

Each According to His Manner:
Latinate Chroniclers in England 1377–1422

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Signature:

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Contents

Abbreviations	5
Note	8
Abstract	9
Introduction	11
The Latinate Chroniclers in England	13
Approaches to the Study of Medieval Chronicles	16
Chapter One: Intellectual and Professional Worlds	31
Introduction	31
The Clerical World	32
Professional Historians?	38
The Graduate World	56
A Textual Repertory	71
Conclusion	75
Chapter Two: The Crown and the Church	76
Introduction	76
Terminology	79
Division	97
Heresy	112
Conclusion	119
Chapter Three: Constructing Community	122
Introduction	122
<i>Domus</i>	124
<i>Regular Chroniclers</i>	124
<i>Secular Chroniclers</i>	141
The Textual Environments	144
<i>Contemporary History</i>	146
<i>Classical Influences</i>	149
<i>Scriptural History</i>	154
<i>Hagiography</i>	157
The Three Orders	160
<i>Communes and Civites</i>	163
<i>The Commons and the Peasants' Revolt</i>	164
<i>Civites</i>	169

The English Clergy and ‘Mother Church’	177
Ethnic Identification	187
Conclusion	196
Chapter Four: Reporting Martiality	198
Introduction	198
Constructing the Morality of Martial Activity	200
<i>Defending the Faith</i>	202
Bold Leaders: Imagining Kings and Lords as Commanders	225
<i>Warrior Kings</i>	226
<i>The Lords at War</i>	238
Imagining Alternatives	251
Conclusion	270
Chapter Five: Criticism, Comment, and Debate	272
Introduction	272
An Age of Debate	275
<i>Purpose</i>	279
<i>Audience</i>	282
Preaching and Homilies	285
Commenting on Government	297
Criticism in the Chronicles	309
Conclusion	318
Conclusion	320
Bibliography	327
Manuscripts	327
Primary Sources	327
Secondary Sources	334

Abbreviations

<i>Annales</i>	<i>Annales Ricardi Secundi et Henrici Quarti</i>
<i>Anonimalle Chronicle</i>	V. H. Galbraith, ed., <i>The Anonimalle Chronicle, 1333–1381: From a MS. Written at St. Mary’s Abbey, York</i> (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1927).
BL	London, British Library
CCCC	Corpus Christi College, Cambridge Library
<i>Chronica Maiora</i>	Thomas Walsingham, <i>The St Albans Chronicle: the Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham. 1376–1394</i> , eds. and trans. John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs, and Leslie Watkiss, 2 Vols., Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003-2011).
<i>Chronicle of Meaux</i>	Thomas de Burton, <i>Chronica Monasterii de Melsa: A Fundatione Usque Ad Annum 1396 Auctore Thoma de Burton, Abbate. Accedit Continuatio Ad Annum 1406</i> , ed. Edward A. Bond, 3 Vols., <i>Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores</i> (London: Longman, 1866-1868).
<i>Continuatio Eulogii</i>	Frank Scott Haydon, ed., <i>Eulogium (Historiarum Sive Temporis): Chronicon ab orbe condito usque ad annum Domini M.CCC.LXCI., a monacho quodam Malmesburiensi exaratum; accedunt continuationes duæ, quarum una ad annum M.CCCC Xiii., altera ad annum</i>

- M.CCCC.XC. perducta est*, Rolls Series (London: Longman, 1858).
- Favent's *Historia* Thomas Favent, 'Hic Incipit Historia Siue Narracio de Modo et Forma Mirabilis Parliamenti Apud Westmonasterium Anno Domini Millesimo CCCLXXXVJ, Regni Vero Regis Ricardi Secundi Post Conquestum, Anno Decimo, per Thomam Fauent Clericum Indictata', ed. May McKisack. *Camden Third Series* 37 (1926): 1–28.
- Gesta abbatum* Henry T. Riley, ed., *Gesta abbatum monasterii Sancti Albani*, 3 Vols., Rolls Series. (London: Longman, 1867-1868).
- GHQ* Frank Taylor and John Smith Roskell, eds. and trans., *Gesta Henrici Quinti: The Deeds of Henry the Fifth*, Oxford medieval texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).
- Knighton, *Chronicon* Henry Knighton, *Knighton's Chronicle 1337–1396*, ed. and trans. G. H. Martin, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).
- Polychronicon* *Polychronicon, Ranulphi Higden Moachi Cestrensis*, ed. C. Babington and J. R. Lumby, 9 Vols., Rolls Series (London: Longman, 1865-1886)
- Oxford, Bodl. Oxford, Bodleian Library
- Vita Ricardi Secundi* G. B. Stow and N. Herford, eds., *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977)
- Westminster Chronicle* L. C. Hector and Barbara F. Harvey,

eds. and trans., *The Westminster Chronicle, 1381–1394*, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).

Note

Where possible the translations used in this thesis come from existing translations to provide the reader with a consistent and accessible copy of both the original Latin and a modern English translation. For those texts where accurate translations exist separately from editions in Latin, I have provided references to both Latin and English editions of a text or part of a text in translation. Where this has not been possible, I have provided my own translations.

Abstract

This thesis aims to examine the outlook of writers of contemporary history in England between 1377 and 1422. The chroniclers have traditionally been characterised as writers who, despite some individuality, were spokesmen for establishment views and lesser successors to the chroniclers of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. In contention with this perception, the thesis approaches the chroniclers through a comparative analysis of their treatment of the Crown and the Church, their construction of communities, their reports of martiality, and their engagement with contemporaneous comment, criticism, and debate to show that their intellectual journeys belie superficially communal attitudes. The premise of this thesis is that the late medieval regular and secular clerks who wrote Latin chronicles in England were engaging in multiple discourses and were responding to contemporary pressures rather than simply continuing existing traditions. The thesis aims to re-examine these texts to offer a new perspective on the intellectual complexities of historical writing during this period. It argues that the chroniclers, despite some superficial similarities in their backgrounds and probable experiences, were highly idiosyncratic.

This thesis problematizes terms such as 'regular chronicler' or 'secular chronicler' which obscure the complex web of experiences that connected various regular and secular chroniclers whilst dividing them from their fellows through their professional and intellectual experiences. It explores key issues such as the chronicler's social backgrounds, educations, and their engagement with forms of narrative and discourse. The thesis suggests instead that whilst many of the chroniclers were thoroughly involved in their intellectual and textual milieu this produced a plethora of responses from them rather than a single one.

The thesis concludes that the chroniclers were far from being the uninspired commentators they have been described as by V. H. Galbraith, John Taylor and Charles Kingsford, and neither were they an elite set of voices as Steven Justice suggested. Instead, it argues, the chroniclers were a set of authors who were in fact actively reflecting on political, social, and intellectual issues. It suggests that first, they were deeply immersed in the culture of the universities, and the Oxford schools in particular. Second, that they did not have a united perspective on the establishment, and that this is demonstrably the case from the study of their depiction of the Crown and Church, how they

constructed communities, and how they reported warfare. Third, they were not only engaged in the surrounding textual culture and the debating practices, such as scholastic sermons, which were becoming ever more important, but that they also often shifted their own position and adopted different forms of discourse.

This thesis is an addition to the work that has already been done on monastic and clerical intellectual life and culture in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. It aims to go beyond the existing historiography in presenting a new examination of the chroniclers's outlooks which demonstrates the complexity and many distinctions that individuated them.

Introduction

The Latinate chroniclers in England during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries were richly idiosyncratic. Their approaches were mutable and changed from their account of one episode to that of another. They engaged with the intellectual debates surrounding them, such as discourses over how a king should be advised and accept advice. During his account of 1383 the second anonymous Westminster chronicler (whom I shall refer to hereafter, according to the generally adopted nomenclature of Barbara Harvey, as the Westminster Monk) described tensions between the magnates and Richard II.¹ In the passage he provided a complex rendering of Richard's kingship, framed by existing political theory:

Item in isto parlamento inter regem et dominos temporales magna dissencio est exorta; nam prout eis videbatur rex insano consilio adherebat et propter hoc bonum regimen circa se non admisit; unde nitebantur totum onus gubernacionis supra se assumere. Allegabant enim quod predecessors sui reges nobilissimi temporibus retroactis dominorum consilio regebantur, et quamdiu illorum gubernacio fuerat acceptata regnum Anglie magnificis prosperitatibus affluebat. Rex vero, contrarium senciens, dixit se nolle illorum consilio regi vel duci solummodo, set per suum consilium, scilicet per viros electos et probatos de regno, placuit sibi modeste et tractabiliter gubernari.

(In the course of this parliament a serious quarrel arose between the king and the lords temporal, because, as it seemed to them, he clung to unsound policies and for this reason excluded wholesome guidance from his entourage; they therefore strove to take the full burden of control on themselves. They maintained that in former times the most illustrious of his royal predecessors had been ruled by the advice of their lords, and for as long as the control of those lords had been accepted the realm of England was a land of plenty and brilliant prosperity. The king, however, was of the opposite way of thinking: he said that he was unwilling to be

¹ Barbara Harvey has convincingly argued that there were two primary authors for the Westminster Chronicle between 1381 and 1394. The change between the narratives occurred around the end of the account of Bishop Despenser's crusade in 1383. As these chroniclers remain anonymous they are referred to as the Westminster Chronicler (whose work covers 1381–1383) and the Westminster Monk (1383–1394) respectively. Barbara F. Harvey, 'Introduction', in *The Westminster Chronicle, 1381–1394*, eds. and trans. L. C. Hector and Barbara F. Harvey, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), xxii.

ruled or led exclusively by their advice, but he was content to accept with all deference and docility the guidance of his council, composed as it was of the kingdom's picked and tested men.)²

The Westminster Monk's defence of Richard's policy is at odds with several of his contemporaries. Thomas Walsingham, for instance, criticised Richard in 1383 for his ineffectual rule and failure to act in the war against France.³ The difference reflected the Monk's personal position as a monk of Westminster Abbey, which had a special bond with the Crown, as the house which kept the coronation regalia, which was the royal burial place, and which was adjacent to Westminster Hall. However, it also demonstrates the inconsistencies within a single chronicler's account. The Westminster Monk described how in 1384 Richard drew his sword and attempted to kill the archbishop of Canterbury, William Courtenay, for challenging him on a plot to kill John of Gaunt.⁴ On this occasion Richard's reluctance to be ruled by his counsellors was a less praiseworthy trait. Instead, the prelate stood as an example of good behaviour on the part of the Church and magnates, speaking truth to the king.

The episode is set immediately after a clash between the temporal lords and the bishop of Norwich, Henry Despenser, and appears to be part of the same parliamentary session. The lords condemned Despenser for behaving like 'dominus temporalis' ('a temporal lord') and commanded him to lay aside his sword, although Richard, in a moment which demonstrated a more supportive relationship between the king and the Church, gave his private encouragement to Despenser.⁵ The passage then addressed the concerns of the clergy as well as the magnates, and in fact reflected upon a still wider set of layered communities. The Westminster Monk highlighted not only the magnates but also the community of the 'realm of England', and later in the text Richard's concern that the magnates would anger the 'inferiorum' ('less exalted') classes.⁶ So, it is illustrative of the Monk's view of society and the relationships between the king, his lords, and other ranks within the realm. The account situated the political contest for power between the king and his lords within a wider

² L. C. Hector and Barbara F. Harvey, eds. and trans., *The Westminster Chronicle, 1381–1394*, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 54.

³ Thomas Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle: the Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham, 1376–1394*, eds. and trans. John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs, and Leslie Watkiss, Vol. I, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 690, 702.

⁴ *Westminster Chronicle*, 98, 116.

⁵ *Westminster Chronicle*, 52–54.

⁶ *Westminster Chronicle*, 54.

narrative of political to and fro between a much wider range of ranks and interest groups within the overarching community of the realm.

The passage is also demonstrative of how chroniclers engaged with current intellectual discourse. The language of wicked advisers and accusations that the king was being ill-governed by his counsellors was a regular part of political debate in the fourteenth century.⁷ Arguments over who should advise a king and how a king should engage with counsellors were commonplace in both *speculum principis* and chronicles.⁸ During the passage the Westminster Monk took up but also, arguably subverted, this rhetoric. Though the lords suggested that Richard was ill-counselled, the Chronicler reported that Richard countered by only provisionally accepting their advice. Indeed, he then turned their attack on its head by arguing that the lords themselves were seeking power and counselling the king poorly. This engagement suggests that chroniclers like those of Westminster were thoroughly engaged with the political and intellectual milieu of their era.

The passage is replete with symbols and language common to narratives of political contests for control. Appeals to ancient custom featured prominently in other accounts, such as Henry Knighton's (d. c.1396), of clashes between magnates and Richard II.⁹ However, the Westminster Monk's account stands out for his use, and then rejection, of the idea. He went on from the above passage to describe events as if he were privy to the king's thoughts.¹⁰ In the following section the Monk acknowledged that all was not well between the king and the ranks below the magnates, and he privileged the importance of this relationship for the peace of the realm. From this part of the passage it is evident that the Westminster Monk was conscious of the multiple layers of political relationships which underpinned Richard's reign and had considered them.

The Latinate Chroniclers in England

This thesis is intended to contribute to the field of late medieval English chronicle studies a reassessment of the Latinate chroniclers in England

⁷ Judith Ferster, *Fictions of Advice: The Literature and Politics of Counsel in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 70.

⁸ Ferster, *Fictions of Advice*, 74.

⁹ See below, 299.

¹⁰ *Westminster Chronicle*, 54.

between 1377 and 1422. It is not intended to be an exhaustive study of the chronicles which form its source base. Instead it seeks to challenge the existing assumptions as to the homogeneity and value of the chronicles. It presents a reading of the chroniclers which places their work within the multiply voiced discourse on public events taking place in their era and proposes that they were thoroughly engaged with contemporary debates and styles of argument. The thesis establishes a fresh perspective for further analysis of the chronicles as complex literary, political, and intellectual creations.

Other types of literature are occasionally referred to, including sermons, political treatises to which chroniclers would have had access, and political poetry. These pieces provide essential points of comparison to the wider intellectual milieu. Those non-chronicle texts mentioned represent only a selection to facilitate a focus upon the Latin chronicles, and many are omitted. Similarly, there are a number of chronicles which this thesis does not consider. The chronicles discussed here largely exclude those derived from the prose Latin Brut tradition. This is partially because the Latin Brut texts have been less heavily studied and are therefore of less relevance to a reassessment of perspectives on the chronicles. The majority of those under consideration were derived from the *Polychronicon* of Ranulf Higden (c.1280–1364).

The major pieces of historical writing discussed in this study may be briefly divided into their respective orders (the usefulness of such distinctions will be discussed in the following chapter). The Benedictine chronicles of Thomas Walsingham, the chronicle of Westminster Abbey, and the Evesham *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi* (*Vita Ricardi Secundi*) are discussed in detail, and brief consideration is given to the St Albans' *Annales Ricardi Secundi*.¹¹ The Benedictine *Anonimale Chronicle* of St Mary's York is also occasionally referred to, though its status as an Anglo-Norman chronicle and a continuation of the Brut precludes it from being a focal point of the study. The chronicles of the Augustinian canons Henry Knighton of St Mary of the Meadows in Leicester and John of Strecche of St Mary's Priory in Kenilworth are also discussed in detail, whilst the metrical chronicle of Thomas Elmham of Canterbury (c.1364–1427) is only discussed briefly.¹² The Cistercian chronicles of Kirkstall Abbey,

¹¹ The brevity of this consideration comes partially from the *Annales*' heavy reliance on Walsingham's *Chronica Maiora* for the period under discussion.

¹² Thomas Elmham's surviving chronicle was composed in metrical verse and therefore represents a rather different type of composition to the other prose chronicles. Though there is

Whalley Abbey, and Dieulacres Abbey all feature, though other Cistercian chronicles such as that of Meaux Abbey have been largely excluded from this study. There are also several chronicles from clerks who were either definitely or probably members of the secular clergy: Adam of Usk, the anonymous author of the *GHQ*, and Thomas Favent. The *Continuatio Eulogii* is used, though to balance comparisons between narratives from chroniclers from the same orders the analysis of the *Continuatio Eulogii* is not sustained.¹³

To facilitate comparison, the range of texts and the temporal limits of this study have been chosen to focus on historical writing of roughly contemporaneous composition. The temporal limits, which cover the reigns of Richard II to the end of the reign of Henry V, are not intended to demarcate any perceived significant change in historical writing but acknowledge that many original sections start in 1377 following continuations of the *Polychronicon*, and several reach their conclusion in 1422 with Henry V's death. The chronicles selected represent a cross-section of secular, regular, and institutional contexts; all have attracted a critical response which this thesis challenges as it presents a new interpretation of their significance as social documents.

A discussion of the chronicles requires at least a short explanation of what is meant by the term. As Antonia Gransden has observed, 'the term "chronicle" has been used so loosely in medieval and modern times that it has lost any precise meaning'.¹⁴ Gransden's use of it to refer to 'general, serious historical writings' is perhaps the most practical as it allows for the inconsistent use of the term 'chronicle' by medieval authors and so permits almost any historical writing to be considered a chronicle.¹⁵ It also avoids the problems inherent in trying to neatly categorise pieces of historical writing such as Thomas Favent's *Historia*, which covers a very specific set of events and, in its original manuscript (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley Rolls 9), appears as a roll rather than a codex. Favent's *Historia* is evidently different in many respects to chronicles of monastic houses, such as those of Westminster, Kirkstall, or St

room for further study of the chronicle, particularly given the inclusion of verse elsewhere in the chronicles of John Strecche and Henry Knighton. John Strecche's chronicle is included despite the fact that it appears to have been partially based upon the Brut tradition for its value as a comparison to both Henry Knighton as another Augustinian chronicle and to Thomas Walsingham for the interest in classical material which both authors evince.

¹³ The full bibliographic details of the texts discussed in this thesis are given in the bibliography. Antonia Gransden, 'The Chronicles of Medieval England and Scotland: Part I', *Journal of Medieval History* 16 (1990): 129.

¹⁵ Gransden, 'The Chronicles of Medieval England and Scotland: Part I', 129.

Albans, all of which appear in codices and continue previous chronicles. Yet, Gransden's broad categorisation avoids this issue. It also sidesteps the problems of inherited terminology, such as the name of the *Gesta Henrici Quinti* (GHQ), which comes from an eighteenth-century notation on the earliest surviving copy (British Museum, Cotton MS Julius E.IV).¹⁶

David Dumville challenged Gransden's own loose definition of the genre.¹⁷ Dumville divided the possible ways to define the chronicle into different approaches, through the etymology of the word 'chronicle', the history of the overarching genre of historical writing, and distinction between the formats of the works themselves, for instance.¹⁸ However, his conclusion, that the various categories which could be discerned should in the end be regarded as 'sub-types' in the wider field, brings us back to using a broad definition in our initial selection of chronicles whilst simultaneously acknowledging the differences between individual texts. Therefore, for convenience in this study, although the differences and distinguishing features of texts and manuscripts should be kept in mind, the various types of historical writing discussed in this thesis will commonly be referred to as 'chronicles'.

Approaches to the Study of Medieval Chronicles

Scholars of the later Latinate chroniclers in England remain hampered by the critical apparatus and approaches of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, despite the developments made in adjoining fields such as the study of the intellectual communities and book culture. We still often approach the chronicles as historians such as T. F. Tout and Galbraith did: as storehouses of information, which by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were pale imitations of their predecessors, written by a homogeneous, intellectual elite.¹⁹

¹⁶ Frank Taylor, 'Introduction', in *Gesta Henrici Quinti: The Deeds of Henry the Fifth*, eds. and trans. Frank Taylor and John Smith Roskell, Oxford medieval texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), xv.

¹⁷ David Dumville, 'What Is a Chronicle?', in *The Medieval Chronicle II: Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on the Medieval Chronicle, Driebergen/Utrecht 16–21 July 1999* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), 4; for the range of different historical texts to which the term chronicles is often applied, cf. Chris Given-Wilson, *Chronicles: The Writing of History in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004), 8, 19, 23–24, 26, 35, 156, 189, 203, 207, 259.

¹⁸ Dumville, 'What Is a Chronicle?'

¹⁹ T. F. Tout, 'The Study of Mediaeval Chronicles', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 1922, 8; Galbraith, *Roger Wendover and Matthew Paris*, 11–12.

Much of the work of present scholars rests on the value judgements made in the creation of the Rolls Series in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which served to create a canon of chronicles. The effects of the choices made in the creation of the Rolls Series in particular have been compounded by a focus on the specific uses of the chronicles for modern historians. Taylor remarked that the worth of chronicles most often lies in their records of parliaments (though he acknowledged they also preserve something of the writers' own outlooks).²⁰ Although Taylor emphasised the value of the chronicles for these types of episodes, in doing so he placed implicit limits on their usefulness as sources for intellectual and cultural history.

It has been a truth universally acknowledged in the historical narrative on late medieval Latin writing that the chronicle tradition was in decline. Tout declared that 'the time when the fairest flowers of mediaeval culture [chronicles] attained their perfection' was in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and he went on to argue that before the end of the fourteenth century they were already showing signs of deteriorating.²¹ Galbraith, speaking about the monasteries and chronicles, later commented that 'it is a commonplace that the best days of the old monasteries were past [*sic*] by the year 1200'.²² Gransden followed suit and described the last twenty years of the twelfth century as the 'golden age' of chronicles in England.²³ Chris Given-Wilson echoed these attitudes in 2008, when he described late fourteenth-century monastic chronicles as 'relics' of the past, though he has also argued that chronicles such as that of John Strecche (*fl.* 1407–1425) deserve greater attention and regard for the subtleties of their narratives.²⁴ Thus, the assumption that the Latin chronicles of the period were in decline, out-dated, and inferior has persisted within the field.

There has been an implicit assumption that the chroniclers of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries were part of a homogeneous and intellectually declining community. The underlying teleological argument that the

²⁰ John Taylor, 'The Use of Medieval Chronicles', *Help for Students of History* 70 (1965): 14, 15, 16.

²¹ Tout, 'The Study of Mediaeval Chronicles', 5.

²² V. H. Galbraith, *Roger Wendover and Matthew Paris*, David Murray Foundation Lectures; No.11 (Glasgow: Jackson, 1944), 5, 11–12.

²³ Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England. 1, c.550 to c.1307* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), 219., 219.

²⁴ Chris Given-Wilson, 'Official and Semi-Official History in the Later Middle Ages: The English Evidence in Context', in *The Medieval Chronicle V*, ed. Erik Kooper (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2008), 2; Chris Given-Wilson, *The Chronicle of John Strecche*, session 806, Leeds International Medieval Congress, 2019 [Unpublished]

approaching Reformation meant that the chronicles and the English monastic intellectual community were coming to an end is anachronistic: for the monks there was no reason to act or believe that this was the case. This type of argument carries with it the unacknowledged presumption that the terminal state is a moribund state. However, along with the increasing number of vernacular chronicles, the Latinate chronicles can be seen to have been the last expression of a long-standing tradition.

Alongside these assumptions, has been a tacit third: the untested supposition that the later chroniclers were always following the pattern of their predecessors; and contrast has frequently been made with the most impressive of their forerunners, such as Matthew Paris's (c.1200–1259) *Chronica Maiora*.²⁵ This assumption becomes problematic if the variations amongst the physical manuscripts, of which only some followed earlier patterns, are considered. Careful examination may suggest that there was a significant distinction between how some of the chroniclers between 1377 and 1422 conceived of their works in comparison to how the chroniclers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries had done. V. H. Galbraith's comment that those who followed thirteenth-century chroniclers such as Matthew Paris and Roger of Wendover (c.1236) were 'smaller men' implied that the chroniclers were following a model rather than writing independently.²⁶ John Taylor gave a more positive assessment of their achievements, though still one tinged with a narrative of decline, when he declared that 'in England the fourteenth century was the last great century of monastic chronicle writing' and contrasted their work to the rise of new political literature.²⁷ Charles Kingsford's earlier assessment of the historical literature of the fifteenth century was still bleaker: 'It does not present the same richness of promise or achievement as we find in the thirteenth, nor even the chivalrous glamour of the fourteenth.'²⁸

The argument that the chroniclers were homogeneous writers was further developed by the suggestion that they represented an establishment voice. This suggestion is well grounded in the chroniclers' narratives of

²⁵ Alexander L. Kaufman, 'St Albans', in *The Encyclopedia of Medieval Literature in Britain* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), 1–2.

²⁶ Galbraith, *Roger Wendover and Matthew Paris*, 5, 11–12.

²⁷ John Taylor, *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 1.

²⁸ Charles Kingsford, *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1913), 1.

opposition to the rebels in the Peasants' Revolt in 1381 and in the many pro-Lancastrian narratives which appeared in the chronicles after Richard II's deposition. However, the suggestion has obscured the different circumstances of the chroniclers whilst establishing new ways to examine the silenced voices of non-clerics. In 1992 Paul Strohm and A. J. Prescott illustrated how chroniclers used rhetorical strategies to discredit the rebels in the Peasants' Revolt.²⁹ Their arguments elegantly established the dismissal and disparagement of the rebels by the chroniclers, though in focusing on the 'largely effaced alternative [...] interpretive scheme' of the rebels, further critical work on the differences in the chroniclers' narratives was not fully developed.³⁰ Instead their assessment of how the chroniclers envisaged society using these events as a prism often treated them as, if not interchangeable, then certainly members of a group whose analyses of events were often highly interwoven.³¹ In Strohm's 1998 study, *England's Empty Throne*, whilst an insightful picture was developed of Lancastrian attempts to control the narrative of Richard II's deposition, and their incidental pursuit of that goal through the language they used, the chroniclers were situated primarily as part of the narrative of the legitimisation.³² Though the inclusion of the propagandistic *Record and Proces del Reunciacion* in several chronicles and the anti-Ricardian sentiments voiced in chronicles such as the *Vita Ricardi Secundi* certainly supports the theory that the language used by the Lancastrians supported a narrative of legitimation, the layered narratives in both 1399 and elsewhere in the chronicles require further consideration and comparison.³³ The rationale behind chronicles composed over decades cannot, after all, be extrapolated from discrete episodes.

Steven Justice in his 1994 study, *Writing and Rebellion*, developed the idea that the chroniclers were the 'official culture' or voices of the establishment.³⁴ The contrast he explored between the voices of the chroniclers and the rebels, whom, he suggested, the chroniclers struggled to believe could read or write (simultaneously acknowledging their literacy and disparaging it),

²⁹ Paul Strohm and A. J. Prescott, *Hochon's Arrow: The Social Imagination of Fourteenth-Century Texts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 4.

³⁰ Strohm and Prescott, *Hochon's Arrow*, 37-44.

³¹ Strohm and Prescott, *Hochon's Arrow*, 4.

³² Paul Strohm, *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation 1399–1422* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 20.

³³ Strohm, *England's Empty Throne*, 4.

³⁴ Steven Justice, *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381*, 27 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 261.

concentrated on the rebels and used the chroniclers as means through which to discover the voices of the rebels.³⁵ Justice put forward a compelling argument for the engagement of the rebels with the written word and with their own narrative; however, it also cast the chroniclers as voices of the established order unable to conceive of the rebels as anything other than ignorant.³⁶ In the process of defining the character of vernacular voices, the chroniclers were overlooked as all being much of a muchness, a group largely defined by their antagonism towards the rebels.³⁷ Justice's more recent study, *Adam Usk's Secret*, has entrenched the view that it is impossible to tear illuminating comments from chroniclers.³⁸ His approach mirrored the argument of his study in denying an answer to the 'secret' in question throughout until the conclusion, which revolves more around the dangers of overthinking a problem in literary criticism than studying Adam of Usk as a chronicler.³⁹ Underlying his conclusions, though, is the argument that the intent or implications of Latin chroniclers' works should not be considered too closely, whilst a less obtuse character is implicitly ascribed to vernacular authors. Revisiting the chronicles in light of these studies develops a greater discernment of not only the chroniclers themselves but existing notions of the relationship between Latin and vernacular cultures, providing a fresh basis for the conceptualisation of the environment in which discourses, whether over Lancastrian authority or rebel claims, were emerging.

The conclusion that the chronicles were derivative and less complex than their predecessors has meant that there remains a great deal of work to be done on the close reading of the attitudes and values expressed in these texts by their authors. Such close readings have been neglected, or in some cases not fully realised, because of this assumption that there is simply less to discover. Reassessing the late fourteenth-century chronicles can provide new insights into the intellectual and social milieu of the period.

Although the fourteenth-century chronicles should not be considered solely through comparison with their precursors, efforts in the study of earlier chronicles to re-evaluate historical writing are instructive. There is currently a

³⁵ Justice, *Writing and Rebellion*, 18.

³⁶ Justice, *Writing and Rebellion*, 259.

³⁷ Justice, *Writing and Rebellion*, 19.

³⁸ Steven Justice, *Adam Usk's Secret* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 133.

³⁹ Justice, *Adam Usk's Secret*, 132.

dissatisfaction with previous readings of the chronicle tradition across both the high and late Middle Ages, although the various studies have different points of emphasis. A number of scholars of high medieval chronicles are seeking to understand the chroniclers themselves better.⁴⁰ Björn Weiler, in his study of Matthew Paris's use of prophecy and other vatic material, aimed to explore how Paris conceived of truth and the relationships between the natural and supernatural.⁴¹ Rodney Thomson's treatment of William of Malmesbury's (c.1095–c.1143) 'historical vision' has unpicked how William understood the complex interrelationship between competing influences and precedents, such as God's plan, the influence of virtue, and parallels to the Roman past.⁴² Meanwhile, Ryan Kemp's study on William of Malmesbury's views on kingship has highlighted the influences which moulded his historical and political perspective as a chronicler.⁴³ Emily Winkler has challenged the assertions that the twelfth-century chronicler William of Poitiers (c.1020–1090) was a classical stylist.⁴⁴ Winkler has suggested that William was far subtler and used classical allusions on a much deeper level than generally accepted.⁴⁵ These approaches challenge the orthodox positions on the high medieval chroniclers as writers and offers fresh insights into these chroniclers' outlooks and methods. This thesis is related to this research community and extends its concerns by confronting the characterisation of the later medieval chronicles.

Although the fourteenth-century chronicles require a reassessment on their own merits, a renewed emphasis on comparative readings and close textual analysis could also prove profitable for the analysis of them. This

⁴⁰ Cf. Anne E. Bailey, 'Gesta Pontificum Anglorum: History or Hagiography?', in *Discovering William of Malmesbury*, eds. Rodney M. Thomson, Emily Dolmans, and Emily A. Winkler (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2017), 13–26; Tom Stephen Forster, 'William of Malmesbury and Fortuna', *Journal of Medieval History* 44, no. 1 (1 January 2018): 21–38.

⁴¹ Björn Weiler's work on chronicles also includes studies on the alternative angle of examining how representations of lordship in the thirteenth-century chronicles represented lordship, although these studies differ from this thesis in the emphasis on the wider political culture. Björn Weiler, 'History, Prophecy and the Apocalypse in the Chronicles of Matthew Paris', *The English Historical Review* 133, no. 561 (2 May 2018): 253; Björn Weiler, *Kingship, Rebellion and Political Culture: England and Germany, c. 1215 - c. 1250*, Medieval Culture & Society S (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

⁴² Rodney M. Thomson, 'William of Malmesbury's Historical Vision', in *Discovering William of Malmesbury*, eds. Rodney M. Thomson, Emily Dolmans, and Emily A. Winkler (Boydell and Brewer, 2017), 165–74.

⁴³ Ryan Kemp, 'Advising the King: Kingship, Bishops and Saints in the Works of William of Malmesbury', in *Discovering William of Malmesbury*, eds. Rodney M. Thomson, Emily Dolmans, and Emily A. Winkler (Boydell and Brewer, 2017), 65, 66.

⁴⁴ Emily A. Winkler, 'The Norman Conquest of the Classical Past: William of Poitiers, Language and History', *Journal of Medieval History* 42, no. 4 (7 August 2016): 456.

⁴⁵ Winkler, 'The Norman Conquest of the Classical Past', 459.

assessment, though, needs to avoid comparing their literary style with earlier chronicles, because they should not be assumed to be sufficiently alike or written within a similar enough intellectual milieu for such a comparison to be reasonable. Few of the late fourteenth-century chroniclers demonstrated the same interest in classical material that appeared in William of Malmesbury's chronicle. Thomas Walsingham was well-versed in many classical texts, but the frequency with which he incorporated them into his chronicle was unusual. Considering those late fourteenth-century chroniclers who did not routinely employ classical allusions as inferior, however, imposes a quality judgement on them. This judgement disregards the usual practice of late fourteenth-century chroniclers in favour of the practices of their thirteenth-century predecessors.

However, recent scholarship on the fourteenth century has challenged assumptions that the chronicles were homogeneous and of an inferior quality to their predecessors. The narrative of monastic decline itself has been challenged.⁴⁶ James Clark has been especially outspoken against the narrative of intellectual decline. Clark argued that at St Albans 'there was no shortage of intellectual energy' and has demonstrated that it was instead a community filled with scholarship and a didactic drive.⁴⁷ He recast the discussion of the intellectual output of the Benedictines in the period and suggested that they were part of a developing and lively scholarly community engaged in 'educational reform' and fuelled by a 'religious revival' as part of wider cultural and social changes rather than a declining, stagnant tradition.⁴⁸ Clark's work has prepared the field for further study of monastic chroniclers as part of a dynamic society.

Many of the regular clergy and the secular clergy, were engaged with the intellectual dynamism of the period. Sylvia Federico's recent work on the St Albans monk and chronicler Thomas Walsingham (d. 1422) as a classicist has begun to reveal the plethora of intellectual networks to which the chroniclers

⁴⁶ See, Barbara F. Harvey, *Westminster Abbey and Its Estates in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977); Barbara F. Harvey, *Living and Dying in England 1100–1540: The Monastic Experience* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); James G. Clark, 'Thomas Walsingham Reconsidered: Books and Learning at Late-Medieval St. Albans', *Speculum* 77, no. 3 (2002): 832–860; James G. Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance at St Albans: Thomas Walsingham and His Circle, c. 1350–1440*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁴⁷ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 2.

⁴⁸ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 163.

were connected.⁴⁹ Federico built on Clark's work, exploring Clark's contention 'that by the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries intellectual life at St. Albans – indeed in monastic England in general – had become both more complex and more varied in its character'.⁵⁰ Federico's work has demonstrated that chroniclers like Walsingham were aware of the wider 'public literature' at the time, as well as other popular means of communication such as prophecies.⁵¹ Her study has illustrated the intellectual complexity and dynamism present in monastic houses and exhibited by chroniclers.

Considering the chroniclers as conversant with public discourse throws them into the wider intellectual milieu of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Scholars of English literature have done a great deal to open up fresh avenues in textual criticism and analysis in the period. Fiona Somerset, in her 1998 work, *Clerical Discourse*, investigated the intended audiences of texts and exposed the interplay between clerical and lay writers.⁵² Somerset has shown that clerical writers of controversial texts presented themselves as part of the laity whilst still using the argumentative tools of the clergy.⁵³ This reassessment of the clergy who were positioned against the established order and Somerset's demonstration of the multifarious fresh ways writers were engaging with debate and commentary in the period has a direct relevance for the study of the chroniclers. The chroniclers existed largely on the periphery of radical discourse, only occasionally engaging with it. Somerset, as Sarah Stanbury argued, explored how writers 'used language, and especially English, to intervene in learned and political discourses in England'.⁵⁴ This in turn opens up questions of how the chroniclers contributed to this discourse, albeit through the medium of historical writing. So, in light of Somerset's research, it is necessary

⁴⁹ Sylvia Federico, *The Classicist Writings of Thomas Walsingham: 'Worldly Cares' at St Albans Abbey in the Fourteenth Century*, *Writing History in the Middle Ages* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2016).

⁵⁰ Clark, 'Thomas Walsingham Reconsidered', 832.

⁵¹ Federico, *The Classicist Writings of Thomas Walsingham*, 153.

⁵² Fiona Somerset, *Clerical Discourse and Lay Audience in Late Medieval England*, *Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature*, no. 37 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Kathryn Kerby-Fulton has more recently also contributed to the discussion. Kerby-Fulton has challenged the narratives of traditional English orthodoxy and undermined the borders traditionally placed between Latin and English voices in the period. Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion: Censorship and Tolerance of Revelatory Writing in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Press, 2006).

⁵³ Somerset, *Clerical Discourse and Lay Audience in Late Medieval England*, 3–4.

⁵⁴ Sarah Stanbury, 'Clerical Discourse and Lay Audience in Late Medieval England by Fiona Somerset', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 23, no. 1 (2001): 593.

to take this fresh look at clerical culture and with it turn back to the narrative of the declining chronicler.

The work of scholars such as Clark, Somerset, Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, and Federico has demonstrated the existence of multiple intellectual and social circles the chroniclers would either have belonged to or been aware of. Federico has placed Walsingham within the intellectual sphere of non-monastic contemporaries like Geoffrey Chaucer (c.1343–1400) and John Gower (c.1330–1408), demonstrating their shared approaches, concerns, and knowledge.⁵⁵ Clark's development of the intellectual community of the Benedictines points towards the strong links between many monastic houses and the universities.⁵⁶ Such links naturally impinged on the chroniclers' experiences. Federico and others have, as a consequence of their work, eroded the boundaries between chroniclers and their contemporaries. This points towards the need for a fresh examination of the chroniclers as members of a plethora of groups rather than as part of a single, homogeneous community.

Recent studies have been taking important steps towards the re-evaluation of chronicles, treating them as complex intellectual and cultural products.⁵⁷ This move has shifted the emphasis away from treating chronicles as catalogues of information towards recognising them as crafted literary

⁵⁵ Sylvia Federico, *New Troy: Fantasies of Empire in the Late Middle Ages*, Medieval Cultures, v. 36 (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Federico, *The Classicist Writings of Thomas Walsingham*.

⁵⁶ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 62.

⁵⁷ There have been a wide array of articles, theses, and monographs published on chronicles in this vein recently. Margaret Aston demonstrated certain theological aspects of Thomas Walsingham's chronicle in 1994. In 2000 Mark Ormrod effectively deconstructed chronicle narratives around episodes in the Peasants' Revolt, showing the chroniclers' use of topoi to construct a political narrative. Margaret Aston, 'Corpus Christi and Corpus Regni: Heresy and the Peasant's Revolt', *Past and Present* 143 (1994): 3–47; W. M. Ormrod, 'In Bed with Joan of Kent: The King's Mother and the Peasants' Revolt', in *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in Late Medieval Britain. Essays for Felicity Riddy*, eds. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and Felicity Riddy (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 277–292; Anne Curry et al., 'New Regime, New Army? Henry IV's Scottish Expedition of 1400', *The English Historical Review* CXXV, no. 517 (1 December 2010): 1382–1413; Christopher Guyol, 'The Altered Perspective of Thomas Walsingham's "Symbol of Normandy"', in *Law, Governance, and Justice: New Views on Medieval Constitutionalism*, eds. Richard Kaeuper, Paul Dingman, and Peter Sposato (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 189–210; P. H. Cullum, 'My Lord Bishop: Chronicles and the Construction of Episcopal Identity in Late Medieval England', *International Journal of Regional and Local History* 8, no. 1 (2013): 40–53; Alicia Marchant, 'Narratives of Death and Emotional Affect in Late Medieval Chronicles', *Parergon* 31, no. 2 (2014): 81–98; Christopher David Linsley, 'Nation, England and the French in Thomas Walsingham's *Chronica Maiora* 1376–1420' (The University of York, 2015); Christopher Guyol, "'Let Them Realize What God Can Do": Chivalry in the St Albans Chronicle', in *Fourteenth Century England IX*, eds. James Bothwell and Gwilym Dodd (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2016), 87–108.

creations.⁵⁸ Trevor Smith, in his recent thesis on historical writing earlier in the fourteenth century, argued that chroniclers were engaged with matters such as the ethical problems of war.⁵⁹ His argument highlighted the intellectual dynamism present in the historical writing immediately preceding the period covered by this thesis. Christopher Guyol has examined Thomas Walsingham's chronicle as a semi-coherent thesis on martial prowess.⁶⁰ Peter Cullum has used a comparative analysis of 'local' and 'national' chronicles to propose that the chroniclers had 'different perspectives on what their function was in relationship to describing and assessing the qualities of the late medieval episcopate', though he concludes by treating Walsingham and Henry Knighton as fundamentally similar.⁶¹ These studies have implicitly acknowledged the presence of in-depth social commentaries within the chronicles, included by the chroniclers either in unwitting expression of their subconscious beliefs or in deliberately constructed accounts. They have avoided the judgements on quality and the narrative of decline, instead assessing the chronicles in their specific milieu.

These changes in chronicle studies need to be continued and expanded upon, embracing the inconsistencies and mutability of chronicles rather than treating them as inconvenient. R. B. Dobson remarked in 1983 that chroniclers were 'capable of embroidering freely and imaginatively around their subject matter'.⁶² Whilst any student of chronicles will have noted the important personal additions and dramatic language used by chroniclers to discuss events like the Peasants' Revolt, the implications of studies (discussed above) that have brought to the fore the rhetorical and discursive side of the chroniclers will require further work before it has been thoroughly applied.⁶³

The analysis of chronicles as literary artefacts remains an expanding field. Alicia Marchant's examination of the chronicles detailing Owain Glyndŵr's revolt (1400–15) has offered a secure and practicable model for the analysis of

⁵⁸ Hannah Kilpatrick, 'The Problematic Present: Locating and Losing Meaning in the Narrative Structure of the Fineshade Chronicle', *Parergon* 32, no. 1 (2015): 31, 35, 51.

⁵⁹ Trevor Russell Smith, 'National Identity, Propaganda, and the Ethics of War in English Historical Literature, 1327–77 [Unpublished]' (University of Leeds, 2017), 11.

⁶⁰ Guyol, 'Chivalry in the St Albans Chronicle', 87.

⁶¹ Cullum, 'My Lord Bishop', 49.

⁶² R. B. Dobson, *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381*, 2nd ed, History in Depth (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1983), 4.

⁶³ See above, 19; Strohm and Prescott, *Hochon's Arrow; Justice, Writing and Rebellion*.

historical writing through narrative strategies.⁶⁴ Building upon the narrative turn, concepts of emplotment and focalisation underpin the study.⁶⁵ Marchant has provided a stepping stone for the further analysis of chronicles as narrative constructions, developing arguments proposed by Suzanne Fleischman and chiming with those of Hannah Kilpatrick.⁶⁶ Though there are areas of the intellectual context which could be further developed, Marchant's study does provide a useful methodological approach to the details and accounts of the chroniclers.

The historical narratives, though the main source of evidence for this thesis, are only part of the chronicles, which also had a complex existence as manuscripts. The question of the textual or manuscript traditions which lie behind the creation of the chronicles further challenges the notion underlying the Rolls Series that there was a finished or definitive recension of the chronicles. In the cases of some chronicles, such as Adam of Usk's, this appears to be the case: in the sense that there is no evidence that another manuscript of it was ever created. However, the same rarely holds true for any other chronicle. Even in those chronicles which are unique there is evidence that the chroniclers treated them as mutable rather than definitive works and it is questionable who else even within the institution where they originated would have been aware of them. Adam of Usk regularly inserted sections into the earlier parts of his chronicles, such as the portents which framed Richard II's coronation, and which he included whilst discussing Richard's death.⁶⁷ The *Westminster Chronicle* survives in a unique paper manuscript (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 197A, pp.130–210) as a continuation of the continuation of the *Polychronicon* by the Worcester monk, John of Malvern. The absence of any presentation or display copy suggests that the *Westminster Chronicle* was not widely circulated in the abbey, possibly marking it as a work

⁶⁴ Alicia Marchant, *The Revolt of Owain Glyndŵr in Medieval English Chronicles* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2014), 2.

⁶⁵ Hayden White, 'The Historical Text as Literary Artefact', in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1985), 86; Suzanne Fleischman, 'On the Representation of History and Fiction in the Middle Ages', *History and Theory* 22, no. 3 (1983): 278–319; Marchant, *The Revolt of Glyndwr*, 10; Mieke Bal and Christine van Boheemen, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 3rd ed (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 2–35; Jonathan Evans, 'Episodes in Analysis of Medieval Narrative', *Style* 20, no. 2 (1986): 126.

⁶⁶ Kilpatrick, 'The Problematic Present: Locating and Losing Meaning in the Narrative Structure of the Fineshade Chronicle'; Fleischman, 'On the Representation of History and Fiction'.

⁶⁷ Adam of Usk, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk, 1377–1421*, ed. Chris Given-Wilson, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 90, xlii–xliii.

which was largely private to its authors, and there is little evidence that later chroniclers at Westminster were aware of it. Similarly, the fifteenth-century Oxford Bodl., MS. Laud Misc. 722 recension of the *Kirkstall Chronicle* was written on a paper octavo manuscript.⁶⁸ Although M. V. Clarke has argued that it was ‘only a draft’ given the many errors and corrections in the manuscript this does not preclude it from being considered to be intended as a private or even independent work.⁶⁹ The *Westminster Chronicle* also incorporated the praise for Edward III, which appears in the short chronicle usually attributed to Thomas Walsingham.⁷⁰ These inclusions are important for their bearing on the circulation of chronicles in the period and demonstrate that the Westminster chroniclers, for instance, were linked to a much wider textual environment of historical writing. The *Westminster Chronicle* included corrections that occurred within the text of the chronicle, such as the passage describing the end of Bishop Henry Despenser’s crusade in 1383, which was largely crossed out before a new version was inserted.⁷¹ In such corrections it becomes evident that the chroniclers revised and adjusted their chronicles over time.

The mutability and individuality across the manuscripts of chronicles which were not unique also demonstrates the problems inherent in considering the chronicles as definitive works. Thomas Walsingham’s *Chronica Maiora* was widely circulated, and amongst the Latinate chronicles only the Evesham *Vita Ricardi Secundi* survives in more copies, but there is no single copy of the *Chronica Maiora* which contains every variation.⁷² British Library (BL) Royal MS 13 E.IX, one of the major versions of the *Chronica Maiora*, is a large display manuscript. It is written in double columns, rubricated, and even includes spaces left for illustrations. However, it only runs to 1392 (1393 in the text), leaving other versions to continue until 1422. The break has been associated with Thomas Walsingham’s time in Wymondham Priory, but this manuscript was not continued. Instead the Royal manuscript appears to have undergone revisions in the 1390s to remove material critical of John of Gaunt.⁷³ However, there are issues concerning the authorship of some of the other versions of the

⁶⁸ Cf. John Taylor, *The Kirkstall Abbey Chronicles* (Leeds: Thoresby Society, 1952).

⁶⁹ M. V. Clarke and N. Denholm-Young, ‘The Kirkstall Chronicle, 1355–1400’, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 15, no. 1 (1931): 104.

⁷⁰ Harvey, ‘Introduction: Westminster’, xix.

⁷¹ CCCC, MS 197A, pp.138–141; *Westminster Chronicle*, 46, 522.

⁷² James G. Clark, ‘Introduction’, in *The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham 1376–1422*, trans. David Preest (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2005), 20.

⁷³ Linsley, ‘Nation, England and the French’, 37.

Chronica Maiora, such as CCC MS 7, which contains the history commonly known as the *Annales Ricardi Secundi et Henrici Quarti*. Clark has convincingly suggested that this manuscript was misattributed to Walsingham and was instead composed by William Wintershill, who was a historian in his own right and owned and compiled the manuscript in which the *Annales* can be found.⁷⁴ Further differences in the manuscripts of the *Chronicle Maiora* include the use of the abridged chronicle as a continuation of the *Polychronicon* in manuscripts such as Oxford, Bodl., MS Bodley 462, or Oxford, Bodl., MS. Bodley 316. Meanwhile, the late fifteenth-century Oxford, Bodl., MS Rawlinson B 152 was written on an octavo manuscript and follows the short chronicle. These myriad differences in even the creation of copies of Thomas Walsingham's *Chronica Maiora* highlight the sheer variety and individuality of the chronicle manuscripts. Whilst for the sake of analysis it is convenient to refer to a single critical edition, further research in the future needs to be done to unpick the complexities of chronicles as manuscripts.

The circulation of the chronicles and their audiences are, unfortunately, uncertain. Although Walsingham's chronicle is known to have been used in some form at Evesham and possibly at Westminster it is unusual that we have this much information, even the circulation of chronicles within the house of their creator is unclear. Even in this case though matters are complicated by Walsingham's composition of the *Ypodigma Neustrie*, which survives in a single manuscript (CCC MS 240) for Henry V and which used a great deal of material from Walsingham's other historical works. It compounds the issues of audience by providing a chronicle that circulated amongst significantly different audiences. The Cistercian houses of Kirkstall, Dieulacres, and Whalley circulated chronicles amongst one another. The Whalley Chronicle included in BL, Cotton MS. Domitian A xiii ff.131–38 has a note declaring it to be a chronicle of Kirkstall, for example.⁷⁵ The *GHQ* has no audience we can positively identify, apart from Thomas Elmham and potentially John Strecche. The two data points that these chroniclers in turn represent as Augustinians are insufficient for us to extrapolate to a wider readership. So although there are

⁷⁴ Clark, 'Thomas Walsingham Reconsidered', 844–848.

⁷⁵ Charles Kingsford, ed., 'A Northern Chronicle: Appendix II', in *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1913), 279.

aspects of the texts which point towards clerical audiences, the exact nature of the audience intended for most of the chronicles is vague in the extreme.⁷⁶

The selected texts and their authors are discussed through a comparative, close reading of passages.⁷⁷ The method of interrogation owes much to Marchant's narrative analysis of chronicles, which emphasises narrative details such as the focalisation of the text, the representation of details such as time and space, and the depiction of individuals as historical characters.⁷⁸ The thesis does not seek to suggest that every decision made by a chronicler to include or exclude material has a meaning to be unpicked. Such a statement would be illogical and overly assertive. However, through close reading and comparison of the texts it is possible to highlight the intellectual complexity and contradictions within a single chronicle.

Chapter One establishes the basic premise for the renewed consideration of the chronicles. It suggests that the chroniclers were pluralistic. It describes the range of professional and intellectual backgrounds the chroniclers experienced and argues that they were both divided by experiences and also drawn together at times. It demonstrates that the conceptual boundaries such as those between secular and regular chroniclers are often unhelpful and misleading when working to understand the chroniclers.

Chapter Two moves from the chroniclers' intellectual setting as writers of historical literature to the two principal pillars of authority which dominate their accounts: the Crown and the Church. It suggests that the chroniclers approached these concepts from markedly different angles, and indeed, that there was neither a consensus nor a common view of the Crown or the Church amongst the chroniclers, despite their supposed status as an elite and homogeneous group of clerks. Instead Chapter Two proposes that their readings of the Crown and Church depended heavily on factors such as the practical demands of their *domus*. It argues that though these concepts feature throughout the chronicles as the supports for community at multiple levels they

⁷⁶ For further discussion of the audiences of the chronicles, see below, 282–285.

⁷⁷ Jonathan Evans has argued that 'episodes' (events which may be considered in isolation from a wider sequence) were 'the primary macrostructural unit in medieval narrative', and that medieval narratives as a whole worked around a series of minor endings rather than one grand finale. Close analysis of these episodes both in the context of the wider narratives and on their own merits enables the historian to consider the contradictory opinions often held by chroniclers. Evans, 'Episodes in Analysis', 126, 127; Fleischman, 'On the Representation of History and Fiction', 283; H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 2nd ed, Cambridge Introductions to Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 4, 5.

⁷⁸ Marchant, *The Revolt of Glyndwr*, 9–13.

do not dictate how the chroniclers understood either the Crown and Church or the world at large.

Chapter Three develops the themes of Chapter Two and Chapter One, unpacking the experiences of the chroniclers and how these were expressed through the act of writing and representation. As part of this the chapter explores the disjunction between what the chroniclers wrote and what they experienced. It then broadens the scope from the pillars of the Crown and Church to a wider discussion of how the chroniclers experienced and represented communities on multiple levels: from their place within a textual environment to their experience of the *domus*. It argues that whilst chroniclers used similar themes in the depictions of communities they fluctuated, turning towards or away from communities depending on the episode.

Chapter Four draws on the ideas of community in Chapter Three to discuss aspects of the reportage of warfare in the chronicles. The chroniclers lived through a period in which warfare dominated the political landscape, from the Hundred Years War to the various internal English conflicts (especially under Richard II and Henry IV). This chapter discusses the functions of their writing in respect to warfare. It argues that the chroniclers' views of warfare show a significant independence from one another and were occasionally inconsistent even within the same text. Their reports of warfare have strong underlying themes of social commentary and suggest that many of them were engaging closely with contemporary events.

Chapter Five brings the thesis back round to consider the nature of the chronicles as pieces of literature within an era of public debate. It examines the audiences the chroniclers addressed and the apparent purposes for their works. This chapter turns back once more to the question of how the chroniclers related to the wider intellectual milieu. It draws together the themes of intellectual, social, and cultural history which run through the preceding chapters to argue that chroniclers were far more than part of a homogeneous group of traditional commentators. Instead, the chapter argues, their approach to comment, debate, and criticism demonstrates that they were a dynamic, idiosyncratic, and pluralistic collection of writers.

Chapter One

Intellectual and Professional Worlds

Introduction

This chapter seeks to answer a single question which defines the shape of this thesis: where did the chroniclers belong? It argues that the Latinate English clerks who wrote chronicles were part of multiple independent and yet intersecting groups. They were exposed to a range of contextual factors which formed multi-layered experiences. The diversity of their social, cultural, clerical, institutional, professional, intellectual, and educational contexts means that they were not a cohesive group.

The chronicles were written in diverse intellectual settings, but there were common factors which drew them together. From the traditional authorities, such as the Bible, to the ephemeral documentation of their period – which has previously been cited to support suggestions that authorities attempted to impose narratives on chroniclers – the chroniclers (as clerks) worked within a partially shared textual repertory. Although they obviously had differing levels of access to texts and in all probability had substantially different reading habits, there is an identifiable overlap, particularly in the contemporaneous newsletters, between them.

The chapter is divided into four sections. First, it briefly outlines the problems inherent in attempting to categorise the chroniclers will focus on the viability of categories such as ‘regular’ or ‘secular’ as a framework through which to understand the chroniclers’ experiences. This section argues that such categories are insufficiently nuanced. Second, it will offer a consideration of whether the chroniclers’ professional and institutional settings mean that the chronicles should be considered as formal historical writing, that is to say, whether their texts were written not only with the approval of their superiors but also with content that was sanctioned or even sponsored. As a corollary, it asks whether they can be considered to have written independently, whether for pleasure, their own education or the education of their fellows, as a fulfilment of their perceived duties, or as a matter of personal pride or an interest in historical material, for instance. These various impulses to independent intellectual activity are not exclusive and may work in combination with the obligations of an individual within their house. The *Liber Benefactorum* of St Albans appears to

be an official document produced for the abbey, but Thomas Walsingham's role in its creation does not preclude his personal interests in history spurring the *Chronica Maiora*. Third, the chapter brings these themes together and places the chroniclers within the intellectual context of the universities. It examines how the chroniclers experienced the universities as members of the regular or secular clergy (if they attended university at all). This section encapsulates how chroniclers were inexorably drawn together by certain experiences, while still remaining a deeply divided set of writers. The fourth, and final section, it briefly considers the chroniclers within the context of their shared textual bonds. It suggests that the chroniclers were drawn together by a shared textual repertory but also divided by the textual settings of their houses and professions.

The chapter lays out a key part of the foundation of the chroniclers' lives and most particularly their intellectual context. As many of the chroniclers were anonymous and most of what we know about them is from deductive and inductive reasoning, this context is essential to building a pattern with which to understand the grounding for their histories.

The Clerical World

The chroniclers discussed in this thesis were members of the clergy, but this categorisation is too simplistic. The clerical community was replete with complex identities. The primary distinction which has been drawn within the community of Latinate chroniclers has been between the regular and secular clergy.¹ This distinction was undoubtedly embedded in the structure of the Church. There was an evident difference between following a rule within a community and being part of the world at large. However, the duality of the division is misleading.

There are some benefits to dividing clerks into these categories. It positions clergy in relation to the lay world. Yet, regular clerks were not utterly removed from lay affairs, nor were the secular clerks. In theory, regular clergy were set apart from the world, yet they shared a common identity with their secular counterparts as priests. Ordained members of religious houses were

¹ In this study there are nineteen known chroniclers who are at least lightly touched upon. In several cases these chroniclers were at the same house, as in the case of the first and second chroniclers of the *Historia Vita et Regni Ricardi Secundi*. In total this thesis touches on three secular chroniclers and sixteen chroniclers from regular orders.

brought into close contact with the laity, particularly those in their locale. Though they lived within a community of the religious the regular clergy were often deeply involved with the lives of their tenants and neighbours. The secular clergy were part of the world, mingling with the laity without the structure of the rule or the day-to-day religious structure of their regular brethren.

The majority of clerks were unbeneficed. As a social group they filled many roles, from clerks of chancery to members of the Scriveners Company of London.² Lay clerks were able to marry and live as laymen for the most part.³ Of the chroniclers discussed in this thesis only Thomas Favent is likely to have been a lay clerk. There are significant differences between Favent's *Historia* and other contemporary Latin chronicles. Physically, the original manuscript exists in a roll rather than a codex.⁴ Gwilym Dodd has convincingly argued that Favent's *Historia* was written for a London audience, probably supporters of the one-time mayor John of Northampton who Favent exonerated whilst condemning his rival Nicholas Brembre.⁵ However, it remains a Latin historical text which explicitly appeals to the same didactic purposes as other chronicles.⁶ The implication is that Favent's position as a lay clerk in London led him to link his account to the interests of his most immediate possible patrons: the London merchant class.

Favent's position as a lay clerk in London is significantly different to the careers of other contemporaneous Latin chroniclers. Although even for regular clerks there was a customary career, not all ended up progressing to the same roles; social background and patronage could ensure that some would reach the top of the career path far faster than others. The religious houses themselves were substantially different from one another. A member of the regular clergy at a wealthy house, such as the Benedictine Westminster Abbey or St Albans, could enjoy a standard of living otherwise reserved for the nobility.⁷ However, regular clergy in small or poor priories such as the

² Linne R. Mooney and Estelle Stubbs, *Scribes and the City: London Guildhall Clerks and the Dissemination of Middle English Literature, 1375–1425*, Manuscript Culture in the British Isles (Woodbridge: York Medieval, 2013), 7–16.

³ George Shuffleton, 'John Carpenter, Lay Clerk', *The Chaucer Review* 48, no. 4 (2014): 435.

⁴ Oxford, Bodl., MS Bodley Rolls 9; Gwilym Dodd, 'Was Thomas Favent a Political Pamphleteer? Faction and Politics in Later Fourteenth-Century London', *Journal of Medieval History* 37, no. 4 (2011): 398.

⁵ Dodd, 'Was Thomas Favent a Political Pamphleteer?' 406.

⁶ See below, 278–281.

⁷ Barbara F. Harvey, *Living and Dying in England 1100–1540: The Monastic Experience* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 1.

Augustinian priory of Brooke in Rutland, where John Strecche was prior, could expect nowhere near the resources or quality of life of their richer brethren (though, as prior John Strecche's own standard of living would have been substantially above that of his subordinates).⁸ Furthermore, the variation in the size of the communities may have produced a substantially different sense of the *domus*. When first founded Brooke Priory was only intended for three canons, and by 1535 only the prior was a canon, there were merely eleven servants, and just eight individuals in possession of corrodies.⁹ Meanwhile at Westminster there were usually between forty and fifty monks.¹⁰ Thus, the term 'regular clergy' in the discussion of a group as varied as the chroniclers is misleadingly simplistic.

It is practically impossible to claim that there was a common experience for the three secular chroniclers discussed in this thesis.¹¹ Whilst the majority of secular clerks were unbeneficed Adam of Usk was a beneficed priest for much of his career and even aimed to join the episcopacy. He travelled and worked alongside regular clergy such as Philip Repyndon (c.1345–1424) abbot of St Mary of the Meadows Leicester.¹² He worked in the court of Archbishop Thomas Arundel (1353–1414) and in the papal court.¹³ These roles placed him at a remove from the majority of secular clerks without giving him the experiences of the regular clergy.

Adam's life was in large part defined by the patronage he received. Indeed, patronage features prominently in the context of both the secular and

⁸ William Page, ed., 'House of Austin Canons: Priory of Brooke', in *A History of the County of Rutland*, Vol. 1, British History Online (London: Victoria County History, 1908), 159–161, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/rutland/vol1/pp159-161>; James G. Clark, 'Introduction: The Religious Orders in Pre-Reformation England', in *The Religious Orders in Pre-Reformation England*, ed. James G. Clark, Studies in the History of Medieval Religion 18 (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002), 14.

⁹ Page, 'Priory of Brooke'.

¹⁰ William Page, ed., 'Benedictine Monks: St Peter's Abbey, Westminster', in *A History of the County of London: Volume 1, London within the Bars, Westminster and Southwark*, British History Online (London: Victoria County History, 1909), 433–57, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/london/vol1/pp433-457>.

¹¹ R. N. Swanson, 'Problems of the Priesthood in Pre-Reformation England', *The English Historical Review* CV, no. CCCCXVII (1990): 845–869.

¹² Simon Forde, 'Repyndon [Repington, Repingdon], Philip (c.1345–1424), bishop of Lincoln', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-23385>.

¹³ Jonathan Hughes, 'Arundel [Fitzalan], Thomas (1353–1414), Administrator and Archbishop of Canterbury', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-713>.

the regular chroniclers. Adam of Usk's allegiance to the Mortimer family and Thomas Arundel featured heavily in his chronicle. The author of the *GHQ* appears to have written because of his position as chaplain to Henry V.¹⁴ The patronage the chaplain received from the king seems to have sparked his interest in writing his narrative. Meanwhile, Adam's detailed account of his attempts to gain preferment and secure a better living placed patronage centre stage in his own account of his life.¹⁵

Drawing a hard and fast distinction between the secular and regular clergy is misleading because it does not recognise the permeability of the boundary between the two. For instance, both the regular and secular clergy were able to rise to the episcopacy. They encountered each other in multiple settings. They would have met in passing in parliament, at university, or as with Adam and Philip Repyndon whilst investigating heresy.¹⁶ Various experiences and activities were open to both secular and regular clergy, such as being members of the priesthood. Both Adam and the author of the *GHQ* were priests. The precise number of regular chroniclers who were ordained is uncertain. The anonymity of many of the chroniclers makes it impossible to make a definitive statement on how many were priests, but it is probable that most were. Rates of ordination for regular clergy rose in the fourteenth century, and although religious communities did not require every member to be a priest the vast majority were ordained.¹⁷ Barbara Harvey, in her study of Westminster Abbey, confirmed that the vast majority of those novices who professed as monks must have been ordained as there are records demonstrating that they said their First Mass within a few years of profession.¹⁸ Thomas Walsingham was, without doubt, an ordained priest, and although the records of their ordinations do not

¹⁴ Frank Taylor and John Smith Roskell, eds. and trans., *Gesta Henrici Quinti: The Deeds of Henry the Fifth*, Oxford medieval texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), xviii–xxviii.

¹⁵ Chris Given-Wilson, 'Usk, Adam (c.1350–1430), Chronicler', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004)

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-98>.

¹⁶ Adam of Usk, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk, 1377–1421*, ed. Chris Given-Wilson, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 120.

¹⁷ Virginia Davis, 'Rivals for Ministry? Ordinations of Secular and Regular Clergy in Southern England c.1300–1500', *Studies in Church History* 26 (1989): 99, 105.

¹⁸ Harvey particularly cites the example of seven of eight novices between 1435 and 1436 who were ordained within three to five years of their profession; there are also records showing that at least 231 monks of 279 of those professed between 1390 and 1529 were ordained. Harvey, *Living and Dying in England*, 118.

survive, the same is likely to be true of Henry Knighton and John Strecche.¹⁹ Among the reasons to conclude Knighton was a priest is that he owned a copy of a guide to proper conduct for priests.²⁰ This manual is part of an existing culture of priestly behaviour from which we can reason that there was common ground for priested chroniclers, but also that they were separated from their non-ordained confrères.

The distinction between secular and regular clergy was one layer of many into which clerical identity may be subdivided. John Taylor distinguished between the chroniclers by their respective orders. This thesis alone treats, however briefly, with eight Benedictines, two Augustinians, five Cistercians, three secular clerks, and one Franciscan. The rule imposed more than superficial identities on their members. Adherence to the rule entailed following a set of common guidelines and principles for life. The Benedictines, under the Rule of St Benedict, modelled their lives around a disciplined partnership, prayer and work, prescribing the virtues and values of the order and the path to humility.²¹ The governance of the order itself, in keeping with papal statutes, and the Benedictine chapters had a particularly significant effect on Benedictine life, and the chapters' call for permanent claustral lectors in 1243 and the papal canons of the *Summa Magistri* in 1336 reshaped the order's educational life.²² By contrast the Franciscans pursued the *vita apostolica*. They shunned material wealth and focused on theological scholarship.²³ It was only by the late thirteenth century, following the changes brought in from papal canons and the meetings of the chapters, that orders such as the Benedictines began once again to challenge Franciscan dominance in the universities. So, the rule followed by an order gave members of that order a shared experience, but it also meant that clerks from different orders had distinct perspectives on communal life.

¹⁹ G. H. Martin, 'Introduction', in *Knighton's Chronicle 1337–1396*, ed. and trans. G. H. Martin, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), lix.

²⁰ Daniel Thiery, 'Plowshares and Swords: Clerical Involvement in Acts of Violence and Peacemaking in Late Medieval England, c.1400–1536', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 36, no. 2 (2004): 202.

²¹ Saint Benedict and Timothy Fry, *The Rule of St Benedict in English* (Liturgical Press, 1982), 32.

²² James G. Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2011), 201.

²³ Carolly Erickson, 'The Fourteenth-Century Franciscans and Their Critics', *Franciscan Studies* 35 (1975): 107–135; Carolly Erickson, 'The Fourteenth-Century Franciscans and Their Critics: II. Poverty, Jurisdiction, and Internal Change', *Franciscan Studies* 36, no. 1 (1976): 108–147.

Clerical identity was, then, divided at many levels. It was, however, unquestionably connected to the possession of education. This was true to such an extent that learned individuals could be described as possessing *clergie*, or learning. A clerk, then, was inherently to be a man of learning.²⁴ Yet not all clerks were educated equally. The term 'burel clerk' appears in works by authors such as Geoffrey Chaucer and John Gower to denote poorly educated clerks.²⁵ It is a distinction which indicates yet another gulf within the clerical class.

The different intellectual and educational priorities of the regular orders complicated the picture. The Benedictines' programme of educational reform placed an emphasis on university education, though, as they were not permitted to follow the arts courses on logic and philosophy the programme of studies they developed was more closely related to the *trivium* (grammar, logic and rhetoric), the pre-scholastic tradition of the liberal arts and the study of classical material both in the *domus* and in the universities.²⁶ Meanwhile, the Cistercians were significantly less engaged with the universities. Instead they maintained a traditional pattern of education which placed a reduced emphasis on the transmission of texts.²⁷ These educational strata show that even the fundamental pillars of clerical identity were complex and shifting. The chroniclers, as members of this educated social group, were distributed throughout a rarefied society, but they were not necessarily concentrated within any one area of the society.

The complexities of the chroniclers' education only increase when university studies are figured into the problem. Secular and regular chroniclers attended university, and as Clark has observed university studies exposed regular clergy to the preoccupations of the secular clergy, though there were restrictions on the regular clerks' participation in the universities.²⁸ R. B. Dobson, in his examination of the place of the religious orders at the Oxford

²⁴ Gerald Morgan, 'The Logic of the Clerk's Tale', *The Modern Language Review* 104, no. 1 (2009): 2; Shuffleton, 'John Carpenter, Lay Clerk', 435.

²⁵ Shuffleton, 'John Carpenter, Lay Clerk', 435.

²⁶ James G. Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance at St Albans: Thomas Walsingham and His Circle, c. 1350–1440*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 4; James G. Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2011), 109.

²⁷ Clark, 'Introduction: The Religious Orders', 21; John Taylor, *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 18–20.

²⁸ James G. Clark, 'Monasteries and Secular Education in Late Medieval England', in *Monasteries and Society in the British Isles in the Later Middle Ages*, eds. Janet Burton and Karen Stöber (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2008), 150.

schools in the period, has argued that the attempts to increase the attendance of the various orders of regular clerks at university 'exposed the divisive rather than the co-operative forces within late medieval English monasticism and mendicancy'.²⁹ At Oxford the various orders achieved differing levels of success; the Benedictines, though promoting monastic study as an order, were perhaps hampered by the independence of their home institutions, which participated to a greater or lesser extent in university studies.³⁰ This in turn meant that certain houses, such as St Albans, Westminster, and Evesham, were disproportionately represented at Oxford.³¹ Whilst we can be certain that some such as Thomas Walsingham and Adam of Usk attended Oxford there is an absence of evidence in the cases of many others.³² The lively academic and intellectual life in universities was part of the conscious and inventive milieu of the chroniclers. It was essential to the formation of their habitus, to 'the mental structures through which they apprehend the social world'.³³ The universities offered the dialectic pattern of argumentation and thought which several of the chroniclers discussed in this thesis employed, if rarely with consistency.

Professional Historians?

There is no clear evidence that majority of the Latinate historical writers of the late fourteenth century were commissioned by patrons or superiors to write their chronicles. There are some examples of chroniclers, such as the anonymous author of the *GHQ* and Thomas Favent, who do appear to have written their histories for or at the behest of patrons, but they are in the minority. There were official and formal elements to the construction of the chronicles. To write a chronicle a monk or a canon required permission from their superiors. If anything, unless explicitly commissioned by a superior to write the need for a

²⁹ R. B. Dobson, 'The Religious Orders 1370-1540', in *The History of the University of Oxford: Volume II: Late Medieval Oxford*, vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1992), 539.

³⁰ Dobson, 'The Religious Orders 1370-1540', 547.

³¹ Dobson, 'The Religious Orders 1370-1540', 547.

³² Knighton and Strecche, for example, seem to have had connections at the universities, but there is no record of their attendance. These four represent a Benedictine, a secular priest, and two Augustinian canons respectively. Their attendance or lack of it at university highlights the overlap between regular and secular clerks as well as the significant separation in experience amongst the regular clergy.

³³ Pierre Bourdieu, 'Social Space and Symbolic Power', *Sociological Theory* 7, no. 1 (1989): 18.

chronicler to seek permission suggests that those who did so regarded their work as a pleasure rather than a chore.³⁴

In her discussion of what made chronicles in the thirteenth century 'official' in the same sense as cartularies and registers Antonia Gransden argued that they formed a convenient alternative to the abbey archives which she argued had by the thirteenth century already 'outstripped the ability to organize them'.³⁵ This is perhaps not an entirely accurate portrait of the late fourteenth-century archives though; as Dobson noted, by the end of the thirteenth century it had already become common for monastic communities to compile and preserve their archives carefully.³⁶ That the archives have come down to us in a haphazard and often patchy collection is not sufficient reason to believe that they were poorly organised at the time. So, characterising chronicles as a means to organise the archives is probably not commensurate with the monastic experience of record keeping. Certainly, those chronicles that included notices of lawsuits and acquisitions by the monastery provided a useful defence of the abbey's rights.³⁷ However, by the late fourteenth century, this was no longer the case. Fourteenth-century monastic chronicles broke from abbey-specific traditions and almost universally followed the *Polychronicon*. Although numerous documents were copied into the chronicles few of them were proofs of the house's rights. This lack of a formal rationale might explain why the chronicles of the late fourteenth century were only maintained over relatively short time frames, but alternatively it is likely that that the chronicles were maintained for only brief periods points towards the individuality of the texts and their position as personal rather than institutional works.

There were some differences between the traditions of historical writing practised by the religious orders.³⁸ The Benedictines with their well-stocked libraries and the emphasis on education – particularly after Benedict XII's (1285–1342) reforms in the *Summi Magistri* – were the authors of several of the lengthiest and most detailed chronicles, whereas the Cistercians, whose studies had been limited during the twelfth century, wrote, on average, shorter

³⁴ Martin, 'Introduction: Knighton', xxviii–xxix.

³⁵ Antonia Gransden, 'The Chronicles of Medieval England and Scotland: Part I', *Journal of Medieval History* 16 (1990): 136, 141.

³⁶ R. B. Dobson, 'The English Monastic Cathedrals in the Fifteenth Century', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 1 (1991): 153.

³⁷ Gransden, 'The Chronicles of Medieval England and Scotland: Part I', 136.

³⁸ Taylor, *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century*, 8–24.

chronicles (though as Taylor acknowledged there were exceptions such as the *Meaux Chronicle*).³⁹ Clark's recent chapter on Cistercian historical writing offers an alternative and more nuanced perspective of the white monks as part of a distinct historical tradition to that of the black monks.⁴⁰ The interest displayed by abbots and superiors, such as Thomas Burton of Meaux, amongst the Cistercians is suggestive of an emphasis on the importance of historical writing for administration of a foundation. As Clark has also demonstrated, the Cistercian booklists were not lacking in historical writing, from authors such as Henry of Huntingdon, Bede, and Eusebius.⁴¹ There is a distinction between the Cistercian and the Benedictine chronicles in the scope of their works. The chronicles of Westminster and St Albans exhibited an authorial interest in papal and international affairs. Walsingham delved into the running of the university at Oxford and detailed affairs as far afield as Poland.⁴² However, in large part this can be connected to the Benedictine monks from these institutions who were abroad, including, for instance, Adam Easton, who had close connections to Westminster Abbey even after he had become a cardinal in Rome.⁴³ The Cistercian chronicles, however, were much more heavily focused on affairs within England, or at least the interactions between England and its neighbours.

Several religious houses had a series of historical texts created, contributed to, and kept by their institutions, texts which would have been available to the monks, potentially even used to educate them as novices in their history of their abbey. In Westminster's case John of Reading had provided a continuation the *Flores Historiarum* up until the late 1360s, before the *Westminster Chronicle* was begun in the 1380s.⁴⁴ However, the Chronicler did not choose to continue John of Reading's work. Instead the Chronicler wrote

³⁹ Taylor, *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century*, 16, 18.

⁴⁰ James G. Clark, 'Cistercian Histories in Late Medieval England, and Beyond', in *Monastic Life in the Medieval British Isles: Essays in Honour of Janet Burton*, eds. Julie Kerr, Emilia Jamroziak, and Karen Stöber (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2018), 4–11.

⁴¹ Clark, 'Cistercian Histories in Late Medieval England, and Beyond', 7.

⁴² Thomas Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle: the Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham. 1376–1394*, eds. and trans. John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs, and Leslie Watkiss, Vol. I, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 902.

⁴³ R. Dobson, 'Easton, Adam (c.1330–1397), Benedictine Monk, Scholar, and Ecclesiastic', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-8417>.

⁴⁴ Barbara F. Harvey, 'Introduction', in *The Westminster Chronicle, 1381–1394*, eds. and trans. L. C. Hector and Barbara F. Harvey, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), xxxi–xxxii; T. F. Tout, 'The Westminster Chronicle Attributed to Robert of Reading', *The English Historical Review* 31, no. 123 (1916): 451.

a continuation of Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon* and John of Malvern's (d. c.1414) chronicles.⁴⁵ The change in the foundations of the text seems to mark a different intent, a separation from the continuity of the Westminster tradition. It is also noteworthy that the *Westminster Chronicle* was written on paper and lacks any rubrication or illumination, which may suggest that it was not intended as a formal display piece.⁴⁶ Though definitive proof is impossible, it suggests that the Westminster chroniclers wrote out of interest rather than in response to a formal diktat.

If we compare the *Westminster Chronicle* to its precursors at the abbey it becomes apparent that there were a number of different styles associated with the abbey. John of Reading's continuation of the *Flores Historiarum* was a terse and annalistic account of the twenty-year timeframe it spanned, which although it drew on Higden's *Polychronicon*, was a more annalistic work without the same level of detailed narrative.⁴⁷ In fact John of Reading declared it his intention not to follow the style of other chroniclers who inserted detailed accounts from newsletters into their narratives.⁴⁸ Richard of Cirencester (b. before 1340, d. 1400), a contender for the identity of the Westminster Chronicler, also wrote a work entitled *Speculum Historiale de Gestis Regum Angliae* (*SHGRA*).⁴⁹ The *SHGRA* was radically different in content from John of Reading's chronicle: an example of the form that centred on abbey history it dealt with the Saxon kings, and Westminster Abbey's history.⁵⁰ It included a detailed discussion of the foundation and charters pertaining to Westminster's rights and property.⁵¹ In the fifteenth century John of Reading, the authors of the *Westminster Chronicle* and Richard of Cirencester were followed by John Flete (c.1398–1466) and his *History of Westminster Abbey*.⁵² Flete drew on older

⁴⁵ John Taylor, 'Higden, Ranulf (d. 1364), Benedictine Monk and Chronicler', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004)

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-13225>.

⁴⁶ CCCC, MS 197A, pp.130–210

⁴⁷ John of Reading, *Chronica Johannis de Reading et anonymi Cantuariensis, 1346–1367*, ed. James Tait (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1914).

⁴⁸ John of Reading, *Chronica*, 8, 26, 33.

⁴⁹ Harvey, 'Introduction: Westminster', xxxi.

⁵⁰ Barbara F. Harvey, 'Cirencester, Richard (b. before 1340, d. 1400), Historian and Benedictine Monk', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-5422>.

⁵¹ Harvey, 'Introduction: Westminster', xxxii–xxxiii.

⁵² John Flete, *Flete's History of Westminster Abbey*, ed. J. Armitage Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909); Barbara F. Harvey, 'Flete, John (c.1398–1466), Prior and

Westminster-based histories, such as Sulcard's (*fl.* 1080), and used abbey documents including charters and papal letters.⁵³ Flete's lives of the abbots follow a formulaic pattern, suggesting he wrote with a particular understanding of how to write a history.⁵⁴ Flete described the burial places and effigies of the abbots, as well as Westminster Abbey's collection of relics.⁵⁵ His work was stylistically distinct from the *Westminster Chronicle* in several regards. It followed a single formulaic style and was focused solely on the abbey, whereas the Westminster chronicle had a much wider scope. Flete's history also stands out as a deliberate and focused history which openly builds on the historical tradition of the abbey. At the very beginning of the text Flete stated it was intended to satisfy churchmen's need to know the evidence for their rights and endowments; he then began to detail Westminster Abbey's foundation.⁵⁶

This range of historical texts at Westminster Abbey demonstrates that the monks were deeply interested in the history of their abbey. It also illustrates that they were acquainted with the abbey's existing historical material and archives and that these were kept in order during this period. Flete relied on Sulcard for the earliest section of the chronicle. He incorporated papal letters sent to the abbey as well as the abbey's charters, the records of the abbey's possessions, and records of the abbey's liturgical practices.⁵⁷ Richard of Cirencester similarly depended on abbey records. John of Reading's continuation of the *Flores Historiarum*, though most similar in form to the *Westminster Chronicle*, depended on the pre-existing abbey chronicle.⁵⁸ Together these texts suggest that the community of Westminster Abbey instilled a sense of its own history into its monks. The Westminster chroniclers, although they wrote a less institutionally based text must have been immersed in this context. They were first and foremost chroniclers from the abbey. Yet they had an eye to the more literary narrative of the *Polychronicon*.

Historian of Westminster Abbey', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-9743>.

⁵³ Harvey, 'Flete, John'.

⁵⁴ Harvey notes that Flete, 'includes details of the election of the abbot in question, his acquisitions of property, additions to the liturgical calendar, and other important acts, together with the date of death, the site of the tomb and the inscription'. Harvey, 'Flete, John'.

⁵⁵ Flete, *Flete's History of Westminster Abbey*, 22.

⁵⁶ Flete, *Flete's History of Westminster Abbey*, 33.

⁵⁷ Harvey, 'Flete, John'; Flete, *Flete's History of Westminster Abbey*, 12, 17.

⁵⁸ Richard of Cirencester, *Speculum historiale de gestis regum Angliæ*, ed. John E. B. Mayor (London: Longman, 1863), x.

The anonymity of the writers of the *Westminster Chronicle*, and many other chroniclers, means that we cannot determine their precise professional context. Even the relationship between Thomas Walsingham's historical writing and his professional life is unclear, though he is one of the best documented chroniclers. There is a significant overlap in interests between the two, and certain of his works appear to have been institutionally sponsored, but the evidence is insufficient to justify the assertion that Walsingham was only an official chronicler. Walsingham served as precentor and *scriptorarius* of St Albans, and prior of the dependent house of Wymondham for a time in 1394 before returning to St Albans.⁵⁹ He was thus amongst the upper echelons of the monastic community at St Albans. His positions may have been connected to his production of musical and classical treatises, both of which certainly reflect his role within the intellectual heart of the monastery. V. H. Galbraith speculated that the role of precentor and Walsingham's supervision of the construction of the new writing room for the scribes were connected to, and evidence of a role as an official or semi-official chronicler.⁶⁰ The textual evidence does suggest that Walsingham was deeply immersed in the official abbey records. His *Gesta Abbatum* was based in part on an intimate knowledge of the abbey records and the work of Matthew Paris in the thirteenth century as well as William Rishanger (c.1250–1312) in the fourteenth century.⁶¹ It was a history of the institution with potential benefits for St Albans as a record of the abbey's rights, privileges and history. And at the behest of the abbot he documented donations to the abbey in the *Liber Benefactorum*.⁶² At the very least, then, it is reasonable to say that Walsingham was actively involved in St Albans' official institutional historical writing.

However, correlation does not denote causation. If we consider Walsingham's position from the perspective of the abbey's intellectual culture, the case for the so called *Chronica Maiora* as an official work is less persuasive. The studies of the monks at St Albans were not limited to their formal roles.

⁵⁹ John Taylor, 'Walsingham, Thomas (c.1340–c.1422), Historian and Prior of Wymondham', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-28627>.

⁶⁰ James G. Clark, 'Thomas Walsingham Reconsidered: Books and Learning at Late-Medieval St. Albans', *Speculum* 77, no. 3 (2002): 838; V. H. Galbraith, ed., *The Saint Albans Chronicle: 1406–1420* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1937), xxxvii–xxxviii.

⁶¹ Clark, 'Thomas Walsingham Reconsidered', 832.

⁶² Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 114–115.

Abbot Thomas de la Mare, encouraged the scholarship of St Albans.⁶³ He supported attendance at the universities, both within the abbey and as head of the Benedictine chapter, and the intellectual freedom it brought with it.⁶⁴ James Clark has shown that by Walsingham's period the monastic graduates of Oxford who lived at St Albans 'enjoyed considerable freedom to pursue their own intellectual interests'.⁶⁵ Reading history was a common, informal pastime at St Albans, preferable to pursuits which might undermine the spiritual and moral character of the monks.⁶⁶ Walsingham, whether or not he had an official role as chronicler, was deeply interested in historical works from classical to contemporary authors. He was also extraordinarily well-versed in the abbey archives.⁶⁷ Thus, the intellectual context within which Walsingham was writing was already one which offered significant intellectual freedom. His roles as head of the scriptorium and precentor meant he was perfectly placed to indulge his love of history. Even if he had been chosen to act as chronicler for the abbey the depth and breadth of his knowledge should certainly indicate that if we were to confine our understanding of him to 'official chronicler' we would unduly dismiss his passion.

Whilst it is possible that Walsingham was a semi-formal chronicler his professional and personal context suggest that he wrote history for pleasure. Walsingham had a prodigious output of not only historical texts but also classical treatises and literary works.⁶⁸ He was well acquainted with a wide range of historical texts including contemporary chronicles, as well as being, as mentioned, incredibly well versed in the abbey records.⁶⁹ Seen situated in the midst of these documents it seems most plausible that the chronicle was the product of his own interests and though he wrote as a chronicler of St Albans rather than a private individual, we should not assume that the opinions he gave were not his own.

⁶³ James G. Clark, 'Mare, Thomas de La (c.1309–1396), Abbot of St Albans', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-18039>.

⁶⁴ Clark, 'Mare, Thomas de La'.

⁶⁵ Clark, 'Thomas Walsingham Reconsidered', 840–841.

⁶⁶ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 154–162.

⁶⁷ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 176–186.

⁶⁸ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 170–173, 186–195.

⁶⁹ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 181; Henry Thomas Riley ed., *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani*, Vol. II, Rolls Series (London: Longman, 1867).

The boundary between a formal chronicle and a personal chronicle was not always hard and fast. Regular chronicles had an independence in the composition of their narratives which led to distinct experiments with the historical narratives. Some blended institutional histories with other concerns. John Strecche, who composed his chronicle as both a canon at St Mary's Kenilworth and subsequently the prior of the small dependent house of Rutland, walked the line between these alternative forms of historical writing. Geoffrey Hilton asserted that the text 'is in the tradition of the monastic chronicle but does not match the standards of presentation and historical comment of chroniclers of earlier centuries' intended for the needs of St Mary's Priory Kenilworth.⁷⁰ However, Strecche's accounts of the priors of Kenilworth and the origins of the institution are typical of the foundation narratives which followed the lives of the leaders of communities and created a sense of continuity for the house.⁷¹

Yet, Strecche's account is not a single, homogeneous work. As a canon his work had required permission from his prior; as prior himself, he would have had more leeway (not that there is any sign that the prior of St Mary's imposed restrictions on him whilst he served as a canon in Kenilworth). The text which Strecche produced blurs the lines between institutional and national history. He melded the *Polychronicon* with the *Historia Regum Britanniae*, a history of Troy, and his own continuation running to the end of Henry V's reign. The inclusion of episodes such as the legend of Albia and the giants of Albion may represent a use of the *Brut* tradition as well as the *Polychronicon* tradition.⁷² Strecche's copy of the *Polychronicon* was heavily abridged and excluded most of the material which was not connected to the history of the kings of England. This abridgement suggests that though he used the *Polychronicon* as a source he did not intend to write a universal history. The more provincial focus of his history may be further demonstrated by his inclusion of a history of the priors of Kenilworth into this cycle of kings and nations.⁷³ The resulting text is a blend of the institutional 'gesta abbatum' type texts, such as Walsingham's and abbot

⁷⁰ Antonia Gransden, in her description of Strecche, noted his 'taste for good stories' and described him as a chronicler heavily influenced by secular writers. This assessment does not do justice to his concentration on the history of his priory. G. M. Hilton, 'The Chronicle of John Strecche and Its Place in Medieval Historical Records of England and Kenilworth Priory', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 85, no. 1 (2003): 34; Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England. 2, c. 1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 407–408.

⁷¹ Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages*, 6.

⁷² BL, Add. MS 35295, 230^r

⁷³ BL, Add. MS 35295, 250^r, 255^r

Thomas Burton of Meaux's (d. 1437) chronicle, and the national, semi-epic histories. Strecche did not hold to a single narrative structure throughout either. During book four, which covered the reigns of William I to Richard II, Hilton has counted 386 lines of 1099 (35%) devoted to the history of the priory.⁷⁴ Hilton has argued that the relatively light coverage of major national events in English history indicates that Strecche's priority was the priory's legacy.⁷⁵ Yet, the chronicle is preceded by romances and histories. The history of the priory is important, but it is not noticeably more prominent than the early history of the English and the formation of Britain.⁷⁶

If Strecche had to create the chronicle as a narrative to enhance the priory's reputation alone then these sections are not only superfluous but seem at odds to the main purpose. Instead, Strecche's chronicle appears to have been a half-way house between the institutionally uplifting and the entertaining. It is an unconventional and complex mixture of traditional formats for historical writing – and an indication that we should not apply the distinctions too rigidly.

The secular chroniclers are more easily divided between those with official and unofficial roles. Arguably these distinctions provide a core element of their mentality as producers of historical writing. Adam of Usk's chronicle is an extremely personal and quite unusual creation that he claimed that he wanted no one to read during his lifetime. In his will he bequeathed it to his family.⁷⁷

Adam's account functioned semi-autobiographically and featured many of his personal interests. For instance, there is a particularly high concentration of vatic material throughout the text. This included documents such as a long Flemish poem on the apocalypse.⁷⁸ The chronicle is in large part a detailed account of Adam's career and covers his days at Oxford, his service with the pope, and his return to England.⁷⁹ The trials and tribulations of his career featured prominently; for instance Adam recorded in detail how the prevalence

⁷⁴ This dropped to a mere five percent during Strecche's account of Henry V's reign, however. Hilton, 'The Chronicle of John Strecche', 29.

⁷⁵ Hilton, 'The Chronicle of John Strecche', 33.

⁷⁶ BL, Add MS 35295; Anne Curry, 'Strecche, John (fl. 1407–1425), Augustinian Canon, Historian, and Antiquary', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004). <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-50201>.

⁷⁷ Chris Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', in *The Chronicle of Adam Usk: 1377–1421*, ed. and trans. Chris Given-Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), lxxxiv.

⁷⁸ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 228–230.

⁷⁹ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction: Adam of Usk', lv.

of simony in Rome had impeded his advancement.⁸⁰ Archbishop Thomas Arundel's death was addressed in relation to Adam's hopes for promotion, which died with Arundel. Adam even included a dream in which the Archbishop personally said goodbye to him.⁸¹ In 1411 Adam received a royal pardon (for unspecified crimes), he described in his chronicle how

ad instanciam demum dicti domini et Dauid Holbech, magnifici uiri, regis gratiam per suas literas, ac ipsas Salopie proclamari, obtinui; et tunc illuc pedester antiquos uisitaturus amicos transiui. Duos ab eis equos et centum solidos gratanter habui; famulum condux; tamquam denuo natus, statum ante exilium aliquantulum refigurare incepi; ad partes proprias, per antiquos amicos et cognatos, promotos et alioquin per me non modice releuatos, ac debitores, et releuari sperans, accessi. Quos non solum ingratos, dum etiam obprobria incucientes, ymmo etiam, ne quid ab eis de proprio exigerem, meam ruinam appententes, repreei; illud uulgare quod 'non propter me sed propter mea alii dilecerunt', unde infortunia labente me neclexerunt.

(finally, however, at the request of the aforesaid lord [of Powis] and that of that excellent man David Holbache, I received royal letters of pardon, which I had proclaimed at Shrewsbury; whereupon I set out on foot to visit old friends there. They gave me two horses and a hundred shillings, for which I was grateful; so I hired a servant, and began slowly, like a man reborn, to rebuild the life I had led before my exile. I returned to my native country, among old friends and kinsmen, men for whom I had secured promotion, or had helped in other ways, or to whom I had lent money, hoping that they in turn might help me; but not only were they ungrateful and reproachful, they actively sought my ruin, so that I would not be able to claim from them anything that was rightfully mine; and I remembered the saying, 'they loved me not for myself, but for what I had;' and thus, when fortune deserted me, they shunned me).⁸²

It was a clearly personal account of the royal pardon in which he consistently used the first person and took swipes at his fair-weather friends as he defended his own reputation. Adam's description of his tribulations, the turn of the wheel of fortune that had brought him back to the beginning, is self-aggrandising. He

⁸⁰ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 160.

⁸¹ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 248.

⁸² Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 240, 242.

situated his experiences within national events and without any notable change in the representation of how important they were, positioning himself as an autobiographical narrator as well as a historical writer.

In cases where chronicles had a formal role the chroniclers often clearly demonstrated it, and often these accounts appear to have a more sharply focused agenda. The *Chronicle of Meaux*, by the Cistercian abbot Thomas Burton, might be considered within this category merely by virtue of its author's status. It certainly features a careful and deliberate institutional history laying out the historical foundations for the abbey.⁸³ The prime example is, however, the *GHQ*. Written by a royal chaplain as propaganda for Henry V it presents a view from the centre of the Lancastrian regime.⁸⁴ The chronicler recounted much of the text from an eyewitness perspective, and the authority of their role as a royal chaplain and a witness to Henry V's deeds supported the *GHQ*'s claim for accuracy. Throughout the account the author highlighted his proximity to events. He described himself as being in close proximity to the king and as being present in the baggage train with the other priests at the battle of Agincourt.⁸⁵ The account is probably accurate in such details, but the attention drawn to it asserts the chronicler's first-hand knowledge and thus his work's veracity.

The formal role of the *GHQ*'s author was also expressed in the form and style of the account itself. The *GHQ* was not a continuation of Higden's *Polychronicon*. It does not have a position within the tradition of universal histories. Instead it delivered a strictly limited account of Henry V's deeds from his coronation in 1413 to 1416 (avoiding his problematic youth).⁸⁶ Replete with scriptural references and a discourse on Henry V, it represented him as a holy, almost saintly, king. Covering this short period with repetitious implicit comparisons of Henry to Judas Maccabeus or Old Testament kings the author maintained a consistent tone and message.⁸⁷

⁸³ Chris Given-Wilson, 'Official and Semi-Official History in the Later Middle Ages: The English Evidence in Context', in *The Medieval Chronicle V*, ed. Erik Kooper (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2008), 86.

⁸⁴ Frank Taylor, 'Introduction', in *Gesta Henrici Quinti: The Deeds of Henry the Fifth*, eds. and trans. Frank Taylor and John Smith Roskell, Oxford medieval texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), xxiii.

⁸⁵ *GHQ*, 88.

⁸⁶ *GHQ*, 2, 180.

⁸⁷ *GHQ*, 146, 180.

The informal role of many chroniclers suggests that their agendas and positions were not derived from an official position and that they had a certain flexibility of perspective and expression. In contrast, Given-Wilson has suggested that regular chroniclers who held either official or semi-official roles were more compromised. He has argued that since the chroniclers were known about by authorities it is likely that news was directed towards them to establish 'official' records of events which aligned with governmental interests.⁸⁸ This theory presupposes that chroniclers were largely passive recipients of news. Gransden argued that 'a chronicler had little or no control over what or when news reached him, and had to impose chronological order on a miscellaneous collection of items arriving sporadically, sometimes after he had composed the relevant annal'.⁸⁹ Given-Wilson developed a similar argument, contrasting the degree of mobility of those members of the secular clergy who composed chronicles to that of the regular clergy in collecting evidence. He suggested that successive kings sought to supply chroniclers with a narrative which suited their dynasty's claims to legitimacy using the chronicles as evidence if not necessarily used for propaganda.⁹⁰

The theory does not fully acknowledge the agency of chroniclers or their contacts, including the abbots of their houses. Their access to archives and the houses' collections of histories was not under the close control of the government. Rather, clerks were often proactive in the consideration and accumulation of the records from which they created their chronicles.

Abbots and their convents were not passive in the collection of historical information. Many abbeys had a range of contacts. Dependent houses were in communication with the mother house, and properties such as the abbot of St Alban's hostel in London may have also helped feed information back to chroniclers. The Westminster chroniclers were barely a stone's throw from Westminster Hall, easily capable of gathering political gossip and accessing royal archives. Most abbots attended or sent a proxy to parliament themselves,

⁸⁸ Chris Given-Wilson, 'Official and Semi-Official History in the Later Middle Ages: The English Evidence in Context', in *The Medieval Chronicle V*, ed. Erik Kooper (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2008), 5.

⁸⁹ Antonia Gransden, 'The Chronicles of Medieval England and Scotland. Part II: The Composition of the "Contemporaneous" Annals of Chronicles, with Special Reference to the Chronicle of Bury St Edmunds', *Journal of Medieval History* 17, no. 3 (1 September 1991): 218.

⁹⁰ Demands that chronicles should be provided to the king to substantiate his claims occurred under Edward I, Edward III, and Henry IV. Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, 65–80; Given-Wilson, 'Official and Semi-Official History', 1–8.

which gave a monastic chronicler eyewitness sources of political events. Moreover, the monasteries were also major communal hubs, and the importance of travellers passing through the monastery's gates cannot be dismissed. News from multiple sources including the government and the papacy reached them. Eyewitness accounts from the sources passing through or their own experiences were an essential part of the information gathering of the chronicler. The Dieulacres chroniclers' account of the coup in 1399, Strecche's tale of how Henry V received news from France whilst in Kenilworth, or Walsingham's account of the Peasants' Revolt in St Albans (at which he was personally present) were all instances in which the chronicles benefited from first-hand accounts, and the regular chroniclers had links and communication networks throughout the kingdom.⁹¹ Government-based newsletters may feature prominently in several accounts, but their importance should not be overemphasised. While eyewitness accounts were especially prevalent in secular chronicles (the *GHQ*'s personal presence on the Agincourt campaign, or Adam of Usk's complaints about his own life stand out, for instance) regular chroniclers and secular chroniclers alike had an attitude to historical investigation which made them more than government spokesmen. They reacted to a far broader range of stimuli than a simple characterisation of them as official or semi-official record keepers would suggest.

While the chroniclers did often use the newsletters and pamphlets that circulated throughout the kingdom their use of them was not passive. Instead, their use of such texts represents an active engagement with the collection of historical documentation. The chroniclers who had less access to eyewitnesses naturally used these sources more frequently than those contemporaries who could quiz travellers or colleagues who had been present at events.⁹² However, this is not a sufficient basis upon which to claim that the chroniclers who used documentary evidence simply accepted the accounts delivered to them.

Such interpretation does not give sufficient credit to the chroniclers' judgement in the construction of a chronicle. Henry Knighton, who used over a hundred documents, quoting directly from many of them in the composition of his chronicle is a key example of how chroniclers actively selected accounts

⁹¹ Frank Taylor, 'The Chronicle of John Strecche for the Reign of Henry V, 1414–1422', *The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 16, no. 1 (1932): 145; Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 455.

⁹² Given-Wilson, 'Official and Semi-Official History', 4.

and documents. Given-Wilson remarked that Knighton at times did little more than 'provide the linking passages between one document and the next', and yet this only tells part of the story.⁹³ The majority of the chronicles were written at least months and often years after the fact. Knighton probably began writing his chronicle in approximately the late 1370s. He reported events as far back as 1337 in his continuation of the *Polychronicon*, Geoffrey Martin's assessment suggests that he drew on at least fifty-one newsletters, treaties and other sources for the first forty years of his chronicle.⁹⁴ Given-Wilson has argued that by the fourteenth century a chronicler was faced with a problem of selection, rather than collection, of documentary evidence.⁹⁵ Knighton's selection suggests that he purposefully drew on the most immediate accounts available to him. In which case he must be assumed to have done more than regurgitate texts as they arrived at his abbey. Instead he must, at the very least, have searched through the abbey archives to find these documents.

Furthermore, Knighton's chronicle shows more than a tendency to simply copy one useful document after another. He intermingled sources, drawing a narrative from multiple histories and even romances. After his foreword and explanation of the chronicle's purpose Knighton melded together texts such as a legend of *Guy of Warwick*, Walter of Guisborough's chronicle and Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*. He presented a text which, whilst formed from previous records demonstrates deliberate choice rather than a simple tendency to copy the first source to hand.⁹⁶ Chroniclers like Knighton were deliberately drawing on existing news to supplement their accounts. They also drew on other contemporary chronicles, reinforcing a tradition of historiographical absorption. The *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, for example, included long sections from Walsingham's *Chronica Maiora*.⁹⁷ This use of varied and selected sources is indicative of an active and critical engagement with historical writing by these chroniclers. It is also striking evidence of a shared historical textual environment as chronicles circulated amongst the religious houses and occasionally orders.

⁹³ Given-Wilson, 'Official and Semi-Official History', 4.

⁹⁴ Martin, 'Introduction: Knighton', xxxii–xl.

⁹⁵ Given-Wilson, *Official and Semi-Official History*, 3

⁹⁶ Martin, 'Introduction: Knighton', xvi; Henry Knighton, *Chronicon Henrici Knighton, vel Cnitthon, monachi Leycestrensis*, ed. Joseph Rawson Lumby (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1889), 25–26.

⁹⁷ George B. Stow, 'Introduction', in *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, eds. George B. Stow and Nicholas Herford (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), 12–20; G. B. Stow, 'Thomas Walsingham, John Malvern and the Vita Ricardi Secundi 1377–80', *Mediaeval Studies* 39 (1977): 490–497.

Knighton, Walsingham, and other chroniclers framed their accounts with emotive, entertaining, informative, and, crucially, carefully selected texts. They offered a synthesised rendition of history blended with their own critical input.

It is undeniable that the monastic chroniclers often copied documents written outside the monasteries and frequently ones disseminated by the government. However, the evidence for this dissemination of information on an official footing is flimsy. Given-Wilson has concluded that the proliferation of accounts of parliamentary affairs came from the clerks of chancery, though there is regrettably little evidence for how they reached the monasteries.⁹⁸ Information and documents could enter a monastery from multiple angles. It is perfectly possible that messengers passed the accounts on to religious houses, either to inform the house as a whole or in direct quizzing by semi-official recorders. Many chroniclers would have also had access to their abbots, who attended parliament and were present at various important events. News, books, and information circulated between monastic houses, but with no guarantee of passing from one to the next. Knighton's house, St Mary of the Meadows, had close connections to Leicester Castle. The castle was the seat of the dukes of Lancaster, from whom information undoubtedly flowed.⁹⁹ The point being that there was ample opportunity for official records to enter abbeys and priories through the many unofficial mechanisms by which documents commonly circulated in monastic communities. While it is justifiable to describe sections of the chronicles as 'semi-official' inasmuch as they passed on information from government sources these sections do not comprise the entire texts and they were not adopted with unthinking slavishness.¹⁰⁰

The secular chroniclers did not use their sources unquestioningly either. Their accounts suggest that they were concerned with the quality of the evidence and the veracity of their sources. The author of the *GHQ* explained that 'cuius transcripti tenorem reperies in alio libro inter evidencias regias et recorda' ('the tenor of this transcript you may find in another book amongst the royal evidences and records').¹⁰¹ Adam of Usk appealed to concepts of truthfulness and critical assessment. Adam was part of the council which considered the reasons for Richard II's deposition. During the council, Adam

⁹⁸ Given-Wilson, 'Official and Semi-Official History', 2–3, 6, 11.

⁹⁹ Martin, 'Introduction: Knighton', xxxii.

¹⁰⁰ See, 'Chapter One: Intellectual and Professional Worlds. A Textual Repertory', 71–75.

¹⁰¹ *GHQ*, 18, 8, 14, 56, 96.

explained, some of its members suggested the myth of Edmund Crouchback being the first-born son of Henry III as evidence that Henry Bolingbroke's claim was superior. However, he dismantled this claim:

ad istud, ecce quid historie P de Grw per totam Angliam, quod Edwardus primogenitus regis Henrici erat, et quod post ipsum, ante Edmundum, Margareta, postea regina Scocie, regi predicto nata fuerat. In cronicis fratrum predicatorum London' ita legi, 'Natus est Edwardus primogenitus regis Henrici apud Westm', quem Oto legatus baptizavit, libro septimo, capitulo uicesimo Quinto, anno Domini millesimo ducentesimo tricesimo nono.

As far as that idea is concerned, look at the pedigree in the histories throughout England, which says that Edward was the first-born son of King Henry, and that after him, and before Edmund, King Henry's next child was Margaret, later queen of Scotland. In the chronicles of the friars preachers at London, for example, I have read the following: 'Edward, the first-born son of King Henry, was born at Westminster and baptized by the legate Otto' – book 7, chapter 25, AD 1239.¹⁰²

Adam's assault on the Crouchback story relied on belief in accurate historical reportage. He offered an interpretation before criticising it with reference to the *Polychronicon*. This evaluation of material thus suggests that Adam may have considered his own role as historian as one of authoring an authoritative and critical account for future reference. In this instance he acted as an arbiter of the truth and addressed the question as a logical problem.

Secular clerks were evidently thinking critically, and the regular accounts were not mindless repetitions of government news. Based on the support present in many of the chronicles for Henry IV's coup it has been suggested that the chroniclers produced or caved to a dedicated propaganda campaign against the deposed Richard II.¹⁰³ However, whilst the Lancastrians do appear to have been extremely successful at propagating an initially positive image, not all regimes managed to do likewise. Neither is it certain that chroniclers continued to accept the Lancastrian narrative. Knighton, Walsingham, the

¹⁰² Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 64, 65.

¹⁰³ Paul Strohm, *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation 1399–1422* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 2–3; Jenni Nuttall, *The Creation of Lancastrian Kingship: Literature, Language and Politics in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

Dieulacres Chronicle, and the *Continuatio Eulogii* all criticised the actions of the ruling monarch.¹⁰⁴

During Richard II's reign Walsingham was often acerbic and frequently bluntly criticised the king. In 1384 a friar relayed to the king the news of a supposed plot by John of Gaunt (1340–99) the duke of Lancaster to the king. Walsingham lambasted Richard for failing to consult his lords or wise men and for turning instead to the priests of his chapel.¹⁰⁵ Walsingham stated that 'hiis auditis, rex puer non dominos, non pares regni, seu qui sensu uigebant in regno, set consuetos consiliarios suos, duos uidelicet capelle sue clericos, Nicholaum Slake et quemdam alium' ('when the boy king heard this, it was not the lords, nor the peers of the realm or those who had the most wisdom in the realm whom he met to consider this business, but those of his counsellors closest to him, two clerks of his chapel, Nicholas Slake and one other').¹⁰⁶ Walsingham's critique of Richard here highlighted the inability of a child to rule effectively. Listing the groups to whom the king should have turned established the folly of his decision. The incident ended well, for the king and John of Gaunt. They settled their differences. The friar was less fortunate and was tortured to death. Walsingham's description of events highlighted questions of good and wise rule, in which he appeared to be sitting in judgment on the king's actions. So, although he may at times have incorporated news which originated from the Crown, it would be reductive to describe him as simply a semi-official chronicler for the government. During this episode he seems to have located himself as an objective and external narrator, commenting upon events.

Perhaps to avoid risking Henry IV's wrath Walsingham revised his chronicle to excise criticisms of John of Gaunt. Though such revisions demonstrate an awareness of the potential for royal censorship this does not indicate that Walsingham's chronicle can be regarded as a piece of even indirectly government-sponsored writing. Censorship indicates a concern on the part of the censoring party with the text or object produced by the creator. It does not follow that a censored individual, or one who self-censors, is a

¹⁰⁴ See below, 57–58; Henry Knighton, *Knighton's Chronicle 1337–1396*, ed. and trans. G. H. Martin, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 360; Frank Scott Haydon, ed., *Eulogium (Historiarum Sive Temporis): Chronicon ab orbe condito usque ad annum Domini M.CCC.LXCI., a monacho quodam Malmesburiensi exaratum; accedunt continuationes duæ, quarum una ad annum M.CCCC.Xiii., altera ad annum M.CCCC.XC. perducta est* (London: Longman, 1858), 389–393; Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 702.

¹⁰⁵ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 722.

¹⁰⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 722.

mouthpiece for the censors. Walsingham's critiques and his perception of the need for revisions suggest that he was able to write largely at his own discretion. Walsingham's most likely censors would not have been the government or the agents of the Crown but his own monastic superiors. Given that he held an important position in the St Albans' hierarchy there were not a great number of these. The censorship in relation to John of Gaunt may also, of course, relate to Gaunt's patronage of St Albans as recorded in the *Liber Benefactorum*, although it cannot be tied to the dates when the *Chronica Maiora* was corrected.¹⁰⁷ In any case, neither Walsingham nor chroniclers like him can be described as proxy spokesmen for the government, though the internal politics of their own abbeys cannot be ignored and the relationship between the superiors and external figures including the king could be reflected in the chronicles.¹⁰⁸

Only two chroniclers discussed in this thesis served the Crown directly: Adam of Usk (who cannot be considered even to have been a semi-official chronicler for the Crown) and the anonymous chaplain who wrote the *GHQ*. Also, among the regular chroniclers were some with close informal connections to the Crown. The Westminster chroniclers lived barely a stone's throw from Westminster Hall and events in parliament. The *Dieulacres Chronicle* was well positioned to receive news on the coup in 1399. John Strecche was in a privileged position as canon of the Priory of St Mary in Kenilworth, located just below Kenilworth Castle where Henry V often stayed. However, the regular chronicles were not in service to the Crown. Their relationships with the government gave at least some access to official documentation. In the case of the Westminster chroniclers and Strecche they would have had access to eyewitness accounts of occurrences. The Westminster chroniclers included numerous reports and articles from parliamentary proceedings, most notably from the 'Process' of the Merciless Parliament in 1388. Though their chronicle also contains a more personal narrative of the discussions between the appellants, Westminster had close links to parliament.¹⁰⁹ John Scarle, clerk of parliament for much of the period covered by the chronicler, received a pension

¹⁰⁷ James G. Clark, 'Monastic Confraternity in Medieval England: The Evidence from the St Albans Abbey Liber Benefactorum', in *Religious and Laity in Western Europe, 1000-1400*, Vol. 2, Europa Sacra 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 323.

¹⁰⁸The impact of these internal politics on works like the *Westminster Chronicle* which do not appear in presentation copies is still more uncertain. See above, 27.

¹⁰⁹ *Westminster Chronicle*, 236–306, 328.

from the abbey. Occasionally the Commons met within the monastic precinct.¹¹⁰ The Westminster chroniclers were positioned close to the heart of governmental affairs. To a degree they were outsiders, but, since the abbey as a community had vested interests in the running of the realm, they had an agenda of their own. The link between their connections to the corridors of power and the abbey's interests highlights the tensions inherent in their role as chroniclers. They were not solely part of the monastic regular world. Nor were they insiders in the same sense as the author of the *GHQ*, whose professional and personal life was so intimately entwined with the Crown.

The weight of evidence suggests that most chronicles, although embedded within a professional context, were more personal than official. The chroniclers were self-aware in their selection of accounts, episodes, and documents. Despite the fact that many came from the same order and some came from the same institution they displayed a great deal of intellectual independence.

The Graduate World

The chroniclers' diversity as writers owed much to their varied educational context. The Benedictines and Augustinians were increasingly exposed to the literary and argumentative theories and techniques of the universities as the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries progressed. There is evidence that the universities had an appreciable effect on historical writers, not only encouraging a dialectic turn of argument but also promoting a common textual and linguistic culture.

The influence of the universities upon the chroniclers was questioned by John Taylor. Taylor argued that 'in considering the conceptual background of chronicle writing some mention should be made also of the literary theory developed at the schools and universities'.¹¹¹ He posited, however, that graduates and non-graduates alike were influenced by these factors and that university educations had no appreciable effect upon chroniclers.¹¹² Taylor's theory characterised the chroniclers – university educated or not – as a fundamentally indistinguishable caste. Yet, at the very least, there is evidence

¹¹⁰ Harvey, 'Introduction: Westminster', xlvi–xlvi.

¹¹¹ Taylor, *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century*, 29, 5.

¹¹² Taylor, *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century*, 29, 5.

that the clerks who went to university were aware of the textual and oral traditions of those institutions. The issue is clouded by the interlocking factors already discussed that could lead to differences or similarities between clerks who might otherwise be expected to share views or interests.

The chroniclers were more likely to have attended university, and the Oxford schools in particular, than were the majority of regular or secular clerks in the period. In the largest of Benedictine foundations one monk in twenty was expected to study at university.¹¹³ Out of the nineteen chroniclers upon whom this study touches, four were educated at university without a doubt: Thomas Walsingham, William Wintershill, Thomas Elmham, and Adam of Usk (two Benedictines from the same house, one Augustinian, and a secular clerk respectively).¹¹⁴ The author of the *Continuatio Eulogii* was probably also a university scholar.¹¹⁵ Additionally Harvey has proposed that the first author of the *Westminster Chronicle* quite probably attended university.¹¹⁶ Although whether Prior Nicholas Herford (*fl.* 1352–1392) – the most probable first author of the *Vita Ricardi Secundi* – also attended university is unknown, the monks of Evesham were thoroughly connected to university culture and he himself left a large collection of texts to the abbey on his death, which suggests he was likely to have interacted with university culture.¹¹⁷ So, the chroniclers were, as a group, statistical outliers amongst the monastic community.

In the *Continuatio Eulogii*, written in the early 1400s, the Franciscan author criticised Richard II for his tyranny. The chronicler went on to chastise Henry IV for his treatment of the Franciscan friars.¹¹⁸ The chronicler described a conversation between the Franciscan Roger Frisby and Henry IV over the king's

¹¹³ Léotard Alban, 'The Benedictines at Oxford 1283–1539', in *Benedictines in Oxford*, eds. Henry Wansbrough and Anthony Margett-Crosby (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., 1997), 21.

¹¹⁴ Taylor, 'Walsingham'; Given-Wilson, 'Usk'; S. E. Kelly, 'Elmham, Thomas (b. 1364, d. in or after 1427) Historian and Prior of Lenton', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-8734>; Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 43; Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England. 2, c.1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 344–350.

¹¹⁵ Taylor, *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century*, 20–21.

¹¹⁶ Harvey, 'Introduction: Westminster', xxxii–xlili.

¹¹⁷ David Cox, *The Church and Vale of Evesham, 700–1215: Lordship, Landscape and Prayer* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2015), 206; Stow, 'Introduction', 3–4.

¹¹⁸ Chris Given-Wilson, 'Henry IV and the Friars: Speaking Truth to Power', Leeds International Medieval Congress (2018) [Unpublished]; George B. Stow, 'The Continuation of the Eulogium Historiarum: Some Revisionist Perspectives', *English Historical Review* 119, no. 482 (2004): 667–881; G. B. Stow, 'Richard II in the "Continuation Eulogii": Yet Another Alleged Historical Incident?', in *Fourteenth Century England V*, ed. Nigel Saul (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2008), 116–129.

right to the throne. In it Frisby maintained that, were Richard still alive he would be the rightful king.¹¹⁹ The argument recorded is arguably an assault upon Henry's legitimacy, though the chronicler also lambasted Richard II in other episodes, which shows the political disjunction present in his account. The attack on both kings highlights anything but an acceptance of the government's official version. The passage, which is framed as a discussion between the king and the friar, is reminiscent of the format of a university debate: each side presents a proposition and defends it in a questioning style.¹²⁰

Et dixit Rex magistro: 'Isti sunt fatui et idiotae, nec legere sciunt nec intelligunt. Tu deberes sapiens esse, dicis tu quod Rex Ricardus vivit?' Magister respondit: 'Non dico quod vivit, sed dico si vivit ipse est verus Rex Angliae.' Et Rex opposuit, dicens: 'Ipse resignavit.'

And the king said to the master: 'These others are buffoons and idiots, they are unable to read and are not intelligent. You ought to possess wisdom, do you say that King Richard lives?' The Master responded: 'I do not say that he lives, but I say that if he lives he is the true king of England.' And the king opposed him, declaring: 'He abdicated.'¹²¹

The debate between the two continues and ends with the master's implied victory.¹²² In the discussion the master and king through imbalanced in power challenge one another repeatedly. The investigative, even dialectic, element of the discussion and the critical discussion of Henry IV's right to the throne are not flattering to the regime. The chronicler proved a point in a fashion demonstrative of his university background and possibly suggested an intellectual superiority to the non-university educated king.

The textual evidence for the chroniclers' participation in university culture is rarely this clear. There are some instances where the chroniclers directly acknowledged their relationship to university. Adam of Usk, a doctor of canon law, directly referred to his time at the University of Oxford on several occasions. Adam claimed that during the riots between 1388 and 1389 in which the Northern students and the Welsh came into conflict he had been a leader of the Welsh party.¹²³ He explained details of how the Welsh students, supported

¹¹⁹ Haydon, *Continuatio Eulogii*, 389–93.

¹²⁰ Haydon, *Continuatio Eulogii*, 390–93.

¹²¹ Haydon, *Continuatio Eulogii*, 391.

¹²² Given-Wilson, 'Henry IV and the Friars'.

¹²³ Given-Wilson has suggested that Adam claimed a rather more significant role than the one he actually played. Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 14–16.

by Merton Hall forced the Northerners back to their lodgings.¹²⁴ On this occasion Adam clearly situated himself within the concerns and culture of Oxford, although he subdivided that culture.

Thomas Walsingham also displayed an interest in the politics and internal affairs at Oxford in his chronicle.¹²⁵ He discussed the reaction of the university to John Wyclif in particular.¹²⁶ His criticism of the University of Oxford for allowing Wyclif's opinions air was particularly keen and sorrowful. He wrote, 'Pudet recordacionis tante imprudencie, et ideo supersede in huiusmodi materia immorari; ne maternal uidear ubera decerpere dentibus, que dare lac, potum sciencie consueuere' ('I am ashamed to recall such folly, and therefore refuse to dwell on such matters, lest I should appear to be biting my mother's breasts which have always given her milk as the food of knowledge').¹²⁷ The personal reflection on his own connection to Oxford highlights the links between the St Albans' chronicler and the culture of the universities. A connection, which as Clark has pointed out, Walsingham stressed in *De dignitate et prioritate nigrorum monachorum*, in which he claimed a role for the Benedictines in the foundation of Oxford.¹²⁸

Though the links between most chroniclers and the universities were not as explicitly stated by the authors there is good reason to believe that they were connected to the university's intellectual tradition. The dialectic method, which had re-arisen in the fourteenth century, rarely appears clearly in the chronicles, though it may underpin some episodes.¹²⁹ Henry Knighton, although not explicitly engaging in the dialectic style, was aware of and had experience of heterodox preaching and lessons from clerks educated at Oxford, and was closely acquainted with some such as Philip Repyndon.¹³⁰ The debate between Henry IV and Roger Frisby in the *Continuatio Eulogii*, discussed earlier in this chapter, is the clearest instance of the dialectic style in the chronicles. Each party offered a reasoned argument in an attempt to establish the truth of the matter. It is feasible to construe certain sections of Walsingham's chronicle as belonging to the same tradition. For instance, Walsingham presented Wyclif's

¹²⁴ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 14–16.

¹²⁵ Clark, 'Thomas Walsingham Reconsidered', 840.

¹²⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 602.

¹²⁷ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 176.

¹²⁸ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 62.

¹²⁹ Eleonore Stump, *Dialectic and Its Place in the Development of Medieval Logic* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), 67.

¹³⁰ Martin, 'Knighton'.

conclusions on several occasions before presenting the reasons to condemn Wyclif as a heretic – though Walsingham used aggressive condemnation as well as reason to condemn Wyclif.¹³¹

Earlier education would have provided a similar background in areas such as grammar. Almonry schools and grammar schools delivered a non-homogeneous but fairly comparable educational foundation in late medieval England. There were no universally circulated teaching materials, but the schoolboys would have encountered many similar and often the same texts.¹³² By the fourteenth century the books used for teaching subjects such as grammar were increasingly contemporary, and Nicholas Orme has argued that thirteenth-century poetry was edging out the classical Latin poems previously used.¹³³ Those chroniclers who entered religious orders would have been expected to have at least been literate in Latin. They would have completed a basic schooling in grammar prior to entering orders. Some clerks who were not sufficiently educated required dispensations to enter monasteries or were refused entry.¹³⁴ Once boys entered monasteries the informal educational values and material of the houses began to diverge further.

Learning was an integral part of the clerical context. Admittance to prestigious monasteries demanded a high level of learning from applicants.¹³⁵ There was a steady call amongst the clergy for well-educated clerics.¹³⁶ Bishop Thomas Brinton of Rochester (*d.* 1389) criticised those clergy who he considered ignorant and unworthy on more than one occasion.¹³⁷ His attitudes were at one with a series of educational reforms which had been sweeping through the established regular clergy since the thirteenth century. The thirteenth century had seen the rise of the Dominican and Franciscan Friars.

¹³¹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 584–602.

¹³² Jo Ann Hoepfner Moran, *The Growth of English Schooling, 1340–1548: Learning, Literacy, and Laicization in Pre-Reformation York Diocese* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 21–26.

¹³³ Nicholas Orme, *Education and Society in Medieval and Renaissance England* (London and Ronceverte: Hambledon Press, 1989), 11.

¹³⁴ Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Schools: From Roman Britain to Renaissance England* (New Haven, Conn.; London: Yale University Press, 2006), 267; Joan Greatrex, 'The Scope of Learning within the Cloisters of the English Cathedral Priories in the Later Middle Ages', in *Medieval Monastic Education*, eds. G. Ferzoco and Carolyn Muessig (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 2000), 43.

¹³⁵ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 56–57.

¹³⁶ Greatrex, 'The Scope of Learning', 41.

¹³⁷ Thomas Brinton, *The Sermons of Thomas Brinton, Bishop of Rochester, 1373–1389. Volume II.*, ed. Mary Aquinas Devlin, Vol. 2, Camden Society 3rd Series, Vol. 86 (London: R.H.S., 1954), 416, 499.

Both orders were, from their inception, closely linked to the universities. In response to the intellectual challenge posed by the friars to their scholarly pre-eminence the Cistercians and Benedictines and Augustinians attempted to restore their former scholastic standing. Under Pope Benedict XII all three orders underwent a series of reforms which emphasised intellectual pursuits.¹³⁸ These reforms were instrumental in producing the high numbers of chroniclers who attended university.

The regular clergy's reforms did not create a single educational framework. Whilst formal university education became more common amongst them the chroniclers were not homogenised by it. The religious orders followed different educational philosophies. Members of most Augustinian and Benedictine houses could study either ecclesiastical law or theology at university, but the Cistercians were only permitted to study theology.¹³⁹ These differences were exacerbated by the structural difference between the orders: Cistercians operated as an international order, but the Augustinians and Benedictines were organised on a national basis and as such the latter orders formulated their response to the need for education on a national rather than an international basis.¹⁴⁰ On the level of their historical writing the implications of this are uncertain. It may offer a reason for the disconnection observable in many of the Benedictine and Augustinian chronicles between the English and international Church.

The Benedictines were the most significantly affected of the three orders, and the order which developed the closest links to the universities. The Benedictine Constitutions of 1277 and 1336 had been filled with educational reforms. They also had an established a college at Oxford long before their Augustinian or Cistercian counterparts.¹⁴¹ There were further distinctions between the orders as the Benedictine's studies at the universities were distinctly different from those of the other orders. As Clark has demonstrated, their training 'owed more to the traditional conception of the liberal arts, the

¹³⁸ Cistercians, *Fulgens Sicut Stella* (1335); Augustinians, *Ade Decorem Ecclesie* (1339), Benedictines, *Summi Magistri* (1336), Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 270; Joan Greatrex, 'Monk Students from Norwich Cathedral Priory at Oxford and Cambridge, c. 1300 to 1530', *The English Historical Review* 106, no. 420 (1991), 556.

¹³⁹ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 268–270; Clark, 'Monasteries and Secular Education', 148; Martin Camargo, 'The Late Fourteenth-Century Renaissance of Anglo-Latin Rhetoric', *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 45, no. 2 (2012): 109.

¹⁴⁰ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 271.

¹⁴¹ Alban, 'The Benedictines at Oxford 1283–1539', 20.

trivium and the *quadrivium*, than it did to the speculative culture of the fourteenth-century schools'.¹⁴² Although they were not entirely removed from the usual studies their integration both intellectually and physically in university life was limited as many were not permanently resident at the universities.¹⁴³

The Augustinians in England were less involved in the universities than their counterparts in France, where the Augustinians had had many members in attendance at the University of Paris since the thirteenth century. It was not until 1325 that they entered the English universities.¹⁴⁴ The completion of an Augustinian college at Oxford in the 1520s placed their permanent residence there almost two and half centuries after the foundation of the Benedictine Gloucester College in 1283.¹⁴⁵ Although not as involved in the universities as the Benedictines, the Augustinians were at least looking inwards from the perimeter and could engage with various facets of the textual environment of the universities.

The clergy's interaction with the universities was partially determined by the standards and interests of their houses. The premier intellectual hub for the Benedictines in England was St Albans, which outshone major houses such as St Mary's York and Westminster Abbey in its involvement with the universities.¹⁴⁶ This was partially because the abbeys' priorities differed. The monks of Westminster were, for example, occupied with the commemorative duties of the abbey.¹⁴⁷ The historical literature of Westminster, as has been discussed, emphasised the relationship between the abbey and the monarchy. Their works suggested a continual concern with their duties as the church of the king. St Albans put scholarly pursuits first, both internally and externally. Between 1335 and 1476 the abbot of St Albans led the Benedictine general and provincial chapters. Abbot Thomas de la Mare spearheaded the educational reform of the English chapter.¹⁴⁸ Thomas de la Mare's promotion of the

¹⁴² James G. Clark, 'University Monks in Late Medieval England', in *Medieval Monastic Education*, eds. G. Ferzoco and Carolyn Muessig (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 2000), 62; Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 147.

¹⁴³ Clark, 'University Monks in Late Medieval England', 57.

¹⁴⁴ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 271; Alban, 'The Benedictines at Oxford 1283–1539', 20.

¹⁴⁵ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 271.

¹⁴⁶ Barbara F. Harvey, 'A Novice's Life at Westminster Abbey in the Century before the Dissolution', in *The Religious Orders in Pre-Reformation England*, ed. James G. Clark (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002), 66.

¹⁴⁷ Harvey, *Living and Dying in England*, 24–30.

¹⁴⁸ In 1363 Thomas de la Mare had reprimanded the superiors of Benedictine for not sending the required number of monks to university, See Alban, 'The Benedictines at Oxford 1283–1539', 22; Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 10.

scholarly endeavours of St Albans left it one of the most intellectually engaged and productive of the Benedictine houses in England. If we are to look for factors which fostered the complexity and range of Walsingham's *Chronica Maiora*, this exceptional support for intellectual pursuit has an obvious claim to pride of place.

The distinction between Westminster Abbey's relationship with the universities and St Albans's relationship with them is readily apparent in the chronicles. Walsingham was deeply concerned with the business of the universities. His preoccupation found expression in his discussion of John Wyclif's career. During the 1370s and 1380s Wyclif challenged the established social position of the clergy.¹⁴⁹ The Benedictines as an order were Wyclif's most proactive opposition. They lead the charge to dispute with heterodox preachers, and St Albans was at the heart of the anti-Wyclif movement.¹⁵⁰

Walsingham's attacks against Wyclif, as mentioned above, appear frequently throughout the chronicle, often demonstrating close links to the University of Oxford. Indeed, his criticisms were often connected to the moral and intellectual condition of the universities. Walsingham's interest in Wycliffism was directly tied to his university connections and the academic theologians of St Albans whom he counted amongst his colleagues. These theologians participated in preaching against Wyclif's arguments.¹⁵¹ When first addressing the beginning of Wyclif's time on the public stage Walsingham stated that Wyclif was a 'pseudotheologum' ('false theologian').¹⁵² He claimed that John of Gaunt had hired this 'uerum theomachum' ('true adversary of God') to help him destroy the liberties of the Church.¹⁵³

Walsingham drew a line between the educated opponents of Wyclif and his uneducated adherents. He stated that 'qui profecto nullius argumentis, nulla scientia a Deo fulciebatur, et floruit, ut opinions suas probibiles demonstraret,

¹⁴⁹ Anne Hudson and Anthony Kenny, 'Wyclif [Wycliffe], John [called Doctor Evangelicus] (d. 1384), Theologian, Philosopher, and Religious Reformer', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-30122>.

¹⁵⁰ W. A. Pantin, 'A Benedictine Opponent of John Wyclif', *The English Historical Review* 43, no. 169 (1928): 73–77; Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 1–2, 247.

¹⁵¹ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 239–253; James G. Clark, 'Introduction', in *The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham 1376–1422*, trans. David Preest (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2005); for further discussion of Walsingham's association with Oxford see below, 182–184.

¹⁵² Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 74.

¹⁵³ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 74.

set sola compositione uerborum, que satis eructauit. Vnde intricauit minus doctorum aures audientium, et uentos pauit inaniter sine fructu' ('Wyclif certainly received no divine proof or knowledge to support his arguments, and though he was successful in showing that his views were plausible, this was only because of the eloquence of the words which he frequently gave vent to. Hence, learned men were less affected by what they heard him say, and his words cast to the wind were fruitless and unsuccessful').¹⁵⁴ He applied principles of proof and argument that were common in the universities. He returned to this theme of appearance over substance later and explained that when the Wycliffites were brought before the archbishop of Canterbury and a council of masters they were eventually forced to concede Wyclif's conclusions were heretical.

Qui tandem post multas tergiuersaciones, imponendo duplicem sensum in eisdem, et cauillaciones diuersas, coacti sunt, licet inuiti, simplicieter proferre sentire suum de premissis, facta prius protestacione quod uellent et intenderent esse humiles et fideles filii, et ecclesie in omnibus obedire, etc.

(After they had indulged [*sic*] in much shilly-shallying and had expressed themselves equivocably [*sic*] on those matters by various sophisticated arguments, they were forced to state simply, though they did it reluctantly, what they felt about those statements [Wyclif's Conclusions], protesting first that they were willing and intended to be contrite, faithful sons of the Church, and to obey it in all things, and so on.¹⁵⁵

Walsingham drew attention to Oxford's relationship with Wyclif, condemning the chancellor for entrusting preaching to Wyclif's followers.¹⁵⁶ He criticised Wyclif's position for not only its content but also the superficiality of the arguments defending it, which he suggested failed to stand up under pressure. Walsingham's dismissal of Wyclif as a false theologian contributed to a condemnation of the Conclusions as a poor piece of scholarly work. It undermined Wyclif's academic credentials. His critique bears the hallmarks of a perspective entwined with the academia of the universities, stressing the importance of arguments that were not only persuasive but also backed by

¹⁵⁴ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 76.

¹⁵⁵ Walsingham, *St Albans Chronicle*, I: 604.

¹⁵⁶ Walsingham, *St Albans Chronicle*, I: 602.

reliable evidence. Thus, Walsingham situated himself in the scholarly, argumentative intellectual setting of the universities.

By comparison, Westminster Abbey – though members of its community went to university – was far less engaged with the business of the university. The Westminster chroniclers left out university business and theological concerns. Their note of Wyclif's death read simply, 'in die Sancti Stephani magister Johannes Wyclif subito arreptus paralisi diem clausit extremem; qui multa heretica et perverse in ecclesia Dei, ut placeret hominibus non Deo, nequiter seminavit' ('on St. Stephen's Day [26 December] Master John Wycliffe was suddenly seized by paralysis and ended his days. With the aim of pleasing men rather than God, he had sinfully spread a number of heretical and wrong-headed doctrines in God's Church').¹⁵⁷ As Harvey noted, the Monk was 'singularly uninterested in theology'.¹⁵⁸ What little that can be said about the chroniclers' relationship with the universities must be inferred. Their lack of interest or engagement with university business is strikingly at odds with Walsingham. Although they were part of the Benedictine order the chronicle does not reflect the black monks' struggle with Wycliffism. The most obvious distinction between contexts of Walsingham and the Westminster chroniclers in this case is their house of origin. So, it seems likely that it was the pressure of institutional interests which drove Westminster eyes away from the universities. Meanwhile, Walsingham's attitude and the scope of his chronicle was fed by his connection to Oxford.

The Benedictine's efforts were not isolated from those of the rest of the Church. Although Walsingham had an unusually academically orientated institutional context, there were other factors which could lead a chronicler into the universities' sphere of influence. There is no evidence that Henry Knighton attended university, but there is evidence that the culture and context of the universities seeped into his chronicle. Knighton's engagement with Wycliffite doctrine was bound to the interplay between the universities and his own institutional life. He was supplied with an unusually rich range of sources. His location in the East Midlands exposed him to the Lollards personally. Documents on Wyclif's doctrines were circulated by the Bishop of Lincoln, and Philip Repyndon (abbot of St Mary of the Meadows from 1393 to 1399) was a

¹⁵⁷ *Westminster Chronicle*, 106.

¹⁵⁸ Harvey, 'Introduction: Westminster', xxxvi.

one-time Wycliffite and Oxford theologian. It was from Repyndon that Knighton seems to have gained much of his knowledge of the Wycliffites.¹⁵⁹ In so much as this, then, Knighton was influenced by university-orientated figures. He was particularly detailed when reporting the actions of the Lollards at Oxford as he drew on the sources at his disposal. Arguments over theology and sermons for and against the Lollards circulated around him, placing him in contact with the textual environment of Oxford's theologians. Moreover by the end of the fifteenth century, Knighton's abbey of St Mary of the Meadows had almost a thousand books and although this fact cannot be translated back on the late fourteenth century, when considered in combination with the presence of canons such as Philip Repyndon at Oxford it seems likely that the texts common in the universities, and potentially even aspects of forms of learning and teaching such as dialecticism, were spreading into the abbey.¹⁶⁰

The influence of academic methodology on Knighton was not as clearly exhibited in his style of commentary, but his understanding of the threat Wyclif and his followers posed was indebted to his connections to the Oxford schools. The author of the *Continuatio Eulogii*, with his fevered debate between the friars and Henry IV, and Walsingham both refuted Wyclif's propositions and Conclusions (first laying out Wyclif's propositions and then attacking their foundations and proposing instead that they were heretical). They displayed structured, argumentative, discursive techniques which are less identifiable in Knighton's chronicle.¹⁶¹ So, though Walsingham, who definitely attended university, far more clearly displayed the argumentative techniques we might associate with a university scholar in this period in his chronicle, it seems probable that like him Knighton was part of a community engaged with scholarly texts and both were connected to or part of the textual environment of the universities.

A dialectic historical discourse was, undeniably apparent in Adam of Usk's chronicle. In his record of the council that discussed the disputed points between England and France in 1400 Adam laid out each point, along with the arguments for and against and the conclusions he drew as questions and

¹⁵⁹ Martin, 'Introduction: Knighton', xxxvi.

¹⁶⁰ M. R. James and A. Hamilton Thompson, *Catalogue of the Library of Leicester Abbey* (Leicester: Leicestershire Archaeological Society, 1941).

¹⁶¹ Walsingham's approach was not particularly detailed, but it did form a counter-point buoyed by the evidence of miracles to Wyclif's teachings. Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 192–212, 592–602.

responses.¹⁶² All three chronicle writers who were most heavily involved in the universities occasionally approached matters of the historical record as points to prove. For example, the author of the *Continuatio Eulogii* had presented the argument between Roger Frisby and Henry IV as an argument on the theory of legitimacy. Adam had gone to some lengths to provide evidence that Edward I and not Edmund Crouchback was the firstborn son of Henry III.¹⁶³ The confluence here between them suggests that their university educations (one of the few obvious overlapping features they shared) informed their approach to historical writing.

The dialecticism of the universities had a more discernible effect on some chroniclers than others. John Strecche – who superficially was less connected to the universities than was Knighton – appears to have situated himself within the intellectual community, employing similar rhetoric to that of university scholars. Strecche was at least partially responsible for the construction of two manuscripts: BL, Add. MS 38665 and BL, Add. MS 35295.¹⁶⁴ Two of the works contained in BL, Add. MS 38665 contain a debate between the Augustinian friars and the canons regular over their relative precedence.¹⁶⁵ The debate itself is at least indicative of Strecche’s involvement with the dialectic tradition of proof through discourse.

The other works within the manuscripts are also indicative of Strecche’s relationship to a classical literary culture. They include a treatise on rhyming verse, a copy of Aesop’s fables, and the version of Trojan history which prefaces the chronicle while the chronicle itself included short verse passages.¹⁶⁶ Not only was poetry used to educate students in the *ars rhetorica*, but theoretical commentaries on it were not uncommon in the late fourteenth century. Texts such as the thirteenth century *Poetria Nova* on the proper composition of poetry were even required reading in some cases.¹⁶⁷ Strecche was in possession of and apparently familiar with classical material which was in circulation within the universities and he used it in his own writing. This was material similar to that used by authors like Thomas Walsingham. So, if not

¹⁶² Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 102–116.

¹⁶³ See above, 53.

¹⁶⁴ Curry, ‘ Strecche, John (fl. 1407–1425)’.

¹⁶⁵ Curry, ‘ Strecche, John (fl. 1407–1425)’.

¹⁶⁶ BL MS. Add. 35295, fos.256^v, 261^v. –262, 269^v-270, 279–279^v.

¹⁶⁷ Marjorie Woods, ‘A Medieval Rhetoric Goes to School - and to the University: The Commentaries on the *Poetria Nova*’, *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric* 9, no. 1 (1991): 56.

necessarily in the same close-knit textual setting of the *domus* as Walsingham, Strecche was certainly absorbed in the broader textual environment.

The texts of Aesop and Trojan history also match the interests of the scholar-monks of Oxford. Both texts appear amongst the compositions of university monks.¹⁶⁸ Although there is no evidence he attended university, Strecche appears to have been situated at the edge of the universities' textual environment. He seems to have adopted aspects of the texts favoured within it to compose his history. The history he presented then was more than a provincial history, it was instead a national epic and an institutional history comingled with strains of university-rooted poetical thought. Strecche's history was filled with a complex medley of styles.

The universities were not the only hive of intellectual activities. Monasteries were also hubs for scholarly work, shaped by and reacting to the wider world.¹⁶⁹ Some monasteries even ran disputations and lectures. At St Germain in Worcester there were glossed copies of the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, commonly lectured on in the universities.¹⁷⁰ This is not directly reflected upon in the chronicles, but to form a full picture of the chroniclers' milieu it is important to note the significant overlap between the university education and the institutional educational practice of centres such as St Albans. The *trivium* followed by the Benedictines was matched in the Benedictine Constitutions and the Augustinian's provisions. These dictated that masters should be employed by institutions to teach the notices in the 'primitive sciences' of grammar, logic, and philosophy.¹⁷¹ The Constitutions were not applied universally amongst the Benedictine houses. St Albans employed masters to instruct novices, but there is no record of a claustral lecturer or master at Westminster Abbey before the beginning of the middle of the fifteenth century.¹⁷² Tutoring at Westminster may have been more informal, or simply not recorded in the administrative documentation. Novices would still have been instructed to some extent in the Rule of St Benedict, the liturgy, and the *ars grammatica*. The monastic-students who attended university took the basic

¹⁶⁸ Clark, 'University Monks in Late Medieval England', 65.

¹⁶⁹ James G. Clark, 'Humanism and Reform in Pre-Reformation English Monasteries', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 19 (2009): 62.

¹⁷⁰ Lesley Smith, *The Glossa Ordinaria: The Making of a Medieval Bible Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 186.

¹⁷¹ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 270.

¹⁷² Harvey, 'A Novice's Life', 70.

training they either received or would have received at their institutions as the foundations for their studies.¹⁷³

Abbeys and priories were educationally distinctive and had internally shared textual environments and histories. Upon entry into a monastery, novices were given a thorough liturgical training to initiate them into the practices of monastic life.¹⁷⁴ A monastic community was also versed in the rule of their order, establishing the common bond and code which covered their lives within the institution. These pillars of the community were complimented both by scriptural studies and by surrounding pursuits, usually including education in the history of the house and its saints.¹⁷⁵ So, members of the same house were part of a nuclear textual group, and as texts were shared between houses there were numerous intersections between textual environments of different houses and the universities.

The educational communities of religious orders were divided by their priorities. Cistercians restricted the writing and reproduction of books during the twelfth century, a practice which continued to affect the fourteenth-century communities.¹⁷⁶ It is not surprising, then, that the Cistercian chronicles were often shorter, though there were exceptions in the form of Thomas Burton's chronicle and the lively descriptions of the *Dieulacres Chronicle*. The Benedictines had a vibrant book culture and their libraries were usually larger than those of the Cistercian houses.¹⁷⁷ The major Benedictine houses, such as Worcester, St Albans and Westminster Abbey, all boasted a rich array of institutionally owned books, and the monks often possessed private

¹⁷³ Clark, 'University Monks in Late Medieval England', 58.

¹⁷⁴ Susan Boynton, 'Training for the Liturgy as a Form of Monastic Education', in *Medieval Monastic Education*, eds. G. Ferzoco and Carolyn Muessig (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 2000), 16.

¹⁷⁵ Bert Roest, 'Franciscan Educational Perspectives: Reworking Monastic Traditions', in *Medieval Monastic Education*, eds. G. Ferzoco and Carolyn Muessig (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 2000), 173; Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 42–79; Evelyn Birge Vitz, 'Liturgy as Education in the Middle Ages', in *Medieval Education*, eds. Ronald Begley and Joseph Koterski (New York: Fordham University, 2005), 21; Katherine Smith, *War and the Making of Monastic Culture*, Studies in the History of Medieval Religion (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2011), 196.

¹⁷⁶ Taylor, *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century*, 18.

¹⁷⁷ Orme has suggested that the Rule of Benedict was not particularly exacting and has argued that it compared unfavourably with the study regimens of the friars. Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 267; Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 79–123.

collections.¹⁷⁸ So, the textual exchange and community which existed amongst the Benedictines was substantially different to that of the Cistercians.

In Benedictine communities education was part of the house's *raison d'être*, as monasteries were described as schools to the further glorification of God.¹⁷⁹ Intellectual pastimes were embedded within the Benedictine culture, time was built into the *horarium* for reading, both privately and as part of the community at meals.¹⁸⁰ Once per year each monk in a house was to select a book to read during their hours of private study, and Clark has suggested that in houses such as St Albans the selections may have taken place more frequently as part of a deliberate drive to promote reading above other pastimes.¹⁸¹ Although the studies of the monks were often directed they enjoyed a degree of intellectual freedom.¹⁸² The circulation of texts within an abbey indicates the presence of a vibrant textual environment in the institutions. The chroniclers who belonged to these Benedictine houses were not only able to access a wide array of sources but must be expected to have been immersed in multiple genres and narrative forms. They were, in all probability, exposed to forms of historical understanding which were expressed not in accordance with a single pattern but in multiple styles.

The chronicles do not represent extended discourses on theology or other texts which are instantly identifiable as university orientated; however, they were also operating within complex textual environments which existed in communication with the universities, John Strecche's work at least was reflective of the types of texts circulating in the schools. Thomas Walsingham was a scholar at the bleeding edge of St Alban's reforms – Reforms which fostered an increase in monastic attendance at Oxford.¹⁸³ The *Continuatio Eulogii* exhibits the type of scholarly debate common in the university at the time. Adam of Usk both taught at the universities and reflected upon the scholastic sermons he heard, describing their division and *thema*.¹⁸⁴ Such

¹⁷⁸ Harvey, 'A Novice's Life', 44; Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 124–162; R. M. Thomson, 'Worcester Monks and Education, c.1300', in *The Culture of Medieval English Monasticism* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), 104.

¹⁷⁹ Greatrex, 'The Scope of Learning', 41.

¹⁸⁰ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 124–125.

¹⁸¹ Orme, *Medieval Schools*, 267; Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 81, 126.

¹⁸² Clark, 'University Monks in Late Medieval England', 64.

¹⁸³ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 166.

¹⁸⁴ The scholastic sermon is discussed in more detail in the context of the chroniclers below, 286. Siegfried Wenzel's work gives the most detailed and meticulous breakdown of the medieval scholastic sermon. Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 84; Siegfried Wenzel, *Medieval 'Artes*

pieces of evidence suggest that although the influence of the universities was rarely overt it had a significant presence in many chroniclers' lives. It also suggests that whilst we cannot claim they were part of a monolithic university culture, we can propose that they were each part of a distinct textual environment influenced by the universities.

Not all chroniclers attended university. Nor do all of the chronicles exhibit signs of a significant influence from the spreading culture of the universities. Those who did engage with the ideas seeping from Oxford and Cambridge often clearly expressed it in their works. The discursive, logical approach which is most heavily associated with the universities appears clearly from time to time. Although the links are tenuous on occasion the collected weight of evidence suggests that chroniclers like Walsingham, Strecche, and Adam Usk, despite the immense gulf in their experiences, would have found common ground in a subtle historical perspective which had its origins in the universities. Thus, although their educations and backgrounds pushed them apart there was still some commonality. These points of intersection and the differences prevent neat categorisation of chroniclers.

A Textual Repertory

The chroniclers' values were shaped not only by their institutional experiences and their professional and educational backgrounds but also by their intellectual formation. Amongst these some mention must be made of their shared textual repertory, that miscellaneous collection of material and references which gave literary texture to their lives. The number of identifiable texts which were shared between the chroniclers is both small and often only provably present in a few examples rather than the whole corpus of chronicles. However, these texts form the most tangible core intellectual bond which existed between the chroniclers.

The most obvious texts to which the chroniclers had access were not always those which had the most profound effect upon them. Most of the chroniclers must have been acquainted with Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*: the majority of the Latinate chronicles in the period were continuations of manuscripts of it. There is also often a degree of similarity and continuity in

such manuscripts at least in the way the form of the pages is laid out.¹⁸⁵ As continuations of the *Polychronicon* they are most closely linked to only to that most contemporary fraction of the whole text, whilst the ancient and biblical history (though possibly used as a reference point) would have been known to them through other texts as well. There is, on the whole, very little evidence to suggest many chroniclers built their historical imagination entirely or even mostly upon it. Adam of Usk, with his deliberate references to either his own copy of the *Polychronicon* (into which his chronicle is written) or that of the London Dominicans, is one rare exception.¹⁸⁶ However, other chroniclers, like Henry Knighton, combined it with multiple different historical and pseudo-historical texts.¹⁸⁷ Although it formed an essential piece of the intellectual background it was not deeply embedded within their original sections.

In contrast to the muted impact of the *Polychronicon*, a number of contemporaneous, often more ephemeral, documents make their mark appearing repeatedly in the chronicles – or documents of the same type. Principle among these are the errors of John Wyclif, which were recorded by Henry Knighton and Thomas Walsingham, their concern with Wyclif and the Lollards uniting them, in part, as they copied the errors and the condemnation of them into their chronicles.¹⁸⁸ These were the types of text which were most clearly part of a common repertory of contemporary writings. The spread of such documents amongst the monasteries cannot be said to have formed a textual community – as in a community in which texts are used to reform the practices of the group – between Henry Knighton and Thomas Walsingham, but it does demonstrate the close textual bonds that were formed between clerks by the circulation of documentation in the period.¹⁸⁹

These connections crossed boundaries between secular and regular clerks. Adam of Usk and the chronicler of the *Vita Ricardi Secundi* both relied

¹⁸⁵ This is an observable phenomenon in various manuscripts. BL Add. MS 10104; BL. Harley MS 3600.

¹⁸⁶ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 64, 65.

¹⁸⁷ Martin, 'Introduction: Knighton', xvi.

¹⁸⁸ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 210-212; Knighton, *Chronicon*, 256-60.

¹⁸⁹ Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 91; Mark S. Burrows, 'The Body of the Text and the Text of The Body: Monastic Reading and Allegorical Subversions of Desire', in *Scrolls of Love: Ruth and the Song of Songs*, eds. Peter S. Hawkins and Lesleigh Cushing Stahlberg (New York: Fordham University, 2006), 245; Emma Campbell, *Medieval Saints' Lives: The Gift, Kinship and Community in Old French Hagiography* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2008), 123.

on an apparently pro-Ricardian report of the Revenge Parliament in 1397.¹⁹⁰ Neither chronicler represented Richard II positively, suggesting that though these documents circulated they were not accepted uncritically by the chroniclers. Reports of parliaments, Church councils, and other newsletters not only circulated in the clerical community but formed an essential evidence base and textual context for the chroniclers. The articles of the Lords Appellant from 1388 (which occupy a substantial section of Henry Knighton's *Chronicon* and the *Westminster Chronicle*) and the *Record et Proces del Renunciacion* (laying out the justifications for Ricard II's deposition) in 1399 are further examples of the textual bonds which existed between the chroniclers.

The chroniclers were also bound together as an intellectual group by their access to and instruction in major, traditional, authoritative texts. Their education in scripture and scriptural commentaries is, probably, the defining feature of their intellectual context.¹⁹¹ The study of scripture, with the importance of examination, contemplation, learning of and exposition upon the themes within it featured as an essential methodological foundation for studies and possibly for their own writing.

Alongside scripture were the great historical works of the classical and medieval periods, particularly the *Flores Historiarum* and those of Bede and Eusebius. Exactly which works they were acquainted with and which they encountered through intermediaries and reference works remains uncertain, however.¹⁹² At the very least it is certain that Thomas Walsingham was acquainted with the *Flores Historiarum* and highly likely that the Westminster chroniclers, whose predecessors had continued it, were too.¹⁹³ Turning to the sermons of Bishop Thomas Brinton, the magpie-like collection of references and authorities which clerks in the period would have been exposed to is evident. Although Brinton's repertoire is not necessarily representative of the chroniclers' own learning, he does provide evidence for the continual application

¹⁹⁰ The principal work on this is Chris Given-Wilson, 'Adam Usk, the Monk of Evesham and the Parliament of 1397-8', *Historical Research* 66 (1993): 329–335.

¹⁹¹ 'Chapter One: Intellectual and Professional Worlds. The Graduate World', 68.

¹⁹² Antonia Gransden, *A History of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds, 1257-1301: Simon of Luton and John of Northwold* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2015), 243.

¹⁹³ Other major authors, such as Bede, were almost certainly accessible and known to the chroniclers (even if only through *florilegia*). Antonia Gransden, 'Bede's Reputation as an Historian in Medieval England', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 32, no. 4 (1981): 397–425.

and reiteration of historical and textual references by educated preachers.¹⁹⁴ The circulation of authoritative historical and scriptural texts bound the chroniclers as an intellectual group, their reliance on scripture in particular featuring prominently in their texts. If their sense of historical writing was drawn from any wellspring these must number amongst the most important, emphasising the importance of explaining and expounding on events whilst the hand of God and the threads of revelatory material tie history together.

Yet, for all this the individual textual contexts of the chroniclers also served to drive them apart. The pressures of the individual monastic houses and personal circumstances distinguished their values. This is not to say that a preferential, partisan selection from a universal set of course documents separated them, instead the authorities and interests of their houses and contexts emphasised different authorities in their daily arenas. There were also documents (whether house specific histories or newsletters and reports with a limited circulation) that differentiated them. The lives of patron saints, records of the abbey, cartularies, biographies of major abbots and institutional histories were both a common part of chroniclers' lives and one which would have been specific to their institutional context. Westminster Abbey, acting as the *eigenkloister* of the king and the spiritual head of the realm, was distinctly removed from the concerns of St Mary of the Meadows where Knighton was keenly aware of the importance of John of Gaunt and the dukes of Lancaster.¹⁹⁵ The newsletters Knighton received often seem to have come from the duke's household and reflect a peculiarly Lancastrian perspective.¹⁹⁶ Meanwhile, Adam of Usk was bound to his patrons, the Mortimers, and his roles as a canon lawyer at Oxford, in the court of Archbishop Thomas Arundel, and in service to Henry IV.¹⁹⁷ Each identity and textual context distinguishes him from his contemporary chroniclers by dint of the concerns it presented to him.

So, even as their textual bonds brought them closer together as a group of intellectuals, so too they were torn apart by the textual, political, social, and professional links to institutions and individuals. Though their methodological

¹⁹⁴ Thomas Brinton, *The Sermons of Thomas Brinton, Bishop of Rochester, 1373–1389. Volume I.*, ed. Mary Aquinas Devlin, Camden Society 3rd Series, Vol. 85 (London: R.H.S, 1954), 1, 47, 89, 160, 62, 115, 44; Thomas Brinton, *The Sermons of Thomas Brinton, Bishop of Rochester, 1373–1389. Volume II.*, ed. Mary Aquinas Devlin, Vol. 2, Camden Society 3rd Series, Vol. 86 (London: R.H.S, 1954), 266, 297, 351, 360, 389.

¹⁹⁵ Martin, 'Introduction: Knighton', xv.

¹⁹⁶ Martin, 'Introduction: Knighton', xxxii.

¹⁹⁷ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction: Adam of Usk', xiv–xxxviii.

backgrounds, as clerks, were probably closely related, they only represent a portion of a multi-layered image. As chroniclers, they were united and yet divided by the sea of texts they moved through throughout their lives.

Conclusion

The chroniclers did not belong to any one social, cultural, or intellectual group. They were generally not official chroniclers for either their houses or the government, with some exceptions, and it is questionable whether many of them could even claim a semi-official status. If one were to visualise their relationship to one another as a Venn diagram it would require a series of overlapping circles so numerous that without careful inspection they might as well form a single ink stain on the page. This chapter opened with the question of where the chroniclers belonged, the question does not entirely reflect the nature of the answer. The chroniclers did not belong together in a unit, and their narratives were commensurately idiosyncratic.

Many of the chronicles were written with an underlying relationship to the universities. The individuals who became chroniclers were exceptionally likely to have studied at Oxford, certainly more so than the average regular clerk. The nature of this relationship is difficult to determine, however, since few chroniclers mention their time of university and the chronicles do not often mimic scholarly treatises. However, the overlap between their experiences does suggest that there were aspects to their social and intellectual experiences which were deeply interlinked. Nevertheless, as the fact that Thomas Walsingham and Adam of Usk were among the few to mention their time at Oxford suggests, these connections do not necessarily follow the patterns of secular and regular clerks.

The universities may have been influential but they did not dominate the detail of the chroniclers' accounts as much as they did the manner in which the chroniclers approached their material. As the following chapter discusses, there were other pressures, such as the Crown and the Church, which appear much more prominently in the chronicles.

Chapter Two

The Crown and the Church

Introduction

The previous chapter examined the intellectual and professional experiences of the chroniclers and how they were situated in their societal and intellectual context. It suggested that even those with the most similar backgrounds were divided by a myriad of factors. It also argued that the usual categorisations used to discuss chroniclers' backgrounds (such as secular and regular) are broad brush strokes that obscure the many individual features of these clerks.

This chapter will develop the question of whether the chroniclers' conception of the two primary pillars of authority which dominated and overshadowed their lives and their writing of history – the Crown and the Church – reflected a shared perspective and foundation for their texts. The institution or community of the Church, or the office of the Crown or monarchy provided the spiritual and temporal foundations for the societal order.¹ The chroniclers were exposed to these dual authorities at every level, and many lived their professional lives in religious institutions or in service to the Crown. This chapter will consider whether they differed from each other in their understanding of these fundamental parts of their societal experience.

The chroniclers had radically different experiences of the Crown and the Church. Knighton interacted with the Crown at Leicester, where the monarch appeared on a handful of occasions, whereas the Westminster chroniclers were situated close to Westminster Hall where parliament was regularly held, the writer of the *GHQ* was a royal chaplain, and Adam of Usk interacted with the king directly or indirectly on a few occasions, often as a private individual. The author of the *GHQ* may be assumed to have had the closest connection to the

¹ The literature surrounding the nature of medieval kingship, the Church and the relationship between the two is vast. For further reading scholars such as, Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*, Princeton Paperbacks (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Björn Weiler, *Kingship, Rebellion and Political Culture: England and Germany, c.1215 – c.1250*, Medieval Culture & Society S (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Cary J. Nederman and Catherine Campbell, 'Priests, Kings, and Tyrants: Spiritual and Temporal Power in John of Salisbury's Policraticus', *Speculum* 66, no. 3 (1991): 572–590; Gerard E. Caspary, *Politics and Exegesis: Origen and the Two Swords* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1979); J. A. Watt, 'Spiritual and Temporal Powers', in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c.350–c.1450*, ed. J. H. Burns, The Cambridge History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 367–423.

Crown, working directly in its service. Meanwhile, the *domus* of the authors of the Westminster chronicle was adjacent to Westminster Hall; close though this brought them to the heart of power, however, their engagement with it was purely in the formal performance of the monarchy from coronation ceremonies, entries into London and burials. Each chronicler's perspective on the monarchy and the Church was moulded by their disparate experiences into distinctive historical commentaries.

The chroniclers were engaging with notions of what the Church and Crown symbolised, consciously and from many perspectives, and despite their keen awareness of the king and the Church, they were not bound to a single position on what either institution represented. This is demonstrably the case in the terminology they employed; the representation of the king and the Church in the context of issues such as social disorder; and explicit ruminations on the subject.² The chroniclers' depiction of these two bodies illustrates the complexity of their historical narratives. It also demonstrates that these major forces did not dictate the way chroniclers conceptualised the world but were instead imagined by them within historical narratives and patterns.

When the chroniclers related episodes involving the Church and Crown what was at stake for them were the principles of the relationship between the two and the roles each should perform. This discussion was present in descriptions of the king as figure situated between the temporal and the sacred. It featured in papal bulls such as the *Unam Sanctum*, which pressed home the supremacy of the Church, and in John Wyclif's attacks upon the institutions of the Church from the papacy to monasticism.³ Yet the distinction between Crown and Church was not a simple binary separation. Each could be subdivided further, the Crown was surrounded by other powers such as the magnates, and the Church itself could be subdivided, perhaps most significantly for the chroniclers into the Roman Curia and English clergy. Furthermore, the Church and Crown habitually worked together rather than in opposition – to suppress heresy, for instance. Nonetheless, for chroniclers in the late fourteenth century these two authorities in their lives were under direct scrutiny.⁴

² Other themes, such as the representation of the role of the Church and the Crown in warfare are discussed below, 250–270.

³ Steven E. Ozment, *The Age of Reform (1250–1550): An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 141, 144.

⁴ Watt, 'Spiritual and Temporal Powers', 442.

The use of the term 'Crown' requires some further definition. 'The Crown' principally to refer to the office of kingship. The chroniclers were inconsistent in their application of the title 'rex' as either a reference to the office or to the king as an individual, and whether they meant one or the other is often unclear. So the discussion of the 'Crown' as a concept often includes discussions of an individual king's behaviour. The chroniclers seem to have separated the individual from the dignity of the office itself, as whilst a particular king could be criticised the institution itself was not questioned: records of events such as the Peasants' Revolt are accompanied by firm defences of the monarchy and magnates.⁵ They often wrote in generalisations about the behaviour and expected character of a monarch: Thomas Walsingham and Adam of Usk both referenced the biblical proverb 'Ve terre, cuius rex puer est' ('Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child').⁶ Yet, they were also willing to criticise an individual king, as demonstrated by the application of this proverb to Richard II.

The chroniclers were not only reacting to established ideas of kingship or the Church but also contributing to their place within the social and intellectual imagination. In recording the behaviour of the monarch and the prelates and giving voice to their concerns, criticisms, and doubts they were laying down an image of these two pillars of society for an audience.⁷ Recognising their own input into the description, we may suggest that some of them drew on other models, such as holders of ecclesiastical office, when depicting kingship. Stretche, is a particularly clear example of the phenomenon. The framework of his blended history of the kings of England and the priors of Kenilworth priory might be read as forming an implicit equivalence between ecclesiastical and monarchical office.

The relationship between the power and authority of the prelacy and the monarchy was not theoretically or practically treated in the same way by any one chronicler. Indeed often the chroniclers did not continuously apply a single model of the relationship between the Crown and the Church, whether hierocratic, theocratic, or dualistic. The discussion in this chapter partially follows Walter Ullmann's model of theocratic kingship in which authority and

⁵ Thomas Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle: the Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham. 1376–1394*, eds. and trans. John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs, and Leslie Watkiss, Vol. I, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 410.

⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 690; Adam of Usk, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk, 1377–1421*, ed. Chris Given-Wilson, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 6.

⁷ The audience of the chroniclers is largely discussed below, 281–284.

virtue are figured as descending from God. Ullman's feudal model, in which authority and power are achieved through a common obligation to the law, is not relevant here as the main interest of the chapter is the relationship between the clergy and the king.⁸ Meanwhile the hierocratic model privileges the position of the priests and clergy themselves, emphasising the authority of the Church or parts of the Church. The term 'dualistic model', in this thesis, refers to a model of government more closely aligned to the theocratic, one in which the king's authority rested on his adherence to paradigms of virtue and piety and the importance of the clergy in the governance of the realm was simultaneously stressed. The chroniclers' narratives were ongoing and shifting reflections on events and concepts, often ranging across these different models without fully subscribing to any given one. Their engagement with the concepts was diverse, but there were occasions, such as in discussions of heresy, when their outlooks drew closer together. Their representation and understanding of the Church and the Crown evidence their idiosyncrasies and the common references are evident.

Terminology

The chroniclers used a range of terms to refer to the Crown (embodied in the king) and to the Church. The differences in the language they used are suggestive of distinctly independent understandings of the role and nature of the two institutions. Analysis of the various terms – how frequently they were used and when they were used – provides a window onto how the chroniclers figured these dual pillars of society. There was a conscious use of language to define and mould images of kingship in the late fourteenth century.⁹ Nigel Saul argued Richard II sought to establish an 'almost God-like image of himself' partially through the vocabulary of kingship, whilst Gwilym Dodd has suggested the language came from individuals seeking to please Richard. In either case there was a conscious effort to fashion and appeal to kingship through language taking place in the wider political milieu.¹⁰

⁸ Walter Ullmann, *The Individual and Society in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), 66–69.

⁹ Nigel Saul, 'Richard II and the Vocabulary of Kingship', *English Historical Review* CX, no. 438 (1995): 876.

¹⁰ Saul, 'Richard II and the Vocabulary of Kingship', 876; Gwilym Dodd, 'Kingship, Parliament and the Court: The Emergence of "High Style" in Petitions to the English Crown, c.1350–1405', *English Historical Review* CXXIX, no. 538 (June 2014): 519.

There were a number of phrases common to the chroniclers. Common linguistic property does not indicate a common outlook, however. The chroniclers were engaged in many discourses and appear to have been aware of an extremely wide range of texts, giving them a thesaurus of phrases. So, the fact that they sometimes employ the same constructions and forms of discussion should not be taken to imply, that they read them in the same way or used them towards the same ends. Nor does the use of distinctive terms mean that a writer had a radically different relationship with an idea. Opposed views and arguments can be expressed in the same terms. However, when the chroniclers' turns of phrase are placed into the context of one another, the details of their accounts, and the shared texts it is possible to draw out a complex picture of the chroniclers' intellectual positions.¹¹

Stock terms for the king appear throughout almost all the chronicles. These terms provide a broad foundation for a common understanding of what the Crown represented. Generic terms such as 'rex' ('king') were used almost constantly. For example, Henry Knighton used 'rex' in its various forms over 1000 times throughout his history.¹² Other words for the king and the Crown were less common, but phrases such as 'dominus rex' ('lord king') appear with striking frequency in the *Whalley Chronicle*; between 1399 and 1422, covering Harley MS 3600 ff. 233–7, there were approximately sixty-six variants on 'rex' including twenty-two instances of 'dominus rex'.¹³ Thomas Walsingham also used the phrase frequently. In the chronicle for 1376 and 1377 he used 'rex' forty-five times and 'dominus rex' twenty-four times respectively.¹⁴ We may reasonably conclude that 'dominus rex' was used by chroniclers as an honorific, if not one of exceptional importance. It suggests that for many chroniclers there was an automatic level of respect for the person of the king.

The use of the word 'rex' needs little explanation, though it is useful as a benchmark for the frequency of other terms. 'Dominus rex', however, placed a greater emphasis on the exalted position of the person embodying the

¹¹ These included texts such as papal bulls, newsletters, parliamentary documentation, and letters to monarchs.

¹² According to my count of how many times Knighton used this term. Henry Knighton, *Knighton's Chronicle 1337–1396*, ed. and trans. G. H. Martin, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

¹³ According to my count of how many times this term was used in the *Whalley Chronicle*. Charles Kingsford, ed., 'A Northern Chronicle: Appendix II', in *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1913), 281–291.

¹⁴ According to my count of how many times Walsingham used this term. Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 2–174.

Crown, and as a term it was also routinely used in formal declarations and documentation relating to the monarch. It appears frequently in records of parliamentary business; Walsingham recorded that in 1376 Sir Peter de la Mare – when addressing parliament – referred to ‘dominus noster rex’ (‘our lord king’).¹⁵ The parliamentary rolls for 1376 used the terms ‘roi nostre signur’ (‘our lord king’) and ‘dominus rex’.¹⁶ The use of the phrase to demonstrate parliament’s loyalty to the king highlighted the deferential connotations of ‘dominus rex’. This went further than the attitude implied by ‘rex’ alone. Its use in the chronicles suggests that the chroniclers were internalising the language of the political culture. So, it seems likely that those amongst them who used phrases like ‘dominus rex’ had a more defined sense of the Crown’s authority.

Similarly, although the chroniclers used a wide variety of terms for the Church, they often turned to phrases which figured the Church as a monolithic institution. Descriptions of the Church as simply ‘ecclesia’ (‘the Church’) – appear in every chronicle that discusses the institution of the Church. Phrases such as ‘uniuersali ecclesia’ (‘universal Church’), ‘sancte matris ecclesie’ (‘Holy Mother Church’), and ‘ecclesie sancta Dei’ (‘holy Church of God’) were also used on a regular basis.¹⁷ The terms have an obvious significance. Each emphasised the all-encompassing nature of the Church as a community (implicit in the word itself) and a guiding light for society. ‘Ecclesie sancta Dei’ explicitly stated the Church’s divine sponsorship.

Indeed, the chroniclers were embedded in a textual environment which continually highlighted the community of the Church, often as a parental authority. The Easter sermon for 1383 delivered by Thomas Brinton opened with an immediate reminder that Church was a guiding parent for Christians: ‘After the order established by Mother Church, we rise especially at two times to

¹⁵ ‘Edward III: April 1376’, in *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England*, eds. Chris Given-Wilson, Paul Brand, Seymour Phillips, Mark Ormrod, Geoffrey Martin, Anne Curry and Rosemary Horrox (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), *British History Online*, accessed May 7, 2019, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/april-1376>.

¹⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 10; ‘Edward III: April 1376’.

¹⁷ Although there are different patterns between the chroniclers, these terms were not exclusively used by any one chronicler. Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 670, 242; Thomas Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle: the Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham. 1394–1422*, eds. and trans. by John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs, and Leslie Watkiss, Vol. II, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011), 504; L. C. Hector and Barbara F. Harvey, eds. and trans., *The Westminster Chronicle, 1381–1394*, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 84, 106, 176, 316; Knighton, *Chronicon*, 134, 264.

pray and to praise God'.¹⁸ Brinton acknowledged his audience's identity as monks following the *horarium* of St Benedict and made room for the broader community of 'Mother Church'. He reinforced this message with references to Abraham and to the scriptures.¹⁹ The references to the Church as a single body appear as a staple of sermons. John Mirk in his *Festial* (written in the late 1380s) often began sermons with references to 'Holy Chyrch' as an active parental authority governing its members, driving the worship of his audience.²⁰ Such sermons and other ritualistic statements of belief (such as the Nicene Creed) framed the discourse of Christian identity. Chroniclers were part of this textual environment when they referred to the Church in their histories. Therefore, we might anticipate that the rhetoric of the united Church would appear in the chronicles.

The terms discussed above were part of the common language of not only historical writers but the hierarchy of the Church itself. The papal decree from the Council of Constance, which Walsingham copied into his chronicle, used the term 'uniuersalis ecclesie' four times.²¹ This term appeared most notably in connection to the political and social concerns of the Papal Schism and heresy; he had, for instance, also used it when discussing John Wyclif in 1377 in the Royal Manuscript recension.²² Whilst not entirely novel, the use of the term is part of the political debate over the universal Church and the regional churches. Walsingham had complained against aspects of the Roman Curia such as the corruption of papal chaplaincies, but his use of this term may mark a tacit acceptance by him of the usefulness of the papacy in the face of heresy.²³ Papal bulls such as the one included by the Westminster Monk in 1391 also drove home the message of ecclesiastical unity as it referred to the 'Holy Roman Church'.²⁴ The language, of the monolithic Church, was part and parcel of the chroniclers' lives as clerks. They were regularly exposed to it in the religious houses in which many of them spent their lives, but they would also

¹⁸ Siegfried Wenzel, trans., 'Easter (Thomas Brinton)', in *Preaching in the Age of Chaucer: Selected Sermons in Translation* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 124, 125.

¹⁹ Wenzel, 'Easter (Thomas Brinton)', 125.

²⁰ John Mirk, *John Mirk's Festial: Edited from British Library MS Cotton Claudius A.II*, ed. Susan Powell, Vol. I, Early English Text Society Original Series, 334/5 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3, 4, 12, 17, 23, 28, 31, 35.

²¹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 700–706.

²² Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 982.

²³ Henry Thomas Riley ed., *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani*, Vol. II, Rolls Series (London: Longman, 1867), 417–418.

²⁴ *Westminster Chronicle*, 458–468.

have experienced it at the preaching crosses and elsewhere as a pervasive part of their wider social experience. It is probable, then, that their incorporation of these accepted and well-worn phrases carried with them a certain acceptance of the unquestionable primacy of the Church as a spiritual authority and guardian for society.

Although many chroniclers used such terms there was a substantial and significant variation between them in the frequency with which the different terms were used. This variation suggests that they diverge from one another in their conceptions of the place of Crown and Church. A brief examination of the use of the term 'dominus rex' reveals a fundamental divergence between the chroniclers. The Whalley chronicler and Thomas Walsingham routinely used the appellation. Their use of the term may derive from an acquaintance with the formal *acta* of the monarchy and be an adaptation of this language. If so, as seems most probable, it exemplifies the use of deliberately respectful and formal language by these chroniclers. Henry Knighton used 'dominus rex' and a few related variations only seventeen times between 1337 and 1396 in BL Cotton MS Tiberius C.VII ff. 139^v – 239^r.²⁵ A comparison between this and his use of 'rex' and 'dominus' suggests that Knighton had a closely defined concept of who various titles like these ought to be used to describe. Whilst he used 'dominus' when discussing the king only seventeen times, he used it to describe knights and lords around 600 times. Out of the seventeen instances when he used 'dominus' to describe the king four were in reference to Edward III and thirteen to Richard II. Out of the thirteen, four were direct quotations from other sources such as the parliamentary rolls. Two were delivered as records of direct speech addressing the king. One more appeared in a passage closely tied to parliamentary rolls. Two of those in reference to Edward III were expressions of another individual's relationship to the king, describing him as 'domini sui regis Anglie' ('his liege lord the king of England').²⁶ The term was rare in Knighton's chronicle then. The circumstances in which it appears are often instances of him integrating other sources into his text. Therefore, it seems likely that Knighton did not share the view of the Crown held by authors like the Whalley chronicler.

²⁵ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 116, 142, 164, 202, 206, 209, 234, 242, 354, 394, 396, 406, 408, 498, 542.

²⁶ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 116, 142.

'Dominus rex' had connotations of respectful, deferential address, so the apparently conscious choice not to use it suggests Knighton had a less elevated notion of kingship than the Whalley chronicler. Notably he used the phrase 'dominus dux' ('the lord duke') to describe John of Gaunt (1340–99), on nine occasions between 1381 and 1396.²⁷ St Mary of the Meadows enjoyed a close relationship with the Crown, particularly during abbot William Clowne's (*d.* 1378) occupancy.²⁸ However, it also had close ties to the duchy of Lancaster, first under Henry Grosmont (1310–61) and then John of Gaunt.²⁹ The added honorific when referring to John of Gaunt is demonstrative of Knighton's institutional perspective. Although the terms are evidently not equivalent, Knighton's expression of respect for the duke implies an additional, personal respect. Since no such honour was awarded to Richard II, though, it can only be surmised that the strength of the personal connections determined his perspective and terminology. The explicit defence he provided of John of Gaunt's reputation in 1381 further substantiates the possibility.³⁰

The Peasants' Revolt of 1381 saw several attacks on Gaunt. For example, the rebels burnt down the Savoy Palace, his London residence.³¹ The hatred levelled against Gaunt spurred a quarrel between him and the earl of Northumberland – a falling-out which is almost identically recorded in Knighton and the *Anonimale Chronicle*.³² Knighton segued from this dispute into a description of the duke's qualities in a section succinctly entitled by the rubricator 'pietas ducis' ('the duke's goodness').³³ The defence Knighton offered distorted the account of the Peasants' Revolt around the character of his abbey's patron. He wrote, 'Ne cuidam cedat in mirum quare ipsum tociens pium ducem uocitauit' ('Lest any wonder that I should always refer to him as the good duke'), a statement which reflects his own awareness of his choice of epithets.³⁴ If the Crown figured large in his worldview, his choice of language suggests it was less dominant than for some of his contemporaries.

²⁷ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 228, 308, 342, 334, 544, 550.

²⁸ A. Hamilton Thompson, *The Abbey of St Mary of the Meadows Leicester* (Leicester: Edgar Backus, 1949), 32.

²⁹ Thompson, *The Abbey of St. Mary of the Meadows*, 30.

³⁰ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 238.

³¹ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 214.

³² Knighton, *Chronicon*, 232; V. H. Galbraith, ed., *The Anonimale Chronicle, 1333–1381: From a MS. Written at St. Mary's Abbey, York* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1927), 152–153.

³³ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 238.

³⁴ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 238.

The rarity of Knighton's use of 'dominus rex' as a term to describe the king is not the only evidence that he did not elevate the Crown. Indeed, Knighton's use of language suggests that he did not regard the king with especial respect, but that he also had a firmly defined notion of the identity of the king. Throughout the chronicle there are fifty-seven instances in which he used the word 'princeps' ('prince') or rarely its equivalent in French.³⁵ Forty-eight of the occasions when Knighton used the term 'princeps' were in relation to Edward Woodstock, the Prince of Wales.³⁶ Six of the remainder appear in letters Knighton copied into his chronicle: three in a letter from the duke of Guelders to Richard II in which the duke as 'magnifice princeps' ('exalted prince'), 'serenissime princeps' ('most exalted prince'), and 'potentissime princeps' ('most potent prince'); two in a letter from the College of Cardinals to the pope referring to him as 'serenissime princeps' ('most exalted lord') and to St Peter as 'principis apostolorum' ('the prince of the apostles'); and one, the sixth instance, in a letter in French sent by the duke of Brunswick to Henry Grosmont, duke of Lancaster, challenging him to a duel and naming him as an 'excellent prince'.³⁷ These examples indicate that the term 'princeps' was known to Knighton as a term of flattery. However, Knighton himself only used it once to describe how the German princes praised Edward III when considering him as a potential contender for the imperial throne.³⁸ Dodd has argued that by the end of his reign Richard had become the 'assertive and opulent monarch' his subjects desired.³⁹ Knighton's use of language, including terms such as 'princeps', implies that he had no desire for a king who might wield supreme authority over his subjects, furthermore it suggests that he differentiated clearly between the roles of princes, kings, and dukes.

The distinct perspectives of the chronicles become even more apparent when we turn to a chronicler with a close relationship to the Crown. The writer of the *GHQ* was clear in his promotion of the Crown as a symbol of England and the seat of secular authority. Just prior to the battle of Agincourt the author described how he prayed to the Virgin Mary and St George that they should

³⁵ Knighton, *Chronicon*.

³⁶ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 56, 62, 84, 120, 122, 128, 136, 140, 142, 144, 148, 158, 170, 172, 176, 184, 186, 194, 198, 202, 359.

³⁷ The translation to 'most exalted lord' by Martin might be better translated as 'most exalted prince' or 'most serene prince'. Knighton, *Chronicon*, 542, 202, 205.

³⁸ Barring the examples included in the letter and the text of the Treaty of Esplechin which he also copied into the chronicle, Knighton, *Chronicon*, 30, 90.

³⁹ Dodd, 'The Emergence of "High Style"', 546.

intercede on behalf of 'invictissima corona Anglie' ('the most invincible crown of England').⁴⁰ His understanding of the significance of the Crown and the king was not simply demonstrated by occasional statements though. It was a consistent and recurring theme in the language he chose to use. He stressed the relationship between his audience and the king and emphasised the glory of the Crown. The *GHQ* included a range of majestic terms, but amongst them 'rex noster' ('our king') and 'princeps' ('prince') stand out.⁴¹ Although these terms appear in other chronicles they were used particularly frequently by the author of the *GHQ*.⁴² The author applied the term 'princeps' to Henry V, to his brother the duke of Gloucester, and to the Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund.⁴³ The appellation of 'prince' was often accompanied in the text by a superlative 'serenissimus' ('the most serene'), 'superillustrissimum' ('superillustrious'), or other adjectives such as 'maioribus' ('of the great'), and 'intrepidus et magnanimus' ('fearless and great-hearted').⁴⁴ Meanwhile, 'rex noster' expressed the author's self-identification as a servant of the king. It potentially suggests that he intended his audience also to recall their allegiance. The recurring descriptions of Henry V and other rulers through effervescent language illustrate the author of the *GHQ*'s dedication to, and consistent understanding of, the Crown and the king as the pinnacle of secular society, close to, if not on a level with, the emperor. Furthermore, his promotion of the Crown and intimate identification with it reflects his status and perspective as a royal chaplain and propagandist. As such the deliberate use of language in the *GHQ* reveals the sophistication of the narrative.

The *GHQ*'s potential audiences may also have influenced the author's depiction of Henry V. The text was in all likelihood written for both the clergy and the laity. Taylor and Roskell argued that the evidence of reception in Thomas Elmham's work and in religious houses as well as the heavy use of scriptural material suggests an appeal to the clergy whilst the visceral detail of

⁴⁰ Frank Taylor and John Smith Roskell, eds. and trans, *Gesta Henrici Quinti: The Deeds of Henry the Fifth*, Oxford medieval texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 66.

⁴¹ The author of the *GHQ* used a form of 'princeps' forty-two times in his history, and a 'rex noster' twenty-eight times.

⁴² The use of 'prince' to denote a ruler was common, texts from the mirrors for princes genre used it regularly to encompass rulers of multiple stations, and the author of the *GHQ*, who referred to Giles of Rome's *De Regimine Principum* was evidently thoroughly acquainted with this style of address when discussing rulers. *GHQ*, 28, 40.

⁴³ *GHQ* 12, 128.

⁴⁴ 'Superillustrissimum' might be better translated as 'exceedingly illustrious'. *GHQ*, 2, 12, 16, 20.

battle reflected a lay audience.⁴⁵ Although the details of the campaign may well have been of interest to the clergy too, the supposition is not unreasonable. The author of the *GHQ*'s defence of Henry V's home and foreign policy certainly suggests that he was providing a text in support of further funding for the king's campaigns.

Taylor and Roskell also suggested that the *GHQ* was written with a secondary or tertiary audience in mind: the Council of Constance.⁴⁶ The argument rests on the conflict between the English and French delegates over the right of the English to be regarded as a full nation with control over provinces such as Scotland and Wales, and over the English alliance with the Emperor Sigismund.⁴⁷ Roskell and Taylor argued that the mention of Bishop of Bangor' participation at the siege of Harfleur and the claim that the Scots had traditionally paid homage to the English might have been intended to support English claims to be a 'nation'.⁴⁸ Furthermore, they suggest, the alliance with Sigismund and praise of the emperor may be taken to imply that the author was emphasising the Anglo-German alliance to the delegates at Constance.⁴⁹ The points are in themselves reasonable and it is certainly likely that the author was responding to the disputes in the crisis. Whether the text was meant for an audience of Constance delegates is, however, less certain. If it was then the author's argument is far more subtle than elsewhere in the text, and occasional references to English control of Wales or Scotland are infrequent in comparison to the description of Henry's qualities and the justice of his campaigns. It is not impossible that the *GHQ* was written for a domestic and an international audience, but there is less material evidence for it being directed at the Council of Constance. This material could equally well have been aimed at presenting further justifications for Henry V's wars to the English clergy who were aware of the disputes at the council.

The descriptions of the Anglo-German alliance are similarly inconclusive evidence. Taylor and Roskell suggest that the description of Sigismund and the emphasis on the alliance are related to Constance (which is in all likelihood the

⁴⁵ F. Taylor and J. S. Roskell, 'The Authorship and Purpose of the *Gesta Henrici Quinti*: II', *The Bulletin of the John Ryland's Library* 54, no.1 (1971), 223.

⁴⁶ Taylor and Roskell, 'The Authorship and Purpose of the *Gesta Henrici Quinti*: II', 227.

⁴⁷ Taylor and Roskell, 'The Authorship and Purpose of the *Gesta Henrici Quinti*: II', 229.

⁴⁸ Taylor and Roskell, 'The Authorship and Purpose of the *Gesta Henrici Quinti*: II', 229.

⁴⁹ Taylor and Roskell, 'The Authorship and Purpose of the *Gesta Henrici Quinti*: II', 232.

case).⁵⁰ However, as the emphasis on an alliance with an emperor and vindication of their cause would have been equally valuable as a positive reassurance to a domestic audience as it would as a comment to delegates at Constance, the suggestion is not compelling. Moreover, comparison between the *GHQ*'s focus on the importance of this alliance to other sources, such as Henry Knighton's account of Edward III's alliance with the emperor at the start of the Hundred Years War, suggests that such arrangements were perceived as important regardless of whether the Council of Constance was in progress.⁵¹ This is not to dismiss the potential appeal the *GHQ* may have had at Constance, but it does suggest that regarding such an audience as having played a determining factor on the text would be highly speculative and reliant on only a potential reading of the work.

The linguistic patterns in the *GHQ* and Knighton's chronicle were highly distinctive and demonstrate in turn the underlying differences between their views of lordship and kingship. Knighton refrained from elevating the king further with the formal language of monarchical *acta* and instead gave further epithets to lords such as Henry Grosmont or John of Gaunt. His language indicates a view of kingship as a distinct form of lordship, the king very much the first amongst equals, but it also highlighted his valorisation of the lordship of magnates. Whilst the writer of the *GHQ* figured the king as a glorious prince amongst princes, supported by God, Knighton discussed him in more muted terms. For Knighton a king was certainly superior to princes or dukes, but there was no need to hammer home the point. The two perspectives are potentially reflective of the periods in which these chroniclers were writing and their primary patrons. Knighton was writing in a period which included the Lords Appellants and the various councils which governed in Richard's stead whereas, the author of the *GHQ* was reflecting particularly on the accomplishments of Henry V in a campaign he personally led and on his negotiations with Sigismund.

There are similar patterns apparent in the discussion of the Church. These patterns suggest that chroniclers had perspectives which variously emphasised the monolithic, national, and personal elements of their experience,

⁵⁰ Taylor and Roskell, 'The Authorship and Purpose of the *Gesta Henrici Quinti*: II', 233.

⁵¹ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 8.

though they conceived of the Church in broadly similar ways and most imagined it as an overarching institution most of the time.

Walsingham repeatedly referred to 'Mother Church' or the 'universal Church'.⁵² The phrases appear most frequently in his transcriptions of papal or episcopal documents, such as the decree from the Council of Constance in 1417 declaring the election of the new pope and the end to the schism, where the phrase 'universal Church' is used four times.⁵³ This, in itself, suggests that by the end of Walsingham's chronicle such ideas of community were being impressed by the central bureaucracy of the Church and, perhaps, more readily accepted. The seismic changes Walsingham experienced, from a period in which the papacy had been aligned with the French at the beginning of his life through the days of the schism to the rise of Lollardy is also arguably exhibited in his increasing use of the language of the universal rather than the regional Church, despite his reservations over the corruption of the papacy. Whilst Walsingham's concerns over the Roman Curia did not evaporate, its support in countering heretics such as Wyclif may have fostered a greater inclination towards universalism as a counter to the destabilising threat of Lollardy.

The author of the *GHQ*, with his partisanship for Henry V, offered a vision of the king and Church united in harmony. He depicted the Church as an indivisible whole against the backdrop of the Council of Constance and the end of the Papal Schism (1378–1417).⁵⁴ The language of the universal Church was used to propound values which were more than dutifully loyal to the Church. The author of the *GHQ* repeatedly referred to the 'universal Church', often compounding religious orthodoxy with his support for Henry V.⁵⁵ His call for an end to bloodshed was also praise for Henry V for attempting to bring an end to the conflict between England and France (by conquest): 'O amara memoria et grandis lacrimarum occasion videre vel audire populum Christianum in se ipsum taliter deseuire' ('Oh what a bitter memory and great cause for tears, to see and

⁵² Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 80, 198, 258, 304, 478, 598, 662, 908; Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 488, 512, 700.

⁵³ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 700.

⁵⁴ Alison K. McHardy, 'Religion, Court Culture and Propaganda: The Chapel Royal in the Reign of Henry V', in *Henry V*, ed. Gwilym Dodd, New Interpretations (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2013), 153.

⁵⁵ *GHQ*, 3, 5, 7, 11; *Westminster Chronicle*, 107.

hear Christian people so rage against one another').⁵⁶ This call used the rhetoric of the united Christian Church in the service of lauding Henry V.

Henry V's driving motivation as a monarch was, according to the chronicler, 'ampliandis ecclesiis et pace regnorum' ('to extend the Church and encompass the peace of kingdoms').⁵⁷ The focus upon Henry's talks with the emperor Sigismund fed into this narrative. The author described how Sigismund laboured for 'reformacionem et liberacionem ecclesie' ('for the reformation of the Church and her release') from the schism.⁵⁸ The language of the universal Church and the association between the Crown and the Church in the *GHQ* speak volumes for its author's vision of the relationship between the two and their role as the foundations of society. The *GHQ*'s author's explanation that the heretics challenged these two concepts suggests that for him the fabric of societal order depended on the security of the Church and Crown. Ideally, as under Henry V, they were united in purpose. In such an instance the expansion of the king's power and the Church's authority were one and the same.

Henry Knighton was far less clear-cut about the issue. His chronicle suggests that he often took a more English-centric perspective on the Church. He acknowledged its monolithic nature, describing it as the universal or Mother Church occasionally. However, his choice of language also emphasised the divisions between the Church in England and the wider communion which had been exacerbated by the schism.⁵⁹ He discussed the Church within England separately from the whole on several occasions.⁶⁰ This is not surprising, the English bishops and abbots often acted semi-autonomously from the papacy, and in particular in their dealings with the Crown the English prelates were often independent. However, Knighton also criticised the papacy.⁶¹ In 1358 he remarked that King Edward III refused to be cowed by the pope and instead denied the tribute the pope demanded from him and described Edward as 'prouidus' ('wise') for his refusal.⁶² Taken in combination, Knighton's approach to the papacy and to the Church as a single institution was more complex than the author of the *GHQ*'s.

⁵⁶ *GHQ*, 149.

⁵⁷ *GHQ*, 2, 12.

⁵⁸ *GHQ*, 12.

⁵⁹ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 206, 134, 272, 280, 318.

⁶⁰ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 3, 280

⁶¹ See below, 91.

⁶² Knighton, *Chronicon*, 159.

There was a distinction between the English clergy and the trans-European Church. As English clerics, most of the chroniclers existed within a multi-layered institution with various calls on their allegiances (though there were exceptions such as Adam who whilst he is often counted amongst the English chroniclers was Welsh). The regular chroniclers lived within religious houses. Both Benedictine and Augustinian orders were organised on a national rather than an international basis, while the various provinces of Christendom, most importantly for the chroniclers the archbishoprics of York and Canterbury, formed another layer of clerical identity. The rights of the chroniclers' institutions were linked to the English government and Crown and therefore in large part to their fortunes. The importance of identification as English clerks rather than simply members of the transnational Church was evident in the wider context. By the end of the schism, during the Council of Constance, the English argued for their right to representation as a 'nation' alongside French, Italians and Germans during the Council.⁶³ This distinction appears as part of an essential framework for understanding the network of allegiances between the chroniclers as English clerks and the wider international context.

Knighton differentiated between the English clergy – indeed the English as a whole – and the papacy. He even depicted the mid-fourteenth century papacy as an antagonistic force and stated that the pope favoured the French over the English, which bias identified the papacy as the supporters of the enemy in the Hundred Years War.⁶⁴ In the account for 1357 Knighton quoted the pithy popular saying,

Ore est ly Pape de uenu Fraunceys, e Ihesu de uenu Engleys.

Ore serra ueou qe fra plus, ly pape ou Ihesus.

(Now is the pope a Frenchman born, and Christ an Englishman,
And the world shall see what the pope can do, more than his Saviour
can.)⁶⁵

The remark articulates a sense of division in the Christian Church. The English were at odds with the papacy, taking the English clergy with them. Knighton's divided loyalties are symptomatic of the Hundred Years War and the textual context which saw a deliberate discourse that set English and clerical identity

⁶³ Antony Black, 'Popes and Councils', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History. Volume VII: C. 1415–c. 1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 67.

⁶⁴ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 49, 118, 150.

⁶⁵ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 150–151.

first.⁶⁶ Indeed, the schism itself, during which Knighton was writing, undermined the authority of the Roman Curia and may have led to a questioning of the universal Church as a workable concept.

However, as his chronicle progressed, Knighton warmed to the pope. Although the main drive for this appears to have been John Wyclif's attacks on the hierarchy of the Church the schism itself, which led to the French aligning themselves with the anti-pope whilst the English declared for the pope in Rome, may have helped to soften how Knighton perceived the English relationship with later popes. He described how 'gens Anglicana dicto Urbano pape fauebat, et ipsum ut uerum papem amplectebatur et colebat' ('the English people supported the said Pope Urban, and embraced and nurtured him as the true pope').⁶⁷ Knighton intermixed the language of the united Church with diversions into the division between the English Church and the universal Church. This, combined with his account of fraught relations between the English people and the pope, demonstrate that he held multiple perspectives on the Church simultaneously, with his allegiance to the English province surpassing his allegiance to the pope. However, his attitude mellowed as he began to discuss the period following the advent of the schism. Thus, the complex layers of his historical narrative and his use of language reflect many different impressions of the Church.

If we compare Knighton and Walsingham, whose shared distrust of the papacy mutating into a somewhat conditional acceptance may make them appear fairly similar, there are some distinct differences in their thinking that may have arisen from the variety in their access to information and the extent of their overview. Walsingham was connected to the network of Benedictines outside England, such as Adam Easton, and Simon Langham in the college of cardinals, affording him a broader perspective. Knighton, though by no means parochial, shows less evidence of such connections; instead many of his sources were either based in Oxford or in the duke of Lancaster's household. There is also the difference in period when they were writing: whilst Knighton's account came to an end in 1396, Walsingham's continued until the 1420s. So whilst both witnessed the schism and the rise of Lollardy, Walsingham also witnessed the efforts made by the Emperor Sigismund, Henry V, and the

⁶⁶ Joanna Bellis, *The Hundred Years War in Literature, 1337–1600* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2016), 67.

⁶⁷ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 280.

Council of Constance to put an end to the schism, and personally saw the formal papal documentation emphasising the universality of the Church. Though this is speculative, it does point to the many possible causes for their slightly different timetables and ways in which each chronicler's position shifted. Walsingham continued to have issues with the corruption of the papacy.⁶⁸

Knighton's shift in support of the Roman pope away from his earlier criticisms of him is potentially part of a wider movement in the period. The pope's assistance in opposing Wyclif's heresy seems to have won admiration from other chroniclers such as Thomas Walsingham, who was also often critical of the papacy. In part the papacy's interventions and condemnations of Wyclif's work were the result of pressure exerted by the English clergy, such as Adam Easton (c.1330–97), within the Curia.⁶⁹ Although there is little evidence that Knighton or Walsingham were aware of the details of this, the Westminster chroniclers might have been as Adam Easton was in communication with the abbot of Westminster, and the Monk of Westminster recorded his arrest by Urban VI in 1385.⁷⁰ In any case, the papacy's backing for quashing heresy earned praise from chroniclers like Walsingham as they repeated the papal bulls to counter Wyclif's position.⁷¹

The Papal Schism drove more than one chronicler to reflect on the nature of the Church and to question whether their primary allegiance was to the international Church or to the English clergy. The Monk of Westminster – although he expressed a conception of a difference between the English clergy and the Church as a whole – used language which repeatedly reinforced the claim of the Roman pope over other contenders and used phrases that emphasised the truth of that claim.⁷² Three times he described the pope as 'verum Christi vicarium in terris' ('Christ's true vicar on earth'), distinguishing him from implied pretenders to the title, and described him as Christ's vicar on a further two occasions.⁷³ He also included in his chronicle a papal bull delivered by a papal nuncio establishing the rights of the Church in England and the

⁶⁸ See below, 107.

⁶⁹ R. Dobson, 'Easton, Adam (c.1330–1397), Benedictine Monk, Scholar, and Ecclesiastic', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-8417>.

⁷⁰ *Westminster Chronicle*, 106; Dobson, 'Easton, Adam'.

⁷¹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 16.

⁷² For further discussion of differentiation in the *Westminster Chronicle* between the English clerical community and the Roman Curia, see, below, 177–178.

⁷³ *Westminster Chronicle*, 108, 140, 160.

primacy of the Roman pontiff, and he followed this with Richard II's reply, which denounced the anti-pope.⁷⁴ The Monk's participation in the discussion of the papal claim suggests that for him it was the Roman Curia that bounded the notion of the Church, though there are also signs that his loyalty was divided and often centred on the English Church. As discussed below, the Chronicler and Monk wrote with a shared style which suggested that Westminster was in some sense able to judge the Crown and the universal Church from a unique vantage point as the seat of the royal regalia. The Monk's focus was certainly on the battle of the liberties of the Church in England.⁷⁵ Many of the chroniclers explicitly considered their identity as clerks. Knighton identified as a member of the clergy in his complaint that the translation of the Bible into English by Wyclif was allowing women and uneducated lay men to read that which had been written in the language of angels.⁷⁶ The author of the *GHQ* explicitly referred to himself and the other priests in Henry V's army praying at Agincourt, defining himself as part of that priestly group.⁷⁷ Thomas Walsingham reflected repeatedly on the dangers posed to monks as members of the clergy by groups such as the Lollards, or by unfair taxation from the Crown.⁷⁸ The question of the unity of the Church and the identity of the true Vicar of Christ seeped into the fabric of the chronicle.

The chroniclers' interaction with the concept of the Church was not limited to the national and the universal or to questions of unity over schismatic discord. Adam of Usk stands out for his unusual experiences. His chronicle, as mentioned, was semi-autobiographical and the language and terms he used emphasised the personal rather than the institutional aspects of the Church. Throughout his chronicle he referred to the Church on an international and a national level. However, he also he repeatedly focused upon the Church as represented in the person of his patron, 'dominus meus Cant' archiepiscopus' ('my lord archbishop of Canterbury').⁷⁹ His time in service to Archbishop Thomas Arundel of Canterbury before and after his sojourn in the papal court defined arguably the most successful years of Adam's life. When Arundel died

⁷⁴ *Westminster Chronicle*, 458–468, 470.

⁷⁵ See below, 108.

⁷⁶ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 242–244

⁷⁷ *GHQ*, 84.

⁷⁸ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 778.

⁷⁹ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 58, 68, 72, 92, 246; McHardy, 'Religion, Court Culture and Propaganda', 148.

Adam's own poor fortunes were highlighted when Adam noted that Arundel's successor to the See of Canterbury was the man who had previously succeeded to Adam's chair at Oxford.⁸⁰ The use of the phrase 'dominus meus Cant' archiepiscopus' spoke to Adam's close relationship with Arundel. As the head of the Church in England Arundel dominated Adam's account of ecclesiastical matters. The possessive language and the emphasis Adam placed on his service to Arundel shows the Church through the window of a personal connection. Adam's interaction with the elite of the Church framed his narrative. His personal circumstances as a priest, a canon lawyer, and as an employee of major prelates placed him in a position enjoyed by no other chronicler. It meant that he had a more immediate connection to prelates' concerns than to institutional concerns. Adam was unique amongst the chroniclers as none other is known to have worked directly for the pope and for the anti-pope.⁸¹ His chronicle must be read in the context of these unusual factors, factors which suggest that his concerns with the Church were flexible and depended in part on the advantages presented to him.

The Church dominated the historical imagination of many of the chroniclers. A great deal of chronicles such as the *Chronica Maiora* or the *Westminster Chronicle* is dedicated to the business of both the domestic and the universal Church, though in some chronicles, such as those of Whalley and Thomas Favent, it had a more limited presence.⁸² The examination of the various terms the chroniclers used when discussing the Church demonstrates the idiosyncrasies of this corpus of texts. The Church might have been a fundamental pillar of their lives, society, and intellectual outlook, but the linguistic quirks of the texts suggest that they did not share a common perspective on it. They were generally aware of, but did not always use, the terms common in communication from the Roman Curia. There were also clear distinctions between the language used in different chronicles. They certainly used terms which they held in common with each other, but they also explored

⁸⁰ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 250.

⁸¹ Chris Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', in *The Chronicle of Adam Usk: 1377–1421*, ed. and trans. Chris Given-Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), xxix.

⁸² Thomas Favent, 'Appendix: History or Narration Concerning the Manner and Form of the Miraculous Parliament at Westminster in the Year 1386, in the Tenth Year of the Reign of King Richard the Second after the Conquest, Declared by Thomas Favent, Clerk', in *The Letter of the Law: Legal Practice and Literary Production in Medieval England*, eds. Emily Steiner and Candace Barrington, trans. Andrew Galloway (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002); Kingsford, 'A Northern Chronicle', 281–291.

their own ideas. The language suggests that they shifted through mental gears to encompass multiple narratives of what the Church represented.

The chroniclers appear to have enjoyed making stylistic choices as much as trying to demonstrate some grand point with their narratives. Thomas Walsingham's narrative was particularly distinctive. Alongside terms such as 'rex', 'dominus rex', 'princeps', 'noster rex', 'magnificus rex' ('magnificent king'), and 'illustrius rex' ('illustrious king'), he also used more unusual descriptors for the king, such as 'rector' ('ruler') and, when Richard II entered London for his coronation in 1377, 'Cesarianos' ('Roman emperor').⁸³ Terms such as 'Cesarianos' were not entirely absent from other chronicles: Adam of Usk and Henry Knighton referred to the king as, or compared him with, 'Cesare', and John Strecche equated Henry V specifically with Augustus Caesar.⁸⁴ In his *Gesta Abbatum* Walsingham also used the title for Abbot Thomas de la Mare.⁸⁵ When these terms were used they often played into existing historical narratives and established a tone. Christopher Linsley has argued that Walsingham appropriated classical terms, deliberately recasting English history in the mould of the Roman Empire.⁸⁶ However, the use of such terms does not necessarily denote a consistent and deliberate attempt to create a comparison between ancient history and contemporary events. Terms could also be applied by authors who were simply invested in the literary style of other historical texts and appreciated them. Walsingham's reading and work demonstrated an intense interest in classical literature.⁸⁷ In 1377 Walsingham compared Richard's entry into London for his coronation to a Roman triumph, despite the lack of key elements of the triumph, such as a significant military victory.⁸⁸ Entry ceremonies were undoubtedly moments of great symbolic significance for a monarch, often imbuing the person of the king with sacral as well as temporal glory.⁸⁹ However, Walsingham's choice of terms here seems intended to reflect

⁸³ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 584; Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 584, 136, 124, 118, 10, 146.

⁸⁴ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 264; Knighton, *Chronicon*, 254; Frank Taylor, 'The Chronicle of John Strecche for the Reign of Henry V, 1414–1422', *The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 16, no. 1 (1932): 186.

⁸⁵ James G. Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance at St Albans: Thomas Walsingham and His Circle, c. 1350–1440*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 29.

⁸⁶ Christopher David Linsley, 'Nation, England and the French in Thomas Walsingham's *Chronica Maiora* 1376–1420' (The University of York, 2015), 96.

⁸⁷ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 210.

⁸⁸ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 136.

⁸⁹ The literature on entry ceremonies is large and wide ranging, see, for further discussion, Gordon Kipling, *Enter the King: Theatre, Liturgy, and Ritual in the Medieval Civic Triumph*,

the scale of the ceremony rather than to tie classical and contemporary history together into a comparative narrative.

There are instances throughout the chronicles where the inclusion of unusual terms such as Caesar give a particular tenor to an account. Henry Knighton and Thomas Walsingham, for instance, referenced John Wyclif's heretical doctrines, among them, that if the pope should be known to be evil then he would have no power over Christians, except that given to him by 'Cesare'.⁹⁰ The use of the title 'Caesar' tied directly into notions of temporal and ecclesiastical authority, and implicit comparisons were possibly intended to biblical passages such as Matthew 22:21 in which Jesus replied to the Pharisees that everyone should to render unto Caesar that which was Caesar's, and to God that which was God's.⁹¹ Wyclif's use of the title to refer to the secular authorities suggests a deliberate invocation of specific scriptural precedents. However, Knighton and Walsingham explicitly rejected Wyclif's doctrine, so, they include his use of 'Cesare' only to then refute his argument. The evident care taken by authors in their use of language does suggest that the chroniclers had distinct views on the temporal and spiritual pillars of their society. The ideas represented by this language were often a moulding of imagery, but not every instance should necessarily be seen as demonstrating a strategic intent.

Division

The chroniclers' depiction the Church and the Crown divided their roles, their power, and their authority. The study of the terminology used by Latinate historical writers to describe the Church and Crown points to the range of perspectives these clerics held upon the two principal authorities in their lives. The detail of those perspectives is, however, best supplied by turning to the instances in which the chroniclers addressed the Church and Crown in the context of one another. When viewed in isolation from each other the question of the supremacy of the Church or the Crown did not need to be addressed:

Oxford Scholarship Online 2011 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); David Cannadine and Simon Price, eds., *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, Past and Present Publications (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁹⁰ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 598; Knighton, *Chronicon*, 258.

⁹¹ Matthew 22:21.

each was dominant in its respective sphere.⁹² When the chroniclers came across points in time or events during which the Church and the Crown interacted, there was often tension between the two. This section suggests that the chroniclers often coincided on the conclusion that the Church was supreme. However, the arguments they used to reach this point and the implications of their conclusion were often wildly different. The divisions which chroniclers drew between the authority of the Church and the Crown reflect how they engaged with this complex relationship.

In the chronicles the most common interaction between Church and Crown was taxation. This was often expressed in accounts as a negotiation of power and obligation between the two. The chroniclers were intellectual individuals who voiced ideas of what the two institutions represented. They were also often pragmatic, and in the case of taxation this was particularly evident. G. W. Bernard has noted that the demands for taxation from the Crown and the acceptance of these demands by the clergy carried with them an implicit admission of secular control.⁹³ However, many of the chroniclers denied this power structure. The dynamics of the relationship between the temporal and the spiritual realm were under peculiar strain in the late fourteenth century. The Hundred Years War had laid an exceptional fiscal burden on the regular clergy, whose institutions were subjected to frequent taxation in its cause. The chroniclers, particularly those embedded within institutions, would have been keenly aware of this. Taxation for the war effort features prominently in Walsingham's, Knighton's, the Westminster chroniclers', and Strecche's chronicles.⁹⁴ Their context, as writers within institutional settings which had to deal regularly with taxation and which contributed to debates on taxation in parliament, should not be overlooked. At the same time, John Wyclif was

⁹² Walter Ullmann, *Medieval Papalism: The Political Theories of the Medieval Canonists*, Routledge Library Editions, Political Science, Vol. 36 (London: Routledge, 2010 [1949]), 76; Joseph Canning, *Ideas of Power in the Late Middle Ages, 1296–1417* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1.

⁹³ G. W. Bernard, *The Late Medieval English Church: Vitality and Vulnerability Before the Break with Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 21. For further discussion of royal taxation and its reception within the English Church see, Cary J. Nederman, 'Royal Taxation and the English Church: The Origins of William of Ockham's "An Princeps"', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 37, no. 3 (July 1986): 377–388; W. M. Ormrod, 'The Rebellion of Archbishop Scrope and the Tradition of Opposition to Royal Taxation', in *The Reign of Henry IV: Rebellion and Survival, 1403–1413*, eds. Gwilym Dodd and Douglas Biggs (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press; Boydell & Brewer, 2008), 162–179.

⁹⁴ Taylor, 'The Chronicle of John Strecche', 154; Knighton, *Chronicon*, 206; Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 10.

advocating for the increased control of ecclesiastical assets by the temporal lords.⁹⁵ As Wyclif's ideas gained traction, the balance between temporal and spiritual authority became a matter for public debate. This debate was characterised in the chronicles by a plethora of distinct narratives on how the contract of taxation operated.

Taxation is almost ubiquitous as a subject across the chronicles. Thomas Walsingham, the Westminster chroniclers, Adam of Usk, Henry Knighton, the authors of the *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, and the writer of the *Anonimale Chronicle* all mentioned taxation of the clergy as a regular part of life.⁹⁶ This should not, however, be taken as indicating a homogeneous experience. Adam of Usk, as a secular priest, experienced taxation as a personal concern rather than one which he bore as part of a community, whereas writers such as Walsingham, who were part of a religious house which submitted tax payments, had the interests of the *domus* in mind. Taxation touched the chroniclers personally as well as in theory. It was the real and present demonstration of the power of the Crown.

Often the same author delivered multiple perspectives. Henry Knighton regularly described taxation through the same formula: the king held a parliament at which a grant was made from the laity and the clergy, before Knighton then specified the size of the grant.⁹⁷ Sometimes, in accordance with his personal position as a canon of St Mary of the Meadows, he recorded the payment the abbey had made, such as the eighteen sacks of wool in 1337.⁹⁸ He also gave the maltolt, or tax upon wools, the alliterative epithet 'mala' ('wicked').⁹⁹ The inclusion of the record of taxation in 1337 is interesting principally because at the time he was writing Knighton must have been looking approximately thirty years or more into the past. His choice to include the tax paid by the abbey is perhaps suggestive of the interest in the affairs and circumstances of his *domus*. It is a salient reminder of the incredible impact of the chroniclers' professional and communal contexts on their historical accounts.

⁹⁵ M. E. Aston, 'Lollardy and Sedition 1381–1431', *Past & Present*, no. 17 (1960): 3.

⁹⁶ *Anonimale Chronicle*, 132; George B. Stow and Nicholas Herford, eds., *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), 61; Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 16–18, 38, 126; Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 2, 8, 10, 68–70, 98–100; *Westminster Chronicle*, 50, 204, 244, 526; Knighton, *Chronicon*, 4, 8, 54, 74, 76, 78, 86, 138.

⁹⁷ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 8, 24, 42, 54, 74, 86, 138, 334, 334, 338, 339, 370, 508, 542, 548, 550.

⁹⁸ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 2.

⁹⁹ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 186.

There are two occasions early in Knighton's chronicle when the king claimed tax from the Church which reveal that Knighton's perspective on the relationship between the Crown and the Church was under pressure. He described how in 1337 Edward III seized 'omnes thesauros' ('all the treasures') of the 'alienigenis religiosus, et similiter de secularibus' ('the foreign religious and secular clergy') in England, and let this pass without criticism.¹⁰⁰ When, in 1338 Edward took 'uestimenta, uasa argentea, et alia ornamenta' ('vestments and silver vessels and other ornaments') from the English monasteries, however, Knighton observed that it could have led to a disaster if Edward had not been persuaded to change his mind.¹⁰¹ 'Ortus ingens clamor in populo' ('there arose a great outcry from the people'), he recounted.¹⁰² The episodes neatly paralleled one another, though in the first instance Edward III was taxing the foreign clergy and in the second he was targeting the English Church. Relating the second episode, Knighton was clear that the Crown should not claim Church property. Yet the first example suggests that his concern did not extend to the king's seizure of the assets of non-English clergy. This distinction suggests that Knighton held separate views on the national and the international aspects of the Church when it came to the consideration of ecclesiastical and monarchical rights. Yet, at the same time, his choice of language indicates that he acknowledged the existence of an overarching mother Church. Again, the issue of whether the Church was consistently envisaged as universal rears its head. Knighton's specific concept of the English Church conflicted with the idea of a trans-European authority. The concerns and interests of the house and the desire that institutions like St Mary of the Meadows should not suffer such taxation seem to underly the defence of English religious houses. These notions come to the forefront in his response to the pressures and demands of one institution on another (such as royal taxation), which imply a conception of the Church as multi-faceted and requiring a differentiated relationship with the Crown.

Knighton's balancing act heightened the sense of the division within the Church. He recorded that in 1343 the pope claimed 1000 marks from

¹⁰⁰ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 4; W. R. Jones, 'The English Church and Royal Propaganda during the Hundred Years War', *Journal of British Studies* 19, no. 1 (1979): 26.

¹⁰¹ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 6.

¹⁰² Knighton, *Chronicon*, 6.

Canterbury and 1000 marks from York to support cardinals.¹⁰³ However, this led to a reply, based on 'communi consilio regni' ('the common advice of the kingdom'), that the English would not suffer such impositions from 'curia Romana' ('the Roman court').¹⁰⁴ From this passage it is evident that Knighton divided the rights and role of the English Church from the Roman Church. The pope's interference with the fiscal affairs of the English clergy stretched the relationship too far. It is an indication of the distinctions between the expectations he placed on the Crown's behaviour to the English clergy and to foreign clergy, including the pope. There is no single, holistic view to be drawn from Knighton on the Church. There are indications that he was proactive in the defence of the English clergy's liberties. However, as he acknowledged the links between the different branches of the Church there is no one answer to the question of how he understood the obligations of the Church and Crown owed each other when it came to taxation.

The opposition to royal taxation of the Church – common amongst the clergy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries – highlights the fraught relationship between Crown and Church.¹⁰⁵ The Westminster Monk made a resounding attack on the taxation of the English clergy. The Monk would have been witness to the dismay and fury of the clergy on the subject of taxation, given that the Convocation frequently met at the abbey. In response to taxation he promoted a hierocratic worldview. The Westminster chroniclers usually tolerated royal taxation, but in 1384 Richard II overstepped his bounds and the Monk gave a detailed commentary on the problems this represented.¹⁰⁶ Richard had requested tax from the laity and clergy. They both had granted him funds, but he was not satisfied and threatened to bring proceedings against them unless further funds were given.¹⁰⁷ The clergy and laity bowed under the pressure.¹⁰⁸ The Monk's response was to launch a diatribe against the prelates of the Church for failing to resist Richard II's demands:

Constat namque istis diebus fere in ecclesia Dei omnia luminaria fore extincta, quod dolendum est, quia premaxime tenebre obnubilant ejus

¹⁰³ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 46.

¹⁰⁴ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 46.

¹⁰⁵ Ormrod, 'The Rebellion of Archbishop Scrope and the Tradition of Opposition to Royal Taxation', 174–175.

¹⁰⁶ *Westminster Chronicle*, 28, 32, 48, 82, 102, 321, 369, 524.

¹⁰⁷ *Westminster Chronicle*, 82.

¹⁰⁸ *Westminster Chronicle*, 84.

superficiem usquequaque, nec est aliquis jam qui disponat se exurgere et stare ex adverso pro ecclesia Dei. Facti sunt ejus prelati sicut 'canes muti non valentes latrare'.

(It is generally agreed nowadays almost all the lamps have gone out in the Church of God, more is the pity, since the darkness that on every side shadows her face is indeed great and there is none now inclined to bestir himself and make a stand for God's Church. Her prelates have become like 'dumb dogs that cannot bark'.)¹⁰⁹

The Westminster Monk explicitly objected to the suggestion that the Crown should have authority or power over the Church. His account suggests that he understood the complex relationship between the two as one in which whilst the Church possessed ultimate authority, the Crown held practical power. The Monk's critique of the prelates highlighted their failure to defend the Church from temporal powers. From the description of dark lamps and silent protectors, we may conclude that in the Monk's opinion leading churchmen were failing in their duty to the institution and permitting the king to act unjustly. This reading of the Monk's commentary is supported by the description of the prelates as 'dumb dogs' apparently to refer to Isaiah 56:10 in which Israel – for which the Church appears to be an analogue here – was left unprotected by her watchmen. The Monk understood the Church to be in crisis. As a clerk he positioned himself as a voice crying out to his superiors for action. His historical imagination, as expressed in this episode, was heavily influenced by his understanding of the Crown, the Church, and the relationship between the two. He appears to have situated himself as a commentator unaligned with the Crown but also somewhat apart from the Church. Taking the unusual position of Westminster Abbey and its proximity to parliament, as well as its relationship to the Crown, into account we may conclude that Westminster's view was distinct from Knighton's. The Monk's fears for the Church entered the account through an implicit comparison to earlier eras when prelates defended the Church from taxation of this kind. What he shares with Knighton is a revulsion for taxation which harmed the *domus*.

The Westminster Monk's perspective on taxation was not, of course, representative of all chroniclers. Henry Knighton was not in such close proximity to the decision-making processes which determined clerical taxation as the

¹⁰⁹ *Westminster Chronicle*, 84.

Westminster Monk. From 1352, St Mary of the Meadows had not been obliged to send representatives to parliament.¹¹⁰ Knighton, writing in probably the late 1370s to 1390s, was therefore at a remove from the hub where taxation was agreed upon. He may have reflected upon taxation at large, or through reports, but he had a less personal connection to the parliamentary agreements on taxation. Meanwhile, Walsingham appears to have attended parliament occasionally, and as part of the St Albans community he had more immediate access to news of it (see below). Of course, the Westminster chroniclers were in the closest proximity to events in Westminster Hall, and the Lords often convened in the abbey's chapter house. They were privy to the most immediate accounts of parliamentary debates and had the greatest opportunity to witness them for themselves. As such, their accounts come from different contexts which perhaps explains the different focuses of their criticism. Whilst Knighton had good reason to consider the impact of taxation, the Monk condemned the prelates who had not opposed it in parliament.

Taxation was not a clear-cut case of the Crown against the Church for all chroniclers. Thomas Walsingham described how in the parliament held at Westminster in 1384 between 12 November and 14 December the clergy were to be taxed more heavily than the laity.¹¹¹ Walsingham criticised the knights and commons for this rather than the king. He reported that the then archbishop of Canterbury, William Courtenay (c.1381–96), opposed the taxation. According to Walsingham, Courtenay argued that 'presertim cum ecclesia esse libera, et per laicos nullo modo taxanda; ymmo, cicius caput exponeret pro hac causa, quam in tantum sanctarn ecclesiam Anglicanam permetteret ancillari' ('the Church should be free and in no respect taxed by the laity. Indeed, he said he would sooner risk his life for this cause, than allow the Holy Church in England to be so enslaved').¹¹² Walsingham said that knights rejoiced, envisaging the distribution of the Church's temporalities, and added the personal note that he heard one knight declare he wanted to make a thousand marks from St Albans.¹¹³ Again the concern amongst regular chroniclers with the fiscal damage done to the *domus* surfaced. Walsingham's focus on the risk to St

¹¹⁰ G. H. Martin, 'Introduction', in *Knighton's Chronicle 1337–1396*, ed. and trans. G. H. Martin, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), lii.

¹¹¹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 778.

¹¹² Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 778.

¹¹³ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 780.

Albans positions him as a commentator for the abbey. Whilst the knights and the archbishop were at odds Walsingham turned to Richard II's role in events: 'Set tante deliracioni non consensit rex' ('However, the king did not agree to such madness').¹¹⁴ Instead Richard prevented this taxation. In turn the clergy gave him a sum as a 'donation' in thanks. Walsingham delivered a clear message through his narrative: that the Church was not, nor should be, subservient or beholden to the temporal powers or the king. His refusal to accept that the clergy should be liable to taxation by the laity was a denial of temporal jurisdiction over the spiritual. Walsingham laid out a clear model for the relationship between lay and religious society, and thus carved out a defence for his *domus*. He positioned himself and the religious as superior to temporal powers. As part of this he demonstrated the appropriate attitude for a good king to hold towards the Church. Eventually the Church agreed to pay a grant to Richard, but through choice rather than obligation. The corollary of which was that St Albans, in particular, was defended against a precedent which would enable the stripping of its assets. Walsingham's narrative bears many similarities to the Westminster Monk's account; however, there was a significant stylistic difference: Walsingham's description was more positive towards the king in this instance, his ire was turned towards the laity rather than the king or the Church. His report of the payment to the Crown as a gift made in gratitude carried with it the implication that taxation was performed on the sufferance of the Church, rather than simply excessive taxation as the Westminster Monk implied.

The violation of the liberties of the Church was a common theme amongst the chroniclers, who were often acutely aware of the privileges of their houses or patrons. The Westminster Monk and Thomas Walsingham were in a position to promote an unapologetically hierocratic model for society. Adam of Usk, unique once again, had a complex and personal relationship with royal power which shifted depending on circumstances. Adam's account suggests that he was a supporter of a Church free from concerns about royal power. He advanced the authority of the prelates and yet feared and made obeisance to royal power in his attempts to gain preferment. In 1400, Adam described how Thomas Arundel summoned his clergy and sadly explained to them that the temporal powers had repeatedly violated the English Church by arresting

¹¹⁴ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 780.

bishops. Adam claimed he spoke up to lend historical evidence to Arundel's claims. He remarked that if one were to examine the chronicles 'plus crudelitatis inuenitur in Anglis prelatibus quam in tota Cristianitate fuisse irrogatum' ('you will find that more crimes have been committed against prelates in England than in the whole of Christendom').¹¹⁵ He followed this account with a story told by Arundel of how Simon Islip (archbishop of Canterbury between 1349 and 1366) had plucked Thomas Lisle (bishop of Ely 1345–61) from the royal justices in Westminster Hall. Islip had, according to Adam, told Lisle, 'Subditus meus es' ('You are my subject').¹¹⁶ He then led him away declaring that the temporal powers could not judge him. Adam's account defends the rights of the Church and the clergy, emphasising that it had a separate jurisdiction to the temporal powers. Archbishop Islip's statement that Thomas Lisle was his subject distinguished the realm of the prelates from that of royal justice and provided a reminder of the ecclesiastical courts. Adam, like the Westminster Monk, feared that the English Church – separate in his account from the monolithic Church – faced a significant threat from the powers of the Crown. However, unlike the Westminster Monk he based his fear on personal rather than collective experience.

The focus of the account was on the independence of the Church, but it also demonstrates several key elements of Adam's intellectual approach to history and his unique personal experience. The episode was preceded by a description of the arrest and sentencing of the bishop of Carlisle and the bishop of Norwich for their support of Richard II.¹¹⁷ The use of evidence and anecdotes by Adam and Arundel reinforced the didactic and deliberately historical understanding of the relationship between the spiritual and temporal realms. From Adam's references to chronicles and the legal record to Arundel's description of events, it is apparent that Adam was delivering a self-aware and structured argument. His understanding of his role as an author of a history is also demonstrated in this account, which recorded the injustice of the Crown's attempts at dominion over the Church.

However, although Adam indicated his support for the separate jurisdiction of the Church, his own attitude towards the Crown was more complex. In a letter Adam sent to Henry IV in 1404 to avoid the king's wrath,

¹¹⁵ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 92.

¹¹⁶ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 94.

¹¹⁷ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 92.

which he included in his chronicle, he turned to the rightful power of the Crown. He appealed to the king with the words 'supplicans quam humiliter et deuote maiestati regie, sub cuius umbra uiuo et uolito' ('I most humbly and devoutly beg your royal majesty, in whose shadow I live and act').¹¹⁸ Adam also acknowledged his service to the pope. However, the letter with its language of subservience and the emphasis upon the power of the king over him moved away from the focus upon the separate world of the clergy. Instead it created an image of Church and Crown in balance. Adam's view on this occasion was almost certainly dictated by his royal audience, but he chose to include it within the chronicle. His admission that the Crown could practically violate the Church had recognised the king's power, but not its legitimacy. This letter added another dimension to the picture. It explicitly reinforced the power of the king to give mercy, guide actions, and grant promotions to the clergy.¹¹⁹ Adam, as the evidence he gave to support Arundel's position shows, was keenly aware of the import of the historical record and had a clear intellectual approach to the Crown and the Church. So, by including the letter in an episode presumably intended for posterity, Adam shifted his perspective significantly to accommodate dealing with a monarch rather than a prelate.

The chroniclers rarely altered their views to fit their audiences and those alterations that there were (such as the *Scandalous Chronicle*) were limited and were not consistently transmitted across their recensions. There is evidence that some of them were deliberately considering the balance of power and authority between the Crown and the Church through the medium of their historical narratives. The conflicting remits of the Church and Crown over justice were strikingly presented in the *Continuatio Eulogii*. The Franciscan author provided an argument between the chancellor of Oxford and the chancellor of the realm, Richard Scrope, over who controlled the University of Oxford. The author of the *Continuatio Eulogii* described how in 1378 students at Oxford insulted the king.¹²⁰ The chancellor and vice-chancellor of Oxford were summoned to London and questioned by Scrope, who quizzed them as to why

¹¹⁸ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 178.

¹¹⁹ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 176.

¹²⁰ Henry Knighton, *Knighton's Chronicle 1337–1396*, ed. and trans. G. H. Martin, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 360; Frank Scott Haydon, ed., *Eulogium (Historiarum Sive Temporis): Chronicon ab orbe condito usque ad annum Domini M.CCC.LXCI., a monacho quodam Malmesburiensi exaratum; accedunt continuationes duæ, quarum una ad annum M.CCCC.Xiii., altera ad annum M.CCCC.XC. perducta est* (London: Longman, 1858), 348.

the students had not been punished.¹²¹ The chancellor of Oxford explained that he had feared disorder if he had punished them. Scrope replied, 'Tu probare vis quod Oxonia non potest regi per clericum' ('You provide the evidence that Oxford cannot be governed by the clergy').¹²² The chancellor of Oxford answered that he received the office from both the pope and king and that Richard II could only remove the part of the office given by the king. Scrope responded that the king had removed him, so he could go to the pope if he wished. Eventually the chancellor resigned and did his best to avoid suggesting that he had been forced to. The stylistic choice of the *Continuatio Eulogii's* author, with its presentation of two opposing sides, is in the dialectic style of the universities, though it lacks an explicit conclusion.¹²³ The author broke down the case into two opposing propositions: from Scrope, that the clergy have a duty to the Crown to keep order and respect for royal majesty; from the chancellor of Oxford, that the king does not have the authority to strip a member of the clergy of his position. Practically, the victory went to Scrope. He dismissed the chancellor of Oxford and apparently proved the Crown's dominance over the university. However, although he was forced to resign the chancellor provided a reminder that the Crown shared its power with the pope. We may infer that the author of the *Continuatio Eulogii* was not convinced that the Crown should be the sole voice of justice. So, although the author's exact position is difficult to establish, it is evident that the chronicler was engaging in a discussion of society as bounded by the authority of the Crown and the Church.

The tension between the powers of the pope and the king was rarely more clearly realised than in Walsingham's report of the argument between Richard II and the pope in 1391. Richard had summoned the English clergy home from the Roman Curia on pain of the loss of their benefices.¹²⁴ The pope sent a nuncio, who commended the king for his devotion to the pope, advancing a hierocratic position. The nuncio argued against the statute on the grounds it would harm 'ecclesiasticam libertatem' ('the liberty of the Church').¹²⁵ He added that 'papa non intendit minuere coronam regis, nex tollere quin statute condere

¹²¹ Haydon, *Continuatio Eulogii* 348.

¹²² Haydon, *Continuatio Eulogii*, 348; translated in, A. K. McHardy, *The Reign of Richard II: From Minority to Tyranny 1377–97* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 49.

¹²³ For a discussion of another passage by the author of the *Continuatio Eulogii* in the same style, see above, 58.

¹²⁴ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 906.

¹²⁵ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 908.

ualeat non faciencia contra ecclesiasticam libertatem' ('the pope had no intention of weakening the king's royal power, nor to take from him the ability to draw up statutes which do not act against the liberty of the Church').¹²⁶ Walsingham explained the king agreed to support the pope's requests and put them to parliament as he was 'filius obediencie' ('an obedient son').¹²⁷ Walsingham and the nuncio were clear in their position. The king was subject to the pope, who could give or revoke his rights, even if the king still wielded significant temporal power.

Walsingham's position in this episode demonstrated the complexities of his writing and his competing motivations. As mentioned, Walsingham criticised the papal chaplaincies for their corruption in the *Gesta Abbatum* and implicitly in the *Chronica Maiora*.¹²⁸ His attack on the sale of papal chaplaincies by Walter Diss, and the purchase of them by mainly young men, highlighted the problems he perceived in a distant curia with goals which were not aligned with those of St Albans.¹²⁹ However, this episode demonstrated Walsingham's awareness that an attack on one part of the Church might endanger the rest, and his belief that the clergy (if not the papacy) were essential moral guides and guardians for society.

The Westminster Monk provided a clear-cut argument in favour of the hierocratic order, despite having a more positive view of Richard than that of other chroniclers, though it was one suffused with a pessimistic rather than an optimistic tone.¹³⁰ He focused on the king as one who needed his behaviour corrected. As early as in his record of 1385 the Westminster Monk was protesting what he saw as Richard's presumption of authority. In that year the Monk recorded that archbishop of Canterbury knelt before the king to beg his pardon.¹³¹ The Monk criticised Richard for his desire to make everyone show deference to his kingship and for his 'glorie cupidus' ('lust for glory').¹³² But he also argued that the archbishop should never have knelt to the king, 'cum pocius juxta canonicas sancciones regum colla et principum genibus pontificum

¹²⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 908.

¹²⁷ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 910.

¹²⁸ James G. Clark, 'Introduction', in *The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham 1376–1422*, trans. David Preest (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2005), 14.

¹²⁹ *Gesta abbatum*, II: 416–417.

¹³⁰ John Taylor, 'Richard II in the Chronicles', in *Richard II: The Art of Kingship*, eds. Anthony Goodman and James Gillespie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 16.

¹³¹ *Westminster Chronicle*, 138.

¹³² *Westminster Chronicle*, 138.

inclinari debeant et submitti' ('when according to the canonical rule it is rather the necks of kings and princes which should be bowed in submission at the feet of pontiffs').¹³³ Instead, the Monk argued, if the archbishop had the courage of St Thomas Becket he would have refused.¹³⁴ By making comparison with a saint, the Monk established the most moral behaviour which a member of the clergy, and particularly an archbishop, should display: unwavering self-sacrifice in defence of the authority of the Church. Through his emphasis on the supreme authority of canonical rules and the superiority of pontiffs the Monk advanced a vision of a clergy-led society in which temporal powers and the Crown held second place. This understanding was tainted by his historical imagination, which emphasised the waning quality of prelates. Thus, for the Westminster Monk the question of the authority of the Church and the Crown, which framed the political dramas of parliament and relations between prelates and kings, was surrounded by a historical narrative of decline. Ultimately, somehow, the Crown and the Church needed to be guided back onto the right lines.

The chroniclers of Westminster Abbey appear to have been uniquely situated in a historical view that envisioned the abbey as more than just one Benedictine monastery amongst many. Although there is a passion in the Monk's account for the advancement of the Church, as a whole throughout the *Westminster Chronicle* the chroniclers specifically advanced the importance of Westminster Abbey as the principal church in the realm. If we look to the wider context, the community at the abbey and its historical tradition emphasised its special place in the realm. The Westminster monk and historian John Flete (c.1398–1466) wrote of the abbey as 'regum sepultura, repositoriumque regalium iusignium; caput Angliae merito diademaque regni ab antique nominatur' ('the tomb of kings, and the repository of the royal insignia; and well named the head of England and the diadem of the realm').¹³⁵ As Emma Mason argued, Flete's words implied that Westminster was the 'spiritual head' of England.¹³⁶ The word 'caput' ('head') clearly demonstrates the belief among the Westminster community that their *domus* was the principal spiritual authority in England. Writing around two generations of monks earlier, the Westminster

¹³³ *Westminster Chronicle*, 138.

¹³⁴ *Westminster Chronicle*, 138.

¹³⁵ Flete, *Flete's History of Westminster Abbey*, 63; Harvey, 'Flete, John'.

¹³⁶ Emma Mason, "'The Site of King-Making and Consecration": Westminster Abbey and the Crown in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', *Studies in Church History, Subsidia* 9 (1991): 57.

Monk's censure of prelates for failing to defend the Church derived from a similar attitude. As a member of the Westminster community he berated the prelates for their weakness, and in doing so implied that the monks of Westminster were in a position to criticise both Crown and Church.¹³⁷

The intellectual and political culture of Westminster Abbey's community was expressed exceptionally clearly in the account of how the Peasants' Revolt came to an end at Smithfield. In this account the abbey featured as the crux of spiritual and royal authority that brought an end to the revolt. The Chronicler constructed the victory of the Church, Crown, and established order over the rebels as the work of St Edward the Confessor, who was deeply connected to the abbey.¹³⁸ The Westminster Chronicler described how on Saturday 15 June 1381 the rebels had violated the sanctuary of the abbey.¹³⁹ This incident was followed by the Chronicler's observation 'Sanctus Edwardus irrogatam sibi injuriam citissime vindicavit in sue sanctitatis exaltacionem et regni consolacionem' ('St Edward, to the exaltation of his sainthood and the comfort of the realm was swift indeed to avenge the wrong offered to him').¹⁴⁰ The narrative from this point is almost identical to that found in the *Anonimale Chronicle*. It also bears a striking resemblance to other chronicles such as the *Vita Ricardi*, barring a few slight differences.¹⁴¹ On the Sunday Richard II went to Westminster 'causa oracionis accessit, divinum at feretrum predicti regi imploraturu auxilium ubi humanum omnino defuit consilium' ('to supplicate at the shrine of the sainted king for divine aid where human counsel was altogether wanting').¹⁴² From thence Richard continued to Smithfield and there put an end to the revolt. The symbolic interaction between Richard II and St Edward the Confessor – the representative of Westminster Abbey and its avenger – is one in which the power dynamic was in favour of the saint king

¹³⁷ *Westminster Chronicle*, 139, 82–84.

¹³⁸ Michael Evans, *The Death of Kings: Royal Deaths in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon, 2003), 1, 10.

¹³⁹ *Westminster Chronicle*, 8.

¹⁴⁰ *Westminster Chronicle*, 8.

¹⁴¹ Harriet Merete Hansen, 'The Peasants' Revolt of 1381 and the Chronicles', *Journal of Medieval History* 6, no. 4 (1980): 393–415; *Anonimale Chronicle*, 147; *Vitae Ricardi Secundi*, 65. See below, 138.

¹⁴² Richard II worked to reinvigorate the importance of Edward the Confessor as a saint and throughout his reign paid especial attention to him and his shrine. *Westminster Chronicle*, 8; Sarah Blick, 'King and Cleric: Richard II and the Iconography of St Thomas Becket and St Edward the Confessor at Our Lady of Undercroft, Canterbury Cathedral', in *Beyond Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges*, ed. Sarah Blick, Essays in Honour of Brian Spencer (Oxbow Books, 2007), 187.

over his living counterpart. Throughout the Peasants' Revolt Richard had been unable to prevent the execution of his counsellors (such as Archbishop Sudbury), the violation of churches, and the riotous behaviour of the rebels.¹⁴³ Meanwhile, when Edward the Confessor's shrine was violated, the Westminster Chronicler observed, the saint immediately avenged himself, to the benefit of the realm. The contrast between the two figures is striking. It suggests the Westminster Chronicler regarded the power and authority vested in Edward the Confessor, as a representative of Westminster Abbey and the Church, as superior to that possessed by Richard II. Richard's visit to the abbey invested him with the support and counsel of the saint. Only then was he able to put an end to the revolt. Westminster Abbey was the location where the narrative turned and the revolt began its final act. At Westminster Richard II received the key support of Edward the Confessor. We may infer that the Westminster Chronicler, like later authors such as John Flete, was convinced of the authority of Westminster Abbey as the focal point of the Church in England.

In summary, it is evident that the majority of chroniclers were conscious participants in the theoretical discussion surrounding the relative authority of the Church and Crown. These institutions were immensely important to the chroniclers. Their power and authority drove the events within the chroniclers' narratives. There was an underlying support between chroniclers for a hierocratic social model. They also emphasised the importance of the freedoms of the Church. Yet, there were, too, significant differences between the levels to which they were concerned with this and the arguments they made in favour of a Church-led model. Nor were they entirely in agreement over who best represented the Church. Adam of Usk focused upon Archbishop Arundel. The Westminster Chronicler and Monk were proponents for their own abbey. Henry Knighton had a complex relationship with the authority of the ecclesiarchy. Therefore, the chroniclers' perspectives on the Crown and Church cannot be categorised together. They were not homogeneous. They were divided by the pragmatic interest of their houses in regard to taxation. They differentiated between the Roman and the English Church, but in response to different events. Perhaps most importantly, they were not solely informed by one authority or another. Instead their accounts demonstrate a myriad of often

¹⁴³ *Westminster Chronicle*, 2, 4.

inconsistent views; these expressed different historical models and alternative conceptions of the power relationships present in society.

Heresy

The chroniclers often presented quite disparate notions of the relative power and authority of Church and Crown, but they were also prepared and able to change their position depending on the circumstances. There was a significant commonality amongst them in regard to their reaction to Lollardy. This was partially tied into existing discourses on heresy as a spiritual disease and partially to the threat it posed to the aristocratic lifestyle of the well-off clergy.¹⁴⁴ Underlying their reaction, though, is also their understanding that the problematic doctrine of Wyclif was an intellectual and a social crisis. Amongst the chroniclers who discussed heresy there was often an increased emphasis on the importance of unity between the Church and Crown. Expressed through concepts such as the two swords – representing the temporal and spiritual power – chroniclers praised the king and the prelates for conjoined efforts against heretics.¹⁴⁵

In Thomas Walsingham's work there was a discernible shift towards an emphasis on the importance of the unity of the Church as the pressures of heresy and the Papal Schism mounted. As discussed above, the papacy's contribution to the spiritual battle, even as the result of pressure from the English clergy, appears to have been accepted positively – though Walsingham maintained a dislike of the papacy interfering in the business of the English monasteries.¹⁴⁶ Walsingham's use of language referencing the universal Church and 'unionis ecclesie sancta Die' ('the unity of the holy Church of God') increased dramatically after the beginning of the schism, and it was particularly common in the latter sections of his chronicle, which dealt with Lollardy.¹⁴⁷ Terms such as 'unitem ecclesie' ('unity of the Church') appeared when he

¹⁴⁴ P. H. Cullum, 'My Lord Bishop: Chronicles and the Construction of Episcopal Identity in Late Medieval England', *International Journal of Regional and Local History* 8, no. 1 (2013), 47.

¹⁴⁵ The debate over the relative roles of the spiritual and temporal swords was a long, ongoing, and contentious issue. See for further discussion, Nederman and Campbell, 'Priests, Kings, and Tyrants', 572–590; Gerard E. Caspary, *Politics and Exegesis*; Watt, 'Spiritual and Temporal Powers'.

¹⁴⁶ See below, 180.

¹⁴⁷ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 504, 508, 518, 538, 540, 550, 552, 554, 578, 622, 626, 632, 634, 654.

described the bishop of Norwich's crusade to Flanders in 1383.¹⁴⁸ When confronted with the Lollard revolt in 1414, led by John Oldcastle in an attempted coup, Walsingham emphasised that the rebels were turning against the authority and teachings of the Church.¹⁴⁹ Despite his own complex relationship with the Roman Curia the use of such terms suggests that Walsingham was imagining the heroes of the Church as those who mended its community. Simultaneously, we may infer that for Walsingham heresy was a social issue challenging the stability of the secular and the ecclesiastical realms. The language Walsingham used suggests he saw an increasing need for cooperation to put an end to threats, whether open, as in the case of the schism, or subversive, as in the case of Lollardy.

Walsingham's move towards an emphasis on the unity of the Church developed alongside his response initially to John Wyclif and then to the Lollards. His first description of Wyclif, in the 'scandalous chronicle', was as John of Gaunt's political and social tool in his schemes.¹⁵⁰ This changed in his later recension (probably from the 1390s) to a description of Wyclif as a northerner, a theologian, and a heretic in 1377, noting the particular threat he posed to monks and the universal Church.¹⁵¹ This was accompanied by complaints against Wyclif's doctrines and the Roman Curia's condemnation of them.¹⁵² Walsingham continued to complain against Wyclif's doctrines in this vein long after Wyclif's death. However, his account also shifted to accommodate his increasing sense that the nobility, like John Oldcastle, were listening to the ideas of the Lollards and might also pose a threat to the clergy.¹⁵³ In the course of his writing he demonstrates a significant move from discussing the heresy as a spiritual and intellectual threat to figuring it as a social crisis with the Oldcastle revolt in 1414.

The Oldcastle Revolt brought matters to a head for Walsingham, and in his account of the revolt he took on another perspective, hammering home the

¹⁴⁸ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 670.

¹⁴⁹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 630; Maureen Jurkowski, 'Henry V's Suppression of the Oldcastle Revolt', in *Henry V: New Interpretations*, ed. Gwilym Dodd (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2013), 103–130; Richard G. Davies, 'Lollardy and Locality', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 1 (December 1991): 198.

¹⁵⁰ Thomas Walsingham, *The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham, 1376–1422*, ed. James G. Clark, trans. David Preest (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2009), 30, fn. 4.

¹⁵¹ Thomas Walsingham, *Thomae Walsingham, Quondam Monachi S. Albani Historia Anglicana.*, ed. Henry Thomas Riley, vol. Volume 1: A.D. 1272–1381 (Longman, 1863), 324.

¹⁵² Thomas Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana*, Volume 1: A.D. 1272–1381:357.

¹⁵³ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 636.

importance of the Crown and the Church working together. Ironically, as Christopher Allmand has observed, on the wider stage Henry V's suppression of the Lollards saw an increase in secular power over the Church. Walsingham framed it as a matter of presenting a united front, a practical precaution against a common threat.¹⁵⁴ Walsingham established early in his account of Lollard's rebellion that they were the enemies of the Church and the king. He described how Oldcastle was 'hostis ecclesie pertinacissimus' ('an obdurate opponent of the Church').¹⁵⁵ He also detailed how at the start of the revolt the Lollards sought to capture and kill Henry V and his family at Eltham.¹⁵⁶ Walsingham and chroniclers such as the author of the *GHQ* and John Strecche emphasised that Henry V exposed himself to danger and fought the Lollards on the battlefield, taking the spiritual battle and the physical battle to the foes of the Church.¹⁵⁷ Walsingham also praised Thomas Arundel as a champion of the Church and one who 'contra Lollardos sepius Dominica bella bellauit' ('often fought the Lord's battles against the Lollards').¹⁵⁸ In the aftermath of the revolt Henry V had given additional powers to secular officials so that they might guard against heresy more effectively.¹⁵⁹ Furthermore, Ian Forrest – in his study of how heresy was treated and understood as a crime – has suggested that for some time after 1414 heresy was treated as treason by the royal courts.¹⁶⁰ This rising secular effort to combat heresy, in combination with a response to the direct threat the revolt had posed to the king, saw an increase in the coordination of the resources of the Crown and Church towards a common enemy. It is evident, that Walsingham had shifted over the course of the composition of his chronicle to an increasingly passionate sense that the Church required a form of unity and heroes such as the king and the archbishop as a united front against the threat posed intellectually, socially, and politically by the Lollards.

Walsingham praised the united efforts of the temporal and spiritual authorities against heresy, but other contemporary chroniclers, such as the

¹⁵⁴ Christopher Allmand, *Henry V* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 305; Patrick J. Horner, 'The King Taught Us the Lesson: Benedictine Support for Henry V's Suppression of the Lollards', *Medieval Studies* 52 (1990): 190–220.

¹⁵⁵ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 622.

¹⁵⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 636.

¹⁵⁷ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 638; *GHQ*, 6; Taylor, 'The Chronicle of John Strecche', 148. See below, 206–207.

¹⁵⁸ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 644.

¹⁵⁹ Jurkowski, 'Henry V's Suppression of the Oldcastle Revolt', 118.

¹⁶⁰ Ian Forrest, 'The Dangers of Diversity: Heresy and Authority in the 1405 Case of John Edward', *Studies in Church History* 43 (January 2007): 195.

author of the *GHQ*, went further, praising Henry as the champion of God. Such accounts had a propagandistic angle and also demonstrated how, for the author of the *GHQ*, the divide in authority between the Crown and Church could be bridged by a sufficiently pious king. The author of the *GHQ*, as a royal chaplain, came from a context of education and anti-Lollard sentiment.¹⁶¹ His account of the Oldcastle rebellion was vitriolic and evidently carefully crafted. At the beginning of his account the author established that Henry was 'electus eius' ('His [God's] elect').¹⁶² He then proceeded to explain that Oldcastle 'non solum in Regem set in universalem presumpsit ecclesiam' ('dared to presume not only against the king but also against the Universal Church').¹⁶³ Within the first folio of the narrative, then, the author clearly stated that the interests of the Church and the Crown were united and that Henry V had an especially close relationship with God. The intermingling of Henry's role as king with a more spiritual role had precedents, but it is also demonstration of the chronicler's conception of Henry V as a pillar of strength within the context of religious and social turmoil.¹⁶⁴ The two branches of authority, which were so frequently distinct in other chronicles, were depicted by the chronicler as working towards a single purpose. They united their power and authority to combat heresy.

The author of the *GHQ* displayed a clear notion of Henry as a meeting point for spiritual and temporal authority. He also explained the Oldcastle Revolt and its subsequent defeat in language which explicitly figured the Church and the Crown as two parts of a single whole. He noted that Oldcastle had conspired against 'gladii potestatem' ('the power of both Swords').¹⁶⁵ The author of the *GHQ* also described how, prior to the Revolt, when Oldcastle had been tried for heresy, Henry had ordered that he should be struck with the sword, 'primo spirituali, inde temporal' ('first the spiritual, then the temporal').¹⁶⁶ These phrases directly referenced the language of the discourse over the relative authority of the Church and Crown and of the suppression of heresy. Henry was the one to command that both swords should be used upon Oldcastle not just the temporal. This may suggest that for the author of the *GHQ* the boundary between the authority of king and the authority of the clergy was not immutable,

¹⁶¹ McHardy, 'Religion, Court Culture and Propaganda', 142.

¹⁶² *GHQ*, 2.

¹⁶³ *GHQ*, 2

¹⁶⁴ Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, 43.

¹⁶⁵ *GHQ*, 6.

¹⁶⁶ *GHQ*, 4.

though such a reading should not discount the possibility of factual accuracy. Although with a deep emphasis on the supremacy of God, the author of the *GHQ* seems to have held a more theocratic or dualistic than hierocratic belief in the nature of authority, in line with his service to the Crown.

The language of the king as the champion of the Church, its defender and wielder of its authority was part of a wider discourse; a discourse, which seems to have spread amongst the chroniclers, maybe partially as a result of Henry V's own propaganda.¹⁶⁷ Adam of Usk used similar descriptions to the author of the *GHQ*'s in his version of the Oldcastle Revolt. He wrote that the Lollards had sought to attack the king, 'fortem pro fide pugilem Christianissime zelantem' ('that mighty zealot and champion of the Christian faith').¹⁶⁸ This representation of Henry as a champion of the spiritual with temporal power was in line with Henry's own propaganda.¹⁶⁹ Adam and other chroniclers were already prepared for the figure of the holy warrior king and for the threat which Lollardy posed (in their opinion) to the Crown as well as the Church. In his account of the execution of the heretic William Sawtre in 1401 Adam recorded that before he died Sawtre said, 'Ego, missus a Deo, dico tibi, quod tu et totus clerus tuus, et eciam rex, estis in breui mala morte morituri' ('I, who am sent from God, say to you that you and all your clergy, and the king too, will shortly succumb to an evil death').¹⁷⁰ Although it lacked the framing of the king as the champion of Christianity, Adam's record of the threats made by Sawtre featured the same pattern apparent in Walsingham's account and that of the author of the *GHQ*. It suggested that the heretics sought to tear down these pillars of society. The existential threat which this suggests was not entirely novel in the discussion of heresy. Certainly, the papacy had framed heresy as an attack on the foundations of Christianity and society by individuals rebelling against orthodox doctrine.¹⁷¹ As Richard Obenauf has observed, John of Salisbury had represented heresy in the twelfth century as inherently treasonous, a political

¹⁶⁷ Alison McHardy has suggested that the *GHQ* may have initially been intended as the history of Henry V's victory over Lollardy; although if so, the opening lines which focus upon Henry's French campaigns are somewhat out of place. McHardy, 'Religion, Court Culture and Propaganda', 154.

¹⁶⁸ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 246

¹⁶⁹ McHardy, 'Religion, Court Culture and Propaganda', 131, 154.

¹⁷⁰ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 122.

¹⁷¹ Carol Lansing, *Power and Purity: Cathar Heresy in Medieval Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 33.

affair as well as a religious one.¹⁷² However, in England and amongst the chroniclers it represents a more unprecedented threat to English society, stretching between the intellectuals at Oxford and the masses. These three chronicles, representative of the wider swathe, appear then to have been united by the common concern for the two institutions. In the episodes detailing heresy there seems to have been a move towards a more dualistic societal model, or at least one in which clerical supremacy was not stressed.

Henry V turned narratives of the king and the prelates acting in unity against heretics to his own advantage. However, it was a narrative which chroniclers, like Adam, were already well acquainted with. The tropes of the narrative itself were malleable. The Westminster Monk, although he rarely discussed heresy, took a similar line. He emphasised the power and authority of the king, but he also stressed that in combating heretics Richard II was serving the Church. In 1387, when Richard II decided in favour of an abbot over a Lollard squire in a dispute over taxation, the Monk prefaced the account 'Ecce quomodo nobilis rex ecclesiam Dei venerator et diligit! Quam affecuose et sollicite satagit ejus libertates defendere ac eciam conservare!' ('How this noble king reveres and loves God's Church! How sympathetically and anxiously he exerts himself to champion her liberties and preserve them!')¹⁷³ The Westminster Monk repeated this sentiment in various forms three further times during the episode.¹⁷⁴ The Monk praised Richard for 'revering' the Church, for his service to it. The king protected the Church and the exercise of his power ensured its rights. However, unlike the account of Henry V in the *GHQ* Richard did not implicitly take on the authority of the Church. Instead the Westminster Monk's reflections on the relationship between the Crown and Church in the context of Lollardy suggest that his perspective on kingship was thoroughly dominated by the overwhelming authority of the Church over king.

Even with the broadly similar terms used to discuss the relationship between the Crown, Church, and heresy there were significant variations in tone and the conclusions chroniclers drew. Henry Knighton delivered an account of the Crown's efforts to curb the Lollards which cast doubt on the

¹⁷² Richard Obenauf, 'Censorship and Intolerance in Medieval England' (Loyola University of Chicago, 2015), 68.

¹⁷³ *Westminster Chronicle*, 326.

¹⁷⁴ *Westminster Chronicle*, 326–328.

efficacy of temporal action.¹⁷⁵ Given that Knighton died before the reigns of Henry IV and Henry V, Lollardy may have appeared a more insurmountable problem to him than to the authors who saw the Oldcastle Revolt, though later chroniclers' emphasis on the threat it posed may have been meant to exaggerate Henry V's victory over the Lollards.¹⁷⁶ Knighton was well informed and interested in heresy. Again, his position within St Mary of the Meadows at Leicester informed his account. Leicester was closely connected to a number of Lollards, including William Swinbury and an anchorite named Maud.¹⁷⁷ John of Gaunt and Philip Repyndon (abbot of St Mary of the Meadows from 1394) were closely tied to John Wyclif for a time.¹⁷⁸ Knighton went out of his way to avoid mentioning Repyndon's heretical past. He defended John of Gaunt's actions, but nonetheless heresy was a recurring theme.¹⁷⁹ Despite this Knighton made few references to the Crown's role in the suppression of heresy.

Knighton's most explicit discussion of Lollardy appeared in the record for 1388.¹⁸⁰ He described how the king, lords, and commons made an attempt to combat heresy, 'ne forte archa tocius fidei ecclesie talibus impulsioneibus in illis temporibus pre defectu gubernaculi irrediamiter quateretur, et gloriosum regnum Anglie per fidei deprauacionem in desolacionem gracie et honoris paulatim duceretur' ('lest in those days the ark of the faith should for want of governance be irredeemably shattered by such blows, and the glorious realm of England, by the corruption of its faith, despatched step by step into desolation with the loss of grace and honour').¹⁸¹ Knighton laid out the king's efforts to remedy the situation. The passage suggests that Knighton was drawing on fundamentally the same discourse as the chroniclers who discussed the Oldcastle Revolt. The importance of good governance as the bulwark of the Church and the interdependence of faith and government upon one another are a demonstration of Knighton's understanding of the twin pillars which supported the realm. Either one without the other would fall and catastrophe ensue. It is

¹⁷⁵ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 438.

¹⁷⁶ Paul Strohm, *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation 1399–1422* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 35.

¹⁷⁷ Thompson, *The Abbey of St. Mary*, 50; Knighton, *Chronicon*, 306.

¹⁷⁸ Cullum, 'My Lord Bishop', 48.

¹⁷⁹ For instances of heresy in Henry Knighton's chronicle see, Knighton, *Chronicon*, 242, 244, 248, 250, 252, 262, 272–276, 282, 294, 296–298, 298–306, 310–312, 432–438, 532–534, 540; for Henry Knighton's avoidance of mentioning Philip of Repyndon's role as a heretic see Knighton, *Knighton*, 283 fn. 5.

¹⁸⁰ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 438.

¹⁸¹ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 438.

one of the clearest demonstrations of a dualistic perspective on the nature of Church and State amongst the chroniclers. We may suppose that for Knighton there was a fundamental bond between spiritual and temporal authority.

However, despite his acknowledgement of the importance of mutual support between Church and Crown, Knighton suggested that they were not enough upon their own. The threat of heresy could only be quashed by the ultimate authority of God to whom he appealed in the face of Lollardy.¹⁸² He described the efforts of the king and Church in 1388 as 'tarda et quasi nulla affuit quia nondum hora correccionis aduenit' ('tardy and practically of no effect, for the time of correction had not yet come').¹⁸³ Knighton dismissed the government's ability to effect change. There was an implicit suggestion that a time would come for the end of the Lollards. This indicates that he regarded the events from an intellectual standpoint which awaited the fruition of a divine plan. Earthly authorities might be ineffective, but there was still an anticipated reckoning. It suggests that Knighton's history itself should be read, in part, as one fundamentally framed by an on-coming divine judgement.

The relationship of the Crown and Church, as depicted by chroniclers through the prism of heresy, highlights the close, overlapping narratives which the chroniclers employed. Yet, it illustrates the idiosyncrasies of their interpretation and presentation of these narratives. Walsingham and the author of the *GHQ* were admirers of Henry V, but the latter's emphasis upon Henry as a tool of God and a king with spiritual authority was heavier. The Westminster Monk, although he praised Richard II for defending the Church still cast him as a subordinate. Henry Knighton dismissed the power of the Church and Crown in favour of a narrative which hinged upon the role of God. Ultimately, the relationship of the chroniclers to the central pillars of authority in their lives was defined by radically different interpretations of the Church and Crown.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the terminology used by the chroniclers proves that their conception of the position, nature, and appropriate regard for the Church and the Crown was significantly different: for instance, whilst the

¹⁸² Knighton, *Chronicon*, 304–306.

¹⁸³ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 438.

Whalley Chronicler emphasised the regality of the king, Henry Knighton had a far more muted notion of royal authority. These idiosyncratic ideas of Church and Church reflect the lack of conformity amongst the chroniclers and suggest that they developed their own ideas of monarchy and the Church. These ideas were not independent of their surroundings, but they were also not dependent upon a single model.

The discussions of the divisions and tensions between the prelates and the king do suggest that most of the chroniclers tended towards a hierocratic political model, albeit this model was not consistently deployed. In some cases, such as those of Walsingham or the Westminster Chronicler, they deliberately contested claims of royal authority over the Church even as they implicitly acknowledged royal power. Yet, even here the chroniclers were not in agreement, neither in their approach nor in their stylistic choices. Their personal contexts drove accounts with intellectual and pragmatic elements to them. Adam of Usk walked a thin line, gravitating towards whichever force was the more immediate, his personal circumstances and lack of a community to rely upon seems to have left him pivoting between various models. By comparison, authors from institutions often had an underlying concern with how the actions of the Church or Crown affected the fiscal situation of their house. Their accounts demonstrate the figuration of these pillars of society within an ongoing historical discourse, but also one in which relationships shifted depending upon the pressures facing the Church and Crown.

The tendency amongst many chroniclers to switch position, or at least perspective, depending on the circumstances, comes to the fore in their discussion of heresy. Whilst they had wrangled with the question of temporal power versus sacral authority, when discussing the threat of heresy many chroniclers altered their tone. They praised royal power and its union with the interests of the Church. However, despite this they did not reach a common point of view. Instead their accounts still possess subtle differences in tone and approach. There were also significant differences in the chroniclers' contextual circumstances. Knighton probably composed his chronicle between the 1370s and 1396 when he died; Adam of Usk wrote intermittently between 1400 and 1421; Thomas Favent though wrote his entire chronicle in the late 1380s; and the *GHQ* was similarly composed over a short period of perhaps less than a

year (between 1416 and 1417).¹⁸⁴ Whilst some works represent the mature reflection – or at least hindsight – of chroniclers whose perspectives developed over years or even decades, others, such as Favent's *Historia*, were created as responses to particular events. Not only should we not expect a single perspective from multiple chroniclers who happen to record the same events, therefore, we may also anticipate that those writing for an extended period, such as Knighton, might have changed their opinion over time.

Thus, the chroniclers' discussion of the Church and Crown demonstrates the subtle but fundamental idiosyncrasies of their texts. Their depiction of these pillars of their society represent the macro view of the institutions in which their communities and lives were embedded. However, the communities which the chroniclers engaged with, assessed and were part of on a personal level often increased the differences between their perspectives and allegiances and the focus of their narratives.

¹⁸⁴ Martin, 'Introduction: Knighton', xxviii; Given-Wilson, 'Introduction: Adam of Usk', xlvi–xlviii; Taylor, 'Introduction: GHQ', xxiv.

Chapter Three

Constructing Community

Introduction

The previous chapter examined the chroniclers' relationship to and representation of the Crown and the Church as the primary authorities which affected their accounts. It argued that the chroniclers had significantly different conceptions of what the Crown and the Church represented as an office and an institution respectively. It demonstrated that few chroniclers conceptualised the Church and Crown consistently and that instead they shifted position in light of contextual pressures.

The Church and the Crown were not the only pillars around which chroniclers constructed ideas of community. Indeed, they were not necessarily the most important in the chroniclers' lives. The regular chroniclers primarily belonged to the community of their *domus*. However, they also belonged to communities beyond their institutional setting. Their depictions of these communities were shaped by the chroniclers' educational paths and the textual environment within which they worked. In turn, as producers of texts which contributed to the historical literature of their institutions, or their patrons, they were also contributing to the conceptualisation and construction of communities within the historical record.

The chroniclers, informed by their textual environment, imagined a wide range of social groupings. They shared no single construction of these communities and were also internally inconsistent in the matter. In some cases there is evidence that the chroniclers were reacting to new societal and structural pressures. Benedict Anderson's model of imagined communities has some use as a framework for the conceptualisation of community in the chronicles. Anderson argued that the nation was

An imagined political community ... It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.¹

¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised edition (London: Verso, 2006), 6.

Although Anderson's conclusions that national identity did not exist in the modern sense in the Middle Ages have been challenged by scholars there are advantages to a limited application of the model in this instance.² In the act of describing these communities chroniclers were bound to envisage them and their membership. Anderson argued, 'communities are to be distinguished not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined'.³ So, using the model of an imagined community, though not the nation, provides a framework for understanding the construction of communities from multiple subjective perspectives.

The chroniclers engaged with a current discourse, formed from reportage and other ephemera, such as newsletters and sermons. The regular chronicles contributed to the textual environment of their houses, and in the cases of the regular chroniclers and possibly of the author of the *GHQ* there is evidence that their works were circulated amongst monastic houses beyond their house of origin.⁴ The chroniclers were also engaged in a diachronic discourse with their textual predecessors as they built on and responded to texts such as Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon* which were both easily accessible and used as the foundation for many of the English Latin chronicles.

This chapter is divided into five main sections. First is a discussion of the importance of the *domus* as a community for the regular chronicles. The *domus* does not fit into the model of imagined communities. The members of a *domus* were well acquainted with each other and had records of many of the past members of a *domus* in domestic histories and biographies. Moreover, the dead members of the community were commemorated in the liturgical calendar. The *domus* formed the central communal experience for the regular chroniclers, and one which had an impact upon almost every other experience of communities. Second is a further discussion of the textual environment of the chroniclers. The discussion of the textual environment and culture the chroniclers worked within frames the language and models within which they conceptualised and described communities. Third, a brief section focuses on the usefulness of the

² Kathy Lavezzo, 'Introduction,' *Imagining a Medieval English Nation*, ed. Kathy Lavezzo, NED-New Edition, Vol. 37 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), vii; Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (New Dehli: Penguin Books India, 2005), 8.

³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

⁴ Frank Taylor, 'Introduction', in *Gesta Henrici Quinti: The Deeds of Henry the Fifth*, ed. and trans. Frank Taylor and John Smith Roskell, Oxford medieval texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), xxiv.

three orders as a model to understand the chroniclers' comprehension and expression of societal identity. Fourth, returning to a major theme from Chapter Two, this chapter examines further the relationship between the English clergy and the 'Mother Church'. This section argues that the chroniclers' identity as part of the Church was deeply divided and was formed of many-layered imagined communities. Finally, this chapter briefly considers the question of ethnic identity within the chronicles. This section argues that the chroniclers often had defined ideas of ethnic identity, often based on their textual environment, but that these ideas were often not aligned with one another. These sections each engage with wide-ranging fields. These are not intended to be exhaustive discussions. Instead, they highlight the complexity, contradictions, and idiosyncrasies of the chroniclers. They reflect primarily upon how the chroniclers were adapting to both new and old pressures.

Domus

Regular Chroniclers

The chroniclers were deeply embedded in the identity and interests of their houses.⁵ The religious houses are perhaps the only communities in which the chroniclers can be described as being part of a textual community, as in 'a place or social circle where manuscript texts are or were produced, read, and circulated by and for a certain group of people'.⁶ James Clark has demonstrated that at St Albans the community was complex and tightly knit, responding to the reform movements of the fourteenth century and increasingly interacting with adjacent communities such as that of the Oxford scholars.⁷ The religious houses were distinguished from one another by factors such as diet, wealth, geographical location, and religious orders. Monasteries, abbeys, and priories

⁵ Antonia Gransden, 'Propaganda in English Medieval Historiography,' *Journal of Medieval History* 1, no. 4 (1975): 364.

⁶ Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 90–91; Peter Beal, 'A Dictionary of English Manuscript Terminology. 1451–2000', 2011, <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199576128.001.0001/acref-9780199576128-e-1058>.

⁷ James G. Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance at St Albans: Thomas Walsingham and His Circle, c. 1350-1440*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 15.

were clearly distinct communities.⁸ Within the houses, though, there were factors which reinforced a sense of community: monks ate, prayed, worked, lived, and were often priested together.⁹

The regular chroniclers within monastic houses wrote from a position of a clearly defined identity as part of a *domus*. There were meetings and interchanges of information between connected houses that reinforced horizontal bonds of fellowship.¹⁰ These encounters and instances of communication between the regular clergy naturally brought chroniclers into a wider circle of knowledge and information. However, though monks circulated within their own network, exchanged letters, news, and documents such as chronicles with related houses, these connections were nowhere near as immediate as those within the same *domus*. Neither Walsingham, nor other chroniclers like the monks of Westminster, Henry Knighton, or the Cistercian chroniclers at Whalley, Dieulacres, and Kirkstall, spent much time explicitly reflecting on their own religious order – although Walsingham exhibited prejudices common amongst the Benedictines, such as a dislike of the Franciscans.¹¹

The identification with the house offered a conception and an experience of community which permeated their lives. Amongst the Benedictines the community of the house was a fundamental part of the Rule of St Benedict and appeared throughout the literature of their order.¹² Within the order the Benedictines maintained bonds between the brethren, to their superiors, and between other Benedictine houses.¹³ The monastic superiors or proxies were expected to attend the Convocation of their province and to interact with the

⁸ Barbara Harvey, *Living and Dying in England 1101–1540: The Monastic Experience* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 40.

⁹ Harvey, *Living and Dying*, 119.

¹⁰ John Taylor, *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 16; Chris Given-Wilson, ed., *Chronicles of the Revolution, 1397–1400: The Reign of Richard II*, Manchester Medieval Sources Series (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 9.

¹¹ John Taylor, 'Introduction,' in *The St Albans Chronicle: the Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham. Volume I, 1376–1394*, eds. and trans. John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs, and Leslie Watkiss, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), cxi; Thomas Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle: the Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham. 1394–1422*, eds. and trans. John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs, and Leslie Watkiss, Vol. II, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011), 318; Thomas Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle: the Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham. 1376–1394*, eds. and trans. John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs, and Leslie Watkiss, Vol. I, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 500.

¹² James G. Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2011), 130–188.

¹³ Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages*, 130.

wider Church, but how deeply this influenced the chroniclers' sense of identity as part of a wider order is unclear.¹⁴ Taylor has pointed out that Thomas Walsingham took a particular interest in, or at least often recorded, affairs concerning the Benedictine order.¹⁵ However, Walsingham's most usual personal identification was as a monk of St Albans, which came across particularly strongly in sections such as his account of the Peasants' Revolt.

The Rule of Saint Benedict was the scaffolding for life in a monastic community. It provided a structure for prayers, offices, and day-to-day existence.¹⁶ The Rule urged the pursuit of the spiritual life through communal effort. It also gave a schedule to prayers, meals, and sermons, and it established regulations for the administration of Benedictine communities.¹⁷ Each professed monk was also required to write down his profession, signing their membership and entering the community by becoming part of this tradition of texts.¹⁸ In short, the Rule and the practices of the Benedictine's formed a textual basis for the experience of community.

The Rule promoted the virtue and value of the cenobitic monastic life.¹⁹ Components of the Rule established the communal experience of this, such as the regular and consistent ordering of the office, or the importance of the abbot or prior as a father to their community and the concomitant obedience expected from the monks to their superiors.²⁰ The values it propounded affected not only the Benedictines but other orders such as the Augustinian canons regular.²¹ The Rule of St Benedict and the Rule of St Augustine emphasised the importance of the religious community of the *domus*. In the case of the Rule of St Augustine, the value of living in a community in accordance with the *vitae apostolica* was a central theme.²² Rules set a gold standard for the regular communities, outlining for them what it meant to be part of a monastic house.

¹⁴ Martin Heale, *The Abbots and Priors of Late Medieval and Reformation England* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 193.

¹⁵ Taylor, 'Introduction: St Albans Chronicle, Vol I', lxxxiii fn. 79.

¹⁶ C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism: Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages*, 4th edition (London: Routledge, 2015), 22.

¹⁷ Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 23.

¹⁸ Donald Logan, *Runaway Religious in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 19.

¹⁹ Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 166.

²⁰ Heale, *The Abbots and Priors of Late Medieval and Reformation England*, 58.

²¹ James G. Clark, 'Introduction: The Religious Orders in Pre-Reformation England', in *The Religious Orders in Pre-Reformation England*, ed. James G. Clark, Studies in the History of Medieval Religion 18 (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002), 11.

²² Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 165–166.

The minutiae of their practice formed ritualistic patterns of communal experience.

The regular clerks' contemplation of the rules they lived by also contributed to the development of their sense of communality. The Benedictine and Augustinian houses held extensive libraries, and the orders encouraged an active contemplation of texts.²³ As discussed in Chapter One, this engagement was supported by the capitular statutes of 1277 and the *Summa magistri* in 1336, which made changes to the day-to-day life of monks to support their intellectual efforts.²⁴ As Clark has observed, 'in the later Middle Ages it was common for the daily chapter to include readings not only from the rule but also from the capitular statutes, *Summi magistri*, and other canons'; the monks were thus habitually presented with shared textual content and reminded of its institutionally approved role in their lives.²⁵ These reforms signalled a major shift in the practices of the religious orders, and the regular chroniclers of this period would have been among the first historical writers to fully experience their effects. In the case of St Albans, abbot Thomas de la Mare's efforts to promote the intellectual endeavours of the abbey formed a major part of Thomas Walsingham's educational and intellectual context.²⁶

The community of the *domus* as experienced by regular chroniclers was formed at the intersection of multiple elements of their textual environment: the institutional history, the rule of an order, and sermons which impressed on them the values of the ideal monastic life. The importance of these sources cannot be overstated. For instance, sermons formed a continuous discourse on community. Thomas Brinton's sermon collection included several on good monastic practice.²⁷ These sermons encouraged essential elements of the communal life such as collective as well as individual virtue. In a sermon Brinton

²³ Taylor, *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century*, 16.

²⁴ David Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 14; Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 64; James G. Clark, ed., *The Religious Orders in Pre-Reformation England*, Studies in the History of Medieval Religion 18 (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002), 20; David Wilkins, ed., *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae: A Synodo Verolamiensi A.D. CCCCXLVI, Ad Londinensem A.D. MDCCXVII; Accedunt Constitutiones et Alia Ad Historiam Ecclesiae Anglicanae Spectantia*, Vol. II (Bruxelles: Culture et Civilisation, 1964), 594–599.

²⁵ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 60.

²⁶ See above, 44.

²⁷ Thomas Brinton, *The Sermons of Thomas Brinton, Bishop of Rochester, 1373–1389. Volume I.*, ed. Mary Aquinas Devlin, Camden Society 3rd Series, Vol. 85 (London: R.H.S, 1954), 55–58, 58–60, 97–99; 99–101; Thomas Brinton, *The Sermons of Thomas Brinton, Bishop of Rochester, 1373–1389. Volume II.*, ed. Mary Aquinas Devlin, Camden Society 3rd Series, Vol. 86 (London: R.H.S, 1954), 434–435.

delivered in 1380 to the Benedictine monks of Rochester he urged his listeners to elect a new and worthy prior, foregrounding the importance of the community of the priory to his audience.²⁸ In an Easter sermon delivered in 1383 Brinton gave his audience the example of an elderly monk who never failed to attend Matins.²⁹ He drew on the everyday experiences of his audience as a community to deliver a model of piety and virtue. Such sermons and texts laid down communal values and a shared way of living. Meanwhile, institutional histories detailed the practical identity of a particular house and often recorded the practical rights and privileges of the *domus*. As discussed in Chapter One, institutional histories almost certainly featured in the chroniclers' educations.³⁰ At St Albans, Walsingham continued the *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani*, Westminster held Sulcard's *Gesta Abbatim*, and both Henry Knighton and John Strecche incorporated the history of their superiors into their texts.³¹ Such histories defined the regular clergy's institutions both legally and within a historical context.

The defences of rights common to institutional histories were rarer in the chronicles of this period. This may have come as a consequence in the rise of alternative forms of record keeping, but although the accounts of a house's rights now featured more predominantly in institutional histories they still appeared in the chronicles. The Westminster Monk was engrossed by the dispute between Westminster Abbey and St Stephen's church over the jurisdiction of the abbey.³² 'Misit rex pro abate Westm' ad comparendum coram eo ibidem responsurus super querelis et gravaminibus que illi de capalla Sancti Stephani contra eum nequiter intentabant' ('The king summoned the abbot of Westminster to appear before him and to answer the complaints and accusations maliciously levelled against him by the clergy of St Stephen's Chapel'), he recorded.³³ According to the Monk, the clergy of St Stephen's were unjustly claiming that the abbot was appealing to the pope to deprive them of

²⁸ Brinton, *Sermons of Thomas Brinton*, I: 434.

²⁹ Siegfried Wenzel, trans., 'Easter (Thomas Brinton)', in *Preaching in the Age of Chaucer: Selected Sermons in Translation* (Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 125.

³⁰ See above, 41–42.

³¹ G. M. Hilton, 'The Chronicle of John Strecche and Its Place in Medieval Historical Records of England and Kenilworth Priory', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 85, no. 1 (2003), 29.

³² The clergy of St Stephen's had been exempted from the jurisdiction of the Abbey by Clement VI. L. C. Hector and Barbara F. Harvey, eds. and trans., *The Westminster Chronicle, 1381–1394*, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 380, fn. 1.

³³ *Westminster Chronicle*, 378.

their benefices.³⁴ The Monk ran through the history behind the dispute and claimed ancient precedence for the abbey's rights.³⁵ The episode put the importance and rights of Westminster Abbey foremost in a chronicle that otherwise usually presented a history of the English and their affairs, with some digressions on the Curia. The ad hominem attack on the clergy of St Stephen's cast them as aggressors against the maligned abbot. The episode constructed the community of Westminster Abbey around the legal rights of the house, although they were preserved by the chronicler in a narrative history potentially intended for the education of novices or future monks instead of, or as well as, in legal documentation.

Similarly, Henry Knighton included a discussion on the importance of the rights and privileges of St Mary of the Meadows in his chronicle. The abbey enjoyed a dispensation given to Abbot William Clowne by the king releasing him from the obligation to attend parliament.³⁶ In combining his history of Edward III with the anecdote about Abbot Clowne Knighton demonstrated his abbey's special relationship with the Crown. The inclusion of a few important rights of the abbey is interwoven in this way with the greater scope of the history. Meanwhile, Walsingham engaged in a spirited defence of St Alban's privileges against the local townspeople, focusing much of his account of the Peasants' Revolt in St Albans on the dispute.³⁷ The events these chroniclers recounted were related by them to the rights of the communities of their house. The episodes mentioned here demonstrate the underlying importance of the *domus* within their chronicles.

The chroniclers were aware of the histories of their houses.³⁸ John Strecche's account is divided between two communities, the national community of the English kings and the equally important community of Kenilworth Priory. Strecche and the other canons of the house were members of both communities. The narrative switchback between the two, from king to prior and back again interwove the history of the communities, presenting them

³⁴ As Harvey has pointed out the clergy of St Stephen were accurate in this claim. *Westminster Chronicle*, 378, 379 fn. 4.

³⁵ *Westminster Chronicle*, 380.

³⁶ Henry Knighton, *Knighton's Chronicle 1337–1396*, ed. and trans. G. H. Martin, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 186, 200–202.

³⁷ Thomas Walsingham, *The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham, 1376–1422*, ed. James G. Clark, trans. David Preest (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2009), 134; Paul Strohm and A. J. Prescott, *Hochon's Arrow: The Social Imagination of Fourteenth-Century Texts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 5.

³⁸ See above, 41–42.

as equally important to his audience – probably the canons of his house – and offered an education in two themes. The education in the history of the house is particularly apparent in passages such as one describing the restoration of the tombs of the founders of the priory in 1417, or his short verse on the foundation of the priory.³⁹ Strecche was unusual in this dedication of space to the history of the priory as an apparently consciously integral part of the manuscript. Although Walsingham dealt in detail with the abbots of St Albans in the *Gesta Abbatum* this was a separate work from his continuation of the *Chronica Maiora*. Strecche's history is more than a textual record of an imagined community. The identities of the members were clearly known and were a major focus of the account. He placed the history of this intimately known community alongside rather than just within the broader English community as represented by the kings of England.

The pervasive presence of the institution in the historical imagination was also displayed by Knighton at the transition from Higden's *Polychronicon*: 'Finito .vij. et sic ultimo libro Cistrensis, solus procedit Leycestrensis prosequens inceptam materiam' ('The seventh and so the last book of Chester's having come to an end, Leicester goes on alone, pursuing the work that he has begun').⁴⁰ The immediate identification of the work as a production of Leicester and a continuation of Higden situated Knighton's chronicle within his own *domus*, whilst it also claimed the authority of the *Polychronicon*. The passage makes the perceived difference in communal identities plain. Knighton's self-representation was as a Leicester writer.

The *domus* was more than a closed community focused solely on its own interests. Benedictine abbots were often the local landowners and held the lordship of the seigneurial liberty. Religious houses provided alms and a hub for the community beyond their walls.⁴¹ The links went further, stretching out over the estates and dependent houses. Houses as major as Westminster Abbey, whose lands stretched over much of the South-East and the West Midlands, were linked to many dependent houses.⁴² These houses fed them news from

³⁹ Frank Taylor, 'The Chronicle of John Strecche for the Reign of Henry V, 1414–1422,' *The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 16, no. 1 (1932): 26.

⁴⁰ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 2.

⁴¹ Harvey, *Living and Dying in England*, 23–33; Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages*, 130.

⁴² Harvey, *Living and Dying in England*, 2.

across the country and recruited monks for the mother house.⁴³ An abbey's recruitment from the various estates and other communities of cities, towns, and regions, inevitably means that, in almost any house, its members brought with them many distinct identities and senses of their belonging within these disparate communities. Meanwhile, they also had a sense of comradeship with their fellows in the *domus* and as part of an institution which held the lordship of the liberty, in the cases of Benedictine abbeys like St Albans, a connection to the vicinity of the *domus*.

The *Westminster Chronicle* displayed a keen sympathy for the metropolitan community of the City of Westminster, which, as Harvey has noted, was excluded from the polemical account of the Peasants' Revolt.⁴⁴ The Monk of Westminster was less well informed on events in London than might have been expected from their proximity, but they still evinced a keen interest.⁴⁵ Walsingham, who was close to London and probably in communication with a dependent house there, is the only regular chronicler who could consistently claim an equal or better knowledge of events in the capital to that of the Monk. There are a number of errors in the Monk's account; for instance, in his account of Richard II's conflict with London in 1392 he conflated the king's peace proposals with his ultimate demands.⁴⁶ Yet, the account he gave was still understanding towards the king and to the city and highlights his sympathies for both – sympathies arising from their close ties to Westminster Abbey.

Localities were largely considered according to their ties to a chroniclers' *domus*. If we turn to Walsingham and the Westminster chroniclers, their engagement with the city of London was demonstrably different. The chroniclers may have embraced a wider Westminster identity from their time in the abbey. Richard Cirencester (c.1335–1401) – a likely candidate for the Westminster Chronicler – had entered Westminster over twenty-five years before the *Westminster Chronicle* was begun.⁴⁷ It is to be expected that alongside their own experiences, chroniclers drew on the testimony of their brethren, likewise

⁴³ Barbara F. Harvey, *Westminster Abbey and Its Estates in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 2.

⁴⁴ Harvey, *Living and Dying*, 6.

⁴⁵ Barbara F. Harvey, 'Introduction,' in *The Westminster Chronicle, 1381–1394*, eds. and trans. L. C. Hector and Barbara F. Harvey, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), lxviii.

⁴⁶ Harvey, 'Introduction: Westminster,' lxvii; *Westminster Chronicle*, 506–508.

⁴⁷ Harvey, 'Introduction: Westminster,' xxxi.

centred in Westminster, supplementing an interest in Westminster and London that should be anticipated in the study of an author from the abbey.⁴⁸

The Westminster chroniclers' representation of communities and individuals surrounding the abbey was developed around these communities' relationship to the abbey. In particular Westminster's role as the place of coronation for the kings of England and a spiritual hub for the surrounding urban area were recurring features. As discussed in Chapter Two, the Westminster Chronicler described how Richard II turned to Westminster for spiritual aid and guidance during the Peasant's Revolt.⁴⁹ In 1392 the Westminster Monk described how Richard came to the abbey at the end of his entry into London.⁵⁰ He painted the scene at the gate of the monastery, highlighting the ecclesiastical features: 'ubi occurrebant ei prior et conventus revestiti et albis capis induti cum crucibus, cereis, thuribus, et textibus: quos videns rex et regina ilico descenderunt de equis et depositis coronis osculati sunt textus' ('Here the king was met by the prior and convent in new clothes and wearing white copes, with crosses, candles, censers, and Gospels: on seeing them the king and queen at once dismounted and laying aside their crowns, kissed the Gospels').⁵¹ The scene was one of ritualistic theatre. The submission of the king and queen to the prior and convent's spiritual power reflected the authority of the Church, perhaps particularly the authority of Westminster Abbey.⁵² The Monk's description legitimised pride in the identity of the abbey and depicted the complicated relationship with the king in which the abbey claimed a certain authority over the monarch.⁵³ Reading these events at Westminster within the context of the community of the abbey suggests that the chroniclers were affirming the authority and standing of their house.

His *domus* did not have to be embedded within city or town for a chronicler to pass comment on the urban community, though proximity gave a natural advantage. Walsingham, who was also located close to London, demonstrated a keen interest in the city and gave a complicated and flexible view of Londoners. In 1381 his account of the Peasants' Revolt in London was exceptionally detailed. He also delineated the conflicts between the fishmongers

⁴⁸ Taylor, *English Historical Literature*, 84.

⁴⁹ See above, 110; *Westminster Chronicle*, 8–10.

⁵⁰ See below, 173–174. *Westminster Chronicle*, 506.

⁵¹ *Westminster Chronicle*, 506.

⁵² See below, 173–174.

⁵³ See above, 101.

and other guilds and included numerous details of London's internal political affairs.⁵⁴ He reported in 1388, when explaining, during his discussion of the end of the Lords Appellants' rising, the execution of the one-time mayor Nicholas Brembre, that Brembre intended to rename the city 'Parue Troie' ('Little Troy').⁵⁵ The remark reflected on the struggle between the various guilds and partially framed the Lords Appellants' actions within a debate over London's future as a city. At times he was sympathetic, for instance, in their conflict with John of Gaunt over the city's rights, described in most detail in the 'Scandalous Chronicle'.⁵⁶ However, when the Londoners sought reconciliation with the king in 1392 he castigated them as heretical, distancing himself and the rest of society from them by suggesting they had heterodox beliefs.⁵⁷ Walsingham's approach was mixed and reflected the challenges facing London in the period not just St Albans; he shifted between interested, critical, and sympathetic depending on the circumstances.

Walsingham's inconsistency in his relationship with the Londoners is demonstrated in the difference between his criticism of the Londoners' enemies such as John of Gaunt, or in part Nicholas Brembre, and his depiction of them in 1392. He described how 'erant quippe tunc inter omnes fere naciones gencium elatissimi arrogantissimi, et auarissimi, ac male creduli in Deum et tradiciones auitas, Lollardorum sustentatores, religiosorum detractores, decimarum detentores, et comunis uulgi depauperatores' ('they were indeed the haughtiest, the most arrogant, and the most avaricious of all the peoples of the world; their belief in God and the faith handed down by their forebears was erroneous; they were supporters of the Lollards, disparagers of the religious, withholders of tithes, and impoverishers of the common people').⁵⁸ The assault on the Londoners' character established several layers of social failure on their part, including a failure of orthodoxy. In the passage Walsingham framed the Londoners as a distinct communal group to the surrounding communities. Walsingham's criticisms placed himself and his fellow monks as arbiters of virtue and vice, orthodoxy and heterodoxy as he castigated the Londoners for their failures.

⁵⁴ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 614–616, 666–668.

⁵⁵ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 850.

⁵⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 84–92.

⁵⁷ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 924.

⁵⁸ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 924.

Other communities were often imagined by the chroniclers around a more defined sense of the *domus*. Knighton applied a model of community which drew links between close and distant groups. He stated that in 1337 the king had taken wool from 'tota terra Anglie' ('the whole land of England').⁵⁹ And he then added, 'et de domo nostra Leycestrie habuit .xviii. saccos' ('and from our house of Leicester he had eighteen sacks').⁶⁰ Knighton's use of the first-person plural suggests an understanding of the community beyond St Mary of the Meadow's walls as related to the abbey whilst the affairs of the abbey itself were of especial interest. His account suggests that he had a sense of the 'whole land of England' as a geographically bounded community to which he and his house belonged. The shared taxation reflected his concerns as a canon with the practical finances of his house and form a link between the wider English community and the more intimate community of St Mary of the Meadows. The increased focus on how national affairs affected Leicester clearly demonstrates the layered nature of Knighton's various identities.

Religious institutions also had close ties to their patrons, which were exhibited in texts dedicated to the history of the abbey, such as the St Albans' *Liber Benefactorum*. Pieces in defence or praise of a patron in chronicles were common, often voicing the chroniclers' pride that their community was connected to a notable individual. John Taylor noted that Knighton and chroniclers like him exhibited a strong interest in their locale and the history of their religious house.⁶¹ Knighton's ready access to information on Leicester, and the duke of Lancaster's household probably contributed to his particular focus on the town.⁶² In his account of Edward III's French expedition in 1340 Knighton named two of the king's companions, Henry Burghersh, the bishop of Lincoln, and Henry Grosmont.⁶³ Knighton praised the former highly: he was 'uero utique nobili et sapienti consilio, eleganti audacia, prepotenti uiribus, et retencione uiorum forcium perspicuus' ('a man of great distinction, wise in counsel, urbanely bold, of outstanding powers, and a shrewd manager of fighting

⁵⁹ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 2.

⁶⁰ See above, 98; Knighton, *Chronicon*, 2.

⁶¹ Taylor, *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century*, 8.

⁶² G. H. Martin, 'Knighton, Henry (d. c.1396) Chronicler and Augustinian Canon', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (23 Sep. 2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-15747>.

⁶³ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 26–28.

men').⁶⁴ Henry Grosmont's description was more functional but still established his pre-eminence: 'nobilis Henricus, iuuenis comes Derbeye, qui postea factus est primus dux Lancastrie' ('the noble Henry, the young earl of Derby, who was later made the first duke of Lancaster').⁶⁵ Burghersh and Grosmont were closely connected to Leicester. The abbey fell within the former's diocese and Ormrod has suggested that Grosmont regarded Leicester castle as his primary seat.⁶⁶ The connection then between these figures and Leicester abbey was a close one.

Knighton's descriptions were explicitly and implicitly laudatory. Burghersh as the diocese's bishop was lauded, and Grosmont's elevation to the dukedom established the king's high regard for him and his power. Although the earls of Northampton, Gloucester, and Huntingdon were also mentioned, it was only Grosmont who received a further note on his future career. Grosmont was also uniquely described in terms of the youth and quality Henry Knighton found in his character.⁶⁷ Knighton's praise for them is suggestive of the keen interest taken by the canons at Leicester in their patrons. Moreover, recording their virtues and educating readers in their deeds reflected well on the abbey in turn as it established the quality of the canon's connections.

Knighton's interest in his locale also featured the abbey as a central community. The episodes included in the chronicles suggest he believed his audience would be intrigued by the minor scandals of Leicester. Knighton described how 'in ebdomada Pasche occisus est Iohannes de Alythewerle, clericus, apud Leycestriam in domo propria, per Emmam, uxorem suam, et famulum suum, et alios de eorum conuencione, et portatus est et positus sub abbatia super ripam Sore' ('in Easter week [4–10 Apr. 1344] John Allintheworld, a clerk, was slain in his own house in Leicester by his wife, Emma, and their servant, and others who conspired with them, and they carried

⁶⁴ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 26–28.

⁶⁵ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 28.

⁶⁶ W. M. Ormrod, 'Henry of Lancaster [Henry of Grosmont], First Duke of Lancaster (c.1310–1361)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-12960>; Nicholas Bennett, 'Burghersh, Henry (c.1290–1340), Bishop of Lincoln'. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004). <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-4007>;

C. H. Compton, 'The Abbey of St Mary de Pratis, Leicester', *Transactions of the Leicestershire Architectural and Archaeological Society* 9, no. 3 (1902), 96.

⁶⁷ Knighton continued to hold Grosmont up as an individual par excellence. For example, in the account for 1352 he recorded a duel between the dukes of Brunswick and Lancaster in which he depicted Grosmont as a chivalric hero blessed by God. Knighton, *Chronicon*, 112–118.

him out and left him on the bank of the Soar, below the abbey').⁶⁸ The description of how Allintheworld's body was left by the river was evocative and demonstrative of Knighton's knowledge of the place. The episode sat between an expedition to France by Henry Grosmont and the record of a parliament. It occurred thirty or forty years before the probable beginning of Knighton's composition of the chronicle.⁶⁹ Knighton probably only had access to records or witnesses by virtue of his proximity to the site of the event. The account is, therefore, a reminder of how Knighton's position as a canon of St Mary of the Meadows informed his historical writing.

Though Knighton reflected on his locality, the *domus* took narrative precedence. Knighton expressed his identity as a canon of the abbey through establishing rhetorically and historically the virtue and character of notable members of his community. His eulogy for Abbot William Clowne in 1378 demonstrated the depth of his emotional attachment to the abbot and the abbey. He explained,

hic pie memorie piissimus abbas in evidenciam et signum quod totus Dei seruus fuerit, et pacis atque quietis amator, pacis tempore et hora quietis, scilicet media nocte diei Dominice, inter brachia et manus confratrum suorum eius decessum plangencium et animam eius Deo commendancium, ab hac luce migravit, ad Dominum.

(this most excellent abbot, of pious memory, in sign and token that he was entirely the servant of God, and a lover of peace and concord, in a time of peace and a quiet hour, namely in the watches of the night of the Lord's day, in the arms and hands of his brethren, who bewailed his decease and commended his soul to God, passed from this world to his lord.)⁷⁰

Knighton enumerated the abbot's many virtues, his diligence, mild nature, and desire for peace as well as Clowne's many achievements on behalf of the abbey, including gaining possession of two churches, two manors, and numerous rents and properties.⁷¹ Knighton framed his version of the community of St Mary of the Meadows united in grief at the abbot's death through the textual tradition of monastic eulogies for superiors. The rhetoric of virtue and

⁶⁸ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 48.

⁶⁹ Martin, 'Introduction: Knighton', xvi.

⁷⁰ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 200.

⁷¹ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 200.

achievement lauded the deceased abbot and reflected the importance of the abbey to Knighton and his brethren.

The Westminster chroniclers' accounts, although they demonstrate a similar passion for their *domus*, are also suggestive of the unique conceit that Westminster Abbey was the sacred heart of England. A preoccupation with the Crown permeated the chronicle and the abbey's textual tradition. The *Speculum Historiale de Gestis regum Angliæ* by Richard Cirencester (who was either a contemporary of the Chroniclers' or possibly the Chronicler himself) included a treatise on the coronation regalia written by his fellow monk William Sudbury.⁷² The discussion of the proper treatment of the coronation regalia late in the Westminster Monk's account was characteristic of the chronicler: the king had sent a pair of red velvet shoes to the abbey to be kept with the other items of the 'ornamentis regalibus' ('royal insignia') as during his coronation a slipper had been lost.⁷³ The Monk explained that 'constat namque quod rex statim post coronacionem suam domum revestiarum intraret, ubi sua regalia deponeret et alia indumenta sibi per suos cubicularios adapta assumeret, et abhinc via proximiori in palacium suum redirect' ('it is generally accepted that immediately after his coronation the king should go into the vestry, where he should take off the regalia and put on the other garments laid out for him by his chamberlains before returning by the shortest route to his palace').⁷⁴ He added, 'Igitur nostrates caeant imposterum ne ullatenus permittant regem cum insigniis regalibus amplius extra ecclesiam exire' ('Our people must therefore take good care in the future that the king is not allowed for a moment to leave the church wearing the regalia').⁷⁵ The sense of communal possessiveness over the regalia articulated in the passage is an especially clear demonstration of the Monk's sense of both the rights and special duties of the Westminster community, and their special relationship with the office of the Crown. The Monk appears to have been addressing members of the monastery in this passage. Imagining the coronation, the Monk articulated a vision of a Westminster community, past, present, and future, maintaining the proper practice. He was also engaging with the discourse and interest in the regalia that appeared repeatedly at Westminster in the period. So, the Westminster Monk was

⁷² *Westminster Chronicle*, xxxvii.

⁷³ *Westminster Chronicle*, 414.

⁷⁴ *Westminster Chronicle*, 414.

⁷⁵ *Westminster Chronicle*, 416.

distinguished from his contemporaries beyond Westminster by this close relationship between his *domus* and the monarchy.

During moments of crisis the narratives often articulated a heightened sense of community focused on their house. The Peasants' Revolt blended the interests of the national community with the interests of the chroniclers' houses. The major accounts of the revolt, from those writers who were close to the rebellion, contain clear evidence of their authors' attachment to their *domus*. The *Anonimale Chronicle*, the *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, and the *Kirkstall Chronicle* were all written far away from the main centres of the rebellion. Although the *Anonimale Chronicle* provided a detailed account of events there is no obvious reason to assume that its author or his *domus*, St Mary's Abbey in York, was invested in the events to the same extent as chroniclers like Thomas Walsingham who directly witnessed it.

Henry Knighton balanced second-hand information with the concerns of his *domus* and locality. Almost half of Knighton's account of the Peasants' Revolt dealt with either the city of Leicester or with the abbey's patron, John of Gaunt.⁷⁶ Knighton laid out the reactions of the townsfolk, Gaunt's household in the castle, and Abbot Kereby of St Mary of the Meadows.⁷⁷ All three appear to have panicked. The keeper of Gaunt's wardrobe, who had come from London, brought what he could from the castle to the abbey for safekeeping.⁷⁸ However, Knighton recorded that 'abbas nimio terrore percussus sicut et ceteri regni non audebat ea hospicio recipere, ne forte huiusmodi rei occasione tota abbathia detrimentum intollerabile exterminii pateretur' ('the abbot [of St Mary of the Meadows] was stricken with great fear, like everyone else in the kingdom, and did not dare to take them in, lest the result should be total destruction of the abbey itself').⁷⁹ With the abbot's refusal to protect the carts brought by the keeper of the wardrobe they were left in the collegiate church of St Mary de Castro. Though the revolt left Leicester largely untouched, Knighton's reflections on how his abbey and surroundings reacted demonstrated how important the impact of national events upon his house were to him.

⁷⁶ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 228–240.

⁷⁷ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 228–230; A. Hamilton Thompson, *The Abbey of St Mary of the Meadows Leicester* (Leicester: Edgar Backus, 1949), 40–41.

⁷⁸ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 230.

⁷⁹ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 230.

Similarly, Walsingham and the Westminster Chronicler discussed the Peasants' Revolt as it related to their communities. Walsingham detailed the revolt in St Albans as it interacted with the lordship of the abbot and the abbey over the town of St Albans and the threats made to the abbey's liberties by the townspeople. He wrote that, 'quanta tristitia putandum est fuisse repleta corda monachorum, qui uidebant illud celebre monasterium iam uel constare suorum indulgentia natiuorum, qui nec indulgere sciunt, nec amare dominos, uel ipsorum furore et iracundia conflagrandum?' ('One can imagine the sadness that filled the monks' hearts, as they saw that famous monastery now either being allowed to exist by the indulgence of bondmen, who do not know how to be indulgent, nor how to love their masters, or being burned down through their fury and anger').⁸⁰ This inversion of the usual order, the danger posed to the abbey by the secular domination of the abbey's liberties and the transference from the monks – who implicitly know how to govern – to the laity, all demonstrate Walsingham's idea of the community of his house (his home and spiritual family, indeed) in this period of crisis. He reflected on the community as the rightful overlords and the moral guardians of the liberty. The crisis threatens the monastic community, their place at the head of local society, and their paternalistic relationship with their subjects.

Westminster Abbey, as discussed in Chapter Two, was deeply affected by the events of the rebellion. Although the author did not include the people of Westminster in the events there is an underlying sense of the importance of the abbey's liberties and its isolation from secular interests. When the sanctuary of Westminster Abbey was violated and Richard paid homage to St Edward the Confessor's shrine at the abbey it marked a violation of the abbey's identity as a sacred space.⁸¹ The account in the *Westminster Chronicle* largely matched that in the *Anonimale Chronicle*, but the Chronicler heightened the importance of the abbey's role and remarked that 'nam post horam ejusdem diei nonam rex in tanta rerum turbine concomitantibus dominis et militibus cum multo civium equitatu ad Westmonasterium causa oracionis accessit' ('the political whirlwind was at its height when, in the afternoon of the same day, the king, accompanied by lords and knights and a large body of mounted citizens, proceeded to

⁸⁰ Walsingham also reflected on the abbot's role as a 'placidum dominum' ('gracious lord') to the people of the liberty of St Albans. Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 458, 454, 450.

⁸¹ See above, 110.

Westminster for his devotions').⁸² The Westminster Chronicler centred the account at his *domus*. The abbey featured as a place of relative safety against the perceived chaos outside and as a place and a community whose liberties, rights, and prestige should have been respected by both the king and the rebels.

The expression of institutional allegiance in moments of crisis was only one part of a spectrum. The chroniclers articulated their affiliation with a *domus* in the routine incorporation of the details of institutional life. John Strecche inserted the lives of the priors of his *domus* into the chronicle. Whether it be the death of Prior Thomas Warmyngton, in the year 1312, or Prior Thomas de Merston in 1400, Strecche wove them into compilation of previous histories and brought the narrative back to Kenilworth.⁸³ Strecche noted Henry V's fondness for the castle and town of Kenilworth.⁸⁴ Strecche's history of his community was integral to the chronicle. His construction of the history of the English around their kings was matched by his construction of priory life around the priors: a duality in his narrative which implicitly placed the importance of priory history to his audience on par with national history.

Chronicles, like Strecche's, with its clear sense of the identity of the priors and past members of the house, were built around a chronicler's *domus*. The *Meaux Chronicle* was partially divided into a history of the deeds of the abbots and included lists of the lands that the abbey had obtained under their leadership.⁸⁵ It included a list of the various relics and manuscripts in the abbey's possession.⁸⁶ The focus on the abbots of Meaux also highlighted the chronicler's awareness of the archbishop of York. York appears frequently, whether in the defence of the north from the Scots or in more regular matters

⁸² See above, 76–121 for a more complete discussion of the Westminster Chronicler's representation of the relationship between the king and the Church at Westminster; *Westminster Chronicle*, 8.

⁸³ BL, Add. MS 35295, fos. 255^v, 262^v.

⁸⁴ Taylor, 'The Chronicle of John Strecche,' 141; BL Add. MS 35295, fos. 80, 263^v.

⁸⁵ Brinton, *The Sermons of Thomas Brinton* II, 251, 357, 446; 'Houses of Cistercian monks: Meaux,' in *A History of the County of York: Volume 3*, ed. William Page (London: Victoria County History, 1974), 146–149. *British History Online* (accessed July 10, 2018, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/yorks/vol3/pp146-149>); Thomas de Burton, *Chronica Monasterii de Melsa: A Fundatione Usque Ad Annum 1396 Auctore Thoma de Burton, Abbate. Accedit Continuatio Ad Annum 1406*, ed. Edward A. Bond, Vol. I, *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores* (London: Longman, 1866), 50–69.

⁸⁶ 'Houses of Cistercian monks: Meaux'.

such as granting petitions to the abbot.⁸⁷ Indeed, between 1336 and 1396, there are ninety-two mentions of Eboracum, referring variously to the city, county, duke, and archbishop of York.⁸⁸ By comparison, over the same period Henry Knighton mentioned them explicitly seventy-six times, though many of those references were included in parliamentary documents relating to them.⁸⁹ Over the course of the substantially longer *Chronica Maiora* Walsingham referred to York in some form ninety-seven times, between 1376 and 1422.⁹⁰ There was, then, an increased awareness of provincial matters and the relative importance of northern affairs in the *Meaux Chronicle*, perhaps not excessively so, but to a notable extent nonetheless.

Tallying up the different renditions of community as it pertained to the *domus* there are several conclusions that may be immediately drawn. The regular chroniclers were devoted to their respective houses. These perspectives were so tightly held that they affected not only the representation of the house itself but almost everything connected to the house. Chroniclers of Westminster, Leicester, Kenilworth, and St Albans reflected on matters from distinct communal perspectives. They were writing as individuals with a deep-seated sense of where they belonged, even if, at times, as in the case of Walsingham when other considerations conflicted with his relationship to the Londoners, this resulted in an inconsistent narrative.

Secular Chroniclers

Not all chroniclers had a *domus*. Secular clerks were rarely as exposed to a single identity as were the regular clergy. They experienced a greater range of mobility and were often employed by multiple patrons throughout their careers. The *GHQ* and Thomas Favent's chronicle were written over relatively short periods and were snapshots of their chroniclers' perspectives in comparison to chronicles written over longer periods. Adam's work is marked by his support for

⁸⁷ Thomas de Burton, *Chronica Monasterii de Melsa: A Fundatione Usque Ad Annum 1396 Auctore Thoma de Burton, Abbate. Accedit Continuatio Ad Annum 1406*, ed. Edward A. Bond, Vol. III, *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores* (London: Longman, 1868), 7, 9, 61.

⁸⁸ Thomas de Burton, *Chronica Monasterii de Melsa: A Fundatione Usque Ad Annum 1396 Auctore Thoma de Burton, Abbate. Accedit Continuatio Ad Annum 1406*, ed. Edward A. Bond, Vol. II, *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores* (London: Longman, 1866); Thomas de Burton, *Chronica Monasterii de Melsa*, III.

⁸⁹ Knighton, *Chronicon*.

⁹⁰ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I; Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II.

his primary patrons, the Mortimers and Archbishop Arundel, alongside his inconsistently expressed identity as a Welshman. Adam of Usk's identification with his patrons and communities shifted throughout his career. There was a focus on Oxford in the early sections of his chronicle. His references to the expulsion of the northerners from the city and the dispute between Welsh students and both southerners and northerners spoke directly to a sense of an identity which was connected to the university.⁹¹

The communities experienced by secular clerks were often looser groups with imagined bonds, rather than directly experienced communities like the *domus*. The author of the *GHQ* repeatedly expressed a sense of identification with his audience and the English army.⁹² Throughout the description of the Agincourt campaign the chronicler identified himself as part of the army, which consisted of several thousand soldiers. During his account of the siege of Harfleur the chronicler repeatedly used possessive pronouns: 'aversarii nostri' ('our adversaries'), 'costodia nostra' ('our guard').⁹³ He identified himself to the audience as a member of the army. When the enemy sallied out to attack the English and burnt their defences, he recounted that, 'improperabant tamen hostes nos sompnolentes et disides quod super custodia nostra non potuimus melius vigilasse' ('the enemy, however, taunted us with being only half-awake and lazy, in that when on watch we had not been able to keep a better look out').⁹⁴ The narrative, with its personal, eyewitness testimony, positioned the chronicler as part of the transitory collective which was the English army. Membership of the army was temporary and ill-defined and to a certain extent impersonal. Whilst it linked the soldiers and priests together as long as they were part of it they cannot be thought to have all known one another thoroughly. Thus, this imagined identity which featured so prominently in the *GHQ* was fundamentally distinct from the regular chroniclers' sense of the *domus*.

His identification with the army did not diminish other identities the chronicler had. He maintained, for example, a clear separation between the identities of clerks and laymen. During Agincourt the chronicler reported that he was in the baggage train of the army, where he explained that he 'et alii qui

⁹¹ Adam of Usk, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk, 1377–1421*, ed. Chris Given-Wilson, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 14.

⁹² Taylor, 'Introduction: *GHQ*', xviii.

⁹³ *GHQ*, 44–45.

⁹⁴ *GHQ*, 44–45.

intererant sacerdotes humiliavimus animas nostras coram deo' ('and the other priests present did humble our souls before God').⁹⁵ The chronicler was, in his own words, part of the 'clerali milicie' ('clerical militia') of the army.⁹⁶ These two strands of identity were united by a series of common themes: that the army was English, that the chronicler went on campaign as part of the army, and that the army was led by Henry V. They were part of the layered sense of identity of the chronicler, but they do not suggest a sense of the close community expressed by the regular chroniclers.

There are similarities between the secular and regular clerks in the discussion of important patrons. Knighton's defence of John of Gaunt, discussed in Chapter Two, and the *GHQ*'s representation of Henry demonstrate close connections between the writer and their patron. Henry V's brilliance was a recurring feature in the *GHQ*, which set out to be a record of his deeds. It was within the context of Henry's character that the chronicler defined himself as the king's man. He lauded Henry, 'nec recolit senioritas nostra quod unquam princeps aliquis magis laboriose, strenuous vel humanius populum suum regebat per viam, seu qui manu propria se virilius gerebat in campo' ('nor do our older men remember any prince ever having commanded his people on the march with more effort, bravery, or consideration, or having, with his own hand, performed greater feats of strength in the field').⁹⁷ The chaplain reminded the audience of their connection to Henry and educated them in how Henry compared to his predecessors. In the chronicler's use of the textual tradition of 'deeds' he delineated his own identity around his praise for Henry V.

The *domus* was, for the regular chroniclers, a concrete and practical reality around which much of their historical writing revolved. However, the secular chroniclers moved through more fluid, imagined communities. Their experience often reflects a more momentary identification within their career than one which can be traced over a prolonged period. For example, in the case of the author of the *GHQ* his identification with the army lasted throughout the campaign, but beyond that it did not define his account.

⁹⁵ *GHQ*, 84–85.

⁹⁶ *GHQ*, 88–89.

⁹⁷ *GHQ*, 100.

The Textual Environments

The chroniclers' historical imagination was formed in series of intersecting textual environments.⁹⁸ As the work of Kathryn Kerby-Fulton and Fiona Somerset has shown, clerks were using both Latinate and vernacular formats to engage in and respond to social debates and discourses.⁹⁹ This included heterodox theologians, such as John Wyclif, who participated in bringing Latin texts to audiences in the vernacular. It also included orthodox preachers, such as Bishop Thomas Brinton of Rochester, a one-time Benedictine monk at Norwich, who was familiar with vernacular texts such as *Piers Plowman* and who used them as reference points in Latin sermons.¹⁰⁰

Sermons formed a significant part of the textual environment of the chroniclers, as scholastic sermons not only became an increasingly important tool for the delivery of ideas in the universities but also were also a key part of parliamentary culture. The opening sermons of parliament were repeatedly recorded by chroniclers, who through their contacts in parliament would often have been aware of the themes discussed. This transference of public sermons into a monastic setting carried ideas of community back and forth between communities. In 1414, for example, Bishop Henry Beaufort addressed parliament with the theme 'Dum tempus habemus operemur bonum' ('As we

⁹⁸ This textual environment had a direct bearing on the construction of community, which figured strongly in the thinking of the period. As Emily Steiner has argued, William Langland in *Piers the Plowman* (whose work was known to Latinate clerks such as Knighton, Walsingham, and Bishop Thomas Brinton) emphasised the necessity of communal living to salvation and offered a range of models for the consideration of community. The writers surrounding the chroniclers were keenly aware of and involved in the contemplation of communal identity. Brinton's sermons repeatedly reflect upon communities, such as that of the realm in his sermons to parliament, or a monastic house. This contemplation appears in literary sources, for instance Chaucer's depiction of communities of religion (the company pilgrims), class, culture, and nationality among the characters of the *Canterbury Tales*. Peggy A. Knapp, 'Chaucer Imagines England (in English)', in *Imagining a Medieval English Nation*, Vol. 37 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 133, 146; Emily Steiner, *Reading Piers Plowman* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 61; Brinton, *Sermons of Thomas Brinton*, I: 167; Brinton, *Sermons of Thomas Brinton*, II: 416, 499, 500, 259.

⁹⁹ Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion: Censorship and Tolerance of Revelatory Writing in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Press, 2006), 13–14; Fiona Somerset, *Clerical Discourse and Lay Audience in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 3–4

¹⁰⁰ Mary Aquinas Devlin, 'Bishop Thomas Brunton and His Sermons', *Speculum* 14, no. 3 (1939): 344; Alan J. Fletcher, 'The Social Trinity of Piers Plowman', *The Review of English Studies* 44, no. 175 (1993): 354; Gwilym Dodd, 'A Parliament Full of Rats? Piers Plowman and the Good Parliament of 1376', *Historical Research* 79, no. 203 (1 February 2006): 44; Andrew Galloway, *The Penn Commentary on Piers Plowman, Volume 1: C Prologue-Passus 4; B Prologue-Passus 4; A Prologue-Passus 4* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 135; Elizaveta Strakhov, "'But Who Will Bell the Cat?": Deschamps, Brinton, Langland, and the Hundred Years' War', *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 30 (2016): 258.

have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men').¹⁰¹ He explained to his audience what they should do and urged war for Henry V's rights.¹⁰² These types of sermons are evidence of one of the textual environments which surrounded the chroniclers and which highlights the direct contributions of their contemporaries to a discourse on the construction of community.

The notion of an ordered society was also part of another cornerstone of the chroniclers' textual environment: the *speculum principis* tradition. Mirrors for princes, such as John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*, the Pseudo-Aristotle's *Secretum Secretorum*, and Giles of Rome's *De Regimine Principum*, were readily accessible by most clerks.¹⁰³

Mirrors for princes offered an intellectual, not a practical, discourse on behaviour and values. Their arguments and ideas do not represent a handbook for behaviour either for monarchs or for clerics who may have read them. However, they do reflect theoretical conceptualisations of societal order. John of Salisbury's arguments in favour of the 'common good' (subsequently related to the 'common weal') as a guiding principle for good rule open up a debate over what constituted the common good of the realm and over how it could be achieved.¹⁰⁴ Giles of Rome's assertion that a kingdom or city required many people of the middle rank raised questions over both how society was divided and how it could best be ordered.¹⁰⁵ The authors of mirrors for princes imagined ideal communities, if not practical ones, and in doing so opened up a discourse to which even up to several hundred years later some chroniclers felt drawn to respond. There was still a vibrant discourse on the societal order ongoing in the early fifteenth century. Thomas Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes* and John Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* demonstrate that the chroniclers were working within a clerical, intellectual environment where such ideas were being actively discussed, and there is evidence that at least some of the chroniclers were actively engaging with this tradition. There was a copy of John of Salisbury's

¹⁰¹ 'Henry V: November 1414', in *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England*, eds. Chris Given-Wilson, Paul Brand, Seymour Phillips, Mark Ormrod, Geoffrey Martin, Anne Curry and Rosemary Horrox (Woodbridge, 2005), *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/november-1414> [accessed 2 October 2018].

¹⁰² 'Henry V: November 1414'.

¹⁰³ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 144–145, 181.

¹⁰⁴ Quentin Taylor, 'John of Salisbury, the "Policraticus", and Political Thought', *Humanitas* 19 (2006), 153.

¹⁰⁵ Charles F. Briggs, *Giles of Rome's De Regimine Principum: Reading and Writing Politics at Court and University, c. 1275–c. 1525*, Cambridge Studies in Palaeography and Codicology; 5 (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 127.

Policraticus at St Albans, though, as Clark has observed there is no evidence that works like it were widely read at the abbey; however, more positively, the anonymous author of the *GHQ* repeatedly referred to Giles of Rome as an authority on military decisions and good kingship.¹⁰⁶ Within the broad textual environment, then, the chroniclers were situated within a debate over the nature of society. Their texts, which reflect upon the reality and the theory of the communities, were in a very real sense contributing to their audience's engagement with these ideas.

Contemporary History

Historical texts had a significant presence within the *domus*. The Venerable Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* was commonly found in monastic libraries as a major historical authority.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, as Clark has observed, the readings during Benedictine mealtimes reinforced a sense of historical time through the writings of the Church Fathers.¹⁰⁸ In addition, contemporary historical works, both those particular to a house and those more widely circulated, were an essential part of a regular clerk's education. Such texts also had an influence on the secular clergy such as Adam of Usk, whose chronicle was appended to a copy of the *Polychronicon*.

Whilst the chroniclers undoubtedly drew on the precedents set by previous historians, many of them had adopted a model of history which encouraged more idiosyncratic approaches to historical writing. Most chroniclers were exposed to multiple historical works, through their own studies (including the creation of chronicles, given that the contemporaneous accounts were often appended to earlier histories), abbatial records, and monastic libraries, and even references in sermons.¹⁰⁹ Many of the chroniclers were

¹⁰⁶ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 261; *GHQ*, 40–42.

¹⁰⁷ Alfred P. Smyth, 'The Emergence of English Identity, 701–1000', in *Medieval Europeans: Studies in Ethnic Identity and National Perspectives in Medieval Europe*, ed. Alfred P. Smyth (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), 31.

¹⁰⁸ Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages*, 225.

¹⁰⁹ The evidence that any individual read a text is difficult to establish; however, it is provable that the chroniclers had access to a wide range of historical texts (as demonstrated by their amalgamation of different texts as a basis for their own works). Therefore, it is worth noting the sheer range of texts that were provably accessible in their communities. Walsingham evidently had access to Matthew Paris's *Chronica Maiora*, and his abbey also housed copies of historical encyclopaedic works and universal histories such as Bartholmeus Anglicus' *De Proprietatibus Rerum*. Other historical works, such as Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, were commonly owned by monastic libraries and was frequently cited by writers and preachers. A

embedded within the historical writing of their own house. Thomas Walsingham continued Matthew Paris's *Chronica Maiora* and the Westminster chroniclers, were amongst a number of fourteenth-century historical writers at the abbey.¹¹⁰

Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon* formed the basis for the majority of the Latin national chronicles. *Polychronicon* was not only the starting point for most of the chroniclers, it also supplied a detailed framework for the discussion of identity, though as discussed it did not obviously bind its continuators's views and values together. Higden described the peoples of Britain who, despite the universal scope of his history, which stretched from creation to the fourteenth century, took centre stage.¹¹¹ The *Polychronicon* comprised seven books. Of these, the first laid out the geography of the world and Britain in particular; and the final three detailed the history of Britain and the invasions of Anglo-Saxons, Danes, and Normans.¹¹² The *Polychronicon* also emphasised England's peculiar liminality, on the margins of the world.¹¹³ Higden mixed this rendering of the English exceptionalism with a layered perception of local identity, especially in the depiction of his home county of Cheshire.¹¹⁴ Higden's influence spread across orders and across the boundaries of secular and regular clerks. The Westminster chroniclers, the authors of the *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, Adam of Usk, the Cistercian chroniclers of Whalley, Dieulacres, and Kirkstall, Henry Knighton, and John Strecche were all amongst the chroniclers who used Higden as a foundation stone for their chronicles.¹¹⁵

century later Knighton's abbey had copies of histories by numerous authors, including Eusebius, Bede, Vegetius, Ranulf Higden (whose *Polychronicon* Knighton had used as the basis for his own chronicle along with William of Guisborough). Meanwhile, at Westminster Abbey, along with the many historical texts already mentioned in 1376, the abbey received seven chests of books from Simon Langham on his death in Avignon, including Giles of Rome's *De Regimine Principum*, Bede's history of the English, come lives of saints, and the *Cronica Martiniana*. Brinton, *Sermons of Thomas Brinton*, I: 1, 47, 89, 160, 62, 115, 44; Brinton, *Sermons of Thomas Brinton*, II: 266, 297, 351, 360, 389; Antonia Gransden, 'Bede's Reputation as an Historian in Medieval England', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 32, no. 4 (1981): 399; M. R. James and A. Hamilton Thompson, *Catalogue of the Library of Leicester Abbey* (Leicester: Leicestershire Archaeological Society, 1941), 132–133; J. Armitage Robinson and M. R. James, *The Manuscripts of Westminster Abbey* (Cambridge, 1908), 6.

¹¹⁰ See above, 41–43.

¹¹¹ Peter Brown, 'Higden's Britain', in *Medieval Europeans: Studies in Ethnic Identity and National Perspectives in Medieval Europe*, ed. Alfred P. Smyth (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), 104.

¹¹² The others covered biblical and classical history. Brown, 'Higden's Britain', 105.

¹¹³ Kathy Lavezzo, *Angels on the Edge of the World: Geography, Literature, and English Community, 1001–1534* (Ithaca, N.Y.; London: Cornell University Press, 2006), 73.

¹¹⁴ Lavezzo, *Angels on the Edge of the World*, 74.

¹¹⁵ Thomas Walsingham, unusually, continued Matthew Paris' *Chronica Maiora* rather than Higden's *Polychronicon*, though later scribes connected Walsingham's text to Higden's, and Walsingham himself was acquainted with the *Polychronicon*. James G. Clark, 'Introduction', in

The widespread dissemination of Higden's *Polychronicon* and its use demonstrate that it was treated as a reliable universal history for late fourteenth-century chroniclers.¹¹⁶ It is, therefore, reasonable to surmise that the writers of contemporary history who continued the *Polychronicon* were associating with it, linking, their works to the national and universal narratives Higden presented.¹¹⁷ They also linked their own historical understanding to a continuous history from Genesis to the present through a chronological model of the Seven Ages of the world.¹¹⁸ This chronological model emphasised the progress of all mankind towards Judgement Day and focused on both the Christian community and the identity of various ethnic and national groups.

The texts which preceded the chronicles may suggest factors that formed the chroniclers as historical writers. Henry Knighton began his chronicle with the work of the Yorkshire Augustinian canon Walter of Guisborough and used other sources, such as the *Cronica Bona*, for details such as his eulogy for Edward III.¹¹⁹ Although Knighton is perhaps more heavily indebted to Higden, Guisborough's interest in Anglo-Scottish affairs may have influenced Knighton's own concern with the relationship between the northerners and their neighbours.¹²⁰ Knighton's choice of material to intermingle with his original content suggests that he had a defined notion of the history he wished to present. Knighton kept the universal history of Ranulf Higden largely intact compared to John Strecche. Strecche stripped away many of the universal elements of the history in his abridgement. For example, Strecche's history does not follow the pattern of a parallel biblical and classical history used by Higden. From the comparison it seems probable that Knighton, whilst invested in his institution, was writing with a historical purpose distinct from John

The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham 1376–1422, trans. David Preest (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2005), 11; Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 177, 155.

¹¹⁶ Larry Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power: The Medieval Exemplum and the Chaucerian Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 38.

¹¹⁷ This association was not consistently or constantly of importance to the chroniclers in the act of writing history. See above, 71–75.

¹¹⁸ John Taylor, *The 'Universal Chronicle' of Ranulf Higden* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966).

¹¹⁹ Martin, 'Introduction: Knighton', xvi; D. A. L. Morgan, 'The Political After-Life of Edward III: The Apotheosis of a Warmonger', *The English Historical Review* 112, no. 448 (1997), 866.

¹²⁰ John Taylor, 'Guisborough [Hemingford, Hemingburgh], Walter of (fl. c.1290– c.1305), Chronicler and Augustinian Canon', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-12892>; Walter (de Hemingburgh), *The Chronicle of Walter of Guisborough, Previously Edited as the Chronicle of Walter of Hemingford or Hemingburgh.*, ed. Harry Rothwell, Camden Series, v. 89 (London: Offices of the Society, 1957).

Strecche's. The history of the community of Leicester appears to have been a more secondary concern for Knighton than for Strecche.

The *Polychronicon* was far more than a manuscript to which chronicles were appended. Its continuators display an intense level of engagement with the text. The acrostic through which Higden spelt out his name through the initials of each chapter was also used by Henry Knighton, Thomas Elmham and John Strecche in their continuations.¹²¹ As discussed, though the Westminster chroniclers were almost certainly acquainted with the historical tradition of their own abbey they continued the *Polychronicon*.¹²² Furthermore, the abbreviation and editing of Higden's work by Strecche, and Adam of Usk's conscious references to the *Polychronicon*, reveal that they were in a conscious diachronic discourse with Higden.¹²³ These factors suggest that in the discussion of communities and regional identities many of the chroniclers would probably have been sufficiently acquainted with the *Polychronicon* to be familiar with Higden's construction and his depiction of identities such as that of the English.

The use of contemporary histories is most relevant to this discussion because it places the chroniclers within a shared textual environment which was developing throughout the fourteenth century. Indeed, they were not only reacting to this textual environment but adding to it, contributing historical information to growing pieces of work. Few of the chroniclers wrote completed histories or histories with a clearly defined end. Their works represent continuous additions to the historical writing of their houses and the educational community within those houses.

Classical Influences

Classical material was an essential part of a clerk's education in the fourteenth century, though not as much as it had been in the thirteenth century.¹²⁴ The use of classical material by chroniclers in this period may be connected to structural

¹²¹ Chris Given-Wilson, *Chronicles: The Writing of History in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004), 148.

¹²² See above, 41–42.

¹²³ Adam's use of Higden as a reference point for his own historical conclusions in the council on Richard II's deposition, and the use of the *Polychronicon* as a basis for histories suggests that chroniclers probably viewed it as an authoritative and reliable account for their own histories. Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 66

¹²⁴ Martin Camargo, 'The Late Fourteenth-Century Renaissance of Anglo-Latin Rhetoric', *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 45, no. 2 (2012), 107; Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 272.

changes in education in the period, at least in the case of Thomas Walsingham, who used it most frequently. The resurgence in classical studies both at St Albans and at the universities cannot entirely explain Walsingham's interest. As Clark has noted, 'as a Classical scholar, Walsingham had no obvious counterpart in fourteenth-century England'.¹²⁵ His use of classical material had more in common with earlier historians. The comparison highlights the sea-change represented by the many other chroniclers who were less invested in the study of classical Roman authors.

Medieval literary analysis had a long and ongoing relationship with classical texts. These formed the basis for much of the critique of genre in the late Middle Ages. Models included Cicero's division of narrative into *historia*, *argumentum*, and *fabula* as well as new texts based upon the absorption of classical history and literature and academic treatises on classical works.¹²⁶ Classical material appeared in the teaching of grammar and saw a resurgence in the universities and the Benedictine monasteries.¹²⁷ Chroniclers' exposure to individual texts was uneven. Certain works such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses* were widely circulated.¹²⁸ References to classical literature and characters were commonplace in the routine of their lives and commonly appeared in sermons.¹²⁹

The conscious use of a genre or form of historical writing is particularly apparent in Thomas Walsingham's use of classical literature. Walsingham reflected on and used epic, tragic, and comedic approaches throughout the chronicle.¹³⁰ He often translated classical descriptions and characterisations

¹²⁵ Clark, 'Introduction: *Chronica Maiora*', 9.

¹²⁶ Vincent Gillespie, 'From the Twelfth Century to c. 1450', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, eds. Alastair Minnis and Ian Johnson, Vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 146, 211.

¹²⁷ Jo Ann Hoepfner Moran, *The Growth of English Schooling, 1341–1548: Learning, Literacy, and Laicization in Pre-Reformation York Diocese* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 25–30; James G. Clark, 'Ovid in the Monasteries: The Evidence from Late Medieval England', in *Ovid in the Middle Ages*, eds. James G. Clark, Frank T. Coulson, and Kathryn L. McKinley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 182; Camargo, 'Renaissance of Anglo-Latin Rhetoric', 107, 109.

¹²⁸ James G. Clark, 'Monasteries and Secular Education in Late Medieval England', in *Monasteries and Society in the British Isles in the Later Middle Ages*, eds. Janet Burton and Karen Stöber (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2008), 26.

¹²⁹ Cf. Siegfried Wenzel, 'Ovid from the Pulpit', in *Ovid in the Middle Ages*, eds. James G. Clark, Frank T. Coulson, and Kathryn L. McKinley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 160–76.

¹³⁰ Clark, 'Introduction: *Chronica Maiora*', 18; Thomas Walsingham, *The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham, 1376–1422*, ed. James G. Clark, trans. David Preest (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2009), 322, 410–411; Gillespie, 'From the Twelfth Century to c. 1450', 210.

onto contemporary figures.¹³¹ Moreover, Walsingham was consciously engaging with classical material on an intellectual level. He wrote at least one surviving epitome of Lucan and his literary works (the *Dites diatus* and the *Archana deorum*) drew heavily on classical Roman authors.¹³² Walsingham's engagement with classical material was part of the common mode of literary analysis that encoded events and texts through a classical lens.¹³³ There are signs that Walsingham's choices were a deliberate adoption of a style of historical understanding which he deployed as it suited him.

Walsingham's selection of authors and his application of quotations was telling. In his description of Agincourt he made particular use of Balbus Italicus' *Ilias Latina*, Persius' *Satires*, Statius' *Thebaid*, with Virgil's *Aeneid* and Lucan's *Pharsalia*.¹³⁴ The authors he chose quotations from, particularly Virgil, Statius, and Lucan, were all associated with tragedy, epic history, and the deeds of kings according to the literary theory of the period.¹³⁵ Walsingham's use of these texts demonstrates his application of classical material to contemporaneous historical narratives in a directed and deliberate fashion. He adopted a form of historical writing which had a pre-existing set of connotations. From the inconsistent use of this material, however, it is evident that Walsingham shifted through forms of historical imagination by reference to his textual environment.

Chris Linsley has argued that Walsingham deliberately sought to use the Romans as a model through which to imagine the English.¹³⁶ Certainly, Walsingham's use of a classical style and his signposting of history by reference to the Romans, Greeks, and Trojans displayed an awareness of classical history as a framework for a discourse on identity, and drew the identity of his contemporaries into their symbolic sphere by comparison and the inclusion of classical references. The stylistic choice was one which followed earlier authors like William of Malmesbury or Matthew Paris.¹³⁷ Walsingham was distinguished by his application of the ideas to the peculiar challenges of

¹³¹ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 191.

¹³² Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 164, 165, 183, 186.

¹³³ Gillespie, 'From the Twelfth Century to c.1450', 146.

¹³⁴ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 676–682.

¹³⁵ Gillespie, 'From the Twelfth Century to c.1450', 211.

¹³⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 674–682; Christopher David Linsley, 'Nation, England and the French in Thomas Walsingham's *Chronica Maiora* 1376–1420' (The University of York, 2015), 209.

¹³⁷ Clark, 'Introduction: *Chronica Maiora*', 9.

his own era, from questions of the identity of Londoners and 'Little Troy' to the framing of the English during the Hundred Years War within a recognisable paradigm.

The application of classical references in episodes of tragedy or epic scale occurs frequently if not always consistently in the *Chronica Maiora*. Although Walsingham used such passages more and more frequently as time went by, his early uses often highlighted political or personal tragedy. During his account of Richard II's reign Walsingham paraphrased Virgil's *Aeneid* in discussing the overthrow and arrest in 1383 of the queen of Portugal, along with the murder of her lover, by the master of the Knights Hospitaller. When describing Sir John Arundel's expedition to France – which led to the violation of a convent of nuns and Sir John's death – Walsingham referred to Neptune and quoted Virgil for his description of the sea.¹³⁸ Instances such as these, which are isolated from much of the text, suggest that Walsingham's use of classical material was a conscious adoption of a classical paradigm of historical writing to position his history, possibly to invest the narrative with a sense of tragedy and the grand scope of these affairs that he felt appropriate to them. Walsingham was clearly a self-aware writer, as is evident from his explicit discussion of modes of historical expression in the opening to his account of the Peasants' Revolt, which ran, 'Rem scripturus sum plus quam tragicam qui comediam scripsisse semper optaueram' ('I, who would always have preferred to write comedy, am about to describe something more than tragic').¹³⁹ This demonstrates that he viewed his role as fluid, one which could shift in accordance with the subject matter he was discussing.

Not all classical material was used within the same historical paradigm. John Strecche was sufficiently interested in classical scholarship to write a treatise on rhyming verse, a version of Aesop's fables, and compilation of myths of the fall of Troy (albeit ones mediated through medieval texts).¹⁴⁰ The narrative of his chronicle displays a strong relationship between the ancient past and the present. He began his chronicle with the tale of Brutus and the giants of

¹³⁸ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 296, 332.

¹³⁹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 236.

¹⁴⁰ Strecche's chronicle was, for example, preceded by John Arton's copy of Guido delle Colonne's thirteenth-century account, and he then included his own history of the founding of Britain by Brutus and further notes on the history of Aeneas. Taylor, 'The Chronicle of John Strecche', 139; Moran, *The Growth of English Schooling*, 25; Hilton, 'The Chronicle of John Strecche', 28; Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 181; BL, Add MS 35295, fo. 136^v.

Albion as the ancient history of England.¹⁴¹ Strecche's use of this material and of Geoffrey of Monmouth may be taken as evidence that he sought to link the contemporary English kings to their mythic predecessors.¹⁴² He then switched the style of his history to discuss details such as the priors of Kenilworth, and then returned to a classical mode with the poem with which he closed the chronicle in which he compared the dead Henry V to various classical heroes, such as Augustus Caesar, Achilles, and Hector.¹⁴³ It encapsulates the themes of tragedy and epic military history that typified his understanding of the place of classical material in narratives and historical writing. However, though Strecche praised Henry IV for his many qualities, his account lacked the classical comparisons which accompanied his description of Henry V.¹⁴⁴ The inconsistency of which this is one example, suggests that his mingling of accounts was not done to any one historical pattern or a single model. His work is distinct in its historical style from that of authors like Walsingham, but it too contained multiple competing styles that reflected on communities in different ways.

Chroniclers rarely adopted classical modes of historical writing. The Westminster chroniclers and Henry Knighton included few classical quotations, but instances of classical style in the *Westminster Chronicle* were routine light adornments. As Harvey noted, the Westminster Chronicler preferred to use latinised versions of place names, or archaic classical terms: 'Fons Clericorum' ('Clarkenwell'), 'Planus Campus' ('Smithfield').¹⁴⁵ However, barring these minor habits of phrasing, the Westminster Chronicler did not use classical material to frame his narrative. The distinct difference between these accounts and those of Strecche or Walsingham suggests that its place in late fourteenth-century historical writing was personal rather than part of a universal historical format.

If we look to Strecche as a case study, it is clear that he did not consistently insert classical material into his account. Its appearance in the life of Henry V stands at odds with its absence from the reign of Henry IV or the lives of the priors. He was evidently aware of and able to use classical or scriptural material. So the variations in his narrative were in all likelihood

¹⁴¹ See above, 45.

¹⁴² Lavezzo, *Angels on the Edge of the World*, 22.

¹⁴³ Taylor, 'The Chronicle of John Strecche', 187.

¹⁴⁴ BL, Add. Ms. 35295, fo. 262^r.

¹⁴⁵ Harvey, 'Introduction: Westminster', xxiii.

deliberate. The reasons for the choices he made can only be speculated on, though the distinct stylistic differences between his records of the lives of his subjects suggest that he intended almost to caricature them through the use of particular devices. Which is not to say that he lacked subtlety. His possible subversion of Henry IV's elevation of Thomas duke of Clarence by comparison to Isaac's blessing of Jacob (which had, in scripture, only occurred through trickery), suggests that even within a single life he provided a nuanced reading of character.¹⁴⁶ The influences of classical material on writers of contemporary histories were present, but they were a tool used by the chroniclers rather than the sole bedrock for their accounts.

Scriptural History

The bedrock of the chroniclers' historical imagination was scriptural history. The scriptures were instilled into novices and senior monks alike through the liturgy, psalters, and the Divine Office.¹⁴⁷ The scriptural sources of history, particularly the historical texts of the Old Testament, were of especial importance. They were a routine part of a clerk's education and were also a source of unquestionable authority to which chroniclers referred for comparison or historical precedent.

Instances of moral commentary and didacticism were naturally framed within a scriptural reading of events. An understanding of history based in biblical historical writing would have been transmitted to the chroniclers directly from their scriptural studies and from the pre-existing medieval historical tradition.¹⁴⁸ For those who continued Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon* the seeds had already been sown as he provided the link between Genesis and contemporary events, and the parallel history of classical and biblical material. Although this was the usual pattern for universal histories, Higden's is differentiated by its availability and that it already had a great many continuations which brought it down the chroniclers' own period. More broadly speaking, the Bible as the ultimate authority was a natural foundation for historical understanding.

¹⁴⁶ BL, Add. Ms. 35295, fo. 262^v

¹⁴⁷ Moran, *The Growth of English Schooling*, 40–46.

¹⁴⁸ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, 110, 38.

Scripture was almost omnipresent in clerical life and was used in practically every form of discourse. It appeared in sermons, papal bulls, the liturgy, histories, and romances. It was central to studies in theology or in monastic houses, and it was the primary narrative format and basis for authority experienced by clerks. Whilst a chronicler could adopt another identity as a historian to explain matters in a classical vein, scripture offered a concrete mode of historical thought. The frequency with which chroniclers turned to scripture, and their integration of it into their accounts, is evidence that much of the time they were discussing history within a mental framework of divine purpose and judgement. Henry Knighton used at least forty-three biblical quotations and allusions, by G. H. Martin's estimation.¹⁴⁹ Adam of Usk referenced scripture at least 127 times, and the author of the *GHQ* peppered his account with biblical allusions throughout.¹⁵⁰ In the closing folio of his narrative the author of the *GHQ* drew particularly on the wisdom of the Old Testament, using passages from the Book of Samuel, the Book of Kings, and the psalms, employing the well-established scriptural narratives to reflect upon Henry V's virtues as a ruler.¹⁵¹ The dominance of scripture in so many narratives is indicative of the spiritual and moral purpose which many of the chroniclers understood to lie behind parts of their work.

The chroniclers often presented their work within a moral framework. Thomas Walsingham addressed the Peasants' Revolt as a punishment sent by God for England's sins.¹⁵² Arriving at the end of his account, Walsingham explained how in St Albans the locals spread scandalous stories against the abbot and the abbey. 'Et hec quidem', he stated, 'erat retribucio uillanorum quam retribuere abbati, qui reddere mala pro bonis festinabant, ed odium pro dileccione sua, ac pro eo ut eundem diligenter detrahebant sibi' ('That was how the villeins repaid the abbot. They were quick to repay evil for good, and hatred for his love, and instead of loving him they disparaged him').¹⁵³ This conclusion, which references psalms 136 and 108, indicated that Walsingham was taking up an attitude of patient and pious suffering. His choice of scriptural references hammered home the innocence and persecution of his abbey. The use of a

¹⁴⁹ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 558.

¹⁵⁰ *GHQ*, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 18, 36, 48, 60, 68, 88, 90, 94, 98, 102, 104, 106, 108, 110, 120, 136, 150, 146, 151, 154, 174, 176, 180.

¹⁵¹ *GHQ*, 180.

¹⁵² Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 502.

¹⁵³ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 556.

scriptural model of history emphasised the spiritual and moral lesson of the Peasants' Revolt and the violation of the relationship between the communities.

Adam of Usk's approach to historical writing may have interwoven scriptural influences at several levels. He used the Old Testament for examples of virtue, and following the biblical model of prophetic fulfilment he also often suggested events of his own era were foreshadowed in biblical passages. When he was reinstated as a papal auditor in 1405 he described it as a fulfilment of Genesis 3:33: 'Factus est Adam quasi unus ex nobis' ('Adam the man is become as one of us').¹⁵⁴ The pattern persisted throughout the chronicle as Adam framed events as the mirror to biblical phrases or characters. He criticised Richard II's actions at the Merciless Parliament in 1397 by comparing him to biblical tyrants. When the duke of Milan died in 1402 Adam described how

Dux iste, subiugata per eum Bononia mundi delicia et Ytalie Gloria, et ante cuius conspectum quasi siliut terra, qui et magnum fluuium Powe per medium montium et multa miliaria abduvens, ad modum Ciri magni a Bablilone Efraten euertentis, Padwamque lucratus, subita peste ad magnum peregrinorum dolorem succubuit

(having conquered Bologna, the splendour of the world and the glory of Italy, this duke, a man before whom all the earth was quiet, and who had acquired Padua by diverting the mighty river Po for many miles in the middle of the mountains, just as the great Cyrus turned the Euphrates away from Babylon, died suddenly of the plague).¹⁵⁵

Adam was speaking of the Persian king Cyrus the Great mentioned in the Bible. The reference provided a biblical mirror to the events of his own day. His account appears to reflect upon itself the associations of scriptural history and linking events together within the schema of the holy history of humanity. The pattern of historical writing is strikingly like that of the evangelists, whose accounts drove home Christ's messianic nature by establishing him, his life and death as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies. It suggests that Adam envisaged his history of the contemporary events and communities within the model of scriptural history.

¹⁵⁴ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 206.

¹⁵⁵ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 36, 156–157.

Thomas Favent's chronicle of the Lords Appellant's actions between 1386 and 1388 included layered references to scripture. During his description of the execution of the enemies of the Lords Appellant, Favent called the place of execution used for Robert Tresilian (d. 1388), chief justice of the King's Bench, 'Calvarie' ('Calvary'), the hill of execution outside Jerusalem where Jesus was believed to have been crucified.¹⁵⁶ Andrew Galloway has suggested that the account of Tresilian's execution was a parody of Jesus' death.¹⁵⁷ Favent depicted Tresilian's death as an unholy inversion of Jesus' sacrifice as he accused Tresilian of carrying papers inscribed with demons' names to protect him from death.¹⁵⁸ Tresilian's allegiance with the forces of hell, combined with his attempt to avoid rather than meet death, served as a damning counterpoint to the traditional Passion narrative. Favent's deployment of the scriptural parallel occurred when he sought to blacken his antagonists' moral character. The narrative is explicitly and implicitly scriptural as he adopted the identity of a moral commentator. His commentary reflected on the London community, who featured as the heroes of his account, as defenders against the allies of Satan.

Hagiography

Hagiographies, along with institutional histories, were the keystones of the traditional historical output of monastic houses, and many chroniclers demonstrated an ability to adopt this form of the genre.¹⁵⁹ They were common both in institutional settings and beyond, with many being copied by members of religious houses for the glory of their institutional saints, reinforcing the community of the *domus*.¹⁶⁰ They emphasised the inspirational and virtuous

¹⁵⁶ Thomas Favent, 'Hic Incipit Historia Siue Narracio de Modo et Forma Mirabilis Parlamenti Apud Westmonasterium Anno Domini Millesimo CCCLXXXVJ, Regni Vero Regis Ricardi Secundi Post Conquestum, Anno Decimo, per Thomam Fauent Clericum Indictata', ed. May McKisack. *Camden Third Series* 37 (1926), 18; Favent, 'The Manner and Form of the Miraculous Parliament', 246.

¹⁵⁷ Favent, 'The Manner and Form of the Miraculous Parliament', 246, n. 20.

¹⁵⁸ Favent, *Historia*, 18.

¹⁵⁹ Clark, 'Introduction: *Chronica Maiora*', 8; Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 272; Smith, *War and the Making of Monastic Culture*, 198.

¹⁶⁰ Sara Gorman, 'Anglo-Norman Hagiography as Institutional Historiography: Saints' Lives in Late Medieval Campsey Ash Priory', *Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures* 37, no. 2 (2011), 112–115; Claire Lewis, 'History, Historiography and Re-Writing the Past', in *A Companion to Middle English Hagiography*, ed. Sarah Salih (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2006), 132.

deeds of their protagonists and offered a reading of history which highlighted God's role in individual lives.¹⁶¹

Hagiography, with its emphasis upon the virtue and trials of an individual, was a natural fit for the promotion of a hero's legend and a political agenda. Even if he or she was not actually canonised, the tropes of the genre could still serve to reinforce their virtue. Walsingham included several hagiographic passages. For example, he represented Archbishop Sudbury's death at the hands of the rebels in 1381, and the earl of Arundel's death in 1397 on Richard II's orders, as martyrdoms.¹⁶² In Archbishop Sudbury's case the rubricator described the episode as 'martirium archiepiscopi' ('the martyrdom of the archbishop').¹⁶³ Walsingham detailed how after Sudbury's death a number of miracles were attributed to the archbishop, including the curing of blindness and infertility.¹⁶⁴ Symbolically the hagiographic description of the archbishop's martyrdom clearly drew the lines within the political and social community between the rebels and the established order.

Similarly, the hagiographic description of the earl of Arundel illustrated the injustice of Richard II's position and the illegitimacy of his cause. Walsingham may well have adopted a hagiographic style from an entirely genuine apprehension of the sacred nature of the events recounted. It was, however, a knowing choice of style and one that came naturally to him. The genre of hagiography is not dominant in Walsingham's chronicle, but when he chose to use it, he slid easily into the character of the hagiographer. The melding of different forms of historical writing into a single chronicle is not necessarily evidence of an unfocused historical imagination. Walsingham's clear understanding of genre and the distinct character of episodes suggests that he did not feel constrained to a consistent style but shifted between styles depending on the subject matter.

The *GHQ*'s author presented a fully formed narrative which echoed many hagiographic themes. The hagiographies of kings posed some problems, narratively speaking, as they challenged the usual narrative of hagiography in which a hero with only the authority of God was pitted against foes with worldly

¹⁶¹ Lewis, 'History, Historiography and Re-Writing the Past', 124.

¹⁶² John M. Theilmann, 'Political Canonization and Political Symbolism in Medieval England', *Journal of British Studies* 29, no. 3 (1990): 241–66.

¹⁶³ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 428, 430.

¹⁶⁴ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 428, 430.

power.¹⁶⁵ Yet, as Claire Waters has observed, a number of saintly kings existed.¹⁶⁶ Edward the Confessor was, in at least one fourteenth-century *vita*, a protector balanced between the two roles. In this *vita* Edward's virtuous use of earthly power was subject to divine authority.¹⁶⁷ The representation of Henry V's kingship in the *GHQ* also conformed to this pattern, although there were no miracles. Henry was represented as a holy king: his relationship and his power were directly and repeatedly linked to divine support. Within the recto and verso of the first folio the author referenced Colossians, Wisdom, Corinthians, Luke, Leviticus, and Numbers.¹⁶⁸ Of these references two directly referred to Henry's personal virtues: one to God testing monarchs, two to the just punishment of those who oppose God's anointed, and one to the connection between God and the king. The earthly power of John Oldcastle and the Lollards was pitted against the holy authority of the newly crowned king by the author of the *GHQ*.¹⁶⁹ In his first chapter the author related Henry V's struggle with Oldcastle and his eventual triumph with God's help. He opened second chapter by expanding on these events:

'inter has igitur tempestates et temptacionum angustias adhuc mens regia stetit immobilis et frangi non potuit, ymmo priori inherens sacratissimo proposito de ampliandis ecclesiis et pace regnorum, primo tria dundare cepit monasteria'

(amid the storms and stresses caused by these painful experiences, the mind of king remained firm and was unshakable; nay rather, abiding by his former most devout intention to extend the Church and encompass the peace of kingdoms, he first began the foundation of three monasteries).¹⁷⁰

There was an emphasis on Henry's testing by God, on his devotion to the Church, and on earthly peace. Features were included that indicated Henry was balancing the twin duties of a holy king. This narrative form and the balance between the roles were maintained throughout the *GHQ*. The conclusion to the chronicle was a plea to God for his support in Henry's future wars with

¹⁶⁵ Claire Waters, 'Power and Authority', in *A Companion to Middle English Hagiography*, ed. Sarah Salih (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2006), 70.

¹⁶⁶ Waters, 'Power and Authority', 76.

¹⁶⁷ Waters, 'Power and Authority', 77.

¹⁶⁸ *GHQ*, 2–8.

¹⁶⁹ *GHQ*, 2–10.

¹⁷⁰ *GHQ*, 12.

France.¹⁷¹ This style of historical writing suggests that the author of the *GHQ* may have understood his role to be similar to that of a hagiographer. In fulfilling it he contributed to the Lancastrian mythmaking and separated himself from chroniclers who were less closely embedded in the Crown's business.

The chroniclers were part of a rich textual environment that had a number of different modes of discourse for the discussion of communities already present within it. The chroniclers, reacting to new educational pressures and the political moments, proved themselves to be mutable historical writers, presenting themselves as tragedians, hagiographers, moralists, and didactic seekers of the truth. The different traditions and the chroniclers' application of them to various parts of society (inconsistently even within a single chronicle) demonstrate both the complexity of this group of writers and the problems inherent in the representation of the chroniclers as a homogenous community in and of themselves. The traditions within the textual environments in which the chronicles were written formed a patchwork, and they reflected in turn on multi-layered communities.

The Three Orders

The theory of the three orders had been most prevalent prior to the fourteenth century, but it provides an interesting social model and one still occasionally used by the chroniclers. The three orders were traditionally *oratores*, *bellatores*, and *laboratores*.¹⁷² Yet, in the fourteenth century these were becoming increasingly blurred categories. Katherine Smith has noted that a subdivision between monastic and secular clergy had been proposed as early as the eleventh and twelfth century, setting monastic orders at the pinnacle of society.¹⁷³ The chroniclers in fourteenth century, with the rising number of unbeneficed clergy and clergy in minor orders, were confronting questions of who the *orates* really were. Meanwhile there were suggestions that there should be a fourth order of merchants.

¹⁷¹ *GHQ*, 180.

¹⁷² Georges Duby, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 287; Inka Moilanen, 'The Concept of the Three Orders of Society and Social Mobility in Eleventh-Century England,' *The English Historical Review* 131, no. 553 (December 1, 2016): 1331; Jean Dunbabin, 'Government,' in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c.350–c.1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 482.

¹⁷³ Smith, *War and the Making of Monastic Culture*, 39.

The orders still provided an important model for the conception of society that permeated the chroniclers' textual environment. They were implicitly and explicitly addressed within the textual context.¹⁷⁴ To join the clergy was to join a community which vied only with the aristocracy for social dominance. The bishops and many abbots had seats amongst the lords in government.¹⁷⁵

There is little in the way of an explicit discourse on the three orders in the chronicles. However, there was an implicit division between groups in society based on their class or status. Religious lords, temporal lords, and the mixture of rural and urban groups were not described in the same terms. In the *Anonimalle Chronicle* the 1377 dispute between John of Gaunt, the duke of Lancaster, and the citizens of London over John Wyclif was described as follows:

mesme celle tenps / de parlement comensast une graunte debate parentre le duk de Loncastre et les citisayns de Loundres par cause qe une meastre de divynite meastre Johan Wyclyff nome, avoit preche en Londres et aliours come homme arage diverses poyntes encontre le clergie.

(at the same time as parliament met there began a great dispute between the duke of Lancaster and the citizens of London about a master of divinity called Master John Wycliff, who had preached in London and elsewhere against the clergy on various subjects, like a man possessed.)¹⁷⁶

Gaunt was a supporter of Wyclif, whilst the Londoners and the bishop of London were opposed to Wyclif's teachings. The *Anonimalle Chronicle's* chronicler identified three separate groups: John of Gaunt, the citizens of London, and the clergy against whom Wyclif was preaching. The Londoners do not necessarily fit into the part of the *laboratores*, given that they were explicitly identified as 'citisayns de Loundres', rather than as 'the commons' as the chronicler later referred to the rebels in 1381.¹⁷⁷ However, this catch-all description of them suggests that the chronicler imagined them as a distinct,

¹⁷⁴ G. R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England: A Neglected Chapter in the History of English Letters and of the English People* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), 554.

¹⁷⁵ Moilanen, 'The Concept of the Three Orders', 1331.

¹⁷⁶ V. H. Galbraith, ed., *The Anonimalle Chronicle, 1333–1381: From a MS. Written at St. Mary's Abbey, York* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1927), 103; translation in A. K. McHardy, *The Reign of Richard II: From Minority to Tyranny 1377–97* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 24.

¹⁷⁷ *Anonimalle Chronicle*, 103, 150.

defined, and limited community whose membership was neither noble (like John of Gaunt) nor priestly (like Wyclif and the clergy under attack). The identification of the duke, the clergy, and the Londoners is suggestive, then, of at least an implicit figuration of the actors into the traditional tripartite division of society. It is apparent that the *Anonimale Chronicle's* chronicler was at least partially constructing communities through categorisation.

There were occasions when chroniclers set aside their identity as members of the clergy to align themselves with other group identities. Henry Knighton shared the concerns of the tenant farmers over the price of crops; the Westminster chroniclers paid close attention to the concerns of the citizenry of London; Thomas Favent rounded off his chronicle by stating that 'nos liberate sumus; Deo gratiarum acciones' ('we are free, thanks to God'); and, as we have seen, Walsingham frequently referred to English soldiers as 'our men'.¹⁷⁸ These inclusive episodes imply a boundary to the identities. They demonstrated the flexibility of a chronicler's sense of identity. The community such remarks suggest is more nebulous than the model of the three orders.

There is some evidence that the distinction between the three orders mattered more to Thomas Walsingham than others. He attacked the knights of Richard II's household in 1387 as knights of Venus, 'plus ualentes in thalamo quam in campo' ('showing more prowess in the bedroom than on the field of battle').¹⁷⁹ He also described how during Henry Despenser's crusade in 1383, 'coacti reuera fuerunt iuuenes delicati, mercatorum et burgensium filii, nescientes arma, ignorantes uigilias, et per omnia inexperti, ad supplementum exercitus' ('fine young men, the sons of merchants and burghers, who had no knowledge of warfare, and knew nothing of night watches, and so were totally inexperienced, had in fact been forced to make up the numbers of the army').¹⁸⁰ These young men, he reported, immediately fell ill as they were unsuited to warfare. In each episode Walsingham constructed his comments around an implicit notion that society was divided into groups suited to particular roles. His criticism of Richard's knights as insufficiently warlike, for example, highlighted that they should be *bellatores*. Meanwhile it is evident in the episode on the

¹⁷⁸ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 16, 89, 389, 393, 539; *Westminster Chronicle*, 9, 13, 103; Favent, 'The Manner and Form of the Miraculous Parliament', 252; Favent, *Historia*, 24; Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 678, 680.

¹⁷⁹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 814; W. M. Ormrod, 'Knights of Venus', *Medium Ævum* 73, no. 2 (2004): 290–305.

¹⁸⁰ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 704; See below, 255.

crusade that the merchants' sons, though fine, were ill-suited by their social grouping for warfare.

Communes and Civites

By the fourteenth century there had been developments in the model of the three orders; writers now posited a middling order – the mercantile – primarily present in cities. This additional distinction appears within the chroniclers' depiction of the city as a community, Thomas Walsingham's descriptions often suggested that the urban community of London consisted of *laborates* and a distinct group of *civites*, who were neither *bellatores* nor *orates*.

The term 'the commons' was also applied to multiple distinct groups, including the lower ranks within London, rural workers, and the 'commons' in parliament. The various knights of the shires and the urban representatives who made up the parliamentary commons were not one and the same as the rebels in 1381, who were also frequently referred to by chroniclers as 'the commons'.¹⁸¹ In describing the commons chroniclers held two quite different concepts and communities in uncomfortably close proximity. The matter was complicated by the differentiation between the lower ranks of urban dwellers and the merchant class. The latter group was described in one sermon as a new order and a product of the devil.¹⁸² Londoners were categorised separately by the chroniclers from the rural commons in the chronicles. However, distinctions were drawn within the London community as well. There was a context of city and town identities of which chroniclers with urban connections would have been especially aware.

Cities and towns with charters had rights of their own – charters which the chroniclers accepted as an everyday part of life – and they operated as collective political and economic units.¹⁸³ To be a 'citizen' was a practical description and a privilege reserved for an elite few that was enacted through ritual performances such as the City of London's collective welcome to Richard II in 1392.¹⁸⁴ However, though such descriptors appear in chronicles, such as

¹⁸¹ Strohm and Prescott, *Hochon's Arrow*, 41.

¹⁸² Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, 554.

¹⁸³ Christian D. Liddy, *War, Politics and Finance in Late Medieval English Towns: Bristol, York and the Crown, 1351–1400* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2005), 1–3.

¹⁸⁴ The London Guilds controlled the conference of citizenship because of the privileges it entailed.

those of Walsingham, the Westminster chroniclers, and Favent, they were not universally used. Amongst chroniclers at further removes from large population centres the technical subdivisions of the communities became blurred.

The construction of communities of citizens and commons by the chroniclers was most clearly articulated in two particularly well-documented episodes: the Peasants' Revolt in 1381, and Richard II's entry in 1392. These events attracted the attention of several different chroniclers who expressed a broad range of perspectives that were most significantly rooted in the *domus*.

The Commons and the Peasants' Revolt

The accounts of the Peasants' Revolt in the chronicles contained a range of ideas of community. There have been numerous detailed studies examining how the chroniclers conceptualised the rebels in 1381. Paul Strohm and Andrew Prescott have argued that the chroniclers adapted 'their texts to serve clerical partisanship, bolster royal authority, and uphold hierarchy and vested privilege'.¹⁸⁵ Strohm's analysis suggests that the chroniclers, through a range of strategies, sought to undermine the rebels' self-definition as the 'true commons'.¹⁸⁶ That the chroniclers depicted the rebels as outsiders to an elite and established society is inarguable. Some details, such as the start of the revolt, which was rooted in the unjust treatment of peasants by either tax collectors or particular individuals, were shared by Knighton, the *Anonimalle Chronicle's* author, and the writer of the *Vita Ricardi Secundi*.¹⁸⁷ However, this was not necessarily representative of their tone or approach to events.

The author of the *Anonimalle Chronicle* suggested that the actions of Simon Burley were to blame for the revolt. He accused Burley of seizing a man whom he claimed was his villein at Gravesend.¹⁸⁸ The *Anonimalle Chronicle's* narrator then claimed, 'les bones gentz de la ville viendrent a luy pur acorde fair

¹⁸⁵ Strohm and Prescott, *Hochon's Arrow*, 33.

¹⁸⁶ Paul Strohm has also challenged the idea that the rebels were in fact peasants, the chroniclers' construction of the 'commons' as peasants is possibly indicative of their own desire to downplay any authority the rebels might be believed to possess, see Strohm, 'A "Peasants" Revolt?', 198; Strohm and Prescott, *Hochon's Arrow*, 34–36.

¹⁸⁷ George B. Stow and Nicholas Herford, eds., *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), 62; Knighton, *Chronicon*, 209; *Anonimalle Chronicle*, 136.

¹⁸⁸ As A. McHardy has noted, it would have been impossible for Burley himself to have done this as he was not in England on the necessary dates. *Anonimalle Chronicle*, 136; McHardy, *The Reign of Richard II*, 71.

en ease maner al reverence le roy' ('the good people of the town came to him to make a fair accord with all reverence to the king').¹⁸⁹ However, matters escalated and the accounts agreed that the commons in Kent, Essex, and other counties rose up. In this moment between injustice and rebellion, the *Anonimalle Chronicle's* writer had constructed the community, which then rebelled, as formed from townsfolk and individuals with a genuine grievance. The rebel commons were described in the *Anonimalle Chronicle* as a mixture of urban and rural groups who could collectively be named 'les comunes' ('the commons').¹⁹⁰

Other chroniclers differentiated between the urban and rural commons. The *Vita Ricardi Secundi* described the initial rebels as 'omnes communes, tam Rurales quam aliosm de Cancia et Estsexia' ('all the country-dwellers and others of Kent and Essex').¹⁹¹ These rebels were joined by the 'communes civites' ('commons of the city').¹⁹² Differentiation of this sort also appeared in the *Westminster Chronicle*. As Strohm has argued, the Westminster Chronicler regarded the rural rebels as outsiders and drew a line between the London commons and the rebels from outside the city.¹⁹³ The Westminster Chronicler's approach drew distinctions within the Londoners and incorporated a more detailed version of London society. The differences in nomenclature used by the chroniclers suggest that they had a range of understandings of what the Peasants' Revolt was. Such idiosyncrasies demonstrate that the chroniclers' narratives were not adapted only to serve the establishment.

The Chronicler claimed that when the rebels entered the city of London, 'tota civitas London in seipsa confuse et aliquantulum, ut a multis putabatur, in seipsam divisa quid ageret non cernebat' ('the whole of London, the prey of internal confusion and, as many thought, of some degree of internal dissension, was without a clear view of what was to be done').¹⁹⁴ He followed this statement by explaining that there was a fear that the lower orders of London society might join the rebels. Thus, the rebel commons were imagined in the chronicle as explicitly the lower ranks of London society, and only indirectly a part of

¹⁸⁹ *Anonimalle Chronicle*, 136.

¹⁹⁰ *Anonimalle Chronicle*, 136.

¹⁹¹ *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, 62.

¹⁹² *Vitae Ricardi Secundi*, 62.

¹⁹³ Strohm and Prescott, *Hochon's Arrow*, 36.

¹⁹⁴ *Westminster Chronicle*, 8.

London society.¹⁹⁵ For the Westminster Chronicler, then, there were angles which altered the representation of communities surrounding him. The Westminster Chronicler avoided mentioning the part of the townsfolk of Westminster in the account. This exclusion from blame may be related to their absence in the assault on Westminster Abbey.¹⁹⁶ Combined with the fairly complex rendering of rebels in London we may infer that the Westminster Chronicler, influenced by the identity of his *domus* and its positive relationship with the town of Westminster, sought to present a nuanced picture of the participants. Instead he directed blame towards the rural commons and some of the lower commons of London.

The *domus* also featured prominently in the representation of the commons in the Peasants' Revolt. Historians have often turned to Walsingham for his lengthy and ferocious attacks on the rebels as an example of chroniclers' attitudes to the rebels. Walsingham lambasted them for foolishly reaching beyond their station.¹⁹⁷ He suggested that their stupidity and wickedness drove them to try to overthrow their betters.¹⁹⁸ He juxtaposed the naturally superior orders with the inferior peasants, establishing his own superiority as a monk. As Strohm noted, Walsingham undermined the rebels' claims to be the 'true commons' rather than the Parliamentary Commons.¹⁹⁹ Walsingham claimed that they had imagined they could become equal with their lords. He described the idea as one which, had it come to pass, would have rendered England a laughing-stock.²⁰⁰ He dismissed the rebels' desire for a voice and equality, and he differentiated between those who could be part of the Commons as a political and social group and the rebels.

Walsingham's use of terms to describe the commons was consistent and appears to have been deliberate. He referred to the Londoners who supported the rebels with phrases such as 'plebs communis' ('the common people') or 'uulgaribus' ('commoners') of London.²⁰¹ He described the rural rebels en masse as 'rustici' ('rustic peasants'), with connotations of oafishness, before

¹⁹⁵ This differentiation between lower and higher ranks of society was also noted by Thomas Favent who referred to the 'lower commons' of London in his chronicle of the Lords Appellants' rebellion. Favent, 'The Manner and Form of the Miraculous Parliament'.

¹⁹⁶ Harvey, *Living and Dying*, 6.

¹⁹⁷ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 410.

¹⁹⁸ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 410.

¹⁹⁹ Strohm and Prescott, *Hochon's Arrow*, 6.

²⁰⁰ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 410.

²⁰¹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 418.

breaking down the term into 'natavi' or 'villani' ('villeins'), and 'bondi' ('bondsmen'), highlighting their status within the social hierarchy.²⁰² His language's consistency and its connotations suggest that he sought to image the rebels as peasant upstarts. However, it strikes a markedly different chord from his discussion of the idea of London as a new Troy or Rome elsewhere in the chronicle, when he discussed Londoners in a more positive light.

Walsingham usually only used the term 'communis' when reporting the rebels' self-descriptions. He applied the term when describing the rebel's oath to remain loyal to Richard and the commons; when the 'communis' demanded the support of the commons of Barnet and St Albans; when he stated that Richard of Wallingford (the spokesman for the St Albans rebels) declared that the commons were now the lawmakers; and when the rebels described themselves as the commons to the abbot of St Albans when demanding new liberties.²⁰³ Walsingham claimed that the rebels gloried in the title of 'the commons'. The complaint suggests that he was uncomfortable consciously referring to them in this way.²⁰⁴ His own use of terms, then, in comparison, indicates that he may well have knowingly crafted his imagined version of the peasants.

Walsingham was at pains to demonstrate that the rebels' attempts to appropriate rank and positions were to be denied. He sought to demonstrate that they were a transgressive anomaly by including shocking episodes such as the invasion of the bedchamber of Joan of Kent (the queen mother).²⁰⁵ In describing the event he laid out the perversion of societal norms: 'intrabant et exhibant ut domini, qui quondam fuerant uilissime condicionis serui; et preferebant se militibus non tam militum, set rusticorum, subulci' ('the peasants, who had once occupied the most menial positions of serfs now went in and out like lords. Swineherds exalted themselves above the knights, while not behaving as knights, but as peasants').²⁰⁶ To Walsingham, the rebels were, as a group, a mockery of societal order.

²⁰² Strohm and Prescott, *Hochon's Arrow*, 36; Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 410, 442.

²⁰³ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 412, 420, 454.

²⁰⁴ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 452, 448, 458.

²⁰⁵ W. M. Ormrod, 'In Bed with Joan of Kent: The King's Mother and the Peasants' Revolt', in *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in Late Medieval Britain. Essays for Felicity Riddy*, eds. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and Felicity Riddy (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 277.

²⁰⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 424.

The characterisation of the rebels by Walsingham was universally negative. When the rebels in London came to find the archbishop and kill him Walsingham described them as ‘ganeones demoniaci’ (‘devilish scoundrels’).²⁰⁷ The rebels in St Albans were no better. As Aston has observed, Walsingham suggested that they were following heterodox beliefs.²⁰⁸ His denial of their spiritual and moral qualities further supported his deliberate construction of them as an evil and unnatural group.

Yet, Walsingham’s depiction of the rebels was multifaceted. His descriptions echo the dismissive and critical language of newsletters and sermons but also show an awareness of the various interlinked groups of which they were composed. He included calls from the rebels for the commons of Barnet and St Albans to join them, which suggests that there was at least a nominal separation by location.²⁰⁹ Walsingham noted that the order for the commons of the town to join the rebellion was accompanied by the threat that ‘uiginti milia eorum simul accessura ad incendendum uillas prefatas et eos cum potestate magna adducta’ (‘twenty thousand of them would come en masse with all the power they had mustered to destroy them and these towns with fire’).²¹⁰ The passage reinforced the rebels’ destructive nature, but it also established that the men of St Albans were themselves victims. Even Walsingham, for all his ferocious hatred of the rebels, was more subtle than an entirely critical reading would suggest.

The complexities of the account were increased by Walsingham’s depiction of the St Albans commons as the subjects of the abbey. He explained that when the news reached St Albans ‘res statim notificatur abbati, qui timens eorum aduentum, et dampna ex eo secutura, confestim conuocatis uinuersis cure sue famulis et uillanis’ (‘the abbot was immediately informed of this, and fearing their arrival and the harm which would ensue, he straightaway called a meeting of all the servants and villeins at his court’).²¹¹ He added that the servants, whom he identified through the possessive pronoun *noster*, intended to do good, whilst the villeins sought to do evil.²¹² The differentiation between

²⁰⁷ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 424.

²⁰⁸ Margaret Aston, ‘Corpus Christi and Corpus Regni: Heresy and the Peasant’s Revolt’, *Past and Present* 143 (1994), 29–34.

²⁰⁹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 420.

²¹⁰ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 420.

²¹¹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 420.

²¹² Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 420.

the villeins and the servants drew a line between the *domus* and the townspeople of St Albans. It suggests that Walsingham believed the villeins associated with the commons in the revolt against their lord, the abbot.

The representation of the monastic community as benign masters was central to Walsingham's discussion of the events at St Albans. Steven Justice has suggested that Walsingham partially composed the narrative to encourage fortitude in the monks against future depredations.²¹³ The chronicle's record of the events was a depiction of the ideal relationship between the communities of the town and monastery. Walsingham related that the abbot responded,

'Boni proxima, iam triginta duo anni sunt ex quo abbas et pater uester extiti, et nunquam uos infestau i uel contristau i; set quociens in tribulacione fuistis et angustia, laborau i uestris necessitatibus et miseriis depellendis; et uos me omnino subuere nicimi, amicum uestrum et placidum dominum, sine causa'

('My good neighbours, it is now thirty-two years since I became your abbot and father, and I have never been hostile to you or grieved you; in fact, whenever you have been in trouble or distress I have laboured to relieve you of your straightened and miserable circumstances. Now you are striving without cause to destroy me, your friend and gracious lord').²¹⁴

The rebels replied, Walsingham claimed, by acknowledging that the abbot had indeed been a fair lord.²¹⁵ In the passage, Walsingham framed the abbot and the men of St Albans as part of a single wider community bound to the *domus*. The report in the chronicle that the abbot self-identified as the abbot and father of the St Albans villeins painted a picture of a reciprocal communal bond. Although he wished to maintain the status quo, Walsingham's depiction of the 'commons' was not consistent and moved between several distinct groups.

Civites

Mentions of the lower commons of London in accounts of the Peasants' Revolt suggest that several chroniclers considered them a distinct group, if not a

²¹³ Steven Justice, *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381*, 27 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 199.

²¹⁴ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 454.

²¹⁵ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 454.

distinct order, from their rural equivalents. This discourse was not exclusively part of the chronicler's intellectual milieu. London went through a period of intense questioning of its identity in the late fourteenth century. Sylvia Federico demonstrated that writers such as John Gower (in his *Vox Clamantis*) and Richard Maidstone (in the *Concordia facta inter regem Riccardum II et civitatem Londonie*) imagined London as a 'New Troy'.²¹⁶ Gower's *Vox Clamantis* was written apparently in response to the Peasants' Revolt, whilst Maidstone's poem was a reaction to Richard II's entry into London in 1392.²¹⁷ Federico suggested that the rising and the conflict between Richard and the Londoners which led to the king's entry into the city were instances in which the city's 'cohesive corporate identity' was compromised, and that the writers envisaged this by conceptualising the city's identity as sexually vulnerable and feminine.²¹⁸

Chroniclers' ideas of the city were often rooted in existing textual traditions. Troy was a useful pseudo-historical model in the discursive evaluation of urban identity. It offered an example of a city which had been praiseworthy and yet which fell because, many suggested, of its own sinfulness.²¹⁹ The integration of Troy into the contemporary imagination is clear in Gower and Maidstone's work, and also in Walsingham's chronicle.²²⁰ The incorporation of these ideas into the chronicles points to the conclusion that some of the chroniclers were deliberately seeking to cast comment on the city as a community. They deployed an imagined model for the city to critique it and the society it represented.

Walsingham's comparisons to ancient cities established a question: would the Londoners rise to glory or fall by their own sins? In the description of Richard II's entry into London before his coronation Walsingham claimed that 'ciuitas tot pannis aureis et argenteis, tot olosericis, aliisque adinventionibus que animos intuencium oblectarent, ornate fuerat, ut putares te ibidem uel Cesarianos triumphos cernere, uel Romam, ut quondam fuerat, in precellente decore' ('the city, in fact, had been decorated with so many golden, silver, and

²¹⁶ Sylvia Federico, *New Troy: Fantasies of Empire in the Late Middle Ages*, Medieval Cultures, Vol. 36 (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 3.

²¹⁷ Federico, *New Troy*, 4.

²¹⁸ Federico, *New Troy*, 5–13.

²¹⁹ Sylvia Federico, 'Two Troy Books: The Political Classicism of Walsingham's *Ditis Datus* and Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 35, no. 1 (27 October 2013), 169.

²²⁰ Federico, 'Two Troy Books', 169; James G. Clark, 'Thomas Walsingham Reconsidered: Books and Learning at Late-Medieval St. Albans', *Speculum* 77, no. 3 (2002), 855.

silk banners and other devices to delight the minds of spectators that you might have thought you were witnessing here one of the triumphs of a Roman emperor and seeing Rome, as it had once been, in all its surpassing splendour').²²¹ Walsingham depicted Rome as an ideal state towards which London and England might aspire.²²² It suggests a conceptualisation of the city as an independent power and centre of a potential English empire. Walsingham's emphasis on wealth and extravagance was superficially admiring – though the mention that long-fallen Rome had once been this way suggested that the English and Londoners should be wary not to fall into the same vices as their predecessors. This was a remarkable difference in tone for Walsingham, who in 1392 castigated the Londoners for their heretical beliefs. It was perhaps more in tune with his discussion of Brembre's plan to turn the city into a new Troy.

In chronicles the urban community was imagined on several levels. As noted, the chroniclers recognised a difference between not only the urban and rural rebels but also the different ranks within the city of London. Walsingham was well acquainted with the ebb and flow of London politics.²²³

Walsingham constructed an image of civic society around a strict social hierarchy. In his descriptions of London society, he divided the city into citizens and commons. Walsingham consistently applied the term 'ciues' ('citizen') to define the elite members of the London community. He used the term to describe several individuals and groups in the early section of his chronicle. In some cases, it is unclear exactly what class he intended, for instance, when he described the 'ciues' who supported Wyclif.²²⁴ However, he usually used the term for the established ranks of London's elite. Walsingham described Adam Bury, for instance, as a 'ciuem Londoniensem' ('a citizen of London').²²⁵ Bury was a senior alderman of London who, accused of disloyalty to the king, fled the country in 1376.²²⁶ Likewise, John Philpot (later knighted), who was sent by the 'ciues' to be their spokesmen against the duke of Lancaster (John of Gaunt), was well regarded by Walsingham.²²⁷ The definition Walsingham gave to these

²²¹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 136.

²²² Linsley, 'Nation, England and the French', 50.

²²³ Taylor, 'Introduction: St Albans Chronicle, Vol I', xcix.

²²⁴ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 76.

²²⁵ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 40.

²²⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 40, 41 fn. 49.

²²⁷ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 94.

representative figures implies that he had a clear notion of the nature of the London commune – in which for him, only the citizens were worthy of respect. This in turn suggests that he was consciously reflecting on these communities.

Walsingham directly addressed the distinction he made between the citizens and the commons of London. He outlined the distinction in rank and quality in describing how after a flattering speech by Lord Fitzwalter to the citizens of London, ‘applaudunt ciues, quos uulgus uocat proceres, propter urbis Londoniensis nobilitatem ueterem’ (‘the citizens, whom the common people call “leaders” because they were the old nobility of London applauded this speech’).²²⁸ Also in the account for 1378, during a diatribe against Wyclif, Walsingham turned his attention to the Londoners who supported Wyclif, declaring that ‘non dico ciues tantum Londonienses, set uiles ipsius ciuitatis’ (‘I do not say so much the citizens of London, as the scum of that city’).²²⁹ The dismissal of the commoners of London established a critical distinction between the different ranks of society. Defining them as a form of nobility Walsingham drew on tropes of authority through ancestry and status. Thus, Walsingham drew social lines through his history, establishing the order which it seems he believed must be upheld, not by chance, but in all probability with deliberate care.

The Westminster Chronicler used a similar categorisation to Walsingham. He distinguished between the wealthier citizens and the lower orders of the city.²³⁰ He noted that, ‘formidabat quidem <ne> si inualescentibus servis resisterent, communes tanquam suorum fautores cum servis contra reliquos civium insurgerent, sicque tota civitas in seipsa divisa deperiret’ (‘it was, indeed, feared that if resistance were offered to the growing strength of the serfs, the city’s lower orders might champion their own class and join the serfs in rising against the rest of the citizens and in this way the entire city, divided against itself would be ruined’).²³¹ The chronicler described London as an urban community of multiple classes. The lower ranks in the city were torn between allegiance to the community of the city and common bonds of rank with the serfs. They were still part of the commonality. For them to turn on the rest of the

²²⁸ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 88.

²²⁹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 196.

²³⁰ *Westminster Chronicle*, 8.

²³¹ *Westminster Chronicle*, 8.

community would have seen London destroyed not by an external force but by itself. The passage then encapsulates an awareness of multi-layered identities.

The Westminster Monk demonstrated an understanding of the urban community built on the various city guilds. He first described John Northampton and the restrictions he placed on the fishmongers of London. Northampton had abolished their court and prevented them from selling fish unless they had brought it from the sea and sold it at the same price as non-guild members.²³² The Monk followed this with an account of how Nicholas Brembre, on his election to the role of mayor, undid Northampton's work.²³³ The conflicts between factions within the city continued with future mayoral elections, for instance, in the near riot between the supporters of the goldsmith Nicholas Twyford and Brembre's men in 1384.²³⁴ The internal conflicts of London continued with the bill presented in parliament by the mercers, goldsmiths, and drapers against the fishmongers and vinters, whom they sought to exclude from public office.²³⁵ The London community as depicted in the Westminster Monk's account was formed of multiple factions within a single body.²³⁶ He established lines of conflict which accorded more closely with guild identities. The Monk's image of community, then, was invested with a reading of city events which was aware of and valued these identities.

The guild identities were a fundamental part of how London displayed itself and were incorporated into the chronicles. These identities were expressed textually and in practice during the entry ceremonies of monarchs into London. The entry ceremonies operated as a forum for the expression of political and social messages between the king and the city. The *GHQ*'s author imagined the city of London as a joyous commune on the return of Henry V after Agincourt in 1415.²³⁷ He described how

cives exierunt in obviam Regis usque promontorium de Blakeheth, maior videlicet et xxiiiij seniors in scarlet, et ceteri de inferioribus civibus rubiis

²³² Walsingham also discussed the conflict between the other guilds and the fishmongers, Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 614; *Westminster Chronicle*, 60.

²³³ The Westminster Monk incorrectly identified Nicholas Brembre as a fishmonger rather than a grocer. Brembre did, however, remove many of the restrictions imposed on fishmongers. *Westminster Chronicle*, 62; A. J. Prescott, 'Brembre, Sir Nicholas (d. 1388), Merchant and Mayor of London', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-3312>.

²³⁴ *Westminster Chronicle*, 102.

²³⁵ *Westminster Chronicle*, 334.

²³⁶ *Westminster Chronicle*, 206, 216, 496.

²³⁷ *GHQ*, 100–112.

indumentis cum capuciis bipartitis de rubeo et albo, in circiter xx milibus equorum. Qui omnes iuxta eorum artificial certas habuerunt divisas culciores, que unumquodque artificium notabiliter ab alio distinguebant (the citizens went out to meet the king as far as the heights of Blackheath, that is the mayor and the twenty-four aldermen in scarlet and other citizens of lower degree in red gowns with parti-coloured hoods of red and white, to the number of about twenty thousand on horses. All of them, according to their crafts, wore some particularly richly fashioned badge which conspicuously distinguished the crafts from one another).²³⁸

The writer of the *GHQ* went on to detail how the citizens of London welcomed Henry and celebrated his triumph. The citizens of London, their hierarchy distinguished through visual signification, put exceptional effort into meeting the king. The chronicler highlighted the efforts made to greet Henry V in style. Their adoration was expressed as a further reinforcement of his success. The chronicler described them from the perspective of the royal party. His inclusion of details such as the citizens' own banner of 'Civitas Regis Iusticie' ('City of the King of Justice') reflected on Henry's quality and accepted the self-identification of the citizens. The *GHQ*'s writer was aware of the guild identities and incorporated them in his demonstration of Henry V's virtues as part of the theatre of the relationship between the monarch and the city.

Similarly, the descriptions of the welcome to Richard II in 1392, as part of a reconciliation between the king and the city, revealed a keen awareness of urban identity. The origins of the dispute which led to the entry are unclear. The Westminster Monk suggested financial concerns were the root cause.²³⁹ The reconciliation itself saw the Londoners promise payments to the Crown in return for their liberties. Walsingham glossed over events, but there were more complete accounts in the *Westminster Chronicle* and Knighton's chronicle. The Westminster account was partially based on another source, potentially a newsletter of some kind, as it shares many similarities with a letter in the register of Llanthony Secunda Priory in Gloucester.²⁴⁰ However, unlike the letter, the chronicler emphasised the importance of Westminster Abbey.

²³⁸ *GHQ*, 102.

²³⁹ *Westminster Chronicle*, 502.

²⁴⁰ Helen Suggett, 'A Letter Describing Richard II's Reconciliation with the City of London, 1392', *The English Historical Review* 62, no. 243 (1947), 211.

The Westminster Monk suggested that Richard conceived of the Londoners through the medium of the guilds. The Monk explained that the king demanded that on the day of his entry the Londoners meet him at Wandsworth with appropriate ceremony, 'unaqueque arse dicte civitatis in secta sua et in equis, et per medium dicte civitatis honorifice perducerent eum usque Westmon' ('each city craft in its own livery and mounted on horseback, to escort him with all honour through the city to Westminster').²⁴¹ The Westminster Monk's account and the letter agreed that the Londoners escorted the king in this manner. According to the Monk 22,000 horsemen and many others met the king, before handing him the sword and keys of the city.²⁴² The king was subsequently treated to a series of set pieces as he processed through London, each tableau apparently part of a ritualistic bonding between king and city.²⁴³ Two young men brought golden thuribles to Richard and honoured him with incense, he and the queen were crowned by two boys dressed as angels; and they were then presented with a golden table or a golden tablet for an altar (the Monk claims the former).²⁴⁴ The sequence of meetings appears to have ritualistically associated Richard with the figure of Christ in an openly encoded plea for his forgiveness of the city. The gifts and spectacle provided a setting within which the king could forgive. The Westminster Monk highlighted the significance of this ceremonial agreement between the king and the city of London. He cast the Londoners as a cohesive unit when pressured by an outside force, such as the king, whilst still acknowledging the importance of their guild identities. His description may have been anchored in the citizens' own intentions or a common language of repentance present in entry ceremonies. In either case the Monk depicted the Londoners as a layered community which performed the role of a supplicant.

At Westminster Abbey, in a passage of his chronicle reflective of the Monk's conceptualisation of the abbey community in the wider hierarchy of the kingdom, the king laid aside his crown and submitted to the power of the

²⁴¹ *Westminster Chronicle*, 504.

²⁴² *Westminster Chronicle*, 504.

²⁴³ Such bonding rites were a key part of many entry ceremonies, see, Andrew Brown, 'Bruges and the Burgundian "Theatre-State": Charles the Bold and Our Lady of the Snow', *History* 84, no. 276 (1999), 587.

²⁴⁴ *Westminster Chronicle*, 506; Suggett, 'A Letter Describing Richard II's Reconciliation with the City of London, 1392', 212.

Church.²⁴⁵ When the king met the monks of Westminster Abbey, he and the queen dismounted, removed their crowns, and kissed the Gospels before returning to the church with the convent. The convent then sang responsories appropriate to the commemoration of St Edward and St Peter.²⁴⁶ The Monk explained that ‘dominus rex interim super gradus marmoreos devote genuflexit et post ipsum venit regina et similes devociones peregit’ (‘meanwhile the king knelt reverently on the marble steps and after him came the queen and performed similar devotions’).²⁴⁷ The letter did not mention the visit to the abbey; the passage was probably informed by the Monk’s partisanship for his *domus*. The Monk constructed the inextricably linked community of the king, the citizens of London, and Westminster Abbey, in which Westminster remained supreme.

If we compare the Westminster account to Knighton’s, we see a significant difference in their articulation of the London commune. Knighton’s view from Leicester placed far less emphasis on either the guilds or on Westminster Abbey. He included similar descriptions to the Westminster Monk and the letter of how the streets were decorated and hung with cloths of gold, silver, velvet, and muslin, yet his community was more homogeneous.²⁴⁸ It was the ‘ciues’ who met the king rather than the guilds, they were followed by women and children, then the bishop of London, and then all the clergy of the city without distinction.²⁴⁹ Knighton received a different account of events: a single angel offered first wine to the king and queen and then two crowns.²⁵⁰ His account probably reflects his limited access to sources on the capital, which restricted his ability to give an informed description of the civic commune’s multiple internal identities.

Knighton focused on the king rather than the city, and his narrative relegated the citizens to a more passive role. ‘Et tantos ac tales honores et mirabiles regni impenderunt,’ Knighton claimed, ‘quales nulli alii regi et huius regni retroactis temporibus meminimus impensos fuisse’ (‘And so many and such honours and marvels were lavished upon the king that no other king of this

²⁴⁵ See above, 108–109.

²⁴⁶ *Westminster Chronicle*, 506.

²⁴⁷ *Westminster Chronicle*, 506.

²⁴⁸ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 546.

²⁴⁹ It is notable that the women and children Knighton referred to do not appear to have a civic identity. Knighton, *Chronicon*, 546.

²⁵⁰ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 546–548.

realm in past times can be remembered to have enjoyed the like').²⁵¹ The episode ended with the king's promise to give a final answer to the Londoners on the return of their rights by the following parliament.²⁵² The difference between the Westminster account and Knighton's was largely a matter of emphasis and detail: Knighton's account was substantially shorter than the Westminster account and included far fewer details. Knighton constructed the Londoners in this episode as a community of clergy and citizens who cooperated in a dutiful and magnificent welcome to the monarch. This emphasis substantially altered the imagined relationships between king, city, and clergy and evidently lacks the allegiance to Westminster Abbey which defined the Monk's account.

Knighton was well aware of London's various crafts and guilds, but they were not an aspect of society which preoccupied him. He mentioned that the crafts of the city, each in their own livery, went with King David of Scotland's procession when he was brought to the Tower after he was captured in 1347.²⁵³ And, again, that the citizens of London went out to meet the king of France as a prisoner in 1357 in the livery of their crafts.²⁵⁴ However, the significant difference between Knighton's account, with its emphasis on the king, and the Westminster Monk's focus on his *domus* and the guild-based order of London, indicates that they approached the construction of the community of the city of London acting under different influences. The Monk appeared as chronicler within an urban setting, rooted through the membership of his *domus* and its locale in a paradigm of civic variety. Knighton perceived the guilds from a literal and figurative distance, focusing instead on the more identifiable figure of the king and the religious trappings of the ceremony surrounding him.

The English Clergy and 'Mother Church'

The religious elements of the entry ceremony were part of the all-pervasive religiosity present in medieval public life and were deeply embedded in

²⁵¹ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 548.

²⁵² Knighton, *Chronicon*, 548.

²⁵³ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 76.

²⁵⁴ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 150.

construction of community by historical writers. Faith and religion pervaded the textual environment of the chroniclers, from the presence of miracle plays and tableaux during ceremonies to their everyday lives within their *domus*. Papal bills and sermons circulated through the clergy, offering what may be regarded as 'official' models of the Church. Yet, as discussed in Chapter Two, the Catholic Church was not imagined in the chronicles in simple monolithic terms, and there was a deep-seated tension in the late fourteenth century between the domestic and international Christian communities. Even embedded within it the chroniclers had competing identities as members of different religious orders, or even secular clerks, and members of separate religious houses.

The tension between religious identities was expressed in an articulation of comradeship between monks from within the network of the Westminster chroniclers over members of the papal court. The Monk of Westminster described how in 1385 the pope received news that some of his cardinals were plotting to accuse him of heresy and other crimes, intending to depose him.²⁵⁵ The pope threw the suspects in prison and proceeded to have them tortured.²⁵⁶ The Monk added that 'inter quos fuit quidam cardinalis Anglicus, quondam monachus Northwycen'; qui professus est se de hujusmodi conspiracione peante scivisse' ('among them was an Englishman, a former monk of Norwich, who admitted he had had prior knowledge of the plot').²⁵⁷ The English cardinal in question was Adam Easton. The pope, furious with the cardinals, stripped them of their honours and flung them back in prison.²⁵⁸ The Westminster Monk's narrative demonstrates how the papal news that was fed into monasteries by corporate networks was not received in isolation from the bonds of interest and sympathy with brother monks who were closely linked to their own institution.

The pope's decisions were depicted critically by the Monk. His torture of the cardinals and his anger were recounted with the use of adjectives and adverbs such as 'severest' or 'furiously', commonly indicative of the sin of wrath.²⁵⁹ The language of vice highlighted not a comradeship with the Curia but a criticism of it, one which articulated a sympathy for Adam Easton and which

²⁵⁵ *Westminster Chronicle*, 106.

²⁵⁶ *Westminster Chronicle*, 106.

²⁵⁷ *Westminster Chronicle*, 106.

²⁵⁸ *Westminster Chronicle*, 106.

²⁵⁹ *Westminster Chronicle*, 107.

imagined an English monk and cardinal endangered by the politics of the papal court.

The tensions between the English clergy and the universal Church were particularly acute in light of pressures such as the Hundred Years War. Throughout the war cardinals often acted as emissaries between the French and the English as the papacy attempted to directly intercede.²⁶⁰ Chroniclers were faced with a divergence in the interests of their communities. They could side with the king and his magnates, to whom the *domus* was often beholden, or side with the papacy and the Church. The tensions in the chroniclers' identification with the Curia were further strained in 1378 when the Church was rent by schism.²⁶¹ The relationship between supporters of the Roman papacy and the Avignon papacy was an uneasy mixture of open antagonism and a tacit acknowledgement that each side was still Christian, which challenged any imagined stability in the Church.

Walsingham deliberately engaged with the crisis in the Church and he supported the individuals who rose to combat the problems. While France, Scotland, and Spain cleaved to the anti-pope in Avignon, England was mainly aligned with the pope in Rome. The schism laid a great strain on the identity of the Church, forcing the English clergy into a position of vulnerability. Walsingham quoted from a letter to Archbishop Arundel in 1408 which ran, 'Attendat, quesumus, uestra sollicitudo pastoralis qualiter huius pestiferi scismatis uulnus, liuor et plaga tumens non guerunt iam a triginta annis circumligata nex curate medicamine' ('May your compassion, we pray, as shepherd of the sheep, lead you to see how the pain, malice, and the spreading plague of this pestilential schism have remained unchecked and unremedied by any cure now for thirty years').²⁶² Walsingham's inclusion of this letter in his chronicle reflected the stress caused to the Church by the schism. The letter voices an English perspective, calling, as a member of the Church and yet with a semi-external voice, for the papacy to seek unity.

The uncomfortable tension between the English interests and the interests of the Curia was a common element of the chroniclers' discourse on identity. Walsingham had previously indicated a significant divide between the

²⁶⁰ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 152.

²⁶¹ The schism continued to divide Christendom until 1417.

²⁶² Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 556.

Curia and the English clergy, and his account suggests that the latter were struggling with their own identity. He explained that

odibilis erat hic annus non solum Romanis, Romaneque curie, set Anglicis infinitis, qui curiam propter prouisiones et beneficia sequebantur; suspectus prelati et religiosi, quia metuebant censuras uel interdictum regni futurum propter statutum premissum factum contra Romanam ecclesiam

(it was an odious year [1391] not only for the people of Rome and for the Roman Curia, but for the countless English who went to the Curia for provisions and benefits. It was a year that aroused suspicion amongst bishops and religious because they feared that punishments or an interdict would be inflicted upon the kingdom because of the statute against the Roman Church).²⁶³

Walsingham's rendition of events marked out a clear divide between the Roman Curia and the English clergy. The English were prelates and monks, but politically they were also English. For Walsingham the clergy was not a single group, but one which could be subdivided.

The distance between the community of the English clergy and identification with the Roman Curia was also generated by the different threats the Church faced at a national and an international level. Clark has argued that the monks of St Albans were partially distracted from the schism by their struggles with John Wyclif.²⁶⁴ This was reflected in concentrated praise for the English prelates who stood up in defence of the clergy. The Peasants' Revolt saw several heroic prelates take a stand against the demonic rebels in Walsingham's view. Walsingham described Archbishop Sudbury's execution as a martyrdom and demonstrated how Abbot Thomas de la Mare's courage preserved the lives of the monks of St Albans and their rights.²⁶⁵ Episodes such as these leave a clear depiction of regional or national clerical identities.

Walsingham's chronicle suggests that he imagined the English and Roman portions of the Church to be distinct, if interlinked – an attitude which has significant implications for his account of international politics and matters of faith. He combined this praise for the English prelates with a condemnation of cardinals such as Pileus de Prata. Pileus was accused by Walsingham of

²⁶³ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 902.

²⁶⁴ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 247.

²⁶⁵ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 428, 458.

selling papal chaplaincies and taking a substantial portion of England's wealth.²⁶⁶ Walsingham described how

ad capellanatum domini pape tam possessionatos quam mendicants admisit, nec aurum eorum respuit, qui notarii puplici effici precabantur. Altaria quoque portabilia nulli pecuniam offerenti negavit. Quadraginta libras cum aliis donis Cisterciensium non repulit, quin graciose concederet eis licenciam generalem uescendi carnibus extra monasterium indifferenter, ut in monasterio edere consueuerunt (he admitted to papal chaplaincies men of property as well as Mendicants, and rejected nobody's gold who begged to be made notaries public. Neither did he refuse to give portable altars to any who offered money for them. He did not decline forty pounds from the Cistercians with other gifts, which thus allowed him to grant them graciously general licence to eat meat when they like outside the monastery, just as they were accustomed to do in the monastery).²⁶⁷

The cardinal's takings from the English were so great, Walsingham reports, Pileus' servants began to reject silver and demanded to be given nothing but gold.²⁶⁸ The entire episode was loaded with an implicit condemnation of such practices. Walsingham articulated the flaws in the Curia's representative. Pileus' simony stands out as subverting and undermining the proper religious practices of the Cistercians and the English as a whole. Walsingham's account suggests that he regarded the papal agents as not only separate from the English clergy but even antagonistic towards them, potentially endangering the wealth and stability of his *domus*. His position in this instance stands at odds then with his appreciation for Arundel's appeal to a united church. The attitude is not precisely inconsistent, but it labours with an internal tension between perspectives which were difficult to align.

The articulation of identity in Walsingham's chronicle was not cut and dried. Walsingham's political and spiritual concerns conflicted with government policy. At times he expressed discontent with the Anglo-French peace talks. In 1391, during peace talks between the English and French, he reported, 'Quare papa suadet quod cum sint scismatici ex nulla alia causa comunicacio sit cum eis, nisi pro reducendo eos ad fidem et obedienciam debitam' ('The pope on

²⁶⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 406; Walsingham, *The Chronica Maiora*, 249 fn. 1.

²⁶⁷ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 406.

²⁶⁸ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 408.

these grounds advised the king that since the French were schismatics, there should be no communication with them on any matter other than that of restoring them to faith and due obedience').²⁶⁹ Walsingham was a keen advocate of warfare for the moral health of a society.²⁷⁰ The pope's intervention, articulated as a religious and moral injunction, provided support for Walsingham's own valorisation of the war with France. Whilst Walsingham had on occasion suggested that the English clergy were separate – even superior – to the Roman clergy, in this instance, when their interests aligned, Walsingham dutifully repeated the pope's words. Responding to the structural tensions in the Church and the interests of the English simultaneously, Walsingham, for a brief moment, aligned the competing interests that repeatedly surfaced elsewhere in the chronicle.

Despite these conflicts of identity, the chroniclers simultaneously, and largely without contradiction, attempted to defend the Church – particularly the domestic Church – from threats. With the rise of John Wyclif's teachings the English clergy appeared to be under threat, and defences of orthodoxy spread, particularly amongst the Benedictines.²⁷¹ Expressions of anti-Lollard sentiment appear frequently in multiple chronicles. Many defined 'true' Christians by contrast to these heretics; chroniclers imagined the Church by drawing on traditional topoi of holy unity.

The oppositional relationship with Lollardy was a common theme which crossed boundaries of order or religious house. The Benedictines were particularly antagonistic towards the Lollards, but the Augustinian, Cistercian, and secular writers were also highly critical. Henry Knighton had a particularly complex relationship with Wycliffism. As discussed, his abbot, Philip Repyngdon, had been a Wycliffite, and John of Gaunt had supported Wyclif. Yet, Knighton passionately decried heresy.²⁷² He defended orthodox virtue and appealed to scriptural authority. Turning to the Gospel of Matthew he wrote,

Cristi doctrina mitis humilis et mansueta! O repugnans nephandorum
disciplina superba gladiate inuidie et detractionis plena! Cristi namque

²⁶⁹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 990.

²⁷⁰ Christopher Guyol, "'Let Them Realize What God Can Do": Chivalry in The St Albans Chronicle', in *Fourteenth Century England IX*, eds. James Bothwell and Gwilym Dodd (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2016), 87; see below, 198–271.

²⁷¹ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 247; see above, 63.

²⁷² Martin, 'Introduction: Knighton', xliii.

doctrina est si quis uos non audierit, exeuntes excutite puluerem pedum uestrorum in testimonium illis

(O gentle, humble, and mild teaching of Christ! O vile teaching of the wicked: proud, armed, and full of hatred and reproach! For the doctrine of Christ is, that if they will not hear you, you should shake the dust of the place from your feet in witness of them).²⁷³

The language of sin and virtue and the contrast between the qualities of Christianity and the vices of heretical doctrine were oppositional. Knighton reflected on the Lollards as defined by their sinful and non-Christian behaviour. Shake the dust of the place from your feet was Jesus's advice in the Gospel of Matthew to his disciples on leaving behind those who would not listen to their ministry. Knighton's account suggests he found a scriptural understanding of history the most appropriate with which to conceptualise the Lollards. By using this language, Knighton established the Lollards as a sinful, non-Christian, 'other' for his orthodox audience.

The fundamental root of Knighton's attack on the Lollards was shared with other chroniclers, but Walsingham incorporated it into a more complex model of the Christian community. Walsingham responded to heresy by maintaining the hierarchy of the faithful, placing *oratores* and *bellatores* in their appropriate roles. The first were to quash the ideas of the heretics, the second were to oppose them by force of arms. Walsingham praised the crusade led by bishop Henry Despenser in 1383 against the Flemish schismatics and urged intellectuals and the clergy to clamp down on heterodox beliefs.²⁷⁴ He planted a firm ideological position in favour of churchmen as defenders of the faith and arbiters of justice.

Walsingham's diatribes against the Lollards were particularly vicious and suggest that he took on himself a role of a gatekeeper to the intellectual community.²⁷⁵ His complaint in 1378, when Gregory XI sent a papal bull to Oxford rebuking the university for tolerating the Wyclif, reflected multiple imagined communities. He wrote,

Oxonense stadium generale, quam omnino cum dedecore refutare.

Oxonense stadium generale, quam graui lapsu a sapiencie et sciencie

²⁷³ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 294.

²⁷⁴ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 626.

²⁷⁵ Jill C. Havens, 'A Curious Erasure in Walsingham's Short Chronicle and the Politics of Heresy', in *Fourteenth Century England*, Vol. II (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2002), 96.

culmine decidisti, quod quondam inextricabilia atque dubia toti mundo declarare consuesti, iam ignorantie nubilo obfuscatum dubitare non uereris que quemlibet et laicis Christianis dubitare non decet. Pudet recordacionis tante imprudencie, et ideo supersede in huiusmodi materia immorari net maternal uidear ubera decerpere dentibus, que dare lac, potum sciencie, consueuere.

(What an attitude for Oxford University! How seriously you have dropped from the heights of wisdom and knowledge when once it was your custom to declare to the whole world knowledge that was difficult to understand or unknown before; now you are not afraid to express doubt on any matter, though it be obscured by a cloud of ignorance, when it is not right for any Christian layman to doubt these things. I am ashamed to recall such folly, and therefore refuse to dwell on such matters, lest I should appear to be biting my mother's breasts which have always given her milk as the food of knowledge.)²⁷⁶

Walsingham clearly imagined the community at Oxford as a scholarly body. He identified himself with the scholars and suggested that scholar-monks and the University of Oxford had a role as guardians of orthodoxy. The textual environment of the universities and his experience of at least the Benedictine community at Oxford is represented in his engagement with the concerns of Oxford. Writing from within this context Walsingham acting as a scholar-monk, and one who had cause to view this identity as a badge of pride and a challenge.²⁷⁷ Walsingham's self-construction as a member of scholastic, textual communities emerged in this passage as an implicit argument that the Oxford scholars, and indeed all those with learning, should leap to the defence of the Church. It is also a clear reflection on his relationship to the concerns of the moment. He stands as an example of the Benedictine involvement in the universities, and one closely involved with the great crisis in English Orthodoxy in the late fourteenth century.

Walsingham's description of Oxford as a mother framed his relationship to the university within familial lines and paralleled the offence signified by the Lollards to 'Mother Church'. Walsingham used his criticism of his metaphorical mother to emphasise the depth of the problem that Wycliffite teachings posed.

²⁷⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 176.

²⁷⁷ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 191, 247.

His use of parallel comparisons went further: Oxford, imagined as a community of knowledge with a duty to the ignorant laity, was juxtaposed to the ignorance of Wyclif's doctrine.²⁷⁸ This articulated a divide between orthodox intellectualism and heterodox ignorance. Walsingham's construction of the community at Oxford was a deliberate and calculated commentary that delineated a cornerstone of his intellectual community and background.

Walsingham's projection of a dichotomy between the Church and heretics frequently recurred in the *Chronica Maiora*. He defined the imagined values and community of the Church by comparison with the Lollards. In 1413 he explained how Sir John Oldcastle, leader of a Lollard rebellion, put down opposition to Lollard preachers with threats.²⁷⁹ Walsingham claimed of Oldcastle, 'aliterque senciit et sentit, ac dogmatizat et docet de sacramentis altaris et penitende, peregrinacionibus et adoracionibus ymaginum ac clauibus quam Romana ecclesia docet et affirmat' ('he had thought fit in the past and in the present to propound doctrine, and to give teaching about the sacraments of the altar and penitence, about pilgrimages and the worship of images, and about the keys other than is taught and affirmed by the Roman Church').²⁸⁰ Oldcastle failed to uphold the doctrine of the Church. The doctrinal identifiers – the teachings of the Church, the sacraments, the adoration of images – were all clear signifiers of the Christian community.²⁸¹ Walsingham implicitly called on laymen to hold to doctrine whilst demanding that scholars provide a guiding light. He was at his most didactic as a chronicler in the defence of Catholicism and offered his audience clear markers of the faith's opponents. Walsingham's representation of orthodoxy established what he regarded as communally acceptable behaviour.

Similarly, Walsingham's description of the violation of the sanctuary at Westminster reinforced the authority of the clerical class.²⁸² His account of the death of the squire Robert Hawley was prefaced by a long moralistic reflection on the state of the Church.²⁸³ He explained that

²⁷⁸ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 176

²⁷⁹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 624.

²⁸⁰ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 624.

²⁸¹ See below, 288

²⁸² Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 236.

²⁸³ Hawley had taken sanctuary at Westminster after he had escaped arrest in the Tower of London for holding the son of a Spanish count to ransom.

inuenit tempus nostrum, pro dolor, homines Christiano nomine insignitos, peiores infidelibus, et irreuerenciores ipsis ethnicis aut paganis. Reuera pagani suorum sacrorum immunitates et iura, que non soldanorum, admiraliorum siue regum, cartis fulciuntur, set solum deuocione plebeiana, adeo illibata custodiunt ut capitale sit infra ambitum templi ullius hominem percussisse.

(our age, alas, has discovered men bearing the name of Christians who are worse than infidels and more impious than the very heathens and pagans. In fact pagans protect unimpaired the liberties and rights of their sacred places, which are not supported by charters of sultans, emirs, or kings, but only by the people's devotion, so that it is a capital offence to have struck down a man within the precincts of any temple.)²⁸⁴

Walsingham condemned Christians who failed to abide by the diktats of the clergy. The passage was peppered with ideas steeped in a historical imagination coloured by scripture— as with his description of the abbey as a 'temple', for example. Walsingham presented the Church as a community in which the sacred places and their guardians were paramount.²⁸⁵ He seems to have imagined the abbey as the meeting place between the temporal and the spiritual and suggested that its members required and merited the support of temporal powers. Castigating 'Christians' for their failings, Walsingham offered a critique of the failings of society around him. He established himself and other members of the clergy as spiritual gatekeepers of virtue.

The representations of the communities of domestic and Roman churches demonstrate the tensions which underlay this central part of the chroniclers' experience of identity. Even within a single chronicle, such as the *Chronica Maiora*, multiple competing imagined bonds between communities are evident. In cases such as the Westminster chroniclers' accounts there are suggestions that the bonds between English monks, or at least between monks in connected monasteries, were for them stronger than those to the papacy. These tensions undercut any possibility of a united community of chroniclers or a historical narrative which could be fully aligned.

²⁸⁴ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 237.

²⁸⁵ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 236.

Ethnic Identification

The conflict between identification with the universal Church and identification with the English clergy was related to the concurrent discourse on identity as a part of a people. Identification with a *gens* or *natio* was fluid, in so far as an individual might be associated with the traits of another people, and rigid, in as much one was exceptionally unlikely to be considered a member of a different *gens* or *natio*. Thomas Walsingham described certain individuals as possessing the character traits of other peoples, but he never revised an individual's ethnic identity.²⁸⁶ However, ideas of ethnic identity and the emphasis on it fluctuated, from chronicler to chronicler and depending on the crises that the authors were discussing.

The discourse of ethnicity was not confined to the chronicles, of course. The late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries saw a wide array of nationalistic texts produced.²⁸⁷ Poems such as the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* and Laurence Minot's *The Siege of Calais* played on ethnic or even national sensibilities, addressing the pervasive sense of English identity during the Hundred Years War.²⁸⁸ Patricia Ingham has argued that communities imagine temporally and spatially, defining themselves through conflicts and politics.²⁸⁹ The textual environment of vernacular poetry was rooted in this conflict. The model is equally apt for the chroniclers whose discourse on English identity was at its peak during periods of conflict with antagonistic 'others' such as the French. They were equally part of the contemporary pressures in the late fourteenth-century, which whilst not peculiar to the period had a profound impact on the literature, bringing questions such identity under a spotlight. The cross-genre explorations of ethnicity do suggest that discussing the topic as if it were unique to the chronicles would unduly dismiss the chroniclers' existence within a wider textual environment.

Ethnic identity is inextricably linked to self-construction in opposition to the 'other'. This process was often a feature of wartime (discussed in Chapter

²⁸⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 52.

²⁸⁷ Joanna Bellis, *The Hundred Years War in Literature, 1337–1600* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2016), 104.

²⁸⁸ Larry D. Benson, ed., *King Arthur's Death: The Middle English Stanzaic Morte Arthur and Alliterative Morte Arthure* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1986); Bellis, *The Hundred Years War*, 100–163.

²⁸⁹ Patricia Clare Ingham, *Sovereign Fantasies: Arthurian Romance and the Making of Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 70.

Four), but it cannot go unmentioned here. The Hundred Years War provoked a sense of existential crisis. Joanne Bellis has illustrated that there was a long-established rhetoric which suggested the English were under threat of absolute annihilation by the French, even down to the English language.²⁹⁰ This perceived threat was employed in parliament to justify Edward III's wars.²⁹¹ Henry Knighton articulated this fear when he claimed that Philippe of France had sworn to completely destroy Edward III no matter the cost, and later when he claimed that Charles VI vowed to destroy the English completely.²⁹² The paranoid belief in the threat to English identity and existence was such that it led to the rejection of the French language in the courts in 1362.²⁹³ Knighton's reference to the endangered state of the English language indicates that he was party to these contemporary fears and that his concept of the English community was informed by them.

These immediate pressures were expressed by the chroniclers as they fed back into a contemporary discourse on English identity. Susan Reynolds has demonstrated the importance of early medieval ethnic origin myths to the construction of the identities of different peoples.²⁹⁴ These myths were often referred to by chroniclers or incorporated within framing texts. The chroniclers' textual environment ranged across historical and pseudo-historical material alongside the contemporary political and poetic discourse that framed ideas of ethnic identity. English identity had already blossomed by the tenth or eleventh century and continued to thrive in the chronicles and poetry of the following centuries.²⁹⁵ In the twelfth century, writers such as Henry of Huntingdon and Geoffrey of Monmouth had engaged in the discursive imagination of British identity, and their work continued to echo through the historiography of the

²⁹⁰ Bellis, *The Hundred Years War*, 62.

²⁹¹ Andrea Ruddick, *English Identity and Political Culture in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 62; 'Edward III: September 1346,' in *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England*, eds. Chris Given-Wilson, Paul Brand, Seymour Phillips, Mark Ormrod, Geoffrey Martin, Anne Curry and Rosemary Horrox (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), *British History Online*, accessed October 29, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/september-1346>.

²⁹² Knighton, *Chronicon*, 349; Walsingham makes no mention of Charles VI's supposed oath to exterminate the English or die trying, although he included Charles' planned invasion.

²⁹³ W. M. Ormrod, 'The Use of English: Language, Law, and Political Culture in Fourteenth-Century England', *Speculum* 78, no. 3 (2003), 750, 781.

²⁹⁴ Susan Reynolds, 'Medieval "Origines Gentium" and the Community of the Realm', *History* 68, no. 224 (1983), 389, 390.

²⁹⁵ V. H. Galbraith, 'Nationality and Language in Medieval England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 23 (1941), 113.

fourteenth century.²⁹⁶ Many of these sources were filtered through Ranulf Higden, whose encyclopaedic *Polychronicon* drew on vast array of sources, which in the cases of writers such as Bartholomeus Anglicus' *De Proprietatibus Rerum* and Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, helped to provide Higden with his descriptions of the world and its nations.²⁹⁷ In the case of Britain, Higden's account was compiled from major historians such as Bede and Geoffrey of Monmouth, even if he questioned their accounts at times.²⁹⁸ These histories collectively provided a wide-ranging discourse on identity, though there were consistent strands such as the superior virtue of the English in Higden's work.²⁹⁹ For the chroniclers, these texts were essential parts of their textual environment as they approached the question English identity.

The historical imagination of chroniclers was tied to more than the medieval historical sources. Thomas Walsingham anchored descriptions of various peoples in classical history. Chris Linsley argued that Walsingham deliberately engaged in a discourse on national identity.³⁰⁰ Walsingham drew on the medieval ethnographic discourse in his dismissal of the Irish and Scots, but in the case of the English he particularly expressed his vision and concerns for the English by creating parallels between them and the Roman Empire.³⁰¹ The comparisons he drew urged the English not to succumb to the vices that had undermined the Romans but to preserve their virtues.³⁰² Walsingham's extensive use of classical material, from Ovid, Virgil, and Lucan framed his expression of history within a classically defined model.³⁰³ His idiosyncrasies can be closely connected to a deliberate engagement with their textual environment, which was, as mentioned, engaged in a discourse over national identity in the context of warfare.

John Strecche's use of the mythic history of Troy and Britain also located the English within an established and heroic line of ethnic descent.³⁰⁴ Strecche

²⁹⁶ John Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century: Imperialism, National Identity, and Political Values* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2000), 20; Bellis, *The Hundred Years War*, 13.

²⁹⁷ Taylor, *The 'Universal Chronicle' of Ranulf Higden*, 82.

²⁹⁸ Taylor, *The 'Universal Chronicle' of Ranulf Higden*, 58.

²⁹⁹ Trevor Russell Smith, 'National Identity, Propaganda, and the Ethics of War in English Historical Literature, 1327–77' (University of Leeds, 2017), 51–60. [Unpublished]

³⁰⁰ Linsley, 'Nation, England and the French', 230.

³⁰¹ Linsley, 'Nation, England and the French', 137–150, 158–175.

³⁰² Linsley, 'Nation, England and the French', 210–258.

³⁰³ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 181–200.

³⁰⁴ Geoffrey Hilton concluded that Strecche used Higden's *Polychronicon* as a major source, albeit with significant innovations. His analysis has identified significant overlaps including large portions of the text which were copied verbatim into Strecche's chronicle. Geoffrey Hilton, *The*

framed his history with mythic history and made explicit parallels between the present and the mythic past.³⁰⁵ He compared the weather at Henry V's coronation to that at King Lear's:

Verumtamen in die coronacionis Henrici regis V et per duos dies continue sequentes nix cum grandine ita cecidit et copis tants pluviarum quauts vel quails a diebus Leyer, a quondam regis Britonum qui Leyercestriars condidit, usque in illum diem in regum coronacionibus nullatinus fuit visa.

(Notwithstanding this, on the day of, and for the next two days following, the coronation of King Henry V snow, hail, and a great deal of rain fell – as had occurred on the day of the coronation of Lear, once king of Britain, who founded Leicester – on the day of his coronation nothing could be seen.)³⁰⁶

The coronation appeared as a key moment, setting Henry V amongst the lineage of the great British kings.³⁰⁷ It suggests that Strecche was pulling together existing concepts and connotations to flavour his narrative. It also indicates that he saw Henry V as comparing favourably with his mythic predecessors.³⁰⁸ However, mythic and classical references are notably absent, by comparison, in his account of Henry IV's reign. Instead, Strecche praised Henry IV, at the beginning of his reign, not by making parallels with classical heroes but by remarking on his time spent fighting in 'Lattonia' (by which Strecche was probably referring to Lithuania rather than to Latvia).³⁰⁹ Strecche also makes the interesting observation that Henry IV's face was painted on the walls in many towns in England, giving the impression of a cult of personality surrounding the king within the English community.³¹⁰ This suggests that Strecche was deliberately responding with classical parallels to the contemporary foundation of legends around Henry V whilst presenting a quite different character for his father. Though there is no tension between the two

Deeds of King Henry V Told by John Strecche (Kenilworth: TWP Leamington, 2014), 79; BL Add. MS 35295, fo. 6^r.

³⁰⁵ He compared Henry V in particular to various classical heroes and used archaic phrases throughout his account. See below, 215.

³⁰⁶ Taylor, 'The Chronicle of John Strecche', 137–187, 12–13.

³⁰⁷ Taylor, 'The Chronicle of John Strecche', 12–13.

³⁰⁸ BL, Add. MS 35295, fo. 262^v.

³⁰⁹ BL, Add. MS 35295, fo. 262^v.

³¹⁰ BL, Add. MS 35295, fo. 262^v.

representations, it does highlight an inconsistency within Strecche's approach to historical writing.

Imagining ethnic identity within a semi-mythic continuity was practically *de rigueur* for the chroniclers. Adam of Usk self-identified as a Welshman. He described himself as a leader of the Welsh at Oxford during a series of riots and mixed mythic history with pejorative terms from Anglo-centric history.³¹¹ Early in his account of Owain Glyndŵr's revolt, Adam of Usk included a letter which Glyndŵr had sent to the king of Scotland appealing for an alliance on the basis of their common ancestry.³¹² The letter referred to their shared descent from Brutus, the first king in the British Isles.³¹³ The application of the Trojan origin myth and their common place within it established their right to rule and their shared characteristics. Adam's inclusion of the letter was not, of course, necessarily a restatement of these same beliefs (though his genealogy of Edmund Mortimer suggests he subscribed to them), but it does demonstrate the commonplace nature of such claims and their application of them within the context of the period. Glyndŵr, and maybe Adam from the inclusion of the letter, may be understood to be reclaiming British history and the legitimacy of Brutus for the Welsh over the English.³¹⁴

Adam rarely applied terms such as *Britanni* to describe the Welsh and to indicate descent from the past peoples of Britain. Instead he consistently self-described and named the Welsh as variants on *Wallia* and *Walenses*, owning terms which had been pejorative for writers such as Geoffrey of Monmouth or Gerald of Wales and which were a reflection of the Anglo-Saxon perspective on the Welsh.³¹⁵ Adam only infrequently referred to the British, and where he did so he set them apart from the Welsh, though he evidently knew that the Welsh were the descendents of the British.³¹⁶ In his long genealogy of his patrons, the earls of March, he claimed descent for them from Llewelyn ap Iorwerth Drwyndwn, prince of North Wales, and through him to Cadwaladr, 'ultimi regis

³¹¹ Chris Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', in *The Chronicle of Adam Usk: 1377-1421*, ed. and trans. Chris Given-Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), xvi; Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 16.

³¹² Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 148.

³¹³ Brutus was claimed by Glyn Dŵr to be the first king crowned in Great Britain (*Brataygne graunt*), see, Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 148.

³¹⁴ In contrast, Strecches' account claimed this British history for the English.

³¹⁵ Simon Meecham-Jones, 'Where Was Wales? The Erasure of Wales in Medieval English Culture,' in *Authority and Subjugation in Writing of Medieval Wales*, eds. R. Kennedy and Simon Meecham-Jones (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 41; Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 14, 16, 116, 146, 172.

³¹⁶ In setting the Welsh and British apart Adam appears to have been following Geoffrey of Monmouth's division then.

brytonum' ('last king of the British').³¹⁷ Adam then traced their descent to the Trojans through Brutus, 'primi regis britonum' ('first king of the Britons').³¹⁸ In his summary of their ancestry he claimed glorious descent for the earls from the kings of Britain, Italy, Troy, England, France, and Spain – including delving into their close connections to Edward III and the line of Alfred the Great.³¹⁹ The genealogy established a line of succession between the British and the Welsh, differentiating between them on the basis of their relative antiquity. Thus, it seems that Adam imagined the history and community of his patron with his own identified ethnic group and their predecessors. Doing so suggests a teleological historical imagination building on a succession of interlinked stages of perceived progression within a family and within a series of ethnic groups – a set of ideas situated within a textual environment which stretched over generations.

Although Wales and Welsh identity represent an alternative perspective from the dominant English narrative represented in the chronicles covered by this study, the English chroniclers also imagined regional identities within their ethnicities. The act of dividing England into its constituent parts was not revolutionary; Higden had given a regionalised breakdown of the English.³²⁰ However, amongst the chroniclers it was a further signifier of their textual environment and the factors behind the idiosyncrasies of the texts.

A regionalised perspective on events could result in an internal divergence of qualities and characteristics within a chronicler's account of even their own people. As Linsley has argued, Walsingham 'othered' the northerners, identifying them as similar to the barbarous Scots.³²¹ Indeed, Linsley has argued Walsingham perceived the Londoners and northerners as removed from his own identity.³²² Walsingham placed English identity on a lower rung of the scale of allegiance than identities such as the *domus*.

³¹⁷ The application of the myths of ethnicity was an argument for the right of the earls of March to the throne of England. Richard II's chosen heir had been the earl of March, whose claim had been displaced by Henry IV's usurpation. Adam's genealogy appears a lightly veiled argument for their right to inherit. Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 40–41.

³¹⁸ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 42–43.

³¹⁹ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 40–47.

³²⁰ Andrew Galloway, 'Latin England', in *Imagining a Medieval English Nation*, ed. Kathy Lavezzo (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 50.

³²¹ Linsley, 'Nation, England and the French', 136, 172; for further discussion of the depictions of the northern English see, King, 'The Anglo-Scottish Marches and the Perception of "the North" in Fifteenth-Century England'.

³²² Linsley, 'Nation, England and the French', 16.

The compartmentalisation of English identity was not a constant in the chronicles. Henry Knighton articulated a strong sense of comradeship and shared virtues with the northerners. He used similar adjectives to describe the northern English and the English people as a whole. Variations of ‘audāx’ (‘bold’) appear in his descriptions of both communities.³²³ In the description of an attack by the northern English on the Scots in 1346 Knighton recorded that Edward III had crossed to France, but,

medio tempore orta est magna discordia inter magnates Scocie, unde nostri boreales cum magna audacia intrauerunt in Scociam circiter .xv. milia hominum, et cito post dominus de Percy det dominus de Neuylle, et alii magnates patrie borealis ceperunt trewgas usque ad festum Sancti Michaelis.

(in the mean time [*sic*] a serious quarrel broke out amongst the Scottish lords, so that our northerners entered Scotland with great boldness, to the number of 15,000 men, and soon afterwards Lord Percy and Lord Neville and other lords of the north country made a truce until Michaelmas.)³²⁴

The northerners were described as part of the English people, ‘nostri borealis’. Led by the northern lords, Percy and Neville, they exhibited bravery and a willingness to fight on their own behalf and that of the English. Knighton frequently used bravery as an appellation for the northerners, so much so that it was their stand-out virtue.³²⁵ His description indicated that, unlike Walsingham, Knighton imagined the northerners familiarly. If they were different to the men of Leicester, they were at least not lacking in virtue.

Knighton’s attitude to the northerners did see some fluctuation depending on the circumstances. When the earl of Northumberland refused to shelter John of Gaunt during the Peasants’ Revolt for fear that Gaunt might not have the king’s favour, Knighton described the earl’s behaviour as shameful, and implied it was unworthy of him.³²⁶ He contrasted the earl’s rejection with Gaunt’s welcome by the Scots, although they were his enemies.³²⁷ The underlying image of the northerners as brave and bold Englishmen remained, the earl’s

³²³ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 2, 28, 54, 70.

³²⁴ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 54.

³²⁵ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 92.

³²⁶ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 234–238.

³²⁷ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 238.

behaviour an aberration instead of the norm. However, it is evident that Knighton was willing and able to shift position.

The characterisation of the English as courageous was perhaps unsurprisingly a recurring theme in discussions by English writers. Higden had placed martial skill amongst the primary skills of the English, and it appeared again and again amongst the chroniclers' articulations of identity.³²⁸ In the midst of wars with their neighbours the characterisation of the English as warriors was a logical act of self-construction. Walsingham, a fervent supporter of warfare as the testing ground of virtue, criticised Richard's favourites for undermining the warlike nature of the English.³²⁹ With frameworks for the discussion of English identity – such as classical antecedents which privileged martial prowess – it is a natural reflection of circumstance and the historical anchors for the texts that the discourse turned to prowess.

Comparisons between the relative prowess of the English and their opponents within the chronicles was in tune with the surrounding textual environment of historical works and the literature of warfare, such as the many 'Siege' poems.³³⁰ The valour of the English was continually placed over and above that of their foes. Knighton recorded the 'Normans' raiding Southampton in 1339, 'cum uidissent audaciam Anglorum sic paratam et defensionem resistibilem, non audebant terram Anglie pede suo attingere, set altum mare tenuerunt pre timore ne Anglici eos insequerentur' ('when they saw how boldly the English were arrayed for its defence they did not dare to set foot on English soil, but kept to the open sea, for fear the English should pursue them').³³¹ The 'Anglici' ('English') offered the raiders the opportunity to come ashore and rest before engaging in battle.³³² It is not necessary to define one's own group in an original fashion, instead one must articulate the belief that one is different from those with whom one is in conflict. Knighton repeatedly placed the English on a pedestal of martial prowess, from English victories over the Scots to naval victories and to Edward III's invasion of France the English were warriors par excellence.³³³ At Crécy, Knighton explained, the English discovered the French

³²⁸ Linsley, 'Nation, England and the French', 212.

³²⁹ Ormrod, 'Knights of Venus', 292.

³³⁰ See for example, *The Siege of Jerusalem*, *The Siege of Calais*, *The Siege of Thebes*, *The Siege of Milan* and *The Siege of Troy*.

³³¹ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 12–14.

³³² Knighton, *Chronicon*, 14.

³³³ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 14–20.

army was arrayed for battle, 'de que nuncio multum leti facti sunt Anglici, et immensa uoluntate ad pugnandum exhillarati' ('which news made the English rejoice, and excited them with a great will to fight').³³⁴ This description demonstrated that Knighton was recounting events and ideas of identity through clearly defined notions of bellicosity and courage.

Narratives of valour and virtue were not the only tools in the chroniclers' repertoire in the discussion of ethnic identity as reflected by warfare. The Westminster Chronicler gave a variety of accounts, including a critical assessment of the English knights who went with bishop Henry Despenser on his crusade.³³⁵ In 1383 the Westminster Chronicler described how,

incepto parlamento quasi in principio Novembris invaserunt Scoti partes Northumbranas, homines occiderunt, spoliarunt, et totam patriam more hostile crudeliter consumentes dampnis gravissimis incolas affligebant.

(about the beginning of November, when the parliament had just opened, the Scots attacked Northumberland, slaughtering and pillaging and by a ruthlessly hostile devastation of the entire countryside inflicting very severe damage on the inhabitants.)³³⁶

The passage was typical of descriptions of Scottish raids. The Chronicler characterised the Scots as barbaric, violent, and ruthless. He drew on the common fund of tropes present in encyclopaedic, English, historical literature.³³⁷ Condemning their behaviour as savage and implicitly wicked the Chronicler filtered national characteristics through the discursive pattern of moral virtue and vice, rather than simply martial virtue. He imagined the foe as a community of savages.

A certain moral virtue was connected to military skill in many chronicles. Their textual environment, after all, lauded spiritual warfare and even incorporated strength, fearlessness, and martial prowess into the roster of monastic virtues.³³⁸ Knighton included priests and monks in martial accounts, though he focused on the values and lives of the military classes.³³⁹ Knighton implicitly sidelined parts of the English community who were unable to take part in military action.

³³⁴ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 20.

³³⁵ See below, 263–269.

³³⁶ *Westminster Chronicle*, 50.

³³⁷ Smith, 'National Identity', 52.

³³⁸ Smith, *War and the Making of Monastic Culture*.

³³⁹ See below, 251–269.

Knighton's descriptions divided the armies into the aristocracy, 'milites' ('knights'), 'viri armati' ('men-at-arms'), and 'scutiferi' ('squires').³⁴⁰ The men-at-arms might appear to take up the bulk of the armies Knighton described. They certainly often numbered in the improbable tens of thousands, but the rank was usually applied to soldiers, possibly of the rank of knight or just below, whose arms were of a high standard; however, lower ranks, who doubtless provided the numerical strength of the army, remained largely unmentioned by the chronicler.³⁴¹ Of the battle of Crécy he merely noted that there were innumerable infantrymen.³⁴² As such, Knighton's discussion of even the most English of virtues – courage – was textually restricted to the middle ranks of society and above. So, Knighton seems to have written from a pinhole view when it came to English identity, focusing only on a subsection of the whole.

The differentiation between the identities of the upper and the lower classes, and the description of their virtues also appeared in Walsingham's chronicle. Linsley has demonstrated that Walsingham consistently applied the term *gentes* in his discussion of identity, and as argued in this chapter he also clearly demarcated classes such as the *rustici* and the *civites*, establishing a strictly defined hierarchical order.³⁴³ Differences in class also subdivided ethnic identity in Walsingham's deliberate and consistent use of the terms *Franci* and *Gallici* to refer to the upper and lower ranks of French society.³⁴⁴ Walsingham maintained a myriad of intersecting identities in his chronicle.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered the chroniclers' construction of identity both as part of a wider textual environment and as a reaction to the external communities surrounding them. The textual environment anchored the chroniclers' historical imagination and provided a multitude of frameworks which they often mapped onto society. Although the chroniclers' awareness of and absorption of historical, classical, and scriptural discourses led them to have conflicting conceptions of the world, they held a core set of values in common – such as

³⁴⁰ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 62, 66.

³⁴¹ Michael Prestwich, 'Miles in Armis Strenuus: The Knight at War,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5 (1995), 212.

³⁴² Knighton, *Chronicon*, 62.

³⁴³ Linsley, 'Nation, England and the French', 304.

³⁴⁴ Linsley, 'Nation, England and the French', 49, 98–129.

the importance of 'holy Mother Church'. These various traditions provided them with different formats and registers to discuss the world around them.

In the chronicles, imagined bonds of comradeship and characteristic identifiers were expressed through the established linguistic and rhetorical models. Engaged in a synchronic and diachronic discourse the chroniclers established distinct representations of communal groups, creating individualised images of their communities. The chroniclers were not bound to a single model or set of models. Instead, they shifted between models, creating narratives which were relative rather than absolute, shaped by circumstance rather than fixed to a single, invariant position.

A chronicler's primary community was their *domus*, the centre of their education and its primary source. That education and their sense of a shared identity with fellow members, past, present, and future, moulded the chroniclers as writers.

The regular chroniclers' engagement with communities outside the *domus* was primarily filtered through this communal experience. Their articulation of ideas of urban life was framed by their identities as members of religious houses, and the houses' recruitment and relationship with urban communes that were going through an identity crisis of sorts themselves. That crisis entered the chronicles, where it was reflected by them in discussions of London's potential future as a new Rome or Troy.

There were underlying tensions in the discussion of the Church that resulted in a multiplicity of views expressed even within one account. There were more similarities in the depictions of English identity, which often chimed the same notes of courage, martial prowess, and honour. Nevertheless, the importance of ethnic identity fluctuated throughout the texts, appearing and disappearing at times and being tied to different figures and concepts.

Chapter Four

Reporting Martiality

Introduction

The previous chapter examined the construction of community in the chronicles. It argued that for the regular chroniclers their most important identity was as part of their religious house. It also argued that the chroniclers' construction of communities was often informed by their experience of their textual environment. The different ways in which they encountered and used texts was a major contributing factor to their, often inconsistent, use of many different historical and social models to describe society.

This chapter argues that the chroniclers' reports of martial activity reflected the intellectual and social culture of their period, but that the breadth and fluidity of this culture was such that their comments were often at odds with one another. It suggests that in their conception of martiality and martial conduct there was a substantial stylistic overlap between the chroniclers, but that they were using various styles in a complex, self-aware, and critical discourse.

The chroniclers were aware of the many wars in which the English were involved during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. The Hundred Years War was an inescapable part of life for the clergy. It led to a series of grants of taxation to the Crown which affected the regular chroniclers, and Adam of Usk, deeply.¹ The Anglo-French wars also featured as a major narrative strand of the *GHQ*. The English were also frequently involved in wars against the Scottish, often linked to the war in France, which saw battles such as Otterburn (1388) and Homildon Hill (1402). Between 1400 and 1415 the English kings were locked in a war with the Welsh rebel and prince Owain Glyndŵr and were attempting to secure their rule over Ireland. Throughout these wars there were internal conflicts and rebellions, including the Peasants' Revolt (1381), the crisis of the Lords Appellant (1386–1388), Richard II's Deposition (1399), the Epiphany Rising (late 1399–early 1400), the Percy Rebellion (1403), the Northern Rising led by Archbishop Scrope (1405), the Oldcastle Rebellion (1414), and the Southampton Plot (1415). The chroniclers'

¹ See above, 98.

reports of the various battles and conflicts are especially illuminating for the study of their chronicles because of how intensely aware of warfare they were, whether because of taxation, their connections to its conduct on the field, or in some cases, a belief that war was crucial to maintaining a moral and orderly society.

The chroniclers reported on battles and wars in a multitude of ways. There were accounts such as Knighton's version of the battle of Crécy, which relied upon newsletters and reports from the Lancastrian household, and which recorded the number of combatants, the dead and the captured.² Other chroniclers, like the Westminster chroniclers, rarely gave breakdowns of battles (though the Westminster Monk often included the number of ships captured in naval engagements).³ The most complete enumeration of the dead and captured notables in a battle in the *Westminster Chronicle* is the account of a battle in Portugal in 1385, the details of which the Monk noted he obtained from 'certa nuncia' ('reliable reports').⁴ This suggests that the Monk's reports were intended to function as an accurate record, preserving documentation for posterity. Walsingham had numerous first-hand informants, for instance, the monks who accompanied Henry Despenser on his crusade in 1383; he would also have met King John II of France and many of Richard II's household when he visited the abbey.⁵

Although this cannot necessarily be claimed to have been a universal intention, it is likely that a concern for posterity and accurate accounting was a part of the function of most chroniclers' reportage of deeds of arms. As is clear from Knighton's use of Lancastrian documents this could include the propagation of perspectives in line with particular loyalties and connections. However, there were also other functions a chronicle could and often did serve: entertainment; reflections on the order of society; the defence of an individual's, group's, or country's actions; and the simple, personal satisfaction of writing them. As this chapter will explore, the fact that the chronicles were historical

² Henry Knighton, *Knighton's Chronicle 1337-1396*, ed. and trans. G. H. Martin, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 60-62; G. H. Martin, 'Introduction', in *Knighton's Chronicle 1337-1396*, ed. and trans. G. H. Martin, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), lxi.

³ L. C. Hector and Barbara F. Harvey, eds. and trans., *The Westminster Chronicle, 1381-1394*, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 24, 126, 132, 164, 182, 374.

⁴ *Westminster Chronicle*, 132.

⁵ James G. Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance at St Albans: Thomas Walsingham and His Circle, c. 1350-1440*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 259.

records does not mean that they could not also be intellectual ruminations on events or possible circumstances.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section sets out how chroniclers reported wars as just or unjust; it covers a selection of the key representations of defensive martial actions, war as a religious endeavour, and the suppression of rebellions. The second section explores how the chroniclers reported martiality as part of the political lives of kings and magnates. The third section addresses the chroniclers' construction of the clergy as an alternative to the secular lords as leaders during the challenges of the 1380s. A running theme throughout is the evaluation and representation of the martial conduct. This chapter argues the chroniclers displayed distinct attitudes to reporting martial actions. They were not in agreement in their interpretations and sometimes switched how they themselves reported on military affairs.

Constructing the Morality of Martial Activity

The textual and intellectual environment of the chroniclers was rife with debates over the justice and morality of martiality. Preachers and intellectuals were contesting the justice of the Hundred Years War with French scholars, and martial conduct with one another.⁶ The ecumenical Council of Constance (1414–1418) saw a debate between Paulus Vladimiri and Johannes Falkenberg, the spokesmen for the Teutonic order, over the justice of war against Polish infidels.⁷ The chroniclers were members of a clergy who were deeply embroiled in these debates. There is some evidence that the chroniclers were even actively considering their reports on wars, battles, and deeds of arms in the context of just war theory, which suggests that in part their reports of the war were functioning as a justification, particularly for the Anglo-French wars. The late fourteenth century saw a clash of opinions in literature and sermons

⁶ Timothy Guard, *Chivalry, Kingship and Crusade* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2013), 182; Andy King, 'The English Gentry and Military Service, 1300–1450', *History Compass* 12, no. 10 (1 October 2014), 760; A. K. McHardy, 'Liturgy and Propaganda in the Diocese of Lincoln during the Hundred Years War', *Studies in Church History* 18 (1982): 215–27; W. R. Jones, 'The English Church and Royal Propaganda during the Hundred Years War', *Journal of British Studies* 19, no. 1 (1979): 18–30.

⁷ James Muldoon, 'John Wyclif and the Rights of the Infidels: The Requerimiento Re-Examined', *The Americas* 36, no. 3 (1980), 311; Phillip H. Stump, *The Reforms of the Council of Constance: (1414–1418)* (Turnhout: Brill, 1994), 153.

between advocates for and against the wars with France and Scotland.⁸ The chroniclers struggled to reconcile ideals of moral warfare with the practical reality. Amongst these conflicts stand the numerous civil crises of Richard II's and Henry IV's reigns, which forced chroniclers to implicitly reflect on the nature of war.

The chroniclers' shared intellectual repository was replete with warriors who were spiritual exemplars and holy men who embodied martial values.⁹ Victories of the spirit were portrayed in the trappings of the material world, in the art clerics saw, the histories they read, and the sermons they gave and heard.¹⁰ They appeared frequently in the scriptural sources which were ubiquitous parts of the lives of the clergy. Sermons drew on martial pursuits as examples and metaphors for Christian behaviour.¹¹ The religious life itself was discussed as an ongoing battle against the forces of hell.¹² The chroniclers substantially overlapped in their depiction of virtues and vices in warfare, suggesting that they were operating within a vibrant textual culture.

The medieval philosophy of war had a long history that questioned the character of a 'just war'. Among the most influential were the treatises by Aristotle on the justifications for war; Ambrose of Milan's work (founded on Cicero's), which suggested violence could be morally positive; and St Augustine of Hippo's theories of what might constitute a 'just war', which were revised by Thomas Aquinas.¹³ The fourteenth century saw a significant development as John Wyclif rejected the notion that any form of war could be just.¹⁴ In his sermon *Feria vi in quinquagesima* Wyclif preached that the pro-war lessons taught by friars, namely that the English ought to attack other nations to protect

⁸ Nigel Saul, 'A Farewell to Arms? Criticism of Warfare in Late Fourteenth-Century England', in *Fourteenth Century England II*, ed. Chris Given-Wilson (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2002), 142, 145; Katherine Smith, *War and the Making of Monastic Culture*, Studies in the History of Medieval Religion (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2011), 156–196.

⁹ Peter Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages*, trans. Michael Jones (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), 296–302.

¹⁰ Smith, *War and the Making of Monastic Culture*, 1.

¹¹ John Mirk, *John Mirk's Festial: Edited from British Library MS Cotton Claudius A.II*, ed. Susan Powell, Vol. I, Early English Text Society Original Series, 334/5 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 4.

¹² Smith, *War and the Making of Monastic Culture*, 2; V. M. O'Mara and Suzanne Paul, *A Repertorium of Middle English Prose Sermons. Part 3: Manchester, John Rylands University Library to Oxford, Bodleian Library*, Vol. 3, Sermo (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 1672.

¹³ John Langan, 'The Elements of St Augustine's Just War Theory', *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 12, no. 1 (1984), 21; Rory Cox, *John Wyclif on War and Peace* (Boydell & Brewer, 2014), 23.

¹⁴ For a further discussion of Wyclif's 'pacifism' see, Cox, *John Wyclif on War and Peace*, 135.

themselves, were lies from the devil.¹⁵ Wyclif accused those who encouraged men to go to war of being heretics who denied the command of God to love their enemies.¹⁶ Thus, there was a reassessment of the moral place of war occurring around the chroniclers.

Defending the Faith

Many, chroniclers like Walsingham, Knighton, or the Whalley Chronicler, treated battles and skirmishes as an arena in which to prove virtue. Their reports did not only deal with the prosaic details of warfare such as the lists of the fallen and captured (which appear most frequently in the longer chronicles when discussing major battles); they also seem to have considered their reports within the framework of just war theory. For example, several chroniclers were at pains to represent the virtuous commanders and warriors as defenders. Knighton cast Edward III's war against France as a defence of his own rights.¹⁷ The author of the *GHQ* made a complex mental effort to justify Henry V's war against France as an attempt to create peace through war – following Augustinian just war theory – and to protect God's peace in the first place against the aggressive French.¹⁸ They established a moral high ground for their protagonists as they responded to existing intellectual debates.

Defensive war was characterised in four principle ways by the chroniclers, though all were broadly in line with Augustine's theory of just war: defence of Christendom, defence against aggressors, defence against rebellion, and defence against ill-governance.¹⁹ They followed the simplified theory of Aquinas, which held sway throughout the fourteenth century, that for a war to be just there must be a just cause to be upheld, such as defence or retribution; a legitimate authority; and a righteous spirit.²⁰ The principal variations in the

¹⁵ V. M. O'Mara and Suzanne Paul, *A Repertorium of Middle English Prose Sermons. Part 1: Introduction, and Cambridge University Library to London, British Library (Additional)*, Vol. 1, Sermo (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 680; Anne Hudson, *English Wycliffite Sermons*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 404–405.

¹⁶ O'Mara and Paul, *Repertorium. Part 1*, 680.

¹⁷ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 2.

¹⁸ *GHQ*, 12.

¹⁹ For a brief discussion of the medieval theology of just war, with which the chroniclers were largely aligned, see Frederick H. Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 217, 218, 222.

²⁰ Frederick Russell, 'Paulus Vladimiri's Attack on the Just War: A Case Study in Legal Polemics', in *Authority and Power*, ed. B. Tierney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (1980) 2012), 238.

chroniclers' reports of forms of war lay not in their understanding of the justifications themselves but in how and when they applied them.

The chroniclers did not explicitly engage with the late fourteenth-century's counterculture of peace.²¹ However, St Augustine's just war theory encouraged a defensive theory of warfare. Knighton cloaked the offensive wars of Edward III in the rhetoric of a defensive war for the king's rights. Yet Walsingham and Strecche, who were thoroughly immersed in the histories and poetry of antiquity, treated the war effort as a glorious endeavour, hinting at an admiration for conquerors. Strecche praised both Henry IV and Henry V's martial prowess and noted that, even before becoming king, Henry IV had been warlike.²² The author of the *GHQ*, on the other hand, delicately attempted to represent Henry V as a defender of a universal peace whose offensive wars were justified by their ends. These variations highlight the tensions between them even in the narratives of a king both writers admired.

Even Walsingham, who was frequently a proponent of warfare, demonstrated reservations about bloodshed at times. How widely aware the chroniclers were of anti-war sentiments generally, even those of Wyclif, is not absolutely clear.²³ Knighton claimed that the Lollards' faith was like that of the disciples of Muhammad, and that they were commanded to 'defendere preceptit

²¹ Ben Lowe, *Imagining Peace: A History of Early English Pacifist Ideas, 1340-1560* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 69–70.

²² British Library Add. Ms.35295, fo.262r.

²³ Complaint against warfare was not limited to Wyclif. There was a growing disillusionment with the war with France, identifiable in a number of vernacular poems. In a wider societal context, for example, the poem *Wynnere and Wastoure* was deeply critical of Edward III's wars. John Gower also denounced 'dedly werre' in the *Confessio Amantis*. Recent readings have rejected William Matthews's argument that the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* was a condemnation of Edward III for imperialistic conquest. However, these studies do agree that the author was performing an intellectual reflection on the morality of monarchs through an account of the wars of Arthur. Although chroniclers may never have encountered those texts they are demonstrative of the active discourse on warfare in the period and the potential uses for reporting mythical wars. Lowe, *Imagining Peace*, 99; Gardiner Stillwell, 'Wynnere and Wastoure and the Hundred Years' War', *ELH* 8, no. 4 (1941), 245; John Gower, *Confessio Amantis, Volume 2*, ed. Russell A. Peck, trans. Andrew Galloway, 2nd edition, Online, Vol. 2 (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2013), l. 2267, <http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/peck-gower-confessio-amantis-book-3>; William Matthews, *The Tragedy of Arthur: A Study of the 'Alliterative Morte Arthure'* (Los Angeles and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), 188; Elizabeth Porter, 'Chaucer's Knight, the Alliterative "Morte Arthure", and the Medieval Laws of War: A Reconsideration', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 27 (1983), 78; Marco Nievergelt, 'Conquest, Crusade and Pilgrimage: The Alliterative Morte Arthure in Its Late Ricardian Crusading Context', *Arthuriana* 20, no. 2 (2010), 108; Steven Bruso, 'The Sword and the Scepter: Mordred, Arthur, and the Dual Roles of Kingship in the Alliterative Morte Arthure', *Arthuriana* 25, no. 2 (2015): 44–66; Cox, *John Wyclif on War and Peace*, 135; Christopher Guyol, "'Let Them Realize What God Can Do": Chivalry in the St Albans Chronicle', in *Fourteenth Century England IX*, eds. James Bothwell and Gwilym Dodd (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2016), 101.

et pro ea pugnare' ('defend it in battle and fight to maintain it').²⁴ He did also note, however, that Wyclif preached against warfare, so it is possible that he distinguished between Wyclif himself and the Lollards.²⁵ Walsingham asserted that in 1382 one of Wyclif's propositions for the protection of the realm, enacted by the lords of England, was 'quod rex et regnum tenentur destruere regni proditores, et suos a ferocibus inimicis defendere' ('that the king and realm are obliged to destroy traitors of the realm, and to defend their own people from fierce enemies').²⁶ Walsingham also connected his criticisms of the Lollards to his criticisms of knights who failed to live up to his standards. He described the 'Lollard knight' Lewis Clifford as acting 'pompose' ('pompously') and, when Clifford defended John Wyclif from condemnation in 1378, Walsingham pointed out that he was not a powerful or noble knight.²⁷ This description of Lewis Clifford demonstrates the underlying tensions between the perceived virtues of martiality and the nature of the Lollards.

Walsingham urged prelates and warriors to fight the infection the Lollards represented.²⁸ In 1389 Walsingham described how 'iam plena erat omnis turba non solum lupis set ipsis rapacibus, quorum morsus ineuitabiliter uirulenci atque lethales' ('every crowd had not only wolves in abundance, but ravening wolves, whose fangs were inevitably poisonous and deadly').²⁹ The description, which was filled with metaphors common to the discussion of heresy, demonstrated that Walsingham regarded the Lollards as a serious social and religious threat. He criticised the bishops who, barring Henry Despenser, did nothing. Walsingham reported that Despenser swore 'quod si quisquam de secta persuersa predicare presumeret in diocese sua, uel ignibus traderetur uel

²⁴ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 305.

²⁵ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 288.

²⁶ There is no evidence of this proposition in the Parliamentary Rolls. Thomas Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle: the Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham. 1376-1394*, eds. and trans. John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs, and Leslie Watkiss, Vol. I, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 584–585.

²⁷ For a discussion of the Lollard Knights see K. B. McFarlane, *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 212; Thomas Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle: the Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham. 1394–1422*, eds. and trans. John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs, and Leslie Watkiss, Vol. II, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011), 590; Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 196; Thomas Walsingham, *The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham, 1376–1422*, ed. James G. Clark, trans. David Preest (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2009), 56.

²⁸ The discussion of heresy as a disease was rooted in a long tradition of anti-heterodox rhetoric. Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 818–819; 882–883; Ian Forrest, 'The Dangers of Diversity: Heresy and Authority in the 1405 Case of John Edward', *Studies in Church History* 43 (January 2007), 239.

²⁹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 882–883.

capite priuaretur' ('that if anyone from that perverse sect dared to preach in his diocese, he would be consigned to the flames or beheaded').³⁰ Walsingham represented Lollards as dangerous for the moral and social health of the realm, and so a violent excision of the danger was the only option. The chronicler concluded that Despenser's oath was appropriate and measured, purging the heretics from society through physical means. Walsingham's response to the Lollards included an appropriation of temporal methods by the Church to counter the danger that the Lollards posed to the country's religious wellbeing.³¹ As a report there is reason, then, to read it as a lesson for his audience on how to deal with heretics, but contained within that lesson is an appraisal of the behaviour of prelates and nobles.

The threat persisted, and Walsingham addressed the crisis through a scriptural historical model. In 1410 he described a group of knights as 'satellites Pilatales' ('followers of Pilate').³² These knights, Walsingham asserted, strove to destroy Christianity by trying to claim the revenue and wealth of the Church.³³ The association with Pilate, known for his part in Christ's execution, reinforced the danger the knights posed to Christianity. However, John Norbury, a one-time soldier, went to the archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Arundel, to report through his tears the schemes of the 'false knights' ('pseudo milites').³⁴ Walsingham reported that Norbury 'monens ut metropolitanus uiriliter ageret, crucem contra crucis hostes erigeret et super eosdem bellum santificaret' ('advised the archbishop to act with courage, to raise the cross against the enemies of the cross, and order a holy war against them').³⁵ Walsingham's focus on Norbury, as a layman, speaking in defence of the Church is a typically biting criticism of the prelates who were implied by omission to have failed. It

³⁰ Knighton also reported the suppression of Lollardy in Lincoln in 1389, though his language was less passionate. Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 882–83; Knighton, *Chronicon*, 532–533.

³¹ Walsingham's belief that temporal methods were useful in the suppression of the Lollards was also apparent in his treatment of the Peasants' Revolt. David R. Carlson, 'Whethamstede on Lollardy: Latin Styles and the Vernacular Cultures of Early Fifteenth-Century England', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 102, no. 1 (2003), 23; Margaret Aston, 'Corpus Christi and Corpus Regni: Heresy and the Peasant's Revolt', *Past and Present* 143 (1994).

³² Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 582–583.

³³ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 582–583.

³⁴ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 590–91; Philip Morgan, 'Norbury, John (d. 1414), soldier and administrator', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-50144>.

³⁵ The call to Arundel to be manly and to raise the cross could be a reference to Simon of Cyrene's efforts to help Christ on the road to Golgotha and to the act of taking part in a crusade. Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 590.

suggests that Walsingham's anxieties over the threat posed by Lollardy may have emerged in the contrast between the false knights and the true knights who advocated for holy war against the heretics. As a passage it ties together the concepts of virtue, faith, devotion, and martial fervour in opposition to Lollardy.

The threat of Lollardy drove an admiration for those bishops who took the fight to the enemy in several chroniclers. When Thomas Arundel died in 1414 Walsingham and the author of the *GHQ* praised him for fighting the Church's battles. The author of the *GHQ* described him as 'nobilis defensor ecclesie' ('a noble defender of the church').³⁶ Walsingham called him 'eminentissima turris ecclesie Anglicana, pugil inuictus' ('that very great tower of strength in the English Church, and its resolute champion').³⁷ The chroniclers agreed that Arundel fought God's battles against the Church's enemies. These descriptions, whilst similar to one another, highlighted the strength of the identity of the domestic Church for English chroniclers, as discussed in Chapter Two.³⁸

The author of the *GHQ* and John Strecche regarded Henry V's victory over the Lollards as a triumph for the Church. They treated the episode as evidence that Henry was a paragon of Christian faith and justice. The author of the *GHQ* claimed God wished Henry to be 'permisit adversarium in eum insurgere' ('proved in the furnace of tribulation').³⁹ Walsingham had described events as a conflict between the established order and the chaos – as he perceived it – let loose when the lower strata of society disrupted the status quo. Meanwhile, the *GHQ*'s writer treated it as an opportunity to scourge vice from the old order. The Revolt was a divine plan so 'that He might utterly destroy the one [Oldcastle], and that He might perfect the other [Henry V]' (istum ut consumeret, alterum ut consummaret).⁴⁰ Henry's victory established him as God's champion. When Henry decided to invade France his actions carried with them his established moral position as the elect of God, justifying his conquests. The description in the *GHQ* suggests a hagiographic reading of history by the author as it contrasted Henry's authority and moral virtue with the power of Oldcastle.

³⁶ *GHQ*, 4.

³⁷ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 642, 644.

³⁸ See above, 112–114.

³⁹ Walsingham had mentioned twice that God had intervened on Henry V's behalf, but this goes further. *GHQ*, 2, 6.

⁴⁰ *GHQ*, 10.

Henry V, as depicted by Strecche, blended spiritual and temporal virtues.⁴¹ Strecche claimed that after Henry had crushed the revolt, 'unde timor ingens irruit in lollardos et regem nostrum nominarunt principem presbiterorum' ('then great fear overcame the Lollards and our king was named the prince of priests').⁴² The passage linked Henry to the clergy and used the topos of a good king inspiring fear in his enemies.⁴³ Intriguingly there are arguably parallels in Strecche's presentation of Henry V's reign to his description of Henry IV and his crusading exploits against the 'turcos' (Turks').⁴⁴ In each case the episodes were connected to the virtue of the new king and their suitability to the throne. So, whilst Strecche's accounts of the Anglo-French war appear to have functioned as classical mythmaking the discussion of the Oldcastle Revolt was reported in terms which supported Henry V's more spiritual virtues.

There were also many sermons which promoted the virtues of martiality and warriors. The upper echelons of the clergy had been encouraged by the Crown to support the Hundred Years War.⁴⁵ Services were given in support of the war effort, saturating society with pro-war rhetoric.⁴⁶ Many preachers used war as a source for examples of virtuous conduct. The sermons of John Mirk include numerous instances in which he used knights and homilies on knighthood to prove points of virtue.⁴⁷

Knighton, immersed in a chivalric idiom, addressed the morality of war as a question of prowess and knightly virtue.⁴⁸ Richard Kaeuper has proposed that in the thirteenth century the clergy faced a conflict between their own ideology of peace and the fact that to exercise governance a control of violence was

⁴¹ Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*, Princeton Paperbacks (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 441.

⁴² Taylor, 'The Chronicle of John Strecche', 148.

⁴³ See, for instance, the letter from Prince Henry, later Henry V, to the kingdom about his father, which repeatedly emphasised that his father was 'feared', Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 610–614.

⁴⁴ British Library ADD. MS.35295, fo.262^v.

⁴⁵ Jones, 'The English Church and Royal Propaganda during the Hundred Years War', 22.

⁴⁶ Jones, 'The English Church and Royal Propaganda during the Hundred Years War', 20; Patrick J. Horner, *A Macaronic Sermon Collection from Late Medieval England: Oxford, MS Bodley 649* (Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2006), 26.

⁴⁷ Mirk, *John Mirk's Festial*, I: 92, 115, 118, 128, 132.

⁴⁸ Nigel Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011), 117; Maurice Keen, 'Chivalry and English Kingship in the Later Middle Ages', in *War, Government and Aristocracy in the British Isles, c.1150–1500: Essays in Honour of Michael Prestwich*, eds. Chris Given-Wilson, Ann Kettle, and Len Scales (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2008), 251; Craig Taylor, 'English Writings on Chivalry and Warfare During the Hundred Years War', in *Soldiers, Nobles and Gentlemen: Essays in Honour of Maurice Keen*, eds. Peter Coss and Christopher Tyerman (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2009), 65.

necessary, resulting in an effort to reform chivalry.⁴⁹ In the fourteenth century Knighton addressed the problem from the opposite end of the spectrum. He delighted in instances of courage, but he justified violence as defensive. On the basis of an acceptance of chivalric mores Knighton accepted and incorporated a justification of the actions of Edward III and Edward Woodstock. The short passage, largely quoted from the *Cronica Bona*, praised the Prince Edward as the 'fortunatissimus et miles in bello audacissimus' ('most favoured by fortune, and the boldest of knights in battle').⁵⁰ The passage included praise for Edward III as 'hic flos mundane milicie, sub quo militare erat regnar, conflagere triumphare' ('the flower of this world's knighthood, for whom to do battle was to reign').⁵¹ However, despite incorporating the *Cronica Bona's* delight in their bellicose personalities Knighton did not suggest they started wars. Instead he justified Edward III's wars with the argument that 'cui iure maternali linea recta descendente regnum cum corona Francie debebatur' ('to him by right of the female line the kingdom and crown of France ought to have descended').⁵² Knighton claimed that in 1337 Philippe, the king of France, had seized Edward III's lands in Gascony and sworn 'quod aut regem Anglie penitus destrueret, aut ipsem ditissimum regem Cristianitatis efficeret, aut pauperimum redderet' ('that he would utterly destroy the king of England, whether in so doing he made himself the richest or the poorest king in Christendom').⁵³ Though Knighton added that it was because Edward had humiliated the Scottish he also noted that Edward had sent ambassadors to Philippe, exhausting reasonable means before resorting to war. So, Knighton's representation of Edward's war as just, in the mid-fourteenth century, suggests a reaction to the concerns about violence in the thirteenth century. We might also infer that Knighton's reports on the war were, to an extent, upholding for posterity the justice of the English cause. His depiction of Edward as a protector, obviated anti-war criticisms of knights and lords as avaricious warmongers.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Richard Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 39.

⁵⁰ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 196; D. A. L. Morgan, 'The Political After-Life of Edward III: The Apotheosis of a Warmonger', *The English Historical Review* 112, no. 448 (1997), 866.

⁵¹ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 196; Morgan, 'The Political After-Life of Edward III', 866.

⁵² Knighton, *Chronicon*, 196.

⁵³ The French desire to destroy the English utterly was a recurring theme in Knighton's chronicle. He claimed that in 1386 Charles VI of France had sworn to kill or conquer all the English. Knighton, *Chronicon*, 2, 348.

⁵⁴ Saul, 'A Farewell to Arms?', 132.

The Anglo-French war was consistently cast as one of defence by the English government. The Crown, desperately in need of finances, used sermons, bulletins, and newsletters to promote the war as one of survival to the public.⁵⁵ Knighton reflected the impact of this propaganda. The first section of his chronicle was filled with French raids against the English coastline: Portsmouth, Southampton, Hastings, and Sandwich were all attacked.⁵⁶ In 1339, Knighton reported, Edward III invaded France ‘uendicans ius regni sibi incumbere iure hereditario ex parte matris sue, Isabelle’ (‘seeking that hereditary right to the kingdom that came from his mother Isabella’).⁵⁷ He then continued with an extended passage explaining Edward’s right to the throne of France.⁵⁸ Edward’s conduct in Knighton’s account was a bizarre mixture of pragmatic conqueror – burning France in a great chevauchée – and peacemaker, as Knighton reported his regular attempts to open negotiations. Meanwhile, Knighton wrote, the French refused peace and avoided battle.⁵⁹ When the French sued for peace at times during the chronicle it was usually duplicitously. In 1354, when a truce was arranged to begin peace talks, Knighton claimed that when the French arrived ‘dederunt cunctos articulos ad quos assensum prebuerant et conuenerant apud Calesiam’ (‘they repudiated the articles to which they had assented and agreed at Calais’).⁶⁰ From Knighton’s account it seems likely that he was engaging proactively with the English justifications for warfare and incorporating them into his historical work, so that the chronicle partially functioned as a record of the character and relative virtues of the English and French.

The war with France, which dominated Knighton’s chronicle, had a religious aspect too in the Papal Schism (1378–1417).⁶¹ Knighton occasionally cast the English as God’s chosen against the anti-pope supporting French. Knighton’s account of the Battle of Crécy (1346) blurred religious and patriotic ideals in a description echoing scriptural conflicts. He reported that at the start of the battle ‘staimque clanxerunt clarriones et tube, inundacioque pluuiarum comitabatur, tonutruique magni horribilitas, et in breui cessauit illa mirabilis

⁵⁵ Jones, ‘The English Church and Royal Propaganda during the Hundred Years War’, 19.

⁵⁶ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 4, 12, 14.

⁵⁷ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 16.

⁵⁸ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 16.

⁵⁹ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 16–18.

⁶⁰ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 126.

⁶¹ Martin, ‘Introduction: Knighton’, xvi.

tempestas' ('at once the bugles and trumpets sounded, and there fell a flood of rain, with terrible thunder, but that amazing storm soon passed').⁶² Five times in less than a single leaf Knighton claimed that divine aid had been given to the English.⁶³ Without representing the conflict as explicitly one between the faithful of God and their enemies, Knighton still implied that the English were the chosen people. However, Knighton's account of Crécy was not solely focused on the English as religious exemplars but it also incorporated lists of the fallen. Using Lancastrian sources Knighton presented a report of the battle which demonstrated the special position of the English and their virtues and which justified the war, but he also provided his audience with the basic details of events that showed that even a just war was not one without human cost.

By comparison Walsingham placed a greater emphasis on the virtues of the warriors themselves in his descriptions of the war. He made brief asides mentioning the Hundred Years War as a defensive effort, but he focused on war as the key to a virtuous society. His work exhibited an admiration for knightly skills. Christopher Guyol has argued that Walsingham applauded bloodshed and encouraged knights to pursue savage prowess.⁶⁴ Walsingham even praised Sir John Hawkwood, the mercenary, though mercenaries were often held in low regard.⁶⁵ Walsingham's concern with knightly prowess as a key virtue reverberated throughout the chronicle. His report of heroic deeds of John Harleston and Geoffrey Worseley demonstrate his interest in the boldness of knights, without showing a matching concern for the justifications for their behaviour. He described Worseley as 'miles et manu promptus et bello strenuous' ('a knight swift in action and vigorous in battle').⁶⁶ Walsingham's account was more than a basic statement of fact; he extolled military heroism with details, adjectives, and descriptions. In his history of Alexander the Great he had observed that such subjects could be a welcome diversion for those in cloisters.⁶⁷ From his account of Hawkwood's deeds, which come across as a ripping good yarn, we may infer his fascination with martial prowess and imagine that he regarded his contemporary history in a similar vein at times, as

⁶² Knighton, *Chronicon*, 62.

⁶³ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 60–62.

⁶⁴ Guyol, 'Chivalry in the St Albans Chronicle', 91–93.

⁶⁵ Guyol, 'Chivalry in the St Albans Chronicle', 90; Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 4; Saul, 'A Farewell to Arms?', 141–142.

⁶⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 286.

⁶⁷ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance at St Albans*, 155.

a source of all-action entertainment as well as an unobjectionable education for his audience.

Walsingham and Knighton shared an admiration for prowess, and both eulogised Edward Woodstock for his martial virtues. However, Walsingham's description was more heavily rooted in classical texts: he compared the prince to Alexander the Great (in a longer recession) and Hector of Troy (in a shorter version) and claimed that Edward always conquered any nation he attacked.⁶⁸ Hector and Alexander were significant choices for several reasons. They were two of the Nine Worthies (a selection of great chivalric heroes formed of three Jews, three pagans, and three Christians), many of whom were known for their remarkable conquests and who were fashionable subjects for discussion in the fourteenth century.⁶⁹ Although Hector and Alexander were frequently referred to in sermons as examples of good conduct they were also the subjects of long literary traditions, with which Walsingham, who wrote texts on both figures, was well acquainted.⁷⁰ By comparing Edward Woodstock to them Walsingham placed the prince into a classical and epic line of heroes. He addressed the glory of deeds of arms, in this case, more than he sought to justify the wars themselves.

Walsingham continued along these lines over the course of the chronicle. His criticisms of Richard's household knights as ('plus ualentes in thalamo quam in campo' ('more valorous in the bedchamber than on the field of battle')) are evidence of his dismissal of the knights who did not uphold their role as *bellatores*.⁷¹ Walsingham's mordant description of the king's favourites in this way highlighted his sharply pro-war, pro-conquest attitudes, against the trend of critical literature during Richard's reign and in contrast to Knighton's account with its more apparent just war influences.

Walsingham's treatment of offensive war as a virtuous endeavour which was a necessary function of a mighty monarch flowered in Henry V's reign. He cast opponents of Henry as rogues and saboteurs of the war effort. Walsingham

⁶⁸ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 36, 996.

⁶⁹ The heroes were usually Joshua, David, Judas Maccabeus, Hector, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, King Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Bouillon.

⁷⁰ Most importantly the *Historia Alexandri Magni Principis* and the *Dites Ditatus*. Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance at St Albans*, 164–65; Sylvia Federico, *The Classicist Writings of Thomas Walsingham: 'Worldly Cares' at St Albans Abbey in the Fourteenth Century*, *Writing History in the Middle Ages* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2016), 142.

⁷¹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 814; W. M. Ormrod, 'Knights of Venus', *Medium Ævum* 73, no. 2 (2004), 290–305.

claimed that in 1415 the French supported the attempt of the three lords, Henry Scrope, Richard of Conisburgh, and Thomas Grey, and the Southampton plotters to kill Henry V and replace him with the young earl of March, Edmund Mortimer.⁷² Walsingham stated that the French ambassadors, after paying Henry Scrope for his betrayal, returned home. He claimed that the ambassadors reported everything was now peaceful, 'quia iam iuxta pacta rex Anglie, reuocato proposito, uel ad sua redisset uel certe, quod uerius putabatur, gladio interesset' ('because, in accordance with the agreement, the king of England had cancelled his plan of attack, and either had returned to his own concerns, or, what was thought to be more truly the case, had died by the sword').⁷³ Walsingham represented the French as duplicitous villains in this passage. They had behaved treacherously so any war against them was justified. Walsingham did not single out the French alone in his accounts but attributed different dimensions of martiality more broadly to various nationalities. The French, however, were as a rule treacherous in warfare, according to the treatments by Walsingham, Knighton, and the author of the *GHQ* among others.⁷⁴ The report, although it cannot be read as a complete explanation for the war, presented a narrative from Walsingham which clearly demonstrated why Henry V's invasion of France was both justified and virtuous.

Later, after Henry V's death, Walsingham gave a passionate eulogy of the king par excellence which emphasised Henry's martial qualities, a passage which bears some comparison to Walsingham's more nuanced reflection on the last great warrior king Edward III on his death in 1377. Henry had been so magnificent, Walsingham wrote, that 'omnes pene Francigene, qui eiusdem regis Anglie equum et discretum regimen, post tam turbulentam et improbam aliorum tyrannidem, experti fuerant, planctu maximo condolebant' ('almost all the people of France as well, who had experienced the equitable and discerning governance of the king of England after the turbulent and monstrous tyranny of

⁷² They were also mentioned by Strecche, the author of the *GHQ*, and Adam of Usk, who also accused the French of bribing the conspirators. Christopher Allmand, 'Henry V (1386–1422), King of England and Lord of Ireland, and Duke of Aquitaine', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. (23 Sep. 2004).

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-12952>; Frank Taylor, 'The Chronicle of John Strecche for the Reign of Henry V, 1414–1422', *The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 16, no. 1 (1932), 151; *GHQ*, 18–19; Adam of Usk, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk, 1377–1421*, ed. Chris Given-Wilson, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 254.

⁷³ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 660.

⁷⁴ The chroniclers also display stereotypes of national martiality such as Scottish barbarity and Welsh savagery. See below, 232.

others, grievously lamented [Henry's] death').⁷⁵ Meanwhile, by comparison, Edward III, though praised as 'illustrius' ('illustrious') and lauded for having protected the realm, was criticised by Walsingham for having neglected the laws and peace of the land.⁷⁶ Walsingham's eulogy for Edward III's son, the Black Prince, in 1376 is perhaps a closer comparison.⁷⁷ He remarked that 'cuius animus sicut in hostes et ad bella, ita et in mortem inuictus fuit' ('his [the Black Prince's] spirit when facing death was as invincible as it had been against his enemies in war').⁷⁸ From the eulogies the value of martial activity in a king – or a prospective king – for Walsingham is evident, but he also acknowledged that a monarch had to match their deeds of arms with a strong domestic policy. The importance of domestic policy to Walsingham is further attested to in his criticisms of Edward III's last years, which add a complexity to his praise of royal martiality. Regardless of the problems of taxation it brought with it, the reports of martiality in Walsingham's chronicle, therefore, are partially ones of praise for its practice.

John Strecche took a similarly positive attitude towards warfare and conquest. It seems to have been more than a renewed enthusiasm for the Hundred Years War and Henry V's own propaganda as it was also reflected in his praise for Henry IV.⁷⁹ Strecche described the function of his chronicle as an explanation of the king's 'bellis et conquestu [...] in Normannia et in Francia' ('wars and the conquest [...] in Normandy and France').⁸⁰ The end of his chronicle was framed in the same terms. In a short, concluding poem Strecche claimed

Hic rex Henricus in bellis semper apricus,
 Rex fuit Anglorum, lux et laus preteritorum,
 Necnon Francorum rex et flos belligerorum
 (This king Henry was, in wars, always radiant
 He was king of the English, his light and renown are past,
 Also the king of France and the flower of warfare).⁸¹

⁷⁵ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 774.

⁷⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 124, 138.

⁷⁷ See above, 210.

⁷⁸ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 32.

⁷⁹ Craig Taylor, 'Henry V, Flower of Chivalry', in *Henry V: New Interpretations*, ed. Gwilym Dodd (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press; Boydell & Brewer, 2013), 217.

⁸⁰ Taylor, 'The Chronicle of John Strecche', 146.

⁸¹ The translation is not entirely literal. Instead I have sought to recognise the sense rather than the precise phrasing. Taylor, 'The Chronicle of John Strecche', 187.

Strecche's account of Henry V's reign was cast as a single, homogeneous piece, dissimilar from the many chronicles that were built up as slow accretions as chroniclers lived through events. It was connected to previous reigns by its place in the sequence but different from them in the degree of interest in the person of Henry V. His portrait of Henry V remained consistent: he was a brilliant and aggressive warrior, praiseworthy for his glorious conquests. Strecche shows little interest in questioning what was and was not a just war but instead wrote an encomium for war and Henry V.

Strecche's reports of Henry V's wars were framed with classical antecedents.⁸² He explicitly compared Henry V to Hector, Achilles, Augustus, Paris, and Troilus; comparison to these conquerors, warriors and pillars of chivalry cast anti-war concerns aside.⁸³ Strecche also aped the form of classical works, highlighting the scale of Henry V's preparations. He listed that Henry had readied 'novo loricas, galias, scuta, thoraces, clipios, capita lancearum, cirotecas, laminatas, gladios, arcus, sagittarum multa milia et universa armorum genera invasiva et defensiva ad bellum' ('new breastplates, helmets, large shields, cuirasses, small shields, spearheads, gloves, laminar armour, swords, bows, many thousands of arrows and all kinds of arms for offense and defence in war').⁸⁴ Such lists and turns of phrase, which revealed mighty war efforts – demonstrating the epic scale of conflicts – were a common feature in epic poetry composed and inspired by classical writers and in accounts of the Trojan war from authors such as Dares Phrygius.⁸⁵ His use of such concepts owed a great deal to classical sources, such as Julius Caesar's *Commentārii dē Bellō Gallicō*, but nothing to the just war tradition that questioned if a war should happen. Thus, the chronicle functioned not as a moral piece but as a more literary record of war.

Positive representations of war could take many forms. The author of the *GHQ* appears to have deliberately engaged with war from a moral perspective. His account focused on the righteousness of the combatants and their part in

⁸² The individuals he cited drew heavily on the Virgilian tradition of the accounts of the Trojan wars, though whether he encountered them through Virgil, other poets, or intermediary texts is unclear.

⁸³ Taylor, 'The Chronicle of John Strecche', 187.

⁸⁴ Taylor, 'The Chronicle of John Strecche', 150.

⁸⁵ Alfred David, 'Gawain and Aeneas', *English Studies* 49, nos 1–6 (1968), 405; for further examples see: Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book VII, ll. 183–186; 524–526, 626–627; Lucan *Pharsalia*, 462–467; Dares Phrygius, *De excidio Troiae historia*, ed. Ferdinand Otto Meister (Lipsiae: B. G. Teubner, 1873), 17, <http://archive.org/details/daretisphrygiide00dareuoft>.

God's plans.⁸⁶ The *GHQ* functions as an argument for the justice of Henry V's wars. Henry, the chronicler claimed, sought 'pacem et tranquillitatem regnorum' ('the peace and tranquillity of kingdoms').⁸⁷ Thus, his cause for war was an extension of Augustine's maxim that war was to be waged to preserve or create peace. There is external evidence, such as John Lydgate's *Siege of Thebes*, that writers sympathetic to Henry V were framing warfare through this rationale at the time.⁸⁸ So the *GHQ* relates to a move under Henry V to recast war as peace-seeking endeavour, potentially as a counter claim to anti-war sentiments.

The chronicler asserted as defence for Henry's wars that the French would not agree to reasonable terms during the negotiations in 1414–1415.⁸⁹ Henry was, the author argued, 'incolpati' ('blameless') and 'iusti' ('just'), in opposition to the French, who withheld the king's rights through 'culpabilis et iniusta' ('blameworthy and unjust') violence.⁹⁰ The chronicler also explained that Henry V acted in accordance with Deuteronomy whilst the French had behaved 'superbia' ('arrogantly'), committed acts of injustice, and were 'excordes et ignaves' ('irresolute and cowardly').⁹¹ Furthermore, and damningly, they were a 'rebellem populum' ('rebellious people').⁹² Henry's victories were not victories for the worldly glory frequently criticised by preachers but for God's peace and the moral over the immoral.⁹³ The *GHQ* appears to have been written in part as a defence against possible criticisms of Henry V, or at least with an awareness of them. Calling the French rebels, alongside their other crimes, established that Henry was in the right – a question which Strecche did not address as carefully.

Though many contemporary chroniclers were extremely supportive of Henry V's wars the rare criticisms of him reflect the duality of the themes used to praise him. Adam of Usk, though generally supportive, criticised Henry V towards the end of his chronicle. Adam had by Henry V's reign, in a long career,

⁸⁶ Frank Taylor, 'Introduction', in *Gesta Henrici Quinti: The Deeds of Henry the Fifth*, eds. and trans. Frank Taylor and John Smith Roskell, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), xix; Paul Strohm, *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation 1399–1422* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 83.

⁸⁷ *GHQ*, 2; Langan, 'The Elements of St Augustine's Just War Theory', 26.

⁸⁸ Lee Patterson, 'Making Identities in Fifteenth-Century England: Henry V and John Lydgate,' in *New Historical Literary Study*, ed. Jeffrey N. Cox and Larry J. Reynolds (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 95.

⁸⁹ *GHQ*, 14.

⁹⁰ *GHQ*, 14, 36.

⁹¹ *GHQ*, 46, 94, 64, 36.

⁹² *GHQ*, 36.

⁹³ For example, Nancy H. Owen, 'Thomas Wimbeldon's Sermon: "Redde Racionem Villicacionis Tue"', *Mediaeval Studies*, 29 December 2009, 183.

repeatedly lost his livelihood, moving from England to Rome in search of preferment. He joined the anti-papal court, then the rebel Owain Glyndŵr, and then, eventually, switched sides again to work for the English once more.⁹⁴ Given the monetary difficulties this caused Adam it is unsurprising that he had little fondness for taxation. In his accounts of Edward III, Richard II, Henry IV, and Henry V he consistently condemned taxation and the wars that prompted it.⁹⁵ These criticisms of warfare were distinct from the majority of such in the fourteenth century. Nigel Saul has differentiated between critiques of war in the early fourteenth century and the late fourteenth century by arguing that there was an increasing trend to fault the pride and greed of soldiers rather than blame taxation.⁹⁶ Although Saul has argued that the difficulties peace brought under Richard II led to a renewed faith in the ideas of honour and chivalry – identifiable in Strecche's chronicle – Adam's chronicle fits neither trend.⁹⁷

Adam looked at the downfalls of the Nine Worthies rather than their successes, as Walsingham and Strecche had done.⁹⁸ In 1421, when Henry V planned a new expedition to France, Adam voiced his concerns that it would see the great men and the wealth of the realm wasted. He added that there were dark mutterings against the imposition of taxes and wrote fretfully, 'utinam non sit dominus meus supremus gladii furoris Domini, cum Iulio cum Assuro, cum Alexandro, cum Extore, cum Siro, cum Dario, cum Machabeo, finaliter particeps' ('I pray that my supreme lord may not in the end, like Julius, and Ahasuerus, and Alexander, and Hector, and Cyrus, and Darius, and Macchabeus, incur the sword of the Lord's fury').⁹⁹ The passage appears to have been a thinly veiled prediction and complaint, if only to himself. Adam used a series of textual references which would have been easily understood within his textual culture.¹⁰⁰ Each figure was praiseworthy, many of them were

⁹⁴ Chris Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', in *The Chronicle of Adam Usk: 1377–1421*, eds. and trans. Chris Given-Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), xvii–xxxviii.

⁹⁵ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 16.

⁹⁶ Saul, 'A Farewell to Arms?', 131.

⁹⁷ Saul, 'A Farewell to Arms?', 145.

⁹⁸ For examples of Adam's use of prophecy on taxation see, Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 16–18, 38, 242.

⁹⁹ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 270.

¹⁰⁰ Thomas Brinton, *The Sermons of Thomas Brinton, Bishop of Rochester, 1373–1389*, ed. Mary Aquinas Devlin, Vol. 1, 2 Vols, Camden Society 3rd Series, Vol. 85 (London: R.H.S., 1954); V. M. O'Mara and Suzanne Paul, *A Repertorium of Middle English Prose Sermons. Part 4: Manchester, John Rylands University Library to Oxford, Bodleian Library*, Vol. 4, Sermo (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 2603, 2626; O'Mara and Paul, *Repertorium. Part 1*, 1: 477; V. M. O'Mara and Suzanne Paul, *A Repertorium of Middle English Prose Sermons. Part 2: London*,

conquerors and warriors. However, Adam laid his focus on the downfalls of the figures he referenced: assassination, illness, and defeat. Adam also made the suggestion – antithetically to the *GHQ* – that Henry V might face divine opprobrium. Adam's precarious position as a secular clerk in search of preferment set him against taxation and, fuelled by cultural touchstones, he gave an uncertain narrative of Henry V's wars. Even amongst those chroniclers who were enthusiastic supporters of martial activity on idealised levels there were practical concerns such as taxation. Thomas Walsingham and Henry Knighton, for example, frequently reflected on the cost of the wars for their abbeys.¹⁰¹

There were, however, areas where violence was seen as necessary to preserve the monasteries and the clergy rather than as a drain on their resources. Reports which discussed the need for the defence of the faith were often strikingly similar. The descriptions of Henry V as an English champion of God were part of a wider sense, identifiable in the chronicles, that the English enjoyed a special relationship with heaven. However, they also marked a shift away from the self-doubt which scholars such as Michael Livingston have argued appears in vernacular poetry in the wake of Bishop Henry Despenser's failed crusade of 1383.¹⁰² Yet the crusade was accompanied by a self-definition on the part of the English in opposition to the alien religious, and in particular the French, a self-definition that saw some chroniclers strongly support the crusading effort.¹⁰³ The Westminster Chronicler and Monk were perhaps influenced to some extent by the connections of their abbey to Despenser (who sent letters describing the campaign to the abbot of Westminster which were then used in the chronicle), but also, it would seem, by the power of the idea of faith as a justification for war.¹⁰⁴

The Westminster chroniclers, with their deliberate depiction of the crusade as a simultaneously patriotic and religious effort, were part of this

British Library (Arundel), to London, Westminster Abbey Library, Vol. 2, Sermo (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 999.

¹⁰¹ See above, 98

¹⁰² See, for further reading, Marco Nievergelt, 'The "Sege of Melayne" and the "Siege of Jerusalem": National Identity, Beleaguered Christendom, and Holy War during the Great Papal Schism', *The Chaucer Review* 49, no. 4 (31 March 2015), 403, 404; Michael Livingston, 'Introduction', in *Siege of Jerusalem*, Online edition (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2004), <http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/livingston-siege-of-jerusalem-introduction>.

¹⁰³ Timothy Guard, 'Pulpit and Cross: Preaching the Crusade in Fourteenth-Century England', *The English Historical Review* 129, no. 541 (1 December 2014), 1321.

¹⁰⁴ W. A. Pantin, 'A Medieval Treatise on Letter-Writing with Examples', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 13, no. 2 (1929): 359–361; *Westminster Chronicle*, 38.

budding zeitgeist.¹⁰⁵ The existing intellectual tradition condemned the participation of the clergy in warfare, and St Raymond of Peñafort (c.1175–1275) had argued that soldiers ought to be laymen. Yet Despenser, the leader of the crusade, was a prelate, and many clerks accompanied him.¹⁰⁶ The issue was pressed in parliament, as the Westminster Chronicler reported the temporal lords opposed the crusade.¹⁰⁷ They also argued that were Despenser successful his conquests would have been made in the name of the Church rather than the king.¹⁰⁸ The Chronicler explained that ('hiis aliisque suasionibus iniquo zelo ducti nitebantur plurimi dominiorum ejus transitum impedire; quopropter communitas regni, videns inerciam dominorum in multis preactis expedicionibus regno fuisse nocivam, parti episcopi favebant' ('with these and other arguments many of the lords strove, from motives of base jealousy, to obstruct the bishop's expedition; which caused the commons, who had observed how often in past ventures the apathy of the nobles had damaged the country's interests, to side with the bishop')).¹⁰⁹ The Chronicler distinguished between the virtuous bishop and the sinful lords, between the noble pursuit of a religious war and self-interest. They sidestepped questions of the appropriate behaviour of prelates by questioning the motivations of the bishop's opponents.

Walsingham, in his discussion of Despenser's crusade, presented a narrow view of martial activity as the domain of knighthood. It was not a view he consistently held, he praised Despenser for his deeds of arms in 1381 during the Peasants' Revolt and supported the crusade itself.¹¹⁰ However, in this instance he made an especial – and disapproving – note of the St Albans monks who joined it, criticising their behaviour as inappropriate for monks.¹¹¹ His position here represented a restricted notion of the legitimate practice of violence.

Although Walsingham took issue with the participation of his brethren in the crusade, the Westminster Chronicler seems to have taken pride in the slightly less direct association of the crusade with his own abbey. The

¹⁰⁵ The crusade is discussed in further detail below, 263–269; Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 670–712 *Westminster Chronicle*, 34–40, 44–48.

¹⁰⁶ Russell, 'Paulus Vladimiri's Attack on the Just War', 238.

¹⁰⁷ *Westminster Chronicle*, 36.

¹⁰⁸ *Westminster Chronicle*, 36.

¹⁰⁹ *Westminster Chronicle*, 36.

¹¹⁰ See below, 257.

¹¹¹ Henry T. Riley, ed., *Gesta abbatum monasterii Sancti Albani*, Vol. 2, 3 Vols., Rolls Series. (London: Longman, 1867), 416.

Chronicler recorded, 'episcopus Northwycen' in ecclesia Westmon' accepit vexillum crucis ac illud ipsemet portavit aliquantulum extra monasterium' ('the bishop of Norwich received the standard of the Cross in the church of Westminster and himself carried it for some little distance after leaving the abbey').¹¹² The spectacle was a piece of social theatre. It granted the blessing of the abbey to the crusade, and the record of it in the chronicle suggests that the Chronicler wanted his audience to remember Westminster Abbey's significant role. Ties between the abbey and the crusade were unsurprising, given that the abbot was a relation of Henry Despenser's.

The chroniclers were not necessarily actively seeking to justify wars. However, they did reflect or use narratives of just war which would have been understood in the intellectual circles they moved in. These narratives were not always consistent with one another and the prominence they had within an account varied from chronicler to chronicler and episode to episode. Many of the reports the chroniclers presented did appeal to common ideas within the textual environment, though, as they encoded events such as Oldcastle's rebellion within existing narratives of rebellion and heterodoxy.

Revolts like Oldcastle's were unusual in that the chroniclers had no sympathies with the rebels. Although the concept of rebellion was used pejoratively, chroniclers found ways to excuse or recast rebellions when they were sympathetic to the rebels. The complex mental gymnastics of reporting martial conduct in rebellions demonstrates the underlying tensions within chroniclers' reports of martiality. Rebellion was condemned as amongst the worst of crimes, a betrayal of social bonds, and yet it could also be part of the divine plan to remove a corrupt ruler, or even be cast as a tragedy. In principle rebellion was an unforgivable sin. The chroniclers employed a very similar rhetoric in condemning it. Their accounts of the Peasants' Revolt in 1381 exhibit a common wave of dehumanising and dismissive attacks against the rebels. The word 'rebel' was synonymous with wickedness. Among other slurs Walsingham described them as 'demoniaci' ('demoniacal') and 'amentes' ('madmen').¹¹³ Adam of Usk, in the early fifteenth century, referred to the entire crisis as 'monstruosum' ('monstrous').¹¹⁴ Henry Knighton called the peasants, 'luporum rabiem' ('rabid wolves') and described them as 'stulte multitudini' ('the

¹¹² *Westminster Chronicle*, 38.

¹¹³ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 418, 424.

¹¹⁴ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 2.

foolish multitude').¹¹⁵ The Westminster Chronicler described the rebels as 'rabidissimi canes' ('the maddest of mad dogs').¹¹⁶ The response is to be expected from authors who either personally, or as members of a *domus*, understood themselves to be threatened by the aims of the rebels.¹¹⁷ Each attack on the rebels relies on the same basic topoi of inhuman evil and madness.¹¹⁸ The commonality of the language used by the chroniclers suggests between accounts of the Peasants' Revolt and Oldcastle's rebellion and indicates that there was a shared notion of what rebellion represented.

The description of the 'horrisono clamore' ('horrifying clamour') of the rebels, as Steven Justice argued, stripped the faculty of language from them.¹¹⁹ The response was common to chronicles written years and leagues apart, and it also appeared in sermons condemning the rebels.¹²⁰ To describe the insurgency in terms of the vices of its followers was a natural extension of the discourse and preaching which pervaded the community of chroniclers.

These condemnations of the rebels were mixed with the rhetoric of vice and virtue. Walsingham's description of Wat Tyler, one of the revolt's leaders, was laced with accusations of sin. He used five variations on anger to describe Tyler's behaviour during the meeting at Smithfield on Sunday 15 June, and also claimed Tyler behaved arrogantly.¹²¹ The *Dieulacres Chronicle* included a description of the rebel leader Jack Straw as 'sacerdotis nephandi' ('that wicked priest').¹²² The phrases the chroniclers used were the key to a common storehouse of cultural reactions against rebellion. In this instance, Walsingham's report took on yet another function, painting the social and moral problems of rebellion against the established order.

Not all revolts were as despised as the Peasants' Revolt or Oldcastle's. Owain Glyndŵr's Revolt, surprisingly, divided opinions. The *Dieulacres*

¹¹⁵ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 234, 220.

¹¹⁶ *Westminster Chronicle*, 2.

¹¹⁷ G. R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England: A Neglected Chapter in the History of English Letters and of the English People* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), 290.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Steven Justice, *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381*, 27 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 205.

¹¹⁹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 428; Justice, *Writing and Rebellion*, 207.

¹²⁰ In a sermon delivered in 1382 Thomas Brinton described the rebels as abominable, and during a second sermon he reminded his audience that the rebels and Wyclif had been condemned by the Church. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, 306; Brinton, *Sermons of Thomas Brinton*, II: 458, 466.

¹²¹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 434.

¹²² This is probably an erroneous identification of John Ball. M. V. Clarke and V. H. Galbraith, 'The Deposition of Richard II', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 14, no. 1 (1930), 164.

chronicler, the second of two authors of the chronicle, although he was a supporter of Henry IV was somewhat sympathetic to Glyndŵr's followers.¹²³ He only called them rebels once, and he explained the rebellion on the basis of the rights of Welsh law.¹²⁴ This sympathy did come into conflict with his other loyalties, though, and he still expressed a fundamental opposition to the rebels in the same terms as the other English chroniclers: a routine critique of Welsh deceptiveness.¹²⁵ He reported, for instance, that Reginald Grey, lord of Ruthin, was captured by 'dolo et fraude' ('deceit and fraud').¹²⁶ The Welsh rebels existed at the edge of society, in hiding, 'fugiendo latuerunt in montibus, boscis et cavernis terre, semper machinantes caudam anglicorum perimere' ('they fled and lurked in the mountains, the woods and caves of the earth, always plotting to annihilate the rear-guard of the English').¹²⁷ Although they were not cast in the bestial terms used of peasants, the language clearly disassociated them from civilised society and set them at odds with English mores.

English chroniclers commonly cast the Welsh as inherently inferior to the English. Alicia Marchant has argued that these terms and the derision shown for the Welsh are part of discourse on the division between the English and the Welsh, rather than just the critique of rebels.¹²⁸ The chronicler of the *Continuatio Eulogii* implied that the Welsh were uncouth, describing their delegation to parliament as 'scurries nudipedibus' ('barefooted buffoons').¹²⁹ This description set a distinct boundary between the civilised English parliament and the Welsh, whose perceived inferiority made them a natural target for ridicule.

¹²³ The *Dieulacres Chronicle* was written in two main sections (covering 1337–1400 and 1400–1403), one largely before Richard's downfall and the other sometime before 1413. For further discussion of wars in Wales see Alicia Marchant, *The Revolt of Owain Glyndŵr in Medieval English Chronicles* (Boydell & Brewer, 2014); Clarke and Galbraith, 'The Deposition of Richard II', 127, 128; R. R. Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyndŵr* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

¹²⁴ Clarke and Galbraith, 'The Deposition of Richard II', 176, 175.

¹²⁵ Marchant, *The Revolt of Glyndŵr*, 108.

¹²⁶ Clarke and Galbraith, 'The Deposition of Richard II', 175.

¹²⁷ The English chronicles contain a great number of instances in which they accused the Welsh of acting deceptively; Thomas Walsingham even accused them of black magic, although the Dieulacres chronicler dismissed the same claims as improbable. Clarke and Galbraith, 'The Deposition of Richard II', 176; George B. Stow and Nicholas Herford, eds., *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), 168, 172; Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 326; Marchant, *The Revolt of Glyndŵr*, 91–118.

¹²⁸ Marchant, *The Revolt of Glyndŵr*, 153.

¹²⁹ Marchant, *The Revolt of Glyndŵr*, 152; Frank Scott Haydon, ed., *Eulogium (Historiarum Sive Temporis): Chronicon ab orbe condito usque ad annum Domini M.CCC.LXCI., a monacho quodam Malmesburiensi exaratum; accedunt continuationes duæ, quarum una ad annum M.CCCC.Xiii., altera ad annum M.CCCC.XC. perducta est* (London: Longman, 1858), 388.

Adam of Usk's use of narratives of rebellion was particularly complex, probably because of how often he had shifted loyalties. For example, he sympathised with Glyndŵr's revolt (which he temporarily joined) and rarely called the Welsh 'rebels', but he too used descriptions of the Welsh hiding in the mountains and valleys.¹³⁰ The phrase is not necessarily pejorative though there are questions to be raised over whether this image was simply a reflection on the realities of guerrilla warfare or a determined characterisation of fighters as savage. It is also by no means certain that the chroniclers, when they used the phrase, intended the same connotations, Adam added in mention of Glyndŵr's loyal companions a detail which seems more heroic than critical.¹³¹ The chroniclers' report of rebellion within an established paradigm was amply demonstrated by their care when discussing Henry IV's coup in 1399. Adam of Usk explicitly dismissed the idea that Henry's coup was in fact a rebellion at all. He quoted Geoffrey of Monmouth, comparing Richard's overthrow to that of the mythical British king Arthgallus, who was displaced for the good of the realm.¹³² Adam also suggested that Richard may have been Joan of Kent's bastard, implying that a rebellion against Richard was not a rebellion at all since he was not the true king.¹³³ Adam had participated in the counsel which justified Henry IV's assumption of the throne, and his opinions were naturally heavily partisan. There is a clear indication that any insinuation of rebellion was perceived as deeply troubling to the new regime.¹³⁴ So Adam avoided framing the events of 1399 within a model which he was well aware they could be seen to fit. His loyalties to Archbishop Thomas Arundel, who had been an enemy of Richard, and perhaps other factors, such as the dangers of censorship, seem to have led to a careful shifting of the narrative so that it could function as a legitimisation rather than a challenge to the new regime.

The rebellion was framed by Adam through the use of vatic material. Adam suggested that the Prophecy of the Eagle and the prophecies of Merlin might relate to Henry, and he then determined that Bridlington's prophecies were correct because of Henry's livery of greyhounds and his return to England

¹³⁰ Marchant, *The Revolt of Glyndŵr*, 157.

¹³¹ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 100.

¹³² Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 62.

¹³³ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 62.

¹³⁴ Strohm, *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation 1399–1422*, 1–2.

in the 'diebus canicularibus' ('dog-days').¹³⁵ Adopting their authority, Adam's approach was moulded by the tradition of prophecy, which required the interpretation of evidence as part of a divine plan.¹³⁶ Each additional prophecy appears as a piece of evidence reinforcing Henry's legitimacy as opposed to undermining him by associating him with the madness and monstrosity of rebellion. Adam revealed how he witnessed a greyhound of Richard's find its way to Henry IV after Richard had deserted his army:

ipso relicto, proprio eciam sensu, solus sine, aliquot ducente, directe uenit a Caermerthyn Solopiam ad Lancastr' ducem, iam regem, in monasterio cum exercitu tunc existentem, me uidente, se sibi, quem prius non uiderat, humilimo et hilarissimo et gaudenti uultu inclinando (deserting him, it made its way, once again by its own instinct, alone and unaided, from Carmarthen directly to Shrewsbury, where the duke of Lancaster, now the king, was staying at that time with his army in the monastery there, and, as I stood watching, it went up and crouched obediently before him, whom it had never seen before with a look of the purest pleasure on its face).¹³⁷

The passage symbolically suggests that Henry, not Richard, was the true king. Henry could not have rebelled if he were already the monarch. The passage of the quasi-mystical authority of kingship from an unworthy to a worthy monarch seems to occur along with the transference of the greyhound's allegiance. Adam's emphasised his own presence, expressed through first person singular verbs, such as 'video'. This suggests that the account was intended to function as an episode of his personal history and as a legitimation of Henry IV, backed up by the eyewitness testimony. As an account of the coup it demonstrated Adam's awareness and struggles with the tensions of legitimacy and rebellion, revealing his consciousness of the potential for conflicting narratives around the overthrow of Richard II.

Narratives from chroniclers who favoured Richard during the 1399 coup, few though they were after the Lancastrians had the reins of power, depicted it

¹³⁵ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 52; Strohm, *England's Empty Throne*, 13.

¹³⁶ R. W. Southern, 'Presidential Address: Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: 3. History as Prophecy', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, 22 (1972), 160–161.

¹³⁷ This story also appears in Froissart, although Richard and Henry were both present and there were thousands of witnesses, and Richard himself interpreted the event. Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 86.

as a rebellion. The first Dieulacres chronicler stated in the record for 1395 that it would be absurd for a subject to rebel, and that God had directed Richard to punish the rebels.¹³⁸ The chronicler had already established the terms of the discussion when he described how, in 1399, Richard 'in Hibernia audiens insurrectionem ducis predicti prodiciose festinantem' ('heard in Ireland that the duke's [Henry Bolingbroke's] rebellion was gathering its treacherous pace').¹³⁹ There was no attempt by the chronicler to distance himself from these views. He provided an immediate moral judgement, founded on the pre-existing traditional interpretation of rebellion. The Dieulacres chronicler wove a narrative that cast Richard's defeat as a tragic violation of the natural order. The divergence between Adam and the Dieulacres chronicler suggests three principal conclusions: first, that though they disagreed on the hero of the piece they accepted the significance and worked from opposing sides to correct this; second, that they were sufficiently self-aware to frame the events within a distinct narrative paradigm; and third, that they were not part of a single clique of writers.

These narratives, as suggested above, were partially developed through the language choices of their authors, choices which could significantly alter the import of an episode. Adam of Usk had used the first-person to lend support to the portent whilst the first Dieulacres chronicler distanced himself from the contemporary discussion of prophecy by framing any commentary as the remarks of others rather than his own interpretation. As Marchant has noted, the use of impersonal constructions created a sense of distance between chroniclers and their texts.¹⁴⁰ This separation appeared in the *Dieulacres Chronicle* when the chronicler explained,

tunc quidem errant signa regalia tam cervi quam corone sub abscondito posita, unde creditor quod armigeri ducis Lancasterie deferentes collistrigia quasi leporarii ad destruendum insolenciam invise bestie albi cervi per annum presignati sunt quodam presagio futurorum

(then, indeed, were those royal badges both of the hart and of the crown hidden away, so some said that the esquires of the duke of Lancaster

¹³⁸ Clarke and Galbraith, 'The Deposition of Richard II', 168.

¹³⁹ Chris Given-Wilson, ed., *Chronicles of the Revolution, 1397–1400: The Reign of Richard II*, Manchester Medieval Sources Series (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 154; Clarke and Galbraith, 'The Deposition of Richard II', 172.

¹⁴⁰ Marchant, *The Revolt of Glydnŵr*, 33.

[Henry Bolingbroke], wearing their collars, had been pre-ordained by a prophecy to subdue like greyhound in this year the pride of that hated beast the white hart [Richard's symbol]).¹⁴¹

Adam, meanwhile, asserted that 'secundum Bridlinton merito canis, propter liberatam callariorum leporariis conueniencium [...] et quia infinitos ceruos, liberatam scilicet regis Ricardi in ceruis existentem penitus a regno affugauit' ('following Bridlington [...] he [Henry IV] should rather be the dog, because of his livery of linked collars of greyhounds [...] because he drove utterly from the kingdom countless numbers of harts – the hart being the livery of King Richard').¹⁴² Comparing the two passages, the Dieulacres chronicler distanced himself from speculation, whilst Adam decided not to. As the first Dieulacres chronicler had not paused to cast doubt on Henry's treason or rebellion, it seems that he may have intended to separate himself from the conclusion that Richard's fall was pre-ordained. This reading suggests that the first Dieulacres chronicler was party to a different polity to many of his contemporary commentators. Reporting on martiality, or at least rebellions, functioned in each chronicle as an expression of legitimacy, but the legitimate and the illegitimate could be parts of conflicting narratives.

Bold Leaders: Imagining Kings and Lords as Commanders

The chroniclers' presented substantially different notions of the role of kings and magnates as commanders during campaigns and battles. This section discusses the representation of royal and magnate commanders in Richard's expedition into Scotland in 1385; the earl of Arundel's naval expedition in 1387; the battles of Otterburn (1388), and Shrewsbury (1403), and Agincourt (1415). The expeditions in 1385 and 1415 were led by monarchs and were significant attempts by them to prove their credentials as warriors.¹⁴³ They also include major battles in which magnates fought either without royal support or even against the king, as at Shrewsbury. These accounts were distinguished less by

¹⁴¹ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles of the Revolution*, 155; Clarke and Galbraith, 'The Deposition of Richard II', 173.

¹⁴² Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 52.

¹⁴³ W. M. Ormrod, 'Coming to Kingship: Boy Kings and the Passage to Power in Fourteenth-Century England', in *Rites of Passage: Cultures of Transition in the Fourteenth Century*, eds. Nicola F. McDonald and W. M. Ormrod, Online edition 2012 (York: York Medieval Press; Boydell & Brewer, 2012), 43.

their style, than by their application of the notions of the balance of legitimate warfare between the king and his lords.

Warrior Kings

Kings were a major focal point for later medieval English war efforts and praise of martially orientated kingship often appeared in chronicles.¹⁴⁴ As noted by Maurice Keen, English kingship was built around an 'aggressive brand of chivalry' which praised those kings who sought out war and damned those who failed to grasp at military opportunities.¹⁴⁵ This aggressive kingship appeared prominently in chronicles like Walsingham's and in the textual environment. Chronicles and literature in turn contributed to the intellectual emphasis on the importance of royal aggression. There were exceptions. Bishop Brinton delivered some sermons which encouraged peace.¹⁴⁶ However, his sermon, delivered in 1374, compared the realm's tragic situation to the high points of Edward III's reign, which had been marked by successful warfare.¹⁴⁷ Preachers criticised the waning of a spirit of chivalry dissociated from the courage and virtue that had been its characteristics in the past.¹⁴⁸ If average knights needed to prove themselves in war, the king needed to do so doubly.

Richard was frequently criticised for his failures as a warrior. After his death the chronicler of the *Vita Ricardi Secundi* condemned him. He claimed that Richard had used the great wealth he had accrued for his own pleasures rather than to defeat his enemies.¹⁴⁹ Walsingham made it clear that in 1383 Richard failed to act on Henry Despenser's request for aid, observing that though Richard put on a great display of interest he never actually moved to help the bishop.¹⁵⁰ He described Richard's behaviour with reference to Horace, complaining of the mountains labouring only to produce a 'ridiculus mus' ('ridiculous mouse').¹⁵¹ Walsingham picked out Richard's empty promises and failure to capitalise on the opportunities offered by the bishop's crusade.

¹⁴⁴ Anne Curry et al., 'New Regime, New Army? Henry IV's Scottish Expedition of 1400', *The English Historical Review* CXXV, no. 517 (1 December 2010), 1398.

¹⁴⁵ Keen, 'Chivalry and English Kingship in the Later Middle Ages', 264–265.

¹⁴⁶ Brinton, *Sermons of Thomas Brinton*, I: 16–17; Brinton, *Sermons of Thomas Brinton*, II: 322–26.

¹⁴⁷ Brinton, *Sermons of Thomas Brinton*, I: 61–62.

¹⁴⁸ Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, 332, 334.

¹⁴⁹ *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, 167.

¹⁵⁰ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 702; *Westminster Chronicle*, 46.

¹⁵¹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 702.

Walsingham's critique brought to the fore the absurdity and the danger inherent in the person of a king who failed to follow through and fight to help his subordinates. Yet Walsingham's position is further complicated in the dialogue he reported between Richard II and a household knight which considered the possibility of bloodshed were Richard to attack the Lords Appellant. Walsingham condemned such an outcome; when it was realised at Radcot Bridge, he depicted the king's use of martial force as a failure of domestic policy and an assault on the peace of the realm.¹⁵² The issue is perhaps somewhat explained by Walsingham's praise for Richard II's peace-making efforts in 1377 between the duke of Lancaster and the bishop of Winchester, when he commented that it was 'felix auspiciū in tante etatis puero' ('it was a happy beginning in a boy of so young an age'), that he should care about peace for his subjects.¹⁵³ Similarly in 1384 Walsingham remarked that peace was to the benefit of both England and France, and desired by both nations.¹⁵⁴ He then followed this, when recording the negotiations led by the duke of Lancaster, by remarking that 'quorum tractatus semper dampnosi Anglicis et promissiones infructuose fuerunt' ('such negotiations had always been to the detriment of the English and had produced promises which had come to nothing').¹⁵⁵ The most obvious distinction seems to be one of domestic versus foreign policy. The crux of the matter was whether Walsingham believed that martial action on the king's part would benefit or harm the king. It also suggests that Walsingham was prepared to take up an overtly condemnatory stance against the ruling regime.

Knighton appears also to have criticised the king by pointing to his military failures. Amongst the most significant symbolic features of a king's career was the first time he led an army, Richard's first campaign was his expedition to Scotland in 1385.¹⁵⁶ Knighton described Richard's army as 'flos milicie Anglie, comitum, baronum, militum, armigerorum, ualletorum, neque sue etati, neque sue paupertati respectum habentes pro expensis, set hoc solum desiderantes ut tante diei euentui in bello interessent incassum' ('the flower of English knighthood: earls, barons, knights, esquires, and their attendants, their expense unstinted by their age or means, and all moved by a single desire to

¹⁵² Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 832.

¹⁵³ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 130.

¹⁵⁴ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 716–718.

¹⁵⁵ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 728.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Ormrod, 'Coming to Kingship; Anne Curry, et al., 'New Regime, New Army?' 1382.

join battle, but in vain').¹⁵⁷ Knighton set his narrative against Richard's inevitable failure. The grandeur of the expedition reinforced a sense in the narrative of the king's arrogance and the scale of the fiasco. The king's failure to meet the Scots in battle was compounded by the Scottish response. Knighton held that though Richard burnt Edinburgh, the Scots outfoxed him: 'rex sic ageret in marchia orientali, intrauerunt Scoti in marchia occidental, et incenderunt partem uille de Penneryche, et ad uillam de Carlelyl insultum fecerunt' ('the king was thus occupied in the eastern March, the Scots invaded the western March, and burned part of the town of Penrith, and attacked Carlisle').¹⁵⁸ The counterbalanced narrative of the king's invasion and the Scottish raids suggested that Richard's campaign had not secured England but endangered it. Knighton's report undercut the glory of Richard's army. It was not overtly negative, but Knighton did not shy away from revealing the overall failure of the campaign.

Walsingham began his account of the expedition with a portent. Prior to the invasion of Scotland there had been a storm:

Quarto die sequente dictam tempestatem affuit terre motus circa secundam uigiliam noctis presignans forsitan inanem commocionem utriusque regis, Anglie uidelicet et Francie, qui iam contraxerant inauditos exercitus, unus uersus Scociam, ut hostes arceret a regno, alter uersus Angliam, ut acquireret sibi regnum

(Four days after this storm and earthquake occurred around nine o'clock in the evening, portending perhaps the pointless trouble between the two kings of England and France, who had now assembled enormous armies: the English army had marched against Scotland to keep the enemy away from the kingdom, the French army had marched against England to gain possession of the English kingdom for the French).¹⁵⁹

Walsingham, despite his passion for martial activity and all its trappings, dismissed the sound and fury of Richard's campaign. Although Richard's purpose had been to defend his own kingdom, Walsingham suggested that his failure to account for the French left England in a worse position. Furthermore, the Scots and the French had already prepared for the English army's passage by stripping the land of resources. Walsingham noted that whilst the English

¹⁵⁷ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 334–336.

¹⁵⁸ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 336.

¹⁵⁹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle* I: 760.

were in Scotland the Scots invaded England 'reuersi sunt in terram suam, et sic ingress suo furtiuo, plus commode perceperunt in Anglia, quam rex cum imperiali exercitu retulit de terra sua' ('when they returned to their homeland the Scots had gained more benefit in England from their furtive invasion than the king had gained in Scotland with his mighty army').¹⁶⁰ Although Walsingham characterised the Scots pejoratively, he also demonstrated Richard's incompetence. Walsingham implicitly demanded not just military leadership but effective military leadership from the king, and his report of the war on this occasion appears to serve as a criticism of the young king and a record of his failure.

Richard's failure was partially due to the sheer size of his army, which put a critical strain on the supplies. The problem appears in many of the chronicles.¹⁶¹ However, not all chroniclers were as critical as Walsingham. The Westminster Monk turned the failed mission into something of a success. The Monk included an anecdote, also present in Walsingham's version of events, of how Richard had argued with his uncle (John of Gaunt) over strategy whilst in Scotland.¹⁶² The Westminster Monk often cast Gaunt as a man who acted from self-interest, although he occasionally praised him. In this instance the account is ambiguous, but the chronicler did not contradict Richard's assessment of the situation.¹⁶³ The king accused his uncle of not caring for the troops.

Licet tu et alii domini hic existentes pro se ipsis copiam victualium possent habere ceteri tamen mediocres et inferiores nostril exercitus nequaquam tantam ciborum opulenciam inibi reperirent quin fame perirent.

(Though you and the other lords here might have plenty of food for yourselves, the rest, the humbler and lowlier members of our army would certainly not find over there such wealth of victuals as would prevent their dying of hunger).¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle* I: 760.

¹⁶¹ *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, 89; Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 762; *Westminster Chronicle*, 126–130; Knighton, *Chronicon*, 336–37; M. V. Clarke and N. Denholm-Young, 'The Kirkstall Chronicle, 1355–1400', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 15, no. 1 (1931), 123.

¹⁶² Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 762; Anthony Goodman, 'John of Gaunt: Paradigm of the Late Fourteenth-Century Crisis', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 37 (December 1987), 261, 261.

¹⁶³ Goodman, 'John of Gaunt', 133.

¹⁶⁴ *Westminster Chronicle*, 130.

The Westminster Monk's inclusion of direct speech is intriguing. It may indicate that he had spoken to witnesses or perhaps that he wanted to evoke a sense of the argument. In either case, Richard's concern suggested a certain wisdom and virtue. Also, unlike the other accounts there is no mention by the Westminster Monk of the Scottish raid into England. Although Richard had not succeeded in his goals, he had not allowed his people to die. In the Westminster account then, there was a conflict over how to judge Richard: as admirable for his concern, or ineffective for his defeat.

Walsingham and the Westminster Monk both used direct speech, and their accounts contained many of the same points, potentially indicating a shared source. However, there were also significant differences: Walsingham gave John of Gaunt's speech, which presented Gaunt's desires as an earnest wish to take an opportunity to crush the Scots.¹⁶⁵ Delivering Gaunt's speech may indicate that Walsingham was choosing to record a version of history which provided a counter-argument against Richard's retreat. It also suggests that either the Monk and Walsingham's sources had significant differences or that they were choosing to use them to create clearly distinct narratives. On this note, Walsingham's description of Richard's concern for his purse, as well as his men, may suggest the latter conclusion.¹⁶⁶ In contrast, even as he recounted Richard's retreat, the Westminster Monk's account suggests an attempt to preserve the image of a warrior king: 'Franci quam Scoti a facie ejus fugerunt' ('French and Scots alike, consistently fled from his path').¹⁶⁷

Prowess as a quality was reported by many chroniclers. It spanned multiple political positions, Richard's enemies and supporters used the concepts to advance their narratives. For instance, the Kirkstall chronicler described how Richard devastated Edinburgh with fire and 'valenter progrediens versus Scociam' ('went forth powerfully against the Scots').¹⁶⁸ The Kirkstall chronicler reported the successes of the invasion more notably than its failures in a choice of focus which cast the narrative in a positive light.

Richard was not the last monarch to attempt to establish his reign through a military expedition to Scotland. In 1400, after the Epiphany Rising – when a collection of nobles attempted to overthrow the new Lancastrian regime

¹⁶⁵ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 762.

¹⁶⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 762.

¹⁶⁷ *Westminster Chronicle*, 130; Samuel 17:24.

¹⁶⁸ Clarke and Denholm-Young, 'The Kirkstall Chronicle', 124.

and reseat Richard II on the throne – Henry led an army into Scotland. The expedition had been planned from Henry's first parliament and represented a major exercise of the new king's power.¹⁶⁹ Henry already had a reputation as a capable warrior, but leading a campaign as a king was an essential rite of passage.¹⁷⁰ It offered an opportunity to assess the loyalty of the realm, an important question for a king who had taken power by force and who had already suffered a rebellion.¹⁷¹

The chroniclers were, overall, far more positively inclined towards Henry than they had been towards Richard, even though Henry's campaign was arguably even less successful.¹⁷² The chronicler of the *Vita Ricardi Secundi* simply observed that 'post festum Natiuitatis Sancti Iohannis Baptiste proximum sequens, rex cum suo exercitu iter suum arripuit uersus Scociam' ('after the feast of the birth of St John the Baptist the king went with his army taking them against the Scots').¹⁷³ He then turned to the beginning of Owain Glyndŵr's rebellion and Henry IV's moves against the Welsh instead. Walsingham's account was similarly brief: 'rex, collecto exercitu, profectus est in Scociam; sed, Scocis se subtrahentibus nec facientibus belli copiam, rex, uastata patria, redit in Angliam' ('king Henry himself gathered an army and invaded Scotland. However, the Scots withdrew and gave no opportunity for a battle, so the king devastated their land before he returned to England')¹⁷⁴ These brief accounts did not report the king's failures. Walsingham was unusually succinct. His brief note that Henry had laid waste to Scotland implied some success. The report was focused on Scottish cowardice, rather than the king. The reports functioned as a record of events, but it was a narrative which the chroniclers were apparently tightly controlling.

The *Whalley Chronicle* (written c.1430) broadly followed the same pattern.¹⁷⁵ Its accounts of warfare are rarely detailed, but description of Henry

¹⁶⁹ 'Henry IV: October 1399, Part 1', in *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England*, eds. Chris Given-Wilson, Paul Brand, Seymour Phillips, Mark Ormrod, Geoffrey Martin, Anne Curry, and Rosemary Horrox (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), *British History Online*, accessed January 22, 2018, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/october-1399-pt-1>.

¹⁷⁰ Ormrod, 'Coming to Kingship', 43.

¹⁷¹ Curry et al., 'New Regime, New Army?', 1382.

¹⁷² Curry et al., 'New Regime, New Army?', 1413.

¹⁷³ *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, 167.

¹⁷⁴ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 302.

¹⁷⁵ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles of the Revolution*, 10; Charles Kingsford, ed., 'A Northern Chronicle: Appendix II', in *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1913), 279.

IV's invasion of Scotland, though blunt and to the point, was not critical of Henry:

In estate vero sequente dominus rex Henricus, congregates proceribus regni et exercitu copioso, perrexit in Scociam vsque Edynburgh, vbi xxij. Diebus ibi permansit, et quod nullam resistenciam invenit fecit quicquid voluit; set auditis rumoribus de Wallencibus rebellacionibus redire compulsus est

(In the summer afterwards [after the Epiphany Rising] the lord king Henry, he gathered the lords of the realm and a great army, he proceeded into Scotland all the way to Edinburgh, where he remained for twelve days, and he found no resistance whatever; but they heard rumours of Welsh rebels and he returned, turning the war thither).¹⁷⁶

The *Whalley Chronicle's* style is generally laconic but not inscrutable. The portrait the account painted was subtly positive: the association of Henry IV's retreat with the Welsh rebellion suggested that Henry's efforts were not entirely in vain, and that he had not left the war in Wales to his nobles after calling them to his campaign demonstrated a personal concern for the good of the realm. Whilst the account should not necessarily be read as a deliberate cultivation of a good reputation for Henry, it certainly suggests that the Whalley chronicler wanted to record a positive interpretation of the Scottish campaign and its aftermath.

Adam of Usk crafted an image of Henry's campaign into Scotland that similarly redirected criticism away from the king, his recent employer. The Scots, he claimed fled before Henry IV, burning their own lands. They hid 'ac se diclitentes ad frutices ac deuiarum cauernarum et nemorum' ('lying low in the depths of woods and thickets and remote caverns') only emerging to assault the English troops.¹⁷⁷ Adam immediately followed this episode with a parallel description of how Glyndŵr hid from the English in the same year. He set the Scottish and the Welsh in the imagined space of wild and savage places. Their tactics were duplicitous, and although successful they were cast not as equals but as rebels. Adam's use of inclusive nouns associated him, and the audience, with the king's army. The report suggests that Adam was aware of the same textual culture on warfare as his contemporary commentators and that he was

¹⁷⁶ Kingsford, 'A Northern Chronicle', 280.

¹⁷⁷ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 98.

consciously applying existing tropes to delegitimise Scottish and possibly Welsh resistance.

The depiction of the Welsh as savages was a recurring feature of several chronicles. Even the Dieulacres chronicler, who suggested that the Welsh victories over the English were partially the result of illegitimacy of the English claim for Wales, described how the Welsh 'semper fugiendo latuerunt in montibus, boscis et cavernis terre' ('always fled and lurked in mountains, forests and caverns of the earth').¹⁷⁸ Walsingham's description of the Welsh was much more damning. He described an unprecedented atrocity (in his opinion): 'femine Wallencium post conflictum accesserunt ad corpora peremptorum et, abscindentes membra genitalia, in ore cuiuslibet posuerunt membrum pudendum, "inter dentes" testiculis dependentibus supra mentum' ('after the battle Welsh women went to the bodies of the slain, cut off their genitalia, placed the penis of each man in his mouth with the testicles hanging between the teeth and above the chin').¹⁷⁹ The desecration was completed by removing the men's noses and pressing them to their anuses.¹⁸⁰ Walsingham's account depicted the Welsh as a depraved and bestial people, exaggerating the traits criticised in most other chronicles. Indeed, by comparison his remarks highlight how mild Adam's comments were, relatively speaking, perhaps an indication of the identities which informed these reports of martiality. Walsingham's almost aggressively English, somewhat imperialistic approach, stands in contrast to Adam of Usk's conflicted Welsh–English allegiances. The account also adds further depth to Walsingham's response to warfare. His condemnation of atrocities in war suggests that although he admired knightly violence this required an imagined code of conduct and that a certain respect for one's enemies be upheld.

Henry IV's proposed expedition to France in 1412 brought Walsingham's martial fervour to the fore in a passionate defence of the king's inaction.¹⁸¹ Walsingham claimed that Henry rejoiced when the lords of France offered Henry support and the duchy of Aquitaine returned to him. Henry, he said, proposed an expedition, and, Walsingham added 'quam, puto, recuperasse

¹⁷⁸ Clarke and Galbraith, 'The Deposition of Richard II', 175, 176.

¹⁷⁹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 322.

¹⁸⁰ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 322.

¹⁸¹ Cf. Christopher Allmand, *The Hundred Years War: England and France at War c. 1300–c. 1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 27.

potuisset, si uirtus corporis uirtuti animi correspondisset' ('this, I think, he would have been able to achieve, if the strength of his body had equalled the strength of his mind').¹⁸² However, the king was too ill, unable to walk or ride far. Henry did organise an expedition, but he did not lead it personally. Walsingham's emphasis on Henry's desire to fight, even if he could not, formed a useful comparison to his dismissal of Richard II's invasion of Scotland in 1385. Where Richard was criticised for his failure, despite the attempt, Walsingham admired Henry IV for his unfulfilled ambition. His report fully bought into the belief in the need for a militarily aggressive king.

Not all first campaigns were failures. Walsingham's account of Henry V's Agincourt campaign was a masterclass in classical literature and the inclusion of epic poetry in the historical record. It demonstrated Henry's great leadership, as well as Walsingham's delight in classical material.¹⁸³ In the *Chronica Maiora* Henry V appeared as a model king.¹⁸⁴ In the context of the need for a king to be a warrior, Walsingham's account suggested that Henry was practically flawless.¹⁸⁵ His account of the battle includes a dozen quotations from various classical writers, including Virgil, Lucan, and Statius.¹⁸⁶ His description of the battle was also indicative of his interests and even the pleasure he took in classically influenced descriptions. It is suggestive of Walsingham's competing values as an author, on the one hand he concluded the battle with a careful record of the captured and slain, on the other, he evidently took care to create an entertaining narrative. From the list of casualties we may deduce Walsingham's interest in the preservation of accurate information, but the verve of his classical quotations suggests that the body of the account was meant to serve as a diversion for his readers.

Walsingham reported war as a proving ground and a glorious exhibition of the king's quality. He emphasised the quality of the French as well as the English at Agincourt. He described how the French ranks were filled 'viris instructam fortibus, armis ornatam fulgentibus' ('with strong men in line, equipped with shining arms').¹⁸⁷ Meanwhile the English archers were pre 'indignacione nimia calefacti' ('inflamed with a fierce anger') and 'tot simul

¹⁸² Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 608.

¹⁸³ Taylor, 'Henry V, Flower of Chivalry', 222.

¹⁸⁴ Taylor, 'Henry V, Flower of Chivalry', 224.

¹⁸⁵ Keen, 'Chivalry and English Kingship in the Later Middle Ages', 265.

¹⁸⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 674–684; See below, 150.

¹⁸⁷ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 674–684.

emisere iacula ut illa tempestate grandinea primitus equites dissiparent' ('shot so many arrows simultaneously that in the hailstorm that occurred they scattered the cavalry in this first encounter').¹⁸⁸ Walsingham praised the English for defeating a worthy foe. His style was poetic and part of a sweeping narrative, incorporating classical material. At every point Henry V loomed large. Walsingham explained that Henry led out his troops, understood the French tactics (described in a quotation from Lucan), and led a successful counterassault.¹⁸⁹ Henry was central to the narrative and the only individual apart from God in the account until the summary of the result of the battle. The conclusion returned to the itemised breakdown of deaths, performing both the prosaic recording functions of war reporting alongside the more dramatic parts of the narrative.

Walsingham did not limit Henry to a role as a splendid leader. He also praised his personal martial prowess, 'Rex ipse, non tantum regis, quantum militis, exponendo uices, primus in hostes aduolat' ('the king himself, not so much like a king as a knight, entering into this change of fortune, was the first to rush against the enemy').¹⁹⁰ The passage, in the context of Walsingham's praise for Henry IV (who could not lead his army), and Henry V's own command of the strategy of the battle, suggests that for Walsingham there was more than one positive model for warlike kingship. Henry V simply happened to represent multiple models.

For the author of the *GHQ*, it was scripture and Giles of Rome that provided kingly models. He repeatedly cited Giles of Rome's *De Regimine Principum* to illustrate Henry's wisdom.¹⁹¹ Agincourt cemented Henry's worth as

¹⁸⁸ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 678.

¹⁸⁹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 678.

¹⁹⁰ It is worth noting that Walsingham's representation of a king as also a knight appears repeatedly in the surrounding textual environment, in both Latin and vernacular sources. The anonymous author of the political poem the *Crowned King* explained that it was necessary for a king to also be a knight:

Sir they it come to the of kynde a kyng to be called,
Yit most thou know of corage what knighthood befalleth.

Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 678; Helen Barr, ed., *The Piers Plowman Tradition: A Critical Edition of, Pierce the Ploughman's Crede, Richard the Redeless, Mum and the Sothsegger, and The Crowned King* (London: Dent, 1993), 209.

¹⁹¹ *GHQ*, 28, 40, 42; Giles' book on the subject was largely founded on Vegetius' *De Re Militari*. John Trevisa and Giles of Rome, *The Governance of Kings and Princes: John Trevisa's Middle English Translation of the De Regimine Principum of Aegidius Romanus*, eds. Charles F. Briggs and Paul Gardner Remley, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities 1778 (London: Garland Publishers, 1997), 394–437.

a leader in the account.¹⁹² The writer of the *GHQ*, still immersed in scriptural and hagiographic traditions, described Henry's faith in God prior to the battle and opined, 'non potuit, iudicio meo, ex vera iusticia dei, filio tam grandis confidentie infaustum quid accidere, sicuti nex Iude Machabeo accidit usque in diffidenciam cecidit, et inde merito in ruinam' ('as I myself believe, it was not possible, because of the true righteousness of God, for misfortune to befall a son of His with so sublime a faith, any more than it befell Judas Maccabeus until he lapsed into lack of faith and so, deservedly, met with disaster').¹⁹³ The *GHQ*'s scriptural influences are evident, though the comparison to Judas Maccabeus also put Henry on par with the Nine Worthies.¹⁹⁴ It set the battle within the backdrop of historical scriptural conflicts. The account was more than a report, it also implied that Henry's faith preserved him from misfortune. This suggests that the account acted in some sense as a reassurance for the audience that whilst they supported Henry V they would be assured victory. The author of the *GHQ* thought of a king's role in warfare differently from Walsingham, exaggerating the scriptural comparisons rather than the classical, choosing to demonstrate the pious side of Henry's character.

In the *GHQ* it is Henry V's goals and qualities that are held up for inspection. The battle stood as proof for the justice of his aims. His religious ambitions were repeated throughout the battle: 'ampliacionem ecclesie et pacem regnorum' ('the extension of the church, and the peace of kingdoms').¹⁹⁵ At the height of the battle God ensured 'coronam Anglie sub gracioso Rege nostro, milite suo, ac paucitate, illa manere sicut ab olim invincibilem' ('our gracious king, His own soldier, and with that little band, the crown of England should remain invincible as of old').¹⁹⁶ The mention of the extension of the Church suggests an attempt on the chroniclers' part to figure the war with France as a holy war, as well as a war to reclaim Henry's rights. The report does not seem to function in the same way as a prosaic account of the dead or captured, instead it served to paint a very clear picture of Henry V's character and why his goals were admirable.

¹⁹² Allmand, *The Hundred Years War: England and France at War c.1300–c.1450*, 152.

¹⁹³ *GHQ*, 78.

¹⁹⁴ See above, 210.

¹⁹⁵ *GHQ*, 86.

¹⁹⁶ *GHQ*, 88.

Thomas Elmham, who wrote a metrical life of Henry V based on the *GHQ*, produced a more prowess-driven report. Elmham developed Henry's character as a figure of chivalry.¹⁹⁷ He described in lurid detail how,

Hic frater Regis Humfredus nobilis est Dux
 Inguine percussus; defluit ense cruor.
 Huic ad humum presso Rex succurrendo superstans,
 Fratris defensor hoc in agone fuit
 [...] Opprimitur vivis plebs mortua; viva subivit
 Occisis

(The brother of the king, the noble Duke Humphrey was wounded in the groin. Gore flowed down from the sword. Having fallen to the ground, the king stood over him to assist him. He was in this battle the defender of his brother [...] The living were pushed towards death. The living went under the dead.).¹⁹⁸

Much of the style was Elmham's, though sections such as the final sentence closely followed the *GHQ*'s description of how 'vivi super mortuos caderent et super vivos etiam alii cadentes interficiebantur' ('the living fell on top of the dead, and others falling on top of the living were killed as well').¹⁹⁹ Elmham had already written some historical pieces, including a history of the kings of England from Brutus to 1399.²⁰⁰ He described Henry as being a knight as much as a king. Henry's objective – to protect his brother – focuses the battle on a single struggle for life or death. Elmham's chronicle, with its metrical form, seems to serve a quite separate function to the prose chronicles. As prose was commonly associated with truthful history and verse with more literary histories, the report's purpose seems to have been partially one of entertainment and the mythologising of Henry's valour. There is less reason to suggest that Elmham was engaging with intellectual musings on just war, good kingship, or military strategy, unlike chroniclers such as Walsingham or Henry Knighton.

¹⁹⁷ Anne Curry, *The Battle of Agincourt: Sources and Interpretations* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2000), 40.

¹⁹⁸ Thomas Elmham, 'Elmhami Liber Metricus de Henricio Quinto', in *Memorials of Henry the Fifth, King of England*, ed. Charles Augustus Cole, 2012 Online edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1858), 121–122; Anne Curry, *The Battle of Agincourt: Sources and Interpretations* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2000), 47.

¹⁹⁹ *GHQ*, 90.

²⁰⁰ S. E. Kelly, 'Elmham, Thomas (b. 1364, d. in or after 1427) Historian and Prior of Lenton', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-8734>; Curry, *The Battle of Agincourt*, 40.

The Lords at War

The chroniclers' division between the expeditions waged by lords and the campaigns of kings was derived from lordship, legitimacy, and scale. The right of a lord to wage war often depended on his performance of his duty to defend the realm for the king and his tenants, or commissions from the king and his counsel (as in the case of the earl of Arundel in 1387). Intermingled with these questions of legitimacy were concerns that the magnates were acting in their own self-interest, a concern rarely raised about armies led by the king who was the primary representative of the realm's interests.

The Earl of Arundel's Campaign (1387)

In 1387 Richard, the earl of Arundel, set out from Sandwich at the head of fleet of sixty ships which shortly encountered French and Spanish ships.²⁰¹ The chronicles give similar renditions of events, possibly based on a newsletter describing the expedition. There do remain some important variations in the textual setting and style of the accounts.²⁰² The earl attacked and captured the French and Spanish vessels; he then captured further ships carrying wine. He proceeded to pursue the remaining enemy ships, taking more and burning others. He brought supplies to the port of Brest (not recorded by the Westminster Monk) but could not break the siege. He continued to Sluys, capturing yet more ships and raiding the surrounding countryside. Eventually he returned home to general approbation.²⁰³ It has been suggested that Arundel's greatest achievement was the defeat of the French fleet (numbering around 250 vessels), which removed the danger of an invasion of England for years to come.²⁰⁴

The report of Arundel's endeavours included by the Westminster Monk reflected the importance of the lords as driving forces in the English war effort during Richard II's reign. The Monk described how 'item isti de consilio jam de

²⁰¹ The following events were recorded by Thomas Walsingham, Henry Knighton and the Westminster Monk. Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 812.; *Westminster Chronicle*, 180–182; Nigel Saul, *Richard II*, Yale English Monarchs (London: Yale University Press, 1997), 168; Knighton, *Chronicon*, 390.

²⁰² Martin, 'Introduction: Knighton', xxxvii.

²⁰³ Anthony Goodman, *The Loyal Conspiracy: The Lords Appellant under Richard II*. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), 128–129.

²⁰⁴ Saul, *Richard II*, 168.

novo create suspect onere tocius regiminis affectantes eorum gubernacione bona multimodaque prospera regi et regno succedere cum honore ordinarunt unum navigium, cui prefecerunt in ducum dominum Ricardum comitem Arundell' ('the persons who had just been appointed to the council and had taken upon themselves the whole burden of government were anxious that their administration should be attended by striking all-round success and prestige for king and kingdom, and gave orders for a fleet to the command of which they appointed Richard earl of Arundel').²⁰⁵ The Monk's report framed the purpose of the expedition as an indication of good government. Richard II was not part of the picture, but his counsellors desired to do the best job for the realm rather than just themselves. Good counsellors benefited the realm, though since in this case Arundel and the other Appellants had forced their counsel on Richard no praise accrued to the king.²⁰⁶ Although such suggestions must remain speculative, the importance of good advisers was embedded in the textual environment, in sermons such as Brinton's, *speculum principis*, and in scripture.²⁰⁷ The account balanced the king's role in war oddly. On the one hand, warfare was evidently important for the good of the realm, and the counsellors who served Richard were doing a good job. On the other hand, Richard II was tacitly represented as an under-mighty monarch for his absence from the prosecution of war.

In comparison Walsingham constructed the earl of Arundel's expedition as a victory for the loyal lords of England, but not as a victory for the king or his counsel. Throughout the account Walsingham used Arundel as a role model, particularly since Arundel was seeking to erase an earlier shameful defeat.²⁰⁸ Immediately preceding the account of Arundel's expedition Walsingham described the escalating tensions between the lords and the king.²⁰⁹ They were such, Walsingham reported, that Arundel set to sea at parliament's decree, rather than at the command of the king's council.²¹⁰ He was also a man of largesse, who distributed the wine he captured so that he retained none, and as Walsingham observed 'preposuit communem utilitatem priuato commodo' ('he

²⁰⁵ *Westminster Chronicle*, 180.

²⁰⁶ Mahmoud Manzalaoui, ed., *Secretum Secretorum: Nine English Versions. Vol. I, Early English Text Society 276* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 77.

²⁰⁷ Brinton, *Sermons of Thomas Brinton*, I: 34, 46, 122; Brinton, *Sermons of Thomas Brinton*, II: 249, 356.

²⁰⁸ See below, 254.

²⁰⁹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 846.

²¹⁰ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 806.

had put the general welfare above his private profit,').²¹¹ Walsingham set the earl of Arundel apart from Richard's advisers for his chivalric traits and his focus on deeds rather than personal gain.²¹² Walsingham's assessment of his qualities tallied with the fourteenth-century preaching tradition that had so heavily criticised the pursuit of world gain by knights during wartime.²¹³ Setting Arundel against the backdrop of the self-interested counsellors, Walsingham's report seems to fulfil a moral function, recognising one of the most common complaints against the English war effort: greed. He aligned it with the sinful favourites of the king, criticising the counsellors the Westminster Monk had praised.

Walsingham brought the tensions arising from the prosecution of war by the lords rather than the king into the open by comparing Arundel's behaviour with that of his fellows. Arundel, 'spared no expense, and chose men of valour whom he knew, in order that he could achieve something great for his country' ('non parcens expensis, ualenciores <Quos> nouit, elegit ut per hos posset magnum aliquid patrie reportatre').²¹⁴ Conversely, Walsingham reported, other generals hired soldiers cheaply to maximise their profits.²¹⁵ This juxtaposition highlights a significant anxiety on Walsingham's part that the self-interest of the lords and the king's absence from the war were undermining the good of the realm.²¹⁶

It was following this episode that Walsingham complained that Richard's advisers were knights of Venus, framing them as flatterers and deceivers rather than warriors.²¹⁷ He also added a practical example of the advisers' plans coming to fruition.²¹⁸ Henry Percy, also known as Hotspur, was sent to sea at the order of the king's council. He was to defend against the French, 'cui nec sufficientem manum delegauerunt, nec fauorem' ('but they did not assign him an adequate force nor grant him proper support').²¹⁹ This political backstabbing was, Walsingham claimed, a result of their envy of Henry Percy's integrity and

²¹¹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 812.

²¹² For the importance of largesse, see, Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, 198.

²¹³ Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, 313.

²¹⁴ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 808.

²¹⁵ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 808.

²¹⁶ Magnates could and did run their own private armies. Often, as in this case, on the Crown's behalf but sometimes, as led by the Lords Appellant or in the Glyndŵr rebellion, against the Crown.

²¹⁷ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 814; cf. Ormrod, 'Knights of Venus'.

²¹⁸ Ormrod, 'Knights of Venus'.

²¹⁹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 816.

prestige.²²⁰ Walsingham clearly laid out his own issues with the king's lords: namely, that they were self-seeking and pacifistic. Writing after the Lords Appellants had removed Richard's advisers it could have been a politically savvy move. However, it also indicated a disassociation on Walsingham's part between his own position and government. He spoke as an outsider to the existing regime, criticising its members.

Knighton focused most heavily not on the morality or wisdom of the counsellors but on the practical details of Arundel's actions. He included details of how Arundel had destroyed siege forts around Brest, but these insertions were focused on the earl, rather than the morality of the council.

Veniens igitur ibid ictus comes de Arundelle primo cepit bastille super aquam, fregit et funditus subuertit, et unum bastille super terram cepit et funditus dilapidauit, uillamque de uictualibus que in eis errant pro biennio sequenti luculenter instaurauit, et precipue de sale

(When the earl of Arundel came in [to Brest], therefore, he first took the fort on the waterfront, broke it and cast it down, and then took one of the inland forts, and razed it, and with the stores which were in it he provided the town with two good years' supplies, and especially with salt).²²¹

Knighton's report of Arundel's adventures was centred within the wider war effort, but it did not suggest the praise or condemnation in Walsingham's account or the Westminster Monk's. Before he described the episode Knighton explained Sir William Beauchamp had taken a number of ships and supplies from the French.²²² After Arundel's mission Knighton moved on to Sir Hugh Despenser's expedition, which ended in the capture of Despenser and 160 ships.²²³ Knighton's report of the earl of Arundel's deeds was a more prosaic rendering of an episode in the war than that of some of his contemporaries and he probably borrowed heavily from newsletters, providing a fairly accurate rather than a dramatic account.²²⁴

²²⁰ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 816

²²¹ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 390.

²²² Knighton, *Chronicon*, 388.

²²³ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 390.

²²⁴ Martin, 'Introduction: Knighton', xxxvii.

Otterburn (1388)

The reports of campaigns or battles involving lords were also often framed in chivalrous, heroic terms. The narratives of the battle of Otterburn constructed Henry Percy as a chivalrous individual, although some criticised him for his rash actions. In 1388 the Scottish raided northern England.²²⁵ An English army under the command of Hotspur attacked the Scots at Otterburn without waiting for reinforcements. Although the Scottish leader, James Douglas (second earl of Douglas), was killed, the battle was lost and Hotspur was captured.

The two chronicles written in the closest locations to the battle gave short accounts. Thomas de Burton, in his *Meaux Chronicle*, concisely recorded that ‘irrupentibus Scottis cum valido exercitu in Angliam, dominus Henricus Percy, primogenitus comitis Northumbriae, cum eisdem confligens apud Oterburne captus est, nonnullis aliis Anglis captis cum eo et interfectis’ (the Scots were blocked with a strong army in England, Lord Henry Percy, first born of the earl of Northumberland, struggled with the same [earl of Douglas] at Otterburn and was captured, not a few others of the English were captured with and were slain).²²⁶ The *Kirkstall Chronicle* was written just before 1400, but the most detailed section of the chronicle, barring that around Richard’s deposition, was the section on 1387–1388. The chronicler added that Douglas was, ‘vir prudens et potens preliator’ (‘a prudent and powerful warrior’).²²⁷ The fight between Douglas and Henry Percy led to the former’s death and the latter’s capture and ransom by the earl of Dunbar.²²⁸ The two accounts’ most notable feature is the inclusion of the personal encounter between Hotspur and Douglas. The chroniclers reveal an interest in the role of the noble as an individual knight in a battle and as commander and defender of the English even at a risk to himself.

The virtue of courage looms large in most accounts of the battle. Walsingham provided a more detailed narrative than those present in the Kirkstall and Meaux chronicles, and it was copied by the Evesham chronicler for

²²⁵ Anne Curry, *The Hundred Years War*, British History in Perspective (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), 53.

²²⁶ Thomas de Burton, *Chronica Monasterii de Melsa: A Fundatione Usque Ad Annum 1396 Auctore Thoma de Burton, Abbate. Accedit Continuatio Ad Annum 1406*, ed. Edward A. Bond, *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1868), 213.

²²⁷ Clarke and Denholm-Young, ‘The Kirkstall Chronicle’, 128.

²²⁸ Clarke and Denholm-Young, ‘The Kirkstall Chronicle’, 128.

the *Vita Ricardi Secundi*.²²⁹ Walsingham described how Douglas had greatly desired to fight Henry Percy and, ‘alacriter equitat contra eum’) ‘rode enthusiastically against him’).²³⁰ The description of the duel was spirited, ‘erat ibidem cernere pulchrum spectaculum, duos tam preclaros iuuenes manus conserere et pro gloria decertare’ (‘it was a fine spectacle to behold, two illustrious young men joining in battle and fighting for glory’).²³¹ The episode is depicted as one which the audience should want to behold, lying somewhere between entertainment and edification. Walsingham added that although Hotspur lost the battle the Scots retreated.²³² He transformed an episode which several other chronicles regarded as a significant defeat into a partial victory for the English.²³³ Walsingham commended William Douglas in particular and suggested a perceived hierarchy in quality amongst the Scottish as he described him as ‘Scotorum maximum’ (‘the greatest of the Scots’).²³⁴ That Henry Percy slew Douglas in personal combat of course in turn demonstrated that the commander of the English was greater still. The remainder of the Scots, although they slew many Englishmen, were driven back ‘humiliati’ (‘humiliated’).²³⁵ Walsingham did not criticise Hotspur, in the style of other chronicles but instead concentrated on the virtue of courage, letting the question of rashness which dogged its heels pass by.²³⁶ ‘Sic unius Henrici uidelicet probitate, licet captus esset, totum regnum fuit tam metu quam Scotis penitus uacuatum’, he claimed (‘so it was that, by the prowess of Henry alone, though he had been captured, the whole realm was freed entirely from fear and from the Scots’).²³⁷ Walsingham employed notions of knightly courage to recast the battle and worked according to a conception of warfare that imagined it as an integral part of noble culture. His account suggests that he took a delight in the idea of the battle and anticipated that his audience would too.

²²⁹ Knighton also includes a similarly prowess-orientated account. *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, 119; Knighton, *Chronicon*, 504–506.

²³⁰ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 856.

²³¹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 856.

²³² Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 856.

²³³ Knighton, in his summary of the battle, also noted Henry Percy’s valour and added that he had slain Douglas with his own hand. His account was short but appears well informed.

Knighton, *Chronicon*, 506, fn. 506.

²³⁴ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 856.

²³⁵ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 856.

²³⁶ Craig Taylor, *Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 132.

²³⁷ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 856.

The Westminster Monk castigated Hotspur for his rash behaviour. 'Istud infortunium contigit Anglicis nostris protunc apud Otrebourne primo propter impetuosum animum et excessivam audaciam domini Henrici de Percy' ('The calamity that befell our countrymen on this occasion at Otterburn was due in the first place to the heady spirit and excessive boldness of Sir Henry Percy').²³⁸ Henry Percy's rash behaviour in the attack was contrasted by the chronicler with how Sir Matthew Redmayne fought on the other flank.²³⁹ Redmayne, the Monk stated, was the reason that the Scots retreated.²⁴⁰ Hotspur's behaviour was, then, too extreme. He was represented as sacrificing sense in a quest for glory. This use of the concepts of courage and excessive boldness is reminiscent of the contemporary discussions on the subject that situated ideal courage between fear and rashness.²⁴¹ Whether the Westminster Monk was deliberately engaging with this intellectual discourse must remain an unknown. What is clear is that he reported the battle from an entirely different position to chroniclers like Walsingham, the Kirkstall chronicler, or Thomas Burton and did not value Hotspur's pursuit of glory as highly as them.

The disparity between the Westminster account and Walsingham's analysis of the battle brings their different conceptions of the proper role of knights and lords in battle into focus. Walsingham represented the act of courage as an end in itself, Hotspur's behaviour reaped the rewards due to a noble defending his country. For Walsingham, the Scottish retreat proved Hotspur right. The Westminster Monk evaluated the defeat as an act of God.²⁴² The accounts seem to function in related but opposing ways. Walsingham's has suggestions of entertainment and praise for martial virtue, indicating, perhaps, a perspective informed by romances. The Westminster Monk's on the other hand offers criticism of Hotspur for foolish valour.

Shrewsbury (1403)

The chroniclers' incorporation of chivalry into their understanding of the place of the magnates and the king in warfare was an overwhelmingly important theme

²³⁸ *Westminster Chronicle*, 348.

²³⁹ *Westminster Chronicle*, 348.

²⁴⁰ *Westminster Chronicle*, 348.

²⁴¹ Taylor, *Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood*, 136.

²⁴² *Westminster Chronicle*, 346.

in the descriptions of the battle of Shrewsbury in 1403.²⁴³ Their descriptions of the combatants, one side led by Hotspur, the other by Henry IV, were ostensibly chivalric, even during rebellion. The accounts reveal the inherent tension between the ideals of knightly prowess and courage and the problems of civil conflict. They also demonstrate the chroniclers' involvement in a textual environment which allowed for multiple perspectives on the same events. In 1402 Henry Percy once again fought a Scottish invasion led by Archibald, the fourth earl of Douglas, at Homildon Hill. This time he won a clearer victory.²⁴⁴ However, there were disputes between Henry IV and the Percys over the prisoners because Henry IV did not want them ransomed.²⁴⁵ The Whalley chronicler commented, years later, that the seeds of wickedness and discord were sown between the king and the earl of Northumberland after Homildon.²⁴⁶ In 1403 these tensions climaxed when the Percys rebelled (probably aiming to coordinate with Owain Glyndŵr) and met the king in battle at Shrewsbury.

There was a recurring fatalism to the accounts of Shrewsbury; the civil conflict stirred traditions of mournful prophecy and tragedy, often with a Boethian strain.²⁴⁷ Adam of Usk remarked that the Percy victory at Homildon, 'domus in nimiam superbiam elata [...] collabatur in occasum' ('made their house so puffed up with pride that it later fell headlong to its ruin').²⁴⁸ He referred to Proverbs 16:18 tying in his preference for foreshadowing and scriptural parallels. Adam's account of the battle was fairly short, he described how after 16,000 deaths Henry IV emerged victorious and commented that 'in quo bello dictus dominus Henricus milicie Christiane flos et Gloria, cum dicto patruo suo dolenter occubuit' ('sad to say, this Sir Henry [Hotspur], the flower and glory of Christian knighthood, died in the battle').²⁴⁹ Adam's report of the battle melded semi-factual reporting of numbers with the epithets of martial prowess. The note of the total number of dead, rather than the dead on each side, is unusual compared to other chronicles like Henry Knighton's accounts of battles in the

²⁴³ Even John Strecche's very short account of Shrewsbury mainly focused around the actions of the various noble commanders and the wound Prince Henry (later Henry V) suffered. British Library ADD. MS.35295, fo.263^v.

²⁴⁴ Kingsford, 'A Northern Chronicle', 280; Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 174; Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 328–332.

²⁴⁵ J. A. Tuck, 'The Emergence of a Northern Nobility, 1250–1400', *Northern History* 22, no. 1 (1986), 16.

²⁴⁶ Kingsford, 'A Northern Chronicle', 281.

²⁴⁷ V. Gillespie, 'From the Twelfth Century to c.1450,' *Cambridge History of Literary Theory*, Vol II, 210.

²⁴⁸ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 174.

²⁴⁹ Adam of Usk, 170.

Hundred Years War, where the dead from each side were noted separately. It may be that Adam was reflecting on the internal nature of the conflict or it could simply be that he did not have a breakdown of the figures. Adam's comment on Hotspur's death is a reminder of his popularity and suggests that although Adam had associated the Percys' defeat with pride, his admiration for Hotspur overcame the usual criticisms of rebels. So the account as a whole displayed several different types of report rolled into one: tragic, prophetic, factual, and moral with a hint of interest in Hotspur's chivalrous reputation.

Comparison to the *Continuatio Eulogii* reveals a similar fixation on the courageous display of prowess. The account, also included in several other chronicles, of Henry Percy's charge into the king's army demonstrated a confluence of opinion that military prowess was an admirable quality.²⁵⁰ When describing the prelude to the battle of Shrewsbury the chronicler explained, 'in spiritu fervoris assumptis secum triganta hominibus irrupit in exercitum Regis, et fecit deambulatorium in medio exercitus usque ad fortissimos Regis custodies, interficiens comitem Staffordiae et alios multos in foritudine exercitus Regis' ([Henry Percy] in a burning spirit took with him thirty men rushed into the army of the king, and made a passage through the middle of the army without stopping for the mightiest of the king's guards, he slew the count of Stafford and many mighty others in the king's army).²⁵¹ The chronicler emphasised Henry Percy's courage and ability.²⁵² The report featured a rhetoric of martial action. It demonstrated the quality of the rebellious lords, much as Adam had. It provided a sense of the action during the battle as well as the outcome.

Themes of tragic destiny and personal courage were common in the discussion of Shrewsbury. The second Dieulacres chronicler, a strong supporter of Henry IV, gave a report of Shrewsbury framed in portentous terms.²⁵³ Portents heralded Shrewsbury: 'stella comata apparuit in borialibus partibus Anglie. Que comata sintillas vertebat versus Walliam; et quidam estimant dictam cometam pronosticare bellum Salopie' ('a comet star appeared in the northern parts of England. This comet turned its sparks towards Wales; and

²⁵⁰ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 806; Clarke and Galbraith, 'The Deposition of Richard II', 180.

²⁵¹ *Continuatio Eulogii*, 397.

²⁵² Richard Kaeuper, 'Chivalry and the "Civilizing Process"', in *Violence in Medieval Society*, ed. Richard Kaeuper (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2000), 29; Taylor, *Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood*, 54.

²⁵³ Clarke and Galbraith, 'The Deposition of Richard II', 134.

certain people consider the said comet to have predicted the battle of Shrewsbury”).²⁵⁴ His mention of the comet also appears in the *Continuatio Eulogii*, where it was explicitly described as ‘malum significans euentum’ (‘signifying an evil occurrence’).²⁵⁵ The connection the chronicler drew between the comet and the battle of Shrewsbury suggests that he understood the battle within a wider cosmographical structure of events in which the battle was an inevitable tragedy. To an extent, then, the chronicle may have functioned as an explanation to its audience of why an event like Shrewsbury could have come to pass.

The Dieulacres chronicler’s account of the battle and the negotiations beforehand was probably founded in the literary traditions of epic and classical literature as well as medieval histories. He emphasised the opportunities offered by the king to avoid the battle: ‘Rex vero non obstante proterva eius responsione adhuc ut sepius humanum sanguinem salvare satagens ut cum dicto Henrico duellaret affectans ne plures causa eorum occumberent’ (‘The king truly, in spite of his [Henry Percy’s] impudent response thus far, so that human blood might be saved, said that he would duel with Henry so that no others would be slain’).²⁵⁶ During the battle itself the chronicler described the movements of the army, as the earl of Stafford and Prince Henry led charges, dashing themselves against one another.²⁵⁷ Their armour was scarcely strong enough to withstand the arrows.²⁵⁸ With the imagery of the breaking of battle lines, sweeping conflicts with worthy princes, great lords clashing the Dieulacres chronicler provided a lively account of the deeds of arms. The prowess of the combatants was marked out as a virtue by the chronicler’s focus on it, and its presence exacerbated the tragic overtone to the battle.²⁵⁹ Henry IV’s attempt to prevent bloodshed only added to the pathos of the account.

However, the Dieulacres chronicler was not only applying one historical paradigm, he fluidly moved between classical tragedy and biblical reference points. He described the protagonists as biblical figures, stating, ‘Et sic occidit Saul mille et David decem milia’ (‘And thus Saul killed thousands and David

²⁵⁴ Clarke and Galbraith, ‘The Deposition of Richard II’, 175; Marchant, *The Revolt of Glydnŵr*, 237.

²⁵⁵ *Continuatio Eulogii*, 398.

²⁵⁶ Clarke and Galbraith, ‘The Deposition of Richard II’, 179.

²⁵⁷ Clarke and Galbraith, ‘The Deposition of Richard II’, 180.

²⁵⁸ Clarke and Galbraith, ‘The Deposition of Richard II’, 180.

²⁵⁹ Taylor, *Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood*, 91.

tens of thousands').²⁶⁰ The oration referred to the biblical wars against the Philistines before the civil war between Saul and David. The comparison to two great heroes from the Old Testament set Henry IV and Henry Percy against the backdrop of scriptural history. Which figure was associated with Saul and which with David is difficult to judge, Saul had been the king, but David was lauded as the greater warrior and he became king. Henry IV, whilst king, was also the victor in the battle. The precise connection is perhaps less important than their connection to a tale of civil strife. Melding scriptural references and a tragic tone, the Dieulacres chronicler brought the virtues and ideals of knightly conduct and the religious elements of knighthood valued by clerics into contact with the realities of civil conflict whilst imagining them in a medley of styles. The report of the battle was consistent in tone but inconsistent in how the author expressed his criticism and horror at a conflict between an English hero and an English king.

There is more to Walsingham's use of Virgilian imagery than a desire to frame the episode in accordance with an classical literary model.²⁶¹ Guyol has asserted that Walsingham depicted knightly violence as an act which was most worthy when performed in the service of devotion to the Church.²⁶² Despite the destruction wrought at Shrewsbury, Walsingham addressed knightly violence as noble as well as tragic. His despair at the rebellion was perhaps more subtly indicated by the lack of his usual scriptural comparison. Instead, the emphasis lay heavily on the inevitability of the tragedy, as demonstrated through prophecies: Hotspur had left behind his favourite sword in the town of Berwick, and when he was told, he said, 'Cerno quod modo meum aratum ad sulcum pertingit ultimum, nam et accepi per fatidicum dum adhuc in propriis partibus essem, apud Berwycum me proculdubio mortiturum' ('I perceive that my plough is now cutting its final furrow, for I heard a prophecy while I was still in my own lands that I would without any doubt die at Berwick').²⁶³

Walsingham echoed the Boethian tradition as he suggested the tragedy was caused by ill-fortune, rather than wickedness.²⁶⁴ Henry Percy's acceptance of his fate established him as an ideal figure in the mould of the epic heroes,

²⁶⁰ Clarke and Galbraith, 'The Deposition of Richard II', 180; 1 Samuel 18:7.

²⁶¹ Walsingham, *The Chronica Maiora*, 328, fn. 2; Charles Blyth, 'Virgilian Tragedy and "Troilus"', *The Chaucer Review* 24, no. 3 (1990), 213.

²⁶² Guyol, 'Chivalry in the St Albans Chronicle', 87.

²⁶³ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 364.

²⁶⁴ Henry Ansgar Kelly, *Chaucerian Tragedy* (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2000), 51.

such as Roland or Arthur, who by accepting the inevitability of death preserved their honour.²⁶⁵ He framed Shrewsbury with a stylistic choice which echoed chivalrous values.²⁶⁶

To remove culpability from the deuteragonist, Hotspur, Walsingham depicted his uncle, Sir Thomas Percy as the primary antagonist of the revolt.²⁶⁷ Although Hotspur behaved predictably rashly, that might not have proved disastrous had it not been Sir Thomas, who was known, Walsingham insisted, for his impeccable steadfastness.²⁶⁸ Prior to the battle Henry Percy had received an embassy from the king and, having been somewhat mollified by the king's ambassadors had sent Thomas as his ambassador to King Henry.²⁶⁹ 'Ferunt aliqui quod cum rex omni rationi condescendisset, idem dominus Thomas, cum redisset ad nepotem, peruertit negocium, contraria referens responsis regiis, ex exacerbans mentum iuuenis, et ad bellum impellens eciam preliari nolentem' ('Some say that when the king had accepted every condition, Sir Thomas on his return to Henry [Percy] distorted the discussion, reporting the opposite to what the king had said, and stirring the young man's anger, thus inciting him to war even though he did not wish to fight').²⁷⁰ Even Walsingham's description of Henry Percy as a 'young man', despite the fact that he was almost forty, contributed to the tragic theme. Walsingham avoided confronting the dilemma of tension between the king and a heroic magnate by accusing Thomas Percy of treachery instead. Thus, his narrative of Shrewsbury was dissimilar to many of his other reports of battles and campaigns. It was, for instance, fundamentally different to his reports of the earl of Arundel's campaign or the wars against Welsh rebels. The difference does not suggest an inconsistency in opinion but highlights the flexibility of Walsingham's narrative style.

Walsingham's classical style also explains the focus on military rather than spiritual details. In the longer recensions of his manuscript Walsingham's

²⁶⁵ K. S. Whetter, 'Genre as Context in the Alliterative "Morte Arthure"', *Arthuriana* 20, no. 2 (2010), 60.

²⁶⁶ Heroes such as Hector and Turnus, and in more contemporary literature characters such as Palamon in Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale* and Mordred in the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* also possessed courage and prowess which set them apart from their followers.

²⁶⁷ The following passage has overtones of the rejection of Tydeus' embassy in Statius' *Thebaid* and of the breakdown in negotiations between Arthur and Mordred commonly depicted in Arthurian cycles. D. C. Feeney, 'Epic Hero and Epic Fable', *Comparative Literature* 38, no. 2 (1986), 142.

²⁶⁸ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 362, 366.

²⁶⁹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 368.

²⁷⁰ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 368.

account was layered with classical allusions in the style of older chronicles. He wrote, for instance, of a hail of arrows, using quotations from Statius' *Thebaid* and Virgil's *Aeneid* to describe how 'igitur architenentes Henrici, quibus meliores nusquam poterant inueniri, sagittando prelium incoharunt, qui densantes iacula' ('therefore Henry's archers – and none better could be found anywhere – began the battle by discharging their arrows, which were so dense in the sky that they obliterated the daylight').²⁷¹ Walsingham added that Henry IV's men panicked as their comrades dropped around them, 'uelut poma cadentia in autumn, cum iam matura mouentur ab Africo' ('like apples falling in autumn when they are ripened by the south wind').²⁷² Walsingham pressed the grim horror home through descriptions of how the dead and dying iacueruntque fessi, uulnerati, uerberati, sanguinolenti, tota nocte in campo belli passim mixti' ('lay the whole night on the battlefield fatigued, wounded, thrashed and bloody, both sides everywhere intermingled').²⁷³ Even Henry IV wept when he saw Henry Percy's body.²⁷⁴ From this emphasis on the darker side of war it is evident that Walsingham was expressing a more melancholy conception of warfare than he did otherwise. It also highlights that Walsingham's use of classical material was pliable. He was able to use the style to spin glorious tales or weave tragedies. Focusing on Shrewsbury as a heroic conflict he promoted the martial values he admired.²⁷⁵ However, though Walsingham depicted the battle as a national tragedy, he saw martial fervour not as a problem but as a praiseworthy trait.

The chroniclers appear to have been engaging with martiality on intellectual, practical, and political levels in their accounts of the martial activities of kings and magnates. Their approaches were wide-ranging, whether because of their sources, their political allegiances, or even their own apparent pleasure in writing about heroic deeds of arms. When describing the battle of Shrewsbury, over which there was more agreement, their narrative styles were inconsistent, performing multiple functions even within a single account.

²⁷¹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 806.

²⁷² Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 806.

²⁷³ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 806.

²⁷⁴ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 804.

²⁷⁵ Guyol, 'Chivalry in the St Albans Chronicle', 108.

Imagining Alternatives

The late fourteenth century saw a distinct upturn in the participation by prelates in organised martial activity. The clergy belonged in principle to a non-martial class, although some of them – and particularly prelates – had a social status and occasionally personal experiences which meant that they were not entirely detached from martiality.²⁷⁶ The following section suggests that the reports of prelates' martiality, which appear mainly in the 1380s, were largely the result of three factors: the perceived failure of secular lords in the English wars; a belief in the Church's authority (brought to the fore by the crisis of the schism and the Lollard threat); and an admiration for key individuals who were particularly militant. The chroniclers praised an imagined knightly prelate, blurring the established lines between the clergy and the aristocracy. Their accounts on martial conduct continued to bear deep stylistic similarities, but they reported the episodes from clearly dissimilar intellectual positions.

Chroniclers had many reasons to imagine prelates as alternative legitimate users of violence to magnates in the 1380s. On a textual level, literature, including sermons, for instance was replete with descriptions of saints, clergy, and even Jesus, as knights, though usually in relation to spiritual battles.²⁷⁷ This did not, mean that clerics were expected to take up arms. They had, in fact, been criticised for acting like knights in the temporal world in sermons and earlier historical writing.²⁷⁸ However, the beginning of Richard II's reign was a particularly difficult time for Church and Crown. English fortunes in the Hundred Years War had soured in the last years of Edward III's reign. Some chroniclers, such as Walsingham, saw increasing support for Wyclif amongst

²⁷⁶ Cf. Daniel Thiery, 'Plowshares and Swords: Clerical Involvement in Acts of Violence and Peacemaking in Late Medieval England, c.1400–1536', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 36, no. 2 (2004), 201–222.

²⁷⁷ Siegfried Wenzel, trans., 'Glossa Ordinaria on This Gospel', in *Preaching in the Age of Chaucer: Selected Sermons in Translation* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 10; Siegfried Wenzel, trans., 'Christmas Eve (Nicholas Philip)', in *Preaching in the Age of Chaucer: Selected Sermons in Translation* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 66; Siegfried Wenzel, trans., 'John Felton on the Same Gospel', in *Preaching in the Age of Chaucer: Selected Sermons in Translation* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 30; Siegfried Wenzel, trans., 'Good Friday', in *Preaching in the Age of Chaucer: Selected Sermons in Translation* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 97, 101.

²⁷⁸ Richard Kaeuper, *Holy Warriors: The Religious Ideology of Chivalry* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 12; Craig M. Nakashian, *Warrior Churchmen of Medieval England, 1000-1250: Theory and Reality*, Theory and Reality (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2016), 138.

the secular lords.²⁷⁹ Clergy themselves were increasingly expected to take part in the war; legislation demanded clerical contributions, whether through taxation, preaching, or more active leadership in the field.²⁸⁰ Furthermore, though the Papal Schism only began in 1378, the chronicles were mostly written several years later and so they were anachronistically aware of the violent partisanship of the fast-approaching rift within the Church.²⁸¹ The depiction of the clergy as warrior heroes may have offered examples for improvement through the adoption of a pre-existing self-image fashioned by the clergy of themselves as holy warriors.²⁸² The reporting of clerical contributions to war could also function as a critique of the secular *bellatores*.

In 1377, shortly after Richard II's coronation, the French raided the southern English coast. Reports in the chronicles placed abbots in the frontlines of the defence. These raids were reported in Walsingham's chronicle and the *Vita Ricardi Secundi's* abridged version of Walsingham's account. Walsingham recorded that shortly before Richard's coronation the town of Rye was sacked by the French and its civilian defenders defeated; 'abbas de Bello, audito rumore tam flebili, adunatis expedites hominibus suis' ('the abbot of Battle got to hear of this lamentable report, so he assembled all his able-bodied men').²⁸³ With these men the abbot successfully protected Winchelsea and won national fame for his deeds.²⁸⁴ Later that year, after Richard's coronation and a successful expedition into Scotland by the earl of Northumberland, the French attacked the Isle of Wight.²⁸⁵ The island was overrun, but Walsingham reported that Sir Hugh Tyrell eventually defeated the French when they attacked the

²⁷⁹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 76–78.

²⁸⁰ David Green, *The Hundred Years War: A People's History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 83.

²⁸¹ George B. Stow, 'Introduction', in *Historia Vita et Regni Ricardi Secundi*, eds. George B. Stow and Nicholas Herford (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), 14; Barbara F. Harvey, 'Introduction', in *The Westminster Chronicle, 1381–1394*, eds. and trans. L. C. Hector and Barbara F. Harvey, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), xxx.

²⁸² Smith, *War and the Making of Monastic Culture*, 9.

²⁸³ The Burgundian born prior of Lewes, John de Cariloco, also raised troops to try resist the attack, but his men were ambushed and he was captured. Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 132; James G. Clark, 'Cariloco, John de (d. 1396), Prior of Lewes', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (29 May. 2014)

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-104409>.

²⁸⁴ James G. Clark, 'Offynton, Hamo (d. 1383), Abbot of Battle', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (28 May. 2015)

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-105484>.

²⁸⁵ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 160.

castle.²⁸⁶ At that point the French left to raid Winchelsea, where the abbot refused their demands for a ransom to spare the town. They challenged him to a fight between their champions and his, but Haimo refused as a man of religion. He claimed that he had come to Winchelsea to preserve the peace of his country.²⁸⁷ The French decided the abbot was a coward and attacked. ‘Pugnantes a non usque ad uesperum; set abbatis, et eorum qui cum ipso errant, laudabili probitate minime profecerunt’ (‘They fought from three in the afternoon until the evening but, because of the praiseworthy courage of the abbot and his comrades, completely failed in their attempt’).²⁸⁸ The report shows that the French misjudged the abbot by holding him to knightly standards. Haimo’s behaviour was not knightly, but Walsingham suggested that he could still capably defend England. Walsingham demonstrated the clergy’s value in military affairs, reacting to the pressures of the 1370s despite the existing objections to clerical participation in warfare.

The *Vita Ricardi Secundi* was, between 1377 and 1381, an amalgamation of John Malvern’s *Chronica* and Walsingham’s account.²⁸⁹ However, the account of the battles with the French were not a verbatim copy. The Evesham Monk’s description emphasised Haimo’s role and advocated for the role of warrior prelates – much as the Knighton and Walsingham praised Bishop Despenser’s behaviour in the Peasants’ Revolt – partially because he made it clear that England was suffering extraordinarily: ‘istis enim xl annis elapsis, ut creditor, non fuerunt in Anglia tot mala facta per inimicos, sicut in illo <tempore> fuerant perpetrare’ (‘it is believed that more evils were perpetrated on England at this time than had been caused by the enemy during the last forty years’).²⁹⁰ Continuing to describe the raid, the chronicler moved to the next attack: on Winchelsea. ‘Gallici fecerunt impetum ad uillam de Wynchelsee, sed abbas de Bello eos uiriliter arcuit ab ingress uille, sed interim, dum pugnatur ibidem, Gallici miserunt partem nauium, qui combusserunt uillam de Hastyng’ (‘The French assaulted the town of Winchelsea but the abbot of Battle [Haimo of Offington] courageously came to stop them from entering the town, but meanwhile, when this battle was being fought, the French sent a group of ships

²⁸⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 162.

²⁸⁷ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 162.

²⁸⁸ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 162.

²⁸⁹ G. B. Stow, ‘Thomas Walsingham, John Malvern and the *Vita Ricardi Secundi* 1377–80’, *Mediaeval Studies* 39 (1977), 493.

²⁹⁰ See below, 257–263; *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, 47.

to burn the town of Hastings).²⁹¹ Haimo's victory was one of the few positive moments in the chronicler's account of 1377. The account of how Abbot Haimo fought was represented as fairly unusual (though in the same year the prior of Lewes also fought to defend the coast).²⁹² Yet, the chronicler made no remark as to the exceptionality of this behaviour. That the clergy were the main figures identified as taking up the defence of England could be simply the result of the chronicler receiving information positively identifying their roles. However, Haimo was described as acting manfully or courageously, which suggests an appropriation of knightly masculinity.²⁹³ Descriptions such as the abbot's part in defying the French invaders, suggest the *Vita Ricardi Secundi's* chronicler intentionally recorded the clergy's role in preserving England in its time of crisis.

That the clergy had to take up this burden runs contrary to Walsingham's usual view that it was duty of the king and the magnates to defend the country. Walsingham was especially critical of the aristocracy's contribution to the English war effort at the start of Richard II's reign. In the 'scandalous recension' of his chronicle Walsingham criticised John of Gaunt for using his political clout to persuade parliament to grant him taxes for a campaign in 1378 only to then sabotage the same campaign.²⁹⁴ Walsingham's attack on Gaunt was emblematic of his concerns that the magnates were failing the country. The king, as a child, was an absent figure, so responsibility fell to his lords. Yet since they were failing others were forced to take up the banner. Walsingham framed figures such as Abbot Haimo, and Sir John Philpot (a citizen of London and a possible informant of Walsingham's), as examples for martial behaviour.²⁹⁵ He contrasted them to the aristocrats who should have been the military commanders. He recorded that in 1378 the nobles, jealous of John Philpot's success and courage, began scheming against him because they were aware their own faults were on display.²⁹⁶ Walsingham explained that the lords used bureaucracy to obstruct his hero, making complaints he had behaved without the consent of the king and his council.²⁹⁷ At other times Walsingham criticised

²⁹¹ *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, 47.

²⁹² *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, 48.

²⁹³ *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, 47.

²⁹⁴ Walsingham, *The Chronica Maiora*, 64 fn. 1.

²⁹⁵ John Taylor, 'Introduction', in *The St Albans Chronicle: the Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham. Volume I, 1376–1394*, eds. John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs, and Leslie Watkiss, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), cxii.

²⁹⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 222.

²⁹⁷ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 222.

merchant warriors, comparing them unfavourably to the aristocracy, which makes his praise of Sir John Philpot an inversion of this critique.²⁹⁸ Walsingham's praise for the martial qualities of non-aristocratic groups appears to have been a response to the decline in English martial fortunes. If this is so, there is an important implication that the reports of clerical deeds of arms had a didactic function, both teaching Walsingham's audience the proper order of society and suggesting that clerics could take up the sword when the country was in need.

Walsingham's account of the French attack – on Winchelsea in 1380 supports this hypothesis. In it he balanced a proactive prelate against the failure of Richard, the earl of Arundel (who as admiral in 1387 had sought to erase the shame of this episode). Whilst Abbot Haimo of Battle and his men attempted to fight but were forced to retreat, 'Comes de Arundellia Ricardus, quem paterne diuicie et auita hereditas sublime effecerant, nichil horum minuere quouis pacto decernens, postposita pompa rei militaris et nominis, ne dampna inferret claustris inexorabilibus' ('Richard, earl of Arundel, who had been raised high by his father's wealth and his ancestral inheritance, having little regard for the show of military action or his own reputation decided to lessen none of these things in any way, in case he should cause harm to befall the obdurate monasteries').²⁹⁹ Eventually Richard moved against the French, but with a small retinue. In the end he only managed to dispirit the defending army.³⁰⁰ Walsingham claimed that Richard's men could have kept the enemy at bay, if the earl had not intervened.³⁰¹ The report of Richard's passivity is the reverse of Walsingham's demonstrations of good conduct by the magnates. In his report, Richard's men and Abbot Haimo, neither of whom should have had to defend England, shamed the ineffectual nobility. Walsingham's account is part of his consistent position on the duties of the *bellatores* and the moral and didactic functions of reports of battles in the *Chronica Maiora*.

The account was a series of pinpoint-accurate attacks by Walsingham against the behaviour of the earl of Arundel. The earl of Arundel was imagined in relation to the typical signifiers of aristocratic quality: a long lineage, wealth,

²⁹⁸ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 704.

²⁹⁹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 374.

³⁰⁰ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 374.

³⁰¹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 374.

and military prowess.³⁰² Walsingham highlighted the earl's failings and demonstrated the depth of his dishonour. The emphasis on factors such as lineage was not, of course, removed from the higher ranks of the clergy. Though Haimo, like many abbots and bishops was not from aristocratic stock, several notable prelates were – such as Henry Despenser, who featured prominently in many accounts of knightly valour on the part of clerics – and as such Walsingham regarded martial engagement as suitable to them.³⁰³ However, Walsingham praised Haimo despite his defeat and the fact that he came from a burgess family and so was not typically responsible for matters of warfare. So, although Walsingham seems to have argued through his report that magnates should be warriors he provided space for the clergy, or merchants, to step up when the *bellatores* were lacking (albeit with reservations as to their ability to perform the role).³⁰⁴

Admiration for clerical warriors also appeared in the *Westminster Chronicle*. The Westminster Monk's epitaph for the abbot of Battle, Haimo de Offington (d. 1383) ran, 'sub habitu monachico belliger insignis patriam et conterminous littoraque maris ab invasionibus piratarum strenuissimie servans' ('beneath his monkish habit he was a soldier of mark and the stout defender of home, neighbours, and coast against the attacks of pirates').³⁰⁵ The Monk also mentioned later clerical warriors. For instance, at the battle of Otterburn in 1388, the Monk noted, Walter Skirlaw, the bishop of Durham, was a commander, though he failed to arrive in time.³⁰⁶ The Monk treated Skirlaw's failure as a typical military failure. He explained that if Skirlaw had reached Newcastle shortly afterwards he would have been stoned by women avenging their fallen husbands, 'quia si eum innata animositas ad audaciam provocasset tam illos quam captivos ab hujusmodi clade forsitan liberasset' ('for if any fighting instincts had prompted boldness he might have perhaps saved both them [the fallen men] and the prisoners from disaster').³⁰⁷ The rest of the blame fell on Henry Percy and the night-time attack. The account exhibits the same

³⁰² Kenneth Bruce McFarlane, *The Nobility of Later Medieval England: The Ford Lectures for 1953 and Related Studies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 165.

³⁰³ R. G. Davies, 'Despenser, Henry (d. 1406), Bishop of Norwich', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004)

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-7551>; Clark, 'Offnyton, Hamo'.

³⁰⁴ See above, 161.

³⁰⁵ *Westminster Chronicle*, 34.

³⁰⁶ *Westminster Chronicle*, 348.

³⁰⁷ *Westminster Chronicle*, 348.

preoccupation with prowess present in discussions of chivalry and virtue.³⁰⁸ The account shows no special consideration for the bishop's clerical status. Instead, it suggests that the Westminster Monk held a different position on warrior prelates to Walsingham. Walsingham presented a moralistic message about the failures of aristocratic warriors, but the Westminster Monk accepted the warrior bishops without the underlying suggestion that they were filling the roles of absent knights.

The crisis of secular lordship as the nobles failed, in the view of these chroniclers, to perform their duty to the realm is perhaps one of the two most important formative issues for this generation of chroniclers' reports on martiality (the other being the Papal Schism). The failures of magnates such as the earl of Arundel or Richard II's household knights had left a void to be filled, and into that void, for chronicles such as that of Walsingham or those of Westminster, stepped prelates like Haimo, Skirlaw, and Despenser. The failure of secular martiality was also aggravated, for Walsingham at least, by the emerging connections between lords such as John of Gaunt, or knights such as Lewis Clifford, and the Lollards, so that rather than performing their social obligations they were instead undermining the social order. These issues were further exacerbated by the crisis of the Papal Schism, which, by the 1410s when the *GHQ* was written, was being tied by chroniclers to the ongoing Hundred Years War.

The Westminster chroniclers had demonstrated sympathy for Richard II, but this was mixed with concerns about the English commanders.³⁰⁹ Some of the clergy, notably including Thomas Brinton, even criticised Edward III and Richard II for the damage their wars caused.³¹⁰ The positive reports of the prelates' martial activity suggest that some chronicles were responding to the problems posed by the war by endorsing martial conduct by the clergy. Such radical efforts appeared particularly clearly during the Peasants' Revolt in 1381, when Bishop Henry Despenser in particular took up arms against the rebels.

³⁰⁸ Kaeuper, *Holy Warriors*, 6.

³⁰⁹ Green, *The Hundred Years War*, 69–70.

³¹⁰ Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, 338.

The Peasants' Revolt (1381)

The reports of prelates' actions during the Peasants' Revolt highlight the chroniclers' acceptance of clerical martiality *in extremis*. The chroniclers' responses to the revolt were, it has been suggested, intended to reinforce an established order.³¹¹ Many of them also shared a common source.³¹² Several of the chroniclers report how Henry Despenser, bishop of Norwich, crushed the revolt in Norfolk. These accounts to an extent reinforced the traditional order, but Despenser's role went beyond traditional norms for the clergy. The *Anonimale Chronicle's* chronicler succinctly described Despenser's role: he sent letters demanding that the peasants return home; the peasants ignored these letters and slew

une chivaler hardy et vigorous [...] par qay le dit evesqe, acoillaunt a luy plusours gentz des armes et des archiers et les assaylerount en plusours places ou il les purroit trover et plusours des eux pristret; et le dit evesqe les fist confesser et puis decolere pur lour malveys faitz

(a brave and vigorous knight [...] The said bishop collected many men-at-arms and archers and he attacked the rebels in several places wherever he could find them; and he captured many of them. The said bishop made them confess and then had them beheaded for their evil deeds).³¹³

The *Anonimale Chronicle's* chronicler framed the episode as one of justice. Despenser acted as a judge and commander for his forces. It is to the point and does not give a great deal of information on the actual skirmishes between Despenser and the rebels. The report given by Henry Knighton included further details of Despenser's bellicosity and presented a much more active and bloodthirsty version of the episode. Knighton added that the abbey of Peterborough was saved from the rebels by Henry Despenser and his forces. Though the rebels fled to the church for sanctuary, Despenser pursued them.

³¹¹ Paul Strohm and A. J. Prescott, *Hochon's Arrow: The Social Imagination of Fourteenth-Century Texts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 33.

³¹² Harriet Merete Hansen, 'The Peasants' Revolt of 1381 and the Chronicles', *Journal of Medieval History* 6, no. 4 (1980), 395.

³¹³ Knighton identified the brave knight as Roger Salle, known for his skill in arms. V. H. Galbraith, ed., *The Anonimale Chronicle, 1333–1381: From a MS. Written at St. Mary's Abbey, York* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1927), 151; R. B. Dobson, *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381*, 2nd edition, *History in Depth* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1983), 237; Charles William Chadwick Oman, *The Great Revolt of 1381* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), 205.; Knighton, *Chronicon*, 224.

'Nam quidam eorum iuxta altare et ad parietes ecclesie tam intra ecclesiam quam extra, lanceis et gladiis confossi sunt' ('Some of them were struck down with lances and swords by the altar, and against the walls of the church, both within and without').³¹⁴ Knighton's description is remarkably vivid. It does not have the same form as his descriptions of battles like Crécy or Poitiers, which included little of the cut and thrust of the conflict but were followed by lists of the dead and captured. As a commentary, Knighton's response to Despenser's actions was positive. One might expect a slaughter within a church to be considered problematic, but if Knighton found it to be so he did not remark on it, and in fact praised Despenser for it.

Knighton and the chronicler of the *Anonimalle Chronicle* framed their accounts around preventing the violation of the church. Knighton justified the bishop's actions as divine judgement adding that since the rebels had intended to destroy the church it was right that they should be slain by a churchman: 'Nam manus eius in ulcionem eorum ualde letanter erat extensa et absolucionem gladialem episcopalis dignitas eis impendere in extremis non dedignabatur pro suis delictis' ('For his avenging hand reached out upon them with great joy and the absolution of the bishop's sword was not unworthily visited upon them for their misdeeds').³¹⁵ However, where Knighton described the bishop as an individual, the *Anonimalle Chronicle's* chronicler described the bishop as an overseer to the suppression. Knighton integrated Despenser into the action by focusing on his sword and his avenging hand smiting the rebels. Knighton's vivid imagery may have come from an eyewitness, though that can only be a speculative claim. It certainly seems to be an intimate report. His commentary on Despenser's actions and his acceptance of this episode of clerical violence suggest that his report was a reflection on social morality as well as an account for posterity. Absent from the accounts of Knighton, Walsingham, and the *Anonimalle Chronicle* are descriptions of Despenser in relation to other major symbols of aristocracy, such as his genealogy. Yet, they knew Despenser came from a major noble family, and also recorded the deeds of his brother, Hugh. Knighton focused on the bishop as God's instrument. Walsingham, although he did not focus on Despenser's lineage, used martial imagery to describe the bishop. He emphasised the necessity of clerical figures

³¹⁴ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 224.

³¹⁵ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 226.

taking up the sword of the knights, and in his description of him, Despenser would not fail the standard: he was one 'uir ydoneus satis armis gerendis bellicis, et ipse armatus ad unguem' ('who was ideally suited to be a soldier, and was armed to the fingertips').³¹⁶ Despenser displayed his courage leading a small band of lances and archers whilst the knights who should have taken up arms were afraid of the peasantry.³¹⁷ Thus, Walsingham, unlike his fellow chroniclers constructed the account into a critique of English knighthood which he compared unfavourably with the actions of the bishop.

The report functioned as praise for warlike bishops and a condemnation of cowardly knights. It is suggestive of the running theme in Walsingham's *Chronica Maiora* that the English nobility were failing in their martial duty to the realm. His description of Despenser riding out framed the bishop as an inspiration to the *bellatores*.

In pertranseundo ergo patriam semper numerus episcopalis augebatur, quia de ordine militari et plures e patria generosi, qui delitescebant timore comunium, uidentes episcopum militem induisse, et galeam assumpsisse metallicam, et loriam duram quam non possent penetrare sagitte, necnon gladium materialem ancipitem arripuisse eius lateri se iunxerunt

(As they made their way across the country the bishop's numbers were being constantly increased, for when men from the knightly rank and many country gentlemen, who had been lying low out of fear of the commons, saw the bishop armed as a knight, accoutred with a metal helmet and a strong hauberk impregnable to arrows, and wielding a substantial two-edged sword, they joined his side).³¹⁸

Despite the prohibitions against the clergy shedding blood, Walsingham framed Despenser as a positive combination of the roles of clerk and knight.³¹⁹ Walsingham went on to describe Despenser as an 'episcopus Marcius' ('warlike bishop').³²⁰ The report appears to be distinct from Walsingham's discussions of Haimo, or Knighton's description of Despenser, though there was a significant

³¹⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 490.

³¹⁷ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 490–492.

³¹⁸ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 492.

³¹⁹ Green, *The Hundred Years War*, 83.

³²⁰ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 494; the translation given lacks the spirit and classical resonance of the chronicler's original language and might be better rendered as 'bishop of Mars'.

overlap. Despenser was not just performing in place of knights or delivering God's justice. He was what a knight should be as well as a bishop, a description with an underlying suggestion that engaged with ideas of societal order and propriety. Walsingham appears to have been creating a multi-layered account of Despenser's behaviour.

The distinction Walsingham drew between the *oratores* and the *bellatores* became increasingly vague. After he had armed himself, Despenser, sounded the charge and rampaged amongst the foe 'dextra manu lancea' ('a lance in his right hand').³²¹ 'Antistes ergo belliger, uelut aper frendens dentibus, sibi nex hostibus suis parcens' ('This warlike prelate, like a boar gnashing its teeth, spared neither himself nor his enemies').³²² The descriptions of the frantic battle bear similarities to Walsingham's description of knightly heroes in battle elsewhere; the simile of a boar is strikingly like the quotation he took from Statius to describe the battle of Shrewsbury years later.³²³ The language and style Walsingham used to describe the bishop was therefore of a piece with his discussion of paragons of knightly masculinity.

Alternative models of clerical courage were available. The clergy were not expected to act as aggressors, as a rule; instead, when they did participate it was often in response to the assaults led by the rebels or heretics. However, as the praise for Despenser suggests, the prelates now needed to take up the characteristics of the secular lords to counter their opponents, to the delight of several of the chroniclers. This did not mean, though, that traditional forms of clerical courage were cast aside. Accounts of Archbishop Sudbury's death highlighted the value of martyrdom.³²⁴ The archbishop's death and behaviour are only briefly mentioned in the *Westminster Chronicle*, the *Continuatio Eulogii*, the *Kirkstall Chronicle*, the *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, and Adam of Usk's chronicle. However, Walsingham, Knighton, and the *Anonimale Chronicle*'s chronicler gave more detailed accounts that emphasised his piety and courage.

Despite elsewhere being dismissive of his worth, Walsingham depicted Sudbury as a martyr.³²⁵ He ascribed miracles to him after his death.³²⁶ In Walsingham's account the primate was calm and authoritative even in the face

³²¹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 494.

³²² Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 494.

³²³ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 806.

³²⁴ See above, 158.

³²⁵ Justice, *Writing and Rebellion*, 199.

³²⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 428.

of death. Aware of the rebels' plan, he awaited them in prayer.³²⁷ Walsingham claimed that Sudbury addressed his companions when the rebels came for him, urging them to be without fear.³²⁸ This willingness to hand himself over is also attested to in Knighton, who described the archbishop as submitting like a lamb.³²⁹ In both accounts Sudbury displayed the stoicism expected of martyrs. The overtones of historical veracity transmitted through direct speech authenticated Sudbury's piety in a moment of conflict between the narratives of the rebels (who claimed that he was a traitor) and Walsingham's version of events, which emphasised Sudbury's courage in the face of death. The episode, when taken in combination with the representation of Despenser's courage, demonstrates the multiple narratives and many different ways of conceptualising similar characteristics that appear within the chronicles.

The attack on Sudbury was framed as a part of a wider assault on the Church by the chronicler of the *Anonimalle Chronicle* and Walsingham, and was demonstrative of the chroniclers' uncomfortable relationship with the secular clergy.³³⁰ The *Anonimalle Chronicle's* chronicler claimed that the rebel leader, the priest John Ball, advised the rebels to 'de defair toutz les seignurs et lercevesqes et evesqes, abbes et priours et plusours moignes et chanouns, issint qe nulle evesqe serroit en Engleterre forsqe une ercevesqe' ('get rid of all the lords, archbishops, bishops, abbots and priors as well as most of the monks and canons so that there should be no bishop in England except for one archbishop [John Ball]').³³¹ The followers of Ball, the chronicler explained, also sought to divide the possessions of the religious houses amongst themselves.³³² The attack on Simon Sudbury shortly afterwards was, in the *Anonimalle*, part of a systematic assault on the liberties, possessions, and persons of the clergy.³³³ In the *Anonimalle Chronicle* Sudbury was dragged forth, rather than submitting with Christian meekness, but his piety remained intact:

lercevesqe chaunta sa messe decotement en la Toure et confessa le priour del Hospitalle de Klerkenwell et autres et puis oia deux messes ou

³²⁷ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 428.

³²⁸ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 428.

³²⁹ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 214.

³³⁰ Aston, 'Corpus Christi and Corpus Regni', 35.

³³¹ *Anonimalle Chronicle*, 137; translated in Dobson, *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381*, 128.

³³² *Anonimalle Chronicle*, 137.

³³³ *Anonimalle Chronicle*, 137.

trois et cahunta le commendacione et 'Placebo et Dirige' et les vii salmes
et le letanye

(the archbishop had sung his mass devoutly in the Tower, and confessed the prior of the Hospital of Clerkenwell and others; and then he heard two or three masses and chanted the *Commendatio*, and the *Placebo* and *Dirige*, and the seven Psalms, and the Litany).³³⁴

This was brought to an end during the Litany at the words 'Omnes sancti orate pronobis'.³³⁵ His record of the archbishop's sequence of masses and devotions, performed as the mob approached, suggest that the chronicler of the *Anonimalle Chronicle* wished to negate the rebels' slurs against the archbishop. It afforded the clergy a traditional, martyr-like form of courage and dedication and provided a rebuttal of sorts to the complaints of the rebels that the episcopacy was corrupt.

Simon Sudbury's death was not the only event which focused chroniclers' admiration for non-military clerical bravery. Walsingham described the Peasants' Revolt as it affected St Albans in more detail than Knighton or the Westminster Chronicler did, and the bravery of his abbot of Thomas de la Mare featured prominently.³³⁶ Walsingham turned to events in St Albans after Sudbury's death. At St Albans the abbot decided that he preferred 'qui iam dudum cicius mori decreuerat pro libertate tuenda monasterii, quam quicumque facere quod ecclesie sue cederet preiudicio' ('had long ago decided to die protecting the liberty of the monastery sooner than do anything prejudicial to his church').³³⁷ He was only dissuaded from this by the entreaties of his monks who pointed out the rebels might well burn the abbey.³³⁸ In comparison, the rebels were irrational and unruly, suffering, Walsingham suggested, under the delusion that their actions would see the end of ecclesiastical and civil law.³³⁹ Although the peasants numbered 2000, Walsingham claimed, the abbot had only his monks.³⁴⁰ The contrast between the two sides framed the Peasants' Revolt as a struggle for the rights and existence of the Church.

³³⁴ *Anonimalle Chronicle*, 145; translated in Dobson, *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381*, 161.

³³⁵ *Anonimalle Chronicle*, 145; translated in Dobson, *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381*, 161.

³³⁶ The Dunstable Annals also noted Thomas de la Mare's courage, though in light of the problems the author believed it had caused him. A. K. McHardy, *The Reign of Richard II: From Minority to Tyranny 1377–97* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 85.

³³⁷ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 452–454.

³³⁸ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 452–454.

³³⁹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 454–454.

³⁴⁰ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 450.

Walsingham suggested that the abbot's courage and negotiation saved St Albans at least. He did not take up arms, and Walsingham did not suggest that he should have done so.

Walsingham's account of the archbishop's death also highlighted the failures of the king's battle-hardened knights who were silent whilst the clergy struggled in their place.³⁴¹ His positive descriptions of the virtues of the prelates when compared to the failings of the secular lords' martial conduct, and of their piety, was symptomatic of his concern with the quality of governance in England and perceived attacks on the Church.³⁴² Meanwhile, his multiple different narratives of clerical virtue, from Sudbury's martyrdom to Despenser's crusade, show the mutability of his narrative.

Henry Despenser's Crusade (1383)

Praise for the clergy behaving as warriors was probably interconnected with the English crusading fervour of the late fourteenth century, a fervour which reached an apotheosis in Despenser's crusade in 1383 against the Flemish and the Avignon papacy under Clement VII. The failure of the crusade saw a temporary decline in passion for such endeavours; Walsingham noted that by 1386 the pardons received by Gaunt before his military expedition to Spain were cheapened by the frequency with which they had been handed out for Despenser's crusade.³⁴³ However, the crusading spirit had been combined with the concept of the English wars with France in the preceding decades.³⁴⁴ In the context of an increasing focus on the higher, spiritual call to arms it is surely significant that chroniclers engaged passionately with a crusade led by a bishop.

There was a range of views of crusading activity in the chronicles: it appeared in detail in the *Westminster Chronicle*, Knighton's *Chronicon*, Walsingham's account and the *Continuatio Eulogii*.³⁴⁵ The *Vita Ricardi Secundi* also included it, though much of that account matches Walsingham's. Adam of

³⁴¹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 458.

³⁴² For perceived attacks on the liberties and rights of the Church, see Knighton, *Chronicon*, 304; Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 75, 236.

³⁴³ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 788.

³⁴⁴ Guard, *Chivalry, Kingship and Crusade*, 182.

³⁴⁵ *Westminster Chronicle*, 36–40, 44–46, 50–54; Knighton, *Chronicon*, 324–332; Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 662–666, 670–710; *Continuatio Eulogii*, 356–357.

Usk only included a brief summary.³⁴⁶ The accounts in this instance shows a range of opinions and styles.

The chronicler of the *Continuatio Eulogii* was highly critical of Despenser and clerical engagement with military activities. He described how ‘episcopus Northwincensis magis militari levitate dissolutus quam pontificali maturitate solidus procuravit a papa auctoritatem praedicandi Crucem Christi et deballandi antipapam ae ejus fautores’ (‘the bishop of Norwich, dissolute rather with military high-mindedness than weighty with pontifical maturity, procured from the pope the authority to preach the Cross of Christ and to make war on the antipope and his supporters’).³⁴⁷ According to this report, the lords had pointed out, when the bishop declared his intention to lead the crusade, that it was not permitted for a bishop to fight.³⁴⁸ The association between military action and sin invalidated the justice of a war waged by the clergy.³⁴⁹ There is cause to suspect that the chronicler intended to blacken Despenser’s name: the chronicler of the *Continuatio Eulogii* was profoundly anti-Ricardian, and Despenser was one of the few individuals to actively try to fight for Richard II during his deposition in 1399.³⁵⁰ The chronicler condemned Despenser by appealing to the inappropriate use of weapons by the clergy.

The Westminster Chronicler’s account confirmed the secular lords were uncomfortable with a bishop bearing arms, but the Westminster Chronicler suggested that the lords were jealous of the bishop. The chronicler of the *Continuatio Eulogii* agreed with the temporal lords and made no allusion to jealousy.³⁵¹ He undermined the justification of the crusade itself. Though he recognised the bishop’s argument that in the cause of the pope he could fight, the narrator of the *Continuatio Eulogii* claimed that the crusade was not to fight the antipope, ‘qui de facto castitatem expugnabant’ (‘but in fact to fight against purity’).³⁵² So, the chronicler of the *Continuatio Eulogii*’s discussion of the crusade in 1383 opposed the place of the warrior priest and turned the narrative of virtue against Despenser.

³⁴⁶ *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, 5; Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 14.

³⁴⁷ *Continuatio Eulogii*, 356, translated in McHardy, *The Reign of Richard II*, 98.

³⁴⁸ *Continuatio Eulogii*, 356.

³⁴⁹ Russell, ‘Paulus Vladimiri’s Attack on the Just War’, 238.

³⁵⁰ Henry Thomas Riley, ed., ‘Annales Ricardi Secundi et Henrici Quarti, Regum Angliæ’, in *Johannis de Trokelowe et Henrici de Blaneforde Chronica et Annales*, Online (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 244; *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, 154.

³⁵¹ *Westminster Chronicle*, 52.

³⁵² *Continuatio Eulogii*, 357.

The premise that a bishop should not fight was followed by the author's attempts to cast the crusaders into disrepute. The chronicler of the *Continuatio Eulogii* claimed that they were, 'armatis sacerdotibus et falsis religiosus' ('armed priests and false religious').³⁵³ Thus, the chronicler's position vindicated traditional, non-violent clerical practice. The appeal to an authoritative tradition established what the chronicler believed bishops ought to be: respectable moral and religious authorities rather than knights.

Despite the chronicler of the *Continuatio Eulogii's* antipathy towards the crusade, earlier writers treated the participation of a bishop in war as either unremarkable or praiseworthy. Walsingham was predictably enthusiastic about the place of the clergy on the campaign. He included a great many details about the lead up to the crusade, summarising the papal bulls issued during the preparation and expressing a keen interest in it. This interest was possibly exacerbated by the fact that several monks from St Albans went on the crusade.³⁵⁴ Walsingham reported that the lords had expressed concerns about the crusade, but that 'nam pars quorum corda Deus tetigerat uolebat eum proficisci tanquam ecclesie pugilem contra hostes Christi' ('some whose hearts had been touched by God, wanted the bishop to proceed as the champion of the church against the enemies of Christ').³⁵⁵ However, these arguments were dissolved through 'Dei uirtute' ('the goodness of God').³⁵⁶ Walsingham presented Despenser and the crusade as blessed by God. The virtue of the knights in parliament, highlighted by Walsingham, was reflective of an appreciation for the connections between the Church and knights: without the support of the knights the goals of the crusade could not be achieved.³⁵⁷ If we compare this to perspective to that of the chronicler of the *Continuatio Eulogii* it is instantly apparent they were practically diametrically opposed, perhaps because of the periods in which they wrote, or maybe Walsingham's fascination with martial priests made the subject irresistibly positive for him. The chroniclers were, after all, human, not mere recording machines, and part of their motivation to write histories appears to have been an interest in the act itself.

³⁵³ *Continuatio Eulogii*, 357.

³⁵⁴ Walsingham, *The Chronica Maiora*, 200 fn. 2.

³⁵⁵ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 662.

³⁵⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 662.

³⁵⁷ Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages*, 296.

The campaign was notable for Despenser's key role as organiser, preacher, and commander.³⁵⁸ Guyol has argued that Walsingham, responding to the threat of 'knightly impiety', sought to link true military prowess with Christian virtues.³⁵⁹ However, in the discussion of the crusade Walsingham took the idea to its logical conclusion and opened the field for the clergy to be warriors. He lauded the secular and regular clergy in the English lines.³⁶⁰ Walsingham remarked, 'uiri de rebus bellicis expertes, deliciose educati, in pace requieque nutriti, animo poterant concidisse' (men who were inexperienced in warfare, leisurely educated, nurtured in peace and quiet, could have lost heart').³⁶¹ However, he explained, God supported them and the bishop's monks proved their courage.³⁶² Walsingham's praise for warrior prelates bears a close resemblance to praise for monks as soldiers in the war against sin.³⁶³

As Walsingham had praised the clergy, and warriors, present at the battle – delving into Ovid, Lucan, and Claudian to illustrate the scope of their deeds – so he also drew the battle lines against self-interest.³⁶⁴ Walsingham claimed that the bishop had chosen his commanders wisely, 'episcopus autem non dominos prepotentes, nec eos qui in incerto diuiciarum suarum spirant' ('the bishop of Norwich, however, did not choose the most powerful lords to be his comrades, nor those whose hopes were placed in the uncertainty of riches').³⁶⁵ Instead he chose men of middle rank who knew how to wage war.³⁶⁶ Walsingham emphasised this for Despenser as well, claiming he was the poorest bishop in England.³⁶⁷ These descriptions called on connections between virtue and poverty, and wealth and sin, recurring themes in moralistic material such as sermons.³⁶⁸ Unfortunately, as Walsingham noted, the crusade was to fail, a failure he blamed on the avarice of the commanders (barring the bishop). That Walsingham appealed to these ideas suggests that part of his

³⁵⁸ Siegfried Wenzel, trans., 'The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (John Dygon)', in *Preaching in the Age of Chaucer: Selected Sermons in Translation* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 197; Wenzel, 'Glossa Ordinaria on This Gospel', 10; Wenzel, 'Good Friday', 97; Smith, *War and the Making of Monastic Culture*, 37.

³⁵⁹ Guyol, 'Chivalry in the St Albans Chronicle', 96, 90.

³⁶⁰ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 678.

³⁶¹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 678.

³⁶² Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 678.

³⁶³ Smith, *War and the Making of Monastic Culture*, 37.

³⁶⁴ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 672, 680.

³⁶⁵ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 664.

³⁶⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 664.

³⁶⁷ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 664.

³⁶⁸ Brinton, *Sermons of Thomas Brinton*, I: 80; Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, 43, 236.

purpose was to portray Despenser as a moral example. Perhaps he had his monastic audience's own moral welfare in mind, or maybe he saw Despenser as providing an exemplar for them to use in turn to elevate the virtues of the nobility.

Henry Knighton's accounts of clerical martial conduct were more mixed. He praised the clergy of the north of England when they marched to oppose a Scottish invasion, and again in 1360 he lauded the clergy who prepared for war.³⁶⁹ Yet, his account of Despenser's crusade verged on hostility. He forbore to glorify Despenser's expedition and implied in his bald statement 'mense Iunii intrauit episcopus cum cruciate uersus Flandriam, et post festum Sancti Michelis repatriare cepit de Flandria in Angliam, frustrates ab effectu cruciate propositi' ('the bishop took his crusade into Flanders in June, and after Michaelmas he started to return to England, having failed to achieve his purpose'), that the wealth and safety of the kingdom had been put at risk by the crusade.³⁷⁰ He also noted that the bishop's commissaries claimed that angels would descend to collect the souls of the dead, but perhaps tellingly he left the promise without any follow-up.³⁷¹ His account, then, was at odds with not only the positive accounts of Walsingham and the Westminster chroniclers but also the critical account of the *Continuatio Eulogii*. His version seems to owe more to his allegiances than to the question of whether a prelate should participate in battle.

Knighton included a list of the places which the bishop attacked and captured similar to the list provided by the chronicler of the *Vita Ricardi Secundi*. The narrative parts of the episode do not suggest any great sympathy for Despenser.³⁷² Unlike Walsingham, who emphasised the positive parts of the expedition, Knighton recorded the bishop's humiliation at Ypres, 'ipse secutus est suos, subclamante populo uille' ('he [Despenser] fled with his men amid the jeers of the townsmen').³⁷³ Instead, Knighton depicted Sir Thomas Trivet as the greatest hero of the piece; Trivet told the king of France and his army that although besieged and outnumbered the English would continue to repel him.³⁷⁴

³⁶⁹ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 72, 174.

³⁷⁰ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 328.

³⁷¹ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 324.

³⁷² Knighton, *Chronicon*, 326; *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, 78.

³⁷³ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 326.

³⁷⁴ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 326.

The admiration Knighton previously expressed for warrior clerks suggests it is unlikely he disapproved of Despenser's expedition on the same basis as the chronicler of the *Continuatio Eulogii*. He had praised the bishop for his actions during the Peasants' Revolt and did not mention his impeachment, which indicates that he did not bear ill-feeling towards the bishop. Perhaps his comment on the endangerment on England's wealth is a hint to us that his concerns were financially based. However, at the same time as Despenser sought funds, so too did Gaunt, Knighton's patron, in preparation for an even more expensive expedition to Spain about which he did not make the same complaint.³⁷⁵ It appears significant that Gaunt's expedition to Scotland in 1384, positively described, was situated immediately after Despenser's failed crusade and just before Richard II's failed expedition to Scotland.³⁷⁶ Knighton, as a firm supporter of Gaunt would have had good reason to regard Despenser's campaign with antipathy as the two were competing for funds.

The *Westminster Chronicle* is unusual, the Chronicler and the Monk's representations of Despenser's crusade were focused around Despenser as an individual and directly influenced by him. The Chronicler copied verbatim from a letter, probably sent by Despenser, to the abbot of Westminster, Nicholas de Litlington (a member of Despenser's family).³⁷⁷ The letter is redolent of the interest in martial prowess and combat exhibited throughout Despenser's life, from his days fighting for the pope in Lombardy to his final attempt to rally men to defend the coast in 1402. Of especial note is the passage of the letter which described how, in a battle with the French, 'conjunctisque aciebus fragor lancearum, disrumpuntur cassides' ('as the opposing lines met with a clash of lances, helmets were shattered and lacings burst').³⁷⁸ The report seems to be intended to engage the recipient with a stirring account of the details of the action. These details of cut and thrust were mixed freely with scriptural features such as God's miraculous intervention at the end of the battle.³⁷⁹ Despenser's close affiliation with the abbey and his own rendering of events promoted the Chronicler's praise and admiration for the use of arms by the clergy.

³⁷⁵ Margaret Aston, 'The Impeachment of Bishop Despenser', *Historical Research* 38, no. 98 (1 November 1965), 127; Peter Edward Russell, *The English Intervention in Spain and Portugal in the Time of Edward III and Richard II*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 344.

³⁷⁶ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 332–336.

³⁷⁷ Pantin, 'A Medieval Treatise on Letter-Writing with Examples', 359–361; *Westminster Chronicle*, 38.

³⁷⁸ *Westminster Chronicle*, 40.

³⁷⁹ *Westminster Chronicle*, 40.

However, Despenser's martial activities diminished significantly after the failure of the crusade. With the death of Abbot Haimo in 1383 there were fewer prelates who involved themselves in battles. Despenser's later exploits were less glamorous; his role as a supporter of Richard II during the deposition was noted neutrally in the *Annales Ricardi Secundi et Henrici Quarti* and the *Vita Ricardi Secundi*.³⁸⁰ The *Annales'* chronicler did insert the bishop's condemnation of Richard's councillors' courage, indicating a certain respect for the bishop.³⁸¹ Despenser's final attempt to rally troops to defend the Suffolk coast in 1402 came to nothing when the French invasion never occurred.³⁸²

Either because other prelates were not as warlike, because the king took greater control of the war effort, because of a lack of significant military events involving the clergy, or from some mixture of these reasons, from then on there was a decline in reports of clerical heroism.³⁸³

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed chroniclers' depictions of the practice of war and martial conduct and suggested that not only were they not a united commentariat but that their positions often fluctuated as English fortunes in the Hundred Years War shifted. They wrote from a range of perspectives which were loosely linked by a broad understanding of the intellectual theory of war. Their reports of martiality were rarely united.

If we consider the chroniclers' positions on the participation of the martiality of the clergy, their responses are demonstrative of the multitudinous views. Thomas Walsingham praised prelates who took up arms and the characteristics of knights in place of magnates who failed in their duty. Yet, he also criticised clergy like the monks of St Albans who joined Despenser's crusade for inappropriate behaviour and praised the benefits of peace. Whilst the positions Walsingham held were not entirely internally incompatible, they too demonstrate the complex range of his views and his intellectual flexibility. Meanwhile, the chronicler of the *Continuatio Eulogii* presented a much more critical perspective on martial activity by prelates, arguing that it was in and of

³⁸⁰ Riley, 'Annales Ricardi Secundi', 244; *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, 154.

³⁸¹ Riley, 'Annales Ricardi Secundi', 244.

³⁸² Davies, 'Despenser'.

³⁸³ GHQ, 4; Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 642.

itself to be avoided. Henry Knighton gave more than one response to the participation of prelates in violence, gladly accepting Despenser's role in the Peasants' Revolt, but perhaps because of his allegiance to John of Gaunt reacting far less warmly to Despenser's crusade. The loyalties, and even the theoretical principles, to which these chroniclers ascribed led to diverse opinions, despite their shared experiences.

Their reports of the martiality of kings, magnates, and prelates demonstrate significant dissimilarities. Walsingham's account exhibits strong signs that he intended his contemporary martial histories as a form of wholesome diversion for his readers. The Westminster Chronicler, meanwhile, was rarely as engaged in the cut and thrust of battle, focussing more usually on the moral questions surrounding it.

Furthermore, as demonstrated by the significant drop-off in narratives of martial prelates in the fifteenth century and the shifting perspectives on a crisis in secular martiality between the early 1380s and 1420s, the chroniclers' were responding to the pressures of particular crises – some affected more than others by geographical proximity to uprising and unrest. The most important crises being those of the secular lords' war efforts in the 1380s and the ongoing Papal Schism which prolonged and exacerbated secular conflicts.

The chroniclers' descriptions of martial activity had multiple functions, ranging from preservation for posterity to – it seems likely – entertainment. These functions do not appear to have been mutually exclusive, but they did often result in multi-layered narratives that, not infrequently, pursued different goals as pieces of comment or criticism to the work of writers who were contemporary to events.

Chapter Five

Criticism, Comment, and Debate

Introduction

The previous chapter examined how the chroniclers responded to martiality, changing their positions on war as prosecuted by monarchs, prelates, and magnates, according to circumstances. At times this meant that they critiqued the values that might typically be associated with as members of the 'establishment'. Martiality, however, although significant, was only one theme of a wider-ranging discourse whose essential characteristics this chapter will consider.

The chroniclers' distinctive representations of martiality show that they were not only recording events but responding to them on a personal level. Thomas Walsingham's apparent delight in martial activity was, though, only one aspect of a much broader range of concerns that he expressed in response to contemporary discourses.

The clerks of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries were surrounded by a plethora of critical voices.¹ Sermons, and the scholastic sermon in particular at the universities, were stretching discourses on social, religious, political, and military questions.² They were, moreover, speaking to multiple layers of society. Orthodox and heterodox preachers competed at the preaching crosses and debated in the universities. Sermons, delivered in parliament and from the pulpits, addressed the gentry, the lords, the clergy, and the king. The chroniclers knew preachers, listened to them, reported on them,

¹ For further discussion of the sheer range of debate see, for example: G. R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England: A Neglected Chapter in the History of English Letters and of the English People* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966), 210–470; W. A. Pantin, 'The Defensorium of Adam Easton', *The English Historical Review* 51, no. 204 (1936): 675–680; James M. Blythe, *Ideal Government and the Mixed Constitution in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Fiona Somerset, *Clerical Discourse and Lay Audience in Late Medieval England*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature, no. 37 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion: Censorship and Tolerance of Revelatory Writing in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Press, 2006); John of Salisbury, *Policraticus: Of the Frivolities of Courtiers and the Footprints of Philosophers*, ed. Cary J. Nederman, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), xv.

² See, for a further discussion, Russell A. Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit in Gower's 'Confessio Amantis'*, Literary Structures (Carbondale: London: Southern Illinois University Press; Feffer and Simons, 1978); Louis Dupré, 'The Common Good and the Open Society', *The Review of Politics* 55, no. 4 (1993): 687–712; Matthew Kempshall, *The Common Good in Late Medieval Political Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

and they even preached themselves. To discuss the clerks who were chroniclers in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries is to discuss a collection of individuals who were inextricably linked to numerous critical discourses. There were also a number of works of vernacular complaint. Janet Coleman has argued that these were changing in response to the rise of vernacular preaching; the war with France and the taxes it incurred; the Lollards and the Papal Schism.³ As Coleman has observed, these factors drove a shift from a contemplation of problems individually to a more holistic criticism of both social and religious issues.⁴ Many of the political poets, such as John Gower, Thomas Hoccleve, and John Lydgate, moved in circles closely related to the chroniclers. Their techniques and the style of narrative they adopted are likely to have been circulating around the chroniclers.

Writers drew on material as diverse as sermons, histories, earlier complaint literature, discourses on the abuses of society, and satirical poetry.⁵ Chroniclers cannot be understood independently of this context. They were aware of these various genres and some directly contributed to them. Therefore, the proposal in this chapter is that the chroniclers were more than simply writers in a single, formal, historical tradition of comment. Instead, it suggests that they were responding to the multitude of contemporary literary influences. The chronicles were an amalgamation of many approaches to social comment and criticism, echoing and sometimes responding to the texts that surrounded their authors.

The late fourteenth century staggered under heresy, revolt, and coup; it is crucial to view the chroniclers' comments within this context to understand their concerns and the conflicts which ran through their allegiances to establishment bodies. The heresies and conclusions of Wyclif and the Lollards led to heated polemics from heterodox and orthodox parties alike. The Peasants' Revolt in 1381 provoked multiple, simultaneous commentaries from the clerical constituency in forms varying, from John Gower's dream vision in the *Vox Clamantis*, to the sermons by Thomas Brinton, and the polemics by chroniclers like Thomas Walsingham and Henry Knighton.⁶ Similarly, the

³ Janet Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers 1350–1400* (London: Hutchinson, 1981), 60.

⁴ Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers*, 60.

⁵ Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers*, 111.

⁶ Michael Bennett, 'John Gower, Squire of Kent, the Peasants' Revolt, and the Visio Anglie', *The Chaucer Review* 53, no. 3 (28 June 2018), 276.

conflict between the Lords Appellant and Richard II, 1386–1388, was reflected on widely in the chronicles and in several distinct ways: for example, Thomas Favent delivered a clear, and almost formulaic, assault on Richard II's advisers; the Westminster Monk gave slightly more complicated narrative of Lords who considered overthrowing the king, but balanced it with the articles of the Lords Appellant.⁷ In 1397, during the Revenge Parliament, Richard exacted vengeance on the Lords Appellant, an act which provoked distinct and opposed responses from chroniclers. Then, in 1399, he was deposed by Henry Bolingbroke. The events of 1397–1399 were referenced directly and indirectly in satirical poetry such as *Mum and the Sothsegger*, in the chronicles, and in sermons by preachers including Archbishop Thomas Arundel.⁸ These controversies, and others, prompted debate and discussion from monastic, parliamentary, and popular commentators.

The chronicles cannot simply be read as bland records of events. The chroniclers adapted their narratives and could use them as a discursive tool. Framing an episode in a particular style, or with reference to established tropes, could deliver an inherent symbolic meaning. Discussions on Lollardy and Wyclif, for example, were not just records of who did what and when – the chroniclers imputed meaning into events and actions. Moreover, a chronicler could adopt the voice of a preacher, a cleric of their house, or a member of the polity under duress by outside forces. Their application of different forms of narrative, as discussed in this chapter, suggests that in constructing their narratives chroniclers were often (though not always) entering into discourse with an issue.

This chapter is divided into four principal sections. First, it outlines the didacticism of the fourteenth-century chronicles; the increasingly fluid boundaries between forms of comment; and the audiences the chroniclers imagined. Second, it argues that the chroniclers incorporated into their work

⁷ The Lords Appellant were originally Thomas Woodstock, duke of Gloucester; Richard FitzAlan, eleventh earl of Arundel; and Thomas Beauchamp, the earl of Warwick. These lords were subsequently joined by Thomas Mowbray, the earl of Nottingham, and Henry Bolingbroke, earl of Derby and the future Henry IV. For further details see, W. M. Ormrod, 'Government by Commission: The Continual Council of 1386 and English Royal Administration', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland* 10 (1996): 303–321; Anthony Goodman, 'Richard II's Councils', in *Richard II: The Art of Kingship*, eds. Anthony Goodman and J. Gillespie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 70–71.

⁸ Helen Barr, ed., *The Piers Plowman Tradition: A Critical Edition of, Pierce the Ploughman's Crede, Richard the Redeless, Mum and the Sothsegger, and The Crowned King* (London: Dent, 1993); Adam of Usk, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk, 1377–1421*, ed. Chris Given-Wilson, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 68.

elements of the preaching culture including homilies against societal crises such as Lollardy, the duties of parliament, or behaviour of the clergy. Third, it evaluates occasions when the chroniclers' implicitly or explicitly commented upon the government of the realm. Fourth, it addresses the interplay between the chronicles and the criticisms of abuses of society. The chroniclers were aware of the wider discourse on order, morality, and politics. Their works were part of these debates not separate from them. Their relationship to these modes of expression reveals that they were both a unique and internally distinctive set of writers, and that they were also thoroughly engaged with the dynamic intellectual milieu of the period.

An Age of Debate

The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries saw an increasingly fluid discourse in which the boundaries between vernacular and Latinate voices were progressively eroded.⁹ Writers of vernacular complaint were blending material from across the spectrum, from histories to advice literature. In turn, writers of academic sermons were incorporating material from subversive authors of complaint into their work.¹⁰ The chroniclers were part of this interchange, they were not bound to a single traditional model and instead their chronicles represent conversations with those they identified themselves with or wished to address. They were decidedly clerical writers, embedded within an establishment, but they, and it, were aware of and engaged with subversive and varied literary modes of expression.

Scholarship on the transmission of argumentative and didactic material from Latin into the vernacular in this period is well developed. There were significant changes, such as the expansion of the corpus of texts in the vernacular and the refined focus on personal morality in both complaint literature and university scholasticism.¹¹ These shifts are emblematic of the

⁹ Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion*, 395.

¹⁰ Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers*, 28.

¹¹ Margaret Aston's work also demonstrated that the range of English theological works was increasing across the period, undermining the distinction between genres associated with English and Latin workers. Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers*, 15, 20; Margaret Aston, 'Wyclif and the Vernacular', *Studies in Church History Subsidia* 5 (1987): 281–330.

broadening of social discourse generally.¹² Fiona Somerset drew out how writers were fashioning academic discourse in English, rather than the traditional Latin.¹³ Although her work suggests that texts in English emerged in apposition to the ecclesiastical culture of the fourteenth century, the distinction also establishes the pressure they exerted on one another.¹⁴ The shifts within vernacular writing were not, after all, isolated from the clerical community. Many authors in the vernacular, such as William Langland and John Gower, had clerical credentials. Furthermore, some, such as Gower, wrote in Latin as well as in English.¹⁵ They were already part of the ecclesiastical, Latinate community, and although vernacular works were multiplying and gaining authority, Latinate authors were neither becoming isolated nor stagnating.

Many of the chroniclers, particularly those in monastic settings were demonstrably aware of the wider popular and public discourse. They were deeply aware of the historical traditions of their houses and of more popular texts such as Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon* (though as discussed it was probably not the most important bond they shared).¹⁶ As discussed in Chapter One, many of the chroniclers were either educated at or acquainted with the universities and the didactic style of sermons which dominated the arguments of both orthodox and heterodox preachers.¹⁷ Their educations, religious institutions, and universities furnished them with wide-ranging and formal discursive approaches to history and to social commentary. Though these forms were quite distinct from one another, the quodlibetal disputations of the universities and the academic sermons were not practised in the monasteries.

This historical and didactic material was supplemented with the literature of advice, though the expansion and variety in this genre during the late

¹² The increase in vernacular material was associated with the rise of Wycliffism, but Kerby-Fulton has challenged these assumptions, demonstrating that Wycliffism was in fact neither the beginning of the trend nor the majority of it. Instead, Kerby-Fulton's assessment suggested that Wycliffism was one part of a wider, expanding discourse which stretched back into the earlier part of the fourteenth century. Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion*, 3, 63.

¹³ Somerset, *Clerical Discourse and Lay Audience in Late Medieval England*, 3–5.

¹⁴ For further approaches to the oppositional nature of vernacular literature and ecclesiastical culture see Larry Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power: The Medieval Exemplum and the Chaucerian Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 246–48; Alan J. Fletcher, *Preaching, Politics and Poetry in Late-Medieval England* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), 29; Somerset, *Clerical Discourse and Lay Audience in Late Medieval England*.

¹⁵ Elisabeth M. Dutton, John Hines, and Robert F. Yeager, eds., *John Gower, Trilingual Poet: Language, Translation, and Tradition*, Westfield Medieval Studies (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2010).

¹⁶ See above, 39, 71–75.

¹⁷ See above, 56–71.

fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries renders comparison difficult as writers increasingly turned to discreet textual traditions. Advice literature should not be regarded as part of a single continuum or homogeneous group of texts. In one form or another, though, it does appear within the chroniclers' intellectual milieu.

The patronage of Henry V may have encouraged Thomas Hoccleve to use this style of genre to celebrate his benefactor in his *Regiment of Princes* (1411), a text which was, then, produced within a similar courtly milieu to the *GHQ*.¹⁸ Though in the broad sense advice literature was circulating in both Latin and the vernacular, Hoccleve, for instance, had drawn on Giles of Rome's *De Regimine Principum* (which had been repeatedly transferred from Latin to the vernacular). Prior to Hoccleve, John Trevisa had translated it in the late fourteenth century along with other texts such as Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon* and Bartholomaeus Anglicus' *De Proprietatibus Rerum*.¹⁹ Since Trevisa's translation was, supposedly, for his patron Baron Thomas de Berkeley, its audience was distinct from that of the Latin version of the *De Regimine Principum* circulating in the universities. There is some overlap with its presence in the English court, though, where Nigel Saul has noted it is likely that Simon Burley at least was acquainted with it.²⁰ As Saul has noted, the *De Regimine Principum* was widely circulated, particularly amongst the laity.²¹ It is probable that the majority of chroniclers were acquainted with some form of advice literature, either through texts such the *De Regimine Principis* (as in the case of the author of the *GHQ*) or schoolroom equivalents such as John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* or the *Secretum Secretorum*.²² There is also direct evidence that individuals within the personal circles of chroniclers were producing advice literature of some kind. The contribution of Philip Repyndon, one-time abbot of

¹⁸ Large portions of John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* were also interwoven with the advice tradition. Later, albeit in the context of Italian political discourse entering the English court, Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* (1431-1438) was composed on the patronage of Humphrey duke of Gloucester. Scanlon, *Narrative, Authority, and Power*, 325. Douglas Gray, 'Lydgate, John (c.1370-1449/50?)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004)

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-17238>.

¹⁹ Charles F. Briggs, *Giles of Rome's De Regimine Principum: Reading and Writing Politics at Court and University, c. 1275-c. 1525*, Cambridge Studies in Palaeography and Codicology; 5 (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 77.

²⁰ Nigel Saul, *Richard II*, Yale English Monarchs (London: Yale University Press, 1997), 16; Richard Hutton Jones, *The Royal Policy of Richard II: Absolutism in the Later Middle Ages*, vol. 10 (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1968), 144.

²¹ Saul, *Richard II*, 16.

²² James G. Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance at St Albans: Thomas Walsingham and His Circle, c. 1350-1440*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 144-145.

St Mary of the Meadows Leicester and bishop of Lincoln, for instance, was a corrective letter sent to Henry IV.²³ Although this was after the end of Henry Knighton's time at Leicester it demonstrates that there were distinct attempts to provide advice of some form emerging within the chroniclers' field of experience as clerks. The difference between the texts, Hoccleve's use of Giles, or later John Lydgate's use of Italian political philosophy through Boccaccio, does not invalidate the importance of the delivery of a type political advice in clerical discourse, even if the fundamental parts of this discourse were changing over time. The authors of this material deliberately sifted history to present didactic political models to monarchs and their advisers, a purpose which was partially shared with the didactic tendencies of chroniclers.

There are also significant indicators that chroniclers were aware of, or likely to be aware of, specific pieces of complaint literature. Some accounts of the Peasants' Revolt, such as those of Thomas Walsingham and Henry Knighton, and the Dieulacres' Chronicler, included explicit mentions of the rebels' references to *Piers Plowman*.²⁴ The sermons of authoritative, orthodox figures such as Bishop Thomas Brinton (perhaps the most well-known preacher of his day) also incorporated references to Langland's work.²⁵ This type of material, with its aggressive rhetorical attacks on perceived vices, corruptions, and injustices in French, English, and Latin, swayed between socially radical and conservative stances. Whilst the chroniclers as a rule tended towards the orthodox, their works still show an intertextual engagement with this broad and complex style of criticism.

However, though certain chroniclers were surrounded by and aware of these various types of text, they were not dependent on any single form of them, nor were they equally engaged with the discourse. Instead, the instances of commentary and criticism often echoed or were amalgamations of multiple

²³ Simon Forde, 'Repyndon [Repington, Repingdon], Philip (c.1345–1424), bishop of Lincoln', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-23385>.

²⁴ Steven Justice has provided an extended discussion of these mentions of *Piers Plowman*. Thomas Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle: the Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham. 1376–1394*, eds. and trans. John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs, and Leslie Watkiss, Vol. I, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 548; Henry Knighton, *Knighton's Chronicle 1337–1396*, ed. and trans. G. H. Martin, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 222–224; M. V. Clarke and V. H. Galbraith, 'The Deposition of Richard II', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 14, no. 1 (1930), 164; Steven Justice, *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381*, 27 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

²⁵ Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers*, 28.

different forms of criticism and debate. The chroniclers did not draw evenly on the different traditions. Rather, they spoke to particular traditions, and their different approaches resulted in truly idiosyncratic texts.

Purpose

The chroniclers were participants in a long tradition of historical writing, the customary purpose of which was to provide a record of events for posterity. Although, as discussed, there were significant differences between the fourteenth-century chroniclers and their predecessors, they continued, referenced, and drew on earlier histories that explicitly expressed their historical purpose as being to preserve events for posterity and provide lessons for their audiences.²⁶ The eleventh-century Norman historian Dudo of Saint Quentin suggested that his work was intended for lengthy reflection.²⁷ Thietmar of Merseburg, Dudo's contemporary, stated that he wrote of events 'propagare viventique semper memorie commendare' ('not only to propagate the matters committed to him, but also to preserve their memory for ever').²⁸ Such sentiments appear widely, from chroniclers such as Orderic Vitalis, Henry of Huntingdon, and, in the thirteenth century, Matthew Paris (Thomas Walsingham's predecessor and partial inspiration at St Albans).²⁹ The importance of the moral dimension of history as acknowledged by high medieval historians established the need for chroniclers to engage with a discourse on the events they recorded.

Those chronicles that included prefaces in the late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century chronicles often employed similar expressions, even when the

²⁶ Chris Given-Wilson, *Chronicles: The Writing of History in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004), 2; Daniel Woolf, 'Genre into Artifact: The Decline of the English Chronicle in the Sixteenth Century', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 19, no. 3 (1988), 323.

²⁷ Dudo of St Quentin, *History of the Normans*, ed. Eric Christiansen (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1998), 13.

²⁸ Dithmar von Walbeck and David A. Warner, *Ottoman Germany: The Chronicon of Thietmar of Merseburg*, Manchester Medieval Sources Series (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 67; Robert Holtzmann, *Die Chronik Des Bischofs Thietmar von Merseburg Und Ihre Korveier Überarbeitung* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1935), 5.

²⁹ Ordericus Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis. Vol. 1, General Introduction, Books I and II (Summary and Extracts) Index Verborum*, ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 131; Henry of Huntingdon, *The Chronicle of Henry of Huntingdon. Comprising the History of England, from the Invasion of Julius Cæsar to the Accession of Henry II. Also, The Acts of Stephen, King of England and Duke of Normandy*, ed. Thomas Forester (London, 1853), xxv; Richard Vaughan, *Matthew Paris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 151.

chroniclers came from highly diverse clerical backgrounds. Henry Knighton began by explaining his moral purpose as a writer and cited the importance of writing for posterity.³⁰ Thomas Walsingham situated his *Ypodigma Neustriæ* (written c.1419) as a didactic piece of literature for Henry V.³¹ He concluded his dedication, ‘quia nullum magis decet plura scire quam principum, cuius doctrina maxime subjectis prodesse potest’ (‘as it is befitting that no one should have greater knowledge than a Prince, whose learning may be of the greatest possible advantage to his subjects’).³² Meanwhile, the secular clerk Thomas Favent – in his short chronicle of the Wonderful and the Merciless parliaments – urged his readers to pay heed to the chronicle: ‘Nec meminisse pigeat talia memorie committere que quisquis si diligens perlector animaduerterit speculum in parte habere poterit aduersitates et scandala, mortisque pericula et torrida cruciacula facilius euitandi’ (‘Let it not be disgusting to bring to mind and commit to memory such things which, if every diligent reader would heed, he would have a mirror, in part, for more easily avoiding adversities, scandals, and the dangers and burning torments of death’).³³ There was a shared acknowledgement that historical writing was intended as a means to preserve events, but that historians also had a moral obligation to teach and inform their audience through the medium of their narrative. Prefaces were not universal, though, and these statements of intent represent an unusual attempt to claim a particular purpose for a work; they could justify a history, frame it within an existing tradition, or enable a particular form of comment. Appealing to the need to learn from the mistakes of the past could, after all, provide a justification to comment upon the errors that had been made.

Though many chroniclers appealed to a tradition of didacticism, circumstances effected subtle distinctions in their use of it. Walsingham and

³⁰ Henry Knighton, *Chronicon Henrici Knighton, vel Cnitthon, monachi Leycestrensis*, ed. Joseph Rawson Lumby (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1889), 1; Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, 57.

³¹ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 168.

³² Henry Thomas Riley, ‘Introduction’, in *Ypodigma Neustriæ* (Longman, 1876), x; Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 168.

³³ Thomas Favent, ‘Hic Incipit Historia Siue Narracio de Modo et Forma Mirabilis Parlamenti Apud Westmonasterium Anno Domini Millesimo CCCLXXXVJ, Regni Vero Regis Ricardi Secundi Post Conquestum, Anno Decimo, per Thomam Fauent Clericum Indictata’, ed. May McKisack. *Camden Third Series* 37 (1926), 1; translated in, Thomas Favent, ‘Appendix: History or Narration Concerning the Manner and Form of the Miraculous Parliament at Westminster in the Year 1386, in the Tenth Year of the Reign of King Richard the Second after the Conquest, Declared by Thomas Favent, Clerk’, in *The Letter of the Law: Legal Practice and Literary Production in Medieval England*, eds. Emily Steiner and Candace Barrington, trans. Andrew Galloway (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 231.

Favent, for instance, despite both making this reference, had little in common as teachers. Where Walsingham appealed to the necessity for a king to be superior to his fellows, Favent spoke of his lesson to his readers as one of self-preservation. The two directions of thought are not incompatible: a king should, after all, avoid leaving the realm without a helmsman, but there is an evident difference of emphasis. These differences between their explicit purposes must partially stem from their own identities as well considerations of their intended audiences and their subject matter. Walsingham, as a Benedictine monk from one of the most prestigious houses, had connections to the court and reason to desire royal patronage for his abbey. Favent, as a secular clerk in London whose account supported the king's enemies, had good reason to be concerned with the dangers historical material could present to himself and his readers.³⁴ The subject matter they discussed follows this distinction: Walsingham provided a history of the Anglo-French wars; Favent discussed the crisis of recent civil conflict. The former could serve as a military and moral lesson to the king; the latter, a salient reminder of the 'right' side in the conflict of the Lords Appellant but also of the wickedness of the audiences' opponents.

Chroniclers' comments, adjectives, and descriptors evaluated the faults and flaws in society and in individuals. Given-Wilson has pointed to the description in the *Anonimale Chronicle* of Edward II, which illustrated his moral and political failures.³⁵ The preceding chapters of this thesis have examined the chroniclers' observations and engagement with their material as self-aware writers and thinkers. Versed in the tradition of historical writing, they acted as critics, picking out the failures and successes of the past to advise the present and the future. To comment on or criticise behaviour in one's own time, though, did not restrict a chronicler to a single perspective, audience, or necessarily, style. Nor should an avowed intent always be understood to be what was foremost in a chronicler's mind, sometimes commentary itself may have been as important as teaching a particular lesson.

³⁴ Gwilym Dodd, 'Was Thomas Favent a Political Pamphleteer? Faction and Politics in Later Fourteenth-Century London', *Journal of Medieval History* 37, no. 4 (2011), 403.

³⁵ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, 173.

Audience

The lessons of historical material were not thrown out into a void to await any chance reader. Even the monastic chronicles were not widely circulated. The Westminster Chronicle's single paper manuscript is unlikely to have had a wide audience. John Strecche's chronicle, and its accompanying documents, are orientated towards an audience of Augustinians and the canons of Kenilworth priory especially.³⁶ There was a significant difference between the audiences chroniclers expected to reach, although these were often not precisely defined or necessarily consistently envisaged. Few can have anticipated addressing anyone as exalted as the monarch – though there was always the chance in the case of histories from major institutions that they might be summoned by the king.³⁷ However, by and large it is more likely that the chroniclers imagined their primary audience as one of lesser grandeur. Specific dedications to major nobles are few and far between amongst the chronicles of this period, and most chronicles had unspecified audiences. If, examining even a sample of the chronicles, we briefly contemplate for whom they might have been intended, it quickly becomes plain that there was no single audience held in common.

Walsingham appears to have planned for the continuation of the *Chronica Maiora* in British Library Royal MS 13 E.IX to be used for the education of his community.³⁸ It is evident that several manuscripts must also have been disseminated to other Benedictine houses, as chroniclers such as the chronicler of the *Vita Ricardi Secundi* copied large portions of his work. An intended audience of Benedictine students of history, at least initially those with an allegiance to St Albans, paints a distinctive picture of Walsingham's purpose and focus. He addressed monastic concerns about social conduct, propriety, and orthodoxy. The criticisms of the rebels in 1381, the attacks on Lollardy, and even the assaults on Richard II as a king whose policies negatively affected the rights of the church – and thereby St Albans – could all be part of other narratives, but also spoke to the concerns of Walsingham's brother monks.

³⁶ The dialogue on the relative virtues of the Austin friars compared to the canons regular, for example, along with the concentration on the history of the priors of the house, suggest that he did not anticipate a readership beyond his brethren. BL MS. Add. 35295.

³⁷ Chris Given-Wilson, 'Official and Semi-Official History in the Later Middle Ages: The English Evidence in Context', in *The Medieval Chronicle V*, ed. Erik Kooper (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2008), 5.

³⁸ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 188, 267.

The audience did not always deeply influence the detail of a work. Walsingham's *Ypodigma Neustriæ* was dedicated to, and at least officially directed at, Henry V, but it comprised a compilation of other historical material whose first audience must have been monastic. The *Ypodigma Neustria*'s organising principle, with its focus on Anglo-Norman relations, was distinctly different from the *Chronica Maiora* which served as a continuation of Matthew Parris' universal history. The *Ypodigma Neustriæ* was one of a number of didactic works presented to Henry V, others include Thomas Hoccleve's poems, such as his *Remonstrance to Oldcastle* or the *Regiment of Princes*, and Thomas Elmham's *Liber Metrico de Henrico Quinti*, which was dedicated to the king.³⁹ Whether Walsingham was ever acquainted with these texts is uncertain. Elmham's work was included in MS Bodley 462, which also contains a version of the *Chronica Maiora*, and although John Taylor has suggested it was compiled at St Albans it was probably compiled after Walsingham's death.⁴⁰ He may, however, have still heard of these works through contacts at court or from their author's houses, but there is no conclusive proof of this. It is evident that Walsingham made some effort to deliberately mould his historical narratives to his audience, but the text was not so finely honed that the majority of its material was unsuitable for royal ears or eyes as opposed to monastic ones.

Similarly, in the case of the *Chronica Maiora*, Walsingham was involved in a discourse which was not exclusive to St Albans and which had a significant bearing on the experiences of other monastic houses. It was, after all, influential at other houses such as Evesham, although there were substantial differences between their texts.⁴¹ However, it does reflect a primary monastic audience within the house. Much as Knighton's chronicle must first and foremost be regarded as a chronicle for his fellows in St Mary of the Meadows, or as the Cistercian chronicles of Dieulacres, Whalley, and Kirkstall were circulated

³⁹ Antonia Gransden, 'Silent Meanings in Ranulf Higden's "Polychronicon and in Thomas Elmham's Liber Metricus de Henrico Quinto"', *Medium Ævum* 46, no. 2 (1977), 235; Jenni Nuttall, 'Thomas Hoccleve's Poems for Henry V: Anti-Occasional Verse and Ecclesiastical Reform', *Oxford Handbooks Online*, 2015, <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:c24f6155-7586-4e66-b351-366f00296387>.

⁴⁰ John Taylor, 'Introduction', in *The St Albans Chronicle: the Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham. Volume I, 1376–1394*, ed. John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs, and Leslie Watkiss, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), xxxvii.

⁴¹ George B. Stow and Nicholas Herford, eds., *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), 1.

primarily amongst other Cistercian houses.⁴² These narratives were filled with the concerns of the educated regular clergy and the comments and forms of debates found within them must be anticipated to appeal to the regular clergy. The number of historical works produced in cloistered communities indicates that there were a fair number of individuals who engaged positively with historical writing. Yet, as discussed, the clergy were aware of and immersed in multiple debating techniques and styles of complaint and comment so choice of the exact mode of expression could shift dramatically over the course of a chronicle.

By way of contrast, Adam of Usk, as a secular clerk, had no close-knit regular community around him to educate. His work is written in Latin, so only an educated audience would have been able to fully engage with it. To an extent Adam's primary audience appears to have been himself, since he dealt with dangerous subjects and stated early in his chronicle that he wanted no one to read his chronicle during his lifetime.⁴³ He perhaps intended a posthumous role for it as a means to preserve his life for posterity. At his death he left the manuscript to his kinsman, Edward-ap-Adam, so he certainly meant it to have an afterlife.⁴⁴ Yet, it was more than a record of his life. He intermixed reflections on sermons and his own deeds with prophetic verse and complaints against the Crown and the papacy. The mixture of anecdotes and complaints, based in personal experience, and his extremely restricted audience distinguish Adam's chronicle from those of his contemporaries. Whether Adam was writing for his relatives or primarily for himself cannot be known, and his intentions may, of course, have changed over the more than twenty years of composition: his claim that he intended no one to read it until after his death was made, after all, when he first began to write.

Thomas Favent's probable audience had a profound impact on the style and focus of his history. Gwilym Dodd has convincingly argued that the intended audience for Favent's history was extremely small, pointing to the illumination and roll format of the only fourteenth-century copy and the danger

⁴² Chris Given-Wilson, ed., *Chronicles of the Revolution, 1397–1400: The Reign of Richard II*, Manchester Medieval Sources Series (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 9.

⁴³ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 118.

⁴⁴ Given-Wilson has argued, though, that Adam imagined a wider circulation at some point in the future. Chris Given-Wilson, 'Introduction', in *The Chronicle of Adam Usk: 1377–1421*, ed. and trans. Chris Given-Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), lxxxv.

of promoting opinions critical of Richard II's regime amongst other factors.⁴⁵ Dodd has therefore suggested that the document was never, as Clemantine Oliver argued, intended as a pamphlet for dissemination.⁴⁶ As such, Favent's 'mirror' for his readers was aimed at a small group who knew well quite how close they could have been to choosing the losing side in the conflict between the Lords Appellants and Richard II. Simultaneously, it justified and praised this audience and their party for their destruction of wicked advisers to the king. It is therefore unsurprising that the burghers of London feature prominently as the heroes of the text.⁴⁷ The interests of Favent's audience were distinct from those of Walsingham, Adam, or Knighton's. This is reflected in the emphasis put on local political events, which spoke more directly to concerns expressed by lay audiences. Yet even here, where the evidence is perhaps clearer than in the cases of many chroniclers, conclusions on Favent's audience are speculative, although Dodd has advanced a compelling argument that Favent's audience was a select group of London burghers.⁴⁸

The audiences that the chroniclers addressed their lessons to were, then, no more homogeneous than the chroniclers themselves. The audience for an individual chronicle is likely to have been only one or two removes from the chronicler, however.⁴⁹ From monastic writers addressing the preoccupations of their house and orders to secular chroniclers appealing to patrons, their discourse and their lessons, both practical and moral, must be assumed to have been directed towards the concerns of those varying audiences. And these audiences were not necessarily consistent over the course of a chroniclers' career; in this aspect their writing may have been as mutable as their actual commentary.

Preaching and Homilies

The act of moral teaching took many forms in the later Middle Ages, but among them one of the most prevalent was the sermon. All the chroniclers would have

⁴⁵ Dodd, 'Was Thomas Favent a Political Pamphleteer?', 403.

⁴⁶ Dodd, 'Was Thomas Favent a Political Pamphleteer?', 403; Clemantine Oliver, *Parliament and Political Pamphleteering in Fourteenth-Century England* (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press; Boydell & Brewer, 2010), 116.

⁴⁷ Dodd, 'Was Thomas Favent a Political Pamphleteer?', 418.

⁴⁸ Dodd, 'Was Thomas Favent a Political Pamphleteer?'

⁴⁹ Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, 77; Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 60–62.

been acquainted with sermons in one form or another. As secular and regular clerks they would have not only been familiar with delivering knowledge and instruction to an audience through this medium, but many of them would have understood that this was part of their role as members of the clergy. Sermons were not, of course, bound to a single format.⁵⁰ Certainly, most of the chroniclers echoed the tone, phrasing, or structure of certain types of sermon within their chronicles. The most prominent form of sermon-related literature apparent in the chronicles is the fairly informal homily. Some chronicles displayed few discernible signs of the incorporation of sermon literature, and those that did were not always consistent in their use of a sermon-like style. Episodes framed in the format of homilies were few and far between. Chroniclers often echoed the mode of expression of preachers without necessarily seeking to fully imitate sermons. The mingling of the already malleable style of sermons with other genres such as history often left passages somewhere in the hinterland between homilies and the literature of abuse.⁵¹

Preaching was far from a homogeneous tradition, but in one form or another it was one of the dominant mediums for education and instruction. The sermon, and the scholastic sermon in particular, was becoming an increasingly dominant tool for instruction, whether to guide the ignorant or correct the wicked.⁵² The scholastic sermon was set out according to a logical ordering and guided by a *thema*.⁵³ Preachers drew on a range of material, from historical accounts to theological debates to complaint literature, and were as varied as their sources.⁵⁴ Preachers were not necessarily part of the establishment: many of them delivered anti-authority sermons and contributed to debates that challenged the status quo. Richard Fitzralph's complaint sermons against the friars led to a royal decree banning further such sermons as early as 1357.⁵⁵ In the 1370s and 1380s John Wyclif's sermons were especially infamous for their

⁵⁰ Siegfried Wenzel, *Medieval 'Artes Praedicandi': A Synthesis of Scholastic Sermon Structure*, Vol. 114, *A Synthesis of Scholastic Sermon Structure* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 43.

⁵¹ In this instance I refer to literature of abuse in the broad sense of those pieces which focused on the corruption of virtue or the damage done to society by immoral individuals. For a problematisation of the categorisation of 'literature of abuse' see, Siegfried Wenzel, *Preachers, Poets, and the Early English Lyric*, Princeton Legacy Library (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 176.

⁵² Wenzel, *Medieval 'Artes Praedicandi'*, 114: 45.

⁵³ Wenzel, *Medieval 'Artes Praedicandi'*, 114: 46, 49.

⁵⁴ Owst, *Literature and Pulpit*, 210–470.

⁵⁵ Jeremy Catto, 'Wyclif and Wycliffism at Oxford 1356–1430', in *The History of the University of Oxford. Volume II. Late Medieval Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 180–182.

socially subversive messages. For instance, in the *De Civili Dominio* he argued for secular power over Church property at times of crisis.⁵⁶ The range of audiences and the arguments relayed through preaching demonstrate both its power and its malleability as a form of debate for the chroniclers and their contemporaries.

In their many different formats sermons, ranged from the highly formalised styles, such as the scholastic sermon – which divided into *thema*, *prothema*, prayer, repetition of the *thema*, a fresh introduction to the *thema*, the subdivision of the *thema* and the development of those subdivisions, and then a closing formula – to the less formal variations, such as the homily.⁵⁷ The homily, less rigorously structured than its counterparts, usually included a *thema* and *prothema* without the subsequent division and ornaments. Whatever their form all sermons shared a role as a vehicle for instruction. Prime examples of how in this period sermons were an increasingly important means for the communication of instruction to all manner of audiences are the public sermons preachers like Brinton regularly delivered to parliament – which, given that parliament itself had only become a regular occurrence in the late thirteenth century, was a matter of recent history for the chroniclers. Though there is no point in the chronicles where any chronicler definitively took up the structure of a scholastic sermon and they rarely followed the style of a homily closely, there were still elements of their criticism of the ills of society that closely echoed the genre.

Many of the chroniclers were sufficiently educated to have been closely acquainted with the form and style of scholastic sermons.⁵⁸ As discussed in Chapter One, a large proportion of the chroniclers had attended the universities or were acquainted with preachers who had. Moreover, by the late fourteenth century the scholastic sermon was appearing beyond the university milieu.⁵⁹ Other forms of university comment and debate were also appearing in the chronicles; for instance, the dialectic approach was repeatedly evident in the

⁵⁶ Anne Hudson and Anthony Kenny, 'Wyclif [Wycliffe], John [called Doctor Evangelicus] (d. 1384), Theologian, Philosopher, and Religious Reformer', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-30122>.

⁵⁷ Wenzel, *Medieval 'Artes Praedicandi'*, 114: 45, 48.

⁵⁸ See above, 71.

⁵⁹ Wenzel, *Medieval 'Artes Praedicandi'*, 114: 46.

Continuatio Eulogii.⁶⁰ However, materials such as homilies were part of the day-to-day life of many chroniclers and had a more immediate and obvious use in the didactic purpose of chronicle writing. Monastic homiletics were an essential part of the syllabuses of regular orders and encouraged reading for the spiritual edification of novices.⁶¹ So the chroniclers would usually have been addressing audiences who were accustomed to moral lessons deployed through the form of homilies, with clear moral statements, themes, and usually a scriptural root.

Thomas Walsingham displayed, as a chronicler, one of the most thoroughly developed deliveries of historical content through homiletic argumentation. Among the clearest examples of this is his reflection on the wickedness of John Wyclif and his account of how a knight named Laurence of St Martin committed a sin against the sacrament of the Eucharist. Walsingham began his report of Wyclif's doings in 1381 by referencing Job 40:18: 'Uiusus est absorbere Iordanem, et omnes Christianos merger in abissum' ('He [John Wyclif] seemed to swallow the Jordan and to plunge all Christians into the abyss').⁶² He then accused Wyclif of embracing the heterodox theories of Berengar of Tours and William of Ockham over the Mass.⁶³ From there Walsingham first explained Wyclif's beliefs and then began to recount how Sir Laurence had taken on these beliefs and, as a consequence, desecrated the host.⁶⁴ Sir Laurence took the host at communion and returned home with it. He was pursued and harangued by the priest to return it or consume it 'Christianorum more honorifice' ('honourably like a Christian').⁶⁵ He did neither, and instead the knight 'diuideret, et partem cum ostreis, partem cum cepis, et partem cum vino, deglutiret' ('devoured some of the bread with oysters, some with onions, and some with wine').⁶⁶ Eventually the knight was called before the bishop, made confession, and performed penitence for his crime. Walsingham concluded, 'Hec iccirco scripsi plenius ut omnibus elucescat quanta mala bestia

⁶⁰ Frank Scott Haydon, ed., *Eulogium (Historiarum Sive Temporis): Chronicon ab orbe condito usque ad annum Domini M.CCC.LXCI., a monacho quodam Malmesburiensi exaratum; accedunt continuationes duæ, quarum una ad annum M.CCCC.Xiii., altera ad annum M.CCCC.XC. perducta est* (London: Longman, 1858), 348–349, 356–357.

⁶¹ James G. Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2011), 81, 195.

⁶² Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 402.

⁶³ In referencing Ockham and Berengar Walsingham was following the established pattern of condemning errors by reference to earlier heresies. Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 402; Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion*, 263.

⁶⁴ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 404–406.

⁶⁵ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 404.

⁶⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 404.

que ascendit di abisso collega Sathane, Iohannes Wycliff, siue Wykkebeleue, seminavit in terra' ('I have written about this in full to make it clear to everybody what great evil that monster who ascended from the abyss, that associate of Satan, John Wyclif, or Weakbelief, sowed on earth').⁶⁷ The episode as a whole then follows the rough outline to be expected of a homily; although there is no *prothema*, the *thema*, *exempla*, judgements, evaluative terms, and the conclusion are exceptionally clear.

Following the homiletic model, Walsingham provided a salient lesson in orthodoxy for his fellow monks at St Albans. His attack on Wyclif tied into the Benedictine's counter-preaching against the Lollards.⁶⁸ The cutting remarks that thrust Wycliffites out of Christian society and highlighted the nature of the knight's sin provide ground for spiritual reinforcement and nourishment. The references to Ockham and Berengar establish Walsingham's expectation that at least a portion of his audience would have been acquainted with previous theological disputes to some extent and point towards his contribution to an ongoing social, moral, and religious debate. This is insufficient evidence to conclude that Walsingham's only audience were elite university monks, but it does suggest that he anticipated that they would be prominent amongst his readers. This contribution appears in the chronicle through the mixture of history and homily. The clearly defined pattern, along with its detailed breakdown of the evidence, proves that Walsingham integrated some of the discursive techniques of preaching into his delivery of history. Yet, it also marks a clearly different pattern of discussion to those used by Walsingham (as discussed previously in this thesis), it signals an entirely different approach to his classicised passages, and his discussion of martial prowess. Therefore, Walsingham's decision to use a homiletic style demonstrates the mutability of his commentary and suggests that he may have even been echoing this mould to satisfy himself since he could evidently have used alternative styles if he had wanted to.

The subject matter of homiletic passages was substantially different from one chronicle to another, mirroring wider concerns for the respective authors and their institutions. Walsingham was particularly focused on countering Lollardy, but the Westminster chroniclers had little interest in theological matters. Indeed, the passages in the *Westminster Chronicle* that most closely

⁶⁷ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 406.

⁶⁸ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 240.

echo the moral edification of homily were often bound to the contestation of power between the clergy and the laity. Episodes of this sort appear in both the Westminster Chronicler's section and the Westminster Monk's continuation.

Westminster Chronicler or Monk (probably the latter), discussed the bribery of the knights who served as captains on Henry Despenser's crusade in 1383 as part of a reflection on English morality and honour. The passage from the account that most closely echoes homiletic discourse comes at the end of the episode. The Monk concluded in 1383 after the crusaders had taken bribes from the French to surrender Bourbourg,

Profecto istud dampnabile factum numquam ab Anglicis militibus gestum esse cognoscimus, ut cicius temporalia lucra et momentanea contenderent servare quam bonam famam sibi accumulare que universis bonis fortuitis preminet et precellit. Nonne illud prophete vaticinium eis possumus adaptare: 'Erubescere, Sydon; ait mare'? Nonne factum istorum militum in perpetuam ignominiam Anglicis in posterum redundabit? Utique.

(We are aware of no occasion when this infamous thing has been done by knights of England, that they should sooner strive to preserve this world's ephemeral riches than to lay up for themselves that good name which outshines and surpasses all fortune's favours. Can we not apply to them the words of the prophet, 'Be thou ashamed, O Zidon, for the sea hath spoken'? Will not the action of these knights redound to the everlasting future humiliation of Englishmen? It will indeed.)⁶⁹

In a passage describing a parliament in 1384 the Monk detailed the disagreements over taxation between the king, the clergy, and the commons. He objected strenuously to the taxation of the clergy and concluded that the king threatened the clergy with trailbaston if they did not agree to provide taxation. The clergy gave in and granted him further taxes, to which the Monk responded that it bore out the text, 'sicut tenebre ejus ita et lumen ejus' ('darkness and light are both alike').⁷⁰ He expanded on this piece of scripture, reinforcing it, by describing how 'constat namque istis diebus fere in ecclesia Dei omnia luminaria fore extincta, quod dolendum est, quia premaxime tenebre obnubilant ejus superficiem usquequaque, nec est aliquis jam qui disponat se

⁶⁹ L. C. Hector and Barbara F. Harvey, eds. and trans., *The Westminster Chronicle, 1381–1394*, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 46.

⁷⁰ *Westminster*, 84.

exurgere et stare ex adverso pro ecclesia Dei' ('it is generally agreed that nowadays almost all the lamps have gone out in the Church of God, more is the pity, since the darkness that on every side shadows her face is great indeed and there is none now inclined to bestir himself and make a stand for God's Church).⁷¹

Neither instance followed the pattern of *thema, prothema*, reflection, and conclusion, nor the looser formulation of homily demonstrated by Walsingham. Instead the information was first provided and then, with the aid of a scriptural quotation, the chroniclers drew forth their conclusion. The Monk's mention of Zidon (Isaiah 23:4) and reference to the dumb watchdogs of Israel (Isaiah 56:10), discussed in Chapter Two, focused on the theme of shame and disgrace.⁷² With this parallel the chronicler unpacked the notions of vice and virtue that underlay the episode. They presented a conclusion, pointed to a scriptural theme, and then restated the failure of the knights. In doing so they used a loosely homiletic format to present a moral reading of historical events.

The passages themselves are both evidently moral commentaries. They intermix historical styles with the homiletic form as they relay lessons to the audience on proper, acceptable behaviour and the world their audience should aspire to. The audience itself, as monastic, cannot be held accountable for either the faults of the knights or the prelates, but its members do have an implicit duty to hold their countrymen up to this standard. The dual criticism of both the Crown and the prelates speaks primarily to the tendency in writers from Westminster Abbey, already discussed, to stand apart from either the laity or the universal Church. The mixture of history and homily in each piece is part of a didactic discourse. The Monk's warning that the prelates have become the 'canes muti' ('dumb dogs'), comparing them with the watchmen who failed Israel, is an assessment of the principal ills of the Church and offers a way forwards for the future that could save the spiritual health of the Church and country.⁷³ His conclusion, following the rough outline of a homily, brings the theme of the passage home, 'dolor inmensus, angustia intollerabilis, et miseria lacrimosa' (limitless sorrow, insupportable anguish, and tears of wretchedness will be the lot of churchmen who have reached eminence in conditions like

⁷¹ *Westminster*, 84.

⁷² See above, 101.

⁷³ See above, 101.

these.)⁷⁴ These final lines brought the episode full circle, combining the risk posed with the expected outcome, should matters not change. Although not quite delivering a sermon, the Monk does seem to have taken up something of the rhetorical power of the sermonic style to deliver his lesson.

The emphasis on the immorality of the knights and the failings of the clergy are common clichés amongst the polemics of the period.⁷⁵ The contrast between the shadows surrounding the Church and the light of the Church itself are reminiscent of the contradictions and paradoxes that Siegfried Wenzel established as key signifiers of the literature of 'Abuses of the Age'.⁷⁶

The movement in the *Westminster Chronicle* from history to moral conclusions is similar to the loosely formulaic style of homilies, but if we look to chroniclers such as Adam of Usk, the homiletic parts of historical didacticism become more blurred. Adam, a priest and a one-time student and doctor of canon law at Oxford, was well acquainted with both homily and the academic sermon.⁷⁷ His chronicle included descriptions of sermons he had heard or particularly enjoyed. For instance, he reported the sermon of Edmund Stafford, the bishop of Exeter, at the beginning of the Revenge Parliament in 1397, and Stafford's point that the king's power belonged solely to the king.⁷⁸ He also praised a scholastic sermon in 1399 on the theme 'Memorare nouissima tua' ('Remember thine end'), and he detailed its tripartite division.⁷⁹ His account of it showed both an awareness of the structure of such sermons and an expectation that his audience would also understand it.

However, Adam himself often blurred the lines between historical comment and homiletic comment. Early in his account, when discussing John Wyclif, Adam introduced the theme of the suffering of England by beginning, 'Salamonis iuxta prouerbium, "Ve regno cuius rex puer est"' ('In keeping with

⁷⁴ *Westminster*, 84.

⁷⁵ Polemic, in this instance, is used in the sense of a verbal or written attack upon a position rather than in relation to the scholarly polemics of the period. Somerset, *Clerical Discourse and Lay Audience in Late Medieval England*, 30; John N. King, 'Traditions of Complaint and Satire', in *A New Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, ed. Michael Hattaway, Vol. I, Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture (Malden, Mass: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 338.

⁷⁶ Wenzel, *Preachers, Poets, and the Early English Lyric*, 176.

⁷⁷ Chris Given-Wilson, 'Usk, Adam (c.1350–1430), Chronicler', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004)

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-98>.

⁷⁸ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 20.

⁷⁹ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 84.

the saying of Solomon, “Woe to the land whose king is a child”).⁸⁰ He explained that the ills of the time were attributable to King Richard’s youth. He then moved on to Wyclif. Beginning with Wyclif’s teachings against the clergy he concluded,

Vnde in pluribus regni partibus, et precipue London’ et Bristolie, uelud Iudei ad Montem Oreb propter uitulum conflatilem – Exodius triginta duo – mutuo in se reuertentes, uiginti tres milium de suis miserabilem pacientes casum merito doluerunt, Anglici inter se de fide antiqua et noua altercantes omni die sunt in pincto quasi mutuo ruinam et sedicionem inferendi.

(As a result of which, in various parts of the realm, and particularly in London and Bristol, the English people – in the same way that the Jews at Mt. Horeb, turning upon each other because of the molten calf (Exodus 32), justly had cause to bemoan the miserable fate suffered by 23,000 of their number – by quarrelling amongst themselves about the old faith and the new, are continually on the point of mutual destruction or rebellion.)⁸¹

Adam began the passage with scripture as its starting theme and expanded from there. The conclusion meshed Adam’s fears for the realm, social discontent, and scripture. By framing his concerns as fears for the future (he twice stated ‘timeo’ (‘I fear’) about events to come) Adam pushed further away from the moral dimension that dominated in the *Westminster Chronicle* and complicated the reading of his work. He demonstrated a rhetorical position in which the scriptural event provided not only the theme but also a historical comparison. Thus, he presented the conflict over Wyclif’s doctrine to the readers as a fresh and unresolved biblical crisis. There was evidently still a moral lesson on the proper ordering of society and orthodox behaviour, but it was also tied into prognostication as well as self-reflection. However, like Walsingham, he only turned to this form of expression occasionally; he was perfectly able to switch to the discussion of portents and prophecy, or to deal with more historically based arguments over Henry IV’s rights to the throne. Adam’s use of a homiletic style is part of a demonstration of the extreme mutability of his chronicle writing and his ability to slip between forms of commentary.

⁸⁰ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 6.

⁸¹ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 6.

The Westminster passages were both rounded off with a reflection on what these events meant for the future. They positioned their criticisms and used scripture as a primarily moral commentary and comparison respectively. Meanwhile, Adam used it as a practical and historical parallel. The lesson bore more resemblance to one on cyclical events than on morality. Thus, although Adam was aware of and used a roughly homiletic style, his account displayed significant differences from his contemporaries' both intellectually and politically.

The amalgamation of scriptural and moral language with historical information in the chronicles was routine, but it does not indicate that the chroniclers were echoing the argumentative style of sermons and homilies. Though Thomas Favent used metaphors that were redolent of the language of vice and virtue, this does not demonstrate that he was constructing his history in line with homilies. He referred, for example, to how the king's advisers in 1385 were 'in vinea diabolica [...] laborantes' ('labouring in the devil's vineyard').⁸² Superficially, the phrase might speak to the long tradition of sermons dealing with heresy and heterodox thought.⁸³ However, the metaphor did not lead to a clear or immediate conclusion. Instead it appears to have been a rhetorical device to libel the king's advisers. Favent also named them 'proditores' ('traitors') and described how they themselves had discussed the need to execute or punish as traitors all who had 'regem excitarunt et coactarunt ad ea consenciendum' ('excited and compelled the king to consent') to the commission established during the previous parliament.⁸⁴ Appealing to an audience he clearly held to be in the right, Favent can have had less cause to provide moral correction. Also, as a lay clerk he is likely to have been less involved with the preaching traditions in which other chroniclers would have been immersed. Instead the lesson he provided was a focused series of criticisms of his audiences' opponents. Thus, Favent's chronicle exhibited the

⁸² Favent, *Historia*, 7.

⁸³ The image of the vineyard was commonly used in scripture and preaching. It had been notably associated with heresy through Bernard of Clairvaux's commentary on the Song of Songs, but there are a number of contemporary sermons which drew upon the imagery of vineyards. Favent, 'The Manner and Form of the Miraculous Parliament', 236; Dodd, 'Was Thomas Favent a Political Pamphleteer?', 402; Siegfried Wenzel, trans., 'Visitation of a Monastery', in *Preaching in the Age of Chaucer: Selected Sermons in Translation* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 280; Siegfried Wenzel, trans., 'To the Clergy', in *Preaching in the Age of Chaucer: Selected Sermons in Translation* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 256; Beverly Mayne Kienzle, 'Defending the Lord's Vineyard: Hildegard of Bingen's Preaching against the Cathars', in *Medieval Monastic Preaching*, ed. Carolyn Muessig (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 164.

⁸⁴ Favent, *Historia*, 7.

features of an account one would expect for a lay audience who were the heroes of the history.

In this spectrum of chronicles some stand out for their lack of homiletic material. The Cistercian chronicles of Kirkstall, Dieulacres, and Whalley are all brief, and although there was some moral reflection it rarely followed the pattern of any form of sermon. Meanwhile, John Strecche's chronicle, in its latter and most original parts, shows little sign of a homiletic approach (as in a narrative format based around the principles of preaching, although scriptural references do appear in his text). Arguably Strecche's account of a miracle attributed to Archbishop Scrope, included in the chronicle after Henry IV's death, does contain some elements we might consider to exist within a similar schema, for instance, the note that not even imperial majesty is able to strike back against God's gifts.⁸⁵ Even his account of the Oldcastle Revolt focused on the events and the prophetic nature of Henry V's victory over the Lollard rebels. The focus on a classically influenced historical approach and the brilliance of Henry V perhaps explains the lack of a morally edifying message.

Henry Knighton's chronicle provides an interesting counterpoint to those chroniclers who used some of the key language of homilies but not the argumentative and edifying style. Knighton rarely drew on scriptural quotations in the style of Walsingham or the Westminster authors. He often delved into more chivalric material or prosaic records of the details of events. However, he also led his audience through events to spiritually elevating conclusions. A substantial section of Knighton's chronicle for 1382 focused on the confessions and errors of John Wyclif and his followers.⁸⁶ Within this section of his history Knighton described many sermons delivered by Wycliffite preachers and their teachings. Knighton regarded many Lollard practices as inherently problematic, including, for instance, Wyclif's translation of the Bible from Latin to English. Knighton attacked this on social and intellectual grounds arguing, 'unde per ipsum fit uulgare et magis apertum laicis et mulieribus legere scientibus, quam

⁸⁵ The episode is similar to a miracle recorded in the *Continuatio Eulogii*, and Adam of Usk also mentioned it. It suggests that Strecche's view of Henry IV was more nuanced than the praise for him at the beginning of his reign suggested as in this episode Strecche praised one of Henry IV's most well-known opponents. British Museum Additional MS. 35295, fo. 265r; R. G. Davies, 'After the Execution of Archbishop Scrope: Henry IV, the Papacy and the English Episcopate, 1405–8', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 59, no. 1 (1976), 41; J. W. McKenna, 'Popular Canonization as Political Propaganda: The Cult of Archbishop Scrope', *Speculum* 45, no. 4 (1970): 608–623.

⁸⁶ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 238–332.

solet esse clericus admodum literatis et bene intelligentibus' ('so he made that common and open to the laity, and to women who were able to read, which used to be for literate and perceptive clerks').⁸⁷ Here is a self-revealing complaint that shows that Knighton's own Latin chronicle was intended for literate and perceptive clerks, probably the Austin canons of his house.

Knighton moved away from such complaints to a refutation of Wyclif and eventually an illustrative story, similar in many regards to Walsingham's tale of Laurence of St Martin. Knighton recounted how 'unus venerabilis miles nomine Cornelius Cloune' ('a venerable knight called Corneilius Cloyne') upheld Wyclif's conclusions that the sacrament was simply bread.⁸⁸ The knight went to a mass in London and at the elevation of the bread saw only bread. However, 'in fractione uero hostie miles respexit et uidit oculo suo corporali in minibus fratis celbrantis ueram carnem crudam et sanguine lentam diursam in tres partes' ('on the breaking of the bread the knight looked again, and saw with his own eyes, in the hands of the celebrant friar, true flesh, raw and bloody, divided into three parts').⁸⁹ The description of the miracle concluded, Knighton explained how the knight came to relate his experience to a congregation and promised to fight and die for the cause of transubstantiation if necessary. Superficially this episode cannot be classed as homiletic. It neither begins nor ends with a scriptural passage, and in many ways, it is simply a brief and illustrative miracle story. It might even be considered a form of complaint literature with the concern it expressed that the spiritual corruption of the Lollards was a corrupting force undermining the true faith.⁹⁰ Yet Knighton also used it to teach a clear theological and moral lesson. He began with the theme of Lollard errors and eventually proved them false, after expanding on them, through this episode. Although not a homily in the strict sense, there is a clear intertextual quality to the piece, echoing the spiritual edification and layout of homily through historical material.

The chroniclers' use of homilies and sermons was not even, and it may have been determined by their audience, though for most of the chronicles the evidence that they were deeply aware of their audience is scant. For all that they were, as discussed, aware of the didactic potential of their work, the

⁸⁷ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 244.

⁸⁸ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 260–262.

⁸⁹ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 262.

⁹⁰ Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers*, 60.

mutability of their writing suggests that perhaps the intentions of the genre interested them less than its rhetorical power. Potentially, then, despite their own suggestions, the style of their accounts could, at times, be as important to the chroniclers as the substance of their accounts. Some chroniclers, though, such as Walsingham or Knighton, used forms of preaching that were particularly focused and addressed dangers and threats such as Lollardy. The lessons they drew established the conflict between orthodoxy and heterodoxy and the perceived need for the moral enlightenment of their brethren by reference to these theological conflicts. Incorporating the homiletic style, chroniclers blended their work with a pervasive and persuasive argumentative and didactic format. Yet, there were still aspects of other genres that were part of this interplay. Hints of radical literary forms such as complaint and prophecy appear in the passage from Westminster, Adam of Usk, Knighton, and Favent.

Commenting on Government

There was a significant overlap between preaching and political philosophy.⁹¹ Homily provided a format for the chronicler's transmission of societal criticism and moral lessons, and such lessons were often intertwined with the proper governance of the realm and the common weal. Even orthodox and powerful preachers directed corrective moral diatribes towards the political establishment. Thomas Brinton, in a sermon to the Good Parliament in 1376, expounded, 'sed numquid est scitum et quasi vndique predicatum quomodo singularis persone non virtuose sed viciose et scandalose per multa tempora habuerunt principale regimen huius regni' ('But is it not known, and almost everywhere publicly acknowledged, that it is not people who incline to virtue but those who lead vicious and scandalous lives who have long had the chief share in the government of this kingdom?').⁹² Brinton delivered a clear critique of Parliament and the failure of the rule of law. His sermon served as a polemic

⁹¹ Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers*, 103.

⁹² Thomas Brinton, *The Sermons of Thomas Brinton, Bishop of Rochester, 1373–1389. Volume II*, ed. Mary Aquinas Devlin, Camden Society 3rd Series, Vol. 86 (London: R.H.S., 1954), 318; translated in Siegfried Wenzel, trans., 'Convocation (Thomas Brinton)', in *Preaching in the Age of Chaucer: Selected Sermons in Translation* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 242, 244; Christopher Fletcher, 'Virtue and the Common Good: Moral Discourse and Political Practice in the Good Parliament, 1376', in *Charisma and Religious Authority: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Preaching, 1200-1500*, ed. Miri Rubin and Katherine Ludwig Jansen, Europa Sacra 4 (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2010), 197–214.

against certain injustices, but also as a call to arms for a fairly generic vision of the virtuous kingdom. His sermon extols the importance of virtuous counsellors, of justice, of the power of parliament. His sermons echo the basic tropes and themes of commentaries and medieval political philosophy. This type of public sermon would have been known to many of the chroniclers, there are several mentions of the sermons preached in parliament, including Thomas Brinton's, for instance. Combined with the circulation of texts like John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*, the *Secretum Secretorum*, and in the universities and at court Giles of Rome's *De Regimine Principum*, it is probable that many of the chroniclers were exposed to some form of commentary on government, even if the sources they drew upon were disparate.

We cannot expect the chroniclers continually to comment on the government, either by following one particular strand of the *speculum principis* genre – be that John of Salisbury, Giles of Rome, or others – or by adopting the manner of a preacher. They were, after all, composing historical texts which to an extent were intended to function as an accurate record. Their comments, however, can provide insights into their own complicated and inconsistent relationship with temporal power. This necessarily overlaps with certain aspects of complaint literature as well, which often provided advice to the king. Indeed, the difficulty of fixing any part of a chroniclers' comments on government to a single genre, let alone a single text, serves to highlight the inherent difficulties in discussing the precise influences to which the chroniclers were responding.

There were some exceptions to this rule. The author of the *GHQ* referenced Giles of Rome by name several times throughout his history to point to examples of Henry V's wisdom as a military commander.⁹³ The author of the *GHQ*'s use of Giles as an authority – possibly simply the closest to hand – to demonstrate Henry V's application of the virtues and military leadership expected of a king is a demonstration of the casual use of such authorities and may indicate an expectation that readers would recognise the significance of such an authority. Texts like the *De Regimine Principum* frequently featured historical examples to prove points, and its use by the author of the *GHQ* might suggest that in turn he was appropriating this purpose in part, using the textual examples and the account of Henry V's deeds to prove a point to his audience:

⁹³ Frank Taylor and John Smith Roskell, eds. and trans., *Gesta Henrici Quinti: The Deeds of Henry the Fifth*, Oxford medieval texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 28, 40, 42.

demonstrating through example and narrative that Henry's war with France was intelligently executed and supported by divine mandate.

Common, schoolroom authorities, like John of Salisbury in his *Policraticus*, used history as an extended series of examples for comparison to verify the wisdom of his advice.⁹⁴ He observed in his prologue to the *Policraticus* that 'exempla maiorum, quae sunt incitamenta et fomenta uirtutis, nullum omnino erigerent aut seruarent, nisi pia sollicitudo scriptorum et triumphatrix inertiae diligentia eadem ad posteros transmisisset' ('the examples of our ancestors, which are incitements and inducements to virtue, never would have encouraged and been heeded by everyone, unless through devotion, care and diligence, writers triumphed over idleness and transmitted these things to posterity').⁹⁵ The emphasis on didactic value and posterity was evidently one that had much in common with the historical thought of the fourteenth century.⁹⁶ So, at a foundational level we may anticipate a strong similarity between the chronicles and the major works of governmental theory that were in circulation in the fourteenth century. Whether this appeared as an indirect consequence of a common methodological framework must remain uncertain. However, incidents of political commentary in this didactic pattern do represent an amalgamation of multiple intellectual traditions in the chronicles.

Theoretically works like the *De Regimine Principum* were addressed to great lords, kings, princes, and rulers. Giles of Rome had composed it for Philip IV of France in the late thirteenth century, and its circulation in Richard II's court, in potentially aspirant noble houses, and at Henry V's court through Thomas Hoccleve suggests that it continued to carry intellectual currency as theoretical text for princes.⁹⁷ These audiences were distinct from those of the chroniclers who, as discussed, primarily addressed a monastic audience. Amongst the texts composed closest to the king the *GHQ* stands out. However, the *GHQ*, written on behalf of the royal court, was not addressed to Henry V so much as to his

⁹⁴ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 144–145; Peter von Moos, 'The Use of Exempla in the "Policraticus" of John of Salisbury', *Studies in Church History Subsidia* 3 (1994), 208.

⁹⁵ John of Salisbury, *Ioannis Saresberiensis episcopi Carnotensis Policratici sive De nugis curialium et vestigiis philosophorum libri 8; recognovit et prolegomenis, apparatu critico, commentario, indicibus instruxit Clemens C.I. Webb*, ed. Clement Charles Julian Webb (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 12; translated in, John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, 3; Moos, 'The Use of Exempla in the "Policraticus" of John of Salisbury'.

⁹⁶ See above, 278–281.

⁹⁷ J. A. Burrow, 'Hoccleve [Oocleve], Thomas', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-13415/version/0>.

magnates – probably the prelates, given the emphasis on Henry V's devotion and his special relationship with the divine. Nevertheless, its court connections perhaps explain why this text had some of the clearest references to Giles of Rome or any such author.

This does not mean comments on government would have been expected to be wasted: some monks and clerics would go on to become abbots, priors, bishops, or occupy other roles in the ecclesiarchy. Furthermore, as the government affected them all, so political philosophy had a continual relevance, if only as an intellectual exercise.

The detailing of parliamentary affairs featured as part of the textual environment chroniclers were engaged with, as newsletters, details of parliamentary process, and even propagandistic accounts circulated through houses. It also seems to have featured as a matter of interest for the historical record: Knighton repeatedly addressed the proper order of parliament and the relationship between a king and his lords. This was fairly common amongst chroniclers, many of the most detailed political commentaries in the chronicles clustered around parliamentary sessions. In his account for the sessions from 1386 to 1388 Knighton was especially vocal as he followed the events surrounding the Lords Appellant.⁹⁸ His account included large portions of text taken from the articles of the Lords Appellant laying out their demands to the king, and the various statutes imposed at the Cambridge Parliament in 1388.⁹⁹ In his record of the 1386 parliament Knighton included a detailed and instructive speech from the earl of Arundel to the king. The earl, according to Knighton, stated the people of England

habent enim ex antiquo statuto, et de facto non longe retroactis temporibus experienter (quod dolendum est habito), si rex ex maligno consilio quocumque uel inepta contumacia aut contemptu seu proterua uoluntate singulari, aut quouis modo irregulari se alienauerit a populo suo, nec uoluerit per iura regni et statuta ac laudabiles ordinationes cum salubri consilio dominorum et procerum regni gubernari et regulari, set capiose in suis insanis consiliis propriam uoluntatem suam singularem proterue exercere, extunc licitum est eis cum communi assensu et

⁹⁸ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 340–526.

⁹⁹ For further discussion of the 1388 parliament see, J. A. Tuck, 'The Cambridge Parliament, 1388', *The English Historical Review* 84, no. 331 (1969): 225–243.

consensu populi regni ipsum regem de regali solio abrogare, et propinquiores aliquem de stirpe regia loco eius in regni solio sublimare (have an ancient law, which not long since, lamentably had to be invoked, which provides that if the king, upon some evil counsel, or from wilfulness and contempt, or moved by his violent will, or in any other improper way, estrange himself from his people, and will not be governed and guided by the laws of the land, and its enactments and laudable ordinances, and the wholesome counsel of the lords and nobles of the kingdom, but wrong-headedly, upon his own unsound conclusions, follows the promptings of his untampered will, then it would be lawful with the common assent and agreement of the people of the realm to put down the king from his royal seat, and raise another of the royal lineage in his place).¹⁰⁰

Knighton's delivery of Arundel's speech was framed from the position of Arundel as the wise counsellor to Richard II. This casting of the speaker provided an authoritative tone to the political debate. Arundel's speech challenged sovereign authority. To frame the debate through Walter Ullmann's models of 'theocratic' or 'feudal' models of kingship, Arundel's speech was heavily on the side of feudal kingship.¹⁰¹ Ullmann's models posed 'theocratic' kingship as kingship without constraint based on divine authority, whilst 'feudal' kingship depends on the rule of law, the king's relationship with his subjects, and the common interest of the realm.¹⁰² Arundel's speech established that the king's authority, and indeed his title, relied on the tolerance and support of the people.

The speech was framed as a salutary lesson to Richard, advising on behaviour to avoid as a prince. It spoke to the common themes of the consequences of tyranny and the symptoms of ill-rule.¹⁰³ Arundel laid out Richard's vulnerability in light of Edward II and the foundations for the English political system. Authority derived from ancient laws, and the laws of the land, which Knighton indicated should be the king's guidelines for his rule. The king must obey the law and listen to the counsel of the magnates or else face being overthrown. The language of kingship that Knighton used (see Chapter One)

¹⁰⁰ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 360.

¹⁰¹ Walter Ullmann, *Medieval Papalism: The Political Theories of the Medieval Canonists*, Routledge Library Editions, Political Science, v. 36 (London: Routledge, [1949] 2010), 66–69.

¹⁰² Ullmann, *Medieval Papalism*, 66–69.

¹⁰³ Cary J. Nederman and Catherine Campbell, 'Priests, Kings, and Tyrants: Spiritual and Temporal Power in John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*', *Speculum* 66, no. 3 (1991): 572–590.

was tightly controlled and avoided elevating the status of the king.¹⁰⁴ In this speech Arundel drove home the position of the king as the first among equals. Kings were, he pointed out, replaceable. The emphasis on the importance of counsel and the people of the realm in governance could apply to anyone within the realm. This applied whether the audience were members of the increasingly powerful gentry, local magnates resisting royal interference, or clerks who similarly had an interest in establishing their own freedoms and authority.¹⁰⁵ Knighton's integration of this comment on the government shifted the form of his narrative, moving away from preaching as he recorded a more secular debate.

Not all instances of comment were as radical as Arundel's attack on Richard II's government. Although after Richard's deposition discussion of the reasons for the event was common, few chroniclers included such debates whilst a king was still on the throne.¹⁰⁶ Nonetheless, lessons on good rule were not unusual. Walsingham provided a didactic commentary and a positively charged account of parliament in his record of the Good Parliament of 1376, and at Richard II's coronation in 1377.¹⁰⁷ During much of Richard's reign, Walsingham was a strong advocate for conciliar or parliamentary government, though there were significant fluctuations in his views. For example, in 1376 he praised the knights of the shires and claimed that it was believed they were inspired by God; in 1377 Walsingham complained that the knights in parliament had 'aberrantes a uero' ('strayed from the truth').¹⁰⁸ In such instances Walsingham criticised or praised the elements of government as they happened to conform to his interests. In 1377 the knights' great mistake that left Walsingham so aghast was that they agreed to a poll tax on the country.¹⁰⁹ Overall though, Walsingham firmly advocated the importance of parliament in running the country, remarking in 1377 that it was necessary for the common good.¹¹⁰ So, Walsingham continually argued for a political model throughout his

¹⁰⁴ See above, 79–97.

¹⁰⁵ Elliot Richard Kendall, *Lordship and Literature: John Gower and the Politics of the Great Household*, Oxford English Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2008), 31.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. John M. Theilmann, 'Caught between Political Theory and Political Practice: "The Record and Process of the Deposition of Richard II"', *History of Political Thought* 25, no. 4 (2004): 599–619.

¹⁰⁷ The standard work on the Good Parliament is G. Holmes, *The Good Parliament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).

¹⁰⁸ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 2, 98.

¹⁰⁹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 100.

¹¹⁰ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 72.

commentary on parliament, such asides supporting a parliamentary model even if he occasionally criticised the participants.

With Richard II's overthrow in 1399 Walsingham turned towards the oaths that Henry IV made when ascending the throne. The coronation itself was critical to Henry's legitimisation, and as Paul Strohm has noted, Walsingham supplied a tale of a miracle during it in the form of the holy oil of St Thomas Becket that was supposedly used to crown Henry IV.¹¹¹ Walsingham, drew out elements such as the oaths Richard had sworn in 1377 and provided a record of how the king is to be crowned and the questions to be asked of him.¹¹² The oaths and procedures provided a standard to which Henry, and indeed any king, could be held. Among other observances, the archbishop was to ask the king to confirm that he would grant and preserve 'leges et consuetudines et liberates ab antiquis iustis et deuotis Deo regibus plebe Anglorum concessas' ('the laws and customs that have been granted to the people of England by righteous men of old and by kings devoted to God').¹¹³ Henry also swore oaths that he would not show special favour on the basis of rank; instead he promised 'quemlibet iuxta iura regni fore sine ficticia iudicandum' ('to judge each and every man in accordance with the laws of the realm without exception').¹¹⁴ Henry's oaths as relayed by Walsingham established the principles a monarch must rule by cementing for future readers a baseline against which to measure Henry's performance as king. However, their instructive elements appear to be aimed towards the monks of St Albans, as he claimed he found it described in the books of Westminster and the archbishop of Canterbury.¹¹⁵ Walsingham's record of both Henry's private oaths and his coronation oaths point towards a propagation of authority delivered and dependent on law and custom, but that he obtained the information from records in Westminster and Canterbury suggests that he regarded the Church as sanctioning and upholding that authority. Whilst the coronation of Henry IV with the holy oil of Thomas Becket suggests divine support, it is balanced in Walsingham's narrative by the

¹¹¹ Paul Strohm, *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation 1399–1422* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 208.

¹¹² Thomas Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle: the Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham. 1394–1422*, eds. and trans. John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs, and Leslie Watkiss, Vol. II, Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011), 170, 226–236.

¹¹³ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 230.

¹¹⁴ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 220.

¹¹⁵ The order of the coronation Walsingham included is from the fourteenth-century 'fourth recension'. Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, II: 226, fn. 311.

reminder of the oaths that Richard II had broken and the emphasis on the importance of the common good of the people of England. Walsingham overtly contributed to the records of St Albans by claiming documentation from Canterbury and Westminster. In doing so, he preserved information for his house, providing comment alongside it on the values and virtues of kingship and governance, comment which lay juxtaposed to his criticism of the end of Richard II's reign.

Chroniclers often provided accounts that were superficially self-contradictory. Thomas Favent provided a two-sided discussion of politics in his short history that acted as a negative commentary on Richard II's rule, advanced a more conciliar and parliamentary orientated form of kingship, and yet removed the stain of guilt from Richard himself. Although Favent wrote as a secular clerk for a lay audience his political commentary overlapped with Walsingham's and Knighton's. In appealing to an audience of burghers he had good reason to promote their power and the power of the commons within government.¹¹⁶ When describing the state of the realm in 1386 Favent explained that Richard was 'primitiuis adolescencie sue conuallibus florisset' ('cavorting in the glens of his youth').¹¹⁷ Meanwhile, various counsellors, including Robert Tresilian, the chief justice; Robert de Vere, the duke of Ireland; and Sir Nicholas Bremre, former mayor of London, were 'viciose viuentes, dictum regem deludentes, negocia regis nee regni prospicientes, sed sibi ipsi mamona iniquitatis pluries per nephas amplectentes' ('living in vice, deluding the said king, concerned neither with the king's nor the kingdom's business but embracing the mammon of iniquity for themselves through much wickedness').¹¹⁸ Their sins, according to Favent, included unnecessary taxation and sowing disharmony in the realm. The passage clearly demonstrated both the sinfulness of Richard's government and the king's inability to govern wisely for himself at his age and implicitly acknowledged the necessity of good conciliar rule to guide the kingdom. It followed the generic criticisms of poor rulership, marking the problems of Richard's reign almost by rote.

Favent's censure of the influence of wicked advisers, and his lamentation over the impact of immorality on the realm is not particularly inventive. Instead it

¹¹⁶ For discussion of Favent's audience see, Dodd, 'Was Thomas Favent a Political Pamphleteer?'

¹¹⁷ Favent, 'The Manner and Form of the Miraculous Parliament', 231; Favent, *Historia*, 1.

¹¹⁸ Favent, 'The Manner and Form of the Miraculous Parliament', 232; Favent, *Historia*, 2.

echoes the traditional and well-worn models of political criticism; for instance, his remark that the state of the realm that was ‘plaga magna percutitur’ (‘lacerated with great wounds’) by their iniquity was part of a commonplace, almost stock, language of poor governance, used by barons and the rebels of the Peasants’ Revolt alike to condemn their opponents.¹¹⁹ The description of the realm as wounded implied the traditional and trite analogy of the state as a body.¹²⁰ At this level, directed to the burghers of London, the account appears to function as a clichéd assault on his, probable, audience’s enemies (particularly Nicholas Brembre). As a piece of historical writing it demonstrates the possible truth behind many chroniclers’ accounts: that at times they were going through the motions of criticism, using terms with a clear cultural cachet to argue without engaging in more complex discussions of exactly how the king’s counsellors had strayed.

Favent’s history follows a more positivist view of events, leading from the bleak days in 1386 to the triumph of the Lords Appellant and the burghers of London in the Merciless Parliament of 1388. Favent drew his account to a close following Richard’s renewal of his coronation oath before parliament and the lords with the archbishop’s excommunication of all those who contravened or impeded anything agreed on by the parliament, ‘et hec forma observancie parliamenti per totum regnum solempnizabatur’ (‘and this form of observance of parliament was solemnized through the whole kingdom’).¹²¹ Possibly Favent was depicting the king as an intrinsic part of the governmental system, bound to observe the social contract with his subjects, but equally it may be a neat conclusion to the narrative: king and parliament in harmony once more, now that the wicked counsellors were gone. There is little of practical value in the account for the audience beyond the usual platitudes against wicked advisers. The assaults on the character of the particular individuals surrounding the king were far more concretely formed and provided a justification for their removal. However, the insertion of details of how Robert Tresilian carried papers covered

¹¹⁹ Favent, ‘The Manner and Form of the Miraculous Parliament’, 232; Favent, *Historia*, 2; Joel Rosenthal, ‘The King’s “Wicked Advisers” and Medieval Baronial Rebellions’, *Political Science Quarterly* 82, no. 4 (1967): 595.

¹²⁰ Nicholas Perkins, *Hoccleve’s Regiment of Princes: Counsel and Constraint* (Cambridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2001), 127.

¹²¹ Favent, *Historia*, 24; translated in Favent, ‘The Manner and Form of the Miraculous Parliament’, 252.

in demons' names is suggestive of an attempt to libel him rather than a more complex political statement.¹²²

There were a number of chroniclers who, unlike Favent, were proponents of a more theocratic model for kingship and who, through their commentaries, advanced a natural political order in which the king was supreme. In particular, the Cistercian chronicler of the short *Kirkstall Chronicle* and the first chronicler of Dieulacres Abbey both provided accounts of the years surrounding Richard II's overthrow which were in support of Richard II and emphasised the absolute sovereignty of the king.¹²³ The Kirkstall chronicler echoed scriptural passages, exalting in Richard's glory during the Revenge Parliament in 1397. After the earl of Arundel's execution on the king's orders, the Chronicler remarked, 'Olim quidam sol erat tectus nube scilicet regia magestas sub aliena potestate set iam armis saliens in montibus et transiliens colles suis cornubus nubes et sole ventulavit et solis lucem clarius demonstravit' ('Previously the sun was hidden behind a cloud – in other words, the royal majesty was obscured by a hostile force – but now, soaring in arms above the mountains, and bounding over the hills with his might, he dispersed the clouds with his sun, whose light shines ever more brightly').¹²⁴ The Kirkstall chronicler's account suggests a basic premise for a defence of Richard's character and decisions, though the chronicler does not expand upon it. It does, however, speak to the theocratic model of divinely sponsored kingship.¹²⁵ Describing Richard II in this fashion the Kirkstall chronicler legitimised the king's revenge on the Lords Appellant and, albeit in passing, promoted an image of theocratic kingship. The removal of the hostile force of the Lords Appellants allowed Richard to take glorious command of his kingdom.

The Dieulacres chronicler similarly engaged with the discourse on kingship and political legitimacy by promoting Richard's inalienable right to rule. In the account of 1397, the Chronicler justified Richard's retribution on the Lords

¹²² Favent, *Historia*, 18.

¹²³ For Kirkstall's support of Richard II see, John Taylor, 'Richard II in the Chronicles', in *Richard II: The Art of Kingship*, eds. Anthony Goodman and James Gillespie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 18.

¹²⁴ The passage is possibly a reference to Habakkuk 3:4 or Job 37:21, though it may also be referring to Richard's adoption of the symbol of a rising sun. Given-Wilson, *Chronicles of the Revolution*, 96; M. V. Clarke and N. Denholm-Young, 'The Kirkstall Chronicle, 1355–1400', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 15, no. 1 (1931), 131.

¹²⁵ Helen Lacey, "'Mercy and Truth Preserve the King": Richard II's Use of the Royal Pardon in 1397 and 1398', in *Fourteenth Century England IV*, ed. J. S. Hamilton (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2006), 124.

Appellant as he argued that 'absurdum est servum vel subditum contra suum dominum esse rebellem' ('for a servant or subject to rebel against his lord is ridiculous').¹²⁶ He added that it had been at God's direction that Richard took revenge on the Lords Appellant and assiduously dispelled rumours of Richard's involvement in the death of his uncle (the duke of Gloucester).¹²⁷ The statement, although verging on an attack on the king's enemies rather than a piece of advice literature, again carried with it an implicit political model. The Chronicler positioned himself neatly for the theocratic model in which a king neither should nor reasonably could be overthrown or opposed. This was contrary to Walsingham and Knighton, who emphasised the justifications for the removal of a monarch and whose accounts suggest they imagined a greater co-dependence between the king and his subjects. So, the pro-theocratic, pro-Ricardian statements from the Kirkstall and Dieulacres chroniclers are revealing comments on the government of the kingdom. Although brief they are also illustrative of the lack of homogeneity between chroniclers' readings of the political status quo but offer what might be regarded as an establishment view of power.

Examination of their audience does not adequately explain this alternative viewpoint. Circulation between the Cistercian abbeys should still mean that their audience was primarily the regular clergy. Although Kirkstall and Dieulacres were both connected to the Lancastrian affinity and fell within the wider estates of the Lancastrian dynasty, the accounts run counter to the preference for Henry IV we might expect.¹²⁸ Indeed, in an unusually metatextual moment, the second Dieulacres chronicler even criticised the first for his Ricardian partisanship. The tension within the texts highlights issues with assuming that the chroniclers were necessarily writers who produced commentaries which suited a single identity. Even chroniclers like Henry Knighton, who were clearly loyal to their local magnate (in his case the dukes of Lancaster), had multiple allegiances. St Mary of the Meadows was a royal

¹²⁶ Clarke and Galbraith, 'The Deposition of Richard II', 168; translated in Given-Wilson, *Chronicles of the Revolution*, 96.

¹²⁷ Clarke and Galbraith, 'The Deposition of Richard II', 168.

¹²⁸ G. C. Baugh et al., 'Houses of Cistercian Monks: The Abbey of Dieulacres', in *A History of the County of Stafford*, eds. M. W. Greenslade and R. B. Pugh, Vol. 3 (London: Victoria County History, 1970), 230–235, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/staffs/vol3/pp230-235>; William Page, ed., 'Houses of Cistercian Monks: Kirkstall', in *A History of the County of York*, vol. 3 (London: Victoria County History, 1974), 142–146, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/yorks/vol3/pp142-146>; Simon Walker, *The Lancastrian Affinity 1361-1399* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

abbey, though it had been founded with a grant from Robert Bossu, second earl of Leicester in 1143.¹²⁹ So for the most part the chroniclers were entangled by multiple intersecting and occasionally conflicting loyalties, like Henry Knighton. Whilst it is currently impossible to provide a concrete explanation for the contradiction between the likely allegiances of the Dieulacres and Kirkstall chroniclers and their narratives, the disconnection does illustrate the inconsistencies that lie at the heart of chronicle writing in the period.

The chroniclers often echoed multiple forms of debate within a single account, and in the case of their comment on government there are occasional overlaps with texts like the *De Regimine Principum*, but more frequently they seem to use a basic idea of good rule as the foundation for polemics against hated public figures. The chronicler of the *Vita Ricardi Secundi's* posthumous report on Richard II exemplifies the latter form of comment. He described how Richard II 'spreto antiquorum procerum Consilio, iuuenibus adherebat, magis eorum quam illorum consilium sequens. In dandis prodigus, in conuiuuiis et indumentis ultra modum splendidus, ad bella contra hostes infortunatus et timidus' ('spurned the advice of his elders and betters and preferred to take counsel from the young, [and] he was capricious in his behaviour. He was prodigious with gifts, extravagantly ostentatious in his dress and pastimes, and unlucky as well as faint-hearted in foreign warfare').¹³⁰ The passage refers to many of the key signifiers of good or bad kingship commonly in circulation in the Late Middle Ages.¹³¹ There are perhaps echoes of warnings such as those of John of Salisbury against extravagance and his advice that the prince should listen to the wise and elderly, but they are too generic to suggest any close relationship between the two.¹³² At the least, though, the chronicler made his antipathy towards Richard II clear, highlighting his flaws for posterity, and

¹²⁹ A. Hamilton Thompson, *The Abbey of St Mary of the Meadows Leicester* (Leicester: Edgar Backus, 1949), 2, 23.

¹³⁰ The Westminster Chronicler similarly criticised Richard for being overly generous. By contrast, Adam of Usk praised the bishop of Asaph, who spoke out to encourage the king to be generous rather than niggardly. *Westminster*, 162; Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 82; *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, 166; Given-Wilson, *Chronicles of the Revolution*, 241.

¹³¹ Terry Jones has challenged the assumption that Richard II acted as a tyrant, but the author of the *Vita Ricardi Secundi* particularly appealed to the tropes of tyranny and poor rule. John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, 22, 163, 178–179; Nederman and Campbell, 'Priests, Kings, and Tyrants: Spiritual and Temporal Power in John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*'; Karen Bollermann and Cary J. Nederman, *A Companion to John of Salisbury* (Leiden: Brill, 2015); Terry Jones, 'Was Richard II a Tyrant? Richard's Use of the Books of Rules for Princes', in *Fourteenth Century England V*, ed. Nigel Saul (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2008), 130–160.

¹³² John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, 207, 33, 80.

perhaps offering a lesson to his readers on what made a poor king. Richard's inconsistency and inability to govern himself moderately served to justify his overthrow.

However, the chronicler was also engaging in a complaint against Richard, and one that mingled the ideas of vice, virtue, and due punishment with advice on how to rule well. Richard II's death – through starvation in Pontefract castle – was cast as a deserved end by the chronicler. “Qui gladio percutit, gladio peribit.” Quia dum nonnullos gladio materiali leuiter occidi iussit, ipse in fine gladio famis irremediabiliter sine liberis uitam terminauit’ (“He who lives by the sword shall die by the sword” [Matt 26:52]. For since he had in the past so thoughtlessly condemned many people to die by the earthly sword, so it came about that in the end he himself died, childless and friendless, by the sword of hunger’).¹³³ This passage is placed directly before the description of Richard's personality and his behaviour as a monarch. The chronicler justified the death of Richard II as a natural outcome of his behaviour whilst king. The chain of consequence, starting with the scriptural quotation and leading through Richard's behaviour to his own demise implied a divine judgement. This cast the entire episode as a somewhat scripturally orientated lesson against the depredations Richard inflicted on the realm.

The chroniclers were not significantly constrained by the historical genre. Though perhaps not at a particularly elevated level, the episodes suggest that there was a wide spectrum of engagement by the chroniclers with the governance of the realm. They also demonstrate that the chronicles were often far from defending the centre of government. Rather, they appear to have felt their interest groups lacked sufficient political sway.

Criticism in the Chronicles

The chroniclers were addressing concerns over social, political, and religious issues, often delivering blistering criticisms of societal ills. These criticisms are a slim part of the wider, multifaceted literature of abuse circulating in the period, though usually without the allegorical or satirical aspects of the broad genre of ‘complaint’ literature. As Coleman has argued, social, political, and religious

¹³³ Stow and Herford, *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, 166; Given-Wilson, *Chronicles of the Revolution*, 241.

complaints overlapped: a writer might condemn failures in society from a religious perspective or critique the religious from the perspective of laymen.¹³⁴ The chroniclers were not, however, bound to any one form of comment. Instead their melding of different forms of comment and criticism marked them as both an engaged and distinctive constituency. The emphasis on didactic history and posterity which appears in the chronicles complements the modes of expression they were responding to and using.

The chroniclers were addressing audiences who, whilst usually understood as part of a conservative establishment, had grievances to air. Coleman has asserted that because of the chroniclers' advanced educations and awareness of the policies of the ruling classes, they were 'the worst sources for dealing with the growing voice of popular discontent' in their era.¹³⁵ She stated that they had a 'uniform attitude of contempt and fear of the lower orders'.¹³⁶ Whilst both statements are arguably fairly accurate they do not invalidate the importance of the chroniclers as valuable sources for examining the voice of clerical discontent, and certainly not the voice of the beneficed or regular clergy. Indeed, one area of agreement cannot be regarded as sufficient to describe multiple identities as a single community. In the fourteenth century, Coleman has noted, poems sympathetic to a wide variety of groups launched a barrage of complaint against every social group and class.¹³⁷ The regular clergy may have been sympathetic with such complaints. They were certainly aware that their abbeys were funding the Crown's war effort; that their way of life was under siege by anticlerical preachers; and that as both individuals and communities they had an interest in the common weal of the realm. The chroniclers were consciously or unconsciously taking part in the debates common to the literature of abuse.

Ideas, narrative strategies, and models for complaint were passing back and forth between Latinate and vernacular authors. Authors of vernacular complaint narratives such as *Mum and the Sothsegger* were drawing on history, advice literature, and preaching.¹³⁸ Preachers were taking part in complaints

¹³⁴ Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers*, 61.

¹³⁵ Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers*, 49.

¹³⁶ Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers*, 49.

¹³⁷ Corrupt royal advisors, immoral knights, taxation, mendicancy, and the abuses of both the Church and Lollardy were all subject to attack. Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers*, 14, 61, 64, 66.

¹³⁸ Barr, *The Piers Plowman Tradition*; Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers*, 40.

against the vices and failures of society. Simultaneously, the chroniclers were adopting vernacular narrative patterns. As Christopher Fletcher has identified, the chroniclers were using the strategies of vernacular literature in discussions of such events as the deposition of Richard II.¹³⁹ Fletcher argued that Henry IV's coup was justified and framed within the narrative framework of the romance genre and the concept of the wrongfully disinherited hero, or inevitable destiny.¹⁴⁰ So, the interweaving of various forms of literature is essential to the chronicles of the late fourteenth century, defining the way they related history.

The themes of societal abuse could easily be blended with even highly stylised historical works. Mark Ormrod, in his study of Walsingham's criticisms of Richard II's advisors as knights of Venus, concluded that Walsingham was 'writing in the highly formalized tradition of monastic historiography'.¹⁴¹ However, Ormrod noted too that Walsingham's approach demonstrated as well that he was also open to the public discourse on morality and was engaged with a wider tradition of comment that dealt with issues such as 'social stability', 'religious orthodoxy', and 'political legitimacy'.¹⁴² Walsingham's attack on Richard II's counsellors as courtiers rather than warriors can be understood as at one with the warnings in advice literature against flatterers, part of a tradition of complaint against immoral knights, and part of the tradition of historical writing.¹⁴³ Breaking down episodes of comment, criticism, and debate in the chronicles, it is evident both that the chroniclers were open to the discourse of complaint and that they were echoing the different strains within this discourse, often even switching between them.

Walsingham also clearly depicted and lampooned Richard for indecisiveness, turning towards satirical attacks on the king. In 1383 Richard heard a French army had amassed against the bishop of Norwich's crusade. Walsingham reported that Richard, who was at dinner, 'expulsis tabulis, cum omni furia et festinacione surrexit' ('pushed the table away from him and rose with great anger and haste').¹⁴⁴ Richard rode swiftly for Westminster. Walsingham added in the private complaint of his house that, 'uentique ad

¹³⁹ Christopher Fletcher, 'Narrative and Political Strategies at the Deposition of Richard II,' *Journal of Medieval History* 30, no. 4 (2004), 329, 326.

¹⁴⁰ Fletcher, 'Narrative and Political Strategies,' 337.

¹⁴¹ W. M. Ormrod, 'Knights of Venus', *Medium Ævum* 73, no. 2 (2004), 297.

¹⁴² Ormrod, 'Knights of Venus', 298.

¹⁴³ Jenni Nuttall, *The Creation of Lancastrian Kingship: Literature, Language and Politics in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 60.

¹⁴⁴ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 702.

Sanctum Albanum nocte media, set nil moraturus ibidem nisi dum palefridum abbatis mutuat nunquam redditurus eundem' ('he arrived at St Albans in the middle of the night, but only stayed there to change his horse for the abbot's palfrey, with no likelihood of ever returning it').¹⁴⁵ However, on the following morning Richard changed his mind. Walsingham mocked Richard for this, quoting Horace, 'Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus' ('The mountains are in labour, but will only give birth to a ridiculous mouse').¹⁴⁶ Walsingham satirised Richard's pointless frantic action in a complaint that highlighted the king's inconsistency and the absurdity of his actions. Walsingham may have been echoing other works on the importance of counsel to good rulership, but the section is not merely critical of Richard, it ridiculed him.¹⁴⁷ Walsingham, as usual, indulged his love of classical quotations and appealed to an audience well versed in them. Their venerable tone could be used to elevate an episode, but here he uses it to make a mockery of Richard's grand plans. So, Walsingham's description of Richard's behaviour was flavoured with more than simple criticism; it was a darkly humorous jab at the king.

As a piece of complaint this episode illustrated both political and local interests. Walsingham identified several topics typical of complaint: Richard was an indecisive king; he provided poor military leadership; the clergy were being persecuted by his fickle and inconsiderate side. The last, evidently, was of direct interest to Walsingham's audience.

The approach to complaint varied between chroniclers, but there is a wide basis of evidence for the conclusion that the chroniclers were contributing to narratives of abuse. Thomas Favent took a darker tone than Walsingham in his polemic against the advisers of Richard II. For his audience of London burghers, he painted Richard's counsellors, the enemies of his audience, in the blackest of colours. Favent explained that they spoke with 'serpentine oris' ('serpent's mouths'), and that they embraced 'mamona iniquitatis' ('the mammon of iniquity') among other faults.¹⁴⁸ As addressed earlier in this chapter, Favent depicted Richard II as weak, youthful, and misled by his cunning and self-interested advisers. His biblical references echoed the temptation of Eve

¹⁴⁵ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 702.

¹⁴⁶ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 702.

¹⁴⁷ Blythe, *Ideal Government and the Mixed Constitution in the Middle Ages*, 183.

¹⁴⁸ Luke 16:9; Favent, *Historia*, 3, 1; translated in, Favent, 'The Manner and Form of the Miraculous Parliament', 235.

and connected the counsellors to greed through the evil influences of Mammon. Robert de Vere, duke of Ireland and one of Richard's favourites, fought the Lords Appellant at Radcot Bridge 'ductore diabolo' ('with the devil as his leader'), Favent claimed.¹⁴⁹ He even maintained that Robert Tresilian (chief justice of the King's Bench) carried lists of demons' names and demonic images at his execution.¹⁵⁰ The comments and descriptions Favent provided mingled social, political, and religious criticisms. De Vere's wickedness as a counsellor who misled the king was mirrored in his association with the devil. Favent was aggressively condemnatory. His assertions demonstrated what dire hands the country had been in until its salvation at the hands of the Lords Appellant and the Londoners. His commentary was a diatribe against Richard's advisers as well as a piece in praise of those who vanquished them.

Favent's narrative, although exceptionally partisan, was not unusual amongst the chroniclers, or amongst vernacular writers, for the criticism of the king's advisers. Walsingham, as mentioned, had written his own polemics against the knights who surrounded Richard. Other chroniclers, such as Knighton, also worked within this tradition when effectively criticising royal government.¹⁵¹ As Sylvia Federico has noted, Knighton described Richard's advisers as 'sudectores' ('seducers'), layering his commentary with overtones of sexual and political misrule.¹⁵² Meanwhile, such themes were also staples of vernacular complaint literature. Notably in *Richard the Redeless*, a poem of advice and complaint from the early fifteenth century, the narrator criticised Richard for his poor choice of counsellors.¹⁵³ So, Favent's criticisms of Richard's counsellors were clearly both part of a broader theme of political complaint amongst the chroniclers and connected to themes present in the wider vernacular discourse of the late fourteenth century.

¹⁴⁹ Favent, *Historia*, 11; translated in, Favent, 'The Manner and Form of the Miraculous Parliament', 239.

¹⁵⁰ Favent, *Historia*, 18; translated in, Favent, 'The Manner and Form of the Miraculous Parliament', 247.

¹⁵¹ Rosenthal, 'The King's "Wicked Advisers"', 595–618.

¹⁵² The phrase also appears in the London *Annales Paulini* for the reign of Edward II. Although there is no reason to believe there was a connection between the sources it does at least highlight that Knighton was quite probably drawing on a pre-existing turn of phrase used to attack wicked counsellors. Sylvia Federico, *The Classicist Writings of Thomas Walsingham: 'Worldly Cares' at St Albans Abbey in the Fourteenth Century*, *Writing History in the Middle Ages* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2016), 58; William Stubbs, ed., *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II: Volume I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012 [1882]), 295; Knighton, *Chronicon*, 392.

¹⁵³ Barr, *The Piers Plowman Tradition*, 111.

The range of criticism across the chronicles encompassed most, if not all, of the common abuses of society commonly associated with other vernacular and Latinate texts in the period.¹⁵⁴ As already discussed, the chroniclers were often concerned by taxation, either as defenders of the rights and wealth of their house or as private individuals.¹⁵⁵ Adam of Usk was primarily concerned about the effects of taxation on him as a secular clerk and priest. There are numerous instances in his chronicle in which he complained about the effects of taxation by the king. For example, looking back to 1372 he included prophetic verses against taxation.¹⁵⁶ Prophecy was, in and of itself, a potentially dangerous and subversive genre; Henry IV twice promulgated against the circulation of prophecies to prevent them destabilising his rule.¹⁵⁷ Adam's use of it, although it seems partially in line with his interests, also at least indirectly served to highlight the critical elements of his account.

Taxation also featured prominently in Adam's complaints against Richard II. During his account of Richard II's deposition Adam compared Richard to Arthgallus, an ancient British king who had 'nobiles depressit, ignobiles exaltauit; cuique sua diuiti auferebat et infinitos thesaurus coligebat' ('debased the noble and exalted the ignoble, seizing the goods of the wealthy and amassing indescribable treasures').¹⁵⁸ Even in his account of Henry V, towards whom he was usually positive, Adam questioned Henry's policy on taxation.¹⁵⁹ The continual assault on taxation was part of a broader resistance to taxation common across lay and clerical culture and featured prominently in complaint literature.¹⁶⁰

Adam's criticisms of Richard here also followed the complaints against unsuitable advisers. The suggestion that Richard had exalted the ignoble is an example of a common charge against men raised above their station.¹⁶¹ All told, Adam was deeply immersed in material that spoke to narratives of complaint as well as to the historical record. In instances such as his mention of Arthgallus he

¹⁵⁴ Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers*, 65–66.

¹⁵⁵ See above, 39.

¹⁵⁶ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 16.

¹⁵⁷ Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion*, 17.

¹⁵⁸ Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 62.

¹⁵⁹ Given-Wilson, 'Introduction: Adam of Usk', lxx–lxxi.

¹⁶⁰ Barr, *The Piers Plowman Tradition*, 105; Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers*, 46, 85; W. M. Ormrod, 'The Rebellion of Archbishop Scrope and the Tradition of Opposition to Royal Taxation', in *The Reign of Henry IV: Rebellion and Survival, 1403–1413*, eds. Gwilym Dodd and Douglas Biggs (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press; Boydell & Brewer, 2008), 162–179.

¹⁶¹ Walsingham, *The St Albans Chronicle*, I: 744; Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers*, 66.

expressed this complaint though the lens of historical didacticism; however, whatever the narrative vehicle, they remained a series of criticisms of the government.

Complaint after the fact and in the reign of a different king could afford to be much more overt than complaint during the reign of the king a writer criticised. Adam was doubtless emboldened by the fact that by the time he wrote Henry IV and not Richard II was king. Meanwhile, whilst a king ruled, Knighton and other commentators would often speak of a king's wicked advisers when they may have intended the criticisms for the king.

The *Annales Ricardi Secundi et Henrici Quarti* knew no such restrictions in its author's commentary on Richard II. It was composed at St Albans, probably by William Wintershill, who drew on Thomas Walsingham's work. Wintershill emphasised the conflict between vice and virtue in the Revenge Parliament and overtly directed a polemic against Richard II himself.¹⁶² Wintershill, possibly drawing on the accusations made in the Record and Process, depicted Richard as a personification of vice.¹⁶³ Wintershill described how by 1397 Richard was enraged against the one-time Lords Appellant, and he came to 'tyrannizare' ('tyrannise') the country.¹⁶⁴ As the account progressed Wintershill accused Richard of deceit, treachery and 'malitia [...] exoerimenta' ('wicked machinations').¹⁶⁵ The account is both a moral and a social complaint. Wintershill explained that through 'regis astutia, levitate, et insolentia, regnum tota turbatur' ('the rashness, cunning and pride of the king, the entire kingdom was suddenly and unexpectedly thrown into confusion').¹⁶⁶ As the kingdom relied on the king's good governance, Richard's failure threatened the common good of the entire realm. Wintershill's attack on Richard is to the point. Though surrounded by the historical details, there was still an echo of complaint against the abuses of ill-rule in the aggressive assault on Richard's character and rule.

¹⁶² Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 168.

¹⁶³ *The Record and Process* constitutes the 'official' account of Richard's deposition. It was also copied into the *Annales*.

¹⁶⁴ Henry Thomas Riley, ed., 'Annales Ricardi Secundi et Henrici Quarti, Regum Angliæ', in *Johannis de Trokelowe et Henrici de Blaneforde Chronica et Annales*, Online (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1866] 2012), 201; translated in, Given-Wilson, *Chronicles of the Revolution*, 71.

¹⁶⁵ Riley, 'Annales Ricardi Secundi', 202; translated in, Given-Wilson, *Chronicles of the Revolution*, 71.

¹⁶⁶ Riley, 'Annales Ricardi Secundi', 201; translated in, Given-Wilson, *Chronicles of the Revolution*, 72.

Pointing to Richard II as the problem that needed to be rooted out was common after his downfall.¹⁶⁷ Yet, there is another aspect to recall. The *Annales Ricardi Secundi* was, like other chronicles, a piece of didactic literature. So the criticism of Richard II stood as a lesson, presumably most commonly for monastic audiences. Through them, though, it was also possible for abbots and priors to pass on their lessons to the king and nobles. It can be read as salient advice on what should occur if a king were to turn to tyranny.

Henry Knighton stands out amongst the chroniclers for his use of poetic material as a format for complaint. Poetry was frequently the medium for vernacular complaint literature.¹⁶⁸ Yet, it appears infrequently in the chronicles.¹⁶⁹ Knighton, however, included two poems against Lollards.¹⁷⁰ The second was a brief and illustrative verse in support of Knighton's assertion that the followers of Wyclif were so wicked that unless God supported the English, 'regnum Anglie non arbitror posse supportare uersucias eorum atque malciam' ('this realm of England will be unable to sustain their deceits and their malice').¹⁷¹ The first poem was substantially longer, running to twenty-eight lines. These poems mark an engagement with complaint through a mode of expression that was not normally to be expected of historians. Most chroniclers wrote in prose as the authoritative and reliable style.¹⁷² For Knighton to deviate from this, apparently interpolating his own poetry, suggests that despite his position as a provincial chronicler he was quite willing to take executive decisions on what type of material should appear in his chronicle.

Knighton's longer poem was a complex and unusual piece, when viewed as a chronicler's work. It took the form of a bitter satire against the Lollards. It was written in Latin and its criticisms are almost all made by appealing to

¹⁶⁷ *Vita Ricardi Secundi*, 166; Adam of Usk, *Chronicle*, 62; Barr, *The Piers Plowman Tradition*; Fletcher, 'Narrative and Political Strategies'; Ulrike Graßnick, "'O Prince, Desyre to Be Honourable": The Deposition of Richard II and Mirrors for Princes', in *Fourteenth Century England IV*, ed. J. S. Hamilton (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2006), 159–174.

¹⁶⁸ Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers*, 16.

¹⁶⁹ Amongst the instances in which poetry does appear in the chronicles the major examples are Adam of Usk's copy of an apocalyptic Flemish poem, Thomas Elmham's metrical chronicle of the life of Henry V, which he claimed to have deliberately chosen for its obscurity, and John Strecche's classicised and historical poems. None of these can reasonably be considered complaint literature. S. E. Kelly, 'Elmham, Thomas (b. 1364, d. in or after 1427) Historian and Prior of Lenton', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (23 Sep. 2004) <https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-8734>.

¹⁷⁰ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 296–298, 306.

¹⁷¹ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 306.

¹⁷² Given-Wilson, *Chronicles*, 137.

common values, rather than by embedding condemnatory phrases in the text itself, though, there are some criticisms of the Lollards in the surrounding prose text. The poem follows a prose account of how two men – a chaplain, Richard Waytestathe, and William Smith – desecrated a chapel outside Leicester and acted out their heretical beliefs. These culminated in an act of iconoclasm in which they used a statue of St Catherine as fuel to make a vegetable stew. In his poem Knighton described how the two Lollards jokingly remarked as they set about chopping up the statue that if it were to bleed and prove its saintly value they would kneel, but that otherwise St Catherine would be famous for the stew they would use the kindling to make.¹⁷³ Knighton then concluded that the two men ate their supper with a hearty appetite. He then returned to criticising the Wycliffites in general as ‘lupi rapaces’ (‘ravening wolves’).¹⁷⁴ This mixture of reportage and outright condemnation in the surrounding passages marks Knighton’s poem out as a satirical and polemical piece. The cheerful errors of the two men are disparaged as Knighton veers between horror at the heterodox social behaviour and poking fun at it. To an orthodox audience of Austin canons the concept of chopping apart a religious icon would have been horrendous. So, by relating light-hearted jests by Lollards about their disregard for the icon Knighton illustrated both the problems with their beliefs and the dangers such beliefs posed to wider orthodox practice.

The poem is a demonstration of the range of narrative tools at a chroniclers’ disposal, particularly when considered within its textual context. Knighton integrated it into his larger assault on Wycliffites, providing both a historically authoritative account for posterity and then an engaging verse account of events. The poem itself re-established his complaint against the Lollards and mocked their behaviour before he resumed his theme and condemned them outright as a danger to the fabric of society. The poem is a divergence from the usual prose style of Knighton’s chronicle. It might be that it was intended for didactic purposes, but if that was purely the case there is no obvious reason to write in verse rather than his usual prose. Instead it suggests that Knighton chose his form of commentary to satisfy his own desire rather than to inform an audience. Thus, Knighton interwove satire and complaint with

¹⁷³ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 298.

¹⁷⁴ Knighton, *Chronicon*, 300.

his chronicle perhaps for his own pleasure as much as to achieve any particular end.

These chroniclers were not voicing their protests in the vernacular as many contemporary clerks did, but they were not isolated from criticisms of uncloistered society; at times they used the narrative tools more commonly found in vernacular literature. The indication is that the chroniclers frequently reacted against the perceived abuses of their section of society both by heterodox elements and by the government.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the chroniclers were thoroughly engaged with multiple forms of debate. The chronicles demonstrate an extraordinary range of intellectual influences that their authors were processing, absorbing, sifting, and amalgamating. Chroniclers strayed between genres easily, and it would be misleading to try and pin them down to a single point on the spectrum of literature. Certain authors, like Thomas Walsingham, Henry Knighton, or the Westminster chroniclers often expressed themselves in terms one might expect in a sermon or homily whilst similar episodes are absent from authors such as the Whalley Chronicler. However, the writers who did use sermons or homilies were evidently not confined to this approach as they also used the less formal styles of societal criticism and proposed political models for society separately from any homiletic treatment.

They were not only acquainted with but also echoed all manner of literary types, from formal and established sermons to radical complaint. They may have been poor models for the examination of popular, lay concerns, as Coleman argued, but they were no more content with the shape of society for that. Rather, their chronicles were melting pots for seething discontent, criticism, and social commentary.

The chroniclers drew inconsistently on polemical literature, various different mirrors for princes, and homilies as forms of expression. They sometimes used more than one of these forms simultaneously, drawing on them, but not simply relying upon one alone. Their works represent a distinctive and dynamic constituency of thought that emerged through the repurposing of its surrounding intellectual milieu. Though their audiences were frequently

limited, could change depending on the recension and version of their texts, and indeed, are often ambiguous, the broad swathe of styles they adopted suggests that they were attempting to do more than simply record history for posterity. Not all of their texts were revolutionary, they frequently used tired phrases and ideas – Favent's assaults on Richard's counsellors, for example, closely follow the usual slurs against poor advisers. However, the appropriation of the rhetorical power of sermons, by chroniclers such as the Westminster Monk or Thomas Walsingham, suggests that they were responding to the intellectual impetus of the universities and the spreading extra-cloistral debates between preachers by co-opting the form to lecture their readers.

The chroniclers' use of multiple texts was manifested in an incredibly mutable narrative, or set of narratives, which slipped between one form and another inconsistently. The range of their voices was immense. Within just this chapter it has been demonstrated that they were constantly changing from one form to another. Looking back over the preceding chapters and comparing them to the evidence presented here it becomes clear that the chroniclers adopted different voices as a matter of course, switching between them, in all probability as a reflection of their absorption and enjoyment of the multitudinous forms of expression which surrounded them.

Conclusion

This thesis has argued that we may individuate the outlook of chroniclers in England between 1377 and 1422, and that their works were dynamic, idiosyncratic, and mutable. It has suggested that these writers of contemporary history were engaged in the intellectual and textual milieu of the late fourteenth century. It has demonstrated that the distinctions of the chroniclers' status, their position as regular and secular clerks, their social background, and their educations all combined to create complex identities which transcended the apparent bounds any one aspect might have been expected to set upon them. It has also proposed that the position that chroniclers represented an elite or establishment voice required reassessment, and that instead the chroniclers' attitudes were deeply fluid.¹ The chroniclers' accounts and attitudes varied over time and in response to events and crises

The clerks of the late fourteenth century were involved in crises which wracked their society. In particular, the impact of Richard II's minority government, the rise of the Lollard heresy, and the Papal Schism provoked responses both by chroniclers and more broadly by lay clerks. Connected to these problems were the Peasants' Revolt, the failing fortunes of the English in the Hundred Years War, and rising tensions between the domestic and the Roman Church. Comments and reactions to these events circulated in both Latin and the vernacular.

The chronicles must be figured within multi-layered patchwork of textual environments. Sermons in the universities, the monasteries, parliament, and at the preaching crosses were raising and circulating pro- and anti-war sentiments, social commentaries, heterodoxy, and theological questions. Political and social poetry, from William Langland's *Piers Plowman* (with his commentary on contemporary society and groups such as the Franciscans) to *Richard the Redeless* (which questioned how best a king might be advised by critiquing Richard II's rule), was both contesting the political and social status quo and offering an affected clerical discourse.² A substantial range of non-establishment

¹ This position has been developed in the works of scholars such as Steven Justice, *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381*, 27 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 205; Coleman, *Medieval Readers and Writers*, 15, 20; Margaret Aston, 'Wyclif and the Vernacular', *Studies in Church History Subsidia* 5 (1987), 49.

² Helen Barr, ed., *The Piers Plowman Tradition: A Critical Edition of, Pierce the Ploughman's Crede, Richard the Redeless, Mum and the Sothsegger, and The Crowned King* (London: Dent,

vernacular positions and responses have been established by Kathryn Kerby-Fulton as emerging throughout the fourteenth century.³

Although the work of scholars such as Kerby-Fulton, Fiona Somerset, and Strohm has established the variety and complexity of vernacular voices, the Latinate chroniclers have not been as fully characterised or problematised as a group of writers. The model of the chroniclers as establishment writers has obscured the variety of backgrounds and influences within which the chroniclers worked. The thesis began by establishing that factors such as the chroniclers' professions and educations rendered them more, rather than less, heterogenous. Labels such as 'secular' or 'regular' clerk obscure the dissimilarities in the lives of the chroniclers as well as their, often unexpectedly, shared contexts. Thomas Walsingham and Adam of Usk both attended university and were priests, and likewise, Walsingham's experiences overlapped as a Benedictine monk with the two Westminster chroniclers or the chroniclers of Evesham. Yet each of these writers also had major factors in their lives which divided them from their colleagues, whether they were Adam's experiences working for the papacy or the different priorities of the abbeys of Westminster and St Albans. Thus, the model of the multi-layered vernacular clerks, expanded by this thesis's consideration of the chroniclers, demonstrates that by the end of the fourteenth century even those groups previously seen as establishment writers were heterogenous. Their comments and accounts then may be read as a stratified and multifarious contribution to wider discourses.

Moving from the background and basis for the individuation of the chroniclers to the perceived seats of authority which might be expected to have tied them together (their responses to and representation of the Crown and the Church) it becomes increasingly evident that their works were not only composed from distinct vantage points but were also mutable. Analysis of the language used by the chroniclers suggests that they had significantly different understandings of what the two represented and their role in society. This led to

1993), 101–133; Fiona Somerset, *Clerical Discourse and Lay Audience in Late Medieval England*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature, no. 37 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 3; Lawrence M. Clopper, 'Langland's Persona: An Anatomy of the Mendicant Orders', in *Written Work: Langland, Labor, and Authorship*, ed. Steven Justice and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton (Philadelphia: Penn State University Press, 1997), 145, 184; Caroline Barron, 'William Langland: A London Poet', in *Chaucer's England: Literature in Historical Context*, ed. Barbara F. Hanawalt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 92–93.

³ Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, *Books Under Suspicion: Censorship and Tolerance of Revelatory Writing in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Press, 2006), 13–14.

tensions in their representations of each, for instance between the depictions of the domestic Church and the supra-national Church. Henry Knighton, the Westminster Monk, and Thomas Walsingham, amongst others, all painted separate portraits of the national Church and the Roman Curia. Their depictions were not static, instead they fluctuated in response to the pressures of Lollardy and the Papal Schism. Walsingham's attitudes, for instance, discernibly changed over the period 1377–1422. He moved from perceiving John Wyclif as John of Gaunt's tool to his being the arch-heresiarch of a movement which fundamentally threatened the social order. Alongside this, Walsingham used the language of the universal Church as a counter to the threat of Lollardy whilst criticising papal corruption: a combination of contradictions that demonstrate how even an institutionally based chronicler was not constrained to a single position. The mutability of the many chroniclers who, writing over prolonged periods, demonstrably shifted their positions added a further layer of complexity onto the diversity of experience which characterised them. It also fundamentally alters our image of the intellectual landscape in this period, demonstrating the intellectual vitality of monastic historians.

The Church and the Crown may have been the pillars of community for the chroniclers, but as this thesis has argued, around these pillars were many other, multifaceted, communities. Though the chroniclers imagined many communities, for the regular chroniclers the *domus* was especially important. Yet, their institutional identities did not utterly unite them. Whilst figuring Thomas Walsingham, the chroniclers of Westminster, John Strecche, or Henry Knighton within the context of their *domus* clearly demonstrates the influence of institutional pressures in shaping their outlook, from the divided opinions of the Dieulacres chroniclers it is evident that even the community of a *domus* could not homogenise them. Their depiction of these communities was based in a diachronic discourse with their predecessors but also a synchronic discourse with their contemporaries. Though the study of ideas of community in the late Middle Ages has seen an acknowledgement of the plethora of views amongst vernacular authors this has not been fully replicated in the study of the Latinate chroniclers. Previous studies of ideas of identity have addressed chroniclers' representations of groups and ethnicities through complex webs of stereotypes,

tropes, and literary and historical models.⁴ The contradictions of the chroniclers as demonstrated in this thesis, though, and their responsiveness to the concepts of identity present in their textual environment and their political and social context, highlight that the chroniclers were often dynamic commentators whose views were not set in stone but altered in accordance with circumstance and the political and social moment.

The Hundred Years War and, indeed, the other episodes of martiality which were liberally sprinkled throughout the chronicles figure within this discussion of community and the context which encouraged the chroniclers' accounts to change over the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. The discourse of anti-war and pro-war ideologies, voiced and promoted through preaching by Wyclif and government-sponsored prelates respectively, forms an essential backdrop in the period. The complications of this discourse were compounded by the perceived failures in the Anglo-French war effort during the early years of Richard II's reign and the following attempts at negotiating peace. The chronicles demonstrate both pro-war and anti-war concerns, with fluctuating support for various magnates. Their reports of martiality were inherently contradictory, chroniclers such as Walsingham presented a vision of the social obligations of the *bellatores* and the king as warriors, and yet condemned it when performed by political enemies such as the so-called Lollard knights. Simultaneously, he praised the efforts to create peace on a domestic level and encouraged war as a part of foreign policy.

The study of how chroniclers reported martiality also highlights the changing relationship between deeds of arms and the chroniclers' reactionary re-evaluation of the role of the clergy both as individuals and as a community. Whilst chroniclers like Knighton, Walsingham, and the Westminster chroniclers praised Bishop Henry Despenser for his prowess in battle, the author of the *Continuatio Eulogii* regarded it as immoral for a prelate to have taken up arms. Yet Walsingham also criticised the monks and clerks who accompanied Despenser on crusade, once again presenting multiple perspectives even on a single subject. Driven by the crises of the failures of the magnates in the Anglo-French wars, the tensions of the Papal Schism, and eventually Henry V's

⁴ Christopher David Linsley, 'Nation, England and the French in Thomas Walsingham's *Chronica Maiora 1376–1420*' (The University of York, 2015); Andy King, 'The Anglo-Scottish Marches and the Perception of "the North" in Fifteenth-Century England', *Northern History* 49 (March 2012): 37–50.

successes the chroniclers' reports on martiality, and particularly the martial activities of the clergy, can provide a nuanced perspective on how clerks in England experienced the tensions provoked by the crises facing England between 1377 and 1422. They also present an opportunity to consider the intellectual and stylistic versatility of the Latinate and institutionalised clerks, as the chroniclers' accounts often switched styles significantly, provided entertainment, factual information, and moralising commentaries.

The chroniclers' acquaintance with and use of multiple different styles of writing in their reportage of martiality is part of the broader question of the delivery of comments, criticisms, and debates in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. The scholastic sermons, spilling over into wider society as preachers delivered them at the preaching crosses, were absorbed by the chroniclers. This use of, particularly, the rhetorical power of sermons places the chroniclers within a scholastic discourse which was emerging and evolving in the period. It identifies them as part of the intellectual moment rather than as bystanders stuck in thirteenth-century modes of discourse. Nevertheless, the chroniclers mingled this with a plethora of forms of writing, including traditional historical narratives. Like their vernacular and secular contemporaries their commentaries were developing and changing rather than static.

The thesis has proposed that the chroniclers were not members of a single establishment commentariat. On the contrary, they were deeply divided writers, who, despite access to a similar textual and educational culture, demonstrated significant intellectual independence. They frequently critiqued the major institutions which dominated their social landscape and often presented radically different understandings of major parts of their lives, from community and warfare to the political map of English society.

The chroniclers were using multiple different forms of discourse, some of which echoed their vernacular contemporaries or were shared with them, some of which were rooted in the developments in the universities. They frequently switched between one form of expression and another, commenting on and evaluating their contemporaries in a plethora of ways. Though there were episodes on which chroniclers agreed or provided similar narratives, sometimes drawn from the same sources, these are insufficient to suggest that these writers can be considered part of a single, cohesive group. Rather they must be considered idiosyncratic authors. John Strecche used classical material and a

classical form to discuss warfare and the reign of Henry V in a similar though not identical manner to Thomas Walsingham. Yet, Strecche's record of Henry IV's reign was not based around the same classical allusions, and he took a different approach again when discussing the priors of Kenilworth within the paradigm of institutional history. These many different modes of discourse are a demonstration of the rich variety of thought and historical writing which was possessed by the Latinate chroniclers of the period.

The texts discussed in this thesis represent a small portion of the vibrant, complex, and often contentious intellectual picture of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, both inside and outside the monasteries. The chronicles are suggestive of significant overlaps between the secular and regular clergy, but they also demonstrate that within these groups there were distinctions which led to the production of radically different pieces of historical writing.

The arguments advanced in this thesis present a reorientation of the study of late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century Latinate chronicles in England. They demonstrated that the late medieval chronicles were more complex and more significant intellectual productions than has been fully realised previously. They also highlight the need for a further examination of the connections between monastic Latinate commentaries and vernacular complaint and challenge the representation of the regular clergy as part of a single establishment voice for either the Crown or the Church.

The new perspective on the chroniclers which this thesis proposes emphasises the need for subsequent work in a number of fields. The networks of communication between chroniclers' houses need to be studied in more depth to build up a picture of how and when clerks who practised historical writing engaged with one another. This also raises the issues of manuscript transmission, alteration, and reception. Further work is necessary to develop the various ways in which the chronicles were read and used. There are potentially rich avenues in the study of the different ways particular chronicle traditions were used as manuscripts. This also includes a further close examination of the physical manuscripts of the chronicles, both those commonly used and those which have been largely passed over, to elucidate the questions of how malleable and fluid the passage of the historical record was between versions of chronicles. In turn this raises the question of the prose *Brut*

chronicles and the intellectual complexities of the vernacular chronicles during this period, both in terms of how this tradition interacted with the chroniclers who, for instance, continued Higden and those who visibly used both traditions, such as John Strecche. A re-examination of the Latinate chronicles provides the basis for the further reassessment of the vernacular chronicles within this wider textual culture.

This thesis has shown that the chroniclers of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries were individuals who were keenly involved in their world and mediating their responses to it through an array of literary styles and resources according to their personal choice. Their educations did not homogenise them; rather, their reactions reflected the intellectual conflicts and crises of the era, from the heretical propositions of Wyclif, the issues of the Papal Schism, and the questions over the theocratic or hierocratic models for the relationship between the Crown and the Church. Their clerical identities were legion, not only secular nor regular but composed of multiple competing and interlocking factors. And, finally, their exposure to, experience of, and responses to the active textual environments of the period came through in their texts. They absorbed and reacted to these environments, switching between distinct formats and blending them in ways which rendered their accounts original, reactionary, stylised, and contradictory. If a chronicler appears to have been predictable in one instance there is almost inevitably a counterexample to be found in which he has revealed an unanticipated idiosyncrasy.

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