

THOMAS CHAUNDLER AND ACADEMIC DRAMA:
PERFORMANCES PRACTICES IN THE MEDIEVAL ENGLISH UNIVERSITY

by

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Abstract

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Previous scholarship has claimed that university drama did not exist (at Oxford or Cambridge) before the Tudor period. To support this claim, scholars have repudiated medieval pedagogy for being unable to generate the kinds of “exploratory” forms of inquiry that would later allow university drama to occur in the early sixteenth century through humanist pedagogy. I contend that medieval or scholastic pedagogy is capable of producing dynamic forms of entertainment and that a vibrant tradition of medieval university drama and performance did occur throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This performance tradition has been unrecognized by scholars not only because of inaccurate assumptions about medieval pedagogy, but also because scholars have not considered the full range of medieval performance practices or “texts” beyond the traditional play text.

My investigation takes as its focus one of the last medieval university plays, Thomas Chaundler’s *Liber Apologeticus de omni statu humanae naturae* (A defense of human nature in every state, c. 1460). The play is typically valued only for its alleged ability to explain the literary transition from medieval to humanist stylistics, and not for its literary qualities and/or performance potential. My dissertation views *Liber Apologeticus* and the texts of its parent codex, Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5 (in addition to select texts from another

manuscript compiled by Chaundler, Oxford: New College MS 288) as representing the *culmination* of a substantive and nuanced medieval university performance tradition. The texts of the Chaundler MSS incorporate, for instance, medieval pedagogical practices (such as disputation and preaching), devotional practices (such as the observance of the Office of the Dead), and ceremonial practices (such as *commendatio* speeches and King of Christmas festivities) to produce dynamic and transformative forms of performance. Furthermore, I demonstrate that these texts existed within networks of performative and textual communities that reached beyond the walls of Oxford and were generative of ecclesiastical and pedagogical performance practices and aesthetics that can be traced back to Oxford University's first institutionalization as a corporate body.

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Introduction

University Drama Before the Tudor Period

According to the accepted narrative, English university drama began in the Tudor period, principally in the first few decades of the sixteenth century, when Masters at English universities wrote plays and dialogues to encourage students to develop Latin proficiency, eloquence in communication, and moral decorum. The publications of the Records of Early English Drama project would seem to support this claim, since researchers have not discovered definitive records of university drama before 1506 (when we find evidence of a specific play, *St. Mary Magdalene*, written by John Burgess at Magdalen College).¹ It would seem that Frederick Boas' assertion that before the Tudor period there wasn't "a single extant text of a cycle or of a detached play which can be connected with either Oxford or Cambridge," still stands.² The absence of medieval academic drama is further justified with claims that there existed a strict separation between festive and didactic forms of dramatic expression within the university setting. Boas, for instance, acknowledges that the students of medieval English colleges sought to entertain themselves between terms (particularly around Christmas), but labels these youthful expressions as "merely recreative" and not formally a part of "academic life," like the performances in the sixteenth century. In particular, he faults the medieval curriculum for its inability to "foster an interest in humane letters generally" or drama specifically.³ When

¹ John Elliott, *Records of Early English Drama: Oxford* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 2:602-3.

² Frederick Boas, *University Drama in the Tudor Age* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1914), 1.

³ *Ibid.*, 14. Alan Nelson states, "University drama in England is essentially a postmedieval phenomenon" ("The Universities" in *Contexts for Early English Drama*, eds. Marianne Briscoe and John Coldewey [Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989], 137). See also Jonathan Walker's introduction in *Early Modern Academic Drama*

² Frederick Boas, *University Drama in the Tudor Age* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1914), 1.

³ *Ibid.*, 14. Alan Nelson states, "University drama in England is essentially a postmedieval phenomenon" ("The Universities" in *Contexts for Early English Drama*, eds. Marianne Briscoe and John Coldewey [Indianapolis:

considering the precedents for academic drama, scholars acknowledge the presence of “ceremonial customs” from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, such as rituals of the Boy Bishop, King of Beans or lords of misrule, and various festive disguisings, but do not view these customs as being either academic or properly dramatic. Performative pedagogical practices within the medieval university curriculum have likewise been denied their potential for performance. In his editorial procedures for the *REED* volume on Cambridge, for instance, Alan Nelson mentions that he excludes disputation and commencement exercises even though, as he acknowledges, they were “frequently treated as entertainment for the benefit of visiting dignitaries.”⁴ Scholars have subsequently highlighted what they see as the limitations of a “demonstrative” medieval approach to pedagogy in order to emphasize the specific relevance and dramatic impetus of humanist pedagogy.⁵ Recently, Paul Sullivan, for instance, has explored the humanist implications of Tudor pedagogy as witnessed in collections of *vulgaria*, that is, English and Latin sentences that were used to teach Latin in English grammar schools. Although he uses collections that date to the 1420s, he views these earlier examples of *vulgaria* as purposed for schoolmasters “to leaven classroom tedium and engage student interest in Latin conversation.”⁶ By contrast, Sullivan claims *vulgaria* from the Tudor period not only have the potential to envision and rehearse different social identities, but also constituted, through the use of impersonation, a “rudimentary form of school drama.”⁷ The supposed difference lies in an “exploratory” rather than “demonstrative” pedagogical approach. Whereas medieval grammar teachers required students simply to memorize and recite Latin *vulgaria*, Tudor grammar

Indiana University Press, 1989), 137). See also Jonathan Walker’s introduction in *Early Modern Academic Drama* (Burlington, VT.: Ashgate, 2008), 1-18.

⁴ Alan Nelson, *Records of Early English Drama: Cambridge* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 2:810.

⁵ Joel Altman creates an influential paradigm, which separates humanist inquiry and innovation from medieval didacticism and orthodoxy, in *The Tudor Play of Mind* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 17.

⁶ Paul Sullivan, “Playing the Lord: Tudor *Vulgaria* and the Rehearsal of Ambition,” *English Literary History* 75 (2008): 183.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 185.

teachers asked students to recite their exercises *non in propria persona*, that is, by assuming a persona or identity other than their own. This is a compelling claim; however, Sullivan never supports it with specific evidence from the compilations of *vulgaria* or external evidence to demonstrate this practice actually happened.

I contend that “university drama” did happen before the Tudor period and that medieval pedagogy was capable of producing dynamic forms of entertainment both in and out of the classroom. University performance does not necessitate humanist pedagogy. Scholars have overlooked medieval university traditions, in part, due to narrow definitions of performance that fail to consider the range of “texts” that were performed.⁸ We must recognize that the terms of the conversation have been changed by the newer category of performance. “Drama” no longer suffices to tell the history of medieval performance practices.

My dissertation will take as its focus one of the last medieval university plays extant in England, *Liber Apologeticus de omni statu humanae naturae* (A defense of human nature in every state), a morality play written c. 1460 by the chancellor of Oxford University, Thomas Chaundler (c. 1420-1490), and preserved in Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.14.5.⁹ The Trinity College MS contains, in addition to the play, fifteen semi-grisaille illustrations and several texts: *Libellus de laudibus duarum civitatum, Wellie scilicet ac Bathonie, sediumque Episcopaliū in eisdem* (A little work about the praises of two cities, namely Wells and Bath, and the episcopal see), a debate dialogue concerning the relative merits of Bath and Wells; four letters from Thomas Chaundler to Thomas Bekynton (c. 1390-1465), the bishop of Bath and Wells; and an allegorical poem, *De iudicio Solis in conviviis Saturni* (*On the judgment of Sol at*

⁸ See John Elliott, “Drama,” *The History of the University of Oxford*, ed. Nicholas Tyacke, vol. 4, *Seventeenth-Century Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 641-58. See also Davenport’s section on “closet drama” in *Fifteenth-Century English Drama* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1982), 92-6.

⁹ For a description of the manuscript, see M.R. James, *The Chaundler MSS* (London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1916), 33-5.

the Feasts of Saturn, c. 1350), by Simon of Couvin about the devastating effects of the plague, beginning in the year 1345. My investigation does not view *Liber Apologeticus* and the texts and illustrations of the Trinity College MS independently from one another, but rather considers them contingently, as producing an integrative and performative whole.

Chaundler gave the Trinity College MS to his patron and friend, Bishop Bekynton sometime between 1457 and 1461, during the years he served his first term as chancellor of Oxford University. Chaundler gave Bekynton another gift manuscript, New College MS 288, c. 1462, which contains: four illustrations (depicting academic life in New College, Oxford, Winchester College, and Wells Cathedral, as well as a portrait of prominent Wykehamists); Chaundler's *Collocutiones* and *Allocutiones* ("conversations" that discuss the virtues of William of Wykeham); a chronicle on the life, death, and deeds of William of Wykeham; the will of William of Wykeham; a poem on William of Wykeham; and a speech and two letters by Pope Pius II (one of which is addressed to Bekynton).¹⁰ David Rundle suggests that the letters were added later (copied by a different scribe) after Chaundler gave Bekynton the manuscript.¹¹ As part of my investigation, I will also discuss the performative aspects of Chaundler's *Collocutiones* and *Allocutiones* as well as the meaning behind some of the illustrations.

Unfortunately, *Liber Apologeticus* has not been well received. Scholars tend to describe Chaundler's play as having little literary merit (with verbose dialogue, flat characterizations, and irregular dramatic structure) and/or lacking true performance potential, categorizing it as an unsuccessful "closet drama."¹² Scholars usually concede that the play could have had "in house"

¹⁰ For a description of the manuscript, see David Rundle, "Of Republics and Tyrants: Aspects of Quattrocento Humanist Writings and their Reception in England, c. 1400–c. 1460" (unpublished DPhil dissertation, University of Oxford, 1997), 452-7.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 455.

¹² R.L. Storey calls Chaundler's work "pretentious and devoid of elegance" in contrast to his otherwise admirable administrative accomplishments in "The Foundation and the Medieval College: 1379-1530," *New College, Oxford*:

reading, yet readily affirm that it is more likely the play was intended for private (and silent) reading by Bishop Bekynton.¹³ Moreover, *Liber Apologeticus* is often depicted as not having the same cultural implications as, for instance, “popular entertainment,” because its Latin erudition seems to be limited to Oxford.¹⁴ If *Liber Apologeticus* is valued, it is for its ability to promote a humanist agenda, despite representing a “failed attempt.”¹⁵ However, like most forms of medieval performance, there is a communal aspect to the production of university performance in which the text emerges from existing social practices of the academic community and produces representational spaces.¹⁶ By examining these communal or corporate practices, we will be able to discover how Chaundler’s *Liber Apologeticus*, the debate dialogue, *Libellus de laudibus*, and the *Collocutiones and Allocutiones* move beyond “closet drama” and enter into a dynamic tradition of medieval university performance that reaches beyond the walls of Oxford through vibrant textual and performative communities.¹⁷

1379-1979, eds. John Buxton and Penry Williams (Oxford: Warden and Fellows of New College, Oxford, 1979), 26. James, for instance, makes a rather curt assessment of the play, “Of dramatic fire or characterization it has none” (*The Chaundler MSS*, 13). Roberto Weiss surmises Chaundler’s “literary remains are not very interesting except as evidence of his leanings” as stated in *Humanism in England during the Fifteenth Century*, eds. David Rundle and A. J. Lappin (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), 205. W.A. Davenport categorizes the play under the heading of “closet drama” and determines that *Liber Apologeticus* was “designed merely to be read” in *Fifteenth-Century English Drama: The Early Moral Plays and Their Literary Relations* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1982), 92-6.

¹³ Doris Enright-Clark Shoukri suggests in the introduction to her edition of the play that *Liber Apologeticus* may have been given a dramatic reading, but the presentation copy, i.e., the Trinity College MS, was meant “for the Bishop alone” to be “read not heard” in *Liber Apologeticus de Omni Statu Humanae Naturae: A Moral Play*. (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 1974), 15.

¹⁴ Marion Jones describes *Liber Apologeticus* as a play that “proceeds with a pomp of Latin phrase and a panoply of rhetorical ornament which have no connection with vulgar speech or popular entertainment,” in “Early Moral Plays and the Earliest Secular Drama” *The Revels History of Drama in English*, eds. A.C. Cawley et al. (New York: Methuen, 1983), 281.

¹⁵ Like Storey and Weiss, J.I. Catto believed that although “Chaundler was not a scholar of distinction,” he did help others to achieve “new standards of Latinity,” making it possible for humanism to emerge at Oxford (“Scholars and Studies in Renaissance Oxford,” in *The History of the University of Oxford*, eds. J.I. Catto and Ralph Evans, vol. 2, *Late Medieval Oxford* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992], 779-81).

¹⁶ See the introduction to *Medieval Practices of Space*, eds. Barbara Hanawalt and Michal Kobialka (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), ix-xviii.

¹⁷ See Brian Stock’s discussion of late medieval “textual communities” that circulated deeds, registers, and wills in conjunction with literary texts, creating networks of social relations in *Listening for the Text* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 146.

This investigation views the Chaundler MSS as intended for two audiences: Bishop Bekynton and a broadly defined Oxford community that included (in addition to the masters, fellows, and scholars of the university) the ecclesiasts and choristers of Wells Cathedral, the canons of Exeter and Lincoln cathedrals, and the monks of St. Albans and Christ Church, Canterbury. In chapter 1, I will explore how *Liber Apologeticus* serves this broader community through a shared set of values for the maintenance and preservation of a clerical corporate identity. I will consider how performance petitions on behalf of the clerical corporate body by examining one of the gravest moments in the university's history that threatened its very existence, the St. Scholastica's Day riot in 1355. Specifically, I will investigate how this riot was generative of performance, as seen in a previously unacknowledged university performance text, *Planctus Universitatis Oxoniensis contra laicos tempore magni conflictus* (The Lament of Oxford University in Response to the Laity at the Time of the Great Conflict, c. 1356-7), and how the university, through performance, worked to protect its clerical corporate body against the external and internal conflicts precipitated by the crisis. I will then examine *Liber Apologeticus* and the ways in which the play uses pedagogical practices to likewise preserve and maintain a clerical corporate identity (that are representative of the broader communities' shared virtues of fraternity and charity).

In chapter 2, I will explore how *Liber Apologeticus* might be used by Bekynton (and potential readers) as a performative devotional text. The play incorporates, for instance, liturgical passages from the Office of the Dead and provides a *ductus* or path for contemplation. As part of the liturgy, Job makes a spiritual journey from despair and anger to hope and redemption and was performed by the celebrant "in character" or *non in propria persona*. Such performative enactments of Job were not limited to priests, but could be performed (as part of the

lay Book of Hours) by anyone. Chaundler incorporates this transformational journey of Job into the trials of the play's protagonist, Man, and the potential readers (in addition to Bekynton) are invited to participate in this journey.

In chapter 3, I will investigate Chaundler's and Bekynton's engagement with different kinds of humanist "sensibilities" that have defined the humanist agenda, i.e., one's relationship to ancient authorities, civic responsibilities, and "canons of taste."¹⁸ I will examine in particular Bekynton's style of epistolography, which has been claimed to exemplify humanist innovation. As part of this examination, the medieval "florid" style will be compared to the humanist style of epistolary production. I will also interrogate the humanist texts found in Chaundler's debate dialogue, *Libellus de laudibus*, and determine the extent to which these were used for the purposes of promoting humanism. The *Libellus de laudibus* will also be examined in relation to medieval styles of performance.

In chapter 4, I will explore the rarely acknowledged medieval Christmas King tradition at Oxford and its relationship to the composition of *Liber Apologeticus*, *Libellus de laudibus*, *Collocutiones* and *Allocutiones*. I will also examine how the study and application of the *ars dictaminis* (art of letter writing) tradition might offer an important medieval pedagogical link to both the Christmas King tradition and texts of the Chaundler MSS. I will demonstrate how these epistolary performances were able to provide "honest solace" for the students (as well as monitor and maintain their clerical corporate identity) during the long Christmas vacation while they were resident in Oxford.

Ultimately, I will try to prove that Chaundler's works, *Liber Apologeticus*, the *Libellus de laudibus*, the *Collocutiones* and *Allocutiones*, are the culmination of, and not a departure from, a

¹⁸ David Carlson, *English Humanist Books* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1993), 5.

long medieval tradition of ecclesiastical and pedagogical practices and aesthetics. Through the performance of these practices, academic and ecclesiastical identities are formed and transformed.

Chapter 1
**The Imagined Audience: The Preservation
and Performance of the Clerical Corporate Body**

Liber Apologeticus has not received adequate scholarly attention, in part because of its failure to exemplify established generic categories, but also, and perhaps more importantly, because it is perceived as having been written for an audience of one: Bishop Thomas Bekynton.¹⁹ The play, illustrations, letters, and debate dialogue of the Trinity College MS are specifically addressed to Bekynton and seem to be written with the foremost intention of offering him praise. The history of the manuscript's production and ownership would also seem to support a presumption of limited access and/or viewership. We know, for instance, that Thomas Chaundler gave the Trinity College MS to Bekynton sometime between 1457 and 1461, when Chaundler was both chancellor of Wells Cathedral and chancellor of Oxford University.²⁰ The provenance (or history of ownership), however, is less clear. Following Bekynton's death, it appears the Trinity College MS was bequeathed to Wells Cathedral Library. An inscription appears at the bottom of the table of contents on both the Trinity College MS and Chaundler's other gift manuscript to Bekynton, New College MS 288, and was added by the same scribe or librarian to both sometime in the late fifteenth century: "From the gift of the reverend father, in Christ, Lord Thomas Bekynton, Bishop of Bath and Wells and from the labor of Thomas Chaundler, chancellor of this cathedral. May you pray on behalf of both their souls" (*Ex dono Reverendi in christo patris domini Thome de Bekyntona Bathoniensis et Wellensis Episcopi et*

¹⁹ Davenport provides an abiding depiction of *Liber Apologeticus* as "closet drama" (*Fifteenth-Century English Drama*, 92).

²⁰ The range of dates for the play's composition is implied in the opening Argument, in which Chaundler states, "Receive now, Father, the first fruits of my labours, and since I so inadequately fill the posts of Chancellor at Oxford and also at Wells..." (Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 53. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 11^v). Although he was twice chancellor of Oxford (1457 - 1461; 1472 -1479), we can assume Chaundler refers to his first term as chancellor, since he not only addresses Bekynton as one who is still alive (and Bekynton dies in 1465), but also because he served as chancellor at Wells Cathedral only until 1467.

labore Magistri Thome Chaundeler huius ecclesie Cancellarii. Oretis pro animabus utriusque).²¹ According to sixteenth-century antiquarian John Leland, the Trinity College MS (at least, the play, the four letters of correspondence, and the debate dialogue), in addition to “several little works containing praises and celebrated deeds of William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester,” (*aliquot opuscula, continentia laudes & celebria facta Gulielmi Wycham, episcopi Winton*), that is, the texts of New College MS 288, were at Wells Cathedral in the 1530s and remained there at least through 1542.²² In his description from the 1530s, John Leland observes that Chaundler “wrote, as they produced at that time, skillfully in poetry and prose. He flourished around the time of Edward IV” (*Scriptis [ut illa ferebant tempora] docte & carmine, & prosa. Floruit circa tempora Edwardi 4ⁱ*).²³ Shortly after Leland saw Chaundler’s manuscripts at Wells Cathedral, Edward VI mandated that ecclesiastical institutions purge all “spurious writings” (c. 1549-50). It is quite possible that the Trinity College and New College MSS were moved at that time for safekeeping, the New College MS returning to New College, Oxford.²⁴

The next definitive record of ownership of the Trinity College MS is by Thomas Nevile, who was Master of Trinity College from 1593 to 1615, and during his tenure gave the manuscript to Trinity College (where it currently resides).²⁵ The most probable date for Nevile’s

²¹ This inscription appears on 1^v of both the Trinity College MS and New College MS.

²² James Carley, “John Leland at Somerset Libraries,” *Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society* 29 (1985): 141. See John Leland’s description of Chaundler’s and Bekynton’s works under heading of “Wellys” in *De Britannicis Collectanea*, ed. T. Hearne, vol. 4 (London, 1770), 155-6. For Leland’s discussion of Chaundler’s patronage to Bekynton, exemplary Latinity, and “great eloquence” see *Commentarii De Scriptoribus Britannicis*, ed. A. Hall (Oxford, 1709), 456-7. For Leland’s discussion of Chaundler’s patronage to Bekynton, exemplary Latinity, and “great eloquence” see *Commentarii de Scriptoribus Britannicis*, ed. A. Hall (Oxford, 1709), 456-7.

²³ Leland, *De Rebus*, 156.

²⁴ David Wallace, “Dante in Somerset: Ghosts, Historiography, Periodization,” *New Medieval Literatures* 3 (1999): 12.

²⁵ On fol. 1^v of the Trinity College MS, there is a pasted inscription that states, “from the gift of the most distinguished man Thomas Nevile, Dean of Canterbury and Prefect of Trinity College” (*Ex dono ornatissimi viri Thomae Nevile Decani Cantuariensis, et Collegii Trinitatis Praefecti*). M.R. James describes Thomas Nevile as “so munificent a benefactor” of Trinity College in *The Chaundler MSS* (London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1916), 31.

gift of that manuscript to the library is between 1611 and 1612, when Nevile bequeathed 126 manuscripts to the college (and there is no record of Chaundler's manuscript in the registers at Trinity College library before 1600).²⁶ How it came into Nevile's possession, we still do not know, though it might have come to him by way of the Cathedral Library of Canterbury, where Nevile acquired many of his more literary works.²⁷ Thus, the Chaundler MSS resided at Wells Cathedral until the mid-sixteenth century and their connection to a broader viewing audience (such as Oxford University, Winchester College, or Christ Church, Canterbury) can only be established much later, when they had most likely lost their "currency." However, this assumes that Wells Cathedral served merely as a repository for the manuscripts and nothing more. As we will see, Wells Cathedral was part of a network of textual and performative communities that expanded the potential viewing audience beyond the bishop. In this chapter (and chapter 2), I argue that *Liber Apologeticus* is the product of textual and performative communities that served two kinds of audiences – imagined and actual.

For the formulation of these two kinds of viewing audiences, I borrow from Daniel Wakelin's recent investigation into fifteenth-century humanism, where he finds evidence of a humanist sensibility within vernacular English literature not only through the "imitation of

James also notes that the record of the manuscript's transaction between Nevile and New College appears in the "register of manuscripts given by him" under the heading, "*Chaundelerus de humana natura*," 31.

²⁶ Philip Gaskell, *Trinity College Library* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 80-1. After Leland, Chaundler's manuscript is first mentioned in a register, Trinity College MS R.17.8 (referred to as *Memoriale* or *Memoriale Collegio Sanctae et Individuae Trinitatis in Academia Cantabrigiensi dicatum*), which catalogued gifts to the college library between 1612 and 1614. See also pp. 147-212 for catalogue of books compiled from this manuscript (within Appendix A) that shows which "books" existed at the library in 1600.

²⁷ Gaskell, *Trinity College Library*, 81. The Trinity College MS may have been moved to Canterbury because of Chaundler's patronage of Christ Church, Canterbury. There is also an intriguing inscription on fol. 1^r of the Trinity College MS, in a rather rough hand, "Stevyn Carslegh ys boke." According to the *Alumni Oxoniensis*, one "Stephen Carslegh" supplicated for a B. Med. from Oxford University in 1541 (University of Oxford and Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses: the Members of the University of Oxford, 1500-1714* [Oxford: Parker and Co., 1891], 242). The connection is not immediately apparent.

classical antiquity,” but also through the “activities of readers.”²⁸ He makes an important distinction between the actual or “real reader” and the “imagined reader” for different types of vernacular humanist literature. Taking as one example Lydgate’s *Fall of Princes*, Wakelin deconstructs a common assumption that Duke Humfrey commissioned Lydgate to write the treatise or “mirror for princes” for the intended reader Henry VI. The actual readers of Lydgate’s treatise, as evinced through the popular distribution of copies made from the original manuscript, may have been, instead, Lydgate’s “imagined readers” of humbler origin. Despite the pretense of providing good counsel for the king, *Fall of Princes*, in practice, honors Duke Humfrey as its patron through the promotion of a humanist sensibility that equates nobility with higher education. Lydgate achieves this effect by portraying the intended reader, the king, as one who successfully “blend(s) the active life and scholarship,” like the ideal ruler Julius Caesar, whose exemplary life is to be followed by other men.²⁹ In this way, the “imagined readers,” who are from the “comounte” or “civil society: gentry, lawyers, scholars and monastic houses,” become the actual readers who support this idea of “humanist-inspired” nobility and/or aspire to it.³⁰ I adapt this idea of “imagined” and “actual” readerships (substituting “audience/participant” for “reader”) as a way of expanding the audience and performance potential for *Liber Apologeticus* and the Trinity College MS. Although Bekynton is the intended (and actual) audience for the manuscript, which honors his patronage and legacy, there are precepts of moral conduct and qualities to be imitated, layered within the texts, which are meant for an “imagined audience.” This implied or “imagined” audience encompasses the “comounte” of Oxford University, the society of Wykehamists (past and present students of New College, Oxford and

²⁸ Daniel Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature: 1430-1530* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 7 and 18. Specifically, he attempts “to mix the history of humanism or of English literature with the history of reading – the practices of glossing, translating, adapting, editing, printing,” 22.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

Winchester College), as well as the choristers and ecclesiasts of Wells Cathedral. Specifically, I will argue that the performance of *Liber Apologeticus* encourages the “imagined audience” to preserve and maintain the integrity of the clerical corporate body as defined by the university, colleges, and Wykehamist community.

Performance Tradition at Wells Cathedral

The providence of the Chaundler MSS and their residency at Wells Cathedral until the mid-sixteenth century does not diminish their performance potential. Wells Cathedral had an active (and somewhat notorious) history of performance from at least the early fourteenth century. In 1331, for instance, the statutes of the dean and chapter of Wells Cathedral decree that “there [shall] be no plays [*ludi*] contrary to the decency of the church of Wells.”³¹ This ordinance seems to refer to specific performances, as the subsequent entry elaborates:

[Likewise] from Christmas to the octave of [Holy] Innocents’ [Day] some clerics, subdeacons, deacons, [and] even priests, vicars of this church, put on theatrical entertainments in the church of Wells and, introducing masked shows, presume to exercise their scandalous stupidities, contrary to clerical decency and the prohibition of the holy canons, hindering the divine office in many ways. We, forbidding [this] to take place hereafter in the church of Wells under canonical penalty, wish that the divine office be celebrated on the feast of the Holy Innocents, just as on similar feasts of saints, quietly and peacefully without any confusion or playfulness [and] with due devotion.³²

Max Harris finds that the observance of the Feast of Innocents during the second quarter of the fourteenth century at Wells resembled (rather exceptionally) the “kind of disorder we usually associate with the Feast of Fools.”³³ These prohibitions are reiterated in the 1338 statutes, which also mention the inappropriateness of similar kinds of performances by the laity during

³¹ James Stokes, *REED: Somerset*, vol. 2 (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1996), 830.

³² For this passage, I used Harris’s translation (*Sacred Folly: A New History of the Feast of Fools* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011], 176). Harris interprets, I believe rightly, “*ludos...theatrales*” to mean “theatrical entertainments” and not “stage plays” as represented in the *REED* volume.

³³ Max Harris, *Sacred Folly*, 173.

Whitsuntide and other festivals that were performed in the church and on church property.³⁴ The main objection to the “theatrical entertainments,” specifically those performed between Christmas and the octave of Holy Innocent’s Day (January 4th), was the “violent dissension and the shedding of blood that often arises from the seeds of plays and spectacles and stone throwing in the aforesaid church and its cemetery and cloister, and from these occurrences the said church of Wells suffers many losses” (*Item cum ex coreis ludis & spectaculis & lapidum proieccionibus in prefata ecclesia & eius cimiterio ac claustro dissensiones sanguinis effusions & violencie sepius oriantur & ex his dicta Wellensis ecclesia multa dispendia paciatur*).³⁵ As Watkin points out, the punishment for violating this statute is excommunication, and perhaps for that reason, “we never hear of the observance of the Feast of Fools again in the cathedral.”³⁶ However, this was not the only form of “theatrical entertainment” or *ludi* performed at Wells. From at least 1327 to 1537, the boy bishop was annually celebrated on the Feast of the Innocents (with additional choristers enacting the parts of canons from 1455 onward). Beginning in 1408, payments for various forms of liturgical drama (such as the *Visitatio Sepulchri* and *Peregrinus*) show up in the Communar’s and Escheator’s Account Rolls for the cathedral.³⁷ Payments for costumes of these plays continue until 1471, on which occasion, there was a rather lavish expense of “two pounds of hemp for making wigs for the three Marys playing on the night of Easter, 6d; and paid for three coifs bought for the said three Marys, 3d; and paid for three quarts of fustic for the dye of the said wigs, 6d; and paid to Christine Handon for the dyeing and

³⁴ Stokes, *REED: Somerset*, 2:832.

³⁵ This is my own translation. For the Latin, see Stokes, *REED: Somerset*, vol. 1, 238.

³⁶ Aelred Watkin, *Dean Cosyn and Wells Cathedral Miscellanea*, Somerset Record Society 56 (1941), xxvii.

³⁷ Stokes, *REED: Somerset*, 2:834. In 1408, payments are made for the “making of one tunic of the Holy Savior for the play in Easter week” (and then payments made the next year for the mending of the tunic for the same play). In 1418, in addition to the robe for the Holy Savior, payments are made for two beards for two pilgrims (i.e., for *Peregrinus*). Then, beginning in 1419, mantles (and later wigs) are recorded for the three Marys (i.e., for *Visitatio Sepulchri*).

making of the said costumes, 12*d.*”³⁸ Lay performances do not seem to have a similar performance tradition after the ordinances of 1338, since the next recorded play or spectacle is not until 1497 for Robin Hood games and parish entertainment.³⁹

The performance history of Wells Cathedral shows that a particular kind of performance was preferred. “Theatrical entertainment” that was disruptive to ecclesiastical order was banned, whereas liturgical or playful forms of entertainment or “honest solace” like the boy bishop (that preserved the clerical corporate body) were institutionalized. In addition to this performance history, there is evidence of a performative relationship that existed between Oxford and Wells as presented in Chaundler’s other gift manuscript, New College MS 288. The *Collocutiones* or “conversations” begin, for instance, with two “philosophers” or students, who are traveling from Oxford University to Wells not only to see the splendor of the town and cathedral, but also for the chance to discuss moral philosophy with Chaundler (who has a house in Wells).⁴⁰ By the fifth *collocutio*, the two philosophers reach Chaundler’s house and enter into a debate with him about the virtuous qualities of the founder of New College, William of Wykeham. Although the *Collocutiones* were most likely performed at New College’s hall in Oxford (which will be discussed further in chapter 4), they demonstrate how these two “venues” for performance, Wells and Oxford, could inhabit the same performative space. Chaundler provides a further connection between these locations, serving as warden of New College, Oxford, and chancellor of Wells Cathedral at the time he gave Bekynton the New College MS.

It is also worth speculating on the actual venues or performance spaces at Wells. The performance of the liturgical drama and the boy bishop festivities certainly would have been

³⁸ Stokes, *REED: Somerset*, 2:838. Stokes suggests such liturgical plays and ceremonies may have continued until 1537.

³⁹ *Ibid.* It is unclear how long before this record these games and parish ales were performed.

⁴⁰ Shirley Bridges, “Thomas Chaundler,” (B. Litt. thesis, Somerville College, Oxford, 1949), 2:106.

enacted in the cathedral or the bishop's chapel. For more "secular" forms of entertainment, it is possible that the Great Hall could have been used. As a venue for entertainment, it could accommodate a considerable number of people (with dimensions of 115 feet by 59½ feet). In 1337, for instance, 268 people were entertained for a sumptuous banquet.⁴¹ For a more intimate performance space, the Chapter House could serve as a reasonable alternative. When I examined the Escheator's Account Rolls for 1445-6 in the cathedral archive, I found an intriguing entry of a payment (under "internal expenses") to "Nicholas Pelly for making a [*locandi*] in the Chapter House, with timber for the same, 4s 2 ½ d."⁴² The editor who transcribed the account records for the archive translated *locandi* as "moveable stage." It seems that *locandi* actually refers, more precisely, to a "demountable stage" or a stage platform that could be constructed and then disassembled and stored for future use.⁴³ This type of stage platform is found in Cambridge University records from 1464 to 1720 and was used, at first, for commencement ceremonies and later for college plays.⁴⁴ The "demountable stage" goes by several names, one being "*locus*," which is perhaps derived from the platforms or scaffolds used in staging medieval performances to define specific locations (in contrast to "*platea*" or a performance space that is not localized).⁴⁵ As we will see later in chapter 3, students from New College, Oxford performed the *Libellus de laudibus* at Wells Cathedral (in either 1444 or 1445). It is not out of the question that the

⁴¹ Robert W. Dunning, "The Bishop's Palace," *Wells Cathedral: A History*, ed. L.S. Colchester (Wells: Open Books Publishing, 1982), 233 and 236.

⁴² For some reason, this entry was not recorded in the *REED* volume. Nicholas Pelly shows up later in the Fabric Rolls (1457), where he is described as a carpenter.

⁴³ Alan H. Nelson, *Early Cambridge Theatres: College University, and Town Stages, 1464-1720* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 78. I want to thank Judith Milhous for providing me with this important citation.

⁴⁴ Nelson states, "Records of construction of the commencement stage from 1464 to 1720 are of interest because they reveal, with even greater clarity than records of college plays, carpenters and co-workers engaged in the specialized craft of creating, assembling, disassembling, and storing the demountable stage platforms, seating galleries, and similar structures which made up the theatres of early modern Cambridge" (ibid.).

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Libellus de laudibus could have been performed in the Chapter House using a *locandi* or stage platform for the disputants, the judge or Bekynton himself.

Granted, we do not know if the Chaundler MSS were performed after they were deposited at Wells Cathedral. Nevertheless, they are indicative of a record of performance practices and educational exchanges between Oxford and Wells. As we will see from new evidence presented below, during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century there were networks of textual and performative communities between Oxford and Wells. These communities of canons, bishops, and Oxford alumni are part of the “imagined audience” for the Chaundler MSS. On behalf of the “imagined audience,” the Chaundler MSS communicate the value of the clerical corporate body and the need for its preservation.

The Clerical Corporate Body of Oxford University

Oxford University did not become a corporate body or *universitas* proper until the thirteenth century.⁴⁶ By the late twelfth century, a coalition of prominent masters from various faculties teaching in Oxford formed a somewhat loosely connected academic guild or *studium generale*. In 1209, that cohesion unraveled when the mayor and burgesses of Oxford, in retribution for the wrongful death of a woman, hanged several scholars. This punishment violated the presumed privilege of clerical status that safeguarded students and masters at Oxford from the consequences of secular law (like capital punishment). As a result, many of the Oxford masters left for Cambridge or Reading, and those few that remained refused to teach until the matter was satisfactorily resolved. Thus, it was not until Oxford’s *studium generale* began anew in June of 1214, when Pope Innocent III issued a “charter of privileges” that reaffirmed the

⁴⁶ M.B. Hackett, “The University as a Corporate Body,” *The History of the University of Oxford*, ed. J.I. Catto, vol. 1, *The Early Oxford Schools* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 42-3.

clerical status for students and masters of Oxford, that Oxford University become an officially sanctioned *universitas* or unified corporate body.⁴⁷ The notion of the university as a corporate body is therefore predicated on its clerical status and identity.

The statutes of the university were subsequently written around 1230, in response to the growth of the student population and the need for a more formalized disciplinary structure.⁴⁸ Although the *forma* (or course requirements for an arts degree) were included in the statutes (notably the statutes of 1268), these requirements acted more as a general guideline than a rigid curriculum.⁴⁹ The statutes were authorized, as Weisheipl notes, “only to correct abuses or to clarify obscure points then in dispute.”⁵⁰ Moreover, those texts prescribed by the statutes for the study of the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, and logic), the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy), and the “three philosophies” (natural philosophy, moral philosophy, and metaphysics) did not encompass the full range of texts the students heard (through lecture) or read privately.⁵¹ Much of the university’s curriculum was determined by custom and, as Hackett states, “the importance of customs, which covered a far wider field than statutes, with reference to medieval institutions cannot be over emphasized. The maxim *consuetudo habet vim legis*

⁴⁷ Alan Cobban, *The Medieval English Universities* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1988), 45-6. Hackett, however, argues in “The University as a Corporate Body” that the masters might have been considered to be a corporate body by 1209 since they promulgated “a common will among the members, expressed publicly by concerted and coercive action, and the practice of electing accredited officers, whose status incidentally was recognized by the town corporation of Oxford,” 42-3. However, it was not until 1214 that Oxford University had its first chancellor.

⁴⁸ Hackett, “The University as a Corporate Body,” 52. However, some of this is conjecture, since the earliest recorded statute in Registrum A (the earliest surviving register) is from 1253.

⁴⁹ See Pantin, who observes the high number of graces or “dispensation from the statutory requirements for a degree” for the bachelor of arts degree (*The Register of Congregation: 1448-1463*, eds. W.A. Pantin and W.T. Mitchell [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972], xxi-xxii).

⁵⁰ J. A. Weisheipl, “Curriculum of the Faculty of Arts at Oxford,” *Medieval Studies* 26 (1964): 145.

⁵¹ J.M. Fletcher states that lectures were either “ordinary, providing the material required for the statutory course and given by masters; cursory, offering textual sources with a minimum of commentary and usually delivered by bachelors; and extraordinary, presenting works on subject outside the statutory curriculum” in “Developments in the Faculty of Arts” *The History of the University of Oxford*, eds. J.I. Catto and Ralph Evans, vol. 2, *Late Medieval Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 322.

(custom has the force of law) succinctly sums up the role of custom.”⁵² I will examine next how both the pedagogical program implied by the statutes and the pedagogical customs that developed in conjunction with these faculties worked to preserve and maintain the corporate body through performance.

The Corporate Body in Crisis

Although clerical privileges were legitimized by papal decree, there were still many challenges to the clerical corporate body. In this section, I will discuss how the corporation of the town of Oxford, the Northern and Southern “nations” within the university, and perhaps most profoundly, the individual character of the students posed a threat to the corporate body and how this internal and external conflict was generative of academic performance.

Students (undergraduate and graduate) found the trope of the university as a corporate body useful (particularly to explicate problems), and it shows up frequently in sermons and student letters. The university is often presented as *alma mater* (nourishing mother), who provides sustenance, but also requires support from the individual members to sustain the integrity of the whole. John Schyrborn (or Shirborne) uses an example of the university as corporate body as part of his *thema* (or theme) for the promotion of the Christian faith in his Oxford academic sermon (c. 1412-1433), which Richardson suggests may have been part of a collection of *sermones examinatorii* (examination sermons) for bachelors and doctors of divinity.⁵³ Here, the *alma mater* is composed of only the senior members of the university, in which the doctors and masters

⁵² Hackett, *The University as a Corporate Body*,” 52.

⁵³ See *Formularies which Bear on the History of Oxford, c. 1204–1420*, eds. H. E. Salter, W. A. Pantin, and H. G. Richardson, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942), 436-7.

...have different duties just like the different members of a single body. With the same law, statutes and privileges, however, the whole has a single purpose, that is, the strengthening and increasing of the faith of the fellow citizenry. Thus, there is a single chancellor as the head. The professors of sacred theology appropriately preside as the eyes and contemplate the divine secrets more clearly because they are not held back by the limitations of what can be perceived by the senses. The lawyers are like ears, pricked for higher things, judging between the just and the unjust. The medical doctors, like the hands, protect the whole body against dangers to the bodily members, and provide remedies. The feet are the masters of the philosophical liberal arts and they support the whole body.⁵⁴

Henry Anstey observes in his introduction to his edition of Oxford University's Registrum F (or University letter book) that the frequent occurrence of "*alma mater*" in the register's letters of correspondence was indicative of more than "allegorical and metaphorical language, expressing no mere poetic fancy, no mere figure of speech or empty ornament of diction, but a sincere, powerful, and effectual appeal to the strongest affections and the most solemn sense of piety and duty."⁵⁵ The "nourishing mother" cared for her students, who spent the greater part of their adolescence away from home, and in return, she expected filial piety. Yet, for undergraduates, the *alma mater* also served very practical purposes – a means by which to appeal and decry the ravages of student poverty.⁵⁶ The vast majority of extant student correspondence consists of what Charles Haskins calls "begging letters."⁵⁷ As Anstey observes, if "the University is the mother, poverty is the stepmother of learning."⁵⁸ Yet, poverty is not necessarily an individual problem, for the university believed, as Anstey demonstrates from the letters seeking patronage

⁵⁴ I have adapted G. R. Evans's translation (John Wyclif: Myth and Reality [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005], 22). British Library: Harley MS 5398, fol. 21^r. Chaundler uses a similar metaphor of the body politic in the second letter of the Trinity College MS, found on fol. 47^v-48^r (which will be described in detail in chapter 3).

⁵⁵ *Epistolae Academicae Oxon. (Registrum F): 1421-1457*, ed. Henry Anstey, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), xxxvii.

⁵⁶ Cobban argues that the poverty of the students is relative and does not mean that the students were without a source of income. Up until 1500, most students came from the lesser gentry and the merchant class, and did not face the kind of abject poverty, for instance, of non-property owning peasants (Cobban, *The Medieval English Universities*, 300-2).

⁵⁷ Charles Haskins, "The Life of Medieval Students as Illustrated by their Letters," *The American Historical Review* 3.2 (1898): 208-9.

⁵⁸ *Epistolae Academicae Oxon*, xxxviii.

and from the testimonial letters, “what is done for the advancement of one benefits the whole body corporate.”⁵⁹

In addition to problems that affected individuals, there were also internal conflicts that arose from specific populations within the university, the “unnatural sons,” that threatened the stability of the corporate body. The administrative organization of Oxford University was divided by a “nation” of Northerners, who originated from areas of England north of the river Nene, and of Southerners, who came from areas south of the river, but also inclusive of the Irish and the Welsh. Conflicts between the two nations often resulted in violence and bloodshed.⁶⁰ On account of these divisions, the university stipulated equal representation among the nations for the majority of supervisory positions, such as, the proctorships, the “collators of sermons...supervisors of University rents, the supervisors of disputations at the Austin Friars, the supervisor of bread, wine, and of paving, the taxors of the halls ‘ex parte Universitatis,’ and the bachelor collators of disputations at the Austin Friars,” in addition to those who served on disciplinary councils.⁶¹ This division of power among the nations was meant not only to keep peace among the students, but also the masters, who were equally prone to create factions within the university. In 1334, for instance, thirty-six Northern masters and scholars attempted to secede from the university and start a “*studium*” after a violent confrontation with Southern masters and students that resulted in a Southern master’s death. The Northerners were “threatened with imprisonment” and forced by royal edict to return to Oxford.⁶²

⁵⁹ Ibid., xxxix. The testimonial letters often refer to the individual as offering benefit “under the common form” (*sub forma communi*), 199.

⁶⁰ The earliest recorded conflict is in 1252, in which the Congregation had to intervene to stop their fighting from escalating (A.B. Emden, “Northerners and Southerners in the Organization of the University to 1509,” *Oxford Studies Presented to Daniel Callus* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964], 2).

⁶¹ Ibid., 3.

⁶² Ibid., 5.

Northern and Southern divisions also affected the composition of students in the colleges and halls, each of which was typically comprised of students from one particular nation. When New College was first founded in the late fourteenth century, for instance, it was more equitably composed, recruiting students from both nations. Yet as the college became more established (and its corporate identity defined through Southern ties), “only one Northerner was admitted” from 1435 to 1500.⁶³ Despite these divisions, the rise in the founding of colleges created new corporate bodies with feelings of loyalty comparable to those expressed in support of the university. As we will see, the Chaundler MSS *embody* these ecclesiastical and educational values in their devotion to Wykehamist fraternity.

Tensions between the “town and gown” (two corporations vying for jurisdiction) might constitute the gravest threat to the corporate body, and conflicts between the two continued “with some regularity” throughout the thirteenth century.⁶⁴ The most violent example occurred on February of 1355, St. Scholastica’s Day, when a typical tavern brawl turned into full-scale three-day riot. At the height of battle, “two thousand” townsmen broke through the university gates, infiltrated the houses and halls, and destroyed everything (and everyone) representative of scholarly privilege. By the third morning, as Millet describes:

The Chancellor in his turn hurried to the King, and efforts, perhaps now dictated by panic, were made to keep the clerks at home. But again the mob broke into the Halls. Scholars were beaten, wounded, killed, pursued to the churches and dragged from sanctuary there. Some were even carried off and tortured, their tonsured crowns flayed ‘in scorn of their clergy.’ The Friars marched out in solemn procession. But their crucifix was dashed to the ground, and a scholar murdered while clinging to the Friar who bore the Host. The vanquished clerks abandoned the contest and fled in despair.⁶⁵

⁶³ Ibid., 12.

⁶⁴ Cobban, *The Medieval English University*, 261.

⁶⁵ Charles Edward Mallet, *A History of the University of Oxford* (London: Methuen & Co., 1924), 1:161.

The king responded in favor of the university, and two hundred townsmen were arrested. All privileges were temporary suspended, since the town claimed that the abuse of clerical privileges was the initial cause of the fight in the tavern. Once order was restored, however, the king reissued clerical privileges to the masters and students. The University then received additional privileges to oversee “trade and government of the town, powers of regulating bread and ale and weights and measures, of supervising markets, of keeping the streets, of assessing the taxes of privileged persons, of punishing laymen as well as clerks for carrying arms.”⁶⁶ For every year thereafter, the mayor and bailiffs were required to attend Mass at St. Mary’s on St. Scholastica’s Day “for the souls of the clerks who had been killed, and to offer a penny apiece in memory of their victims.”⁶⁷ Yet, despite this recompense, the University’s corporate body was “broken,” and as Rogers observes, “the University was dispersed, and was recalled with difficulty.”⁶⁸

Preserving the corporate clerical privilege was central to the identity of the University, and when this was threatened to the point of death and dismemberment, the University had to redefine its relationship to its individual members. This internal conflict between the University and masters and scholars is performed in what, I argue below, may be Oxford’s first academic drama, *Planctus Universitatis Oxoniensis contra laicos tempore magni conflictus* (The Lament of Oxford University in Response to the Laity at the Time of the Great Conflict).⁶⁹

Oxford’s first academic drama, *Planctus Universitatis Oxoniensis*

⁶⁶ Ibid. For the financial and judicial city documents pertaining to this event, see J.E.T. Rogers, *Oxford City Documents 1268-1665* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891), 248-68.

⁶⁷ Mallet, *A History of the University of Oxford*, 1:162. This yearly penance continued until in 1825.

⁶⁸ Rogers, *Oxford City Documents*, 246.

⁶⁹ Oxford: Bodley MS 859, fol. 292^v-294^r. The verse dialogue is printed by H. Furneaux in “Poems relating to the riot between town and gown on St. Scholastica’s Day, Feb. 10, 1355,” *Collectanea*, ed. M Burrows, vol. 3 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), 170-9. For a description of the manuscript, see catalogue number 2722 in *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford: Pt. 1*, eds. F. Madan and H. H. E. Craster (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922), 513-4. See also A.G. Rigg, *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature: 1066-1422* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 268-9.

One way to communicate the value and importance of the clerical corporate body to the “imagined audience” of Oxford University students is through an affective performance of lamentation and admonition by the *alma mater*. The verse dialogue, *Planctus Universitatis Oxoniensis*, having been written not long after the St. Scholastica’s Day riot, performs the anguish of the corporate body in crisis. Based on internal evidence, Furneaux suggests a date of composition c.1356-7.⁷⁰ The dramatic action of the dialogue also supports a contemporaneous dating, with references made to the “present discord” (*praesens discordia*) that is affecting the University.⁷¹ A more conservative dating of c. 1375 could be argued as a *terminus ante quem*, but even with a later dating, the dialogue retains its “currency” for the University, which endeavored throughout the Middle Ages to protect the status and identity of the clerical corporate body. It may also be argued that the dialogue was written with the intention of only being read and distributed, but I believe that the urgency of the subject matter and the necessity for active student involvement requires the agency of performance.

The verse dialogue begins with the character of the Scholar (*Scholaris*), who asks his mother Oxford why she is so visibly upset: “You bewail in grief, Mother Oxford/ with a furious roar, desperately crying out/...perhaps I can show you a remedy” (*Plangis in gemitu, mater Oxonia/ Furentum fremitu, perdens praeconia... Forsan remedia sciam ostendere*).⁷² The University of Oxford (*Universitas Oxoniensis*) responds to her son by describing the events of the St. Scholastica’s Day riot and blames, in particular, the owner of the tavern and mayor of Oxford, John Bereford. He is likened to a “viper [who] spews venom with his mockery and

⁷⁰ Furneaux, “Poems relating to the riot,” 165. There are allusions, for instance, to David, the King of Scotland, as still being held a prisoner in England. Other poems in the manuscript, which also discuss the riot have a date of composition c. 1375. Furneaux contends that some of these poems seem to have “borrowed ideas” from the verse dialogue, suggesting an earlier date for *Planctus Universitatis Oxoniensis* (*ibid.*, 166). Based on the codicology, a more conservative dating of the poem would be c. 1357-74.

⁷¹ *Planctus Universitatis Oxoniensis*, line 18.

⁷² *Planctus Universitatis Oxoniensis*, lines 1-2 and 8. These and subsequent passages are my own translation.

makes festering wounds, contributing, by his nefarious hands, to the attacks against the free status of the scholars” (*vipera/ Spumat ludibrio virus et ulcera/ Dans in nefarium manus ad aspera/ Contra scolarium statuta libera*).⁷³ According to the University of Oxford, the townsmen have justified their incendiary actions by “forging a false royal edict” (*Edictum regium fingit falsidicus*), declaring the clerks “public enemies” (*hostis publicus*), and “raising their edict high in the air, crying ‘havoc’!” (*Banno sic edito 'Ha wok' vociferans*).⁷⁴ The University of Oxford recounts the horrors of the attacks using colors of rhetoric, such as apostrophe, not only to engage the other character in the dialogue, the Scholar, but also to provoke an affective response in the audience. As the scholars are unable to combat the wave of marauders, for instance, the University of Oxford wails: “Alas! The weapons for the defenders have failed. O Vanity, you cast more anguishes!” (*Arma deficiunt, heu! defensoribus. O sortis vanitas plena doloribus*).⁷⁵

The style of the *Planctus Universitatis* resembles the passion plays and cycle plays presented in England and on the Continent that used the “religious lyric” or liturgical trope, *planctus Mariae*.⁷⁶ The rhetorical use of apostrophe allows for a heightened expression of grief, as in the final lament of Mary from the *Carmina Burana Passion Play*, which as Peter Dronke observes, is punctuated by a “series of impassioned apostrophes – to her son, to personified Death [Mors], to the Jewish race, and to the daughters of Jerusalem who are Mary’s fellow-mourners.”⁷⁷ Mary then beseeches John, who is with her, to participate in her lament.⁷⁸ The University of Oxford makes a similar overture to the Scholar to lament her fallen state: “Vilely deprived of so many of my bright sons/ Bleeding violently with so much suffering,/ I am

⁷³ *Planctus Universitatis Oxoniensis*, lines 45-8.

⁷⁴ *Planctus Universitatis Oxoniensis*, lines 82-8.

⁷⁵ *Planctus Universitatis Oxoniensis*, lines 94-5.

⁷⁶ George Taylor, “The Relation of the English Corpus Christi Play to the Middle English Religious Lyric,” *Modern Philology* 5.1 (1907): 4-5. See also Sandro Sticca, *The ‘Planctus Mariae’ in the Dramatic Tradition of the Middle Ages*, trans. Joseph R. Berrigan (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988).

⁷⁷ Peter Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 190-1.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 191.

downtrodden with unceasing grief,/ I use a hair shirt; I live mournfully” (*Tot claris filiis orbata viliter,/ Tantis suppliciis cruentans graviter,/ Urgeor maesticiis incessabiliter,/ Utor ciliciis, vivo lugubriter*).⁷⁹ The Scholar doesn’t want to mourn, however, and finds such displays unnecessary: “Refrain from grief, O mother of our people,/ Dismiss the rumors, and listen to the remedies” (*Parce maeroribus, O mater gencium,/ Vale rumoribus, audi remedium*).⁸⁰ To him, mourning is no longer necessary since the King has intervened, the offenders have been duly punished, and the clerical privileges have been restored. The Scholar tries to console his mother and concludes, “Let peace be your goal with victory/ for your bright students, Mother Oxford” (*Pax tuis finibus et cum victoria/ Clares studentibus, Mater Oxonia*).⁸¹ Although the University of Oxford responds, “My son, I am now glad” (*Filii, nunc gaudeo*), her happiness is short lived.⁸² The University of Oxford reveals another, perhaps more serious, reason that she suffers – the decline of scholarly virtue. She pointedly states, “It is well known that the clerks make their hair effeminate,/ defining masculine behavior according to the laity” (*Patent in clericis crinis effeminans,/ Gestus cum laicis mas disseminans*), as well as cutting their clothes too short and displaying questionable morals.⁸³ Moreover, the corruption of their moral character has transformed the University of Oxford (much in the same way *Anima*, in the morality play, *Wisdom*, is physically transformed by the sins of her human faculties, Mind, Will, and Understanding): “Alas! I am now diminishing with the burden. Thus, I wither because of my [corrupted] virtues” (*Heu! meis graviter nunc decrescentibus/ Marcesco taliter meis virtutibus*).⁸⁴ In the Scholar’s preceding speech, the rubric designating the Scholar’s name has changed from

⁷⁹ *Planctus Universitatis Oxoniensis*, lines 121-4.

⁸⁰ *Planctus Universitatis Oxoniensis*, lines 125-6.

⁸¹ *Planctus Universitatis Oxoniensis*, lines 199-200.

⁸² *Planctus Universitatis Oxoniensis*, line 201.

⁸³ *Planctus Universitatis Oxoniensis*, lines 233-4.

⁸⁴ *Planctus Universitatis Oxoniensis*, lines 227-8.

Scholaris to *Planctus Scholaris Oxoniensis* (Lament of the Oxford Scholar), indicating that the Scholar invariably takes on the affect of lamentation even as he tries to defend against the need for it. The University of Oxford also changes from *Universitas Oxoniensis* to *Planctus Universitas Oxoniensis*, perhaps indicating the *real* reason for her lament, i.e., the moral corruption of her sons, the scholars. If performed, it seems these speeches would be presented directly to the audience, since in the last two brief speeches the character designations change again to indicate that the Scholar and University are speaking directly to one another: *Planctus Scholaris ad Universitatem* (Lament of the Scholar to the University) and then *Planctus Universitatis ad Scholarem* (Lament of the University to the Scholar). The (lamenting) Scholar concedes that these “lascivious” (*lascivius*) problems exist (particularly among the junior scholars), but senior scholars will help steer the university in the right moral direction. The (lamenting) University of Oxford maintains her faith in the scholars, but ultimately warns they must keep peace with the laity (and within themselves). The clerical audience, is therefore, prompted to consider its relationship with the laity and the effect it has had on their moral virtue.

The Scholar in the dialogue seems to represent one of the senior scholars who will help the junior scholars mend their ways. He does not seem to be directly implicated in the admonition of the University of Oxford and does not react defensively when she despairs at the decline of the learning and morals of the scholars. Throughout the dialogue, the Scholar tries to actively console his grieving mother and provide “remedies” for what ails her. As a performance, the *Planctus Universitatis* would then seem to serve a similar purpose to the ceremonial custom of the *commendatio* (commendation) speeches that were delivered on behalf of incepting bachelors who were receiving the Master of Arts degree. The masters of those incepting presented these speeches in honor of their inceptors at the evening ceremony

(*vesperies*), and, the following morning (*principium*), the inceptors would officially become masters of arts, receiving their insignia as well as giving a brief “inaugural lecture.”⁸⁵ The *commendatio* speeches would highlight specifically the morals and learning of the inceptors (the speech’s *thema*) in celebration (and justification) for earning the degree. However, as Lewry observes, the speech also had an ancillary purpose, as witnessed in a speech from the late thirteenth century that begins by discussing the four reasons *commendatio* speeches are given: “[the purpose of] the custom of commending knowledge and moral qualities [is] to reward the candidate for what he has done, and to spur him on to continue with even greater vigor; to make his teaching more acceptable to his students and to encourage the audience to imitate his attainments.”⁸⁶ Often, the speeches would argue the antithesis of the *thema* “to contrast the candidate’s good disposition with the evil ways of others,” that would include several of the same complaints of the *alma mater*, such as those “voluptuaries whose inner turmoil is accompanied by affectations of expression, speech, gestures, gait and posture, all signs of an unreflective spirit; being base and effeminate, they should be excluded from the status of master.”⁸⁷ Similar to the purpose presented in Hermann the German’s thirteenth-century Latin translation of Averroes’s so-called “Middle Commentary” on Aristotle’s *Poetics*, the “poetic utterance” or performance of the *commendatio* speeches were one part praise and one part blame.⁸⁸ The *Planctus Universitatis* also presents these two sides to the moral and intellectual virtue of the scholars, but divides its representation between the two characters. Through performance, therefore, both the *commendatio* and the verse dialogue could praise the senior

⁸⁵ P.O. Lewry, “Four Graduation Speeches,” *Mediaeval Studies* 44 (1982): 140.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 161.

⁸⁸ Hermann the German states that “Aristotle says: Every poem, and all poetic utterance (*oratio poetica*), is either praise (*laudatio*) or blame (*vituperatio*)” (“Translation of Averroes’ ‘Middle Commentary’ on Aristotle’s *Poetics*: Extracts,” *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism: c.1100-1375*, eds. A.J. Minnis and A.B. Scott (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 289.

scholars and admonish the junior scholars with cautionary examples that would regulate behavior more effectively in the presence of an audience than if read in private. Like Lydgate's *Fall of Princes* that was seemingly purposed for Henry VI, but whose actual audience, the "imagined audience," encompassed a far greater population from the middle classes and lesser nobility, the *commendatio* speeches and the *Planctus Universitatis* are seemingly addressed to senior scholars, but in actuality, to the "imagined audience" of the junior scholars, who are admonished for their behavior and encouraged, instead, to imitate the qualities of the senior scholars.

The performance of *Planctus Universitatis* also engages the clerical audience through the performative trope of the *planctus*. Pamela King argues, for instance, that the lament of Mary in the Bodley *Burial of Christ* incorporates the *planctus Mariae* trope for the purpose of encouraging audience affect: "the audience is first brought into emotional proximity with remote biblical characters, then put through a cathartic experience. The chief tools in this process are not those of dramatic realism but of performance poetry."⁸⁹ Similarly, in *Planctus Universitatis*, the clerical audience is brought into emotional proximity with the range of problems that threaten clerical privilege and is challenged to contemplate and re-evaluate (through affective means) their clerical identity. As we will see, *Liber Apologeticus* also encourages the students and masters of Oxford (and the ecclesiasts from Wells) to consider the mechanisms that threaten and preserve the clerical corporate identity through the affect of lamentation. Before investigating *Liber Apologeticus*, however, we should take note of the codicological implications of Bodley MS 859 that demonstrate further evidence of textual and performative exchanges between Wells and Oxford.

⁸⁹ Pamela King, "Drama: Sacred and Secular," *A Companion to Medieval Poetry*, ed. Corrine Saunders (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), 634.

Textual and Performative Communities of Oxford, Wells, and Exeter

In addition to the *Planctus Universitatis Oxoniensis* and other Oxford poems related to the St. Scholastica's Day riot, Bodley MS 859 contains theological material that was composed (with the exception of Paschasius's *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini*) in the early fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: Gilbert Stone's collection of letters, the *Distinctiones* of John Bromyard (and 155 notes for sermons), a theological lecture on the Apocalypse by John Orum, and John Peckham's commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*.⁹⁰ Notably, those texts that were produced around the time of its compilation (in the early fifteenth century) provide evidence for the existence of performative and textual communities among Oxford University, Wells Cathedral, and Exeter Cathedral. When John Orum delivered the theological lectures on the Apocalypse at Wells Cathedral in the first quarter of the fifteenth century (which were later preserved in the Bodley MS), for instance, he was serving as vice-chancellor of Oxford University, having recently earned a doctor of divinity from University College.⁹¹ Giving theological lectures is also the required duty of the chancellor of Wells Cathedral (in addition to preaching sermons during the season of Lent), and Chaundler served in this position from 1452 to 1467.⁹² Orum, like Chaundler, held the prebend of Holcomb, was a canon at Wells, and labored for the betterment of the town. Orum's benevolence to Wells, for instance, is mentioned in an inscription on fol. 329^r of the Bodley MS: "Payment made by Master J. Orum concerning the restoration of St. Cuthbert of Wells" (*Expense facte per magistrum J.Orum circa*

⁹⁰ *A Summary Catalogue*, 513-4.

⁹¹ See Kathleen Edwards, *The English Secular Cathedrals in the Middle Ages* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967), 199.

⁹² Chaundler may have appointed a deputy to lecture and preach on his behalf, which was permissible (Edwards, *The English Secular Cathedral*, 199). Yet, Chaundler also enjoyed the distinguished honor of being chancellor of Wells and he refers to himself as such in both the Trinity College MS and New College MS (sometimes only with this appellation). It is therefore possible that he lectured and preached at Wells when not otherwise occupied (or after he resigned the chancellorship of Oxford in 1461).

reparacionem Sancti Cuthberti Wellensis).⁹³ Gilbert Stone, who Everitt thinks “probably studied at Oxford, becoming a master of arts between 1364 and 1368,” was also a canon at Wells when he assembled his letter collection c. 1407-10.⁹⁴ The collection in the Bodley MS is a copy of the original “which was sent, along with a dedicatory epistle, to Gilbert’s friend and former fellow-student at Oxford, John Langrysh,” according to Jacob.⁹⁵ The owner of the manuscript, Edmund Lacy, Bishop of Exeter, attended University College and served as Master of University College from 1398-1401.⁹⁶ Lacy was known for encouraging his canons to pursue academic study at Oxford and to acquire manuscripts that would further their learning in the *ars dictaminis* (art of letter writing) and the *ars praedicandi* (art of preaching), such as those texts found in the Bodley MS.⁹⁷ As David Lepine suggests, this was not uncommon:

By the fifteenth century a university education was almost essential for a successful ecclesiastical career...Not only were more canons university educated during this period but they were more highly educated as an increasing number held higher degrees. In recognition of this Oxford University wrote to four chapters, Exeter, Lincoln, Salisbury and Wells, in 1426 appealing for funding to help complete the new lecture room ‘because many of your members were educated at Oxford.’⁹⁸

One of Lacy’s canons, John Stevens, acquired a large formulary, All Souls College MS 182, and sold it to one of Lacy’s registrars, William Elyot, who had been a Fellow of All Souls College, and who subsequently gave the manuscript to the college upon his death. According to Lepine,

⁹³ *A Summary Catalogue*, 514. This is my translation. St. Cuthbert is a parish church in Wells.

⁹⁴ Charles Everitt, “Eloquence as Profession and Art: The Use of the *Ars Dictaminis* in the Letters of Gilbert Stone and his Contemporaries c 1300-c1450,” (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 1985), 10.

⁹⁵ E.F. Jacob, “*Florida Verborum Venustas*: Some Early Examples of Euphuism in England” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 17 (1933): 287.

⁹⁶ Robin Darwall-Smith, *A History of University College, Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 60. Lacy bequeathed the manuscript to the Exeter Cathedral library. He died in 1455.

⁹⁷ A.K McHardy, “Patronage in Late Medieval College,” *The Late Medieval English College*, eds. Clive Burgess and Martin Heale (York: York Medieval Press, 2008), 98-9. However, McHardy suggest that Oxford graduates may have been attractive to Lacy because they were “paid, at least partly, by convenient prebendal incomes from colleges,” 99.

⁹⁸ David Lepine, *A Brotherhood of Canons Serving God: English Secular Cathedrals in the Later Middle Ages* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 1995), 56.

“Most canons concentrated on supporting an existing institution. The main focus of their benefactions was the Oxford and Cambridge colleges that had been so important in the early stages of their careers.”⁹⁹ In addition to being a significant formulary (containing Oxford correspondence), All Souls College MS provides examples of epistolary performance as part of the Christmas King tradition at Oxford University (which will be explored in chapter 4). Thus, the Bodley MS (like the All Souls College MS and the Trinity College MS) offers an important record of textual and performative transmission between Oxford and Wells that seems to have continued throughout the fifteenth century.

The Defense of Human Nature (or the Defense Against Sensuality)

As suggested before, the “imagined audience” of *Liber Apologeticus* encompasses the students of Oxford University, the past and present Wykehamists, and the choristers and ecclesiasts of Wells Cathedral, and on behalf of the “imagined audience,” the play endeavors to preserve and maintain the integrity of the clerical corporate body. Around the time the Trinity College MS was compiled (c. 1457-1461), Chaundler, as chancellor of Oxford University, was actively defending clerical privilege. According to the Register of Congregation, on June 27th, 1458, “Stokys, then bailiff of the village of Oxford, was imprisoned by the chancellor [i.e., Chaundler] because he imprisoned a scholar, against the university privilege” (*in carcerabatur Stokys, tunc ballivus ville Oxon., per cancellarium quia incarceravit unum scholarem, contra privilegia universitatis*).¹⁰⁰ As Storey relates, “the mayor sued the king’s council for the bailiff’s release, but it refused and is reported to have declared that the chancellor might incarcerate the presumptuous fellow as long as he pleased. The town’s belated recognition of the 1406 charter

⁹⁹ Lepine, *A Brotherhood of Canons*, 168-9.

¹⁰⁰ *The Register of Congregation*, 319. This is my translation.

thus soon followed a clear demonstration that the crown upheld the university's privilege."¹⁰¹ Chaundler did not want the "imagined audience" to take for granted the privilege of clerical status and actively policed the borders of the clerical corporate body. On February 25th, 1459, for instance, Chaundler received a grant of letters patent to "banish prostitutes to a distance of ten miles from Oxford."¹⁰² Prostitution was a problem that many chancellors of both Oxford and Cambridge Universities tried to eradicate. For Chaundler, like his predecessor Thomas Gascoigne, the privilege of clerical status necessitated that students also *engender* the moral conduct of a clerical identity. This requirement was met with mixed results. As Cobban suggests, the strict measures taken to monitor prostitution and lay recreational activities only seemed to increase the frequency of such activity.¹⁰³ As an alternative, many colleges tried to promote forms of "honest solace" or recreational activities that students could enjoy without compromising their clerical identity. In chapter 4, I will discuss one type of "honest solace," Christmas King festivities, that students and masters wrote and performed for entertainment during the Christmas vacation. *Liber Apologeticus* is another "honest solace," that encourages the "imagined audience" of students to aspire to a clerical identity that is represented in its idealized form (as discussed in the last section) through the educational and ecclesiastical achievements of William of Wykeham.

Chaundler explores the potential of a scholastic education and uses theoretical principles of the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, and logic) and the higher faculty of theology to show the "imagined audience" how to become virtuous and effectuate a clerical corporate identity. Contrary to Altman's determination that medieval pedagogy can only generate demonstrative

¹⁰¹ R. L. Storey, "University and Government: 1430-1500," *The History of the University of Oxford*, eds. J.I. Catto and Ralph Evans, vol. 2, *Late Medieval Oxford* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 723.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Cobban, *The Medieval English Universities*, 364-366.

and not exploratory forms of drama (as discussed in the introduction), I believe that Chaundler incorporates not only demonstrative *pro forma* material (or the required texts of the liberal arts curriculum), but also exploratory pedagogical practices (such as disputation and preaching) that model and perform one's academic and ecclesiastical proficiency.¹⁰⁴

Liber Apologeticus begins with a monologue by God (delivered to the audience), who laments the fall of the angels: "Truly I take much to heart the event which I lament [that] has lately come to pass: I speak of the fall of the glorious angels."¹⁰⁵ The fall was caused by the willful disobedience of Lucifer and the "weakness of those angels who had formed schisms," which has, as a result, enfeebled the clerical/celestial corporate body.¹⁰⁶ God has decided, therefore, to create Man with the ability to "multiply" in order to restore "in reparation" the integrity of the whole. God constructs Man's corporate body using the letters of "*homo Dei*," which signifies his relationship to God.

In the mid-twelfth century, Aristotle's dialectical works (*Topics*, *Prior Analytics*, *Posterior Analytics*, and the *Sophistical Refutations*) were "rediscovered," which caused great enthusiasm for the scientific potential of his *logica nova* or "new logic" and became the primary focus of the *trivium*.¹⁰⁷ Grammar, particularly at Paris and Oxford, was incorporated into the study of logic, and Latin was examined in relation to "manners or modes of language and

¹⁰⁴ Students would hear ordinary lectures on required texts (*pro forma*) by masters and would repeat (*repetitio*) the lectures later that day (as well as present a weekly review of the material). After two years, students would be expected to participate in public disputations on grammar and *de sophismatibus* (on sophisms) that would test their knowledge of logic. As students progressed, public disputations (and lecturing for bachelors) would become necessary for advancement (J.A. Weisheipl, "Curriculum of the Faculty of Arts at Oxford," *Mediaeval Studies* 26 [1964]: 152-4).

¹⁰⁵ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 55. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 11^v. At times, I have adapted Shoukri's translation to reflect the idiom of a character's speech.

¹⁰⁶ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 55. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 11^v.

¹⁰⁷ P. Osmund Lewry says that it was Aristotle's "own treatment of syllogistic, dialectical and fallacious reasoning and demonstration" that prompted the most excitement in "Grammar, Logic and Rhetoric: 1220-1320," *The History of the University of Oxford*, ed. J.I. Catto, vol. 1, *The Early Oxford Schools* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 402.

thought” or modes of signifying (as represented in works such as Peter Helias’ *de modi significandi*), transforming literary-based grammar into a “modal” grammar.¹⁰⁸ Modes of signifying and the metaphysical question of universals were hotly debated at Oxford and the disputants fell into two camps: realists and nominalists. Cobban provides a helpful comparison:

In grammatical terms, signification was the act of determining within a particular sentence whether the words represented universal or only individual entities. For a realist, a word such as “women” was a general concept with its own inherent reality. For the nominalist, the term was only a name for a group of individual women. It had no meaning beyond this, and no reality as a general concept.¹⁰⁹

The creation of Man seems to follow a realist mode of signifying and views these universals in relation to Man’s moral virtue. This etymological depiction of Man also takes the concept of “the reading road” from one of the *pro forma* texts for grammar, Priscian’s *Institutiones*: “It is called litera [‘letter’]...as a leg-iter-a [‘reading-road’], because it provides a path for reading.”¹¹⁰

The individual parts of Man’s corporeal body are signified through letters that provide him with a “moral road” to follow. As God relates:

Thus shall ‘homo Dei’ (Man of God) be twice written on his face by means of marks and letters disclosing the artificer and testifying that God is his Creator.... The orbs of the eyes make ‘o’ twice. ‘m’ is written by the nose midway between the eyes. The ear makes ‘D’ the nostril makes ‘e’, the grace of the mouth makes ‘i’. This word is formed both from the right and from the left. Therefore, this word ‘homo Dei’ shall be read twice on the human face.¹¹¹

Apparently, the “h” is silent. Then God constructs the parts of the body to have specific moral *significance*:

I regulate the appearance itself and the figure and stature of the whole body in such a way that Man may judge these several parts to have been made for the service of the rational soul.... I shall grant him a pair of eyes, so that with the one

¹⁰⁸ Jeffrey Huntsman, “Grammar,” *The Seven Liberal Arts in the Middle Ages*, ed. David Wagner (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 82.

¹⁰⁹ Alan Cobban, *English University Life in the Middle Ages* (Columbus: Ohio State Press, 1999), 154.

¹¹⁰ Priscian, *Institutiones in Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric*, eds. Rita Copeland and Ineke Sluiter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 173.

¹¹¹ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 57-9. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 12^v.

he may always through inner love be intent upon the joys for which he was ordained, and with the other, upon the punishments to be feared and avoided.... Accordingly, I plan to set Man's two eyes in the upper part of his body, so that perceiving evils from a distance, he may be able from afar to avoid their drawing near.... I also grant him two ears that he may have one always open for the warnings of his Creator and superiors, the other for the piety to be shown to the wretched...the tongue, communicative and expressive of the soul...teeth for the purpose of curtailing whatever should be found excessive in his speech...the heart...[shall be] wide at top toward its Creator, but at the base narrow and closed from the world, so that Man may devote to me all his charity and love...hands...fit for writing...but I shall also give him two feet, so that climbing the steps of virtue at a steady pace and gazing at his Creator, he may while he seeks the higher rung of reason, trample upon the lower rung of sensuality.¹¹²

Thus, the individual parts of Man's corporeal body, like the members of the university's corporate body, are constructed to provide moral instruction and guidance for the integrity of the corporate whole. In relation to the theological outlook of the play, however, Chaundler seems to favor a nominalist approach, which is consistent with other English morality plays. As Wertz has shown, the theology of nominalism in plays like *The Castle of Perseverance* and *Everyman* allowed for "God to relate directly to the individual man" and give him "a radical freedom in his own immediate world. No deed was meritorious unless done by free will."¹¹³ These aspects of nominalism, specifically, Man's free will and the immediate presence of and access to God, drive the first two acts of *Liber Apologeticus*.

After Man's creation, God addresses him (as stated in the marginal rubric "To Man" [*Ad hominem*]): "I establish you as a prince, so that you may glory in the prerogative of double lordship, over the passions, both the inward forces of sensual desire and the parts of sensuality; and then, that you may rule over all living things of the earth."¹¹⁴ God gives Man the "scepter of original justice," an "emblem of [imperial] power" (*imperialibus signis*) to subjugate the "lower

¹¹² Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 59-61. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 12^v-13^v.

¹¹³ Dorothy Wertz, "The Theology of Nominalism in the English Morality Plays," *Harvard Theological Review* 62.3 (1969): 371.

¹¹⁴ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 63. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 13^v-14^r.

forces of the body” or “inward passions of sensual desire” to the “rule of reason.”¹¹⁵ Man also receives the “golden sphere,” which is representative of “lordship over all things” and the “mantle of divine immortality,” which is a symbol for the potential of eternal life if he is able to persevere in his double lordship.¹¹⁶ Lastly, God equips Man with the “freedom of will” and two counselors, Reason, a wise mentor, and Sensuality, a “blind servant” whose “roving passions” may lead him astray. God instructs Reason to counsel Man “in the path of morals...as yet he is a child in a state of innocence and hence must be under a guardian.” Of Sensuality, God requests that she “minister to [Man] only in the service of natural necessity.” If Man succumbs to Sensuality beyond “natural necessity” and “taste[s] her seductive fruit...having spurned Reason [he] shall die the death.” However, if he resists her temptations, he will receive the “golden crown” and live eternally.¹¹⁷

In contrast to Sensuality, who is depicted in the illustrations as a lady from court, Reason is depicted as a nun who wears the “golden crown” (see **Appendix 1**, fols. 2^v, 3^r, 3^v, 4^v, and 5^v), and provides the kind of moral instruction that allows Man (who is still a child) to live virtuously.¹¹⁸ As we will see, the virtue of the clerical corporate body is upheld through the *trivium* (grammar, logic, and rhetoric), the foundation of a scholastic education. As part of the medieval curriculum, logic, in particular, was championed for its ability to discern truth. The scholastic emphasis on logic is one of the distinguishing features of medieval pedagogy that is later repudiated in favor of rhetoric as part of the campaign for the “new learning” of humanist pedagogy. Whereas logic “assumed the certainty of all truth,” according to John Ward, rhetoric

¹¹⁵ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 62-5. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 14^r.

¹¹⁶ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 65. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 14^r.

¹¹⁷ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 69. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 15^r.

¹¹⁸ Kathleen L. Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts: 1390-1490*, vol. 2 (London: Harvey Miller, 1996), 286.

maintains the “negotiability of all certainty.”¹¹⁹ Notably, in the same sermon in which John Schyrborn discusses the university as a corporate body, he also warns against the ways in which “poetic fashionings harmfully represent the doctrine of truth, and labor to conceal under an obscurity of words a picture of the truth that ought to be laid bare” (*Ficciones enim poetice ex eo doctrine veritatis reddunt inimice, que sub obscuris verborum picturis veritatem que patere debet nuda, nituntur occultare*).¹²⁰ Sensuality is not to be trusted because of her “vain blandishments...or moreover to be moved in any way by her sweet words.”¹²¹ Instead, Man must follow Reason, who represents “the inexhaustible treasury of [God’s] wisdom.”¹²² Although I do not think Chaundler was intentionally equating Reason with logic and Sensuality with rhetoric, it is interesting that as part of the medieval scholastic curriculum, rhetoric is subordinated (or under the aegis) of logic. The greater concern for Chaundler, however, is Sensuality’s ability to corrupt Man as he traverses the “path of morals.”

After God departs, Reason gives Man the “Mirror of Reason,” which shows Man that he is indeed the image of God. Reason explains that the mirror can show Man “most clearly what is right, what unjust, what ought to be avoided, and what ought thoroughly to be done.”¹²³ However, if Man’s image in the mirror becomes “distorted and deformed,” no longer the image of God, but the image of death, he should “attribute that deformity to excessive passions and to [his] own wretchedness. For whatever person you are, it will present your image and likeness as if reflecting the beams of your intentions.”¹²⁴ Sensuality does not allow Man time for “reflection” and immediately offers him a gift as well, the “forbidden fruit.” Reason quickly

¹¹⁹ J.O. Ward, “Rhetoric in the Faculty of Arts at the Universities of Paris and Oxford in the Middle Ages: A Summary of Evidence” *Bulletin du Cange* 54 (1996): 166.

¹²⁰ British Library: Harley MS 5398, fol. 23^v. This is my own translation.

¹²¹ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 69. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 14^r.

¹²² Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 67. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 14^v.

¹²³ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 71. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 15^v.

¹²⁴ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 71. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 15^v.

intervenes and equates the “forbidden fruit” with the body of Sensuality: “See to it, therefore, Man that you do not give way to her soft blandishments, so that you do not eat of her forbidden fruits, nor venture to touch them with your hands at all!”¹²⁵ Sensuality explains to Man that inside the fruit are two seeds, good and evil; if he is to be a lord, then he needs to have the knowledge that these seeds contain. Reason again counters Sensuality by reminding Man that following Sensuality is disobedience against God. Yet, as the rubric indicates, “The opinion of Reason is willfully misinterpreted,” and Man asserts a logical fallacy, stating that neither Sensuality nor her “sweet fruit” are at fault because God does not permit Man to “raise her above Reason or to take her fruit.”¹²⁶

The “imagined audience” would have immediately detected Man’s logical fallacy (or if they did not, Chaundler provides explanatory glosses). Students at Oxford University, for instance, spend an entire term studying Aristotle’s *De Sophisticis elenchis* (On Sophistical Refutations), which takes as its focus contentious and fallacious argumentation. Man’s fallacy, in this particular case, is that his conclusion demonstrates an *ignoratio elenchi* (ignorance of refutation), i.e., he is making a false conclusion that is irrelevant to what Reason proposed.¹²⁷ The interlinear rubric, therefore, alerts the “imagined audience” to such fallacies in argumentation and their moral consequences. Moreover, the frequent occurrence of didactic rubrics suggest the play is intended for an audience other than Bekynton, such as the university’s students, who are learning how to argue effectively in dialectical disputations.

Sensuality then questions Man’s “freedom of will” and challenges him to be free. This notion strikes at the heart of the clerical corporate body – asserting one’s independence and

¹²⁵ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 73. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 16^r.

¹²⁶ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 75. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 16^v.

¹²⁷ Aristotle, *On Sophistical Refutations*, trans. E.S. Forster (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1955) 39-41.

going against the mandates of the university in the pursuit of sensuality. Reason reminds Man of the necessity for corporeal integrity: “Remember, O Man, how I was summoned from on high for your counsel and instruction, and how, as the eye leads the feet, so I [may] rule you.”¹²⁸ As stated in the interlinear rubric, “Man dissents” (*Dissentit homo*), and Reason, for the first time, becomes gendered as female. Specifically, Man questions the authority of Reason and her challenge to his freedom: “And what else is this, if not that you are placed over me as a mistress, while I am humbled before you as a slave with all submission. God forbid it!”¹²⁹ He then gives “pride of place” to Sensuality over Reason (and literally places Sensuality above Reason in the illustration -- see **Appendix 1**, fol. 3^r). Sensuality takes Reason’s corporeal analogy and twists (and dismembers) its meaning through the use of scriptural authority: “[Reason] imagines herself to be one of your eyes, but since that eye is worthless to you, pluck it out and cast it from thee, so that hereafter she who commands obedience may learn to obey.”¹³⁰ She presents a logical fallacy by stating a false premise that contends Reason’s advice is worthless and supports it, using a scripturally “true” conclusion. The logical fallacy also equates, for the “imagined audience,” immorality with the distortion of truth, thus drawing the audience’s attention to how logical fallacies can impact their moral conduct.

Reason does not want to leave Man’s side, but Man ruthlessly chides her: “How long will you wait? Rise, vile beast; depart from me.”¹³¹ Man, then, hits Reason over the head with the scepter of original justice and embraces Sensuality: “I shall place you in my bosom and joyfully hear your most sweet discourse whispered in my ears.”¹³² Through these actions, Man rejects his

¹²⁸ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 77. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 16^v.

¹²⁹ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 77. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 17^r.

¹³⁰ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 79. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 17^r. Sensuality excerpts from Matthew 5:29.

¹³¹ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 79. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 17^r.

¹³² Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 79. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 17^r.

clerical identity in favor of not only a lay identity, but also a lay masculinity. As Cullum observes, the clerical identity has an “expectation of celibacy and the avoidance of violence,” that “distinguished the clerk from the layman,” and “fighting and fornication, or at least the potential for them, were intrinsic markers of normative masculinity.”¹³³ In the university, scholars could be expelled (excised from the corporate body) for sexual or physical misconduct. But as we saw earlier, definitions of a clerical masculinity, devoid of normative markers of “fighting and fornication,” brought internal fears of “effeminacy” as a result of its liminality. I argue that the masculinity of the clerical identity in the universities was defined, instead, through fraternity and *virtus* (with its dual meaning of strength and virtue). For this reason, as Cullum contends, clerical masculinity is “consciously learned in opposition to conventional lay masculinity.”¹³⁴

As Man is deciding whether or not to eat the fruit (which presents the gravest threat to his clerical identity), after each line of dialogue, there is a flurry of moralistic/didactic interlinear rubrics that are aimed at the “imagined audience”: “The impulses of Sensuality are delightful at first,” “Pleasure once conceived inclines to consent,” and “Pleasure with consent begets the evil act.”¹³⁵ These interlinear rubrics differ from the marginal rubrics, which, for the most part, describe the dramatic action or provide “stage directions” for the actions of the characters.¹³⁶ In opposition to these warnings, Man eats the fruit. For Man’s next line of dialogue, the marginal rubric that indicates Man’s name reflects his altered state (similar to the changing character designations in *Planctus Universitatis*), as a result of giving over completely to Sensuality, and

¹³³ P.H. Cullum, “Learning to Be a Man, Learning to Be a Priest,” *Learning and Literacy in Medieval England and Abroad*, ed. Sarah Rees Jones (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 137.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 136.

¹³⁵ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 79-80. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 17^v.

¹³⁶ See the rubric on fol. 15^v, for instance, which states, “Reason gives Man the mirror of contemplation.” Although it is presented as an interlinear rubric, it is given a marginal paraph as if it was meant to be a marginal rubric. At the very least, the scribe viewed this type of rubric as purposed differently than other interlinear rubrics.

he becomes the “Forsaken Man.” The accompanying interlinear rubric states, “The evil act gives birth to sorrow,” and Man laments his fallen state in a long speech that ends the first Act. Like the *Planctus Universitatis*, his lament begins with a series of apostrophes, “O dread thing, O wretched evil! O inexorable fate!” and comments on the effect Sensuality has had on his body: “Hardly had I taken your sweet fruit, when I felt a continuous battle within myself, the strong and hard rebellion of the flesh. Woe is me!”¹³⁷ Notably, when Man looks into the Mirror of Reason, he finds that evil is defined as his internal sensual desire: “Alas! It is horrible to me beyond measure. I appear the image of death; and I now learn what is good and evil, good through having lost it and evil through the rebellion of the flesh.”¹³⁸ Man decides to break the mirror, and his deformity compounds: “Alas heinous sin. I seem to myself both deformed and malformed. There are as many particular deformities of particular parts and segments as there are broken pieces.”¹³⁹ For the first time in the play, pagan references also inhabit Man’s speech: “Pit of Tartarus, you seize the accursed one and crush him with everlasting evils. Waves of Cocytus and torpid waters drag me into the deep gulfs because I am deformed by such great wickedness. Ah me!”¹⁴⁰ Man’s (clerical) body is deformed and broken, and in his new fallen state, he adopts the language of the laity, and he flees into the wilderness.

Although the privilege of clerical status presumed the responsibility of clerical celibacy, for many students this clerical identification was temporary and did not represent their future career goals.¹⁴¹ All students received their “first tonsure,” but this did not mean that they were destined to enter the minor or major orders (or that they were to be ordained). It merely gave

¹³⁷ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 81. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 17^v.

¹³⁸ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 81. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 18^r.

¹³⁹ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 83. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 18^r.

¹⁴⁰ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 83. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 18^r. I have adapted Shoukri’s translation.

¹⁴¹ As Robert Rait noted long ago, “the insistence upon celibacy in the northern universities is one of the characteristic differences between them and the universities of Southern Europe,” in *Life in the Medieval University* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), 40.

students the *appearance* of a clerical identity (and concomitant clerical status). Probably a significant number of students went to university in order to pursue a lay career and/or went for purposes other than obtaining a degree.¹⁴² The careers of university students are difficult to determine, since there are only substantive records for those who pursued an ecclesiastical career. Nevertheless, Lytle has shown that according to a sample of 2040 students from 1451 to 1500, while more than half pursued ecclesiastical careers (most becoming secular clergy), 845 had lay careers that were not academic and/or ecclesiastic in nature.¹⁴³ Thus, although the clerical privilege was valued and protected, for many students clerical status did not always imply a clerical identity (in the narrow sense).

Yet, whether or not students intended to pursue a lay or ecclesiastical career, as long as they were a part of the university, students were expected to behave as if they were clergy. Two discernible threats to the clerical identity were prostitution and excessive drinking (and related tavern brawls).¹⁴⁴ Both of these “lay activities” are viewed as deceptions of the rational mind. As a countermeasure, *Liber Apologeticus* warns the “imagined audience” of *clerical* students about the logical fallacies and physical dangers of sensuality and provides remedies through the corporate body’s *pro forma* texts and pedagogical practices. As we will see in the next section, the clerical corporate body is healed through the incarnation of God and sustained through the bonds of fraternal virtue.

Manners Maketh Man: Healing the Corporate Body

¹⁴² T.A.R. Evans, “The Number, Origins and Careers of Scholars,” *The History of the University of Oxford*, eds. J.I. Catto and Ralph Evans, vol. 2, *Late Medieval Oxford* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 519-20.

¹⁴³ Guy Fitch Lytle, “The Careers of Oxford Students in the Later Middle Ages,” *Rebirth, Reform, and Resilience: Universities in Transition, 1300-1700*, eds. James M. Kittelson and Pamela J. Transue (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1984), 217.

¹⁴⁴ Cobban, *English University Life*, 200.

Similar to the first Act of *Liber Apologeticus* (where God describes to the audience the fall of the angels), God begins the second Act by explaining the reasons for the fall of Man. God provided Man with “emblems of [imperial] power,” but through Man’s disobedience, he has lost these symbols and has therefore incurred the punishment of death. God states that he will allow Man the possibility for restitution, but first, he must find Man, who is in hiding: “I do not know where you are, O Man. Arise, I say, Man, and come forth from your hiding place.”¹⁴⁵ God then interrupts the dramatic action by discussing at length the doctrinal meaning of his words:

What is the meaning of ‘I do not know where you are,’ except that I reject your ways as if they were unknown, and that, judging them, I condemn your wicked deeds.... Truly it is because I see you fallen and hidden as it were from the eyes of Truth, under sin as if under some vain covering of leaves, and [it is] because I do not approve of your darkness, that I do not know where you are, O Sinner.¹⁴⁶

This explication of doctrine resembles the practice of masters in ordinary lectures, who read the *pro forma* texts and offer detailed explanations of the doctrine they contain.¹⁴⁷ This explanation of the doctrine would be unnecessary for Bekynton, and implies further that Chaundler also intended the play for the “imagined audience” of university students. After this didactic interlude, God resumes the dramatic action: “Nevertheless, I wait patiently to see if perchance you may shortly seek forgiveness.”¹⁴⁸ Man reluctantly appears, and the two enter into a debate over Man’s culpability, after God poses a question (per the standard format for scholastic disputations): “Having enacted violence against the very sound counsel of Reason, you yielded to [Sensuality’s] persuasion and partook of the forbidden fruit. Why did you not fear at all

¹⁴⁵ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 89. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 19^r.

¹⁴⁶ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 89. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 19^r.

¹⁴⁷ Weisheipl, “Curriculum of the Faculty of Arts,” 150. This is in contrast to cursory lectures that were delivered by bachelors, who did not expound on the doctrine within the texts, but provided “an unpretentious reading and paraphrase of the official text,” 151.

¹⁴⁸ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 89. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 19^r.

transgressing my commandment?”¹⁴⁹ The debate focuses on the “freedom of will” and the cause of Man’s sin, and follows the theological perspective of Peter Lombard’s *Sentences* (Book II, Distinction XXIV), which was an integral part of the *pro forma* for theology students at Oxford.¹⁵⁰ Following proper disputation procedures, Man responds with a “proposition in answer,” God counters with “objections to the proposition,” and also provides a “determination” for the debate.¹⁵¹ As part of his “proposition in answer,” Man blames God for his fall, using the theoretical concept of Aristotle’s “four causes” found in the *pro forma* texts, *Physics* and *Metaphysics*.¹⁵² Man positions God as being the “efficient cause” (or “motivating agent”) of his “formal cause” (the form and style of the “material cause”), that is, the body of Man and his sinful nature. However, he argues his case in a rather convoluted manner: “Since, therefore, whatever is, is the cause of a cause and the cause of that caused, you yourself are very rightly demonstrated to be the first cause of my sin.”¹⁵³ God refutes Man by showing the fallacy of this “false cause,” and, in his disputative determination, proves that virtue requires free will for it to have any merit. This not a solemn debate, however, and it would have been quite entertaining for the “imagined audience” of students to watch Man dispute with God and witness, for instance, God’s indignation: “Behold wretched Man, whom out of nothing I created glorious in

¹⁴⁹ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 91. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 19^r. I have adapted Shoukri’s translation.

¹⁵⁰ Shoukri, *Liber Apologeticus*, 19. As a bachelor of theology (in 1450) and later a doctor of divinity (in 1455), Chaundler would have lectured and delivered “public sermons” for several years on the *Sentences*, in addition to the delivering “examination sermons” for the obtaining of these degrees (Siegfried Wenzel, *Latin Sermon Collections From Later Medieval England* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005], 298). See also Courtenay, “Theology and Theologians,” 4.

¹⁵¹ James Murphy provides a succinct overview of the scholastic disputation format: “1: Question, 2: Proposition in answer, 3: Objections to proposition, 4: Determination by master, 5: Answers to objections (optional)” (*Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from Saint Augustine to the Renaissance* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974], 102-3).

¹⁵² These were studied as part of two of the “three philosophies,” namely natural philosophy and metaphysics. See the introduction to *Medieval Literary Theory* by Minnis and Scott for the extent to which Aristotle’s four causes became an integral part of the commentary tradition (2-3).

¹⁵³ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 91. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 19^v.

mine own image and likeness! Behold him, most wretched! He now imagines that I am the author and cause of his every sin, and he repudiates the charge of evil-doing by blaming me!”¹⁵⁴

As punishment for his disobedience, God gives Man the “opposite signs” of the emblems of power: a coat of skins for the mantle of immortality, a scourge for the scepter of original justice, and a spade for the orb. These new “signs of wretchedness” are meant to correct the sins of the body by disciplining it (through mortifying the flesh and toiling in the earth). Now humbled, Man is repentant and recognizes the extent of his sin, and, as stated in the rubric, “bewails the evil of his condition.”¹⁵⁵ In his tirade, he also deprivileges the “masculine act” of fornication: “O monstrous deed! I have cast away the likeness of God, whose image I had, and I have taken on the likeness of the whore Sensuality.”¹⁵⁶ Rather than proving his lay masculinity through fornication, he becomes feminized and “debased” as a result. This and subsequent indictments are intended explicitly for the “imagined audience.” Towards the end of the second Act, for instance, Man speaks as Adam from the bible and laments the impact that his fall will have on future generations; but his lament also speaks directly to the audience, beseeching them not to follow his (corporeal) example: “O my dearest children, how have you sinned or what evil have you done.... Many shall be creatures with broken limbs and impaired senses, to the sadness of friends, the shame of parents, and the scandal of kinsmen.”¹⁵⁷

The third Act provides the “remedy” for the broken corporeal body through the corporeal incarnation of Christ. The judgment of Man is determined through the Parliament of Heaven by

¹⁵⁴ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 93. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 20^r. I have adapted Shoukri’s translation.

¹⁵⁵ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 99. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 21^v.

¹⁵⁶ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 101. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 21^v.

¹⁵⁷ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 103-5. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 22^v.

the Four Daughters of God (Truth, Justice, Mercy, and Peace), who debate the fate of Man.¹⁵⁸

Truth and Justice state their arguments using formal judicial language, “Let reprobate Man come, let unhappy Man approach the tribunal,” reflecting the true laws and decrees of God the judge. Mercy and Peace, on the other hand, use the affective language of rhetoric to persuade God of Man’s need for mercy and clemency. In what seems to be a direct reference to the faculty of rhetoric, for instance, Peace comments on the style of her speech, and how, through its use, it may offer persuasive justification for Man’s salvation:

I should provide a new style of speaking, O most beneficent Judge, if a dispute may be reckoned with our sister Truth. She, indeed, begins in sharpness of speech and she is filled with every severity and judgment. But it will be fitting for me to seek to capture your goodwill everywhere and throughout this whole speech, and also your compassion, O great Creator.¹⁵⁹

Peace wishes to “capture [God’s] goodwill” (*captare benevolenciam*), which is notably one of the five parts of a letter as explicated in various *ars dictaminis* treatises (that is, in turn, based on the six Ciceronian parts of an oration).¹⁶⁰ The performance potential of letters and their connection to the tradition of *ars dictaminis* and other forms of rhetoric will be examined further in chapter 4. However, it is worth noting here the explicit connection of *ars dictaminis* made in this speech (described as an *oracio* in the rubric) to the practice of epideictic rhetoric, which is presented as a useful pedagogical practice for the “imagined audience” of university students.

Peace also advocates compassion through the affective maternal attributes of the “nourishing mother” in her plea to God, saying “since you are patient and rich in mercy, I shall

¹⁵⁸ According to Shoukri, Chaundler’s main source for this popular trope is St. Bernard’s sermon, *Sermo in Festo Annuntiationis Beatae Mariae Virginis (Liber Apologeticus, 19)*. For the tradition of the Four Daughters of God see Hope Traver, *The Four Daughters of God* (Philadelphia: Bryn Mawr College Monographs, 1907).

¹⁵⁹ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 113. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 24^v.

¹⁶⁰ Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, 224-5.

begin my suckling, so to speak, a milky beginning from the very breasts of your compassion.”¹⁶¹

Realizing the effectiveness of these stylistic tactics, Justice objects, “In this matter, neither of my sisters ought to be listened to, neither Peace nor Mercy, however much they interject persuasion.”¹⁶² After each Daughter has had the opportunity to present a speech, God offers a final verdict that unites the four sisters: “Mercy and Truth have met together and Justice and Peace have kissed.”¹⁶³ In the morality play *The Castle of Perseverance*, the Parliament of Heaven is used at the very end of play, and the unity of the four daughters allows the main character, Humanum Genus, to ascend to heaven. In *Liber Apologeticus*, as in the N-Town play, “Parliament of Heaven,” the unity of the four daughters, instead, brings about the Incarnation of Christ.¹⁶⁴ God states: “I shall descend, and I shall bind up his wounds, on behalf of Man made Man.”¹⁶⁵ Christ, or more accurately God Incarnate (since the rubric designating his name remains “God”), enters and delivers a sermon on the Good Samaritan, using the four types of exegesis (literal, allegorical, tropological, and anagogical). St. Bernard’s sermon, Chaundler’s source material for the Parliament of Heaven, also connects the parable of the Good Samaritan to the Four Daughters of God trope.¹⁶⁶ However, Chaundler makes an important addition to this scholastic “university-style” sermon – God Incarnate systematically heals the parts of Man’s body that were afflicted by or served as “entry points” for Sensuality’s enticements. While God

¹⁶¹ This may reflect Chaundler’s source material, St. Bernard, who often used maternal images of suckling, particularly when describing the responsibilities of an “abbot as mother” (Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984], 115-6). Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 113-4. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 24^v.

¹⁶² Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 117. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 25^v.

¹⁶³ Psalm 85:11 (84:11 in the Vulgate). Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 129. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 28^v.

¹⁶⁴ John W. Velz, “The Parliament of Heaven in Two Fifteenth-Century Dramatic Accounts of the Fate of Humankind,” *New Approaches to European Theater of the Middle Ages*, eds. Barbara I. Gusick and Edelgard E. DuBruck (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 236-9.

¹⁶⁵ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 131. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 28^v.

¹⁶⁶ Shoukri, *Liber Apologeticus*, 19-20.

Incarnate preaches the sermon and heals Man, he also addresses (and thus implicates) both the audience and Man:

He falls among thieves, the Devil, and Sensuality, through disobedience.... and after Reason had been injured, [the Devil] wounded Man.... The malice of Sensuality made him blind whom I shall enlighten with clay made from the dust of the earth and with spit with which I rub your eyes....you have been made leprous, and just as Mary [i.e., Miriam] was cured of leprosy, when Moses interceded on her behalf, so also you will be cured by my merit.... Since, you have been brought to me deaf and dumb, and taken apart from the multitude, through the pacification of Sensuality, I place my finger in your ears through the inspirations of the Holy Spirit.¹⁶⁷

After his corporeal body is healed, Man's virtue is entrusted to the four cardinal virtues (Justice, Temperance, Fortitude, and Prudence), who, along with Charity, provide the moral guidance to sustain a virtuous corporate, clerical identity. In his *Collocutiones*, Chaundler discusses these virtues in relation to William of Wykeham, the founder of Winchester College and New College, Oxford (these virtues will be examined further in chapter 2). Although the "imagined audience" of *Liber Apologeticus* included all university students, I argue that the play tried to encourage students to pursue a clerical rather than a lay identity by appealing to the *ideal* of the corporate clerical identity as set forth by William of Wykeham.

The "New" Wykehamist Ideal

On November 26th, 1379, William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, founded New College, Oxford, and on October 20th, 1382, Winchester College.¹⁶⁸ Wykeham designed a unique pedagogical program, in which Winchester College provided students with a proficiency in

¹⁶⁷ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 133-5. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 29^v-29^v.

¹⁶⁸ R.L. Storey, "The Foundation and the Medieval College: 1379-1530," *New College, Oxford: 1379-1979*, eds. John Buxton and Penry Williams (Oxford: Warden and Fellows of New College, Oxford, 1979), 7. It was originally called "St. Mary's College commonly Seynte Marie College of Wynchestre," but soon after acquired the name New College "to distinguish it from the older college of St. Mary (Oriel)," 8. The fellows and warden officially became a part of the college on April 14th, 1386 (George Moberly, *The Life of William of Wykeham* [Winchester: Warren & Son, 1887], 192-4). The Winchester scholars did not become a part of the college until March 28th, 1393 (T.F. Kirby, *Annals of Winchester College* [London: Henry Frowde, 1892], 3-5).

grammar so that they could proceed with greater expediency to an undergraduate education at New College, Oxford. Both of Wykeham's colleges had substantial endowments that offered financial support for their scholars and fellows. Additionally, New College had a "salaried tutorial system," which, as Cobban describes, "involved setting aside a sum of 100s from college funds for payment to fellows or scholars who were to act as tutors (*informatores*) to younger fellows or scholars during their first three years of residence."¹⁶⁹ This successful pedagogical program subsequently became a model for future foundations (such as Henry VI's mutual foundation of Eton College and King's College in Cambridge).

A distinct advantage of an endowed college, such as New College, is that the property, which supplied the income for the college, also provided opportunities for benefices or sources of income for its graduates. The endowed college had avowsons or the right to place their graduates into "modest livings" (with parochial responsibilities) that were vacant in churches associated with the college's endowment.¹⁷⁰ According to Cobban, as a result of these avowsons, "networks were formed whereby graduates, who had owed their first ecclesiastical placement to the college and who went on to senior position within the church, in turn acted as patrons for members of their former college. In this way, collegiate dynasties were created."¹⁷¹ The percentage of bishops who were college graduates also increased, and many of these individuals, such as Bekynton, wished to honor and support their collegial foundation(s).¹⁷² Bekynton was this type of institutional patron, advancing many graduates from the Wykehamist foundations; and the Chaundler MSS are a product of this patronal relationship and collegiate dynasty.

¹⁶⁹ Cobban, "Colleges and Halls," 596.

¹⁷⁰ Storey, "The Foundation and the Medieval College," 30.

¹⁷¹ Cobban, *English University Life*, 93.

¹⁷² In 1441, Bekynton convinced Henry VI to grant New College a significant portion of land. See Storey, "The Foundation and the Medieval College," 14.

In an effort to describe these “collegiate dynasties,” Guy Lytle has argued that there existed, at least until the Reformation, a “Wykehamist culture,” with a “shared array of concerns, attitudes, beliefs, and values” among Wykehamists that promoted “administrative service to the state,” “involvement in the political events of the time,” “a strong belief in the value of high-quality education,” and “orthodox, even conservative, religious opinions, which embodied a simple piety.”¹⁷³ Although this depiction does seem to reflect the “early Wykehamists,” I contend that as the fifteenth century progressed, political and administrative service to the state was not an integral part of the “shared array of concerns” for the majority of Wykehamists. According to the New College statutes, William of Wykeham founded Winchester College and New College for the benefit of “poor needy scholars,” but also to cure the “general disease of the clerical army, which we have seen grievously wounded through the want of clergy caused by plagues, wars and other miseries of the world, in compassion for its sad desolation; to this in our small way we willingly spend our labors.”¹⁷⁴ When these statutes were issued in the late fourteenth century, theology was the dominant faculty at Oxford and could lead to careers in both church and state. Several prominent Wykehamists in the early fifteenth century, such as Bekynton and Archbishop Chichele, had successful political, civil, and ecclesiastical careers.¹⁷⁵ Yet, they were exceptional. There was a laicization of university careers in the fifteenth century, and, as Courtenay observes, those in “influential positions in church and state eventually tended to be lawyers rather than theologians.”¹⁷⁶ Even when collegiate statutes mandated that a higher percentage of students study theology instead of law or medicine, students still managed to study

¹⁷³ Guy Fitch Lytle, “‘Wykehamist Culture’ in Pre-Reformation England,” *Winchester College: Sixth Centenary Essays*, ed. Roger Custance (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 132-3.

¹⁷⁴ Selections from the Statutes of New College, Oxford can be found in Arthur Leach’s *Educational Charters and Documents 598 to 1909* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), 353.

¹⁷⁵ W.J. Courtenay, “Theology and Theologians from Ockham to Wyclif,” *The History of the University of Oxford*, eds. J.I. Catto and Ralph Evans, vol. 2, *Late Medieval Oxford* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 3.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

the latter over the former.¹⁷⁷ More indicative of fifteenth-century Wykehamists, as Lytle has shown, are those “from Andrew Holes to Warham [who] were singled out for their asceticism,” in addition to the “overwhelming majority” of Wykehamists (whose careers are known) who became parish priests.¹⁷⁸ Lytle mistakenly views Chaundler, however, as one who promotes “secular ethics” and a new “Wykehamist humanism” in *Liber Apologeticus*, and thus, “unusual among Wykehamist writers in slighting the duties and benefits of ecclesiastical rituals.”¹⁷⁹ His depiction of Wykehamist Culture, however, represents the “old ideal,” when service to the church and state was possible for theologians. The “new ideal,” I argue, is represented by a commitment to education and religious piety, and witnessed in the Chaundler MSS as a corporate, clerical identity in service of pedagogical practices and ecclesiastical devotion. As I will show further in chapter 2, Bekynton, who is representative of the “old ideal,” does not engage in politics or secular matters once he becomes bishop, focusing instead on education and religious devotion. Chaundler similarly eschews politics and administrative service. In this way, the “new” Wykehamist ideal forms the philosophical underpinnings of the clerical corporate identity for the “imagined audience” of *Liber Apologeticus*. The “new” Wykehamist ideal may be best summed up by the New College statutes (rubric 1), in which Wykeham describes the corporate body of New College (and Winchester College): “with our great number, may we may strive for one goal, and be of one heart and of one mind...united in the warmth of fraternal love and the sweetness of mutual charity” (*multitudinis ipsorum ad unum finem tendentium sit semper*

¹⁷⁷ A.B. Cobban, “Colleges and Halls: 1380-1500,” *The History of the University of Oxford*, eds. J.I. Catto and Ralph Evans, vol. 2, *Late Medieval Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 583.

¹⁷⁸ Lytle, “Wykehamist Culture,” 155-6.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 157. He cites Shoukri (*Liber Apologeticus*, 12), who has unfortunately misrepresented *Liber Apologeticus* by suggesting it advocates secular values. This issue will be explored in chapters 2 and 3.

*cor unum et anima una...dilectionis fraternae favore ac mutuae charitatis
dulcedine...copulentur).*¹⁸⁰

As we will see in the next chapter, the devotional performance practices of *Liber Apologeticus* are derived from institutional ideals of fraternity and charity. New College served fundamentally as a chantry that required daily devotional prayers on behalf of Wykeham's soul. As Cobban observes, "Wykeham's emphasis on a heavy devotional regime is probably best seen as a heightened attempt to adapt the monastic ideal to the secular college, and New College was as yet the most complete realization in the universities of this ideal."¹⁸¹ In addition to requiring that members of the college perform weekly recitations of the Office of the Dead for the predecessors and successors of the Bishop of Winchester (alone or in groups), the New College statutes (rubric 43) state that:

...four times a year at the end of each quarter (or term) in perpetuity...the warden, scholars, fellows, chaplains, and chapel clerks of this college...will solemnly recite together in the aforesaid chapel the Office of the Dead on behalf of the King, Queen and Prince of Aquitaine and of the aforesaid Wales, our father and mother, not only for the benefactors of the said college, and but also ourselves when we will depart from this light, and of all faithful souls of the dead...

*...quarter singulis annis in perpetuum, in fine cuiuslibet quarterii...Regum, Reginarum, et Principis Aquitaniae et Walliae praedictorum ac patris et matris nostrorum, necnon benefactorum dicti collegii, et nostra, cum migraverimus ab hac luce, et animabus omnium fidelium defunctorum, Custos, scholares et Socii, ac apellani et clerici capellae ipsius collegii...dicant in communi solemniter in dicta capella exequias mortuorum...*¹⁸²

Chapter 2 will focus on the devotional performances of *Liber Apologeticus* that draw upon liturgical practices, such as the Office of the Dead, that promote the virtues of the "new"

¹⁸⁰ "Statutes of New College, Oxford," *Statutes of the College of Oxford*, ed. E.A. Bond (Oxford: J.H. Parker, 1853), 1:3. This is my translation

¹⁸¹ Cobban, "Colleges and Halls," 589.

¹⁸² "Statutes of New College, Oxford," 1:72-3. This is my translation.

Wykehamist ideal, fraternity and charity, and are enacted *by* the “actual audience,” Bishop Bekynton.

Chapter 2

The Actual Audience: Bekynton, *Ductus*, and the Devotional Performance of Divine Piety

If *Liber Apologeticus* was never performed before an audience, what purpose would the play and/or manuscript serve Bishop Bekynton as the “actual audience” (or indeed subsequent individuals reading the play)? As stated in the opening Argument, *Liber Apologeticus* is inspired by the “piety” (*pietas*) and magnanimity of Bekynton. The play, therefore, would seem to be a mere panegyric (as has often been claimed) in praise of Bekynton’s exemplary devotion to God and generosity to the less fortunate.¹⁸³ However, I will argue that the play and its illustrations provide the means for contemplating and performing a variety of paths to “divine piety.”

Chaundler resists adhering to one single definition of “piety” in order to demonstrate the ways that Bekynton’s accomplishments exceed such categorizations. He begins by portraying Bekynton’s “piety” as issuing not from the “worship of God,” but from the more secular meaning of the word -- “dutiful conduct.” Chaundler marvels at the way Bekynton “mingles justice with piety and piety with justice” and is able to show “justice toward all...toward parents, toward country, and may I add, particularly toward God. You may correct me, for in truth we show God reverence, not piety [i.e., dutiful conduct].”¹⁸⁴ This secular and obligatory form of “piety” can be traced back to the Pseudo-Ciceronian *Rhetorica ad Herennium* in which the pursuit of Justice requires “dutiful conduct” (*officio*) to be shown to “parents, gods, and country”

¹⁸³ The analysis by M.R. James sets the precedent that influences subsequent scholars to view the Trinity College MS as a panegyric for Bekynton in *The Chaundler MSS* (London: J.B. Nichols and Sons, 1916), 9.

¹⁸⁴ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 47. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 10^r. Shoukri translates “*pietas*” (and its declensions) as “devotion,” but this definition would not have caused Chaundler to be concerned about the inappropriateness of the word in relation to God.

and upheld by exhibiting the other cardinal virtues (Prudence, Temperance, and Fortitude).¹⁸⁵ With its emphasis on “justice toward all,” this would also seem to reflect the type of republican secular virtues championed by proponents of so-called Florentine “civic humanism,” like Leonardo Bruni, in the early fifteenth century.¹⁸⁶ Yet, Chaundler sees this form of “piety” not in only secular terms, but also in relation to Bekynton’s benefaction that “signifies the service of God.”¹⁸⁷ Bekynton’s piety is revealed in this way through his commitment to the people of his diocese, his restoration and fortification of the bishop’s palace and the buildings of Wells, and his offerings to the poor. Although Chaundler acknowledges these contributions of Bekynton’s “service of God,” he decides not to make this the focus of the play either: “It was my intention to write about holy alms-buildings, in which the poor are built up as living stones in the Lord, about your piety toward parents, about your piety lastly to our entire country, but I prefer that these be entrusted to those who profit by your benevolence.”¹⁸⁸ Instead, Bekynton’s “piety” provides inspiration (in addition to serving as a role model for students) to “reflect on piety more closely...so that I may travel, by means of the mind, into the inner most part of divine piety” (*ita profecto sit ut in divine pietatis viscera viderer animo transmigrare*).¹⁸⁹ Chaundler wishes to uncover the “substance” (with its scholastic connotation) or ontological essence of divine piety.

To do this, *Liber Apologeticus* explores the “signs of divine piety toward us,” as the title suggests, in every state of human nature, in order to ultimately reveal “the greatest mystery of divine piety,” i.e., the reconciliation of Man to God through the virtue of Man and the grace of God. The virtue of Man is obtained, I will argue, through the diligence of the conscious mind,

¹⁸⁵ See Book III, Chapter II & III in *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964) 165-7.

¹⁸⁶ See in particular James Hankins’s groundbreaking revisionist essay, “The ‘Baron Thesis’ after Forty Years and Some Recent Studies of Leonardo Bruni” in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56 (April 1995): 309-338.

¹⁸⁷ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 49. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 10^v

¹⁸⁸ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 51. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 11^r

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.* I have adapted Shoukri’s translation of this passage.

acquiring self-knowledge through introspection and self-discipline. As I will demonstrate, the play, as an examination of the “habituation of virtue,” provides Bekynton (as the “actual audience”) with a performative devotional text that will help him prepare a “divine altar within...for [his] eternal reward.”¹⁹⁰ To assist in the contemplation of virtue, *Liber Apologeticus* incorporates numerous biblical citations that encourage a very different kind of soteriology (doctrine of salvation) than the contemporary sacred and secular literature of the fifteenth century. In contrast to other morality plays that focus on the temptations of Man during his life, *Liber Apologeticus* is focused on those temptations that confront Man as he faces (spiritual and material) death. Thus, it is my contention that *Liber Apologeticus*, as a performative devotional text, is able to serve the same function as treatises on *ars moriendi* (art of dying) or the Office of the Dead, that is, to provide instruction for negotiating the temptations that precede death by maintaining a virtuous state of mind. This interpretation is dependent upon viewing the Chaundler manuscript(s) as a product of a vibrant medieval performative (literary and theological) tradition and not the result of proto-humanist innovation.

Ecclesiastical Humanism (Part I)

Andrew Cole has recently proposed a new literary classification for English works produced in the mid-fifteenth century (1430s to 1485), which he calls, “ecclesiastical humanism.”¹⁹¹ For about fifty years prior, most literary works seem to have been crafted in response to the growing threat of Wycliffism, with its espousals of heretical ideology and challenges to the system of ecclesiastical authority. At Oxford, in particular, the justification of the Church’s authority was reinforced by Arundel’s Constitutions (1407-9), which outlined the

¹⁹⁰ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 49. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 10^v

¹⁹¹ Andrew Cole, “Heresy and Humanism” in *Middle English*, ed. Paul Strohm (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 421-2.

methods and procedures for distinguishing (and censoring) heretical forms of writing, teaching, and preaching.¹⁹² Cole endeavors to account for the apparent lack of heretical inquisitions during the mid-fifteenth century and the concurrent literary disengagement from issues of orthodoxy and heresy. He proposes that academics and ecclesiasts during this time appealed to more “neutral” classical representations of secular ideology and could therefore “imagine ecclesiastical institutions as centers of patronage and humanist literary culture.”¹⁹³ New classical acquisitions and translations of Plato, Cicero, Aristotle (et al.) also provided the *exempla* for the “self-fashioning” of ecclesiasts and created what Cole describes as a new concomitant genre within “ecclesiastical humanism,” the “mirror for bishops.”¹⁹⁴

Cole uses *Liber Apologeticus* specifically to explicate both the dynamics of “ecclesiastical humanism” and the classicizing influences within ecclesiastical/episcopal patronage. The character of Man (*Homo*) is alternately viewed as an “idealized Socratic figure,” a representation of biblical history, and a “mirror image of Bekynton – literally, a symmetrically opposite persona: rather than ruling, patronizing, and making opportunities available to others, which is the Bekynton of the dedication, *homo*’s purpose in the play is [to attain] self-rule and the lessons of self-rule, first and foremost.”¹⁹⁵ Since Man received “bad counsel” from Sensuality, he is in need of “good counsel” in order to achieve self-rule and redemption. For Cole, self-dominion is effectuated through the counsel of the cardinal virtues, which allows Man

¹⁹² See Nicholas Watson, “Censorship and Cultural Change in Late-Medieval England: Vernacular Theology, the Oxford Translation Debate, and Arundel’s Constitutions of 1409,” *Speculum* 70 (1995): 825-8.

¹⁹³ Cole, “Hersey and Humanism,” 425. James Clark argues persuasively, however, that examples of monastic classicism at St. Albans and at the universities during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century should not be described as the work of early humanists. Moreover, in relation to Wycliffism, he states that “their classicism represents less the cultivation of new values than a concern to defend, preserve, and refine the old” in *A Monastic Renaissance at St. Albans: Thomas Walsingham and his Circle c. 1350-1440* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 238. I see Chaundler’s works and the tradition of university drama and performance as engaging these prior “humanisms.”

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 429-31.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 432.

to discover his “political and ethical self.”¹⁹⁶ Chaundler is thus able to instruct Bekynton about these secular values, and the lesson for Man becomes the lesson for Bekynton in the form of a “mirror for bishops” (which Cole directly equates with the mirror for princes tradition): “rule your kingdom, rule your temporalities, by first ruling yourself.”¹⁹⁷

Several flaws undermine Cole’s attractive argument, in part, because he omits details and scenes within *Liber Apologeticus* (such as the play’s dramatic crisis with the arrival of Fear of Death and Charity), which makes it possible to misconstrue the cardinal virtues as advocating secular values. After Man falls from the “bad counsel” of Sensuality, he is not simply redeemed through the “good counsel” of the four cardinal virtues. Man is “spiritually dead,” and as a result of the (theologically significant) trial of the Four Daughters of God, he is “revived” or, as stated in the marginal rubric, “entirely healed” (*totus homo sanatur*) through the incarnation of Christ. For this reason, Act Four begins with Man giving “humble thanks to God for his redemption” (*Primo homo humiles Deo gratias reddit pro sua resitutione*) as again stated in the marginal rubric.¹⁹⁸ Thus, Man does not seek counsel from Justice, Temperance, Prudence, and Fortitude for the restitution of his fall effected by Sensuality, but for protection against temptations that may compromise his newly restored state (one of the states of human nature as suggested in the play’s title) before his final confrontation with Death. God (as God Incarnate) tells Man: “Behold, Man is made entirely sound. But since the kindling of sin is not extinguished in him wholly and perfectly, I commit the frailty of Man, not yet firm, to be ruled by the four cardinal virtues, namely, Justice, Prudence, Fortitude, and Temperance so that Man may live and not perish for all eternity.”¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 433.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 141. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 31^r

¹⁹⁹ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 137. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 30^f

Significantly (and not acknowledged by Cole), when the four cardinal virtues are commissioned to defend Man's household, the territory or part of Man they are instructed to defend is the "house of your [i.e., Man's] conscience." This allegorical reference and a considerable portion of the fourth act are derived from the Pseudo-Anselmian twelfth-century Latin allegory, *De custodia interioris hominis* (*On the Custody of Inner Man* or, more commonly, *On the Custody of the Soul*).²⁰⁰ This homiletic treatise shares a similar narrative structure with its thirteenth-century English vernacular adaptation *Sawles Warde*, but differs in its philosophical treatment.²⁰¹ The household in *Sawles Warde*, for instance, is not viewed as man's conscience, but "man himself."²⁰² Reason and will are therefore seen as aspects of man that are not "located in" or exclusively dependent upon man's conscience. The head of the household, Wit (who represents the faculty of reason), must rule over his "unruly wife," Will, and her servants (who represent the five senses and sensual desires). This proves a bit unmanageable, so in order to maintain discipline within his household, Wit elicits the help of the four cardinal virtues (presented, in name only, as the Four Daughters of God).²⁰³ In contrast, the conflict in Man's household in *De custodia* and *Liber Apologeticus* relies on the ability of Man's conscience to make virtuous decisions within the rational mind/soul (*animus rationalis*) as temptations and vices threaten these ethical decisions.

²⁰⁰ Shoukri suggests the source for much of Act Four is Hugh of St. Victor's *De Anima*, Book IV, Cap. XIII-XVI (Migne, CLXXVII, 185-9). It may be that Chaundler came across the *De Custodia* treatise via Hugh of St. Victor (since he seems to use him in other instances). However, it is important to know that this treatise existed separately (attributed to St. Anselm) and had several significant Latin variations and vernacular adaptations. See in particular Wolfgang Becker, "The Literary Treatment of the Pseudo-Anselmian Dialogue *De custodia interioris hominis* in England and France," *Classica et Mediaevalia* 35 (1984): 215-233. For a critical edition of *De custodia*, see Richard W. Southern and Franciscus S. Schmitt, eds., "The Dialogue 'De Custodia Interioris Hominis'," *Memorials of St. Anselm* (London: British Academy, 1969), 354-360.

²⁰¹ See the introduction to *Medieval English Prose for Women: Selections from the Katherine Group and Ancrene Wisse*, eds. Bella Millett and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), xxvii and 84-109 for a critical edition and modern English translation of *Sawles Warde*.

²⁰² Millett and Wogan-Browne, *Medieval English Prose for Women*, 87.

²⁰³ Millett and Wogan-Browne, *Medieval English Prose for Women*, xxvi-xxvii.

Both *De custodia* and *Sawles Warde* begin with a passage from Matthew 24:43, “If the head of the household knew at what hour a thief would come, he would certainly keep watch and not allow his house to be broken into” (*Si sciret paterfamilias qua hora fur venire, vigilaret utique et non sineret perfodi domum suam*). This passage refers to the diligence required of faithful Christians in preparation for the eschatological return of Christ. However, in the context of these homiletic treatises, the focus shifts from the imminent arrival of the Son of Man (who will make a final reckoning of each individual’s soul) to the imminent arrival of Death, who will initiate the separation of the soul from the body and prompt a reckoning of the soul (to heaven, purgatory, or hell). In *Liber Apologeticus*, God speaks this passage from Matthew at the end of Act Three when he commits Man to the custody of the four cardinal virtues to protect Man’s conscience.

Moral philosophy and the theory of conscience

From the mid-twelfth century, conscience was understood to function as a bimodal entity and was viewed as an important part of medieval moral philosophy. The conscience was perceived as being divided into two parts: *synderesis* and *conscientia*. This bimodality was essential, for it provided the means by which God was able to communicate with man (*synderesis*) while allowing man to possess and exert free will (*conscientia*). *Synderesis*, according to St. Jerome, is the “spark of conscience” (*scintilla conscientiae*) that was “not even extinguished in the breast of Cain [read Adam] after he was cast out of paradise, and by which we discern that we sin, when we are overcome by pleasures or frenzy and meanwhile are misled by an imitation of reason.”²⁰⁴ Thus, one part of conscience (*synderesis*) is eternal and offers the

²⁰⁴ Timothy C. Potts, *Conscience in Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 79.

“natural” (or infallible) voice of reason (or provocations from God) that is innately good. The other part of conscience (*conscientia*) is temporal and prompts ethical decisions based on *synderesis*, but is also morally corruptible. As we shall see later, these two parts of conscience correspond to Augustine’s (and Chaundler’s) concepts of “wisdom” and “knowledge.”²⁰⁵

Scholastic debates during the thirteenth century tried to determine how reason and will functioned within this bimodal state.²⁰⁶ For Bonaventure (1221-1274), *synderesis* is an innate “potential conscience” that has the infallible “power for discovering the truth” and resides in the affective faculty (able to produce, for instance, feelings of guilt). *Conscientia*, on the other hand, is an innate “applied conscience” that is fallible through “ignorance or faulty reasoning” and resides in the rational faculty.²⁰⁷ Bonaventure warns that although *synderesis* is immortal, its promptings can be rendered ineffectual “by the darkness of blindness, or by the wantonness of pleasure, or by the hardness of obstinacy.”²⁰⁸

For Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), both *synderesis* and *conscientia* existed in the rational faculty. He views *synderesis* as equivalent to the “voice of God,” and as a “first principle,” it should be voluntarily obeyed. Consequently, *conscientia* is fallible to the extent that it is subject to “invalid reasoning,” which it derives, for instance, from false premises or conclusions in relation to God’s first principles.²⁰⁹ Langston observes that having both *synderesis* and *conscientia* in the rational faculty results in a lack of agency. Aquinas addresses this apparent

²⁰⁵ Anders Schinkel, *Conscience and Conscientious Objections* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), 172-3. See also Douglas Langston, *Conscience and Other Virtues: From Bonaventure to MacIntyre* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001).

²⁰⁶ Schinkel states in *Conscience and Conscientious Objections* that “the scholastics were concerned with determining the proper place of both terms in a conceptual network that included the concepts of the will, reason, emotion, virtue, and many other besides,” 176. See also Wolfgang Becker, “The Literary Treatment of the Pseudo-Anselmian Dialogue *De custodia interioris hominis* in England and France,” *Classica et Mediaevalia* 35 (1984): 218.

²⁰⁷ Langston, *Conscience and Other Virtues*, 25-6. “Potential” and “applied” consciences are Langston’s terms not Bonaventure’s.

²⁰⁸ Potts, *Conscience in Medieval Philosophy*, 117.

²⁰⁹ Langston, *Conscience and Other Virtues*, 39-40.

lack in his *Summa Theologiae* where, as Langston suggests, prudence becomes the active link to the *conscientia*, for “not only is prudence connected with carrying out the dictates of conscience [*conscientia*], but prudence is also connected with the knowledge that is applied to activities.”²¹⁰ Thus, the cultivation of prudence provides the necessary support (as a habitual virtue) for *conscientia* to be willed into action.

The representation of virtue in *Liber Apologeticus* is largely contingent upon the development of Man’s conscience. In the first act of the play, as in *Sawles Warde*, Man has two externalized representations of inner forces (or “powers” according to Lombard), Reason and Sensuality. These inner forces find analogues in Augustine’s concept of “higher reason” (Reason) and “lower reason” (Sensuality). Augustine states, “The Fall of man is the result of the ‘lower reason’ throwing off the control of the ‘higher’ and devoting itself to the pursuit of the material and temporal.”²¹¹ As part of Man’s anagogic (or symbolically spiritual) creation in the play, God gives Man two feet “so that climbing the steps of virtue at a steady pace and gazing at his Creator, he may, while he seeks the higher rung of reason, trample upon the lower rung of sensuality.”²¹² If not carefully monitored, Augustine warns, the search for knowledge often “sinks below the level of the rational” and falls prey to the “bodily senses.”²¹³ However, when the pursuit of knowledge resists these temptations, it can provide instruction (as *conscientia* does) on the “moral activity” of the human condition. “Higher reason” is therefore equated with wisdom (and derived from God) and “lower reason” is associated with knowledge (that can be both good and evil). God further exhorts Man in the play to “let Reason come forth from the inexhaustible treasury of wisdom, so that by means of that uprightness and judgment by which

²¹⁰ Ibid., 43.

²¹¹ See Book XII of St. Augustine’s *On the Trinity* in *Augustine: Later Works*, ed. John Burnaby (London: S.C.M Press, 1955), 93-94.

²¹² Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 61. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 13^v.

²¹³ Augustine, *On the Trinity*, 93-4.

Man is superior to the other animals, he may also be superior to that servant Sensuality and know his Maker.”²¹⁴ Man falls because he has rejected Reason (literally hitting her over the head with the scepter of original justice) and *elevates* Sensuality: “Come hither Sensuality...you are, in truth, raised up.”²¹⁵ He then accepts the apple from Sensuality and “gains” the forbidden knowledge of good and evil. Notably, he also gains “self-knowledge” as shown to him in the Mirror of Reason -- “which indeed was bestowed upon me for the preservation of immortality and for the knowledge of myself, now reveals to me the image of death and the picture of confusion.”²¹⁶ Horrified by what he sees, Man breaks the Mirror of Reason. Thus, in order for Man to obtain self-knowledge (and live virtuously), he must now turn inward and discern correct moral actions through the dictates of his conscious mind. At the end of the debate between God and Man, for instance, God tells Man:

Look into your own thoughts and let your own conscience give the verdict. Pray, why is it, O Man, that you blush at every evil and are afraid, and that you reveal the guilt of your deed now in the redness, now in the pallor of your face, and that with fearful mind, conscience gnaws you most frequently even over the least things?²¹⁷

This depiction of conscience resembles Bonaventure’s concept of affective *synderesis*. Although this would suggest Chaundler does not adhere to any one particular doctrine of conscience, he comes closest to following Duns Scotus’ (1265-1308) late thirteenth-century integrative view of conscience. In the beginning of Act Three, for instance, Reason, who has previously served the function of *synderesis* (as the voice of God), is aligned with the (now externalized) affective Conscience. God tells the audience that he has been summoned by “the ceaseless complaints of Reason and of conscience” and has therefore “come to judge Man.” This integration of affective

²¹⁴ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 67. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 14^v.

²¹⁵ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 79. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 17^r.

²¹⁶ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 83. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 18^r.

²¹⁷ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 95. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 20^v.

properties within the rational conscious mind reflects Scotus' unified approach.²¹⁸ Scotus believed that the "applied conscience" of Bonaventure (*conscientia*) operated through the "habit of conscience," which necessitates the development of the moral virtues (Temperance, Prudence, Fortitude, and Justice). According to Langston, "As habits, moral virtues are acquired by repeated acts that are dependent on the will. Once a virtuous moral habit is established, the will is inclined to follow the right reason or dictate of the virtue and to act rightly."²¹⁹ It is this habituation of virtue that allows the two disparate views of consciousness (Bonaventure and Aquinas) to be integrated. Thus, with the Incarnation of God in the play, Man is now ready to listen to the dictates of his conscience, but needs to cultivate habits of virtue within the "household of conscience."

Like Aquinas' solution of requiring Prudence to substitute for the conscience's lack of agency (because both *synderesis* and *conscientia* exist in the rational faculty), *De custodia* singles out Prudence, who "speaks on behalf of all the others" (*loquitur pro omnibus*) and drives the action and dialogue of the treatise.²²⁰ In *Liber Apologeticus*, however, Man takes on the role of Prudence and solicits counsel from all the virtues – seeing them as unified: "Let us embrace and unite our indissoluble minds. For what can Fortitude avail, if Prudence be lacking?"²²¹ In the beginning of Act Four, Man is able to discover self-knowledge through the habituation of virtue(s) as the marginal rubric illustrates: "Restored Man delights in virtuous acts."²²² For Scotus, this is an essential requirement for the cultivation of virtue. As Langston relates, "An important part of the development of virtue is a transformation of the affective order so that the

²¹⁸ Langston, *Conscience and Other Virtues*, 57.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ Pseudo-Anselm, *De custodia*, 356.

²²¹ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 145. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 31^v.

²²² Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 145. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 31^v.

person possessing the relevant virtue takes delight in performing the acts associated with the virtue.”²²³

For Chaundler, Prudence is the means by which *conscientia* is able to will the correct (and habitual) forms of action (i.e. “right reason”). The agency of Prudence is featured in Chaundler’s second gift manuscript to Bekynton as part of the *Collocutiones* (conversations) that debate the four cardinal virtues and the moral character of William of Wykeham. In the fourth *collocutio*, for instance, the role of the will is examined in relation to Prudence (here represented as Wisdom) and the degree to which the rational mind can be “perturbed” or move by forces outside of the mind. The opinions of Cicero and Aristotle are considered, but ultimately Augustine’s view of Christian compassion (which moves the individual’s heart, but not the rational mind) prevails. This *collocutio* will be examined in greater detail in chapter 4. However, when appraising Chaundler’s engagement with secular ideology, it is important to recognize that Chaundler also wrote the *Allocutiones* as a supplement to the *Collocutiones* specifically to demonstrate (in case it seemed that the *Collocutiones* placed too much emphasis on the Stoics and Peripatetics) that Augustine and the Church Fathers are best able to define virtue.

Ecclesiastical Humanism (Part II)

We may question the validity of Cole’s secular argument, not only because of Chaundler’s use of twelfth and thirteenth-century homiletic source material and allusions to medieval moral philosophy, but also through Chaundler’s use of the four cardinal virtues in *Liber Apologeticus*, which function *primarily* through theological means. To prove his argument

²²³ Langston, *Conscience and Other Virtues*, 60.

that *Liber Apologeticus* is a vehicle of episcopal self-fashioning and evidence for “ecclesiastical humanism,” Cole must assert that in the play there is “the bracketing of certain kinds of theological discourse in favor of the secular virtues,” (i.e., Prudence, Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude).²²⁴ After a selective plot summary, he further states, “Although this might sound like ordinary theology, it is not. For the moral or theological virtues are excluded, as well as (with few exceptions) the efficacy of the sacraments.”²²⁵ Shoukri may have misled Cole in the introduction to her edition of *Liber Apologeticus*, in which she states: “It is the four Cardinal Virtues that are appointed to guide Man toward an acceptance of his human condition and to regulate his life. Chaundler at no time mentions the theological virtues, which were normally added to the ethical ones during the Middle Ages. Such an omission could well reflect humanist influence.”²²⁶ Unfortunately, they are both incorrect. One of the key theological virtues, Charity, makes her entrance during the climax of the play. This is different from the source material, *De custodia*, where the character of Charity is represented by Desire for Eternal Life (*Desiderium Vitae Aeternae*). Likewise, in *Sawles Warde*, Charity is characterized as Love of Life. Although Chaundler uses the full appellation for Fear and Memory of Death (*timor mortis atque memoria*) as does his source material, he specifically changes Desire for Eternal Life to represent a theological virtue, Charity (*Caritas*).²²⁷ The character of Charity also very clearly espouses the standard doctrine of the theological virtue when describing the “common actions” of the heavenly palace in which she resides: “They love God incomparably and they love each

²²⁴ Cole, “Hersey and Humanism,” 431.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 433.

²²⁶ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 17.

²²⁷ There is also a version of *De custodia* in a sermon by Prepositinus of Cremona (c. 1130-1210) that uses another theological virtue, Hope, in place of Charity. It is printed in Becker, “The Literary Treatment of the Pseudo-Anselmian Dialogue,” 219.

other as they love themselves.”²²⁸ Most importantly, it is Charity who facilitates the resolution of the play and Man’s redemption.

In Act Four, after “Restored Man” has taken delight in acting virtuously, Fear of Death and Charity successively visit Man in advance of Death’s arrival. These affective forces challenge Man’s conscience to discern the correct and virtuous way to die one’s death, which leads to the climax of the play, and determines whether or not Man obtains the golden crown and receives eternal life. God presents this as Man’s ultimate objective in the first act: “Labor, therefore, for the good of all, and if you have duly striven, obeying my commands, you will be crowned with the golden crown.”²²⁹ God Incarnate reiterates this charge after he commits Man to the care of the four cardinal virtues: “And if you have striven lawfully and do not suffer your house to be broken open, you will receive the crown of life.”²³⁰ The climax of the play (and Man’s spiritual fate) is therefore dependent upon whether Man’s *conscientia* accepts through “right reason” the advice of Fear of Death or of Charity. Man considers the warnings of Fear of Death, but accepts the guidance of Charity instead, who is carrying the golden crown. Finally, it is Charity who places the golden crown on Man’s head, after he has died virtuously.²³¹

Augustine asserts in *De moribus ecclesiae* that the four cardinal virtues require the agency of the theological virtue charity for a person to be virtuous (and achieve salvation).²³² The four cardinal virtues cannot effectively function as virtues without the assistance of the theological virtue. Bejczy describes Augustine’s “idea of virtue” as inextricably linked with

²²⁸ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 161. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 34^v.

²²⁹ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 69. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 15^r.

²³⁰ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 139. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 30^v.

²³¹ Additionally, Man receives the orb of lordship over all things, the scepter of original justice, and the cloak/mantle of immortality, which resembles the popular iconography of Wisdom or “Christ in majesty” as aptly represented in the morality play *Wisdom*. See Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 266-7.

²³² See István P. Bejczy, *The Cardinal Virtues in the Middle Ages: A Study in Moral Thought from the Fourth to the Fourteenth Century* (Boston: Brill, 2011), 23-25.

charity, which is “the only proper motivation of virtue, while it is also virtue’s only proper end.”²³³ Of course, it may be argued that Chaundler ignores the other two theological virtues, hope and faith, but it is quite possible that he is following the precedent set in Book III of Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*: “Since charity is the mother of all virtues, in whomsoever that mother exists, all her sons are rightly believed to exist as well.”²³⁴ In this way, as Rosemann explains, Lombard justifies the exceptional nature of charity: “Christ’s perfect charity entails that the theological virtues – faith and hope – are cancelled out in Him,” since “in the presence of God, where love is at its most ardent, faith and hope disappear, having become pointless.”²³⁵ When Man welcomes Charity into his household, he does not need Faith and Hope to achieve the perfection and redemption of his soul.

The cardinal virtues represent the *conscientia* of Man and function as a unified faculty to help Man decide who should gain entry into the “household of conscience.” As the *conscientia*, however, they are fallible. Fear of Death is able to convince the virtues that he should be allowed into the household because of the reforming potential of the fear that accompanies impending death. Yet, Death is not a messenger from God (as in the morality play *Everyman*), but one who resides “below the gates of hell” with Satan as his secretary (as stated in the letter delivered by Fear of Death).²³⁶ Charity, on the other hand, is a messenger from God (representative of *synderesis*), who beseeches Man to “despise death” and persuades the virtues (as the *conscientia* of Man) to cast out Fear of Death.²³⁷ Thus, Man is able to overcome Death through the reconciliation of Man’s virtue(s) to God’s charity that, in turn, reveal the “mysteries of divine piety.”

²³³ *Ibid.*, 24.

²³⁴ As qtd. in Philipp W. Rosemann, *Peter Lombard* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 140.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 142-3.

²³⁶ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 151. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 32^v.

²³⁷ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 159. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 34^v.

Chaundler encourages Bekynton to explore or contemplate divine piety, not in the manner of the mirror for princes's tradition, but rather as Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) advised Pope Eugenius III in his treatise, *De consideratione* (*On Consideration*, c. 1148-1153).²³⁸ In the treatise, Bernard is concerned about the degree of the pope's involvement in secular matters: "And if I may venture to address thee in the words of Jethro to Moses (Exod. xvii. 18), know that thou also 'art spending thyself with foolish labour' in these secular occupations, the only result of which – so far as concerns thee – are affliction of spirit, vexation of mind, and the loss of the grace of devotion."²³⁹ As a remedy, Bernard suggests an intellectual and contemplative (or devotional) practice that leads to self-knowledge and virtue through "piety."²⁴⁰ He defines "piety" as "leaving time for consideration," which does not preclude (though differs from) the standard definition, "worship of God."²⁴¹ This form of "piety" is fostered through rational and affective means, with an emphasis on the cultivation of the four cardinal virtues. As in *Liber Apologeticus*, such consideration helps one achieve the reconciliation of Man to God through "divine piety." Bernard states, "First, consideration purifies that very font, that is, the mind, from which such endeavors flow. Next it governs the affections, then directs actions, corrects excesses, composes our morals, makes for a good and orderly life, and finally bestows knowledge of things both divine and human."²⁴² Self-awareness through the contemplation of virtue is placed in opposition to the externally focused secular (or political) self. Moreover, this form of contemplative "piety" would appeal to Bekynton, who had, by this time, turned away from his prior secular involvement and focused his energies on pastoral duties and educational

²³⁸ Chaundler uses the works of Bernard of Clairvaux (particularly his sermons) throughout *Liber Apologeticus*.

²³⁹ *St Bernard's Treatise On Consideration*, trans. by a priest of Mount Mellerey (Dublin: Browne and Noland, Ltd., 1921), 7.

²⁴⁰ R.E. Houser suggests that Bernard's contemplative view of "piety" and the unity of the four cardinal virtues derives primarily from Stoicism. *The Cardinal Virtues: Aquinas, Albert and Philip the Chancellor* (Toronto: PIMS, 2004), 218.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 218.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, 219.

reform.²⁴³ For much of his tenure as bishop, Bekynton also deeply contemplated his own death and made extensive preparations accordingly. In the next section, I will examine how *Liber Apologeticus* could be used by Bekynton as a performative devotional text that would allow him to enter his “household of conscience,” take “time for consideration,” to be able to proceed on a spiritual pilgrimage to die a “good death.” Consequently, rather than providing a “mirror for bishops” that focuses on the proper way to conduct one’s life, *Liber Apologeticus* offers a *speculum artis bene moriendi* or a mirror for the proper way to die one’s death.

Performative devotion and *ductus*

Mary Carruthers discusses the useful concept of rhetorical *ductus* or “directed movement” through a composition in relation to the monastic practice of meditative prayer.²⁴⁴ Through rhetorical figures and tropes, a composition leads the reader along a path (*ductus*) to achieve a goal (*scopus*) that is generated as much by the author/composer as the audience/reader. As Carruthers observes: “silent reading, the medium of meditation, is thought of as a performance by the reader (viewer or listener in other arts), actively and intently memorizing, responding, recalling, and seeing and hearing inwardly.”²⁴⁵ Rhetorical ornamentation, such as the “difficult figures” (e.g., metaphor, allegory, and metonymy) become “what Augustine called

²⁴³ After giving up the Privy Seal in 1444, Bekynton seems to have also given up much of his political aspirations. According to the *Calendar Patent Rolls* for 1446-52, on June 18th, 1452, Bekynton received a grant that excused him of any further political requisites: “Grant to Thomas, bishop of Bath and Wells, in consideration of his age and infirmities, that he be not compelled to come to any council or parliament of the king as a lord thereof, so that he appear by his proctor.” It would seem from Bekynton’s Register that he had proxies serve on his behalf and only went to London during the period of great political upheaval (June 1461). See *The Register of Thomas Bekynton*, eds. by H. C. Maxwell-Lyte and M. C. B. Dawes, vol. 1, no. 632, (Somerset Record Society, xlix, 1, 1934-5), xiv-xv. In the next section, I will explore Bekynton’s earlier career as “civil servant” and his conditional status as *humanitatis patronus*.

²⁴⁴ Mary Carruthers, “Rhetorical *Ductus*, or, Moving through a Composition,” in *Acting on the Past*, eds. Mark Franko and Annette Richards (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 2000), 99.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 100.

obscuritas utilis et salubris, ‘productive and health-giving difficulty.’”²⁴⁶ These figures were used in Augustine’s sermon on Psalm 41 as a way to contemplate the “place of the Tabernacle” or the inner mind of “faithful men.”²⁴⁷ This introspective psalm has comparable similarities with Man’s “household of conscience.” The Psalmist (as personified in the first person by Augustine) must “[remove] himself from all the noise of body and blood” (concerns of the material body) in order to successfully make the journey to God’s house (the *scopus* or goal).²⁴⁸ At one point, the Psalmist looks around him and exclaims, “I gaze also upon those virtues in my soul.”²⁴⁹ Like the *conscientia*, the Tabernacle has access to the “house of God,” but only through active (contemplative) exploration. “Augustine is very clear,” Carruthers states, that “only by walking about and looking at the parts or *membra* of the tabernacle can the soul come to God’s house.”²⁵⁰ Man’s journey to “divine piety” (the *scopus*) necessitates that he only let into his “household of conscience” those who help him find the path to God. However, this contemplative process may be different for the audience/reader. As Carruthers observes, “Movement within and through a literary or visual piece is performed, as it is in music and dance. Choice is involved for the author in placing ornaments in a work, and choice for an audience in how to ‘walk’ among them.”²⁵¹ The Trinity College MS offers Bekynton the choice of many different *ductus* or paths for the contemplative exploration of his death.

The *ductus* of the illustrations

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 104.

²⁴⁷ See Michael G. Sargent and Marlene Villalobos Hennessey’s article “The Latin Verses over the Cell Doors of the London Charterhouse,” in which they discuss the contemplation of death at a Carthusian London Charterhouse, where each monk’s cell (the physical structure and the interior of the monk) is inscribed with verses to serve as a continual *memento mori* (remember death), in *Studies in Carthusian Monasticism in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout, Brepols, 2008), 179-197.

²⁴⁸ As qtd. in Carruthers, “Rhetorical *Ductus*,” 109.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 108.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 109.

²⁵¹ Ibid. 105.

Upon opening the Trinity College MS, Bekynton would have immediately encountered the fourteen full-page semi-grisaille illustrations (in addition to the “presentation scene” with Chaundler presenting the Trinity College MS to Bekynton). It is worth noting that the only other play manuscript of English origin to have accompanying illustrations is a twelfth-century manuscript from St. Albans, featuring the comedies of Terence.²⁵² Given the illustrations’ initial placement within the manuscript and separation from the play text, Jessica Brantley, for instance, questions the way *Liber Apologeticus* was experienced “from the perspective of performative reading...by Bekynton, or any other reader of the Trinity manuscript.” She concludes that “the pictures do not seek, then, to reproduce an actual experience of dramatic literature performed, standing in for what one might see on the stage. Instead, they provide for visualizations of the play’s subject, whether or not the subject is ‘represented’ by the text in the same terms.”²⁵³ The illustrations, indeed, have a life of their own and present Bekynton and potential readers with material for active contemplation. Yet, the illustrations are still dependent upon the reader’s knowledge of the play text and/or performance. I argue that Chaundler chose these particular evocative images to provide the reader with a *ductus* by which to experience the play differently from the text and/or the text in performance.²⁵⁴ Specifically, the illustrations seem to heighten the eschatological and tropological (or moral) ramifications of death.

Although the illustrations are separate from the play text, they still have a direct relation to an interpretative text, that is, the descriptive rubrications that accompany each illustration. As Kathleen Scott suggests, “four lines of text were entered below each miniature to assure a correct

²⁵² Oxford: Bodleian Library, MS. Auct. F. 2.13.

²⁵³ Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 287-289.

²⁵⁴ In her description of the Trinity College MS, Kathleen L. Scott states, “This manuscript is a rare illustrated English manuscript whose production the author was certainly involved” in *Later Gothic Manuscripts: 1390-1490*, vol. 2 (London: Harvey Miller, 1996), 286.

interpretation (not as instructions to the illustrator).”²⁵⁵ It is unfortunate that in Shoukri’s edition of *Liber Apologeticus* the relationship between illustration and rubrication is not clear, since the rubrics have been cropped out of the reproduced images, and text and image are presented separately en masse (as images only and then as text only). These rubrications, however, serve as “contemplative directions” for how to navigate the *ductus* on the “map of Man” through performative reading. As Pamela Sheingorn and Robert Clark argue in an article focusing on the presentation manuscripts and miniatures of Arnoul Gréban’s *Mystère de la Passion*, “the written word does not remain inert on the page; rather, the act of reading transforms it into enacted text, and it is this process that we term performative reading.”²⁵⁶ The rubrications can also refer readers directly to the play text, encouraging an interactive relationship between illustrations, interpretative rubrics, and dialogue of the play. For instance, on fol. 5^r, the rubric states:

God refutes Man’s excuses for sins, but when he acknowledges his error and repents, God promises future forgiveness. He enjoins a salutary penance. He delivers to him for scepter a scourge, for the golden sphere a spade, and for the mantle of immortality clothes him in a garment of skins. *The secret meaning of these things is explained more clearly in the text* [my emphasis].

The last line of the rubric guides first time readers to the play text for more details, but this line could also open up the possibility for readers familiar with the text (or viewers of a performance) to discover “the secret meaning” as found in the illustration itself. When God, in the illustration, hands Man the spade and scourge for his penance, for instance, his countenance does not express anger or condemnation towards Man. This is a merciful God who offers the gentle rebuke of a compassionate father figure. According to the rubric, Man has repented and “God promises future forgiveness.” The offering of the spade and scourge are therefore presented as a step towards this reconciliation rather than a punitive gesture. In this way, the illustration engenders

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Robert L.A. Clark and Pamela Sheingorn, “Performative Reading: The Illustrated Manuscripts of Gréban’s *Mystère de la Passion*,” in *European Medieval Drama* 6 (2002): 136.

hope. Man's speech in the play, however, has a very different tone. Man "bewails the evil of his condition" (as stated in the interlinear rubric) comparing his "base condition" implicitly to Job 5:7 – "As the bird is born to fly, so is man born to wretchedness. All his days are full of toils and miseries."²⁵⁷ Only by the very end of the speech is Man able to state, "I have hope, because God will not forget to show mercy" (referring to Psalm 76:10).²⁵⁸ If a reader were feeling despair over the nature of his or her past and present sins, the illustration provides consolation, encouraging the reader (through the eyes of Man) to view God as a nurturing father, who is not only able to show mercy, but actually *enacts* this compassion in the illustration. If the reader was unable to make this "affective leap," he or she is referred by the interpretive rubric to the accompanying play text (where Man enacts the *ductus* from despair to hope). The tropological connection of Job (representing despair) and the Psalms (representing hope) will be discussed in relation to the Office of the Dead in more detail below.

The illustrations, then, provide the reader with an eschatological exploration of the "image of God" that is continually contrasted with the "image of Death." In the beginning of the play text, God describes the fall of the angels and the creation of Man in a monologue to the audience. The first illustration portrays the events that God describes, not as a static tableau, but as a living enactment. The illustrations help potential readers to visualize themselves as an "image of God" through the complex gestures and emotive expressions of the illustrations. As Scott observes, the Trinity Master depicts Man (particularly when nude) in "difficult postures" such as running in the wilderness or peeking out from behind a bush. Within traditional English illustration, "a fully unclothed figure was seldom represented in action."²⁵⁹ Scott goes on to say that the Trinity Master also "produced a range of facial expressions beyond the skill (or interest?)

²⁵⁷ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 101-3. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 22^r-22^v.

²⁵⁸ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 105. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 23^r.

²⁵⁹ Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts*, 2:286.

of most English illustrators of the period. God the father is benign (ff. 2, 4v), Reason shows pain (f. 4v), Sensuality conveys flirtatiousness (f. 2v) or outright lecherousness (f. 3v), and Man conveys poignancy (f. 5).”²⁶⁰ These active and affective representations provide the basis for a potential reader’s active contemplation of the “secret meaning behind these images.”

The “image of God” is established immediately with God placed in the center of the first illustration (fol. 2^r), sitting under a canopy with the good angels to his right and the fallen angels in the process of transforming from angels to deformed bat-like creatures down the side of the illustration. From this lower “base” level, Man is created, lying in a prone position. He looks to God expectantly. In the second illustration (fol. 2^v), Man no longer resembles the “slime of the earth,” but the “image of God” (with royal accoutrements) and has visually replaced God from the previous illustration. By the fourth illustration (fol. 3^v), however, Man has injured Reason, “raised up” Sensuality, and is no longer seated under God’s canopy, but, as Marion Jones has observed, is placed on “a particularly long seat resembling both bed and tomb.”²⁶¹ He holds the Mirror of Reason, which has an inverted bat-like “image of Death.” When God Incarnate arrives as a result of the trial of the Four Daughters of God (fol. 6^v), God Incarnate is depicted with God’s head and the animal skins of Man (representative of Man’s mortality after his fall), and Man once again shares a resemblance with God. Man is then visited by an “image of Death” and an “image of God” (fols. 7^r-7^v). Fear of Death (as Death’s messenger) has deformed features that resemble an intermediate stage of the fallen angels’ spiritual death in the first illustration. This image is contrasted with Charity (as Heaven’s messenger), who resembles from the same illustration one of the “good angels” positioned on the right hand of God. Death then enters and pierces Man’s side (fol. 8^r), but Man focuses his attention entirely on Charity, who holds the

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Marion Jones, “Early Moral Plays and the Earliest Secular Drama” in *The Revels History of Drama in English*, eds. A.C. Cawley et al. (New York: Methuen, 1983), 282.

golden crown of immortality. The final illustration (fol. 8^v) shows both images: Man as the “image of God” triumphant over the “image of Death”/Death, who is trampled (underneath Man’s feet) and conquered.

Man resides visually within the “household of conscience” (or in a state of contemplation) during moments when the “image of God” is under the most scrutiny (the trials of the Four Daughters of God) or when Man must decide which path to take (as symbolized by Fear of Death and Charity). Through active contemplation Man (and the potential reader) becomes more like the “image of God.” Yet, active contemplation could also have topical applications. If we compare the “presentation scene” illustration set in the bishop’s palace (i.e., the “household of Bekynton”) with the interior scenes representing the “household of conscience,” for instance, it seems evident from the architectural and decorative features that Chaundler meant to equate the two households.

The illustrations (suitable for a presentation manuscript) provide Bekynton, from the very beginning, with a *ductus* for contemplation. This type of contemplation is particularly relevant for Bekynton, who represents the “image of God” on earth. This does not mean, however, the illustrations are purposed exclusively for Bekynton. The path for other potential readers is to be found in the accompanying interpretative rubrication. Notably, when Man is lost in the wilderness and hides from the “image of God,” Chaundler provides several biblical passages in the interpretative rubric that are intended for potential readers to contemplate and *find* the “image of God.”²⁶²

The last rubric on fol. 8^v also allows the potential reader (or even those performing the play) to envisage a different interpretation of the dramatic action. It states:

²⁶² Proverbs 10:29 and John 3:20.

Justice restores to Man the mantle of immortality formerly lost. Temperance the sceptre of original justice, Prudence the golden sphere whence comes eternal salvation. Fortitude, *or* Charity [my emphasis] herself who is strong, having trodden down and conquered Death, crowns Man in Man's eternal kingdom, which is to serve God and to praise and glorify him.

In the play text, Charity crowns Man, but the illustration presents a different way of looking at Man's encounter with Death. Immediately before Death's arrival in the play, Man accepts the advice of Charity and takes a seemingly passive role: "I shall await with all patience the day when he shall come."²⁶³ But here, Man's patience is viewed as a form of inner strength by equating Fortitude with Charity. In this way, the illustrations provide several contemplative paths that allow for varied performative readings.

The ductus of *Liber Apologeticus*

As part of the *ductus* toward "divine piety," the play text encourages the contemplation of death for Bekynton and potential readers through the inclusion of liturgical passages from the Office of the Dead. I argue specifically that Chaundler uses the performative readings within the Office of Dead to authenticate and deepen the contemplative and transformative experience of reading (and performing) the play. There are well over 225 biblical citations in the play that are incorporated into the dialogue and speeches of the characters.²⁶⁴ These citations serve the play by advancing its biblical history through literal and allegorical exegesis, representative of two of the four "senses" or levels of meaning (i.e., literal, allegorical, tropological, and anagogical).²⁶⁵ However, Psalms constitute a significant portion of these biblical citations (92 separate

²⁶³ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 163. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 35^r

²⁶⁴ In her edition, Shoukri has identified most of these occurrences in the margins of the play text.

²⁶⁵ In his discussion of scriptural exegesis, Henri de Lubac quotes the helpful mnemonic distich used by medieval students, "The letter teaches events, allegory what you should believe, morality teaches what you should do, anagogy what mark you should be aiming for" in *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 1.

occurrences), and function primarily in a non-literal sense. Like the English lay devotional Book of Hours (which consists mostly of Psalms), some of the Psalms are inspirational (allegorical), some are penitential in nature (tropological), and some pray on behalf of the dead (anagogical). Chaundler strategically uses these Psalms and passages from Job to evoke the exegetical and performative devotional practices of the Office of the Dead.

Before we examine the relationship of the Office of the Dead to the play text, it is helpful to assess briefly Bekynton's attitude toward death and the preparations he made accordingly. Even before he became bishop, Bekynton was interested in the power of devotional prayer. As described in Bekynton's journal chronicling the proceedings of the embassy to Calais, on August 13, 1439, Bekynton, Cardinal Beaufort and the Bishop of Norwich "rode after dinner to the chapel and tomb of St. Gertrude, where they performed their devotions, made their offerings to her shrine, and took away some earth from the saint's grave, which was said to possess the miraculous virtue of driving away rats."²⁶⁶ Later, during Bekynton's episcopacy, several chantries were founded in his diocese, including his own.²⁶⁷ In 1452, roughly thirteen years before he died, Bekynton had his own chantry and tomb built in Wells Cathedral. The tomb served as a striking *memento mori* (remember your death) for Bekynton and anyone who witnessed it – being a transi-tomb (or a two-tiered tomb).²⁶⁸ It portrays (still to this day) two remarkable effigies of Bekynton: a larger than life sculptural representation of him as a bishop in his prime (in full pontificals) on the top tier and an emaciated representation of Bekynton as a

²⁶⁶ Harris Nicholas, ed., *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council in England*, vol. 5 (The Public Records of the Kingdom, 1835), lxii and 384.

²⁶⁷ *The Register of Thomas Bekynton*, eds. by H. C. Maxwell-Lyte and M. C. B. Dawes, vol. 1 (Somerset Record Society, xlix, 1, 1934-5), xxvi.

²⁶⁸ Transi-tombs or cadaver tombs were found primarily in Northern Europe during the late fourteenth-century to the mid-sixteenth century. For a comprehensive list of the tombs in England (approximately 150) see Pamela King, "Contexts of the Cadaver Tomb," vol. 1 (D.Phil. diss., University of York, 1987), 81-151.

rotting corpse (with only a shroud covering the genital area) glimpsed between ornate marble columns surrounding the bottom tier (see **Figure 1**).²⁶⁹



Figure 1
Bishop Bekynton's transi-tomb in Wells Cathedral
(this is my own photograph)

²⁶⁹ See King, "Contexts of the Cadaver Tomb," 1:91-2.

Preparations for impending purgatory seem to define Bekynton's episcopacy, and, in addition to the chantry tomb, Bekynton made extensive provisions in his will for prayers on behalf of his soul by both clergy and laity alike. Intercessory prayers (in exchange for material and spiritual gifts) are specifically mentioned to be performed by the clergy and "poor women" from the Hospital of St. Katherine, the chaplains from the parish churches of Sutton and Bedwyn, the Augustinian friars from his diocese, ten honest priests and poor scholars from the University of Oxford, and the clergy and choristers of Wells Cathedral.²⁷⁰ One of the most celebrated examples of devotional prayers in exchange for material gift(s) occurred on September 20th, 1451, when Bekynton granted a "water conduit with reservoir, vents, and other engines" to the city of Wells, which diverted the Palace's water supply for the benefit of the city. In return for this gift, the master and burgesses of the city of Wells (and "their successors forever") were required to visit Bekynton's tomb once a year and "render prayers for his soul," for which they would also receive "40 days indulgence for every visit."²⁷¹ This debt of gratitude is still acknowledged. In a recent local newspaper, *This is Somerset* (published online), the Dean of Wells submitted the following:

Five hundred and fifty years ago Bishop Thomas Bekynton granted water to Wells. The terms of the bishop's gift gave to the citizens and burgesses of Wells 'to have and to hold for ever, of the bishop and his successors, one head for a water-conduit, with troughs, pipes and other necessary engines above and under ground, to be supplied from a certain water within the precincts of the palace, called St Andrew's well...' This Friday [January 14th, 2011] is the anniversary of Bishop Bekynton's death and on Sunday at 3pm the mayor and city council come

²⁷⁰ F.W. Weaver, ed., *Somerset Medieval Wills: 1383-1500* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1901), 202-207.

²⁷¹ *The Calendar of Manuscripts of the Dean and Chapter of Wells*, (London: Ben Johnson & co., 1907), 1:433-4. This is a transcription of Wells Cathedral's *Liber Albus*, ii, fols. 251^d-253. See also Paul Binski, *Medieval Death* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 144.

to Evensong in the cathedral, and flowers and a bowl of water are laid by Bishop Bekynton's tomb to remember this significant moment in the life of the city.²⁷²

Bekynton took all such provisions very seriously. Any misdeeds surrounding the in-house devotional practices, for instance, would result in the withdrawal of his legacy to Wells Cathedral. According to his will, "But if any of the canons residentiary of the said church, or any others, should demand any goods of mine in the name of a mortuary, or should make any impediment or disturbance as regards my burial, it is my will that the above legacy be utterly void [and given to Winchester College]."²⁷³ Contemplating aspects of the Office of the Dead's liturgy would help Bekynton make similar "internal provisions" as he approached his death and tenure in purgatory.

The Office of the Dead began as a monastic liturgical observance in the early ninth century "in order to maintain prayers for the dead brethren of each other's communities," but by the mid-thirteenth century it was included in every lay Book of Hours.²⁷⁴ Yet, its availability to the laity did not change its liturgical format (Hours of Vespers, Matins, and Lauds), but allowed the laity to participate in the Office of the Dead, albeit as private devotion. As Paul Binski states, "The Office was customarily enacted in the chancel or choir of a church with the corpse in a coffin with hearse and drapes: the laity would usually not enter this space but could in theory follow the service in a Book of Hours or Primer."²⁷⁵ The Office served two different liturgical purposes: 1) For the dying individual (originally performed at the deathbed), it offered prayers of comfort on his or her behalf. This was later observed for the recently deceased and celebrated before the *Requiem* Mass. 2) For the community of the dead who were in purgatory, it offered

²⁷² John Clarke, "Christian Comment," *This is Somerset*, last modified January 13, 2011, <http://www.thisissomerset.co.uk/Christian-comment/story-12309621-detail/story.html>

²⁷³ Weaver, *Somerset Medieval Wills*, 202.

²⁷⁴ Knud Ottosen, *The Responsories and Versicles of the Latin Office of the Dead* (Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 1993), 31.

²⁷⁵ Paul Binski, *Medieval Death* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 53.

daily prayers of intercession.²⁷⁶ According to Roger Wieck, “along with the funding of funerary Masses, praying the Office [of the Dead] was considered the most efficacious means of reducing the fiery price of paradise [i.e. the time spent in purgatory].”²⁷⁷

In the fourteenth-century Middle English dialogic poem *The Gast of Gy* (“The Spirit of Guy”) based on the Latin *De spiritu Guidonis* (c. 1323), a ghost visits and torments his wife eight days after his death. A prior is summoned, who brings with him an entourage of Masters of Theology and Philosophy (for counsel) and “two hundred well-armed men” (for protection). The ghost (Guy) relates the pains of purgatory (which he describes as worse than any pain experienced on earth) and offers several devotional remedies.²⁷⁸ One of the notable remedies is the recitation of the Office of the Dead:

The prior asks him, “What does it profit the souls in purgatory if Vespers and Matins and the entire Office of the Dead are said for them?” The voice answered louder than it did before and said, “Ah ah my prior, if you knew how the souls are comforted through that office when it is said for them, you would say it often for your dead friends! Hear now, and I shall tell you the hidden meaning of that office. As you know well, in the Vespers and Matins of the Office of the Dead are seven psalms and five antiphons, which when they are said, restore the soul that they are said for to the commandments of God, which the soul obeyed many times while he was alive according to his ability, although he did not in all cases. The nine psalms that are said in Matins before the nine lessons signify the nine orders of angels in heaven, to which rank the soul that is cleansed of its sin is taken.”²⁷⁹

²⁷⁶ Ottosen, *The Responsories and Versicles*, 43-7.

²⁷⁷ Roger S. Wieck, “The Book of Hours,” *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, eds. Thomas J Heffernan and E. Ann Matter (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 2005), 463.

²⁷⁸ This is a modern translation of the *The Gast of Gy* by Mona L. Logarbo in *Cultures of Piety: Medieval English Devotional Literature in Translation*, eds. Anne Clark Bartlett and Thomas Howard Bestul (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1999), 72. This translation is, however, excerpted. For a critical edition of the Middle English version, see *The Gast of Gy in Three Purgatory Poems*, ed. Edward E. Foster (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2004).

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 77. R.N. Swanson defines two types of indulgences: “The medieval search for salvation was a complex amalgam of strategies to speed progress through Purgatory to eternal bliss. It functioned with two currencies: money (or goods or labour with cash value), and prayers” in “Praying for Pardon: Devotional Indulgences in Late Medieval England” *Promissory Notes on the Treasury of Merits: Indulgences in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. R.N. Swanson (Boston: Brill, 2006), 215.

The performance of devotional practices for those in purgatory, however, was not limited to monastic or secular clergy. As Eamon Duffy suggests, “Given the centrality of intercession for the dead in the piety of late medieval men and women, these [prayers from the Office of the Dead] were the most commonly used of all prayers” whose recitation was “not left [exclusively] to the professionals.”²⁸⁰ As the dialogic poem suggests in a later passage, the laity could lessen the pains of purgatory (for the deceased and themselves) through “suffrages” (prayers of petition), indulgences, and charitable deeds.²⁸¹ I contend that allusions to the Office of the Dead in the play text provide an exemplar of intercessory devotional prayer for both clergy and laity (and thus for Bekynton and potential readers). Moreover, these prayers are performed *non in propria persona*.

The Hour of Matins for the Office of the Dead (for the Use of Sarum or English use) begins with the antiphon, “*Dirige Domine Deus meus in conspectu tuo viam meam*” (Direct my path, my Lord, in your sight) and repeated in a subsequent versicle in the second nocturn of the Hour.²⁸² Originally designed as “liturgy for the deathbed,” the Hour of Matins provides a *ductus* for the dying and “give[s] voice to man’s frustrations facing death: his despair and anger against God, his admission of transgressions and sin, and his confession of faith and hope in the redeemer.”²⁸³ This path is punctuated by nine lessons or readings from the Book of Job, which required the celebrant(s) to perform the part of Job “in character.” As Ottosen observes:

The readings are presented *in persona moriendi/defuncti* [in the person of the one dying/dead] and reflect the original close relation between the celebration of the Office of the Dead and the vigil with no relation to the Old Testament context. The protagonist in these readings is not Job, the Old Testament character, nor the

²⁸⁰ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 220.

²⁸¹ See in particular lines 557-8 in the edition by Foster (left out of Logarbo’s modernized translation): “Be speciall prayers and speciall dede / That frendes dose here for thair mede.”

²⁸² Procter, Francis and Christopher Wordsworth, *Breviarium ad usum insignis ecclesiae Sarum: Fasciculus II* (Cambridge: almae matris Academiae Cantabrigiensis, 1879), col. 273.

²⁸³ Ottosen, *The Responsories and Versicles*, 53.

medieval saint Job, but the person for whom the vigil – later the Office of the Dead – was celebrated. Consequently, the framework for an interpretation of these texts is not their biblical context but their liturgical use.²⁸⁴

The performance of the one dying/dead is enacted in the first person and presents an affective voice for the anguishes of dying or the pains of purgatory. The *ductus* for the one dying/dead follow “the trials endured by Job” and, as Wieck discerns, they “become an allegory for one’s time on earth – or in purgatory. Thus the ‘I’ of the readings ceases to be Job, ceases even to be the person reading the Office and, instead, becomes the voice of the dead man himself, crying for help.”²⁸⁵

There is an interesting parallel found in *The Register of Thomas Bekynton*, in which Bekynton actually performed his own *Requiem* Mass “in costume” to commemorate the completion of his chantry tomb:

On 15 January in the same year [1452], about the fifth hour in the morning, the bishop, clothed in the pontifical ornaments of his consecration day, in which he will be buried, consecrated his tomb in the above-mentioned chapel situated under representations [*quasi imagines*] of Life and Death.²⁸⁶

Two days prior (also at 5:00 in the morning), Bekynton had celebrated mass at his chantry tomb with many people in attendance.²⁸⁷ On January 15th, however, Bekynton did not merely consecrate the chantry tomb, but became the voice of the rotting corpse’s effigy – his future self or “I.” Both masses, furthermore, were performed during the Hour of Matins.

In the play text, Chaundler makes this identification with Job in the Argument, directly following Chaundler’s stated purpose of the play, i.e., to “reflect on piety more closely...so that I

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 54. Because there are many variants of Matins within the Office of the Dead, Ottosen categorizes them according to their readings and places those for Sarum use, to which I refer, as part of Group 1d. See Ottosen, *The Responsories and Versicles*, 53-63.

²⁸⁵ Wieck, “The Book of Hours,” 464.

²⁸⁶ *The Register of Thomas Bekynton*, eds. by H. C. Maxwell-Lyte and M. C. B. Dawes (Somerset Record Society, xlix, 1, 1934-5), 1:176, entry 632.

²⁸⁷ See *The Register of Thomas Bekynton*, 1:175, entry 630.

may travel, by means of the mind, into the inner most part of divine piety.”²⁸⁸ Significantly, the line that follows uses a verse from Job, but changes it from the third person into the first person: “I beheld [rather than ‘he beheld’] indeed the orb of the heavens and earth.”²⁸⁹ Chaundler thus establishes from the beginning that (at least one) *ductus* to divine piety is to be performed through the first person subjectivity of Job and the “I” of the one dying/dead.

The Hour of Matins in the Office of the Dead consists of three nocturns, and there are three lessons or readings (*lectiones*) from the Book of Job for every nocturn. The readings of Job (according to Sarum use) occur after a series of alternating antiphons and psalms. Each reading is then accompanied by interpretive versicles and responsories. As Ottosen points out, the purpose of the liturgy is to “give voice to man’s frustrations facing death” and so the *ductus* of the readings move from “his despair and anger against God” to “his admission of transgressions of sin,” which allows for “his confession of faith and hope in the redeemer.”²⁹⁰ This is the progression, at least, of the first eight readings. In the ninth reading Job despairs and seems to lose all hope in God, thus necessitating the third and final Hour of the Office of the Dead, Lauds.

A similar *ductus* or sequence of performative events is represented in the play. Chaundler uses three of the nine readings from Job (along with several of their accompanying versicles and responsories) at key moments in the dramatic action.²⁹¹ Man reminds God, for instance, that he was created by “the work of thy own hands” (Job 10:3), which in the Office begins the third lesson. Following its liturgical function, the voice of the one dying/dead in this reading (specifically Job 10:9) questions why God, who has created him, now seeks his

²⁸⁸ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 51. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 11^r.

²⁸⁹ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 51. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 11^r. All biblical citations (when not quoted from the *Breviarium*) are from the Vulgate (Stuttgart edition).

²⁹⁰ Ottosen, *The Responsories and Versicles*, 53.

²⁹¹ See Ottosen, *The Responsories and Versicles*, 54-8, 62 where he identifies the nine readings from Group 1d as the following: Job 7, 16b-21: *Parce mihi*; Job 10, 1-7: *Taedet animam meam*; Job 10, 8-12: *Manus tuae*; Job 13, 22-28: *Responde mihi*; Job 14, 1-6: *Homo natus*; Job 14, 13-16: *Quis mihi*; Job 17, 1-3 and 11-15: *Spiritus meus*; Job 19, 20-27: *Pelli meae*; and Job 10, 18-22: *Quare de vulva*.

destruction: “just as you made me from clay now you will reduce me into dust” (*sicut lutum feceris me et in pulverem reduces me*).²⁹² A similar accusation occurs in the debate between Man and God in the second Act. Having been created by God, Man blames God for his sinful nature, since he has provided Man with the seeds of his own destruction: “You therefore bestow upon me the faculty of free will as if you gave to one demented or in a frenzy a sword or fire with which to kill himself, or gave to one thirsting a cup mixed with poison.”²⁹³ After Man loses the debate with God, he acknowledges his error and cites a passage from the Psalm of the second nocturn (24:6), “Remember, O, Lord, thy bowels of compassion: and thy mercies that are from the beginning of the world.”²⁹⁴

The second stage in the journey of the one dying/dead is the admission of sin, which is evident in the responsory to the fourth reading: “Woe is me, O Lord, since I have sinned too much in my life... Where should I flee if not to you, my God? Have mercy on me” (*Hei mihi Domine, quia peccavi nimis in vita mea: quid faciam miser, ubi fugiam, nisi ad te, Deus meus? Miserere mei*).²⁹⁵ In the play, God responds to Man’s confession with a verse from one of the Penitential Psalms (101:14), “God will not forget to show mercy since the time to have mercy will come.”²⁹⁶ Like the one dying/dead in the fifth reading of the second nocturn (Job 14:1-6), Man accedes to the judgment of God (and the trial of the Four Daughters of God begins).²⁹⁷

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 91. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 19^v.

²⁹⁴ Procter and Wordsworth, *Breviarium*, 2:col. 275. Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 99. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 21^v.

²⁹⁵ Procter and Wordsworth, *Breviarium*, 2:col. 276.

²⁹⁶ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 99. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 21^v. Penitential Psalms 6, 50, and 129 are featured in all three Hours of the Office of the Dead. As Wieck observes, “Like the Office of the Dead, the [penitential] psalms were thought especially efficacious in reducing the time the departed had to spend in purgatory, in “The Book of Hours,” 255-6.

²⁹⁷ Procter and Wordsworth, *Breviarium*, 2:col. 276-7. At the beginning of the trial of the Four Daughters of God, Man’s opening remarks consist of a flurry of verses from the Penitential Psalms (6:3-4, 142:2). The Daughters evoke Penitential Psalms (31:10), Psalms from the second nocturn (24:6), and Lauds (129:7) as part of their testimony. God concludes judgment with references to Psalm 7:11-12, which is the last Psalm before the first reading of the first nocturn.

The performance of the Office of the Dead (and not merely its recitation) is a necessary part of its liturgical expression. The one officiating (whether monastic or secular clergy) would, through use of direct address (i.e., apostrophe, a medieval rhetorical form of amplification), enact the part of the one dying/dead as part of its devotional performance. Since the literal reading of many of these passages could be considered blasphemous, the officiate avoids irreverence by performing the reading *non in propria persona* (not in one's own person) as the one dying/dead, who directly confronts God.²⁹⁸ In the beginning of the second reading, for instance, the one dying/dead says, "I speak in the bitterness of my soul. I say to God: Don't condemn me. Show me why you judge me so." (*Loquar in amaritudine animae meae: Dicam Deo, noli me condemnare. Indica mihi: cur me ita iudices*).²⁹⁹

However, as part of private devotional prayer, the layperson could enact the part of Job *in propria persona* (in their own person) as a way of expressing his or her fears and anxieties about death. This enactment would allow the reader to take a devotional journey as Job and be transformed through performance. Richard Schechner and Willa Appel, for instance, discuss how the "transformation of being and/or consciousness" changes the performers (and sometimes the spectators) "by means of performance."³⁰⁰ Within this kind of performance, the "problems of representation, imitation, and transformation converge" and the performer is simultaneously that which is being represented (voice of the one dying/dead) and, like Bekynton, their future "I."³⁰¹

The citations within the play that refer to the devotional performance of the Office of the Dead

²⁹⁸ As L.L Besserman states, "in the ecclesiastical tradition certain nearly blasphemous verses from the Book of Job are turned to devotional use, while the entire Book of Job becomes the basis for exegetical reflection of Christian doctrine," in *The Legend of Job in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 3.

²⁹⁹ Procter and Wordsworth, *Breviarium*, 2:col. 275.

³⁰⁰ Richard Schechner and Willa Appel, "Introduction," *By Means of Performance*, eds. Richard Schechner and Willa Appel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 4.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

would thus encourage Bekynton and potential readers to perform the part of Man in a similar fashion.

Like the one dying/dead, Man also makes the transformation from despair to reconciliation “by means of performance,” which is most evident through the use of affective language. In Man’s last speech at the end of Act Two, he “bewails his condition” (as stated in the rubric) with an affective intensity similar to the despair of the dying man: “Continual fears terrorize me and everlasting pains will torment me because of my crime. A desire to weep comes upon me, for it is a grievous thing.”³⁰² Man even questions the purpose of his existence: “Were it not better for man if he had not been born...I was created for so many unspeakable misfortunes and for these accursed tribulations!”³⁰³ This sentiment is echoed in the ninth reading, which ends with the one dying/dead in despair: “Why did you bring me forth from the womb...I wish I had been as if I never was, having been conveyed [directly] from womb to grave” (*Quare de vulva eduxisti me...Fuissem quasi non essem, de utero translatus ad tumulum*).³⁰⁴ Herein lies the key difference between the two devotional performances. In the readings, the one dying/dead moves through several stages from despair to reconciliation, and then back to despair. The readings make an abrupt shift from the end of the eighth reading – “This hope [that I shall see God my savior] is restored in my bosom” (*Reposita est haec spes mea in sinu meo*) to the beginning of the ninth – “Why did you bring me forth from the womb?”³⁰⁵ Chaundler uses the ninth reading, instead, early in Man’s journey, and does not have Man plummet into such despair again. Man makes relatively steady progress toward his *scopus*/goal, having been transformed by his *ductus* /journey through his debate with God, the trial of the Four Daughters of God, the

³⁰² Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 99 and 101. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 21^v.

³⁰³ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 101. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 21^v.

³⁰⁴ Procter and Wordsworth, *Breviarium*, 2:col. 279. As Ottosen has shown, the ninth reading refers back to the second and third reading, however, this time without hope in *The Responsories and Versicles*, 62.

³⁰⁵ Procter and Wordsworth, *Breviarium*, 2:col. 278-9.

sermon by God Incarnate, and the counsel of the four cardinal virtues.³⁰⁶ Thus when Fear of Death confronts Man, he does not fall back into despair as the one dying/dead does, although he seems to share the same affect (using the same language): “Fear of Death troubles me” (*timor mortis conturbat me*).³⁰⁷ The closest Man comes to despair is when he allows Fear of Death to enter his “household of conscience.” Once admitted, Fear of Death does his best to scare Man and describes the “palace of death” as a place of “darkness and no order, but everlasting horror,” using a verse from the ninth reading (Job 10:22).³⁰⁸ With the arrival of Charity, Man is still quite *affected* by Fear of Death and again states, “Fear of Death has troubled me.” However, he has not given up hope and readily accepts the message Charity proffers (in her heavenly letter), which counters the feelings of despair with passages from Psalm 26. This psalm was previously used as part of the one dying/dead’s transformation to hope and reconciliation (in readings 6-8). As stated in the beginning of the Psalm: “The Lord is my illumination, my salvation: Whom shall I fear?” (*Dominus illuminatio mea, et salus mea: quem timebo?*)³⁰⁹ Accordingly, Fear of Death and despair are banished from the “household of conscience” before they are able to “take root.”

In the liturgical devotional performance of the Office of the Dead, Lauds provides the one dying/dead with a comparable message of hope and another chance for God’s mercy. The one dying/dead again recounts despairingly the “bitterness of my soul” (*amaritudine animae meae*), but concedes there is still an opportunity for redemption. Moreover, the one dying/dead

³⁰⁶ The readings specifically discuss this transformation. In the sixth reading, the dying/dead man says, “All my days, in which I now serve as a soldier, I hope until my change/transformation may come” (“*Cunctis diebus quibus nunc milito: expecto donec veniat immutatio mea*”). Procter and Wordsworth, *Breviarium*, 2:col. 278.

³⁰⁷ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 149. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 32^r. The responsory of the seventh reading states the same. Procter and Wordsworth, *Breviarium*, 2:col. 278.

³⁰⁸ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 153. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 33^r. Procter and Wordsworth, *Breviarium*, 2:col. 279.

³⁰⁹ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 157. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 34^r. Procter and Wordsworth, *Breviarium*, 2:col. 275.

realizes that salvation is through the agency or *voice* of the living: “The living, the living will confess to you just as I will today” (*Vivens vivens ipse confitebitur tibi, sicut et ego hodie*).³¹⁰

The one dying can still cry out for salvation, but the one dead must rely on the voice(s) of those who are living through intercessory prayers. The one dying/dead then asks for salvation: “Save me, Lord, and we will sing our psalms all the days of our life in the house of the Lord” (*Domine salvum me fac: et psalmos nostros cantabimus cunctis diebus vitae nostrae, in domo Domini*).³¹¹ Lauds ends with the singing of psalms for conceivably the remainder of the one dying’s life and to comfort those already dead in purgatory. The last psalm to be sung is Psalm 129, which begins, “From the depths I have cried to you Lord: Lord, hear my voice” (*De profundis clamavi ad te Domine, Domine exaudi vocem meam*).³¹² After the psalms are sung, a final intercessory prayer to God and the Virgin Mary is offered on behalf of the one(s) dead. Thus, “by means of performance,” the voice of the officiate or lay person becomes the conduit and agency for the one dying/dead’s salvation.

As I have shown previously, Man’s salvation in *Liber Apologeticus* is through the agency of Charity, who is a conduit to God’s “ineffable piety.” Chaundler makes one final allusion to the struggle of Job, albeit his apocryphal representation, who endures his trials and suffering with patience.³¹³ Before he dies a physical death, Man states the following “last words”: “I shall await with all patience the day when he shall come.”³¹⁴ However, he doesn’t have to wait long.

Prudence announces Death’s arrival and Man welcomes Death: “Look, Death, how acceptable,

³¹⁰ Procter and Wordsworth, *Breviarium*, 2:col. 281.

³¹¹ Procter and Wordsworth, *Breviarium*, 2: col. 281.

³¹² Procter and Wordsworth, *Breviarium*, 2: col. 281.

³¹³ L.L. Besserman discusses three traditions of the Job legend (biblical, apocryphal, and ecclesiastical). He states that “in the biblical tradition Job is sometimes impatient and rebellious, in the apocryphal tradition Job is always pious and patient,” in *The Legend of Job*, 3.

³¹⁴ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 163. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fols. 35^r.

and how dear even, your arrival is to me.”³¹⁵ Death then cites the beginning of Isaiah 38, which is used in Lauds when the one dying/dead is still consumed with the “bitterness of my soul”: “Therefore, supervise (or manage) your household, because you shall die, and not live” (*Dispone ergo domui tue quia morieris et non vives*).³¹⁶ But Man is unperturbed, for he has followed the correct path or *ductus* and receives the “mantle of immortality.” Choirs of angels sing hymns and canticles, while the “virtues raise Man to heaven.”³¹⁷ This is similar to Lauds, in which the last moments (or time in purgatory) of the one dying/dead are accompanied by the singing of psalms. The devotional performance of *Liber Apologeticus*, however, provides a *ductus* that allows one to achieve salvation through “divine piety,” which is able to bypass purgatory altogether.

The *ductus* of *De judico Solis in conviviis Saturni*

In addition to the illustrations and the play text, Bekynton and potential readers could also choose for active contemplation the final text in the Trinity College MS, the allegorical poem, *De judico Solis in conviviis Saturni* (*On the judgment of Sol at the Feasts of Saturn*, c. 1350) by Simon of Couvin, a canon of Liege.³¹⁸ Surprisingly little has been written about the poem, which discusses the causes and remedies of the Black Death as well as its astrological and theological implications. In contrast to the uniform script and decoration of the other texts in the Trinity College MS, the poem is written in a heavier proto-humanist hand with frequent displays of large floral initials (that do not always correspond with new paragraphs). This seems to

³¹⁵ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 163. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fols. 35^r -35^v.

³¹⁶ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 165. This is my translation. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fols. 35^v. Procter and Wordsworth, *Breviarium*, II, col. 281.

³¹⁷ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 167. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fols. 35^v -36^r.

³¹⁸ A Latin edition of the poem can be found in E. Littre, “Opuscule relatif a la peste de 1348,” *Bibliothèque de l’Ecole des Chartes* 2 (1840-41): 201-43. Littre creates the edition using two extant manuscripts: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MSS lat. 8369 and lat. 8370 with only slight differences between them.

indicate that Chaundler perhaps chose to include the poem at different time (and place) than the other texts, and yet still wanted it to be a part of the final presentation manuscript (as evidenced by its inclusion in the table of contents). It can also be deduced that Chaundler understood the poem to have thematic rather than authoritative or authorial connections with the other texts, since he acknowledges in the table of contents and the *explicit* of the poem that he does not know the name of the author.³¹⁹ He also does not include a prologue found in other manuscripts that explicates the allegorical meaning of the poem. Instead, Chaundler's version opens with a descriptive preface, which is misleadingly called the "prologue." It is the explanatory prologue that was omitted, however, that enables a full understanding of the poem. Couvin intricately weaves mythological characters and biblical history into a rather convoluted astrological treatment of the conditions that caused the "pestilence" to occur.³²⁰ In lieu of the prologue in the Trinity College MS, lexical interlinear glosses (in a very tiny rubricated script) guide the reader through the material. Because Couvin uses different appellations for the names of the characters, the glosses are often just trying to distinguish the characters. For instance, *Sol* (the Sun) is referred to interchangeably as *Judex* (The Judge) and *Phoebus* (Apollo), but since theologically Sol also serves the function of Wisdom, he is additionally referred to as *Rex* (which represents the majesty of Christ).³²¹

The prologue describes the astrological conjunction of the planets, "which according to the philosophers, signifies great and amazing upheavals," and caused the pestilence or Black

³¹⁹ On fols. 1^v and 67^v, Chaundler states, "*Cuius Autoris nomen ignoro*" ("I do not know the name of the author").

³²⁰ See John B. Friedman, who sees the poem as trying to "reconcile two very different responses to the Black Death of 1348, astrological determinism and clerical pietism" in "Henryson's 'Testament of Cressid' and the 'Judico Solis in Conviviis Saturni' or Simon of Couvin," *Modern Philology* 83 (August 1985): 13.

³²¹ See in particular fols. 51^r-53^v.

Death.³²² Couvin decides to portray this event (“in the manner and fashion of the poets”) as a feast when all the gods have come together at the house of Saturn. In short order, Jupiter (who is a “friend to the human condition”) gets into a fight with Saturn (who is a “corrupter of human life”) about the nature of humankind, and Sol must intervene as judge. Both Saturn and Jupiter argue their case, but when Mercury provides evidence (celestial documents, charters, and records) that the “crimes of men are greater than they were at the time of the Flood,” Jupiter capitulates. Sol determines that the human race is guilty of these crimes and should receive “pestilential death,” which Saturn implements (in the form of toxic “smothered air”). Couvin then discusses the potential remedies by “putting them poetically into the mouth of Lachesis, who represents the lengthening of life.”³²³ Couvin parallels the doctors who try to cure Lachesis with those who try to cure the afflicted in Montpellier. The poem satirizes the attempts of incompetent doctors, whose remedy for the pestilence is more about taking people’s money than providing a cure:

Holding urine and a purse replete with money, [Lachesis] flees to the doctors who are skilled in the art/science of Hippocrates, and with their consultation, she believes her [perilous] fate can be safeguarded. These experts have been attributed to have a skill that is prudent and powerful, yet they avoid her urine and all that afflicts her; after this consultation, they discuss what can be done, thereupon coaxing the evil seed of sickness. With the consultation having been performed, they entice the divine goddess with a nurturing voice and promise [to offer] her without a sense of decency the protective remedies that will help her avoid the [pestilent] storm; but first it is necessary for her to acquire a large amount of money, without which she will be defenseless, since no one can ward off [the pestilent winds].³²⁴

*Urinale tenens, bursam nummisque repletam
Affugit ad medicos, Ypocratis arte peritos,
Consilio quorum credit sua fata tueri.*

³²² This quote and the subsequent plot summary are taken from the translation of the prologue by Rosemary Horrox in the entry “Simon de Covino,” *Black Death* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 163-167.

³²³ Lachesis, Clotho, and Atropos being the three fatal goddesses.

³²⁴ This is my translation.

*Prudentesque viri quibus ars dedit esse magistros,
 Urinal evident ipsius, et omne quod obstat;
 Post hoc consilium tractant super his quid agendum
 Esse potest, et ibi palpant mala semina morbi.
 Consilio facto, divam cum vocibus almīs
 Alliciunt, et ei promittunt absque pudore
 Armis posse datis hanc evitare procellam;
 Sed prius arma decet magnis acquirere nummis,
 Absque quibus nullus defendi posset inermis.³²⁵*

As Couvin states in the prologue, the doctors who tried to help Lachesis have given her ineffective remedies (against Atropos), and all fall dead “as really happened in Montpellier.”³²⁶

The veil of allegory is now lifted, and Couvin discusses “not with poetic imagination” the real consequences of the Black Death and his proposed solution. Because the sins of humankind have caused the plague (and incurred the wrath of God), humankind must cultivate an aware “conscious mind” and prudent behavior that will lead to a penitent heart and the soul’s (and body’s) salvation:

And because the cause remains hidden, the conscious place [i.e. mind] is in accordance with the crime of the plague, and the prudent one is able to avoid the [pestilent] storm and flees before the day of ruin comes to the city. For the place/mind harms with its barriers; and through conscious awareness of the disease [such harm] can be avoided. No one can be given a sounder remedy; but be quick, do not delay – the winds are about to come to you; lest you come too slowly to be helped and are captured by the army [of Atropos]. If unprotected the sickness will take hold of your strength; the power/virtue of the remedy having been increased by your strength, with luck, will be able to overcome the pestilential suffering of the plague. But first and foremost, the soul, having been sickened with sin, should be healed with a sacred remedy, [i.e.] by a faithful penitent heart, together with pious tears poured out for its salvation.³²⁷

*Et quia causa latet, locus est in crimine morbi
 Consciūs, et tutus poterit vitare procellam*

³²⁵ I cite Littré’s Latin edition, 233-4. See Christine Renardy for her discussion of the poem and its satirical implications in “Un témoin de la Grande Peste: Maître Simon de Couvin, chanoine de Saint-Jean l’Évangéliste à Liège,” *Revue belge de philologie et d’histoire*, tome 52, fasc. 2 (1974): 273-292 at 291.

³²⁶ Horrox, “Simon de Covino,” 163. Renardy provides evidence that Couvin’s claim of utter devastation at Montpellier is supported by historical fact in “Un témoin de la Grande Peste,” 291.

³²⁷ This is my translation.

*Qui fugit ante diem venturae cladis ab urbe.
Nam loca sepe nocent; fugito loca conscia cladis.
Nulla potest medicina dari securior ista;
Sed propera, nec te venturas differ in auras;
Ne tarde venias castro succurrere capto.
Si tamen incautum morbus te ceperit vires;
Virtus forte tua medicinae viribus aucta
Pestiferum poterit cladis superare dolorem.
Sed prius, est anima sacris medicanda medelis,
Saucia peccatis, contrito corde fideli,
Cum sanctis precibus lacrimas fundendo salutis.*³²⁸

Notably, the remedy for the pestilence is enacted through affective means (i.e., “pious tears”).

Couvin then dramatically exhorts his readers, “Bow, mortals, in suppliant prayer before the wrathful judge” (*Flectite, mortales, prece supplice iudicis iram*).³²⁹ The poem emphasizes that even when faced with a calamity (of quite literally astronomical proportions), the remedy is not found in the strength of the external body (which may or may not serve you) or through the expertise of secular doctors (who serve themselves more than you), but by virtue of the “conscious awareness” of the inner contemplative mind and affective penitent soul.

Bekynton’s Legacy

Bekynton’s piety and its divine representation within the play and manuscript also underscore the legacy of a bishop who was swiftly approaching the end of his life.³³⁰ Like Bekynton’s chantry, the letters and the *Libellus de laudibus* (which is discussed in greater detail in chapter 3) function as a *mementote* of Bekynton’s legacy, providing additional justification as to why one should pray on behalf of his soul. These documents discuss Bekynton’s material

³²⁸ Litre, “Opusculum relatif a la peste de 1348,” 237-8.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 238.

³³⁰ At the time the manuscript was produced, Bekynton was quite feeble, and Chaundler’s commitments to Oxford University had intensified, a situation that did not allow Bekynton and Chaundler to meet in person with as much regularity as they had in the past. See Bridges, “Thomas Chaundler,” 1:73.

accomplishments in the context of a material/spiritual gift economy.³³¹ As with other such literary presentational manuscripts, the spiritual purpose of the material manuscripts is embedded in an inscription of supplication. This type of inscription appears at the bottom of the table of contents on both Chaundler MSS (fol. 1^v) and was added sometime in the late fifteenth century (by the same scribe or librarian): “From the gift of the reverend father in Christ Lord Thomas Bekynton, Bishop of Bath and Wells and from the labor of Thomas Chaundler, chancellor of this cathedral. May you pray on behalf of both their souls” (*Ex dono Reverendi in christo patris domini Thome de Bekyntona Bathoniensis et Wellensis Episcopi et labore Magistri Thome Chaundeler huius ecclesie Cancellarii. Oretis pro animabus utriusque*).³³²

Chaundler saw the system of patronage as an integral part of this material/spiritual gift economy. In a letter written on October 1st, 1449, Chaundler discusses Bekynton’s tomb (which was in the process of being built) and comments on Bekynton’s particular attentiveness to death:

Right reverend father, the utmost forethought and (care for) perfection are two characteristics which cover you with honor and in my judgment make you highly praiseworthy; your forethought is shown by the preparation of your tomb and your constant mindfulness of death (*mortis memoria*).³³³

Chaundler also thanks Bekynton for arranging the “free bestowal of property,” the alien priory of Newton Longville in Buckinghamshire, on behalf of New College, which helped steer the college out of financial ruin.³³⁴ After some additional praise for Bekynton’s generosity,

³³¹ See R.N. Swanson’s discussion of the “spiritual economy” in *The Church and Society in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1989), 227-8.

³³² This inscription (in the same hand) is also found on 1^v of the New College MS.

³³³ As qtd. in Judd, *The Life of Thomas Bekynton*, 98. *Official Correspondence*, 1:264.

³³⁴ R.L. Storey states that Bekynton, as secretary to Henry VI, persuaded the king to “grant the college the five manors and other property of the confiscated alien priory of Newton Longville” providing an additional income to the college of £90 in “The Foundation and the Medieval College: 1379-1530,” *New College Oxford: 1379-1979*, eds. John Buxton and Penry Williams (Oxford: The Warden and Fellows of New College, 1979), 14. Bridges notes that Chaundler also mentions this gift in the seventh *collocutio* as part of Bekynton’s list of accomplishments, “Thomas Chaundler,” 1:69; 2:197.

Chaundler expresses a desire to exchange a “benefice in Hants for a prebend in Wells,” but concludes with a return to a “mindfulness of death”:

If that prebend will not be compatible with the college, then before the end of the year I will abandon it for the lesser one; I will live safe from that which harms us since these things have been procured by you and parents and among friends, or if God wills, I will die safe in the Lord: on account of which, rejoice and be well, always for the desire and glory of country.

*Quod si non fuerit compatibilis illa praebenda collegio, ante terminum anni dimittam pro inferiori; ut vobiscum parentibusque et amicis inter haec quae invenerunt nos mala securus vivam, aut, si Deus velit, securus in Domino moriar: in quo gaudete et valet, semper desiderium et decus patriae.*³³⁵

Potential readers, particularly students, would probably have been aware of the ways the gift manuscripts served a similar material/spiritual purpose as Bekynton’s chantry. As Binski observes, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the colleges founded at Oxford and Cambridge “were in effect academic chantries, founded by specific patrons as good works, and staffed by scholars to support the patron’s memory and soul; the whole development was premised upon the institutionalization of the doctrine of Purgatory and remission; and the chantry was essentially private.”³³⁶ Devotional prayer was also an important part of a student’s daily routine. New College, for instance, operated fundamentally as a chantry foundation on behalf of its founder William of Wykeham.³³⁷ William of Wykeham founded Winchester College and New College for the benefit of “poor needy scholars,” but also to cure the “general disease of the clerical army,” which Wykeham saw as “grievously wounded through the want of clergy caused by plagues, wars and other miseries of the world, in compassion for its sad desolation; to this in our small way we willingly spend our labors.”³³⁸ These Wykehamist colleges were thus

³³⁵ *Official Correspondence*, 1:264. This is my translation.

³³⁶ Binski, *Medieval Death*, 115.

³³⁷ Cobban, *English University Life*, 80-1.

³³⁸ This quote is taken from the Statutes of New College, Oxford as presented in Arthur Leach’s *Educational Charters and Documents 598 to 1909* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), 353.

founded on account of death and sustained in the memory of Wykeham's death. To succeed at New College and beyond, a student was required to participate actively in this material/spiritual gift economy and embrace a corporate identity as a Wykehamist. Cobban describes the considerable extent to which the fellows or scholars of New College were responsible for devotional duties, to the point where "they must have impinged upon the time available for study and teaching."³³⁹ The Chaundler MSS are a literary by-product of these communal ties and responsibilities to post-mortem patronage. Whereas the Trinity College MS preserves the legacy of Bekynton, the New College MS preserves the legacy of all Wykehamists.

In this chapter, I have examined how the "actual audience" (Bekynton and potential readers) of the Trinity College MS may have viewed and performed *Liber Apologeticus*, the accompanying illustrations, and Simon de Couvin's poem as paths or *ductus* for the contemplation of "divine piety" through devotional performance. These paths are not representative of secular virtues that have "rework[ed] theological genres within humanist terms,"³⁴⁰ but ethical and theological virtues, whose terms and operations have been debated for centuries in medieval moral philosophy and incorporated within liturgical devotional practices like the Office of the Dead. In the next chapter, I will investigate Chaundler's and Bekynton's engagement with defining aspects of humanism. For Bekynton, I will examine his style of epistolography and its relationship to humanist and "florid" correspondence to suggest that Bekynton could find the humanist style as the "voice" of Italianate governance and the medieval "florid" style as the "voice" of the fraternal and literary-minded Englishman and/or Wykehamist. For Chaundler, I will consider his *Libellus de laudibus* and suggest that he uses humanist texts,

³³⁹ Cobban, *English University Life*, 123.

³⁴⁰ Cole, "Heresy and Humanism," 436.

not to promote humanist ideology, but rather to demonstrate the necessity of theological over secular virtues. The *Libellus de laudibus* will also be examined in relation to medieval performance styles and aesthetics.

Chapter 3
Medieval vs. Humanist:
“Humanist Gestures” and the Performance
Potential of “Florid” Poetics

To what extent were Chaundler and Bekynton proponents of humanism? For many scholars, the answer to this question determines their perception of the literary value and performance potential of the Chaundler MSS. By positioning Chaundler and Bekynton as proto-humanists, scholars believe they are able to understand more fully the transition from medieval scholasticism to humanism at Oxford. In support of this reasoning, there is an assumption that Chaundler and Bekynton preferred humanist texts to medieval ones, and that they experimented with new stylistic forms or communicated with humanists for the purpose of becoming more humanist. Evaluations of Chaundler’s attempts to implement this so-called humanist agenda have yielded decidedly mixed results. Hastings Rashdall and Robert Rait, for instance, view Chaundler as the “first distinct representative in Oxford” of Italian humanism and one who “writes perhaps better Latin prose than any that had been known in England since the twelfth century.”³⁴¹ On the other hand, R. L. Storey believes that although Chaundler “took the leading role in the promotion of [humanist] studies” his literary output was “pretentious and devoid of elegance.”³⁴² In this chapter, I will examine why terms like “proto-humanist” and “ecclesiastical humanism” perform a disservice to Chaundler’s works and how medieval terms like “florid” (*florida*) or conditional terms like “humanist gestures” might be more representative. I will also show how both Chaundler and Bekynton found medieval “florid” examples of writing preferable

³⁴¹ Hastings Rashdall and Robert Rait, *New College* (London: F.E. Robinson & Co., 1901), 98. Subsequent scholars have cited them as “proof” of Chaundler’s humanist influence.

³⁴² R.L. Storey, “The Foundation and the Medieval College: 1379-1530,” in *New College, Oxford: 1379-1979*, eds. John Buxton and Penry Williams (Oxford: Warden and Fellows of New College, Oxford, 1979), 26. J.I. Catto states that in terms of humanist literary output Chaundler was not a “scholar of distinction” in “Scholars and Studies in Renaissance Oxford,” *The History of the University of Oxford*, eds. J.I. Catto and Ralph Evans, vol. 2, *Late Medieval Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 779-81.

to those generated by Italian humanists. Most importantly, it is through the tradition of medieval “florid” writing that we discover new evidence of medieval performance.

From the start, it is important to define the terms of the discussion. David Carlson provides a helpful working definition of humanism:

Fundamentally, humanism was a committed interest in antiquity, in ancient literature, Latin or Greek, and in ancient culture more generally, committed in the sense that it was polemical, arguing in favour of a revival of ancient standards and canons of taste. Such an interest entailed, on the one hand, an effort to return *ad fontes*, in order to gain understanding in antiquity; it also entailed, on the other, an effort to put the understanding of antiquity so gained to work on and within contemporary society.³⁴³

In particular, I will focus on three aspects of this definition of humanism: ancient authorities, civic responsibilities, and “canons of taste.”

Studia Humanitatis at Oxford

Humanism at Oxford begins principally with Duke Humfrey’s donations of humanist (and medieval) books to Oxford University (c. 1439 -1444). Yet, the students and masters of Oxford seem to have viewed and/or used these humanist texts differently than their Italian contemporaries. David Rundle, for instance, describes the “cultural distance” of English readers and scribes who compiled miscellanies in the 1440s from the humanist texts of Duke Humfrey’s donations.³⁴⁴ He discusses one compiler who, in an effort to provide “a range of humanist literary techniques,” chose texts from Humfrey’s books that were representative of various genres (*dialogus*, *invectiva*, *translatio*, and *comparatio*). As Rundle points out, the new material required at the end of the manuscript an eight-page glossary of unfamiliar vocabulary or word

³⁴³ Carlson, *English Humanist Books*, 5.

³⁴⁴ David Rundle, “Humanist Eloquence among the Barbarians in Fifteenth-Century England,” in *Britannia Latina: Latin in the Culture of Great Britain from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*, eds. Charles Burnett and Nicholas Mann (London & Turin: Warburg Institute Colloquia, 2005), 76-8. There are three copies of the manuscript extant -- Rundle focuses on Oxford: Bodleian Library, Auct. F.5.26.

usage, suggesting the “linguistic challenge” of such texts that were distinctly Italianate.

Moreover, the particular glossing of those texts that were translated from the Greek is suggestive of how English readers and scribes might have viewed their application for its content rather than its philological (humanist) potential.³⁴⁵

Perhaps more surprising (or revealing) is the time it took for Duke Humfrey’s gift manuscripts and other humanist donations to have a noticeable impact on the university curriculum. Scholars generally agree that formal humanist studies, often referred to as the *studia humanitatis* (studies of human nature), did not become institutionalized as part of the English university curriculum until the very end of the fifteenth century.³⁴⁶ However, changes to the faculty of arts statutory requirements in 1431 would suggest, at the very least, that an attempt was made to accommodate the *studia humanitatis*. Both Parkes and Fletcher argue, for instance, that the new statutes, which mention for the “first time” the requirements for the study of rhetoric, were in response to Duke Humfrey’s request to “give more emphasis to the study of rhetoric and the literature of classical antiquity.”³⁴⁷ The statutes state that a student in the faculty of arts program must take “Rhetoric for three terms, namely *Rhetorica* of Aristotle, or the fourth [book] of the *Topics* of Boethius, or Tully’s [pseudo-Cicero’s] *Nova Rhetorica*, or Ovid’s *Metamorphosis* or the poetry of Virgil” (*Rethoricam per tres terminus, videlicet Rethoricam Aristotelis, seu quartum Topicorum Boecii, aut Tullium in nova Rethorica, vel Ovidium*

³⁴⁵ Ibid. Rundle suggests that, unlike their Italian counterparts, the particular interest in the translations of Plutarch and St. Basil from the Greek indicates an English dependency on translation (and adaptation) at this time.

³⁴⁶ Allan B. Cobban, *English University Life in the Middle Ages* (London: University College London Press, 1999), 162. Paul Oskar Kristeller provides an oft-quoted definition of *studia humanitatis*: “a clearly defined cycle of scholarly disciplines, namely grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry, and moral philosophy, and the study of each of these subjects was understood to include the reading and interpretation of its standard ancient writers in Latin and, to a lesser extent, in Greek.” in *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources*, ed. Michael Mooney (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 22.

³⁴⁷ M.B. Parkes, “The Provision of Books,” *The History of the University of Oxford*, eds. J.I. Catto and Ralph Evans, vol. 2, *Late Medieval Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 473. See also J.M Fletcher, “Developments in the Faculty of Arts,” *The History of the University of Oxford*, eds. J.I. Catto and Ralph Evans, vol. 2, *Late Medieval Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 324.

Methamorphoseos sive poetriam Virgilio).³⁴⁸ Yet, Parkes and Fletcher maintain that this new formulation of the *pro forma* requirements for rhetoric was merely “for show” (to appear more humanist in response to Humfrey’s request in order to receive his donation of books) and did not, in any significant way, change the curriculum.³⁴⁹ If the statutory requirements had changed, however, why wouldn’t the curriculum also change to meet those new requirements? Rundle suggests that the curriculum did not change until at least the last quarter of the fifteenth century because of the “restricted number of manuscripts that reached England,” which limited student access to seminal humanists texts like Valla’s *Elegantiae*.³⁵⁰ Before the advent of print, texts required by the statutory requirements for an undergraduate degree in the arts were mostly heard through ordinary or cursory lectures and not read individually by the students.³⁵¹ In accordance with Rundle’s argument, it would take a shift in the medium, a move from manuscript culture to print culture, to widely disseminate those texts, minimize their ideological “cultural difference,” and move from the appearance of humanism to its institutionalization.

Parkes’s and Fletcher’s investigations highlight two important aspects of fifteenth-century humanism. First, humanism is not only “a self-conscious commitment to return to the classics or *ad fontes*,” as suggested by Wakelin, but also a series of “gestures” or practices that could encompass varying degrees of authenticity.³⁵² In this way, the appearance of humanism could carry the same cultural capital as its actual expression. John Lydgate (c. 1370-1451), for instance, often gave the appearance of humanism in his literary works. His “new poetic style,” as termed by Schirmer, was admired in royal and noble courts, and is a testament to the potential

³⁴⁸ Strickland Gibson, ed. *Statuta Antiqua Universitatis Oxoniensis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), 234.

³⁴⁹ Parkes, “The Provision of Books,” 473. J.M. Fletcher finds it “difficult to comprehend” the “allocation of three terms to rhetoric, exactly the same time as for the study of logic, when the dominance of logic in the Oxford arts course is attested by commentators and by the university itself. Equally, the sudden appearance of texts of a ‘humanistic’ flavor seems out of place at Oxford” (“Developments in the Faculty of Arts,” 324).

³⁵⁰ Rundle, “Humanist Eloquence,” 84.

³⁵¹ Fletcher, “Developments in the Faculty of Arts,” 322.

³⁵² Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature*, 8-9.

political efficacy of medieval forms of literary production. Having been commissioned to write literary works for Henry V and Henry VI, Lydgate was asked by Duke Humphrey to write the *Fall of Princes*. Alessandra Petrina argues that medieval contributions like the *Fall of Princes* to Duke Humphrey's "intellectual project," along with Lydgate's popularity among royal and noble households, demand a "reconsideration of the notion of humanism in the Duke's circle."³⁵³ Petrina acknowledges that Lydgate's literary style was not *entirely* medieval, which may explain his inclusion within Humphrey's circle. She further maintains that Lydgate walked the line between medievalist and humanist by "grafting" pieces of humanist thought onto a "self-sufficient medieval structure."³⁵⁴ I agree, but we need to differentiate between Lydgate's style and his content. I would contend that within this courtly context classical "grafting" does not necessarily reflect a conscious attempt to incorporate humanist stylistics. As we will see, similar classical examples can be found within medieval forms of "florid" rhetoric. Lydgate was instead appealing to humanists through a shared urbane ideology popular at court. As Maura Nolan suggests, Lydgate's "aureate" style was favored at court because it "represented the cultural capital of the aristocratic and royal elites."³⁵⁵ We should also keep in mind, as Schirmer points out, that Lydgate was not a "singular phenomenon"; rather this "new poetic style" (i.e., the "florid" style) was "adapted to the taste of the fifteenth century," with Lydgate as "its most characteristic exponent."³⁵⁶

³⁵³ Alessandra Petrina, *Cultural Politics in Fifteenth Century England: The Case of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 281.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 283.

³⁵⁵ Maura Nolan, *John Lydgate and the Making of Public Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 100.

³⁵⁶ Walter Franz Schirmer, *John Lydgate: A Study in the Culture of the XVth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), 76. It is perhaps on account of their "florid" stylistic similarities (and monastic associations) that John Whethamstede asked Lydgate to write *The Life of Saint Alban and the Life of Saint Amphabel* in 1439. This hagiography followed the model of Lydgate's earlier work that detailed the life of his monastery's patron saint, Edmund, and was presented as a gift to Henry VI in 1433. Whethamstede compensated Lydgate handsomely for the manuscript, a remarkable 100 shillings.

Even though Lydgate wrote mostly in English, he was stylistically very similar to Chaundler. They both, for instance, used principles of scholastic debate and philosophy to explore the moral implications of human nature. They both had a proclivity for lengthy “florid” speeches that were peppered with quotations and references to biblical and classical sources. And they both seem to be representative of their time. It is also quite possible that Lydgate’s work served as some of Chaundler’s source material. In the appendix to her edition of *Liber Apologeticus*, Shoukri notes several instances where Lydgate’s allegorical debate poem *Resoun and Sensuallyte*, his “minor” poem *Look in Thy Merour*, and *Pilgrimage of the Life of Man* (based on Deguilleville’s *Pèlerinage de vie humaine*) find allegorical and tropological analogues in the play.³⁵⁷

Parkes’s and Fletcher’s investigations also demonstrate how humanism becomes increasingly defined in relation to its opposite, scholasticism.³⁵⁸ If scholasticism is defined by the study of logic, then humanism is defined by the study of rhetoric. Therefore, any expressions of rhetoric (or “classical studies”) must also be an expression of humanism. Parkes and Fletcher both view the 1431 statutes as representing a new phenomenon, in part, because they equate the study of rhetoric at Oxford with the *studia humanitatis*. Yet, medieval forms of rhetoric occurred at Oxford much earlier and could co-exist with scholastic forms of moral philosophy and dialectic. Schoeck and Weisheipl discuss, for example, evidence of rhetoric not only in the

³⁵⁷ See notes 8, 15, 18, 36, 39, 43, and 44 in Shoukri, *Liber Apologeticus*.

³⁵⁸ Scholars have long recognized that these categories are problematic, yet the binary persists. Early revisionists are still relevant. See Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Medieval Aspects of Renaissance Learning*, ed. and trans. Edward P. Mahoney (Durham: Duke University Press, 1974) and R. W. Southern, *Medieval Humanism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970). See also Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities: Education and the Liberal Arts in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1986). For more recent examinations, see Robert Black, *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) and Ronald G. W. *In the Footsteps of the Ancients: The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Boston: Brill, 2001). For an account of the historiography of humanism as it relates to the universities, see Paul F. Grendler, “Ancient Learning, Criticism, Schools and Universities,” in *Interpretations of Renaissance Humanism*, ed. Angelo Mazzocco (Boston: Brill, 2006), 73-95. In the same collection (and a somewhat different perspective) see Robert Black, “The Origins of Humanism,” 37-71.

thirteenth-century statutes (that refer to the fourth book of Boethius' *De differentiis topicis*), but also within the pedagogical practices (c. 1220-1430) related to the teaching of *dictamen* (letter-writing) and preaching.³⁵⁹ Lewry's examination of "epideictic oratory" found within university *commendatio* or graduation speeches (c. 1270-1310) led him to conclude that "there was teaching of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* at Oxford before 1300 and it is safe to assume that more was always studied than was taught, and more taught than prescribed by statute or made the subject of examinations."³⁶⁰ These aspects of and attitudes towards fifteenth-century humanism will be explored in greater detail below. In the next section, I will show how Bekynton could value medieval forms of "epideictic oratory" as part of diplomatic negotiations while serving as secretary to Henry VI.

Bekynton's Civic Responsibilities and Sacred Authorities

Bekynton records in his journal, which chronicles the proceedings of the embassy to Calais, negotiations that were predicated on the "elegance" of spiritual authority rather than civic authority. On June 10, 1439, ambassadors from England and France met to determine who had the right to the French crown, Henry VI of England or Charles, the Dauphin of France. The Archbishop of York spoke first and "delivered [a speech] elegantly in Latin" (*eleganter proposuit in latinis*) in favor of Henry's right to the French throne by citing not only Henry's victories in battle that demonstrate God's support for Henry, but also evidence from the Revelations of St. Bridget.³⁶¹ The Archbishop of Rheims, in turn, gave a speech (in French) describing how the Dauphin had also won considerable battles, and therefore, was equally willed

³⁵⁹ As discussed by J.O. Ward in his important article, "Rhetoric in the Faculty of Arts at the Universities of Paris and Oxford in the Middle Ages: A Summary of Evidence," *Bulletin du Cange* 54 (1996): 183-4.

³⁶⁰ Osmund Lewry, "Rhetoric at Paris and Oxford in the Mid-Thirteenth Century," *Rhetorica* 1.1 (1983): 61.

³⁶¹ Harris Nicholas, ed., *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council in England*, vol. 5 (The Public Records of the Kingdom, 1835), 352.

by God to lead the country. He then countered the prophecies of St. Bridget with those of St. John the Hermit, who “among other things wrote that France on account of her sins would be much afflicted by the English, but in the end, the French would drive them in disgrace entirely from the kingdom” (*inter cetera scripsit que Francia propter peccata affligeretur multum per Anglicos sed tandem Gallici turpiter expellerent eos totaliter a regno*).³⁶² The Archbishop of York argued that the prophecies of St. John the Hermit were not known or recognized (*incognitum*) by the Church, unlike those of St. Bridget. The Archbishop of Rheims, however, did not back down from the authority of St. John the Hermit, and so neither a resolution nor a peace agreement could be reached. In his preface to these proceedings, Harris states incredulously, “It is a striking illustration of the state of knowledge in the fifteenth century, that two learned prelates, each at the head of an embassy for determining the right to the crown of a great kingdom and putting an end to a sanguinary war, should support their arguments by citations from the writings of two obscure saints, whose very names are now almost forgotten.”³⁶³ Ultimately, the point of contention was not the ability of each man to lead the country, but the authority and legitimacy of each saint and their claims of divine right. As previously demonstrated in chapter 2, Bekynton believed in the efficacy of the saints and the power of devotional prayer (two months after these negotiations, he visited and prayed at the chantry of St. Gertrude). For Bekynton, the authority of saints possessed the same *rhetorical* power of persuasion and elegance as humanist authorities.³⁶⁴ As we will see in the next section, Bekynton valued both medieval and humanist styles of rhetoric, which is most clearly shown through his correspondence and collections of letters.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 353.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, lii.

³⁶⁴ In his *de jure regnum Anglorum ad regnum Franciae*, for instance, Bekynton references the twelfth Petrarchan eclogue to make a case for English entitlement. See Judd, *The Life of Thomas Bekynton*, 40.

The Implications of Bekynton's Medieval and Humanist Epistolography

Bekynton was certainly a very accomplished letter writer, who, it is often claimed, changed the epistolary landscape of official correspondence, most notably during his tenure in royal administration.³⁶⁵ Bekynton's personal letters and official correspondence, in addition to the letters he collected as models for future use, are found primarily within two manuscripts: London, Lambeth Palace Library MS 211 (written in a "very neat Gothic hand") and his "private register" or formulary, contained within Bodleian Library, Ashmole MS 789 (fols. 147^r – 359^v).³⁶⁶ Study of these manuscripts reveals the different ways in which Bekynton engages the variety of medieval and humanist forms of Latin correspondence. Scholars usually describe Bekynton's "new" epistolary style as the gradual adoption of Italian humanist standards of epistolography.³⁶⁷ These apparent changes to the style and form of English official correspondence are presented as evidence of Bekynton's general support for humanism and "new

³⁶⁵ Judd, *The Life of Thomas Bekynton*, 87.

³⁶⁶ For a description of the Lambeth manuscript see Montague Rhodes James and Claude Jenkins, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Lambeth Palace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), 339. For a description of the Ashmole manuscript see William Henry Black, *A descriptive, analytical, and critical catalogue of the manuscripts bequeathed unto the University of Oxford by Elias Ashmole, Esq.* (Oxford, 1845) 410-415. There is perhaps another formulary connected with Bekynton, British Library MS Cotton Tiberius B.VI, which may have contained, according to the eyewitness testimony of Henry Wharton, "deeds, letters, orations, pacts and other formulae in relation to the deeds of English and French from the year 1417" (*instrumenta, epistolae, orationes, pacta, aliaeque formulae rerum in Anglia & Gallia gestarum ab anno 1417*) in *Anglia Sacra* (Oxford, 1691), 1:573. As Rundle points out (in his annotations to note 30 in Weiss, *Humanism in England*, 116), Williams dismissed the connection of Cotton Tiberius B.VI to Bekynton, and its contents and further attributions are very difficult to determine since this manuscript was badly damaged in a fire. As part of a later embassy to Bordeaux (1442), there are also eleven letters and six fragments written by Bekynton in English and preserved in a manuscript found at Emril in Flintshire in 1861. For these letters, see *Letters of Queen Margaret of Anjou and Bishop Bekynton and Others*, ed. Cecil Monro (Camden Society, 1863), 71-88. During his diplomatic missions, Bekynton also kept a journal about foreign diplomacy, which is contained within British Library MS Cotton Tiberius B.XII, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 1114, British Library MS Harley 4763, and British Library MS 861. The latter, according to Harris Nicholas (in his edition of the journal found within *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council*), is imperfect but more "authentic," 335.

³⁶⁷ "Bekynton's role in the development of Renaissance learning in England must be sought chiefly within the province of administration, for it was reserved for him to raise the standards of official epistolography in this country by following classical models, and by a disregard of the formalities of medieval epistolary practice" (Weiss, *Humanism in England*, 110). Weiss's position of Bekynton as the harbinger of English humanist epistolography has become orthodox.

learning.” After all, it may be argued, he mingled in humanist circles, collected humanist books and treatises, and seemed to spurn “florid” medieval examples of correspondence and/or literary composition. But did he really? I will argue specifically that what defines Bekynton’s style of epistolography is a rigorous adherence to proper political and ecclesiastical decorum rather than the promotion of a humanist agenda. In accordance with proper decorum, Bekynton views the composition in and command of the Latin language as tied to (largely medieval) models of social hierarchy and protocol. Bekynton’s correspondence, then (like that of many other fifteenth-century Englishmen), uses a wide variety of epistolary styles to suit the needs of the specific recipient and/or occasion.

Assumptions that Bekynton’s humanist disposition was unequivocal reflect negatively on Chaundler’s “mixed” (medieval/humanist) dramatic and epistolary style. If Bekynton were a proponent of humanism, then it would seem that in order for Chaundler to impress and please his patron, he must have composed the Trinity College texts in a humanist style. By suggesting that Chaundler is aspiring to be a humanist, even by proxy as Bekynton’s protégé, scholars are then able to dismiss Chaundler’s “verbose” and “flowery” style as a failed attempt at humanism (and unworthy of further inquiry). I will argue instead that, although there are elements that can be identified as “humanist” (most notably the humanist script) within the Trinity College MS, the essential style and structure is informed by or in response to the medieval “florid” tradition. *Liber Apologeticus*, for instance, represents an attempt to resist (his usual) “florid” style for the purpose of presenting a more pious tone. As Chaundler states in the Argument to the play, addressed to Bekynton, “this book, dedicated to you, O Venerable Bishop, is written not in a weighty style but in an ordinary, even a fairly humble, one. That style seemed to me suitable

since it suggests the mystery of our humility.”³⁶⁸ Chaundler recognizes the self-conscious bravado of the “florid” style, and thus wishes to appear more humble by writing in a less ornate style. As we shall see in chapter 4, Chaundler’s “florid” style manages to find expression in the play nonetheless.

What exactly is the medieval “florid” style? In his seminal article, “*Florida Verborum Venustas*,” E.F. Jacob situates the “florid” style in connection with terms that appear in Archbishop Chichele’s register such as “*florida verborum venustas*” (“flowery beauty of words”) or “*ornata verborum series*” (“ornate series of words”) that were used to describe the rhetorical style of petition made on behalf of Oxford graduates, among other business transactions conducted at the Southern Convocation.³⁶⁹ This style also appears to have flourished in prose composition in England during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Prose forms such as *dictamen*, when combined with the French ornate style (e.g., Orléans), contributed to late medieval Latin’s “extravagance and over-elaboration in imagery and metaphor,” which for Weiss, “heralded a decline in literary values.”³⁷⁰ While it may be true that Bekynton did not regularly incorporate “florid” stylistic ornamentations or rhythmical cadences (i.e., *cursus*) into

³⁶⁸ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 53.

³⁶⁹ In 1417, the warden of Merton College, Robert Gilbert, for instance, “commended in flowery beauty of words the state of the University and the promotion of its graduates” (E.F. Jacob, “*Florida Verborum Venustas*: Some Early Examples of Euphuism in England,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 17 [1933]: 264-290, at 264). However, according to the register, this appeal on behalf of Oxford graduates occurred on November 29th, 1417 and not, as Jacob suggests, in October. The entry appears in *The Register of Henry Chichele*, ed. E.F. Jacob, vol. 3 (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1945), 36. In a later version of the article (with minimal revisions), Jacob fixes the wrongly attributed citation (i.e., “*florida verborum venustras*” can be found in “Reg. Chichele, ii” which he changes to “Reg. Chichele, iii. 36”), but he still does not correct the date. For the later version, see “*Verborum Florida Venustas*,” *Essays in the Conciliar Epoch* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), 185. Jacob also mistakenly calls Robert Gilbert “Chancellor of the University of Oxford” (in both publications), when he was only warden of Merton College. It is also noteworthy that Cambridge makes a similar appeal with their representative Thomas Kyngton on December 3rd, 1417 using comparable language, “*studencium promocionem cum verborum eloquentia satis floride commendavit*” (“he recommended the promotion of students with eloquent words in a sufficiently florid manner”) in the third volume of Chichele’s *Register*, 37.

³⁷⁰ Weiss, *Humanism in England*, 47.

his official correspondence,³⁷¹ this should not imply that Bekynton dispensed with all medieval stylistic forms of letter writing while in the service of Duke Humphrey and Henry VI.³⁷² Nor, should it imply that he did not use a “florid” style of letter writing in his personal correspondence. For indeed, we find evidence to the contrary.³⁷³ Thus, if we examine the contexts of his epistolary correspondence, it may be possible to demonstrate how Bekynton could engage with humanists on a political level and yet alternately embrace the medieval “florid” style on a personal and/or literary level. It is my contention that Bekynton views the humanist style as the “voice” of Italianate governance and political prestige within the papal court and views the medieval “florid” style as the “voice” of the fraternal and literary-minded Englishman and/or Wykehamist.³⁷⁴

In his monograph on the life of Thomas Bekynton, Arnold Judd describes Bekynton’s career after leaving Oxford as unfolding in two parts: 1) Bekynton as “civil servant” from 1420 - 1443; 2) Bekynton as Bishop of Bath and Wells from 1443-1465.³⁷⁵ Bekynton was a part of, what Alan Cobban identifies as, the new wave of career-minded students who preferred to take a degree in civil law (rather than theology) at Oxford, enabling them to participate in secular service before pursuing “senior ecclesiastical careers.”³⁷⁶ I begin by examining, from a political

³⁷¹ N. Denholm-Young, “The *Cursus in England*,” in *Oxford Essays in Medieval History Presented to Herbert Edward Salter*, ed. FM Powicke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934), 68-103 at 90.

³⁷² In favor of Bekynton’s pioneering epistolary (i.e., humanist) practices, see Weiss, *Humanism in England*, 110-16 and Judd, *The Life of Thomas Bekynton*, 85-87. For an opposing point of view, see Richard Hunt and Tilly de la Mare, *Duke Humphrey and English Humanism* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 1970), 15 and also David Rundle, “Humanist Eloquence among the Barbarians in Fifteenth-Century England,” in *Britannia Latina: Latin in the Culture of Great Britain from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*, eds. Charles Burnett and Nicholas Mann (London & Turin: Warburg Institute Colloquia, 2005), 71-2.

³⁷³ See examples later in this chapter.

³⁷⁴ David R. Carlson in “The Civic Poetry of Abbot John Whethamstede of St. Albans,” *Mediaeval Studies* 61 (1999): 205-242 at 223, offers an important correction to the oft-cited “proof” of Bekynton’s distaste for the florid style, corroborated in a letter by Bekynton to abbot John Whethamstede. This correspondence will be examined more fully later in this chapter.

³⁷⁵ Judd, *The Life of Thomas Bekynton*, 16-7.

³⁷⁶ Alan Cobban, *The Medieval English Universities: Oxford and Cambridge to c.1500* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 213. In 1420, Bekynton became chancellor to Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, which

standpoint, the ways in which Bekynton engaged the Italian humanists during his “civil servant” career. Although Bekynton was in possession of a variety of humanist texts, he acquired many of these as a result of political transactions with individuals who were intimately connected to the papal court. These humanist manuscripts were not given to him for the purpose of literary patronage or even necessarily in accordance with his personal taste, but for reasons of political prestige. When Bekynton was trying to secure the bishopric of Salisbury, for instance, he gave considerable “benefactions” to Flavio Biondo, a papal secretary, and to Vincent Clement, who was sub-collector for the pope. We must not let Biondo’s status as one of the leading Italian humanists overshadow the importance of his political leverage as a papal secretary. As part of one of these “benefactions,” for instance, Bekynton gave Biondo a very expensive piece of cloth from England (which was then dyed scarlet in Florence), and in return, Biondo sent him volumes III and IV of his *Decades*.³⁷⁷ Rather than expecting to receive in return the latest humanist history on the splendors of Rome, Bekynton was probably trying to procure favor with the pope through one of his most influential advisors. The receipt of the gift of the *Decades* meant that Bekynton had successfully obtained the “pope’s notice.”³⁷⁸ Thus, on May 28th 1442, the pope wrote to Bekynton stating, “We have received your little present, and a handsome one it is, and sent as we know, with this design, that we might have in it a proof of your great affection and

immediately thrust him into a demanding political arena where his primary duty seemed to be maintaining good public relations on the Duke’s behalf. His service to the Duke, in turn, led to other key positions within royal administration (e.g., ambassador to France, Secretary to the King, and Keeper of the Privy Seal). Between the years of 1423 and 1444, Bekynton was also active as a lawyer in the court of Canterbury, under the supervision of Archbishop Chichele (a fellow Wykehamist), where he received the bulk of his legal training. In February of 1423, he became Dean of the Court of Arches, where he tried several cases against heretics. Moreover, through his official correspondence, Bekynton was perceived as the royal spokesman for the king and his court.

³⁷⁷ Judd, *The Life of Thomas Bekynton*, 74-5. *Official Correspondence*, 1:229. This gift is housed in Corpus Christi College MS 205 and Bekynton’s rebus appears on 1^r.

³⁷⁸ Margaret Harvey, *England, Rome, and the Papacy: 1417-1464* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 120.

devotion towards us.”³⁷⁹ Bekynton viewed humanist texts as political gestures (as did Chaundler), and these texts, as Rundle suggests, could be appropriated “into a range of linguistic and presentational maneuvers, each of which they [Chaundler and Bekynton] imitated, adapted, and rejected to their own taste.”³⁸⁰

In a similar vein, many have pointed out that because Bekynton recommended to Richard Caunton, in 1441, that he study oratory in Rome – “I request that you study the art of oratory, which these days flourishes to the highest degree” (*studio quaeso artis oratoriae, quae diebus his summe floret*) – he must have considered the presumably humanist style and/or texts that were taught in Rome as preferable.³⁸¹ However, Bekynton wrote Caunton as yet another friend who was part of the papal court and could assist with the negotiations (specifically the receipt of the cloth) for the bishopric of Salisbury. In the same letter in which Bekynton encourages Caunton’s “humanist” study, Bekynton also praises Caunton for being in good standing with the pope and king, stating “our most holy lord has a good opinion of you” (*dominus noster sanctissimus bonam de te opinionem habet*).³⁸² It was therefore in Bekynton’s best interest to encourage Caunton to study in Rome regardless of what he studied. Again, in this context, his recommendation can be viewed as a “humanist maneuver” that does not necessarily serve literary or stylistic ends.

As Margaret Harvey asserts, most of Bekynton’s Italian interests, like those of most Englishman who were in negotiation with the curial system at this time, were not based on the advancement of humanist “scholarship,” but on “mutual career interests” existing within an

³⁷⁹ Judd, *The Life of Thomas Bekynton*, 76. *Official Correspondence*, 1:240.

³⁸⁰ Rundle, “Humanist Eloquence,” 75.

³⁸¹ *Official Correspondence*, 1:231. For descriptions of Bekynton’s humanist mentoring of Caunton, see Rundle, “Humanist Eloquence,” 71; Weiss, *Humanism in England*, 114; and Judd, *The Life of Thomas Bekynton*, 74.

³⁸² *Official Correspondence*, 1:229.

ecclesiastical legal system that “depended above all on personal relationships.”³⁸³ Bekynton’s “benefactions” or gifts to the papal court were quite successful, and it appeared that he would have become the bishop of Salisbury had it not been for a slight miscalculation. The current bishop of Salisbury, Aiscough, was unwilling to relinquish his position. In concession, Bekynton was offered and accepted the bishopric of Bath and Wells.

It is through these politically motivated exchanges that we see distinct changes in Bekynton’s style of letter writing. On June 27th, 1441, Biondo makes, in a rather short letter, an overture of friendship to Bekynton. In response, Bekynton, with great enthusiasm, gushes: “I rejoiced for a long time as soon as I received your letter with your pledge of love for me” (*Literas jampridem tuas, uti primas amoris in me tui arras, laetabundus excepi*).³⁸⁴ For our purposes, what is most striking about this letter is Bekynton’s adoption of Biondo’s particular humanist style of epistolography. As Rundle has shown, Bekynton uses the same greeting as Biondo, imitating “the protocol of the nominative, dative, *salutem plurimam dat*” (“gives the highest greetings”).³⁸⁵ Bekynton also follows Biondo’s humanist convention of putting his name first before the addressee.³⁸⁶ Yet, Bekynton uses these humanist forms of salutation only in correspondence with Biondo (Bekynton imitates this style again in a letter to Biondo on April 27, 1443), and not in subsequent communication with other humanists.³⁸⁷ By comparison, on October 23, 1443, Bekynton writes to Vincent Clement, who is by this time subdeacon to the pope, using the (very medieval) polite plural form of *salus*, “*salutes*” (a practice much despised

³⁸³ Harvey, *England, Rome, and the Papacy*, 42.

³⁸⁴ *Official Correspondence*, 1:170.

³⁸⁵ This is one of Cicero’s “usual greetings,” as pointed out by Judith Rice Henderson in “Valla’s *Elegantiae* and the Humanist Attack on the *Ars Dictaminis*,” *Rhetorica* 19.2 (2001): 251, note 5. However, Rundle asserts that within these correspondence Bekynton uses many words that are “acceptable medieval Latin” but “hardly Ciceronian” in “Humanist Eloquence,” 75. Compare the two letters in *Official Correspondence* I, 169 & 170.

³⁸⁶ For other common humanist salutation devices, see Judith Henderson, “Humanism and the Humanities,” in *Letter-Writing Manuals and Instruction from Antiquity to the Present*, eds. Carol Poster and Linda Mitchell (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 150.

³⁸⁷ *Official Correspondence*, 1:172.

by later humanists) and places this within the standard medieval order of address in his salutation, “*Praecarissime frater, post salutes internas*”; (“Dearest brother, after internal health”).³⁸⁸ Bekynton does not adopt a style of humanist address (from the leading humanist of the day, no less) for the purpose of becoming more humanist. Rather, Bekynton sees this stylistic choice as politically expedient (a form of flattery), and preserves it in his collection of letters and his formulary for potential future use as the *circumstances* warrant. In his discussion of proper protocol within official and diplomatic correspondence, Pierre Chaplais observes that one of the easiest and most reliable ways to avoid offense is for the recipient to model the form and style of address from the letter received.³⁸⁹ It seems significant that in his first exchange with Biondo, Bekynton quotes Terence’s *Andria* (I.1.144), “You go first; I will follow” (*I prae: sequor*). Bekynton’s style of epistolography is therefore not defined by humanist trends, but developed in response to the stylistic variances that were appropriate to each recipient.

Jacob observes that in the late thirteenth century the “florid” style found its way into English formularies through influential Orléans *artes dictandi*. Notably, these letter books were organized with a “conscious attempt to suit the style to the occasion,” at times displaying an “impressive rotundity” and other times written without notable ornamentation.³⁹⁰ Although Jacob does not mention Bekynton explicitly, he does single out Bekynton’s formulary to characterize the style of fifteenth-century formularies, describing Ashmole MS 789 as a “purely medieval” letter book with very little application of “new classical scholarship.” The Ashmole MS seems to have been used as medieval formulary into the early sixteenth century at Hereford Cathedral, after its donation by Bishop Booth.³⁹¹ However, I would qualify Jacob’s contention

³⁸⁸ Ibid. *Official Correspondence*, 1:185.

³⁸⁹ Pierre Chaplais, *English Diplomatic Practice in the Middle Ages* (London: Hambledon and London, 2003), 105.

³⁹⁰ Jacob, “Florida Verborum Venustas,” 281-2.

³⁹¹ Ibid., 282.

that the Ashmole MS is “purely medieval,” since the formulary does contain humanist material, such as letters of correspondence between Duke Humphrey and Pier Decembrio. What is significant is that these humanist examples are juxtaposed with other medieval real and model letters within a very formulaic medieval structure.

The compiler of Ashmole MS 789 states from the beginning that the formulary presents “letters not only of friendship and personal matters but also letters of political business and ecclesiastic conduct” (*epistolas tum amicitiae et rerum privatarum, tum negotiorum politicorum et ecclesiasticorum*).³⁹² Many of the letters preserved relate to diplomatic or political correspondence, and copies of these can also be found in Lambeth Palace Library MS 211 (Biondo’s correspondence with Bekynton, for instance, is on fols. 168^r and 172^r). After the inclusion of Bekynton’s journal of his mission to Bordeaux (174^r-184^r)³⁹³, there is what appears to be a table of contents for different types of letters that are modeled in subsequent folia, such as, “*grates de beneficiis*” (“thanks with regard to a benefice”) or “*amicus ad amicum verba solacii*” (“friend to a friend offering words of solace”). As George Williams observes, seemingly very private correspondence (e.g., a model letter for the given circumstance, “a friend blames a friend because he does not visit him”) is codified and given a “very uniform and official character.”³⁹⁴ Following model letters that pertain to friendship (185^r-187^r), there is what Williams calls a “phrase dictionary”³⁹⁵ and a general style chart for the different parts of a letter. The chart begins, for instance, with “*salutationes*,” which illustrates modes of address for different positions within the (civil and ecclesiastical) social hierarchy, e.g. priors, canons, deacons, judges, and potentates. These social allocations continue “down” to the ranks of

³⁹² Black, *Ashmole*, 412-413.

³⁹³ The Latin version is printed in *Official Correspondence*, 2:177-248. An English translation can be found in N.H. Nicholas, ed. *A Journal of One of the Suite of Thomas Beckington* (London: William Pickering, 1928), 1-102.

³⁹⁴ George Williams, “Bishop Bekynton,” *Gentlemen's Magazine*, November 1863, 556.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 553-566 at 555.

scholars and notaries (fols. 188^r-188^v). Beginning on 190^r, we find a similar section, focusing on *narrationes*, which correlates the specific type of relationship (such as friendship or patronage) with potential scenarios, to help structure the body of the letter. Less detailed are the sections on *petitiones* and *conclusiones* (beginning on fol. 191^r), yet the reader is still provided with a fairly wide range of potential affective registers. With *petitiones*, for instance, one is given the option to choose from a cluster of verbs (that are meant to petition on behalf of the sender) from the basic and synonymous (perhaps for the sake of variety), such as, “*cupio*,” “*desidero*,” and “*opto*” (“I desire” or “I wish”) to more nuanced such as “*gestio*” (“I exult”) or “*affecto*” (“I aspire”). These are then paired with potential recipients such as “*reverendi patri*” (“reverend father”), “*amicii*” (“friend”) or “*socii*” (“fellow”) with appropriate requests. Once these aspects are delineated, the formulary demonstrates how these parts can fashion letters according to a particular theme. For instance, there are models for how to write to an abbot under various adverse conditions (on 191^v).

Most of these elements of the formulary were part of a tradition that extended back to the days of Alberic of Monte Cassino in the late eleventh century. According to James Murphy, Alberic’s two works, *Dictaminum radii* and *Breviarium de dictamine*, contain nearly all the elements of *ars dictaminis*, such as “the relation of rhetoric to letter writing, the standardization of parts of a letter, the emphasis on salutations and introductory section with distinction between social levels of addressees, the recommended use of *colores*, the inclusion of model letter and official forms.”³⁹⁶ Structurally, Bekynton’s formulary is organized in a very traditional medieval manner. Even the elaborate charts used to delineate modes of address along the continuum of

³⁹⁶ James Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 210.

the social hierarchy are common features since at least the time of Lawrence of Aquilegia (c.1300) and his *Practica sive usus dictaminis*.³⁹⁷

What is impressive about Bekynton's formulary, therefore (more than his attention to detail), is its range and breadth of model and real letters. Their extent is so great that Black, in his description of the manuscript, does not provide any details concerning the formulary proper (165^r – 359^r), claiming “the contents of this compilation or Register are so exceedingly numerous, that they cannot be enumerated in the present work.”³⁹⁸

With regard to the content, there seems to be a preference within the past and contemporaneous exempla in Bekynton's formulary for those that model political transactions, diplomatic negotiations, and other types of official correspondence. The formulary includes correspondence that dates back to at least September 3rd, 1346, with a letter from Edward III to Thomas Lucy, a knight, who describes the conditions of the war at Crécy. There are also several official documents from the reign of Henry V (e.g., 147^v - 150^r), those that chronicle Bekynton's own diplomatic missions (e.g., 174^r-184^r), and even those that highlight heretical grievances. Perhaps the most controversial or “charged” documents are those relating to the trials of Reginald Pecock, such as letters stating “the council's action in the case of Pecock” and his abjuration (fols. 303^v – 304^r and 322^r-326^r).³⁹⁹

If we are specifically looking for Italian humanist examples of correspondence in Bekynton's formulary, they can be found with relative ease. A decisive change on fol. 200^r,

³⁹⁷ Ibid., 261-3. In fact, Emil Polak views fols. 188^r-192^v as a fragment from Lawrence of Aquilegia's *Practica sive usus dictaminis* in *Medieval and Renaissance Letter Treatises and Form Letters* (New York: Brill, 1994), 360.

³⁹⁸ Black, *Ashmole*, 415. Black refers readers to the index (fols. 151^r – 156^v), which according to Catto, in *The Fall of Bishop Pecock*, 212, was created sometime between May 1459 and July 1461 with a subsequent attempt to update the index for the additional entries made through 1463.

³⁹⁹ For a description of these, see Edouard Perroy, ed., *The Anglo-French Negotiations at Bruges: 1374-1377* (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1952), viii. For Pecock, see Jeremy Catto, “The King's Government and The Fall of Bishop Pecock, 1457-8,” in *Rulers and Ruled in Late Medieval England*, eds. Rowena Archer and Simon Walker (London: Hambledon Press, 1995), 212 -222.

where the script becomes larger and more prominent with accentuated descenders, signals a move from model letters (following the delineated parts of a letter) to real letters. Here we find, prominently displayed, Decembrio's letters to Duke Humphrey concerning Decembrio's translation of the *Republic* (fols. 218^r -219^v). Paleographic considerations notwithstanding, the inclusion of such texts does not (necessarily) mean that Bekynton views these kinds of texts differently than the medieval letters. Instead, he probably saw these letters as offering another valuable contemporaneous example of effective correspondence between patron and client.

The least humanist examples in Bekynton's formulary are those that may be considered "private correspondence." To that end, two examples written by Bekynton (both to fellow Wykehamists) demonstrate Bekynton's change in style and tone. The first example (fol. 81^r) is a correspondence with Andrew Holes, whom Weiss disparages as one who despite spending many years at the Curia somehow never adopted the style of the humanists, instead showing a "preference for scholastic rather than Ciceronian form" typical of his "formal medieval education."⁴⁰⁰ In the same year that Bekynton writes to Biondo (1441) and models Biondo's humanist epistolography, Bekynton also writes to Holes for some "unknown favor" in a distinctly medieval style:

Most affectionate father, in acknowledging your favors I am so overwhelmed in the face of the manifold variety of the magnitude of what you have so freely vouchsafed, I am brought into a state of bewilderment so that I have well nigh lost the powers of hand and tongue, while I am sensible of being left with nothing worthy which I can proffer to your paternity – either of the written or the spoken word – as an expression of my gratitude. Accordingly, as my powers are not competent to render a sufficient response to your benevolence, I give my very self to you. Take me and use me: I am – all of me – yours! I commit myself to you. Do as you wish in all things affecting myself, for I am yours completely body and soul.⁴⁰¹

⁴⁰⁰ Weiss, *Humanism in England*, 120-1.

⁴⁰¹ Judd, *The Life of Thomas Bekynton*, 72-3. *Official Correspondence* 1:225.

Bekynton then goes to say, “I grieve on behalf of our renowned [New] College that has these years fallen into miserable poverty” (*Memoratum Collegium in miserabilem, proh dolor paupertatem his annis dilapsum est*) in a very similar tone and style used by Chaundler in a letter to Bekynton about ten years later (which we will examine in more detail below).

The second example (fol. 172^v) is a rather sardonic fragment of a letter sent by Bekynton to William Say, during his embassy to Calais (c. 1439):

Dear friend, to prevent any belief that Calais is alarmed on account of statements that there will be a siege, I would have you know that the men of Calais are larger than giants, fiercer than lions, more dreadful than dragons; some of them mounted on tall horses, propose to charge, wielding spears as heavy as beams; others are preparing to discharge swift missiles from two-horned catapults drawn on wheels, others will do their best with bows to cover the whole sky with a hail of arrows.⁴⁰²

Although this passage is too short to analyze fully, it does demonstrate the “florid” use of rhetorical tropes, such as hyperbole, and its subsequent amplification through interpretative repetition (*interpretatio*) and the figure of thought, accumulation (*frequentatio*).⁴⁰³ Bekynton takes a single thought – “Calais is not worried about an English siege” – exaggerates it, and then repeats it with a succession of compounding examples.

To complicate matters, some of the criteria scholars use to determine the facets of humanist epistolography are far too general and inadequate. For instance, in addition to categorizing Bekynton’s epistolography as humanist by means of his engagement with humanist texts (both past and present), and his disregard of the *cursus*, he is also characterized as such through his adoption of humanist grammatical forms.⁴⁰⁴ In accordance with the last of the criteria, Richard Hunt and Tilly de la Mare have observed that in Bekynton’s model letters to

⁴⁰² Judd, *The Life of Thomas Bekynton*, 61-2. *Official Correspondence*, 1:cxxi (No 3).

⁴⁰³ Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *Poetria nova*, Trans. by Margaret F. Nims and Intro. to the rev. ed. by Martin Camargo (Toronto: PIMS, 2010), 26, 48, 52-3.

⁴⁰⁴ Weiss, *Humanism in England*, 110-6. However, *vide supra* note 49.

friends, it seems that indeed “the ‘*tu*’ of the humanists has replaced the medieval ‘*vos*.’”⁴⁰⁵ Yet, Hunt and de la Mare doubt that Bekynton was “responsible for a reform of the Latinity of English official letter writing...beyond the fact that he was aware of the use of ‘*tu*’ instead of ‘*vos*’ in familiar letters.”⁴⁰⁶ As we have seen with Bekynton’s use of the medieval form of address, “*salutes*,” and based on a preliminary survey of the materials, the use of the humanist “*tu*” is also not without equivocation.⁴⁰⁷

If we look at Chaundler’s extant correspondence with Bekynton, Chaundler uses the medieval “*vos*” in his first extant letter to Bekynton as part of the salutation, “*vos, reverdissime pater*” (“you, most reverend father”), but uses the singular “humanist” form in subsequent communication.⁴⁰⁸ Did Chaundler change his style to match Bekynton’s “humanist” epistolography? Perhaps. But these humanist gestures seem rather insignificant and cosmetic when we consider Chaundler’s overall stylistic voice, which generally intonates with grand, “florid” flourishes. In the first letter preserved in the Trinity College MS, for instance, Chaundler laments the deplorable state of the college:

I call upon God as my witness; it seems to me that the walls weep and threaten to bewail bitter tears as [the college is] now near ruin. How often I observe the same number of innocent [children] and hear them singing in memory of those that went to the sleeping Lord shouting: “Save us Lord, we perish.” Likewise, when they sing, I often cry.

Testem Deum invoco; videntur mihi isti parietes lacrimari, et imminentem ac jam proximam deflere ruinam. Istum quoque numerum innocentium quociens inspicio, quociens cantentes audio, in memoriam venit illud dormienti Domino

⁴⁰⁵ Hunt and de la Mare, *Duke Humfrey*, 16.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴⁰⁷ In a footnote to the new edition of Weiss’s *Humanism in England*, Rundle refers to a non-humanist example of diplomatic letters “produced under Bekynton’s supervision” in P. Chaplais, *English Medieval Diplomatic Practice*, vol.1 (London: H.M.S.O), 41-3. This letter was written on July 15, 1438 (with a duplicate written on the 17th) by Henry VI to Archbishop Dietrich of Cologne and signed (along with its the duplicate) by Bekynton. To my eyes, the most medieval aspect of this letter is the continued use of the plural *vos* rather than *tu* when the king describes his affection for him (e.g., “*affectionis in vos nostre*”), 42.

⁴⁰⁸ *Official Correspondence*, 1:264. This letter is dated October 1, 1449.

*acclamatum: SALVA NOS DOMINE, PERIMUS. Ipse quoque, dum illi canunt, fleo aliquociens.*⁴⁰⁹

His language is so effusive that Bekynton (somewhat sardonically) replies:

Therefore, in the meantime, we ask [that you] have patience in these matters. With the help of God, these living columns, which survive thus far, will be given approbation for their potential ruin that you bitterly lament. Nor, indeed will this edifice rapidly collapse that has supported so many with nourishment.

*Interea igitur rogamus hac in re patientiam habe. Ruituro quem defles loco, opitulante Deo, vivae quae adhuc supersunt columnae suffragium dabunt. Nec enim de facili corruet aedificium quod tot sustentaculis fulciatur.*⁴¹⁰

Here, Bekynton is not criticizing Chaundler's "florid" style (specifically his use of *prosopopoeia* or personification, one of the forms of amplification or stylistic ornamentation) as much as the *intent* behind his hyperbolic tone.

The purpose of this examination into the style of Bekynton's epistolography and letter collections is to demonstrate not only the many facets of Bekynton's style (medieval, humanist, political, and often very personal), but also to deprivilege the importance of the humanist style when considering the merits of Chaundler's literary works and letters. Additionally, although Bekynton may have used the humanist style, at times, for political purposes, this should not suggest that humanist epistolography is necessarily more politically efficacious than its "florid" medieval counterpart. As we have seen, Bekynton found both styles of letter writing to be politically advantageous. We should therefore distinguish between the perceptions of Bekynton and his contemporaries and the views of "correct" epistolary style held by sixteenth-century humanists (notably Erasmus). With the former, we find that there is greater tolerance for different epistolary styles. It is for this reason that someone like Abbot John Whethamstede, in

⁴⁰⁹ *Official Correspondence*, 1:271. Trinity College MS, fol. 47^r. This letter is date September 11, 1452. Williams changes the spelling for "quociens" (in the MS) to "quotiens." He also misidentifies the biblical citation for the last line, which refers to Matthew 8:25 not 3:25.

⁴¹⁰ *Official Correspondence*, 1:273. This letter is dated September 21, 1452.

the early fifteenth century, could see himself simultaneously as one of the foremost paragons of the “florid” style and also a proponent of humanism.⁴¹¹ Significant changes to the “barbaric” grammatical and stylistic forms of *dictamen* did not really occur, as Judith Henderson has successfully demonstrated, until the 1470s (shortly after Bekynton’s death), when works such as Valla’s *Elegantiae* were widely disseminated through print.⁴¹² Moreover, amidst the later humanist criticism of medieval forms, Geoffrey of Vinsauf’s *Poetria Nova* (which describes the kinds of stylistic ornamentations used by practitioners of the “florid” style) continued to be popular well into the sixteenth century.⁴¹³ Like Bekynton, Chaundler’s writing style was a combination of medieval techniques and humanist borrowings.

Chaundler’s Role in the Cultivation of the *Studia Humanitatis*

After Humfrey’s donations, scholars have typically credited Chaundler with the next, most significant humanist contribution to the university, that is, sowing the seeds of the *studia humanitatis* or “new learning.”⁴¹⁴ Thus, discussions of Chaundler’s engagement in “new learning” tend to revolve around his ability to create the conditions under which the future humanist curriculum could emerge. For instance, during Chaundler’s tenure as chancellor of Oxford University, some students like Robert Flemmyng, William Sellyng, John Tiptoft, and

⁴¹¹ David Carlson suggests that although Whethamstede’s style was “florid,” he incorporates many of the civic-minded elements of rhetoric of the early fifteenth-century humanists (“The Civic Poetry,” 214).

⁴¹² Henderson, “Valla’s *Elegantiae*,” 249. She also shows how even Salutati “tried out the singular pronoun *tu* in his official correspondence but soon retreated to the polite plural *vos*,” 254. Gideon Burton, in “From *Ars dictaminis* to *Ars conscribendi epistolis*,” *Letter-Writing*, 95-6, also sees Valla’s work as providing the necessary tools for stylistic reform, but suggests these changes did not take hold until the time of Erasmus. While some elements of medieval *dictamen* persisted into the sixteenth century, there was a definitive grammatical and stylistic shift that focused on the rhetorical “elegance” of the language and its classically inspired refinement. Though this “back to antiquity” approach could produce slavish results, as Erasmus was apt to criticize, the new goal for these “second wave” humanists, according to Burton, was to supersede the formulaic medieval models of letter writing through a more pure (classical) form of expression.

⁴¹³ Henderson, “Valla’s *Elegantiae*,” 265.

⁴¹⁴ Chaundler’s transitional role was first discussed at length by A.F. Leach, who describes Chaundler, while Warden of Winchester and New College, as “the Janus through whom the passage from ‘old’ and ‘new’ learning was made” (*A History of Winchester College* [London: Duckworth & Co., 1899], 220).

John Free went abroad and studied in humanist centers like Padua, Cologne, and Rome.⁴¹⁵

Likewise, humanist scholars like Stefano Surigone and later Cornelio Vitelli (near the time of Chaundler's death) were brought over from Italy to instruct in some of the fundamentals of "new learning."⁴¹⁶ Primarily for initiating these cultural exchanges, in addition to his "proto-humanist" literary attempts, scholars have argued that Chaundler should be recognized for preparing the foundations of humanist study at Oxford. However, the extent of Chaundler's influence and active participation in these matters (even in his correspondence with William Sellyng) is difficult to determine.⁴¹⁷ In my view, the best indicators of Chaundler's humanist predilections, therefore, are his manuscripts and correspondence with Bekynton. As alluded to before, this evidence has proved unsatisfactory for some. In his assessment of Chaundler's contribution to the *studia humanitatis* program, Roberto Weiss states:

[Chaundler's] efforts to give a humane character to some of his writings, and his use of neo-classical and ancient texts while pursuing typically scholastic studies, indicate clearly his conception of modern learning merely as a means by which the old learning could be improved. In fact, his appreciation of the antique was subordinated to the help it gave to his more conservative studies, and if he encouraged classicism he did so in order to further the advancement of medieval rather than Renaissance culture.⁴¹⁸

I agree with Weiss's assessment. Chaundler uses "neo-classical and ancient texts" not to dismantle the tenets of "old learning" but to advance specific medieval pedagogical and ecclesiastical practices within the collegiate and university system. He is not a humanist like Erasmus, who rejected medieval scholastic debate, medieval authorities, and the extensive

⁴¹⁵ See Hunt and de la Mare, *Duke Humfrey*, 36, 41-44, and 58.

⁴¹⁶ Weiss, *Humanism in England*, 207, 11-12.

⁴¹⁷ Other than circumstantial evidence, there is no proof that Chaundler directly communicated with these Italian humanists or encouraged these students to study abroad though it seems likely he would have had some contact with them. The intimate nature of his letters with William Sellyng suggests that Chaundler probably knew him before he became prior of Christ Church – most likely when Sellyng was a student at Canterbury College (1454-64). However, the extant correspondence between Sellyng and Chaundler only discusses their friendship and Chaundler's benefactions to Canterbury College. For Chaundler's correspondence with Sellyng, see W.A. Pantin, *Canterbury College Oxford*, vol. III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), 112-125.

⁴¹⁸ Weiss, *Humanism in England*, 206-7.

medieval commentary tradition.⁴¹⁹ Weiss privileges the advancement of Renaissance culture and views medieval culture as inferior; thus, Chaundler's "humanist attempts" are found wanting. Like many of the twelfth-century humanists, however, Chaundler found what David Carlson has termed "humanist gestures" useful in his exploration of the human and the divine.⁴²⁰ As I will argue, these "humanist gestures" take many forms. At times, Chaundler uses humanist texts to represent current political events or to serve as the voice or idiom of contemporary politics. Other times, he uses them playfully, devoid of ideology. However, at all times, Chaundler recognizes that the authority (and secular virtues) of these humanist texts is secondary to the authority (and theological virtues) of patristic authors.

Chaundler's Civic Responsibilities and Sacred Authorities

It is important to recognize that when Chaundler wrote his plays, dialogues, and debates Bekynton was no longer a "civil servant." Once Bekynton became bishop of Bath and Wells, he withdrew from public affairs and did not perform civic responsibilities outside of his diocese. Maxwell-Lyte, in his introduction to *The Register of Thomas Bekynton*, states, "There is, however, no evidence of [Bekynton] taking a very active part in public affairs beyond serving as a trier of petitions in several parliaments."⁴²¹ Furthermore, Bekynton received relatively early in his episcopacy an exemption from this parliamentary duty. The following entry appears in the *Calendar Patent Rolls* on June 18th, 1452: "Granted to Thomas, bishop of Bath and Wells, in consideration of his age and infirmities, that he be not compelled to come to any council or

⁴¹⁹ See specifically the prefatory letter to Erasmus' *Enchiridion militis christiani* (*The Handbook of the Christian Soldier*) in *Collected Works of Erasmus: Spiritualia*, vol. 66 (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1988), 8-23. Erasmus despises particularly the commentaries on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* – one of the primary sources of *Liber Apologeticus*.

⁴²⁰ David Carlson defines "humanist gestures" as "manifestations, intermittent perhaps, of the characteristic humanist desire to return *ad fontes* [to the source]," in *English Humanist Books*, 5.

⁴²¹ *The Register of Thomas Bekynton*, eds. by H. C. Maxwell-Lyte and M. C. B. Dawes, vol. 1 (Somerset Record Society, xlix, 1, 1934-5), xiv.

parliament of the king as a lord thereof, so that he appear by his proctor.”⁴²² Then, on July 12th, 1461, Edward IV granted Bekynton an exemption for the remainder of his life.⁴²³

Chaundler, on the other hand, was required to perform civic responsibilities on behalf of New College. In 1455, he began “the practice of wardens of New College to reside in London when parliament was in session” for the purpose of “represent[ing] the interests of the university” and college.⁴²⁴ Yet, he did not actively engage in partisan politics as part of, or in addition to, these required duties. This political neutrality did not seem to matter, however, when the Yorkist regime change impacted all parts of the administration at Oxford University during the height of the War of the Roses. As Shoukri suggests, Chaundler had connections to several influential Lancastrians (such William Waynflete and Bekynton) that implicated him as a sympathizer and led to his (forced) resignation of the chancellorship of Oxford University in 1461.⁴²⁵ During this Yorkist ascendancy, George Neville (brother to the Earl of Warwick, “The Kingmaker”) assumed the chancellorship in his place. However, after Neville’s political duplicity and charges of treason in 1472, Edward IV wrote to the “Comyssary proctores and regentes” of Oxford University and asked that they choose “with alle the celerite that ye godly may” the next chancellor, who should be “most hable in vertu connyng and pollicye to guyde and reule with yow owr sayd Universite.”⁴²⁶ The university elected Thomas Chaundler, and the king responded enthusiastically: “We been late ascertayned by your lettres presentyd unto us that ye in accomplissyng oure desyr have chosyn oure trusty and wellebelovyd Clerke Maister Thomas Chawndeler one of oure chapellayns of hos promtyon and preferment in that byhalf

⁴²² Calendar Patent Rolls (1446-52), 558.

⁴²³ Calendar Patent Rolls (1461-7), 18.

⁴²⁴ *The History of the University of Oxford*, eds. J.I. Catto and Ralph Evans, vol. 2, *Late Medieval Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press, 1992), 722.

⁴²⁵ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 5-6.

⁴²⁶ This and the following letter have been transcribed in Bridges, “Thomas Chaundler,” 1:193. Cambridge: Corpus Christi College MS 423, fol. 38^v.

we be ryghte welle contente and pleasid.”⁴²⁷ Chaundler clearly did not take sides during the regime changes in 1471 and proved himself a formidable administrator while serving as vice-chancellor (1463-7). Chaundler also served as commissioner of peace for the town of Oxford while chancellor of Oxford (until 1479) and also in Hereford while dean of the cathedral.⁴²⁸ During these turbulent times, Chaundler wanted unity for the fractured “*res publica*” and, more than anything, as he states in the prologue to the *Collocutiones*, “I desire peace” (*pacem cupio*).⁴²⁹ From this non-partisan vantage point, let us examine Chaundler’s letters that engage in civic affairs through the idiom of “humanist” texts, but provide remedies to these civic problems through sacred authorities.

In the second letter from the Trinity College MS (most likely written on January 5, 1452), Chaundler feels overwhelmed by the political events that are occurring in England and beseeches Bekynton: “Have mercy, father! What may be said about the republic of England, which is divided amongst itself? I am not talking about the general population that suffers such divisions, but those who are leading [the country]” (*Miserere, pater. Quid loquendum est de re publica Anglorum, quae tot in se divisions, non dicam plebium, sed et principum, patitur*).⁴³⁰ Chaundler frames the discussion with a quote from Job 17:12, notably, a key passage from the seventh reading of the third nocturn of Matins in the Office of the Dead. As explored in chapter 2, this is a turning point in the journey of the one dying/dead who is looking to God for deliverance.⁴³¹ Here, Chaundler seeks a similar type of guidance and deliverance from Bekynton:

⁴²⁷ Bridges, “Thomas Chaundler,” I, 194. Cambridge: Corpus Christi College MS 423, fol. 39^r.

⁴²⁸ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 1.

⁴²⁹ Bridges, “Thomas Chaundler,” 2:99.

⁴³⁰ *Official Correspondence*, 1:266. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 47^v. George Williams finds references in this letter to “the murder of Bishop Aiscough (June 29, 1450), to the popular insurrections under Jack Cade, in that year; to the disasters in Normandy in 1451; and to the rising in Wales under the Duke of York, at the beginning of 1452” in *Official Correspondence*, 1:liii, note 1.

⁴³¹ Procter and Wordsworth, *Breviarium*, 2:278. Incidentally, the responsory following this passage is the “fear of death troubles me.”

I ask you, how many councils, how many parliaments have not elevated [our country] so much as they have consumed it? Indeed, so many and so great that most blessed Job may be the most appropriate to exclaim about our republic, “my thoughts are dissipated, tormenting my heart;” If you add this, perhaps you can discover the cause: “They have turned day into night.” And all our enemies and those of his [Henry VI’s?] flatterers speak, turning black into white.⁴³²

*Quot, rogo, concilia, quot parlamenta non tam exorta quam consumpta sunt? Tot denique et tanta, ut illud beatissimi Job possit res publica congruenter exclamare: “Cogitationes meae dissipatae sunt, torquentes cor meum” quod si addideris, fortassis causam proferes: “Noctem verterunt in diem.” Illos et sui et omnium nostrum inimicos loquor assentatores, nigrum vertentes in candidum.*⁴³³

Chaundler then uses what appears to be a humanist text, i.e., Plutarch’s description of the body politic. He states: “I have learned about the worthy opinions of the philosopher Plutarch”

(*Plutarchi philosophi digna sententia didici*).⁴³⁴ And yet, he continues by quoting

(unacknowledged) John of Salisbury’s *Policraticus* that quotes pseudo-Plutarch:

The republic, as it pleases him, is a kind of body that is animated by benefit of divine gift, driven by the will of the highest equity, and ruled by the particular government of reason. Truly, it is necessary to venerate that which institutes religion and provides the worship of God and also presents the devotion of that religion as if it were the soul of the body. Certainly, in succession, the prince holds [the place] of the head; the senate the place of the heart; the officials, the judges and governors of the provenances, themselves, claim the place of the eyes, ears, and tongue....⁴³⁵

*Est, ut illi placuit, res publica corpus quoddam quod divini muneris beneficio animatur, et summae aequitatis nutu agitur, et regitur quodam moderamine rationis. Eos vero qui religionem instituunt et Dei caerimonias tradunt, quique religionis Illius cultui praesunt, quasi animam corporis, venerari oportet. Princeps vero capitis in re publica obtinet vicem; et cordis locum senatus; oculorum, aurium, et linguae officia sibi vendicant iudices et praesides provinciarum....*⁴³⁶

⁴³² This is my own translation.

⁴³³ *Official Correspondence*, 1:267. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 47^v.

⁴³⁴ *Official Correspondence*, 1:267. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 47^v.

⁴³⁵ This, and subsequent passages, are my own translation.

⁴³⁶ *Official Correspondence*, 1:267-8. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 47^v-48^r. The attribution of the quotation to John of Salisbury was first recognized by M. R. James in *The Chaundler MSS*, 5. As James notes, John of Salisbury is quoting “the lost (and perhaps spurious) *Institutio Traiani* ascribed to Plutarch,” 5. Compare Book V, Chapter II in *Ioannis Saresberiensis Policraticus*, ed. Clement C. I. Webb, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1909), 262-264.

Chaundler then applies this metaphor to England: “I consider Henry to be the most illustrious and kind Prince, and the nourishing bishops to hold the place of the soul” (*illustrissimum Regem et benignissimum Principem contemplerer Henricum, et qui locum animae tenent pontifices almos*).⁴³⁷ It is not the institution that holds the place of the soul, but rather the bishops like Bekynton. However, Chaundler warns that the current political situation has created a monstrous body politic: “How could it be more monstrous than if a painter were to join the neck of a horse to a handsome human head and cover it with various feathers?” (*Sane monstruosior, quam si humano et formoso capiti cervicem pictor equinam junget, et variis induat plumis*).⁴³⁸ In these lines, Chaundler quotes from the beginning of Horace’s *Ars Poetica*, but then he immediately relates the current situation or monstrosity to “violence against the soul” (*animam saevire*) just like “those hostile ones who rose up and slew Christ the Lord” (*insurgentes iniqui christos Domini trucidarunt*).⁴³⁹ While these officials endeavor to undercut the body politic, Chaundler turns to Bekynton, “a most prudent man” (*vir prudentissime*), for advice about how to navigate the current state of affairs. Again, Chaundler beseeches Bekynton using ecclesiastical language: “Have mercy [on us], most agreeable father” (*Miserere, pater suavissime*). These interjections are very reminiscent of the responsory and versicle that directly follow the seventh reading of Job from the Office of the Dead (used earlier in the letter), both ending with “Have mercy upon me God, and save me” (*miserere mei Deus, et salva me*).⁴⁴⁰ Moreover, shortly after John of Salisbury uses the example of the body politic from pseudo-Plutarch in the *Policraticus*, he examines the virtues of Job (Book V, Chapter VI) that the Prince should imitate in order to

⁴³⁷ *Official Correspondence*, 1:268. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 48^r.

⁴³⁸ *Official Correspondence*, 1:268. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 48^r. Chaundler concludes the letter by suggesting that the disorder that is happening in the republic resembles a similar disorder that is occurring at the “minor republic” (*minoris rei publicae*) or Winchester College.

⁴³⁹ *Official Correspondence*, 1:268. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 48^r.

⁴⁴⁰ Procter and Wordsworth, *Breviarium*, 2:278.

succeed in his governance of the republic. Thus, the so-called humanist examples provide an idiom by which to describe the current state of the “*res publica*,” but do not provide the means for a solution. The salve resides in the soul (and theological virtues) of the body politic, the bishops, or, as in this case, Bekynton.

In his discussion of the relationship between humanism and religion (not just Christianity), James Hankins observes, “If the fourth-century Latin Church Fathers had been line-drawers, Quattrocento humanists were line-blurrers. They were eager to show the common ground between Christians and virtuous pagans.”⁴⁴¹ This is evident in the various educational treatises written by fifteenth-century humanists. Leonardo Bruni, for instance, in “The Study of Literature,” positions Augustine, Jerome, and Lactantius as “men of letters as well as great theologians” and points out the poetic aspects of the Mass as the most meaningful: “Again, when Mass is being said in church, we sometimes yawn and fall asleep even when it is being done very beautifully, but when once the poetical refrain breaks out...which of us is so earthbound as not to feel some lifting of the soul, some inspired feeling?”⁴⁴² Bruni even goes so far as to suggest that the morality of secular literature is not all that different from the bible, “as though the same and even worse cannot be found in the Holy Scriptures!”⁴⁴³ In “The Education of Boys,” Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (the future pope Pius II) likewise justifies the use of secular or pagan literature to instruct boys by equating secular and sacred moral perspectives: “We do not doubt you are convinced that after this life there is another which is joyful and sweet for the good, bitter, and full of trouble for the evil. Not only the Bible but also pagan literature shows this.”⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴¹ James Hankins, “Religion and the Modernity of Renaissance Humanism,” *Interpretations of Renaissance Humanism*, ed. Angelo Mazzocco (Boston: Brill, 2006), 142.

⁴⁴² Leonardo Bruni, “The Study of Literature: To Lady Battista Malatesta of Montefeltro,” *Humanist Educational Treatises*, trans. Craig W. Kallendorf (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2008), 48 and 59,

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁴⁴⁴ Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, “The Education of Boys,” *Humanist Educational Treatises*, 83.

Piccolomini, then, provides examples from Socrates via Cicero. Chaundler, on the other hand, does not try to equate secular with sacred literature (or secular and theological virtues). He is very careful to keep both separate and ultimately maintains that sacred authorities are preferable.

In the fourth letter found in the Trinity College MS, for instance, Chaundler incorporates several quotations from Cicero's *Post Reditum ad Quirites*:

As often as I am mindful that your friendship, kindness, and benevolence are always with me, most worthy bishop and most beloved father among human beings, so often the oration of Marcus Cicero flows into my mind, which having been honorably called back by the senate to his own city [of Rome], and [deciding] to return to organize a day in gratitude of the Roman people, he proceeded thus: "On the day when I vowed to sacrifice myself and my fortunes in the cause of your safety, tranquility, and union, I prayed of Jupiter Best and Greatest, and of the other immortal gods, that if ever I had placed consideration of my own interest before those of your welfare, I might be visited with eternal retribution, which I should deliberately have brought upon myself."⁴⁴⁵

*Amicitiae, beneficiorum, et tuae semper in me benevolentiae, dignissime Praesul et pater inter mortals amantissime, quotiens sum memor, totiens mentem illabitur ea Marci Ciceronis oratio, quam a senatu in suam urbem honorificenter revocatus, et reditus sui diem in gratis Romani populi componere statuens, ita aggressus est: "Quid precatus," inquit, "a Jove optimo ceterisque diis immortalibus sum, eo tempore cum me fortunasque meas pro vestra incolumitate, otio, concordiaque devovi, -- ut si meas res unquam vestrae saluti anteposuissem, sempiternam poenam sustinerem, mea voluntate susceptam."*⁴⁴⁶

After citing two more passages, Chaundler becomes concerned that Bekynton might not see the value of these passages from Cicero that might conflict with the authority of sacred scripture. He states:

But, O, most beloved Bishop, dearer to me than anyone, you may consider for what value are these things that I have introduced? Certainly I am not ignorant that I myself pray by the true and only God, having been taught by the authority of sacred scripture.

⁴⁴⁵ For Cicero's translation, I have used *Cicero: The Speeches*, trans. N.H. Watts (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1965): 101.

⁴⁴⁶ *Official Correspondence*, 1:313. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 49^r.

*Sed, O dilectissimi Praesul, quo nemo mihi carior, quorsum aestimas haec intromisi? Profecto quid ipse precatus sim ab Vero et Solo Deo, doctus sacrarum auctoritate scripturarum, non ignoro.*⁴⁴⁷

Nevertheless, Chaundler returns to his discussion of Cicero and observes the “honor, dignity, humanity, and benefice” (*honorem, dignitatem, humanitatem, beneficia*) that accompany life in the Senate. Chaundler respects Cicero’s self-sacrifice for the welfare of others, and he wishes to demonstrate such sacrifice on behalf of Bekynton. He states: “Like Cicero, it is more preferable that I choose by my own accord eternal punishment rather than prefer either my possessions or any human being to your wellbeing” (*Ergo potius cum cicerone mea voluntate sempiternam poenam eligere debeo, quam aut res meas aut cuiusquam mortalis salutem tuae antepone*re). Chaundler’s devotion to Bekynton is justified because Bekynton exhibits exemplary virtue and holiness (*sanctitas*) as demonstrated by his “gentleness of soul/mind, affability, benevolence, and devotion to the less fortunate” (*mansuetudo animi, affabilitas, benevolentia, pietas in miseros*). Chaundler then compares the civic-minded virtue of Cicero to the ecclesiastical virtue of Bekynton (*has mihi comparando virtutes*) and decides:

I prefer your love, most blessed bishop, in difficult times rather than to occupy some lordship. I entreat, therefore, your love, also through those holy Apostles to which we are entrusted, in return, in whose voice I pray: Do not permit, O Lord, your servant to be separated from you, etc.

*malim tuo amori, beatissime pontifex, in haerere quam nonnulla possidere dominia. Precor ergo dilectionem tuam, etiam per sacrum illum Apostolum cui nos commendamus, in cuius voce rursus oro, ne me permittas, domine, famulum tuum a te separari etc.*⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴⁷ *Official Correspondence*, 1:313. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 49^r.

⁴⁴⁸ *Official Correspondence*, 1:314. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 49^v.

Appropriately, this prayer is the first antiphon of the third nocturn of Matins for the Feast of St. Andrew.⁴⁴⁹ The Feast of St. Andrew held special significance for Chaundler, as Bridges observes, for not only was the vigil of St. Andrew the Apostle “an important festival for a native of Wells,” but it was also the day when Chaundler was inducted Warden of Winchester.⁴⁵⁰ Thus, although Chaundler demonstrates an interest in humanist texts, particularly the works of Cicero, he does not blur the boundaries between secular and sacred authorities or privilege secular over sacred virtues. If Chaundler had an agenda, it would be to reaffirm and safeguard the Wykehamist network (the *dilectissimi*) through these letters (and his literary works) as a way of negotiating the turbulent and unpredictable state of the university during the War of the Roses. Understanding the way Chaundler incorporates humanist texts and sacred authorities will be particularly important as we examine, in the next section, the performance of the *Libellus de laudibus duarum civitatum*.

The Medieval Performance of the *Libellus de Laudibus Duarum Civitatum*

In this section, I will argue that Chaundler’s debate dialogue, the *Libellus de laudibus*, is best characterized as a medieval performance of humanist texts. Because humanist texts and/or authorities seem to dominate the *Libellus de laudibus*, scholars generally view it (as well as Chaundler’s *Collocutiones*) as an example of proto-humanism. Wakelin, for instance, sees the debate dialogue as Chaundler’s attempt to provide a “theory of eloquence” through the *controversia* or “false controversy” between the cities of Bath and Wells.⁴⁵¹ In my view, however, the *Libellus de laudibus* provides an excellent example of how one could use humanist

⁴⁴⁹ *Breviarium Ad Usus Insignis Ecclesie Eboracensis*, ed. Stephen Willoughby Lawley, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: Blackwood & Sons, 1883), 92.

⁴⁵⁰ Bridges, “Thomas Chaundler,” 1:27.

⁴⁵¹ Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature*, 164-5.

text(s) for purposes other than promoting humanist ideology. I will argue specifically that although the *Libellus de laudibus* uses several humanist texts then in fashion (such as Leonardo Bruni's *Laudatio Florentiae Urbis* and Pier Decembrio's *de Laudibus Mediolanensium Urbis Panegyricus*), it de-politicizes and de-privileges them by also using medieval stylistic devices and conventions for the purpose of providing entertainment appropriate for the commemoration of Bekynton's episcopacy.⁴⁵² By arguing that this a medieval performance, I wish to emphasize that there are aspects to this performance that are a part of an unrecognized medieval tradition and are negated when labeled as "new" or, in this case, "proto-humanist."

The *Libellus de laudibus* may be Chaundler's earliest extant work, written while he was still a fellow at New College (and, potentially, revised later for its inclusion in the presentation manuscript). Although the *Libellus de laudibus* debates a "false controversy," the performance seems to be connected to an actual event, the commemoration of Bekynton's episcopacy. In one of the letters presented to Bekynton as part of the performance, Bekynton is congratulated on recently obtaining the bishopric: "For you illustriously engender all virtues... and now have been decorated with the bishop's mitre; we can celebrate and congratulate you most justly and deservedly not only by this event" (*tibi enim omnium virtutum genere clarissimo... iam pontificali mitra decorato, non ab re sed merito ac justissime congaudere ac congratulari possumus*).⁴⁵³ Bekynton was consecrated bishop of Bath and Wells on the 13th of October 1443, but he did not resign the privy seal (and therefore was not active in the diocese) until the 11th of

⁴⁵² Shirley Bridges was the first to discover these sources in "Thomas Chaundler," 1:135–8. David Rundle provides a full account of these references in "Of Republics and Tyrants: Aspects of Quattrocento Humanist Writings and their Reception in England, c. 1400–c. 1460" (unpublished DPhil dissertation, University of Oxford, 1997), 272.

⁴⁵³ Thomas Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus duarum civitatum*, ed. George Williams, *Somersetshire Archaeology and Natural History Society Proceedings* 19 (1873): 102. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 37^r. The following translations are my own.

February 1444.⁴⁵⁴ It seems possible that the *Libellus de laudibus* could have been performed either Christmas 1444 or 1445. There is also suggestive evidence that it was the latter year. On Tuesday, December 23rd, 1445, Chaundler, who was at that time a Regent Master and Senior Proctor, went with several other senior fellows (King, Hall, Baker, Wagett, Duke, Roth, Boule, and Wagard) and Bekynton to Wells Cathedral for Christmas festivities – and returned approximately four weeks later.⁴⁵⁵ The *Libellus de laudibus* would have provided suitable entertainment for such an extended stay over the holidays.

The conceit of the debate dialogue (which is performed over two days) is a quarrel between the cities of Bath and Wells over which city should be chosen for the episcopal seat. Of course, the episcopal seat had been located at Wells since the middle of the thirteenth century, so the quarrel was meant to be fictitious. Nevertheless, representatives have come (the patron saints, Peter of Bath and Andrew of Wells) to debate the merits of each city and why theirs should be preferred. In part one, the performance begins with a prologue or Argument, which addresses Bekynton directly:

...you have obtained the highest level of learning in the study of the arts, and since, principally, you are free for the holidays, for the trouble, we thought to put on display a worthwhile work, in praise of you and your cities, Wells and Bath... to be introduced on behalf of your fatherly presence.

*..atrium studiis apprime eruditus sis, et huiuscemodi potissime otis vaces quae sunt etiam negotiis praeferenda, opere pretium credidimus, in tuas laudes, urbium ac civitatum tuarum laudationes, Welliae et Bathoniae, sub nominibus Fontium ac Balneorum, coram tua paternitate introducere.*⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁴ *Register of Thomas Bekynton*, xii-xiii. Maxwell-Lyte states that during this period Bekynton “appointed his vicar in spiritualibus, explaining that he was so much occupied with public affairs as to be unable to repair his diocese,” xiii.

⁴⁵⁵ Bridges, “Thomas Chaundler,” 1:22. New College Muniment *Liber Senescalli Aulae*, (1445-6) XIII not XIV (as Bridges suggested) *Septimana* and they return four weeks later on the XVII *Septimana*.

⁴⁵⁶ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 99. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 36^r.

There is a further indication that the prologue was read (perhaps by Chaundler) as part of the performance of the debate dialogue. Several examples, as part of the prologue's direct address to Bekynton, use deictic language to indicate that the debate is about to happen. For instance, the prologue states that Bekynton may be surprised by the vigor and diligence of the thoughts expressed, "when you hear their praises and speeches...about to be spoken" (*quorum laudationes et orationes cum audieris...dicendi*).⁴⁵⁷ Like the performance of banns read before a morality or cycle play, the prologue provides an overview of the ensuing performance and its moral purpose: "But after you hear the arguments of the parties, it will be decreed [that these matters] be restored to peace and unity" (*Sed demum rationibus partium auditis, ad pacis unitatem reduci sententiabitur*).⁴⁵⁸ Moreover, Bekynton is representative of this unity (as bishop of both Bath and Wells), which is the justification for current celebration: "thus to celebrate that you are one as father and bishop just as you are one in name" (*ac uno sic te patre ac praesule sicut uno nomine congaudere*). The prologue ends with another festive direct address, "And in the meantime, most reverend father, enjoy" (*Ac tu interim gaude, Revendissime pater*)!⁴⁵⁹

Next, Andrew steps forward to address Bekynton, as stated in the rubric, "First, Andrew of Wells speaks to the bishop" (*Et primo Andreas de Fontibus domino Episcopo suo dicit*), and greets him with a litany of praise: "Father of illustrious virtue and much wisdom, whose fame and glory is proclaimed with exceptional praise throughout nearly the whole world..." (*Clarae virtutis ac multae prudentiae pater, cuius fama et Gloria per universum paene orbem peculiari quadam laude praedicantur*).⁴⁶⁰ Then, Andrew reads aloud a letter (also through direct address)

⁴⁵⁷ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 100. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 36^v.

⁴⁵⁸ See Bruce Moore, "The Banns in Medieval English Drama," *Leeds Studies in English* 24, (1993): 91-122.

Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 100. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 36^v.

⁴⁵⁹ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 100. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 36^v.

⁴⁶⁰ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 101. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 36^v.

from the residents (*incolis*) of Wells, who petition for Bekynton's favor. He concludes by offering gifts from the city (as stated in the letter):

We give to you two of the most beautiful jewels of all the world: a sevenfold golden candelabrum, according to the example that Moses demonstrated on the mountain, having been artificially made by the hand of the Hebrew Bezalel; additionally, we give to you a container of our water of life from Wells similar to the oil of nature, as its kindling is better with fire, which for that reason, we decided for it to be sent to you as it ignites for us the fire of your charity and increases every day.

*Duo totius mundi pulcherrima jocalia ad te transmittimus: candelabrum silicet aureum septiforme, secundum exemplar quod Moysi in monte monstratum est, per manus Beseleel Hebrei artificiosi fabricatum; phiolam insuper nostrorum fontium aquae vitae similis cum oleo naturae, ut ignibus fomentum praestet; quam ideo, tibi transmitti statuimus ut tuae erga nos caritatis ignis incalescat, ac indies augmentetur.*⁴⁶¹

Notably, the letter is dated December 23rd (the day Chaundler, Bekynton, and the fellows left for Wells Cathedral in 1445). The rubric then states that the letter, candelabrum, and container of water are given to Bekynton (*Epistola domino Pontifici transmissa cum aureo candelabro et phialis aquae vitae*).

Peter of Bath, then, follows this same pattern of address. The accompanying rubric states that Peter announces (*affert*) the letter to the bishop, "first honorably recounting the reason of his mission" (*primo honeste suae legationis causam aperiens*). Although Peter offers similar praise to Bekynton, he soon goes on the offensive, warning Bekynton about the true intentions of Wells: "Do not, therefore, do not, most excellent father, be persuaded by either their promises or their gifts" (*Noli, igitur, noli, praestantissime pater, vel eorum pollicitis aut muneribus flecti*).⁴⁶²

Peter has also brought gifts from the inhabitants of Bath, but these gifts are not "false or deceptive" (*falsae*) like the ones Andrew gave:

⁴⁶¹ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 102. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 37^r.

⁴⁶² Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 103. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 37^v.

But lest we seem to have written to you with empty hands and chosen [to persuade] your mind with a speech more than a work by us, we are sending myrrh, spices and other aromatic things of that nature and incense to your highness, which protects your body from corruption, infection, and pestilence by fumigating the air.

*At ne vacuis ad te scripsisse manibus, et sermone plusquam opere tuum nobis animum adoptasse videamur, mirram aloes, caeteraque illius naturae aromata ac timiamata sublimitati tuae transmittimus, quae corpus tuum a corruptione infectoque ac pestilente aere fumigata semper custodiant).*⁴⁶³

This letter is dated December 26th (i.e., the seventh of the kalends of January).

Yet, Peter has questioned Andrew's integrity and sincerity, and the formality of the preceding presentations breaks into an informal exchange of insults. Andrew's affective response is described in the rubric: "Andrew, speaking with difficulty to the ambassador Peter, caustically says [the following] against him" (*Andreas Petri legationem, contra eum mordaciter dicit*).⁴⁶⁴ Andrew states:

I know you, Peter, to be not only the worst of all men but also a great adversary, being inflamed with malice, seething with spite, so that you may not cease to bite us and all the inhabitants of our Wells with your snarling teeth.

*Scio, Petre, scio omnium te virorum pessimum, tanta adversum nos malitia calentem, tanta malignitate efferbuisse, ut nos omnesque nostrorum Fontium incolas canino dente non unquam mordere cesses.*⁴⁶⁵

And then Andrew gets really personal:

I wonder if you are a sensible man, so disposed to melancholy; you have brought out your gray hairs by this misery, so that, with your life already in decline, you try to intoxicate yourself, cut short, and end your life by the poison of envy and resentment. . . . Why, if you are in any way an adversary to me it is the way that you wish to nosily belch your drunken breath, as it soon may desire to do so in the present hour. I do not altogether fear you.

Miror te hominem prudentem, tanto senio constitutum, canos tuos in hanc miseriam deduxisse, ut declinantem vitam tuam jam sero iracundiae ac invidiae veneno apocupare, ac te ipsum intoxicare, et statum tibi terminare

⁴⁶³ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 104. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 38^r.

⁴⁶⁴ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 104. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 38^r.

⁴⁶⁵ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 104. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 38^r.

*nitatis....Quamobrem si quicquam adversum me crapulosus spiritus tuus eructare voluerit, ut id mox in horum praesentia fiat exopto. Ego te omnino non timeo.*⁴⁶⁶

The rubric then states, “Since the quarrel has crossed the line, Peter wishes to dispute under an impartial judge” (*Petrus ut dirimat lis, sub aequo Iudice optat contendere*).⁴⁶⁷ But, Peter retorts with another barb before making the request: “I am truly astonished by you, Andrew. You cast that little remark of spite and you wish me to cast one back; all mouths testify that you and your nature are corrupt” (*Admiror sane te, Andrea, illam mihi tuae invidiae notulam obicere, ac in me retorquere velle, qua te et tuam naturam semper fuisse infectam omnium ora testantur*).⁴⁶⁸ The two agree to have Daniel serve as judge, since he is a “most just man, in whose heart the treasures of divine judgment have been concealed, and therefore [called] by the Hebrew name the Justice of God” (*hominum justissime, in cuius pectore divinorum judiciorum thesauri recondite sunt, et propterea Hebreo nomine Iudicium Dei*). Daniel states, “how pleasing and acceptable it will be to restore you to unity and peace” (*quam gratum ac acceptum erit vos ad unitatem et pacem reducere*) and sets a day, the 29th of December (the fourth kalends of January), for the formal debate. He then addresses the audience: “In the meantime, be merry and applaud” (*Vos interim gaudete ac plaudite*).⁴⁶⁹

In the first part of the *Libellus de laudibus*, there is nothing particularly humanist about the structure or content of the debate dialogue with the exception of an excerpt from the opening of Decembrio’s *de Laudibus Mediolanensium Urbis Panegyricus*, “Eloquence is a wonderful thing indeed...” (*Mira equidem illa res est eloquentia*), used in the prologue.⁴⁷⁰ As we will see below, the bricolage of such speeches, with whole cloth borrowings from Bruni and Decembrio,

⁴⁶⁶ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 104. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 38^r-38^v.

⁴⁶⁷ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 104. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 38^v.

⁴⁶⁸ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 104-5. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 38^v.

⁴⁶⁹ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 105. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 38^v.

⁴⁷⁰ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 100. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 36^v.

is not constructed according to their humanist ideological content. The structure of the *Libellus de laudibus*, in the main, resembles the early medieval Latin debate dialogue traditions of the *conflictus* and *altercatio*, which, as Emma Cayley observes, argue the “relative merits” of opposing concepts like “winter and summer” or “body and soul” and influenced many subsequent literary forms of debate.⁴⁷¹ When these literary dialogues are “mediated by a third agent” (as happens in the *Libellus de laudibus*), Cayley contends, they become performative and “can only be experienced via a performance, either [through] reading or hearing.”⁴⁷²

We should not be misled by humanist buzzwords like “*controversia*” or the use of invective by the two disputants as evidence of humanist innovation. The *controversia* and “flyting” (or a contest of insults) genres, for instance, are a part of medieval pedagogy as early as the eleventh century in Italy, as exemplified (and performed) in Anselm of Besate’s *Rhetorimachia* (c. 1048). According to Otter, the *Rhetorimachia* is a textbook, which is meant to supplement the rhetorical pseudo-Ciceronian works, *De Inventione* and *Ad Herennium*, by providing “practical examples, *quaestiones* for discussion, and a demonstration of how to construct a Ciceronian forensic speech.”⁴⁷³ The textbook itself is “framed as an academic performance,” in order to present the rhetorical “advanced school exercise,” *declamatio* and “what Anselm calls a *controversia*, an exercise in ad-hominem polemics; a game of ritual insult and attack, not unlike a medieval ‘flyting.’”⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷¹ Emma Cayley, *Debate and Dialogue: Alain Chartier in his Cultural Context* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 32. She cites Pseudo-Alcuin’s ninth-century *Conflictus veris et hiemis* (Contention between summer and winter) as an early model for late twelfth-century poems such as *Altercatio hiemis et aestatis* (Altercation of winter and summer). The *Libellus* also resembles the French medieval *débat* in the form of a *dit*, which presents “an aesthetic discontinuity, a first-person enunciation spoken by a *clerc-écrivain* figure (the narrator), and a didactic aim,” 29.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*

⁴⁷³ Monika Otter, “*Scurrilitas*: Sex, magic, and the performance of fictionality in Anselm of Besate’s *Rhetorimachia*,” *Aspects of the Performative in Medieval Culture*, eds. Manuele Gagnolati and Almut Suerbaum (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 105.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 107. The target of Anselm’s invective is Roitland, a fellow student in northern Italy. Their debates run the gamut from black magic to sexual prowess. After winning one argument, Anselm chastises Roitland, “O what a

Verse competitions at grammar schools, debates on the “principles of grammar,” and examples of “flyting” had been a part of medieval pedagogical practices in England since at least the twelfth century, as described by contemporary William Fitzstephen:

Boys from different schools compete in verse...some employ the well-established loquacity of the trivium in epigrams, rhythms and meters... they excoriate their fellows freely (though under concealed names); they hurl abuse and taunts; with Socratic witticisms they touch on the faults of their peers or even of their superiors.⁴⁷⁵

These competitions were also popular at Oxford in the thirteenth century, both as “flytings” and more serious debates. In the mid-thirteenth century, Henry of Avranches, for instance, engaged in a “staged contest” with John Bordo and Peter Siler before Michael, bishop of Angers.

According to A.G. Rigg, the contest involved “charges of a hunched back, association with jesters, blindness, drunkenness, and unsociability,” with a liberal use of word-play: “You’re only good at lies but not for barrel-ties...you’ll bend, or have to clean the floor of the latrine.”⁴⁷⁶

After the publication of Aristotle’s *De generatione et corruptione*, Henry of Avranches, who was, perhaps, best known for his “great flyting” with Michael of Cornwall (c. 1254-5), participated in a verse competition at Oxford that was “heard before a university audience, from whom Henry pleads for a fair hearing”:

I humbly beg this court on bended knee
That you maintain impartiality.
Your skill in law is peerless,
So favour-free and fearless,
Defer to neither part
But always stand apart.⁴⁷⁷

good orator I am! I have cut down his speech from all sides! The vices you charged me with, rhetorical skill doubly repelled them, and the crimes you tried to pin on me, Anselmian eloquence doubly thwarted them,” 118. As Carol Cochran has demonstrated, flyting is also used extensively in the cycle plays, and perhaps most poignantly, in Chester’s pageant, *Slaughter of the Innocents* in “Flyting in the Mystery Plays,” *Theatre Journal* 31.2 (1979): 186-197.

⁴⁷⁵ A.G. Rigg, *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature:1066-1422* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992), 189.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 188-9.

Henry wanted this competition to be regarded as a serious debate, and so, like Peter in the *Libellus de laudibus*, he makes an appeal for an impartial judge to prevent the debate from devolving into mere “flyting.” As we will see later in the *Libellus de laudibus*, it can be difficult to maintain a serious “*controversia*” without moments of “flyting.” Additionally, it is important to note that, in this verse competition, Henry debates Aristotle’s *de generatione et corruptione* soon after it was discovered, when it was ripe for the entertainment of a university audience. We find the same kind of enthusiasm for the humanist texts by Bruni and Decembrio in the second part of the *Libellus de laudibus*. Yet, these texts are not valued for the ideology content, but rather for their “ornate words” (*verbis ornata*).

The second part of the debate dialogue begins the debate proper (presumably a day or so later), as indicated in the rubric, “Having arrived on the predetermined day, Daniel requests the orators to speak, first Andrew” (*Adveniente praefixo die, jubet Daniel oratores dicere; primo Andream*). Before Andrew begins, however, Daniel reminds the audience of the reason for having the debate:

Recently, most beloved men, there has risen a quarrel and dispute between the most sharp and clever orators, Andrew of Wells and Peter of Bath, preeminently presiding over their cities, namely Wells and Bath, about which [city] may be preferable, and from the Bishop’s standpoint, may be more pleasing and agreeable for his honorable seat.

*Nuper, carissimi viri, inter acutissimos et ingeniosissimos oratores, Andream de Fontibus ac Petrum de Balneis, de praeeminentia ac praesidentia civitatum suarum, Fontium silicet ac Balnearum, lis atque controversia orta est; quae ex illis conspectui sui Antistitis gratior ac placentior, suisque honoribus sedes aptior sit.*⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁸ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 106. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 38^v-39^r.

Daniel makes sure the audience is attentive and ready for the speeches: “They are both present and wish that you pay attention” (*Assunt utrique ac quid velint animadvertite*). He then calls on Andrew to begin. The *Libellus de laudibus* now uses the humanist texts to their full advantage. Andrew’s speech begins with the same opening line as Bruni’s *Laudatio Florentiae Urbis* (substituting Wells for Florence): “Would that God immortal give me eloquence worthy of the city of Wells, about which I am to speak, or at least equal to my zeal and desire on her behalf” (*Vellum mihi a Deo immortalis datum esset ut vel praeclarae Fontium urbi de qua dicturus sum parem eloquentiam praestare possem, vel certe meo erga illam studio meaeque voluntati*).⁴⁷⁹

Chaundler then takes sections from Bruni’s description of Florence, focusing specifically on its ideal location, its temperate climate, and superior inhabitants: “Just as these citizens surpass to a greater extent all other men in their natural genius, prudence, elegance, and magnificence, so the city has surpassed all other cities in its prudent site and its splendor, architecture, and cleanliness” (*Nam quemadmodum ipsi cives naturali quodam ingenio, prudentia, eloquentia, et magnificentia, ceteris hominibus plurimum praestant, sic et urbs prudentissime sita ceteras omnes urbes splendore, ornatu, ac munditia superat*).⁴⁸⁰

As Rundle has shown, the political aspects or “*raison d’être*” of Bruni’s *Laudatio* and Decembrio’s *Panegyricus*, namely the “constitution and politics of the author’s home town,” are largely absent from the *Libellus de laudibus*.⁴⁸¹ Rundle maintains that there are still humanist virtues found in the *Libellus de laudibus*, such as “justice, *urbanitas*, and (most crucially) unity” that are representative of “communal ideals” or the humanist “civic identity.”⁴⁸² I would argue

⁴⁷⁹ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 106. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 39^r. For the translation of Bruni’s *Laudatio*, I have used (with minor adaptations) Benjamin G. Kohl’s translation from *The Earthy Republic*, eds. Benjamin G. Kohl and Ronald G. Witt (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991): 135-175.

⁴⁸⁰ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 107. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 39^v.

⁴⁸¹ Rundle, “Humanist Eloquence,” 74.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, 74-5.

that although there is a discussion of “communal ideals,” they do not constitute a re-definition of the “city-state,” but rather a preservation of the existing social order. Toward the end of his speech, Andrew states, “There is no place on earth where there is greater justice open equally to everyone” (*nec locus ullus est in terris in quo jus magis aequum sit omnibus*).⁴⁸³ Chaundler does not connect justice to the larger political mechanisms of republicanism (exemplified by the Florentine city-states), where equality and justice necessitate the absence of tyrannical forms of governance. Justice is viewed in the abstract.

Chaundler interrupts and de-privileges these “eloquent descriptions” taken from the humanist texts with various insults and/or biblical references. Half way through his speech, for instance, Andrew says, (still quoting Bruni): “Everything is striking and adorned with exceptional beauty. But one may better know these things by comparison rather than by themselves alone” (*Omnia conspicua sunt ac egregia pulchritudine ornata. Sed ea melius ex comparatione aliarum quam ex seipsis licet cognoscere*). After providing a few examples to the contrary from Bruni, he goes “off script”:

Peter, just as in your stinking and sulfurous village of Bath, where nothing can be thought of as more foul; where if there were a thousand king’s men, if there were inexhaustible riches, if there were an unlimited multitude of people, I would still hold that most foul city in contempt, nor will I ever hold it in esteem.

*Quemadmodum, Petre, in illa tua foetida ac sulphurea villa de Balneis, qua re nihil foedius excogitari potest; ubi si mille essent regiae, si inexhaustae divitiae, si infinita populi multitudo, contemnam tamen foetidissimam urbem illam, nec ullius unquam existimabo.*⁴⁸⁴

Toward the end of his speech, Andrew again diverges from Bruni and makes a conjugal analogy for the selection of the location for the episcopal seat. The bishop is noble and requires a place of nobility. He will therefore select a bride (the location for the episcopal seat) befitting his

⁴⁸³ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 109. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 40^v.

⁴⁸⁴ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 108. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 40^r.

station, and one who is adorned with countless jewels (*tantis ac tot ornatam monilibus*). Andrew describes the village of Bath as “truly Babylonia before her shame” (*verius Babiloniam prae confusione*) and unworthy as a bride for the bishop. He then taunts Peter: “What do you plead, wretched Babylonia, hateful slave girl, if your lord enters into marriage with a well-adorned wife because of her unimpeded virtue and worthy reputation?” (*Quid ergo causaris, misera Babilonia, invida ancilla, si cum ornata sponsa, libera sua virtute et auctoritate digna, contrahat dominus tuus*).⁴⁸⁵ Andrew continues, rather deftly, with Bruni to illustrate why Wells makes a better bride: “Therefore, what ornament does this city lack? Or what may be found wanting to prevent it from receiving the highest praise?” (*Quo, putas, ornamento haec civitas caret? Aut quid sibi ad summam laudem atque amplitudinem deest?*)⁴⁸⁶ Upon Andrew’s concluding, Daniel praises his speech for its cleverness, particularly the last part (*ingeniosum decet perorasti*).

Next, Peter delivers his oration in praise of Bath and argues that his city should be chosen as the episcopal seat since “the culture and religious observance is more devout, the status of the republic more favorable, the power and wealth will be more abundant; it is a place where the air is healthier, and [a place] that is safer from the attacks of enemies (*cultus ac religio devotior, ubi status reipublicae felicior, ubi potentia et opulentia fuerit affluentior, locus ac aer salubrior, ac ab hostium impugnationibus tutior*).⁴⁸⁷ Peter’s oration draws mostly from Decembrio’s *Panegyricus* and Bruni’s *Laudatio*. Yet, as I have recently discovered, the oration contains an additional unacknowledged humanist source – several key parts of a letter from Lorenzo Valla to

⁴⁸⁵ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 110. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fols. 40^v-41^r.

⁴⁸⁶ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 110. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 41^r.

⁴⁸⁷ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 113-4. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 42^v.

Decembrio (c. 1435) regarding Bruni's *Laudatio*.⁴⁸⁸ This letter is incorporated in the opening of Peter's speech:

With much indignation, Andrew, I speak of your praises, which you bestow, full of frivolity (or inconsistency) and indolence, on the fields and unfortified village of Wells. Thus you speak against our illustrious city of Bath as if you thought no one would respond, even though no one would agree with your absurdities. For which, I have observed not only your frivolousness, but also the incredible opinion that you have of yourself.

*Indigner nimis tui laudes tuas, Andrea, quas campestri et immunitae villulae de Fontibus tribuis plenam levitatis ac supinitatis. Ita loqueris contra praeclaram urbem nostram de Balneis ac si neminem responsurum atque adeo neminem non assensurum tuis ineptiis putares. In quo libet videre tuam non modo levitatem, sed incredibilem de te ipso opinionem.*⁴⁸⁹

Chandler's use of Valla's letter is a suitable way to begin Peter's oration. Andrew's speech is derived mostly from Bruni's *Laudatio*. Valla's letter was written to encourage Decembrio to write a defense of Milan in response to Bruni. Decembrio accepted the charge and wrote *de Laudibus Mediolanensium Urbis Panegyricus*.⁴⁹⁰ Yet, for our purposes, Valla's critique of Bruni also de-privileges both the style and authority of Bruni's text. Quoting the latter part of Valla's letter (but in the second person singular), Peter continues, saying, "And your style itself is lax and fluid, deprived of vigor, lacking dignity and talent" (*At ipse quoque stilus tuus latus est ac fluens, enervates, ac gravitate ac ingenio carens*).⁴⁹¹ In the letter, the sentence continues with a specific critique of Bruni's Latin: "and in many places speaking with the most insufficient Latin,

⁴⁸⁸ "Laurentius Valla Romanus orator Petro Candido," *Studi sul Panormita e sul Valla*, eds. Luciano Barozzi and Remigio Sabbadini (Florence, 1891), 75. The letter begins: *Perlegi Laudationem Florentiae Leonardi Arretini plenam levitatis ac supinitatis, ut optime hesterno vesperi dixisse videar: ita loquitur ac si neminem responsurum atque adeo neminem non assensurum suis ineptiis putaret. In quo licet videre hominis non modo summam levitatem sed incredibilem de se ipso opinionem.* And later: *Atque ipse quoque stilus latus est et fluens et enervates et gravitate et ingenio carens multisque in locis minime latine, ne dicam corrupte, loquens... Valet et hominem hunc levem tua gravitate castiga, et somnolentum tuis virgilis excita et hebetem tuo acumine ac pugione confode et prosterne.*

⁴⁸⁹ Chandler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 111. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 41^r.

⁴⁹⁰ See James Hankins, "Rhetoric, History, and Ideology: The Civic Panegyrics of Leonardo Bruni," in *Renaissance Civic Humanism: Reflections and Reappraisals*, ed. James Hankins (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000), 150.

⁴⁹¹ Chandler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 111. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 41^r.

not to say corruptly” (*multisque in locis minime latine, ne dicam corrupte, loquens*).⁴⁹²

Chaundler would not have assumed, therefore, that just because Bruni’s *Laudatio* and Decembrio’s *Panegyricus* were humanist texts, they were *de facto* representative of a Latin style to be emulated and preferred. The letter indicates that Valla objected to not just the content, but also the style of the *Laudatio*. Peter then takes up Valla’s concluding charge from the *conclusio* of the letter: “But I will correct this man’s frivolity with my gravity and I will overthrow his blunt and sleep-inducing [speech] with my sharpness (or cunning) and dagger-like [words]” (*Sed hominem hunc levem mea gravitate castigabo, et somnolentum ac hebetem meo acumine ac pugione prosternam*).⁴⁹³ Peter proceeds by distinguishing his presentational style from Andrew’s: “To begin, therefore, I wish to praise the illustrious city of Bath with great prudence, to make nothing showy or threatening, the way he has spoken, to seek ostentation” (*Principio quidem, igitur, magnae prudentiae existimo ad laudandam inclitam urbera de Balneis, nihil ad ostentationem facere, nec periculosam, ut idem ait, jactantiam sequi*).⁴⁹⁴

After the formal debate is over (and Andrew receives an “extra turn”), Daniel begins his oration and judgment of the proceedings with a line similar to the one used in the prologue, “Eloquence is a rather extraordinary thing indeed” (*Admiranda nimis mehercule res est eloquentia*).⁴⁹⁵ He then quotes a passage from Cicero’s *De Natura deorum*, illustrating the utility of eloquence:

⁴⁹² Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 111. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 41^r.

⁴⁹³ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 111. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fols. 41^r-41^v.

⁴⁹⁴ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 111. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 41^v.

⁴⁹⁵ In his “extra turn,” Andrew “attacks” (*impugnat*) Peter for his emotional response: “Therefore Peter, cease and abandon your rage and allow yourself for the time being to put forth a rational way of behaving” (*Desine igitur, Petre, ac derelinque furorem tuum; ac jam tandem rationi victum te submitte*). Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 117. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 44^r. Andrew also appears to “win” the debate as stated in the rubric following this speech, “Daniel is awed by the eloquence of the oration, and decrees that he prefers Wells, and appropriately his lordship should be called the Bishop of Wells” (*Admiratur Daniel eloquentias oratorum, sententiatque praeferendos esse Fontes, ac digne suum praesulem appellari debere Wellensem Pontificem*). Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 117. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 44^r. Andrew may have received

...which first made it possible for us to learn things we don't know and teach things we do. With it we are drawn together, we rally the afflicted, console the terrified, and lead them from fear, we restrain the warlike, we quench the lust and anger; and through it we are joined together in a society of right, law, and cities, when it removes us from a poor and beastly life.

*...quae primum efficit ut et ea quae ignoramus discere, ac ea quae scimus alios docere possimus. Cum eadem coartamur, persuademus affictos, consolamur perterritos, a timore deducimus, gestientes comprimimus, cupiditates iracundiasque restinguimus; ac per eam juris, legum, urbium societate conjungimur, cum nos ab inani et fera vita segregarit.*⁴⁹⁶

Wakelin argues that this passage is representative of Chaundler's main purpose for the debate dialogue, which is to "discuss and to prove nebulous theories of eloquence as the unifier of society."⁴⁹⁷ Yet, after citing this passage, Daniel discusses eloquence in relationship to religion and institutional patronage: "If a most learned and eloquent man earns patronage by us, we are generally excited by the most attractive ornate words and eloquence thus [used] for the sake of religion" (*si doctorum hominum ac eloquentissimorum patrociniū nobis demeretur; quorum suavissimis verbis ornataque facundia sic ad religionem plerumque excitamur*). This may seem reminiscent of Cole's "ecclesiastical humanism;" however, it is not. Eloquence is not purposed in the promotion of secular values. Daniel maintains that although Andrew and Peter have discussed their two cities eloquently, their orations are, nevertheless, inadequate:

And what remains except something very much to be lamented; you have glorified such splendid and ornate cities and nearly all virtue, only for that door of virtues and princess, Charity, to be foresaken? Without which even the best of morals and virtues are insufficient or seem to contribute nothing: it appears more clearly from the testimony of the saints and immortal God and our dear teacher of the Gentiles, Apostle Paul, when he says the same: "If I speak with the language of man and angels, but do not have charity, I become just like the sounding brass

an "extra turn" because the episcopal seat in actuality resides in Wells and therefore, by necessity, he must win the debate. However, Daniel's concluding speech demonstrates the "true" purpose of the *Libellus de laudibus*.

⁴⁹⁶ I have used a translation of this passage found in Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Natura deorum: Academica*, ed. and trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1933), 266-7. Wakelin was the first to recognize and discuss Cicero's *De Natura deorum* as a source for this passage in *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature*, 164.

⁴⁹⁷ Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature*, 164-5.

or the clanging cymbals.” And others: “But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection.” From this, and so it is written in the most blessed Job: “I erected bars and doors, and I said: You shall come to this point, and shall go no further, and here you shall break your swelling waves.” How do we [break] through these bars unless we accept the strength of charity?

Et quid superest nisi vehementer dolendum esse tam splendorum ac ornatas urbes, ac omni paene virtute decoras, sola illa virtutum janua et principissa, Caritate, destitui? sine qua, etiam optima morum ac virtutum genera parum aut nihil conferre videntur: quod ex testimonio Sancti illius ac immortalis Deo cari doctoris nostrarum gentium Pauli Apostolico luculentius apparet, cum dicat idem: “Si linguis hominum loquar ac angelorum, caritatem autem non habeam, factus sum, velut aes sonans, aut cymbalum tinniens” et alibi “Super omnia, autem haec caritatem habentes, quae est vinculum perfectionis.” De hac itaque scribitur in sanctissimo illo Job: “Posui vectem et ostia, et dixi, Hucusque venies, ac non procedes amplius; hic confringes tumentes fluctus tuos.” Quid hic per vectem nisi robur accipimus caritatis?⁴⁹⁸

Daniel’s final summation becomes a homily on the importance of charity. He provides the exemplum of Mary and Martha to differentiate the kinds of charity that the united bishopric of Bath and Wells offers. Although Mary and Martha/Bath and Wells express their love in different ways to Christ/Bekynton, they are “both are necessary in the temple of the Lord” (*Utraque enim in temple Domini necessaria est*).⁴⁹⁹ Concluding with a homily would seem to be a medieval trait, yet there are humanist examples. David Marsh discusses how humanists took the Augustinian form of debate in which “a Christian authority pronounces sentence on a two-part classical debate” (as exemplified in Augustine’s dialogue, *Contra Academicos*), and modified it through Ciceronian rhetorical styles of debate, such as *in utramque partem* (arguing both sides).⁵⁰⁰ Marsh differentiates Poggio Bracciolini’s humanist debate dialogue, *De avaritia* (c. 1428), for instance, which debates the topic of avarice and ends with a homily, from Augustine’s dialogue, *Contra Academicos*, through their use of authorities. Although Poggio uses a structure

⁴⁹⁸ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 119. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 45^r. The biblical passages are 1 Corinthians 13:1, Colossians 3:14, and Job 38: 10-11, respectively.

⁴⁹⁹ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 119-20. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 45^r-45^v.

⁵⁰⁰ David Marsh, *The Quattrocento Dialogue* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1980), 43.

similar to Augustine's, he follows a Ciceronian model of debate where "classical and Christian authorities are evaluated in the same manner" by reducing "the authority of Scripture to a secular level of judgment."⁵⁰¹ Poggio's use of patristic authorities is not, Marsh argues, "theological for he wishes to encourage the humanists to translate Chrysostom into eloquent Latin."⁵⁰² As we have seen, Chaundler also follows the Augustinian form of debate, but he does not view secular authorities, such as Cicero, as comparable to the authority of Scripture. And while Chaundler recognizes how eloquence can be beneficial to ecclesiastical institutions, he very clearly states that without the theological virtue of charity, eloquence is meaningless.

Chaundler's preference for sacred over secular authorities is represented visually through the historiated initial (as part of the letter "A" for *admiranda*) that begins Daniel's oration (see **Figure 2**). The initial presents the Annunciation scene with the angel Gabriel and Mary, mother of Jesus. The banderoles function as "speech-banners" for the dialogic exchange in Luke 1:28-38, beginning with Gabriel's initial greeting, "Hail" (*Ave*) and Mary's final proclamation, "Behold the handmaiden" (*Ecce Ancilla*).⁵⁰³ Although the text of Daniel's speech proclaims, "Eloquence is a rather extraordinary thing indeed" (*Admiranda nimis mehercule res est eloquentia*), the initial proclaims, with biblical sovereignty, Mary's extraordinary conception of Christ.⁵⁰⁴ Thus, the sacred authority is foregrounded and puts the secular authority of Cicero into "perspective."

It would be interesting to consider how the original performance of the *Libellus de laudibus* may have been different from the version included in the Trinity College MS. It is

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., 49-50.

⁵⁰² Ibid., 48.

⁵⁰³ For a helpful discussion of banderoles' function as "speech-banners" and "text banners" see Susanne Wittekind, "Von Schriftband zum Spruchband. Zum Funktionswandel von Spruchbandern in Illustrationen biblischer Stoffe," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 30 (1996): 343-367 and plates XVIII-XXIII. I am grateful to Pamela Sheingorn for her translation of this article.

⁵⁰⁴ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 117. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 44r.

quite possible that the original contained a greater degree of playfulness and additional moments of “flyting.” When it was compiled later, during a period of intense political instability, the *controversia* would have taken on new meaning, as stated by Daniel, “to restore peace and unity” (*unitatem et pacem reducere*).⁵⁰⁵ This interpretation is consistent with Chaundler’s non-partisan attitude and commitment to civic peace. However, ultimately peace and unity of the two cities of Bath and Wells is restored through charity (and witnessed through its relationship to Bekynton). Daniel unites the two cities by decreeing in the end: “Thus you ought to be bound with the bond of unity of love and charity” (*ita unitate dilectionis ac caritatis vincula astringe, debetis*).⁵⁰⁶ Like Andrew’s gift from Wells at the beginning of the *Libellus de laudibus*, Bekynton is the “water of life from Wells” (*fontium aquae vitae*) and like the “oil of nature...ignites for us the fire of your charity and increases every day” (*oleo naturae ...caritatis ignis incalescat ac indies augmentetur*).⁵⁰⁷ It is my contention that the theme of charity runs throughout the entire manuscript and that each text serves as a performance of charity.

In this chapter, I have shown why using terms like “proto-humanist” or “ecclesiastical humanism” can be detrimental to Chaundler’s works because they imply that medieval forms of rhetoric or “florid” styles of expression are not capable of performance. If an author’s or a text’s relationship to ancient authorities, engagement in civic responsibilities, and determination of new “canons of taste” define humanism, then neither Chaundler nor his works would appear to be humanist. He prefers sacred to ancient authorities, ecclesiastical to civic responsibilities, and “florid” to humanist forms of expression.

The next chapter will explore how epistolary performance emerges from the ornamentations and rhetorical colors (figures of diction and thought) of the “florid” style taught

⁵⁰⁵ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 105. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 38^v.

⁵⁰⁶ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 121. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 46^r.

⁵⁰⁷ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus*, 102. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 37^r.

at Oxford. Just as the historiated initial communicates the primacy of sacred authority, epistolary performance is often dependent upon sacred authorities to ensure, for instance, that the recreation of the students is (what the statutes define as) “honest solace.” Moreover, as part of Christmas celebrations, faculty and students at Oxford University used the epistolary form and the “florid” style to create what can rightly be called the first expressions of university drama and performance.



Figure 2 Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 44^r
(by permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge)

Chapter 4

Exchanging Performative Words: Epistolary Performance, Christmas Kings, and University Drama In Late Medieval England

One of the reasons scholars view the texts within the Chaundler MSS as proto-humanist rather than medieval is that they do not find evidence of a performance tradition at the medieval universities that would have enabled or supported their development. Therefore, scholars maintain that Chaundler's works must reflect a new, albeit inferior, attempt to imitate the style (Italian humanism) and pedagogy ("new learning") that would eventually allow university performance to flourish in the Tudor period. In this chapter, I will provide new evidence about the rarely acknowledged medieval Christmas King tradition at Oxford (see **Appendix 2**) that influenced the composition of *Liber Apologeticus*, *Libellus de laudibus*, *Collocutiones* and *Allocutiones* in the Chaundler MSS and places these texts within a medieval university context and tradition of performance.

At least a century before the Tudor period, the halls of Oxford's secular and monastic colleges as well as those established for legists (i.e., those studying civil law), provided an annual venue during the Christmas season for the performance of "florid" letters, satires, sermons, speeches, and dialogues. On behalf of the Christmas King (Princes, Lords, Abbots, *rex fabarum* and the like)⁵⁰⁸, students and/or masters from the higher faculties (such as theology and law) wrote and performed allegorical and satirical forms of entertainment that explored the underpinnings of "good governance." This "*thema*" or "topic" was examined within the context of biblical and secular kingship as well the personal governance or moral conduct of the students,

⁵⁰⁸ I will use "Christmas King" as an umbrella term for these different appellations – though *rex fabarum* may have been used first.

who must be weary of “titillation from pleasure” (*titillatoria voluptate*).⁵⁰⁹ Yet, under the aegis of the Christmas King, students were also able to experiment with precepts of the *forma* (or requirements of the university curriculum) and the mechanisms of preferment within the royal and ecclesiastical program for advancement. I will discuss the earliest known evidence of this tradition, its purpose, and performance context.

This chapter will further examine how the study and application of the *ars dictaminis* or art of letter writing provides an important medieval pedagogical link to both the Christmas King tradition and the Chaundler MSS. My purpose is to demonstrate that the texts within the Chaundler MSS are not proto-humanist, but firmly representative of a medieval “florid” style of rhetoric and pedagogy as demonstrated through the epistolary performances of the Christmas King and *ars dictaminis* tradition.

Defining Epistolary Performance and the *Ars Dictaminis* Tradition

When examining the performance potential of the *ars dictaminis* on the tradition of university drama, it must be acknowledged that *ars dictaminis*, per se, was not formally taught as part of the university curriculum. Students would have been exposed to various treatises on letter writing that were used as models of prose composition for instruction in grammar and rhetoric. Instruction in *ars dictaminis* for the specific purpose of learning how to compose letters, however, was a part of the curriculum for business instruction and considered (from at least the fourteenth century) as external to the university curriculum. The Oxford University statutes of 1432, for instance, suggest that, although this type of instruction on *dictamen* was still

⁵⁰⁹ H. H. Henson, “Letters Relating to Oxford in the 14th Century from Originals in the Public Record Office and British Museum,” *Collectanea First Series*, ed., C.R.L. Fletcher *Oxford Historical Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885), 46. This letter is from a series of three in All Souls College MS 182 (which will be discussed in greater detail below).

under the jurisdiction of university grammar masters, as were “the art of writing or composing or speaking French, or of composing charters or other such-like scripts, or of holding lay courts, or the English method of pleading,” it was taught as part of the curriculum that would prepare students for careers in business administration.⁵¹⁰ Two different types of instruction produced two different styles of letter writing. Grammar masters or instructors who used letters as models of prose composition at Oxford, for instance, emphasized rhetorical stylistics that could be found in contemporary prose and verse literature. Business *dictatores*, on the other hand, preferred a sparse structure (with little rhetorical flourish), resembling the format of legal documents such as deeds and testaments.⁵¹¹ These pedagogical and stylistic differences will be important a bit later.

First, I need to establish what will be presented as evidence of epistolary performance, since there are many different performative elements found within the discursive and oral practices of medieval epistolography. Therefore, I will primarily focus on those epistolary examples that employ allegorical or fictional characters and scenarios to enact what is being petitioned or in some cases mandated. These allegorical examples differ from treatises that use allegorical letters principally to expound the precepts of grammar (such as *Regina sedens Rhetorica* or the allegorical letter found within Simon O’s *Summa dictandi*). I maintain that medieval epistolography is inherently performative because letters in the Middle Ages were intended to be read aloud in public in the form of direct address. By the early twelfth century, the art of letter writing was codified through the assimilation of a Ciceronian model of oration,

⁵¹⁰ Martin Camargo, “If You Can’t Join Them, Beat Them; or, When Grammar Met Business Writing (in Fifteenth-Century Oxford)” in *Letter-Writing Manuals and Instruction from Antiquity to the Present*, eds. Carol Poster and Linda Mitchell (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 69. For Latin a edition of the statutes, see *Statuta Antiqua Universitatis Oxoniensis*, ed. Strickland Gibson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), especially 240.25-8.

⁵¹¹ Camargo, “If You Can’t Join Them,” 73-4.

which provided the basic structure of a letter (employing five instead of six parts).⁵¹² Indeed, many *dictatores* in their treatises or textbooks, the *artes dictandi*,⁵¹³ describe letters as written orations that serve a similar performative purpose.⁵¹⁴ Similarly, the *cursus* or “rhythmical patterns” that resemble the late Antique *clausulae* of Cicero’s speeches were added to “make the prose sound pleasing when spoken.”⁵¹⁵

For the purposes of this study, the difference between a performative act and a performed act lies in the constitutive aspect of its discourse. To take Geoffrey Vinsauf’s *Poetria nova* (a seminal *ars poetriae* or treatise on the art of poetry) as an example, one of the reasons for its sustained popularity was the way it enacted the rhetorical figures and tropes it was endeavoring to name or define. Sometimes precept and example were separate, but when explored in tandem, they had the potential to be a performative act. As many scholars have observed (most recently the editor of the revised edition of the *Poetria nova*), in the section on amplification when Vinsauf is trying to define the use of repetition, for instance, he repeats; to define the use of apostrophe, in separate addresses, he rebukes the prideful man, empowers the timid man, and comforts the country of England for its loss of King Richard.⁵¹⁶ In this way, the treatise enacts what it names. However, if a medieval teacher recited these examples (particularly those related to personification or dialogue), this act of recitation could be viewed as a performed act, since

⁵¹² James J. Murphy discusses and charts their comparative rhetorical components in *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 225. The five parts of the letter include: *salutatio* (greeting), *captatio benevolentiae* (obtain goodwill), *narratio* (narration), *petitio* (petition), and *conclusio* (conclusion).

⁵¹³ Martin Camargo makes a clear distinction between *ars dictaminis* and *ars dictandi*, referring to the former as the “discipline” of letter writing and prose composition, and the latter as the “textbook” of letter writing and prose composition in *Ars dictaminis, Ars dictandi*, *Typologie des Sources du Moyen Âge Occidental* 60 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1991), 20.

⁵¹⁴ Ronald Witt, “Medieval ‘Ars Dictaminis’ and the Beginnings of Humanism: a New Construction of the Problem” *Renaissance Quarterly* 35 (Spring, 1982): 9.

⁵¹⁵ Giles Constable, *Letters and Letter-Collections*, *Typologie des Sources du Moyen Âge* fasc. 17 (Turnhout, Belgium: Editions Brepols, 1976), 50-1. Malcolm Richardson, “The *Ars dictaminis*, the Formulary, and the Medieval Practice,” in *Letter-Writing Manuals and Instruction from Antiquity to the Present*, 56.

⁵¹⁶ Geoffrey Vinsauf, *Poetria nova*, Trans. by Margaret F. Nims and Intro. to the rev. ed. by Martin Camargo (Toronto: PIMS, 2010), 12-13.

the subject does not constitute these “norms” of discourse, but rather (with self-awareness) reiterates these “norms” through the subjectivity of the teacher (but also *non in propria persona*).⁵¹⁷

Recently, Martin Camargo has explored the possibility that, given the oral transmission of most letters (from dictation to delivery), students may have been formally taught how to perform letters. Most treatises on *ars dictaminis* tend to focus on defining specific terms or parts of a letter (particularly the *salutatio* and *captatio benevolentiae*) with very little ink devoted to methods of their oral delivery. Yet, Camargo finds an exception in one thirteenth-century *ars dictandi*, the *Candelabrum* of Bene of Florence, which provides instruction for the proper delivery, gestures, and facial expressions in the oral performance of letters.⁵¹⁸ In Book VIII, for instance, Bene states, “Delivery therefore observes proper management in voice, facial expression, and gesture, so that the listener is won over (*concilietur*) and is led to belief through persuasion, and his passions are kindled” (Bene VIII.58).⁵¹⁹ Camargo believes that passages such as this one articulate what is implicit in most *artes dictandi*.⁵²⁰ These *artes dictandi* also typically incorporate many figures and colors of rhetoric that lent themselves to performance in the grammar school classrooms.⁵²¹ Camargo and Ward have suggested these forms of rhetoric and performance-based exercises may have extended to instruction at the university level.⁵²²

⁵¹⁷ I make the distinction between performance and performativity using primarily Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 94-5 and 189-190.

⁵¹⁸ Martin Camargo, “Special Delivery: Were Medieval Letter Writers Trained in Performance?” in *Rhetoric Beyond Words: Delight and Persuasion in the Arts of the Middle Ages*, ed. Mary Carruthers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 176.

⁵¹⁹ Camargo, “Special Delivery,” 177.

⁵²⁰ In his forthcoming publication, “Epistolary Declamation: Performing Model Letters in Medieval English Classrooms,” in *Studies in the Cultural History of Letter Writing*, ed. Susan Green (San Marino: Huntington Library Press), Camargo explores approaches to delivery in a treatise that has intriguing Oxford connections, *Compendium on the Art of Composition (Compendium artis dictatorie)* found in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 358, fols. 1^r-5^r; Douai, Bibliothèque Municipale MS 764, fols. 109^r-119^r; Oxford, Balliol College MS 263, fols. 4^v-7^v; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Selden Supra 65, fols. 125^v-134^r. Dr. Camargo was very generous to give me an early draft of this article.

⁵²¹ Marjorie Curry Woods, “Boys Will Be Women: Musings on Classroom Nostalgia and the Chaucerian

The King of Beans Tradition at Merton College, Oxford

In addition to the performance-based structure of letters and instructional precepts of *ars dictaminis*, there is recorded evidence that letters were performed within the university, although not in the classroom, during the sixteenth century at both Oxford and Cambridge. In his annals of the University of Oxford, seventeenth-century antiquarian Anthony Wood recorded notable events and descriptions of exceptional individuals who demonstrated academic excellence. Of the three individuals that he singles out from Merton College in 1557, two are found exemplary (David de la Hyde and Jasper Heywood), in no small part, because of their contributions to the ceremonies and performances surrounding the *rex fabarum* or King of Beans. Wood prefaces his account of these individuals with a detailed description of a typical performance of the ceremonial election of the King of Beans:

On the 19th of November, being the Vigil of St. Edmund, King and Martyr, Letters under seal were pretended to have been brought from some place beyond [the] sea, for the election of a King of Christmas, or Misrule, sometimes called with us of the aforesaid College, Rex Fabarum. The said letters being put into the hands of the Bachelaur Fellows, they brought them into the Hall that night, and standing, sometimes walking, round the fire, there reading the contents of them, [they] would choose the senior Fellow that had not yet borne that office.⁵²³

The election of the *rex fabarum* usually occurred on or around the 19th of November, though it could be as late as the eve of St. Nicholas (December 5th).⁵²⁴ Toward the end of the reign, the *rex*

Audience(s),” *Speaking Images: Essays in Honor of V. A. Kolve*, eds. Robert F. Yeager and Charlotte C. Morse (Asheville, NC: Pegasus, 2001), 145–66; Woods, “Rape and the Pedagogical Rhetoric of Sexual Violence,” *Criticism and Dissent in the Middle Ages*, ed. Rita Copeland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 56–86. Martin Camargo, “Medieval Rhetoric Delivers; or, Where Chaucer Learned How to Act,” *New Medieval Literatures* 9 (2008): 41–62.

⁵²² J.O. Ward, “Rhetoric in the Faculty of Arts at the Universities of Paris and Oxford in the Middle Ages: A Summary of Evidence” *Bulletin du Cange* 54 (1996): 184–6. Martin Camargo, “Beyond the *Libri Catoniani*: Models of Latin Prose Style at Oxford University Ca. 1400,” *Mediaeval Studies* 56 (1994): 170.

⁵²³ Anthony Wood, *The Histories and Antiquities of the University of Oxford*, in *Two Books*, ed. John Gutch (Oxford, 1796), 2:136.

⁵²⁴ Merton College generally elected their King of Beans on November 19th. However, in first quarter of the fifteenth century, a mock abbot at Hinxey Hall in Oxford was elected on December 5th. See *Formularies which*

fabarum held a feast for the bachelor fellows and masters in mid January (probably to coincide with the start of the Hilary term). His reign usually ended at Candlemas (or February 2nd).

Wood demonstrates David de la Hyde's academic excellence through de la Hyde's ability to deliver "very witty and ingenious" speeches, specifically, the "*oratio de ligno et foeno*" ("The Speech about Wood and Hay" -- no longer extant) that was performed in praise of the King of Beans, Jasper Heywood (son of playwright John Heywood).⁵²⁵ In addition to hearing speeches from his "exalted chair," Heywood, like the typical King, "had the power put into his hands of punishing all misdemeanors done in the time of Christmas, either by imposing Exercises on the juniors, or putting into the stocks at the end of the Hall any of the servants, with other punishments that were sometimes very ridiculous."⁵²⁶ Heywood excelled as both "Poet and Disputant," and two years after his reign as King of Beans, he translated three works of Seneca into English before leaving the country to become a Jesuit priest.⁵²⁷

A performance tradition comparable to the King of Beans occurred at Cambridge University (under the auspices of the "Christmas Lord" or "Christmas Prince" but on occasion simply "king" or "emperor"), first recorded at Christ's College in 1539.⁵²⁸ However, there are indications from the records of King's Hall and King's College that a "mock lord or king" tradition may have occurred earlier in association with the local parish church. In 1386, for instance, there were payments of 10*d* made on behalf of King's Hall for entertainment provided at Great St. Mary's Church "for the king's meals" (*pro repastis Regis*) on the feast of St.

Bear on the History of Oxford, c. 1204–1420, eds. H. E. Salter, W. A. Pantin, and H. G. Richardson, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942), 439.

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*, 136-7. Although the speech was purportedly among Wood's MSS in the Ashmole museum, Elliott finds an interesting passage in Bodleian Library MS Wood D.32, fol. 315, col. 2 that may have contributed to Wood's commentary. See Elliott, *REED: Oxford*, 2:799.

⁵²⁶ Wood, *The Histories and Antiquities*, 136-7.

⁵²⁷ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁵²⁸ Nelson, *REED: Cambridge*, 2:731.

Edmund.⁵²⁹ This entry in the King's Hall Accounts also states that the king was accompanied by an "attendant" (*famula*), possibly female.⁵³⁰ Payment of 6*d* and 2*d* is also "given to the king and clerk of the same church" (*dati Regi et clerico eiusdem ecclesie*) for their part in the entertainment. Notably, further down the same folio, payment of 8*d* is recorded for the boy bishop on the feast of St. Nicholas.⁵³¹ However, records of this kind do not reappear until the sixteenth century. Additionally, there are payments for annual disguisings (by both students and masters) at King's College that appear as early as 1456 and continue through the 1490s.⁵³² Nelson suggests that these disguisings may have been imitations of those found in aristocratic households and court (though Nelson may have been thinking of mummings, rather than the festive king tradition).⁵³³

We have the most detailed information about the Christmas King tradition from Merton College, Oxford. The Oxford records, for instance, indicate that masters and fellows participated in the performances on behalf of the King of Beans while other spectators were present.⁵³⁴ These spectators may have been chaplains, portionists ("poor scholars who were to be administered by the warden and fellows of Merton"), or even servants.⁵³⁵ However, this was erudite, sophisticated entertainment. Merton College did not admit undergraduates as fellows, but rather those who were already bachelors and pursuing a graduate degree (such as an M.A. or a D.D.).

⁵²⁹ Ibid., 12. While this could refer to an actual king, the use of the term "*repastis*" usually implies a meal that required some sort of service to one of higher rank.

⁵³⁰ Ibid. Nelson translates *famula* as maidservant. However, it would seem that the clerk served as "attendant" for the entertainment.

⁵³¹ Ibid. On 798, Nelson notes that Great St. Mary's Church was "appropriated" by King's Hall in 1343 and later became the University Church. According to the records, entertainments that featured music, dance, and more "dramatic" fare were performed there.

⁵³² Ibid., 711. Nelson notes that while there is no indication of the "subject matter" it seems that they incorporated "music, costumes, painted fabrics, and an otherwise undefined 'apparatus' (1473-4)."

⁵³³ Ibid.

⁵³⁴ *Registrum annalium Collegii Mertonensis*, ed. H.E. Salter, Oxford Historical Society 76 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), xviii.

⁵³⁵ Ibid., xii.

The elected King of Beans was typically a senior fellow and often one who received or would receive a “real preferment” within the academic year (either as an internal promotion or an external benefice).⁵³⁶ Appropriately, when it came time to elect a new warden of Merton College (with the resignation of Fitzjames in 1507), the three men who were nominated for the post, Hugh Saunders, Thomas Harper, and Richard Rawlyns, had all previously served as King of Beans and all pursued (during their tenure as King) a doctorate of sacred theology. Moreover, two of the three actually became warden. Thomas Harper served from 1507-8 (dying prematurely) and Richard Rawlyns from 1508-21.

In the case of Rawlyns, such forays into the “florid” performance of rhetoric were not abandoned when he took on the responsibility of warden. Many of the rhetorical figures and tropes found within the letters presented during the King of Beans ceremony, for instance, can be detected in several of his speeches and writings. Bernard Henderson describes Rawlyns’s addresses to the Fellows and speeches for chapters at Holywell as “eloquence [that] soars above Pelion piled on Ossa to reach the heaven of royal favor.”⁵³⁷ His “florid” proclivities were also apparent in the college’s register where, “[Rawlyns’s] flowing periods, far-fetched similes, and solemn platitudes overrun the pages of the Register, and how small a portion of his exuberant magniloquence must that which is preserved represent!”⁵³⁸ Though somewhat extreme, Rawlyns’s use of such rhetorical flourishes was not exceptional.

The performance of the King of Beans, moreover, was not ancillary to the honor it bestowed. In 1517, Rawlyns, as warden, denies Mr. Williot, a bachelor at the college, “exhibition” money as well as the ability to “lay claim to the place and rank of senior” because

⁵³⁶ Boas, *University Drama*, 5. See also *Registrum annalium Collegii Mertonensis*, xviii.

⁵³⁷ Bernard Henderson, *Merton College* (London: Ballantyne Press, 1899), 74.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*, 76.

Williot did not properly organize the ceremony for the election of the king.⁵³⁹ He did not provide, for instance, a letter with a seal “according to the ancient custom,” nor did the bachelors, who also participated in the performance, wear masks and come attired in “outlandish clothing.”⁵⁴⁰ These performance aspects of this “ancient custom” suggest that this is not merely the ceremonial election of a mock king, but a performance event that involved an intricate narrative culminating in the mock king’s election (as related in the letter). The messenger might read the letter aloud and move around the fire (to indicate changes in time or space), while other masked individuals performed the story. But it is also quite possible, as we will see later, that the performance might happen, beyond what is explicit in the text, as part of the interpretation of the letter. If what defines something as a performance rather than an academic exercise is, as Sullivan suggests, students engaging a specific text *non in propria persona*, then this certainly qualifies as a performance.

Although the election and reign of the King of Beans was an honor, it was also a financial burden. Toward the end of his reign, it was the onus of the elected king to provide a banquet with a fire and “sumptuous offerings” (*aliis lauticiniis*) for all the fellows.⁵⁴¹ In a similar vein, the regents’ fire (celebrated annually) was a festive occasion with food and wine sponsored by a senior regent master for both regents and bachelors. On the occasion of at least one of these fires, “the most delightful interludes” (*jocundissimis interludis*) were a part of the festivities.⁵⁴²

In addition to being a form of recreative entertainment, there was also a presumed solemnity to the performance and proceedings of the election of the King of Beans. In 1488, a

⁵³⁹ Elliott, *REED: Oxford*, 2:950. This entry is from Merton College Register, fol. 239v.

⁵⁴⁰ Elliott, *REED: Oxford*, 2:950.

⁵⁴¹ See the description of the festivities on January 10th for J. Waytt, who was King of Beans 1507-8 in *Registrum annalium Collegii Mertonensis*, 356-7.

⁵⁴² See, for instance, the entry on January 17th, 1502 (on fol. 131^v) in which Thomas Skarsbreke, the senior regent, included these performances as part of the regents’ fire in *Registrum annalium Collegii Mertonensis*, 260.

“scrutiny” was held by a special committee (consisting of the warden and five senior fellows) to resolve disagreement over the proper conduct of the King of Beans election. Apparently, the masters were not playing their part appropriately for, “On the 18 December, that is to say, the eighth day before Christmas, a scrutiny was held in which deposition was made against the ill-advised manner of some masters toward the bachelors on St. Edmund’s Eve, allowed unpunished by the deans.”⁵⁴³

The extant records chronicling the King of Beans at Merton College examined above provide evidence of the earliest and most sustained celebration of the Christmas King tradition at either Oxford or Cambridge (1485-6 to 1539-40).⁵⁴⁴ These records should not imply, however, that prior to the Tudor period there was not a sustained Christmas King tradition. Evidence of epistolary performance (specifically letters recited on behalf of the King of Beans) from British Library MS Royal 10.B.ix, for instance, suggests that the tradition at Merton College occurred from at least the first quarter of the fifteenth century. This and other evidence will be explored in detail below (see also **Appendix 2**).

“Honest Solaces”: The Conservative Nature of Christmas King Festivities

Scholars have misunderstood the purpose of the Christmas King festivities (e.g., the Kings of Beans) and related performative ceremonies. Anthony Wood, in his description of the election ceremony, implies that the “King of Christmas, or Misrule, sometimes called with us of the aforesaid College, Rex Fabarum” are one and the same.⁵⁴⁵ This assumption was perpetuated by E.K. Chambers, who views the Lord of Misrule as a direct descendant of a “burlesque” *dominus festi* (lord of the feast) who supervised the Feast of Fools on either Circumcision,

⁵⁴³ Elliott, *REED:Oxford*, 2:929.

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 797.

⁵⁴⁵ Wood, *The Histories and Antiquities*, 2:136.

Epiphany, or the octave of Epiphany.⁵⁴⁶ Chambers believes the feast, which found its first expression among the “inferior clergy” in France at the end of the twelfth century, acted to subvert the ecclesiastical order through its clerical “inversion of status.”⁵⁴⁷ With the condemnations of Innocent III in 1207, however, the role of the *dominus festi* changed. Following these mandates, the *dominus festi* was systematically routed out of the Church during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, only to find refuge in secular or lay feasts as mock rulers or Lords of Misrule.⁵⁴⁸

Max Harris has recently challenged Chambers’ depiction of the Feast of Fools and its participants as disruptive forces that invariably worked in opposition to the Church and its liturgy.⁵⁴⁹ He finds evidence of two traditions of “fool” festivities (clerical and lay societies) that were separate and concurrent. The clerical Feast of Fools was celebrated with a devotional respect for the liturgy that temporarily inverted the status of “inferior clergy,” not to be subversive, but (like celebration of the boy bishops) to “exalt the humble.”⁵⁵⁰ Harris states, “the *dominus festi* of the Feast of Fools presided over a temporary reversal of established order, not to initiate disorder but precisely to celebrate the overthrow of disordered power.”⁵⁵¹ Toward the end of the fourteenth century, “festive societies” celebrated a separate lay tradition of the Feast of Fools during the Christmas season, but did not observe the Christmas liturgy. They focused their energies instead on staging moralities, *sotties*, and farces.⁵⁵² As Natalie Zemon Davis observed, “the imagery of the lay organizations was usually monastic rather than episcopal as in

⁵⁴⁶ Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, 1:275.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁸ Chambers states, “And so we find a second tradition of Feasts of Fools, in which the *fous* [fools] are no longer vicars but *bourgeois*, and the *dominus festi* is a popular ‘king’ or ‘prince’ rather than a clerical ‘bishop,’” 373.

⁵⁴⁹ Max Harris, *Sacred Folly: A New History of the Feast of Fools* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 4.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 241. Harris observes, “The Feast of Fools often invoked Mary’s lines from the Magnificat, ‘*Deposuit potentes de sede et exultavit humiles*’ (He has put down the mighty from their seat and exalted the humble),” 49.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*, 169.

the Feast of Fools”; to which Harris adds, “if the lay festive societies had been little more than secularized versions of the clerical feast, one would expect their leaders to have been called bishops rather than abbots, kings, or princes.”⁵⁵³ Chambers, however, equates the figure of the Christmas King with the Lord of Misrule, who functioned as an agent of folly and not a master of revels. This connection has secular implications: “I have regarded the Lord of Misrule, amongst the courtly and wealthy classes of English society, as a direct offshoot from the vanished Feast of Fools.”⁵⁵⁴ I will show that the Christmas King tradition in the English universities embodies both clerical and lay practices, while not, substantively, undermining authoritarian power as a lord of misrule.

The conservative nature of the Christmas King tradition is evident by the way that “mock” Christmas King or Lord ceremonial performances were institutionalized while other “mock” authority figures were banned. In the late fourteenth century (c. 1368-90), for instance, Cambridge University issued a new statute prohibiting students from assembling in the streets, sounding trumpets and/or ringing bells, and from assuming the persona of a “captain, duke, chancellor, proctor, or bedell, or by whatever name he may be titled in such a company.”⁵⁵⁵ Public entertainment of this sort had to be regulated and contained. And yet, as Elliott observes, “academic prohibitions alternated with college or University sponsorship of public or private entertainment.”⁵⁵⁶ The first University prohibition regarding the “observance of local festivals” makes it clear that those within the University must celebrate feasts only within their own parish and avoid public displays of revelry as “[decreed] under penalty of greater excommunication that no one lead dances with masks or with any noise in churches or streets or go anywhere festooned

⁵⁵³ As qtd. in Harris, *Sacred Folly*, 241.

⁵⁵⁴ Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, 1:418.

⁵⁵⁵ Nelson, *REED: Cambridge*, 2:1193.

⁵⁵⁶ Elliott, *REED: Oxford*, 2:612.

or crowned with a crown made of leaves of trees or of flowers or of anything else.”⁵⁵⁷ This prohibition may have been in response to the clashes between the North and South “nations” at Oxford and the violence that could erupt with the slightest provocation.⁵⁵⁸

There was sanctioned entertainment from “outside” the university system, albeit rather limited. At Cambridge, from at least 1342 until the late fifteenth century, entertainers such as “musicians and parish dancers” performed, primarily at King’s Hall, until the mid-fifteenth century. Nelson posits that some of the “later players may have engaged in mimetic activity,” but terms such as “*histrion*,” “*lusor*,” and “*mimis*” can be deceiving.⁵⁵⁹ Oxford also had entertainers, musicians, and dancers perform, but not until the fifteenth century. The first record of entertainment by itinerant players at Oxford is at the monastic Canterbury College in 1410.⁵⁶⁰ However, it is possible that the students and faculty may have had other access to “outside” entertainment. On August 29, 1361, for instance, Exeter College sponsored a parish play.⁵⁶¹ Other such engagements with parish churches may have gone unrecorded.

Nevertheless, it seems the universities relied to a greater extent on their own “in house” entertainment. Both universities needed to monitor the kinds of recreational activities appropriate for scholars and fellows, and they made increasingly detailed provisions that were codified in the college statutes. Queens College statutes (c. 1340) seem to be the first to mention what is proper “for the sake of recreation” (*causa recreationis*) by specifying what is not, i.e., any game that occasions the loss of money (such as dicing) or music that causes one to behave wildly (*insolentiam*). Instead, students must “amuse themselves honorably and peacefully”

⁵⁵⁷ Taken from the Chancellor’s Register as qtd. in Elliott, *REED: Oxford*, 2:905.

⁵⁵⁸ See A.B. Emden, “Northerners and Southerners in the Organization of the University to 1509” in *Oxford Studies Presented to Daniel Callus*, Oxford Historical Society, n.s., vol. XVI (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 1-30.

⁵⁵⁹ Nelson, *REED: Cambridge*, 2:710.

⁵⁶⁰ Elliott, *REED: Oxford*, 2:915.

⁵⁶¹ Elliott, *REED: Oxford*, 2:612 and 2:907. This play took place on the day of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist and perhaps had related subject matter.

(*honeste et pacifice iocari voluerint*) either individually or “at times of common solace” (*temporibus communis solatij*).⁵⁶² The New College statutes (1398) provide a more detailed account of types of preferred recreation, and these are used as a “template” for subsequent Oxford foundations (i.e., Magdalen College, Corpus Christi College, and Christ’s Church), regulating the proper time and place for “honest solaces:”

when in reverence to God and his mother or any other saint a fire is lit in winter in the hall for the Fellows; then the scholars and Fellows, after the time of dinner or supper, will be permitted to linger in the hall for the sake of recreation in singing and other honest solaces (*solatiis honestis*), and seriously to study poems, chronicles of kings, and wonders of this world, or other things which suit the clerical state.⁵⁶³

We find similar accounts in Cambridge college statutes (St. John’s being fairly indicative):

as a solace to all the residents (*ad solacium omnium inhabitancium*)...after the said refreshments and drinking, for the sake of recreation in songs and other honest solaces (*solaciis honestis*), in a respectable way becoming to clerics and not to cause delay in the hall, [fellows, students, and servants of the college] for cultivation among themselves are to debate, read and interpret poems, histories, and other literary works of this kind.⁵⁶⁴

Both sets of statutes contrast these forms of “honest” recreation with dishonorable places outside the confines of the college or hall, such as “taverns, spectacles, or other dishonorable places” (*tavernas spectacula vel alia loca inhonesta*).⁵⁶⁵

Over time these “honest solaces” become increasingly performance-based, and by the reign of Henry VIII, St. John’s (Cambridge) statutes dictate that every fellow must take his turn to play the Christmas Lord so that during the Christmas vacation he may avoid the kind of

⁵⁶² Elliott, *REED: Oxford*, 1:6.

⁵⁶³ New College Archives 9429, fol. 14^v. trans. by Joyce Coleman, who sees these recreational readings as “a form of social control that substitutes an approved, centralized, and supervised source of group interest for the potentially disruptive misbehaviors of individuals,” in *Public Reading the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 136-7.

⁵⁶⁴ Nelson, *REED: Cambridge*, 2:1107 (I have provided my own translation). In a later version of these statutes, 1544-5, the *solaciis honestis* include: “poems, letters, or speeches; in the reading of Greek poets, orators, or historians; or in putting on of dialogues, comedies, or tragedies according to the will and assignment or order of the reader of humanities and other examiners,” at 1113.

⁵⁶⁵ New College Archives 9429, fol. 16^r. Elliott, *REED: Oxford*, 1:11 and 2:912.

behavior that derives from “wonderful and incredible...(sensual) enjoyment” (*miram et incredibile...voluptatem*).⁵⁶⁶ Moreover, he is to be paid twenty shillings for his Christmas Lord duties, which include making statutes in Greek or Latin verses (in the style of the ancients or some far off republic), and showing “at least six dialogues, or festive or literary spectacles, on as many of the nights of the Twelve Days” (*sex ad minus dialogos aut festiva aut literaria spectacular totidem duodecem dierum noctibus exhibeat*).⁵⁶⁷ These are meant to engender “happiness and good cheer” (*letitia et hilaritate*).⁵⁶⁸

In this way, fellows and scholars were kept occupied in literary activities and performance-based endeavors during the Christmas vacation to ensure proper (clerical) behavior. Thus, the purpose of the Christmas King’s reign was not to sanction a period of misrule, but to maintain order through authorized entertainment.⁵⁶⁹

“Honest Solaces” in Chaundler’s *Collocutiones*

Chaundler provides, as part of the second “gift manuscript” to Bekynton (c. 1462), the most extensive performance texts (with the exception of the seventeenth-century *Christmas Prince*) related to the Christmas King tradition.⁵⁷⁰ These texts (the *Collocutiones* and *Allocutiones*) provide *solaciis honestis* and *letitia* similar to the fourteenth and early fifteenth-

⁵⁶⁶ Nelson, *REED: Cambridge*, 2:1113.

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.* Certainly, the most elaborate (and unruly) expression of the Christmas Lord can be found within 1607-8, Oxford, St. John’s College Library MS 52, commonly referred to as *The Christmas Prince*, a collection of nine plays and entertainments performed from October 13th, 1607 to February 13th, 1608. See Frederick Boas’s edition, *The Christmas Prince: An Account of St. John’s College Revels Held in Oxford in 1607-8*. Malone Society Reprints (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1922).

⁵⁶⁹ Though, it would seem that even these “contained” forms of entertainment could not be sufficiently control. Perhaps for this reason, Edward VI made royal injunctions to be read at Cambridge’s senate, stating that the university must “change the lecture on Terence to one on rhetoric and rule out the ‘*dominus ludorum*’ (lord of plays) at Christmas” in Ian Lancashire, *Dramatic Texts and Records of Britain* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 99. For an example of an Oxford festival of Misrule, see *Fallux evangelium secundum Lupum*, described as “a drinker’s gospel related to the festivities at Oxford,” and discussed in Martha Bayless, *Parody in the Middle Ages: The Latin Tradition* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 125 and 218.

⁵⁷⁰ See footnote 62.

century Christmas King entertainment. As Chaundler relates in the prologue to the *Collocutiones*, for instance, seven *Collocutiones* “were at length delivered in public on behalf of the King of Solace to augment social delight” (*ad ampliacionem socialis gaudii aliquando publice coram Rege solacii fuisse dictas*).⁵⁷¹ A student wrote an earlier version of these “conversations” and apparently corresponded with Chaundler while he was warden of Winchester College. Chaundler subsequently modified the student’s version (which may or may not have been the version that was performed for the Solace King) for inclusion in the New College presentation manuscript. Chaundler states in the prologue that he “removed the superfluous, corrected most of its parts; truly, much has been changed, for the most worthy bishop and all who have been nurtured by the foundation of so great a father” (*elimato superfluo, plurima sui parte correctas, in multis vero mutates, tibi dignissimo presuli omniumque quos tanti patris et fundatoris gremium enutrivit insignissimo*).⁵⁷² Chaundler had taught this student philosophy “in his tender years” (*in teneris annis*), and Shirley Bridges, agreeing with M.R. James, believes that the student must have been a scholar (in his first or second year) at New College, where Chaundler conceivably was his tutor (as part of the statutory tutorial system). As Bridges posits, “He must have been a Wykehamist at least four years younger than Chaundler, who had access to him while he was warden at Winchester. John Nabbe is the mostly likely candidate.”⁵⁷³

⁵⁷¹ Bridges, “Thomas Chaundler,” 2:104. M.R. James first to suggest that the Solace King was a part of the larger Christmas King tradition in *The Chaundler MSS*, 7. The *Collocutiones* and *Allocutiones* are extant in another manuscript, British Library, Cotton Titus A.XXIV. This copy is not written in Chaundler’s hand. For a range of representative samples of Chaundler’s handwriting, see entries that he made while he served as Steward of the Hall (such as *Septimana XXXII* 1441-2 and *Septimana XXIII*, 1445-6), his Latin glosses in British Library, Harley MS 43 (at least through fol. 17^v), and the signature for an extant correspondence with Sir William Norris in New College Muniment 10,303 (Drayton 32), c.1485.

⁵⁷² Bridges, “Thomas Chaundler,” 2:105.

⁵⁷³ Bridges, “Thomas Chaundler,” 1:141.

At the time of the manuscript's compilation, Chaundler had just resigned as chancellor of Oxford University, as a result of Yorkist ascendancy in the War of the Roses (and Chaundler's Lancastrian sympathies). As he tells Bekynton in the prologue to the *Collocutiones*, "Thus I felt truly free and released from the gravest matters, since I certainly do not know whether what happened with the position [as Chancellor of Oxford] should be more preferable to me" (*liberum me ita sensi, et gravissimis nempe solutum laboribus, ut nesciam profecto an ex parte potius bene contigisse mihi*).⁵⁷⁴ Chaundler spends the majority of the prologue, however, recounting the wrongs that have been perpetrated against him during his reign as chancellor and citing a range of ancient and medieval authorities:

For if we would recall the former rulers of cities, or consider now our men, select few have been able to reasonably achieve worthy honors with great remembrance without great peril. Kings understand it, bishops know it, and governors of the citizens put it to the test. Thus, as the Stoics say, for men to be successful, they must rule not allowing any division: Adversity to them is nothing. But for a long time I have been troubled by inferior and evil men, which also troubles the highest honor, as Seneca said, to conduct a moderate life in peace.

*Nam si aut priscos commemoremus urbium rectores, aut jam nostros, perpaucos horum sane consecutos esse honores monumento dignos maximis absque periculis, intuebimur. Id sentiunt Reges, pontifices sciunt, civium proconsules experiuntur. Aiunt tamen Stoici, quosdam ita felices esse homines, ut cum regant nullum patiantur discrimen: Adversum eis nihil. Sed ego, longe hisce viris impar, malo, ut inquit Seneca, mediocrem in quiete agere vitam, quam summis in honoribus perturbari.*⁵⁷⁵

Once he feels he has sufficiently demonstrated that he did all that he could to "promote peace" (*pacis...promotor*) and serve the best interests of the students and town of Oxford despite the "attack of the lions" (*impetum leonum*), he shifts his focus to the topic of the *Collocutiones*, the character of a virtuous man (which is synonymous with a man who has been a beneficiary of one or both of Wykeham's foundations).

⁵⁷⁴ Bridges, "Thomas Chaundler," 2:97.

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 97-8.

And if the writers, poets, and comedians of the Greeks and Romans present such distinction with noble men of renown, for which, besides the useful honor of one's native land, they are the least emulated. [As an alternative], I include in number all of the two hundred clerics, for whom the pious father of Winchester, the most worthy prelate William of Wykeham, founded. What honor, what praise, what glory...we have conveyed.

*Et si Graecorum Romanorumque scribae, poetae, et comici, tantum suis nobilibus titulum laudis tribuunt; e quibus, praeter honorem patriae, utilitatem sunt minimam consecuti; nos, ut in illorum ducentorum numero clericorum omnes comprehendam, quos pius ille pater Wintoniensis dignissimus praesul Willelmus de Wykam, fundaverat; quid honoris, quid laudis, quid gloriae... contulimus*⁵⁷⁶

The *Collocutiones* or “conversations” were performed over several days and address the life and character of William of Wykeham, which is “disputed” between two fictitious “philosophers” (Panescius and Ferrandus). The “philosophers” have travelled by foot from Oxford to Wells, perhaps for the long vacation, as Ferrandus humorously recounts at the beginning of the

Collocutiones:

Having wandered over the hills, and through valleys, where the dirt and mire are plentiful, from the beautiful and sublime University of Oxford, we have entered into this little village, O most delightful companion, Panescius. After so long a journey, I wish to rest a little: these limbs are so weary that, doubtless, if I had not supported myself with a staff, I should have fallen to the ground.⁵⁷⁷

They begin talking about virtue and William of Wykeham, which leads Panescius to the topic of whether “manners maketh man” (an English proverb that Wykeham apparently favored, which then became the motto for Winchester College and New College):

Panescius: Yesterday you said that you are often moved by the founder's words, which may be sound in speech, but in the practice of the mind conveys the highest truth, that is: manners [or moral actions] maketh man.

Ferrandus: You have come to explain that now? I am happy! I ask nothing of you, by which your elucidation may be withdrawn.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid., 103.

⁵⁷⁷ Bridges, “Thomas Chaundler,” 2:106. Trans. by John Britton, *Cathedral Antiquities: Wells, Exeter, and Worcester* (London: M.A. Nattali, 1836), 46.

Panesicus: I have not come to explain that. However, if manners maketh man, we may ordain one, from whom, just as physicians are wont to a great number of spices, so we may amass some or all of the kinds of virtue.

Ferrandus: Admittedly. But who will it be?

Panesicus: No one, I reckon, is more suitable a man than the one of whom we often speak: Our founder, William [of Wykeham].

Panescius: *Hesternum quidem die aiebas frequenter te motum ex illo fundatoris verbo, cuius in ore sonum sed mente praxim verissime comportabat, id est: mores componunt hominem.*

Ferrandus: *Venisti ad illud nunc explanandum? Me Felicem! Nihil te, queso, ab huius enucleacione retractet.*

Panescius: *Non dum illud explanare veni, sed si hominem componant mores, consitituamus unum, quo, sicut medici plurima solent odoramenta, ita nonnullas aut omnes videamur nos virtutum species conficere.*

Ferrandus: *Admitto. Sed quisnam is erit?*

Panescius: *Nullus, estimo, aprior est quam is de quo sepius colloquimur: noster fundator Willelmus.*⁵⁷⁸

The two disputants then argue about the virtues of Wykeham, examining each of the four cardinal virtues (in the guise of Wisdom, Courage, Temperance, and Justice) and using criteria set forth principally by Cicero and Aristotle (advocated by Panescius and Ferrandus, respectively).⁵⁷⁹ Yet, by the fourth *collocutio*, while discussing temperance, the two disputants are unable to find agreement in Cicero and Aristotle over the related topic, “Whether it is possible for a wise man to be perturbed [or troubled]?” (“*an sapiens posset perturbari?*”)⁵⁸⁰ To make his point, Panescius cites a long quote from Cicero’s *Tusculan Disputations* that says a

⁵⁷⁸ Bridges, “Thomas Chaundler,” 2:127-8.

⁵⁷⁹ After a rather circuitous discussion of virtue by Panescius, Ferrandus exclaims, “You are talking about wisdom, fortitude, temperance, and justice: Without a doubt, those are the cardinal virtues!” (“*Sapientia, inquis, fortitudine, temperancia, iusticia: istae nimirum virtutes sunt cardinales*”). To which Panescius replies: “Without a doubt” (“*Nimirum*”). Bridges, “Thomas Chaundler,” 2:129. For a list of the range of the authorities used, see Bridges, “Thomas Chaundler,” 2:xvi-xvii.

⁵⁸⁰ Bridges, “Thomas Chaundler,” 2:153. See the brief summary in the rubric after the fourth *collocutio*.

wise man is one “who keeps the mind quiet through moderation and constancy” (“*qui moderacione et constancia quietus est in animo*”). Panescius concludes by characterizing the reasoning of the Peripatetics (that is, Ferrandus) as “weak and effeminate” (“*mollis et enervate*”) because they believe it is necessary for the mind to be troubled or agitated – with questionable moral boundaries or limits. Since they are discussing the ways in which “manners maketh man,” this would imply that Ferrandus’s Aristotelian beliefs make him less than a man or perhaps not a man at all. Ferrandus reacts accordingly and becomes infuriated – “What is this, Panescius?” (“*Quid hoc, Panesci?*”) – and repeats what Panescius says incredulously. This time Ferrandus does not concede (as he has in previous *Collocutiones*), stating, “I disagree that virtue is the medium between two vices” (“*Negat, ut mini videtur, virtutem esse quid medium duo inter vicia*”). Likewise he questions the claim that “there are primary things that move us that are not in our power” (“*primi motus non sunt in potestate nostra*”).⁵⁸¹ This leads to rapid-fire banter:

Panescius: Although your reasoning is most offensive to me, O Ferrandus, nevertheless it will be more effective to me now as the authority of Cicero the orator rather than the authority of Cicero the philosopher.

Ferrandus: And clearly that does not please me.

Panescius: But it pleases me to the greatest extent.

Ferrandus: It may please you as it can, yet it is not so.

Panescius: On the contrary, it is so.

Panescius: *Quamquam tua mihi sit ratio pugnacissime, O Ferrande, nihilominus erit nunc mihi valencior perfecti non tam oratoris quam philosophi Ciceronis autoritas.*

Ferrandus: *Et plane illa mihi non placet.*

Panescius: *Sed et mihi summe placet.*

⁵⁸¹ Bridges, “Thomas Chaundler,” 2:152.

Ferrandus: *Placeat ut potest, tamen ita non est.*

Panescius: *Imo ita est.*⁵⁸²

To resolve their somewhat petulant disagreement, they must go to the Chancellor's house (Chaundler's house in Wells) to determine who is right. Chaundler (referred to as "Chancellor") greets them at the door, and Ferrandus offers praise in verse:

Chancellor: You have summoned me, dear sons. Behold, I am here.

Ferrandus: O great doctor, Warden, and Chancellor, spare our young men with the increasing years of your counsel; for already that Minerva (your wisdom) has set ablaze our hearts/minds with the modest spark of reason, just as if a fire had now been built...

Cancellarius: *Vocastis me, filioli: ecce adsum.*

Ferrandus: *O magne doctor Custos et Cancellarie parce tuis pueris nostris crescentibus annis consule; nam gracili iam scintilla rationis pectora succendit nostrum illa Minerva tuorum, et veluti ingentem iam construxerat ignem...*

To which Chaundler responds, "You will always have me at hand" (*presto semper habebitis me*), however, "if you summon me in the middle of the night, it is uncertain you can keep me up all night" (*si mediis noctibus vocaretis, indubie haberetis pervigilem*).⁵⁸³ Chaundler is able to settle the debate by demonstrating how Cicero and Aristotle ultimately fall short in matters of virtue. He shows how the differences within these two camps of thought (the Stoics and the Peripatetics) are best resolved through Augustine's Christian framework as presented in *The City of God*: "[Scripture] places the mind itself under the rule and guidance of God, through which the passions of the mind may be governed and curbed in order that the mind may be redirected for the use of righteousness" ("*Deo quippe illam ipsam mentem subicit regendam et iuuandam*

⁵⁸² Bridges, "Thomas Chaundler," 2:152-3.

⁵⁸³ Bridges, "Thomas Chaundler," 2:156.

mentique passiones ita moderandas atque frenandas, ut in usum iustitiae conuertantur").⁵⁸⁴

Service to God involves compassion toward others and this compassion invariably moves us, but does not disturb the rational mind. As Chaundler again quotes Augustine, "What is compassion if not a certain sympathy in our heart for another's misery, which we are compelled to help if we can? That disturbance serves reason, when compassion is shown, as when righteousness is observed or when the indigent are provide for or when the penitent are forgiven." ("*Quid est autem misericordia nisi alienae miseriae quaedam in nostro corde compassio, qua utique si possumus subvenire compellimur? Seruit autem motus iste rationi, quando ita prebetur misericordia, ut iustitia conseruetur, siue cum indigenti tribuitur, siue cum ignoscitur penitenti*").⁵⁸⁵ Chaundler concludes that Augustine "cuts through the ambiguity" ("*ambiguitatem decisam*") and reconciles the discrepancies. He enjoins Panescius and Ferrandus: "Don't therefore foster strife" ("*Nolite ergo fovere lites*") and asks the two disputants to follow in the spirit of Augustine's harmonious resolution, to which each responds:

Panescius: That evidence is lucid enough for me, great teacher.

Chancellor: How about you Ferrandus?

Ferrandus: I understand the same as Panescius.

Chancellor: And rightly it may give you understanding, from which all is wisdom! And here may it please you to rest a little.

Panescius: *Illud a me compertum est dilucide satis, magne preceptor.*

Cancellarius: *Quid, inquam, a Ferrando?*

⁵⁸⁴ Bridges, "Thomas Chaundler," 2:169. This excerpt is from the beginning of Chapter 5 (Book IX) in Augustine's *The City of God*.

⁵⁸⁵ Bridges, "Thomas Chaundler," 2:170. In the transcription, Bridges recorded "*dilucidine*" but in the MS it is "*dilucide*."

Ferrandus: *Id ipsum sapio quod Panescius.*

Cancellarius: *Et bene vos sapere donet, a quo omnis est sapientia! Atque hic paululum libeat respirare.*⁵⁸⁶

Since the *Collocutiones*, in their present form, reflect alterations and corrections by Chaundler, it may be that the character of the Chancellor was added later or underwent the most revision.⁵⁸⁷ In either case, it would seem likely that the Chancellor represents Chaundler's actual beliefs, which favor sacred authorities over secular authors.

Scholars have described the *Collocutiones* as a "dreary performance" for Christmas festivities.⁵⁸⁸ What may appear dry or "didactic" on the page, however, was probably quite entertaining in performance. The characterizations are quite amusing. Pompous Panescius is described in the rubric of the first *Collocutio* as "all knowing" (*omnia sciens*) and presented in contrast to the flummoxed Ferrandus, who is said to possess a "slower and rougher intellect" (*tardioris ac durioris intellectus*).⁵⁸⁹ It is quite possible that a senior scholar would have played Panescius and a junior scholar would have played Ferrandus to emphasize their differences in academic proficiency. Ferrandus also complains in the very beginning of the first *collocutio* that he can barely stand after walking from Oxford to Wells. This might be suggestive of a particular physicality (or lack thereof) for the character of Ferrandus and be a source of humor for the

⁵⁸⁶ Bridges, "Thomas Chaundler," 2:171. The last line by the Chancellor could also mean "time for a break in the performance."

⁵⁸⁷ The *Collocutiones* and *Allocutiones* (with a missing quire), Wykeham's will, a chronicle and a poem of the birth, life, and death of Wykeham are found in another extant manuscript, British Library: Cotton MS Titus A XXIV, fols 2^r-63^r. With the exception of the poem (which is styled in a rough humanist hand), all the other texts are in English Gothic cursive. The works of the two manuscripts are nearly identical. As the *Collocutiones* contains Chaundler's prologue (and his description of his unceremonious removal from his position as chancellor of Oxford University), it was most likely copied after the presentation manuscript was given to Bekynton – probably in the mid-to-late fifteenth century.

⁵⁸⁸ Shoukri, *Liber Apologeticus*, 4. Weiss, *Humanism in England*, 206. Arthur Leach, *A History of Winchester College* (New York: Scribner and Son's, 1899), 215.

⁵⁸⁹ Bridges, "Thomas Chaundler," 2:106.

student who is playing him. Moreover, the entertainment value of this “dreary performance” would be heightened by the particular circumstances at the time of its performance. For instance, was the audience exclusively students? Did Chaundler play the role of Chancellor? If not, how might the performance change when a student or master played the part (with Chaundler in the audience)? Since this iteration of the *Collocutiones* is the version appropriate for the bishop, it does not necessarily reflect prior performance(s) that occurred in its development. Nevertheless, the topic of the *Collocutiones*, the qualities of a virtuous man (i.e., William of Wykeham), and the format, scholastic debate, provide “honest solace” and entertainment as they reinforce a vital collegiate corporate identity.

The “Ancient Custom” of The King of Christmas Festivities

The performance potential of Chaundler’s *Collocutiones*, *Libellus de laudibus*, and *Liber Apologeticus* can be further substantiated when placed in the context of other academic performance such as the Christmas King tradition. Previous to my study, however, there was only circumstantial evidence of the Christmas King ceremonial elections and/or performances before the Tudor period. Wood states that the ceremony of the King of Beans “hath been as ancient for ought that I know as the College itself.”⁵⁹⁰ Indeed, if we examine Merton’s College Register from the beginning of its records (1482-3), the election of the King of Beans is described as held in accordance with “ancient custom.”⁵⁹¹ Boas and Elliott believe that it would be foolhardy to assume that this means that the custom extended back to the time of the college’s founding in 1264.⁵⁹² Although John Persons, the first (recorded) King of Beans, was elected to office as late as November 18th, 1485, it seems just as foolhardy to conclude that his election was

⁵⁹⁰ Wood, *The Histories and Antiquities*, 136.

⁵⁹¹ *Registrum annalium Collegii Mertonensis*, 70.

⁵⁹² Boas, *University Drama*, 5-6. Elliot, *REED: Oxford*, 2:798.

the first of its kind. As a point of comparison, the first entry in the register for the festival of the Regents' Fire (January 17th, 1485), which resembles the feast at the end of the King of Beans' reign, specifically states that this custom is being reinstated after "having passed into disuse for many years" (*hec consuetudo a multis annis in dissuetudinem abiit*).⁵⁹³ The first King of Beans entry makes no such caveat. It would follow that the "ancient custom" of the King of Beans had, at the very least, a sustained tradition according to institutional memory (even if its origins do not coincide with the founding of the college).

Regrettably, it is not particularly easy to pinpoint exactly when, why, or how the ceremony and performance of the King of Beans became institutionalized in England. Although the election of festive kings seems to have been a custom that found some popularity in the royal courts and later, perhaps, was appropriated as college hall entertainment, much is clouded by a scarcity of evidence and a preponderance of scholarly hearsay. To affirm the antiquity of the King of Beans ceremony, for instance, many scholars have directly or indirectly referenced John Brand's *Observations on Popular Antiquities* (1777), where he claims that, according to his personal copy of "the ancient Calendar of the Romish Church" (no year provided) on Twelfth Night or the eve of Epiphany (January 5th), "*Kings [were] created or elected by Beans*" and on the day of Epiphany was "The Festival of Kings...[and] this Ceremony of electing Kings was continued with Feasting for many Days."⁵⁹⁴ Unfortunately, the antiquity of this evidence cannot be verified, and scholars repeat it without qualification. However, in a later edition of Brand's

⁵⁹³ *Registrum annalium Collegii Mertonensis*, 60.

⁵⁹⁴ John Brand, *Observations on Popular Antiquities* (Newcastle: Printed by T. Saint, 1777), 205. Brand's book is actually an edition (revised, amended, and updated version) of Henry Bourne's *Antiquitates Vulgares* (Newcastle: Printed by J. White, 1725). Nevertheless, Brand's description of the antiquity of the King of Beans is taken up by R.T. Hampson in *Medii Aevi Kalendarium* (London: Henry Kent Causton and Co., 1841) 1:135 and, turn, used by T.F. Thiselton-Dyer in *British Popular Customs Present and Past* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1900), 20 who is cited by the very influential E.K. Chambers (*Mediaeval Stage*, 1:260-1).

work (not often cited), John Ellis supplements this account with some contextual evidence from the first volume of John Anstis's *Militaris Curia: or, a Treatise of the Court of Chivalry*:

The practisers [sic] of the Parliaments or Courts of Justice in France chose a governor among them, whom they styled *Roy de Basoche*, which calls to remembrance the custom observed in our Inns of Court, of electing a king on Christmas Day, who assumed the name of some fancied kingdom, and had officers with splendid titles to attend on him. Answerable hereto some of our colleges in Oxford did, from the time of their first foundation, annually choose a Lord at Christmas, styled in their registers *Rex Fabarum*, and *Rex regni Fabarum*, which was continued down to the Reformation of Religion, and probably had that appellation because he might be appointed by lot, wherein *beans* were used, as the *Roy de la Febue* on the feast of the Three Kings, or Twelfth Day, was the person who had that part of the cake wherein the bean was placed.⁵⁹⁵

The tradition of the *rex fabarum* in France may have been “appointed by lot,” but the first record of the *rex fabarum* in the England suggests that this was probably a position appointed by the *actual* king. On January 1st, 1316, in reward for services to the court of Edward II, “our Lord the King [gave] to Sir William de la Bech, king of the bean, *Rex Fabae*, as a new-year's gift, on the day of the Circumcision of our Lord, a silver-gilt chased basin, with ewer to match, by weight 3*l.* 13*s.* 7*d.*, price 7*l.* 13*s.* 10*d.*”⁵⁹⁶ For the following year, the squire of the household received similar payment for his services as king of the bean. In this capacity, the *Rex Fabae* seemed to be a temporary a Master of Revels for the Christmas season and not one chosen by lot on a particular day to serve as a mock king. This is evident in the reign of Edward III, whose *Rex Fabae* supervises additional musicians for the entertainment of the king. In 1335, for their service, Regan the trumpeter and his accompanying court minstrels received 60*s* on the day of

⁵⁹⁵ As qtd. in John Brand, *Observations on the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain*, arr. Sir John Ellis (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1841) 1:24. Unfortunately, only the introduction appears to have been published (1702). David Carlson suggests that notes and materials for the treatise can be found in British Library, Additional MSS 9009-22 in “The Writings and Manuscript Collections of the Elizabethan Alchemist, Antiquary, and Herald Francis Thynne,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 52 (Spring 1989): 271.

⁵⁹⁶ Sandra Billington, *Mock Kings in Medieval Society and Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 31. Billington incorrectly dates the passages 1315 and 1316. Thomas Stapleton, “A Brief Summary of the Wardrobe Accounts of the tenth, eleventh, and fourteenth years of King Edward the Second,” *Archaeologia* 26 (1836): 342.

Epiphany “in the name of the King of the Bean (*in nomine Regis de Faba*).”⁵⁹⁷ This relationship between Epiphany and the *rex fabarum* is likewise preserved in the college traditions at Merton and elsewhere, most notably in the use of the character Balthazar, one of the three Magi (as explored in greater detail below).

Wood may (or may not) have exaggerated when he claimed that the performance of the election of the Christmas King at Merton was as old as the college itself, but multiple copies of “mock letters” from the fourteenth and fifteenth century amply document such performances.⁵⁹⁸ Moreover, these letters (in conjunction with their “manuscript matrix”) prove to be both recreative and pedagogical, serving multiple purposes within the Oxford academic community.⁵⁹⁹ In my initial investigation, I have found a number of diverse examples of treatises on *ars dictaminis* that exist in conjunction with “mock letters” (which are variously allegorical and/or satirical in nature), and have connections to Gloucester College, Canterbury College, Hinkey Hall, Greek Hall, and New College, Oxford, as well as Merton College.

The Earliest Evidence of the Christmas King Performances

All Souls College MS 182 contains some of the earliest and most nuanced examples of “mock letters” presented on behalf of the Christmas King. This manuscript features three interconnected letters (presented to the Christmas King at different times throughout the Christmas season), which demonstrate the potential performances that might be enacted for the

⁵⁹⁷ Billington, *Mock Kings*, 31. Joseph Strutt, *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* (London: T.T. & J. Tegg, 1833), 344. Strutt notes that this entry is found in British Library MS Cotton Nero C.VIII (no folio specified).

⁵⁹⁸ Boas, in *University Drama*, 5 and Elliott in *REED: Oxford*, 798 are particularly insistent that Wood does not accurately depict the “antiquity of the custom,” and yet do not offer any alternative timeframe.

⁵⁹⁹ Stephen Nichols defines the “manuscript matrix” as the “historical fact that medieval texts were written in a manuscript format which is both multivoiced and temporally open-ended,” “Philology and Its Discontents,” in *The Future of the Middle Ages: Medieval Literature in the 1990s*, ed. William Paden (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994), 119. Elliott sees these practices, for instance, as relating specifically to Merton College, though there are two late references to St. John’s College and a somewhat ambiguous reference to Canterbury College.

King during and subsequent to his initial ceremonial election.⁶⁰⁰ The first of the three letters, which is printed in Henson's edition as "Confirmation by the Genius of Christmas of Robert Grosteste as King of Christmas," is a letter for the election of the Christmas King, yet provides more details than the rudimentary description found in the Merton College register. The letter is addressed to "each and every mortal, living under the sovereignty of Christmas" (*mortalibus universis et singulis, sub Natalicia ditione degentibus*), and is delivered by disembodied celestial spirits, "revealed by divine inspiration" (*inspirazione divina revelata*).⁶⁰¹ As the spirits explain, "Recently, when the Only Begotten of God the father came forth from the secret of the virgin's womb, at the same time we came forth, because while he is manifested in flesh, we have been made public solely with the voices of the Angels" (*Nuper cum Unigentius Dei patris, de secreto cubili prodiit uteri virginalis, simul cum eo temporaliter cepimus exoriri, quia du mille manifestatur in carne, et nos publicamur una cum ipsa vocibus Angelorum*).⁶⁰² The celestial spirits have come to oversee the election of Robert Grosteste as Christmas King and to make sure the festivities do not get out of hand. The angelic voices begin by explaining why the reign of the king should be renewed each year, "lest from a longer period of time they might be clothed in tyranny" (*ne ex longiore protractu tyrannidem induant*), and why the king must be in human form, "truly because the bleary eyes of mortality cannot look upon our majestic splendor of light without being irreverent, we have made material, sensate prelates on behalf of god for the direction of human beings" (*verum quia lippientes mortalium oculi nostrae majestatis splendorem irreverberato lumine non poterunt intueri, deo pro regimine corporum humanorum*

⁶⁰⁰ H. H. Henson, "Letters Relating to Oxford in the 14th Century from Originals in the Public Record Office and British Museum," *Collectanea First Series*, ed., C.R.L. Fletcher *Oxford Historical Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885), 39-49. I will cite the Latin from Henson's edition of these letters; however, they are not printed in the order as they appear in the manuscript (see below). Henson may be reproducing the actual chronological order of the letters. The translations are my own.

⁶⁰¹ Henson, "Letters Relating to Oxford," 42.

⁶⁰² *Ibid.*, 43.

corporales atque sensibiles instituimus praelatias).⁶⁰³ However, they do not discount the merriment inherent in the feast and strike a bargain with the mortals, requiring that “the temporary feast may be led to the very end with harmonious tranquility, and in worthy compensation of your obedience, may your heads hurt with pleasant annoyance and happy anguish each morning” (*temporale festum cum concordi tranquillitate ducatur ad exitum et in dignam obedientiae recompensam, vobis capita doleant cum suavi molestia laetoque dolore singulis matutinis*).⁶⁰⁴ Indeed, happy hangovers seem to be the norm, as the revelries are expected to continue through the Christmas season (implied by “each morning”). Thus, the election is merely the precursor to the festivities, as the angelic voices proclaim, “the vigil of the present feast is imminent, as we are admitted to your drinking place, at the extraordinary hour as is the custom” (*festi praesentis imminente vigilia, vos ut accepimus in loco potatorio, hora extraordinaria prout moris est*).⁶⁰⁵ Robert Grosteste, “knight in scholastic arms” (*militem in armis scolasticis*), is then elected, as implied in the angels’ pronouncement, “with this concordant election you have lifted him up to the pinnacle of royal dignity” (*electione concordi sustulistis ad apicem regiae dignitatis*).⁶⁰⁶ Before the festivities can begin, however, the angelic voices provide an exemplum from the bible of an election that was divinely ordained (Saul chosen by God to rule over the Israelites), offer a final exhortation to behave “if only according to Christmas laws and not according to canon or civil” (*si tamen secundum Natalicias leges et non secundum canonicas vel civiles*), and command “fidelity to him [the Christmas King] this present night to be employed by every noble of your kingdom” (*fidelitatem hac instanti nocte ab*

⁶⁰³ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid. Henson notes it is “*excitum*” in the MS.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid.

omnibus regni vestri proceribus adhiberi).⁶⁰⁷ The *conclusio* of the letter states, “Given in the luminous air above the region of Bethlehem where our magnificence was proclaimed by the shepherds” (*Datum in aere luminoso supra Bethlemiticam regionem ubi nostra magnificentia fuit pastoribus promulgata*).⁶⁰⁸

This first letter shows how the election of the king was only one part of the performance of the letter. Rather than the mere recitation of a narrative about fanciful events from “beyond the sea,” this letter uses direct address by angelic voices, who provide tropological and literal biblical exempla to instruct and mentor the king elect. The celestial spirits speak with deictic immediacy; “the feast is imminent, as we are admitted to your drinking place.” The king and his nobles are called to action to demonstrate their willingness “in a sign of submission and obedience” (*in signum subjectionis et obedientine*) to the “Christmas Laws.” Their compliance is “to be employed this present night by every noble of the kingdom” (*hac instanti nocte ab omnibus regni vestri proceribus adhiberi*).⁶⁰⁹ The “nobles” could represent select senior fellows or potentially the entire viewing audience. The messengers (i.e., celestial spirits) do not simply narrate the events, but become a part of the dramatic action, where the role of the sender and messenger of the letter have merged. Thus, the messenger(s) of the Christmas King letters and those characters discussed or evoked in the text of the letter (as will be shown in the second letter from the All Souls College MS) are not ancillary to the letter’s enactment, but central to its performance.

There is a greater degree of authenticity and “realness” in the All Souls College letters than suggested by Wood’s description of the election. And yet, Robert Grosseteste, the Christmas King, cannot represent the actual Robert Grosseteste. It is believed that Grosseteste taught at

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid. The exemplum cites, I believe, I Samuel 9:2.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid.

Oxford University and served as its first chancellor sometime between 1214 and 1221, but there is no evidence that he ever studied at Oxford.⁶¹⁰ It is more probable that the King is merely playing the part of Robert Grossteste. Role-playing occurs frequently in the third All Souls College letter, which suggests these letters reflect actual performances that were later preserved as models of performance.

Rather than Chambers' and Wood's "lord of misrule," figures of authority and order dominate this letter. Like the prescribed statutes to be drafted by the incoming king at St. John's College in the sixteenth century, the "Christmas laws" are rules specific to the festive occasion, which dictate proper moral conduct and sanction merriment in the form of "honest solaces" or, in the words of this letter, "harmonious tranquility." The apparent slighting of the canon and civil laws may have been the author's attempt to distinguish the "honest" nature of the festivities and suggests these letters were written by and for theologians or artists, who "contrast their studies 'for love of God' with those of the lawyers for 'pride and gain.'"⁶¹¹

The performance potential of "good governance" is illustrated further in the second letter (as printed in Henson's edition) of the All Souls College MS. This letter is from Discretion, who acknowledges from the very beginning that R. [Robert] King of Christmas has already been elected: "We, Discretion, both mother and queen of all virtue, and a protectress of peace and serene governance of everyone, to our son, previously chosen by the grace of God, R. the illustrious Christmas King, and not to mention all the nobles of his kingdom, greetings" (*Nos, Discretio, virtutum omnium parens pariter et regina, ac cujuslibet tranquilli regiminis pacifica*

⁶¹⁰ See James McEvoy, *Robert Grossteste* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000), 21-9. McEvoy evaluates the competing hypotheses of Grossteste's theological career at Oxford and determines that if he were to have taught at Oxford or serve as its chancellor, it would probably be early rather than later in the unaccountable years between 1214 and 1235.

⁶¹¹ J. M. Fletcher, "Developments in the Faculty of Arts," *The History of the University of Oxford*, eds. J.I. Catto and Ralph Evans, vol. 2, *Late Medieval Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 320.

conservatrix, praedilecto filio nostro R. Dei Gratia Regi Natalicio illustri, necum omnibus proceribus sui regni, salutem).⁶¹² Discretion's purpose, therefore, is not to assist with the election, but to make sure the Christmas King behaves in accordance with the Christmas laws for the *duration* of his reign. Discretion lectures the Christmas King on how easily kings and kingdoms are overthrown by imprudent governance. As an exemplum, Discretion "bring(s) up the well known story concerning the rashness of Roboam [Rohoboam], who having dismissed the intelligent council of the elders...endorsed the crude opinions of the licentious youth, which split the absolute rule of his kingdom in two" (*notissimam tamen de temeritate Roboam adducamus historiam, qui, sensata et digesta seniorum consilia...lascivientis adolescentiae crudam approbavit sententiam, quae sui regni postea secuit monarchiam*).⁶¹³ Instead, the Christmas King should emulate "the power of the Empress Nature, who, in the larger world, united with an affinity of brotherhood the opposition of the four elements, and in the smaller world, the four humours" (*imperatricis naturae potentia in majori mundo, quatuor elementorum repugnantias, fraterna germanitate conjunxit et in mundo minori quatuor humorum*), and in so doing find resolve through temperance and moderation.⁶¹⁴

At the heart of this rather long letter, however, lies the conflict between "Clerimonia" (clerical sobriety) and "Laetitia" (joyful exuberance), both personified as female. While the Christmas King has been faithful to Discretion, lately, as Discretion relates, there has been "an agitation of your soul which pleasantness (Laetitia) and Clerimonia have kindled by the bellows of opposing convictions" (*aestum tui animi quem jocunditas et clerimonia contrariis persuasionum follibus accenderunt*). Thus, "lest your royal serenity be polluted by such a

⁶¹² Henson, "Letters Relating to Oxford," 44.

⁶¹³ Ibid. The exemplum refers to the story in the bible of Rohoboam in 2 Chronicles 10:7-19.

⁶¹⁴ Ibid., 45.

dishonorable blemish” (*ne tua regalis serenitas tanti dedecoris macula polluatur*), Discretion commences a trial (using judicial language):

Therefore, let it be known, dearest son, that while we were sitting judiciously in the most meritorious assembly of Discretion, and as there are different times and places for the entire world, we proclaimed a different ordinance of laws. We have ascertained in the relating of events by a faithful [source] that a certain Laetitia plays with the levity of laughter run riot in connection with young men under the guarantee of good faith, with many incitements of delight displayed on behalf of your Serenity.

*Igitur scito, carissime fili, quod dum in dignissimo sapientiae consistorio judicialiter sedebamus, et pro varietate temporum et locorum ad universalis mundi regimen varias legume promulgavimus sanctiones, fidei relatione concepimus quod ludens laetitia quadam risus levitate lasciviens et adolescentibus sub fidei sacramento conjuncta multa jocunditatis incitamenta coram tua serenitate proposuit.*⁶¹⁵

Since, in later elections of the King of Beans, both regent masters and bachelor fellows participated in the ceremonial performances, it is quite possible that the letter of Discretion was written by a regent master who had heard reports (i.e., the “faithful” source who snitched) that the entertainments of the bachelor or junior fellows (i.e., “many incitements of delight”) performed on behalf of the Christmas King (i.e., “on behalf of your Serenity”) without the masters in attendance were a bit on the wild side.

In response to these “incitements of delight,” Clerimonia brings the Seven Liberal Arts to weigh in on the situation (again, appropriate to a regent master in arts). It is at this point in the trial that Discretion’s description of the events becomes more visceral and histrionic:

How pale Clerimonia becomes following/coming in from the far side [or rear of the hall?] with the Seven Liberal Arts to escort the virginal one. She advised against her [Laetitia’s] entire conduct and because of the stress of anguish she trembles as if struck with palsy. At last, with her strength recovered from heavy bewailing, she suggests that Laetitia’s sensuality led [those] away from the protection of Clerimonia herself not yet inherited by right.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid., 46.

*Quam sequens a tergo clerimonia pallens cum septem liberalium artium virgineo comitatu. Ejus totale propositum dissuasit et prae dolorum angustia quasi paralytice tremens. Tandem resumptis viribus gravi conquestione suggestit, quod laetitia sensualitatis adducta praesidio ipsam clerimoniam nondum hereditario jure.*⁶¹⁶

Clerimonia accuses Laetitia of “seizing and corrupting the integrity of the scholars with the pleasure of titillations” (*titillatoria voluptate... scholarium integritatem corripuens et corrumpens*).⁶¹⁷ While Clerimonia may be a virgin, it appears Laetitia is not. And, though all Seven Liberal Arts have accompanied Clerimonia, not all are in full support of her. Music sides with both Clerimonia and Laetitia. To express Music’s vacillations, Discretion uses deictic language that seems to call for visualized representations of these actions: “Just as one of the partakers, now [Music] promises obedience to Clerimonia as a maid servant. Now Laetitia is joined [by Music] as a friend” (*quasi quoddam participium nunc clerimoniae spondet obsequium ut ancilla nunc laetitia jungitur ut amica*).⁶¹⁸ It is implied that Music’s duplicity may have caused the conflict between Clerimonia and Laetitia (since riotous “incitements of delight” probably included music and “sensual” dancing). Thus, Discretion must intervene and declares an “indestructible edict” (*infringibili... edicto*) that acknowledges “the plurality of the twelve signs in the firmament” (*signorum in firmamento duodena pluralitas*) and the changing of the four seasons, which “alternate by exchanging supremacy, thus also Laetitia presides for the time of Christmas, by right and having been preferred, in such a manner that is controlled and regal until the approaching solemn feast of Purification [February 2nd], when Clerimonia is given place” (*sic et laetitia natalicio tempori jure praesidens et praelata, suam taliter moderaret regaliam [regalium?] ut accedentibus purificationis solemnibus clerimoniae locus datur*).⁶¹⁹ Laetitia will be

⁶¹⁶ Ibid.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid., 46-7.

the prominent “governing force” during the reign of the Christmas King, although her influence will have to be moderated. Discretion is adamant, however, that Laetitia is not simply assigned to exile (*deputetur exilio*) after the Christmas season, for “then Clerimonia would rule with unstrained tyranny” (*tunc clerimonia tyrannizaret effrenis*), and laboring unremittingly would “induce madness” (*induceret in maniam*).⁶²⁰ Thus, Discretion concludes, “we wish that Clerimonia and Laetitia become a sacred mixture such that Clerimonia may be pleasant and Laetitia may be studious” (*volumus ut jocunditatis et clerimoniae talis fiat sacrosancta commixtio ut et clerimonia sit jocunda et jocunditas studiosa*).⁶²¹ The *conclusio* provides a further moral or lesson for the Christmas King: “[This letter] was given so that in the manner of the invincible conquerors you may possess the glorious crown in your native country” (*Quod velut triumptatores invicti coronam in patria possidebitis gloriosam datam*).⁶²² The Christmas King is thereby encouraged to follow/use discretion for the duration of his reign, as would be appropriate for one in pursuit of an ecclesiastical career.

The trial expresses many of the concerns articulated in the statutes of the Oxford colleges. As mentioned before, the Queens College statutes attempt to define and regulate improper forms of recreation. Music, in particular, could cause students to “behave wildly,” the type of behavior that is representative of an unrestrained Laetitia.⁶²³ The New College statutes, on the other hand, beseech the well-behaved side of Music (sanctioned by Clerimonia) and associate singing with “other honest solaces” as a proper form of recreation in the hall.⁶²⁴

The third letter also demonstrates how proctors or masters could monitor the behavior of students as part of the performances that were enacted throughout the Christmas season. The

⁶²⁰ Ibid., 47.

⁶²¹ Ibid.

⁶²² Ibid.

⁶²³ Elliott, *REED: Oxford*, 6.

⁶²⁴ Trans. in Coleman, *Public Reading*, 136-7.

letter begins with Transaetherius, the “father of fathers, pontiff, and minister of all ecclesiastic monarchies” (*pater patrum ac totius ecclesiasticae monarchiae pontifex et minister*) offering greetings to R. (presumably Robert), the Christmas King, as well as “the disciplinary impetus to temper his soul” (*impetum sui spiritus cum modestia temperare*).⁶²⁵ Apparently, the Christmas King has forgotten his responsibilities to the mother Church “as if inebriated by the river Lethe” (*quasi Lethaeum flumen inebriat*).⁶²⁶ Transaetherius disparages the King’s youthful pride and has serious reservations about his “premature promotion” (*immatura provectio*) as Christmas King, since “by entrusting you with such fame, it has in fact bestowed infamy” (*deferente fama quinverius infamia*).⁶²⁷ Transaetherius recounts the crimes that have been committed toward “our venerable brother ‘Johannes Curtibiensis,’⁶²⁸ honorable bishop and member of the church of divine God” (*venerabilem fratrem nostrum Johannem Curtibiensem episcopum honorabile membrum ecclesiae Sancti Dei*) by the King’s officials, “heedless of his safety, and whose names or characters though permitted, we are thoroughly ignorant of their services to us, such as, the utterly stupid steward, the drunken marshall, and that boastful one of your parliament yet worthless prolocutor” (*suae salutis immemores quorum nomina vel personas licet eorum officia nobis constet penitus ignoramus, ut puta stolidus senescallus, madidus marescallus et ille tui parlamenti grandiloquus sed nugatorius prolocutor*). The King conspired with his officials and sanctioned the attack on “Johannes Curtibiensis”:

On the very night of the Nativity of the Lord, [the officials] having proclaimed peaceful declarations/intentions earlier [to the student playing the part of “Johannes Curtibiensis”], later attacked him in a hostile manner in a remote area. They manhandled and attacked him with wicked and violent hands, having

⁶²⁵ Henson, “Letters Relating to Oxford,” 48.

⁶²⁶ Ibid. There are particularly strong parental overtones in this letter represented in the character of Transaetherius as father and the Church as nurse or mother.

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

⁶²⁸ I have not been able to locate the source of this name. “Curtibiensis” is not one of the bishoprics of the British Isles and so may be the birthplace and/or last name (Curtis?) of the student who was injured.

grabbed ahold of him with iron chains (as if he were not anointed with oil). They bound and tied him and nearly strangled him before they allowed him to go.

*In ipsa nocte Nativitatis Dominicae proclamata prius firma pace per angulos sunt hostiliter insecuti, insecutumque nephandis et violentis manibus contrectarunt, contrectatum catenis ferreis, quasi non esset unctus oleo, ligaverunt et ligatum pene prae siti dimiserant suffocatum.*⁶²⁹

Unwisely, the King attempts to defend the actions of his officials by appealing to an established tradition of juvenile hazing. As Transaetherius observes, “you have attempted to justify the horrible things previous mentioned, by alleging a certain antiquity of your kingdom” (*horribilia supradicta conatus es justificare, allegando quasdam antiquas regni tui*).⁶³⁰ Transaetherius refutes these justifications by quoting from the *Decretales* of Gregory IX (1234): “I do not speak of customs but rather of corruptions” (*non dico consuetudines sed potius corruptelas*).⁶³¹ He admonishes the King further, “Are they not your responsibilities, which in your early election to your kingdom you promised the execution of punishment on behalf of the church if you were threaten by such problems?” (*Suntne ista [tua] subsidia, quae in tua primitiva creatione in regnum in retributionis effectum promittebas ecclesiae, si sibi necessitas immineret?*).⁶³²

Because of the King’s negligence, Transaetherius (as representative of the sacred mother church) finds it necessary to intervene:

Your royal activity must cease from these undertakings, and humbly recognize the kindness of your mother [church], lest [you] be removed [from office]. If, with willful petulant disobedience, you try to defend [your actions] further and are not willing to admit to your errors in addition to the torture that was permitted by you and [those of] your kingdom, we will be forced to enact punishment. And because we wish to place mercy before judgment, we summon the aforesaid perpetrators of the wickedness to make atonement for their “ancestral” offense. They must remorsefully/penitantly submit themselves to our venerable father to be exorted equally and committed to his charge.

⁶²⁹ Ibid. The position of the Prolocutor was created as part of the First English Parliament in 1258.

⁶³⁰ Ibid.

⁶³¹ Ibid. Chambers observes the citation of the *Decretales* in the All Souls College letter in *Mediaeval Stage*, 1:412.

⁶³² Ibid.

*Desistat igitur ab inceptis tua regalis industria, et humiliter recognosce beneficia matris tuae, ne quod absit si contumaci protervia errores defendere nolueris supradictos cruciatricem in te et regnum tuum licet inviti cogamur erigere cruciatam. Et quia misericordiam iudicio volumus anteferre, praedictos superius recitatae nequitiae patratores ad satisfactionem paternaliter invitamus, eos exhortando pariter et mandando quatenus praedicto venerabili patri nostro paenitentialiter se submittant.*⁶³³

The “officials” are given three hours to submit to “our venerable father” (who is presumably the warden of the college). If they refuse, they will receive the “sentence of excommunication” (*excommunicationis sententia*), which will deprive them of all “official” rank and status.

Moreover, “John of Norwich, Guardian of Jericho [perhaps the proctor], will keep away and expell the aforesaid malefactors from being able to enter this place [i.e. the hall], and will maintain this enforcement to the extent that they will remain inside their own cramped rooms on account of their shameful deeds until they offer the customary sacrifices/penance” (*Johanni de Norwich Gardiano Jerocontino quatenus ab ingressu ejusdem loci dictos malefactores arceat et expellat, et ulterius praesentium tenore compellat, quatenus infra camerarum suarum angustias sua foeda interim offerant sacrificia consueta*).⁶³⁴ The *conclusio* of the letter states, “Given on the summit of Mount Cancer, in the year of our pontificate, not transient but eternal” (*Datum in vertice Montis Cancari, pontificatus nostri anno non fluxibili sed aeterno*).⁶³⁵

Chambers views this letter as a parody of “a papal letter to a royal sovereign” and “exactly the sort of thing that happened at the Feast of Fools.”⁶³⁶ While some parts of the letter may parody language found within a papal letter (such as the use of the *Decretales*), the purpose of the letter is to reassert “papal” (or ecclesiastical) authority rather than to undermine it. The

⁶³³ Ibid., 49.

⁶³⁴ Ibid. John of Norwich might refer to an early fourteenth-century knight who worked closely with King Edward III. See in particular records for 1329 found in H.C. Maxwell Lyte, ed. *Calendar of the Close Rolls: Edward III*, vol. 1 (London: Institute of Historical Research, 1896), 557.

⁶³⁵ Ibid.

⁶³⁶ Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage*, 1:411-2.

letter would seem to represent an actual abuse of power by the senior fellows (who played the parts of the “officials”) that required immediate action by the warden. However, the regulation and punishment of their behavior does not appear to compromise the celebration of the Christmas festivities or disrupt the conceit (or suspension of disbelief) of the performance(s). After all, it is “by means of performance” that the “officials” are reprimanded.⁶³⁷ The tradition(s) of the Christmas King are incriminated only for those specific instances that have led to an abuse of power. Thus, the performances of the Christmas King during the period of Christmas festivities give the students a time and a place for sanctioned recreation that is largely self-regulated, but does not preclude collegiate disciplinary intervention.

The Shared King of Christmas Performance Practices of Secular and Monastic Clergy

The letters of the All Souls College MS may represent the earliest letters related to the King of Christmas festivities written by secular scholars of Oxford University. Their date and provenance, however, are not certain. We can claim with perhaps greater accuracy that the six letters preserved in British Library MS Royal 10.B.ix addressed to the King of Beans have Merton auspices with codicological evidence to connect them with the reign of Henry IV and Henry V.⁶³⁸ The All Souls College letters could have been written by monastic or secular scholars (and/or masters) at Oxford and could be dated, as scholars suggest, as early as the late thirteenth century or as late as the early fifteenth century.⁶³⁹

There is a case to be made for monastic provenance based on their thematic similarities with other fifteenth-century monastic examples. The second letter from the All Souls College

⁶³⁷ Schechner and Appel, “Introduction,” 4.

⁶³⁸ Sir George F. Warner and Julius P. Gilson, *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King’s Collections in the British Museum* (London: The trustees of the British Museum, 1921), 1:314.

⁶³⁹ See below for a more detailed discussion concerning the date of composition.

MS, for instance, bears a resemblance to three allegorical letters (each with a different personified addresser – *Laetitia*, *Sobrietas*, and *Discretio*) that were written by three monks in the early fifteenth century and preserved in four manuscripts.⁶⁴⁰ Out of these four, only the Harley MS provides information about their authorship with brief notes in the margins. The first letter from *Laetitia* was “composed by Dom John Wodeward, a monk of Worcester” (*littera compositum Dompnum Johanem Wodeward monacharum Wygorn*). The second letter, from *Sobrietas*, describes the author as enigmatically, “our friend Maurice D” (*littera compositum amicum mauricum D*).⁶⁴¹ We have the most detailed information about the author of the third letter from *Discretio*, the scholar-monk Hugh Legat, who attended Gloucester College, Oxford, in the first quarter of the fifteenth century and wrote several important literary commentaries and sermons.⁶⁴² Wodeward was apparently “an exact contemporary of Hugh Legat” and also active at Oxford around the turn of the fifteenth century.⁶⁴³ It would seem likely, therefore, that these letters were written in the first decade of the fifteenth century. H.G. Richardson believes an Oxford theologian must have owned the Harley MS and that a single scribe, by the name of “Stoyle,” copied and compiled it around 1433.⁶⁴⁴ This would make the Harley MS manuscript the earliest compilation, with the other three manuscripts dating from the middle of the fifteenth century.⁶⁴⁵ Based on this evidence, it is possible that the three separate allegorical letters and the

⁶⁴⁰ James Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance at St. Albans: Thomas Walsingham and his Circle c. 1350-1440* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 227. Clark lists the four manuscripts as British Library, Harley MS 5398, fols. 128^r-131^v; British Library, Cotton MS Julius F.VII fols. 129^r-135^r; British Library, Royal MS 10.B.ix, fols. 170^r-173^r; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley MS 828 fols. 173^v-176^v.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid.

⁶⁴² Ibid. According to Clark, Legat attended Oxford “no later than 1405 since he had completed the bachelor degree in theology by 1412.”

⁶⁴³ Ibid. Siegfried Wenzel mentions in a footnote that John Wodeward returns to Worcester in 1405 from Oxford to preach a sermon on Christmas in *Latin Sermon Collections From Later Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005), 154, note 15.

⁶⁴⁴ Formularies which Bear on the History of Oxford, 435.

⁶⁴⁵ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 227, note 76.

letters from the All Souls College MS could have been written around the same time, i.e., in the first decade of the fifteenth century.

From the evidence where the auspices are known, we see similar forms of epistolary entertainment between monastic and secular clergy. As previously discussed, the students of Merton College were engaged in graduate study, and many of those who were elected King of Beans pursued a degree in theology.⁶⁴⁶ Yet, these “secular scholars” were not the only ones who studied theology at Oxford or wrote “literary letters” for recreational purposes. The Benedictine monks who attended Canterbury College (situated in close proximity to Merton) and Gloucester College developed a similar tradition of electing Kings or Abbots and/or using letters with “dramatic personae” for celebrating the Christmas season.⁶⁴⁷ By and large, these monks (like the mendicants and those from the other orders) studied primarily theology at Oxford University, although some were permitted to take a degree in Canon Law.⁶⁴⁸ Notably, this propensity among Oxford theologians for dramatic and recreational expression as a counterpart to pedagogical practices can also be seen in the work of Chaundler, who earned his doctorate in theology (as well as a Bachelor’s in Canon Law).

Although monastic and secular colleges operated separately from one another, there was still considerable educational and recreative “cross-over,” as evinced in academic sermons, ceremonial rites, and forms of recreation.⁶⁴⁹ After studying at Oxford, one of the primary responsibilities of “graduate monks” upon their return to the monastery was “to fulfill the formal

⁶⁴⁶ Not all earned a doctorate in theology like Rawlins or Harper, but more often those elected received a Master of Arts and then a Bachelor’s in Theology. Notably, Simon Mollond, who was King of Beans in 1488, earned a M.A. and B. Th. and later became a grammar master in 1490.

⁶⁴⁷ James Clark, “The Self-Image of the Scholar Monk,” *Self-Representation of Medieval Religious Communities The British Isles in Context*, eds. Anne Müller, Karen Stöber (Berlin: LIT Verlag Münster, 2009), 260-1.

⁶⁴⁸ R. B. Dobson. “The Religious Orders 1370-1540,” *The History of the University of Oxford*, eds. J.I. Catto and Ralph Evans, vol. 2, *Late Medieval Oxford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 571.

⁶⁴⁹ Clark, “The Self-Image of the Scholar Monk,” 260.

role of preacher to (and for) the monastic community.”⁶⁵⁰ The fourteenth-century Oxford University statutes state: “Those who are about to incept in theology, before they are admitted to inception, must throughout all theology schools oppose in public, preach in public, and read in public some book from the biblical canon or the *Sentences*.”⁶⁵¹ University sermons were scholastic sermons, in form and structure, which Wenzel suggests “provided a powerful model for many different kinds of public speech-making, both at the university and elsewhere.”⁶⁵² What is notable stylistically about the structure of the sermon is its reliance on “florid” forms of amplification and *auctoritates* (the authorities) to explicate the meaning of a particular theme (similar to the *loci* or topics of disputations). As seen in chapter 1, this form is also preserved in the graduation speeches (*commendationes*), which walk a fine line between performance and performativity. So it may come as no surprise that these letters, written by theologians and read/performed in public, have elements of the scholastic sermon.⁶⁵³

The Christmas King letters use these scholastic and exegetical (the historical, allegorical, tropological, and anagogical) elements of the university sermon during key parts of the epistolary performance (such as the celestial spirits’s exemplum of Saul or Discretion’s exemplum of the rashness of Rohoboam in the All Souls College letters). These exegetical performative elements have dramatic corollaries as well. In her examination of the late twelfth-century play, *Interfectio*

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid. 255.

⁶⁵¹ Trans. by Siegfried Wenzel in *Latin Sermon Collections From Later Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005), 297.

⁶⁵² Wenzel, *Latin Sermon*, 300. James Murphy helpfully outlines the six parts of a typical University-style sermon: “1) Theme: a Scriptural quotation, 2) Protheme: Exordium for the theme itself; usually followed by a prayer, 3) Introduction of theme (antetheme): Explanation of the purpose of the sermon. 4) Division of theme: usually into three or multiples of threes with *auctoritates* to “prove” each division, 5) Subdivision of theme, 6) Amplification or dilation of each divisions, and subdivisions” in *Three Medieval Rhetorical Arts*, ed. James Murphy (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1971), xix.

⁶⁵³ But it is probably more accurate to say that the scholastic sermon borrowed rhetorical elements from the *ars dictaminis* and *ars poeticae*. In Robert Basevorn’s fourteenth-century treatise on the art of preaching entitled *Forma praedicandi* (Form of Preaching), the author discusses, for instance, several ways to approach rhetorical amplification (*Three Medieval Rhetorical Arts*, 180-4). Based on specific references to university practices, Murphy also believes the treatise was written either at Oxford University or the University of Paris (112).

puerorum (Slaughter of the Innocents) from the French Abbey of Fleury, Susan Boynton argues that the play “functions as a form of performative exegesis through the medium of dramatic impersonation, which heightens the already representational and exegetical character of the feast’s liturgy.”⁶⁵⁴ The feast of the Innocents developed tropes that signified meaning beyond the literal biblical interpretation presented in the play. Thus, in the play’s performance, the boy singers could represent figures of praise and commemoration in relation to the feast of the Innocents, but also figures of lament and martyrdom in relation to the story in the bible. The performance of the play allows these and other scriptural interpretations to inhabit the same space, wherein “tropes and drama both served to fuse the two types of innocents.”⁶⁵⁵

We can see Chaundler’s play as having the same ability to engage several levels of interpretation through performative exegesis. If we merely view *Liber Apologeticus* from a structural standpoint (as most scholars have done), Chaundler’s play becomes a didactic, scholastic sermon about man’s temptation, fall, and redemption. Each act of *Liber Apologeticus* represents a new theme that is “proven” through the extensive use of *auctoritates*. Certainly the *Argumentum*, by itself, could also be viewed as a sermon with Bekynton’s divine piety as its theme. Yet, it should be remembered that Chaundler in the *Argumentum* disavows the style of the sermon, finding it unbecoming a man such as Bekynton: “Nor did I indeed imagine that a profound sermon would please you, who are an apostolic man, knowing that not in profound and persuasive words of human wisdom are the declarations of God construed.”⁶⁵⁶ Instead, Chaundler

⁶⁵⁴ Susan Boynton, “Performative Exegesis in the Fleury *Interfectio Puerorum*,” *Viator* 29 (1998): 44.

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 45. Max Harris has similarly examined the range of (devotional) performance possibilities for the *Play of Daniel* and the *Office of Joseph*. He shows how the energies of the secular New Year festivities could be incorporated into the liturgical celebration of the Feast of Circumcision (thus creating a liturgical Feast of Fools) that was recognized and endorsed by the Church (*Sacred Folly*, 126-7).

⁶⁵⁶ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 53. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 11^v.

deliberately chose the play format; because, as I have argued, performative exegesis allowed the play to signify for both Bekynton and the students of Oxford.

We should not discount, therefore, the possibility for literary and performance practices to cross the monastic and secular divide. By understanding these “overlaps” and the pervasiveness of “epistolary” forms of recreation during the Christmas season, we can better envisage the time and place for the performances of Chaundler’s play, debate dialogue, *Collocutiones*, and *Allocutiones*. There is also evidence for considerable exchange between monastic and secular colleges at Oxford, particularly in relation to the study of *dictamen*. This is discernible in the treatises themselves. Thomas Merke, a Benedictine monk, who wrote a popular treatise on letter writing, *Formula moderni et usitati dictaminis* (c. 1390), studied at Gloucester College, Oxford, but then later taught theology at the secular Queens College, Oxford, at the turn of the fifteenth century. As Camargo has shown, the treatise was clearly influenced by (and derived from) the arts of poetry and prose tradition – specifically Geoffrey of Vinsaulf’s *Documentum de modo et arte dictandi et versificandi* and *Poetria nova*.⁶⁵⁷ The preservation of his treatise in eleven manuscripts reflects this bimodality, with both monastic and secular records of ownership.⁶⁵⁸

Secular and monastic reciprocity is also evident in patterns of patronage. Chaundler, for instance, who was a very devoted Wykehamist, maintained strong ties to the monastic Canterbury College, Oxford. Sometime before November 7th 1473, he gave significant benefactions to the college as evident from the correspondence of William Sellyng, who was prior of Christ Church, Canterbury, and the warden of Canterbury College, Thomas Goldstone.⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁵⁷ Camargo, “If You Can’t Beat Them,” 73-4.

⁶⁵⁸ Martin Camargo, *Medieval Rhetorics of Prose Composition: Five English “Artes Dictandi” and Their Tradition* (Binghamton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1995), 105-115.

⁶⁵⁹ W.A. Pantin, *Canterbury College Oxford* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), 3:112-125.

Later, when Chaundler was Dean of Hereford (c.1481), Sellyng gave Chaundler a personal (undisclosed) gift in honor of their friendship.⁶⁶⁰ Coincidentally, William Sellyng, during the time of Goldstone was active at Canterbury College, was in possession of one of the manuscripts containing copies of the three allegorical letters (*Laetitia, Sobrietas, and Discretio*).⁶⁶¹

James Clark has recently observed that scholar monks participated in “principal academic rites,” including “recreations of the secular university” at Oxford.⁶⁶² Canterbury College had a history of satirical epistolary performance, as demonstrated in a letter preserved among the six King of Beans letters and the compendia of dictamen in British Library MS Royal 10.B.ix.⁶⁶³ The letter purports to be from Prester John to the “kingdom of Canterbury College” and targets its own members under the guise of various figureheads (Duke of York, Bishop of London, etc.).⁶⁶⁴ At Gloucester College, Oxford, there is specific evidence of Christmas King festivities. Benedictine monk John Lawerne kept a notebook detailing his theological studies (i.e. sermons, lectures, disputations, inception speeches, and correspondence et al.) at Oxford during the 1440s.⁶⁶⁵ In the first few folia of his academic notebook, Lawerne records that he preached a sermon “in the presence of the Christmas King at Oxford” (*coram rege natali oxonie*).⁶⁶⁶ Wenzel describes the sermon as following the “florid monastic style of the time,” though the presentation of the sermon’s subject matter seems to be unique. Lawerne appears to take on the persona of “the king’s prophet” (*Johannes lawarn’ propheta regius*) and comments on the behavior of those in the kingdom. As Wenzel observes, the sermon addresses the theme “A prophet has arisen among us” from Luke 7:16 and Lawerne “likens himself to Ezechiel [sic] and warns his ‘most

⁶⁶⁰ See, in particular, the letter from “Thomas Goldstone to Prior Sellyng, concerning Thomas Chaundler 3 Sept. [c. 1481?],” Pantin, *Canterbury College*, 3:125.

⁶⁶¹ British Library, Cotton MS Julius F.VII fols. 129^r-135^r.

⁶⁶² James Clark, “The Self-Image of the Scholar Monk,” 260.

⁶⁶³ See below for a discussion of the MS.

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 68-72.

⁶⁶⁵ Siegfried Wenzel, *Latin Sermon Collections*, 302. Lawerne’s notebook is Bodleian Library, Bodley MS 692.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 304. The sermon is on fols. 1^r-2^v.

serene prince' against his seneschal, against his secretary (*scriba*) named Bernard, and against false prophets in the realm."⁶⁶⁷ This example demonstrates that the reign of the Christmas King (secular and monastic) could encompass a wide range of performances and performance texts (sermons, speeches, letters, etc.).

Exchange as part of these monastic and secular textual (and performative) communities is further exemplified in the five letters that precede Merke's *Formula* (fols. 133^r-145^r) in Harley MS 5398. The first three are the letters from *Laetitia*, *Sobreitas*, and *Discretio* (fols. 128^r-131^v). A "real" letter from the University of Paris to Oxford University (fols. 131^v-132^v, dated June 18, 1432) follows. The fifth letter (133^v-133^r) is in the Christmas King tradition and sent from King Baltasar to a "future abbot," as part of an election ceremony, which H.G. Richardson suggests is an *abbas laetitia* (i.e., abbot of joy or "mock abbot").⁶⁶⁸ The *conclusio* provides a date of December 5th, and the subscription states that Baltasar is from the palace of Hinxe Hall, writing to the "pretended" (*pretensio*) principal of Greek Hall.⁶⁶⁹ Both of these secular halls were designated for legists at Oxford, and Richardson suggests that Christmas festivities may have been celebrated within "a grouping of numerous halls of legists, of some such kind seems to have taken place among halls of artists."⁶⁷⁰ Were the legists using the figure of the "mock abbot" because of its distinct "otherness" or were they imitating the practices of the monastic colleges? The manuscript largely comprises material that would be beneficial for a monk scholar (such as examination sermons et al.). Regardless, the preservation of the fifth letter within the manuscript suggests the possibility for the exchange of performance practices between monastic and secular scholars.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁸ Richardson, *Formularies which Bear on the History of Oxford*, 438.

⁶⁶⁹ Cobban makes note of this in *English University Life*, 206.

⁶⁷⁰ Richardson, *Formularies which Bear on the History of Oxford*, 438.

It must be acknowledged that there are notable differences in the moral intent between letters produced for a monastic audience and those for secular (academic) clergy. Clark views the separate allegorical letters from *Laetitia*, *Sobreitas*, and *Discretio* as written “in the first instance for an exclusive audience of student monks,” since “the letters concern the forthcoming Christmas celebrations in a monastic *studium* (presumably Gloucester College itself).”⁶⁷¹ However, this does not necessarily mean they were presented on behalf of a Christmas King. As the individual letter from *Laetitia* begins:

Laetitia, by permission of God, Queen of Joyful Comfort, Instructress of Music and Lady of Delight, to all populations of people and languages within the limits of established Christianity, greetings and continual increase of heartfelt delight.

*L(a)eticia, dei permissione regina L(a)eticia consolacionis, magistra musice et domina voluptatis, omnibus gentibus populis et linguis infra christianitatis limites constitutis salutem et continua precordialis letitiae incrementa.*⁶⁷²

This contrasts markedly with the secular Christmas King (and “mock abbot”) letters that always address a specific individual or members of the audience (i.e., those in attendance) for a specific occasion (i.e., the election or mock trial of the king) rather than *Laetitia*’s general greeting and indeterminate occasion.

Clark believes that given the preponderance of classical imagery, these monks (like Lydgate at court) wanted to “display – indeed to dazzle with – their literary erudition and expertise.”⁶⁷³ Although the All Souls College letters seem similarly purposed, I suggest there are important differences in the role of *Clerimonia* and *Sobrietas* that reflect their moral intent. In both versions, *Laetitia* is characteristically the same (i.e., she leads men to improper behavior through music). However, *Sobrietas* counters this impulse through (male) monastic austerity, e.g., “pious fasting, honest studia and devout prayer” (*casta ieunia honesta studia et devota*

⁶⁷¹ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 227-8.

⁶⁷² British Library, Harley MS 5398, fol. 128^r.

⁶⁷³ *Ibid.*, 229.

precamina).⁶⁷⁴ As we have seen, *Clerimonia* elicits the help of the Seven Liberal Arts, yet she ultimately yields to *Discretio*'s counsel that allows for a seasonal (albeit more moderate) expression of both *Laetitia* and *Clerimonia*. With the three separate allegorical letters, *Discretio* views both *Laetitia* and *Sobrietas* as extremes that can only be reconciled through marriage. As Clark observes, "Both protagonists are chastised, Lady Joy for her lasciviousness, Sobriety for his inept response which strained the customs of grammar and the rules of reason...they settle their difference in marriage, for only then can discretion and virtue truly triumph."⁶⁷⁵ Both sets of letters encourage discipline, but their approaches are distinct to secular or monastic auspices. All things considered, I conclude that the letters from the All Souls College MS are secular. Nevertheless, the secular and monastic overlaps demonstrate the pervasiveness of these literary and performance practices and their influence on the "honest solaces" produced in the Chaundler MSS.

The Codicological Implications of the All Souls College MS and the Christmas King Tradition

The All Souls College letters have been variously dated from c. 1225 to just before the Reformation and have been used variously by scholars to demonstrate the antiquity or early modern provenance of the Christmas King tradition.⁶⁷⁶ Discrepancies in the dating of composition arise from the 1885 edition of these letters by H.H. Henson, who does not specify

⁶⁷⁴ Qtd. in Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 228.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁶ Clark sees these letters in relation to the thirteenth-century King of Beans tradition at Merton that then expanded as the colleges grew more pervasive in the fourteenth century in *A Monastic Renaissance*, 228. Ian Lancashire, *Dramatic Texts and Records of Britain*, 240-1, who offers a tentative date c. 1225 and classifies these letters as a "performance" (in contrast to a "record," where the occurrence of which in the documentary evidence does not necessarily denote an actual performance).

the manuscript from which they were taken and has led scholars astray.⁶⁷⁷ Boas asserts that these letters could be written anytime between the fourteenth century and the early sixteenth century.⁶⁷⁸ Others seem to follow Henson's assessment that the subject matter of the letters suggests a composition date of the late thirteenth century.⁶⁷⁹ Elliott does not hazard a date, and although he is able to identify the All Souls College MS as the source of two of the letters, he does not make such a claim for the third, "which remains untraced."⁶⁸⁰ However, E.F. Jacob in his study of the "*Florida Verborum Venustas*" discusses all three letters and demonstrates (albeit implicitly) their relationship to the All Souls College MS.⁶⁸¹ This identification is further substantiated by correlating the folia designations used by Jacob, Henson, Martin and Brown, which also allow us to determine how they would have appeared in the original MS (which is not the order Henson provided in his printed edition).⁶⁸² Notably, after the first two King of Christmas letters in the manuscript, there is a real letter from Oxford University to the king appealing the Statute of Provisors.⁶⁸³ The third King of Christmas letter appears directly after. This "extra letter" and several other Oxford-related letters within the manuscript can offer some clues as to the range of potential dates within which the King of Christmas letters were written. Although the letters pertaining to Oxford (at least five, in addition to the three King of Christmas letters) are mostly

⁶⁷⁷ H. H. Henson, "Letters Relating to Oxford in the 14th Century from Originals in the Public Record Office and British Museum," *Collectanea First Series*, ed., C.R.L. Fletcher *Oxford Historical Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885), 39-49.

⁶⁷⁸ Boas, *University Drama*, 4. See also Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage*, 1:411.

⁶⁷⁹ Henson suggests the first letter is "curiously relevant to the reign of Henry III" in "Letters Relating to Oxford," 42. Clark and Lancashire seem to follow his lead.

⁶⁸⁰ Elliott, *REED: Oxford*, 799.

⁶⁸¹ E.F. Jacob, "*Florida Verborum Venustas*: Some Early Examples of Euphuism in England" *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 17 (1933): 285.

⁶⁸² The first letter printed by Henson (appears on 94^r-94^v) and should have been the last in the sequence of three. The correct sequence (using Henson's titles) is: "The Letter from Discretion to R. King of Christmas" (91^r-92^v), "To R. King of Christmas: (92^v-93^v), followed by a real letter from Oxford University to the King appealing the Statute of Provisors (93^v-94^r), and lastly "Confirmation by the Genius of Christmas of Robert Grosteste as King of Christmas" (94^r-94^v). Henson may have printed them according to what he thought was the chronological order rather than the sequence preserved in the manuscript.

⁶⁸³ A.L. Brown, "The Latin Letters of MS All Souls College 182," *English Historical Review* 87 (July 1972): 567.

undated, they are situated within a cluster of personal letters (between fols. 73^r and 94^r) that appear to be from the later fourteenth century. It would also seem that the letter from Oxford University to the king could not have been written later than 1404. In this year, according to Lytle, “papal patronage virtually ceased,” and such appeals to the king for ecclesiastical benefices were no longer necessary.⁶⁸⁴ The only other Oxford letter (fol. 80^v) suggestive of a date of composition is written by a student to a friend in Rome and mentions the late Bishop Grossteste [sic] (who died in 1253) as one who had “the power to raise spirits.”⁶⁸⁵ The legends of Grossteste’s ghost interfering with the world of the living appear shortly after his death and continue into the fifteenth century.⁶⁸⁶ Yet, probably more significant is the fact that the student is corresponding with a friend in Rome. The English presence in Rome does not become noticeable until the mid-to-late fourteenth century.⁶⁸⁷ Thus, with this circumstantial evidence, it becomes more probable that the Christmas King letters were written in the fourteenth century than the late thirteenth century. To understand these letters further, however, it may be useful to examine the codicology of the manuscript and the transmission of the documents themselves.

The All Souls College MS is divided into two sections: Latin (1-190^v) and French (191^r-375^r). The Latin section is the work of a single scribe (at least, fols. 1^r-111^v, the section containing the Oxford letters), written sometime after 1416 (the date of the most recent letter), and may have been compiled and/or transcribed by its provisional owner, John Stevens, a canon

⁶⁸⁴ Guy Fitch Lytle, “Patronage Patterns in Oxford,” *The University in Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 1:128.

⁶⁸⁵ *Registrum Epistolarum Fratris Johannis Peckham, Archiepiscopi Cantuariensis*, ed. Charles Martin, Roll Series (London: Longman & Co., 1882), 1:xlvi.

⁶⁸⁶ McEvoy, *Robert Grosseteste*, 67. The earliest narrative is preserved in Lambeth Palace Library MS 499 (c. 1270s), in which the ghost of Grosseteste visits Innocent IV, tells him he will “shortly be dead and buried in hell,” and the next morning the pope is found dead.

⁶⁸⁷ See the introduction to Margaret Harvey’s *The English in Rome: 1362-1420* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1-9.

of Exeter.⁶⁸⁸ Whereas the compiler draws extensively from the late thirteenth-century register of John Peckham (or Pecham), archbishop of Canterbury, he also incorporates letters from the archives of Norwich and Exeter in addition to the royal archives.⁶⁸⁹ The apparent difficulty of obtaining access to these documents has led some to believe that Roger Walden, secretary to Richard II in the late fourteenth century, assembled these letters.⁶⁹⁰ This might explain the existence of the diplomatic letters and those from the royal archives, but not necessarily the more personal and fanciful kind that I have termed the “Oxford cluster.”

The French section includes petitions and diplomatic correspondence from the reigns of Richard II and Henry IV, a treatise on the art of speaking and writing French (beginning on 305^v), and other documents related to French grammar. Significantly, the treatise (written by an Englishman in 1396) is composed in the form of dialogues that Bonin and Wilburn say “present conversations within the context of everyday practical situations a traveler is likely to encounter.”⁶⁹¹ These dialogues exploit the language(s) of those from different social classes, explore a full range of emotions within various comic, amorous, and contentious scenarios, and even offer potential drinking songs for the traveler to sing to pass the time.⁶⁹²

These “literary” aspects of the All Souls College manuscript (in both Latin and French sections) may point to its pedagogical usefulness. In 1484, William Elyot (who had purchased the manuscript from Stevens) willed it to All Souls College “for use of the master fellows and

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid., 565. This hand, however, appears in both Latin and French sections.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid., 568.

⁶⁹⁰ John Taylor, “Letters and Letter Collections in England, 1300-1420,” *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 24 (1980): 60. Jacob, “*Florida Verborum Venustas*,” 284.

⁶⁹¹ Thérèse Bonin and Josette Wilburn, “Teaching French Conversation: A Lesson from the Fourteenth Century,” *The French Review*, 51.2 (1977): 189. This treatise can also be found in Cambridge University Library MS Dd 12.23, fols. 67^v–87^r; Cambridge, Trinity College MS B. 14.39/40, ff. 179^r–180^v; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale Nouv. acq. lat. 699, fols. 114^r–128^v; London, British Library MS Add. 17716, fols. 106^r–111^v, and London, British Library MS Harley 3988, fols. 1^r–26^r.

⁶⁹² Ibid., 190-195.

scholars of the college” (*ad [usum] magistrorum sociorum [et] ejusdem collegii scol[la]rium*).⁶⁹³ John Taylor observes that letter collections such as All Souls College MS 182 and Richard de Bury’s *Liber Epistolaris* have a unique “literary bias” in contrast with most fourteenth-century letters, which tended to focus on “business communications.”⁶⁹⁴ Yet, Taylor views the All Souls College MS as a “hybrid compilation” that could serve cross-purposes (as both a register of important historical documents and an *ars dictandi* for composition). As such, the “letter as literary art” is most often associated with treatises on the art of letter writing in the form of model letters.⁶⁹⁵ These more “literary letters” have been used by *dictatores* to supplement the teaching of letter writing since at least Orlèans in the twelfth-century.⁶⁹⁶ By using the term “literary letters” I wish to distinguish these from a mere playfulness such as is found in an early thirteenth-century “begging letter” from an Oxford student to his venerable master: “I respectfully beg your paternity that by the promptings of divine pity you may assist me, so that I may be able to complete what I have well begun. For you must know that without Ceres and Bacchus Apollo grows cold” (*sciatis quod sine Cerere et Bacone frigescit Apollo*).⁶⁹⁷ The last line is an allusion to Terence’s *Eunuchus*, act 4, scene 5 and may be a pun on the word “bacon.”⁶⁹⁸ In contrast, there are “literary letters” that use Geoffrey of Vinsauf’s rhetorical “florid” forms of amplification (apostrophe and personification), rhetorical tropes (allegory and metonymy) in addition to rhetorical colors and figures of thought (*sermocinatio*, i.e., dialogue and *ratiocinatio*, i.e. question and answer) that can be purposed for public performance. The

⁶⁹³ *Registrum Epistolarum Fratris*, xlv.

⁶⁹⁴ Taylor, “Letters and Letter Collections in England,” 60-1.

⁶⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁶⁹⁶ Charles Haskins, “Latin Literature Under Frederick II,” *Speculum* 3.2 (1928): 141.

⁶⁹⁷ Haskins, “Letters of Mediaeval Students,” 210. Notably, this letter, housed in British Library: Additional MS 8167, provides some of the first examples of the English “florid” style. See Martin Camargo, “The English manuscripts of Bernard of Meung’s *Flores Dictaminum*,” *Viator*, 11 (1981): 197-219

⁶⁹⁸ Peter Dronke, *Sources of Inspiration: Studies in Literary Transformations: 400-1500*. Edizioni di storia e letteratura (Rome, 1997), 95.

letters to the Christmas King use these rhetorical devices in particular as part of a “literary” style that provides opportunities for students to enact a persona other than oneself (*non in propria persona*). However, these letters also use performative language that engages and parodies material related to the university curriculum as well as “real world” social and political identities.

The first letter from the “Oxford cluster” (fol. 73^r) begins with a warning about the irresponsible use of rhetoric that can cloud meaning and impede effective communication:

These and similar words I write to you, my friend, that you may the more fervently delight in the art of rhetoric which, by happy communication of itself, generalizes the blessings of peace with remarkable sweetness, refreshing the spirit of its lover. Its abuses, which surpass the sand of the seashore, affect the majority of men, as you know well; a few, however, lead even modern rhetoricians astray and deceive the professors of that art with their cloudiness (*nebulositate*). Avoid obscure words, which weaken the senses of the *hearers* and use terms easily understood by the human intelligence.⁶⁹⁹

The three Christmas King letters are “florid” examples of what the author of the letter designates as “modern rhetoric” and may seem more cloudy than clear to today’s modern reader. These letters and those of comparable manuscripts make it possible to put forth new hypotheses regarding the purpose and performance conditions of the election (and reign) of the Christmas King and, in so doing, to demonstrate the potential for a vibrant English *medieval* university performance tradition.

The Christmas King Tradition and the Re-Definition of Medieval University Performance

This new evidence raises a new conundrum: From the Tudor period (though not until 1539 at Cambridge), we have records of the election of the Christmas King and King of Beans, but no extant letters; from the fourteenth until the late fifteenth century we have approximately eighteen, perhaps upwards of twenty, letters (all from Oxford) that pertain to the election and

⁶⁹⁹ Trans. by Jacob in “*Florida Verborum Venustas*,” 284. I have added emphasis to the word “hearers.”

conduct of the King of Beans, Christmas King, Emperor, and/or mock abbot, but no records of performance, per se (see **Appendix 2**). I contend that the reason so many of these kinds of letters survive from the medieval period is because they were consciously preserved as part of collections or compendia of *dictamen*. Some, like the letters from All Souls College MS, were included in *dictatores'* textbooks or *artes dictandi*, while others, like Merton's letters for the election of the King of Beans, were compiled to supplement treatises and other model letters. I suggest that these letters were preserved because someone recognized their pedagogical usefulness, which may have been augmented by their entertainment value. Indeed, the humor and satire of these letters often belies their sophistication and rhetorical complexity. For instance, a letter from the first quarter of the fifteenth century from Neptune to the Nobles of the Kingdom of Beans begins:

Neptune, the offspring of heaven and son of great Diana, ruler, lord, and patron from Dis [Pater]'s palace to greatest Jove's citadel, to each and every noble of the kingdom of the bean, [wishing them] good health and peace and that they may listen attentively to the precepts of the everlasting republic, set [their] hands [to do them], and gather soon [to obey them] on the feet of affection as if on feathered wings.⁷⁰⁰

Neptune beseeches the "nobles" to elect a new king since the current king "brother of noble Atlas" has "renounced the world" and a kingdom without a ruler is "depredation and ruin equally."⁷⁰¹ This decision is to be made when the "feast of Clement dawns" (November 23rd). The *conclusio* of the letter states: "Written in the port of Pelion at the time when Thetis was rejoicing everywhere with Bacchus in honor."⁷⁰² This letter is found in British Library MS Royal 10.B.ix along with five other letters that are similarly addressed to the Kingdom of Beans and exhibit comparable rhetorical flourishes (with local references to Oxford and the surrounding

⁷⁰⁰ Elliott, *REED: Oxford*, 2:1081. British Library MS Royal 10.B.ix, fol. 129v

⁷⁰¹ Elliott, *REED: Oxford*, 2:1081.

⁷⁰² Elliott, *REED: Oxford*, 2:1081.

area). This type of fanciful letter is also found in contemporaneous letters written by Abbot Whethamstede, such as one written in 1423 to his fellow monks after travelling overseas to Calais:

Dear friends: Concerning the great perils of the tempest at sea from which, now that the monster ocean has been appeased, we have by grace been preserved, we are erecting altars of incense to Neptune, who at the intercession of his Thetis calmed the watery storm into a breeze, and spake and the breath of the tempest was stayed and its waters were stilled...But in no way did events follow our aspirations: since before the friend of Apollo had given us our full allowance (*plenam praebendam porrexerati*) and his steeds were tired, all at sea with us suffered the spirit of giddiness, and we, shame to say, were struck with terror and with all the others in every respect suffered watery sufferings (*aequoreas passi summus passiones*).⁷⁰³

The classical references and rhetorical flourishes within these (medieval) fanciful letters, however, trouble scholars. In his introduction to his edition of the *Registrum Annalium* for Merton College, H.E. Salter, for instance, connects these letters to Merton's Christmas festivities, yet questions their "advanced" use of language. Perhaps, he says, "if the letters were fifty years later, we might understand them better."⁷⁰⁴ However, what he, and so many others, has failed to notice is the important pedagogical connection these letters have with the instruction of *ars dictaminis*. Composing these mock letters (often with elaborate classical allusions) was not for the uninitiated. As Martin Camargo points out, *ars dictaminis* was an advanced skill and one that was rarely attempted in English grammar schools.⁷⁰⁵

To understand the pedagogical and performative relationship between "mock letters" and *ars dictaminis*, we must return to the manuscripts and examine why these "mock letters" were preserved and their sixteenth-century counterparts were not. British Library MS Royal 10.B.ix, which contains the six letters to the Kingdom of Beans, is often referred to as a miscellany, and

⁷⁰³ Jacob, "Florida Verborum Venustas," 271.

⁷⁰⁴ *Registrum annalium Collegii Mertonensis*, xvii-xix.

⁷⁰⁵ Martin Camargo, "If You Can't Join Them," 68.

its quire-signatures suggest more than one arrangement or configuration. However, the manuscript's "original components" can still be identified and grouped according to seven distinct hands.⁷⁰⁶ When we do this, we find that "hand B" consistently scripts discrete sections of compendia on *dictamen* with accompanying model letters that often refer to Oxford (fols. 13^r-45^v, 123^r-124^r, 127^r-132^v, 168^r-174^v, and 178^r-201^r). It is within one of these sections that Merton's six letters are located (fols. 127^r-132^v). In another discrete section, there are three short treatises by Thomas Sampson, a prominent "business administration" *dictator* in Oxford during the fourteenth century (fols. 13^r-32^v). The first of these treatises describes the rules for creating a will, followed by model examples, writs, libels, and ecclesiastical causes, in addition to humorous examples with names like "Dysshewassher" (fols. 13^r-16^v). Accompanying the third tract, *de litteris missivis*, there are model letters of correspondence between Oxford scholars and family members and the aforementioned satirical letter from Prester John to the "kingdom of Canterbury College" (fols. 25^v-32^r). What is striking is that in almost every discrete section the pattern is the same: treatise or official correspondence followed by a mixture of entertaining and instructive model letters. In the REED volume for Oxford, Elliott questions the relationship between the six letters from Merton and the satirical letter from Canterbury College. Perhaps there is not a connection of the type he was seeking. Rather, it may be that each extant letter is representative of a performance event that could then be used (as part of the diverse collection of *dictamina*) for pedagogical purposes. Again, I conclude that these performative letters were preserved because they shared an affinity (in goals and/or practice) with the compendia of *ars dictaminis*.

⁷⁰⁶ This is corroborated by Sir George F. Warner and Julius P. Gilson in *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Old Royal and King's Collections in the British Museum* (London: The Trustees of the British Museum, 1921), 1:314-321.

Could The Trinity College MS Be Considered an *Ars Dictandi*?

Let us view these epistolary practices in relation to Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.14.5. Few scholars have examined the play *Liber Apologeticus* and its potential for performance in relation to its parent codex. As I have done so, I have been struck by the extent to which letters figure within the play and the manuscript. The Trinity College MS contains, in addition to fifteen semi-grisaille illustrations and a poem by Simon de Couvin, a debate dialogue that begins with letters read aloud from Bath and Wells, four letters of correspondence from Thomas Chaundler to Bishop Bekynton, and *Liber Apologeticus*, whose dramatic climax occurs through the delivery of letters.⁷⁰⁷

As mentioned in the second chapter, the fourth act of *Liber Apologeticus* is based on the popular twelfth-century treatise, *On the Custody of the Soul*, attributed to Anselm of Canterbury, and a thirteenth-century Middle English variation, *Sawles Warde*. In the play, Man has just received restitution through the incarnation of Christ, but he must still make it through his last days without succumbing to temptation. In order to help him to accomplish this, Christ provides Man with the Four Cardinal Virtues to protect his “household.” With the arrival of two messengers, Fear of Death and Charity, who endeavor to gain entry into Man’s household, the play and treatises begin to follow a similar narrative. The dialogic format of the treatises (after an initial homiletic prologue) fits Chaundler’s dramatic style and thus could be easily incorporated into the play. And yet, it is notable that Chaundler adds the exchange of letters with the arrival of Charity and Fear of Death (not present in either *De custodis* or *Sawles Warde*) to heighten the dramatic climax of the play. The messenger is a separate character unlike the

⁷⁰⁷ Chaundler repeatedly blurs the boundaries between letters, dialogue, and oration. The prefatory *Argumentum*, for instance, is written in a complimentary style, using salutatory language and *captatio benevolentiae* (“seizing of good will”) similar to Chaundler’s “formal” letters to Bekynton. This epistolary format is also used in the *Argumentum* that precedes *Liber Apologeticus*.

Christmas King messenger(s), whose identity is often indistinguishable from the sender. However, the performance of these letters is not through each messenger's respective reading, since it is Man who reads the letters aloud to his household. Rather, the true performance of the letters occurs through each messenger's elaboration of the text's meaning.

This aspect of the performance of letters is corroborated by Giles Constable, who views the role of the messenger as one who "acted to some extent as an envoy or ambassador, transmitting orally not only secret messages or news too dangerous to put into writing, but also the text and message of the letter itself."⁷⁰⁸ Conrad of Mure's *Summa de arte prosandi*, for instance, explains how important it is that a messenger know the meaning of the letter and be able to transmit this meaning through proper rehearsal: "Thus, let the expositor 'preview' the letter to be expounded with careful forethought, let him read, reread, and read once again secretly, so that he may more easily disclose and expound the meaning that he has gathered to the lord to whom the letter is sent. For 'He who would speak well should premeditate well.'"⁷⁰⁹

In *Liber Apologeticus*, each messenger must supplement the content of the letter and perform its meaning; Fear of Death attempts to instill fear, whereas Charity tries to offer hope. The authenticity of their performances (just like authenticity in letters) determines which character is allowed to remain in the household, that is, which truth will be believed. In response to being asked why he has come, Fear of Death specifically states:

I am allowed to say this: Assuredly there are devils bearing great books and fiery chains. In these books, all the sins of man are written and the devils will bring them for this purpose; since Man whose sins are written in these books may be found guilty on account of them, the devils may violently snatch his soul with fiery chains into hell.⁷¹⁰

⁷⁰⁸ Constable, *Letters and Letter-Collections*, 53.

⁷⁰⁹ Camargo, "Where's the Brief?," 5-6.

⁷¹⁰ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 147. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 32'.

Man then reads the letter aloud, asking his counselors to “hear the letter of death,” which begins: “End and aim of all flesh, death, just penalty of sin, fear and terror to all whom life quickens and whom flesh covers, sends to Man still remaining in the flesh until I shall come, the last and most frightful of all terrors, greetings (*salutem*).”⁷¹¹ The letter from Death is written as if it had been produced for a court of law, using sparse, declarative legal terminology (and clauses, for instance, that begin with the future imperative): “Know that we are named Death from the bite of the forbidden fruit, concerning which it has been declared to you: On whatsoever day you shall eat of it, you shall die the death.”⁷¹² At a time when *dictatores* who taught “business administration” were seen as a threat to those teaching grammar and rhetoric in the universities, the style of “business administration” letters would have been detected in this adverse letter from Death. In contrast, the letter from Heaven is florid and poetic (much like Chaundler’s real letters to Bekynton) and describes those who “dwell in the house of the Lord”:

Here are the ranks of the good spirits who stand before God, whose equal blessedness from the vision and from the love of God neither diminishes nor comes to an end, but ever grows and abides, and their ornaments are marvelously aglow and shining.⁷¹³

It may be no coincidence, therefore, that this type of letter is ultimately the one preferred.

There is another performance of letters in Chaundler’s debate poem, *Libellus de laudibus duarum civitatum*. Before the debate begins, a prologue and two letters are read aloud *non in propria persona* by the patron saints of Bath and Wells (Peter and Andrew) on behalf of their citizenry in order to provide justification for the present debate. As examined in chapter 3, Chaundler encourages us to view the prologue and letters as an integral part of the performance of the debate. The prologue states, for instance, that Bekynton may be surprised by the vigor and

⁷¹¹ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 149. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 32^r.

⁷¹² Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 149. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 32^v.

⁷¹³ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 157. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 34^r.

diligence of the thought expressed, “when you hear their praises and speeches...about to be spoken” (*quorum laudationes et orationes cum audieris...dicendi*).⁷¹⁴ The letters that follow the prologue likewise actively petition Bekynton (through direct address) to see their town as worthy of his eminence. Gifts are then presented to Bekynton at the conclusion of these letters, and the debate formally begins. The letters are incorporated into the debate proper, as the messengers, in the form of the patron saints of Bath and Wells, elaborate the meaning behind the letters, namely, each town’s virtues and superiority. Like the performance of the “mock letters,” the *Libellus* presents expectations for the rule of the newly elected, incorporates humor, and was performed at Christmas time on behalf of Bekynton and his household. As mentioned before, the letters that precede the debate are dated December 23rd and 26th. Thus, we have not only extant letters used as part of a performance event (and performed *non in propria persona*), but also a record of the actual performance.

The real letters follow directly on the heels of *Libellus de laudibus*. They are primarily letters of petition: two written while Chaundler was warden at Winchester College, and two written (both undated) during his later tenure at New College, Oxford.⁷¹⁵ Each letter illustrates not only the generosity of Bekynton as patron, but also the workings of patron and client reciprocity. For instance, in the first letter, Chaundler assures Bekynton that he will look after a protégé Bekynton has sent to Winchester College, and without pause, Chaundler asks for additional aid on behalf of Winchester College.

We have here one countryman and your fellow-citizen, master J. of Bekynton...O most beloved father, whom we know to have always conferred benefit on us, impart to us benefit further still, we beseech you.

⁷¹⁴ Thomas Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus duarum civitatum*, ed. George Williams, *Somersetshire Archaeology and Natural History Society Proceedings* 19 (1873): 100. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 36^v.

⁷¹⁵ Shirley Bridges discusses, in “Thomas Chaundler,” 1:30-1, the considerable debt of Winchester College that Chaundler inherited as warden. During his brief administration, he was able to stabilize the college finances by securing profitable land acquisitions.

*Habemus hic patriotam unum et tibi concivem, magistrum J. de Bekynton...O
amantissime pater, quem semper nobis benefecisse cognovimus, adde precamur
adhuc benefacere.*⁷¹⁶

These real (and model) letters are not private correspondence between patron and client, but rather public declarations of a patronal relationship that spanned the period from approximately 1443 until Bekynton's death in 1465. Thus, it might be useful to view the Trinity College MS as an *ars dictandi*, since it contains real/model letters, letters as orations, and fictive legalistic and florid-style letters that were presented within the framework of performance and preserved for pedagogical and entertainment value.

My purpose has been to suggest that there was a tradition of university drama before the Tudor period by demonstrating how *ars dictaminis* and the Christmas King tradition could be the basis for pedagogical and recreative performance within medieval English universities. The many ways letters intersect with performance indicate their complementary and dynamic relationship, which existed long before their vogue in the early modern period. Medieval pedagogy is thus very capable of supporting multi-faceted, "exploratory" performance practices, provided that we expand our investigation beyond play texts. In doing so, we discover the true performance potential of Chaundler's *Liber Apologeticus*, *Libellus de laudibus*, the seven *Collocutiones* and two *Allocutiones*.

⁷¹⁶ Chaundler's letter is printed in *Official Correspondence*, 1:270-72. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 44^v- 45^r.

Conclusion

The Future of Academic Drama: Expanding the Network of Medieval Textual and Performative Communities

My inquiry began by questioning the validity of Frederick Boas's assertion that university drama did not exist before the Tudor period. An essential part of this inquiry was the examination of *Liber Apologeticus*, one of the most important academic plays written and performed (by an "imagined" or "actual" audience and/or readers) during the fifteenth century. To appreciate the performance potential of *Liber Apologeticus*, it was necessary to dislodge the play from the trappings of humanism and to view it in relation to its own cultural context, that is, the ecclesiastical and pedagogical practices of the medieval English university. As we have seen, its author Thomas Chaundler preferred the use of patristic or biblical authorities over the "ancient authors" in his writings, and when he did use authors such as Cicero, it was, as Weiss suggests, because of the "help it gave to his more conservative studies, and if he encouraged classicism he did so in order to further the advancement of medieval rather than Renaissance culture."⁷¹⁷ It was also necessary to view medieval university drama from the standpoint of ecclesiastical and pedagogical performance practices rather than traditional play texts. In doing so, I was able to identify several new types of medieval university performance and *performance* texts: pedagogical performance and the performance of lamentation (*planctus*) for the preservation of the clerical corporate body, devotional performance of divine piety and the *ductus* of the one dying/dead as part of the liturgical contemplation of the Office of the Dead, and epistolary performance of the Christmas Kings that coexist with treatises on the *ars dictaminis* and provide "honest solace" for the students (and masters) during the Christmas season. These different, yet complementary, types of medieval university performance

⁷¹⁷ Weiss, *Humanism in England*, 206-7.

flourished from the mid-fourteenth century, perhaps earlier, and their performance potential is effectively evinced in *Liber Apologeticus* and the texts of the Trinity College MS and New College MS.

In chapter 1, I showed how the performance of *Liber Apologeticus* encourages the “imagined audience” to preserve and maintain the integrity of the clerical corporate body. Oxford University became a corporate body in 1214 as a result of its members receiving the privilege of clerical status. As part of its clerical status, the university tried to promote a concomitant clerical identity. I argued that there were many internal and external conflicts that threatened the university’s corporate body as a result of the disparity between the students’ clerical status and implied clerical identity. These internal and external conflicts were generative of the first academic drama, *Planctus Universitatis*, which attempts to regulate the behavior of the junior scholars who are not engendering a proper clerical identity. In a similar way, *Liber Apologeticus* advocates for the proper observance of a clerical identity, but uses theoretical concepts from the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, and logic) to reinforce the ways in which the curriculum can safeguard against the temptations of sensuality (or prostitution) and uphold clerical celibacy. The play also models and performs pedagogical practices (such as preaching, disputation, and lecture) that show students how to *enact* proper moral conduct. I suggested that a “new” Wykehamist ideal of fraternity and charity provides the ideological foundation in support of a clerical identity for the “imagined audience.”

In chapter 2, I explored how Bekynton as the “actual audience” (as well as potential readers) could use *Liber Apologeticus* as a performative devotional text. I argued that the play and illustrations provide a *ductus* or path for contemplating the dictates of one’s “house of conscience” and the virtues required not only to lead a good life, but also to die a good death.

Liber Apologeticus, for instance, cites liturgical passages from the Office of Dead and guides the reader along a similar path as Job from despair and anger to hope and redemption. I claimed that the devotional prayers of the Office of the Dead are performed *non in propria persona* and that this performative aspect of its liturgy contributes to the performativity of *Liber Apologeticus*. The illustrations also provide the reader with a *ductus* for contemplation, but they allow the reader/viewer to experience the play differently, heightening, in particular, the eschatological and moral implications of death. The allegorical poem, *De judico Solis in conviviis Saturni*, which concludes the manuscript, also provides a *ductus* of active contemplation about the theological and astrological implications of the Black Death. The poem suggests medical remedies for the Black Death are not effective (because the doctors are corrupt) and therefore one must depend on the moral remedies that can only be discovered through the “conscious awareness” of an inner contemplative mind and affective penitent soul. I argued that the various *ductus* for contemplating one’s death found within these texts would have been attractive not only to Bekynton who thought often about his own death, but also to Wykehamists, whose chantry obligations and “post-mortem patronage” were dominant fixtures of their everyday life at New College.

In chapter 3, I showed why terms such as “proto-humanist” and “ecclesiastical humanism” perform a disservice to Chaundler’s works. I began by critiquing Chaundler’s and Bekynton’s level of humanist political and literary engagement, with an extensive examination of Bekynton’s style of epistolography. As a result of this inquiry, I was able to show how both Chaundler and Bekynton found sacred authorities, ecclesiastical responsibilities, and medieval “florid” examples of writing preferable to ancient authorities, civic responsibilities, and the writings generated by Italian humanists. I also disputed the assumption that the humanist texts

incorporated into Chaundler's *Libellus de laudibus* from leading Italian humanists (Leonardo Bruni, Pier Decembrio, and Lorenzo Valla) implied that Chaundler was trying to imitate these humanists or endorsed their ideology. Instead, I demonstrated how Chaundler uses medieval stylistic conventions, such as the format of the *controversia* and the invective of *flyting*, to structure and enliven the *Libellus de laudibus*. I also showed how Chaundler intentionally deprivileges and depoliticizes the content and style of the humanist texts he incorporates. Though Chaundler acknowledges the value of Ciceronian eloquence, he does so not because he admires its secular virtue (as political persuasion on behalf of the *res publica*), but for its ability to promote sacred virtues (for which, as Chaundler states, without the theological virtue of charity, such eloquence is meaningless). When these humanist assumptions are no longer seen as its *raison d'être*, the *Libellus de laudibus* can be appreciated as a dynamic example of medieval performance.

In chapter 4, I provided new evidence about the rarely acknowledged medieval Christmas King tradition at Oxford that influenced the composition of *Liber Apologeticus*, *Libellus de laudibus*, *Collocutiones* and *Allocutiones* and placed these texts within a medieval university context and tradition of performance. I also examined how the study and application of the *ars dictaminis* provided an important medieval pedagogical link to both the Christmas King tradition and the texts of the Chaundler MSS. My purpose was to demonstrate that the texts within the Chaundler MSS were not proto-humanist, but firmly representative of a medieval "florid" style of rhetoric and pedagogy as demonstrated through the epistolary performances of the Christmas King and *ars dictaminis* tradition.

One of the challenges of working with new performance texts is reconstructing the performance event. It becomes necessary to determine whether the text was intended to be

performed, and if it was, whether its enactment was more than the mere recitation of an academic exercise. For the latter, Sullivan's criterion of *non in propria persona* was a useful tool for making this distinction. However, not all forms of academic performance require impersonation. The pedagogical practice of disputation, for instance, was performed as "solemn" yet "pleasing" entertainment, for King Edward IV and Richard III.⁷¹⁸ All too frequently, no clearly identifiable performance texts can be discerned from such records of performance. When we examine a disputation's performance text (*questiones disputatae*), for instance, we are faced with the problem of determining the representational authenticity of the actual event. The performance text may only represent a master's "exposition of a text" used for teaching purposes and not a record of a publically determined disputation.⁷¹⁹ Moreover, texts of disputations that are recorded as having been performed often provide misleading information about the actual performance. As Jody Enders has shown, there is a significant difference between "the lively and participatory oral *disputatio*, and a definitive [written] *determinatio* of that proceeding which was rendered (often on a later day) by the presiding master."⁷²⁰ Thus, we cannot assume that an extant "performance text" is representative of the text used in performance.

For this reason, it is difficult to know if the first two All Souls College Christmas King letters represent a record of an actual performance, a modified version of the original, and/or models for future performances. Although the letters do not make local references that are indicative of an actual performance (such as those found in the Harley MS 5398 letter from Hinxy Hall to Greek Hall or the King of Beans letters in British Library MS Royal 10.B.ix),

⁷¹⁸ Anthony Wood states that on September 24th, 1481, Edward IV was "pleased to be present at public Disputations...and [after the King] heard Scholastical exercises he departed with great content" (*The Histories and Antiquities of the University of Oxford*, 638). Wood also states that on July 25th, 1483, "at the command and desire of [Richard III] two solemn Disputations [were] performed" (one in moral philosophy and the other in divinity) and the king "rewarded the Disputants very honorably, that is to say, to the Doctor he gave a Buck and 5*l*, to the Respondent a Buck and five marks," 639.

⁷¹⁹ J. A. Weisheipl, "Curriculum of the Faculty of Arts at Oxford," *Mediaeval Studies* 26 (1964): 182.

⁷²⁰ Jody Enders, "The Theater of Scholastic Erudition," *Comparative Drama* 27.3 (1993): 345.

they do make frequent use of deictic language and role-playing, which suggests they were performed, but potentially modified and/or preserved as models of performance. However, the third All Souls College letter (with Transaetherius and the tribunal) seems to represent more definitively an actual performance event, whose disciplinary action, for instance, is *performed* in the letter. Although it could have been revised later to reflect the “proper course of action” (or how the masters or warden would have liked to have handled the situation), the specificity of the details, such as the irons chains used by the “officials” as part of their juvenile hazing of “Johannes Curtibiensis,” are suggestive that the letter was based on an actual performance (with or without modifications). Additionally, the third letter does not have the kind of “general applicability” as the other two letters that serve as models of performance and can be easily performed without much adaptation.

We may also speculate on the performance texts in the Chaundler MSS and their relationship to the performance event. As discussed in chapter 4, Chaundler’s *Collocutiones* were written by a student and “delivered in public on behalf of the King of Solace to augment social delight” (*ad ampliacionem socialis gaudii aliquando publice coram Rege solacii fuisse dictas*).⁷²¹ For its inclusion in the presentation manuscript, Chaundler states that he “removed the superfluous, corrected most of its parts; truly, much has been changed, for the most worthy bishop and all who have been nurtured by the foundation of so great a father” (*elimato superfluo, plurima sui parte correctas, in multis vero mutates, tibi dignissimo presuli omniumque quos tanti patris et fundatoris gremium enutrivit insignissimo*).⁷²² These significant changes to the original performance text obviously obfuscate our ability to reconstruct the original performance event. However, it would seem to imply that those “superfluous” aspects of the performance that were

⁷²¹ Bridges, “Thomas Chaundler,” 2:104.

⁷²² Bridges, “Thomas Chaundler,” 2:105.

deemed unsuitable for Bekynton might account for the more “playful” elements that were not removed (such as the recitation of verses and humorous exchanges between Panescius and Ferrandus). These “superfluous” elements (rather than the didactic examination of virtue) may have been featured and be more indicative of the original performance as part of Christmas King festivities. In contrast, the *Libellus de laudibus* seems to represent the actual performance event, a celebration of Bekynton’s recent advancement to the episcopacy. The internal evidence in Andrew’s letter to Bekynton seems to support this: “For you illustriously engender all virtues... and now have been decorated with the bishop’s mitre; we can celebrate and congratulate you most justly and deservedly not only by this event” (*tibi enim omnium virtutum genere clarissimo... iam pontificali mitra decorato, non ab re sed merito ac justissime congaudere ac congratulari possumus*).⁷²³ As suggested in chapter 1, there is also circumstantial evidence that Chaundler and several fellows went to Wells Cathedral to celebrate Christmas festivities in 1445, which would have been an appropriate time to present the *Libellus de laudibus* in his honor. Further, it coincided with the construction of a “*locandi*” or “demountable stage” for use in the Chapter House in the same calendar year. *Liber Apologeticus*, on the other hand, seems to be a “new work” by Chaundler, as the anxious comments in the end of the play’s Argument suggest: “Receive now, Father, the first fruits of my labours, and since I so inadequately fill the posts of Chancellor at Oxford and also at Wells, use your authority as holy Chancellor to strengthen in substance this little work of mine, and if ought appears in need of correction, strike it out.”⁷²⁴ However, as demonstrated throughout this dissertation, this does not in any way diminish the play’s potential for performance. *Liber Apologeticus* represents the culmination of the

⁷²³ Chaundler, *Libellus de laudibus duarum civitatum*, 102. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 37^r.

⁷²⁴ Chaundler, *Liber Apologeticus*, 53. Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 11^v. I have slightly modified Shoukri’s translation.

ecclesiastical and pedagogical performance practices whose bimodality is purposed for different audiences and performance experiences.

Although medieval university drama tends to be conservative (preserving the clerical corporate body, providing “honest solace,” contemplating one’s death, etc.), this does not lessen its entertainment value or indeed imply that a university custom of performance remained conservative throughout its performance history. As seen in chapter 1, from the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, *commendatio* speeches honored, in solemn fashion, the moral and intellectual virtues of incepting bachelors. In the first quarter of the fifteenth century, however, the *commendatio* speeches were presented *non in propria persona* by the “Father of the Act” to his “children” (the inceptors). Moreover, the commendation was no longer about the inceptor’s virtue, but his faults and foibles, as the following speech for a Merton inceptor illustrates:

Mr. Dobbys’s name denotes duplicity and fickleness, because firstly D stands for Duplex; secondly, his name has two syllables; thirdly, it has double B in the middle; and fourthly, *bis* at the very end. Mr. Dobbys has a large head, a very low forehead, beetling eyebrows, black staring eyes, a monstrous mouth, a large nose, a protruding upper lip, and big ears; features which prove him undisciplined, choleric, unsteady, impetuous, proud, feeble, fatuous, unvirtuous, greedy, wicked, rough, quarrelsome, abusive, foolish and ignorant.⁷²⁵

The “Father of the Act” then describes a drunken escapade of Mr. Dobbys on his way from Carfax to Merton where he fell into a pond and “on the morrow, in answer to kind inquiries, he denied all knowledge of the pond. Thus, were his feckless drunken ways amply proved.”⁷²⁶ By the sixteenth century, the role of the “Father of the Act” was usurped by the “*Terrae Filius*” (Son of the Earth), whose invective was not limited to the inceptor, but insulted nearly everyone in attendance at the evening ceremony (*vesperies*). Perhaps as a measure of control and containment, the participation of the *Terrae Filius* in the inception ceremonies was

⁷²⁵ Strickland Gibson, “Order of Disputations,” *Bodleian Quarterly Record* 6 (1930): 107-8. According to Gibson, this speech and two others can be found in Magdalen College MS 38 (c. 1420).

⁷²⁶ *Ibid.*, 108.

institutionalized (that is, formally written into the *Laudian Statutes* of 1636). By 1669, the ceremony moved from the Church of St. Mary the Virgin to the Sheldonian Theatre, which was viewed as a more appropriate venue for its increasingly “secular” proceedings.⁷²⁷ According to Gibson and Buxton, the *Terrae Filius*’s speech was not only for the (clerical) entertainment of an academic audience, but also for the entertainment of a lay audience, “attract[ing] large crowds of the less desirable sort to the Theatre.”⁷²⁸ The *Terrae Filius*’s performance was essentially its own performance event and could last upwards of an hour.⁷²⁹ However, the disruptive (and anti-clerical) nature of the *Terrae Filius*, described by Richard Steele in 1713 as one who has “less compunction than the common hangman, less shame than a prostitute,” not only led to the frequent expulsion from the university for those who played the part, but also the removal of the *Terrae Filius* from the graduation ceremony altogether, with his “last appearance” in 1763.⁷³⁰

The Christmas King tradition was also institutionalized (that is, included in the St. John’s College, Cambridge statutes by Henry VIII, c. 1544-5), however, these ordinances were not drawn to contain disruptive or immoderate behavior, but to keep students occupied in order to *prevent* this behavior by spending the Christmas festivities “in suitable relaxation of mind and literary exercises, with happiness and good cheer.”⁷³¹ Yet, even with attempts to institutionalize the tradition, the college records indicate that the Christmas King was performed only

⁷²⁷ Strickland Gibson and L.H. Dudley Buxton, *Oxford University Ceremonies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), 92-3. See also Douglas Ehninger and Bromley Smith, “Terrafilial Disputations at Oxford,” *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 36 (1950): 333-9. Kristine Haugen, “Imagined Universities: Public Insult and the *Terrae Filius* in Early Modern Oxford,” *History of Universities* 16:2 (2000): 1-31.

⁷²⁸ Gibson and Buxton, *Oxford University Ceremonies*, 93. By the eighteenth century, the *Terrae Filius* was an opponent as part of the ritualized disputations.

⁷²⁹ Haugen, “Imagined Universities,” 1.

⁷³⁰ Ehninger and Smith, “Terrafilial Disputations,” 334 and 339.

⁷³¹ Nelson, *REED: Cambridge*, 2:1113. The exception is perhaps the elaborate and problematic reign of the Christmas Prince at St. John’s College, Oxford in 1607-8 (Chambers, *Mediaeval Stage*, 1:408-11).

sporadically after 1539, and then it disappears (after one last hurrah) in the early seventeenth century, probably as a result of its increasingly excessive cost.⁷³²

These two seemingly disparate traditions, however, find common ground in the satirical letter from Canterbury College from the first quarter of the fifteenth century (as discussed in chapter 4) that is preserved among the six King of Beans letters and the compendia of dictamen in British Library MS Royal 10.B.ix. The satirical letter is addressed to the “Kingdom of Canterbury” from Prester John and targets the “officials” (such as the Duke of York and the Bishop of London), who represent the masters and scholars of the college. Notably, the style of address is very similar to the *commendatio* speeches given by the “Father of the Act”:

Chief Justice: This one is admired in all affairs and rises against voices of insolence, which is a warning sign of madness since he is raised so high: For he has legs of yew-trees, a pontifical (cone-shaped?) crown, a face of a leopard, a voice of a bull or rather a cow, the tongue of a crow, the language of the mill-house, and the mouth of a hedgehog. For his deformed and monstrous figure exceeds all consideration of his nature.

*Justiciarius: hic miretur omne seculum, et insurgat in voces insultacionis, quod tam demens prodigium ita alte sublimaretur: nam ei sunt tibie taxis, corona pontificis, facies leopardi, vox tauri vel verius bovis, lingua gracult, loquela molendini, os ericii. Nam eius deformis et monstruosa figuracio excedit omnem speculationem nature.*⁷³³

As Pantin notes, the satire also uses selections from the Christmas liturgy (antiphons and hymns), which suggests it was performed during Christmas festivities.⁷³⁴ The presence of both forms of “conservative” epistolary performance and the “disruptive” parodic *commendatio* speeches suggest that these traditions were not mutually exclusive. Moreover, these borrowings are a further indication of the range of shared performance practices between the monastic and secular colleges.

⁷³² Boas, *University Drama*, 7.

⁷³³ Pantin, *Canterbury College*, 3:71.

⁷³⁴ *Ibid.*, 3:68.

Future research may find additional performance texts through the examination of these secular and monastic textual and performative communities. James Clark, for instance, has proposed that there was a “new brand of classicism” at Oxford, which was evident among the theology students in the late fourteenth century and began to “flourish” in the first quarter of the fifteenth century, largely because of the “university’s established position as a centre for the circulation of texts.”⁷³⁵ Significantly, Clark argues that this “new classicism” should not be viewed as the work of “early humanists,” but rather, analyzed “on its own terms.”⁷³⁶ He maintains that the proponents of this “new classicism” were both secular and monastic theologians (such as Hugh Legat, Simon Southery, John Seward, and John Whethamstede), who promulgated “florid eloquence” in “service of the church” and encouraged “educational reform, a return to older, perhaps high medieval conceptions of the liberal arts, a curriculum of *trivium* and *quadrivium*.”⁷³⁷ As examined in chapter 4, Legat was the author of the third allegorical letter from *Discretio* and also wrote a commentary on Jean de Hauville’s *Architrenius* (The Arch-Weeper). Many of the practitioners of “new classicism” were particularly influenced by the allegorical poetry of Alain de Lille’s *Anticlaudianus* and Jean de Hauville’s *Architrenius* (which Douglas Kelly has termed “literary masterpieces”) that were deemed by Gervase of Melkley in the twelfth century as exceptional works of art that could instruct in poetry and prose composition simply through study and imitation of their literary techniques.⁷³⁸ These “literary masterpieces” were often preserved in anthologies along with examples of poetry and prose that

⁷³⁵ Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 211-5. He notes that classical texts were borrowed by fellows of Merton College in the first quarter of the fifteenth century and included “Boethius’s *Consolatio*, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* of the pseudo-Cicero, and Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*” (215).

⁷³⁶ *Ibid.*, 238.

⁷³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷³⁸ Douglas Kelly, *The Arts of Poetry and Prose* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1991), 41-2. Clark, *A Monastic Renaissance*, 236.

demonstrated these literary techniques.⁷³⁹ Bekynton was in possession of a rather substantial medieval anthology (Oxford: Bodleian Library, MS Additional A.44) that A.G. Rigg has described as being an “anthology par excellence” and one that “would provide a student with a solid basis in Medieval Latin literature.”⁷⁴⁰ Notably, it contains John of Hauville’s *Architrenius*, two Latin plays (Matthew of Vendome’s *Miles Gloriosus* and Vitalis of Blois’s *Geta*), Isidore de Seville’s *Synonyma* (whose rubric states, “A useful treatise in the manner of a dialogue, namely of lamenting man and admonishing reason”), and many other verse debates, *planctus*, invectives, mock sermons, and dialogues.⁷⁴¹ As Cole has recently pointed out, Chaundler cites a passage from Hauville’s *Architrenius* in the prologue to the *Collocutiones*, though does not mention Hauville by name: “You have read, I suppose, the most elegant meter of that poet” (*Legisti, reor, illa poete elegantissima metra*).⁷⁴² Cole suggests, I believe rightly, that Chaundler is referring to Bekynton’s anthology.⁷⁴³ Moreover, many of these exemplars of “florid eloquence” from this anthology participate in the tradition of medieval university performance. A study of these texts and their relationship to Oxford’s textual and performative communities as well as the Chaundler MSS would certainly be a worthwhile inquiry. For now, I would like to suggest that, rather than being a secular proto-humanist, Chaundler was a part of this wave of “new classicism” that

⁷³⁹ Kelly, *The Arts of Poetry and Prose*, 43.

⁷⁴⁰ Rigg, *A History of Anglo-Latin*, 152-3.

⁷⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 153. For a description of the contents with their accompanying rubrics see André Wilmart, “Le Florilège mixte de Thomas Bekynton,” *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies* 1 (1940): 41-84 at 83. This is my translation. See also part two, André Wilmart, “Le Florilège mixte de Thomas Bekynton,” *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies* 4 (1958): 35-90.

⁷⁴² Bridges, “Thomas Chaundler,” 2:100.

⁷⁴³ Andrew Cole, “Staging Advice in Oxford, New College, MS 288: On Thomas Chaundler and Thomas Bekynton,” *After Arundel: Religious Writing in Fifteenth-Century*, eds. Vincent Gillespie and Kantik Ghosh (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 254-5.

originated in the twelfth-century Orléans, had a resurgence in the late fourteenth century, and “flourished” in the fifteenth century among Oxford theologians.⁷⁴⁴

One of the most important nodes for Chaundler in the network of textual and performative communities is the fraternity of Wykehamists, which is defined by the virtue and charity of its figurehead, William of Wykeham. Ultimately, Wykeham is determined to be a virtuous man in the *Collocutiones* through his collegiate foundations, Winchester College and New College, Oxford, and his virtues are demonstrated further by the generations of distinguished men who have and continue to “eminently honor” (*eminenter ornabunt*) these foundations.⁷⁴⁵ Wykeham is virtuous, therefore, not only by his “morals” (*moribus*) and his “wisdom” (*sciencis*), but also by his ability to instill virtue in others, as Chaundler relates, “establishing you [i.e., Panescius and Ferrandus, but also the audience] as heirs by that proverb, which he most often displayed in life: manners maketh man” (*illius veluti proverbii vos heredes constituens, quod sepissime in vita promebat: mores component hominem*).⁷⁴⁶ The virtuous distinction of Wykehamists is visually displayed in an illustration in the beginning of the New College MS (see **Figure 3**). At the top of the illustration, William of Wykeham is seated, holding his two collegiate foundations. On one side of Wykeham stands archbishop Chichele, who founded All Souls College, as Chaundler states, “by imitating the example of our founder, he founded the honorable college” (*fundatoris et nostri exemplar imitans collegium fundaverat honorandum*).⁷⁴⁷ On the other side stands archbishop Cranley, who was also the first warden of Winchester College. Slightly below them, stand Bishop Bekynton on the left, who rests his hand

⁷⁴⁴ For lines of textual transmission from the twelfth century into the fourteenth century via anthologies and *florilegia*, see R.H. Rouse, “Florilegia and Latin Classical Authors in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Orleans,” *Viator* 10 (1979): 131-160.

⁷⁴⁵ Bridges, “Thomas Chaundler,” 2:194.

⁷⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 2:201.

⁷⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 2:195.

in patronal support of New College, and Bishop Waynflete on the right, who would go on to found Magdalen College. Chaundler is positioned directly below Bekynton, with Bekynton's robe draped over his shoulder, as James observes, in order "to emphasize the fact that Bekynton is his patron and protector."⁷⁴⁸ Chaundler describes the men to his right in the illustration by their ecclesiastical titles (written on their robes) but also mentioned in the seventh *collocutio*: Andrew Holes (archdeacon of Wells), John Norton (archdeacon of Berks), Hugh Sugar (treasurer of Wells), and slightly above stand William Say (deacon of London) and Richard Andrews (deacon of York), and on the lower right, John Selot (archdeacon of Cornwall).⁷⁴⁹ In addition to ecclesiastical preferments, many of these men also held important educational positions such as chancellor of Oxford University (John Norton and Chaundler) and warden of a college (Richard Andrews and Chaundler).⁷⁵⁰ Four of them also had their own chantries (Chichele, Sugar, Bekynton, and Wykeham).

Chaundler also lists, as part of the seventh *collocutio*, his most esteemed Wykehamists (*dilectissimi*), the scholars, fellows, and brothers of intimate acquaintance whose accomplishments are delineated according to the degrees they earned at Oxford and the ecclesiastical positions (mostly as canons) they served.⁷⁵¹ Chaundler's ecclesiastical connection to these canons may offer additional textual and performative communities similar to the Oxford, Exeter, and Wells Cathedral nexus. Though many of the Wykehamists featured in the illustration had successful civic and political careers, I believe it is significant that Chaundler does not focus on these accomplishments; instead he shows how these men are representative of

⁷⁴⁸ James, *The Chaundler MSS*, 20.

⁷⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁰ Storey, "The Foundation and the Medieval College," 24-5.

⁷⁵¹ Arthur Leach provides a list of these "Wykehamical worthies": John Merton S.T.P., i.e. D.D.; Thomas Marsh, Canon of Wells; Thomas Edmund, Canon of Lichfield; Thomas Halle, Canon of St. Paul's; Thomas Walkington, Canon of Lincoln; Thomas Durset, Canon of Hereford; John Russel, Canon of St Stephen Westminster; John Baker, Warden of Winchester; John Kingscote, Archdeacon of Gloucester; and William Westberry, Provost of Eton, Canon of Salisbury (*A History of Winchester College*, 217-8).

educational and ecclesiastical distinction, i.e., the qualities that engender the “new” Wykehamist ideal.

To conclude, university drama did exist before the Tudor period, and produced a wide range of performance texts that were both demonstrative and exploratory in order to reaffirm *and* redefine clerical corporate identities. As demonstrated by the Chaundler MSS, the audience for university drama was not limited to Oxford, but encompassed a much broader audience through dynamic ecclesiastical and educational networks that reached out to the fraternity of Wykehamists, the ecclesiasts and choristers of Wells Cathedral, the canons of Exeter and Lincoln cathedrals, and the monks of St. Albans and Christ Church, Canterbury, in addition to Bishop Bekynton and the students of the Oxford University. As part of these communities, the performance texts of the Chaundler MSS invite each member of the audience or performative reader to embark on his or her own exploratory *ductus*.



Figure 3 Oxford: New College MS 288, fol. 4'
(by permission of the Warden and Scholars of New College, Oxford)

Appendix 1
Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5 Illustrations



Post confirmacionem bonorum Anuloꝝ in gratia ⁊ iustam demonū condem
nacōnem obstinatoꝝ in malicia. De qb; dicit: Supbia eoz q; te oderūt ascendit
semper. plasmat homo ex limo. in corpore organico bñ disposito. aīa rationali
desup informato. numerum cadencium restauraturus.

Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 2r
(by permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge)



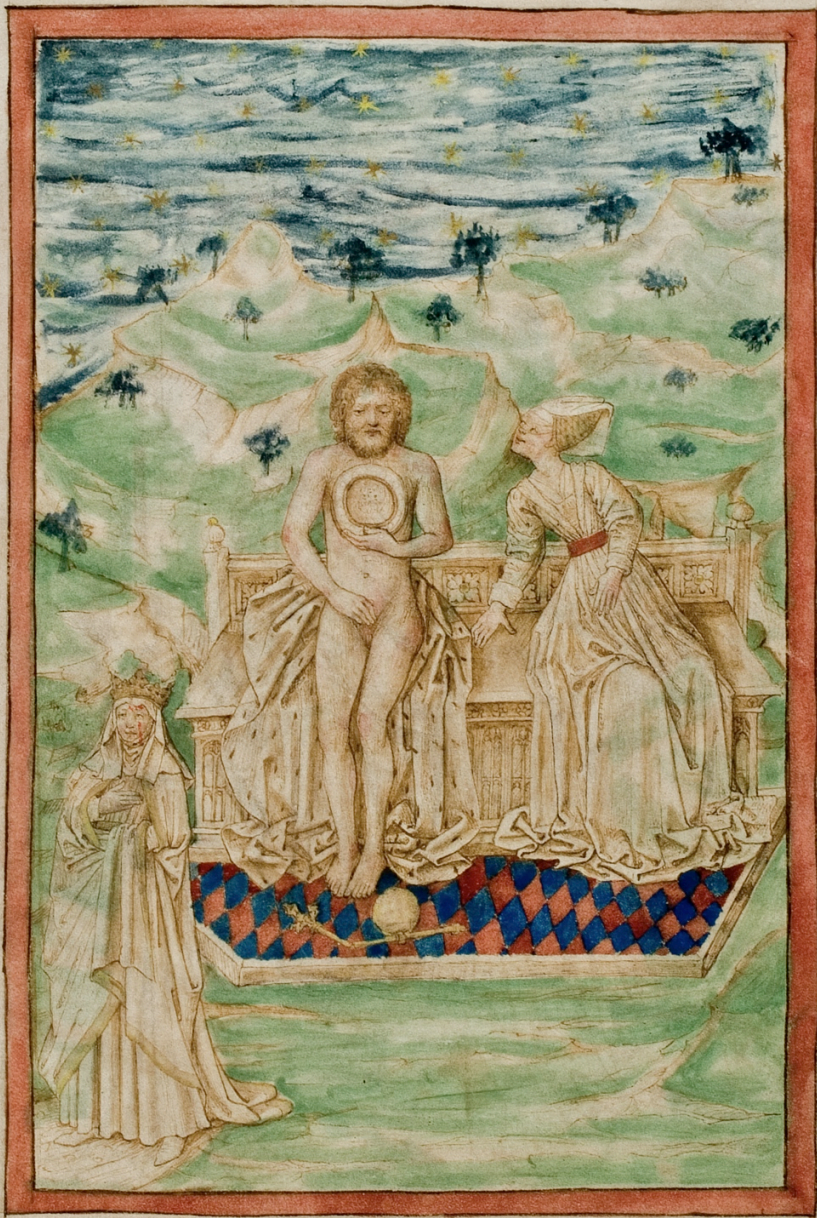
Tnduit hominē deus immortalitatis pallio. in dexteram: cepit: originalis iustu-
cie. et in sinistra orbe aureū tradens q' est pacifica eccl' possessio. Coronam vni-
uersi. p'mittens. Prehicit diua racō. Sensualitatis belua subiecit. Dictamen
racioms iube' homo cecq' et sensualitatis motus parifacere.

Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 2v
(by permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge)



Inferitur hominis pectori speculum rationis. et dū sensualitatis suggestio de factu venio miq; admittit. leditur ratio. originalis iusticie cepta obliquatur. et orbs aureus qui est pacifica terrenarum rerum possessio: perditur.

Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 3r
(by permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge)



Tum inq; puerfa voluntas racōis sentēciam niteptat. Iefa racōne. Sen-
fualtas eleuat. immortalitatis pallū amittituz. Nam fenfualitatis motus
pncipio delectantes admissi. melinant ad consensū. delectacō vero eum
conlenfu. actum malū gignunt, actus malus. trifuciam parit.



Quia in securitatem cadere de regno grauissi^m miseriū q; est fuisse
felicem: misere homo domis gratiū nūdatus. in naturalibus lesus.
nūditate. erubescens. velut amens fugam. latebras q; petit. Et dicit.
paucos hys qui opant^r malū. et alibi. q. in male agit. odit lucem.

Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 4r
(by permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge)



Tum tacito semp quecula iniquum eodemnat, declarat q; neq; ciam
honiis vocat hoem deus ad penitenciam; pro comisso reprehendit.
S; iniquus homo peccese malicia voluntatis; in auctorem deū
iniquitatis sue causam refect.



Exculpationem hominis in peccatis deus redarguit. s; coram suum
agnoscenti penitenti q; pmittit futura venia, salutare munges penitenciam,
pro ceptis: flagellu. pro orbe aureo: vngam tradens, et pro immortalitate
pallio. tunc a pellicea homem iduit, quoz misteria clar; ipa la pandit.

Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 5r
(by permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge)

Taus tecius.



Austera veritas. rigida q; iusticia. oratrices lese vicōis causā cont^{ra}
hōis neq̄ciam agunt. contra quacū austeritates. pro miseri hōis
defensione. due concionatrices sorores. misericordia t̄ pax. aduocant.

Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 5v
(by permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge)



Affectus iudex oratione pacis et misericordie hominis causam ipse suscipit.
tueturque pro incarnationem osculat de homine. Itemque in huius conclu-
sione pacis misericordia et veritas obuiauerunt sibi. Iusticia et pax
osculatae sunt.

Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 6r
(by permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge)



Incarnatus deus habitu q; simili homin factus. instruit hoīem
fide. cōmittit virtutib; regendū cardinalib; Justicie. p̄dencie. for-
titudini. t̄ temperancie. Judex in hominis domo Justicia sit. Iamtozis
officiū. p̄dencia teneat. Fortitudo p̄dencie deo hostes repellat. t̄ tēpancia
interioris familie turpes coherceat appetitus.

0
6
7
Iustus quatuor.



Iusticia hominem dirigit in deum et in omnes. temperantia moderat, fortitudo illum corroborat, prudentia vero inservit. Et dum delectatur homo virtutibus suis actibus, timor hostis aggreditur, decreto consilium admittitur, laes et nuncia mortis homini presentare. utilis quae homini decernitur.

Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 7r
(by permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge)



Prudencia hoīem de caecitate admonet. inducit q; in hominis fam-
liam. caecitas hoīem letificat. lris + nuncijs nouis. Iusticia iudicāte
fortitudo mortis timorem eijcit. Quia pfecta caecitas foras mittit
omnem timorem.

Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 7v
(by permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge)



Tum celestis caritas hoīem consolatur. abiecto timore mortis. mors
ip̄a homini iam proxima. tunica pellicea que est carnis mortalitas.
hoīem exuit. Virtutes em̄ in mortis piculo. hominū assistunt. con-
solantur et uiuant. ;

Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 8r
(by permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge)



TRefutur homini iusticia p̄ amissū immortalitatis palliū. temperancia. ceptum.
originalis iusticie. p̄oencia vero orbem aureū q' est eterna securitas. fortitudo
vel ip̄a caritas que fortis est. cōcultata deuicta q; morte: hoīem coronat. in
Regno homīs eterno. quod est securire deo. illū laudare t̄ glōrificare.

Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 8v
(by permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge)



Thomas. C. alme Vniuersitatis Oxonie ꝛ ecclesie Ca
thedralis Welln Cancellariꝝ: ad insignē dominū ꝛ lātissimꝝ ꝑ
Dominū Thomā de Bekintonā Welln et bathonꝝ pontificem
seꝑm cū ꝑsenti opusculo ꝛ sua omnia .j.

Cambridge: Trinity College MS R.14.5, fol. 9r
(by permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge)

Appendix 2
Performative Oxford Letters and Related Material

(S)= Secular authorship and/or provenance
(M) = Monastic authorship and/or provenance

<p>Oxford, All Souls College MS 182</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters composed in late 14th and early 15th century Compiled and copied in the 1420s (<i>terminus ad quem</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (S) Three letters addressed to the Christmas King et al. (fols. 91r-92v, 92v-93v, & 94r-94v), c. late 14th century <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All three are printed in Henson, "Letters relating to Oxford," 39-49. See Jacob, "<i>Florida Venustas Verborum</i>," 284, for a letter from an Oxford student c. late 14th century talking about the study and purpose of "modern rhetoric" (fol. 73r).
<p>London, British Library MS Royal 10.B.ix</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sections with hand "B" contain documents from 1400-1420 Later additions by Henry Cranebrooke c. 1452 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (M) A satiric letter from Prester John to members of Canterbury College (fol. 32v-33v), c. 1414-1430 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Printed in Pantin, <i>Canterbury College</i>, 68-72; N.B.: The letter contains parts of the Christmas liturgy, and incorporates the style of <i>commendatio</i> speeches. (S) Six letters addressed to Merton College's King of Beans (fols.127r-132v) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First letter is transcribed and translated in Elliott, <i>REED:Oxford</i>, 799 & 1081). (M) Three letters from <i>Laetitia</i>, <i>Sobrietas</i>, and <i>Discretio</i> (fols. 170v-173r); N.B.: These are copies of letters found in Harley MS 5398. (S/M) Two satiric or <i>controversia</i> letters with personifications (fols. 173r-174r) (M) <i>Regina sedens Rhetorica</i>, a fictionalized allegorical <i>ars dictandi</i> (fols. 178r – 195v), c. 1415 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Printed in Camargo, <i>Models of Five Artes Dictandi</i>, 169-219. N.B.: There are also several testimonial letters, <i>commendatio</i> speeches, and a curious joust challenge to Prester John written in French (fol. 256r).
<p>London, British Library MS Harley 5398</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compiled c. 1430s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (M) Three letters from <i>Laetitia</i>, <i>Sobrietas</i>, and <i>Discretio</i> (fols. 128r-131v), c. 1405-1412. This manuscript contains glosses that specify monastic authorship (Hugh Legat, John Wodeward, and Maurice D.) (S) A letter from King Baltasar to a "future abbot" yet sent from Hinkey Hall to Greek Hall (fols. 132v-133r); this letter may be related to those in Corpus Christi

	<p>College MS 358.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Printed in H.G. Richardson, <i>Formularies which Bear on the History of Oxford</i>, 439. N.B.: Situated between the three allegorical letters and the mock abbot letter is a real correspondence (c. 1432) between the U. of Paris and the U. of Oxford. Bekynton also preserves this real letter in Lambeth Palace MS 211 (fols. 136v-137r); printed in <i>Official Correspondence</i>, II, 104-6. Thomas Merke's <i>Formula</i> directly follows the five letters (fols. 133r-145r). There are also several academic or examination sermons (which tend to rail against the use of paganism -- specifically Carmelite John Haynton fols. 43r-v).
<p>London, British Library MS Cotton Julius F.VII</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Original owned by John Free, who died in 1465 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (M) Three letters from <i>Laetitia</i>, <i>Sobrietas</i>, and <i>Discretio</i> (fols. 129r-135r). N.B.: These are copies of letters found in Harley MS 5398. Commonly referred to as William Worchester's notebook, this manuscript may have been known to Chaundler (per his patronage of Canterbury College).
<p>Bodleian Library, Bodley MS 828</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early 15th century? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (M) Three letters from <i>Laetitia</i>, <i>Sobrietas</i>, and <i>Discretio</i> (fols. 173v-176v) N.B.: These are copies of letters found in Harley MS 5398. These letters are placed within a manual for parish priests, <i>Oculi Sacerdotum</i>.
<p>Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 358</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Late 14th century? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (M) Two letters addressed to the Christmas King from Baltazar (fols. 20v-21v); references are made to Gloucester College. They show some resemblance to those found in the Harley MS. <i>Compendium artis dictatorie</i> or Oxford compendium on the art of composition (fols. 1r - 5r).
<p>Lambeth Palace Library MS 221</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early to Mid 15th century 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (S) Two letters for the election and rule of the King of Beans in imitation of letters patent (fols. 159v-160r). There are also "forms and records of disputations in the Schools of Oxford," <i>commendationes</i> speeches, examination sermons, letters testimonials, and model letters.
<h3>Notable Mentions</h3>	
<p>Dover Priory MS 272 (no longer extant) Compiled in 1389</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The register or catalogue of the Library of Dover Priory (compiled in 1389) mentions a letter of Prester John (beg. 126r) that Pantin, in <i>Canterbury College</i>, 69, offers as a potential source for the Canterbury satire found in Royal 10.B.ix. For the entry, see M.R. James, <i>Ancient Libraries</i>

	<i>of Canterbury and Dover</i> , 472.
Cambridge, Trinity College MS B.14.40 • C. 1420	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Regina sedens Rhetorica</i> (162r-178v). This is another copy of the <i>ars dictandi</i> found in BL MS Royal 10.B.ix. N.B.: The manuscript also has treatises and model letters for the instruction of French and Latin.
Cambridge, Trinity College MS O.5.4 • C. 1420 or later	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Regina sedens Rhetorica</i> (fols. 69v-71v). This is another copy of the <i>ars dictandi</i> found in BL MS Royal 10.B.ix. N.B.: According to Camargo, this manuscript also has “materials for teaching grammar, <i>dictamen</i>, and other school subjects” in <i>Models of Five Artes Dictandi</i>, 170.
John Rylands Library MS Latin 394 • Early 15 th century	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allegorical letter within Simon O’s <i>summa dictandi</i> (fols. 49r-49v), which resembles <i>Regina sedens Rhetorica</i>; printed in Camargo, <i>Models of Five Artes Dictandi</i>, 220-221. • Letter to an Oxford student requesting a play or several plays to be performed at court for Christmas (fol. 53v).
Oxford, Bodleian Library Bodley MS 692 • 1440s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Lawerne’s notebook featuring playful letters (fols. 29v-30r, 84r, 147v-149v); a sermon delivered by Lawerne on behalf of the Christmas King (1r-2v); and a humorous <i>commendatio</i> speech (fols. 37v-38v).
Edinburgh University Library MS 136 • Compiled 1418-1422	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ludicra</i> (1413). This play was written by John Seward and is a product of these literary circles.

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Bodleian Library, Oxford University
Additional MS A.44

British Library
Cotton MS. Julius E. IV
Cotton MS. Titus A. XXIV
Harley MS 43
Harley MS 5398
Royal MS 10.B.ix

Cambridge University
Corpus Christi College MS 358
Trinity College MS. R.14.5

New College, Oxford
New College Archives 9429
New College MS 34 *Petri Lombardi in Psalterium Davidis glossae*
New College MS 46 *Nicolae de Lyre Postille super Evangelia Quatuor*
New College MS 50 *St. John Chrysostomi in St. Matthaei Evangelium Homiliae*
New College MS 242 *Gualteri Burlaei super Aristotelis Ethicorum Libros Decem et
super Libros Octo Politicorum*
New College MS 288 *Chaundler's Colluccionnes and Allocutiones, et al.*
New College MS 289 *Liber communis uni sophiste non habenti quatuor annos in
universitate*
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