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**The royal clerks: Career patterns in the chancery and the privy
seal office of Henry VI**

Gordon-Kelter, Janice, Ph.D.

City University of New York, 1988

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THE ROYAL CLERKS: CAREER PATTERNS IN
THE CHANCERY AND THE PRIVY SEAL OFFICE OF HENRY VI
by
JANICE GORDON-KELTER

A dissertation submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in History in
partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City
University of New York.

1988

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j.g.k.

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List of Abbreviations Used in Text

CCR	<u>Calendar of the Close Rolls</u>
CFR	<u>Calendar of the Fine Rolls</u>
CPR	<u>Calendar of the Patent Rolls</u>
RP	<u>Rotuli Parliamentorum</u>

Glossary of Administrative Terms

chafewax

member of chancery staff responsible for heating the wax used to seal writs

chancery clerk

clerk of the second form of chancery, prepares documents, submits important documents to masters for examination, works on all aspects of chancery business

clerk of the almonry

clerk working for portion of chancery devoted to redressing the wrongs of "persons of poor estate lacking the means to sue at common law"

clerk of the crown

second-form chancery clerk who attends the chancellor personally and draws up documents dealing with the king's household

keeper of the hanaper

clerk of the first form of chancery, functions as accountant for the chancery, receiving fees and paying the expenses of chancery

keeper of the rolls

functions as deputy to the chancellor for chancery business, primary responsibility for records of chancery and for the office in which records were stored

master of chancery

clerk of the first form of chancery, allowed to receive those with power of attorney for people leaving England, primary responsibility for examination and supervision of those creating writs

privy seal clerks

clerk who prepares letters ordered under the privy seal, responsible for all aspects of secretarial work for the privy seal and the council

prothonotary of chancery

clerk of the first form, drew up treaties, commissions to ambassadors and was generally involved in diplomatic work and documents for foreign affairs

secondary of the privy seal

head clerk in the privy seal office, second in command to the keeper of the privy seal

spigurnel

member of chancery staff responsible for the sealing of chancery writs

Introduction

Asa Briggs, in his recent social history of England, chose chapter titles for each period of English history which captured the era's dominant theme.¹ Thus the early Middle Ages were aptly described as a time of "invasion, resistance, settlement, and conquest," the seventeenth century as one of "revolution, restoration and settlement." For the later Middle Ages, Lord Briggs chose as his descriptive title, "Order and Conflict." Given the tendency, until recently, for most writing on this period to stress its chaos and disorder, its violent dynastic changes, its civil wars and overmighty subjects, the choice of the term "conflict" may not seem surprising, that of "order" may. Whether one relied on William Shakespeare or William Stubbs the usual picture of the later Middle Ages seemed bleak.

This bleak picture both led to, and was further exaggerated by, historians' neglect of the period, particularly the fifteenth century. Recent changes in the view of the fifteenth century have resulted from the vastly increased quantity of new scholarship concentrating on the period. New views have noted other events, placed different emphases.

At the most basic level, one reason for the emphasis on the conflict and disorder of the fifteenth

century was the problematic nature of the sources themselves. Charles Kingsford, an early specialist in the fifteenth century, stated that the choice of sources made a negative picture of the century a certainty. He cited:

preambles of statutes, petitions in Parliament, ...and Bills in Chancery, where rhetorical statements were introduced by way of justification. It is upon the evidence of such documents that the common opinion as to the almost universal prevalence of disorder in great part depends.²

Another aspect of the same problem was stressed by K.B. McFarlane, the scholar whose influence on fifteenth century studies has been unquestionably the most significant. McFarlane made the telling point that the large quantity of evidence available from the fifteenth century could in itself contribute to the negative picture.

As one pushes back out of the well lit fifteenth century into the dark ages before it, it is important not to mistake the decrease in the amount of evidence (for corruption) as a decrease in the phenomena the evidence illustrates.³

In the fifteenth century a great number of administrative and judicial records were created. It is possible to see the vast quantity of material created as symptomatic of the degree of disorder in society and the need to deal with this disorder.

It is also possible to consider the great number of records preserved as a sign of "a relatively literate and much-governed society."⁴ Not only the vast quantity of records preserved, but the quality of their organization are indications that governmental bureaucracy continued functioning throughout the fifteenth century.⁵

In addition to problems arising from the sources themselves, some of the fifteenth century's reputation for disorder was also the result of problems inherent in medieval government generally. Although the ability to control lawlessness is one of the most important services a government can offer, difficulties in this area were not unique to the fifteenth century. J.G. Bellamy, in his study of public order in England, cites evidence that, although levels of lawlessness fluctuated from year to year, inability to control levels of crime occurred throughout the Middle Ages.⁶ As for the corruption of the fifteenth century, it too had a long history: "Corruption amongst officials...seems to have been as bad in the fifteenth century as it had been in the thirteenth."⁷ Another of the classic charges against the fifteenth century and its overmighty subjects, that of maintenance (the illegal support which magnates gave to the suits of lesser men) was rampant even before the fourteenth

century.⁸

In a similar vein, Edward Powell, noting the emphasis on what he calls the "violent self-help" so common in the fifteenth century stated that the period also saw the less dramatic but equally commonplace use of peaceful extra-legal solutions to problems.⁹ The conciliation and compromise offered by arbitration was regarded by contemporaries "as a useful complement to the existing legal system," and was found throughout Europe.¹⁰

The use of extra-legal solutions should not be taken as implying that the legal institutions of the fifteenth century were stagnating. It was a time of development as specialist legal studies make clear.

Through their studies of the central courts at Westminster, the provincial circuits of assize and gaol delivery and the justices of the peace and coroners in the counties, /historians/ have proved beyond doubt the sophistication of the late medieval legal system.¹¹

In addition to the growing complexity of long-existing institutions, the period saw the emergence of the Court of Chancery, a new source of justice and equity whose rapid development "provides one of the strongest arguments against the view that the period was one in which the institutions of government were moribund."¹²

Although modern specialist studies of the legal system have produced a more positive view of legal institutions, studies of the institution of Parliament have had a more controversial effect. From Sir John Fortescue's contemporary praise of England's "limited monarchy" to Bishop William Stubbs' stress on the fifteenth century's "Lancastrian constitutional experiment," the Parliament, especially the Commons, was seen as the one progressive development in an otherwise dim picture of an England of conflict and disorder.¹³

Without adopting Stubbs' over-emphasis on the importance of the Commons and an anachronistic ascription to the Parliament of a sovereignty it did not yet possess, it is still clear that Parliament did develop and expand its powers. The frequency with which Parliament met, the large number of petitions submitted to it, its growing control of the granting of subsidies, the extent to which representatives to it were re-elected and attended many sessions, the administration's refinement of sophisticated procedures for handling the vast amount of material submitted to Parliament -- all these contributed to the growth of Parliament and the significance of the fifteenth century in its history.¹⁴

Other fields besides the legal and governmental provide information which contributes to the picture of a dynamic Lancastrian era. The influence of the new humanistic studies from the Continent increased interest in book-collecting and produced some contacts with foreign scholars.¹⁵ The use of the vernacular in literature and in government documents increased and the English language of the time became the source for modern English.¹⁶ In the history of English education, the fifteenth century was the age of the pious founder. Schools and colleges were established in England at a rate unequalled in the Middle Ages -- many of these foundations still in existence today.¹⁷

In the area of social history, the amount of travel and building of "manor houses designed for comfort with little thought of defense" argue against a period of constant disorder.¹⁸ The circulation of consumer goods and the passage of "sumptuary laws" designed to discourage the wearing of "inappropriate" finery point to enough economic and social mobility to suggest that the description of the period as an "age of ambition" is not exaggerated.¹⁹

All these positive aspects of the later Middle

Ages are not meant to convey an overly optimistic picture of the period, a distortion as untrue to the period as the original picture of conflict and disorder. It is meant to suggest that, as more studies concentrate on the era and new aspects are illuminated, a more complex and more accurate picture emerges, a picture which can encompass often contradictory information. In the economic sphere, for example, M.M. Postan describes one of the economic paradoxes of the time:

In the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the contraction in the total area of cultivated land and the fall in the aggregate output of agriculture went together with an improved economic condition of the majority of the villagers. We can therefore justifiably consider the late middle ages both as a time of economic decline and as the golden age of English peasantry.²⁰

Similarly in the fifteenth century, administrative history contains another such paradox.

While the central government...was failing, the purely administrative organs of government carried on or were, at the worst, stagnating yet nevertheless they provided continuous and even reasonably effective day-to-day government.²¹

A strong contrast can be drawn between problems at the highest levels of government and the efficient functioning of a professional bureaucracy. This contrast suggests that a period such as that of the

reign of Henry VI, the specific focus of this study, in which monarchical control was relatively weak, makes a good test case for evaluating routine administration's ability to provide "reasonably effective day-to-day government." Henry VI, who was neither a great warrior king like his predecessor nor a strong executive like his successor, headed a reign which included a long minority with conciliar rule, shorter periods during which he was incapable of ruling owing to illness, and period of civil war with chaotic changes at the highest levels of power. How does a bureaucracy operating in such circumstances fit into the evolution and professionalization of English medieval bureaucracy, a development chronicled through the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by T.F. Tout.²² Following the model established by G.E. Aylmer in his study of Charles I's civil service, a detailed study of the bureaucratic personnel of Henry VI should provide strong evidence to arrive at an answer to this question.²³

Although medieval bureaucracy was the creation and instrument of the monarchy to a large extent, vicissitudes in administrative history reflect less the degree to which monarchical authority was asserted and more the degree to which the

administrators and their assistants accomplished the task of delivering strong, efficient and professional administration. The view of the fifteenth century as an age of "dramatic changes of allegiance...and unashamed political cynicism" makes it easy to forget "the hundreds of conscientious bureaucrats also produced."²⁴

Part of the explanation for the seeming paradox found in Lancastrian administrative history can be found in the permanent civil servant, the clerk who weathered political change and continued to perform his assigned tasks. T. F. Tout's observation about the chaotic reign of Edward II applies equally well to the reign of Henry VI: "Thanks to the permanent civil service...routine went on equally well, whether the heads of the department were competent or incompetent, long-lived or short-lived."²⁵ During the reign of Henry VI, whatever his own problems as a ruler, the heads of his administration and the members of their support staff, as an added bonus, were both competent and long-lived and able to make a contribution to bureaucratic effectiveness.

The work of the administration in government, although less dramatic than the history of Parliament for example, could be effective because it was everyday, routine. Administration is always in operation and, although each act may be trivial, its aggregate effect is great.²⁶ As one example, M. Clanchy discusses the keeping of records: "The making of such records is an indicator of the efficiency of the government rather than its cause."²⁷ One indicator of the efficiency of Henry VI's government was the vast amount of careful records carefully preserved. Further, efficient record keeping contributed to effective government as well as being the result of effective government, whether these records were financial, judicial or legislative. Another indication of a bureaucracy's success is its willingness to accept change and improvement. A reforming bureaucracy is an efficient bureaucracy.²⁸ Over and over again in Henry VI's administration, examples are found of heads of offices and their subordinates who went beyond the demands of their offices, which were frequently demanding enough, to suggest and implement improvements in the procedures of their offices.

This study focuses on the personnel of the offices of the chancery and the privy seal in

Henry VI's reign. These offices were chosen because they were the primary bureaucratic instruments of executive authority in this period, whether from monarch or council. Medieval administration was a unified whole; duties and responsibilities overlapped and rigid definitions give a false picture of its operations. Although the offices of the chancery and the privy seal had their own staffs, their own departmental heads (the chancellor and the keeper of the privy seal respectively), their own seals (the great seal and the privy seal), there was a great similarity between the duties and activities of the two offices. Bertie Wilkinson, in discussing these offices under Edward II, described these similarities. "As far as executive orders by the government are concerned, it does not seem possible to distinguish between the use of the great and the privy seal...In administration, the great and privy seals seem to have been used indifferently and to have had almost equal weight."²⁹

This is not to say that, in the fifteenth century, each office did not have its own sphere of activity, but there was a strong parallel between their activities. Both functioned primarily as writing offices where executive orders from king,

council or the heads of office were issued in the form of letters and writs. As another example of parallel activity, "chancery clerks arranged the composition, the business, the payment and the record-keeping of Parliament, while privy seal clerks dealt similarly with the business of the council."³⁰

The activities of both chancery and the office of the privy seal were inextricably interwoven with the rest of the administration. They had innumerable dealings with the king and the council, the household and the exchequer, the Parliament and the courts.

The focus of this study is on the personnel of the offices rather than the offices themselves because the qualities the royal clerks brought to their offices affected the level and professionalism of administrative services offered. The competence of the official, particularly the average official, made a bureaucracy a success or a failure.³¹ It is a misconception to believe that "it is possible and desirable to write the history of institutions apart from the men who worked in them...{Institutions} are born, develop, change and decay by human agencies. Their life is the life of the men who make them."³²

In this study the lives referred to are those of 121 members of the chancery and the privy seal

office, holding positions ranging in status from chancellors and keepers of the privy seal to the spigurnels and chafewaxes concerned with the physical production of documents. The amount of information on each individual varies considerably, but just as the aggregate of routine tasks in administration produces a significant effect, so the collection of details on each individual can produce a significant collective biography, a prosopography. The details collected on each individual have been assembled in a pattern similar to that used in preparing an individual's biography -- family background, early contacts, education, positions held, marriage and living conditions, duties and rewards, length of service and retirement -- stressing factors and associations which help him get a job, keep a job, do it effectively and profit from it. The portraits created are concerned with the behavior of individuals within the group, interaction among members of the group, and the relationship of the group to society as a whole.³³

Jeremy Catto, in his discussion of the king's servants in the reign of Henry V, denied the existence of a professional civil service because,

among other reasons, the great departments of state had "no political independence nor even, so far as can be judged, a spirit of passive administrative resistance to the political will of their masters. Further, "there is not the slightest evidence that the procedures of the chancery...were used to delay or frustrate the will of Henry V."³⁴

As a criterion for defining a professional civil service in the Middle Ages, evidence of the defiance of a medieval monarch's will is never easy to come by. Often defiance is manifested in the classic bureaucratic method of lethargy as strategy.³⁵ "A great deal of (slackness) was due to the deliberate policy of the men who controlled the permanent machine....Medieval administrators could show plenty of perseverance in the execution of a law which they really desired to enforce."³⁶

More important than evidence for defiance of the king's will as an indication of the increasing professionalization of Henry VI's civil service was the tendency of the bureaucratic staff to take on tasks and to form associations which went beyond the duties of their offices. These tasks

and associations contributed to the creation of a common loyalty and tradition which enabled the king's clerks to make their contribution to government in the delivery of an efficiently run professional bureaucracy.

Notes

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7. Bellamy, Crime and Public Order, 14.
8. Bellamy, Crime and Public Order, 22.
9. Edward Powell, "Arbitration and the Law in England in the Late Middle Ages," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society 33(1983):67.
10. Carole Rawcliffe, "The Great Lord as Peacekeeper: Arbitration by English Noblemen and their Councils in the Later Middle Ages," in Law and Social Change in British History, ed. J.A. Guy and H.G. Beale (London: Royal Historical Society, 1984), 52. In arbitration, "parties to a dispute formally bound themselves in writing and on pain of an agreed sum, to abide by the award of specified persons" (J.B. Post, ed., "Courts, Council and Arbitrators in the Ladbroke Manor Dispute, 1382-1400," in Medieval Legal Records: edited in memory of C.A.F. Meekings, ed. R.F. Hunnisett and J.B. Post [London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1980], 294-95).
11. Powell, "Arbitration and the Law," 49. Powell cites the work of Marjorie Blatcher, Margaret Hastings, Roy F. Hunnisett, and B.H. Putnam. Specific examples include: Marjorie Blatcher, The Court of King's Bench, 1450-1550: A Study in Self-Help (London: Athlone Press, 1978); Margaret Hastings, The Court of Common Pleas in Fifteenth Century England (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1947); Roy F. Hunnisett, The Medieval Coroner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961); B.H. Putnam, Proceedings Before the

Justices of the Peace in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, Edward III to Richard III (Oxford: Oxford Studies in Social and Legal History, 1938).

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28. T.F. Tout, "The English Civil Service in the Fourteenth Century," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library 3(1916):207.
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33. Robin S. Oggins and Virginia Darrow Oggins, "Hawkers and Falconers: The Prosopography of the English Royal Household," Medieval Prosopography 3(1982):63.
34. Jeremy Catto, "The King's Servants," in Henry V: The Practice of Kingship, ed. G.L. Harriss (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 76-77.
35. Jonathan Lynn and Antony Jay, eds. The Complete Yes Minister: The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister (Topsfield, Mass.: Salem House Publishers, 1987), 110.
36. Tout, Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England, 1:5. Examples of open defiance of a monarch's will do exist. Chancellor Richard Lescrope refused to seal some extravagant grants of Richard II, an act which led to Lescrope's removal (Edward Foss, The Judges of England (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1848-64), 4:5). The administration which Edward III left in England while he was in France, angered at his attempt to reduce their power, delayed providing funds for his campaigns, until Edward was "compelled at last to abandon the campaign in despair" (T.F. Tout, "Some Conflicting Tendencies in English Administrative History during the fourteenth Century," in The Collected Papers of Thomas Frederick Tout (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1934), 3:232). Edward III's wish that the temporalities of the Bishop of Ely be seized met with hesitation on the part of bureaucratic officials. "It is clear from the king's letter that the chancellor and treasurer had shown considerable independence" (Bertie Wilkinson, "A letter of Edward III to his Chancellor and Treasurer," English Historical Review 42(1927):248-250).

Chapter One Identifying the Clerks: Methodology

G.E. Aylmer, in his study of the civil service of Charles I of England, made the important point that "in studying any group of people, the first and most obvious but not necessarily the easiest step is to define its membership."¹ Defining the membership of the group to be examined is the first and most obvious step because the decision as to who to include in a group biography is the decision which will determine the accuracy and validity of the entire study. It is not the easiest step in a study of medieval government because precise membership lists of personnel are simply not available. An initial decision had to be made as to how to determine who would be included in this study, specifically to identify a significant number of the bureaucrats who served in Henry VI's chancery and office of the privy seal during his years in power (1422-1461).

In proposing the study of the king's clerks themselves as an important step toward understanding medieval administration, G.P. Cuttino provided a brief model of what could be learned about the reign of Edward I and suggested that, "we shall not have the answer to our problem until we laboriously go through the calendars of the various rolls

page by page."²

The best source for a large number of names of various clerks of the chancery and the privy seal office is the rolls prepared by the chancery itself, rolls whose calendars are readily available. Calendars have been completed for the major classes of chancery documents: Charter rolls, Close rolls, Fine rolls and Patent rolls.³ Although there are, in theory, distinctions among these classes of documents, these distinctions were not always maintained. Just as medieval administration was not overly concerned with precise divisions between spheres of activity, so these divisions were not always adhered to in collecting and classifying these documents. The blurring of lines of divisions and overlapping among categories resulted from a combination of contemporary classification methods and modern attempts to arrange documents for the sake of convenience.⁴ The lack of rigidity, however, contributes to the richness of these sources for a variety of information about Henry VI's administration.

From these rolls it is possible to compile a list of people specifically identified in the calendars themselves as holding various chancery

and privy seal offices (see Chart A). This list of personnel can be double-checked against lists of personnel available in various secondary sources. Among the most useful of these sources are: the Handbook of British Chronology which lists the chancellors and keepers of the privy seal for this period;⁵ the Ordinaciones cancellarie Domini Regis which includes chancery personnel under Henry V;⁶ Emden's biographical registers of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge which list offices of alumni;⁷ Foss's discussion of the judges of England which includes a generally reliable list of chancery masters;⁸ Wedgwood's not always reliable list of members of Parliament, some of whom were also in the chancery and privy seal office;⁹ Otway-Ruthven's list of fifteenth-century secretaries and signet officials;¹⁰ Pronay's list of mid-fifteenth century chancery masters;¹¹ Richardson's discussion of Henry V's chancery clerks, many of whom served his son;¹² Storey's discussion of gentleman-bureaucrats which identifies chancery personnel;¹³ Smith's discussion of chancery trends which includes lists of chancery masters;¹⁴ and Brown's description of the early fifteenth-century privy seal clerks.¹⁵ The lists of receivers of Parliament included in the Rotuli Parliamentorum¹⁶ can be used to identify chancery

masters, as can references to clerks in the Bishop's registers.¹⁷ Testators in contemporary wills often identify themselves specifically by the offices they held.¹⁸

Once a base list of personnel is established, these and many other works can prove a rich source of information about the clerks. The lives of these clerks clearly encompassed a greater time period than that included in the reign of Henry VI alone. The broader canvas offers the opportunity of observing the fate of the royal clerks during several reigns, and gives a better picture of changes that occurred during the fifteenth century.

Methodological problems arise in determining whether information actually concerns the royal clerk himself or concerns other individuals with the same name. Obviously, an examination of the clerks listed (See Chart A) makes it clear that names range from the very common such as John Hill or Thomas Smyth, for whom every calendar will include listings relating to many separate individuals, to more exotic names such as Nicholas Wymbyssh or Baldwin Hyde. Among the 121 clerks studied here, there are only nineteen different first names. The two names John and Thomas were given to over half of these clerks. Fortunately the variety of surnames is far greater.

For those clerks with very common names, however, many of the references in the calendars and other sources can not be assigned to them with any degree of certainty. Similarities in dates of service, benefices or offices held, land owned, known associates have to be considered so as to establish a reasonable likelihood of identity. Even at the best, several individuals may lead lives hopelessly entwined.

Even when names are less common, the medieval practice of using names over and over again in the same family or of choosing names based solely on place of birth (although this has obvious utility in suggesting place of origin) results in inevitable duplication. The keeper of the privy seal, Bishop William Alnwick, for example, shared his name with several contemporary William Alnwicks.¹⁹ The two chancery clerks, both named John Mapilton, are an example of overlapping identification within Henry VI's chancery. Although contemporary documents sometimes differentiated them as John Mapilton the Elder and John Mapilton the Younger, at other times it is impossible to determine which clerk is meant. The younger Mapilton's date of entry into the chancery cannot be determined because of the difficulty of distinguishing his references from those to the

older Mapilton.

Although in the case of the Mapiltons it is likely that they are related, this is not always the case. A study of chancellor John Kempe advises: "One must, however, exercise caution, remembering similarity of family names does not necessarily establish ancestry or relationship. The name Kempe is found all over medieval England, particularly in Kent and the southeast."²⁰ Even for an individual as prominent as John Kempe, family associations have been determined only partially; for lesser individuals this valuable information may never be known.

A parallel problem to that of one name used by many individuals is that of one individual using many names (or at least many variants of his name). Medieval spelling was notoriously unstandardized and indices must be read carefully to insure that these variants are not overlooked. The chancery clerk Robert Waskham also appears as Robert Waskam, Wascam, Wassham and Weskeham, but is he also the individual who appears as Robert Walsham and Washam? Internal similarities of dates of service suggest this, but these sets of names appear in the calendars as unrelated individuals. Fortunately, few clerks make as major a change as William Waynflete

who exchanged his family name of Patten for that of Waynflete, after the town in Lincolnshire in which he was born.²¹

All these various factors complicate the task of determining who should be included in a study and what information can be accurately assigned to each individual. But beyond considering who should be included in a study is the problem of those who are excluded. To what extent is the validity of a study compromised by those who are, inevitably, not even identified? Emden's biographical dictionaries of medieval graduates of Oxford and Cambridge are considered a data collection of tremendous significance. Much of the material has been computerized for easier access. Yet even a collection of this extent is limited.

The fifteen thousand or so alumni recorded in the Register represent something between 15 and 25 per cent of actual alumni, leaving us with an unrecorded group of at least 45,000.... This should warn us to beware of making hasty generalizations about the influence of the University on society, until more is known about those who left no mark in University records.²²

Concentration on those individuals who survived to be included is, obviously, a necessity, but clearly this means that any study will be weighted toward those who were more prominent, more active, more involved, more likely to be recorded. The chart

of those included in this study illustrates this bias: at the highest levels, the chancellors and keepers of the privy seal have all been identified; at the lower administrative levels far fewer individuals relative to the number of those who held office are known.

The same bias also affects those who are included. The further down in the official hierarchy an individual is, the smaller the amount of information about him is generally available.²³ Less prominent people may have done less, but, in addition, less of what they did tends to be preserved. The fifteenth century is also a period in which the best and most available sources surviving are official records. Official records preserve information which was useful to the government and the bureaucracy. Lands owned, terms of office, official duties may be recorded, informal activities, social and family background, personal life may be less accessible. Fortunately, for the historian the lack of formalism and rigidity even in formal records ensured that information on a variety of topics was included.

Although the amount of detail and the kind of information available for each individual may vary, the study of a group can provide enough total

information to make the group biography, the prosopography, valuable. Given the difficulties of individual biography in this period, the group biography answers questions about those involved in government which must be answered: "As long as men prominent in the governing class in their day remain shadowy figures, known primarily as mere names floating through the records, our understanding of the period is bound to be superficial."²⁴

Chart A The Royal Clerks: Offices Held in the
King's Service

Each man in the study is listed under the main office
attained in Henry VI's chancery or privy seal office

CHANCERY

Chancellors (Total: 8)

Henry Beaufort
Thomas Bouchier
John Kempe
Thomas Langley
George Neville
Richard Neville
John Stafford*
William Waynflete

Masters of Chancery (Total: 34)

Keepers of the Rolls

John Frank
Simon Gaunstede
Thomas Kirkeby
Robert Kirkeham+
John Stopyndon+

Prothonotaries

John Derby
John Stokes

Keepers of the Hanaper

Henry Kays
Robert Mouter
(Robert Kirkeham)+
(John Stopyndon)+

Other Masters of Chancery

John Bate
John Bekyngham
Richard Bekyngham
John Brokholes
John Cammell

*Stafford was also Keeper of the Privy Seal under Henry VI

+Stopyndon and Kirkeham held both offices under Henry VI

John Faukes
 Richard Fryston
 Robert Groute
 John Hertilpole
 William Hill
 Thomas Manning
 John Mapilton the Elder
 William Morland
 William Normanton
 John Pemberton
 William Prestwyk
 John Roland
 Richard Selby
 John Sheefield
 Henry Shelford
 John Springthorp
 John Thoraby
 Thomas Westthorp
 Richard Wetton
 Nicholas Wymbyssh

Chancery Clerks (Total: 44)

Clerks of the Crown

Thomas Haseley
 Thomas Ive
 William Rous
 Richard Sturgeon
 William Swerendon

Other Chancery Clerks

John Alkyn
 Hugh Ardern
 Peter Aumener
 William Bolton
 Thomas Brigge
 John Broke
 Thomas Buk
 Richard Cable
 John Chese
 Richard Colman
 William Colyns
 John Dale
 Robert Fen
 Henry Garstang
 William Godyng
 John Hill
 Baldwin Hyde
 James Kelom
 John Louth

Richard Loy
 John Mapilton the Younger
 Thomas Morker
 John Nayler
 Nicholas Newton
 John Ongham
 John Payne
 Thomas Playter
 John Ratheby
 William Ruddyng
 Roger Rydley
 Thomas Shelford
 Thomas Shipton
 Thomas Smyth
 Thomas Tetisworth
 John Toller
 Henry Upton
 Henry Wyndesore
 Hugh Wynkley

Clerks of the Almonry (Total: 5)

Thomas Asshecombe
 Nicholas Bailly
 William Marchall
 (William Rous)*
 Robert Walsham (Waskham)

Spigurnels (Total: 2)

Geoffrey Goodlok
 John Morker

Chafewaxes (Total: 1)

Thomas Baker

OFFICE OF THE PRIVY SEAL

Keepers of the Privy Seal (Total: 9)

William Alnwick
 Thomas Bekynton
 Lawrence Booth
 Andrew Holes
 Thomas Lisieux
 William Lyndwood
 Adam Moleyns
 John Stafford
 Robert Stillington

*Previously listed under Clerks of the Crown

Secondaries of the Privy Seal (Total: 2)

Robert Frye
Thomas Kent

Privy Seal Clerks (Total: 17)

William Alberton
William Alton
John Bagot
Thomas Beaugrant
Henry Benet
John Brewester
John Claydon
William Flete
John Foston
Thomas Frank
John Hamond
Abel Hessill
John Hethe
Thomas Hoccleve
Richard Langport
John Offord
Richard Prior

Chart B Personnel Career Patterns - Years of Service*
Office of the Chancery

<u>Clerk</u>	<u>Years of Service</u>	<u>Highest Office attained under Henry VI</u>
John Alkyn	1430-1452	Chancery clerk
Hugh Ardern	1385-1429	Chancery clerk
Thomas Asshecombe	1423-1449	Clerk of almonry
Peter Aumener	1414-1450	Chancery clerk
Nicholas Bailly	1449	Clerk of almonry
Thomas Baker	1421-1446	Chafewax
John Bate	1429-1468	Chancery master
Henry Beaufort	1403-1405 1413-1417 1424-1426	Chancellor
John Bekyngham	1432-1453	Chancery master
Richard Bekyngham	1430-1455	Chancery master
William Bolton	1449-1473	Chancery clerk
Thomas Bouchier	1455-1456	Chancellor
Thomas Brigge	1432-1458	Chancery clerk
John Broke	1442-1474	Chancery clerk
John Brokholes	1392-1444	Chancery master
Thomas Buk	1444-1456	Chancery clerk
Richard Cable	1446-1448	Chancery clerk
John Cammell	1428-1458	Chancery master
John Chamberlain	1414-1472	Chancery master
John Chese	1421-1427	Chancery clerk

*Years of service are those indicated by sources used.
Actual terms of service could be longer.

<u>Clerk</u>	<u>Years of Service</u>	<u>Highest office attained under Henry VI</u>
Richard Colman	1377-1424	Chancery clerk
William Colyns	1441	Chancery clerk
John Dale	1427-1440	Chancery clerk
John Derby	1439-1461	Prothonotary
John Faukes	1426-1471	Chancery master
Robert Fen	1445-1460	Chancery clerk
John Frank	1388-1439	Keeper of rolls
Richard Fryston	1429-1477	Chancery master
Henry Garstang	1421-1427	Chancery clerk
Simon Gaunstede	1390-1423	Keeper of rolls
Geoffrey Goodlok	1442-1455	Spigurnel
William Godyng	1430-1453	Chancery clerk
Robert Groute	1434	Chancery master
Thomas Haseley	1405-1449	Clerk of the crown
John Hertilpole	1388-1432	Chancery master
John Hill	1447-1460	Chancery clerk
William Hill	1425-1454	Chancery master
Baldwin Hyde	1458-1471	Chancery clerk
Thomas Ive	1446-1481	Clerk of the crown
Henry Kays	1401-1426	Keeper of hanaper
James Kelom	1421-1449	Chancery clerk
John Kempe	1426-1432 1450-1454	Chancellor

<u>Clerk</u>	<u>Years of service</u>	<u>Highest Office attained under Henry VI</u>
Thomas Kirkeby	1429-1461	Keeper of rolls
Robert Kirkeham	1443-1471	Keeper of rolls
Thomas Langley	1405-1407 1417-1424	Chancellor
John Louth	1436-1457	Chancery clerk
Richard Loy	1448-1470	Chancery clerk
Thomas Manning	1451-1460	Chancery master
John Mapilton(Elder)	1400-1432	Chancery master
John Mapilton(Younger)	1420s-1454	Chancery clerk
William Marchall	1437-1448	Clerk of almonry
John Morker	1405-1443	Spigurnel
Thomas Morker	1446-1456	Chancery clerk
William Morland	1440-1489	Chancery master
Robert Mouter	1418-1450	Keeper of hanaper
John Nayler	1430-1474	Chancery clerk
Nicholas Newton	1431-1459	Chancery clerk
George Neville	1460-1467 1470-1471	Chancellor
Richard Neville	1454-1455	Chancellor
William Normanton	1424-1459	Chancery master
John Ongham	1434	Chancery clerk
John Payne	1452-1459	Chancery clerk
John Pemberton	1422-1471	Chancery master
Thomas Playter	1447-1460	Chancery clerk

<u>Clerk</u>	<u>Years of Service</u>	<u>Highest Office attained under Henry VI</u>
William Prestwyk	1408-1436	Chancery master
John Ratheby	1450-1454	Chancery clerk
John Roland	1399-1427	Chancery master
William Rous	1447-1470	Clerk of the crown
William Ruddyngge	1442	Chancery clerk
Roger Rydley	1455	Chancery clerk
Richard Selby	1406-1447	Chancery master
John Sheefield	1442	Chancery master
Henry Shelford	1388-1442	Chancery master
Thomas Shelford	1405-1426	Chancery clerk
Thomas Shipton	1435-1459	Chancery clerk
Thomas Smyth	1401-1433	Keeper of rolls
John Springthorp	1399-1425	Chancery master
John Stafford	1432-1450	Chancellor
John Stokes	1421-1466	Prothonotary
John Stopyndon	1416-1447	Keeper of rolls
Richard Sturgeon	1415-1449	Clerk of the crown
William Swerendon	1457-1469	Clerk of the crown
Thomas Tetisworth	1453-1458	Chancery clerk
John Thoraby	1399-1431	Chancery master
John Toller	1456-1460	Chancery clerk
Henry Upton	1454-1460	Chancery clerk
Robert Walsham	1434-1459	Clerk of almonry

<u>Clerk</u>	<u>Years of Service</u>	<u>Highest Office attained under Henry VI</u>
William Waynflete	1456-1460	Chancellor
Thomas Westhorp	1456-1463	Chancery master
Richard Wetton	1447-1465	Chancery master
Nicholas Wymbyssh	1394-1461	Chancery master
Henry Wyndesore	1455-1468	Chancery clerk
Hugh Winkley	1441-1457	Chancery clerk

Office of the Privy Seal

<u>Clerk</u>	<u>Years of Service</u>	<u>Highest Office attained under Henry VI</u>
William Alberton	1406-1448	Privy seal clerk
William Alnwick	1422-1432	Keeper
William Alton	1422-1424	Privy seal clerk
John Bagot	1423-1426	Privy seal clerk
Thomas Beaugrant	1430-1446	Privy seal clerk
Thomas Bekynton	1443-1444	Keeper
Henry Benet	1419-1470	Privy seal clerk
Lawrence Booth	1456-1460	Keeper
John Brewester	1447-1463	Privy seal clerk
John Claydon	1415-1459	Privy seal clerk
William Flete	1398-1422	Privy seal clerk
John Foston	pre-1447-1452	Privy seal clerk
Thomas Frank	1417-1454	Privy seal clerk
Robert Frye	1385-1425	Secondary
John Hamond	1440-1446	Privy seal clerk
Abel Hessill	1398-1427	Privy seal clerk
John Hethe	1398-1422	Privy seal clerk
Thomas Hoccleve	1387-1424	Privy seal clerk
Andrew Holes	1450-1452	Keeper
Thomas Kent	1443-1468	Secondary
Richard Langport	1446-1474	Privy seal clerk
Thomas Lisieux	1452-1456	Keeper

<u>Clerk</u>	<u>Years of Service</u>	<u>Highest Office attained under Henry VI</u>
William Lyndwood	1432-1443	Keeper
Adam Moleyns	1444-1450	Keeper
John Offord	1405-1438	Privy seal clerk
Richard Prior	1404-1446	Privy seal clerk
John Stafford	1421-1422	Keeper
Robert Stillington	1460-1467	Keeper

Notes

1. G.E. Aylmer, The King's Servants: The Civil Service of Charles I 1625-1642 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961).
2. G.P. Cuttino, "The King's Clerks and the Community of the Realm," Speculum 29(1954):396.
3. For the reign of Henry VI: Calendar of the Charter Rolls, volumes 5, 6; Calendar of the Close Rolls, Henry VI, 6 volumes; Calendar of the Fine Rolls, volumes 15-20; Calendar of the Patent Rolls, Henry VI, 6 volumes.
4. The Guide to the Contents of the Public Record Office (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1963), 1:15-24 gives a detailed discussion of each of these classes. In brief: Charter Rolls include original grants of privileges, lands, creations of peerages, and charters confirming grants; Close Rolls include letters closed and sealed by the Great seal, administrative decisions of an executive nature (although many were also issued under the privy seal), summons to Parliament, private deeds, recognizances and bonds; Fine Rolls include payments for charters and grants, for lands, liberties, privileges, wardships, and offices; Patent Rolls include documents relating to prerogatives of the Crown, revenue, treaties, truces, grants of liberties, offices, privileges, lands, wardships, licences for elections of bishops, presentations to churches, chapels, and pardons.
5. E.B. Fryde, et al., eds., Handbook of British Chronology, Third edition (London: The Royal Society), 1986.
6. An edition appears in Bertie Wilkinson, The Chancery Under Edward III (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1929), 217-33.
7. A.B. Emden, A Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge to 1500 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963); A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 3 volumes.
8. Edward Foss, The Judges of England (London: Longman, Brown, Green & Longmans, 1848-64), 9 volumes. For the reign of Henry VI, see especially volume 4.

Although generally reliable, Foss includes chancery masters who are not verified elsewhere. For example, Foss identifies a Gilbert Haydock as a master of chancery in 1450 (4:222). This identification may have resulted from Haydock's position as chaplain to chancery prothonotary John Derby and Haydock's title as Master derived from his M.A. Since Haydock's studies were in theology and he is identified in the patent rolls as king's chaplain, a position in the king's chancery as master seems unlikely (CPR, Henry VI, October 26, 1458, 6:462; November 7, 1458, 6:465). There was a Henry Haydock who was a clerk in the chancery of Edward III (T.F. Tout, Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1920-1933/1967), 3: 197-98).

9. J. Wedgwood, ed., History of Parliament (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1936), 2 volumes.

10. Jocelyn Otway-Ruthven, The King's Secretary and the Signet Office in the Fifteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939).

11. Nicholas Pronay, "The Chancellor, the Chancery and the Council at the end of the Fifteenth Century," in British Government and Administration, ed. H. Harter and H.R. Loyn (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1974), 87-103.

12. Malcolm Richardson II, "The Influence of Henry V on the Development of Chancery English" (Ph.D. diss., University of Tennessee, 1978).

13. R.L. Storey, "Gentlemen-bureaucrats," in Profession, Vocation and Culture in Later Medieval England, ed. Cecil H. Clough (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1982), 90-129.

14. Charles W. Smith, "Some Trends in the English Royal Chancery: 1377-1483," Medieval Prosopography 6(1985):69-94.

15. A.L. Brown, "The Privy Seal Clerks in the Early Fifteenth Century," in The Study of Medieval Records, ed. D.A. Bullough and R.L. Storey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 260-81.

16. Rotuli Parliamentorum, 1832, 7 volumes.

17. The bishops' registers examined include: F.R.H. DuBoulay, ed., Registrum Thome Bourgchier Cantuariensis archiepiscopi, A.D. 1454-1486 (Canterbury and York Society, 1957), vol. 54; G.R. Dunstan, ed., The Register of Edmund Lacy, bishop of Exeter, 1420-1455 (Canterbury and York Society, 1963-72), 5 volumes; Thomas S. Holmes, The Register of John Stafford, bishop of Bath and Wells, 1425-1443 (Somerset Record Society, 1915-16), vols. 31, 32; E.F. Jacob, ed., The Register of Henry Chichele, archbishop of Canterbury, 1414-43 (Canterbury and York Society, 1938-47), 4 vols.; H.C. Maxwell-Lyte, ed. The Registers of Robert Stillington, Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1466-1491 (Somerset Record Society, 1937), vol. 52; H.C. Maxwell-Lyte and M.C.B. Dawes, The Register of Bishop Bekynton (Somerset Record Society, 1934-35), vols. 49, 50; Robin L. Storey, ed., The Register of Thomas Langley, bishop of Durham (Surtees Society, 1956-71), 6 volumes; A. Hamilton Thompson, ed., Documents Relating to Diocesan and Provincial Visitations from the Registers of Henry Bowet, 1407-23 and John Kemp, 1425-52, (Surtees Society, Miscellanea, 1916), vol. 127.

18. Sources for wills include: various Bishops' registers; Susan H. Cavanaugh, "A Study of Books Privately Owned in England: 1300-1450," 2 vols. (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1980); John William Clay, ed., North Country Wills: Being Abstracts of Wills Relating to the Counties of York, Nottingham, Northumberland, Cumberland and Westmorland at Somerset House and Lambeth Palace, 1383-1558 (Surtees Society, 1908), vol. 116; W.F. Irvine, A Collection of Lancashire and Cheshire Wills Not Now to be Found in Any Probate Registry 1301-1752 (Record Society for the Publication of Original Documents relating to Lancashire and Cheshire, 1896), vol. 30; Canon James Raine, ed., Testamenta Eboracensis (Surtees Society, 1836, 1855, 1864), vols. 4, 30, 45; Reginald R. Sharpe, ed., Calendar of Wills Proved and Enrolled in the Court of Hustings, London A.D. 1258-A.D. 1688, Part II (London: John C. Francis, printer); F.W. Weaver, ed., Somerset Medieval Wills (1383-1500) (Somerset Record Society, 1901), vol. 16.

19. Ann K. Warren, Anchorites and Their Patrons in Medieval England (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 177-78, fn. 88.

20. Joseph Anthony Nigota, "John Kempe, A Political Prelate of the Fifteenth Century," (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1973), 3.
21. Foss, The Judges of England, 4:370-71.
22. Malcolm C. Burson, "Emden's Registers and the Prosopography of Medieval English Universities," Medieval Prosopography 3(1982):37. Burson is discussing the ideas of T.H. Aston.
23. This problem has been noted in many prosopographical studies. In a study of the fifteenth century treasury of the Dukes of Brittany, J. Kerhervé stated, "En revanche, plus l'on s'élève dans la hiérarchie financière plus le profil de l'administrateur ou du comptable se dégage avec netteté" (J. Kerhervé, "Prosopographie des officiers de finances: L'exemple des trésoriers de l'Épargne bretons du XV^e siècle," in Medieval Lives and the Historian: Studies in Medieval Prosopography, ed. Neithard Bulst and Jean-Philippe Genet (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1986), 268).
24. Charles R. Young, "Hugh de Neville: An Early Thirteenth-Century Problem in Identification," Medieval Prosopography 2(1981):37.

Chapter Two Career Contacts: Family and Regional Associations

The impersonal nature of many medieval records caused Joseph Strayer to suggest that "a meaningful biography of an individual" from the middle ages may not be possible.¹ Strayer clearly is aware that many of the important questions which a biographer must answer if the subject is to become more than a "shadowy figure" are the personal ones. Even a study, such as this one, which focuses on the medieval clerks' career patterns and on the development of effective bureaucracy, the public life, can not afford to ignore the private one. Indeed a dividing line can not always be drawn between the public and the private arena. An examination of the clerks' background, family and local contacts can make clearer how these men secured their offices initially.

How an individual acquired office is a matter of basic interest...the approach which offers the greatest promise of explanation as to how a new individual acquired a new office is that of attempting to determine what contacts or connections he had with people in a position to confer such an office.²

In discussing what factors contributed to a clerk's securing his office, it is important to note that differing influences are at work. Beech, above, considers how an individual "acquired" an office as well as how he made the connections with

people in a position to "confer" an office. An examination of these bureaucrats' early lives stresses factors beyond the individual's control -- family, personal, regional contacts -- yet it is not meant to convey a view of the clerk as passive pawn. Du Boulay aptly called this period the "age of ambition" to combat the picture of the fifteenth century as an age of decay and decline. He saw the fifteenth century as a time in which changes occurred, opportunities were seized. Native ability and ambition are also factors in an individual's success. Rosenthal, in describing "the training of an elite group," fifteenth-century English bishops, noted that he was considering medieval "success stories."³ The clerks considered here are a much more diverse group than the bishops in Rosenthal's study. They range from men who reached heights of administrative and ecclesiastical power to lowly clerks involved in the physical production of documents. Yet all are, in their way, also medieval success stories. Using a combination of factors -- where they were born, their family's status, patrons they attracted, family ties -- these clerks insured their place in the administrative bureaucracy.

An examination of biographies of three historical

figures -- one late ancient, one medieval and one modern makes the importance of one of these factors, place of birth, as a starting point for individual biography abundantly clear:

When Augustine was born there, in 354, the town of Thagaste (modern Souk Ahras in Algeria) had existed for 300 years.⁴

The being that would one day become Louis XI, Most Christian King of France, was born about three o'clock in the afternoon of July 3, 1423, in the episcopal palace of Bourges hard by the great cathedral of St. Etienne.⁵

Herbert Henry Asquith was born in the small Yorkshire woollen town of Morley on Sept. 12, 1852.⁶

For any period of history, establishing an individual's point of origin seems a necessary beginning. When the subject of a biography is a group, rather than an individual, the same necessity imposes itself. Place of birth as a starting point for biography is not only a chronological necessity. Where a person is born may determine where his career begins and what patronage contacts he is able to make. In a medieval group biography, the first step in examining regional influences is determining what are the regional origins and associations of as many members of the group as possible.

Determining regional origins is not always possible for medieval figures as specific statements

about early origins may not be forthcoming. A variety of possible approaches have been used in both individual and group biographies. Using these methods, regional origins and early associations -- ranging in degree of certainty from possible to probable to definite -- have been suggested for three-quarters (ninety-two) of the 121 clerks in this study (See Chart C).

The first, and sometimes the only, indication of an individual's origin may be the individual's surname. Surnames with regional associations were found frequently in this period. P.H. Reaney, in a survey of mid-fourteenth-century names, examined surnames from a broad geographic area -- London, Kent, Cambridgeshire, Somersetshire, and Yorkshire. He determined that names indicating local origins comprised 23 to 57 percent of the names surveyed.⁷ This appears consistent with a study of fifteenth-century Shrewsbury which showed that 37 percent of Shrewsbury names indicated regional origin.⁸ Even the 1870 London Directory still included a substantial proportion of regional names.⁹ Undoubtedly, these nineteenth-century regional surnames were the result of centuries of the inheritance of fixed surnames, not necessarily reflections

of contemporary residence. Were late medieval surnames a more valid indication of relatively recent regional association? Surnames in the fifteenth century were more likely to refer to regional associations in the more immediate past as surnames had only recently become fixed.¹⁰ In addition, a study of thirteenth and fourteenth-century documents indicated that, although a substantial number of tenants no longer resided in the towns from which their surnames derived, the distance they had moved from their place of origin averaged ten to forty miles.¹¹ For a determination of broad regional influences, this limited mobility should not significantly affect the results.

In the specific group of chancery and privy seal personnel who are the focus of this study, surnames with regional associations abound. Some geographic associations are too vague or commonplace to help determine actual place of origin, as many English towns and villages were not uniquely named.¹²

Surnames, such as those of Nicholas Newton (New town), William Normanton (Norman town), and Henry Upton (Up town) refer to placenames found all over England.¹³ Surnames, such as that of John Foston which refers to places found in Derbyshire, Leicester,

Yorkshire, and Lincolnshire, of William Bolton, a reference to placenames in Cumberland, Northumberland, Westmorland, and Yorkshire, and of John Derby, found in Derbyshire, Lancashire and Lincolnshire, have too many associations for a specific determination of origin.¹⁴ All these locations do suggest northern origins. Fortunately a much larger group of clerks have surnames associated with counties, villages, parishes, or towns, associations sometimes buttressed by other regional indicators.

Among these clerks, examples include: William Alnwick (Alnwick, Northumberland); William Alton (Alton, Southampton); Thomas Asshecombe (Ashcombe, Devonshire); John Bate (Bath, Somersetshire); John and Richard Bekyngham (Beckingham, Lincolnshire or Nottinghamshire); Thomas Bekynton (Beckington, Somersetshire); John Brokholes (Brockholes, Lancashire); Richard Fryston (Freston, Suffolk); Henry Garstang (Garstand, Lancashire); Simon Gaunstede (Ganstead, Yorkshire); Thomas Haseley (Great Haseley, Oxfordshire); John Hertilpole (Hartlepool, Durham); Abel Hessill (Hessle, Yorkshire); John Hethe (Hethe, Oxfordshire); Thomas Hoccleve (Hockliffe, Bedfordshire); Andrew Holes (Hulse, Cheshire); Thomas Ive (St. Ives, Cornwall); James Kelom (Kelham, Nottinghamshire); Thomas Kent (Kent); Robert Kirkeham

(Kirkham, Lancashire); Richard Langport (Langport, Somersetshire); John Louth (Louth, Lincolnshire); William Lyndwood (Linwood, Lincolnshire); John Mapilton the Elder and the Younger (Mappleton, Yorkshire); John Offord (Offord, Bedfordshire); John Pemberton (Pemberton, Lancashire); William Ruddyng (Ruddington, Nottinghamshire); Richard Selby (Selby, Yorkshire); John Sheefield (Sheffield, Yorkshire); Henry and Thomas Shelford (Great and Little Shelford, Cambridgeshire); John Shelton (Shelton, Norfolk); John Springthorp (Springthorp, Lincolnshire); John Stafford (Staffordshire)*, Robert Stillington (Stillington, Yorkshire); Thomas Tetisworth (Tetsworth, Oxfordshire); John Thorlby (Thorlby, Yorkshire); Robert Walsham (Walsham, Norfolk); William Waynflete (Wainfleet, Lincolnshire); Richard Wetton (Wetton, Staffordshire); Henry Wyndesore (Windsor, Berkshire); and Hugh Winkley (Winkley, Devonshire).¹⁵

There are other ways in which names can suggest place of origin in addition to specific locations. Sometimes the form of a name itself can suggest background. The words "brewer" or "brewster" denote the same occupation, but the brewster form, used by privy seal clerk John Brewster, suggests a northern

*Note: John Stafford in this study is actually from Wiltshire. The name refers to the family's Staffordshire origin.¹⁶

origin.¹⁷ Chancery clerk Richard Colman's name is consistently spelled in the southern fashion.¹⁸ John Hamond, a clerk in the privy seal office, has an old French surname common among the residents of Kent.¹⁹

Other information, in addition to surnames, can be called into evidence in determining regional associations. This information can either buttress that provided by surnames or may serve as a substitute for surname indicators. Thomas Lisieux, a keeper of the privy seal, has a surname which attests to his family's past origin in Normandy, but reveals nothing about his English regional association. This missing information is supplied by his Oxford career. His northern origin is suggested by his election as Northern Proctor at Oxford, a position occupied by those residing north of the river Trent.²⁰ William Rous, a clerk of the crown in chancery, also had a surname which indicated his French origin, but his election as member of Parliament for Horsham in Surrey and Reigate in Sussex attests to southern associations, at least later in life.²¹ His extensive land holdings in Wiltshire further support this theory.²² Robert Frye's Wiltshire background led to his election three times as parliamentary representative for Wilton.²³ Robert Fen served Rutland,

Northamptonshire in Parliament; John Toller may have been a representative for Somerset.²⁴

Even a career skill as basic for chancery personnel as handwriting could reveal geographic origin. Chancellor Thomas Langley's northern chancery hand, as shown by letters and documents still extant, is as clear an indication of his northern origin as the more specific statements in his will.²⁵

Descriptions of the clerks' career activities in the chancery rolls themselves are often accompanied by specific identification of their place of origin. This form of identification is not surprising in a society which recognized regional loyalties more easily than national ones. Thus it is common to include a geographic description as a way of identifying an individual to his contemporaries. "Simon Gaunstede of Yorkshire," "Geoffrey Goodlok of Oxfordshire," "Richard Loy of Oxfordshire," "Richard Selby of the county of York," "William Godyng of the county of Surrey," "William Marchall of the county of Oxford," "John Morker of Bedford, county Bedford," "Robert Mouster of Somercotes, county Lincoln," "Nicholas Wymbysshe of Notynghamshire," -- the form may vary but the importance to contemporaries of an individual's local origin is continually stressed.²⁶

The importance and validity of regional loyalty could be used as an argument for a candidate's suitability for a job, while providing a contemporary indication of his place of origin, as in the case of Chancellor John Kempe.

When in 1452 the name of John Kempe,... was offered to the chapter of Canterbury by Henry VI as the royal candidate to fill that vacant archbishopric, the king reminded the chapter that Kempe was 'born of his nativities not ferre from you' [in Wye, Kent].²⁷

Many years had elapsed since Kempe's birth in Kent yet it was still seen as a selling point by the king. During Cade's Rebellion (1450), centered in Kent, the delegation authorized to persuade the rebels to ask for a royal pardon included Chancellor John Kempe, a native of Kent, and former Chancellor John Stafford, a large landowner in Kent.²⁸ In a similar fashion, keeper of the hanaper John Stoppyndon's local associations in Kent were useful in the service of the king: "Commission to Thomas, bishop of Rochester, John Stoppyndon, clerk, and John Darell to induce notables of the county of Kent to lend the king a considerable amount of money."²⁹ As a parallel, the town of Canterbury in Kent saw John Stoppyndon as the logical chancery clerk to represent their interests to the crown.³⁰ In like fashion, secondary Robert Frye's neighbors and relatives in Wiltshire

continually used his good offices.³¹

If activities during the course of a clerk's career shed light on his regional loyalties, these loyalties had even a stronger claim at the end of the clerk's life. Joel Rosenthal suggested that one of the difficulties in determining the origins of medieval bishops was their tendency to remember the last stage of their careers in their wills rather than their early associations.³² This behavior was contrasted with that of local clerks and canons who, of necessity, had only local careers to remember. Although the chancery and privy seal personnel had national careers in the king's service, their behavior revealed a continuing loyalty to their early regional associations. Further, even those bureaucrats who were themselves bishops and equivalent in status to, or in some cases identical to, those in Rosenthal's study, recognized family and local ties as well as those formed later in their careers.³³

In an earlier study of the fifteenth-century episcopate, Rosenthal follows G. Williams, editor of the Bekynton correspondence, in including keeper of the privy seal, Thomas Bekynton, among those bishops whose early origins are little known:

And if we know whence he came, this bit of information must be balanced against the fact that 'he does not appear to have felt any strong attachment to his native place.'³⁴

In his later study of the bishops' bequests, Rosenthal does note that Bekynton showed his gratitude to his native diocese by arranging for the support of scholars from that area.³⁵ Other sources provide further evidence that Bekynton gave thought to his birthplace. He bequeathed ecclesiastical ornaments to the church in the parish of Beckington, Somersetshire.³⁶ Other civil servant bishops made similar provisions for their place of origin -- Robert Stillington, William Alnwick, and William Waynflete all founded schools in their native towns.³⁷ Thomas Langley, also founded a grammar school in his native place, Middleton, Lancashire and supported his affection for his place of birth by the many bequests to Lancashire families.³⁸ Gratitude to their place of birth made such concern likely. Many testators felt the need to make "permanent provision for the education of kinsmen yet unborn and to extend such provisions beyond the confines of their families to the inhabitants of places with which they were connected by birth...."³⁹

Chancellor John Kempe not only founded a school for the inhabitants of his place of birth

Wye in Kent, but erected a tomb for his parents and established a chantry in the same locale.⁴⁰ The founding of a chantry in one's native place made both sentimental and social sense. "Prayer foundations served a social, as well as a spiritual purpose. They lent prestige to the family of their founder."⁴¹

Even in smaller bequests, testators went out of their way to assert their association with their native region. William Lyndwood, keeper of the privy seal and bishop of St. David's, specifically noted and remembered his place of birth in his will: "Item lego ecclesie de Lyndewode [Lincolnshire] ubi natus sum, antiphonarium meum minorem de tribus."⁴²

Gratitude to one's place of birth was not only the prerogative of those at the top of the civil service hierarchy. Those further down in the hierarchy acknowledged their regional debts as well, thus making their origins easier to determine. Edward Foss incorrectly suggested that chancery master John Frank came from a Norfolk family.⁴³ This not only contradicts the specific identifications in the chancery rolls of John Frank as "clerk of the county of Somerset" but contradicts those provisions in

Frank's will wherein he recognized his local debts.⁴⁴ John Frank asked that his executors found a chantry of one chaplain to celebrate services for his soul and that of his parents in the church of Trent in the county of Somerset "in which town the said John Frank was born."⁴⁵

Other bureaucrats arranged chantries in their native towns making their early origins evident. In his will, William Prestwyk, master of chancery, provided for a perpetual chantry in the parish church of Worbelton in Chichester where he and his parents were to be buried.⁴⁶ Similarly, John Nayler, one of the clerks of chancery, provided for a perpetual chantry in Bodmin, county Cornwall to honor the souls of his parents, wife and brothers.⁴⁷ John Louth was not only involved in extensive land transactions with his fellow clerks in Louth, Lincolnshire but confirmed his early connections with the area by founding a chantry in the town which provided his surname.⁴⁸

John Springthorp, another master of chancery, honored his entire family -- mother, father, brothers and sisters -- by establishing a chaplain to maintain a chantry in their honor for a year in Springthorp,

Lincolnshire: "Item lego cuidam capellano honesto pro anima mea, patris, matris, fratrum, sororum, et omnium benefactorum meorum apud Spryngthorp, per unam annum celebratur."⁴⁹ Springthorp also arranged for money to be provided to repair the church in his birthplace, apparently finding loyalty to his beginnings an appropriate way of deciding the charitable arrangements at the end of his life.⁵⁰ Other clerks considered their native churches in their wills. Thomas Asshecombe, clerk of the almonry, left money for the church "of our lady of Bradford in the shire of Somerset wherein I toke my cristendome."⁵¹

Another way of repaying a successful early start was by thinking of the poor of one's native place. William Normanton asked that alms be divided among the poor people of Camsall in his native Yorkshire and John Cammell not only asked that celebrations be held for his family's souls in his native Somerset but arranged also that the poor in Dychesgate, Somersetshire be remembered.⁵²

Bequests such as these put the personnel of the chancery and the privy seal office in the mainstream of fifteenth-century charitable impulses.

A study of urban bequests in late medieval Hull reveals similar results: "Nor perhaps can there ever have been a period when more testators (almost a half of the total in fifteenth-century Hull) made such copious bequests for the commemoration of their soul."⁵³ London benefactors, including merchants, also made heavy contributions to the endowment of chantries in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁵⁴ The clerks' total involvement in ecclesiastical building and repair as a way of insuring their local and their spiritual reputation was a major contribution to their age and another indication of its active character.

There is no period at which money was lavished so freely on English parish churches as in the fifteenth century, and there is a curious contrast between the complaints of dilapidation and decay so common in the reports of visitations and the building activity which was prevailing all over the country.⁵⁵

The extent to which the clerks acknowledged and repaid their regional associations suggests the importance these associations had for them. Some of the give and take between the bureaucrats and their regions is obvious particularly in the arrangements made for their education (see also Chapter Three). Regional relations also influenced the clerks when they were seeking positions.

Political influence in England as a whole in the middle ages was heavily weighted in favor of the midlands and south of England. "The rise of the Nevilles and Percies in the late fourteenth century was the first occasion when families of genuine northern origin came into the first rank of the nobility."⁵⁶ The majority of the aristocracy based its power on holdings in the midlands and south. In Parliament the same discrepancy between north and south operated. Southern and midland areas were over-represented, northern definitely under-represented. In the fifteenth century, Wiltshire had sixteen boroughs represented and Sussex twelve. This is in strong contrast to the important northern areas: Yorkshire had three boroughs represented, Northumberland one and Lancashire none.⁵⁷ Even among professional groups the same geographic imbalance operated. E.W. Ives found that 80 percent of late fifteenth and early sixteenth-century lawyers came from the south of England.⁵⁸

When the civil service is examined, however, a very different picture emerges. A political imbalance which favored the south is in direct contrast to the imbalance found in the civil service. Wilkinson discovered that in the chancery of

Edward III, only three of the forty-seven first-form clerks he identified came from south of Norfolk.⁵⁹ This northern dominance continued in the chancery of Henry V. A study of the development of chancery English at this time revealed that, "the relative absence of Northernisms...is more surprising than the lack of Southernisms since so many in Chancery were apparently from the north."⁶⁰

The geographic origins of those clerks in the chancery and privy seal office of Henry VI continue to show an imbalance slightly in favor of the north. (See Chart C). This imbalance is even more marked at the decision-making levels. Ten of Henry VI's chancellors and keepers of the privy seal are of northern origin as opposed to six southerners.⁶¹ Among the chancery masters identified in this study, the northern dominance is even more evident. Of the twenty-nine masters whose origin has been suggested, twenty-two are of northern background.⁶²

What were the general and specific influences which explained the regional orientation of the civil service? The most important influence was that of the royal family itself. In the reign of Richard II, whose patrimony and major power were centered in North Wales and Cheshire, men

noted the "glorious prospects available to Cheshire men at the court."⁶³ In Richard III's reign, his position as lord of the County Palatine of Durham resulted in the advancement of men from that area.⁶⁴ In like fashion the Lancastrian monarchs favored natives of their own area: "The Lancastrians looked well after their own; the revolution which put Henry Bolingbroke on the throne had its family and territorial aspect; it meant advancement alike... for natives of the duchy as well as supporters of the duke."⁶⁵ Although the Lancastrian monarchs held lands in the south and midlands as well, the duchy of Lancaster was still a northern power base.

This northern orientation influenced the patronage available to the ambitious clerk. Thomas Langley, chancellor under Henry VI, had a career which illustrated the advantages of an early connection with the Duchy of Lancaster. Langley, a native of Lancashire, began his career in the service of the Radcliffes who lived near the town of Middleton where he was born.⁶⁶ Through the Radcliffes, he became a chaplain in the household of John of Gaunt, whose favor virtually insured access to a successful career at court.⁶⁷ Langley later performed the same function for another native of the north,

John Thoraby. Thoraby began his career as a clerk in the chancery of the Duchy of Lancaster and later became one of Langley's councillors.⁶⁸ Langley assisted him in his rise to the position of master of chancery and maintained a deep affection for him throughout his career.

Positions in the service of the Duchy of Lancaster were an early impetus for the careers of many northern natives who served in Henry VI's chancery. John Louth, Simon Gaunstede, Henry Kays, John Mapilton the Elder, and John Springthorp, all natives of Yorkshire, Lincolnshire or Lancashire, like John Thoraby, profited from the contacts and experience of their extensive service in the chancery of the Duchy. Their positions in the Duchy chancery included auditor, attorney, deputy chancellor, and chancellor.⁶⁹

In addition to the general influence of the northern monarchy on the bureaucracy, there were specific influences within the chancery itself. When Ives analyzed the regional backgrounds of late medieval lawyers, he noted that the only significant exception to their southern origins was the existence of a large group from Yorkshire.⁷⁰

This same influence prevailed in the chancery, where Yorkshire clerks had a monopoly of the hanaper of chancery for the entire fourteenth century, a "remarkable continuity of offices of state by one group...unique in administrative history."⁷¹

The bonds between the Yorkshire clerks benefitted the administration through their group cooperation and benefitted others from their area. A significant group of clerks from this area can still be found under Henry VI (See Chart C). Simon Gaunstede, for example, profited from his Yorkshire birth. He joined Thomas Arundel's service in Yorkshire. When Arundel became chancellor in the 1390s, he introduced Gaunstede into the chancery.⁷²

At the most specific level, regional orientations resulted from individual actions. Officials from every part of England assisted those from their own regions: "Loyalty to a particular geographical region would often involve a lord, bishop or official in the advancement of people from that area."⁷³ The civil service was no exception to this pattern. William Waynflete, chancellor during Henry VI's reign, was initially favored by Henry Beaufort, bishop of Lincoln, as the son of a Lincolnshire family.⁷⁴ Chancery master, John Frank, served as John Cammell's

patron in the chancery in part as recognition of their common Somersetshire origin. In his will Cammell acknowledged Frank as his benefactor and offered prayers for his soul.⁷⁵ In like fashion, John Stoppyndon's promotion to the position of keeper of the hanaper was the direct result of his involvement in the service of fellow Kent resident, chancellor John Kempe.⁷⁶ Clerk of the crown Thomas Haseley was assisted throughout his career by his Oxfordshire neighbor, Thomas Chaucer, a relative of Cardinal Beaufort.⁷⁷

Regional association was not the only influence guiding those in power when making patronage decisions. Family association was equally important. Throughout this study emphasis will be placed on the family character of associations formed in the bureaucracy and the key role they played in insuring an effective administration. For some clerks and other officials, the family character of their office assumed a literal significance -- these bureaucrats were able to use their influence to find places for members of their own families. Tout observed that, "the family character of the society was enhanced by the facility with which a prosperous chancery clerk could obtain places in the office for his kinfolk."⁷⁸ It is important to identify a clerk's family, to

establish who they were in both senses of the term, both their social status and their individual identity, in order to determine patronage connections and opportunities.

Ralph Griffiths believed that a study of the social origins of fifteenth-century bureaucrats would very likely conclude that "bureaucrats were drawn from every class of society."⁷⁹ Although he felt no specific status emphasis would emerge, he still realized the importance of pinpointing social origin. Even in a bureaucracy staffed by clerks of various social backgrounds, social patterns could emerge. In exploring the accuracy of the description of the fifteenth century as an "age of ambition," it is necessary to investigate the theme of social mobility. If "the church provided a career more genuinely open to talent than any other in late medieval England,"⁸⁰ royal service, too, served as a means of social ascent, a means much employed.⁸¹ Although hierarchical privilege remained significant, patronage and individual talent provided a counterbalance for those whose ambition exceeded their birth.⁸²

The sixteen men in this study who attained the rank of chancellor and keeper of the privy seal

illustrate Griffith's thesis of a wide range of social origins. Men such as Richard Neville, eldest son of the earl of Westmorland, Thomas Bouchier, third son of the earl of Eu, George Neville, fourth son of the earl of Salisbury, and Henry Beaufort, illegitimate third son of the duke of Lancaster, obviously profited from their elevated connections.⁸³ Thomas Bouchier's career offers a clear example of the advantages of an aristocratic background. His promotion to the bishopric of Worcester at the uncanonical age of twenty-two over the protests of the pope ("he had promoted no one of the like age to a cathedral church") owed far less to individual talent than to his noble blood and powerful connections.⁸⁴ Similarly, George Neville profited from his status: "Privilege enabled him to take his M.A. degree in 1452 without the statutory requirements, and exalted him to Chancellorship of the University a year later, at the early age of twenty...."⁸⁵ The importance of younger sons staffing the king's service is also suggested by these men's positions in their families. With the exception of Richard Neville, the only lay chancellor or keeper of the privy seal in Henry VI's reign, their family backgrounds reveal the importance of

the church as a career source for aristocratic younger sons, and by extension the importance of career opportunities in the bureaucracy for clerics.

Henry Beaufort's illegitimate birth -- although in his case his bastardy was corrected by acts of church and Parliament -- reminds us that those of illegitimate birth might have used their family connections to upgrade their social position through the service of the king.⁸⁶

Beneath the level of those at the top of the civil service hierarchy with aristocratic relations, were those chancellors and keepers of the privy seal who came from families who, if not obscure, were not privileged enough to ensure success at court. Thomas Lisieux, a keeper of the privy seal, without anything specific known of his origins, was described as "of noble birth."⁸⁷ More specifically, of the sixteen top-level bureaucrats a significant number came from families of middle-level gentry rank. Similar origins were shared by John Kempe, Thomas Langley, John Stafford, William Waynflete, Lawrence Booth, Andrew Holes, and Robert Stillington. Kempe, Stillington and Waynflete came from families of local prominence. Although John Kempe's father never held knightly rank, he was a man of wealth

and substance, who was chosen as royal escheator for his area several times.⁸⁸ Robert Stillington's father, John, owned the manor of Nether Acaster in Yorkshire.⁸⁹ Waynflete was descended from this rank through both parents for his father, about whom not much is known, was of sufficient social position to marry the daughter of a knight, Waynflete's mother, Margery Brereton.⁹⁰ Although Waynflete chose to give up his family's name for that of his birthplace, this is not necessarily a sign of inferior birth. John Lord Campbell has stated that this was a common custom among ordained priests, even among those of good birth.⁹¹ Thomas Langley, although from a less substantial family, still appears to be descended from a minor branch of a gentry family.⁹²

The family of Andrew Holes illustrates another important social influence. He is descended from a gentry family who achieved added status through the legal profession. His father, Sir Hugh Holes, was a justice of the king's bench and "then as now a successful professional career could set the seal upon a man's social advancement."⁹³

Lawrence Booth and John Stafford, although like Kempe, Stillington and Waynflete, the sons of locally

prominent knights, shared the disability of illegitimacy, both having unmarried mothers who were not of high rank.⁹⁴ Like Henry Beaufort, however, they were able to obtain dispensations from the church which enabled them to pursue successful ecclesiastical and bureaucratic careers. Lawrence Booth received a grant from the pope stating that "he had been dispensed by papal authority on account of illegitimacy as the son of unmarried parents to be promoted to all, even holy orders."⁹⁵ John Stafford received a similar dispensation and found his illegitimate birth such a minor impediment that he was able to arrange to have a monument constructed for his mother, Emma, when he was archbishop.⁹⁶

Although this study has shown that those who attained the highest rank of chancellor were of either aristocratic or gentry rank, four of the men who attained the still substantial rank of keeper of the privy seal had origins that were both humble and obscure. Men such as William Lyndwood, the son of John Lyndwood, a woolman, or Thomas Bekynton, whose father was apparently a weaver, are truly medieval success stories who were helped both by local patronage and their own talent.⁹⁷ William Alnwick, once

thought to be a Percy and brother of the earl of Westmorland (although not by unbiased historians) and Adam Moleyns, who was described as the son of Sir Richard Molineux, have both, on closer examination, been found to have backgrounds that are completely unknown.⁹⁸ Obscure origins are unlikely to belong to those of high rank and, for these two keepers of the privy seal, their own talent probably explains their rise. In the case of Adam Moleyns "What we are left to suppose...is that Adam Moleyns rose by virtue of his learning and administrative skill from a background he preferred to leave unmentioned."⁹⁹ These four cases, however, (25 percent of the administrators observed at this level) suggest a significant degree of social mobility available to those who could combine talent and luck.

To what extent was the social makeup of the bureaucracy at its highest level parallel to that of those below? If even relatively well-documented lives, such as those of William Alnwick or Adam Moleyns, do not provide information about social background, how much more frequently must this occur for those at the less prestigious levels of the administration. A variety of sources must be called into evidence to reveal whenever possible any

indications of social origin. It seems reasonable to assume that those in the lower ranks of the administration would exhibit varied social backgrounds, although with a greater number of those of lowly status. In a study of seventeenth-century English civil servants, G.E. Aylmer found, not surprisingly, that "men of relatively humble social origins were more likely to be found in the lesser ranks of the administration."¹⁰⁰ Similarly, in contrast to those at the top of the civil service bureaucracy, men of aristocratic rank should be rare at the less prestigious levels of the administration.

One source of status information, the documents of the papal chancery, may suggest vague noble origins for clerks at the less elevated, but still influential, level of chancery master. These documents, which described Thomas Lisieux, the keeper of the privy seal as "of noble birth," contain a similar description of chancery masters Richard Sturgeon, John Thoraby, William Hill, and Nicholas Wymbyssh. Sturgeon was described as coming from a noble family and often worked with a Nicholas Sturgeon, possibly a relative, who was also described in papal documents as being of noble birth.¹⁰¹ In like fashion, Thoraby, Hill and Wymbyssh are described as "born of a noble race

of barons," "of noble race," and "of noble birth."¹⁰² Are descriptions such as these a valid indication of noble origin? The term "noble" in these contexts may not have a specific legal meaning but rather implies a family of "wealth and prominence."¹⁰³ Social descriptions derived from papal documents may be "of little worth, for men might gratuitously inflate their rank when petitioning the Roman see."¹⁰⁴

Three of the top-level bureaucrats, whose social origins were discussed above, appear as petitioners in papal documents. Lawrence Booth, the son of a prominent knight, is given only a slightly inflated rank when he is called of "noble race."¹⁰⁵ Thomas Bourchier is accurately described as "of a rank of great nobles," and Andrew Holes' rank is certainly not exaggerated when he is described as "of knightly birth."¹⁰⁶ Descriptions such as these suggest that, although the information in papal documents should be used with caution, the evidence they provide for social origin cannot be dismissed out of hand. These descriptions do suggest that some of the chancery masters came from families substantial enough to assist them in their careers.

Chancery and privy seal documents can also provide occasional evidence for social status. A grant to

privy seal clerk John Offord describes him as "alias John Pabenham, son of Laurence Pabenham, 'chivaler,'...."¹⁰⁷ Like William Waynflete, Offord replaced his father's surname with that of his birthplace, although his father was of knightly status. In his case, however, it has been suggested that he may have changed his name in part because of his illegitimacy.¹⁰⁸ For the same reason, a John Louth, clerk of Lincoln and possibly the chancery clerk, changed his name: "To John Helenesone alias Louth, clerk of the diocese of Lincoln. Dispensation to him who lately had himself tonsured without mention of his illegitimacy...to act as a clerk."¹⁰⁹ A privy seal document corrects a conjecture about privy seal clerk Thomas Frank's origins. A.F. Pollard believed that Frank was the son of a prominent Lincolnshire knight, Sir William Frank.¹¹⁰ A petition by Thomas Frank himself, enrolled in the privy seal documents, refers to his father simply as "his fader William ffrank of Richemond...Countee of York," casting doubt on the regional and social origin proposed by Pollard.¹¹¹

Earlier in this chapter, surnames were used to determine regional origins. Surnames can be used for another purpose, the discovery of social origins. A study of naming patterns reveals that surnames denoting social rank or occupation, although less common than

those with regional associations, still constitute a significant source for names. P.H. Reaney found that in the fourteenth century occupational and social surnames comprised almost one-fifth of Middle English surnames surveyed.¹¹² For many clerks surnames are the only evidence of social origin.

These surnames may be as general, yet as important, an indication of rank as that of clerk Robert Frye or clerks John and Thomas Frank which indicate their "free" status.¹¹³ Privy seal clerk Richard Prior's last name seems appropriate for a monastic profession, although Reaney suggests that the last name "Prior" is far too common in England to have specific meaning.¹¹⁴ Clerks who come from families with a history in the king's service are suggested by surnames such as those of Nicholas Bailly (bailiff), John Toller (toll collector), John Chamberlain (chamberlain), William Marchall (marshall), and even John Faukes (falconer).¹¹⁵ Thomas Playter's surname is especially appropriate for a clerk involved with legal writs in one of its meanings (pleader), although it also suggests the more humble occupation of plater (metal worker).¹¹⁶ Several other chancery and privy seal clerks bear names suggesting humble occupations: John Bagot (bag-maker), Thomas Baker

(baker), John Brewster (brewer), John Chese (cheese maker), John Claydon (potter), Richard Colman (smelter), John Nayler (carpenter), Thomas Smith (blacksmith), Richard Sturgeon (fisherman).¹¹⁷ Families with respectable but modest origins such as these are unlikely to have had access to powerful patrons. They are more likely to have gradually raised their status through administrative service.

Earlier in this chapter, reference was made to the family character of the bureaucracy. Even families with humble origins, once established in the king's service, could upgrade their families' status by bringing in other family members: "The normal method of recruitment to the administration in the middle ages was by recommendation, sometimes by magnates and bishops, but more often by kinsmen and neighbors already established in the king's service."¹¹⁸

Membership in Henry VI's chancery and privy seal office provided access to patronage for oneself and one's relatives and associates -- the opportunity to propose new names for membership and to assist family and friends.¹¹⁹ A young man starting a career would not ignore the advantages of well-placed relatives. Indications of these ties exist in the repetition of names generation after

generation in royal service.

Even in a heavily clerical civil service, enough lay clerks existed to provide examples of the closest of kin relations, parent and child. John Mapilton the Elder, who began his career in the chancery under Henry IV, was still serving as a chancery mater under Henry VI at the same time that John Mapilton the Younger began his own successful career in the same office.¹²⁰ The most common use of the terms "elder" and "younger" suggests a father-son relationship, although occasionally the custom of naming children after godparents resulted in two brothers widely separated in age being designated in this way.¹²¹ A 1481 grant in the patent rolls states that Richard Ive should have the office of clerk of the crown just as his father, Thomas Ive, one of the clerks of the crown under Henry VI, did before him.¹²² Even at the lowest levels of the bureaucracy, where individual references are especially infrequent, the chancery records describe a spigurnel of chancery, John Morker, who arranged that his son Thomas Morker join him in Henry VI's chancery.¹²³ Thomas rose to the rank of chancery clerk, a case of fifteenth-century upward mobility.

Kinship ties extended far beyond those of father

and son. "Experience has shown that more distant relatives or ancestors -- particularly those distinguished in their own right -- could also explain some later preferment."¹²⁴ Since influential relatives could provide patronage contacts for a wide range of associates, it was clearly to the advantage of family members to assist each other in their careers.

When future keeper of the privy seal Andrew Holes wished to attend Oxford University, his relatives bargained for the living of the rectory at Davenham for his support while he was a student.¹²⁵ At the lower level of the bureaucratic hierarchy, a chafewax, Thomas Baker, found support in mid-career from a female relative. Alice Penforde arranged with the priory of Southwick "to demise her estate therein to the end that she and the said Thomas may have the same for their lives."¹²⁶

Many clerks, in turn, repaid their relatives. William Alberton, a privy-seal clerk well-established in his own career, gave up one of the many perquisites of his office, a pension within the abbey of Wynchecome, "to the end that Richard Hende his cousin may have it."¹²⁷ Alberton also gave up a corrody (an allowance of food and clothing) from the abbey of St. Augustine in Bristol in order to

"advance John Bollesdoun his kinsman."¹²⁸ Chancery clerk Peter Aumener gave up his living in a Norwich church in favor of a Walter Aumener, described in later chancery records as his brother.¹²⁹ Chancery master John Bate benefited from his relationship to Chancellor John Kempe. Kempe apparently introduced him into the chancery and provided him with prebends. Papal records reveal that Bate received the subdeanery of Salisbury "at his petition and that of John, cardinal priest of St. Balbina's /Chancellor John Kempe/ whose kin he is."¹³⁰ Clerk of the crown Thomas Haseley was well-established in the chancery when his cousin William Godyng entered as a chancery clerk. Haseley assisted in training Godyng and was involved with him in real estate and legal transactions.¹³¹

This form of nepotism was more than acceptable in the middle ages -- it was one of the perquisites of office. It benefited not only the individual but the bureaucracy as a whole by contributing to administrative efficiency. It produced a system in which improvements in technique were passed from generation to generation and in which the members had a vested interest in the continuing smooth functioning of government. If "all

governments work within an intricate matrix of relationships which form the structure of power within society," regional, social and kinship ties helped form and strengthen the relationships which characterized bureaucratic society in the reign of Henry VI.¹³²

Chart C Geographic Origin of the King's Clerks

(The information in this chart is a summary of the research discussed in the first section of Chapter Two.)

NORTH

North (county not specified) - Bolton, Brewster, Derby,
Foston, Lisieux

Yorkshire or Lincolnshire - Thoraby

Lincolnshire or Nottinghamshire - J. Bekyngham,
R. Bekyngham

Westmorland - Morland, R. Neville

Northumberland - Alnwick

Lincolnshire - Flete, W. Hill, Louth, Lyndwood, Mouter,
Ratheby, Springthorp, Waynflete

Cheshire - Ardern, Holes

Lancashire - Bailly, Beaufort, Booth, Brokholes, Garstang,
Kays, Kirkeham, Langley, Pemberton

Yorkshire - T. Frank, Gaunsted, Hessill, Kirkeby,
J. Mapilton the Elder, J. Mapilton the
Younger, Normanton, Selby, Sheefield,
Stillington, Westthorp

Nottinghamshire - Kelom, Ruddyng, Wymbyssh

Durham - Hertilpole

Leicester - Payne

Northampton - Fen

TOTAL: 47 clerks

SOUTH, MIDLANDS AND SOUTH-WEST

South (county not specified) - Colman, Rous

Staffordshire - Wetton

Norfolk - Newton, Shelton, Walsham

Suffolk - Claydon, Fryston

Sussex - Prestwyk

Oxfordshire - Goodlok, Haseley, Hethe, Loy, Marchall,
Tetisworth

Bedfordshire - Hoccleve, J. Morker, T. Morker, Offord

Somersetshire - Asshecombe, Bate, Bekynton, Cammell,
J. Frank, Langport, Toller

Kent - Hamond, Kemp, Kent, Stoppyndon

Cambridgeshire - Shelford

Surrey - Godyng

Southampton - Alton

Wiltshire - Frye, G. Neville, Moleyns, Stafford

Cornwall - Ive, Nayler

Devon - Sturgeon, Wynkley

Essex - Bouchier

Berkshire - Wyndesore

Herefordshire - Stokes

London - Hyde

TOTAL: 45 clerks

SUMMARY: Northern = 47 clerks (51% of total)

Southern = 45 clerks (49% of total)

Total Number of Clerks for whom geographic origins are
suggested: 92 clerks (76% of total 121 clerks studied)

Notes

1. As quoted in James W. Alexander, "Medieval Biography: Clio Lo Volt," The Historian 35(1973):355, fn. 1.
2. George Beech, "Prosopography," in Medieval Studies, ed. James M. Powell (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1976), 169.
3. Joel Rosenthal, The Training of an Elite Group: English Bishops in the Fifteenth Century (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1970), 6.
4. Peter Brown, Augustine of Hippo: A Biography (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 19.
5. Paul Murray Kendall, Louis XI: The Universal Spider (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1971), 33.
6. Roy Jenkins, Asquith: Portrait of a Man and an Era (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1966), 13.
7. P.H. Reaney, The Origin of English Surnames (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1967), 22. In addition to regional names, other sources for names include nicknames, names of relationships, and surnames of occupation or office.
8. Reaney, Origin of English Surnames, 22.
9. Reaney, Origin of English Surnames, 23.
10. J. Wedgwood, ed., History of Parliament (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1936), 1:xv.
11. Peter McClure, "Patterns of Migration in the Middle Ages: The Evidence of Some English Place-Name Surnames," Economic History Review 2nd series, 32(1979):167.
12. McClure, "Patterns of Migration in the Middle Ages," 168. McClure estimates that a majority of towns and villages were not uniquely named.
13. Samuel Lewis, A Topographical Dictionary of England (London: S. Lewis & Co., 1842), vols. 3, 4:passim.

14. Lewis, Topographical Dictionary of England, 1: 294-95; 2:237; McClure, "Patterns of Migration in the Middle Ages," 169.

15. These references are to Lewis, Topographical Dictionary of England: Alnwick 1:40-43; Alton 1:51; Asshecombe 1:85; Bekyngham 1:186; Bekynton 1:187 (Lewis includes a biography of Thomas Bekynton which is generally correct but does give Bekynton's date of birth as 1645); Brokholes 1:393; Fryston 2:246; Garstang 2:262; Haseley 2:401; Hertilpole 2:345; Hessill 2:460; Hethe 2:424; Holes 2:531; Ive 2:574; Kelom 2:589; Kirkeham 2:645; Langport 3:22; Louth 3:162; Mapilton 3:229; Pemberton 3:486-87; Ruddyng 3:635; Selby 4:41; Sheefield 4:55; Shelford 4:63; Springthorp 4:153; Stafford 4:155; Stillington 4:193; Tetisworth 4:301; Thoraby 4:312; Walsham 4:424; Waynflete 4:408 (Lewis notes that Wainflete contains a free grammar school founded in 1424 by Waynflete); Wetton 4:499; Wyndesore 4:571; Wynkley 4:580. Reaney, Origin of English Surnames also supports Bate 151; Derby 336; Hessill 351; Louth 337; Selby 351; Sheefield 46; Shelford 347; Shelton 336; Stafford 337; Walsham 336; Wyndesore 347. Gaunsted's origin is supported in Malcolm Richardson II, "The Influence of Henry V on the Development of Chancery English" (Ph.D. diss., University of Tennessee, 1978), 130. Hoccleve's in J. Mitchell, Thomas Hoccleve (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1968), 1. Lyndwood's is supported in Susan H. Cavanaugh, "A Study of Books Privately Owned in England: 1300-1450" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1980), 2:519. Offord's is supported in Jocelyn Otway-Ruthven, The King's Secretary and the Signet Office in the Fifteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939), 181. Kent's name seems an obvious reference to the county.

16. C.M.D. Crowder, "Peace and Justice around 1400: A Sketch," in Aspects of Late Medieval Government and Society: Essays Presented to J.R. Lander, ed. J.G. Rowe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 54-55. Crowder notes that John Stafford's grandfather, Sir John Stafford, held lands in Staffordshire and his father, Sir Humphrey Stafford, owned lands in Southwick, Wiltshire.

17. Reaney, Origin of English Surnames, 184, 356.

18. Reaney, Origin of English Surnames, 193.
19. Reaney, Origin of English Surnames, 132.
20. A.B. Emden, A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957) 2:1197; Pearl Kibre, The Nations in the Mediaeval Universities (Cambridge, Mass.: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1948), 161-65. For further details on Northern Proctors, see Chapter Three, fn. 13.
21. Reaney, Origin of English Surnames, 237; Wedgwood, History of Parliament, 1:728. Rous is an old French name meaning red.
22. CCR, Edward IV, January 14, 1471, 2:171.
23. J.L. Kirby, "Clerks in Royal Service," History Today 6(1956):758; A.L. Brown, The Early History of the Clerkship of the Council (Glasgow: Glasgow University Publications, 1969), 275.
24. Wedgwood, History of Parliament, 1:317; J.H. Baker, "Lawyers Practising in Chancery, 1474-1486," Journal of Legal History 4(1983), 72.
25. John H. Fisher, Malcolm Richardson, and Jane L. Fisher, An Anthology of Chancery English (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 144-45.
26. Simon Gaunstede: CCR, Richard II, December 12, 1384, 2:595; December 5, 1387, 3:461; July 29, 1388, 3:594. Geoffrey Goodlok: CCR, Henry VI, March 1, 1451, 5:248. Richard Loy: CCR, Henry VI, March 1, 1451, 5:248. Richard Selby: CFR, Henry VI, December 13, 1429, 15:300; May 24, 1426, 15:125-26. William Godyng: CFR, Henry VI, March 21, 1437, 16:324. William Marchall: CFR, Henry VI, March 21, 1437, 16:324. John Morker: CCR, Henry VI, July 6, 1425, 1:207. Robert Mouter: CCR, Henry V, October 23, 1418, 1:508. Nicholas Wymbyssh: CCR, Henry IV, December 16, 1407, 3:354.
27. Joseph Anthony Nigota, "John Kempe, A Political Prelate of the Fifteenth Century," (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1973), 1.
28. Ralph A. Griffiths, The Reign of King Henry VI: The Exercise of Royal Authority, 1422-1461 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 611.

29. CPR, Henry VI, February 24, 1436, 2:528.
30. Rosemary Horrox, "Urban Patronage and Patrons in the Fifteenth Century," in Patronage, the Crown and the Provinces in Later Medieval England, ed. Ralph A. Griffiths (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1981), 150.
31. A.L. Brown, "The Privy Seal Clerks in the Early Fifteenth Century," in The Study of Medieval Records, ed. D.A. Bullough and R.L. Storey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 273.
32. Joel Rosenthal, "The Fifteenth Century Episcopate: Careers and Bequests," in Sanctity and Secularity: The Church and the World, ed. Derek Baker (New York: Harper and Row, Inc., 1973), 117-27.
33. Rosenthal includes in his study William Alnwick, Thomas Bekynton, Lawrence Booth, and Thomas Bouchier.
34. Rosenthal, The Training of an Elite Group, 11.
35. Rosenthal, "The Fifteenth Century Episcopate," 120.
36. H.C. Maxwell-Lyte and M.C.B. Dawes, eds., "The Register of Bishop Bekynton," Somerset Record Society 49(1934):xvi.
37. Keeper of the privy seal Robert Stillington founded an endowed school in Acaster, Yorkshire; Keeper of the privy seal William Alnwick a grammar school in Alnwick, Northumberland, and Chancellor William Waynflete a grammar school in Waynflete, Lincolnshire (Nicholas Orme, English Schools in the Middle Ages (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1973), 78, 200, 295; Archibald F. Leach, The Schools of Medieval England (New York: Barnes and Noble, (1915/1969), 269).
38. Leach, Schools of Medieval England, 239; Ernest Axon, "Thomas Langley, Bishop of Durham," Transactions of Lancaster and Cheshire Antiquarian Society 52 (1937):161-62.
39. G.D. Squibb, Founders' Kin: Privilege and Pedigree (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 2-3.

40. James N. Miner, "Schools and literacy in later medieval England," British Journal of Educational Studies 11(1962):24; A.H. Thompson, The English Clergy and their Organization in the Later Middle Ages (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 154; Edward Foss, The Judges of England (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1848-64), 4:337.
41. P.W. Fleming, "Charity, Faith, and the Gentry of Kent, 1422-1529," in Property and Politics: Essays in Later Medieval English History, ed. A.J. Pollard (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 39.
42. Cavanaugh, "A Study of Books," 2:519.
43. Foss, The Judges of England, 316.
44. CFR, Henry IV, October 20, 1404, 12:270; CCR, Richard II, March 8, 1384, 2:249.
45. CPR, Henry VI, January 9, 1441, 3:97.
46. CPR, Henry VI, November 16, 1442, 4:143.
47. CPR, Edward IV, July 1, 1474, 2:468-69.
48. CCR, Henry VI, April 21, 1437, 3:116; CPR, Edward IV, February 20, 1466, 1:449.
49. E.F. Jacob, ed., The register of Henry Chichele, archbishop of Canterbury, 1414-1443 (Canterbury and York Society, 1938), 42:Pt. 1, 306.
50. Jacob, The register of Henry Chichele, 42:Pt. 1, 306.
51. F.W. Weaver, ed., Somerset Medieval Wills (1383-1500) (Somerset Record Society, 1901), 16:209-10.
52. Weaver, Somerset Medieval Wills, 16:175-77; John William Clay, ed., North Country Wills: Being Abstracts of Wills Relating to the Counties of York, Nottingham, Northumberland, Cumberland and Westmorland at Somerset House and Lambeth Palace. 1383 to 1558 (Surtees Society, 1908), 116:286.

53. R.B. Dobson, ed., The Church, Politics and Patronage in the Fifteenth Century (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 18-19. Dobson is discussing Peter Heath's article in this collection on "Urban Piety in the Later Middle Ages," 209-34.
54. W.K. Jordan, The Charities of London 1480-1600 (New York: Archon Books, 1974), 273-74.
55. A.H. Thompson, The English Clergy and Their Organization in the Later Middle Ages (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 128.
56. J.A.F. Thomson, The Transformation of Medieval England 1370-1529 (London: Longman, 1983), 79.
57. Thomson, The Transformation of Medieval England, 79.
58. E.W. Ives, "Summaries of theses. Some aspects of the legal profession in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries," Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research 31(1958):100.
59. Bertie Wilkinson, as quoted in Richardson, The Influence of Henry V, 171-72.
60. Fisher et al., An Anthology of Chancery English, 35.
61. The chancellors and keepers of the privy seal who are of northern origin are: Henry Beaufort, Thomas Langley, Richard Neville, William Waynflete, William Alnwick, Lawrence Booth, Andrew Holes, Thomas Lisieux, William Lyndwood, and Robert Stillington. Those of southern origin are: Thomas Bouchier, John Kempe, George Neville, John Stafford, Thomas Bekynton, and Adam Moleyns.
62. Twenty-two chancery masters are of northern origin, seven of southern origin and six are of unknown origin.
63. Thomson, The Transformation of Medieval England, 161; Michael J. Bennett, Community, Class and Careerism: Cheshire and Lancashire Society in the Age of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 170.

64. A.J. Pollard, "St. Cuthbert and the Hog: Richard III and the County Palatine of Durham, 1471-85," in Kings and Nobles in the Later Middle Ages, ed. Ralph A. Griffiths and James Sherborne (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 121.
65. Jacob, The register of Henry Chichele, 45:xxv.
66. R.L. Storey, Thomas Langley and the Bishopric of Durham (London: S.P.C.K., 1961), 2-3.
67. Storey, Thomas Langley and the Bishopric of Durham, 2-3.
68. Storey, Thomas Langley and the Bishopric of Durham, 5.
69. John Louth was attorney for the Duchy; (Robert Somerville, History of the Duchy of Lancaster 1265-1603 (London: Chancellor and Council of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1953), 456); Simon Gaunstede was chancellor for the duchy, (J.H. Wylie and W.T. Waugh, The reign of Henry V (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929), 3:22, fn. 5); John Springthorp was chancellor for the duchy, (Somerville, History of the Duchy of Lancaster, 389); Jacob, The register of Henry Chichele, 42:Pt. 2, 676); Henry Kays was attorney and deputy chancellor, (Somerville, History of the Duchy of Lancaster, 456, 477); John Mapilton the Elder was chancellor, (Richardson, The Influence of Henry V, 149).
70. E.W. Ives, "Summaries of theses," 100.
71. J.L. Grassi, "Royal Clerks from the Archdiocese of York in the Fourteenth Century," Northern History 5(1970):21.
72. Richardson, "The Influence of Henry V," 130.
73. Guy Fitch Lytle, "Patronage Patterns and Oxford Colleges, c. 1300-c. 1530," in The University in Society, ed. Lawrence Stone (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 1:117.
74. Dictionary of National Biography, s.v. "William Waynflete," 996.
75. Weaver, Somerset Medieval Wills, 16:175-77.

76. Nigota, "John Kempe, A Political Prelate," 208; Richardson, "The Influence of Henry V," 160-61.
77. J.S. Roskell, Parliament and Politics in Late Medieval England (London: Hambledon Press, 1981), 1:176, 185, fn. 38, 187; CPR, Henry VI, November 13, 1430, 2:100.
78. T.F. Tout, Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1920-33/1967), 3:215-16.
79. R.A. Griffiths, "Public and Private Bureaucracies in England and Wales in the Fifteenth Century," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society 5th ser., 30(1980):116.
80. R.B. Dobson, "The Residentiary Canons of York in the Fifteenth Century," Journal of Ecclesiastical History 20(1979):155.
81. Alexander Murray, Reason and Society in the Middle Ages (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 85.
82. Lytle, "Patronage Patterns and Oxford Colleges," 115.
83. Thomas Bourchier: F.R.H. Du Boulay, ed., Registrum Thome Bourgchier Cantuariensis archiepiscopi, A.D. 1454-1486 (Canterbury and York Society, 1957), 54:viii; Emden, Oxford, 1:230; George Neville: Dictionary of National Biography, s.v. "George Neville," 252; Henry Beaufort: Dictionary of National Biography, s.v. "Henry Beaufort," 41; Richard Neville: Dictionary of National Biography, s.v. "Richard Neville," 279.
84. Emden, Oxford, 1:231; Griffiths, The Reign of King Henry VI, 100.
85. Sir Wasey Sterry, The Eton College Register, 1441-1698 (Eton: Spottiswode, Ballantyne and Co., Ltd., 1943), 39.
86. Stanley Chrimes, Lancastrians, Yorkists and Henry VII (London: Macmillan, 1964), 8-10.
87. Emden, Oxford, 2:1197.
88. Nigota, "John Kempe, A Political Prelate," 9.

89. Rosenthal, The Training of an Elite Group, 10; H.C. Maxwell-Lyte, The Registers of Robert Stillington, Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1466-91 (Somerset Record Society, 1937) 52:ix.

90. Dictionary of National Biography, s.v. "William Waynflete," 996.

91. John Lord Campbell, Lives of the Lord Chancellors and the Keepers of the Great Seal (London: John Murray, 1868), 1:310.

92. Bennett, Community, Class and Careerism, 155.

93. Bennett, Community, Class and Careerism, 131; F.R.H. Du Boulay, An Age of Ambition: English Society in the Late Middle Ages (New York: Viking Press, 1970), 72.

94. E.F. Jacob, "Archbishop John Stafford," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, ser. 5, 12 (1962), 1; Crowder, "Peace and Justice Around 1400," 54-55; Canon James Raine, ed., Testamenta Eboracensis (Surtees Society, 1864), 45:249.

95. Calendar of Papal Registers, February 8, 1447, 10:338. H.S. Bennett notes that "the examiners had also to inquire of candidates whether they were illegitimate or of servile birth, since both of these were canonical impediments which had to be removed by dispensation...." ("Medieval Ordination Lists in the English Episcopal Registers," in Studies Presented to Sir Hilary Jenkinson, ed. James C. Davies (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 25).

96. Rosenthal, The Training of an Elite Group, 8, fn. 7, fn. 8.

97. Maxwell-Lyte and Dawes, The Register of Bishop Bekynton, 49:vii; Cavanaugh, "A Study of Books," 2:518-20; A.B. Emden, A Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge to 1500 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 379-80.

98. Rosenthal, The Training of an Elite Group, 8, fn. 4.

99. A. Compton Reeves, Lancastrian Englishmen (Washington D.C.: University Press of America, Inc., 1981), 383-84.

100. G.E. Aylmer, The King's Servants: The Civil Service of Charles I 1625-1642 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), 258.
101. Richardson, "The Influence of Henry V," 164; Guy Fitch Lytle, "The Social Origins of Oxford Students in the Late Middle Ages: New College, c. 1380-c.1510," in Les Universités à la fin du Moyen âge, ed. Jacques Paquet and Jozef Ijsewijn (Louvain: Institut d'études médiévales, 1978), 441.
102. Calendar of Papal Registers, 17 Kalends December, 1420, 7:143; 3 Nones October, 1437, 8:656; Ides May 1425, 7:379.
103. Rosenthal, The Training of an Elite Group, 7.
104. Rosenthal, The Training of an Elite Group, 8-9.
105. Calendar of Papal Registers, February 8, 1447, 10:338.
106. Calendar of Papal Registers, 3 Kalends May, 1427, 7:563-64; 10 Kalends November, 1427, 7:499.
107. CPR, Henry V, November 1, 1420, 2:309.
108. Jocelyn Otway-Ruthven, The King's Secretary and the Signet Office in the Fifteenth Century (Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 1939), 181.
109. Calendar of Papal Registers, 7 Kalends October, 1419, 7:120.
110. A.F. Pollard, "Fifteenth-century Clerks of Parliament," Bulletin of the Institute for Historical Research 15(1938):143, fn. 3.
111. Fisher et al., An Anthology of Chancery English, 167.
112. Reaney, Origin of English Surnames, 20.
113. For Frye as a form of free, Reaney, Origin of English Surnames, 26. For Frank meaning free, Oxford English Dictionary.

114. Reaney, Origin of English Surnames, 168;
J.R. Dolan, English Ancestral Names: The Evolution
of the Surname from Medieval Occupations (New York:
Clarkson N. Potter, Inc., 1972), 349.
115. Reaney, Origin of English Surnames, 139, 158,
160; Dolan, English Ancestral Names, 265, 276.
116. Reaney, Origin of English Surnames, 159.
117. Reaney, Origin of English Surnames, 162-63,
178, 184, 245, 274, 324; Dolan, English Ancestral
Names, 27, 47, 48, 162, 242.
118. Grassi, "Royal Clerks," 15.
119. The same pattern occurs in other medieval bureau-
cracies. The ducal civil service in Valois Burgundy,
for example, was riddled with nepotism and included
several examples of father and son and of brothers
serving together (Richard Vaughan, Valois Burgundy,
Hamden, Connecticut: The Shoe String Press, 1975),
85-86). The France of Philip the Fair also contained
many administrative families. Joseph Strayer found
that sons did not automatically inherit their fathers'
offices. Although their initial opportunities were
greater, they still had to prove their ability (The
Reign of Philip the Fair (Princeton: Princeton Uni-
versity Press, 1980), 65).
120. Richardson, "The Influence of Henry V," 149;
Somerville, History of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1:456;
List of Early Chancery Proceedings (New York: Kraus
Reprint Company, 1963), 1:53.
121. Barbara A. Hanawalt, The Ties That Bound:
Peasant Families in Medieval England (New York:
Oxford University Press, 1986), 174.
122. CPR, Edward IV, May 21, 1481.
123. CFR, Henry VI, October 27, 1453, 19:68; CPR,
Henry VI, July 9, 1446, 4:259.
124. Beech, "Prosopography," 160.
125. Josephine Waters Bennett, "Andrew Holes: A
Neglected Harbinger of the English Renaissance,"
Speculum 19(1944):314-15.

126. CCR, Henry VI, August 18, 1437, 3:136.
127. CCR, Henry VI, February 18, 1423, 1:56; CCR, Henry VI, June 3, 1424, 1:152.
128. CCR, Henry VI, 1445 (no date), 4:294.
129. CPR, Henry VI, July 4, 1426, 1:345; CPR, Henry VI, February 26, 1428, 1:474; CCR, Henry VI, April 20, 1450, 5:184.
130. Nigota, "John Kempe, A Political Prelate," 18-19; Calendar of the Papal Registers, 4 Ides May, 1442, 9:261.
131. CCR, Henry VI, October 5, 1435, 3:40; CCR, Henry VI, July 6, 1426, 3:60-61; A.F. Pollard, "The Mediaeval Under-Clerks of Parliament," Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research 16(1938):80.
132. Penry Williams, The Tudor Regime (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 1.

Chapter Three Career Preparation: Educational Involvement

Nicholas Pronay, in his study of the chancery in late fifteenth-century England, discussed the development of a new kind of civil servant at the time of Henry VII, "highly educated, trained and much travelled."¹ The king's clerks, during Henry VI's earlier reign, showed interests and aspirations similar to these later clerks. The lives of Henry VI's bureaucrats reflected careful preparation for their positions, whether through formal education or through an apprentice system. Their lives once in office revealed the common interests and loyalties which characterize the development of a group mentality and contribute to effective centralized administration.

Further, an examination of the civil servants' education, like that of their origins and regional associations, makes clear another way in which these men were able to acquire office. In examining the educational backgrounds and concerns of these clerks, it is evident that they participated in various forms of learning and education both as a way of preparing for, and as a way of obtaining, their positions. "There were contacts to be made at a university which would serve in later life."²

To illustrate the variety of training which characterized these clerks, it is useful to examine representative figures from each level of the hierarchy -- those who are most prominent to those who are much more obscure. At each level there are indications that these are men who not only worked together, but extended their association beyond their offices into extracurricular activities. There are those men whose training and experience qualified them to be the heads of office, the chancellors and keepers of the privy seal, men whose lives are relatively well-documented. There are others who are virtually obscure minor figures, such as the spigurnels and chafewaxes, who dealt with the sealing of chancery documents -- men whose very existence can only be gathered from a few references in the pages of chancery records.

In between are the various levels of masters and clerks of the chancery and secondaries and clerks of the privy seal office who prepared for their positions in a variety of ways. As Ralph Griffiths noted, "Fifteenth-century bureaucrats were literate men, they could handle sheaves of parchment and paper, compile bundles of accounts and memoranda, give receipts...affix seals to a variety of instruments and they could do all these things in French,

English, and Latin."³

At the highest level of the bureaucracy, the chancellors and the keepers of the privy seal were the quintessential examples of the public servants who made their marks as the learned men and pious founders of their generation. The fifteenth century was a period of increasing interest in legal studies. Of the sixteen bureaucrats who held office under Henry VI at this highest level, ten had legal training -- Henry Beaufort and John Kempe, chancellors; William Alnwick, William Lyndwood, Thomas Bekynton, Adam Moleyns, Andrew Holes, Lawrence Booth, and Robert Stillington, keepers of the privy seal; and John Stafford who held both offices in Henry's reign.

Henry Beaufort, who was both chancellor and cardinal of England, studied civil and canon law at Oxford, although he never received a formal degree beyond the M.A.⁴ He was elected chancellor of Oxford University, one of four of Henry's heads of chancery and the privy seal who reached this high level of university administration.⁵ Various sources have, in error, given Beaufort a more exotic educational background. He was formerly credited with being educated at Aachen, an error corrected by A.B. Emden,

who showed this was merely a misreading for 'Oxenford' (Oxford).⁶ Beaufort may not have received a law degree, but the remaining nine of these men did. William Alnwick, who had a leave of absence for five years to study at an English university, received his doctorate in civil and canon from Cambridge, as did Lawrence Booth and William Lyndwood.⁷ Five of the remaining six lawyers -- Bekynton, Kempe, Moleyns, Stillington and Stafford -- received doctorates at Oxford, Kempe at Merton College and Bekynton at New College.⁸ Andrew Holes was the sole exception, but he soon remedied this by obtaining a doctorate in canon law in Padua.⁹

Oxford was the dominant educational institution for the six non-lawyers as well.¹⁰ Thomas Bouchier, George and Richard Neville all studied in the faculty of arts at Oxford.¹¹ Thomas Bouchier had formal training in theology at Oxford as well, making him the first archbishop of Canterbury to have formal theological training since the early fourteenth century.¹² Thomas Lisieux not only studied in the school of theology, but was elected Northern Proctor at Oxford.¹³ William Waynflete has customarily been associated, as were Thomas Bekynton and Andrew Holes, with New College, another example of that college's association with the

production of bureaucrats for the king's service. Waynflete was a master of arts and a bachelor of theology at Oxford, but, in spite of his traditional relation to New College, Emden was unable to find any confirmation of his attendance at New College in its records.¹⁴ All of his life Waynflete did display a special affection for New College, a regard which seems to suggest he may well have been a student there.¹⁵ He was certainly assisted in his later career by Thomas Bekynton, a New College graduate who tended to use his influence as secretary to Duke Humphrey of Gloucester to help fellow graduates of that college.¹⁶

Thomas Langley remains the final and the unusual member of this group. In spite of having extensive intellectual abilities and interests, there is no definite indication that he attended any university.¹⁷ He chose the college at Manchester as recipient of one of his books, which may reflect his early schooling.¹⁸ In other respects, he appears to have followed the traditional path of the well-educated civil servant: his learning and ability brought him to the attention of those in a position to assist him, including fellow members of the king's service; he was involved in various educational projects often in collaboration with fellow bureaucrats; and even in the

final stage of his life, through his will and bequests, he revealed both his continuing interest in learning and the family nature of his associations.

In Langley's case his learning and ability brought him to the attention of John of Gaunt who was instrumental in introducing him to other people in power. John of Gaunt was so impressed by Langley that he referred to him as "mon très cher clerc" in his will and named him as executor.¹⁹ Through him, Langley was assisted by Henry Beaufort who recommended him for the post of keeper of the privy seal in 1401 and supported Langley as chancellor under Henry V and Henry VI.²⁰

When Oxford decided to build a divinity school in the 1420s, Langley was an immediate benefactor.²¹ He was also involved in the founding of a chantry in Durham for two priests, one to teach grammar and one to teach song, as well as a grammar school at his birth place in Lancashire.²² Further, throughout his career he was an avid book-collector. He left books both to the library of his own cathedral at Durham and to many of his friends and colleagues at the chancery, including John Stafford, a chancellor and keeper of the privy seal, and two clerks who

worked with him, John Frank and Nicholas Wymbyssh.²³

Similar patterns appear in the lives of Langley's associates in the chancery and privy seal office. William Waynflete, chancellor from 1456 to 1460, obtained the position of headmaster at Winchester College in 1429, a post he held for twelve years.²⁴ Owing to his fame as a teacher at Winchester, Waynflete, like Langley, attracted the notice of Henry Beaufort who introduced him to the king. Henry VI was impressed with Waynflete's educational qualifications and chose him to be provost of his pet institution Eton College, "and to [Waynflete] more than to any other person was due the early prosperity of that noble institution, and its subsequent preservation from ruin."²⁵ Waynflete also won Henry's affection by contributing to the expenses of building Eton from his private means.²⁶

He so won the King's heart by framing statutes for Eton and King's College, Cambridge that his Majesty added a clause with his own hand, ordaining that both colleges should yearly...., for ever after Waynflete's decease, celebrate solemn obsequies for his soul...a distinction not conferred on any other person besides Henry V and Queen Katherine...and Queen Margaret [the king's own parents and wife].²⁷

After all his efforts on behalf of other educational foundations, Waynflete took the final step of so many "pious founders" of his time -- he applied for a license in 1448 to found his own institution,

Magdalen College. He was also, like Langley, a great book-collector and was able to give Magdalen College a gift of 800 volumes from his own collection.²⁸

Waynflete was not the only bureaucrat who involved himself with Henry VI's favorite project, Eton College. Three of the men who served Henry as keeper of the privy seal, William Alnwick, Thomas Bekynton, and William Lyndwood, worked together with Waynflete in the founding of Eton. Bekynton was appointed to the see of Bath and Wells directly as a reward for his work on Eton and, at the same time, (1443) to the post of keeper of the privy seal.²⁹ Over and over again, there is a strong connection between involvement in the king's support of learning and the recruitment of civil servants for the king's service.

Once in the king's service, most of these civil servants involved themselves in education not only as a conventional pious gesture, but also as a way of repaying the education that they had received. In addition to his work on Eton, William Alnwick founded a grammar and song school in his native town of Alnwick.³⁰ John Kempe, Adam Moleyns and Robert Stillington founded schools as well.³¹ Thomas Bekynton was able to repay New College for

his education when it experienced financial difficulties in the 1430s. He "showed filial loyalty by persuading Henry VI to grant to the college the confiscated property of the alien priory of Longueville."³² He further arranged that, in his native town of Beckington, money would be provided for scholars to receive a stipend to attend New College.³³ Thus he repaid the town which had financed his own education. Andrew Holes, a keeper of the privy seal, who had profited from the assistance of Bekynton in obtaining the position which led to his recruitment into Henry's service, arranged in a similar fashion for Winchester scholars to receive a stipend.³⁴ In his will he distributed his books on civil and canon law to the libraries at Oxford with the "melior bibliotheca" to be given to New College.³⁵ George Neville gave several manuscripts to Balliol College as well as five silver staves for the use of the bedels.³⁶ William Lyndwood and Thomas Bouchier left money to found loan chests at Oxford and Cambridge.³⁷ Even chancellor Beaufort, who in spite of his vast wealth and great power, generally neglected his alma mater, Oxford, did leave money for Eton and King's College, Cambridge.³⁸ Oxford, although not specifically mentioned in his will, was able to claim that since he had been chancellor

at Oxford, they were entitled to 500 marks of the money he left for good works.³⁹

Clearly, involvement in the universities of England both as students and as patrons was commonplace, but members of this group who had a less insular involvement with learning were not lacking either. In discussing humanism in England, Roberto Weiss gave extensive coverage to five of these sixteen men and passing notice to others. He notes that Henry Beaufort met Poggio Bracciolini, the Florentine humanist, at the council of Constance and invited him to England where he was an employee of Beaufort from 1418 to 1422.⁴⁰ Poggio even mentions Beaufort's book collection in his letters, noting especially his ownership of an ancient copy of Pliny.⁴¹ Andrew Holes, who was able to receive his doctorate at Padua, while serving as clerk of the court of Rome, also used the time to amass an incredible collection of Italian books: "So large was his collection that when he left Italy early in 1444 he had to charter a ship from Leghorn to convey his library to England."⁴² His dealings with the Florentine bookseller Vespasiano da Bisticci were so extensive and he made such a favorable impression that Bisticci became his biographer.⁴³

Thomas Bekynton, as well, used his time at Rome to become a friend of both Poggio and Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini. The latter described him as "litteratus cultor" and specifically praised the quality of his Latin.⁴⁴ Another major Renaissance scholar, Flavio Biondo of Forli, was fond enough of Bekynton to write to inform him "of his intention to send him something which will both give him pleasure and be an addition, he hopes, to his treasures," apparently one of Biondo's own works.⁴⁵ The same group of Italian intellectuals also had a real respect for and extensive dealings with Adam Moleyns; Weiss notes that not only did he assemble a large manuscript collection but that his Latin style was so excellent that it approached the standard of the Italian humanists.⁴⁶

Even in the field of Greek studies, Weiss found the involvement of a member of this bureaucratic circle. George Neville, in addition to his work as chancellor, employed a Greek scribe called Emmanuel of Constantinople to copy Greek manuscripts for him.⁴⁷ Neville may have decided that he should learn Greek himself, for manuscripts have been preserved containing Greek notes possibly in his own hand.⁴⁸

T.F. Tout depicted the learned civil servant as having various characteristics: men who studied at the university; men who were patrons of learning, friends of other learned men, collectors of books, benefactors of universities; men who themselves made solid original contributions.⁴⁹ In this study, there have been many examples of men who fulfill Tout's requirements as students, benefactors, collectors and patrons but men who make original contributions of their own are of necessity rare. In William Lyndwood (keeper of the privy seal from 1432-1443) there is a perfect example of an original scholar. Lyndwood was not only a doctor of canon and civil law, but a legal scholar as well. In 1422 he began the Provinciale, seu Constitutiones Angliae which summarized and commented upon the constitutions of the synods of Canterbury from Langton to Chichele, a work he finished in 1430.⁵⁰ He brought to the confusion of the constitutions of Canterbury the same organizing skill which was to serve him well in the privy seal office. Lyndwood found the constitutions "in a state of disorder, some corrupted by bad scribes, others which led to confusion by the prolixity of their preambles, others of uncertain authorship."⁵¹ On the basis of this reorganization

he has been called "an expert on procedure...with a remarkable knowledge of the common law of the Western church."⁵²

Lyndwood also contributed a scientific study of testamentary law, a lasting contribution to the understanding of the usefulness of a will as a way of providing for the future.⁵³ His learning was not only useful to the legal practitioner; he also brought it to his work in government. He simplified and improved the language of diplomacy and raised the literary level and clarity of the language used in the chancery and the privy seal office.⁵⁴

It may not be surprising to find so much learning and involvement with book-collecting and patronage at these lofty levels of the bureaucracy, nor to find that many of these men associated with and assisted each other. To what extent, however, does a similar picture emerge for the less prominent levels of the bureaucracy? Though detailed knowledge of the education of the civil servant is less available when that servant is less important, there is enough information about the individuals as a group for the picture to become clear.

Tout cautioned, when writing of the clerks of the fourteenth century that "it is an illusion to

think that 'masters of chancery'...were so called because they were commonly masters of arts or doctors of laws."⁵⁵ Rather they were called masters because they were the masters of the junior clerks. It was common for the masters of chancery in the fifteenth century to have educational backgrounds about which it is not possible to be precise, but for the thirty-five masters examined there were significant exceptions. Those masters of chancery who held the position of prothonotary, the prime registrar of chancery and advisor on foreign treaties, held doctorates of law.

John Derby and John Stokes, both prothonotaries under Henry VI, held their doctorates of law from Cambridge.⁵⁶ Nicholas Pronay writes that by 1450 there was a doctor of laws in the chancery in addition to the prothonotary. Richard Wetton, unlike most masters in chancery, did not rise through the ranks but was made a master immediately upon receiving an Oxford doctorate in civil law.⁵⁷ Although his education is not known, William Morland's involvement as an arbitrator in many canon law cases led to the suggestion that he was trained in the law.⁵⁸

Masters who had other forms of formal education were not lacking either. John Chamberlain was

apparently an Oriel fellow and master of arts from Oxford by 1443.⁵⁹ William Normanton was granted a license to study at Oxford or another English university for three years in 1415.⁶⁰ Another master, John Faukes, was given permission in 1426 to appoint a deputy to his rectorship while at the university or in the service of the king.⁶¹ A reference to master Thomas Manning, bachelor in degrees, may refer to the chancery master of that name. The dates are appropriate, but the name is a common one.⁶²

For master Richard Fryston, two possible educational backgrounds are suggested in Emden. A Richard Fryston rented a school in Oxford in 1428; this is probably the source for Pronay's suggestion that he attended one of the informal Oxford business schools.⁶³ These schools provided training in the "arts of writing and Latin composition, of speaking French, of drafting charters and similar documents," training which could be put to practical use in the king's service.⁶⁴ The timing seems perfect as Richard Fryston's career in the king's service began in the next year, 1429. A Freston was also admitted to Cambridge in 1451 and Emden suggests that he may be master Richard Fryston, ascribing to him the

chancery master's position and dates of death.⁶⁵

In 1451, Fryston had already served in the chancery for at least six years and he may not have wished to interrupt his career in this way.

It seems safe to conclude that the John Frank identified as a Bachelor of Canon Law in 1415 is the same John Frank whose long term in the chancery ended during the reign of Henry VI.⁶⁶ Although John Frank is a common name, a connection is provided by the will of chancellor Thomas Langley. As was noted earlier, Langley included a John Frank among the recipients of his books. In this case, Frank, who is referred to as a Bachelor of Canon Law, received a copy of the Historica Scholastica of Petrus Comestor.⁶⁷ Since Frank was certainly close to Langley and often served as Langley's proctor when he was too weak in his old age to attend Parliament, he seems a likely choice to be remembered in Langley's will. Further, in Frank's own will there is a gift of 11,000 to the provost and faculty of Oriel College, Oxford to enable Oriel to receive scholars, which may mean that he studied there at some point.⁶⁸

For most of the masters of chancery even suggestions of formal education do not exist. Many

undoubtedly prepared for their jobs with a combination of informal education and "on-the-job" training. It is difficult to find indications of informal education in formal records, but indications of other kinds of informal involvement in education abound. If the chancellors and keepers of the privy seal were founders of universities and schools, collectors of books, and benefactors on a large scale, those at the middle level were most often involved in more modest enterprises often as the recipients of other people's largesse.

John Frank was not the only recipient of Thomas Langley's generosity, but continued the chain of association by involving two of his fellow chancery clerks in his gift to Oriel. John Cammell and Nicholas Wymbyssh, as his executors, were chosen to carry out the conditions of Frank's gift to the college. As a result of their good work on Frank's behalf, Cammell and Wymbyssh each earned two pairs of gloves from Oriel as an expression of the college's gratitude.⁶⁹ The final link in this chain appears in Cammell's own will in which he praised John Frank as one of his chief benefactors.⁷⁰

Master John Springthorp received several books including a psalter from one of Henry IV's chancellors. Springthorp, in turn, left a psalter to

fellow master John Hertilpole. Finally, in 1431, Hertilpole went to the trouble to mention that the psalter he was leaving to the church of Gaynesburgh was given to him by John Springthorp in Springthorp's 1424 will.⁷¹ Hertilpole also arranged to distribute goods to poor students at Oxford and to send one of his relatives ("Johanni, cognato meo") to either Oxford or Cambridge.⁷² His colleague in the chancery, Nicholas Newton, was also remembered with a gift.⁷³

Bequests of books and other gifts from one generation of chancery to the next reflect the family nature of the educational association. John Wakering, keeper of the rolls under Henry IV and Henry V, left his books to two of Henry VI's masters who had worked with Wakering in the chancery, William Prestwyk and John Thoraby.⁷⁴ Thomas Arundel, formerly chancellor of England under Richard II, left master John Bathe one of his books in 1413.⁷⁵ This is undoubtedly master of chancery John Bate or Bathe who was Arundel's secretary at the time. Henry Kays, another of Henry VI's chancery masters, was left a gift of books by a chancery clerk he worked with under Henry V.⁷⁶

Other masters in chancery were involved in more unusual educational enterprises. John Brokholes inherited scientific instruments including a distilling

vessel, a calendar, and an astrolabe from a vicar who called him 'meo magistro.'⁷⁷ A specific scientific gift such as this one suggests more than a casual interest in science. Chaucer scholars might like to know what happened to the copy of The Canterbury Tales which John Stopyndon of the chancery received as an inheritance in 1417. Richard Sotheworth, who left it to him, was a chancery clerk in the fourteenth century.⁷⁸ Stopyndon left many books and valuables in his will including bequests to two of his fellow chancery clerks, William Normanton and Richard Selby.⁷⁹ Unfortunately, there is no mention of Stopyndon's copy of The Canterbury Tales and its final fate remains a mystery.

The books collected by Thomas Kent, secondary of the privy seal, in the latter part of Henry VI's reign, helped him make his contribution in the legal sphere. Kent was well-educated; he studied at Oxford and at Pavia in Italy and held the doctorate in both laws.⁸⁰ He furthered his legal education by reading widely in the field. When Kent was dying in 1469, he arranged that his collection of twenty-eight books on civil and canon law be left for the use of the officials of the Court of Canterbury. This collection became the basis of the library around which the civil lawyers formed their professional society.⁸¹

The masters of the chancery and secondaries of the privy seal were prominent members of their society. In a world in which education was valued and rewarded, those of lesser status were likely to be less educated. Certainly it is more difficult to find available information about the education and educational contributions of the forty-three lower-level chancery clerks examined. Again there are exceptions which assume greater significance given the general lack of evidence about university attendance. As Guy Fitch Lytle emphasized, "Since matriculation and class lists are lacking, many students (especially those who withdrew before taking a degree) left no record at all of ever having attended the university."⁸²

The Nicholas Newton, for example, who was described as a rector of Forde in Northumberland and received a Bachelor of Canon Law in 1438, is certainly the same man as the chancery clerk Nicholas Newton who was rector of Forde at the same time. He worked in chancery as an assistant to John Hertilpole and used his education as a means for rising in the hierarchy.⁸³ Another chancery clerk, Richard Sturgeon, prepared for his career in the chancery by studying civil law as a fellow of New College.⁸⁴ Two other identifications are less certain. A dispensation

was given in 1445 for a John Payne, Bachelor in Degrees, to attend the University of Oxford for two years. The dates are correct for the clerk of that name who served in the chancery in the 1450s, but the name is quite common.⁸⁵ Little is known of a clerk, William Colyns, who served in the chancery of the 1440s. Whether he is the same as the William Colyns, clerk of the diocese of Salisbury, who held the B.A. in 1429, is not clear. The dates are possible, but again the name is a common one.⁸⁶ An uncommon name provides a better connection between Baldwin Hyde, a clerk who served the chancery at the end of Henry's reign, and the Baldwin Hyde who received a Bachelor of Canon Law in 1471-72 from Cambridge.⁸⁷ Baldwin Hyde was deposed from the chancery in 1471; possibly he used his time to finish an interrupted education and pursue a legal career in less official spheres.

Although most chancery clerks remained in the chancery throughout their working lives, Hyde was not the only exception. Thomas Playter, after several years as a chancery clerk, chose to work primarily for the Paston family as their secretary and legal advisor. In his case he was able to use the legal knowledge acquired in the chancery to obtain employment with this prominent family. Numerous references

to him appear in the Paston Letters; many of their letters, in fact, were written by him.⁸⁸ The dependence of various members of the Paston family on Playter is clear. Margaret Paston advises her son John in 1470:

if ye shuld be at my lady of Suffolk, it [were] necessary to have Playtere there wyth you if ye shuld engross any appoyntmentes wyth here at that tyme, for she is sotill and hath sotill counsell wyth here; and perfore it were wele ye shuld have summe wyth you that shuld be of your counsell.⁸⁹

For the seventeen privy seal clerks studied, information about formal education is even less in evidence than for clerks of the chancery. The average privy seal clerk in this period did not have the kind of influence or fame to make him more than a somewhat obscure figure. There is one notable exception, however. Thomas Hoccleve was a clerk in the privy seal office for almost forty years extending into the beginning of the reign of Henry VI. Although not well-educated in the formal sense, Hoccleve was nevertheless one of the notable poets of the fifteenth century. His poetry focused on advice to the Prince and included much biographical information useful to understanding the life of the bureaucrat of his day.⁹⁰ Hoccleve combined the writing of a great deal of poetry with his life as a privy seal clerk and was constantly in search of patrons for his writing. He seems,

however, to have received most of his grants and annuities as a result of his bureaucratic work.⁹¹

Another privy seal clerk, Henry Benet, may have been at Merton College from 1417-18, a few years before he entered the privy seal office.⁹² He may also have been the privy seal clerk who was a heavy contributor to, or the author of, John Benet's Chronicle covering the years 1400-62. This chronicle revealed a detailed knowledge of government activities to which its putative author, a Bedford vicar named John Benet, lacked access.⁹³ Richard Prior of the privy seal, who served Henry VI for more than forty years, was chosen by Cardinal Henry Beaufort to be one of his executors and assist in carrying out Beaufort's gift of 500 marks to Oxford University.⁹⁴

Clerks of the more subordinate branches of the chancery, such as the almonry where the poor went to obtain legal aid, continued the pattern of an educated personnel. William Marchall, clerk of the almonry in the latter part of Henry VI's reign, may be the same William Marchall who left Winchester College in 1425. The timing is right and both William Marchalls were born in Woodstoke.⁹⁵ Thomas Asshecombe of the almonry valued the books

accumulated during his work in chancery enough to make them an important bequest in his will:

Also I bequeathe to Thomas Pery my newe register unbound and my 2 rolles of the cours of the Chauncerie and all my other bundles and bokes longyng to the cours of the Chauncerie.⁹⁶

At the lowest ranks of the administrative hierarchy references to education are no longer vague -- they are non-existent. The men, such as the chafewax or spigurnel were, understandably, humble men. References tend to be made only to their existence and the terms under which they served, occasionally to their land-holdings or commercial activities. At this level, the most important indication of preparation for a position is the the suggestion of an apprentice system. John Morker, a spigurnel in chancery, thus arranged for his son, Thomas Morker, to be brought into chancery to serve with him.⁹⁷

From the highest to the lowest ranks of the chancery and the privy seal office a similar picture emerges. The education and training required for positions varied. Sophisticated administrative positions, especially in the relatively undifferentiated structure of medieval administration,

called for well-educated men with a variety of educational experience. The less demanding positions could be filled by men who prepared with less formal education, without the personal connections one could make at Oxford, many of whom learned the details of their duties on the job. The tendency to form associations which went beyond the duties of the office was consistent at all levels of the bureaucracy. Chancery and privy seal staff formed associations and involved themselves in the learning of the day. All this activity contributed to the creation of a common loyalty and tradition which went far to explain the kind of long tenures seen in these offices and the permanent associations developed outside the offices which carried over into the larger society -- long tenures and relationships which contributed to the delivery of an efficient, well-run bureaucracy.

Notes

1. Nicholas Pronay, "The Chancellor, the Chancery and the Council at the end of the Fifteenth Century," in British Government and Administration, ed. H. Hearder and H.R. Loyn (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1974), 87.
2. R.G. Davies, "The Episcopate," in Profession, Vocation and Culture in Later Medieval England, ed. Cecil H. Clough (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1982), 56.
3. Ralph A. Griffiths, "Public and Private Bureaucracies in England and Wales in the 15th Century," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 30, ser. 5(1980):117.
4. A.B. Emden, A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 1:140.
5. Emden, Oxford, 1:140; Nicholas Orme, English Schools in the Middle Ages (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1973), 14; Lawrence Booth was chancellor of Cambridge (Dictionary of National Biography, s.v. "Lawrence Booth," 849); Thomas Bouchier was chancellor of Oxford (Emden, Oxford 1:230; F.R.H. Du Boulay, ed., Registrum Thome Bourghier Cantuariensis archiepiscopi, A.D. 1454-1486 [Canterbury and York Society, 1957], xi); George Neville was also chancellor of Oxford (Emden, Oxford, 2:1347).
6. Emden, Oxford, 1:140.
7. A.B. Emden, A Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge to 1500 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 11; J. Otway-Ruthven, The King's Secretary and the Signet Office in the Fifteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939), 170; Emden, Cambridge, 70, 379-80; Emden, Oxford, 2:1191. There are conflicting stories about William Lyndwood's education as he apparently studied at both Oxford and Cambridge and it is not clear at which school he received his law degree.
8. T.F. Kirby, Winchester Scholars (London: 1888), 31; Emden, Oxford, 1:157, 2:1031, 1289, 3:1777; T.S. Holmes, ed., The Register of John Stafford, 1425-1443 (Somerset Record Society, 1915-16), 31:xvii; Dictionary of National Biography, s.v. "John Stafford," 862.

9. Emden, Oxford, 1:949.
10. Oxford's dominance was shown among fourteenth-century keepers of the privy seal. T.H. Aston, G.D. Duncan, and T.A.R. Evans, "The Medieval Alumni of the University of Cambridge," Past and Present 77(1980):81-82.
11. Emden, Oxford, 1:230, 2:1347; Joel Rosenthal, The Training of an Elite Group: English Bishops in the Fifteenth Century (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1970), 16.
12. Davies, "The Episcopate," 59-60.
13. Emden, Oxford, 2:1197; A.B. Emden, "Northerners and Southerners in the Organization of the University to 1509," Oxford Studies Presented to Daniel Callus (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 23. Lisieux held this position in 1426-27. The proctors were official representatives for the whole university and performed a wide variety of administrative duties. The northern proctors were elected by the masters of the north, that is, English masters from north of the Trent river, a category that included the Scots (Pearl Kibre, The Nations in the Mediaeval Universities [Cambridge, Mass.: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1948], 161-65).
14. Emden, Oxford, 3:2001.
15. Dictionary of National Biography, s.v. "William Waynflete," 996.
16. Josephine W. Bennett, "Andrew Holes: A Neglected Harbinger of the English Renaissance," Speculum 19(1944):318.
17. Rosenthal, The Training of an Elite, 13; Robin Storey, ed., The Register of Thomas Langley, Bishop of Durham (London: Surtees Society, 1949), 164:xi; Davies, "The Episcopate," 75-76.
18. Ernest Axon, "Thomas Langley, Bishop of Durham," Transactions of Lancaster and Cheshire Antiquarian Society 52(1937):161-62.
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Chapter Four Career Conditions: The Lay Presence

In overviews of medieval society, emphasis often falls on the contrast between lay and ecclesiastic life, between the active life and the contemplative one. Although pure examples of both extremes abound, boundaries more often overlapped. Thus the cleric who committed himself to the king's service led an active involved life not significantly different from that of his lay comrades. Further, many of these men who began their careers in minor orders eschewed clerical advancement, choosing to marry instead. At the same time, the later middle ages saw an increase in the number of laymen whose learning and education compared favorably to those designated "clericus," men who were well qualified to join the king's service.

Many of the learned king's clerks discussed in the previous chapter were actually laymen, laymen increasingly involved in formal and informal education. The one lay chancellor, Richard Neville, had an education not inferior to the bishop bureaucrats of his era. At the lower levels, many of the bureaucrats whose educational involvements were discussed earlier were also laymen. The combined influence of these two groups -- potential clerics who chose to marry

and laymen who chose to be royal clerks -- created a royal bureaucracy which, by the fifteenth century, included a significant lay element.

This lay element was not new to the fifteenth century. J.R. Strayer found evidence for increasing laicization in "the multiplication of lay officials" which he saw as "one of the most striking phenomena of the thirteenth century."¹ This multiplication of lay officials only slowly affected the chancery and the privy seal office. Marriage was primarily associated with the menial posts such as the spigurnel and chafewax and rarely with those who had influence.² These offices did not require an educated personnel and did not usually attract clerics. Not until the fourteenth century were married, lay personnel found at a higher level. Benedict Normanton, a chancery clerk, was married by 1331 and John Tamworth, a clerk of the crown of chancery, was called "clericus uxoratus" in the mid-fourteenth century.³ The clerks of the crown were the first chancery clerks, at the higher levels, who were granted official permission to marry and to remain in office.⁴ By 1388-89 official response made it clear that marriage was increasingly modifying the clerical monopoly of the chancery and the privy seal office.

In 1388-89, the government of Richard II issued the "Ordinaciones Cancellarie" which included, among other requirements for chancery clerks, the order that the chancery clerks should certainly not be married ("scilicet non uxoratos").⁵ Even here the government acknowledged the right of clerks of the crown to marry. A later grant under Henry V reiterated the prohibition against marriage: "the king is unwilling [that] others of this conjugal position shall be raised in future to this estate and grade."⁶ At the same time, the government bowed to reality and, in the same document, gave Ralph Grenehurst, the prothonotary of chancery, permission to marry.

Although the privy seal office never had the formal requirement of celibacy which the chancery office had, it too traditionally had a staff consisting almost entirely of clerics.⁷ Not until the fifteenth century did married men take up posts in the privy seal office in numbers large enough to be noticed.⁸

By the reign of Henry VI, the lay personnel in both these offices constituted a numerically significant minority. The first step in assessing the lay presence is to determine who, among the 120 clerks who are the subjects of this study, was

a layman. Although a clerk may be a layman and still not choose to marry, the vast majority of laymen were married, and marriage was still the most certain indicator of lay status. For members of the well-documented upper echelon such as chancellor Richard Neville, married to Alice, daughter of the fourth Earl of Salisbury, evidence of marital status is easily obtained.⁹ For those of lower rank, whose marriages did not involve great amounts of land or important legal or political alliances, evidence may not be as readily available. A combination of sources can still provide information.

Since marriage for royal clerks was still in theory subject to government prohibition, one source of an individual's marital status is specific statements within government records. The "Ordinaciones Cancellarie" of Richard II mentioned by name a few lower-level clerks who were given specific permission to keep their posts although married. One of these, Richard Colman ("Ricardus Coleman"), was still in office as a chancery clerk under Henry VI.¹⁰

Government records produced during the reign of Henry VI also included petitions from chancery personnel asking permission to marry. Thomas Asshecombe requested and received such permission in 1448

after more than twenty-five years service in the almonry:

he had continued in that office by the space of twenty-five years and more, and of use and ancient custom of the Chancery no such clerk on pain of deprivation can marry, and he is wholly indisposed to take holy orders, that he be free to marry and stay in the said office for life.¹¹

The success of his request was evident as he continued to serve in the almonry until his death. His wife Alice was executrix of his will in 1466.¹² At much the same time, similar grants were made to fellow clerks of the almonry Nicholas Bailly, Robert Walsham, and William Marchall.¹³ Thus, in a period of only two years (1448-49), four of the five members of the almonry of chancery received permission to marry or secured validation for already existing marriages.¹⁴

Information on a clerk's marital status was more often a by-product of other requests. When Peter Aumener was admitted to a corrody, the grant requested the admission of "Peter Aumener one of the clerks of the chancery and Alice his wife."¹⁵ In a similar arrangement, privy seal clerk Thomas Frank received a corrody which included his wife Elizabeth.¹⁶ John Nayler, another chancery clerk, arranged to found a chantry in the church of St. Petroc in Cornwall which included, among other requests, that of prayers for Katherine, his wife.¹⁷ Nayler's marriage

to Katherine was further documented by their joint ownership of a tenement, garden and brewhouse.¹⁸

Involvement in husband-wife property transactions such as these often provided evidence for lay status. Land-holding sheds light on the marriage of two influential members of their respective offices -- Thomas Kent, secondary of the privy seal office, and Thomas Haseley, clerk of the crown. Kent's marriage to his wife Isabel is well attested by references to their joint ownership of the manor of Langley in Kent and to the costs incurred by them in repairing this manor.¹⁹ Their marriage was further established by Kent's founding of a chantry with his brother Robert in 1461 in which each made provision for his wife's soul.²⁰

An even better-documented lay life is that of Thomas Haseley, whose various positions as clerk of the crown, undermarshall of England and lay knight made him an influential figure in both his court and country roles. Haseley's marital pattern revealed that a certain ambivalence toward the married clerk still existed. Although clerks of the crown were bureaucrats for whom marriage was acceptable, Haseley still hesitated to make his marriage public. Although apparently still a lay clerk, he married under an alias and waited until three children had been born

before applying for a 1436 papal dispensation for the marriage.²¹ His later success in all his posts may have alleviated his worries about marriage -- he certainly contracted a second marriage late in life. Detailed information is again provided by records of land ownership. In 1433 Thomas Haseley owned land in Chelchihithe, Middlesex jointly with his first wife Alice; by 1449 he held the same land with his second wife Agnes.²²

The marriages of less prominent members of the chancery left their mark also through records of land transactions. Chancery clerk James Kelom was involved with his wife Katherine in land dealings which also included two of his fellow clerks.²³ Another property transaction involving Robert Fen of Northampton and his wife Juliana suggests a chancery link.²⁴ The identification with the chancery clerk, Robert Fen, is made likely since the chancery clerk served as parliamentary representative from that same area.²⁵ In addition, Fen's inclusion as a representative of Parliament for Rutland in Northampton was possible only if he were a layman.

Election as a borough or shire representative in Parliament confirmed the lay status of several

other clerks. William Rous, clerk of the crown, represented Horsham and Reigate while John Pemberton, one of the few lay chancery masters, may have represented Southwark.²⁶ John Toller, a chancery clerk, may have been the same John Toller who represented Somerset in Parliament. Nothing in his career contradicts this identification and he is continually designated as 'gentleman', a term which may indicate a lay clerk.²⁷ Secondary of the privy seal Robert Frye left a private letter in which he accepted the position of parliamentary representative for Wilton.²⁸ Spigurnel Geoffrey Goodlok's lay status was indicated not only by his position as member of Parliament for several constituencies, but by his own will in which he left all his property to his wife Elizabeth.²⁹

Although Goodlok's position as spigurnel was one at the lower levels of the chancery hierarchy, he was still successful enough to find the leaving of a will necessary. By the fifteenth century, the writing of wills had become commonplace at many levels of society. The survival of a will, or at least the necessity of designating an executor, furnishes valuable information on marital and familial relations.

Almoner Thomas Asshecombe was not the only clerk to choose his wife as executrix. Chancery clerk Henry Garstang also left a will indicating that he was married.³⁰ Although privy seal clerk Thomas Frank's will did not survive, a reference to his choice of his wife as executrix was recorded in chancery records.³¹ In his will of 1468, Henry Benet left half his Oxford estate and silver plate to his wife Alice.³² She in turn in 1474 left all her goods and chattel to her husband's former master in the privy seal office, keeper John Russell and a chancery master John Morton.³³ Thomas Haseley's well-documented life was summed up in his will which described his various offices and his two marriages.³⁴ In the case of secondary of the privy seal Thomas Kent, Emden suggests that Kent's will provides evidence for his second marriage to a widow Joan to whom Kent left several manors at his death in 1469.³⁵ Another possible explanation is that this widow Joan was his brother's wife since his sister-in-law was called Joan Kent.³⁶ Cristiana Ongham, the widow of a John Ongham, left her London property to her children in her 1455 will.³⁷ The timing is reasonable for an identification with chancery clerk John Ongham, but very little is actually known of

his life.

The will of clerk of the crown Richard Sturgeon does not specifically mention his wife, but does reveal another indication of married status -- the presence of legitimate children. In his will dated 1456 Sturgeon designated his daughter Joan as his main legatee.³⁸ The strong possibility of a father-son relationship between John Mapilton the Elder and Mapilton the Younger suggests the likelihood of lay status for the elder Mapilton.³⁹ Chancery records also reveal that both clerk of the crown Thomas Ive and spigurnel John Morker had sons for whom they were able to find suitable chancery positions.⁴⁰

Although Thomas Hoccleve, as a privy seal clerk, did not have the kind of lofty position commonly associated with a well-documented life, evidence for his lay status and marriage comes from an unusual source for a medieval bureaucrat, his own writings. Hoccleve's poetry refers to many aspects of his own life including a description of his decision to marry: "I gasyd longe firste, and waytid faste/After some benefice; and when non cam/ By proces I me wedded atte laste."⁴¹ Hoccleve's verse implies that he saw marriage as a poor substitute for a successful clerical career, but the

causal relationship between a lack of benefices and the decision to marry was more commonly the reverse of that described by Hoccleve. Generally, it was the decision to marry which made it impossible for a clerk to receive the traditional offices of a clerical bureaucrat.

T.F. Tout suggested that a clerk's acceptance of secular offices, more appropriate to lay personnel, could be another indicator of married status. Tout specifically describes the career of privy seal clerk Richard Prior, whose career extended well into the reign of Henry VI. Prior received various minor secular offices in Wales, rather than the more customary benefices and livings reserved for clerical personnel.⁴² Others among Prior's colleagues in the privy seal office -- John Claydon, Thomas Frank, Henry Benet, William Alberton -- also accepted various minor offices in Wales.⁴³ If Tout's thesis is correct, it would appear that there were several privy seal clerks for whom marriage had eliminated the possibility of clerical preferment.

Although further information about Claydon's marital status does not exist, both Frank's and Benet's lay status is supported by evidence cited above. Alberton's career provides additional

evidence of another sort to support his probable lay status -- he is designated as a "London gentleman" in chancery records.⁴⁴ R.L. Storey, in his work on fifteenth-century gentleman-bureaucrats, found a correlation between lay status and the designation of "gentleman" or "London gentleman" and posited this as yet one more indicator. Storey wrote that as laymen became increasingly involved in administration, they began to describe themselves as gentlemen rather than adhering solely to the term "king's clerk" with its clerical associations.⁴⁵ Among the clerks in Henry VI's chancery and privy seal office were at least twenty-seven clerks who, at some point in their career, referred to themselves as "gentlemen."⁴⁶ (For a summary of these and other indicators of lay status, see Chart D).

When information from all these sources is combined, it appears possible that more than 1/3 of the 120 clerks in this study were actually laymen for all or at least part of their careers. When the laity constitute a significant minority within the civil service, how was the civil service itself affected? In what way was the bureaucratic experience modified both to attract and to accommodate

lay personnel? What advantages did lay clerks offer the royal government? What difficulties did their presence create?

Chancery personnel and, by extension, other bureaucrats, "were a prosperous and much-envied community."⁴⁷ In addition to the stability of their employment, remuneration and advantage came to the royal clerks in many different ways -- through formal and informal payments in both money and kind, immunities, money-lending, legal practice, and the opportunity of forming and continuing influential contacts and associations. In addition, the "psychic rewards of officeholding were great and should not be underestimated."⁴⁸ With the bureaucrats' many involvements and possibilities, it is not surprising that clerks, lay and clerical, "seem to have increased, rather than to have abandoned, their private interests."⁴⁹ Royal government, however, needed personnel who would consider the interests of their king as well as their personal profit. Medieval monarchs may have believed that clerics were less likely to put family interests first. However, given the opportunities open to them, clerical civil servants were almost as susceptible to these temptations as laymen.⁵⁰

Of more significance to a medieval monarch

was the difference in the ways lay and clerical personnel were reimbursed for their services. At the upper echelon of the civil service in this period -- the positions of chancellor and keeper of the privy seal -- support still came primarily from high church office. Thirteen of these bureaucrats reached episcopal status in the course of their careers -- Henry Beaufort, Thomas Bourchier, John Kempe, Thomas Langley, George Neville, John Stafford, William Waynflete, William Alnwick, Thomas Bekynton, Lawrence Booth, William Lyndwood, Adam Moleyns, and Robert Stillington. Of the remaining three high-level clerks, Andrew Holes became arch-deacon of York, Thomas Lisieux was dean of St. Paul's and the one lay chancellor, Richard Neville, was a great noble in his own right. Administrative service was not the only reason for high church promotion, but these promotions certainly combined reward for past service and consideration of future service.

At the lower bureaucratic levels, the Church remained a source of support for many of the king's servants. Benefices in royal free chapels or collegiate chapels were filled almost exclusively by clerical civil servants.⁵¹ Clerks in Henry VI's chancery and privy seal office occupied many of

these desirable posts. Examples abound. Among them, the collegiate church of Tamworth was occupied by John Bate and John Frank, that of Hastings by John Faukes and William Prestwyk. The royal free chapel of Sts. Mary and George of Windsor was held by Baldwin Hyde, John Faukes and William Morland, St. Stephen's in Westminster by Robert Kirkeham, William Morland, and Robert Mouter, and that of St. Mary Magdalene by Nicholas Newton.⁵²

For clerks who could not proceed to major orders and occupy livings and benefices with the cure of souls, other sources of support had to be found. Lay clerks, often with families to support and without the financial independence provided by a church living, had a dual need for a reliable source of income. Stipends attached to offices and direct grants of money from the king were either non-existent or formed only a nominal portion of a clerk's income.⁵³ There are certainly indications that clerks were willing to provide services for years before receiving direct compensation. John Claydon, a privy seal clerk, was given a grant for "seventeen years service without reward," and Thomas Haseley of the chancery noted that his work as clerk of the commons was done, without pay, for thirteen years by his underclerk, John Dale.⁵⁴

Such willingness to work without official pay suggest that other sources of income provided the profits which attracted lay clerks to these offices.

The reservation of church livings for clerical civil servants had its parallel in lay administration. The grants and positions offered to privy seal clerk William Alberton are examples of the variety of rewards the government had available for lay clerks. Alberton was nominated for a pension from a Wynchecombe convent, the office of ragelawe (sheriff) in Wales, a corrody from a Bristol convent, the office of escheator in Surrey and Sussex and a cash grant from the subsidy of cloth.⁵⁵ A lay bureaucracy was an expensive bureaucracy, one in which fewer expenses could be shifted to the Church and new forms of reward had to be created.

Ralph Griffiths, in his detailed study of the reign of Henry VI, condemned Henry's prodigal dispensation of patronage to various royal servants as a contributing factor in the depletion of the crown's resources and to a regional government marked by absenteeism and inefficiency.⁵⁶ Griffiths pointed out that even "the security of the realm...might be imperilled" when members of the household and

royal clerks were appointed to the constableshops of royal castles.⁵⁷ As one example, he cited Henry VI's appointment of lay chancery clerk, John Nayler, originally of Cornwall, to the constableness of Salisbury castle.⁵⁸ Griffiths holds up an ideal of "a sophisticated, integrated and well-regulated national administration" which employed local men in their own regions, a notion which he says "did not receive a high priority from Henry VI or his advisers."⁵⁹ Appointments, such as that of John Nayler, made it clear that "regardless of region, (it was) personal loyalty, reliability and a record of service" which became the basis for royal rewards.⁶⁰

Griffiths' idea of a sophisticated, integrated national administration may seem unrealistic given the resources and priorities of medieval government. Loyalty, reliability and service are reasonable criteria for royal appointments. After Henry VI's death, royal governments continued to use royal appointments to acquire and maintain political support. Penry Williams points out, for example, that neither Elizabeth I or James I allowed the Duchy of Lancaster to be absorbed into the Exchequer "because the abolition of its offices would have deprived them of valuable rewards for their servants."⁶¹

Griffiths is, of course, aware of this "attractive side" of patronage and the usefulness of a lay presence in forming a "close-knit affinity dedicated to the service of the king."⁶² Local connections were an advantage for a monarch. In another work, Griffiths stresses the importance of "lawyers or courtiers who had little or no connection with the new bailiwick, but whose presence in the localities inspired in the crown a confidence that its interests would be vigorously safe-guarded."⁶³ A lay administration was intrinsically more expensive than a clerical one, but it presented its own special advantages to the monarch as well.

Service in the king's bureaucracy provided other less direct forms of reward, rewards which increased the attractions of these offices for laymen. It was "a convenient arrangement for a government which wanted duties done and had no money to pay for them, to grant...the right to get fees from the public for executing the duties of the office."⁶⁴ When arrangements were made for a grant to King's Hall, Cambridge, "they furthermore paid 40s to Sir John Hamond whose curious signature appears at the bottom of the writ, and 6s 8d to Richard Freston, his clerk."⁶⁵

It was customary to give the clerks preparing writs or performing other services a gift or gratuity which was then shared among the participating clerks at all levels. Thomas Hoccleve complained that a clerk could be deprived of these unofficial payments and have little recourse: "som lordes man schal undertake/ To sue it out; and that that is us due/ ffor our labour, hym deyneth us not take."⁶⁶ Although a gratuity does imply that a payment is optional, G.E. Aylmer pointed out that "if a gratuity is taken at a more or less standard rate, for the rendering of the same service over a long enough time, it can sometimes become a fee without anyone being aware of the transition."⁶⁷ By Henry VI's reign, these payments were a standardized part of the cost of a writ.

The clerks also received sums of money as reimbursement for the purchase of supplies for their work. Privy seal clerk William Alberton was given 18s 4d as repayment for buying parchment; Thomas Hoccleve was paid over 3*ƒ* for parchment, ink and red wax he had purchased.⁶⁸ Stationers in London and elsewhere may have found it expedient to attract clerks, whose purchases must have provided much of their sales, by offering them a present or percentage for

purchase.⁶⁹ Certainly, London merchants saw the king's clerks as desirable consumers: "The London merchants' obvious desire to be in the city at the same time as the royal household...serves as a reminder that conspicuous consumption as practised by the king and his followers could be a source of great profit."⁷⁰

The intensive development of Westminster and the surrounding areas of London as an accommodation and service sector was a response not only to clerks working together but to their living together as well. Lay personnel might well have found it difficult to live with their families in the midst of a bureaucratic household.⁷¹ Traditionally, the king's clerks had led a semi-communal life, reminiscent of the religious life, in the same household or at least in houses in the same area. Living near one another promoted the development of a professional identity and fostered the exchange of ideas and routines, all of which benefited the bureaucracy. Was this identity of interests threatened by the more independent living arrangements natural for lay clerks? The separate residences of lay clerks followed traditional practice, however, and remained concentrated in the areas bureaucrats had always occupied. Clerks, lay or

clerical, still lived in houses in close proximity, travelled to work together and maintained constant contact.

Certain of the clerks' rewards, which also reflected the household origins of these offices, were also adapted to a lay life. Rewards such as food, drink, furnishings, and clothing were patterned on the traditional privilege, in ecclesiastic and noble households, of members of the household dining and living together. The system became more commonly the giving of outright gifts of food, drink, or candles, a method of reward convenient for the independent lay household. Regular gifts of wine, for example, were extremely common and undoubtedly appreciated. John Bate, a chancery clerk, was granted a tun of red Gascon wine yearly; Thomas Frank, for his years of service in the privy seal office, received a yearly pipe of wine.⁷²

Rewards of cloth and other materials for clothing and the resulting adoption of specific styles designating membership in the royal bureaucracy had parallels in the more communal life of the royal and noble household. Their dual purpose resulted in the appeal to lay and clerical civil servants at all levels. The wearing of special clothing served not only to emphasize a clerk's membership in a close-knit affinity dedicated to the king's service, but also to indicate

his status as a member of a separate, professional elite. Geoffrey Goodlok and John Morker, as spigurnels of chancery, received an annual livery at Christmas of the suit of the esquires of the royal household; the chafewax of the chancery received clothing including shoes and stockings.⁷³ Thomas Beaugrant and John Offord of the privy seal office received colored cloth appropriate for winter and summer clothing.⁷⁴ At the upper echelon, William Lyndwood, secondary of the privy seal, received not only a double allowance of cloth but squirrel fur as well.⁷⁵ Gradations among bureaucrats were indicated by their clothing. The increasing status of the clerks serving in the hanaper of chancery was marked by the grant to one of its clerks, Robert Kirkeham, of the livery of a master of chancery.⁷⁶

Other advantages available to the king's bureaucrats had parallels in aristocratic and religious life. A clerk's long service might be rewarded by exemption from serving on "assizes, juries, inquisitions...and from being made sheriff or escheator." James Kelom was exempted from these services as a compensation for good service in the chancery for twenty-eight years.⁷⁷

One of the requirements of good lordship was the ability of a lord to protect his retainers

before the common law courts.⁷⁸ The Church extended to its servants the privilege of being tried before ecclesiastic courts. In like manner, chancery clerks, lay and ecclesiastic, had the privilege of being tried before the Court of Chancery even in cases which would not ordinarily have come under the chancellor's jurisdiction.⁷⁹ There were obvious advantages in being tried before a court staffed by one's colleagues and associates. John Brokholes, as a clerk in chancery, made use of his right to have his case tried in the Court of Chancery when his London tenants were threatened.⁸⁰ When John Hertilpole, during an exchange of benefices, was accused of removing the tithes and stripping his former rectory of furniture, his accuser complained that "he was unable to obtain a remedy at common law because Hertilpole was a master in Chancery."⁸¹ Complaints also occurred suggesting that cases in which law clerks were themselves involved, either as principals or as attorneys, might result in errors in the records or in the hampering of access to the records.⁸²

The clerks' special relationship to the chancellor's court and their duties in the chancery itself provided them with another profitable opportunity -- money-lending. Although usury, a straight

loan at interest, was forbidden by the Church, other sources of profit from money-lending (penalties when the loan was not repaid on time, compensation to the lender for the loss of his money, compensation for the risk that the money might not be repaid) were permitted.⁸³ Chancery personnel, who prepared and kept the records of loans (recognizances), used their access to these records as a means of facilitating repayment. Debtors could end up in court having their obligations enforced by the colleagues of bureaucratic money-lenders.⁸⁴ The importance of money-lending to chancery personnel led to the suggestion that the recognizance was introduced into chancery because the clerks were money-lenders.⁸⁵

Chancery clerks were in great demand by merchants and others as participants in money-lending syndicates, and also initiated such transactions on their own. The practice was indulged in by clerks at all levels on a grand scale. Chancery master William Hill was involved in over 170 money-lending arrangements with non-bureaucratic partners.⁸⁶ Master John Frank acquired enough wealth from money-lending to require a bailiff to keep his accounts.⁸⁷ Clerk of the crown Thomas Haseley was part of a group able to lend the king 4,000 marks.⁸⁸ Even lower-level clerks

such as spigurnel Geoffrey Goodlok involved themselves in this trade.⁸⁹

Money-lending not only provided the bureaucrats with profits; it also afforded them the opportunity to make important contacts. The clerks were often approached by individuals who needed their expertise. They were able to form associations with people of influence, people who found many uses for their skills. Chancery and privy seal clerks' access to and familiarity with government records guaranteed a demand for their services. If a member of the public needed a legal document or wished to insure that a transaction was recorded without delay, who better to consult than these government clerks.⁹⁰ In addition, the long vacations given to civil servants gave them the time to pursue these private interests.⁹¹

References to clerks acting as attorneys and assisting parties in suits are frequent and varied. Often they were able to provide assistance for people whose influence could be valuable. John Mapilton the Elder appeared as attorney for many people, including Elizabeth, the wife of the Earl of Salisbury; chancery master Richard Selby aided Katherine, the Earl of Suffolk's wife; Chancery clerk John Louth served as attorney in chancery

for Sir John Styward.⁹² Chancery clerks often ended up defending both sides in a suit. William Payn appeared in chancery with attorney Nicholas Wymbyssh of the chancery against John Syfrewast who enlisted the services of chancery clerk John Mapilton the Younger.⁹³ When prior John Wardous was expelled from some property, he asked Thomas Tetisworth of the chancery to help him; his opponent in the suit secured the aid of chancery clerk John Nayler.⁹⁴ A court case frequently led to long-term legal involvement as when master John Stokes supervised and advised the Pastons in a long, drawn-out court case over Sir John Fastolf's will.⁹⁵ Privy seal clerks were also in demand. Robert Frye's letters show that throughout his privy seal career, he was asked to assist many suitors.⁹⁶

Not only individuals but institutions made use of the clerk's training. In 1453, the London company of pewterers paid a clerk of the chancery "for his reward in laboring to serche for statuts and other things."⁹⁷ The Merchant Taylors of London paid Adam Moleyns of the privy seal for his assistance with a warrant for a new charter.⁹⁸ John Stoppyndon served as town attorney for Canterbury in exchange for gifts and informal payments.⁹⁹

Many royal clerks were appointed to the position of warden or master of crown hospitals. The hospital of St. Katherine's in London was served by John Frank and Thomas Bekynton, that of St. Leonard's in Yorkshire by Nicholas Wymbyssh and that of St. John's in Leicester by William Hill.¹⁰⁰ In return for providing a living for many royal clerks, the hospitals profited by being able to use the services of these clerks as their representative in legal matters. Frequently the clerks appeared in law-suits representing the hospitals.¹⁰¹

In discussing the civil service of Henry V, Jeremy Catto stated that the skills of the chancery clerks had few applications, that these clerks were self-sufficient and inward-looking, and that the privy seal clerks inhabited a narrow world of their own, a world which reflected a clerical, bachelor existence.¹⁰² The chancery and the privy seal clerks' activities throughout the fifteenth century as property owners, active consumers, money-lenders and attorneys contradict the depiction of a self-involved group unconcerned with outside affairs. A numerically significant lay presence did result in changes in bureaucratic life, but these changes were often accelerations in tendencies inherent

in the active, involved life of a bureaucrat, whether lay or clerical. Their professional status and their awareness of the advantages of the bureaucratic life did not isolate the clerks from the surrounding society. Rather it provided them with the means for active interaction in both the public and private spheres.

Chart D The Royal Clerks - Indications of Lay Status

1. William Alberton: secular office, designation as gentleman
2. John Alkyn: designation as gentleman
3. Thomas Asshecombe: government petition, will, (wife Alice)
4. Peter Aumener: corrody, designation as gentleman, (wife Alice)
5. Nicholas Bailly: government record
6. Henry Benet: will, secular office
7. William Bolton: designation as gentleman
8. John Broke: designation as gentleman
9. Thomas Buk: designation as gentleman
10. Richard Cable: designation as gentleman
11. John Claydon: secular office
12. Richard Colman: government record
13. Robert Fen: property transactions, member of Parliament, (wife Juliana)
14. Thomas Frank: executrix of will, corrody, secular office (wife Elizabeth)
15. Robert Frye: member of Parliament (wife Alice)
16. Richard Fryston: designation as gentleman
17. Henry Garstang: will, designation as gentleman
18. Geoffrey Goodlok: member of Parliament, will (wife Elizabeth)
19. William Godyng: designation as gentleman
20. Thomas Haseley: property transactions, will, papal dispensation, designation as gentleman, (wives: Alice, Agnes)

21. John Hill: designation as gentleman
22. Thomas Hoccleve: poetry
23. Thomas Ive: legitimate offspring, (son Richard)
24. James Kelom: property transactions, designation as gentleman, (wife Katherine)
25. Thomas Kent: property transactions, chantry, will, (wives: Isabel, Joan)
26. John Louth: designation as gentleman
27. Richard Loy: designation as gentleman
28. John Mapilton the Elder: legitimate offspring, (son John)
29. William Marchall: government record
30. John Morker: legitimate offspring, designation as gentleman, (son Thomas)
31. Thomas Morker: designation as gentleman
32. John Nayler: chantry, property transactions, designation as gentleman, (wife Katherine)
33. Richard Neville: property transactions, government records, (wife Alice)
34. John Ongham: will, (wife Cristiana)
35. John Payne: designation as gentleman
36. John Pemberton: member of Parliament
37. Richard Prior: secular office, (wife Joan)
38. William Rous: member of Parliament
39. Richard Sturgeon: legitimate offspring, will, designation as gentleman, (daughter Joan)
40. William Swerendon: designation as gentleman
41. Thomas Tetisworth: designation as gentleman

42. John Toller: member of Parliament, designation as gentleman
43. Henry Upton: designation as gentleman
44. Robert Walsham: government record, designation as gentleman
45. Henry Wyndesore: designation as gentleman
46. Hugh Winkley: designation as gentleman

Chart E Effect of the Lay Presence on Chancery
Personnel
(Based on Lay Indicators in Chart D)

Personnel of the Chancery Below the Level
of Chancellor

85 Individuals

Date of Entry into the Chancery	before <u>1400</u>	1400- <u>1420</u>	1421- <u>1440</u>	1441- <u>1461</u>
Total Number of Individuals	11	14	31	29
Lay Clerks	1	5	12	19
Percentage of Lay Presence	9%	36%	39%	65%

Notes

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6. Wilkinson, The Chancery Under Edward III, 217, fn. 2.
7. R.L. Storey, "Gentleman-bureaucrats," in Profession, Vocation, and Culture in Later Medieval England, ed. Cecil H. Clough (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1982), 100.
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16. CCR, Henry VI, March 6, 1439, 3:254-55.
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19. Rotuli Parliamentorum, July 21, 1452, 5:317; CPR, Henry VI, April 30, 1447, 5:74; CPR, Henry VI, March 20, 1452, 5:579.
20. CPR, Edward IV, March 7, 1466, 1:516-17.
21. Calendar of Papal Registers, 5 Ides March, 1436-37, 8:644. A detailed discussion of Haseley's complicated marital situation is included in Charles W. Smith, "Some Trends in the English Royal Chancery: 1377-1483," Medieval Prosopography 6(1985):74-75. Smith suggests that Haseley was reluctant to reveal his marriage out of fear of ecclesiastical rather than royal censure, since the marriage was contracted in an irregular fashion.
22. CCR, Henry VI, October 24, 1433, 2:286-87; CCR, Henry VI, May 23, 1449, 5:134-35; CCR, Henry VI, February 22, 1451, 5:285.
23. CCR, Henry VI, February 7, 1439, 3:247; CCR, Henry VI, July 18, 1439, 3:284.
24. CCR, Henry VI, February 14, 1449, 5:139.
25. J. Wedgwood, ed. History of Parliament (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1936), 1:317.

26. Wedgwood, History of Parliament, 1:728, 674.
27. J.H. Baker, "Lawyers practising in Chancery 1474-1486," Journal of Legal History 4(1983):72; Storey, "Gentleman-bureaucrats," 126, fn. 55; CCR, Henry VI, November 7, 1453, 6:217; CFR, Henry VI, April 18, 1460, 19:266.
28. J.L. Kirby, "Clerks in Royal Service," History Today 6(1956):758; A.L. Brown, The Early History of the Clerkship of the Council (Glasgow: Glasgow University Publications, 1969), 17; A.L. Brown, "The Privy Seal Clerks in the Early Fifteenth Century," in The Study of Medieval Records, ed. D.A. Bullough and R.L. Storey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 275.
29. Wedgwood, History of Parliament, 1:382, 383; CCR, Henry VI, February 4, 1444, 4:206.
30. Storey, "Gentleman-bureaucrats," 127, fn. 68.
31. CCR, Henry VI, July 4, 1455, 6:66-67.
32. Ralph A. Griffiths, The Principality of Wales in the Later Middle Ages (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1972), 1:540.
33. CCR, Edward IV, September 1, 1474, 2:379; Griffiths, Principality of Wales, 1:540.
34. Storey, "Gentleman-bureaucrats," 128, fn. 90.
35. A.B. Emden, A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 2:1037-38.
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37. Reginald R. Sharpe, ed., Calendar of Wills Proved and Enrolled in the Court of Hustings, London A.D. 1258-A.D. 1688 (London: John C. Francis, printer, 1890), 2:528.
38. Storey, "Gentleman-bureaucrats," 99.
39. Malcolm Richardson II, "The Influence of Henry V on the Development of Chancery English" (Ph.D. diss., University of Tennessee, 1978), 149; Robert Somerville, History of the Duchy of Lancaster, (London: Chancellor and Council of the Duchy of Lancaster, 1953), 1:456; List of Early Chancery Proceedings (New York: Kraus Reprint Company, 1963), 1:53.

40. CPR, Edward IV, May 2, 1481, 3:272; CFR, Henry VI, October 27, 1453, 19:68; CPR, Henry VI, July 9, 1446, 4:259.
41. Thomas Hoccleve, The Regement of Princes, ed. F.J. Furnivall (London: Early English Text Society, 1897), Extra Series 72:53, lines 51-53.
42. Tout, Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England, 5:94, fn. 5; CPR, Henry VI, December 12, 1424, 1:255; CPR, Henry VI, May 20, 1427, 1:398.
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54. CPR, Henry VI, June 5, 1432, 2:196; A.F. Pollard, "The Clerical Organization of Parliament," English Historical Review 57(1942):35, 45.
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Chapter Five Career Responsibilities: Tradition, Innovation and Bureaucratic Effectiveness

The picture of the bureaucrat which has emerged is that of an active individual involved in both the public and private spheres, an individual who seized opportunities and accommodated himself to change, a fitting participant in the "age of ambition." How does the picture of an active, involved participant accord with that often presented of the bureaucrat as a cog in a machine, an official mindlessly following an inflexible routine? G.R. Elton wrote that "the steady and undisturbed performance of regular bureaucratic duties provided no matter for discussion."¹ Yet, part of a bureaucracy's internal strength and success derives from this very emphasis on routine, on the steady performance of assigned tasks. Although bureaucracy is often (and justly) criticized for the slowness of its response to change, this very tardiness is not only a guarantee of internal order -- it is frequently a protection against chaos.

Further, a slow response to change does not mean the absence of change. T.F. Tout found administrative changes during the reign of Edward II which, he believed, were tantamount to an administrative revolution.² His model has been criticized

as over-emphasizing "time of conflict and sudden change as against those of gradual evolution in the methods and machinery."³ Actually, Tout's careful, detailed studies more frequently provide evidence for piece-meal advances rather than for quantum leaps.

As the subtitle of this chapter suggests, tradition and innovation were both factors in the efforts of the members of Henry VI's bureaucracy to create a more efficient, responsive administration. If the bureaucrat used his training and associations to wrest personal, financial and status rewards from the civil service, he, in turn, contributed his involvement and expertise to the civil service. Just as bureaucracy affected the life of the bureaucrat, the qualities the clerk brought to the job affected the bureaucracy. "If the public servant is capable and honest and astute, administration will be likewise, and it will reflect more accurately the intention of the government."⁴

For the medieval public servant, the opportunity to affect and influence administration was especially great. "The mediaeval conception of affairs of state" made it difficult to "fix definite bounds to the competency of any government office."⁵ Although Jeremy Catto suggested that the chancery

clerks' "narrow duties and specialized training cannot have fitted most of them for the larger tasks of diplomacy and government," fifteenth-century governments apparently felt otherwise.⁶ Members of the chancery and privy seal office were called on to apply their expertise and efficiency both to their own departments and to other aspects of administration and government as well.

The chancery and privy seal offices were primarily writing-houses which received requests for a great variety of executive and judicial actions and issued responses authenticated respectively by the great and privy seals. Malcolm Richardson provides a coherent summary which conveys the incredible variety of work undertaken by chancery personnel:

The king might grant a pension or land at will, but nothing was really complete until the received had picked up his charter or letters patent at the Chancery. The king's justice could not be obtained without a writ from the Chancery. Licenses to marry heiresses, rights of wardship, appointments of sheriffs, powers of attorney, legal wrangles over inheritances, military commissions, grazing rights, confiscations, acknowledgements of debt, loans to the king, inventories of the king's jewels, agreements with foreign powers -- all of these and much, much more had to pass through Chancery.⁷

Chancery clerks controlled and were responsible for every step of the process. Both the originating

letters, requesting legal remedies or grants of land and money, and the official responses to these requests were drafted by chancery staff.⁸ In the privy seal office, clerks recorded official decisions by king, council, and royal officials and transformed them into formal royal letters.⁹

Beyond the immediate duties of their offices, the clerks had a parallel relationship to another government body: chancery clerks to the Parliament, privy seal clerks to the council. Chancery personnel were involved in and familiar with all aspects of Parliament. The clerks issued the writs of summons to Parliament as well as the expense writs which knights and burgesses took home to claim their wages.¹⁰ The receivers of petitions for Parliament in this period, were, with few exceptions, chancery clerks and the vast majority served more than one Parliament (see Chart E).

These receivers rejected any petitions which they considered not appropriate for consideration by Parliament.¹¹ Chancery staff compiled the rolls of Parliament which recorded Parliament's proceedings, drafting and enrolling the statutes created from the petitions.¹² The chancery clerks, who served as clerks of Parliament, probably aided the parliamentary representatives in formulating petitions and

advised them of the most advantageous procedures.¹³

In a role parallel to that played by the chancery clerks in Parliament, privy seal clerks served as clerks of the council. This connection, which reached its fullest development during Henry VI's minority, continued throughout his reign.¹⁴ The council's secretarial work was carried out by privy seal clerks, who also summoned the council by privy seal writs.¹⁵

The absence of firm boundaries between offices also enabled clerks to combine service for the signet seal with their other duties. Robert Frye worked for the privy seal and signet offices simultaneously, as did John Offord and possibly John Hethe.¹⁶ Chancery clerks John Stoppyndon, John Brokholes and Thomas Manning combined their activities with signet work.¹⁷

Both chancery and privy seal clerks were also in great demand as clerks for diplomatic business and as diplomatic agents, preparing documents and travelling for the king. The prothonotaries, in particular, became specialists in the drafting of diplomatic documents and were frequently consulted about the various peace proposals between England

and France.¹⁸ Prothonotary John Stokes was involved in diplomatic missions treating with such diverse personages as Sigismund of Hungary, Yoland of Jerusalem, the king of Castile, and the Duke of Bavaria. In 1433 he had full power to redress the grievances with Brittany and, in 1441, to negotiate a commercial alliance with Holland, Zeeland and Friesland.¹⁹

In the privy seal office, secondary Thomas Kent wrote the letters surrendering Maine to the French and was imprisoned by the men of Lübeck while on an embassy of the king to Prussia.²⁰ Kent was so prominent in diplomatic negotiations that he was attacked during Cade's rebellion for his services as envoy to Charles VII of France and the Duke of Burgundy.²¹

Clerks at less exalted levels of the privy seal were pressed into diplomatic service as well. Robert Foston, in 1447, received a life appointment in the privy seal for good service "in the privy seal office and elsewhere and beyond the seas in divers embassies in the company of the king's ambassadors."²²

The clerks' involvement in the many aspects of administration broadened their effectiveness and made individual qualities and contributions more significant. In addition, the long tenures common in both the chancery and the privy seal office, (twenty-nine of the thirty-four chancery masters, for example, had served in the chancery for more than twenty years (see Chart B)) gave the clerks both the opportunity and the motivation to understand the traditions of their office and to institute change where needed. Indications of bureaucratic professionalism -- an established hierarchy with careful delegation of responsibility, a growing body of expertise, an interest in the improvement of bureaucratic performance, extensive record-keeping, and the development of professional ethics -- continued and developed throughout Henry VI's reign.

One way in which an established bureaucracy could strengthen central government was the immunity to crisis its structure provided -- an immunity particularly important in a reign which included a long minority, a king's incapacity, and years of civil war. Bureaucratic government is based on an accepted internal hierarchy and the delegation of

responsibility which enables it to acquire an independent life of its own, "the habit of being bureaucratically governed."²³

When chancellor Thomas Langley stepped down from office in 1424, the ritual of transmission of the seal of office was observed as formally as if the monarch were not a two-year-old child:

Thomas bishop of Durham the chancellor delivered to the king his great seal of silver...and the king took it in his own hand and straightaway by advice and assent of the council delivered it sealed up... to the bishop of Winchester.²⁴

In addition to the presence of the council, the ritual was witnessed officially by representatives of the chancery itself: keeper of the rolls John Frank, keeper of the hanaper Henry Kays, and chancery masters John Hertilpole, John Roland, John Mapilton, and Nicholas Wymbyssh.²⁵

The presence of members of the chancery itself at this ceremony serves as a reminder that internal vigorous supervision could supplement the active physical presence of the monarch. The chancellor and, to a lesser extent, the keeper of the privy seal, as heads of office, had "the right and opportunity to influence administration at every

point."²⁶ They were educated, experienced men who could provide continuity at times of crisis or change. When chancellor Thomas Langley remained in office for the first two years of Henry VI's minority, his several years' experience as Henry V's chancellor, in addition to two decades of Lancastrian administrative service, ensured a smooth transition to the new reign.²⁷ Langley's presence was seen, both by the new regime and Langley himself, as so crucial to the success of the new government that he "took no more than six days to return to Windsor from York...no mean feat for a man of about sixty-two."²⁸

Similarly, keeper of the privy seal John Stafford was carried over into the new reign and only left this post to serve Henry VI's government as treasurer. He was quickly replaced by William Alnwick, who held the post for the next ten years, and contributed his many years' experience, including service as Henry V's secretary, to the new reign.

In like fashion, Henry VI's mental collapse in 1454 created a more serious threat to the

stability of his reign. Again, the chancellor, the keeper of the privy seal and the treasurer were able to work with the lords to ensure that the government functioned, under a protectorate headed by the Duke of York, until Henry VI could resume active participation. They were aided by the fact that the offices of the bureaucracy and the household were all occupied and political constraints ensured that their occupants were not subject to dismissal.²⁹ Thomas Lisieux, keeper of the privy seal, remained in office as did the treasurer. Only the chance death of chancellor John Kempe enabled York to put his brother-in-law, Richard Neville, in this office to promote the Yorkist interests.

Ralph A. Griffiths' description of Henry's household during Henry's illness could apply equally well to the bureaucracy: "His large household organization, with its nexus of patronage and influence throughout the realm, remained in suspended animation; its principal officials clung to their posts and bided their time."³⁰

In an increasingly complex and stratified medieval bureaucracy, the vigorous supervision

provided by the heads of office was, in turn, supplemented by the delegation of responsibility to personnel at other levels. Given the hundreds of petitions received in the chancery every year, "it is inconceivable that the chancellor with his many ecclesiastical, political and administrative duties could have attended personally to them all."³¹

Clearly, a relatively minor duty of the chancellor, such as the requirement that he visit the king's hospitals and chapels, could be delegated to other chancery personnel.³² Much of the chancellor's more important work was also delegated to the keepers of the rolls and the chancery masters. Although the chancellor might choose to take some of the paraphernalia of chancery -- rolls, parchment, wax, even the great seal -- as John Kempe did in 1426 while on a journey through his diocese, the days of the peripatetic chancery had ended.³³ While Kempe and his staff offered chancery services to the local populace, the main work of chancery, the preparation of standard writs and letters, continued under the supervision of the many chancery masters who remained at Westminster.

Convenience dictated that even the possession of the great seal was not reserved for the chancellor.

When John Kempe took the great seal with him on his visit, "royal messengers...were kept busy riding to and from Kempe, carrying warrants ordering him to seal letters that needed the weight of the great seal."³⁴ More often, when the chancellor was called away or otherwise not available, the responsibility for the great seal was given to the keeper of the rolls.

While chancellor John Stafford was on an embassy to Calais for two months in 1433, he placed the great seal in the custody of John Frank, keeper of the rolls. When Stafford returned, the great seal was restored to him without a new oath of office.³⁵ The keeper of the rolls possessed the great seal simply as the chancellor's representative or deputy. Similarly, when Thomas Langley gave up the seal and his position as chancellor on September 28, 1422, the seal was given to keeper of the rolls Simon Gaunstede to hold until Langley's official reappointment several weeks later.³⁶ For those weeks it was actually Gaunstede who "exemplified the continuity from one reign to another."³⁷ When the great seal was in Gaunstede's possession, he was not merely its passive guardian. He was given the same authority to use the great seal as the chancellor, apparently

without qualification.³⁸

Even when the chancellor was in residence at Westminster, much of the chancery's work did not require his personal supervision, but other levels of authority were carefully observed. Thus, after masters John Faukes, John Pemberton and Richard Fryston received the letters prepared by their subordinates, the sealing of the letters was completed in the presence of the keeper of the rolls.³⁹

In the privy seal office, too, clerks became more active, expanding and developing the authority of their office. In 1434, privy seal clerk Henry Benet after fifteen years in office and Thomas Frank after seventeen years began the practice of writing their surnames in the lower right hand corner of writs and bills prepared by their subordinates. By this step, they gave official notice that "they thus made themselves responsible for the correctness of the phraseology."⁴⁰ The care taken to correct erroneous entries is another indication of bureaucratic efficiency.⁴¹

Much of any bureaucrat's day consisted of standard tasks endlessly repeated, the inflexible routine so characteristic of bureaucracy. Privy

seal clerk Thomas Hoccleve leaves us no doubt that the routine could be dull, even mind-numbing:

But we labour in travaillous stilnesse;
We stowpe and stare up-on the shepe's skyn,
And keep our song and wordes in.⁴²

At the same time, bureaucratic change, such as that undertaken by Benet and Frank, emphasized the importance of individual initiative and involvement for administrative development. Hoccleve himself was interested enough in his government work to assemble a large collection of royal letters which could serve as models for notarial work.⁴³

The importance of an established routine should not imply passivity on the part of those who follow it. The clerks of the chancery and the privy seal office were not mere document processors; their jobs called for a detailed knowledge of a variety of legal and administrative tasks. An important aspect of the professionalization of bureaucracy was the possession of expertise, the "body of knowledge and techniques which the professionals apply in their work."⁴⁴

The complexity of the knowledge and technique varied considerably at each level of the hierarchy,

but each had developed its own precise rules and rituals. Even the more menial posts were differentiated by the specific tasks required. Thus the spigurnel, responsible for the physical sealing of chancery documents, was assisted by the chafewax who prepared and heated the sealing-wax.⁴⁵ Sealing itself was part of a formal ritual in which there were decisions to be made as to the type of seal, color of wax, color of silk threads, and position of the seal.⁴⁶

The necessity for precision and formality resulted in elaborate rules for creating documents. The chancery and privy seal clerks, who actually created the letters and writs required by their offices, were not passive members of a "typing pool," but practitioners of a curial style, "with a public and legal function...concerned with exactness in meaning and precision in reference."⁴⁷ Each word and form chosen for these documents was significant and any error could be far-reaching. Different kinds of documents required different forms and formulae, each of which the clerks had to learn: "The distinctions between the formulae of different writs were on occasion very fine and are now frequently very obscure."⁴⁸

The handwriting used in documents was stylized and distinctive. Mastery of the official hand was another qualification for professional employment in either the chancery or the privy seal office.⁴⁹ Clerks also had to work in three different languages, although frequency of usage varied. In the early fifteenth century, Latin dominated the chancery and Anglo-French the privy seal office. Later in the fifteenth century, English became more commonplace in both offices.⁵⁰ Whether Anglo-French, Latin or English was used, style and language were so uniform and standardized that it is clear these documents were the work "of a group of clerks trained and working in the same environment."⁵¹

The standardization of language had implications beyond the administrative milieu. Several writers have suggested that the circulation of administrative documents in Chancery English throughout the country established spelling and language norms that were the model for the English that has since become standard.⁵²

Calls on the clerks' expertise went beyond the daily practice of their profession; often they had to demonstrate an understanding of bureaucratic theory as well. Chancery masters John Faukes and

Thomas Kirkeby, who both served as clerks of Parliament, were able, when called before Sir John Fortescue and the judges of the exchequer, to provide them with a detailed knowledge of the workings of Parliament. Well-aware of the complexities of the institutions for which they worked, the two produced "the fullest and most authoritative contemporary account of medieval parliamentary practice with regard to the passing of bills, public and private, and their enrolment."⁵³ They made clear that the consent of king, lords and commons was necessary for a bill's passage.⁵⁴ In this context, Faukes was responsible for the earliest English use of the phrase "the common house," on January 28, 1450.⁵⁵

Although chancery clerks and privy seal clerks did not have the specific involvement with the royal economy which exchequer clerks did, they were frequently called upon to provide fiscal advice. When soldiers in Caen, in 1458, demanded certain sums of money, a commission of chancery masters, headed by keeper of the rolls Thomas Kirkeby, examined and reported on the validity of the soldiers' requirements.⁵⁶ In the privy seal office, Henry

Benet, in his position as clerk of the council, was given the delicate task of explaining to Henry VI the cost of grants and pardons. Benet noted a pardon to a collector of customs which cost the crown 2,000 marks and a grant of the office of constable by which Henry lost another 1,000 marks.⁵⁷

If expertise suggests the capable civil servant, innovation requires the astute one. A reforming bureaucracy is an efficient bureaucracy.⁵⁸ The chancery and privy seal offices remained relatively efficient and successful because their functioning was improved by the suggestions of clerks who combined involvement with day-to-day routine with their knowledge of administration. Their suggestions were made doubly effective by an environment which allowed clusters of like-minded individuals to work together, challenging and supplementing each other.⁵⁹

The area which most frequently benefited from administrative ingenuity was that of record-keeping, the hallmark of any bureaucracy. Government is dependent on a constant flow of information for effective operation and medieval governments were no exception. The Middle Ages saw increasing literacy and an increasing desire for quantification-- the development of a literate, numerate society

which was both the cause and the consequence of more extensive record-making and preservation.⁶⁰ The progressive increase in the number of chancery records produced in the thirteenth century, which M.T. Clanchy documented by the graph of the letters extant and the table of sealing-wax used, continued into the late Middle Ages.⁶¹ The creation, filing and storage of the vast body of documents produced was the bureaucracy's main reason for existence and a prime focus for the clerks' organizational skills.⁶²

Records created for the council and Parliament owed as much to the inclinations of chancery and privy seal clerks as to official governmental action.⁶³ Under Richard II, the employment of a clerk of the council led to a noticeable regularity in the style of notes taken at council meetings.⁶⁴ By the beginning of Henry VI's reign, it was established "that the clerk of the council be charged and sworn to write daily the names of all the lords that be present from time to time, to see how and by whom everything passeth."⁶⁵ The marked improvement in council notes owed much to clerk of the council Robert Frye who improved filing methods in the

privy seal, and then applied privy seal practice to the records of the council.⁶⁶ The influence of privy seal clerks, such as secondary Robert Frye, ensured that the council records showed the influence of the privy seal office rather than the chancery:

The chirography is recognizable as rounder and more cursive, the notes and memoranda were briefer, on thinner parchment or on paper, in French or English more often than in Latin; petitions and warrants were kept in files, but with no enrolments as in the chancery.⁶⁷

By the middle of Henry VI's reign, the records kept by the clerk of the council were so complete that he even recorded his own presence at meetings, "et me Adam Moleyns."⁶⁸

Further improvements in the council's records were instituted by the same Henry Benet who had applied his organizational talents to on-the-job improvements in the privy seal office. Benet ensured more accurate conciliar records by keeping a detailed set of rough minutes at the council meetings themselves, rather than jotting them down after the fact as earlier clerks had done.⁶⁹

Secondary Thomas Kent, who succeeded Benet as clerk of the council in 1443, may have found the keeping of detailed, formal records even more

necessary during Henry's illness, when the council assumed new responsibilities.⁷⁰ The relationship between the king's incapacity and formal record-keeping led J.F. Baldwin to the belief that under a strong personal monarchy, such as that of Edward IV, the council was far less important and the clerkship of the council sank into obscurity.⁷¹ F.R.H. Du Boulay supported Baldwin's view, noting the informal character of Edward IV's council and the absence of regular records.⁷² Recent research, however, provides evidence for the essential continuity of the fifteenth-century council. J.R. Lander, for example, believes that the 1,500 references to the council from 1461 to 1485 "cast grave doubt on any theory of a failure in the operation of the council."⁷³ His research attests to administrative continuity and the success with which innovations in record-making and preservation under Henry VI were carried over into succeeding reigns.

Parallel innovations in record-keeping transformed parliamentary practice as well. John Faukes, during his years of service in chancery (1426-71) and as clerk of the Parliament (1447-70) made a significant addition to Parliament's records. As

an addition to the rolls of Parliament compiled by chancery clerks, Faukes began the earliest Lords' Journal yet discovered.⁷⁴ He is the likely author of the most complete fragments of fifteenth-century journals still extant, the records of a parliamentary debate of 1449 and the Fane Fragment from the Parliament of 1461.⁷⁵ Faukes kept a daily record of sittings which included the date of sessions and a record of the Lords present, "the latter being taken down at the beginning of the day's sitting rather than by marking up a prepared list."⁷⁶ Most importantly, Faukes' innovations did not end with his tenure. There is the strong suggestion that similar journals were kept throughout the fifteenth century, which, although not permanently preserved, may have provided working papers for the more complete journals of the sixteenth century.⁷⁷

In discussing the professional lives of these capable, astute civil servants, emphasis fell on the breadth and the significance both of the tasks assigned to them and those undertaken by them. Incumbent on bureaucrats with important responsibilities was the development of professional ethics, as a contribution to a public perception of the honest civil servant.

What was an appropriate code of conduct for those, at the various levels of the royal service, who worked with important, sensitive documents? The chanceries in fifteenth-century Venice and Rome illustrated one approach to this problem. They required that those sealing documents had to be illiterate to ensure that they did not reveal the contents of the documents they worked on.⁷⁸

This passive approach to the problem of bureaucratic discretion was obviously not applicable to the members of the chancery and the privy seal office whose jobs demanded literacy and comprehension. A better model for the royal bureaucracy was provided by the council whose members took an oath urging the admirable sentiments of impartiality, honesty and confidentiality, as a response to complaints that secrets were not being kept.⁷⁹

In addition to discretion, a bureaucracy involved in the preservation of documents whose exact content and date could affect inheritance, land transactions, and other matters had to provide their public with a reasonable assurance that these documents would not be tampered with. Forgery of seals and of documents dealing with property was a serious

offense throughout the Middle Ages and was generally perceived as "the particular sort of forgery most dangerous to society."⁸⁰ One way individuals tried to deceive the chancery clerks was by the creation of new documents in an antique-appearing hand.

A seal from an older document was then affixed to the new deed to make it appear authentic. Often, "the chancery clerk accepted with a light heart the documents set before him, and, having pocketed his big fees, cheerfully wrote them out in the confirmatory inspeximus and vidimus."⁸¹ If the claimant could not create a document of appropriate authenticity, he might attempt to bring a copy of a supposedly destroyed earlier deed.

In an age where the means of authenticating documents were quite limited, forgeries were difficult to detect. As professionalism and expertise increased, however, efforts to detect forgeries were more successful.⁸² Even more important for the development of professional ethics was the fact that such attempts were made, even if not always successful. One indication that the chancery was working towards this goal was the requirement, instituted in the later Middle Ages, that only original documents with

original seals would be accepted by the clerks of chancery.⁸³

The chancery records of Henry VI's reign contain a specific example of the detection of forgery through a clerk's examination of a document and retention of its details.⁸⁴ Robert Danvers, a claimant to Oxford manors, protested that his character had been defamed by his rival's false claim. The rival asserted that Danvers had brought forged documents to the chancery which contained the figure 40 which had been erased and rewritten in fresh ink.

Thomas Smyth, a master in Henry VI's chancery, not only recalled that the figure 40 appeared authentic when he had examined it earlier, but was able to testify that a clerk of the exchequer, William Broket, had been at the Tower of London, where chancery records were stored. Broket had sent a chancery servant to search for records he supposedly needed and was thus left alone in the room with Danvers' document. When confronted with Smyth's testimony, the exchequer clerk broke down and "acknowledged that he did the erasure with his fingernail" at the behest of Danvers' rival and then rewrote the same number in fresh ink to discredit Danvers' claim.⁸⁵ Not only did Smyth

uphold the honesty and expertise of his own office, but the exchequer clerk was barred from any job working with government records.

When Tout referred earlier to the chancery clerk cheerfully pocketing his fee before approving a document, he raised another issue for the development of professional ethics, that of bribery. What of the clerks in the chancery office and the office of the privy seal who routinely required gifts and sums of money to encourage them to perform their bureaucratic duties? If gifts and gratuities were "a normal part of official incomes, the line between the acceptable and the reprehensible was hard to draw."⁸⁶

Earlier writers were clearly uncomfortable with the gifts exacted by the bureaucracy. John of Salisbury, in the Policraticus, wrote a scathing description of the bureaucratic warren where a clerk on the take lurks everywhere and particularly notes that "delay is the officials' stock in trade."⁸⁷ Another twelfth-century theorist, Peter the Chanter, equated administrators who charged for accelerating their work to those committing simony and flatly stated that "on no account should

there be a charge for the use of a seal, which was the very sign of office."⁸⁸

The fifteenth century recognized the problems of bribery as well. In 1410, the commons received approval of their petition stating that the chancellor, treasurer and keeper of the privy seal should not receive presents.⁸⁹ The council of 1430 enacted that the councillors should be free from bribery and that no councillor should receive "any gift, bond or promise in order to favor or further any matter pending."⁹⁰ Accusations that officials were taking bribes were rife throughout Jack Cade's rebellion of 1450.⁹¹ At the same time, as bureaucracy became omnipresent, awareness had grown that civil servants were performing a job and offering a service for which payment had to be made. When government could not afford to offer these services for free, the logical person to bear the costs was the individual who used the service. Critical as John of Salisbury had been of the exactions of royal bureaucrats, he did recognize that their services required compensation. He offered a solution to the dilemma by suggesting the enactment of fixed fees for services rather than vague gifts and gratuities.⁹²

By the fifteenth century, most of the charges for administrative services had become fixed fees and, although payments and inducements beyond the standard rate were undoubtedly offered, both the bureaucracy and the larger society seemed comfortable with the compromise. Lists of expenses submitted by institutions and individuals, routinely included payments, sometimes referred to as bribes, made out to chancery and privy seal officials. A bill of costs submitted at the time of Henry VI contained numerous notations of such payments including "Item to a squyer of my lord pryvy seall for to help y^t yit mygth be seled" and "Item for fysh to my lord chaunceler" all in aid of a letter being presented to the king.⁹³ As John Noonan points out, in his detailed analysis of the concept of bribery and its implications for governmental ethics, "bribery is an act distinguished from other reciprocities only if it is socially identified and socially condemned."⁹⁴

In ethics, as in the other areas of bureaucratic development, a pragmatic approach to a variety of administrative problems enabled "tradition-bound work" to have the flexibility to modify tradition.⁹⁵ Further, the emphasis on the

social context of bribery is a reminder that bureaucracy and bureaucrats function within a larger society.

The initial paradox raised in this study concerned the contrast between problems at the center of government, problems relating to the assertion of monarchical authority, and an efficiently operating bureaucracy functioning in spite of a lack of strong monarchical control. Charles Ross, while contrasting Henry VI's administration unfavorably with that of Edward IV, observed that "the development over several centuries of established bureaucratic machinery had in no way removed the need for vigorous direction and constant physical supervision by the monarch."⁹⁶ S.B. Chrimes, similarly, wrote that an administrative system could not function normally without the proper exercise of royal authority. For him, too, the "decline of the kingship under Henry VI inevitably brought a decline in administration."⁹⁷

There are other points of view. Nicholas Pronay found that in spite of problems at the center "administrative organs of government carried on" providing "reasonably effective day-to-day government."⁹⁸ Charles Smith's work on the chancery

specifically concluded that the bureaucracy under Henry VI compared favorably to that of Edward IV in terms of professionalism and the use of experienced personnel.⁹⁹

The professionalism and effectiveness of English bureaucracy has been traced back at least to the twelfth century and forward into the modern period.¹⁰⁰ The most recent biographies of Henry VI have not altered the picture of him as incompetent and lacking in judgment.¹⁰¹ How does administration during such a reign fit into the history of professional English bureaucracy? The present study, in focusing on the characteristics of the bureaucrat himself, has found many indicators of bureaucratic effectiveness and expertise which support the view that Henry VI's administrative bureaucracy suffered no decline in quality.

Earlier discussions in this study emphasized the importance of regional and personal contacts, the completeness of bureaucratic records, the extensive education and training of the clerks, the attractiveness of the rewards and perquisites available to the clerks, and the development of a "bureaucratic family" as contributions to a

smoothly functioning bureaucracy. When this is further buttressed by the evidence of professionalism in the actual performance of the job itself, it places administration in the reign of Henry VI in the mainstream of the growth of professional bureaucracy rather than as an aberration from it.

Recent research on the Wars of the Roses has revealed that the numbers of people involved, the number of casualties, and the effects of the battles on surrounding areas were actually relatively small.¹⁰² Similarly, the civil war did not accelerate the natural rate of turnover in noble families.¹⁰³ As for "bastard feudalism," maintenance and livery, doubt has been cast not only on its limitation to the fifteenth century, but on its association with chaos and disorder as well.¹⁰⁴ Commerce, education, architecture, travel, literature, and philanthropy were neither static nor degenerating. In the same vein, the development of fifteenth-century English bureaucracy seems not only a contribution to stability but a reflection of a fundamentally orderly society.

Chart F Henry VI's Clerks Serving as Receivers of
Petitions in Parliament

(RP = Rotuli Parliamentorum)

<u>Chancery Clerk</u>	<u>Years of Service</u>
John Bate	1436, 1439, 1441-42, 1444, 1447, 1449, 1450 (RP 4:496; 5:3, 36, 66, 128, 141, 171, 210)
William Bolton	1467-68 (RP 5:571)
John Cammell	1441-42, 1444, 1450 (RP 5:36, 66, 171, 210)
John Chamberlain	1460, 1461, 1463, 1467-68 (RP 5:373, 461, 496, 571)
John Derby	1455 (RP 5:278)
John Faukes	1433, 1435, 1436, 1449, 1450, 1453, 1455, 1459, 1460, 1461, 1463, 1467-68 (RP 4:419, 481, 496; 5:141, 171, 210, 227, 278, 345, 373, 461, 496, 571)
John Frank	1414, 1415, 1416, 1417, 1419, 1420, 1422, 1423, 1425, 1426, 1429, 1430-31, 1432, 1433, 1435, 1436 (RP 4:16, 63, 70, 95, 106, 116, 123, 129, 170, 198, 261, 295, 316, 336, 367, 388, 419, 481, 496)
Richard Fryston	1453, 1455, 1459, 1460, 1461, 1463, 1467-68 (RP 5:227, 278, 345, 373, 461, 496, 571)
Simon Gaunstede	1414, 1415, 1416, 1419, 1420, 1421, 1422 (RP 4:16, 63, 70, 95, 106, 116, 123, 129, 170)
John Hertilpole	1413, 1414, 1415, 1416, 1417, 1419, 1420, 1421, 1422, 1423, 1425, 1426, 1432 (RP 4:3, 35, 70, 95, 106, 116, 123, 129, 170, 198, 261, 316, 388)

<u>Chancery Clerk</u>	<u>Years of Service</u>
Henry Kays	1416, 1417, 1419, 1420, 1421, 1422, 1423 (RP 4:95, 106, 116, 123, 129, 170, 198)
Thomas Kirkeby	1439, 1441-42, 1444, 1447, 1449, 1450, 1453, 1455, 1459, 1461 (RP 5:3, 36, 66, 128, 141, 171, 210, 227, 278, 345, 461)
Robert Kirkeham	1455, 1460, 1461, 1463, 1467-68 (RP 5:278, 373, 461, 496, 571)
Thomas Manning	1459 (RP 5:345)
John Mapilton (Elder)	1415, 1423, 1425, 1426, 1429, 1430-31, 1432 (RP 4:70, 198, 261, 316, 336, 367, 388)
Robert Mouter	1439, 1441-42, 1444, 1447, 1449, 1450 (RP 5:3, 36, 66, 128, 141, 171, 210)
John Pemberton	1460, 1461 (RP 5:373, 461)
William Prestwyk	1425, 1426, 1429, 1430-31, 1432, 1433, 1435 (RP 4:261, 205, 316, 336, 367, 388, 419, 481)
Henry Shelford	1429, 1433, 1439 (RP 4:336, 419; 5:3)
John Springthorp	1414, 1415, 1416, 1417, 1419, 1420, 1421, 1422 (RP 4:16, 63, 70, 95, 106, 116, 123, 129, 170)
John Stokes	1423, 1441-42, 1444, 1449 (RP 4:198; 5:36, 66, 141)

Chancery ClerkYears of Service

John Stopyndon

1433, 1435, 1436, 1439, 1441-
42, 1444, 1447 (RP 4:419, 481,
496; 5:3, 36, 66, 128)

John Thoraby

1415, 1425, 1430-31 (RP 4:70,
261, 367)

Richard Wetton

1455, 1460, 1463 (RP 5:278,
373, 496)

Nicholas Wymbyssh

1425, 1426, 1430-31, 1432,
1433, 1435, 1436, 1439, 1449,
1450 (RP 4:295, 316, 367, 388,
419, 481, 496; 5:3, 141, 171,
210)Privy Seal ClerkYears of Service

Thomas Kent

1453 (RP 5:227)

Richard Langport

1453 (RP 5:227)

Notes

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25. CCR, Henry VI, July 16, 1424, 1:154.
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71. Baldwin, The King's Council, 368.
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91. Baldwin, The King's Council, 405; Griffiths, The Reign of King Henry VI, 637.
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