

History and the Written Word in the Angevin Empire
(c. 1154–c. 1200)

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ABSTRACT

It is axiomatic that later twelfth-century England witnessed a growth in the sophistication of government and a related proliferation of written records. This period is also noted for its prolific and distinctive historical writing—which was often written by administrators and reproduced administrative documents. Taking these connected phenomena as its starting point, this study investigates how the changing uses of, access to and attitudes towards the written word affected the writing of history. Conversely, it also seeks to understand how historiography—which had long been associated with the written word—shaped contemporary assumptions about the written word itself. It assesses why historians quoted (and versified) so many documents in their histories, and traces structural similarities between chronicles and other contemporary forms of documentary collection. In doing so, it suggests that the apparently ‘official’ documents reproduced by histories are better thought of as social productions that told stories about the past, for and about those holding public office. It suggests that by rewriting documents as history, historical writing played a fundamental role in committing them to memory—and that it used historical narrative to explain the documents of the past to an imagined future. It also investigates why the period’s historical writing is so attuned to the performances that surrounded the written word. By investigating the presentation of documentary practices in both Latin and vernacular historiography, and by reconstructing the multilingual milieu that historians and historiography inhabited, the study challenges the way that vernacular textual practices are associated primarily with orality and performance, and Latin textual practices with writing and the making of ‘passive’ records. In the process, it suggests that both vernacular and Latin (historical) writing presented a normative picture of the functions of the written word—and of the *litterati*—in contemporary society.

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NOTE ON ORTHOGRAPHY AND TRANSLATIONS

Orthography

Changing editorial practices mean that editors from different periods have followed different orthographical conventions. I have maintained the orthography of the editions from which I have quoted (with the exception of *æ*, which I have rendered *ae*). This means that the orthography of Latin quotations is not consistent throughout the study.

Translations

Where bibliographical details of a translation (or edition with translation) of a text are given, translations will be those of the editors. Otherwise, all translations will be mine, and will be literal, unless stated.

Abbreviations

In accordance with University regulations, a list of abbreviations is provided immediately before the bibliography, below.

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Introduction

The two dazzling cultural achievements of later twelfth-century England were its sophisticated administrative government and its prolific historical writing, and the intimate relationship between these two phenomena has long been acknowledged. At the heart of this relationship lay a mastery of literate technology, which was shared by those who wrote history and those who participated in literate government. It is a mastery that is epitomized above all by those ‘civil servant historians,’ as Robert Bartlett has called them, who did both.¹

This study is about the relationship between the historiographical and administrative cultures of later twelfth-century England; and I place the implications of their common concern with the written word at the centre of its field of view. More specifically, I situate the prolific historiographical production of later twelfth-century England within the context of the widening diffusion of a ‘literate mentality,’ as Michael Clanchy called it, that took place in the same period.² The rise of the literate mentality was a consequence of, and stimulant to, the ‘new uses and forms of writing’ that appeared in this period as records were produced and retained ‘on an unprecedented scale.’³ People ‘began to think of facts not as recorded in texts but embodied in texts.’⁴ ‘Literate modes’ of thinking spread both territorially and socially.⁵ In this study I show how historiography’s cultural function—as a form of written record and artificial memory—was affected by these developments. I chart how

¹ For the ‘civil servant historians’ of the period, see Robert Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings, 1075–1225* (Oxford, 2000), 630–1.

² For the term ‘literate mentality,’ see M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1993), 185–96, a giant of a work upon whose shoulders this study precariously attempts to perch.

³ Clanchy, *Memory*, 1.

⁴ Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, 1983), 62.

⁵ Clanchy, *Memory*, 2.

historiography was penetrated by new administrative techniques, and by administrative assumptions about the written word. And I assess how historiography as a discursive genre was affected by the new generic and linguistic configurations that appeared in this period as a consequence of the spread of literacy.⁶

In doing so I offer a new perspective on the way that historical writing functioned as an institution of cultural memory in the public life of Angevin England. The story of the spread of literacy is frequently caught up in a narrative of increasing rationalization, subjective self-awareness and cognitive sophistication, and it often seems that as soon as the written word irrupted into society, writing became a passive and ephemeral vehicle of information.⁷ Scholarship's focus on the increasing importance of writing tends to neglect the oral practices and ritual performances that were still essential to the way writing worked in the late twelfth century.⁸ This study, by contrast, is attuned to the performances and norms and relationships that were formed around the written word. And it seeks to establish the *social* realm that both historical writing and literate administrative practices inhabited.⁹

It is hardly new, however, to note that the historiographical and administrative cultures of the Angevin Empire were closely related. William Stubbs was among the first to make the connection between the

⁶ See now Franz H. Bäuml, 'Varieties and Consequences of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy,' *Speculum* 55.2 (1980), 237–65 and Dennis H. Green, *The Beginnings of Medieval Romance: Fact and Fiction, 1150–1220* (Cambridge, 2002), esp. 35–54.

⁷ For a critique of the 'functional determinism' underlying this grand narrative, see Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge, 1996), 5–20.

⁸ As Coleman has forcefully argued, 'Orality was not a contaminant distracting from literacy, a superseded mentality at war with its successor, or the inert residue of an extinct modality, but a vital, functioning, accepted part of a mixed oral-literate tradition.' Coleman, *Public Reading*, 1. Coleman goes on to suggest that 'orality and literacy were functionally interacting over the whole of the Middle Ages ... "transitional" terminology persistently deflects attention away from the *mixedness of the situation*.' *Ibid.*, 19–20, my emphasis. The 'mixedness of the situation' of orality and literacy in the late twelfth century is a fundamental assumption of my study.

⁹ Cf. Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1993), 65: 'All texts, to the degree that they formed part of the oral culture of lay society or entered into it by being read aloud, enjoyed a public, collective status as vehicles through which the community reaffirmed its sense of historical identity.' Spiegel here provides another guiding principle that underlies this study, although this study is interested in ecclesiastical, as well as lay, society.

history written in late twelfth-century England and the period's administrative and constitutional developments.¹⁰ 'The same age that originated the forms in which our national and constitutional life began to mould itself,' thought Stubbs, 'was also an age of great literary activity;'¹¹ and Stubbs identified that 'great literary activity' with historical writing. R. W. Southern made broadly the same connections almost a century later. Southern emphasized the common concerns of historical writing and what he called the 'literature of secular government' written in later twelfth-century England. According to Southern, works such as the *Quadripartitus*, the *Dialogus de Scaccario* and 'Glanville' 'aspired in some degree to invest the routine of government with an intellectual generality.'¹² They ordered and codified—they rationalized—literate processes.¹³ And with their 'preoccupation with the details of government' and their compilation of administrative and diplomatic documents, thought Southern, the histories written in the same period 'show the same inspiration.'¹⁴

The inspiration shared by historians and administrators is traditionally thought to be most clearly evident in the many documents that historians of this period included in their narratives. For Antonia Gransden, who surveyed the entire corpus of medieval English historical writing, the late twelfth century was a 'golden age of historiography in England.' The 'strong interest in administrative, legal, and constitutional affairs' shown by the historians of this golden age provided part of its lustre.¹⁵ Gransden suggests that historians' administrative 'interests' had a direct and profound influence on the nature of their historical writing. This interest

¹⁰ William Stubbs, 'Learning and Literature at the Court of Henry II,' in *Seventeen Lectures on the Study of Medieval and Modern History*, ed. idem (Oxford, 1887), 136.

¹¹ For a similar sentiment, see Charles Homer Haskins, 'Henry II as a Patron of Literature,' in *Essays in Medieval History presented to Thomas Frederick Tout*, ed. A. G. Little and F. M. Powicke (Manchester, 1925), 77: '[Henry II] was first and foremost an administrator, and his clearest impression on literature is seen in the literature of administration.'

¹² R. W. Southern, 'The Place of England in the Twelfth Century Renaissance,' in *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies*, ed. idem (Oxford, 1970), 176.

¹³ For the 'rational qualities of mind' typical of administrators in this period, see Ralph V. Turner, *Men Raised from the Dust: Administrative Service and Upward Mobility in Angevin England* (Philadelphia, 1988), 10.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England I: c.550 to c.1307* (London, 1996), 219–20.

can be felt especially in the ‘number of official documents’ they included in their histories.¹⁶ Others have suggested that these documents indicated not just historians’ ‘interest’ in ‘central government’ but also their *participation* in it.¹⁷ J. C. Holt, for example, suggested that the chronicler Roger of Howden’s inclusion of the assizes of Henry II in his history represented ‘the genuine attempts of a person involved in government to record its actions.’¹⁸ And John Gillingham has suggested that Howden’s use of letters sent by those in positions of secular power lent his chronicles the complexion of ‘insider history.’¹⁹

However, the relationship between history and the written word seems both more complicated—and more significant—than the simple biographical fact of historians’ involvement in administration would allow. Historiographical discourse is more profoundly related to other written practices, meanwhile, than its use of documents alone implies. As its name suggests, historiography has long been connected with the written word. The connection has endured, in fact, almost since ancient rhetoricians first discussed history as a literary genre. Greek rhetorical theory so closely associated *suggraphē* (written composition) with *historia* (an account of human actions in time) that they became virtually synonymous.²⁰ Practical application in the ancient grammar schools strengthened this theoretical association between history and writing. The *enarratio historiarum* of the grammatical curriculum tied the study of writing (*litterae*) to the study of past events;²¹ and it made the composition

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 224.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ James C. Holt, ‘The Assizes of Henry II: The Texts,’ in *The Study of Medieval Records in Honour of Kathleen Major* ed. Donald A. Bullough and R. L. Storey (Oxford, 1971), 100. Cf. David Corner, ‘The Texts of Henry II’s Assizes,’ in *Law-Making and Law-Makers in British History: Papers Presented to the Edinburgh Legal History Conference, 1977*, ed. Alan Harding (London, 1980), 7.

¹⁹ John Gillingham, ‘Royal Newsletters, Forgeries and English Historians: Some Links Between Court and History in the Reign of Richard I,’ in *La Cour plantagenêt (1154–1204)*, ed. Martin Aurell (Poitiers, 2000), 182.

²⁰ For the process by which written narrative and history became synonymous in Greek literary theory, see Catherine Darbo-Peschanski, ‘The Origin of Historiography,’ in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, ed. John Marincola (Oxford, 2007), 1:34.

²¹ Matthew S. Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History* (Manchester, forthcoming), chapter 2. I am most grateful to Dr Kempshall for sharing his typescript with me in advance of its publication. For the *enarratio historiarum*, see e.g. Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, ed. and trans. Donald Russell, 5 vols (Cambridge, MA, 2001), 1.8.18.

of historical narrative a paradigm for written composition itself.²² History and the written word maintained their association in the grammatical curriculum as it was Christianized during Late Antiquity; and history remained affiliated with grammar throughout the Middle Ages for both practical and theoretical reasons. According to Isidore of Seville's foundational pedagogical text the *Etymologiae*, since grammar 'receives its name from letters,'²³ and since 'whatever is worthy of memory is committed to writing,' the discipline of history should be classified as grammar.²⁴ The study of historians as stylistic models declined in practice in the Middle Ages—not least because of the mistrust of pagan historians who had glorified human institutions²⁵—but the Christian reorientation of grammatical teaching towards biblical exegesis only served to re-emphasize the conceptual proximity between the written word and history. The historical and textual reality of the Incarnation demanded that historical fact and literal truth should converge in *sacra historia*. Students of the Bible, therefore, needed 'language, grammar and history in order to understand the literal sense' of scripture.²⁶ Exegetes used the terms *littera* and *historia* interchangeably as terms to describe the *fundamentum* of biblical narrative;²⁷ and by the time the exegesis of the historical sense of scripture reached its scholarly apogee in the mid- to late

²² Grammar was not, however, the exclusive domain of history in the ancient liberal arts: history writing itself was also thought to be an inherently *rhetorical* task. For an emphatic (and famous) assignation of history to oratory, see Cicero, *De Oratore*, ed. and trans. H. Rackham, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA, 1942), 2.9.36.

²³ 'Grammatica autem a litteris nomen accepit. γράμματα enim Graeci litteras vocant.' Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum sive originum: libri XX*, ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford, 1911), 1.5.1 (henceforward *Etym.*). Cf. Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana libri iv*, ed. Joseph Martin (Turnhout, 1962), 3.29.40.

²⁴ 'Haec disciplina ad grammaticam pertinet, quia quidquid dignum memoria est, litteris mandatur.' Isidore, *Etym.*, 1.41.2. Cf. Augustine, *De ordine*, ed. W. M. Green (Turnhout, 1970), 2.12.38–44, where Augustine suggests that history's written nature means that it (and whatever else is committed to writing) can be classified as grammar. In the twelfth century, John of Salisbury followed Seneca (rather than Augustine or Isidore) in assigning the study of history to the grammarian—not so much because history was a specifically written discourse, but because it taught those who read it to be good, which was also the ultimate aim of grammatical studies. John of Salisbury, *Metalogicon*, ed. J. B. Hall and K. S. B. Keats-Rohan (Turnhout, 1991), 1.22.19. Cf. Seneca, *Ad Lucilium epistulae morales* ed. Richard M. Gummere, 3 vols (Cambridge, MA, 1917–25), 88.3.

²⁵ Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, chapter 1.

²⁶ Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame, 1983), 26.

²⁷ Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture*, trans. Mark Sebanc (Edinburgh, 1998), 2:41, ff. Cf. Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, 41.

twelfth century, Hugh of St. Victor could compare the exegete's grounding in history to the grammarian's knowledge of the alphabet.²⁸

History's association with grammar, therefore, suggests an enduring affiliation with the written word, which was not forged by twelfth-century historians' personal involvement in literate bureaucracy alone. The challenge this study takes up is to determine how the long-established relationship between writing and history was affected by the changing role of the written word in wider society. It is concerned, therefore, with how historiography was perceived as a discursive genre when its erstwhile appearance of inherent truth and endurance, that it once shared with other forms of written discourse, was no longer guaranteed. For, as the use of the written word became more widespread and routine, ephemerality became a possibility. So did a literate forgetfulness: writing, which was once inherently spectacular, was becoming more commonplace.²⁹ And as literacy increased, other literary genres developed alongside historiography. These had very different commitments to truth, and constructed their own relationship with the written word very differently.

More significantly still, perhaps, the bond between historical writing and standardized literary languages was being unpicked in the late twelfth century: history was now being written down in languages previously associated principally with orality. The medieval metonymy of *littera* for written Latin, indeed, and of *grammatica* for the study of Latin texts, should not mislead us into assuming that the relationship between history and writing was confined to Latin historiography, or that in Latin historiography the relationship was at its closest. In twelfth-century

²⁸ Hugh of St. Victor, *Hugonis de Sancto Victore Didascalicon de studio legendi* ed. Charles Henry Buttmer (Washington, DC, 1939), 6.3. See Janet Coleman, *Ancient and Medieval Memories: Studies in the Reconstruction of the Past* (Cambridge, 1992), 281–5 for an analysis of the implications for historiography of Hugh's alignment of *historia* with *littera*.

²⁹ As the Egyptologist Jan Assmann has emphasized, writing becomes a 'locus of latency' when literate practices spread through society. 'It is possible,' suggests Assmann, that 'memories that have been written down can be more easily disposed of than unwritten ones... We witness the buildup of outposts of cultural memory, dumping grounds of meaning and of texts that are unread and may even have become unreadable.' Jan Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies*, translated by Rodney Livingstone (Stanford, 2006), 98–9.

England, Latin was only one of three languages—English, French and Latin—in which history was written. The long twelfth century witnessed profound changes in the relationship of these three languages to each other, and in the social valences of their use.³⁰ Most notably, the use of standardized English (Late West Saxon) as a written language of government and literature declined, and Latin was firmly established as a language of record and legal authority.³¹ French, meanwhile, became the defining sociolect of the ruling elite and a literary language³²—but it remained unstandardized, and it was not yet a language of official record or of written government (as English had been before the Conquest).³³

In the midst of this ‘riot of competing tongues,’³⁴ the enduring association between history and writing appears to have made historiography an especially productive site in which the modalities of written language could be teased out. To put it a little more strongly, historiography’s self-evident writtenness provided a space in which language could stake its claim to writing. So the *Peterborough Chronicle*, which was compiled until 1154, provides one of the last examples of written Anglo-Saxon narrative. Gaimar’s *Estoire des Engleis* (ca. 1140), on the other hand, provides one of the first examples of written French narrative to have been composed in England.³⁵ If it had been one thing to write vernacular history in pre-Conquest England in Late West Saxon—a standardized and closely

³⁰ For an overview of these developments, see Ian Short, ‘Patrons and Polyglots: French Literature in Twelfth-Century England,’ *ANS* 14 (1992), 229–49; idem, ‘On Bilingualism in Anglo-Norman England,’ *Romance Philology* 33 (1979–80), 469–79; and Thomas Hahn, ‘Early Middle English,’ in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. David Wallace (Cambridge, 1999), 63–76.

³¹ Clanchy, *Memory*, 200–1.

³² Susan Crane, ‘Anglo-Norman Cultures in England, 1066–1460,’ in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. David Wallace (Cambridge, 1999), esp. 48.

³³ For the role of written English in the government of pre-Conquest England, see especially Simon Keynes, ‘Royal Government and the Written Word in Late Anglo-Saxon England,’ in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Mediaeval Europe*, ed. Rosamund McKitterick (Cambridge, 1990), 226–57, with bibliography. Written English was not, however, entirely obliterated as a language of record, as the charters from the reign of Henry II catalogued by David Pelteret show. David Pelteret, *Catalogue of English Post-Conquest Vernacular Documents* (Woodbridge, 1990), nos. 50–5. For the ‘practical’ nature of many Old English texts written in the reign of Henry II, see Mary Swan, ‘Old English Textual Activity in the Reign of Henry II,’ in *Writers of the Reign of Henry II*, ed. Ruth Kennedy and Simon Meecham-Jones (Basingstoke, 2006), 155.

³⁴ Hahn, ‘Early Middle English,’ 65.

³⁵ See now Ian Short, ‘Gaimar et les débuts de l’historiographie en langue française,’ in *Chroniques nationales et chroniques universelles*, ed. Danielle Bushinger (Göppingen, 1990), 155–63.

regulated literary language, which also conveyed legal (and regal) authority—it was another to write in a newly-literate and non-standardized French.³⁶ A significant aim of this study's focus on the relationship between history and the written word, then, is to open up the implications of linguistic change for history as a genre, and to explore how historiography itself worked to shape assumptions about written language.

If this means that the languages *of* history will be one area of concern, the languages *around* history will be another. In practice, this means that the connections that have been habitually made between historiography and administration will need to be nuanced to take account of the dynamically multilingual nature of contemporary administrative practices. As we have seen, history's close relationship to administrative practices has been established primarily on the basis of history's use of official documents, and through historians' involvement in bureaucracy. This does not mean, however, that written practices should be associated exclusively with Latin historiography, or that French historiography should be pushed back from the realm of 'written record' into that of 'memory.' It is increasingly clear that French played a vital role in the Latinate culture of record-making in later twelfth-century England,³⁷ even if the production of records in French was not the intention of that culture.³⁸ It is likely that

³⁶ For Late West Saxon as a standardised language, see Helmut Gneuss, 'The Origin of Standard Old English and Æthelwold's School at Winchester,' *Anglo-Saxon England* 1 (1972), 63–84. For the cultural space opened up by the severance of the bond between vernacular historiography and standardized language, see Henry Bainton, 'Translating the 'English' Past: Cultural Identity in the *Estoire des Engleis*,' in *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England, c. 1150–c. 1500*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne et al. (Woodbridge, 2009), 186–7.

³⁷ French is, according to Ian Short, a 'tangible substratum' in the Latin of administrative documents. Short, 'Patrons and Polyglots,' 242. William Rothwell has highlighted the lexical influence of French and English on the administrative Latin of the period. William Rothwell, 'Language and Government in Medieval England,' *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur* 93 (1983), esp. 264.

³⁸ On Michael Clanchy's reading, the Anglo-Norman version of Magna Carta 1215 must have had 'curiosity value only' for the monks at Pont-Audemer who preserved it, since, not being written in Latin, it 'lacked the fullest legal authority.' Clanchy, *Memory*, 221. A 'curiosity' is also what George Woodbine calls the French charter of Stephen Langton recorded in the Charter Roll for 10 John. George E. Woodbine, 'The Language of English Law,' *Speculum* 18 (1943), 402, n. 2. Ian Short has suggested that the French version of Magna Carta was 'designed to facilitate oral proclamation,' and, like Clanchy, suggests its vernacularity militated against its being 'thought preferable for archival purposes to the Latin original had the latter been available concurrently at Pont-Audemer.' Ian Short,

many documents were drafted in French before being translated into Latin;³⁹ and, as William Rothwell has suggested, 'the finished products in Latin now in our archives conceal a mass of preparatory thought and debate that must have taken place in the vernacular.'⁴⁰

One consequence of the way that the vernacular has habitually been aligned with speech is that Latin—as its supposed opposite—has been associated almost exclusively with writing rather than with the performances that surrounded writing. But just as the vernacular had a role in administrative practices that is not immediately apparent from the Latin documentary record, so the rituals and performances that surrounded the use of written Latin have been obscured by the documentary record's self-evident (and apparently unproblematic) writtenness. This study's focus on the languages that surrounded written practices will be accompanied, then, by an attention to the written word's own place among the rituals and performances through which power was negotiated. Despite frequent references to such performances in Latin historical writing, Latin historiography's own relationship to the written

'The Vernacular-French Magna Carta: Some Linguistic Evidence,' *Semasia* 4 (1977), 61. For another view of the purposes of this document, see William Rothwell, 'The Role of French in Thirteenth-Century England,' *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 58.2 (1976), 446.

³⁹ Clanchy suggests that the Anglo-Norman return to the 1170 Inquest of Sheriffs must have been a draft erroneously submitted instead of a Latin fair copy, and that this document's 'chance survival' implies 'thousands of such informal documents once existed which were discarded when their usefulness was over.' Clanchy, *Memory*, 219. For the 1170 inquest return, see Helen Suggett, 'An Anglo-Norman Return to the Inquest of Sheriffs,' *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 27.1 (1942), 179–81.

⁴⁰ William Rothwell, 'The Trial Scene in "Lanval" and the Development of the Legal Register in Anglo-Norman,' *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 101.1 (2000), 26. This point is also made by Legge, albeit for different reasons: 'French was naturally the language of clerks, and became therefore the language of law and administration and of the Church... The indication is that clerks were talking Anglo-Norman even if most of their work was recorded in Latin.' M. Dominica Legge, 'Anglo-Norman as a Spoken Language,' *ANS* 2 (1979), 113. Were administrative records such as the Pipe Rolls to be studied in way analogous to Laura Wright's scrutiny of later medieval business writing, the vernacularity of the 'preliminary thought' of record-making would become more apparent still (not least because the records of the Exchequer also make use of the abbreviation and suspension system which 'facilitates the mapping of one language onto another.') See Laura C. Wright, 'Mixed-Language Business Writing: Five Hundred Years of Code-Switching,' in *Language Change: Advances in Historical Sociolinguistics*, ed. Ernst Håkon Jahr (Berlin, 1997), 100. For further discussion of how 'medieval abbreviation and suspension signs may hide a linguistically salient feature of a text,' see eadem, 'Bills, Accounts, Inventories: Everyday Trilingual Activities in the Business World of Later Medieval England,' in *Multilingualism in Later Medieval Britain*, ed. David A. Trotter (Cambridge, 2000), 150–4.

word has not been considered in relation to the performances it describes. This is surprising, because many such references occur in histories that also reproduce documents within their narratives. And while the complexities of historical *narrative* have been recognised, the written word itself is often portrayed as being fundamentally *stable* in its modes of operation, and consistent in its effects on both historiographical discourse and on wider society. Whether it is the 'official document' inserted in a chronicle by a secular historian, the charter in monastic historical writing, or the 'documentary evidence' that is assumed to be so essential for establishing the veracity of historiographical discourse, not only do those manoeuvres appear to be unproblematic, but the non-narrative texts themselves always appear the silent partners, self-evident in their functions and, compared to the narrative itself, characterized by a remarkable passivity. Put another way, although it is now fairly common to approach medieval historiographical texts themselves in terms of their social logic and to acknowledge their social function,⁴¹ there has not been a similar eagerness to investigate the social logic, and social functions, of the texts with which historiography shared textual (and intertextual) relations.

Historiography, for example, is thought to have played a practical, legalistic role in maintaining the security of land ownership and in the upholding of seigneurial rights. These roles for historical writing have been suggested largely by analogy with the development of monastic cartularies, many of which were being compiled in this very period. However, there appears to have been little attempt to establish when, how—or indeed if—these histories were read for such purposes, nor when they were produced in a court of law and with what effect. This is all the more surprising given Patrick Geary's and Katherine Uge's insistence (albeit an insistence about the early middle ages) that cartularies themselves were rarely (if ever) used in a legal context but rather served a primarily commemorative, memorial and liturgical function within the

⁴¹ Seminal in this respect is Gabrielle M. Spiegel, 'History, Historicism and the Social Logic of the Text,' in *The Past as Text*, ed. eadem (Baltimore, 1997), 3–28.

communities that produced them.⁴² And even if that legal function were to be granted, there appears to have been very little recognition of John Hudson's suggestion that, despite their increasingly 'rationalized' procedures, courts were 'not just judicial but also social meetings.'⁴³ 'The close connection between, and indeed the continuity between, legal and other activities must be emphasized,' suggests Hudson.⁴⁴ This being the case, it must surely also be accepted that in such meetings and in the course of such activities the written word would have played a role as both *product and site* of social interaction; it was not a mere material adjunct to it. To this end, Brigitte Bedos-Rezak has encouraged medievalists to approach the charter 'as an agent for the structuring of society,'⁴⁵ whose permanence inhered 'not in the stability of the written medium but in the very social relationships that were created, maintained and continued to operate throughout the ongoing negotiations surrounding titles to land revenues.'⁴⁶

If we accept that documents were both an instrument and product of *social* processes, then that sociability must be read back into the histories that made use of them. So if the giving of charters created relationships, for

⁴² See now Katherine Ugé, *Creating the Monastic Past in Medieval Flanders* (Woodbridge, 2005), 14, and Patrick J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, 1994), 86, ff. Sarah Foot has also stressed the importance of the 'highly visible rituals' needed 'to make the validity of the written word apparent to the laity' in the granting of charters, and has emphasized the *mnemonic* function of charters in recalling this ritual. Sarah Foot, 'Reading Anglo-Saxon Charters: Memory, Record or Story?,' in *Narrative and History in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Elizabeth M. Tyler and Ross Balzaretto (Turnhout, 2006), 49. The liturgical and memorial possibilities of reading histories in the twelfth century are, however, suggested by Roger D. Ray, 'Orderic Vitalis and his Readers,' *Studia monastica* 14 (1972), 17–33, and in Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, 3rd ed. (New York, 1982), 155–66. Clanchy avoids the slightly reductive approach of what one might term the defensive hypothesis: 'the fact that most monastic charters and chronicles are exclusively concerned with property rights and worldly events does not invalidate the rule that their makers had a religious purpose.' Clanchy, *Memory*, 146.

⁴³ John Hudson, *The Formation of the English Common Law: Law and Society in England from the Norman Conquest to Magna Carta* (London, 1996), 25. Paul Hyams has insisted that legal historians' explanations of charters should be 'consistent not merely with the social relations that produced the charters, but also with the mental terms in which they were thought out and interpreted, their legal context.' Paul Hyams, 'Warranty and Good Lordship in Twelfth-Century England,' *Law and History Review* 5 (1987), 438.

⁴⁴ John Hudson, *Land, Law, and Lordship in Anglo-Norman England* (Oxford, 1994), 2.

⁴⁵ Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, 'Diplomatic Sources and Medieval Documentary Practices: An Essay in Interpretative Methodology,' in *The Past and Future of Medieval Studies*, ed. John van Engen (Notre Dame, 1994), 321.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 323.

example, we need to establish how those relationships were affected (if indeed they could continue to operate) if that charter was rewritten as history or incorporated into historical narrative. Conversely, we need to ask how exactly the allegiances and points of view of historiographical texts were affected by the allegiances and points of view of their documentary intertexts. How were the respective purposes of histories and their documents affected by each other?

Similar questions must be asked of the historical narratives written by 'secular' historians who used 'official documents' in their histories; and those documents should be approached in a manner similar to that suggested by Bedos-Rezak for charters. The most usual way of approaching such documents, however, has been to establish a rather superficial and unproblematically causal connection between text and context, or between a chronicler's life and his historiographical work. This has involved, first of all, positing a link between a chronicler's administrative work and the chronicle he produced, usually judging that chronicler's administrative 'interests' by the type of written material included in the chronicle.⁴⁷ An assessment is then often made of his reliability as a historian on the basis of the authenticity of the documents inserted (an authenticity that appears to increase in proportion to his closeness to the centre of government).⁴⁸ Such an approach assumes that documents were used in later twelfth-century administration as passive vessels of written communication, whose significance was neatly coterminous with the information they conveyed; and it assumes, furthermore, that twelfth-century historians who were also administrators

⁴⁷ For Southern, for example, Roger of Howden's administrative work maps neatly onto the 'heartless records of government service' contained in his historical work. R. W. Southern, 'England's First Entry into Europe,' in *Medieval Humanism*, ed. idem, 151. See Frank Barlow, 'Roger of Howden,' *EHR* 65.256 (1950), 358, for the view that 'the chronicler shows considerable interest in the laws of England' on the basis that 'a valuable collection of legal material ... is inserted in one manuscript.' Cf. Gransden, *Historical Writing I*, 224: 'Interest in the central government is shown by the number of official documents in the chronicle [of "Benedict of Peterborough"].'

⁴⁸ Richardson and Sayles, for example, directed a suspicious glare at Roger of Howden's historical writing, because they considered him 'incapable of distinguishing between authentic legislative instruments and apocryphal enactments' (although the real target, no doubt, was William Stubbs, Howden's editor, their *bête noire*). See H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles, *The Governance of Mediaeval England from the Conquest to Magna Carta* (Edinburgh, 1963), 448.

shared this view of the way that documents convey information. Pushed to their logical conclusions, these assumptions combine to suggest that twelfth-century historians shared many modern historians' conviction that documents themselves can be used to illustrate faithfully the history of the institution that created them.⁴⁹

This study insists, then, on the need to reconstruct the broader contemporary resonances of the uses of the written word. If Bedos-Rezak is correct in suggesting that charters should be approached as active agents in the structuring of society, and John Hudson's perspective on the social nature of the occasions in which legal documents were used is sound, then surely the same must be true of many other categories of document. Indeed, from the law-code or assize to the humble writ (the administrative document par excellence of this period), the defining characteristic of medieval 'governmental' documents was their performativity: whether ordering, forbidding, or promising, they exerted an illocutionary force implicit in their very existence. Rather than merely exemplifying facts, in other words, documents *did* things: they were speech-acts manifested in a physical form. Moreover, not only were such documents performative in function, but the enactment or execution of that function generally involved some kind of performance, in which a letter might be read in public, a charter might be placed on an altar, or a writ exhibited in a court of law. On this basis alone it can be argued that such documents did not so much *illustrate* transactions as themselves form part of those transactions; and the possibility is also raised that those who dealt with such documents as administrators were parties to such transactions.

The extent to which historiographical texts and their administering authors *had an interest in government*, rather than just being 'interested' in it—and the extent to which they had a related interest in presenting history's relationship with the written word in a particular way—have

⁴⁹ Cf. Holt's comments, above n. 18.

thus gone largely unexplored.⁵⁰ This study will attempt to redress this through exploring historical writing's own awareness of the transactional nature of the written word. It will therefore ask not only how administrator-historians obtained documents in order to illustrate their histories, but also what they were themselves doing in reproducing them; and the focus will not only fall on the reproduction of documents but also on how historians represented the performance of documentary practices (to which they seem highly attuned). The study will therefore focus not only on the *presence* of charters, letters and laws in histories, but also on their social meaning; and it will be as concerned with historical narrative's presentation of their donation, delivery and enactment as it will with the documents themselves.

Scope

The first chapter explores how, why, and with what effects the administrator-historians of the Angevin Empire reproduced documents (including letters, laws and charters) within their histories. The histories under discussion are those which are most often noted for their use of documents, and which were written by the chroniclers most often noted for their involvement in government. Ralph de Diceto, author of the *Abbreviationes chronicorum* and the *Ymagines historiarum*,⁵¹ was archdeacon of Middlesex, and so responsible for much diocesan administration.⁵² He commissioned a detailed written survey of churches in the diocese,⁵³ and at his death he donated to the chapter of St. Paul's a martyrology containing copies of its charters.⁵⁴ Roger of Howden was a *soi-disant*

⁵⁰ Peter Haidu has emphasized the way that government has an interest in producing evidence of its own existence: 'As governance is institutionalized through bureaucratization and administration ... its dependency on literacy expands: literacy incites both governance and its evidence.' Peter Haidu, *The Subject Medieval/Modern: Text and Governance in the Middle Ages* (Stanford, 2004), 155.

⁵¹ *Radulfi de Diceto decani Landoniensi opera Historica*, ed. William Stubbs, 2 vols (London, 1876). Henceforward Diceto, *Opera*.

⁵² Diana E. Greenway, ed., *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1066–1300: Volume 1: St. Paul's London* (London, 2005), 14–17. For the role of archdeacons in diocesan administration, see Christopher R. Cheney, *English Bishops' Chanceries, 1100–1250* (Manchester, 1950), 8.

⁵³ *The Domesday of St. Pauls of the Year MCCXXII*, ed. W. H. Hale (London, 1868), 109–17.

⁵⁴ Dean of London Ralph Baldock surveyed the cathedral's treasures in 1295, noting among Diceto's bequests 'aliud martylogium [*sic*] ejusdem quod incipit "ego Theodricus" et postea intitulatur nomine ejusdem in sexto folio a dextra noviori litera; et

clericus regis, sometime justice of the royal forest, and a diplomatic envoy.⁵⁵ His two chronicles, the *Gesta regis Henrici secundi* and the *Chronica*,⁵⁶ are so packed with documents they have been described as reading ‘more like a register than a literary work.’⁵⁷ The chronicles written by Howden and Diceto will be the chapter’s central concern, but Gervase of Canterbury’s chronicle,⁵⁸ which also makes considerable use of documentary material, will also be explored. Gervase’s chronicle provides a monastic perspective, and enables a direct comparison between monastic, ecclesiastical and ‘secular’ attitudes towards the written word. The chapter provides a broad survey of the type of document reproduced, and works to situate historical writing within a typology of documentary practices. It approaches the documents used by historians from the starting point of their three-dimensional sociability—and suggests that rather than being ‘official history’ that used ‘official documents,’ these histories were deeply involved in the construction of the relationships and norms that underpinned the public life of an increasingly literate society.

The next chapter goes on to consider the textual and literary implications of the reproduction of documents in historical narrative. It asks what— from a theoretical perspective—reproduction, quotation and *imitatio* meant, what they meant in the context of medieval historical narrative,

post incipit “in nomine Domini nostri” in cartis concessis terrarum et in capellam decani.’ Diceto, *Opera*, 1: lxx–i, n. 2.

⁵⁵ Howden’s career was first studied in detail by Barlow, ‘Roger of Howden,’ and subsequently by Doris M. Stenton, ‘Roger of Howden and Benedict,’ *EHR* 68.269 (1953), 577–82. The definitive study is now David Corner, ‘The *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi* and *Chronica* of Roger, Parson of Howden,’ *BIHR* 56 (1983), 133–44. For Howden’s diplomatic work, see John Gillingham, ‘The Travels of Roger of Howden and his Views of the Irish, Scots and Welsh,’ in *The English in the Twelfth Century: Imperialism, Nationalism and Political Values*, ed. John Gillingham (Woodbridge, 2000), 69–91; for a comprehensive view of his career, see idem, ‘Writing the Biography of Roger of Howden, King’s Clerk and Chronicler,’ in *Writing Medieval Biography, 750–1250: Essays in Honour of Professor Frank Barlow*, ed. David Bates, Julia Crick, and Sarah Hamilton (Woodbridge, 2006), 207–20.

⁵⁶ Roger of Howden, *Gesta regis Henrici secundi Benedicti abbatis: The Chronicle of the Reigns of Henry II and Richard I, A.D. 1169–1192*, ed. William Stubbs, 2 vols (London, 1867); Roger of Howden, *Chronica magistri Rogeri de Houedene*, ed. William Stubbs, 4 vols (London, 1868–71). Henceforward Howden, *Gesta* and Howden, *Chronica*. Antonia Gransden is alone among recent historians in rejecting the case Stenton made (in ‘Roger of Howden and Benedict’) for Roger of Howden’s authorship of both the *Gesta* and the *Chronica*. Gransden, *Historical Writing I*, 225–30. David Corner’s research, published after the first edition of Gransden’s survey, has since put the matter beyond doubt. See above, n. 55.

⁵⁷ Gransden, *Historical Writing I*, 224.

⁵⁸ Gervase of Canterbury, *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury*, ed. William Stubbs, 2 vols (London, 1879–80). Henceforward Gervase, *Historical Works*.

and why historical narrative made use of such devices. To the texts explored in the previous chapter are added two accounts of Becket's life and death: the *Vita* of Becket written by William FitzStephen (fl. 1162–1174),⁵⁹ and the *Historia* written by Herbert of Bosham (d. ca. 1194).⁶⁰ Bosham and FitzStephen clearly articulate the relationship between Becket's collected letters and their narratives of his life. They show, furthermore, that the documents included in historical narratives could be very different from the 'official records' reproduced by Howden and Diceto in their chronicles. Along with those who collected, compiled and published Becket's letters, Becket's biographers contributed to the propagation of Becket's cult—one of the most remarkable projects of cultural memory of any era. Becket's biographies, therefore, are highly conscious of the ways in which narratives and documents could work together to tell stories about the past—and to their own role in combining them. The role of textual reproduction in constructing cultural memory is a key concern of this chapter, and it compares the quotational strategies of those writing history with the 'chancery' practices that used textual reproduction in order to have important cultural information remembered. It suggests that, while historiographical and bureaucratic forms of quotation were used for distinct purposes, they nevertheless share significant similarities.

The fourth chapter provides a tentative reconstruction of the rhetorical framework within which later twelfth-century historians worked. It takes John of Salisbury's *Historia pontificalis* as a case study,⁶¹ and compares the *Historia's* conceptualization of the relationship between history and the written word with his analysis of the written word in the *Metalogicon* (his treatise on the liberal arts). It focuses especially on the role that John gave to history in making sense of the *dicta* and *facta* and *scripta* of the past.

⁵⁹ William FitzStephen, *Vita Sancti Thomae Cantuariensis archiepiscopi et martyris*, ed. James C. Robertson, *Materials for the history of [Thomas] Becket* 3:1–154. Henceforward FitzStephen, *Vita*.

⁶⁰ Herbert of Bosham, *Vita Sancti Thomae archiepiscopi et martyris*, ed. James C. Robertson, *MTB* 3:155–534. Henceforward Bosham, *Vita*. For reasons we explore below, Bosham himself always refers to this work as a *historia*.

⁶¹ *John of Salisbury's Historia pontificalis*, edited by Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford, 1986). Henceforward *HP*.

Although medieval writers of history are often thought to lack a truly historical consciousness—or a sense of the ‘pastness of the past’—John of Salisbury’s view of history shows how important in fact a sense of the past was to contemporary administrative practices. In exploring these problems, the chapter investigates the way that the ‘rise of the literate mentality’ affected literary theories. And it also explores how historical writing was actively involved in theorizing the implications of developments in literate technology.

In the fifth chapter, the focus of the study shifts from predominantly internal and textual concerns to the cultural and linguistic context in which history was written. It offers readings from a number of the texts already introduced—together with Richard FitzNeal’s *Dialogus de Scaccario*, a normative and highly rhetorical manual teaching the inner workings of the Exchequer. By closely reading the way that chronicles represented the performance of documentary practices—the donation of charters, the reading of letters, the promulgation of laws and the public creation of records—the chapter suggests that the written word was experienced in this period as both a more public and a more social phenomenon than it is usually considered to have been. Rather than positing a narrowly biographical connection between administrative practices and the history produced by administrators, or between histories and the ‘official documents’ they reproduced, this chapter suggests that histories themselves presented a normative picture of the way in which the written word should be used for social and political purposes.

The final chapter maintains this theme, but it focuses on the way that historiography’s concern with the written word was affected by the languages in which history was written. By treating linguistic and sociolinguistic concerns separately from the other questions we explore in this study, we are not claiming that languages occupy a discrete cultural space of their own. Nor, by approaching linguistic questions last of all, are we suggesting that they are in any sense secondary, or pose problems ancillary to the other problems this study addresses. But by treating linguistic and sociolinguistic problems towards the study’s end, we are able to approach the issues that we have surveyed earlier in the study in a

different light. We are able, furthermore, to use insights from earlier parts of the study to challenge the way that the language of historical writing has frequently been used to assign it specific cultural functions. The chapter challenges in particular the way in which vernacular historical writing is often associated more with orality and performance than with writtenness and functionality. As a counterpoint to the previous chapter's emphasis on the performativity of Latin historiographical and documentary practices, this chapter underscores the relationship between French and writing. French historical writing emerges to be as deeply concerned with the way that the written word structured social relationships as the Latin texts we investigate earlier in the study. And it shows that history written in French, like history written in Latin, could work to influence the way people behaved with respect to the written word. It shows, above all, that both Latin and French historical writing could make fundamental contributions to the idealization and regulation of public life in a literate society.

History and documents

Seeking evidence to prove his historical right to rule Scotland, in 1291 Edward I demanded that English monasteries should search their ‘chronicles, registers and every other *secreta*, both ancient and current, of whatever shape or date,’ in order to find it.¹ For Michael Clanchy, this episode is striking primarily because it shows not only that the evidence Edward sought was of the written variety, but because Edward had ‘made no attempt at first to search the royal records’ to find it.² Even a century after royal records had begun to be kept centrally, there was still no instinct actually to use those records, despite the controlled efficiency with which they were made.³ The episode demonstrates for Clanchy, furthermore, that those searching the records had no developed sense of textual criticism: their results were ‘scrappy and unsatisfactory,’ and the treaty of Falaise of 1174 which they recovered ‘was cited from a monastic chronicle, whereas more accurate transcripts were to be found both in the Red Book and the Little Black Book of the Exchequer.’⁴

Three complementary points can be made about this episode. Firstly, the storage media that Edward ordered to be searched are as remarkable as their wide dispersal. Edward’s edict mentions chronicles, registers and *secreta*—whatever exactly the latter may be—in the same breath, and in that order. It is as if chronicles and archives were thought to belong to the

¹ ‘Mandavimus quod ... diligenter scrutari faceretis ... cronica vestra, registra et alia secreta vestra singula, tam novissima quam antiqua, cujuscumque formae dataeve fuerint.’ Joseph Stevenson, ed. *Documents Illustrative of the History of Scotland, 1286–1306*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1870), 1:222.

² Clanchy, *Memory*, 152–3; cf. E. L. G. Stones, ed., *Anglo-Scottish Relations, 1174–1328: Some Selected Documents* (Oxford, 1970), 2–3.

³ Bernard Guenée, who has studied Edward’s historical survey in the greatest depth, emphasizes the lack of a centralised *historiographical* (rather than archival) project in England in this period. Had Philip IV (of France) demanded a similar survey, Guenée suggests, all he needed do would be to send his agents to Saint Denis, where they would have found everything they needed in the *Grandes chroniques de France*. See Bernard Guenée, ‘L’Enquête historique ordonnée par Édouard Ier, roi d’Angleterre, en 1291,’ *Comptes-rendus des séances de l’Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 194.4 (1975), 576.

⁴ Clanchy, *Memory*, 153.

same class of thing, and that both were thought equally likely to preserve written records. The second point is that those searching the records worked under a very different concept of textual authority to that of the modern diplomatist. For those searching the records, *auctoritas* did not reside in the best text—the closest to originality or authenticity—but rather with the weightiest;⁵ and, in cultural terms, chronicles were weighty indeed, textual infidelities and all.

The third point to be made about this episode, and perhaps the most striking thing about it, concerns what happened next. Once the search had turned up the copy of the treaty of Falaise, which proved Edward's historical right to rule Scotland, Edward wrote to the dean and chapter of St. Paul's ordering them that they have this noted (*faciatis annotari*) in their chronicles.⁶ The dean and chapter took Edward's demand remarkably literally. They did not, as might be expected, note the *fact* of Edward's triumph in the narrative of their chronicles; instead, they transcribed the *letter announcing it* onto a blank leaf of one of those chronicles' codices.⁷ The codex was that of Ralph de Diceto's chronicle—which itself reproduced a copy of the same treaty of Falaise (which was so important in securing Edward's claim to Scotland) under its annal for 1174.

The episode lays bare, then, the complicated relationship between historical writing and the written word—the relationship that lies at the heart of this study. It reveals a wonderfully circular and mutually reinforcing process whereby documentary proof of a historical right was found transcribed in one chronicle, the right established on the basis of

⁵ For a recent assessment of documentary authenticity and *auctoritas*, see Giovanna Nicolaj, 'Originale, authenticum, publicum: una sciarada per il documento diplomatico,' in *Charters, Cartularies, and Archives: The Preservation and Transmission of Documents in the Medieval West*, ed. Adam J. Kostó and Anders Winroth (Toronto, 2002), 8–21.

⁶ 'Mittimus vobis ... transcripta quarundam litterarum quae in thesauraria nostra resident, tenorem qui sequitur continentes ... Unde vobis mandamus quod eadem faciatis in cronicis vestris ad perpetuam rei gestae memoriam annotari.' (We are sending you transcripts of certain letters which lie in our treasury, whose contents include the following... Therefore we order that you have them noted in your chronicles for the perpetual remembrance of the matter.) Diceto, *Opera*, 1:286–7, n. 3. For the *tenor* of a document, see below, chapter 5.

⁷ Or, to be precise, the letter containing the transcripts of the letters announcing Edward's claim to Scotland. This distinction is marked in Edward's letter, with the letter to St. Pauls being written in Latin, and the original letters announcing Edward's claim being written in French.

that proof re-framed and circulated via another form of document, before that second document was transcribed into a further work of history (which itself already had a transcript of the original document embedded within its narrative).⁸ The aim of this chapter is to establish what it was about historical narrative that made it work in such close association with documentary forms of discourse. Why did Ralph de Diceto and other chroniclers include the treaty of Falaise in their chronicles in the first place? And why did Edward I and his agents look to histories both to establish legal claims and to provide documentary proof for them?

The complex symbiosis between historical narrative and documents has long been recognized, and Jean-Philippe Genêt and Bernard Guenée have both associated it especially with the historical writing of medieval England.⁹ Although the practice of inserting documents into historical narrative has been associated most commonly with Matthew Paris and his successors, it has a long history in the history of English historical writing, stretching back to Bede via Eadmer and William of Malmesbury among others.¹⁰ Despite the emphasis that Guenée and Genêt have placed on the Englishness of the practice, it had biblical, classical and patristic precedent. The Bible combines historical narrative and prophecy with legislation and letters.¹¹ Sallust and Eusebius had both used documents in

⁸ Diceto, *Opera*, 1:396–7.

⁹ Jean-Philippe Genêt, 'Cartulaires, registres et histoire: l'exemple anglais,' in *Le métier d'historien au moyen âge: Études sur l'historiographie médiévale*, ed. Bernard Guenée (Paris, 1977), 111: 'Le document occupe chez les historiens médiévaux anglais une place considérable.' (Documents occupy a prominent [historiographical] place among medieval English historians.) Cf. Bernard Guenée, 'Documents insérés et documents abrégés dans la chronique du Religieux de Saint Denis,' *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 152 (1994), 376: 'En Angleterre, récit et documents sont liés par une très forte tradition.' (In [medieval] England, narrative and documents are linked by a very strong tradition.)

¹⁰ Bede used the correspondence of Gregory the Great (and others) in his *Historia ecclesiastica* (*Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1992): see, for example, 1.28–32, 2.4, 2.10–11, 2.18. For Bede's use of Gregory's letters see Paul Meyvaert, 'The *Registrum* of Gregory the Great and Bede,' *Revue Bénédictine* 80 (1970), 162–66). Eadmer made extensive use of Anselm's correspondence in his *Historia novorum*, for which see Gransden, *Historical Writing I*, 139–40. For William of Malmesbury's use of charters, see Julia Barrow, 'William of Malmesbury's Use of Charters,' in *Narrative and History in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Elizabeth M. Tyler and Ross Balzaretto (Turnhout, 2006), 67–85.

¹¹ The combination of legislation and narrative is most apparent in the Pentateuch. The two books of Maccabees are notable for the way they combine historical narrative with letters. See, e.g. 1 Maccabees 10:25–45, *ibid.*, 11:29–37; 2 Maccabees 1:1–11.

their historical works,¹² and the form of Eusebius's *Historia ecclesiastica* may well have inspired Bede to include documents in his own ecclesiastical history. Meanwhile, the fact that (notarial) documents were routinely incorporated within historical narrative in Italian civic historiography from the twelfth century onwards militates against viewing this practice as an exclusively insular phenomenon.¹³

These diachronic and geographical connections notwithstanding, however, the practice of inserting documents into historical narrative is especially marked in the English historical writing of the late twelfth century; and the practice is especially conspicuous in the historical works of Roger of Howden and Ralph de Diceto, whose historical works are the principal focus of this chapter. The practice can also be found in the historical works of their contemporaries Gervase of Canterbury (d. ca. 1210) and Gerald de Barri (d. 1220x23); and it is evident, to a lesser extent, in the histories written by Ralph of Coggeshall (fl. 1207–26), William of Newburgh (d. ca. 1198) and Richard of Devizes (d. ca. 1200). Although the practice in England has often been noted, its twelfth century manifestation has not been closely studied—and it has certainly not received the kind of scholarly attention paid to the corresponding practice

¹² According to Sallust, the failure of the Catilinarian conspiracy was precipitated by the interception of an incriminating letter, an 'exemplum' of which Sallust includes in his *Bellum Catilinae*. See *Sallust's Bellum Catilinae*, ed. John T. Ramsey (Oxford, 2007), 34.2–35.6 and 44.4–6. (For Sallust's profound influence on medieval historical writing, see Beryl Smalley, 'Sallust in the Middle Ages,' in *Classical Influences on European Culture AD 500–1500*, ed. R. R. Bolgar (Cambridge, 1971), 165–75.) For the relatively minor role played by documents in classical historiography more generally, see Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1990), 66–7. Cf. P. J. Rhodes, 'Documents and the Greek Historian,' in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Historiography*, ed. John Marincola (Oxford, 2007), 1:56–66. For Eusebius' use of documents, see A. H. M. Jones, 'Notes on the Genuineness of the Constantinian Documents in Eusebius' Life of Constantine,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 5 (1954); and Momigliano, *Classical Foundations*, 140–2.

¹³ For Falco of Benevento's chronicle, see Marino Zabbia, 'Écriture historique et culture documentaire: La Chronique de Falco Beneventano (première moitié du XIIe siècle),' *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 159 (2001), 369–88. For the *Chronicon Casauriense*, see Graham A. Loud, 'Monastic Chronicles in the Twelfth-Century Abruzzi,' *ANS* 27 (2005), 101–31; for Genoese chronicles, see Girolamo Arnaldi, 'Il Notaio-cronista e le cronache cittadine in Italia,' in *La Storia del diritto nel quadro delle scienze storiche* (Florence, 1966), 293–309 and Frank Schweppenstette, 'City Chronicles,' in *Transforming the Medieval World: Uses of Pragmatic Literacy in the Middle Ages*, ed. Franz-Josef Arlinghaus et al. (Turnhout, 2006), 127–49. For the Romagna, see Gherardo Ortalli, 'Aspetti e motivi di cronachistica romagnola,' *Studi romagnoli* 24 (1976 [for 1973]), 349–87.

in Italy, for example, during the same period.¹⁴ Genêt has provided only a broad overview for the later Middle Ages,¹⁵ and Hans-Eberhard Hilpert's study of Matthew Paris's use of papal and imperial letters pays little attention to his predecessors.¹⁶ Where direct scholarly attention *has* been paid to English historical writing's use of documents, there has been little attempt to situate that use within the context of other twelfth-century literate practices, other than in the most general terms.¹⁷

By contrast with studies of secular historians such as Diceto and Howden, studies of monastic historical writing have made more concerted efforts to connect its form (and especially its use of documents) to the literate practices of the culture that produced it. Being a product of the monastic *scriptorium*, monastic historiography is frequently considered to have developed hand-in-hand with the drawing up of charters and the making of cartularies.¹⁸ The alignment between archival and historiographical activity has fostered a characterization of monastic historical writing as a fundamentally defensive and 'sternly practical' activity,¹⁹ undertaken by monks to protect their material and ideological interests in response to crises.²⁰ But while some histories written in the monasteries of the

¹⁴ See n. 18, p. 4, above.

¹⁵ Genêt, 'Cartulaires, registres et histoire: l'exemple anglais,' 95–138.

¹⁶ Hans-Eberhard Hilpert, *Kaiser- und Papstbriefe in den Chronica majora des Matthaeus Paris* (Stuttgart, 1981). The tradition of using letters in earlier chronicles is mentioned (9–12), but its history is not explored in any depth.

¹⁷ See e.g. Gransden, *Historical Writing I*, 224–36, Clanchy, *Memory*, 100–1.

¹⁸ This scholarly trend focuses on the earlier middle ages, and not on England specifically. Marjorie Chibnall, for example, has suggested that 'to speak of "archive" as distinct from "narrative" sources in any part of northwest Europe during the eleventh century is something of an anachronism... Contemporaries saw no sharp distinction between them and they interpenetrated one another... History and charters might at times be composed by the same men and in much the same language.' Marjorie Chibnall, 'Charter and Chronicle: the Use of Archive Sources by Norman Historians,' in *Church and Government in the Middle Ages*, ed. Christopher Brooke et al. (Cambridge, 1976), 1. Other studies of cartularies and historiography in high medieval Europe include Patrick J. Geary, 'Entre gestion et gesta: aux origines des cartulaires,' in *Les Cartulaires: Actes de la table ronde organisée par l'École nationale des chartes et le G.D.R. 121 du C.N.R.S.*, ed. Olivier Guyotjeannin, Laurent Morelle, and Michel Parisse (Paris, 1993), esp. 13–26; Dominique Iogna-Prat, 'La confection des cartulaires et l'historiographie à Cluny (XIe–XIIe siècles),' in *Les Cartulaires*, ed. Guyotjeannin et al., 27–44; Trevor Foulds, 'Medieval Cartularies,' *Archives* 18.77 (1987), esp. 11–15; and Georges Declercq, 'Originals and Cartularies: The Organization of Archival Memory,' in *Charters and the Use of the Written Word in Medieval Society*, ed. Karl Heidecker (Turnhout, 2006), 147.

¹⁹ R. W. Southern, 'Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: IV. The Sense of the Past,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 23 (1973), 249.

²⁰ The crisis par excellence in England was that of the Conquest (as it always is); it is to the Conquest that Southern attributes the monastic 'historical revival' in England of the

Angevin Empire undoubtedly did share structural similarities with cartularies—and were written in moments of material crisis—other monastic histories written in this period made use of documents *not* directly connected with their *scriptoria* or with their corporate survival. So although Gervase of Canterbury included many copies of papal mandates concerning the rights of Christ Church cathedral priory in his chronicle, he also included a copy of Henry II's will and the articles constituting Henry II's 1177 Inquest of sheriffs.²¹ Little account, though, has been taken of the ways in which 'monastic' literate practices interacted with, and were affected by, the 'literate mentality' diffusing through the world surrounding twelfth-century English monasteries.²² And while the defensive model posited for monastic historiography's use of documents works well enough for corporations with well-defined institutional needs, it is much less clear whose interests were being defended by the kind of documents reproduced by Howden or Diceto.

In historical studies, twelfth-century English historians' use of documents has most frequently been addressed in the course of discussions about their usefulness and reliability for the modern historian.²³ One scholarly

1080s (*ibid.*, 246; cf. Nancy F. Partner, *Serious Entertainments: The Writing of History in Twelfth-Century England* (Chicago, 1977), 5). Jean Blacker also suggested that Latin histories were 'in part written to support the legal claims of monasteries' (Jean Blacker, *The Faces of Time: Portrayal of the Past in Old French and Latin Historical Narrative of the Anglo-Norman Regnum* (Austin, 1994), 134). Leah Shopkow suggests that Norman monks wrote histories to 'safeguard their property, their authority and their privileges' (Leah Shopkow, *History and Community: Norman Historical Writing in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Washington, DC, 1997), 53). Monika Otter suggests that 'it was chiefly quarrels over land, privileges, or status ... that prompted local historiography' in the later twelfth century (Monika Otter, *Inventiones: Fiction and Referentiality in Twelfth-Century English Historical Writing* (Chapel Hill and London, 1996), 22). Bernard Guenée has also suggested that monasteries commissioned histories 'pour défendre leurs droits' and for 'aider l'avocat.' Bernard Guenée, *Histoire et culture historique dans l'Occident médiéval* (Paris, 1980), 94.

²¹ For Henry's will, see Gervase, *Historical Works*, 1:298–300; for the Inquest of Sheriffs, see *ibid.*, 1:217–19.

²² The involvement of monasteries with the world, and the role of writing in that involvement, is evident (for example) in Jocelin of Brakelond's *Chronicle* (which comes to a close in 1202, a year later than the histories written by Howden and Diceto). Abbot Samson of Bury St. Edmunds is portrayed in the *Chronicle* as a consummate feudal administrator, complete with a *kalendarium* of the Abbey's estates and debts, which he *cotidie inspexit*. *Cronica Jocelini de Brakelonda de rebus gestis Samsonis Abbatis Monasterii Sancti Edmundi*, ed. and trans. H. E. Butler (London, 1949), 28–9.

²³ See, for example Richardson and Sayles, *Governance*, 448, who condemn Howden as 'incapable of distinguishing between authentic legislative instruments and apocryphal enactments,' in the same breath as condemning him as a historian. Cf. Corner, 'Gesta Regis,' 131.

trend to have considered the practice, for example, treats it as the phenomenon responsible for the fortuitous preservation of historical evidence in documentary form, which would not otherwise have been transmitted to posterity.²⁴ For modern historians who prefer 'record evidence' to that of 'chronicle evidence,' medieval chroniclers' use of documents apparently redeems the chronicles as sources for history; and for such historians it is primarily in their documents that the chronicles' historical value lies. (The reliability of the picture painted by those documents remains subject to a positive assessment of the personal authority of the chronicler himself, however.)²⁵ John Gillingham has recently attacked this approach, arguing that the twentieth-century mining of Howden's chronicles, first for facts and then for documents, has left them 'looking worthy but dull.'²⁶ But then to use such histories to argue for 'chronicle evidence' over 'record evidence' perpetuates a perspective which keeps documents on the one hand, and historical narrative on the other, locked in mutual opposition (rather than exploring how they work together and are informed by one another).²⁷

²⁴ This is particularly true of the texts of the assizes of Henry II, which are only known from their transmission in Roger of Howden's chronicle. See now Holt, 'Assizes of Henry II,' 85–106, and Corner, 'The Texts of Henry II's Assizes,' 7–20.

²⁵ Anne Duggan, for example, suggests that the letters Edward Grim used in his *Vita of Becket* 'lends additional quality to an otherwise brief and unreliable narrative.' Anne Duggan, *Thomas Becket: A Textual History of his Letters* (Oxford, 1980), 177. For a classic statement of the need to assess the authority of the chronicler who inserted documents, see Arthur Giry, *Manuel de diplomatique*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1925), 34: 'Pour ... apprécier la valeur [des chartes insérées dans les ouvrages des chroniqueurs], la critique diplomatique doit donc ici ajouter aux ressources qu'elle cherche dans la teneur même des actes, des renseignements, empruntés à l'historiographie, sur le degré de confiance que mérite l'ensemble de l'œuvre et son auteur.' (To assess the value of charters inserted into chroniclers' works, diplomatic criticism should supplement the information that it seeks in the content of the document itself with details (borrowed from historiography) about the degree of trust that the work as a whole, and its author, merits).

²⁶ See Gillingham, 'Travels,' 71, for a critique of such an approach.

²⁷ See John Gillingham, 'Historians without Hindsight,' in *King John: New Interpretations*, ed. S. D. Church (Woodbridge, 1999), 2–26, for an attack on a 'new orthodoxy' in studies of John resulting from 'systematic use of record evidence.' Cf. Clanchy, *Memory*, 101. Girolamo Arnaldi suggested in 1966 that texts such as the *Annales Ianuenses*, which seamlessly combine 'narrative' and 'record,' require a new set of critical apparatus to take account of their hybrid form. Arnaldi posits a 'diplomatica delle cronache medievali' (diplomatic of medieval chronicles) which, he suggests, would notably reduce 'la distanza che ... separa di solito la categoria delle «fonti narrative» da quella delle «fonti documentarie.»' (the distance that ... usually separates the category of 'narrative sources' from that of 'documentary sources.') Arnaldi, 'Notaio-cronista,' 297. Arnaldi's call for a new approach seems to have gone unheeded in English scholarship; but Genêt has also suggested that when dealing with texts combining narrative and documents that 'Plutôt d'axer l'enquête sur le texte historique fini et "édité"... l'enquête devait porter sur

Literary studies of historiography, which have sought to understand the construction of historical writing as a narrative genre once fiction had emerged as a discursive category, have also been interested in the relationship between documents and the truthfulness of historiography. The recognition that there was ‘nothing in literary tradition or contemporary thought to suggest that history required a new and special mode of discourse’ in the Middle Ages,²⁸ and that ‘the conventions and aesthetic standards that governed the authors of epic and romance also guided the construction of historical narrative,’²⁹ has led to a concentration on the discursive devices by which writers alerted audiences to the historicity or otherwise of their narratives and thereby directed the reception of their texts as history or fiction.³⁰ Considering, indeed, the fact that history and fiction in this period dealt with substantially the same subject matter (the past, real or imagined)³¹ and that they are thought to ‘emerge from the same cultural need and do the same cultural work,’³² the need to distinguish between historical and fictional narrative has led to intense scrutiny of the strategies by which writers made their narratives both verisimilar and plausible—and thus directed their audiences to take them to be historical.³³ The truth-status of

les composantes élémentaires du texte historique.’ (Rather than centring the enquiry on the finished and published historical text ... the enquiry should be brought to bear on the constituent elements of the historical text.) Jean-Philippe Genêt, ‘Histoire et documentation dans la tradition anglaise,’ in *Le Forme della propaganda politica nel Due e nel Trecento*, ed. Paolo Cammarosano and Jacques Le Goff (Rome, 1994), 228.

²⁸ Partner, *Serious Entertainments*, 196.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 197; cf. Robert M. Stein, *Reality Fictions: Romance, History, and Governmental Authority, 1025–1180* (Notre Dame, IN, 2006), 10: ‘Historical writing is thoroughly dependent on the techniques of fiction to represent the reality of the past.’

³⁰ For the importance of ‘basic genre coordinates’ in directing audiences’ responses to the historicity or fictionality of narrative texts, see Nancy F. Partner, ‘Medieval Histories and Modern Realism: Yet Another Origin of the Novel,’ *MLN* 114.4 (1999), 865. Monika Otter, *Inventiones*, explores the ‘contract’ between writer and audience that ensured fictional material could be used without being thought necessarily mendacious. Both Otter and Laura Ashe go beyond narrative texts’ explicit truth claims by invoking Bakhtin’s notion of the chronotope (the simultaneous narrative control of space and time), which enabled readers to distinguish between historicity and fictionality. Otter, *Inventiones*, 9–12; Laura Ashe, *Fiction and History in England, 1066–1200* (Cambridge, 2007), 50.

³¹ For the convergence in the subject-matter of history and fiction, see Rosalind Field, ‘Romance as History, History as Romance,’ in *Romance in Medieval England*, ed. Maldwyn Mills, Jennifer Fellows, and Carol M. Meale (Cambridge, 1991), 163–73.

³² Stein, *Reality Fictions*, 2.

³³ Foundational in this respect is Jeanette M. A. Beer, *Narrative Conventions of Truth in the Middle Ages* (Geneva, 1981), but see also Nancy F. Partner, ‘The New Cornificius: Medieval History and the Artifice of Words,’ in *Classical Rhetoric and Medieval*

medieval historical narratives has therefore been made to work very hard in the service of establishing generic categories; and it is from this perspective that the intertextual relations between narrative and non-narrative texts (and the wider relationship between narrative and non-narrative uses of the written word) has been explored in relation to historiography. Along with such 'authorising devices' as the claim to have been an eyewitness to an event,³⁴ medieval historical narrative's habitual use of documents to persuade audiences of its own historicity (rather than fictionality or even mendacity) has been emphasized as a crucial means of authentication. Suzanne Fleischmann, for example, has explored the way that vernacular epic poets used documents in order to 'bolster verisimilitude:' 'documents provided the most impressive stamp of authenticity for the overwhelmingly illiterate audiences to whom the jongleurs' work was directed.'³⁵ Historians have also noted how medieval history writers used documents as a form of authorization for their narrative. Diana Greenway, for example, suggests that suggests that Ralph de Diceto 'endeavoured to make his work as authentic as possible by incorporating lengthy quotations from contemporary letters.'³⁶ Julia Barrow has noted how William of Malmesbury deployed charters earlier in the twelfth century in order to 'support the [historical narrative] by authenticating what is being said,' and to provide 'additional detail to back up his narrative.'³⁷

Both literary and historical studies of medieval historians' use of documents have, therefore, long connected it with history writing's

Historiography, ed. Ernst Breisach (Kalamazoo, MI, 1985), 5–60, Roger D. Ray, 'Rhetorical Scepticism and Verismilar Narrative in John of Salisbury's *Historia Pontificalis*,' in *Classical Rhetoric and Medieval Historiography*, ed. Breisach, 6–103, and, more generally, Ruth Morse, *Truth and Convention in the Middle Ages: Rhetoric, Representation, and Reality* (Cambridge, 1991). The mechanics of the suspension of 'historical' verisimilitude for fictional purposes is the focus of Otter, *Inventiones*.

³⁴ See, for example, Beer, *Narrative Conventions*, 23–34, Peter Damian-Grint, *The New Historians of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance: Inventing Vernacular Authority* (Woodbridge, 1999), 69–84, and Anthony Lodge, 'Literature and History in the Chronicle of Jordan Fantosme,' *French Studies* 94 (1990), 266–8.

³⁵ Suzanne Fleischmann, 'On the Representation of History and Fiction,' *History and Theory* 22 (1983), 301.

³⁶ Diana E. Greenway, 'Historical Writing at St Paul's,' in *St Paul's: The Cathedral Church of London, 604–2004*, ed. Derek Keene, Arthur Burns, and Andrew Saint (New Haven, 2004), 152.

³⁷ Barrow, 'William of Malmesbury's Use of Charters,' 68.

truthfulness—whether measured in relative terms (through reconstructing medieval notions of truthfulness), or in absolute terms (by assessing historical writing’s conformity to an ‘objective’ empirical standard). There has not, however, been any concerted attempt to elucidate *what it was* about the documents inserted in histories that invested them with such truth-giving power (it cannot only have been that the documents were *written*, because the histories were that too; and lots of other written things were not true at all). And there has been little effort to connect the use of the written word in histories with its *other* contemporary functions—as there has in studies of the earlier Middle Ages. (Early medievalists have long explored the common commemorative and ritual functions of historiography and documents.)³⁸ The ‘charisma’ of the written word in this period is thought to have been diminishing as its use was ‘routinized.’³⁹ But that does not mean that its charisma disappeared overnight, and writing immediately began functioning as a passive and immaterial receptacle for information that seamlessly communicated information over distance and time.

This chapter aims to provide a richer picture of the way that historians’ use of the written word was embedded within contemporary literate practices—and within the social relationships that writing was (still) capable of forging. The vocabulary historians used to describe what documents were, and the terminology they used to categorize how they could be used, will therefore be charted, and the similarities between this vocabulary and that used by other textual and scribal practices will be noted. Overt contemporary statements of the theoretical place of documents within historical writing, rare as they are, will also be explored here, and compared with contemporary practice. This focus on the utterances of historians themselves—this internal evidence—will be balanced by a typological assessment of chronicles, which will attempt to place them within the range of medieval documentary forms and archival

³⁸ See, for example Ugé, *Creating the Monastic Past*, 14, and Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, 84, ff.

³⁹ For the Weberian ‘routinization of charisma’ under Henry II, see Clanchy, *Memory*, 67. Cf. John Hudson, ‘L’Écrit, les archives et le droit en Angleterre (IXe–XIIIe siècle),’ *Revue historique* 308.1 (2006), esp. 21–2.

practices. If chronicles used letters, for example, what is the formal or generic relationship between such chronicles and letter collections that made use of the same documents, and what does this relationship reveal about the purposes of historical writing? Finally, I go on to assess the *social* purposes of the documents reproduced by writers of history—and the social functions they enacted by reproducing them.

DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

One means of reconstructing the assumptions that historians in later twelfth-century England made about the way they used documents is to analyze the vocabulary they used to describe documents and the terminology they used to describe how they—and others—used documents. Modern terminology has generally been imprecise and inconsistent in this respect: Guenée refers to ‘les sources diplomatiques,’⁴⁰ for example, but this provokes too close an association with the particular concept of textual authority of the tradition of Mabillon, and risks anachronism because the word *diploma* was not yet part of the twelfth-century administrative lexicon.⁴¹ Furthermore, the notion of ‘source’ is unhelpful for our purposes: the process by which ‘source’ and ‘narrative’ are put into textual dialogue but conceptual opposition is precisely the subject of this chapter. The word ‘document,’ with its frequent opposition in modern historiographical discourse to ‘chronicle’ as a rival source for the study of history, has similar connotations of priority.⁴² But its etymological link to *docere* (to teach or instruct, considered to be one of the principal aims of writing history since Antiquity) is a reminder that the documents in medieval historical writing may have had a historiographical purpose significantly different from the ‘documentary evidence’ that is the bulwark of modern historiography.⁴³ Ralph de Diceto

⁴⁰ Bernard Guenée, *Histoire et culture historique*, 92.

⁴¹ Olivier Guyotjeannin, ‘Le Vocabulaire de la diplomatie en latin médiéval (noms de l’acte, mise par écrit, tradition, critique, conservation),’ in *Vocabulaire du livre et de l’écriture au moyen âge*, ed. Olga Weijers (Turnhout, 1991), 120.

⁴² For a concise survey of the history of the document’s role in modern historiography, see Jaques Le Goff, ‘Documento/monumento,’ in *Enciclopedia Einaudi*, ed. Ruggiero Romano (Turin, 1978), 5:38–47.

⁴³ Roger of Howden, for example, uses the word ‘documentum’ to introduce a quotation from Claudian: ‘et memores documenti illius eloquentissimi, qui ait...’ (and mindful of the lesson of that most eloquent [man], who said...) Howden, *Gesta*, 1:199.

sometimes uses the verb *docere* when he introduces a document reproduced in his narrative: 'Quid ibi actum sit,' he writes of a conference between Philip count of Flanders and Philip II of France, 'docebunt sequentia'—*sequentia* being Henry II's report to Bishop Richard of Winchester reporting what had happened there.⁴⁴ As such, *docere*, and by extension *documenta*, refer to what the inserted text is doing within the chronicle, rather than what it did outside or prior to it.⁴⁵ So just as 'documents do not automatically become records,'⁴⁶ it seems that written records do not automatically become documents, at least not in the modern sense of that word.

Among less problematic alternatives to *documentum*, *scriptum* makes no reference to function, emphasising instead the technology by which information was conveyed. It belonged to the administrative terminology of the twelfth century,⁴⁷ and Howden and Diceto sometimes used it themselves.⁴⁸ The baldness of this term, though, might risk positing a pre-textual, pure writing, a mere assemblage of graphemes that could never have existed in a literate culture; it also perhaps obscures the way 'orality retains functions within a system of graphic representation for language.'⁴⁹ But *scriptum* draws attention to the growing critical awareness of not just literacy and orality, vocality and aurality, but also of *scripturalité*, which encompasses the performative aspects of the act of writing and situates it alongside other ritual practices and institutions of cultural memory (a theme that will be elaborated in chapter five).⁵⁰ So

⁴⁴ E.g. Diceto, *Opera*, 1:394. Cf. idem, *Opera*, 1:309. Note, however, that elsewhere Diceto uses this formula to introduce non-'documentary' matter, such as the life of Anselm reproduced in the *Abbreviationes chronicorum* (idem, *Opera*, 1:223; the MS used as the basis of Stubbs's edition has 'edocebunt sequentia;' another contemporary MS has 'docebunt' (Cambridge, MS CCCC 77 fol. 10v).

⁴⁵ It should be noted that Diceto does not use the word *documentum* to refer to the 'documents' he inserts in his chronicle, although the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* does record the word being used to mean 'written evidence, certificate, document,' from the early ninth century. *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, s.v. 'documentum.'

⁴⁶ Clanchy, *Memory*, 145.

⁴⁷ Guyotjeannin, 'Vocabulaire de la diplomatie,' 124.

⁴⁸ Howden, *Gesta*, 1:148, 169.

⁴⁹ Stock, *Implications*, 42.

⁵⁰ For a delineation of this critical field, see Pierre Chastang, 'Cartulaires, cartularisation et scripturalité médiévale: la structuration d'un nouveau champ de recherche,' *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 49 (2006), 21–31.

from the point of view of their origin, these texts may be termed *scripta*; from that of their transcription into a chronicle or other text in a probatory or illustrative capacity, they are *documenta*.

The variety of the terms chroniclers themselves use to refer to the insertions makes settling on a satisfactory definition harder.⁵¹ Roger of Howden's *Chronica* uses nineteen different terms in the rubrics to such texts, ranging from the technically specific (e.g. *assisa*) to the very general (e.g. *verba*).⁵² The main body of the narrative uses thirteen different terms to refer to or introduce them.⁵³ Most insertions are cast in epistolary form—Howden refers to them most frequently as *litterae*—but their formal uniformity does not necessarily reveal any conceptual coherence on the part of the chroniclers, who do not seem to handle different types of document in significantly different ways. Besides which, as Frank Barlow pointed out, 'it is notoriously difficult to classify medieval documents, because almost all are cast into the form of the letter, and classes shade into one another.'⁵⁴

⁵¹ Perhaps a reflection of what Guyotjeannin describes as the rapid development in this period of specialized vocabularies 'corrélatif de l'essor d'appareils d'administration.' Guyotjeannin, 'Vocabulaire de la diplomatie,' 125.

⁵² *Assisa, calumnia, capitula, carta, concordia, consuetudines, conventio, decimae, decreta, epistola, liber, litterae, mandatum, opinio, pactum, pax, placita, rescripta, verba*. By far the most frequent is *epistola*.

⁵³ *Assisa, carta, concordia, conventio, decreta, edictum, leges, litterae, mandatum, pax, praecepta, scriptum, sententia* (excluding compounds such as 'pax et concordia,' 'finis et concordia,' etc.), with *litterae* being the most frequent. To complicate things further, the word used in the rubric frequently differs from that used in the text.

⁵⁴ *The Letters of Arnulf of Lisieux*, ed. Frank Barlow (London, 1939), xliii. Attilio Bartoli Langeli discusses how 'la documentazione di tutte le cancellarie, maggiori e minori, laiche ed ecclesiastiche, si realizzò principalmente nella forma della lettera... [Tutti] tipi documentari del medioevo cancelleresco ... aderivano al modello epistolare.' (Documentation produced by all chanceries—major and minor, ecclesiastical and lay—manifested itself principally in the form of the letter ... all medieval bureaucracy's documentary types derive from the epistolary form.) Attilio Bartoli Langeli, 'Cancellierato e produzione epistolare,' in *Forme della propaganda politica*, ed. Cammarosano and Le Goff, 252. The difficulty that the ubiquity of epistolary form caused in distinguishing between the letters and charters of Gilbert Foliot is discussed in *The Letters and Charters of Gilbert Foliot*, ed. Adrian Morey and Christopher N. L. Brooke (Cambridge, 1967), 1. See Cheney, *English Bishops' Chanceries*, 57–9, for the dominance of the epistolary form in episcopal administration (cf. Julia Barrow, 'From the Lease to the Certificate: The Evolution of Episcopal Acts in England and Wales,' in *Die Diplomatie der Bischofsurkunde vor 1250*, ed. Christoph Haidacher and Werner Köfler (Innsbruck, 1993), 537–8, which dates the increasing dominance of epistolary forms to the 1150s). Guyotjeannin has noted the 'l'irrésistible ascension' of 'litterae' at the expense of 'carta' and 'scriptum' in the documentary terminology used in the twelfth century. Guyotjeannin, 'Vocabulaire de la diplomatie,' 124.

The inconsistent way in which chroniclers present documents makes the matter of definition harder still. Although Diceto's formula 'docebunt sequentia' implies a reader, the formula emphasizes the elucidatory function of the document itself, rather than the historiographical activity of the chronicler who inserted it. Frequently the chronicles foreground the original senders or receivers of a *scriptum*, or the circumstances of its dispatch or reception; but a *scriptum's* role in the chronicle, and the role of the chronicler using it, are left unarticulated. In Howden's chronicles especially, the production of written texts is made to appear as a natural outcome of historical processes, introduced following the narrative of an event by the formula 'unde scripsit in hac forma,' followed by the text of the *scriptum*. Where the recipient rather than the sender of the letter is the subject of the sentence, a formula such as 'impetravit litteras in hac forma' is used instead.⁵⁵ And where a notice does not simply end with the *scriptum* (which is the usual case, suggesting perhaps that there was something final and definitive about its inclusion), the *scriptum* is made the motor of the action reported in the following notice, introduced with a hypotactic formula such as 'his [sc. litteris] auditis...'⁵⁶ or 'harum auctoritate litterarum...'⁵⁷

The act of sending (or receiving) letters is thus presented as a historical fact that is *digna memoria* in itself; it is presented as an integral part of the historical event related in the notice and has a historical significance of its own (not necessarily neatly coterminous with the letter's contents).⁵⁸ Diceto does not usually introduce *scripta*, and the *scripta* sometimes have little or nothing to do with the events related in the previous notice (this

⁵⁵ In the case of Howden's *Gesta*, for example, one or other of these formulae is used in 28 of the 75 documents included.

⁵⁶ E.g. Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, 2:301. The universal preference of 'auditis' over 'lectis' will be explored further below.

⁵⁷ As such these *scripta* do not serve merely as *documenta* for the historian, but are made active participants in the history narrated. E.g. Diceto, *Opera*, 2:62; Howden, *Chronica*, 2:314.

⁵⁸ However, *scripta* were not always transcribed at the exact moment of the composition of an annal but at its end; and blank leaves were often left between annals, presumably for this purpose. (For examples see Gransden, *Historical Writing I*, 225.) This suggests that on occasion the inclusion of a *scriptum* was a kind of foreseen afterthought: *scripta* were sometimes come across by these chroniclers after they had written about the event that produced them, and chroniclers expected that this would happen.

sometimes also occurs in Howden).⁵⁹ In such cases *scripta* do not act as *illustrations* of the preceding historical narrative, but work as alternative and self-sufficient vehicles of historical knowledge. They are associated with their neighbouring notices, like their narrative counterparts, by parataxis. This way of using *scripta* is especially evident in Diceto's summary of the chapters of his *Ymagines historiarum*, where letters, the dispatch of letters and narrative notices appear to share equal historiographical weight.⁶⁰ Thus, within ten *capitula* of each other we find a narrative notice ('Hubertus Cantuariensis archiepiscopus legatus creatus est' [Hubert, archbishop of Canterbury, was made legate]), a notice solely concerning the dispatch of letters ('Philippus rex Francorum tres litteras scripsit archiepiscopo Rothomagensi' [Philip, king of the French, wrote three letters to the archbishop of Rouen]), and the quoted text of a letter presented *as if it were* a narrative notice ('Ricardus rex Angliae episcopo Ebrouicensi, "Significamus vobis"' [King Richard of England (sc. wrote to) the bishop of Evreux, (sc. saying) 'We inform you...']).⁶¹ If Howden and Diceto thus make it seem that *scripta* have the same historiographical weight as narrative notices, it becomes more understandable why they did not comment on why they included them. Just as chroniclers did not usually include a gloss explaining why they made a narrative entry, so they saw no reason to explain why they included a *scriptum* either.

If conceptualizing *scripta* has its challenges, then, the historiographical *process* of transcription or insertion is no more easily defined, chiefly because these chroniclers—strategically, perhaps—make almost no reference to their own role in the process, and only rarely do they allude to the fact of copying or transcription.⁶² Neither, it seems, does one single

⁵⁹ Although such statistics are crude and occasionally misleading, in Diceto's chronicles 205 of the 220 documents included are not introduced at all. By contrast, in Howden's *Gesta* only 17 of 75 documents are *not* introduced, and in the *Chronica* 57 of 169.

⁶⁰ Diceto calls this summary a commemoration: 'Radulfus Lundoniensis decanus in opusculo sequenti brevissime multarum commemorat Ymagines Historiarum capitulatum.' (In the following *opusculum*, Ralph dean of London very briefly calls to mind, chapter by chapter, the many images of histories.) Diceto, *Opera*, 1:267.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 1:284.

⁶² Two exceptions are Howden, *Gesta*, 1:151, relating how Henry II 'tradidit [nunciis regum hispanie] scriptum suum ... cuius hoc transcriptum est' (handed over his *scriptum* to the messengers of the kings of Spain ... of which this is a copy), and how his own *nuntii* 'tradiderunt [Henrico regi] quoddam scriptum de dote quam Willelmus rex

term exist in the modern lexicon to describe the process. Gransden favours insertion, Guenée and Genêt favour incorporation, Clanchy mentions citation;⁶³ Stenton writes of how the narrative is ‘supplemented and illustrated’ by documents.⁶⁴ Richardson and Sayles reject ‘incorporate’ in favour of ‘thrust into’ in their analysis of Howden’s use of the *Liber de legibus Anglie* in his *Chronica*.⁶⁵ Of all the English historians of the late twelfth century, Howden and Diceto are both the most notable users of documents for historiographical purposes and the most infuriatingly reticent about why they used documents in the way that they did. Their contemporaries, however, were more forthcoming: Gervase of Canterbury explicitly discussed why he included letters in his *Chronica*, and the verb he used to describe what he was doing with them is ‘inserere.’⁶⁶ Gerald de Barri frequently combines historical narrative with *documenta*, and also mentions that ‘curavi inserere’⁶⁷ (or else he uses a passive construction that makes his reader the grammatical subject).⁶⁸ On occasion Diceto uses *inserere* too: before transcribing two canons of the third Lateran Council, he states that ‘plurima memoriae plurimum commendanda statuta sunt

Siciliae dedit Johanna filiae suae ... cujus scripti transcriptum hoc est.’ (handed over to King Henry a certain *scriptum* concerning the dowry which William, king of Sicily, gave to his daughter Joanna ... this is a copy of the *scriptum*). Howden, *Gesta*, 1:169. Curiously, when these passages were revised in the *Chronica*, reference to the ‘scripti transcriptum’ is replaced: ‘Unde rex Angliae in hac forma scripsit regibus Hispaniae’ (so the king of England wrote to the kings of Spain), and ‘Unde idem rex Siciliae fecit ei cartam suam in hac forma.’ (so the same king of Sicily composed his charter for him in this form.)

Howden, *Chronica*, 2:128 and 2:95.

⁶³ Clanchy, *Memory*, 171.

⁶⁴ Stenton, ‘Roger of Howden and Benedict,’ 574.

⁶⁵ Richardson and Sayles, *Governance*, 444.

⁶⁶ ‘Nec te moveat, lector bone prudentia tua ... quod tot epistolas inserui.’ (Do not let your prudence disturb you, good reader ... because I have inserted so many letters). Gervase, *Historical Works*, 1:502. Gervase’s *Chronica* contains forty documents in total, all of which are letters. Gervase’s explanation of why he inserted letters into his chronicle is further explored below.

⁶⁷ E.g., in *De principis instructione*, ‘quas litteras una cum epistola Soldani responsoria, sub eisdem verbis quibus et scriptae sunt, hic inserere curavi, quatinus ex istis animosa Caesaris audacia, ex illis vero superba tyranni resistendi fiducia, declaretur.’ (I have thought to insert [Frederick Barbarossa’s letter to Saladin], together with Saladin’s letter in reply, in the same words in which they were written; so that from the first [letter], Caesar’s bold daring may be revealed; from the second, the proud faith of the tyrant in [his] resistance.) Giraldus Cambrensis, *De principis instructione*, ed. George F. Warner, vol. 8 of *Opera omnia*, ed. J. S. Brewer et al. (London, 1891), 8:267.

⁶⁸ For example, ‘Litteras, quas in Angliam tunc destinavit, hic insertas lector invenit.’ (The reader finds the letter that [Clement III] then sent to England inserted here.) Cambrensis, *De principis instructione*, 8:236.

ibi, de quibus saltem inseramus paucissima.⁶⁹ Bede had used the word *inserere* to denote his practice when introducing words taken from another text, so it had canonical historiographical precedent.⁷⁰ But ‘*inserere*’ was also a widespread *scribal* term in this era, and, like ‘*scribere*,’ designated ‘*la mise par écrit*’ of (for example) a judicial act, emphasising ‘*l’application de lettres*’ onto parchment.⁷¹ The verb ‘*inserere*’ therefore foregrounds the technology of writing; and although the chroniclers use the term about the texts they are quoting rather than the original creation of *scripta*, these works are nonetheless penetrated by the vocabulary of the *scriptorium*.

It cannot be automatically assumed, however, that in this context ‘*inserere*’ was semantically associated exclusively with the *scriptum*, to the exclusion of the chronicle of which it would become a part. Diceto sometimes uses the verb where no *scriptum* is involved at all: he writes of the ‘*causas regnorum ... [et] rebelliones illicitas filiorum temerariis ausibus insurgentium in parentes intersertas annalibus*,’⁷² which show what a sticky end rebellions such as that of Henry the Young King usually come to. He writes that the French abandoned Verneuil to Richard I at Pentecost in 1194 because they were worried that Richard’s victory over them on such a sacred day would be remembered by posterity ‘*et suis annalibus inserendam computarentur*.’⁷³ In both cases, deeds rather than documents are being inserted. This suggests that ‘insertability’ might also be a property belonging to blank annals passively (their medium of

⁶⁹ ‘Many things were ordered to be committed to memory there [i.e. at the Council], of which we insert just a very few.’ Diceto, *Opera*, 1:430.

⁷⁰ Concerning Adamnan’s book on the holy places, for example, Bede writes ‘*de cuius scriptis aliqua decerpere, de nostrae huic Historiae inserere commodum fore legentibus reor.*’ (I think it will be useful to readers to make some extracts and put them into this history.) Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, trans. Judith McClure and Roger Collins (Oxford, 1999), 5.15 (p. 263).

⁷¹ Guyotjeannin, ‘Vocabulaire de la diplomatie,’ 126–7. The author of the *Liber Eliensis* uses the verb ‘*inserere*’ synonymously with ‘*scribere*’ to refer to the ‘*inclita gesta*’ of the *Elienses* ‘*queve disperse vel confuse Anglico stilo inserta sunt.*’ (which were committed to writing in English in a variety of different places or in a disorganized manner.) Ernest O. Blake, ed. *Liber Eliensis* (London, 1962), 1. (Translation: *Liber Eliensis: A History of the Isle of Ely from the Seventh to Twelfth Century*, trans. Janet Fairweather (Woodbridge, 2005), 1).

⁷² Diceto, *Opera*, 2:20. ‘The crises of kingdoms ... and the unlawful rebellions of sons rising up with rash boldness against their fathers inserted in annals.’

⁷³ ‘and reckoned to be inserted into their annals.’ *Ibid.*, 2:115.

reproduction), rather than actively to a certain type of content, which could take narrative *or* documentary form.⁷⁴

It seems reasonable, though, to use the word ‘insert’ for the purposes of this study, bearing in mind all the while the word’s multiple (scribal and textual) medieval valences. But it was not the only word used to refer to this process, and if the verb ‘inserere’ has its complications, here is William de Longchamp, who, knowing Diceto was writing a chronicle, sent him a *transcriptum* of a letter ‘ut de illo *agatis* in cronicis vestris.’⁷⁵ The complexity and ambiguity of the verb *ago* (write up? work in? do something with?), along with the reticence of the chroniclers themselves about naming what they were doing, suggests that no single term will be entirely satisfactory.

Longchamp’s comment does suggest, however, that there was a recognized and recognizable historiographical process at work here, which belies the ambiguity of the vocabulary used to describe it and the apparent inconsistencies in the ways in which the technique was used. The remainder of this chapter will attempt to look beyond the terminology used by chroniclers in order to suggest how historical narrative and *documenta* worked together to tell stories about the past. What, for example, could a *documentum* provide that narrative alone could not? And how dependent were *documenta* themselves on historical narrative in order to make them meaningful? I will approach these questions through a combination of close textual reading and broad typological survey. The latter will delineate the sort of *scripta* included by chroniclers and suggest how chronicles were related to other sorts of

⁷⁴ Cf. Bede’s miraculous story about one of King Ælfwine’s retainers, Imma, who could not be bound after his capture: ‘Unde eam [historiam] quia liquido comperi, indubitanter Historiae nostrae Ecclesiasticae inserendam credidi.’ (Therefore since I had so clear an account of the incident, I thought that it should be undoubtedly be inserted into this *History*.) Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, 4.22; (trans. McClure and Collins, 209–10.) Gervase of Canterbury writes of the way that annals are not just written, but written *down*: ‘Multae falsitates de factis regum et dictis principum *conscripta* sunt. Annorum etiam computatio, cui tota rerum *conscriptio* initi deberet ... multotiens veritate carere probatur.’ (Many untruths have been written down about the deeds of kings and sayings of princes. The computation of the years—on which the very recording of things should have depended—is many times proved to be devoid of truth.) Gervase, *Historical Works*, 89.

⁷⁵ Diceto, *Opera*, 2:127.

contemporary *scripta*-collection; and the close readings will offer examples of how *documenta* and narrative were deployed together, and how, in turn, that deployment relates to chroniclers' own conception of the relationship between historical writing and the written word.

GERVASE OF CANTERBURY: A CASE STUDY OF THEORY

Howden and Diceto never directly address the relationship between their chronicles' narratives and the *scripta* they included within them. However, their monastic contemporary, Gervase of Canterbury, explicitly discusses the inclusion of letters in his history, and has a clear notion of the effect that those letters should have on his narrative and on his audience. Gervase, who had direct knowledge of an early version of Howden's *Gesta*, had one of the most sophisticated understandings of the various forms and purposes of historiography in this period. It is worth dwelling on his explanation for his use of *scripta*. Gervase's comments come immediately after he has reproduced a series of papal mandates condemning Archbishop Baldwin of Canterbury's project to build a collegiate church at Hackington in Kent, which had threatened the right of Gervase's priory (Christ Church, Canterbury) to elect the archbishops of Canterbury.⁷⁶ It is worth quoting Gervase's comments in full:

Haec autem omnia munimenta reservantur in ecclesia Cantuariensi ad extinguendam temporis futuri malitiam, si qua super hoc poterit exoriri. Nec te moveat, rogo, lector bone, prudentia tua, quod tam prolixa narratione, contra propositum meum vel promissum, electionem Ricardi, vel persecutionem Baldewini, recitavi, vel quod narrationi meae tot epistolas inserui. Justa enim, ut arbitror, intentione utrumque factum est; videlicet ut futurorum sciat necessitas temporum quod cui morbo opponat remedium, et quibus objectionibus justum et exemplare adhibeat responsum. Epistolas autem, quod cronicorum non esse solet, plures inserui, ut, ipsis inspectis et in arca memoriae reconditis, narratio brevietur et subtilius utiliusque intelligatur. (Gervase, *Historical Works*, 1:502)

⁷⁶ The controversy about this building was the axis on which the dispute between the archbishops and the monks—and Gervase's chronicle—turned. Baldwin's new church would have threatened the position of the cathedral priory at Christ Church as the archbishopric's monastic chapter, and would have threatened the priory's (contested) right to elect the archbishop (the archbishop was the priory's titular abbot).

(All these muniments⁷⁷ are kept in the church at Canterbury in order that they might extinguish any evil of a future time about this matter, should it arise. But I ask that your prudence should not disturb you, good reader, because I have recounted [Archbishop] Richard's election and [his successor] Baldwin's persecution with such a lengthy narrative (contrary to my promise and indeed my design), or because I have inserted so many letters into my narrative. I consider that both these things were done with a just intention. For the need of future times should know which remedy it should apply to what affliction, and the appropriate and exemplary response it should employ to meet which objections. I have moreover inserted many letters—which is unusual in chronicles—so that, once they have been examined and stowed in the memory's chest, the narrative might be shortened, and it might be more precisely and profitably understood.)

The first thing to be noted about Gervase's attitude towards documents here is his perception that he is doing something unusual by using them in his history. More precisely, Gervase suggests that it is unusual that he should be using them in the specific kind of history—a chronicle—that he had chosen to write. Given that the practice of including *scripta* of various sorts in what modern scholarship terms chronicles was entirely typical of the era in which Gervase wrote, this seems at first sight surprising. Gervase defines chronicles quite precisely on the basis of their brevity;⁷⁸ so it appears that he is wary of adding to the (already considerable) volume of his chronicle by bloating it with letters (which, as Gervase himself suggests, were already available elsewhere). Apparently paradoxically, however, Gervase defends the *prolixitas* caused by his use of the letters on the grounds that it in fact enabled him to make his *narratio* shorter. And, being shorter, his *narratio* would be understood better and consequently more likely to fulfil its purpose.⁷⁹ So it is not the length of the whole

⁷⁷ For the 'semantic kinship and ultimate fusion between *monimentum/monumentum* (monument or memorial) and *munimentum/munitio* (ammunition, fortification),' see Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, 'Medieval Identity: A Sign and a Concept,' *The American Historical Review* 105.5 (2000), 1527, n. 98.

⁷⁸ In the prologue to his chronicle, Gervase distinguishes clearly between the form of *histories* on the one hand and *chronicles* on the other. 'Historicus diffuse et eleganter incedit, cronicus vero simpliciter graditur et breviter.' (The historian strides expansively and elegantly, while the chronicler steps simply and briefly.) Gervase, *Historical Works*, 87.

⁷⁹ Gervase suggests that its purpose was to teach posterity to seek the good and eschew the bad through example. *Ibid.*, 86–7. For the connection between the *brevitas* of a rhetorical *narratio* and its *utilitas* (which lay in its power of persuasion), see Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study*, ed. David E. Orton

chronicle (or its codex) together with any documents that Gervase identifies as being crucial, but the length of its *narrative*; and the correct understanding of the latter, for Gervase, is paramount.

Gervase's emphasis on the importance of the narrative sheds light on the exact relationship he envisages between his chronicle, the documents he reproduced in it and the *munimenta* that he mentions were stored at the church of the Holy Trinity in Canterbury. By reproducing some of those *munimenta* in his chronicle, Gervase binds narrative and document into a relationship in which the one supports the other on both a practical and rhetorical level. For practical purposes, Gervase's reproduction of the letters alerts the chronicle's future readers to those letters' existence, and provides information about where to find them (there is no guarantee that Gervase's readers would have known either these things).⁸⁰ Furthermore, by associating those *munimenta* with the *narrative* of the dispute over the church at Hackington, and with the history of the relations between the cathedral priory and its archbishop more broadly, Gervase provides the (original) *munimenta* with an interpretative framework which, locked in the muniment room at Christ Church,⁸¹ they would otherwise have lacked. On a rhetorical level, the abbreviation of the narrative which the letters made possible also made the *narratio* more effective; and this, in

and R. Dean Anderson (Leiden, 1998), §§295–301. For the opposition between *subtilitas* and *utilitas*, which was particularly notable in the political discourse of the later twelfth century, see John of Salisbury, *Metalogicon*, 2.8.8 and M. T. Clanchy, 'Moderni in Education and Government in England,' *Speculum* 50.4 (1975), esp. 678–9.

⁸⁰ Cf., for example, the reason the *Liber Eliensis* gives for reproducing a charter of King Edgar: 'in view of the fact that leave used not to be given for the royal charter to be shown to everyone (*nec omnibus ... ostendi*) and *it ought not to be hidden away from everyone* (*nec ab omnibus ... abscondi*), it has been needful that there should be made public, through this present work, information about the charter which it has not been possible to obtain by means of the charter itself.' *Liber Eliensis*, trans. Fairweather, 105; ed. Blake, 81, my emphasis. Janet Burton has emphasized the overlap between cartulary-makers' purposes in making their houses' archives more accessible and their desire to construct a corporate identity. Janet Burton, ed. *The Cartulary of Byland Abbey* (Woodbridge, 2004), xxxiii, xlvi. For the technological challenges of documentary retrieval in this period more generally, see John M. Steane, *The Archaeology of Power* (Gloucester, 2001), 246.

⁸¹ It is possible that important documents were kept in the church of the Holy Trinity itself (rather than the muniment room at the cathedral priory). This was the practice at the mother churches of some other sees. For this practice, see Cheney, *English Bishops' Chanceries*, 139, and Jane E. Sayers, 'The Medieval Care and Custody of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Archives,' *BIHR* 39.99 (1966), 95–107. Sayers raises the intriguing possibility that the mutually antagonistic monks and archbishops shared an archive at Christ Church. *Ibid.*, 96. For a survey of muniment rooms and the physical apparatus of record-keeping in medieval England, see Steane, *Archaeology of Power*, 239–50.

turn, would have made the interpretative framework it provided for the *munimenta* that much more compelling.

It is unlikely that Gervase envisaged that the documents he copied into his chronicle had the legally binding authority of the originals stored at Christ Church. The reproductions in the chronicle were merely a reminder that proof existed that the church at Hackington was to be destroyed by papal decree; the proof itself inhered in the originals. As Gervase's own narrative makes clear, the monks of the cathedral priory and their neighbours at St. Augustine's Abbey were required to make documents such as these papal mandates available to public scrutiny with surprising regularity. And when they did so it was the authenticity—or, more precisely, the originality—of those documents that was scrutinized most closely in assessing whether they were to be obeyed.⁸² If only original documents had the power to bind posterity legally, then it seems the documents in Gervase's chronicle had more of an *illustrative* than *probative* role. In other words, they are *documenta* in the pedagogical sense of that word explored above (and *exempla* in Gervase's own terminology). Although this is a primarily rhetorical role, which works (as Gervase sees it) to ensure the effective reception of the narrative, that role is not unconnected with the existence of the Canterbury *munimenta*. The *documenta* in the chronicle illustrated the *potential* role of the *munimenta* at

⁸² According to Gervase, Alexander III ordered the monks of St. Augustine's to display ('ostendere') their privileges to the bishop of Durham and the abbot of St. Albans. The monks 'protulerunt ... scedulas duas, quas sua originalia constanter esse dicebant.' (brought forward two sheets of parchment, which they were resolutely claiming were their original [privileges].) Although one was notable for its age, it was dismissed because 'erat rasa ac si esset emendata, et absque sigillo,' (had been erased, as if it had been amended, and [was] without a seal,) and the other was 'digna reprehensione' because 'nova extitit ejus littera et bulla, cum vetustatis esse deberet annorum quingentorum octoginta.' (its writing and bull stood out [as being] new, although it should have been 580 years old.) As Gervase bitterly notes, 'Fuit etiam notatum, immo notorium et notabile, quod bulla ipsius plumbea fuit, cum non soleant cisaplina praesules vel primates scriptis suis autenticis bullas plumbeas apponere.' (It was also noted—or rather notable and notorious—that its bull was leaden, whereas primates and prelates this side of the Alps do not usually affix leaden bulls to their authentic[ated] documents.) Gervase, *Historical Works*, 296. For a similar episode, see John of Salisbury, *Historia pontificalis*, 86–7. Henceforward *HP*. For the precise contemporary valences of 'autenticum' and 'originale,' see Nicolaj, 'Originale, autenticum, publicum: una sciarada per il documento diplomatico,' 8–21.

Christ Church, strengthening their real power by demonstrating how they could be deployed most effectively.⁸³

Gervase wrote his *Chronica* from within an identifiable institution, whose survival depended quite precisely on the existence and valence of certain written privileges. As such, we can relate Gervase's reproduction of those privileges in his history to the priory's immediate corporate concerns fairly unproblematically.⁸⁴ The relationship between the form of Gervase's chronicle and Christ Church's political priorities becomes clearer still when his chronicle is compared to another text written at Christ Church in this period, the compilation known as the *Epistolae Cantuarienses*.⁸⁵ This compilation reproduced letters sent to and from Christ Church regarding the archbishops' attempts to establish collegiate churches in the diocese. Like Gervase's chronicle, this collection worked to circulate and publicize the documents that underpinned Christ Church's legal position, which would have otherwise been inaccessible to anyone but the priory's archivists or those who saw them at their periodic ritual exhibitions. And like Gervase, the compiler of this collection aimed to give the *scripta* polemical coherence by organizing them within the scheme of a larger narrative about the place of the priory in the kingdom. The existence of the *Epistolae Cantuarienses* suggests that Christ Church was engaged in a project to organize and mobilize their *munimenta* for a specific and

⁸³ For the tendency of archives to look forward in time as well as back, see Carolyn Steedman, "'Something She Called a Fever.'" Michelet, Derrida and Dust (Or, in the Archives with Michelet and Derrida),' in *Archives, Documentation and Institutions of Social Memory*, ed. Francis X. Blouin and William G. Rosenberg (Ann Arbor, 2006), 6. 'The archive is a record of the past at the same time as it points to the future. The grammatical tense of the archive is the future perfect.'

⁸⁴ This does not mean, however, that Gervase's chronicle should be aligned with Guenée's monastic 'histoires locales appuyées sur des documents originaux [qui] voulaient aider l'avocat ... Elles ne cherchaient pas les lecteurs.' (local histories built on original documents, [which] aimed to help lawyers ... They did not seek readers.) Guenée, *Histoire et culture historique*, 94. It strikes me that Gervase's chronicle in fact actively sought readers, and actively sought to persuade (or even change) them. In doing so, Gervase himself provides a much more compelling argument for his chosen historiographical form (and the form of texts such as the *Liber Eliensis*) than Guenée does for the readerless tools for the (apparently non-existent) lawyers he describes.

⁸⁵ William Stubbs, ed. *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, vol. 2, *Chronicles and Memorials of the Reign of Richard I* (London, 1865). For the date of this collection, see *ibid.*, xi.

political purpose that both encompassed and exceeded the scope of Gervase's work.⁸⁶

There is an identifiable ideological, historical and material context, therefore, upon which to base an analysis of Gervase's historiographical technique. In other words, we can relate Gervase's use of the Canterbury *munimenta* to what Christ Church was doing with the *munimenta* elsewhere. Taken together, the *Chronica* and the *Epistolae* demonstrate the mutual dependence of *scripta* and historical narrative on one another to direct each towards their purpose. However, the function of *scripta* in the histories written by Roger of Howden and Ralph de Diceto demands a more speculative analysis. Howden and Diceto do not explicitly comment on how and why they used *scripta*, as Gervase does; and there is no guarantee that they shared Gervase's nuanced rhetorical understanding of how narrative and *scripta* could be made to work together. More significantly, Howden's and Diceto's chronicles do not have the unambiguous corporate affiliation of Gervase's chronicle ('I do not write for a public library but for you, my brother Thomas, and for our poor little family,' Gervase claimed).⁸⁷ This institutional shapelessness—or rather indeterminate publicness—characterizes Howden's and Diceto's narratives as well the *scripta* they reproduce in them. Diceto was archdeacon of Middlesex and later dean of St. Pauls,⁸⁸ but his chronicles do not provide a history of the diocese or of its cathedral church. Howden's precise institutional affiliation is more ambiguous (and more

⁸⁶ There is evidence that the textual histories of the *Epistolae* and Gervase's *Chronica* are closely related. In one of the principal manuscripts of Gervase's *Chronica* (London, British Library MS Cotton Vespasian B. 19, the basis of Stubbs's edition of the *Chronica*), the letters which form part of the *Chronica* 'are full of mistakes and corrections, the latter a result of collation with the copies of the letters then existing at Canterbury, and all or nearly all reduced to something like the order [of the *Epistolae*].' Gervase, *Historical Works*, 1:1–li.

⁸⁷ 'Non bibliothecae publicae sed tibi, mi frater Thoma, et nostrae familiolae pauperulae scribo.' Gervase, *Historical Works*, 1:89. This reservation notwithstanding, Gervase also wrote for a more indeterminate 'lector bonus quisquis est,' whom he frequently addresses (see e.g. *ibid.*, 90, and *passim*). For the distinction between the *res publica* and the *res familiaris*—the latter which pertained to life within the monastery, see Georges Duby, 'Private Power, Public Power,' in *A History of Private Life: Revelations of the Medieval World*, ed. idem (Cambridge, MA, and London, 1988), 7.

⁸⁸ The most comprehensive survey of Diceto's career remains that of Stubbs in his introduction to Diceto's *opera*. Diceto, *Opera*, 1:xx–lxxxv. See also J. F. A. Mason, 'Diceto, Ralph de (d. 1199/1200),' in *ODNB*, online edition, accessed 1 November 2010.

various) than Diceto's, and it changed several times over the thirty years or so during which he was compiling his two chronicles.⁸⁹ The royal itinerary is a structuring principle of Howden's two chronicles, but the extent to which Howden fixes his historiographical gaze on the king and his court varies considerably over time.⁹⁰ And with their cold, distinctly ambivalent attitudes towards the Angevin kings, Diceto and Howden can hardly be thought to have been writing *for* them, even if they often wrote *about* them.⁹¹ As Nicholas Vincent has put it, they wrote 'in the shadow of the court.'⁹² But with its comings and goings and mutations in personnel, the Angevin court is (and was) almost impossible to define as a community;⁹³ it certainly could not be defined in the same way that an institution such as Christ Church could, with its tangibly historical incorporation under Archbishop Dunstan.⁹⁴ The court was a fact of political life, an enduring structure of power, not an institution established by or founded in history. 'God knows what the court is—I

⁸⁹ Roger was presented to the parsonage of Howden in 1174 (two years after he started writing his *Gesta*), but was not resident until 1189; and even after 1189 there is little to suggest that his possession of Howden had a significant determining influence on the shape of his history. (Roger does show more interest in northern England after 1189 than he had done beforehand, but, as John Gillingham has suggested, 'more seemed to be happening there' in the 1190s than before. Gillingham, 'Writing the Biography,' 216.) Howden is also thought to have been a canon of Glasgow cathedral from 1195, but his interest in Scotland is sporadic (and certainly does not provide a hermeneutic key the interpretation of his chronicles). For Howden's Scottish connections, see A. A. M. Duncan, 'Roger of Howden and Scotland, 1187–1201,' in *Church, Chronicle and Learning in Medieval and Early Renaissance Scotland*, ed. Barbara E. Crawford (Edinburgh, 1999), esp. 139, and Gillingham, 'Travels,' 69–91.

⁹⁰ 'His history ... followed the court when [Howden] followed the court, but when he was away from court ... then it reflected his own journeys.' Gillingham, 'Travels,' 72–3. As Nicholas Vincent points out, 'Howden's so-called *Gesta* concerns Henry II hardly at all, but instead deals with events in the holy land or Rome for much of the 1180s.' Nicholas Vincent, 'The Strange Case of the Missing Biographies: The Lives of the Plantagenet Kings of England, 1154–1272,' in *Writing Medieval Biography*, ed. Bates et al., 244.

⁹¹ 'They had no special theme, they glorified no-one.' Southern, 'Place of England,' 177. See now Vincent, 'Missing Biographies,' 237–57, for a compelling account of why the Angevin kings of England inspired so little historiographical affection in their own time.

⁹² Nicholas Vincent, 'Why 1199? Bureaucracy and Enrolment under John and his Contemporaries,' in *English Government in the Thirteenth Century*, ed. Adrian Jobson (Woodbridge, 2004), 28.

⁹³ Vincent has shown that contemporary statements regarding the mutations of the court should not be taken at face value. However, the margins of the court that Howden and Diceto appear to have inhabited, were precarious. Idem, 'The Court of Henry II,' in *Henry II: New Interpretations*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill (Woodbridge, 2007), esp. 294–8.

⁹⁴ As Thomas Bisson has provocatively asked of the Angevin court, 'Was the court (after all) much more than the talk it cultivated, the gossip that, once leaked, named the court as its source?' Thomas N. Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century: Power, Lordship and the Origins of European Government* (Princeton, 2009), 440.

don't,' complained Walter Map, famously;⁹⁵ and whatever it was,⁹⁶ it would certainly have been very difficult to use a *chronicle* to articulate its historical identity, other than in the most broadly cultural terms.

Unlike Christ Church, which had an archive that Gervase used, there was no single source or archive for the *scripta* Howden and Diceto reproduced. To be sure, many of the documents they reproduced had originated in or passed through the *curia regis* or Exchequer. But unlike Christ Church cathedral priory, the 'government' had no single repository of such documents;⁹⁷ and the *scripta* produced or recited in the course of 'government' business did not define (or legitimize) the government as an institution in quite the way that the *munimenta* reproduced by Gervase did for Christ Church. And although Diceto doubtless encountered many of the *scripta* he inserted in his chronicles in the course of his archidiaconal work—many of them were addressed to him and his chapter⁹⁸—the *scripta* themselves did not have the kind of constitutional significance for the chapter or diocese that Christ Church's *munimenta* did. So while Gervase's historiographical technique can be analyzed in the first instance by working from the institutional context of his chronicle towards its textual form, greater scrutiny will be needed of the implications of the *sort* of *scripta* that Howden and Diceto included. In other words, the *scripta* reproduced in those chronicles—and their uses and purposes in wider contemporary culture—need to be analyzed in order to establish a textual context for the form of the histories that made use of them.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ 'Nescio, sed Deus scit, quid sit curia.' Walter Map, *De nugis curialium*, ed. and trans. M. R. James, Christopher N. L. Brooke, and R. A. Mynors, revd ed. (Oxford, 1983), 1.1 (3) (translation after that of Bartlett, *Norman and Angevin Kings*, 29, who explores life in the Angevin court at 28–47).

⁹⁶ For comprehensive accounts of the structures and functions of the Angevin court, see Martin Aurell, *The Plantagenet Empire, 1154–1224*, trans. David Crouch (Harlow, 2007), 31–82, and Vincent, 'The Court of Henry II,' 278–334.

⁹⁷ Clanchy, *Memory*, 162–72. Monastic establishments such as Christ Church and Winchester, in fact, were partly responsible for storing royal documents. This may well have had less to do with monasteries' archival expertise than their own durability as institutions.

⁹⁸ 34 of the total 124, or 27 per cent.

⁹⁹ Howden's and Diceto's *scripta* have been scrutinized especially closely for their *provenance*. Empirical historiography has taken both the presence of *scripta* in chronicles and the path the *scripta* followed to arrive there to indicate the proximity or otherwise of the chronicler who included them to the government (or other institution) that produced them. And this proximity, in turn, provides an indication of the reliability of the story told by that chronicler. Tracing the route of a *scriptum*'s transmission, therefore, reveals

TYPOLOGY

The table below crudely summarizes the different types of *scripta* included in the chronicles.

Table 1. Documents classified by type

	<i>Gesta</i>	<i>Chronica</i>	<i>Ymagines</i>	Gervase
Letters	45	117	124	29
Charters and treaties	15	24	6	4
Secular legislation (laws, assizes etc.)	6	10	0	4
Ecclesiastical legislation	3	6	2	2
Others	2	7	0	1
Total	76	164	133	40

It is clear from the outset that the letter is the dominant form of *scriptum* reproduced in these chronicles—although, as we have already seen, letters are hard to define as a distinct textual category. Letters represent 59% of the *scripta* in Howden’s *Gesta*, 69% of those in the *Chronica* and 93% of those in Diceto’s *Ymagines*. The only significant difference in the types of document included by Howden and Diceto is that Howden includes a number of *concordiae* between English and French kings that Diceto omits; and Diceto reproduces none of the assizes—documents setting out the pleas to be heard by royal justices—that Howden does.

the level of potential distortion caused by the layers of mediation through which the chronicler received his information. For such an approach, see especially Corner, ‘*Gesta Regis*,’ 131: ‘In the annals for 1195 and 1196, originally compiled in the “parson of Howden” period, the *Chronica* has no document sent to or from the royal court, whereas in the annals for 1173 and 1174, originally compiled in the “clericus regis” period, the *Gesta* has only documents relating to the activities of that court. Again, while in the annals for 1173 and 1174 there is no document specifically concerning Yorkshire affairs, in the annals for 1195 and 1196 every document included would have been available in the parson’s home county... The *Gesta* could still be seen as in large part an account of events at the royal court written by a royal clerk. The value of the *Chronica*’s reports on events at that court would, however, be much more difficult to gauge if it were to be accepted that it was written in Yorkshire by a man no longer directly involved in the affairs of that court. An *evaluation of its reliability* would then become to a large degree dependent on an estimation of the *reliability of the channels through which information about the king reached the chronicler* in Yorkshire.’ My emphasis. For a different view, see Vincent, ‘Missing Biographies,’ 244–5.

Let us set aside for a moment Howden's use of these assizes, which has been exhaustively studied,¹⁰⁰ and look at the letters more closely. Given the near clerical monopoly on literacy in this period—and the centrality of epistolary communication to ecclesiastical textual culture—it should be no surprise that the majority of those who sent the letters included in the chronicles were themselves ecclesiastics.¹⁰¹ The prolific traffic of letters between England and the papal curia in the late twelfth century means that the high proportion of papal letters included in the chronicles should not be too surprising either. (Papal letters make up the biggest single category of letters in all three texts: 46% of all letters in the *Gesta*, 43% of those in the *Chronica* and 34% in the *Ymagine*s). Perhaps more surprising though—especially considering these chronicles are routinely described as being 'interested in the central government' because they included documents in their narratives¹⁰²—is the fact that bishops and archbishops make up the biggest single group of *recipients* of letters in all three texts. The majority of those who sent the letters to those bishops and archbishops were ecclesiastics too.¹⁰³ So we are largely dealing here with communication *between* ecclesiastics. Of course, ecclesiastics sometimes wrote to one another about purely secular business, or wrote to each other in their capacity as secular officials.¹⁰⁴ But the predominance of ecclesiastical letters complicates the notion that Diceto and Howden's

¹⁰⁰ See now Richardson and Sayles, *Governance*, 438–49, Holt, 'The Assizes of Henry II,' 85–106 and Corner, 'Texts of Henry II's Assizes,' 7–20.

¹⁰¹ Apart from anything else, apostolic precedent ensured that the letter was the definitive vehicle of ecclesiastical communication. For the importance of the Pauline model of letter and the way that the genre as a whole is penetrated by its liturgical functions, see Alain Boureau, 'The Letter-Writing Norm: a Medieval Invention,' in *Correspondence: Models of Letter-Writing from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Robert Chartier, Alain Boureau, and Cécile Dauphin (1977), 24–58. For tables providing statistical evidence for this paragraph, see appendix A below.

¹⁰² E.g. Gransden, *Historical Writing I*, 224: 'Interest in the central government is shown by the number of official documents in [Roger of Howden's] chronicle.'

¹⁰³ See appendix A.

¹⁰⁴ This was not as common a phenomenon as might be thought; or if it was a common phenomenon, this is not reflected in Howden's and Diceto's chronicles. There are no letters of this sort in the *Gesta*; the *Chronica* contains one letter from Walter de Coutances (archbishop of Rouen from 1184, chief justiciar of England, 1191–3) to Hugh du Puiset (bishop of Durham, 1153–95, justiciar of the north in 1190), about the capture of Richard I (Howden, *Chronica*, 3:195). Walter de Coutances also sent a letter to William de Longchamp, bishop of Ely and Richard I's chancellor, forbidding him to come to Canterbury after his deposition, which Diceto reproduces (Diceto, *Opera*, 2:92–3). Other than these examples, the ecclesiastical letters reproduced by Howden and Diceto concern ecclesiastical matters such as episcopal elections.

inclusion of documents *per se* demonstrates their interest in *secular* government. In fact, the letters included in these chronicles throw into relief the intimate relationship between secular and ecclesiastical government in this period.¹⁰⁵

What does the circulation of papal letters in contemporary textual culture imply for the chronicles that used them? An obvious point with which to start is that it is highly unlikely that the chroniclers copied these letters from draft or registered copies in the curial archives:¹⁰⁶ the recipients of the letters were the far more likely source. Establishing the exact source for the letters, however, is tricky: papal letters could be so widely dispersed in this period that the named recipient of a letter was only one of a number of people who would have seen it or possessed a copy. Many papal letters circulated far beyond the immediate circle of those to whom they were addressed directly, or they were encyclicals addressed to all Christians. Of the twenty papal letters in Howden's *Gesta*, for example, six were such encyclicals, which were intended to circulate among all Christians or among the members of named dioceses.¹⁰⁷ A further letter is addressed expressly to Henry II, urging him to go on crusade,¹⁰⁸ but this

¹⁰⁵ The overlapping jurisdictions of those who held both ecclesiastical and secular office was a constant point of political friction (and provided room for political manoeuvre) in this period, and was a problem addressed by all those who wrote history. Richard of Devizes reports, for example, how William de Longchamp (royal chancellor, bishop of Ely and papal legate), arrested Hugh du Puiset (bishop of Durham and justiciar) 'non presul presule, sed cancellarius castellanum.' (not as a bishop seizing a bishop, but as the chancellor seizing a castellan.) *The Chronicle of Richard of Devizes*, ed. and trans. John T. Appleby (London, 1963), 12. According to Jocelin of Brakelond, Abbot Samson of Bury St. Edmunds refused to visit Archbishop Hubert Walter when he was making a legatine visitation to the churches of Norwich. Samson claimed he had refused to meet Hubert Walter in the latter's capacity as the king's justiciar, not in his capacity as papal legate. Brakelond, *Cronica*, 84. For the close relationship between secular and ecclesiastical administration, see especially John D. Cotts, 'Monks and Mediocrities in the Shadow of Thomas Becket: Peter of Blois on Episcopal Duty,' *Haskins Society Journal* 10 (2001), 141–61.

¹⁰⁶ For the practice of registration from drafts at the papal curia, see Reginald Lane Poole, *Lectures on the History of the Papal Chancery Down to the Time of Innocent III* (Cambridge, 1915), 128–35. For a correction to Poole's chronology, see Christopher R. Cheney and Mary G. Cheney, eds., *The Letters of Pope Innocent III (1198–1216) Concerning England and Wales* (Oxford, 1967), x, xxii.

¹⁰⁷ Howden, *Gesta*, 1:187–8 (*Immensas laudes*), 1:188–90 (*Exigunt gratissimae*), 1:272–4 (*Cor nostrum*), 1:275 (*Cum orientalis*), 1:340–1 (*Celestis altitudo*); Howden, *Gesta*, 2:15–19 (*Audita tremendi*), 2:19 (*Numquam melius*). Diceto, by contrast, only includes one such letter: Diceto, *Opera*, 1:421 (*Exigunt gratissimae*).

¹⁰⁸ Howden, *Gesta*, 1:332–3 (*Cum cuncti*).

letter, like Alexander III's letter to Prester John (which Howden also included),¹⁰⁹ was clearly intended to circulate widely—and it did.¹¹⁰

Many of the encyclicals reproduced by Howden and Diceto were sent in the course of preaching the crusade, but papal letters about quite specific administrative matters could circulate beyond their intended recipient too.¹¹¹ This is especially true of decretal letters—letters with legislative force, usually clarifying points of law about particular cases¹¹²—which had begun to be collected *and circulated* by English judges delegate and canonists 'with an almost incredible enthusiasm' in England in precisely this period.¹¹³ Diceto, who was a papal judge delegate himself on occasion,¹¹⁴ included five such letters in his *Ymagines*, and is known to

¹⁰⁹ Howden, *Gesta*, 1:210–12 (*Apostolica sedes*).

¹¹⁰ William of Newburgh and Gerald de Barri also reproduce *Cum cuncti*. (Newburgh, *Historia Anglorum*, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, ed. Richard Howlett, 4 vols (London, 1884–9), 1:245–7; Cambrensis, *De principis instructione*, in *Opera*, ed. Warner et al., 8:204–6). This letter was brought to England by Heraclius, patriarch of Jerusalem, who travelled to England in 1184 to seek Henry II's help in the Holy Land. According to John Gillingham 'Howden was clearly an eye-witness' to the meeting at Reading, where Heraclius delivered this letter to Henry II along with the keys to Jerusalem. As so often happens, Roger of Howden's reproduction of a letter is used to make an assertion about his own activities: Gillingham's suggestion that Howden was present at Reading is in fact only a conjecture, made on the basis that Howden reproduced the patriarch's speech along with his letter. John Gillingham, 'Roger of Howden on Crusade,' in *Richard Coeur de Lion: Kingship, Chivalry and War in the Twelfth Century*, ed. John Gillingham (London, 1994), 145–6.

¹¹¹ The chronicler Jocelin of Brakelond, for example, reported that Abbot Samson of Bury St. Edmunds sent Hubert Walter a copy of the papal letter exempting St. Edmunds from legatine visitations, and could do so easily because 'habuit enim abbas duo pario literarum sub eadem forma.' (the abbot had two copies of the letters in the same form.) Brakelond, *Cronica*, 84.

¹¹² 'Decretal letters were commissions to judges delegate, or replies to questions submitted to the pope for guidance of points of law or procedure, the resolutions of specific disputes and a host of consultation of all kinds.' Charles Duggan, 'Papal Judges Delegate and the Making of the "New Law" in the Twelfth Century,' in *Cultures of Power: Lordship, Status and Process in Twelfth Century Europe*, ed. Thomas N. Bisson (Philadelphia, 1995), 174. Cf. Gérard Fransen, *Les Décrétales et les collections décrétales* (Turnhout, 1972), 12.

¹¹³ Charles Duggan, *Twelfth-Century Decretal Collections and their Importance in English History* (London, 1963), 22. English canonists were precocious in this respect compared with those in continental Europe, and this precocity cannot be unrelated to the growing importance of record keeping more generally in English administrative practice. For the process by which the 'local resources of the most primitive decretal collections were supplemented from similar records in other districts, especially from the records of associated judges delegate,' see *ibid.*, 123.

¹¹⁴ For Diceto's 'expert knowledge of ecclesiastical law,' see Anne Duggan and Charles Duggan, 'Ralph Diceto, Henry II and Becket, With an Appendix on Decretal Letters,' in *Authority and Power: Studies in Medieval Law and Government in Honour of Walter Ullmann*, ed. Brian Tierney and Peter Linehan (Cambridge, 1980), 65–7. Diceto's use of papal decretals in his historical works is analyzed in detail in *ibid.*, 74–82.

have received further decretal letters that he did not include.¹¹⁵ Howden also included four decretal letters in his chronicles, which are attested elsewhere in canonical collections.¹¹⁶ No single surviving decretal collection can be shown to have been the source of the decretal letters reproduced in Howden's or Diceto's chronicles. This suggests, on the one hand, that the chroniclers did not use such collections as sources for the documents in their chronicles.¹¹⁷ On the other hand, it also suggests that the decretal letters in question—like the papal encyclicals—were public documents that were widely available.

What goes for the circulation and collection of papal letters in this period goes for ecclesiastical correspondence of a more personal nature (although it hardly makes sense to talk about 'personal' letters in this period).¹¹⁸ Many of the great letter collections of the Middle Ages were being compiled at the same time, or shortly before, Howden and Diceto were writing their chronicles. These collections included those of the letters of Gilbert Foliot, Arnulf of Lisieux and Peter of Blois; and Alan of Tewkesbury was redacting the letters documenting and commemorating the Becket conflict.¹¹⁹ Although individual letter-writers or their

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 77–78.

¹¹⁶ These are *Licet nobis* (*Chronica*, 2:7–9; WH 618), *Fraternitate vestrae* (*Chronica*, 2:32–3; WH 520), *Cum sacrosancta* (*Chronica*, 3:312–6; WH 300), and *Cum venissent* (*Chronica*, 4:177–81; Potthast 1285). The encyclicals *Apostolica sedes* (*Gesta*, 1:210–12; *Chronica*, 2:168–70; WH 89), *Nunquam melius* (*Gesta*, 2:19; *Chronica*, 2:329–30; WH 689A) and *Quoniam ad episcoporum* (*Chronica*, 2:332; WH 830) are also attested in canonical collections. The WH numbers refer to Walther Holtzmann's card index of pre-Gregorian decretal letters. The other collections in which these letters appear can be found via the database of Holtzmann's index cards, hosted on the website of the Stephan Kuttner Institute of Medieval Canon Law: (http://www.kuttner-institute.jura.uni-muenchen.de/holtzmann_formular.htm).

¹¹⁷ As Christopher and Mary Cheney note, there are 'countless rulings of legal importance by the popes from Eugenius III which have been transmitted in archives and registers and which do not appear in any decretal collection,' and not all such collections survived. So it is possible that Howden and Diceto had access to collections that have not survived. Christopher R. Cheney and Mary G. Cheney, eds., *Studies in the Collections of Twelfth-Century Decretals From the Papers of the Late Walther Holtzmann* (Vatican, 1979), 1.

¹¹⁸ 'The classical distinction between the public epistle and the private letter ... was more or less disregarded in the Middle Ages.' Giles Constable, ed. *The Letters of Peter the Venerable*, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA, 1967), 1:2–3. In an interesting inversion of this public status of private correspondence, Christopher Cheney has noted how episcopal archives, which we might think of as public phenomena, were treated as the personal property of bishops. Cheney, *English Bishops' Chanceries*, 135. And as Nicholas Vincent has pointed out, 'the king's rolls were precisely that: rolls that served the private and personal interest of the king, not public records.' Vincent, 'Why 1199?', 26.

¹¹⁹ As Vincent has also pointed out, 'it is surely no coincidence that the wider circle of the Plantagenets responsible for such letter collections as those of John of Salisbury, Gilbert

households usually directed the assembly of such collections, once they had assembled them letter collections circulated far beyond their compilers; they were often considered to be literary productions in their own right.¹²⁰ Those who *sent* letters were not the only people who collected them, however.¹²¹ Like the judges delegate who collected decretal letters and the canonists who circulated them, the recipients of other types of letter, and the recipients' own epistolary networks in turn, were also sometimes responsible for collecting them. As with the decretal collections, no existing collections of correspondence provided Howden and Diceto with their epistolary material, other than the collections connected to Becket. But the popularity of such collections in this period, their wide distribution for artistic as well as archival purposes, and their *fundamentally public nature* provide a significant analogue to the work of collection and reproduction undertaken by the chroniclers themselves.

The relationship between known letter collections and Howden and Diceto's chronicles is not as neat, to be sure, as that between the *Epistolae Cantuarienses* and Gervase of Canterbury's chronicle. But Diceto and Howden had close connections with important people who had political interests that they pursued in part by written means. These people (whom we shall meet in due course) circulated letters among their literate friends and adversaries for polemical purposes.¹²² And they evidently did so with the express desire that they should have as wide—and as enduring—a circulation as possible. Dossiers of documents were assembled, almost as

Foliot, Alan of Tewkesbury, Peter of Blois or the collections of papal decretals ... should have been the same environment from which the first systematic enrolments of royal letters emerged since the fall of Rome.' Vincent, 'Why 1199?', 20. It is also worth noting that Diceto was personally and professionally connected to Gilbert Foliot (whom Ralph served while the latter was bishop of London) and Arnulf of Lisieux (with whom Ralph studied in Paris; see now Diceto, *Opera*, 1:xxxi–ii).

¹²⁰ Julian Haseldine, 'The Creation of a Literary Memorial: The Letter Collection of Peter of Celle,' *Sacris Erudiri* 37 (1997), 336.

¹²¹ For the importance of the role of drafts, see R. W. Southern, review of *The Letters of John of Salisbury*, *EHR* 72 (1957), 495. For the 'elusiveness' of the processes of epistolary collection in this period, see *ibid.*, 333.

¹²² See, for example the character assassination of Richard I's chancellor, William de Longchamp, penned by Hugh de Nonant (bishop of Coventry) and reproduced by Howden, which must have brought a smile to the face of Howden's patron (and Longchamp's arch-rival), Bishop Hugh du Puiset. Howden, *Chronica*, 3:141–7. Gerald de Barri also makes use of this letter in his *Vita Galfridi Archiepiscopus Eboracensis Cambrensis*, *Opera* 4:403–5.

libelli de lite,¹²³ around individual causes or controversies.¹²⁴ Such collections of correspondence provided Howden and Diceto with the letters about the Becket conflict;¹²⁵ and they may also have provided the letters sent during the controversy surrounding William de Longchamp's chancellorship.¹²⁶ Both chroniclers include a significant number of letters documenting the dispute between Walter de Coutances (archbishop of Rouen) and Richard I, over Coutances's manor of Les Andelys.¹²⁷ And in Howden's case the career and controversies of Geoffrey Plantagenet, archbishop of York, receive considerable documentary attention,¹²⁸ as does the drawn-out controversy revolving around the disputed election to the see of St. Andrews in 1180, which we shall investigate more closely shortly.¹²⁹

The connection between (polemical) letter collections and chronicles that made use of letters is not only evident in their common use of epistolary material. Contemporary textual culture also recognized the specifically *historiographical* nature of letter collections and the way that they could be used to memorialize and disseminate causes. The similarity between

¹²³ For *libelli de lite* and their origins in the investiture controversy, see Karl J. Leyser, 'The Polemics of the Papal Revolution,' in *Trends in Medieval Political Thought*, ed. Beryl Smalley (Oxford, 1967), 42–64.

¹²⁴ 'Archetypes α and β [of Becket's correspondence] were specially constructed *libelli de lite*, probably made during the last months of Becket's life, and depend on regularly-kept archives, divided into papal and non-papal letters, together with separate files and dossiers relating to current business and special concerns.' Anne Duggan, ed. and trans., *The Correspondence of Thomas Becket Archbishop of Canterbury 1162–1170*, 2 vols (Oxford, 2000), 1: lxxix–lxxx.

¹²⁵ 19 letters in the *Ymagines*; three in the *Gesta*; 28 in the *Chronica*. For an analysis of the already-complied collections of Becket's correspondence Howden and Diceto used, see Anne Duggan, 'The Manuscript Transmission of Letter Collections Relating to the Becket Dispute and their Use as Contemporary Sources' (PhD diss., University of London, 1971), 274–334.

¹²⁶ Three letters in Diceto's *Ymagines*; six in Howden's *Chronica*.

¹²⁷ Which accounts for three letters in Diceto's *Ymagines*. Walter de Coutances was a frequent correspondent of Diceto (sending him nine letters preserved in the *Ymagines*). Diceto's Renaissance editor, John Bale, lists the letters between Diceto and Coutances as a work in itself, distinct from the *Ymagines* (see Diceto, *Opera*, 1: lxxxvi). For Coutances and the Les Andelys case, see Peter A. Poggioli, 'From Politician to Prelate: The Career of Walter of Coutances, Archbishop of Rouen, 1184–1207' (PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1984), 124–9.

¹²⁸ 17 letters in the *Chronica* (Geoffrey's career is not covered by the chronological scope of the *Gesta*). For Howden's account of Geoffrey's career, see Marie Lovatt, ed. *English Episcopal Acta, 27. York, 1189–1212* (Oxford, 2004), cxxxii–cxxxiii, and Claudia Rother, 'Geoffrey, Archbishop of York: A Prism of Twelfth-Century Historical Writing' (MA diss., University of York, 2008), 29–41.

¹²⁹ Seven letters in the *Gesta*; 12 in the *Chronica*.

compiling chronicles and collecting letters is evident from the way that contemporary letter collections skilfully combined collected letters with historical narrative. Gerald de Barri's *Liber de invectionibus*, which charted his disputed election to St. David's via a combination of collected letters and narrative, is one example of such a practice.¹³⁰ The *Book of St Gilbert*, which presented a narrative *vita* and a collection of letters about Gilbert of Sempringham in the cause of his canonization, is another.¹³¹ If the use of historical narrative alongside or between collected letters hints at their affinity with historiography, the compilers of collections themselves made the connection quite explicit. The compiler of the *Book of St. Gilbert*, for example, draws attention to the historiographical nature of the process of compilation by emphasizing the careful chronological ordering of the letters.¹³² Many letter collections compiled in this period shared this concern for chronological order.¹³³ Significantly, the determination of the correct chronological order lay at the heart of Orosius's model of historical writing—which was profoundly influential in this period¹³⁴—and it had been debated by classical and medieval rhetoricians and grammarians in

¹³⁰ Giraldus Cambrensis, *Invectionum libri sex*, vol. 3 of *Opera Omnia*, ed. J.S. Brewer (London, 1863), 3:3–100.

¹³¹ For the growth in importance of such compilations of written evidence in the canonization process, see André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1997), 38–9. For the collection's role as written testimony of Gilbert's sanctity, see *The Book of St. Gilbert*, ed. and trans. Raymonde Foreville and Gillian Kier (Oxford, 1987), xcvi–xcviii.

¹³² 'Exemplaria epistolarum ... quibus beati G(ileberti) sanctitas et magnificentia operum eius merito commendata est et probata, in unam seriem congegimus.' (We have collected together into one sequence copies of letters ... by which the sanctity of blessed Gilbert, and the greatness of his works, are rightfully commended and proved.) *Ibid.*, 198–9.

¹³³ For example, the compiler of the *Epistolae Cantuarienses* states he had redacted the letters 'in ordinem et unum corpus.' Stubbs, ed. *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, 1. Becket's biographer Herbert of Bosham referred to Becket's letters 'quas ... secundum ordinem historiae venerabilis prior sanctae Cantuariensis ecclesiae Alanus laboriose quidem et studiose digessit.' (which Alan the venerable prior of the church of Canterbury laboriously and indeed studiously arranged according to the order of history.) Bosham, *Vita*, *MTB* 3:396.

¹³⁴ 'Praecepas mihi ut ... ordinato breviter voluminis textu explicarem.' (You had instructed me ... to set out in a book, concisely and in order.) Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos libri VIII*, ed. Marie-Pierre Arnaud-Lindet, 3 vols (Paris, 1990–1), 1:1.10. *idem*, *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*, trans. A. T. Fear (Liverpool, 2010), 22. For a discussion of the importance of chronological order to medieval historical narrative, see Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, chapter 1. For a contemporary example of a concern for historiographical order see, for example, William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens, et al. (Turnhout, 1986), prol. 15: 'Rerum autem incontaminatam prosequi gestarum seriem.' (I have followed the uncorrupted order of events.)

their discussions of historical *narratio*.¹³⁵ Another foundational text of Christian historiography, Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*, also emphasized the historiographical nature of the process of collection (or rather the fundamental role of *scripta*-collecting to historiography). As Rufinus put it in his Latin translation of Eusebius, Eusebius saw his task as uniting into one body through historical narrative (*in unum corpus redigere historica narratione*) that which his predecessors had recorded (*memoraverant*) in dispersed places.¹³⁶

The manifest *writtenness* of letter collections and chronicles also provides a point of contact between the two genres. The compiler of the *Epistolae Cantuarienses* and Gerald de Barri draw attention to the status of their collections as written monuments in the same way as historians often did in their histories. In the preface of the *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, the compiler speaks of the prudence of those in the past who committed the 'rerum gestarum notitia' to writing. And he suggests that, in compiling letters, he too was inserting into his work 'ea quae gesta sunt' in the course of the disputes between Christ Church and the archbishops of Canterbury.¹³⁷ Gerald sought in his *Liber de invectionibus* (he said) to set forth the 'things by which he won praise at the curia,' because 'things said or done by the efforts of the ancients are accustomed to be noted down and perpetuated in writing (for the instruction of posterity and for posterity to imitate).'¹³⁸

¹³⁵ See the classical examples compiled in Lausberg, *Handbook*, §317, §§443–52, and the extracts from Conrad of Hirsau's *Dialogue on the Authors* and Bernardus Silvestris's commentary on the *Aeneid* translated in A. J. Minnis and A. B. Scott, eds., *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism, c. 1100–c. 1375: The Commentary Tradition*, revd. ed. (Oxford, 1988), 45 and 151 respectively.

¹³⁶ 'Ex his, quae illi sparsim memoraverant, eligentes ac velut e rationabilibus campis doctorum flosculos decerpentes historica narratione in unum corpus redigere ... temptavimus.' (So, choosing from those things that [our predecessors] had here and there committed to memory—[as if we were] gathering flowers from the intellectual meadows of the learned—we have attempted to unify [them] into one body.) *Eusebius Caesariensis secundum translationem quam fecit Rufinus*, ed. Eduard Schwartz and Theodor Mommsen, 3 vols (Leipzig, 1903–8) 1:9. For the medieval reception of Eusebius/ Rufinus's notion of historiographical collecting, see Bernard Guenée, 'Lo storico e la compilazione nel XIII secolo,' in *Aspetti della letteratura latina nel secolo XIII: atti del primo Convegno internazionale di studi dell'Associazione per il Medioevo e l'Umanesimo latini*, ed. Claudio Leonardi and Giovanni Orlandi (Florence, 1986), esp. 58–63.

¹³⁷ Stubbs, ed. *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, 1. Cf. the comments about Diceto's use of letters in his 'capitula ymaginum,' n. 60, p. 33, above.

¹³⁸ 'Quoniam egregie dicta vel acta veterum studiis ad posteritatis tam instructionem quam imitationem literis annotari solent et perpetuari, ea quibus in curia Giraldus dictis aemulorum aut scriptis ... explicare curavimus.' Cambrensis, *Invectionum libri sex*, in

So it seems that the historiographical—as well as polemical and rhetorical—potential of letters and letter collections would have been well understood by chroniclers and by their readers. The patterns of circulation and dynamics of collection of letters in the late twelfth century also provide modern readers of Howden’s and Diceto’s chronicles with a valuable insight into the way that their authors might have operated. The model of contemporary letter collections suggests that it was quite common to *do* something with letters—to re-frame them somehow, to circulate them in a slightly different form—in order to tell a wider story of which they could be made to tell a part. So while modernity might consider the work of collecting to be a fundamentally passive activity, late twelfth-century letter collections suggest that, in gathering and ordering *scripta*, their compilers were actively turning them towards a new purpose. I have suggested that it is unlikely that Howden and Diceto encountered the majority of the letters they reproduced in ready-made collections. Could we then say that they were themselves engaged in collecting letters about specific subjects, and in circulating them through the medium of their chronicles?

CASE STUDY: ROGER OF HOWDEN AND ST. ANDREWS

The letters relating to the disputed election to St. Andrews, which Roger of Howden reproduced in both his chronicles, can serve as a case study here to illustrate the likely provenance of a series of letters on a single subject. The dispute at St. Andrews began in 1180, when King William of Scotland attempted to impose his chaplain, Hugh, on the see, after the chapter had itself elected John ‘the Scot.’ The dispute lasted until 1188, when Hugh died making his case in Rome, John in the meantime having surrendered his claim. Howden’s account of the dispute is valuable from a

Opera 3:11. Of course, the wish to commit things to writing for the benefit of posterity was not the sole domain of historiography, but is also found in a range of documentary discourse (such as Hugh de Nonant’s letter, reproduced in Howden, *Chronica*, 3:141–7 and in the *aregnae* of many charters). But praising the ancients’ practice of recording their deeds in writing for posterity (as Gerald and the compiler of the *Epistolae* do) appears to be a distinctly historiographical topos. See, for example, Walter Map’s lament that ‘The results of the industry of the ancients are in our hands; they make deeds which even in their times were past, present to ours, and we remain silent ... who is bold enough to engage (*impaginare*) anything that happens now or even to write down our names?’ Map, *De nugis curialium*, 405–7.

historiographical point of view because it exists in two versions: Howden wrote the *Gesta* broadly contemporaneously with the events it narrated;¹³⁹ but he began the *Chronica*, which also recounts the dispute, only after 1192.¹⁴⁰ The two accounts of the dispute differ. Howden presents the letters in the *Chronica* in a different order from that of the *Gesta*; and the *Chronica* has four additional letters—two from 1182 and two from 1186—which do not occur in the *Gesta*. Furthermore, the *Chronica*'s narrative of the account is more consolidated than in the *Gesta*, where it is dispersed throughout the annals.¹⁴¹

The fact that Howden composed the *Gesta* contemporaneously at this point probably rules out the possibility that he had access to a ready-made dossier of letters about the dispute, as he had with the Becket materials.¹⁴² Rather, it seems that they were inserted, along with glossing narratives, as and when he obtained them. If this is indeed the case, do the additional letters inserted in the *Chronica* indicate that Howden had actively sought them out in the years since he had written about St. Andrews in the

¹³⁹ Howden, *Gesta*, 1:xlix–l. Cf. Stenton, 'Roger of Howden and Benedict,' 574 and David Corner, 'Howden, Roger of (d. 1201/2),' in *ODNB*, online edition, accessed 1 November 2010.

¹⁴⁰ The *Chronica* was written from 1192, and was itself revised between the very end of the twelfth century and 1201 when Howden died. David Corner, 'The Earliest Surviving Manuscripts of Roger of Howden's 'Chronica',' *EHR* 98.387 (1983), 297–310.

¹⁴¹ Compare, for example, the beginning of the dispute in the *Gesta*, with that in the *Chronica*. The version in the *Gesta* is presented in the form of two paratactic notices. The first notice states that 'Eodem anno R. episcopus Sancti Andreae obit.' The second notes John's return from presenting his appeal to the papal curia, without having noted first why had gone: 'Eodem anno, Johannes cognomine Scottus, electus ad episcopatum Sancti Andreae in Scotia, rediit ab Alexandro summo pontifice, cui conquestus fuerat quod, post electionem de ipso canonicè factam, Willelmus rex Scotiae, Hugonem capellanum suum in episcopatum Sancti Andreae intruserat.' (In the same year, R. bishop of St. Andrews died. In the same year, John (surname the Scot), elect of the see of St. Andrews, returned from the supreme pontiff Alexander. He had complained to him that William king of Scotland had forced his chaplain Hugh upon the see of St. Andrews, after his own (canonically made) election.) By contrast, the *Chronica*'s version of the annal is written in more flowing prose complete with causal subordination: 'Eodem anno Ricardus episcopus Sancti Andreae in Scotia obiit: quo defuncto, statim fit schisma de electione pontificis. Canonici enim de ecclesia Sancti Andreae elegerunt sibi in episcopum magistrum Johannem cognomento Scottum: et Willelmus rex Scottorum elegit Hugonem capellanum suum, et consecrari fecit ab episcopis regni sui, super appellationem a praedicto Johanne electo ad dominum Papam factam.' (In the same year Richard, bishop of St. Andrews in Scotland, died. His death immediately caused a schism in the election of the primate. For the canons of St. Andrews elected master John (surnamed the Scot) to the see, and William king of the Scots elected Hugh, his chaplain; and [William] had him consecrated by the bishops of his kingdom despite the appeal made to the Lord Pope by the aforesaid John.) Howden, *Gesta*, 1:250; *Chronica*, 2:208.

¹⁴² A. A. M. Duncan, however, suggests that he did. Duncan, 'Roger of Howden and Scotland,' 141.

Gesta—perhaps so he could give a more complete account of the dispute—or had he merely held them back from the earlier account? It is impossible to say for certain. But it seems likely that Howden had seen at least one of these additional letters while he was writing the *Gesta*, but left it out. This letter is *Cum litteras*, a report to Lucius III (pope, 1181–5) sent by his judge delegate Roland (bishop-elect of Dol) who had been given legatine authority to broker a reconciliation between the parties at St. Andrews. Although *Cum litteras* is not included in the *Gesta*, there appears to have been some dialogue between the two texts at some point, which raises the possibility that this letter was available to, but held back from, the *Gesta*. The *Gesta* reports that when the legate had suggested that both parties renounce their claims to St. Andrews, Hugh told King William that he would rather argue for the validity of his election before the pope in person. It continues:

Cumque rex huic adquisierat consilio, praefatus Hugo litteras quas Johannes episcopus contra eum a summo pontifice adquisierat, redarguit falsitatis, et appellavit ad audientiam domini papae. (Howden, *Gesta*, 1:290)

(When the king had agreed to this plan, the aforementioned Hugh accused the letters against him (which Bishop John had obtained from the supreme Pontiff) of being forgeries, and appealed to the lord pope's court.)

The *Chronica*, for its part, mentions nothing of the agreement between Hugh and King William (it merely reports that Hugh refused to surrender his claim), and rephrases Hugh's accusation of forgery: 'Et statim litteras quas Johannes episcopus contra eum a Romano pontifice impetraverat, arguavit falsitatis, et appellavit ad Romanum pontificum.'¹⁴³ It then adds the text of *Cum litteras*:

Cum litteras, quas Hugo episcopus redarguerat falsitatis, eidem episcopo dedissemus, et eas in quibus processus rei continetur, acceptaque a domino rege Scottorum licentia recedere cum festinatione vellemus. (Howden, *Chronica*, 2:271)

(When we had handed over to bishop Hugh the letter that the same bishop had accused of being false, and in which were contained the [details of the case], we wished to come back in haste, having been granted leave by the king of the Scots.)

¹⁴³ Howden, *Chronica*, 2:270. 'And immediately he accused the letters which Bishop John had obtained against him from the Roman Pontiff of being forgeries.'

It seems strange that there should be such strong verbal correspondence between the two texts without the *Gesta's* text being in some way dependent on that of the letter.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, the suspicion that it may have originally been available to the *Gesta* but left out is heightened by the fact that *Cum litteras*—along with all but one of the letters about St. Andrews included in the *Chronica* but not the *Gesta*—is left out of all but the oldest manuscript of the *Chronica's* tradition.¹⁴⁵ The importance of this conclusion for the St. Andrews material is that when this manuscript was revised,¹⁴⁶ epistolary material and its associated narrative may actually have been excised in conformity with the model of the earlier *Gesta*.

A close reading of *Cum litteras* and its immediate context reveals what was at stake in the inclusion or excision of certain letters. Controversies such as those surrounding the election to St. Andrews were at least in part played out in writing; and they often had at their core disputes about written texts, or even disputes about writing itself. As we have seen, both the *Chronica* and *Gesta* record that Hugh claimed that the letters that John had obtained from Pope Alexander confirming his election were forgeries. Forgeries or not, the very existence of these *instrumenta*—as Howden calls them here—was materially damaging to Hugh and his patron King William. This is a fact tacitly acknowledged by Hugh himself, who saw that they had to be discredited if not got rid of altogether. So when the papal judges delegate were negotiating with King William, he agreed to give John the chancellorship of Scotland, a pension, and the bishopric of Dunkeld, if only he would renounce his claim to St. Andrews. But (as Roland relates it to Lucius III in *Cum litteras*) 'He wished though that Bishop John burn all the documents which were obtained from your

¹⁴⁴ This does not rule out, however, the possibility that a third text was an interlocutor. As Haseldine notes of surviving medieval letters, 'what might have been part of a more complex communication, complementing verbal messages or other documents, and resting on the assumption of shared knowledge of [epistolary] circles, now stands apart from that fuller context.' Haseldine, 'Literary Memorial,' 361.

¹⁴⁵ The oldest manuscript for this part of the *Chronica* is Oxford, Bodleian MS Laud 582, which Corner identified as Howden's autograph copy. Corner, 'Earliest Surviving Manuscripts,' 305–10. *Comperto nobis* is exceptional in being attested in all manuscripts of the *Chronica*; but it alone comes from the first part of the *Chronica* (up to 1181), whose textual history is far more stable than the second part (1181–1201).

¹⁴⁶ Thus providing the basis for the remaining witnesses.

predecessor Alexander (of dear memory) on the matter of St. Andrews.¹⁴⁷ To the chancellorship, pension and bishopric, John willingly agreed; but (he said) he would never let Hugh remain in possession of St. Andrews. And rather than burn the *instrumenta*, 'he wished that these documents be stored in some place so that they could never be used against the royal will.'¹⁴⁸

The negotiations between John and William ultimately failed,¹⁴⁹ and a date was fixed for John and Hugh to argue their cases before Lucius in Rome. It is unclear what became of John's *instrumenta* from Alexander, except that if they were destroyed, it was after Howden had seen and copied them.¹⁵⁰ But what is striking here is that Howden, in reproducing those documents, is doing precisely what King William and Bishop Hugh had sought to make impossible. Howden ensured, that is, that even if the original *instrumenta* were destroyed, they would have an afterlife as *documenta*, ghostly re-enactments of their original creation. Hugh and William had both been absolved so did not need to fear the *instrumenta* themselves, nor their inherent censures. They did, however, fear precisely the *documentary*—or rather historiographical—function that Howden made these texts fulfil (a function that John's crafty suggestion only to put them out of reach always kept as a possibility). So it is perhaps not surprising that William and Hugh wanted not only to be absolved from the original determination of the case by Alexander III, but also wanted that determination struck from the record. So much, then, for Howden's famous impartiality, which is often mentioned in the same breath as his

¹⁴⁷ 'Volebat tamen, quod idem Johannes episcopus omnia instrumenta sua combureret, quae super facto Sancti Andreae fuerant a piaie recordationis Alexandro praedecessore vestro obtenta.' Howden, *Chronica*, 2:271.

¹⁴⁸ 'Volebat ... quod instrumenta praedicta in aliquo loco reponerentur, ita quod nunquam sibi contra voluntatem regiam eis uti liceret.' Howden, *Chronica*, 2:271. This solution is noteworthy for its diametric opposition to canon law: 'In ecclesiasticis causis regia uoluntas sacerdotibus non est preferenda.' (In ecclesiastical affairs the royal will is to be subordinate to priests.) Gratian, *Decretum*, D. 10 c. 3 (rubric). Gratian, *The Treatise on Laws (Decretum DD. 1–20) with The Ordinary Gloss*, trans. Augustine Thompson O. P. and James Gordley (Washington DC, 1993), 34.

¹⁴⁹ Howden, *Chronica*, 2:270.

¹⁵⁰ Intriguingly, Howden remains the only witness to these documents. See Robert Somerville, ed. *Scotia Pontificia: Papal Letters to Scotland Before the Pontificate Of Innocent III* (Oxford, 1982), 10.

inclusion of documents.¹⁵¹ By including them he was taking sides, and the suppression in all but the autograph manuscript of the *Chronica* of *Cum litteras* (which expresses King William's and Bishop Hugh's desire to have the documents destroyed) perhaps reveals that someone—possibly Howden himself—was uneasy about their inclusion.

As Gervase of Canterbury did with Christ Church's *munimenta*, Howden was turning these letters to a historiographical purpose in order to rescue them from oblivion. By using them in his history he was actively circulating them, revivifying them by exposing them to a new audience; he was giving them a new frame of reference in the same way as compilers of letter collections such as Gerald de Barri did.¹⁵² Exactly what was at stake in Howden's reproduction (or suppression) of these *scripta* remains obscure.¹⁵³ But the St. Andrews dispute did have a fundamental importance for the ecclesiastical politics of northern England where Howden held his parsonage. The two most senior ecclesiastical figures of northern England, Roger de Pont l'Évêque (archbishop of York, 1154–1181) and Hugh du Puiset (bishop of Durham, 1153–1195), both had strong interests in the Scottish church, and were both involved in the St. Andrew's affair. The appointment of the archbishop of York as papal legate alongside the bishop of Durham to resolve the dispute in 1181 had a special piquancy too, because Canterbury and York had long fought over which was owed obedience by the Scottish Church.¹⁵⁴ So the political significance of the episode exceeded the simple fact that Alexander III had

¹⁵¹ According to Stenton, the *Gesta* and *Chronica* 'stand out among the rest as objective narratives, supplemented and illustrated by official records and letters.' Stenton, 'Roger of Howden and Benedict,' 574. Cf. Gillingham, 'Travels,' 72–3.

¹⁵² For the implications of this process of textual reframing, see chapter 3 below.

¹⁵³ John Gillingham has argued that, because Howden is known to have undertaken a diplomatic mission to Galloway in 1174 (Howden, *Gesta*, 1:80), and because he might have acted as an escort of King William from Winchester back to Scotland in 1177 (a conjecture made on the basis that he 'had nothing to report on Henry II's actions between 12 July and 15 August,' Gillingham, 'Travels,' 79), it is likely that he was also an escort for the legate Alexius in 1180. 'This would explain in the most economical fashion how he got the pope's letters,' Gillingham suggests (*ibid.*, 80)—but it still does not explain why he then used them in his history.

¹⁵⁴ The Treaty of Falaise, which settled King William's rebellion of 1173–4, stipulated that the Scottish church was subject to the English church, but failed to state whether it was subject to York or Canterbury. For this *contentio* between Canterbury and York, as Howden calls it, see Howden, *Gesta*, 1:111–2, and A. A. M. Duncan, *Scotland: The Making of the Kingdom* (Edinburgh, 1975), 262–3.

given an English archbishop a decisive role in Scottish ecclesiastical politics.¹⁵⁵ The significance of this was surely not lost on Howden, who went so far as to rubricate Roger's legation in the *Chronica* (which he rarely did; the last such rubric announced the death of Louis VII).¹⁵⁶ Both Roger de Pont l'Évêque and Hugh du Puiset have been suggested as Howden's historiographical sources,¹⁵⁷ and they both extended their patronage towards him. (Their co-operation would have been required for Howden to be appointed to his parsonage, which was a jurisdictional peculiar of Durham in East Yorkshire.) Is it possible that, in writing about the St. Andrew's dispute in this way, Howden was enacting a kind of service to Puiset and Pont l'Évêque? I would suggest that it is, and the way historians served such social purposes by reproducing *scripta* is the focus of my next section.

CHARTERS, STORIES AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

Howden's handling of the St. Andrews material—and the analogue of contemporary letter collections—suggests that one reason why historical writing could use letters such as *Cum litteras* so easily is that the letters themselves already told stories. They relied on narrative to set out what had been done in the course of the business; and even letters conveying judgements rather than information were couched in narrative form.¹⁵⁸ This is also characteristic of other forms of *scripta* reproduced in these chronicles, and especially charters and treaties. The many royal treaties used by Howden and Diceto set out to do more than physically embody an agreement between two contracting parties. They also tell authoritative

¹⁵⁵ Although the involvement of the English church was of course a crucial dynamic in the dispute. John the Scot had sought the protection of Henry II throughout the dispute, and the implications of this were not lost on Alexander III. Alexander warned King William that if Hugh would not renounce his claim to St. Andrews, 'Sicut laboravimus ut regnum tuum libertatem haberet, sic dabimus studium ut in pristinam subjectionem revertatur.' (Just as we worked so your kingdom might have its freedom, so we will take pains that it revert to its former subjection.) Howden, *Gesta*, 1:263; *Chronica*, 2:212; see now *ibid.*, 272.

¹⁵⁶ Howden, *Chronica*, 2:197.

¹⁵⁷ For Howden's relations with Hugh du Puiset and his successor Philip de Poitou, see Corner, 'Gesta Regis,' 134–44. For Howden as a protégé of Pont l'Évêque before becoming a member of Puiset's *familia* see Gillingham, 'Travels,' 74–75.

¹⁵⁸ See, for example, the absolution of King William from excommunication by Lucius III at Howden, *Chronica*, 2:268–9, which is expressed almost entirely in the past tense.

stories about the making of an agreement.¹⁵⁹ Treaties often began by setting out who had done what, where they had done it and why.¹⁶⁰ These stories, authenticated by the names of those who had witnessed the events they narrated, exerted a coercive power. The text of the so-called ‘Compromise of Avranches,’ which recorded Henry II’s expurgation after Becket’s murder—and which Howden reproduces in his *Chronica*—illustrates this narrative power and its historiographical potential nicely.¹⁶¹ Unusually but tellingly, the *carta* (as Howden calls it) is written in the second person and addressed from the cardinal-legates Albert and Theodinus to Henry II. It reads:

Purgationem in praesentia nostra de voluntate propria praestitistis, quod videlicet nec praecepistis nec voluistis ut occideretur; et quando pervenit ad vos, plurimum doluistis... Et jurastis ... quod a Alexandro papae ... minime recedatis... Atque, ut in memoria Romanae ecclesiae firmiter habeatur, sigillum vestrum praecepistis apponi. (Howden, *Chronica* 2:36–7.)

You performed this purgation in our presence by [your] own [free] will: namely, that you neither ordered nor wanted [Becket] to be killed, and when [the news of his death] reached you, you were greatly saddened... And you swore that you will never desert Pope Alexander... And in order that [this] might be firmly held in the memory of the Roman Church, you ordered your seal to be applied.¹⁶²

This text presented Henry with an agreed and authoritative narrative of what he had done at Avranches. It also recounted unambiguously what Henry said he had (not) done to Becket, what he *felt* about his death and what he had promised as a consequence. The power of this story and others like it lay partly in their embodiment within a form of public *scriptum*—a charter—whose creation at the nexus of a number of ritual practices endowed it with a coercive power. But stories like this were also

¹⁵⁹ The narrativity of these *scripta* is similar to those of the Anglo-Saxon charters explored by Sarah Foot. Foot suggests that Anglo-Saxon charters ‘would tell one account in order that it become the accepted version, countermanding—overwriting—alternatives ... the text is not dispositive (it does not constitute the conveyance) but represents the evidence that a conveyance has been made.’ Foot, ‘Reading Anglo-Saxon Charters,’ 41, 52.

¹⁶⁰ See, for example, the treaty of Ivry, reproduced in Howden, *Gesta*, 1:191–4; idem, *Chronica*, 2:144–6.

¹⁶¹ Howden reproduces the ‘Compromise’ under the rubric ‘*carta absolutionis regis*.’ Howden, *Chronica*, 2:36.

¹⁶² It is not immediately obvious to what, exactly, Henry’s seal had been applied. Was it to the story itself?

effective because they did not depend on the document onto which they had originally been written. It was rather their inherent iterability as disembodied narratives that made them powerful—and also made them so useful to historical narrative. So while the embodiment of the compromise of Avranches in an authoritative physical form might have made it *legally* binding, its social and political power lay in the story it told. This power was multiplied by the expectation that that story would be told again.

Howden's treatment of the 'Compromise of Avranches' in his *Chronica* shows that such *scripta* were not just physical documents, but also retellable stories. Their iterability was manifest from the moment they were created. After the text of the 'Compromise' in the *Chronica*, Howden inserts a letter written by the legates to the archbishop of Ravenna, which rehearsed in slightly different words the very same story. As Albert and Theodinus explain to the archbishop, 'we have written these things so you might realize that [Henry] is obedient to God and much more inclined towards divine service than he has been so far.'¹⁶³ The archbishop of Ravenna had little *personal* interest in the promises Henry made in the cause of his rehabilitation. But it was to the church's advantage—and also to Henry's—that as many people as possible should know about what happened at Avranches. The need for the story to be diffused is apparent from Robert de Torigni's account of the conference in his *Chronica* (which Torigni wrote at Mont Saint-Michel while Howden was writing his *Chronica*). At Avranches, Torigni states, the Becket *causa* was formally closed ('finita est')—'just as the *public* letters, which were drawn up *and kept by the many people who had met there*, testify.'¹⁶⁴ It seems then that those who had witnessed Henry's purgation were also given a written account of what they had witnessed, which probably bore their own names as testimony to the truth of the story it told.

¹⁶³ 'Haec autem scripsimus ut cognoscatis ipsum obedientem Deo atque ad divinum obsequium multo amplius quam adhuc fuerit animatum.' Howden, *Chronica*, 2:39.

¹⁶⁴ 'Sicut litterae publicae testantur, quae inde factae sunt, et a multis personis quae illuc convenerant, retinentur.' *Chronique de Robert de Torigni, abbé de Mont-Saint-Michel*, ed. Léopold Delisle, 2 vols (Rouen, 1872–3), 2:32–3.

The public dissemination of narratives in written form is attested elsewhere in Howden's *Chronica*. In his account of Richard I's tumultuous stay at Messina on the way to the Holy Land, for example, Howden reproduces a 'carta pacis factae inter Ricardum regem Angliae et Tancredum regem Siciliae.'¹⁶⁵ This *carta* presented a narrative recounting the resolution of the disagreements between the two kings. Alongside the *carta*, Howden *also* reproduces a letter that Richard sent to Pope Clement III, telling the same story, which Richard had written 'so that Tancred might be more secure about all the aforesaid agreements.' (ut Tancredus ... securior esset de omnibus supradictis conventionibus.) Again, the pope *himself* didn't need to know about the agreement.¹⁶⁶ But Howden's inclusion of Richard's letter alongside the charter suggests that Tancred wanted the written narratives—the stories—that those agreements depended upon to have as wide a circulation as possible—and that getting Richard to write a letter to the pope was one of surest means by which that would happen. As in the St. Andrew's case, Howden's chronicle itself here plays a part in the diffusion of these *scripta* and the stories that they told. All in all, Howden told the story of Henry's expurgation at Avranches on three different occasions: first in his own narrative of the episode, then when he reproduced the narrative contained in the 'Compromise' itself, and finally by reproducing the narrative rehearsed in the legates' letter to Archbishop Gerard. And he told the story of the agreement between Richard and Tancred three times too: once in his own narrative, once in the narrative contained in Tancred's charter, and once in the narrative of the letter Richard wrote to the pope.

Charters were not the only form of *scriptum* reproduced by Howden and Diceto that could tell stories and carry news. They also reproduced a number of *scripta* that had been sent solely (and expressly) to circulate important news. As John Gillingham has suggested, it was 'standard practice for those fighting in the Holy Land to send written reports back home,' and Howden and Diceto reproduced many of them.¹⁶⁷ They also

¹⁶⁵ Howden, *Chronica*, 3:61–4; cf. *Gesta*, 2:133–5, without the rubric.

¹⁶⁶ Although it should be said that Tancred held Sicily as a fief of the papacy.

¹⁶⁷ Gillingham, 'Royal Newsletters,' 173.

reproduced newsletters about military campaigns not connected with the Crusade—Diceto reproduces a letter sent to the Bolognese by the Milanese in 1176 in order to ‘report our glorious victory over our [imperial] enemies’, for example;¹⁶⁸ and Howden reproduces a letter from Richard I to Bishop Philip of Durham reporting his victory over Philip Augustus at Dangu in 1198.¹⁶⁹ The notion that these letters were written and circulated *solely* in order to convey information in narrative form, however, is problematic. As Atillio Bartoli Langeli has suggested, ‘dominante nella lettera formalizzata è la logica politica’—and that political logic was as evident in a letter’s protocol as in its *narratio*.¹⁷⁰ So when Howden and Diceto reproduce a letter from Manuel Comnenus to his ‘dearest friend’ Henry II (relating Manuel’s failed attempt to capture Iconium from the Seljuk Turks), Manuel’s and Henry’s friendship itself is as important a story for the letter as the narrative it recounted.¹⁷¹ Manuel was telling Henry this news, he said, partly because of the ‘principes nobilitatis tuae’ who had fought alongside him during the expedition (and who would ‘tell [*narrabunt*] ... the story [*series*] of everything that happened there’).¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ ‘Notum sit vobis nos ab hostibus nostris gloriosum reportasse triumphum.’ (May it be known to you that we have won a glorious triumph from our enemies.) Diceto, *Opera*, 1:409–10.

¹⁶⁹ ‘Noveritis quod Dominica proxima ante festum Sancti Michaelis intravimus terram regis Franciae apud Dangu, et insultum fecimus apud Curceles, et castrum cepimus cum turre, et dominum castri, et omnes alios qui erant in castro.’ (May you know that on the Sunday just before the feast of St. Michael we entered the land of the king of France at Dangu, and made an attack on Courcelles[-lès-Gisors], and we captured the castle and its keep, and the lord of the castle, and all those who were in the castle.) Richard continues to narrate the rest of the campaign. Howden, *Chronica*, 4:58–9. According to the thirteenth-century chronicler Roger of Wendover, Richard sent copies of this letter ‘to all his friends of the kingdom of England ... asking that they would join with him in praising God who gave him such a triumph.’ Quoted in Gillingham, ‘Royal Newsletters,’ 173, n. 9.

¹⁷⁰ Langeli, ‘Cancellierato e produzione epistolare,’ 253. ‘La preponderanza cancelleresca orientò il genere epistolare a rappresentare rapporti tra poteri. Si pensi solo al lavoro che meritò la *salutatio*, indicatore immediato del rapporto—paritario or gerarchico—tra emittente e destinatario.’ (Chancery tendencies orientated the epistolary genre towards representing the relations between powers. One only has to think of the intense labour merited by [a letter’s] *salutatio*—an immediate indicator of the relationship, equal or hierarchical, between sender and receiver.) *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ The letter is reproduced in full in Howden, *Chronica*, 2:102–4. It is also reproduced in Howden, *Gesta*, 1:128–30, but here Howden uses the letter’s narrative without giving any indication that a letter had been its source. Diceto gives an abbreviated form of the letter at Diceto, *Opera*, 1:418. For relations between the Byzantine Empire and Henry II, see A. A. Vasiliev, ‘Manuel Comnenus and Henry Plantagenet,’ *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 29 (1929–30), 233–44.

¹⁷² ‘Gratum autem habuimus, quod quosdam nobilitatis tuae principes accidit interesse nobiscum, qui narrabunt de omnibus quam acciderant tuae nobilitati seriem.’ (We were

Manuel also adds that it was only right for him to tell Henry everything that happened to the Empire because Henry was ‘such a beloved friend’—and because of the ‘intima consanguinitas’ of Henry’s and Manuel’s children.¹⁷³ The letter sent from Manuel to Henry, together with the story it related, thus formed part of a transaction that was *constitutive* of a diplomatic alliance based on friendship and kinship; it is not merely evidence that such an alliance existed. As was the case for the narratives told by charters, the narrative told by Manuel’s letter was effective as a piece of diplomacy precisely because the stories it told—about the Empire and about the friendship between Henry and Manuel—were, or would be, widely diffused. Not only would many people come know the news that Manuel related to Henry in the letter—but everybody who read the letter would also know that Manuel wanted Henry, especially, to know it.

A similar, if slightly more complicated, logic of friendship, seems to underlie the letter sent by the emperor Henry VI to Walter de Coutances, archbishop of Rouen, which Diceto also reproduced. As Manuel had to Henry II, Henry VI wrote to Walter as ‘his beloved friend’ to tell him (*significare*) that he had taken possession of Sicily, and that his wife Constance had given birth to a son. He knew, he said, that Walter would rejoice in his successes.¹⁷⁴ By sending this news to one of Richard I’s closest associates, Henry VI was confirming the strength of the alliance between Richard and Henry.¹⁷⁵ But the nature of the news that the letter related was also a poke in the eye for Richard (like the alliance itself, which was an unwelcome consequence of the homage that Richard had

grateful that some of your nobility’s princes happened to be with us, who will tell you the story of everything that happened.) Howden, *Chronica*, 2:104.

¹⁷³ As Stubbs explains, ‘Manuel’s second wife, Mary of Antioch, was the daughter of Raymond of Poitiers, uncle of Queen Eleanor; her children and Eleanor’s would thus be second cousins.’ Howden, *Chronica*, 2:104, n. 1.

¹⁷⁴ ‘Scientes honestatem tuam de nostrae magnificentiae felicibus successibus plurimum gratulari, significamus ...’ (Knowing your honesty to rejoice in the happy successes of our magnificence, we inform you ...) Diceto, *Opera*, 2:125. It seems likely that whoever delivered this letter also supplied the information about Henry VI’s march south through Italy that Diceto narrates just before this letter. Diceto, *Opera*, 2:123–4.

¹⁷⁵ Henry VI encountered Coutances through the negotiations for Richard’s release. Coutances also stood surety as a hostage for some of Richard’s ransom after Richard was released. See now Poggioli, ‘From Politician to Prelate’, 109–10.

done for the kingdom of England).¹⁷⁶ The news confirmed that the son of Richard's ally Tancred of Sicily had fled, and the alliance against Henry VI forged between Richard, Tancred, the princes and archbishops of Lotharingia and Henry the Lion, lay in tatters.¹⁷⁷ So although Henry VI shared news with his friend Richard's chancellor—and doing so was a sign (and enactment) of friendship—the news shared was tinged with hostility. It is hard to say whether the hostile news or the friendly transaction had the stronger force. (As we shall see in chapter five, the performative functions of the written word sometimes overrode the information that it conveyed.)

The friendships between Manuel and Henry II, and between Henry VI and Walter de Coutances, were enacted in public and through writing. Howden and Diceto worked to ensure that those enactments were diffused further. But Howden and Diceto were themselves involved in similarly public friendships, to the maintenance of which their histories contributed. Walter de Coutances wrote frequently to Diceto himself, and Diceto wrote back.¹⁷⁸ Coutances sent Diceto letters containing news, often in narrative form, on the same basis of friendship that Manuel sent news to Henry II (and Henry VI did to Coutances).¹⁷⁹ We have already observed that epistolary friendships enacted through the sharing of news could underpin diplomatic relationships. Medieval friendship had many forms and many meanings, so the epistolary communication between Coutances

¹⁷⁶ For the historical and historiographical significance of Richard's homage to Henry VI, see John Gillingham, 'The Kidnapped King: Richard I in Germany, 1192–1194,' *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute London* 30 (2008), 5–34.

¹⁷⁷ Host Fuhrmann, *Germany in the High Middle Ages*, trans. Timothy Reuter (Cambridge, 1986), 181–3.

¹⁷⁸ This correspondence mostly concerned Coutances's travails over the manor of Les Andelys, which Richard demanded from him in order to build Château Gaillard, and comprises nine letters in total (Diceto, *Opera*, 2:112–3, 122, 135–7, 140–1, 141–2, 144–6, 148–50, 153–4, 157–8). Only Alexander III (with 19), Henry II (12) and Richard I (12) had more letters included in the *Ymagines*. It is likely that Diceto and Coutances worked together when Coutances was custodian of Richard's ransom, which was collected at St. Paul's.

¹⁷⁹ As Coutances wrote to Diceto in 1195, 'Sicut personam vestram tenerius diligimus, ita et prolixius et confidentius angustias animae nostrae et statum nostrum actaque a nobis in colloquio inter regem Francorum et regem Anglorum habito nunciamus.' (Just as we love your person more dearly [sc. than even you love us], we tell you at greater length and more confidingly the difficulties of our soul, our current state, and the meeting held between the king of the French and the king of the English.) Diceto, *Opera*, 2:135. For Diceto as Coutances's *amicus amantissimus*, see *ibid.*, 2:141.

and Diceto needs placing in a framework sensitive to friendship's complex social valences. 'Propaganda,' perhaps, is not such a framework. John Gillingham asks whether chroniclers such as Diceto and Howden were responding to 'deliberate government attempts to mould public opinion' when they reproduced newsletters in their histories.¹⁸⁰ The reciprocal nature of the relationship between Diceto and Coutances, however, suggests that the definition of who constituted the 'government'—and who constituted the 'public'—needs careful thought; and it certainly needs establishing before deciding whether they were respectively persuasive or persuadable.

The 'propagation' of news from Coutances to Diceto was only one side of a transaction that cut two ways. Reciprocity was a defining feature of medieval friendship¹⁸¹—and the epistolary friendship between Coutances and Diceto was certainly reciprocal. Coutances shared (often bad) news with Diceto, and Diceto sent letters of consolation to Coutances in return. Diceto included some of Coutances's letters in the *Ymagines*, along with one of those he sent to Coutances. Diceto made a habit of dedicating historical works to prominent public figures such as Coutances, who had themselves sent him letters. He dedicated an *opusculum* to William de Longchamp (Richard I's chancellor from 1189 to 1197 and chief justiciar of England, 1190–1),¹⁸² who had sent him the letter from the Old Man of the Mountain so that he could use it in his chronicle.¹⁸³ (And it is worth noting that Longchamp sent that letter to a Diceto 'de cujus dilectione habemus experimentum').¹⁸⁴ Diceto also dedicated a collection of excerpts from his *Ymagines* to Archbishop Hubert Walter,¹⁸⁵ who was chief justiciar from

¹⁸⁰ Gillingham, 'Royal Newsletters,' 172. In a very literal sense, of course they did: the formal rhetoric of public letters conspicuously marked them out as a form of persuasive discourse.

¹⁸¹ Gerd Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers: Political and Social Bonds in Medieval Europe*, trans. Christopher Carroll (Cambridge, 2004), 66.

¹⁸² 'The history of the MS [containing this *opusculum*] confirms that it was a presentation copy given to Longchamp himself,' suggests Stubbs. Diceto, *Opera*, 1:xcviii. The manuscript once belonged to St. Mary's, York, where Longchamp's brother, Roger, was abbot in the 1190s.

¹⁸³ Diceto, *Opera*, 2:177, ff. For the letter of the Old Man in the Mountain, see *ibid.*, 2:127.

¹⁸⁴ 'Of whose affection we have experience.' Diceto, *Opera*, 2:128.

¹⁸⁵ For a letter from Hubert Walter to Diceto as dean of St. Pauls, see Diceto, *Opera*, 2:164–5. Unlike the letters from Coutances and Longchamp, this is strictly speaking a business letter.

1193 to 1198.¹⁸⁶ It is also very likely that Diceto either dedicated, or intended to dedicate, the *Ymagines* to Walter de Coutances himself,¹⁸⁷ who was chief justiciar (and effectively regent) of England between 1191 and 1193.¹⁸⁸ Taken as a group, in fact, all those who held great public office in the early part of Richard I's reign and during his absence had close relationships with people writing history. Diceto made historical compilations for Longchamp, Coutances and Hubert Walter; and these men patronized other historians too.¹⁸⁹ Hugh du Puiset, who not only wielded public power as justiciar in Richard's absence but was a prince-bishop in his own right, counted Howden among his *familiares*; and he appears to have had a determining influence on the shape of Howden's chronicles. Gerald de Barri wrote a biography of Geoffrey Plantagenet (illegitimate son of Henry II; chancellor 1181–9 and archbishop of York 1189–1212) probably for Geoffrey himself.¹⁹⁰

There was a considerable overlap, therefore, between the 'government' and the 'public' of historical writing in this period. Instead of being simple conduits for propaganda to be transmitted from the one to the other, the histories written by the friends of public officials have a collaborative and public flavour. High-ranking administrators had circulated much of the

¹⁸⁶ This *opusculum* exists in a single manuscript, Cambridge, Corpus Christi Coll. MS. 76. Stubbs suggests that this was a presentation copy made for Hubert Walter (Diceto, *Opera*, 1:xcix); M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College Cambridge*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1912), 1:155, concurs, although Neil Ker dated the manuscript to the early thirteenth century. More recently, Malcolm Parkes has suggested that it was a London production of the late twelfth century—thereby confirming Stubbs's view that the MS was a product of the St. Paul's scriptorium. Malcolm B. Parkes, 'Handwriting in English Books,' in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume 2, 1100–1400*, ed. Nigel J. Morgan and Rodney M. Thomson (Cambridge, 2008), 114, n. 24. The compilation for Hubert Walter ends with two letters from Celestine III announcing Hubert's legation (one for the province of Canterbury, the other for York). This perhaps suggests that Diceto's dedication of the work to Walter coincided with his being granted what Diceto called the 'plenitudinem potestatis in officio legationis inauditam a saeculis.' Diceto, *Opera*, 2:125–7. Significantly, Diceto began the *opusculum* dedicated to Longchamp by reproducing the letter granting Longchamp a papal legation and the letter appointing him Richard I's regent. Diceto, *Opera*, 2:178.

¹⁸⁷ See appendix B, below.

¹⁸⁸ For Coutances's career as regent, see Poggioli, 'From Politician to Prelate', 57–102.

¹⁸⁹ Gerald de Barri also wrote history, of a sort, for William de Longchamp, dedicating an early version of the *Itinerarium Cambriae* to him. See *Cambrensis*, *Opera*, 4:3, n. 1. Hubert Walter also commissioned Gerald to write a prose history of the crusade, and his *nepos* Joseph to write one in verse. *Cambrensis*, *Opera*, 1:79.

¹⁹⁰ The most comprehensive account of Gerald's *Vita Galfridi* is provided by Rother, 'Geoffrey, Archbishop of York: A Prism of Twelfth-Century Historical Writing', 8–28. For the identification of Geoffrey as a dedicatee of Gerald's work, see *ibid.*, 12.

written information—as newsletters or charters or even assizes—that became the basis of historical narratives. Much of that written information was either about, or written by, high-ranking administrators. And high-ranking administrators were the dedicatees of historical writing. In a sense, administrators and historians (and historian-administrators) were acting in a *public* capacity by engaging in these processes.¹⁹¹ To share news about the king, even among friends, was to perform a kind of public service—or at least a service to the king. ‘Without the continual release and broadcast of news,’ Nicholas Vincent has suggested, ‘it would have been all too easy for those in remoter parts of the Plantagenet dominion to assume either that the king was dead or that his writ had ceased to run.’¹⁹² Literate administrators who circulated written news also served their *own* purposes. By circulating *scripta* in this way they were insinuating their own importance as literate technicians of the highest skill. And by patronizing, or associating with, historians who made *scripta* stand for *res gestae*—who wrote histories in which things were accomplished *by scripta*—their indispensability was made manifest.

The publicness involved in the circulation of written news shares certain characteristics of the ‘representative publicness’ that Jürgen Habermas identified as being typical of feudal society of the High Middle Ages. Feudal governors, thinks Habermas, ‘represented their lordship not for but “before” the people.’¹⁹³ This representative publicness was not, according to Habermas, the publicness of bourgeois political debate; it was the publicness of political display.¹⁹⁴ On Habermas’s reading of feudal society, having power meant nothing unless it was represented, and Vincent’s ‘broadcast of news’ certainly fulfilled this function. But we need

¹⁹¹ As Thomas Bisson suggests of Howden, ‘As with others incorporating injunctive material in their narratives—the monk Gervase and the chronicler(s) of Battle Abbey—the impulse was public yet not quite official.’ Bisson, *Crisis of the Twelfth Century*, 387.

¹⁹² Vincent, ‘Missing Biographies,’ 245.

¹⁹³ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, 1989), 8.

¹⁹⁴ Genêt suggests that political debate only occupied a ‘public space’ towards the end of the fourteenth century, and that even then the ‘public lettré n’est pas tel qu’il puisse déjà exister un “marché” de littérature politique où pourraient circuler pamphlets et manifestes.’ (the literate public was not such that a market for political literature existed where pamphlets and manifestos could circulate.) Genêt, ‘Histoire et documentation dans la tradition anglaise,’ 248–9.

not agree with Habermas that ‘this publicness (or publicity) of representation was not constituted as a *social* realm, that is, as a public sphere.’¹⁹⁵ To be sure, the circulation of news did not play the same role in Angevin England as it did in the public sphere of bourgeois society under capitalism. But those who circulated *scripta*—whether as administrators or historians—certainly did so for social purposes. As we have seen, through exchanging the written word they contracted friendships and maintained other social relationships. As we shall see in chapters five and six, historical writers provided distinctly normative accounts of how the written word should be used, and how people should behave around writing. As Stephen Jaeger has insisted, the written word itself was capable of exerting a performative (and normative) social force between those who shared transactions in writing. Instead of treating them as diametrically opposed forms of discourse, Jaeger has pointed to the ‘common ground between history/romance and official documents.’ ‘Both kinds of text,’ suggests Jaeger ‘tutor men of the present and regulate their dealings with one another; the high value of both is a strong commendation of literacy.’¹⁹⁶

This study returns to the social realm that contemporary written processes inhabited, and their relationship to historical writing, in due course. Before then it turns to more textual matters, to look more closely at the dynamics of textual reproduction—and what was at stake in the reproduction and dissemination of the stories that *scripta* told.

¹⁹⁵ Habermas, *Public Sphere*, 7, my emphasis. As Timothy Reuter pithily pointed out, ‘when sociologists [like Habermas] venture beyond the recent past, they frequently sharpen our own perceptions even when we find that we cannot accept theirs.’ Timothy Reuter, ‘Assembly Politics in Western Europe from the Eighth Century to the Twelfth,’ in *Medieval Politics and Modern Mentalities*, ed. Timothy Reuter and Janet Nelson (Cambridge, 2006), 207.

¹⁹⁶ C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals, 939–1210* (Philadelphia, 1985), 230.

 Quotation

- *Je lis avec des ciseaux, excusez-moi, et je coupe tout ce que me déplaît.*
 — *On a du mal à comprendre cet homme qui se fabrique une bibliothèque de débris.*¹

*To the portions of history which he borrows or re-writes from the older historians, [Howden] adds very little of his own, until he takes the pen, we may assume, into his own hands, and lays down the scissors.*²

Modernity has been unkind to those who take scissors to texts, and in so doing offend so many of its assumptions about authorship. The act of dismemberment seems a violence against wholeness, presence and the plenitude of meaning; it is an assault on the inviolable bond between author and *œuvre* and the seamless communication of intended meaning from the one to the other and thence to the reader. Those who are armed not with scissors but with pots of glue and engage in what Antoine Compagnon felicitously calls *bricolage*, meanwhile—those who make works (or libraries) out of the debris of other works—have been regarded no less severely. They seem to strike at both originality and authenticity, the two columns upon which the status of the modern author rests. This distrust of citation (scissors) and compilation (paste) is not limited to assessments of modern texts. As Neil Hathaway suggested, ‘we tend to treat medieval compilations as we do modern ones, with limited respect: they are useful, but not original;³ and if they are not original, they are

¹ The response of a woodman to a survey by *Le Bulletin des lettres* of its subscribers’ reading habits in 1933, and the subsequent riposte of the Parisian critic Émile Zavier. Quoted in Antoine Compagnon, *La seconde main, ou, le travail de la citation* (Paris, 1979), 27–8.

² Howden, *Chronica*, 1:xxv.

³ Neil Hathaway, ‘*Compilatio*: From Plagiarism to Compiling,’ *Viator* 20 (1989), 19. This prejudice is not limited to literary or scholarly compilations, but extends to ‘diplomatic’ compilations too. Geoffrey Martin complains that enrolled borough records ‘seem [to diplomatic scholarship] to lack the intrinsic interest of administrative records’, and are

tainted by the suspicion that their compilers are guilty of handling stolen (or counterfeit) goods.⁴

That authorship (or *auctoritas*) worked under a very different set of assumptions in the Middle Ages is hardly breaking news. But in contradistinction to modernity, compilation, citation and *auctoritas* went hand-in-hand throughout the Middle Ages.⁵ In scholastic discourse, and especially in the commentary tradition, *auctoritas* could be established on the basis of a scholar's skilful compilation, and subsequent rewriting, of other texts. The principles of *imitatio* and *aemulatio* were also fundamental to the composition of other sorts of texts, both 'literary' and 'pragmatic.'⁶ Whether that *imitatio* entailed quoting an antique work to add rhetorical

thus treated as 'mere compilations of second hand material,' which, with their uniform scripts, lack of seals and truncated texts, rob original deeds of their diplomatic characteristics. Geoffrey H. Martin, 'Registration of Title Deeds in the Medieval Borough,' in *The Study of Medieval Records: Essays in Honour of Kathleen Major*, ed. Donald A. Bullough and R.L. Storey (Oxford, 1971), 152. This tendency remains in diplomatic scholarship: see, e.g., Olivier Guyotjeannin, Jacques Pycke, and Benoît-Michel Tock, *La Diplomatique médiévale* (Turnhout, 1993), 278: 'La copie au cartulaire subvertit beaucoup d'observations que l'original permet de faire sur l'état de la langue, mais aussi sur la structure diplomatique de l'acte.' (Copies in cartularies undermine many observations that the original allows [us] to make about the state of their language, and also about the diplomatic structure of the act.)

⁴ Cf. Nicholas Vincent's assessment of the charters included in the *Battle Abbey Chronicle*: 'Battle Abbey and its chronicler were duplicitous in their claim that Battle was exempt [from episcopal authority], conjuring up a world of make-believe from royal and episcopal charters, which were forged and reworked and thereafter incorporated within a narrative account, the Battle Chronicle, itself composed to lend credence to monastic fantasy.' Nicholas Vincent, 'King Henry II and the Monks of Battle: The Battle Chronicle Unmasked,' in *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages: Studies Presented to Henry Mayr-Harting*, ed. Richard Gameson and Henrietta Leyser (Oxford, 2001), 285.

⁵ For important studies of the connections between *auctoritas* and compilation, see A. J. Minnis, 'Late-Medieval Discussions of Compilatio and the Role of the Compiler,' *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 101.3 (1979), 385–421; cf. Hathaway, 'Compilatio,' 19–44, for a critique of Minnis's argument that the *compilatio* became a new (or newly respectable) genre in the thirteenth century. See also Southern's description of the development of the *Glossa ordinaria* over three generations: it was a 'process of absorbing the learning of the past and providing the basis of new elaborations for the future.' R. W. Southern, *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe, Volume II: The Heroic Age* (Oxford, 2001), 34–5. For the affinity between the processes of reading and rewriting in this period, see Eric H. Reiter, 'The Reader as Author of the User-Produced Manuscript: Reading and Rewriting Popular Latin Theology in the Late Middle Ages,' *Viator* 27 (1999), 151–69.

⁶ For an overview of *imitatio* in the middle ages, see Jan Ziolkowski, 'The Highest Form of Compliment: *Imitatio* in Medieval Latin Culture,' in *Poetry and Philosophy in the Middle Ages. A Festschrift for Peter Dronke*, ed. John Marenbon (Leiden, 2001), 293–307. For the view that 'la rhétorique est un art d'imitation, d'adaptation et de réécriture,' see Douglas Kelly, 'La rhétorique de la citation dans le roman médiéval,' *Romance Languages Annual* 10 (1999), 70.

color to a sentence,⁷ or involved lifting a formula from a formulary in the drafting of a charter or letter,⁸ the rewriting of what had previously been read, excerpted and collected was the norm, if not defining characteristic, of medieval textual culture.⁹

This chapter seeks to situate historical writing's reproduction of *scripta* within that textual culture, exploring how that reproduction participated in it and contributed to its formation. The chroniclers whose histories we have been exploring so far in this study explicitly acknowledged that compilation was a fundamental part of writing history.¹⁰ Ralph de Diceto prefaced his chronicle of his own times, the *Ymagine historiarum*, with an 'abbreviatio chronicorum de diversis ... codicibus diligenter excerpta,' of approximately the same length.¹¹ When Roger of Howden rewrote his own *Gesta* as the *Chronica*, he began by compiling material extracted from the Chronicle of Melrose Abbey and the *Historia post Bedam* (and the latter was itself a compilation, made from the histories written by Simeon of Durham and Henry of Huntingdon).¹² Gervase of Canterbury used the histories of John of Worcester and Henry of Huntingdon in his *Chronica*,

⁷ Which itself would frequently have been extracted from a *florilegium*, rather than from an 'original' work.

⁸ Reginald Lane Poole, *Studies in Chronology and History* (Oxford, 1934), 254, suggests that the letters written by John of Salisbury in Archbishop Theobald's name were collected 'perhaps to furnish a kind of formulary, compiled for use in the court of Canterbury', wherein the letters 'might be preserved either as models of composition or else as precedents to govern decisions in similar cases.' For a discussion of the collection of model letters, see Martin Camargo, *Ars dictaminis, ars dictandi* (Turnhout, 1991), 35–7.

⁹ As Hathaway puts it, 'Compilations may not have been the sole activity of intellectuals in the Middle Ages, but they were the foundation and heart of the rest of university education and professional, administrative pursuits.' Hathaway, 'Compilatio,' 44. The tradition of compilation epitomises Bernard Cerquiglini's characterization of 'la réécriture incessante à laquelle est soumise la textualité médiévale.' (the incessant rewriting to which medieval textuality was submitted.) Bernard Cerquiglini, *Éloge de la variante: étude critique de la philologie* (Paris, 1989), 111.

¹⁰ For the view that 'medieval historiography largely consisted in combining (compiling) and changing (adapting, rewriting, abbreviating, paraphrasing, epitomising etc.) already existing sources,' and that 'such rewriting was a conscious creative act worthy of constituting the subject of independent research,' see Marek Thue Kretschmer, *Rewriting Roman History in the Middle Ages: The 'Historia Romana' and the Manuscript Bamberg, Hist. 3* (Leiden, 2007), 2–3, along with the exhaustive study that follows. See also the case Kretschmer makes for 'historiographical rewriting as a field of research, which deserves greater attention in the future,' in idem, 'Historiographical Rewriting,' *Filologia mediolatina* 15 (2008), 303.

¹¹ 'An abbreviation of chronicles ... carefully excerpted from various codices.' Diceto, *Opera*, 1:3–287, with Diceto's description of the *Abbreviationes chronicorum* at 1:3.

¹² As a near-contemporary manuscript (London, British Library, Arundel MS 150) has it, 'Incipit historia Anglorum sive Saxonum post venerabilem Bedam, edita a magistro Rogero de Hoveden.' Howden, *Chronica*, 1:xxxii.

and disavowed the authorship of his own chronicle altogether. Instead he positioned himself as a humble compiler: ‘I wish to compile rather than write,’ he insisted.¹³ Rewriting old histories, therefore, was—is—considered to be a fundamental task of the medieval historiographer. Given the way that Howden, Diceto and Gervase called attention to the way they *rewrote* history, their chronicles will remain central to this study. We will also investigate Herbert of Bosham’s and William FitzStephen’s *Vitae* of Becket, which provide examples from a different form of historiography from that of the chronicle. The *Vitae* quoted Becket’s correspondence and other documents central to his troubles, and they were instrumental in the propagation of his cult. Because of the relic-like status Becket’s letters had in the propagation of his cult, the *Vitae* are especially attuned to the relationship between historical narrative and the *scripta* it quoted. And as we shall see, they offer crucial perspectives on where textual reproduction ends and rewriting begins.

History writing’s rewriting of *scripta* to make them tell new stories about the past—the process we have been charting so far in this study—has rarely been explored. Histories that use documents have tended to be approached as doubly divided texts. They are divided first on the plane of contiguity between chronicle (narrative) and record (*scripta*); and they are then split along the plane of representation between historiographical reproductions of *scripta* and ‘original’ witnesses to them. In this chapter I draw attention to the permeability and contingency of these dividing lines through exploring the modalities of historiographical quotation. The aim is not to restore the chronicles to some putatively pristine unity, but to approach them in a manner more faithful to the meaningful ambiguity of their intertextuality. Gian Biagio Conte’s plea that poetic imitation should be studied in terms of ‘texts and the structuring of texts’ rather than as ‘a hunt for sources for “Quellenforschung” [which] has classified these literary phenomena as “influences” or “sources,”’ serves as something of a

¹³ Gervase, *Historical Works*, 1:89. For Gervase’s comment as the starting point in a tradition of the historian-compiler’s rejection of *auctoritas*, see Guenée, ‘Lo storico e la compilazione nel XIII secolo,’ 57–76.

rallying call here.¹⁴ But in order to frame our questions in terms of ‘texts and the structuring of texts,’ the boundaries between ‘literary’ or ‘poetic’ and ‘diplomatic’ or ‘documentary’ practices will need to be blurred.¹⁵

The perspectives of the diplomatist Brigitte Bedos-Rezak and the anthropologist Jan Assmann are useful for this task. Bedos-Rezak has suggested that ‘because strict duplication seems to have been eschewed in producing the various versions of a single [diplomatic] deed, it may be that the so-called archetype was never an original document in our modern sense, but truly an “act” by which actions, transactions, or judgements, were accomplished. In that sense, every surviving document reporting such events may best be understood as a copy.’¹⁶ Diplomatic texts and copies of diplomatic texts, Bedos-Rezak suggests, helped to meet ‘the medieval need for and process of repetition and re-enactment. Medieval documentary truths are in a sense the truths of action done double, of action re-produced.’¹⁷ Jan Assmann has suggested, meanwhile, that the texts constituting a society’s cultural memory (‘cultural texts,’ as he calls them)¹⁸ are by definition ‘constituted on the basis of prior communication.’¹⁹ A cultural text, Assmann considers, is ‘a message that is repeated, remembered, recovered, and referred to.’ It is not the original speaker of a message who generates a cultural text, he suggests, ‘but the repeater—the messenger and the commentator.’²⁰

¹⁴ Gian Biagio Conte, *The Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Poetic Memory in Virgil and Other Latin Poets*, trans. Charles Segal (Ithaca, 1986), 23.

¹⁵ Not least because Howden is as happy to quote from Ovid’s *Epistulae ex ponto* as he is from charters and royal letters (for Howden’s extended quotation from Ovid, see Howden, *Chronica*, 4:143–4).

¹⁶ Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, ‘Towards an Archaeology of the Medieval Charter: Textual Production and Reproduction in Northern France,’ in *Charters, Cartularies and Archives: The Preservation and Transmission of Documents in the Medieval West*, ed. A. J. Kostó and Anders Winroth (Toronto, 2002), 59.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Cultural texts, as defined by Jan Assmann (after Aleida Assmann), are texts ‘that possess a special normative and formative authority for society as a whole. *Normative* texts codify the norms of social behaviour... *Formative* texts formulate the self-image of the group and the knowledge that secures their identity.’ Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory*, 104. See now Aleida Assmann, ‘Was sind Kulturelle Texte?’, in *Literaturkanon, Medienereignis, Kultureller Text: Formen Interkultureller Kommunikation und Übersetzung*, ed. Andreas Poltermann (Berlin, 1995), 232–44.

¹⁹ Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory*, ix.

²⁰ Jan Assmann, ‘Form as a Mnemonic Device: Cultural Texts and Cultural Memory,’ in *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory, and Mark*, ed. Richard A. Horsley, Jonathan A. Draper, and John Miles Foley (Minneapolis, 2006), 75.

Assmann's emphasis on the role of repetition and reproduction in the creation of cultural texts suggests that we should consider bureaucratic records and the historical narratives that made use of them as different, but closely related, institutions of cultural memory. Together with Bedos-Rezak, Assmann privileges not the moment of a text's original creation, but the cultural significance of its re-creation and re-enactment. In other words, instead of working to eliminate the means and media of reproduction of a text in order to recover a more accurate reading of it, Assmann and Bedos-Rezak bring those means and media to the foreground and insist that they are meaningful themselves. By doing so, they pose important questions about how historians' use of quotation enabled *scripta* to become part of history, and part of memory; and they invite us to explore the role that historiographical quotation played in contemporary memorial culture. Of course, literary quotation is not the *same thing* as the reproduction of *scripta* in historical narrative or, say, the copying of a charter into a cartulary.²¹ But, as I shall suggest by comparing chroniclers' techniques with contemporary chancery practices, historians and bureaucrats shared a conceptual framework that insisted that textual reproduction was a fundamental form of remembrance. In this chapter, therefore, we will try to reconstruct that conceptual framework by approaching historical writing as a site where literary and literate technologies converged.

The quotational practices of the historians of later twelfth century England are so various, however, that they resist being subjected to a general survey and they defy simple classification. Sometimes historians reproduced *scripta* in direct discourse, sometimes in indirect discourse; and sometimes they silently incorporated the text of *scripta* into their narratives without further comment.²² Sometimes, as we shall see, the

²¹ There is no dynamic in historiographical textual reproduction that corresponds, for example, with the playfulness of literary quotation and poetic imitation. With the latter, 'the point of the game is to discover the quotation ... that is the only way it can achieve its specific effect.' Hermann Meyer, *Das Zitat in der Erzählkunst: zur Geschichte und Poetik des europäischen Romans* (Stuttgart, 1961), 13, quoted in Beate Schmolke-Hasselmann, *The Evolution of Arthurian Romance: The Verse Tradition from Chrétien to Froissart*, trans. Margaret and Roger Middleton (Cambridge, 1998), 187.

²² William of Newburgh's *Historia Anglorum*, although not the focus of this study, has long been noted for the way it 'melts and recasts' written information. Newburgh,

borders between quoting narrative and quoted *scriptum* are so clearly defined that the latter is physically detachable from the codex into which it is inserted; and sometimes quoting and quoted discourse are so indistinct they are difficult to prise apart.²³ If there is no obviously discernible method behind contemporary historians' use of quotation,²⁴ they rarely themselves discussed why they reproduced (or appropriated) *scripta* in the ways that they did. When history writers did discuss their own quotational practice, however, they (like Assmann) associate their reproduction of *scripta* with the mechanics of remembering. But as I suggest below, by reproducing *scripta* (and other histories) in order to have them remembered, history writers drew attention to the problematic nature of historiographical rewriting. If a chronicler could rewrite a *scriptum* in order for it to be remembered in a certain way, what would happen to their own texts if they were rewritten in turn? If they quoted a *scriptum* in direct discourse, and insisted that their audience were seeing a faithful reproduction of an original, how could they be sure that their reproduction would not be separated from the narrative framework that so carefully directed its reception?

QUOTATION AND REWRITING

Gervase of Canterbury, the most metahistorically aware of all the historians of this era, discusses why he reproduced Christ Church's *munimenta* in his chronicle with great sophistication. He reproduced the *munimenta*, he explained, so that his readers would see and remember them. Because the *munimenta* would be 'inspected and stored away in the

Historia Anglorum, ed. Howlett, 1:xxvii. For Ralph de Diceto's use of Becket's letters, some of which he 'adapted in a paraphrased version and incorporated without identification of source' to the extent that 'many passages of seeming narrative or comment can be shown to be derived from letters,' see Duggan and Duggan, 'Diceto, Henry and Becket,' 69–70.

²³ As J. C. Holt (slightly patronizingly) characterizes the intrusion of narrative into Howden's text of the assizes of Clarendon and Woodstock, '[Howden] could not resist the temptation, natural enough in a historian who was familiar with the administrative background to his documents, to mix together both [quoted] text and context.' Holt, 'Assizes of Henry II,' 89.

²⁴ Howden, in particular, can be inconsistent even in the way that he uses quotation between his two chronicles: see, for example, the way that he incorporated the narrative of Manuel Comnenus's letter into his own narrative in the *Gesta* (1:128), while in the *Chronica* he gave the letter in full in direct quotation. Cf. Howden's treatment of Hugh du Puiset's excommunication by Geoffrey, archbishop of York. Geoffrey's letter appears in full at Howden, *Chronica*, 3:168–9; at Howden, *Gesta*, 2:225, Howden only reproduces some choice phrases, and does not acknowledge Geoffrey's letter as the source.

strong-box of the memory' by readers of his chronicle,²⁵ his narrative could 'be shortened and be more precisely and profitably understood.'²⁶ So Gervase assumes that if the *physical substance* of Christ Church's defence against Archbishop Baldwin—that is, the text of the papal letters annulling Baldwin's acts—were reproduced in his *Chronica* and thereby made available to his reader's memory, there would be less work for his narrative to do in calling that defence to mind. For Gervase, the sight—the inspection—of the text of the papal letters is the prerequisite to their committal to memory. Pre-modern theorists of memory had long emphasized the memory's visual nature: that which was remembered, they thought, was either apprehended by the eyes or translated into memorable images by the mind.²⁷ The physiology of reading, too, was beginning at just this time to be thought through in visual terms.²⁸ As Mary Carruthers explains, the visual coding that was fundamental to medieval memory technology 'allows the memory to be organized securely for accurate recollection.' This recollection 'permits not just reduplication of the original material, but sorting, analysis, and mixing as well—genuine learning, in short, rather than simple repetition.'²⁹ These assumptions about the memory underpin Gervase's claim that, by reading and remembering the *munimenta*,³⁰ his prudent reader would in the future 'know what remedy to apply to which affliction,' and 'know the appropriate and exemplary response it should employ to meet which objections.'³¹ The learning involved in the processing of memorable

²⁵ 'ipsis inspectis et in arca memoriae reconditis.' Gervase, *Historical Works*, 1:502. For the rich imagery of the *arca* in medieval memorial culture, see Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2008), 51–5.

²⁶ 'Narratio brevietur et subtilius utiliusque intelligatur.' Gervase, *Historical Works*, 1:502.

²⁷ Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 19–21.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 20, although note the changes in high medieval scribal practices charted by Paul Saenger that made such a visual conception of reading possible. Paul Saenger, 'Silent Reading: Its Impact on Late Medieval Script and Society,' *Viator* 13 (1982), 367–414. For Hugh of St. Victor's description of the (new) silent mode of reading as *per se inspicientis*, see *ibid.*, 384.

²⁹ Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 22.

³⁰ As Carruthers points out, in the Middle Ages 'reading and memorizing were taught as they were in antiquity, as one single activity.' *Ibid.*, 129.

³¹ 'Justa enim, ut arbitrator, intentione utrumque factum est; videlicet ut futurorum sciat necessitas temporum quod cui morbo opponat remedium, et quibus objectionibus justum et exemplare adhibeat responsum.' Gervase, *Historical Works*, 1:502, and above, p. 38 for full translation. According to Cicero, *prudentia* combined memory, intelligence and foresight, and gave knowledge of what was good and what was bad. For memory and prudence, see Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 81–2.

images is underscored by the pedagogical complexion of Gervase's conception of historiography.³² By speaking of the 'just and exemplary response' to future problems, Gervase offers an insight into his assumptions about the way texts could be read and re-used. If a *munimentum* could be used in an *exemplary* way, there was presumably a range of other uses for it too, some of them less ideal. The 'sorting and mixing' in the memory suggests that Gervase thought of reading history as a transformative process whereby texts were seen, remembered and re-categorized so that they could be re-deployed later.

Although Gervase was more articulate about his methodological assumptions than his colleagues, there are indications that Diceto thought his chronicles would be read—and re-deployed—in a similar way. Diceto had come under the direct influence of Hugh of St. Victor, the foremost technician of memory of his age.³³ Diceto made several direct references to Hugh's works.³⁴ Moreover, Hugh's insistence on the mnemonic power of images informs Diceto's system of marginal images, which Diceto used because they were (he said) useful for 'jogging the memory.'³⁵ Like Gervase, Diceto assumes that readers of his history would remember it as they read it, and remember specific parts in specific ways. Diceto also assumes, like Gervase, that readers who remembered the contents of his chronicles would recollect them in the future. More significantly, Diceto's

³² '[In chronicis] multa quaerenti sedulo bene vivendi repperiuntur exempla, quibus humana ignorantia de tenebris educitur, et ut in bono proficiat edocetur.' (In chronicles the diligent seeker discovers many examples of how to live well; and by [these examples] human ignorance is led out of darkness, and is instructed how it might advance in virtue). Gervase, *Historical Works*, 87.

³³ Grover A. Zinn, Jr., 'The Influence of Hugh of St. Victor's *Chronicon* on the *Abbreviationes Chronicorum* by Ralph of Diceto,' *Speculum* 52.1 (1977), 59–60, which points out that Hugh was dead by the time that Diceto studied in Paris. For a suggestion that Diceto had, in fact, encountered Hugh's work in Paris, see Julian Harrison, 'The English Reception of Hugh of Saint-Victor's *Chronicle*,' *The Electronic British Library Journal* (2002), article 1, 28.

³⁴ Diceto quoted the now-famous preface to Hugh's *Chronicon* in his *Abbreviationes chronicorum* (Diceto, *Opera*, 1:31) and he also made use of the *Chronicon*'s pre-Incarnation chronology (for which see Zinn, 'Influence of *Chronicon*,' 38–61). He used the *Chronicon*'s lists of secular rulers in the *opusculum* he dedicated to William de Longchamp; and he used the form of its list of popes for his own list of the archbishops of Canterbury. See now Harrison, 'English Reception,' 27, and Diceto, *Opera*, 2:213–22, 241–2, 267–70, 275–6.

³⁵ 'Ea [signa] namque sunt ad memoria facilius excitandam non parum accomoda.' (These symbols are of no little use in more easily jogging the memory.) Diceto, *Opera*, 1:3. For Hugh's influence on Diceto's use of marginal symbols, see Beryl Smalley, *The Becket Conflict and the Schools: A Study of Intellectuals in Politics* (Oxford, 1973), 232–3.

mnemonic categorizing of his text suggests that he, like Gervase, expected his chronicle to be recollected in a potentially *different* form to that in which he had composed it himself. Stubbs was unaware of Diceto's use of mnemotechnology, but his suggestion that Diceto's marginal symbols were not visual mnemonics but were 'originally inserted to facilitate the process of excerption' is valuable.³⁶ Stubbs gestures towards a crucial feature of the influence of medieval mnemonics on historiographical form. For, when marked up in the manner of Diceto's *Ymagines*, a chronicle became *quotable*, divisible for a later recollection in a form that might not wholly resemble the original.³⁷

Gervase did not mark up his text in the manner of Diceto, but he would certainly have understood the logic of doing so. Diceto and Gervase both expected that the contents of their chronicles would be remembered as they were read—and that having been remembered they would be redeployed, possibly in a different configuration, at a later time. These were distinct advantages for their works. But they were not unproblematic. By suggesting that their histories could be cut up and pasted elsewhere and otherwise, they imperilled the integrity of their texts—and undermined the interpretative framework that they provided for the *scripta* they reproduced. Gervase and Diceto do not address these problems directly, although Gervase's notion of the 'just and exemplary' use of Canterbury's *munimenta* speaks to a certain anxiety that the letters might be redeployed for less useful, or possibly even malicious, purposes.

Herbert of Bosham, however, found these possibilities distinctly uncomfortable, and he said as much in his *Historia* of the Becket conflict.³⁸ Although medieval texts are often thought to have a postmodern disregard for integrity, Bosham certainly did not. Unlike Diceto's and Gervase's chronicles, Bosham's *Historia* does not appear to have been

³⁶ Diceto, *Opera*, 2:xxviii.

³⁷ For a discussion of the medieval meaning of *quotare*—“to number” a book, dividing a longer text into numbered subdivisions, such as chapters,’ see Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 130. Carruthers also makes the point that (at least in the fourteenth century) ‘the practice of quoting, marking, and numbering a text for citation seems to have been the special prerogative of the most learned members of the university.’ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Bosham resolutely refers to his text as a *historia*, and the laws of the genre are a recurrent preoccupation. See below, n. 107.

influenced by contemporary discussions of memory. But he had an acute sense of the importance of maintaining his work's wholeness once it was beyond his own authorial possession. Bosham was especially worried about the 'many, who, as if beating their new [work] out of another's, older [work], trim away necessary things as though they were superfluous, or else retain those superfluous things as though they were more necessary.'³⁹ Such people, Bosham suggests, 'very often corrupt the things found in the original by mutilating [them], and by interpreting them according to their own understanding;'⁴⁰ and rather than 'following the meaning of the author in the author's own words, they drag them round to their own meaning.'⁴¹ Bosham goes so far as to address future users of his book directly:

Tu ... quisquis es, si librum historicum aliumve nosti condere, conde tuum, non facias de meo veteri et a me elaborato tuum illaborate novum... Si potes, me ipsum conveni ut meum corrigam; sin autem, meo intacto, tuum novum compone. (Bosham, *Vita*, 3:534.)

(If you, whoever you are, know how to compose a history book—or another book—compose yours. [But] don't lazily make your new one out of my old one, which *I* painstakingly worked on... If you can, prevail upon me myself to correct mine. But if not, compose your new one, leaving mine untouched.)

Bosham's belief in the determining power of the *intentio auctoris* and his uneasiness about the future of his work has a direct bearing on the way he reproduces *scripta* in his history books.⁴² Rather than suggesting that his readers could re-deploy them, as Gervase had, Bosham tries to control tightly how they would be used. He was happy enough for his readers to go off on their own and read the 'abundance of things about the gruelling history of our exile' contained in the letters compiled by Alan of

³⁹ 'Pro multis dico qui, de alieno et veteri suum quasi novum cudentes, persaepe, quae magis necessaria tanquam superflua resecant, aut ipsa superflua tanquam plus necessaria retinent.' Bosham, *Vita*, *MTB* 3:533.

⁴⁰ 'persaepe etiam in originali inventa juxta sensum suum interpretando et mutilando corruptentes.' *Ibid.*

⁴¹ 'nec in ipsis auctoris verbis auctoris mentem sequentes, sed ipsa ad propriam suam trahentes.' *Ibid.*

⁴² For the *intentio auctoris* (a category for the analysis of texts in medieval literary theory), see chapter 4 below.

Tewkesbury,⁴³ but there was one *scriptum* that Herbert would emphatically not suggest his readers should go and find elsewhere. Herbert appended to his *Historia* a copy of the chirograph containing the Constitutions of Clarendon, a *scriptum* he considered to be the very *materia dissensionis* between Thomas and Henry.⁴⁴ The chirograph is a reference point to which Bosham repeatedly returns. Bosham is distinctly concerned that posterity should *always* consider this *scriptum* to be an integral part of the *volumen historicum* he had compiled. Just as Bosham had himself included the chirograph at the end of the book, he demands that this *scriptura* (as he calls it here) should 'likewise be copied by everyone who might wish to transcribe this history book.'⁴⁵ Bosham reproduces the chirograph, therefore, so that his narrative could control it. Unlike the other letters from the *tempus dissensionis*, which were now nothing more than illustrations of Becket's travails, the chirograph was a physical manifestation of evil, which both proved Becket's sanctity and had to be contained by it.

To be sure, not all contemporary historians worked with such volatile material as Bosham; and only Bosham seems worried about how his work might be rewritten in the future. But Bosham, along with Gervase and Diceto, assumed their works would be read (and memorized) and called to mind again in the future. They *expected* that their works would be excerpted and recollected and compiled again, even if they would have nothing to do with that process.⁴⁶ And, in different ways, they all tried to

⁴³ 'In quibus [sc. epistolis] de exsilii nostri laboriosa historia perplurima continentur... ' Bosham, *Vita*, MTB 3:396. Bosham makes reference to the corpus of letters compiled by Alan five times, at *ibid.*, 3:315, 395–6, 418, 440, 463. Bosham says that 'many people and many churches already possessed [Alan's] book of letters,' should anyone need to consult it. (Liber ille epistolaris a multis personis et a multis ecclesiis jam habetur.) Bosham, *Vita*, MTB 3:396.

⁴⁴ Bosham, *Vita*, MTB 3:285. Elsewhere Bosham refers to the *scriptum* as the 'totius turbationis et dissensionis prima et summa causa, velut totius mali radix.' (the first and highest cause of all the disturbance and dissension, or rather the root of all evil.) *Ibid.*, 3:411.

⁴⁵ 'Pariter et ab omni qui historicum libellum hunc transcribere voluerit, et scriptura illa semper in fine transcribatur.' Bosham, *Vita*, MTB 3:341. Bosham's Rolls Series editor, James Robertson, pointedly ignored this injunction ('it has seemed needless to annex [the Constitutions of Clarendon] here.' *Ibid.*, 3:159, n. 1), but J. A. Giles reproduces Herbert's version of the Constitutions in *Herberti de Bosham Opera quae extant omnia*, ed. J.A. Giles, 2 vols (London, 1845), 2:201–5.

⁴⁶ Bosham graciously allowed posterity to make excerpts from his *Historia* in order to read them out in church on Becket's feast day. Bosham, *Vita*, MTB 3:533.

influence that future recollection—Bosham with his prohibitions (don't quote this),⁴⁷ Diceto with his symbols (quote that), and Gervase with the exemplary force of his didactic narrative. Of course, history writing was not alone in having to deal with the problem of its own future—it was a danger inherent in writing per se. As Mary Carruthers glosses Socrates's worries about writing in Plato's *Phaedrus*, 'the trouble with written composition is that it becomes detached from its author, and goes off on its own, so to speak, falling into ignorant as well as learned hands.'⁴⁸ Of course, twelfth-century historians had not read much Plato. But the form of history that many of them wrote conspicuously depended on the rewriting of that which had already been written. So their own historiographical practice constantly called attention to the inherent instability of the historiographical form they used—it highlighted the contingency of the bonds between the parts of the books that they had built, to use Bosham's metaphor.

DETACHABLE FRAMES, REMOVABLE INSETS

These were not merely theoretical assumptions, and the consequences of historians' quotational practices were not solely intellectual. We turn now to more codicological matters, to argue that the intertextuality of history writing affected the *physical* form of histories—and that the physical form of historical writing can itself tell us something about history's intertextuality. By exploring the presentation of Becket's correspondence in a manuscript of FitzStephen's *Vita*, I suggest that the contingency of the association between a quoted text and its narrative framework—which

⁴⁷ 'Oro, opto, et sicut audeo, ipsius etiam martyris nomine inhibeo, ne quis lectorum hanc martyris historiam ... unquam tempore aut mutilet aut excurtet.' (In the name of the martyr himself I pray, I desire and—as I dare—I forbid that any of [its] readers should mutilate or cut short this history of the martyr.) Ibid., 3:532. The most notable historiographical analogue for Bosham's demand is that of Gregory of Tours, in whose *Historiae* he exhorts his successors 'never [to] permit these books to be destroyed (*abolere*), or to be rewritten (*rescribi*), or to be reproduced in part only with sections omitted (*quasi quaedam legentes, et quasi quaedam praetermittentes*).' Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks*, ed. Lewis Thorpe (Harmandsworth, 1974), 603 (10.31). For Gregory's prohibition, and for a 'mauvaise conscience chez quelques hagiographes' who rewrote earlier saints' lives, see Monique Goulet, *Écriture et réécriture hagiographiques: essai sur les réécritures de Vies de saints dans l'Occident latin médiéval (XIIe–XIIIe s.)* (Turnhout, 2005), 47–9.

⁴⁸ Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 35. Clanchy suggests that 'those who objected in the Middle Ages to the literate preference of the artificial memory of written record, instead of the living memory voiced by wise men of age and experience,' shared the misgivings of Socrates, albeit unwittingly. Clanchy, *Memory*, 296.

was implied by the quotational practices of Diceto, Gervase and Bosham—could be manifested in a strikingly material way. Bosham’s fears about the separability of quoted discourse were not unfounded. FitzStephen’s manuscript shows how provisional the links between quoting and quoted text were, and thus poses awkward questions about the extent to which people like Bosham *could* appropriate the texts they quoted. Quoted *scripta* emerge as inherently ambiguous, neither belonging wholly to the histories that quoted them, nor to any other discourse. The separability of quoted text that FitzStephen’s manuscript embodies suggests that historical writing might be better thought of as *reframing scripta*, rather than rewriting them. As we go on to explore Roger of Howden’s use of correspondence in his account of Richard I’s capture, historiographical framing emerges as a productive way of thinking about the way that writers of history consciously manipulated the autonomy of the texts that they quoted.

One manuscript of William FitzStephen’s *Vita* of Becket, Bodleian, MS Douce 287 (hereafter *D*),⁴⁹ illustrates how separable the constituent parts of history books could be, even if they were not actually separated from one another.⁵⁰ Manuscript *D* contains FitzStephen’s life of Becket (and John of Salisbury’s brief *Vita*) along with a collection of letters ‘connected with the Becket dispute, which was certainly derived from the archives of the Bishop of London.’⁵¹ As Mary Cheney has suggested, the textual history of FitzStephen’s *Vita* (which exists in two versions, and of which *D* represents the earliest) ‘presents many puzzles.’⁵² Not least of these puzzles is the way *D* reproduces Becket’s correspondence. Unlike

⁴⁹ For a description, and history, of this manuscript, see Duggan, *Textual History*, 158–9.

⁵⁰ For the view that separability is a defining characteristic of quotational discourse, see Stefan Morawski, ‘The Basic Functions of Quotation,’ in *Sign, Language, Culture*, ed. A. J. Griemas, et al. (The Hague, 1970), 691. ‘Quotation is the literal reproduction of a verbal text of a certain length ... wherein what is reproduced forms an integral part of some work and *can be easily detached from the new whole* in which it is incorporated... [It is a] semantic portion designed to perform a certain function in a new and extraneous semantic structure of a higher order—something which the new structure can never completely absorb... [It is] not so much separate as *separable*.’ My emphasis.

⁵¹ Duggan, *Textual History*, 196. This marked FitzStephen’s *vita* off from the other biographers, who made use of correspondence collated at Canterbury.

⁵² Mary Cheney, ‘William FitzStephen and his Life of Archbishop Thomas,’ in *Church and Government in the Middle Ages*, ed. Christopher N. L. Brooke, et al. (Cambridge, 1976), 149. The wider textual history has since been explored by Duggan, *Textual History*, 187–200.

Bosham, who wrote his *Historia* after Alan of Tewkesbury had redacted Becket's letters and could refer his readers to that collection, FitzStephen wrote before Alan had completed his collection and so had to provide his readers with the texts of the letters himself. FitzStephen's *Vita* quotes the complete text of seven letters in direct discourse, and Duggan has shown that it was familiar with thirty-one others.⁵³ Significantly and unusually, however, the narrative in *D* does not wholly incorporate the seven letters that the narrative quotes directly. Instead, the letters are transcribed on small, loose pieces of parchment, which are inserted between the leaves containing the narrative, along with symbols informing the reader where in the narrative the letters belong.⁵⁴ The letters are transcribed in the same hand as the narrative. But although the scribe inserted them in the codex *after* transcribing the narrative, there is no possibility that the *idea* of including the letters was an afterthought, because the narrative anticipates their presence by including standard phrases used to introduce other texts (such as *scripsit in haec verba*).⁵⁵

It seems unlikely that *D*'s treatment of the letters was a quirk only of the scribe of this manuscript. As Cheney has noted, the fact that these letters were included in this way, allied to the fact that some of the letters are found in slightly different places in other manuscripts of the tradition, suggests that the letters were 'clearly not in position in *D*'s exemplar' either.⁵⁶ This being the case, it seems that the letters were also transcribed onto loose leaves in *D*'s exemplar, but they had been unavailable to *D*'s scribe when the narrative of the *Vita* was copied (in other words, they had been separated from the *Vita*). In addition to the seven letters actually

⁵³ Duggan, *Textual History*, 199.

⁵⁴ These are fols. 7r–v, 18r–v, 22r–v, 26r–v. Fol. 65* (as it is numbered in the MS, in distinction to fol. 65) is also a loose leaf, and continues the text of fol. 65 (which is part of the letter collection). The symbols resemble [Ø].

⁵⁵ E.g., 'Ibi in publico omnium aspectu sacerdos ille Vitalis acta narrat episcopo; suas offert literas. Quorum tenor hic erat: Decano etiam offert suas. que hoc continebant [Ø]. Et utreque litere in publico lecte sunt [Ø]. Ex tunc episcopus communi consilio excommunicatum se gessit et regi acta significat. Rex ei rescribit in hunc modum.' These letters refer to the letters *Excessus vestros*, *Vestram non debet*, and *Audivi gravamen*, printed in the edition on pages 90, 91, 91–2 respectively; and transcribed in the manuscript on the (loose) fols. 22r, 22v and 18r. Cheney's view that 'the scribe ... failed to observe that he was intended to insert certain documents into the life; instead he slavishly copied words such as 'in hunc modum' and carried straight on, returning later to copy the documents' seems a little unfair. Cheney, 'William FitzStephen,' 148.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

'quoted' in *D*, the narrative also refers to a number of letters that are transcribed in the letter collection that accompanies the *Vitae* in the manuscript.⁵⁷ The referral of the reader to letters in this collection (via their incipits) suggests that the narrative depended on this separate letter collection to tell its full story. The relationship of dependency between the narrative and the letter collection was distinctly reciprocal, however. For just as the *Vita* refers the reader to the letter collection for the texts of some of the letters, the letter collection reproduces *only the protocols* of four of the seven letters that are included in the *Vita*, implicitly referring the reader back to the *Vita* for their complete texts.⁵⁸ The relationship between narrative and letter collection in this case, then, is the reverse of that between the narrative and the letters inserted on loose leaves. Slightly paradoxically, while the loose letters are physically separable from the narrative that makes use of them, the letter collection appended to the narrative in *D* is not. The letter collection in *D* and the narrative of the *Vita* are bound to, and mutually dependent upon, one another for the complete text of the material they reproduce.

Although *D* is apparently not a fair copy nor the descendant of one,⁵⁹ this manuscript does allow us to speculate about attitudes among historians and their scribes towards the *scripta* rewritten (or reframed) by historical narratives. The separability of narrative and *scripta* that *D* manifests so physically certainly goes some way to explain Herbert of Bosham's anxiety about the possible afterlife of his own *Historia*. But it also raises challenging questions about the precise status of texts quoted by historical narratives, and about its own quotability. At what point does quoted text become part of history—and at what point (if any) are we justified in thinking about composite historiographical texts as integral unities? Were

⁵⁷ Including, for example, the letter *Desiderio desideravi*, which is introduced thus: 'Circa primum elapsum exsilii sui annum, cum jam deferbuisse deberet regis excandescencia, scripsit ei bonus archiepiscopus exhortatorias literas illas: *Desidero desideravi*, etc.' FitzStephen, *Vita*, *MTB* 3:81.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 160, n. 1. Cf. Cheney, 'William FitzStephen,' 148.

⁵⁹ Cf. Duggan, *Textual History*, 196: 'It gives the appearance of being a rough copy taken from drafts;' but *D* is 'closest in time and provenance to FitzStephen himself, and, although certainly transcribed *post* 1176 ... it is evidently based on a very early form of the text.' Cf. Cheney, 'William FitzStephen,' 149.

the letters inserted on loose leaves in *D* more a *part* of the *Vita* than the letters in the collection at the end of the volume to which it also referred?

The perspectives of Meir Sternberg, who has analyzed the modalities of quotation in a variety of modern and pre-modern discourses, are helpful here.⁶⁰ Sternberg suggests that no matter how direct the form of quotation might be, and no matter how accurately a text might be transcribed, 'to quote is to mediate and to mediate is to interfere.'⁶¹ Even if the wording were to be identical when repeated in another discourse, 'even if the original could be copied down to the last detail, its transplanting and framing in a new environment would impose on it a *new mode of existence* ... a communicative subordination of the part to the whole that encloses it.'⁶² However specific the representation, suggests Sternberg, 'and whatever its linguistic form, it cannot exhaust, let alone replace, the original act of discourse or expression, which is and remains a unique event.'⁶³ Sternberg's perspective demands that we ask how that inset discourse is affected by the new frame that contains it, and how that frame, in turn, is penetrated by the point of view and purposes of the inset text.⁶⁴ By approaching the *scripta* in this way, they begin to emerge not so much as derivative texts—as traditional diplomatic scholarship might view them—but as *ambiguous* texts,⁶⁵ belonging simultaneously to two

⁶⁰ Meir Sternberg, 'Proteus in Quotation Land: Mimesis and the Forms of Reported Discourse,' *Poetics Today* 3 (1982), 107–56.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 109. And as Sternberg suggests, misquotation is not so much a 'potential danger' of direct discourse as a 'prevalent fact.' It is only the omniscient, 'quasi-divine' teller who can 'authoritatively replicate any speech-event he pleases'; on the other hand 'ordinary mortals in life and art cannot with any show of probability ... report even external acts of expression at which they failed to be physically present.' Sternberg, 'Proteus,' 141.

⁶² Sternberg, 'Proteus,' 108, my emphasis.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Cf. Dominique Maingueneau, *Initiation aux méthodes de l'analyse du discours: problèmes et perspectives* (Paris, 1976), 125: 'Il ne suffit pas d'identifier le discours dans lequel a été prélevée la citation ou d'étudier la transformation qu'il a subie, il faut en outre rendre compte de son sens, de son statut, dans la nouvelle structure à laquelle il est intégré.' (It is not enough to identify the discourse from which a citation has been lifted, or to study the transformation it has undergone; one must also account for its meaning and its status within the new structure into which it is integrated.)

⁶⁵ This ambiguity, suggests Sternberg, 'is only contingently resolvable.' Sternberg, 'Proteus,' 109.

different discourses, each with its own perspective and purposes and whose precise relationship needs to be determined.⁶⁶

Given Sternberg's observations, would it be justified to suggest that the narrative framework of FitzStephen's *Vita* imposed a 'new mode of existence' on the letters it so loosely housed? The analogy of the letter collections we surveyed in the previous chapter suggests that, perhaps, it would be. As we saw, collecting, re-ordering or otherwise reconfiguring *scripta* very often turned them to a purpose other than that for which they had been created. Indeed, it seems that in an age where *scripta* had little chance of survival if they stood on their own, there was always a trade-off to be made between textual autonomy and permanence. But while recognizing the mediating interference of FitzStephen's narrative, it might still be too much to say that the *Vita* rewrote the letters its codex contained. FitzStephen (or his scribe) had no interest in diminishing their appearance of textual autonomy. It was this that gave the letters' impression that they were somehow relics—touch-relics—embedded within a narrative about them.⁶⁷ Similarly, it was the autonomy of Bosham's *funestum chirographum* that enabled him to quarantine it, as it were, at the end of his narrative (he would not include its words into his narrative itself, he said, 'because of their excessive crudeness and indecency').⁶⁸ It might be better to think

⁶⁶ Cf. Maingueneau, *Initiation*, 124, who posits the 'sécurité illusoire' involved in the verification of quotations 'comme si le découpage du fragment cité et sa mise en contexte lui laissaient son intégrité profonde, comme si l'étaient les « mêmes » énoncés dans les deux discours différents.' (as if the excision of the cited fragment, and its deployment in a [different] context left to it its essential integrity, as if they were the 'same' utterances in the two different discourses).

⁶⁷ For Becket's letters as a stimulant for devotion to his cult, see the comments of Alan of Tewkesbury in the preface to his letter collection: 'In quibus [sc. epistolis] sedulus lector et devotus viri Dei imaginem inveniet plenius depictam. Insuper operum ejus vestigia si libet perscrutari, ibi inveniet digito Dei fabricatam armorum copiam... Per epistolas ipsius martyris iter recenseat...' (In his letters the devoted and industrious reader will find depicted more fully the image of the man of God. Moreover, if it pleases the reader to scrutinize the footprints of his works, s/he will find there an abundance of weapons forged by the finger of God... Through the letters s/he may review the path of the martyr himself...) Alan of Tewkesbury, *Vita Sancti Thomae Cantuariensis archiepiscopus et martyris*, ed. James C. Robertson, *MTB* 2:300–1.

⁶⁸ 'Quam ... scripturam, etsi forte hic esset locus, non tamen curavi hic, in hac videlicet libelli historici serie interserere, tum propter nimiam illic verborum inurbanitatem et indecentiam, tum propter historici hujus libelli, qui nunc in manibus est, prolixitatem evitandam.' (Even if this were the place [to do so], I have decided not to insert this *scriptura* here—in this history book's narrative—both because of the excessive crudeness and indecency of [its] words, and in order to avoid [making] this history book that is now in [your] hands long-winded.) Bosham, *Vita*, *MTB* 3:341.

then of the *Vita* as *reframing* Becket's letters, of giving them new meaning as components of Becket's cult while leaving their old meaning, as transactions between Becket and his friends and enemies, intact.⁶⁹

REMEMBERING THE UNSPEAKABLE

The potential for historical narrative to give a new frame to quoted text, but simultaneously to maintain the appearance of its autonomy, goes some way to suggest why historians of this era seem to have preferred to quote *scripta* in direct discourse rather than wholly absorb their texts into narrative form. To be sure, MS *D* of FitzStephen's *Vita* represents an unusually extreme, and strangely material, manifestation of the textual autonomy of direct discourse. But other contemporary historians, not least Roger of Howden, seem as keen as FitzStephen to harness the rhetorical power of direct quotation—even if its autonomy was not always manifested in such a codicological way. Howden uses a combination of narrative and quoted *scripta* on any number of occasions, but his account of the capture of Richard I provides an apposite case study to illustrate the advantages of the apparent formal autonomy of *scripta* reproduced in direct discourse. Howden's account shows how canny the strategies of those quoting *scripta* could be. And in a complicated way it also shows how histories could be caught between absorbing and rejecting the *scripta* they reproduced—between speaking *for* them, and letting them speak for themselves. And while Howden (and FitzStephen) do not make any overt connection between their historiographical re-framing of *scripta* and a desire to have those *scripta* committed to memory, I suggest (with Jan Assmann) that through reproducing and re-telling the stories those *scripta* told, they attempted to ensure that they were remembered.

The capture of Richard I was one of the most remarkable (and most talked about) events of the late twelfth century. Howden's account of it is a Russian-doll-like piece of historical writing that gestures towards the

⁶⁹ Alan of Tewkesbury makes a nice distinction between Becket's letters, which enabled the reader to trace the 'iter martyris,' and John of Salisbury's narrative of Becket's life that accompanied them in his collection, which cleared the path. 'Joannis itaque opus primo perlegatur, per quod iter aperietur ad caetera quae sequuntur.' (John's work, through which the path will be cleared for the other things that follow, should be read through first.) Tewkesbury, *Vita*, *MTB* 2:301.

outlandishness of the episode it related. Howden's account combines his own historical narrative of Richard's capture with the text of a letter, which in turn quoted the text of another letter. As we shall see, the way that the two quoted letters call attention to their own textual autonomy suggests that Howden used this textual strategy to talk around the profound awkwardness of the facts he was relating, and to carefully manage his readers' responses to it. The combination of narrative and quotation (and quotation of quotation) he uses, meanwhile, sheds light on the complicated dynamics of quotation, repetition and remembrance at work in historical writing.

Let us sketch in outline how Howden presents the episode. He begins with a succinct narrative account of Richard's departure from the Holy Land,⁷⁰ his disembarkation at Ragusa,⁷¹ and his capture. The account of the latter, especially, is minimalistic: Howden relates only that the servants of the duke of Austria, having extracted information about Richard's whereabouts from his companion, 'found him sleeping in some little hut, and captured him.'⁷² Concerning Richard's subsequent fate, Howden is tight-lipped: he promptly shifts his focus to France, where Philip Augustus was plotting to invade Normandy; and from France he moves his attention to the complicated tussle between Geoffrey Plantagenet, William de Longchamp, Walter de Coutances and Richard's brother John over the regency of England.⁷³ Some time later,⁷⁴ Howden returns to the matter of Richard's fate, and explains that people in England did not know where he was. It is at this point that Howden inserts the two letters. The first letter Henry VI (the German emperor) had sent to Philip Augustus, announcing that he had Richard in his power.

⁷⁰ Howden, *Chronica*, 3:184.

⁷¹ Howden, *Chronica*, 3:185.

⁷² 'Invenerunt eum dormientem [in quadam parva villa], et ceperunt.' *Ibid.*, 3:186.

⁷³ According to Howden, it was precisely because of the machinations of Philip Augustus and the struggle between Longchamp and Count John that Richard left Outremer in the first place: 'Rex Angliae ... redire in regnum suum properavit, propter sinistros rumores quos audierat, tam de rege Francia, et de cancellario suo expulso, quam de comite Moretonii fratre suo.' (The king of England hurried to return to his kingdom, on account of the sinister rumours that he had heard—as much about the king of France and about his expelled chancellor—as about his brother [John] the count of Mortain.) Howden, *Chronica*, 3:185. For a narrative of the events of 1192 in England, see John T. Appleby, *England Without Richard, 1189–1199* (London, 1965), 99–106.

⁷⁴ Ten pages later in Stubbs's edition.

The second letter, which Howden inserts immediately after the first, had been sent by Walter de Coutances to his (then) co-justiciar, Hugh du Puiset, to accompany a copy of the first.

Howden's use of chronological narrative to describe the prelude to Richard's capture is relatively uncomplicated. But Howden's convoluted treatment of the aftermath of Richard's capture seems troubled by a peculiar reticence; and this seems to raise the possibility that Howden used the two letters because he did not want to address directly Richard's capture himself. Howden's reticence first becomes apparent when he introduces the section on Richard's fate with the following notice:

Eodem anno multi peregrini, qui recesserunt cum rege de terra Suliae, redierunt ante Natale Domini in Angliam, sperantes se invenisse regem in Anglia; et interrogati de regi, ubi esset, responderunt 'Nescimus; sed navem ejus, quam intraverat, vidimus applicatam apud Brundusium in Appulia.' (Howden, *Chronica* 3:194.)

(In that year, many pilgrims who had come back from Palestine with the king returned to England before Christmas, hoping to find him there. And, asked where the king might be, they replied 'We do not know. But we saw his ship—which he had boarded—docked at Brindisi in Apulia.')

By presenting the announcement of Richard's capture in this way, Howden conveys the politically destabilizing uncertainty that surrounded Richard's departure from Palestine.⁷⁵ But Howden also seems to tease his readers: he will not leave it to the returning pilgrims, whom he makes stubbornly ignorant, to announce where Richard is. For further details of the capture the reader is dependent on the text of Henry VI's letter announcing Richard's capture to Philip Augustus, which Howden inserts immediately following the report of the pilgrims' ignorance of Richard's whereabouts. The letter describes Richard's shipwreck, his flight from Illyria, the capture of the eight knights he left behind, Richard's journey to Friesach, and the capture there of six more of his knights. It also contains details of Leopold's vigilance for Richard and Richard's eventual capture

⁷⁵ See now Appleby, *England Without Richard*, 107–8; and cf. Gervase, *Historical Works*, 1:514 for the 'mira rerum commutatio, sed et famae confusio' in England and Normandy.

'near Vienna, in a hovel in a neighbouring town.'⁷⁶ And of course it also contained the crucial information that Richard was now under Henry's power.⁷⁷ All these latter details are lacking in Howden's own narrative.

It might be thought that the primary purpose of Howden's use of Henry's letter was one of convenience, since its ready-made narrative meant he would not need to write a new one himself. However, Howden's subsequent insertion of the second letter—which Walter de Coutances had originally sent to Hugh du Puiset to accompany a copy of Henry's letter to Philip—suggests that Howden's strategy was altogether more complicated. Howden uses Coutances's letter not to supplement his own narrative of Richard's capture (or to elaborate on Henry VI's narrative), so much as to articulate its unspeakability.⁷⁸ For Coutances, it seems, was even less willing to talk about the capture than Howden: he tried very hard to tell Puiset about Richard's capture without actually mentioning it at all. So although Coutances mentions that 'things had happened for the king that would not profit the kingdom or the king's faithful,'⁷⁹ he fails to enumerate exactly what those things were. Coutances suggests that he is about to reveal his news (lamenting that 'we are compelled to say that which we would have preferred not to')⁸⁰ but he goes on to say only that

⁷⁶ 'Juxta Wenam, in villa vicinari, in domo despecta.' Howden, *Chronica*, 3:195

⁷⁷ 'In nostra nunc habeatur potestate.' Ibid.

⁷⁸ This point should perhaps not be pushed too hard, because King Stephen was captured and ransomed during the civil war—but the historians of Howden's generation do not present this as being any more traumatic than the civil war itself (see, for example, Gervase, *Historical Works*, 1:117, Diceto, *Opera*, 1:254, Howden, *Chronica*, 1:204, all after Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*). However, self-censorship is a feature of many late twelfth century chronicles. A conspiracy of silence, for example, surrounded what had gone on between Eleanor of Aquitaine and her uncle (Raymond of Poitiers) in the Holy Land in 1148. 'Melius tacenda sunt quae in illa peregrinatione contigerunt,' (It is better that the things that happened on that pilgrimage be unspoken) says Gervase of Canterbury. Gervase, *Historical Works*, 1:149. Richard of Devizes also alludes to this scandal in one of his many marginal comments: 'Multi nouerunt quod utinam nemo nostrum nosset. Hec ipsa regina tempore prioris mariti fuit Ierosolimis. Nemo plus inde loquatur. Ego bene noui. Silete!' (Many know what I would that none of us knew. This same queen, during the time of her first husband, was at Jerusalem. Let no one say any more about it; I too know it well, Keep silent!). *The Chronicle of Richard of Devizes*, 25–6. Intriguingly, Diceto also uses a marginal comment to make a veiled reference to another scandal, the plot to poison Geoffrey Plantagenet: 'In voluminis nostri serie / Non est locus ejus memorie, / Involutus in tanto crimine / Vix est ut sit subscriptus in margine. / Glosa volatili, vel glosa volatilis.' Diceto, *Opera*, 2:148.

⁷⁹ 'De domino nostro rege aliter accidisse, quam ejus regno et universis suis fidelibus expediret.' Howden, *Chronica*, 3:196.

⁸⁰ 'Loqui compellimur, quod nollemus.' Ibid.

Imperatoris Alemannorum litterarum transcriptum vobis ducimus transmittendum, quas de domini nostri regis Angliae captione ad regem Francorum destinavit, praesenti pagina nostra involutum.⁸¹ (Howden, *Chronica* 3:196)

(We have thought to send over to you a copy of the German emperor's letter (rolled up in this our page before you), which he sent to the king of the French about the capture of our lord the king of England.)

Even now, Coutances mentions only the *letter about* the capture of the king, and then the council to which Puiset was summoned to discuss it. He omits any direct mention of the capture itself. It is as if the news dealt with here, announcing as it does a violation of not only norms of diplomacy but also the right ordering of the world, is traumatic to the point of being taboo. So by sending a transcript of the 'original' announcement along with his own letter, Coutances avoids having to announce the capture himself. Instead, he makes Henry VI's letter do it for him. Furthermore, he avoids having to copy the text of Henry's letter into that of his own, or even epitomize its *tenor*.⁸² By maintaining the formal autonomy of Henry's message in this way, Coutances wholly dissociates himself and his own voice from Henry's. In effect, he tries to give the impression of *conveying* it without actually having to *reproduce* it, of circulating it without simultaneously disseminating it.

Three further rhetorical considerations may also have informed Coutances's strategy. First, by conveying Henry's words in their original form (that of Henry's own letter), without Coutances's words to introduce them, Henry's malice would be laid bare. (Henry writes, for example, of the 'most plentiful joy' that the news of the capture of this 'enemy of our empire and *turbator* of [Philip's] kingdom' would bring him.)⁸³ Secondly,

⁸¹ Whether *involutus* should be translated 'rolled' or 'folded' or perhaps even 'wrapped up' (see now *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, 1472 s. v. *involvere*) depends on whether Walter's letter was patent (so rolled) or close (so folded and sealed). For the differences between letters sealed close and letters patent, see Clanchy, *Memory*, 90–1.

⁸² It could perhaps be argued that this strategy was merely a means of saving parchment, time and effort. See Constable, ed. *The Letters of Peter the Venerable*, 9, who suggests that few people who wrote letters kept copies themselves because to do so would have been too expensive. For the effects of the rarity and expense of parchment on attitudes to the written word more generally, see Clanchy, *Memory*, 146.

⁸³ 'Inimicus imperii nostri, et turbator regni tui ... animo tuo uberrimam importare laetitiam.' Howden, *Chronica*, 3:195–6.

by maintaining the physical separation of the two letters yet joining them by association, Coutances could attempt to direct his addressee's response to Henry's letter. 'There is no need for your tears,' he urges Puiset, 'but for your courage; for the attacks of fortune are to be met not with lamentations but, hiding our sorrow, to be treated as a test of character.'⁸⁴ To circulate a letter in this way, safely folded up within its new interpretative context was to control it, to appropriate its words and re-direct them towards a new purpose. Finally, the possibility that Coutances had himself manipulated Henry's message would have appeared less likely. (This kind of manipulation was especially likely considering the political atmosphere of rumour and counter-rumour that characterized the early 1190s in Western Europe;⁸⁵ and Coutances may have wished to maintain the epistolary and written nature of his information to distinguish it from the immateriality of those rumours.)⁸⁶

Howden's use of Henry VI's letter therefore closely corresponds with Coutances's use of it before him, and it is possible that Howden was simply imitating Coutances by using it this way. Although Howden is considerably more forthcoming about Richard's capture than Coutances was in his letter, like Coutances he uses Henry's letter to provide the most comprehensive and detailed account of it. Like Coutances, Howden might have included Coutances's own letter precisely to remind the reader of the

⁸⁴ 'Vobis non est opus lacrymis, sed virtute: quoniam fortunae aggressibus non est planctibus occurrendum, sed, dissimulato dolore, probitatis experientiae intendendum.' *Ibid.*, 3: 195.

⁸⁵ Or, as Gillingham forcefully puts it, the atmosphere of the 'propaganda war' launched against Richard I by Philip Augustus. John Gillingham, *Richard I* (New Haven and London, 1999), 223.

⁸⁶ Coutances mentions the 'super adventu regio rumoribus variis ventilatis' (rumours circulated about the royal *adventus*). Howden, *Chronica*, 3:196. This contradistinction between rumour and writing is also evident in Ansbert's *Historia de expeditione Frederici Imperatoris*, which also dealt with Richard's captivity. 'Dum vero in captivitate in Austria adhuc detineretur, fama velox vicina regna et regnorum principes penetravit, et auditam humiliationem et captionem tanti viri mirati, certitudinem hujus facti a duce Austriae literis suis inquirentes, ipsi scripserunt.' (While therefore [Richard] was being detained in captivity in Austria, swift rumour reached kingdoms and the princes of kingdoms; and having marvelled at the humiliation and capture they heard of so great a man, they wrote to [the Duke of Austria], seeking certainty of this fact from him in writing [lit. by his letters].) Ansbert then inserts the text of a letter from Philip Augustus to Duke Leopold asking that Richard be kept in captivity, in order (Ansbert says) that the *real* reason for Richard's incarceration—his alleged murder of Conrad of Montferrat—'probabilius esse credatur' (should be believed to be more plausible). Ansbert, *Historia de expeditione Friderici Imperatoris*, ed. Josef Debrowsky (Prague, 1827), 119. For the rumours circulating after Richard's capture, see Gervase, *Historical Works* 1:512–4.

episode's unspeakability. And like Coutances, Howden explicitly opposes the contents of a letter to rumour. In Coutances's case, the rumours *ventilati* of Richard's capture are superseded by the truth about it 'that cannot be hidden' and which is confirmed (or illustrated) by the information contained in Henry's letter. Howden, by contrast, suggests that *Henry's letter* contains the rumours, which Coutances's accompanying letter confirms as being true.⁸⁷

The complex interplay between rumour and writing in the aftermath of Richard's capture provides the essential context for Coutances's reproduction, in a disjointed form of direct quotation, of Henry VI's letter. It is evident from Howden's narrative (and those of Gervase of Canterbury and contemporary imperial chroniclers such as 'Ansbert') that few people knew exactly what was happening at this point, and fewer still knew for sure. It is also clear that the *writtenness* of information was no guarantee of its credibility.⁸⁸ But Howden himself was not disengaged from this context, or fighting a battle against it in the name of historiographical impartiality. In fact, he was taking part in the very processes that characterized it. However much Howden's use of direct discourse might have sought to give the impression that he was not himself disseminating Henry's letter, Howden, like Coutances and Henry VI, was engaged in the propagation and dissemination of written information, in framing it and re-framing it for his own purposes. Henry's letter had circulated widely (it had been *publicatus*, as Howden puts it): it had certainly circulated in France, where Rigord had seen a copy;⁸⁹ and it is quite possible that Henry's letter had been circulating in England even before Coutances sent his copy to Hugh du Puiset. But Howden's

⁸⁷ The following sentence connects Henry's and Walter's letters in Howden's *Chronica*: 'His itaque per Angliam publicatis de captione regis Angliae rumoribus, Walter Rothomagensis archiepiscopus in hac forma scripsit Hugoni Dunelmensi episcopo.' (With these rumours [i.e. those in the preceding letter?] about the king's capture being circulated through England, Walter therefore wrote to Bishop Hugh of Durham as follows.) Howden, *Chronica*, 3:196.

⁸⁸ For forged newsletters circulating in this period, see Gillingham, 'Royal Newsletters,' 171–86.

⁸⁹ Rigord's copy seems to belong to a different tradition to that received by Howden via Walter de Coutances and Hugh du Puiset, and presumably came from a source close to Philip Augustus. Rigord, *Histoire de Philippe Auguste*, ed. Élisabeth Carpentier, Georges Pon, and Yves Chauvin (Paris, 2006), 314–6.

chronicles circulated too, albeit on a smaller geographical scale. And those chronicles, together with the *scripta* they reproduced, were themselves reproduced in turn. William of Newburgh had read an early version of the *Chronica*, and Gervase of Canterbury used parts of the *Gesta*;⁹⁰ and Newburgh may well have used the version of Henry's letter included in the *Chronica* as the basis of his narrative of Richard's capture and its aftermath.

The point here is not just that histories should be thought of in terms of their role in the dissemination of written documents (although our discussion of treaties and newsletters in the previous chapter suggests that this phenomenon merits further investigation). It is rather that Howden's use of Henry's letter, and Coutances's use of it before him, throws into relief the way that textual reproduction could work to embed *scripta* and narratives within historical memory. On the one hand, by repeating and re-framing Henry's letter, Coutances furthered its circulation; on the other, he simultaneously appropriated it into the political discourse of English royal government. By repeating and reframing Henry's letter *and* by welding it to Coutances's previously detachable frame, Howden appropriated both texts for his normative—and formative—narrative of English history. Others such as Newburgh then repeated Howden's narrative and its letters in turn; they 'melted down and recast them,' as Richard Howlett put it, as a single entity, and gave no indication that a letter had ever been involved.

Jan Assmann has emphasized that 'acts of storage, transmission and reproduction' are decisive in the formation of cultural memory;⁹¹ and we can see something like these processes at work in the histories we have been exploring, together with the *scripta* they reproduce. Assmann's suggestion invites us to explore how texts could, in physical terms, be

⁹⁰ For Gervase's use of the *Gesta*, see Gervase, *Historical Works*, 1:xxi. For William of Newburgh's use of Howden, see John Gillingham, 'Two Yorkshire Historians Compared: Roger of Howden and William of Newburgh,' *Haskins Society Journal* 12 (2003), 15–16, and Gillingham, 'Royal Newsletters,' 179–85. Work remains to be done on how the conjectured version of the *Chronica* up to 1196, which Gillingham supposes Newburgh had seen, fits in with the manuscript tradition of the *Chronica* as it is currently understood (for which see Corner, 'Earliest Surviving Manuscripts,' 297–310).

⁹¹ Assmann, 'Form as a Mnemonic Device,' 75.

associated only contingently (like the letters of Coutances and Henry VI, and the letters and narrative of FitzStephen's *Vita*)—but how historians could nevertheless make them form a new *lieu de mémoire* through reproducing that association in historiographical form. And rather than assuming that the *scripta* reproduced by these texts were wholly subservient to their narratives—as scholarship has tended to do—Assmann's perspective suggests that historical narratives also enacted a kind of service to *scripta*. By enclosing *scripta* within the stable framework of a venerable literary genre—historical narrative—Gervase and Howden's chronicles, and FitzStephen and Bosham's *vitae*, afforded *scripta* the 'institutional support and framing' that Assmann suggests 'cultural texts' require for their information to be transmitted meaningfully over time.⁹² For his part, William of Newburgh's rewriting of Henry VI's letter as straight narrative—a letter Howden had worked so hard to ensure that his history did not quite absorb—shows that once a chronicle had 'stored' a *scriptum*, its author had little control over how it would subsequently be transmitted and reproduced and remembered. However uncomfortable the facts it contained, Howden's reproduction, and Newburgh's subsequent rewriting, of Henry VI's letter worked to ensure that even if the letter itself was forgettable, the story it told about Richard's capture was not.

INSPECTING THE PAST

In late twelfth-century English society, textual reproduction was becoming an increasingly formalized way by which important cultural information was remembered. This is as clear in literate administrative techniques as it is in contemporary historical writing. Although it is unusual to juxtapose bureaucratic practices with historiography, doing so shows the considerable technical and conceptual overlap between the worlds of those remembering things by writing history and those having

⁹² Ibid., 76. As Assmann persuasively argues elsewhere, rather than guaranteeing remembrance, writing is in fact a 'locus of latency,' and written cultures are as prone to forgetting as oral ones. In written cultures, 'we witness the buildup of outposts of cultural memory, dumping grounds of meanings and of texts that are unread and may even have become unreadable. Writing is a storage system, not a means of communication.' Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory*, 98–9.

things remembered by having them written down in charters. The fact that other literate practices besides historiography self-consciously used textual reproduction to commit things to memory strengthens the argument that history writers reproduced *scripta* in order for them to be remembered over time. And it shows that the gulf between literary and literate practices is narrower than it sometimes seems.

We have already seen that sight, memory and textual reproduction were closely related in this period. Gervase of Canterbury associates his reproduction of Christ Church's *munimenta* with the eyes of his reader and their *arca memoriae*.⁹³ The association between seeing, reading and remembering was not confined to Gervase's metahistorical commentary, however. This combination was also crucial to contemporary chancery practices, which provide further evidence of how they interrelated in contemporary memorial culture. Gervase's use of the verb *inspicere* invites direct comparison with charters of *inspeximus*, which late twelfth-century chanceries increasingly used to confirm older charters.⁹⁴ *Inspeximus* charters worked by reproducing in a new charter the exact words of an earlier charter under a new protocol. The *inspeximus* depended, at least in theory, on the new grantor having *seen* the old charter (which is why the grantor used the words 'inspeximus' or 'vidimus' with regards to the previous charter at the beginning of the confirmation).⁹⁵ The practice of

⁹³ Cf. pp. 37–8 above, and Carruthers, *Book of Memory*, 51–5.

⁹⁴ As Richard Mortimer complained in 1989, 'there has been very little study of *inspeximus* and chancery enrolments, given their importance in the transmission of documents.' Richard Mortimer, 'The Charters of Henry II: What are the Criteria for Authenticity?', *ANS* 12 (1990), 127. Mortimer's complaint is generally speaking valid today. Foundational for the study of English *inspeximus*es is Vivian Hunter Galbraith, 'A New Charter of Henry II to Battle Abbey,' *EHR* 52.205 (1937), 67–73, and, in more general terms, Giry, *Manuel de diplomatique*, 18–34. For a more detailed analysis of their emergence in episcopal practice, see Cheney, *English Bishops' Chanceries*, 91–96 and Christopher R. Cheney, ed. *English Episcopal Acta II. Canterbury 1162–1190*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1991), lxvi–lxviii. Since Mortimer's comments, the introduction of *inspeximus* charters into English chancery practice has been studied in Nicholas Vincent, 'The Charters of King Henry II: The Introduction of the Royal *Inspeximus* Revisited,' in *Dating Undated Medieval Charters*, ed. Michael Gervers (Woodbridge, 2000), 97–122 and Vincent, 'King Henry II and the Monks of Battle: The Battle Chronicle Unmasked,' esp. 277, ff., which challenge the conclusions of Galbraith and Cheney in the light of new evidence.

⁹⁵ The common formulas (for examples of which see Cheney, *English Bishops' Chanceries*, 93) usually involve a combination of 'inspeximus,' 'vidimus,' 'audivimus,' 'contrectavimus,' which are variations on an allusion to 1 John 1:1: 'Quod audivimus, quod vidimus oculis nostris, quod perspeximus, et manus nostre contrectaverunt.' Idem, ed. *English Episcopal Acta II. Canterbury 1162–1190*, lxvi, n. 105.

confirming previous charters, usually by making reference to their existence and who granted them, was an ancient one; but *inspeximus* charters were unique in their insistence on the exact verbal repetition of the text of an earlier charter. The conjunction of visual proof and precise verbal reproduction that the *inspeximus* charter required was peculiarly powerful, and it had the potential to re-make—or to destroy—an older charter. As the *Chronicle of Battle Abbey* suggests (in yet another instance of a late twelfth century work of history showing a peculiarly strong interest in *scripta*), in the older practice of alluding to an earlier charter with the formula ‘sicut carta illa, vel illius N testatur,’⁹⁶ the later charter ‘would seem to require the evidence (*testimonium*) of earlier (charters) because it is more recent.’⁹⁷ But with the full recitation of the previous charter’s text, there is an assumption that the new charter *supplants* the old. Battle Abbey’s chronicler, reporting Henry II’s inspection and recitation of the privilege granted to Battle by William I, attributes this view to Henry himself:

If the clause we avoid [i.e. *sicut carta N testatur*] were to have been put in the later charter it would confer little without the presence of the earlier. But now, since in the later one no mention has been made of the original prototypes (*precedentibus originalibus*), this charter alone would be enough, even if all the others had been lost.⁹⁸

It is no coincidence then that Henry and the monks of Battle describe his manoeuvre not as a *confirmatio* of the charter, but as a *renovatio*.⁹⁹ In structural terms, this procedure amounts to the imposition of Sternberg’s ‘new mode of existence’ on the contents of a previous charter.¹⁰⁰ The power of this new mode of existence was such that, far from merely replicating the text of the old discourse and making it do the same work as previously, the renewed discourse could be used for purposes diametrically opposed to what was originally intended. In the field of

⁹⁶ For examples of variations on this formula, see Cheney, *English Bishops’ Chanceries*, 94.

⁹⁷ ‘Ut posterius est videatur precedentium exigere testimonium.’ *The Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, ed. and trans. Eleanor Searle (Oxford, 1980), 310. Translation adapted.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 312.

⁹⁹ ‘“Hec, inquit Rex, “renouatione indigeret.” Abbate ad hoc respondente, “Et nos ut eam si placet auctoritate regia renovando confirmetis supplicamus.”’ (‘This could do with renewing,’ said the king. To this the abbot replied, ‘And we pray that, if it please you, you will renew it and confirm it by your royal authority.’) *Ibid.*, 310–11.

¹⁰⁰ Sternberg, ‘Proteus,’ 109.

diplomatic, the most extreme manifestation of this potential is the charter of exemplification, which reproduces the words of a previous charter precisely in order to annul them.¹⁰¹ The ‘inspected’ charter thus gains its authority afresh—or loses it at once—through the repetition of its contents; and although the *text* of the old charter is repeated (thus retaining a representational link to its former mode of existence), the ritual circumstances of its original promulgation are replaced by those of its renewal, the guarantees of the original witnesses are superseded by those of the new and the old seal is discarded along with the parchment to which it was attached.

The charters (re)produced by confirmations explicitly manifest in their protocols their dependence on the validating eyes of someone of charter-giving authority. The reproduction of the exact words of one charter within those of another *proved* that the older charter had not only been seen, heard, handled and otherwise ritually validated in order to be remade,¹⁰² but that the previous text *had been read* and adjudged acceptable as part of that validation. Furthermore, the exact form of the words used had been adjudged acceptable.¹⁰³ This implies that the authority of a written text was both self-evident and important *per se*: the text of the original charter was thought to possess authority *qua* text, rather than as text embedded within a symbolic object (a charter), from whose material existence it drew its authority. This textual autonomy, indeed, is a

¹⁰¹ This is indeed a characteristic of confirmation charters more generally. See Giry, *Manuel de diplomatique*, 18: ‘loin d’avoir pour objet de conserver les actes anciens ... les confirmations tendaient à en annuler la valeur en créant des titres nouveaux.’ For the first example of a royal exemplification in the reign of John, see Vincent, ‘The Charters of King Henry II: The Introduction of the Royal *Inspeximus* Revisited,’ 116. In cases like this, where the framing context of the original and the quoting text are diametrically opposed, it is tempting, as Sternberg suggests, ‘to view quoting as a type of speech-act.’ Sternberg, ‘Proteus,’ 146–7.

¹⁰² At its minimal manifestation, this ritual involved the simple resealing of the original charter.

¹⁰³ An example of the words of a charter *not* being adjudged acceptable (and an example of the remarkable dialogism of the process of confirming a charter), can be found elsewhere in the *Battle Abbey Chronicle*: while a privilege of Battle was being recited before Henry II shortly after his coronation ‘they reached a particular phrase in the charter that “the church of Battle be wholly free from all subjection of bishops” ... A shout (clamor) went up from all sides ... [Bishop Hilary of Chichester] moved that the extraordinary privilege in this phrase be condemned in perpetuity by the authority of the holy canons, and that it be deleted (*delendam*) [from the charter] by a unanimous resolution of the judges present.’ *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, 158–9. For an analysis of this scene, see chapter 7, below.

necessary condition of the *inspeximus* that renews the power of a charter-as-text while simultaneously making the charter-as-material-object obsolete. Bedos-Rezak has also detected a tendency towards textual autonomy in late twelfth-century charters (although she suggests that they achieve this autonomy by making explicit reference to themselves as objects, rather than as texts). By adopting this strategy, 'the charter was freed from its former dependency upon a specific medium,' to the extent that 'whatever its material format, a kind of textual self-referentiality was achieved whereby the text-as-charter might continue to exist, whether in a cartulary or elsewhere.'¹⁰⁴

Although it is tempting to extend that 'elsewhere' automatically to the histories that also quote the texts of charters, there are considerable qualitative differences between the inspecting and rewriting of the old charter in order to renew it and transferring its contents into a cartulary or chronicle.¹⁰⁵ These differences notwithstanding, it is remarkable that the formulas used by historians to introduce the text of *scripta* when they are quoted directly are often identical to those used by *inspeximus* charters to introduce the text of a previous charter, such as 'litteras nos inspexisse in

¹⁰⁴ Bedos-Rezak, 'Archaeology of the Medieval Charter,' 59. Cf. John Hudson's observation that the use in historical narrative of charters increases just as charters themselves were becoming more ephemeral. Hudson, 'L'Écrit, les archives et le droit en Angleterre (IXe–XIIe siècle),' 21.

¹⁰⁵The most significant difference is that, in the *renovatio*, a new charter is granted, and with it a new promise is made (and a new speech-act performed) by the renewer. The renewer, therefore, requires sufficient social authority to be able to promulgate a new charter. The binding force of the old charter, meanwhile, and the perspective of the original grantor, is wholly replaced by the binding force of the new, which has no further use for the original. Although by no means necessarily the case, it seems that in practice the reproduction of the text of a charter in a cartulary (like the reproduction of the text in a charter of *inspeximus*) led to the obsolescence and destruction of the original. By contrast, when a chronicler or cartulary-maker reproduced the text of a charter, he did not do so by creating a new *scriptum*, issued in his own name, to supersede it; the copyist makes no promise or guarantee, and nor is he necessarily party to the transaction that the charter represented. As such, its position with respect to the original *scriptum* is the opposite of that of the relation between the old charter and its renovated successor. In the (contested) terminology of J. L. Austin, the original in the case of the *inspeximus* and the copy in that of the chronicle might be said to be utterances that are 'in a peculiar way hollow or void ... [which] fall under the doctrine of the *etiolations* of language.' See now J. L. Austin, *How to do things with words*, ed. J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA, 1975), 21–2 with the reply by Jaques Derrida, 'Signature Event Context,' *Glyph* 8 (1977), 172–97, which claims that this 'etiolation' is the 'internal and positive condition' of all language (190), the 'determined modification of a general citationality—or rather a general iterability—without which there would not even be a successful performative.' (191) For the destruction frequently caused by the copying process, see Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, 82. Cf. Foulds, 'Medieval Cartularies,' 10.

hec verba,' 'in hac forma' or 'sub hac forma.'¹⁰⁶ This does not of course mean that those who made them made no distinction between a charter that cited an anterior text and a chronicle that did so using the same words. But the creation of *inspeximus* charters conjoins written proof, eyewitness testimony and quotation—three of the most characteristic features of contemporary historical writing. The combination of the similarity of the terminology, the similarity of the structure that enclosed one discourse within another, and the similarity of the appeal to the eyes of an audience suggest that the processes at work in both charter and historiographical text were intimately related. Gervase of Canterbury's association of his *Chronica* with seeing and remembering, together with the processes by which *inspeximus* charters were created, point towards the intimate relationship between seeing, reading and remembering. Roger of Howden's and William FitzStephen's re-framing of letters highlights the transformative effects that processes of seeing, reading and remembering had on the texts they had as their objects. These processes had the power to separate the apparently inseparable—and to join the once-physically distinct into a new, visible and memorable, unity.

Contemporary discussions of history as a literary genre underscores its grounding in the realm of the written, the memorable and the visual. I suggest, by way of conclusion, that the visibility of history made the transfer of *scripta* to memorial structures integral to historiography's purposes. Herbert of Bosham's *Historia* illustrates the visual foundation of history writing most clearly.¹⁰⁷ According to Bosham, the role of the sight is fundamental for the writer and reader of history alike. Bosham suggests

¹⁰⁶ A requirement of a citation is that it be identifiable. Maingueneau suggests that formulas such as 'X prétend que...', 'Selon X...', etc.' are as significant in this respect as quotation marks: 'Ce sont ... de marques par lesquelles le discours citant introduit une distance par rapport au discours cité.' (These are markers through which the quoting discourse introduces a distance with respect to the quoted discourse.) Dominique Maingueneau, *Initiation*, 125. For an analysis of the formulas used to introduced quoted text by historians, see appendix C, below.

¹⁰⁷ Bosham's persistent insistence that he was writing *history* (rather than any other form of discourse) and his frequent references to the laws of the genre signal that he had a thorough understanding of the genre's rhetorical mechanics. See, for example, Bosham, *Vita*, *MTB* 3:462, for the 'lex historiae' prohibiting digressions; *ibid.*, 3:496, for the 'lex scribentium' and 'regula scribendi' which prohibits the repeated narration of the same thing (Bosham curiously says he is exempt from these rules because he is in mourning); and *ibid.*, 3:533, for the 'lex historiae' which demands brevity (which Bosham apparently honours only in the breach).

that his use of direct quotation makes his picture of Becket's life clearer for the reader. As Bosham puts it after quoting six of the Constitutions of Clarendon in the *Historia*,

Ex istis itaque constitutis funestis, quae jam expressimus, odio archipraesulis ad ecclesiasticae libertatis oppressionem ab Ecclesiae inimicis fabricatis, sic quisque mox videre potest quam manifesta, quam justa archipraesulis nostri primo exsilii et demum martyrii causa fuerit. (Bosham, *Vita*, 3:285)

(And so everyone can straightaway see from these deadly constitutions that we have just quoted ([which were] concocted by the enemies of the Church out of hatred for the archbishop and for the oppression of ecclesiastical liberty) how manifest [and] how just was the cause [which led to] our archbishop's initial exile and eventual death.)

Bosham reproduced the text of the Constitutions, then, in order to make the point of his narrative (that Becket's cause was a just one) clear to his readers.¹⁰⁸ Bosham does not claim that his narrative *itself* is clear, or that the Constitutions contribute to that clarity. Rather, it is Becket's *causa* that the inserted Constitutions clarify. Bosham inserted the Constitutions, he says,

ut cunctis martyris hujus historiae lectoribus liquido pateat, etiam praeter ea quae jam posita, quam clara, quam aperta, quam perspicua primo exsilii et postea martyrii fuerit archipraesulis causa. (Bosham, *Vita*, 3:286)

(in order that it should be clearly obvious to all the readers of the history of this martyr how evident, how manifest, how conspicuous, was the *causa* [which led to] first the exile and then martyrdom.)

The visual language in Bosham's description of the role of the Constitutions in the *Historia* is striking. In reading the Constitutions, suggests Bosham, his readers will *see* how manifest the justice of Becket's case was; they will *see* how just was the cause for which Becket died. Bosham is even more explicit about this when he explains the purpose of his reproduction of the Constitutions in the plan of his *volumen historicum*:

¹⁰⁸ Along with brevity (which was so important to Herbert's conception of history), narrative clarity was the crucial rhetorical *virtus narrationis* whose achievement would mean that the narrative would be persuasive. For the *narratio aperta*, see Cicero, *De inventione*, ed. and trans. by H. M. Hubbell (Cambridge, MA, 1960), 1.19.28–9; for the *narratio dilucida*, see [Cicero], *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, ed. and trans. by Harry Caplan (Cambridge, MA, 1954), 1.9.14–15. See also the further examples provided by Lausberg, *Handbook*, §§315–21.

In omnium vero calce scriptum illud funestum, chirographi instar confectum, postponitur quod primo inter tantum regem et tantum archipraesulem, *ut mundus vidit et invidit*, tam magna et cara dissolvit foedera, archipraesulis primo exsilii et demum martyrii causa. (Bosham, *Vita*, MTB 3:158–9)

(Placed at the very end of all [the works presented here] is that fatal *scriptum* (made in the form of a chirograph), which destroyed such once-great and dear alliances between so great a king and so great an archbishop, so that the world may see and resent the cause of first the archbishop's exile and eventually his death.)¹⁰⁹

Bosham's visual language, although used in this case about the chirograph, is entirely consonant with the rhetoric of *testimonium*—and especially eyewitness *testimonium*—that underpins the *historia* as a whole.¹¹⁰ 'Only that which I heard, which I saw, do I testify here,'¹¹¹ declares Herbert; and what he wrote he did so 'fide oculata.'¹¹² The idea that *historia* was the domain of the eyewitness is directly attributable to Isidore of Seville, whose *Etymologiae* were a foundational pedagogical text in this period. According to Isidore,

Dicta autem Graece historia, ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱστορεῖν, id est, a videre, vel cognoscere. Apud veteres enim nemo conscribebat historiam, nisi is qui interfuisset, et ea quae conscribenda essent vidisset... Haec disciplina ad Grammaticam pertinet, quia quidquid dignum memoria est litteris mandatur. (Isidore, *Etymologiae* 1.41.1–2)

(History is so called from the Greek term ἱστορεῖν [*historein*], that is, from seeing or 'knowing.' Indeed, among the ancients no one would write history unless he had been present and had seen what was to be written down... This discipline has to do with writing, for whatever is worthy of memory is committed to writing.)¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ The translation of this sentence is tricky (*ut* plus indicative) because it is unclear whether it is the *cara foedera* which the world sees and envies (*invidit*), or the *causa martyrii* (or perhaps the chirograph itself) which the world sees and despises. A preference from the latter might be allowed, since in the preface to the *Liber melorum*, Bosham mentions again that 'In omnium vero calce scriptum illud funestum, chirographi instar confectum, postponitur quod primo, ut mundus vidit et invidit, archipraesulis exilii et martyrii causa fuerit.' *Herberti de Boseham Opera quae extant omnia*, 2:2.

¹¹⁰ See now Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, chapter 2, for the rhetoric of *testimonium* in historical writing.

¹¹¹ 'Solum quod audivi, quod vidi, hic testor.' Bosham, *Vita*, MTB 3:286. The notable exception to this was the martyrdom itself, which Bosham complains he was 'defrauded' of seeing. *Ibid.*, 3:502.

¹¹² Bosham, *Vita*, MTB 3:479.

¹¹³ Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, trans. Stephen A Barney (Cambridge, 2007), 67.

The definition of *historia* as the preserve of the eyewitness was more or less axiomatic when Herbert wrote his history of Becket.¹¹⁴ But it was not just the quality of its eyewitness *testimonium* that made history visual for Isidore, however. As Dennis Green has suggested, ‘in a *double* sense Isidore’s conception of history was visual, resting on the presence of an eyewitness and on written, rather than oral transmission, so that Konrad von Hirsau follows him in pithily defining the *historiographus* as *rei visae scriptor*.’¹¹⁵

Herbert’s use of the chirograph works, then, to put his readers in the place of the eyewitness, so that *they* can see Becket’s *causa* through seeing written evidence of it. This manoeuvre is indebted to the rhetorical technique of *demonstratio* or *evidentia*—the description of an object or event with such vividness that it appeared to be present before the eyes of the audience, to the extent that they themselves became eyewitnesses.¹¹⁶ *Evidentia* is a fundamentally *visual* figure, and Herbert’s repeated statements that his audience would have seen what he was describing work to position them as if they were eyewitnesses.¹¹⁷ ‘Antonius’ claimed

¹¹⁴ Dennis H. Green, *Medieval Listening and Reading: The Primary Reception of German Literature 800–1300* (Cambridge, 1994), 227. See now *Oeuvres de Robert de Melun*, ed. Raymond M. Martin, 4 vols (Leuven, 1932–1952), 1:171: ‘Mos enim hic apud antiquos erat, ut nullus rem gestam que historia proprie appellatur scribere presumeret, nisi eam geri vidisset.’ (It was the custom among the ancients that nobody presumed to write [about] past deeds—this is properly called history—unless they had seen them being accomplished.) Cf. Hugh of St. Victor, *De scripturis*, PL 175, col. 12A, ‘Apud veteres nulli licebat scribere res gestas, nisi a se visas.’ (Among the ancients nobody was allowed to write [about] past deeds unless they had seen them themselves.) For the importance of eyewitness history in this period, see especially Jeanette Beer, *Narrative Conventions of Truth*, 23–34, and Peter Damian-Grint, *New Historians*, 69–84. For the importance of Bede’s reception of Isidore’s definition of *historia* to its later transmission, see Roger D. Ray, ‘Bede’s *Vera Lex Historiae*,’ *Speculum* 55 (1980), 14–17.

¹¹⁵ Green, *Medieval Listening and Reading*, 227, my emphasis. Cf. Conrad of Hirsau, *Dialogos super auctores*, ed. Robert B. C. Huygens (Leiden, 1970), 17. It is perhaps significant that Herbert refers to himself as Becket’s *historiographus* (Bosham, *Vita*, MTB 3:531, 534; and *idem*, *Opera*, ed. Giles, 2:185).

¹¹⁶ See *Rhet. Her.*, 4.55.68: ‘Demonstratio est cum ita verbis res exprimitur ut geri negotium et res ante oculos esse videatur.’ (It is *demonstratio* when an event is so described in words that the business seems to be enacted and the subject to pass before our eyes.) Cf. Isidore, *Etym.*, 2.21.33, ‘Energia est rerum gestarum aut quasi gestarum sub oculis inductio.’ For other examples of *evidentia* / *demonstratio* / *energia* in rhetorical theory, see Lausberg, *Handbook*, §§810–819. For *evidentia* and historiography, see Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, chapter 3.

¹¹⁷ E.g. Bosham, *Vita*, MTB 3:176, ‘Videres totam domum ipso tanquam stella matutina ... illustrari.’ (You would have seen his household illuminated by him just as if by the morning star.) For ‘cernerer,’ see e.g. *ibid.*, 3:467: ‘cernerer quidem tunc ex multis cordibus cogitationes revelari.’ (you would have seen then many thoughts being

in Cicero's *De oratore* that Crassus was so eloquent that, when he recited the written will of a benefactor in court, he could raise him from the grave and 'place him before the eyes of everyone;' he would appear to be present in the courtroom to embrace his mourning son.¹¹⁸ While Bosham makes no such claims for his oratory, this is exactly how he envisaged the process of writing history. As he nears the climax of *Historia*, Bosham explains that

Quoniam paterni certaminis recordatio mihi dulcis, invitus ad finem accedo. Nam dum adhuc certantem describo, styli gratum beneficium quasi oculo ad oculum certantis mihi personam effigiat, et est modicum mecum adhuc. (Bosham, *Vita*, *MTB* 3:497)

(Since recording [our] father's struggle is sweet for me, I approach the end unwillingly. For while I write down [his] struggle, the welcome service of the pen sculpts a figure for me of the struggler—as if [we were seeing] eye-to-eye. And he is with me for a short while.)

Bosham holds up a model of history in which the use of the written word by its readers or writers had the power to make the past present before their eyes. Through reading history written by eyewitnesses or using the 'testimony' of *scripta*, Bosham suggests that history's readers became eyewitnesses too. This was a possibility Isidore's definition of history always left open. As Green suggests, in historical writing of an Isidorian mode, 'reliable written sources may replace eyewitnesses in a civilization whose historical consciousness is matched by a high degree of literacy.'¹¹⁹ Bosham's 'civilization' certainly had the historical consciousness, and it increasingly had the literacy too.

Not enough is known about Roger of Howden's education to say whether he would have thought that the *scripta* he reproduced verbatim in his

revealed from many minds.) This turn of phrase was distinctly Sallustian: see, for example, Sallust's account of the battlefield at Pistoria: 'Confecto proelio tum vero cerneret quanta audacia quantaque animi vis fuisset in exercitu Catilinae.' (When the battle was ended you would have seen what boldness and resolution had pervaded Catalina's army.) J. C. Rolfe, ed. and trans., *Sallust* (Cambridge, MA, 1921), 61.1, translation adapted. For the effects of *evidentia* on an audience see Lausberg, *Handbook*, §810.

¹¹⁸ Cicero, *De Oratore*, 1.57.245. 'ut soles, dicendo a mortuis excitasses; statuisses ante oculos; complexus esset filium...' (You would by your eloquence, in your usual way, have called up [the heir's] father from the dead; you would have set him in the sight of all; he would have embraced his son...)

¹¹⁹ Green, *Medieval Listening and Reading*, 238. Emphasis mine.

history could fulfil this role. But Gervase of Canterbury's and Ralph de Diceto's chronicles suggest that they too considered history to inhere in a visual, and written, object. The visibility of historical writing meant that its contents—like the contents of charters needing renewal—were memorable; and being memorable, they could be recalled and re-remembered in new ways. As Jan Assmann has suggested, the repetition and re-configuration of cultural texts was precisely the way that cultural knowledge was transmitted to posterity. In a world in which record-keeping was widespread but insecure—and in which the writtenness of information no longer guaranteed its importance, the need to make the written residue of the past meaningful and unforgettable was becoming acute.

Context

In Jan Assmann's study of cultural memory, he draws a distinction between the 'ritual coherence' of the principles that hold together pre-literate cultures, and the 'textual coherence' of literate cultures. 'In the world of ritual coherence,' Assmann suggests 'cultural texts structure reality because they are communicated in the rhythm of group festivals and rites. In the world of textual coherence, life with texts is structured very differently.'¹ Because in literate cultures cultural texts 'do not exist in living memory, but have been displaced into thinglike pieces of writing, they assume one form when latent in a state of stored presence and another in the act of communicative reproduction.'² In the ritual coherence of pre-literate cultures, cultural texts are always binding and always relevant; were they redundant, the *mouvance* of unwritten cultural memory would ensure they were swiftly forgotten.

Writing provides no such guarantee of cultural coherence over time, according to Assmann. On the contrary, it 'conceals risks of being forgotten, of disappearance, of aging and being left to gather dust that are alien to the oral tradition.'³ The cultural texts of literate society are always poised between foreground and background, latency and presence, 'functional memory and storage memory.'⁴ As we observed in the previous chapter, Gervase of Canterbury's *Chronica* and the *Liber Eliensis* explicitly articulate the role of their texts in re-presenting *scripta* to the sight (and to the memory) in order to prevent them from 'gathering dust' in obscurity and obsolescence. So a crucial means by which one literate culture (that of late twelfth century England) activated cultural texts that

¹ Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory*, 121.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, 118.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 121.

lay dormant was by reproducing them textually, and by giving them a new audience. Another way Assmann suggests literate cultures ensured their written and 'displaced memory-store' was transferred from latency to presence was through 'interpretation, the effort to reconstruct meaning.'⁵

This chapter explores how historians and historiographical narrative saved the *scripta* of the past from oblivion by explaining their meaning to the present. It explores, therefore, the role of historical narratives in the transfer of texts 'from latency to presence' by providing interpretation and reconstructing meaning for the utterances of the past. More precisely, it investigates the impact of new ideas about historical context on historical writing, which ideas grew out of contemporary rhetorical and hermeneutical thought. For it is striking that, at the very moment that historical writing was at its most precocious in terms of its forms and its awareness of its own purposes, a number of related discursive practices recognized the importance of establishing a (historical) context for past *dicta, facta* and *scripta* in order to determine their meaning. Contemporary literary theory, legal scholarship and historical writing itself all show a growing concern for establishing and explaining the *circumstantiae* in which things had been said and done in the past. The concern is evident in John of Salisbury's *Historia pontificalis* and Gervase of Canterbury's *Chronica*; and it can be found in the *summae* written by decretists and the *Accessus ad auctores* read in the schools. This chapter offers a close reading of the *Historia pontificalis* to explore the archaeology of its interest in historical circumstances. It assesses the *Historia's* debts to other contemporary textual practices (legal, rhetorical, literary, historiographical) to suggest that it self-consciously offers a lesson on how to reconstruct the meaning of the utterances of the past. The historical *circumstantiae* of those utterances, I argue, become the *subject* of historical writing in the *Historia pontificalis*—which, I suggest, presents the writing of history as if it were a *reading* of a written text.

⁵ Ibid.

Unlike many of the works considered elsewhere in this study, John of Salisbury includes no *scripta* in his *Historia*. However, John makes clear the fundamental role of the written word in the composition of history. He expresses his surprise, for example, that no ecclesiastical historian had continued Sigebert of Gembloux's *Chronica*—even though John had ‘found in church archives notes of memorable events which could be of help to future writers.’⁶ And although his *Historia* does not contain the sort of public letters that are such a marked feature of Howden's and Diceto's chronicles, the *Historia* is similarly interested in written practices. Like Howden's and Diceto's chronicles, the *Historia* explores the relationship between those practices and public life. Most notably, John casts the *Historia* itself in quasi-epistolary form (it is addressed to Peter of Celle in the second person).⁷ Unlike the histories considered so far, the centre of the *Historia*'s attention is the papal, rather than Plantagenet, court. Nevertheless, the *Historia* is a history as concerned with matters of administration and the written word as its insular counterparts,⁸ and it evinces a highly developed awareness of the importance of history to administration and law. Indeed, it is the unique combination of this awareness with its sophisticated understanding of the idea of historical context that makes the *Historia* so revealing. The *Historia*'s combination of concerns suggests that, while the written word might have been (increasingly) considered the characteristic technology of both administration and law—and while writing was increasingly considered

⁶ ‘Licet aliquas rerum memorabilium subnotationes in archiuis ecclesiarum inuenerim, que possint si qui forte scripturi sunt eorum diligentiam adiuuare.’ *HP*, 2.

⁷ John's address to Peter is at *HP*, 4. For the relationship of the *HP* to other of John of Salisbury's letters, see Marjorie Chibnall, ‘John of Salisbury as Historian,’ in *The World of John of Salisbury*, ed. Michael Wilks (Oxford, 1984), 169–72. For John of Salisbury's membership of Peter of Celle's epistolary circle, see Julian Haseldine, ‘Understanding the Language of *Amicitia*: The Friendship Circle of Peter of Celle (c. 1115–1183),’ *JMH* 20 (1994), 237–60. For the view that ‘the best key’ to the puzzles of the purpose of the *Historia* ‘lies in [John's] relation to Peter of Celle,’ see Christopher N. L. Brooke, ‘Aspects of John of Salisbury's *Historia Pontificalis*,’ in *Intellectual Life in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Margaret Gibson*, ed. Lesley Smith and Benedicta Ward (London, 1992), 195.

⁸ Pace the editors of John of Salisbury's later letters, who considered the *Historia* to be ‘not the work of an administrator, but a commentary, strictly contemporary yet self-conscious, of a witness of great events.’ W. J. Miller and Christopher N. L. Brooke, eds., *The Letters of John of Salisbury, Volume II: The Later Letters* (Oxford, 1986), xxi. For an argument that the *Historia* should be considered an ‘administrative history,’ see Clare Monagle, ‘The Trial of Ideas: Two Tellings of the Trial of Gilbert of Poitiers,’ *Viator* 35 (2004), 114, n. 5.

the bearer of truth—the relationship between the meaning of *scripta* at the moment of their production and their meaning at the moment of their reproduction, was still being worked out.

The other characteristic of the *Historia* that makes it so useful for the purposes of this study is that John approaches the problems of history, administration and law from a framework provided by the conjoined perspectives of classical rhetoric and biblical exegesis.⁹ This framework means that the *Historia* had at its disposal a sophisticated metacritical vocabulary to describe its own purposes. Rhetorical accomplishment is perhaps associated more with Renaissance secretaries than with the hard-nosed administrators of the Angevin empire.¹⁰ But that most hard-nosed of texts, the *Dialogus de Scaccario*, shows that rhetorical sophistication and administrative skill were intimately linked: although scholarly attention almost universally falls on the *Scaccario* of its title, it is one of the most sophisticated contemporary examples of a scholarly *dialogus*. And although it is perhaps surprising to be encouraged to view the manifestly material concerns of ecclesiastical administration through the lens of the fundamentally spiritual technique of exegesis, the *Dialogus* also shows that administrators were quite capable of viewing their earthly task through spiritual eyes. (The *magister* suggests that ‘it is a worthy thing to seek flowers of mystic meaning among the thistles of worldly matters... Holy mysteries can be found hiding ... in the whole course of the

⁹ The first word of the *Historia* is, tellingly, ‘Ieronimus.’ The distinction between exegesis and rhetoric would have hardly been allowed in the twelfth century (nor indeed at any time during the middle ages or for a good while afterwards), where the reading of scripture and the expression of that reading were considered different sides of the same coin. For the *Historia*’s debt to classical rhetoric, see John O. Ward, ‘Some Principles of Rhetorical Historiography,’ in *Classical Rhetoric and Medieval Historiography*, ed. Briesach, 107–11. For its exegetical concerns, see Partner, ‘New Cornificius,’ 19–22. For a classic exposition of the convergence of historical writing, classical rhetoric and biblical exegesis, see Roger D. Ray, ‘Bede, the Exegete, as Historian,’ in *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede*, ed. Gerald Bonner (London, 1976), 125–40.

¹⁰ The characterisation of Renaissance administrators as ‘professional rhetoricians’ is that of Paul O. Kristeller, ‘Humanism and Scholasticism in the Italian Renaissance,’ in *Renaissance Thought and its Sources*, ed. idem and Michael Mooney (New York, 1979), 85–105. For administrating rhetoricians, see Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1978), 1:23–48, and Ronald Witt, ‘Medieval “Ars Dictaminis” and the Beginnings of Humanism: a New Construction of the Problem,’ *Renaissance Quarterly* 35 (1982), 1–35.

Exchequer.¹¹ The mechanisms of the Exchequer, he suggests, 'are symbols of the strict accounting that will be revealed when the "books of all are opened and the door shut."' ¹² Like the *Dialogus*, the *Historia* succeeds in combining rhetorical, exegetical and administrative concerns. Indeed, the *Historia* posits a vision of historical writing that demands the combination of all three.

John expresses the importance of this combination to historiography most clearly in the *Historia's* prologue. Here John locates his work within the tradition of historian-exegetes such as Eusebius (who, according to John, succeeded the author of the Acts of the Apostles as wielder of the 'scripturarum clavis' and related 'noteworthy matters, so that the invisible things of God may be clearly seen by the things that are done').¹³ At the same time, John makes a nod to demonstrative rhetoric by suggesting that his chronicle will be useful for moral instruction because 'men may by examples of reward or punishment be made more zealous in the fear of God and pursuit of justice.'¹⁴ And, finally, John insists on the *Historia's* practical utility because 'the records of chronicles are valuable for establishing or abolishing customs [and] for strengthening or destroying privileges,'¹⁵ and because he is including things omitted by Sigebert 'which may be useful for those who have the conduct of church affairs (*ecclesiasticis negotiis*).'¹⁶ The aims of the *Historia*, as stated in the prologue, have generally been taken as so many *topoi*, substantially unrelated to each other and to what follows.¹⁷ Yet taken together, and taken with the

¹¹ 'In mundanorum enim tribulis mystici intellectus flores querere laudabile est ... in tota scaccarii descriptione sacramentorum latibula sunt.' Richard FitzNigel, *Dialogus de Scaccario: The Dialogue of the Exchequer/ Constitutio Domus Regis: The Establishment of the Royal Household*, ed. and trans. Emilie Amt and Stephen D. Church, new ed. (Oxford, 2007), 38.

¹² 'Districti examinis figura sunt, quod reuelabitur cum "omnes libri aperti erunt et ianua clausa."' Ibid.

¹³ 'ut per ea que facta sunt conspiciantur inuisibilia Dei.' *HP*, 3.

¹⁴ 'et quasi propositis exemplis premii uel pene, reddant homines in timore Domini et cultu iustitie cautiores.' Ibid. For Gervase of Canterbury's similarly moral-didactic vision of history, see Gervase, *Historical Works*, 1:85–7.

¹⁵ 'Valet enim noticia cronicorum ad statuendas uel euacuandas prescriptiones et priuilegia roboranda uel infirmanda.' *HP*, 3.

¹⁶ *HP*, 4.

¹⁷ According to Brooke, John 'follows a well-worn path in pretending that his book is a continuation of another chronicle.' Brooke, 'Aspects,' 188. Although Chibnall accepts that 'like the best *topoi* [the preface] has been enriched by the skill and individuality of the author,' she suggests the preface 'mirrors a monastic tradition,' and while it 'paid a

debt to rhetoric and exegesis evident throughout the *Historia*, there is nothing incongruous about any of these principles.

The remainder of the *Historia*—although often considered rather formless and wandering—seems quite deliberately to be composed of a series of set-piece controversies and *causae*. With its emphasis on court cases, the *Historia* reads as if it were a practical demonstration of the possible applications for forensic rhetoric: almost every episode involves a *contentio*,¹⁸ a discord¹⁹ or a divergence.²⁰ Cases at law abound, and many of them turn on the correct understanding of the utterances of the past. The *Historia*'s narrative begins, for example, with an account of the dispute at the Council of Rheims about the jurisdiction of French archbishoprics that centred on whether the evidence of 'ancient histories' were to be preferred over custom. The *Historia* continues with an exposition of the ambiguity of the canons promulgated at the Council of Rheims, and follows this with the *causa* brought about by Count Ralph of Vermandois's repudiation of his wife. The narrative reaches a climax with an account of the dispute between Bernard of Clairvaux and Gilbert de la Porrée about the latter's teaching, before moving on to the marital difficulties of Louis VII and Queen Eleanor.²¹ This focus on discord and litigation might in part be a satirical sideswipe at the increasing litigiousness of John's contemporary society. But it also allows John to postulate a methodology for the *historical* investigation of the causes of discord.²² In setting forward this technique, which is indebted to both scriptural exegesis and forensic rhetoric, John

graceful tribute' to conventions of monastic historiography 'a tribute was sufficient.' Chibnall, 'John of Salisbury as Historian,' 171.

¹⁸ John uses the word 'contentio' to describe the dispute between Bernard and Gilbert (*HP*, 21), that between Stephen and Matilda over the succession to the throne (*HP*, 85), and that over the right to consecrate the prior of St. Augustine's, Canterbury. (*HP*, 86, 87).

¹⁹ For example, John describes Arnulf of Lisieux and Godfrey, bishop of Langres as 'discordie incentores' who argued constantly in the Holy Land. 'Discordes erant ut uix aut nunquam in aliquo consilio convenirent' (rarely, if ever, could they agree on any plan). *HP*, 54.

²⁰ The papal legates Jordan of St. Susanna and Octavia of St. Cecilia sent to the imperial court were, according to John, 'moribus et professione dissimiles,' ... 'discordantes in omnibus.' *HP*, 75–6.

²¹ For this taboo subject, see chapter 3, above. John, characteristically, spills the beans.

²² This methodology does not necessarily allow for any final resolution. The *Historia*'s refusal to come to any firm conclusion about these matters is a consequence of the academic scepticism which underpinned John's epistemology and his philosophy of language. For this scepticism and its effect on John's conception of the determinability of historical knowledge, see Ray, 'Rhetorical Scepticism,' 61–102.

presents the work of writing history as a *reading* of history *as if it were a written text*. This is a methodology in which the meaning of texts is elucidated by the historical circumstances they simultaneously describe. The remainder of this chapter will investigate in detail the genealogy and implications of this correlation of the writing of history with the reading of texts.

John's account of the promulgation of the *decreta* at the Council of Rheims provides the clearest example of this contextualizing (or historicizing) technique. Although John would be among the last to doubt papal authority, his account of the council displays a surprising scepticism about the efficacy of written papal pronouncements *per se*.²³ Although the decretals were written down in the course of their promulgation,²⁴ their *writtenness* does not seem to have persuaded John of the stability of their meaning. According to John, the decretals would have been meaningless were they promulgated as a bare collection of decrees. So instead the pope confirmed them 'with their interpretations and explanations' (*cum interpretationibus et causis suis*). It is these *interpretationes* that really catch John's interest in the *Historia*. Typically for John, he does not insert the *decreta* themselves (they were available among the canons, he says).²⁵ But he did think it worthwhile 'to add explanations and interpretations of a few [of them] that might otherwise seem unnecessary or hard to

²³ John thought Eugenius rather capricious, not least because 'decessorum sententias facile retractabat, nedum coepiscoporum.' (he used readily to revoke to sentences of his predecessors, not to mention his fellow-bishops.) *HP*, 51, translation adapted.

²⁴ John does not specify at this point that the decretals were written down, merely that they 'promulgata sunt ... et assensu publico roborata' (were promulgated with their interpretations and explanation) *HP*, 8. However, elsewhere in the *HP* John describes how authoritative decisions were put into writing 'quomodo fieri solet ubi decreta promulgantur aut leges.' (after the fashion in which decretals or laws are promulgated.) The articles of faith in which Bernard differed from Gilbert, for example, were put to a group of 'uenerabiles uiri' who were asked if they agreed to Bernard's propositions before they were written down. First of all, says John, a proposition was read aloud, whereupon one of Bernard's monks wrote it down 'word for word.' The *scriptum* was then read aloud to the audience, and their assent was requested. *HP*, 18.

²⁵ 'Vitans autem prolixitatem et quia canonibus inserta sunt, ipsa decreta non insero.' (To avoid repetition, I shall not copy these decretals, for they are to be found amongst the canons.) *HP*, 8. Like Herbert of Bosham's attitude towards Becket's letter collections, John assumes that these canons will be readily available to his readers, suggesting that his imagined audience might be that of legally-minded ecclesiastical administrators.

understand.²⁶ Just such a *questio*, according to John, surrounded the decretal stipulating that anyone who had laid hands on a religious should go to the pope for absolution.²⁷ For the avoidance of doubt, John provides four examples of when it might and might not apply, and warns against taking the word of those who raise their hands against others. John also explains that he will enumerate how ‘the pope made his meaning (*mens*) clear,’ and reports the pope’s injunction that ‘the bishops and all the faithful ought to apply these interpretations, for he had promulgated it with that intention (*intentio*).’²⁸ Did John really believe that the papal curia would be flooded by litigant students whose teachers had hit them if he did not provide this ready explanation?²⁹ Was his dedicatee, Peter of Celle (abbot of Saint-Rémi) concerned with what to do should one of his monks beat up another?

Perhaps. But the doubt surrounding the canon seems so contrived that one suspects that John is more interested in exploring ways of interpreting such canons, and exploring their ambiguity, than in rehearsing the possible applications of the canon itself. Indeed, John’s enumeration of when the decretal might and might not be applied recalls the rhetorical *controversiae* practised in the schools, which trained the speaker to make arguments for and against various imaginary cases.³⁰ Weighing up the application of the decretal resembles especially the *constitutio legitima*, in which the applicability of a law in a given set of circumstances was debated. According to the rhetorical handbooks transmitted from

²⁶ ‘de quorundam tamen interpretationibus et causis pauca ... subnectenda, eo quod de hiis quibusdam risus nascitur, aliis questio.’ *HP*, 8.

²⁷ ‘Queritur autem quatenus protendi debeat ut excommunicati mittantur ad dominum papam absoluendi, qui in clericos, monachos, conuersos, et moniales uiolentas iniecerint manus.’ (There was also some doubt about the precise application of the canon that anyone who had laid violent hands on clerks, monks, lay-brethren or nuns must go to the pope for absolution.) *HP*, 9.

²⁸ ‘dominus papa mentem suam interpretatus est ... omnes episcopos et fideles ecclesie debere sequi prescriptas interpretationes, quia sub hac intentione promulgauit canones.’ *HP*, 9–10, translation modified.

²⁹ John suggests these matters ‘in scolis uel claustris commodius emendari, quam si inde pateat sub pretextu adeundi dominum papam curiosis et dissoluis libertas euagandi.’ (it is more desirable to settle such matters in the schools or cloisters than to provide an excuse for the idle and dissolute to roam about under pretext of going to the pope.) *HP*, 10.

³⁰ For the possible influence of these *controversiae* on the generation of narrative material among rhetorical historians like John, see Ray, ‘Rhetorical Scepticism,’ 83–85.

Antiquity (which were the foundation of education in the twelfth century), one species of this *constitutio* was found ‘when some controversy arises *in* something written or *because* of something written.’³¹ An example of one such *controversia* is that arising ‘from letter and spirit ... when the framer’s will appears to be at variance with the letter of the text.’³² The *locus communis*, when arguing a case in which the written text of a law and the intention of its framer appear to disagree,³³ is ‘that against one who reads a text and does not interpret the writer’s intention (*voluntas*).’³⁴ Although John deliberately does not ‘recite’ the text of the decretals as envisaged in the textbooks, he certainly sets great store on the *voluntas* of their author—the pope’s *mens* and *intentio*, in John’s terminology.

John’s exploration of the interpretation of this canon is, admittedly, brief. But the way in which it probes at the space between the written word and the intention of the writer (a space prised open by rhetorical theory), and the way that it questions the stability of meaning in written language, is entirely consonant with the rest of the *Historia* and the intellectual tradition of John’s own teachers. It is in the space between meanings and intentions, for example, that John locates the roots of the controversy between Gilbert of Poitiers and Bernard of Clairvaux, an account of which forms the centrepiece of the *Historia*. It is clear from John’s treatment of this controversy that the way the meaning of utterances could be determined by the context of their enunciation was a profound problem with far-reaching implications. For it affected not only matters of law, and it was more troubling than a mere rhetorical exercise would suggest. Questioning as it did the status of the written word as the bearer of truth

³¹ ‘... cum in scripto aut e scripto aliquid controversiae nascitur.’ *Rhet. Her.* 1.11.19, my translation.

³² ‘... ex scripto et sententia ... cum videtur scriptoris voluntas cum scripto ipso dissentire.’ Ibid. Cicero employs a slightly different typology in *De inventione*: ‘Nam scripti controversia est ea quae ex scriptionis genere nascitur. Eius autem genera, quae separata sunt a constitutionibus, quinque sunt. Nam tum verba ipsa videntur cum sententia scriptoris dissidere, tum inter se duae leges aut plures discrepare, tum id quod scriptum est duas aut plures res significare...’ (For a dispute about a document is one which arises from the nature of a written document. Of this there are five kinds, which are separate from the ‘issues.’ In one case it seems that there is a variance between the actual words and the intent of the author, in another, that two or more laws disagree; again, that what is written has two or more meanings...) *De Inv.*, 1.12.17–1.13.17.

³³ ‘... cum voluntas scriptoris cum scripto dissidere videbitur.’ (When the intention of the framer appears at variance with the letter of a text.) *Rhet. Her.*, 2.9.13.

³⁴ ‘... contra eum qui scriptum recitet et scriptoris voluntatem non interpretetur.’ Ibid.

in and of itself, it impinged on matters of theological orthodoxy and seems to undermine contemporary society's increasing confidence in the capacity of the written word stably to transmit information.

Since establishing the intention that gave force to an author's words revolved around matters of truth and texts, it is perhaps not surprising that the close relationship between forensic rhetoric and scriptural exegesis found throughout John's work comes to the fore in John's response to the problem in the *Historia*. According to his sympathetic account of the defence mounted by Gilbert of Poitiers, Gilbert's words were not at fault, but others' interpretation of them were. Even the words of Moses, suggests Gilbert (through John), were not immune to such misinterpretation;³⁵ and Gilbert's words were no less likely to be misunderstood than those of the Fathers.³⁶ The whole thrust of Gilbert's defence, as handled by John, rests on Gilbert's claim that his teaching on the Trinity had been taken *out of context*, that he had written certain words with certain people in mind,³⁷ and that other people were not necessarily expected to understand what he had written in the way that he had intended it to be understood. According to Gilbert, this would be the case for anyone else's utterances (whatever they were) as much as it was for his own. As a result, he suggests, the fourth of the propositions formulated by Bernard (to which he was required make his teaching conform)—that 'divinity' (*diuinitas*) is incarnate only in God the Son³⁸—

³⁵ Gilbert's allusion to the words of Moses were particularly apposite: Hilary of Poitiers's *De Trinitate*, which provides the basis for much of Gilbert's defence, was directed, point by point, against the Arian creed (the *Epistola Aarii ad Alexandrum*) which used the words of Moses 'Audi, Istrahel, Dominus Deus tuus unus est' (Deuteronomy 6:4) to deny the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father. See Hilary of Poitiers, *De Trinitate*, ed. P. Smulders, 2 vols (Turnhout, 1979–70), 4:8; cf. 4:14. The fact that this allusion to the *De Trinitate* in the *Historia* came as part of Gilbert's defence of his *trinitarian* theology alerts us to the complexity of John's treatment of the episode and the layers of allusion it contains.

³⁶ 'Sibi dicebat fortasse similiter patribus prouenisse ut ingenia peruersa et minus exercitata errauerint ex uerbis eius' (He said that perhaps he had shared the fate of the Fathers, in that obstinate and untrained minds had read errors into his words.) *HP*, 29.

³⁷ For the identification of these *aliqui* as Abelard and his school, see Lauge O. Neilsen, 'Peter Abelard and Gilbert of Poitiers,' in *The Medieval Theologians*, ed. Gillian R. Evans (Oxford, 2001), 116.

³⁸ 'Credimus ipsam diuinitatem, siue substantiam diuinam siue naturam dicas, incarnatum esse, sed in Filio.' (We believe that the divinity whether it is called divine substance or essence, is incarnate, but only in the Son.) *HP*, 24. Gilbert was required to make his teaching conform to these *capitula*; and it was Gilbert's insistence that there was

was useful *only* to reprove trinitarian heretics. Otherwise, Gilbert suggests, 'it is useless or breeds errors.'³⁹ Such is the power of a speaker's intention over the meaning of his words, Gilbert suggests a little impishly, it would be possible if the occasion demanded it to express the truth of Bernard's proposition using words entirely *different* from those used by Bernard himself, since 'a form of words does not vitiate the understanding of the true faith.'⁴⁰ Particular words were used for particular purposes, thought Gilbert; and in some circumstances the words might signify otherwise than normally. Gilbert uses figurative language as an example of an alternative form of signification, which could be used 'to stimulate our devotion, or to teach our children, or to confound and destroy our enemies.'⁴¹ This method of tailoring words and their means of signifying to suit an occasion, according to John's Gilbert, was why 'the doctors of the church, considering the quality of the persons with whom they were dealing, often propound certain things which, if stated elsewhere, might seem contrary to the faith.'⁴²

The consideration of the *circumstances* in which something was said, then, and especially the consideration of intention of the speaker, lay at the heart of John's account of Gilbert's defence. John's Gilbert quotes Hilary of Poitiers's view that 'we should take no isolated texts from the divine revelation that may give doubt to the hearers or an occasion for blasphemy' to demand that his statements be taken in the context of his work as a whole.⁴³ John generalizes this principle by alluding to Hilary's dictum that 'we must seek the antecedent cause (*causam dicendi*) for every statement, since ... there is an antecedent cause for every saying that is

a formal distinction to be made between *Deus* and *diuinitas* that landed him in hot water. For this distinction, see Lauge Olaf Neilsen, *Theology and Philosophy in the Twelfth Century: A Study of Gilbert Porreta's Thinking and the Theological Expositions of the Doctrine of the Incarnation during the Period 1130–80* (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 158–63.

³⁹ '... aut nichil agit aut inducit errorem.' *HP*, 38. Gilbert (via John) singles out Patripassianists, Corrupticolae, and Manicheans as the heretical sects in question.

⁴⁰ '... expressio ... uerborum recte fidei intelligentiam non subuertit.' *HP*, 39.

⁴¹ *HP*, 36. Gilbert's point, presumably, was that his commentary on Boethius's *De Trinitate* was specifically written against those who claimed that the three parts of the Trinity differed in their formal properties.

⁴² 'Doctores ecclesie habita ratione personarum cum quibus agitur sepe non nulla proponunt, que si alias dicerentur fidei uiderentur aduersa.' *HP*, 39.

⁴³ 'Nichil solitarium ex diuinis sacramentis ad suspicionem audientium et ad occasionem blasphemantium proferamus.' *HP*, 40; cf. Hilary of Poitiers, *De synodis, seu de Fide Orientalium*, 70 (*PL* 10.526–7).

uttered.⁴⁴ In other words, if Gilbert's commentary on Boethius' *De Trinitate* (the point of contention between Gilbert and Bernard) were to be studied in its entirety, it would be clear that Gilbert—like his *familiarissimus* Hilary, in fact—was writing in the cause of suppressing a heresy rather than working for its dissemination.⁴⁵

Turning to other of John's works, it is clear that the views about the meanings of words he attributes to Gilbert were either remarkably similar to his own, or that indeed they *were* John's own (or perhaps they were a product of Gilbert's teaching). John's concern for the *causa dicendi* is not limited to the context of Gilbert's defence in the *Historia* (to which we shall return), but lies at the very heart of his philosophy of language. In the *Entheticus*,⁴⁶ the 'philosophical and satirical poem' John worked on from mid-1150s,⁴⁷ he suggests that

Qui sequitur sine mente sonum, qui verba capessit,
non sensum, iudex integer esse nequit.
Cum *vim verborum dicendi causa ministret*,
haec si nescitur, quid nisi ventus erunt?
Quae bonus auditor pensat de mente loquentis,
Non quovis sensu, quem sibi verba ferunt.
(*Entheticus* 1:106–7)

He who follows sound without meaning, who catches the words
and not the sense, cannot be an incorruptible judge.
Since the cause of speaking gives the words their force,
what will they be but wind if this cause is not known?
A good listener weighs these words in the light of the speaker's
meaning, not in any sense that the words take of themselves.

⁴⁴ 'Necesse est ad causam dicendi recurratur, quoniam ... omne dictum ut dicatur ex causa est et dicti ratio ex sensu erit intelligenda dicendi.' *HP*, 41. Cf. Hilary of Poitiers, *De Trinitate*, 2.31, and John of Salisbury, *Later Letters*, ed. Millor et al., 253: 'Ex causis dicendi sumendam esse dictorum intelligentiam.'

⁴⁵ Besides, suggested Gilbert, if the quality of an action was to be determined by its attendant circumstances, Gilbert could not have been teaching heresy because 'hereticum namque facit non ignorantia ueri, sed mentis elatio contumaciam pariens, et in contentionis et scismatis presumptionem erumpens.' (It was not ignorance of the truth that made a heretic, but pride of spirit giving rise to contumacy and presuming to cause disputes and schisms.) Gilbert, by contrast, 'in scolis et in ecclesiis palam mundo, et se in occulto dicebat nichil esse locutum.' (had spoken openly to the world in schools and churches and had taught nothing in secret.) *HP*, 22.

⁴⁶ *John of Salisbury's Entheticus Maior and Minor*, ed. and trans. Jan van Laarhoven, 3 vols (Leiden, 1987).

⁴⁷ Rodney M. Thomson, 'What is the Entheticus?', in *The World of John of Salisbury*, ed. Michael Wilks (Oxford, 1984), 287.

Although this is the only place in John's writings where he claims that the *vis verborum* was drawn directly from the *causa dicendi*, his emphasis on the *causa dicendi* and on the hermeneutical potential of the *mens loquentis* is familiar from his account of the Council of Rheims and of Gilbert's defence in the *Historia*. John's concern for the *causa dicendi* recurs in John's treatise on the Trivium, the *Metalogicon*, where John outlines his theory of language in the greatest detail. In the *Metalogicon's* account of the purposes of grammar, John suggests that an understanding of rhetorical schemata and tropes are *utilissima* because only when these are understood can words be taken in the way in which they were intended.⁴⁸ To truly understand the *significatio verborum*, John suggests (as Gilbert did in the *Historia's* version of his trial), words must be considered both *in se* and *ab adiunctis in contextu*.⁴⁹ In addition to understanding the words themselves, the circumstances in which they were uttered must also be accounted for. Without understanding these circumstances, 'even in the canonical scriptures, the Fathers would be at odds and the Evangelists themselves would be contradicting each other.'⁵⁰ To expound Scripture's meaning without understanding the circumstances would be 'foolishly to judge only from the surface of their words, without considering the meaning (*mens*) of those speaking.'⁵¹ Understanding the *mens dicentis*, however, did not provide the sole hermeneutic key for interpreting an utterance's meaning. The *Metalogicon* also outlines the additional factors which are to be taken into account in determining meaning. 'The reason for speaking (*ratio dicendi*) should be weighed up from the circumstances of the things [that were] said: from the quality of the person [speaking], from the quality of the listeners, from the place and the time; and from the

⁴⁸ Salisbury, *Metalogicon*, 1.19.32, and *The Metalogicon of John of Salisbury*, ed. Daniel D. McGarry (Gloucester, Ma., 1971), 57. Cf. *ibid.*, 3.2.53–4 (ed. McGarry, 153): 'Non est itaque ex leui occasione uerbi, menti auctorum praeiudicandum quae ex circumstantia sermonis pensanda est. Non enim omnis dictio semper eodem formatur scemate.' (The meaning an author has in mind, which is ascertainable from the circumstances of his statement, should not be discarded by quibbling over a word. We may convey the same thought in various ways, and it is not necessary always to use the same form of expression.)

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.19.43.

⁵⁰ 'etiam in scripturis canonicis rixabuntur patres, sibi que erunt etiam Euangelistae contrarii.' *Ibid.*, 1.19.21.

⁵¹ 'iudex insulsus ad solam dictorum superficiem et non ad dicentium mentes aspiciat.' *Ibid.*, 1.19.21. McGarry's translation modified.

other things that in various ways, are to be considered by the diligent researcher.⁵² It should be clear from the breadth of terminology John uses to talk about the connection between the meanings of words and the circumstances of their enunciation that we are dealing not with a coherent theory of language so much as a broad framework for understanding the way it means. And although John's views are clearly indebted to Gilbert of Poitiers's teaching, those views are far less bound up in a reading of Hilary of Poitiers's trinitarian theology than Gilbert's were. In fact it seems that John's thinking was influenced by a wide range of hermeneutical practices—and that many of these would have been familiar to almost any competent grammarian or lawyer.

Views analogous to John's can be found in the precepts of classical rhetoric and in those of contemporary exegesis: they can be found too in canonist and civilian thought and in the texts introducing students to the work of *auctores*. In short, they are evident in a wide range of practices concerned with the interpretation of written texts. Classical rhetorical theory demanded a determination of *circumstantiae* at two stages. The first stage was that of the *intellectio* of an argument, where determining the *circumstantiae* was a heuristic device to establish what kind of *constitutio* was at hand. The second stage was that of the *inventio*, where careful control over the *circumstantiae* was required to ensure the *narratio* of the

⁵² 'dicendi ... ratio pensanda est ex circumstantia dictorum, ex qualitate personae, ex qualitate auditorum, ex loco et tempore, aliis que uario modo, apud diligentem exploratorem considerandis.' *Metalogicon*, 1.19.46, translation mine. Cf. John's advice to Henry, Count of Champagne, about the importance of establishing who wrote each of the canonical books of scripture, and the other factors to take into account in exegesis besides this: 'Praeterea singuli Patrum librum aliquem exposituri, sicut ratio exigit, de auctore et materia ejus, intentione et causa, et titulo, et si qua alia sunt quae auditoribus, et lectoribus faciliorem intelligentiam sequentis operis praeparent, in tractatibus suis praemittere consueverunt, et haec quidem habita ratione loci, et temporis, et eorum ad quos sermo dirigitur, ut ad formam evangelicae institutionis, familiae Domini mensuram cibi salutaris opportune dispensent.' (Furthermore, when any of the fathers embarked on the exposition of any book, as a rational approach demands, it was his custom to set down first in his tract a statement about the author and his subject, his purpose, the occasion of writing and the title, and anything else calculated to instil in his listeners and readers a readier understanding of the work which followed. This was done with due attention to the place and time of writing and the audience whom he was addressing, so as suitably to dispense to the Lord's family, according to the Gospel pattern, the due measure of saving food.) *Later Letters*, ed. and trans. Millor and Brooke, 324.

case was rendered verisimilar (*probabilis*).⁵³ The determination of *circumstantiae* was also fundamental to certain influential schools of exegetical thought (which were themselves influenced by classical rhetoric). Abelard had especially emphasised the determining influence of the *intentio auctoris* over the meaning of canonical texts, the Gospels not excepted. Like Gilbert in the *Historia*, Abelard aligned himself with both Cicero and Augustine in positing the capacity of language to mean different things in different circumstances as the enabling condition of pedagogy,⁵⁴ and in making the mastery of that capacity the defining characteristic of a good teacher.⁵⁵ And like Hilary of Poitiers, Abelard considered it the work of the exegete to recover the circumstances of the utterances of the teachers *par excellence*, the writers of scripture. (In his commentary on *Romans*, for example, Abelard explores the intention of scripture,⁵⁶ the Gospels and the Epistles,⁵⁷ as well as the intention of the

⁵³ For the determination of the nature of an action, see, for example, Cicero's treatment of the *constitutio coniecturalis* (issue of fact) in *De inventione*, where he suggests the justice of an action should be considered first from a careful assessment of the character of the agent ('ex persona ... coniectura capietur, si eae res quae personis attributae sunt diligenter considerabuntur,' *De inv.*, 2.9.28–2.12.38; cf. 1.24.34), then from a consideration of the act itself ('Ex facto ... ipso,' *De inv.*, 2.12.38). This latter is explored by an examination of the *locus, tempus, occasio*, of the deed and the *facultas* of the agent (*De inv.* 2.12.40; cf. 1.36.38.). For the requirements of verisimilar narrative see, for example, Cicero, *Partitiones oratoriae* 32.33: 'Probabilis autem erit [narratio], si personis, si temporibus, si locis ea, quae narrabuntur, consentient.' (A narrative will be verisimilar if the persons, times, and places that are narrated agree with one another.)

⁵⁴ This is not, however, to suggest any more general similarity between Abelard's and Gilbert's theology: for their profound differences, see Nielsen, 'Peter Abelard and Gilbert of Poitiers.'

⁵⁵ 'Saepe etiam, pro diversitate eorum quibus loquimur, verba commutari oportet; cum frequenter eveniat ut verborum propria significatio nonnullis sit incognita aut minus usitata.' (Furthermore, we should often change our words on account of the diversity of those to whom we speak; for it frequently happens that the proper meaning of words is unknown to quite a few people or unusual.) Peter Abelard, *Sic et non: A Critical Edition*, ed. Blanche B. Boyer and Richard McKeon, 2 vols (Chicago, 1976–7), 1:89. Cf. Augustine, *De doctrina*, 2.6.7–8, and 4.9.23–4.10.24 For the way that 'rhetoric's dynamic engagement with changeable conditions of persuasion can ... provide a paradigm for exegetical engagement with the particular circumstances of textual reception,' see Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation: Academic Prologues and Vernacular Texts* (Cambridge, 1991), 70.

⁵⁶ Peter Abelard, *Commentaria in epistolam Pauli ad Romanos*, ed. E. M. Buytaert (Turnhout, 1969), prol.5: 'Omnis scriptura diuina more orationis rhetoricae aut docere intendit aut mouere.' (All divine scripture intends to teach or to move in the manner of rhetorical speech.) With this opening, Abelard immediately signals his debt to rhetorical theory, which taught that the aim of oratory was to 'instruct, move and delight.' See, e.g. Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* 12.2.11, and Augustine, *De doctrina*, 4.12.27.

⁵⁷ 'Euangeliorum intentio sit ea quae sunt salutis necessaria nos docere, hanc intentionem epistolae tenent ut ad obediendum euangelicae doctrinae nos moueant uel nonnulla etiam ad amplificandam uel tutius muniendam salutem tradant.' (The intention of the Gospels is to teach us the things necessary for salvation. The Epistles have this intention:

Epistle to the Romans).⁵⁸ A little later in the twelfth century, Hugh of St. Victor emphasized the importance of determining other *circumstantiae*, besides that of the *intentio auctoris*, in expounding the historical sense of scripture.⁵⁹ Understanding the historical sense, according to Hugh, depended on a thorough interiorization of the *tribus maximis circumstantiis gestorum, id est personis, locis, et temporis*.⁶⁰

Canon lawyers working on Gratian's *Decretum* shared Abelard's (and Gratian's own) desire to synthesize apparently contradictory texts that were nevertheless equally true.⁶¹ Contemporary canonists such as Paucapalea (fl. ca. 1140–50) suggested that the subject matter (*materia*) of ecclesiastical law and the intention (*intentio*) of ecclesiastical legislators had to be determined to make sense of it.⁶² 'Orlando Bandinelli' suggested that Gratian's own *Decretum* should be analyzed first for its 'title, [Gratian's] reason for writing, for whom he wrote, the subject matter, the intention, and the method of composition.'⁶³ Roman lawyers used a

that they should move us to obey the teaching of the Gospels; and also that they should relate certain things to extend and more securely safeguard salvation.) Abelard, *Commentaria*, prol.79–82.

⁵⁸ 'In hac ipsa epistola ... intentio est Romanos ... ad ueram humilitatem et fraternam concordiam reuocare.' (In this particular letter, ... the intention is to recall the Romans ... to true humility and fraternal agreement.) *Ibid.*, prol.84–9. Abelard's view on intentionality was the most sophisticated of his time, and had implications that went far beyond the reading of texts: he built a whole framework of ethics around the idea that it was an agent's intention—knowable ultimately only by God—in doing something that made an action good or bad. For the role of intention in Abelard's ethical thought, Peter Abelard's *Ethics*, ed. and trans. David Luscombe (Oxford, 1971), xxxii–vi, 28, 42–9, 52–7; and John Marenbon, *The Philosophy of Peter Abelard* (Cambridge, 1997), 251–64.

⁵⁹ The classic exposition of Hugh's exegetical method and its intellectual context remains Beryl Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, 83–111.

⁶⁰ William M. Green, 'Hugo of St. Victor: *De Tribus Maximis Circumstantiis Gestorum*', *Speculum* 18 (1943): 484–93. John refers to this text (also known in the Middle Ages as the *Chronicon*) in his prologue, but Marjorie Chibnall doubted that he had seen a copy. Chibnall, 'John of Salisbury as Historian,' 170. Lars Boje Mortensen, 'Hugh of St. Victor on Secular History: A Preliminary Edition of Chapters from his *Chronica*', *Cahiers de l'Institut du moyen-âge grec et latin* 72 (1992), 3–30 (3, n. 2), argues that he had, in fact, had first-hand knowledge of the text. For a comprehensive survey of the (wider than once-thought) dissemination of this text in England in this period, see Julian Harrison, 'Hugh of Saint-Victor's *Chronicle* in the British Isles,' in *Schrift, Schreiber, Schenker: Studien zur Abtei Sankt Viktor in Paris und den Viktorinern*, ed. Rainer Berndt (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2005), 263–92.

⁶¹ Abelard himself emphasized the implications of the *intentio auctoris* for canon law: 'Haec [sc. intentio] autem in institutionibus ecclesiasticorum decretorum vel canonum maxime distinguere necesse est.' (It is most necessary to determine this intention in the interpretation of ecclesiastical *decreta* and canons.) Abelard, *Sic et non*, 1:96.

⁶² Robert Somerville and Bruce Clark Brasington, eds., *Prefaces to Canon Law Books in Latin Christianity: Selected Translations, 500–1245* (New Haven, 1998), 183–4.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 189.

similar technique to read and introduce Justinian's law books.⁶⁴ The determination of the *circumstantiae* of a text's composition—whom, what, why, how, where, when and whence—was also fundamental to the teaching of literary *auctores*, sacred and secular, and had been since late antiquity.⁶⁵ The determination of the *intentio scribentis* was fundamental to the teaching of secular texts, and was one of the headings under which pedagogical introductions to secular *auctores* (the *accessus*) presented the work of an *auctor*.⁶⁶ These theoretical models for reading literary and scriptural texts frequently found their way into the prologues of contemporary literature to provide a kind of metatextual commentary. The poet John de Hauville explained that the prologue to his *Architrenius* (which he dedicated to Walter de Coutances when he became archbishop of Rouen) clearly showed 'the intention (*intencio*) of the book, as well as its subject matter (*materia*).' 'You may [also] gather,' John added, 'from the title to whom the book is written (*ad quem scribitur*). The list of chapter headings placed at the beginning will tell you what it is about (*de quo*)... If you are curious about the author (*de auctore*), suffice it to say that his name is John.'⁶⁷ Gervase of Canterbury performed a similar exegesis of his own work in the prologue to his chronicle. This seems to bear the imprint of the *accessus ad auctores* too: as Gervase puts it, 'historians and chroniclers

⁶⁴ See now Edwin A. Quain, 'The Medieval *accessus ad auctores*,' *Traditio* 3 (1943), 228–36.

⁶⁵ For the development of the theory of *circumstantiae* and their use in academic prologues, see A. J. Minnis, *The Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (Aldershot, 1988), 16–19, and Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation*, 63–76. According to John's own discussion of Boethius's *Topica*, dialectic's *materia* was a 'questio' for the dialectician, and the determination of the *circumstantiae* (quis, quid, ubi, quibus, adminiculis, cur, quomodo, quando) was the job of the *orator*: 'Siquidem quaestionem habet materiam [sc. dialectica], sed eam quae hypothesis dicitur, id est quae circumstantiis implicatur, relinquit oratori.' (Accordingly, dialectic has the *questio* for its subject matter. But it leaves that which is called the hypothesis, which has to do with the *circumstantiae*, to the orator.) *Metalogicon*, 2.12.1. For the distinction between *thesis* and *hypothesis*, see Boethius, *De differentiis topicis*, PL 64.1177c–d: 'Thesis quidem philosophis, hypothesis vero oratoribus attributa est.' (Indeed, the thesis is assigned to philosophers, the hypothesis to orators.)

⁶⁶ For the *Accessus ad auctores*, see Minnis and Scott, eds., *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism*, esp. 12–15, and Quain, 'The Medieval *accessus ad auctores*,' 225–64. The *intentio auctoris* is discussed in Minnis, *Authorship*, 20–1, and *passim*.

⁶⁷ Johannes de Hauvilla, *Architrenius*, ed. Winthrop Wetherbee (Cambridge, 1994), prol.21–5 (pp. 1–2).

have one intention (*intentio*) and material (*materia*), although their style (*modus tractandi*) is dissimilar and their form different.⁶⁸

It is unclear precisely to what extent each of these traditions directly informed John of Salisbury's view of the importance of determining the *circumstantiae* of utterances and the importance of determining the intention of a speaker. However, it is safe to say that the scholastic enumeration of the *circumstantiae* of the work of *auctores* and the related (but distinct) exegetical ideas of Abelard, Gilbert de la Porrée and Hugh of St. Victor, encouraged serious thinking about the way in which what something means might be connected to why it is said.

*Redeamus ad pontificalem hystoriam.*⁶⁹ The uniqueness and importance of John's response to these traditions lies in the fact that he chose to explore the problem of meanings, circumstances and intentions *in a work of history*. He used the *Historia pontificalis*—and his account of Gilbert's defence—as a practical demonstration of how intentions affect meanings. In doing so, he was taking the arguments of Abelard, Gilbert and Hugh of St. Victor to their logical conclusions: although Abelard was unconvinced that intentions were ever fully knowable to mortals,⁷⁰ this trio's historicist hermeneutics nonetheless demanded an element of *historical reconstruction* to uncover the original meaning of an utterance or text. This historical reconstruction, moreover, was to take place at the moment of a text's reading and that of its exposition, and was to include a moral assessment of both speaker and audience both at moment of the utterance's original enunciation and the moment of its exposition. As such, reading for historical meaning was also productive of historical writing. As Rita Copeland has suggested, medieval exegesis 'does not simply treat the text as a pre-given universal for which philological science can supply a fixed exposition. Rather, the text is the subject of

⁶⁸ 'Historici autem et cronici ... una est intentio et materia, sed diversus tractandi modus est et forma varia.' Gervase, *Historical Works*, 87. Gervase goes on to explain the common intention of chroniclers and historians, and the divergent textual forms they use.

⁶⁹ *HP*, 41.

⁷⁰ 'Quam sit etiam temerarium de sensu et intelligentia alterius alterum iudicare, quis non videat cum soli Deo corda et cogitationes pateant?' (Indeed, how presumptuous is it for one to judge the meaning and understanding of another ... when the mind and thoughts are open only to God?) Abelard, *Sic et non*, 1:90.

continuous and changing interpretation according to the judgment of each generation of expositors... Even though medieval commentary works around the text, alongside the text, as addenda to the text, it can take on a *primary productive character*: it continually refashions the text for changing conditions of understanding.⁷¹ But rather than incorporating historical reconstruction into exegesis to make a text intelligible, John incorporates exegetical techniques into history to make the texts of the past make sense for the present and the future.⁷²

Understanding this strategy has implications for the wider interpretation of the *Historia*. Most importantly, it begins to elucidate the seeming miscellany that is the prologue. It becomes clearer, for example, why John considers the chroniclers he names to be *exegetes* rather than just historians. John alludes to those chroniclers not because he claimed to be writing a universal or ecclesiastical history (as each of them had done) but because he, like them, inscribes history at the heart of exegesis, and makes exegesis the ultimate purpose of historical writing. 'Horum uero omnium uniformis *intentio* est,' John suggests, 'scitu digna referre, ut per ea que facta sunt *conspiciantur inuisibilia Dei*.'⁷³ Elucidating those *inuisibilia* included explaining that spilling Eucharistic wine before the pope could presage the defeat of the crusading armies.⁷⁴ It also, surely, involved explaining the underlying meaning of the words and actions of historical actors through considering the totality of their historical situation. Moreover, the apparent triviality of the suggestion among such high-mindedness that 'the records of chronicles are valuable for establishing or abolishing customs, [and] for strengthening or destroying privileges,'

⁷¹ Copeland, *Rhetoric*, 64–4, emphasis mine. Cf. Assmann's suggestion that exegesis makes written texts understandable over time. Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory*, 120–1.

⁷² The texts in question here would be Gilbert's commentary on Boethius and the canon promulgated at Rheims.

⁷³ 'For all these chroniclers have had a single intention: to relate noteworthy matters, so that the invisible things of God may be clearly seen by the things that are done.' *HP*, 3. Once again, we see the importance of history writing in making things *visibile*. See the comments about Gervase of Canterbury and Herbert of Bosham, in chapter 3, above.

⁷⁴ For this incident and its interpretation, see *HP*, 11–12, and Ray, 'Rhetorical Scepticism,' 72.

dissipates.⁷⁵ For by juxtaposing a particular method of historical exegesis with matters of ecclesiastical administration, John insinuates that administrative texts are as much the product of (and subject of) historical forces as canonical texts.

It should be no surprise, then, that history plays a determining role in the first matter to which John turns his attention in the *Historia's* narrative, the settling at the Council of Rheims of a series of disputes concerning the hierarchies of archiepiscopal jurisdictions in France and England. It is typical of John that he at once describes and problematizes the issues at stake, and does not let the role of 'history' go without comment. He reports that the archbishop of Lyon, which, 'as is read in ancient histories, is the first see in Gaul,'⁷⁶ claimed on this basis the obedience of Rouen, Sens and Tours.⁷⁷ The bishops of Rouen and Sens, however, countered this historical evidence with something slightly different, the '*prescriptionem longissimi temporis*.'⁷⁸ Following this example perhaps, the bishop of Bourges similarly countered history with custom when the archbishop of Vienne claimed his subjection.⁷⁹ And in a still-more complicated fashion, Alberic archbishop of Trèves claimed the obedience of Rheims 'asserting that his right was unimpugnable since the canons of the Roman pontiffs *as well as ancient histories* bore witness that Trèves was the see of *Belgica prima*, Rheims only of *Belgica secunda*.'⁸⁰ Which was to be believed, written history or time immemorial—and what was the historical status of the canons themselves?

John provides no definitive answer, but it seems that custom, rather than history, won the day at Rheims. Although John does not dwell on the question for long, his suggestion that memory and custom could

⁷⁵ 'ualet etiam noticia cronicorum ad statuendas uel euacuandas prescriptiones et priuilegia roboranda uel infirmanda.' *HP*, 3.

⁷⁶ 'Sicut apud ueteres hystoricos legitur, prima Galliarum sedes est.' My translation.

⁷⁷ *HP*, 4.

⁷⁸ *HP*, 5. Chibnall translates this expression as 'custom.' The *prescriptio longissimi temporis* was a tenet of Roman law whereby rights or property could be acquired or lost through the passing of time. In Roman law, and canon law afterwards, the *tempus longissimum* was fixed at forty years. I am grateful to Dr Jeffrey Hackney for help with this point.

⁷⁹ *HP*, 5.

⁸⁰ *HP*, 5–6. 'asserens ex eo ius suum in expeditio esse, quod non modo in antiquis hystoriis sed eciam in canonibus Romanorum pontificum reperitur quod Treueris Belgica prima est, Remis autem Belgica secunda.'

sometimes trump the written record succeeds in raising more than a hint of doubt about the simplicity of written history's utility for the administrator. Not only is the probatory capacity of written history thus complicated in the *Historia*, then, but *scripta* emerge as potentially unreliable in themselves. In his description of the *contentio* at St. Augustine's Canterbury, which arose after the abbey claimed to have the right to consecrate their abbot in their own abbey 'ex causa quorundam priuilegiorum,' John reports that 'the authenticity of these same privileges was questioned, both because they were not drawn up in the style of handwriting always used in the papal curia, and because, by comparison of the text and bull it was evident that they could not have been issued by the popes whose names they bore.'⁸¹ This episode surely does more than merely '[illustrate] John's close knowledge of the methods of detecting forgery employed in the Papal Curia.'⁸² It also shows that both the ecclesiastical administrator and the administrating historian were required to master both the material residue of the past (to know the *formae scribendi*, for example) and the immaterial knowledge of the past (such as knowing who was pope when). As such, John's reaction to the privileges is entirely consonant with his attitude towards the *decretum* at Rheims and the writings of Gilbert: the material evidence of the past must be considered in the light of immaterial knowledge of the past. That material evidence could be the archbishop of Trèves's *ius*, or it could be the *privilegia* of St. Augustine's, or it could be the words of Gilbert's *commentaria*; and that immaterial knowledge of the past could take the form of written history or of long-established custom, or of a thoroughgoing exegesis of the *circumstantiae* of human intention. And this is the work John sets about to exemplify in the *Historia*: to show that unglossed words and decrees mean little in themselves, that they needed an interpreter who could understand and explain them through an exposition of the *circumstantiae* in which they were uttered. The explanation of circumstances, he claims in the *Metalogicon*, is the job of the

⁸¹ 'ipsa tamen priuilegia suspecta habebantur, tum quia concepta non erant in ea scribendi forma quam sequitur ecclesia Romana, tum quia ex collatione scripture et bulle uidebantur non esse pontificum quorum nomina preferebant.' *HP*, 86–7.

⁸² *HP*, 87, n.1.

orator,⁸³ and there is little evidence in the *Historia* to suggest he saw the explanation of history any differently. By entering the fraught and complex world of biblical and legal exegesis, attempting to tease out the letter from the spirit dictated by *intentio*, John is setting up a model of historiography that militated against the inclusion in histories of lists of laws and canons and charters. He is pointing instead towards one that, in its rhetorical description of the *circumstantiae* of laws and words, depended above all on the availability of a skilled interpreter of both.

To claim that there was a growing concern for establishing historical context among those working with texts in the late twelfth century is to argue against the way contemporary historical consciousness is typically characterized. Janet Coleman, for example, identifies in the twelfth century a 'concern to harmonize rather than show the discontinuities of the past in relation to the present,' and that this 'is indicative of what we today would call a lack of historical depth.'⁸⁴ Medieval 'remembering was an exercise in constructing harmonies between the past as recorded in texts and the present,' which led to a profoundly 'unhistorical stance' among medieval historians.⁸⁵ They had no sense of the 'pastness of the past,' they made 'no attempt to evaluate the past on its own terms and therefore preserve discontinuities.'⁸⁶ History's pedagogical classification alongside grammar, thinks Coleman, 'reinforced an understanding of *historia* as the literal freezing of events experienced through representative texts.'⁸⁷ So, for the twelfth century, history 'is the recording in words or letters, which directly substitute for events experienced by actors and observers.'⁸⁸

It strikes me that, despite John of Salisbury's insistence on the readability of history, and despite the way that he seems to treat it like a text, that his stance towards the past was profoundly historical. The 'discontinuities'

⁸³ John of Salisbury, *Metalogicon*, 2.12.1, and see n. 65, above.

⁸⁴ Coleman, *Ancient and Medieval Memories: Studies in the Reconstruction of the Past*, 293.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 276.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 289.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 282.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 283. Coleman's account of twelfth century history's pastlessness is taken up in Ashe, *Fiction and History*, 33–4, 151.

between the past and the present were not to be explained by the experiences of the present, so much as to be reconstructed from the texts of the past, and on the past's own terms. To suggest otherwise would be, on John's terms, distinctly Cornifician⁸⁹—it would be to caught up in the *surface* of words, and to assume that they always meant the same thing whenever they were said. As we shall see in the next two chapters, medieval historical writing was a meaningful structure of memory precisely because of the variousness of the meanings of the written words it contained and what those words represented, in the broadest sense of that word.

⁸⁹ Cornificius was John's semi-fictional (or disguised) enemy, against whom he wrote his *Metalogicon*. He was representative of a new trend in scholastic practice which (according to its detractors) spent little time on inculcating virtue and prudence (as it should have done) and a lot of time practising sophistry. For a reconstruction of the 'Cornifician moment' in twelfth-century scholasticism, see John O. Ward, 'The Date of the Commentary on Cicero's *De inventione* by Thierry of Chartres (ca. 1095-1160) and the Cornifician Attack on the Liberal Arts,' *Viator* 3 (1972): 219-74.

Performances

When, in 1159, rival factions of the Roman cardinals elected both Orlando Bandinelli and Gregorio Conti to the papacy (as Alexander III and Victor IV), Henry II faced a delicate decision about who to support: Victor was the imperial candidate, and the French had accepted the reformist canon lawyer Alexander.¹ It was the custom for the English clergy not to accept a pope's election without the king's permission, so Archbishop Theobald held his peace.² The archbishop of Rouen and the bishop of Le Mans, however, recognized Alexander III as pope without Henry's consent. According to William FitzStephen's *Vita* of Becket, Henry was enraged.³ By way of a punishment, FitzStephen explains, 'the king had orders written for [the bishop's] house at Le Mans to be destroyed.' Emphasizing that this was to be a very public humiliation, Henry 'held the signed orders in his hand and, displaying them publicly (*ostendens publice*), said to those present "now the people of Le Mans will hear what their bishop is really like!"⁴ This greatly distressed the clergy who were present, and distressed Becket especially.⁵ So Becket (who was still Henry's chancellor at this point) came up with a cunning plan. He connived with the royal messengers to ensure that they would ride very slowly to Le Mans to give

¹ *The Letters of John of Salisbury*, ed. Millor and Butler, 1:201 (letter 122). In this letter, Archbishop Theobald attempts to persuade Henry to accept Alexander.

² Warren, *Henry II* (London, 1973), 445; *Letters of John of Salisbury* 1:190 (letter 116).

³ 'Rex vehementer commotus... Iratus est quod ejus sine jussu et licentia et sententia fecisset.' (The king was greatly agitated... He was angered that [the bishop] had done this without his order and permission and judgement.) FitzStephen, *Vita*, *MTB* 3:27. For the 'renaissance of royal anger in the twelfth century and the reappearance of demonstrative anger in the repertoire of royal behaviours,' of which this and other episodes in the Becket conflict seem so typical, see Gerd Althoff, 'Ira regis: Prolegomena to a History of Royal Anger,' in *Anger's Past: the Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages*, ed. Barbara Rosenwein (Ithaca, NY, 1998), 59–74, esp. 74.

⁴ 'Facit [sic] rex breves scribi, ut domus ejus Cenomanni diruantur. Signatos breves rex in manu tenens, et ostendens publice, ait astantibus: "Equidem Cenomannenses audient de episcopo suo rumorem."' FitzStephen, *Vita*, *MTB* 3:27. The precise meaning the bishop's 'rumor' is unclear.

⁵ 'Omnis clerus qui aderat ... doluit, cancellarius supra omnes.' FitzStephen, *Vita*, *MTB* 3:28.

the order to destroy the house.⁶ While the royal messengers were making their slow way to Le Mans, Becket interceded on behalf of the bishop. Henry agreed to make peace with him, assuming that his house would by then have already been destroyed at the behest of his written order. So Henry ordered Becket to write the bishop a new letter, this time making peace with him. Becket, craftily, sent his own messenger to bear this letter, telling him to rest neither day nor night until he got to Le Mans. Sure enough, Becket's messenger bearing the letter of peace overtook the royal messengers who were carrying the order to have the house destroyed. And he managed to display the letter of peace before the royal messengers were able to display (*ostendere*) the order for the house to be destroyed. By this 'honest trick' (*dolus bonus*), suggests FitzStephen, Becket saved the bishop from an unjust punishment—and demonstrated his devotion to the clerical cause even when he worked for its fiercest opponent.

Becket's *dolus bonus* also illustrates the gulf between modern and medieval assumptions about the use of the written word for 'governmental' and administrative purposes. It shows the absolute importance of the physical presence of a *scriptum* in the execution of a mandate. It emphasizes that written mandates could be part of spectacles of power: they were often drawn up in public, or displayed in public when they had been drawn up—and they were displayed in public when they were executed. It also suggests that the precise choreography of administrative practices had a performative valence stronger even than the *intentio* of those performing them. Henry II had intended that the bishop's house should be destroyed, but his letter of peace prevailed over his mandate of destruction because the former was displayed in public before the latter. Henry's order to destroy the bishop's house inhered in the parchment it was made on, in other words, but its power was impeded by the performances through which it was enacted. The episode also tells us something about at least one historian's attitude to the written word. Administrative performances such as these were *digna memoria*.

⁶ 'Praecipit cursoribus regis, bajulis litterarum illarum, ut non festinent.' Ibid.

They did not illustrate history—they *were* history, and it was the task of the historian to record them.

This chapter is about the ways that late twelfth-century administrators in the Angevin empire encountered the written word, and it asks how those encounters affected the way administrators wrote history. In it, I aim to add some depth to the currently rather two-dimensional picture of the relationship between historical writing and administrative practices in this period. I will focus principally on Roger of Howden's and Ralph de Diceto's chronicles (because they are so often taken as the archetypical examples of administrative historiography), reading them alongside other contemporary chronicles and administrative texts such as the *Dialogus de Scaccario*. I will emphasize especially the negotiations and mediations that were involved in the transfer of written information from one medium (an administrative *scriptum*) to another (a chronicle), and chart the effect of those negotiations and mediations on the chronicles that reproduced them. By closely reading the way that chronicles reproduced documents and represented the performance of documentary practices, I suggest that the written word was experienced in this period as both a more public and a more social phenomenon than it is usually considered to be. The public nature of the written word was fundamental to its ability to construct political and social relationships. In reproducing *scripta*, chronicles participated in the creation and maintenance of those relationships. By emphasising that the *performative* capacity of *scripta*—their capacity to *do* something in the world—rested partly on their publicness, I argue that chronicles worked to support that performative capacity by re-presenting them before a new public.

The key to interpreting chronicles written by administrators has long been thought to be provided by their authors' professional involvement in something called 'government.'⁷ Howden's and Diceto's involvement in government has generally been portrayed as having affected their

⁷ See e.g. Gillingham, 'Royal Newsletters,' 182: 'Howden ... was undoubtedly writing from within the government;' Holt, 'Assizes of Henry II,' 100: 'Howden's version of the assizes must stand as the genuine attempts of a person involved in government to record its actions.'

chronicles in two ways. Firstly, their governmental activities would have involved them personally using at least some of the *scripta* they subsequently reproduced in their histories. Howden, for example, includes the Assize of the Forest of 1184 in his *Chronica*, which, as a justice of the forest, he would have been responsible for executing.⁸ For his part, Diceto includes the letters from Henry II and Archbishop Baldwin summoning him *nominatim* to the election of the new bishop of London in 1189.⁹ (Indeed, letters directed to the bishop of London, its dean and chapter, or Diceto himself, represent more than a quarter of the documents included in the *Ymagines*). The second way that historians' involvement in government is thought to affect their histories is that it gave them access, and made them accessible, to the networks of written information controlled by those holding public offices that we explored in chapter two.

Drawing a line of causation directly from the professional activities of the chroniclers to the texts they produced—or between their lives and their historiographical work—is problematic, however. Doing so risks underestimating the more pervasive (if more subtle) ways that historical writing was penetrated by contemporary assumptions about the functions and mechanics of the written word. There has nevertheless been a tendency to suggest that chroniclers' administrative work gave them the opportunity to seek out material for their chronicles in the same way that a modern historian might, say, pop into the *archives départementales* whilst at a conference in Rouen (or even go to Rouen under the pretence of going to the conference, but really go to visit the archives). Thus, according to John Gillingham, Howden 'was undoubtedly able to use his position as a royal clerk to get his hands on copies of government records such as the charter recording Audemar of La Marche's sale of his county to Henry II ... a document that he reproduced verbatim.'¹⁰ Similarly, if a role were to

⁸ Howden, *Gesta*, 1:323–4. Howden was justice of the forest on the northern circuit in 1185, 1187 and 1189. Barlow, 'Roger of Howden,' 357.

⁹ Diceto, *Opera*, 2:62.

¹⁰ John Gillingham, 'Events and Opinions: Norman and English Views of Aquitaine, c. 1152–c. 1204,' in *The World of Eleanor of Aquitaine: Literature and Society in Southern France between the Eleventh and Thirteenth Centuries*, ed. Marcus Bull and Catherine Léglu (Woodbridge, 2005), 71.

be conjectured for Howden as an escort for the papal legate Alexius to and from Scotland during the election dispute at St. Andrews, this 'would explain in the most economical fashion how Roger got the pope's letters.'¹¹ Alternatively, 'another way of explaining their presence there would be that Roger himself had been involved in procuring them,' that is, he himself had been sent to the papal curia and had brought them back.¹²

These arguments rest on substantial (but unspoken) assumptions about the role of written documents, both in twelfth-century administration and in twelfth-century historiography. The first assumption is that administrators of this period used and experienced the written word as a passive, even ephemeral, vehicle of communication, whose manifestation in physical form was secondary to the information it contained. On the basis of this assumption, it is further assumed that this would have been Howden's and Diceto's own primary experience of the written word, being, as they were, administrators. The second major assumption is that historians in this period used (and desired) written documents simply to provide illustrative or probatory grist to the mills of their narratives. So as administrators who were *also* historians, these assumptions combine make it *appear* only natural that Howden and Diceto should have used documents in the way that they did in their histories. Such assumptions lead directly to the sort of speculation that conjectures a chronicler's journeys to the papal curia simply on the basis that transcribed *scripta* had originally been produced there. That Howden and Diceto did encounter many of the documents they transcribed during their administrative work, and that they received written information from those in power, is not in question here. It is rather that the actual processes involved in their encounter with the written word—and the manoeuvres involved in

¹¹ Gillingham, 'Travels,' 80. This conjectured role for Howden is made on the grounds that he is known to have been sent on royal business to Galloway in 1174, and might have been there again in 1176. As such, it is possible that 'this had become his role in royal service by the later 1170s.' This possibility is strengthened, for Gillingham, by another conjectured role for Howden as Philip Augustus's escort back from the Crusade in 1191. For the latter, see Stenton, 'Roger of Howden and Benedict,' 580–1.

¹² According to Gillingham, Howden's 'experience in the business of Galloway' (in 1174), combined with his 'allegiance to both king of England and archbishop of York,' made him the 'obvious choice' to go to the curia on Roger of York's behalf. Gillingham, 'Writing the Biography,' 215.

transcribing documents into a historical text—have been left invisible, silent, or unexplored; and an assessment of how these processes might inform the structure of the histories themselves has been neglected.

Given Howden's and Diceto's emphasis on the materiality of written documents and on the public, even ritual, character of reading and writing in the contemporary episteme, this silence is surprising. The publicness of reading and writing is explicit in many of the documents Howden and Diceto reproduce—and it is evident in some of the documents that the chroniclers are thought to have themselves used in the course of their administrative work. Howden's account of the General Eyre of 1194 in the *Chronica*, together with the *capitula* upon which the justices were instructed to judge, is a good example of this. Howden records that itinerant judges were sent to 'hear pleas' (in justitiis exsequendis) throughout England 'according to the form of the categories written below.' (secundum subscriptorum formam capitulorum.) The General Eyre and the written *capitula* constituting it were important administrative innovations in the last decade of the twelfth century,¹³ and so they are exactly the kind of thing those 'interested' or involved in administration would be expected to record if they were writing a chronicle. But the *capitula* have an additional interest: they prescribe that the written word should be used in a certain way for administrative purposes—and this prescription is written into and reproduced by the *Chronica* itself. The reproduction of this prescription in the *Chronica* suggests that, rather than just reflecting the way that the written word was used in contemporary society, the *Chronica* was itself playing a role in disseminating attitudes towards the use of writing. Among the *capitula* of the General Eyre that Howden reproduces in the *Chronica*, for example, are the *capitula Judaeorum*, which stipulate that

Omnia debita et vadia Judaeorum imbrevientur... Item provideantur sex vel septem loca in quibus facient praestita sua, et provideantur duo legales Christiani et duo legales Judaei, et duo legales scriptores, et coram illis, et clerico Willelmi de

¹³ Although the General Eyre was not an entirely new institution, having been used first in the reign of Henry I, the Eyre of 1194 'represents a very remarkable attempt to overhaul the administration.' Francis West, *The Justiciarship in England, 1066–1232* (Cambridge, 1966), 93.

Sanctae Mariae Ecclesia, et Willelmi de Chimilli fiant praestita, et cartae praestitorum fiant in modum cirograffi ... clerici autem praedictorum Willelmi et Willelmi habeant rotulum de transcriptis omnium cartarum, et sicut cartae mutabuntur, mutetur et rotulus. (Howden, *Chronica* 3:266)

(All the debts and pledges of the Jews are to be embreved... And six or seven places should be appointed in which the Jews are to make their loans; and two lawful Jews, two lawful Christians and two lawful scribes should be appointed, and all loans are to be made before them, as well as a clerk of William of Ste.-Mère-Eglise and William de Chemillé. And charters of the loans shall be made [sc. before them] in the manner of a chirograph... And the clerks of the aforesaid William and William should have a roll of transcriptions of all the charters, and if the charters should be changed, so should the roll.)

The *capitula* then prescribe an elaborate system of cross-sealing, and set out the rules for the deposit of one part of the chirographs in a triple-locked chest ('in arca communi'), one key of which would be held by the two 'lawful' Christians, one by the two 'lawful' Jews and one by the two clerks. Richard I ordered a similar procedure to be followed in the levying of the carucage in 1198, which Howden also reports. The carucage was to be collected jointly by one knight, one clerk, and the sheriff:

Et super singula carucarum wannagia ponebant ex praecepto regis primo duos solidos et postea tres solidos: et haec omnia in scriptum redigebantur; et habebat inde clericus rotulum unum, et miles rotulum alterum, vicecomes rotulum tertium, senescallus baronum rotulum quartum de terra domini sui... Et per praedictos rotulos respondebat vicecomes inde ad scaccarium coram episcopis, abbatibus et baronibus ad hoc assignatis. (Howden, *Chronica* 4:46)

(And by the king's command they levied first two, and then three shillings on every carucate of ploughable land, and all this was put down in writing. And accordingly the clerk had one roll, and the knight another, the sheriff a third and the seneschal of the barons a fourth roll [relating to] the land of his lord... And the sheriff answered [for the money collected] to the Exchequer according to these rolls in the presence of the bishops, abbots and barons assigned to this [task].)

These examples highlight the inadequacy of a model of writing that posits the *simple* transfer of information into written form, or between written forms, for its defining characteristic. They show instead how the creation

of a *scriptum* is often not primarily a technical or mechanical manoeuvre, but an inherently social and political activity.¹⁴ It is social because the creation of three or four identical texts by three or four different scribes, presumably simultaneously, necessarily involved an element of negotiation. It is political because it stipulates the simultaneous transcription of the same thing by authorized representatives of different social orders (in the first case ‘legal’ Jews, ‘legal’ Christians and clerics; in the second case, knights, clerics and a human representative of royal power (the sheriff)). It is political too because demanding that an account be rendered was inherently an exercise of lordship.¹⁵ A *scriptum*’s creation is thus imbued with, and structured by, questions of status and ownership.¹⁶ The statutes for the General Eyre and the levy of the carucage suggest that, at least in these cases, writing was a fundamentally shared activity, which was undertaken for social (as well as strictly administrative) purposes. The statutes underscore the fact that writing was a fundamentally *visible*, public activity—something, as we have seen, that Herbert of Bosham and Gervase of Canterbury understood very well. The *capitula Judaeorum* stipulate that chirographs (shared documents by definition) are to be made before an audience of ten whose presence alone validates the transactions those chirographs enact. The 1198 statute stipulates that when the sheriff had collected the carucage he must present his rolls at the Exchequer. What we know of the Exchequer suggests that this would be a sub-spectacle of an occasion notable for its theatricality.¹⁷

Richard FitzNigel’s normative description of the Exchequer, the *Dialogus de Scaccario*, makes it clear that the Exchequer was manifestly a forum for

¹⁴ See now Thomas Bisson’s comments about the Assizes of Clarendon and Northampton: ‘local men sworn to declare or determine in accordance with the Assizes ... were working for a social purpose.’ Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century*, 390.

¹⁵ Henry II ordered (for example) Becket to account for his expenses while chancellor (see FitzStephen, *Vita*, *MTB* 3:53–4); and when Archbishop Hubert Walter asked Richard I if he could resign his position as justiciar (‘ut eum liberaret a regimine regni’—that he should free him from ruling the kingdom), he hastily changed his mind when ‘inspectis scriptis’ and ‘computationibus auditis.’ Howden, *Chronica*, 4:13.

¹⁶ For an analysis of how the medieval charter should be seen as ‘an agent for the structuring of society,’ see Bedos-Rezak, ‘Diplomatic Sources and Documentary Practices,’ 321.

¹⁷ ‘The Exchequer is a table is a chessboard is a prop in a theatricalized political ritual ... [it] was not a place housing a department of government, like the court of which it was a specialized extension, it was an occasion.’ Haidu, *The Subject Medieval/Modern*, 185–6.

public writing. In the *Dialogus*, the return of a sheriff's account is staged as an event in which 'battle' was joined between sheriff and treasurer before an audience 'sitting as judges so that they might see and judge' it.¹⁸ Once a sheriff had read his account out aloud, and the judges had heard it, that account was subject to further public re-viewings and public re-writings. The scribes sat in such a way that the clerks of the officers of the Exchequer could oversee and survey the rolls they wrote. According to FitzNigel, the treasurer's scribe would sit next to the treasurer, 'in order that nothing was written that would escape his eyes';¹⁹ next to the scribe of the chancellor's roll sat the 'clericus cancellarii' who 'by his own eyes (*oculata fide*) ensures that his roll corresponds to the other in every detail.'²⁰

Superficially, the visibility of the rolls and the process of enrolment—at the Exchequer, in the carucage and in the 'enbreving' of Jewish debts—is simply a means by which mistakes of transcription could be avoided and fraud could be detected (the overseer's scribe 'must have the eyes of a lynx not to make any mistakes,' says FitzNigel's student).²¹ Yet the publicness of writing is more significant than this: the high visibility of writing and of the written word serves to bind those who saw the transactions together, as joint *witnesses* to (and of) them. These witnesses become the audience from which the *scripta* claimed their authority. This has distinctly political implications: *scripta* become *res publicae*, by which the validating audience at the moment of inscription, and the judging, reviewing, audience at the moment of reproduction, were both

¹⁸ FitzNigel, *Dialogus*, 10: 'in hoc inter duos principaliter conflictus est et pugna committitur, thesaurarium scilicet et vicecomitem qui assidet ad comptum residentibus aliis tanquam iudicibus ut *videant* et iudicent.' Translation and emphasis mine. Cf. Henry's insistence on the judicial (and spectacular) quality of the renewal of Battle abbey's charters by *inspeximus*. See below, p. 148, n. 37.

¹⁹ 'Ne quid scriberetur quod oculum eius effugeret.' *Ibid.*, 26, translation mine.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 27. Significantly, *oculata fides* was precisely the authority Herbert of Bosham claimed in writing his *historia*. See chapter 3, above.

²¹ *Ibid.* 'Huic oculi lincei necessarii essent ne erraret.' As Richardson and Sayles note, despite the theatricality of returns to the Exchequer, which involved physically moving symbolic objects over the chequered cloth, the 'saccarium itself, the chequered cloth itself ... does not seem to have been a concession to illiteracy, but the corollary of treating an audit as a judicial process. If the court and parties were to follow such proceedings, there must be a continuous ocular demonstration of each step in arriving at a final balance ... whether the accountant was literate or not is beside the point.' Richardson and Sayles, *Governance*, 280.

constituted and bound.²² Furthermore, instead of envisioning writing as an impersonal, reliable, stable vehicle for the transfer of information, the techniques set forward in the examples we have been exploring evince a mistrust of the reliability of writing to convey written information accurately, and an even greater mistrust of a single writer's ability to record information faithfully.²³ Checks and cross-checks weave a web of accountability, but all the while they undermine the fixity of authorship and ownership of information. With the insistence on an audience for the written word, the determination of the final authority of a *scriptum* is diffused and deferred.

The foregoing examples suggest that contemporary administration and government did not happen behind closed doors. Or rather, if they did happen behind closed doors, there were plenty of people inside to see. The modern historiographical assumption that the *scripta* in chronicles represented the *inner* workings of government, therefore, needs to be nuanced. The notion that a *scriptum*'s presence in a chronicle proves that a chronicler had privileged and private access to *scripta*, moreover, is brought into question. The *capitula Judaeorum* and the carucage—with their insistence on an audience—suggest that chroniclers appropriated the public role for writing that administrative *scripta* demanded. Chroniclers gave *scripta* a new audience, in other words. So instead of providing evidence for medieval chroniclers' *personal* fascination with documents and government, the reproduction of *scripta* in chronicles shows how chronicles themselves participated in the relentless insistence of literate government on the public proliferation of *scripta*.

The *scripta* discussed so far were designed to maximize financial accountability by ensuring that accountability for transactions, and the

²² As Julia Crick and Alexandra Walsham suggest of literary texts, 'The tendency to align written culture with privacy and individualism belies the way in which, either verbally rehearsed or silently perused, books forged links between scattered individuals and groups of people.' The same point could be made about certain administrative texts—and certainly the ones under consideration here. Julia Crick and Alexandra Walsham, 'Introduction: Script, Print and History,' in *The Uses of Script and Print, 1300–1700*, ed. eaedem (Cambridge, 2004), 18

²³ See Clanchy, *Memory*, 294–327, for contemporary attitudes towards, and solutions for, the (un)trustworthiness of writing.

written evidence for it, were shared. Not all contemporary *scripta* were necessarily created through such processes. However, the visibility of *scripta*, which is so clear in the production and reproduction of financial records, is also implicit in other forms of *scriptum* inserted in contemporary chronicles. The seeing audience that *scripta* imply (both at the moment of their production and that of their reproduction) is evident, for example, in Howden's account of King William of Sicily's marriage to Joanna, Henry II's daughter. Typically for Howden, he uses a combination of narrative and *scriptum* to relate the wedding and the negotiations leading up to it. The wedding charter that he reproduces, however, does not only fulfil the function of *corroborating* the fact, enumerated by Howden, that Joanna 'dotata est honorifice' following her wedding and coronation. It also makes manifest the vehicle by which that gift was given.²⁴ As its rubric in the *Chronica* puts it, 'This is the charter of William king of Sicily, which he made for Joanna daughter of Henry king of England for her dowry, and by which he endowed her on the day of her wedding.'²⁵

William's charter thus indicates that the charter was not some token of ownership—some symbol of possession—for Joanna, proving her rights over her new lands. On the contrary, it embodies the act of giving in its very writing, and forms part of the gift's enactment:

Quia vero nostra dignum est celsitudine, ut tam nobile ac insigne conjugium decenti dodario debeat honorari, *per hoc scriptum damus et in dodarium concedimus* praefatae reginae carissimae uxori nostrae comitatum Montis Sancti Angelo, *sicut est inferius annotatum*. (Howden, *Chronica* 2:96; *Gesta* 1:170)

(Because it is truly appropriate for our highness that such a noble and conspicuous marriage should be honoured by a fitting dowry, *through this scriptum we give and grant* in dowry the county of Monte Sant'Angelo to our beloved wife the queen, as it is written below.)

²⁴ See Pierre Chaplais, *English Diplomatic Practice in the Middle Ages* (London, 2003), 53–6, for a full analysis of the diplomacy and diplomatic practices involved in this marriage.

²⁵ My emphasis. 'Haec est carta Willelmi regis Siciliae, quam fecit Johanna filiae Henrici regis Angliae de dote sua, qua eam dotavit die desponsationis suae.' Howden, *Chronica*, 2:95.

The charter is fully reproduced by Howden on this occasion in all its remarkable solemnity. The charter enumerates who wrote it (William's notary, Alexander), how it was sealed (with a golden bull impressed by William's *typarium*), who witnessed its donation (no fewer than thirty of William's *familiares* 'se scripserunt' into the charter), and it states exactly when and by whose hand it was given. In one manuscript of the *Gesta*, and in all those of the *Chronica*, a reproduction of William's *bullā* is included too:²⁶

Fig 1. William of Apulia's seal



These authorizing devices act in the service of the charter's performative, rather than descriptive, function. In other words, they are signals that the conventions governing the performance of William's promise had been met, and that the transaction was therefore valid.²⁷ These devices were therefore part of the original, public circumstances of the document's (and dowry's) donation. The charter's authorizing devices are also reminders that *scripta* such as these were inherently social productions, and were

²⁶ Howden, *Chronica*, 2:98.

²⁷ Unusually for such an important transaction, Henry II could not be present as a party to it. It was especially important, therefore, that the *scriptum* through which the transaction was made and recorded should be effective even in his absence. This, perhaps, explains the lengths to which William went to make the charter appear authentic and binding. For Henry's absence, see Chaplais, *English Diplomatic Practice*, 53–6.

productive of social relations. As Bedos-Rezak has suggested, gifts in this period were 'social actions which were represented not as abstract categories, but as events embedded in, and expressive of, a social network;'²⁸ and the presence of the witness-list and seal work to situate the evidence and vehicle of that gift securely within it.²⁹ In reproducing the document in its entirety and reproducing the *bull* that guaranteed it, therefore, Howden proves that he had seen an original copy of the charter and is therefore reproducing it faithfully. But he also binds his chronicle and its readers—his audience—to the moment of the *scriptum's* transaction and to its original audience. What its original audience saw, Howden's readers see also;³⁰ they become party to it, witnesses not only of the document but also to the transaction effected by the document's creation and donation. Despite the considerable differences in the level of rhetorical sophistication between Howden's histories and the *Historia* written by Herbert of Bosham, it is significant that this was almost precisely how Herbert of Bosham envisaged the way his reproduction of the *funestum scriptum* containing the Constitutions of Clarendon would work; and, as we have seen, it is also the way that charters of *inspeximus* revived the promises of a previous generation before an altogether new audience.

The examples we have explored so far indicate that the primary experience of the written word for those who wrote history in this period was characterized by its publicness and its visibility. This suggests, on the one hand, how historians expected the *scripta* reproduced in their chronicles to be received and understood by their readers: as public productions that were part of, and representative of, social and political transactions. On the other hand, it also explains why reading and writing

²⁸ Bedos-Rezak, 'Diplomatic Sources and Documentary Practices,' 326.

²⁹ And as Bedos-Rezak puts it, seals '[embody] the characters of their owners, their fame, their authority, their authenticity.' *Ibid.*, 331.

³⁰ And this, as D. H. Green points out, is why Isidore of Seville considered history to be 'doubly visual': it was a record of what had been seen, rendered in a visual medium. '[Isidore's] founding of history on what an eyewitness had beheld for himself should have confined it to contemporary history ... [but] if a gap thus opens up between the original eyewitness and the historian's account, this has to be bridged in a reliable way if his account is to be as reliable as if composed by the eyewitness. Isidore sees this reliable bridge in writing.' Green, *Medieval Listening and Reading*, 238.

were portrayed in contemporary historical writing as such manifestly public activities—and which took on such overtly political functions. Gervase of Canterbury, for example, reports how Richard I decisively intervened in the negotiations between Archbishop Baldwin and the monks of Christ Church about who had the right to appoint the convent's prior. Richard did this by demanding that the agreement between Baldwin and the monks to submit to royal arbitration be put in writing. The controversy in which Richard intervened was one in which the written word was already playing a prominent role: the controversy revolved around whether certain *scripta* (the respective privileges of Christ Church and the archbishops of Canterbury) should be displayed in public in order that the rights of the monks (on the one side) and the archbishop (on the other) be made known once and for all. This was also an episode in which the give and take of the public and the private in the conduct of politics was laid bare: deals were struck behind people's backs in private, and rumour abounded that this or that charter had been 'mutilata' in secret.³¹ Because the process of arbitration would have involved the public display and inspection of Christ Church's privileges, the monks hesitated. To the request of the negotiating monks that they be granted yet another a delay so that they could consult the convent about whether to exhibit their privileges in public, Gervase relates that Richard replied, 'I won't [grant it]. I won't wait any longer for you... Summon me a scribe to write down before us those whom I will have nominated as judges.'³²

The fact, therefore, that a long-deferred decision had finally been made required that everyone present should see the outcome of that decision and could *see* that a decision had been made. Unlike the making of financial records, this is not an example of accountability being shared through the making of a shared document. Rather, the demand to have

³¹ For Gervase's account of this meeting at Westminster, see Gervase, *Historical Works*, 1:464–75. For the use of public and private colloquia in contemporary political negotiations, see Reuter, 'Assembly Politics in Western Europe from the Eighth Century to the Twelfth,' 201–4.

³² 'Non faciam. Non enim diutius praestolabor vos... Vocate mihi notarium, qui quos nominavero iudices scribat in medio nostrum.' Gervase, *Historical Works*, 1:469.

something put in writing was a fundamentally executive function that depended on its publicness.³³

This is one of many examples of the political nature of public writing recorded by a chronicler in the period. The best known such example, and the one which perhaps provided a model for subsequent descriptions of similar episodes, is the public creation of a chirograph containing the Constitutions of Clarendon at the council of Clarendon. Although modern scholarship on the Becket conflict is generally far more interested in the contents of the Constitutions of Clarendon than the process that created them, almost all contemporary historians remarked upon the creation of the *scriptum* on which the Constitutions were written.³⁴ Contemporary historians universally presented the episode as the crucial flashpoint of the conflict between Becket and Henry II. They did so with some justification. For, in having the Constitutions written down, Henry attempted to turn unwritten customary principles into *lex scripta*; and while Becket as primate possibly could have agreed to the former, accepting the latter from the king's hand would have amounted to a theoretical submission of the Church to secular jurisdiction. Thus, according to most contemporary accounts, Becket agreed verbally and in private to the customs of the time of Henry I, but refused then to put his seal publicly to the *scriptum* that rendered those customs in written form.

Contemporary historians focus, in fact, as much on the political implications of the way Henry required Becket to accept the written constitutions in public as they do on the theoretical implications of their contents. Although it is unclear exactly when during the council of Clarendon the chirograph containing the Constitutions was drawn up,³⁵ contemporary historians report that the chirograph was designed to be

³³ Richard ostentatiously refused to let the parties in the dispute become involved in nominating and writing down the names of the arbitrators: 'ne videlicet hac occasione nova surgeret altercatio.' Ibid.

³⁴ See, for example, Edward Grim, *Vita S. Thomae Cantuariensis archiepiscopi et martyris*, ed. James C. Robertson, *MTB* 2:382; William of Canterbury, *Vita et passio S. Thomae*, ed. Robertson, *MTB* 1:18; Bosham, *Vita*, *MTB* 3:279; FitzStephen, *Vita*, *MTB* 3:46–7; Diceto, *Opera*, 1:312; Gervase, *Historical Works*, 1:178; Howden, *Chronica*, 1:222.

³⁵ Warren, *Henry II*, 474; for an attempted reconstruction of the chronology of the Council of Clarendon, see Frank Barlow, *Thomas Becket* (London, 1986), 99.

either created in public, or subsequently read out and then divided in public; and it was the combination of the publicness and the writtenness of the procedure which lay at the root of its insidiousness. Edward Grim's Henry II makes clear to Becket that the publicness was only fair: Becket had impugned the laws of the kingdom in public (said Henry), so he should make amends by confirming their validity *in audientia publica*.³⁶ By receiving a part of the chirograph in public view (*in episcoporum et procerum regni conspectu*, as Herbert of Bosham put it),³⁷ Becket was both validating its content and enacting a kind of submission to Henry. Although chirographs were typically used for treaties and other agreements between people, there was little in this ceremony that suggested a relationship of equality between Becket and Henry as the respective heads of *regnum* and *sacerdotium* in England.³⁸ Rather, the procedure had every characteristic of a charter-giving ceremony, as if the Constitutions were being *conceded* to Becket in an act of lordly indulgence. Using the written form of the chirograph ensured that Becket was made accountable in the same way that the collectors of the carucage and Jewish creditors were. Everyone in the *audientia publica* could see that Becket had accepted the written Constitutions by accepting part of the chirograph; and that accountability was strengthened still further through the dissemination of the document, which was divided into three, one part

³⁶ As Grim's Henry puts it to Becket 'Dignum est ut in publica audientia haec fatearis; universis siquidem notum est in quantis mihi contrarius exstiteris, publicis regni legibus contradicens.' (It is fitting that you should acknowledge these [constitutions] in a public hearing, because it is known by everyone how much you came out opposed to me, contradicting the public laws of the kingdom.) Grim, *Vita*, MTB 2:379. This point is also made by Timothy Reuter, 'Velle sibi fieri in forma hac: Symbolic Acts in the Becket Dispute,' in *Medieval Politics and Modern Mentalities*, ed. Timothy Reuter and Janet Nelson (Cambridge, 2006), 184.

³⁷ Bosham, *Vita*, MTB 3:277. The *Battle Abbey Chronicle* also emphasizes the sometimes-judicial character of textual production. When Abbot Odo of Battle asked Henry II to renew the abbey's charters, Henry replied that he would 'not do so except by the judgement of my own court.' So Odo waited for a 'place and time when the king would ... be sitting in the midst of his barons (*in medio procerum*) ... and in view of all presented his charter (*in conspectu omnium proposuit*), decayed with age, and requested that it be renewed by royal authority.' *Battle Abbey Chronicle*, ed. Searle, 310–11. Henry's order that the text of the old charter be included in the new was predicated on the fact that he himself had *seen* the old charter. And not only had Henry seen the old charter, it had been seen by his *proceres* too—it had been seen to be seen. It is the royal gaze upon the old charter, then, that enabled the promises of the past to be remade and rewritten, before a new audience, in the present.

³⁸ For chirographs, see Clanchy, *Memory*, 87–8.

going to Becket, one to the archbishop of York, and one to the royal archives.³⁹

If writing is thus to be understood to have been a public and political activity in this period, contemporary historians also lay considerable emphasis on the publicness of *reading*, and assume that it is primarily a shared auditory as well as visual experience.⁴⁰ Chroniclers frequently use words such as ‘his autem auditis’ to connect a *scriptum* to the narrative describing what that *scriptum* achieved. Public readings are presented as solemn occasions, and like the examples of public writing we have explored, they are informed by political concerns. Diceto, for example, reports that when Henry the Young King’s rebellion had been put down and he had been reconciled to Henry II, ‘nearly all the magnates of England had been called together at Westminster, and, in the presence of the Young King, a letter was read containing these words...’⁴¹ The words of the letter (*Gratias ago*) were those of Henry II, announcing his son’s submission and the terms of their reconciliation. According to Diceto’s chronicle, the reading of the letter was followed by the very same oath-taking and surety-giving that the letter of reconciliation had prescribed.⁴² (As it was written, so it was done: Diceto’s chronicle here seems to insinuate the efficacy of the written word). This example represents exceptionally high political theatre, but many of the other *scripta* contained in the chronicles would have been delivered at similar

³⁹ ‘Scriptum tamen dictas consuetudines continens recipit... Alteram vero scripti partem suscepit Eboracensis archiepiscopus: rex vero ipse tertiam, in regum archivis reponendam.’ ([Becket] however received the *scriptum* containing the so-called customs... The archbishop of York received another part, the king a third, to be kept in the kings’ storage-boxes.) Bosham, *Vita*, *MTB* 3:288.

⁴⁰ That reading was not *always* a public activity in this period is clear from Gervase of Canterbury’s account of a monk of Canterbury’s vision of Thomas Becket wielding the sword of St. Peter. Thomas instructs the monk to read gold letters inscribed on the sword: ‘“Andrea, lege litteras istas.” Qui cum silentio litteras non legeret sed cogitaret, “Non ita,” inquit sanctus, “sed viva voce lege illas.”’ (‘Andrew, read those letters.’ Since he did not read the text but thought them through in silence, the saint said ‘not like that—read them out aloud instead.’) Gervase, *Historical Works*, 1:340.

⁴¹ ‘Universis Angliae fere majoribus apud Westmustier convocatis ... praesente rege filio, lectae sunt litterae continentes haec verba.’ Diceto, *Opera*, 1:399–400.

⁴² ‘Igitur ipsa die praestita sunt sacramenta sicut supra scriptum est.’ (Therefore on the same day oaths were taken just as it was written above [i.e. in the text of *Gratias ago*].) Diceto, *Opera*, 1:401.

occasions.⁴³ Indeed, in many respects, *all scripta* were part of political theatre, which took their lead from virtuoso performances such as Henry's.⁴⁴

Even those *scripta* that might be considered workaday business letters, such as Richard I's summons of the London clergy to the archbishop of Canterbury's election, are presented as having been read out in public.⁴⁵ The audiences of the *scripta* later copied into chronicles were not necessarily large, but their use almost always involved more than one person. The transposition of information from oral to written modes of discourse—'from sound to sight, from ear to eye'—was rarely a solitary activity.⁴⁶ Indeed, on the evidence surveyed so far, it was more often a collective activity, structured by questions of status and authority. William FitzStephen, for example, trumpets his closeness to cancellarial and archiepiscopal power by proclaiming his role as Becket's reader of documents: 'I was [Becket's] dictator in his chancery; in his chapel, I was subdeacon when he was celebrant; when he was sitting judging cases, I

⁴³ The treaty of Falaise, a *conventio et finis* between Henry II and William king of Scotland which reconciled them after William had sided with the Young King in his rebellion, is handled in an almost identical way: 'Recitatis in ecclesia Sancti Petri Eboraci coram praedictis regibus Angliae, et coram rege Scotiae et David fratre suo, et universo populo.' ([It was] recited in the Church of St. Peter at York before the aforementioned kings of England, and before the king of Scotland and David his brother, and the whole people.) Howden, *Chronica*, 2:82. Cf. the announcement of Becket's election at the papal curia reported in Diceto's *Ymagines*: 'Litteris igitur episcoporum, litteris etiam prioris et conventus Sanctae Trinitatis, litteris quoque regis in medium recitatis, sub audientia cardinalium in consistorio.' (So the bishops' letter, and the letter of the prior and convent of the Holy Trinity, and the king's letter too, [were] recited in public in the hearing of the cardinals in consistory.) Diceto, *Opera*, 1:307. See also the canonization of Becket: 'Apices summi pontificis in communi audientia recitate sunt...' (The letters of the supreme pontiff were recited in the hearing of all...) Ibid. 1:369; and the announcement of John of Salisbury's promotion to the see of Chartres. Ibid. 1:411.

⁴⁴ Pace Frank Barlow, who suggests that sworn *recognitiones* of the type that created the Constitutions of Clarendon 'were a familiar part of Anglo-Norman judicial and administrative proceedings, and the procedure would have surprised no one.' Barlow, *Thomas Becket*, 99. As John Hudson points out, 'any document recording a transaction involving laymen may well stem from an *abnormal* situation, generally one of conflict... Written documents often try to hide the very abnormality of the situation as they aim to restore workable social relations.' Hudson, *Land, Law, and Lordship*, 4. Emphasis mine.

⁴⁵ 'Commonitoriis igitur hujusmodi lectis in medium ad vocationem domini Londoniensis plures convenerunt episcopi.' Diceto, *Opera*, 2:108.

⁴⁶ Jack Goody, *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral* (Cambridge, 1987), 12. Cf. Green, *Medieval Listening and Reading*, 113–4.

was the reader of the letters and documents that were presented,⁴⁷ he claims. In doing so, he positions himself in the reflection of Becket's glory and stakes his claim to be his ideal biographer.

The political uses of public writing that history-writers describe, and the social and political functions that the *scripta* they reproduced prescribe, suggest that the political and social functions of the written word were integral to the stories that chroniclers told about the past. We need to analyze the *scripta* reproduced by historical narratives, therefore, as much for what they *represent* as for what they illustrate. So the letter *Gratias ago*, which announced Henry the Young King's submission, should not so much be thought of as *documenting* that submission as forming a part of it. The letter's public recitation, as Diceto makes clear, enabled it to do its work as a political tool. Similarly, the public inscription and recitation of the Constitutions of Clarendon constituted Becket's humiliation as much as their contents justified Henry II's theoretical position in relation to the Church. By reproducing the Constitutions of Clarendon or *Gratias ago*, chroniclers ensured that the political relationships constituted by *scripta* were made part of history, alongside the political processes that made those *scripta* effective. Meanwhile, they further disseminated the *scripta* by reproducing them, laying before the eyes and ears of their own audience both the fact and instrument of what they recorded.

The emphasis of historical writing on the performances that endowed *scripta* with their social meaning, however, suggests that writers of history recognized that their own reproductions of *scripta* would never be able fully to represent the performances that made them historically significant. Historians such as Howden might, as Holt suggested, have used *scripta* to 'record the actions of government.'⁴⁸ But they were also aware that they made that record at one remove. So while they called attention to the instrumentality of the written word, they also insisted that that instrumentality depended on the performative presence of

⁴⁷ 'Fui in cancellaria ejus dictator; in capella, eo celebrante, subdiaconus; sedente eo ad cognitionem causarum, epistolarum et instrumentorum quae offerebantur lector.'

FitzStephen, *Vita*, MTB 3:1.

⁴⁸ Holt, 'Assizes,' 100.

documents and an audience to witness it. Howden reports that Adam of St. Edmunds, a *clericus* and *familiaris* of Count John had been caught red-handed by the mayor of London with written mandates ‘to arm [Count John’s] castles against his brother the king.’⁴⁹ Once the mayor of London had handed the letters over to Hubert Walter, the latter ‘convened the bishops, earls, and barons of the kingdom before him, [and] he set out before them (*ostendit*) Count John’s letters and their contents (*tenor*).’⁵⁰ Just as the physical presence of a *scriptum* was crucial in FitzStephen’s episode of the non-destruction of the bishop of Le Mans’s house, in this case, the oral exposition of meaning would have been incomplete or ineffective without the public display of the *scriptum* itself: not only did everybody hear evidence of John’s guilt, but they saw it too. John’s mandates were both visual evidence of his treachery and its physical manifestation—which was the more shocking for being enshrined in writing.⁵¹ A letter of one of Becket’s clerks to his master suggests that Howden’s distinction between a letter’s presence and its *tenor* was not Howden’s alone. Becket’s clerk reports that, at a meeting with Empress Matilda about the Constitutions of Clarendon, ‘we set forth the king’s customs orally (*verbo narrauimus*) because Master H[erbert] had lost the sheet of parchment (*scedulam*).’⁵² This oral exposition, presumably from memory, apparently did not satisfy Matilda, who ‘commanded us to send to you for a copy of

⁴⁹ ‘Ad castella sua munienda contra regem fratrem suum.’ Howden, *Chronica*, 3:236.

⁵⁰ ‘Convocatis coram eo episcopis, comitibus, et baronibus regni, ostendit eis litteras comitis Johannis, et earum tenorem.’ Idem, *Chronica*, 3:236. Cf. Alexander III’s 1181 letter *Cum orientalis* to all prelates ordering that the encyclical *Cor nostrum* (exhorting a new crusade) be read publicly in all the churches and that they expound its meaning: ‘Litteras autem, quas propter hoc generaliter mittimus, universis faciatis ecclesiis publice legi, et exponatis earum tenorem.’ (May you therefore have the letters that we are sending on this matter publicly read out to the whole church, and expound their contents.) Howden, *Gesta*, 1:275. The distinction between *scriptum* and *tenor* is also conspicuous in the way Becket reports his condemnation of the Constitutions of Clarendon to his suffragans: ‘Auctoritatem ipsius scripti, ipsumque scriptum, cum pravitatibus quae in eo continentur, in irritum duximus et cassavimus.’ Idem, *Chronica*, 1:238. For the authoritative Latin version and translation of this text see Duggan, ed. *The Correspondence of Thomas Becket Archbishop of Canterbury 1162–1170*, 1:308–16: ‘We have nullified and quashed the authority of the text itself and the document in which it is written, together with the perversities it contains.’ *Correspondence of Becket*, ed. Duggan, 1:311.

⁵¹ A similar dynamic is at work in the episode recorded by Howden in the *Gesta* in which Tancred of Sicily proved Philip II had slandered Richard I by giving him the sealed letters in which Philip claimed Richard had broken his faith with him. Howden, *Gesta*, 2:159–60.

⁵² *Correspondence of Becket*, ed. Duggan, 1:164–5. According to Duggan, this Master H. may have been Herbert of Bosham. Ibid, n. 8.

the customs themselves (*propter consuetudines illas*).’ When a copy had been found, she ‘ordered us to read them out in Latin and expound them in French (*eas latine legere, et exponere gallice*).’⁵³ The implication is that Matilda did not just need to know what those customs were, but needed them *physically in her presence*, voiced in French but simultaneously presented in all their Latin writtenness, in order to judge whether Becket’s complaints about them were justified.

The distinction in contemporary documentary practice between a material *scriptum* and its immaterial *tenor*—its contents and its meaning—suggests that historical writing could not wholly re-create the force of a *scriptum*’s original physical presence or the ritual circumstances in which it was deployed. At best, it could describe and explain its *tenor*, and reproduce a two-dimensional image of its physical form. It was the task of the reader, therefore, or of the hearer or of the person reading the chronicle *out*, to supply the cultural information that endowed the physical *scriptum* with social force. Contemporary readers of medieval chroniclers were much better placed to do this than modern readers of the same texts.⁵⁴ As I suggested in chapter two, histories in this period had a collaborative and public complexion. Histories, and the *scripta* they used, circulated via social networks whose members knew many of those involved in the written transactions they describe (or else they knew those who knew them). The relationships forged between administrators, historians and the audiences of histories supplied the cultural information that we might now feel is ‘missing’ from historians’ representations of deeds done through writing. Bedos-Rezak emphasizes the power of the written word not only to forge social relationships, but also to act as a locus of negotiation through which those relationships ‘were created, maintained and continued to operate.’⁵⁵ So although the *scripta* inserted into historical

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 1:166. Translation mine.

⁵⁴ As Gabrielle Spiegel suggests, there was a ‘pervasive medieval bias in favour of considering as historically telling not “what really happened” but what was done—*res gestae*—and then, perforce, *by whom*. The importance of events is gauged by the status of those who participate in them.’ If we think of the documents in historical writing not only as *scripta* but as *acta* too, then they also functioned as accounts of *res gestae*, celebrating those who performed them. See now Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, 215.

⁵⁵ Bedos-Rezak, ‘Diplomatic Sources and Documentary Practices,’ 323.

writing might not have been able to express the immediate power of their original presence, history's own role in social life meant that it was able to continue to negotiate the relationships represented by the *scripta* it reproduced.

We shall look more closely at the contexts in which historiographical texts might have been read in the final chapter. Their audiences probably included *illiterati* who were hearing history read through the mediation of a translating cleric. I suggest that nonetheless even they would have understood the valences of socially significant actions performed through written practices. I would even suggest that the written nature of the transactions we have explored in this chapter would in many cases have been secondary to the staging and ritual that surrounded their performances, and to the relationships those performances created and maintained. In suggesting the primacy of performance and ritual in the contemporary use of the written word, and by raising the possibility that chronicles could have been mediated by a reciting performer when they were read, I am making points usually associated with the vernacular tradition of historical writing. But as the next chapter shows, the association of the vernacular with performance and Latin with writtenness might be more a consequence of the narrow linguistic categories of modernity than they were of medieval reality.

Languages

This study so far has approached the relationship between historical writing and the written word through probing at the association between historical narrative and the *scripta* it reproduced. Historical narrative and written records have emerged as closely related institutions of cultural memory, which called attention to their own enduring writtenness and to their historicity—to their power to preserve and their ability to monumentalize. The fundamental narrativity of many forms of *scripta* made them especially amenable to historiographical rewriting: *scripta* were stories about the past that history, and other narrative frameworks, re-told for their own purposes. This historiographical re-telling of the stories told by *scripta* was related to the citationality that was so fundamental to medieval textuality. And it also helped to fulfil a cultural need to reproduce and re-enact the *acta* of the past in the present. Historian-administrators thereby afforded *scripta* the ‘institutional support and framing’ required to ensure they were transmitted to the future in a meaningful way.

The texts we have investigated so far have all been in Latin, like the *scripta* they reproduced. But the written word was far from being an exclusively Latinate phenomenon in late twelfth-century England. And the administrative and historiographical cultures of that society—the circles in which Diceto and Coutances and Howden and Puiset moved—were by no means monolingual either.¹ Rather, they were dynamically polyglot; and if it is true that administrators in Angevin England defined their social position partly through their relationship with writing,² in a multilingual

¹ For Roger of Howden’s use of French, see appendix D, below.

² *Pace* Clanchy, who suggests that it is primarily ‘language which forms mentalities, not literacy,’ and that ‘writing is one of the means by which encoded language is communicated; it can never be more than that.’ Literate public officials in the Angevin empire might take issue with Clanchy’s notion that the ‘medium was not the message.’ See now Clanchy, *Memory*, 9.

society the social valences of using the written word were compounded by the social valences of using particular languages. On the one hand, administrators spoke French in the higher courts and in the Exchequer where they operated (and probably in the chancery too).³ On the other hand, they owed their position at least in part to their mastery of written Latin.⁴ And as polyglot mediators between the Anglophone culture of the governed and the Francophone and highly literate culture of the government, administrators were in contact with three different languages,⁵ each of which had a distinct relationship to writing.⁶ These relationships cannot have failed to affect the writing of history: French and Latin were both languages of historical writing in this period—the last Anglo-Saxon entry in the Peterborough Chronicle had been made for the year 1154.⁷

This chapter investigates the relationship between the written languages of late twelfth-century England and its historical writing, and it does this through an examination of two French histories, each of which was written within a few years of the other. The first is Jordan Fantosme's *Estoire* of Henry the Young King's rebellion against his father,⁸ Henry II, which Fantosme composed in its aftermath.⁹ The other is Guernes de

³ See Short, 'Patrons and Polyglots,' esp. 242. Paul Brand has made a strong case for French being the language of the royal law courts from the time of Henry II (i.e. from the beginning of the period of this study), in Paul A. Brand, 'The Languages of the Law in Later Medieval England,' in *Multilingualism in Later Medieval Britain*, ed. David A. Trotter (Cambridge, 2000), 66. An older tradition of legal scholarship also emphasized the role of French in the administration of the common law. See, for example, Paul Hyams, 'The Common Law and the French Connection,' *ANS* 4 (1982), esp. 91; and Raoul C. van Caenegem, *The Birth of the English Common Law*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1988), 23. Even George Woodbine, who was hostile to the possibility that French was a written language of law before the mid-thirteenth century, suggests that French might have been *spoken* in the courts. Woodbine, 'The Language of English Law,' 425–6.

⁴ For clerical and lay administrators' literacy, see e.g. Turner, *Men Raised from the Dust*, 9–11, with bibliography.

⁵ As Clanchy notes, 'for governmental purposes the language of *script* did not need to be the same as the language of *speech*.' Clanchy, *Memory*, 212, emphasis mine.

⁶ For which see Clanchy, *Memory*, 197–223.

⁷ Although perhaps not its last entry, which might be better thought to be the *Livres de reis de Brittainie*, which was written into its margins in the late thirteenth century. See now Ruth J. Dean, *Anglo-Norman Literature: A Guide to Texts and Manuscripts* (London, 1999), no. 13.

⁸ Jordan Fantosme, *Jordan Fantosme's Chronicle*, ed. and trans. R. C. Johnston (Oxford, 1981). Henceforward Fantosme.

⁹ Jordan's *Estoire* has always been edited under the title of a *Chronicle*, although there is no evidence that it was ever thought to be one. As its most recent editor, R. C. Johnson notes, 'the word [chronicle], which never appears in the text, [does not] seem the most

Pont-Sainte-Maxence's *Vie de Saint Thomas*, which he completed in 1174.¹⁰ Both texts offer acute observations on the relationship between language and writing, and between the written word and history. They both offer the written word, and the vernacular written word especially, a distinctive role in history and its writing; and they seem as comfortable in reproducing *scripta* in French within their narratives as their Latinate counterparts did in Latin. This chapter asks why this should be so; and one of the answers that emerges is that the *Estoire* and the *Vie* were pioneering a role for written French in a multilingual administrative culture whose characteristic physical products were still overwhelmingly Latinate.

This chapter will show, however, that these French histories did not claim a role for written French while dreaming of (or arguing for) a secular, emancipated and Latin-free future.¹¹ Although the *Estoire* and the *Vie* were

apt to describe [the] work.' Fantosme, xiv. Johnson maintains the title for the sake of convenience; but given the fine distinctions twelfth century historians made between different types of history, I will stubbornly refer to the text as an *Estoire*—which Fantosme himself calls it in its first line.

¹⁰ Guernes, *La Vie de Saint Thomas Becket*, ed. Emmanuel Walberg (Paris, 1936).

Henceforward Guernes. Translations are mine unless otherwise stated.

¹¹ In the rush to see vernacular literature as a secularizing force, there is a tendency to fence off Latin and its users entirely from the story of the rise of vernacular textuality—as if they were unaffected by it and had no effect on it themselves—despite the fact that vernacular texts were usually written by Latinate clerics, and often by male and female religious. Unfair caricatures are made of Latin users: for Michel Zink, for example, the majority of Latin historians were 'hommes d'Église qui rédigent dans le silence de leur cabinet des essais de synthèse d'après les documents qui leur sont transmis.' (churchmen who compiled synthetic accounts from the documents which were sent to them in the silence of their study.) Fantosme, Ambroise and Villehardouin, on the other hand, 'ont vu et vécu ce qu'ils racontent.' (saw and lived what they recount.) This hardly fits in with what we know of either Fantosme, who was quite capable of writing in the Latin of an 'homme d'église,' or (say) Roger of Howden, who was hardly removed from the events he described (as John Gillingham has shown so clearly). Michel Zink, 'Une mutation de la conscience littéraire: le langage romanesque à travers des exemples français du XIIe siècle,' *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 24 (1981), 12. David Hult posited a 'biculturalism' between writing and speaking, which he suggested coincided with that between Latin and romance—and suggests that oral (vernacular) culture 'ne pénétrait qu'avec difficulté dans la clôture hermétiquement scellé que formait le scriptorium.' (only with difficulty penetrated the hermetically sealed enclosure of the scriptorium.) David Hult, 'Vers la société de l'écriture: le *Roman de la rose*,' *Poétique* 50 (1980), 159. Gabrielle Spiegel, meanwhile, speaks of 'literature' and 'church' as if they were not only mutually antagonistic but actually the opposites of one another (see, for example, her view that 'romance's literary construction of the fictional, together with its avowed intention to please and instruct ... operated to reinforce clerical hostility to vernacular literature as an attempt to usurp the moral role of the church in the spiritual guidance of the laity.' Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, 64–5. As Ian Short has shown for Beneit of St. Albans's Anglo-Norman *Vie* of Becket, and Taylor for the *Chanson de Roland*, such texts could find audiences in both the monastic refectory and the aristocratic court. Ian Short, 'The

not always in *overt* dialogue with Latin texts, this chapter shows that they were products of a culture in which Latinity and vernacularity were in a constant negotiation.¹² The *Vie* and *Estoire* illustrate starkly, in fact, the difficulties of compartmentalizing different uses of language in the polyglot society of high medieval England.¹³ As we shall see, this makes the precise relationships between vernacular historiography and language and writing distinctly slippery. To be sure, the vernacularity of French histories enabled them to articulate social concerns about how to behave around the written word, and to make comments about the limits of written communication, that might have been difficult to articulate in Latin (with its enduring association with the written word). But an unproblematized alignment of vernacular historical writing with performance and behaviour, on the one hand, and Latin historical writing with the written word on the other, obscures the contingencies of such configurations. The *Vie* and the *Estoire* vocally claim to be using a manifestly *written* French. On the one hand, they emphasize the power of the spoken word in the giving of counsel. On the other, they figure historical writing—*French* historical writing—as a form of counsel in itself. And they suggest that Latin could be posited as an index of performance and unmediated communication—even if modern scholarship sometimes thinks of spoken French as a more authentic, less artificial, vehicle of meaning. Finally, the reception history of the *Estoire* and the *Vie* make it hard to argue that vernacular and Latin history occupied wholly opposed cultural spheres.¹⁴ William of Newburgh, writing his *Historia Anglorum* before 1198, is thought to have used Fantosme's *Estoire* to write his own

Patronage of Beneit's *Vie de Thomas Becket*, *Medium Ævum* 56 (1987), 239–56. Cf. Andrew Taylor, 'Was There a Song of Roland,' *Speculum* 76 (2001), 45–53.

¹² As Andrew Taylor has suggested of the partnering of the *Chanson de Roland* and the *Timaeus* in the *Chanson's* earliest manuscript, although the two texts 'might seem [to us] to belong to different worlds ... the Norman and Anglo-Norman scribes who copied them lived in the same one.' Taylor, 'Song of Roland,' 50.

¹³ As Robert Stein has put it, 'No points of stability can be found within the fluid and shifting multilingual field. Neither English nor Latin nor French can be definitely attached either to a place of production nor to a specific use during this period.' Robert M. Stein, 'Multilingualism,' in *Middle English*, ed. Paul Strohm (2007), 34.

¹⁴ For a compelling argument for Matthew Paris's use of *chansons de geste* in the thirteenth century, see Heather Blurton, 'From *Chanson de geste* to Magna Carta: Genre and the Barons in Matthew Paris's *Chronica Majora*,' *New Medieval Literatures* 9 (2007), 117–38.

narrative of the Young King's rebellion, and Guernes's French narrative was used by 'Roger of Pontigny' as the basis of his Latin *Vita* of Becket.¹⁵

The way the *Estoire* and the *Vie* portray and use the written word means that the widespread association of Latin (and Latin historiography) with record-making and bureaucracy, and Old French (and Old French historiography) with performance and courtly entertainment will need some adjusting. French is not generally recognized as being a language of record in this period, even if it was demonstrably a language of history.¹⁶ The consequent 'inability' of French to reproduce written records means that French historical writing tends to be considered as primarily a literary, rather than fully literate, phenomenon. If this is the case, quite why the *Vie* and the *Estoire* seem so untroubled by reproducing written correspondence in their narratives needs to be accounted for. We need to determine, in other words, what the historiographical function of that correspondence was—and whether the monumentalizing function of Latin historiography that we have noted in previous chapters really was unavailable to its French counterpart. If it was, was the social and cultural role of French historiography confined to that of *commemoration*—of celebrating the past in the present, rather than preserving the present for the future? Did French versification (and translation) of *scripta* really interfere with their meaning any more than the historiographical re-framing we explored in chapter three?

¹⁵ See Newburgh, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. Howlett, 1:xxvi–ii, 1:178 n. 3 and 1:181 n. 6. To my knowledge, no modern historian apart from Howlett has made anything of the connections between Fantosme's *Estoire* and Newburgh's *Historia* (and even if it turns out that Newburgh did not borrow from Fantosme but the two had access to a common source, at least *one* of them would have been translating from it). The possibility of a connection is strengthened by recent research on William of Newburgh's (and his priory's) role in the 'circulation of books and texts ... between the Cistercian houses and Durham [cathedral priory].' (See now Anne Lawrence-Mathers, 'William of Newburgh and the Northumbrian Construction of English History,' *JMH* 33 (2007), esp. 342)). Durham Cathedral Library possessed the earliest extant manuscript of the *Estoire*, which, following Johnston's dating, 'might belong to the end of the twelfth century.' Fantosme, xlv. 'Roger of Pontigny's life of Becket was published as the *Anonymous I* in *MTB* (4:1–79). For his use of Guernes, see Guernes, xxxiv. For the argument that 'Roger' used an earlier version of the *Vie* than the existing version, see Ian Short, 'An Early Draft of Guernes' *Vie de saint Thomas Becket*,' *Medium Ævum* 46 (1977), 20–34.

¹⁶ See Clanchy, *Memory*, 219. It should be noted that Clanchy's point is about *royal* records, not records in general.

Any exploration of the relationship between vernacular literature and the written word, however, moves through muddy waters. The relationship between vernacular literacy and vernacular literature has long been dominated by scholarship on the emergence of vernacular literary genres, most notably the emergence of vernacular epic and romance. Epic and romance have often been thought to have a fixed—almost pre-ordained—relationship with the written word. Epic (like lyric) was until recently assumed to be a written form of a once-oral performance, while romance was thought to be an altogether more bookish and textual sort of writing.¹⁷ As critiques of these positions by Sarah Kay and Andrew Taylor have made clear, such claims carry heavy ideological baggage. According to Taylor, the orality of the epic has long been taken to represent vernacular literature's appropriation of the pure and unmediated memory of a proto-national warrior society.¹⁸ Kay has questioned the way medievalists represent the *chanson de geste* as 'belonging to a time before signification became complex, irony corrosive, politics stressful, and transgressive thinking possible'—while considering romances to be altogether more artificial and 'literary' productions.¹⁹ Simon Gaunt has

¹⁷ Emerging as it did simultaneously with both the author and the reader, romance is thought to have had a reflexive and self-authorising quality where the text was 'son propre modèle, offrant ... la garantie de la plus parfaite des fidélités, la fidélité à lui-même.' Zink, 'Mutation,' 5. Its octosyllabic form, according to Paul Zumthor, entailed 'une réflexion sur le texte comme tel.' Paul Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale* (Paris, 1972), 339. Evelyn Vitz has characterized romance scholarship as considering it to be a 'fundamentally "written" genre—not just one that happens to have existed in texted form or to have found readers.' Evelyn B. Vitz, *Orality and Performance in Early French Romance* (Woodbridge, 1999), 48. Vitz suggests that romance may in fact have been composed and performed orally—a provocative suggestion, but one that perhaps maintains too sharp a distinction between the text and the voice. For a stimulating corrective to these two extremes of writtenness and orality, see Dennis Green's compelling argument for the *dual* reception of medieval romance by sight and by ear: Green, *Medieval Listening and Reading*, and idem, *Beginnings of Medieval Romance*, esp. 35–54, where he situates this dual reception within the precise context of increasing literacy.

¹⁸ 'From the moment of its rediscovery [the *Song of Roland*] has been associated with minstrel performance. Both its epic dignity as a French *Iliad* and its patriotic value as a repository of martial valour depended on this classification (36) ... the grandeur of oral epic is thus part of the long history in which writing marks a fall from some lost state of primal unity. In the jongleur's song the political body of early France is reconstituted, spiritually, racially and politically. The epic is not read, it is sung (41).' Taylor, 'Song of Roland,' 28–65.

¹⁹ Sarah Kay, *The Chansons de Geste in the Age of Romance: Political Fictions* (Oxford, 1995), 4–6, and *passim*. For a classic statement of the older view, see Bäuml, 'Varieties and Consequences,' 237–65. Bäuml suggested that growing vernacular literacy made possible a 'greater distance between fixed text and writing author or reading reciter than between oral poem and oral poet,' meaning that the 'form and content of a written narrative

shown that scholarly judgements about the orality and 'performative presence' of lyric poetry betray a 'nostalgia for the presence and immediacy of oral performance.'²⁰ According to Gaunt, this nostalgia is 'at least encouraged by the texts themselves,' and 'the representation of orality in troubadour tradition should be seen as an effect, even as a fiction, of a textual culture.'²¹ Indeed, far from assuming that lyric poetry's oral characteristics are 'simply a reflection of an originally textless performance,' Gaunt concludes, with Derrida, that 'the very notion of orality derives from an intellectual perspective that is imbued with writing.'²²

Gaunt, Kay and Taylor alert us, then, to the troublesome and overbearing nature of generic categories. They also make it difficult to sustain any claim that the attitudes towards the written word evinced by the *Vie* and the *Estoire* were transparent reflections of primordial generic characteristics, somehow hard-wired into their vernacularity. Rather, it seems that the *Vie* and the *Estoire* used and manipulated generic assumptions while negotiating and defining their relationship with the written word. As such, genre is part of a *process* that needs mapping,²³ not an answer with compelling explanatory force of its own. This is important to note, because the weight that the *Estoire* and the *Vie* place on the delivery of correspondence, a key narrative device in both texts, could otherwise be dismissed as simply the deployment of a recurrent trope of epic discourse.²⁴ To be sure, Fantosme (like Guernes) sets his poem up as

[could] be manipulated by the writing author or scribe and the reciting reader to a much greater extent than a traditional oral poem by a performing oral poet.' *Ibid.*, 250.

²⁰ Simon Gaunt, 'Fictions of Orality in Troubadour Poetry,' in *Orality and Literacy in the Middle Ages: Essays on a Conjunction and its Consequences in Honour of D. H. Green*, ed. Mark Chinca and Christopher Young (Turnhout, 2005), 119–20.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 120.

²² *Ibid.*, 125.

²³ Cf. Timothy Peters, 'Elements of the Chanson de Geste in an Old French Life of Becket: Garnier's *Vie de saint Thomas le martyr*,' *Olifant* 18 (1994), 283.

²⁴ The paradigmatic medieval example is Ganelon's delivery of the Franks' message to Marsile in the *Chanson de Roland* (which, according to Philip Bennett 'has probably produced as much controversy as the rest of the poem put together.') Philip Bennett, 'Ganelon's False Message: A Critical False Perspective,' in *Reading Around the Epic: A Festschrift in honour of Professor Wolfgang van Emden*, ed. Marianne Ailes, et al. (London, 1998), 149. See also exhaustive studies by Jacques Merceron, *Le Message et sa fiction: la communication par messenger dans la littérature française des XIIe et XIIIe siècles* (Berkeley, 1998), and Jean-Claude Vallecalle, *Messages et ambassades dans l'épopée française médiévale: l'illusion du dialogue* (Paris, 2006), esp. 83–111. The theme of the messenger is found even

something of an epic:²⁵ he invokes a listening audience ('Or oëz... '),²⁶ he bases his metre on that of the *chansons de geste*,²⁷ and he refers to *geste* heroes.²⁸ But the alignment of Fantosme's presentation of correspondence in the *Estoire* with the presentation of correspondence in other epic texts appears less neat when the afterlife of one of Fantosme's most typically 'epic' narrative devices is considered. The account of the delivery of a message from William the Lion (king of Scotland) to Henry II (whom William defies by allying with Henry's son, the Young King) is replete with the heroism of the messenger. But that did not stop Thomas of Kent seamlessly rewriting it into a self-consciously 'romance' text, *Le Roman de toute chevalerie*, shortly after Fantosme completed the *Estoire*.²⁹ Rather than using the device of the messenger and his message simply to give their plots an epic complexion, it seems likely that Fantosme and Guernes (and

in oral poetry of the modern era, for which, Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, ed. Stephen Mitchell and Gregory Nagy (Cambridge, MA, and London, 2000), esp. 55–71. Johnston suggested that contemporary epic influenced Fantosme's emphasis on 'topoi like councils, ambassadorial journeys and parleys.' R. C. Johnston, 'The Historicity of Jordan Fantosme's Chronicle,' *JMH* 2.2 (1976), 166.

²⁵ 'An epic tale of epic events,' according to Johnston. R. C. Johnston, *The Versification of Jordan Fantosme* (Oxford, 1974), 6. As Timothy Peters suggests of Guernes's *Vie de Saint Thomas*, it 'resembles chansons de geste to a surprising degree... In diction, plot and characterization, [it] has more in common with the *Chanson de Roland* than with the *Vie de Saint Alexis*.' Peters, 'Elements of the Chanson de Geste,' 278; see also idem, 'An Ecclesiastical Epic: Garnier de Pont-Sainte-Maxence's *Vie de Saint Thomas le martyr*,' *Medievistik* 7 (1994), 181–202.

²⁶ As Bennett has suggested of the *Estoire*'s opening line 'Oëz veraie estoirë: que Deu vus beneïe!' 'il s'agira d'un texte « oralisant », porteur de l'index « écouter ».' Philip Bennett, 'La chronique de Jordan Fantosme: épique et public lettré au XIIIe siècle,' *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 40 (1997), 39.

²⁷ See now Johnston, *The Versification of Jordan Fantosme*, passim, and Bennett, 'La Chronique,' 42.

²⁸ For Jordan's allusion to the *Chansons de geste*, see e.g. his description of Henry II as 'Le plus honorable e le plus cunquerant / Que fust en nule terre puis le tens Moysant, Fors sulement li reis Charle, ki poeste fud grant / Par les dudze cumpaingnuns, Olivier e Rodlant.' (The most honourable and the most victorious king who ever was anywhere on earth since the time of Moses, save only Charlemagne, whose might was immense through the deeds of the twelve peers amongst whom were Oliver and Roland.) Fantosme, ll. 111–4. The epic cast of Jordan's poem has most recently been explored by Philip Bennett, 'L'épique dans l'historiographie Anglo-normande: Gaimar, Wace, Jordan Fantosme,' in *Aspects de l'épopée romane: Mentalités – idéologies – intertextualités*, ed. Hans van Dijk and Willem Noomen (Groningen, 1995), 321–30, and Bennett, 'La chronique,' 37–56, where Bennett emphasizes the *Estoire*'s combination of lyric and epic forms.

²⁹ Fantosme, ll. 316–9; cf. Thomas of Kent, *The Anglo-Norman Alexander*, ed. Brian Foster and Ian Short (London, 1974–5), ll. 1382–4. As Short notes, however, its 'epic flavour is very marked.' *Ibid.*, 2:59. For the implications of Thomas of Kent's use of Fantosme's *Estoire*, see *ibid.*, 2:74–5. Note that this text, for all its romance epicness, had a monastic circulation in the thirteenth century like Fantosme's *Estoire* (St. Alban's library had an illustrated copy, for which see N. J. Morgan, *Early Gothic Manuscripts*, 2 vols (London, 1982–8), 1, no. 81).

Thomas of Kent) also deployed it as an interface through which written and oral modes of communication could be negotiated and explored.³⁰

As we have seen already, the use of written correspondence as such an interface was not confined to vernacular texts. So while Guernes might have been responsible for casting Becket as something of an epic hero, it is not his doing that the written word played such a crucial structuring role in the Becket controversy itself, or that written correspondence and diplomacy feature so prominently in the Latin tradition of its historiography. And although Fantosme deploys the device of the written message in a way deliberately reminiscent of epic texts, he also uses it in a way that recalls the reproduction of *scripta* in Latin histories that was so typical of precisely the time in which he was writing.

Let us look a little more closely at Fantosme's use of correspondence in the *Estoire* (we shall explore Guernes's use of correspondence further below). The transmission of correspondence is a crucial device in the poem, which serves many purposes. On a pragmatic level, the device enables Fantosme to pivot the focus of his narrative between the far-flung flashpoints of the civil war of 1173-4.³¹ In a more subtle way, Fantosme uses the device's potential for controlling the narrative's point of view: he uses it to give a

³⁰ Scholarship has not been slow to recognise the potential for the representation of messages to act as such an interface. Dennis Green, for example, uses Rolf Köhn's analysis of medieval correspondence as a paradigm for the interpenetration of oral and written, vernacular and Latin communication that characterises the 'intermediate mode' of reception, stressing that in the case of correspondence, 'written communication ... involved two translation processes, [and] also the use of the spoken word at three points (dictation, delivery, recital).' Green, *Medieval Listening and Reading*, 16. Vitz studies the exchange of letters between Tristan and King Mark in Bérout's *Tristan* and that between Tristan and Isolde in Marie de France's *lai* 'Chevrefoil' to suggest that despite their written form, it is their orality that is emphasized (Vitz, *Orality and Performance*, 32), before concluding that these exchanges were 'typical of a period that found purely written records somewhat unsatisfactory, even epistemologically inadequate' (Vitz, *Orality and Performance*, 40). Simon Gaunt (partly by way of riposte to Vitz) explores how the troubadour Marcabru's depiction of a messenger who is 'enjoined to transmit [a] text to its addressee is ... implicitly represented as doing so in writing' to suggest that 'writing was playing a role from the outset in the life of [Marcabru's] lyrics' (Gaunt, 'Fictions of Orality,' 134). Bäuml uses the presentation of a letter in Rahwein's *Gesta Friderici i imperatoris* to contrast 'the increased distance between text and content occasioned by writing' and the 'identification of the messenger with the message in narratives originating in the oral tradition.' Bäuml, 'Varieties and Consequences,' 251, n. 40.

³¹ Thereby linking William the Lion's invasion of Northumberland to the Young King's renunciation of fidelity to Robert de Breteuil's rebellion and invasion of England.

voice to the various parties in the war and to take it away, and to show how those points of view came into contact and conflict. Fantosme's vivid descriptions of the distances messengers had to travel (which Thomas of Kent liked so much) also work to emphasize the sheer size of Henry II's domains, stretching from Orkney (l. 359) to the 'porz d'Espaine' (the Pyrenean passes, l. 772). Finally, Fantosme also uses the strong association of correspondence with *absence* as a means of drawing attention to Henry II's distance from England and from its troubles.³²

Of course, all sorts of other texts, both Latin and vernacular, reproduced correspondence for similar reasons—and Howden's and Diceto's accounts of the successive wars between the Plantagenet and the Capetian kings are packed with accounts of diplomatic activity. But the *Estoire* frames the narrative of war in the *Estoire* with two accounts of diplomatic activity with such self-consciousness that it feels that they are part of the story itself. The first sets up the causes of the war: it reproduces the messages exchanged between the Young King, William the Lion and Henry II (through which the defiance of the first, the demands of second and the refusal of the third, were made public). The second episode represents the war's conclusion, with a messenger's announcement to Henry that 'the war is over and your kingdom is in peace.'³³ In between these two episodes, messengers and their messages play a crucial role, whether they

³² According to Fantosme, William de Vesci, the castellan of Alnwick 'Plus regrette sun seigneur [Henry] que chevalier s'amie.' (He thinks more longingly of his absent lord than does a knight of his mistress.) Fantosme, l. 548. Fantosme was not the only one for whom Henry's absence was notable: according to Diceto, the embassy of Richard of Ilchester (then elect of Winchester), sent to ask that he return to England after William the Lion's invasion, was a matter of some mirth to the *Normanni*: 'Wintoniensis electi adventum intelligentes et causam dixerunt: 'Cum Angli tot emiserint nuntios et istum nunc dirigunt, quid amplius transmisuri sunt ad regem revocandum in Angliam, nisi turrim Lundoniae?' (Hearing the elect of Winchester's arrival and his purpose, they said 'when the English have sent so many messengers—and now *him*—what more will they be sending to call the king back to England, apart from the tower of London?) Diceto, *Opera*, 1:381–2. Laura Ashe argues that the *Estoire* should be read as 'an appeal from a kingdom to its ruler, a ruler who spent many years away from that kingdom,' (Ashe, *Fiction and History*, 104). The 'trope of the displaced king' Ashe mentions (111), however, is as likely to be related the figure of Charlemagne in the *Chanson de Roland* (to which Fantosme explicitly alludes) as it is (as Ashe thinks) to be an allusion to the 'exile and return of the king' of Anglo-Saxon literature.

³³ 'Ore est la guerre finie e en pes vostre regné,' l. 2022.

are demanding surrender, requesting a truce or seeking alliance.³⁴ The most striking thing about all these messages is the ambiguity of their relationship to the written word. As we shall see, sometimes Fantosme underscores the writtenness of the transactions. On other occasions the letters sent seem less important than the oral messages sent alongside them and the comportment of the messenger who delivered them. And sometimes written correspondence and the performances surrounding it are so intimately related that they become inseparable. What lies behind these different emphases, and behind the *Estoire's* ambivalent attitude towards the written word more generally?

These questions can best be answered by closely reading two very stylized, but contrasting, accounts of the delivery of correspondence, which together narrate the beginning of the hostilities between Henry II, his son and William the Lion. Together they illustrate what was at stake for language and for history writing in the use of the written word. The structure of the two passages is almost identical, and Fantosme evidently designed them to be taken as a pair. Their structural similarity, however, works to highlight the fact that they treat the delivery of messages in entirely contrary ways. The first passage (ll. 245–76) depicts the Young King's appeal for King William's aid in his war against his father. Here, Fantosme emphasizes the appeal's writtenness. The second passage (ll. 314–37) reproduces the message that William sent Henry II (as a consequence of the letter he had received from the Young King) to warn Henry that he would ally with his rebellious son if he did not meet his demands. In this second passage, the spoken word is decisive.

In the first passage, Henry II has just resolved to fight his son, who had just fled from his protection to the court of Louis VII. Henry would not give in to his demands to have his own land and revenues, he decides. The French are terrified:

Espoënté sunt li Franceis de la fiere novele:
Le cuer al plus hardi en tremble e chencele.

³⁴ E.g. Fantosme, ll. 839–45; 1359–80; 1383–1408 (demanding surrender); ll. 533–6 (requesting truce); ll. 916–24 (seeking alliance).

Mes icil les cunfortë ki trestuz les chele;
Irrur ad en seun cuer, li sanc li estencele.
A un conseil en vait a sa gent plus leale.

245 En romanz devise un brief, d'un anel l'enseele.
Les messagiers al jeufne rei, devant lui les apele.
Ço fud li reis Lowis ki chargea la novele.

Vunt s'en li message, ki les briés en porterent.
Passent la mer salee, les regnes traverserent,
250 Les forez, les plaines, les ruistes guez passerent.
Vient en Escoce e le rei i troverent.
De part le jofne rei Henri les escriz presenterent:
Jas orrez les paroles ki escrites i erent.

'Al rei d'Escoce, Willame le meillur
255 A qui nostre lignage fud jadis anceisur!
Le rei Henri le jeufne vus mande par amur:
Suvenir vus deit de mei, ki sui vostre seignur...'

(The French are alarmed by this dire news: the heart of the boldest trembles and misses a beat. But he who ever leads them strengthens their resolution;³⁵ *his* heart is full of anger and his blood boils with rage. He goes to take counsel with the most loyal of his intimates. He composes a letter in French and seals it with a ring. He summons before him the Young King's envoys. It was King Louis who gave them the message they had to bear.

The envoys depart bearing the letter. They crossed the salt sea, they traversed kingdoms, forests and plains, and they crossed perilous fords. They came to Scotland and there they found the king. They presented the letter on behalf of the Young King. Now you will hear the words that were written in it: 'To the king of Scotland, the most noble William, who has a common ancestor with us in former members of our line! King Henry the Younger with loving greeting thus addresses you...')

This transaction presents a number of problems that need explanation. First, it seems that Fantosme is anxious that the words in the letter, the words delivered orally to William and the words of the *Estoire's* version of the letter should be understood as being identical. The letter itself was written 'en romanz,' says Fantosme (l. 245); he had not distorted its

³⁵ I (and I think Johnston), take the grammatical subject of this and the following paragraph (until 'Vunt') to be King Louis (i.e. he who leads (*ki trestuz chaele*) all the French), not the Young King (as Philip Bennett implies in 'Ganelon's False Message: A Critical False Perspective,' 164). This, as we shall see below, has a particular political significance.

contents by translating them.³⁶ Secondly, although it was *en romanz*, the letter was sealed and its contents thus guaranteed by a marker of royal authority and textual authenticity.³⁷ And finally, although the spoken word has a crucial role in the transaction, Fantosme emphasizes that the messengers' audience—and the audience of the *Estoire*—are *hearing* a *written* text being voiced: the noun *escriz* stands for *briés* (l. 252), and the *Estoire* demands that the audience should listen to the words which were *escrites* in the letter ('Jas orrez les paroles ki escrites i erent,' l. 253). The *brief* is not being deployed merely as a prop or sign of authority, in other words, while the 'real' information was given as an *ex tempore* oral performance. The *brief* was the determining object of the transaction. The description of the journey of the messengers foregrounds the *materiality* of the message, and emphasises that information is not incorporeal but rested in a real object that had to be carried, and carried a long way, before being delivered.

We shall explore these problems in due course. At this stage, the most important thing to note is the contrast between the first passage and its twin. The second passage, like the first, describes the despatch of a message following the taking of counsel. This time the message travels the other direction, from Scotland to the other side of the Channel. In the message, William the Lion warns Henry II that if he does not give him his ancestral rights in Northumberland, he will join the Young King and defy him. In this passage, the writtenness of the message seems to be almost incidental and the emphasis falls instead on the spoken word. This so striking because the passages are otherwise so similar:

'Enveium noz messages od icest mandement,
315 Ki si facent lur port cum chevalier vaillant.'

Vunt s'en li message; lur chevaux espurunent
Par les granz chemins ferrez, lur rednes abandonent.
Li cheval sunt mult bon qui desuz eus randunent.
Viennent en Normendie, pas lunges ne sujornent

³⁶ As Bennett suggests, this 'allows the inference that what we hear recited are the very words the Young King [or Louis] had authenticated with his signet.' Bennett, 'Ganelon's False Message,' 164–5.

³⁷ For a visual representation of a sealed document in Roger of Howden's *Gesta*, see above, chapter 4.

320 Trovent le viel rei Henri; sagement l'araisunent
De part le rei d'Escoce. Lur lettres puis li dument.

Frere Willame d'Olepenë parole tut premier
E dit au rei d'Engleterë: 'Jo sui un messagier
De par le rei d'Escocë, vus vieng ci nuntier
325 Il est vostre parent sil devez mult amer...'

(‘Let us despatch this message by our envoys, who will bear it like valiant knights.’ The envoys depart; they spur their horses along the metalled highways, with the reins hanging loose. The horses galloping under them are unrivalled. They reach Normandy with no lingering on the way; they find King Henry the Elder; wisely they address him in the name of the king of Scotland. Then they present their missive to him. Brother William de Olepen speaks first and says to the king of England: ‘I am an envoy from the king of Scotland, and I am here to let you know that he is your kinsman and that there should be love between you.’)

Where in the first passage the letters being carried by the messengers are mentioned, in the corresponding place in the second it is the horses carrying the messengers; and where the messengers present the *escriz* to King William in the first passage, in the second they ‘wisely address’ Henry II (‘sagement l’araisunent,’ l. 320). Moreover, whereas in the first scene the words put into the mouth of the messenger are presented as being identical to the words written in the letter, in the second there is a clear distinction between the letter, which was handed over to Henry after he had been orally greeted (‘Lur lettres *puis li dument*,’ l. 321), and the words that were spoken (*paroler*) by William d’Olepen.³⁸ In the first passage, the Young King’s own words are communicated to William the Lion in the first person, as if the messenger were incidental to the transaction.³⁹ In the second, the messenger (William d’Olepen) speaks for *himself* (‘*Jo sui un messagier ... vus vieng ci nuntier*,’ ll. 323–4), and refers to

³⁸ In this case, it seems likely that the letters in question were letters of credence, which were handed over to the recipient of a message to vouch for the fidelity of the messenger who delivered the message orally. This was a common practice in the twelfth century, and was especially useful where the content of the message was to be secret; letters of credence were generally sealed close, whereas letters in which the substance of the message was contained in the writing (and whose contents were not secret) would be sealed patent. For an account of these practices, see Chaplais, *English Diplomatic Practice*, esp. 12–28, 45–50.

³⁹ Precisely whose words were being spoken in this passage is deliberately unclear: the message is delivered as if from the Young King by the Young King’s messengers, although ‘*ço fud li reis Lowis ki charga la novele*’ (l. 247).

King William only in the third person.⁴⁰ William d'Olepen emphasises his own role—and his physical and visible presence—in the transaction, as if he himself is part of the message: 'Now see me here in your court,' he insists,⁴¹ and he uses the first person to demand that '*I* will not seek to have any later date appointed; *I* propose that [the Young King's] claim be upheld by a knight in single combat.'⁴²

When Henry II formulates his reply (in the third transaction in this long-distance dispute), the mechanics are slightly different again. This time there is no letter for the messenger (again William d'Olepen) to bear. And rather than letting d'Olepen speak in his own person, as d'Olepen does when delivering William the Lion's message, Henry instructs d'Olepen to tell David (William the Lion's brother) '*for me* ... to come to my aid.'⁴³ Then he should say to the king of Scotland on Henry's behalf—so again speaking *for* him—'that I am not frightened by the war my son is now waging against me.'⁴⁴ Accordingly, when d'Olepen delivers Henry's message to William the Lion (ll. 362–82), he never refers to himself as if he has any agency in the matter by naming himself as a subject, but rather speaks entirely in the third person to relate Henry II's *mandement*.⁴⁵

What can account for the difference between the writtenness of the message in the first passage and the spokenness of the message in the second and third? And between William d'Olepen's two opposed subject positions? A simple answer would be that they each reflect alternative diplomatic practices, both of which were widespread and well understood at the time.⁴⁶ Perhaps, in this case, Fantosme wanted to draw attention to

⁴⁰ This was the usual practice: as Chaplais notes, 'when delivering their oral message, diplomatic envoys normally reported their master's words in the third person.' The only example of the first person being used that Chaplais identifies is found in the *Life of Becket* by (Fantosme's contemporary) William of Canterbury, who records a messenger—also sent by Louis VII—addressing Henry II in the same way. Chaplais, *Diplomatic Practice*, 49.

⁴¹ 'Or veez mei ci en vostre curt.' Fantosme, l. 334.

⁴² 'Terme avant ne requier: / Ferai derainement par un sul chevalier.' Fantosme, ll. 334–5.

⁴³ 'Dites *mei* sun frere ... qu'il vienge pur mei aider.' Fantosme, ll. 348–9.

⁴⁴ 'Que pas ne m'espoent / Pur guerre que jo aie de mun fiz en present.' Fantosme, ll. 342–3. Translation modified.

⁴⁵ 'Ore, oiez sun mandement; nel tenez a folage!' (Hear [King Henry's] message and weigh it carefully!) Fantosme, ll. 365.

⁴⁶ It could be argued that the letter sent by the Young King to William the Lion was a letter patent, which he chose to use because by its very nature it was public and it was

his own diplomatic competence and his knowledge of different protocols.⁴⁷ This answer, however, underestimates the considerable subtlety with which Fantosme deploys the devices of the written letter and oral message. For one thing, Fantosme seems to use them to make a comment about the Young king's political position. According to the *Estoire*, it was when the Young King 'could not do his will (*ses volentez*) because of his father' that he decided to ally against him.⁴⁸ We know from other contemporary sources that the Young King's inability to execute *acta* in his own name and under his own seal—to do his royal *volentez*—contributed to the powerlessness that led to his rebellion.⁴⁹ We also know from other contemporary accounts that the custody of the Young King's seal during his rebellion was a matter of great significance. According to

part of his design to announce his defiance of his father and his claims of direct lordship over William publicly. The decision to write it in French could be taken to support this line of argument, in that it would be understood all the more readily *en romanz* and be heard by more people. The use of an oral message accompanied by a letter (which was probably sealed close) in the second passage could reflect that, rather than making an outright demand of Henry II, William d'Olepen had been sent to negotiate with him and been given the written authority to do so on his behalf, but that King William's position was not yet firmly established. This possibility accords with what is known about contemporary diplomatic practice, where an envoy—given the necessary tokens of credence—could be delegated the power to *facere* as well as *dicere* for those who sent them. Often letters of credence would delineate the limits of their authority (or the complete freedom from such limits). For delegated authority of this sort (and administrative, non-diplomatic uses of such delegation), see Chaplais, *Diplomatic Practice*, 56–69.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Lodge, 'Literature and History in the Chronicle of Jordan Fantosme,' 266–8, which suggests that Jordan derived his knowledge of the war in the north of England through executing his own 'intelligence-gathering' role. For the overlap between the role of a spy and an envoy in the *Estoire*, see ll. 409–13: 'il [William] voldrad ultre mer enveier un espie/Pur veoir le cuntienement le pere en Normendie/ E puis alant en Flandres al fiz en qui il se fie/ Ses briés e ses messages ki haltement il die/Cume li reis sun pere "par dit me cuntrialie... "' (He wants to send a spy across the sea to observe the actions of Henry the father in Normandy, and, after that, to Flanders to Henry's son in whom he puts his trust, bearing letters telling him plainly how the king his father 'frustrates me by his decision...') See also Vallecalle, *Messages et ambassades*, 373–86.

⁴⁸ 'Quant ne pot ses volentez acumplir pur sun paire,/Pensout en sun curagè qu'il li fereit cuntraire.' Fantosme, ll. 23–5. Translation modified.

⁴⁹ R. J. Smith notes that, despite the new presence of the Young King's own household in the witness-lists of his charters after he was reconciled to his father, 'his dependence, albeit gilded, continued. It is notable that not only are his charters to monasteries all confirmations, but the more elaborate of them ... occurred when Henry II himself was contemporaneously involved. Indeed, the primary importance of the Young King's *acta* lies in their demonstration of the restricted nature of associate kingship; they illustrate the frustrations that provoked his rebellions and in some measure substantiate the Young King's complaints of the inanity of his own regal title.' R. J. Smith, 'Henry II's Heir: The Acta and Seal of Henry the Young King, 1170–83,' *EHR* 116.466 (2001), 302. For a valuable comparison of the Young King's rebellion with those of other contemporary European princes, see Björn Weiler, 'Kings and Sons: Princely Rebellions and the Structures of Revolt in Western Europe, c. 1170–c. 1280,' *Historical Research* 82.215 (2009), esp. 20–4, 36–8.

Roger of Howden, when the Young King's chancellor defected to Henry II, he brought with him the Young King's seal. This was something of a coup for Henry II, who ordered it to be closely guarded.⁵⁰ But as soon as the Young King had fled to Louis, Louis 'immediately had a new seal made for him.'⁵¹ So the Young King was now (by the grace of Louis) able to exercise executive regal power for himself—a power that was increasingly expressed through the use of the written word.⁵² For all that he had a new seal, however, and despite his new freedom from his father's obstructiveness, the Young King appears in the *Estoire* to be as voiceless and powerless as before his rebellion. This power-and-voicelessness is especially clear in Fantosme's contrasting depiction of the Young King's and his father's use of writing. Although the Young King's own messengers delivered the letter to William the Lion (l. 246), it was Louis who ordered it to be written, it was Louis who sealed it (l. 245), and 'Ço fud li reis Lowis ki charga la novele' (l. 247).⁵³ When Henry II formulated his message to William, by contrast, he is in complete control: 'Ne quiert aver al respuns estrange ne parent,' declares Fantosme (l. 341).⁵⁴ And rather than sending his reply in writing and in the third person, as the Young King had, Henry used the unmediated power of the *verbum regis*; and he commandeered the voice and person of William d'Olepen in the process. Henry II's power thus appears immediate and direct; the Young King, by contrast, seems as impotent in his new freedom under Louis as he did in his 'subjection' under Henry (when, as he had

⁵⁰ Howden, *Gesta*, 1:43. Henry II sent the rest of his son's household and treasure back to him, but he kept the seal.

⁵¹ 'Statim fecit fieri ei novum sigillum.' Ibid.

⁵² The charters the Young King issued show the extent of his ambitions: he gave all of Kent, with Dover Castle, to Philip, Count of Flanders; he transferred the county of Mortain from his own brother John and gave it to Philip's brother Matthew, the Count of Bologne; he gave William the Lion all of Northumberland. These and other donations 'confirmavit ... sigillo suo quod rex Franciae fecit ei fieri.' (he confirmed with the new seal which the king of France had had made for him.) Howden, *Gesta*, 1:45. The relationship between the charter that Howden mentions the Young King made for William the Lion and the letter that Fantosme reproduces from the Young King to William, promising him Northumberland in return for his aid, is open to speculation.

⁵³ 'It was King Louis who gave them the message they had to bear.' If the Young King is in fact the subject of the sentence until this point (as Bennett seems to imply—see n. 35, above), this reading is weakened. The point still stands, however, that Louis still had a determining influence in the transaction.

⁵⁴ 'He does not need anybody's help, be it stranger or relative, to formulate his reply.' As Johnston glosses this line, 'Henry's answer is immediate and he needs no advice to help him make up his mind.' Fantosme, p. 162.

complained to Alexander III, 'we did not reign over anything, but we were coerced in every way; we were coerced when we should have been coercing others').⁵⁵

The *Estoire's* comments on the politics of rebellion explain then, superficially at least, the differences in its emphasis on writing in these episodes. They also suggest that different uses of the written word had distinct social valences that were treated as primary historical phenomena. They were understood as speech acts, in other words, which were as much part of history—and vernacular historiography—as the letters and charters that we explored in chapter two. But the *Estoire's* unusual insistence that the Young King's letter was written *en romanz* suggests that the *Estoire's* treatment of the written word was *also* an intervention in a debate about the relationship of the vernacular to writing—and the relationship of vernacular historiography to writing in particular.

Fantosme's claim that the vernacular written word could be the basis of historical narrative questions current scholarly assumptions about the uses of written French in later twelfth-century England. Michael Clanchy, for example, suggests that monastic chronicles, with their inserted documents, were the 'most secure and productive form of record in existence in this period.'⁵⁶ On Clanchy's reading, the *Latinity* of such histories meant that they could both authentically reproduce records, and act as a form of record themselves. Clanchy suggests that this was *not* the

⁵⁵ 'Eramus subditi ... coerciti ... nec in aliquo quidem regebamus, sed coercebamur qui alios coercere debuimus.' Martin Bouquet and Léopold Delisle, eds., *Recueil des historiens des Gaules de la France*, revised ed., 24 vols (Paris, 1869–1904), 16:644. The *Estoire's* suggestion that the Young King was being coerced by Louis and his evil counsel was the standard line among contemporary historians to explain (and perhaps excuse) his behaviour. As Fantosme later says, 'Par conseil ... puet l'um un sage mettre en grant folie.' (By evil counsel ... a man can be pushed into disastrous folly.) Fantosme, ll. 677–9. See also Diceto, *Opera*, 1:355, 'abiens in consilio impiorum'; cf. Ps. 1:1. See also Howden, *Gesta*, 1:41, where Howden claims the Young King rebelled 'per consilium regis Franciae.' Fantosme, Diceto and Howden may therefore have been trying to exculpate him by charging him only with naivety. (As Strickland points out, they were writing in the Young King's lifetime, so had an interest in exculpating him, since he would one day be in charge alone. Matthew Strickland, 'Arms and the Men: Loyalty and Lordship in Jordan Fantosme's Chronicle,' in *Medieval Knighthood, IV: Papers from the Fifth Strawberry Hill Conference, 1990*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill and Ruth Harvey (Woodbridge, 1992), 193). But they may also have been laughing at his expense.

⁵⁶ Clanchy, *Memory*, 101.

case for vernacular historical writing in the late twelfth century. So when Fantosme versified the text of a letter *en romanz* from Louis VII to William the Lion in his *Estoire*, Clanchy thinks that ‘the text he gives is not intended to be an authentic document, since he recounts it in verse as part of his narrative.’⁵⁷ The few French administrative documents that today survive from twelfth-century England, are, according to Clanchy, ‘best interpreted as exceptions proving the rule that French was not yet a language of record for royal government.’⁵⁸ So although French was self-evidently a language of *history* in the late twelfth century, on Clanchy’s reading it was not yet a language of *record*, at least not for the great pioneers of record-keeping who worked for the king. By extension, a French work of history could apparently not *itself* fulfil the functions of a record in the way that a Latin chronicle could. And since French—not to mention versified French—was unable to achieve the strict duplication required to transfer a record from one context to another, French was unable to reproduce records either.

It seems to me that Fantosme nevertheless uses the Young King’s letter *en romanz* to claim written French as legitimate material with which to build historical narrative. Although suspicions about the truthfulness of verse historical writing were beginning to surface in this period (suspicions which would eventually contribute to the emergence of prose vernacular historical writing),⁵⁹ Fantosme does not seem overly troubled by them. Fantosme claims quite explicitly that the letter *was* an authentic document, and his assertions about the Frenchness and the writtenness of his source do not seem to be overdetermined. The letter was sealed, Fantosme says,

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 219. Note that Clanchy’s point is about language, rather than just versification. It is curious that nobody ever suggests that the papal letters reproduced in Latin verse by Étienne de Rouen in his *Draco Normannicus* were not ‘authentic.’ See now Étienne de Rouen, *Draco Normannicus*, ed. Howlett, 2:3.477–576.

⁵⁸ Clanchy, *Memory*, 219.

⁵⁹ For the rise of prose in vernacular historical writing, see Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, esp. 55–98. Spiegel suggests that ‘despite its original definition as a register of spoken language ... *roman* rapidly assumed a generic connotation as a particular type of vernacular literature, suggesting a written or potentially written performance. Once this had occurred, the cultural competition between orality and textuality as communicative modes was no longer limited to the contrasting discursive registers of Latin and Old French, but was displaced to within the vernacular itself, a struggle that was to have broad significance for the eventual debate over the value of poetry or prose in the communication of “true” historical knowledge.’ *Ibid.*, 67.

and he makes every effort to ensure that his reproduction of its contents was understood as being accurate. Other twelfth-century English historians had also attempted to claim the written word for vernacular historiography earlier in the twelfth century. Geffrei Gaimar presented his *Estoire des Engleis* as a translation into written French of a number of Latin and Old English history books. Wace's *Brut* was presented as a translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*. But Fantosme breaks new ground by claiming that the written text that lay behind his own history was *already* written in French. He was not a translator, in other words, even if he was a versifier.⁶⁰ And instead of presenting his history as a French rewriting of old history *books*, as Gaimar and Wace (and indeed the *Roland* poet) had, Fantosme grounded his *Estoire* in the unbound *scripta* of the present. He figures the French written word, then, as an effective political instrument of the present; and he claims the recent past for history written in French.

Fantosme was not alone in blazing this trail. Guernes de Pont-Sainte-Maxence's *Vie* of Becket makes similar claims for (and use of) written French. Guernes also wrote about the very recent past, and he, like Fantosme, versifies written correspondence. Unlike Fantosme, Guernes makes no comment about the language of his sources; but, as we shall see, the relationship of language to writing is a recurrent theme in the *Vie*. Leaving aside the question of whether Fantosme's letter 'really' existed *en romanz* before Fantosme worked it into his *Estoire*, Leena Löfstedt has convincingly argued that when Guernes versified Becket's correspondence he was working from French drafts of letters that later circulated in Latin.⁶¹ Löfstedt shows that the French version of Becket's letter *Expectans expectaui* that Guernes versified was textually superior to extant Latin versions.⁶² Löfstedt even suggests that the surviving Latin

⁶⁰ In this case, he might be considered to have more in common with Étienne de Rouen than with Wace.

⁶¹ Leena Löfstedt, 'La loi canonique, les Plantagenêts et S. Thomas Becket,' *Medioevo Romano* 15 (1990), 3–16, and eadem, 'La *Vie* de S. Thomas Becket par Garnier de Pont-Sainte-Maxence et la traduction en ancien Français du *Décret* de Gratien,' *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 98 (1997), 161–78.

⁶² Löfstedt does this by collating the text of the letters versified in Guernes's *Vie*—whose Latin 'originals' make extensive use of Gratian's *Decretum*—with the Old French translation of Gratian's *Decretum* that was made in this period. (According to Löfstedt,

version of the letter ‘donne l’impression d’être une traduction médiocre de ce texte français.’⁶³ In suggesting this, Löfstedt inverts common assumptions about the relative priority of French and Latin in this period. One significant implication of her argument is that Guernes, Fantosme—and indeed Latin chroniclers—were working with the written word in French *and* Latin in this period, possibly as a matter of course. And even if (or perhaps because) the French letters that Guernes versified were disposable drafts intended to be rewritten and circulated in Latin—rather than ‘authentic’ letters sealed and sent in the manner described by Fantosme—the relationship between written language and textual authority evidently needed serious thought.

As I have argued throughout this study, historiography’s grounding in the written word made it especially fertile ground to explore such issues. The question we need to address, therefore, is why Fantosme and Guernes explored them through writing history in the *vernacular* about *socially traumatic events in the recent past*. Put another way, we need to determine what it was about vernacular historical writing’s relationship with the written word that enabled it to address the Young King’s rebellion and Becket’s murder in a socially useful way. Had Fantosme and Guernes wished to write unproblematically authoritative historical narratives based on unproblematically authoritative documents, they could presumably have done so in Latin. So what did writing in the vernacular enable them to say or do that could not be said or done in Latin?

To explore this question, let us look more closely at Guernes’s *Vie*. Guernes explicitly situates his work with regard to ‘all those who have written about the saint in French or Latin,’⁶⁴ so it invites a comparison with contemporary Latin accounts of the Becket conflict. The first thing to note is that despite the fundamental role of Becket’s correspondence in the

the translation of Gratian was made by someone in the circle of Becket himself.) Löfstedt shows that Guernes’s use of canon law terminology did not come from the Old French *Decretum* itself, but from other texts, such as the French drafts of Becket’s letters, which had direct knowledge of it.

⁶³ Löfstedt, ‘*Vie et traduction*,’ 168. ‘[It] gives the impression of being a poor translation of this French text’ (i.e. the draft that Guernes versified).

⁶⁴ ‘tuit cil qui del saint traitié unt/U romanz u latin.’ Guernes, ll. 6173–4.

historiography of the conflict—and the way that, through the dissemination of his letters, the controversy could be easily portrayed as one fought through (and about) the written word—the role of writing is entirely eclipsed at significant moments in the *Vie* by that of speech. These moments show the contrast between Latin and vernacular versions of the same episode at its sharpest; and as such they question whether this privileging of speech over writing was an inevitable effect of the vernacular's apparent proximity to spoken language.

One such moment is found in Guernes's account of Adam de Senlis's mission to request the pallium for Becket,⁶⁵ which is also reported by Ralph de Diceto.⁶⁶ According to Diceto, when Alexander III arrived in France in exile from Rome,

celeri relatione perlatum est quod suffraganei Cantuariensis ecclesiae sibi pastorem elegerant, qui concurrentibus omnium votis jam a propria synodo fuerat consecratus. Acceptum fuit verbum istud in auribus domini papae. Litteris igitur episcoporum, litteris etiam prioris et conventus Sanctae Trinitatis, litteris quoque regis in medium recitatis, sub audientia cardinalium in consistorio postulatione facta, facilis et jocundus juxta petitionem ab omnibus datur assensus. (Diceto, *Opera*, 1:307)

(It was quickly reported that the suffragans of the Church of Canterbury had elected a pastor, who, with everyone's wishes concurring, had now been consecrated by its own synod. This news had reached the ears of the lord pope. So the bishops' letter, and the letter of the prior and convent of the Holy Trinity, and the king's letter too, were recited in public in the hearing of the cardinals in consistory. Once the petition was made, they all gave their ready and joyful assent.)

For Diceto, the public recital of a clutch of letters from different interested parties proved the unanimity of, and provided the justification for, Becket's election. Diceto seems to draw a connection between the *volume* of the written word and its authority. But although the letters were 'in medium recitatis' by *someone*, Diceto does not articulate who among the delegation did what or how they did it. And by using a series of passive

⁶⁵ Adam de Senlis (d. 1189) was abbot of Evesham from 1161 and a renowned canon lawyer. See D. C. Cox, 'Senlis, Adam de (d. 1189),' in *ODNB*, online edition, accessed 1 November 2010.

⁶⁶ Guernes and Diceto are unique in reporting this episode—but Diceto's account was very likely written some time after Guernes's.

constructions, he gives the impression that the written word, albeit voiced, did its magic all on its own.

Guernes's account of this mission is very different. Instead of merely suggesting that the letters were recited to the consistory, as Diceto does, Guernes foregrounds the precise qualities of the envoys' own speech. As in the *Estoire* (but unlike in Diceto's chronicle), the envoys are named, and their fame and learning are recognised.⁶⁷ Guernes calls Adam de Senlis 'prudume e renumé';⁶⁸ his companions were 'clerks skilled in the arts, in the canons and in law.'⁶⁹ And like the *Estoire*, which also highlights the importance of speaking well, the *Vie* states that when the envoys each presented their case 'all three spoke very learnedly and well.'⁷⁰ So the envoys' skilful deployment of a particular form of *eloquence*, rather than the *writtenness* of their petition, overcomes the cardinals' avaricious resistance to granting the pallium. The *Vie*, in fact, appears to establish the envoys' eloquence quite deliberately in opposition to written discourse, as the *Estoire* does with King William's message to Henry II. Having explained that they had journeyed a long way, spent all they had, and had no desire to be tainted by any suspicion of simony, Guernes reports that

Li abes vit k'il ot liu de parler,
E vit les cardunals entur la pape ester,
Sa requeste mult bel cumença a mustrer;
Mes n'i volt mot de lei ne de decreté soner. (ll. 617–20)

(The abbot saw that he had a chance to speak; and saw the cardinals standing around the pope. He began to put forward his request most gracefully, but did not want to a word of canon or civil law to ring out.)

Instead of such legalistic words,⁷¹ Adam de Senlis quotes Matthew 7:7 ("Demandez justement," fet Deus, "e vus l'avrez, querez le seintement, e

⁶⁷ Diceto only lists the envoys' names in the margin. Diceto, *Opera*, 1:307.

⁶⁸ Guernes, l. 597. Cf. Fantosme's description of the *sage* envoy Robert de Huseville, who was 'prové de vasselage.' Fantosme, l. 423.

⁶⁹ 'Bon clerz furent des arz, de decreté e de lei.' Guernes, l. 601.

⁷⁰ 'Mult parlerent bien e clerzement tut trei.' Guernes, l. 603.

⁷¹ It should be noted that contemporary legal scholarship figured law, as opposed to custom, as written. See, for example, Gratian, *Decretum* D. 1 c. 5: 'Quae in scriptis redacta est, constitutio siue ius uocatur; quae uero in scriptis redacta non est, generali nomine, consuetudo uidelicet, appellatur.' (Cele qui n'est pas escrite est apelee costume, qui est li nons general/ What is put in writing is called enactment or law, while what is not collected in writing is called by the general term 'custom.')

Gratiani Decretum: La

vus le trouverez’’’),⁷² and makes the request again. The role of written word in Diceto’s account, then, works to accentuate the procedural correctness of Becket’s election; and there is a mechanical simplicity to the transaction. For Guernes, by contrast, Adam’s spontaneous and biblically-inspired exhortation exemplifies its *righteousness*—something altogether different. (*Frater*, replies Alexander immediately to Adam (and to Matthew), ‘tu prendras ci ceo que as demandé./ Tu l’as quis justement, e tu l’avras trové.’)⁷³ Why does Guernes find it so notable that the learned abbot eschewed the talk of lawyers when he was such an accomplished canonist, and when he had an audience receptive to just such talk?

According to Timothy Peters, ‘canon law and bureaucracy are [here] shown helpless and hopelessly corrupt, compared to the triumph of such saintly, if sophisticated simplicity.’⁷⁴ It is hard to disagree with this analysis; but that triumph was not directly related to the delegation’s use of the vernacular (the episode is explicitly figured as taking place in Latin). Nor was Adam’s triumph necessarily or solely a consequence of the vernacularity of the account in which it was reported. The *Vie*, like the *Estoire*, grounds itself firmly in the written word. It gives Becket’s correspondence as significant a role as in its Latin counterparts—and Guernes even intervenes in the narrative to make comments on the epistolary protocols of Becket’s letters.⁷⁵ Like Herbert of Bosham and his *volumen historicum*, Guernes makes frequent reference to the *livre* he has

Traduction en ancien français du Décret de Gratien, ed. Leena Löfstedt, 5 vols (Helsinki, 1992–2001), 1:5; Gratian, *The Treatise on Laws (Decretum DD. 1–20) with The Ordinary Gloss*, 6.

⁷² “Demand justly, says God, “and you shall have it, seek it reverently, and you shall find it.” The adverbs appear to be Guernes’s (or Adam’s) additions to the Vulgate’s text (‘petite et dabitur vobis, quaerite et invenietis’). Guernes, 623–4.

⁷³ “Frater, you shall take here that which you have demanded. You have sought it justly, and you have found it.” Guernes, ll. 632–3. Is Guernes translating spoken Latin into French here? Or was Alexander III code-switching?

⁷⁴ Peters, ‘An Ecclesiastical Epic,’ 189.

⁷⁵ Guernes notes that *Desiderio desideravi*, which Becket sent to Henry II to seek reconciliation, was sent ‘senz saluz’ (without greetings, Guernes, l. 3041). On the other hand, when the English clergy wrote to Becket, ‘Amur, subjectiun e saluz li manda.’ (They offered him love, submission and greetings, Guernes l. 3185.) These notes appear immediately before Guernes presents his rendition of the main body of the letters and do not seem to have been drawn from Guernes’s likely source for the text of the letters, Edward Grim’s *Vita* of Becket, which makes no such comments.

written.⁷⁶ The *Vie*'s vernacularity, therefore, did not rule out its frequent privileging of the written word. But did the vernacularity of the *Vie* and *Estoire* enable them to give a more prominent role to the spoken word than would have been possible in Latin history? To the extent that their Frenchness enabled them to recall certain tropes from the *chansons de geste*, perhaps it did. The *Estoire* and the *Vie* allude explicitly to the French epic tradition, both in their form and content. Councils and messages are notable tropes of the *chansons de geste*, and the *Vie* and the *Estoire* call them to mind when they show the spoken word being deployed for social and political purposes.⁷⁷ Peters has noted the influence of the *geste* trope of the feudal council on the *Vie*;⁷⁸ and good advice given well is a concern that runs like a thread through the *Estoire*.

Let us look a little more closely at the way the *Estoire* portrays the use of the spoken word. The *Estoire* posits an ideal of political conduct in which virtuous speech and good behaviour conform to one another; and the attainment of this ideal is one that wins praise from Fantosme no matter which party in the dispute is under scrutiny. This is especially evident in Fantosme's account of the 'plenier parlement des sages de la terre' (full parliament of the wise men of the land, ll. 287–8) called by William the Lion to discuss how to respond to the Young King's letter. William announces to the council that he will send his messengers to Henry II to demand that he give him Northumberland or else 'I will no longer owe him fealty or friendship.'⁷⁹ To this

Respunt le cunte Donekan et dit cume barun:
 'Li vielz reis est *rednable*, si li faites *raisun*.
 De faire nul ultrage ne querez achaisun.
 S'il volt, vus le servier cume ses liges hum... (ll. 300–4)

⁷⁶ See Guernes, ll. 4393: 'Ne tut ne puet pas estre en mun livre noté' (Not everything can be written in my book [my translation]), and ll. 5101–3 'Tut li mielz de la curt se sunt entrafié/ De faire e de furnir cele grant cruelté./ Mais en mun livre n'erent ne escrit ne nommé.' (All the best men of the court pledged each other to commit this great cruelty. But they will not be written into or named in my book.) Shirley's translation adapted.

⁷⁷ For the prominent role of councils and counsel in *Girart de Rousillon*, see Dietmar Reiger, "'E trait sos meillors omes ab un conseil.'" Emotion, mise en scène et *consilium* féodal dans *Girart de Roussillon*, *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 114 (1998), 628–50. For Fantosme's allusions to particular *chansons de geste*, see Bennett, 'La chronique,' 149–69.

⁷⁸ Peters, 'Elements of the Chanson de Geste,' 282.

⁷⁹ 'Ne li dei en avant ne fei ne druerie.' Fantosme, l. 299. Translation mine.

Mielz valt *bele parole mustree par raisun*
Ke ne fait manace pur demander nul dun;
E ki autrement le fait, si quiert destructiun
Sa mort e sun damage e sa confusiun.' (ll. 306–10)

(Earl Duncan, speaking as a baron should, replies 'The old king is reasonable, therefore act reasonably towards him. See no occasion to give him grounds for offence. If it is his pleasure, you will serve him as his liegeman... Fair words reasonably put forward are better than threats when making a request, and anyone who does it in any other way brings on himself his own undoing, his death, harm to his interests, and his overthrow.')

What Fantosme foregrounds here is the power of spoken *cunseil* to persuade when delivered correctly: *bele parole mustree par raisun* promise success, while *ultrage* and *manace* promise death and confusion.⁸⁰ Furthermore, a well-delivered speech had the potential to unite its auditors: according to Fantosme, having 'spoken very wisely,' Earl Duncan binds king, *barun* and *gent* together in consensus: 'Then the king himself, the barons, and all the others say "This is exemplary advice and greatly to my liking."' ⁸¹ Similarly, when Louis VII holds 'a great council of all his good friends,' ⁸² Fantosme suggests that 'the king and his barons are now of one mind' as a result.⁸³ The giving of good *cunseil*—and giving it well—becomes its own reward, strengthening the assembly in which it is given.

The spoken word's power to bind social units, and Earl Duncan's concern for the reasonable delivery of messages are also underscored by the *Estoire's* descriptions of those who delivered messages, who in their virtue seem to adhere to a single chivalric code of conduct.⁸⁴ There is a sense,

⁸⁰ The word *raisun* is nicely ambiguous, at once legalistic (the *ratio* of Roman legal terminology), scholastic (the *ratio* of logic), and oratorical (as in *oratio*, and the Anglo-Norman *raisun* meaning 'discourse' or 'address.' See *The Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, ed. Louise Stone and William Rothwell (<http://www.anglo-norman.net/>) s.v. 'raisun.'

⁸¹ 'Dunc dit li reis meisme, li barun e la gent: "Cest cunseil est leiaus si me vient a talent."' Fantosme, ll. 312–3.

⁸² 'Un grant cuncil de tuz ses bons amis.' Fantosme, l. 32. Translation mine.

⁸³ 'Ja sunt a un acorde li reis et ses baruns.' Fantosme, l. 59. Translation mine.

⁸⁴ If the *Estoire* posits ideals of conduct for the messenger, then others' behaviour towards messengers is also explicitly addressed: the messenger is inviolable, no matter what his affiliation. When William's messengers are sent to demand the surrender of Carlisle and its castellan threatens them, one of them retorts 'Ço n'est pas avenant. Ne deit l'um messagier sun message portant/ Laidir nē aforer; dire puet sun talent.' (That is no proper way to talk. An envoy bearing a message must not be insulted or harmed; it is right to speak his mind.) Fantosme, ll. 1376–8. This taboo on harming the messenger is the subject

indeed, that the status and behaviour of the person giving the message are as important as the message itself.⁸⁵ Messengers are often named and their qualities described, such as when William sends a message agreeing to the Young King's proposed alliance:

Willame de Saint Michiel ferad icest message
E Robert de Husevile, kar ambedous sunt sage;
Suvent s'unt en busuine prové de vasselage
Bien sevent en riche curt parler en maint language.

A cest message faire s'en vunt ces messagiers;
Li reis le volt e gree, sil funt mult volentiers.
A Berewic-sur-Tine troevent les noteniers
Kis amerrunt en Flandres, les sages messagiers.

Ja sunt entrez en barges e vunt en halte mer,
E traient sus lur sigles, si se funt desarmer.
N'unt cure d'Engleterre lunges acostëer:
Il sunt lur mortel enemi qu'il soleient amer.

Si cum ces chevaliers unt trové lur seignur
Ove le rei de France, Lowis l'empereur,
Dient lur messages süef e senz irrur
Si que bien l'entendent de France li cuntur. (ll. 421–36)

(William of Saint-Michel and Robert of Huseville will bear this message, for they are both wise men; they have often and in difficult times given proof of courage; they are skilled in delivering appropriate speeches in powerful courts.

The two envoys depart on their mission; it is the king's will and pleasure that they undertake it right willingly. At Berwick the sagacious envoys find the mariners who will take them to Flanders. Speedily, they embark and put out to sea; the sails are hoisted and they remove their armour. They do not think it advisable to hug the English coast for long, for the English with whom they used to be friendly are now their deadly enemies. As soon as these knights have found their liege lord with the king of France, the Emperor Louis, they give their message coolly and

of *Otinél*, a *chanson de geste* with an insular career. In the poem, Otinél, a messenger from the Saracen king, is harassed by the members of Charlemagne's court (over whom Charlemagne seems unable to keep control) before fighting Roland, converting to Christianity and marrying Charles's daughter. See *Otinél: chanson de geste*, ed. François Guessard and Henri Michelant (Paris, 1859), 3–4. As is the case for many *chansons de geste*, the only complete manuscript is in Anglo-Norman (which is dated to the mid-thirteenth century; see Dean, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, no. 78). For the immunity of messengers (and further examples of its use as a motif in *chansons de geste*), see Vallecalle, *Messages et ambassades*, 152–68.

⁸⁵ Again, this seems a fair reflection of diplomatic practice, in which the credibility of the message derived in part from the authority of the messenger. For *legati credibiles* and *probablies viri*, see Chaplais, *Diplomatic Practice*, 56–9.

dispassionately, so that the nobles of France understand it clearly.)

The messengers' wisdom, their willingness to serve, their reputations, their skill in delivering their message in the right register: all these Fantosme celebrates, and he also underlines the arduousness of their journey. And the final proof of their virtue is that their journey is a success—they are correctly understood and return with what they wanted: a sealed 'chartre,' and an order from Louis VII that they should 'tell the king of Scotland ... that the land he has asked for is all his.'⁸⁶ Correct speech, therefore, promises material and written rewards—and on Fantosme's reading, neither speech nor writing would be sufficient to achieve their purposes alone.

The extent to which this emphasis on correct speech is solely an effect of the *Estoire's* vernacularity, however, is debatable. To be sure, the *Estoire* makes overt references to the *chansons de geste*, and both councils and messages are crucial tropes of that genre. But while speaking well in public assemblies was undoubtedly a feature of epic discourse, this might have as much to do with questions of *genre* as it does questions of *language*. The spoken word might have had the power to bind, but it could do that in Latin texts too. In Walter de Châtillon's contemporary Latin epic the *Alexandreis*, for example, after Alexander the Great had addressed a council of his friends, 'they all raised up their hands in pledge that they would follow him through all dangers... As one, glad youths and old men full of joy cried out.'⁸⁷ In William of Newburgh's *Historia Anglorum*, Newburgh translates one of the most speech-bound episodes of the *Estoire* into Latin, apparently without difficulty. (The episode is Ranulph de Glanville's messenger's announcement to Henry II that William the Lion had been captured and the war was now over.) Somehow the passage seems authentically Latinate; none of the scene's famed suspense and

⁸⁶ 'Dites al rei d'Escoce ... La terre est tute sue qu'il a demandee.' Fantosme, l. 456–8. Once again, it is Louis VII here who is speaking on behalf of the Young King.

⁸⁷ Walter of Châtillon, *The Alexandreis: A Twelfth-Century Epic*, trans. David Townsend (Peterborough, Ont., 2007), 7.588–91 (p. 161). Cf. Fantosme, l. 59: 'Ja sunt a un acorde li reis et ses baruns.' The *Alexandreis* is dated 1171x81, Fantosme's *Estoire* 1174x1181.

realism is lost in Newburgh's seamless translation.⁸⁸ A fascination with messengers and their rewards is found in other Latin, as well as vernacular, texts. So Fantosme's description of the reward Henry II gave to Ranulf de Glanville's messenger (a *bastun* investing him with land) deserves to be considered as much in relation to Étienne de Rouen's description of a staff and ring given to a messenger by Henry II in his (Latin poem) *Draco normannicus*, as to the messenger Ganelon's staff in the *Chanson de Roland*.⁸⁹

Aside from these examples, speaking well in public was the very foundation of the Latin tradition of classical rhetoric, which had an incalculable influence on medieval historiography.⁹⁰ It is hard to imagine that Fantosme, the *magister scholarum* at Winchester (and innovative versifier), would not have been aware of this rhetorical tradition. The political assembly is the defining speech situation of deliberative rhetoric. William the Lion's council in the *Estoire*, which debates the advantages and dangers of siding with the Young King, resembles the deliberative *dialogus in utramque partem*, through which an assembly discusses a political *constitutio* such as whether to go to war (usually, in the Roman tradition, with Carthage).⁹¹ Furthermore, Fantosme's description of messengers as *sage, prové de vasselage* and able to *parler maint language*, aligns them with the *vir bonus dicendi peritus*—Cato's ideal orator—who was so dear to Cicero and Quintilian.⁹² And the conjunction between

⁸⁸ Newburgh, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. Howlett, 1:189. The only significant difference between Newburgh's account and Fantosme's (at ll. 1956–2022) is that Fantosme names the messenger (Brien), and in the *Estoire* Brien promises further messengers will bring written proof of his news. In Newburgh's account, Henry asks 'habesne ... literas?' and Brien 'protulit literas signatas rei gestae seriem continentias, quibus rex statim inspectis...' (produced a signed letter containing a narrative of what had happened, which the king immediately inspected...) For the 'realism' of the episode, see M. Dominica Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background* (Edinburgh, 1963), 80.

⁸⁹ Fantosme, l. 2031–2. Cf. Étienne de Rouen, *Draco Normannicus*, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, ed. Howlett, 2:3.1287–92. See also Vallecalle, *Messages et ambassades*, 70–3, for a discussion of Ganelon.

⁹⁰ As Nancy Partner so succinctly put it, 'transmuted, epitomised and dissected, culturally displaced and badly taught, rhetoric was antiquity's domineering gift from the grave.' Partner, 'New Cornificius,' 9. See now Kempshall, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History*, passim.

⁹¹ For more examples of such *constitutiones*, see e.g. Cicero, *De inv.* 1.12.17.

⁹² For the transmission of this definition from Greece to Rome, Eric Laughton, 'Cicero and the Greek Orators,' *American Journal of Philology* 82.1 (1961), 29–30. It was transmitted to the medieval schools via Victorinus and Isidore of Seville's *Etymologie*: see Isidore, *Etym.*,

eloquentia and *sapientia*, which Fantosme's messengers and Guernes's Adam de Senlis apparently embody, was the foundation of Augustine's Christian redemption of oratory.⁹³

This is not the place to debate (as Stephen Jaeger has) the extent to which classical and scholastic ideals underpinned the normative 'poetics of conduct' of vernacular literature.⁹⁴ But it is important to note classical rhetoric's concern with speaking, since it makes it harder to argue that the *Vie* and *Estoire* presented normative accounts of public speaking simply because they were in French, and French was more of a spoken language than a written one. So however tempting it is automatically to align writtenness with Latin and vernacularity with orality—and however tempting it is to explain a text's emphasis on writing or speaking on the basis of its language—Latin and vernacular models are impossible fully to untwine from one another.

The *Vie* and the *Estoire* themselves contribute to the blurring of the boundaries of the categories to which individual languages are habitually assigned. In the *Vie*, for example, Latin is at times posited as the language of *performance* and of *persuasive*—even *unmediated*—communication. This blurring is especially apparent in the *Vie's* account of Becket's exposition of the Constitutions of Clarendon before Alexander III at Sens. Undertaking a move reminiscent of Herbert of Bosham, Guernes's Becket not only recites the Constitutions, but presents them for all to see:

Le cyrogrefe al rei li arcevesques prent;
As piez a l'apostolie a ses dous mains l'estent.
'C'est la cause pur quei m'estuet essil souffrir,
Sire, veez la ci; bien la devez oïr.' (ll. 2344–8)

(The archbishop took the king's chirograph, and with his two hands he displayed it at the feet of the pontiff. 'This is the cause for which I have been forced to suffer exile; Sire see it here; you should hear it now.')

2.3.1; and cf. Abelard's gloss on the phrase: '*Sapientiam* Tullius in *Rhetorica eloquentiae* coniungendam dicit ... secundum quod orator a Victorino describitur: "Vir bonus, dicendi peritus" etc.' (Wisdom, Cicero says in his *Rhetoric* [i.e. *Rhet. Her.*] is to be conjoined to eloquence ... accordingly the orator is described by [the Late Antique grammarian] Victorinus as 'a good man, skilled in speaking.') Peter Abelard, *Theologia Christiana*, ed. E. M. Buytaert (Turnhout, 1969), 2.40.

⁹³ See esp. Augustine, *De doctrina*, 2.5.7–2.7.12

⁹⁴ C. Stephen Jaeger, *Origins of Courtliness*, esp. 117–75.

Guernes's Becket, like Fantosme's messengers, seems fully aware of the power of the material presence of the written word, and recognizes that its power lay partly in its appeal to the eyes. Yet the visible presence of the written word is entirely subordinated in this instance to Becket's performance in reading it out when Alexander ordered the laws to 'be read out and listened to.' And although this is a performance par excellence, Guernes associates it with a virtuoso display of *Latinity*, rather than with vernacularity. According to Guernes, Becket manages successfully 'to nobly present his case in Latin' (sa cause en latin gentement a mustrer) despite the fact that a pro-Henry cardinal (William of Pavia) repeatedly interrupted him and engaged him in debate.⁹⁵ These interruptions effectively meant that Becket was forced to extemporize, to expound *orally* the *sensus* of the written laws.⁹⁶ This exegesis necessarily went beyond the letter of the written *materia*. For Guernes this is less about Becket's competence as an exegete or lawyer as an inherent quality, an inspired form of wisdom of which persuasive speech is both the cause and the mark. The reward for such a performance, as for the messengers in the *Estoire*, is to be well heard:

Sainz Thomas fu mult sages; sainz Espirz en lui fu.
 E quanque cil [William] diseit aveit bien entendu,
 E mot a mot par tut li aveit respundu;
 Par bel latin adès a chascun puint solu... (ll. 2366–69)

E quant il aveit bien solu ses questiuns,
 Reveneit a ses poinz, cum se fust Salemons;
 Diseit sa cause avant od mult beles raisuns... (ll. 2371–3)

Quant l'arcevesques out sa raisun bel finee
 E destruites les leis par raisun confermee
 E par trestut raisun e provance mustree,
Bien unt e clerc e lai sa parole escultee;
 E l'apostolies l'out par tuz les puinz notee. (ll. 2376–80)

(Saint Thomas was very wise; the Holy Sprit was within him.
 And he had understood well whatever [William of Pavia] had
 said, and word by word he had responded to him thoroughly; he

⁹⁵ 'Cil le comença lués par tut a traverser/ Quida qu'um li eüst fait la cause fermer,/ E, s'um le disturbast, ne seüst parfiner.' (This man kept contradicting him—he thought that the Archbishop had learnt his speech by heart, and that if he interrupted him, he would not be able to finish.) Guernes, ll. 2363–5. Translation: Shirley, *Garnier's Becket*, 63.

⁹⁶ It is interesting to note that this exegesis is explicitly figured as having taken place in Latin, since, as we saw in the last chapter, a French exegesis of this text was also possible.

solved every point in fine Latin... And when he had resolved his questions, he came back to all his points, as Solomon would have done. He presented his case with very eloquent arguments.

When the archbishop had finished his fine speech, and had destroyed the laws by established reason—and throughout demonstrated proofs and rational arguments—both clerk and lay listened well to his words, and the pope had all the points noted.)

The connection set up here between good Latin, righteousness and persuasion is intriguing, and is strengthened all the more when compared to the royal delegation's stutteringly ungrammatical attempts to persuade Alexander to grant a legation to Roger, archbishop of York.⁹⁷ The fact that this concern for Latinity should be expressed in a text written in *French* makes it more intriguing still, since it affects both the way that Guernes depicts Becket's actions and the way that Guernes positions himself as the mediator between written text and hearing audience. The vernacularity of the *Vie* means that the connection it makes between righteousness and Latinity cannot be fully expressed in the *Vie* itself. Try as he might, Guernes would never be able to reproduce Becket's *bel Latin* in French.⁹⁸ This is tacitly acknowledged by Guernes, because, for all his labours describing Thomas's *araisun* at Sens, he makes no attempt to quote or represent it, even indirectly. Rather, the audience is given a French version of the Constitutions of Clarendon (which Alexander had asked Becket to read aloud) only once the description of Becket's performance at

⁹⁷ 'Devant la pape esturent li messagier real.
Alquant diseient bien, pluisur diseient mal
Li alquant en latin, tel buen, tel anomal,
Tel qui fist personel del verbe impersonal,
Singular a plurel aveit tut parigal.' (2256–60)

(The royal messengers stood before the pope; some of them spoke well, many spoke badly. Some spoke in Latin, some of it good, some of it bad. One made a personal verb from an impersonal verb; singular and plural were all alike to him.) Translation modified from Shirley, *Garneier's Becket*, 61.

⁹⁸ Although this is precisely what Matthew Paris did in his *Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei* in the early thirteenth century, when he gave the 'Latin' text of Edward the Confessor's pilgrimage vow in Anglo-Norman verse: *Tel est de l'escrit la summe / Ki est en Latin apert / Noté, ke en seit chescuns cert.* (Here is the entire text, set down clearly in Latin, so that everyone may be sure of it.) Matthew Paris, *La Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei*, ed. Kathryn Young Wallace (London, 1983), ll. 1652–3; *The History of St Edward the King by Matthew Paris*, trans. Thelma Fenster and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (Tempe, AZ, 2008), 74. For the implications of this for the voicing of language, see Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, 'What Voice is that Language / What Language is that Voice? Multilingualism and Identity in a Medieval Letter-Treatise,' in *Multilingualism in Medieval Britain, 1100–1400: Sources and Analysis*, ed. Ad Putter and J. Jefferson (Turnhout, forthcoming). I am grateful to Jocelyn Wogan-Browne for these references.

Sens has been brought to a conclusion. Unlike Fantosme's insistence that he is quoting the Young King's letter directly, Guernes makes clear that the version he gives is quite distinct from the words used by Becket. 'If you would like to hear the laws of King Henry, you can learn them here; for I don't wish to lie about them,' Guernes writes of his own—not Becket's—rendition.⁹⁹ By separating the two discourses, Guernes marks off the *Vie's* French version of the Constitutions of Clarendon, together with his own exegesis of them, from the moment at which Becket read them out and expounded them in Latin. This means that Becket and his performative presence at the audience in Sens, rather than the Constitutions and their words, are placed centre stage. The effect of this, in turn, is to align Becket's Latinity more with comportment—with knowing how to behave in a given set of circumstances—rather than with strictly linguistic competence. For Guernes, it seems that Latin is a behaviour as much as a skill. The high drama of the episode as a whole seems to point towards the suggestion that for Guernes (if not for many modern scholars), the vernacular did not have a monopoly on performance.¹⁰⁰ Rather, Latin could be posited as the index of a performance, even if that performance could not easily be represented in written form.

The structural distinction between Guernes's narrative of Becket's performance and his own (didactic) analysis of the Constitutions suggests that the episode should be read as more than just a comment on Becket's charismatic virtue. Like the French letter of Henry the Young King, it should also be read as a comment on the purposes and effects of Latinity and on the limits of vernacular discourse. In this case, it is as if the immediacy of Becket's performance could not be rendered in vernacular, or possibly even written, form. As Thomas O'Donnell has put it, Becket's

⁹⁹ 'Se vus volez les leis le rei Henri oïr... Ci les purrez aprendre; car jo n'en voil mentir.' Guernes, ll. 2391–4.

¹⁰⁰ As Thomas O'Donnell puts it, the incident 'overlays Thomas's charismatic Latinity with the immediacy and power of an oral performance ... the oral appears as the quintessential register of the true statement.' 'Anglo-Norman Multiculturalism and Continental Standards in Guernes de Pont-Sainte-Maxence's *Vie de Saint Thomas*,' in *Conceptualizing Multilingualism in England c. 800–c. 1250*, ed. Elizabeth M. Tyler (Turnhout, Forthcoming).

use of Latin here might be ‘compared to Pentecost, but inverted: whereas the Apostles spoke so that they could be understood by all, a clerk moved by the Spirit becomes largely unintelligible to most.’¹⁰¹ Guernes makes no effort at all to rectify that unintelligibility, which is nonetheless unproblematic for the ‘clerc e lai’ (clerks and laypeople, literate and illiterate, Latinate and Francophone) in the audience, who all ‘listened well to his speech.’¹⁰² Rather, Becket’s intelligible-unintelligibility is at once the mark of his inspiration and the proof that it defied representation. By refusing to represent Becket’s speech, Guernes maintains the integrity of Becket’s movement from a straightforward recitation of the text of the Constitutions to a textless exegesis of their spirit. In this respect, Guernes aligns himself with the romance narrator who acts as a clerkly intermediary between written authority and lay (and often illiterate or quasi-literate) audience.¹⁰³ As we have already noted, Guernes marks out the didacticism of the *Vie* by stressing that his audience will *learn*, rather than just hear, the cause of Becket’s exile through his rendition of the Constitutions of Clarendon (‘Se vus volez les leis le rei Henri oïr... Ci les purrez aprendre’). Guernes suggests, therefore, that they would not be available to his audience except through his mediation. However, by *also* foregrounding Becket’s performance of the (original, Latin) Constitutions, Guernes presents himself as their *glossator*, mediating not just the letter of the text but giving form to the immaterial effects of their spirit.

The difference between Guernes’s strategy and that of the romance narrator is that while the romance narrator also mediates between written text and audience, the ‘original’ text is usually figured as being in a different language from that of the narrative. Fantosme rules this out with his insistence that the Young King wrote *en romanz*, and Guernes is entirely silent about the original language of the letters (which may have been French; significantly, the only mention of Becket’s language in the

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² ‘Bien unt e clerc e lai sa parole escultee.’ Guernes, l. 2379.

¹⁰³ The locus classicus of a romance *conteur* expounding the ‘sens’ of Latin texts while treating them ‘en romaunz,’ is found in the prologue to the *Lais* of Marie de France. See now Marie de France, *Lais*, ed. Alfred Ewert (Oxford, 1963), prol. ll. 9–32. For ‘quasi-literates,’ see Bäuml, ‘Varieties and Consequences,’ 246.

Vie concerns his speech). So rather than presenting themselves as the transmitters or translators of written texts, Guernes and Fantosme present themselves as giving *voice* to them. They play the role of the literate person who gives a spoken rendition of a written text to a listening audience. Fantosme asks that his audience should *hear the words written* in the Young King's letter. Guernes positions himself similarly in relation to Becket's letters: 'If you would like to *hear* the letters, I know very well how to *speak* them just as the king had them *dictated and written*.'¹⁰⁴

Guernes's and Fantosme's mediation between written text and listening audience is clearest in their representation of correspondence. But it also suffuses their position with respect to the texts they had written, and underpins their understanding of the role of history writing and the writers of history. For them, history is grounded in the written word but expressed *viva voce*, and it is the role of the reciting historian to give voice to those words. Fantosme never lets his audience forget that they are hearing a *written* account of the war, even in *Estoire's* most epic moments. The description of the defence of Dunwich by its *burgeis* against the threats of Robert of Leicester, for example, might be expected to be sublimated into the realm of the fictively oral. But here Fantosme speaks/writes of how valiantly

... se defendirent la gent de Dunewiz,
 Si *cum ces vers parolent ki sunt ici escriz*;
 E tant furent prudhume li granz et li petiz
 Ke le cunte Robert s'en vait tut escharniz. (ll. 871–4)

(The people of Dunwich defend themselves, just as these words that are written here say. The great and the humble were so worthy that Earl Robert went off a laughingstock.)¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ 'S'oïr volez les letres, jes vus sai tresbien *dire*,/ Si cum li reis les fist e dïter e escrire.'
 Guernes, ll. 4496–7. Cf. ll. 2847–8: 'Voldrai vus les epistles e dire e reconter/Qu'al rei e as
 evesques enveiad li bons ber' (I wish to speak and recount the letters to you that the good
 baron sent to the king and the bishops); and ll. 3046–50: 'Se volez esculter, tost vus avrai
 conté/ Que i out en cel brief escrit e endité.' (If you would like to listen, I will soon have
 told you what there was written and dictated in this letter.) By insisting that the letters
 were both written and 'endité,' Guernes opens up another dimension of the question of
 quotation: is he reproducing the text of the letter, or the form of words that Henry
 dictated in order that it was written down?

¹⁰⁵ Translation mine.

For Fantosme, the written word *speaks*; and even without the explicit presence of a reciting narrator the audience's role is constructed as that of one that hears. Guernes, also, constantly reminds his audience that they are to *hear* the truth about Thomas, and suggests by referring to other (competing) *vitae* that this is the *natural* way to learn about his life:

Tut cil autre romanz ke unt fait del martyr
Clerc u lai, muine u dame, mult les oï mentir,
Ne le veir ne le plain nes i oï furnir.
Mes ci purrez le veir e tut le plain oïr.
(ll. 161–4)

(I have heard all these other romances about the martyr lie greatly, whether written by clerk or layman, monk or lady; nor have I heard them furnish the truth or the whole story. But here you can *hear the truth* and the full story.)¹⁰⁶

Given the possibility that the written word could speak out loud, it is unclear whether the deictic 'ci' refers to the 'here' of Guernes's 'livre' (l. 4393) or the 'here' of an imagined performance. This uncertainty epitomises Guernes's position throughout the *Vie*, for while the writtenness of the *Vie* is explicitly acknowledged, it is nonetheless consistently referred to as a performance. Guernes repeatedly invokes the register of the spoken word: the *Vie* is his 'sermun' (l. 6156), and he refers to Saint Thomas the archbishop 'of whom you hear me preach' (*dunt preecher m'oez*, l. 166). On the other hand, he also takes pains to describe the writing process: the crossings out and puttings-back-in,¹⁰⁷ the thieving scribes who stole an early version of the *Vie* (ll. 151–5). But even when he refers the text's spokenness, that *text* is nonetheless ever present; the *Vie* was not just any 'sermun,' but one that Guernes 'read many a time at the man's tomb' (*mainte feiz ... list a la tumbe al barun*, l. 6158.)

Guernes and Fantosme construct their own roles, then, as the ideal reciting readers of written histories. That manoeuvre had a doubling effect through which the role of future performers of their texts was both described and prescribed. By positioning themselves in this way, and by giving idealized descriptions of the uses of the written word, Guernes and

¹⁰⁶ Translation mine.

¹⁰⁷ 'Mainte feiz en ostai ço que jo ainz escriis.' (Many a time I had removed the things I had already written.) Guernes, l. 6169.

Fantosme held up an image of ideal clerkly conduct in the content of their histories, and they provided a script for it in their texts. Without wishing to draw the reductive conclusion that, as clerics, Guernes and Fantosme wanted to call attention to their own indispensability, there is a case for reading them as being addressed as much to their fellow clerks and courtiers as to their ostensible dedicatees.¹⁰⁸ In her study of history writing at the Carolingian court, Janet Nelson describes how the crystallisation of courtly life and the role of courtiers led to a 'court (*palatium*) [which was] also as a governmental centre where personal and public coincided in the giving of counsel.'¹⁰⁹ This giving of counsel was a great stimulus to historical writing in Carolingian courts; moreover, 'what distinguished history's teaching function was not just its purveying of private morals and exemplary conduct, but its direct reference to politics—to public life.'¹¹⁰ Historical writing was thus 'intended to contribute ... to the framing of counsel through debate ... the special mode through which the

¹⁰⁸ The 'prologue' to Fantosme's *Estoire* contains an address to Henry II, which has led Laura Ashe, and others, to suggest that the poem was 'designed for delivery at the royal court in 1174–5.' Ashe, *Fiction and History*, 82. Karen Broadhurst trenchantly argues against this possibility: 'Clearly, the tone of voice that Jordan employs is not one of grateful artist toward generous patron. On the contrary, Jordan is frank, even daring, in his addresses to the king. Despite the presence of conventional expressions of praise for Henry, there is no indication that the text was commissioned by Henry or even dedicated to him.' Karen M. Broadhurst, 'Henry II of England and Eleanor of Aquitaine: Patrons of Literature in French?,' *Viator* 27 (1996), 60. Whichever is the case, the *Estoire* would certainly have been performed at an occasion structured by the social relations of literacy which would have closely mirrored the dynamics of the royal court. Guernes said that he had read his *Vie* aloud many times at Becket's tomb (l. 6158), and in an additional epilogue found in one manuscript, Guernes praises the largesse of the abbess of Barking (Becket's sister, Mary) and 'les dames' of Barking for the gifts he received from them (Guernes, *Vie*, Appendix.) But the nuns' patronage does not rule out a wider, or secular, audience. Thomas O'Donnell has emphasized the broad appeal of Guernes's work, which, as Guernes himself said, he had already written once previously. 'Written in the austere, paratactic tradition of vernacular epic,' O'Donnell writes, the *Vie* 'would have resonated with an even broader audience [than the Nuns of Barking]: pilgrims, monks and nuns, and the 'meint riche umme' who spent money on Guernes' defective first draft... The late twelfth century witnessed a profusion of new literary modes, in both Latin and in the vernacular, enjoyed by both secular and religious elites, who were (after all) united by the same aristocratic origins in the world.' Thomas O'Donnell, "'The Ladies Have Made Me Quite Fat: Authors and Patrons at Barking Abbey,' in *Barking Abbey and Its Texts*, ed. Donna A. Bussell and Jennifer N. Brown (Woodbridge, Forthcoming, 2011). I am most grateful to Thomas O'Donnell for sharing this essay in advance of its publication.

¹⁰⁹ Janet Nelson, 'History-writing at the Courts of Louis the Pious and Charles the Bald,' in *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. Anton Scharer and Georg Scheibelreiter (Vienna, 1994), 436.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 437.

learned participated in counsel.’¹¹¹ Its audience was primarily that of ‘other counsellors, who were to find in histories a practical guide to action.’¹¹²

Of course, the Plantagenet court(s) were very different from those of the late Carolingian empire. But the intense concern of the *Vie* and *Estoire* with the written and spoken word suggests that they may have been intended as counsel themselves, providing their audiences with practical knowledge and encoding norms of conduct in the manner of John of Salisbury’s *Policraticus*, Walter Map’s *De Nugis Curialium* and, to an extent, FitzNeal’s *Dialogus*. There is no evidence, of course, to support the fact that either Guernes or Fantosme were indeed administrators. And it might be objected further that, while Guernes makes no bones about the fact that he received rewards for his writing and sang for his supper,¹¹³ it was the liberality and hospitality of a convent—rather than that secular government—that sustained him. But it only takes a glance at (for example) Jocelin of Brakelond’s depiction of Abbot Samson and his skilled marshalling of the abbey’s charter of foundation and his close control over its accounts to realise that the combination of skilled deployment of the written word and persuasive speech was an ideal towards which even the cloistered were expected to aspire.

The way the *Estoire* and the *Vie* negotiate language and the way they negotiate genre support this reading of them as counsel. They combine elements of romance and epic to insist that history could be written (and spoken) in French—and that French could be a written language; they also suggest that the spoken word (French and Latin) was uniquely valuable. The social significance of their epic allusions becomes apparent if Andrew Taylor’s suggestion—that the oral style of epic texts indicates that they are ‘already nostalgic for lost origins and a simpler and nobler time’¹¹⁴—is

¹¹¹ Ibid., 438.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ As he said of the nuns of Barking, ‘les dames m’unt fet tut gras, chescune d’eles de sun dun.’ (The ladies have made me quite fat, each one with their gift.) Guernes, *Vie*, Appendix, l. 12. My translation.

¹¹⁴ Taylor, ‘Was there a Song of Roland?’ 64.

placed in the context of the events of 1173–4.¹¹⁵ The *Estoire* was written in the uneasy aftermath of the wars of that period; and with its canny balance of praise and censure of those involved (the ‘savage’ Galwegians and Flemish aside), it has with some justification been read as a work of mediation and reconciliation.¹¹⁶ Much the same might be said about the *Vie*, which was written after Henry II had been formally rehabilitated at Avranches and had done penance at Becket’s tomb. The *Vie* was written for Mary, Becket’s sister, whom Henry II had appointed as abbess of Barking.

Their epic-inspired orality therefore answered a cultural need to re-establish a code of conduct that could reconcile erstwhile enemies by giving them common ground. This common ground, however, was no longer provided by the chivalry of the distant past. If the *Estoire* was a *speculum militis*, as Matthew Strickland has suggested,¹¹⁷ it was also a *speculum militis litterati*: knights like Ranulf de Glanville could capture the kings like William the Lion on the battlefield, but they could also have the authorship of the *Liber de legibus Anglie* attributed to them. Fantosme’s and Guernes’s works of reconciliation, then, offered a vision of how to re-align society on a new footing that would recognize the role of bureaucracy in political culture, and teach bureaucrats about political culture. But while at times evoking the unifying effect of communities of conduct and speech, their solution was far from monoglot and far from purely oral.

The role they scripted for future reciters of their works has a significant implication for the way the relationship between these histories and the written word should be conceived. To be sure, any future reciters would be giving an oral performance and would have at their disposal all the markers of orality—imperatives that its audience should hear, for example—that the texts provided. But the reciters would never be able to

¹¹⁵ Many of the *Chansons de geste* with insular manuscript traditions date from this period or shortly after, and one of the preferred datings for the most famous of them, the Oxford manuscript of the *Chanson de Roland*, places it in 1170.

¹¹⁶ Jean Blacker, ‘Oez veraie estoire: History as Mediation in Jordan Fantosme’s *Chronicle*,’ in *The Formation of Culture in Medieval Britain: Celtic, Latin, And Norman Influences on English Music, Literature, History, and Art*, ed. Françoise Le Saux (Lampeter, 1995), 25–37; Strickland, ‘Arms and the Men,’ 193–7.

¹¹⁷ Strickland, ‘Arms and the Men,’ 199.

dispense with the written book before them, in which the history itself inhered, and to which they gave a voice. This prescriptive role for future reciters ensures that the text is given an authority that is expected to endure. It posits written French, in other words, as a stable repository of historical knowledge. 'Oëz verraie estoirë:' hear a true history, declaims Fantosme the beginning of his text. Whether the *Estoire* to be heard is an immaterial story or one written in the book before the performer remains to be decided.

Conclusion

(Or Rereading medieval historiography with Timothy Reuter)

[The practice of English medievalists] obviously varies a good deal ... but there are certainly dominant features. One is an unwillingness to use any level of magnification other than that of the incipient nation-state: no to devolution and no to European integration. Another is a belief in the smack of firm government.¹

The history of English historical writing in the twelfth century often reads like a Nativity story for the nation state. As the story told by Richard Southern has it—and many others have told a similar story since—the writing of history by English monks at the beginning of the twelfth century was stimulated by the need to rescue and to preserve the Anglo-Saxon past in the aftermath of the Norman Conquest. Faced with cultural and corporate obliteration, English monks diligently set to work narrating the conquest and the history of the nation that had preceded it. With their ‘families ... destroyed or impoverished’ by the Normans, ‘alone among Englishmen they were left to speak for the people and see the catastrophe in its widest setting.’² The authentic voice of the English people thus survived, it seems, through a monastic telling of the English past.

By the 1130s, Southern thought, ‘the work’ of securing the English past ‘had been accomplished.’ But once secured, the English past had to be defended; and the English nation continues to dominate the narrative of English historical writing as it moves through the middle years of the century. The narrative is now one of the assimilation of the newly-safeguarded English past by the descendants of the conquerors. Although they had begun to identify with England, as Southern has it, the second

¹ Timothy Reuter, ‘Modern Mentalities and Medieval Polities,’ in *Medieval Polities and Modern Mentalities*, ed. Timothy Reuter and Janet Nelson (Cambridge, 2006), 15.

² Southern, ‘England’s First Entry into Europe,’ 162.

generation of settlers 'began to deplore their lack of French freedom.' But in the 'imagined liberties' of a distant English past 'they found the source of a present hope.'³ Texts like Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis* and Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*, both rewritings of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, are, according to Southern, testament to this trend towards historical appropriation in the cause of building a new English nation, one to which the second generation of settlers could consider themselves to belong.

The England of the late twelfth century saw a new flourishing of historiography, which has been the focus of this study. In this 'golden age of historiography in England'⁴ the story of English historiography begins to address not only the growth of the English nation but also the development of the bureaucratic state. History writers of this period develop an 'interest in the central government'—which, as we have seen, is often taken to be manifested by their reproduction of the documentary output of literate government. In the normative story of English political history and historiography, it was at this point—when English administrators and historians started routinely to use documents—that the English state and its remembrancers came of age. Thus, as Timothy Reuter sharply observed, 'the production of archival material is often seen as a sign of progress in itself,'⁵ so 'just as the virtuous historian is [seen as] one who reads records, so the virtuous state is [seen as] one which writes them.'⁶ The chronicler who both read *and* wrote records, who both participated in administration and documented it, thus appears as virtue personified—and a member of a proud tradition of civil servant historians stretching from Eutropius to E. H. Carr.

³ Southern, 'England's First Entry into Europe,' 154.

⁴ Gransden, *Historical Writing I*, 219.

⁵ Clanchy provides a compelling argument against assuming in this way that literacy increases in proportion to a society's degree of civilization. Clanchy, *Memory*, 7–11.

⁶ Reuter, 'Modern Mentalities and Medieval Polities,' 13. The grand narrative on which Reuter trains his sights is that first propounded by the 'Manchester' (or 'Sir Humphrey') school of medieval history, whose patriarch was Frederick Thomas Tout. Tout's approach 'saw the history of our medieval polity as consisting precisely in the development of administrative practices.' Reuter suggests that Tout's approach continues to cast long shadows over the way the political history of medieval England is written.

The grand narrative of English historiography does not let its new role charting the growth of the bureaucratic state eclipse its old role narrating the rise of the nation, however. On the contrary, nation and state are seen to converge in late twelfth-century historical writing in such a way that the one defines the other. Pre-Conquest England had a long tradition of literate administration, sometimes carried out in Anglo-Saxon.⁷ The literate basis of pre-Conquest governmental practices survived the Conquest, even if many institutions of Anglo-Saxon government, and the widespread use of Anglo-Saxon as a language of government, did not.⁸ Post-Conquest historians and bureaucrats (and historian-bureaucrats) are sometimes therefore thought to enact a kind of administrative patriotism through their devotion to the written word. According to Southern, while the Angevin kings of England were abroad chasing their dreams of continental glory, English society was forced back on a native tradition of literate government. The historiographical corollary to this is that while the Capetians inspired adulatory biographies such as those of Rigord and Guillaume le Breton, the historians of England focused instead on the impersonal mechanics of government and the documents it produced.⁹

A tendency to align bureaucratic ways of doing things with Englishness continues today. Laura Ashe's recent study of English historical writing in the long twelfth century, for example, suggests that the system of literate bureaucracy of Angevin England was one 'whose power was derived from the Anglo-Saxon past.'¹⁰ By closely associating particular administrative and textual practices with a historical Englishness, Ashe argues that the literate revolution in the 1170s and what she calls the 'resurgence of English identity' of the same period should be considered different sides of the same coin.¹¹ On this reading, the Englishness of the historical writing of the late twelfth century is guaranteed by what Ashe

⁷ See, for example, Keynes, 'Royal Government and the Written Word in Late Anglo-Saxon England,' 226–57.

⁸ For the Angevin 'dismantling' of the Anglo-Saxon state, see James Campbell, 'Observations on English Government from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century,' *TRHS*, 5th ser., 25 (1975), 51–3. Cf. W. L. Warren, 'The Myth of Norman Administrative Efficiency,' *TRHS*, 5th ser., 34 (1984), 113–32.

⁹ Southern, 'England's First Entry into Europe,' 149–51.

¹⁰ Ashe, *Fiction and History in England*, 11.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

calls its 'compulsive reverence for the written word.'¹² Meanwhile, because it is (apparently) in England alone in this period that 'textuality was taking the place of orality as the container and guarantor of truth,'¹³ textuality *itself* (and vernacular textuality in particular) is made to become a bearer of English identity.¹⁴ The textual practices of a thoroughly English tradition, therefore, provide the crucial point of continuity between pre- and post-Conquest England and between pre- and post-Conquest English literature; and they ultimately work to ensure the triumph of both.

The narrative whose *telos* is the triumph of the nation state has not, however, gone unchallenged. Robert Stein has recently suggested that the national state is 'simultaneously too small and too large to be a useful analytic unit' for the history, and literary history, of medieval Europe.¹⁵ And although medieval polities were certainly crystallizing into state-like formations in the high Middle Ages, Stein suggests that the formation of the national state was '*one social process among others ... in conflict with other countervailing tendencies, and ... by no means destined to become victorious.*'¹⁶ Like Stein, Timothy Reuter does not 'deny altogether the existence of "governance"' in this period. 'Yet it is hard to accept,' he suggests, 'that this was all that the relationship between rulers and the political community was about.'¹⁷ Stein has shown how it is possible to 'consider the history of state formation without relying on the narrative of the inevitable rise of the state.'¹⁸ Reuter has shown that a history of medieval political behaviours can be written without abstracting it and

¹² *Ibid.*, 21.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁴ Ashe's approach to English identity builds on the views of Patrick Wormald and James Campbell, who both insist that England was a nation-state *before* the Conquest and continued to be the *same* nation-state afterwards. See e.g. Patrick Wormald, 'Engla Lond: The Making of an Allegiance,' in *Legal Culture in the Early Medieval West: Law as Text, Image and Experience*, ed. idem (London, 1999), 370, for an analysis of 'the survival of England as a unified state' at 1066: 'The Norman Conquest cannot have been the *making*, even if it was the *saving*, of England. England, as its name implies, was made already.' See also Campbell's appraisal of Wormald's 'valuable stress on how the ultimate absorption of the Norman conquerors and the triumph of English and Englishness was an indication of the strength of pre-Conquest national consciousness.' James Campbell, 'The Late Anglo-Saxon State: A Maximum View,' *Proceedings of the British Academy* 87 (1995), 47–8.

¹⁵ Stein, *Reality Fictions*, 5.

¹⁶ Stein, *Reality Fictions*, 4. My emphasis.

¹⁷ Reuter 'Assembly Politics', 194.

¹⁸ Stein, *Reality Fictions*, 4, and *passim*.

reinscribing it into a narrative ‘of ever-thickening institutionality’¹⁹—even if that does mean sacrificing conventional political history’s smoothing out of what he calls the ‘lumpiness of the past.’²⁰ Reuter does this by *not* concentrating on the political activity that historians often assume medieval rulers were engaged in *continuously* (but which nonetheless somehow always seems to be happening off-camera).²¹ Instead, Reuter analyzes the staged and intensely social occasions—‘assemblies’—in which the political public momentarily came into being before dissolving again when those occasions finished.²² Reuter firmly rejects Habermas’s claim that the public did not exist in the Middle Ages. There *was* a public, Reuter insists—it just did not have a permanent existence.²³ Communities ‘embodied themselves as a political public’ at assemblies and social gatherings, and it was there that they were ‘empowered and enabled to practise politics.’²⁴

It is within the ‘assembly politics’ of high medieval England that the histories and other uses of the written word that we have been investigating need to be located. More often than not, assemblies were both the starting point and the destination of historical writing, and the *scripta* it reproduced. The examples of *scripta* singled out for close reading throughout this study have, I hope, been typical representatives of the documents historians of this era included in their histories. To be sure, some of them were politically momentous. But, as Reuter suggests of the Council of Clarendon, ‘matters which might be less controversial in content, from appointments to bishoprics, abbacies, and high secular posts down to the granting of privileges appear also, when we have enough details to judge, to have been for preference carried out, suitably staged, at

¹⁹ Reuter, ‘Assembly Politics’, 194.

²⁰ Reuter, ‘Assembly Politics’, 193.

²¹ ‘Conventional political history presents rulers and ruled as engaged continuously in political activity and calculation: our sources may not so present them, but the narrative strategies implicit in such writing will reframe the past to make it look like this, just as actors in a film—unless it is very experimental indeed—are assumed to be and implied as being engaged in action when they are off camera.’ *Ibid.*

²² For this response to Habermas’s denial of a public sphere to the Middle Ages, see Reuter, ‘Assembly Politics,’ 207.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

assemblies.²⁵ And it is an itinerary of assemblies, rather than of kings or even the ‘government,’ that Howden and Diceto tracked in their chronicles. Howden’s and Diceto’s chronicles are histories of assemblies and the documents performed in them. The following consecutive entries from five pages of Howden’s *Gesta* (selected more or less at random) show this clearly:

Table 2. Assemblies in the *Gesta*

Page ²⁶	Person	Event	Place	Date	Other people
77	Henry II	Colloquium	Tours	Feast of St. Michael (30 Sept.)	Henry’s sons ²⁷
79	Gilbert FitzFergus	Homines suos congregavit et cum eis consilium iniit	Not stated	Not stated	
80	Roger of Howden	Colloquium	Not stated	Feast of St. Clement (23 Nov.)	Uctred and Gilbert of Galloway
80	Richard, archbishop of Canterbury	Episcopal consecrations, legatine visitations	Various	various	
81		Fire at Canterbury		Not stated	
81		Death of William bishop of Norwich		Not stated	
81	Henry II	Curia	Argentan	Christmas	
81	Henry II	Fuit ... apud ... cum	Le Mans	Purification of the BVM (2 Feb.)	Henry Young King
81	Henry	Colloquium	Gisors	Feast of St. Matthew (24 Feb.)	Henry Young King, Louis VII

Of these nine entries from September to February, only two (the fire at Canterbury and the bishop of Norwich’s death) did not involve any kind of assembly, although they would probably have led to one taking place. It is unclear whether Henry II was involved in a public meeting with Henry the Young King at Le Mans in February, but it might have gone without saying that an assembly took place. (It is hardly likely that two

²⁵ Reuter, ‘Assembly Politics,’ 203.

²⁶ From volume 1.

²⁷ This entry reproduces the *concordia* made between Henry and his sons. Howden, *Gesta*, 1:77–9.

kings would meet without their own retinues, the retinues of their followers and leading citizens from the towns in which they met). Archbishop Baldwin's consecrations, and his legatine visitations, would all doubtless have been staged and public occasions. Five of the entries specifically mention assemblies—three colloquia, a *curia*, a *congregatio*. At the first of these assemblies a signed and authenticated charter was its outcome. We can imagine the written word being involved at various stages in the other assemblies too. As Reuter notes of contemporary church councils, which generally involved the promulgation of written decreta (as at the council of Rhiems recounted by John of Salisbury), participants 'probably saw the staging and ritual as primary.'²⁸ This does not mean though that the use of the written word was in any sense secondary—but participants probably experienced the written word as an *integral part* of the staging and ritual, rather than as something that occupied a discrete and reasoned and technical space of its own.

Modern historiography has a tendency to align the use of the written word for administrative purposes with a rationalization of political behaviour; and it sees the production of an orderly written narrative in the form of a charter, or a set of rulings in the form of legislation, as proving the point. But there is good evidence in the texts explored in this study to suggest that the orderliness of contemporary assemblies has little to do with the routinization of administrative practices. They suggest that the production of charter-narratives or *decreta* at assemblies was not always as controlled and monologic a process as Richard I had wanted it to be at Christ Church.²⁹ It is more likely that the production of *scripta* involved the kind of structured debate, negotiation and controlled opposition evident in Fantosme's accounts of councils (and those in *chansons de geste*).³⁰ The dialogism of composing *scripta* at assemblies is sometimes palpable in Latin histories too. It is evident, for example, in the

²⁸ Reuter, *Medieval Politics*, 203. The archetypal legislation of the Angevin kings were *assizes*. As Reuter points out, in its Latin and vernacular cognates, an assize 'implies a session, a sitting down together.' *Ibid.*, 205.

²⁹ Above, chapter 4, p. 146.

³⁰ Or indeed those documented by Becket's biographers, for which see Reuter, 'Velle sibi fieri in forma hac: Symbolic Acts in the Becket Dispute,' 171–90.

Historia pontificalis's account of the *conuentum* to which Bernard of Clairvaux gathered a group of 'uenerabiles uiri' in order to formulate a set of written propositions with which to confront Gilbert de la Porrée. John of Salisbury relates that these were formulated 'after the fashion in which decretals or laws are promulgated.'³¹ First of all, says John, a proposition was read aloud,³² whereupon 'one of [Bernard's] monks wrote it down word for word.'³³ The *scriptum* was then read aloud to the audience, and their assent was requested.³⁴ The audience did not accept all the propositions *excepta et interrogata*, as John puts it, in this manner. They refused to accept the final proposition after 'a certain archdeacon ... rose and, asking for silence with both hand and voice, asked for a delay in their response.'³⁵ 'His advice (*consilium*) was followed, and the assembly broke up.'³⁶ The group was defying Bernard—an unusual thing to do in this period, when he was at the height of his powers and, according to John a 'uir sanctissimus et precepte auctoritatis.'³⁷ But since their opposition was orderly and dignified (the archdeacon's raised hand was seen and he was heard in silence; he spoke well, he was persuasive), it was played out according to the *Spielregeln* of structured debate, and there was little that Bernard could complain about.

But the rules of the game were not always attended to in the drawing up of *scripta*—or rather they were sometimes breached in meaningful ways. The *Battle Abbey Chronicle* relates that a privilege of Battle was being read out in the presence of Henry II's chancellor so that he could put the royal seal to it. Also present in the audience were the archbishop of Canterbury and other ecclesiastical dignitaries. When 'they reached a particular phrase in the charter "that the church of Battle be wholly free from all subjection of bishops" ... a shout (*clamor*) went up from all sides.' At this

³¹ 'quomodo fieri solet ubi decreta promulgantur aut leges.' *HP*, 18.

³² E.g. Bernard 'dixit se credere quod *Deus et deitas, et e conuerso*.' (he said he believed that 'God is deity, and the converse.')

³³ 'quam propositionem excipiens ex ore eius monachus suus ... scripsit.' *Ibid*.

³⁴ 'scriptamque recitauit, subiugens in fine, *Placet uobis?*' (and then [the monk] read it out with the question 'Do you accept this?'). *Ibid*.

³⁵ 'surgens archidiaconus quidam ... et tam uoce quam manu silentium impetrans, petiit huius responsionis dilationem.' *Ibid.*, my translation.

³⁶ 'paritum est consilio eius, conuentu sic soluto.' *HP*, 19.

³⁷ *HP*, 14.

point, Bishop Hilary of Chichester ‘moved that the extraordinary privilege in this phrase be condemned in perpetuity by the authority of the holy canons, and that it be deleted (*delendam*) [from the charter] by a unanimous resolution of the judges present.’³⁸ The archbishop of Canterbury signalled his agreement ‘with a shout (*conclamatio*).’ However ‘reasonably’ the abbot of Battle ‘resisted’ the bishops’ demands,’ he did not ‘calm their commotion.’³⁹ In the end, the matter was deferred (just as it was in Bernard’s *conuentum*: delay was a crucial means through which conflict was negotiated in this period). Both sides believed they had won the day—but the abbot in the end prevailed by asking the king, *in private*, to confirm the charter, which he did so after ‘quibusdam secreti sui consciis consilio communicato.’⁴⁰

Apart from what we know from glimpses like these, little is certain about how assemblies operated or how they produced written documents.⁴¹ We know even less about the social and political dynamics of assemblies which had been convened in order to *hear* documents. It is likely, for example, that when Walter de Coutances relayed the news of Richard I’s capture to Hugh du Puiset, this was not a ‘personal’ communication. But when he gave the instruction that ‘vobis non est opus lacrymis sed virtute,’ it is unclear whether Coutances was directing Puiset’s own emotional response or whether he was trying to direct the purpose of the assembly in which Henry VI’s letter, and his own letter, were undoubtedly read out. Both scenarios are plausible, but Coutances’s injunction would have been a powerful instruction to Puiset’s *familia* that their political *duty* was not to mourn together (itself a distinctly staged

³⁸ *Chronicle of Battle Abbey*, ed. Searle, 159.

³⁹ ‘Abbate uero quamuis rationabiliter resistente, non tamen illorum quieuit commotio,’ my translations. Cf. Earl Duncan’s emphasis on *raison* in Fantosme’s account of William the Lion’s *cunseil*.

⁴⁰ ‘having asked the advice of certain confidants of his personal [council].’ For how the *colloquium secretum* fits into the ‘set of well-known distinctions in the politics of the early and central middle ages between various types of assembly and their appropriate procedural forms,’ see Reuter, ‘Velle sibi fieri in forma hac: Symbolic Acts in the Becket Dispute,’ 184, and Gerd Althoff, ‘Colloquium familiare – colloquium secretum – colloquium publicum: Beratung im politischen Leben de früheren Mittelalters,’ in *Spielregeln der Politik im Mittelalter: Kommunikation in Frieden und Fehde*, ed. idem (Darmstadt, 1997), 157–84.

⁴¹ Reuter, ‘Assembly Politics,’ 200; Althoff makes the case for more research, given that the oral advice given in public was such an important part of so many aspects of medieval life. Althoff, ‘Beratung im politischen Leben,’ 157.

behaviour), so much as to formulate the counsel that Coutances demanded Puiset should give him in person. As for the broader social dynamics of such occasions, the evidence surveyed in this study suggests that the physical presence and public display of the document in question would have provided a vital point of focus. There would have been people present from across the spectrum of literacy. At many assemblies at least a minority of the audience would have depended on the performances of the literate clerks whom Guernes and Fantosme idealize. Assemblies would have been distinctly polyglot occasions, and would have been structured by the multilingual practices that we observed in the reading of the Constitutions of Clarendon to Empress Matilda.

It was therefore a kind of assembly-literacy—rather than the literacy of the bureaucratic apparatus of the state—that structured many of the episodes related in the texts we have explored in this study. It is hard to pin that kind of literacy onto a particular form of polity (such as the nascent bureaucratic state). Furthermore, the public of assemblies would have held various cultural identities, of which national identity was only one. Reuter suggests that ‘*any* ethnic or *regnum*-based political grouping could find itself and define itself at an assembly.’⁴² But a common national identity was a sufficient, not necessary, condition for an assembly to be able to define itself as a public. The negotiation of different literacies and languages that assembly politics made necessary, meanwhile, meant that the written word could rarely be experienced by the political public in an unmediated form. It would, therefore, be difficult for any group to claim the use of the written word as a marker of an *exclusive* identity. Many of the assemblies reported in twelfth-century historiography (or providing it with *scripta*) were places where national and institutional allegiances overlapped through the mediation of written practices. The transmission of a complex piece of diplomatic communication like Henry VI’s letter about Richard I forged networks (not necessarily friendly) *between* assemblies that were often international in character. Henry’s letter had been read out (we assume) at his own court, at Philip Augustus’s court, at

⁴² Reuter, ‘Assembly Politics,’ 207.

Walter de Coutances's court and at Hugh du Puiset's court. At each stage, mediating envoys, like Walter d'Olepen in Fantosme's *Estoire*, provided a point of continuity and dialogue between them.

Assembly politics also provided the occasion for cultural exchange of a more general sort. John Gillingham has compellingly shown how the political efficacy of Henry VI's detention of Richard I depended on the carefully choreographed public appearances that Richard made at regnal assemblies in Germany during the process of negotiating his release.⁴³ These appearances were always made in the presence of the emperor, and always in the presence of a large audience. It was presumably at an assembly like this that one of the hostages who remained in Germany in surety for Richard's ransom (Hugh de Moreville, lord of Burgh by Sands in Cumbria) brought out his copy of a *Lancelot* romance to be performed. And it was presumably at such an assembly that the Swiss poet Ulrich von Zatzikhoven persuaded him to lend him this *welschez buoch* so that he could translate it into German.⁴⁴ Assembly politics thus facilitated an encounter between an Anglo-Norman magnate and a Swiss clerk, through which a text otherwise associated with the court of Champagne was transmitted to the German literary tradition.

In one way or another, then, assemblies provided the material for much of the historical writing we have surveyed. Assemblies produced the written material that historians rewrote, and it was at assemblies that many of the *gesta* they relate were acted out. But what role did histories, if any, play in assemblies themselves? The patterns of patronage and dedications of Howden's and Diceto's chronicles suggests that they were written for people whose lives were structured by the kind of public occasions that we have been exploring here. Their patrons and dedicatees were administrators whose duty was to engage in staged debates, to follow the rules of advice-giving and to behave appropriately in giving the counsel

⁴³ Gillingham, 'The Kidnapped King: Richard I in Germany, 1192–1194,' 5–34.

⁴⁴ For this encounter, and a translation of the prologue to Ulrich's *Lanzelet*, see Martin H. Jones, 'Richard in the German Literature of the Middle Ages,' in *Richard Coeur de Lion in History and Myth*, ed. Janet Nelson (London, 1992), 74–81.

that they owed to each other and to their lord. We know from the internal evidence of Fantosme's and Guernes's histories that their authors expected them to be performed in public in the future—and in Guernes's case his text had already been performed in the past. We should envisage Guernes's and Fantosme's histories as being performed at public occasions—just as parts of Hugh de Moreville's *Lancelot* probably were. They would have formed the focal point of assemblies much as the letters and charters that were read aloud did. Although Fantosme's history is addressed to the king, we do not need assume that it was ever performed in his presence. But it is likely that any performance would have been structured by the kind of social relations that were epitomized by assemblies held in his presence.⁴⁵

It is hard to imagine, however, that Howden's and Diceto's chronicles would have been performed at such occasions in the forms in which they exist today.⁴⁶ The manifest 'quotability' of such texts—the separability of their constituent parts—suggests though that *extracts* from them could have been read aloud. We know that the texts that became Howden's *Gesta* and *Chronica* circulated, possibly in abbreviated forms, before they were 'completed.' Gervase of Canterbury used the *Gesta* in 1188 (or thereabouts) as the basis of his own annals for the years 1171–9, but the *Gesta* as we have it was not finished until 1191/2. William of Newburgh used Howden's *Chronica* before 1198 (when Newburgh died), but the

⁴⁵ See chapter 5, above. As Reuter notes, 'Princes with quasi-regal status might also hold [assemblies], and lower down the scale the shire-meetings held regularly in late Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman England ... might be thought of as local assemblies, at which a local or regional political community came together in much the same way as a regnal community did at a royal assembly.' Reuter, 'Assembly Politics,' 198. Reuter's 'princes with quasi-regal status' abounded in Henry's reign and in Richard's; and this study has encountered many of them. Hugh du Puiset, William de Longchamp, Walter de Coutances, Geoffrey Plantagenet, Count John and Duke Richard (before they became kings), were all princes in their way. Thomas Bisson suggests that under Henry II 'what we may speak of as "government," something culturally distinct from lordship, has intruded, pervasively so, even brutally... The peace of possession begins to work against the self-serving powers of lesser lords.' But, thanks to the 'worldly profiteering' of administrating lords like Longchamp and Hubert Walter, 'once again the story of government is downed out by that of lordship and dependence.' Bisson, *Crisis of the Twelfth Century*, 389–91.

⁴⁶ That is not to say that Guernes and Fantosme's histories would either. For a critique of the notion of the epic *séance*, in which epics such as the *Chanson de Roland* were once thought to have been performed in their entirety, see Taylor, 'Was there a Song of Roland?' 38–9.

Chronica was completed in 1201/2. Stubbs suggested that Diceto's account of the Young King's rebellion might originally have been composed as a stand-alone work that he incorporated into his *Ymagines* at a later date.⁴⁷ Similar short historical works in Latin on discrete subjects certainly existed in this period: in the thirteenth-century library catalogue of Durham Cathedral Priory is listed an *Itinerarium Jeresolimitanorum de recessu Ricardi regis de Messana, de recessu regis Franchiae de Acon, de morte regis Anglorum*, which does not exist today.⁴⁸ This work may have been an excerpt from Howden's work or from a work like his—it could even have been the basis for his own narrative.

But notwithstanding this evidence for the circulation of short histories (or histories in shortened form), it is unusual for a series of entries in Howden's and Diceto's chronicles to elaborate with any narrative depth on the events they narrated, even when the entries all deal with the same *materia*. It is hard to determine the precise cultural utility of reading aloud from histories of so recent a past, and about people whom the audience probably knew very well. If news in narrative form was called for, it could be (and was) circulated in the form of a newsletter, treaty or charter. If a celebratory or epideictic performance was called for, then there were various literary genres that could serve this purpose better than a set of annals, which, as Southern put it 'glorified no-one.'⁴⁹ This is not to say, however, that annals and chronicles were not public productions, which could even have been displayed as written artefacts at public occasions. And it is not to say that chronicles had no cultural utility. It is rather that their cultural utility lay in their *public preservation* of the deeds of the chroniclers' friends (and their friends' friends) for the *future*. Fantosme and Guernes both celebrated their subjects, and did so using forms more often used for celebrating the heroic and distant past. They could make use of these forms because they were dealing with discrete events that were over: the civil war was 'now finished,' as Fantosme put it as he

⁴⁷ Diceto, *Opera*, 2:xv.

⁴⁸ Beriah Botfield, ed. *Catalogi veteres librorum ecclesiae cathedralis Dunelm.* (London, 1838), 26.

⁴⁹ Southern, 'The Place of England in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance,' 177.

closed his chronicle; Becket was dead and canonized. Annals, by contrast, were never finished in this way; they were always ready to be continued, to be brought up to within a hair's breath of the present. They were not monuments, so much as a process.

No contemporary descriptions of the public use of chronicles in England appear to have survived. We might, however, speculate by looking at how chronicles were used elsewhere in Europe in this period, even if this shows us only what English chronicles were not. Italian city chronicles, in particular, provide a valuable model of how contemporary chronicles could be encountered by a public of officials in a very different kind of literate society. Caffaro, for example, the first 'official' chronicler of Genoa, presented his chronicle to the Genoese consuls in 1152. The consuls then presented it to the *Consiglio*, who ordered a *publicus scribanus* to transcribe it and deposit in the communal archives.⁵⁰ As he states in his preface, Caffaro

consulibus qui tunc temporis, Tanclerio et Rubaldo Besaza et Ansaldo Spinola in consilio pleno scriptum istud ostendit. consules uero, audito consilio consiliatorum, palam coram consiliatoribus, W[illielmo] de Columba publico scribano preceperunt, ut librum a Cafaro compositum et notatum scriberet et in comuni cartulario poneret, ut deinceps cuncto tempore futuris hominibus Ianuensis [ciuitatis] uictorie uictorias cognoscantur.

(presented this document to the consuls at that time, Tanclerius, Rubaldus Besaza and Ansaldus Spinola before the assembled council. The consuls, however, ordered, after they had heard the advice of the councilmen, that the book, as authored and written down by Caffaro be handed over for copying to the public scribe, Wilhelmus de Columba, in their presence, and that it be placed in the archive of the commune, so that the victories of the city of Genoa might be recognized by future citizens furthermore and at any time.)⁵¹

⁵⁰ Girolamo, 'Notaio-cronista,' 295. By the late thirteenth century the choreography by which the city's political community accepted the story told about it had been formalized, so one of Caffaro's successors presented his annals to the *podestà*, the *capitano del popolo*, the abbots and the Elders, and once they had *all* approved them, they were committed to the public archive to be chained to the previous part of the city's chronicle. Ibid., 296. For a detailed exegesis of the early parts of the Genoese chronicle, see Schweppenstette, 'City Chronicles,' 127–49.

⁵¹ Text and translation from Schweppenstette, 'City Chronicles,' 132. Translation slightly modified.

The differences between Caffaro's Genoa and the Angevin Empire are multiple. The institutions of public life were considerably less defined in the Angevin Empire than they were in Genoa. Howden and Diceto were *clerici*, but they were not notaries afforded *fides publica* like Caffaro; and there was no notion of a *publicus scribanus* in England in this period. Nor was there a public archive in England, and England was not a commune (although, in Richard's absence, those opposing his chancellor William de Longchamp called themselves the *communitas regni*).⁵² It seems unlikely that Howden's and Diceto's chronicles were presented to public officials in order for those officials to approve and validate them. William de Longchamp asked, in the form of a public letter, for another public letter to be inscribed in Diceto's chronicle.⁵³ I suggest, speculatively, that both these letters might have been read before an assembly at St. Paul's. There might not have been quite the same sort of debate that accompanied the formulation of the propositions before the trial of Gilbert of Poitiers to decide whether the letters should be written into Diceto's history. The whole process might have been less formalized than that at Genoa. But for both Diceto and Longchamp history writing was a public project to which many parties could contribute.

The Genoese process and Longchamp's letter show above all the importance to medieval societies of how the present would be viewed, as the past, in the future. There was not necessarily any expectation that annals would be performed publicly in the future, or that future readers would belong to the 'same' public as those for whom the histories were originally written. But, as we saw in chapter three, there was an expectation that annals would be *used*. The textual histories of Diceto's and Howden's chronicles bear this out. They were not ceremonially committed to a public archive, once and for all, but were dispersed—rapidly—through England and Normandy via the same networks that connected assembly to assembly over time and distance. Their annals

⁵² For the *communitas regni*, see Bertie Wilkinson, 'The Government of England during the Absence of Richard I on the Third Crusade,' *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester* 28.2 (1944), 485–509, esp. 508–9.

⁵³ The letter of the Old Man of the Mountain, exonerating Richard I from the murder of Conrad of Montferrat. Diceto, *Opera*, 2:127–8.

were recopied, dissected and reframed—rewritten—and in the process embedded within new structures of memory. In the *Chanson de Roland*, Roland’s followers feared that a bad song would be sung about them—and probably that it would be sung about them again and again. The French whom Diceto records abandoning Verneuil on the eve of Pentecost did so because they did not want their defeat to be plotted against that movable liturgical festival, whose date—and events—the annals of the future would inevitably calculate and record.⁵⁴ Pentecost—‘celebris ille dies,’ as Diceto calls it—was a time to be remembered. And it was a time for remembering, when songs would be sung.⁵⁵ So whether or not histories did their cultural work *for* a public or *before* a public⁵⁶—and whether or not that public had a permanent or momentary existence—histories in this period were as public as the written word in which they were grounded.

⁵⁴ Diceto, *Opera*, 2:115.

⁵⁵ Diceto includes the following description of Pentecost in Verneuil in 1194. It is instructive to reproduce it in full, because it is precisely the kind of liturgical festival that Reuter suggests was typical of assemblies in this period. (Reuter, ‘Assembly Politics,’ 201). ‘Tunc temporis instabat dies ille magnus, celebris ille dies, majestati dies altissimae dedicatus, dies optabilis toti mundo, dies inquam Pentecostes, populo Christiano per orbem terrarum venerandus ubique. Quo tempore Franci quondam cathedralium visitationibus ecclesiarum obnoxii loca sancta contendebant adire. Sacerdotes ordinis secundi, cum ymnis et laudibus, cum vexillis et crucibus suas praecedebant plebeculas; coreae virginum, juvenum evagationes, civium et plebeiorum oculos demulcebant. Sed quia *mobile mutatur semper cum principe vulgus* [Claudian, *De quarto consulatu Honorii*, 5.22], nunc villarum depopulationibus, nunc depraedationibus armentorum, nunc incendiis, nunc caedibus, nunc homicidiis invigilare curabant.’ (At that time that great day was approaching—I speak of Pentecost—that celebrated day, that day dedicated to the most high majesty, that day eagerly anticipated by the whole world, [which is] to be honoured by Christian people everywhere throughout the lands of the globe. Formerly at this time the cowardly French used to hasten to make visitations to the holy places of the cathedral churches. Priests of the second rank used to precede their parishioners with hymns and praises and banners and crosses; choirs of virgins and bands of youths charmed the eyes of the citizens and people. But because ‘the unstable crowd ever changes along with the prince,’ now they were worrying about watching for sackings of towns, now the pillaging of cattle, now fires, now massacres, now murders.)

⁵⁶ The distinction is that of Habermas, *Public Sphere*, 8.

Appendices

APPENDIX A. LETTERS IN HOWDEN'S AND DICETO'S CHRONICLES

Table 3. Senders of letters in Diceto's *Ymagines Chronicorum*

Sent by...		Sent to...							
Popes	37	Archbishops	15	Bishops	10	Kings	8	Other	3
Kings (English)	24	Archbishops	4	Bishops	4	<i>Fideles</i>	4	Kings	3
Archbishops¹	24	Bishops	6	Encyclical ²	4	Popes	2	Kings	2
Kings (non-English)³	17	Kings (English)	6	Others	11				
Bishops	6	Popes	3	Archbishops	2	Bishops	1		
Diceto	1	Walter de Coutances							
Others	15								

Table 4. Recipients of letters in Diceto's *Ymagines Chronicorum*

Sent by...		Sent to...							
Bishops	23	Popes	10	Archbishops	6	Kings	5	Others	3
Arch-bishops	20	Popes	15	Bishops	2	Others	3		
Kings (English)	14	Popes	8	Emperors	6	Kings	6	Arch-bishops	2
Popes	13	Bishops	3	Archbishops	2	Specific Chapter	2	Other	6
Diceto	10	Walter de Coutances	9						
Kings (other)	8	Kings (non-English)	4	Popes	2	Kings (English)	2		

¹ Both Diceto's *Ymagines* and Howden's *Chronica* reproduce a large number of letters from and to Thomas Becket. These have been classified under archbishops.

² I have used this term loosely, to designate a letter addressed to all ecclesiastics in a diocese, province, or all of Christendom.

³ This includes emperors.

Table 5. Senders of letters in Howden's *Gesta*

Sent by...		Sent to...									
Popes	21	Encyc- licals	7	Kings	5	Bishops	5	Abps	2	Others	2
Legates	4	Kings	2	Popes	1	Other	1				
Kings (English)	4	Popes	3	Kings	1						
Nuncii⁴	4	Kings	3	Archbishops	1						
Bishops	3	Royal	1	Papal	1	Other	1				
Others⁵	11	Various									

Table 6. Recipients of letters in Howden's *Gesta*

Sent to...		Sent by...					
Kings (English)	13	Popes	6	Nuncii	2	Others	5
Bishops	9	Popes	5	Legates	3	Arch- bishops	1
Popes	5	Kings	2	Secular magnates	2	Bishops	1
Encyc- licals	8	Popes	7	Others	1		
Others	11	Various					

⁴ One of these was a *nuncius* of Walter de Coutances, the others are all royal *nuncii*.

⁵ Including groups who received two letters or fewer.

Table 7. Senders of letters in Howden's *Chronica*

Sent by...		Sent to...									
Popes	53	Encyclicals	16	Archbishops	14	Bishops	11	Kings (English)	5	Other	7
Archbishops	16	Bishops	7	Popes	4	Kings (English)	2	Encyclicals	2	Other	1
Kings (English)	11	Archbishops	2	Kings (non-English)	2	Named clerics	2	Administrators	2	Other	3
Bishops	9	Popes	4	Archbishops	2	Others	3				
Kings (non-English)	9	Kings (English)	4	Other	5						
Others	26										

Table 8. Recipients of letters in Howden's *Chronica*

Sent to...		Sent by...					
Encyclical	26	Popes	16	Bishops	5	Other	5
Bishops	21	Popes	11	Archbishops	5	Other	6
Kings (English)	14	Popes	5	Kings (non-English)	4	Other	5
Popes	11	Archbishops	4	Bishops	4	Other	5
Kings (non-English)	6	Popes	4	Other	2		
Others	17	Various					

APPENDIX B. WALTER DE COUTANCES AND THE *YMAGINES*
HISTORiarum

Although the *Ymagine*s do not appear on the list of books given to the chapter of Rouen at Walter de Coutances's death,⁶ one contemporary manuscript of the chronicle, possibly executed under the direction of Diceto himself, shows a marked interest in Coutances.⁷ In the 'Capitula ymaginum historiarum' that precede the *Ymagine*s in this manuscript,⁸ a large blue cross is inserted in the margin whenever Coutances is mentioned.⁹ Given that Diceto used a sophisticated system of mnemonic marginal symbols through all his works ('ad memoriam facilius excitandam,' as he explains),¹⁰ the use of such symbols is significant. Stubbs suggests, quite plausibly, that Diceto's marginal symbols may also have facilitated the excerption of notices to make historical compilations on specific subjects, such as that about the archbishops of Canterbury made for Hubert Walter; or that about Anjou, which he may have made for Arnulf of Lisieux.¹¹ So it may be that the manuscripts had been marked up for a compilation to be dedicated to Coutances. The suspicion that Coutances had some relationship with this manuscript is strengthened by a marginal comment (in the same hand as the text) following the insertion of Richard I's letter confirming the exchange of Les Andelys (this comment it is also found in another contemporary manuscript.)¹²

Si quis fuerit inter canonicos Rothomagenses fidus antiquitatum
interpres et assertor praecipuus, qui dixerit Karolum magnum
ecclesiae Rothomagensi nomine dotis Andeleium contulisse,
recolligat secum quod annus octingentesimus quartus decimus ab

⁶ For this list, see Théodose Bonnin, ed. *Cartulaire de Louviers: documents historiques originaux du Xe au XVIIIe siècle*, 5 vols (Évreux, 1870–83), 1:156–7. It should be noted that John de Hauville's *Architrenius*, which is explicitly dedicated to Coutances, does not appear on this list either.

⁷ London, Lambeth Palace, MS 8 (which Stubbs designated A). This MS, like that which Stubbs designated B (London, British Library, Cotton MS Claudian E. 3) is a distinctive product of the St. Paul's scriptorium.

⁸ Lambeth Palace, MS 8.

⁹ Lambeth Palace, MS 8, fols 59–63v, esp. fol. 63; cf. Cotton MS Claudian E. 3, fols 154–159v. See the monochrome reproduction in Diceto, *Opera*, 1:277.

¹⁰ Diceto, *Opera*, 1:3.

¹¹ For this compilation, see Diceto, *Opera*, 2:xxviii–xxix.

¹² MS Claudian E. 3, fol. 152, where it is also in the same hand as the narrative.

Incarnatione Domini tunc temporis effluebat, quando Karolus Aquisgrani sepultus est. Recolligat etiam quod ab anno praedicto post trescentos octoginta tres annos Walterus Rothomagensis archiepiscopus ab Anglorum rege Ricardo receperit in excambium Andelii commodissimum, et intellet archiepiscopi praedicti sollicitudinem et industriam post labores quamplurimos et expensas multiplices ecclesiae suae providisse viriliter et profuisse quamplurimum. Cui per Dei gratiam et providebit et proderit semper in posterum per tempora longa. (Diceto, *Opera*, 2:157)

(Should there be [in the future] a faithful interpreter (and trenchant assertor) of ancient things among the canons of Rouen Cathedral, who says that Charles the Great gave Les Andelys to the Church of Rouen as a dowry, he should recollect to himself that the 814th year since the Lord's Incarnation had passed at the time when Charles was buried at Aachen. He should also recall that 383 years after that year Walter, archbishop of Rouen, received from Richard king of the English something most advantageous in exchange for Les Andelys. And he should understand that the solcitude and industry of the aforesaid archbishop (after very many efforts and multiple expenses) forcefully provided for—and very much benefited—his church. Through the grace of God he will benefit and provide for it always for a long time in the future.)

There are no other records of the *Ymagines* being at Rouen, so it is possible Diceto never gave it to him after he had completed it (it seems that Diceto died before the work was finished). Alternatively the compilation for Coutances may have been made but did not survive the fire that destroyed Rouen cathedral in 1200.

APPENDIX C. QUOTATION MARKS

The table below shows the most common formulas used by the chronicles to introduce the text of *scripta* when they are quoted directly.

Table 9. Introductory formulas

	Howden, <i>Gesta</i>	Howden, <i>Chronica</i>	Diceto, <i>Ymagine</i> s
In hac forma	30	67	0
In haec verba	0	1	17
In hunc modum ¹	2	4	3
Other	19	27	9
None	24	70	104
Total	(75)	(169)	(133)

Although Howden and Diceto are fairly consistent in their use of these formulas within their chronicles, Diceto overwhelmingly favours ‘in haec verba,’ and Howden ‘in hac forma.’ The reasons for this divergence are obscure, and it is worth remembering that contemporary chanceries, insofar as they existed, did not employ formulas in the charters they produced with any regularity or uniformity, even if individual scribes were consistent in the phraseology they used.² It is however worth considering for a moment what other kinds of text use such phrases, other than *inspeximus* charters. To take Howden’s preferred expression (*in hac forma*) first, it appears that it is rarely used to introduce a quoted text in ecclesiastical or theological discourse, and rarely at all before the fourteenth century. The notable exceptions, however, are letters of Innocent III, which occasionally use the formula in confirmations or

¹ *In hunc modum* seems to be used only when discussing the making of peace or a final concord, e.g. ‘[Henricus Rex Angliae] pacem fecit cum Philippo rege Franciae in hunc modum.’ Howden, *Chronica*, 2:365.

² Terence A.M. Bishop, *Scriptores Regis: Facsimiles to Identify and Illustrate the Hands of Royal Scribes in Original Charters of Henry I, Stephen and Henry II* (Oxford, 1961), 19–20.

decretal letters where the text of a question addressed to the papal court was reproduced.³ Apart from Innocent III, it seems that only Peter of Blois uses the formula to introduce other texts, one of which is a distich of Cato, the other a verse of the Bible (a fact that may be significant in that he was also a prominent member of the Plantagenet ‘chancery’).⁴ By contrast, Diceto’s formula (‘in h[a]ec verba’) is attested much more frequently, in biblical,⁵ exegetical,⁶ legal⁷ and historiographical discourse.⁸ It also appears to be the most widely-used formula among the *inspeximuses* of the archbishops of Canterbury and the bishops of London in this period. Diceto’s preference for this formula may well reflect the fact that his text makes far more frequent reference to other authoritative (literary, historiographical and scriptural) texts. It seems then that the chronicles are in this respect penetrated by the vocabulary and techniques of the *scriptorium* and chancery, and that the differences in terminology may be a reflection of the scribal (or bureaucratic) traditions of the institutions in which they worked.⁹

³ See, for example, the decretal ‘*Vestra prudentia*,’ preserved in the register of Innocent III: ‘*Vestra prudentia nos consuluit utrum ab apostolica sede processerit huiusmodi decretalis allegata nuper in iudicio coram vobis, quam de verbo ad verbum nobis in hac forma scripsistis: “Quisquis ... etc.”*’ *Innocentii III romani pontificis regestorum sive epistolarum* (PL, 215) col. 1113C–1114D, and col. 56C–D for a confirmation.

⁴ For the distich: ‘*Legi quandoque puerulus in Catone de hoc genere hominum in hac forma: “Est genus hoc hominum quod dicitur officii perdi.”*’ *Petri blesensis epistolae* (PL, 207), col. 0490C. For the biblical verse: ‘*Audivit enim et adhuc memoriter tenet illud sapientiae verbum: Fili, si spiritus potestatem habens super te venerit, locum tuum non deseras.*’ *In hac forma verborum commendat in Dei et vestris manibus sortes suas.*’ *Petri blesensis epistolae* (PL, 207), col. 0497D.

⁵ E.g. 1 Maccabees 10:25, ‘*et scripsit in haec verba “rex Demetrius genti Iudaeorum salutem ... etc.”*’

⁶ E.g. Jerome, *In Hieremiam prophetam libri vi*, (CSEL 65), Col. 0586 ‘*sic et filia sion, cum suos uiderit liberos interfectos, in haec uerba prorumpit et dicit: “uae mihi, quia defecit anima mea propter interfectos!”*’

⁷ E.g. Gratian, *Decretum*, C. 2 q. 5, c. 1: ‘*Hoc autem eum non in preiudicium canonum, sed ex misericordiae dispensatione dixisse, ex epistola eiusdem colligitur, missa Vitali Presbitero in haec uerba: “In dignitate seruanda symoniacis misericordia potest inpendi, si eos uita commendat.”*’

⁸ E.g. William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, ed. Huygens et al., 2.10: ‘*Dum hec vero in castris aguntur, ecce domini Boamundi nuntius presens ante ducem astitit, predicti principis litteras deferens in haec verba: “Noveris ... etc.”*’

⁹ Bernard Guenée has explored the use of such words in the *Chronica* of Michel Pintoin (fl. 1380–1420), a monk of Saint Denis, and concluded that his use of such words was an effect of the kind and provenance of the written sources he used: they are ‘*expressions qui ne sont ... pas propres au Religieux, dont les notaires usent habituellement pour produire le reproduction fidèle d’un document, et qui annoncent clairement un mot à mot.*’ (expressions which ... are not peculiar to the religious but which notaries habitually use to present the faithful reproduction of a document, and which clearly announce a word-for-word [transcription.]) Guenée, ‘*Documents insérés et documents abrégés,*’ 380.

APPENDIX D. ROGER OF HOWDEN AND THE FRENCH OF ENGLAND

Many of the public encounters with the written word we have been exploring would have been marked by the multilingual practices we observed in the presentation of the Constitutions of Clarendon to the empress Matilda. David Trotter has emphasized that, although little pre-twelfth century written French survives, evidence in ‘the “wrong” language’ (i.e. Latin) demonstrates ‘the subterranean manifestations of as yet unwritten (or as yet unattested, or lost) vernacular evidence.’¹ Dominica Legge, similarly, has suggested that ‘French was naturally the language of clerks, and became therefore the language of law and administration and of the Church ... clerks were talking Anglo-Norman even if most of their work was recorded in Latin.’² As a justice responsible for the execution of the Assize of the Forest, Roger of Howden would have had first-hand experience of such multilingual administrative and legal practices. The language of the forest courts in which the assize was prosecuted was most likely French;³ and the assize had probably been proclaimed in French or English alongside an exhibition of the Latin original in the same way that Magna Carta would be in 1215.⁴

It seems that the multilingualism of these encounters could only be represented with difficulty, if at all, in monolingual Latin chronicles. Just as the chronicles were unable to represent the performative force of the documents’ original creation, so they were also unable to represent fully the multilingual dynamics of their use and execution. That is not to say, however, that Latin chronicles entirely hid the fact that they were written

¹ David A. Trotter, ‘“Stuffed Latin:” Vernacular Evidence in Latin Documents,’ in *Language and Culture in Medieval England: The French of England c. 1100–c. 1500*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, et al. (Woodbridge, 2009), 156. Cf. Rothwell, ‘Trial Scene,’ 26.

² Legge, ‘Anglo-Norman as a Spoken Language,’ 113.

³ For French as the language of the law since the time of Henry II, see Brand, ‘Languages of the Law,’ 66. Mildred Pope suggested that administrative innovations from this period, such as the assize of novel disseisin, were responsible for the penetration of French into rural districts. Mildred K. Pope, *From Latin to Modern French with Especial Consideration of Anglo-Norman: Phonology and Morphology*, 2nd ed. (Manchester, 1952), 420–1.

⁴ For the role of the vernacular in the proclamation of Magna Carta 1215, see Short, ‘Vernacular-French Magna Carta,’ 61.

in a multilingual world. Howden's *Chronica* contains under its annal for 1096 a list of the *nomina principum qui obsederunt Niceam* in the first Crusade.⁵ 'Hi sunt principes qui obsederunt Niceam,' it begins, before listing, (mostly) in French, their names. It is worth reproducing this list here, because it has apparently never been commented upon.

Godefrai de Buillun; Tancred, e Buamund; Tatin le Nased, e Tumas de la Fere, e Baldwin de Burch; Druï de Neele. e sis frere Raul, Girad de Ciresi, Ansel de Ribemunt; li quens Guarner de Greez, Baldewin de Munz, e li quens Eustace frere a duc de Buillun, Clarembald de Vendoil, e Rembalt le Frisun, e Hüge le Mainne le frere Philippum; *Adimarus episcopus*, Gwiun de Pursesse *nobilis*, Escalderun, e Baldewin de Gand; e li quens de Forais, e Ansel de Kaiou; Robert le fiz Girard, ed apeled Raimund, Walter de Campes, e le Viel Milum, Stefnes de Albemare fiz al cunt Odum, Willam de MuntPELLERS.⁶

The presence of this document in Howden's *Chronica* is intriguing. The small size of the sample means that it is difficult to establish which of its morphological features are a consequence of the date at which it was written, and which were a consequence of its dialect. However, it is quite possible that the document was not contemporary with Howden (the *-d* in *ed* and *apeled* dropped out of most dialects in the early twelfth century, and preconsonantal *l* remains present in *Baldewin*, although this was vocalized in the early twelfth century).⁷ This suggests that it could have been an old document, possibly contemporary with the siege of Nicea in the 1090s. The importance of this document from the point of view of this study is not primarily the fact that it might be an unusually early example of written French in prose. It is just as revealing that, if it is a pre- or early-twelfth-century document, the document *had been thought worthy of preservation* despite its Frenchness. Secondly, despite its Frenchness—and

⁵ Howden, *Chronica*, 1:152.

⁶ It is notable that, in common with contemporary editorial practice among English historians, Stubbs made no improving interventions in either orthography or punctuation in this example of early French prose, as he did in the Latin remainder of the *Chronica* (and as French editors of Old French texts did as a matter of course in Stubbs's era). For Victorian historians' editorial practice regarding Old French, see Julia Marvin, 'The Unassuming Reader: F. W. Maitland and the Editing of Anglo-Norman,' in *The Book Unbound: Editing and Reading Medieval Manuscripts and Texts*, ed. Siân Echard and Stephen Partridge (Toronto, 2004), 14–36.

⁷ E. Einhorn, *Old French: A Concise Handbook* (Cambridge, 1974), §7.2 (for *-d*) and Ian Short, *Manual of Anglo-Norman* (London, 2007), 21.1 for preconsonantal *l*. Short notes, however, the retention in spelling of preconsonantal *l* long after it was vocalized. I am most grateful to Jocelyn Wogan-Browne for discussion of this point.

however old the document was—Howden included it in his Latin chronicle *in its original form*. So Fantosme, it seems, was not the only historian in this period who thought that written French provided a legitimate material for historical writing. Howden never comments on the ‘authenticity’ of the *scripta* he reproduced (although he comes close to it by reproducing King William of Sicily’s seal). He nonetheless makes no apology for including a *scriptum* that diplomatic scholarship might assume could not have been considered authentic because of its language.

French is found elsewhere in Howden’s *Chronica*. One manuscript—in which Howden’s own hand has been detected⁸—contains valuable evidence for the *negotiation* of the different administrative languages of later twelfth-century England. This manuscript of the *Chronica* contains what Stubbs referred to as a ‘collection of legal monuments,’⁹ which comprises a copy of the *Tripartita* (the *Leges Willelmi*, the *Leges Eadwardi confessoris* and a genealogy of the dukes of Normandy),¹⁰ the legal treatise known as ‘Glanvill,’¹¹ and three of Henry II’s assizes. Between the *Tripartita* and ‘Glanvill,’ there is a list of seventeen English legal terms which are given Latin and French glosses.¹² This glossary was presumably not intended to make Anglo-Saxon legal vocabulary intelligible to a new generation of lawyers, because the *Tripartita* provided definitions of

⁸ London, British Library, Royal MS C II. For evidence of Howden’s role in its composition, see Corner, ‘Earliest Surviving Manuscripts,’ 304–10.

⁹ See Howden, *Chronica*, 1:lxv–lxxvii for a discussion.

¹⁰ The *Tripartita* was so christened by Felix Liebermann, ‘Eine Anglonormannische Uebersetzung des 12. Jahrhunderts von Articuli Willelmi, Leges Eadwardi und Genealogia Normannorum,’ *Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie* 19 (1895), 78.

¹¹ For the place of the *Chronica* in the textual history of *Glanvill*, see *The Treatise on the Laws and Customs of the Realm of England, commonly called Glanvill*, ed. G.D.G Hall (Oxford, 1993), lxvi–lxvii, lv–lvi.

¹² Howden, *Chronica*, 2:242. It should be noted here that the *Tripartita* had a vernacular tradition of its own by the time that Howden compiled the *Chronica*, having been translated into the French of England in its entirety in 1192–3. It is also significant that the vernacular version of this text is also associated with historical writing, just as it is in Howden’s *Chronica*. The vernacular version is bound in its surviving manuscript (s. XIII–XIV: Cambridge University Library, MS Ee 1.1) with two versions of *Le livre de reis de Brittanie*. One of these was written after Richard had departed from Jerusalem ‘e ne esteit mie uncore venu quant nus cest escreymes’ (so exactly the period in which Howden was writing). The same manuscript also contains a Latin version of ‘Glanvill.’ For the dating of the *Tripartita*, see Liebermann, ‘Anglonormannische Uebersetzung,’ 78; and for the text of the French *Articuli Willelmi*, see *ibid.*, 82–4. For *Le livre de reis de Brittanie*, see Dean, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, no. 13 and no. 30.

Anglo-Saxon terminology in Latin.¹³ It is more likely that the glossary's primary purpose was to give the contemporary (French) equivalents of archaic (English) terminology. This suggests, in turn, that the working language of the readers of both the glossary and the *Chronica* was likely to have been French—or rather that French was the language of their administrative milieu. (And the glossing of *Miskennighe* as 'inconstanter loqui in curia, vel invariare; change de parole u mesparler en plait,' is further evidence that French played a role in legal procedure.)

The fact that French was the language most familiar to administrators and lawyers is also evident from the glossary's structure. It starts by giving the French translation of an English term, via the mediation of the Latin equivalent. For example, 'Munbrice, interpretatur laesio majestatis vel honoris. Blesmure donur.' The glossary continues in the form English-Latin-French for the next five words. In seven of the remaining eleven terms, however, the Latin middle term drops away, giving the form 'Yearwite interpretatur susise de warde.' And the mediation of the Latin 'interpretatur' momentarily disappears altogether in the thirteenth term, to leave just 'Forstal: force faite en real chemin.' The controlling presence of French in the glossary is also evident in last three terms in the glossary: *sachke*, *sochne* and *theam* were recognisably English words but were neither so archaic nor so novel that they would have needed explanation (they are frequently found in contemporary legal documents).¹⁴ These last three terms in the glossary serve to underline further the differences between the spoken languages of the administration and the way that it was recorded in writing, and this emphasizes the fact that the two did not always neatly coincide. The language of administrative texts like the *Tripertita*—together with that of other administrative records such as the pipe rolls, needs further lexicographical (and sociolinguistic) work. David Trotter has suggested that the 'back to front' evidence presented by the demonstrably vernacular origin of many words in the *Dictionary of*

¹³ For example, under the rubric 'Quid sit soca' the following definition is provided: 'Socca est, quod si quis quaerat in terra sua est justitia, si inventum fuerit, an non.' Howden, *Chronica*, 2:229.

¹⁴ These terms had survived the Conquest and were commonly found in contemporary charters, records such as the pipe rolls and substantive law such as the Assize of Clarendon.

Medieval Latin from British Sources, is 'a muddle that cannot be monolingually resolved because it had not been monolingually generated.'¹⁵ The same point, no doubt, could be made about the administrative lexicon of Howden's time—and about his own administrative vocabulary.

¹⁵ Trotter, 'Stuffed Latin,' 158.

Abbreviations

<i>ANS</i>	<i>Anglo-Norman Studies</i>
<i>BIHR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</i>
<i>Bosham, Vita</i>	Herbert of Bosham, <i>Vita Sancti Thomae archiepiscopi et martyris</i> , ed. James Cragie Robertson. Vol. 3 of <i>Materials for the History of Thomas Becket</i> , edited by idem, Rolls Series 67.3 (London, 1877)
<i>CCCM</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum: Continuatio Mediaevalis</i>
<i>CCSL</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum: Series Latina</i>
<i>De inv.</i>	Cicero, <i>De Inventione</i> , ed. and trans. H. M. Hubbell. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960
<i>Diceto, Opera</i>	<i>Radulfi de Diceto Decani Lundoniensis Opera historica</i> , ed. William Stubbs, 2 vols (London, 1876)
<i>EHR</i>	<i>The English Historical Review</i>
<i>Etym.</i>	Isidore of Seville, <i>Etymologiarum sive originum: libri XX</i> , ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford, 1911)
<i>Fantosme</i>	<i>Jordan Fantosme's Chronicle</i> , ed. and trans. R. C. Johnston (Oxford, 1981)
<i>FitzStephen, Vita</i>	William FitzStephen, <i>Vita Sancti Thomae Cantuariensis archiepiscopi et martyris</i> , ed. James Cragie Robertson. Vol. 3 of <i>Materials for the History of Thomas Becket</i> , edited by idem, Rolls Series 67.3 (London, 1877)
<i>Guernes</i>	Guernes de Pont-Sainte-Maxence, <i>La vie de Saint Thomas</i> , ed. Emmanuel Walberg (Paris, 1936)
<i>Howden, Chronica</i>	<i>Chronica magistri Rogeri de Houedene</i> , ed. William Stubbs, 4 vols (London, 1868–71)
<i>Howden, Gesta</i>	<i>Gesta regis Henrici secundi Benedicti abbatis</i> , ed. William Stubbs, 2 vols (London, 1867)

- HP *The Historia pontificalis of John of Salisbury*, ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford 1986)
- JMH *Journal of Medieval History*
- MTB James Cragie Robertson, ed., *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket*, 7 vols (London, 1875–85)
- ODNB *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Online edition, (Oxford, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/>
- PL *Patrologia Latina cursus completus*, ed. J-P Migne, 221 vols (Paris, 1844–65)
- Rhet. Her.* Cicero [pseud.], *Rhetorica ad Herennium* ed. and trans. Harry Caplan (Cambridge, MA, 1954)
- TRHS *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*

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