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HUMPHREY DUKE OF GLOUCESTER AND THE INTRODUCTION OF  
ITALIAN HUMANISM IN FIFTEENTH CENTURY ENGLAND

THESIS

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Duke Humphrey of Gloucester is often given credit for the renaissance of English learning in the fifteenth century. It is true that the donations of books he made to Oxford, his patronage of English and Italian writers, and his patronage of administrators who had humanist training resulted in the transmittal of humanist values to England. But is it also true that these accomplishments were mainly the by-product of his self-aggrandizing style, rather than a conscious effort on the duke's part to promote learning. The duke, however, does deserve recognition for what he unwittingly may have done.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	
I.	INTRODUCTION.....1
II.	BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION.....10
III.	THE BACKGROUND FOR FIFTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH ARTS AND LETTERS.....31
IV.	THE BEGINNINGS OF HUMANIST PATRONAGE IN ENGLAND.....51
V.	SECONDARY ENGLISH PATRONS OF HUMANISM.....73
VI.	DIRECT PATRONAGE BY THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER.....90
VII.	CONCLUSION.....105
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....109

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The contribution of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, to the renewal of English learning has been variously described by modern scholars. Their opinions range from a consideration of Gloucester as a "great patron of the university" who seemed to have "had but slight effect on Oxford thought",<sup>1</sup> to the laudatory view that the duke "must be regarded with gratitude as the restorer of classical learning" in England.<sup>2</sup> The truth is, of course, somewhere between these two viewpoints. Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, did indeed make a significant and lasting impression on English learning. His patronage, by employment in his household, in the offices of government, or through the commissioning of humanist writings, brought the Italian scholars into closer contact with an England that had become intellectually paralyzed. At the start of the fifteenth century, learning had not been abandoned in England, but had become instead fossilized by the conservative reaction to the influence John Wycliff had exerted in the late fourteenth century. C. L. Kingsford described the character of Oxford University at the close of the fourteenth century as "dead". He continued to say:

Dead in one sense it no doubt was. All vigorous and earnest scholastic thought had been extirpated by the ecclesiastical repression which followed on the end of the Wycliffite heresy. It was only a dead ghost of a worn-out tradition with which at the close of the century<sup>3</sup> the champions of the new learning had to contend.

The Duke of Gloucester's great contribution to the renaissance of English learning was his provision of contacts with the humanist scholars in Italy. Whether this contribution was an intentional effort to spread scholarship, or whether it was a by-product of Gloucester's self-aggrandizing style of conducting the affairs of state, the benefits of his actions were real. His employment of Italians as secretaries and the use of English scholars trained in Italy to fill important government positions provided the pathway for ideas to travel between Italy and England. The fresh ideas brought by these men helped reanimate English scholars. By the start of the sixteenth century the great Erasmus would find the state of english learning far from "dead." In April of 1518, Erasmus praised England in a letter to Richard Pace:

How truly splendid is the court of your native Britain, the seat and citadel of humane studies and of every virtue! I wish you joy, my dear Pace, of such a prince, and I wish you England joy, for, blessed as she is in many other ways, on these grounds she so much excels all else that no region can be compared with her. At this stage I should like to spend my whole life in England, where under the favour of princes the humanities hold sway and the love of honour flourishes, while the painted mask of false piety and useless and tedious learning of monks are alike exiled and overthrown.<sup>4</sup>

The Duke of Gloucester was not alone in patronage of the Italians. His contemporaries, including Henry, Cardinal Beaufort, were most anxious to employ Italian scholars in their households. The Cardinal's greatest contribution was his employment of Poggio Bracciolini as his Italian secretary. Poggio's epistolary talent and style provided an example for English writers who wished to turn away from the tired style of the scholastic formularies. In his years in England Poggio touched the lives of many English scholars despite his rather negative view of England as a whole. He wrote to his friend Nicolaus de Niccolis in 1421:

I have not seen Oxford and I have no hope of seeing it. My money is hardly sufficient for my voyage home, even if I hurry; and so you had better give up hope of books from England, for they care very little for them here. If you want to know simply how many courses to prepare for a banquet or the art of making sauces, you could find some pretty good authors here, well trained for that kind of game.<sup>5</sup>

Nor was Gloucester unique in his taste for the new humanist writings. There were others who appreciated the classic and humanist books coming out of Italy. These men included Thomas Bekynton, who as the secretary to Henry VI, was responsible for the "introduction of humane values in official epistolography."<sup>6</sup> Roberto Weiss states that Bekynton "conceived classical learning not only as an intellectual attainment but also a thing of practical value."<sup>7</sup> John Whethamstede provided another important link in the chain that connected Italy with England. It was Whethamstede who introduced

Piero del Monte, the Papal Collector, to Gloucester, and it was through del Monte that the duke made some of his most important Italian connections. It was del Monte who provided the introduction to the duke for Tito Livio Frulovisi. He was employed by the Duke of Gloucester as poet and orator and was the author of the Vita Henrici Quinti, the first "official" life of an English king. It was Gloucester, however, who remained at the center of his expanding network of scholarly acquaintances. The English scholars who were patrons of the new learning owed their positions in turn to the patronage of the duke. Their positions, whether secular or clerical, were the result of the influence of Gloucester. Men such as Bekynton, Andrew Holes, and Adam de Moleyns were able to rise to positions of power because of the value their humanist training had given them. In their turn, the wealth they acquired as a result of their power was shared with the schools and universities, which educated them.

The influence of the papacy, while not as direct as that of Gloucester, also played a role in the revival of English learning. The end of the Great Schism at the Council of Constance allowed the unified church to put forth a greater effort at collecting its revenues and provided an opportunity for the repair of damage done by the years of schism. In England, the Statutes of Provisors and Praemunire were the focus of Pope Martin V's efforts. He pressured the

Archbishop of Canterbury to do all in his power to see that these statutes were eliminated. In 1426 the Pope wrote:

Since we lately sent our beloved son, Master Julian, auditor of our apostolic chamber, to our most dear son in Christ, Henry, illustrious King of England, for the abolition of that execrable statute, formerly enacted in England against the liberty of the Church, the king replied that since that statute cannot be revoked without parliament, the earliest opportunity should be given for the convocation of parliament, and that he would do whatever was possible in it for the abolition of that statute, protesting expressly that he did not intend in any way to derogate from the rights and privileges of the Roman church. . . . As the time of parliament has now arrived, we exhort you in the Lord and enjoin you in virtue of your obedience that for the reverence of God and our honour, and the protection of the authority of the apostolic see, and for the safety of the souls of yourself and all other inhabitants of that kingdom, you should work effectively in that parliament which all study and diligence, that statute, which cannot be observed without peril of your souls, should be entirely repealed.<sup>8</sup>

The men sent to England by the papacy reflected the concern that the pope had expressed. These were talented men with classical and humanist backgrounds who, in their spare time, continue to pursue their studies. The Curia, itself, influenced English humanism by serving as an example of the benefits which could be derived employing humanist talent in governmental positions. Besides the example it set in employment of humanists, it also served as a training ground for those Englishmen sent to Italy. Scholars such as Poggio Bracciolini, Simon da Taramo, Piero del Monte, and Leonardo Bruni all had positions in the papal Curia and had an in-



fluence in English learning. The fifteenth century was still a century of clerics. Ecclesiastics continued to hold a practical monopoly on learning, the civil service, and diplomacy. The contacts provided by the papacy and its bureaucracy were an important conduit for Italian humanism.

Roberto Weiss called the papacy:

A powerful propagating factor in the spreading of humanism . . . As an international institution it had its officials all over Western Christendom. Legates, nuncios, collectors of Peter's Pence, went everywhere, and the majority of these officials had received a humanist education, had humanist tastes, and were often themselves professed humanists. While residing abroad, these men continued to cultivate their studies and in this way influenced the ecclesiastics and laymen with whom they came into contact.<sup>9</sup>

The taste for humanist learning did not grow in virgin soil. The interest in the classics, in Greek literature, in the use of reason, had all appeared in before in England. Men such as Robert Grosseteste had earlier shown an interest in Greek and the natural sciences, but these studies had been overcome and forgotten by the tangled, choking influence of scholasticism. In the work of Duns Scotus, scholasticism reached a pinnacle of complexity. The fifteenth-century humanists offered an alternative mode of study which offered clarity and classical simplicity in the place of the overly ornate arguments of the scholastics. The Duke of Gloucester and his contemporaries provided the contacts and the patronage which brought the new classicism. His fame was enlarged by the passage of time and the

help of later propagandists. By the early eighteenth century he was even being portrayed as a Protestant hero of the common people. A play entitled Humfrey, Duke of Gloucester: A Tragedy contained a dedication which praised Gloucester:

The Duke of Gloucester was a Man of Singular Goodness; a wise and upright Statesman; a great Opposer of the oppressive Usurpations of the See of Rome; a generous Favourer of the, then, poor and distrest Commons; a powerful Oratour; a most loyal Subject; a learned Prince; and an Encourager of Learning: Which shining Qualities, even without the Advantage of his Birth, would render his Memory dear to You.<sup>10</sup>

Some of this list of attributes have their basis in fact. The duke did encourage learning and was, himself, a learned prince, but the remainder are somewhat exaggerated. Although his contemporaries viewed the duke as a powerful political figure, it is his contribution to learning which was his most lasting achievement. The efforts of Gloucester and his fellow scholars are dwarfed and overshadowed by the works of the next century. But the importance of the fifteenth-century efforts was summed up by C. L. Kingsford:

The fifteenth century in England was not an epoch of great achievement. The visible results of its manifold intellectual activities were small. But these small things prepared the way for true Renaissance, and it was through them that the rich accomplishment of the next age was made possible.<sup>11</sup>

## NOTES

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4. R. A. B. Mynors and D. F. S. Thomson, eds., The Correspondence of Erasmus: Letters 594 to 841, 1517-1518, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), 392-393.

5. P. W. G. Gordan, ed., Two Renaissance Book Hunters: The Letters of Poggius Bracciolini to Nicolaus de Niccolis (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 48-49.

6. R. Weiss, Humanism in England During the Fifteenth Century (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), 74.

7. Ibid., 74.

8. Myers, 677.

9. R. Weiss, The Spread of Italian Humanism (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1964), 87.

10. M. Phillips, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester: A Tragedy (London: J. Roberts, 1723), A1-A2.

11. Kingsford, 47.

## CHAPTER II

### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Duke Humphrey of Gloucester was probably born in August or September of 1390. His father, Henry of Bolingbroke, received the news of his fourth son's birth on November 1, 1390, while on crusade with the Teutonic knights. The future patron of letters and Protector of England began life as an unimportant son of a leading nobleman. Humphrey's life was greatly altered, however, when his father deposed Richard II and assumed the title of Henry IV, King of England. He became a prince in the line of succession to the throne. Kenneth Vickers states that in spite of this change in status, very little is known of the young prince's early life and education. Except for chroniclers noting his presence at certain functions, there was little said about Humphrey. The Chronicle of England contains a typical entry describing the family of Henry IV at his coronation:

This Henry had that tyme sex childryn be dam Mary, doutir to the erl of Hereforth. The eldest son hite Henry; the secunde Thomas, the thirde, Jon; the fourte, Humfrey: to douteris, had he eke; one of hem was wedded into Denemarc.<sup>1</sup>

The "dam Mary" mentioned by Capgrave was Mary Bohun, the co-heiress to the fortune of the Earls of Hereford and Essex. The name, Humphrey, was popular with the Bohun family. Five

of the last six Earls of Hereford were called Humphrey before Mary Bohun gave the name to her own son. Vickers suggests that along with the name, this Humphrey also inherited "some part of that restless and unstable character which was to influence his actions all through his life."<sup>2</sup>

The education of Humphrey was not well documented. That a priest named Thomas Bothwell was appointed his tutor is one of the few facts about Humphrey's early education that Vickers can document. He also claims that "it is very probable that he studied both rhetoric and res naturales at Balliol College, Oxford."<sup>3</sup> Vickers attributes this shadowy, scholarly existence to an intended career in the church, similar to the path followed by his uncle Henry Beaufort, the Bishop of Winchester. His biographer wrote:

It may be, too, that the death of his father changed his future life materially, for his absence from all political functions, and his inactivity, whilst his brothers, little older than himself, had taken an active part in the management of public affairs, suggest the impression that he was not destined for a political career.<sup>4</sup>

It was not until after the death of Henry IV and the accession of his brother, Henry V, that Humphrey emerged from the shadows. On May 16, 1414, Humphrey de Lancaster was created Earl of Pembroke and Duke of Gloucester. After this he assumes a more prominent and well-documented role, joining the ranks of the leading men of England. Along with his brothers Henry V, King of England, Thomas, Duke of Clarence, and John, Duke of Bedford, Humphrey of Gloucester became

well known as a knight and politician. A contemporary chronicler described the sons of Henry IV:

Which four sons above named were all good knights,  
and well-educated in moral science, and each of  
them afterwards held a high command in the wars  
between France and England, in which they all  
behaved valiantly.<sup>5</sup>

The Duke of Gloucester's adult life was divided into three principal phases: the first centered on his military exploits as a knight in the Hundred Years War, the second was focused on his political life during the minority of Henry VI, and the final portion was his career as a patron of Italian humanist learning. As a prince fighting with his brother, the king, Gloucester was indeed a valiant knight. Contemporary chronicles record his presence at the Battle of Agincourt:

The duke of Glowcestre also that tyde  
Manfully' with his mayne,  
Wondes he wroght ther wondere wyde.<sup>6</sup>

John Page's poem The Siege of Rouen glowingly credited the duke with great bravery in battle. The poet wrote:

Glouceter that gracyus home,  
From the sege of Chirboroughe he come,  
At the Port Synt Hyllarye  
Fulle manfully loggyd he.  
In caste of stone, in schot of quarelle,  
He dradde hym for noo perelle,  
But wanne worschyppe with his werre,  
And lay hys enmys fulle nerre  
Thenne any man that there was  
be xl. rode and more in spas.  
Whenn alle othyr pryncys ben tolde  
Set hym for one of the bolde.<sup>7</sup>

The confidence that his brother had in his abilities as a soldier shows in his choice of Gloucester to lead the siege

of Cherbourg, which was, as the chronicler Wavrin noted, "the strongest place in all the Duchy of Normandy, and the best supplied with provisions and all the apparatus of defensive warfare."<sup>8</sup> Following the siege of Rouen, Gloucester exchanged positions with his brother, John Duke of Bedford, and served as Henry V's regent in England, Gloucester's regency lasted for three years which were "even more peaceful and uneventful than those of Bedford's", and Gloucester found "that his duties did not exceed the ordinary official business of the kingdom."<sup>9</sup> Vickers credits this quiet span of years with giving Gloucester the opportunity to establish his rapport with the new middle class emerging in London. His recognition of their influence and power, expressed through the middle class merchant's abilities to provide loans to the crown, was one modern, pragmatic trait which differentiated Gloucester from his more feudal contemporaries. Vickers credits Gloucester's support of policies beneficial to middle class political values as being the principal source of the duke's lifelong power and popularity in London.

The most important events to occur during Gloucester's regency took place not in England, but in France. The murder of the Duke of Burgundy at Montereau in 1419 upset the political balance in France and led to the Treaty of Troyes. By this treaty Henry V became heir to Charles VI of France and acquired the hand of his daughter, Catherine, in marriage. The Dauphin was naturally not at all pleased to being disinherited.

He did not accept this treaty as valid and was joined in his opposition by most Frenchmen not under direct Burgundian or English dominance. In England, suspicion was aroused by the treaty. The fear of England becoming a subservient province of the French crown led parliament to demand that Gloucester, a regent, reaffirm the guarantees made by his great-grandfather, Edward III. Parliament asked:

That it may please the very noble and very powerful prince the Duke of Gloucester, Guardian of England, to ordain and establish by authority of this present parliament, that the said grant and establishment of the said late King Edward may be affirmed and kept in all points. And moreover, to ordain by the aforesaid authority that because our said lord the king is heir and regent of the realm of France, and because he and his heirs shall be kings of France after the death of the said Charles, King of France . . . the said kingdom of England and the people of it . . . shall never be put in subjection or obedience to him, his heirs, and successors, as heir, regent, or king of France.<sup>10</sup>

The Treaty of Troyes, which marked the high-point of English influence in France, was enormously influential in the Duke of Gloucester's policies later in his life. Vickers believed that the treaty "seemed to crystallise the unhappy principles with which Gloucester had been impressed during the early years of his active life." He continued:

The only statesmanship that his royal brother could teach him was the mistaken ideal of a self-righteous war . . . Henceforth he stood by the clauses of the Treaty of Troyes with a constancy worthy of a better cause, and in this particular his line of action was definitely marked out. Though a man of intellect and perception in theoretical matters, he was not endowed with sufficient powers of statesmanship to see the disastrous consequences of a war policy.<sup>11</sup>



Gloucester's emotional loyalty to the policy established by the Treaty of Troyes became one of the principal areas of contention between the duke and his chief political rival, Henry Beaufort. The Bishop of Winchester proved himself to be the superior statesman by eventually abandoning the folly of English military adventures in France, while Gloucester was loyal to the idea that the English right to the French throne should be supported by military action.

The years of Gloucester's regency were ended in 1421 when Henry V and his queen, Catherine, returned to England. The new queen's coronation took place soon after their return. Gloucester served as Great Chamberlain of the event and presided over the sumptuous banquet which followed. Vickers notes that "it was in the organization of pageants such as this that Gloucester was most efficient. All his tastes for ancient learning and his love of display were given full scope."<sup>12</sup> Gregory's Chronicle describes the event in great detail and even lists the menu of the banquet at Westminster Hall. the first course alone contained:

Braune with mustarde, elys in burneus, furmenty with bakyn, pyke, lampray powderyd whythe elys, pouderyde trought, codelyng, plays with merlyng fryde, grette crabbys, lesche lumbarde, a bake mete in paste, tartys, and a sotylte i-callyd pellycane, etc.<sup>13</sup>

Henry V did not spend much time back in his kingdom before events in France required him to return to the continent.

Gregory's Chronicle gives Henry's reason for departure:

And uppon Easter eve, that was the xxij day of Marche, and the reign of the kynge ye ix, the Duke of Clarans with many othyr lordys were slayne in Fraunce and many lordys were takyn presoners . . . And the same yere, a non aftyr Wytson tyde, the kyng sayld in to Fraunce a-yenne and the Duke of Bedford was made Lewtennaute of Inglonde. And the same yere came the Duchyes of Holonde in to Inglond.<sup>14</sup>

The entrance of the "duchyes of Holonde" into England was as important in Gloucester's life as were the death of his brother, Clarence, or the departure of the king to France. Jacqueline, the Countess of Holland, Zealand, and Hainault, was welcomed to England by the Duke of Gloucester, who became infatuated by the combined charms of her femininity and her extensive continental possessions. Although she had been married to John, Dauphin of France, who died in 1417, and John, the Duke of Brabant, a third marriage was not out of the realm of possibility. Any interference with this heiress by Henry V, or any of his brothers, could not do anything except disturb the shaky alliance between England and Burgundy. The Duke of Burgundy had conspired with the Dowager-Duchess of Hainault to marry her daughter, Jacqueline, to the Duke of Brabant in hope of this marriage being a childless one. This was fairly certain since the Duke of Brabant was a "despicable weakling, much older than his proposes bride, and possessing qualities which would make the life of a young and spirited woman wholly unbearable."<sup>15</sup> In the event of Jacqueline dying childless, the Duke of Burgundy would be the heir to her territories. The Duke of Gloucester had no

concern for the possible effects that his courtship of Jacqueline would have on English policy in France. Burgundy's support was essential for England to maintain her claims to the French throne. The Burgundian alliance was tenuous at best and Gloucester's interference in territories which the Duke of Burgundy coveted could tip the balance against England.

The English position in France was soon weakened further by the death in 1422 of Henry V. The king left an infant son to claim his French and English thrones. This left the actual government in the hands of the three most powerful men in the kingdom; John, Duke of Bedford, Henry, Bishop of Winchester, and Gloucester. Upon his deathbed, Henry V had specifically divided and defined the powers to be exercised by these men:

To my brother the Duke of Bedford I commit the custody and rule of France and the Duchy of Normandy until my son shall reach years of discretion. My brother the Duke of Gloucester shall be the protector and defender of England. I will and decree that my uncles the Duke of Exeter and Henry, Bishop of Winchester, along with the Earl of Warwick, shall be tutors of my son.<sup>16</sup>

From the beginning of Henry VI's reign until the position of protector was dissolved when the king came of age, Gloucester was constantly struggling to maintain his position against the faction led by the Bishop of Winchester. The first parliament of the reign saw disputes over Gloucester's powers as protector and his position relative to parliament and the council. This was documented in the Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England, which stated:

on the day before the opening of the king's parliament . . . there was communicated to them the text of a commission to be made to the most illustrious prince the lord Henry Duke of Gloucester uncle of the king, by whose authority that illustrious prince was to open and dissolve the said parliament with the assent of the council and do other things which were contained in a certain minute read there, the tenor of which is as follows . . . To these words, that is, with the assent of the council, the Duke of Gloucester took objection; amongst other things he said that these words seemed to be prejudicial to his status and for many reasons it seemed to him that they were unaccustomed words in such commissions.<sup>17</sup>

Despite Gloucester's objections he eventually accepted these limitations on his powers and assumed a position as first among equals in a councilar form of government. His policies as Protector of England were the result of three principle influences. Kenneth Vickers defined these as his commitment to the policy of French conquest established by his brother, Henry V, the influence exerted by Jacqueline of Hainault's appeal to his sense of being a knight errant, and factious instincts aroused by the opposition of Henry Beaufort.<sup>18</sup>

On his death-bed, Henry V had issued a warning to Gloucester of the folly involved in quarreling with the Duke of Burgundy:

And again I pray you all as much as I can, and that you fail not in disobeying this, that you will have no quarrel with or brother-in-law Burgundy, and this I forbid expressly to my fair brother Humphrey: for if it happened, which God forbid! that there should be any bad feeling between you and him, the affairs of this kingdom, which are prospering for our party, might be greatly damaged thereby.<sup>19</sup>

Gloucester did all that he was forbidden to do, and the results were as dire as Henry V had fortold. Shortly after the

position of the protectorate was settled, Gloucester resumed his courtship of Jacqueline of Hainault. They were eventually married sometime between the death of Henry V and 1427. Following their marriage, Gloucester impetuously sailed with his duchess and his troops to take possession of his wife's territories. His English troops were not well received by the residents of Hainault and the duke was disappointed when he was only grudgingly given recognition as regent for his wife. The Duke of Burgundy soon became involved in Hainault supporting with troops the claims of Jacqueline's second husband, John of Brabant. The conflict between the two rival factions quickly became a personal contest marked by a challenge by Burgundy to meet Gloucester in man-to-man combat. Burgundy's intervention on the side of John of Brabant, along with the continued stubbornness of the people of Hainault, convinced Gloucester that his efforts to acquire Jacqueline's territory were wasted. His fickle nature showed itself most clearly in this situation: once his ambitions had become achievable only through tedious effort, he abandoned the whole project. Along with his territorial desires, he also abandoned Jacqueline. He showed little regret for leaving behind his duchess. A Short English Chronicle sums up his entire Hainault adventure most succinctly:

This yere in the monthe of Octobre the Duke of Glowceter and his Duches sayled to Caley and so forthe in to Henaude wher was his wiffes eritage, where he was at the fyrst worschupfully resseyved, but after they sett nott by him, and so came home and lefte his

lady at Moynys in Henaude. And then the Duke of Burgoyne beseged hir and wanne the towne and brought hir to Gawnte in Flaundres, but she scaped from thens and came in to Holonde, and there long tyme helde wer a yenes the Duke and put him dyverse tymes at the worste.<sup>20</sup>

The conduct of the Duke of Gloucester in this affair damaged his reputation greatly and the plight of his abandoned wife was even more embarrassing due to her repeated appeals for help. The whole sordid episode was ended by Jacqueline's subjugation to the Duke of Burgundy and by Gloucester's marriage to Eleanor Cobham, who had accompanied the duke back to England. The marriage was possible since Burgundy had induced the pope to declare the marriage of Gloucester and the Countess of Hainault void. His second marriage generated even more criticism:

the duke of Gloucester, knowing of this separation thus made by our holy father the pope, whom he wished to obey as all good catholic princes are bound to do, took in marriage and espoused a woman of low estate in comparison with his eminence, whose lover he had formerly been, who was named Eleanor Cobham . . . at which marriage everyone marvelled both in England and in France saying that his duke was a bad successor of the noble race from which he had issued and proceeded, for in truth, without reflecting on anyone, he was a prince of great virtue, liberal, courteous, wise, and a very valiant knight in body, bold in heart.<sup>21</sup>

An additional reason for Gloucester's haste in abandoning Jacqueline and Hainault was his distrust of the person whom he had left in charge of England. Once his interest in Hainault had waned, he quickly focused his attention on factional politics. Gloucester returned to find that Beaufort taken advantage of his absence to strengthen his position in

London. The duke found the Beaufort had placed his man, Richard Wydeville, in command of the Tower of London. This effort naturally aroused Gloucester, and a state of near civil war resulted by October, 1425. At that time armed conflict between the supporters of the duke and the bishop was most narrowly avoided. Gregory's Chronicle recorded the events:

And that same yere that the mayre rode to Westmynster on the same day for to take hys othe . . . whenne that he come home to hys mete with hys aldyrmen and with hys goode comyners, or that they hadde fully ete, the Duke of Glouceter sende for the mayre and hys aldyrmen . . . and whenne they come he caryd the mayre that he shulde kepe welle the cytte that nyght, for my Lorde of Glouceter and the Byschoppe of Wynchester were not goode frendys as in that tyme . . . And by-twyne ix and x of the belle per come certayne men of the Byschoppys of Wynchester and drewe the chaynys of the stulpys at the brigge ende in Southeworke ys syde, the which were bothe knyghts and squyers, with a grete mayny of archerys, and they enbaytayled them . . . and then the pepylle of the cytte hyrde there of, and they in haste schytte in ther shoppys and come downe to the gatys of the brigge in kepyng of the cytte and savacyon of the cytte agayns the kyngys enmys.<sup>22</sup>

The quarrel between Beaufort and Gloucester was quieted only by the intervention of Gloucester's brother, the Duke of Bedford. Bedford, who was serving as regent in France, was summoned back to England by Beaufort who had realized that his position in London could not be improved by force. In his letter to Bedford, the bishop conveniently overlooked that it was his force of archers who had broken the peace in England. he was not exaggerating the gravity of the situation when he wrote, "for by my troth, if you tarry, we shall put

this land in peril with a battle."<sup>23</sup> Although the two men never came as close to armed conflict again following this confrontation, the minority of Henry VI was a constant factional struggle between the supporters of the bishop against those of the duke.

When the minority of Henry VI ended, the ascendancy of the Beaufort faction became established. The Duke of Gloucester retired from both the political and military battlefields after one last adventure in Calais and Flanders. His old enemy, the Duke of Burgundy, had besieged Calais, and Gloucester was sent to the city's relief. The military reputation of the duke, which was well established on the continent, allowed for an easily claimed victory. A contemporary poet relates the reaction of Burgundy's forces to the Duke of Gloucester's coming:

The next morrow, or yt was day,  
Early the duk fled oway,  
    And with him they off Gant.  
And after Bruges and Apres both  
To folow after they wer not loth;  
    Thus kept they thee avaunt  
For they had very knowyng  
Off the duk off Glouceturs cumyng,  
    Caleys to rescue.<sup>24</sup>

Although Gloucester had retired from political affairs in the late 1430's, he did not cease from his life-long habit of book collecting. His correspondence with the Italian humanist writers was most active during this phase of his life. His munificent gift of books of Oxford University also came during these years.



The duke's last political outburst resulted from the decision of the Beaufort faction at court to abandon the policy of Henry V and to seek peace with France. As a token of their desire for peace, the Duke of Orleans, who had been a captive in England since Agincourt, was released. Gloucester's bitterness at not being able to muster the political power to overturn the decision is apparent in the formal protest he lodged. The principal target of his anger was, of course, Cardinal Beaufort. It was the Cardinal, himself, that Gloucester was attacking more than his policy. The protest also shows signs that Gloucester realized his power was gone. He opens with a full recitation of his titles, emphasizing that his position was one of birth. The contrasts with the list of grievances against the Cardinal, whose position, Humphrey claimed, was the result of unbridled ambition. Humphrey begins, "The declaracone of Humfrey, sonne, brother and oncle of kyngys, duc of Gloucestre, of Holond, Zeland and Brabant, erle of Penbroke, of Henaude and of Flaundres, grete chamberlain of Englonde." He quickly moves to attack Beaufort, saying:

the cardinal the bisshop on Winchester toke upon him the state of cardinal which was nayed and denyed him by the kyng of most belssed memory, my lorde your fadre, (whom God assoyle!) saying he had a leef sette his coroune biside hym, as to see him were a cardinal's hatte. . . for he knewe ful wele the pride and ambicion that was in his persone.<sup>25</sup>

The position of Gloucester as an outsider at court is emphasized by his claim that Beaufort and his faction had

"estranged" him from knowledge of the king and court.<sup>26</sup>

The next misfortune to befall the duke after the defeat of the war policy to which he had given most of his life was the arrest and humiliation of his duchess. Eleanor Cobham was implicated by Roger Bolingbroke in the use of witchcraft to bring about the death of King Henry VI. Suprisingly, the duchess confessed her complicity in the crime. A chronicler relates that Eleanor was "amde to go throwe London, openly beryng a taper in hir hande by pennaunce enjoyned by the Chirche and Kynge, and after hir body to perpetuall prison."<sup>27</sup> The clerk who had named her was hanged, drawn, and quartered. Vickers concludes that the case against Eleanor Cobham was the work of Gloucester's enemies. He states, "It was her husband at whom the blow was aimed, and it was he that suffered as well as his wife."<sup>28</sup>

In the early 1440's, the Beaufort faction at court was no longer led by the Cardinal, himself. His place as Gloucester's chief tormentor had been taken by William de la Pole, the Duke of Suffolk, and the new queen, Margaret of Anjou. Through their efforts the king was gradually estranged from his uncle, until, by 1445, he held the Duke of Gloucester in open contempt.<sup>29</sup> It was the Duke of Suffolk who received the blame for the final downfall of Gloucester. Suffolk is blamed with spreading the rumor that the duke was preparing to take the throne by force. It was also Suffolk who prepared the reception for Gloucester when he was summoned

to a parliament at Bury, a Suffolk stronghold, to avoid arousing the common crowds in London where Gloucester was still popular. Gregory's Chronicle described the events that took place at Bury:

Ande at Schroffe tyde nexte aftyr there was ordaynyd a parlyment at Synt Edmondys bury; ande att the comyng of the goode Duke Umfray, sum tyme Duke of Glouceter, uppon the Satyrday anon as he was a lyght of hys hors he was a-restyde of dyvers lordys for treson by commaundement of hte kyng . . . And upon the Thursseday next folowyng he dyssesyde ande passyde owte of thys wrecchyde and false trobely worlde.<sup>30</sup>

It was believed by most men that the duke had been murdered. The chief suspect in the crime was the Duke of Suffolk. Suffolk did not long survive the Duke of Gloucester. He was charged with high treason, exiled and murdered while leaving the kingdom. The Duke of Gloucester was well-remembered by English chroniclers as "the good duke." His reputation, battered by the affair of his wife's downfall, was restored and perpetuated by his death while in Suffolk's keeping. An anonymous poet typifies the common man's reaction to Gloucester's death:

The good duc of Gloucestre, in the season  
Of the parlement at Bury beyng,  
Was put to dethe; and ay sithe gret mornyng  
Hath ben in Ingeland, with many a scharp schoure,  
Falshode, myschyef, secret synne upholyng,  
Whiche hath caused in Engeland endeletz langoure.<sup>31</sup>

The duke's reputation was further rehabilitated by the effects of his patronage of letters. The books which he had collected and donated to Oxford preserved his reputation as a scholar when that recollection of his military and political exploits had begun to dim.

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### CHAPTER III

#### THE BACKGROUND FOR FIFTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH ARTS AND LETTERS

The great gift that Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, and his associates gave to English learning was one of renewal. The new materials provided by their patronage and the revived interest generated by their contacts with Italy reanimated English learning. The duke and his contemporaries did not bring knowledge to the uneducated or civilization to the uncivilized, instead they helped to introduce a new attitude and appreciation of classical learning into a country which had a long history of scholastic achievement. English scholars had for centuries participated with their continental peers in the pursuit of learning. Their names were prominent among those who provided the intellectual energy of the Carolingian and Twelfth-Century renaissances. English born or trained men were also prominent contributors to the flowering of scholastic thought in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. From Bede in the eighth century until the zenith of scholastic thought as represented by William of Ockham, English minds were at the forefront of European learning. The fifteenth century represented a pause in that leadership, not a total breakdown in scholarship. This pause was the

result of a combination of factors. The Hundred Years War as well as dynastic difficulties distressed English finances and communications with the continent. The Great Schism divided scholarly clerics into opposing factions supporting either Rome or Avignon. Events such as the Peasant's Revolt of 1381 and the oppressive reaction to the Wycliffite heresy at Oxford made the normal functioning of England's universities more difficult. These troubles, which did not leave Oxford and Cambridge untouched, left the English universities devoted to a conservative program. However, the universities still served the principal purpose of medieval academic discipline described by Hastings Rashdall:

It trained pur intellect, encouraged habits of laborious subtlety, heroic industry, and intense application, while it left uncultivated the imagination, the taste, the sense of beauty--in a word, all the amenities and the refinements of the civilized intellect. It taught men to think and to work rather than to enjoy.<sup>1</sup>

The influence of the Italian humanists, which was spread to England as a result of the activities of the Duke of Gloucester and his contemporaries, allowed the English universities and their students to share in the reawakened appreciation of classical learning. It was the humanists who returned the enjoyment to scholarship.

The history of English learning was one of contribution to, and participation in, the culture of Western Christendom. Greek and Latin had been taught in England centuries before the Italian humanists spearheaded a revived interest in the

classics. Bede, in the eighth century, described his predecessors, Archbishop Theodore and the abbot Hadrian, as "men of learning both in sacred and in secular literature." He continued:

they attracted a large number of students, into whose minds they poured the waters of wholesome knowledge day by day. In addition to instructing in the holy Scriptures, they also taught their pupils poetry, astronomy, and the calculation of the church calendar. In proof of this, some of their students still alive today are as proficient in Latin and Greek as in their native tongue.<sup>2</sup>

In the late eighth century Alcuin was called upon by Charlemagne to bring his knowledge to the Frankish court. Alcuin was described as "a man more skilled in all branches of knowledge than any other person of modern times", who

was, moreover a pupil of Bede, that priest of great learning, himself, the most accomplished interpreter of the Scriptures since St. Gregory . . . His teaching bore such fruit among his pupils that the modern Gauls or Franks came to equal the Romans and Athenians.<sup>3</sup>

While Alcuin provided an English contribution to the Carolingian Renaissance, the Renaissance of the Twelfth Century was provided John of Salisbury. Charles Homer Haskins felt that John realized "the classics were not a mere training for theology, they were worthy of study for their own sake and for moral profit."<sup>4</sup> R. W. Southern believed that John of Salisbury found the ancient authors "a mine of information on science, philosophy, human nature and human speech to be worked over till they had given up all their secrets."<sup>5</sup> Southern later states that although England participated



fully in this humanism of the twelfth century, it did so in a derivative manner, and "made no great, distinctive contribution" of its own.<sup>6</sup> Still, John of Salisbury was an example of those twelfth century humanists who were struggling to reconcile the pagan philosophy behind classical learning with their own Christian prejudices. John speaks of this struggle between pagan and Christian philosophers in a letter to Gerald Pucelle:

We read that philosophers have of their own accord spurned and rejected riches as hindrances to virtue; but that any of them, even among pagans, put their possessions before the truth, has never yet been heard of. Indeed the precepts of the whole of pagan morality thrive on this very point: they repress and subject to reason, although they can never wholly quench, the passions of the carnal affections. But if God grant it to any man (since nature is incapable of it), there is no question that that man has set out on the true path of the philosopher's life.<sup>7</sup>

When the Greek classics became available the twelfth century scholars proved that Christian men could find worth in pagan writings. John could appreciate art and beauty in the classics as well as the useful information. He found in these pagan writings, as would his fifteenth-century descendants:

the timber of special knowledge and unique wisdom, delightful to the eye and good for food, which was forbidden to our forefathers, but is granted to our contemporaries.<sup>8</sup>

Through this attempted reconciliation of Christian and pagan philosophy the twelfth century humanists were preparing the path for the great scholastics to follow.

In the thirteenth century, Robert Grosseteste provided a fresh appreciation of what classical writings contained. His desire to strip away the clutter of earlier scholastic authorities in order to learn from the Greek and Latin authors in their original forms put him at odds with the traditional educational views. John of Salisbury, although born an Englishman, had been the product of the French cathedral school at Chartres. Grosseteste, however, was probably a product of English schools, and was at odds in approach and results with much that the great scholastic centers produced. One of his admirers, Roger Bacon, recognized the four principal areas of Grosseteste's originality. These differences were as emphasis on the study of science, the study of Greek, organizing translations, and the primacy of the Bible.<sup>9</sup> His distinctive style of personal involvement in questions, reaching conclusions by the result of his own investigations, was completely opposite the scholastic tendency to support a position by quoting the decisions of known authorities. Grosseteste, like the later Italian humanists, saw the value in personal observation to provide the proof of a scientific hypothesis. According to Southern, Grosseteste:

was not just lagging behind the scholastic leaders of the day: he was in a different world, in which the dissection of authorities, the refinement of doctrines and the hair-line distinctions of scholastic discussion played no part.<sup>10</sup>

In his desire to consult original sources, Grosseteste is in another way a forebearer of the fifteenth-century. He felt, as did the later Italian humanists, the original sources should be consulted, the information considered, and a conclusion reached by the reader, himself. This effort to achieve personal understanding through consultation of original sources led Grosseteste to be one of the few Englishmen, or Western Europeans, to attempt to learn Greek.

Roger Bacon followed Robert Grosseteste, and indeed helped preserve Grosseteste's reputation. Each was an English scholar acutely interested in developing the knowledge available in the ancient authors. Like Grosseteste, he had a clear view that original sources, devoid of the accumulated errors of translators, should be the ultimate authorities. For him, the methods of the scholastics that depended upon references to layers of authorities worked to obscure rather than to support the truth. Bacon, himself, said in his Opus Majus:

Now there are four chief obstacles in grasping the truth, which hinder every man, however learned, and scarcely allow any one to win a clear title to learning, namely, submission to faulty and unworthy authority, influence of custom, popular prejudice, and concealment of our own ignorance by an ostentatious display of our knowledge . . . For people without distinction draw the same conclusion from three arguments, than which non can be worse, namely for this the authority of our predecessors is adduced, this is the custom, this is the common belief; hence correct.<sup>11</sup>

The scholastic system, which Bacon criticized, survived both Grosseteste and Bacon and reached its zenith in the achievements of John Duns Scotus and William of Ockham. These men represented both the best and the worst of mature scholasticism. By the time that they wrote their major works, Thomas Aquinas had successfully reconciled Aristotelian philosophy with Christian theology. Scotus, who lived from about 1265 until 1308, found faults in the Thomist system but was unable to complete an all-encompassing system of philosophical thought to refute Aquinas' writings. In his short life, he did however manage to produce a mass of highly complex, intricately argued writings that attacked the Thomist idea that the order of creation was a direct reflection of divine reason. The complexity of his writing has been frequently criticized as representing scholasticism at its worst. In Scotus' works, Rashdall found:

The abuse of distinction and of syllogism, the habit of spinning cobwebs out of the philosopher's own inside, the multiplication of barbarous technicalities and unintelligible jargon--these are in popular estimation the characteristics of the scholastic philosophy.<sup>12</sup>

Scotus' successor as the leader of scholastic thought was William of Ockham. Ockham's career was divided into two phases by his summons to Avignon to answer charges of teaching heretical doctrines. Prior to this he had taught at Oxford, where he had lectured on the Sentences from 1317 until 1319, and then at the Franciscan studium generale in London.

Following his summons to Avignon in 1324, Ockham became involved in a dispute over poverty which divided the allegiance of the Franciscan between their General, Michael of Cesena, and Pope John XXII. Michael and Ockham eventually fled to Munich in 1328 to seek protection from Louis of Bavaria, the German Emperor. From this time until his death in 1349, Ockham concentrated on his political writings. However, his theological works which were his most influential. Ockham's attack on the realism of Thomas Aquinas served as the nucleus of a new school of nominalist thought. David Knowles noted that for Ockham the individual became "the only entity truly existing outside the mind, and the intuitive perception of the individual became the only perfect knowledge."<sup>13</sup> For Aristotle and Aquinas, the individual had only been a starting point for a process of abstraction.

The last of the great scholastics at Oxford, John Wyclif, was also credited as one of the first of the church reformers. Wyclif was educated at Oxford, where he was elected a Master of Balliol College sometime between 1356 and 1360. He left Oxford in 1361 to accept the living of Fillingham, Lincolnshire, but returned to Oxford in 1363. He received his doctorate in theology sometime before 1374. Unfortunately, Wyclif had a negative impact on fourteenth and fifteenth century English learning mainly due to the oppressive reaction to his teachings. Wyclif popularized ideas which had their

origins in the writings of Marsiglio of Padua and William of Ockham. It was from these men that he drew his inspiration for attacking papal authority and his ideas on the duty of the church to those it served. The writings of Wyclif disturbed more than just those scholastics sensitive to attacks on matters of theology. Civil authorities as well as spiritual ones were concerned by his notion that authority's purpose was to benefit those over whom it rules. If it failed in this, it was operating contrary to God's own example and no longer required obedience. This concept touched both the crowns of kings and the papal tiara, and was therefore dangerous. If popes no longer could demand obedience simply because they were the successors of St. Peter, how could kings require loyalty of their subjects through the notion of their divine right to rule? The Christian man, even if he was a lord, was bound to service of his fellow men by the example set by Christ during his life on earth. This ideal was in Wyclif's opinion lost on rich and powerful clerics. The example provided by the pope as head of Christ's church was most stridently attacked by Wyclif:

Christ was a poor man from his birth to his death, and shunned worldly riches and begging, according to state of innocence; but Anti-Christ by contrast, from the time of his birth until he dies, covets to be worldly rich, and devises by many ways how he may thus become rich. Christ was the most meek of men and bade us learn this of Him; but men say that the pope is the most proud man on earth, and makes lords kiss his feet, whereas Christ washed His Apostles feet . . . Christ was busy to preach the Gospel,

not for His worldly worship nor gain; men say that the pope permits this but would galdly make a law and make this law in more worship and dread than Christ's law . . . Christ was so patient and suffered so much His own wrong that He prayed for his enemies and taught His Apostles to take no vengeance; men say that the pope of Rome will be avenged on all kinds of men both by slaying and by cursing and other pains that he pretends to exercise.<sup>14</sup>

Wyclif undercut authority by providing a focus for civil and church rebellion even though civil and ecclesiastical authorities moved to prevent his ideas from spreading. His denial of transubstatiation, that the elements of bread and wine of the Eucharist materially become the body and blood of Christ, was the catalyst that brought about his condemnation by the Chancellor of the University in 1381. The Archbishop of Canterbury convened a synod to examine Wyclif's doctrines in May of 1382, and as a result the teaching of incorrect doctrines at Oxford was banned. Eventually, Wyclif was driven from his teaching post. His ideas still had great popular appeal, as Henry of Knighton reported in 1382:

In this time flourished master John Wyclif, rector of the church of Lutterworth in the county of Leicester, a very eminent doctor in theology in those days. In philosophy he was reputed second to none, and incomparable in scholastic studies . . . The Gospel which Christ handed down to clerics and doctors of the church, so that they might gently minister them to laymen and lesser folk according to the demands of the time and the needs of their persons . . . he translated from Latin into the English language so that it became vulgarized and open to laymen and ill-educated women . . . So the believers in these doctrines grew in number, and multiplied exceedingly, until they filled the whole kingdom . . . and they became so bold . . . that in public places they

shamelessly barked like dogs with unwearying voices. So . . . a great number of people were foolishly deceived and drawn into their sect.<sup>15</sup>

Stern measures were put into effect to combat the influence of Wyclif. The statute De Haeretico Comburendo passed in 1401 by parliament, declared that "none herceforth preach, hold, teach or instruct anything openly or secretly, or make or write any book contrary to the catholic faith." Violation of the statute was punishable by the offender being "burnt before the people in a conspicuous place; that such punishment may strike fear into the minds of others."<sup>16</sup> To make sure that no new heresies again erupted from overzealous scholastic debate, Archbishop Arundel submitted his constitutions against the Lollards in January of 1409. These banned: preaching without a licence, teaching any views on sacraments contrary to those of the Holy Mother Church, masters teaching in arts or grammar from meddling with matters of Catholic faith, reading any work by John Wyclif, translating Holy Scripture into English without diocesan consent, and disputing publicly or secretly about articles determined by the church.<sup>17</sup> Oxford had to be reminded at least twice by the archbishop that his constitutions must be obeyed, but this action taken by parliament and convocation would eventually stop the flow of fresh ideas from Oxford. The university was limited to stale debates on increasingly minute points of philosophy supported by references to accepted authorities. Since Wyclif's doctrines



were also attractive to malcontents on the continent and served to inspire heretics, including the Hussites of Bohemia, one of the goals of the Council of Constance, convened in 1414, was to eliminate these doctrines. Guillaume Fillastre, Cardinal Priest of St. Mark, noted in his diary on May 4, 1415:

the Council held a session to deal with the errors of John Wyclif of England, deceased, first with the forty-five articles that had been previously investigated, the books already condemned and his memory, and then 266 new articles, which the English brought forward. The King was present, as before, and the Cardinal Bishop of Ostia presided. A sentence was read condemning the forty-five articles and the books and memory of Wyclif.<sup>18</sup>

Another goal of the council of Constance was to set about reforming the abuses which Wyclif and his followers criticized in their works.

All of these great scholastics who had been leaders of English scholarship, had in common an attachment to Oxford University. From Grosseteste until Wyclif, they had all either studied or taught at Oxford. England's intellectual energy was centered at Oxford. It was among the oldest universities in Europe with a history stretching back to the mid-twelfth century. While not as impressive as the great cosmopolitan centers at Bologna, Paris, Montpellier, or Salamanca, it provided the English needs for an educated clerical class more than competently. Since the principal purpose of the medieval universities was to serve as a vocational institution, it was here that clerks were trained

in the intricacies of canon and civil law. These clerks, once trained by the university, provided the bureaucracy which ran the governments of the medieval states and the papacy. Alan Cobban noted that in the legalistic society centered on the competing rights and privileges conferred by a hierarchy of authorities, the dialectical adroitness of a university graduate had almost unlimited scope of application. Oxford entered the fifteenth century trying to recover from the conservative reaction to the Wyclif heresy. The effect of Archbishop Arundel's actions certainly must have removed the desire to follow any speculative or original course. His orders confirmed in the Convocation of Canterbury of January, 1409, included such oppressive measures as:

Every warden, head, or keeper of a college, hall, or hostel . . . shall inquire diligently every month at least in the college, hall, or hostel over which he presides, whether any scholar or inhabitant of any such college, hall, or hostel, had held, defended, or in any way proposed any conclusion, proposition, or opinion, sounding ill for the Catholic faith or good customs. (Such persons are to be warned, and then, if they offend again, are to suffer the great excommunication and suspended from all scholastic acts.)<sup>19</sup>

The result of the close monitoring was that Oxford remained tied to the program of studies it had followed successfully throughout the Middle Ages. The Munimenta Academica in 1431 listed the course of studies for those wishing admission to the level of master of arts. The courses and suggested texts

were still those of the medieval scholastics: Priscian for Grammar, Aristotle for rehetoric, Boethius for logic, rhetoric, music, and arithmetic, Euclid for geometry, and Aristotle for philosophy.<sup>20</sup>

While Oxford was still pursuing its medieval curriculum, in Italy humanism had already taken hold. At the beginning of the fourteenth century the Italians had begun to rediscover their classical heritage, and by the fifteenth century Renaissance humanism was firmly entrenched. The ideas of returning to original sources through study of classical languages, the value of individual thought, and an interest in the natural sciences had been explored by Grosseteste and Bacon, but had died out in England under the crushing weight of scholasticism. These ideas would have to be re-introduced from Italy into England during the fifteenth-century.

Although fourteenth-century England had the intellectual background necessary to appreciate the products of humanist scholars, it did not have the social and political environment which fostered the growth of humanism in Italy. The new ideas of the fourteenth and fifteenth century humanists were well received by the patrons that were established in the Italian city-states. Karl Hozknecht described the situation which allowed general patronage of intellectuals and artists:

such men as the Medici, once fairly well established looked about for a way of tightening their hold, and

by means of their wealth to use their authority to please the people and to cover their tyranny by the lustre of institutions of national glory. Thus, individual talent was stimulated, and even if freedom was on the decline, what had originally individual glory for an end now became the incentive to civic glory.<sup>21</sup>

The English crown was not firmly on anyone's head from the mid-fourteenth century until the reign of the Tudors. Unlike the Italian princes, the English king was not a wealthy tyrant who could distract his people by the patronage of artisans and writers who magnified his glory. Although many felt he was arbitrary, Richard II had little wealth to spare and did not tightly control his people as his letter to the Byzantine Emperor, Michael Paleologus, shows:

As for sending money, you know, what I believe is notorious enough throughout all quarters of the world, how some of our subject magnates and nobles, while we were yet of tender age and afterwards also, have made many attempts on the prerogative and royal right of our regal state, and have wickedly directed their malevolence even against our person . . . Since then, for the purpose of bringing this to a happy completion, we have gone to vast expenses, which have exhausted our exchequer, and very little time has since lapsed--for scarce seven months have passed since these things began--and as yet we have not been able to recover this outlay; we pray your Magnificence that the notoriety of these facts may obtain for us more abundant pardon.<sup>14</sup>

The crown of Richard II was indeed snatched away by Henry, Duke of Lancaster, who was also troubled by rebellions and lack of money. The need to continually raise new loans and to petition money from parliament demonstrated that there was little to spare for princely patronage. What money was not

spent on combating rebellious subjects was directed at the continual war in France. When the king's personal income was consumed and the parliamentary subsidies were gone, the crown had to rely upon loans raised from the king's wealthier subjects. By 1422 the greatest single debt of the crown was to Bishop Beaufort, who was owed the astounding sum of 20,000 pounds. The great magnates loaned their incomes and services to the crown, while the crown in turn poured these resources into its military operations in France. In order to maintain loyalty at home, the king used his patronage to reward his military supporters rather than to encourage the arts. The process of providing rewards with grants from the king's own holdings further reduced the crown income and made the need for further loans ever more pressing. The English monarchs of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were, therefore, hardly in the financial position to encourage the arts. This contrasted to the Italian princes who financed the humanist renaissance. Jacob Burckhardt compared the Italians with their northern contemporaries:

The illegitimacy of his rule isolated the tyrant and surrounded him with constant danger; the most honorable alliance which he could form was with intellectual merit, without regard to its origin. The liberality of the Northern princes of the thirteenth century was confined to the knights, to the nobility which served and sang. It was otherwise with the Italian despot. With his thirst for fame and his passion for monumental works it was talent, not birth, which he needed. In the company of the poet and the scholar he felt himself in a new position--almost, indeed, in possession of a new legitimacy.<sup>23</sup>

Even in the England of the fifteenth century only a few men would have the power or the money to engage in such activities. One such man was the Duke of Gloucester, another was his uncle, Cardinal Beaufort. Both of these men were ambitious and highly conscious of their reputations. A legitimacy enhanced by cultural largess could well serve the son of the usurper of the English crown and his recently legitimized kinsman, the Cardinal.

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE BEGINNINGS OF HUMANIST PATRONAGE IN ENGLAND

In August of 1417, Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, left England ostensibly to go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The actual reason for his journey is generally believed to have been a diplomatic one. Gerald Harriss argues that his departure was part of a diplomatic offensive conceived by Beaufort and Henry V to isolate the French politically and to prepare support for English military action in France. The bishop had been dispatched to the Council of Constance to overcome the deadlock between England's ally, Sigismund, King of the Romans, the cardinals, and the national delegations of Italy, France, and Spain. The purpose of the council was the reunification and reform of the Roman Church following the damage wrought by the Great Schism. Unfortunately, the English and German delegations, who preferred to pursue reform before the election of a new pope, were blocked by the desire of the cardinals and the other national delegations to proceed with the papal election before the other business. According to Harriss, Beaufort's task was to ease the English delegation away from Sigismund's position while preserving his support for English military action in France. Also, this diplomatic maneuver was designed to win the gratitude

of the newly-elected pope, who would, it was hoped, recognize the English claims to the French throne.<sup>1</sup> Beaufort's pilgrimage was not a well-disguised ploy and was suspected as a political scheme by those present at the Council. Guillaume Fillastre, the Cardinal-Priest of St. Mark, remarked in his diary of the council that:

after the coming of the Bishop of Winchester a dark suspicion arose in many minds and rumors were widely circulated to the effect that he was pretending to be on his way to Jerusalem but had no intention of going there, because the journey is impracticable in winter weather and few or none set out to travel at that season, especially to a country so remote. The King of the Romans, it was said, had contrived a scheme with the English--that the Bishop should be elected pope. To this end they brought about the above agreement through his mediation, that he might acquire grace and favor with the Council. Certain of the great prelates were asked by agents if they would consent to the scheme and help forward it. Some of the cardinals urged the college to send cardinals to visit him. Others said that would not be proper. All this activity created suspicion.<sup>2</sup>

The agreement to which Fillastre refers resulted in Beaufort negotiating the election of Martin V as pope of a reunited church. The diplomatic rewards anticipated by Henry V were not forthcoming: instead, Martin V began to reassert the Church's claims in England. The results of the bishop's involvement at Constance, however were far-reaching. The role played by Beaufort in the papal election earned him a cardinal's hat in December of 1417. The pope also named him legatus a latere for life in England, Wales, Ireland, and the other lands in obedience to Henry V, and

allowed him to retain his see of Winchester for life. In addition, the pope released the new cardinal from any obedience to Henry V, and allowed him to retain his see of Winchester for life. In addition, the pope released the new cardinal from any obedience to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Martin V's intention was to use the influence of a grateful Cardinal beaufort to help eliminate the Statute of Provisors and to increase papal collections in England.<sup>3</sup> The idea of a Cardinal-Legate acting independently in England was not at all attractive to either Henry V or his Archbishop of Canterbury. Henry would not have been discontented with an English cardinal residing in Rome and pursuing English interests at the Curia, but having a Cardinal-Legate pursuing papal interests in England was not acceptable. The Archbishop of Canterbury found a receptive audience for his letter of March 6, 1418, in which he begged Henry:

that ye will this matter take tenderly at heart and see the state of the church be maintained and sustained, so that everich of the ministers thereof hold them content with their own part--for truly he hath least hath enow to reckon for--and that your poor people be not piled nor oppressed with divers exactions and unaccustomed, through which they should be the more feeble to refresh you, our liege lord, in time of need and when it liketh you to clepe upon them, and all pleas and slanders ease in your church.<sup>4</sup>

Henry denied Beaufort his cardinal's hat, threatening him with the forfeiture of all of his goods if he chose to accept the papal honors Martin V had offered. Eventually, Beaufort

used his wealth to buy a pardon from Henry by lending the king 17,666 pounds in 1421.

The Council of Constance influenced English history in more important ways than a dispute over a cardinal's hat. Beaufort had increased in stature as a result of his key role in the election of Martin V. A man of his station required a secretary who could compose his correspondence in the most fashionable Latin, and for this task Beaufort recruited Poggio Bracciolini. Poggio was lured away from the Curia by Beaufort's promises of financial reward, as well as the possibility of finding forgotten manuscripts such as the copies of Origen seen by Chrysoloras in the libraries of English monasteries.<sup>5</sup> Through Poggio, Bishop Beaufort began the process of introducing humanist-trained Italian scholars into England. In addition to Constance providing the meeting place for Beaufort and Poggio, the council also influenced English intellectual development by the reunification of the Roman Church. The papacy helped introduce humanist values into English society through members of the Curia who were sent into England to restore the Roman Church's power following the Great Schism.

Poggio Bracciolini had been a member of the Curia before Beaufort persuaded him to come to England. In a biographical sketch of Poggio, Vespasiano da Bisticci wrote:

Messer Poggio was born at Terranuova, a Florentine village. His father sent him to the University,

where he remained as a teacher, being very learned in the Latin tongue and well conversant with Greek. He was an excellent scribe in ancient characters, and in his youth he was wont to write for a living, providing himself thus with money for the purchase of books and for his other needs. It is well known that the court of Rome is a place where distinguished men may find a position and reward for their activity, and thither he accordingly went, and when his quickness of wit had become known, he was appointed apostolic secretary. Afterwards he opened a scrivener's office, and in these two vocations was known as a man of integrity and good repute.<sup>6</sup>

Poggio left for England in the autumn of 1418 with the anticipation of monetary rewards and exciting finds of classic manuscripts. He had already established a reputation in humanist circles by discovering lost works and while in Constance, he had occupied his free time with his literary detective work. According to Vespasiano, Poggio had found six of Cicero's orations, and other works by Tully, Lucretius and Valerius Flaccus. He wrote to his friend Guarino da Verona in December, 1416:

For by good luck, as much ours as his, while we were doing nothing in Constance, an urge came upon us to see the place where he (Quintilian) was being kept prisoner. This is the monastery of St. Gall, about twenty miles from Constance. And so several of us went there, to amuse ourselves and also to collect books of which we heard that they had a great many. There amid a tremendous quantity of books which it would take too long to describe, we found Quintilian still safe and sound, though filthy with mold and dust. For these books were not in the Library, as befitted their worth, but in a dungeon at the bottom of one of the towers, where not even men convicted of a capital offense would have been stuck away.<sup>7</sup>

Poggio hoped to continue his successes in England and described his activities there to his friend, Nicolaus de Niccolis:

You see that I am not allowing this time which I have free of business to slip away through laziness but that I am doing something worthwhile. For I devote the greater part of the day to books; the rest I use up by walking around, seeking and turning over bundles of books in case I should find anything good. But so far I have found nothing of interest to you except the small word book about which I had written before, which is by Nonius Marcellus like the rest.<sup>8</sup>

This letter was written in January, 1420, but by October of that year Poggio's outlook had soured. He had become discouraged by lack of any new discoveries. He wrote:

What Manuel saw long ago I cannot imagine; I know only this, that there are no books of Origen there now. I did not make a careless search, but there was no one who could say that he had ever seen them. We can find plenty of men given over to gluttony and lust but very few lovers of literature and those few barbarians, trained rather in trifling debates and in quibbling than in real learning. I saw many monasteries, all crammed with new doctors, none of whom you would even have found worth listening to . . . Nearly all the monasteries of this island have been built within the last four hundred years and that has not been an age which produced either learned men or the books which we seek; these books were already sunk without trace.<sup>9</sup>

His disillusionment resulted in Poggio requesting that he be allowed to leave England and return to Italy. He felt that he had "been rolling this stone too long, here and always in vain."<sup>10</sup> Poggio realized that his chances of financial reward were dim. He wrote repeatedly to his friend Nicolaus of his desire to return to the Roman Curia and of the promises made to him by Beaufort. He wrote in November of 1421 that the Bishop of Winchester had:

made me many promises of his own accord which he has not kept; also, although he had so often broken his promises, he kept encouraging me to be with him, offering to do a great many things. Though I did not really believe him, he had some influence with me because I saw that he could easily accomplish what he was promising if only he would stick to it.<sup>11</sup>

Poggio felt carried "hither and yon as though on waves" and stayed in England only because of the influence of the Papal Collector, Simon do Taramo, who counseled him to give Beaufort more time, and because of the disastrous state of the Roman Curia. It would be foolish, Poggio felt to "flee from toil into sorrow" by leaving the service of Beaufort to an uncertain life in the Curia.<sup>12</sup>

The promises made by Beaufort in late 1417 were probably a victim of the bishop's ill-fated elevation to the cardinalate. It would not have been a problem for a papal legate in England who also possessed the financial resources of the see of Winchester to provide a more than adequate living for his retainers. Unfortunately for Poggio, however, Beaufort was absorbed for much of the humanist's stay in England by his efforts to protect his fortune and his position of favor with Henry V. The bishop's acceptance of papal favors without consulting the king cost him dearly. K. B. McFarlane claims that Henry V went as far to threaten Beaufort with "loss of his bishopric, degradation to the rank of priest, and . . . with the forfeiture of all or part of his worldly goods as well."<sup>13</sup> The bishop was forced to work quickly to restore himself to favor and to that end he wrote an almost groveling

apology to the king. This apology was necessiated by Beaufort compounding his first offense of accepting the cardinal's hat by neglecting to obey Henry's summons to appear at his marriage to Catherine of Valois.<sup>14</sup> In 1421, the bishop used other means to restore his influence. In May of that year Beaufort advanced the enormous sum of 17,666 pounds to the crown. McFarlane states that this was "almost the whole balance of his fortune."<sup>15</sup> In return for this financial contribution, Beaufort was allowed to retain his bishopric and its incomes. McFarlane wrote of the conflict between the bishop and Henry V:

A business arrangement it may well have been, for both men were hardened politicians, used to driving keen bargains. Neither uncalculating generosity nor the obstinate pursuit of the impracticable were lines of action at all likely to appeal to them. But this was no agreement between two free and well-matched adversaries. The sacrifices were all on Beaufort's side.<sup>16</sup>

In view of these circumstances, it is not difficult to see why the bishop, who was struggling to preserve his own position, could not fulfill the promises made to his Latin secretary.

In spite of Poggio not discovering any important manuscripts or receiving the great financial rewards Beaufort had promised, the time he spent in England was an important contribution to the advancement of humanist ideas in that country. He impacted directly the other members of the Bishop of Winchester's household, especially Nicholas



Bildestone, Beaufort's chancellor, and Richard Petworth, who was Beaufort's secretary. Bildestone shared with Poggio an interest in classical literature, although he was at best only a "dilettante" who "used his familiarity with polite letters to improve the standard of his diplomatic language."<sup>17</sup> Their friendship survived Poggio's time spent in England and when, in 1424, Bildstone was in Rome, Poggio warmly recommended him to his friend Nicolaus de Niccolis. He wrote:

Nicolaus Bildeston, doctor of laws, ambassador of the King of England, is a very great friend of mine, for we both served the same master and were inevitably together. He is anxious to have some of Petrarch's books; please try to dig something up for us that he can take with him. He will buy them no matter what the price; but please take care that he is not cheated; at the same time he will buy a History of the Emperors. Whatever he asks of you, please do your best for him; that will give me the greatest pleasure. Treat him as if he were your Poggius, in his desires.<sup>18</sup>

Richard Petworth found Poggio's own writings more interesting than those of the ancients and therefore requested that the humanist copy some of them for his own use. Petworth made use of his connections with other admirers of neo-classicism such as the Duke of Gloucester and Adam de Moleyns to introduce Poggio's work to a wider English audience. Although Petworth showed Poggio's work to Gloucester, he did not establish a personal connection between the two men, possibly a result of Poggio's employment in the household of Gloucester's chief rival. From Poggio Petworth also acquired a desire to improve his own Latin style. His writing, however, remained

"over orante, full of euphusisms, and defective in grammer."<sup>19</sup>  
 It was Petworth's effort to expand the appreciation for Poggio's work which had the greatest impact in moving England toward accepting Italian humanist ideals of style. In Poggio's works, the English found "a beauty worthy of imitation" and his letters were included in epistolaries and formularies which contained the "choicest specimens of Latin finery."<sup>20</sup>  
 In fact Poggio, himself, collected, edited, and published his own letters due to the demand for examples of his style. In a letter from Bologna in 1436, Poggio tells Franciscus Marescalcus Ferrariensis:

when I learned that quite a few people, either stirred by good will or induces by an eagerness to pursue some trifle, were not only diligently seeking my letters, such as they are, but were reading them for pleasure and enthusiasm, and when I was fequently asked to locate them and assemble them in a volume for the general good of the uneducated, I complied.<sup>21</sup>

The Roman Curia was also a force for promoting a shift toward English acceptance of Italian humanism. The Curia attracted the best and brightest minds of Italian humanism by offering careers which still allowed writers sufficient time to pursue their independent studies. John D'Amico speaks of a "clericalization" of humanism, which saw a close relationship between humanism and the Curia. The humanists found no threat in taking holy orders. The minor orders required no strong sense of vocation, and the vagueness of their rules required little alteration in the humanists normal

behavior.<sup>22</sup> This attitude is reflected in the letters of Poggio, in which he speaks repeatedly of wishing to acquire a benefice, however poor, which would leave him time for his studies. The religious duties involved were often spoken of as a burden. When Beaufort finally procured a benefice for Poggio he complained that the bishop had given him a "small living with a cure of souls" which he considered "of little value" since he "did not wish to assume the burden of the priesthood."<sup>23</sup> Indeed Poggio later complained that if he were offered a secular secretaryship, "I should leave these sacred occupations which I took up only unwillingly; not that I in any way despise the religious life, but because I do not think I shall ever be the sort of man they say I ought to be."<sup>24</sup> The restored papacy was glad to have these humanists in its court to help rebuild the prestige lost during the Great Schism. D'Amico credits the fifteenth-century popes with having a pragmatic appreciation of the humanists' literary talents as well as an acceptance of their pursuit of intellectual projects on their own time. The popes also appreciated the diplomatic and political advantages of the humanists. Humanist propaganda helped to present the papacy as a cultural force equal to or greater than any of Europe's secular courts.

The influence of the Papacy on English humanism was carried directly to England though the financial offices

of the Curia. The chief office of this division was the Camera Apostolica, or apostolic chamber, which had the duty of collecting the monies due to the Holy See. These monies included annates and Peter's pence, as well as the incomes derived from the Papal States.<sup>25</sup> This office had a direct impact on English humanism through the role played by the Papal Collector. The Collectors sent to England during the fifteenth century were men who had been trained by Italian humanists. Poggio spoke of one Papal Collector of England, Simon de Taramo, as his "great friend" and a "very learned man."<sup>26</sup> Simon met Poggio during his stay in England. Although he established friendly relations with both Bishop Beaufort and Poggio, he made an unfavorable impression upon the Duke of Gloucester by meddling in the divorce suit of Gloucester and Jacqueline of Hainault.<sup>27</sup> Taramo was another voice spreading the claim of large numbers of forgotten manuscripts in England. Poggio tended to believe his evidence was hearsay due to the short time the Collector had been in England. Although Taramo had the standard classical education of most curialists of his time, Weiss noted that his writings were amateurish and showed a knowledge of the exact classical quotations. The Papal Collector who had the most influence on English humanism was Piero del Monte, who served as Collector in England from 1435 until 1440. Del Monte was a student of Guarino da Verona

and had attended the universities at Padua and Paris. Unlike Simon da Taramo, del Monte found a friend in the Duke of Gloucester. The Collector had frequent conversations with Gloucester which kept the duke informed on the latest trends in Italian letters. He also served the duke as an advisor upon matters of humane taste.<sup>28</sup> Del Monte introduced writers to the duke, such as Ambrogio Traversari, who was urged by del Monte to send Gloucester some of his works. Del Monte used the dedication of his only major work to deliver unsolicited praise of Gloucester, comparing him to Julius Caesar, Augustus, and Theodosius, all of whom had combined brilliant military careers with the study of ancient classics. Del Monte also lauded Gloucester's many interests and describes a man who delighted in the discussion of literary matters, amazing del Monte with the breadth of his memory.<sup>29</sup> In addition to his personal relationship with Gloucester, del Monte established ties with English scholars such as Andrew Holes, Nicholas Bildestone, John Wethamstede, Thomas Bekynton, and Adam de Moleyns mainly through their mutual connection to the Roman Curia. Bekynton corresponded with del Monte while he was official secretary to Henry VI. Whethamstede, however, had a closer relationship with the Collector, who provided him with Italian Books and introduced him to the works of Plutarch and Bruni. It was, however, his position as Papal Collector which placed him in contact

with Gloucester as the Protector of England and with the other important members of English society.

The fourth division of the Curia also had a substantial impact on English humanism by serving as an example. The Cancellaria Apostolica, or apostolic chancery, took care of the papacy's general administrative work. It had the task of issuing papal letters, bulls, and the paperwork associated with beautification, canonization, judicial statements, and the nominations of cardinals. This office was concerned with the maintenance of proper form and correct language.<sup>30</sup> It was in the chancery that the most humanists were employed. Their talents were most suited for preparation of documents in fluid, elegant Latin. These were precisely the talents required for the most prominent office to which the humanist could aspire, that of the apostolic secretariat.<sup>31</sup> Poggio Bracciolini was one of the humanists who reached this level. The apostolic secretary not only achieved a position of prominence in the papal court, but also had the opportunity to enrich himself. Vespasiano commented that Poggio became "very rich through long residence at the court of Rome" and claimed that Bishop Beaufort's former secretary had amassed "much ready money, property, many houses in Florence, fine household goods, and a noble library."<sup>32</sup> The example set by the employment of humanists in the papal government was discussed by John D'Amico. He felt that the choice of humanists for offices in the papal secretariat reflected

a major development in both humanism and Renaissance government. Princes came to realize the value of the administrative and diplomatic services rendered by humanists. The example of the Papacy was followed by Florence and Naples, which used humanists to lend legitimacy to their governments and to avoid having to rely on the aristocracy to fill administrative posts.<sup>33</sup>

The model of having a Latin secretary to prepare court documents was not lost on either Bishop Beaufort or his chief rival, the Duke of Gloucester. Beaufort snatched Poggio from the Curia following their meeting at the Council of Constance. Gloucester, wishing to enhance his reputation as a great European prince, and also realizing that a prominent humanist as his secretary was "an indisputable mark of grandeur and power", first turned to Leonardo Bruni.<sup>34</sup> Bruni, however, was esteemed and comfortable in Italy and had no desire to go to England. Gloucester then sought the advice of del Monte, who suggested an acquaintance of his, Tito Livio Frulovisi. Frulovisi was another of Guarino da Verona's students who had earned his living by running a school in Venice. His time there was punctuated by violent quarrels with his rivals and critics, and it was his unpopularity which may have led him to accept Gloucester's offer.<sup>35</sup> His principal duties while in the duke's household were the preparation of Gloucester's correspondence and the writing

of a biography of Gloucester's dead brother, Henry V. This book had another purpose besides the praise of Henry, it was also pamphlet to glorify Gloucester's loyalty to his brother and to restore waning confidence in the war policy he supported. Frulovisi's most lasting contribution to English letters was the precedent set by his Vita Henrici Quinti. Weiss notes that this work anticipated Polydore Vergil in combining national feeling with foreign culture. English national sentiment was effectively expressed in the elegant new Latin style of Frulovisi.<sup>36</sup> Frulovisi's bad temper eventually cost him the support of Gloucester and he returned to Venice in 1439.

The advice of del Monte was followed again in filling the vacant secretaryship, Gloucester's next choice to serve him as secretary was Antonio Becarria. Beccaria, a native of Verona, had been a pupil of Vittorino da Feltre before arriving in England in either 1438 or 1439. His duties went beyond chancery activities to include the translation of several texts, such as several tracts of St. Athanasius and Boccaccio's Corbaccio, from Italian or Greek into Latin. Weiss notes that St. Athanasius must have appealed to Humphrey's "uncompromising orthodoxy."<sup>37</sup> Beccaria used his dedicatory preface to Boccaccio's poetry to praise Gloucester's many virtues, the principal one being his greater glory of having recalled scholarship and literature "from death unto



life" at a time of literary decadence and decay.<sup>38</sup> Beccaria remained in England until about 1445 or 1446, after which he returned to Italy where he continued to maintain cordial relations with Gloucester.

The employment of Latin secretaries in England by Beaufort and Gloucester was an important step in bringing humanist learning to their country. These scholars brought humanist education and a talent for Latin letters with them to England where they served as a model for the English. The example set by the Curia in the use of humanist talent was followed by both Italian princes and also by men such as Beaufort and Gloucester who saw that great men needed to surround themselves with great talent. The standards of style set by the Curial staff served as an example followed by other courts aspiring to greatness. On a personal level, the individual contacts made by the Italians in England inspired English scholars to seek out classical literature and to pursue humanist education. The ties established by Italians who came to England either as secretaries or as Curial officials served to promote continued exchange of fresh ideas and to provide access by patrons in England with the latest in Italian humanist writings. The connections established between Italy and England did not revolutionize English scholarship, but instead built a bridge over which the traffic of ideas could begin to flow.

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## CHAPTER V

### SECONDARY ENGLISH PATRONS OF HUMANISM

There were Englishmen as well as Italians who aided in the transmittal of Italian humanist learning to fifteenth-century England. Men such as Thomas Bekynton, Andrew Holes, Adam de Moleyns, and Vincent Clement added to the appreciation of humanist values in England while they, themselves, benefitted from the largess of their more powerful patrons, the Duke of Gloucester and Bishop Beaufort. Although they were the recipients of patronage, it was not for their literary or scholastic achievements that they were rewarded, but for the expertise these talents lent to their efforts as diplomats and bureaucrats. These men were well-educated clerics who rose to the chief posts of church and state through the practical exercise of humanist skills valued by the government. The prestige of a well-written letter or document had become a necessity for European governments, and England looked to these men to provide that prestige.

The most interesting of this second tier of patronage was probably Thomas Bekynton. He was born sometime between 1385 and 1390 into an obscure family and took his name from his probable birthplace of Bekynton, near Frome, in Somerset.<sup>1</sup>

He was well-educated at Winchester, which he entered in 1404, and New College, Oxford, where he became a fellow in 1406. It was during his residence at Oxford that he attracted the notice of the Duke of Gloucester, who employed him in his household as chancellor in 1420. From this time onward he was the recipient of multiple church preferments including the rectory of St. Leonard's, near Hastings; the vicarage of Sutton Courtney, in Berkshire; the archdeaconry of Buckinghamshire; the prebendary of Bilton, which he exchanged for that of Warthill; and the Deanery of Arches.<sup>2</sup> With Gloucester's assistance, he also moved forward in his secular career. He became secretary to Henry VI in about 1437. While in this post Bekynton was chosen to represent the king in several important embassies. In 1439, he was among the ambassadors sent to conduct negotiations with the French at Calais. In 1442 he was sent to negotiate a marriage alliance between Henry VI and John IV, Count of Armagnac, but his purpose was defeated by military disasters which made returning to England the new goal. In 1443, both his secular and ecclesiastical careers reached their zeniths when Bekynton became Keeper of the Privy Seal and was consecrated the Bishop of Bath and Wells.

It was in his position of secretary to the king that Bekynton exerted the greatest influence on humanism in England. Roberto Weiss found that Bekynton's importance

resided in his "introduction of humane values into the official writings of the English government."<sup>3</sup> The contact Bekynton had as chancellor in Gloucester's household while Frulovisi served as "poet and orator" undoubtedly strengthened Bekynton's admiration of the epistolary skill of the Italian humanists. He learned to view classical learning "not only as an intellectual attainment but also as a thing of practical value."<sup>4</sup> It is through Bekynton's collection of official correspondence that a description of the time in which he worked and a portrait of the man, himself, is found. George Williams, the editor of The Official Correspondence of Thomas Bekynton, implies that the preservation of such a large collection of official documents, letters, and personal papers was for use in preparation of an epistolary formulary.<sup>5</sup> The letters also illustrate the ties between Bekynton and Italian humanists by preserving their correspondence. Included in this collection are letters between Bekynton and Biondi of Forli who provided the English cleric a manuscript of his Decades as a gift in proof of friendship. The letters also reveal personal characteristics such as Bekynton's short temper and his contempt for bad Latin. In an exchange between John Whethamstede and Bekynton in 1439, Whethamstede, as abbot of St. Alban's, writes requesting Bekynton's assistance in obtaining a licence in mortmain for the abbey. He received

a reply that rebuked him for being self-willed and derides the poor quality of his Latin.<sup>6</sup> The abrasiveness of Bekynton's manner is also seen in a letter from William Grey, Bishop of Lincoln, who marvelled at his actions as the Dean of Arches:

Well beloved brother, I greet you well, marvelling greatly that last Friday, when you had dined with me, and I, as you saw, took my horse to ride away, one came to me, just as I was going out, at my gate, and inhibited me by your authority and cited me to appear before you within fourteen days next following; . . . And since you are the judge of the highest spiritual court in the this land, to whom all the prelates of this province must have recourse, I think you should be right well informed what passed under your seal, and especially against a prelate; and therefore if your have done me law to cite me at such short notice, so be it. Nevertheless I will not disobey in any way but, by the grace of God, I will appear at my day, and satisfy the law in full. But blame me not if I, another day, do as little favour to you, in your jurisdiction, if it shall lie in my power, as it shall right well, I trust to God; may he ever keep you.<sup>7</sup>

Bekynton evidently realized he had overstepped the limits of his position and quickly wrote a letter to the offender bishop promising his devotion to him and asking Grey to view his actions in a more favorable light.

The collection of official correspondence also contains evidence of Bekynton's diplomatic skill and of the intrigue necessary to procure advancement in the Roman Church. In an account of his embassy to the Count of Armagnac, he describes the envoys inability to pursue their original goal of chosing a bride from the three daughters of the count due to French military actions. Despite Bekynton's failure in the goal of the embassy the king still complimented him:

Right trusty, &c., we grete you hertly wel, and late you wete that we have received your lettres, by the which we understand to oure grete displeasure the grete enterprises that our adversary of Fraunce doeth dayly upon our duchie of Guienne and subgetts of the same. And also hit hath be further reported upon us of the grete diligences, discrete labours, and demeneg that ye do at all tymes aboute the surete of our cite of Burdeaux, and the continuancis of true obeissaunce unto us wards of our subgetts therin; where of we can you right good and special thanke, and praye you and nethelless charge you of good perseveraunce in the same.<sup>8</sup>

Bekynton's correspondence with Rome is preserved in letters between himself, Andrew Holes, and Vincent Clement. Holes and Clement both served the interest of England in Rome, with Clement being particularly effective at court intrigue. His abilities served Bekynton well when Henry VI provided him to the see of Bath and Wells. The actions of Clement on his behalf were the subject of many letters which provide an interesting look into the money and intrigue necessary to gain advancement. Prior to his nomination by the Pope to the bishopric of Bath and Wells, Bekynton received letters from Pope Eugenius IV, the Cardinal Treasurer, the Papal Chamberlain, and the Papal Secretary all thanking him for the generous gifts provided to them through his agent Vincent Clement. The Cardinal Treasurer compliments Clement's zealous actions on Bekynton's behalf and notes that the pope had been so impressed that he made Clement a subdeacon.<sup>9</sup> Once confirmed in the see, Bekynton was an efficient and conscientious bishop who fulfilled the duties of his ecclesiastical office with the same care which he had lavished



on his secular career. He dealt effectively with those in his diocese whether they were abbots of great houses or powerful noblemen. Letters in his correspondence include sharp exchanges between Bekynton and the Abbot of Glastonbury as well as some reproving letters to the Duke of Somerset. While bishop of Bath and Wells, Bekynton used his wealth to help complete a project begun by Richard Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln, to found a college of theologians to combat Lollardy. It was Bekynton's money that allowed the rector's house at Lincoln College to be built. In his own diocese Bekynton's liberality provided for the completion of an episcopal palace, improvements to the water supply, and a group of tenements by the market place, which were intended to provide an income to fund a memorial chantry. Bekynton must have provided a much needed example of asset management to other churchmen who had disposable wealth. His gifts to Oxford were the sort of actions Henry VI described in a letter to convocation. The king wrote:

It is now publicly said that unless we choose to succour our universities both of them are likely to fall into extreme desolation. The number of students in them is greatly diminished, as indeed there is none, or scarcely any, gain or advantage to be hoped for from study. The only way we can think of pouring oil into the almost extinguished lamps is by causing them to have some better provision made for them from the patrimony of the church. The Lord in the Gospel gave his vine--that is, the catholic church--to be tended by learned and skillful husbandmen, so that we feel ashamed to see so many learned men as are to be found in our universities growing old without any

promotion or any fruit of their studies. On this ground we exhort your fatherhoods and require of you that you should take effectual measures for the promotion of those who are graduates, and of those about to become so. By so doing you shall deserve well of the Lord of the vineyard and of us.<sup>10</sup>

Bekynton's successor as Keeper of the Privy Seal was Adam de Moleyns. Unlike Bekynton, Moleyns came from a well-established family. He was the second son of Sir Richard Molyneux of Sefton, Lancashier, and his distinguished ancestors included William de Molines, one of the Norman invaders, whose name stands eighteenth on the Battle Abbey Roll. Adam de Moleyns' grandfather was created a knight-banneret following the Battle of Navarret by the Black Prince. Although he was not a self-made man as was Bekynton, his path to prominence was similar. Like Bekynton, his value to the state was the result of his education. Moleyns as a second son was intended for a career in the church and, therefore, received the education necessary to prepare him for clerical service. Nothing definite is known of the details of his schooling, but Roberto Weiss cites his degrees in utroque and his bequests of books to Oxford upon his death as evidence that he was probably educated at that university.<sup>11</sup> The first use Moleyns made of his education was at the papal court. During his service in Rome from about 1430 until 1435. Moleyns made contact with prominent humanists such as Poggio and Aeneas Sylvius

Piccolomini. The influence exerted by the high standards of the Curia was reflected in the Latin style adopted by Moleyns. Aeneas Sylvius, the future Pius II, complimented Moleyns' Latin usage as the best in England since Peter of Blois and attributed his high degree of learning to the wise patronage of the Duke of Gloucester.<sup>12</sup> His letters followed classical models and were considered superior in style to his contemporaries, including his friend, Thomas Bekynton. Moleyns also maintained an association with some of the most enlightened men in England. Among his circle were Richard Petworth, Thomas Bekynton, Vincent Clement, and Piero del Monte.

Moleyns' career in England began when he returned from Rome in 1435 bearing a message for Cardinal Beaufort from Pope Eugenius IV. In 1436, he was appointed Clerk of the Council and was soon sent abroad on diplomatic missions to Aix la Chapelle and Cologne in 1438, and to Frankfurt in 1441. In addition to his secular duties, Moleyns began to accumulate multiple benefices. In 1440 he was made archdeacon of Salisbury. These were followed in 1441 by his acquisition of the living of Cottingham, Yorkshire, and his elevation to the deanery of Salisbury. Moleyns' church career peaked in 1445, when he was consecrated Bishop of Chichester. His secular career reached its zenith when Moleyns served as Keeper of the Privy Seal from 1444 until 1449. Moleyns,

however, fell into an adversarial role to the Duke of Gloucester by his support of Cardinal Beaufort's party. Bekynton's replacement as Keeper of the Privy Seal by Moleyns reflected the greater influence that Beaufort's faction, then led by William de la Pole, exerted on Henry VI's council. Moleyns was even involved in some of Gloucester's great personal tragedies. He was among those who presented evidence before the commissioners at the trial of Eleanor Cobham, the Duchess of Gloucester, for charges of sorcery, and it was he, as Keeper of the Privy Seal, who sealed the warrant for Gloucester's arrest in 1447. The chief political difference between Moleyns and the duke was over the Beaufort faction's efforts at ending the war in France. Gloucester could not abandon his brother's policy while Moleyns was active in the drive to replace Henry V's dream of French conquest with a treaty of peace. Indeed, Moleyns was one of those sent to France in 1444:

to trete for pees, and to make a maryage for the Kynge with teh Dukys doughter of Agnios, which pees was made for xvij monthes, and seuerte hadde of the maide for a maryage a for recorde of all the riales of Fraunce in presens of oure enbassetours. And so they came a yene in to Engeland, presentyng the kynge this tythings, for the whiche was made bothe in Inglonde and Fraunce grete solemnyte.<sup>13</sup>

Moleyns was not well-liked by the English public, who resented him for his support of pro-French policies and his wealth. As a staunch supporter of William de la Pole, Moleyns also received his share of blame for the death of the Duke of

Gloucester. It was not surprising, then, that his own death went unlamented. An English Chronicle recorded the violent deaths of Adam de Moleyns and the Bishop of Salisbury in the year 1450:

And this year, the 9th day of January, Master Adam Moleyns, Bishop of Chichester and keeper of the king's privy seal, the king sent to Portsmouth, to make payment of money to certain soldiers and shipmen for their wages; and so it happened that with boisterous language, and also for curtailment of their wages, he fell at variance with them, and they fell on him, and cruelly killed him there.

And this same year, in the feast of Saint Peter and Paul after midsummer, that is to say, the last day of June save one, Master William Alscough, Bishop of Salisbury, was slain by his own parishioners and people . . . These two bishops were amazingly covetous men, and badly liked among the common people, and wer held suspect of many faults, and were assenting and willing to the death of the Duke of Gloucester, as it was said.<sup>14</sup>

The principal contribution made by Moleyns and the higher standard of epistolary excellence which he had set. Further contributions to English humanism were limited, however, by the weight of his duties as bishop and Keeper of the Privy Seal and consisted mainly of book collecting and letter writing.

Upon Moleyns' death, the Privy Seal passed to yet another cleric influenced by Italian humanism. Andrew Holes had spent a longer period of time in Italy than any of his predecessors in office. Consequently, he had been more greatly influenced by what he had read and seen. He had also made a more durable impression on the Italians and he was one of only

two Englishmen described by Vespasiano da Bisticci in his memoirs. Just as Moleyns had been, Holes was a younger son of an important family. His father, Sir Hugh de Hulse, of Cheshire, was the Chief Justice of Cheshire and Judge of the King's Bench. His family also had extensive holdings in the Welsh marches. Holes was schooled at Winchester and New College, Oxford, where he became a fellow in 1414. He held his fellowship until 1420, when he began accumulating a number of multiple benefices. His acquisition of the rectory of Davenham in the diocese of Lichfield gave Holes the necessary monetary freedom to continue his studies at Oxford until 1427. By November of 1428, Holes had become a gentleman of the king, perhaps through the efforts of his friend Thomas Bekynton, who was himself in the service of the Duke of Gloucester. In 1429, Henry VI sent Holes with Robert Fitz-Hugh on an embassy to Rome. He would remain at the Curia following FitzHugh's return to England in September, 1432, and served as the king's proctor until 1444. He followed the pope when the Roman rebellion of June, 1434, forced the pontiff to flee to Leghorn and then on to Florence. Holes was a member of the curia during its stay in northern Italy and was therefore a resident of the greatest center of Italian humanism. Josephine Bennett places Holes in Ferrara during 1438 when the council met to unify the Greek and Roman churches. After its move to Florence in 1439, the council

drew together such luminaries as Poggio, Chrysoloras, Guarino da Verona, Leonardo Bruni, and the future Cardinal Bessarion. Holes remained in contact with Bessarion since the Greek became a member of the papal household in which Holes, himself, was employed. Vespasiano relates how Holes adopted Italian ways and gained Italian friends during his years with the Buria. In his memoirs, Vespasiano described Holes:

He was a man of the highest repute, both on account of his great learning and of his holy life; indeed, I have known few foreigners who were like him in their habits and way of living. He was acolyte to the Pope and was well liked by all on account of his goodness . . . His house was so well ordered that all who stayed there had to look carefully to their carriage, for its ordering was a very religion of life, and in manners, Messer Andres having given up the English custom of sitting four hours at table. He lived in the Italian fashion, taking only one dish, and he and his household fared very soberly. He greatly favored men to learning, especially those of good lives.<sup>15</sup>

Holes kept the good of his home church in mind when in Italy since many of the purchases he made from booksellers and copyists were intended for use in England. Vespasiano records his devotion to literature and his desire to share its benefits with his fellow churchmen at home:

The rest of his time he would spend in reading holy books, and he kept by him a vast number of scribes who copied for him many books which he intended to take back to his church in England. After Pope Eugenius quitted Florence, Messer Andrea remained there entirely for the sake of the books on which his heart was set . . . Messer Andrea lived in Florence more than a year and a half, during which

time he bought, and caused to be written for him, a vast number of books in order to carry out his worthy aims. His books being too numerous to be sent by land, he waited the sailing of a ship, and by this means he despatched them to England and then, his task being finished, he went also.<sup>16</sup>

Very few of Holes' books survived to modern times, but one, a copy of Cicero's Oration, does remain at New College, Oxford. Most of Holes' books probably went to the Salisbury Cathedral library, with others going to St. Mary's, Winchester, and New College, Oxford. In addition to his work in collecting and transmitting books for his schools and churches in England, Holes had also worked in Rome to promote English learning. Letters in the correspondence of Thomas Bekynton reveal that Holes played an important role in obtaining the necessary papal bulls for the foundation of Eton College. Holes also worked in Rome to solicit aid from the pope for St. Anthony's Hospital, London, the school where John Colet and Thomas More were later educated. Holes will also include a bequest of one hundred marks for exhibitions for scholars at Oxford.<sup>17</sup>

The contribution which Moleyns, Bekynton, and Holes made to English culture was through the example they set as public servants. They emphasized by their achievements the rewards which the well-trained scholar could hope to find in England. It was no longer only in Italy that a classically trained scholar could expect to find a career. These men did not however produce literary works, but instead used



their training for practical purposes. They furthered educational achievement in England through gifts of books, manuscripts, and money. After rising to prominence with the aid of Gloucester and Beaufort, they shared the rewards they had gathered with the schools which had trained them and the churches which had supported them. The growth of English humanism was slowly nurtured by the stream of patronage and education that slowly wound its way downward through English society. For those not able to travel to Italy, efforts by men such as Holes to bring the fruits of Italian humanism to England provided access to new ideas which would not have been available a generation before. Bekynton and Moleyns encouraged learning through their gifts to their schools and improvements in their churches. Humanism in England was not introduced only through the effort of the Duke of Gloucester, but also through this second tier of patronage.

## NOTES

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3. Roberto Weiss, Humanism in England During the Fifteenth Century, 2d ed., (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), 74.
4. Ibid., 74.
5. George Williams, ed., Official Correspondence of Thomas Bekynton, vol. 1 (London: Longman and Company, 1872), xi.
6. Ibid., 113-115.
7. A. R. Myers, English Historical Documents: 1327-1485, (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1969), 712.
8. George Williams, ed., Official Correspondence of Thomas Bekynton, vol. 2 (London: Longman and Company, 1872), 216.
9. Williams, vol 1., 242.
10. Perry, 273.
11. Weiss, 81.
12. Ibid., 83.
13. James Gairdner, Three Fifteenth-Century Chronicles (London: Camden Society, 1880), 64.
14. Myers, 261.
15. Vespasiano da Bisticci, Renaissance Princes, Popes, and Prelates, trans. William George and Emily Waters (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963), 206-207.

16. Ibid., 206-208.

17. Josephine Waters Bennett, "Andrew Holes: A Neglected Harbinger of the English Renaissance," Speculum 19 (July 1944): 333.

## CHAPTER VI

### DIRECT PATRONAGE BY THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER

Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, acquired his reputation as the preeminent patron of fifteenth-century scholarship in England primarily through his activities as a book collector. His gifts of books to the library of the University of Oxford do provide a testament to his appreciation of medieval and classical literature. His detractors, however, point out that his collection of classical writings was the result of self-aggrandizing attempts to enhance his reputation by imitating the great Italian princes. Perhaps Gloucester did collect books to document his own greatness, but the contribution he made to the renewal of English learning, whether intentional or accidental, still remains important. The duke's literary patronage was distributed between both English and Italian writers. He continued Henry V's patronage of English poets such as John Lydgate and Thomas Hoccleve following his brother's death in 1422. He also included John Capgrave in the list of those Englishmen receiving his patronage. His contacts with the Italian writers began with men such as Zano Castiglione, the Bishop of Bayeux, and Pier Candido Decembrio, both of whom acted as agents for the duke in acquiring new texts. The Bishop of Bayeux met Gloucester

while in Normandy and they developed a strong friendship. Later the bishop carried his enthusiastic impressions of the duke to Italy when he travelled there as Henry VI's representative to the Council of Basel in 1434. He also carried with him a commission from the duke to purchase as many books as he could for Gloucester's library.<sup>1</sup> It was the Bishop of Bayeux who provided the connection between Gloucester and Pier Candido Decembrio. Candido was also enlisted by the duke to help complete his library, by providing him a list of books which he felt indispensable for a truly complete library. Gloucester was invited to select from this list those he wished Candido to acquire. Gloucester liked to see himself as a great Renaissance prince who balanced his military prowess with a love for learning that was reflected by his splendid library. Gloucester, himself, described literary accomplishments in a letter to Candido as a "noble and worthy province which cannot be taken from you in any age, nor be lost by any forgetfulness, that is, if what the wisest men say be true, and glory is indeed immortal."<sup>2</sup> Gloucester's military reputation was already well-established by poems such as John Page's The Siege of Rouen, but his literary reputation was still incomplete. In his pursuit to assure his literary greatness. Gloucester provided a gift of great importance to his country, and thereby achieved indeed the immortality he sought.

The Duke of Gloucester followed his brother's lead in patronizing Thomas Hoccleve, a minor English poet who was also patronized by several other members of the royal family until mental illness and the growing popularity of John Lydgate combined to push him into the background. Hoccleve's major work, The Regiment of Princes, was completed in 1441 and was dedicated to Gloucester's brother, Henry. His poem, The Dialogue With A Friend, opened with a tribute to the Duke of Gloucester. Hoccleve described him as:

Next our lord lige, our kyng victorious,  
In al this wyde world lord is ther noon  
Vnto me so good ne so gracious,  
And haath been swich yeeres ful many oon.  
God yilde it him. As sad as any stoon  
His herte set is and nat change can  
Fro me, his humble seruant and his man.<sup>3</sup>

Hoccleve emphasized Gloucester's reputation as a chivalrous knight whose military might was an example of manly virtue:

To cronicle his actes were a goode deede,  
For they ensauple mighte and encorage  
Ful many a man for to taken heede  
How for to gouerne hem in the vsage  
Of armes. It is a greet auantage  
A man before him to have a mirour<sup>4</sup>  
Therin to see the path vnto honour

Hoccleve differed from his contemporaries Lydgate and Capgrave in that his career was not entirely a success. He never rose above the level of a clerk in the Privy Seal office, where he worked for forty years, perhaps because of a bout of mental illness which afflicted him in mid-1416. The stigma of his affliction destroyed his confidence but left an interesting

impression in his poetry. Hoccleve included toughing autobiographical references in The Complaint of Hoccleve, which was a discussion of the painful legacy of his disease. He wrote of the loss of good fortune and the treatment he received from his fellow men:

Sithen I recovered was, have I ful ofte  
 Cause had of anger and inpacience,  
 Where I borne have it esily and softe,  
 Suffringe wronge be done to me and offence,  
 And not answerid ayen but kept scilence,  
 Leste that men of me deme wolde and sein,  
 'Se howe this man is fallen in ayein' . . .<sup>5</sup>

In addition to The Dialogue With A Friend, Hoccleve produced a sequence of poetry based on the Gesta Romanorum and Henry de Suso's Ars sciendi mori for the Duke of Gloucester. He died at the age of fifty-eight in 1426.

John Lydgate, the poet whose prodigious output swamped the reputation of Hoccleve was born in Suffolk about 1370 and, according to his autobiographical Testament spent his youth "lyke a yong colt that ran without brydell."<sup>6</sup> Lydgate entered the monastery at Bury St. Edmunds in 1385 and began his education in the monastery school. His education was completed at Oxford University, where he was a student from 1406 to 1408.<sup>7</sup> His position as a monk at Bury St. Edmunds afforded Lydgate privileges which had not fallen to Hoccleve. He was provided access to the monastery's library, then one of the largest in England, as well as contacts with some of England's most influential people. Among the prominent

Englishmen who admired Lydgate's skill was Thomas Chaucer, son of the poet Geoffrey Chaucer. Thomas was an important member of the government who had close ties with the Duke of Gloucester. It was probably through Chaucer that Lydgate was first introduced to the duke. His commissioned works for Gloucester included On Gloucester's Approaching Marriage. This poem emphasizes Gloucester's military attributes by comparing him to Paris, Hector, Solomon, Julius Caesar, Hannibal, and Pompey. It praises Jacqueline of Hainault, Gloucester's bride, as another Helen and extols the virtues of the union of their two lands by such a marriage.<sup>8</sup> The major work commissioned by the duke was The Fall of Princes. This work was developed from a translation of Boccaccio's De Casibus by Laurent de Premierfait, and ran to over 36,000 lines. The Duke of Gloucester was active in overseeing the preparation of the work and lent Lydgate texts, such as the Policraticus of John of Salisbury, which he wished to be worked into Lydgate's version of the poem. It was also Gloucester's involvement which led to Lydgate including a translation of the Declamatio of Lucretia by Caluccio Salutati in his poem's second book.<sup>9</sup>

Lydgate encountered a problem with Gloucester which later affected his dealings with the Italians. The duke, although he promised handsome rewards for his commissions, was slow to pay. Lydgate wrote the tongue-in-cheek Letter to



Gloucester to prod his patron to part with some cash. The poet complained:

Riht myhty prynce, and it be your wille,  
 Condescende leiser for to take,  
 To seen the content of this litil bille,  
 Which whan I wrot, myn hand I felte quake.  
 Tokne of mornynge, weryd clothys blake,  
 Cause my prus was falle in gret rerage,  
 Lynyng outward, his guttys wer out shake,  
 Oonly for lak of plate and coignage.<sup>10</sup>

Lydgate continued to describe the illness of his purse, for which there was no remedy available at Bury. The only cordial would be the merry sound of gold. Lydgate concluded:

Thu mayst afferme, as for thyn excus,  
 Thy bareyn soyl is sool and solitarie;  
 Of cros nor pyl ther is no reclus;  
 Preent nor imprssioun in al thy sentuaries.  
 To conclude breiefly, and nat tarye,  
 Ther is no noyse herd in thyn hermytage,  
 God sende soon a gladdere letuaries,<sup>11</sup>  
 With a cler soun of plate and coignage.

Lydgate was an amazingly prolific writer whose poems covered topics ranging from the strictly religious to household hints. His A Tretise for Laundres reminds maids:

Of wyn away the moles may ye wesshe,  
 In mylk whyt; the fletyng oyle spott  
 Wyth lye of beenes make hit clene & fresshe.  
 Wasshe with wyn the feruent inkes blot,  
 All oder thynges clensed well, ye wot,  
 Wyth water cler, is purged & made clene,  
 But thes thre clense, wyn, mylkes, and beene.<sup>12</sup>

He also produced a large number of poems which chronicled the political scene in fifteenth-century England. He wrote poems on the pedigree of Henry VI, descriptions of Henry VI's coronation and triumphal entry into London, and a description of the Kings of England since William the Conqueror.

In addition to Hoccleve and Lydgate, Gloucester also patronized John Capgrave. Capgrave was peasant stock, as was Lydgate, and was probably raised in the town of Lynn. He entered the Augustinian order in Lynn about 1410 and began his education there. He studied theology in London from 1417 until 1422, when he was appointed by the Prior General to study at Cambridge where he completed his doctorate in theology in 1425.<sup>13</sup> Vickers claimed that Gloucester was the motivating force behind Capgrave's most important work, Abbreuiacion of Cronicles, as well as the five religious works which were dedicated to the duke. These five works, In Regum I and III, Super Epistolas Pauli, In Genesium, and In Exodum, all carried dedications to Gloucester. In Exodum contained a preface which enumerated all the reasons why a prince such as Gloucester should wish to be a patron of letters:

Permit me among writers the most worthless, O most generous Prince, to increase this your greatness in accordance with my ability so that, because you favour writers, you may win the praise of writers. For princes and writers have always been mutually bound to each other by a special friendship, so that writers were supported by the authority and monetary gifts of the former while books were laid up by the labour and sweat of the latter. And, to touch on certain more spiritual matters, those men of old, who adorned the whole body of philosophy by their studies, did not make progress without the encouragement of princes. For it is not the arts that are lacking, as someone says, but the honours given to the arts. Nor would the best writers have ceased today if excellent princes were not lacking. Grant us therefore a Pyrrhus and you will give us a Homer. Grant us a Pompey and you will give us a Tullius.

Grant us a Gaius and Augustus and you will also give us a Virgil and a Flaccus. and to turn to our own writers, Ieronimus wrote under the guidance of Damasus. Bede also, a man of flowering genius, wrote his Historica Ecclesiastica under King Theowulf . . . What do all these things show except that writers are protected by the favour of princes and the memory of princes endures by the labour of writers? Who today would have known of Lucillius if Seneca had not made him famous by his Letters? The writings of Virgil and Lucan added more to the praises of Caesar than all the wealth which he brought together from various provinces.<sup>14</sup>

Capgrave must have been aware of the duke's failure to compensate those who he had promised reward for he included the reminder:

For if I have written anything good, anything necessary to the advantage of the sons of the Church, let all the faithful know that he is being sheltered under your protection inasmuch as I am being supported in one way or another by your generosity.<sup>15</sup>

The Duke of Gloucester began his direct patronage of Italian writers about 1433. His first contacts were with Leonardo Bruni. The duke had become acquainted with Bruni's skill as a translator through works of his which were in the library of the Bishop of Bayeux. A translation of Aristotle's Ethics so impressed Gloucester that he sent Bruni a letter in 1433 inviting him to England and asking him to prepare a translation of Aristotle's Politics. Gloucester's invitation to Engalnd was not accepted, but Bruni did begin work on the Politics. Bruni was then one of Europe's most celebrated humanists as Vespasiano noted in his memoirs:

At this time the fame of Messer Lionardo was great in Italy and in other lands. In Florence a large band of scribes were always copying his works, some for the city and some for export, so that, wherever he might go, he would find some transcripts of his writings which, through his great name, were in demand throughout the world.<sup>16</sup>

Bruni worked on his translation of the Politics from 1434 until 1437, when Bruni arranged for the presentation copy to be sent to England. Some delays in this copy's transport caused Gloucester to have his secretary inquire about the book. Bruni was insulted by these inquiries as Vespasiano described:

The Duke sent a reply which, in Messer Lionardo's opinion, did not show due appreciation of such a fine work, so he withdrew the dedicatory proem and added another to Pope Eugenius who was then Bologna. He bore the book in person to His Holiness, who received him with distinguished consideration.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to the Politics, the duke acquired a number of Bruni's other works through purchases in Italy by the Bishop of Bayeux. Gloucester added the Ethics of Aristotle, Latin texts of Plato's Phaedrus, Xenophon's De Tyranno, some of Plutarch's Lives, Boccaccio's Tale of Tancredi and Ghismonda, all of which were translated by Bruni. He also acquired original texts by the humanist including the Isagogicon Moralis Disciplinae and the Oratio in Hypocritas.<sup>18</sup> These books were in the collection that Gloucester donated to Oxford University. Roberto Weiss noted that it was through this donation that the duke was responsible for the introduction of Bruni's writings to English academic circles.

The Bishop of Bayeux also connected Pier Candido Decembrio with the Duke of Gloucester. The bishop had been impressed with Candido's translation of the fifth book of Plato's Republic and wrote to the humanist to inquire about the relation between his translation and that done by Emanuel Chrysoloras somewhat earlier. In their correspondence on this topic, Candido declared his intention to complete the translation of the Republic and dedicate it to the Duke of Gloucester. The duke gladly accepted the offer of the translation and enlisted Candido's help in the completion of his library as well. While working on the Republic, Candido also served as a book buyer for the duke. He sent a total of nearly forty volumes to England, with eighteen of them being sent in 1440 alone. The authors represented in these shipments included Apuleius, Varro, Cato, Livy, Vitrovi-  
vius, and Ptolemy.<sup>19</sup> But after the delivery of the presentation copy of the Republic in 1441, the relationship between Gloucester and Candido came to an end. Weiss places the blame for this on Gloucester's reluctance to reward Candido with what the humanist considered an adequate sum. It had become apparent that the duke's reputation for generous support of learned writers was not entirely well-founded. The duke paid for the actual books he purchased, but was reluctant to reward the humanists for their labor in procuring them. The correspondence of the duke and Candido shows some of the

disrespect which Vespasiano blamed for the severing of the relationship between Bruni and Gloucester. In one of his last letters to Candido, written in 1444, Gloucester treats Candido's apprehension over adequate reward rather coldly:

On this account we have determined to write this letter to you, in which we ask you to complete the work you have begun, and not to let our long silence about the reward of your labors affect you, for in the end, perhaps, you will get what you thought at the beginning, as we have never let anyone who has done work for us go unrewarded.<sup>21</sup>

In spite of Gloucester being unable to maintain a long term alliance with any one humanist, the short term relationships did provide him with access to an exciting collection of books rich in classical and humanist writers. This collection, which he donated to Oxford University, was greatly appreciated in his own day. The Munimenta Academica describes the exceptional measures taken to protect what the university obviously considered a valuable asset. Precise instructions detailed how the books were to be stored, the procedures for their use by students, and provided that fines for the loss or damage of a book should be "greatly above its true value." The university's appreciation was declared in the Munimenta Academica:

In return for his munificent donation, the university can make no worthy recompense, yet desiring to repay the donor by such spiritual good offices as they can give, they hereby order that every year during his lifetime on the festival of SS Simon and Jude mass shall be said, with special mention of his name and that of his consort, for their prosperity and he shall be mentioned by name at all masses for benefactors of

the university, all public sermons in St. Mary's, a funeral service shall be performed for him within ten days of his death, and every year on the anniversaries of the deaths of himself and his consort, special masses shall be said; and the university bind itself in perpetuity to the observance of this ordinance.<sup>22</sup>

The duke, by gifts of books, had assured that his name would not be forgotten. What his military prowess, territorial ambitions, and literary pretensions could not do, his literary donation achieved. For Gloucester the reward was a form of immortality, the perpetual remembrance of his name and generosity. For the university and for England his gift provided the tools for future scholars to regain England's standing as one of Europe's leading intellectual centers.

## NOTES

1. Kenneth H. Vickers, Humphrey Duke of Gloucester: A Biography (London: Archibald Constable and Company, 1907), 351.
2. Ibid., 361.
3. Thomas Hoccleve, Selections from Hoccleve, ed. M. C. Seymour (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 88.
4. Ibid., 90.
5. Douglas Gray, ed., The Oxford Book of Late Medieval Verse and Prose (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 58.
6. John Lydgate, The Minor Poems of John Lydgate, vol. 1, ed. Henry Noble MacCracken (London: Early English Text Society, 1911), 352.
7. Lois A. Ebin, John Lydgate (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1985), 2.
8. John Lydgate, The Minor Poems of John Lydgate, vol. 2, ed. Henry Nobel MacCracken (London: Early English Text Society, 1934), 601-608.
9. Ebin, 62-63.
10. Lydgate, vol 2, 665.
11. Ibid., 667.
12. Ibid., 723.
13. John Capgrave, Abbreviacion of Cronicles, ed. Peter J. Lucas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), xx-xxi.
14. Peter J. Lucas, "The Growth and Development of English Literary Patronage in the Later Middle Ages and the Early Renaissance," The Library 4 (September 1982): 236-237.
15. Ibid., 237.



16. Vespasiano da Bisticci, Renasissance Princes, Popes, and Prelates, trans. Williams George and Emily Waters (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 366.
17. Ibid., 367.
18. Roberto Weiss, "Leonardo Bruni Aretino and Early English Humanism," The Modern Language Review 36 (1941): 446.
19. Mario Borsa, "Correspondence of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester and Pier Candido Decembrio," The English Historical Review 19 (1904): 511.
20. Roberto Weiss, Humanism in England During the Fifteenth Century, 2d ed., (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1957), 60.
21. Vickers, 366.
22. A. R. Myers, Ed., English Historical Documents, vol. 4, 1327-1485 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1969), 893-894.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

The career of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, centered upon one man's quest for personal glory. In his efforts to be a true Renaissance prince, the duke looked to the model provided by the Italians. The Italian Renaissance prince was one who balanced an impressive military career with a reputation for artistic appreciation. His military victories were offset by his acquisition of new artworks or the commissioning of a new translation. His generosity was revealed in munificent donations to public works. All these added together to give the prince an aura of personal glory which cloaked his arbitrary rule and distracted his subjects. Gloucester struggled to pour himself into this mold. His military feats in France were indeed exciting examples of a leader's bravery, but unfortunately they were offset by his undisguised greed in the attempt to acquire the territories of Hainault. His rule of England while Protector, instead of being a calm period of benevolent leadership, frequently was tarnished by his political squabbling with Cardinal Beaufort. Even his attempts to patronize English and Italian letters were blemished by his apparent reluctance to adequately

reward those in his service. Gloucester tried to achieve the status of a great prince, but lacked true greatness. The truly great are blessed with singleness of purpose that Gloucester never had. His inability to pursue a steady course that rewarded him with completed tasks or achieved goals left the impression that Gloucester was a self-centered, vain, ill-disciplined man concerned only with personal glory. His quickness to pursue policies, such as his marriage to Jacqueline of Hainault, that were obviously contrary to the interests of his country proved that his personal fame outweighed the good of his country. All of these faults may be genuinely attached to his character, but there was one benefit that accrued to his country from his actions. His literary patronage, both of English and Italians, while perhaps designed to assure his fame, did provide the link between late-scholastic England and Renaissance Italy.

The works translated, written, or copied for the Duke of Gloucester's library, or written to enhance his reputation or policies, provided new materials for the English scholar. For the English writers, royal patronage ensured that the work done in the vernacular was supported. For the English scholars, Gloucester provided a bridge to connect them with the fresh ideas being produced in Italy. By bringing Italians into England to serve as secretaries, Gloucester and Beaufort wished to ensure that their reputations would be enhanced by

the elegant Latin style of their documents and letters. What they did ensure was the contact was established between English scholars and the Italians, and that a traffic of ideas, as well as students, could begin to move between the two countries. The standards of eloquence set by the Italians while in England also determined the level of achievement necessary for those who wished to follow a career in the government. English bureaucrats had to perform with the same competence that the Italians had shown, standards could not be lowered. The Curia provided the training ground of which many of these English bureaucrats sharpened their language skills. Thanks to intervention from Gloucester and Beaufort, promising men such as Moleyns or Holes were appointed to posts that allowed them to benefit from this training. These men in turn repaid their good fortune by donations to schools and universities or through patronage of other scholars.

By the patronage of writers, Gloucester hoped to preserve his name for posterity to honor. He did achieve this last goal, although not exactly as he had intended. Instead of being the subject of the works studied, or gloried for the achievements of his life, he is remembered chiefly for what his gift did rather than what it was. The books he gave provided a new path for scholars. The classical and humanist writers in the collection of books that he donated widened

the world of ideas available to students at Oxford. The university, exhausted by the extremes of scholasticism, found new vitality in Gloucester's books. Students used to Aristotle, Priscian, or Boethius, now had access to Cato Bruni, Petrarch, Dante, Livy, Suetonius, Plutarch, Varro, Boccaccio, and many other writers, both classical and contemporary. Although Oxford never received all of the books which Gloucester intended for it to receive, and few of the volumes which they did receive still remain, the benefit of his gift was enormous, Oxford, and England, returned to the forefront of scholarly achievement within the next century. While the England of the fifteenth century had few examples of outstanding scholarship, that of the sixteenth century provided Erasmus with a number of companions of equal intellect. The restoration of English scholarly prominence was a fitting memorial to a man who hoped to preserve his own greatness through the scholarship of others.

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