

## THE KING'S HISTORIOGRAPHER: JOHN CAPGRAVE, AUSTIN IDENTITY, AND THE PURSUIT OF ROYAL PATRONAGE

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**Abstract:** This essay argues that Capgrave's self-presentation as an unaligned historian of the Lancastrian usurpation is an essential aspect of a strategy whereby he attempts to attract royal support for himself and for his order of Austin friars. It highlights Capgrave's bid to raise his order's profile as a means of increasing the likelihood of securing that support and it examines the ways in which he incorporates the friars' history throughout his writing to that end. Special emphasis is placed on the development of Capgrave's understanding of the role of the material book in his attempts to attract backers. The author's sensitivity to the links between the reputation of his order and his work as an author and a publisher means that he may usefully be considered alongside more familiar fifteenth-century writers who likewise aim to shape public opinion for their own benefit and for the benefit of their associates.

**Keywords:** John Capgrave, *Liber de illustribus Henricis*, *Abbreuiacion of Cronicles*, historiography, auto-graph manuscripts, Austin friars, Austin canons, Lancastrians, usurpation, patronage.

Among the writers who have fared best in the revival of interest in fifteenth-century English literature have been those whose work contains an autobiographical element. Once neglected authors such as Thomas Hoccleve and Margery Kempe now assume a central position in scholarship and teaching on the period; the republication of extracts from *The English Book of Love* of Charles d'Orléans along with the *Prisoner's Reflections* of George Ashby indicates that interest in these writers is also bound to increase.<sup>1</sup> Although his work is not entirely devoid of the personalizing touches that characterize the prose and poetry of his more explicitly self-referential contemporaries, the work of the Austin friar John Capgrave (1393–1464) inevitably seems impersonal next to their texts. This is, of course, to be expected: as J. A. Burrow has argued, Middle English autobiography is fundamentally petitionary in nature<sup>2</sup> and the dissatisfactory material and social conditions that prompted Hoccleve, Kempe, Charles, and Ashby to write about themselves clearly did not affect Capgrave, who occupied a position of comparative security and privilege.<sup>3</sup> Notwithstanding this

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<sup>1</sup>See *The Kingis Quair and Other Prison Poems*, ed. Linne R. Mooney and Mary-Jo Arn (Kalamazoo 2005).

<sup>2</sup>See J. A. Burrow, *Medieval Writers and their Work: Middle English Literature 1100-1500*, 2nd ed. (Oxford 2008) 37–48.

<sup>3</sup>For the argument that Hoccleve wrote his *Series* after a period of mental illness in order to effect his social rehabilitation, see J. A. Burrow, "Hoccleve's *Series*: Experience and Books," *Fifteenth-Century Studies: Recent Essays*, ed. Robert F. Yeager (Hamden 1984) 259–273. On Kempe's concern for her reputation at Lynn as a motivation for the writing of *The Book of Margery Kempe*, see Anthony Goodman, "The Piety of John Brunham's Daughter, of Lynn," *Medieval Women: Essays Dedicated and Presented to Professor Rosalind M. T. Hill*, ed. Derek Baker, Studies in Church History, Subsidia 1 (Oxford 1978) 347–358. On Charles's attempts to neutralize reports of his political guile in his *English Book of Love*, see Rory G. Critten, "The Political Valence of Charles d'Orléans's English Poetry," *Modern Philology* 111 (2014) 339–364. On Ashby's attempt to attract a renewal of his Lancastrian patronage via his *Prisoner's Reflections*, see Robert J. Meyer-Lee, "Beggars and Laureates in Fifteenth-Century English Poetry: The Case of George Ashby," *Speculum* 79 (2004) 688–726. Where they imagine a relationship between themselves and their worlds in which literary self-representation might be used to alter the public image of the self represented, these authors manifest an approach to writing that is fundamentally different to that espoused by their predecessor, Geoffrey Chaucer; it may derive from the self-representational tactics developed by John

disparity, there are significant critical gains to be made by considering Capgrave's oeuvre alongside the work of these more familiar writers since he shares with them a profound faith in the link between reputations and writing. The crucial difference in Capgrave's case is that the reputation that concerns him most is not personal but corporate: like his contemporary, John Lydgate, albeit in a more extensive and self-directed fashion, Capgrave wrote with the aim of shaping and securing the public profile of his order.<sup>4</sup>

Capgrave's prominent position within the *ordo sancti augustini* provided him with both the impetus for his authorial work and the means to pursue it.<sup>5</sup> By the mid 1440s until his death he was prior of the Austin friary at Lynn and in 1453–1457 he led the English branch of his order as its prior provincial. The author's bibliography demonstrates that, in both these capacities, Capgrave saw the composition, copying, and timely dispatch of his works as one of the main ways in which he might promote the interests of his brothers, by forging favorable relationships with other religious houses, both locally and nationally, at the same time as he sought the protection of one key patron or *fundator*. Austin friaries routinely employed at least one scribe, usually a layman, who ultimately stood at the disposition of the prior.<sup>6</sup> On the basis of this information and following a detailed study of the extant Capgrave manuscripts, Peter J. Lucas has built a convincing case for the existence of a small scriptorium at Lynn where Capgrave produced or oversaw the production of several copies of his work.<sup>7</sup> While, as Lucas points out, Capgrave may not have been unique among religious authors in this regard, he is the late medieval English author for whom there survives the greatest body of autograph and authorially supervised manuscript material "providing more evidence than anyone else of an author at work on English (and Latin) works in the Middle Ages."<sup>8</sup> Proximity to textual production gave Capgrave an edge on the fifteenth-century patronage market on which he was apt to capitalize, in particular with regard to his attempts to attract royal patronage, an historically important source of support for the Austin friars: they were welcomed to England in 1249 by Henry III and the order's leaders were successful in their attempts to attract the patronage of each subsequent monarch until they were suppressed under Henry

Gower. See Robert J. Meyer-Lee, *Poets and Power from Chaucer to Wyatt*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 61 (Cambridge 2007) 36–38.

<sup>4</sup> Lydgate's superior at his monastery of Bury St. Edmunds, William Curteys, appears repeatedly to have directed the poet's talents in the course of his attempts to protect their abbey's interests: Curteys's personal registers contain Middle English versions of Bury's royal charters of privilege that are traditionally attributed to Lydgate and the poet's *Lives of SS. Edmund and Fremund*, written at Curteys's request, seems likewise to have been produced with a view to broadcasting and defending the monastery's foundational rights. See Kathryn A. Lowe, "The Poetry of Privilege: Lydgate's *Cartae Versificatae*," *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 50 (2006) 151–165; and Fiona Somerset, "'Hard is with seyntis for to make affray': Lydgate the 'Poet-Propagandist' as Hagiographer," *John Lydgate: Poetry, Culture, and Lancastrian England*, ed. Larry Scanlon and James Simpson (Notre Dame 2006) 258–278.

<sup>5</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all bio-bibliographical information given here is drawn from Peter J. Lucas, *From Author to Audience: John Capgrave and Medieval Publication* (Dublin 1997).

<sup>6</sup> See K. M. Humphreys, *The Book Provisions of the Mediaeval Friars, 1250–1400*, Studies in the History of Libraries and Librarianship 1 (Amsterdam 1964) 70–71.

<sup>7</sup> See Lucas, *From Author to Audience* (n. 5 above) 19–126.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 3.

VIII.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, as Frances Andrews has argued, securing the king's protection was crucial for Capgrave's brethren since successive popes appear to have left the English province to fend for itself.<sup>10</sup> In the turbulent years spanned by Capgrave's career, particularly swift reactions to changes in the political climate were necessary in order to ensure the continuation of royal support. In what follows, I hope to be able to demonstrate that Capgrave frequently exploited his capacity to produce reasonably good copies of his work at short notice in his attempts to effect such reactions, thereby protecting the interests of the brothers under his care.

Insofar as may be ascertained, Capgrave's interventions on behalf of the English Austins were effective. The friary at Lynn appears to have grown markedly during his tenure as prior there, becoming the order's largest house in England, or maintaining that distinction, at a time when numbers were falling elsewhere in the country; his re-election as prior provincial in 1455, though not unusual, likewise suggests that his peers considered him a capable advocate for their concerns.<sup>11</sup> Curiously, however, Capgrave's determined defense of the English Austins is a factor that has played against his rehabilitation in modern criticism. In particular, his defection to the Yorkist party shortly after the accession of Edward IV in 1461 has made him the focus of harsh reproof: in his Foreword to Carl Horstmann's edition of *The Life of Saint Katherine*, Furnivall famously called Capgrave a "flunkey," and this accusation has been repeated more recently and in stronger terms by the author's modern biographer, M. C. Seymour.<sup>12</sup> This judgment is based on a reading of Capgrave's *Liber de illustribus Henricis* (1446–1447) alongside the prefatory material introducing his subsequent *Abbreuiacion of Cronicles* (1461–1464). Whereas the *Liber* is dedicated in glowing terms to Henry VI, "cujus ministeriis ... me totum obtuli" (125) [to whose service I have wholly devoted myself (144)], at the conclusion of the Preface addressing the later work to Edward IV, Capgrave writes that he finds

a grete conueniens in 3our tytil, þat 3e be cleped Edward þe Fourt. He þat entered be intrusion was Herry þe Fourte. He þat entered be Goddis prouision is Edward þe Fourt. The similitude of þe reparacioun is ful lich þe werk of þe transgression .... We trew loueres of þis lond desire þis of oure Lord God, þat al þe erreure wheche was browte in be Herry þe Fourte may be redressed be Edward þe Fourte (9/8–16).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See Francis Roth, *The English Austin Friars, 1249–1538*, 2 vols. (New York 1966), 1.18–95, esp. 1.54–55.

<sup>10</sup> Contrasting the paucity of papal letters addressed to the English province in its early phase with the "innumerable records of concessions of land, grants of protection and pittances made by the Crown," Andrews stresses the importance of royal support in deciding the success or failure of individual Austin communities: "nothing could make clearer the importance to the order of good relations with the royal court," she concludes. See Frances Andrews, *The Other Friars: The Carmelite, Augustinian, Sack and Pied Friars in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge 2006) 103.

<sup>11</sup> See Roth, *The English Austin Friars* (n. 9 above) 1.111–116.

<sup>12</sup> See Fredrick J. Furnivall, Foreword to *The Life of St. Katherine of Alexandria*, ed. Carl Horstmann, EETS o.s. 100 (1893, repr. Millwood 1987) xv. Seymour calls Capgrave's Preface to the *Cronicles* a "nauseating performance." "Politic submission is always contemptible," he adds, "for a man of 68, without the hostages of family and fortune, to allow cowardice, vanity, and self-interest to displace self-respect and conscience ... this was abject." See M. C. Seymour, *John Capgrave, Authors of the Middle Ages* 11 (Aldershot 1996) 33.

<sup>13</sup> The *Liber* is cited by page number from *Liber de illustribus Henricis*, ed. Francis Charles Hingeston (London 1858); I cite Hingeston's translation, lightly modernized and adapted, also by page number, from

In her study of Capgrave, Karen A. Winstead demonstrates that criticism of Henry VI's rule may be detected both in the *Liber* and, in particular, in his roughly contemporaneous *Katherine* (ca. 1445); in consequence, she argues, the impression given in this passage of an abrupt *volte-face* in favor of Edward ought not to be taken at face value.<sup>14</sup> Winstead's suggestion is of a piece with the overarching aim of her study, which is to present Capgrave as an independently minded intellectual who "did not care deeply whether York or Lancaster governed but cared that England be governed well" and who was intent upon the promulgation of a set of often quite progressive viewpoints on topics ranging from the value of vernacular theology to the intellectual and spiritual capacities of women.<sup>15</sup> While broadly in sympathy with Winstead's attempt to rehabilitate Capgrave, this essay focuses on the author's attempts to secure royal patronage for his order and the element of role-playing that such attempts necessarily entailed; as such it contributes to the reassessment of the nature and functions of the author's dedicatory policy recently begun by Joni Henry.<sup>16</sup> I begin with a reassessment of the *Liber* in which I argue that there is much in this text that seems designed to confirm Henry in the patterns of behavior with which he had come to be identified by the 1440s and that Capgrave goes to considerable lengths in this work to present both himself and his friary at Lynn as worthy recipients of the king's support; an important aspect of this appeal, I suggest, is Capgrave's self-representation as a loyal but accurate recorder of English history. Departing from the observation that the *Liber* is apparently dispatched to Henry unfinished, I then move to look at Capgrave's apprehension of the role played by timing and by the persuasive power of the material book in his attempts to secure protection for the English Austins via the gifting of his manuscripts. I propose that Capgrave's understanding of these aspects of patronage was formed during his early dealings with Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, and, at this juncture, I round out my discussion of the author's attitude towards his dedicatees with a consideration of the intersection between his writing and contemporaneous attempts to define the corporate identity of the Austin friars. By way of conclusion, I offer an analysis of the *Abbreviacion of Cronicles* that reassesses Capgrave's understanding of the various links between historiography, patronage, and the role played by the material book in the self-promotion of late medieval religious communities.

#### CAPGRAVE'S APPEAL FOR PATRONAGE IN THE *LIBER DE ILLUSTRIBUS HENRICIS*

At the opening of the *Liber de illustribus Henricis*, an anthology of the biographies of twenty-four emperors, kings of England, and other notables who have borne the name

*The Book of the Illustrious Henries*, trans. Francis Charles Hingeston (London 1858). The *Cronicles* is cited by page and line number from *John Capgrave's Abbreviacion of Cronicles*, ed. Peter J. Lucas, EETS o.s. 285 (Oxford 1983).

<sup>14</sup> See Karen A. Winstead, *John Capgrave's Fifteenth Century* (Philadelphia 2007) 137–161; and compare Lucas, *From Author to Audience* (n. 5 above) 261.

<sup>15</sup> Winstead, *John Capgrave's Fifteenth Century* (n. 14 above) 163.

<sup>16</sup> See Joni Henry, "Capgrave's Dedications: Reassessing an English Flunkey," *Studies in Philology* 110 (2013) 731–61. As Henry observes, "in place of the static relationship between the lowly writer and the powerful patron, [Capgrave] envisages a series of dynamic relationships between writers, books, and patrons as well as their wider social groups" (at 736). Where it considers Capgrave's understanding of his audiences' tastes and requirements and where it reexamines the motives that lie behind his dedicatory policy, the present essay is conceived as a compliment to Henry's astute study.

of Henry, Capgrave briefly explains to his dedicatee, Henry VI, why he has undertaken to provide him with this gift:

Ad ampliandum enim desiderium vestrum in optimis viris sequendis hunc libellum edidi, ubi laudes eorum qui nomen vestrum sortiuntur ex veterum libris collegi, quatenus vos, qui hoc nomine laureamini, virtutem quoque nominis imitemini (2).

In order, then, to increase your desire to follow in the steps of the best of men, I have published this little book, in which I have gathered together from the works of the ancients the praises of those who have chanced to bear your name, so that you, who are crowned with this name, may also imitate the virtue of the name (3).

Indeed, Capgrave's collection catalogues and glosses a range of models of royal conduct that it appears his Henry (himself the subject of one of the author's *vitae*) would have been well advised to emulate at the moment the *Liber* was written. While in the mid 1440s the worst disasters of the king's reign still lay ahead, many of the personality traits to which the ultimate failure of his rule is typically attributed had by this time begun to manifest themselves. Thus, for example, Piero da Monte, a papal tax collector who visited England in 1437, wrote to the then archbishop of Florence, Ludovico Trevisan, concerning the young king's quasi-monastic lifestyle and his detachment from the life of his court.<sup>17</sup> Henry's posthumous biographer, John Blacman, likewise recalls the king's reputation for chastity and his preference for learning over affairs of state.<sup>18</sup> As Winstead notes, these are among the very shortcomings for which Capgrave's Katherine is upbraided by her barons in Book Two of his *Life of Saint Katherine*, and similar concerns may be detected in the *vitae* included in the *Liber*.<sup>19</sup> Both texts can thus be understood to provide a tacit commentary on Henry's governance, highlighting areas where improvements might be made. In his biography of Henry's grandfather, Henry IV, for example, Capgrave is keen to promote his subject's ability to balance his personal inclination towards study with the needs of his realm: "vir iste in moralibus dubiis enodandis studiosus fuerit scrutator," the author writes, "et quantum regale otium a turbinibus causarum eum permisit liberum in his semper sollicitum fuisse" (109) [This man was a studious investigator in all doubtful points of morals, and as far as his hours of rest from the administration of his government permitted him to be free, he was always eager in the prosecution of such pursuits (116, emphasis mine)].<sup>20</sup> An incisive commendation of marriage is similarly inserted

<sup>17</sup> See Piero da Monte: *Ein Gelehrter und päpstlicher Beamter des 15. Jahrhunderts, seine Briefsammlung*, ed. Johannes Haller, Bibliothek des deutschen historischen Instituts in Rom 19 (Rome 1941) 44.

<sup>18</sup> See *Henry the Sixth: A Reprint of John Blacman's Memoir with Translation and Notes*, ed. M. R. James (Cambridge 1919) 7–9 and 14–6. Roger Lovatt has argued persuasively for the general reliability of this account, which he presents as Blacman's attempt to recast the king's political failures as private virtues. See "John Blacman: Biographer of Henry VI," *The Writing of History in The Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Richard William Southern*, ed. R. H. C. Davis and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (Oxford 1981) 415–444; and "A Collector of Apocryphal Anecdotes: John Blacman Revisited," *Property and Politics: Essays in Later Medieval English History*, ed. Tony Pollard (Gloucester 1984) 172–197.

<sup>19</sup> Winstead, *John Capgrave's Fifteenth Century* (n. 14 above) 151–161.

<sup>20</sup> This idea is stated in still plainer terms in Capgrave's gloss on his biography of Henry, the Brother of Louis, king of France: "Si sit unus princeps qui tam necessarius esset ad populum, quod, eo absente, populus periclitaretur, puto quod non bene ageret si labores omittat, et otio ac sancto studio intendat" (*Liber* 160) [In the case of a prince who was so necessary to the people that, in his absence, they would be placed in

into the biography of Henry VI himself, “maxime propter eos qui ita virginitatem laudant, ut quasi nuptiarum contubernium damnare videantur” (135) [especially intended for the perusal of those who praise the single life to such a degree that they seem as it were to condemn matrimonial alliances (157)].

The *Liber* contains a range of comparable comments that appear designed subtly to encourage an adjustment in the king’s conduct. Other recurrent concerns include, for example, the necessity of war (*Liber* 7, 153) and the importance of punishing crime (*Liber* 14, 52), these perhaps being issues which Capgrave felt particularly compelled to address in light of Henry’s increasingly clear desire to pursue peace with France and his incipient reputation as an erratic judge of criminals and disturbers of the peace.<sup>21</sup> But with the exception of a brief and unoriginal excursus on the decline of the English navy that Capgrave interpolates in the *vita* of his own illustrious Henry (*Liber* 134-35), the author advances nothing here that can be interpreted as an unequivocal condemnation of royal policy. To my mind, at least, Winstead’s attribution of a “diabolically subversive” aspect to the work thus overstates the intensity of the criticism voiced here.<sup>22</sup> While the *Liber* is a far cry from the “thoroughly adulatory” text or the “Lancastrian manifesto” described by some readers,<sup>23</sup> it is important to recognize that criticism of royal behavior was an accepted feature of the historical and advisory modes of writing that Capgrave engages in this work. “A marked characteristic of the chronicle tradition in England” has been found to be “the propensity for criticizing king and government.”<sup>24</sup> Likewise, numerous studies of the rich and flexible tradition of the mirror for princes have demonstrated that this is a genre in which dissent from and investment in royal power need not be mutually exclusive aims.<sup>25</sup> Finally, there is much in the *Liber* that appears designed to confirm Henry in the various behaviors with which he had begun to be identified around 1445. In Capgrave’s biography of king Henry III of England, for instance, the king may have read a confirmation of the utility of his pursuit of peace with France. Like Henry VI, Henry III was a child at his accession, and Capgrave describes the king’s youth, the difficulties he encounters as he attempts to assert his royal authority, and the various rebellions of his barons (*Liber*

peril, I consider that he would not be acting rightly if he were to give up his labours and devote himself to rest and sacred study (185)].

<sup>21</sup> On Henry’s pursuit of peace with France and on his inability to deal effectively with criminality at home, see Ralph A. Griffiths, *The Reign of Henry VI: The Exercise of Royal Authority, 1422–61* (London 1981) 490–504 and 562–609; and Bertram Wolffe, *Henry VI* (London 1981) 146–212 and 106–134.

<sup>22</sup> Winstead, *John Capgrave’s Fifteenth Century* (n. 14 above) 159.

<sup>23</sup> For these assessments, see J. C. Fredeman, “The Life of John Capgrave, O. E. S. A. (1393–1464),” *Augustiniana* 29 (1979) 197–237, at 231; and Geoffrey Martin and Rodney M. Thomson, “History and History Books,” *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: 1100–1400*, ed. Nigel Morgan and Rodney M. Thomson, vol. 2 of *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* (Cambridge 2008) 397–415, at 412.

<sup>24</sup> See Antonia Gransden, “The Chronicles of Medieval England and Scotland: Part I,” *Journal of Medieval History* 16 (1990) 129–150, at 139.

<sup>25</sup> See among others Judith Ferster, *Fictions of Advice: The Literature and Politics of Counsel in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia 1996). Capgrave acknowledges the proximity of the *Liber* to the mirror for princes tradition when he cuts short a discussion of Proverbs 18.19, concluding that “Pleni sunt libri qui de regimine principum conditi sunt, rebus de quibus nunc agimus, quia intentio nostra sola ad hoc refertur, ut illustres viros mundo describamus, qui hoc nomine pollent” (*Liber* 29) [Indeed, the books which have been composed concerning the government of princes are full of those matters of which we now treat; but our purpose has reference solely to this: that we may give to the world an account of those illustrious men who have borne this name (28)].

86–92). Henry's fortunes take a turn for the better once he has made peace with Louis of France, whose subsequent intervention in English affairs apparently tips the balance in the English king's favor (*Liber* 93–95). Capgrave's dedicatee might similarly have interpreted the following frank defense of the monarch's right to exercise mercy in his treatment of convicted criminals as a ratification of that aspect of his policy. Having cited Aquinas in approval of the first imperial Henry's early decision to release various captives, Capgrave concludes that

rex noster pro utilitate regni posset absolvere multos incarceratos, qui in terra et in mare fortiter resisterent inimicis, sub tutamento tamen aliorum. Nec ignorat dominus meus quales sunt qui incarcerantur, quam agiles, quam [fortes], et multi propter levissimas, ut dicitur, causas. Hic enim supradictus imperator ... non sine consilio virorum providorum id egisse putandus est (8–9).

our king, for the welfare of the realm, might release many prisoners, who by land and sea might boldly resist the foe; but under the charge of others. Nor is my lord ignorant concerning prisoners, what manner of men they often are, how agile, how strong, and many of them, it is said, imprisoned for very trifling causes. We must believe then that this aforementioned emperor did not thus act without the counsel of prudent men (10).

This broad endorsement of a recognizable aspect of Henry VI's policy, moderated by one important restriction—the released prisoners should be put under supervision—is, I think, characteristic of the monitory tone of the *Liber*.

In light of the implicit criticism of Henry's reign in the *Liber* and *Katherine*, Winstead suggests that the *Liber* was only completed at the king's express command. During the royal visit to Lynn in August 1446, she proposes, the king saw Capgrave's work and "made it clear that he expected to find himself among those 'Illustrious Henries.'"<sup>26</sup> But it is clear that Capgrave goes to considerable lengths in this work to present himself and his friary at Lynn as worthy recipients of royal patronage and it thus seems most likely that the *Liber* was always designed to attract Henry's backing for the English Austins. Capgrave's interest in obtaining Henry's protection may be observed in the first instance in his determined self-representation as a long-time follower of Lancastrian fortunes, an image he constructs in his biographies of kings Henry IV and Henry VI by means of a number of eye-witness accounts that function clearly to situate him in the orbit of the rulers whose deeds he narrates. In the first of these the author remembers how in 1406 he saw Philippa, the daughter of Henry IV, just before she left England for Scandinavia to join her new husband, Prince Eric of Denmark: "Unicam filiam hujus excellentissimi regis ego vidi in villa de Lenne," he boasts, concluding his rendition of this event with a reiteration of his presence there: "Hæc est quidem regalis progenies, quam ego oculis conspexi" (109) [I saw the only daughter of this most excellent king in the town of Lynn. She indeed is the offspring of this king, and I saw her with my own eyes (117)]. In his *vita* of Henry VI, Capgrave goes on to state that he remembers the chiming of the church bells in London that greeted the birth of the king and that he was present when Henry laid the foundation stone of King's College at Cambridge in 1441 (*Liber* 127, 133). These three passages

<sup>26</sup> See Winstead, *John Capgrave's Fifteenth Century* (n. 14 above) 161.

have allowed Capgrave's modern biographers to flesh out their accounts of his life significantly.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, Capgrave's recollection of the celebrations that greeted the birth of the king in London spurs him on to a rare biographical expansion. He remembers this incident, he tells Henry, "quoniam et tunc studens ibi eram, in quarto anno vel quinto ex quo ad sacerdotium promotus sum" (127) [for I was then studying there, in the fourth or fifth year after I was raised to the priesthood" (146)].

If the effect of these passages is to underline the author's commitment to the Lancastrian cause, Capgrave is elsewhere at pains to stress his neutrality. Thus when in his life of Henry IV he is about to broach to topic of the deposition of Richard II, he reassures his reader that though many competing accounts of this event exist, "nec mirum, cum in tanto schismate alius sic, alius autem sic ibat" [and no wonder, since in so great a struggle one took one side, and one the other],

ego, qui medius inter utrosque existo, credo me meliorem viam et securiorem tenere, quoniam, utrisque partibus discussis, ad solam veritatem elucidandam sedulus existo, nulli post me scripturo præiudicans, si ipse aut verius aut planius materiam hanc discutiendam susceperit (102).

I, who stand as it were in the middle between the two parties, consider that I hold a better and a safer path, since, having investigated both sides of the question, I set myself diligently to elucidate the truth alone, not, indeed, to the prejudice of any one who may write of these things after me, if he shall undertake to discuss this matter with more accuracy and clearness (107).

And, broadly speaking, this is a task that Capgrave is able to fulfill, largely thanks to a citation strategy that allows him to re-present the acceptable Lancastrian version of events while still leaving himself room to demur. The charges against Richard II made by his enemies are framed here as a list of allegations and the old king's resignation speech is closely transcribed from the official Lancastrian story preserved on the parliamentary rolls (*Liber* 102–107), but Capgrave manifests a reluctance to condone Lancastrian claims to legitimacy wholeheartedly when he refers to an elusive and ancient document said to prove Bolingbroke's right to rule by a family connection. Henry IV, he writes, claimed the throne first by blood, a relationship "quam probavit ex antiquis quidem gestis, quorum veras copias necdum vidi" (107) [which he proved, indeed, from ancient records, *the true copies of which I have not yet seen* (115, my emphasis)]. Since it is distinctly unlikely that Capgrave set out gratuitously to insult his addressee, who, after all, was Henry IV's grandson, it seems reasonable to conclude that he saw a demonstration of an apparently genuine historical interest as an important step towards securing his Henry's support both for himself and for the English branch of his order. Where Capgrave stresses his capacity independently to weigh up the usurpers' claims to legitimacy, he demonstrates his worth the Lancastrian party: here is someone who might speak credibly on their behalf; here is someone too of a manifestly probing nature whom it might be prudent to keep sweet.

While there is nothing in the *Liber* to suggest that Henry commissioned the work directly, it is unlikely that Capgrave's decision to present the king with the collection

<sup>27</sup> See Lucas, *From Author to Audience* (n. 5 above) 7–8 and 10.



came as a complete surprise to his dedicatee. In August 1446 Henry had stayed with Capgrave and his friars at the Austin priory at Lynn and the author's decision to dedicate a book to him shortly afterwards may be interpreted as an attempt to capitalize on the goodwill that the king expressed during this visit. Capgrave narrates in the life of Henry VI included in the *Liber* that during the time he spent at Lynn, the king made an oral commitment to become the friars' protector:

Hic rex devotissimus in XXIII. anno regni sui, in illa solemnī peregrinatione qua Sanctorum memorias visitavit, locum Fratrum Heremitarum Sancti Augustini in villa de Lenne in suum accepit favorem, promittens sacerdotibus suis ibidem manentibus, vivo vocis oraculo, quod amodo locus ille sibi et successoribus suis de corpore suo legitime procreandis immediate pertineret. Ipse quoque et successores sui, ut præmittitur, fundator sive fundatores non solum nomine essent, sed rei veritate. Acta sunt autem hæc in Ad Vincula Sancti Petri, sub anno Domini M.CCCCXLVI.; regi vero incliti domini nostri, ut præmissum est, anno XXIII (137).

In the twenty-fourth year of his reign, this most devout king in the course of the solemn pilgrimage which he made to the holy places, received into his favor the place of the Hermit Friars of Saint Augustine in the town of Lynn, promising to his priests who dwelt there, by his own mouth, that from thenceforth that place should be regarded as closely connected with himself, and also with his successors lawfully begotten of his body. That he himself, also, and his successors, as before, should be regarded as its founder, or founders, not in name only, but in deed and truth. These events occurred on the feast of Saint Peter ad Vincula, in the year of our Lord, 1446, and in the twenty-fourth year of the reign of our illustrious lord king, as we said above (158–159).

With its three-fold iteration of the date of Henry's promise and the winding syntax by means of which Capgrave attempts to inscribe Henry and his as yet unborn heirs as the protectors of the Austin house at Lynn, this passage reads as if it were a contract between the king and the friars whose formalization its author hoped to secure via Henry's formal receipt of his book. The composition of the *Liber* also affords Capgrave an opportunity to respond to critics who have cast aspersions on the origins of their priory. Since his departure, he tells Henry, gossips have been making comments to the effect that the house at Lynn had had a founder before "cujus tamen nomen nesciunt insinuare" (*Liber* 137) [whose name, however, they know not how to insinuate (159)]. There follows a brief history of the priory tracing its origins from the time of Edward I to the present day in which Capgrave offers vindication of his house, sealing the legal tenor of this passage and concluding the chapter devoted to the career of the king (*Liber* 138–139).

#### DEALINGS WITH DUKE HUMPHREY

Capgrave's *Liber de illustribus Henricis* is currently known to be extant in two manuscript copies, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 408 and London, British Library MS Cotton Tiberius A viii. Lucas has identified the Corpus manuscript as Capgrave's working draft of the text and it seems likely that Cotton Tiberius A viii was the copy prepared for Henry himself.<sup>28</sup> As Lucas shows, the Corpus manuscript repays close

<sup>28</sup> See Seymour, *John Capgrave* (n. 12 above) 25.

analysis, for it offers a valuable perspective on the process whereby a late medieval author prepared a text of his work for copying by another scribe. Of particular importance here is the observation that, after spending some time compiling his book, Capgrave appears to have completed his copy text in haste, leaving his project in a presentable but ultimately unfinished state: the hope expressed by the author at the opening of Book Three of the *Liber* that he will subsequently be able to add the biographies of more Henries to his work (*Liber* 141), as well as the premature completion of his bibliography of the prominent Austin friar Henry of Friemar (*Liber* 183), suggests that, had he had more time, his project might have assumed a different form.<sup>29</sup> Such conjectures aside, Lucas's analysis of the Corpus manuscript demonstrates that the author of the *Liber* accorded more importance to the timely presentation of his work than to its internal perfection. Indeed, for Capgrave, supporting the Austin friars was often as much about the production and punctual presentation of books as it was about the composition of texts. This is an attitude that the author appears to have developed early in his career over the course of his dealings with Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, who was almost certainly the founder discussed by the gossips at Lynn in 1446.

In the late 1390s Capgrave had courted Humphrey's protection quite assiduously and on at least one occasion during this period the duke is thought to have come to the aid of the English Austins: in 1438 he interceded on the friars' behalf in a dispute between one of their enemies at Oxford, Philip Norreys, a secular master, and a friar attached to the Austin priory at Ludlow, William Musylwyke, who had been expelled from the University for accusing Norreys of heresy.<sup>30</sup> By the time he came to write his biography of Henry VI for the *Liber*, however, Humphrey's stock had fallen considerably, and Capgrave must have been on the lookout for a new source of royal support.<sup>31</sup> Evidence for the author's cultivation of Humphrey survives in the form of two biblical commentaries addressed to the duke, *In Genesim* (1439) and *In Exodum* (1440), both of which Capgrave may have worked up for presentation from lectures previously written during his studies at Cambridge.<sup>32</sup> These gifts were preceded by commentaries on 1 Samuel and 1 Kings (both now lost),<sup>33</sup> and, if Capgrave fulfilled the promise he makes in his Preface to *In Genesim*, they were followed by readings of the three remaining books of the Pentateuch.

<sup>29</sup> See Lucas, *From Author to Audience* (n. 5 above) 38–43 and 82–83. Lucas observes that changes in the ink used on p. 138 of the Corpus codex indicate that the author had left gaps in the book list of Henry of Friemar to be filled at a later stage; the completion of the last reference with an admission of ignorance suggests that the author was “tying up loose ends as best he could to make the work available in as finished a version as possible” (at 83). The entry in question runs: “Item vidi Quodlibetum suum, cuius etiam initium [change to darker ink] jam non recorder, quoniam ad manus non est (*Liber*, 183 and n. 4) [I have also seen his *Quodlibetum*, whose beginning... I do not now remember since I have not got it ready to hand (214)].”

<sup>30</sup> See Roth, *The English Austin Friars* (n. 9 above) 1.109–10.

<sup>31</sup> Humphrey never recovered from the damage done to his reputation by the trial of his wife, Eleanor Cobham, for treasonable necromancy in 1441; his downfall would be confirmed in February 1447 upon his mysterious death in royal custody. On this stretch of the duke's career, see K. H. Vickers, *Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester: A Biography* (London 1907) 225–294.

<sup>32</sup> On Capgrave's academic career, see Lucas, *From Author to Audience* (n. 5 above) 8.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* 285.

Capgrave personally presented the first of his extant gifts to Humphrey on New Year's Day 1439. Although it is clear from comments made in the Preface to this work that the author had had no direct contact with the duke before this time,<sup>34</sup> he nevertheless attempts to use the opportunity afforded by this dedicatory moment in order to secure Humphrey's formal support for the Austin friars at Lynn. Mid-way through his dedication, Capgrave is at pains to record the traditional connection between the duke's family and the English Austins:

Set et annualia mea reuoluens aliud inueni quod me mouit. Scriptum enim in hiis reperi quod anno domini m.cc.xlviii. fundatus fuerat ordo heremitarum sancti Augustini in Anglia per Ricardum de Clara filium Gilberti de Clara comitemque Glouernie. Quia igitur per gloriosos progenitores vestros in hanc vbertatis terram ducti sumus digne ad illum qui generalis fundator noster est ego totius ordinis nouissimus hoc opus meum direxi ut si qua catholice et ad fidem edificandum ibi inuenta fuerint ipse non tantum fundator set et protector eorum habeatur (39–40).

But also, on turning over my annals, I have found something else which moved me. For in them I have found an entry to the effect that in the year of our Lord 1248, the order of the Hermits of St Augustine was founded in England by Richard de Clare, the son of Gilbert de Clare, and earl of Gloucester. Since, then, by the means of your illustrious progenitors we have been led into this fertile land, worthily to him who is our general founder have I, the very least of the whole order, dedicated this my work, that if any things shall be found therein written in a catholic spirit, and for the building up of the faith, he may be reckoned not as our founder only, but as our protector also (231).<sup>35</sup>

The author presents himself here as an active reader and writer of history, a move that appears designed to appeal to Humphrey's reputation for supporting learning and frames the duke as a sympathetic fellow scholar. What is more, Capgrave anticipates an active reception of his work, asking his dedicatee to emend any passages which do not sit well with him and offering to send him a complete cycle of commentaries on the Pentateuch "si enim placuerit et ad noticiam meam peruenerit ..." (Preface, *In Genesim* 40) [if it—i.e., *In Genesim*—shall indeed please you, and the fact come to my knowledge (232)].<sup>36</sup>

The impression conjured in this passage that Capgrave was genuinely interested in using his book to start an intellectual conversation with Humphrey is reinforced by two illuminated initials included at the opening of the presentation copy of the manuscript, now Oxford, Oriel College MS 32.<sup>37</sup> The first of these, occurring at the opening

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 63. Lucas rejects Bale's assertion that Capgrave had served as the duke's confessor.

<sup>35</sup> Neither of the surviving commentaries that Capgrave addresses to Humphrey has been edited. The Preface to *In Genesim* is cited from Seymour's transcription in *John Capgrave* (n. 12 above) 39–40; the translation is Hingeston's, lightly modernized, cited by page number from *The Book of the Illustrious Henries* (n. 13 above).

<sup>36</sup> While the degree of Humphrey's intellectual interest in the books that he collected has been hotly debated, Daniel Wakelin points to manuscript evidence suggesting that the duke frequently marked up the works that he received in a manner according with the hopes voiced by Capgrave here. See Daniel Wakelin, *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature 1430–1530* (Oxford 2007) 54–55. See too the commentary in Henry, "Capgrave's Dedications" (n. 16 above) 736–744.

<sup>37</sup> Both these initials and the presentation miniature in the unique manuscript of *In Exodum* (discussed below) are reproduced by Winstead, who treats them in similar terms. See *John Capgrave's Fifteenth Century* (n. 14 above) 8–9.

of the dedication (fol. 3v), shows Capgrave presenting his commentary to Humphrey. It is unusual in that the book Capgrave is gifting is open, as if its author wanted to point out a particular passage to his dedicatee; the second initial is positioned at the top of the opposite page (fol. 4r) and shows Capgrave rearranging four bright red tomes on a narrow desk, under which still more books are piled. As Lucas's study of the Oriel manuscript demonstrates, although the book is not written in the author's hand, he appears to have supervised its production quite closely, adding labels to three diagrams that accompany his text.<sup>38</sup> It seems likely, then, that Capgrave also provided the specifications for these illuminated letters stressing his bookishness and imagining him discussing his work with his addressee. Indeed, the depiction of the author drawing Humphrey's attention to a particular passage in his book is subsequently realized in the text of the commentary, which is accompanied by several examples of the marginal triquetra typically used by Capgrave to guide his readers through his texts and to personalize their experience of his writing.<sup>39</sup>

It seems that Capgrave was encouraged by Humphrey's reception of *In Genesim* for, as the colophon of his next commentary, *In Exodum*, makes clear, he began work on his second production for the duke just over a fortnight later.<sup>40</sup> By the time Capgrave comes to complete and dispatch this manuscript—Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Duke Humphrey b. 1—in 1440, however, his enthusiasm for Humphrey has waned. There is a change in tone in the prefatory remarks to his second gift that suggests a degree of dissatisfaction with the duke as patron:

Pretergressus sum modum dum laudes scriptorum scripsi et, quasi in propriis deliciis oberrans, oblectamenta despexi aliorum. Parcat igitur circumspeccionis vestre clarissimus oculus, optime princeps, huic pio errori et animum donantis magis attendat quam ipsum donum ... Si qua enim bona, si qua necessaria, scripsero ad vtilitatem filiorum ecclesie, noscant omnes fideles quod sub proteccione uestra obumbratur, utpote qui impensis et largitate uestra utcumque sustentor (287).

I have gone beyond due measure while I wrote the praises of writers and, wandering as it were among my own pleasures, have neglected the delights of others. Therefore, O finest prince, let the most clear eye of your circumspection excuse this pious error and give more attention to the intention of the giver than to the gift itself. 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 ((?) I was) being sheltered under your protection inasmuch as I am being supported in one way or another by your generosity (289–290).<sup>41</sup>

From this elusive passage (note in particular the repetition of “si”) it may be deduced that the gain that Capgrave had hoped to achieve as a result of his dedication of *In Genesim* to Humphrey had yet to be completely realized. Precisely what Capgrave was hoping for can only be speculated, but it seems unlikely that the author was looking

<sup>38</sup> Lucas, *From Author to Audience* (n. 5 above) 43–44.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* 59–68.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* 23 n. 22.

<sup>41</sup> The Preface to *In Exodum* is cited by page number from Lucas's transcription and translation in *From Author to Audience* (n. 5 above) 286–288.

solely for personal financial support, as Lucas argues.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, as A. S. G. Edwards notes, the author's use of the phrase *sub proteccione uestra* here "would seem to raise the possibility that Capgrave has entirely different expectations, ones perhaps connected with his order or with some aspect of his increasingly prominent role within it for which he wishes to solicit Humphrey's support."<sup>43</sup> Given that Lucas's own research supports Edwards's point regarding the author's growing influence among the English Austins<sup>44</sup> it appears most probable that Capgrave was addressing Humphrey at least partly in the hope of securing a new source of political recognition and protection for his brothers.

In this connection, Capgrave's injunction that Humphrey should give more attention to the intention of the giver than to the gift is telling. The emphasis on learning and dialogue that characterized the Preface to *In Genesim* is almost entirely absent in the Preface to *In Exodum*, in which Capgrave elects to concentrate on the worldly glory that writers from Homer to Giles of Rome (another prominent Austin friar) have conferred upon their patrons (Preface to *In Exodum* 287). Moreover, although the text of the commentary is accompanied by the same personalizing triquetra as that deployed in *In Genesim*, in the miniature marking the beginning of the presentation manuscript of the text—now Oxford, Bodleian duke Humphrey MS b. 1—the book Capgrave presents to Humphrey is held closed by a golden clasp and the viewer's attention is guided towards the opulent ermine robes in which the duke is dressed (fol. 3r). Capgrave thus appears to have given up on his attempt to engage the duke's scholarly interest, trusting instead to the persuasive power of his book less as the conveyer of a particular text than as an object in its own right. This at least is the reading of the gift adumbrated by Capgrave towards the close of his Preface:

Offerant alii aurea munuscula et lapides preciosos quibus sublimitatem vestram placabilem reddant; ego vero talia non optuli, qui de facili preterire possunt et perire, set ea pocius celsitudini vestre destinanda curavi que non possunt amitti. In hoc enim libro sequenti sub typo pellium et cortinarum eterna mansio depingitur vbi ligna incorruptibilia totum opus sustentant (288).

Let others offer golden gifts and precious stones with which they may make your highness pleased; I, however, have not bought such things, which can easily pass away and perish, but rather I have caused those things to be intended for your highness which cannot be lost. For in this book which follows the eternal dwelling-place is depicted under the symbol of skins and curtains where incorruptible timbers support the whole work" (290).

The book, then, is defined as something both more enduring and safer than treasure. Moreover, while, as Lucas points out, the author's evocation of the "eternal dwelling-

<sup>42</sup> Compare Lucas, *From Author to Audience* (n. 5 above) 271: "The only obvious interpretation ... seems to be that Capgrave, as a writer, expects some kind of pecuniary reward (from which, incidentally, Duke Humphrey could gain some good publicity); this is the *animus donantis*."

<sup>43</sup> A. S. G. Edwards, review of *From Author to Audience*, by Peter J. Lucas, *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* 237 (2000) 169–71, at 170.

<sup>44</sup> On the basis of testamentary evidence Lucas argues that by 1439 Capgrave was considered second in importance only to the prior at the Austin friary at Lynn. Since the prior during this period, William Wellys Jr., served as prior provincial in the years 1433–1441, Capgrave, as sub prior, might have been acting prior at Lynn in 1440. See Peter J. Lucas, "A Bequest to the Austin Friars in the Will of John Spicer 1439–40," *Norfolk Archaeology* 41 (1993) 482–489.

place” undoubtedly refers in the first instance to the Tabernacle as described in Exodus,<sup>45</sup> the parallel between the physical description of the tent that housed the Ark of the Covenant and the shape of the book dispatched to Humphrey is striking: is this not too a composite of hide, cloth, and wood? The codex itself, Capgrave seems to be suggesting, is both part and parcel of the message contained in his commentary; just to behold it is to glimpse some of the richness it contains. This is the access to knowledge that the author now offers the duke.

#### MANUSCRIPTS, PATRONS, AND THE AUGUSTINIAN MYTH

Elsewhere, as we have begun to see, Capgrave fills his books with what he clearly considers to be important texts that deserve careful close reading; I do not want to overstress the case for Capgrave’s reliance on the persuasive power of the material book *per se*.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, the author’s faith in the value of the codex as a means of cultivating good will towards the English Austins is evident in the years that follow his dedication of *In Exodum* to Humphrey. Indeed, as well as seeing his rise in importance in the order, the period from 1440 to 1453 (when he is first elected prior provincial of the English friars) marks the busiest stretch in his career as an author and a book-maker. Alongside the production of the *Liber*, a considerable number of works in English is completed and dispatched during these years, among which there survive four Middle English hagiographies—*Norbert* (1440), *Katherine* (ca. 1445), *Augustine*, and *Gilbert* (both 1451)—a *Treatise of the Orders under the Rule of St Augustine* (1451), and an account of the author’s visit to Rome, the *Solace of Pilgrims* (also ca. 1451); several other works in Latin, now lost, are also dateable to this period.<sup>47</sup> All but one of the extant texts (*Katherine*) are preserved in an autograph or authorially supervised copy and, with two exceptions, all of Capgrave’s extant works are dedicated to a recipient who may be identified. *Norbert* is addressed to John Wygenhale, abbot of the Premonstratensian abbey at West Dereham in Norfolk; *Gilbert* was written at the request of Nicholas Reysby, master of the Gilbertine Order of Sempringham in Lincolnshire, to whom Capgrave also sent a copy of his *Treatise*, and the *Solace* was dedicated to Sir Thomas Tuddenham, sponsor of the journey to Rome that Capgrave narrates in this text. Of the lost works from this period we know that a *Concordia* (ca. 1442) apparently designed to foster reconciliation between the Austin friars and the Austin canons regular was dedicated to John Watford, abbot of the Augustinian abbey at Northampton, and that a *Manipulus doctrine Christiane* (ca. 1452) was produced for John Kempe, archbishop of Canterbury. The two extant works whose dedicatees are

<sup>45</sup> Lucas, *From Author to Audience* (n. 5 above) 291. The manuscript contains several impressively illuminated images of the Ark of the Covenant at fols. 114r, 118v, 122r, 127v, 130v, and 133v.

<sup>46</sup> Thus although, as Seymour notes, Capgrave’s dedicatees often appear to receive “whatever Capgrave had at hand at the moment,” he goes too far where he asserts that “just as [the author’s] books were not written with their recipients in mind, so their interests did not affect the contents of future volumes” (*John Capgrave* [n. 12 above] 49–50). Capgrave’s resourcefulness is a hallmark of his authorial praxis, but he clearly desired to gift works that would appeal to their dedicatees and to thereby reshape their attitudes towards himself and his order. Henry finds that “nearly all [Capgrave’s] dedications reveal an astute match of the form and style of his dedicatory address to the patron, to his imagined readers, and to the content of the book itself” (“Capgrave’s Dedications” [n. 16 above] 736).

<sup>47</sup> For a concise account of the lost works attributed to Capgrave, see Seymour, *John Capgrave* (n. 12 above) 46–49.

unknown are *Augustine* and *Katherine*. *Augustine*, its author tells us, was written at the request of an anonymous "gentill woman" (Prol.: 15)<sup>48</sup> and Derek Pearsall isolates elements of romance diction in *Katherine* that indicate that its author seriously pursued his aim to distribute the saint's legend widely; "It schall be know of man, mayde, and of wyffe," Capgrave writes in the opening to his work (Prol.: 66).<sup>49</sup> Lucas's examination of one of the three extant copies of the work, now Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson poet. 118, leads him to speculate that it may have achieved a correspondingly broad dissemination insofar as it was deployed in the sermons of the East Anglian preacher William Gybbe of Wisbech.<sup>50</sup>

For the most part, however, Capgrave was careful to record the identities of his first addressees since, as Lucas notes, he seems to have seen them as conferring on a given work "a kind of glorified *imprimatur* which would secure a wider audience for it."<sup>51</sup> Thus while he dedicates *Gilbert* to the "maystyr of þe order of Sempyngham," the author makes clear that he has undertaken to produce his translation with a broader audience in mind, namely "for the solitarye women of 3our religion which vnneth can vndyrstande Latyn, þat þei may at vacaunt tymes red in þis book þe grete vertues of her maystyr" (61/1–2 and 19–22).<sup>52</sup> Likewise, although *Norbert* is dedicated to "þe abbot of Derham" in its concluding envoy (4097), at the opening of the work, the gifting of the book is couched in the condition that it should be shared:

And if 3e list þat þis book present  
 May be receyued in 3oure fraternyte,  
 Onto 3oure name dedicate þan schal it be (61–63).<sup>53</sup>

*Augustine*, *In Genesim*, and the *Solace of Pilgrims* are dedicated similarly in ways that indicate a desire to reach a larger audience, this last text featuring the most ambitious address "[o]n to all men of my nacioun þat schal rede þis present book" (1) before the work is formally announced as Tuddenham's gift.<sup>54</sup> It is evident, moreover, that certain of Capgrave's works did circulate, despite the fact that many of his texts now only exist in unique copies. In his Prologue to *Gilbert*, the author recalls that Reysby's commission for the translation was a result of his having seen and approved of a copy of his earlier *Augustine*: "aftir 3e had red þis lyf of Seynt Augustyn," he records, "3e sayde to on of my frendes þat 3e desired gretly þe lyf of Seynt Gilbert schuld be

<sup>48</sup> *Augustine* is cited by chapter and line number from *Life of Saint Augustine* by John Capgrave, ed. Cyril Lawrence Smetana, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies: Studies and Texts 138 (Toronto 2001).

<sup>49</sup> See Derek Pearsall, "John Capgrave's *Life of St. Katherine* and Popular Romance Style," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 6 (1975) 121–137. *Katherine* is cited by book and line number from *The Life of Saint Katherine*, ed. Karen A. Winstead (Kalamazoo 1999).

<sup>50</sup> See Lucas, *From Author to Audience* (n. 5 above) 164.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* 16.

<sup>52</sup> *Gilbert* is cited by page and line number from *Lives of St. Augustine and St. Gilbert of Sempringham, and a Sermon*, ed. J. J. Munro, EETS o.s. 140 (London 1910).

<sup>53</sup> *Norbert* is cited by line number from *The Life of St. Norbert* by John Capgrave, ed. Cyril Lawrence Smetana, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies: Studies and Texts 40 (Toronto 1977). The slight disjunction between these prefatory remarks and the book's closing dedication may be accounted for by Lucas's hypothesis that *Norbert* was written before 1422 and only prepared for presentation to Wygenhale in 1440. See *From Author to Audience* (n. 5 above) 281–284.

<sup>54</sup> The *Solace* is cited by page number from *Ye Solace of Pilgrims: A Description of Rome circa A. D. 1450*, ed. C. A. Mills (London 1911).

translat in þe same forme” (61/14–16). Finally, as Henry points out, Humphrey’s donation of Capgrave’s biblical commentaries to the University of Oxford, although so often adduced as proof of his lack of interest in these and similar works, might equally be interpreted “not as indifference but as Humfrey’s response to Capgrave’s desire that his commentaries reach a wider clerical audience and also as Capgrave’s presentation of such works to Humfrey with the foreknowledge that they might form part of Humfrey’s establishment of a university library.”<sup>55</sup>

An important factor motivating these gestures towards a broader audience appears to be Capgrave’s desire to enhance the profile of his order by raising public awareness of its history, a common apprehension of which he knew to be essential to the success of his brothers’ claims to patronage and protection. The author’s expansions on the origins of the English Austin friars in the biography of Henry VI composed for the *Liber* and in his Preface to *In Genesim* have already been cited. Official histories such as these constituted an important part of a religious community’s self-presentation as a worthy recipient of support; as Andrew Abram and Janet Burton have shown, besides underlining an institution’s pedigree, such histories were also designed to advertise a community’s record of successfully cultivating relationships with patrons in order to increase the likelihood that comparable protection would be proffered in future.<sup>56</sup> It should thus come as no surprise to discover that throughout his oeuvre Capgrave is keen to advertise the history of the English Austin friars and their various connections to power. In his attempts to secure support for his fellow religious by these means, however, Capgrave did not have the easiest task on his hands: his brothers had arrived comparatively late in England and they never achieved the numbers of the older orders.<sup>57</sup> More importantly, along with the Austin friars throughout Europe, they were disadvantaged from the comparatively late moment of their founding in that they lacked a stable ideological platform from which to petition for support. The bull *Licet ecclesiae catholicae* that formally marked the birth of the *ordo eremitarum sancti augustini* in 1256 was in fact the last in a series of unifying declarations that assembled and transformed into one mendicant order a variety of distinct eremitic communities living under the Augustinian rule, principally, though not exclusively, in Italy. At its inception, as Eric L. Saak has shown, the order was thus very much an administrative creation of the pope; it took some time for a corporate image to be developed in which all members of the new amalgamation felt they could participate.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>55</sup> See Henry, “Capgrave’s Dedications” (n. 16 above) 754.

<sup>56</sup> See Andrew Abram, “Identity and Remembrance: Interaction between Augustinian Houses and their Benefactors in an English Context” and Janet Burton, “Constructing a Corporate Identity: The *Historia Foundationis* of the Cistercian Abbeys of Byland and Jervaulx,” both in *Self-Representation of Medieval Religious Communities: The British Isles in Context*, ed. Anne Müller and Karen Stöber, Vita Regularis: Ordnungen und Deutungen religiösen Lebens im Mittelalter 40 (Münster 2009) 233–244 and 326–340.

<sup>57</sup> For the period 1422–1500 there were an estimated 550–520 Austin friars in England and Wales to 587–572 Carmelites, 892–866 Dominicans and 966–1000 Franciscans. See David Knowles and R. Nevill Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses: England and Wales*, 2nd ed. (London 1971) 492.

<sup>58</sup> See Eric L. Saak, *High Way to Heaven: The Augustinian Platform Between Reform and Reformation, 1292–1524*, *Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought* 89 (Leiden 2002). While, as I outline below, the process of Austin unification gathered steam in the later Middle Ages, the Austin friars remained, as Andrews asserts, “perhaps the most disparate of the major medieval religious orders” (*The Other Friars* [n. 9 above] 69).



Events towards the turn of the next century helped to speed this process of consolidation. In 1274 the Second Council of Lyons confirmed the injunction against the formation of new orders decreed at the Fourth Lateran Council, effectively threatening the friars with suppression if they could not prove their existence prior to the date of that meeting (1215). Then, in the opening decades of the fourteenth century, an escalation of the rivalry between the Austin friars and their neighbors in religion, the Austin canons regular, further intensified the need for a serious defense of the order: when in 1327 Pope John XXII issued a bull granting the Austin friars shared custody of the body of Augustine at the basilica of San Pietro in Ciel d'Oro in Pavia, the canons regular, until this moment the sole guardians of saint's relics, were predictably resentful, and a public debate on the relative merits of these two Augustinian orders ensued.<sup>59</sup> In the wake of the Second Council of Lyons and in direct response to the challenge posed by the canons, a raft of propagandistic texts was composed by such prominent friars as Henry of Friemar (to whose *vita* in the *Liber I* I have already briefly alluded) and his pupil, Jordanus of Saxony. These authors typically asserted the value of the friars' vocation by tracing it back to the days of Augustine himself, whom with increasing confidence they claimed as their original founder.<sup>60</sup> This new originary myth quickly assumed the proportions of an official history and its promulgation became a top priority for the order. Capgrave manifestly conceived of his literary work as means of boosting the friars' public profile by continuing this process of dissemination.

Capgrave is careful to advertise his connection to the Austin friars at every available opportunity.<sup>61</sup> At their opening almost all the author's extant Latin works include some variation on the phrase "frater Iohannes inter doctores minimus tituloque heremitarum sancti Augustini" (cited here from the Preface to *In Genesim* 39) [brother John, the least among doctors under the title of the hermits of Saint Augustine (229)]; in the *Cronicles* he likewise identifies himself as "a pore frere of þe Heremites of Seynt Austyn in þe conuent of Lenne" (7/2–3) before naming himself some one hundred lines later (9/22). Even in *Katherine*, where Capgrave never gives his name, he still makes sure to mention his order and to stress his attachment to it:

Owt of the world to my profyte I cam  
 Onto the brotherhode wech I am inne.  
 Godd geve me grace nevyt for to blynne  
 To folow the steppes of my faderes before,  
 Wech to the rewle of Austen were swore (Prol.: 241–245).

Elsewhere, as in *In Genesim* and the *Liber*, the author goes out of his way to point out important moments in the history of the English Austins (this is an important characteristic of the *Cronicles* too, as we shall see). In the *Solace of Pilgrims* the order is presented in a topographical perspective when Capgrave points out a series of Roman churches that are especially meaningful for the friars, including those dedicated to

<sup>59</sup> See Saak, *High Way to Heaven* (n. 58 above) 160–176.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* 176–234.

<sup>61</sup> On this aspect of the author's self-presentation, see too the preliminary comments in Winstead, *John Capgrave's Fifteenth Century* (n. 14 above) 17.

St. Tryphon, which had recently received the remains of St. Monica, Augustine's mother (92–94), or to St. Susanne, a new acquisition of the friars (123–124), or to the Virgin, on the Piazza del Popolo (163–165): the church of S. Maria del Popolo was the Austin friars' mother house in Rome.<sup>62</sup> Where he draws on the work of the Augustinian myth-makers of the previous century, Capgrave's promotion of his order becomes more polemical. In particular, Capgrave's desire to demonstrate the seniority of the friars over the canons regular appears to have been an abiding one.<sup>63</sup> The *Treatise of the Orders under the Rule of St Augustine* that he appends to the copy of *Gilbert* sent to Reysby, he tells his reader, is "drawe out of a sermon seyde be frer Ion Capgrau at Cambrige, þe 3ere of our Lord a M cccc xxij" (i.e., almost thirty years previously) (145/*incipit*),<sup>64</sup> and the affirmation of the priority of the Austin friars delivered here is repeated in *Augustine*, Capgrave's adaptation of Jordanus of Saxony's *vita* of the saint; the now lost *Concordia*, to which the author refers repeatedly in his *Treatise* (146/4–6 and 146/34–147/2) and in the *Solace* (92) would also appear to have addressed this issue.

While there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of Capgrave's statement that the *Concordia* was written "to reforme charite be-twix Seynt Augustines heremites and his chanones" (*Treatise* 146/6–7), it is clear from the extant texts that he was keen to resolve this discord on terms that were favorable to the friars. At the same time as he stresses the antiquity of both the friars and the canons in the *Treatise* and *Augustine*, Capgrave is keen to point out that the friars came first. Thus in the *Treatise* Capgrave compares his brothers to Judas, the first son of Jacob; Augustine founded his order, he writes, "ny iij 3ere be-for þat he was bischop at Ypone, and mad þere chanones" (146/2–3), who in their turn are compared to the patriarch's second and third sons, Reuben, representing the canons secular (146/11–23), and Gad, representing the canons regular (146/24–147/2). Capgrave again insists upon the distinction between the Austin canons secular and regular in *Augustine*, where, in a passage not paralleled in his source (in which the priority of the friars is already stressed, cf. *Augustine*, chaps. 28–29), he moves to underline both the priority of the secular canons over their regular brethren and their spiritual inferiority. Regarding the third monastery supposed to have been founded by Augustine, Capgrave writes that

owt of þis colege cam þese chanones þat ar called at þis day of Ordre of Seint Augustin, þou3 it be so þat þei be distincte in oþir habite þan þei þat were with Seint Augustin, for þei went in dyures colouris and fures as chanones do now in cathedral cherchis. But because þat þese chanones in blak habite kepe more streytly þe reule of Seynt Augustin as touching þat poynt to lyue in commoun, þerfor I suppose þat þei be nyher Seynt Augustin þan þe othir;

<sup>62</sup> Lucas notes that the overall shape assumed by the *Solace* reflects Capgrave's experience of Rome insofar as those features of the city that receive particularly detailed description such as the Baths of Diocletian were often close to sites affiliated with the Austin friars (these baths were adjacent to the Church of St. Susanne). See Peter J. Lucas, "An Englishman in Rome: Capgrave's 1450-Jubilee Guide, *The Solace of Pilgrims*," *Studies in Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Texts in Honour of John Scattergood: The key of all good remembrance*," ed. Anne Marie D'Arcy and Alan J. Fletcher (Dublin 2005) 210–217, at 209.

<sup>63</sup> Capgrave's advocacy on this topic is described briefly in George Sanderlin, "John Capgrave Speaks Up for the Hermits," *Speculum* 18 (1943) 358–362.

<sup>64</sup> The *Treatise* is cited by page and line number from Munro, *Lives of St. Augustine and St. Gilbert of Sempringham, and a Sermon* (n. 52 above).

and þerfor is þere meued a question in þe lawe, wheþir þe chanones of cathedral cherchis be bounde þorwoute þe world for to kepe þe reule of þis doctour which he mad onto hem . . . , or nowt. And þei sey nay þerto, for because he myth bynde no cherch but his owne. Werfor me semeth þat þo chanones which be clepid regulere ar more ny Seint Augustin þan þoo þat be cleped seculere (34/10–22).

At the same time as he asserts the proximity of the canons regular to the spirit of Augustinian monasticism, then, Capgrave underlines their posteriority to the order of canons secular, from whom, he claims, they descend by a process of reformation. Both *Norbert* and *Gilbert* may be said implicitly to support this argument insofar as they focus on the medieval foundation of these orders of canons regular. It is difficult to judge how *Norbert* and *Gilbert* might have been received at Dereham and Sempringham, but from the comments Capgrave attributes to Reysby in his Prologue to *Gilbert* it appears that the abbot shared the author's desire to resolve the issue of seniority: Reysby apparently expressed a desire that information pertaining to "alle þoo relygyous þat lyve vndyr [the saint's] reule" (*Gilbert* 61/9–10) should be appended to *Augustine* and this is the motivation given for Capgrave's decision to send him the *Treatise*. Perhaps Capgrave genuinely believed he could persuade his neighbors of the justness of his case.

UNIVERSAL HISTORY AND THE AUGUSTINIAN MYTH: THE *ABBREUIACION OF CRONICLES*  
 This survey of Capgrave's dedicatory policy during the 1440s and early 1450s suggests that the author was engaged in an attempt both to promulgate an official history of the friars and to create a wide-ranging network of allies and protectors for his brothers at Lynn and throughout England; it is evident that he considered these goals to be closely related. At the center of this network was the king himself, replacing Humphrey after the collapse of his influence. Radiating outwards from this point, Capgrave targeted a range of local bourgeois (Tuddenham and the "gentill woman" who commissioned *Augustine*), religious (Archbishop Kempe) and religious communities (his friendly (?) rivals at Sempringham and Dereham; a copy of *Katherine* is known to have been kept at the Austin nunnery of Campsey Ash in Suffolk).<sup>65</sup> Notwithstanding his evident industry, the utility of Capgrave's network of friends and patrons remained contingent on a degree of political stability that fifteenth-century politics did not admit, and the civil war that resulted in the accession of Edward IV in 1461 left the English Austins exposed. Deprived of a royal protector, they were also encumbered with at least one associate besides the deposed king who was now decidedly out of favor: Tuddenham was executed as a traitor in February 1462. It is this power shift that prompts Capgrave's decision to prepare his *Abbreuiacion of Cronicles* for dispatch to Edward.

As was the case with the *Liber*, Capgrave seems to have spent several years compiling his *Cronicles*, a collection of annotations on universal history that runs from

<sup>65</sup> On this manuscript, now London, British Library MS Arundel 396, see Horstmann, *The Life of Katherine* (n. 12 above) xxix–xxx. Pearsall speculates that another *Katherine* manuscript, now London, British Library MS Arundel 168 "presumably also belonged, judging from its contents (lives of St. Christina and St. Dorothea, Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady*, etc.), to a nunnery"; "John Capgrave's *Life of Saint Katherine*" (n. 49 above) 136–137 n. 76.

Creation until 1417. The previously cited reference to “*annualia mea*” in the Preface to *In Genesim* (40) suggests that the work might have existed in some form as early as 1439, and in his study of Capgrave’s orthography Lucas detects “possible signs of a change in spelling habit such as might have occurred if the work was compiled over a period.”<sup>66</sup> It appears probable that Capgrave resolved to address the *Cronicles* to Edward IV at a rather late stage in its composition, perhaps even after the main body of the autograph presentation manuscript, now Cambridge, University Library MS Gg. 4. 12, had been copied. It is evident from the collation of this codex—1<sup>2</sup>, 2–14<sup>8</sup>, where the first quire contains the dedication—that the Preface addressing the work to Edward was a late addition to the book.<sup>67</sup> Indeed, given the care with which the work was produced, it appears possible that it may originally have been intended for Henry VI. In this case Capgrave’s eagerness to present his universal history as a project undertaken on his own initiative could be explained as an attempt to avoid making the original purpose of his project indecorously apparent. Describing the compilation of his text, he tells Edward that “it plesed me as for a solace to gader a schort remembrauns of elde stories, þat whanne I loke upon hem and haue a schort touch of þe writyng I can sone dilate þe circumstaunes. This werk send I to 3ow” (7/12–16).

As Antonia Gransden’s study of historical writing from this period demonstrates, it was not unusual for writers to switch allegiance during the turbulent years that saw the end of the Hundred Years’ War and the beginnings of the Wars of the Roses: like Capgrave, the chronicler John Hardyng, at one point a highly vocal Lancastrian supporter, also defected to the Yorkist party; the antiquary John Rous would likewise transfer his support from the Yorkists to the Tudors later in the century upon the accession of Henry VII.<sup>68</sup> What is unusual, however, is Capgrave’s decision to present Edward IV with a text that bears so few signs of being adapted to suit its new audience. Hardyng, for instance, revised the second “Yorkist” version of his *Chronicle* quite vigorously, cutting back his eulogy of Henry V and adding new passages that style Henry IV a usurper and detail the arguments in favor of Richard of York’s—that is, Edward IV’s father’s—claim to the throne.<sup>69</sup> By contrast, Capgrave’s account of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries follows his source, Thomas Walsingham’s *Historia Anglicana*, quite closely, and the Lancastrian bias in this text is reflected in his work. Indeed, as Gransden points out, the narrative of the deposition given in the *Cronicles* is substantially similar to that the author had composed some fifteen years earlier for the *Liber*.<sup>70</sup> In his description of the years leading up to 1399, Capgrave reproduces Walsingham’s narrative of Richard’s arbitrary rule, whereby the deposed king is shown constraining the rights of parliament unfairly, making unreasonable financial demands on his noblemen, and manifesting a sensitivity to criticism of his reign which, as Capgrave has it, “mad þe puple to hate þe kyng” (211/20). Clearly, the author cannot have thought that his participation in the blackening of Richard’s name

<sup>66</sup> Lucas, *Abbreviacion of Cronicles* (n. 13 above) xliii.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* xxxvii.

<sup>68</sup> Antonia Gransden, “Politics and Historiography During the Wars of the Roses,” *Medieval Historical Writing in the Christian and Islamic Worlds*, ed. D. O. Morgan (London 1982) 125–148.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* 134–135.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* 138.

would negatively dispose his dedicatee towards him or his friars, although it was through his relation to the deposed king that Edward IV claimed his right to rule. Perhaps this was because he knew that elsewhere in the *Cronicles*, as in the *Liber*, he had made a special attempt to avoid Lancastrian polemic.

Two of the departures that Capgrave makes from the surviving texts of the *Historia Anglicana* cast a significant shadow over the reputation of Henry IV. The first of these is a gossipy and unflattering account of the late king's final disease. This began, we are told, following his assassination of Archbishop Scrope in 1405:

The kyng afir þat tyme lost þe beuté of his face, for, as þe comoun opinion went, fro þat tyme onto his deth he was a lepir, and euyr fowler and fowler; for in his deth, as þei recorded þat sey him, he was so contracte þat his body was scarce a cubite of length (229/13–16).

Capgrave likewise significantly extends Walsingham's account of the death of Henry IV with an interpolated conversation between the king and his confessor. The matter of Scrope's assassination is raised again here, along with the legitimacy of the deposition, and the author leaves his reader with the curiously downbeat image of a dying king cowed by his children:

At his deth, as was reported of ful sad men, certeyn lordes stered his confessour, Frere Jon Tille, Doctour of Diuinité, þat he schuld induce þe kyng to repent him and do penauns, in special for iii þingis: on, for þe deth on Kyng Richard; the oþir, for þe deth of þe Arch-bis-chop Scrop; þe þird, for þe wrong titil of þe crowne. And his answeire was þis: – For þe to first poyntis, I wrote onto þe pope þe veri treuth of my consciens, and he sent me a bulle with absolucion and penauns assigned, whеч I haue fulfillid. And as for þe þird poynt, it is hard to sette remedy, for my childirn wil not suffir þat þe regalie go owte of oure lynage (238/6–16).

The *Cronicles* provides the unique extant record of both these anecdotes. Since so much of the material in Capgrave's history is derived from Walsingham's *Historia Anglicana*, Lucas suggests that the author was working from a now lost copy of the Latin history that also contained these passages.<sup>71</sup> It may also be that these moments are Capgrave's own original additions to his history, included with a view to balancing out the Lancastrian version of events preserved in his source. As Peter McNiven has established, the emphasis that individual medieval chronicle writers placed on the connection between the onset of the king's illness and Scrope's execution, for instance, was often "proportionate to the degree to which they wished to censure the king's act of sacrilege."<sup>72</sup>

From Gransden's perspective, Capgrave's failure to adapt the *Cronicles* to reflect the new Yorkist history is unlikely to have been deliberate: "perhaps death prevented its revision as well as its completion," she speculates.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, although Capgrave's book appears to be unfinished (compare the Corpus manuscript of the

<sup>71</sup> Compare Lucas, *Abbreviacion of Cronicles* (n. 13 above) lxxxv–lxxxvi.

<sup>72</sup> Peter McNiven, "The Problem of Henry's Health, 1405–1413," *English Historical Review* 100 (1985) 747–772, at 759.

<sup>73</sup> Gransden, "Politics and Historiography" (n. 68 above) 138.

*Liber*),<sup>74</sup> the author evidently did not plan to send this text to Edward entirely *faute de mieux*. Perhaps having learned from his experience with duke Humphrey, Capgrave makes clear in the Preface to the *Cronicles* that he elects to give the king a copy of his universal history instead of the compendium of his biblical commentaries that he has been in the process of compiling (*Cronicles* 7/6–11). It follows, I think, that, as was the case with the *Liber*, Capgrave trusted his royal addressee—initially, perhaps, Henry; later, certainly, Edward—to appreciate the partial independence of the historical account with which he was presented. Thus the historiographer could demonstrate his potential usefulness to his addressee as a credible spokesperson at the same time as he reminded his king that he was an active author and self-publisher whom it would be wise to court. Certainly, Capgrave has not forgotten the persuasive potential of the material book: the autograph manuscript is big—its pages measure 306 x 217mm—and the text is written throughout in the hand which Lucas has identified as Capgrave’s best presentation script.<sup>75</sup> The dedication opens with an illuminated initial which, if not quite so sumptuous as those that introduce the presentation manuscripts of *In Genesim* and *In Exodum*, is probably the best that could be produced at short notice. Most impressive, however, is the layout of the work, which Capgrave describes at length:

If 3e merueyle whi þe 3eres be set oute as on, too, thre, þis is þe cause: for þe elde bokes in her noumberes, þou3 þei were mad ful treuly, 3et þe þei viciat be þe writeres; eke þe cronicles of Euseby, Jerom and oþir haue grete dyuersité in noumbiris of 3eres. This is þe cause whi I sette my noumbiris o-rowe. Also, if 3e merueile þat in þoo 3eres fro Adam to þe flood of Noe sumtyme renne a hundred 3ere or more where þe noumbir stant bare and no writing þerin, þis schal be myn excuse: forsoth I coude non fynde, notwithstanding þat I soute with grete diligens. If othir studious men þat haue more red þan I or can fynde þat I fond not, or haue elde bokes wechch make more expression of þoo stories þat fel fro þe creacion of Adam onto þe general flod þan I haue, þe velim lith bare saue þe noumbir, redy to receyue þat þei will set in. Whan þe tyme of Crist is come þan renne to noumberes togidir—þe blak seruith for þe age of the þe world, þe rede seruith for þe annotacion of Crist (7/19–34).

The *mise en page* of the text is annalistic, in two columns, with the years listed continuously down the left hand side of each column and the text written in next to the year or years during which the historical events recorded took place; after the birth of Christ the numbering of the years is doubled, a number in black giving the age of the world and another in red marking the years since Christ’s birth. The space that future additions might require has been factored into the layout. While this was not a new mode of presentation—a more sophisticated form of the same layout has been held responsible for the great success of one of Capgrave’s major sources, Martin of Troppau’s *Chronicon pontificum et imperatorum*<sup>76</sup>—it was nevertheless one that required careful planning of the kind that not all scribes were either willing or able to

<sup>74</sup> Lucas notes that “the writing of the text of the manuscript ceases abruptly halfway down fol. 104v, col. a, the text in this last column is not rubricated, and fol. 105r is headed ready to receive more text”; *Abbreviacion of Cronicles* (n. 13 above) xxxvii.

<sup>75</sup> Compare Lucas, *From Author to Audience* (n. 5 above) 19–36.

<sup>76</sup> See Wolfgang-Valentin Ikas, “Martinus Polonus’ Chronicle of the Popes and Emperors: A Medieval Best-Seller and Its Neglected Influence on Medieval English Chroniclers,” *The English Historical Review* 116 (2001) 327–341, at 328–329.

undertake: the copyist of the non-autograph manuscript of the *Cronicles* that is now Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 167 has written Capgrave's text out continuously.<sup>77</sup> Where he draws attention to the role he has played as the maker of his presentation manuscript, moreover, Capgrave confirms his description of his work as a personal project at the same time as he invites his dedicatee to appreciate his skill as a scribe and the technically demanding nature of the product with which he is being presented.

Lastly, as is the case throughout the author's oeuvre, Capgrave's demonstration of his loyalty to his dedicatee in the *Cronicles* is bound up with an attempt to shore up the Austin self-image. Capgrave repeatedly capitalizes on the opportunities that his project affords him to record the order's official history. An entry is thus devoted to John XXII's landmark decision to grant the friars joint custody of Augustine's relics in 1327 (141/8–14), and information pertaining to the arrival of his brothers in England (119/24–32), their installation and patronage in the country (122/31–33; 130/32–131/6) and their formal unification by papal decree in 1256 is likewise interpolated (122/36–123/5). Predictably, the seniority of the order is also stressed: Capgrave's dating of the entry of the English Austin friars to 1230 (cf. 119/27–31) puts them in Britain almost twenty years earlier than any other extant document and a reference to the founding of the Dominicans and the Franciscans at the turn of the thirteenth century prompts the addition that of the four mendicant orders, "the oþir too ... Heremites of Seint Austin, and heremites of þe Mount Carmele, were longe befor" (113/8–10). Memory of the crisis provoked by the Second Council of Lyons died hard, it seems. Elsewhere, however, Capgrave is less polemic, demonstrating a healthy interest in the history of the other mendicant orders and reserving his most acerbic comments for their common enemies, Richard Fitzralph (170/17–25) and John Wyclif (188/9–17). By deploying his notes on Austin history alongside entries devoted to developments in national and European politics, church history, natural disasters and other *faits divers*, it is perhaps in the *Cronicles* that Capgrave comes closest to achieving his aim of naturalizing the Augustinian myth in England. This goal is only furthered by the author's hunt for common ground with the other mendicants, an intended audience that cannot be ruled out since a reference to "þe reder" in the Preface (8/6) indicates that, as usual, Capgrave hoped for a broad reception.

It is not known whether the autograph copy of the *Cronicles* was ever dispatched to Edward, but Capgrave's Preface makes clear that at one time he seriously intended to send it to him. It is difficult to guess how the new king might have received such a gift; certainly Capgrave was an author ill-placed to cater to the tastes that he would subsequently develop for Burgundian prose romances and the particularly handsome books in which such texts typically traveled.<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, the *Cronicles* manuscript stands as a potent reminder of its author's flexibility as a bookmaker: here as else-

<sup>77</sup> On this manuscript, see Lucas, *Abbreviacion of Cronicles* (n. 13 above) xxxvii–xxxix and plate V. Lucas's plates IV and VI illustrate the layout of the autograph manuscript; his plate II reproduces its illuminated initial.

<sup>78</sup> On which, see Carol M. Meale, "Patrons, Buyers and Owners: Book Production and Social Status," *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375–1475*, ed. Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge 1989) 201–238, at 204–205.

where we see him adapting previously produced material in order to produce a substantial volume for presentation, apparently at short notice. It also testifies to the author's intransigence as a historiographer and his conviction, similarly evident in the *Liber*, that this very quality would appeal to his royal addressee. Finally, the *Cronicles* reminds us of Capgrave's enduring advocacy of his order, constituting what was perhaps his most successful attempt to present his message to the English ears he needed to catch. The author who emerges on this reading of the texts is a far cry from the "flunkey" derided by Furnivall and castigated by Seymour; nor is he quite the apolitical ideologue described by Winstead. Focusing on Capgrave's historical writing facilitates a clarification of this author's sensitivity both to the complex imbrication of historiography and communal identity and to the effective links between the publication of such identities and the successful acquisition of patronal support. It is within this frame of reference that Capgrave's particular achievements and his relationship to his literary peers may be most accurately gauged.