“Hokclyff” and the Will of William Hoton

Abstract

There are two surviving copies of La Male Regle by Thomas Hoccleve, a lively account of his dissolute life as a clerk of the Privy Seal. One is part of an autograph manuscript of Hoccleve’s works in the Huntington Library, the other an incomplete version in Canterbury Cathedral Archives. Reference to a third copy survives in the will of William Hoton, proved in 1447. As well as La Male Regle, Hoton bequeathed a letter of Pharaoh, chronicles and statutes, together with a mazer and pious donations. This information, coupled with records of Hoton’s family members, his burial place and associates, produces a profile of William Hoton linking him with the law and the book trade, and possibly with Neville’s Inn, the London town house used by a noble family to whose members Hoccleve addressed some of his poems. Hoton’s will also leads to a second individual who owned La Male Regle – the person who received it as a bequest, the common attorney and citizen, John Mordon. Neither Hoton nor Mordon has hitherto featured in discussions of the reception of the poem, which was in circulation later than previously thought.

A will in the records of the Commissary Court of London, made by William Hoton in 1445, includes the bequest to John Mordon of a short treatise called ‘Hokclyff’ beginning with ‘O precious tresour incomparabile’ (‘vnus parvus tractatus vocatus Hokclyff incipientes cum O precious Tresour incomparabile et cetera’).¹ The item was identified from its incipit by C. L. Kingsford in 1922 as a copy of La Male Regle by Thomas Hoccleve (c.1367–1426).² Since then, the existence of the bequest has not been entirely overlooked, but its significance has not been grasped. The will provides a series of clues to William Hoton’s social status, intellectual interests, religious attitudes, family relations, professional activities and network of friends and associates. It locates him in a particular area of London, connecting him with
a major religious foundation, Greyfriars; with the city’s manuscript book trade and legal world; and, possibly, with the town house of the Neville family, two of whose members were the addressees of Hoccleve’s poetry. In providing access to such evidence, the will of William Hoton enables us to reconstruct the reception and transmission of *La Male Regle* by and between two owners of the text who have not thus far been the focus of scholarly attention. And it counters the claim that Hoccleve’s poem ‘rapidly became unintelligible to later fifteenth-century readers’.³ In what follows I examine first William Hoton’s legacy of books, then his other bequests and place of burial, before identifying some of the individuals named in his will. It is then possible to create a profile of William Hoton and to evaluate his place within the reception history of Hoccleve’s poem.

*La Male Regle*, composed by 1406, was one of Hoccleve’s first substantial poems, running to fifty-six stanzas in ballade form.⁴ Part petition for an unpaid annuity, part complaint, Hoccleve used an autobiographical persona to describe his dissolute roistering as a clerk of the Privy Seal at Westminster Hall (where he worked from 1387 until his death) and the need to reform his disordered life.⁵ Only one complete copy is known to exist, included as part of the autograph collection of his works that the poet compiled in the last four years of his life.⁶ A second copy, retitled ‘Balade’ and made *circa* 1420, begins at the fifth verse and uses just nine stanzas (two in reverse order), shorn of personal and topographical specificity, to deliver a poem on the perils of excess.⁷ Hoton’s will therefore provides evidence of a spectral third, and presumably complete, copy of *La Male Regle*, available as an independent text, though probably not with the title Hoccleve gave it in his autograph copy.

William Hoton bequeathed *La Male Regle* alongside other books that he valued and this in itself provides useful information about the intellectual and cultural context within which Hoccleve’s poem was owned and received. To Robert Shipton William left a treatise called the Epistle of Pharaoh (‘vnus tractatus vocatus pharaoh is pistell’); and to John
Leseuve a book beginning with a chronicle and finishing with some old statutes with several (or many) other statutes included (‘vnum librum incipientem cum cronicis et finientem cum veteribus statutis cum pluribus aliis statutis compositis’). The will evinces a clear sense of generic distinction (epistle, chronicle, statutes, ‘Hokclyff’) and of the physical appearance or bulk of each item (tractatus, librum, parvus tractatus). Whether this order of bookishness is William’s, or that of the clerk who made the list, it is impossible to say. It is also worth noting that the bequest is out of the ordinary in having a secular emphasis. Book requests by Londoners at this period are predominantly of pious texts. The texts William accumulated are also unusual in representing a wide range of discourse in prose and poetry – both that of the authoritative, formal statutes and of the more demotic Male Regle, which uses the language of complaint – and of language: the English of Hoccleve alongside the law French of the statutes and (possibly) the Latin of the chronicle.

The possible exception to William Hoton’s secular taste in books is the letter of Pharaoh, its title suggesting a religious, or at least a biblical, orientation. I have been unable to identify this item and instead offer some speculative observations. First, the Pharaoh of Exodus and Kings was not known for his letter-writing, preferring to communicate orally or through intermediaries. It is other protagonists, such as courtiers and clerks, who demonstrate literacy – notably Joseph, as a reader of dreams. For its part the Middle English Metrical Paraphrase, which expands the biblical source, depicts Pharaoh surrounded by ‘cunnand clerks’, but they are advisers and magicians rather than scribes. However, the York Hosiers’ Play of Moses and Pharaoh, while borrowing its narrative from the Paraphrase, adds an emphasis on the diabolical nature of Pharaoh. The idea that Pharaoh is an agent of Satan, or analogous to him, is present also in The Five Wiles of Pharaoh, a short text often associated with the Gilte Legende. A number of the surviving copies date from the mid fifteenth century. It is a work of religious instruction, alluding to
the biblical Pharaoh to show how he devised a series of ingenious stratagems to ensure that his Christian enemies stay ever more rooted in the place of sin.\textsuperscript{13}

Such a figure brings to mind the Satan of the anticlerical satire ‘Epistola Sathanae ad Cleros’, deriving from a text composed by Peter Ceffer in 1352, that emerged in Wycliffite circles.\textsuperscript{14} Its conceit is that the devil writes to his creatures, the prelates and officers of the church, urging them to continue their excellent work in resisting the ideals of virtuous poverty set by Christ. A version of Ceffer’s letter appears in Huntington HM114, a mid fifteenth-century manuscript, containing in the same hand copies of other Middle English texts, including \textit{Piers Plowman}, \textit{Troilus and Criseyde} and the \textit{Pistil of Susannah}.\textsuperscript{15} The scribe was also responsible for texts in Lambeth Palace Library, MS 491, which include a copy of \textit{Brut}. Both manuscripts feature compositions with an oriental content.\textsuperscript{16} The scribe’s work has recently been further expanded to cover a wide range of legal documents.\textsuperscript{17}

Therefore, were ‘pharao is pistell’ in the Ceffer tradition, it would not have been without parallel: the range of Hoton’s textual bequests – literary, satirical, legal, historical, oriental – is encompassed by that of the HM114 scribe.\textsuperscript{18}

Second, it may be worth considering another aspect of the apocryphal Pharaoh. Chronicles on the origin of Scotland claim that the kingdom was founded by Scotia, daughter of the Pharaoh, who had been exiled from Egypt in the aftermath of Exodus. She brought with her a new ‘tablet of the law’, the Stone of Scone.\textsuperscript{19} Having defeated the Scots in 1296, Edward I appropriated the Stone, token of Scottish sovereignty, and took it to Westminster where it was installed under the coronation throne. But Anglo-Scottish animosities continued to flare up and the first half of the fifteenth century saw regular hostilities.\textsuperscript{20} In such a context a letter from Pharaoh, father of Scotia, would have been a potent intervention. Distant as the Scottish borderlands were from Westminster, disturbances there had an immediate import on the northern counties, the governance of the marches and the stability of the kingdom.
Finally, it is worth noting that the letter form is one with which Hoccleve himself was very familiar. His Formulary of 1423–5, much of which is in his own hand, is a compendious volume created for fellow clerks in the office of the Privy Seal. It is a compilation of model writs, letters and verbal conventions, organised by type of addressee, as used in official communications and petitions of one sort and another.\(^\text{21}\) The documents, dating back to the reign of Edward III, are instruments of government, by means of which the office of the Privy Seal enacted the decisions of the king’s council. It is highly unlikely that ‘pharao is pistill’ was in a similar mould, but the presence in Hoton’s bequests of a letter, alongside a copy of a poem by Hoccleve, displays a certain consanguinity of interest: an appreciation of the documentary form that was the poet’s daily fare and which, through its petitionary element, infiltrated La Male Regle.

The above hypotheses are open to objection. If ‘pharao is pistill’ was a composition in the Ceffons tradition, then Pharaoh would be acting out of character, having mysteriously acquired a skill absent from his biblical or apocryphal roles: literacy. If the letter related to Scottish sovereignty, it would be a rarity: there is no precedent for a letter from Pharaoh as the father of the Scotland’s mythical founder. Finally, it is important to bear in mind that ‘pharao is pistill’, unlike Hoccleve’s letters for the Privy Seal, was not a letter as such but is designated in Hoton’s will as a treatise or tractatus, a body of thought structured by a polemical argument using the letter form as a rhetorical device, as in the case of the ‘Epistola Sathanae’.\(^\text{22}\) Alternatively, the ‘pistill’ might not be any kind of letter at all but rather a ‘written legend or story’ (MED s.v. epistel, 4) in the manner of the Pistil of Susannah contained in HM 114 – although this meaning is relatively rare. Regrettably, therefore, the true nature of ‘pharao is pistill’ must remain a matter of conjecture until such time as further evidence comes to light.

In the case of William Hoton’s chronicle the ground is somewhat surer. Although the will does not name the text in his possession, several were available in whole or in part. One
possibility, if a relatively remote one, is the Latin *Polychronicon* of the Benedictine monk, Ranulph Higden (fl.1299–c.1360). 135 copies survive of this universal and encyclopedic history, which exists in various recensions initiated by Higden himself. Its primary appeal to members of religious orders, and university educated secular clergy, let alone its bulk and costliness, makes it an unlikely candidate. Most copies appear in institutional collections, although the geographical section was occasionally excerpted and anthologized, and so circulated more widely. The English translation by John Trevisa, surviving in a further sixteen manuscripts, was completed by 1385, and was more accessible to a London lay audience. For example, in 1468 the wealthy mercer Robert Skrayningham bequeathed ‘to Thomas Thirland marchaunt my grete English booke called pollycronycon’, but this is an isolated case.

A more promising candidate for ownership by William Hoton is one of the numerous manuscripts of the *Brut* chronicle, whether in Latin, French or English (three-quarters of the surviving 160 manuscripts are in English). Intended for those with chivalric values, or aspirations towards them, it was a highly adaptable text, as its many continuations show. There is some evidence that the text was so much in demand in fifteenth-century London that it was commercially produced there on a speculative basis, and for different levels of affluence. One kind of continuation that the *Brut* accommodated was the work now known as the London chronicle, usually in English. Structured by a chronological sequence of mayors and sheriffs, it had a strong civic and secular focus and was elaborated to a greater or lesser extent by accounts of significant individuals and key incidents affecting the city and its inhabitants, such as the king and events at court, Joan of Arc, John Cade, trials, extreme weather, pageants, war, treaties, rebellion and disorder, treason, heresy, plague and harvest dearth. The London chronicles also exist independently of the *Brut*, either alone or in commonplace books, are anonymous, secular, and are individually often the work of their owners, written for personal and household use. Their authors were merchants, clerks or
lawyers with a stake in the political and economic success of the city and who lent their work an eyewitness credibility and a novel sense of linear history.\textsuperscript{32} Yorkist and anti-Lollard, the London chronicles, of which some fifty examples survive, were at the height of their popularity at the time of William Hoton’s death. As well as enabling their authors to engage with and reflect on significant events, they also provided an opportunity to collect copies of key documents affecting the city including official letters, ordinances and statutes. Thus the presence of a letter and statutes alongside William Hoton’s chronicle and, in the case of the statutes, bound together with it, suggest that his chronicle was most likely of the London variety.\textsuperscript{33}

The statutes, bound with the chronicle in William’s bequest, were a characteristically London production of the manuscript book trade, with their own cachet.\textsuperscript{34} They have been described as ‘among the most common secular reading in late medieval England’ and were in high demand in the 1330s and 1340s: more than a quarter of the surviving manuscripts date from those decades; and the regnal year of 23 Henry VI, when William Hoton drew up his will, is the terminal year of no fewer than fifteen copies.\textsuperscript{35} The laws of the realm, recorded in law French, were of especial interest to the mayor, aldermen and citizens of the city as the legal instruments that enshrined key rights and privileges and that regulated their relationship with the court at Westminster and with the city populace at large. Copies of statutes were kept in the Guildhall library for consultation by officials. A sequence in the \textit{Liber albus}, a wide-ranging compilation by the town clerk, John Carpenter, illustrates the importance of statutes to the governance of the city: they concern the management of waterways, crucial to London’s economic success.\textsuperscript{36} Presumably the statutes owned by William likewise reflected his preoccupations both professionally and as an inhabitant of the city. They must have amounted to a considerable collection since they are differentiated as ‘old’ and ‘other’, indicating that the latter were newer or \textit{Nova statuta}, those issued from the
first year of Edward III’s reign (1327), whereas the *Vetera statuta* were those issued in the regnal years of Henry II, Edward I and Edward II.\textsuperscript{37}

What kind of book was the one referred to in William Hoton’s will as ‘Hokclyff’? Comparison with two other books, in circulation at the same time, may help to provide an answer. HM 744, two-thirds of which contains predominantly religious verse by Hoccleve, in his own hand, was owned by the Fyler family. Individuals of that name were associated with the London Mercers’ company and appear in the city’s testamentary records. From 1424 to 1473 they used their book to record family births and deaths, and for inventories of their possessions.\textsuperscript{38} Its mercantile, devotional and familial aspects are quite unlike those of ‘Hokclyff’; nor is Hoccleve material within it directly attributed to him. Nevertheless, the Fyler volume does raise the possibility that William Hoton’s ‘Hokclyff’ was likewise a compilation, a collection of items that happened to begin with *La Male Regle* and which may or may not have included other works by Hoccleve. That possibility seems to be reinforced by another book, called ‘Hocclef’, which appears in the 1443 bequest of the Norfolk squire Robert Norwich to the priest Nicholas Frenge. Intriguingly, Norwich’s interests were not dissimilar from Hoton’s: Norwich left to others a book of new statutes and ‘one little quire of paper with the kings of England versifed’.\textsuperscript{39} His bequest also of ‘a paper book of the Household of the Duke of York’ leads Watt to conclude that ‘Hocclef’ is none other than HM 111, containing *La Male Regle*, a book made for the Duke of York.\textsuperscript{40}

While Norwich’s ‘Hocclef’ is categorically a book, the same is not true of Hoton’s ‘Hokclyff’, described as *parvus tractatus* – as distinct from the *tractatus* that is ‘pharaoh is pistell’, and his *librum* of chronicles and statutes. It seems likely, therefore, that Hoton’s ‘Hokclyff’ is not a bulky compilation like HM 111, but rather a single item. The fact that Hoton’s bequest is attributed to Hoccleve need not of itself indicate a large volume, since Hoccleve names himself within *La Male Regle* (line 351). If Hoton’s *Male Regle* was similar in layout to that of *La Male Regle* in HM 111, with three stanzas to a side, Hoton’s
copy would have required a quire of ten leaves. Hoccleve favoured pamphlet publication: his works in HM 744 are a series of pamphlets bound together.\textsuperscript{41} If Hoton’s ‘parvus tractatus vocatus Hokclyff’ was indeed a pamphlet, the question arises as to why he should have included such a relatively slight item in his bequest. That it was not unprecedented to do so is clear from Norwich’s will with its ‘one little quire of paper’. The inclusion by William of \textit{La Male Regle}, alongside larger items, may also indicate that the poem had a special significance for its owner.

William left to his wife’s mother, who leads the sequence of personal beneficiaries, a particularly valuable item, his mazer, adorned with an image of the head of Saint John the Baptist (‘meam mazeram cum ymaginiis capitis sancti Johannis Baptiste in medio’). Mazers found in other London wills of this period belong to individuals of substance and standing.\textsuperscript{42} A mazer or communal drinking bowl is the kind of object that allowed the owner – typically a merchant or citizen – conspicuously to display his or her wealth and social prestige in a social setting. The bowl itself was usually made of maple burl adorned with a deep metalwork rim, in gold or silver-gilt, sometimes with a base-band in the same metal and including a metalwork boss at the bottom of the inner surface of the bowl.\textsuperscript{43} So the image of the head of John the Baptist on William’s mazer, a recurrent motif on mazers of the period,\textsuperscript{44} would have been part of the metalwork design and quite possibly (and appropriately) the design for the inner boss – referring, gruesomely, to the serving vessel in which Salome requested that John’s head be given to her. The vessel is named as a ‘dish’ in the Wycliffite Bible (Matthew 14:8 and 11; Mark 6:25 and 27–8), translating the Vulgate’s \textit{discus}.\textsuperscript{45} As a disc-shaped object, a mazer would pass muster as the serving vessel used for supporting ‘in medio’ the severed head of the saint.\textsuperscript{46}

The rector of St Anne’s, which must have been William’s parish church (i.e. the church of St Anne and St Agnes, near Aldersgate), received a modest 3s. 4d. for ten masses and 6s. 8d for the fabric.\textsuperscript{47} For the expenses connected with his tomb and for the sisters who
were dependent upon the Franciscan brothers he bequeathed 20s.; then to the Dominicans, Augustinians and Carmelites he left 3s. 4d. each. Finally, there were benefits of a more general and social kind: 20s. for improving the communal road and the same amount for invalid paupers. These are fairly routine provisions by the standards of the day.

William requested that he be buried next to his wife, near the images of the blessed Mary and Saint James. The church housed several statues of Mary and accommodated a fraternity dedicated to her. For William was not requesting burial in his parish church but at Greyfriars, no ordinary church. It had been founded in the Faringdon Within ward of the city in 1225 when, at the behest of Francis himself, members of the Friars Minor came to England to establish footholds, initially in Canterbury, London and Oxford. As mendicants, with no access to tithes, lands and rents, the Franciscans depended entirely on charity, primarily from lay patrons. In London, from the outset, they were generously supported by leading citizens, perhaps because Francis himself was the son of a wealthy merchant. The range and extent of that support is indicated by the donors of the thirty-six windows at Greyfriars. They included Edward III; the Drapers’ Company; John, Lord Cobham; the alderman Simon Parys; Richard Bryton, citizen and mayor; Sir Robert Launde, goldsmith, knighted for his part in the defeat of Wat Tyler; and the Vintners’ Company. By the time of William Hoton’s death in 1447 Greyfriars, one of London’s largest monastic institutions, was a large and imposing establishment, second only to St Paul’s in size and ‘probably the largest Mendicant church in England’, measuring 300 feet from east to west and 89 feet wide. It dominated the north-west corner of the city and extended over four parishes.

Whilst funding a window displayed visible evidence of the donor’s pious generosity, for all to admire, individuals could also elect to be buried at Greyfriars and, through bequests, benefit from the ministrations of the brothers in securing them an easier passage to the afterlife by intercession in the form of prayers, masses and commemoration. The
church rapidly became a burial place of choice for people of rank, including prominent craftsmen and retailers, strangers and outsiders. By the mid-fifteenth century Greyfriars was a mausoleum of the good and the great, including four queens and one king, crammed with raised alabaster and marble tombs, some with effigies, and commemorative stone slabs incised with images, decorations and lettering. Of the 765 interments at Greyfriars, 302 belong to the 1400s, of which half were in the nave.

The funerary monuments were destroyed in 1547 and the stone sold for £50, but not before the Franciscans made an inventory, ‘De monumentis’ (c.1526), in a register that still survives. From this evidence the antiquarian E. B. S. Shepherd devised a plan of burial places within the church, the accuracy of which has subsequently been checked and endorsed. The plan is important for present purposes because in graphic form it shows not only the exact location of William’s burial but also suggests something of his social standing relative to others buried within Greyfriars. For the organisation of the tombs was on a hierarchical or ‘zoned’ basis. Burial in the choir was reserved for royalty, other people of high rank, prominent benefactors and senior members of the convent; next came those buried in the four chapels either side of the choir; then individuals in two transverse sections of the building, the ambulatory and altars; and finally those buried in the nave, where the north aisle was especially populous. The position of the Hoton tomb was in the third bay of the north aisle and reasonably close to areas of the church reserved for those of higher rank, indicating that William was by no means least among those of the middling sort interred at Greyfriars. Additionally, the occupations of those among whom William was buried provide some pointers to his own calling and social group. The church had long-term associations with lawyers, and the burial records reveal that it was also favoured by stationers. The designation ‘citizen’ regularly occurs. The majority were probably lesser citizens rather than merchants.
As one of the chief conventual schools of the English province Greyfriars had a distinguished reputation for learning. It housed a library that was given a significant boost by the convent’s Guardian, Thomas Wynchelsey, when in 1411 he persuaded Richard Whittington, serial mayor of London, to provide £400 for a new and larger library building.⁷⁰ Although access to the library by laypersons would not have been the norm, it may have been a factor in attracting book-owning testators to consider the Franciscans’ church as a burial place, just as the reputation of the Franciscans for book-learning and intellectual curiosity may have attracted them to Greyfriars in the first instance. Its library covered theology, canon law and ecclesiastical history but it also included Higden’s *Polychronicon* as well as a London chronicle that is part of London, British Library, MS Cotton Vitellius F. xii, the manuscript containing ‘De monumentis’.⁷¹

For the wider testamentary evidence from Greyfriars indicates that William Hoton’s legacy of books, while unusual in relation to the standard book bequests of Londoners more generally, is less so when seen alongside other book bequests by other lay persons buried at Greyfriars.⁷² He was laid to rest among people of similar inclinations. Some ten years earlier, in 1436, Elias Stoke had bequeathed to John Rowe of Exeter College, Oxford (where Rowe had been Rector from 1391 to 1393) a bible, *De sermonibus Januensis*, a glossed psalter and a book of medicine.⁷³ In 1443 the son of Henry Asshebourne, citizen and surgeon, was the recipient of what his father termed ‘vij libros meos principales’, the latter word indicating that his library was actually more extensive. The bequest was of medical books including works by John of Arderne, Teodorico dei Borgognoni, Lanfranc of Milan and Nicholas of Salerno. Henry also had a care for the fate of his principal books once his son died, requesting that they then be left to Charterhouse.⁷⁴ One final example reveals a form of meditative piety reflected in a ‘remarkable’ library for a layman that, again, included a significant proportion of secular texts, including legal ones. In 1474 Stephyn Preston, of Stylton in Dorset, bequeathed:
my byble, my boke called Bonaventure, my boke called the Pater noster, my boke called Boys de consolatione philosophie, my ii bokes called every of them Stimulus consciencie, and all my other bokes of grammar, sophistry, logyk, and lawe.75

The transfer of William’s assets was proved by Robert Church, ‘ciuis et Textwryter’, on 7 September 1447. Church, or Chirche, acting in an official capacity, was not necessarily known personally to Hoton, but he was a prominent member of the London book trade. He was sworn in as Master of the Mistery of Stationers in 1441 and on five separate occasions between 1441 and 1450 provided surety for foreign craftsmen entering the Mistery. In 1450 he was named as a witness in a legal document involving a property transaction for Peter Blyton, Warden of the Mistery of Textwriters and Limners, and textwriter John Taillor. He is styled ‘stationer and textwriter’ in his will of 1459.76 Hoton’s personal familiarity with another individual centrally involved in the book trade is more certain. Although neither the recipient of a book, nor an executor, outside of pious and family bequests Robert Quadryng heads the list of Hoton’s beneficiaries and received the relatively generous sum of 6s 8d. Quadryng too is designated civis.77 He was a citizen who had no need of books. In his will of 1452 he is termed citizen and stationer. He lived in the same parish as Hoton, St Agnes and St Anne, in which parish church he and his wife, Dionisia, were interred in 1452 and 1453 respectively.78

The recipient of La Male Regle, and one of the executors of William Hoton’s will, was John Mordon. Court records provide evidence of a John Mordon who on different occasions is named as gentleman, auditor, attorney and citizen. In 1421 he stood surety in the Court of Common Pleas for the defendant Robert Coventre, citizen grocer, in a case of debt pursued by the executor of a will.79 In a case of housebreaking before the same court in
1428 he provided surety for the defendant William Westryn, chaplain, accused of stealing four books and two iron keys from St John Zachary church in Aldersgate ward. In 1448 he was himself the defendant in a case brought by John Santon, in which he stood accused with others of trespass, embracery (illegal influencing of a jury, in this case through bribes) and breach of the statute 38 Edward III (1364) concerning the corruption of jurors. Later the same year the roles were reversed when he pursued the same John Santon, ‘amerced for many defaults’, for the recovery of a debt of £20 due to him and another citizen, recently deceased. On this occasion, Mordon showed the bond in court. Other records, including those of the Court of Hustings, held at Guildhall, illustrate Mordon’s activities as a common attorney from 1413 until 1449 when he represented heads of religious houses as much as secular clients in cases concerning disputes over tenements, land and rents.

It is no accident that the cases in which John Mordon took part regularly involved the ward of Aldersgate. In 1451, in the Hustings of Common Pleas, Mordon represented Robert Cawode in a further complaint against John Santon concerning two messuages in the parish of St Botolph without Aldersgate. That was the parish where Mordon lived and where all three men were members of a moderately affluent Fraternity, that of the Holy Trinity and Saints Fabian and Sebastian. Cawode, Clerk of the Pipe in the Exchequer, was one of its founders, and Mordon was its warden from 1438–41 – as Santon had been before him, in 1415. A number of members of the fraternity were themselves wardens of their craft guilds, though few were wealthy (Cawode was an exception). Brewing was the dominant craft among members of the fraternity; the Brewers’ hall was in Cripplegate ward, adjoining Aldersgate. Mordon’s role as warden included the keeping of accounts, negotiating property transactions and bequests of benefit to the fraternity, and resolving disputes between its brothers. The process of arbitration could include the close examination of key documents, described in one proceeding as ‘chartres, evidences, muniments and
In 1447 Mordon was himself a disputant within the fraternity, along with some associates, including Cawode, against the ubiquitous John Santon. It is reasonable to surmise that the John Mordon of Hoton’s will and John Mordon, common attorney and fraternity warden, are one and the same person. If so, it is probable that he and William Hoton were close associates, if not outright friends. John Mordon the common attorney would have been an apt choice as an executor of William Hoton’s will. He was adept at navigating his way through the litigious waters of mid fifteenth-century London, familiar with the process of probate and disputes arising from it, with the correct allocation of property including books, with the role of statutes in determining law, and he was used to dealing with religious houses. Mordon would have enjoyed some standing within his local community and he lived in the same ward as Hoton, in an adjacent parish. He was also an apt recipient of La Male Regle. Like Hoccleve, he was immersed in documentary culture, keenly aware of the importance of rules, their tendency to be neglected or infringed, the procedures for enforcing them or securing redress, lapses in the payment of money and the petitionary processes necessary to its recovery. It is also a poem that vividly captures work and after-work culture in and around Westminster Hall, where Hoccleve was a clerk in the Privy Seal, and where Mordon attended the Court of Common Pleas.

Who was William Hoton? Quite possibly, he was not a Londoner born and bred, for he was not a citizen, and was buried at Greyfriars. He lived in the northwestern part of the city, in the parish of St Anne and St Agnes in Aldersgate ward. Greyfriars was located to the west, chiefly occupying the adjacent parish of St Nicholas. In 1445, when he drew up his will, William was a widower and had no surviving children (a not unusual state). His wife’s mother was still alive so it is possible that William died relatively young. Family relationships appear to have been close. William held the memory of Margaret, his wife, dear and requested burial in the north aisle of Greyfriars alongside her, in the space left
vacant for that purpose. In due course his brother, Robert, asked to be interred where the body of William lay. And William bequeathed to his mother-in-law, who leads the sequence of personal beneficiaries, a particularly valuable item, his mazer.

Other individuals named in the will indicate that William belonged to wider social networks that have two dominant strands: the book trade and the law. That in turn indicates that he enjoyed a high level of literacy, an inference corroborated by the books he bequeathed. William was polyglot, reading English, law French, and possibly Latin; he was acquainted with a variety of discourses – those of complaint, petition, chronicl, letter and statute – whether in verse or prose; and was familiar with the range of forms in which those discourses occurred (composite book, single treatise, pamphlet) and therefore of manuscript culture more widely. It is perhaps not surprising that William was drawn to the Franciscans, with their reputation for intellectual endeavour. Collectively, William’s books suggest an owner with a lively and independent intelligence that was secular in emphasis and focused on topics relevant to London.

Unusually for a Londoner with his accomplishments William left no religious books. He could not use the books he bequeathed in the way that his fellow Londoners did, for pious charity. He was thus somewhat different from most other book-owning testators, who more readily advertised their pious practice. William’s piety was less in evidence, more low-key, pragmatically designed to secure the spiritual benefits that charity could bestow. He made bequests – if modest ones – to his parish church, to the friars in general and especially the Franciscans and minoresses, not neglecting also provision for the common good and the poor. His request that he be buried next to his wife, near the images of the blessed Mary and Saint James, may indicate some special devotion to the named saints on the part of William and his family. Greyfriars was also supported by an association of amici spirituales – the kind of group to which William might conceivably have belonged.
William Hoton was a relatively wealthy individual. He owned books, though probably of modest monetary worth, and a precious mazer, and could afford the expense of a commemorative slab at Greyfriars.\textsuperscript{99} Although modest by comparison with other funerary monuments in the church, and referred to as small in ‘De monumentis’ (it records that he and his brother are buried ‘sub parvo lapide’),\textsuperscript{100} a memorial of this sort was well beyond the reach of most people. Then again, the standard burial fee at Greyfriars was 6s 8d whereas William set aside 20s, which could have covered the cost of extras such as prayers, candles and tapers, or of an incised stone or brass inlay.\textsuperscript{101} This allowance is in turn put into perspective by the total sum William bequeathed to various individuals, religious groups and causes – £4.13s 4d – and it in turn by contemporary standards of expenditure. Wealthy individuals laid out anything from £4 to £50, the higher amount allowing for sumptuous ceremony.\textsuperscript{102} So William’s projected expenditure is hardly excessive.

William’s settled and extended family, his wider networks, affiliation with Greyfriars, and wealth, indicate someone of established social status of the middling sort. Individuals associated with him in the will – Robert Church, Robert Quadryng, John Mordon, were all citizens. William was not styled \textit{civis}, although he was buried among Londoners who were.\textsuperscript{103} It is appropriate therefore to think of him as a householder, who thereby had a voice – though a less influential one than that of a citizen – at wardmote meetings.\textsuperscript{104} His books add to the impression that William was someone who identified closely with the city and who had a stake in its reputation, prosperity and success as expressed through its influence, good governance and economic and political prowess.

What did William Hoton do? His interest in statutes old and new, in chronicle material and historical precedent, in rules \textit{male} or otherwise, in the Egyptian king who was the chief adversary of God’s lawgiver, suggest familiarity with legal matters.\textsuperscript{105} That impression is borne out by his close link with the common attorney John Mordon, and burial at Greyfriars – in the company of lawyers. It is especially his possession of the statutes that
allies William with the legal profession. Law French, the peculiar language in which the statutes were written, was intelligible only to someone who had received the appropriate training, as for a common lawyer. If William had received such instruction it would have been in the ambit of the Inns of Chancery and Inns of Court, situated in Holborn and Chancery Lane, the other side of Newgate, westwards from where William lived and just beyond the city wall abutted by Greyfriars. However, William was not necessarily an attorney, notary or scrivener. He could have belonged to that substantial group of individuals versed in the common law as a means of defending rights and property during a lengthy period of chaotic central government, and who served the gentry and ruling élite.

Looking for William Hoton elsewhere in the London records produces only thin pickings. Between 1426 and 1432 Chancery records mention a William Hoton as the plaintiff in a case concerning the destruction of hedges and corn, and other riots, at Brampton in Cumbria. In the same records a William Hoton is the plaintiff in a suit about hindering a plaint of debt at the Manor Court of Moreton Hampstead (Devon). Some of the surviving records probably refer to another William Hoton, the man who was Steward of Durham Priory from 1437 to 1446 (the year of his death). As head of the prior’s lay servants, the steward’s principal responsibility was the management of the priory’s estates. He administered short-term leases of land and property to tenants throughout the county, and presided over the prior’s manorial court. Working closely with the prior as his ‘most valued link with the non-religious world’, he acted as courier and messenger to the local nobility and visited London on monastic business. He was a respected, affluent and influential member of gentry society in the county. The Durham William Hoton’s tomb and memorial brass are at Sedgefield church, eighteen miles south-east of Durham, where he also endowed a chantry chapel.

Although the existence of two William Hotons at opposite ends of the country, both of whom died at the same time, seems like an odd coincidence, it may be more than that.
Hoton is not a common name in the London records, it occurs with greater frequency in northern counties. The London William Hoton may therefore have had some family connections with the Hotons of the north. If so, it would have brought him closer to networks within which Hoccleve’s poetry circulated. For the William Hoton buried at Sedgefield, steward of Durham Priory, had previously served as steward an even greater landlord: Thomas Neville, second earl of Westmorland. At the time of his appointment to the Priory, senior members of the family wrote glowing recommendations. The earl’s predecessor, Ralph Neville (1364–1425), first earl, married as his second wife Chaucer’s niece, Joan Beaufort (c.1379–1440), legitimated daughter of John of Gaunt and Katherine Swynford. Joan had marked literary interests and was the dedicatee of a holograph volume of Hoccleve’s Series (Durham, University Library, MS Cosin V.iii.9). Nor was she the only member of the Neville family with whom Hoccleve had an association, literary or otherwise. The addressee of La Male Regle, from whom Hoccleve craves his unpaid annuity, is ‘my lord the Fourneval … | My noble lord that now is tresoreer’ (417–18), that is Lord Furnival, Thomas Neville (1366–1407), younger brother of Ralph. As treasurer between 1404 and his death, Thomas was a member of the king’s council, whose decisions were implemented by the office of the Privy Seal where Hoccleve worked. In that capacity, Hoccleve would have had some professional awareness also of Ralph, first earl of Westmorland. He had offered significant support to Henry in his bid to oust Richard II, and was himself a member of Henry IV’s council between 1399 and 1404.

The Neville family was a political force to be reckoned with. After Ralph Neville’s key roles in the defeat of the Percy rebellion of 1403 and the Percy–Scrope rebellion of 1405, the Nevilles, whose power base was in county Durham, consolidated their control of the northern marches, policing the border and resisting invasion by the Scots. But they also continued to enjoy a strong presence in London where, since the mid fourteenth century, they had maintained a grand, stone-built town house. Known as Neville’s Inn, or
Westmorland Place, it was adjacent to the parish of St Anne and St Agnes, a short walk north-east of where William Hoton, owner of ‘Hokclyff’, lived. If he and his Durham namesake with Neville connections were related (as cousins?), *La Male Regle* could have come into the possession of the London William Hoton from a family network, and without necessarily having to travel a circuitous route to the north and back.

A more audacious hypothesis is that William himself worked in a supportive, administrative capacity as a clerk for the Nevilles at their London base. He would have been a good fit: multilingual, secular, with established London and possibly Durham family networks, savvy about legal and historical precedent. It would help to explain how he came to be the owner of a poem addressed to a distinguished member of the Neville family and – if ‘Pharaoh is pistill’ was of that ilk – a treatise relating to a Scottish foundation myth. If William did have such a role, then there were precedents from an earlier generation: William Massy and John Picard. In their cases, Hoccleve was in direct contact, naming them in poems where he flattered their literary acumen and exhorted them to act as intermediaries with their noble lords, in order to ease the reception his poetry. Massy, addressed in a balade as being ‘of fructuous intelligence’, was steward, receiver general and general attorney to John of Lancaster, third son of Henry IV, who from 1403 until 1413 was, like the Nevilles, instrumental in policing the northern border. For John Hoccleve intended an autograph copy of the *Regiment of Princes*. Picard, of whom Hoccleve wrote ‘vndir his correccioun stand y’, was possibly John Picard, a clerk of the chapel royal, who in 1394 had power of attorney for Edward, duke of York and was probably responsible for his household accounts. Edward was the dedicatee of a set of Hoccleve’s balades

What would have been the appeal of *La Male Regle* to William Hoton? If he was connected in a direct or indirect way with the Neville family, then *La Male Regle*, addressed to one of its members, would have had enduring value. Leaving aside that conjecture, as an inhabitant
of London William might have appreciated the poem’s vivid description of lowlife shenanigans in the city’s taverns and the extent to which Hoccleve name-checks familiar places. As someone who left money in his will for the upkeep of the city’s roads, William might have recognised Hoccleve’s difficulties in moving around the city in winter.\textsuperscript{123} While not a member of a guild, William may nevertheless have espoused the city’s prevailing ethos, outlined by Sylvia Thrupp as typical of the merchant \textit{mentalité}: self-control, discretion, the prudent use of money, moderation in recreational activities, reservations about unnecessary expense.\textsuperscript{124} All of these qualities are sadly lacking in Hoccleve’s alter ego in \textit{La Male Regle}, but his mindfulness about the opinion of others, a recognition that he is on the road to perdition, and desire to amend his ways, provide exemplary morals that could have played well to a receptive reader. William’s mazer, with its head of John the Baptist surfacing through the wine, shares with Hoccleve’s poem a warning against excess: Herod was feasting and drinking when, against his better judgement, he agreed to Salome’s request that she be given the head of John the Baptist, then languishing in Herod’s gaol. With his legal frame of reference, William might have responded well to the petitionary element in the poem, to the documentary conventions and discursive practices it evokes, and to its focus on rues and governance, whether personal or civic.\textsuperscript{125}

In some respects it is not surprising that a copy of \textit{La Male Regle} found its way to William Hoton, whether or not he worked for the Nevilles. Since he moved in legal circles, William could have known Hoccleve and have acquired the poem directly from him or from an intermediary: Hoccleve’s lodgings were in Holborn, where William might have attended the inns of court; and his training or practice could have taken him to Westminster Hall, where Hoccleve worked. Or William might have bought a copy of \textit{La Male Regle}: as a highly literate individual of some social standing who lived in the parish of St Anne and St Agnes, he was a few minutes away from the north side of St Paul’s, the hub of the manuscript book trade in London, with which he had personal connections.\textsuperscript{126} The parish of
St Nicholas in the Shambles, where Greyfriars had been founded, itself had a high concentration of book artisans. Just to the north of Greyfriars was Smithfield, ‘the most active centre of book production in London after St Paul’s’. There, in rented accommodation at the hospital of St Bartholomew’s, the prolific scribe John Shirley was active between 1420 and the mid 1440s, producing texts ‘designed for circulation, perhaps in the form of booklets’. His copies included Hoccleve’s first long poem, the *Letter of Cupid* (translated from Christine de Pisan’s *Epistre au Dieu d’Amours*) as well as his most celebrated composition, the *Regiment of Princes*. Shirley enjoyed a wide network of contacts with the mercantile elite.

Hoccleve himself knew the manuscript book trade at first hand. As well as producing documents at the Privy Seal and composing his own poems, he worked as a jobbing scribe. In that capacity he helped to produce a copy of John Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*, and possibly had some involvement in the production of the Hengwrt and Ellesmere copies of the *Canterbury Tales*. He also wrote religious verse for Thomas Marlburgh, a prominent textwriter and stationer, who was warden of the mistery of Limners and Textwriters from 1391 to 1429. Hoccleve’s involvement in the London book trade no doubt helped him to promote, preserve and transmit his own poetry. One of his favoured forms of circulation was through booklets, a form particularly well suited to *La Male Regle*. In William Hoton it found a ready and receptive reader.

William Hoton’s will adds a further dimension to the existing picture of the audience for *La Male Regle*. In HM 111, the autograph manuscript that includes it, Hoccleve frequently prefaces a poem with a note about its intended recipient, dedicatee, or the person who commissioned it, but not so in the case of *La Male Regle*. Instead, internal evidence indicates that his intended audience was twofold. First, the poem was for fellow clerks at the Privy Seal, such as the ‘Prentys and Arondel’ (321) he names – individuals who subsequently made careers first as clerks of the Chapel Royal and then respectively as Dean...
of St Stephen’s Westminster and Dean of St George’s, Windsor. Second, the petitionary element of the poem is aimed at Henry IV’s Lord Chancellor, Thomas Neville, Lord Furnival, who held the strings to the purse containing Hoccleve’s delayed annuity.

Thereafter, the poem found a third audience in Canterbury, c.1420. A monk of Christ Church, reflecting communal anxiety about institutional excess at a time when Henry V was threatening the Benedictines with reform, extracted from La Male Regle certain stanzas that spoke to their predicament. William Hoton’s will shows that the poem also continued to be in circulation over two decades later, and in complete form, in Hoccleve’s home city. Its complex layering of topography, graphic warnings against excess, and awareness of the instrumentality of writing, spoke to those who, like William Hoton and John Mordon, operated within frameworks regulated by laws enshrined in documents. Moreover, the will goes further than previous evidence in identifying two actual owners, seriatim, of a copy of La Male Regle. They point to the existence of a London lay audience for Hoccleve’s poem later than previous thought. It was one interested in powerful overlords, including individuals in service to them, and therefore in the parliamentary and historical framework that conditioned social relations, and in rules of governance both legal and personal and the consequences of ignoring them.


3 Sarah Tolmie, ‘The professional: Thomas Hoccleve’, Studies in the Age of Chaucer 29 (2007), 345; see also Ethan Knapp, The Bureaucratic Muse: Thomas Hoccleve and the

4 For a recent edition of *La Male Regle* see ‘My Complente’ and Other Poems by Thomas Hoccleve, ed. Roger Ellis (Exeter, 2001), 64–78. Subsequent references are to this version.

5 On reform, in its various applications, as one of Hoccleve’s continuing preoccupations, see David Watt, *The Making of Thomas Hoccleve’s ‘Series’* (Exeter, 2013), 8–15.


8 In a will of 1449, Augustine Hawkyns, citizen and grocer, left a missal, primer and bible; Robert Markele, skinner and citizen, bequeathed two psalters in a will of 1420; books left by Eleanor Purdelay, widow, in 1443, included the story of Joseph, St Patrick’s Purgatory and a sermon of ‘altquyne’; in the same year Thomas Roos, citizen and mercer, left two primers, *Stimulus consciencie*, and *Piers Plowman*; John Springthorp, clerk, left a bible, psalter and


Hoccleve himself, of course, was not averse to producing both normative and demotic discourse as occasion demanded.

10 Josephus elaborated the biblical stories but generally through eloquent speeches. There are no acts of writing, although sacred scribes skilled in accurately predicting the future (presumably in part through book-learning) are part of the action and one such scribe announces to Pharaoh the birth of Moses. Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, ed. and trans. H. St J. Thackeray, vol. 1 (London, 1930), 171ff., 229, 253.


13 Albert E. Hartung (gen. ed.), *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English*, vol. 7 (New Haven, 1986), 2365–6, item 222.


16 In HM 114 *Mandeville’s Travels*, Susannah and excerpt from *Three Kings of Cologne*; in Lambeth 491 *Siege of Jerusalem* and *Three Kings of Cologne*.


18 Controversially identified by Linne Mooney and Estelle Stubbs as the Guildhall attorney and chamber clerk, Ralph Osborn, a claim contested by Lawrence Warner in favour of an unnamed clerk associated both with Guildhall and Goldsmith’s Hall: Linne R. Mooney and Estelle Stubbs, *Scribes and the City: London Guildhall Clerks and the Dissemination of Middle English Literature, 1375–1425* (York, 2013), ch. 2; Warner, *Chaucer’s Scribes*, ch. 4.

For the background see Bruce Webster, *Medieval Scotland: The Making of an Identity* (Basingstoke, 1997), 96–112.


That in turn may rule out another possibility, that the title ‘pharao is pistill’ is a convenient fiction designed to cloak an actual and notorious letter from a duplicitous and hostile sender. From the standpoint of a London resident, ‘Pharao’ could be code for the king at Westminster, insofar as his rule might restrict the freedom of the ‘Israelites’, the Londoners over whom from time to time he claimed sovereignty but who had their own codes of law – a situation that created periodic tension and gave rise to royal letters. For the genre of royal letters as sent to the citizens of London see Malcolm Richardson, *Middle-Class Writing in Late Medieval London* (London, 2011), 70–2.


Gransden, Historical Writing, 2. 220–7.


29


31

41 Watt, Making, 68–75.

42 The emblem of a mazer or goblet features on the coats of arms adopted by merchant families, especially goldsmiths. Thrupp, Merchant Class, 146–7, 252.


44 Thrupp, Merchant Class, 147.


46 More prosaically, the emblem of John the Baptist’s head might signal an association with a fraternity linked to a trade guild. John the Baptist was the patron saint of the Tailors’ fraternity, which welcomed members who were not tailors; and of the fraternity for younger members of the skinners’ guild. Matthew Davies and Ann Saunders, The History of the Merchant Taylors’ Company (Leeds, 2004), 19–23, fig. 15; Caroline M. Barron, ‘London 1300–1540’, in D. M. Palliser (ed.), The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, vol. 1: 600–1540 (Cambridge, 2000), 429, 432; George Unwin, The Gilds and Companies of London, 4th edn (London, 1963), 58, 176, 205–6.


48 The house of the minoresses, otherwise known as the Franciscan order of Poor Clares, was located to the east, outside Aldgate: Lobel and Johns (eds), City of London, map 4.


On similar requests see Röhrkasten, ‘Londoners’, 467, who includes Hoton (n. 156).


Röhrkasten, Mendicant Houses, 408–9, 459.

Röhrkasten, Mendicant Houses, 411, 468. Cf. 467: ‘Large numbers of laymen and women wanted to express their spiritual affiliation to mendicants not just through requests of intercession but through the physical presence of their body in the friars’ churches and cemeteries.’
Kingsford, *Grey Friars*, 5–6 and 39–40, who notes that ‘a great part of the church must have been practically paved with tombstones’ (5). Greyfriars could boast the bodies of Queen Margaret and Queen Isabella; Joan, queen of Scotland; the garter knights Lord Mountjoy and Sir John Robsart; John, lord Cobham; Robert, lord Lisle (who had entered the Franciscan Order); the Countess of Norfolk; a number of provincial ministers of the Franciscans; and the hearts of Edward II, John Pecham (a Franciscan and archbishop of Canterbury) and Eleanor of Provence, wife of Henry III, as well as the remains of Italian merchants and prominent citizens such as chief justice Robert Tresilian and the former mayor, Sir Nicholas Brembre who, like Launde, played a decisive role in the defeat of Wat Tyler and who was knighted by Richard II for his efforts: Röhrkasten, *Mendicant Houses*, 468; Cavanaugh, ‘Books Privately Owned’, 467, 523; Kingsford, *Grey Friars*, 4. Some fragments of the sepulchral monuments emerged in the course of the 1975 excavations: Johnson, ‘Excavations’, 228–31, with illustrations. For a drawing of the medieval church foundations and Wren superstructure see Herbert, ‘Excavations’, fig. 4.


Dying and the Dead, 100–1600 (Leicester, 1992), 124, 131. The practice was not peculiar to Greyfriars: see Saul, English Church Monuments, 116.

67 Kingsford, Grey Friars, 7, 18.


69 Thrupp, Merchant Class, 190.


72 Cf. Thrupp, Merchant Class, 161–3.

73 Kingsford, ‘Additional material’, 92–3. Januensis was the thirteenth-century Genoese archbishop Jacopa da Verrazze. Copies of his sermons, which included advice on domestic
relations, are relatively widespread but usually occur in clerical possession: Cavanaugh, ‘Books Privately Owned’, 264, 326, 390, 553, 826, 872.


77 The term *civis* was an important and recognised category of social demarcation, indicating the enfranchised nature of those ‘who had sworn loyalty to the city government and undertaken to bear their share of taxation and public duty’. Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, 2.

Privileges included local political rights, buying and selling, and keeping shops for retail purposes. Access to citizenship was through trade guilds and it was to citizens that the mayor and aldermen were responsible: Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, 3, 67.


80 Mackman and Stevens, *Court of Common Pleas*, CP40/670, rot. 135d Trinity Term 1428.
Mackman and Stevens, *Court of Common Pleas*, CP40/749, rot. 128 Easter Term 1448.

Mackman and Stevens, *Court of Common Pleas*, CP40/750, rot. 371 Trinity Term 1448.

For cases in which Mordon was an attorney, see Helena M Chew (ed.), *London Possessory Assizes: A Calendar* (London, 1965), Roll EE, items 235, 237, 239, 240, 242, 244, 248, 253 and Roll FF, items 255, 257, 258, 261, 265, 266, 267. The court process is described on pp. xix–xxii. I am grateful to an anonymous reader for the *Review of English Studies* who directed me to this source. See also Penny Tucker, *Law Courts and Lawyers in the City of London, 1300–1550* (Cambridge, 2007), Appendix 8.4.


‘Appendix: Membership and office-holding (141-3)’, in Basing (ed.), *Parish Fraternity Register*, 82–6. On the wealth of the Fraternity and its members, see xiii, xxi–ii.


For examples see Basing (ed.), *Parish Fraternity Register*, 19, 70, 72 (receiving rent), 20 (receiving quarterage), 30 (validating an election), 44–5, 63 (property transactions), 75 (recording expenses).


On the role of common attorney in city courts see Tucker, *Law Courts*, 272, 273, 286–7, 290–300, 304, 307–13. Tucker opines (p. 308) that Mordon ‘may be the man who was in
1431 granted a retainer by the prior of Charterhouse’. This seems likely, since part of the
Charterhouse estate lay in the parish of St Botolph.

92 Lobel and Johns (eds.), City of London, map of ‘The Wards’. The Franciscans had also
acquired land in St Anne’s parish in the early fourteenth century: Maggs, ‘Londoners’, 64;
Röhrkasten, Mendicant Houses, 50.

93 Thrupp, Merchant Class, 200.

94 The median age at death of London merchants in the fifteenth century was from forty-nine
to fifty: Thrupp, Merchant Class, 194.

95 Kingsford, Additional Materials, 115.

96 Wendy Scase, ‘Reginald Pecock, John Carpenter, and John Colop’s “Common-Profit”
texts bequeathed for common profit, while noting that wealthy mercers would have had
access to many different kinds of book.

97 On bequests by Londoners to the city’s mendicant houses, and for some cautionary
remarks on the evidence provided by their wills, see Röhrkasten, ‘Londoners’, 449–51; J. A.
16 (1965), 189–90; and more generally Clive Burgess, ‘Late medieval wills and pious
convention: testamentary evidence reconsidered’, in Michael Hicks (ed.), Profit, Piety and
the Professions in Later Medieval England (Stroud, 1990), 14–33.

98 Röhrkasten, Mendicant Houses, 415, 423, 432.

99 For relative values see Cavanaugh, ‘Books Privately Owned’, 11–13, 16.

100 Kingsford, ‘Additional material’, 115.

Church Monuments, 38, 111.

103 The fact that William Hoton’s will was registered in the Commissary Court may also indicate that he was not a citizen: Barron, ‘Parish fraternities’, 21. See also Barron, ‘London 1300–1540’, 400.


105 Chronicles were also of great interest to merchants. See Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, p. 163; and Boffey, *Manuscript and Print*, 8, 151–61, on the involvement of one merchant group, the drapers, in book production and consumption. In a will of 1393 William King, draper and alderman, bequeathed a book of chronicles in French: Cavanaugh, ‘Books Privately Owned’, 486.

106 For examples of lawyers leaving copies of statutes in their wills see J. H. Baker, ‘The books of the Common Law’, in Lotte Hellinga and J. B. Trapp (eds), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, vol. 3: 1400–1557 (Cambridge, 1999), 413, 415, 416, 422, who indicates that in the absence of extensive law libraries personal ownership of the statutes and other law books was not unusual.


The Paston family, for example, owned copies of statutes and other law books and John Paston appears as an early student at the Inner Temple in 1443. See Davies, *Catalogue*, 1. 146; Skemer, ‘Reading the law’, 128–9.


The surname Hoton may derive from the place with which the family was associated. Houghton (-le-Spring) is seven miles north-east of Durham. Note also Robert Hoton, a squire of Newton-on-Derwent, Yorkshire, who in 1446–7 requested burial in his parish church of Wilberfoss, east Yorkshire, leaving service books in his will: Cavanaugh, ‘Books Privately Owned, 444–5.

Dobson, *Durham Priory*, 129.

The envoy on f. 95 reads ‘Go, smal book, to the noble excellence | Of my lady of Westmerland, and seye | Hir humble servant with al-reuerence | Him recommendith vnto hir nobleye | And byseeche hir on my behalue and preye | Thee to recyue for hir owne right, | And looke thow in al manere weye | To plese hir wommanhede do thy might. | Humble servant to your gracious noblesse | T. Hoccleue.’ (ed. Ellis, 255). The range of Joan Neville’s literary interests is conveniently summarized by Anthony Tuck, ‘Beaufort [married names Ferrers, Neville], Joan, countess of Westmorland’ in the online *ODNB*


118 Anthony Tuck, ‘Nevil, Ralph, first earl of Westmorland’, online *ODNB* (version 03 January 2008).


123 Hoccleve describes how, in winter, he hires a boatman to take him from the Paul’s Head tavern, near Westminster, downriver to his Privy Seal hostel on the Strand, because the ‘way
was deep’ – too muddy. See Paul Strohm, *Theory and the Premodern Text* (Minneapolis, 2000), 9.


127 Christianson, ‘Evidence’, 89.


135 The dedicatees of Hoccleve’s other short poems were people like the merchant Robert Chichele, twice mayor of London and brother of the archbishop; John Carpenter, common clerk of the Guildhall 1417–38, compiler of the *Liber albus*, and himself the owner of a significant collection of books; Sir Henry Somer, Baron of the Exchequer in 1408 and Chancellor in 1410; Joan, Countess of Hereford; and Henry V: Cavanaugh, ‘Books Privately Owned’, 346, 415, 422. On Hoccleve’s manipulation of his poetry to create the favourable impression that his audience was high-ranking, see Thompson, ‘Thomas Hoccleve’, 84–6.

