

‘The Seeds of Modern Bureaucracy? Charisma and Routine in the Charters and Charter Rolls of King Henry III’

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This thesis is dedicated to my mother, who like Constance Ellis's epigraph of Hubert de Burgh, has been a *study in constancy*, and to the loving memory of my father and brother.

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I also owe thanks for the advice of Professor Stephen Church, Professor Julia Crick, Dr. David Crook, Dr. Hugh Doherty, Professor Jörg Peltzer, Professor Björn Weiler, and Professor Louise Wilkinson, for which I am extremely grateful.

List of Abbreviated References

Cart. Antiq. i *Cartae Antiquae Rolls, vol. i*, ed. L. Landon (Pipe Roll Society, New Series, xvii, 1938).

CChR *Calendar of Charter Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office, 1226-1300*, 2 vols. (London, 1903-06).

CFR *Calendar of Fine Rolls of the Reign of Henry III, 1216-42*, eds. Paul Dryburgh and Beth Hartland, 3vols. (Woodbridge, 2007-9).

CLR *Calendar of Liberate Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office: Henry III, 1226-1272*, 6 vols. (London, 1916-64).

CM *Matthaei Parisiensis, Monachi Sancti Albani Chronica Majora*, ed. H.R. Luard, 7 vols. (Rolls Series, 57, 1872-83).

CPR *Calendar of Patent Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office: Henry III, 1232-1272*, 4 vols. (London, 1906-13).

CPReg *Calendar of Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland: Volume I, 1198-1304*, ed. W.H. Bliss (London, 1893).

CR *Close Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, 1227-1272*, 14 vols. (London, 1902-38).

Dialogus *Dialogus de Scaccario*, Richard FitzNigel, edited and translated by C. Johnson (London, 1950).

Foedera *Foedera: Conventiones, Litterae et cujuscumque generis Acta Publica*, ed. T. Rymer, volume. I, part. i, eds. A. Clark and F. Holbrooke (Record Commission, London, 1816).

FFinesHunts *A Calendar of the Feet of Fines relating to the County of Huntingdon levied in the King's Court from the Fifth Year of Richard I to the End of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1194-1603*, ed. G.J. Turner (Cambridge, 1913).

Fleta *Fleta*, ed. H.G. Richardson and G.O. Sayles (Selden Society 72).

Monasticon William Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum: A History of the Abbies and other Monasteries, Hospitals and Friaries, and Cathedral and Collegiate Churches, with their Dependencies, in England and Wales*, ed. J.Caley, H. Ellis and B. Bandinel, 6 vols. (London, 1817-30).

ODNB Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

PR *Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office: Henry III, 1225-1232*, vol. 2 (London, 1903).

PRS Pipe Roll Society

RCh *Rotuli Chartarum in Turri Londinensi Asservati*, ed. T.D. Hardy, (London, 1837).

RCWL *The Royal Charter Witness Lists of Henry III*, ed. M. Morris, 2 vols., (List and Index Society, 291-92, 2001).

Rot. Sutt. *The Rolls and Register of Bishop Oliver Sutton, 1280-1299*, ed. R.M.T. Hill (Lincoln 2013).

TR *Treaty Rolls preserved in the Public Record Office, Vol. I: 1234-1325*, ed. P. Chaplais, (London, 1955).

Abstract

This thesis represents an attempt to peek behind the veil of mystery that still shrouds the royal chancery: the writing office of the medieval kings of England. This office had many tasks, not all of them administrative, and it would take an entire career and several weighty volumes to tackle all that is waiting to be discovered. It has been a challenging task even to trace the output of one document type and its records across a single reign: the charters and charter rolls of King Henry III. To provide value for the reader, I have found it helpful to summarise and synthesise some pre-requisite secondary research before adding my primary contributions. First, the reader will find an explanation for my focus on medieval bureaucracy, the reign of Henry III, and the charter as a document. There will be an overview of some theoretical frameworks that help explain the sometimes-contradictory objectives of medieval bureaucracy. Next will follow a brief history of the charter and of the English royal chancery, covering ground from the Roman Republic to the eve of King Henry III's accession. This concludes the introductory part of the thesis. The next section is intended to probe the secrets of the Henrician chancery by collating information from every recorded charter of Henry's reign. Such information includes beneficiaries, witnesses, dates, and places of issue. Some categories, such as the days of the week on which charters were issued, help illuminate the chancery's working practices, while others, such as lists of beneficiaries, help establish for whom King Henry's charter-writing apparatus was chiefly working. The last section outlines the results of a palaeographical survey that I have conducted into the handwriting of King Henry III's chancery scribes, providing hitherto unexplored data on staffing and working patterns. Some concluding remarks complete the thesis.

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Section One: Researching and Understanding the Royal Chancery

1.1 Introduction: A Justification for This Thesis

In the year 2024, just as in the year 1224, bureaucrats tend not to be lionised by the general public. James Stewart did not star in a heartwarming Christmas film entitled ‘It’s a Wonderful Government Department’, in which he wakes in a hellish world without administrators. During the COVID pandemic, no one banged their saucepans in appreciation of administrative back-office staff. There is not yet an internationally popular podcast named ‘The Rest is... Bureaucracy’.¹ This distinct absence of joy in the face of middle-management has been elevated to positive dislike in various well-known cases. Charles Dickens, for instance, railed that ‘your public functionary who delights in red tape...is the peculiar curse and nuisance of England’.² John Stuart Mill, who wrote at length on the topic, considered that bureaucracy was antithetical to English representative democracy, inevitably sliding into ‘pedantocracy’.³ Why, then, does officialdom still endure? True, some of the public may not like bureaucrats, but they certainly like the things that bureaucracy allows. In the most recent, 2023 edition of the venerable *British Social Attitudes Survey* those surveyed showed very high levels of support for the government increasing its role in society, including such administration-intensive activities as ensuring a job for everyone, providing healthcare for all the sick, and nationalising or subsidising industry.⁴ The past may be a foreign country, and they surely do things

¹ Referring to the series of podcasts that began with Dominic Sandbrook and Tom Holland’s ‘The Rest is History’, later augmented with ‘The Rest is Football’, ‘The Rest is Politics’, and so on.

² Charles Dickens, originally from *Household Words*, no. 47 (15 February 1851). Reprinted in *Household Words* (London, 1851).

³ J.S. Mill, *On Liberty, Representative Government, The Subjection of Women: Three Essays by John Stewart Mill* (Oxford, 1859), p. 138.

⁴ The British Social Attitudes Survey has published its results every year since 1983, with consistent questioning ensuring that changes can be tracked accurately. The areas of government provision cited in the main text above have always been popular, and are today overwhelmingly so. See the special report on ‘The Role of Government’, accessible online at <https://natcen.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2023-09/BSA%2040%20Role%20and%20responsibilities%20of%20government.pdf>

differently there, but a basic principle holds good for almost any era: anything popular the government of the day might achieve needs bureaucrats of some variety to make it happen.

The England of King Henry III, who reigned from 1216-72, was not a democracy, and the interventionist state was not yet a gleam in Otto von Bismarck's eye. The movers and shakers of this kingdom were barons, burghers, bishops, lords, merchants, mercenaries, moneylenders, and anyone else in the prevailing system who had land or services to buy, sell, or rent. For these people, including the king himself, the best use of a bureaucracy was to facilitate and guarantee transfers of money, property, or rights.⁵ From the common folk granted new rights by charters of liberties, through to the magnates granted lands or titles in payment for services rendered, nearly everyone had something to gain from a proper method of legally accepted proof.⁶ Not having leisure or inclination to write, draft and authenticate his own acts, the king entrusted these administrative tasks to his writing office, the royal chancery. It is this institution, its staff, and its beneficiaries that this thesis aims to demystify. This will be achieved by examining one substantial part of the chancery's documentary output: the king's charters and charter records.

To hold and examine these documents produced by the royal chancery eight hundred years ago brings a thrill to the fingertips: even now, these royal acts are *powerful*. I make no pretence to objectivity here, but the number of interested genealogists, more accustomed to nineteenth or twentieth-century documents, stopping me in record offices to enquire in hushed tones what the yellowed parchment with the wax seal on it is, and (with even more interest) what it *says*, suggests that the aura of these documents remains undiminished. They are objects of

⁵ The best guide to documentary and bureaucratic proliferation in the English Middle Ages remains Michael Clanchy, whose *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 2013), is a classic. For the proliferation of legal documents down to village level, see pp. 95-103. For the increase in the numbers of documents produced in the royal chancery, measured according to the royal court's consumption of wax, see pp. 60-4, 80-2.

⁶ Magna Carta may not be the most typical of charters, but the well-documented mass engagement with its contents by the high and low of the land shows the transformative power that charters could have in the public imagination. For the impact of Magna Carta amongst the general populace, see D.A. Carpenter, *Magna Carta* (London, 2015), pp. 98-123, and for upper sorts, pp. 124-152.

extraordinary intentionality, with their scribes merely one part of an office tasked with witnessing important grants of rights or property, drafting written accounts of these grants in good Latin, ensuring that important details such as the date, place and witnesses were accurate, authenticating the documents properly with the correct seal, and dispatching them to the beneficiaries, while not forgetting to send any relevant writs to local authorities to read the grant in court, or to grant seisin.⁷ The whole documentary culture of medieval Christendom, and of England in particular, seems far more impressive when viewed in this light, rather than through the prism of today's world where the written word has been cheapened by its abundance. An iceberg of institutional complexity peeks out above water just from the scribe's writing. Who, without having seen its fruits, would ever have believed in the comprehensiveness of English chancery record keeping? Here we have roll after roll of government business – commands, patronage, monetary transactions, loans, licences, all of it collectively running to miles of parchment were it to be unravelled, neatly divided up into categories and arranged in something close to date order. No equivalent mass of record material exists for any other contemporary polity up to and including the papacy, not least because such comprehensiveness could be as detrimental as it was beneficial to administrative efficiency.⁸ All this had to be produced by an office that was already drafting and dispatching documents on an industrial scale. Yet crucially, no clerk working for the chancery in or near this period

⁷ The definitive guide to the minutiae of charter production, sealing and dispatch is likely to remain H.C. Maxwell-Lyte, *Historical Notes on the Use of the Great Seal of England* (London, 1926).

⁸ For the lack of an equivalent anywhere in Christendom, see N.C. Vincent, 'Royal Diplomatic and the Shape of the Medieval English State, 1066–1300' (forthcoming), p. 5. For his doubts as to the efficiency of enrolments, see N.C. Vincent, 'Why 1199? Bureaucracy and Enrolment under John and his Contemporaries', in *English Government in the Thirteenth Century*, ed. A. Jobson (Woodbridge, 2004), p. 48. Those great archenemies of the Plantagenets, the Capetian kings of France, used a system of charter registration, in which charters touching the affairs of the king were recorded as a matter of course, and those of others willing to pay for the privilege could also be recorded as a kind of premium upgrade. An outline of how this system worked in the time of Philip Augustus is provided in J. Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus: Foundations of French Royal Power in the Middle Ages* (New York, 2005), pp. 34, 115–8, 404, 413–19.

ever saw fit to produce a written record of its processes, nor does any individual charter or roll entry in the same time frame appear to be ‘signed’ by any individual scribe.⁹

In the absence of a first-hand account of how the clerks worked, or what their overarching objectives were, the modern investigator must make do with miles of parchment and ink. There are two routes forwards from here. The first is to consider the meaning of the words written on the page. Chancery documents in our period carry their date, their place of issue, and enough information about the nature of a command or transaction to make the document legally enforceable. When tens, hundreds, or thousands of these snippets of information are collated, a clearer picture can be painted of the underlying purposes and processes of the organisation responsible. The second route is to explore, without preconceptions, the ‘testimony’ of the very letters on the page – to analyse the handwriting of the original documents and records that have survived and that can be consulted. From this, it is possible to determine how many scribes worked on them, over what time periods, and according to what patterns of work.

Chancery clerks produced the documents that conveyed the will and patronage of the monarch, which in turn provided the rights and real estate that elite medieval people and institutions needed. Clues as to how this was achieved can be gleaned from the surviving material produced by the royal chancery. But why is this thesis focused only on charters and their rolls? If the ‘mountain’ of chancery records is so remarkable, why reduce it to a relative hillock? There was no one type of document that would serve for all the king’s dispositive needs, so by our period the chancery was producing several: cursory writs, for basic business like summonses to court; letters close, for commands and other matters for the recipient’s eyes only; letters patent,

⁹ P. Chaplais, *English Royal Documents* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 52-3.

typically for temporary or lifetime grants; and charters, for permanent grants that could not (in theory) be rescinded by the crown after granting. In practice, I have found it necessary to consult all major types of chancery document, at least in their enrolled form, to put chancery practice into context. Despite this, there are several good reasons for focusing limited time and resources on one document-type only, and charters in particular. Firstly, as noted previously, they display the greatest degree of intentionality of any type of Henrician royal document. Usually referring to relatively important grants, yet of narrower potential scope than letters patent or letters close, the Henrician charter tends to be standardised in a way that promotes easier palaeographical recognition than more *ad hoc* lesser writs. The higher status of charters also meant that the scribes typically wrote them with greater care, and it is certainly easier to detect peculiarities of handwriting in a properly formed hand than in a hasty scribble.¹⁰ Secondly, the smaller numbers of charters produced makes trends and careers much easier to follow than would be the case with the patent or close rolls. Thirdly, and most importantly, focusing on charters makes it possible to situate both the first and second halves of this present investigation within the historiographical traditions of diplomatic and palaeographical charter scholarship.

Having made the case for administrative history and the royal chancery, it would be strange now to claim that this area of research has been neglected. In truth, it has not been. Work that illuminates a little more of the dark path has been in progress for over a century. Like the mapping of the universe, the problem is not so much lack of manpower, but size of subject. To make another astronomical analogy, the different elements of medieval administrative history can be compared to planets and moons in a solar system. Some planets are well understood,

¹⁰ Chaplais, *English Royal Documents*, pp. 30-2.

others less so. Some moons are tidally locked, so we have never seen their dark side, and so forth. What is lacking is a snapshot of this solar system with all the planets aligned in clear order. As such, we have a truly magisterial study of the royal wardrobe and small seals conducted by the great T.F. Tout, yet that barely touches on the royal chancery.¹¹ Tout's protégé V.H. Galbraith wrote a fine guide to the development of medieval records and in particular of the chancery materials, but aimed it principally at students and so did not include much new research.¹² Another of Tout's students, Bertie Wilkinson, wrote a magnificent history of the chancery of Edward III, but this is three generations removed from Henry III and the institution had changed beyond recognition over that time.¹³ H.C. Maxwell-Lyte's 'Historical Notes on the Uses of the Great Seal' covers every imaginable area of the production, recording and distribution of documents under the great seal, including charters, but in a way that mixes and matches supporting evidence from across several centuries, making it difficult to build a coherent picture of one particular time period.¹⁴ Pierre Chaplais, a protégé of Galbraith, wrote the definitive guides to English royal documents and diplomatic practice, but like Maxwell-Lyte he had too much chronological ground to cover for his investigations to be treated as a guide to any one period in particular. Until recently, there has been no English equivalent in either size or quality to Harry Bresslau's *Handbuch der Urkundenlehre für Deutschland und Italien*: a compilation and guide to charters of the Holy Roman Empire.¹⁵ To some extent, things have now improved. The publication of Nicholas Vincent's eight-volume edition of

¹¹ T.F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England: The Wardrobe, the Chamber and the Small Seals*, 6 vols (Manchester, 1920-33). Tout claimed that he wished to make as few references to the chancery as possible in the *Chapters*. It is a measure of this incredible feat of scholarship that even these 'few' references remain one of the best guides to the development and operation of the English royal chancery. See vol. i, p. 17.

¹² V.H. Galbraith, *Studies in the Public Records* (London, 1948).

¹³ B. Wilkinson, *The Chancery under Edward III* (Manchester, 1929).

¹⁴ Maxwell-Lyte, *Great Seal*.

¹⁵ H. Bresslau, *Handbuch der Urkundenlehre für Deutschland und Italien* (Leipzig, 1889).

Henry II's charters includes much material on the twelfth-century chancery, but this is still no help for the chancery of Henry's grandson, Henry III.¹⁶

For the chancery of Henry III, the most useful modern material is to be found, not in monographs, but in chapters, articles, and PhD theses that tackle individual elements of the institution (as, indeed, does the present enquiry). Nicholas Vincent, who is supervising this PhD and who has generously shared much of his research with me, is the author of various of the more important of these shorter pieces. Subjects he has covered include the origins of the chancery rolls before and after 1199, the extent to which these rolls shaped the development of the state, the advantages and disadvantages of enrolments compared to registers, and the personal role played by kings (including Henry III) in the production of their own acts and records.¹⁷ David Carpenter, my MA supervisor to whom I owe a debt of gratitude for inducting me into the coven of public records researchers, is responsible for much of the rest of the modern research into Henry III's chancery. His articles and book chapters cover such areas as the types of business transacted by Henry III's chancery and how it was carried out, the role of chancellor Ralph Neville in chancery practice, and the relationship between Henry III and his magnates.¹⁸ Finally, two PhD theses supervised by Professor Carpenter have made great progress in unlocking separate mysteries of the Henrician chancery. The first, by Julie Kanter, breaks down, in immense detail, the itinerary of Henry III, as well as those of his father and

¹⁶ *The Letters and Charters of Henry II King of England (1154-1189)*, ed. N. Vincent, 8 vols (Oxford, 2020-).

¹⁷ Vincent, 'Why 1199?', and idem 'The Shape of the Medieval English State'. See also N.C. Vincent, 'Rouleaux ou Registres? Choix et Usages de l'Enregistrement à la Chancellerie Plantaganet XIIe-XIIIe- Siecles', in *L'art médiéval du registre: chancelleries royales et princières* (Paris, 2018), ed. O. Guyotjeannin, pp. 55-70, and N.C. Vincent, 'The Personal Role of the Kings of England in the Production of Royal Letters and Charters (to 1330)', in *Manu propria: vom eigenhändigen Schreiben der Mächtigen 13.-15. Jahrhundert*, ed. C. Feller and C. Lackner (Vienna, 2016), pp. 171-84.

¹⁸ D.A. Carpenter, 'Chancellor Ralph de Neville and Plans of Political Reform, 1215-1258', in *Thirteenth Century England*, 2 (Woodbridge, 1988), pp. 69-80; D.A. Carpenter, 'The English Royal Chancery in the Thirteenth Century', in *English Government in the Thirteenth Century*, ed. A. Jobson (London, 2004); D.A. Carpenter, 'Kings, Magnates and Society: The Personal Rule of King Henry III, 1234-58', *Speculum* 60 (1985), pp. 39-70.

son.¹⁹ The chancery travelled with the king wherever he went, and in writing a history of the roving king Kanter effectively charts the regional movements and actions of the whole apparatus of royal government. Her labours have saved me having to write more than a few passing words of commentary on the subject, for which I am most grateful! The second relevant thesis supervised by Professor Carpenter is that of Adam Chambers, which before I began my work was focused squarely on the operations of Henry III's royal chancery.²⁰ Happily, even though we have researched the same institution during the same period, our two ships have passed each other safely in the night. His thesis focuses on matters of process, encompassing the completeness, accuracy, usage, and production of all main types of chancery enrolment. This means there is practically no overlap with my thesis, which is less process-oriented and more concerned with the wider social history of charter use, including the office lives and careers of chancery clerks, and the benefits derived from this type of document by the king and the wider community of the realm.

1.2 Medieval Bureaucracy: Some Theoretical Frameworks

Before summarising how the chancery and its flagship product, the charter, came to take shape after 1227, it will be useful to explore why such bureaucratic systems flowered in England and across Europe. Nicholas Vincent has playfully characterised those English scholars who have relied chiefly on the public records and scorned 'jargon' as 'the archive-mole(s), rooting for earthworms in Kew', with the mirror-image being 'his or her more theory-obsessed colleagues,

¹⁹ J.E. Kanter, 'Peripatetic and Sedentary Kingship: the Itineraries of the Thirteenth-Century English Kings', Unpublished PhD Thesis, King's College University of London (2011).

²⁰ A. Chambers, 'Aspects of Chancery Procedure in the Chancery Rolls of Henry III of England', Unpublished PhD Thesis, King's College University of London (2022).

staring at moonbeams in Paris or New York'.²¹ That this thesis has been motivated more by the succulent taste of the earthworm than the beguiling light of the moonbeam should be obvious, but this is no excuse for insularity or tunnel-vision. There are more commentaries available on the rise of the modern state than it would be feasible or desirable for me to include here, so I have limited my focus to just three: the routinisation of charismatic rule, the virtuous circle of literate culture and documentary abundance, and growth in numbers and power of officials (the educated but low-born class of people needed to run an expanding bureaucracy).

The first of these concepts has its roots in the work of Max Weber, the father of the discipline of sociology. Like his fellow pioneering Germans Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche, Weber was not content to write about the conditions prevailing in his own time. Instead, he wrote more than one complex survey of the shifting sociological foundations of human society across centuries.²² Also in common with Marx and Nietzsche, Weber had a particular interest in the Middle Ages as crucible for the development of the modern world.²³ In his *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* ('Economy and Society'), Weber outlined his conception of a pre-modern, pre-bureaucratic world of uncertain and inconsistent perils.²⁴ In such a world, individuals endowed

²¹ N.C. Vincent cites the views of Galbraith in 'Shape of the Medieval English State', p. 2, and cf. N.C. Vincent, 'Enrolment in English Government: Sickness or Cure?', in *The Roll in England and France in the Late Middle Ages: Form and Content*, ed. S.G. Holtz, J. Peltzer, and M. Shirota (Boston, 2019), p. 134.

²² The following references draw from Weber's *Economy and Society*, an in-depth examination of state power dynamics through history. His most famous work remains *Die Protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus* (Berlin, 1905), which traces the social underpinnings of capitalism back to John Calvin and the Reformation.

²³ The Middle Ages figure especially prominently in the thinking of Karl Marx as he developed his grand theories of political economy. See, for example, K. Marx, *Der Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie* (Moscow, 1939-41). This was published posthumously from a vast collection of notebooks that were set aside in 1858, before being compiled and published in largely unedited form in the Soviet Union. For some of the many references to medieval economy, see the English translation of Martin Nicholas, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft)* (London, 1973), pp. 98, 107, 184-5, 245, 468, and especially 475-9 and 508-12. published posthumously from a vast collection of notebooks that were set aside in 1858. Nietzsche also discussed the Middle Ages frequently in *Human, all too Human* (Chemnitz, 1878), as for example at pp. 93, 114, 126-7, 175, 197, 285, 345, and most famously p. 367.

²⁴ Though I have referred to Weber's *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Tübingen, 1922) in an original German edition, with the page numbers reflecting this, here in the text I have elected to use translations of the

with exceptional gifts of the body and spirit allied with immense personal resolve emerged as the natural leaders of society.²⁵ This leadership, justified by continued successes, could then take on a supernatural justification: the aura of divine will.²⁶ Warlords fit this description, as do certain religious leaders, the more martial Roman emperors, and certain powerhouse medieval kings. Unfortunately, according to Weber, charismatic rule was unstable by its very nature. It required constant proofs of the ruler's strength and wisdom, with years of past success doing little to mitigate any subsequent or present weakness.²⁷ Moreover, Weber pointed out that while rule by charisma alone is more suited to solving uncertain or irregularly occurring problems, 'calculable and recurrent needs' are much better handled by remunerated officials working within a system of rational rules.²⁸

Charisma therefore inevitably gave way to what Weber termed 'rational discipline': the cultivation of larger institutions of high-status agents of the state, all of whom were highly trained to behave predictably and uniformly.²⁹ This is but the first step on the road to Weber's 'ideal type bureaucracy', which was characterised by fixed jurisdictional areas, encompassing official duties, strict rules delimiting the powers at the disposal of bureaucratic personnel, and methodical provision for how such duties were to be executed; an official hierarchy of higher and lower offices, in which there was some recourse available to the lower officers to challenge the higher ones; and a basis in written documentation, requiring a staff of literate personnel.³⁰ Once it had reached maturity, this modern bureaucracy could manifest advanced ideas such as

terminology employed by Weber. These translations are all in common currency and are used as a matter of course in English-language material on Weber, but for the sake of consistency I have sourced all my terms from Talcott Parsons.

²⁵ Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, p. 753.

²⁶ Ibid. p. 753.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 755-7.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 753.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 642-3.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 640.

differentiation between individuals acting in their private and public capacities, or institutional policies of office-management.³¹ Many elements of a Weberian ideal-type bureaucracy he predicated upon 'modern' advances such as mass education, electronic communications, and the division of labour - even the most advanced pre-modern bureaucracy could not have implemented a welfare state, or pay as you earn taxation. Within the medieval paradigm, the dilemma for the ruler thus became how to mobilise as much expert opinion and skill as possible, as continuously as possible, while preserving as much as possible of the ruler's own personal dominance³². This resulted in strong kings (in authority if not in temperament) aided by limited bureaucracy. Weber called this hybrid 'routinised charisma'.³³

What this looks like in practice is not just a growing English state as the Middle Ages progressed, though that did emerge. Taking on more staff and increasing the complexity of administrative processes is part of bureaucratisation, but according to the Weberian view the real litmus-test for routinisation lies not in the officers, but in the nature of the king's power. This idea has probably never been applied more fruitfully to the English royal chancery than by Michael Clanchy, who drew a parallel between the two great warrior kings, Alfred and Henry II. Where King Alfred settled disputes through personal negotiation, by the time of Henry II the quasi-mystical power of the king was no longer conveyed by his person, but by the wax seal bearing his likeness that could be sent throughout the kingdom. The king's power had been depersonalised and routinised simply through the office of the spigurnel and his operation of a wood and metal sealing press.³⁴ What Clanchy did not explicitly explain is that the sealing press of Henry II represents no terminus for the routinisation train, but an early stop

³¹ Ibid., pp. 650-2.

³² Ibid., pp. 673-8.

³³ Ibid., pp. 647-8.

³⁴ Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, comparison between Alfred and Henry II, p. 126. Further reference to Weber, pp. 64-70.

on its journey to the present day. At least Henry II's chancery clerks had itinerated with his person, and he had needed to be present for the agreement of any business bearing his name. As English royal government was routinised, such processes became increasingly detached from the royal centre. By the reign of Edward I, the chancery had gone out of court, so the king needed to use writs of the privy seal to authorise documents to be produced by his own writing office.³⁵ Such was the progress of routinisation that, with each passing generation, the monarch became ever further removed from the centre of his own government.

We have already heard from Michael Clanchy in his application of Weberian thinking to Henry II's seal press. In his classic book, *From Memory to Written Record*, Clanchy also laid out the next of our important concepts for understanding high-medieval bureaucracy: the virtuous circle of the production and retention of records that facilitated growth in literacy and literate culture, which in turn enabled more record-collection, and so on. The overall sweep of Clanchy's argument was that document-driven government was neither an inheritance from time immemorial, nor an overnight revolution, but a gradual shift from important information being remembered to it being written down. The proliferation of royal documents led to a situation in which baronial and ecclesiastical documents followed a similar trajectory. By 1307, after years of this great documentary harvest, the widespread use of writing extended as far as village level.³⁶ Clanchy gives examples throughout his book persuasively, arguing that the 'old ways' of doing business, typically involving custom or folk-memory, were swept away one by one in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Property deeds, for example, were rarely used in property transactions before 1100, but had become common by 1300, showing how mindsets

³⁵ The history of warrants for the great seal is explained in Chaplais, *English Royal Documents*, pp. 39-45.

³⁶ Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, pp. 17 (for the virtuous cycle of literacy and record making), 21 (gradual nature of the change), 107 (ecclesiastical and baronial documents follow the royal chancery's lead), 93 (eventually the culture of using and reading documents reaches village level).

had changed. The crowning glory of this change was, of course, the royal chancery rolls. These represented a second-order of record, as they recorded the dispatch of documents that were themselves records of transactions or commands.³⁷

The final overarching concept of medieval bureaucracy to be discussed here is the rising importance of officials: typically low-born men who were present at the royal court, who were not aristocrats or ‘great’ men, but who were nonetheless of fundamental importance in the shaping of the medieval English state. When this phenomenon was first noted, it was conceptualised in adversarial terms. Kings could not rely wholly on the loyalty of powerful barons, nor was it wise to hand potential rivals too much power. By creating a class of empowered ‘curiales’, so the thinking went, the king obtained a bulwark against his own most dangerous liegemen.³⁸ The court, of which the chancery and wardrobe were still parts in the reign of Henry III, could be a push-me-pull-you of shifting power dynamics – a weak king could find it dominated by barons demanding a slice of the pie, where a stronger king could fill his court with household staff who relied on no one but the king for their power, and hence served him rather better.³⁹ There is sense to this appraisal (the thirteenth century saw two baronial civil wars!), but the idea of King Henry III in particular deliberately denuding his baronage at the expense of ‘curiales’ has been largely disproven. Firstly, the king rewarded his barons too handsomely, with court offices as well as titles and lands, to be seriously suspected of undermining them.⁴⁰ Secondly, the newly independent exchequer and soon-to-be-independent chancery could themselves create powerful new men, not just in the form of over-

³⁷ Ibid. pp. 105 (property deeds became more common), 130 (records begin to be taken of records).

³⁸ Tout, *Chapters*, i, p. 240-3, and Wilkinson, *Chancery under Edward III*, pp. 3-5.

³⁹ Tout, *Chapters*, i, p.11.

⁴⁰ Carpenter, ‘Magnates’, pp. 57-8.

mighty chancellors (think of Richard Marsh or Ralph Neville) but also via ex-clerks elevated to bishoprics, who could be just as harmful to the king as any wayward baron.⁴¹

Instead of viewing the growth of officialdom as a royal and deliberate policy of social engineering, it makes more sense to view it as a natural concomitant of the more ambitious tasks that thirteenth-century monarchy undertook. Some of this increased state capacity was probably inevitable. The ‘crisis of the twelfth century’ strained the legitimacy of the extractive, repressive Norman state to breaking point, and the thirteenth century witnessed the rediscovery of Roman and pre-Roman (i.e. Aristotelian) attitudes to government synthesised into the existing governmental system without replacing it.⁴² A muscle gets stronger the more it is exercised, and so it seems to have been with officialdom in thirteenth-century England. The classic modern monograph on the rise and development towards autonomy of the officer-class is John Sabapathy’s *Officers and Accountability in Medieval England*. But this, unfortunately, more or less ignores the king’s clerks, instead focusing on sheriffs, bailiffs, stewards, and bishops.⁴³ For the ‘ascension des clercs’, we must look instead to Frédérique Lachaud. Her argument, which I find extremely persuasive, is that as officers of the royal bureaucracy were elevated and given tasks to accomplish, they developed systems of normative ethics relating to the dispensation of their duties that rapidly solidified into an underpinning system of political thought.⁴⁴ In being delegated a share of the (in Weberian terms) charismatic power of the king, royal officials needed access to the ethical norms of power. This resulted in an increasingly

⁴¹ F. Lachaud, *L’Éthique du Pouvoir au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 2010), p. 44.

⁴² T.N. Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century: Power, Lordship and the Origins of European Government* (Princeton 2009), pp. 19, 351. Bisson’s points are not uncontroversial and his style of argumentation is robust, but I do not think there is anything particularly objectionable here.

⁴³ J. Sabapathy, *Officers and Accountability in Medieval England 1170-1300* (Oxford, 2014). There are cursory mentions of the chancery pp. 86, 95, but only to cite the work of others.

⁴⁴ Lachaud, *L’Éthique du Pouvoir*, pp. 93-176, with extensive discussion of political underpinnings at pp. 177-320.

confident class of powerful officers sharing in the language, etiquette, and behaviour of power alongside princes and magnates.⁴⁵

Thus, we return to Nicholas Vincent's analogy of the earthworm and the moonbeam. Is it better for scholarship to look upwards to the sky, like Plato, or extend its hands level with the earth, like Aristotle?⁴⁶ Is it more helpful to ask what King Alfred burning the cakes actually symbolises, or what kind of cakes they were? Time, money, and skills-acquisition are not in boundless supply, meaning that sometimes difficult choices must be made. However, especially when both are of good quality, facts and theory can be complementary, so that no preference need be expressed for one or the other. With this mere thimbleful of theoretical wine, we can marinate the meat that is to come, in which we identify the development of the charter as a dispositive document and how the royal chancery came to develop its distinctive institutional identity by the reign of King Henry III.

1.3 The Evolution of Charters and the Royal Chancery before 1216

As we have established, the technological and sociological realities of the era mean that a medieval king could not establish a ruling dynasty without the creation of a permanent and relatively sophisticated bureaucracy. Thus, no great innovations were required of King Henry III. Inheriting his throne as a boy, his origins were to a large extent distinct from those of any mere warlord needing to stamp his authority on a conquered realm. Indeed, Henry inherited an

⁴⁵ Lachaud, *L'Éthique du Pouvoir*, p. 27.

⁴⁶ This is an excessively simplistic presentation of their respective philosophies, but the popular consciousness has long since regarded the philosophy of Plato as heaven-focused and metaphysical and that of Aristotle as grounded and empirical. This viewpoint has been set in aspic by Raphael's painted masterpiece, 'Scuola di Atene' ('The School of Athens'), in which Plato points towards heaven and Aristotle holds his hand level.

administrative system that was already at a very high level of maturity, so that the goal of this chapter must be to summarise the centuries-long evolutionary process by which this royal bureaucracy came to be, with particular emphasis on its charter writing and recording functions. This is no mere scene-setting exercise. Organisations with ancient roots, employing many people, discharging critical duties, rarely change their hidebound methods except in response to particularly pressing need. They rarely work in practice exactly as a sociologist like Max Weber might suppose they *ought* to have worked for maximum efficiency, and this was certainly the case for King Henry III's royal administration. Supposedly discrete 'offices' could be chaotically muddled over the question of who worked for whom. Institutions enjoyed inconsistent ties to physical locations. Job titles did not always correspond with real duties, even in the case of the chancellor himself, who might or might not have real control of his office. These and other idiosyncrasies are both too numerous to explain as they arose and much too important for any comprehensive survey to ignore, so a brief overview must be included below.

At its core, the English royal chancery was an institution concerned with writing and authenticating documents that laid out the king's (and therefore the 'state's') will. Documents authenticated with a wax seal had many parallel points of origin across the ancient world, but the oldest *direct* ancestor of Henrician chancery documents are the city charters that began to be produced in the last century of the Roman Republic. In Henry III's England, a charter was the most solemn, high-status dispositive document that could be imagined, because it conferred a *permanent* grant of land, property or rights. This association with permanence goes back to the origins of the charter. Augustus may have left Rome a city of marble, but even cities of brick had to be erected with the proper legal authority. In the century before the principate, the Italian peninsula had become urbanised at an unprecedented rate, and the Roman bureaucracy

had begun to produce authenticating documents confirming that new cities were under the rule and protection of Rome.⁴⁷ Diplomatic analysis has shown that there was already considerable uniformity in the phraseology of municipal charters, especially where legal rights were bestowed.⁴⁸

Though the use of the charter as a document type was never developed by the Romans beyond the founding of cities, it is hardly possible to overstate the significance of their legacy for the development of writing offices as nexuses of state administration. Imperial bureaucracy developed and expanded colossally as Rome's fortunes waxed and waned, and by the later empire had taken on a life that was separate from the will of the emperor. For example, archaeological evidence suggests that as many as thirty large, rectangular rooms in the Great Palace at Constantinople were used as permanent, fire-proof archival spaces for the imperial secretariat. In addition to this large operation at the imperial centre, there is evidence from fourth-century Egypt that registers were kept of landowners, adoptions, wills, and other information that was deemed valuable for the local government, with such arrangements probably replicated across many other Roman provinces.⁴⁹ With this level of bureaucracy both widespread and mature, it was inevitable that there should be a degree of institutional memory and pride within the staff. John the Lydian, a sixth-century administrator serving emperors Anastasius and Justinian, wrote of his vexation at seeing his contemporaries misuse administrative terminology. He also wrote of his disapproval of Justinian changing the

⁴⁷ For the history of Republican, Augustan, Julian and Flavian city charters, see M.H. Crawford, 'Roman Towns and their Charters: Legislation and Experience', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 86 (1995), pp. 421-30.

⁴⁸ This level of uniformity makes it possible to analyse drafting errors in extant Roman city charters, which even further illuminates the way they were *supposed* to work. See M. W. Frederiksen, 'The Republican Municipal Laws: Errors and Drafts', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 55 (1965), pp. 183-98.

⁴⁹ C.M. Kelly, 'Later Roman Bureaucracy: Going Through the Files', in *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World*, ed. A. Bowman and G. Woolf (Cambridge 1994), pp. 161-3 (many fireproof rooms dedicated to archiving), 163-4 (archiving typical of all Roman provinces).

language of imperial administration to Greek from Latin, which was already seen as the traditionally expected language of bureaucracy.⁵⁰ As the Byzantine Empire (a term never used before its fall) began to diverge from its Roman origins, men like John must have perceived the significance of ‘Romanitas’ much more clearly than those for whom it had once been merely a settled reality.

The retrenchment of the old Roman order was felt differently across Western Europe, with England a particularly remote outlier. Elsewhere, Gothic, Frankish and Lombardic polities never experienced a total severance from Roman institutional memory.⁵¹ Of particular relevance to King Henry III’s England is the Carolingian Empire, from which all European imperial projects, including the Angevin Empire, were fundamentally descended in their intellectual focus.⁵² Like that of the later Roman Empire, Carolingian bureaucracy was conceptually ambitious and physically omnipresent, with written instruments of law and administration central not only to government but also to elite culture.⁵³ Just as in its equivalent at Constantinople, the administration centred on Aachen adopted Latin as its official language, and for the same basic cause. Latin had been the written language of the Roman Empire, and remained so for the Catholic Church, so that any institution purporting to be the nexus of Christian ‘holiness’ or ‘Romanitas’ could hardly stoop to the use of vernacular tongues. Indeed, as the Frankish realm grew in power and security, not-always-successful efforts were made to introduce authentically Ciceronian forms into the written and spoken Latin of the Carolingian

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp.174-5.

⁵¹ See Ben Snook, *The Anglo Saxon Chancery* (Woodbridge, 2015), pp. 17-21, in which Snook cites the highly influential work of W.H. Stevenson,

⁵² The descent was more than intellectual: the Angevin titan King Henry II was Emperor Charlemagne’s eleventh great-grandson, making King Henry III his thirteenth.

⁵³ R. McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 2-3, 25-37.

court, proving once again the connection between written administration and the by now somewhat moth-eaten trappings of Romanitas.⁵⁴

Despite its occasional tendency towards archaism and tradition, the Carolingian imperial court far excelled its Roman antecedents in the development of charters as a form of legal instrument. This process began in parallel with those of the western Roman Empire, and not merely in imitation or aping of past forms. The Alemannic tribes who had to deal often with the Romans quickly realised that this was a people for whom properly phrased, formatted, and authenticated documentary communication was a major component of diplomacy, from which seeds grew Germanic charter culture.⁵⁵ This culture never shed its bi-polar Germanic/Romance personality, though the syncretisation seems on the whole to have proved effective. The Germanic oral tradition persisted for centuries in legal disputes, where it was appropriate, but Roman traditions of documentary permanence became more or less obligatory for all transactions involving property.⁵⁶ It is important to stress that such a focus on property did not exclude the common man. Firstly, as Janet Nelson has observed, ‘pragmatic’ or ‘passive’ literacy was widespread, meaning that even non-elite and generally non-literate people could recognise a restricted number of words or phrases.⁵⁷ Secondly, Alice Rio has noted that Carolingian formularies included detailed descriptions of how to phrase transactions involving very small units of property, which would not have registered at an elite level.⁵⁸ Thirdly, such was the sophistication of the empire’s administrative machinery, and such was the imperial

⁵⁴ Ibid. pp. 7-23 (it is important not to use vernacular language), and 13 (connection between administration and Romanitas).

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 66-71.

⁵⁶ A. Rio, *Legal Practice and the Written Word in the Early Middle Ages: Frankish Formulae, c.500–1000* (Cambridge, 2009), pp.19-20.

⁵⁷ J.L. Nelson, ‘Literacy in Carolingian Government’, in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Mediaeval Europe*, ed. R. McKitterick (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 269-70.

⁵⁸ Rio, *Legal Practice*, p. 23.

court's desire to be the chief source of legitimacy in this relatively youthful realm, that many Carolingian charters simply confirmed (and hence legitimised) property transactions between two parties wholly unrelated to the emperor.⁵⁹ This, naturally, brought such charters into the orbit of many people who would never have been likely to receive direct patronage from the emperor in person. As for the charters themselves, despite repeated efforts to correct this, they were not always written well, but sometimes in poor, grammatically haphazard Latin. This problem only worsened with time, reaching its peak in the charters of the Merovingian court.⁶⁰ Leaving linguistic issues to one side as matters of prestige and legitimacy rather than administrative efficiency, it must be acknowledged that Carolingian charters were already sophisticated documents. They were invariably witnessed, for example, and there seems to have been an understanding that witnesses with some personal interest in the transaction ought to be selected where available.⁶¹ They were also written by professional scribes, albeit usually in the employ of the beneficiary or working for an external religious institution, employing formularies to standardise the phraseology of commonly-occurring transactions.⁶² Finally, and perhaps most importantly for those who were 'customers' of this bureaucracy, the legal transaction itself and the production of the charter certifying it seem to have been conceptualised as a single event, with the production of each individual charter engrossment being a necessarily rapid process in order to facilitate this.⁶³

⁵⁹ P. Depreux, 'The Development of Charters Confirming Exchange by the Royal Administration (Eighth-Tenth Centuries)', in *Charters and the Use of the Written Word in Medieval Society*, ed. K. Heidecker (Turnhout, 2000), p. 44.

⁶⁰ Rio, *Legal Practice*, p. 15.

⁶¹ McKitterick, *Carolingians and the Written Word*, pp. 90-4, 98-103.

⁶² For reliance on local scribes, see *Ibid.*, pp. 115-125. For an analysis of formularies, which often employed Latin just as bad as what the scribes were making up themselves, see Rio, *Legal Practice*, pp. 27-49.

⁶³ McKitterick, *Carolingians and the Written Word*, pp. 94-5.

By contrast to continental Western Europe, administrative discontinuity was much more profound in England, where written Roman legal culture disappeared for centuries. Its reintroduction was facilitated not by kings but by the Church. Where land was to be dedicated to God, it had to be taken out of the pool of folk-land that descended automatically to descendants of the present occupant. This process required the use of charters, which in turn had to be written by literate Italian or Frankish missionaries.⁶⁴ Various of these missionaries were subsequently engaged by Saxon kings to draw up similar charters for their own purposes, but these remained distinct from European norms. Since the king of Mercia or Northumberland had no imperial pretensions to match those of the Carolingians, their diplomas were based not on imperial instruments, but on private property deeds.⁶⁵ These documents were written in Latin, though by the tenth century the clauses that delimited boundaries were usually written in English.⁶⁶ With seals only properly introduced in the reign of Edward the Confessor, Saxon royal charters invariably included a witness list as a means of authentication, as well as a simple drawn cross.⁶⁷ In this respect, they were again imitating Roman private deeds, not Carolingian charters that had instead derived this practice from their own Germanic tradition.⁶⁸ Unfortunately, though the early history and documentary origins of these Saxon charters is clear, a debate has ebbed back and forth for over a century on the institutional origins of the men who wrote them. Here, the timeline matters: Hengist, Horsa and Edward the Confessor may all be crudely labelled Anglo-Saxons, but the first pair were picking apart a former Roman colony while the latter ruled over a nation state with a sophisticated government and a populace

⁶⁴ Stevenson, *Anglo-Saxon Chancery*, pp. 21-47.

⁶⁵ The connection between Saxon charters and Roman property deeds is a central point of Stevenson's *Anglo-Saxon Chancery*, but is given particular emphasis at pp. 50-76.

⁶⁶ Stevenson, *Anglo-Saxon Chancery*, pp. 276-8.

⁶⁷ Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, p. 594.

⁶⁸ Stevenson, *Anglo-Saxon Chancery*, pp. 148-50.

who thought of themselves as ‘English’.⁶⁹ As early as 1898, the eminent Anglo-Saxonist W.H. Stevenson theorised that various of the later, more powerful Saxon kings must have had a permanent writing office, and this theory has been generally confirmed by those in a position to test it.⁷⁰ Palaeographers such as Richard Drogereit and later T.A.M. Bishop found evidence of hands that were employed so frequently in the charters of kings from Athelstan onwards that they could only belong to clerks working directly for the king.⁷¹ These discoveries have given rise to a debate over a ‘minimalist’ or ‘maximalist’ view of the Saxon royal writing office, though few people in recent decades have continued to deny the very existence of such an office. In the minimalist camp, Michael Clanchy emphasised the customary and communitarian nature of Anglo-Saxon government (its propensity for ‘memory’ over ‘written-record’, as *per* his famous dichotomy).⁷² He also suggested that monasteries and monks were the primary writers of Saxon royal acts, significantly de-emphasising the role of any full-time clerks in the kings’ employ.⁷³ Eric John acknowledged the weight of evidence in favour of the existence of some kind of ‘chancery’, but felt that the heavy burden of document-writing undertaken by monastic scriptoria could not be overlooked.⁷⁴ Generally, more recent scholarship has grown increasingly sure of a large and professional writing office existing at least by the tenth century, and probably before this. Advocates here include Simon Keynes and, in his 2015 revisiting of

⁶⁹ As with so many areas of systemic progress, the rate of change seems to have been exponential rather than linear. Michael Clanchy noted that half of all extant Saxon charters date from the century preceding the Norman Conquest, although he conceded that this was also the most common period in which to situate forgeries: *From Memory to Written Record*, p. 65. The sophistication, centralisation and self-identification of the later Saxon state was particularly emphasised by James Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London, 2000), pp. 9-11.

⁷⁰ Snook, *The Anglo-Saxon Chancery*, pp. 17-21,

⁷¹ R. Drögereit, ‘Gab es eine angelsächsische Königskanzlei?’, *Archiv für Urkundenforschung* 13 (1935), pp.335-436, and T.A.M Bishop, *Scriptores Regis: Facsimiles to Identify and Illustrate the Hands of Royal Scribes in Original Charters of Henry I, Stephen, and Henry II* (Oxford, 1961). For more of the latter, see Section Three below.

⁷² Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, pp. 125-7

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 251, 293. Clanchy seems to have softened his opinion on this considerably between 1979 and 1993, for which see Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record* (London, 1979), p. 17.

⁷⁴ *The Anglo-Saxons*, ed. J. Campbell *et al* (London, 1982), p. 176. This is a picture-heavy book clearly aimed at interested general readers rather than scholars, but it should not be written off: its authors were all top-class subject specialists.

the lectures of W.H. Stevenson, Benjamin Snook.⁷⁵ James Campbell, another proponent of Saxon administrative sophistication, took Saxon financial sophistication, exhibited in complex tasks such as burghal hidage, as the starting point for the development of ‘chancery-like’ secretarial and administrative functions.⁷⁶

It is hard to determine whether increased documentary volume and sophistication necessitated permanent writing offices, or whether the greater manpower drove innovation. But in either case it must be acknowledged that the end of the Saxon period brought great changes to the way dispositive documents were employed. Beginning in the reign of Aethelred II, but only becoming widespread in the reign of Edward the Confessor, Latin charters were augmented by Old English writs. Charters were the documentary vehicles of a grant of land or liberties, while writs provided notification to the shire court to ensure that such transactions were satisfactorily concluded.⁷⁷ At this early stage, certain writs could also be used as title deeds for the grants described by them. This meant that they had a functional overlap with charters (which also functioned fundamentally as title deeds), especially once writs ceased to be written in vernacular English.⁷⁸ This overlap between a writ (i.e. a written command) and a charter (i.e. a document proving a grant) resulted in the creation of a single unified document: what some, but by no means all diplomatists are happy to describe as the ‘writ-charter’.⁷⁹ Though produced in gradually diminishing numbers until early in the reign of Henry II, the writ-charter remained

⁷⁵ Simon Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'the Unready' 978-1016* (Cambridge 1980), and Ben Snook, *The Anglo Saxon Chancery* (Woodbridge, 2015).

⁷⁶ J. Campbell, ‘Observations on English Government from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century’, *TRHS* 25 (1975), pp.39-54, repr. In his *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London, 1986), pp. 155-70.

⁷⁷ For an overview of late-Saxon writs, see T.A.M. Bishop and P. Chaplais, *Facsimiles of English Royal Writs to 1100* (Cambridge 1957), pp. ix-xxvii.

⁷⁸ Seeking to avoid confusion between writs and charters from this period, Hubert Hall provided a rough guide to their similarities and differences in *Studies in English Official Historical Documents* (Cambridge, 1908), pp. 211-4.

⁷⁹ Richard Sharpe defined a writ-charter as any writ that 1.) was addressed to the shire court and 2.) pertained to a transfer of property and not a royal command. For his definitive work on the matter, see R. Sharpe, ‘The Use of Writs in the Eleventh Century’ in *Anglo-Saxon England* 32 (2003), pp. 247-91.

the predominant form of dispositive document in the decades following the Norman Conquest. The Normans structured their legal system around local juries and witnessed testimony, which could be easily recorded and authenticated in the form of a sealed writ-charter.⁸⁰ Such writ-charters did not convey permanent grants, but rather rights that had been temporarily alienated on the king's prerogative.⁸¹ Of course, Anglo-Norman kings still sometimes had to make grants that were rather more permanent, and thus required a more permanent sort of title-deed, equivalent to the old Anglo-Saxon diploma. To this end, a new if evolutionary style of document was developed after the conquest: a charter of permanent grant, beginning with a general address, authenticated with the great seal. William the Conqueror utilised this type of charter in small numbers, without proper formularisation. By the reign of Henry I, this type of charter had become the norm and was heavily formularised. Early in the reign of Henry II, the writ-charters were finally dispensed with, with charters and writs being once again separated as distinct document types.⁸²

It is worth lingering for a moment on the conquest of 1066 and the subsequent decades. Max Weber's dichotomy between charismatic versus routinised government is tested to the limits by this phase of English history, not because the reality fits neither, but because it fits both of Weber's categories. On the one hand, William the Conqueror must represent the truest manifestation of Weberian charisma ever witnessed in English history: a foreign warlord, unable to speak the local tongue, ruling by right of conquest, massacring rebellious factions with brutal efficiency. On the other hand, William immediately realised the possibilities of the budding bureaucracy he had inherited from the Saxons, and put it to work in legitimising his

⁸⁰ Michael Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, p. 39.

⁸¹ Sharpe, 'Use of Writs', p. 248.

⁸² Ibid. p. 249. For a published edition of the charters of William the Conqueror, see D. Bates, *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum: The Acta of William I (1066-1087)* (Oxford, 1998).

rule. For example, to assist his new Norman magnates in finding the locations and extents of their new lands, writs were sent out ordering the convocation of juries made up of local men of good standing. These men knew the quirks of England's property portfolio that the Normans did not, and were able to read the vernacular English charters that established title.⁸³ William and his successors' dual nature as warlords who ruled by the sword and lawmakers who governed from the nib of a pen was reflected in the chaotic nature of the royal court and attached writing office. They had no sophisticated administration in Normandy on which to model their new administration, so they needed time to shore up their own positions in a country that was thoroughly hostile to them, to learn the limits of Saxon bureaucracy, and train their own administrators moulded in the image of the new transmarine realm.⁸⁴ Instead of a clearly delineated system of royal government with separate offices and hierarchies for barons, finance comptrollers, administrative clerks/scribes, chamberlains and personal servants, the post-conquest royal court (in Latin, 'curia regis') was an undifferentiated melange of all of the above, along with anyone else of sufficient standing or ability within the Norman realm.⁸⁵ In the beginning, and certainly in the hands of physically and mentally powerful men such as William the Conqueror or William Rufus, the curia regis enabled the monarch to have all the administrative, financial, and feudal machinery of kingship at his fingertips wherever he went, as well as a coterie of servants dedicated to the defence and comfort of his person. Thereafter, during the reigns of Henry I and Stephen, both blighted by questionable legitimacy, it became clear that proximity could be as dangerous as it was useful. Tout, who counted monarchical/baronial relations as one of his many areas of special expertise, considered that

⁸³ This process would, of course, culminate in the production of the Domesday Book: Clanchy *From Memory to Written Record*, pp. 54-6.

⁸⁴ F.M. Stenton, *William the Conqueror* (London, 1908), pp. 407-9.

⁸⁵ For the origins of the curia regis under William I, see *Ibid*, pp. 407-456. For an overview of the curia regis as a whole, see Tout pp. 10-12 and 18-20. The most comprehensive and most classic work the curia regis is J. F. Baldwin, *The King's Council in England during the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1913), pp. 46-47, for the separation of chancery and exchequer.

the later Norman Kings needed protection from their own powers being turned against them by an over-mighty and over-proximate baronage.⁸⁶ The exchequer left the royal household first, around the year 1130, rapidly developing a rich institutional tradition that would endure for centuries.⁸⁷ The document writing and authenticating duties of the chancery made it harder fully to separate from the king's entourage, but under the auspices of various powerful chancellors it nonetheless continued to develop a unique identity.⁸⁸

Chancery practice became considerably more mature in the reign of the great lawmaker-king Henry II. It was under Henry, before 1189, that document production and usage came better to reflect the fundamental purpose of each document type. Writs, which were being produced in vast quantities and on an array of banal financial matters that were of little interest to the king, were increasingly produced by the exchequer using a duplicate copy of the great seal.⁸⁹ Documents that really did benefit from being sealed by the 'real' chancery version of the great seal in the presence of the king, such as charters and major writs, were made more uniform and more usable as legal instruments. For example, the general address of charters usually referenced the relevant county court in charters of Henry I, whereas it was invariably standardised as an address with general address to all of the magnates and 'fideles' of the realm by the reign of Henry II.⁹⁰ Indeed, rigid conformity was increasingly a general facet of Henry II's charters, with great attention being paid to the standardisation of words and phrases,

⁸⁶ Tout, *Charters*, i., pp. 12, 20.

⁸⁷ Vincent, 'Why 1199?' p. 20.

⁸⁸ There has never been a monograph dedicated to the entire history of the royal chancery, despite the huge utility that such a work would provide for historians. In my view, the best substitute when seeking to gain a feeling for the grand narrative of the institution is J. Campbell, *Lives of the Lord Chancellors and Keepers of the Great Seal*, Fourth edn, 10 vols. (London, 1856-57). There is a great deal of biographical information on the chancellors and keepers here that may not be of direct interest to an administrative historian, but the main reforms of the chancery are all present. In Volume 1, chancellors from the Norman Conquest to the accession of Henry III may be found at pp. 36-106.

⁸⁹ Vincent, 'Why 1199?' pp. 32-3.

⁹⁰ Bishop, *Scriptores Regis*, p. 2.

employing unornamented and precise Latin.⁹¹ At this stage, there was not yet a monolithic office of the royal chancery in the vein of the magnificent institution available to Henry III. Some charters were indeed produced ‘in-house’, but others were produced by the beneficiary and brought in for authentication, or produced by casually-employed clerks only vaguely affiliated with the chancery itself.⁹² This somewhat diffuse organisation therefore had a difficult task in stitching together the needs of the patchwork Plantagenet realm, including England, Ireland, Normandy and Anjou. Despite this, Nicholas Vincent has shown that the charter scribes usually did a creditable job of adapting each charter to local needs, including the selection of appropriate witnesses, the use of region-specific language and units of measurement, and even the observation of customary local documentary forms.⁹³ The result was a royal chancery that was centralised in its power, but did not use that power meaningfully to consolidate the realm into a single political entity.⁹⁴ The reign of Henry II also saw the emergence of another important chancery innovation: the *inspeximus* charter. This type of charter, at least in its fully-mature thirteenth-century form, was a mechanism for the chancery to confirm the legitimacy of any previous grant by repeating it verbatim or summarising it in a newly-engrossed document.⁹⁵ Vincent, following on from the work of V.H. Galbraith, has confirmed that many of the supposedly prototypical *inspeximus* charters are in fact forgeries, but that a handful are probably genuine, albeit not chancery-made.⁹⁶ He also demonstrates that the genesis of the *inspexi* (royal charters did not yet employ the ‘royal we’) was rooted in

⁹¹ This was the opinion of Leopold Delisle, who also observed that there was a stylistic commonality between English charters and English annals from this period (for which, see L. Delisle and E. Berger, *Recueil des actes de Henri II, roi d'Angleterre et duc de Normandie, concernant les provinces franaises et les affaires de France*, 5 vols (Paris, 1909-27), i., esp. pp. 145-162.

⁹² Bishop, *Scriptores Regis*, pp. 3-5.

⁹³ N.C. Vincent, ‘Regional Variations in Charters of Henry II’ in *Charters and Charter Scholarship in Britain and Ireland*, ed. M.T. Flanagan and J.A. Green (London, 2005) pp. 70-83.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 94-5.

⁹⁵ For a definition of *inspeximus*, a comparison with the French form *vidimus*, and a very brief history of charter confirmations in England, see V.H. Galbraith, ‘A New Charter of Henry II to Battle Abbey’, *English Historical Review* 52 (1957), pp. 67-73, esp. 70-73.

⁹⁶ N.C. Vincent, ‘The Charters of King Henry II: The Introduction of the Royal Inspeximus Revisited’ in *Dating Undated Medieval Charters*, ed. M. Gervers (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 97-122.

practical concerns: a spate of forged charters from Battle Abbey, in this instance.⁹⁷ By the reign of Henry III, *inspeximus* charters would be an established aspect of royal output, offering a service that was well-understood by its ‘customers’.

The reign of Richard I brought further profound developments in charter form. Despite or perhaps because of the lion-hearted king’s protracted absence on crusade, his chancellor William Longchamps was able to re-form the Angevin documentary system into something much closer to its definitive thirteenth-century form. It was in this period that the familiar system of charters (conferring permanent grants), letters patent (conferring impermanent or lifetime grants) and letters close (conveying orders) became established.⁹⁸ These document types did not just have different names and uses, but also looked very different from one another. Charters had the great seal attached to them, for the most part by means of coloured silk threads. Letters patent used the same seal, but generally attached with a parchment ‘tag’ or ‘tongue’. Letters close, which unlike the other two document types involved an element of secrecy, were folded up and sealed shut with a dab of wax impressed with a corner (the ‘foot’) of the great seal.⁹⁹ Also under Richard I, these royal documents finally adopted the Roman imperial custom of using the first-person plural (i.e. the ‘royal we’), which Richard had already been using in his capacity as count of Poitou.¹⁰⁰ Most importantly of all, it was in this period that proper dating clauses were added to English royal charters. Previously, such instruments had made do with a simple place date (‘apud X’). From Richard’s reign on, all charters adopted a modified form of the papal dating formula, comprised of the date, regnal year, and a clause

⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 107.

⁹⁸ This point was persuasively argued by P. Chaplais in *English Royal Documents*, pp. 12-13.

⁹⁹ D.A. Carpenter, *Henry III 1207-1258*, p. 373.

¹⁰⁰ P. Chaplais, *English Royal Documents*, p. 13.

specifying the name ('per manum', by the hand) of a chancery official with ultimate responsibility for the charter's production (usually the chancellor).¹⁰¹

The greatest innovation of King John's reign did not lie in the content of charters or writs, but rather in the way that they were copied in full onto rolls of parchment, before the original documents were dispatched.¹⁰² This leap in government sophistication is usually credited to the complementary personalities of King John (ruthless, driven, grasping, paranoid) and his pioneering chancellor Hubert Walter (intelligent, experienced, ambitious).¹⁰³ For example, John personally demanded that no charters or letters patent issued by his predecessors were to be actioned unless confirmed under his own seal, with all fees payable once again. This was no doubt a financial manoeuvre, but it put a massive new strain on the chancery, perhaps alleviated by finally making proper records of the work that had already done.¹⁰⁴ Hubert Walter was no mere passive actor, and his innovation while justiciar of the 'feet of fines' (court copies of agreements after legal disputes) illustrate his willingness to improve the record-keeping of any office of state.¹⁰⁵ Of course, the personalities of the king and his chancellor cannot alone explain the massive leap forwards in administrative sophistication seen in just the one year, 1199. H.G. Richardson postulated that the chancery rolls were a natural evolution of the three-decade old chancery practice of supplying the exchequer with any records of fines or writs that were necessary to complete their annual accounts.¹⁰⁶ This remains widely accepted. Unfortunately, Richardson went on to overplay his hand, suggesting that the charter, patent and

¹⁰¹ Ibid, pp. 14-15.

¹⁰² It is overwhelmingly likely that charter enrolment in England began with the accession of King John in 1199. See N.C. Vincent, 'Why 1199?', pp. 17-48.

¹⁰³ The traditional view of King John's role in the beginnings of enrolment is summed up *ibid.* p. 43. For Hubert Walter's role, see C.R. Cheney, *Hubert Walter* (London, 1967) pp. 103-114.

¹⁰⁴ That, at least, was V.H. Galbraith's opinion. See *Studies* p. 69.

¹⁰⁵ Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 127.

¹⁰⁶ The exchequer, of course, had already been producing 'Pipe Rolls' recording their annual accounts since the early twelfth century (for which, see *The Memoranda Roll for the Michaelmas Term of the First Year of the Reign of King John*, ed. H. G. Richardson, Pipe Roll Society, New ser. 21 (1943), pp. xxxv-vi.

close rolls were created following on from the *Cartae Antiquae* rolls, a series of records of important charters kept by the exchequer that Richardson believed began in the 1180s.¹⁰⁷ Rounding out his all-encompassing view that financial considerations were the primary drivers of innovative record-keeping, he most controversially posited that the chancery charter rolls that begin in 1199 were intended as a means of keeping track of which beneficiaries still owed fees for the drafting of their documents.¹⁰⁸ This last theory was pilloried (without mentioning Richardson's name) by V.H. Galbraith, who pointed out that a less complete documentary record that consistently listed fees owed would have served considerably better as an aid towards fee-collection.¹⁰⁹ The *Cartae Antiquae* treated as a formative predecessor of the charter rolls has also been discounted much more recently by Nicholas Vincent, who points out that the supposed 1180 date of their commencement cannot be proven.¹¹⁰

Turning away from speculation as to motives and supposedly lost predecessors of the charter rolls back towards the surviving public records, it is a matter of established fact that the first known charter roll survives from 1199, the first close roll from 1200, and the first patent roll from 1201, and that unlike the pipe rolls, these spawned annual successors immediately thereafter.¹¹¹ More rolls followed: *fine rolls* to record money or gifts offered to the king, *originalia* rolls to copy these fine rolls for use in the exchequer as instruments of debt collection, and *liberate* rolls, to record financial writs that would previously have been copied on the close roll, itself now increasingly devoted to a greater range of more general

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. pp. liv-v.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. pp. xxxv–xliv.

¹⁰⁹ Galbraith, *Studies in the Public Records*, pp. 68–70.

¹¹⁰ Vincent, 'Why 1199?' p. 37.

¹¹¹ David Carpenter, in partial defence of Richardson, has argued that the close rolls (but not the charter or patent rolls) may predate this. See D.A. Carpenter, "'In Testimonium Factorum Brevium': The Beginnings of the English Chancery Rolls' in *Records, Administration and Aristocratic Society in the Anglo-Norman Realm*, ed. N.C. Vincent (Woodbridge, 2009), pp. 1-28.

administrative business.¹¹² Most of the documents recorded on these rolls were so different in usage and purpose from charters that there was not much risk of cross-pollination in the rolls, although an exception must be made for the patent rolls. Until the creation of a dedicated patent roll in 1201, major letters patent were enrolled on the charter roll. When Henry III travelled on two separate expeditions to Gascony, charters produced by the king's court were likewise enrolled on the patent rolls.¹¹³ Though I have found it helpful in this thesis to make the vast chancery documentary output more manageable by focusing on charters and charter rolls, it is worth remembering that letters patent were produced in much greater quantities, often involved grants of similar magnitude as those recorded in charters, and seem to have been written and recorded by many of the same people, as will be addressed in Section Three of this thesis. With Henry III's reign providing an object lesson in the dangers of over-generosity when it came to permanent grants, it is easy to see how letters patent came to replace charters as the *de facto* medium for conveying royal largesse in coming centuries.¹¹⁴

King Henry III was a boy of only nine when he acceded to the throne in 1216. Naturally he was not immediately put in charge of government or granted his own seal. He was given a seal with limited power in 1219, but he would not be allowed to make permanent grants until 1227.¹¹⁵ In Weberian terms, the charisma of the ruling monarch was entirely eclipsed in this

¹¹² The rest of these rolls followed at a much slower pace than the rapid succession of charter, patent, and close rolls. The liberate rolls, the last of this group, didn't start until 1226. See D.A. Carpenter 'The English Royal Chancery in the Thirteenth Century' in *English Government in the Thirteenth Century*, ed. A. Jobson (Boydell 2004), pp. 49-69. For an explanation of each set of rolls. It should also be noted that the exchequer and chancery were not the only household departments that kept rolls of record. From the beginning of Henry III's reign, so did the household, for which see D.A. Carpenter, 'The Household Rolls of King Henry III of England (1216-72)' in *Historical Research*, 80 (2007), pp. 22-46, and the wardrobe, for which see Benjamin Wild's edited version of the wardrobe rolls in B.L. Wild, *The Wardrobe Accounts of Henry III*, PRS new series. 58 (2012).

¹¹³ Not all the patent rolls produced in Gascony contain charters as well as patents. Those that do have the TNA classifications C 66/52, C 66/53, C 66/65, and C 66/66.

¹¹⁴ P. Chaplais, *English Royal Documents*, p. 15.

¹¹⁵ F.M. Powicke, 'The Chancery during the Minority of Henry III', in *English Historical Review*, Vol. 23, No. 90 (1908), pp. 220-235.

period, overshadowed by the titanic personalities of the men who would come to rule in the king's stead.¹¹⁶ With royal authority at an all-time low, what else was there to fall back on but bureaucratic routine? As we have seen, English bureaucracy had a long history, but many of its more complex or codified processes were not even twenty years old in 1216. The institution was still dynamic enough to tolerate innovation, with the ossification of the fourteenth century still a long way off.¹¹⁷ In the period of the king's minority, from 1216 to 1225, and with no one dominant charismatic figure to make the weather, what do we find at the core of England's government? On the one hand, the inheritance of Rome and the Carolingian empire, with their grandiose views of what the power of the state ought to be, even for the common citizen/freeman.¹¹⁸ Elsewhere, the Saxon appeals to memory and custom, manifesting itself in Norman-ised fashion in charters of liberties deliberately couched in terms of ancient rights. Thirdly, the mastery of Henry II and John, the former over legal affairs and the latter over administration, which happened to be the two great duties of the royal chancery.¹¹⁹ Finally, the remarkable farsightedness of Hubert Walter, very shortly to be matched by further administrative genius, set the chancery up at the cutting edge of what a writing office could be in the early thirteenth century. Shaped by the past and the kings and chancellors who had been at its centre, the chancery inherited by Henry III was an institution poised to put the king's

¹¹⁶ William Marshal, Hubert de Burgh, and Peter des Roches. For biographies of these three men, D. Crouch, *William Marshal: Knighthood, War and Chivalry, 1147-1219*, Third edn (London, 2016); C. Ellis, *Hubert de Burgh: A Study in Constancy* (London, 1952); and N.C. Vincent, *Peter Des Roches: An Alien in English Politics, 1205-1238*, (Cambridge, 2002).

¹¹⁷ Carpenter, 'The English Chancery in the Thirteenth-Century', pp. 67-9.

¹¹⁸ T. Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth-Century: Power, Lordship and the Origins of European Government* (Princeton 2009), has been critical of Weberian attempts to link twelfth and thirteenth-century bureaucratic growth to attempts at state-building, instead emphasising the crisis of justice and redress in the feudal world leading to a rediscovery of classical ideas about what the state could and should do for its people. See p. 19.

¹¹⁹ Stretching the point, perhaps, but the great talent of Henry III was conciliation, which might help to explain the successes of the secretariat in his time. If only Richard the Lionheart's talent for war could have been somehow institutionally absorbed in the same way. Perhaps if he were in England as much as his brother was forced to be, the offices of the royal court would have adopted a more martial character.

desires into action. This it would do with distinction – regardless of whether such desires ultimately proved to be sensible or not!¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Carpenter, *Henry III, 1207-58, i*, p. 375.

Section Two: The Evidence of the Records

2.1 An Introduction to the Records Sources

Though no monograph has ever been written supplying a detailed examination of King Henry III's chancery, the selection of what to focus on here has not been a simple matter. Firstly, as with all academic history, it is not only undesirable but impossible to cram in every trivial detail. Some facts matter more than others to our understanding. Secondly, the lack of a definitive monograph in the vein of Wilkinson's *Chancery under Edward III* should not disguise the fact that certain parts of this field have already been brought under profitable cultivation: the careers of Henry III's chancellors, usage of the fine rolls, the itinerary of the court, and the accuracy, completeness, and utility of the rolls are some of the many areas that have no need of re-threshing. My own particular interest lies in the human elements to this institutional history: the lives and career patterns of the chancery clerks who wrote the documents, and the needs of the king and his subjects that made such careers necessary. It is not possible to separate these objectives. Chancery practices were created to facilitate beneficiary needs, but equally the beneficiaries inevitably tailored their requirements around what the chancery could offer. First, we will look at the structural template for a Henrician charter, and see how far practice matched precept. Second, we will examine the patterns of charter production while the king was in England, including the periods where output spiked and what the typical patterns of output may have been, measured by months of the year, days of the week, and important festival days. Analysis of the same criteria will follow for the three periods in which the king was on military campaign in France, followed by a brief overview of the locations where the charters were dated and in what quantity.¹²¹ We shall then cast our eyes

¹²¹ Previous research has focused on where the king and his entourage were located day by day, whereas my interest is in how many charters the court produced at each stop. See J. Kanter cited above, or S.D. Church, 'Some Aspects of the Royal Itinerary in the Twelfth Century', in *Thirteenth Century England XI: Proceedings of the Gregynog Conference, 2005* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 31-45.

beyond the men of the royal chancery, towards the beneficiaries of royal charters, to understand better who this system of patronage most benefited. Finally, we shall examine the witnesses to royal charters, thus developing a clearer sense of who was closest to the centre of royal power.

The data used to compile this survey derive from one main source: the magnificent series of charter rolls compiled by the royal chancery throughout the period of King Henry III's majority, from 1227 to 1272.¹²² At base, all the conclusions reached in this section derive from this series of remarkable documents. Though some years of record are lost and others were never recorded in the first place, the charter rolls represent as complete a record of the total output of their particular organisation as can be expected for the middle ages. The fact that they are available for public consultation in The National Archives makes research of this nature all the easier, with such access a service that I have used liberally for several years. Much of my information comes from direct consultation of these records, especially when looking at the phraseology of charters *en masse*, as the only other way to do this would be to consult original charter engrossments that survive in considerably smaller numbers. All told, Nicholas Vincent estimates that from any average year of Henry III's own only something between 30 and 50 per cent of the outgoing charters still survive as original single sheets.¹²³ The period's published calendars of the charter rolls are useless as a guide to exact phraseology, as they are translated into English. Exactitude's loss is convenience's gain, however, and I could never have compiled my listings without the calendars. This is not only for the obvious reason that beneficiaries are easier to pick out in the printed-translated calendars, but also because the Public Record Office

¹²² I am far from the first person to base my research on the charter rolls. Their apparent simplicity, relative brevity, and extreme longevity in the public records has led many a callow student astray, not least when it comes to selecting what to study and assigning importance to his or her findings. I will not say that I have avoided these traps, but I have F.W. Maitland to thank for getting this far. See 'History from the charter roll', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 8, No. 32 (1893), pp. 726-733.

¹²³ The Nicholas Vincent Register, with its associated imagery, has enabled me to consult original engrossments too, mainly for convenience in quickly reading the neater handwriting.

made the excellent decision for the charter rolls to print dates in the margin to each entry. These dates make finding a specific entry far easier than is the case with the original rolls themselves, and are an incomparable time-saver when recording repetitive information across my total of no less than 3713 individual entries. These same features apply equally to the *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, from which I have gathered the data on Henry's French campaign charters, and the close rolls, where we find the common-law writs ordering charters to be read in the county courts.

Convenience of this kind has also been the chief motivator behind the selection of my final two sources. Sadly, for all their undoubted utility as easy sources of reference, the charter roll calendars were printed without their witness lists. Had it not been for the labours of others in transcribing this information, I should have been faced with the unedifying task of reading the witnesses directly from the heavily abbreviated rolls, which in turn would have proved intolerably time-consuming across our 3713 charters. Fortunately, and himself making use of earlier work conducted in the Public Record Office of the 1920s, Marc Morris has published a full (if not particularly user-friendly) listing of such witnesses.¹²⁴ My task was rendered all the easier by the generous loan from David Crook of a batch of notebooks compiled by C.A.F Meekings, Assistant Keeper of Records at the Public Record Office.¹²⁵ These notebooks reduce the witness lists to easy-to-read tables, further simplifying my task of counting and categorising the 25,046 individual witness names preserved across the charters rolls of this period.

2.2 The Structure of the Royal Charters of King Henry III

¹²⁴ *RCWH*, ed. M. Morris, List and Index Society, vols. 291-2 (2001).

¹²⁵ Meekings Notebooks, generously supplied to me by David Crook.

This thesis does not include a full survey of King Henry's charter diplomatic. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, in common with J.H. Round, I have never received more than rudimentary training in the discipline.¹²⁶ Secondly, to be representative such a study would need to cover many years of the king's reign. My palaeographical study, for instance, cumulatively covers over sixteen years of charter rolls, amounting to over a thousand individual charter entries. It is doubtful that analysing the wording as well as the handwriting of all these entries could have been concluded in the time allotted me by my research grant. Thirdly, and by far most significantly, there is simply insufficient variation to the wording of these charters to warrant the effort. This period, though not without its ups and downs for the king and his writing office, represents the chancery at its most efficient and innovative.¹²⁷ This means that formularisation and uniformity of language, already visible to a degree in the charters of King John, reached new heights. No more do we find the bespoke phraseology apparent on some charters of the Anglo-Norman kings. With few, minor exceptions, even the earliest charters of King Henry III's reign are robotic in their consistency of phraseology, following the appropriate template for any given disposition. Happily, and although this uniformity lessens the utility of any full-scale diplomatic survey, it makes it much easier to summarise here than would be the case for the royal charters of previous reigns. Uniformity and standardisation are first apparent in such instruments within the chancery of the popes. The papal chancery, which had huge a huge burden of work to bear over a vast geographical area, could afford neither slow production nor ambiguous verbiage requiring lengthy clarificatory round trips.¹²⁸ In due course, standardisation spread to other chanceries, both ecclesiastical and royal. Turning in particular

¹²⁶ See the letter to Léopold Delisle cited in N.C. Vincent 'Scribes in the Chancery of Henry II'. David Carpenter once advised me that when analysing phraseology, I should simply use common sense rather than try and develop a grand system. I have tried to apply that advice to day-to-day life as well as charter diplomatic.

¹²⁷ Carpenter, 'The English Royal Chancery in the Thirteenth Century', p. 49.

¹²⁸ For a discussion of the phraseology of the papal chancery, see ed. C.R. Cheney and W.H. Semple, *Selected Letters of Innocent III Concerning England (1198-1216)* (London, 1953). For proof, admittedly in letters patent, that papal chancery phraseology was highly influential in England, see G. Barraclough, 'The English Royal Chancery and the Papal Chancery in the reign of Henry III', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 62 (1954) pp. 365-378.

to English charters, a proliferation of guides to their legal clauses have been published in books and/or uploaded online. As a modern guide, I favour that supplied by Marie Therese Flanagan and Judith Green, but despite its inconsistencies I have also found great help from the guide produced by Thomas Duffus Hardy in his introduction to the printed charter rolls of King John.¹²⁹ This is because Hardy refers directly to early thirteenth-century charter formulae, without the need to accommodate any wider range of geographical or chronological possibilities.¹³⁰ As well as Duffus Hardy's generalisations, I have sought to illustrate various differences in the usages of each clause among the complete corpus of Henry III's charters, with supporting examples.

Royal charters in general, not just those of King Henry III, take the form of a letter, and contain formulaic salutations as well as specifically legal information. Duffus Hardy linked this to the Epistles of Paul, and Roman epistolary culture in general.¹³¹ The standard format of royal charters underwent many gradual changes from the Saxons onwards, but by the time of Henry III they always begin with the **Premises**. Duffus Hardy summarised this section, which acts as an umbrella term for several other named clauses (in contemporary twelfth and thirteenth-century treatises, what would be described as 'intitulatio', 'salutatio', 'invocatio' and so forth), as 'the name and titles of the grantor, the name of the person or persons addressed, the name and quality of the grantee, the description of the thing granted, and the reason or consideration of the grant being made.'¹³² There was no variation in the first of these elements, the name and title of the grantor given in the first line, which Duffus Hardy liked to call the **address** but which in Latin is better given labelled the '**intitulatio**'.¹³³ Before October 1259, Henry's style

¹²⁹ M.T. Flanagan, *Irish Royal Charters: Texts and Contexts* (Dublin 2006).

¹³⁰ T. Duffus Hardy, *RCh*, pp. xi-xxxiv

¹³¹ *Ibid* p. xi

¹³² *Ibid* p. xi

¹³³ Flanagan, *Irish Royal Charters*, pp. 28-9.

read ‘Henricus Dei gratia rex Angliae, Dominus Hiberniae, Dux Normanniae et Aquitanniae, Comes Andegaviae’ (‘Henry, by the grace of God, King of England, Lord of Ireland, Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, Count of Anjou’), here incorporating the names of realms, duchies and counties, rather than, as had been the case under Henry II, the names of the people who inhabited such places (‘King of the English, Duke of the Normans and Aquitainians’ etc). In 1259, following the Treaty of Paris negotiated with Louis IX, Henry then accepted geopolitical reality and officially ceded the provinces of Normandy, Anjou, Touraine, Maine, and Poitou to the King of France, reducing his own style to the form ‘Henricus Dei gratia Rex Angliae, Dominus Hiberniae et Dux Aquitanniae’.¹³⁴ These titles in Henry’s style never varied in their order. Yet despite this, and the fact that, especially in the surviving single-sheet originals, capital letters were often heightened to reflect the king’s elevated status, the level of abbreviation seems to have been left entirely to the scribe’s discretion. Some examples of abbreviation or capitalisation in the earlier, longer style include ‘Henricus dei gra(tia) Rex Angl(iae) D(omi)n(u)s Hib(er)n(iae) Dux Norm(anniae), Aquit(anniae) et Com(es) And(egaviae)’,¹³⁵ ‘Henr(icus) d(e)i gra(tia) Rex Angl(iae) D(omi)n(u)s Hybern(iae), Dux Norm(anniae), Aquit(anniae) et Comes Andeg(aviae)’,¹³⁶ and ‘Henricus Dei Gratia Rex Angl(iae) D(omi)n(u)s Hyb(er)ni(a)e Dux Norm(anniae) Aquit(anniae) et Com(es) Andeg(aviae)’.¹³⁷ Note that even ‘Henricus’ was frequently abbreviated to ‘Henr’: an odd convention given how much effort was expended elsewhere to glorify the king’s name.

After the ‘intitulatio’ came what Duffus Hardy sometimes termed the **compellatio** and sometimes by the less anachronistic term, the ‘**salutatio**’. Despite employing the same words

¹³⁴ Duffus Hardy, *RCh*, p. xviii.

¹³⁵ Salisbury Press IV C3 Royal Grants 19.

¹³⁶ Chippenham G23_0_1.

¹³⁷ Hereford Town Hall HIII yr.11.

in almost every charter this was usually only lightly abbreviated. The typical wording was ‘archiepis, episcopis, abbatibus, prioribus, comitibus, baronibus, justic(iis), vicecomitibus, praepositis, ministris, et omnibus ballivis et fidelibus suis salutem’ (‘To his archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, earls, barons, justiciaries, sheriffs, reeves, officers, and all bailiffs and subjects greeting’).¹³⁸ Scribes occasionally introduced minor changes to the order in which these groups were presented.¹³⁹ Eleven charters provided to me as part of Nicholas Vincent’s ‘Register of Original Charters’ dated from 1227 include an address to ‘forestariis’ (foresters) in the *salutatio*, but with none such recorded after this year.¹⁴⁰ These eleven charters, of which only about half touch on forest business, are the work of just two scribes. Indeed, they represent the complete surviving charter corpus of these scribes, neither of whom ever wrote a charter without including ‘forestariis’, a peculiarity in which they were followed by not a single later scribe.¹⁴¹ Note also that the single word ‘salutem’ is made to suffice, where in diplomatic correspondence we might expect a far more elaborate ‘captatio benivolentiae’, dwelling on the merits and high status of the persons being addressed.

The rest of the ‘premises’ or preliminaries are, by their nature, less formularised as they reflect the nature of the grant being made and to whom. This section is also harder to label, as English practice in this period condensed several discrete clauses from Roman, Papal and Carolingian charter-writing practice into something messier and less consistent. Scholars label this section of a letter the ‘notificatio’, ‘expositio’, ‘dispositio’ or ‘narratio’, even though the variety of

¹³⁸ Duffus Hardy, *RCh*, p. xviii.

¹³⁹ For an example of both these phenomena, in Hereford Town Hall HIII yr.11, the salutation is abbreviated to ‘archiepis(copis), epis(copis), abbatib(u)s, priorib(u)s, comitib(u)s, baronib(u)s, justiciariis, p(rae)po(s)itis, vicecomitib(u)s, ministris, et omnib(u)s ballivis et fidelib(u)s suis, sal(ute)m’. Note the changed position of ‘praepositis’.

¹⁴⁰ These charters are Chippenham 473/8ii; Chippenham 473/8i; Hereford Town Hall yr.11; Shrewsbury 3365 5; Shrewsbury 3365 6; Cambridge St John’s D 10.9; Chippenham 473 7; Gloucester GBR 11 5; Grimsby 1 20 1; Preston DD DA Box 52; and Preston MBLA 14 4.

¹⁴¹ Please note that I did not use the presence of the word ‘forestariis’ to help determine scribal identity. It was only well after I had already sorted the charter rolls into distinct hands that I observed the peculiarity.

business here expounded can range across an almost infinitesimal range of possibilities. In a Carolingian charter, for example, there might be a clear ‘**promulgatio**’ explaining the charter’s legal purpose, then a ‘**narratio**’ to address the circumstances that led to the charter’s creation, and finally a ‘**dispositio**’ to lay out the exact limits of what was being given.¹⁴² These ‘business’ parts of a typical charter of Henry III will usually start with a recognisable ‘promulgatio’, phrased something like ‘Sciatis nos concessisse et hac presenti carta confirmasse...’ (‘know that we have granted and by this present charter confirmed...’). Variants include ‘carta nostra’ (‘our charter’) in place of ‘presenti carta’,¹⁴³ a combination of both previous variants as ‘presenti carta nostra’,¹⁴⁴ ‘sciatis nos concessisse’ on its own without any mention of confirmation,¹⁴⁵ and the use of ‘dedisse’ (‘to have given’) instead of or in addition to ‘concessisse’.¹⁴⁶ After the ‘promulgatio’, or in most cases splitting it in two, there is sometimes a ‘narratio’ clause elaborating on how the charter came to be created. For example, in a 1260 charter to Ingram de Percy, the combined ‘promulgatio/narratio’ reads ‘Sciatis nos ad instantiam dilecti et fidelis nostri Ingram de Percy concessisse et hac cartra nostra confirmasse’ (‘know that at the instance of our beloved and faithful Ingram de Percy we have granted and by this our charter have confirmed ...’).¹⁴⁷ This practice seems to be much more common among the later charters to which I have had access, from about 1260 onwards. The final part of the premises takes the form of the ‘dispositio’, which is invariably present because it lists the terms of the grant and the identity of the grantee. This is the least formulaic part of the charter, as it refers to circumstances unique to each transaction. Particulars vary, but it does seem that every effort was made to use consistent nouns and verbs when discussing common

¹⁴² For the longer and more complex list of clauses that make up a Carolingian charter, I used these definitions from the ‘After Empire’ project of the University of St. Andrews: https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/after-empire/2017/11/29/parts_of_a_charter/.

¹⁴³ Taunton DD SAS 2437 1.

¹⁴⁴ Lincoln A 1 1 B.

¹⁴⁵ TNA E 42 538.

¹⁴⁶ Truro RIC Tam 1 12.

¹⁴⁷ Leeds MD 335.

grant types. For example, charters granting the right to hold market are usually phrased ‘habeant mercatum’ (‘let them have a market’), though verb and noun are not always adjacent.¹⁴⁸ The granting of the right to hold fairs was another charter staple, and again we find that phraseology was consistent. The verb, as before, was ‘habeant’, with ‘feriam’ being the noun in this case, and these charters invariably list the frequency and duration of the event, and sometimes further information such as the saint’s day being celebrated.¹⁴⁹ Before moving on from the premises, it is worth noting that in just two original charters from the Vincent Register, both with the same text founding a hospital in Basingstoke, do we find any sort of ‘**arenga**’ or solemn and pious preamble.¹⁵⁰ Duffus Hardy makes no reference to this clause, as it was archaic even by the start of King John’s reign. The *arenga* had its heyday in Carolingian or Anglo-Saxon charters, especially involving religious institutions, acting as a solemn passage of standard introductory text that conferred sanctity on the gift.¹⁵¹ It is not clear how the Basingstoke charter acquired so archaic a feature, as it is not an *inseximus* or confirmation and must have been the first document ever received by the institution. It can only be assumed that individuals external to the chancery (most likely here the future chancellor Walter de Merton) had some sway over how the charter was drafted, and were using as their template a very old foundation charter for a similar sort of institution.

Though he conceptualises it as part of the premises, Duffus Hardy discusses the ‘**movent**’ clause entirely separately, so I shall follow suit.¹⁵² This is an uncommon but not especially rare

¹⁴⁸ There are many market charters in the Vincent Register, but some examples include Nottingham Mi 3663, Leeds MD 335/7/25, Warwick CR 1886/272, Leeds DD 59R 10 12.

¹⁴⁹ Unfortunately, despite Nicholas Vincent providing me with over a hundred original charter photographs, this corpus surprisingly contains no grants for fairs, save for as secondary dispositions to other grants which may affect their usefulness in studying diplomatic. As such I must cite examples from the original charter rolls – the calendars will not do, as they are translated into English. See charter roll 13.1 membrane 17, entry 5 (C 53/21); charter roll 11.1, membrane 5, entry 1 (C 53.18); charter roll 15, membrane 11, Entries 3, 9, and 12 (C 53/25).

¹⁵⁰ Oxford Merton Muniments, 1660 and 1661.

¹⁵¹ Rio, *Orality and Literacy*, p 17.

¹⁵² Duffus Hardy, *RCh*, p. xxiii-xxv.

clause occurring somewhere after the ‘salutatio’ but before the ‘habendum’ clause, usually taking one of a handful of set forms. When the grantee is a secular person, Duffus Hardy gives the examples ‘pro servitio’, ‘pro bono servitio’, or ‘pro bono et laudabili servitio’ (‘for service’, ‘for good service’, or ‘for good and laudable service’).¹⁵³ In the case of charters for religious institutions, the most common form is ‘pro salute animae nostra et animarum antecessorum et successorum nostrorum’ (‘for the safety of our soul and the souls of our ancestors and successors’).¹⁵⁴ Duffus Hardy was right to highlight the variation here between lay and ecclesiastical beneficiaries. Examples I was able to find include two instances of ‘pro servitio suo’ (‘for his service’),¹⁵⁵ one of ‘pro bono servitio’ (‘for good service’),¹⁵⁶ two of ‘pro homagio et servitio suo’ (for his homage and service),¹⁵⁷ and one of ‘pro fideli servitio suo’ (‘for his loyal service’).¹⁵⁸ The phraseology of movent clauses pertaining to religious houses is even more changeable, though always following the general idea of saving the soul of the king, his predecessors, and successors. Examples I have found include ‘pro salute anime nostre et animarum antecessorum et heredum nostrorum’ (as above for Duffus Hardy’s example but here with ‘heredum’ (heirs) substituted for ‘successorum’); ‘pro salute nostra et domini regis Johannis patris nostri et pro animabus omnium antecessorum et successorum nostrorum’ (‘for our safety and that of our father the Lord King John and for the souls of all our ancestors and successors’),¹⁵⁹ and in inspecting a charter from King John’s reign, ‘pro anima patris nostri regis Henrici et pro animabus omnium antecessorum et successorum nostrorum’ (‘for the soul of our [i.e. King John’s] father King Henry, and for the souls of all our ancestors and successors’).¹⁶⁰

¹⁵³ Ibid. p. xxiii.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. p. xxiii.

¹⁵⁵ See charter roll 37, membrane 22, entry 2 (C 53/45) and Devizes Henry III.

¹⁵⁶ See charter roll 32, membrane 8, entry 3 (C 53/40).

¹⁵⁷ See charter roll 11.1, membrane 2, entry 2 (C 53/18) and charter roll 17, membrane 3, entry 11 (C 53/27)

¹⁵⁸ See charter roll 36, membrane 10, entry 12 (C 53/44).

¹⁵⁹ See charter roll 17, membrane 12, entry 6 (C 53/27).

¹⁶⁰ See charter roll 11.1, membrane 11, entry 4.

After the movent clause, if it is present, or the ‘dispositio’ if not, usually come the ‘**habendum**, **tenendum** and **reddendum**’ clauses. Though they are sometimes combined into one or two clauses, I will take them separately for clarity. The ‘habendum’ clause repeats the name of the grantee and limits the estate.¹⁶¹ Charter form was always evolving, leading to unfortunate duplications when a process was not yet complete. In Saxon charters there was no ‘habendum’ clause, and in Anglo-Norman charters it was rare. By the time of Henry III it had become common, but had not yet replaced the dispositive clauses.¹⁶² The ‘tenendum’ clause, by contrast, introduced new information: the tenure by which the granted estate was to be held.¹⁶³ In order to avoid too much duplication, there are innumerable examples of ‘habendum et tenendum’ being employed together, followed by a clause much more focused on tenure than identity or delimitation.¹⁶⁴ The two words would come to be irrevocably combined as English law continued to develop, with ‘to have and to hold’ achieving such ubiquity that it even ended up in the Church of England wedding vows. But at the time in which we are interested the words and their clauses might be set together or apart.¹⁶⁵ The next clause, the ‘reddendum’, has certainly not been included in any marriage vows, except perhaps in the cases of those who sign a particularly elaborate pre-nuptial agreement. Duffus Hardy defined the ‘reddendum’ as ‘a clause whereby the grantor creates or reserves some new thing to himself out of what he had before granted’, giving as an example a payment of half a mark of silver per annum in return for a grant of land.¹⁶⁶ As he further points out, though the ‘habendum’ and ‘tenendum’ are the

¹⁶¹ Duffus Hardy, *RCh*, p. xxv.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, xxv.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, xxv-vi.

¹⁶⁴ Examples include Warwick CR 1886 271, TNA E 326 11561, and TNA E 40 3170.

¹⁶⁵ As early as 1549, the wedding vows in the Book of Common Prayer included the lines ‘to have and to holde from this day forward’. They are available in this original form here:

http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1549/Marriage_1549.htm.

¹⁶⁶ Duffus Hardy *RCh*, p. xxvi. For an example of a charter with a ‘reddendum’ clause working prototypically, see Gloucester GBR 11 5. For an example without a ‘habendum’ clause, see Southampton SC 1 1 2.

clauses that are usually combined, the ‘reddendum’ is totally dependent on the presence of a ‘tenendum’ in order to make sense.¹⁶⁷ Clauses that lack a ‘tenendum’, due to the nature of the grant, consequently lack a ‘reddendum’ as well.¹⁶⁸ Note that the reverse is not true: there are indeed many charters that lay out the tenure of a grant without specifying any consideration owed in return.¹⁶⁹

One of the most important clauses in a royal charter of Henry III, and indeed one of only two clauses apart from the ‘promulgatio’ regularly to commence with a specially decorated capital letter, is the ‘**quare volumus**’ clause. The consistently emphasised initial letter ‘Q’ here was presumably intended to assist the reader quickly to locate the clause, as it contains a brief recapitulation of ‘the name of the grantee, the limitation, the thing granted, and the service or rent to be rendered’.¹⁷⁰ Generally, the ‘quare volumus’ begins with ‘Quare volumus et firmiter precipimus quod...’ (‘Wherefore we wish and firmly command that...’)¹⁷¹. There are some charters that simplify this to ‘Quare volumus quod...’.¹⁷² In the non-*inspeximus* charters of Henry III, the only other variant that I have encountered is ‘Quare volumus et concedemus pro nobis et heredibus nostris quod...’ (‘Wherefore we wish and grant for ourselves and our heirs that...’)¹⁷³. *Inspeximus* charters are, of course, another matter entirely, as they recite earlier instruments drafted according to the standard practices of their own, earlier times. An example of this occurs in an *inspeximus* of a Henry II charter written before the adoption of the ‘royal we’, where we find the form ‘Quare volo et firmiter precipio quod...’ (‘Wherefore I wish and

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. xxvi.

¹⁶⁸ See, for example, Princeton Willsie Henry III.

¹⁶⁹ Examples include Gloucester GBR J1 34.

¹⁷⁰ Duffus Hardy, *RCh*, p. xxvi.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. p. xxvi.

¹⁷² For example, TNA E 326 11561.

¹⁷³ This formulation found on Salisbury Press 1 Box 20 1.

firmly command that...’).¹⁷⁴ The appearance of archaic forms in inspected charters supplies the sole example I was able to find of a **penal or sanctions clause**. The purpose of this clause, also known as an ‘**anathema**’, was to warn those who might violate or oppose the transaction of the consequences they would face for doing so. Duffus Hardy noted that these penal clauses were rare after the Norman Conquest, and listed a few of which he was aware.¹⁷⁵ None of the examples given by Duffus Hardy was issued or inspected in the reign of Henry III, but a charter from 1227 inspecting a confirmation from the reign of King John contains a long penal clause.¹⁷⁶ Following this charter to its printed record in *Monasticon Anglicanum*, it appears to have been originally issued in the reign of King Henry I, hence the archaic diplomatic practice.¹⁷⁷ The wording of this particular penal clause reads ‘Si quis autem hoc nostre donationis decretum infringere seu minuere seu transmutare scienter presumpserit, summus iudex omnium contraeat eum et eradicet cum sua posteritate, ut permaneat sine aliqua hereditate in clade et fame’ (‘And if anyone knowingly presumes to infringe upon, diminish, or alter the decree of our grant, let the supreme judge of all oppose him and root him out with his offspring, so that he may remain without inheritance in chaos and hunger’).¹⁷⁸

Two more clauses remain to be discussed, neither of them allowing for much variation in phraseology. Both form parts of what elsewhere diplomatists would call the ‘eschatocol’. Here we find a witnessing clause, always beginning ‘**hiis testibus**’ (‘with these witnesses’), followed by a list of who was present in approximately descending order of status.¹⁷⁹ This witness list is

¹⁷⁴ An enrolled version of this may be found on charter roll 11.1, membrane 14, entry 7 (C 53/18).

¹⁷⁵ Duffus Hardy, *RCh*, p. xxvi.

¹⁷⁶ Printed in Latin, due to being a lengthy *inspeximus*, in *CChR* 1226-57, p. 15.

¹⁷⁷ William Dugdale, *Monasticon (Volume IV, Num. I)* pp. 40-41.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ In *RCh*, Duffus Hardy (p. xxx) rejected the notion that witnesses were in any kind of status order, but gave as his supporting evidence a series of rolls from much later than the reign of Henry III. In my view, despite Duffus Hardy’s objections based largely on later periods, it is obvious that men of lesser status like chamberlains and

always followed with ‘et aliis’ (and others), since it would have been impractical and unnecessary to list the presence of everyone at court for every single charter. After the witnesses comes the ‘**data per manum**’ clause, which indicates the place and date at which the charter was issued. Before 1238, this almost always began ‘Data per manum venerabilis patris Radulfi Cycestri episcopi cancellari nostri’ (Given by the hand of the venerable father Ralph, Bishop of Chichester, our chancellor).¹⁸⁰ Duffus Hardy observed that this clause was not always so uniform, and that in the reign of King John it would record whether it had been via the chancellor, Hubert Walter, or one of his subordinates like Hugh of Wells, Hugh de Gray or J. de Brancester by which any charter was ‘given’.¹⁸¹ It is not a simple matter to define what ‘given’ means in this context. For David Carpenter, the word refers to the moment of final authorisation for the charter draft to be engrossed and issued.¹⁸² This interpretation has been confirmed by Adam Chambers, who adds that, following on from the papal practice from which it derived, the moment a charter was ‘given’ was defined by the perhaps publicly acknowledged assent of the king and the chancellor.¹⁸³ The chancellor acted as final authoriser of all charters until a period in 1232, when Ralph Neville seems to have protested against an unconscionably avaricious power grab by Hubert de Burgh and his associates, Peter de Rivallis and Walter Mauclerc. Neville would not authorise the use of the great seal in this fashion, as it would ultimately damage the king’s interests.¹⁸⁴ The king, who was a consummate damager of his

clerks are clustered at the bottom of the witness list, with the bishops and earls at the top. For this (in my opinion, correct) view, see J.C. Russell, ‘Attestation of Charters in the Reign of King John’, *Speculum* 15 (1940), pp. 480-498.

¹⁸⁰ Some of the over seventy surviving examples provided to me by Nicholas Vincent employing this clause include Warwick CR 1886 271, Warwick CR 1886 272, Hereford Town Hall yr. 11, Northampton Stopford-Sackville 2330, Warwick CR 1886 273.

¹⁸¹ Duffus Hardy, *RCh*, xxxi.

¹⁸² D.A. Carpenter, ‘The Dating and Making of Magna Carta’, in D.A. Carpenter, *The Reign of Henry III*, (London, 1996), pp.1-16, especially p. 5.

¹⁸³ A. Chambers, ‘Aspects of Chancery Procedure’ (KCL Thesis, 2022), p. 120.

¹⁸⁴ The process by which Neville came to be absent from court, and the evidence trail for proving this, can be found in D.A. Carpenter, ‘Chancellor Ralph de Neville and Plans of Political Reform, 1215–1258’, in *Thirteenth Century England II: Proceedings of the Newcastle upon Tyne Conference 1987*, ed. P. R. Coss and S. D. Lloyd (Woodbridge, 1988), pp. 70-73

own interests, thereafter resurrected what until now had been a little-used clause for royal charters as opposed to letters patent: ‘datum per manum nostram’ (‘given by our own hand’). This wording had only been hitherto limited to a charter of King John’s appointing Walter de Gray to the office of chancellor (who could hardly be ‘given’ a charter by the hand of himself), and to Magna Carta.¹⁸⁵ The standard form then reverted to ‘datum per manum...cancellari’ until Henry decided that he wished to remove Ralph Neville from office in favour of his wife’s uncle, William of Savoy. This protracted spat culminated in the removal of the great seal from Neville’s custody in 1238, though he retained the nominal use of his title as chancellor.¹⁸⁶ King Henry, who must have longed to do without over-mighty officials telling him to whom he could and could not grant patronage, failed to appoint another active chancellor for many years.¹⁸⁷ After 1238, ‘datum per manum nostram’ became the only form by which charters were authorised. Regardless of whether they were given by the hand of the chancellor or the king, the dating clause then continued with the word ‘apud’ (‘at’) followed by the place at which the charter was granted, the day (a number rather than a name), the month, and the regnal year of the grant. For example, the final words of one charter read ‘...apud Westmonasterium nono decimo die Februarii anno Regni nostri undecimo’ (‘...at Westminster on the nineteenth day of February in the eleventh year of our reign’).¹⁸⁸

2.3 Charter Production in England: Evidence from the Charter Rolls

Having thus far examined the theoretical need for and technical limitations of medieval

¹⁸⁵ Duffus Hardy, *RCh*, pp. xxx-xxxi

¹⁸⁶ Carpenter, ‘Ralph de Neville’, pp. 70-1.

¹⁸⁷ The officials that Henry appointed as keepers of the seal may not have had the clout of ‘real’ chancellors, but like Ralph Neville they seem to have stood up to the king when he gave away patronage ill-advisedly. Simon the Norman, once such keeper, lost his office for his trouble. See Carpenter *Henry III, 1207-1258*, i, pp. 204 and 376.

¹⁸⁸ This example taken from TNA E 326 11561. Note the use of ‘nono-decimo’ instead of the more classically correct ‘undeviginti’.

bureaucracy, the history of the English royal chancery leading up to 1227, and the contents of a typical charter produced by that institution, it is almost time to begin outlining my quantitative analysis of King Henry III's charters and of how they were used. One area of vital context remains, however, and unfortunately it is not one blessed with much in the way of contemporary evidence. The other great office of Angevin government, the exchequer, had a comprehensive treatise written about its operation in the late twelfth century by one of its presiding treasurers, but nothing of that nature exists for the royal chancery.¹⁸⁹ Documentary survival on a grand scale has helped preserve knowledge of how chancery letters were issued, but beyond this we do not know much about how the chancery operated before it went out of court in the fourteenth century. Far more is known about the chancery of Edward I, and more still about the totally extra-curial chancery of Edward III, than is known of the activities of chancery under Henry III, for which we must make do with mere snap-shots from the margins. Aspects of this deficiency that relate to charter production and usage will be partly investigated here, just as those that related to record keeping were addressed by Adam Chambers. But both he and I have had to work according to certain assumptions regarding day-to-day organisation that will probably never be proven until an undiscovered *Dialogus de Cancellario* emerges.

The first of these assumptions relates to the basic organisational structure of the royal chancery. Much of what little is known or can be plausibly guessed about the chancery organisation of this period was summarised by A.E. Stamp in a short article published in 1933. In it, Stamp separated the royal chancery into a series of grades, not unlike those employed by today's civil service. At the top of the structure stood a small group of clerks that Stamp labelled the 'secretariat', who prepared the king's more sensitive business, including his diplomatic

¹⁸⁹ Richard fitzNigel, *Dialogus de Scaccario*, edited and translated by C. Johnson, (London, 1950).

documents for dispatch abroad. Stamp's documentary evidence for this was an enrolment of 1256, in which the clerk Roger of Missenden was asked to file away various diplomatic documents 'in secretis', and the fact that a small cadre of clerks who went abroad were referred to individually as 'specialus clericus' ('special clerk').¹⁹⁰ For the years 1251-72, Stamp found evidence for just six of these men beyond John Mansel, who seems to have been equivalent to the officer later known as the 'secretary of state', indicating that it was a rarefied role far removed from typical clerical experience.¹⁹¹ Roger Lovel, for instance, worked as a clerk of the secretariat. He was a kinsman of Philip Lovell, the king's treasurer, and it appears that his career was fast-tracked. He was sent to Rome in 1250 to act as the king's proctor, with expenses generously covered up to the sum of twenty marks.¹⁹² Later that year he would receive his first set of robes, which were explicitly referenced as being the robes of a clerk, in red with a tunic and surcoat of fur.¹⁹³ He served the king with distinction for many years, receiving generous rewards of robes, free warren, and church benefices to secure his income.¹⁹⁴ Clerks of the secretariat were the king's right-hand men, so Lovel was given instructions to thwart any individuals who were maligning Henry in the papal court, and to renew these actions from time to time.¹⁹⁵ He was dead by 1262, having served as a top-level clerk and diplomat for at least twelve years.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁰ *CR* 1254-56, p. 412.

¹⁹¹ A.E. Stamp, 'Some Notes on the Court and Chancery of Henry III' in *Historical Essays in Honour of James Tait*, ed. J. G. Edwards, V. H. Galbraith, and E. F. Jacob (Manchester, 1933). For more information on John Mansel's work as a diplomat, and his highly successful gathering of patronage, see J. Baylen, 'John Maunsell and the Castilian Treaty of 1254: A Study of the Clerical Diplomat', *Traditio*, 17 (1961), pp. 482-91.

¹⁹² Referenced as kinsman of Philip, *CPR* reg. i, p. 289. First sent to Rome, *CPR* 1247-1258 p. 68. Twenty marks expenses, *CLR* 1245-51 p. 352. Lovell's retainer supplied by King Henry would increase to forty marks later in his career, see *CLR* 1245-1 p. 252. The pope himself provided Lovell with fifty marks expenses while he was acting as proctor for his brother, but this was a loan, not a gift. See *CPR* reg i p. 289.

¹⁹³ First gift of robes: *CR* 1247-1251 p. 385.

¹⁹⁴ Future gifts of robes, *CR* 1247-1251 p. 518, 1251-1253 p. 285, 1254-1256 pp. 50, 234, and 1256-1259 p. 62. Free warren: *CChR* 1226-1257 p. 459. Granted benefices: *CPR* reg. i pp. 268, 273, 277. Forty more marks for expenses: *CLR* 1245-51 p. 352.

¹⁹⁵ The king orders Lovell to lean on those with the pope's ear: *CPR* 1258-1266, p. 213.

¹⁹⁶ *CPR* 1266-1272 p. 730.

At the other end of the spectrum were the ‘clerici de cursu’ (‘clerks of course’, or ‘cursitors’). As the name suggests, these low-grade junior clerks dealt with matters of routine: the simplest and most repetitious tasks that the chancery could give them, such as the short and highly formulaic summonses to attend court.¹⁹⁷ Stamp thought it very likely that these men did not itinerate with the king, remaining (for example) in Westminster or at a house in Hensington owned by Ralph Neville¹⁹⁸. This belief came from two combined observations. First, that two senior clerks were recorded to have remained ‘in officio cancellarie’ (‘in the office of the chancery’) while the king was in France. Second, that writs of replevin (orders to seize property: a very basic writ) were enrolled in batches on spaces on the close roll left blank around already written entries, suggesting that such writs were brought in batches for enrolment and that the cursitors were not with the royal court.¹⁹⁹ Stamp concluded from these facts that the chancery had permanent premises, which were principally used by cursitors to undertake work that did not benefit from proximity to the king. Indeed, as David Carpenter highlighted, there were positive benefits to remaining in London: more writs *de cursu* could be written when not on the move, and having a fixed location to which to apply must have been more convenient for litigants.²⁰⁰

Above the cursitors but below the special clerks of the secretariat stood the ‘clerici de precepto’: the preceptors. These were the men who handled business that *did* require the direct instructions of the king, including the higher-level varieties of letters close, all letters patent

¹⁹⁷ For the evidence of clerks *de cursu* and their output, see Carpenter, *Henry III, 1207-1258*, i, p. 374.

¹⁹⁸ Stamp, ‘Some Notes on the Court and Chancery of Henry III’ pp. 307-8.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 308.

²⁰⁰ Carpenter, ‘The English Royal Chancery in the Thirteenth Century’, p. 55.

and, of course, all charters.²⁰¹ Unlike the cursitors, the preceptor clerks had to communicate directly with the chancellor to determine which business could be handled on his authority alone and which needed the king's personal attention.²⁰² It has also been suggested by David Carpenter that this communication between chancellor, clerks and king must have been a two way street: just as it benefited the clerks to be able to bring 'state' business to the king's personal attention, it must have also benefited the king and his ministers to be able to have their own business drawn up in documentary form by those who were qualified to do so.²⁰³ Though the tendency towards hierarchy and the prizing of legal experience is clearly present in the distinction between preceptors and cursitors, there do not seem at this stage to have been any 'chancery masters', first referenced no earlier than 1327. These were very senior men with particularly deep knowledge of the law, sitting on their own bench at court, each of them having several lower-grade clerks reporting to them directly.²⁰⁴ Also of possibly little importance for our period is the assertion by *Fleta*, a legal treatise written at the end of the reign of Edward I, that upper-level clerks were further divided into pure *preceptores*, who ordered the issue of high-grade writs; *prenotarii*, who wrote them, and *examinatores*, who checked them.²⁰⁵ These were the seniority grades of an institution that had gone out of court and therefore experienced an explosion of institutional complexity, requiring the codification of what had previously been managed by mere custom.²⁰⁶ There may well have been clerks who specialised in staff

²⁰¹ Stamp identified an entry on the close roll that empowered the keeper of the wardrobe to use the great seal in the absence of the lord chancellor, but under the seal of one of Peter de Montfort, Roger de St. John and Giles de Argentan. He was empowered to seal writs *de cursu* in the absence of one of these men, but could only seal writs *de precepto* with one of them present. According to Stamp's logic, which is surely right, this must parallel how *de precepto* required the presence of the king, p. 306-7. The division between cursitor and preceptor clerks is also mentioned in *Fleta*, a treatise on the common law written after 1290. See p. 125.

²⁰² Carpenter, *Henry III, 1207-1258*, i, p. 374.

²⁰³ Ibid. pp. 374-5.

²⁰⁴ For a description of how the chancery masters functioned in the fourteenth century and beyond, see J.E. Sayers, 'The English royal chancery: structure and productions', in *Diplomatique royale du Moyen-Âge, XIIIe-XIVe siècles* (Porto, 1996), p. 80.

²⁰⁵ *Fleta*, pp. 123-6, cited in Chaplais, *English Royal Documents*, p. 20

²⁰⁶ Carpenter 'Thirteenth Century Chancery' pp. 50, 56. Vincent, 'Shape of the Medieval English State', p. 10. This process can be seen happening in Tout's *Chapters*, too, starting in the reign of Edward I (see, for example, vol. ii, pp. 74-77) and ending with a similar slide into dysfunctionality for the wardrobe (vol. iv, pp. 187-190)

management, or writing, or double-checking, but any such specialisms have left no documentary trace. The one exception is in the famous ‘sealing ordinance’ of King John, issued shortly after his coronation in 1199, in which we read of a chancellor, vice-chancellor and a ‘protonotary’, each with their own particular scale of fees.²⁰⁷ There is no reason to suppose that clerks did not simply complete tasks as they arose, without any concrete office hierarchy determining who did what. What the clerks of Henry III’s chancery had in abundance that their highly stratified brethren of decades later did not was something more valuable than a Latin title: constant proximity to the king. As Stamp conceptualised it, the preceptor clerks must have sat on a regular basis with the king, chancellor and members of the royal court, hearing which writs and charters were to be engrossed as the business of the day was brought before them.²⁰⁸ This was not only useful for rapid and efficient administration, but helped facilitate personal advancement.

King Henry, whatever his deficiencies as a military ruler or charismatic politician, was a man with a precise aesthetic vision and a feeling for the importance of pageantry.²⁰⁹ Westminster Abbey may have been his masterpiece, but even the clothes of his courtiers were part of his holistic view of what the court should look like.²¹⁰ Though cursitors were too junior and too far from the court to warrant such largesse, preceptors and special clerks of the secretariat were

²⁰⁷ *Foedera (Volume 1, part i)* (1816), pp. 75-6.

²⁰⁸ Stamp, ‘Some Notes on the Court and Chancery of Henry III’, p. 308.

²⁰⁹ The importance, and relative scholarly neglect, of pageantry in understanding the court of King Henry III is explored in detail by Nicholas Vincent in ‘Shape of the Medieval English State’. Vincent synthesises many points of view regarding Henrician and medieval pageantry, including that of J. Watts that such pageantry has to be understood in purely personal and not national terms, and the analysis of the wardrobe rolls conducted by Benjamin Wild, who found evidence for an extremely visually court style that Henry planned to the nth degree. These works are J. Watts, ‘Looking for the State in Later Medieval England’, in *Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display in Medieval England* (Boydell 2002), pp. 243-67 and B. Wild, ‘A Truly Royal Retinue: Using Wardrobe Rolls to Determine the Size and Composition of the Household of Henry III of England’, *The Court Historian*, 16 (2011), pp. 127-57.

²¹⁰ Vincent, ‘Shape of the Medieval English State’, pp. 18-19.

furnished with robes by the king.²¹¹ These and other gifts are fortuitously documented, assisting us in determining who were the more prominent chancery clerks and, to a limited degree, in charting the course of their careers. It is hard to select representative individuals on whom to focus here, but there are four individuals with sufficient rolls evidence, who at least have the benefit of being exact contemporaries and sharing the same grade of seniority. These four were explicitly identified as receiving the robes of chancery clerks in January 1255, a short time after all had accompanied the king to Gascony. As bureaucrats of equivalent rank two or more of them would often feature in the same record entries.²¹² The first of them was Adam of Chesterton: a highly favoured chancery clerk who received temporary custody of two vacant abbeys and even the vacant see of Norwich, before ending up as master of the *Domus Conversorum* ('House of Converts') in what is today Chancery Lane. The second, Henry de Mercinton, another senior chancery clerk, was twice given custody of vacant abbeys. The third, Thomas of Middleton, who despite being once listed as 'dilectus clericus regis' ('beloved clerk of the king'), never managed to procure a benefice; and the fourth, Michael of Northampton, who would eventually leave the royal chancery, thereafter serving the king's brother, Richard of Cornwall, for many years with distinction.²¹³ All four were granted robes on at least one subsequent occasion, with these usually being specified as the robes of a chancery clerk. Sometimes, the occasion was mentioned: Thomas of Middleton and Henry de Mercinton were granted robes for the Christmas festivities, for example, in the same way that Roger Lovell, the clerk of the secretariat, had obtained them for Christmas and Pentecost.²¹⁴ Gifts were not

²¹¹ Wild, 'A Truly Royal Retinue', pp. 144-7. For the distinctive ways in which issue of liveries worked differently in England than in Europe, and in the thirteenth century compared to the future, see F. Lachaud, 'Liveries of Robes in England, c. 1200-c. 1330', *EHR* 111 (1996).

²¹² *CR 1254-56*, p. 21.

²¹³ Michael of Northampton was first given protection to go to Germany with Richard in February 1257. See *CPR 1247-58*, p. 589. He was then a witness to one of Richard's *inspeximus* charters, enrolled on King Henry's charter roll *CChR 1257-1300*, p. 25. He last appears on the records in 1271 *CPR 1258-66*, pp. 653-4.

²¹⁴ Chesterton and de Mercinton: *CR 1261-64*, p. 329 Lovell: *CR 1254-1256*, p. 234.

confined to robes.²¹⁵ Henry de Mercinton was granted good oak trees to use on his estates, while Chesterton was given ninety-three oaks over his career for the same purpose.²¹⁶ He was granted further wood for fuel, as well as for the use of his mother.²¹⁷ Adam was evidently close to his mother, and the maternally-abandoned Henry must have lent a sympathetic ear, as Maud of Chesterton was granted robes, a cask of wine and a messuage of land in Chesterton in addition to the timber.²¹⁸ Chesterton and Michael of Northampton were granted free warren for their demesne lands in Suffolk and Northamptonshire, respectively.²¹⁹

As far as building up their personal estates and offices was concerned, the four preceptors enjoyed varying degrees of success. Adam of Chesterton was the most successful by far, becoming rector of Broadway in Worcestershire by 1257, then being made parson of Ufford (Northamptonshire) and rector of Hale (Northamptonshire).²²⁰ He acquired a house for six marks in Chesterton itself, as well as a great deal of land in the surrounding area acquired via several transactions.²²¹ Henry de Mercinton was not quite so acquisitive, but he too was successful. In addition to the two abbeys for which he acted as temporary guardian, he acquired the benefice of Brandon (Suffolk) before becoming rector of Kingston and then of Galeby (both in his native Staffordshire).²²² Michael of Northampton cut himself off from the chief source

²¹⁵ G.P. Cuttino, who wrote one of the great articles of academic history on clerks as a social class, suspected that the frequency and value of gifts was part of the official indication of a clerk's position in the hierarchy. He also thought that the term 'king's clerk' was not just a statement of fact, but a middle-ranking position linked to a receiving a fixed amount of patronage. See G.P. Cuttino, 'King's Clerks and the Community of the Realm', *Speculum* 29 (1954), pp. 395-409, with commentary on position of 'king's clerk' at pp. 395-6.

²¹⁶ Henry de Mercinton: *CR* 1256-59, p. 267 Adam of Chesterton: *CR* 1251-53, pp. 339, 387, *CR* 1253-54 p.272, *CR* 1254-6 pp. 66, 67, 279, 343, *CR* 1256-59, p. 72, *CR* 1259-61, pp. 59, 421, *CR* 1261-64, pp. 35, 318, 345, *CR* 1264-68, pp. 50, 147, 191, 299, 320, 340.

²¹⁷ For the hearth: *CR* 1259-61, p. 98, *CR* 1261-64, p. 345. For his mother: *CR* 1254-56, p. 362, *CR* 1256-59, p. 267.

²¹⁸ Robe: *CR* 1264-68, p. 278. Cask of wine: *CR* 1264-68, p. 401. Land in Chesterton: *FFinesHunts*, p. 29.

²¹⁹ Chesterton: *CChR* 1257-1300, p. 49. Northampton: *CChR* 1257-1300, p. 164.

²²⁰ Broadway: *CPR* i, p. 353. Ufford: *CR* 1256-59, p. 72. Hale: *CR* 1259-61, p. 216.

²²¹ *CR* 1256-59, p. 128, *CR* 1261-64, p. 383, *CPR* 1247-58, p. 521.

²²² Brandon: *CPR* 1247-58, p. 608. Kingston: *CPR* i, p. 54. Galeby: *CPR* 1272-81, p. 232.

of royal patronage when he went to work for Richard of Cornwall (himself a fabulously rich man), but still managed to receive the farm of Abingdon (Northamptonshire) for three years before being made priest-in-charge of Hemswell in the diocese of Lincoln.²²³ The least successful of the four men was Thomas of Middleton, who may have died (or at any rate disappeared from the records) before acquiring any significant patronage. He had still not received a benefice by 1261, at which time the king granted him a stipend of one mark per annum in compensation, promising to find him one as soon as possible.²²⁴

As we have seen, senior chancery clerks liberally used their connections with the king and the royal court to secure gifts, estates, and benefices. What the records also show us is that they used the mechanisms of their office to maximum advantage by enrolling their own private bonds. By its nature, this is a difficult phenomenon to evidence through official records alone, as the mechanisms for turning a profit in such transactions had to be concealed. Usury was, of course, forbidden throughout Christendom to all but the Jews in their loans to non-Jews, and the Jewish community had itself been impoverished by the policies of Henry III and his predecessors, and would shortly be entirely expelled from the kingdom by Edward I.²²⁵ Christians with money nonetheless sometimes found it profitable to run money-lending operations that were nominally interest-free, with whatever benefit was received deliberately not recorded, in general by listing sums for repayment that were significantly higher than the initial capital loaned: in effect, a process of disguised interest. What better and more convenient method of recording these transactions could there be than on the chancery close roll? This was

²²³ Granted the farm of Abingdon: *CPR 1258-66*, pp. 653-4 Hemswell re-assigned after his death, June 1283: *Rot. Sutt.*, p. 4.

²²⁴ *CR 1259-61*, p. 460

²²⁵ The relationship between Jews and Christians in England had never been easy, but the situation drastically deteriorated in the 1240s. See R.C. Stacey, '1260: a Watershed in Anglo-Jewish Relations?' in *Historical Research*, Vol. 61 No. 145 (1988), pp. 135-150.

an endemic practice. Of the four preceptors dealt with here, all but Michael of Northampton had their own private loans enrolled, and all four were involved in witnessing each other's transactions.²²⁶ The sums involved were large, but variable – from six marks to seven marks and twenty pence in the loans of Thomas Middleton; ten shillings to five marks in those of Adam of Chesterton; and one mark and seventy pence in the single loan recorded from Henry de Mercinton.²²⁷ Since this was evidently a perk of the job and hence bound by process, all these private debts were phrased in exactly the same way. The only variation came from names, the sum owed, and the date at which payment was due.

We have established that the chancery was staffed by very high-grade clerks of the secretariat, who wrote diplomatic correspondence, low-grade cursitors, who wrote disposable writs that were not enrolled, and middle to high-grade preceptors, who wrote the charters and higher-grade writs that needed to be authorised by the king or chancellor. The next aspect of Henry III's royal chancery that we must address is how this staff produced the documents they were charged with drafting, sealing, and dispatching. To do so, let us go back to Stamp's vision of the chancery clerks and other members of the royal court sitting to hear petitions and to take the king's instructions on what documents were to be issued. By the end of the fourteenth century, when the chancery had gone out of court, there was a complicated process of warranty indicating on whose authority documents had been issued under the great seal.²²⁸ This was not yet known in the reign of Henry III, whose physical proximity to his chancery clerks made anything more than his verbal or direct written command (a so-called 'warrant to the great

²²⁶ All such private debts were witnessed by other personnel of the royal household – they could not very well pull an earl or a bishop in for such a task!

²²⁷ Loans of Thomas of Middleton: *CR 1259-61*, pp. 451, 452. Loans of Adam of Chesterton: *CR 1256-59*, pp. 278-9, 282, 329, 479. *CR 1259-61* pp. 450, 477. *CR 1261-64* p. 94. Loan of Henry de Mercinton: *CR 1261-64*, p. 329.

²²⁸ Chaplais, *English Royal Documents*, pp. 39-44 for the great seal. Maxwell-Lyte *Historical Notes on the Use of the Great Seal* pp. 141-167. Tout *Chapters*, vol. i, pp. 57-60.

seal') for the most part unnecessary.²²⁹ Once warrant had been made to produce a given document, let us say a charter, the process of drafting had to begin. Henry Maxwell-Lyte proved, using evidence from the early fourteenth century when warrants were separate documents and could be cross-referenced, that the beneficiary was able to supply more particulars after the initial petition, so that charters could be drafted with greater accuracy.²³⁰ Of course, making sure that such emendations were not to the king's detriment would be one of the responsibilities of the officials responsible for drafting the document. We are nonetheless here in the same world of petitioning and grace that we find in other thirteenth-century chanceries, such as those of the Popes or the kings of France, in which the petition itself was generally redrafted in dispositive form, with a greater or lesser degree of alteration and refinement depending upon the petitioner's capacity to present his draft in the requisite legal terminology.

Formularisation may have developed considerably in Henry III's reign compared to those of the Anglo-Norman kings, but except for disposable low-grade writs, the royal administration did not simply plug in names to pre-existing documents and call it a day. At the top end of the scale, Paul Brand has shown that the Provisions of Westminster (an update to the Provisions of Oxford, constitutionally limiting the powers of the king) went through no less than four different drafts in three languages, with alterations at each stage.²³¹ Such fastidiousness was not reserved for major documents. Where charter drafts have survived (they were sometimes sewn into the chancery rolls for record purposes), they can be revealing as to why a draft might be rejected. One such charter draft contains three strikeouts: the name of a witness, the year of

²²⁹ Chaplais, *English Royal Documents*, pp. 39-40, Maxwell-Lyte *Historical Notes on the Use of the Great Seal*, pp. 141-3.

²³⁰ Maxwell-Lyte, *Great Seal*, p. 224.

²³¹ P. Brand, *Kings, Barons and Justices: The Making and Enforcement of Legislation in Thirteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 15-16.

one of the charters being exemplified, and a word that seems to have been inserted in error.²³² The last of these might have been clear from a cursory reading, but the correction of the witness name and the year shows that the draft, in this case of an *inspeximus*, was being carefully checked against the original documents to which it referred. Another draft relegated to record use omitted the name of Bishop (Walter) of Bath and Wells, though a small initial ‘W’ was cramped into the interlineal space.²³³ This would have been a particularly unfortunate error for the scribe responsible: Bishop Walter Giffard of Bath and Wells happened also to be the lord chancellor at this time! Another example of an enrolled draft finds the scribe taking no chances. Whatever mistake he made (it was not individually highlighted), he covered the whole parchment in large crosses.²³⁴ This is exactly how false entries in the rolls were cancelled, and in both drafts and enrolments it is interesting to observe the constant process of checking and re-reading that must have been taking place when the documents produced were of such legal importance.

After the documents of the royal chancery had been drafted, they had to be engrossed and sealed, a process that differed between letters close, letters patent and charters. An ‘engrossment’ is the final version of a legal document which has the authority to execute a transaction, as distinct from a copy which may say the same thing (such as a draft) but has no weight in law.²³⁵ Even the enquiring mind of Henry Maxwell-Lyte had to concede our lack of knowledge when it comes to the exact processes of engrossment, and this remains as true today

²³² See charter roll 44, membrane 2 (C 53/50). The witness was Philip Basset, the year was 8 Richard I, and the word was ‘vexeat’.

²³³ See charter roll 49 membrane 1 (C 53/54).

²³⁴ This may be found in charter roll 11.1, schedule to membrane 11 (C 53/18).

²³⁵ See current legal definition at <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/engrossment> and David Carpenter’s commentary on medieval English context for the term in *Magna Carta*, p. 9.

as it was in 1926.²³⁶ We have no concrete information on how final drafts were decided upon, nor by whom in the overall chancery pecking order, nor how much autonomy (if any) the final charter scribe exercised in that process. With a draft in front of him, probably peppered with corrections as time pressures would not have allowed excessive rewriting, most of the chancery scribe's remaining task was presentational.²³⁷ He had to arrange the words of the final document into neatly-ruled and evenly-spaced lines, keep the text as a whole within a regular block, position the 'Quare volumus' clause in roughly the right place, and ensure that such features as the degree of initial capitalisation and abbreviation matched the intended status of the document. During the 1240s, the initial letter 'H' of 'Henricus' began to be omitted by the charter scribes, to leave space for an elaborate decorated version to be written in later, at the beneficiary's expense.²³⁸

With the charter otherwise finished, the great seal could be attached. This would usually be formed of green wax.²³⁹ There were two method of attaching the seal. The first, largely but not completely superseded by the reign of Henry III, was known as 'sur simple queue' ('on a simple tail'), and involved the cutting of a tongue into the bottom piece of the document, generally cut from right to left, to which the seal could be attached. Such tongues were not always sufficient to carry the weight of a seal without tearing, so a new method was early on devised in which the bottom edge of a document was folded, horizontal slits were cut in it, and a strip of parchment was passed through. This superior method of seal attachment we refer to as 'sur

²³⁶ Maxwell Lyte *Historical Notes on the Use of the Great Seal*, p. 265. Commentary on what is known, most of it focused on much later reigns, pp. 265-82.

²³⁷ David Carpenter's commentary on writing from drafts may be found in *Dating and Making* pp. 5-6 and at https://magnacartaresearch.org/read/feature_of_the_month/Jun_2015.

²³⁸ For the definitive guide to decoration in English charter writing, see E. Danbury, 'The Decoration and Illumination of Royal Charters in England 1250-1509: An Introduction' in *England and Her Neighbours, 1066-1453: Essays in Honour of Pierre Chaplais* (London, 1989), pp. 158-178. Information specifically focused on the omission of the initial 'H' by chancery staff may be found at pp. 158-62.

²³⁹ Chaplais, *English Royal Documents*, p. 15. Chaplais pointed out that the green wax colour was following on from the equivalent charters of the King of France.

double queue' ('on a double tail').²⁴⁰ By our period, charters were typically sealed 'sur double queue' with two plaited or twisted strands of silk, which could be from a wide selection of colours.²⁴¹ Vincent's Register, which combines charters and letters patent, includes sixty-three documents sealed 'sur simple queue' but 348 sealed 'sur double queue', showing the extent to which the latter had superseded the former by the 1220s.²⁴²

Before any charter could be dispatched, the beneficiary would need to have paid all necessary fees. We are fortunate to know about these in some detail due to an ordinance issued early in the reign of King John in which the sums of money payable to the chancellor (ten marks), vice-chancellor (one mark), and proto-notary (one mark) were laid out for each type of grant.²⁴³ A charter for a bishop cost £8 5s. in 1214, with charters of 'small fee' costing 16s. 4d. and those of 'great fee', for which our evidence is fourteenth century, costing £7 11s. 5d.²⁴⁴ After the death of Ralph Neville, for many years King Henry ruled without a chancellor, collecting these colossal sealing fees himself. The hanaper department, referring to the basket in which documents were kept, was set up in 1244 to receive funds for sealing and to pay out funds of chancery expenses.²⁴⁵ The physical application of the wax to the document, which apparently was done only after the fee had been paid, was the responsibility of an official known as the 'spigurnel', who himself received a small fee for 'for the wax'.

²⁴⁰ For a pictorial overview of these different sealing types, see: <https://norfolkrecordofficeblog.org/2016/08/19/seals-and-sealing-an-introduction-to-seals-through-the-archives-of-the-norfolk-record-office/>.

²⁴¹ Chaplais, *English Royal Documents*, p. 15.

²⁴² Once again, I can't thank Nicholas Vincent enough for the use of his incredible database and imagery. By generously making this material available to those scholars who have not had the opportunity (or made the sacrifice, depending on your point of view) to visit so many far-flung record offices, he has provided a springboard for us to access much deeper water than we could have managed paddling around on our own.

²⁴³ *Foedera* p. 76, cited and discussed in Tout *Chapters*, vol. i, pp. 134-5.

²⁴⁴ Figures given by Nicholas Vincent in 'Shape of the Medieval English State', with Vincent himself citing *RCh*, 201b, Wilkinson *Chancery under Edward III*, pp. 59-60, 87-90, Chaplais, *English Royal Documents*, pp. 22-3, and Maxwell-Lyte, *Historical notes on the Use of the Great Seal*, pp. 265-6.

²⁴⁵ Tout, *Chapters*, vol. i. p. 286.

Let us now turn to statistics, and in particular to an attempt to assess the production of charters according to their volume and date. For this, a bar chart is the most helpful visual aid:

Table 1: Charter Roll Entries Across the Reign of Henry III

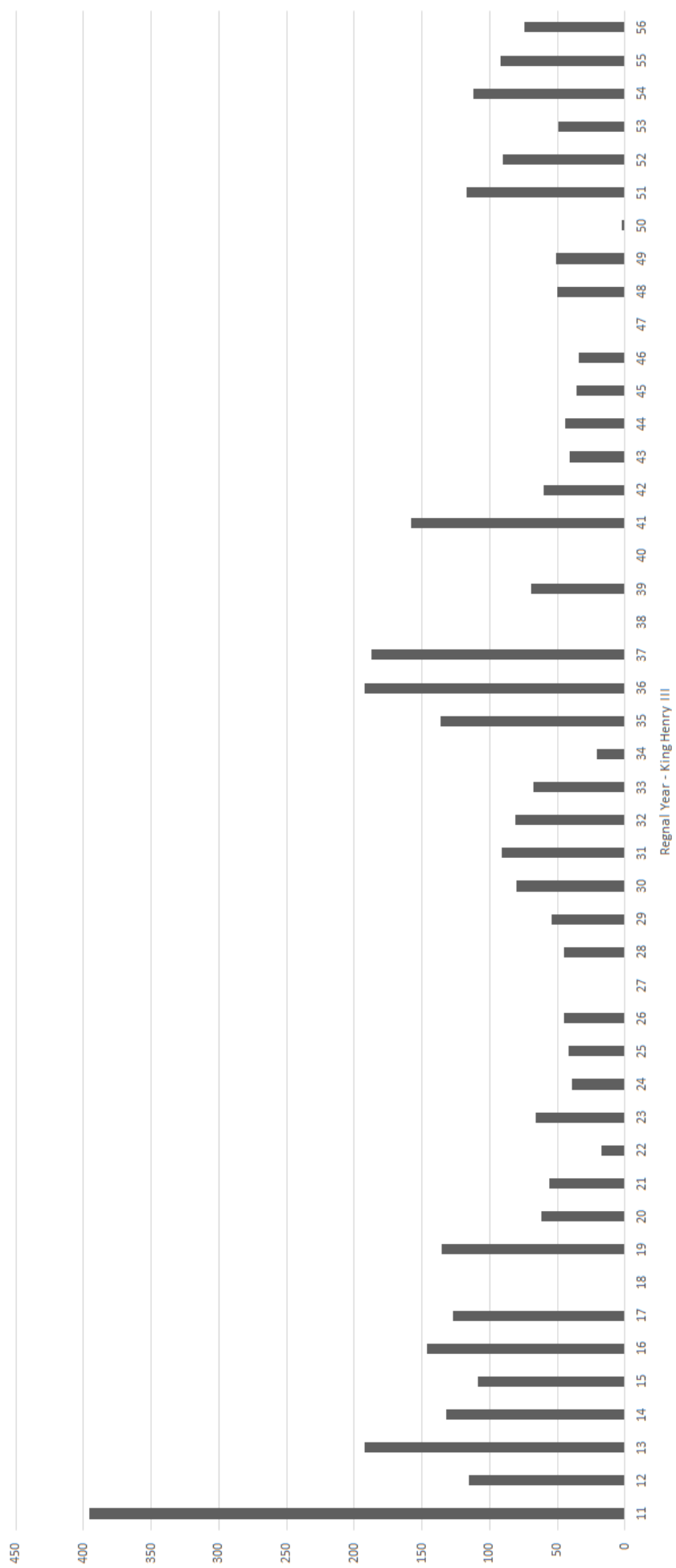


Table 2: Dating Month of Charters Found on Charter Rolls, 1227-72

YEAR	REGNAL	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	---	TOTAL:
1226-27	11	10	106	76	31	38	23	48	23	23	11			7	396
1227-28	12	13	19	6	15	16	6	11	7	1	1	13	6	1	115
1228-29	13	10	24	10	9	33	17	2	1	13	19	37	17		192
1229-30	14	19	24	2	52	4	1	1	3	3	5	10	7	1	132
1230-31	15	13	6	2	9	10	12	20	15	3	8	7	3	1	109
1231-32	16	26	6		7	20	30	22	6	9	4	3	13		146
1232-33	17	4	9	3	8	53	9	16	4	2	2	6	11		127
1233-34	18														0
1234-35	19	8	16	16	14	11	10	10	11	13	1	11	13	1	135
1235-36	20	12	9	3	4	2	1	7	4	5	2	7	1	5	62
1236-37	21	4	9	5	5	5	3	3	8	5	5	2	2		56
1237-38	22	4	2	3				4						4	17
1238-39	23	5	5	8	9	4	8	3	5	4	9	5		1	66
1239-40	24	8	7	3	2	3	3	1	6	1	1	1	3		39
1240-41	25	6	2	7		8	3	1	3	1	6	2	3		42
1241-42	26	5	2	3	22	5						4	4		45
1242-43	27														0
1243-44	28	1	5	1	1	9	11	2	4		1	2	6	2	45
1244-45	29	2	1	8	9	5	3	8	2	9	5	2			54
1245-46	30	5	6	8	10	9	7	7	12	4	7	2	2	1	80
1246-47	31	5	12	5	8	9	6	9	8	1	3	10	13	2	91
1247-48	32	7	3	6	8	11	12	7	8	3	3	7	4	2	81
1248-49	33	3	4	5	7	8	3	5	3	4	12	10	3	1	68
1249-50	34		4	2	4	2						2		7	21
1250-51	35	13	12	16	14	14	9	10	13	8	15	9	3		136
1251-52	36	13	19	6	31	19	16	15	22	11	11	13	16		192
1252-53	37	32	13	26	16	27	16				4	25	22	6	187
1253-54	38														0
1254-55	39		13	8	16	5	4	2	1	8	12				69
1255-56	40														0
1256-57	41	15	11	16	11	7	7	13	3	40	12	16	7		158
1257-58	42	3	10	4	9	8	13			1		2	9	1	60
1258-59	43	3	4		1	6	2	6	7	2	6	3	1		41
1259-60	44					1	4	10	6	4	10	8		1	44
1260-61	45	2	4	2		6	5	2	3		2	6	4		36
1261-62	46	3	6	5		4	7	8					1		34
1262-63	47														0
1263-64	48			2					3	6	10	1	27	1	50
1264-65	49	4	10	7	1	4	2	0	1	1	15	3		3	51
1265-66	50											1	1		2
1266-67	51	7	12	8	6	11	26	7	4	11	4	8	10	3	117
1267-68	52	6	5	13	4	6	7	9	8	4	6	11	6	5	90
1268-69	53	7	3	1	9	4		8	4	1	7	3	2		49
1269-70	54	3	15	3	4	20	7	18	11	4	12	13	1	1	112
1270-71	55	8	6	5	5	11	12	8	7	2	5	14	9		92
1271-72	56	5	6	4	2	11	6	9	1	10	6	8	6		74
TOTAL:		294	430	308	363	429	311	312	227	217	242	287	236	57	3713
AVG.:		12.5	18.3	13.1	15.4	18.3	13.2	13.3	9.7	9.2	10.3	12.2	10.0	2.4	158.0

Work involving arcane bureaucratic practices from a long-past age can be highly technical, requiring the researcher to get into the heads of ancient clerks, to learn their vocabulary, and internalise their traditions. On other occasions, as in this case, interesting results can be achieved with mere data entry: reading English-language translations in a printed calendar and making a note of the dates that were recorded 800 years ago. Anyone *could* have done this, but few people outside narrow specialists in administration would have cause to tabulate an entire reign as presented above. Partly, this is due to the size of the corpus that must be read through, even if calendars do make the job easier. Of the charters recorded on the charter rolls in even the most vaguely legible form, 3713 entries survive by my count. This includes *inspeximus*, confirmation and recital entries, but does not include memoranda, repeated entries or those recorded on the patent roll.²⁴⁶ The charter rolls for years 18, 40, and 47 of King Henry III's reign have been lost since before the modern era, and no roll was ever created for year 27 owing to the king's protracted absence overseas, when charters were instead entered on the patent roll.²⁴⁷ This gives what would have otherwise been a continuous field of data an unfortunately gap-toothed appearance, but this must be tolerated. Roll losses notwithstanding, once output by regnal year is plotted onto a graph and by month into a table, two facts emerge that are hard to discern by simply reading the calendars. The first is that charter production did not randomly spike up or plummet down year by year. The trend of the graph shows a clear sine wave of rising and declining output, albeit with higher-than-expected peaks at the beginning and middle of the reign. The second is that, while charter output changed in small increments year-on-year, monthly output was much more susceptible to variance. Sometimes the chancery had to produce many charters in one month; sometimes it had hardly any business, but the relatively constant underlying administrative needs of the realm seem to have created a natural process

²⁴⁶ The patent rolls in question are C 66/52, C 66/53, C 66/65, and C 66/66.

²⁴⁷ Chambers, *Aspects of Chancery Procedure*, pp. 254-5.

of evening out. If an unusually large number of charters had to be made in one month, such imperatives did not apply again in the next, thus roughly preserving the average. That said, if the average were too well evened out there would be no notable peaks and troughs in the yearly output, so factors external to the capacity of the chancery or the administrative needs of England must have been responsible.

The first and by far most statistically striking of these periods of abnormal output occurs in the first year of the king's majority, 11 Henry III (1226-7). Having acceded to the throne aged nine, Henry, for the first two years of reign, relied on the regent, William Marshal, to seal all the boy king's royal letters.²⁴⁸ By 1218, a seal had been created for the young Henry, on the strict understanding that no permanent grants were to be made with it until he reached the age of twenty-one, on 18 October 1228.²⁴⁹ Jockeying for position among Henry's two greatest ministers would ultimately bring this date forward. In 1223, Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester, asked Pope Honorius for a letter declaring Henry to have all the powers of his majority.²⁵⁰ The justiciar Hubert de Burgh, Des Roche's nemesis and a formidable political operator in his own right, found that he had more to gain than lose from allowing the king to reach his majority early. Hubert needed titles he only held at the king's pleasure to be granted to him on a permanent basis, and for that he needed Henry to have unfettered powers of dispensation.²⁵¹ David Carpenter has also argued that it was not just Peter des Roches and Hubert de Burgh who wished to see the king issuing permanent grants. Almost every powerful member of the regime, bishops as well as barons, had waited ten years since the king's succession to get their hands on proper patronage, and pent-up demand served like a coiled

²⁴⁸ Carpenter, *Henry III, 1207-1258*, i, p. 12.

²⁴⁹ Powicke, *Chancery in the Minority*, pp. 220-235.

²⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 221, Carpenter, *Henry III vol. 1, 1207-1258*, p. 26

²⁵¹ Carpenter, *Henry III vol. 1, 1207-1258*, p. 34-5.

spring.²⁵² The date chosen for the premature reaching of maturity was 1 January 1227, which is also the date at which the first charter roll of King Henry's reign commences. This was to be a red-letter day for a much wider cross-section of society than just the top secular and religious magnates. When King John acceded to the throne in 1199, he had ordered that the justices of his bench should not accept as valid any charters or letters patent of previous monarchs that had not been confirmed by his own new regime.²⁵³ Here he had the precedent of his brother, Richard I, who after the temporary loss of his seal in a shipwreck off Cyprus, insisted that all earlier charters granted under his first great seal be issued under a newly and more magnificently engraved replacement, once again in return for significant new fines. Such moves, under both Richard and John, naturally brought in money from those paying for reissues, but more importantly it had brought parts of England's vast web of patronage firmly under chancery control and within the chancery's own sphere of knowledge.²⁵⁴ With the newly-created system of enrolling verbatim records of all charters, this knowledge would then be stored in perpetuity within the institutional memory of the chancery, where it could be used to test claims to authenticity.²⁵⁵

It can only be assumed that this manoeuvre was successful on its own terms, as it was repeated for the start of Henry III's majority, with the charter rolls again capturing much information that would surely otherwise have been wholly unknown to the regime. In what follows, I have

²⁵² Ibid, p. 34.

²⁵³ This move was not unique to King John. Nicholas Vincent describes the fact that surviving originals cluster towards the start of the reign for this very reason in the cases of most Anglo-Norman monarchs ('Why 1199?' p. 34). Nevertheless, it does seem that John's additional weapon of the charter roll gave him reason to enforce his demand particularly stringently. See Galbraith, *Studies*, p. 69.

²⁵⁴ Ibid, pp. 69-70.

²⁵⁵ Galbraith made this argument, *ibid*, and Vincent expanded it in 'Why 1199?', p.43. It should also be noted that this is no mere medieval solution to a medieval problem, either. The creation of a property register by the Land Registration Act 1925 and of an electronic equivalent by the Land Registration Act 2002 helped solve the problem inherent to the use of deeds to authenticate title, which is that the current status of land only becomes known to the state when it changes hands.

left the fiscal aspects of Henry III's charter-granting operation very much to one side. The published *Calendars of the Fine Rolls* nonetheless make plain (not least from a glance at their subject indexes under 'Charters') that there were many hundreds of fines paid both for new charters and the renewal of the old. One day, this evidence will make for an interesting article in its own right. For present purposes, however, we must content ourselves with the evidence supplied by David Carpenter, that whereas King John extracted a fortune from new fines imposed on laymen and clergy (with no less than £22,000 offered in the fine roll for 1207-8), by the middle years of the reign of Henry III this had dwindled to a mere fraction of its former significance as a revenue-generating tool. In 1256-7, new fines thus accounted for barely £4000, or less than a fifth of what Henry's father had sought to obtain.

A grand total of 395 charters were enrolled in 1227-8, the year 11 Henry III, more than twice the number recorded for the next-busiest year and necessitating the use of two parchment rolls to be stored as record.²⁵⁶ Given the circumstances discussed above, it might logically be supposed that there would be an unusually large number of *inspeximus* charters and charters written for high-ranking aristocrats and churchmen. This is partly true, but with heavy qualification. Of the 395 charters recorded in 11 Henry III, fifty-three are *inspeximuses*, or about 13.41%. For all the remaining years of the reign, 434 of 3318 charters are *inspeximuses*, or about 13.08%. Though this difference is meaningful with such large sample sizes, it does not suggest a surge of people looking only to have their old charters confirmed without seeking any new grants. David Carpenter's argument that much of this early business was driven by elite individuals desperate for patronage after years without permanent grants stands on much firmer ground. Out of 395 Charters given in this year, on my estimate 94 (including

²⁵⁶ These two were charter rolls 11.1 and 11.2 (C 53/18 and C 53/19).

inspeximuses) had either a bishop or a person of baronial rank as beneficiary.²⁵⁷ This means that about 23.80% of charter output in that year went to the upper echelons of society. For the rest of the reign, 583 out of 3318 went to bishops and barons, or about 17.57%. Interestingly, the early surge seems to be almost entirely attributable to bishops. Considering only secular barons, 43 charters went to them in year 11 and 353 thereafter, constituting very consistent percentages of 10.89% and 10.64% of the totals, respectively. Bishops, by contrast, had 51 charters in year 11 and 230 thereafter, a much wider swing from 12.91% to 6.93%. On these figures, Stephen Langton by expediting the early majority of Henry III clearly read and responded to the mood of his subordinates! That said, it would not do to allow this narrative to become too fixated on court machinations or those at the top of society. The clearest conclusion from these figures is that demand was strong in 1227 among all levels of society, or at least on behalf of everybody of sufficient status to receive a charter. *Inspeximuses* were sought at only slightly above the usual rate, and while barons and especially bishops were enthusiastically making hay now that the sun was shining, the vast glut of charter production is for the most part attributable to ‘normal’, first instance grants to a wide variety of individuals and religious institutions. Like those at the top of the pyramid, they too had gone too long without access to the powers of permanent grant that only a royal charter could provide.

The pent-up demand of 1227 had mostly been exhausted by the end of the regnal year in October, with the most brutal months for the chancery being the preceding February and March. In the years that followed, some of the most striking spikes in output came when powerful

²⁵⁷ In medieval England, the term ‘baron’ is usually used to describe the king’s tenants-in-chief, the highest stratum of landowners who controlled great estates and had political and military clout to go along with them. There is an element of subjectivity in deciding which lords were sufficiently powerful as to warrant inclusion in this class, unlike objectively-defined classes such as bishops. To determine who qualified as ‘baronial’ in rank, I have used the classifications given by C.A.F. Meekings in his personal notebooks, kindly supplied to me for consultation by David Crook.

individuals with deep links to the court and royal chancery arrived with reams of charter business to process all at once. Of course, on a smaller scale this was nothing unusual. Individuals and institutions frequently brought two or three items of charter business to the court, especially if the first of these was an intended *inspeximus* of a pre-existing grant. For example, the abbot and monks of St. Mary's, Holme Cultram received three charters in the form of an *inspeximus* and two original grants on 7 April 1227, before receiving another on 19 April.²⁵⁸ On a larger scale, well-connected but not top-level courtiers could sometimes receive half-a-dozen or more charters in one tranche. Peter de Rivallis, the ambitious kinsman of Peter des Roches, received eight charters between 28 June and 5 July in 1232.²⁵⁹ Ralph Fitz Nicholas, one of the king's stewards, also received eight charters on 4 May 1233, and his fellow steward Godfrey of Crowcombe received seven charters twelve days later.²⁶⁰ Impressive as such displays of personal access to the administrative machinery can be, they were dwarfed by the real titans of England, and their capacity to mobilise labour and get their business processed in bulk. Defining a 'bulk' transaction of this kind as twenty or more charters 'expedited' within a few days, this happened four times in King Henry's reign. The beneficiaries were the brothers Hugh and Jocelin of Wells, Bishops of Lincoln and Wells, respectively (May 1229); Hubert de Burgh, the justiciar and de facto chief minister, and his family (November-December 1228); and Ralph Neville, the Bishop of Chichester and lord chancellor, on two occasions (November 1228 and May 1233).²⁶¹

This is not merely a list of powerful men, but a list of powerful men intimately acquainted with how the royal chancery worked. Hubert de Burgh was the most powerful man in England below

²⁵⁸ *CChR 1226-57*, p. 32.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 163.

²⁶⁰ Ralph Fitz Nicholas: *CChR 1226-57*, pp. 180-1 Godfrey of Crowcombe: *CChR 1226-57* p.181.

²⁶¹ (All from *CChR 1226-57*) Bishops of Bath and Lincoln: p. 105. Hubert de Burgh: pp. 81-4. Ralph Neville: pp. 86-8, 177-9.

the king, and was a perennial presence at the royal court.²⁶² Ralph Neville was the lord chancellor and therefore the ultimate boss of all chancery clerks. If anyone had unfettered access to chancery time, it was he. Hugh and Jocelin of Wells had both been senior chancery clerks before becoming bishops, with Hugh one of the few top officials authorised to grant charters by his hand in the reign of King John.²⁶³ The number of scribes permanently retained by the royal chancery is a topic explored more fully in section two of this thesis, but these bulk periods of production do seem to indicate an office that did not have to sacrifice its quotidian commitments when exceptional challenges arose. For example, on 15 May 1229, two charters were granted to the burgesses of Derby and Ralph Neville, both enrolled in proper chronological sequence on the roll, even as twenty-four charters were being prepared for Hugh and Jocelin of Wells. This latter production sequence was so huge that it received its own addendum recording it in the charter roll 13 Henry III, where these particular membranes are tacked onto rest of the finished roll as a schedule. The dates given seem to be reliable, as the normal, day-to-day charter business and the ‘special’ bulk business was all dated at Fulham. The exact same pattern emerges for one of the bulk orders of Ralph Neville. Four ‘regular’ charters were dated 16 November 1228 (to Nicholas de Lettres, Marianus Archbishop of Cashel, and the Prior and Brethren of Maiden Bradley), which were then enrolled in sequence. After the point in the rolls where January 1229 had begun to be recorded, a tranche of eighteen charters for Ralph Neville was inserted. Again, this shows that those who drew up the charter roll were capable of responding to particular needs, and that the chancery could split itself into at least two parts, combining their results only later. Moreover, the fact that both these tranches

²⁶² Meekings’s tables show that de Burgh attested 53 charters.

²⁶³ See Duffus Hardy, *RCh.* p. xxxi. For an example of a charter given by Hugh of Wells, see *ibid.* p. 116. Jocelin and Hugh of Wells were fascinating characters, and I felt privileged to be able to complete my MA thesis on Hugh. For information on how the two pioneering administrator-bishops were shaped by their earlier careers, see N.C. Vincent, ‘Jocelin of Wells: The Making of a Bishop in the Reign of King John’, in *Jocelin of Wells* ed. R. Dunning, (Woodbridge, 2010), pp.9-33, and the introduction to D.M. Smith, *The Acta of Hugh of Wells, Bishop of Lincoln 1209-1235* (Lincoln, 2000).

of charters had to be added to the rolls later than the normal sequence suggests that producing so many charters took time, confirming the suggestion expressed by David Carpenter and Adam Chambers that the date of a charter reflects the moment of its final authorisation and not of its sealing.²⁶⁴

The bulk order for Hubert de Burgh also follows a similar pattern, with twenty-one charters enrolled out of chronological sequence, but with two important differences. The first is that, rather than being added to the end or middle of the roll as the last two examples were, this tranche was inserted at the start of the roll. This made a good deal of sense, as there would have been a huge chronological gap of eleven months if the same material were inserted at the end of the roll. The other big difference is that the same date was not given for all these charters, even though their being grouped together in the roll and not spread among the other entries shows that they were treated as a singular documentary unit. Most are dated 28 November or 10 December, with a few other isolated charters from the same basic order dated over a two-month period. Hubert de Burgh does seem to have absorbed the chancery's full charter-writing resources on these two dates, as no other charters are dated on either day. The final example of bulk charter creation is particularly interesting, as it saw multiple beneficiaries served. On 4 May 1233, Ralph Neville had twenty-three charters granted to him, but that was not all. On the same day, five charters were granted to Amaury de Craon (the father-in-law of the king's half-sister) and the previously mentioned eight charters to Ralph Fitz Nicholas. Though no one else received more than two charters on that day, the list of those who received one or two is dominated by the most prominent members of the royal court. These included Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester, Hugh de Neville, the chief forester and cousin of Ralph, and Stephen of

²⁶⁴ Carpenter, 'The English Royal Chancery in the Thirteenth Century', p. 57. Chambers, *Aspects of Chancery Procedure*, p. 118.

Seagrave, who had by now been promoted to chief justiciar.²⁶⁵ Though the weaknesses in the regime of Hubert de Burgh were becoming obvious by this point, he would not fall until several months later. Instead of reflecting upheavals at court, it seems likely that 4 May 1232 was simply a day set aside for processing the business of those with intimate connections to the royal court, many of whom took full advantage of the opportunity.

If there were times when the tail of administration could wag the dog of politics, they were not frequent. Looking at the chart of monthly production as printed above, it is interesting to observe how few months of spiking output can be explained purely by inference from the identities of the beneficiaries. The royal chancery may have been ahead of its time as a writing office with strong institutional identity and a budding sense of national service rather than purely personal obedience to the King, but such buds would take centuries fully to flower. This was an elite society based on intimate personal connections between elite individuals and their complex orbits of subordinates and hangers-on, and it should not be forgotten that royal charters were ‘flagship’ documents of fundamental interest to relatively few individuals and institutions. As such, it is the political rather than administrative history of King Henry III’s reign that most usefully explains why some months in the production chart were so much busier than others. For example, twenty-seven charters were granted in December 1263 (year 48 of the reign). In this month, King Henry and his son the Lord Edward had recently escaped from the control of Simon de Montfort and were attempting to rally loyalists to their cause. At the very beginning of the month, the king attempted to enter Dover Castle, but was rebuffed by the Montfortian garrison. An attempt to intercept de Montfort at Southwark failed, leading the king to spend the rest of the month at Windsor treating with envoys from the King of France, who

²⁶⁵ *CChR 1226-57*, p. 181.

would act as arbitrator between the rival factions in the following month. The combination of the king having recently regained control of the great seal, conscious efforts at ingratiation by Henry and his eldest son, and their long stay in one place combined to make for a fruitful month of patronage-bestowal.²⁶⁶ Knights did particularly well out of this period at Dover and Windsor, receiving rights to free warren and markets en masse.²⁶⁷ Such were the documentary needs of a time when the fealty of every knight counted.

As the example of Henry and Edward drumming-up the support of knights at Windsor demonstrates, charter production was at its most hectic when elite groups were summoned to the king's presence as a large group. This could also occur on a grand scale. In August 1257 (year 41 of the reign), for example, the king summoned his tenants-in-chief and a large army to muster at Chester, which would be the staging post for a military campaign to shore up the deteriorating situation in Wales.²⁶⁸ He would there grant a massive thirty-six charters with all but four of these dated between 12 and 15 September. Though there were two religious institutions granted charters in this period, the overwhelming majority of beneficiaries at Chester were connected to the forthcoming campaign, and thus found themselves rewarded for their trouble.²⁶⁹ But it was not just barons and knights who could expect to profit from a royal summons. In July 1231 (year 15 of the reign), the king was preparing to attack Wales, just as he would twenty-six years later. Before doing so, he wished to ensure the excommunication of

²⁶⁶ Carpenter *Henry III, 1258-72*, vol. ii., pp. 289-90

²⁶⁷ This was the period when King Henry, and Lord Edward in particular, were trying to keep loyalist knights out of the clutches of Simon de Montfort and woo back those already on the other side. One such convert was John de Vaux, who received two charters in late December. John de Gray was another prominent knight receiving charters at this time, as were Nicholas de Sancto Mauro, William de Wasteneys, and Alan de la Zouche.

²⁶⁸ This campaign, as well as the summons that preceded it, were written about by Matthew Paris. See *CM Vol. vi*, pp. 372-6.

²⁶⁹ Prominent beneficiaries include Ralph Bassett, lord of Drayton; Hugh de Vere, earl of Oxford; and Edmund de Lacy, earl of Lincoln.

Prince Llewellyn, summoning a meeting of bishops at Oxford.²⁷⁰ Within a period of a week, charters were given to the bishops of Chichester, Bath and Wells, Norwich, Carlisle, Lincoln and Winchester.²⁷¹ Again, this group of people, from whom Henry needed support and who were gathered in his presence, could expect the resources of his chancery to be at their disposal for any charter business they may have had outstanding.

The final pattern revealed by the data shown above is the unusually heavy charter production recorded just before all three of King Henry III's expeditions to France. In 1230, King Henry invaded France to support the insurrection of the Duke of Brittany. In 1242 he did likewise to support his Lusignan kinsmen in Poitou, and in 1253 he landed in Gascony to stabilise the province against insurrection. Unlike the Angevin 'empire' of Henry II, Henry III's dominion was not a truly integrated transmarine empire, and these departures from the shores of Britain required administrative improvisation for the royal government to work. While the day-to-day chancery operations of the latter two expeditions are dealt with in the next subsection, for the present let our focus remain on preparations for the king's embarkations. In 1230, the decision to leave for France was taken on 7 February, with the final embarkation date set for 1 May.²⁷² The intervening month of April was extremely busy, with fifty-two charters given, some at Reading but most at Portsmouth. For the next expedition, the summons to the barons were dispatched on 14 December 1241, for final embarkation on 9 May.²⁷³ Again, the month directly preceding departure was busy, though less so at twenty-two charters. This was set, however, not in the context of the busy early years of the reign, but in the chancery's relatively charter-

²⁷⁰ R.F. Treharne, *The Baronial Plan of Reform, 1258-63* (Manchester, 1932) pp. 324-5, Carpenter *Henry III* vol. i, 1207-58, p. 101

²⁷¹ *CChR 1226-1257*, pp. 135-8.

²⁷² Carpenter, *Henry III*, 1207-58, i, pp.84-6.

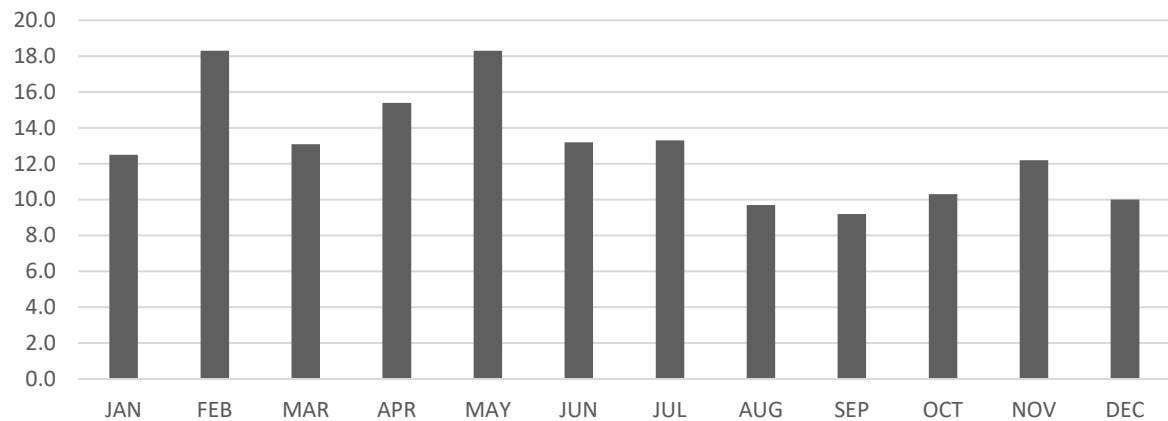
²⁷³ *Ibid*, pp. 245-255.

light middle years. No single month had reached double digits of charters produced for six years previously.

Finally, on 25 May 1253 King Henry formally told the Gascons he was coming to support them, with embarkation set for 6 August.²⁷⁴ The position of the English in Gascony, headed by Simon de Montfort before his rebellion, had been deteriorating for some time, making it a strong likelihood that Henry would have to oversee the territory in person. The fact that Henry had already been physically close to many of his top feudal underlings for the Great Parliament of May 1253, as well as his abortive crusade preparations earlier in the year, may help explain why the chancery granted twenty-seven charters in May, rather than June as might be expected given that the announcement followed later in the month. This capped off several months of heavy production, which then came to a grinding halt as the king was stuck waiting for favourable weather to make the crossing, with the great seal no longer in his custody. Other than the messiness of this 1253 departure, in which there was heavy charter production a few weeks early, it is clear that rises in charter production generally preceded royal sailings. Why should this be? Much depends on the beneficiaries. If a religious institution were seeking a charter, or some notable but non-military individual, then it seems likely that the king was being 'caught' before a period of indeterminate unavailability. If the recipient was meeting the king as part of the general summons, he may have simply been transacting his official business while he was in the right place to do so. On the other hand, for many these expeditions were a nuisance with little prospect of concrete reward for those who set sail, so it seems entirely sensible that they should have sought to extract grants from the king by way of thanks for their trouble.

²⁷⁴ Ibid, pp. 568-70.

Table 3: Average Number of Charters Recorded per Month on the Charter Rolls of King Henry III

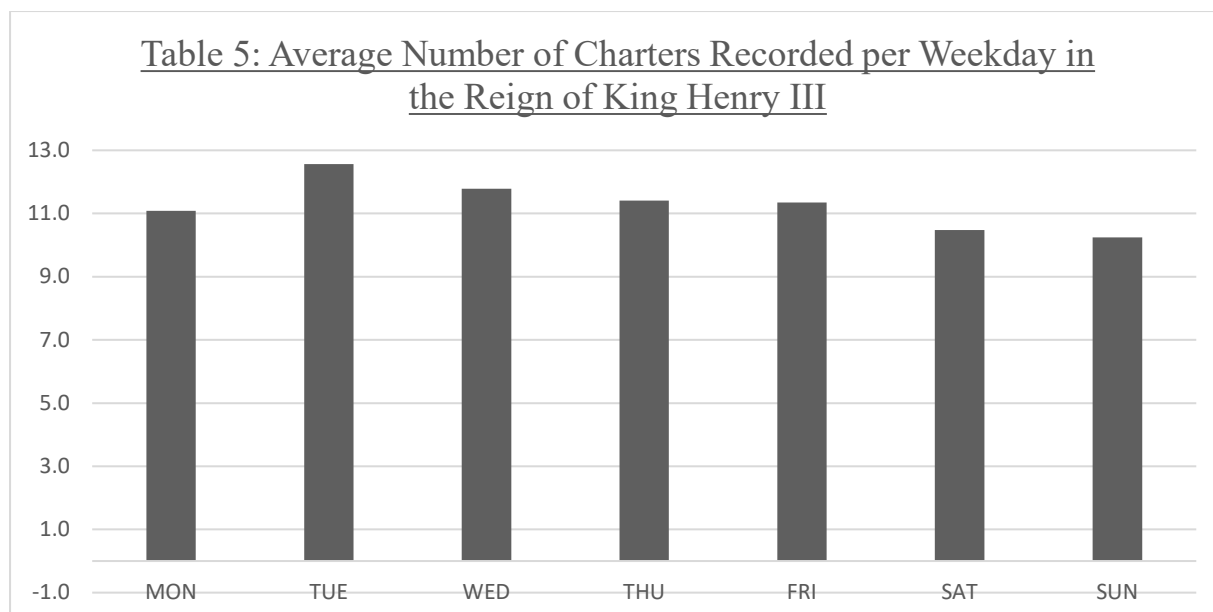


Throughout the reign, the Henrician chancery managed a vast documentary output all the year round, with no month that can definitively be defined as a clerks' vacation. The most common months for dating were February and May (431 and 429 charters, respectively), though February's figures are inflated by the abnormal number of charters produced in the first year of Henry's majority. The least hectic months were September and August (217 and 227 charters). This means that the average charter output for the month of May was 18.3, while the month of September was approximately half that at 9.2. Some caution must be exercised here: August, September and October represent the end of the regnal year, which commenced for Henry III on 28th October. These months, which collectively supplied fewer charters than those of high-summer and mid-winter, seem to have suffered the greatest likelihood of damage or loss due to their positioning on the charter roll. Where the whole charter roll seems to have survived undamaged (years 11-17, for instance) August-October remains the slower part of the year, but on nothing like the 2:1 ratio suggested by the overall averages. 57 charters recorded on the roll are of unknown date, and this can sometimes distort the overall data set. On the roll for the 34th year of King Henry's reign (1249-50), for instance, the 7 undated charters make up a full third of the 21 surviving entries for that year. Physical location on the roll can be some help here: a date-less charter situated between two charters of the same date may very well

share that date. Sadly, this approach has problems of its own. Charters could be very haphazardly written into the roll, especially in the turbulent periods which were already more likely to see mutilation and partial record loss. In such cases, accurate dating becomes almost impossible without the survival of the original record.

Table 4: Dating Weekday of Charters Found on the Charter Rolls of Henry III

YEAR	REGNAL	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN	---	TOTAL:
1226-27	11	51	71	56	64	66	39	35	14	396
1227-28	12	14	25	8	16	14	23	7	8	115
1228-29	13	18	51	17	50	21	12	23	0	192
1229-30	14	18	25	15	23	11	24	13	3	132
1230-31	15	22	17	8	16	9	12	24	1	109
1231-32	16	27	21	25	11	36	15	10	1	146
1232-33	17	17	13	55	15	10	7	10	0	127
1233-34	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1234-35	19	23	24	17	12	32	13	13	1	135
1235-36	20	9	8	9	11	9	4	7	5	62
1236-37	21	5	13	11	9	5	4	9	0	56
1237-38	22	3	2	0	1	0	2	3	6	17
1238-39	23	9	9	9	10	9	9	10	1	66
1239-40	24	3	4	3	4	12	4	8	1	39
1240-41	25	7	6	8	3	10	5	3	0	42
1241-42	26	9	13	4	4	2	6	7	0	45
1242-43	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1243-44	28	5	1	7	2	7	11	8	4	45
1244-45	29	6	3	13	6	9	11	6	0	54
1245-46	30	12	11	12	7	5	17	14	2	80
1246-47	31	10	15	16	7	12	17	12	2	91
1247-48	32	12	14	16	10	8	10	9	2	81
1248-49	33	8	8	12	7	12	6	13	2	68
1249-50	34	1	2	4	1	2	4	0	7	21
1250-51	35	17	17	19	18	17	26	22	0	136
1251-52	36	24	24	25	31	25	27	36	0	192
1252-53	37	22	41	19	19	23	23	33	7	187
1253-54	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1254-55	39	8	7	10	16	11	11	6	0	69
1255-56	40	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1256-57	41	23	19	21	26	18	30	21	0	158
1257-58	42	9	8	8	6	17	9	2	1	60
1258-59	43	6	6	8	3	9	2	7	0	41
1259-60	44	8	7	6	6	7	4	5	1	44
1260-61	45	8	5	6	1	4	7	5	0	36
1261-62	46	6	1	4	7	2	8	6	0	34
1262-63	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1263-64	48	10	1	13	2	6	6	11	1	50
1264-65	49	7	5	5	5	15	4	7	3	51
1265-66	50	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
1266-67	51	13	26	14	24	9	16	12	3	117
1267-68	52	18	11	12	13	9	9	13	5	90
1268-69	53	9	8	6	9	4	6	7	0	49
1269-70	54	12	14	13	22	17	18	15	1	112
1270-71	55	14	8	15	14	12	15	13	1	92
1271-72	56	7	14	13	13	16	6	5	0	74
TOTAL:		510	578	542	525	522	482	471	83	3713
AVERAGE:		11.1	12.6	11.8	11.4	11.3	10.5	10.2	1.8	



The problem of survival bias ought not to apply to the days of the week, since these should be equally spread out throughout the year. My findings indicate that the chancery was truly a seven-days-a-week institution, with charter dating spread surprisingly equally across all the days of the week. Somewhat fewer charters were produced on Saturdays and Sundays throughout the reign: 482 and 471, respectively. But the reductions here are nothing like the sort of evidence that we might expect in a reign in which devotion to the Virgin Mary (with Saturday her particular day for commemoration) or Christ (chief focus of the Sabbath) loomed so significant. The most common weekday for dating was Tuesday, with 578 charters, followed by Wednesday at 542, Thursday at 526, Friday at 523 and Monday at 510. 83 Charters have no readable date. In some ways, this is a surprising distribution. There is a small but appreciable difference in charters dated on weekdays and ‘weekends’, but not so large a difference as to suggest that these days were habitually taken as holidays by the writing staff. It might also be expected that Sunday, the sabbath, would have been by far the least-worked day at court, but it has barely fewer charters than Saturday. Perhaps the king or the chancellor (when there was one) preferred (or was free) to spend rather fewer hours hearing petitions on Saturdays or Sundays than they did during the week, but this without shirking business entirely. Whatever else it was, this was not a court or an office given to rigid sabbatarianism.

Rightly or wrongly, the Middle Ages have always been popularly associated with the idea of extensive or indeed excessive ‘holidaying’. This would have been undoubtedly true were we merely to count the number of ‘holy’ or saint’s days, but the observance of such days was variable, based on the importance of the work and the particular feast.²⁷⁵ Barbara Harvey found that Henry III could be a hard taskmaster where the Palace of Westminster construction workers were concerned, but could also attempt to be fair. The holiday periods for such workers alternated between the paid and the unpaid; they did not work on Sundays, and they were paid if the king insisted they work on the feast days of particular saints.²⁷⁶ There is no way of knowing whether Henry’s clerks were paid a special rate for working on feast days, but work they did. As well as the 471 charters that were dated on the sabbath, there are also charters dated on prominent feast-days, including Christmas Day in 1230, 1243, 1245, 1247 and 1252.²⁷⁷ Likewise, there is a charter dated on Easter Sunday (20 April) 1240, as well as charters dated at Michaelmas 1229, 1230, and 1272²⁷⁸. These entries must be set in the context of a 56-year reign: most feast-days seem to have been respected, most of the time, and this suggests that the dates of the charters do indeed match the dates on which they were authorised, rather than the dates on which they were sealed. However, there are occasionally jumps in date-place clauses that seem implausible given the supposed travel-time allowed. On 16 May 1233, for instance, three charters were dated at Westminster, before a further four dated at Woodstock (all charters with Godfrey de Crowcombe as beneficiary). Again, though somewhat more plausibly, on 4 May 1240, charters were dated at Woodstock and Windsor (this time for

²⁷⁵For more information on this very complex subject, see C. R. Cheney, 'Rules for the Observance of Feast Days in Medieval England', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 34 (1961), pp. 117-147, repr. in C. R. Cheney, *The English Church and its Laws 12th-14th Century* (London, 1982), and B. Harvey, 'Work and Festa Ferianda', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 23 (1972), pp. 289-308.

²⁷⁶ Ibid, 303.

²⁷⁷ Christmas Day charters: *CChR* 1226-57, pp. 127, 276, 289, 328, 418.

²⁷⁸ Easter charter: *CChR* 1226-57 p. 252. Michaelmas charters: *CChR* 1226-57 pp. 99, 125; *CChR* 1257-1300, p. 184.

different beneficiaries).²⁷⁹ In these instances, it seems either that the dates recorded on the charters could be false, or that the court was exceptionally fastidious in attending to charter business after long journeys.

2.4 Charter Production in Gascony: Evidence from the Patent Rolls

King Henry III made many trips to France over the course of his reign, but only three of these involved lengthy stays or the muster of an army. The first, from 30 April to 30 October 1230, was intended to build a coalition of southern-French nobles to help recover Poitou.²⁸⁰ The campaign was a costly failure, with the forces of Henry III and Louis IX facing off against each other for weeks without either side giving battle.²⁸¹ Though this was surely not much comfort to Henry at the time, any failures in mustering a larger army or convincing more French nobles to join the cause cannot be attributed to administrative incompetence. With English royal government being so dependent on access to the king and his court, a sensible system was adopted to spread administrative resources as widely as possible. The king took the great seal with him to France; those clerks of the chancery left in England used the exchequer seal, and the exchequer used the justiciar's seal.²⁸² The patent roll for 14 Henry III makes clear that a special roll was made in France and then added to the main roll in England, but no such arrangements seem to apply to the charter roll, which was continued regardless.²⁸³ That said, it seems fair to guess that it was not brought to France. All sixteen charter entries recording charters written abroad were written on two schedules, compiled on campaign then brought

²⁷⁹ Charter 1: *CChR 1226-57*, p. 181. Charter 2: *CChR 1226-57* p. 252.

²⁸⁰ The prelude, aftermath and fallout from this campaign are discussed at length in Carpenter *Henry III, 1207-58*, i, pp. 77-98.

²⁸¹ Carpenter *Henry III, 1207-58*, i, p. 88.

²⁸² This information was revealed in letters patent dated 28 April 1230: *PR 1225-32*, p. 339, with detailed explanation in Chambers, p. 363.

²⁸³ *PR 1225-32*, p. 368.

home to be sewn into the main series.²⁸⁴ Data from these entries are presented in the graphs below, with a full table available in the appendices:

Table 6: Calendar Month, Overseas Charters
Recorded on the Charter Roll, 1229-30

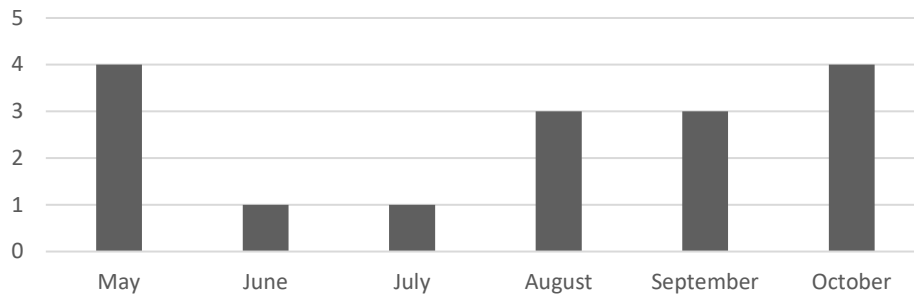


Table 7: Days of Week, Overseas Charters
Recorded on the Charter Roll, 1229-30

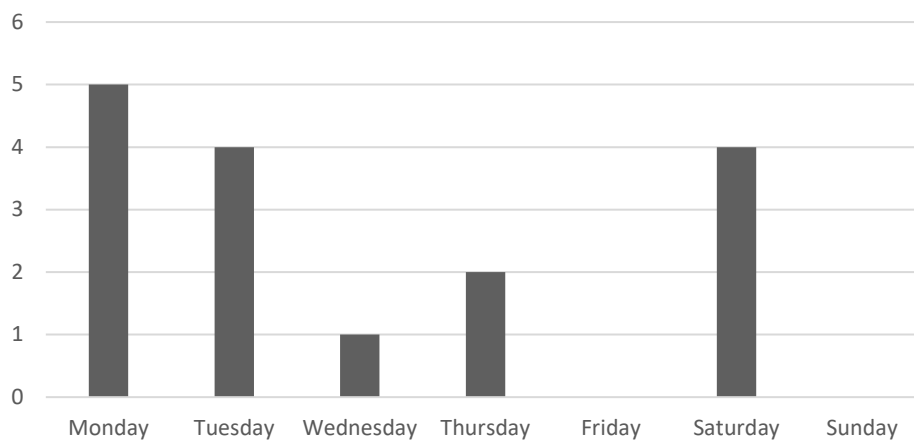
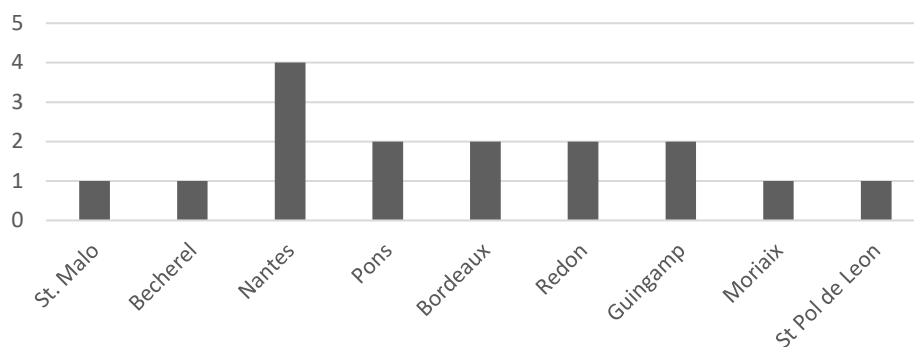


Table 8: Places of Dating, Overseas Charters
Recorded on the Charter Roll, 1229-30



²⁸⁴ *CChR 1226-57*, pp. 124-5.

As we have seen previously, a rush of petitioners came to the royal court to conclude their charter business before the army left Portsmouth. We can see this from the beneficiaries listed. Apart from the representative of the burgesses of Dunwich, who either made the journey from East Anglia to Saint-Malo for a charter of liberties or were simply travelling with the army, every other beneficiary was either local or attached to the royal party.²⁸⁵ These few entries supply the only post-Bouvines echoes in the charter rolls of the mixed Anglo-French flavour of Henry's ancestors' cross-Channel domain. Some beneficiaries were based in France, such as Galo, a citizen of Nantes, or the burgesses of Saint-Emilion.²⁸⁶ Others were being compensated for their lost lands in France, like Roger de la Zouche or Robert de Bruera.²⁸⁷ There were certainly no instances of great magnates arriving with a stack of petitions and leaving with fifteen or so new charters. On the contrary, this was a pared down chancery, and at least as far as charters were concerned, it was doing the bare minimum. As far as patterns of work can be deduced from so small a sample, 'slow but steady' seems to have been the *modus operandi*. King Henry's army stayed for three weeks at Nantes, so it is unsurprising that more charters were dated there than anywhere else. The rest of the campaign was something of a procession, with a party-like atmosphere for those who could afford it, and the king bestowing charters wherever he went.²⁸⁸

Apart from his stay at Nantes, no more than two charters were produced at any single location. Something similar is revealed by looking at the months of issue. Despite a lull in which just one charter was given in June and one more in July, the king gave three or four charters in all other months he was on campaign. Days of the week also suggest an interesting story, as they seem to reflect a routine. The sample of charters may be small, but the expedition lasted for six

²⁸⁵ *CChR* 1226-57, p. 124.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 124-5.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.* p. 125.

²⁸⁸ F.M. Powicke, *The Thirteenth Century, 1216-1307* (Oxford, 1953), p. 95

months, or twenty-four weeks, ample time for patterns of working practice to be revealed. Indeed, such patterns are clear: over eighty percent of all charters from the 1230 expedition were dated on a Monday, Tuesday, or Saturday, perhaps indicating that these were the days that the court regularly met to transact such business. Just three charters in total were dated on a Wednesday or Thursday, and none was dated on a Friday or Sunday. The clerks that the king brought with him may have been active throughout the months of this expedition, but it seems there was no need for them to convene every day, at least if we rely here on the charter evidence.

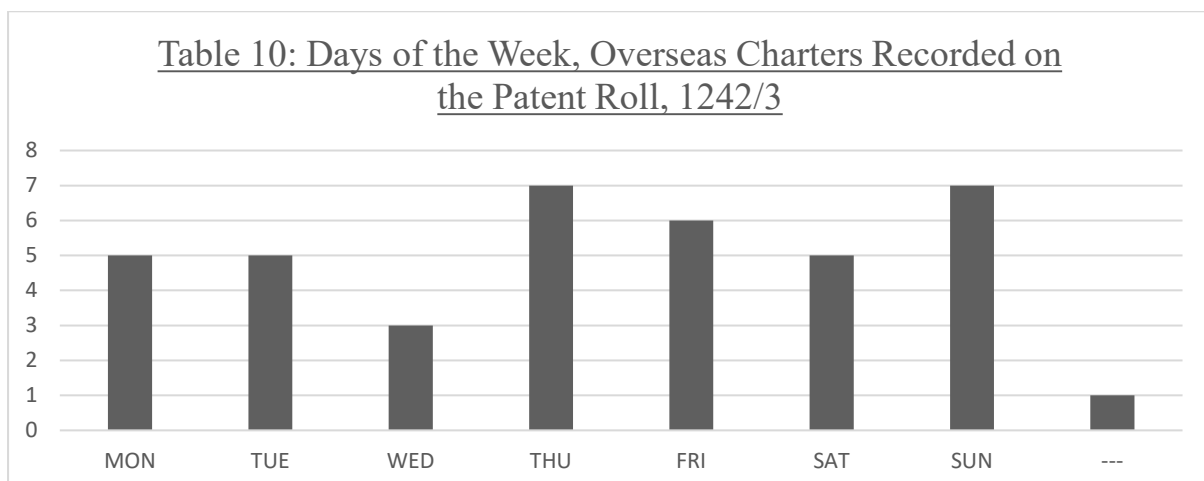
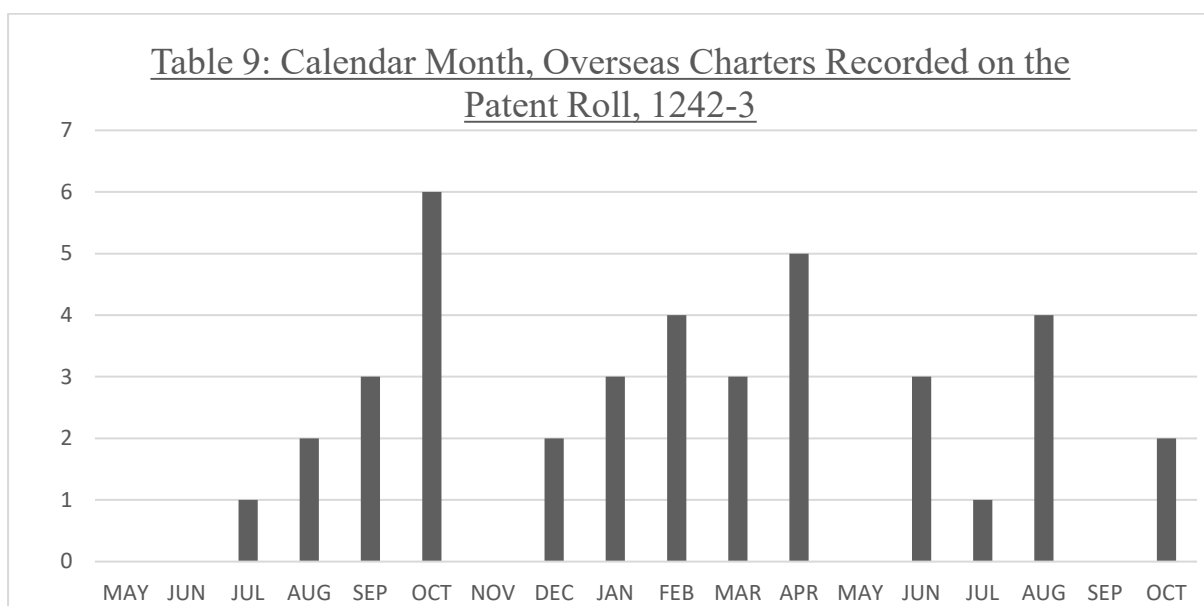
It would be twelve years after the 1230 expedition before King Henry was again moved to campaign in France. Hugh de Lusignan, the king's step-father, was in open rebellion against King Louis. As well as defending the interests of his mother's family, it may have seemed that there would never be a better time to recapture the lost Anglo-Norman lands.²⁸⁹ Henry left England in May 1242, not to return until September 1243. Again, his campaign was a failure. Henry's allies deserted him when it mattered most; his army was too small to inflict much damage, and for the first time the King tasted defeat in battle. The last five months of the expedition were spent, not at war, but touring through or directly ruling Gascony, to shore up Henry's dwindling patrimony in France.²⁹⁰ Royal administration during this lengthy period of absence was handled on similar lines to 1232, but with important differences. As for that earlier campaign, the great seal accompanied the king across the sea, with the rump chancery left in England sealing their writs with the exchequer seal. Unlike previously, however, exchequer writs were not to be authenticated with the privy seal of the justiciar, but with that of the king.²⁹¹

²⁸⁹ For the Saintonge War explained from Louis's perspective, see: J. Richard, *Saint Louis, roi d'une France féodale, soutien de la Terre Sainte* (Paris, 1983), trans. and abridged S. Lloyd, *Saint Louis: Crusader King of France* (1992), pp. 57-61. For the same conflict from Henry's perspective, in much more detail, see Carpenter, *Henry III, 1207-58*, i. pp. 255-272. For the enthusiasm of Henry, see Powicke, *The Thirteenth Century*, p. 102.

²⁹⁰ Carpenter, *Henry III, 1207-58*, i., p. 270.

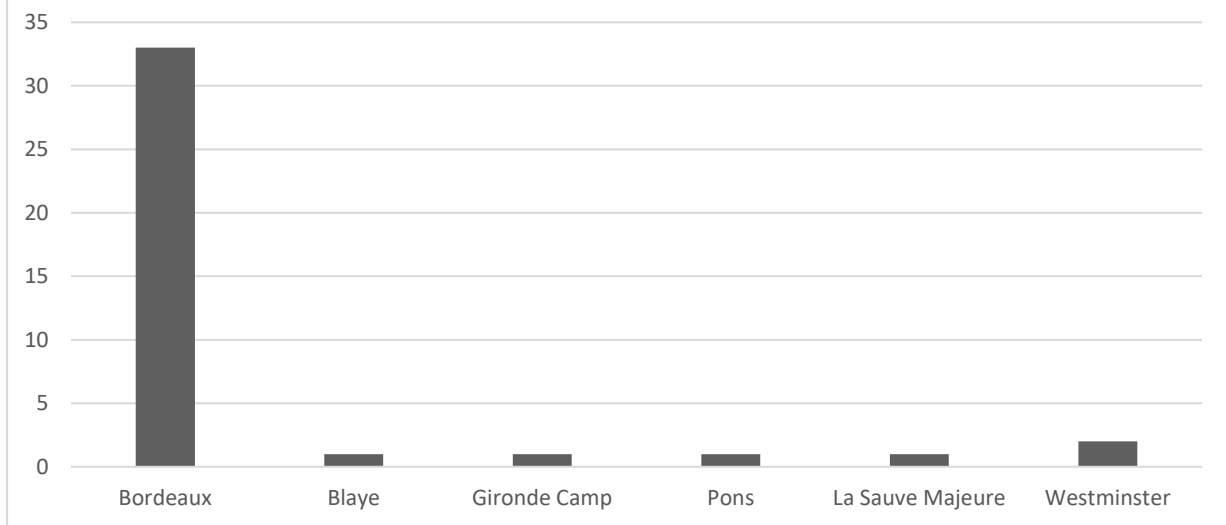
²⁹¹ *CPR, 1232-47*, p. 290, referenced in Tout, *Chapters*, vol. i, p. 291.

As far as charters were concerned, the most noticeable difference with 1230 is that they were not enrolled on the charter roll at all, but on the patent roll. This was presumably done for reasons of simplicity. Rather than sew schedules into existing rolls, all letters issued under the great seal in France was simply turned into a patent roll once the royal party had returned to England.²⁹² For this reason, there is no charter roll for year 27 of Henry III's reign: not because it was lost, but because it was never created. Data from these entries are presented in the graphs below, with a full table available amongst the appendices:



²⁹² New roll commences *CPR 1232-47*, p. 298.

Table 11: Places of Dating, Overseas Charters Recorded on the Patent Roll, 1242/3



Looking at the distribution of beneficiaries, places, months, and days of dating from the charters of this 1242-3 expedition, it is immediately clear that this was a very different campaign from that of 1230. In the earlier campaign, the army had kept moving, except for a few weeks when waiting for Louis IX to attack Nantes. In the 1242 campaign, the overwhelming majority (just under 85%) of Henry III's documentary output was dated at Bordeaux. This was not simply an administrative convenience to leave the document-writing at basecamp. The king really did remain at Bordeaux for ten of the fourteen months that he was in France.²⁹³ By contrast to the 1230 campaign, Henry replicated his English style of Westminster-centred government in France. Naturally, the granting of charters was not the king's foremost concern when he was commanding the battle of Taillebourg, so these charter-bestowing excursions instead represent the king's efforts to ingratiate himself with his Burgundian subjects. These stays were not long – he gave no more than one charter at each place he visited, and there were many such places (for example, Bazas, St-Sever, Dax, and Bayonne) where he gave no charters at all.²⁹⁴ Whether Henry helped or hindered his military

²⁹³ Carpenter, *Henry III, 1207-58*, i., p. 266.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 270.

and diplomatic efforts by remaining in Bordeaux is a question for more others to answer, but it probably had a beneficial impact on his administration. The clerks that were with the king did not produce any charters until July, over a month after landfall was made, which means that they produced only thirty-seven charters over the course of the next twelve months.

With the king mostly in one place, the court was more accessible than it had been in 1230. As before, courtiers who were with the royal entourage received their grants as normal. Examples here include Matthew Bezill, the steward of the queen's household, John of Laxton, a future keeper of the royal seal, and Bartholomew Pecche, one of the household knights.²⁹⁵ Also as before, individuals and institutions from Gascony were able to receive charters that would otherwise never have been issued. Examples include Edeline, the wife of Elias de Beynac; Beatrice, Countess of Provence; and the hospital of St. James, Bordeaux.²⁹⁶ Again in contrast to 1230, and perhaps due to the king's remaining static in a known and relatively accessible location, more English religious institutions were able to send their representatives to secure charters. Examples include the abbeys of Netley, Glastonbury, and Chertsey.²⁹⁷ One last observation regarding the location of charters enrolled for the 1242-3 expedition: with no charter roll for scribes to resume after returning from France, two charters were enrolled on the patent roll *after* the court's return to England. Naturally a new charter roll, 28 Henry III, was commenced from October 1243.

With the royal court mostly in Bordeaux, it might be supposed that King Henry's charter scribes would be able to achieve even more consistent monthly and daily outputs than had done in

²⁹⁵ Matthew Bezill: *CPR, 1237-44*, p. 354. John Lexington: *Ibid* p. 359. Bartholomew Pecche: *Ibid*, p. 369.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid*. p. 363, p.364, p. 341.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid*. p. 333, p. 370, p. 380.

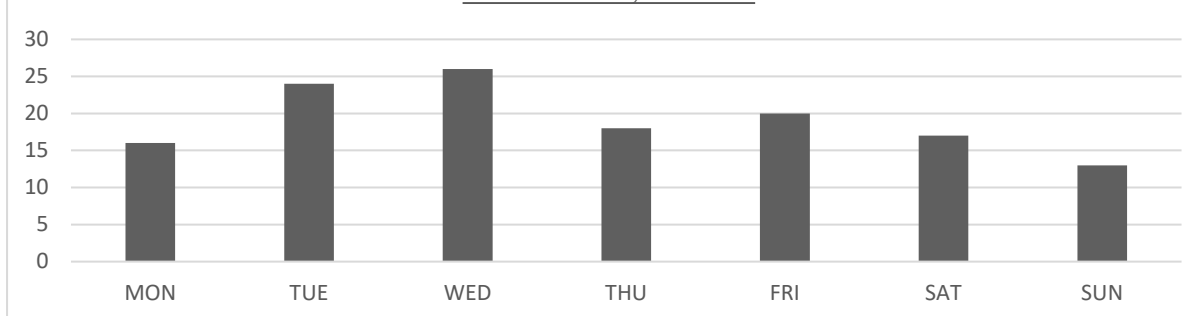
1230, when they were on the move. Strangely, the opposite seems to have been the case. Even making allowances for May-June 1242 as the months of arrival, and for September 1243 as the month of departure, there were two more months of no charter output whatsoever (November 1242 and May 1243) than had been the case a decade earlier. The king's clerks were able to produce between one and six charters for each remaining month of the expedition, with no obvious logic underpinning the peaks and troughs. The same chaotic pattern is in evidence for days of the week. Here, there were no clear days of work versus days of rest. The least busy day was Wednesday, and Sunday was the joint busiest! It seems, based on this data, that the king's scribes who were with him in France were fitting their charter business around the rest of their itinerary, perhaps seeing petitioners when gaps opened in the schedule, rather than on pre-planned days. Staying at Bordeaux may have helped reduce chaos, but a certain baseline of chaos must be expected when waging an expeditionary war, far from the comforts of home.

Though the chancery clerks who accompanied the king held their end up reasonably well in both 1230 and 1242, there must have been a general consciousness among the king's bureaucrats that they would have to manage better if their master were not once again to be humiliated overseas. They got the chance to do just that in 1253, when King Henry and his court set out on an expedition to quell a rebellion in Gascony, and to shore up the province against the threat of invasion from King Alfonso X of Castile.²⁹⁸ Henry was largely successful in these objectives, for a change, and much of the credit for this can be assigned to the royal logistical operation. By his officials learning from the experience of 1242, Bordeaux was again made the centre of the king's operations, but as a base-camp rather than as royal capital. Though

²⁹⁸ For an account of Henry III's military Gascon campaign, see Carpenter, *Henry III, 1207-1258*, i, pp. 568-90. For a more in-depth analysis of the Angevin administration in Gascony after the revolt was quelled and into the reign of Edward I, see J.P. Trabut-Cussac, *L'administration anglaise en Gascogne sous Henry III et Édouard I de 1254 à 1307* (Geneva, 1972).

the king himself did not spend much time there, Bordeaux was the place where goods, treasure, prisoners, and cloth were stored.²⁹⁹ Innovatively, this massive logistical effort was led by clerks of the wardrobe department, who had spent years acting as managers of the king's personal finances and procurers of physical comforts. Peter Chaceporc, a Poitevin administrator and long-standing wardrobe clerk, ably led the operation.³⁰⁰ That said, though the 1253-4 campaign represented something of a coming-of-age for the wardrobe as a royal department, there were also lessons learned from previous campaigns, within the chancery machine. This time, the king appointed the queen as his regent and left the great seal in her care, but sealed up, under his own privy seal, with instructions that it was to remain that way until his return.³⁰¹ As before, the exchequer seal was to be used in lieu of the great seal at home, but this time Henry took a special new seal with him to Gascony, which he used for precisely the same tasks as might otherwise have been performed by the great seal.³⁰² Also, and as in 1242, no charter roll was produced for the year 38 of the king's reign – the system of using the roll produced in Gascony as a combined patent and charter roll was evidently felt to have been a success.

Table 12: Day of Week, Gascon Charters Recorded on the Patent Roll, 1253-4



²⁹⁹ For the role of Bordeaux, see Carpenter, *Henry III, 1207-58*, i., p. 571. For a detailed analysis of the wardrobe's role in the Gascon campaign, see Tout, *Charters*, i, pp. 263-277.

³⁰⁰ He was also the beneficiary of at least two royal charters, and witness to a further 63. See R.C. Stacey, 'Peter Chaceporc', <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/5009>.

³⁰¹ All these processes are laid out in Tout, *Charters*, vol. i., p. 292. The original documentary authority can be found at *CPR, 1247-58*, p. 383.

³⁰² Ibid.

Table 13: Places of Dating, Gascon Charters Recorded on the Patent Roll, 1253-4

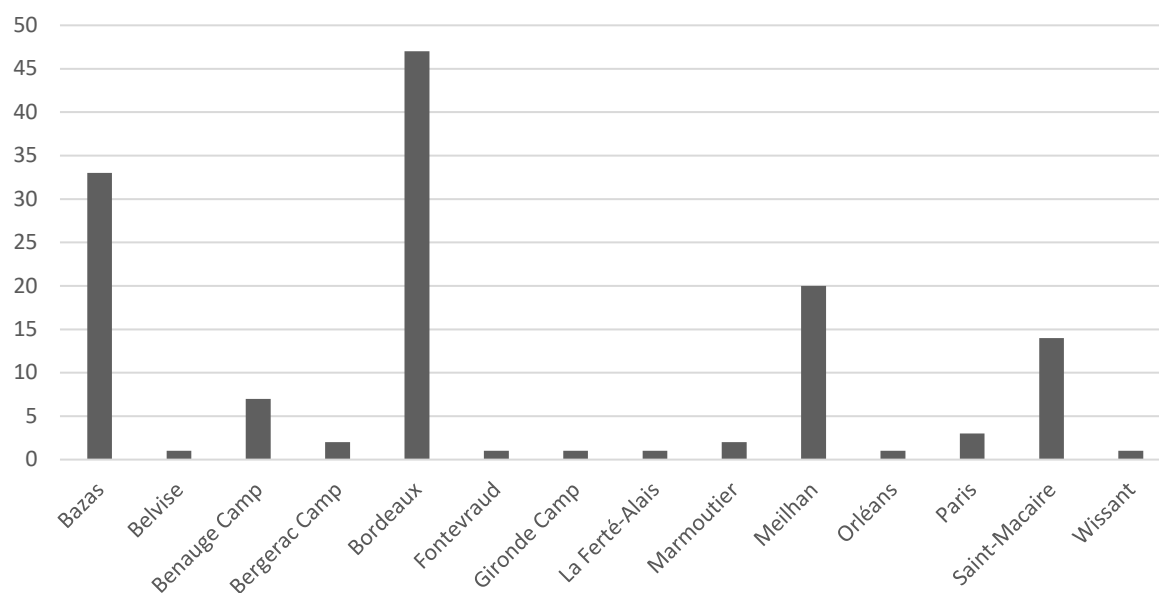
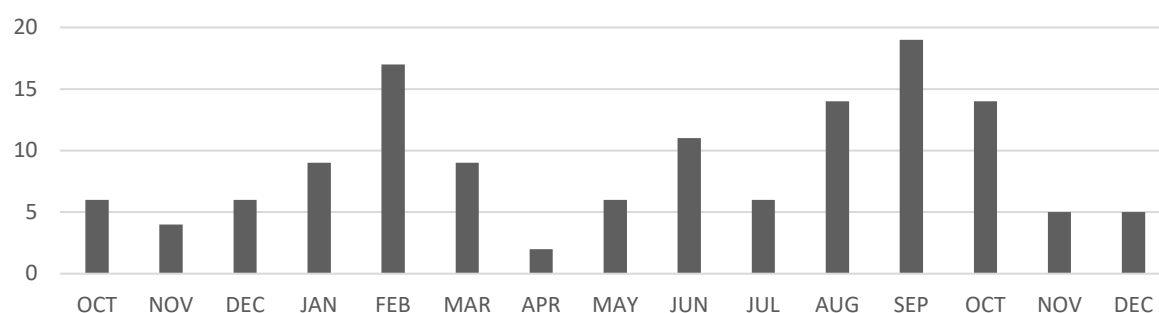


Table 14: Calendar Month, Gascon Charters Recorded on the Patent Roll, 1253-4



If the 1230 campaign had reflected an army on the move and 1242-3 an army stuck in one place, the 1253-4 expedition must be characterised as an army with a clear base-camp, three other important locations at which to spend time, and a series of smaller operational centres where only a limited time was spent. Bordeaux was, as well as the centre of wardrobe logistical operations, apparently also the nucleus of charter production. Forty-seven of the 133 charters produced during this expedition were dated from there, or a little over a third. Other locations that were prominent in the military operations were correspondingly sites of a great deal of charter production. Bazas and Meilhan were two important regional centres within Gascony under the lordship of the rebel lord Amaneus d'Albret, the former of which fell to Henry's

forces early in the campaign.³⁰³ The importance of these places was reflected in the fact that the chancery again produced thirty-three and twenty charters in each, respectively. Saint-Macaire was the site of another notable military success for the Henrician forces, and was the only other place at which a double-digit number of charters was produced.³⁰⁴ Overall, 114 out of 134 charters were produced from these four locations during the expedition, or about 85%. Most of the remaining locations reflect the shape of Henry's military campaign. Nine charters, for instance, were given at army camps. The final charters of this final, long absence of Henry III from English soil illustrate his detour from returning home to go on pilgrimage. While so doing, he was entertained by Louis IX at both Orléans and Paris.³⁰⁵ The fact that Henry managed to grant charters at both locations, and others in between, shows that there was no such thing as a holiday for the English royal court. Peripatetic government may have been convenient for medieval kings, but there must have been moments where it felt inescapable. Small wonder that the chancery went out of court, allowing kings to engage and disengage with such matters at their pleasure.

With 133 charters issued on the 1253-4 Gascon expedition, it might be assumed that the list of beneficiaries cannot have been much different from a typical busy year of charter production. This is correct, or at least it is truer for this expedition than for the two previous. For the first time in these French campaigns, charters were produced for English bishops.³⁰⁶ Religious institutions in general seem to have overcome any reticence they may have had to send their representatives overseas seeking charters. Eight cathedrals, priories, abbeys, and other houses

³⁰³ Carpenter, *Henry III, 1207-58*, i, p. 571

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 573

³⁰⁵ D.A. Carpenter, 'The Meetings of Henry III and Louis IX', in *Thirteen Century England X*, ed. M. Prestwich, R. Britnell and R. Frame, (Woodbridge, 2005), pp.1-30

³⁰⁶ Bishops: See *CPR 1247-58* pp. 258, 306, 345.

did just that in this period.³⁰⁷ As far as individuals were concerned, officials got almost no charters (not one went to a clerk), while knights and barons received many. This was especially true of the top-ranked men like Robert Walerand, Simon de Montfort, the king's Lusignan kinsmen, and his son, the Lord Edward, all of whom collectively did very well out of this expedition.³⁰⁸ No burgesses or citizens of towns or cities managed to appeal for liberties during the campaign: perhaps demand for such things had been temporarily met, or perhaps such matters were unlikely to be so urgent that they could not wait for the king's return. Those that did take the plunge and make their way to France apparently got their charters in two main peaks, in February and September 1254, in which months seventeen and nineteen charters were produced respectively. Demand ramped up and tailed off around both dates. The February spike is easy to explain. Henry called a parliament on 27 January 1254, with dignitaries arriving thereafter, and we have already seen how patronage flowed out of Henry's hands whenever the elite mustered in his presence. The September spike is not so easily explained, but can probably be attributed to the fact that Henry won various of the few military successes of his career at that time.³⁰⁹ Can we expect a man who readily rewarded even abject failure with patronage to be have been moderate when faced with rare success? Most of the men who received charters that September were knights, who rarely dominated in Henry's charter rolls, so it must be assumed that he was thanking them for bringing him his victory.³¹⁰ If these men really were collecting their just rewards for military valour, they do not seem to have done so on any set day of the week. In 1242-3, all seven days of the week had been common for charter dating. Unlike that campaign, however, where Wednesday was a light day and Sunday a busy day, in 1253-4 it was the other way around.

³⁰⁷ *CPR 1247-58*, pp. 263, 279, 320, 378, 382.

³⁰⁸ *CPR 1247-58*, pp. 285 (Robert Walerand), 249 (Simon de Montfort), 354 (Lord Edward and the Lusignans).

³⁰⁹ Carpenter, *Henry III, 1207-58*, i, p. 573.

³¹⁰ The period in which most charter recipients were knights may be found in *CPR 1247-57*, pp. 325-360.

2.5 Places at which Charters were Dated

Table 15: Places at Which Entries were Dated in the Charter Rolls of King Henry III

PLACE NAME	CHARTERS	PLACE NAME	CHARTERS	PLACE NAME	CHARTERS	PLACE NAME	CHARTERS	PLACE NAME	CHARTERS
Westminster	1597	Northampton	11	Pontefract	3	Bisham	1	Sandwich	1
Windsor	356	Geddington	10	Sempringham	3	Blythburgh	1	Scroby	1
Woodstock	201	Rochester	10	Temple Dinsley	3	Caistor	1	Sellawe	1
Winchester	109	Burgh	9	Walsingham	3	Chipping Camden	1	Sherborne	1
Reading	105	Faringdon	8	Wherwell	3	Christchurch	1	Stanford	1
Clarendon	103	Mortlake	7	Ashley	2	Colne	1	Thorpe	1
Marlborough	78	Sherburn	7	Bath	2	Croxton	1	Tutbury	1
Merton	61	Ely	6	Beaulieu	2	Darley	1	Verneuill	1
Canterbury	45	London	6	Blandford	2	Darlington	1	Vaudey	1
Chester	43	Southwick	6	Bordeaux	4	Ditton	1	Waddington	1
Oxford	40	Tewkesbury	6	Brill	2	Durham	1	Walden	1
Portsmouth	39	Abingdon	5	Chesterfield	2	Eccles	1	Waverley	1
Lambeth	38	Croydon	5	Chillingham	2	Farnham	1	Worksop	1
Nottingham	30	Huntingdon	5	Coventry	2	Framlingham	1	Wycombe	1
Kempton	28	Newark	5	Coxford	2	Grantham	1	Unknown	92
Guildford	26	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	5	Doncaster	2	Hampstead Marshall	1	TOTAL:	3713
Worcester	26	Winchcombe	5	Dunstable	2	Harrow	1		
Fulham	25	Bridgnorth	4	Evesham	2	Hay	1		
Stratford	25	Butley	4	Gillingham	2	Ipswich	1		
Dover	24	Chippenham	4	Guingamp	4	King's Cliff	1		
Bury St. Edmunds	22	Faversham	4	Hodsock	2	Kingston	1		
St. Paul's, London	21	Grimston	4	Leckhampstead	2	Ludgershall	1		
Hereford	19	Hertford	4	Maldstone	2	Montgomery	1		
Norwich	19	Lichfield	4	Oddington	2	Moriaix	2		
Waltham	18	Nantes	8	Otford	2	Mottisfont	1		
Painscastle	17	Peterborough	4	Peak Castle	2	Newbury	1		
Shrewsbury	17	St. Briavels	4	Pons	4	Newport Pagnell	1		
York	17	Stamford	4	Rayne	2	Ongar	1		
Marwell	16	Wark	4	Redon	4	Oundle	1		
Wallingford	16	Beverley	3	Teynham	2	Paddington	1		
Cambridge	15	Blyth	3	Thetford	2	Pershore	1		
Digsway	15	Bromholm	3	Warwick	2	Ross	1		
Tower of London	14	Bruerne	3	Water Eston	2	Royston	1		
Kenilworth	13	Burton-on-Trent	3	Allerton	1	Saffron Walden	1		
St. Albans	13	Chertsey	3	Alton	1	St. Malo	2		
Lincoln	12	Daventry	3	Barnwell	1	St. Neots	1		
Wenlock	12	Dereham	3	Basingtoke	1	St. Osyth	1		
Gloucester	11	Feckenham	3	Becherel	2	St. Pol de Leon	2		
Havering	11	Missenden	3	Belper	1	Sandleford	1		

Angevin kings were never sedentary, and indeed they could not be, given the nature of the territories that they ruled. It would be many centuries before the king of England could rule by decree from a single favoured palace. With estates to inspect, barons to both mollify and intimidate, religious houses to patronise and animals to hunt, to say nothing of the need to be *seen* to be dispensing justice, an Angevin king had to spend much of his life in the saddle.³¹¹ Since power was concentrated heavily within the king's own person, the bulk of the governing apparatus of the realm had to follow him around as he conducted this diverse business. Precisely *how* this Angevin train of potentates and their hangers-on conducted their affairs

³¹¹ See J.E.A. Joliffe, *Angevin Kingship* (London, 1963), pp. 139-65 for an excellent overview of the administrative and especially performative requirements of Angevin itineration. Sadly, Joliffe did slightly homogenise his subject-kings, and tended to treat all from Henry I to John as though they were of a piece in daily mileage and behaviour while itinerating.

seems to have depended greatly on the personality of the king in question. Henry I, for instance, acquired a reputation for moderation in both the itinerary and supply requirements of his court, at least relative to those of his brother William Rufus and grandson Henry II.³¹² These latter courts were reputed to eat and drink their way through entire regional supplies and drive their courtiers mercilessly across the land without stopping.³¹³ In Edward I's reign, the chief imperative behind perambulation was no longer estate management and local government, but military manoeuvres against Wales and Scotland tempered with occasional hunting trips or visits to shrines of religious significance.³¹⁴

Relative to his hyperactive forebears and his militaristic son, Henry III certainly seems the most sedentary of the Angevin monarchs. David Carpenter, for instance, calculates that while Henry spent two thirds of his time in his principal palaces, especially Westminster, his father spent just one third of his time in such places.³¹⁵ Julie Kanter has likewise produced in-depth figures showing the length of time spent by Henry at each location, confirming that his time was primarily spent in favoured palaces or amongst the Home Counties.³¹⁶ Sadly, Kanter's data is not suitable for use in this thesis. Firstly, it is understandably selective regarding years analysed, where this thesis uses data for all the years of King Henry's majority where practicable. Secondly, Kanter (and for that matter Carpenter) measure itinerary by days spent in any given location. For the purposes of a chancery-based thesis, it is not time spent but *charters produced* that is of chief concern. Assuming that the specified time and place of dating are usually

³¹² S.D. Church, 'Aspects of the Royal Itinerary', pp. 34-7.

³¹³ Ibid. pp. 38-40.

³¹⁴ See M.C. Prestwich 'The Royal Itinerary and Roads in England under Edward I', in *Roadworks: Medieval Britain, Medieval Roads*, ed. V. Allen and R. Evans (Manchester, 2016), pp. 177-97.

³¹⁵ Carpenter, *Henry III 1207-1258*, i, p. 350.

³¹⁶ J.E. Kanter, 'Peripatetic and Sedentary Kingship'. see pp. 177-255, and particularly pp. 197-221.

accurate, there are clear categories to which different places may be consigned. For that reason, I have compiled a table of all the readable place names in the charter rolls (see above).

First, in a league of its own, comes Westminster: of the 3713 charters recorded on the charter rolls in Henry III's reign, 1597 were dated at Westminster. Of these, 326 come from the glut in the first year of the majority: $\frac{3}{4}$ of that year's charter productions were dated at Westminster. As well as the fact that the king genuinely did spend much of his time there, it also seems plausible that so many charters were drawn up at Westminster in preference to other locations, given the number of baronial and episcopal palaces situated nearby, as well as the palace's proximity to London and the all-important Westminster Abbey. This is especially true if Stamp was correct to assert that the chancery clerks *de cursu* were permanently based at Westminster, as this would have made it easier to synergise charters with any associated lesser writs pertaining to them. Secondly, the major royal residences of Windsor and Woodstock had 356 and 201 charters dated there, respectively. Thirdly, other royal residences at Winchester, Guildford and Clarendon each accounted for over 100 charters, with Marlborough not far off, at 78. Each of these six palaces was a splendid and sprawling residence fit for a European king, and each must have had ample facilities for the chancery and the rest of the household to conduct their operations.³¹⁷ Reading was also in this league, with 105 charters dated there, but this was a favoured royal abbey and not a palace. Even so, not all royal residences had numerous charters produced there: 28 were dated at Kempton and just 11 at Havering.

³¹⁷ For an idea of the incredibly lavish palace complex at Guildford, see *A Medieval Royal Complex at Guildford: Excavations at the Castle and Palace*, ed. R. Poulton et al, Surrey Archaeological Society (Guildford, 2005).

Next, the great cities and ports usually accounted for several royal charters over the course of the reign, e.g. Chester (43), Oxford (40), Portsmouth (39), Worcester (26), Dover (24), York (17), Norwich (19), Cambridge (15), Lincoln (12), and Gloucester (11). With Chester as the notable exception, the king's reputation as a man who preferred to perambulate around his south-eastern palaces seems well justified. Larger northern, midland and western cities account for noticeably fewer charters than their south-eastern counterparts, particularly the various suburbs of London. Fifthly, there are the places that account for very few charters, as they were only briefly visited as the king itinerated around England and France. Of the 170 places from which Henry III's charters were dated, 129 account for fewer than 10 charters. Of these, 102 places account for just less than four, in many cases only for one or two.

2.6 Charters and Common-Law Writs: Evidence from the Close Rolls

Table 16: Time Delay Between Charter and Corresponding Writ

Days from Charter Date	No. of Charters	Days (+/-) from Cart. Date	No. of Charters
0	77	0	77
1	56	1	78
-1	22	2	35
2	25	3	21
-2	10	4	17
3	16	5	11
-3	5	6	8
4	16	7	4
-4	1	8	10
5	7	9	6
-5	4	10	6
6	7	11	3
-6	1	12	6
7	4	13	3
-7	0	14	1
8	10	</>14	26
-8	0	---	5
9	4	TOTAL:	317
-9	2		
10	5		
-10	1		
11	2		
-11	1		
12	5		
-12	1		
13	3		
-13	0		
14	1		
-14	0		
>14	24		
<-14	2		
---	5		
TOTAL:	317		

In this section I have already discussed the parallel development of documents employed by the royal chancery, as well as the probable hierarchy of clerks who produced them. Royal charters were important documents over which considerable care was taken, not least as they usually entitled the beneficiary to privileges that were very much worth having. Even as the more high-flying clerks produced these documents, the more junior elements of the writing

office produced short, highly formulaic documents which issued commands expediting the processes of the common law, including the dispositions of property or rights typically granted by charter.³¹⁸ Charter beneficiaries who had already been through the rigmarole of procuring their most important document (the charter) thus had to jump through various additional bureaucratic hoops, figuring out what standard writs they might need, and how much they would have to pay for these. This fee, though quite small, would probably not have been fixed at a definite rate, and did not take into account the costs of hiring a proctor to take the business to the itinerant chancery in the first place.³¹⁹ The common-law writ was a jack-of-all-trades and had many possible uses. But two in particular were relevant for charter beneficiaries. Most commonly, if the enrolled copies can be considered comprehensive, the writ was required so that the beneficiary might be placed in seisin of his property by the sheriff of the relevant county administration. Less commonly, writs could also be sent out to the relevant sheriff(s) to ensure that the terms of a charter were read out in the county court.³²⁰ Such writs followed no exact diplomatic template, presumably because the variations in the particulars of the charters were too great, but they did share certain commonalities. Firstly, the contents of the charter were usually summarised in just a few lines. These summaries ranged from the very specific (e.g. ‘Rex per cartam suam concessit priori et canonicis de Cumwell’ quod ipsi et eorum successores habeant in perpetuum unum mercatum apud Cumwell’ singulis septimanis per diem Veneris),³²¹ to the very general (e.g. ‘Rex concessit W. Karleolensi episcopo et successoribus suis quasdam libertates et carta sua eas confirmavit’).³²² After the summary of the charter came an order to a

³¹⁸ Common-law writs are a vastly complicated area of study, since they had to facilitate practically every possible transaction or dispute in the common law. The definitive taxonomy of these writs is R.C. Van Caenegem, *Royal Writs in England from the Conquest to Glanvill*, Selden Society 77 (1959), with a briefer summary of the different writ types on pp. 196-7.

³¹⁹ See A.H. Hershey, ‘Justice and Bureaucracy: The English Royal Writ and 1258’, in *English Historical Review*, 113 (1998), pp. 830-2.

³²⁰ A version of this process pertaining to the proclamation of Magna Carta is explained in R.L. Poole ‘The Publication of Great Charters by the English Kings’, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 38 (1956), pp. 444-53.

³²¹ *CR 1231-4*, p. 27.

³²² *CR 1227-31*, p. 529.

sheriff or group of sheriffs, always in the form ‘mandatum est’. This order would either be to read the charter at the county court (e.g. ‘mandatum est vicecomiti Notingh' et Dereb' quod cartam illam in pleno comitatu legi’),³²³ or to place the beneficiary in seisin (e.g. ‘mandatum est vicecomiti Suhamt' quod de predicta terra eidem Willelmo plenam saisinam habere faciat’).³²⁴ ‘Sicut predictum est’ or a similar phrase would then usually finish the writ.

Original common-law writs of this type survive in pathetically small numbers. The main source of record for the process comes to us from the close rolls, in which such executive-orders were recorded. As the royal bureaucracy became a more and more unwieldy beast, it must have gradually dawned on those responsible for keeping the records that discretion would have to be exercised. Indeed, such charter-related writs seem *never* to have been recorded in their entirety, though it is not clear what the rationale was behind inclusion or exclusion. Of the 396 charters enrolled in the glut of 1227, I can find writs matching only 104 of them (26.26%). For the period 1227-1237 (inclusive of the previous figures), I was able to find 298 writs from a total of 1470 possible charters (20.27%). Thus, before 1238, only one fifth of these charter-related writs were recorded on the close roll. Then, in 1238, Ralph Neville had the great seal taken away from him. Whether by coincidence or not, the number of charters with matching writs dropped precipitously from this time onwards: from 1238-51, I could find only 19 writs corresponding to 785 charters (2.42%). I was unable to find any further writs that matched enrolled charters, recorded on the close rolls from 1252-72.

³²³ *CR 1227-31*, p. 529.

³²⁴ *CR 1227-31*, p. 520.

There could be significant variance between the date written on the charter and the date written on the writ. Of the 317 writs corresponding to enrolled charters from 1227-51, 77 bore the same date as the charter to which they were matched. A further 98 writs bore a date that was one day removed from their charters; 35 bore a date that was two days removed, and 21 three days removed. These discrepancies can be in either direction: 185 writs post-date their corresponding charter, whereas 50 writs pre-date it. I can only presume that they were sent based on a draft, and that between drafting and the expedition of writ or charter there might be significant delay. It also seems that writs were produced in larger batches than charters, as the lengthy columns in the close rolls dated simply 'teste ut supra' seems to attest. Otherwise, 78 writs bore a date that was between 4-14 days 'out' from its corresponding charter. Thus, about 90.22% of these writs (286/317) are dated within a fortnight of the date of their corresponding charter. For the remaining writs, there could be a difference of several weeks or even months between charter date and the writ date. In these instances, the charter almost always predates the writ. I have not found any clues in the wording of these late-sent writs to explain the reason for such delay. It is possible that the process was not expedited until fees were paid, but this seems unlikely when the beneficiary was a fabulously wealthy individual like Hubert de Burgh. Another possibility is that an unrecorded writ was sent, and that the writs I have identified were reminders, sent out after a period of delay.

2.7 Beneficiaries of Royal Charters, 1227-72

Despite a complicated birth and protracted adolescence, the process for the issue of English royal charters had reached an impressive degree of maturity by 1216. Such instruments could be as mundane as a licence for a local market, or as singular as Magna Carta itself. Across this

spectrum, it was essential that both the overall structure and individual Latin phrases employed should be both formal and consistent. Just as the royal chancery's high standard of handwriting uniformity ensured that the words on the parchment could be read, its high standard of phrasing consistency ensured that its words could be correctly interpreted via the law courts and legal system.³²⁵ Nor was such documentary fastidiousness a privilege of royalty alone: Henry's reign saw an explosion of what could be termed 'charter culture'. Even at the beginning of the reign, the gentry were using sealed documents to convey land to each other. By the end, the practice had even spread to the more prosperous of free peasant. Monks, canny folk that they were, had been well-used to charter dispositions for over a century.³²⁶ Though fundamentally belonging to a privileged caste, the 'customers' of Henry's royal chancery varied significantly in their needs and expectations. Despite this diversity, charters had to fit recognisable patterns in order to be usable as legal documents. These groupings were never officially labelled, and of course there were marginal cases and documents that were uniquely peculiar. Nevertheless, it is possible to observe certain patterns of charter type and beneficiary that occur again and again across the records of Henry III's charters.³²⁷ The rest of this section is dedicated to exploring some of these.

First, there were charters aimed at landed magnates: the powerful secular lords who each commanded significant military and financial power bases. These magnates' relationship with the crown could be symbiotic or antagonistic, but in either instance there was an insatiable need

³²⁵ For an explanation of the importance of charter diplomatic to the legal system, albeit in the Scottish context, see Alice Taylor, <https://www.modelsofauthority.ac.uk/blog/diplomatic-intro/>

³²⁶ These points were all observed by Michael Clanchy, who did temper them by noting that Italy was probably considerably in advance of English charter practice at the time (*From Memory to Written Record*, pp. 71-2).

³²⁷ As ever when making generalisations about real people, some caution is needed here. It can be hard to split charter beneficiaries into definitive groups. A single man could start his career as a clerk, acquire large landed estates, and end up as a bishop. Moreover, I have deliberately *not* attempted to give a definite number to each 'type' of charter that I have identified. To do so would require too much fudging of uncertain information, and would imply more discreteness in charter 'types' than the real evidence can support.

for charters.³²⁸ If the barons were to buttress the king's authority, they needed their land and their tenure to be as strongly defended by the law as was possible, to say nothing of the sweetening effect of patronage on morale.³²⁹ Conversely, if the baronage was bound by its position to challenge or attempt to weaken the king for its own gain, charters were the only non-military mechanism by which they could bind him to permanent grants of land or privilege.³³⁰ These men had seen their relative wealth increase over decades, even before the accession of Henry III. In part this was because they paid rents to the king at fixed sums (including the county farms), while maximising returns on their own tenants.³³¹ These strengthened magnates posed a dire threat to the king, as was demonstrated in the 1230s in the brilliant campaigns of Richard Marshal, Earl of Pembroke, and confirmed *in extremis* by the rebellion of Simon de Montfort. David Carpenter has argued that Henry did little to rein in the power of his over-mighty barons, and even granted them further liberties while forgiving many of their debts.³³² Instead of diminishing the established baronage, Henry had a clear propensity to lavish land and title instead on those who were important to his regime, from leading officials to lesser members of baronial families. The table below illustrates the number of royal charters received by a selection of these men: magnate families with inherited power on the left, those

³²⁸ Michael Clanchy tracked the output of the chancery based on its usage of wax reserves: *From Memory to Written Record*, pp. 76-82.

³²⁹ Though he was writing about a later period, this is the position of K.B. McFarlane, *The Nobility of Late Medieval England* (Oxford, 1973). McFarlane conceptualised his theory of 'common interest' as being universal for English kingship. See especially pp. 229, 234-5. McFarlane did not explicitly attack Tout or those with an adversarial view of baronial politics, but H.G. Richardson and G.O. Sayles derided Tout as a dinosaur in *The Governance of Mediaeval England from the Conquest to Magna Carta* (Edinburgh 1963), pp. 216, 229-31, 370. Returning to the work of a subject specialist, the co-operative view of Henrician political relations is broadly shared by D.A. Carpenter. See 'Kings, Magnates and Society: The Personal Rule of King Henry III, 1234-58', *Speculum* 60, (1985), pp. 39-70.

³³⁰ This adversarial conception of baronial power is usually associated with T.F. Tout (for instance, Tout, *Chapters*, i., p. 16), though it has its roots in the earlier work of Stubbs and others.

³³¹ For the definitive article on the weakening value of the county farm, see N. Barratt 'The Revenue of King John', *EHR* 111 (1996), pp. 835-55.

³³² See Carpenter, *King, Magnates, and Society* esp. pp. 52-57.

who had largely derived their power from royal grants on the right.³³³

Table 17: Charters Received by Magnate Families, 1227-72

Magnate families	Charters	Men promoted by Henry III	Charters
Montfort (Leicester)	17	Hubert de Burgh	71
Longespee (Salisbury)	17	Peter of Savoy	28
Basset (Wycombe)	16	William de Valence	26
Ferrers (Derby)	14	Richard, Earl of Cornwall	19
Clare (Gloucester)	13	Peter de Rivallis	18
Bigod (Norfolk)	12	Edmund, son of the King	16
Marshal (Pembroke)	11	Peter des Roches	15
Audley (Salisbury)	10	Edward, son of the King	13
Lacy (Lincoln)	9	Guy & Geoff. de Lusignan	3
		John de Plessis, Earl of Warwick ³³⁴	6
Vere (Oxford)	9		
Blondeville (Chester)	2		
Quency (Winchester)	2		
Warrenne (Surrey)	2		
Bohun (Hereford & Essex)	1		
Forz (Albemarle)	9		

Bearing in mind that the right-hand column reflects individuals whereas the left represents entire families,³³⁵ it should be immediately obvious that Henry's trusted ministers and family received many more charters than the established baronage. This is not difficult to explain: magnate families were starting from a higher baseline, so that it would have been foolish for King Henry to give them just as much preferment as his ministers or family who had comparatively little. The acquisitiveness of Hubert de Burgh, for instance, is laid bare by the

³³³ This information has been derived from the *Calendar of Charter Rolls* (CChR), and should be regarded as illustrative rather than authoritative. These chancery records, though impressive in their scope for the period, are not complete: several entire rolls are missing, numerous entries are mutilated or otherwise unreadable, and it can never be guaranteed that every single charter was properly enrolled. This is doubly true in periods of great strife, like the Second Barons' War (1264-7).

³³⁴ An untypical entry on this list, John de Plessis was rendered a magnate through the king expediting his shotgun marriage to Margery of Warwick. See M. Ray, 'The Lady Doth Protest; the Marriage of John de Plessis and Margery, Countess of Warwick 1243' (Paper presented to International Medieval Congress 2004).

³³⁵ Except in the cases of Hubert de Burgh, where I have included charters aimed at his wife or daughter as being broadly to his benefit, and Geoffrey and Guy de Lusignan, who I felt ought to be treated as a pair.

unprecedented 71 charters that he was able to procure for himself and his family.³³⁶ This gluttonous trolley-dash of land and title makes the 15 charters for his arch-enemy Peter des Roches appear positively restrained.³³⁷ That said, it was des Roches' nephew Peter de Rivallis who amassed the truly impressive estates under Des Roches' regime, and this is reflected in the 18 charters that the king conceded to him.³³⁸ Henry's extended family was treated variably: Richard of Cornwall and William of Valence were granted many charters apiece, as was the queen's uncle, Peter of Savoy. By contrast, Guy and Geoffrey de Lusignan were rather stingily served with only three charters between them.³³⁹ On the other side of the chart, it is interesting to observe how many families of roughly equal size and prestige ended up receiving comparable numbers of charters. At the upper end of the distribution, there do not seem to have been any families that succeeded in capturing the king's patronage on the scale of Hubert de Burgh or Peter of Savoy. Even Simon de Montfort, who successfully captured the entire apparatus of government, did not manage significantly to surpass the number of charters granted to the Longespee or Basset families. Nonetheless, the chart's biggest surprise comes from the relative absence of the de Bohun clan, save for a solitary charter granting a weekly market and yearly fair in Huntingdon.³⁴⁰ Both the elder and younger Humphrey de Bohun were prolific royal charter witnesses, which makes it even more puzzling that they do not seem to

³³⁶ Though mostly superseded by the various works on the subject by D.A. Carpenter, there is an excellent appendix detailing and mapping all the many and varied territorial acquisitions of Hubert de Burgh in C.E. Ellis, *Hubert de Burgh: A Study in Constancy* (London, 1952), pp. 203-28. For how this kingly demesne came to be lost, see D.A. Carpenter, 'The Fall of Hubert de Burgh' *Journal of British Studies*, 19 (1980).

³³⁷ Indeed, King Henry would later lament that he had been deceived by de Burgh, and that the crown's authority had been diminished by the generosity of his grants. See D.A. Carpenter, *Henry III, 1207-1258*, i, p. 65.

³³⁸ For more information on the Roches/Rivallis partnership, see Vincent, *Peter des Roches*, pp. 292-9.

³³⁹ The Lusignan/Valence clan are collectively known as 'the Poitevins', while Queen Eleanor's family and their hangers on tend to be referred to as 'the Savoyards'. The general scholarly consensus appears to be that whilst the Savoyards were even more proficient than the Poitevins at extracting concessions, they did so with greater diplomatic tact and therefore generated less rancour among the old Anglo-Norman aristocracy. See particularly two articles by Huw Ridgeway: 'Foreign Favourites and Henry III's Problems of Patronage, 1247-58', *EHR* 104 (1989), pp. 590-610; and 'King Henry III and the 'Aliens' 1236-1272', in *Thirteenth Century England II*, ed. P. Coss and S.D. Lloyd (Woodbridge, 1988), pp. 81-92.

³⁴⁰ *CChR* 1226-57, p. 456.

have received any significant number of charters for themselves.³⁴¹

Charters could vary enormously in significance, from the grant of a single market, to an entire smorgasbord of liberties and privileges. Counting by crude number is therefore a risky business. Even so, though barons seem to have been well-served with charters to meet their needs throughout Henry III's reign, they constitute a surprisingly small slice of total charter production. By far the most prolific recipient of charters, if it can be treated as a singular entity, was the Church.

Table 18: Charters Received by Religious Figures and Institutions, 1227-72

Religious Institution	Possible Beneficiaries	Charters
Cathedrals	Bishop, Dean & Chapter, Canons, Monks	283
Priories	Prior, Prioress, Canons, Monks, Nuns	234
Abbeys	Abbot, Abbess, Canons, Monks, Nuns	380
Churches*	Church itself, Provost	40
Hospitals	Master, Brethren, Prior, Warden, Sick	91
Knightly Orders	Master, Brethren, Prior	50

*Charters addressed to a church (*ecclesia*) are often in practice still referring to monastic houses.

Generalising hundreds of charter recipients is necessarily an inexact science, and never more so than in the compilation of tables such as this. Can a bishop receiving right of free warren really be chalked up as a benefit gained for 'The Church'? Can the various types of religious institution such as priories, abbeys and generalised 'churches' really be separated as discretely as I have attempted to show above? Are the Templars and Hospitallers worthy of being treated

³⁴¹ This is made even more puzzling by the large size of the Bohun clan, as well as the great importance of both the elder and younger Humphrey to contemporary politics. See N.C. Vincent, 'Humphrey de Bohun, second earl of Hereford and seventh earl of Essex', *ODNB*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/2775>.

as religious institutions *per se*? Such matters of detail remain arguable, but some overall observations on the distribution of ecclesiastical charter beneficiaries should nevertheless be uncontroversial. Firstly, the sheer number of charters produced for religious institutions and eminent churchmen was immense, dwarfing the number produced for the more eminent secular lords. Secondly, it seems that monastic institutions and their leaders were, taken collectively, granted more charters than the great cathedral churches and their bishops, perhaps not surprisingly given that there were far more monasteries than there were cathedrals.³⁴² Thirdly, hospitals and knightly orders were not neglected. Overall, it seems that Henry III richly deserves his reputation as a pious king and generous patron of the Church. Indeed, the Church received a glut of royal charters during his reign, encompassing matters as trivial as simple protection or as momentous as the founding of abbeys and hospitals.

³⁴² This is consistent with Henry's general policy of strongly supporting the Church in the abstract while often challenging the episcopal clergy themselves. As an *anointed* king, Henry saw his powers as being essentially sacerdotal in nature, much to the chagrin of Robert Grosseteste among others. See M. T. Clanchy, 'Did Henry III Have a Policy?', *History* 53 (1968), pp. 203-216.

Bishopric	Charters	Bishops	Charters
Bath and Wells	43	Jocelin Bp. of Bath	37
		Walter*, Bp. of Bath and Wells	1
		Roger, Bp. of Bath and Wells	1
		William, Bp. of Bath and Wells	1
Canterbury	12	Richard Abp. of Canterbury	3
		Edmund Abp. of Canterbury	3
		Boniface Abp. Canterbury	2
Cashel	2	Marianus Abp. of Cashel	2
Carlisle	32	Walter Bp. of Carlisle	30
Chichester	60	Ralph Bp. of Chichester	42
Coventry and Lichfield	10	Roger Bp. of Coventry	1
Durham	8	Richard Bp. of Durham	1
		Nicholas Bp. of Durham	1
		Robert Bp. of Durham	1
Ely	11	Hugh I Bp. of Ely	2
		Hugh II Bp. of Ely	3
		Christian Bp. of Ely	1
Exeter	5	William, Bp. of Exeter	2
		Walter Bp. of Exeter	1
		Richard, Bp. of Exeter	1
Hereford	11	Peter Bp. of Hereford	8
Lincoln	15	Hugh II Bp. of Lincoln	14
London (St. Paul's)	6	Henry Bp. of London	1
Norwich	10	Thomas Bp. of Norwich	3
		Walter Bp. of Norwich	2
Ossory	1	Geoffrey Bp. of Ossory	1
Salisbury	10	Richard Bp. of Salisbury	4
Winchester	21	Peter Bp. of Winchester	15
		William Bp. of Winchester	1
		Aymer, Bp. of Winchester	5
Worcester	9	Walter Bp. of Worcester	5
		Godfrey Bp. of Worcester	1
York	13	Sewal, Abp. York	1
		Walter Gray Abp. of York	9
		Walter Giffard* Abp. of York	1

The left two columns of this table list the number of royal charters received by each diocese that received at least one such document. The right-hand columns illustrate those bishops who were mentioned by name in such charters. Where the number in the left column is higher than the shaded-block total in the right column, this indicates that certain charters were addressed to the dean and chapter, the cathedral-church itself, or to the bishop, without providing his name. Thus, it can be seen that of the 279 charters addressed to a particular cathedral, 207 directly referenced the name of the bishop. This is not surprising. By the reign of Henry III, most English bishops were highly skilled operators within the realm of documentary government, with a good number of them maintaining their own permanently-staffed miniature versions of the royal chancery.³⁴³ Indeed, the bishops' documentary knowledge sometimes went further than mere vague imitations of royal practice: many of them were either previous or current administrators working within the royal administration.³⁴⁴ These administrator-bishops (coloured red in the table above) received 132 out of the 207 charters directly referencing bishops, despite the fact that their bishoprics were not always the largest or most influential. In an enterprise as opaque and bureaucratic as the expedition of a royal charter, it must have been a massive boon to know already how the game was played, or to have close access to the king and/or the great seal.³⁴⁵ The clerk-bishops were also very frequent recipients of *inspeximus* charters, whether because they knew the right procedures or because they were

³⁴³ See C.R. Cheney, *English Bishops' Chanceries 1100-1250* (Manchester, 1950), esp. pp. 22-43.

³⁴⁴ These administrator-bishops were Jocelin of Wells (Bath), Hugh of Wells (Lincoln), Walter Mauclerc (Carlisle), William of Kilkenny (Ely), Walter de Gray (York), and Ralph Neville (Chichester), who was also lord chancellor.

³⁴⁵ Not all promoted clerks ended up becoming serial charter recipients. William of Kilkenny was never recorded to have received a single royal charter after becoming Bishop of Ely, despite having been a prolific chancery clerk for many years.

often at court.³⁴⁶

Of course, bishops were not *only* landowners and politicians; they also represented their cathedral churches and dioceses. The needs of these were diverse. For example, Chichester, Exeter, Hereford, Lincoln, St. Paul's, Salisbury, and York were 'secular' cathedrals, so-called because they had chapters composed of secular canons. Bath and Wells, as well as Coventry and Lichfield, were dual-dioceses, with both a monastic and a secular institution at their centre. The other English cathedrals in this period were 'monastic', with chapters composed of monks.³⁴⁷ As well as the religious and political debates that this division engendered, it also resulted in considerable differences between how such dioceses were run, and hence between what they might require from a royal charter. In financial charters pertaining to secular cathedrals, the bishop and the canons of the chapter were often cited as joint beneficiaries.³⁴⁸ The 'dean and chapter' would be the usual beneficiary of a charter aimed at a cathedral church, with the latter term generally being used only to refer to the literal fabric of the building.³⁴⁹ In monastic cathedrals, it was usually the prior and monks who were the grantees of such charters, when the bishop was not mentioned.³⁵⁰

As can be seen from Table 18 provided on page 113, at least 600 royal charters were issued to abbeys and priories over the course of Henry III's reign. To display each and every one of these

³⁴⁶ The Wells brothers were particularly prolific in their use of *inspeximus* charters after becoming bishops, in Hugh's case some of them referring to the time when he was still an archdeacon. For Hugh as bishop of Lincoln, see *CChR 1226-57*, pp. 5, 8, 62, 104, 105, and for Jocelin as bishop of Wells, see *CChR 1226-57*, pp. 7, 44-5, 168-9, 185, 202-3.

³⁴⁷ For a further explanation of the difference between secular and monastic cathedral chapters and how they came about, see H. M. Thomas, *The Secular Clergy in England, 1066-1216* (Oxford, 2014), p. 58.

³⁴⁸ For Salisbury, see *CChR 1226-57*, p. 24-5, and for Chichester, see *CChR 1226-57*, p. 31.

³⁴⁹ St Paul's, *CChR 1226-57* p. 199.

³⁵⁰ See, for instance, the monks of Coventry (*CChR 1226-57*, p. 6), Worcester (*CChR 1226-57*, p. 152), Canterbury (*CChR 1226-57*, p. 147), Durham (*CChR 1257-1300*, pp. 140-1).

institutions would have resulted in a difficult-to-read table, dominated by smaller institutions receiving only one or two charters each. I have omitted many of these smaller monasteries from the table below, especially where the name or location was ambiguous, and I have instead focused primarily on institutions of greater historical significance.

Table 19: Charters Received by Monastic Houses and Hospitals, 1227-72

Monastic Houses	Charters	Hospitals	Charters
Westminster Abbey	26	St. Mary, Dover	28
Dore Abbey	13	St. Mary, Ospringe	10
Osney Abbey	10	St. John Eastgate, Oxford	10
Peterborough Abbey	10	Buckland	2
Furness Abbey	8	Windsor	2
Reading Abbey	8	Maiden Bradley	2
Bec Abbey	7	Wells	2
Lacock Abbey	7	St. Paul, Norwich	2
Sempringham Priory	7	Lincoln	1
Bordesley Abbey	6	St. John the Evangelist, Berkhamsted	1
Wenlock Priory	6	St. Giles without Shrewsbury	1
Montacute Priory	5	St. Giles Hospital, London	1
St. Margaret without Marlborough	5	SS. Mary and John the Baptist, Basingstoke	1
St. Frideswide's Priory	5	St. Leonard, York	1
Vaudey Abbey	5	St. Margaret, Wycombe	1
Bradenstoke Priory	4	SS. Mary and Leonard, Newport	1
Bromhale Priory	4	St. Anthony, Vienne	1
Cumbwell Priory	4	St. John the Baptist, Nottingham	1
Flaxley Abbey	4	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	1
St. Augustine's, Canterbury	4	St. James, Bordeaux	1
Dunkwell Abbey	3	St. Nicholas, Royston	1
Michelham Priory	3	St. John, Wycombe	1
Rievaulx Abbey	3	St. Mary, Strood	1
Roche Abbey	3		
Thorney Abbey	3		
Wherwell Priory	3		
Battle Abbey	2		
Cocksford Priory	2		
Fountains Abbey	2		

Monasteries and hospitals were undeniably well provided for under King Henry III. Though

the chancery produced vast numbers of royal charters for monastic beneficiaries, it should be noted that the typical monastic institution only received one or two of these charters over the course of the reign. Unlike cathedrals, in which the bishop was frequently named and almost invariably cited by his rank, monasteries were often granted charters by the king as institutions with unnamed personnel, or for ‘the monks of X’.³⁵¹ Abbots and priors could still be beneficiaries, of course, but usually in common with their monks and not as political actors in their own right.³⁵² There were major abbeys and priories, like Dore, Osney, Furness or Sempringham, that were more frequent recipients of royal charters, with 7-13 charters over the course of the reign. The reasons for the variation are not clear: for example, Fountains and Furness were both among the grandest of England’s Cistercian abbeys, yet the former received just two charters while the latter received eight. Nevertheless, one monastery stands alone in the number of royal charters it received: Westminster, at 26. This is hardly surprising: Westminster Abbey was the king’s great project, intended to honour the Confessor, and into which he poured vast amounts of treasure and personal attention.³⁵³ Of more interest is that nine of these royal charters were addressed to specific abbots Richard (de Barking) and Richard (de Crokesley) of Westminster. The king was also generous to Reading Abbey, which had been

³⁵¹ For the monks of Thame, see *CChR* 1226-57, pp. 11-12, 13, 14; for the monks of Radmore, see *CChR* 1226-57, see p. 13; for the monks of Reading: *CChR* 1226-57, see pp. 15-16; for the monks of Dunkwell: *CChR* 1226-57, see p. 17, for the monastery of St. Oswald, Bardney: *CChR* 1226-57, see p. 147; for the monastery of St. Thomas the Martyr, Royston: *CChR* 1257-1300, see p. 180.

³⁵² There are too many examples to cite of the abbot and monks of an institution being referenced as a pairing, as the overwhelming majority of charters to abbeys use this formulation. There are, however, counter-examples of abbots/abbesses who were significant enough to be treated as actors in their own right. Two separate Abbots of Westminster, Richard de Barking and Richard de Crokesley, received nine charters between them from 1228-56. Ela, Abbess of Lacock, formerly Countess of Salisbury and one of the most powerful women in England, received three charters addressed to her specifically from 1242-60, though many more charters were still generically addressed to the abbess and nuns. These exceptions can be easily explained: Westminster Abbey was important to King Henry, and Ela of Lacock was important to the realm. For the first Abbot Richard, see N.C. Vincent, ‘Richard of Barking (*d.* 1246)’, *ODNB*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/1422>. For Ela of Salisbury, see J.C. Ward, *ODNB*, ‘Ela, suo jure countess of Salisbury’, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/47205>.

³⁵³ There can be no doubting the sincerity of Henry’s devotional intentions at Westminster. See for instance D.A. Carpenter, ‘King Henry III and Saint Edward the Confessor’, *EHR* 122 (2007), pp. 865-891. That said, there were few Angevin monarchs better attuned to the power of visual metaphor. Westminster Abbey would manifest the power and glory of the English kings in exactly the same way that Louis IX was already using Reims Cathedral in France. See S. Lewis ‘Henry III and the Gothic Rebuilding of Westminster Abbey: The Problematics of Context’, *Traditio*, 50 (1995), pp. 129-72. The whole article is relevant, but see particularly pp. 161-2.

founded by Henry I, but which received nothing like the bounty conferred upon Westminster.³⁵⁴ Hospitals, in much the same way, usually received only one or two royal charters throughout the reign. There were only three hospitals that received more than this: St. Mary Dover, which had been founded and lavished with patronage by the never-parsimonious Hubert de Burgh, St. Mary (alias the Maison Dieu) Ospringe, and St. John's without Oxford.³⁵⁵ This last pair were either founded or re-founded by Henry III himself, 'that therein infirm people and strangers might receive remedy of their health and necessity'³⁵⁶

³⁵⁴ The only full-scale survey of Reading Abbey is that by R. Baxter, *The Royal Abbey of Reading* (Woodbridge, 2016). Baxter shows that Henry III was the last English king to show great interest in the abbey (see pp. 91-130).

³⁵⁵ The most comprehensive history of medieval English hospitals remains R.M. Clay, *The Mediaeval Hospitals of England* (London, 1909), especially for those interested in specific hospitals. For the history of hospitals in general, see C. Dainton, 'Medieval Hospitals of England' in *History Today* 26 (8), pp. 532-538.

³⁵⁶ None of these three hospitals were for lepers: they were for pilgrims or the infirm. Ospringe was founded by Henry III, but the hospital at Dover was founded by Hubert de Burgh before being ultimately committed to the king's care. St John the Baptist without Oxford had been founded by King Henry II in the late twelfth century, but was re-founded by Henry III in his own name. See Clay, *Mediaeval Hospitals*, pp. 5, 73.

Table 20: Charters Received by Select Members of the Household of King Henry III, 1227-72

Men of the Household	Charters
Godfrey of Crowcombe	35
Ralph fitz Nicholas	25
John Mansel	21
Robert Walerand	16
Stephen of Seagrave	17
William de Cantilupe	15
Robert de Muscegras	9
Paulinus Peyvre	9
John de Gray	7
Bertram de Criol	7
Imbert Pugeys	5
Nicholas de Saint-Maur	4
Walter de Gray	4
William Belet	3
William de Gray	3
John of Laxton (Lexington)	3
William de Aette	2
Amaury of St. Amand	2
Ralph de Bakepuz	2
Adam of Chesterton	2
William of Kilkenny	0

Once again, the men of the household represent too large a group feasibly to tabulate in its entirety. Rather than attempt to do so, I have provided a representative sample of men serving in a variety of capacities throughout the reign, each of them senior enough to warrant the receipt of at least one royal charter whilst in service. In general, if there is a lesson to be drawn from the other categories of charter recipient, it is that regular access to the court and knowledge of ‘the system’ were the most reliable means of procuring royal charters. However, every single man listed here could boast of regular court access, and knowledge of ‘the system’ must be assumed a ‘given’ for the very men who staffed the bureaucracy. With that in mind, it seems likely that every member of the household needs to be treated as an individual case, since there seems precious little correlation between the number of royal charters received by a man and

his importance or access to administrative machinery. To take two examples from the extremes: Godfrey de Crowcombe, who was a household knight, royal steward, and loyal ally of Hubert de Burgh, received 35 royal charters between 1227 and his death in 1246.³⁵⁷ During that time, he witnessed 200 royal charters. Conversely William of Kilkenny had a career of similar length (c.1234-1256), during which time he served as controller of the Wardrobe, chancellor of England and Bishop of Ely.³⁵⁸ Over the course of that time, he is listed as a witness to 455 royal charters. Despite his lofty titles and ubiquity at court, however, William does not seem to have received even a single royal charter recorded on the charter rolls. If any conclusion can be drawn from this, it is that chancery men rarely seemed to do as well for themselves as other courtiers in acquiring royal charters for their own benefit. Adam of Chesterton only received two royal charters for himself, despite being *de facto* chancellor, master of the *Domus Conversorum* and lord of a considerable landed estate. The exception to this was the elder John Mansel, who had been highly successful in acquiring diverse administrative, diplomatic and judicial powers over the course of a long career.³⁵⁹ Looking at the same phenomenon from a different perspective, it could be considered that chancery men did not *need* so many charters as their equivalent officers in other departments, since, after all, they controlled what was produced and recorded.

³⁵⁷ The best and most in-depth examination of Godfrey of Crowcombe's career is D.A. Carpenter, 'The Career of Godfrey of Crowcombe: Household Knight of King John and Steward of King Henry III', in *War, Government and Aristocracy in the British Isles, c.1150–1500: Essays in Honour of Michael Prestwich*, ed. C. Given-Wilson, A.J. Kettle and L. Scales (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 26–54.

³⁵⁸ For an overview of William of Kilkenny's life, see R.C. Stacey, 'William of Kilkenny (d. 1256)', *ODNB*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/15527>. For an examination of Kilkenny's role as *de facto* chancellor, see L.B. Dibben, 'Chancellor and keeper of the seal under Henry III', *EHR* 27 (1912), pp. 39–51, esp. pp. 46–48.

³⁵⁹ See M. Powicke, *King Henry III and the Lord Edward: The Community of the Realm in the Thirteenth Century*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1947), p. 294. A.E. Stamp also argued that Mansel was the *de facto* first Secretary of State (see his *Court and Chancery*, pp. 309–10). See also R.C. Stacey, 'John Mansel', *ODNB*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/17989>.

Table 21: Charters Issued to Towns, Jews, and Women by Henry III, 1227-72

Other Charters	
Town and City	148
County/Area	9
Disafforestation (no beneficiary)	10
Jewish Beneficiaries	16
Jewish Property Given to Others	74
Lay Women (sole beneficiary)	57
Lay Women (co-beneficiary)	49
Abbesses and Prioresses	97

The long thirteenth century was a period marked by the growth of autonomy for towns and cities across Europe, especially in Flanders, North Germany and Italy.³⁶⁰ In England, which saw only mild or gradual change by European standards, these autonomies were felt mainly in economic rights and legal jurisdiction. Freedom to form a guild merchant, freedom from tolls, and freedom from arrest in civil cases were among the most important of the liberties awarded, as well as the freedom to collect the farm of the borough (*firma burgi*).³⁶¹ Ever short of money, a succession of English kings saw little harm in acceding to these demands; localisation of the payment of the farm often led to prompter payment, and the increasing frequency and geographical spread of eyre circuits kept the royal law close enough for town-dwellers to feel suitably bound by it.³⁶² Even so, Henry III was much warier (or perhaps ‘charier’) of such borough liberties than his father and uncle had been, and developed a complicated system whereby towns could lose their liberties if they failed to meet their obligations to the letter, or sought the confirmation of previously unused liberties from earlier reigns.³⁶³ Due to these

³⁶⁰S. Reynolds, *An Introduction to the History of English Medieval Towns*, Reprinting with corrections (Oxford, 1982).

³⁶¹ For an explanation of the farm of the borough, see Reynolds, *English Medieval Towns*, pp. 98-106. Though each charter represents a unique legal situation, they do tend to follow similar templates. Some of these include freedom to form a guild merchant (see *CChR* 1226-57, p. 96); freedom from tolls (see *CChR* 1226-57, p. 46); freedom from arrest (see *CChR* 1226-57, pp. 30-1); and the farm of the borough (see *CChR* 1226-57, p. 44).

³⁶² Reynolds, *English Medieval Towns*, pp. 107-8.

³⁶³ Reynolds, *English Medieval Towns*, pp. 109-11.

complex regulations, it also seems likely that various borough charters ostensibly granting new liberties were in reality simply confirmations of pre-existing ones.³⁶⁴ Even if the volume of borough charters can be partly explained by confirmations and crypto-confirmations, it still warranted considerable chancery activity. On the surviving charter rolls for Henry III's reign, 148 charters of liberties are recorded for municipal beneficiaries, with 104 of these being for towns and a further 44 for cities.³⁶⁵ Though it is easy to write blithely that 'boroughs' received these rights, it is important to clarify who exactly benefited. This in turn poses problems given that the charters could be so diverse in their wording. The *burgenses* (burgesses) to whom most town charters were addressed were not necessarily proto-capitalists. The most successful among them were more like petty regional oligarchs, augmenting their trade income from estate-building, indistinguishable in many ways from the equivalent stratum of rural gentry.³⁶⁶ Though a prominent town might have hundreds of taxpayers, many of them self-made, it was much more difficult to break into the handful of families from whom the mayor was usually selected.³⁶⁷ Moreover, it is not always easy to differentiate between burgesses and *cives* (citizens) in these borough charters. The latter word is, of course, only used in connection with the inhabitants of a city, but there are occasions when even city-dwellers are referred to as burgesses.³⁶⁸ The exact level of social capital required to be viewed as a burghess is difficult to pin down, though there is certainly a sense of ascending hierarchy implicit in the ubiquitous phrase '*homines boni et burgenses*' (good men and burgesses).

³⁶⁴ M.T. Clanchy, 'Franchise of Return of Writs', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 17 (1967).

³⁶⁵ This excludes charters enrolled on the patent roll due to Gascon campaigns, as well as known urban charters for which originals survive but not their enrolled equivalents.

³⁶⁶ This information is drawn from E. Miller, 'The Rulers of Thirteenth Century Towns: The Cases of York and Newcastle-upon-Tyne', in *Thirteenth Century England I: Proceeds of the Newcastle Upon Tyne Conference 1985*, ed. P.R. Coss and S.D. Lloyd (1986), pp. 128-41. Miller uses research focused on York and Newcastle to illustrate both the financial and social positions of prominent urban-dwellers. He is even-handed in his conclusions, emphasising that urban burgesses certainly had some degree of social mobility and closeness to the concerns of lower-sorts which were lacking in the pure gentry, while nonetheless concluding that their general *mores* were similar.

³⁶⁷ Miller, 'Rulers of Thirteenth-Century Towns', pp. 130-1.

³⁶⁸ For an example pertaining to Salisbury, see *CChR* 1226-57, p. 92

Since the benefits here were overwhelmingly accrued by the merchant class, it was rare for liberties to be granted to rural counties or parcels of land. Ten such charters were recorded on the charter roll, each of which was unique in its circumstances. For example, one such charter was issued to the men of Kent stipulating that at certain assizes, cases pertaining to tenancy in gavelkind should be judged by jurors who were themselves tenants in gavelkind, and not, as elsewhere, by knights.³⁶⁹ Disafforestation was also granted by charter, which typically stipulated both the denizens of the area and the eminent person (and presumably future assarter or hunter-in-chief) at whose instance or for whose benefit the charter had been made.³⁷⁰ There were, however, a further nine charters of disafforestation produced throughout the reign which did not have a named beneficiary save for the people of the area, sometimes recorded as collectively paying the necessary fee for this to be done.³⁷¹

In the decades before ultimate expulsion by Edward I in 1290, the position of England's Jewish community was precarious. Jews were financially exploited by the crown, despised by large parts of the baronage and Church, but recognised as economically essential by the mercantile classes.³⁷² Nicholas Vincent has shown that, by 1234, severe cracks were showing in Christian-Jewish relations, driven in large part by the Church in parallel with similar developments in

³⁶⁹ The charter given to the men of Kent may be found in *CChR* 1226-57, p. 150. For more information on this subject, see P. Brand, 'Local Custom in the Early Common Law' in *Law, Laity and Solidarities. Essays in Honour of Susan Reynolds*, ed. P. Stafford, J.L. Nelson, and J. Martindale (Manchester, 2001), pp. 150-9.

³⁷⁰ For example, Bishop Jocelin of Wells successfully had a part of his land disafforested, specifically for the greater consumption of venison and timber. I have not counted these charters as pure disafforestation charters, since they still have a beneficiary beyond the people of the land. See *CChR* 1226-57, p. 4.

³⁷¹ Disafforested lands without beneficiary include: land in Berkshire (*CChR* 1226-57 p. 39), land around the Severn River (*CChR* 1226-57, p. 75), Kesteven in Lincolnshire (*CChR* 1226-57), p. 122. The Kesteven charter is specifically addressed to the men of the Forest.

³⁷² For an overview of the simmering atmosphere of hatred for Jews in the middle to later part of Henry's reign, mainly emanating from the Church, see R.C. Stacey, '1260: a Watershed in Anglo-Jewish Relations?' *Historical Research* 61 (1988), pp. 135-150.

France.³⁷³ From the 1240s onwards measures were imposed placing severe restrictions on Jewish lives and effectively mandating that they either contribute to the royal finances or else leave the kingdom.³⁷⁴ This was ruthless even by Angevin standards, and left the Jewish community (and especially ‘The King’s Jew’ Aaron of York) in a state of ruination.³⁷⁵ As far as the charter evidence is concerned, 90 charters recorded in the rolls make some reference to Jews, with 74 of these demising Jewish property to non-Jews and just 16 in which Jewish people were themselves beneficiaries. Taking the larger category first, either cash rents or the property itself could be distributed as royal largesse to non-Jews, although the latter was far more common.³⁷⁶ Typically, this took the form of townhouses, shops or land within one of England’s larger cities.³⁷⁷ The beneficiaries of such Jewish property were a motley group of middle to upper-middle sorts, including the chief justiciar Stephen of Seagrave, the Knights Templar, various independent knights, crossbowmen and sergeants at arms, the burgesses of Oxford, the king’s surgeon, saucer, and mason, a blacksmith, and Richard of Cornwall’s messenger.³⁷⁸ How the properties came into the king’s gift is usually left unexplained, but there are instances in which the charter clarifies the point. When propertied Jews converted to Christianity, they were obliged to renounce their property, which reverted to the crown.³⁷⁹ The

³⁷³ N.C. Vincent, ‘Jews, Poitevins, and the Bishop of Winchester, 1231-1234’, in *Studies in Church History*, 19 (1992), pp. 119-132.

³⁷⁴ One of the most comprehensive single-volume works discussing the monetary position of England’s Jews in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries is H.G. Richardson, *The English Jewry Under Angevin Kings* (London, 1960). For the increasing taxes to which Jews were subject, see. pp. 161-75. For the definitive modern work on the same phenomenon, see R.R. Mundill, *The King’s Jews: Money, Massacre and Exodus in Medieval England* (London, 2010).

³⁷⁵ Aaron had become extremely close to the royal family, but saw few benefits from this arrangement. Indeed, over a period of decades, he saw his entire vast fortune stolen out from under him by King Henry and Queen Eleanor, and was imprisoned several times into the bargain. See Stacey, ‘1240-60: a Watershed’, pp. 141-3.

³⁷⁶ For examples of rents being offered instead of land or other property, see particularly two charters which provide considerable detail, *CChR 1257-1300*, pp. 64-5.

³⁷⁷ Examples include a house and two plots of land in Winchester (*CChR 1226-57* p. 257), a house in Westminster (*CChR 1257-1300* p. 46) and two shops in the City of London (*CChR 1257-1300* p. 263).

³⁷⁸ For the charters to which these examples refer, see *CChR 1226-57*, pp. 5, 55, 93, 109, 351, 354, 441, 447, 451, 452 and *CChR 1257-1300* p. 23.

³⁷⁹ See, for example, *CChR 1226-57* pp. 237 and 283. For the exact mechanics of how the estates of converted Jews were acquired for the crown, albeit focusing more closely on the reign of Edward I, see R.R. Mundill, *England’s Jewish Solution: Experiment and Expulsion, 1262-1290* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 77-101.

masses of poor Jews forced by circumstances into conversion were taken as life corrodians into the *Domus Conversorum*, or into other monasteries under sufferance.³⁸⁰ Other alleged reasons for the expropriation of Jewish property were sometimes specified in the charters themselves, including homicide, forgery, felony, and the circumcision or ultimately the crucifixion of a Christian boy.³⁸¹ This last entry refers to the death of 'Little St. Hugh of Lincoln' two years previously: an infamous case of blood libel.³⁸² The treatment of England's Jews was a world away from judicial impartiality and free trials, especially when proof of their guilt could be so lucrative. That said, there were clearly English Jews who were able to keep their heads above the waterline, if only temporarily. As mentioned previously, sixteen Henrician charters had Jews as their beneficiaries. Most commonly, these charters simply 'granted' land back to the families of the recently deceased, presumably after the receipt of suitable payment.³⁸³ Of course, unrelated Jews could also acquire these lands or properties, once they had likewise rendered the necessary fine.³⁸⁴ The office of 'Archpresbyter of the Jews' was also created and bestowed by charter upon Aaron of York, and the election of Elias le Evesque to the same office was confirmed by the same medium.³⁸⁵

The great majority of Henrician charter recipients were men, who generally participated more actively and openly in the kinds of property-related transactions most suited for charters. The degree of economic, legal and social agency exercised by women in thirteenth-century society

³⁸⁰ For poor Jews taken in as corrodians, J. Greatrex, 'Monastic Charity for Jewish Converts: The Requisition of Corrodies by Henry III', *Studies in Church History* 29 (1992), pp. 132-143. For monasteries being unhappy with the king's demand that they take in these Jews, see R.C. Stacey, 'The Conversion of Jews to Christianity in Thirteenth Century England', *Speculum* 67 (1992), pp. 263-283.

³⁸¹ *CChR* 1226-57, pp. 55, 68, 218, 268, 467, respectively.

³⁸² For an essay on the proliferation of increasingly bizarre 'allegations' of murderous Jewish activity in the thirteenth century, see R. C. Stacey, 'Adam of Bristol' and Tales of Ritual Crucifixion in Medieval England', *Thirteenth-Century England* 11 (2007), pp. 1-15.

³⁸³ For example, see two charters, *CChR* 1226-57, p. 76.

³⁸⁴ For an example which specifically references that a fine was made, see *CChR* 1257-1300, p. 27.

³⁸⁵ For Aaron of York, see *CChR* 1226-57, p. 225. For Elias le Evesque, see *CChR* 1257-1300, p. 8. For more on the office of Archpresbyter of the Jews, see Mundill, *The King's Jews*, p. 46.

remains a complex and sensitive subject, and like most aspects of medieval ‘society’ it is highly dependent on the social stratum under consideration. Charters sent to nunneries, for example, did not meaningfully differ in their range of subject-matter from those sent to monasteries. As well as the usual fairs, markets, debt-quittances, quit-claims, and land or cash gifts, female-only institutions could even be granted right of free warren over their lands.³⁸⁶ Of the 614 charters definitely sent to monastic houses, 97 (nearly one in six) were sent to female-only institutions and the abbesses or prioresses in charge of them. Since celibacy laws equally precluded abbots and abbesses from engaging in familial empire-building, there was none of the imperative, otherwise expressed among the lay aristocracy, for women to focus on child-rearing and household management.³⁸⁷ That said, many nunneries were beset by problems, chief among which were poverty and relative lack of proficiency in Latin. Chaplains, who might have helped turn these problems around, were often hard to come by.³⁸⁸

As with the realities for women in monastic institutions, the treatment of lay women by the law was highly dependent on class. Many of the charters for women were driven by English marriage law, which was greatly to the benefit of men. On her death, a woman’s inherited property passed to her husband for his life use if she had born a living child, but if the situations were reversed, the dower of the widow was only a portion of the husband’s estate that she held for her life, and there were severe restrictions on its use.³⁸⁹ This meant that, while most elite marriages did not quite reach the unscrupulousness of that inveterate moral vacuum King John, who married and discarded Isabella of Gloucester to avail himself of her lands, they could be

³⁸⁶ These grants were made to Abbess Ela and the nuns of Lacock and the prioress and nuns of Campsey. See *CChR 1226-57*, pp. 340, 369.

³⁸⁷ J. Ward, *Women in England in the Middle Ages* (London, 2006), p. 144.

³⁸⁸ S. Thompson, *Women Religious: the Founding of English Nunneries after the Norman Conquest* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 13-15.

³⁸⁹ B. Hanawalt, *The Wealth of Wives: Women, Law, and Economy in Late Medieval London* (Oxford, 2007), p. 55.

very profitable for men who navigated them properly. To illustrate how aristocratic women could be treated in this thirteenth-century world, let us examine Hubert de Burgh's campaign of self-enrichment during his spell of *de facto* control over the governmental machine. Though as justiciar he received numerous charters with himself as sole beneficiary, nineteen charters (all of them permanent grants) explicitly mention his wife Margaret and their heirs as co-beneficiaries.³⁹⁰ There was also a single grant, involving the gift of three manors, in which Margaret de Burgh and her infant daughter (also Margaret) were listed as beneficiaries without Hubert as a co-beneficiary. Interestingly, the elder Margaret was always defined as the wife of Hubert de Burgh in the shared charters, but was instead defined as the sister of the King of Scotland when she benefited with her daughter.³⁹¹ Finally, a single charter to Hubert de Burgh granting him the inheritance of Nigel de Mowbray explicitly excludes the 'reasonable dower' of Nigel's widow, Maud.³⁹² The other 29 charters in which women were co-beneficiaries were mostly unremarkable examples of aristocratic husbands and wives being referenced together along with their heirs of the body. The one slight exception is a charter in which Petronilla de Vivonne is referenced along with her husband, Richard de la More, without being given his surname: a unique lapse.³⁹³

Though women of the upper sorts were often co-beneficiaries with their husbands or fathers, there were slightly more charters (57) received by lay female beneficiaries in their own right. This should not be a surprise: in thirteenth-century England, despite the undoubted

³⁹⁰ Though charters for Hubert and Margaret de Burgh are a prominent fixture of the charter rolls before the justiciar's spectacular political fall from grace, the best place to find them is in a single glut at the beginning of the charter roll for 13 Henry III. This can be found in *CChR Henry III 1226-57*, pp. 81-3. For an overview of the life of Margaret of Scotland's life and the circumstances of her life in England, see Katherine Weikert, 'The Princesses who might have been Hostages: The Custody and Marriages of Margaret and Isabella of Scotland, 1209-1220s', in *Medieval Hostageship c. 700-c.1500: Hostage, Captive, Prisoner of War, Guarantee, Peacemaker*, ed. Matthew Bennett and Katherine Weikert (Abingdon, 2016).

³⁹¹ *CChR Henry III 1226-57*, p. 60.

³⁹² *CChR Henry III 1226-57*, p. 126.

³⁹³ *CChR Henry III 1257-1300*, p. 70.

subordination of women to men *in general*, hierarchy usually took precedence over patriarchy as far as status was concerned. There would have been no confusion as to whether a male serf was more important than a female countess, and women of that rank without living husbands could exercise considerable autonomy.³⁹⁴ Such legally-independent high-status women were often either heiresses in their own right and/or widows benefiting from a generous dower, generally of a third of their late husband's landed property.³⁹⁵ To take three of the best known examples, Ela Countess of Salisbury, Margaret Countess of Lincoln, and Isabel Countess of Aumale were all heiresses by birth, with the latter two also inheriting considerable estates in their widowhood.³⁹⁶ Such powerful women could prove adroit in manoeuvring around the social conventions barring women from particular roles in society such as sheriffdoms or constabships, leveraging their immense landholdings to open doors that would be firmly shut to any woman without such independent power.³⁹⁷ While it is certainly true that many of the charters received by these women were mundane, and might equally have been received by any man of equivalent social class, there are also documents that reveal much about the

³⁹⁴ Much of modern scholarship has emphasised this point, but for an example see L.E. Mitchell, 'The Lady is a Lord', esp. pp. 78-80.

³⁹⁵ A classic article-length explanation of the rights and position of heiresses and widows in thirteenth-century England is J.C. Holt, 'The Heiress and the Alien' in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 35 (1985), pp. 1-28.

³⁹⁶ Despite having been three of the most powerful and influential lay women in thirteenth-century England, none of these countesses are currently the subject of a standalone biography. See the following items for some pertinent information:

Ela of Salisbury: M.W. Labarge, *A Small Sound of the Trumpet: Women in Medieval Life* (Boston, 1986), pp. 108-11.

Margaret of Lincoln: L.E. Mitchell, 'Like Mother, Like Daughter: The Parallel Careers of Margaret de Quency and Margaret de Lacy' in *Portraits of Medieval Women: Family, Marriage and Politics in England 1225-1350* ed. L.E. Mitchell (New York, 2003), pp. 29-42.

See also: Louise J. Wilkinson, 'Women as Sheriffs in Early Thirteenth-Century England', in *English Government in the Thirteenth Century*, ed. Adrian L. Jobson (Woodbridge, 2004), 111-24; for Margaret, Louise J. Wilkinson, 'Pawn and Political Player: Observations on the Life of a Thirteenth-Century Countess', *Historical Research* 73 no. 181 (2000), pp. 105-23.

Isabella of Aumale: B. English, *The Lords of Holderness 1086-1260: A Study in Feudal Society* (Oxford, 1979). Isabella is discussed throughout the book, but especially relevant are pp. 51-4, 67-77, 169-72, 227-34.

³⁹⁷ See L.J. Wilkinson, 'Women, Politics and Local Government in the Thirteenth Century' available online as part of the Henry III Fine Rolls Project:

https://finerollshenry3.org.uk/redist/pdf/Wilkinson_Women_Politics_Local_Govt.pdf

circumstances of the women who received them.³⁹⁸

Widows receiving their promised dower lands figure prominently in the charter rolls, sometimes with men in the background attempting to capitalise in some way. Emma de Bella Fago (Beaufai), for example, may have received a manor for life as part of her dower, but most of the charter confirming her in this is taken up with clarifying that the said manor would fall into the hands of the reliably grasping Hubert de Burgh upon her death.³⁹⁹ Happily, there are other examples in which such wealthy and independent women were able to go their own way without undue interference. The process by which Ela of Salisbury transitioned from widowed countess, to monastic patron, to *bona fide* abbess, finally retiring back into the role of a powerful private person, is documented in a series of charters illustrating each step along the way.⁴⁰⁰ To take another example, a complicated series of letters patent, written in French and enrolled on the charter roll, detailed an arrangement between Isabel de Forz, countess of Aumale and Devon, and Queen Eleanor.⁴⁰¹ They define the marriage arrangements between Edmund, son of Henry III, and Aveline, Isabella's daughter, and the £2000 of sureties to be paid by the queen in order to facilitate this. As well as illustrating the immense importance of securing Isabella's estates for the royal family, a problem which would dog the future Edward I for many years, this example also illustrates the grey area between charters and the grander

³⁹⁸ Margaret de Quency, for example, only received a single, disappointingly mundane charter granting the right to hold a fair. See *CChR 1226-57* p. 393. Land she held in dower was referenced in another charter (see *CChR 1226-57* p. 362), but she is otherwise conspicuous only by her absence from the charter rolls. Clemency, Countess of Chester, received right of free warren, just as any male earl might expect to do. See *CChR 1226-57*, p. 353.

³⁹⁹ *CChR 1226-57*, p. 49.

⁴⁰⁰ It should also be noted that for the purposes of these statistics I have not counted charters clearly received by Ela in her capacity as abbess in the total of charters received by unmarried lay women. For the complete group of charters received by Ela in both a secular and religious capacity, see *CChR 1226-57*, pp. 77, 112, 159, 221, 225, 273, 274, 332, and 369.

⁴⁰¹ *CChR 1257-1300* pp. 121-2.

forms of letters patent.⁴⁰² Apart from her role in the complex matrimonial and pecuniary arrangements with Isabel de Forz, Queen Eleanor was a formidable female player elsewhere in the game of thirteenth-century land ownership. Aided by her uncle, Peter of Savoy, Eleanor was able to extract a generous dower settlement from the king, which stood her in good stead as an extremely rich widow after his death.⁴⁰³ The only two Henrician charters in which the queen was a beneficiary pertain to the granting of her dower, though she was sometimes referenced along with her husband in other charters.⁴⁰⁴

2.8 Witnesses to Royal Charters, 1227-72

Unlike letters close or even letters patent, royal charters in the reign of King Henry III were never witnessed by one man alone. Neither the chancellor nor the king could unilaterally attest such documents, since charters typically conveyed permanent grants which had to be treated with the appropriate solemnity.⁴⁰⁵ Instead, these charters were witnessed by a group of courtiers who could vary considerably in rank and social standing.⁴⁰⁶ This witness information was then carefully copied onto the charter rolls in approximately descending order of social rank, though

⁴⁰² For details on the attempts by Edward I to purchase Isabella's estates, see B. English, 'Isabella de Fortibus', *ODNB*.

⁴⁰³ Two of the most widely cited works on Queen Eleanor's powers and estates were both written by Margaret Howell. For a general overview of the queen's waxing and waning powers and those of the Savoyard party, see M. Howell, *Eleanor of Provence: Queenship in Thirteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1998). For specific information on the queen's estates and other resources, see M. Howell, 'The Resources of Eleanor of Provence as Queen Consort', *English Historical Review*, 102 (1987), pp. 372–93.

⁴⁰⁴ The two dower charters may be found at *CChR* 1226-57, pp. 218, 268. Charters in which she is only referenced may be found at *CChR* 1257-1300, pp. 3, 12, 100.

⁴⁰⁵ Though he could not issue a charter based solely on his own attestation as his grandfather Henry II sometimes did, it does seem that Henry could exert considerable influence on the form and content of his own documentary emissions. See N.C. Vincent, 'The Personal Role of the Kings of England in the Production of Royal Letters and Charters (to 1330)', in C. Feller and C. Lackner (eds.), *Manu propria. Vom eigenhändigen Schreiben der Mächtigen (13.–15. Jahrhundert)*, (Vienna, 2016), pp. 178-9 for Henry II and pp. 182-3 for Henry III.

⁴⁰⁶ Maxwell-Lyte, *Historical Notes on the Uses of the Great Seal*, p. 234.

the specific computation here has been hotly disputed.⁴⁰⁷ In theory, this makes royal charters an invaluable resource for mapping the comings and goings of King Henry's court, since the only people available to attest would be those ministers and other courtiers present with the king or chancellor.⁴⁰⁸ Sadly, there is as yet no clear understanding of the exact process by which the witnesses were selected or how they conducted their attestation. In this as in so many other processes of the royal chancery, fragmentary data has to be pieced together. Maxwell-Lyte observed that there was at least one known instance (albeit in the reign of Edward I) of a charter being read aloud in the presence of the witnesses prior to its authentication.⁴⁰⁹ Since writs authorising the issue of charters never mention witnesses, Maxwell-Lyte further theorised that their names must have been inserted *post hoc* in chancery, well after the initial drafts were drawn up.⁴¹⁰ This seems somewhat implausible, not least because we have several draft charters, never issued from chancery, in which the witness lists are fully set out. Whatever the exact bureaucratic arrangements by which the witnesses were selected and summoned, what really matters is their presence. Once established, this proof-of-presence has three main uses. Firstly, and most obviously, it can be invaluable for the writing of biographies or any other narrative-based history that relies on these details being captured. Secondly, the particular spread of witnesses present at a given time and location can be useful for institutional histories: that of Parliament, for instance.⁴¹¹ Thirdly, it can provide an insight into who was in favour or disfavour at the king's court, as well as which particular courtiers or visitors deemed it most important to become immersed in legalism and the processes of documentary government.

⁴⁰⁷ J.C. Russell, 'Attestation of Charters in the Reign of King John', *Speculum*, 15 (1940), pp. 480-98.

⁴⁰⁸ Carpenter, 'The English Royal Chancery in the Thirteenth century', p. 57.

⁴⁰⁹ Maxwell-Lyte, *Historical Notes on the Uses of the Great Seal*, pp. 234-5.

⁴¹⁰ Brevity must surely have been another consideration. After all, why *should* such a brief and unimportant writ be expected to contain witnessing information? For the original point, see Maxwell-Lyte, *Historical Notes on the Uses of the Great Seal*, p. 235.

⁴¹¹ J.R. Maddicott, *The Origins of the English Parliament, 924-1327* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 454-72.

For the sake of economy (seldom a wise criterion!), witness lists were excluded from the printed *Calendar of Charter Rolls*.⁴¹² This was a grave error on the part of the calendar's creators, which has denied us easy access to critical data. Fortunately, given the mind-numbing prospect of having to transcribe all witnesses from every original charter-roll entry, I have been generously granted access to the notebooks of C.A.F. Meekings, the former Deputy Keeper of the Public Record Office.⁴¹³ Meekings laboriously recorded the witnesses for each charter preserved on the charter roll, providing graphical tables to represent who was at court and when. As well as his data, which I have used for the purposes of statistical analysis but otherwise left unmodified, Meekings also conceived a taxonomy of all the major categories of person who might witness a charter. I have listed these categories below, along with certain prominent examples. The complete list of all witnesses and the numbers of charters they attested, broken down into chronological segments, is available in the appendices (attached separately).

- 1.) **Prelates**, usually bishops but sometimes abbots or priors. Many of these men had been chancery staff prior to their ecclesiastical promotions, such as Walter (de Mauclerc) of Carlisle, Walter (de Gray) of York or William (of Kilkenny) of Ely. Interestingly, it would seem that there was some acceptance that *current* chancery men should not take up ecclesiastical office without first renouncing their secular offices, though King Henry was able to persuade Silvester (de Everdon) of Carlisle to do just that, with difficulty.⁴¹⁴ William (de Cantilupe) of Worcester had worked for the exchequer.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹² Except in the entries for verbatim *inspeximus* entries.

⁴¹³ With particular thanks to David Crook for the loan of these invaluable books.

⁴¹⁴ H.R.T. Summerson, 'The King's Clericulus: the Life and Career of Silvester de Everdon, Bishop of Carlisle, 1247–1254', *Northern History*, 28 (1992), pp. 70–91.

⁴¹⁵ For an overview of the territories and rank of the Cantilupe family, presented in comparison with the fellow-marcher Corbet family, see M.Y. Julian-Jones, *Land of the Raven and the Wolf: Family Power and Strategy in*

Walter (of Kirkham) of Durham had been a senior accountant in the wardrobe department.⁴¹⁶ These men and others like them seem to have remained active in witnessing charters well after their promotions, presumably while staying at their London palaces. Eminent bishops without a royal-administrative background did not seem to be anywhere near as active in witnessing charters: thus we find Boniface (of Savoy), Edmund (of Abingdon) of Canterbury, and Robert (Grosseteste) of Lincoln, for example, witnessing very few royal charters.⁴¹⁷ The great exception to this rule was Peter (des Roches) of Winchester, whose attestation of 90 charters is easily explained by his immense political importance in the 1230s.⁴¹⁸ A final episcopal case is that of Aymer de Lusignan, a member of the Lusignan clan and the King's half-brother, bishop-elect of Winchester from 1250-60.⁴¹⁹ When he was simply the king's half-brother, Aymer attested very few charters. After becoming bishop-elect, particularly from 1252-56, he became a reasonably prolific witness by episcopal standards.

2.) **Magnates**, often Earls. These men can also be divided into two broad categories: the king's relatives, whether Poitevin or Savoyard, and everyone else. Peter of Savoy,

the Welsh March c.1199-c.1300 - The Corbets and the Cantilupes. Unpublished PhD Thesis (Cardiff University 2014).

⁴¹⁶ A.J. Piper, 'Walter of Kirkham (d.1260), administrator and bishop of Durham', *ODNB* (2004).

<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/15668>.

⁴¹⁷ These three bishops were all learned, important and/or respected men even outside their lofty episcopal titles. Edmund of Abingdon was a well-known mathematician and dialectician, Boniface was part of the Savoyard magnate clan, and Robert Grosseteste was one of the fathers of scientific method. The fact that none of these men found much time for royal charter attestation can serve as a helpful reminder to the administrative historian that there was and is a life beyond the royal court and explicit participation in national politics. See (respectively) C.H. Lawrence, *St Edmund of Abingdon: A Study in Hagiography and History* (Oxford, 1960); D.A. Carpenter, (who has a high opinion of Boniface), *The Penguin History of Britain: The Struggle for Mastery: Britain 1066-1284* (London, 2004), pp. 342, 437-9; and J. McEvoy, 'The Chronology of Robert Grosseteste's Writings on Nature and Natural Philosophy', *Speculum*, 58 (1983), pp. 614-655.

⁴¹⁸ Vincent, *Peter des Roches: An Alien in English Politics*, pp. 340-37.

⁴¹⁹ Aymer was also known as "de Valence", in the manner of his brother William. He fought for many years against having his election quashed, finally succeeding immediately before dying. His career is fleshed out in H.W. Ridgeway, 'The Ecclesiastical Career of Aymer de Lusignan, Bishop Elect of Winchester, 1250-1260', in *The Cloister and the World: Essays in Medieval History in Honour of Barbara Harvey*, ed. J. Blair and B.J. Golding (Oxford, 1996), pp. 148-77.

Richard of Cornwall/Poitou/Almain, William de Valence, and Guy and Geoffrey de Lusignan not only received vast patronage from King Henry, but also attested hundreds of his charters. Richard, for all his other faults, could not be thought of as an alien, being full sibling of the king. Indeed, when he embarked upon his effort to be elected Holy Roman Emperor, it seems that many of the other English magnates were sorry to lose him.⁴²⁰ This tendency to attest as well as receive was generally not shared by the king's sons, Edward and Edmund, who witnessed only a handful of charters, even after their return from crusade. Beyond the king's complicated family, the most common charter witnesses from the magnate class were Roger Bigod, Humphrey de Bohun, Richard de Clare and John de Plessis.⁴²¹ The Bohuns, father and son, are possibly unique among the English nobility in that they attested hundreds of charters whilst receiving only one of which they were the beneficiary.⁴²² Neither Simon nor Peter de Montfort (no relation) were out of the witness lists for very long, though they did not attest as many charters as such individuals as John de Plessis or the king's half-brothers. As with the list of attesting bishops, there was a significant difference in charter attestation between a small number of hyper-active magnates and those who seem to have been only occasionally present at court.

3.) **Barons.** Here, Meekings' categorisation sometimes resulted in overlap between barons and magnates of different periods. Overall, as might be expected, the lower-ranking barons had a much less consistent presence at court than did the earls, usually only

⁴²⁰ H.E. Hilpert, 'Richard of Cornwall's Candidature for the German Throne and the Christmas 1256 Parliament at Westminster', *Journal of Medieval History*, VI (1980), pp. 185–98, and particularly pp. 190–1.

⁴²¹ The Bigod family, with their great power base in Norfolk, had also been very important in King John's reign. Keeping them and others like them happy without rendering them too powerful must have been one of the king's primary domestic imperatives. For an in-depth examination of the Bigods in this period, see M. Morris, *The Bigod Earls of Norfolk in the Thirteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 2005).

⁴²² That solitary charter may be found at *CChR* 1226-57, p. 456.

attesting a handful of charters each. However, some from the baronial class did attest a great many charters, even excluding those who did so in their capacity as permanent members of the household staff. Three of the five Basset brothers (Fulk, Gilbert and Philip) attested a great number of charters spread across the reign, in Philip's case even when he was not serving as justiciar.⁴²³ Roger de Montalt, Roger de Leybourne, Roger de Mortimer and Roger de Somery were all knights, and yet they attested dozens of charters each. This was not common, however, and presumably derived from their being household knights in some way attached to the king's council.

- 4.) **Household** staff. Of all categories of charter witnesses, it is these men who by far-and-away predominate. No magnate, bishop or baron, no matter how close to the king, could be at court as often as the men who were employed there. Since they had an almost umbilical connection with the king through their running of his household and affairs, it is perhaps unsurprising that the king's stewards were the most prolific witnesses among the household staff. Whether English (Ralph FitzNicholas, Godfrey of Crowcombe, Paulinus Peyvre, Robert Walerand, etc) or alien (Ebulo de Montibus, Imbert Pugeys, Matthias Bezill, Peter Champvent, etc), there seems to have been no steward who was not heavily involved in charter attestation throughout his career.⁴²⁴

⁴²³ Meekings has classified the Bassets as a baronial rather than a magnate family, possibly due to the lack of a single major title-holder acting as the definite *paterfamilias*. Indeed, of all the families of England, the Basset brothers probably represent the biggest challenge in classification, due to the diversity of their careers. At least one brother could feasibly have been inserted into *any* of the Meekings groups: Thomas and Gilbert were household knights, Fulk rose to become Bishop of London, and Philip was a top justice. I have not attempted to modify Meekings' classifications according to my own preferences. W. J. Stewart-Parker examined the Basset siblings in his doctoral thesis, *The Bassets of High Wycombe: Politics, Lordship, Locality and Culture in the Thirteenth Century*, Unpublished PhD Thesis (King's College London, 2015).

⁴²⁴ Robert Walerand was from a good Wiltshire family with a long tradition of forest service. Other members of the family also served the king in various capacities. See A. Harding, 'Robert Walerand (d. 1273)', *ODNB*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/28455>. Paulinus Peyvre had come from a poor family, but through various means managed to acquire the manor of Toddington in Buckinghamshire, where he built a fabulous palace. See D. Lysons, *Magna Britannia: Being a Concise Topographical Account of the Counties of Great Britain, vol 1*:

Less senior than the stewards, and indeed subject to their authority, were the household knights. Many of these were prolific charter witnesses in their own right, such as Robert Aguilon, William Belet (the king's valet), or William de Faukeham. Though fewer in number, there were also prominent chancery clerks among the most common attestors, including John Mansel, William of Kilkenny, and the de Gray clan. Seniority was no guarantee of large numbers of charter attestations for these men. Though Mansel was chancellor and Kilkenny was de-facto chancellor, there were other prominent chancery men who seem to have attested few if any charters at the apex of their careers. Examples in this category include Adam of Chesterton, Henry de Mercinton and Ralph Neville, the latter attesting a fair number of charters for a bishop, but staggeringly few for a chancellor.

- 5.) **Justices.** Though only a relatively small number of men served on the King's Bench, there was nonetheless significant variance in how prolifically they attested charters. The top judges attested a reasonable number of charters, comparable with bishops rather than with the household staff. Both Henry of Bath and Roger of Thirkleby served as chief justices of the Common Pleas, attesting numerous charters whilst in office. Such seniority did not guarantee charter attestations, however. Though senior, neither William of York nor Thomas de Hemgrave were ever foremost among the circuit

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire. (1806), pp. 142-3. As discussed previously, Godfrey of Crowcombe had a long and eventful career as a household knight and steward under both John and Henry. See Carpenter, *Godfrey of Crocombe*. Ralph Fitz Nicholas is a more difficult man to pin down with a definite biography, but he was certainly an appointee of Hubert de Burgh who was nevertheless able to survive the Roches regime. He was, like the other stewards, a knight: he distinguished himself at Saintes in 1242. See Carpenter, *Henry III*, pp. 60, 65, 84, 88, 90, 82, 96, 117, 123, 169, 188, 189, 191, 384. The foreign stewards' careers have been summed up in various articles by Michael Ray. See 'A Vaudois servant of Henry III, Ebal II de Mont (Ebulo de Montibus)' (2017), available online at https://www.academia.edu/31930999/A_Vaudois_servant_of_Henry_III_Ebal_II_de_Mont_Ebulo_de_Montibus?email_work_card=view-paper, and 'Three alien royal stewards in thirteenth-century England: the careers and legacy of Mathias Bezill, Imbert Pugeys and Peter de Champvent', in *Thirteenth Century England X*, ed. M. Prestwich, R. Britnell, and R. Frame (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 50-70.

judges, yet they both attested many charters. Conversely, Robert of Laxton (Lexington), who was chief justice for eight years, managed to witness just six charters across that period. Another of the most prolific attestors was Gilbert of Seagrave, son of the former justiciar Stephen of Seagrave. Gilbert's time at the royal court seems to have been concentrated in the early 1250s, during which period he attested many charters over a brief span of years. So much for nepotism, or more charitably the deployment of family contacts and know-how.⁴²⁵ Most of the other justices seem not to have been so frequently present at court, attesting only one or two charters over a period of years. In many cases these 'justices' served only temporarily, perhaps for a single eyre circuit. Such men may have found places in another royal department (such as Henry de Mercinton), or have sprung from the baronial or knightly classes (as for instance with William de Turberville).

⁴²⁵ The careers of both Gilbert and Stephen de Seagrave are explored in S. Letters, *The Seagrave family c.1160–1295, with an edition of the calendar of the Seagrave cartulary*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, (University of London, 1997).

Table 22: Witness List Entries Divided by Social Group, 1227-72

1227-43	Bishops/Abbots:	Earls/Magnates:	Barons:	Household:	Justices:
Witness List Entries	670	821	522	2355	69
People	22	21	80	54	8
Avg. Attestations Per Person	30.5	39.1	6.5	43.6	8.6
1244-51	Bishops/Abbots:	Earls/Magnates:	Barons:	Household:	Justices:
Witness List Entries	241	787	301	3706	138
People	20	17	76	75	20
Avg. Attestations Per Person	12.1	46.3	4.0	49.4	6.9
1252-56	Bishops/Abbots:	Earls/Magnates:	Barons:	Household:	Justices:
Witness List Entries	414	873	287	4405	184
People	21	15	52	58	16
Avg. Attestations Per Person	19.7	58.2	5.5	75.9	11.5
1256-65	Bishops/Abbots:	Earls/Magnates:	Barons:	Household:	Justices:
Witness List Entries	326	862	751	2339	154
People	15	18	61	83	11
Avg. Attestations Per Person	21.7	47.9	12.3	28.2	14.0
1265-72	Bishops/Abbots:	Earls/Magnates:	Barons:	Household:	Justices:
Witness List Entries	348	327	561	3605	0
People	11	12	30	71	0
Avg. Attestations Per Person	31.6	27.3	18.7	50.8	0.0

MAJORITY (Average per Period)	Bishops/Abbots:	Earls/Magnates:	Barons:	Household:	Justices:
Witness List Entries	399.8	734	484.4	3282	109
People	17.8	16.6	59.8	68.2	11
Avg. Attestations Per Person	22.5	44.2	8.1	48.1	9.9

MAJORITY (Total)	Bishops/Abbots:	Earls/Magnates:	Barons:	Household:	Justices:
Witness List Entries	1999	3670	2422	16410	545
People	89	83	299	341	55
Avg. Attestations Per Person	22.5	44.2	8.1	48.1	9.9

It should be acknowledged that this style of presentation owes as much to Meekings as it does to the raw data. To make sense of such a huge dataset, it is obviously necessary to divide the myriad witnesses into groups. This inevitably intrudes a subjective element into the analysis, since where should the line be drawn between baron and magnate? How to categorise a member

of the household staff who became a bishop? What about part-time justices? It is testimony to Meekings' immense knowledge that he was able to divide hundreds of witnesses up with such commendable consistency, making allowances for the particular vicissitudes of each individual career. For my part, the most important questions to answer are as follows: how prolific was the average witness of each social stratum, and how prolific was his class as a whole? Non-householders of the baronial class constituted 2422 of the witness list entries according to Meekings' calculations, but these were spread across 299 separate individuals. Justices, by contrast, can claim only 545 entries, but spread across just 55 individuals. As such, though a baron was more likely to be found witnessing any given charter than a justice, any individual justice was more likely to have attested a charter than any individual baron.⁴²⁶ Magnates and bishops make for interesting comparison, since the two groups were of comparable size (I calculate 89 vs 86 found amongst the witness lists). This makes it even more striking that magnates were responsible for twice the number of entries claimed by bishops (44.2 average attestations vs 22.5). This ratio was not constant throughout the reign. In the most unstable and strife-ridden periods (1252-6 and 1265-72), magnates particularly predominated over bishops. After Evesham in 1265 the proportions were reversed, with bishops responsible for more witness-list entries than magnates, both in absolute and per-capita terms. Of course, no group of witnesses in any period of Henry's reign came close to the household staff in terms of their frequency of witnessing. Despite being the largest group by far (341 individuals in total), the household still achieved the highest per-capita average of witness-list entries (48.1). That said, the average hides various interesting shifts over time. From 1227-43 and again from 1244-51, for example, magnates attested nearly as many charters (per capita) as householders, though far fewer in absolute terms. In the years of Montfort's ascendancy and the Second Barons' War

⁴²⁶ Bearing in mind the necessary caveat that both groups were highly prone to massive disparity in attestation numbers.

from 1256-65, the proportions briefly flipped. In that period magnates attested nearly twice the per-capita charter entries that householders could claim (47.9 vs 28.2). Again, after the Battle of Evesham, it is striking how much power the magnates lost. In that final period of the reign from 1265 to 1272, it was the householders who claimed almost twice the number of per-capita attestations that the magnates could boast (50.8 vs 27.3). This is a satisfyingly clear indication that prevalence in charter attestation does indeed map closely to real political power.

2.9 Evidence of the Records: Conclusions

It was not until many years after the death of Henry III that charters became obsolete as instruments of royal authority. Indeed, as most universities or towns can attest, their documentary heirs, the sealed letters patent, continue even today to be significant marks of prestige or institutional incorporation. In the thirteenth century, the specificity of their usage made charters less flexible than the nominally inferior letters patent. It was probably inevitable that the chancery should predominantly market only one 'premier' product.⁴²⁷ After all, a similar process took place in France, with costly diplomas yielding place to cheaper charters.⁴²⁸ Why, then, examine charters at all? Modern scholars know all too well that charters were to be eroded in importance in subsequent centuries, and that even before that charters were produced in very small numbers compared to letters patent and especially letters close. As this chapter has demonstrated, it is precisely the solemnity, inflexibility and relative rarity of charters that makes them such a valuable resource. Whatever a charter bestowed was a boon worth having:

⁴²⁷ After having been progressively denuded in status, the charter rolls finally ceased in 1517. What few charters were left, which were primarily ceremonial in nature, were instead recorded on the patent roll. See N.C. Vincent, 'Enrolment in England: Sickness or Cure?', pp. 117-8.

⁴²⁸ The French terms do not precisely correspond to their English equivalents. See Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus*, p. 405.

after all, a chartered grant could not easily be revoked, and the relative rarity of the document type shows that even a generous king like Henry was not prepared to shower them around like confetti. The system of recitation and *inspeximus*, blatant fee-begging operation though it was, demonstrates the widespread demand for the certainty that charters could bring. Ecclesiastical institutions, which must already have been acquainted with papal officialdom, seem to have had the most to gain from a stable system of title-guarantee. Likewise the great magnates, even though the older families seem to have had more difficulty here than the blatant parvenus in milking the system. The episcopal class, who blurred the line between magnates and the religious, seem to have received as many charters as their worldly ambitions dictated. Those bishops who rendered unto God could do without very many charters. But those who made a regular habit of rendering unto Caesar could extract a great deal of use from charter's essentially Roman legal mechanisms. Though they were overwhelmingly a vehicle for the rich, and never for the poor, save in extraordinary cases such as *Magna Carta*, royal charters did offer possibilities for the middling sorts. This social stratum, epitomised by merchants and town burgesses, could occasionally raise the money for a charter of privileges or some other localised liberty.

What of the production of the charters themselves? This was a complicated but heavily professionalised and systematised business, with a set legal language that had to be perfected and maintained, if those who obtained such documents were to have confidence in what they were paying for. The king itinerated around the country, true, but not as widely or as hectically as his father had. The most junior clerks could even be left back at Westminster, since why swell the numbers at court for matters, such as relatively trivial writs, that need never directly concern the king? Those writs or other documents which *were* important could also be handled before reaching the king by the chancellor, or the de-facto chancellor during the years in which

Henry deigned not to bestow the title. By the time charter business got to the king, it must have been filtered down to only such business as that about which he could make meaningful decisions. The rest of the court must have been involved in this process, and here the witness lists show their true importance. With rare but notable exceptions like William of Kilkenny and Humphrey de Bohun, the most prolific witnesses seem also to have been the most prolific recipients of charters. Access to the king's person seems indeed to have been the most important factor, as men such as Hubert de Burgh and Peter des Roches had discovered during the King's minority. As to the chancery itself, it seems to have been a restless, humming machine. Output dropped a little at weekends, but not very much. Holidays were mostly respected, but there are many examples showing clerks working throughout the week, and even on the holiest days of the Christian calendar. Apart from the tasks of engrossing and then recording the charters themselves, there was the additional parallel responsibility of preparing writs of seisin or county-court proclamations for the appropriate sheriffs. Many of these, it seems, were produced on the same day as the charters themselves, with the remainder perhaps understandably delayed by the sheer burden of work. As for those that were dated before rather than after their corresponding charters, it can only be assumed that the clerks were managing the workload by working from drafts. Even during Simon de Montfort's rebellion or the Gascon campaign, the business of documentary government went on.

Section Three: The Evidence of the Scripts

3.1 An Introduction to the Study of Court Hands

In the introduction to Section Two of this thesis, I expressed my twofold desire to get to the heart of clerks' lives in the royal chancery, and to focus my investigations on academic roads not already well-trodden. Happily, my research has led me down a path that satisfies both conditions. The problem facing us is that, until now, no historian has ever had concrete knowledge of how the labours of individual clerks were allocated within the royal chancery. The solution lies in analysis of the handwriting of chancery material, in my case charters and charter rolls, to determine which scribes wrote what material. Up to a point, this has been attempted before, albeit for rather earlier periods. The handwriting of original charter engrossments from the reign of Henry I to that of Henry II was analysed by T.A.M. Bishop. He was able to sketch out such details as the lengths of careers, influences of scribes upon each other, and possible countries of origin: a tremendous scholarly achievement.⁴²⁹ Unfortunately, as these reigns predated the emergence of the charter rolls in 1199, Bishop could only work with the small selection of surviving original charters available for these reigns. This means that, while a sense of scribes working for the king can be gleaned from Bishop's study, the proportion of documents surviving from before 1189 is so small that it is impossible to say with confidence who wrote few and who wrote many documents. With the rolls at the palaeographer's disposal, the list of questions that it is possible to answer lengthens dramatically. What was the allocation of labour in writing the charter rolls? Were scribes regularly or irregularly employed? Did the scribes employed frequently on the rolls write any, few, or many (surviving) charter engrossments? Did the same scribe necessarily write an engrossment and its corresponding enrolment? Were the main chancery rolls series written by

⁴²⁹ T.A.M. Bishop, *Scriptores Regis*.

the same scribes? The research possibilities are so varied, it is shocking that this has not already been attempted.⁴³⁰

Before focusing on the specifics of charter engrossment and the rolls, it is worth making a few general points about the study of medieval handwriting, here looking in particular to how chancery hands took on their distinctive appearance, and how it is possible with training and experience to tell the scribes apart from their handwriting alone. Apart from inevitable individual differences in motor skills and personal taste, handwriting is further variable according to fashion, technology and writing processes, documentary status, local tradition, or even an explicit philosophy of aesthetics and readability.⁴³¹ The Carolingian Empire was one such philosophically minded institution as far as handwriting was concerned, and the ‘Caroline Minuscule’ style of writing developed in its scriptoria spread across Europe. This writing style was self-consciously Roman in its aesthetics, adapted for medieval sensibilities. Such adaptations included wide spacing between words, clear differentiation between letter forms, and a consistent distinction between upper and lower-case letters.⁴³² Even at this early stage, a separation began to emerge between ‘book’ hands intended for Bibles or other high-status, high-value products which would be written out painstakingly, and ‘documentary’ or ‘business’ hands intended for legal or administrative purposes, which had to be written quickly.⁴³³ By the reign of King Henry III in the thirteenth century, simple and readable Caroline minuscule had

⁴³⁰ A point expressed by Nicholas Vincent in ‘The Shape of the Medieval English State’, pp. 31-2, and ‘Why 1199?’, p. 38.

⁴³¹ Humanistic script, for example, was created in sympathy with the philosophy of Petrarch and others, and was consciously intended as a return to the letter forms (and hence philosophies) of the classical era. See B.L. Ullmann, *The Origin and Development of Humanistic Script* (Rome 1960), particularly the first chapter, pp. 11-21.

⁴³² For more on ‘the perfection and triumph of Caroline minuscule’, see B. Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography: Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, trans. D. O Cróinín and D. Ganz (Cambridge 1990) pp. 112-118.

⁴³³ This process is often erroneously believed to have begun later, as the most iconic business hands are products of the gothic era. For a discussion of the separation of Caroline book and business hands, see G. Cencetti, *Paleografia Latina* (Rome 1978), pp. 119-20.

gone out of fashion, with curves and circles generally being compressed or deleted in favour of straight lines and diamonds. The new style of writing was part of an all-encompassing series of complementary aesthetic trends labelled retroactively as ‘gothic’. The most beautiful and luxurious of these gothic scripts (dubbed by palaeographers as ‘textualis’ or ‘formata’) were too slow to write and too difficult to read, to be of much use for administrative purposes, so book and documentary hands became even further differentiated.

The writers of book hands came increasingly to focus on beauty and uniformity, with minims standardised, and ascenders and descenders minimised as far as possible. Documentary hands were focused on speed and legibility, so cursivity was increased, and ligatures and abbreviations liberally employed. Certain letter forms were simplified, capitals were rounded, and some ascenders and descenders (notably **d**, **r**, and **a**) were exaggerated in length. Once the two types of script had become almost totally separated into discrete styles, they each began to exert influence over the other. On the one hand, a new type of hybrid script emerged, in which cursive charter writing was straightened, neatened, made more regular, and employed as a book hand. The English variant of this phenomenon came to be labelled ‘Cursiva Anglicana’.⁴³⁴ On the other hand, documentary hands proclaimed their status by how much effort was spent to minimise or disguise cursivity. A high-status charter engrossment, despite being written in a quintessentially charter hand, might give the impression of deliberate and slow writing, with individually formed letters and minimal abbreviation. Unlike the charter engrossments dispatched under the great seal, the rolls of the chancery were not intended to be seen by anyone outside chancery. As such, though written in recognisably similar hands and

⁴³⁴ The standard text on these hybrid book-charter hands is, and has been since it was written, M.B. Parkes’s, *English Cursive Book Hands* (Oxford, 1969).

with the same basic letter forms, far less effort was made to disguise cursivity. Abbreviation was also employed more liberally.⁴³⁵

With its roots in the Caroline tradition and having become a separate style of writing in the heyday of gothic scripts, English court hand acted as a house style for the royal chancery for centuries thereafter.⁴³⁶ Not until the widespread adoption of ‘secretary’, a distinctive documentary hand originating in France, did this house style undergo wholesale change.⁴³⁷ This does not mean that the prevailing style of chancery writing was set in aspic until the coming of the new hand. Indeed, it might be more accurate to consider English court hand as a *tradition*, rather than as a set of permanent forms. The hand had centuries to develop in an active office of scribes, able to share both practical and aesthetic insights with each other. As a result, the appearance of a charter from 1150 is markedly different from the exact same type of document written in 1200, 1250, or 1300. Comprehensively mapping these changes in English Court Hands from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries is a Herculean task, and has only been undertaken once - by Charles Johnson, and the future Deputy-Keeper of Public Records, Sir Hilary Jenkinson. Their approach was to trace the development of every capital and minuscule letter form, as well as of prominently used ligatures, abbreviations, and symbols.⁴³⁸ For example, they identified a style of capital **S** which more closely resembles a capital **M**, with a wide ‘beaver tail’ descending below the baseline.⁴³⁹ This style of **S** enjoyed a brief but widely-adopted vogue in the mid thirteenth century, and is well-represented across the decades whose charters I have examined. The absence of such a form means nothing – not even the most

⁴³⁵ L.C. Hector, *The Handwriting of English Documents*, (London, 1957), p. 53.

⁴³⁶ One of the perennial problems with palaeography manuals is that they are more interested in book hands and hybrids than in ‘pure’ business hands, which have less artistic appeal. For an introduction to English court hands that is not afflicted with this problem, see N. Denholm-Young, *Handwriting in England and Wales* (Cardiff 1954), pp.31-40.

⁴³⁷ For reference to the vogue for secretary in England particularly, see Bischoff, *Latin Palaeography*, p. 142 and Parkes *English Cursive Book Hands*, p. xvii.

⁴³⁸ Johnson and Jenkinson, *English Court Hand*.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 47-8.

widely-adopted majuscule letter form ever seems to have achieved total supremacy over all alternatives. The presence of such a form, however, can be useful for diagnostic purposes. All chancery documents from the reign of King Henry III should include a dating clause, but this might be missing or unreadable. Knowledge of when the employed letter forms were in fashion can help roughly determine the age of the document, especially if there are several such forms that reinforce any conclusion. If the dating clause is readable and there is no need to speculate on the age of the document itself, then the age of the scribe might be guessed. If letter forms seem to lean overwhelmingly towards an earlier style than the date, and there are no extenuating circumstances, such as the scribe copying from an older original document, as in an *inspeximus* charter, then it may be speculated that the scribe had learned his trade when the employed forms were in current use. Letter forms could sometimes be altered in style in a gradual but consistent way over the course of decades, with ascenders or descenders gradually shrinking or sprouting, or letter forms morphing in shape. In these cases, it is possible to determine the date of a document (or the age of its scribe) by referring to a continuous ‘scale’, extrapolating the assumed date from at least two known points in the evolution of the form.⁴⁴⁰ Such analysis relies on a degree of consistency in letter forms and decorations, but there is even more palaeographical advantage to be gained from any *inconsistencies* in the hand. Happily, such inconsistency is almost guaranteed – even the most prototypical specimens of a given document type from a given date will employ some mixing-and-matching of forms. English court hands could also be surprisingly unstable, which is to say that a scribe might use different variants of the same letter even in adjacent lines.⁴⁴¹ Though not always helpful when we are trying to date a document or its scribe, this pick-and-mix approach to letter form selection makes it possible to identify when multiple documents contain the same idiosyncrasies of letter selection, and

⁴⁴⁰ This technique was pioneered by Jan Burgers. For a further explanation, see ‘Palaeography and Diplomats: The Script of Charters in the Netherlands during the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries’, in *Quaerendo*, 37 (2007), pp. 1-23.

⁴⁴¹ T.A.M. Bishop discussed the instability of chancery hands in *Scriptores Regis*, pp. 1, 6-7, 20.

are hence are likely to have been the work of the same hand. This approach is almost impossible with a small sample of documents. Even two seemingly totally dissimilar documents can be the work of the same scribe if his intentions for the documents or the circumstances of their creation differed significantly. Pronouncements can be made with much more certainty where surviving document numbers are not measured in single units, but in tens (original charters), hundreds (all surviving chancery originals) or thousands (individual entries on the rolls). With so vast a quantity of documents to examine, it should be no surprise that patterns emerge, and individual scribal preferences and idiosyncrasies become clearer. Again, however, caution is needed. In this case, advanced palaeographical technique and simple common sense are aligned: it is not enough simply to match up whatever letter forms, or combinations of letter forms (if the scribe were unstable in his selections) are employed. Some consideration must be given to whether two hands look physically alike, even if they can be described identically. Fortunately, despite the inevitable subjectivity of such judgements, palaeographers over the course of decades have developed terminology to help standardise conclusions in so far as is possible.

An early pioneer of such holistic analysis of the appearance of handwriting was the eminent French palaeographer, Jean Mallon. Writing nearly four decades after the specialised taxonomy of Johnson and Jenkinson, Mallon synthesised many disparate elements of palaeography into a generalised, seven-point system, by which all historical handwriting could be analysed to distinguish scribal identities:⁴⁴²

- ‘Les formes’, the shapes of letter forms used by the scribe, as previously discussed.
- ‘L’angle d’écriture’, the angle of writing relative to the baseline.

⁴⁴² Mallon, J. *Paléographie romaine* (Madrid, 1952), pp. 22-4.

- ‘Les ductus’, the number, order of writing, and direction of the lines that constitute each letter form.
- ‘Le module’, the modulus, the physical dimensions of the letters.
- ‘Le poids’, the contrast in thickness between the hair lines and shadow lines that can be produced by the nib of a quill pen.
- ‘La matière subjective’, the surface to which writing is applied, such as parchment.
- ‘Les caractères internes’, the internal characteristics of the text, relating to the diplomatic employed for the document’s intended purpose.

As is to be expected of any generalised system, some points here are more relevant than others. In our case, the writing surface is parchment for all our charters and rolls, and of no systematically differentiated quality. Internal characteristics are not of much use either, as there is no evidence to suggest that charter diplomatic changed at all from scribe to scribe. Variation in modulus is more apparent in the original charters than in the rolls, since the former can be ruled and cut to a variety of possible sizes, whereas the latter has a fixed template within which to work. The importance of ductus is situational, as it both informs and is informed by the desired appearance of a letter form.⁴⁴³ If a letter form is of a standardised type, as is often the case, then the ductus will be likewise standardised. Angle of writing is not always a reliable indicator in our corpus of texts. There are hands that deliberately emphasise vertical lines, or forty-five-degree angles, but this is a stylistic choice. There is no guarantee that a scribe will desire to maintain this style across his career. More reliable is the tendency of some scribes to slant certain letters (or symbols like the pilcrow) at particular angles, or to form their minims at an angle slightly off perpendicular to the baseline. Finally, of all the classic Mallonian differentiators, other than letter forms, the most relevant to our charters and chancery rolls is

⁴⁴³ James J. John, ‘Latin Paleography’, in *Medieval Studies: An Introduction*, 2nd edition, ed. J.M.M. Powell (New York 1976), pp. 1-66, especially p. 8.

the contrast in line thickness. It is usually easy to spot whether thick or thin strokes have been used to form a letter or whole document, and scribes seem usually to have achieved consistency in where and how heavily they employed shading.

Since they were first published in 1952, these elements of aesthetic differentiation have not been universally accepted by palaeographers, though they have usually formed the basis of whatever alternative systems have been proposed. Leon Gilissen omitted writing surface and internal characteristics of hands in his own version of Mallon's system, replacing them with the category 'style': a catch-all by which any visual element affecting every form on the page can be described.⁴⁴⁴ More recently, machine-learning has become the holy grail for handwriting differentiation. The goal, which has not yet been realised but may soon be, is to feed large amounts of raw image data into a computer for automatic analysis against known quantities.⁴⁴⁵ I have no access to such science-fiction wizardry, but this is not to deny that my own work has only been made possible by recent advances in consumer digital technology. This has recently become a field in itself – 'digital palaeography'.⁴⁴⁶ My own collection of photographs of chancery rolls numbers 1156 images, to which Professor Nicholas Vincent has contributed a further 108 images of charter originals from his own collection. In the digital age, objective information can be gathered, and subjective judgements can be confirmed, through such simple means as digital rulers and protractors, as well as the manipulation of certain parts of the image overlaid on top of other such images for comparison. There can be no substitute for in-person

⁴⁴⁴ L. Gilissen, *L'expertise des écritures médiévales* (Paris, 1973), p. 50.

⁴⁴⁵ See the following journal article for an outline of how this technology could work: S. He, P. Samara, J. Burgers and L. Schomaker, 'A Multiple-Label Guided Clustering Algorithm for Historical Document Dating and Localisation', in *IEEE Transactions on Image Processing*, 25 (2016), pp. 5252-5265.

⁴⁴⁶ These developments should not be filed away with the pie-in-the-sky, 'move fast and break things' Silicon Valley trends of recent years, they are rooted in subject-specific scholarship and technology in widespread use today. For the best article I have seen on the use of information technology in palaeography, advocating for camera-assisted traditional methods based on Mallonian ideas of form, see M. Aussems and A. Brink, 'Digital Palaeography', in *Schriften des Instituts für Dokumentologie und Editorik*, ed. M. Rehbein, P. Sahle, T. Schassan (Norderstedt 2009), pp. 293-308.

document examination, but no archive office would ever permit dozens of documents to be examined simultaneously, nor the unrolling of several disparate chancery rolls for side-by-side comparison.

It is important not to lose sight of the fact that any survey of chancery hands in the reign of King Henry III cannot *purely* focus on handwriting. True, there would be no value in the exercise if the identification of hands were not rigorously carried out, and a working knowledge of changing chancery scribal practice helps focus attention on the elements that can be properly differentiated. But all this must be in service to the institutional history of the chancery, drawing the right lessons on the movements and actions of scribes from the vast corpus of available evidence. For the charters, charter rolls, or any other chancery rolls of King Henry III, no systematic palaeographical analysis has ever been attempted. The sheer number of documents to be collected and examined is an obvious hindrance, although this can be mitigated by performing a more selective study, as I have done here. It has also been generally asserted by Pierre Chaplais and others that charter hands were significantly more clearly differentiated in the late twelfth century than they were by the mid-thirteenth, by which time they had achieved such a degree of uniformity that they needed a special scribal ‘signature’ to identify their scribe.⁴⁴⁷ As will be demonstrated, this is only partly true. Certainly, the chancery hands reached a greater degree of uniformity, and followed a more consistent visual style, from the 1240s onwards. This phenomenon became even clearer in the subsequent reign of King Edward I. Nevertheless, the scribes of that period did not achieve anything close to total uniformity in their handwriting, and indeed do not seem to have been trying for anything more than general

⁴⁴⁷ Chaplais, *English Royal Documents*, pp. 39-44 and pp. 50-52, discussed in Vincent ‘Scribes of Henry II’, pp. 135-6

consistency. At any rate, this has not proved a serious barrier to the identification of individual hands.

The charters of King Henry II have been much better served by systematic analyses than those of his grandson, and these analyses have served as a model for my own work.⁴⁴⁸ Léopold Delisle kickstarted this process before 1909, followed by Élie Berger who by 1927 had published an extensive compendium of then-known charters of Henry II concerning lands in modern France.⁴⁴⁹ Delisle's 1909 introductory volume, which runs to over 500 pages, set the standard for much future scholarly work, explaining how to build up a picture of medieval royal government from the documents that have survived. For example, Delisle observed that the 'intitulatio' of the charters changed to incorporate the phrase 'Dei gratia' in charters referencing events after 1174. This gave him an effective dating formula to apply to charters that would otherwise have been datable by only much wider criteria.⁴⁵⁰ Most of the rest of Delisle's analysis was concerned with either diplomatic, such as the wording of certain charter types, or the careers of individual witnesses.⁴⁵¹ Delisle also explicitly addressed charters written outside the royal chancery, showing that he was concerned with the identities of the scribes writing them. Again, these deductions arose from connections between beneficiaries and the use of non-standard phraseology, not from handwriting.⁴⁵² Today, Berger's edition, but by no means all of Delisle's introductory material has been rendered obsolete by the newer, longer, more comprehensive, more discursive set of six volumes (with two more on the way) edited by Nicholas Vincent.⁴⁵³

⁴⁴⁸ There were no chancery rolls before 1199, so these do not feature in any such investigation of chancery output.

⁴⁴⁹ Delisle et Berger, *Recueil des actes de Henri II*.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid, vol. i, pp.1-38.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid. Regarding wording- pp.196-247. Regarding witnesses- pp. 333-505.

⁴⁵² Ibid. pp. 278-283.

⁴⁵³ N.C. Vincent, *The Letters and Charters of Henry II*, 8 vols (Oxford, 2020-).

Where Delisle was the first to collate and comment upon a coherent set of medieval English royal charters, T.A.M. Bishop was the first to do so using palaeography as his principal analytical tool. In his *Scriptores Regis* (1961), Bishop analysed a corpus of about 750 extant royal charters, spanning the period from 1100-1189. Of these 750, Bishop considered that about 450 charters were provably written in chancery hands, and from this smaller group he discerned the career patterns of 48 distinct scribes.⁴⁵⁴ Bishop's style of palaeographical analysis was thoroughly modern for its time, with each script holistically considered according to the English and European differentiators laid out above. Indeed, since he was working with a geographically and chronologically limited set of hands and scribes, Bishop was able to develop certain methods of his own, towards the differentiation of documentary handwriting. Firstly, he noted that personal handwriting could be significantly visually impacted both by the house style of its originating scriptorium (not necessarily the royal chancery in this era), and by the changing trends and fashions influencing all scribes.⁴⁵⁵ Where the dates of charters could be deduced, as per Delisle's methods and others, these fashions could be more easily traced. Where not, then any already observed handwriting trends might help date a document, though without optimal precision. In the same vein, Bishop noted that various long-serving scribes had both an immature and a mature personal style, distinct from general trends in fashion, which could be of further use in dating. On the other hand, he cautioned that differences in ink and parchment quality could make the same scribe's handwriting appear different in two or more instances, this time without any great diagnostic utility. So too could the amount of effort put in by a scribe on an important, versus a less important document.⁴⁵⁶ As with Johnson and

⁴⁵⁴ Bishop defined a likely chancery hand as one that was used in at least two charters not intended for the same beneficiary. p. 1. His estimates on number of extant charters are now out of date, not least thanks to the Vincent edition of Henry II charters. (see footnote above).

⁴⁵⁵ There is even a difference in style noticeable from the chancery of Stephen to that of Henry II, presumably as the clerks of the former found themselves out of favour at the court of the latter. Ibid. pp. 13-15.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid. pp. 4-5.

Jenkinson, Bishop feared that the instability of scribal use of letter forms might be a diagnostic hindrance, though unlike them he did note that in the majority of cases, letter form usage was reliable *enough* to determine a scribe with confidence. Finally, Bishop foreshadowed the later assertions of Leon Gilissen and others, by emphasising the importance of indescribable elements of a scribe's visual style, such as the movement of a scribe's pen round an angle.⁴⁵⁷

With specialised historical and palaeographical knowledge, as well as his own rules and observations of the behaviour of handwriting over the course of scribal careers of twenty years or more, Bishop was able to reach several important conclusions as to the behaviour of the royal chancery as an institution. Many of these are not relevant to my own examination of the chancery of King Henry III, as the institution had changed so much in the interim. Charters were no longer written in the scriptoria of their beneficiaries by the 1220s, for example, nor have I encountered any evidence that Henry III's scribes were making their own decisions as to the wording of the charters they drafted.⁴⁵⁸ That aside, Bishop reached other conclusions that are both instructive as to his methods, and useful as insights into ongoing chancery practice. Firstly, Bishop noted that scribes of the royal chancery could spend long careers writing charters, in once case as long as twenty-two years, and that this career pattern tended not to be broken up by other document-writing employment. This is true even if the scribe was known to have written other types of document before or after his continuous employment with the chancery.⁴⁵⁹ Though I have not yet encountered a hand lasting more than a few years in my work on Henry III, I have found that once a hand 'disappeared' from the charters and records, it never re-appeared later. Secondly, Bishop was able to calculate the size of the permanent

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid. For reference to letter forms not being enough to determine the identity of a scribe, see. p. 7. For indescribable evidence being at least as important as quantifiable evidence, see p. 9.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid. For beneficiary production, see pp. 3, 6, 10. For beneficiaries formulating their own charters, see p. 20.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 20-25.

chancery establishment from the number of concurrent hands active at any given time. During the period that he examined, he found that among the chancery-produced charters, there were a minimum of two and a maximum of seven ‘regular’ scribes working in chancery. Bishop attributed the periods with six or seven scribes to gluts in charter production, such as the beginning of Henry II’s reign, when the king refused to honour the acts of Stephen and instead insisted on renewing large numbers of grants and privileges. Conversely, he attributed the periods of just two or three scribes to the breakdown in government under Stephen and, later, to the monopolisation of duties by trusted scribes under Henry II.⁴⁶⁰ Again, these patterns have been reflected in my own research. I have found no documentary evidence for governmental collapse, even during the Second Barons’ War, perhaps reflecting the increased maturity of Henry III’s chancery. However, I have encountered evidence of both monopolisation by trusted scribes during times in which few documents were produced (particularly in the early 1240s), and the retaining of many scribes during periods of hectic document production (as in the late 1220s, after the end of the minority). Indeed, monopolisation can be detected even during the periods of glut, as can be seen from the charter rolls 11 and 13 Henry III.

No survey of important palaeographical investigations into the English royal chancery would be complete without reference to Teresa Webber, whose work has been incredibly influential in recent times.⁴⁶¹ An acknowledged authority on handwriting and document production across several time periods, regions, and institutions, Webber has been able to make judgements on topics for which few other people have the required expertise or ‘eye’. Building on the work

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid. For gluts, see p. 30. For government breakdown, see p. 2.

⁴⁶¹ Webber’s work has been particularly significant for me personally. My MA thesis was partly based on testing her discovery that the Lincoln 1215 Magna Carta was written by a scribe from Lincoln Cathedral (see <https://magnacartaresearch.org/read/feature/of/the/month/Jun/2015/3>), and this thesis has been greatly influenced by her work on the charter scribes of Salisbury Cathedral. See T. Webber, *Scribes and Scholars at Salisbury Cathedral c. 1075–c. 1125* (Oxford, 1992).

of Bishop and others, and keeping to the same time period that he investigated in *Scriptores Regis*, Webber was able to add the corpus of the charters of the archbishops of Canterbury and the earls of Chester to her own examination of twelfth-century court hands.⁴⁶² With over 800 such charters to examine, she has both explained the changing fashions and conventions in charter hands and traced where these changes originated. Here boiling her complex findings down to basics, Webber found that there was still a great deal of Anglo-Saxon visual heritage in the early twelfth-century court hands, though this was substantially reduced by the end of the century. Over the course of that century, the general trend across all types of charter was to use more cursive letter forms and simplify the old-style letter forms that remained. Webber's research indicates that such up-to-date scribal techniques entered the Anglo-Norman realm through religious houses on both sides of the Channel, perhaps due to their exposure to the documents of the papal chancery.⁴⁶³ By the second quarter of the century, the royal chancery's scribal practices were more archaic even than those of the scribes of the earldom of Chester, let alone those of Canterbury. This deficit had been reduced by the 1150s-60s, as at least two European-trained scribes helped introduce reforms to the royal chancery.⁴⁶⁴ These were the growing pains of an institution that had not yet reached maturity, by contrast to the chancery of King Henry III, which was operating at what by the 1230s was contemporary state of the art. That said, Webber draws lessons from her investigation that are readily applicable to my own findings on the later chancery. She found, for example, that younger scribes sometimes aped idiosyncrasies of older scribes, usually preferring to mix and match influences from several role models rather than slavishly copying one scribe alone.⁴⁶⁵ This interest in the

⁴⁶² T. Webber, 'L'Écriture des documents en Angleterre au XII siècle', *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes*, 165 (2007), pp. 139-63.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.* pp. 144-5, 149-152.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 158-9.

⁴⁶⁵ She also found that, over her period, the practice of drawing attention to *litterae notabiliores* by doubling or trebling visual elements from standard capital letter forms became more widespread. I have found that by the 1220s, this practice had become so ubiquitous as to no longer be idiosyncratic, though whether the scribe chose to habitually double or treble a line is still a significant identifier. See *Ibid.* p. 160.

transmission of minor stylistic flourishes from one scribe to an imitator, and the aggregated effect that this had on ‘house style’, is a recurring theme in Webber’s work.⁴⁶⁶ This is of particular relevance to the documents of the English royal chancery, where scribal hands already displayed close similarities in the 1220s and downright homogeneity by the 1250s.

Having credited some of the scholarly role-models without whom this enquiry would have been impossible, it is now necessary to delimit the boundaries of the present investigation. King Henry III reigned for fifty-six years, much longer than the conceivable career of any chancery clerk. So it is unwise to conceptualise ‘the Henrician chancery’ as a monolithic entity. There were sixteen chancellors across the span of the king’s reign, so it is impossible to estimate how many chancery clerks must have come and gone from service.⁴⁶⁷ To capture the full picture of comings and goings from the office and its changing working practices, the ideal study would examine the whole of King Henry’s reign, and at least ten years of the reigns of Kings John and Edward I on either side. This would make for seventy-six years of material to study, and sixty-four surviving charter rolls.⁴⁶⁸ Though a tantalising prospect for a longer research project, it would take far more time than was available for this thesis. As a result, careful selectivity has been exercised, to take large representative samples from significant points in the reign. The table below illustrates the time periods chosen and the surviving rolls and charter evidence for these ‘snapshots’.

⁴⁶⁶ Another good example of Webber’s focus on individual role models in the transmission of handwriting characteristics may be found in her article for the online ‘Models of Authority: Scottish Charters and the Emergence of Government 1100-1250’ project, which includes extensive illustration to highlight the phenomenon. See: <https://www.modelsofauthority.ac.uk/blog/handwriting/>

⁴⁶⁷ Those chancellors were Richard Marsh (1214-26), Ralph Neville (1226-40, 1242-44), Richard le Gras (1240-2), Silvester de Everdon (1244-6), John Maunsell (1246-7, 1248-9), John Lexington (1247-8, 1249-53), William of Kilkenny (1254-5), Henry Wingham (1255-60), Nicholas of Ely (1260-61, 1263), Walter de Merton (1261-3), John Chishull (1263-4, 1268-9), Thomas Cantilupe (1264-5), Walter Giffard (1265-6), Godfrey Giffard (1266-8), Richard Middleton (1269-72) and Walter de Merton (1272-4). See Campbell, *Lives of Chancellors*.

⁴⁶⁸ TNA C53/6-C53/70. Some of these are duplicates, but as this study has shown, duplicates can be even more valuable than wholly original rolls.

Table 23: Composition of Charter Rolls to be Studied

Period in regnal years (AD)	Years	Surviving charter rolls	Surviving charter roll membranes	Total charter roll entries	Original charter images
11 Henry III (1226-7)	1	2	45	395	39
13-17 Henry III (1228-33)	5	6 (+1 duplicate)	84 (+13)	698 (+148)	27
24-29 Henry III (1239-45)	6	5	29	202	19
44-49 Henry III (1259-65)	6	5	26	254	23

For palaeographical investigation to have any value, it was important to strike a balance between comparing like-with-like and capturing key periods in the reign. No charters or corresponding rolls were produced during the king's minority from 1216-26, so there was no possibility of investigating this period. Years 13-17 Henry III (1228-33) represent a 'control' period of high but consistent charter output, perhaps driven by the patronage-hunger of Hubert de Burgh and then of Peter des Roches, which helps us establish the workings of the chancery at its best. Year 11 Henry III (1226-7) saw a glut of nearly four hundred charters produced or inspected, after a decade when no such documents had been produced during the minority.⁴⁶⁹ I have written up my findings on this period after years 13-17 as they represent an exceptional, never-to-be-repeated spike in production, and I did not want this unusual period to set a false standard for future comparison, with no point of reference having already been set. Next, reverting to chronological sequence, come years 24-29 Henry III (1239-45), during which time a part of the chancery staff had to follow the king to Gascony on his expedition there, leading to various charters being enrolled on the patent roll.⁴⁷⁰ Finally, the years of prelude to, and

⁴⁶⁹ I leave to one side here the likelihood that, very early in the reign, Henry continued to issue charters, not least Magna Carta 1216 and various grants for the legate Guala and Worcester Cathedral, of which traces survive. If such charters were issued, the process was very soon abandoned pending the king's coming of age, not least for fear that over-mighty ministers might abuse such grants in perpetuity for their own personal benefit.

⁴⁷⁰ This would be repeated in 1253-4, which is not covered in this investigation.

climax of the Second Barons' War are covered: years 44-49 Henry III (1259-65). This period encompassed Henry III's loss and recovery of power after the Provisions of Oxford, the subsequent chaos in which the whole machinery of royal government fell into the hands of Simon de Montfort, and the period immediately afterwards in which the rebels became personae non gratae. More detail on each period will be given in their respective sections.

3.2 Years 13-17 Henry III (1228-33)

General Observations

This was a period of scheming and tumult in the top echelons of English politics, but relative calm within the royal chancery. Henry III may have exited his official minority, but he was not yet truly his own man. In 1228, the chief justiciar Hubert de Burgh was the dominant minister at court. His avuncular manner and long period of distinguished service gave him a hold on the young king, however blatant Hubert's craving for lands and titles may have been. His personal ambitions, irritating as they were to fellow members of the baronial elite, led to a bonanza of patronage for the justiciar, who was the beneficiary of no less than forty-eight charters in this period.⁴⁷¹ Hubert de Burgh was removed from office in 1232, replaced as de facto chief minister by his great rival, Peter des Roches. The Bishop of Winchester was much less openly acquisitive than Hubert de Burgh had been, but his associates profited handsomely: Peter de Rivallis, Stephen of Seagrave and Peter des Roches himself collectively received forty-one charters during this period.⁴⁷² This helped keep the chancery busy, but chancery itself did not

⁴⁷¹ Counting four for Margaret, Hubert's wife. See *CChR* 1226-57, pp. 81-4. See section 2.3 for more information on these charters and the likely circumstances of their creation.

⁴⁷² Which is to say, 1232-33. Peter des Roches received 11 charters, Peter de Rivallis received 16, Stephen of Seagrave received 14.

otherwise appear to be an organisation in tumult. The chancellor, Ralph Neville, had been allowed to keep his job despite his earlier membership of de Burgh's camp, and remained chancellor throughout this period.⁴⁷³ There is no evidence from the charter rolls of any scribes being removed as a result of the rise of the new regime. Though one new hand appears on the charter rolls in 1232, without further evidence it is impossible to link this to Peter des Roches' ascendancy.⁴⁷⁴ Overall, the only way to detect the changes at the heart of King Henry's court from these five rolls is to examine the charter beneficiaries, as the handwriting reveals no clear shift in personnel.

Table 24: Membranes, Schedules, and Entries in Charter Rolls 13-17 Henry III

Charter Roll	Numbered membranes	Schedules	Entries
13.1 (C 53/21)	20	6	190
13.2* (C 53/22)	13	0	148
14.1 (C 53/23)	4	1	29
14.2 (C 53/24)	13	0	102
15 (C 53/25)	13	0	108
16 (C 53/26)	19	0	142
17 (C 53/27)	15	1	127
Total:	97	8	846

* duplicate

Before examining the prevalence of individual hands that make up these rolls, there are observations to be made about them as a group. Workload remained high throughout these five years. With a minimum of 108 entries (merging the two rolls for Year 14) and a maximum of 190, all these figures are historically high. Of the fifty-one years of the reign, excluding the span of five shown here, only eight produced more entries on the charter roll than the 108

⁴⁷³ Carpenter, *Henry III, 1207-58, i*, p. 120.

⁴⁷⁴ This, of course, assumes that the new hand belongs to a new scribe. The hand is labelled A.xi, and is visible across many styles of chancery document.

written in the least voluminous of these rolls.⁴⁷⁵ The figure of 190 enrolled charters for year 13 should be taken with caution as an indication of general chancery workload for that year. Never moderate in self-advancement, Hubert de Burgh and his wife Margaret were the beneficiaries of twenty-one consecutively enrolled charters.⁴⁷⁶ The brothers Hugh and Jocelin, bishops of Lincoln and Bath respectively, obtained a similar mass of twenty-four consecutive charters, duly enrolled, in which they featured as beneficiaries.⁴⁷⁷ These two blocks of charters were clearly presented to the chancery at the same time, as they bookend the beginning and end of the roll, out of sync with other charters of the year. Once these forty-five charters are removed from consideration, the charter roll records a much more typical 145 charters, practically the same as in year 16, with its 142.

The charters for the Bishops of Lincoln and Bath contribute to another noteworthy aspect of the roll for Year 13: the abnormally high number of schedules. The insertion of schedules into an enrolled membrane sequence suggests some degree of disruption to usual working patterns. This need not always have been the case – the previously mentioned charters of Hubert de Burgh, for instance, were simply written onto three normal membranes before being sewn in at the head of the roll.⁴⁷⁸ Two other rolls in this period, 14.1 and 17 Henry III, each includes a single schedule, but these were comparatively small and inconsequential to the overall production process. The schedule on roll 14.1 contains only a single charter entry, dated eight days before the preceding entry in the sequence and sixteen days before the succeeding entry

⁴⁷⁵ The eight rolls with more than 108 charter entries are those of Years 11, 19, 35, 36, 37, 41, 51, and 54 Henry III. TNA classifications for these rolls are C 53/ 18, 28, 43, 44, 45, 47, 56, and 59.

⁴⁷⁶ See charter roll 13.1 Henry III (C 53/21), membranes 20, 19, and 18, *CR 1226-57*, pp. 81-3.

⁴⁷⁷ See charter roll 13.1 Henry III (C 53/21), after membrane 1, *CR 1226-57*, pp. 103-5

⁴⁷⁸ The fact that there are no charters intended for anyone but Hubert or his wife on the final membrane of their sequence is further evidence that the new membranes were not written before their successors, as their numbering would suggest.

on the next membrane.⁴⁷⁹ The schedule also offers a solitary entry on roll 16, but this time with a more significant time difference of seventy-six days between the preceding and succeeding entries.⁴⁸⁰ Roll 13.1, however, has six schedules of varying lengths. Two of these are single-entry affairs, such as in the other rolls – the first is out of sync with the rest of the sequence by nine days, the second by eleven days with the preceding and ten with succeeding entries.⁴⁸¹ The remaining four schedules are all attached in sequence and contain nothing but the charters for the brother bishops. These schedules record five, eleven, seven and one entries in turn, and were not sown directly into the main sequence as those of Hubert de Burgh were at the start of the roll.⁴⁸² Including those three membranes with their charters for the benefit of the justiciar, there are in effect nine membranes or scraps of parchment which had to be produced out of sequence with all other charter business, showing that Year 13 was a relatively chaotic one for those who made the charter roll. There was one more occasion in this period when large numbers of charters had to be completed at once for a single beneficiary, but this was handled without so much disruption. The chancellor himself, Ralph Neville, Bishop of Chichester, was beneficiary of at least twenty-two charters dated May 4, 1233.⁴⁸³ The makers of the roll here did not have recourse to schedules, so that the entries were written in proper sequence with those that came before and after. Other great men had large numbers of charters dated on the same day, including Ralph FitzNicholas, Godfrey of Crowcombe, and Amaury de Craon, making for an impressive total of forty-three charters successfully enrolled on the same day without breaking the proper enrolment sequence.

⁴⁷⁹ See charter roll 14.1 Henry III (C 53/23), between membranes 2 and 1.

⁴⁸⁰ See charter roll 16 Henry III (C 53/26), between membranes 6 and 5.

⁴⁸¹ See charter roll 13.1 Henry III (C 53/21), between membranes 18 and 17; the second schedule is between membranes 6 and 5.

⁴⁸² See charter roll 13.1 (C 53/21) Henry III, after membrane 1.

⁴⁸³ See charter roll 17 (C 53/21) Henry III, membranes 9, 8, 7, and 6. *CChR* 1226-57 pp. 177-81.

One of the reasons for selecting this period for investigation, apart from the consistently high number of charters enrolled every year, is the prospect of examining a duplicate roll. In this case, the roll (13.2) is an incomplete copy of roll 13.1, preserving 148 of that roll's 190 entries.⁴⁸⁴ It is not written in one hand, which might suggest that it was a hastily made copy of the main roll, even though it was not produced to an obviously inferior presentational standard to that of its completed sibling. Since the other roll was rather hacked together with schedules, it might be tempting to assume that this was an abortive attempt to redo the roll properly, and it is true that there are no schedules or insertions of any kind on this duplicate roll. In other ways, however, this roll is much inferior to its sibling. The forty-two missing charters are not simply the last forty-two on the other roll, nor are they entirely composed of those charters that were clumsily added onto the other roll on schedules. As can be seen from the table below, the omitted charters had many beneficiaries, and many of the omitted entries were included without any problem or date irregularity in the other roll. Moreover, a further twenty-two charters were moved in the duplicate roll into yet another mega-block of charters presented out of date order.⁴⁸⁵

Table 25: Entries Omitted or Moved Between Rolls 13.1 and 13.2 Henry III

Name	Omitted	Moved	Total
Hubert de Burgh	14	13	27
Ralph II, Bishop of Chichester	16	4	20
Ralph fitz Nicholas	3	1	4
Stephen of Seagrave	2	1	3
Godfrey of Crowcombe	0	2	2
Hugh le Dispenser	0	1	1
Disafforestation around Bristol	1	0	1
Gilbert Basset	1	0	1
Sheriff of Northamptonshire	1	0	1
Maurice of Gaunt	1	0	1
Burgesses of Montgomery	1	0	1
Church of All Saints, Oakham	1	0	1
Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln	1	0	1
Totals:	42	22	64

⁴⁸⁴ See charter roll 13.1 Henry III (C 53/27).

⁴⁸⁵ See charter roll 13.2 Henry III (C 53/22).

It is not at all clear why this duplicate roll was produced. It must surely have been made as the second of the two rolls, as the charters for Hubert de Burgh and the Wells brothers were this time written in the proper date sequence, but then why omit various of these same charters? Why omit the charters of totally unrelated beneficiaries such as the church of All Saints, Oakham? At any rate, the roll was not destroyed, so it must have served some purpose once created.

Years 13-17 Henry III (1228-33): Scribal Hands

Table 26: Scribes of Charter Rolls 13-17 Henry III

Scribal Hand	First Entry	Last Entry	Duration (Months)	Total Entries
A.i	Nov. 1228	Jul. 1233	56	120 (+110)
A.ii	Nov. 1228	Aug. 1232	45	94 (+25)
A.iii	Nov. 1228	Feb. 1230	15	14
A.iv	Nov. 1228	Jun. 1233	55	52 (+2)
A.v	Dec. 1228	Oct. 1233	58	361
A.vi	Jan. 1229	Apr. 1230	15	5 (+5)
A.vii	Feb. 1230	Jul. 1231	17	2
A.viii	Feb. 1230	Feb. 1230	1	2
A.ix	Apr. 1230	Dec. 1231	20	15
A.x	Feb. 1232	Feb. 1232	1	1
A.xi	Nov. 1232	Jul. 1233	8	45
TOTAL:				711(+156)

Any massive body of work produced eight hundred years ago by a sizeable group of largely unknown people working in hazily-understood conditions is going to attract potentially multiple interpretations. This is not only due to variations in individual temperament, but also the individual research interests of the enquirer. A recent PhD thesis by Adam Chambers has, amongst its many new areas of discovery, undertaken to uncover the processes by which three years of chancery rolls (17, 35, and 53 Henry III) were produced. Chambers' methods are very different from my own. He develops a concept that he terms the 'enrolment sequence': a

combination of hand, ink, and layout changes on the parchment to indicate a batch of entries enrolled at the same time.⁴⁸⁶ By adding up these enrolment sequences over the course of several rolls, Chambers has produced an account of the changing processes of enrolment over the course of Henry III's reign, as well as the functioning of enrolment more generally within the integrated process of charter drafting, engrossment, dispatch and record.⁴⁸⁷ His interest, at least within the research confines of his thesis, lay in the chancery rolls themselves, engaging with their living scribes only so far as was necessary to explain the magnificent documents that have been handed down to us. My own approach to these same raw materials is almost completely different, happily enough as it would have been difficult to match Chambers' thoroughness and depth of investigation on his own terms. My research interests have focused more on the careers of chancery scribes than the circumstances of the creation of documents. To this end, I have focused less on patterns of document production and more on the careers indicated by the traceable written output of hands belonging to individual chancery scribes.⁴⁸⁸ As previously explained, my models lie in the documentary aggregators of the past, such as T.A.M Bishop, and the present, such as Teresa Webber. For this reason, I have found it necessary to pursue a comprehensive survey of Charter Roll and original charter engrossment scribes across each 'focus' period. Each scribe will be taken individually and the qualities of his handwriting described. The purpose of this is not only to extract an identity from the scribe that can be traced across the corpus of materials produced by the royal chancery, but to give the reader a sense of the visual diversity and individuality of these magnificent documents. Additionally,

⁴⁸⁶ Chambers, *Aspects of Chancery Procedure*, pp. 36-9.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid. pp. 31-68.

⁴⁸⁸ Here, a word of caution is needed. The intention of my research is to identify scribes, but the only information that can be gleaned with any certainty from these chancery documents is hands (i.e. handwriting with consistent internal characteristics). Theoretically, a scribe could write in more than one hand, though one hand could not belong to more than one scribe. Alice Taylor, advised by Teresa Webber, wrote an excellent article on the perils of treating 'hand' and 'scribe' as equivalent terms, available at www.modelsofauthority.ac.uk/blog/barrows-scribes/. With no reason to suspect multiple hand use in these chancery documents, especially in internal documents like charter rolls, I have felt it safe to extrapolate scribal identity from the hands (as T.A.M Bishop and others did), but only after expressing this important terminological difference.

despite the years of work that have been necessary to reach these judgements, and the high degree of confidence that can be placed in palaeography as a system of classification, it must be acknowledged that such judgements turn on an element of subjectivity. For this reason, every reasonable effort has been taken to share a manageable number of visual sources together with the tables of statistics that I have compiled from them.

As the table above shows, eleven hands can be discerned from charter rolls from 1228 to 1233. Of course, this does not tell the whole story, nor does it suggest that the chancery establishment of clerks ‘de precepto’ can be numbered as a mere eleven men. Any assessment of scribal identity is fraught with uncertainties, but these are much reduced when the sample size of the scribe’s works runs to the hundreds. That means that, if there are errors in any of my assessments of scribal identity, they are much more likely to be found amongst the rarely occurring hands, individualistic as they may look. It cannot categorically be proved that a known scribe is not concealing his style on an isolated occasion, or mimicking an earlier style as part of copying out a recitation or *inspeximus*. A scribe writing very few entries can surely not be considered a permanent member of the staff, whether he was deputised from another office or employed on a casual basis. In descending order of their significance, there follows a brief overview of each hand’s style and prevalence in this period of the charter rolls.

Hand A.v is by far the most commonly occurring in the charter rolls from 1228 to 1232, found in 361 entries, or about two-fifths of the total.⁴⁸⁹ Fortunately, given its ubiquity, this is a neat, readable, and yet distinctive hand. There is no contrast in line weight and shading at all, save for the liberal application of hairline flicks on ascenders and descenders. Indeed, instead of the

⁴⁸⁹ See Appendix 1, Figure V for pictorial examples of this hand in the chancery rolls.

clubbing or elongation more commonly employed by the other scribes on the **d**-form, this scribe prefers to form his **d** closer to a figure-8, with a short, backwards-curving ascender transitioning into a hairline flick to complete the top bowl. This **d** is remarkably consistent in roll 13.1, but becomes slightly less so over time, until an appreciable number of straighter, thicker **ds** have crept into the script by roll 17. The **H**-form is delightfully consistent: always simple, made up of four strokes, but with an extremely smooth curve showing a degree of care in preparation. Johnson and Jenkinson illustrate a very similar **H**-form from 1232 which was almost certainly based on that of this scribe.⁴⁹⁰ Until the last two rolls in this selection (16 and 17 Henry III), this hand was also the only one among the ten listed here to exhibit a complete lack of emphasised *litterae notabiliores*, or evenly sized regular capital letter forms, apart from the initial **H**. This changes somewhat in rolls 16 and 17, at which time the scribe began to emphasise the **S** of 'Sciatis' by making use of a bespoke letter form looking rather like a circle drawn around a flattened **s**. This form was not listed as prototypical by Johnson and Jenkinson. Other distinguishing features of this script include the invariable employment of a simple, right-angled pilcrow, the scribe not crossing his Tironian **et**, and the consistent use of smoothly curved 'turn up' marks abbreviating **per/pre**, as described and accurately illustrated by Johnson and Jenkinson.⁴⁹¹ Modulus is not always a completely reliable guide to charter roll hands, as they can be scrawled in without much apparent care by some scribes, but this script is always written at a consistent size and straight angle, which contributes to its readability when all or most entries on the membrane are written by this scribe. The patent, close and fine rolls are dominated by Hand A.v, usually writing in even larger blocks of entries than in the equivalent charter rolls.⁴⁹²

⁴⁹⁰ Johnson and Jenkinson, *English Court Hand*, p. 23.

⁴⁹¹ Johnson and Jenkinson, *English Court Hand*, p. 59.

⁴⁹² Without having conducted a complete survey of hands across the other rolls, it is not practical for me to cite every roll, let alone every membrane, where each hand occurs. Instead, I will be giving one roll and membrane

Hand A.i is very commonly encountered in these charter rolls, being employed in 120 entries in the main series of charter rolls, in addition to another 110 in the duplicated roll 13.2. and is probably the easiest of the four most common hands to identify.⁴⁹³ It changes very little over the course of the five years under consideration here, maintaining consistency in both its letter forms and overall effect on the page. The feature that most stands out here is the capital **S**-form, which is no different for proper nouns or for the word ‘Sciatis’ in the promulgation of each charter. This form is composed of just four lines, with the terminating downstroke always diagonally angled from top right to bottom left, where it would be more usual for such a stroke to angle closer to parallel with the baseline. This scribe also sticks consistently to simple capital **H** and **N**-forms, neither of which is decorated, and a **Q**-form that is simply written from one winding stroke like a snail, which is not so strikingly angular as most of the other capitals displayed here. The pilcrow is a consistent shape, and is distinctly angled to the right to mirror the angle of the **s**. This is not a hand that employs shading to emphasise particular forms, though the general line weight varies from thin to average depending on the entry. The **d**-form is elongated, and sometimes slightly clubbed in shape. The overall effect of this hand is angularity and spikiness, though rarely descending as far as scruffiness due to reasonable consistency in the shape and size of the minims. When glanced at quickly, the horizontal strokes of the tironian **et** and the hairlines to dot the **i** form contribute to a slight sense of chaos, further enhanced by the lack of consistency in curve shapes. Unlike that of Hand A.v, the Tironian **et** is almost never left uncrossed. The ear-shaped **con** abbreviation is used liberally by this scribe, which is not universally true of these charter rolls, and turn-up marks are in evidence but much

reference per hand and type of roll. In the case of Hand A.v, though it is in evidence on almost every patent, close, and fine roll of this period, prototypical examples may be found on patent roll 13, membrane 9 (C 66/38); close roll 17, membrane 18 (C 54/44); and fine roll 14, membrane 9 (C 60/29).

⁴⁹³ See Appendix 1, Figure I.

less liberally employed than by Hand A.v. Finally, this scribe has a marked though not universal tendency to hook his minuscule **h**-form back over itself, failing to terminate or flick the downstroke at the baseline. This technique is usually employed as a ligature into a nearby **d** or similar ascending, diagonally angled letter. Scribe A.i was also prolific in the patent, close and fine rolls of this period, particularly towards the start of year 13 Henry III, at which time A.v was uncharacteristically inactive.⁴⁹⁴ Hand A.i can also be found on the dorse of the first treaty roll recording a writ for Stephen Langton. Sadly, the entry is not dated, and neither is the roll, but treaty rolls were produced by the chancery, and since Langton died in 1227 the era does seem correct for the scribe of Hand A.i to be involved in this way.⁴⁹⁵

Hand A.ii is the least consistent of the common hands displayed here, and accounts for ninety-four entries, in addition to a further twenty-five on the duplicated roll 13.2.⁴⁹⁶ The problem is that this inconsistency makes it possible that this hand could belong to two individuals with similar handwriting, particularly given the fact that the scribe seems to have semi-distinct earlier and later styles.⁴⁹⁷ Whether they are the work of one scribe or not, all these entries share many characteristics in common: shading and elongation of the **d** ascender; scruffy and undisciplined lettering; oversized capitals which lack consistency in size or shape; a long capital S-form which lacks a consistent shape but always features flamboyant loops; and a strong tendency to favour three horizontal lines over two in the decoration of *litterae notabiliores* to distinguish them from regular capitals. This tendency is most pronounced in the initial **H**, but the scribe does not always remember to do this and sometimes abandons his initial

⁴⁹⁴ Examples on patent roll 13, membrane 9 (C 66/39); fine roll 13, membrane 9 (C 60/28).

⁴⁹⁵ TNA C 76/1 treaty roll Henry III, membrane 1 (dorse).

⁴⁹⁶ See Appendix 1, Figure II.

⁴⁹⁷ There is no absolute cut-off between the two 'styles', as the balance of evidence does still lie with this being one scribe's handwriting rather than two, but the change seems to start around Roll 14.2 and be complete by Roll 16.

H at two horizontal bars. Assuming this script is the work of one man, it seems to be more likely that three bars will be employed earlier (roll 13.1) or later (roll 16). Whether early or late, the scribe has a pronounced tendency to continue ascending upstrokes into a thick, visible loop to the left. Again, this is most prominent on the capital **H**, though any capital with strong vertical ascenders is liable to be so decorated. This scribe sometimes favours a longer **g**-form, often with an extravagantly sized lower bowl. Despite the overall impression of haste created by the inconsistencies to size and shape of the capitals and especially the haphazard minims, this scribe often displays unusual care in matching the angle of his sloping **d** ascenders, which helps differentiate his hand from others. There are some entries which seem to have a different ratio of the size of minims to ascenders/descenders and capitals, which can make the process of identification harder, but it seems most likely that this is the result of scribal haste or inattention rather than the of intrusion by a different writer. The modulus can be quite variable. In some instances, such as on the duplicated roll 13.2, where this hand is common, it can appear no larger than any of the other prominent charter roll hands.⁴⁹⁸ Mostly, however, this is a very large hand, a feature which only tends to exaggerate its apparent scruffiness.⁴⁹⁹ I could not find any evidence of this hand on the patent or fine rolls, but it can be found on the close rolls.⁵⁰⁰

Hand A.iv is a neat, rounded hand that appears in fifty-four entries on the charter rolls, including roll 13.2, significantly fewer than for Hand A.ii.⁵⁰¹ It is easy to mistake for the much-commoner Hand A.v at first glance, but there are important areas in which it is distinctive. Firstly, the scribe consistently favours a long **g**, often with the lower bowl closed with a barely-visible hairline. The capital **S** can take three forms: a barely-enlarged version of the minuscule

⁴⁹⁸ See Roll 13.2, membrane 5 for one example among many.

⁴⁹⁹ See Roll 13.1, membrane 19.

⁵⁰⁰ Example on close roll 13, membrane 16 (TNA C 54/39).

⁵⁰¹ See Appendix 1, Figure IV.

s, a variant of this in which the upper bowl is flat topped, somewhat resembling a number ‘5’, or a simple long-S composed of two or at most three curved lines. The ascender of the **d**-form tends to be straight, and is usually shaded. The **H**-form is inconsistent in shape, even in the same entry, but is usually elaborated with vertical and horizontal line decoration and at least one hairline flick. The **M** and **m** are slightly more elaborate than most of the other hands in this list, which adopt a much simpler combination of basic minims. The **I**-form is given by Johnson and Jenkinson as prototypical of the early thirteenth century, somewhat resembling the blade of a sickle.⁵⁰² The pilcrow generally favoured by this scribe is totally right-angled, with none of the characteristic diagonal or curving qualities of line that most other scribes employ. This hand tends to employ thicker lines than many others, especially the otherwise-similar Hand A.v. With fewer smooth curves than that hand, elongated suspension marks and Tironian **ets** that are invariably crossed rather than uncrossed, the straight top on some **s** shapes, and usually a straighter-ruled baseline, there is a much stronger impression of horizontality created by this hand compared to A.v. Hand A.iv felt no need for visual adaptation when employed for other chancery rolls, and appears in the patent, close and fine rolls exactly as it does in the charter rolls.⁵⁰³ It could be argued that the flattening, ‘5’ like effect at the top of the **S** in ‘Sciatis’ is even more pronounced in the patent rolls, but this is probably attributable to random variation.

Hand A.xi bears a close resemblance to Hand A.ii, though with sufficient differentiation to declare it a different hand.⁵⁰⁴ The clincher here is that the hand appears at exactly the same time in the Year 17 Henry III charter rolls, patent rolls, close rolls, fine rolls and one original

⁵⁰² Johnson and Jenkinson, *English Court Hand*, p. 26.

⁵⁰³ For examples, see patent roll 14.1, membrane 5 (C 66/39); close roll 13, membrane 15 (C 54/39); fine roll 13, membrane 4 (C 60/28).

⁵⁰⁴ See Appendix 1, Figure XI.

charter.⁵⁰⁵ The fact that so many types of document display a new hand all at once is unlikely to result from mere coincidence. To address the similarities first: both hands are scruffy, though on average Hand A.ii is certainly worse in that regard, especially in its highly disorganised and baseline-phobic minims. Both hands also have an identical **d**-form, the ascender of which is lengthened, slightly thickened, and drawn at an acute angle with the baseline. Finally, both hands adopt the convention that *litterae notabiliores* should be highlighted by trebling a usually doubled stroke, e.g. the strokes of the initial **H** of Henricus. Fortunately, there are also sufficient differences to be reach a differentiating judgement. That initial **H**, though decorated with a similar scheme (and possessed of Hand A.ii's characteristic loop emanating from the left ascender) has a much more rounded bowl, and the three horizontal bars are more vertically spaced than in A.ii. A.ii was never very consistent in its **S** shape, but this hand imitates the scheme of adding an extra line to a two line shape for *litterae notabiliores* that was never displayed on any such letter in A.ii. The two hands also consistently employ a different pilcrow, with the left-pointing arrow of A.xi not looking very similar to the jauntily-angled right-angle displayed in A.ii.

Though unremarkable in its overall effect on the page, Hand A.ix is by far the most unusual of these hands in its letter forms.⁵⁰⁶ The **H** with a large right bowl shaped like an ear, the two-part **S**-form, and the unique **N** and **P**-forms makes this a very easy hand to identify. Though the mode of executing a certain type of letter form may differ among these chancery hands, the shape being aimed at is usually at least similar between scribes. The capitals of this script are so distinctly different that it is worth considering the possibility of a foreign scribe, or at least

⁵⁰⁵ For chancery roll examples, see patent roll 17, membrane 3 (C 66/43); close roll 17, membrane 6 (C 54/44); fine roll 17, membrane 10 (C 60/32).

⁵⁰⁶ See Appendix 1, Figure IX.

one trained somewhere other than the royal chancery. Sadly, there is probably no systematic way of identifying these letter forms, except if I or a colleague should one day run into similar letter forms while examining a document produced somewhere else. Of possible interest in this direction is that this scribe's entries tend to be more heavily abbreviated than most others, and use a wider variety of suspensions and other marks to facilitate this. This does not suggest a background in writing high-grade originals for the chancery or secretariat, where abbreviation would typically be minimal. Though as common as Hand A.iii in the charter rolls, albeit only for a brief period, Hand A.ix is much harder to find in the other chancery rolls. I was only able to find it in a single entry on patent roll 14.2 Henry III, although it is some consolation that this offers an excellent and highly prototypical example of this scribe's style.⁵⁰⁷ The pilcrow, **H** and **S**-forms are all identical to the counterparts in the charter roll. It is worth noting that all known examples of this scribe's handwriting are found in the rolls pertaining to the second part of year 14 Henry III. When combined with the hand's many non-chancery standard forms, it is hard not to conclude that this particular scribe was not trained within the chancery system – to be traced precisely would require pre-existing familiarity with the house style of the scribe's home scriptorium, which would then make it theoretically possible to trace the scribe.

Hand A.iii is the most flamboyant of the hands displayed in these charter rolls, which aroused suspicion that it was one of the other scribes (perhaps A.ii or A.iv) writing in a flamboyant variant of their usual style.⁵⁰⁸ The discovery of several entries written in this fashion does seem to confirm, however, that this is the scribe's authentic hand. Capitals are consistently decorated with horizontal and vertical lines to create a grid effect, and they are as oversized as space allows relative to minims. This is especially true of the long **S**. The **d**-form is thickly clubbed

⁵⁰⁷ For an example, see patent roll 14.1, membrane 4 (C 66/39).

⁵⁰⁸ See Appendix 1, Figure III,

and shaded, as are certain suspension marks. Some **g** and short **s**-forms have an extravagant lower bowl, but not all. The tironian **et** is unlike any other scribe's in this selection, featuring two strokes instead of one and a pronounced flick. Flicks, indeed, are another feature of this hand, especially following 45-degree lines from top right to bottom left or the opposite. It is not uncommon for these charter roll entries to begin with a marginal marking, but these markings are especially flamboyant in this particular hand, resembling a kind of thickly-shaded treble clef, often taller than the line of text it introduces. In keeping with the two-stroked tironian **et** and cross-hatched capital decoration, other decoration in this hand focuses on the addition of horizontal spines to vertical lines. Despite such flamboyant handwriting, the scribe of Hand A.iii was by no means a charter specialist. He too is to be found frequently in the close and patent rolls.⁵⁰⁹ Unlike Hands A.i and A.ii, which look the same, regardless of the 'solemnity' of the document being recorded, the usually highly decorated Hand A.iii was toned down a little for use in the 'lesser' rolls. The perpendicular pen strokes up the ascenders disappeared, as did most (but not all) extreme shading on the capitals. The modulus was also distinctly shorter than that of the charter-roll equivalent and the pilcrow at the start of each entry was simplified, though it retained its basic shape. Conversely, most of the letter forms, and particularly the highly idiosyncratic double-stroked Tironian **et**, survived the transition without modification. The flamboyant A.iii scribe wrote out a charter preserved in the *Cartae Antiquae* rolls, granting the Bishop of Ely hunting rights in the forest of Somersham.⁵¹⁰ The record of this same grant was written out in charter roll 17 Henry III in Hand A.i, significantly disproving the idea that scribes might have some special responsibility for recording charters they had engrossed.⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁹ Examples on patent roll 13, membrane 9 (C 66/38); close roll 13, membrane 5 (C 54/39).

⁵¹⁰ *cartae antiquae* roll C 52/30

⁵¹¹ *CChR 1226-1257*, p. 183, charter roll 17 Henry III, membrane 3.

Hands A.vii, A.viii, and A.x are the rarest in these charter rolls, occurring only five times between them.⁵¹² Each of these hands are elaborate, taking up a lot of physical space on the page, and give the impression of not being suited to the careless rapidity of record writing. Though none of these five entries are sewn in as might have been the case with a rejected draft of an original charter, all of them give the impression of looking more like charters than mere records. Capitals are highly decorated, the text block properly drawn, and effort has gone into the layout of the page. Each hand has its own distinguishing feature: for A.vii, the scribe's liberal use of flicks for decoration; for A.viii the very long ascender on the capital **H** and the extreme commitment to thinness and simplicity of line; for A.x, the thickness of all lines and tapering point of descenders.⁵¹³ Though Hand A.viii is used in non-consecutive membranes of the same charter roll, and Hand A.ix only seems to be used once in these charter rolls, Hand A.vii is particularly interesting for being used only once each in two distinct charter rolls.

With each scribe's idiosyncrasies of handwriting established and the charter rolls of this period divided up among eleven identified hands, it is now possible to gain insight into how the royal chancery functioned. The period from 1228-1233 was a busy time for charter production, but it was not beset by the crises that would torment King Henry's later years, and Ralph Neville was a supremely confident and capable chancellor. If there is a five year period in this reign in which to establish how large amounts of work could be processed under something close to 'normal' conditions, this is it. A.E. Stamp surmised from reliable but tangential evidence that the royal chancery was a rigidly hierarchical organisation, composed of clerks at different

⁵¹² See Appendix 1, Figures VII, VIII, and X respectively for Hands A.vii, A.viii, and A.x.

⁵¹³ To see this hand in another type of roll, see patent roll 13, membrane 3 dorse (C 66/38).

grades, performing different tasks, even wearing different robes.⁵¹⁴ This macro-level hierarchy cannot be detected at the level of charter rolls, the writers of all must be assumed to have been nominally on the same grade as one another, but it is evident that there are vast differences between the volume of each man's output. Excluding the duplicated roll 13.2, to be examined separately, there is one of them whose activity stands supreme. Here labelled A.v, this scribe wrote just over half the total charter roll entries of this period. Active from near the beginning of roll 13 through to the end of roll 17, this scribe's hand was never out of these rolls for more than three consecutive membranes, and even this only occurred once.⁵¹⁵ There are entire membranes written entirely in this hand, though he could also slot in wherever necessary among entries written by others.⁵¹⁶ It is not clear whether writing so much of a chancery roll was a sign of higher rank, or whether it was a 'muggins' roll deputed to those who were junior, but neither these rolls nor any other charter rolls of the later periods analysed here feature any scribes who wrote few entries 'promoted' into writing many, or vice versa.

Beneath this pre-eminent scribe were two moderately active rolls scribes, here labelled as possessing Hands A.i and A.ii. These hands were collectively responsible for 214 entries, about two-thirds of Hand A.v's individual output, or a little under one third of the total. Both scribes were more active earlier in this period than later, though Hand A.i periodically appears until roll 17, and Hand A.ii until roll 16. Both scribes, despite being considerably less active than A.v wrote at least one membrane entirely in their hand.⁵¹⁷ These two hands, though never dominant even in individual rolls, are never a surprise to encounter, though A.ii does tail off towards the end. With fifty-two and forty-five entries respectively, A.iv and A.xi were half-

⁵¹⁴ Stamp, 'Court and Chancery', pp. 305-31.

⁵¹⁵ See charter roll 17, membranes 9-7 (C 53/27).

⁵¹⁶ Full membranes written in this hand are charter roll 13.1 schedule 4 (C 53/21) and charter roll 16 membrane 10 (C 53/26).

⁵¹⁷ See for example Roll 13.1 membrane 20 (C 53/21) and Roll 14.2 membrane 1 (C 53/24).

way-houses in terms of activity. They had significantly fewer entries than A.i or A.ii but significantly more than A.iii. Though similar in absolute number of entries, the distribution of their work is quite different. Scribe A.iv was active throughout the period, but with more and larger groups of entries towards the beginning. By the end, A.iv's output was much more sporadic, without disappearing. Scribe A.xi, conversely, did not arrive until Year 17, towards the end of this period. Responsible for forty-five out of 126 entries in Year 17, this was no mere secondary scribe producing entries only now and then. If any of the succeeding years to this period are examined by another researcher, it would be interesting to note whether this scribe went on to become prolific in his own right. Below this come hands that did not write more than a handful of entries. Hands A.iii and A.ix fall into this category, with fourteen and fifteen entries respectively. The pattern of writing again differs: Hand A.iii is scattered through the first two rolls, with no blocks of more than three consecutive entries and no further appearances from roll 15 onwards. A.ix, however, became the dominant hand in the rolls for just four membranes, leaving no trace before or after.⁵¹⁸ These patterns help explain the disparities in numbers of entries, since neither scribe seems to have set out to complete just four percent of the work available. In reality, one scribe filled in where necessary for a year or two, and the other was the main writer for a short period. That said, the final batch of scribes is harder to explain, as they produced only one to five entries each. Where did these scribes come from, and what was the point of their performing a minor job on a one-off basis? With no surviving 'lesser' writs from this period, it is impossible to identify any of these men as lesser clerks filling in for their more senior colleagues. If anything, the opposite seems more likely – as the charter chapter below will illustrate. It is possible and even common to find the hands of scribes with very few rolls entries writing charters in just as great or greater quantity than their colleagues who were regularly employed on the rolls. Assuming that writing charters implied

⁵¹⁸ See charter roll 14.2, membranes 7-4 (C 53/24).

more prestige than copying onto rolls, this lends some credence to the fact idea that the rolls' writers were more mugginses than managers. Whatever the truth, it is worth noting that isolated entries written by unknown scribes often have characterful and individualistic handwriting. Could they have developed this on their own, or as lesser clerks, or does it follow that their formative writing experience lay elsewhere? The presence of many single-entry scribes is common to all the periods under investigation below, suggesting that it is more a feature than a bug in the system. Whether intended or not, the constant presence of one- and two-time writers on these rolls corroborates Chambers' conclusion that the charter rolls were in a constant state of production, with scribes scratching away at the parchment as often as three times a day to add new business. If this were not so, there could not easily have been so many scribes available to write one-off rolls entry before disappearing forever.

The comments above pertain exclusively to the main series of charter rolls, 1227-33. The duplicate charter roll of this period, roll 13.2, is very different from its siblings, perhaps suggesting that it was always intended for a different purpose. Only a few hands appear on the duplicate roll: Hands A.i, A.ii, A.iv and A.vi. Though the latter hand appears only rarely on the main charter rolls, it can be found in five entries here and hence cannot be regarded as belonging to a scribal interloper. Indeed, no interlopers of any kind make even the slightest contribution to this roll. It is written chiefly in Hand A.i (110 entries), with some assistance from Hand A.ii (twenty-five). The other two hands make up just seven entries between them, and so cannot be said to have invested much time in this work. But the two main writers were also prominent scribes on the main charter roll for that year. As demonstrated below, these scribes were able collectively to write thousands of entries in all chancery rolls every year, so perhaps an extra few hundred entries did not cause them much heartache. Even aside from the differences in personnel between the duplicate and its siblings, the differences in working

patterns were considerable. No fewer than five membranes were written entirely in the hand of one scribe, with most of the remaining membranes having only one or two entries written by a different scribe.⁵¹⁹ It is my impression that this roll was written very quickly, or at least with more entries added to the parchment at each visit compared to the ‘real’ roll, which seems to have been updated closer to real time.

Table 27: Blocks of Entries Written by the Same Scribe, Charter Rolls 13-17 Henry III

Charter Roll	Blocks	<1	1 to 1.5	2 to 5	5 to 10	>10	Mean
13.1	74	6	29	31	9	2	2.6
14.1	12	1	6	3	2	0	2.3
14.2	46	6	15	24	2	1	2.3
15	47	2	25	16	1	2	2.3
16	49	2	21	19	7	2	2.9
17	49	0	21	23	5	1	2.6

Returning to the main series of charter rolls, the next set of data to be extracted from the hands pertains to the size of each block of charters written in the same hand. Again, it must be acknowledged that Chambers’ research has succeeded in charting the frequency with which scribes came back to the rolls, to add an update, albeit that Chambers cites only one roll on this list (17 Henry III).⁵²⁰ My investigation has a different focus, however, and must adhere to a different plan. Where Chambers was interested in the roll, my own interest lies more in how many entries would typically be entrusted to a single scribe on the charter roll before a colleague took over, even if this period of ‘control’ lasted for several sessions in practice. There is little point measuring this scribe by scribe, as the scribes that had the opportunity to write most entries, such as A.v, A.i and A.ii, naturally dominate the list of scribes who wrote in the longest blocks – they were the only ones to have the opportunity. It has proved more useful to examine the length of handwriting blocks in general. The results across these six rolls emerge as remarkably consistent, with each scribe writing between 2.3 and 2.9 entries on average

⁵¹⁹ See charter roll 14.2, membranes 1, 2, 6, 7, and 9 (C 53/24).

⁵²⁰ Chambers, *Aspects of Chancery Procedure*, pp. 41-51.

before the next scribe took over. To clarify the numbers here, which sadly cannot adequately be conveyed via integers, it must be noted that these rolls exhibit seventeen separate instances where entries have been abandoned before completion, leaving a different scribe to pick up the quill and complete the job. In these instances, I have counted every unfinished entry as half, regardless of how far the scribe got towards completion. Though there is little variation in the headline figures, there are variations in how such averages are arrived at across each individual roll. Long blocks of more than ten charters enrolled in one hand and simple completions of half-finished entries are both relatively uncommon on all these rolls, though with more of the latter than the former. If each number of possible entries in a batch could be charted, the landslide winner would be one. When grouping the data together to create a readable chart, however, we can see that there are also three rolls in which two to five charters is the more commonly occurring pattern. The other three, of course, show the reverse. Note that the three rolls for which individual and small groups of charters being enrolled together are in even balance, also show the highest mean average of entries per block. Conversely, those with a major advantage to either 1 or 2-5 charters have a statistically significant reduction in average block length. If this sample size can be trusted as evidence from which to draw generalisations, it seems that where the norm for a charter roll was for entry blocks to feature one or two charters, there are fewer blocks of 5 or more. Conversely, where the norm was to have blocks of one *or* two charters enrolled in a block, there was sufficient lack of routine in the office for the occasional scribe to be called on to produce several in one go, thus bringing the average up.

All that remains to do in this section is briefly to survey the appearances of these hands in other chancery material. The purpose and limits of this investigation must first be laid out, lest this part of our enquiry be misunderstood. This thesis is categorically not intended to be a comprehensive survey of the palaeography of any documents except the charters and charter

rolls produced in King Henry III's chancery. To expand this to include entry-by-entry analyses of the hands of huge enrolment series such as the close roll or patent roll would have been simply impossible, at least without significantly limiting the number of years under investigation. That said, with most charter rolls stored at The National Archives, it would have been foolish not to make a cursory examination during my many visits to that remarkable institution. Rather than spend additional years of (by then, unfunded) research time cataloguing hands across many hundreds of yards of script, I have instead brought my own lists of hands and their characteristics to TNA, and tried to find evidence of them in any material known to have been produced by the chancery scribes across these particular time frames, without troubling myself to explain any unknown hands encountered in these other rolls. Hand identification is not the work of a moment, and there comes a point in every search for a needle when it seems unwise any further to enlarge the haystack. For that reason, and due to the fundamentally dissimilar nature of the material being recorded across the various classes of chancery rolls, I have not found it possible to include even a cursory survey of the liberate rolls, which recorded writs of liberate: orders from the chancery to the exchequer to pay money out of the royal treasure. Instead, I focused my attention on the following documentary resources: the close rolls, in which letters close were recorded; the patent rolls, in which letters patent were recorded; the fine rolls, in which fines were recorded; the cartae antiquae rolls, in which transcripts of certain important charters were preserved; the treaty rolls, in which treaties and diplomatic documents were recorded; and the chancellor's rolls, which were copies made for the chancellor of the pipe roll, which in my estimation contain no chancery hands, only those of the exchequer or of chancery clerks exclusively deputed to work at the exchequer.⁵²¹

⁵²¹ TNA document classes as follows: C 52, cartae antiquae rolls; C 53, charter rolls; C 54, close rolls; C 60, fine rolls; C 66, patent rolls; C 76, treaty rolls; E 352, chancellor's rolls. I viewed the fine rolls through the superlative fine rolls Project website. See <https://finerollshenry3.org.uk/home.html>. All other rolls were examined in person.

It would certainly have been interesting to find that, for example, the lesser-represented hands on the charter rolls were the more represented hands elsewhere, thus enabling us to assign every scribe a putative 'rank'. Instead, the opposite seems to hold true: the most prolific scribes of the charter rolls were also the most prolific scribes of the contemporary patent, close, and fine rolls. Indeed, it might very well prove, after more detailed examination, that the main charter roll hands are even more dominant in these other rolls than in the charter rolls themselves. Thus Hands A.i, A.iv, A.v, and A.xi were all found without difficulty on the Fine, Patent and close rolls. Hands A.ii (close roll), A.iii (patent and close rolls), A.ix (patent roll), and A.x (patent roll) were all found on at least one of these. Interestingly, while the most common hands of the charter rolls were also typically the easiest to find in the other 'main' chancery rolls, this is not true of other 'lesser' chancery records. The rare Hand A.viii was found in the treaty rolls, for example, though this was also true of the commoner A.i and A.ii hands. Hand A.iii, which was never very common in the charter rolls, though always distinctive, was found in highly prototypical form in the *cartae antiquae* roll. This may not be a coincidence: as I shall reveal in the next section, original charter engrossments do not seem to have been produced in line with the ratios of scribal output that have proved constant among the rolls. A rare hand in rolls might be common in charters, or vice versa.

Years 13-17 Henry III (1228-33): Original Charter Hands

Unlike the charter rolls of King Henry III, such original charter engrossments as survive are not stored in a single, conveniently accessible repository. To be sure, some of them have found their way to The National Archives, but this is but a drop in the bucket. To be able to compare the hands of original charters with those in the rolls would not only require a taste for travelling the length and breadth of the British Isles, it would also require an expert's knowledge of where to look. Registers of charters are nothing new, and massive assemblages or databases of complete charter collections have been made, with such titans as Léopold Delisle leading this particular charge. But our contemporaries enjoy certain advantages unknown to the nineteenth century. With the aid of a digital camera, Nicholas Vincent has thus compiled a fairly comprehensive register of King Henry III's original acts complete with a large collection of photographs (archival rules permitting).⁵²² Having graciously shared this resource with me, it has been my task to try to understand who wrote these important and often beautiful documents. With no realistic prospect of pinning down a scribe's name, life, or wider career from his handwriting alone, the best option has been to do the next best thing: to link him with his known output in the chancery rolls. This creates a pattern of scribal identities, revealing the body of work undertaken by each chancery scribe, albeit with special emphasis on charters, shining yet more light on how the chancery deployed its finite complement of personnel.

⁵²² There are documents in the Nicholas Vincent Register that contain text descriptions but no photographs, as individual archives do not permit this. I have not included these documents in my investigation.

Table 28: Hands of Original Charter Engrossments Sourced from the Vincent Register, 13-17 Henry III

Hand	Charters
A.i	Princeton Willsie Henry III TNA E 40/15166
A.ii	Truro RIC TAM-1-12-1
A.iii	Birmingham 435325
A.v	TNA E 40/3170 Warwick CR1886/273
A.x	Taunton DD/WHb/2533 Warwick CR1886/274
A.xi	Chichester Cap.1/17/17
A.xiii	Chichester Cap.1/17/16 Lincoln A/1/1B/52 Lincoln A/1/1B/61
A.xiv	Cambridge University Library EDC 1/B/28 Oxford, Magdalen College /8 Chartae Concessae TNA E 326/12466
A.xv	Berkeley E/1/1/4 Preston DD St Box 119 Wilton Town Hall Henry III
A.xvi	Kendal WSMB/A no.3 Northampton Stopford-Sackville 2330
Unidentified/Others	Cambridge University Library EDC 1/B/33 Lincoln A/1/1B/53

The outcome here is a detailed picture of chancery output that upends the hierarchy of scribal activity seen in the chancery rolls examined hitherto. In every chancery roll, and particularly the closely inspected charter rolls, it was immediately clear that scribe A.v was the dominant writer, with scribes A.i and A.ii writing many of the rest of the entries. Below them, a group of other scribes might be easily identified but not tremendously prolific, with a peppering of one- or two-time writers below them. Among the extant charter hands of this period, it is immediately clear that hands seen on the charter rolls are not the principal hands of the original charters. Taken as a whole, eleven charters from the group that I was able to inspect seem to have been written by such charter roll scribes, while another thirteen charters were written in hands that could not be identified from the rolls. Taking A.x as a charter hand, since this scribe

only wrote one roll entry, the ratio widens to nine to thirteen. These charters have themselves been grouped according to handwriting, with four scribes having apparently written more than one charter. These scribes have been labelled A.xii (two charters), A.xiii (three charters), A.xiv (three charters), A.xv (three charters), and A.xvi (two charters), with two further charters with either ambiguous handwriting or written by a scribe unidentified elsewhere in the surviving charters of this period. It can be stated with some certainty, due to the survival of all the charter rolls for this period, that these additional scribes did not write in the rolls. The same cannot be said in reverse for the remaining rolls scribes (A.iv, A.vi, A.vii, A.viii, and A.ix), as the number of extant charters is dwarfed by the number that are lost. But it seems probable that Vincent's large sample provides a fairly representative picture. Here follows a brief description of the idiosyncrasies of each hand, as well as of how such handwriting differs from the scribe's work on the charter rolls, particularly in the cases of the scribes who wrote both original charters and copies on the rolls.

Two charters from this period are written in Hand A.i, which remains as consistent as in the rolls. Differences from the hand's appearances in the charter rolls are very few. The modulus has expanded due to the lack of space restrictions on an original charter: A.i was already one of the 'larger' hands on the charter rolls. Though this scribe generally adheres to his distinctive **H** shape, he allows himself slightly more scope for variation, sometimes adding a third horizontal or single vertical bar to the capital **H-form** (but not, in the case of the horizontal bar, to the initial 'H' of 'Henricus'). It could also be argued that the script is very slightly less angled than on the charter rolls, though this seems more a product of writing with greater care than of a deliberate desire by the scribe to modify his handwriting. Otherwise, the principal markers of this hand are intact, including the **Q**, **S**, **h**, and **H-forms**, hairlines on **I**, crossed Tironian **et**, somewhat chaotic hairline flicks after terminating a pen stroke, and generally somewhat spiky appearance.

Hand A.ii is one of the more inconsistent-looking in the charter rolls, and that seems to have been carried over into a charter hand that only shares some aspects with its equivalent in the rolls. Taking differences first, it is clear that the lone charter written in this hand was produced with far more care than the rolls entries from the same scribe. One of the hallmarks of the charter roll version of his script is its untidy minims, which do not often form neat lines around either the baseline or waistline. This script is much neater, an effect that is further compounded by conscientiously vertical ascenders that combine with the neatly ruled horizontal lines to create an impression of order, totally missing from the charter roll version of the script. In terms of letter forms, however, this is clearly Hand A.ii. The clearest indication lies in the shape of the capital **H-form**, which combines the three horizontal bars and hairline loop coming off the ascender in a way that is characteristic of this scribe. The **S**, **I**, **h**, and **Q**-forms also conform to the usual ductus of this scribe, who seems to have favoured terminating any long up or down stroke with a broad flick.

Conversely, Hand A.iii is one of the most consistent hands in the charter rolls, and the one extant charter written in this hand is another highly prototypical example of his script. The long **s**-form, for example, uses the scribe's standard looping decoration, which Johnson and Jenkinson highlight as a common flourish in writing from the 1210s.⁵²³ Other elements that conform to the charter roll equivalent include the heavily shaded capitals and turn-up marks, capital **S** and **Q**-forms, the latter of which is particularly distinctive for its abnormal length, and generally tall and narrow modulus. Most important of all is that the script's most distinguishing feature, the double stroke on the Tironian **et**, remains in evidence, and on every one of those

⁵²³ Johnson and Jenkinson, *English Court Hand*, p. 44.

symbols used in this document. Compared to the charter for the Bishop of Ely featured in the *Cartae Antiquae* rolls, this is certainly less flamboyantly decorated, possibly reflecting the document's status as a charter of disafforestation rather than episcopal hunting rights.

Though he was by far the most prolific writer in the rolls, there are only two surviving original charters for this period that seem to have been written by scribe A.v. Much of the distinctiveness of this hand derives from its almost total lack of chancery house-style, but the charter rolls were documents for internal use. The two charters that this scribe wrote feature more concessions to style. *Litterae notabiliores* are both capitalised and marked with an extra line, according to standard chancery style. The **g-form**, which this scribe usually kept short and simple in the rolls, here follows the prevailing chancery fashion for an elongated lower bowl forming a complete loop below the baseline.⁵²⁴ Another concession, though for practical reasons as well as fashion, was to elongate the ascenders of most **d-forms**, though apparently old habits died hard, as the scribe's usual backwards-looping **d** does periodically return.⁵²⁵ In most other ways that the script appears as it does in the charter rolls, including the prominent turn-up marks, characteristic capital **H**, and uncrossed Tironian **et** marks. The calm, neat style from the rolls is also preserved.

There is only one entry on the charter rolls written in Hand A.x. Two original charters survive written in this hand, making it the only hand seen in the rolls at least once to have written a greater number of original charters. Though distinctive, this is not a very readable hand. It is also singularly unsuited to miniaturisation, as was needed to some degree for the charter rolls.

⁵²⁴ Johnson and Jenkinson, *English Court Hand*, p. 20.

⁵²⁵ See, for instance, every **d** on line 11, Warwick CR1886/274.

The **d**-forms are a thick club shape, which would become the fashion in later years. The capital **S** is of diagnostic utility here, looking like a flipped number '7' with a beaver-tail loop at the base. The initial **H** is generally consistent, and combines the two separate fashions of an ear-shaped right bowl and two curves making up the **H** bow. The overall impression is of tremendous untidiness, with little effort made to match the lengths or angles of strokes. Minims, which are very Gothic-looking with their hints of lozenge-shaped serifs, are surprisingly uniform. The scruffiness derives entirely from the irregularly sized and angled ascenders and descenders.

More than any other in this list, Hand A.xi looks identical in charter form to its appearance on the charter rolls. Characteristic elements include the capital **H** decorated with many horizontal lines, thickened and elongated **ds** with prominent hairline flicks to the right. Distinctive capital **S** shape, elongated turn-up marks, and the generally heavy line weight all make their way over to this scribe's charter without any alteration. It is also interesting to note that the charter itself is dated to the seventeenth year of King Henry III's reign, which is the same year in which the rolls entries in this hand began to appear.

The hands known from the rolls having been exhausted, it is now necessary to describe the hands found only in the original charters. The first of these, A.xii, is a highly distinctive hand. The capital **S** form is made up of two wide loops, forming an open upper and closed lower bowl. The minuscule **s** is of a completely different form, usually looking like a number '5' without its flat top stroke. When abbreviating words ending in 'ibus', the **s** instead takes on an appearance like a contemporary chancery **g**, with an elongated loop below the baseline. Capital **H**-forms tend to be simple, with a very long and straight left ascender. Indeed, ascenders in

general tend towards length and straightness in this script. The scribe also favours an elongated **d**-form with a very hairline flick, bordering upon a loop, sweeping to the right. The initial **H** takes a different form to the regular capital, looking like a heavily shaded reversed capital ‘C’ next to a vertical line and several horizontal lines. Overall line thickness is very uniform, though *litterae notabiliores* are slightly thickened. Their shapes are not otherwise changed.

Scribe A.xiii wrote in a handsome, rather old-fashioned hand. Johnson and Jenkinson place the letter forms and general visual logic of a hand like this in King John’s reign or earlier, which accords with my own experience of the charters of the early thirteenth century.⁵²⁶ There is a consistent visual logic to the decoration, which is similar to Hand A.iii without looking that much alike in practice. Ascenders are lengthened and sometimes decorated with perpendicular pen strokes or looping ‘hooks; falling down from the top of an upstroke. The Tironian **et** also has one to three perpendicular pen strokes running through its waistline horizontal stroke, as well as the usual cross through the vertical stroke. The script’s **d**-forms maintain a consistent angle of about fifty-five degrees, and are slightly elongated and thickened, with a hairline flick that is often invisible. The lower case **s** is usually but not always long. *Litterae notabiliores* are decorated with multiple same-direction pen strokes. Visually, the most striking thing about these charters is that the text lines are ruled very generously while minim heights are not allowed to become excessive, so there is an almost Caroline readability that is not always seen in Gothic cursives.

Teresa Webber has previously observed that scribes could consciously imitate the foibles of

⁵²⁶ See Magna Carta Project for high quality photographs of charters of this period.
<https://magnacarta.cmp.uea.ac.uk/read/original/charters>

their elders, and it is possible that scribe A.xiv modelled his letter forms, though not his overall visual style, on scribe A.xiii⁵²⁷ The capital **S**, **R**, **E**, and **Q**-forms and lower-case **d** and **g** show considerable similarity between the two hands. It is not as consistent as in A.xiii, but some *litterae notabiliores* are decorated, and according to the same visual style. Despite the similarities, and the possibility that this scribe could radically change his style based on the type of charter he was producing, the differences are too many to ignore. Most importantly, where the sensibilities of A.xiii are basically Caroline, A.xiv is thoroughly Gothic: contrast between thick and thin lines, lines ruled closer together, lozenge shapes. The capital **B**-form is particularly Gothic in its conception, as is the **H** of 'Hiis Testibus' in Berkeley Castle E/1/1/4. There are also individual differences beyond the overall logic of the decoration. In general, this hand does not use perpendicular pen stroke decoration on the Tironian **et**, apart from one solitary exception occurring in Preston DD St Box 119. The initial **H** is more consistent in A.xiv, with an ear shape, three horizontal strokes and a single vertical stroke. It is certainly not impossible that hands A.xiv and A.xv belong to the same scribe, but at any rate it is certain that this hand does not feature on the chancery rolls.

There are far more surviving charters displaying Hand A.xv in Year 11 Henry III, but there are still two extant charters written in his hand during this period. The hand has three main diagnostic features. Firstly, the descenders tend to curve slightly to the left, terminating in a sharp point. Secondly, the scribe sometimes use a special variant of the Tironian **et**, with two horizontal strokes perpendicular to the main symbol and a curved shape resembling a 'j'. Thirdly, the capital **S** shape employs broad curvilinear forms composed of relatively few strokes. This is especially true of the *litterae notabiliores* version, occurring on 'sciatis', which

⁵²⁷ Webber, 'L'Écriture des documents en Angleterre au XII siècle', p.160.

has a broad beaver tail and is physically enlarged compared to other letters. The capital **H**-forms, including the initials, can be quite variable, but all feature several horizontal lines of decoration and at least one vertical line.

Two charters could not be identified, for opposing reasons. The first charter has a highly distinctive hand, especially in its initial **H**, which has a doubled appearance.⁵²⁸ *The litterae notabiliores* and ascenders of **d**-forms are thickly shaded and clubbed, giving the hand a heavier appearance than any of the other hands under investigation. The second charter is not set apart because of its eccentricities, but is instead too lacking in distinguishing qualities to be readily pigeonholed. The initial **H** is distinctive, but does not conform to any other hands. Otherwise, the hand is pleasant, with neat and rounded minims, but otherwise has no distinguishing features. The **S**-form is consistent, but could apply to too many hands. Without more information, it is better to admit that this charter is unidentified.

⁵²⁸ Cambridge University Library EDC 1/B/33

Table 29: Hands of Charter Roll Entries Compared with Original Engrossments, Years 13-17 Henry III

Charter Name	Roll Hand	Charter Hand
Chichester, Sussex RO Cap,1/17/16	A.i	A.xiii
Warwick RO CR1186/274	A.v	A.x
Wilton Town Hall	A.iii	A.xv
TNA E 40/3170	A.v	A.v
Preston RO DDSt Box 119	A.v	A.xv
Truro, Royal Institution of Cornwall, Courtney Library RIC-TAM/1/12/1	A.v	A.ii
Lincoln, Lincolnshire RO D & C Lincoln A1/1B/52	A.v	A.xiii
Lincoln, Lincolnshire RO D & C Lincoln A1/1B/53	---	Inconc.
Lincoln, Lincolnshire RO D & C Lincoln A1/1B/61	A.v	A.xiii
Birmingham Central Library 435325	A.i	A.iii
Warwick RO CR1186/273	A.v	A.v
Northampton RO Stopford-Sackville 2330	A.ii	A.xvi
Taunton, Somerset RO DD/WHb/2533	---	A.x
Berkeley Castle BCM/E/1/1/4	---	A.xv
TNA E 326/12466	---	A.xiv
Oxford, Magdalen College Archives *8 Chartae Concessae HIII 12 Jul yr.15	---	A.xiv
TNA E 40/15166	---	A.i
Cambridge University Library EDC 1/B/32	A.iv	A.xiv
Kendal RO WSMB/A no.3:	A.v	A.xvi
Princeton C0953	A.ii	A.i
Chichester, Sussex RO Cap.1/17/17	A.vi	A.xi
Cambridge University Library EDC 1/B/28	A.i	A.xiv
Cambridge University Library EDC 1/B/33	A.i	Inconc.

There is one final aspect of these charters that can be tested in this section, and that is whether the same scribe might typically engross a charter and record it on the rolls. This is not an absurd assumption. As we have seen, the thirteenth-century royal chancery operated with a strong emphasis on accountability, and it is worth checking whether each scribe had a personal responsibility to enrol 'his' charter engrossments. Based on the evidence of rolls 13-17, it seems scribes had no such responsibility. Seven engrossments have no record in the charter rolls, as they come from a period when the charter roll failed to record copies, roughly beginning with Henry's 1230 invasion of France and not ending until June 1231. Of the seventeen charter engrossments in this photographed selection, I did not feel comfortable assigning a hand to one, leaving a final total of sixteen contemporary charter engrossments suitable for like-for-

like comparison of handwriting. Of these sixteen, in my estimation only two are written in the same hand. This happens to be Hand A.v, the most commonly occurring rolls hand by far and therefore the one most likely coincidentally to appear on both the enrolment and the engrossment. I also note that, even aside from the fact that most of these engrossments and rolls entries *are* not written in the same hand, many of them *could* not be. There are engrossment hands that do not appear on the rolls, and rolls hands that do not appear among this selection of engrossments. If one scribe was supposed to be responsible for every stage of a charter including its record, this would not be possible. Everyone would have had to do a little of everything.

3.3 Year 11 Henry III (1227)

General Observations

We must now travel back two years in time from the start of our last examined period. We are now in the eleventh year of King Henry III's reign: a year of profound discontinuity. From 1216-1218, the infant king had had no seal of his own, with that of William Marshal being employed temporarily to authenticate royal acts.⁵²⁹ Thereafter until 1227, the king had a great seal of sorts, but it could only be used in a limited way.⁵³⁰ By a special declaration of the great council, this temporary great seal could not be used for charters or grants in perpetuity.⁵³¹ The charter-granting functions of government had thereafter to be improvised, with all royal orders and other temporary instruments of dubious long-term value.⁵³² After negotiations with Poitevin nobles in 1226 required that the king have all normal royal prerogatives, Henry III's great seal had all restrictions on its use removed on 9 January 1227.⁵³³ That meant that a colossal backlog of charter business had to be dealt with in the months that followed, leading to the busiest period for charter production of the fifty-six year reign. Fortunately, the royal chancery was an institution coming into its own. Ralph Neville, who treated his possession of the great seal with great seriousness and as anything but a sinecure, officially became chancellor in 1226.⁵³⁴ Neville's chancery was an extremely powerful office, and had not yet begun its decades-long seepage of power to the wardrobe and chamber.⁵³⁵ Even apart from the huge workload occasioned by the lifting of restrictions on the use of Henry's great seal, the

⁵²⁹ P. Chaplais, *English Medieval Diplomatic Practice*, vol. 1, (Oxford, 1982) pp. 186-7.

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

⁵³¹ This declaration can be found in *PR 1216-25*, p. 177. Further discussion in Powicke, *Chancery in the Minority*, pp. 222-3.

⁵³² Powicke, *Chancery in the Minority*, p. 221.

⁵³³ Carpenter, *Henry III, 1207-58*, i, p. 42.

⁵³⁴ Though Neville is likely to have been de facto chancellor and keeper of the seal before this. See *ibid.*, pp. 225-7.

⁵³⁵ Tout, *Chapters*, vol. i, p. 181.

young king was coming into his own and had a court packed with highly placed individuals jockeying to extract patronage from him.⁵³⁶ The stage was set for a very busy year.

Table 30: Membranes, Schedules, and Entries in Charter Roll 11 Henry III

Charter Roll	Numbered Membranes	Schedules	Entries
11.1 (C 53/18)	36	1	289
11.2 (C 53/19)	9	0	106
Total:	45	8	395

With almost four hundred charters needing to be recorded over a period of ten months, the chancery scribes decided against enrolling everything in one super-roll. A new roll was begun at the beginning of July 1227, but this was after most of the initial rush for charters had been met. As a result, though roll 11.2 covers four months to 11.1's six, it is only made up of nine membranes to roll 11.1's thirty-six. For such a lengthy roll, it is remarkable that the chancery was able to produce 11.1 whilst resorting to only one schedule, inserted between membranes 11 and 12. In this case, the requirement for a schedule was not caused by a mass of business to be enrolled at once and out of date sequence, as in roll 13.1, but by the existence of a suitable draft that could be more quickly sewn in than re-written. The script is faded but legible, and the large modulus, narrow, with equidistant margins and strings of cancellations suggesting that this was either produced as a draft or rejected as an engrossment. Excluding this schedule, both these rolls were compiled according to a close approximation of date order. Unlike in roll 13.1, there are no great blocks of charters sent out all at once to high-powered individuals. Despite the mass of charters produced in just a few months, there are only two instances of a single beneficiary receiving more than three charters in a single day. The first appears on 9 February 1227, when the Knights Templar received five charters, and the second was on 26 April of the same year, with the beneficiary being the chancellor, Ralph Neville, who also received five

⁵³⁶ For more information on the very end of King Henry's minority and the political situation at the beginning of his majority, see Carpenter, *The Minority of Henry III*, pp. 389-95.

charters.⁵³⁷ Looking at the dates of each entry, they seem to have been enrolled in batches every few days, with individual entries in each batch not necessarily following in sequence but the batches as a whole being enrolled in proper chronological order.⁵³⁸ There was only one instance across this ten-month period of a charter being enrolled long after the rest of its batch, presumably because its engrossment or dispatch had been delayed.⁵³⁹ Overall, considering the fact in 1227 the royal chancery was swamped with charters to engross, there were few serious discrepancies in the order in which they were enrolled.

Almost 400 charters in a single year represents a simply astonishing output for the royal chancery. It is true that a typical patent or close roll would be composed of as many membranes, with even more entries, as those rolls typically use the dorse as well as the recto of each membrane. But that was part of the chancery's normal workload. By contrast, the charter output of 1227 was far from normal. Each charter represented a relatively major grant of land, power, or privilege, so the process of drafting and checking had to be undertaken very carefully. The roll for Year 13 is the second longest charter roll of the reign, yet that had only two thirds of the number of entries of the first part of Year 11, by far the longest compiled for the reign as a whole. If the rolls are taken as a pair, double the number of charters were enrolled in Year 11 compared to Year 13. The chancery had never had to churn out charters at such a rate either before or since, suggesting that the office must have taken on more writers, or redeployed scribes from within the wider governmental organisation. The natural course of action would

⁵³⁷ For the charters received by the Knights Templar, see *CChR 1226-57*, pp.4-5. For more information on the patronage extracted by the Order of the Temple from Henry III, with particular reference to the Temple Church see Z. Stewart, 'A Lesson in Patronage: King Henry III, the Knights Templar, and a Royal Mausoleum at the Temple Church in London', *Speculum*, 92 (2019), pp. 334-384. For charters received by Ralph Neville, see *CChR 1226-57*, pp. 34-5.

⁵³⁸ See, for instance, a huge batch dated between 20 and 30 March 1227, enrolled in apparently random order in *CChR 1226-57*, pp. 22-30. This is followed by another batch of charters dated early April, (*CChR 1226-57*, pp. 22-32) which never dips back into the date range of the previous batch.

⁵³⁹ These two charters, dated 20 and 21 February 1227, may be found enrolled out of sequence in *CChR 1226-57*, pp.17 and 21.

be to compare this roll with the previous charter roll, from before the huge surge in charter production of 1227, but that would mean going back over ten years and into the reign of King John and the chancellorship of Richard Marsh. The next best option has been to present the findings for this year after those for Years 13-17, in the hope that the hands appearing on both rolls can be guaranteed to be those of permanent members of the chancery staff.

Year 11 Henry III (1226-27): Scribal Hands

Table 31: Scribes of Charter Roll 11 Henry III

Scribal Hand	First Entry	Last Entry	Duration (months)	Total Entries
A.ii	Feb. 1227	May. 1227	3	15
A.v	Jan. 1227	Oct. 1227	9	185
B.i	Jan. 1227	Sep. 1227	8	78
B.ii	Jan. 1227	Aug. 1227	7	34
B.iii	Jan. 1227	Jan. 1227	1	1
B.iv	Feb. 1227	Feb. 1227	1	4
B.v	Feb. 1227	Sep. 1227	7	55
B.vi	Feb. 1227	Mar. 1227	1	2
B.vii	Feb. 1227	Aug. 1227	6	33
B.viii	Feb. 1227	Sep. 1227	7	36
B.ix	Mar. 1227	May. 1227	2	2
B.x	Mar. 1227	Mar. 1227	0	4
B.xi	Apr. 1227	Jul. 1227	3	3

Throughout its centuries of existence, English Court Hand adhered to constantly-evolving visual standards. Even without being our being able to read a single letter on the page or in any way to analyse the diplomatic, even at a distance, a charter of Henry II could not be mistaken by any reasonable viewer for a charter of Edward I. Like Theseus' Ship, the handwriting had imperceptibly changed almost every one of its supposedly 'standard' elements across the intervening century. This makes it helpful briefly to state what the 'standards' were for any given period of English royal documents, so that it can be clear what formed part of a scribe's standard toolkit and what might represent a deviation from the norm. Over the course of the thirteenth century in England, there was a slow but consistent morphing of business hands from

a vertical to a horizontal visual emphasis. Elongated hands that had been characterised by forward curves at the top and backward curves at the bottom of letters began to give way to rounded hands with shortened ascenders and descenders, and uniform line thicknesses began to yield place to extreme contrasts of thick and thin lines.⁵⁴⁰ This process was under way but had not advanced far by 1227, with slight thickening of **d** and **v** ascenders already being the norm for most hands. Vertical or horizontal visual emphasis was a more individual affair, with different scribes cleaving to their own preferences in this respect. Thickening of horizontal visual elements such as the tails of **g** and **s**-forms is present in some hands but is still a long way from becoming the norm. It can generally be said that there was an absence of extremes – neither the extreme vertical elongation of the late twelfth century, nor the extreme vertical compression of the late thirteenth, though elongation is still evident in various original charter engrossments of the period.⁵⁴¹ Later chancery preferences for letter choice, substituting ‘k’ for ‘c’ and ‘y’ for ‘i’, are totally absent at this early stage.⁵⁴² Though the contrasts in visual styles of the hands may have only been mild to moderate, ranging from features identical to those of the late chancery of King John, to tentative versions of mid-thirteenth century stylistic tropes, the same cannot be said of scribal preferences for individual letter forms. Here, there is an extreme level of difference, especially in *litterae notabiliores*, other capitals, and certain other letter forms where difference seems to have been tolerated, notably in letters **a**, **v**, **d**, **s**, **m**, **h** and **b**. Overall, the overwhelming impression given by Rolls 11.1 and 11.2 Henry III, and indeed Rolls 13-17 as previously discussed, is lack of house style, and hence of strong scribal individualism. This is especially true of some of the less frequently seen scribes listed below, who seem to have made surprisingly little effort to conform to the clear and consistent stylistic preferences of the chief scribes of the roll. Indeed, in as far as there is stylistic consistency in

⁵⁴⁰ Johnson and Jenkinson, *English Court Hand*, pp. xx-xxi,

⁵⁴¹ For an example of such an ‘elongated’ hand, see Bodleian Cambridgeshire Charter Number 7.

⁵⁴² Johnson and Jenkinson, *English Court Hand* p. xx.

these rolls, it comes from the dominance of three scribes producing over three quarters of all entries, and particularly the dominant ‘super scribe’ producing forty to fifty percent of entries.

In Rolls 11.1 and 11.2 Henry III, this prime scribal role was once again held by scribe A.v, though at this earlier stage his handwriting had not yet fully evolved.⁵⁴³ He had evidently not yet developed his distaste for unnecessary ornamentation, so *litterae notabiliores* are all marked with slightly elaborated capitals, most notably the capital **S** of ‘sciatis’. The initial **H** sometimes has a small knuckle to the left of the left ascender, though this does not seem to be used to draw another hairline flick. This same **H**, though never elaborated beyond the scribe’s trademark simple form, is sometimes emboldened to add emphasis. The **d**-form is also more inconsistent than it would become in the later rolls, sometimes taking its familiar ‘8’ shape and sometimes featuring a more standard diagonal ascender. In the same vein, the scribe had not yet settled on never crossing his Tironian **et**, though admittedly he only does so rarely.⁵⁴⁴ Otherwise, the hand is already much as it would be two years later, including the frequently used curved turn-up marks. The overall visual style of the hand is also much as it would become, but with the additional elements of standard chancery charter-writing practices that he would later reject. Interestingly, this scribe does seem deliberately to have modified his charter roll hand to look more like those of his peers, as his prolific entries on the patent, close and fine rolls of 11 Henry III show his handwriting more like it would become in the 13 Henry III charter roll.⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴³ See Appendix 1, Figure XII.

⁵⁴⁴ See Roll 11.1, membrane 28.

⁵⁴⁵ For examples of this hand in this year on the chancery rolls, see patent roll 11.1, membrane 11 (C 66/35); close roll, 11.1 membrane 2 (C 54/36); fine roll 11, membrane 11 (C 60/25).

Hand A.ii is much the same as it would be two years later, though in some cases it is even scruffier.⁵⁴⁶ The tendency of the scribe to emphasise *litterae notabiliores* with an additional stroke, which he always maintained only sporadically, seems to be absent from the Year 11 roll. As in the charter rolls from 1228-33, it seems that this scribe does not always use a pilcrow, but when he does it tends to be a large, characteristic symbol, with a significant tilt to the left. Otherwise, this is a rarely seen hand in this year, and there is nothing about its appearance or usage to suggest that it would become much ubiquitous in the years to come. There are no apparent examples of this hand in the patent, close or fine rolls of Year 11 Henry III, suggesting that the scribe was not yet fully integrated into the scribal hierarchy, or perhaps had thus far undiscovered duties elsewhere.

B.i is a hand that is similar in some ways to A.i, particularly in the shape of its initial **H**.⁵⁴⁷ Both hands were written by their scribes at a slightly left-tilted angle, which conveys a similar impression on the page. In addition, both hands used mostly uniform line weight. The pilcrow is also exactly the same between the pair, both in shape and in angle. On the other hand, B.i is a much neater hand, and creates less of an impression of spikiness. The capital **S** is a slightly different shape, though the two forms are similar. The forms of **d** in both hands are similar in thickness and style, but the equivalent in Hand B.i has a slightly less crooked ascender. *Litterae notabiliores* are emphasised in B.i, while they never are in A.i. Finally, the capital **Q**-form, so idiosyncratic in A.i, is very different and more conventional in B.i. The hand is commonly and easily found on both the patent and close rolls of Year 11 Henry III, without any apparent reduction in neatness or care taken over its appearance, but does not seem to be present in the

⁵⁴⁶ See Roll 11.1, membrane 25 for an example of some particularly scruffy work. See Appendix 1, Figure XII.

⁵⁴⁷ See Appendix 1, Figure XIII

fine roll of the same year.⁵⁴⁸

Since there is only a finite number of permutations of chancery stylings for these hands, some of them can look a lot like each other. That is certainly not true of Hand B.ii, which is among the most immediately recognisable of any in this survey.⁵⁴⁹ The pen strokes of this hand are exceptionally thin and delicate, with lots of rounded loops contrasting pleasantly with straight, relatively undisciplined minims. Few of the letter forms are particularly distinctive, apart from the capital **H** and **S**-forms, which both give an impression of horizontal compression. The **S**-form has an unusual duct, being made of three overlapping curves. Straight lines are de-emphasised and curves emphasised throughout this script, with almost no ascender or descender being allowed to stretch to even a quarter of its full length before a rightward curvature is applied to it. The rounded turn-up marks are oversized, which further emphasises curvature. Unlike scribe A.v, B.ii does not curve the stem of his **d**-form in order to create a curved visual impression, but rather draws a flamboyantly curved hairline on the back of a straight stem to achieve a similar effect. Like A.v, attention is rarely drawn to capital letters in this script, which are either absent or visually subtle throughout. The visual distinctiveness of this hand makes it easy to spot, so it can be asserted with absolute confidence that it is totally absent from the patent and fine rolls of Year 11 Henry III. However, though rare, it is in evidence on the close roll of that year, proving that the scribe did have some employment outside strictly charter business.⁵⁵⁰

B.iii and B.iv are both hands that are much more commonly found on surviving original charter

⁵⁴⁸ For examples, see patent roll 11.1, membrane 8 (C 66/35); close roll 11.1, membrane 4 (C 54/36).

⁵⁴⁹ See Appendix 1, Figure XI.

⁵⁵⁰ An example may be found on close roll 11.1, membrane 6 (C 54/36).

engrossments than in entries on the charter rolls.⁵⁵¹ Both hands make little more than a guest appearance on roll 11.1, with one and four entries respectively. B.iii is a hand most clearly defined by its long, arrow straight ascenders on both the capital **H** and minuscule **h**. This is usually topped with a broad flick to the right, looping back without crossing over. Such broad loops are common throughout. The diagonal **d**-form, for instance, has a hairline flick that forms an unusually semicircular path as it returns to the baseline. The overall impression is of lower left to upper right diagonal lines, which is strikingly opposed to the lower right to upper left lines that are usually emphasised in chancery hands by using diagonal ascenders. In this hand of course the ascenders travel in the usual direction, but the other diagonal is emphasised by use of hairline flicks above the waistline at the end of upstrokes or below the baseline in the case of downstrokes. The **s**-form at the end of words also contributes to this diagonal emphasis, with its lower bowl replaced by a sharp diagonal pen stroke. B.iv, by way of contrast, is not distinguished by a particular emphasis on directional lines but by the weight, thickness and contrast of its pen strokes. Even the lighter strokes are thicker than average for a chancery hand on these rolls, and the thicker strokes are much wider and darker. Thickening is particularly apparent on the **d**, **a**, long **s**, and **b**-forms, as well as suspension and even turn-up marks. The initial **H** is a highly idiosyncratic shape, which can be seen even more clearly in the charters written by this scribe. Neither Hands B.iii nor B.iv have any apparent presence in any of the other chancery rolls, giving credence to the hypothesis that charter-engrossing ‘specialists’ had fewer if any rolls-producing duties.

Another prevalent hand that shows this inverse dichotomy between charter and roll activity is B.v, though in the opposite way to B.iii and B.iv.⁵⁵² With fifty-five entries, it is quite frequently

⁵⁵¹ For their appearances in chancery rolls, see Appendix 1, Figures XV and XVI.

⁵⁵² See Appendix 1, Figure XVII.

encountered on the charter rolls for Year 11 Henry III, but this is dwarfed by its prevalence on the close, and particularly the fine rolls, where it rivals A.v as the dominant scribal hand.⁵⁵³ No single-sheet charters written in this hand were among the group of extant survivors that I was able to examine. As to its visual qualities, the scribe has some eccentricities that make his work easy to spot. Firstly, his habitual choice of paragraph mark is unique in scribes of this period, using a style suggested by Johnson and Jenkinson as being more typical of the 1190s than the 1220s.⁵⁵⁴ The initial **H** is not placed at the start line, as is overwhelmingly typical, but well into the margin to the left. Where this scribe omits this initial, he nevertheless begins the charter entry with 'Rex' and omits 'Henricus' entirely, he never places the **H** in its typical location. As for the handwriting of the main body, it is more distinct in impression than in letter forms, with the letters being somewhat elongated in height and compressed in width. Minims are rounded but untidy, and an unusually wide array of abbreviation marks are in constant use. Contributing to the unusual impression of height is the relatively straight **d**-form, which typically sits at an angle of about seventy to eighty degrees from horizontal, rather than the more common range of about forty to sixty-five.

B.vi is a rare example of a hand that only occurs twice in these two charter rolls, separated by nineteen membranes, with no other apparent appearances in either chancery rolls or original charters, but that is so unmistakable that there is no chance of any misidentification.⁵⁵⁵ This is largely due to the capital **H** and **S**-forms, which both draw on the same visual logic of vertical enlargement decorated only with vertical lines. This scribe also favours wide, left pointing loops on his **S** and **g**-forms. The two entries are quite different in line width, with that of

⁵⁵³ For examples, see close roll 11.1, membrane 7 (C 54/36); fine roll 11, membrane 12 (C 60/25).

⁵⁵⁴ Johnson and Jenkinson, *English Court Hand*, p. 77.

⁵⁵⁵ See Appendix 1, Figure XVIII.

membrane 34 employing narrower lines and membrane 15 employing wider, but since there is little contrast within the same document the overall effect is largely the same.

Along with B.ii, B.vii may be the most distinctive among the hands presented here.⁵⁵⁶ This is for two main reasons. Firstly, the lines are consistently very thin for a chancery hand, with some being made heavier for contrast but none being made thicker. Secondly, the Tironian **et** symbols appear to point sharply to the top right of the document, looking like arrowheads. The scribe does not typically use diagonal lines to further emphasise this top-right visual style, as other scribes do, but instead forms subtler arrows from hairline curves that extend out from their letter forms slightly further horizontally than vertically. The overall effect is a pleasing one, as the hand is given a distinct rhythm by this consistent direction of visual emphasis. The hand is found with some frequency on the patent and close rolls of Year 11 Henry III, but not on the fine roll of the same year, nor on any original charter engrossments.⁵⁵⁷

Hand B.viii appears in almost exactly as many entries as the B.vii, thirty-six against thirty-three.⁵⁵⁸ Some scribes habitually use a modest pilcrow, while others favour a specific type which they kept using. The B.viii scribe is unusual in that he has two shapes in his pilcrow repertoire, though the rest of his hand does not change. The first of these is a large ‘C’ shape with a single vertical strikethrough. The second is an elaboration of the same shape, with two large vertical lines forming the more familiar paragraph mark. The initial **H** is always formed with three horizontal bars and single vertical bar, with an ear-shaped bowl to the right extending most of the way back to the left ascender from under the baseline. Otherwise, the scribe shows

⁵⁵⁶ See Appendix 1, Figure XIX.

⁵⁵⁷ For examples, see patent roll 11.1, membrane 7 (C 66/35); close roll 11.1, membrane 7 (C 54/36).

⁵⁵⁸ See Appendix 1, Figure XX.

great enthusiasm for extending and thickening bottom-right to top-left pen strokes, including those of the **d**, **a**, **v**, and capital **S**-forms, as well as the very elongated turn-up marks. This scribe also makes liberal use of hairline flicks emanating from the top of his ascenders. His style of **f**-form, with two upper hooks, is listed by Johnson and Jenkinson as being common in the middle to later thirteenth century, making this a relatively early example of the form.⁵⁵⁹ There is evidence of this hand on the patent roll only, with no clear examples on the fine or close rolls.⁵⁶⁰

Chancery roll hands vary considerably in their subjective neatness and attractiveness, and Hand B.ix is a notably ugly example of the breed.⁵⁶¹ No attempt has been made to harmonise the directions of the major lines of the hand, nor to unify any of the decorative elements employed. Two different capital **S** forms are used, and the minims wander around the baseline at will. The **d**-forms are thickened and heavily clubbed. It is not clear why they are emphasised, since this only serves to highlight the disparity of angles between the letters. There is very little space between the lines of text, further contributing to a cramped feel. The pilcrow helps easily identify the hand from others on the roll: it is shaped like a number '8' with a flat top. Perhaps fortunately given how unprepossessing it is, this hand is only found on two charter roll entries, with no trace in other chancery material or original charter engrossments.

The B.x hand is much handsomer than B.ix, with a strong sense of deliberate visual identity.⁵⁶²

The overall line weight is very thin, but horizontal, vertical and diagonal lines are all thickened

⁵⁵⁹ Johnson and Jenkinson, *English Court Hand*, p. 17

⁵⁶⁰ For an example, see patent roll 11.1, membrane 7 (C 66/35).

⁵⁶¹ See Appendix 1, Figure XXI.

⁵⁶² See Appendix 1, Figure XXII.

and elongated. Lines are kept widely spaced, to allow for the number of shaded lines required for this visual scheme. The **g** and **s**-forms have a flamboyant lower bowl, the top line of which is thickened to further emphasise its horizontality. The initial **H** is likewise lengthened, to emphasise the vertical. The pilcrow is quite a flamboyant, heavily shaded form, which the scribe does a good job miniaturising when the modulus is shrunk. Though lines are emphasised in three directions, the overall proportions of the script favour width over height, a relative rarity in these roll hands. I was able to find only one example of this hand in other chancery material, on the close rolls.⁵⁶³

Finally, Hand B.xi appears in three consecutive entries towards the end of roll 11.1.⁵⁶⁴ This is not a hand with many unique or interesting facets to discuss, but the features it does display are in a permutation that make it hard to assign to any known hand. The hand displays a consistent style of shaded pilcrow, without the loop at the bottom that most scribes employing this style of pilcrow favoured. *Litterae notabiliores* are conscientiously differentiated from regular capitals, though not always using consistent forms. There is considerable contrast displayed between thick and thin lines, with a wide variety of abbreviation marks on display. The initial **H**, without being at all outside the usual appearance of such a letter in chancery material, is not a close match for any of the other hands. As far as the non-letter forms are concerned, hairline strokes are used to indicate the dot of the letter **i** are much thicker than usual in a hand of this type, and it is notable in a hand outside the ubiquitous A.v that this scribe never crossed his Tironian **et**. All things considered, the most diagnostically useful idiosyncrasy of this hand is that in one entry, the scribe used a very unconventional form of **S** for ‘sciatis’.⁵⁶⁵ Though this

⁵⁶³ This one example can be found at close roll 11.1, membrane 21 (C 66/35).

⁵⁶⁴ See Appendix 1, Figure XXIII.

⁵⁶⁵ See charter roll 11.1, membrane 8.

was on an *inspeximus* record that might have been consciously mimicking an older form, it is worth noting that one of the original charters shows the same combination of S-forms, which tends to confirm my opinion that these entries are indeed written in the same hand.⁵⁶⁶ Apart from this charter, no other chancery material seems to be written in this hand.

Producing charter rolls totalling nearly four hundred individual entries must have been a mammoth undertaking, and like most such enterprises it seems to have been a team effort. The hands of thirteen scribes are in evidence on the two rolls of Year 11 Henry III, just over half of whom wrote a double-digit number of entries. Only two scribes working on the 1226-7 charter roll were still in evidence by 1228-9, representing a high rate of attrition. There is no easy way to explain this. Clerks were, in effect, part of the household of the chancellor, so it is tempting to ascribe the exodus to the death of Richard Marsh. This seems unlikely, however, as Marsh had not been a regular attender at court since 1217, with Ralph Neville serving as *de facto* chancellor from that time onwards.⁵⁶⁷ It is also worth noting that none of the charter roll scribes from this year were 'promoted', if indeed that is how it was seen, to become the writers of original charter from 1228 onwards.⁵⁶⁸ A more plausible explanation is that many of these men were brought in exceptionally to assist with the unprecedented glut of charter business. This may well be so, but most of the hands in evidence on these rolls were also in evidence on the close and/or patent rolls in the same year. The restrictions placed on charters before King Henry's majority did not apply to letters close or letters patent, so the rolls of those letters were of a normal length for this year. Why make temporarily seconded scribes complete tasks that were no more challenging than normal? Moreover, though this is a more subjective assessment,

⁵⁶⁶ The charter in question is TNA E 326/11561.

⁵⁶⁷ See C.L. Kingsford, 'Richard Marisco'. *ODNB 1885-1900*, vol. 3, pp. 163-164.

⁵⁶⁸ Although it should be noted that there was a slightly higher 'survival rate' among those scribes who only wrote original charters.

in both rolls and charters, the hands in evidence on this roll give the impression of being those of seasoned chancery scribes, with few idiosyncrasies to suggest a different origin for the clerks in question. Without completing a palaeographical investigation that covers the entire reign, it is impossible to know for certain how long the career of a typical chancery clerk might have lasted, but the other periods examined in this thesis suggest that it was unusual for scribes to leave en masse within so short a time. The best way to help solve this riddle would be to examine charter roll 12 Henry III, to act as a link between two of my periods.

As far as the distribution of scribal duties is concerned, the pattern in 11 Henry III is not radically different to that of Years 13-17 Henry III. For this year, super-scribe A.v 'only' wrote about forty percent of the entries on the roll, ten percent less than he would be writing for the next few years. Nevertheless, for a year with a truly exceptional volume of business, it is remarkable that this one man was able to monopolise so much of it for himself. Once again there are two scribes below A.v who collectively wrote about a third of the total number of entries, or in this case just under thirty percent (B.i and B.v). Below these men there was again a tier of scribes writing appreciably fewer entries than the tier above, but this time we find three men in this category (B.ii, B.vii, and B.ix) rather than one. These three wrote 34, 33, and 36 entries, respectively. Not having entered his stride yet, as he would in future years, the next tier down is composed solely of Scribe A.ii, who this time wrote just 15 charter roll entries. Perhaps to compensate for the increased number of men in the tier above, A.ii is the only scribe in this period writing so few charters while clearly being a regular contributor. Finally, all the remaining six scribes in evidence (B.iii, B.iv, B.vi, B.ix, B.x, and B.xi) wrote 1 to 4 entries each on the roll, which must be considered mere 'guest' appearances across a context of nearly 400 entries. Considering that few of these scribes's hands were in evidence for Years 13-17 Henry III, and the difference in context between this bumper year and the busy but not

exceptional years previously discussed, it is incredible that the overall make-up of scribes remained so similar. This strongly suggests that some internal hierarchy was at play to reach these numbers, as it seems improbable that different groups of scribes would have organised their output in a manner so close to that which remained standard hereafter.

These similarities seem even more remarkable considering that this period covers just the ten months of January to October 1227. On the one hand, the shorter time frame for this period of overwork might suggest that ‘normal’ processes were temporarily suspended. On the other, we are able here to remove another variable: the individual coming and going of scribes. Of the six scribes who wrote more than thirty entries on these two rolls, none had a first entry dated later than February and none had a last entry dated earlier than August. This means that most active scribes worked across a guaranteed seven-month period, where in our previous five-year period important scribes are to be starting and stopping work unpredictably. This does not apply to the scribes with very few entries in Year 11, since they wrote all their entries during one or at most two months of the year. This means that it is possible to list the months when these ‘guest’ scribes of 1-4 entries were present in chancery: January, February, February-March, March-May, and April-July. This represents a wide spread of dates for such a small body of men with so little work on these rolls, and again suggests that having non-regulars contribute to these rolls was an entirely normal part of the process.

Table 32: Blocks of Entries Written by the Same Scribe, Charter Roll 11 Henry III

Roll	Blocks	<1	1 to 1.5	2 to 5	5 to 10	>10	Mean
11.1	120	8	41	62	10	3	2.4
11.2	49	7	19	19	4	0	2.1

As before, this table shows blocks of single-hand activity, lists frequency of each size of block in number of entries, then displays the mean average. Surprisingly, it is the bloated and atypical

roll 11.1 Henry III that conforms most closely to the averages of Rolls 13-17, with 2.4 average entries before each change of scribe. Roll 11.2, with its average of 2.1 entries before change of scribe, has a faster rate of scribal rotation than any of the rolls in Years 13-17. Neither roll has many long blocks of single-scribe activity, and both tend toward scribes writing just one or two entries before the hand changes. This rapid turnaround of scribes working on the roll also seems to be reflected in the number of entries abandoned halfway through and then finished by another scribe, of which there are thirteen on these two rolls. For the only time on any of the charter rolls examined for this thesis, there is even a single instance of a hand changing twice in one entry.⁵⁶⁹ Overall, the impression that these seven months of records present is of extreme haste, but the haste of a large institution mobilising its resources, not the usual overworked staff pushing themselves harder. The fact that the dominance of Scribe A.v is slightly reduced compared to that exercised in later and more 'normal' years speaks volumes, as does the fact that both rolls have high rates of turnaround for each scribe putting pen to parchment. Never again, in the rolls I have investigated, would the same sense of relative equality between the work-loads of individual scribes be so clearly apparent. English royal bureaucracy had become largely self-reliant during the years of King Henry's minority, and Ralph Neville was well bedded in as *de facto* and then *de jure* chancellor. Such institutional self-confidence never comes across more clearly than in this first year of the king's full majority.

As with Years 13-17 Henry III, this was a period in which the major hands on the charter rolls were also in evidence on the other great rolls of the royal chancery. As with the later period we have already examined, the dominant A.v scribe is the major contributor to the close, patent, and fine rolls of this year, appearing even more ubiquitously on the fine roll than the charter

⁵⁶⁹ See charter roll 11.2 Henry III, membrane 4 (C 53/19).

roll. No other hand is visible on all three other chancery series I have looked at, but several are to be found in at least two. Hand B.v, with its distinctive pilcrow and elongated ascenders and descenders, making it an easy hand to spot, is regularly to be found on the close roll and especially the fine roll. Hands B.i and B.vii are both visible on the patent and close rolls, though not often. Hands B.ii and B.x are only visible on the close roll beyond the charter roll. Even then I was able to find only one example of each, which was a major disappointment given how distinctive and hence easy to spot these two hands are. I was likewise only able to find Hand B.viii in one other record, in this case the patent roll. Again, this is a distinctive hand with several idiosyncrasies and a noteworthy pilcrow, and not to find it except once on the patent roll was disappointing.

Year 11 Henry III (1226-27): Original Charter Hands

Table 33: Hands of Original Charter Engrossments Sourced from the Vincent Register, 11 Henry III

Hand	Charters
A.ii	Winchester W/A1/1/5
A.xiii	Lincoln A/1/1B/50
A.xiv	Northampton Borough 2 TNA E 42/315 Worcester City Charters Henry III 1227
A.xvi	Chippenham 473/8 (ii) Chippenham 473/8(i) Hereford Town Hall HIII yr.11 Shrewsbury 3365/5 Shrewsbury 3365/6
B.i	Bedford BOR.B.A1/2 Oxford, Magdalen College 30 Chartae Regiae Shrewsbury 3365/7 Southampton SC1/1/2 Winchester W/A1/1/4
B.ii	Cambridge St John's D10.9 Chippenham 473/7 Gloucester GBR/I1/5 Grimsby 1/20/1 Preston DD DA Box 52 Henry III Preston MBLA 14/4
B.iii	Brighton BAT/1/1/10 Chippenham G23/0/1 Salisbury Press IV C3 Royal Grants 8
B.iv	Chichester Cap.1/17/15 Warwick CR1886/271 Warwick CR1886/272
B.viii	Maidstone D/ZQ/1
B.xi	TNA E 326/11561
B.xii	TNA E 40/15165 TNA E 210/11014 TNA E 42/528
Unidentified/Others	Cambridge St John's D10.3 Lincoln A/1/1B/59

Just four of the hands that were still in evidence after 1228, in our earlier survey of the years 1228-33, can be found in the original single-sheet charters of 1227: A.ii, A.xiii, A.xiv, and A.xvi. As I found to be the case for that subsequent period, among these ‘A’ scribes there seems to be an inverse correlation between profligate appearance on rolls and frequency in the writing

of charters. A.v, the most prolific rolls hand, wrote none of the original charters dated 1227 that I have seen. A.ii, a moderately prolific rolls hand, wrote just one. A.xii, A.xiv, and A.xvi, hands that have no presence at all on the charter rolls, wrote nine between them in this small selection alone. Unfortunately for the creation of any new paradigms about charter versus rolls scribes, this correlation is much less evident for the 'B' scribes: those who are only in evidence in the original rolls and charters of year 11 Henry III. A staggering eleven charters from this selection were written by scribes B.i and B.ii, and since these are two of the most distinctive hands from any point in the king's reign there is precious little chance of misattribution. These scribes, particularly B.i, were moderately prolific rolls contributors as well as (on this evidence) frequent charter writers. Indeed, the handwriting of scribes B.iii, B.iv, B.viii, and B.xi, who were collectively responsible for a further eight charters in this selection, can all be found on the charter rolls. The crumb of comfort for the theory of rolls clerks specialising in rolls or engrossment is that, of this selection, only scribe B.viii was moderately prolific on the charter roll, and his hand only appears on a single charter. Only three of the thirty-two charters where I can confidently identify the hand feature a hand that I had not seen before on the rolls or other charters, Hand B.xii. There were a further two charters that I did not feel comfortable identifying as either an old or a definitely new hand, which I have therefore excluded from the labelling process. In the following paragraphs, I have attempted to summarise the unique qualities of these hands, and the similarities and differences with other documents written in the same hand that we have seen before.

None of the ten charters written in Hands A.ii, A.xiii, A.xiv or A.xvi look radically different from the equivalent charters written in the same hands in Years 13-17 Henry III. Five charters in this category were written by the scribe of Hand A.xvi, bringing his total up to seven across the two periods. This is a very consistent hand, and it is not necessary to recapitulate all its

visual qualities. The separate ‘ear’ to the initial **H**, the flicks to the left on downstrokes, and the use of several enlarged, ‘j’ shaped Tironian **et** forms all make it immediately obvious when a charter is written by this scribe, which makes it even more noticeable that no rolls entries are written by him. Hands A.xiii and A.xiv are also identical across the two periods, with Hand A.xiv maintaining a remarkable degree of visual consistency over six charters. It is interesting to note that such consistency among charter hands is more common among those scribes who only or mainly wrote charters. It could be that not having to code-switch between internally and externally facing documents led to greater consistency, or simply that older and more experienced men were given the position of greater ultimate responsibility. This point is proved by the sole charter in this period written by the scribe of Hand A.ii, a rolls ‘specialist’.⁵⁷⁰ This charter exhibits the same non-initial capital **H-forms** as the rolls hand, complete with extravagant loop coming from the top of the ascender. The initial **H** on this charter is unlike the typical style employed by this scribe, but very similar to the style he employed for one entry he wrote on charter roll 13.1 Henry III.⁵⁷¹

A prolific rolls and charter scribe in Year 11 Henry III, the scribe of Hand B.i had a commendably adaptable style of handwriting that could look appropriately functional on the rolls and yet, with minimal modification, convey appropriate solemnity on a charter engrossment. Based on the five consistently written charters identified here, these modifications were as follows: proper highlighting of *litterae notabiliores*, reduction of the angle of the hand so that letters appear straighter, use of subtle decorative dots and pen strokes, wide spacing of lines of text, and consistent angles of diagonal **d** ascenders. One of the most attractive aspects of the hand in the rolls is the consistent use of two parallel horizontal or

⁵⁷⁰ Winchester W/A1/1/5.

⁵⁷¹ See charter roll 13.1, membrane 18 (C 53/21).

vertical lines as a visual motif across several capitals (including **H**, **M**, **A**, **N**, **C**, and **G**), and the enlarged capitals made possible by the size of a charter engrossment makes this even more apparent.⁵⁷²

The other hand in this collection that is common to both rolls and original charters is B.ii, with six extant charters. All the previously established qualities of the hand in the rolls remain, though once again the greater line spacing afforded by the charter format makes a difference to neatness and readability. The tendency of the scribe in the rolls to finish his capital **S**-form with a flick to the right is even more pronounced in the original charters than it was in the rolls, as a hairline has been widened to a full pen stroke. This particular scribe has another tendency that was not in evidence when he wrote on the rolls: at the beginning of the 'intitulatio', he writes out 'HENRICUS' in full, capital letters. B.ii is the only scribe in this period to do this, making it very easy to discern which charters he wrote, and to confirm that he wrote no more in the Years 13-17 Henry III.

A guest appearance for one entry only was all that could be discerned of Hand B.iii in the charter roll, but there are three extant charters surviving in the selection made available to me that are almost certainly in this same hand. They are consistently written, but the most diagnostically clear is Chippenham G23/0/1. This clearly displays the two most interesting aspects of the hand on the charter roll: the elongation of the ascenders on capital and minuscule **H** and **h**-forms, and the consistent use of a small terminal **s**-form at the end of words, whether or not they are abbreviated. Horizontal lines are emphasised, such as the lower bowl of the **g**-form below the baseline. As far as differences are concerned, the capital **S** is not identical

⁵⁷² See Oxford, Magdalen College/30 Chartae Regiae for a particularly attractive example.

across charters and rolls, as the bottom stroke of the letter is omitted in two of the three charters, and the Tironian **et** is never crossed in the roll and usually crossed in the charters.⁵⁷³ These are not major discrepancies, and do not introduce any serious doubt as to the identity of the scribe.

From another guest-hand on the charter roll, three extant charters in this selection are written in Hand B.iv. One charter in particular, Chichester Cap.1/17/15 is written almost identically to one of the rolls entries.⁵⁷⁴ This is a thick hand with heavy, dark lines, and it seems better suited to charters than rolls entries. Across the entire corpus of charters and roll entries written in this hand, the main difference between the two categories is to be found in decoration. In the original charters, the scribe shows great enthusiasm for flourished decorations on the hooks of ascenders, which he does not display in the rolls. The difference in medium is the obvious reason for this discrepancy, but this never discouraged the scribe of Hand A.iii from utilising these very same decorations in the rolls.

Hand B.viii leaves a neat and readable impression on the charter rolls, and its lone extant equivalent seems not have needed much modification. The two main elements that illustrate the hand's identity are the initial **H**, which features a prominent vertical bar and an ear-shaped bowl to the right, and a turn-up mark that is significantly elongated. Some hands are unavoidably more distinct than others, with obvious differences that can be discerned on first inspection. Others are more subtle in their differences. In the case of Hand B.xi, the main determining factor linking this charter with the hand in the rolls is the combination of **S**-forms used. These three disparate forms occur in a row on line three of the charter, on the first letters

⁵⁷³ The exception is Brighton BAT/1/1/10.

⁵⁷⁴ See charter roll 11.1, membrane 29.

of “...suis salutem. Sciatis...”⁵⁷⁵ Even aside from the unusual combination of **S**-forms, overall this hand also accords with the rolls entry, with thick lines, neat minims, and large suspension marks. The only difference, and not a major one, is that the Tironian **et** is always crossed in the original charter, but never in the roll.

The final hand in evidence on these charters, B.xii, has not been found on any of the chancery rolls. A very old-fashioned hand by the standards of 1227, it emphasises vertical lines to the total exclusion of horizontal and even diagonal lines. Some accommodation is made with diagonals for the **S** and **M** forms, which are as narrow as possible while still being recognisable. All other letters, including **f**, **C**, and long **s**, are as close as possible to being simple straight lines. Not only are diagonal and most horizontal lines avoided, but the vertical ascenders are hugely elongated, with lines between text being very wide to accommodate this.

As before, there were two charters that could not be identified. This time, it is both charters that are too distinctive to be written by any of the other scribes listed here. In all likelihood these charters were simply written by two different men, rather than known scribes disguising their hands, but it is not useful to assign to them any alpha-numeric ‘name’ without being able to compare their writing with any equivalent on other charters or rolls.

Table 34: Hands of Charter Roll Entries Compared with Original Engrossments, Year 11 Henry

⁵⁷⁵ TNA E 326/11561.

III

Charter Name	Roll Hand	Charter Hand
Chippenham RO G23/0/1	B.iii	B.iii
Lincoln, Lincolnshire RO D & C Lincoln A/1/1/59	A.v	Inconc.
Warwick RO CR11886/271	A.v	B.iv
Warwick RO CR1186/272	A.iii	B.iv
TNA E 210/11014	A.v	B.xii
Lincoln, Lincolnshire RO D & C Lincoln A/1/1/50	A.v	A.xiii
TNA E 326/11561	A.ii	B.xi
Preston RO DD DA Box 52	A.ii	B.ii
Northampton RO Records of Northampton no.2 HIII 16 March 1227.	A.ii	A.xiv
Preston RO MBLA 14/4	A.ii	B.ii
Worcester, Worcestershire Archives, City of Worcester Charters 2.	A.ii	A.xiv
Shrewsbury, Shropshire RO 3365/5	B.ii	A.xvi
Shrewsbury, Shropshire RO 3365/6	B.ii	A.xvi
Shrewsbury, Shropshire RO 3365/7	B.ii	B.i
Brighton, East Sussex Record Office BAT/1/1/10	A.ii	B.iii
Salisbury Cathedral Library Press IV: C3 (Royal Grants) 8	A.v/B.ii	B.iii
Hereford Town Hall Henry III 23 March yr.11	A.iv	A.xvi
Bedford RO BOR.B.A1/2	A.v	B.i
Gloucester RO GBR/II/5.	A.v	B.ii
Chichester, Sussex RO Cap.1/17/15	B.iii	B.iv
Chippenham RO 473/7	A.v	B.ii
Chippenham RO 473/8 (i)	A.v	A.xvi
Chippenham RO 473/8 (ii)	A.v	A.xvi
TNA E 42/315	A.v	Inconc.
Southampton Civic Records SC1/1/2	A.v	A.xiv
Winchester, Hampshire RO W/A1/1/4	A.v	B.i
Winchester, Hampshire RO W/A1/1/5	A.v	A.ii
Grimsby Borough Archives 1/20/1	A.v	B.ii
Cambridge, St John's College D10.3	B.ii	Inconc.
Cambridge, St John's College D10.9	B.ii	B.ii
Maidstone, Kent RO D/ZQ/1	---	B.viii
Salisbury Cathedral Library Press IV C3 (Royal Grants) 19	A.ii	B.iii
TNA E 40/15165	B.iii	B.xii
Oxford, Magdalen College Archives *30 Chartae Regiae	B.iii	B.i
TNA E 42/528	A.v	B.xii

The evidence for charter roll 11 Henry III leads to much the same conclusions as that from rolls 13-17, perhaps even more emphatically given the larger sample size. Excluding one engrossment for which I could find no rolls entry, and three engrossments with hands I did not feel able to assign to a particular scribe, thirty-two engrossments are available for like-for-like

comparison with their enrolled entries. Of these, a paltry two share the same hand, or one-sixteenth of the total. With so many scribes at work in one year, and the most prolific rolls scribe (A.v) producing no charters, the likelihood of coincidences is greatly reduced by comparison to a year where few scribes were working. As has been previously noted, scribes B.ii and B.iii are the only two clerks we encounter until 1259 who are prolific on both rolls and engrossments, making them by far the likeliest candidates for coincidental writing of an engrossment and rolls entry. Conversely, there are still prolific charter scribes like A.xiv or A.xvi who have no rolls presence at all, showing once again that there was no expectation for a scribe to record his own engrossed output on the charter rolls.

3.4 Years 24-29 Henry III (1239-45)

General Observations

This was a transitional period in King Henry's reign, following his struggles to break free from Hubert de Burgh and Peter des Roches, but before the ill-fated 'Sicilian Business', the Provisions of Oxford, or the civil war of the 1260s. The year 1239 saw the arrival of Thomas of Savoy into England, with his brothers Peter and Boniface following him in 1240 and 1244. These men were the queen's uncles, prominent on the continent, and made themselves agreeable to Henry personally. Thomas was already *de facto* Count of Flanders, but Henry gave Peter the Honour of Richmond and engineered the Archbishopric of Canterbury for Boniface. This Savoyard power bloc would begin to dominate English politics over the coming years, until it was counter-balanced by the arrival of Henry's half-brothers the Lusignans from 1247 onwards.⁵⁷⁶ All this was much to the chagrin of the Anglo-Norman magnates. The king's inner circle was filled with men brought in by the Savoyards: Peter de Aigueblanche became keeper of the king's wardrobe, Bernard of Savoy castellan of Windsor, and Imbert Pugeys steward of the royal household.⁵⁷⁷ The increasing influx of foreigners, not just Savoyards, was even felt in the royal administration: by February 1240, nineteen clerks from 'across the seas' were in the king's service.⁵⁷⁸ These included Simon the Norman, the keeper of the great seal.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁶ H. Ridgeway, 'Foreign Favourites', pp. 590-610.

⁵⁷⁷ The men led chequered lives, and were not altogether successful in their attempts to set themselves up as bona fide Englishmen of quality, but the Savoyards had a collective intelligence and common sense that tended to keep them out of trouble. They certainly didn't cause any institutional decline within the operation of the household, nor anywhere else they found themselves. For more information, see M. Ray, 'Three Alien Royal Stewards in Thirteenth-Century England' and, for a different perspective on the same phenomenon see Julia Barrow, 'Peter of Aigueblanche's Support Network' in *Thirteenth Century England XIII: Proceedings of the Paris Conference*, ed. J. Burton (2009), pp. 27-40.

⁵⁷⁸ Carpenter, *Henry III 1207-58*, i, p. 216-17. Carpenter urges caution: though contemporary voices like Matthew Paris feared that foreigners were taking over, in his judgement this is not a fair reflection on the number of Englishmen that were still securing top jobs. See p. 219.

⁵⁷⁹ F.M. Powicke, 'Master Simon the Norman', *English Historical Review*, 58 (1943), pp. 330-43.

From 1242-3, Henry, many of his new Savoyard companions, and those of his barons who could be prevailed upon, journeyed into France to support the rebellion of Hugh de Lusignan. Their campaign failed to achieve its objectives, and neither wrestled back control of Henry's lost French possessions nor won him any new friends in the region. Though the thought of a military campaign evokes images of long marches and derring-do, and in fairness there was some of both during this campaign, in practice Henry and his court spent ten of the fourteen months they were away from England holed up in Bordeaux.⁵⁸⁰ This meant that Henry was dependent upon a very simplified form of the government to which he had grown accustomed when in England. Bordeaux stood in for Westminster, but there far fewer clerks than normal, and a single overseas patent roll standing in for the regular patent and charter rolls. 1244 and 1245 were quieter years for the king, mostly spent with the queen and their young children or attempting to navigate increasingly chilly relationships with the leaders of Scotland and Wales.⁵⁸¹

Table 35: Membranes, Schedules, and Entries in Charter/Patent Rolls 24-29 Henry III

Charter/Patent Roll	Numbered membranes	Schedules	Entries
charter roll 24 (C 53/33)	4	0	39
charter roll 25 (C 53/34)	6	0	42
charter roll 26 (C 53/35)	8	0	45
patent roll 26-7 (C 66/52)	7	0	11
patent roll 27 (C 66/53)	15	2	29
charter roll 28 (C 53/36)	4	0	45
charter roll 29 (C 53/37)	7	1	54
Total:	52	3	307

The charter rolls for years 24, 25, 28, and 29 Henry III are all carefully written and assembled. There is little evidence of their having been produced under duress, whether through events or overwork. It is true that none of the four rolls shows a consistent commitment to keeping entries

⁵⁸⁰ Carpenter *Henry III, 1207-58, i*, p. 266.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.* pp. 414-434.

in exact date order, but neither are they slapdash. Generally, each roll keeps its months in perfect order, with the days of the month sometimes being jumbled. In May 1244 (year 28), for example, the entries are dated, in order: 4, 3, 16, 22, 25, 28, 23, 27, and 28 May.⁵⁸² To guess purely from the numbers, the roll was updated after 4 May, 16 May, and 28 May. Similarly, the months of the roll were enrolled in correct order, without a single one out of place. This is not true of the other three rolls, but the discrepancies there were slight. One entry from late in a month was mixed with those from early in the next month in rolls 24, 26 and 29, with two such flipped entries in roll 25.⁵⁸³ Again, despite technically crossing from one month to the next, it seems that charters were recorded on the roll every week or two, with little regard to getting dates in order beyond that, but without any of the wildly out of position entries seen on various other, often longer rolls. Another reason for the integrity of the dating sequence here is that there are few schedules on these charter rolls, bar one handsome but heavily corrected attempt at an engrossment on roll 29, nor are there any other structural surprises. Roll 26 finishes in May, as that was when the king set off for Gascony. However, due to the previously discussed rush for charters apparent whenever the king was about to set out on a long journey, the roll contains the same number of entries as that of the next full charter roll (forty-five), and three more than the roll of the previous year.

The elephants in the room here, and the reason for selecting this period for analysis, are the charters recorded on two patent rolls. These are labelled years 26-27 and 27 Henry III, with the former beginning in May rather than October. Both were created as special patent rolls, always intended to include charters as well as letters patent, with the latter being labelled ‘patents and

⁵⁸² *CChR 1226-57*, pp. 277-279.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.* pp. 256-7, 259-260.

charters together of Gascony'.⁵⁸⁴ Neither on this expedition nor on that of 1253 was there any separation between charters and letters patent – they were written onto the roll as they came. Though this combined format is somewhat disorienting if the reader is used to the separate idiosyncrasies of the charter and patent rolls, one ancillary benefit is that the individual entries are at least enrolled in order. To a degree that is almost never seen on domestically produced charter rolls, almost every entry chronologically succeeds the one before it. There is one solitary exception in August 1243, at which time a charter dated 11 August was enrolled after one of 30 August.⁵⁸⁵ Though the king's campaigning must have been a contributing factor to this incredible degree of chronological accuracy, it cannot be the only explanation. The charters enrolled on the patent roll in 1253, while in better order than a typical charter roll, exhibit many more leaps back into the past. I conjecture that this was because of the increased workload on that 1253 campaign. 133 charters might have required a system of enrolment in batches, while thirty-nine spread over nearly as long a span of time could have been written down almost individually. Overall, and although these rolls were produced at a time of greatly reduced output in both charters and letters patent, the observer cannot but wonder whether any consideration was given to combining the patent and charter rolls permanently. Finding charter entries in a roll where almost all entries are correctly ordered by date is almost easier than doing so in a much shorter, but more haphazardly ordered charter roll.

⁵⁸⁴ *CPR 1247-58*, p. 341.

⁵⁸⁵ *CPR 1232-47*, p. 394.

Years 24-29 Henry III (1239-45):

Table 36: Scribes of Charter and Patent Rolls 24-29 Henry III

Scribal Hand	First Entry	Last Entry	Duration (months)	Total Entries
C.i	Oct. 1239	Apr. 1245	66	41
C.ii	Jan. 1240	Apr. 1245	63	8
C.iii	Feb. 1240	Nov. 1240	9	3
C.iv	Dec. 1240	Dec. 1240	1	1
C.v	Dec. 1240	Jan. 1241	1	9
C.vi	Feb. 1241	Oct. 1245	56	189
C.vii	Aug. 1241	Mar. 1245	43	10
C.viii	Apr. 1242	Jul. 1245	39	2
C.ix	Dec. 1244	Dec. 1244	1	1
C.x	Aug. 1244	Aug. 1244	1	1
C.xi	Aug. 1245	Aug. 1245	1	1

The period from 24-29 Henry III (1239-1245) commences seven years after the final year of the previous five-year period investigated above, for Years 13-17 Henry III (1229-33). Despite the lack of any hands shared in common across this gap, the visual style of the first roll of our new period, 24 Henry III, does not look to have changed greatly from that of 17 Henry III. The hands on this first roll share the same early thirteenth century visual sensibilities seen on the previous rolls, including uniform line thickness, letter proportions emphasising verticality rather than horizontality, and ascenders and descenders in balanced proportion with the rest of the letter. The indiscipline of the individual scribes in their selection of variant letter forms appears slightly reduced, but this may simply reflect the shorter time period and fewer entries and hands from which to build up points of difference. By Rolls 25-29 Henry III, however, this situation markedly changed, as none of the scribes of the previous roll immediately returned.⁵⁸⁶ The handwriting of the new scribes is markedly more ‘modern’, with shortened ascenders and descenders, greatly expanded minims and bowls, both absolutely and in proportion with the extremities of the letter form, and more contrast between thicker and thinner lines, with even

⁵⁸⁶ C.i, the chief hand of that roll, does return later in a more limited capacity, and is among the hands seen on the charter records recorded on the patent roll.

the thinner lines being generally thicker than the average lines of the previous batch of scribes. It is true that the domination of one particular scribe has much to do with the suddenness of this change, but the other scribes writing only a few entries each all had handwriting in step with the changing norms. Johnson and Jenkinson observed that the change came about very quickly, but even they surely did not suppose from one regnal year to the next!⁵⁸⁷ This apparently breakneck disjunction can be partially explained by looking at the changes in context. Though the changes between roll 24 and roll 25 seem stark when looked at in isolation, they represent only one of the many such changes that chancery hands were to undergo over the course of the century. The changes from the charter rolls of John to those of 24 Henry III were subtle but significant, and those from Year 29 to Year 45 were significant if not exactly subtle. It seems likeliest that the moment of sudden change resulted from the near-total replacement of the clerical staff between the two rolls, something unprecedented before or since within my knowledge of these rolls.

The C.vi scribe was by far the most prolific writer in the chancery rolls of this period.⁵⁸⁸ With 189 entries on the charter rolls, he was responsible for over seven tenths of entries between years 24 and 29 of the reign. Not a very handsome hand, his is nevertheless fairly readable due to consistently large minims. As with all the ‘super-scribes’ writing many more entries than their peers in these rolls, this scribe demonstrates a strong commitment to cursivity and simplicity, employing simple and easy to reproduce forms to facilitate his writing so much. The overall impression on the page is more striking than the individual letter forms, but examples that help us identify him include the short **s**-form, which often has a very large lower looped bowl to visually match the similar **g**-form, capital **H** and **h**-forms, which are elaborately

⁵⁸⁷ Johnson and Jenkinson, *English Court Hand*, pp. xx-xxi.

⁵⁸⁸ See Appendix 1, Figure XXIX.

looped around themselves, and a propensity to use the long *s*, even when terminating words. Loops figure very prominently in this scribe's visual identity, and these loops are easily seen as the scribe's 'hairlines' are comparatively wide. Though the pen strokes of the hand are generally wide, there is little contrast displayed between light and shadow. Finally, the pilcrow is of a consistent size, shape and orientation. This hand is also dominant on the patent, close and fine rolls of the same period.⁵⁸⁹

After C.vi, the next most frequently observed hand is that of C.i, with forty-one entries. In terms of style, there could not be a greater contrast between C.i and C.vi. Where C.vi points the direction in which chancery hands were going, with huge minims and little subtlety or visual restraint, C.i looks much more like the sort of hands on display in the charter rolls ten years previously. This visual impression seems to be borne out by the chronology of this hand's appearance, as it had mostly disappeared by Year 25 of the reign.⁵⁹⁰ It most closely resembles Hands B.ii and B.v in overall impression, though not in letter forms, and in any case those hands were no longer to be found on the charter rolls even by 1233. Like the work of those scribes, this is a thin and delicate hand with little contrast in line thickness or weight. Even the turn-up marks, which traditionally have a thickly shaded end, are thin and delicate. This scribe is not much given to loops or hairline flicks, or decoration of any other kind, resulting in a hand that resembles modern handwriting more than it does a typical court hand. There is no surviving patent roll for 1239-40, the year during which this scribe was active, but the hand is in regular evidence on the close and fine rolls of that year.⁵⁹¹

⁵⁸⁹ For examples on all three rolls, see patent roll 25, membrane 2 (C 66/49); close roll 29, membrane 3 (C 54/54); fine roll 25, membrane 4 (C 60/37).

⁵⁹⁰ Though the scribe had occasional cameos and, crucially, apparently did accompany the king's party to Gascony.

⁵⁹¹ One such example can be found at close roll 24, membrane 7 (C 54/50).

With 230 out of 266 rolls entries already accounted for, the remaining nine contributors to these charter rolls had little work to do between them. Two of these scribes, C.ii and C.v, wrote eight and nine entries, respectively.⁵⁹² C.ii follows similar visual logic to C.i, though with thicker lines. The pilcrow is similar to that of Hand C.vi, but oriented at a more abrupt angle. This hand also features a looping non-initial capital **H**-form that somewhat resembles that of Hand A.ii. I was able to find clear evidence of this hand on the patent roll only.⁵⁹³ By contrast, C.v is a much more elegant hand, with wide line spacing and lots of rounded edges. This scribe heavily favours long **s** -forms over short, a long and looped **g** -form, and a ‘j’ shaped pilcrow form unlike any other in these rolls. If it occurs in any other chancery rolls, I was unable to find it.

This period continues the trend seen previously, with prolific original charter writers producing only a handful of rolls entries. Such is the case with the extremely distinctive C.vii hand.⁵⁹⁴ It exhibits an extreme contrast between thick and thin lines, as well as several unique decorative choices including checkerboard shading on capitals and two vertical parallel lines at the centre of the **Q** letter form. There is an original charter sewn into roll 29 written in this hand in its considerably more elaborate charter form. I was unable to find evidence for any letters patent or close enrolled by this scribe, so it seems that original charter engrossments were his primary focus. One of the more unusual original charter hands of this period, C.ix, also has a single entry on the charter roll of Year 28 Henry III.⁵⁹⁵ Though significantly miniaturised compared to original charter equivalents, the careful precision of the minims and idiosyncratic capital **S**

⁵⁹² See Appendix 1, Figures XXII and XXVIII.

⁵⁹³ For an example, see patent roll 25, membrane 8 (C 66/49).

⁵⁹⁴ See Appendix 1, Figure XXX.

⁵⁹⁵ See Appendix 1, Figure XXXII.

of this hand are easy enough to spot in any medium.

Excluding C.ix, there are remarkably five further hands in this period with between one and three entries on this charter roll. Each of these hands has at least one feature marking it out as unique. These features are as follows: C.iii, bold and thick lines, spiky appearance on the page; C.iv, exceptionally wide *s* and capital *S*-forms both of which are always long; C.viii, lack of cursive features and highly consistent *d*-form with ascenders angled about eighty degrees from the baseline; C.x, unique pilcrow, odd ductus for some letters, deliberate pen strokes; and C.xi, exceptional width both deriving from stretched letter form and wide spaces left between words, unusual circular capital *S*-form.⁵⁹⁶ None of these hands seems to have written any entries in other chancery rolls, though as usual it must be stressed that this cannot be entirely proved without more thorough study. There is a single charter engrossment in this selection written in Hand C.iii, where it does not look much different from its appearance on the rolls.⁵⁹⁷

So far, this investigation has focused on a single five-year period from 13-17 Henry III and a ten month period of exceptional charter output shortly before this, in the year 11 Henry III. In both cases, a single writer was the clearly dominant force on the charter rolls: Scribe A.v. A period of just a few years cannot prove that this situation was routine, only that it was the prevailing solution at one time. Yet here in the 1240s, moving the focus on by seven years and after the retirement of Scribe A.v from these rolls, we face a wholly new set of chancery scribes, who apparently maintained the mode of organisation of their predecessors. On the five rolls of this six-year period from 24-29 Henry III, we find not one super scribe but two in sequence.

⁵⁹⁶ See Appendix 1, Figures XXVI, XXVII, XXXI, XXXIII, and XXXIV.

⁵⁹⁷ Oxford New College NCA 10676.

The first roll, 24 Henry III, is dominated by Scribe C.i, a scribe with an old-fashioned hand that nevertheless does not look exactly like those found in the previous years examined. Thereafter, from 25-29 Henry, it is scribe C.vi who dominates, though C.i is found again briefly on the charter rolls and again writing in Gascony. Where Scribe A.v never wrote much more than half the entries of his charter rolls, Scribe C.i wrote over three quarters of the entries on roll 24, and Scribe C.vi a staggering eight-five percent of the next four charter rolls. This looks like a significant increase in workload, but in reality the total number of readable entries on the five surviving rolls of Years 24-29, and the patent-enrolled charters of the same period, is 307. This represents a 56.8% reduction on the 711 produced between Years 13-17 Henry III, and even a 22.3 % reduction on the number produced in the single year 11 Henry III. Thus, even with a lower percentage of the total, scribe A.v wrote 361 charter roll entries across the same span of five years (in his case from years 13-17) in which C.vi wrote a mere 189.

Table 37: Blocks of Entries Written by the Same Scribe, Charter and Patent Rolls 24-29 Henry III

Roll	Blocks	<1	1 to 1.5	2 to 4.5	5 to 10	>10	Mean
charter roll 24	7	0	3	2	1	1	5.4
charter roll 25	7	0	2	3	1	1	6
charter roll 26	9	0	2	4	2	1	5
patent roll 26-27	6	0	2	4	0	0	1.8
patent roll 27	5	0	2	2	0	1	5.8
charter roll 28	5	0	2	1	1	1	9
charter roll 29	15	0	8	4	4	1	3.6

The fact that charters were recorded on the patent roll poses an obvious problem for the definition of a ‘block’ of writing. In a typical charter roll, the number of charters written in the same hand can be counted and treated as a block. Even if the scribe took a break, or did not return to his recording duties for two weeks, it can be said that he had responsibility for the

charter roll for a given number of entries without an interloper taking his place. On the patent roll, this is not so. Several enrolled letters patent could separate one charter from the next, and these could have been written in a completely different hand. For the purposes of clarity and easy comparison, I have chosen to ignore the presence of such letters patent and treat the Gascon charters as though they were written as a charter roll. What we lose in the possibility of determining the length of a single sitting (although that is more properly the province of Adam Chambers), we gain in seeing how long a scribe could be assigned to one task before a colleague took it over. Perhaps surprisingly, the most noteworthy difference is not between domestic charters versus those issued in Gascony, but rather between this period as a whole compared to years 13-17 or the special rolls of year 11. From the longest to the shortest of these rolls, the mean block length written by a single scribe before a change of hand was between two and three entries. The only roll from the selection above that approaches this level of scribal rotation is the first of the Gascon patent rolls. This is a short, half-year roll, and was written early in King Henry's campaign in France when the military conflict was still unresolved, and the royal court had not yet fully settled in Bordeaux. Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that clerks might record charter business in an ad hoc way, with scribes picking up and putting down work on the patent roll in the gaps between other commitments.

For every other roll here, however, including the second patent roll of Gascon charters, the average number of entries before a hand change is much higher. For three rolls it takes between five and six entries on average for the hand to change, on another it was a little less at 3.6, and for yet another it was a little more at 9, meaning that even these two 'outliers' average about 6.3. The dominance of individual hands, C.i for roll 24, and C.vi thereafter, must be a contributing factor. When most entries were written in one hand, it is inevitable that there will be occasions where no other scribe got a look in, bringing up the average. This cannot be the

whole story, however. Earlier rolls were dominated by one scribe, but never with that scribe writing so many entries before another hand took over. It seems more likely that there was a genuine change in chancery procedure by this period, perhaps brought about by lessening charter demand or perhaps due to efficiencies worked out between the scribes. This might be to over-reach in terms of conjecture, but this might be considered an early symptom of the chancery becoming more stratified, with certain clerks having responsibility for certain jobs rather than a communal pool of labour tackling whatever needed doing on a given day. Another interesting pointer in this direction is that there are no examples of an entry being started by one scribe and finished by another on any of these 1240s rolls, though this was common on those of the 1220s and 1230s. This can certainly be put down to lower workload, especially in Gascony, but again it might be possible to attribute this to scribes having defined duties that they finished before handing over to someone else.

Another point in favour of each clerk being less of a jack of all trades comes from the other major chancery rolls. Previously, these had clearly employed the same hands that wrote the charter rolls. Unfortunately, I have not had the opportunity to analyse every entry of any roll type apart from those displaying charters – doing so would have taken me years rather than months. However, I have at least tried to find examples of those scribes I identified in the charter rolls elsewhere, to determine the scope of scribal duties. In the 1220s and 30s, most scribes left some evidence of their writing on at least one other roll. This is not true of 1240s. True, the three most commonly-found hands (C.vi, C.i, and C.ii) are all equally easy to find on the other rolls, but only the perennial C.vi hand is found on both patent and close rolls. C.i I was only able to find on the close roll, and C.ii only on the patent roll. Among the less commonly occurring hands, I was only able to find evidence of C.vii on the close roll, and nothing at all for the other seven hands.

Years 24-29 Henry III (1239-45): Original Charter Hands

Table 38: Hands of Original Charter Engrossments Sourced from the Vincent Register, 24-29 Henry III

Hand	Charters
C.ii	Hereford Cathedral 2244 Hereford Cathedral 2245
C.iii	Oxford, New College NCA 10676
C.vi	Leeds, Yorkshire Archaeological Society DD59/R/10/12 TNA DL 10/83
C.vii	Cambridge St John's College D9.16 Oxford, Magdalen College/Chartae Regiae 29 TNA C 146/5880 TNA DL 10/81 TNA DL 10/82 Warwick CR1886/1136
C.ix	Huntingdon Acc. 125 no.2 London, College of Arms Charter 182
C.xii	TNA E 42/502 Leeds, Yorkshire Archaeological Society MD 335/1/1/12/1/1 Oxford, New College NCA 10799 Salisbury Press IV C3 Royal Grants 22
Unidentified/Others	Exeter Cathedral 2092

By these years 1239-45, all scribes from previous engrossments and rolls seem to have disappeared. This means that we have another opportunity to test the theory that prolific rolls scribes wrote few engrossments, and vice versa. This theory was supported by the distribution of 'A' charter scribes, but the waters were muddied by scribes B.i and B.ii, who seemed to be commonly found in both rolls entries and engrossments. Taken as a whole, the evidence of our 'C' scribes supports the assumption that there was deliberate specialism. C.vii, the most common hand in this selection of original charters (six), is found in the charter rolls but wrote just ten entries there. C.vi, the most common rolls hand by an order of magnitude, can be found writing just three original charters from this group. C.i, the second most commonly found hand in the rolls, is not found in these charters at all. Overall, hands found in the rolls (even if only writing a handful of entries) can claim thirteen original engrossments here, against five written

by a new hand (C.xii) not observable in the rolls. Again, there were two further charters where I did not feel comfortable assigning a label, whether as a familiar old hand or as something definitely new.

The most common hand by far among the surviving charter engrossments of this period is that of scribe C.vii. This is a hand with a strong sense of visual identity, which the scribe was able to calibrate according to the flamboyance needed for any particular engrossment. Documents such as Oxford, Magdalen College Chartae Regiae 29 and TNA C 146/5880 are at the upper end of this visual hierarchy, with massively enlarged and elaborated *litterae notabiliores*, vertical and horizontal pen stroke decoration of the capitals, extreme contrast between thick and thin lines, and lozenge-shaped serifs at the feet of the minims, a feature that mimics contemporary book hands. Where this level of care and attention was not needed, the scribe could produce something closer to his charter-roll standard of handwriting. This can be seen in TNA DL 10/81 and TNA DL 10/82. In these cases, the scribe dispensed with his massive, decorated capitals and painstakingly applied serifs, but retained the contrast in line thickness and neat, rounded minims. As with other such scribes with flexible handwriting, the scribe was able to preserve his own visual identity by simplifying complicated forms (or elaborating simple ones) to create a suite of forms that was always visually consistent. The initial **H**, for instance, lost much of its complexity in the simpler charters, but retained its curved pen stroke following the outer curve of the letter, creating a globe-like appearance. The letter **Q** of ‘Quare Volumus’) exhibits similar simplification, with four vertical lines of decoration reduced to two. Even so, some forms do not change dependent on document status: this scribe’s distinctively decorated capital **M**, for instance, is recognisably the same shape in complex charters, simple charters, and on the charter rolls. Other visual markers of this hand include a square-shaped bowl for the capital **P**-form and prominently emboldened turn-up marks, which are typically

terminated with a triangle shape.

Two extant charters from this period are written in Hand C.ii, barely modified from its charter roll appearances. Both these charters date from the year 25 Henry III, by which time most instances of this hand had already occurred on the rolls. One of the engrossments (Hereford Cathedral 2244) is notably neater than the other (Hereford Cathedral 2245), largely due to wider and more consistent line spacing. This is a thin, scratchy hand in the vein of A.i and B.i, though too many letter forms are different for us seriously to entertain the idea that the same scribe was the writer. As far as hand recognition is concerned, there are two letter forms of diagnostic interest: the initial **H** is an unassuming-form that loops back on itself, and the capital **Q** is much taller than it is wide, which is not true of the other capitals in this hand.

C.vi is consistent across its many entries in the rolls, and maintains that consistency in the two original charter engrossments in this selection. Though the modulus is larger and the script slightly more carefully written, the important elements of this hand on the charter roll are all present: neat, rounded minims, large loops on the **g** and **s** fors, a decorative scheme for capitals involving a left-biased vertical line and two horizontal lines, and a complex initial **H**-form. The style of suspension marks is different in the originals compared to the rolls, and the propensity for long loops going all the way around an **h**-form is likewise missing. One of the charters also has a different style of Tironian **et** to the rolls and the other charter.⁵⁹⁸

Only one charter in Vincent's Register is written in the hand of scribe C.iii. This is a spiky hand

⁵⁹⁸ Leeds, Yorkshire Archaeological Society DD59/R/10/12 vs TNA DL 10/83.

in rolls and charter, characterised by descenders (in particular) tapering to sharp points. In the rolls this hand has an emboldened quality caused by applying heavy pressure to the pen, but this is less evident on the charter. It is worth noting that the engrossment is dated 27 January 1242, while the last rolls entry written in the hand is dated 28 November 1240. Could this be an example of a rolls scribe being ‘promoted’ to writing charters? Possibly, but this hand wrote too few rolls entries and too few surviving charters for me to feel comfortable assigning him such a career progression. It is quite possible that his ‘specialism’ lay entirely elsewhere.

Scribe C.ix’s hand is among the most distinctive from this period of the charter rolls, despite only making one entry. As with many of these rarely occurring hands, it seems that this scribe was more prolific writing original engrossments than rolls entries, as there are two original charters in his hand surviving in this selection. With more space afforded by the charter format, the scribe’s visual scheme becomes easier to discern. The long **s**, capital **S**, **f**, and **b** forms all feature a prominent hook shape, drawn at the same angle in all cases and crossing back over the ascender in a hairline. There is definitive influence from contemporary ‘*cursiva antiquior*’ book hands, especially in the shape of the **g** in one of the charters and the minims in both, which have the compressed appearance typical to gothic book hands of the period.⁵⁹⁹

Finally, Scribe C.xii, whose hand does not appear on the charter rolls, wrote four of the charters in this selection. This is a hand dominated by ultra-elongated ascenders, with lines widely spaced to accommodate these. Oddly for such a hand, where there would be plenty of space for the **d** ascender to be near-perpendicular with the baseline, the stem is penned at an extremely acute angle to the baseline. This makes the hand easy to spot among its immediate

⁵⁹⁹ London, College of Arms Charter 182.

contemporaries, none of which use such a visual scheme. Some letter forms, unusually including the initial **H** can be quite inconsistent, but in overall form this scribe maintains very consistent standards. Apart from the elongated ascenders, this scribe also has a penchant for broad hairline flicks coming from the top of ascenders, with little concern given to matching the curves of these flicks. The scribe finished all but one of his charters in this set with a wavy line drawn at a consistent frequency, with the one exception finishing much closer to the end of the line.

Table 39: Hands of Charter Roll Entries Compared with Original Engrossments, Years 24-29 Henry III

Charter Name	Roll Hand	Charter Hand
Huntingdon RO Acc. 125 DD Fenstanton/Bundle 28 no.2	C.i	C.ix
Hereford Cathedral 2244	---	C.ii
Hereford Cathedral 2245	---	C.ii
London, College of Arms Charter 182	---	C.ix
Salisbury Cathedral Library Press IV C3 (Royal Grants) 22	---	C.xii
Cambridge, St John's College D9.16	C.ii	C.vii
Leeds, Yorkshire Archaeological Society DD59/R/10/12	C.vi	C.vi
Oxford, Magdalen College Archives, Chartae Regiae 29	C.vi	C.vii
Oxford, New College Archives 10676 (Hornchurch 10)	C.vi	Inconc.
Oxford, New College Archives 10799 (Hornchurch 132)	C.vi	C.xii
TNA E 42/502	C.vi	C.xii
TNA C 146/5880	C.vi	C.vii
Warwick RO CR1886/1136	C.vi	C.vii
TNA DL 10/81	C.vi	C.vii
Leeds, Yorkshire Archaeological Society MD335/1/1/12/1/1	---	C.vi
TNA DL 10/82	C.vi	C.vii
Exeter Cathedral Library 2092	C.vi	Inconc.
TNA DL 10/83	C.vi	C.vi

Unfortunately, there are once again several charters missing from the rolls in this period, mostly in a single date block from March to August 1240. There are also two charters for which I did not feel able conclusively to identify the scribe. That leaves a sample of just eleven original charter engrossments available for comparison with their corresponding rolls entry. Of these

eleven, just two seem to share the same hand between both. As with the periods previously looked at, the hand that is most prolific across the charter rolls occurs, but only infrequently, amongst the original single-sheets. It should also be noted that, to an even greater extent than the other two periods examined so far, there is a much greater diversity among the hands of original engrossments than in the charter rolls, which are mostly the work of one man. It seems bizarre when looking at the close, patent, or charter rolls that so many hands can appear and then disappear never to return, but it must never be forgotten that the true work of the chancery lay in engrossing, not recording, and in particular in the writing of vast numbers of writs, very few of which have survived as originals. It was in writ-writing that most of the institution's labour seems to have been deployed.

3.5 Years 44-49 Henry III (1259-65)

General Observations

So far, we have monitored charter business across a period of relatively peaceful prosperity, in which the rolls were long and scribes numerous, and then via a desultory middle period in which the king dithered, lost yet more credibility, when the number of charters produced was reduced, and the number of prolific scribes began to fall. Now, to complete the survey of the royal chancery in peace and strife, we must turn our eyes to the strife. This period from 1259-65 covers the years from the Provisions of Westminster to the aftermath of the Battle of Evesham, encompassing most of the rise and fall of Simon de Montfort as King Henry III's principal antagonist. In truth, the king had been the architect of his own difficulties in the decade before this. He had allowed the Savoyards and especially the Lusignans into his inner circle and lavished them with patronage, upsetting many of his more important barons. He had been lavish in his spending, not least on Westminster Abbey. He had wasted much time, effort, and tax money on the 'Sicilian Business': a harebrained scheme to purchase the throne of Sicily from the Pope, for Henry's younger son Edmund. He had even begun preparations to embark on crusade, perhaps simultaneously both to North Africa and the Holy Land! By 1258, the position of Henry's barons had become intolerable, so they strongarmed him into ratifying the Provisions of Oxford in 1258, significantly curbing the powers of royal prerogative and seizing control over patronage and over the king's council and the great offices of state.⁶⁰⁰ By the end of the year 1258-9, the council controlled the exchequer, the great seal, and the council. It held the king a vice-like grip. By October 1259, the month in which our period of analysis begins, the Provisions of Westminster had confirmed and extended the concessions made by the

⁶⁰⁰ See Treharne, *The Baronial Plan of Reform*, pp. 1-63 for the buildup to the Provisions and pp. 64-81 for the events by which they were forced upon the king.

Provisions of Oxford. Even Henry's son, the Lord Edward, supported these later provisions, such was the apparent totality of the Barons' victory.⁶⁰¹

The years that followed unfolded as a roller coaster of ups and downs for both the baronial and royal parties. Having been stripped of power in 1258-9, Henry bided his time as cracks began to show in baronial unity, finally recovering his power as unconstrained monarch in 1261.⁶⁰² Simon de Montfort left the country in disgust at this development, but he returned in 1263. Thereafter, he raised an army, sought violent reprisals against prominent foreigners, arrived in London in triumph and forced Henry to submit once again to the Provisions of Oxford and additional measures imposed against 'foreigners'.⁶⁰³ After Montfort's stunning victory at Lewes in 1264, against an army commanded by the Lord Edward, he became de facto ruler of the kingdom for over a year, with Henry and his eldest son both placed under house arrest. The tide turned after Edward escaped and won a second battle against Montfort at Evesham in August 1265, with the wily old Earl of Leicester cut to pieces on the battlefield.

These were the chief inflection points of the Second Barons' War, but what during this period became of the royal chancery? Like the modern civil service doing the bidding of Labour or Conservative ministers depending on the government of the day, so the chancery served whichever side was in the ascendent.⁶⁰⁴ During the 1258-9 regime, David Carpenter found evidence of over 150 royal letters issued on the authority of 'the council', not the king.⁶⁰⁵ Naturally, after regaining power in 1261, Henry wasted no time in removing any personnel

⁶⁰¹ Carpenter, *Henry III 1258-1272*, ii, pp. 19-22.

⁶⁰² See H. Ridgeway, 'What Happened in 1261?', in *Baronial Reform and Revolution in England, 1258-1267*, ed. A. Jobson (Boydell 2016), pp. 89-108.

⁶⁰³ Carpenter, *Henry III, 1207-1258*, i, p. 267.

⁶⁰⁴ Tout, *Chapters*, i, p. 16.

⁶⁰⁵ Carpenter, *Henry III 1258-1272*, ii, p. 20.

foisted on him, including the notably pro-baronial chancellor, Nicholas of Ely.⁶⁰⁶ Simon de Montfort, in turn, would subsequently replace John of Chishull with Thomas Cantilupe as chancellor, but Cantilupe was no mere Montfortian lackey. True, his robust and experienced style of leadership for the chancery curtailed Henry's arbitrary powers, but Cantilupe could also stand up to his baronial benefactors when required. He was the first chancellor with real reforming intentions since Ralph Neville, and like Neville he was noted for his financial probity, ensuring that the chancellor had a high enough salary not to need to seek bribes.⁶⁰⁷ It is a measure of his success in the role that, though he was forced out of the chancellorship after the battle of Evesham in 1265, his successor, Walter Giffard, maintained the same salary and chancery processes set up by Cantilupe, without any sense that they were tainted by Montfortian radicalism.⁶⁰⁸

Table 40: Membranes, Schedules, and Entries in Charter Rolls 44-49 Henry III

Charter Roll	Numbered membranes	Schedules	Entries
44 (C 53/50)	6	1	45
45 (C 53/51)	4	0	36
46 (C 53/52)	5	0	36
48 (C 53/53)	4	1	45
49 (C 53/54)	7	1	51
Total:	21	3	213

As we have seen, these rolls were the product of a period of political chaos unseen in England since the First Barons' War after 1215, fifty years previously. As such, they sometimes supply evidence of having been produced in times of abnormality, especially when compared to the

⁶⁰⁶ T.F. Tout, 'Nicholas of Ely', *ODNB 1885-1900*, vol. 17, pp. 344-6.

⁶⁰⁷ Carpenter, *Henry III 1258-1272*, ii, p. 351.

⁶⁰⁸ Giffard may have been the royalists' choice, with an impeccable record in supporting the king when so many of his top people had wavered or turned against him, but he was a magnificent administrator in his own right. For an account of how Giffard successfully dealt with the collapse of day-to-day government tasks in England after the giddiness of Evesham, and of how he turned the dire situation around, see A. Jobson, 'Royal Government and Administration in Post-Evesham England', in *The Growth of Royal Government under Henry III*, ed. D. Crook and L.J. Wilkinson (Boydell, 2015), pp. 175-95.

fat rolls of the early reign, when patronage had flowed if not like water then rather more smoothly than over-sanded concrete. Saddest of all for the researcher to report is that the charter roll for year 47 Henry III is entirely lost. This would have been the roll covering Simon de Montfort's sensational sweep through England and ultimate capture of the king, which makes its loss even more regrettable. It is unclear whether it was lost during this period of tumult or much later, but like the other two lost rolls of the reign it certainly did not make it as far as the early modern era. The next clear deficit among this group of charter rolls is how miserably short they are, running to just twenty-one written membranes. For context, the five years of 13-17 Henry III had produced ninety-seven membranes. Though the 1260s were unarguably a period of much less charter production, there are entire spans of time missing even from various of the extant charter rolls. Roll 46 Henry III ends in July instead of October, roll 48 Henry III leaps from December 1263 to August 1264 with only two entries in between, and roll 49 is affected by water and rodent damage, rendering several entries unreadable. It is interesting to observe that, though tensions between the king and his council were high both in the early and the mid 1260s, rolls 44-6 remain relatively intact, while each of the rolls 47-49 Henry III is in some way damaged or missing.

As far as the date order of entries is concerned, the earlier rolls produced at a time of less profound disruption are much closer to chronological order, both by month and by day, than the later wartime rolls. When entries are disordered on roll 44 or 45, it is normally only by 1 to 3 days. Roll 46 is much worse in this regard, with discrepancies of eight to ten days from chronological order being common. This suggests that the writing up of this charter roll was much less frequently undertaken than its two immediate predecessors. Roll 48 is much more chronologically linear than 46, but this can largely be explained by the fact that many months are missing altogether from the record. Those charters that were enrolled tended to have

discrepancies of no more than 3 to 5 days from their correct chronological sequence. By roll 49, charters were date ordered even more haphazardly than in roll 46, with two entries being dated a whole month before their predecessor.

As well as charter entries out of date order, draft or aborted engrossments sewn into the main roll or schedules attached to roll membranes can indicate disruption or time pressure at the royal chancery. In a perfect world, all entries would be written on uniform parchment membranes in perfect date order, and any deviation from this must be probed to determine its cause. Across this period, there were three chief aberrations: one schedule, and two sewn in 'originals'. The schedule was appended to membrane 4 of roll 48 and comprises two charters issued to Nicholas Seymour. What makes this unusual is that, while these two charters are clearly written in a record hand and never intended to form original engrossments, their style and salutations are written out in full. This is elsewhere almost never the case on the chancery rolls, where the overwhelmingly applied convention was to cut out any introductory material common to most documents produced. The two charters are dated about a month apart and were likely discovered after the following membrane had already been copied out. Though schedules make the manipulation of the rolls less convenient, they were probably less detrimental to administrative usage than having entries scattered across the roll far beyond their proper date range. There was no such problem with the two attempted engrossments, as both were inserted in the proper frame for their date. The *Calendar of Charter Rolls* makes no mention of their unusual provenance, treating them as if they were any other membrane that copied only one charter. Yet in reality there is no doubt that these are both discarded originals. It is no mystery why the document that became membrane 2 of roll 44 was not sent out, as it is littered with corrected mistakes. Even so, it is slightly curious that the text block is almost exactly the width of a charter roll membrane. Presumably it was realised that this charter would

not do for dispatch before the parchment was cropped down to size, so it was reduced to roll size losing the wider margins it would no doubt have had as a charter. The correct size, large word count to have to recopy, and beautiful handwriting must have made the decision to enroll this discarded original relatively easy. The other aborted engrossment, this time appended as a schedule between membranes 1 and 2 of roll 49, is also beautifully written, and unlike the one on roll 44, contains no obvious mistakes. The initial 'H' had even been splendidly decorated, though only in black ink. It is rare for a document so advanced along the process of engrossment to be kept back and enrolled, especially with no obvious mistakes. It can only be assumed that some change was decided on for the wording but not the fundamental nature of the grant being made, making it impossible to dispatch the still-unsealed original.

Years 44-49 Henry III (1259-65): Scribal Hands

Table 41: Scribes of Charter and Rolls 44-49 Henry III

Scribal Hand	First Entry	Last Entry	Duration (months)	Total Entries
D.i	Nov. 1259	Jan. 1260	2	4
	Nov. 1259	Nov. 1259	1	
D.ii		1259		1
D.iii	Nov. 1259	Feb. 1261	15	50
D.iv	Oct. 1260	Oct. 1260	1	1
D.v	Oct. 1260	Jan. 1261	3	3
D.vi	Dec. 1260	Jan. 1262	13	2
D.vii	Mar. 1261	Oct. 1264	43	84
D.viii	Feb. 1262	Jul. 1262	5	4
D.ix	Jul. 1262	Jul. 1262	0	1
D.x	Aug. 1264	Sep. 1264	1	5
D.xi	Aug. 1264	Sep. 1264	1	6
D.xii	Sep. 1264	Oct. 1265	13	57
D.xiii	Mar. 1265	Apr. 1265	1	2
	Mar. 1265	Mar. 1265	0	
D.xiv		1265		1
D.xv	Oct. 1265	Oct. 1265	0	1

In the fourteen years between where we left the charter roll in 1245 and our picking it up again

in 1259, the style of writing had changed dramatically. It is to be expected that no scribes would still be in office after so long a time: true even of 1239 when compared to 1233. What is more surprising is that, apart from the idiosyncrasies distinguishing individual handwriting, the template for what court hands should look like seems to have changed dramatically. This is a well-noted phenomenon of the mid-to-late thirteenth century, although its causes remain uncertain. L.C. Hector attributed the change to accelerating divergence between book hands and court hands, with the former becoming ever more elaborate and the latter intended to be ever quicker to write.⁶⁰⁹ Johnson and Jenkinson noted foreign influence as a common cause for hands to change over time, citing the case of English scribes who had extensive experience of the documents written by the papal chancery.⁶¹⁰ We may not need to look so far afield. As we have already seen, the English royal government of this period was relatively cosmopolitan, with foreign clerks regularly coming into service across the main departments, including the chancery.

Whether caused by foreign influence, increasing attention to utility, or simply changing fashions, the differences are obvious when comparison is made side-by-side with older writing. Johnson and Jenkinson characterised the court writing of the later thirteenth century as being very large, particularly in the minims, and as being visually distinguished by the common use of the ‘m’ shaped capital S, itself enlarged compared to earlier uses of the letter form.⁶¹¹ They also found that the letters ‘i’ and ‘c’ were very often substituted for ‘y’ and ‘k’ in this period. Hector noted that a ‘spur-like projection’ appeared on the left side of long ascenders from the middle of the thirteenth century, disappearing in the early fourteenth. Though I agree with

⁶⁰⁹ Hector, *The Handwriting of English Documents*, p. 53.

⁶¹⁰ Johnson and Jenkinson, *English Court Hand*, p. xviii.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. xxi.

Hector's judgement that the shapes of complex letter forms, and particularly of capitals, is simplified in this period compared to preceding years, it is in my view too simplistic to claim that there is a growing divergence from book-hand practice. In one specific area, the treatment of minims, it seems to me that there is, if anything, greater convergence. In fairness, Hector was probably basing his opinion on charter hands, which display a much greater degree of self-consciousness than record hands, but on the rolls of the 1260s there is clear book-hand influence in the standardisation of the height and shape of minims, with rounded serifs connecting each minim to the next. True, this remains different from the high-status 'quadrata' book hands of the day, which would have been using lozenge-shaped serifs, but it is very similar to the treatment found in 'cursiva anglicana', a hybrid book and charter hand that is often encountered in lower-status English books of the time.⁶¹² This uniformity of minims is rarely found amongst the earlier hands, and the ubiquity of round serifs gives these 1260s hands a much more rounded overall appearance than their predecessors.

In the 1220s and 1230s, we found that one dominant hand proliferated across all charter rolls, with several other hands appearing regularly but not at the same level of frequency, and several more that wrote only a few entries each. In the 1240s, we found a dominating hand in the first year examined and a different dominating hand thereafter, with occasional rarely seen hands as before. In the 1260s, as if to maintain consistency, we find three main hands spread over the six years covered. The first of these predominating scribes is first encountered in this selection of rolls in November 1259 and last in February 1261, the middle scribe from March 1261 to October 1264, and the final scribe from September 1264 to October 1265. Sadly, there are limitations inherent to the idea of analysing only short spans across so long a reign, and here

⁶¹² M.B. Parkes *English Cursive Book Hands* (Oxford, 1969) is the standard text on this subject.

we have encountered a major one. With the charter rolls of the whole reign mapped out, it would have been possible to determine with accuracy where the careers of the first and last main scribes began and ended, comparing their tenures with the middle scribe. It would not be surprising if they, like he, served three years as primary scribe, though it should be noted that scribe A.v from the 1220s and 30s served for at least six years in that role. As with all the periods covered by this survey, we find several rarely occurring but often visually distinctive hands writing only a handful of charters. As in the period 1239-45, but unlike that from 1227 to 1233, we find no medium-output charter scribes writing many entries but far fewer than the predominating scribe.

Hand D.iii is the first of the three main hands from 1259-65, with fifty entries.⁶¹³ It is generally the least neat of these hands, and gives the appearance of writing in haste. This scribe, at least in these rolls, is not concerned with maintaining uniform letter sizes or straight ruling of the text block. Much of the time, though not always, the scribe of Hand D.iii employs a thicker line weight than the other hands, especially in suspension marks and vertical ascenders. He tends not to use hairline flicks to denote the dot of the minuscule **i**, but rather an elaborate ligature mimicking the ascender of the Anglicana **d**. The majuscule **H**-form is varied in its execution but consistent in its general style and is elaborate compared to most other scribes' hands. The **h** is usually shaped with a loop surrounding it, though this is sometimes only a hairline. The majuscule **S**-form— which is the form that displays the most individual idiosyncrasy in all these hands— is of the type that resembles a looped 'm', with the rhythm and angle of the strokes being in accordance with the **d**- and **i**-forms. There is extensive evidence of this hand in the patent, close and fine rolls, with the hand appearing even more

⁶¹³ See Appendix 1, Figure XXXVII.

hurried and difficult to read in these applications.⁶¹⁴

With eighty-seven entries in this period, Hand D.vii is by far the most common in the charter rolls of this period, and among the most handsome.⁶¹⁵ This script is characterised by conscientious horizontal ruling, limited use of italicisation, long, thin suspension marks and certain letter forms—such as the majuscule **Q**, **g** and **y**—making exaggerated use of horizontal lines. These forms can be inconsistent, particularly on the **g**. The majuscule **S** is highly idiosyncratic, being exaggeratedly oversized in height in a style that no over scribe employs. This scribe also tends not to use flicks on the **i**-forms and creates the **m** with pronounced bowls when it is at the start of a word. This scribe also tends use a looping form of the long **s** in areas where other scribes in these rolls usually use the short **s**. This hand occurs frequently in the close, patent, and fine rolls, where it does not look significantly different to its application in the charter rolls.⁶¹⁶

Hand D.xii is another that is generally pleasing to the eye, giving the appearance of writing with some care in its fifty-seven entries.⁶¹⁷ It is particularly noticeable for the elaborate **s**-form, which is produced with a high degree of consistency throughout this scribe's many entries. Like scribe D.vii, this hand is written with uniform line thickness without much use of shading, except for the **d** ascender and suspension marks, which are typically thickened. This scribe places very little emphasis on capital letters, through either shading or decoration, making them difficult to distinguish apart. The **i**-form is always highlighted with a fairly wide hairline flick.

⁶¹⁴ For examples, see patent roll 44, membrane 6 (C 66/74); close roll 44, membrane 12 (C 54/75); fine roll 44, membrane 11 (C 60/57).

⁶¹⁵ See Appendix 1, Figure XLI.

⁶¹⁶ For examples, see patent roll 45, membrane 13 dorso (C 66/75); close roll 46, membrane 11 (C 54/78); fine roll 45, membrane 9 (C 60/58).

⁶¹⁷ See Appendix 1, Figure XLVI.

It should also be noted that this hand is just as ubiquitous in the patent, close and fine rolls of Years 48-9 Henry III.⁶¹⁸ In all three of these rolls, the hand has taken on a slightly more cramped appearance, and the modulus appears to have been shrunk slightly. The scribe did not compromise his normal vision to accommodate this, instead painstakingly shading **d**-ascenders in fashion that must have been tedious for a hand-written out so small.

Four hands, which collectively represent ten entries on the hands, are superficially similar without being able to merge them into one with any certainty. These hands feature neat, rounded minims, little contrast in line weight or thickness, and slight placed emphasis on *litterae notabiliores*. Despite their similarities, these hands all have their own idiosyncrasies. Hand D.i has a unique, flamboyant capital **S**-form; Hand D.v has an unusual capital **G**-form, wider line spacing, and a completely different capital **S** form to D.i; Hand D.xiii has neither of these characteristic letter forms, and is remarkably lacking in cursivity.⁶¹⁹ Almost every letter is formed individually, with no pen strokes connecting them to the next or previous letter; Hand d.xiv is similar, but with less rounded minims, more compression between the minims, more shading on ascenders, and a characteristic capital **E** form.⁶²⁰

If the previous batch of hands was defined by their similarity, this six hands and eighteen entries for this group are all totally distinct from each other. Hand D.ii employs uniformly thin strokes, does not emphasise its **d**-form at all, and has an elaborate pilcrow and capital **S** not used by any other hand in this period; Hand D.vi employs a majuscule **S**-form with a larger right bowl than

⁶¹⁸ For examples, see patent roll 49, membrane 23 dorse (C 66/83); close roll 49, membrane 11 (C 54/82); fine roll 49, membrane 7 (C 60/62).

⁶¹⁹ Hand D.i is the only one of these four hands for which I was able to find evidence on other chancery material. See patent roll 44, membrane 4 (C 66/74).

⁶²⁰ See Appendix 1, Figures XXXV, XXXIX, XLVII, XLVIII.

left, a large but unelaborated majuscule **H**-form, a mixture of hairlines and ligatures to denote the **i**-form and very little abbreviation; Hand D.viii has very elongated ascenders on its **d**-forms and a capital **S** with a very broad loop below the baseline; Hand D.ix has **d**- and sometimes **a**-forms that are extensively clubbed, the most common majuscule **S**-form employs a long horizontal flick and all capital letters are substantially enlarged and shaded, as well as an alternative majuscule **S**-form used for the Bishop of Salisbury in the witness list that is even more elaborate; Hand d.x has extremely short, wide minims and letter forms such as a looped, m-shaped **s**, with the scribe deliberately emphasising width as a visual device; and Hand D.xi has an unusual **Q**-form and thickly shaded capitals.⁶²¹

Hands D.iv and D.xv are unlike all others in these rolls, as they are pure charter hands devoid of major concessions to haste. Indeed, that is because they *are* both charters, presumably drafts used to engross the original, which were then sewn directly into the roll rather than copied onto it. It is impossible to say with absolute certainty whether they are the same as the hands of the regular roll entries as the letter forms are produced with far greater care and attention to detail. Taking Hand D.xiv first, there are certain similarities with Hand D.vii discussed above: the graceful flow of the script, thin suspension marks, lack of shading or clubbing, the straight-bottom **g**-form and the tendency to elongate capitals are all present. On the other hand, the majuscule **S**- and **P**-forms both show marked similarity to the rather idiosyncratic equivalents in Hand D.i, which is also closer to this charter in date. Overall, this hand is difficult to satisfactorily assign to any of the other hands of the roll. Hand D.xv poses considerable difficulties: there are certainly some similarities to Hand D.xii, which would be

⁶²¹ See Appendix 1, Figures XXXVI, XL, XLII, XLIII, XLIV, and XLV.

plausible given that this charter is dated during that hand's period of dominance. However, the overall rhythm of the script, as well as the pointiness of the letter forms in comparison to the usually rounded Hand D.xii, tip the balance of evidence against the two hands being the same. There are no obvious clear examples of this hand within the other chancery rolls or the original charter engrossments provided to me by Nicholas Vincent.

Table 42: Blocks of Entries Written by the Same Scribe, Charter Rolls 44-49 Henry III

Roll	Blocks	<1	1 to 1.5	2 to 5	5 to 10	>10	Mean
44	5	0	2	2	0	1	9.0
45	7	0	3	3	2	1	5.1
46	9	0	3	4	1	1	3.9
48	12	0	1	8	2	1	3.9
49	12	0	7	1	1	3	4.5

The charter rolls from 1227-1233 were written by many regular scribes, writing an average of about two to three charters at a time before another scribe took their place on the roll. This number was remarkably consistent across all rolls of the period, suggesting that this was established chancery practice. By 1239-45, the situation had completely changed. In those years, with the solitary exception of the half-year patent roll 26-27 Henry III, a typical block of entries written in a single hand was, on average, around five charters. Though typical block size apparently came down again slightly, it is still around four to five charters per block. Like the 1239-45, there is a single roll with anomalously high charters per block, about nine entries in both cases. Each of the five charter rolls of this period features at least one long block of at least ten entries written in one hand without interruption, with roll 49 featuring three such passages. As was the case in 1239-45, I was able to find no evidence of entries begun in one hand but completed in another, which seems to confirm this practice as isolated to the extremely busy period at the start of the majority when several prolific scribes were

working on the rolls in each year. Interestingly, as has been apparent in all periods examined so far, there is no apparent correlation between roll length and mean block length. No matter how long or short the document, broadly similar working practices seem to have been in place throughout each five-year period, with the only significant discontinuity of practice occurring somewhere between 1233 and 1239. If I were to return to this analysis in future, or if someone else were to be interested in conducting this sort of research to expand or confirm my conclusions, this 1233-9 period would, in my view, be the most fruitful of the reign, if only to see whether there was a moment at which chancery practice changed or a more gradual shift.

The prevalence of the hands used on the charter rolls in other chancery records is one area in which the trends displayed in 1239-45 are reversed. In that period, charter roll hands were only sporadically visible on other rolls, and typically only on one other type of roll. These 1259-65 rolls are much more similar to 1227-33, in that there is ample evidence elsewhere of all the commonest hands. Despite not having had the opportunity to evaluate and tabulate the hands of all patent and close rolls of this period, I can say with a high degree of confidence that hands D.iii, D.vii, and D.xii dominate these other rolls series in the same years that they do the charter rolls. This is an important discovery, as it shows (along with the earlier years) that we are looking at scribes with heavy enrolment responsibilities *in general*, and not specialists in only the charter rolls. Sadly, with the period in this area having more in common with 1239-45, evidence for the less frequently seen charter roll scribes has not been very forthcoming in other rolls. I observed Hand D.i on the patent roll, but otherwise found no other minor hands anywhere else. This may, it must be admitted, be a fault of my perception. Though I am categorically opposed to the notion that thirteenth-century

rolls hands ‘all look the same’, and hope to have proved otherwise with this thesis, it must be admitted that these 1260s hands have got closer to uniformity than any of those from the preceding years. When confronted with very long, double-sided enrolments such as the patent rolls or especially the close rolls, it is not within my power to be certain that such hands did not pop up occasionally without my noticing, despite the care of my examination. What I believe I can assert with confidence is that these hands are no commoner elsewhere in chancery records than they are on the charter roll. There is no possibility whatsoever of, for example, a prolific enroller of letters close writing a single charter roll entry when called upon.

Years 44-49 Henry III (1259-65): Original Charter Hands

Table 43: Hands of Original Charter Engrossments Sourced from the Vincent Register, 44-49 Henry III

Hand	Charters
D.i	Exeter City Charters 9 (SMX) Leeds MD 335/7/25
D.iii	Faversham HIII 20 May yr.44 London Met Arch 25241/32 Taunton DD/SAS/S/2437/1 TNA E 40/15178
D.vii	Faversham HIII 20 November 1261 Oxford Merton Muniments 1661 Oxford Merton Muniments 1660 TNA E 40/15179
D.xii	Hereford BG/11/15/6 Nottingham Mi D 4681-1
D.xvi	Beverley BC1/11 TNA C 146/9826 TNA C 146/9827
Unidentified/Others	Bedford DD (Lucas) L (Jeayes) 916 Nottingham Mi D 3663

Thus far, the original charter engrossments of 1228-33 and 1239-45 have suggested by their handwriting that clerks were either prolific in the chancery rolls or in producing original charter engrossments, but not both. This thesis was muddled slightly by the evidence of 1227, where it became apparent that two scribes wrote several charters as well as dozens of charter roll

entries. By contrast, the evidence of 1259-65 points in completely the opposing direction. Two thirds of charters to which I have been able definitely to assign a hand (ten out of fifteen) were written by scribes D.iii, D.vii, and D.xii. These are the three scribes who dominated these years in the charter rolls, producing 191 entries between them. In this period, at least, it seems there was no tension at all between prolific rolls work and prolific charter writing. Even among the remaining five charters, two were written by scribe D.i, a moderately prolific writer of rolls entries for the duration he was active. Only one fifth of the charters for which I was able to identify the hands (three out of fifteen) were written by a hand not seen in the rolls. As before, I found myself unable to identify whether two charters were written in a known or unknown hand, so I have left them unlabelled. Here follows a brief conspectus of the hands I encountered, and how they were employed on these original charter engrossments.

Scribe D.iii wrote in an ugly and hasty way in the charter rolls, but the handwriting of his four original charter engrossments in this selection is much more careful and even beautiful. As far as letter forms are concerned, these charters precisely reflect the idiosyncrasies of the rolls version of this hand: flicks and loops around the minuscule **h**, short **s**-form with a beaver-tail loop, checkerboard decoration inside the capitals, which have exaggerated bowls and minimised ascenders and descenders. One of the most noteworthy carryovers is the thick and sometimes split suspension marks. The main difference between charter and roll equivalents of this hand are care and time taken. There are no serifs in the charter hand, but a book-like quality is still created through the use of straight-back ascenders on the **d** forms.

Scribe D.vii seems to have taken similar additional care in his four surviving charters, though his writing was much neater in the first place. Again, the main elements of the hand are all

intact: hugely vertically exaggerated long capital **S**, double-curved capital **H**, completely circular capital **E**-form, large square-shaped capital **P**-form with small descender, and exaggerated dark shaded turn-up marks. One new element that the scribe introduces in his charter writing is a flick to the left on his descenders. This is helpful for readability and gives a sense of forward momentum to the text.

Unlike the work of the previous two scribes, the handwriting of the two charters in this selection written by Scribe D.xii is not significantly neater than the equivalent in the charter rolls. This hand features a unique capital **S**-form, with a long beaver tail and circular centre-section, and this form is in evident across both charters. The hand also features stout, thick, heavy **d** forms, and these too are present in both charters. Neither of the charters here appear very carefully written, though both have more elaborately decorated capitals and *litterae notabiliores* than on the charter rolls.

On the charter rolls, Hand D.i is only subtly different from other rounded hands like D.iii., but the differences are clearer in the two charters written by this scribe in this selection. The complex capital **s**-form is hard to see in the charter rolls due to the small size of the script, but can be appreciated in all its glory on these engrossments. In the charter rolls, the shorter minim height and wider line spacing of the hand compared to D.iii take a double take to appreciate, but once again the larger size of the modulus in these engrossments makes the difference immediately clear. A consistent, complicated scheme of capital decoration is employed in these two charters, though there is no obvious trace of this on the charter rolls.

Hand D.xvi is the last of the hands identifiable on the original charter engrossments of this

period. Three charters are written in this hand, for which there is no evidence on the charter rolls. The most unique element of the hand is the shape of the ascenders of the **b** and **d**-forms. These ascenders are shaped like inverted triangles, which gives the hand an incredibly heavy appearance. Capitals in general are richly and thickly decorated, with clear and deliberate contrast between decorative hairlines, regular pen strokes, heavy downstrokes and large shaded sections such as the previously mentioned ascenders. If this hand were to have been used in the charter rolls, it would have needed extensive modification, in the manner that scribe C.vii simplified his complicated decorations in rolls entries twenty years previously.

Table 44: Hands of Charter Roll Entries Compared with Original Engrossments, Years 24-29 Henry III

Charter Name	Roll Hand	Charter Hand
Exeter No9 SMXIII	D.iii	D.i
20 May 1260 Faversham	D.iii	D.iii
Nottingham Uni Mi D3663	D.iii	Inconc.
London Met Arch 2524132	D.iii	D.iii
TNA E 40 15178	D.iii	D.iii
Taunton RO DD SAS S 2437 1	D.iii	D.iii
Leeds MD335 7 25	D.iii	D.i
Oxford Merton Muniments 1661	D.vii	D.vii
Oxford Merton Muniments 1660	D.vii	D.vii
Beverley BC1 11	---	D.vi
TNA C 146 9826	D.vii	D.xvi
Bedford Ro DD Lucas Jeayes	D.x	Inconc.
TNA C 146 9827	D.x	D.xvi
Hereford BG 11 15 6	---	D.xii
Nottingham Uni Mi D4681 1	D.xiii	D.xii

Just as the evidence of the period 1259-65 differed sharply from the preceding periods in showing that prolific rolls scribes could also be prolific charter scribes, so it differs again in showing the same scribes writing the engrossments and enrolments of the same charter. Two engrossments are not found in the rolls and there are two charter hands that I was unable confidently to identify, leaving eleven charters with comparable engrossments and enrolments. Of these eleven, I found six to be written in the same hand, or about fifty-five

percent. In my view, it is impossible to extrapolate from this that scribes wrote enrolments and engrossments of the same document as a matter of procedure in this period. Firstly, 0.55 is probably too weak a correlation to suppose that process is in evidence here, as it ignores almost half of rolls and engrossments. Secondly, we must remember the previous evidence suggesting that, unlike in previous years, scribes D.iii, D.vii, and D.xii were the principal charter writers as well as the principal rolls writers during their sequential periods of primacy. Scribe D.xii is has no shared rolls and engrossment in this small selection of survivors, but since we know he wrote documents of both types his duties were probably no different from his predecessors. Scribes D.iii and D.vii wrote all the six charter engrossments in this selection with a common rolls writer, and these documents are all dated within their periods as 'main' chancery scribe. As a result, the most plausible explanation would seem to be most documentary output for a given period came from the same writer, not that the said writer had an explicit duty to see 'his' charter engrossments recorded in his own hand.

3.6 Evidence of the Scripts: Conclusions

We saw in Section Two that there was no such thing as a typical chancery clerk, as differing ranks render generalisation impossible. Likewise, there was no such thing as a typical week, month, or year of charter production, because circumstances kept changing and the writing office adapted. Nor was there any such thing as a typical delay in sending out writs to accompany charters, and such writs could even be antedated! This impression is even clearer when looking at chancery hands and the scribes to whom they belonged. We are not observing here a chaotic institution in which everyone did as they pleased. An observer who had only seen one of the periods shown above might feel he had sufficient evidence to suggest that very definite working practices were ‘the chancery way’. Not so – the periods I have examined, all picked due to their unique administrative challenges, all betray similar but appreciably different methods of organising the office to meet such challenges.

Throughout the years examined in this section, it seems to have been one scribe’s responsibility to write many more entries of the charter rolls than his colleagues.⁶²² A handful of other scribes, again in all periods examined, wrote half-a-dozen or fewer entries each. A clear shift then took place. In 1227, a little under 42% of all entries on the charter roll were written by the main scribe. In the same year, just over 53% of entries were written by other scribes who had copied out twenty charters or more on the roll. The main scribe wrote far more entries than his prominent colleagues, but they wrote more than him overall. This was the busiest year of Henry III’s reign, so it does not seem unreasonable to suppose that an unusually large number of clerks might have been employed, or redeployed from other duties, to help make the burden

⁶²² These pre-eminent scribes seem in all cases to have been also the majority writers of the patent, close, and fine rolls, at minimum.

manageable. T.A.M. Bishop noticed in *Scriptores Regis* that years of high charter production saw more scribes taken on, as for instance in the opening years of the reign of Henry II.⁶²³ This theory is lent credence by the hands of middling frequency, so dominant in roll 11, not being seen again after charter roll 11. That said, for the most part new men took their place. Rolls 13-17 saw a strengthening of the role of the main scribe and a weakening of that of the middling scribes (51% vs 37% of entries written, respectively), but this middling group still wrote over a third of all the entries on the rolls of the period. By years 24-9, 71% of all entries on the charter roll were written by the main scribe, with just 15% written by a middling scribe. By the turmoil of the 1260s, the trend was complete. There were three main scribes in this period, who worked consecutively and not overlapping each other, and during their tenures not one other scribe managed to write twenty charters (or, indeed, ten).

Between 1227 and 1265, the main scribe had gone from a first among equals to the main writer of the roll. Scribes of middling output had declined from being the group with the largest collective output to not being visible at all. Of course, this all occurred at a time of general decline in charter business, meaning there was no need to retain such a large establishment focused on enrolment. If another researcher should ever renew my enquiry, he or she would be well advised to see if the middling scribes recovered any of their output in the last two years of Henry III's reign.

My investigation has also tracked the blocks in which scribes wrote charter roll entries before being replaced by another hand. This is an interesting feature, as it shows how the rolls were written. Even if the same scribe came back to the roll again and again for weeks, it was still his

⁶²³ Bishop, *Scriptores Regis*, p. 30.

responsibility for all that time. Years with a low average block size show scribes coming and going from the membrane to record the charters, where those with a high block size have a single scribe on 'rolls duty' for longer periods of time. In general, the disappearance of the middling scribes seems to have affected the size of writing blocks, though not with such a clear upward trend across all four periods. In this, there is a clear divide between year 11 and years 13-15, which have block lengths of 2.3 and 2.5, and years 24-9 and 44-9, with block lengths of 5.2 and 5.3. There are as many distinct hands on the latter rolls as the former, so it is not lack of staff leading to this mid-reign change. Rather, it seems that enrolment became a rather less communal activity among the scribes.

Did scribes of the same rank write charter engrossments and charter rolls, and if not is there any evidence of 'promotion'? I base this question on a finding of T.A.M. Bishop, in which, looking at all originals and not just charters, he noticed that scribes with long careers tended only to become 'charter specialists' in their later years, after 'proving' themselves.⁶²⁴ Here, if we turn to our findings from Vincent's Register of originals, we find the chancery roll hands displayed in a wholly different light. Were we to fix our attention too closely on the rolls, it would be easy to view the prolific scribes as the important ones and the bit-part players as fundamentally unimportant. Looking at original charters instead, and particularly in the quantity that Vincent has amassed, it becomes clear that the chancery was primarily an office for writing legally binding documents, not for recording them. In years 11, 13-17, and 24-29 Henry III, the pattern that emerges is one of very active rolls scribes writing few or no surviving charter engrossments, rare writers of rolls hands writing several charter engrossments, and an

⁶²⁴ Bishop, *Scriptores Regis*, p. 32.

entire class of ‘charter specialist’, as Bishop put it, using handwriting unseen in any other documentary medium.

Strangely, in another display of how ready the chancery was to throw away established procedure when circumstances demanded it, this entire pattern of hands goes out of the window in years 44-49 Henry III. In these years almost two-thirds of the charters in Vincent’s Register of originals were written by the three main scribes of the period. It seems that these three scribes really were the backbone of the much-diminished chancery operation during this time.⁶²⁵ This raises the question of what the other twelve scribes writing single-digit numbers of charter roll entries were doing in this period if not writing charters. Perhaps this is a quirk produced merely by the hazards by which particular charters have survived, or simply a manifestation of the degenerating state of English royal government at the time. Even so, the fact that all charters were apparently written in one hand during the government breakdown of King Stephen was noted by Bishop, so there is precedent for the chancery haemorrhaging staff under circumstances of particular political or administrative crisis.⁶²⁶

As far as promotion is concerned, I believe this would be adequately evidenced if a prolific rolls hand ceased to write so many rolls entries but began to be more visible in the surviving body of charters. This certainly cannot be ruled out (the surviving and photographable corpus is just too small), but I have seen no evidence of prolific rolls hands becoming prolific charter hands after serving their ‘apprenticeship’. Bishop wrote of clerks becoming charter specialists

⁶²⁵ For an overview of the chaos surrounding the royal chancery and other government departments around the time of Evesham, see A. Jobson, ‘Royal Government and Administration in Post-Evesham England’, in *The Growth of Royal Government under Henry III*, ed. D. Crook and L.J. Wilkinson (Woodbridge, 2015), pp. 175-95, with particular emphasis on pp. 180-3.

⁶²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-3.

after ten or twenty years, and my chronologically broad investigation would surely have caught this if it were occurring. Perhaps, as Michael of Northampton did, upwardly mobile clerks took their labour elsewhere rather than wait for promotion.

The last point that should be addressed from this new evidence is that chancery clerks did not, as a matter of course, enrol the charters that they themselves had written, nor could they, given the existence of charter specialists who never or only rarely wrote in the rolls. Just six out of seventy-two charters were engrossed by the same hand that enrolled them before 1259, a number low enough to be chalked up to coincidence. The picture is less clear for the charters of 1259-65, in which six out of eleven eligible charters shared the same hand for engrossment and enrolment. In my view, this is not a measure of changing practice but of changing staffing. As we have seen, the three main scribes came to do almost everything around the chancery in this period, and their periods of primacy did not overlap. With only one scribe doing most of the work for periods of over a year, is it any wonder that engrossments and enrolments ended up being written in the same hand? A change of chancery practice would also not explain why the five other entries were written in different hands, since there are no clear reasons why this should have been so.

Conclusion

The title of this thesis both poses a question and makes a statement. In the statement, I express the fact that there was a tension at the heart of King Henry III's royal chancery. The institution existed to serve the pleasure of the king, and to enhance his lordly power ('charisma'), but it did so through proto-bureaucratic processes and self-conscious institutional memory ('routine'). From the statement springs the question: did this environment, situated between the ancient and the modern, point towards our present industrialized bureaucracy? My answer would be that it did, even though most of the seeds of change here had already been planted, long before Henry III came to the throne. King Henry, his chancellors, and his chancery clerks found, improved upon, and bequeathed to their successors an inheritance from Rome. It was an inheritance that would suffer stern trials between the death of King Henry III and more modern times. Much of this apparatus was recognisably bureaucratic, but much of it was also recognisably 'medieval'. Though the characterisation of the Henrician chancery as a prelude to a Weberian ideal-type bureaucracy is not without a degree of merit, it does the institution a disservice. What we find in this period within the royal chancery is not a second-rate modern bureaucracy, nor a second-rate king propping up his lack of martial skill with an army of quill-pushing factotums. Instead, it was an institution offering a first-rate solution to the contemporary realities of statecraft, not to be improved by the purer bureaucratic credentials of its successor equivalents a century later.

Those parts of the Henrician chancery apparatus that were genuinely 'bureaucratic', in the Weberian sense that their development can be traced through to the modern world, almost

without exception had their roots in the Roman Empire. As we have seen, the charter took a fascinating journey to reach thirteenth-century England. From the Romans, charters gained a core ideology predicated on legalism and property rights; from the papacy, a focus on God and a degree of association with religious as well as monarchical authority; from the Carolingians, a recognisable formula and self-conscious concern for linguistic correctness, and from the Saxons a melding with the flexibility and usability of a writ. The reigns of Henry and his immediate predecessors did much to enhance this inherited legacy. Charters became even more uniform and robotic in their structure and phraseology. The mass of flexible but disposable judicial writs served as an elegant counterpoint to the expensive, unwieldy permanence of a charter or letters patent. Where the two systems had to intersect, they did so in a well-oiled manner. We have seen that most writs of seisin or commanding the public proclamation of charters at county courts were dated within a narrow gap of time between the writ and the charter to which they pertained. Such integration of administrative systems is most impressive, and not universally achieved by bureaucracies even today.

We know that the England of this period excelled in enrolment and record-keeping, and here I find myself thoroughly persuaded by the viewpoint of Michael Clanchy that English chancery ‘routine’ was self-fulfilling. Nicholas Vincent has many times put the case that the supposedly inferior registers of France and the Holy Roman Empire must have been easier to use and more efficient in practice than the wasteful and borderline unsearchable rolls of England.⁶²⁷ No doubt

⁶²⁷ This is an argument that Vincent has made in several books and articles, including ‘Why 1199?’, pp. 44-45 and more expansively in ‘Rouleaux ou registres?’, pp. 55-70. As a judgement on the utility of contemporary medieval archive methods, I completely accept it as correct. For what it is worth, if I were to be transported to the Middle Ages and made king, I should undoubtedly adopt the French system of registration. I am, however, reminded of something that Professor Vincent said, of all places, in an ‘ask me anything’ thread on <https://www.reddit.com/r/history/comments/3alwjf/this/is/professor/nicholas/vincent/researcher/on/>, in which members of the public asked him about Magna Carta. Two of his answers included the passages ‘since people generally try to live up to their myths, it can be no bad thing that we believe ourselves to be free’ and ‘in

this is true, and I can attest to the un-searchability of the rolls, but there must be truth in Clanchy's argument that complexity of writing and especially record processes *in themselves* produced a class of more literate officials, with a 'records mindset' that was ultimately crucial to better government. The rolls, even if they did not help a single beneficiary obtain clarification of a grant, emerged from the kind of post-Roman thinking that had already endowed the imperial palace at Constantinople with so many rooms intended for the storage of archives and documents. Indeed, if there is a single aspect of chancery process that elevates the Henrician chancery beyond the routine and into the realm of the genuinely bureaucratic, it is its unshakeable commitment to maintaining the rolls. We have seen rolls hacked together with giant schedules due to masses of charter business being dumped on the chancery in one go, and valiant attempts to keep enrolment going even in times of foreign campaigning or domestic governmental disintegration. We have also seen an institution that continued operating, not quite unperturbed but not derailed either, through the numerous changes of power between king and barons in the late 1250s and 1260s. An institution loyal only to monarchical power could not have achieved this: in its thinking if not always in practice, the chancery was indeed already an organ of the state.

The palaeographical investigation detailed in Section Three of this thesis uncovered more evidence of a bureaucratic institution with a life beyond the wishes of the king. Office management is one of the hallmarks of a Weberian ideal-type bureaucracy, and we can find evidence of it here. The ranking of top chancery men detailed by Stamp were evidently not just

constitutional terms myths can be even more important than the realities that underpin them'. The same phenomenon is at work where administration is concerned, I feel. The extent to which the chancery, household, or exchequer clerks could really record all of England in unsearchable parchment cylinders may be debatable, but the settled belief that to do so was desirable and possible had an incomparably positive development on English government formulation. It is hard to see an equivalent for such ambition and idealism in the patchwork administration of modern Britain.

a means of determining who got what robes and timber. As in a modern civil service, office tasks were determined by a complex series of grades, discussed in *Fleta* but never for Henry III's reign. We now know that many of the scribes of the charter rolls also wrote other chancery rolls; that the charter rolls always had a main scribe writing many or most entries; that it was normal for several other scribes to write only a handful of entries on the charter roll; that prolific rolls scribes were not usually prolific charter scribes and vice versa, at least so far as we can establish from the surviving engrossments; that the scribes of charters did not themselves typically enrol these documents on the charter rolls; and that chancery scribes had surprisingly short writing careers, for the most part of just a few years. Arguments can be made for or against all these points in terms of their administrative efficiency, but the mere fact that these processes remained consistent across a period of fifty years speaks well for the chancery's institutional memory.

So much for routine. But what of charisma? From a modern perspective, the impression given by the Angevin court, including the royal chancery, is less proto-bureaucratic and more mafia-kleptomaniac, with the king as don, the justiciar as consigliere, and the chancellor as underboss. With the chancery firmly placed at the king's side, there could be no clear division between the king's personal and state personae, and even documents given under the great seal seem to have been dictated as much by the caprices and political considerations of the king than by any nascent sense of the common good. The court's itinerary meant that petitioners might struggle to reach the king, though in fairness he did spend much of his time in the accessible southeast. What the king gained by having the chancery ready at hand, petitioners lost by having no consistent or predictable processes for royal business. To some extent the machinery of the Bench and Exchequer, established permanently in Westminster Hall, helped compensate for this. But neither Bench nor Exchequer was entrusted with the issue of such sensitive and

potentially troublesome documents as the King's charters. Even when the chancery went out of court in the decades after Henry III, the need for the king to warrant everything of substance meant that petitioners continued to find it difficult to have their business handled in a timely or predictable manner.

As far as charter beneficiaries are concerned, we find a paradoxical reality. On the one hand, it was religious houses, great and small, that received most charters from Henry across his reign. Few can doubt Henry's piety, and it would be equally difficult to assert that these grants were made always with ulterior motives. Henry's generosity with city foundations and charters of liberties also did him credit and might be regarded as a genuinely governmental rather than political use of the charter format. Sadly, however, the King possessed only a child's grasp of the politics and patronage, and the arbitrary nature of his system emerges when we tabulate the beneficiaries who gained most from the system of charter-awards. By lavishing vast landed titles and wealth on the likes of Hubert de Burgh and the Lusignans Henry made well-known mistakes, but these mask his other errors of judgement. Whether because he had no more patronage to give, or because he sought to buttress himself against his magnates, rather than to empower them, it is shocking how rarely Henry rewarded the men most needed were he to retain his crown. The Bohuns were more or less entirely overlooked, but then so too did most of the more prominent old Anglo-Norman families find themselves marginalised. This was not the fault of the chancery clerks, but it illustrates the flaws in the system. A true bureaucracy would have saved Henry from himself, as indeed at one point Ralph Neville tried and failed to do.

Where the consistencies of chancery practice revealed by the present palaeographical investigation do it credit as a budding bureaucratic institution, its potential decline is observable across the periods I have studied. The earlier charter rolls, apart from recording far more business, give an impression of having been created within an office of many people. This is partly attributable to the group that I have termed the ‘middling scribes’: regular writers of engrossments and rolls who were yet never ‘super scribes’. The pre-1233 charter rolls not only had more writers, but each hand wrote fewer entries before being replaced by another. The original charters of this period convey a similar sense of having been written in a large office, as they were often scribed by charter specialists not otherwise found in the rolls. By the 1259-65 charter rolls, however, office size and sophistication appear to have returned almost to the days of King Stephen, with one scribe at a time acting as Jack of all trades. No doubt the chancery establishment recovered, after memories of the Second Barons’ War had faded, but the vulnerability of the chancery to this sort of scaling back, makes it harder to view it at this time as a department with any life beyond the king.

‘Paturiunt montes’ ... In this conclusion, I have highlighted evidence from both sides of the argument regarding the Henrician chancery. In some ways it was strikingly modern, and in others it was entirely rooted in medieval assumptions. This does not mean that I can accept a mealy-mouthed equivocation, that the chancery was both bureaucratic and (that dread word) ‘feudal’. The important thing to remember is that, in Weberian terms, the chancery in the reigns of Edward I and especially Edward III *did* become more bureaucratic! By going ‘out of court’, it gained institutional independence; its fixed location supplied petitioners with a fixed port of call; the proliferation of named officers meant that in theory there was better accountability, and even the sealing fees were reduced. Despite all this, that era’s chancery is famous for its sclerosis. Here, again, we meet the bureaucracy of Dickens and Hume, the choking red tape of

officialdom. David Carpenter has characterised this period as a ‘bureaucratic nightmare’, albeit with important gains in political legitimacy compared to the times of the earlier Angevins.⁶²⁸ In other words, more bureaucracy was not necessarily a good thing, just as King Henry ruling by military fiat alone would no doubt have been disastrous in the opposite direction. What we find with Henry’s chancery, at least in the 1220s-30s under Ralph Neville, is an organisation that could put the king’s will into action quickly and with unambiguous legal effect, recording this output to a very high degree of accuracy, and doing all this despite constant changes in location, workload, leadership, and even legal authority (through the changing use of seals). We see flexibility in the chancery everywhere: where it had to operate, what tools it had to work with, which rolls it could and could not consult, which seals it could use, how many staff it could employ. The only way it could operate to such a high standard across the reign (not least in the 1260s, considering the scale of the crises overwhelming the king) was by riding roughshod over its own traditions, many of them neither then or now properly documented or established in law. In this sense, considering outcomes rather than definitions, I do not accept that charisma and routine existed in any way in tension with one another. In this ‘golden age’ of the English royal chancery, the dominance of charismatic authority gave the routine room both to breathe, and to adapt to rapidly changing circumstance.

⁶²⁸ Carpenter, ‘The English Royal Chancery in the Thirteenth Century’, pp 68-9.

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The Magna Carta Project, providing what will eventually be a complete photographic record of the original charter engrossments of King John
<https://magnacarta.cmp.uea.ac.uk/read/original/charters>

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C 52 (cartae antiquae rolls)

C 53 (charter rolls)

C 54 (close rolls)

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C 66 (patent rolls)

C 76 (treaty rolls)

E 352 (chancellor's rolls)

Original Charter Engrossments Sourced from the Vincent Register:

Bedford BOR.B.A1/2

Bedford DD (Lucas) L (Jeayes) 916

Berkeley E/1/1/4

Beverley BC1/11

Birmingham 435325

Brighton BAT/1/1/10

Cambridge St John's College D9.16
Cambridge St John's D10.3
Cambridge St John's D10.9
Cambridge University Library EDC 1/B/28
Cambridge University Library EDC 1/B/33
Chichester Cap.1/17/15
Chichester Cap.1/17/16
Chichester Cap.1/17/17
Chippenham 473/7
Chippenham 473/8 (ii)
Chippenham 473/8(i)
Chippenham G23/0/1
Exeter Cathedral 2092
Exeter City Charters 9 (SMX)
Faversham HIII 20 May yr.44
Faversham HIII 20 November 1261
Gloucester GBR/I1/5
Grimsby 1/20/1
Hereford BG/11/15/6
Hereford Cathedral 2244
Hereford Cathedral 2245
Hereford Town Hall HIII yr.11
Huntingdon Acc. 125 no.2
Kendal WSMB/A no.3
Leeds MD 335/7/25
Leeds, Yorkshire Archaeological Society DD59/R/10/12
Leeds, Yorkshire Archaeological Society MD 335/1/1/12/1/1
Lincoln A/1/1B/50
Lincoln A/1/1B/52

Lincoln A/1/1B/53
Lincoln A/1/1B/59
Lincoln A/1/1B/61
London Met Arch 25241/32
London, College of Arms Charter 182
Maidstone D/ZQ/1
Northampton Borough 2
Northampton Stopford-Sackville 2330
Nottingham Mi D 3663
Nottingham Mi D 4681-1
Oxford Merton Muniments 1661
Oxford Merton Muniments 1660
Oxford, Magdalen College /30 Chartae Regiae
Oxford, Magdalen College /8 Chartae Concessae
Oxford, Magdalen College/Chartae Regiae 29
Oxford, New College NCA 10676
Oxford, New College NCA 10799
Preston DD DA Box 52 Henry III
Preston DD St Box 119
Preston MBLA 14/4
Princeton Willsie Henry III
Salisbury Press IV C3 Royal Grants 22
Salisbury Press IV C3 Royal Grants 8
Shrewsbury 3365/5
Shrewsbury 3365/6
Shrewsbury 3365/7
Southampton SC1/1/2
Taunton DD/SAS/S/2437/1
Taunton DD/WHb/2533

TNA C 146/5880
TNA DL 10/81
TNA DL 10/82
TNA DL 10/83
TNA E 42/502
Truro RIC TAM-1-12-1
Warwick CR1886/1136
Warwick CR1886/271
Warwick CR1886/272
Warwick CR1886/273
Warwick CR1886/274
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Appendix 1: Court Hand Evidence from Chancery Rolls

Appendix I, Figure I: Evidence of 'A.i' Hand in Rolls 13-17 Henry III

Charter Roll 13.1 Mem. 5

Handwritten text in 'A.i' hand script, likely a charter or legal document. The text is written in a dense, cursive style with some capital letters in red ink.

Charter Roll 17 Mem. 9

Handwritten text in 'A.i' hand script, likely a charter or legal document. The text is written in a dense, cursive style with some capital letters in red ink.

Close Roll 13 Mem. 9

Handwritten text in 'A.i' hand script, likely a close roll or legal document. The text is written in a dense, cursive style with some capital letters in red ink.

Charter Roll 14.1 Mem. 2

Handwritten text in 'A.i' hand script, likely a charter or legal document. The text is written in a dense, cursive style with some capital letters in red ink.

Patent Roll 14.1 Mem. 7

Handwritten text in 'A.i' hand script, likely a patent roll or legal document. The text is written in a dense, cursive style with some capital letters in red ink.

Close Roll 13 Mem. 8

Handwritten text in 'A.i' hand script, likely a close roll or legal document. The text is written in a dense, cursive style with some capital letters in red ink.

Charter Roll 15 Mem. 5

Handwritten text in 'A.i' hand script, likely a charter or legal document. The text is written in a dense, cursive style with some capital letters in red ink.

Patent Roll 17 Mem. 4

Handwritten text in 'A.i' hand script, likely a patent roll or legal document. The text is written in a dense, cursive style with some capital letters in red ink.

Treaty Roll 19-26
Mem. 1 (dorse)

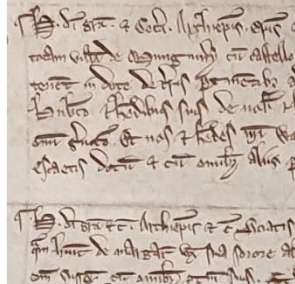
Handwritten text in 'A.i' hand script, likely a treaty roll or legal document. The text is written in a dense, cursive style with some capital letters in red ink.

Charter Roll 16 Mem. 11

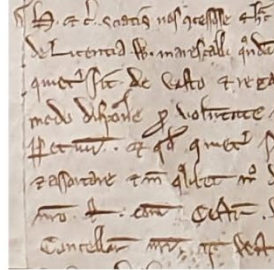
Handwritten text in 'A.i' hand script, likely a charter or legal document. The text is written in a dense, cursive style with some capital letters in red ink.

Appendix I, Figure II: Evidence of 'A.ii' Hand in Rolls 13-17 Henry III

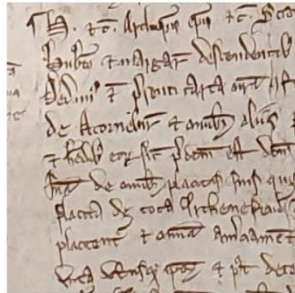
Charter Roll 13.1 Mem. 19



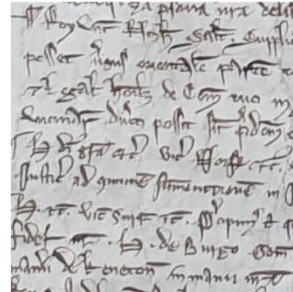
Charter Roll 13.1 Mem. 12



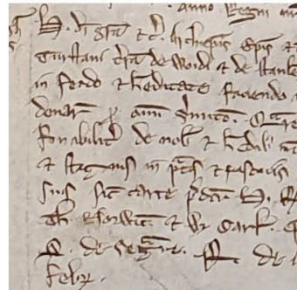
Charter Roll 13.1 Mem. 18



Close Roll 13 Mem. 16

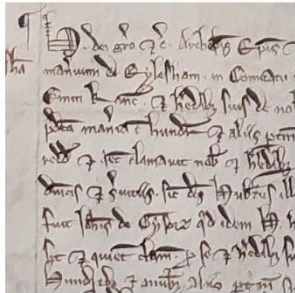


Charter Roll 13.1 Mem. 13

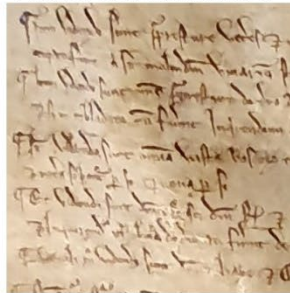


Appendix I, Figure III: Evidence of 'A.iii' Hand in Rolls 13-17 Henry III

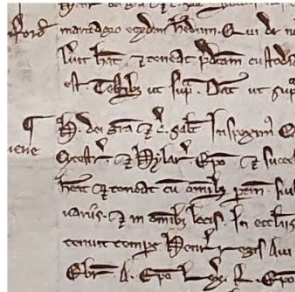
Charter Roll 13.1 Mem. 19



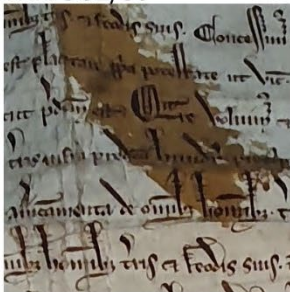
Patent Roll 13 Mem. 9



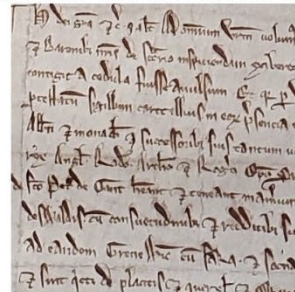
Charter Roll 13.1 Mem. 14



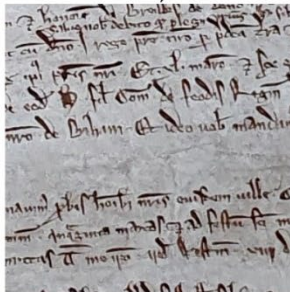
Cartae Antiquae Roll,
TNA C 52/30



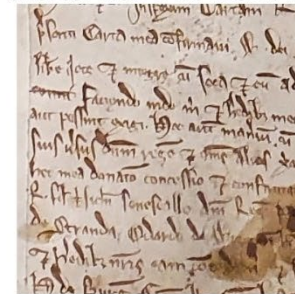
Charter Roll 13.1 Mem. 12



Close Roll 13, Mem. 15

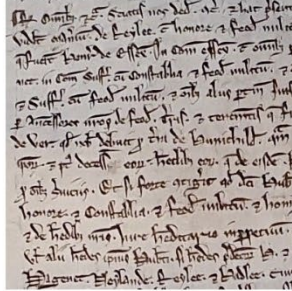


Charter Roll 14.2 Mem. 12

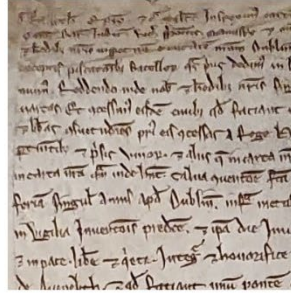


Appendix I, Figure IV: Evidence of 'A.iv' Hand in Rolls 13-17 Henry III

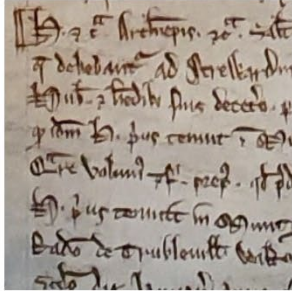
Charter Roll 13.1 Mem. 18



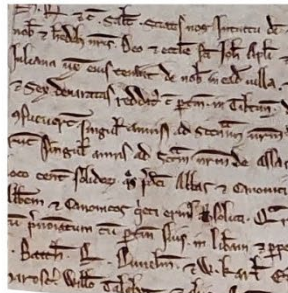
Charter Roll 13.1 Mem. 5



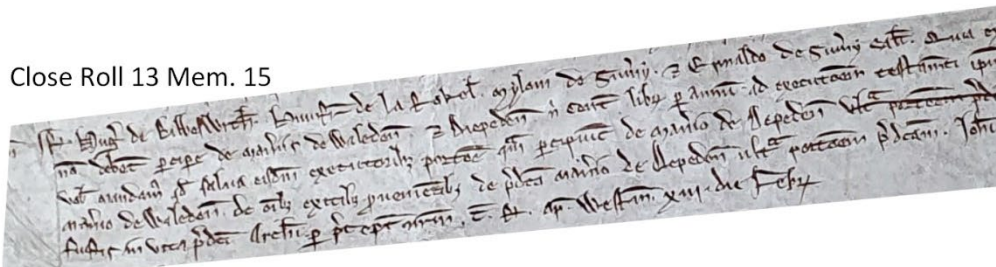
Charter Roll 13.1 Mem. 18



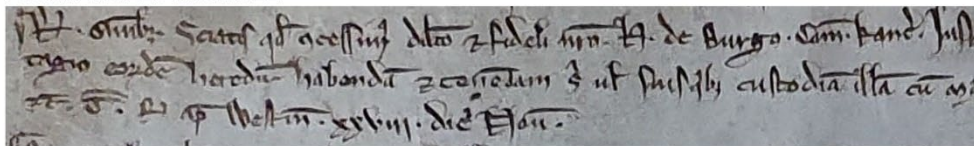
Charter Roll 15 Mem. 9



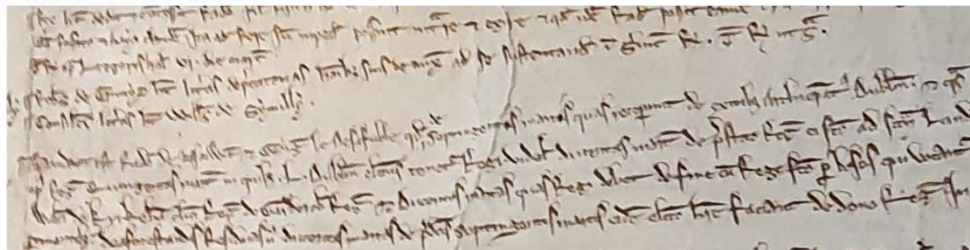
Close Roll 13 Mem. 15



Patent Roll 13 Mem. 11

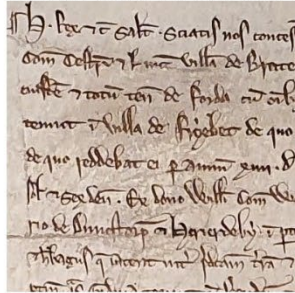


Patent Roll 14 Mem. 5

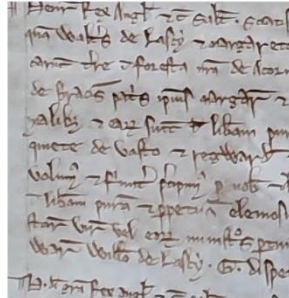


Appendix I, Figure V: Evidence of 'A.v' Hand in Rolls 13-17 Henry III

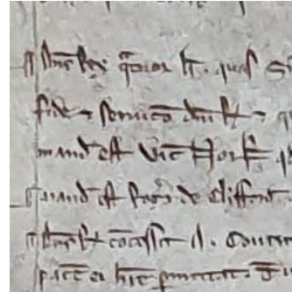
Charter Roll 13.1 Mem. 16



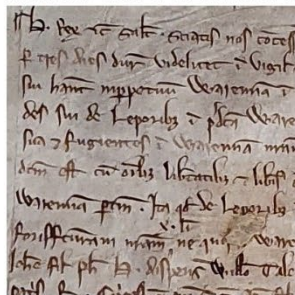
Charter Roll 17 Mem. 13



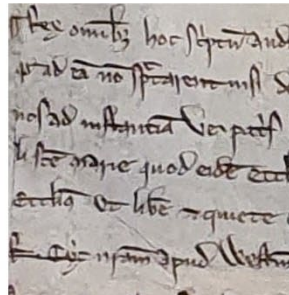
Close Roll 13 Mem. 12



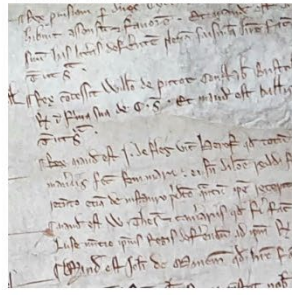
Charter Roll 14.2 Mem. 13



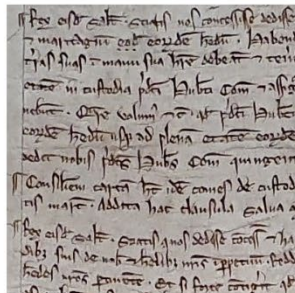
Patent Roll 13 Mem. 7



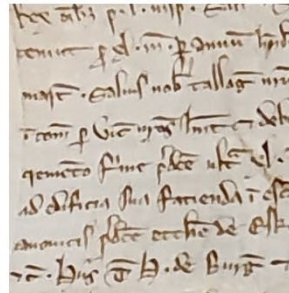
Close Roll 13 Mem. 2



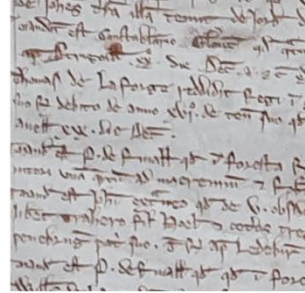
Charter Roll 15 Mem. 13



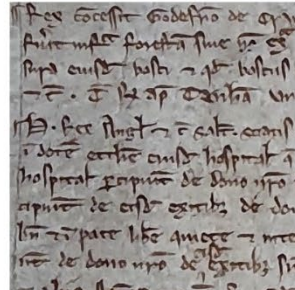
Patent Roll 14.1 Mem. 8



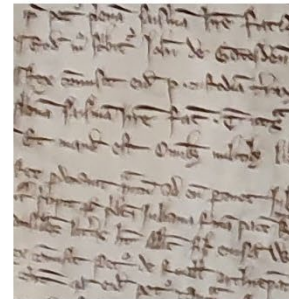
Close Roll 17 Mem. 18



Charter Roll 16 Mem. 19

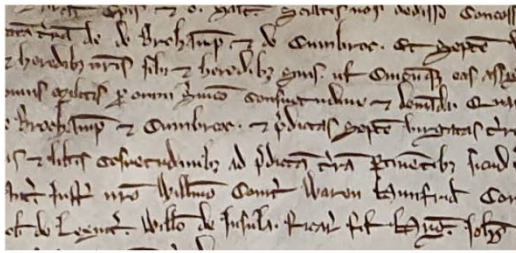


Patent Roll 16 Mem. 4

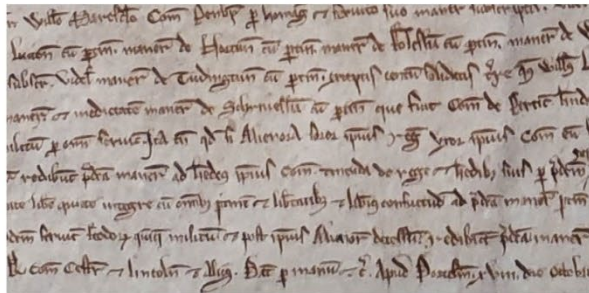


Appendix I, Figure VI: Evidence of 'A.vi' Hand in Rolls 13-17 Henry III

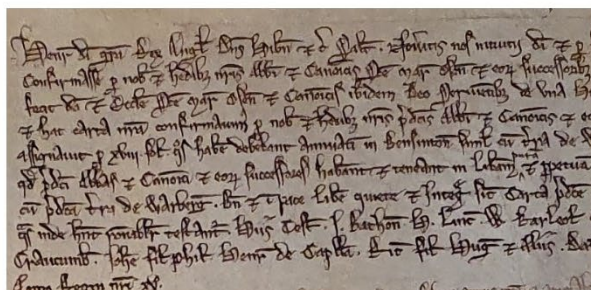
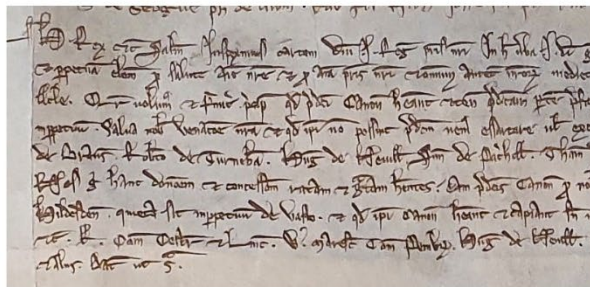
Charter Roll 13.1 Membrane 13



Charter Roll 13.2 Membrane 3

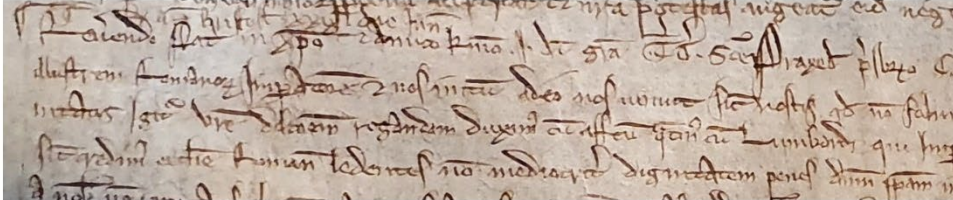


Appendix I, Figure VII: Evidence of 'A.vii' Hand in Rolls 13-17 Henry III

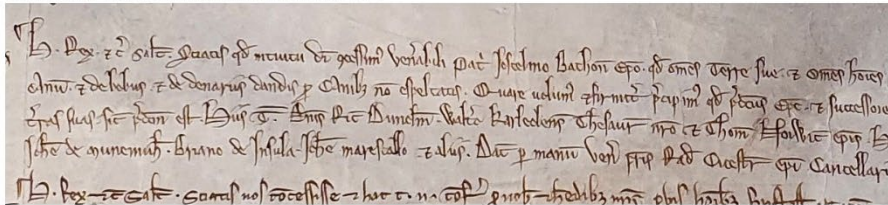


Appendix I, Figure VIII: Evidence of 'A.viii' Hand in Rolls 13-17 Henry III

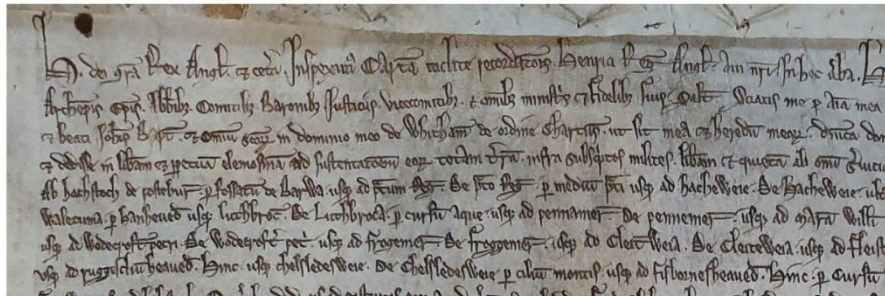
Treaty Roll 19-21 (C 76/1)



Charter Roll 14.2 Membrane 12

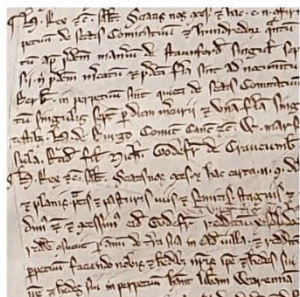


Charter Roll 14.2 Membrane 9

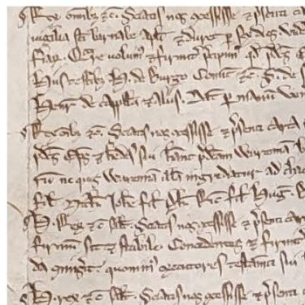


Appendix I, Figure IX: Evidence of 'A.ix' Hand in Rolls 13-17 Henry III

Charter Roll 14.2 Membrane 4



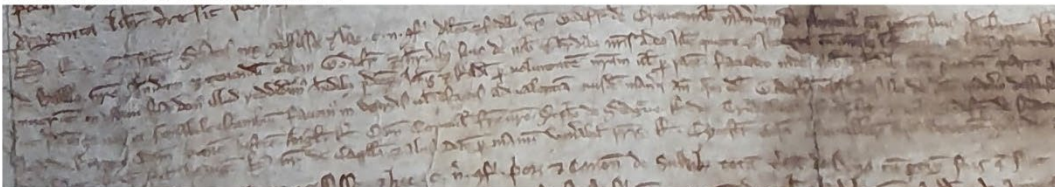
Charter Roll 14.2 Membrane 5



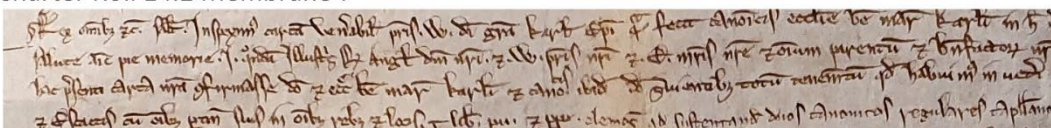
Charter Roll 14.2 Membrane 6



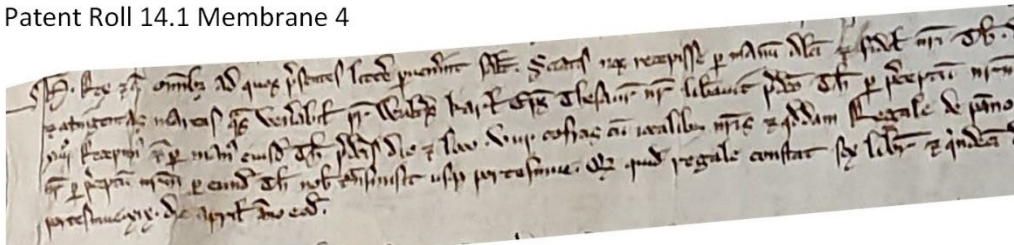
Charter Roll 16 Membrane 19



Charter Roll 14.2 Membrane 7

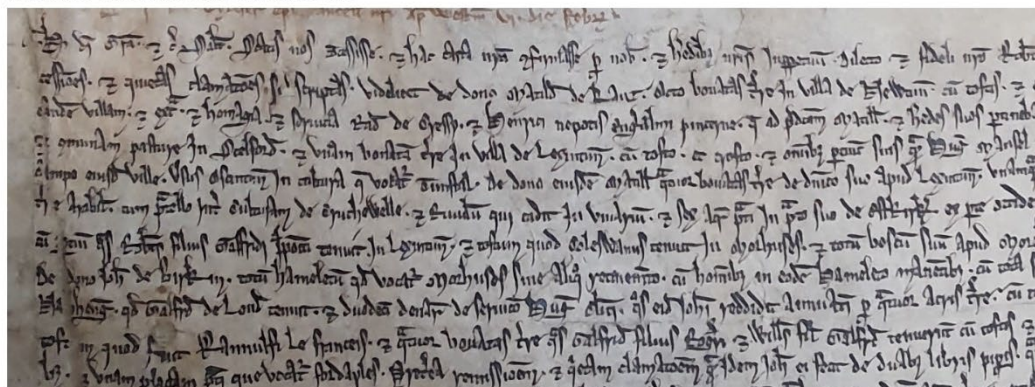


Patent Roll 14.1 Membrane 4

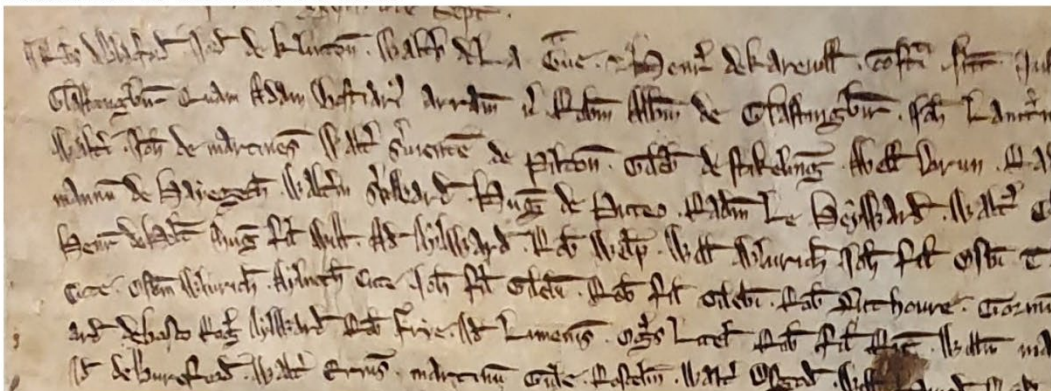


Appendix I, Figure X: Evidence of 'A.x' Hand in Rolls 13-17 Henry III

Charter Roll 16 Membrane 14

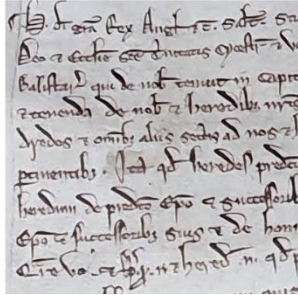


Patent Roll 13 Membrane 3 dorse

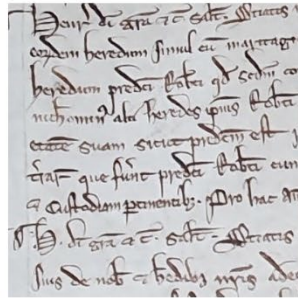


Appendix I, Figure XI: Evidence of 'A.xi' Hand in Rolls 13-17 Henry III

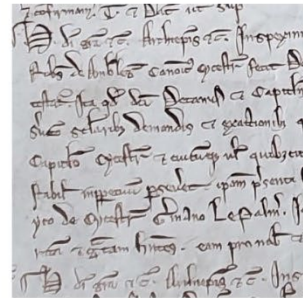
Charter Roll 17 Membrane 6



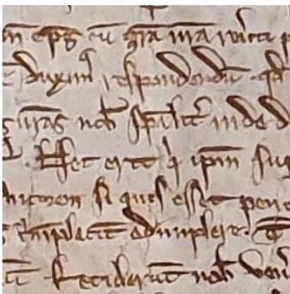
Charter Roll 17 Membrane 5



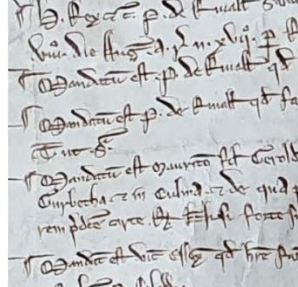
Charter Roll 17 Membrane 7



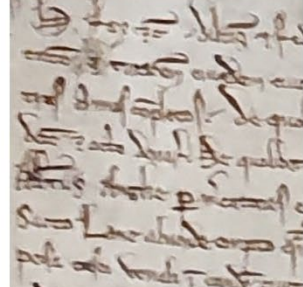
Treaty Roll 19-21 (C 76/1)



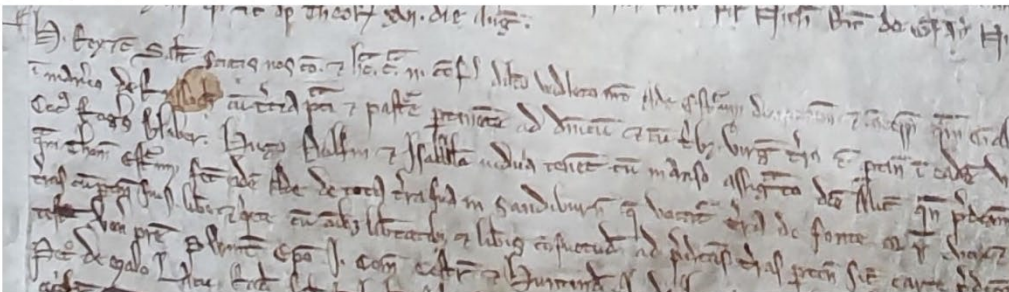
Close Roll 16 Membrane 6



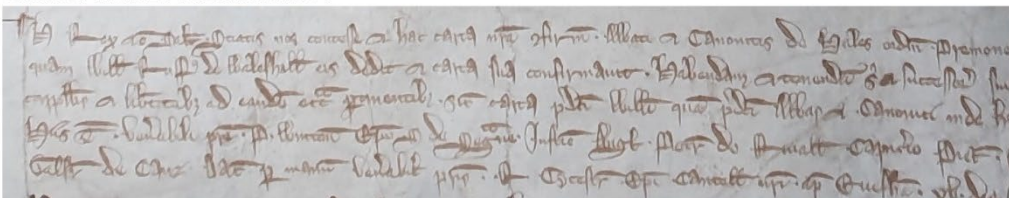
Patent Roll 17 Membrane 3



Charter Roll 17 Membrane 2

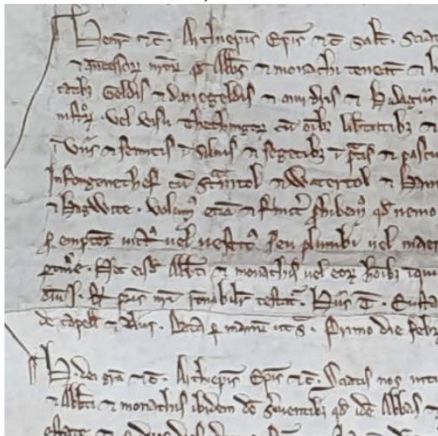


Charter Roll 17 Membrane 4

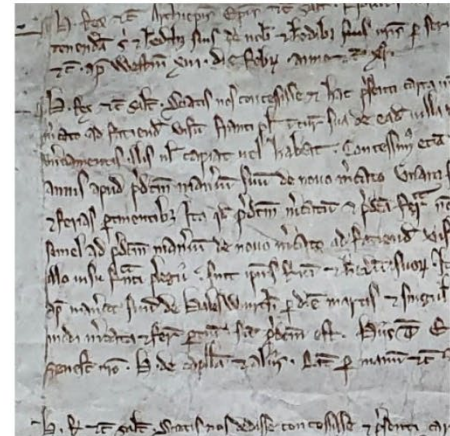


Appendix I, Figure XII: Evidence of 'A.v' Hand in Roll I | Henry III

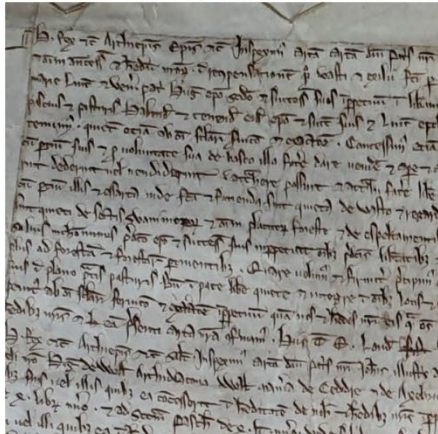
Charter Roll 11.1, Membrane 35



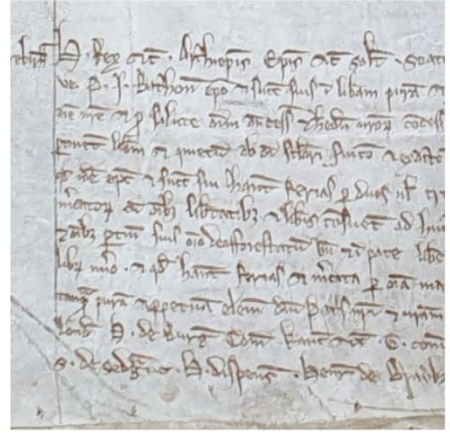
Charter Roll 11.1, Membrane 26



Charter Roll 11.1, Membrane 28

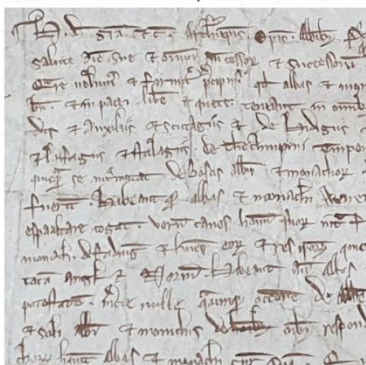


Charter Roll 11.1, Membrane 22

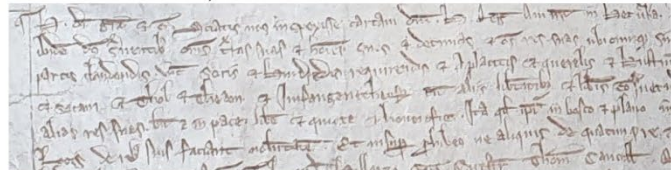


Evidence of 'A.ii' Hand in Roll I | Henry III

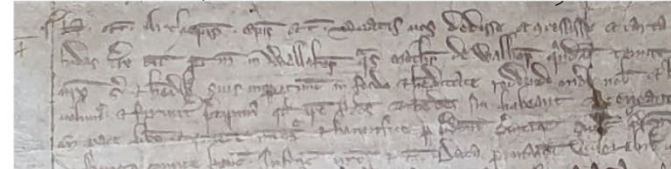
Charter Roll 11.1, Membrane 23



Charter Roll 11.1, Membrane 14

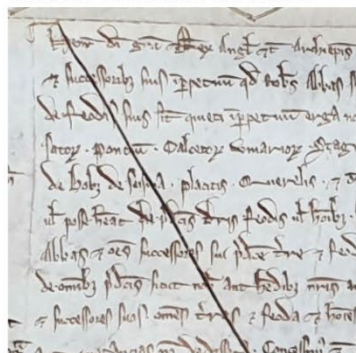


Charter Roll 11.1, Membrane 3

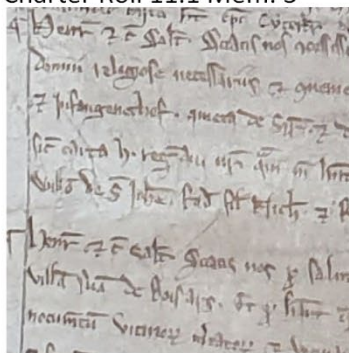


Appendix I, Figure XIII: Evidence of 'B.i' Hand in Roll I | Henry III

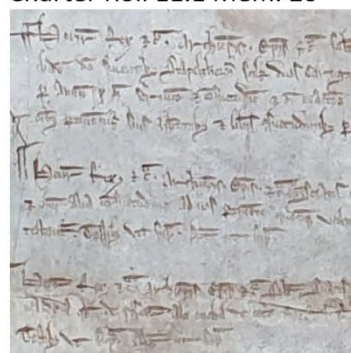
Charter Roll 11.1 Mem. 30



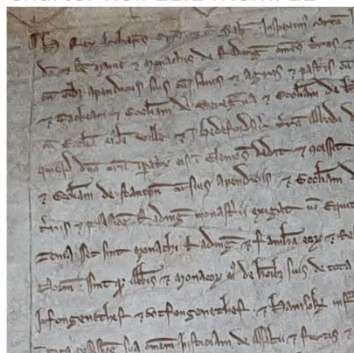
Charter Roll 11.1 Mem. 3



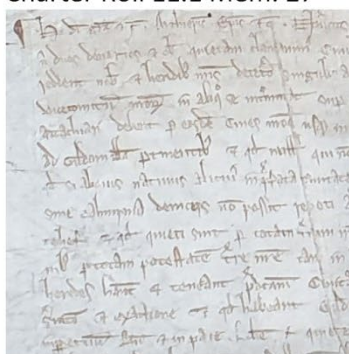
Charter Roll 11.1 Mem. 20



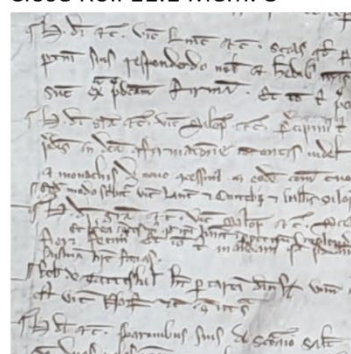
Charter Roll 11.1 Mem. 22



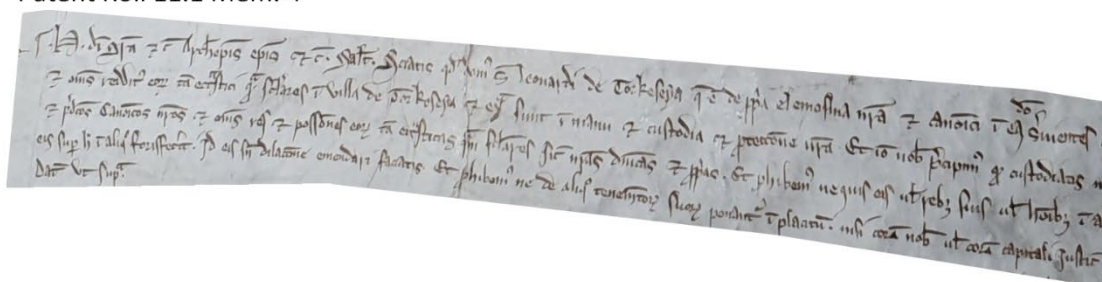
Charter Roll 11.1 Mem. 27



Close Roll 11.1 Mem. 8



Patent Roll 11.1 Mem. 4



Appendix I, Figure XIV: Evidence of 'B.ii' Hand in Roll I | Henry III

Charter Roll 11 Membrane 31

Handwritten text in the 'B.ii' hand, featuring a mix of cursive and semi-cursive script. The text is written in a single column on a parchment strip, with some ink bleed-through visible from the reverse side.

Charter Roll 11 Membrane 26

Handwritten text in the 'B.ii' hand, showing a dense block of cursive script. The parchment is aged and slightly discolored, with the text written in a single column.

Charter Roll 11 Membrane 26

Handwritten text in the 'B.ii' hand, featuring a mix of cursive and semi-cursive script. The text is written in a single column on a parchment strip, with some ink bleed-through visible from the reverse side.

Charter Roll 11 Membrane 16

Handwritten text in the 'B.ii' hand, showing a dense block of cursive script. The parchment is aged and slightly discolored, with the text written in a single column.

Charter Roll 11 Membrane 36

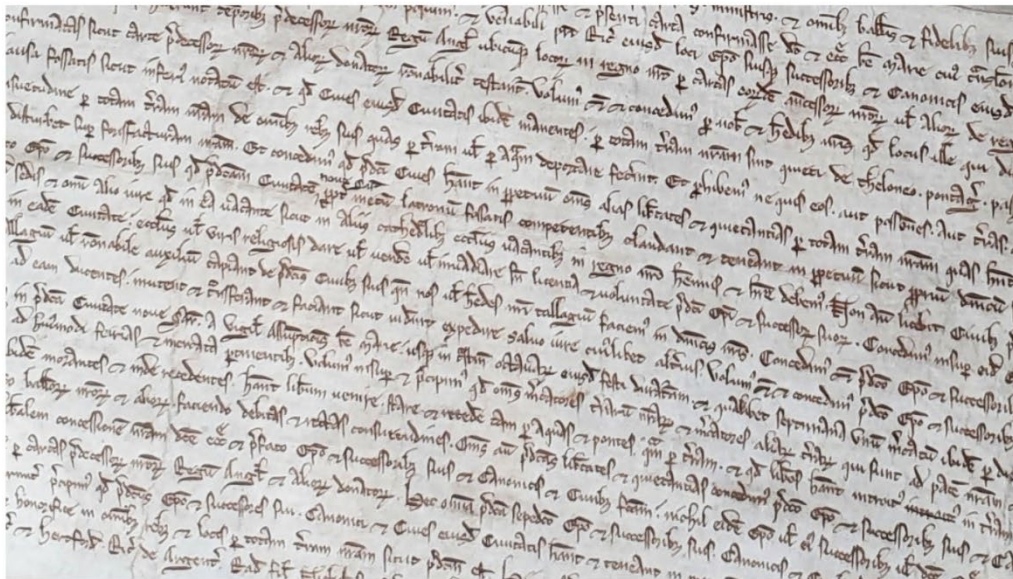
Handwritten text in the 'B.ii' hand, featuring a mix of cursive and semi-cursive script. The text is written in a single column on a parchment strip, with some ink bleed-through visible from the reverse side.

Charter Roll 11 Membrane 6

Handwritten text in the 'B.ii' hand, showing a dense block of cursive script. The parchment is aged and slightly discolored, with the text written in a single column.

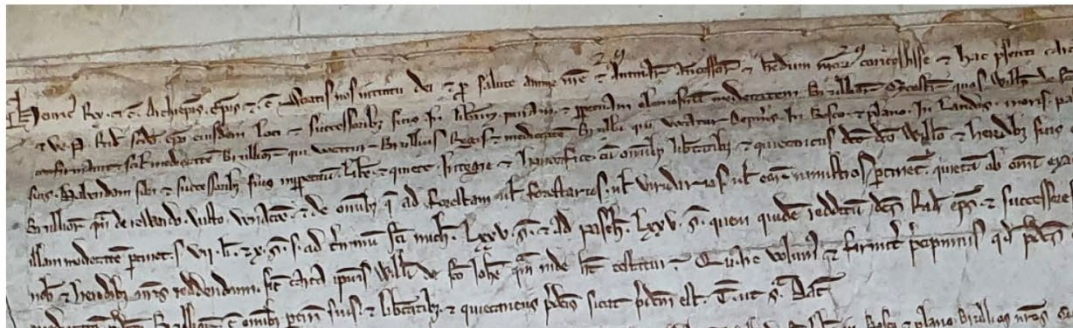
Appendix I, Figure XV: Evidence of 'B.iii' Hand in Roll I | Henry III

Charter Roll 11.1, Membrane 36



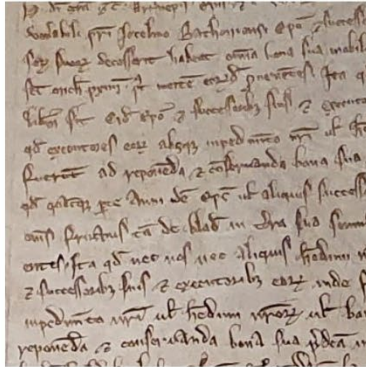
Appendix I, Figure XVI: Evidence of 'B.iv' Hand in Roll I | Henry III

Charter Roll 11.1, Membrane 29

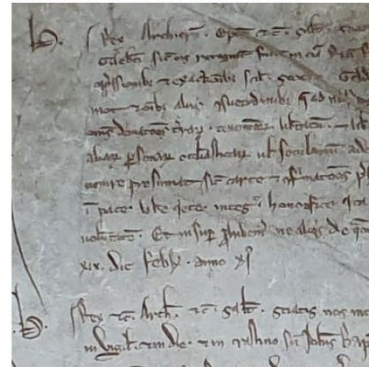


Appendix I, Figure XVII: Evidence of 'B.v' Hand in Roll II Henry III

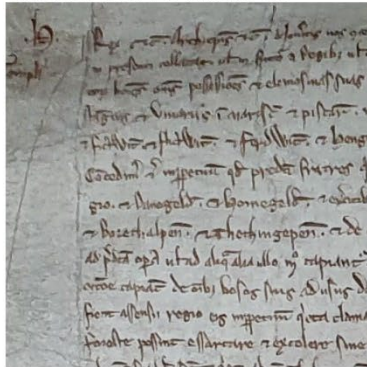
Charter Roll 15 Mem. 5



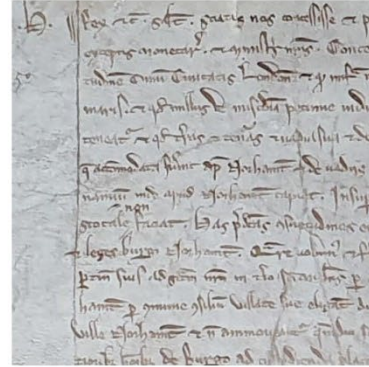
Charter Roll 15 Mem. 21



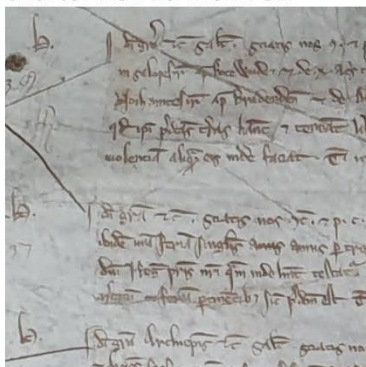
Charter Roll 15 Mem. 33



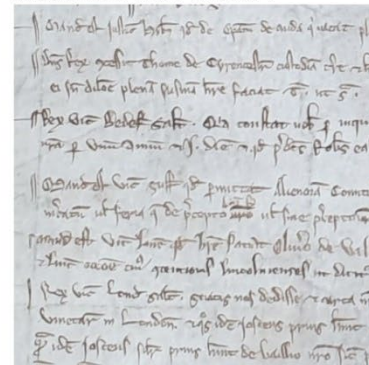
Charter Roll 15 Mem. 17



Charter Roll 15 Mem. 32

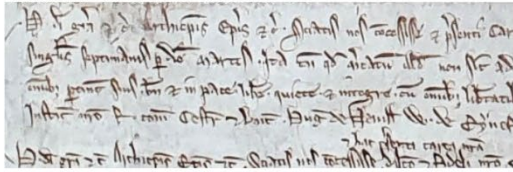


Close Roll 11.1 Mem. 7

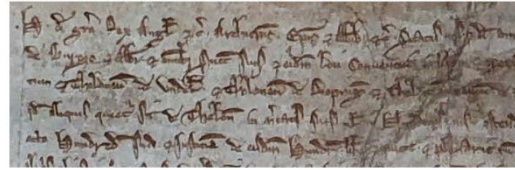


Appendix I, Figure XVIII: Evidence of 'B.vi' Hand in Roll I | Henry III

Charter Roll 11.1 Mem. 34

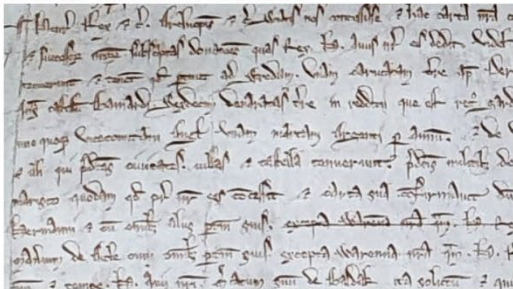


Charter Roll 11.1 Mem. 15

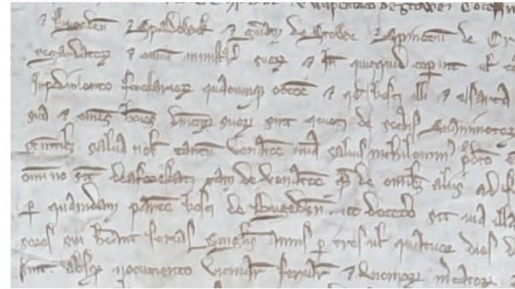


Appendix I, Figure XIX: Evidence of 'B.vii' Hand in Roll I | Henry III

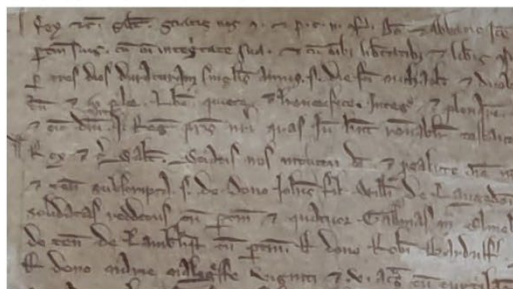
Charter Roll 11.1 Mem. 29



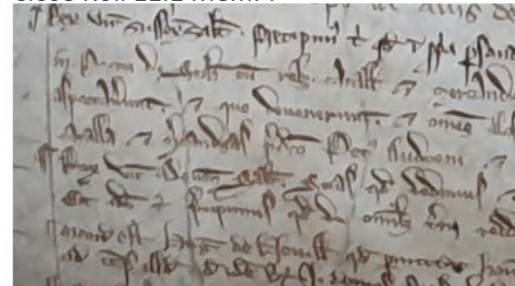
Charter Roll 11.1 Mem. 32



Charter Roll 11.2 Mem. 7



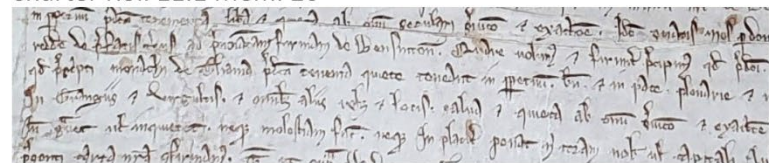
Close Roll 11.1 Mem. 7



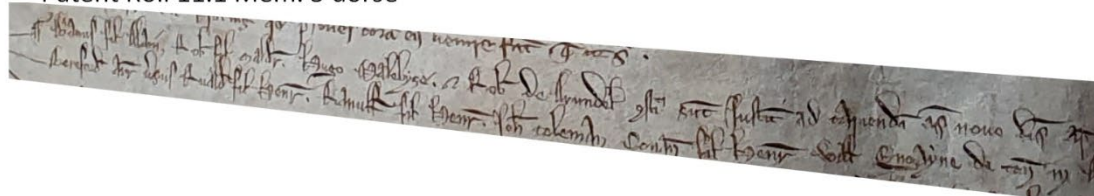
Patent Roll 11.1 Mem. 7



Charter Roll 11.1 Mem. 26

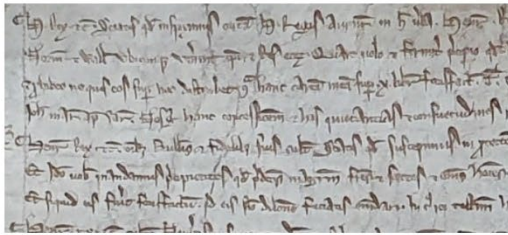


Patent Roll 11.1 Mem. 5 dorso

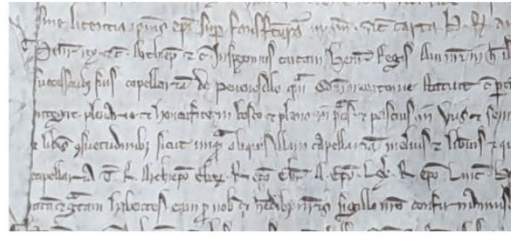


Appendix I, Figure XX: Evidence of 'B.viii' Hand in Roll I | Henry III

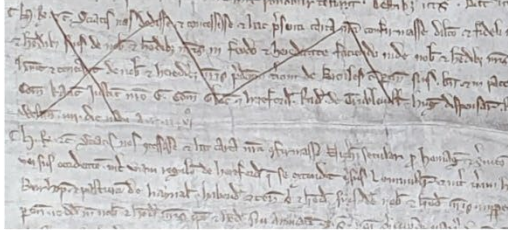
Charter Roll 11.1 Mem. 7



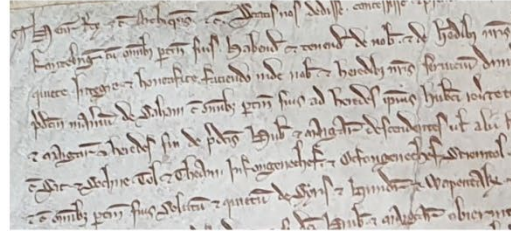
Charter Roll 11.1 Mem. 10



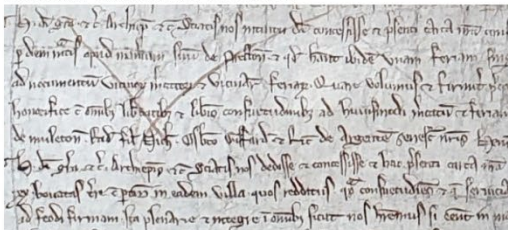
Charter Roll 11.1 Mem. 7



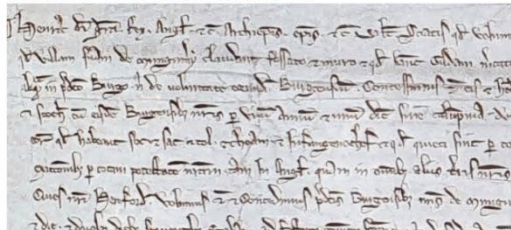
Charter Roll 11.1 Mem. 24



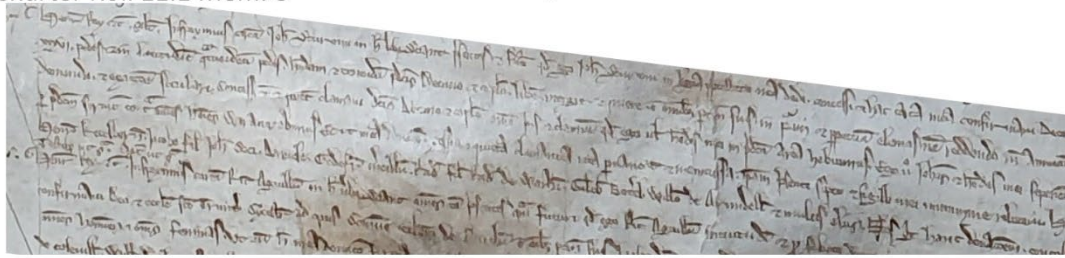
Charter Roll 11.1 Mem. 9



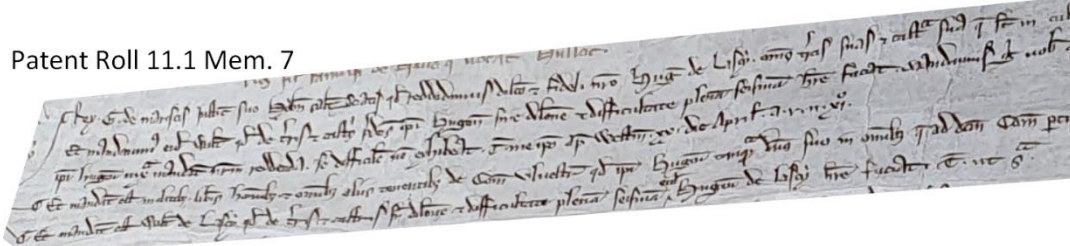
Charter Roll 11.1 Mem. 27



Charter Roll 11.1 Mem. 8

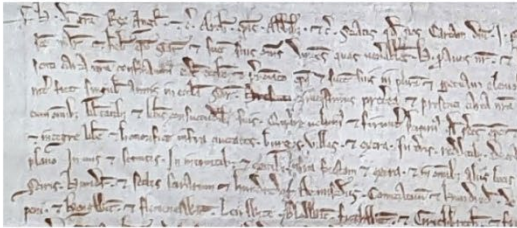


Patent Roll 11.1 Mem. 7

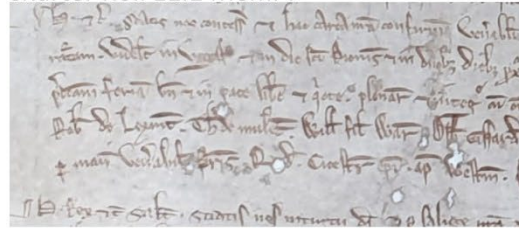


Appendix I, Figure XXI: Evidence of 'B.ix' Hand in Roll I | Henry III

Charter Roll 11.1 Mem. 15

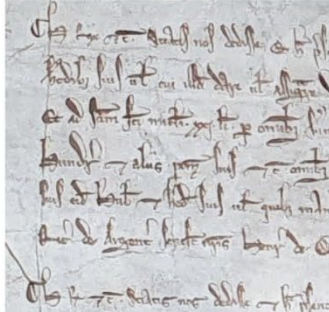


Charter Roll 11.1 Mem. 7

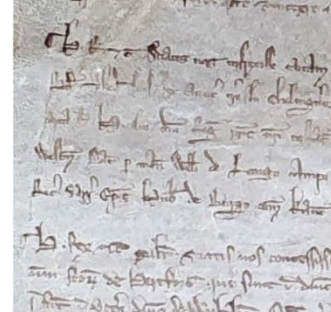


Appendix I, Figure XXII: Evidence of 'B.x' Hand in Roll I | Henry III

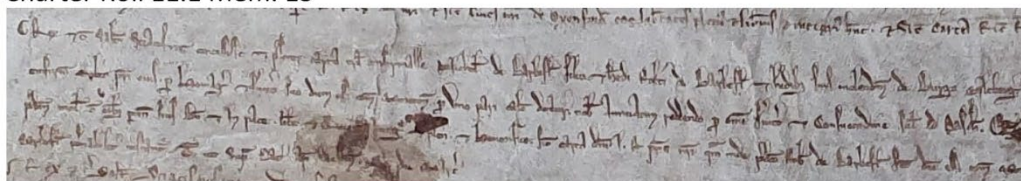
Charter Roll 11.1 Mem. 14



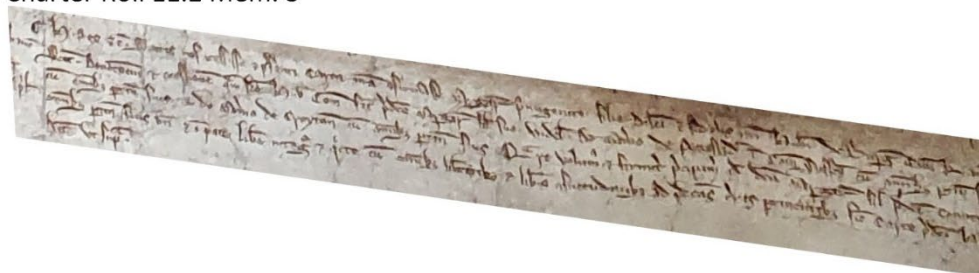
Charter Roll 11.1 Mem. 13



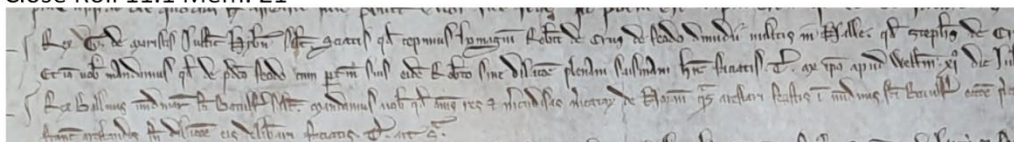
Charter Roll 11.1 Mem. 13



Charter Roll 11.2 Mem. 3

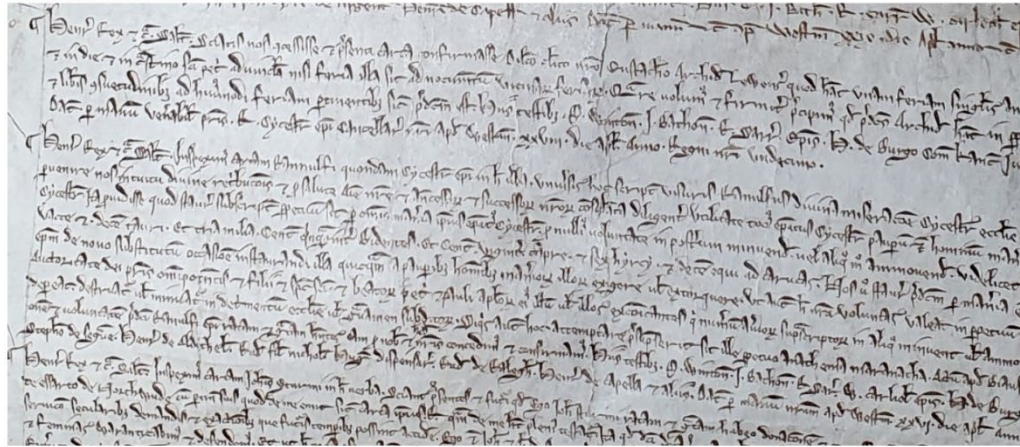


Close Roll 11.1 Mem. 21



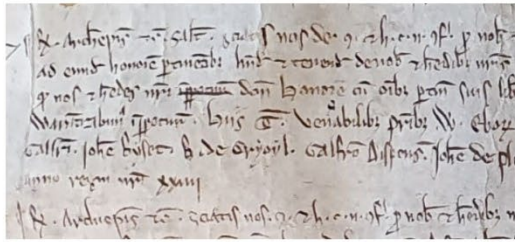
Appendix I, Figure XXIII: Evidence of 'B.xi' Hand in Roll I | Henry III

Charter Roll 11.1 Membrane 8

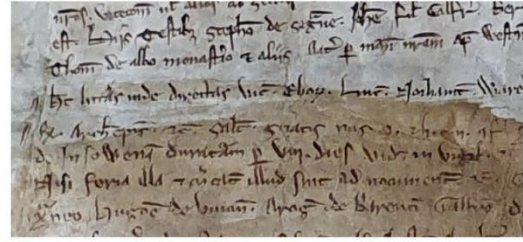


Appendix I, Figure XXIV: Evidence of 'C.i' Hand in Rolls 24-29 Henry III

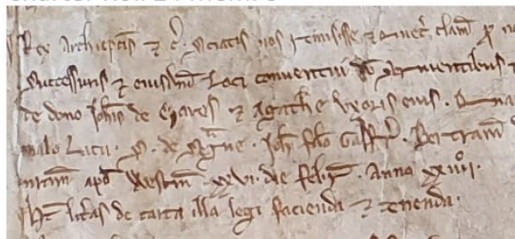
Charter Roll 24 Mem. 2



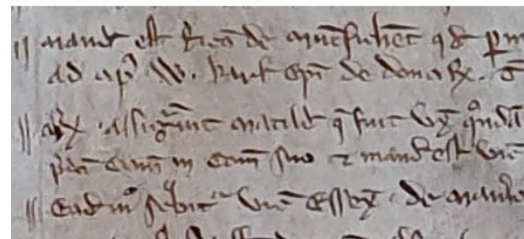
Charter Roll 24 Mem. 1



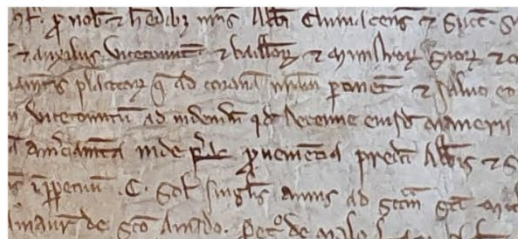
Charter Roll 24 Mem. 3



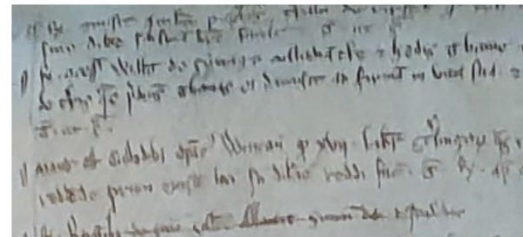
Charter Roll 24 Mem. 4



Close Roll 24 Mem. 7

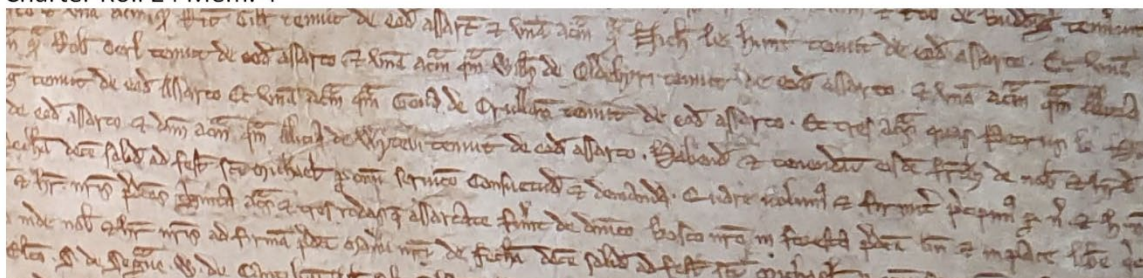


Close Roll 24 Mem. 18

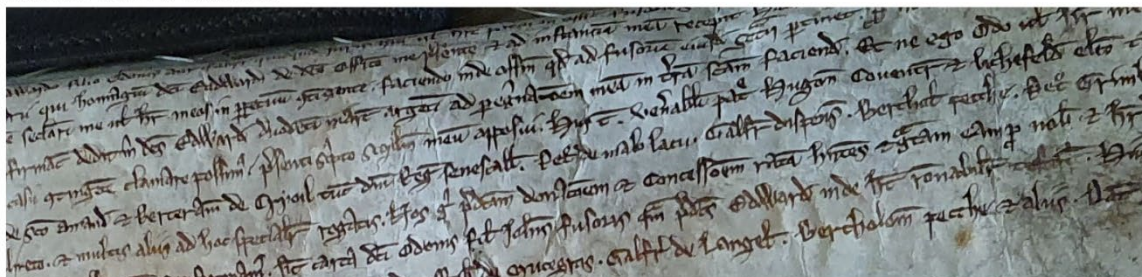


Appendix I, Figure XXV: Evidence of 'C.ii' Hand in Rolls 24-29 Henry III

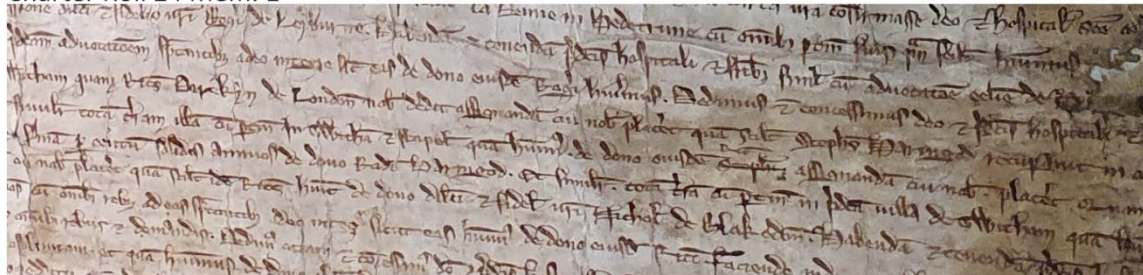
Charter Roll 24 Mem. 4



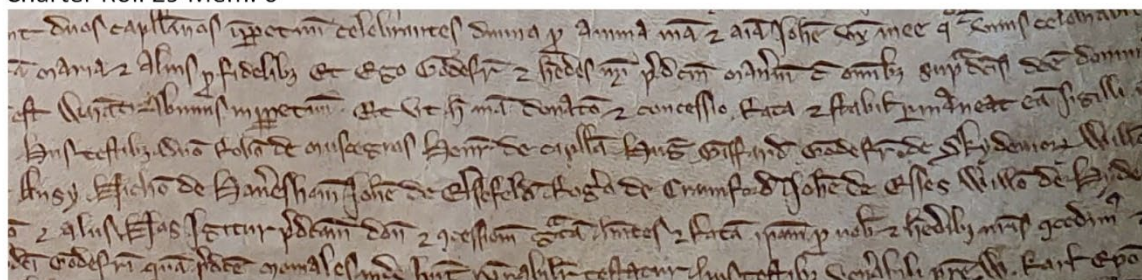
Charter Roll 24 Mem. 3

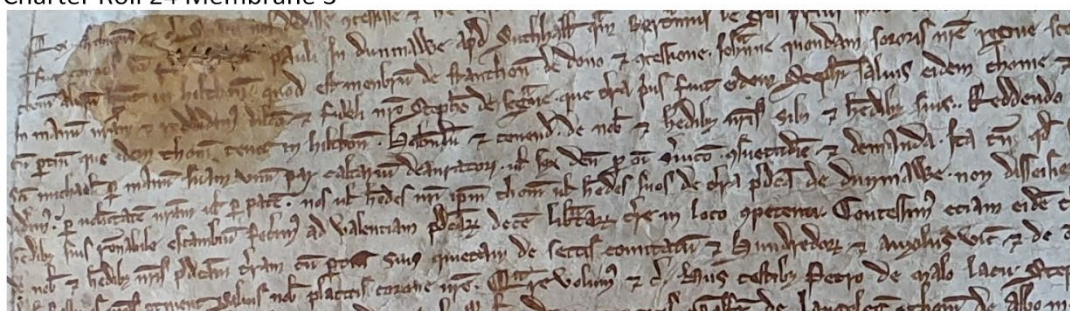
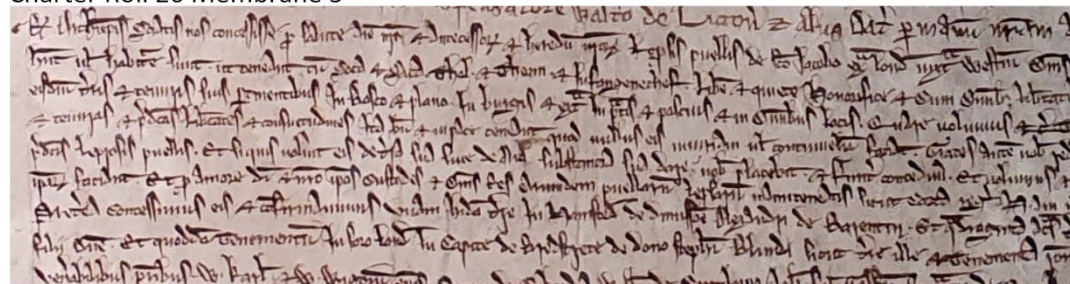
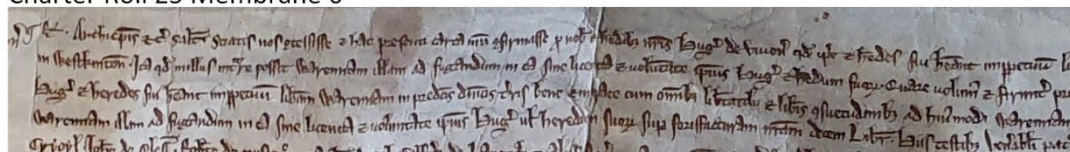


Charter Roll 24 Mem. 1



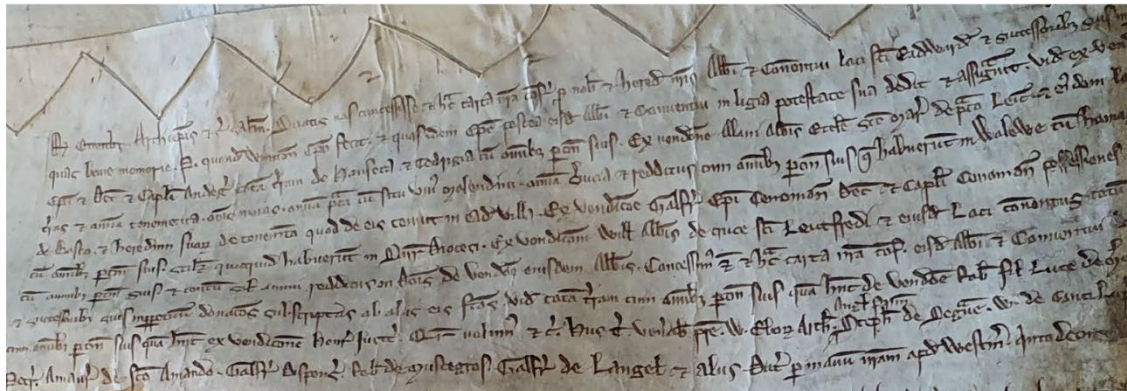
Charter Roll 29 Mem. 6





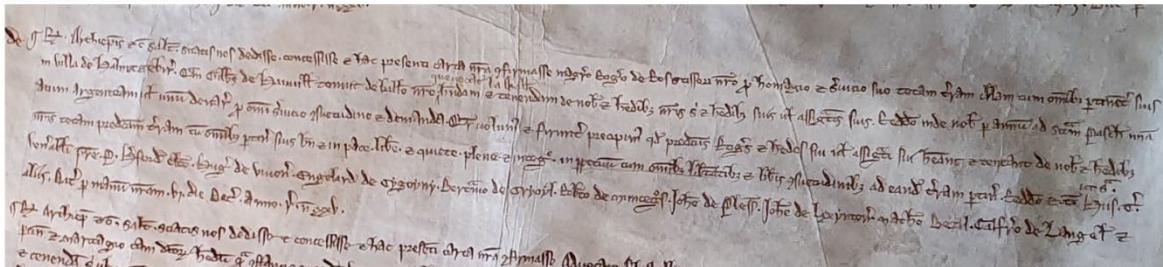
Appendix I, Figure XXVII: Evidence of 'C.iv' Hand in Rolls 24-29 Henry III

Charter Roll 24 Mem. 2



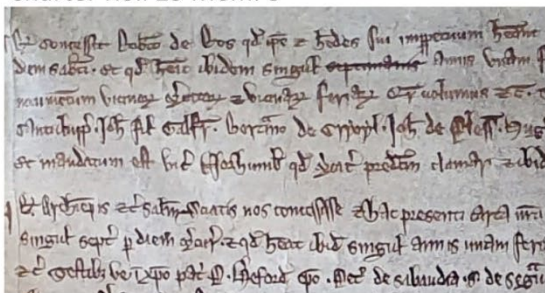
Appendix I, Figure XXVIII: Evidence of 'C.v' Hand in Rolls 24-29 Henry III

Charter Roll 25 Mem. 6

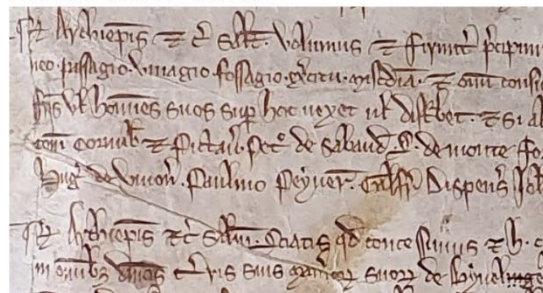


Appendix I, Figure XXIX: Evidence of 'C.vi' Hand in Rolls 24-29 Henry III

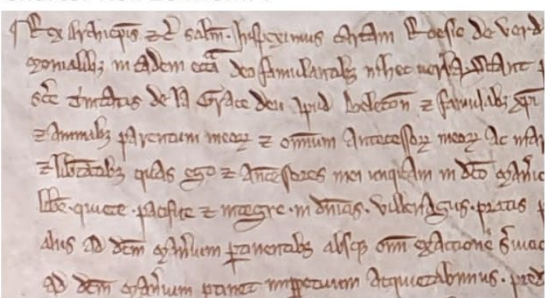
Charter Roll 25 Mem. 3



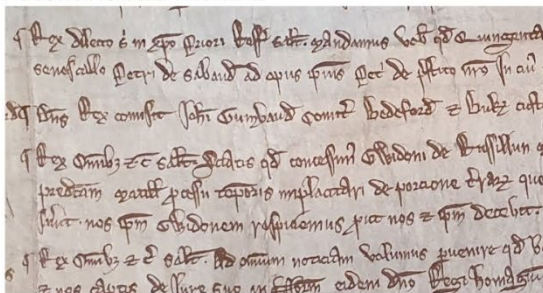
Charter Roll 29 Mem. 2



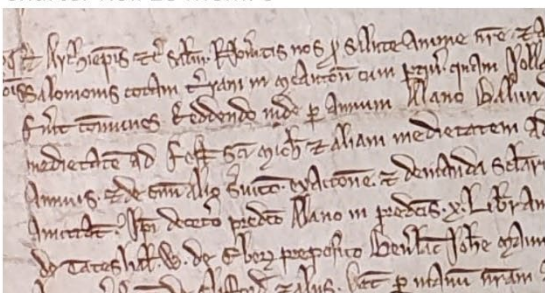
Charter Roll 26 Mem. 7



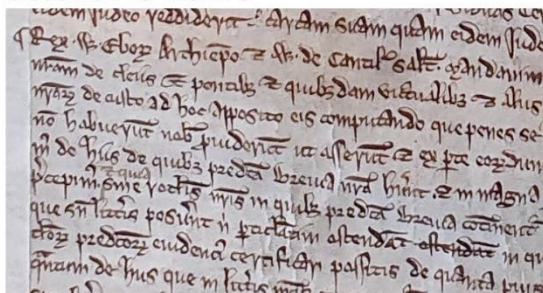
Patent Roll 25 Mem. 2



Charter Roll 28 Mem. 3

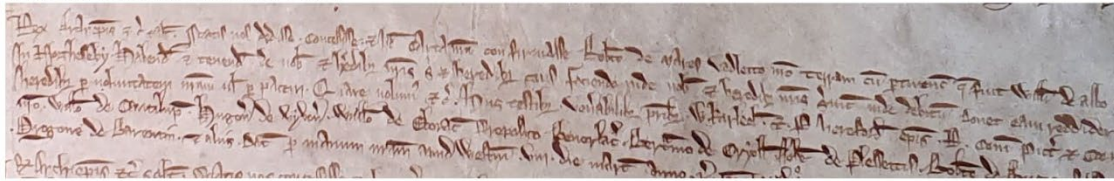


Close Roll 29 Mem. 3

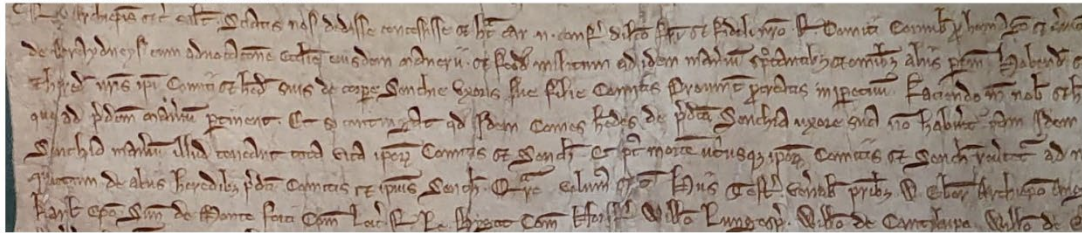


Appendix I, Figure XXX: Evidence of 'C.vii' Hand in Rolls 24-29 Henry III

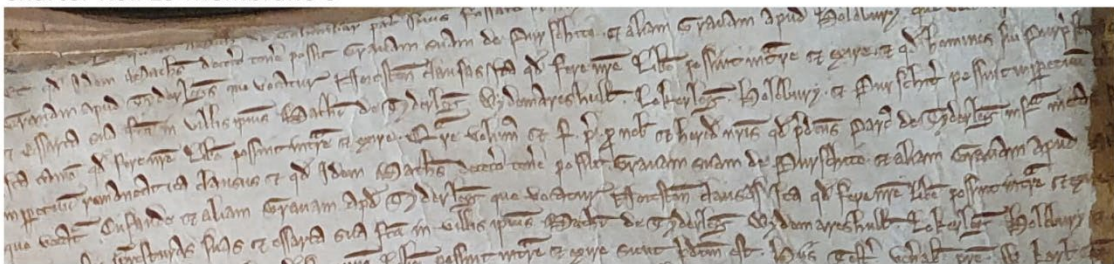
Charter Roll 26 Membrane 3



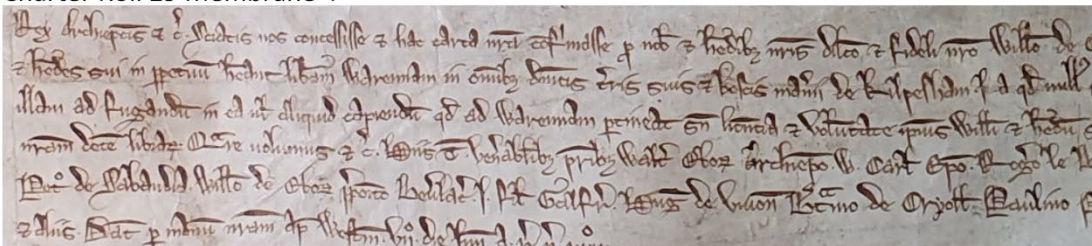
Charter Roll 29 Membrane 7



Charter Roll 29 Membrane 6

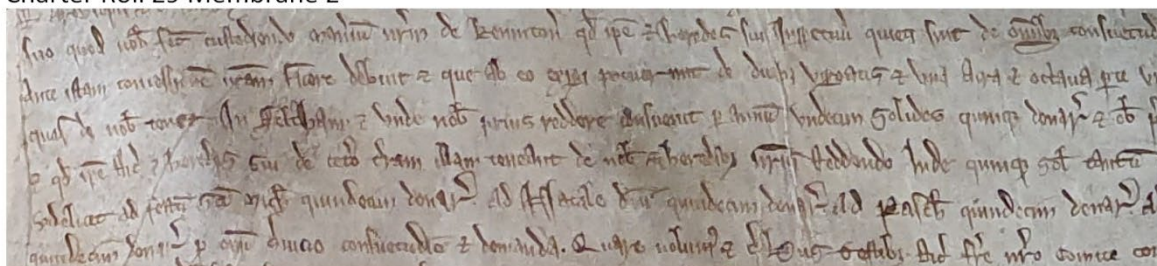


Charter Roll 29 Membrane 4

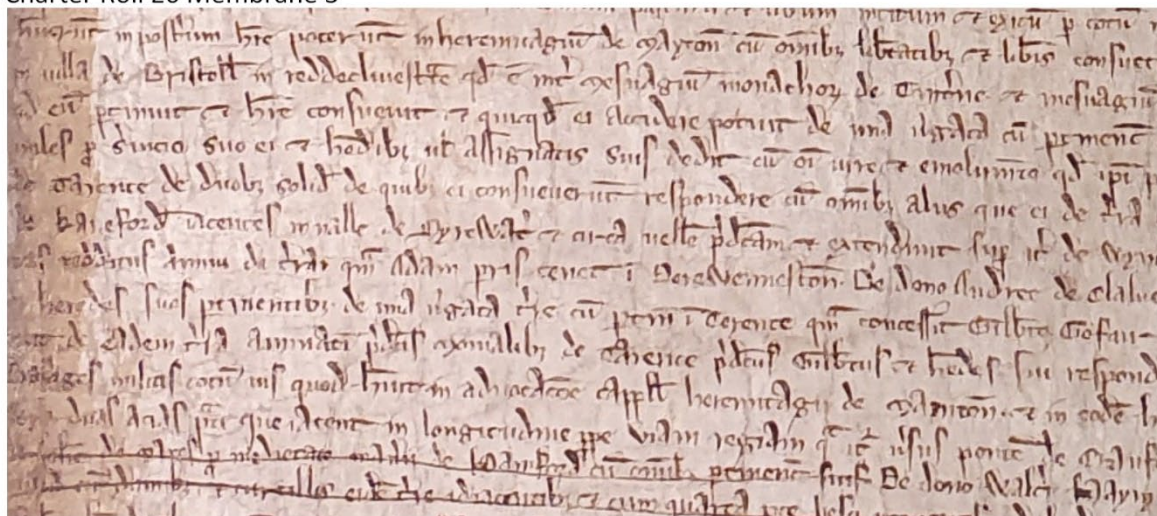


Appendix I, Figure XXXI: Evidence of 'C.viii' Hand in Rolls 24-29 Henry III

Charter Roll 29 Membrane 2

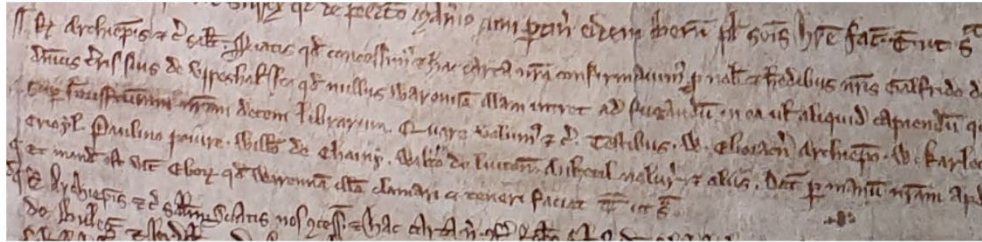


Charter Roll 26 Membrane 3



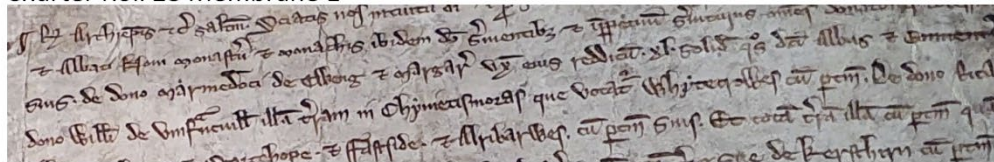
Appendix I, Figure XXXII: Evidence of 'C.ix' Hand in Rolls 24-29 Henry III

Charter Roll 28 Membrane 4



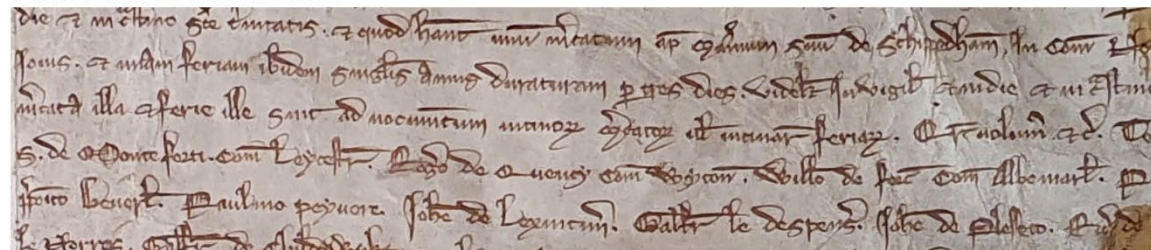
Appendix I, Figure XXXIII: Evidence of 'C.x' Hand in Rolls 24-29 Henry III

Charter Roll 28 Membrane 1



Appendix I, Figure XXXIV: Evidence of 'C.xi' Hand in Rolls 24-29 Henry III

Charter Roll 29 Membrane 2



Appendix I, Figure XXXV: Evidence of 'D.i' Hand in Rolls 44-49 Henry III

Charter Roll 44 Mem. 6

Charter Roll 45 Mem. 4

Charter Roll 45 Mem. 3

Patent Roll 44 Mem. 4

Appendix I, Figure XXXVI: Evidence of 'D.ii' Hand in Rolls 44-49 Henry III

Charter Roll 44 Mem. 6

Appendix I, Figure XXXVII: Evidence of 'D.iii' Hand in Rolls 44-49 Henry III

Charter Roll 48 Mem. 2

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Charter Roll 49 Mem. 3

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2^o circa predictam est. Hinc cellis cordell
capto sudam vultu de illius. ibi. 2^o

Charter Roll 48 Mem. 1

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Et interpretat. Satis qd Emma dluen in glencoe
fess omes capite eam que eadem Emma hup
p ne et ed nps pda cultu lmda e conada ell

Charter Roll 49 Mem. 2

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 samuel ffrs sui de ead pte pntali Incurt
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 exgras dnmus nris filie et uxoris de no

Charter Roll 49 Mem. 7

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Charter Roll 49 Mem. 23 dorse

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Charter Roll 49 Mem. 6

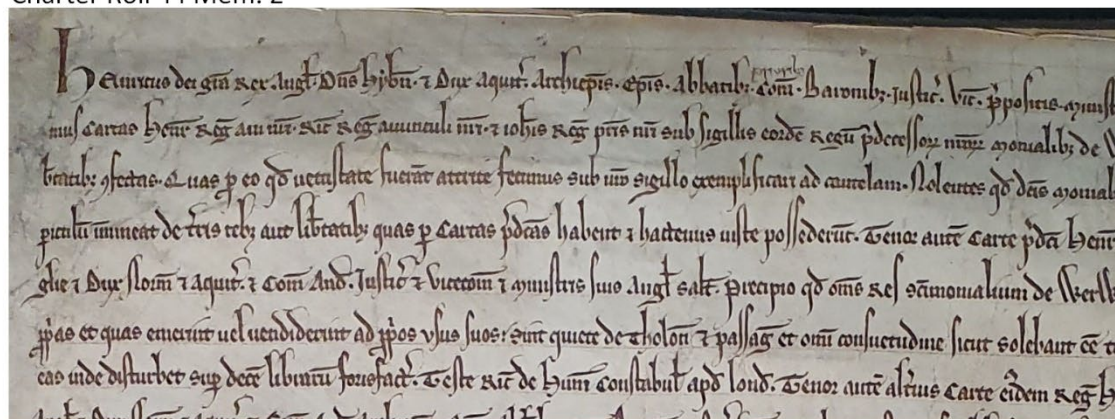
Et huiusmodi ad. Quibus nos concessisse et hac
gratia suo de Burgenhall in com. Dor. et
q. d. hanc omni mediam singul. septim.
vult in vult a. m. d. e. n. q. d. n. p. a. d. m.
Ad hanc huiusmodi annis et tres dies d. m.

Charter Roll 49 Mem. 11

[illegible]

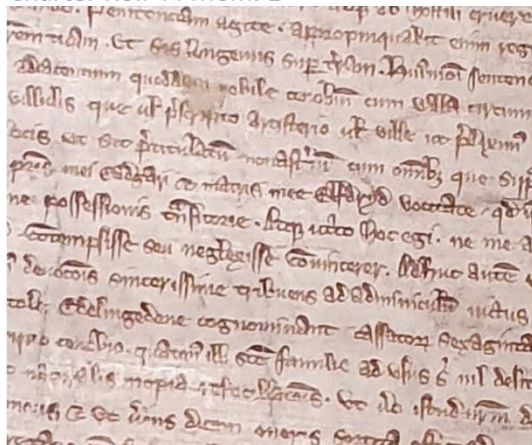
Appendix I, Figure XXXVIII: Evidence of 'D.iv' Hand in Rolls 44-49 Henry III

Charter Roll 44 Mem. 2

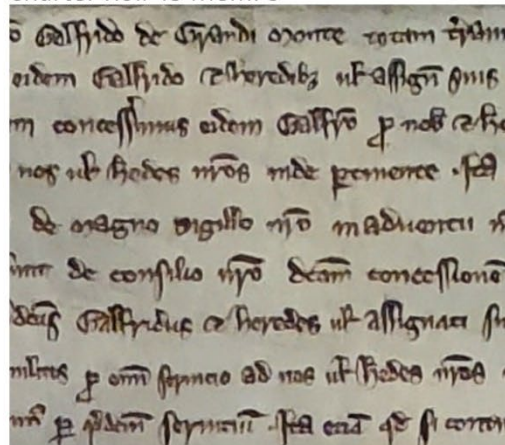


Appendix I, Figure XXXIX: Evidence of 'D.v' Hand in Rolls 44-49 Henry III

Charter Roll 44 Mem. 1

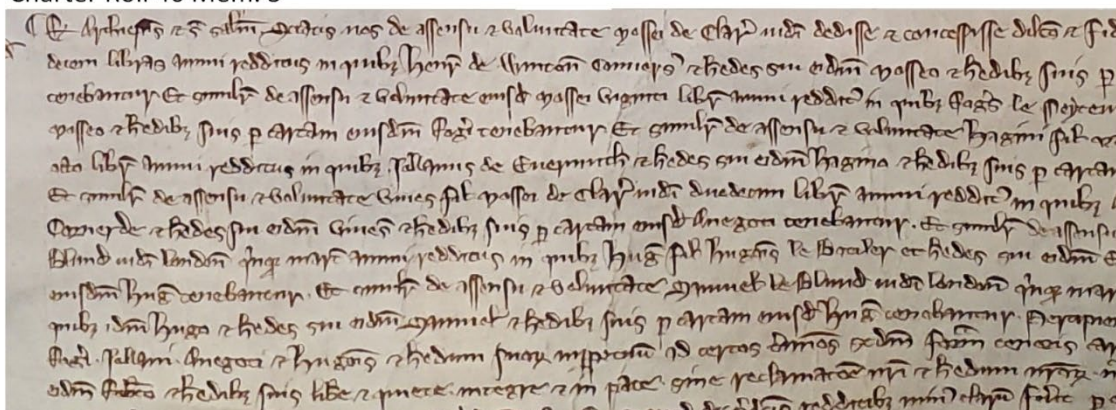


Charter Roll 45 Mem. 3



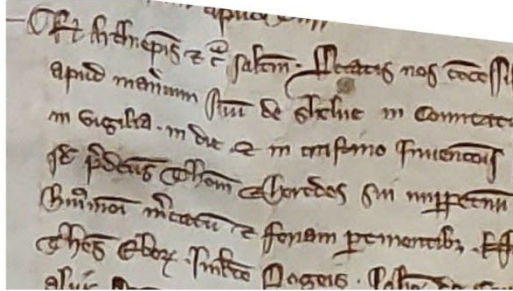
Appendix I, Figure XL: Evidence of 'D.vi' Hand in Rolls 44-49 Henry III

Charter Roll 46 Mem. 5

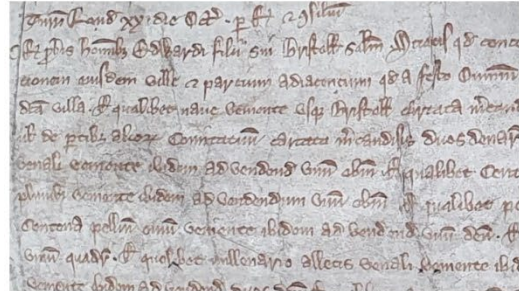


Appendix I, Figure XLI: Evidence of 'D.vii' Hand in Rolls 44-49 Henry III

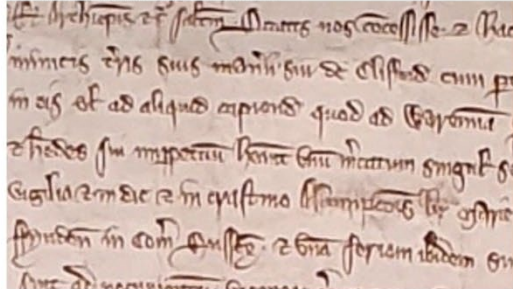
Charter Roll 45 Mem. 3



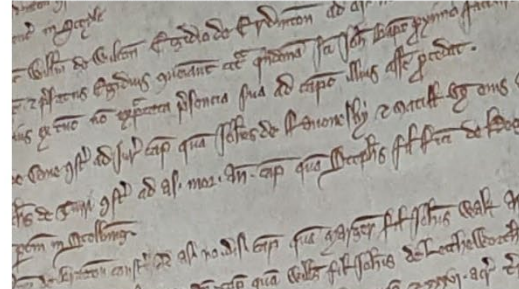
Patent Roll 45 Mem. 2



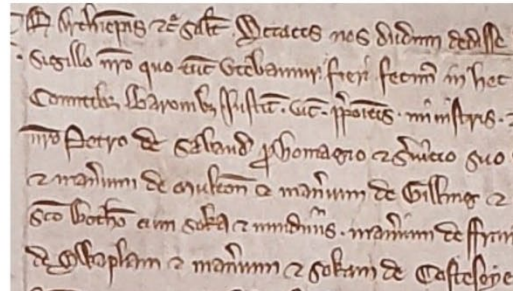
Charter Roll 45 Mem. 2



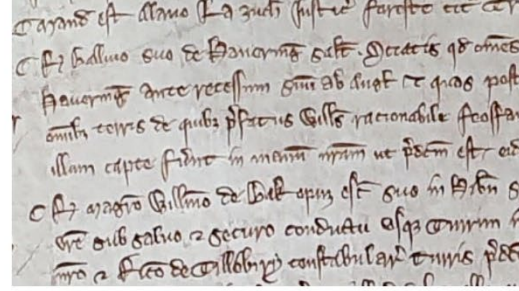
Patent Roll 45 Mem. 3 dorse



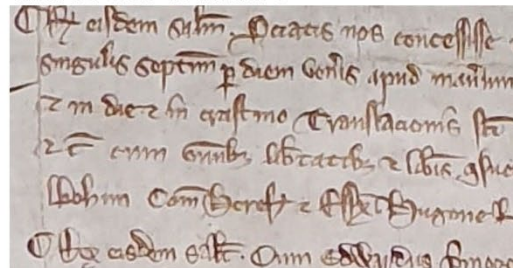
Charter Roll 46 Mem. 4



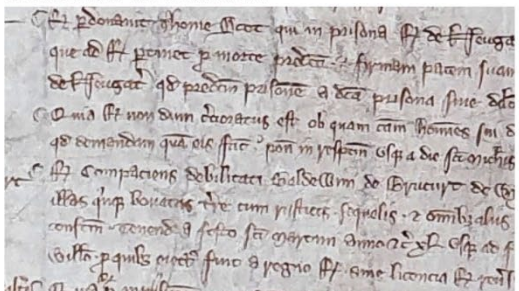
Close Roll 46 Mem. 11



Charter Roll 48 Mem. 3

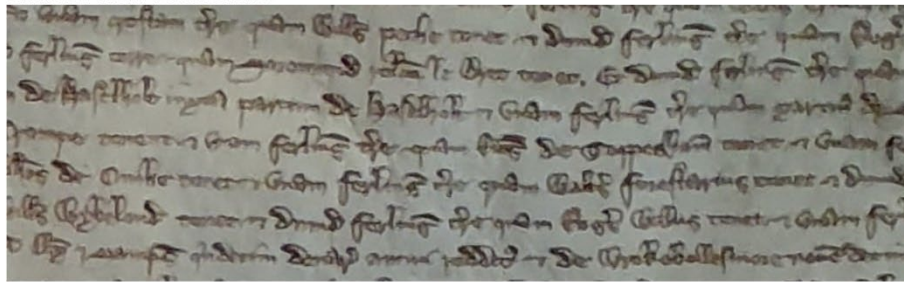


Close Roll 45 Mem. 11



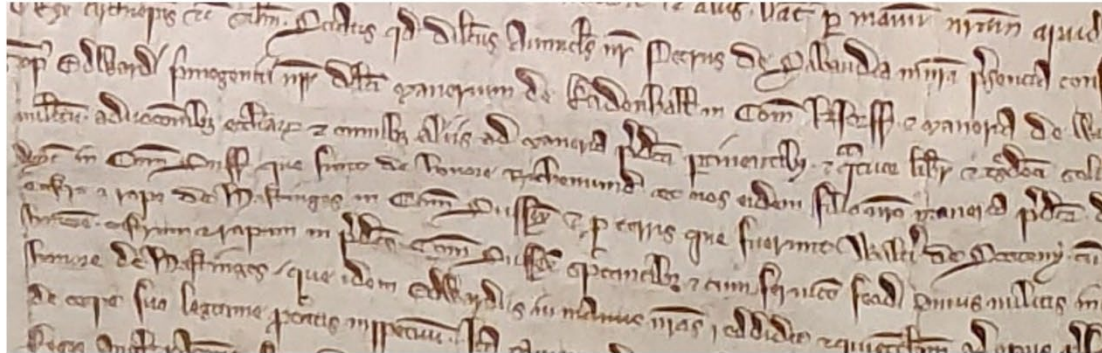
Appendix I, Figure XLII: Evidence of 'D.viii' Hand in Rolls 44-49 Henry III

Charter Roll 46 Mem. 3



Appendix I, Figure XLIII: Evidence of 'D.ix' Hand in Rolls 44-49 Henry III

Charter Roll 46 Mem. 2



Rex Lithuanie et Edwardus
 cum p[ro]p[ri]o habendum et vendendum eidem Joh[ann]i
 servitum feodi omnis militie p[ro] omni servitio
 quatuor annis p[re]dictis Edwardi qua dem[um]
 n[on]o Humphred de Willem Conit[er] heresford
 Ann[us] d[omi]ni de Walep[er] . Galfrid[us] de d[omi]ni
 Rex Lithuanie et Edwardus nos concess
 in omnibus d[omi]nas terre eius de Walep[er]

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

Appendix I, Figure XLVI: Evidence of 'D.xii' Hand in Rolls 44-49 Henry III

Charter Roll 48 Mem. 2

Et hincipit et scias nos concessisse et capere
sunt de colthide in com. Hants. et de
de illis et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam
et predicta nomenclaturam et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam
nomenclaturam nomenclaturam et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam

Charter Roll 49 Mem. 3

Et hincipit et scias nos concessisse et capere
sunt de colthide in com. Hants. et de
de illis et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam
et predicta nomenclaturam et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam
nomenclaturam nomenclaturam et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam

Charter Roll 48 Mem. 1

Omnes et Emma filia et Emma filia et Emma filia
fere in capite de Hants. et de
de illis et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam
et predicta nomenclaturam et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam
nomenclaturam nomenclaturam et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam

Patent Roll 49 Mem. 3

Omnes et Emma filia et Emma filia et Emma filia
fere in capite de Hants. et de
de illis et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam
et predicta nomenclaturam et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam
nomenclaturam nomenclaturam et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam

Charter Roll 49 Mem. 7

Et hincipit et scias nos concessisse et capere
sunt de colthide in com. Hants. et de
de illis et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam
et predicta nomenclaturam et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam
nomenclaturam nomenclaturam et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam

Patent Roll 49 Mem. 23 dorse

Et hincipit et scias nos concessisse et capere
sunt de colthide in com. Hants. et de
de illis et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam
et predicta nomenclaturam et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam
nomenclaturam nomenclaturam et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam

Charter Roll 49 Mem. 6

Et hincipit et scias nos concessisse et capere
sunt de colthide in com. Hants. et de
de illis et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam
et predicta nomenclaturam et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam
nomenclaturam nomenclaturam et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam

Close Roll 49 Mem. 11

Et hincipit et scias nos concessisse et capere
sunt de colthide in com. Hants. et de
de illis et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam
et predicta nomenclaturam et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam
nomenclaturam nomenclaturam et fere illa sunt ad nomenclaturam

Appendix 2: Tables of Hands identified on Charter Rolls

20	19	18	18sch.	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	6sch.	5	4	3	2	1	1sch.1	1sch.2	1sch.3	1sch.4
A.i	A.ii	A.ii.A	A.ii.A.ii	A.i.A.v	A.v	A.ii.A.i	A.i	A.i.A.vi	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.i.A.iii	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.i	A.i.A.i	A.i.A.v	A.v	A.ii.A.ii	A.i.A.v	A.ii.A.ii	A.ii	A.vi.A.iii	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.v	
A.i	A.ii	A.ii.A	A.ii.A	A.i.A.v	A.v	A.i	A.i	A.i.A.vi	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.i	A.i.A.i	A.i.A.i	A.i.A.i	A.i.A.v	A.ii.A.v	A.ii.A.ii	A.i.A.v	A.ii.A.ii	A.i.A.iii	A.ii.A.iii	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	
A.i	A.ii	A.ii.A	A.ii.A	A.i.A.v	A.v	A.i	A.i	A.i.A.vi	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.iii	A.i.A.i	A.i.A.i	A.i.A.i	A.i.A.v	A.ii.A.v	A.ii.A.ii	A.i.A.v	A.ii.A.ii	A.i.A.iii	A.ii.A.iii	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	
A.i	A.ii	A.ii.A	A.ii.A	A.i.A.v	A.v	A.i	A.i	A.ii.A.ii	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.i	A.i.A.i	A.i.A.i	A.i.A.v	A.ii.A.v	A.ii.A.ii	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.iii	A.ii.A.iii	A.vi.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	
A.i	A.ii	A.ii.A	A.ii.A	A.i.A.i	A.i.A.v	A.i	A.i	A.ii.A.ii	A.i.A.iii	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.i	A.i.A.i	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.vi.A.i	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	
A.i	A.iii.A.ii	A.v		A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i	A.iii	A.ii.A.v	A.i.A.iii				A.ii.A.i	A.i.A.v	A.ii.A.v	A.ii.A.v	A.ii.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.vi.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	
		A.ii		A.i.A.v	A.v	A.i	A.iii	A.i.A.v		A.v			A.ii.A.i	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.i	A.i		A.ii.A.ii	A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	
		A.ii		A.i.A.v	A.i.A.v	A.ii.A.v	A.ii.A.iii		A.i.A.v				A.i.A.v	A.v		A.ii.A.ii	A.i.A.v			A.i.A.v					
		A.ii.A.v		A.i.A.v	A.ii.A.v		A.v		A.i.A.iii				A.i.A.v		A.ii.A.v		A.ii.A.v								
		A.ii.A.v		A.i.A.v	A.ii.A.v				A.i.A.v				A.i.A.v		A.ii.A.v		A.ii.A.v								
				A.i.A.v					A.i.A.v				A.i.A.v		A.ii.A.v		A.i.A.v								

[illegible][illegible]

[illegible][illegible]

[illegible]329

Appendix II, Table 7: Hands displayed on each roll membrane, Charter Roll 11.2 Henry III (C 53/19)

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
A.v	B.vii	B.v	B.vii	B.i	B.i	B.v	A.v	A.v
A.v	B.vii	B.v	B.vii	A.v	A.v	B.v	A.v	A.v
A.v	B.i	B.v	A.v	A.v	A.v	B.v	A.v	A.v
A.v	A.v	A.v	A.v	B.vii, A.v	A.v, B.vii, B.i	B.v	A.v	A.v
A.v	A.v	B.vii	A.v	B.vii	B.ii	B.v	B.v	A.v
A.v	A.v		A.v	B.v	B.v	B.viii	B.v	A.v
A.v		B.ix	A.v	B.v	B.ii	A.v	B.v	A.v
A.v		A.v	A.v	B.i	B.ii	B.i	B.v	A.v
A.v		A.v	B.vii	B.i	B.v	B.i	A.v	
B.vii		A.v	B.vii	A.v	A.v, A.i	B.i	A.v	
		B.ii	B.v	B.i	A.v	B.viii		
		B.vii	B.v		A.v	B.viii		
			B.v		A.v	B.v		
			B.i			B.v		
			B.i					
			A.v					

Appendix II, Table 8: Hands displayed on each roll membrane, Charter Roll 24 Henry III (C 53/33)

4	3	2	1
C.i	C.ii	C.iv	C.i
C.i	C.iii	C.i	C.i
C.i	C.i	C.i	C.i
C.i	C.i	C.i	C.i
C.i	C.i	C.i	C.i
C.i	C.i	C.i	C.i
C.i	C.i	C.i	C.ii
C.i	C.i	C.i	C.ii
C.i	C.i		C.ii
C.ii	C.i		
C.i			
C.i			

Appendix II, Table 9: Hands displayed on each roll membrane, Charter Roll 25 Henry III (C 53/34)

6	5	4	3	3 dorse	2	2 dorse	1
C.iii	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi	C.vii	C.vi	C.vii	C.vi
C.iii	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi		C.vi		C.vi
C.v	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi		C.vi		C.vi
C.v	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi		C.vi		
C.v	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi				
C.v			C.vi				
C.v			C.vi				
C.v			C.vi				
C.v			C.vi				
C.v			C.vi				
C.v							

Appendix II, Table 10: Hands displayed on each roll membrane, Charter Roll 26 Henry III (C 53/35)

8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
C.vi	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi	C.viii	C.vi	C.vi
C.vi	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi		C.vi	C.vi
C.vi	C.vi	C.vii	C.vi	C.vi		C.vi	
C.vi	C.i	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi		C.vi	
C.vi	C.i	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi		C.vi	
C.vi	C.i	C.vi	C.vi			C.vi	
C.vi		C.vi	C.vi			C.vi	
			C.vi				
			C.ii				
			C.ii				

Appendix II, Table 11: Hands displayed on each roll membrane, Patent Roll 26-27 Henry III (C 66/52)

11	10	7	6	4	3	2
C.vi	C.vi	C.i	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi
C.vi				C.vi	C.vi	C.vi

Appendix II, Table 12: Hands displayed on each roll membrane, Patent Roll 27 Henry III (C 66/54)

25	22sched.	21sched.	20	19	18	16	14	13	12	11	8	7	4	3	2	1
C.vi	C.i	C.vii	C.i	C.i	C.i	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi
C.vi						C.vi		C.vi	C.vi		C.vi	C.vi		C.vi		
						C.vi			C.vi					C.vi		
						C.vi			C.vi					C.vi		

Appendix II, Table 13: Hands displayed on each roll membrane, Charter Roll 28 Henry III (C 53/36)

4	3	2	1
C.vi	C.vi	C.vi	C.x
C.vi	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi
C.vi	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi
C.vi	C.vi	C.vi	C.vi
C.vi	C.vi	C.vi	
C.vi	C.vi	C.vi	
C.vi	C.vi	C.vi	
C.ix	C.vi	C.vi	
C.vi	C.vi	C.vi	
C.vi	C.vi		
C.vi	C.vi		
C.vi	C.vi		
C.vi	C.vi		
C.vi	C.vi		
C.vi	C.vi		
C.vi	C.vi		
	C.vi		
	C.vi		

[illegible]

6	5	4	3	2	1
D.i	D.iii	D.iii	D.iii	D.iv	D.v
D.i	D.iii	D.iii	D.iii		D.v
D.ii	D.iii	D.iii	D.iii		
D.iii	D.iii	D.iii	D.iii		
D.iii	D.iii	D.iii	D.iii		
D.iii	D.iii	D.iii	D.iii		
D.iii	D.iii	D.iii	D.iii		
D.iii	D.iii	D.iii	D.iii		
D.iii	D.iii	D.iii	D.iii		
	D.iii				
	D.iii				
	D.iii				

	4	3	2	1
D.iii		D.v	D.vii	D.vii
D.iii		D.i	D.vii	D.vii
D.iii		D.i	D.vii	D.vii
D.iii		D.iii	D.vii	D.vii
D.iii		D.iii	D.vii	D.vii
D.vi		D.iii	D.vii	D.vii
D.iii		D.iii	D.vii	D.vii
		D.iii	D.vii	
		D.vii	D.vii	
			D.vii	
			D.vii	
			D.vii	
			D.vii	

	5	4	3	2	1
D.vii	D.vii	D.viii	D.vii	D.vii	
D.vii	D.vii	D.viii	D.vii	D.vii	
D.vii	D.vii	D.viii	D.vii	D.vii	
D.viii	D.vii	D.vii	D.vii	D.vii	D.vii
D.vii	D.vii	D.vii	D.vii		
D.vii	D.vii	D.vii	D.vii		
D.vi	D.vii	D.vii	D.vii	D.vii	
			D.vii	D.vii	
				D.ix	

4	4sched.	3	2	1
D.vii	D.xi	D.vii	D.x	D.vii
D.vii	D.xi	D.vii	D.xii	D.vii
D.vii		D.vii		D.vii
D.vii		D.vii		D.vii
D.vii		D.vii		D.xii
D.vii		D.vii		D.xii
D.vii		D.vii		D.vii
D.vii		D.xi		D.vii
D.vii		D.xi		D.xii
D.vii		D.xi		D.xii
D.vii		D.x		D.xii
D.vii		D.x		D.xii
D.x				D.xii
D.x				D.xii
D.vii				D.xii
D.vii				

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
D.xii	D.xii	D.xiii	D.xii	D.xii	D.xii	D.xii
D.xii	D.vii	D.xiv	D.xii	D.xii	D.xii	D.vii
D.xii	D.xii	D.xii	D.xii	D.xii	D.xii	D.xii
D.xii	D.xii	D.xii	D.xii	D.xii	D.xii	D.xv
D.xii	D.xii	D.xii	D.xii	D.xii	D.xii	
D.xii	D.xii	D.xii	D.xii	D.xii	D.xii	
D.xii	D.xii	D.xii	D.xii	D.xii	D.xii	
D.xii	D.xii		D.xii	D.xii	D.xii	
D.xii	D.xii		D.xii	D.xii		
D.xii	D.xii		D.xii			
D.xii	D.xii		D.xii			
	D.xii					
	D.xii					