

THE AUTHORSHIP AND PURPOSE OF THE *GESTA HENRICI QUINTI*: I

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THE *Gesta Henrici Quinti*¹ is the best single contemporary narrative extant for the first three and a half years of the reign of Henry V. It is also an outstanding piece of propaganda,² designed to justify the king's character and policy, and especially his policy towards France. Among the events for which it is of particular importance are the Lollard insurrection of 1414, the siege of Harfleur, the march to Calais (including the battle of Agincourt), the London pageant on the king's return, and his negotiations with the Emperor Sigismund, with France and with Burgundy in 1416, as well as the battles of Valmont and the Seine. Many of those events its author witnessed. The two manuscripts in which the work has survived—British Museum Cotton Julius E. IV (fols. 113-27) and Sloane 1776 (fols. 50-72)—are both anonymous.

Internal evidence enables us to fix the date when the *Gesta* was written to within about half a year.³ The last date mentioned is 20 November 1416 in connection with the parliament of October-November, and so the later portion, and very probably the whole, was written after that date. The prayer with which the *Gesta* ends (beginning "Et det Deus"), together with

¹ The edition cited below is that published for the English Historical Society in 1850 by Benjamin Williams under the title *Henrici Quinti, Angliæ Regis, Gesta*. The writers of the present article are soon to produce a new edition.

² It is surprising that P. S. Lewis, in his interesting paper "War Propaganda and Historiography in Fifteenth Century France and England" (*Trans. Royal Hist. Soc.*, 5th ser., xv (1965), 1-21), has omitted to notice the value of the *Gesta* (and also of the *Liber Metricus de Henrico Quinto* of Thomas Elmham) as propaganda for Henry V's war for the French crown.

³ As Sir John Oldcastle, the leader of the Lollard insurrection, is stated to be still at large, it must have been written before November 1417 when he was captured. Cf. "latitat a conspectu hominum" (Williams, p. 5).

the statement that that parliament closed "in conclusione irrefragibilis propositi regii transfretandi proxima æstate ad retundendam . . . duriciam Gallicorum",¹ indicates that it was completed before Henry's second French expedition, on which he set out on 30 July 1417. It would seem, therefore, that the *Gesta* was compiled during the winter of 1416/17 and spring of 1417. Internal evidence also shows that the author was an Englishman in priest's orders² and, judging from his intimate knowledge of the liturgy of the chapel of the royal household,³ most likely a member of the chapel. He was evidently, too, conversant with the conduct of the royal diplomacy, its procedures and arrangements; and his coverage of the diplomatic exchanges and agreements which came under his notice and were relevant to his purpose is more than adequate. Even if not personally involved, he may well have been in contact with members of the corps of academically trained, professional ecclesiastical lawyers on whom the Crown drew for its supply of civil servants and diplomatic envoys. He also had access to the "libri (or "codices") recordorum", those official collections of treaties and other evidences which he several times cites and from which he drew information mainly of a diplomatic character. We may note, too, his obvious interest in the appointment of Master Henry Ware as keeper of the Privy Seal, the office of the Privy Seal being, of course, that department of State most closely associated with diplomacy. Henry Ware, incidentally, had been an official of the Court of Canterbury, a fact noted by our author who may have had connections in that quarter as well. He was certainly able to draw information from the register of Archbishop Arundel. This prelate he had held in great esteem and clearly treasured his memory. Arundel's successor in the

¹ Ibid. p. 107.

² Ibid. pp. 17 ("unum forte fortalicium quod nos Barbican set communis Bulwerkis appellamus" . . . "in canellis suis, quas in nostro vulgari Gunnys vocamus"), 51 ("et alii sacerdotes"), 53 ("ascripti . . . clericali milicie"). Had he Welsh sympathies? Notice the reference to "the slaughter and pillaging of the Welsh" (p. 6) which had brought Oldcastle promotion. Such an expression, applied to Oldcastle's involvement in the suppression of the Welsh rebellion under Henry IV, to which suppression none had made greater personal contribution than, as Prince of Wales, Henry V himself, is a curious one.

³ Ibid. pp. 90-92.

primacy, Henry Chichele, is also mentioned, although infrequently and impersonally. One expects in such a work to meet prominent personalities, ecclesiastical and secular, and many others in fact are, of course, mentioned. His references to figures by no means so prominent are also of interest, for example, Sir Thomas West and Sir Baldwin Strange. However, his world would seem to have been essentially that of the court. As regards his movements, he was, as mentioned above, clearly an eye-witness of much of what he relates, including some of the most important events. Thus he was with Henry V at St. Giles' Field on the evening of 9 January 1414 when the Lollard rising was thwarted, served throughout the campaign of 1415, was present at the London pageant which followed it, and accompanied the king to Calais in September 1416 for the negotiations with John the Fearless. Whoever he may have been, he was a highly trained and skilful writer, capable of producing a graphic and telling narrative, and of constructing a coherent "case" persuasively and powerfully argued.

The first editor proper¹ of the *Gesta*, Benjamin Williams, in 1850, after ascribing the work to a royal chaplain, suggested as the author Jean de Bordin (*recte* Bordiu). This supposition was based on the slender foundation of a few hypothetical "Gallicisms", which seemed to Williams to indicate "a native of France", and upon the fact that Bordiu was known to have accompanied Henry V on the 1415 expedition to Normandy.² At first sight there is seemingly more evidence which might be adduced in Bordiu's favour. For example, the fact that he was chancellor of Aquitaine from 1408,³ for the author of the *Gesta* makes special reference to, and clearly was himself acquainted with, the transcripts of the treaty of 1412 in which the Armagnac princes had recognized Henry IV's claim to the duchy.⁴ Bordiu had, incidentally, also had diplomatic experience, having been a

¹ The work was first printed as a whole in 1848 by J. A. Giles from a transcript of the Sloane MS. (the poorer of the two known MSS.). Williams used both MSS., although he can hardly be said to have collated them.

² Williams, p. vii.

³ For the most recent sketch of his career see A. B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500*, i (1957), 222.

⁴ Williams, p. 10.

royal envoy (to Castile) in 1410 and 1414-15.¹ The fact, too, that he had been the lieutenant of Thomas Beaufort, earl of Dorset, himself the king's lieutenant of Aquitaine (1413-14),² might seem of interest both in the same connection and in view of the many favourable references to Dorset made by the author of the *Gesta*. Moreover, he had been attendant on the king at the siege of Harfleur,³ on 3 January 1416 was presented as rector of the church of St. Martin there⁴ and on 12 January following was appointed Archbishop Chichele's commissary in the town and neighbourhood.⁵ Readers of the *Gesta* will, of course, be struck by the amount of space devoted to describing the town,⁶ a description which is not only interesting and valuable for its detail but topographically accurate. The theory in favour of Bordiu is, however, vitiated by several factors: the two references in the text, not taken into account by Williams, indicating that the author was an Englishman;⁷ the fact that on 5 October 1416 Bordiu was in Harfleur⁸ while, as we know from the *Gesta*, its author was attending the diplomatic conference at Calais between 4 September and 16 October; and that Bordiu is also known to have been in Bordeaux so shortly before the Lollard rising of 9 January 1414 (which our author undoubtedly witnessed) as 20 December 1413.⁹ In any case, there is no evidence that he was ever a royal chaplain.

Williams's conjecture, however, was not disputed until 1874 when Max Lenz, in a valuable examination of the English and French sources for these years in his *König Sigismund und*

¹ Emden, loc. cit.

² Ibid.

³ *Archives Municipales de Bordeaux*, iv (*Registre de la Jurade, 1414-1416, 1420-1422*), 257-8.

⁴ *Reports of the Deputy Keeper of the Records*, xlv. 576.

⁵ *The Register of Henry Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1414-1443*, ed. E. F. Jacob, iv (1947), 432.

⁶ Williams, pp. 16-19. ⁷ See above, p. 429, n. 2.

⁸ See Somerset House, Reg. Marche, 36, for his will as rector of St. Martin's, Harfleur, "datum et scriptum in villa de Hare[f]lyeu . . . sigillatum sigillo meo proprio armorum", Tuesday, 5 October 1416.

⁹ At Bordeaux on that date he himself wrote a receipt for wages due to him as "unus de iudicibus curie superioritatis Aquitannie" for the whole year from Michaelmas 1413 to Michaelmas 1414, sealing it with his seal of arms (P.R.O., Exch. Accts., Various E 101/186/2 (90)). On 10 March 1414, also at Bordeaux, he wrote in his own hand and again himself sealed an acquittance for payment of wages made to him in the same capacity "pro termino Natalis Domini proximo preterito usque ad festum Pasce" (ibid. (93)).

Heinrich der Fünfte von England,¹ rejected Bordiu in favour of Thomas Elmham. Elmham he knew as prior of the Cluniac house of Lenton in Nottinghamshire and author of a verse history of the first lustre of Henry's reign written in 1418 and edited by C. A. Cole in 1858 under the title of *Liber Metricus de Henrico Quinto*.² Lenz's argument for Elmham's authorship was based essentially on a statement by the latter in the preface to his *Liber Metricus* that that work was an abbreviation in verse of another book of his written in prose, on the close verbal agreement between the *Liber Metricus* and the *Gesta*, and on the fact that one manuscript of the former bears the title "Epitome Chronicae Thomae Elmhami de regno Henrici Quinti" and another ("Julius E. IV [sic],³ which Cole used as his main text") has the gloss "Extractum breve de Cronica Thomae Elmham prioris de Lenton de tempore regis Henrici quinti".⁴ Since Lenz, the debate on the authorship of the *Gesta* has almost exclusively turned on the question whether or not Elmham should be given the credit for it. Briefly adverting to this problem, C. L. Kingsford at first (1901) had difficulty in accepting Lenz's theory, partly because, he felt, no "safe conclusion" could be drawn from similarities between the *Gesta* and the *Liber Metricus*,

¹ pp. 12-14.

² *Memorials of Henry the Fifth, King of England* (R.S. 11), pp. 80-166.

³ This is incorrect. See below, p. 442; Cole, p. 166, n. 1.

⁴ This claim for Elmham was made possible by the fact that Lenz (pp. 14-15) had indicated that the other book in prose could not have been the *Vita et Gesta Henrici Quinti*, incorrectly attributed to Elmham in 1727 by its editor Thomas Hearne. (This point was later elaborated by Kingsford in *E.H.R.* xxv. 63 ff. and *English Historical Literature*, pp. 56-59). The *Vita et Gesta* (called by Kingsford "the Pseudo-Elmham") was, in fact, written long after the *Liber Metricus* (viz. in 1446) and, moreover, was dependent on the prose *Vita Henrici Quinti* composed by Tito Livio da Forli in 1437-38 (ibid.). Hearne's error, which had stood in the way of any consideration of Elmham as the author of the *Gesta*, had been accepted by Williams (pp. v-vi) and Cole (pp. xli-xlii). Cole, indeed, had regarded the *Vita et Gesta* as the other prose book and considered the *Liber Metricus* to have been written by Elmham as a supplement to it. The agreements between the *Liber Metricus* and the *Gesta* Cole explained on the grounds that Elmham may have been lent a copy of the *Gesta* and even given verbal information by its author. It should, of course, be stated that the exposure of Hearne's error was of negative value. It simply made it not impossible that Elmham could be considered as the author of the *Gesta*.

and partly because he knew of no evidence of Elmham being "in Henry's own service".¹ The following year, however, J. H. Wylie² set his doubts on the second point at rest by drawing attention to two letters,³ one written by Elmham in the palace of Westminster, in which he stated that he was "in negociis penes dominum nostrum regem expediendis in presenti multipliciter prepeditus", the other written as from Henry V to Cluny referring to Elmham as "capellanus noster". Wylie's conclusion from these letters was that the royal chaplain who wrote the *Gesta* was undoubtedly Elmham, and this conclusion was accepted by Kingsford. The latter's acceptance, first voiced in 1907,⁴ was re-affirmed in a major article published in 1910 entitled "The Early Biographies of Henry V"⁵ and in 1913 in his *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century*, in which he stated that Lenz's theory was "the true solution".⁶ Wylie set out the argument for Elmham in its final and most emphatic form in the second volume of his *The Reign of Henry V*, posthumously published in 1919.⁷

It was not until 1937 that this argument was briefly challenged, by V. H. Galbraith.⁸ He observed that "it is . . . difficult to believe that the compiler of the almost childish verses of the *Liber Metricus* was the same as the admirable eye-witness of events who wrote the *Gesta*" and noted "(1) that there seems to be no proof that Elmham accompanied Henry V to France; (2) that the matter peculiar to the *Liber Metricus* is mere war-time legend (e.g. the tennis-ball story and St. George at Agincourt) or stock information like the death of Archbishop Arundel and the promotion of bishops; (3) that the last year of the *Liber Metricus* (. . . when the *Gesta* fails him) is largely taken up with domestic

¹ *Henry V. The Typical Medieval Hero*, p. v.

² *Atheneum* (1902), no. 3904, p. 254.

³ Published by G. F. Duckett in his *Charters and Records Among the Archives of the Ancient Abbey of Cluni*, ii (1888), 21, 16.

⁴ In a review of Oman's *The History of England, 1377-1485*, ap. *E.H.R.*, xxii, 579.

⁵ *Ibid.* xxv. 58-92, particularly p. 60.

⁶ pp. 45-47.

⁷ pp. 80-82. Wylie died in February 1914 but had corrected the proofs of this volume up to p. 96.

⁸ In the introduction to his edition of *The St. Albans Chronicle, 1406-1420* (Oxford, 1937), p. xxiii, n. 2.

affairs and altogether on a lower level". This suggested to Professor Galbraith that the prose chronicle referred to in the *Liber Metricus* was not the *Gesta* but "a mere humdrum, if contemporary, compilation". Taking his cue from Galbraith, Dom David Knowles,¹ briefly referring to the question in 1955, considered "the tone and style" of the *Gesta* "foreign to Elmham's capacity", concluding that the latter's identification as the Chaplain was "doubtful in the extreme". More recently still (in 1961), E. F. Jacob² has taken the same general line: he sees no reason why, "medieval literary propriety being what it was . . ., the *Liber Metricus* should not have been written from the *Gesta* by a totally different person"; he also considers it incongruous that the vicar-general of Cluny in England and Scotland should have been present at Agincourt and, accordingly, found the Elmham theory "not . . . very convincing". And so the question has rested.

The position still seems to us unsatisfactory. The three advocates of the Elmham theory might, we feel, have reached different conclusions had they made a sufficiently detailed comparison between the texts of the *Liber Metricus* and the *Gesta*. But they were merely concerned with general agreements, not with particular differences. On the other hand, the three critics of the theory only deal with the matter incidentally and in passing, and the two latest, concerned with probabilities only, give personal impressions which they do not substantiate. As regards the arguments of Galbraith, a detailed comparison between the two works leads us to disagree with his low estimate of the value of the *Liber Metricus* as a historical source for the years (1413-16) for which Elmham relied upon the *Gesta*, and especially for the years (1417-18) about which he wrote independently. The *Liber Metricus* is of more importance as a source for the period than has been generally acknowledged, apart from what it has in common with the *Gesta*.³ Moreover, as regards Gal-

¹ *The Religious Orders in England*, ii (Cambridge, 1955), 160, n. 2, 270 and n. 1.

² *The Oxford History of England. The Fifteenth Century, 1399-1485* (Oxford, 1961), p. 122.

³ As regards the material common to both the *Liber Metricus* and the *Gesta* it is interesting to speculate upon what value would have been placed on the former had the latter not existed. Would the matter which Elmham borrowed

braith's second point, it should be noted that the *Liber Metricus* exists in two versions,¹ of which the shorter (and probably earlier) omits most of the "war-time legend". Nor do we feel that anything is to be gained by contrasting the deliberately artificial verses of the one—they are stated to be that by the author himself²—with the lucid prose of the other. The two works cannot be profitably compared from any point of view save that of details of fact. For all the above reasons, it has seemed necessary to us thoroughly to re-examine the textual relationship between the two works, with reference to both substance and language; for it is upon this that will depend the acceptance or rejection of the *Gesta* as that "other book" of Elmham in which, he says in his preface to the *Liber Metricus*,³ he had set out at greater length in prose what he now intended to abridge in verse. And, although it must take second place in importance to the textual comparison, it will also be necessary to examine afresh Elmham's career, and especially his connection with the king; for the evidence concerning Elmham's career convinced Galbraith and Jacob that he did not write the *Gesta*, whereas Wylie's interpretation of the same evidence persuaded both himself and Kingsford that he did.

It will be clear from the above that Elmham has been the only writer ever seriously considered as the author of the *Gesta*. He

from the *Gesta* and versified—acknowledged by all scholars to be of major importance in its prose form—have been disparaged had it been known only through his verse? The fact that the *Liber Metricus* has survived in as many as nine manuscripts (see below, p. 441, n. 3) suggests that, as far as Elmham's contemporaries were concerned, it was by no means disparaged, rather had it quite a vogue amongst them. Thus it was used by Capgrave, Otterbourne, and Strecche (and possibly the Pseudo-Elmham), and was later included by Thomas Beckington (royal secretary, 1437-43, keeper of the Privy Seal, 1443-4, and bishop of Bath and Wells 1443-65) in the collections he assembled to fortify the English claim to the French crown (B.M., Cotton MS. Tiberius B.XII, of which the copy of the *Liber Metricus* in Julius E.IV (fols. 89-112) is actually part, as is shown by the hand, the style of ornamentation, the numbering of certain quires, the method of foliation, and by comparison with B.M., Harleian MS. 4763, a duplicate of Tiberius B.XII which also contains a copy of the *Liber Metricus*. The original foliation of the *Liber Metricus* in Julius E. IV, now erased, was probably "fo. 239" to "fo. 262").¹ See below, p. 441 sq. ² Cole, p. 80. ³ Ibid. p. 79.

is known to have been a student of English history,¹ and his *Liber Metricus*² was only the last of a number of historical works which he wrote. The first was the *Speculum Augustinianum*.³ This was an ambitious history of his own abbey, St. Augustine's, Canterbury, which, under *tituli* each representing a single abbacy, was to have extended from 597 to his own day. It was, however, discontinued in 1414, the year in which he left St. Augustine's to be prior of Lenton. Apart from a few entries for 1087 and a collection of more than a hundred charters and bulls from the Conquest to c. 1191, it then extended to 806. Although the nature of the materials available to him when preparing this work may have left him little alternative but to produce a compilation, his next work, the *Cronica Regum Nobilium Angliae* (compiled in 1416⁴) was, as Kingsford has described it, "no more than an extensive chronological table with a few annalistic notes";⁵ the surviving text ends imperfectly in 1389. Both these works show Elmham to have been a compiler, painstaking and methodical but uninspired. Both

¹ He had critically studied English chronicles, including Bede (whom he greatly admired), William of Malmesbury, Geoffrey of Monmouth, Henry of Huntingdon and Ranulf Higden, and also the monk-historians of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, Thomas Sprot and William Thorne. He believed that a decline had taken place in the study of history in England and lamented that interest in it should have reached its lowest ebb in his own time (*Historia Monasterii Sancti Augustini Cantuariensis* [so-called, see below, note 3], ed. C. Hardwick (Rolls Ser. 8), 1858, *passim*).

² He reveals his authorship by inserting his name in acrostics in two places (Cole, pp. 93, 166), firstly in the Proemium, where the initial capitals spell "Thomas Elmham", and secondly in the concluding hymn to the Virgin, where they spell "Thomas Elmham, monachus".

³ Formerly known as *Historia Monasterii Sancti Augustini Cantuariensis*, a title given to it by its editor Hardwick (see above, note 1). Its correct title was established by F. Taylor in "A Note on Rolls Series 8" (BULLETIN OF THE JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY, xx (1936), 381). Elmham's authorship is proved by the inclusion of his name in an acrostic formed by the initial letters of the concluding lines of the verses which end *titulus* 1 (spelling "Thomas Elmham, monachus") (Hardwick, p. 93).

⁴ Cotton MS., Claudius E.IV, fols. 1-32 (fifteenth century). Elmham reveals his authorship in the capital letters of the words beginning the sentences of its Prologue (spelling "Thomas Elmham, Prior Lentonie"). Material from the *Speculum* is incorporated in this work. See Taylor, *op. cit.*

⁵ *English Historical Literature*, p. 50.

have the same method of revealing his authorship—by acrostics. All these characteristics are found too in his *Liber Metricus* (written some two years later), not only in the body of the work but also in its prose preface.

This preface¹ sets out Elmham's objects in writing the *Liber Metricus*, his difficulties and problems, and the approach and methods he intended to use and apply. His basic aim, he tells us, was to inform contemporaries and posterity of the "triumphalis constantia" of Henry V. This he justifies on the general ground that, because the good qualities of princes or lords and their peoples are mutually beneficial and also because peoples should love and respect their lords, those of the latter's deeds that are laudable need to be rationally explained to their subjects. Henry, however, has utterly refused to allow this to be done in verse or story, sung or declaimed, lest he be thought over-proud of the victory he really owed to God. He has been reluctant to permit the writer to publish, following his careful interrogation of the nobles who had been involved, even the simple, and indeed already known, truth concerning the events of his reign. For these reasons, says Elmham, confessing himself to be rather afraid and in something of a quandary ("tremulus et perplexus"), he has had recourse to prose as well as verse, although inclining mainly to the latter, and has been less than fully perspicuous, although not to men of discernment and education; by ascribing the king's victories to God and His saints, he hopes to please him. Elmham indicates his intention to proceed by lustres and, within the lustre he is engaged upon, by one regnal year at a time, and explains how his readers may recognize the year of the era and the regnal year by means of the chronograms he has inserted. He also tells them that, in a numbered list of chapter-headings ("rubricae"), he is providing a key facilitating reference to what follows. He states that his readers need not doubt the truth of what is written in his verses, for he either witnessed it himself or learned of it by credible relation, oral and written, of those involved.

As far as the present enquiry is concerned, the importance of this preface to the *Liber Metricus* lies in what its author has to

¹ Cole, pp. 79-82.

say regarding his approach to the problem of composition. His readers, he maintains, will better remember and enjoy what they read if he not only writes in verse but also abbreviates. It is at this point that he refers to his dependence upon another book, in which he has been at pains to relate in prose more than he intends to relate here in verse. What he has written in that "other prose book" he intends here to abbreviate, firstly, by dealing with only a few out of the many matters of substance described there, and, secondly, by giving even these in a shortened form, so that his readers will not become bored and "skip" those things which ought to be remembered.¹

It will be recalled that one of the main points in the argument for Elmham's authorship of the *Gesta*² was its identification with this "other book in prose". This identification, it was argued by Lenz, Wylie and Kingsford, was obvious because of the resemblances between the *Liber Metricus* and the *Gesta*, these resemblances amounting in many passages to the use of identical words and phrases, sometimes in line after line. It must, however, be pointed out, even at this stage, that these resemblances do not of themselves prove the question at issue. For Elmham could merely have used the *Gesta* as a source without having written it; that is, used it as a source for the "other book in prose" of which the *Liber Metricus* is a verse abridgement. In this connection, it is worth noting that when, in the preface to the *Liber Metricus*, he states that he has learned of events he had not himself witnessed from accounts given him by those who had, such testimony is mentioned as having been written as well as oral. The effectiveness of an argument in favour of identifying the *Gesta* as the "other book in prose" depends upon an investigation not merely of the resemblances but also of differences between the *Liber Metricus* and the *Gesta*, and upon an assessment of the importance and significance of those differences. For, although some differences might be so slight or insignificant as to warrant the suggestion that they were such as an author might

¹ "Non tamen omnia quae sunt facta per ordinem in hiis versibus continentur, quae in alio libro prosaice studui explanare. Sed pauca de multis substantialia sub compendio volui annotare; ne forte lectorem contingeret taedio omittere quae sunt necessario memoranda" (ibid. p. 79).

² See above, p. 432.

unconsciously introduce into a new version of a previous work of his own, others could be of such a nature as to favour the theory that the two works were by different authors. It seems remarkable that a detailed comparison between the *Liber Metricus* and the *Gesta*, taking into account both resemblances and, particularly, differences, should not so far have been made by any scholar who has given attention to the problem. Such a comparison is clearly necessary.

Firstly, however, let us consider the resemblances. Of the reliance of the *Liber Metricus* upon the *Gesta*, there can be no question. Kingsford has pointed out¹ that, "Out of one hundred and thirty four chapters of the *Liber Metricus*, ninety eight follow, often with close verbal agreement, the narrative of the *Gesta*. Of the remainder, twenty eight relate to a period subsequent to the conclusion of the *Gesta* in 1416; and out of the portion common to the two works only eight are entirely new".² Kingsford did not, however, mention that the use of words and phrases in the *Liber Metricus* identical with those employed in the *Gesta* varies considerably. The "close verbal agreement" does not by any means always occur with the same frequency or fullness, even allowing for the fact that versification demanded some change. Here are six passages in the *Liber Metricus*—other instances could be given—illustrating the variety of verbal agreement, the words identical with, or derived from, words in the parallel passages in the *Gesta* being italicized :

A Undique munita *muris* et *turribus altis*,
 Fabrica prae portis lignea *fortis* erat ;
 Arboribus grossis constructis atque *ligatis*,
 Interius terra *tigna* per *antra* tegit.
 Librillis, *telis*, *balistis*, undique ballant
 Anglis obstare ; tot sibi dira parant.
 Portus munitur claudentibus undique *muris*,
 Cum *defensivis turribus* ante sitis.³

¹ *English Historical Literature*, p. 46.

² These figures, it should be pointed out, are not strictly correct, as the *Liber Metricus* exists in a shorter and a longer version, a fact which Kingsford apparently did not know. See below, pp. 441-42.

³ Cole, p. 107, lines 267-74. Cf. Williams, pp. 17-18.

- B *Perventum* cum sit ad Pontem Londoniarum,
Cernitur *in turris culmine* stando *gigas*.
Dextra securim fert, clavesque sinistra tenebat :
Effigies dextra cui *muliebris* erat :
Plura perornabant armis hastilia turrim.
Sic urbs haec *Regis justitiae* fit ibi.¹
- C *Fabrica conteritur* hostilis lignea fortis ;
Turres et muros impetus ille premit.
Aedificata quidem villae *lapidum* terit ictus ;
Incola quisque tremit *stigmata* tanta ferens.
Talibus *offensa* plebs *turbunda* luit intus,
Petras missilia in *jacendo* foras,
Abdita quaeque loca, rimas, que foramina scrutans,
Ex quibus est aptans qua valet arte malum.²
- D Rex, ex parte sua, jubet ut *fossae repleantur*
Fasciculis, lignis : fortia castra parans,
Alta coaequata muris villae levat illa.
His movet assaultum, lignea castra cremans.
Adversae partis subit et fugit inferius plebs,
Linquens quae tenuit. Laus datur inde Deo !³
- E Scandunt *congeries* Francorum coetibus Angli ;
Vis cadit anterior, non patet inde fuga.
Occidunt, capiunt sibi, conservant redimendos ;
Sed cito *clamor* erat praelia ferre nova.
Multiplicata recens acies addenda minatur
Lassos conterere ; plebs furit inde magis.
Captivos priscos pro posterioribus Angli
Interimunt Francos : res datur arcta nimis
Bellum posterius, nostras *gustando* sagittas,
Dat campum Regi. Laus datur inde Deo.⁴
- F In Domini luce properans redit altera scapha,
Caracam referens vi rapuisse fugam.
Scaphis hastili fuit altior ipsa carina,
Qua latus ad *latera* constat agone datum.
Coniunctis tabulis fit ibi *conflictio* dura,
Hostibus et strages magna fuisse datur.⁵

¹ Cole, p. 125, ll. 607-12. Cf. Williams, pp. 61-62.

² Cole, p. 110, ll. 313-20. Cf. Williams, p. 23.

³ Cole, p. 111, ll. 333-8. Cf. Williams, p. 28.

⁴ Cole, p. 122, ll. 549-58. Cf. Williams, pp. 55-56.

⁵ Cole, p. 144, ll. 974-9. Cf. Williams, pp. 97-98.

It will be seen that, whereas in A and B there is indeed "close verbal agreement", in C, D, E and F verbal agreement is distinctly sparse. The degree of reliance of the author of the *Liber Metricus* on the *Gesta* should not, in fact, so far as language is concerned, be exaggerated. Nor, as will be seen below,¹ should the correspondence of the two works as regards subject-matter or information. On this point, Kingsford was right to say merely that the *Liber Metricus* "followed" the *Gesta*. He ought to have added that even when the former "followed" the latter, it was often only very generally. Nor can this be explained away on the grounds that we are dealing with an author who claims to be abbreviating, for Elmham frequently departs from this avowed intention.²

Before, however, examining any differences of content between the *Liber Metricus* and the *Gesta*, it should be noted that the former exists in two versions, a shorter and a longer,³ which themselves differ in content. The shorter version omits the verses, included in the longer, dealing with the royal visit to Kenilworth in Lent 1414, the construction of "Plesant Mareys", the sending of the tennis-balls by the dauphin to Henry V,⁴ and the latter's defence of the wounded Gloucester at Agincourt,⁵

¹ pp. 443 sqq.

² See below, pp. 443-51 passim.

³ This has apparently not hitherto been noticed. The shorter version is contained in four of the nine known manuscripts (B.M. Cotton MS. Vespasian D.XIII and Bodley MS. 462 and two other manuscripts, not known to Cole, Glasgow University Library, Hunter MSS. U.5.3 and V.1.16); all four are fifteenth century. The longer occurs in three manuscripts (B.M., Cotton MS. Julius E.IV and two copies of it, Harleian MSS. 4763 and 861). The remaining two of the nine known manuscripts (Royal 13 A.16 and Bodley, Rawlinson B.214) are confused copies. All three manuscripts containing the longer version are, again, fifteenth century. They have a text as full as that in Cole, save that the acrostic he gives at the end (op. cit. p. 166) is not included, although the other acrostic containing Elmham's name is (ibid. p. 93). It was this longer version which later formed part of the documents accumulated by Beckington to confirm the English claim to the French crown (see above, p. 434, n. 3); this was the version, too, used by Capgrave for the account of Henry V in his *De Illustribus Henricis* (composed c. 1444) and by Otterbourne (who composed his chronicle at the beginning of Henry VI's reign). It is doubtful which version is the earlier, as both have the same date of compilation (1418); probably the shorter, which at any rate seems not to have been extracted from the longer. The longer, however, appears to have been better known.

⁴ Cole, pp. 100-1, ll. 145-62.

⁵ Ibid. p. 121, ll. 535-8.

these items of information being nowhere referred to in the *Gesta* either. It differs from the longer version, too, in a number of other, if less important, ways : in readings of entire lines,¹ in the addition of several glosses,² and in the inclusion of a chapter dealing with Wakering's installation as bishop of Norwich.³ It differs also in the arrangement of certain chapters⁴ and in the arrangement of other lines.⁵ Despite these differences, Cole, in his edition of the *Liber Metricus*, conflated the two versions, and later scholars have treated his text as though it were that of a single work. It is, however, essential to differentiate between the two, for the following reasons : (a) it is the shorter version alone which in one of its manuscripts calls itself " Epitome Chronicae Thomae Elmhami " ⁶ and in two others " Extractum breve de Cronica Thomae Elmham " ;⁷ (b) the " chronicle " here mentioned can only be " the other book in prose " which Elmham, in the preface to his *Liber Metricus*, says he is about to abbreviate in verse ; and (c) the theory that Elmham wrote the *Gesta* has rested upon the assumption that the *Gesta* was this " other book ". Clearly, if this assumption is to be tested by a comparison of the *Liber Metricus* with the *Gesta*, that comparison must be of the shorter and not the longer version. It will also be obvious that if the shorter version cannot, as a result of the comparison, be identified with the *Gesta*, still less can the longer.

Proceeding, then, with the comparison between the shorter version and the *Gesta*, we find many differences of varying degrees of importance. These differences, which will be presented below in sections A and B, are broadly of two kinds : firstly (in A), those resulting from the introduction into the shorter version of topics nowhere dealt with in the *Gesta*, and secondly (in B), and more importantly, the changes made by Elmham in passages in which he is following the *Gesta*. Section B itself is dealt with under two heads. In B(i) a distinction is made be-

¹ E.g. Cole, pp. 122, n. 1, 126, n. 1, 164, n. 1.

² Ibid. pp. 107, n. s, 108, n. y, 110, n. e, 116, n. q, 129, n. y, 156, n. p.

³ Ibid. p. xlv, n. 1.

⁴ Cap. XIII, Year 1 becomes cap. II, Year 2 (ibid. p. 100, n. 3).

⁵ Ibid. pp. 137, n. 2, 157, n. 2.

⁶ Bodley MS. 462, fol. 326.

⁷ B.M. Cotton MS. Vespasian D.XIII, fol. 179^v ; Glasgow University Library, Hunter MS. V.1.16, fol. 9.

tween additional information which is verifiable or credible and that which seems improbable or inconsistent, and in B(ii) attention is drawn to misreadings and garblings. B(ii) is of particular importance, for if any of these misreadings and garblings should be of such a kind as to indicate that Elmham was either ignorant or imperfectly aware of what the author of the *Gesta* is known to have experienced personally, this would tell most convincingly of all against the theory of his authorship of this work.

A. Topics in the shorter version of the *Liber Metricus* nowhere dealt with in the *Gesta*.

These relate mainly to the time between the suppression of the Lollard rising (January 1414) and the events immediately preceding the invasion of Normandy (August 1415). The *Gesta's* treatment of this interval is very sparse: it merely refers summarily to Henry's monastic foundations, to diplomatic approaches to Sigismund and other catholic princes, and to negotiations with France. The shorter version does at least something to fill the gap.¹ Firstly, it rounds off the description of the Lollard rebellion with a short chapter² referring to the processions, with litanies, of clergy and laity, following a royal mandate. It then gives a two-line chapter³ on Archbishop Arundel's death (only obliquely alluded to in the *Gesta* in the words "felicis recordationis") and the succession to the primacy of the bishop of St. David's (Chichele). Next, after the mention of the king's monastic foundations, is inserted a chapter⁴ devoted to the Leicester parliament (April-May 1414), Elmham's only interest in this being (despite the fact that it passed an important

¹ The longer version even more so. Here Elmham adds two more chapters, both relating to the first half of 1414 and to matters directly involving the king. The first (Cole, pp. 100-1, chap. xi, Year 1) refers to Henry keeping Lent 1414 at Kenilworth Castle and his construction there, in a previously unhealthy marsh full of briars and thorns and inhabited by foxes, of the pleasure-garden called "Plesant Mareys". The second (ibid. p. 101, chap. xii, Year 1), and more important, tells of the king being sent, by the dauphin (mistakenly called Charles, not Louis), a present of (tennis-) balls with the mocking suggestion that childish games were more in his line than war, and of Henry's promise shortly to return the compliment with such (cannon-) balls as would damage French roof-tops.

² Ibid. p. 100, chap. x (Year 1).

³ Ibid. p. 101, chap. xiii (Year 1).

⁴ Ibid. p. 102, chap. ii (Year 2).

Lollard statute and dissolved some of the alien priories) Henry's readiness to forego taxation and (of greater significance as a historical contribution) the royal marriage negotiations (with, although this point is omitted, envoys from Burgundy). The ensuing chapter¹ relates the death of the bishop of Chester (sc. the bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, John Burghill, in May 1414), the translation of Catterick from St. David's, and the appointment to the latter see of Patrington. There later follows a short chapter² on the sending by the English clergy, with royal assistance, of a delegation to Constance. Incidentally, the Council of Constance is nowhere mentioned in the *Gesta*, save in the reference to Henry's despatching there of copies of the contracts regarding Aquitaine made (in 1412) between Henry IV and the Armagnac nobles.³ The next addition, much later on (towards the end of the third regnal year, 1415-16), is a chapter⁴ mentioning the death of another bishop and the promotions entailed, namely, the death of the bishop of Chichester (Reade) and the translation of the bishop of St. David's (Patrington) to Chichester and of the bishop of Bangor (Nichols) to St. David's, Elmham attaching an interesting comment ("Tardantur Bullae, schismate stante diu").⁵ The final interpolation, and highly idiosyncratic it is, is a chapter⁶ in praise of Sigismund. Elmham was fond of acrostics, and it was no doubt to indulge this that he included such a chapter; the initial letters of the words of the first four lines (out of six) spell "Sigismundus Imperator pius". It is perhaps more significant that in his prose summary to this chapter Elmham seems to claim—with the words "per compilatorem hujus operis"—a special responsibility, as though the chapter were peculiarly his own.

B(i). (a) Additional information which is verifiable or credible.

Apart from a *proemium*⁷ in which Elmham expatiates on the ancient institution of kingship, the *Liber Metricus* begins very differently from the *Gesta*. The latter starts with Henry V's

¹ Cole, p. 103, chap. iii (Year 2).

³ Williams, p. 10.

⁵ Ibid. l. 760.

⁷ Ibid. pp. 93-94, ll. 1-42.

² Ibid. p. 104, chap. vi (Year 2).

⁴ Cole, p. 132, chap. lv (Year 3).

⁶ Ibid. p. 142, chap. xix (Year 4).

coronation (9 April). Events in the shorter version of the *Liber Metricus*, however, begin with a reference to the feast of St. Cuthbert (20 March) as the date of Henry IV's death, and then (Elmham was a Benedictine) is mentioned the feast of St. Benedict as the following day and the first complete day of the new reign.¹ After giving the date of the coronation,² Elmham goes on to speak of Henry as being the fourteenth king in line from the Conqueror and the seventh from Henry III, one of the fifth dynasty since Edmund the Ironside, and of English, French, Norman and Welsh ancestry,³ following all this with a reference to his religious orthodoxy and the very drastic expiation he has exacted from heretics. Only then does he properly begin to draw his material from the *Gesta*.⁴ The only other fact added to the *Gesta* for this year is the contribution Henry made to the fabric of Westminster abbey,⁵ following which is mentioned his concern for the poor.⁶

Regarding the second regnal year (1414-15), the *Liber Metricus* follows the *Gesta* in referring to the pursuit of alliances abroad. Mention of the king's marriage as only to be made after the conclusion of such alliances is, however, new ;⁷ in fact, nowhere in the *Gesta* is reference ever made to even the subject of royal marriage. Like the *Gesta*,⁸ Elmham reports the sending of an embassy to France ; he adds, however, that it was received with ridicule.⁹ In his relation of Henry's resolve to go to war to recover his rights in France, he also departs from the *Gesta*¹⁰ in referring to the king's consultation with his nobles, the recognition of the need for general taxation, and the ready response of the people to the demands of the war.¹¹

Additions in Elmham's treatment of the invasion of France in the third regnal year (1415-16) are in general of greater particularity and also value. Although his account of the siege and surrender of Harfleur contains differences of another kind (see below),¹² two additions are worth noting. There is the small

¹ Ibid. p. 94, ll. 45-46.

² Ibid. p. 95, ll. 49-51.

³ These references to Henry's position in the royal succession seem natural to the author of a work such as the *Cronica Regum*.

⁴ Ibid. p. 95, ll. 67 ff.

⁵ Ibid. p. 102, l. 168.

⁶ Ibid. l. 171.

⁷ Ibid. p. 103, ll. 193-4.

⁸ Williams, p. 8.

⁹ Cole, p. 103, l. 202.

¹⁰ Williams, p. 9.

¹¹ Cole, p. 104, ll. 215-20.

¹² pp. 451-52.

but interesting fact that, following the surrender, the king sent the gentlewomen away from Harfleur on horseback and in waggons, under a safe-conduct.¹ There is also the reference² to the challenge to single combat sent by Henry to the dauphin which (despite Elmham's mistaken view that the latter was in Paris³) is of real significance. The *Gesta* simply states⁴ that Henry's intention here was to avoid unnecessary bloodshed, whereas Elmham adds, correctly, that Henry offered, even should he win, to allow Charles VI to continue to reign, provided that when Charles died the crown should then become his. The *Liber Metricus* closely follows the *Gesta* in its account of the march from Harfleur to the English crossing of the Somme near Nesle. At that point⁵ Elmham adds the names (Jacques de Heilly and Jean de Graville) of French heralds bringing the message that Orleans and Bourbon would do battle before Henry reached Calais; the *Gesta*⁶ mentions the heralds as being three but does not name them. Important discrepancies between the *Liber Metricus* and the *Gesta* occur in their accounts of Agincourt (see below).⁷ The former, however, makes some noteworthy and valid additions to the latter and occasionally even corrects it. Thus, Elmham mentions the fact that on the eve of the battle the English were without bread.⁸ More importantly, he states that in the field the French vanguard outnumbered the English army by three to one;⁹ the *Gesta* (in a rare exaggeration, unless this is a copyist's error) has thirty to one.¹⁰ Elmham also states that the king said that England should not lament his being ransomed as a prisoner, for he would rather die,¹¹ and notes that Henry made the sign of the cross after ordering his standard to be advanced.¹² He has already mentioned that the king was to

¹ Cole, p. 112, ll. 359-60.

² Ibid. p. 113, ll. 371-4.

³ The dauphin is known to have left Paris some three weeks earlier and was probably already at Rouen.

⁴ Williams, pp. 34-35.

⁵ Cole, p. 118, ll. 445-48 (cf. Tit. Liv., p. 14).

⁶ Williams, p. 45.

⁷ pp. 450-51.

⁸ Cole, p. 119, l. 479.

⁹ Ibid. p. 120, l. 492.

¹⁰ Williams, p. 49.

¹¹ Cole, p. 121, l. 515.

¹² Ibid. p. 121, l. 524. It is at this point (ll. 535-8) that the longer version, although out of strict context, refers to the wounding of Gloucester in the groin and the king's protection of him while he lay on the ground. The *Gesta* (Williams, p. 59) gives no details and, in fact, only refers, after completing its account of the engagement and naming the other casualties, French and English, to

wear his crown in the battle,¹ and later, again unlike the *Gesta* (although what he says here is confirmed by Le Fèvre² who was present), refers to it being damaged in the fighting, Henry himself being unharmed.³ Elmham reverses the order⁴ in which the *Gesta*⁵ considers the dead of both sides, but this is of no particular moment. Of greater interest and importance is the fact that, having alluded to the deaths of York and Suffolk, he states⁶ that the rest of the English dead numbered scarcely thirty; the *Gesta*⁷ gives York and Suffolk, two newly dubbed knights, and not above nine or ten others. A few other differences, sometimes equally noteworthy, occur in Elmham's list of the French dead too:⁸ he adds an archbishop (Sens) and another count, mentions 1,500 knights against the *Gesta*'s "more than 1,500",⁹ and refers to 7,000 nobles and esquires against the *Gesta*'s 4-5,000 nobles.¹⁰ A greater discrepancy arises with the captured, for although Elmham agrees with the *Gesta* in giving the names of two dukes and three counts and the marshal of France, the latter states¹¹ that "pauci alii generosi" were captured, whereas the former has "plures in centenis generosi" and, in his note to this, "plures alii generosi".¹² Elmham concludes his account of the battle with the story of how, by some Englishmen, St. George was seen fighting on their side;¹³ this is not mentioned by the *Gesta*. Thereafter there was little room for divergence between the two until the king's return to England. The reference in the *Liber Metricus*¹⁴ to the royal stay at Calais having lasted twenty days (correct) is, however, worth noting as again being new.

Regarding Henry's welcome home, Elmham relies heavily on the *Gesta*,¹⁵ but occasionally he makes additions of his own which suggest that he, too, was an eye-witness. Thus, the presence of the abbot and monks of Bermondsey (a Cluniac house) is mentioned in his narrative of the royal approach to London.¹⁶ Here,

Gloucester having been seriously wounded in the king's "battle" and his later recovery at Calais.

¹ Cole, p. 121, ll. 521-2.

² *Chron.*, i. 250.

³ Cole, p. 122, l. 559.

⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 122-23, chaps. xxxviii-xxxix (Year 3).

⁵ Williams, pp. 57-58.

⁶ Cole, p. 122, ll. 563-4.

⁷ Williams, p. 58.

⁸ Cole, p. 123, ll. 568-9.

⁹ Williams, p. 58.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Cole, p. 123, l. 573, n. k.

¹³ *Ibid.* ll. 575-76.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 124, l. 586.

¹⁵ Williams, pp. 60-68.

¹⁶ Cole, p. 125, ll. 603-4.

too, is a reference to the captured French nobles accompanying the king ;¹ this occurs in the *Gesta* but only later on (when it describes Henry's behaviour during his progress through the city) and without mention of them being dejected.² In his description of the pageant itself, Elmham gives the quotation from the psalm sung at the entrance to Cheapside by the twelve English royal saints,³ which (although a space was left for it) the *Gesta* omits.⁴ Into his account of the great crowd attending the pageant he imports a singularly personal observation,⁵ remarking with disapproval the horned headdresses of the ladies watching from the windows. He also adds that the prelates meeting the king at St. Paul's were eighteen in number, that Henry made an offering, and that his prisoners showed resentment by not uncovering their heads.⁶ His account of what happened at Westminster is likewise fuller than that of the *Gesta*,⁷ the *Liber Metricus* mentioning that the king, on his visit to the abbey, was met by the abbot and choir and went to the Confessor's shrine, and that, on proceeding to the palace, he was attended by three prelates and the dean and choir of the chapel royal.⁸

Regarding Sigismund's visit to Henry, Elmham's additions to the account in the *Gesta*⁹ are few and rather insignificant, but at least they show an awareness of fresh points of interest. He refers not only to Chichele's reception of Sigismund at Canterbury but to the emperor's being lodged in the archbishop's palace,¹⁰ and mentions, again unlike the *Gesta*, that when the king met Sigismund to conduct him through London he placed him on his right hand.¹¹ Other slight variants occur in Elmham's account of the coming of William of Holland shortly afterwards, the duke being described¹² as accompanied by a hundred knights instead of "in circiter octingentis viris" as the *Gesta* has it.¹³ The *Liber Metricus* also states that William returned home "sponte",¹⁴ whereas the *Gesta* simply says that he went home.¹⁵ Elmham's use of the word "sponte" probably confirms what is known

¹ Cole, ll. 605-6.

⁴ Williams, p. 65.

⁷ Williams, p. 68.

¹⁰ Cole, p. 133, l. 773.

¹³ Williams, p. 79.

² Williams, p. 68.

⁵ Cole, p. 128, ll. 678-9.

⁸ Cole, p. 129, ll. 693-7.

¹¹ Ibid. l. 779.

¹⁴ Cole, p. 136, l. 835.

³ Cole, p. 127, l. 639 and n. w.

⁶ Ibid. p. 129, ll. 687-90.

⁹ Williams, pp. 76-104.

¹² Ibid. p. 134, l. 794.

¹⁵ Williams, p. 82.

from other sources, namely that William left abruptly without taking leave of either Henry or Sigismund. In connection with the progress of the diplomatic negotiations with the French which the imperial and ducal visits were intended to assist, Elmham adds¹ that, between the despatch of embassies from Sigismund and Henry and the return of a favourable answer to the emperor, there were sent from France to Henry at Southampton “ nuntia plura nova ” ; the *Gesta* makes no reference to this. Included among events during the Anglo-Burgundian conference at Calais in September-October 1416 is another small piece of information which Elmham adds to what he borrows from the *Gesta*. This relates to the engagement between the earl of Warwick’s flotilla and the great Genoese carrack : the *Liber Metricus*, after mentioning, like the *Gesta*², the deaths of Sir Thomas West and Sir Baldwin Strange, and the fact that few other Englishmen were killed, adds that many were wounded ;³ the *Gesta* says nothing of any wounded.

In the meantime, Elmham, following the *Gesta*,⁴ has noted the spring parliament of 1416,⁵ interrupted by the emperor’s arrival, and alluded, cursorily like the *Gesta*,⁶ to its dissolution. What the *Liber Metricus* mentions, but the *Gesta* does not, is, however, that taxation was needed for continuing the war ;⁷ in the sense that, although no fresh grant was made, advanced payment of a previous grant was authorized, Elmham was historically correct in this reference. Here, in fact, is an interesting and notable difference between the two works. Nowhere in its otherwise informative references to parliaments does the *Gesta* allude to taxation, not even in the factual account of the autumn parliament of 1416 with which its narrative ends.⁸ The *Liber Metricus* twice previously mentions taxation, and does so particularly with regard to that parliament : here Elmham, after first mentioning the “ emptiness ” of the Exchequer, refers to the magnates’ recognition of the need for taxation, the king’s regret that it should be necessary, and the people’s willingness to bear it and also to make loans.⁹

¹ Cole, p. 136, l. 838.

² Williams, p. 99.

³ Cole, p. 145, l. 986.

⁴ Williams, pp. 73, 76-77.

⁵ Cole, p. 135, l. 809.

⁶ Williams, p. 81.

⁷ Cole, p. 135, l. 811.

⁸ Williams, pp. 105-7.

⁹ Cole, p. 147, ll. 1042-8.

B(i). (b) Improbabilities and inconsistencies.

Only a few changes made by Elmham in the *Liber Metricus* fall into this category, but some are of real significance. One is his reference to the English suffering, during the march from Harfleur, not only hunger but thirst.¹ As the army was then closely following the course of the Somme and crossing tributaries of it, this seems highly improbable ; in fact, a very odd remark, did it come from one who was present. There are two important discrepancies regarding Agincourt itself. Firstly, in the reference to the king's initial intention to place York in charge of the transport in the rear, the duke's protest, and his demand to fight at the front.² The *Gesta* only mentions York as being in command of the vanguard (on the right wing of the army).³ No other chronicle alludes to that intention, and it seems at least very unlikely that York would be appointed to command the baggage which in any case, according to Le Fèvre who was there, was only sparsely manned.⁴ Secondly, the *Liber Metricus* departs from the narrative of the *Gesta* in giving a lengthy and improbable royal speech of twelve lines referring to previous English victories ;⁵ although the *Gesta* refers to a speech by the king, that speech had been made the previous day and goes unquoted.⁶ It is worth noting that, whereas Elmham mostly compresses important passages, here he considerably expands, introducing matter substantially dubious. Other minor differences also occur. He states that the English army numbered scarcely 7,000,⁷ although the evidence of the *Gesta* is that it did not exceed 6,000 ;⁸ and, since the latter's figures of both men-at-arms and archers leaving Harfleur (sc. 900 plus 5,000)⁹ are earlier given by Elmham (who also agrees in saying that time would bring an inevitable decrease),¹⁰ he is here shown not only to have been in error but even inconsistent. He follows this

¹ Ibid. p. 115, l. 407. Note that Walsingham states : " Potus aqua fuit cunctis inferioris fortune viris in exercitu spacio pene decem et octo dierum " (Galbraith, p. 93). Whatever else was scarce, it was evidently not water.

² Cole, p. 120, ll. 503-8.

³ Williams, p. 50.

⁴ op. cit. i. 244.

⁵ Cole, pp. 120-21, ll. 509-20.

⁶ Williams, p. 46.

⁷ Cole, p. 120, l. 495.

⁸ Williams, p. 36.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Cole, p. 114, ll. 384-5 ; cf. Williams, p. 36.

with a curious reference¹ to the king's reaction to the sight of the enemy line of battle being one of feigned amusement ("ficta facetia"), which seems quite out of keeping with Henry's attitude, certainly as represented in the *Gesta*.² We may also note how, in the list of special "memoriae" with which (in recognition of God's help in the battle of the Seine in August 1416) Henry proposed to augment divine service in the chapel royal, the "memoria" of St. Edward³ differs completely from the *Gesta*'s "Ave Sancte Rex Edwarde inter coeli lilia".⁴ Elmham's omission, at the end of that same chapter (chapter xvii, year 4), of all reference to the *Gesta*'s description of Henry's behaviour at his devotions⁵ could be explained by his declared intention either to abbreviate or to abstain from eulogy. More serious is the way in which, when discussing the negotiations with French ambassadors at Calais in September 1416, Elmham⁶ follows the *Gesta*⁷ only in giving the terms of the truce by sea; he omits those by land.

B(ii). Misreadings and garblings

One slip which falls into this category occurs in Elmham's account of the Lollard rising in St. Giles' Field on Tuesday, 9 January 1414, where he says⁸ that the king sought the field in the morning ("mane"), that is, the morning of the next day; the *Gesta*⁹ states that Henry reached the field on the *night* of Tuesday, and that it was the Lollards from up-country who arrived the following morning. Another misunderstanding arises in Elmham's description of Harfleur, which on the whole follows closely, even as to language, that of the *Gesta*:¹⁰ he remarks that the town was surrounded by the Seine ("Sequana cingit eandem").¹¹ This is a topographical error. Harfleur was over a mile distant from the Seine. Indeed, the town was not even surrounded by water, let alone by the Seine. On two sides there was a dry ditch; on a third side the wet ditch was filled not by water from the Seine but by the Lézarde; and only on the

¹ Cole, p. 120, l. 501.

⁴ Williams, p. 91.

⁷ Williams, p. 100.

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 16.

² Williams, pp. 47-50.

⁵ Ibid. p. 92.

⁸ Cole, p. 98, l. 116.

¹¹ Cole, p. 107, l. 257.

³ Cole, p. 141, l. 920.

⁶ Cole, p. 142, ll. 196-7.

⁹ Williams, p. 5.

fourth side, and when the tide was in, did the Seine reach and fill the harbour. Incidentally, later in his account¹ Elmham himself correctly says that the ditches on the valley-side were filled by the Lézarde, thus contradicting his earlier statement. Would anyone who had been present at the siege and become personally familiar with the town and its defences have made such a slip and shown such confusion? Further discrepancies regarding Harfleur relate to the circumstances in which the siege was ended. The storming of the town, Elmham states, was to have taken place on the night following the rejection of the king's terms;² according to the *Gesta*, it was only the preparation for an assault which was ordered by the king for that night, the intention being that the assault itself should take place "erga crastinum mane".³ Both the *Liber Metricus* and the *Gesta* state that one of the conditions for the surrender of the town was that Charles VI and the dauphin should be given an opportunity to rescue it; but whereas the latter informs us that this condition was requested by the townspeople (as would have been normal),⁴ the former reports it as having been voluntarily offered by the king.⁵ Elmham is also in error when referring to the detachment with which, according to the *Gesta*, Cornwall and Umfraville established the bridgehead across the Somme shortly before Agincourt: he describes the force as "procerum turma",⁶ whereas the *Gesta* says that it consisted simply of men-at-arms and archers.⁷ Another instance of Elmham's confusion occurs in his description of the diplomatic exchanges between England and France in 1416: in referring to Charles VI's letters to Sigismund, he states that these contained a concession of Henry's rights so that peace might obtain between the two countries;⁸ in the *Gesta*, the French reply merely agrees to the previous proposals of the English for a conference between Henry and Charles and, in order to make this possible, to the arrangement of a truce.⁹ Elmham, too, is at fault in his rendering of one incident of the *Gesta*'s story of the Genoese carrack which, from off Calais in

¹ Cole, p. 109, l. 293.

² Ibid. p. 112, l. 344.

³ Williams, p. 29.

⁴ Ibid. p. 30.

⁵ Cole, p. 112, l. 346.

⁶ Ibid. p. 117, l. 432.

⁷ Williams, p. 43.

⁸ Cole, p. 136, ll. 842, 844, 848.

⁹ Williams, p. 83.

September 1416, Warwick chased and brought to battle: the *Gesta* says that when one of the earl's six balingers, having abandoned the pursuit, returned to Calais, she did not know what had become of her consorts;¹ the *Liber Metricus* says that it was the carrack's movements of which she was ignorant.²

One other point is perhaps of greater significance. Regarding Oldcastle's escape from the Tower in October 1413, the *Gesta* simply states³ that, being freed from his fetters, he broke prison and fled ("solutus a vinculis . . . rupit carceres et aufugit"), whereas, according to Elmham,⁴ Oldcastle, himself breaking his chains, escaped by sorcery ("Rumpens vincla fugit demonis artis ope"). Even allowing for the transposition into verse, this kind of explanation is surely not what one would have expected from the author of the *Gesta*; it seems out of character.

It is clear from the long and detailed comparison we have made that Elmham relied greatly on the material in the *Gesta* for his *Liber Metricus*. It is equally clear, however, that that reliance (as also the "close verbal agreement" between the two works) was not absolute, even allowing for the fact that Elmham was both abbreviating and versifying. Some of the differences found are, indeed, such as might occur when an author, re-writing his work in another medium, takes the opportunity to revise and add to it, even though he does not specifically state that he is doing either. But others hardly seem explicable on these grounds. Would the author of the *Gesta*, particularly in a work written so soon afterwards, have added unreliable information when dealing with subjects on which he was so well-informed? Even more important, would he have misunderstood and misinterpreted facts, most of them personally observed, recorded in his own work? One is led to the conclusion that the "prose book" referred to by Elmham in the preface to the *Liber Metricus*—the "c(h)ronica" of which the shorter version claims to be an epitome or brief extract—was not the *Gesta*, but a missing work of Elmham written not long after it and, although often following it closely in both content and wording, showing

¹ Ibid. p. 97.

³ Williams, p. 4.

² Cole, p. 144, l. 969.

⁴ Cole, p. 97, l. 104.

a considerable number of differences from it, differences which found their way into the *Liber Metricus*. This conclusion would seem to be re-inforced by an examination of that part of the *Liber Metricus* which continues beyond the end of the *Gesta* and was composed by Elmham quite independently of the latter.

This continuation deals with events in Henry's fifth regnal year (1417-18), the last year of the first lustre of the reign.¹ In reading it one is struck by a change in both quality and theme. We have suggested above that the preceding portion of the *Liber Metricus* is made up, broadly speaking, of a version of the *Gesta* plus additions and digressions which are inferior to it. It is interesting to note that the continuation of the *Liber Metricus* is reminiscent of those additions and digressions rather than of the *Gesta* itself, a fact which serves to emphasize the difference between the two works. This is not least apparent in the fact that no fewer than eight² of the twenty-seven chapters³ which make up the continuation deal with ecclesiastical (mostly episcopal) deaths and appointments; not merely is this number out of all proportion, but the subject itself is irrelevant to what had been the *Gesta's* purpose. In fact, the constant emphasis in the *Gesta* on the king's character and policy, and especially on his military undertakings in support of his divinely recognized right to the French crown, which form the major theme of the *Gesta*, virtually disappears. Elmham devotes only 72 lines of his continuation⁴ (out of a total of 295) to the subject of the French war, the nature of Henry's claim and his second military campaign in pursuance of it. Even of these, 28 set out the claims to Normandy, Aquitaine, and the French crown,⁵ 6 relate to Huntingdon's naval victory preparatory to the invasion,⁶ 4 to the king's employment of English clergy and lawyers in Normandy,⁷ and 6 to the summoning of his chapel to join him there for Easter 1418.⁸ This leaves only 28 lines dealing with the expedition of the king himself to Lower Normandy.⁹ Of the numerous towns

¹ Cole, pp. 147 (chap. xxxiii of Year 4) ff.

² Namely, chaps. xxxv and xxxvi of Year 4 and xiii and xvi-xx of Year 5.

³ Omitting from this count the final chapter (xxiv of Year 5), which is devoted to a hymn to the Virgin.

⁵ ll. 1156-83.

⁸ ll. 1340-5.

⁴ ll. 1080-97, 1148-83, 1314-19 and 1334-45.

⁶ ll. 1084-9.

⁷ ll. 1316-19.

⁹ ll. 1080-3, 1090-7, 1148-55, 1314-15, 1334-9.

and castles he captured there in 1417-18, only three (Touques, Caen and Falaise) are referred to by name,¹ and even these are mentioned only in general terms, the important siege of Caen being dismissed in 2 lines² and the equally important siege of Falaise in no more than 4.³ The bulk (over two-thirds) of the narrative for this year deals with Oldcastle, the Lollards, and their allies the Scots (seven chapters⁴ numbering 184 lines), and there is one chapter relating to the beginning of the parliament of November 1417 (12 lines),⁵ one to the election of Martin V (4 lines),⁶ and one (4 lines) to the completion of the first lustre of the reign.⁷ In fact, from the point at which it leaves the *Gesta*, the *Liber Metricus* becomes more simply a chronicle of events set out in order of occurrence, regardless of whether those events related to England or to France. This continuation is, moreover, mainly valuable for what Elmham has to say about happenings in England, these being mostly of ecclesiastical interest at that. It hardly illustrates even his own theme of the "triumphalis constantia" of the king professed in the preface to the work,⁸ for he has now shifted the emphasis from the king. In doing so he also parts company with the major theme of the *Gesta*.

It is our contention that when the case for Elmham's authorship of the *Gesta* based upon "textual similarities" between his *Liber Metricus* and that work is examined in detail, it is found wanting.

Such other evidence in Elmham's favour which has been adduced relates, as indicated at the beginning of this article,⁹ to his career. Although subordinate to the argument based on textual comparison, it requires examination if only because Wylie and Kingsford considered that, in conjunction with those textual similarities, it actually proved his authorship of the *Gesta*.

Wylie used the evidence relating to Elmham's career in order to prove to Kingsford and others that Elmham was both a royal

¹ ll. 1097, 1153, 1334 and 1336. Walsingham (Galbraith, pp. 109-18 passim) mentions well over a dozen. ² ll. 1152-3. ³ ll. 1334-7.

⁴ chaps. xxxiii-xxxiv of Year 4 and ii-v and xiv of Year 5.

⁵ chap. xi of Year 5.

⁶ chap. xii of Year 5.

⁷ chap. xxiii of Year 5.

⁸ Cole, p. 79.

⁹ See above, p. 433.

chaplain in the king's service and present during the 1415 campaign, facts which were, of course, necessary to establish his authorship of the *Gesta*. The evidence itself is derived from the two letters published by Duckett referred to above.¹ In the earlier, written as from Henry V to the abbot of Cluny and dated "24 November", but from internal evidence unquestionably to be assigned to 1414,² Elmham is referred to as "capellanus noster".³ In the later, written by Elmham himself from the palace of Westminster and dated "16 February" but most probably to be attributed to 1416,⁴ he says that he is "in negociis penes dominum nostrum regem expediendis in presenti multipliciter prepeditus". Wylie⁵ took this to mean that Elmham was in the king's service and, on the basis of his interpretation of both letters, concluded that "there should therefore henceforward be no doubt at all that the "chaplain" who sailed with the king from Southampton and returned with him to Dover and London, was no other than Thomas Elmham, the Cluniac prior of Lenton, near Nottingham". With this Kingsford agreed, affirming that, "since Mr. Wylie has proved that Elmham was present in the campaign of 1415 I feel satisfied that Dr. Lenz was right in regarding the

¹ p. 433.

² That the year is 1414 is clear from two facts: (a) it refers to Elmham as prior of Lenton, which he had become by 11 June 1414 (*C.P.R. 1413-1416*, p. 199); (b) John Kilquit is mentioned as its bearer, and he, in the covering letter with which he forwarded it to Cluny in April following, recommends Elmham for appointment as vicar-general, a post to which the latter had in fact been appointed by 12 June 1415 (*ibid.* pp. 332-3). Duckett (ii. 15) dated the letter vaguely "1414-1418". It is correctly dated 1414, but without explanation, in Rose Graham, *English Ecclesiastical Studies* (1929), p. 69.

³ Duckett, ii. 16.

⁴ The letter (Duckett, ii. 21-22) mentions William Porter's possession of the English manors of the abbey of Cluny (granted him by the king temporarily in June 1413, in perpetuity in September 1415). As Porter is referred to by Elmham as "strenuus miles", the letter must post-date mid-August 1415, when he was knighted (Wylie, *Henry V*, i. 345). It seems most unlikely that, having been appointed vicar-general by June 1415 (see above, n. 2), Elmham should have had no answer to his reports to Cluny regarding both Porter's manors and his own work of visitation for nearly two years (i.e. until as late as February 1417). The probable date for the letter, therefore, is February 1416. Graham (p. 71) also dates it 1416, although again without explanation. Duckett (ii. 21) did not prefix a date to the letter, but later (ii. 198), owing to erroneous ideas as to when Elmham first became vicar-general and when he resigned from Lenton, he placed it after 1417 or 1418.

⁵ *Athenaeum* (1902), no. 3904, p. 254.

Gesta Henrici Quinti as the genuine prose life which Elmham says he had written before the *Liber Metricus*".¹ Both Wylie and Kingsford thenceforward held the case for Elmham proved.

Before discussing the evidence actually provided by these two letters, one point should be made clear. Whatever else Wylie may have done, he certainly had not proved that Elmham "was present in the campaign of 1415". His argument, in effect, was really as follows: because Elmham's *Liber Metricus* was derived from the *Gesta* and because the author of the *Gesta* was a royal chaplain in the king's service who accompanied Henry to France, once it could be shown that Elmham, too, was a royal chaplain in the king's service, then he must have accompanied the king to France and have been the author of the *Gesta*. But clearly Wylie was arguing in circles and doing so upon a basis of mere conjecture; indeed, upon a basis of two conjectures, each dependent upon the other, namely, that Elmham went to France in 1415, which was dependent upon his having written the *Gesta*, and that he was the author of the *Gesta*, which was dependent upon his having been in France. In fact, the letters used by Wylie contain no references whatsoever to Elmham having served abroad; one even refers (as will be seen below) to activity on his part likely to have precluded such service. Nor, may we add, is there any other evidence (e.g. in royal letters of protection or of attorney) that Elmham ever even intended accompanying the 1415 expedition, and there is certainly none that he did so. But what of Wylie's two pieces of evidence taken from the letters printed in Duckett?

Henry V's letter to the abbot of Cluny of 24 November 1414 was one in which the king vigorously demanded that Lenton, of which he was patron and Elmham prior, should in future have the privilege of choosing its own prior and admitting its own monks. The most important feature of the letter from our point of view, however, is the reference (noted above) to Elmham as "capellanus noster". It is open to question whether this designation, applied here to the head of a monastery under royal patronage,

¹ *E.H.R.* xxii. 579. Three years later Kingsford (*ibid.* xxv. 60) considers Wylie to have shown not merely that Elmham was a royal chaplain in the king's service but that he was actually "engaged on the king's business at Westminster".

was other than honorary. That "royal chaplain" could in fact be used in an honorary sense is clear from a petition to the king from Archbishop Chichele in which he calls himself "votre humble Chapellein".¹ Moreover, Elmham, as a regular and, more particularly, as prior of an important monastery, could hardly have belonged to the chapel royal, all the known chaplains of which in this period were secular priests.² Admittedly, near the end of the *Liber Metricus* (where Elmham was writing independently of the *Gesta*), he shows sufficient interest in the "capella" to mention its being ordered to join the king in Normandy for Easter 1418.³ But there is no evidence that he himself obeyed such a summons, then or at any other time.

More importantly, it should also be noted that in this same letter Henry urged upon the abbot of Cluny the appointment of a new and capable vicar-general for the English province, an enlargement of whose powers (to cover all spiritual and temporal matters save those of unusual difficulty) a recent assembly of Cluniac priors in London had warmly advocated.⁴ These proposals had included a recommendation that Elmham be confirmed as prior of Lenton,⁵ and the latter himself had hoped to go to the Council of Constance to submit them to the abbot in person. To his great displeasure, Henry had forbidden this.⁶ All the same, in making his request for a new vicar-general (instead of John Burghersh, prior of Lewes), the king may be assumed to have had Elmham in mind. For when the bearer of the royal letter, John Kilquit, preceptor of the English Hospitalers, having discovered that the abbot was not present at Constance, forwarded it to Cluny from Châtillon-sur-Seine on 21 April 1415, his accompanying letter of explanation⁷ to the abbot not only drew the latter's attention to the constant wish of the existing vicar-general to be relieved of his duties but also pro-

¹ Rymer, *Foedera*, ix. 131.

² For a list of royal chaplains see Wylie, *Henry V*, ii. 30, n. 5, where the names of twenty-one are given.

³ Cole, p. 163, chap. xxii (Year 5).

⁴ Duckett, ii. 22-24, where the proposals of the assembly are dated "circa 1415" (p. 22). The correct date is 1414 (see Graham, p. 68).

⁵ Duckett, ii. 24.

⁶ *Ibid.* ii. 17, 19.

⁷ *Ibid.* ii. 17-20. Duckett does not give a year. Graham (p. 70) correctly assigns it to 1415.

posed that Elmham should replace him. Elmham, Kilquit went on to say, was noted for his honesty, prudence and circumspection in matters spiritual and temporal, was expert in the affairs of the English Cluniacs, and for what he had said and done was well-known to enjoy the king's commendation ("et cujus dicto et facto applaudet notorie regius favor").¹ What followed, as evidently the king had intended, was the conferment of wider powers on the English vicar-general and the abbot of Cluny's acceptance of Elmham's nomination to the office. By 12 June 1415 Elmham had been appointed vicar-general (and chamberlain) of the province of England and Scotland for two years, with full power to hear and determine all causes, civil, spiritual and criminal, and to visit all houses of the Order whether directly or indirectly subject to Cluny (Bermondsey being mentioned specifically).² The twelfth of June was the date of the English royal letters patent giving Elmham and his retinue of monks and servants, their horses and gear, protection when travelling about on the work of visitation. That is, the safe-conduct was issued only four days before Henry left London for the port of embarkation for France. Is it likely that Elmham, so recently entrusted with this new and important office, would have laid aside its administration so soon in order to accompany the royal expedition early in August?

The second of Wylie's two pieces of evidence, Elmham's own letter of 16 February 1416, would appear to answer that question. It is this letter, written from the palace of Westminster, in which Elmham informs the abbot of Cluny that he is "in negociis penes dominum nostrum regem expediendis in presenti multipliciter prepeditus".³ Although Wylie correctly rendered this as meaning that Elmham felt himself to be "much hampered in despatching business with the king",⁴ he then took the words

¹ Ibid. ii. 20.

² *C.P.R.*, 1413-1416, pp. 332-3.

³ Duckett, ii. 21.

⁴ Wylie, *Henry V*, ii. 86. Rose Graham also asserted that Elmham, as a royal chaplain, was so "immersed in state affairs" in November 1414 that Henry V then refused to "spare" him for a visit to Constance (p. 69) and refers to him as being in February 1416 "entangled in the king's business" (p. 71). As pointed out above, there is no evidence whatsoever for this. She, too, had evidently mistranslated from Duckett, and in even more exaggerated terms. She had clearly been influenced by Wylie and Kingsford, and her statement that

from their context and went on to assert that the business referred to was royal business and that consequently Elmham must have been in the royal service. This interpretation ignores the passage in the letter immediately preceding in which Elmham himself states why he is being hampered; it is because the abbot of Cluny has failed to answer his previous letters, although he had written frequently ("sepius").¹ In other words, the inference is not that Elmham was engaged in royal business in Wylie's sense; he is simply informing his superior that the latter's failure to reply to his earlier communications is preventing him from promoting *Cluniac* business with the king. The business indeed involved consultation with the king, but it was concerned with the Cluniac Order and, as the letter indicates, more particularly with the abbot's troubles over Cluny's own lands in England. There is, in fact, nothing in the letter to suggest contact by Elmham with the king in any but Cluniac affairs. Although evidently no stranger to the court and although also well thought of by the king, to whom he doubtless owed much for promoting his rise to eminence in the English province of the Cluniac Order, Elmham was never, so far as available records show, employed by the Crown in the discharge of any ordinary administrative function, indeed of any administrative function at all.

But Elmham's letter of February 1416 does more than fail to support the idea of his involvement in the king's service and royal affairs. It affords evidence which would seem to preclude his participation in the 1415 expedition. For this report to Cluny contains a reminder that his previous letters to the abbot, to which he had received no reply, had also dealt with his work of visitation, and the whole tenor of the report is that, as vicar-

Elmham "sailed with the fleet from Southampton in August and was present at the siege of Harfleur and at the battle of Agincourt" is, on her own showing, based on them (see p. 67, n. 4, where she cites them as her source). It was as a result of accepting their views that she was led to write "there is reason to believe that Elmham made his visitation [as vicar-general] in June and July [1415], for on August 11 he left Southampton with the king for France, and did not return until November" (p. 71), for which again there is no evidence. It is odd that, as a historian of the English Cluniacs, she saw no problem arising out of the contradiction between the fact of Elmham's appointment as vicar-general and the supposition of his immediately ensuing absence from England on a military expedition in France.

¹ Duckett, ii. 21.

general, he had done his duty ("fideliter laborasse").¹ Would this have been possible if, out of the eight months available between the grant of the royal safe-conduct (12 June 1415) and the date of writing (16 February 1416), he had occupied more than three in attending upon the king in France—in fact, five if he had accompanied him from and back to London? There seems every reason to believe that Elmham, following his appointment, had embarked upon his duties without delay. How otherwise would there have been time for him to have made a number of reports on his official conduct, between which there had also been intervals when he was awaiting answers from Cluny? His responsibilities required his presence in England. That he had discharged them not perfunctorily, but rather the reverse, suggests that he stayed at home in the summer and autumn of 1415. His alleged absence overseas, in fact, rests only on the supposition that, in order to have written the *Gesta* (the work, be it remembered, of an eye-witness as far as that campaign is concerned), he must have gone to France with the army. That supposition, it is here affirmed, now stands discredited and can no longer be maintained.

As the claimant to the authorship of the *Gesta* must be sought among the chaplains of the chapel of the royal household, and as many such chaplains who accompanied Henry to Normandy in 1415 can be identified, it is hardly surprising that attempts have been made to associate one or another of these with the *Gesta*. Such associations can, of course, always be suggested, however slender the evidence, and it should be emphasized from the outset that, so far, no individual chaplain has been found to have any firm claim whatsoever. Nevertheless, in a discussion of the authorship all names that have been previously advanced must at least be referred to. Foremost among them is Thomas

¹ *Ibid.* ii. 22. All the evidence we possess suggests that Elmham performed his work as vicar-general satisfactorily. Abbot Raymond's death in the late summer of 1416 made no difference to Elmham's appointment as vicar-general in England and Scotland. Indeed, his successor was so well content with his conduct as to re-appoint him, on 26 October 1417, for another two years, and in Ireland as well (*ibid.* ii. 198). Elmham was still in office in March 1419 (King's College, Cambridge, charter 2. W. 271), being only replaced later that year.

Rodbourne of Merton College, Oxford, who was tentatively proposed by Kingsford in 1901. Before being persuaded to accept the Elmham theory, Kingsford had thought that "a better claim might perhaps be made" for Rodbourne on the grounds that he was one of Henry's chaplains and had been "credited with a history of his master's reign".¹ Rodbourne must have been in close touch with the king. Certainly, he was sufficiently well thought of by Henry to have been bequeathed, in the royal will made at Southampton in July 1415, a missal worth £10.² But so were three other chaplains, at least one of whom (Henry Rumworth) also served with the king in France, as Rodbourne is known to have done.³ In fact, Kingsford might have adduced other evidence in support of his conjecture: that Rodbourne had good reason to hold in veneration (as did the author of the *Gesta*) the memory of Archbishop Arundel;⁴ that (also like the author of the *Gesta*) he had a constant and informed interest in Lollardy;⁵ and that connected with his college was Richard Courtenay, bishop of Norwich,⁶ who receives particular mention

¹ *Henry V. The Typical Mediaeval Hero*, p. vi.

² Rymer, ix. 292.

³ Emden, iii (1959), 1583.

⁴ When, in 1411-12, Rodbourne found himself unable to enjoy the fruits of the rectory of East Deeping, Lincs., it was by Arundel's intervention that he was re-admitted to his fellowship at Merton (*ibid.* 1582).

⁵ He is known to have corresponded with Thomas Netter of Walden, prior provincial of the English Carmelites from 1414, later Henry V's confessor and, in his writings, one of the leading champions of orthodoxy against Wycliffe and Hus. Rodbourne, moreover, had been a member of the committee of twelve who, appointed at Oxford in 1411 to examine Wycliffe's works, drew up the list of 267 errors which Arundel, then about to undertake a visitation of the University, insisted should be repudiated on oath by all of its members (*ibid.*).

⁶ Courtenay gave painted glass for a window in Merton College chapel (*ibid.* xx). Incidentally, it was in Courtenay's diocese that Rodbourne, in 1414, had been appointed archdeacon of Sudbury (*ibid.* 1583). Merton, in fact, was well represented at Court, both through well-wishers such as Courtenay and directly. Another Fellow, Nicholas Colnet, who also accompanied the 1415 expedition to Normandy, was one of Henry's physicians and the recipient under his will of another missal worth £10. He and Rodbourne, together with their Warden (Robert Gilbert) and four other Fellows—Richard Eustace, Thomas Walber, William Duffield and John Kemp (later archbishop of York and of Canterbury)—accompanied the army of 1417; Eustace and Walber are known to have been members of the chapel royal (Merton MS. B.1.7, fol. 76^v, for which reference we are indebted to Dr. Roger Highfield, Librarian of Merton; for biographical notes on the Merton Fellows see Emden, *op. cit.*).

in the *Gesta*. But with the variety of information contained in this work to choose from, it is not difficult to find one or more points which would fit a number of Henry's chaplains, and certainly none of those which seem to favour Rodbourne is either peculiar to him or conclusive. As regards Kingsford's remaining reason, he does not give any evidence at all for his statement that Rodbourne was the author of a history of Henry's reign, nor have we been able to find any.¹ There is, in fact, no evidence of any kind which would associate Rodbourne with the *Gesta*.

Seventeen years after Kingsford had suggested Rodbourne, A. T. Bannister, in the introduction to his edition of the Register of Edmund Lacy, bishop of Hereford (1417-20), stated that "a good claim might be made out for Lacy as the author of the anonymous *Gesta Henrici Quinti*".² Not only did Bannister make no reference to previous theories, notably the one supported by Lenz, Wylie and Kingsford, but he furnished no evidence for his own supposition. This surmise, were it to be pursued, could only be based upon facts taken from Lacy's professional career—his position as canon and prebendary of St. George's chapel, Windsor, from 1401 and as dean of the chapel royal from April 1414 (in each case until his promotion as bishop in February

¹ Thomas Rodbourne of Merton was undoubtedly an historical writer, but his only known work, as stated by Wharton (*Anglia Sacra*, i. xxvi), was a *Chronicon de rebus Anglicanis*. Its title suggests that it could not have been restricted to Henry V's reign. Indeed, if it is also (as Wharton infers) the chronicle written by Thomas Rodbourne of Merton to which acknowledgment was later made by a contemporary of the same name, Thomas Rodbourne, monk of Winchester (*ibid.* 287), in his *De Rebus Anglicis Historia* (or *Breviarium Chronicorum*), then it must have dealt with a period prior to 1234, for the latter ends in that year. Moreover, the fact that the latter was described by its author as dealing with kings and other magnates of the realm who had been founders and benefactors of the English Church suggests that the *Chronicon de rebus Anglicanis* of Rodbourne of Merton, which he had used, had been much concerned, too, with church history. Wylie (*Henry V*, ii. 80), agreeing that "there is no evidence at all that [Rodbourne] wrote the *Gesta*", considered that Kingsford's attribution was due to his having confused the two Rodbournes; this was hardly fair to Kingsford who had at least recognized their separate identity and was aware that Rodbourne of Merton had written a history.

² *Registrum Edmundi Lacy, Episcopi Herefordensis*, A.D. MCCCCXVII-MCCCCXX, transcribed by Joseph H. Parry and edited by A. T. Bannister, Canterbury and York Soc., xxii (London, 1918), pp. iii-iv.

1417), his accompaniment of the 1415 expedition, and his continuous attendance upon the king until the eve of the second campaign (July 1417)—together with his known interest in liturgical observances, exemplified by his *Pontifical*¹ (such an interest being an obvious characteristic of the author of the *Gesta*). But to argue from this alone and ignore the fact that there is no evidence at all to associate Lacy, even indirectly, with the *Gesta*, is as futile as in the case of Rodbourne. In fact, on evidence no less inadequate than this a case could be made out for several royal chaplains known to have gone to France. Take, for example, John Stevens. One could produce in his favour his connection with Archbishop Arundel (venerated, as mentioned above, by the author of the *Gesta*), whom, from no later than 1406, he had served as a notary public in the administration of the archdiocese of Canterbury; his presence as such at Oldcastle's trial in September 1413; and especially the fact that, in the same capacity, he was instructed by Archbishop Chichele at Titchfield in July 1415 to transcribe those copies of Henry IV's agreement with the Armagnac nobles concerning Aquitaine which were sent to Constance, to Sigismund, and to other princes to help prove the justice of Henry V's quarrel with France,² a transaction described in some detail in the *Gesta*. In no case, however, can evidence of this kind serve to connect any known chaplain with the *Gesta*. Mere association with events and personalities described there is not evidence of authorship.

The above examination has been designed to show that previously held theories regarding the authorship of the *Gesta*, and notably that favouring Thomas Elmham, cannot be maintained. We must, however, affirm, disappointing though this may be, that no other candidate presents himself. In our view, the work is that of a chaplain of Henry V who, on present evidence, has not been identified.³

¹ Emden, ii (1958), 1082.

² Ibid. iii. 1774; Williams, p. 10.

³ The second part of this article will appear in the next number of the BULLETIN.