

OXFORD MEDIEVAL TEXTS

General Editors

J. W. BINNS D. d'AVRAY M. S. KEMPSHALL R. C. LOVE

Nigel of
Longchamp
*Speculum
Stultorum*

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY

JILL MANN



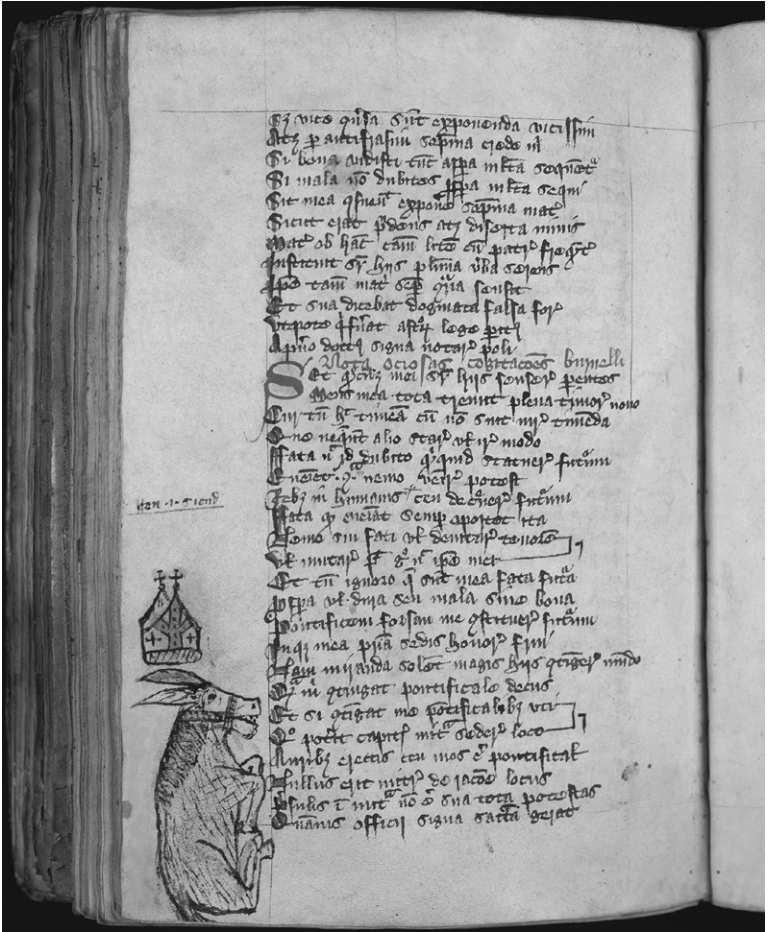
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Burnellus imagines becoming a bishop. BL, Additional MS 38665, fo. 114v.
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To Michael

PREFACE

The *Speculum Stultorum* has occupied my attention for most of my scholarly life. I first read it in connection with my doctoral research on estates satire, and a comparison with Chaucer's *Nun's Priest's Tale* was the subject of one of my earliest articles. The interest in medieval beast literature which was kindled at that point persisted through the long years of research on the earlier Latin beast epic *Ysengrimus*, and culminated in my book on medieval British beast literature, *From Aesop to Reynard*, which was published in 2009, and in which a chapter was devoted to the *Speculum*. During this whole period I had been using the little spare time that was available to work on a translation of the *Speculum*; a draft was completed in 2002 and typed up by my Notre Dame graduate research assistant Ben Fischer. Meanwhile, at some point in the early 1990s (as far as I can remember), the late (and much lamented) Giovanni Orlandi asked if I could suggest a medieval Latin text whose textual transmission would make a suitable subject for investigation in a *laurea* dissertation by one of his pupils. I proposed the *Speculum*, and in due course I received in 1996 a copy of the dissertation ('La tradizione manoscritta della *Speculum Stultorum* di Nigello Wireker', Università degli Studi di Milano, 1994–1995), which was kindly sent to me by its author, Benedetta Marietti (Andreani). Administrative commitments, and other research projects, prevented me from giving attention to this work for a good many years, and it was only after 2009 that I was free to familiarize myself with its contents. Dr Marietti's dissertation does not undertake a new edition, but it consists of a collation of seventeen of the manuscripts listed in Mozley and Raymo's edition of 1960, and provides an analysis of their textual relations and a provisional version of a stemma which differs significantly from that in the 1960 edition by J. H. Mozley and R. Raymo.

My original plan for a translation did not envisage the need to undertake a new edition, but Dr Marietti's dissertation, and the review by Karl Langosch to which it drew my attention, made clear that the Mozley–Raymo edition needed fundamental reassessment and reworking, as Langosch put it, from the beginning. I therefore set about acquiring photographs of the manuscripts, discovering in the process eight manuscripts, and five fragments, that were unknown to Mozley and Raymo. I am most grateful to Professor Anna Maria Fagnoni of the Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia in Milan for sending me

most of the materials used by Dr Marietti, and to Benedetta Marietti herself for generously giving me *carte blanche* to use them and her dissertation in beginning the work afresh. Although my findings sometimes differ from hers, anyone who has confronted a case of complex textual transmission will know how helpful it is to have a second pair of eyes going over the same material and providing independent reactions to serve as stepping-stones to revised judgements.

In approaching this task, I had at first taken comfort from the thought that at least it would not need the extensive historical research that had been necessary for the *Ysengrimus*. To my surprise (and consternation), however, I found that this was not the case: the closer one looked at the text of the *Speculum*, the more important its Canterbury context became, and the more precisely focused was the implicit meaning on which Nigel insists at the beginning and the end of the poem. My historical investigations into the poem's context in time and place took the initial form of a paper delivered at the Fifth International Medieval Latin Congress at Toronto in 2006, which set out the details of this context and concluded by redating the poem. This paper was subsequently published in the *Journal of Medieval Latin*, xvii (2007), 1–37; portions of this article, in suitably adapted form, appear in the Introduction to this edition, and I am grateful to the Editorial Board of the journal, and to Brepols, its publishers, for permission to reuse this material.

In assembling the manuscript materials for this edition, I have been most grateful for the assistance of the staff of the relevant libraries, which are listed in the Manuscript Descriptions. I am also particularly grateful to the following librarians, who answered specific enquiries about the manuscripts, their contents and/or provenance, and provided catalogue details which were not otherwise available: Julie Dietman and Matt Heintzelman at the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library in Collegeville, Minnesota; Marek Suchy and Tomáš Zubec in the Prague Castle Archives; Petr Slouka and Soňa Černocká in the Lobkowicz Library at Nelahozeves Castle; Petr Brůha in the Prague National Library; Michal Broda and Adam Poznański in the University Library, Wrocław; Silvano Groff in the Biblioteca comunale di Trento; Almuth Märker and Matthias Eifler at the Universitätsbibliothek, Leipzig; don Giacomo Cardinali in the Vatican Library; Bruce Barker-Benfield in the Bodleian Library, Oxford; Cressida Williams in the Canterbury Cathedral Archives; Susan Kleine at the Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek in Darmstadt, and Ulrike Spyra at the Stuttgart Handschriftenzentrum. Carolin Schreiber, head of the

Handschriftenzentrum in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, deserves special thanks, not only for the information which she has willingly provided on numerous occasions, but also for the warm and friendly welcome that she extended on my personal visits.

In the early stages Julia Walworth and Danuta Shanzer helped me to navigate the online catalogue of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek. In the later stages, Tessa Webber devoted a session of her palaeographical seminar to examples of the *Speculum Stultorum* manuscripts. Rod Thomson generously scrutinized sample photos of all of them and gave his judgement on their dates.

In Cambridge, Mark Statham presided over my visit to the library of Gonville and Caius College, and Johanna Ward at the University Library provided images of Caius MS 427/427. The staff of the University Library have been consistently helpful. Ann Toseland and Simon Gates gave hands-on assistance with transforming microfilms into CDs and CDs into A3 print-outs. Especially in the last two years, I have often felt I should acknowledge a debt to Sir Tim Berners-Lee, since this project would have ground to a halt during the enforced isolation of the pandemic without the resources of the worldwide web. In these challenging circumstances, the Cambridge University Library provided indispensable support via its scan-and-deliver system for articles and book excerpts, backed up by the click-and-collect system for borrowing books, and the Virtual Reading Room facility which provided answers to specific enquiries and requests to check references.

Thanks are also due to those individuals who have responded to my enquiries on a whole variety of questions: Mike Watt (on the process of tanning); the late David Luscombe and Julia Barrow (on John of Salisbury's early career); Helen Clark, Simon Trew, and Matthew Bennet (on amblers); Andy Orchard (on Norns); Birgit Ebersperger (on the Fraterhaus at Weidenbach); Joan Greatrex and Michael Stansfield (on the archives of Christ Church Canterbury); and Piero Boitani (for checking Boccaccio references). Laura Amalasunta Gazzoli kindly checked some doubtful readings in Vienna manuscripts for me.

Tony Edwards introduced me to the Schoenberg manuscript database, and thus uncovered the existence of the Huntington manuscript. Tim Bolton gave me his invaluable help in tracing it from a Sotheby's sale to California, and put me in touch with Jonathan Reilly of Maggs Bros, the antiquarian booksellers who effected the sale to the Huntington Library.

At OUP, Cathryn Steele and Emma Slaughter handled the production process with exemplary efficiency. Bonnie Blackburn was an

impressively thorough and amicable copy-editor. Thanks also to Nicola Sangster for her patient, cheerful, and eagle-eyed correction of the proofs. The general editors of the Oxford Medieval Texts series made welcome interventions in the final stages: David d'Avray and Rosalind Love made helpful suggestions on the Introduction, translation, and apparatus criticus, while Jim Binns went through the proofs with meticulous attention to detail.

Finally, a huge debt of thanks is due to Michael Reeve for allowing me to draw on his unrivalled knowledge of Latin textual transmission. He read and commented on the entire text and the first draft of the section on the textual transmission, drew attention to a number of metrical problems, and answered a long list of questions on specific problems. His interest and detailed assistance have been an invaluable support.

As ever, however, my greatest debt is to Michael Lapidge, who has been involved in this project every step of the way, and has brought to it the benefits of his learning, experience, and judgement. As a former general editor of Oxford Medieval Texts, and author of the style sheet of the series, he has also advised on the minutiae of OMT copy-editing and presentation. In addition, he contributed the entire section on Nigel's metre and style in the Introduction. He has patiently listened to my daily progress reports, and responded to a stream of detailed requests for his opinion. He has also given much practical help in recent years, when I have unfortunately suffered from reduced mobility due to chronic bursitis: at various times, as circumstances dictated, he has taken a taxi across town to pick up a click-and-collect order for me, or else has cheerfully tramped the long corridors of the University Library to bring me the books I needed. I owe him more than I can say, and this edition is dedicated to him.

J.M.

Cambridge, 2022

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Burnellus imagines becoming a bishop. BL, Additional
MS 38665, fo. 114^v. © The British Library Board.
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frontispiece

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ABBREVIATED REFERENCES

- Albini *Nigelli di Longchamps Speculum Stultorum*, ed. and trans. [Italian] Francesca Albini (Genoa, 2003)
- Armstrong, *Francis* *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents* [English translation], ed. Regis J. Armstrong, J. A Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short (3 vols., New York, 1999–2002)
- AV Authorized Version of the Bible
- Bächtold–Stäubli *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, ed. Hanns Bächtold–Stäubli and Eduard Hoffman-Krayer (10 vols.; Berlin, 1927–42)
- Becket Correspondence* *The Correspondence of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury 1162–1170*, ed. and trans. Anne Duggan (2 vols.; OMT, 2000) [with consecutive pagination]
- BL British Library
- BnF Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France
- Blaise Albert Blaise, *Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs chrétiens* (Turnhout, 1954)
- CCCM Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis
- CCM Corpus Consuetudinum Monasticarum
- CCSL Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
- 1 *Cel.* Thomas of Celano, *Vita prima Sancti Francisci*, in *Fontes Franciscani*, pp. 273–424; trans. Armstrong, *Francis*, i. 180–309
- 2 *Cel.* Thomas of Celano, *Vita secunda Sancti Francisci*, in *Fontes Franciscani*, pp. 441–639; trans. Armstrong, *Francis*, ii. 239–393
- CFMA Classiques Français du Moyen Âge
- Commedie* *Commedie latine del XII e XIII secolo*, general ed. Ferruccio Bertini (6 vols., Genoa, 1976–98)
- CSEL Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
- Disticha Catonis* *Dicta Catonis*, in *Minor Latin Poets*, ed. and trans. J. Wight Duff and Arnold Duff (2 vols., Cambridge, MA, 1934), ii. 585–639 [cited by Book, distich, and line of distich]
- DMLBS* *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, ed. R. E. Latham, D. R. Howlett, and R. K. Ashdowne

- (Oxford, 1975–2013). Available online at <http://www.dmlbs.ox.ac.uk/web/online.html>
- DOML Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library
- Du Cange Charles du Fresne du Cange, sieur, *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis* [1681], rev. by Léopold Favre *et al.* (10 vols. in 5, Graz, 1954)
- elegiac *Romulus* *L'Esopus attribuito a Gualtero Anglico*, ed. and trans [Italian] Paola Busdraghi (Favolisti latini medievali e umanistici, x; Genoa, 2005)
- Epigrams* *Epigrams*, in Nigel of Canterbury, *The Passion of St. Lawrence, Epigrams and Marginal Poems*, ed. and trans. Jan M. Ziolkowski (Leiden, 1994), pp. 248–81 [cited by Epigram number and line number]
- Fontes Franciscani* *Fontes Franciscani*, ed. Enrico Menestò, Stefano Brufani, *et al.* (Assisi, 1995)
- Forcellini *Totius latinitatis lexicon*, ed. Egidio Forcellini, Jacopo Faccioliati, Giuseppe Furlanetto *et al.* [1864–1926] (Padua, 1940)
- Gerald of Wales, *Opera* *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, ed. J. S. Brewer, J. F. Dimock, and G. F. Warner (RS xxi; 8 vols., London, 1861–91)
- Gervase, *Chronicle* *The Chronicle of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II., and Richard I.*, in *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury*, ed. William Stubbs (RS lxxiii; 2 vols., London, 1879–80), i
- Gratian, *Decretum* *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, ed. E. Friedberg (2nd edn.; 2 vols., Leipzig, 1879–81; repr. 1959) [cited as specified in Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, pp. 193–4]
- Langosch *Nigellus von Longchamps, Narrenspiegel oder Burnellus, der Esel, der einen längeren Schwanz haben wollt*, trans. Karl Langosch (Leipzig, 1982)
- Langosch review Karl Langosch, review of *Speculum Stultorum*, ed. Mozley and Raymo, *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch*, iii (1966), 280–6
- Latham R. E. Latham, *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List from British and Irish Sources* (London, 1965)
- Lawrence* *The Passion of St. Lawrence*, in Nigel of Canterbury, *The Passion of St. Lawrence, Epigrams and Marginal Poems*, ed. and trans. Jan M. Ziolkowski (Leiden, 1994), pp. 52–247 [cited by line number]

- Lewis and Short *A Latin Dictionary Founded on Andrews' Edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary*, ed. Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short (Oxford, 1897)
- Mansi *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, ed. G. D. Mansi, cont. J. B. Martin, L. Petit (53 vols., Florence and Venice, 1759–98; Paris, 1899–1927)
- Map Poems* *The Latin Poems Commonly Attributed to Walter Mapes*, ed. Thomas Wright (Camden Society; London, 1841) [cited by page number and line number of poem]
- Matthew Paris, *Chronica* *Matthaei Parisiensis monachi Sancti Albani Chronica majora*, ed. Henry Richards Luard (RS lviii; 7 vols., 1872–83)
- MGH Monumenta Germaniae Historica
- Auct. Ant. Auctores Antiquissimi
- Epp. Epistolae (in quarto)
- Poetae Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini
- SS Scriptores (in folio)
- SS rer. Germ. Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi
- Miracles* Nigel of Canterbury, *Miracles of the Virgin Mary, in Verse*, ed. Jan Ziolkowski (Toronto, 1986) [cited by line number]
- Niermeyer *Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus*, ed. J. F. Niermeyer (2 vols., Leiden, 1976)
- ODNB *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Online version at <https://www.oxforddnb.com>
- OLD *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P. G. W. Glare (Oxford, 1968–82; 2nd edn., 2012)
- OMT Oxford Medieval Texts
- PL Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina, ed. J.-P. Migne (221 vols., Paris, 1841–64)
- Paul* Leo M. Kaiser, 'A critical edition of Nigel Wireker's *Vita Sancti Pauli Primi Eremitae*', *Classical Folia*, xiv (1960), 63–81
- Publilius Syrus in *Minor Latin Poets*, ed. and trans. J. Wight Duff and Arnold Duff (2 vols., Cambridge, MA, 1934), i. 3–111
- RS Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages, published . . . under the direction of the Master of the Rolls (99 vols.; London, 1858–96)

- Rule of St Benedict *Benedicti Regula*, ed. and trans. P. Schmitz (4th edn.; Maredsous, 1975) [cited by chapter number]
- Sancti Bernardi Opera* *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, ed. Jean Leclercq, C. H. Talbot, and H. M. Rochais (8 vols. in 9; Rome, 1957–77) [cited by letter number if relevant, volume and page number]
- SC Sources chrétiennes
- Singer, *Thesaurus* *Thesaurus proverbiorum medii aevi. Lexikon der Sprichwörter des romanisch-germanischen Mittelalters*, ed. Samuel Singer and others (13 vols. in 14, Berlin, 1995–2002) [cited by Singer's numbering system for proverbs, plus volume and page numbers]
- SS *Speculum Stultorum*
- Statuta Petri Venerabilis* *Statuta Petri Venerabilis Abbatis Cluniacensis IX (1146/7)*, ed. Giles Constable, in *Consuetudines Benedictinae Variiae (Saec. XI–Saec. XIV)* (CCM vi, Siegburg, 1975), pp. 19–106
- Stubbs, *Introductions* William Stubbs, *Historical Introductions to the Rolls Series*, ed. Arthur Hassall (London, 1902) [page references to this volume are followed by an equal sign and a reference to the page number of the introduction in the original edition (e.g., Stubbs, *Introductions*, p. 000 = Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, iii. 000)]
- TLL *Thesaurus linguae Latinae*, ed. Internationale Thesaurus-Kommission (Munich, 1896–)
- Tractatus*, ed. Boutemy Nigellus de Longchamp dit Wireker, *Tractatus contra curiales et officiales clericos*, ed. André Boutemy (Paris, 1959)
- Walther, *Initia* Hans Walther, *Initia carminum ac versuum Medii Aevi posterioris latinorum* (Göttingen, 1969)
- Walther, *Proverbia* Hans Walther, *Proverbia Sententiaeque Latinitatis Medii Aevi* (6 vols.; Göttingen, 1963–9); *Nachträge*, supplementary vols., vii–ix, ed. Paul Gerhard Schmidt (Göttingen, 1982–6) [cited by proverb number]
- Werner, *Sprichwörter* Jakob Werner, *Lateinische Sprichwörter und Sinnsprüche des Mittelalters* (Heidelberg, 1912)

STEMMATA

For the reader's convenience, stemmata (1) and (2) represent in diagrammatical form the relations between the main manuscript groups as indicated by the surviving manuscripts. Since so many intervening stages in the development of the poem have disappeared in the centuries between the date of the poem's composition and the date of these manuscripts, the stemmata should not be taken as a complete factual representation of the textual transmission of the poem. The Greek letter ω represents the author's original version of the poem, while β represents the first extended version (see Introduction, pp. cxxv–cxxvii). The letters $\alpha\beta\gamma\delta$ represent the hypothetical originals of each branch of the transmission, with the addition of a tentatively hypothesized original for an intermediate stage between γ and δ which could have been a source for the 'mixed' manuscripts ZQY . Some 'mixed' manuscripts (*GI*, *UX*) appear at more than one point in the stemma, reflecting their complex affiliations; dotted lines indicate connections created by contamination.

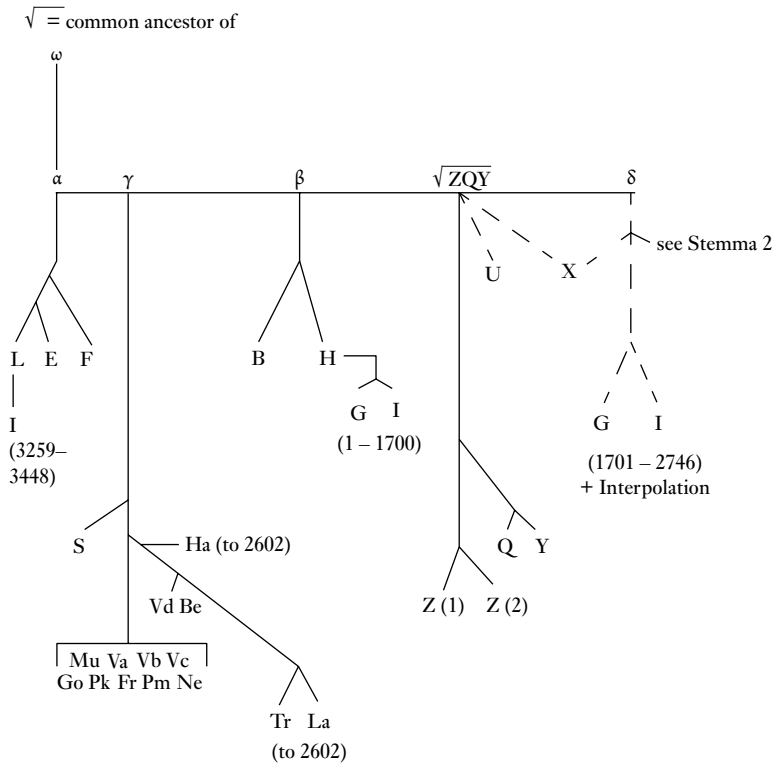


Figure 1. Stemma 1

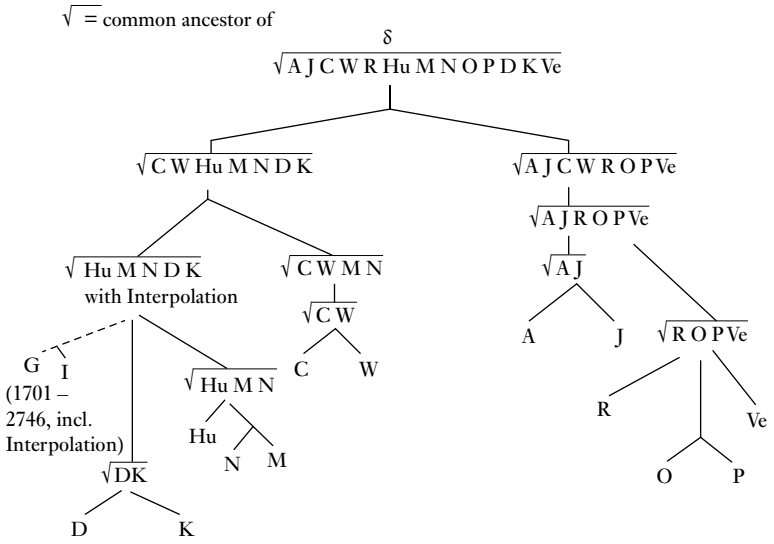


Figure 2. Stemma 2

SIGLA

INDIVIDUAL MANUSCRIPTS

Mozley's sigla are given only in cases where they differ from the ones used in this volume; * = a manuscript not known to Mozley

- A** London, British Library, Harley 2422, fos. 2^r–81^v
B London, British Library, Arundel 23, fos. 1^r–66^v
Be* Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, theol. qu. 214, fos. 181^r–234^r
C London, British Library, Cotton Titus A. XX, fos. 4^r–50^v
D Dublin, Trinity College Library, 440, pp. 1–130 (paginated)
E Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 761 (S.C. 2535), fos. 160^r–180^r
F Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 851 (S.C. 3041), fos. 97^v–115^v
Fr* Frankfurt am Main, Universitätsbibliothek, Barth. 62, fos. 150^r–162^v
G Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 27 (S. C. 1628), fos. 1^r–61^v
Go Erfurt, Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, Chart. B 517, fos. 136^r–195^v (Mozley's k)
H Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 496 (S.C. 2159), fos. 146^r–192^r
Ha* Halle, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, Stolb.-Wern. Za 89, fos. 1^r–47^v
Hu* Huntington Library, San Marino, California, MS HM80250, fos. 168^v–184^r
I Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 780 (S.C. 2583), fos. 1^r–33^v
J Oxford, All Souls College, 37, fos. 171^r–196^r
K London, British Library, Additional 38665, fos. 85^r–156^r
L London, Lambeth Palace Library, 357, fos. 78^r–111^r
La* Sankt Paul im Lavanttal (Kärnten), Stiftsbibliothek, Codex 239/4, fos. 101^r–151^v, 161^r–184^r
M Lincoln, Cathedral Chapter Library, 105, fos. 91^r–116^v
Mu Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm 23820, fos. 243^r–282^v (Mozley's m)
N Lincoln, Cathedral Chapter Library, 191, fos. 228^v–255^r
Ne* Lobkowicz Library, Nelahozeves Castle, Czech Republic, Sig. VI Fb 29, pp. 87–125
O Brussels, KBR, 2695–719, fos. 34^r–93^v
P Brussels, KBR, 1701–4, fos. 122^v–138^v

- Pk*** Prague, Archiv Prazského Hradu, Knihovna Metropolitni Kapituly, M. CXXI (catalogue 1482), fos. 43^r–86^v
- Pm*** Prague, Knihovna Národního muzea, XIV. D. 4, fos. 144^r–180^v
- Q** Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, GKS 1634 quarto, fos. 85^r–133^r
- R** Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, reg. lat 1379, fos. 1^r–70^r
- S** Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 16519, fos. 51^r–106^v
- T** Wrocław, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka we Wrocławiu, IV.Q.126, fos. 154^r–183^r
- Tr** Trento, Biblioteca comunale, W 3154, fos. 211^r–235^v (Mozley's s)
- U** London, British Library, Sloane 1831 B, fos. 1^r–47^v
- Va** Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 3487, fos. 1^r–43^r (Mozley's v)
- Vb** Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 12531, fos. 85^r–133^r (Mozley's z)
- Vc** Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 3283, fos. 1^r–87^r (Mozley's t)
- Vd** Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 3467, fos. 1^r–56^r (Mozley's u)
- Ve** Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 3529, fos. 1^r–74^v (Mozley's x)
- W*** Oxford, Bodleian Library, Lat. misc. c. 75 (*olim* Phillips 3119), fos. 1^r–23^v
- X** London, British Library, Cotton Vespasian E. XII, fos. 10^v–77^r
- Y** Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-August Bibliothek, Helmst. 616, fos. 93^r–137^v
- Z** Leipzig, Universitäts-Bibliothek, 1591, fos. 1^r–62^v

FRAGMENTS

- fb*** Bonn, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, S 220, fos. 252^v–258^v, 356^v–358^v
- fc*** Canterbury Cathedral Archives CCA-DCc/AddMS/127/4
- fg** Paris, Bibliothèque de Sainte Geneviève, 3196, fos. 115^r–116^r (Mozley's e)
- fh*** Giessen, Universitätsbibliothek 1251, fos. 51^v–52^v
- fm** Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm 237, fos. 218^r–220^v (Mozley's n)
- fn** Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, clm 14529, fos. 154^v, 160^r–166^r (Mozley's o)

- fp** Prague, Národní knihovna, III. D. 17, unnumbered guard-leaf, r-v (= 469) (Mozley's p)
- fq** Prague, Národní knihovna, X. D. 9, fos. 94^v-96^v (=1888) (Mozley's q)
- ft*** Trier, Stadtbibliothek 1898, fo. 90^{r-v}
- fu*** Uppsala, Universitets-Bibliotek, Lat. 931, fo. 86^{r-v}

MANUSCRIPT GROUPS

L E F = α

B H = β

S Mu Va Vb Vc Vd T Go Be Pk Fr Pm Ne = γ (minus *Fr* from 2052-464); when with *Tr Ha La* (up to line 2602) = γ^+ ; when minus *S* = γ^-

A C J WR Hu M N O P D K Ve = δ

When a reading is shared by some but not all members of the group (so that the Greek letter cannot be used), the sigla of the relevant MSS are listed in the *apparatus criticus* without spaces in between, but a space separates them from the succeeding group, e.g. *SMuVaVb ACJWR*.

The following 'mixed manuscripts' are grouped according to their general character but not assigned a Greek letter since they derive from more than one ancestor:

G I

Tr Ha La (after line 2602, when γ ends, they are always listed separately)

U Z X Q Y

These are listed without spaces between the individual sigla, but with a space separating them from other groups.

The sigla for the manuscript groups in the *Epistle to William* have slightly different referents, since it is lacking in *LECOPUZQY*. Manuscripts containing the *Epistle* are *F BH* (= β); *SMuVaVbVcVdTGoBePkFrPmNe* (= γ); *AJWRHuMNDKVe* (= δ); *GI TrHaLa X*. The *Epistle* follows the poem in *D*, *F*, and *R*. *Vd* has an abridged version, which is printed separately in Appendix C; its readings are not included in the *apparatus criticus*.

EDITORIAL PRACTICE IN THE *APPARATUS CRITICUS*

Scribal corrections are not usually recorded if they seem to be in the main hand and to have been made at the time of original copying

(or very close to it), *unless* the corrections shed light on the manuscript groupings and thus on the textual transmission. Superscript ^{ac} and ^{pc} are used for corrections or alternative readings which can with reasonable confidence be identified as made by the original scribe at or near the time of original copying (even if these variants derive from a different exemplar).

Superscript ² is used to designate corrections or additions which seem to have been made at a later time than the original copying, as suggested by a different script, different pen, or erasures and additions which indicate large-scale revision resulting from consultation of a different exemplar.

If a variant is identified as ^{ac} (before correction), but no ^{pc} (after correction) version is given, this means that after correction the reading is identical with the lemma. If a variant is identified as ^{pc}, but no ^{ac} version is given, this means that *either* the previous version of the word is illegible, *or* that the reading still differs from the lemma after correction.

Where a scribe has copied the same material twice (whether single lines or larger portions of text), deliberately or inadvertently, variants in the first and second versions are indicated by the addition of (1) or (2) (not superscript) to the sigil, respectively. For details of repeated material, see the *apparatus criticus*.

Ha and *La* frequently record alternative readings, most often in the margin, prefaced by 'uel' (written out in full, as 'uē', or simply as 'P'). Since these alternative readings have significance for the textual transmission, they are recorded in the *apparatus criticus*; a forward slash (/) indicates the placing in the margin. However, it should be noted that it is not always easy to distinguish between the letter l with a diagonal stroke through it as representing an abbreviation for 'uel' and the *signe de renvoi*, a forward slash with one or two marks to the right of it. When it appears that this sign indicates an alternative, it is represented in the apparatus criticus by '[uel]'; when it indicates a correction (the original reading being deleted), this is indicated by superscript ^{ac} or ^{pc} in the usual way. When the original word is struck through, the intention to correct is clear, but sometimes it is underlined, and it is not clear whether this is a way of indicating expunction or a way of drawing attention to the lemma of the variant reading. On a few occasions, the alternative word is incorporated within the line, with or without preceding 'uel' (see, for example, *La* 3703, *Ha* 1250, 1252). The above format(s) are very occasionally used for alternatives and corrections in other manuscripts.

OTHER ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE
APPARATUS CRITICUS

<i>add.</i>	added
<i>corr.</i>	corrected
<i>om.</i>	omitted
<i>transp.</i>	transposed

INTRODUCTION

TEXT AND CONTEXT

The Poem

A DONKEY NAMED Burnellus conceives an overwhelming desire for a longer tail which will match his splendid ears. He asks a doctor (Galen) for help; having tried in vain to persuade Burnellus to be content with what nature has given him, Galen invents a list of absurd medicines which he says will do the trick, and sends the ass off to Salerno to buy them. On arrival, he encounters a London merchant who fraudulently claims to have the medicines all assembled in ten glass jars, and Burnellus joyfully pays up without opening the jars to test his claim. On the way home, a Cistercian monk called Fromundus sets his dogs on Burnellus; in the fray, the glass jars are broken, the ass loses all his imaginary medicines, and in addition the dogs bite off half his tail. Claiming to be a papal legate, Burnellus angrily threatens Fromundus that the pope will punish him severely. Fromundus tries to appease him by offering to take him to a garden of delights where his every desire will be catered for; secretly, he plans to murder him. Burnellus guesses his plan and hurls Fromundus into the sea from a high cliff. Burnellus then decides that if he cannot have a longer tail, he will have learning instead, and sets out for the university of Paris. He studies for seven years but learns nothing; leaving Paris, he cannot even remember its name. He next resolves to enter a religious order, and assesses the suitability for a donkey of each of the existing orders, but he does not actually put this plan into action. After another brief encounter with the doctor Galen, his old master suddenly appears and reclaims him for his old life of drudgery. He cuts off the ass's ears (so that instead of acquiring a longer tail to match his ears, he ends up with shorter ears to match his truncated tail). The concluding moral is that no one can escape nature.

This is the simple narrative outline of the *Speculum Stultorum*, a twelfth-century beast epic in 3,900 lines of Latin elegiac verse. The best-known examples of beast epic at this period centre on the persistent antagonism between Reynard the fox and his supposed 'uncle', the

wolf Ysengrimus.¹ The *Speculum Stultorum* is a surprising exception: its central figure is not the cunning fox but a very stupid ass. As the opening of the poem makes clear (57–80), the seminal idea for his story is Avianus's fable of the ass who clothes himself in a lion's skin; he may terrify the other animals, says the farmer who owns him, but 'to me you'll always be a donkey'.² Burnellus does not, however, yearn to be a lion, but to be even more 'asinine' than nature made him. And his subsequent adventures—his journey to Salerno, his encounter with the evil monk Fromundus, and his seven-year sojourn at the university of Paris—are all without parallel in other beast literature.

The same could be said of the lengthy interpolations of various kinds with which the basic narrative is filled out. First, there are a number of inset narratives:

(1) Galen tells the story of two cows whose tails get stuck in some freezing mud; one cow rashly amputates her tail, so that when summer comes she dies of insect stings, while the other patiently waits until the sun thaws the mud and she can return home unharmed (205–594).

(2) On the way to Paris, a fellow-traveller tells Burnellus the story of a cock whose leg was accidentally broken by Gundulf, a priest's son, when it was a young chick, and many years later took revenge by failing to crow on the day when the young man was himself to be ordained a priest, so that he slept in and missed the ceremony (1251–502).

(3) Burnellus tells how he once rescued three thieves from execution by opening their prison and carrying them to safety. One of them is now mayor of his home town, and *because* Burnellus did him this favour, Burnellus is sure that he will be his enemy, since the man whose life you have saved always hates you for having put him under an obligation (1805–912).

(4) Burnellus tells the story of the Three Fates who travel through the world with the aim of lavishing the gifts of Fortune on those suffering from the defects of Nature. The two junior Fates wish to aid two girls who are distinguished by their beauty and virtue, but who suffer from emotional or physical distress. The senior Fate refuses, on the grounds that Nature has already given them so much; instead, she

¹ The earliest example is the Latin poem *Ysengrimus* (ed. Mann), which was the model and source for the earliest branches of the French *Roman de Renart*, the Dutch *Van den Vos Reinaerde*, and many others. See Knapp, *Das lateinische Tierepos*; Foulet, *Le Roman de Renard*; Flinn, *Le Roman de Renart*. For a succinct survey of the development of Latin and vernacular beast epic, see Mann, *From Aesop to Reynard*, pp. 17–20. For discussion of Nigel's predecessors and later influence, see below, pp. cxxvii–cxliv.

² Avianus, *Fabulae*, v. 18: 'semper asellus eris'. Cf. *SS* 58, 'semper asellus erit'.

insists that they should shower riches and honours on a coarse and ignorant peasant girl whom they encounter defecating by the side of the road (3281–458).

(5) The poem concludes with the story of the Grateful Animals and the Ungrateful Man, in which the central figure is Burnellus's master Bernard, and the ass himself is given only a passing mention. A rich man called Dryanus falls into a pit which has been dug to trap wild animals; already in the pit are a lion, a monkey, and a snake. Attracted by Dryanus's cries, Bernard throws down a rope to him, but is horrified when, one after another, the three animals use it to escape. Persuaded by Dryanus's promises of rich reward, he tries one last time and pulls him out of the pit, but when he tries to collect the promised reward, he is driven from the rich man's door. Meanwhile, the lion brings him fresh meat daily; the monkey cuts and stacks firewood for him, and the snake gives him a magic jewel which returns to his purse every time he tries to sell it. Hearing of this magical stone, the king enquires about its origin, and when Bernard tells him the story, he decrees that Dryanus should either fulfil his promise or else be put back in the same pit with the same three animal companions. Naturally, Dryanus chooses the first option (3561–870).

In addition, there are a number of rhetorical set-pieces:

(6) Burnellus discourses on the duties of a bishop (1669–778).

(7) Burnellus surveys all the religious orders in turn as he tries to decide which is best for a donkey to join, and then proposes a new order combining the features he finds most attractive (2051–464).

(8) Burnellus laments the moral decay of the court of Rome, and the failings of kings, bishops, abbots, and priors (2559–872).

(9) Burnellus then relates a debate between birds that he once overheard, about whether the disasters of the world are to be blamed on avian sins (2873–3236).

The story of the two cows dimly recalls the episode in which Reynard persuades the wolf to go fishing in a wintry river, using his tail as 'fishing-rod'; the freezing ice holds him fast, and he escapes only when a peasant woman cuts off his tail with an axe (*Ysengrimus*, i. 665–ii. 135). The focus in the story of the two cows has, however, shifted to the comically elaborate speeches in which each cow justifies its own course of action. The story of Gundulf and the cock has no known parallel, and neither has the story of the three thieves. The story of the Three Fates reflects a motif of Scandinavian folklore, but is not part of medieval beast literature. And although animals play a major role in the story of the Grateful Animals and the Ungrateful Man, its background

is not in western European beast literature, but in the oriental tale-collection known as *Kalila and Dimna* or the *Pañchatantra*.³ It was first introduced to England by Richard I on his return from the Third Crusade (on which, more later).

These narrative insertions and rhetorical set-pieces are tied to the main story by only the slenderest of threads. The tale of the two cows has some potential relevance to Burnellus's rash ambition, but the same cannot be said for any of the other mini-narratives. The tale of the chick with the broken leg, for example, has no relevance to Burnellus, and the traveller who tells it disappears from the narrative soon after it is ended. Even when an inset story involves Burnellus himself, such as the account of how he rescued the three thieves from prison, it is of no further consequence to the main narrative and is not an obvious illustration of the ass's folly. The reader might therefore conclude that the poem's rambling structure is due to the primary desire to entertain—that it is no more than a fairly casual assemblage of amusing anecdotes and rhetorical elaborations of conventional satiric topics. Closer examination of the themes and motifs of the poem, and a more detailed knowledge of its historical context, its author and its dedicatee, will, however, reveal the underlying motives and concerns that tie all these disparate elements together and make coherent sense of the whole.

The Author

In contrast to the anonymity that cloaks so many medieval texts, the author of the *Speculum Stultorum* makes plain his identity at the very beginning of his poem:

Suscipe pauca tibi ueteris, Willelme, Nigelli
 scripta, minus sapido nuper arata stylo.
 Hoc modicum nouitatis opus tibi mitto legendum,
 maxima pars animae dimidiumque meae. (1–4)

Accept, William, these scanty writings, lately scribbled in unembellished style by your old friend Nigel. To you, who are half my soul, and the more important part, I send this little novelty to read.

The identities of 'Nigel' and 'William' are specified in more detail at the beginning of another work by Nigel, the *Tractatus contra Curiales et Officiales Clericos*:⁴ he identifies himself as a monk of Christ Church,

³ See below, pp. cxxxiv–cxli, and n. to lines 3561–866.

⁴ The *Tractatus* was edited by André Boutemy in 1959. On the manuscripts of the *Tractatus* and the verse epistle which was probably intended as a poetic envoy to this work, see pp. 92–6, 131–43 of Boutemy's edition.

Canterbury ('Cantuariensis ecclesie fratrum minimus frater Nigellus veste monachus, vita peccator, gradu presbyter sed indignus').⁵ He addresses the *Tractatus* to 'Reverendo patri et domino Willelmo, Dei gratia Eliensi episcopo, apostolicae sedis legato, regis Angliae cancellario'—that is, William of Longchamp, chancellor of King Richard I of England, and bishop of Ely from 1189 until his death in 1197.⁶ Also addressed to William is a prose epistle which accompanies the *Speculum* in many of its manuscripts and offers an interpretation of its meaning (see below, pp. lv–lxiii, for a discussion of the *Epistle*). On the principle of Ockham's razor, it has generally been assumed that the 'William' to whom the *Speculum Stultorum* is addressed is also William of Longchamp.⁷

Various other poetic works are attributed to Nigel, as follows: *Miracles of the Virgin Mary*; *Passion of St Lawrence*; *Epigrams* and other poems; and a *Life of St Paul of Thebes*.⁸ The attribution rests on the

⁵ Two Canterbury rentals of around 1200 mention an Agatha, sister of 'Nigel our monk' ('Nigelli monachi nostri'). See Urry, *Canterbury under the Angevin Kings*, pp. 296–7 (Rental D266 and Rental E42), and for the dates of the rentals, see pp. 9, 13. Two references to monks named Nigel occur in an early 13th-c. Canterbury obituary (BL, Cotton Nero C. IX, fos. 3^v–18^r), dated 1225 × 1240 by Boutemy, 'Two obituaries', pp. 292–3). See the edition of this obituary by Fleming, 'Christchurch's sisters and brothers', pp. 130–48, which supersedes the 18th-c. edition by Dart, *History and Antiquities of the Cathedral Church of Canterbury*, pp. xxxii–xli: fo. 9^v (Fleming, p. 138), 'Obierunt [other names] et Nigellus sacerdotis et monachi nostre congregationis'; fo. 12^r (Fleming, p. 141), 'Obierunt Godefridus et Nigellus sacerdotis et monachi nostre congregationis'. (The entry on fo. 11^r (Fleming, p. 140) for 'Nigellus frater noster' must refer to a lay member of the fraternity rather than a monk.) Since the obits are of different dates (18 Kal. Mai. and 6 Kal. Oct.), they must refer to two different monks of this name, although there is no indication of the year of death; Jan Ziolkowski's assertion that 'there is no reason to believe that more than one Nigel belonged to Christ Church in the late twelfth century' (*Lawrence*, p. 9) is thus questionable.

Joan Greatrex's *Biographical Register* (p. 244) notes the two obits on p. 244. On p. 320, she also notes two references in a Canterbury cathedral accounts book (CCA-DCc/MA/1, fos. 56^r and 58^r), under the years 1215 and 1216, to 'Nigel' as almoner of the monastery ('Nigello elemosinar[io] xiiii lib[ras]'); given the two entries in the obit list, this may or may not be the author of *SS*, but it is very possible.

⁶ For a brief summary of William's life, see Turner, 'Longchamp, William de (*d.* 1197)', *ODNB*. The fullest study is the PhD dissertation by David Balfour, 'William Longchamp: Upward Mobility and Character Assassination'. I cited this study as forthcoming with the Davenant Press in my article 'Does an author?' in 2007, but unfortunately the Press's website still lists it as 'coming soon'. Balfour's study supersedes the older monograph by Champeaux (*Notice*).

⁷ Though this is (implicitly) not accepted by Rigg, 'Nigel of Canterbury', who speaks of Nigel sending the *Speculum Stultorum*, 'with an introductory explication', to 'a William', while the *Tractatus* is addressed to 'the Chancellor William de Longchamps' (p. 306).

⁸ For editions of these works, see *Miracles*, ed. Ziolkowski; *Lawrence*, ed. Ziolkowski (which includes the *Epigrams*); Boutemy, 'Une vie inédite de Paul de Thèbes'; Kaiser, 'Nigel Wireker's *Vita Sancti Pauli Primi Eremitae*'.

sole manuscript witness of these works, BL, Cotton Vespasian D. XIX,⁹ which identifies them as the work of ‘Nigel of Longchamp’ (‘Nigelli de Longo Campo’).¹⁰ The alternative name ‘Wireker’, by which Nigel was

⁹ There is, however, another copy of one of the *Miracles* (‘De puero cum alio ludente’) in BL, Arundel 23, fo. 67^r (my MS *B*), which also contains the *Speculum Stultorum*. The contents list of Vespasian D. XIX (see following note) also attributes to Nigel a versified list of the archbishops of Canterbury which does not, however, appear in this manuscript; the full list of 75 leonine-rhymed hexameters is to be found in BL, Vitellius A. XI, fo. 37^r, and was printed by Boutemy, ‘À propos d’un manuscrit’, pp. 1001–3, and *Tractatus*, pp. 46–8. Another version, signalled by Boutemy on p. 74 of his edition of the *Tractatus*, is contained in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 95, fos. 20^v–22^v; it consists of 74 lines, of which the first 68 agree with the version in Vitellius A. XI, ending with Archbishop Richard, who died in 1184. The last six are replaced by new lines which take the list up to the death of Hubert Walter in 1205, as follows: ‘Isti successit Baldwinus cum requiescit/ Mundus ei cessit dum se pro praesule gessit/ Hic betel (?) accessit ad Arcon [=Acre] post fata quiescit/ Hinc dat Hubertus largus per dona repertus/ Iudicio iustus vir strenuus atque venustus/ Moribus et fultus propria nunc sede sepultus.’ An eleven-line excerpt from this list, representing lines 65–75 of the version in Vitellius, is contained in Arundel 23, fo. 66^r; Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College 427/427 (s. xii/xiii), p. 230; Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College 191/224, p. 345 (s. xvi); and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 287, fo. 131^r. The above details, which do not entirely agree with the descriptions in the catalogues of M. R. James for Corpus and Caius colleges, have been verified in person, except for the Corpus manuscript, which has been verified by consultation of the digitized version of Corpus manuscripts entitled Parker on the Web (<https://parker.stanford.edu>). James suggested that Caius 427/427 might have come from Christ Church, but Graham and Watson (*Recovery of the Past*, p. 48, n. 156) indicate that it more probably came from St Augustine’s. (This casts doubt on Boutemy’s suggestion that Caius 427/427 is Nigel’s rough draft, in his own hand; see *Tractatus*, pp. 138–9.) See also Catherine Hall (‘One-way trail’, p. 282), who suggests that the eleven-line excerpt in Caius 427 may be in the hand of Matthew Parker, who later owned this manuscript.

Ziolkowski’s erroneous statement (*Miracles*, p. 4, n. 16) that these eleven lines are also found in MS Corpus 441 (which, like Corpus 287, contains Nigel’s *Tractatus*, at pp. 253–310) apparently derives from a similar statement by Boutemy in ‘À propos d’un manuscrit’, p. 997, where Boutemy seems to have allowed his memory to trick him into substituting one Corpus manuscript number for another.

Also attributed to Nigel are some marginal glosses and poems in a copy of Peter Comestor’s *Historia scholastica* in Cambridge, Trinity College B.15.5, which are edited by Ziolkowski in *Lawrence*, pp. 282–302; see also O’Daly, ‘Reading the *Historia Scholastica*’. Finally, Arundel 23 also contains a ‘Life of St Eustace’ in elegiac distichs (ed. Varnhagen in ‘Zwei lateinische metrische versionen’), which Boutemy (*Tractatus*, pp. 69–70) very tentatively ascribed to Nigel, while admitting that there was nothing in the text to support this attribution, and it rested solely on the presence in Arundel 23 of other works by Nigel or associated with Canterbury. However, even a cursory inspection of the St Eustace poem reveals not only its unsophisticated narrative style but also a level of metrical incompetence sufficient to rule out Nigel’s authorship.

¹⁰ See Mozley, ‘Unprinted poems of Nigel Wireker’, p. 398. A fuller account of the manuscript is given in Ward, *Catalogue of Romances*, ii. 691–5. At the top of fo. 1^r, in small letters, is the Canterbury *ex libris*: ‘hic liber est ecclesie Xti Cant.: qui illum inde abstulerit auferat eum dominus de libro uite’. Nigel’s name, in large black and red letters, is under the *ex libris*. Beneath his name, in a much later hand, are details about Nigel, and under that again, a list of contents, written in blue ink, appears on a small pasted-in slip. The manuscript is listed in the catalogue of Christ Church library; see James, *Ancient Libraries*, p. 48, no. 278, and Ker, *Medieval Libraries*, p. 36.

long known, seems to be a misreading of 'Witeker',¹¹ which is attested in a fine rental of Canterbury holdings at London.¹² J. H. Mozley explains this name as a mistake by the sixteenth-century antiquarian John Bale, misled by a contents list on fo. 2^r of BL, Cotton Julius A. VII (fifteenth-century) which refers to 'the verses of Nigel Wetekre' ('versus Nigelli Wetekre monachi Cantuariensis').¹³ The competing claims of these differing ascriptions have been assessed by A. G. Rigg,¹⁴ whose concluding suggestion was that Nigel should be called 'of Canterbury', though this name is nowhere associated with him in medieval sources. If I prefer the designation 'of Longchamp', it is because this name is linked to his literary works in an early manuscript,¹⁵ and one which belonged to his own monastery.

¹¹ Mozley ('Nigel Wireker or Wetekre?', p. 314) ascribes the misreading to the 16th-c. antiquary John Bale, whose *Index Britanniae Scriptorum* has an entry referring to 'Nigellus de Werekere, monachus Cantuariensis' (ed. Poole and Bateson, p. 311).

¹² The rental is dated c. 1230 by Urry, *Canterbury under the Angevin Kings*, p. 2. Nigel is there called 'de Wetehekere', possibly referring to Whiteacre ('wheat-acre'), the name of a hamlet in Waltham, a few miles from Canterbury. Nigel's sister Agatha (see above, n. 5) is called 'filia Gileberti de Sarneis', which may refer to Sarness Farm in Waltham, half a mile from Whiteacre (though 'Sarnea' is also the Latin name for Guernsey). See Urry, *Canterbury under the Angevin Kings*, p. 154, especially n. 4.

¹³ See Mozley, 'Nigel Wireker or Wetekre?'. Urry (*Canterbury under the Angevin Kings*, p. 154, n. 4) suggested a family connection between Nigel and one Emma of Whiteacre (Wetkera), whose husband Geoffrey was 'of Lisors', a village in Normandy not far from Longchamps (Urry, p. 59, p. 154, n. 4). Urry also suggested (p. 154, n. 4) that this might be the Emma whose death is lamented in Nigel's *Epigram* no. ix. However, she most likely earned this poetic commemoration, not by any family relationship to Nigel, but because she and her husband agreed with Wibert, prior of Christ Church Canterbury, to exchange a piece of land north of the cathedral precincts for property in central Canterbury (Urry, pp. 148, 221). This would explain why 'Emma soror nostra' appears in the 13th-c. obituary list of Christ Church Canterbury (Fleming, 'Christchurch's sisters and brothers', p. 140) at 15 Kal. Oct. (= 17 Sept.). The obit given in Nigel's poem (12 Kal. Oct. = 20 Sept.) is not identical, but is close enough to make the identification probable. Two other references to an 'Emma soror nostra', at Kal. Sept (= 1 Sept.) on fo. 11^r (Fleming, p. 139), and at 5 Kal. Ian. (= 28 Dec.) on fo. 18^r (Fleming, p. 148) are too far distant in date to be relevant.

¹⁴ Rigg ('Nigel of Canterbury', p. 305) thinks that in Nigel's case, 'de Longo Campo' is a Latinization of 'Whiteacre', not because all wheat-fields are long, but because 'if (as is perfectly possible) the wheat-field at Sarness Farm happened to be long, someone from that farm could well have been described as being 'de longo campo'. This explanation is unconvincing: toponyms need to be distinctive to serve their purpose and long fields must have occurred more or less everywhere.

¹⁵ Cotton Vespasian D. XIX is ascribed to the late 12th or early 13th c. (see the references to James, Ker, and Ward in n. 10 above). It is included in the online collection of digitized manuscripts in the British Library.

The Dedicatee

One of the most intriguing things about Nigel's surname 'de Longo Campo' is that he shared it with his dedicatee, William of Longchamp.¹⁶ It does not seem likely that they were related by birth. William's family is well documented, and since William came from Normandy, while Nigel's origins seem to have been in Kent, it has not proved possible to demonstrate even a likely connection between them.¹⁷ In the *Speculum Stultorum*, Nigel addresses William in terms of personal affection, echoing Horace in calling him 'half my soul'.¹⁸ In his *Tractatus*, while praising William's learning, he implies that he has frequently been in company with him.¹⁹ It is possible that they had known each other when young, perhaps at the university of Paris (though there is no evidence for this).²⁰ But there are other, more important reasons why an author might choose William as the dedicatee of a literary work.

¹⁶ Stubbs suggested that the inscription in Cotton Vespasian D. XIX might be a mistake, influenced by Nigel's association with William (*Introductions*, p. 414, n. 2 = *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, Introduction, p. lxxxv, n. 2), but as Ward pointed out, 'this appears hardly likely, considering that the MS. belonged to Nigel's own monastery', and he preferred Stubbs's alternative hypothesis, that 'they were either relations or fellow-townsmen' (*Catalogue of Romances*, ii. 692).

¹⁷ William's family 'took its name from the vill known today as Longchamps, located in eastern Normandy immediately upon what in the twelfth century was the southeastern edge of the forest of Lions' (Balfour, 'Origins of the Longchamp family', p. 78). Tantalizingly, Nigel mentions having heard some gossip 'in Normannia' (*Tractatus*, ed. Boutemy, p. 190), but it is impossible to say when or for how long he was there. He may, for example, have been one of the Canterbury monks who went to Normandy in 1187 in order to plead the monastery's case to Henry II (Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 377, 380–1).

¹⁸ *SS* 4: 'Maxima pars animae dimidiumque meae'. Cf. Horace, *Odes*, i. 3. 8: 'et serves animae dimidium meae', and ii. 17. 5: 'a, te meae si partem animae rapit'. On this phrase, see below, p. xliii, n. 79. At the opening of his *Tractatus*, Nigel insists that he is addressing William 'non quem animi impetus aut spiritus exacerbatus excitet, sed quem intimae dilectionis devotio propinet' (ed. Boutemy, p. 151), and twice addresses him as 'dilectissime' (*ibid.* pp. 155, 177).

¹⁹ Nigel says he fears that he will be charged with insolence or temerity in presuming to write something for William's benefit, 'qui tot scripturarum scientiam penes te non tantum in codicibus sed <etiam> in corde tuo habes reconditam, ita tamen quod omni loco et tempore quantumvis et quomodovis proferas de thesauro tuo nova et vetera non praenumit aut praemeditatum, et talia quidem quae et aedificent audientes, et ex operis venustate commendant artificem. . . . Rem igitur tam mirandam, immo tam miraculosam, tibi insitam primo in tantum mirabar, quod nec credidi sed neque adhuc credidissem, nisi ex commoratione familiari crebra experientia vulnus incredulitatis amputasset' (ed. Boutemy, p. 152; my italics). He also comments on William's eating habits in such a way as to imply he has often been at table with him (*ibid.*). Cf. p. 205: 'ipse aliquando dicere consueveras' (my italics). It is possible that these observations might be based on William's visits to Canterbury (see below, pp. xliii, xlvi) but they suggest rather more.

²⁰ Boutemy (*Tractatus*, p. 87) conjectures that they may have met in Paris. In the *Tractatus*, Nigel refers to William's education: 'Liberalium artium studiis satis olim indulisisti' (ed. Boutemy, p. 155), but does not say where these studies were conducted. Balfour thinks it more likely that William studied at Bologna (*William Longchamp*, ch. 2).

William first reached prominence as chancellor of Richard, son of Henry II, count of Poitou and duke of Aquitaine.²¹ When Richard became king of England in 1189, William continued to be his chancellor, and at the Council of Pipewell (15 September 1189) held two days after Richard's coronation, he was made bishop of Ely.²² In December 1189, when Richard left on crusade to the Holy Land, he made William a colleague of the justiciar, Hugh of Puiset (bishop of Durham), giving him control of the royal seal and custody of the Tower of London.²³ Shortly afterwards, in March 1190, Richard increased his power even further by making him sole justiciar south of the Humber, leaving Hugh of Puiset as justiciar of the northern part of the realm.²⁴ In June 1190, at the king's request, William was made a papal legate,²⁵ and since Archbishop Baldwin of Canterbury was accompanying Richard on crusade, William thus became the highest-ranking cleric in England.

William did not enjoy this high position for long. He seems to have been resented by members of the old baronial families in England because he was a foreigner who despised the English and also because (they claimed) he was of low and indeed servile origin.²⁶ He was typical of a number of men at this period whose careers were based on administrative ability and personal service rather than aristocratic lineage and ancient wealth.²⁷ Regarding him as an upstart, his enemies accused him of arrogant high-handedness and a failure to consult.²⁸ In September–October 1191 they united against William under the leadership of John, count of Mortain, Richard's younger brother, whose ultimate aim was to secure the crown for himself,²⁹ acting in concert

²¹ For William's early career, see below, n. 121.

²² Stubbs, *Introductions*, p. 206 = Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, iii. xxvi. William was one of a series of bishops of Ely who had 'distinguished themselves in the service of the King', rather than as churchmen; see Karn, 'The twelfth century', pp. 5–9 (quotation on p. 9).

²³ Roger of Howden, *Gesta* ii. 101; Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, iii. 28; West, *Justiciarship*, p. 67.

²⁴ Roger of Howden, *Gesta* ii. 106; Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, iii. 32; West, *Justiciarship*, p. 68.

²⁵ Roger of Howden, *Gesta* ii. 106, 108; Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, iii. 33–4.

²⁶ On William's contempt for the English, see, for example, Gerald of Wales, *De vita Galfridi*, ii. 19, *Opera*, iv. 424. William's origins were not, however, as humble as his opponents claimed; see Balfour, 'Origins of the Longchamp family'.

²⁷ For the hostility of conservative critics from old-established families towards the new type of administrators who made their way by ability, see Turner, 'Changing perceptions'. See also Turner, *Men Raised from the Dust*, a study of the careers of six men whose careers are of the same general type as William of Longchamp's.

²⁸ For these accusations, see Roger of Howden, *Gesta* ii. 143; repeated in Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, iii. 72. West (*Justiciarship*, pp. 71–2) thinks that the latter accusation is unlikely to be true.

²⁹ For suggestions as to John's reasons for hating William, see Stubbs, *Introductions*, pp. 226–7 = Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, iii. lv–lvi).

with Geoffrey, bastard son of Henry II (and thus Richard's half-brother), and Hugh of Nonant, bishop of Coventry. After much complicated manoeuvring on both sides they deprived William of the justiciarship and eventually forced him to leave the country in a hurried and undignified manner and take refuge across the Channel.³⁰

Nigel of Longchamp was not the only writer to dedicate works to William. Richard Barre, archdeacon of Ely, dedicated to him a *Compendium* of the Old and New Testaments.³¹ In 1101, Gerald of Wales, who had served under William as a royal clerk, dedicated to him his *Itinerarium Cambriae*.³² Around the same time, it would seem, Ralph de Diceto wrote him a congratulatory letter, celebrating his elevation to the offices of legate and justiciar, which was later (1104–5?) prefaced, 'as a sort of dedication', to the manuscript containing Ralph's *Opuscula*.³³ Gerald's motivation was undoubtedly to win his own ecclesiastical promotion; he is notorious for his sycophantic approaches to anyone who he thought might favour his case, and in fact William did offer him the bishopric of Bangor (which Gerald turned down as not

³⁰ The immediate cause of this sequence of events was William's attempt to prevent Geoffrey from landing in England during Richard's absence. Both Geoffrey and John had sworn to Richard that they would stay on the Continent for three years, to avoid any suspicion that they would try to seize power, but John had later been given permission to be in England; Geoffrey now wished to come to England in order to be consecrated as archbishop of York. Unfortunately, those sent to arrest Geoffrey for this violation of his promise dragged him by force from the chapel of Dover Priory, in a scene that was compared by contemporaries to the murder of Becket in his cathedral. William claimed he had not given orders for this violence (*Epistolae Cantuarienses*, no. ccclxxi), but it gave William's enemies the perfect pretext for expressing their outrage and acting against him.

The contemporary historical accounts of this series of events are as follows: Roger of Howden, *Gesta*, ii. 207–21; Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, iii. 134–55; Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 497, 504–8; Richard of Devizes, *Chronicle*, pp. 29–35, 39–43, 45–6, 48–54; William of Newburgh, *Historia*, iv. 14–17; Gerald, *De vita Galfridi*, ii. 1–13, *Opera*, iv. 386–413. For a detailed synthesis of these sources, see Stubbs, *Introductions*, pp. 218–45 (= Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, iii. xliii–lxxxii), and for a more recent account, see Turner and Heiser, *The Reign of Richard Lionheart*, pp. 110–29.

³¹ Sharpe, 'Richard Barre's *Compendium Veteris et Novi Testamenti*'.

³² For Gerald as a royal clerk, see Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, p. 15 (pp. 20–1). For the dedication to William, see *ibid.* pp. 60–2 (pp. 55–7), and Gerald of Wales, *Itinerarium Cambriae*, *Opera*, vi. xxxiv–xxxvi, and *ibid.* p. 3, n. 1. See also below, n. 51.

³³ Stubbs, *Introductions*, p. 80 = Ralph de Diceto, *Historical Works*, i. p. lxxiv. For the letter, see Ralph de Diceto, *Opuscula*, ii. 177–80. Interestingly, in this letter Ralph excuses William for devoting himself to the chancery rather than his bishopric, citing the example of Pope Gregory VI. William was still in touch with Ralph in 1106, when he sent him the letter allegedly written by the 'Old Man of the Mountain', leader of the tribe of assassins, exculpating Richard I from having plotted the assassination of Conrad of Montferrat, king of Jerusalem, so that Ralph might include it in his chronicles ('ut de illo agatis in cronicis vestris'; Ralph de Diceto, *Historical Works*, ii. p. viii; *Ymagines*, ii. 128).

up to his expectations).³⁴ Jan Ziolkowski has denied, however, that Nigel's dedications to William of Longchamp were inspired by similar motives. Although Mozley and Raymo referred to William as Nigel's patron, Ziolkowski says, 'it would be forcing the facts to present Nigel in any way as a client poet in the patronage of William'.³⁵ 'Client poet' suggests a stronger relationship of financial dependency than is necessarily implied in the word 'patron'; it might be thought that the dedication of a literary work to someone is enough in itself to justify calling that person an actual or potential patron.³⁶ But Ziolkowski vigorously denies that 'Nigel viewed William as a potential personal benefactor', apparently supposing that Nigel is writing simply as one old friend to another, motivated purely by a moralist's desire to excoriate the failings of the contemporary world.³⁷

Rather than quibbling over the meaning of the word 'patron', however, I think it would be more profitable to investigate further the possible significance of William of Longchamp for a monk of Canterbury, especially at the time that Nigel's two major works were written. Ziolkowski claims that the two works that Nigel dedicated to William were produced at 'exceptionally inopportune moments' for any expectation of patronage.³⁸ I propose to examine this claim by considering the two works and their date of production in turn, beginning with the *Tractatus*. Internal evidence shows that it was written after William's expulsion in 1191 (to which Nigel makes sorrowing reference),³⁹ and also after King Richard's capture in Austria on the way home from the crusade in December 1192, but apparently before his release and return to England in March 1194.⁴⁰ At this point, says Ziolkowski,

³⁴ Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, pp. 48 and n. 97, 60–2 (pp. 45–6 and n. 97, 55–7).

³⁵ *Lawrence*, ed. Ziolkowski, p. 40.

³⁶ Cf. Haskins, 'Henry II. as a patron of literature', p. 71: 'In the earlier Middle Ages, evidence of literary patronage is found chiefly in dedications and sporadic references.'

³⁷ *Lawrence*, p. 40.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Tractatus*, ed. Boutemy, pp. 198–201. The tone of these passages is one of sorrow over the sudden reversals of fickle Fortune: e.g. 'Defluentibus igitur amicis quasi sub prima hieme arborum foliis, et in locum suum recedentibus aquis apparuit arida et frons prius capillata repente decalvata' . . . (p. 200). The account of William's discomfiture uses similarly general and conventional phrasing throughout, and in no way justifies George Rigg's claim that the *Tractatus* is 'a satire, in which the downfall of William, with all its indignities, is fully recounted' ('Nigel of Canterbury', p. 306). On the contrary, Nigel compares William's abandonment by his friends to Peter's denial of Christ, and the intended violence that his enemies would have visited on him had he not retreated to France, to the murder of Becket (*Tractatus*, ed. Boutemy, p. 200).

⁴⁰ *Tractatus*, ed. Boutemy, p. 98. Nigel also speaks (*ibid.* pp. 196–7) of the expulsion of the monks of Coventry, which took place at the end of 1190 (see below, pp. xlvī–xlvii).

'William's brief heyday as England's most powerful figure had ended conclusively in a humiliating exile', and in these circumstances, we could only suppose that Nigel dedicated the *Tractatus* to William 'either because he had no other plausible dedicatee or because he clung to the hope that William would recover politically'.⁴¹ 'Conclusively' is, however, too strong a word; in 1193 it might have seemed entirely likely that William would 'recover politically', and so long as the king was overseas and William was at his side, 'exile' does not seem the appropriate word either. William was still Richard I's chancellor and remained so until his death in 1197.⁴² The débâcle of 1191 did not cost him the king's favour, and he continued to act as Richard's right-hand man.⁴³ He was one of the first to reach him in his captivity and was warmly received; he first negotiated Richard's transfer from the castle of Trifels to the more comfortable surroundings of the imperial court at Hagenau, and was then charged with collecting the ransom to free his master.⁴⁴ William returned to England for this purpose in 1193,⁴⁵ and was not well received in London (where he ordered the seizure of some houses belonging to his enemy the bishop of Coventry) and St Albans, so he soon returned to Richard's side.⁴⁶ But when Richard returned to England in 1194, William came with him, and at the solemn crown-wearing that took place in

⁴¹ *Lawrence*, p. 40.

⁴² William died at Poitiers, on his way to Rome to conduct the king's business at the papal court, at the end of January 1197 (Turner, 'Longchamp, William de (d. 1197)', *ODNB*).

⁴³ In 1193 (at Mantes) and 1194 (at Tillières), William was commissioned by Richard to negotiate truce terms with the king of France (see Landon, *Itinerary of King Richard I*, pp. 78–9, 96–7); in 1195, Richard sent him to the German emperor to discuss with him his offer of support against the French king (*ibid.* pp. 103–4). The only discordant note is Roger of Howden's report that Richard withdrew his seal from William because he was dissatisfied with the terms of the French truce, but the new seal was not brought into use until after William's death, several years later, and it seems that the motive for introducing it and demanding that all existing documents be re-authenticated 'must have been to bring money into the exchequer', which would mean that Richard's 'dissatisfaction' with William's handling of the truce, if Roger's report has any foundation, was only a front to cover the real motive. See Landon, *Itinerary of King Richard I*, Appendix A, especially pp. 176–80 (the quotation is on p. 180).

⁴⁴ Stubbs, *Introductions*, p. 252 = Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, iii. xciii, referring to Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, iii. 209 (a letter from Richard to his mother: 'venit ad nos carissimus cancellarius noster Willelmus Eliensis episcopus'); Gerald, *De vita Galfridi*, ii. 17, *Opera*, iv. 415; William of Newburgh, *Historia*, iv. 33; Gillingham, *Richard I*, p. 239; *id.* 'The kidnapped king', pp. 22–3.

⁴⁵ He had already returned briefly in early 1192, in an attempt to resume his old position, but was unsuccessful since John, having accepted a bribe from William in return for his support, accepted an even larger bribe to withdraw it (Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 512; Stubbs, *Introductions*, pp. 249–50 = Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, iii. lxxxviii–xc).

⁴⁶ Stubbs, *Introductions*, pp. 253–4 = Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, iii. xc–xcvi; Appleby, *England without Richard*, pp. 114–15.

Winchester on 17 April, in a splendid procession made up of archbishops, bishops, abbots, and other clergy, along with earls, barons, knights, and the king of Scotland, 'William, bishop of Ely, his chancellor' walked at the king's right hand.⁴⁷ Richard also took care to punish those who had plotted against William: Hugh of Nonant, bishop of Coventry, Godfrey de Lucy, bishop of Winchester, and Gerard Camville, sheriff of Lincolnshire and constable of Lincoln Castle.⁴⁸ It was now Hugh of Nonant's turn to beat a prudent retreat to the Continent.⁴⁹

So if William's fortunes underwent a reversal in 1191, there was no reason to suppose that it would be permanent.⁵⁰ It is true that Gerald of Wales, switching sides with his usual alacrity, seems to have changed the dedication of his *Itinerarium Cambriae*,⁵¹ and that around 1193 he wrote a slavishly sycophantic life of Geoffrey, archbishop of York, the king's half-brother, in which he included a vicious and indeed scurrilous attack on William (borrowed from a malicious epistle written by his enemy Hugh of Nonant).⁵² In the absence of Richard, Gerald was

⁴⁷ 'a dextris ejus ibat Willelmus Eliensis episcopus, cancellarius suus'; Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, iii. 247; cf. Gillingham, *Richard I*, p. 272.

⁴⁸ For the actions of these people against William, see Stubbs, *Introductions*, pp. 227–32, 237–8, and 244 (= Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, iii. lvi–lxiv, lxxi–lxxii, lxxxii). For Richard's punishments, see Stubbs, *Introductions*, pp. 256–7 (= Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, iii. xcix–c).

⁴⁹ Franklin, 'Nonant, Hugh de (*d.* 1198)', *ODNB*: 'On hearing of the captivity of Richard I in 1193 Bishop Hugh is said to have started immediately for Germany with funds, but to have been robbed en route. And although he reached Richard in Germany, he found it prudent to return almost immediately to France, since his relations with the king appear to have become strained, a situation almost certainly exacerbated by the treasonable behaviour of the bishop's brother Robert... After Richard had returned to England he issued instructions, on 31 March 1194, that Hugh de Nonant should answer for his crimes both as bishop and as sheriff. Bishop Hugh seems to have visited England at some point between 1193 and 1196, he apparently spent most of his time in France and died at the abbey of Bec in March 1198.'

⁵⁰ Peter of Blois wrote to William *c.* 1191, commiserating with him on his ill-treatment at the hands of his envious enemies, and predicting his eventual return to power (*Epistolae*, no. lxxxvii, PL ccvii. 272–6; he also wrote a strongly worded letter to Hugh of Nonant, threatening him with divine judgement for having engineered the downfall of this 'vir sapiens, amabilis, generosus, benignus et mitis, et in omnes liberaliter effusus' (*Epistolae*, no. lxxxix, PL ccvii. 278–81, quotation at 279A).

⁵¹ On the changed dedication, see Gerald of Wales, *Itinerarium Cambriae*, *Opera*, vi. xxxvii–xxxix, and *ibid.*, p. 3, n. 1. The *Itinerarium* is an account of Gerald's travels through Wales with Archbishop Baldwin in 1190, preaching the Third Crusade; the changed dedication and Gerald's flattering remarks about Baldwin (ii. c. 14) were doubtless part of his attempts to win friends and influence people.

⁵² For Gerald's attack, see *De vita Galfridi*, ii. 18–19, *Opera*, iv. 417–31. Hugh's epistle is quoted in full in Roger of Howden, *Gesta*, ii. 215–20, and Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, iii. 141–7; Roger also includes the reply written in defence of William by Peter of Blois (*Chronica*, iii. 148–50). Hugh's epistle has been freshly edited in *English Episcopal Acta xvii. Coventry and Lichfield 1183–1208*, ed. Franklin, Appendix II, 'Bishop Hugh's Open Letter'.

obviously changing his allegiance to the party of Count (later King) John and Geoffrey. 'At this time', Robert Bartlett says, '[Gerald] was a *familiaris* of Count John'.⁵³ But he seems to have been backing the wrong horse; as Bartlett says, it is significant that 'John's unsuccessful rebellion and Richard's return from captivity in 1194' were shortly followed by 'Gerald's retirement from court'.⁵⁴

Gerald's habitual switches of loyalty seem to have left him, in this instance, on the wrong side of the fence. But a monk of Canterbury such as Nigel would have had powerful reasons for continuing to be loyal to William of Longchamp. For it was precisely in 1193 that there seemed to many people to be a strong possibility that William might become archbishop of Canterbury. Archbishop Baldwin (who had, as mentioned earlier, gone on crusade with Richard) died in the Holy Land at the siege of Acre in November 1190;⁵⁵ the news reached Canterbury in March 1191.⁵⁶ The right of electing a new archbishop technically belonged to the monks (or so at least they vigorously claimed),⁵⁷ but the kings of England exerted a strong influence in the matter and generally it was well for the monks if their choice coincided with the king's.⁵⁸ In March 1191, the monks petitioned the king for a free election,⁵⁹ but in May William of Longchamp presented them with a letter from Richard ordering them to elect the archbishop of Monreale (in Sicily, where King Richard currently was).⁶⁰ The monks made no moves towards obeying this order, however, and instead resorted to delaying tactics.⁶¹ Eventually in early December, when the convent was forced to move to an election, they obliged Reginald, the

⁵³ Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales*, p. 65 (p. 59).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Fryde *et al.*, ed., *Handbook of British Chronology*, p. 232.

⁵⁶ Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 490; Stubbs, *Introductions*, p. 413 = *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, Introduction, p. lxxxiv.

⁵⁷ See, for example, Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 490–1, and cf. Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, ii. 287.

⁵⁸ Despite his almost continual absence from England, Richard exerted a strong influence over English episcopal elections, and managed to ensure that a large number of the elections during his reign went to his *curiales* (Turner, 'Richard Lionheart and English episcopal elections'; on regal influence over episcopal elections in general, see p. 3).

⁵⁹ *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, no. cccli.

⁶⁰ *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, no. cccxlviii (the letter had been written in January); Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 493–4. See Stubbs, *Introductions*, p. 231 = Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, iii. lxi–lxii. For Stubbs's suggestions as to why Richard nominated the archbishop of Monreale, see *Introductions*, p. 415 = *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, Introduction, p. lxxxvi.

⁶¹ Stubbs, *Introductions*, p. 417; Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 494. They claimed that the news of Baldwin's death was unreliable and needed to be confirmed before they proceeded with the election (*Epistolae Cantuarienses*, no. cccliv, pp. 333–4).

elderly bishop of Bath, who had shown himself sympathetic to them in the past,⁶² to accept the archiepiscopal office, but he died before the month was out.⁶³ During the whole of 1192 the see remained vacant (since permission to fill it had again to be sought), and it was not until May 1193 that Hubert Walter was elected, on the king's orders, and not until November of that year that he was consecrated. For almost the whole of the period from March 1191 to May 1193, therefore, the archiepiscopal see was vacant. What is more, not only did William of Longchamp desire the post ('he was sniffing after the archbishopric', said Jocelin of Brakelond),⁶⁴ but there is little doubt, as the great historian William Stubbs said, that 'had the election been free the monks would have elected him'.⁶⁵ Count John was so alarmed at the possibility that he wrote them a letter forbidding them to elect William, as he had heard they intended to do.⁶⁶ Having elected Reginald of Bath (probably as a stopgap) only when Count John and his other enemies had driven William out of the country,⁶⁷ they wrote William an apologetic letter explaining that they had acted under duress, when they were deprived of William's 'protection'.⁶⁸ After Reginald's death, the hope of electing William revived, and the monks immediately wrote to him again, sympathizing with him in his recent troubles, which they can well understand as they have troubles of their own. Since they have been deprived of his patronage ('vestro destituti sumus patrocinio'), they

⁶² See Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 410–11, 477.

⁶³ *Ibid.* i. 511–12.

⁶⁴ 'Dicebatur olfacere archiepiscopatum' (Jocelin of Brakelond, *Chronicle*, ed. Butler, p. 52). William of Newburgh (*Historia*, iv. 15) also reports that after Baldwin's death, William forbade Walter, archbishop of Rouen, to go to Canterbury to arrange the election of a new archbishop, because William was 'already aspiring to the honour of that see' ('ad ejusdem jam sedis praerogativam aspirans'). William's letter to Walter is reproduced in Gerald, *De vita Galfridi*, ii. 6, *Opera*, iv. 399–400, and Ralph de Diceto, *Ymagines*, ii. 92–3; it is also reprinted in Stubbs's Appendix to the *Epistolae Cantuarienses* as no. dlxvi (p. 548). William of Newburgh (*Historia*, iv. 18) also records the continuation of William of Longchamp's aspirations after his expulsion in 1191: the archbishop of Rouen and others arranged for the filling of the vacant primacy 'ad quam tyrannus [= William] aspiraverat et forte adhuc aspirabat'. On Reginald's death, William of Newburgh comments: 'spemque cancellarii, sua forte electione mortuam, moriendo resuscitavit'.

⁶⁵ Stubbs, *Introductions*, p. 414 = *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, Introduction, p. lxxxv.

⁶⁶ *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, no. cclxxiv.

⁶⁷ The Canterbury monks were still stalling the election of anyone else even after William's expulsion: when summoned to London in October and pressed to elect the Archbishop of Monreale, the prior declined on the grounds that it was an insult to all the clerics of England to pass them over in favour of a 'personam ignotam' (Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 508). The justiciars thanked the monks for their sensible response and sent them home.

⁶⁸ 'parvitas nostra... vestrae... protectionis quoque gratiam abesse persensit' (*Epistolae Cantuarienses*, no. cclxxxvi).

say, William's enemies have risen against them. To make matters worse, they hear that William is angry with them (obviously because they elected Reginald), and they beg him to understand that their actions were coerced.⁶⁹ It seems that in 1192 or 1193 Richard I actually sent the monks a letter supporting William's election, though he later changed his mind and ordered the election of Hubert Walter (another royal servant).⁷⁰ (Two months after Hubert's election a letter arrived forbidding them to elect *him*,⁷¹ testifying to a fair amount of dithering on Richard's part; he seems to have been under pressure from various interest groups.⁷²) Possibly Richard thought his chancellor's services too valuable to lose.⁷³

The Context: Canterbury

Why were the monks of Canterbury so keen to have William as their archbishop? One important reason is that he had shown himself sympathetic to their interests. In October 1190, while Archbishop Baldwin was on crusade, the Canterbury monks complained at a council of bishops held in Westminster, under the aegis of William in his role as papal legate, that a new bishop had been elected at Worcester without Canterbury's consent or knowledge. They insisted that the consecration should be performed only by the bishop of Rochester, nominated

⁶⁹ *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, no. cccxcii, written in January 1192. Note that in this letter they proclaim themselves 'memores beneficiorum quae nobis contulistis, pro quibus omnibus condigne vobis respondere speramus, et expectamus in tempore opportuno' (p. 357).

⁷⁰ This is implied by a letter written by Richard to his mother Eleanor of Aquitaine, charging her to go to Canterbury and secure the election of Hubert Walter, and to ignore any previous letters of his recommending the election of William of Longchamp or the bishop of Bath ('Et si forte aliquid mandatum a nobis accepistis in contrarium, pro cancellario vel pro Bathoniensi episcopo, vel pro aliquo alio, proculdubio vos scire volumus quod illud cassamus, et omne mandatum quod de caetero de cancellaria nostra emanabit, in contrarium': *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, no. ccccliii (p. 365); cf. Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 517–18).

⁷¹ *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, no. ccccv.

⁷² Stubbs, *Introductions*, p. 418 = *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, Introduction, pp. xc–xci. In the letter already quoted, Richard writes to his mother: 'Satis enim vestra novit dilectio, quod dum in custodia tenemur, oportet nos precibus magnorum virorum cedere, et pro quibusdam supplicare, quos nullatenus promovere vellemus': *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, no. ccccliii (p. 365). This probably refers to Savaric, bishop of Bath, a relative of the German/Roman emperor; for Savaric's career, see Stubbs, *Introductions*, p. 415, n. 4 = *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, Introduction, p. lxxvii, n. 1. However, Richard sent contradictory letters on other occasions, suggesting a degree of chronic indecisiveness. See Richard of Devizes, *Chronicle*, p. 14 (on the quarrel between the bishop of Salisbury and the monastery of Malmesbury) and pp. 13–14 (Richard's change of heart on the question of whether his brother John was to be allowed to come to England for three years after he had left on crusade).

⁷³ For Richard's later employment of William on important business, see above, nn. 42 and 43.

by Baldwin as deputy in his absence, and should take place at Canterbury, not in London. William responded tactfully and declared his willingness to uphold the rights of Canterbury; the following month he visited Canterbury and was received by the convent 'with honour' ('honorifice').⁷⁴ The dispute rumbled on, however,⁷⁵ and was finally settled at a meeting of bishops held at Canterbury in May 1191, when William agreed to perform the consecration himself, in his capacity as papal legate,⁷⁶ the new bishop having promised obedience to the archbishop and church of Canterbury.⁷⁷ Similarly, at about the same time, when news came that the king's half-brother Geoffrey was preparing to be consecrated archbishop of York in France, William wrote a circular letter forbidding any Continental archbishops or bishops to perform the consecration, since this was to be done only in Canterbury by the archbishop.⁷⁸

Even more important, it seems that William was prepared to take the monks' part in their bitter and protracted dispute with Archbishop Baldwin, which was probably the most dramatic ecclesiastical quarrel of the twelfth century after the row between Henry II and Thomas Becket (and lasted much longer). The quarrel is documented in the *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, a collection of letters and documents compiled by the monastery shortly after the event (Nigel is mentioned in two of them and may have been the author of another),⁷⁹ and in Gervase of

⁷⁴ Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 485–8.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 490.

⁷⁶ Technically speaking William's legateship terminated with the death of Pope Clement III in March 1191, but Gervase's account of this episode consistently refers to William as legate (*Chronicle*, i. 491–3), and it was only on this basis that he can have been accepted as qualified to perform the consecration. Pope Celestine III renewed the legateship without question. A full list of the contemporary references to William as legate, and an analysis of their significance, is given in Landon, *Itinerary of King Richard I*, Appendix G (pp. 215–18). William's commission finally lapsed in 1194, when the title was transferred to Hubert Walter, the newly appointed archbishop of Canterbury (the primate was the usual holder of the office, and it was because of Baldwin's absence in the Holy Land that it had been given to William).

⁷⁷ Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 492–3. See also Richard of Devizes, *Chronicle*, p. 27. It was on this occasion that William presented the monks with the king's letter instructing them to elect the archbishop of Monreale (see above, p. xl); neither he nor they would have been willing that the king's instructions should be carried out.

⁷⁸ Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 497; *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, no. cccxliv; but cf. no. cccxlii. In 1191, William also supported the monks' claim to a whale that had been washed up on their land in Kent, in gratitude for which they sent him the tongue and part of the head (Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 489).

⁷⁹ Nigel is mentioned in *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, no. cccxxvi, where he is said to have been threatened by Archbishop Baldwin ('Nigellus valde minatus est ab archiepiscopo': p. 312) and no. cccxxix (p. 317). The case for his authorship of *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, no. cccxxii rests on the second of the four lines of verse with which the letter ends: 'Maxima pars nostri

Canterbury's *Chronicle*.⁸⁰ It arose from Baldwin's proposal to found a college of canons at Hackington, a suburb to the north of Canterbury, less than half a mile from the cathedral.⁸¹ It was a peculiarly English system that the religious communities serving the major cathedrals were convents of monks, rather than chapters of canons.⁸² This meant that the bishop or archbishop was the titular abbot as an automatic consequence of his episcopal appointment, whether he himself was a monk or not. The day-to-day running of the monastery was under the charge of the prior. Archbishop Baldwin was a monk, but he was a Cistercian, whereas the Canterbury monks were Benedictines. The hostility between black and white monks which was ubiquitous in the twelfth century probably fuelled the quarrel. Baldwin's aims in seeking to establish a college of canons are easily understandable: it was not very convenient for archbishops to have a body of monks at their disposal, since so much of their time was taken up with the divine office, and their mobility was restricted because they were in theory supposed to remain cloistered. It was far more useful to have a body of secular clerics, who could perform the administrative tasks that the primate's role in national affairs necessarily entailed.⁸³ Also, it was useful to be able to reward or recruit public servants by giving them a prebend—which the archbishop clearly could not do with a monastic community.

The Canterbury monks were, predictably, violently opposed to Baldwin's proposal. In the first place, they objected that this new community was to be funded out of their endowments. This was a knotty

dimidiumque mei, which echoes *SS* line 4 (quoted in n. 18 above). See Stubbs, *Introductions*, p. 414, n. 2 = *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, Introduction, p. lxxxv, n. 2. However, the phrase 'dimidium animae meae' seems to have been a cliché in current use at Canterbury and elsewhere. Already in the 11th c. Guibert of Nogent remarked 'amicos animarum nostrarum dimidium . . . appellare solemus', 'we customarily call our friends "half our souls"' (*De sanctis et eorum pignibus*, ii. line 117 (ed. Huygens, CCCM cxxvii, p. 113), and Thomas Becket uses it in several of his letters (*Becket Correspondence*, i. 606, 610 (no. cxxvi), i. 646 (no. cxl), i. 788 (no. clxxii), ii. 840 (no. clxxxix)), so it does not conclusively prove Nigel's authorship.

⁸⁰ Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 332–502. Gervase lays out the grounds of the dispute in the first of the two *Imaginationes* included in his *Chronicle* (i. 29–68, and see Stubbs's Introduction, pp. xvii–xix). For a detailed account of the sequence of events in the quarrel, with special emphasis on its local dimensions in Canterbury, see Sweetinburgh, 'Caught in the cross-fire'.

⁸¹ 'dominus Baldwinus . . . congregationem secularium clericorum sub festinatione proposuit statuere in ecclesia Sancti Stephani, quae tribus fere stadiis a Cantuaria distat ad aquilonem' (Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 337).

⁸² See Knowles, *Monastic Order*, ch. 36: 'The cathedral monasteries and the bishops' abbeys', and Stubbs, *Introductions*, pp. 371–8 = *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, Introduction, pp. xxi–xxxii.

⁸³ As was explained by Peter of Blois in arguing Baldwin's case to Pope Urban III (Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 368).

point. It was customary for the income from certain estates to be earmarked for individual monastery offices (prior, cellarer, etc.) or for particular uses (the monks' table, alms-giving). On this system, the archbishop had controlled his own individual income, which was certainly large enough for him to finance his proposed foundation.⁸⁴ The problem was that Baldwin's predecessors had over time surrendered their rights to this income, not out of liberal impulses, but to prevent it falling into the king's hands during periods when the see was vacant.⁸⁵ So while Baldwin felt he had moral rights over this income, the monks could point to the titular rights they had acquired over it. Secondly, this college of canons was going to be dedicated to Saints Stephen and Thomas Becket, and the monks were afraid that the archbishop was going to transfer Becket's body (the source of considerable wealth to them) to the new foundation.⁸⁶ Thirdly, they feared that they would lose the right to elect the archbishop of Canterbury.⁸⁷

The battle over these matters was violent and lengthy (the quarrel revived under Hubert Walter, Baldwin's successor, and was finally settled only in 1201).⁸⁸ The monks appealed to the pope, sending representatives from the convent to plead their case in person;⁸⁹ the prior Honorius and several other monks spent a considerable amount of time in Italy between 1186 and 1188, dragging themselves from Verona to Pisa to Rome in pursuit of various popes (two of whom died in 1187).⁹⁰ Five of these monks died of plague in July 1188, and Honorius himself died of the same cause in October 1188.⁹¹ (One of Nigel's *Epigrams* is in praise of Honorius, and another laments his death).⁹²

⁸⁴ See the detailed discussion of the complex relations between archiepiscopal and conventional revenues at Canterbury in Crosby, *Bishop and Chapter*, pp. 66–105, especially pp. 95–102 on Archbishop Baldwin. Similar tussles between monks and their bishop over their relative endowments occurred in 12th-c. Ely, and William of Longchamp played a part in achieving an acceptable solution (Karn, 'The twelfth century', pp. 13–14).

⁸⁵ Stubbs, *Introductions*, p. 377 = *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, Introduction, p. xxx.

⁸⁶ Pope Urban III mentions having heard a rumour to this effect (Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 368–9; cf. i. 431). Later, Hubert Walter tried to assuage the monks' fears by promising not to do this (Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 546).

⁸⁷ Gervase (*Chronicle*, i. 337) claims that Henry II perceived Baldwin's proposal as a means of subverting the convent's right to a free election of their archbishop ('cernens itaque subtilissimus rex hoc commento jura Cantuariensis ecclesiae et libertatem quam maxime in electione sui pontificis usque ad haec habuerat tempora posse subnervari'). Again, Hubert Walter later assured the monks that he would not try to destroy this right (Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 546).

⁸⁸ Stubbs, *Introductions*, p. 430 = *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, Introduction, p. cix.

⁸⁹ Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 345, 356, 366.

⁹⁰ Stubbs, *Introductions*, pp. 386, 396, 399–402 = *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, Introduction, pp. xliii, lviii, lxiii–lxvii.

⁹¹ *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, no. cclxxxix; Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 429.

⁹² *Epigrams*, nos. ii and xi, ed. Ziolkowski, *Lawrence*, pp. 250, 260–3.

The archbishop looked for help from the king, and also sent his own representatives to the papal curia.⁹³ Half England seems to have been dragged into the dispute one way or another, and prelates on the Continent also became involved (for example, the case was brought to the general chapter of the Cistercian order at Cîteaux in 1188, where, predictably, the abbot of Cîteaux found it hard to believe that Baldwin had behaved so badly).⁹⁴ At home, matters reached such a pitch that at one point the monks were physically imprisoned in the monastery by the setting of guards on the gates to the close and the cemetery; they were thus immured for 84 weeks, during which time they were dependent on the gifts of pilgrims for food. During most of this time, divine service was suspended.⁹⁵

In late 1189, Richard I interested himself in the Canterbury quarrel and tried to persuade the monks to submit their case to arbitrators (one of whom was William of Longchamp, in his capacity as bishop-elect of Ely).⁹⁶ At the end of November, Richard 'and his whole court', including William, came to Canterbury and effected a temporary settlement.⁹⁷ Baldwin agreed to remove the prior, Roger Norreys, whom he had forced on the convent, and to demolish the chapel at Hackington. However, shortly afterwards he re-established it at Lambeth and the quarrel started up again.⁹⁸ William himself seems not to have started out as a strong partisan of the monks' cause, since he presided over a council held at Westminster in October 1190 which licensed Hugh of Nonant, the bishop of Coventry, to expel the monks of his cathedral

⁹³ Among these representatives was Peter of Blois, who was then in the archbishop's service; Peter argued Baldwin's case before Pope Urban III in 1187 and incurred the hatred of the Canterbury monks on this account (see Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 356, 368–9). In a letter to the bishop of Soissons and the abbots of Igny and Pontigny (dated to the 1190s by Revell), Peter mounted a vigorous defence of Baldwin's proposed college of canons (at this date intended for Lambeth); see Peter of Blois, *Later Letters*, ed. Revell, Letter 10 = *Epistolae*, no. ccxi, PL ccvii. 492–5, also printed in the Appendix to *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, no. dlxxi (pp. 554–7). Peter later humbly apologized to the monks for having acted against their interests, and promised to make amends (*Epistolae*, no. ccxxxiii, PL ccvii. 534–5, also included in *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, no. cclv). See also Cotts, *Clerical Dilemma*, pp. 36–7, 90, 149–50, 158–60.

⁹⁴ *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, no. cclxxiv.

⁹⁵ Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 398–405. Nigel's *Epigram* 11 refers to this crisis in the monastery's life: 'Ouibus sua pascua tollit/ pastor et impastas carcere claudit eas... a cantu Cantica mesta silet' (25–6, 40).

⁹⁶ Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 461–81. On William as arbitrator, see p. 469.

⁹⁷ Stubbs, *Introductions*, p. 408 = *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, Introduction, p. lxxvi. Cf. Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 474–83. Charters sealed by William in his official capacity as chancellor show that he was in Canterbury from 29 November until 5 December (Landon, *Itinerary of King Richard I*, pp. 18–21).

⁹⁸ Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 484.

chapter and replace them by canons.⁹⁹ The final expulsion at Coventry took place around Christmas 1190,¹⁰⁰ and in his *Tractatus* Nigel refers to it with horror and asks William to examine his conscience and decide what responsibility he bears in the matter.¹⁰¹ William, however, seems to have changed his position—perhaps shocked by the expulsion, perhaps influenced by Hugh of Nonant’s enmity to him in late 1191.¹⁰² The very last document in the *Epistolae Cantuarienses* (a statement of the monastery’s case in response to some proposals from Hubert Walter for settlement of the conflict in 1198) ends with a story about William, relating his response when he was urged by some important men to establish in his own memory a college of canons on some of the cleared land on the estates of his church at Ely.¹⁰³ He replied that he had often thought of doing this, but had rejected the idea because it would have been a cause of scandal between him and the monks of Ely, who had accepted him, a secular cleric, although they themselves were monks, while none of the vacant sees appropriate for secular clerics

⁹⁹ Richard of Devizes, *Chronicle*, p. 13. See Knowles, *Monastic Order*, pp. 322–4. There had been an earlier ‘trial run’ of the expulsion in October 1189; Gervase of Canterbury (*Chronicle*, i. 461) vividly describes the physical violence inflicted on the monks. However, at a council held at Westminster in the same month, Hugh of Nonant had complained to his fellow-bishops that his monks had laid violent hands on him (Richard of Devizes, *Chronicle*, p. 8). Possibly William had been at first convinced by this that Hugh was the victim rather than the aggressor.

¹⁰⁰ Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 488–9.

¹⁰¹ *Tractatus*, ed. Boutemy, p. 197. Since he was present at the Westminster meeting in November 1189 which was held to discuss the Canterbury quarrel (*Epistolae Cantuarienses*, no. cccxxix, pp. 315, 317), Nigel must have heard Hugh of Nonant’s sardonic comment to King Richard, as reported by Gervase of Canterbury (*Chronicle*, i. 470): ‘Cestrensis [= Hugh] autem exclamans et subsannans dixit ad regem: “Heohe! Nonne dixi vobis de monachis? Si michi velletis adquiescere, infra breve spatium temporis nec unus remaneret in Anglia. Monachos ad diabolos”.’ Cf. *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, no. cccxxix (p. 318).

¹⁰² William of Newburgh (*Historia*, iv. 36) comments on William’s initial support for Hugh on the expulsion, but says that Hugh soon changed sides and went over to Count John’s party. Stubbs (*Introductions*, p. 226 = Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, Introduction, iii. liv–lv) thought that William may have ‘hesitated to sanction the oppressive means by which the change was carried out’, or perhaps, when the see of Canterbury became vacant, he prudently decided to take the side of cathedral monasteries; for whatever cause, the friendship between Hugh and William was abruptly converted into violent enmity. The *Annales Wintonienses*, in recording William’s death, mention his connivance at the Coventry expulsion as a blot on his otherwise impeccable record as ‘a father of monks’: ‘homo quidem prudentia saeculi et gratia labiorum mira aestimatione insignis, et quo nemo unquam in integritate semel conceptae dilectionis fidelior extitit; qui et merito pater monachorum poterat appellari, nisi cum olim utrumque teneret gladium apostolica auctoritate et regia, consiliis consensisset religioni adversantium, ut in magno concilio suo apud Londonias ejectionem monachorum de Coventre quantum in ipso fuerat confirmasset’ (*Annales Monastici*, ed. Luard, ii. 64).

¹⁰³ *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, no. dlvii (p. 538).

had appointed him at that time; he therefore felt bound by gratitude to them to introduce no cause of dissension. He also remembered Archbishop Baldwin, and the disturbances that his attempts to found a college of canons had caused. When it was suggested that Baldwin's mistake was to found a canonry so near to the monastery, he said the distance was immaterial, so long as the new foundation diminished the wealth of the monastery. This story gives us a good indication of why the Canterbury monks would have thought of William as a friend and supporter, and why, in 1192–3, they were anxious to have him as their archbishop, despite the fact that he was not a monk.¹⁰⁴

So, it is not really the case that the *Tractatus* was written at an 'exceptionally inopportune' moment to address William. On the contrary, it was written at a time when he seemed to be poised to play a major role in the Canterbury community and also in the nation at large. The *Tractatus* reflects at various points the concerns of the Canterbury monks between 1191 and 1193: most notably, it insists on the right to the free election of bishops or abbots and complains at the interference of kings in the electoral process.¹⁰⁵ Its appeal to William to give up affairs of state and devote himself to his duties as a bishop, and the final exhortation to him to imitate Thomas Becket, who gave up his chancellorship when he became archbishop of Canterbury, look like very strong hints as to the desirable course of action if William in his turn were to become archbishop.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ The 13th-c. Christ Church obituary in London, British Library, MS Cotton Nero C. IX, fo. 4^r, records William's death as follows: 'II Kal. Feb. Willelmus eliensis episcopus frater et b[ene]factor]' (*Tractatus*, ed. Boutemy, p. 112).

¹⁰⁵ See *Tractatus*, ed. Boutemy, pp. 178–81. The complaint that bishops who are completely unknown to the electors are forced on them by the king (p. 178) seems likely to refer to the king's proposal of the Archbishop of Monreale.

¹⁰⁶ 'Sed et ille [Thomas Becket] aliquando regis fuerat cancellarius tantaeque potestatis ut post regem ipsum videretur totius regni dominus. Verumtamen, ex quo ordinatus est in episcopum, ulterius non est reversus ad cancellariae officium, sed nec etiam voluit ecclesiam quae eum vocaverat ingredi, aut consentire electioni, nisi omnino liber et absolutus ab omni potestate et exactione fisci, sciens quod utraque officia pariter non posset sine ordinis sui periculo expedire. Unde altero non transitorie neque ad tempus relicto, sed in perpetuum relegato, altero fideliter adhaesit et in eo usque in finem perseveravit; nec tamen id fecit coactus, sed spontaneus, cum adhuc eo tempore a regis gratia non excidisset, sed in ulteriorem ipsius amicitiam receptus, posset, si vellet, non solum cancellariam retinere, sed etiam quicquid a rege peteret impetrare. Hunc utinam non quasi per speculum et in aenigmate intuearis, sed ita facie ad faciem ut opera eius imiteris . . .' (*Tractatus*, ed. Boutemy, pp. 206–7). This passage best fits a situation when it seemed possible that William might become archbishop of Canterbury, but as a general admonition it would also be applicable to Hubert Walter, the king's eventual choice for the archbishopric, who was just as important a royal servant as William. In the earlier part of the *Tractatus*, where Nigel talks about the inappropriateness of

What about the *Speculum Stultorum*? The quarrel with Baldwin seems to have left its mark on the poem at several points. In the first place, Nigel takes the opportunity of being rude about the Cistercians (the order to which Baldwin belonged). Fromundus, the monk who sets the dogs on Burnellus, is a Cistercian, and Nigel describes him as having the cruelty of his kind (877–80). In his survey of the monastic orders, Burnellus admits that the Cistercians are hard-working, but accuses them of being greedy for land and wealth, and secretly breaking the rule against meat-eating. Having made fun of them for wearing no breeches under their monastic habits, Burnellus moves into a long diatribe against ‘false brethren’ (2161–80) who are the source of every evil, and who are as little entitled to be in the cloister as Satan was to be in Paradise.

Anti-Cistercianism is of course pervasive in twelfth-century satirical literature, so that not too much can be read into these attacks. Much more unusual is the vitriolic attack on secular canons, which accuses them of subverting the order of the Church, and, significantly, of corrupting bishops and the king:¹⁰⁷

There are also those called secular canons, who have earned their name from their function [i.e. secular = worldly]. For them, whatever pleases them is lawful and legitimate; this is the canon under which the whole pack of them has determined to live. They do not rule out or hold in contempt anything which ministers to the flesh. And this thing in particular they have set up as something to be observed by all for all time: that, as the old law commanded, no male should be without a female, and that each male can have two females. They hold to the world, and lest its drooping flower should quickly wither, they take care to water it frequently. These are they who do whatever the wantonness of the flesh commands, so that the path to their vices may be smooth. They lead the whole world into error; they go first and take a headlong tumble. The world does not possess them but rather they the world, and because they drive it downwards, it topples from its foundations. Ready to undermine the foundations of the faith, what they recommend in their teaching they demolish in their practice. It is through them that the force, rule, and power of

a secular head of a monastic community, he may even be suggesting to William that he should become a monk if he wishes to be an archbishop who can act as a true head of the Canterbury community. Most of the preceding archbishops had been monks, and as he was dying, Reginald of Bath expressed a wish to become a monk; Richard of Devizes reports that he actually did so (*Chronicle*, p. 56), but the *Epistolae Cantuarienses* (nos. ccclxxxviii–ccclxxxix) make clear that he died before the prior bringing him the monastic cowl reached him.

¹⁰⁷ Richard of Devizes (*Chronicle*, pp. 70–1) has some equally acerbic, though much briefer, comments on secular canons, but they too are prompted by particular historical circumstances—viz., the replacement of monks by secular canons at Coventry (see above, pp. xlvi–xlvii).

bishops falters and the order of the church becomes disordered. Through them, respect for the clergy grows faint and dies, and the glory of religious life dwindles to nothing. By their counsel kings plan wicked deeds, and give free rein to what they should hold back. They are the evil associates of bishops and kings—a wandering foot, a lying tongue, a grasping hand, a double heart, counterfeit love, a godless name, a concealed wrath, a real turbulence and a false calm, a bottomless purse, a robber without the name of robbery, a lying scale of truth and a truthful measure of fraud, law without the law of God, and canon without the rule of Christ, the preceding cause of evil, a page on which guile is written. They are the ones who have prostituted virgin justice, and have taught their tongues to utter falsehoods. While they endeavour to prop up the tottering world, they stagger when it staggers and fall when it falls. Their life is toil, their path slippery, their glory is shit and their end doubtful, grief their sure reward. (2315–54)

This tirade is clearly inspired by Baldwin's proposal to set up a college of canons that would undermine the rights of the Canterbury community.¹⁰⁸ But this supposition runs into an obvious difficulty, namely that it cannot be squared with Boutemy's suggested date for the *Speculum Stultorum*, 1179–80.¹⁰⁹ Baldwin did not become archbishop until 1184, and it was not until 1186 that he first put forward his proposal for the new college of canons at Hackington. The passage on the secular canons as well as several other pieces of evidence speak in favour of placing it considerably later than Boutemy thought.¹¹⁰

The Date

Burnellus's survey of the monastic orders contains an even clearer indication of a date in the late 1180s or even later: the section on the Grandmontines makes clear reference to a legal dispute within the order which first broke out in 1185:

They trouble the public law courts with quarrels and various lawsuits, and a simple case is dragged out at length. Having no property, they yet run up expenses, and a long-buried case turns into a marathon [lit. 15 years long]. Divided into two, they work hard and long, and continually put themselves to

¹⁰⁸ John Cotts discusses Nigel's outburst against the secular clergy, comparing it with Peter of Blois's vacillating attitudes to the same body (see Cotts, 'Critique'). However, Cotts assumes that Nigel's description of secular canons is a reflection of his previous experience, based on encounters with those of them who were in archiepiscopal service; in my view, even if his experience played a part in his attitude, his deliberately and obviously exaggerated description is far more proactive—that is, it is a violent attempt to ward off the threat of Baldwin's proposed college of canons.

¹⁰⁹ Boutemy, 'Prologue en prose', pp. 72–85; this date is accepted in *Lawrence*, ed. Ziolkowski, p. 40.

¹¹⁰ I argued this in 'Does an author?'

unnecessary expenses. For in a reversal of order the lay-brother rules, while the cleric performs the sacred duties of his office. Disturbed on this account, Grandmont went to Rome, but there too the lawsuit had no end. Their outlay was large, but the Mount is fat and rich, providing them with all things from its milk, and although no one ploughs it, sows it, or reaps it, it miraculously brings forth at will whatever they want. So why is it that the man who lives like an angel inwardly is so often battered about in the public court? (2211–26)

As Raymo's note (to 2211–22) points out, Nigel's reference to the expenditure of time and money suggests that the quarrel has been running for some time, pointing to 1187 or 1188 at the earliest. It would be possible to suggest that this passage, and the section on the secular canons, were later additions to the poem, but the textual transmission of the poem yields no sign of an earlier version from which these passages were absent.¹¹¹ The α group of manuscripts lacks lines 2483–3258 and 3449–900, and the γ group breaks off at line 2602, but both groups contain the monastic survey in lines 2051–464.¹¹²

The section on the Carthusians points the same way, though more unobtrusively. In the late twelfth century, there was only one Carthusian foundation in England: the monastery at Witham, Somerset, in the diocese of Wells, established by Henry II (supposedly as part of his penances for the murder of Thomas Becket). References to this monastery date from 1179/80, but the foundations for its permanent buildings seem to have been begun only in 1181/82.¹¹³ It is therefore rather surprising, to say the least, that Nigel includes the Carthusians in the survey of monastic orders, and also that he seems to be so well informed about the everyday practices of this comparatively recent order. Although Burnellus is supposed to be Italian, the monastic orders listed in the survey display a particularly English bias (especially as regards the Gilbertines), and there is no reason to think that Nigel would have had any acquaintance with Carthusian houses on the Continent. And whereas he comments on the Gilbertine order as a 'noua res' (2452), although it was founded around 1130, he does not comment on the recent arrival of the Carthusians in England. His description of Carthusian life is therefore more easily accounted for if it was composed at some time in the 1190s when the Carthusian community had become a more familiar part of the English monastic scene.

¹¹¹ The monastic survey is present in all manuscript versions of the poem except *Fr*; for a possible explanation of its lack in this manuscript, see below, p. lxxi.

¹¹² See below, pp. lxiii–lxvii for details of all the manuscripts.

¹¹³ Thompson, *Carthusian Order*, pp. 59–60.

What, then, was Boutemy's evidence for the earlier dating? It hinges on a passing reference to 'Louis, king of the French' near the beginning of the poem. When Galen is trying to dissuade Burnellus from his desire for a longer tail, he tells him that 'Louis, king of the French' has no longer a tail than he has (201–2). Louis VII died on 18 September 1180, and was succeeded by Philip Augustus. There are several possible explanations for this discrepancy in dating indications. One might argue (though I am not sure that I would) that the action of the poem takes up a number of years (Burnellus spends seven years in Paris, and at least two or three more years are implied) so that a strict timescale would place its opening action ten years in the past. Or one might see it as some kind of private joke, specially aimed at or involving Louis, who visited Canterbury to pray for his health in August 1179 and who was granted fraternity with the community; after his death, he was to be remembered in the prayers of the monks, and there was to be a memorial service celebrated on its anniversary.¹¹⁴ More plausibly, we might suppose that the composition of the *Speculum Stultorum* occupied a number of years, and this reference belongs to an early stage in its composition.¹¹⁵ The late addition of the story of the Grateful Animals and the Ungrateful Man supports the view that the poem evolved in stages, the first of which might have comprised only the ass's desire for a longer tail and the story of the two cows, which includes Galen's remark about Louis VII. However we choose to account *either* for this reference *or* for the passages in the monastic survey, one or the other has to be 'explained away' in fixing a date.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 293; *English Episcopal Acta ii. Canterbury 1162–1190*, ed. Cheney and Jones, no. 164. The *Epistolae Cantuarienses* often invoke Louis's name in appealing to Philip Augustus for assistance in the dispute with Baldwin. Recalling the reference, in the account of Burnellus's time in Paris, to the popular myth that the English have tails (1533–8), one might wonder if Louis had made this joke during his visit.

¹¹⁵ The episodic structure of the poem means that it could well have evolved over a number of years, and in successive stages; the point that is important to my argument is that the dedication to William, and a large amount of material in the poem, fit a date in the 1190s.

¹¹⁶ The other dating indication mentioned by Boutemy ('Prologue in prose', pp. 73–5), the reference to Saladin at *SS* line 2065, in the section on the Templars in the survey of monastic orders, is not decisive. Saladin had, as Boutemy pointed out, already acquired fame in the West through his destruction of the Templar castle at Jacob's Ford in 1179. On this event, see Barber, 'Frontier warfare in the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem'. However, Saladin's greatest triumph was his capture of Jerusalem in 1187, which led to the Third Crusade, in which Richard I played a leading role and had personal contacts with Saladin. See also n. to line 2065. It is interesting that Burnellus's survey of the monastic orders does not begin, as one would expect, with the Benedictines, Cistercians, etc., but with the crusading orders, the Templars and Hospitallers. This would make sense if the *SS* was written during or immediately after the crusade. Saladin died in 1193.

A particularly clear piece of evidence in favour of the later date was overlooked by Boutemy (and also by me, in my article of 2007). Burnellus's travelling companion Arnoldus prefaces his story of Gundulf and the cock by mentioning that it took place in Puglia (Apulia) 'in the time of William, the grandfather/ancestor of the present king' ('tempore Willelmi principis huius aui'; 1255–6). Boutemy does not mention this very specific indication of date; Raymo's note on these lines glosses 'Willelmus' as 'William the Bad (1154–1166)'. William was the second king of Sicily, whose territory at that date embraced the whole of Apulia.¹¹⁷ This would mean that the 'present ruler' of Sicily was Tancred (1190–4), which would be at odds with Mozley and Raymo's date of 1179–80 for the composition of the *Speculum*, though Raymo does not seem to notice this. The dukes of Apulia/kings of Sicily in the second half of the twelfth century were as follows: William I (the Bad), 1154–66; his son, William II (the Good), 1166–89; William II's (illegitimate) cousin Tancred, 1190–4; Tancred's son William III, 1194.¹¹⁸ Strictly speaking, none of these kings was the grandfather or grandson of any other; 'auus' may simply mean 'ancestor', or it may be supposed that Nigel assumed a direct line of descent and was not accurately informed on their exact relation to each other. But what is clear is that to allow for two changes in succession to the throne after a king called William, 'the present prince' must be either Tancred or William III, and in either case this would fix the date of *SS* well after 1179–80. It seems unlikely that 'the present prince' is William III, who was a child of four and whose reign lasted only from February 1194 to November of the same year, when he was deposed by the Hohenstaufen emperor Henry VI.¹¹⁹ This would mean dating *SS* to a very brief period in 1194, and it seems more probable that the 'William' in question is William I, and 'the present prince' is Tancred. The reign of 'the present prince' then stretches from 1189 to 1194, and would comfortably fit a date in the early 1190s for the *Speculum*.

Another small pointer in favour of the early 1190s is Burnellus's description of the city of Paris, as he looks back on it, as a 'turreted

¹¹⁷ This William was son of Count Roger II of Sicily, the first to hold the title of king. Roger was crowned king in 1130 and died in 1154.

¹¹⁸ See the genealogical tables in *Roger II*, ed. Loud, p. xii, and Norwich, *The Kingdom in the Sun*, p. 394, and n. to *SS* line 1256.

¹¹⁹ Henry's claim to Sicily was based on his marriage to Constance, daughter of Roger II, first king of Sicily (1130–54). Duke Leopold VI of Austria, who had captured Richard I in late 1192 on his way home from the crusade, transferred his captive to Henry in March 1193; Henry used the enormous ransom raised for Richard's release in February 1194 to finance his capture of the kingdom of Sicily.

city', 'surrounded with mighty walls' (1921–2). The construction of the great walls of Paris was ordered by Philip Augustus in 1190, before he left on crusade to the Holy Land (see n. to these lines). The walls on the Right Bank were built with great rapidity, and would presumably be noticeable and a matter for comment by travellers in the early 1190s.

The final reason for thinking that the *Speculum Stultorum* is more plausibly dated after 1190, rather than to 1179–80, is the dedication to William of Longchamp itself. Jan Ziolkowski has said that it is implausible to think of William as Nigel's patron (in whatever sense of the word) in 1179–80, because at that point 'William was still an unimportant bureaucrat in France'.¹²⁰ True, and for that very reason it is hard to imagine why at that date Nigel should dedicate his poem to him, even if (and this is mere speculation) they had met while studying in Paris and become friends. As noted earlier, Nigel certainly uses the language of affection in addressing William. But twelfth-century writers do not usually dedicate their works to old school chums; rather, they aim to give them prestige and influence by addressing them to the great and the good. In 1180, Richard was duke of Aquitaine, and his activities were entirely Continent-based.¹²¹ Richard did not become

¹²⁰ Lawrence, ed. Ziolkowski, p. 40.

¹²¹ Richard visited England (and Canterbury) briefly in 1179, after his victory at Taillebourg (Gillingham, *Richard I*, p. 62) but it is not at all clear that William was in his service at this time. According to Gerald of Wales (*De vita Galfridi*, ii. 1, *Opera*, iv. 388), William started his career as a clerk in the service of Geoffrey Plantagenet, natural son of Henry II and his chancellor, while Geoffrey was archdeacon of Rouen: 'Praefecerat enim eum officialem per archidiaconatum suum Rothomagensem.' Gerald had earlier explained (*De vita Galfridi*, i. 4, *Opera*, iv. 368) that Henry made Geoffrey his chancellor when the latter resigned the see of Lincoln in 1182, and conferred on him the archdeaconry of Rouen, along with several other offices, to provide him with an income. Gerald (*De vita Galfridi*, ii. 19, *Opera*, iv. 420–1) attributes the departure from Geoffrey's service to William's unpopularity with Henry II, placing it at the time of a rupture between Henry and Richard, caused by the latter's sins. The major breaches between Henry II and his sons occurred in 1173–4 and in 1187–9, but these dates are difficult to reconcile with the rest of Gerald's account. According to David Spear, the only documentary attestation of Geoffrey as archdeacon of Rouen occurs in 1183, though Spear speculates that he may have held the archdeaconry until his election as archbishop of York in 1189 ('Les Archidiacres de Rouen', p. 29; *The Personnel of the Norman Cathedrals*, p. 216). Professor Nicholas Vincent, who is preparing an edition of Richard's charters for the period before he became king, informs me (pers. comm., 17 December 2006, 15 January 2007, 24 September 2022) that William appears as witness to two charters issued by Richard while he was count of Poitou, one dated 1188, the other (in favour of St Peter's, La Réole) undated. On the other hand, a charter issued by Richard on the VI Kal. Januarii (= 27 December), 1181, is said to have been written 'per manum Iohannis cancellarii' (the date of 1181 is confirmed by the inclusion of Pope Lucius III—who was enthroned only on 1 September 1181—in the dating clause); see *Chartes et documents pour servir à l'histoire de l'abbaye de Saint-Maxent*, ed. Richard, 375–6, no. 362. Taken together with Gerald's testimony, this would suggest a date of 1182 or later for William's transfer from

king until 1189, at which point William accompanied him to England. What is more, in 1180 no one could reasonably have *expected* Richard to become king, since his older brother Henry was clearly marked out as the heir, and was actually crowned, well in advance of Henry II's death, on 14 June 1170; until the Young King (Henry) died in 1183, the natural assumption was that he would succeed his father. For these reasons it is hard to see why Nigel—or anyone else—should have dedicated a work to William in 1179–80. If, however, we follow the dating indications in the survey of monastic orders and the allusion to 'William, ruler of Sicily', and place the poem some time in the early 1190s, not only these passages but also the dedication make sense.¹²²

The Motive

A clue to Nigel's motives in dedicating the *Speculum* to William is provided by the prose epistle that accompanies the poem in 32 of the 41 surviving medieval manuscripts. This epistle gives a rather surprising explanation of the poem's narrative:

This ass is a monk, or any man of religion situated in a cloister, who is charged with the service of God as an ass is with bearing burdens, and who, not content with his condition, as the ass is not with his tail, yearns passionately for what he does not naturally have or is totally incapable of having because nature forbids it, who pursues his desire in every way possible, and takes advice from a doctor, that is, from anyone who he thinks is able to give it to him, which in his deluded mind he thinks is possible. He wants his old tail to be torn out and a new one to be implanted, because he totally despises the monastic life in which he ought to persevere to the end in order to be saved, exploring every possible way in which he may be uprooted from it and transplanted to where a

Geoffrey to Richard. Balfour ('William de Longchamp', ch. 2) proposes that William moved to Richard's service in 1184, when relations between Henry and Richard were openly hostile as a result of Richard's refusal to obey Henry's order to surrender Aquitaine to his brother John. (NB: in its entry for 'Longchamp, William de (d. 1197)', *ODNB* misleadingly supplies the obit 1186 for Geoffrey, confusing him with Henry's legitimate son Geoffrey, count of Brittany.) I am grateful to David Balfour, the late Richard Sharpe, Ralph V. Turner, and Nicholas Vincent for helping me to trace William's early career.

¹²² There seem to be two possibilities. The poem might have been written around 1190–1, when William was at the height of his power; it might also have been written after 1194, after Richard's release from captivity and William's restoration to a position of power and influence (in which case it would post-date the *Tractatus*). A strong piece of evidence in favour of the latter possibility is the concluding story of the Grateful Animals and the Ungrateful Man, which was brought to England by Richard I in 1194 (see below for details).

This dating shift is also consistent with O'Daly's 'revised chronology' of Nigel's life, which suggests the possibility that his annotations of Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica* 'took place in several stages from the early 1170s to [their] completion by 1194' ('Reading the *Historia Scholastica*', p. 291).

new and luxuriant tail may grow on him, that is, that he may be able to get himself a prioracy or abbacy, where he can first introduce a numerous retinue of his relatives, and then drag them after him like a tail wherever he goes. (*Epistle to William*, 10–13)

Nothing in the poem suggests that Burnellus represents a monk (unlike the *Ysengrimus*, where the other animals consistently address the wolf as ‘abbot’). And the idea that his desire for a longer tail represents a desire for a prioracy or abbacy so that he can drag after himself a long retinue of his relatives seems to be on a par with the wilder excesses of medieval biblical exegesis. Equally unexpected allegorical explanations are proposed for other episodes of the poem. Galen’s story of the two cows is said to represent two types of men in religious life. The first represents those who are

excessively indiscreet and very rash, who when any adversity comes along, as if constricted by a frost, are enslaved and blinded by a tenderness for their relatives, as the cow is by love for her calf, and immediately cut off their tails, that is, they cast far from them the remembrance of death, with which they ought to protect themselves from the flies that fly about and sting. Not looking to the future nor calculating the outcome of events in their frenzy, they cut off without hope of recovery their old friends, who could come to them in their need, and completely uproot them (*Epistle to William*, 21–3).

The second cow represents those ‘ruled by a riper counsel’, who look to the future, and ‘patiently bear the onslaughts of the impatient’, calling to their mind ‘those who are forgetful and ungrateful for benefits’ (*Epistle to William*, 24, 26). Protected by their tails (that is, the thought of their last end), they will survive the torments of heat—that is, the Last Judgment (*Epistle to William*, 29). Next, Nigel explains that Burnellus buying the ten glass jars represents a monk who desperately seeks, by a mixture of flattery and bribery, to acquire men’s favour, which is as fragile as glass, but having been ‘whirled above his station to a position where he may fulfil his foolish and empty desires, he loses even the little he possessed before’ (*Epistle to William*, 37).

These surprising explanations are, as Fritz Peter Knapp says, ‘over-interpretations’ (‘Überinterpretationen’).¹²³ That is, they are not so much allegory as allegoresis or ‘imposed allegory’.¹²⁴ True allegory brings together two areas of discourse in a metaphorical relationship

¹²³ ‘Das mittelalterliche Tierepos’, p. 59.

¹²⁴ See Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery*, ch. 4, ‘Imposed Allegory’, and, for the distinction between allegory and allegoresis, Quilligan, *The Language of Allegory*, pp. 25–6, 29–32.

that seems to be grounded in an existential similarity (such as the progress through life and going on pilgrimage, or making love to a woman and plucking a rose). As William Empson astutely said: 'Part of the function of an allegory is to make you feel that two levels of being correspond to one another in detail, and indeed that there is some underlying reality, something in the nature of things, which makes this happen. Either level may illuminate the other.'¹²⁵ Allegoresis, on the other hand, proceeds by interpreting individual episodes, characters, features of landscape, and so on, in piecemeal fashion, finding ingenious and unsuspected equivalents for the details of the narrative. The ad hoc impression made by these particular allegorical explanations is strengthened by the fact that at this point in the epistle Nigel switches to explanations of a straightforwardly literal type (that is, they do not involve metaphor). Fromundus (who, of course, is not a metaphorical monk but a real one) is said to signify those who try to outwit and trick their simpler brethren by cunning and who often fall into the nets that they themselves have spread. The ass's 'foolish' and 'imprudent' boasts (about his cleverness in outwitting Fromundus) are said to signify (because they *are*) 'imprudent and futile meditations' (*Epistle to William*, 40). The story of the vengeful cock, Nigel says, does not need any explanation because it is 'self-explanatory' (*Epistle to William*, 42)—that is, it is about those who do not forget injuries. The ass's inability to learn anything at the university signifies—again, in a quite unmetaphorical way—those who have not the wit to learn anything and who hypocritically lay claim to a knowledge they do not possess (*Epistle*, 44–8). Burnellus's survey of the monastic orders is said to be a way of criticizing them by means of a comic pretence (that the ass wishes to become a monk) (*Epistle to William*, 50).

At this point, the explanatory epistle breaks off, leaving the last 1,400 lines of the poem without authorial comment. Various explanations for its abrupt ending have been proposed: that the exemplar of the epistle lost a final folio,¹²⁶ or that the poem itself was originally

¹²⁵ Empson, *The Structure of Complex Words*, p. 346.

¹²⁶ André Boutemy, 'Prologue en prose', p. 69. Boutemy draws attention to the word 'interserit' ('inserts'), used in the penultimate sentence of the epistle ('Vnde Burnellus quaedam de diuersis ordinibus interserit, uolens iocosa quaedam insimulatione reprehendere quae nouerat aspera increpatione nequaquam se posse extirpare. Multa enim genera morborum sunt quae utilius unguentum quam cauterium ad medelam admittunt'; *Epistle to William*, 49–50). Boutemy thinks that if the survey of the religious orders is 'inserted' into the narrative, this implies that something followed it, and therefore the poem must have continued past this point.

much shorter.¹²⁷ But it is hard not to feel that the rest of the poem might come under the ‘self-explanatory’ heading. So far from feeling that we have been deprived of the key to the end of the poem, we may well feel that we have been provided with a key to its beginning that we did not really need and do not quite know what to do with. Although, in his verse prologue at the opening of the poem, Nigel urges the reader to pay attention not to the words of his poem but to their inner meaning (9–10), this seems to be no more than the conventional fable-writer’s claim that his absurd animal anecdotes embody moral wisdom. The allegorical explanations do not strike us as opening up the true meaning of the narrative, and they cannot be sustained beyond an individual episode. If, for example, Burnellus *signifies* a monk in the opening episode, how are we to interpret his later decision to *become* a monk?¹²⁸ And how are we to know when an episode is to be interpreted allegorically, and when it is supposed to be ‘self-explanatory’? The *Epistle* seems to need as much interpreting as the poem.

Yet if we look at the prose epistle, not as a decipherment of the *Speculum Stultorum*, but as putting a number of threads into our hands, we shall see that they form part of a complex web of meaning which encompasses both the poem and its context. First, the epistle’s various interpretations stress the centrality of monastic life: those episodes of the poem in which monks or monasticism appear are interpreted literally, while in those episodes where monks and monasticism do not appear they are ‘read in’ allegorically. Since Nigel of Longchamp was a monk this is not surprising, but it does suggest that he is writing not as a disembodied moral observer but from a particular social (and perhaps individual) stance. Secondly, if we piece together the various interpretations in the epistle, a set of overlapping concerns begins to emerge: desire for promotion to the position of abbot or prior; favouritism or fondness for relatives; neglect of old friends in favour of relatives; ingratitude; vengeance for old injuries; monastic ambition; monastic deviousness; monastic hypocrisy and false pretensions to

¹²⁷ Nigel of Longchamp, ‘*Epistola ad Willelmum*’, ed. Mozley, p. 14. Mozley cited in support of this hypothesis the ‘remarkable lack of firmness in the manuscript tradition in the latter part of the poem’; some manuscripts (*LEF*) have a long lacuna from 2483 to 3258, while the original of the manuscript group ζ (my γ) ‘must have stopped at 2602’, and in MS *Y* lines 3233–458 are missing. However, he later abandoned the hypothesis that the shorter manuscripts represented earlier versions of the poem, and suggested instead that they derived from defective exemplars. See below, p. cxvi.

¹²⁸ Cf. C. S. Lewis’s comment: ‘allegory is *idem in alio*. Only a bungler, like Deguileville, would introduce a monastery into his [allegorical] poem if he were really writing about monasticism’ (*The Allegory of Love*, p. 323).

learning. This composite picture suggests that the prose epistle carries a lightly coded message, which can be expressed roughly as follows: asses are winning promotion in monastic life; they do so by using flattery and bribery, and by parading a false and superficial learning; favours are handed out to family relatives, while old friends are forgotten and the benefits they have rendered are not met with gratitude; such injuries rankle and may one day be avenged.

I suggested long ago that this coded message refers to Nigel's own situation:¹²⁹ he is appealing to an old friend, drawing attention to his own suitability for promotion, and providing, in the poem itself, a demonstration of the true learning which his more successful rivals can only counterfeit. It is not of course possible to provide cast-iron proof of this claim (though I shall shortly try to support it with some historical and literary evidence), but I should like to draw attention to the way that it provides a coherent motivation for some important thematic motifs in the poem, which appear also in the parts that the epistle does not discuss. The story of how Burnellus saved the three thieves, and consequently earned the mayor's enmity, seems on the face of it rather pointless (since the mayor's enmity is only a fantasy on Burnellus's part), but it of course illustrates the theme of ingratitude, and this is also the central theme of the concluding tale of the Grateful Animals and the Ungrateful Man. The story of the Three Fates tells how they seek to distribute the gifts of Fortune in such a way that they will counterbalance the gifts of Nature. Ignoring one girl who has many virtues but is desperately unhappy, and another who is very beautiful but unable to walk, they shower Fortune's gifts on the stupid brutish peasant girl whom they find emptying her bowels by the side of the road. Considered as an autonomous anecdote, this story seems to be nothing more than an expression of cynicism, but when it is related to the epistle, it is easy to see it as an ironic demonstration of the universal principle that rewards go only to those who are totally unworthy of them. And in fact Burnellus's concluding comments on the story insist on its applicability to religious life in particular, and the manifold wrongs that spring from a sense of injured merit:

On models such as this, many things often come about in religious life which are not in accord with reason. This is often the way in religious life, O teacher, and you too will often have to put up with it. That is the general rule; these characteristics are shared by many, and this is generally the evil practice of bishops. This is what produces many improprieties, and sets the pastor and his

¹²⁹ Mann, 'The *Speculum Stultorum* and the *Nun's Priest's Tale*'.

flock at odds with each other. These are the things that produce disasters in religious life, scandals, contempt, schisms, injuries, guile. Although virtue can disregard other things which are harmful to many, it cannot disregard its own contemptuous treatment. Nothing wounds the mind more grievously, nothing burns more deeply, than when virtue's gifts are scorned.¹³⁰ Although other things wear off over time, this never leaves the mind. This is a type of wound that gets worse with treatment, and becomes a bigger sore with the passage of time. This causes snake poison to drip into the mind, and no antidote has power against it. Anyone who can patiently bear his own contempt can easily endure other things. Although patience conquers by bearing everything, beneath this burden she falls conquered. (3435–58)

Similar comments emerge at odd moments in the various satiric outpourings of the poem: for example, Burnellus's speech on the faults of bishops declares:

Not despising a care for flesh and blood, they attentively look after both themselves and their family. The one whom they especially ought to have promoted, barely manages to skulk in some remote corner. He who gave what might alleviate another's hunger now burns, freezes, and is needy, thirsts, hungers, and is full of sores. (2711–16)

Talking about the defects of abbots and priors, the ass claims that they are beset by three things in particular: 'the first is the effort to rise in life, after which come the indiscriminate love of their relatives, and an anxiety that knows no peace' (2837–8). In contrast, the ideal confessor will not be swayed by favour for his relatives ('causa parentum': 2997). And when he is praising the Benedictines (Nigel's own order), he says: 'They give outside postings only to those who have been long and thoroughly tried by the discipline of the cloister. Neither the abbot's favour, nor any blood-relationship can prevail against the monks' interest' (2097–100). Insofar as the prose epistle functions to draw attention to them, these passages serve as indications that the poem's moral strictures and satiric criticisms are not the results of a detached observation of the human scene but emanate from, and lead back to, a particular standpoint.

In dedicating his poem to William, Nigel might just have been trying to win the goodwill of an influential and powerful supporter for the monks of Canterbury in their quarrel with Baldwin. But the prose epistle, with its insistent emphasis on monastic promotion and the neglect of people distinguished by solid learning and true merit, suggests that

¹³⁰ This is the point at which manuscripts *LEF* end; for the claim that this was the original end of the poem, see below.

Nigel might also have been thinking of his own advancement. And the passionate outburst at the end of the story of the Three Fates, which I quoted earlier, also points in the same direction. William's enemies said of him when he was justiciar that there was 'no monk who longed for an abbey who was not obliged to become subservient to his power and influence'.¹³¹ Even when deprived of the justiciarship, William would have retained considerable influence on English religious affairs, both as papal legate and as bishop of Ely, which was one of the wealthiest and most important English dioceses.¹³² In 1193, we find Robert, abbot-elect of the Benedictine abbey of Thorney, travelling all the way to Worms to receive the episcopal benediction from William, who was in Germany to negotiate Richard's release from captivity.¹³³ Still more interesting, William was notorious for securing promotion, secular or religious, for his family,¹³⁴ and two of his brothers were made heads of religious houses. His brother Henry was made abbot of Crowland (in Lincolnshire) in 1190, and his brother Robert became prior of Ely, at an uncertain date (but not before 2 December 1189, when his predecessor is attested as having been in post).¹³⁵ In 1191 William tried to get Robert made abbot of Westminster (the king had written a letter giving him *carte blanche* in the affair),¹³⁶ but this plan was foiled by his expulsion from England, and it may have been at this point that Robert was made prior of Ely, as a kind of compensation prize.¹³⁷

¹³¹ Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, iii. 142: 'nec erat rusticus qui agrum, nec civis qui fundum, nec miles qui praedium, nec clericus qui ecclesiam, nec monachus qui abbatiam affectaret, quem in jus et potestatem ejus transire non oporteret'. The comment is not made by Roger of Howden himself but is contained in Hugh of Nonant's malicious letter attacking William, which Roger quotes in full. Cf. Gerald, *De vita Galfridi*, ii. 19, *Opera*, iv. 425: 'Proinde et super matrimoniis, super honoribus et dignitatibus, tam ecclesiasticis quam saecularibus, pro animi sui motu, ad libitum et nutum cuncta disponebat.'

¹³² Ely's income in the late 12th c. has been estimated as approximately £800 (eight times larger than Hugh of Nonant's diocese of Coventry); see Crosby, *Bishop and Chapter*, p. 370.

¹³³ *Victoria County History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely*, ii. 213.

¹³⁴ 'Laicis vero et clericis ecclesias, terras et possessiones suas abstulit, quas aut nepotibus suis aut clericis et servientibus erogabat, aut damnabiliter sibi retinebat, aut in usus extraordinarios dilapidabat' (Roger of Howden, *Gesta* ii. 143; repeated in Roger of Howden, *Chronica*, iii. 72).

¹³⁵ See Conway, 'The family of William Longchamp', pp. 39–40; Knowles et al., *Heads of Religious Houses*, pp. 42 (Crowland) and 46 (Ely). Confusingly, William seems to have had *two* brothers named Henry; the other one held secular offices (Conway, pp. 31–3).

¹³⁶ See Richard of Devizes, *Chronicle*, p. 29 ('De abbatia uero Westmonasterii iam uacante solo cancellario permittitur ordinare pro libito') and pp. 39, 54.

¹³⁷ Since Richard of Devizes (*Chronicle*, p. 39) calls Robert a monk of Caen at the time of the Westminster attempt, it may have been after this attempt failed that he went to Ely.

David Knowles has noted that the monastery of Christ Church, Canterbury, because of its position at the centre of things, 'naturally became a nursery whence, often at the suggestion of the primate, superiors were drawn for other houses, and even occasionally bishops for sees over which Canterbury desired to secure influence'.¹³⁸ He lists eleven monks who in the course of the twelfth century became abbots elsewhere: at the latter end of the century we find Odo sent to Battle in 1175, Ralph sent to Shrewsbury in 1175, Roger sent to St Augustine's Canterbury in 1175/6, Benedict sent to Peterborough in 1177, Alan sent to Tewkesbury (although this was the result of his being 'kicked upstairs' by Baldwin to get him out of the way) in 1186/7,¹³⁹ and Roger Norreys sent to Evesham in 1190.¹⁴⁰ It might well have seemed to Nigel therefore that a stream of his fellow-monks were winning promotion while he was being neglected. Was he perhaps put out that he had not been promoted prior of Ely himself? (or was he writing before Robert had been appointed?) A poem that accompanies the *Tractatus* in one manuscript suggests he knew the monastery and its monks rather well: imitating Ovid's *Tristia* (i. 1–128), he imagines his poem travelling through the fens to Ely; after being hospitably received by the bishop, it will proceed to the monastery where one of the monks, 'my Nicholas', will greet it with embraces and kisses (lines 153–6, 223–6).¹⁴¹ An entry

¹³⁸ Knowles, *Monastic Order*, pp. 176–7.

¹³⁹ Stubbs, *Introductions*, p. 384 = *Epistolae Cantuarienses*, Introduction, p. xl. Cf. Gervase, *Chronicle*, i. 335. Baldwin wanted to replace him with a prior who would he thought be more amenable to his wishes, but in choosing Honorius for this purpose he was very much mistaken (see above, pp. xlv, lxxiv–lxxv).

¹⁴⁰ Knowles, *Monastic Order*, p. 177, n. 1. Ziolkowski thinks that this stream of promotions drained the strength of the mother house (*Lawrence*, p. 35); Knowles obviously sees it in quite the opposite terms, as increasing Canterbury's network of influence.

¹⁴¹ 'Postquam transieris [addressing the *Tractatus*] pontes, vada, stagna, paludes, / Est quibus Elysii gloria septa loci, / Virginis Eldredae venies devotus ad aram, / Dignaque pro meritis dona precesque dabis / ... Si licet atque vacat monachorum claustra subibis, / Portans multiplicis verba salutis eis, / Protinus occurret meus ille tibi Nicholas, / Dicere nec Petro vix patietur "ave". / Totus in amplexu et in oscula tantus abibit, / Cedat ut anguillae filia febris ei' (lines 153–6, 223–8). The poem precedes the *Tractatus* in London, BL, MS Cotton Cleopatra B. III, and is found independently in BL, MS Cotton Julius A. VII, fos. 60^v–65^r (see the digitized version of this manuscript); *Tractatus*, ed. Boutemy, pp. 94–5. As Boutemy points out, in the 14th-c. catalogue of Dover Priory, the poem is listed as an independent item (James, *Ancient Libraries*, p. 463, no. 202, fo. 1a, 'Nigellus ad cancellarium a[nglie]', inc. 'Postquam tristis hyemps'), while on the other hand incipits show that it did not preface any of the five examples of the *Tractatus* included in the same catalogue (ibid. p. 441, no. 59; p. 443, no. 79; p. 449, nos. 105 and 106; p. 455, no. 135). Boutemy argues that the poem was not conceived as a preface to the *Tractatus* and was probably written for a different work, now lost (*Tractatus*, p. 96).

in Bale's *Index* tantalizingly calls him 'Nigellus Eliensis monachus'.¹⁴² At any rate, if William was indeed an old friend, his rise to power, whether as a trusted servant of the king, as justiciar, or as papal legate, must have seemed like a golden opportunity for Nigel.

The *Epistle to William* thus helps us to see some of the threads that run through the *Speculum Stultorum*, and it also gives us some hints as to the nature of their importance for Nigel, even if it does not answer all the questions that it raises.¹⁴³ It is now time to return to the poem, and to try to identify the reasons behind the different shapes it assumes in the manuscripts.

THE MANUSCRIPTS

The following is a list of the 41 manuscripts of the *Speculum Stultorum* which have been collated for the present edition.¹⁴⁴

- A London, British Library, Harley 2422, fos. 2^r–81^v
s. xiii². Ends at 3542 (missing leaves).
- B London, British Library, Arundel 23, fos. 1^r–66^v
s. xv med. Omits 849–1386 (missing leaves); ends at 3864.
- *Be Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz,
theol. qu. 214, fos. 181^r–234^f
s. xv. Ends at 2602.
- C London, British Library, Cotton Titus A. XX, fos. 4^r–50^v
AD 1367 × 1400. Complete.
- D Dublin, Trinity College Library, 440, pp. 1–130 (paginated)
s. xiv med. Complete. Contains the Interpolation on the
Mendicant Orders.
- E Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 761 (S.C. 2535), fos. 160^r–180^f
c. 1360–70. Like *LF*, lacks 2483–3258; ends at 3448.

¹⁴² Bale, *Index Britanniae Scriptorum*, ed. Poole and Bateson, p. 310; cf. Mozley, 'Nigel Wireker or Wetekre?', p. 314. Bale's entry may be a mistake, influenced by the reference in the following line to 'Guillelmum Eliensem episcopum', but since the entry relates to the poem cited in n. 141 above, Bale may have picked up the internal indications that Nigel had some association with Ely.

¹⁴³ See below, pp. lxxv–lxxviii on the possible relevance of the debate between birds.

¹⁴⁴ An asterisk before the manuscript entry signifies that it was not known to Mozley when he was producing his edition of *SS* (in the case of *Ha*, he learned of it before the edition was published but too late to make use of it). Fragments and prose paraphrases are not included in this list, nor is the 17th-c. transcription by Richard James, Cotton Librarian (Mozley's h); for a fuller list, and details of dates, indications of origin, ownership, general character of contents, and bibliographical references, see the Manuscript Descriptions in Appendix A.

- F Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 851 (S.C. 3041), fos. 97^v–115^v
s. xiv^{ex}. Like *LE*, lacks 2483–3258, and ends at 3448, but also
transposes 3259–78 to follow 3432, after which 3323–8 are
repeated.
- *Fr Frankfurt am Main, Universitätsbibliothek, Barth. 62, fos.
150^r–162^v
s. xv^{3/4}. Lacks 2053–464; ends at 2602.
- G Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 27 (S.C. 1628), fos. 1^r–61^v
s. xv. Ends at 2746 (missing leaves). Contains the Interpolation
on the Mendicant Orders.
- Go Erfurt, Forschungsbibliothek Gotha, Chart. B 517, fos.
136^r–195^v (Mozley's k)
s. xv. Ends at 2602.
- H Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 496 (S.C. 2159), fos. 146^r–192^r
s. xv med. Ends at 3864.
- *Ha Halle, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, Stolb.-Wern. Za
89, fos. 1^r–47^v
s. xv. Complete.
- *Hu Huntington Library, San Marino, California, MS HM80250,
fos. 168^v–184^r
s. xiv¹. Complete. Contains the Interpolation on the Mendicant
Orders.
- I Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 780 (S.C. 2583), fos. 1^r–33^v
s. xv. Lacks 1116–744 (missing leaves); lacks 2747–3258 (like
G); copies 3259–448 from an exemplar closely related to *L*;
ends at 3448 (like *LEF*). Contains the Interpolation on the
Mendicant Orders.
- J Oxford, All Souls College, 37, fos. 171^r–196^r
s. xvⁱⁿ. Complete.
- K London, British Library, Additional 38665, fos. 85^r–156^r
s. xvⁱⁿ. Complete. Contains the Interpolation on the Mendicant
Orders.
- L London, Lambeth Palace Library, 357, fos. 78^r–111^r
s. xv¹. Like *EF*, lacks 2483–3258; ends at 3448.