

Hill

A Study, mainly from royal Wardrobe Accounts, of the Nature and Organization of the King's Messenger Service from the reign of John to that of Edward III. inclusive.

The object of this thesis is to show that, from the reign of John onwards, English kings maintained a messenger service of nuncii (riding messengers) and cokini or cursores (messengers on foot). Both were professional messengers, in regular employment, who were appointed by the king, carried his badge, and swore fidelity to him. In addition to these and distinct from them were messengers employed by chancery, exchequer, and chamber, or attached to subordinate royal households. The nuncii regis appear to have been controlled by chancery as the main secretariat, until, in 1234, they came under the authority of the wardrobe, the department which paid and dispatched the nuncii and cursores of Edward I. and II. The effects of the ordinances of 1318, 1323, and 1324, and the final subjugation of the wardrobe in 1341 brought the messengers under exchequer control from 1342. But they remained members of the king's household, the nuncii regis fully, and the cursores in a restricted sense. Nuncii regis, therefore, were entitled to clothing, food, stabling, and wages while in court: could be disciplined by the marshal, and were provided for in

sickness or age with alms, corrodies, or remunerative offices.

The duties of messengers were manifold. They carried letters, money, or goods: arrested prisoners; and escorted foreign envoys. Travelling expenses in England were reckoned at 3d. a day for nuncii and 2d. a day for cokini during the thirteenth century, later increasing to 6d. a day for nuncii in war time, and 5d. in peace. Extra was allowed for travel abroad, for channel crossings, and for hire of additional horses. The service chiefly attracted men from royal manors and small-holders.

My main sources have been the full and enrolled accounts of the wardrobe; the issue rolls of the exchequer; and the household and exchequer ordinances.

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A STUDY, MAINLY FROM ROYAL WARDROBE ACCOUNTS, OF THE  
NATURE AND ORGANISATION OF THE KING'S MESSENGER SERVICE  
FROM THE REIGN OF JOHN TO THAT OF EDWARD. III. INCLUSIVE.

ROYAL HOLLOWAY COLLEGE  
ENGLEFIELD GREEN,  
SURREY.

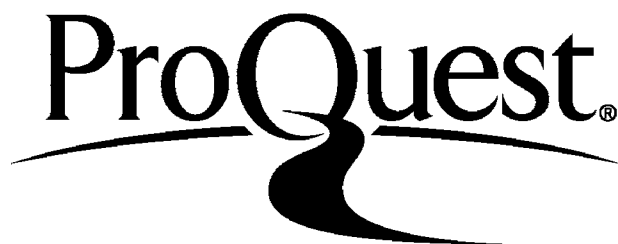
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In presenting this thesis, I should like to express my gratitude to Professor Johnstone for the encouragement she has given me and the unfailing kindness which she has shown to me during the past two years.

A fourteenth century nuncius regis and his  
groom from a drawing on the inside cover  
of a wardrobe book of expenses of messengers  
1360.

(E.A.309/11)



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## INTRODUCTION.

This investigation into the nature and organisation of the king's messenger service from the reign of John to that of Edward III. was undertaken for two reasons. In the first place, the wealth of material in the wardrobe accounts relating to nuncii seemed to demand examination, and in the second place, no existing work appeared to cover this ground. The late Major Wheeler-Holohan, in a book on the King's Foreign Service Messengers, <sup>(1)</sup> devoted one chapter only to the messengers during the middle ages and its author confessed at the start that to trace the earlier history of the corps would be "a long and tedious task" which he was not prepared to undertake. The bibliography given by Tilley and Gaselee~~s~~ in their work on the Foreign Office <sup>(2)</sup> shows how little has been written on the modern King's Messengers: their medieval predecessors have had even less attention paid to them. Nicholas Upton, indeed, did preface his famous fifteenth century book on knighthood and

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(1) V. Wheeler-Holohan, The History of the King's Messengers (1935).

(2) Tilley J. & Gaselee<sup>e</sup>s S., The Foreign Office (1933) p.322. Appendix I A.

heraldry<sup>(1)</sup> by a short account of the messengers employed by the crown in his time, but he was only interested in cursores and nuncii because they represented the first step towards the great heraldic messengers, the pursuivants and the heralds at arms, and because, though not noble, they were, in theory at least, eligible for knighthood. His work, of course, relates to a later period than that with which the present thesis is concerned, but it throws light on earlier practice and is the only detailed description of the messenger service as such. Among more recent historians, Jusserand devoted one chapter of his book on English Wayfaring Life in the fourteenth century to "Messengers, Itinerant Merchants, and Pedlars",<sup>(2)</sup> but his account of the messengers is necessarily very brief. Professor Willard, too, in an article on the dating and delivery of Chancery Writs<sup>(3)</sup> has something to say about the messenger on

- (1) Nicholas Upton "De Studio Militari". Upton's treatise written before 1446, and probably during the reign of Henry V., was printed in London in 1654 under the title "Nicholai Upton de Studio Militari libri quatuor Edoardus Bissaeus e Codicibus MSS primus publici juris fecit." For the date, see The Essential Portions of Nicholas Upton's "De Studio Militari" trans. John Blount c.1500 and ed. F. P. Barnard. Oxford 1931. This selection does not include the chapters relating to messengers.
- (2) Jusserand, English Wayfaring Life in the Fourteenth Century Second Edition 1920, pp.223-253.
- (3) F. Willard "The Dating and Delivery of Letters Patent and Writs in the Fourteenth Century" in Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research X (1932-1933) i.

the road, and Professor Tout refers occasionally to the nuncii sections of the accounts throughout his Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England. No historian, however, has ever described in detail the nature and organisation of the messenger service during any part of the middle ages. An extensive search among periodical publications and bibliographies revealed no reference to any book or article directly bearing upon the king's messenger service in England.<sup>(1)</sup> There are however, several works, useful for comparison, which describe the organisation of similar messengers employed by the Papacy.

The main source used for this present investigation has been the accounts of the royal wardrobe, whether enrolled in summary by the exchequer or in full original shape. The former are found during the earlier part of my period on the pipe roll or chancellor's roll among the sheriff's returns for the year in which the account was submitted for audit. By the ordinance of the exchequer for 1324, however, a separate system of audit was established for all foreign accounts, including those which related to the wardrobe, such accounts being entered henceforward on foreign rolls instead of on the pipe. Thus for the latter half of my period, these summaries of

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(1) I have to thank Mr. G. P. Cuttino for allowing me to read his unpublished thesis "English diplomatic Administration 1259-1339."

wardrobe expenditure are usually to be found among the enrolled accounts of the Lord Treasurer's remembrancer, though there are a few examples of wardrobe accounts still enrolled on pipe or chancellor's rolls until 1332. A second effect of the ordinance was to deprive the wardrobe of all responsibility for the accounts of special envoys, previously audited by the keeper of the wardrobe, and included as one item in the complete wardrobe account. These particulars of expenses appear after 1324 among the exchequer's foreign accounts and in the Public Record Office List XI have been catalogued under the artificial heading "Nuncii". These Nuncii were not, however, members of the king's regular messenger service, and their expenses are only of interest for the present subject as they enable a comparison to be made between the rates and expenses allowed for the ordinary and special messenger.

More important for the ~~purpose~~ of this thesis than the enrolled accounts are the original accounts of the wardrobe and household. The latter, since the wardrobe travelled with the crown, were peculiarly liable to dispersion. Some to-day are in private possession: others are now preserved in the British Museum, the John Rylands library, the library of the Society of Antiquarians<sup>e of London</sup>, and the Bodleian. The majority however, are among the public records. These last have been listed in

the Public Record Office Lists and Indexes No. XXXV under the headings "Wardrobe and Household" and "Nuncii", but, as in the list of enrolled accounts, these titles do not represent any fundamental difference between the documents in each section. "Wardrobe and Household" and "Nuncii" are merely the artificial subject divisions established by the Rev. Joseph Hunter in 1837 when the documents formerly preserved among the "Ancient Miscellanea" of the king's remembrancer of the exchequer were first classified. The section "Nuncii" for example, contains rolls of accounts for special missions, corresponding to those enrolled among the foreign accounts, as well as rolls of expenses for the King's regular messengers. Though mainly preserved by the king's remembrancer's department, four wardrobe books are among the miscellaneous books of the Treasury of receipt, and a certain number are to-day included among Bundles 3 and 4 of the artificial collection known as chancery miscellanea which actually contains documents of exchequer as well as chancery provenance. One wardrobe book only has been printed in full, the Liber Quotidianus Garderobae for 1299-1300: selections from others have appeared in various places, and notably in Archaeologia but none of these were chosen with special regard to nuncii. In Appendix A. I have given a complete list of all original or enrolled wardrobe accounts used for the purpose of

this thesis, arranged chronologically, without regard to the repository in which they are nowadays to be found.

The wardrobe material may be supplemented by other records both of exchequer and chancery. Among the former I have found issue rolls especially valuable. Here the only complete specimen available in print is the issue roll of Thomas de Brantingham, Bishop of Exeter and Treasurer in 1370, which was translated by Frederick Devon in 1835. There are, too, some relevant entries among the extracts from similar rolls which he printed in 1837. The earlier issue rolls, those for the reigns of Henry III. and Edward I., refer as a rule only to those messengers who received pensions, gifts or extraordinary payments direct from the exchequer. But under Edward II. and still more under Edward III., as the effects of the household and exchequer ordinances of 1317 and 1324 became apparent, the number of ordinary payments for routine messages increases, and this material becomes more and more valuable as the nuncii sections in the later wardrobe books decrease in size and importance. A full list of the issue rolls used for the purpose of this thesis will be found in Appendix B.

The material supplied by the receipt rolls, on the other hand, is of the greatest importance during the reigns of

John and Henry III., and becomes negligible later. Two rolls under John and ten under Henry III. have writs of liberate enrolled on the dorse, and among these miscellaneous payments are a considerable number that relate to nuncii, and give, not only the sum paid, but also the name and destination of the messenger. This practice of endorsing writs of liberate on the receipt rolls was continued up to 1253, but thereafter was abandoned: the remaining rolls for the period tell us little or nothing about the activities of the messengers, and I have not considered it necessary to examine more than a few specimen rolls selected at random for the three later reigns. Similar writs of liberate are found in some of the early rolls of writs for issues, and in three surviving Exchequer "liberate" rolls: a very few of the actual writs themselves survive among warrants for issues.

Pipe rolls and memoranda rolls have also furnished some incidental material. Most of this relates to the payment of pensions to messengers from elemosina constituta. Grants of this kind are frequently recorded on the close rolls, and a study of the returns for the appropriate county on the great roll of the pipe shows allowance being made to the sheriff for the sum, while cessation of payment or its transference to

another will often indicate the holder's death. Similar information is sometimes supplied by the memoranda rolls, which note the grant of such pensions and on occasion the failure of the sheriff to pay the money regularly. But since these entries merely confirm the evidence of the close rolls, it seemed unnecessary to attempt the examination of all such rolls for my period. I have however, looked through those pipe rolls which are already in print for the reigns of John and Henry III., and all those unprinted for the reign of Henry III. up to 1243, in addition to the pipe rolls throughout the whole of my period which contain enrolled wardrobe accounts. Among memoranda rolls I have examined those examples for Henry III.'s reign which are available in typescript at the Public Record Office, either in full or calendared, and a number of later rolls, chiefly for Edward III. One example only has been printed, the King's remembrancer's roll for 1230.

Of the chancery enrolments, the patent rolls are now available in print from 1216-1232 in full, and from 1232 until the end of the period in calendar form. The close rolls are similarly available in full from 1227-1272, and in calendar from 1272 onwards, while the liberate rolls have been calendared from 1226-1251. These enrolments have proved useful in varying



degrees. The close and patent rolls supply much information about royal gifts and grants to messengers and thus add materially to our knowledge of the careers of individual men. The liberate rolls contain numerous writs for messengers' expenses during the years 1226-1233, and for this period are a most valuable source of information; later however, as the practice of the exchequer and chancery changed, these detailed writs were superseded by writs for large sums to be spent at the discretion of the keeper of the wardrobe, for the king's expenses. After 1233, therefore, the liberate rolls give little assistance, and since volumes II and III of the printed calendar yielded no important information, I have not consulted any of the unprinted rolls.

Previous to the regular series of enrolments from 1226 onwards, we have certain chancery rolls of the reign of John and the minority of Henry III. These were edited by the Record Commission, and include charter rolls of 1199-1216, patent rolls of 1201-1216, and two volumes of close rolls of 1204-1227. The close rolls are particularly valuable for the years 1216-1227. Numerous writs of liberate for messengers' expenses which would later have been entered on the liberate rolls are, during the minority of Henry III, found here and in the absence of other

material prove our chief source for the first decade of the reign. Specially ~~useful~~ under John are the misae rolls of current court expenses, the first of which (1209-1210) has been printed by the Record Commission in Rotuli de Liberate ac de Misis et Praestitis regnante Johanne, and the second by Cole in Documents Illustrative of English History in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries.

It is obvious that the wardrobe accounts must be read in the light of the various household ordinances. The earliest surviving example for my period, that of 1279, is printed by Tout in Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England. More important for a study of the messenger service is the household ordinance of 1318, supplemented by that of 1323 both of which are printed by Tout in The Place of Edward II. in English History. In addition, the ordinances of the exchequer of 1323, 1324, and 1326, printed in the Red Book of the Exchequer, provide regulations for the payment of messengers. Further information may also be gleaned from "The Household of King Edward III. in Peace and War from the Eighteenth to the Twentyfirst Year of his Reign" edited by Lort, Gough, Topham and Brand, in A Collection of Ordinances and Regulations for the Government of the Royal Household for the Society of Antiquaries

in 1790, though, as Tout explains, this is not an actual Ordinance, but a series of extracts made by a Tudor antiquary from various wardrobe accounts.<sup>(1)</sup> In the same volume may be found the Liber Niger Domus Regis Edwardi IV., which contains much information relating to messengers, and, although later than our period is of interest for comparison with earlier ordinances. Like other fifteenth and sixteenth century documents which deal with household organisation, it probably contains many survivals from earlier practices.

The terminus ad quem of the present investigation is the close of Edward III.'s reign. The messengers were affected in no small degree by the administrative developments of the fourteenth century. The rise and decline of the wardrobe's importance, and the departure of the privy seal from the household bore directly on this group of wardrobe servants. To have continued the study into the fifteenth century would have been to enter a new period of History both in politics and administration: a period in which the wardrobe messengers, though they still existed as part of the king's household, were reduced in numbers and importance. Their place as letter-carriers may have been taken by the messengers of the chamber who appear first in

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(1) Tout, Chapters I. 37.



SOURCES.

I. Original Authorities.

A. Unprinted.

1) Full and enrolled wardrobe accounts (See App.A.)

a) In the Public Record Office

Exchequer king's remembranced various accounts  
(List XXXV "Wardrobe and Household" and "Nuncii"  
E.A.350/5 - 398/14 and 308/1 - 317/40).

Exchequer Treasury of receipt miscellaneous books  
(E.36/201 - 205).

Chancery Miscellane<sup>s</sup> (Bundles 3 and 4).

Lord Treasurer's remembrancer enrolled accounts  
(Wardrobe and household) nos. 1 - 5.

Pipe rolls (nos.79,80,81,88,95,99,113,114,115,  
116,119,121,123,124,128,129,136,138,139,144,166,  
168) and Chancellor's rolls (nos.45 and 125) for  
enrolled wardrobe accounts.

b) In the British Museum.

Cotton MSS. Nero C VIII, Galba E III, Galba E XIV  
Harl.MS. 152.

Egerton MS.2814.

Stowe MS.553.

Add.MSS. 36762, 35294, 7965, 7966, 35292, 8835,  
37656, 37655, 22923, 35093, 17362, 9931, 38006,  
35181.

c) In the John Rylands Library

Latin MSS (nos.229-237).

d) In the Library of the Society of Antiquaries

(MSS.nos.120-121).

## 2) Exchequer Accounts.

Issue Rolls (E.403/18-462) See Appendix B.

Pipe Rolls (nos.62-78,82,84,85,86,87)

## Memoranda rolls.

Lord treasurer's remembrancer (nos.1-5

(P.R.O. transcript)

Nos.13-28 (P.R.O. abstract)

Nos.48,49,50,78,79,102-9).

King's remembrancer (nos.1-5 (P.R.O.transcript)  
nos.108-9)

Receipt rolls (nos.38 - 8 and 10B).

Rolls of writs for issues (nos.1200A and B,  
1201, 1202, 1307).

Exchequer "Liberate" rolls (nos.E.403/1202, 1203,  
and E. 401/11)

Warrants for issues file L (nos.28,30,38)

## .. B. Printed.

## i) Full and enrolled wardrobe accounts.

Enrolled wardrobe account 1224-1227  
(Tout Chapters I 233-238)

Enrolled wardrobe account 10-13 Edw.I., 1282-5.  
(Chronica Johannis de Oxenedes ed. H. Ellis  
Rolls series 1859 pp.326-336)

The wardrobe and Household of Henry son of  
Edward I. ed. H. Johnstone (Reprinted from the  
Bulletin of the John Rylands Library (1923  
(1273-4).

"Roll of expenses of Edward I in Wales 1281-2"  
(Ibid. XVI (1812) pp.32-79 ed. S. Lyson)

"Extracts from the Rotulus Familiae for 18  
Edward I." (S. Lysons Archaeologia XV (1806)  
pp.350-362) 1289-90.

Archaeologia

"A brief Summary of the Wardrobe Accounts of the tenth, eleventh, and fourteenth years of King Edward II" (Ibid. XXVI (1836) pp.318-345 ed. Thomas Stapleton).

"Accounts of expenses of the Great Wardrobe of Edward III. 1344-1349" (Ibid. XXXI (1846) pp.5-103 ed. N. H. Nicholas.

"A Wardrobe Account of 16-17 Richard II. 1393-4" ed. Baildon W.P. (Ibid LXII pt.ii (1911) pp.497-514).

Liber Quotidianus Contrarotulatoris Garderobae anno regni regis Edwardi primi vicesimo octavo (for the Society of Antiquaries, 1787).

ii) Chancery.

Rotuli Litterarum patentium 1201-1216  
ed. T.D.Hardy (Record Commission) 1835  
Patent Rolls 1216-1232  
Calendar of Patent Rolls 1232-1377.

Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum ed. T.D. Hardy (1833). 1204-1227.  
Close Rolls 1227-1272.  
Calendar of Close rolls 1272-1377.

Charter rolls 1199-1216  
Calendar of Charter rolls 1227-1377.

Calendar of Inquisitions post mortem I-VII  
1216-1337.

Rotuli de Liberate ac de Misis et Praestitis regnante Johanne (ed. T.D. Hardy 1844)

Rotulus Misae Anni Regni Regis Johannis Quarti Decimi (ed. H. Cole Documents Illustrative of English History in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries. 1844. pp.231-268)

Calendar of Liberate Rolls 1226-1251.

Calendar of Chancery Warrants 1244-1326.

## iv) Household Ordinances.

The household ordinance of 1279 (Tout, Chapters in Medieval Administrative History II, 158-163)  
The household ordinances of 1318 and 1323 (Tout, The Place of Edward II. in English History 2nd ed. pp.241-294)  
A collection of Ordinances and Regulations for the Government of the Royal Household (ed. Lort, Gough, Topham, and Brand, for the Society of Antiquaries 1790).

## v) Miscellaneous.

The Black Prince's Register I-IV.  
Chronicon de Lanercost (ed. Stevenson for the Bannatyne Club 1839).

Flores Historiarum III (ed. Luard Rolls Series 1890)

Rishanger Chronica et Annales (ed. Riley, Rolls Series 1865)

Accounts of the Great Chamberlains of Scotland and some other Officers of the Crown 1326-1453 (ed. Thomson for the Bannatyne Club 1836).

The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland 1264-1359 (ed. Stuart and Burnett 1878).

Les Journaux du Tresor de Philippe de Valois suivis de l'Ordinarium Thesauri de 1338-1339 (ed. Viard J. 1899).

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ABBREVIATIONS.

## i) Manuscript Sources.

Chanc.Misc.	Chancery Miscellanea.
E.A.	Exchequer, King's Remembrancer, Various Accounts.
Enr. Accts. (W. and H.)	Exchequer, Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer, Enrolled Accounts, Wardrobe and Household.
K.R.M.R.	King's Remembrancer, Memoranda Roll
L.T.R.M.R.	Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer, Memoranda Roll.
Misc.Bks.Exch.T.R.	Exchequer, Treasury of Receipt, Miscellaneous Books.

## ii) Printed Works.

<u>Cal.Cl.R.</u>	<u>Calendar of Close Rolls.</u>
<u>Cal.Pat.R.</u>	<u>Calendar of Patent Rolls.</u>
<u>Cal.Inq.p.m.</u>	<u>Calendar of Inquisitions post mortem.</u>
<u>Cal.Lib.R.</u>	<u>Calendar of Liberate Rolls.</u>
<u>Chapters</u>	Tout. <u>Chapters in Medieval Administrative History.</u>
<u>Cole's Records</u>	Cole, <u>Documents illustrative of English History.</u>
<u>Lib.Quot.Gard.</u>	<u>Liber Quotidianus Contrarotulatoria Garderobae (1787) Society of Antiquaries.</u>
<u>A Collection of Ordinances.</u>	<u>A Collection of Ordinances and Regulations for the Government of the Royal Household (1790) Society of Antiquaries.</u>

Rot. de Lib.

Rotuli de Liberate ac de Misis et Praes-  
titis regnante Johanne, ed. T.D. Hardy  
(1844).

Upton

Nicholai Upton de Studio Militari libri  
quatuor Edoardus Bissaeus E Codicibus MSS  
primus publici juris fecit - (London 1654).

## I.

THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF THE SERVICE.

"Primo pro originali est sciendum quod necessitate oportet quod imperatores, reges, et alii magni principes habeant suos certos nuncios ad sua negotia expedienda " With these words Nicholas Upton began that chapter of his book which concerns itself with messengers, <sup>(1)</sup> thus including in a single category every type of messenger used in the royal service. The late Major Wheeler-Holohan, in his book on the King's Foreign Service Messengers <sup>(2)</sup> also took the view that no distinction could be drawn during the middle ages between men who were messengers by profession and men who, for the king's convenience, acted as messengers. Every ruler needed men to carry his letters, but he might employ any member of his household without discrimination, or even one of the idlers who followed the royal court from place to place. This is true, but it overlooks the early specialisation which took place among royal servants. In the earliest household accounts which survive, the professional messenger appears already with a distinctive title and position.

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(1) Upton, De Studio Militari, Lib.I.Cap.IX.p.18.

(2) V. Wheeler-Holohan, The History of the King's Messengers London, 1935.

Messenger Serjeanties.

Before considering the professional messenger of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, an explanation must be given of another means by which English kings had been accustomed to secure messengers for their service. Norman kings, in addition to their own servants, had the power to demand services of tenants to convey letters as a feudal obligation. Maitland speaks of this as a useful form of petty serjeanty which was 'not uncommon'. He groups it among those serjeanties not so closely connected with the king's household as those involving servitia mansionalia, yet implying menial duties. The tenants who held their lands under this obligation 'are bound to carry the king's letters, to act as the king's summoners when the barons of the neighbourhood are to be summoned, to aid in conveying the king's treasure from place to place, or the like.'<sup>(1)</sup> Such a messenger is 'more or less of a menial servant, bound to obey orders within the scope of his employment.' As examples, he instances two cases from the Rotuli Hundredorum, and five from the Gloucester Cartulary.<sup>(2)</sup> Serjeanties were of course due to mesne lords as well as to the king, and the actual examples given by Maitland were of this kind. In one, taken from the Rotuli Hundredorum, a

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(1) Pollock and Maitland, The History of English Law,  
(2nd ed. 1898) I. 284, 286.

(2) Rot. Hund. II. 336, 539, and Historia et Cartularium Monasterii Sancti Petri Gloucestriae ed. Hart (Rolls Series 1867) III. 69.



certain John Hamond held one virgate of land by the service of carrying the brevia domini in negotiis domini one day's journey at his own expense, and further at his lord's expense. (1) In another, from the Cartulary of St. Peter's Gloucester, twenty-four jurors of King's Barton declared that Radulph of Waleworth holds two virgates of land de antiqua tenura for which he pays twenty shillings et debet portare brevia per comitatum; and that four other men hold land in King's Barton under the same obligation. (2) This is confirmed by an entry on the memoranda roll of 1240, which notes that the men of the Barton of Gloucester have respite both of the view of frankpledge and of the service of messengers demanded by the Abbot of Gloucester. (3)

For examples of similar serjeanties in the royal service, we may turn to Miss Kimball's recent study. (4) Speaking of serjeanties connected with local and central government, she notes that 'in the counties, serjeant tenants were employed on judicial business, such as carrying writs and making distrains and summonses.' (5) She shows that this type of serjeanty was not infrequently attached to small holdings - according to Bracton, to holdings worth less than half a mark

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(1) Rot. Hund. II. 336.

(2) Cart. Glouc. III. 69.

(3) L.T.R. roll 14 M.12. (P.R.O. typescript abstract p.72)

(4) E.G.Kimball Serjeanty Tenure in Medieval England 1936.

(5) Ibid. p.83.

a year, for which reason he classified this among the small serjeanties. Miss Kimball quotes as a typical example a case recorded in an Assize roll of Wiltshire <sup>(1)</sup> in which a tenant was reported to hold land 'per seriantiam portandi brevia domini regis per totum comitatu<sup>m</sup> isto<sup>rum</sup>.' It is usual to find some limiting clause, defining either time or place of service or both. Miss Kimball has only found one case in which the place of service was not limited to one or two counties. One tenant at Skeffington in Leicestershire was bound to carry the king's writs throughout England at his own expense, but presumably as compensation, the period of service was restricted to forty days. <sup>(2)</sup> All the examples given, it will be noticed, are of the twelfth, or early thirteenth century.

"It is not possible," says Miss Kimball, "to know how large a part serjeanty played in the management of the king's household in the twelfth century, but it is evident that by the beginning of the thirteenth century they can have contributed little to its economy." <sup>(3)</sup> The limitation of place and time,

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(1) Kimball *op.cit.* p.83 note 62 (Assize roll 1006 m.67)

(2) *Ibid.* p.96. (Book of Fees p.1231)

(3) *Ibid.* p.66.

A criticism made by a reviewer of Miss Kimball's book was that she failed to consider the extent to which serjeanty service 'could have had the same significance in the organisation of the king's 'civil' and domestic service as knight service had in the organisation of the feudal army.' Until this aspect of the serjeanty system has been examined more thoroughly it is impossible to say how far messenger serjeanties rendered a court messenger service unnecessary. Conway Davies however was of the opinion that, for the  
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necessary from the tenant's point of view, sometimes inconvenienced the lord, with the result that serjeanties which were 'desirable and useful' in the twelfth century were replaced by money payments or knight service in the thirteenth. Henry III. abolished one such obligation on behalf of Robert le Sauvage his serjeant and Maud, Robert's wife, who had a virgate of land in Twiggsworth 'which they used to hold by the yearly payment of five shillings and by carrying the king's writ in Gloucestershire.'<sup>(1)</sup> It is quite clear that in this connection as in so many others, professionalism and direct control was by the thirteenth century felt to be preferable to the more fragmentary and uneven incidence of feudal service. The origin of the king's messenger service is in its way a parallel to the reorganisation of the feudal army from Edward I.'s time onwards. Its history illustrates, from yet another angle, an aspect of general development. It is in no way isolated from the full course of English history, or a matter of purely antiquarian interest.

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dispatch of royal writs, "it would seem as if serjeanty had been an immature expression of the household system, possessing the fatal weakness of being hereditary." (Baronial Opposition to Edward II. p.50.) E.H.R. LIII, 694-696 (Oct.1938)

(1) Cal. Cl. R. 1226-1257, p.357.

Household Messengers.

(1) Early references to Nuncii regis.

By the opening date of the present survey, at any rate, the kings were in the main making use of messengers attached to the royal household. That household was already a complex organisation. As it increased in size, so the necessary specialisation among the king's servants produced the servant whose main duty was to carry the king's letters. At first this might be combined with other employment, but by the early thirteenth century the volume of correspondence was already sufficient to occupy several full-time messengers. As medieval central administration grew more comprehensive, interfered more widely in local government and exercised a stricter control over officials in the provinces, so the need for an organised messenger service increased. The development of that service was thus directly connected with the growth of royal power. The legal and administrative progress of the century involved more frequent communication between the central government and its local representatives, and to maintain this, an organised messenger service was necessary.

The messenger had become distinct from other royal servants at least as early as the reign of John. The Pipe roll for Michaelmas 1199 has an entry under Essex and Hertfordshire concerning the sum of sixty shillings and ten pence

paid by the sheriff to "Hamelino Nuncio Regis".<sup>(1)</sup> His name occurs again in connection with the same sum in the Pipe rolls for 1200, 1201, 1202, and 1203,<sup>(2)</sup> and in 1202 three other nuncii, Lucas, Walwan, and Roger le Tort, are also mentioned. No doubt other entries of a similar nature will be revealed when the remaining Pipe rolls for John's reign are printed, for the first memoranda roll of Henry III. contains a list of all those receiving elemosina constituta through the sheriffs and among them are the names of Hamelin, Lucas, and Walwan,<sup>(3)</sup> nuncii. Payments of this kind were generally made to men who had served the king well and faithfully for a considerable time, and it is probable therefore that these three messengers had been in the king's service for some time prior to their first mention on the Pipe roll. The word nuncius is used again in the Misae roll for 1209-10<sup>(4)</sup> where certain servants of the king are repeatedly described as nuncii, as though the word had already a technical significance when used in connection with a member of the royal household. A reference in the same place to a "nuncio locato"<sup>(5)</sup> shows that the king also hired additional messengers and that these casual letter carriers were not entitled to the name nuncius regis which was reserved

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(1) Great Roll of the Pipe I John Michaelmas 1199 ed. D.M. Stenton 1935 (The Pipe Roll Society) p.86.

(2) ed. D.M. Stenton 1934, 1936, 1937, 1938.

(3) 1217. L.T.R. Memoranda roll I m.5 (P.R.O. typescript transcript p.188)

(4) Rotulus de Liberate ac de Misis et Praestitis Regnante Johanne. ed. T.D. Hardy, 1844. pp.109-170.

(5) Ibid. p. 140.

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for those in the king's permanent employment.

In spite of the indefiniteness and fluidity of medieval language, it seems therefore that the term messenger could be used with a precise meaning as well as in a general sense by the thirteenth century. By the fourteenth century, a greater degree of recognition still had been accorded.

(2) Official designation of royal messengers.

It is necessary for this reason to examine the various words used to describe messengers in the royal wardrobe accounts throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and to discover the exact meaning attached to each by royal clerks.

Four terms were used to describe different types of messengers: nuncius sollemnis, nuncius regis, cokinus, and cursor. In classical Latin the word nuncius had been susceptible of a great variety of meanings, and though in medieval Latin the range had been greatly narrowed, the term could still be

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(1) Money was paid by writ of Liberate to "pluribus nunciis nostis" on 8 May 1222 (Roll of ~~l~~its for issues 1200 B.) Thus the Somerset Herald of 1786, who stated that the Messengers were first instituted about the same time as his own office and by the advice of John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, ~~thus~~ post-dated their appearance by at least two centuries. V. Wheeler-Holohan, op.cit.p.131.

(1)  
 applied to any bringer of tidings. The medieval clerk found himself obliged by this indefiniteness to use the same word to describe two different types of messenger, whom he distinguished where necessary by the descriptive words 'sollemnis' and 'regis'. The first was sent to foreign courts as an envoy capable of explaining and supplementing verbally any documents he presented. Later Medieval usage restricted the term nuncius used in this sense to such envoys as came from 'a private individual who, as such, had no right to an ambassador, or from a person or body which had such a right but did not when employing him, choose to exercise it.' (2) Such a restriction, however, belongs to the late fourteenth century and is reflected in the treatises concerning the office of ambassador written in the fifteenth century - it is not applicable to the word as used in our period and in England, where the term ambassador came into use later than on the continent. In the liberate rolls and in the wardrobe books, the phrase 'nuncius sollemnis'

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(1) "The -- title -- was equally applicable to the humblest messenger taking his wages in the royal household and earning them by carrying letters, or to the great earl or bishop who set forth in state to represent the king at some foreign court" H. Johnstone "John de Ocle, Envoy of Edward I." Speculum XI 216. (1936)

(2) B. Behrens, "Treatises on the Ambassador. Written in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries" English Historical Review. LI. 616-627. 1936.

Miss Behrens emphasises the fact that the five fifteenth century treatises on this subject reflect in ideas and style the attitude of the Middle Ages. They show that the distinction between legatus and nuncius, based on papal procedure, had only recently become definite and was even then not universally recognised except in relation to the court of Rome.

is used to describe all special envoys, whether they were sent to speak in their own name on behalf of the king, or in the king's name only. <sup>(1)</sup> The nuncius regis, on the other hand, was simply and solely the professional messenger carrying writs and letters for the king and his ministers. The envoy was generally a magnate or a dignitary of the church, or one of the king's clerks whose abilities had marked him out for preferment. The nuncius regis was of more humble station, ranking in the royal household between the serjeant at arms and the grooms. The noble envoy's duties nearly always took him abroad, for his mission was essentially to treat with foreign courts: the simple messenger carried the king's writs and letters indifferently within or without the realm. <sup>(2)</sup> Wardrobe clerks differentiated the two types of nuncius by the use of these distinctive phrases whenever confusion between them might occur, understanding by nuncius sollemnis the special envoy, and by nuncius regis the official letter-carrier: if no such confusion appeared likely, the general word 'nuncius' could still be used to cover either or both. Seldom were the distinctive phrases

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(1) Fifteenth century writers said of the nuncius that "loquitur per se sed non a se" like a magpie, whereas the legatus or proctor spoke on his master's behalf, according to his own discretion. Behrens op.cit. p.622.

(2) "Tam in regno quam extra" is the formula used for the expenses of ordinary messengers in the enrolled wardrobe accounts of Henry III.'s reign.



(1)  
misapplied. They appear to have been used consistently all through the wardrobe accounts.

If the title 'nuncius sollemnis' was not used to describe the special envoy, some other distinguishing phrase was found. (2)  
Though he could not be called a king's messenger, he was yet the messenger of the king, and accordingly the phrase "going as a king's messenger" was often used. (3) Such a phrase almost invariably indicates that the messenger in question was not one of the king's permanent staff, but was either a casual letter-carrier, or, more usually, a solemn envoy, acting as the king's representative during some negotiation abroad. The expenses of such envoys were not regarded as an ordinary charge on the

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- (1) One of the very few examples of the phrase "nuncius regis" used in connection with a special envoy occurs in the Liber Quotidianus Garderobe, p.100.  
On the other hand, in a roll of messenger expenses for 1265, the word "nuncius" after the name of Roger de Eswell has been deleted and the phrase "eunti in nuncium" substituted.  
E.A. 308/2.  
A similar correction occurs in an account for 1299-1300, where 'nuncius' has been deleted after Galfridus Baret (E.A. 357/22) and, again an undated file of accounts for Edward I. (E.A. 371/8).
- (2) "In maioribus nunciis" is the phrase used to distinguish the expenses of special envoys from those of ordinary messengers in the enrolled wardrobe accounts for 1233-1236 as entered on the Pipe roll for 19 Henry III. (Pipe Roll no. 79. m.II) The opposite phrase, "in expensis minorum nunciorum" also occurs for nuncii regis in the Chancellor's roll for 1235-6 (Chancellor's roll no. 28). We may compare with these the phrases "pro grossis nuntiis" and "pro minutis nunciis" used to describe the same types of messengers in France. (Les Journaux du Tresor de Philippe VI. de Valois suivis de l'Ordinarium Thesauri de 1338-1339 ed. Jules Viard 1899 p.51)
- (3) Thus in 1241 a writ ran: "Liberate to Master William le Brun, going as the king's messenger towards the parts of Chester 100/- of the king's gift for his expenses" Cal.Lib.R.1240-45. p.85.

wardrobe, but were generally said to be allowed by the king's 'gift', a word that is only applied to the expenses of regular messengers in the rarest instances. In this way too, the distinction between the casual and the regular worker (between the man who goes as a messenger and the man who is one), was carefully maintained. The two phrases "going as the king's messenger" and "of the king's gift" when applied to nuncii and their expenses give a fairly safe criterion of status, if the other descriptive words are not given.

The solemn envoy, going overseas as the king's messenger, had always, in greater or lesser degree, the duty of explaining his mission and negotiating on the king's behalf. Even in those cases in which his power to act was most strictly limited, he was still given certain discretionary powers as to the manner and method of delivering his message. <sup>(1)</sup> But there are no indications that the ordinary messenger, the nuncius regis, was ever employed in this way. He had no discretionary powers, and merely carried messages in a manner similar to that of the modern King's Foreign Service Messenger. Like these latter, he had little chance of promotion, and I have found no case where his work proved the stepping-stone to higher and more responsible service. The medieval, like the modern, messenger

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(1) "Sufficient messengers who can give the message well and plainly" Cal. Ch. W. 1244-1326, p.234 (Sept. 1302)

was only concerned with the carrying of dispatches and had no responsibility for the results. Once the king's letter had been delivered, his duty was at an end: his business was simply to transport news or instructions with the greatest possible speed. Such messengers came and went almost every day, whereas the departure of an envoy was a comparatively infrequent event, and at times an occasion for much pomp and display. In this limitation of function lay the real and essential difference between the simple nuncius regis and the special envoy - the messenger only a messenger and never on any occasion a diplomat.

The clear distinction between the two, even in the early years of Henry III., is indicated by the method followed in entering expenses on the liberate rolls for 1226-1233. Expenses of special embassies were dealt with individually as they occurred, while payments to official nuncii were put together and entered on the rolls in large batches several times a year. The first roll of Henry III.'s reign, covering 1226-1227, will serve as an example of the method employed. Twenty-three embassies were recorded during this year, and the sums paid to the special envoys who undertook them totalled £495.0.5. The payments which make up that total were scattered throughout the accounts for the year. The envoys who were thus "sent by the king to parts beyond the seas" were both ecclesiastics and laymen. Among the former were the Bishops of Carlisle and Coventry, the Chancellor of St. Paul's, the Archdeacon of Lewes,

two abbots, one Prior, two simple monks and two clerks. Among the laymen were Godfrey of Crowcombe, Nicholas de Molis and Master Philip d'Aubigny who went more than once; the Count of Aumâle, Master Henry de Bissopeston, Waleran de Tyes, *? le* William Talbot, Gilbert de Hauvill, Peter Grimbold, Master Philip de Arderne and Master William de Thornover; besides two servants of Philip d'Aubigny. The expenses of the king's regular messengers were entered in five large groups under 9 March, 30 May, 8 June, 13 July and 6 October. The first and last of these each occupy nearly two pages of the printed Calendar; the others are much smaller and would not fill more than a page if put together. In the following year, similar entries were compressed into three groups only, under 4 February, 15 June and 28 October; while in 1226-9 and 1229-30, all payments to the king's messengers were entered in two groups. <sup>(1)</sup> In all these years and subsequently, payments of envoys continued to be kept quite separate from the entries relating to the regular messengers. The first batch of messenger expenses for 1227-8, under 9 March, refer to 19 named messengers, going 56 journeys, all within the realm. Their total expenses amounted to the small sum of £4.2.6., and the most expensive journey cost 3/6. Only four king's messengers

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(1) It is possible that in 1230 a third payment may have been recorded on the membranes now lost.

went abroad during the whole of this year, William le Chareter and William Cointerel to Ireland, John de Cantuaria and John Blundus to Rome. These journeys were entered separately, the expenses amounting to 8 marks in all. Thus during the year 1227-8 the expenses of the whole messenger service were only £8.19.5. for home service, and £5.6.8. for service abroad. The difference in status between the two types of nuncii is seen clearly enough when these sums are compared with the £495 spent on special embassies.

Later wardrobe accounts also distinguish between the expenses of regular and casual messengers. The printed Liber Quotidianus Garderobe for 1299-1300 may be taken as an example here. In this account, the expenses of envoys were included in the Titulus de diversis necessariis emptis et provisio pro rege Edwardo --- et de misis et expensis nunciorum solempnium missorum per vices usque Curie Romane et alibi in nunciis regis predictis, una cum vadiis quorundam --- (1) No attempt was made to sort the different items under this heading into separate categories. Envoys' expenses were still entered as they occurred, among all the other occasional expenditure of the household. Separated from the other items in this section and from the expenses of men sent to fetch soldiers, food, or money, or sent on unspecified business for the king, the total

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(1) Lib. Quot. Gard. p.48.

sum spent on envoys under this heading amounts to £371.15.1. for 19 journeys. Expenses of regular messengers, on the other hand, fell under the "Titulus de expensis nunciorum et cokinorum regis Edwardi, filii regis Henrici, missorum diversimode in nuncium ejusdem regis --- (1) This section contains only the expenses of regular messengers going either on foot or on horse in England or abroad, and the expenses of certain casual letter-carriers employed to supplement the king's regular service. The sum thus spent amount to £87.11.1., according to the total given by the clerk at the end of the section, for 363 journeys. Here again the figures emphasise the different status of the two types of nuncii, <sup>which,</sup> already perceptible in 1227, had become unmistakable by 1300.

The same distinction was maintained when the wardrobe accounts were finally enrolled on the Pipe roll. Here again the expenditure on nuncii sollempnes was always included with that on necessaries and gifts; while the total amount paid to regular messengers is entered as a separate and self-contained item. Even in the earliest enrolled accounts which include the expenses of nuncii, some division of this kind is generally found: before the end of Henry III.'s reign, and in all subsequent enrolments, the distinction is strictly maintained.

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(1) Lib. Quot. Gard. p.280.

The present thesis is confined to the messenger service as such. It is a study, not of medieval diplomacy, but of the means by which communications were maintained between the government and its representatives both at home and abroad. This work was done by the nuncii regis, together with those other types of messenger described in the accounts as cokini or cursores. It is accordingly with these that this present study of the king's messenger service must deal. It is not concerned with the occasional embassy but with the ordinary routine of one side of medieval household administration - the necessary link between the government and its executive officers throughout the country - the official messengers who played such an indispensable part in every kind of undertaking.

In addition to the distinction made between the regular messenger and envoy, a further differentiation was drawn between the two types of professional letter-carrier. The first was the nuncius regis: the second the cokinus or cursor. Considerable importance seems to have been attached to these titles in the wardrobe accounts, especially under Edward I., during whose reign the words 'nuncius' or 'cokinus' are seldom omitted after the name of a recognised messenger. There are very few instances in which the same man was called both 'nuncius' and cokinus in the same account and for the same year<sup>(1)</sup> and

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(1) Bon was called cokinus in accounts for 1283-6 (E.A. 308/7 & /8) and William Alkham in 1300 (Lib. Quot. Gard. p. 292) Both were nuncii.

these may be accounted for by a slip on the part of the scribe. Errors and omissions could easily creep into the accounts while they were being copied into the complete wardrobe book for audit, and were occasionally noticed and rectified,<sup>(1)</sup> but this is only what one would expect when remembering how and for what purpose these books were drawn up. They were the work-a-day records of an important branch of the administration: entries may often have been made hurriedly, without strict attention to details, and afterwards corrected by some conscientious clerk. But inaccuracy which might so easily creep in here and there could not have been permitted on a large scale or the accounts would have lost their value to the department. Therefore where the vast majority of entries show such care in discriminating between these two categories of messengers, it seems reasonable to infer that the difference thus expressed was more than a mere difference in name. Some real distinction was drawn between the fully privileged messenger and the inferior one.

The word 'cokinus' suggests some connection with coquina,<sup>(2)</sup> and these lesser messengers may have developed from the

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(1) e.g. 'nuncio' is inserted above the name of Galfridus de Bardeney in a bundle of accounts for 1299-1300 (E.A. 357/21 no.20)

(2) I have once found it spelt 'coquinus' (E.A. 369/II f.149) and once 'cocinus'. (Society of Antiquaries MS.no.121 1217-1218)



kitchen knave, the jack-of-all-trades of the medieval establishment.<sup>(1)</sup> These men are sometimes found doing miscellaneous work, making purchases or helping to convey goods and furniture for the wardrobe.<sup>(2)</sup> Ducange, s.v. coquinus defines him as 'homo vilissimus nec nisi infimus coquinae ministeriis natus, interdum etiam nequam, improbus, ut nostrum Gallicum 'coquin'.' The recent Medieval Latin Word List<sup>(3)</sup> describes cokinus as "an inferior servant or messenger." But this connection with the kitchen, so strongly asserted by Ducange and suggested by the very form of the word, is not borne out by any evidence from the wardrobe accounts themselves. Cokini are never there mentioned among the servientes coquine who receive robes and shoes twice a year. Moreover, even in the earliest of the remaining rolls of expenses, they are found acting as messengers. Certainly before the end of Henry III.'s reign they had lost all direct connection with the kitchen, and were simply messengers with a lower status than that of the nuncii regis, whose time might be filled in with a variety of odd jobs when they were not required for messenger work.

(1) Miss M. Deanesley has suggested to me a parallel between the royal cokini and the monastic coquinarius who sometimes acted as messenger and purveyor for his house. See Burton Deeds p. xxiii, et infra in Hist. Coll. Staffs. 1937.

(2) The phrase "cokinuseunti in nuncio domini regis" used twice in 1265-6, may imply that this particular cokinus, John Long did not always take messages. (E.A. 308/2. But see p. 430

(3) Med. Lib. R. 1286-1290 pp. 153 and 184.

(3) Baxter and Johnson Medieval Latin Word List 1934.

The word 'cokinus' has a curious history. It does not appear in the misae roll for 1209-1210, nor in the liberate rolls for the early years of Henry III. - unless three entries in 1229-30 to William Cokin, John Cokin, and Geoffrey Cokin represent an abbreviation of the term.<sup>(1)</sup> It appears frequently in a roll of expenses of messengers for 1251-1253<sup>(2)</sup> which mentions fifteen cokini in all, and again on the roll of expenses of messengers for 1264-5.<sup>(3)</sup> Under Edward I. it was the common term for this type of messenger, and is found in every account of messengers' expenses. Under Edward II. it lost favour and little by little disappeared from the wardrobe accounts. Before the end of the reign it had become rare, though it was still used in the general heading "titulus de expensis nunciorum et cokinorum" in an account for 1320-1321.<sup>(4)</sup> After 1315, except for one example in 1317 and another in 1324,<sup>(5)</sup> the only entries under this heading in which a cokinus was mentioned were those relating to groups of unnamed messengers, or

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(1) Cal. Lib. R. 1226-1240, pp. 163 and 164.

(2) (E.A. 308/I) Thus it was in use at least forty years and probably more before the earliest date (1291) cited in the Medieval Latin Word List.

(3) E.A. 308/2.

(4) Brit. Mus. Add. MS. 9951.

(5) John of Norfolk "coginus" took writs for the wardrobe in December 1317 (Society of Antiquaries MS. no. 121) and Robert le Hunt "cokynus" delivered certain letters and commissions in 1325 (E.A. 381/4 m. 10). But from entries on the issue rolls, it seems that the latter may have been an exchequer messenger.

to messengers borrowed from the exchequer. That department, apparently more conservative than the wardrobe, continued to use the term for some time, but by the end of the reign, the "cokinus de Scaccario" had also disappeared.<sup>(1)</sup> Under Edward III. cokinus was never used. In nine rolls of expenses of messengers for that reign the word does not once occur, nor is it found in the nuncii section of any of the complete wardrobe accounts of the King's Wardrobe for the reign.<sup>(2)</sup>

In the enrolled wardrobe accounts, the word 'cokinus' runs a similar course. In the earliest examples, the two types of messengers are not distinguished in any way,<sup>(3)</sup> and when the differentiation does occur, it is explained not by the use of the term 'cokinus' but by the words "equites et pedites", suggesting that the main difference between them lay in their mode of travel and consequently the speed with which they could be expected to deliver their message. The phrase "in expensis diversorum nunciorum equitum et peditum" first occurs on the Pipe roll for 53 Henry III., which contains the enrolled wardrobe accounts for 1 May, 1261- 31 December 1264<sup>(4)</sup> and is found

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- (1) The latest example of the phrase "cokinus de Scaccario" which I have found is in a roll of daily foreign expenses of the wardrobe for 1325. (E.A. 381/14 m. 15).
- (2) An account of the Queen's wardrobe for 1331-2, however, refers to John de Welyng "cokino de hospicio regis, Robert Blacrel "cokino regis", and Henry de Corf "cokino de Hospicio regis".
- (3) Pipe rolls E.372/79,80,81,85,95, and 99: Chancellor's roll E. 352/45.
- (4) Pipe Roll no.113. It has been used three times in the Misae roll for 1212-13, however, where William de Verdon and Albericus Constabularius were called nuncii equites (Cole's Records pp. 254,257,264).

regularly thereafter <sup>(1)</sup> until the word 'cokinus' appears on the Pipe roll for 22 Edward I. <sup>(2)</sup> "In expensis diversorum nunciorum et cokinorum missorum ad diversas partes Anglie et ad quasdam transmarinas" remains the common formula on the Pipe rolls until that for 16 Edward II., <sup>(3)</sup> though in the enrolled accounts of the Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer for the wardrobe and household of 1319-1320, the phrase has already changed to "in expensis diversis nunciorum et cursorum garderober". <sup>(4)</sup> 'Cokinus' makes a final appearance here for the years 1321-1325 <sup>(5)</sup> and then disappears, to be replaced by the phrase 'cursor garderober' <sup>(6)</sup> or to be omitted entirely. It will be seen from this that the exchequer was always more conservative in phraseology than the wardrobe, and that in enrolling wardrobe expenditure on the Pipe roll it used its own formulae, adopting wardrobe phrases

- (1) Pipe rolls E.372/114, 115, 116, 119, 121, 123, 124, 128, 136, 138: and Chancellor's roll E.352/84. This phrase 'nuncii equitantes et peditantes' is sometimes used in the issue rolls, generally of several unnamed messengers (e.g. Issue Roll no./108 1300-1) but occasionally for individuals (e.g. Robert de London nuncius equiti Issue Roll 5/317 m.17, 1341-2).
- (2) E.372/139. (1293-4)
- (3) Pipe rolls E.372/144, 166, 168. (1322-3)
- (4) E.361/2. m.2,4,14,15,18,17d,1d.
- (5) E.361/2.m.20, 22, 24.
- (6) "In expensis diversorum nunciorum et cursorum" is found in Entr. Accts. (W. & H.) E.361/2 m.4, 37, 40, 41, 42. E.361/3 m.51. E.361/4 m.1, 1d, 2, 3, 3d, 5d, 7d, 9, 10, 10d, 11, 19, 22. "In expensis nunciorum" in E.361/2 m.26, 27, 30, 32, 34, 34d, 35, 36, 38d. **and** also in Chancellor's roll E.352/125 m.41 & 41d. No separate totals are given for messenger expenses in E.361/2 m.40d or in E.361/4 m. 21, 22, or for the whole of E.361/5.

years after they had become common in that department. Thus 'cokinus' a word familiar to wardrobe clerks from 1251 at least, was not employed on the Pipe roll till 1293, and in the same way continued to be part of the usual phraseology there until 1322, long after it had fallen into disuse in the wardrobe.

Parallel to 'cokinus' ran the word 'cursor'. It is not found in the surviving accounts of John's reign, but does occasionally appear in the early liberate rolls for Henry, III.'s. There are seven instances of the word in these rolls, all between 1242 and 1244, and all in general contexts, where lump sums were paid "to divers of the king's couriers (cursoribus) going on the king's message."<sup>(1)</sup> It appears again in the memoranda roll for 1241-2, where a note is made of the fact that Walter the Cornishman, the king's runner (cursor) has been given the alms recently held by William the Englishman his predecessor 'quondam cursore nostro'.<sup>(2)</sup> The corresponding entry on the close roll does not give Walter any title, but he had certainly served the king as a messenger since 1226.<sup>(3)</sup> 'Cursor' is not found at all in the rolls of expenses of messengers for 1251-3, or 1264-5, but it occurs in a letter on the close roll

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(1) Cal. Lib. R. II 1240-1245 pp.136,139,141,147,169,177, and 189.

(2) L. T. R. Memoranda roll 15 m.9d (P.R.O. typescript abstract p.39)

(3) Cl. R. 1242-1247 p.179.

Walter appears as a messenger in the liberate rolls for 1226-1233. (Cal. Lib. R. I 1226-1239)

of 1257, which allows robes "quales nuncii regis percipiunt" to four "cursores sequentes cancellariam regis", who had been with the king on his Welsh expedition, and of whom two at least are elsewhere described as nuncii.<sup>(1)</sup> It seems possible that at this date the word might still be used to denote messengers in a general sense, and was not restricted to those who belonged to the inferior variety. Possibly during the early years of this reign, all messengers travelled on foot at times and the distinction based on speed had not become absolute. If this should be so, we may find in this thirteenth century division of the messengers into two classes, equites and pedites, the origin of the increasing definiteness in the meaning of the three words, nuncius, cokinus and cursor, applied to them.

Under Edward I. the word 'cursor' was seldom used. There are no instances of it among messengers attached to the king's service till after 1300. There are, however, a few earlier references in the accounts of the queen and others. Thus in an account of the queen's household for 1288-1290, five

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(1) Cl.R. 1256-1259 p.166.

One of these 'cursores', Nicholas le Waleys, is described as "quondam nuncius regis" in 1266 (Cl.R. 1264-1268 p.170); another, Simon de Mawordin, as nuncius or cokinus in 1264-5. (E.A. 308/2) Perhaps in 1257 they had not yet been admitted to the king's household: if so, this would explain why they receive robes "de dono regis" and not as one of the privileges attaching to their office. See below pp.189-209

cursores (and no cokini) were paid for their expenses,<sup>(1)</sup> and John de Donstal, cursor filii regis, appears in an account for 1299.<sup>(2)</sup> After 1300, the word was used more frequently, though it was by no means common. It generally occurs in the less formal accounts of the wardrobe. Two cursores, William de Igenton and John le Francon are mentioned in a bundle of royal accounts covering the years 1299-1307.<sup>(3)</sup> Richard de Werington in 1300<sup>(4)</sup> and William le Clerk in 1301<sup>(5)</sup>; David, Robert de Langeton<sup>(6)</sup> and Adam Abel in 1303<sup>(7)</sup> are also given this title. All these however, are occasional references. I have only found one document of this date in which the word is used consistently. This is a small book of divers expenses in which record was kept of the sums paid to special and ordinary messengers during the last two years of Edward I.'s reign.<sup>(8)</sup> Here the word is used of royal messengers seventeen times. But this too is only a preliminary account, from which the complete

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(1) Add. MS. 35294. 'Cokinus', as a title for messengers of the queen appears in an account for the wardrobe of the king's sons in 1305 (E.A. 368/12): in a similar account for the king's brothers in 1311-1313 (E.A. 374/19): and in an account for the queen's wardrobe in 1311-1312 (Brit.Mus.Cotton MS Nero C VIII) But 'cursor' seems to have been the more usual term.

(2) E.A. 358/20 f.8v.

(3) E.A. 358/27 nos. 10 and 11.

(4) E.A. 359/2.

(5) E.A. 362/17.

(6) E.A. 364/24.

(7) E.A. 365/50.

(8) E.A. 308/19. The book as we have it is incomplete.

wardrobe book would be compiled, and the frequency with which 'cursor' is employed here suggests that it was current in the wardrobe some time before it appears in the formal accounts presented for audit at the exchequer. In the complete accounts of the Prince of Wales on the other hand, 'cokinus' and 'cursor' are found side by side. His wardrobe book for 1302-3 calls four men cokini, six cursores, and gives either name indifferently to six other messengers. (1)

Under Edward II., the word became more general from the very first years of the reign. It was employed nineteen times in an account for 1311-1312. (2) By this time, 'cursor' was replacing 'cokinus' as the usual term for an inferior messenger. Thus the 'titulus' concerned with messengers was now frequently headed de expensis nunciorum et cursorum regis Edwardi (instead of, as before, nunciorum et cokinorum), and this became the common formula under Edward III. (3)

The use of the word 'cursor' in the wardrobe accounts of Edward II. while Prince of Wales, and its immediate adoption after he became king, suggests that Edward himself or his household officers set the new fashion in names. Possibly the

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(1) E.A. 365/18.

(2) Brit.Mus.Cotton MS. Nero C VIII f.99-108.

It must not be overlooked that the accounts were made up some years after these dates (from the daily records of wardrobe expenditure). Payment for the robes of nuncii for 1311-12, for instance, was not made until 1317. (Nero C VIII f.IIIv.)

(3) For an example of the old phraseology, see Lib.Quot.Gard. p.280: of the new, Nero C VIII f.185v. (1299-1300 and 1334-1338).



messengers themselves preferred the newer word because it did not suggest any connection with the kitchen. 'Cursor' would imply swiftness of travel, more especially as the word could be used for fast running horses as well as for messenger. (1) Foreign usage too may have had a hand in introducing the word, (2) which was the common term for messenger in Italy and was employed for both "cursores Pape" and "cursores curiam Romanam sequentes" in the fourteenth century. (3) In England, 'cursor' remained the usual word for this type of messenger during the fifteenth century, if Upton's evidence is reliable, (4) while the name nuncius regis continued to be known and used both inside and outside the royal household for the professional king's messenger. (5)

- (1) e.g. in such entries as this: "Johanni de Normanvill pro uno cursore nigro ab ipso empto ad opus domini regis vj li. xiijs. iiijd." Add.MS. 36762 - a roll of necessary expenses for 1277-8. This use of the word continued after it had become the usual term for messengers; in one case, the two meanings appear in the same sentence - "Johanni Cursori pro uno cursore liardo empto -- ix li.vj s.viiij d." Nero C VIII f.214 v. (1336)
- (2) e.g. The Bardi, in presenting their account which included money paid to a nuncius regis, John Russel, called him 'cursor', the name which they would have given to their own messengers. (Issue roll no. /187 1318-19.)
- (3) The former corresponded roughly to the nuncii regis: the latter were professionals (working for themselves or for a message-taking establishment) who were hired by the Pope as need arose. See Yves Renouard "Comment les Papes d'Avignon expédiaient leur courrier" in Revue Historique CLXXX pp.1-22.
- (4) De Studio Militari Lib.I. Cap.IX. (1937)
- (5) In a description of the battle of St. Albans of 1455, there occurs a list of those "men of courte" slain in the battle, and among them, ~~that of~~ Rogere Mercroft, the Kynges Messenger". The Paston Letters (ed. Gairdner 1896) I, 350 no.239.

The decline of the old term 'cokinus' and the rise of the new one 'cursor' can also be illustrated from the issue rolls. Entries to messengers of any kind are rare during the early part of Edward I.'s reign, and the word 'cokinus' does not appear here until 1290.<sup>(1)</sup> It occurs three times in 1292<sup>(2)</sup> and eleven times during the following year, when the phrase 'cokini de hospicio regis' is used,<sup>(3)</sup> and the word finally disappears as a term for wardrobe messengers after 1306.<sup>(4)</sup> Its decline here was thus coincident with its decline in the wardrobe. It still continued however to be employed for exchequer messengers throughout the succeeding reign. The cokinus de scaccario appears in the issue rolls for 1309-11, 1313-15, 1317-18 and 1320,<sup>(5)</sup> though the phrase 'cursor de scaccario' creeps in on two occasions (1313 and 1322),<sup>(6)</sup> and the new word was always used for wardrobe messengers. Under Edward III., 'cokinus de scaccario' is used five times in 1327,<sup>(7)</sup> but makes its final appearance in the following year - in 1328, too, the term 'cursor de scaccario' is used freely for the first time<sup>(8)</sup> and continues thereafter to be the regular phrase. The exchequer had kept the word 'cokinus' alive for twenty years after the

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(1) Issue Roll nos. /66 and 71. Two cokini are mentioned and one cokinus de cancellarie.

(2) Issue Roll nos. /76 and 79.

(3) " " " . /90, 91, 95, 96, 99.

(4) " " " . /134.

(5) " " " . /152, 155, 162, 164, 170, 172, 178, 185, 186, 187, 195,

(6) " " " . /170 and 202. 205, 207.

(7) " " " . /231.

(8) " " " . /232 and 239.

wardrobe had abandoned it, and before even this most conserva-  
tive of departments adopted the newer style. (1)

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(1) 'Cokinus' might be used for exchequer messengers while in the same entry 'cursor' was applied to other messengers, either attached to the wardrobe or independent. An entry in the issue roll under 24 Dec. 1314 records the payment of 67/6 to three nuncii regis and to "diversis Kokinis et cursoribus tam de scaccario quam de London deferentibus brevia regis." (Issue Roll no. /172 m.9)

The following table may be of interest as showing the relative frequency with which the words 'nuncius', 'cokinus', and 'cursor' were used in the royal wardrobe in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The figures are taken from accounts selected at intervals over the whole period, and represent the number of times that these three words appear in each account.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Nature of the account</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Nuncius</u>	<u>Cokinus</u>	<u>Cursor</u>
1209-10	<u>Misae Roll</u>	<u>Rotuli de Liberate ac de Misis &amp;c ed. T. D. Hardy</u>	43	0	0
1252-1254	Roll of expenses of messengers	<u>E. A. 308/1</u>	59	84	0
1284-1286	"	<u>E. A. 308/8</u>	44	47	0
1303-4	<u>Liber cotidianus</u>	Add. MS. 8835	101	152	4
1307-8	Wardrobe book	<u>E. A. 373/15</u>	12	53	19
1312-1313	<u>Liber Cotidianus</u>	<u>E. A. 375/8</u>	41	3	18
1315-1316	Account Book of Robert de Wodehouse	<u>E. A. 376/7</u>	31	1	16
1325-6	Daily foreign expenses of Wardrobe	<u>E. A. 381/14</u>	45	2	54
1328-1329	Roll of daily foreign expenses of Wardrobe	<u>E. A. 393/13 &amp; 14</u>	10	0	4
1334-1339	<u>Liber contrarotulatoris</u>	Cotton MS. Nero C. VIII f. 285v-310 v.	84	0	52

This rapid disappearance of one word and the appearance of another did not correspond to any change in personnel among the inferior messengers. It does not seem that the change in title involved any corresponding change in position. Men who under Edward I. were acting as cokini, were acting under Edward II. in exactly the same way under the new title of cursores. Thus, for example, Robert de Crouland was consistently and frequently called 'cokinus' between 1289 and 1307, but in accounts for 1311 and 1316 was called 'cursor'. William Clerk, who entered the royal service as a 'cokinus' about 1281, was also described in 1311 and 1315 as 'cursor'.<sup>(1)</sup> Richard Frere was called 'cokinus' when he first took letters for the king: in 1307 he was sometimes 'cokinus' and sometimes 'cursor': in 1310 and 1311 always 'cursor'.<sup>(2)</sup> The inferior messenger might be called by a new title, but his position and duties remained the same: the change was one of name only and involved nothing more.

#### Characteristics of a Messenger Service.

From this study of the various types of messenger, we must proceed, if we are to justify our belief in the existence of a royal "messenger service" in the thirteenth and fourteenth

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(1) Cotton MS. Nero C VIII f.99-108 and E.A. 376/7

(2) E.A. 375/15, E.A. 374/8, and Nero C VIII f.99-108.

centuries, to show that these various types formed a single organisation, or that one section of the whole was already a selfconscious unit in the household and inside the whole messenger group. The phrase "messenger service" as used to-day implies both an organisation and an official position. It can only be used for the medieval predecessors of the modern King's Foreign and Home Service corps if they were already "a fairly large body of men, properly organised and efficiently handled,"(1) and if they possessed as a body certain distinctive characteristics.

The King's Messenger Service to-day consists of professional messengers, who seldom undertake any other work, who are permanently employed by the King, and who are recognised by all as the King's official messengers. They are specially appointed as messengers, and bear some authorisation in the form of a warrant or badge when they travel to establish their official character. The medieval nuncius regis could claim all these distinctive marks. He was a professional messenger, permanently employed and chosen by the King; he was recognised as such both inside and outside the royal household; and he could produce warrant for his position.

Both nuncii regis and cokini earned their living simply and solely in the King's service. Both were thus professionals.

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(1) V. Wheeler-Holohan op.cit.p.2.

But while the former was a member of a small definite group, the cokinus was one of a larger number of men also messengers, also official, but less coherent. Many cokini remained in the King's service for long periods, as the instances given on page 31 show. But there were also many whose names only figure once or twice on the accounts, who formed a shifting indefinite group to the class of inferior messengers. The latter had no special privileges such as the nuncius regis enjoyed, and their position was more doubtful. Even in the accounts for Edward III.'s reign, when the titles 'nuncius' and 'cursor' are given only intermittently, the words 'nuncius regis' are seldom omitted. (1)

The nuncii regis, then, more than the cokini or cursores, are those who correspond more closely to the professional messenger service of later days. If such a service existed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, they composed it. They satisfy the first condition attached to the use of the phrase "messenger service", for they were professionals, in the king's permanent employ as messengers. The number of payments to each man show how frequently they were sent out with letters, how seldom a messenger spent more than a few days at a time in court. Even if the dating of accounts may not indicate the precise date of a journey (2) the impression of constant activity is confirmed

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(1) e.g. Two rolls of daily foreign expenses of the wardrobe. E.A. 383/13 and 14 (1328-1329)

(2) Payments were sometimes entered under a date which may be that of the messenger's departure; sometimes not until the clerk who paid out the money had his expenses checked.  
See below Chapter vii

by other evidence. The household Ordinance of St. Albans, April 1300, had disturbed the customary routine of the household. Consequently some note was kept of the days on which messengers left the court and the dates of their return, and we are fortunate enough to have the document on which <sup>(1)</sup> these dates were entered for April to October of that year. Although the kings from Edward I. to Edward III. had usually twelve to fifteen nuncii at their disposal, besides a considerably larger number of cokini or cursores, the messengers appear to have been kept busy all through the year. The movements of one nuncius, Hugh of Whitby, during a single month will give sufficient indication of the constant activity required. He returned to court on 30 April, left again on 8 May, returned again 11 May, left again 14 May, and returned once more on 28 May. This instance fairly represents the normal amount of work performed by a nuncius, but they might be called on at any time and be deprived of the few days' rest between every journey which Hugh of Whitby enjoyed, during the month quoted. In times of war their activities redoubled. It is not surprising to learn that some of them were forced to retire because, from ill-health, they could no longer serve the king.

An indication of the professional nature of the messenger service as early as the reign of Henry III. is given by the

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(1) E. A. 357/28 (1300)



frequent use of the phrase "quondam nuncius regis" by men who had ~~thus~~ retired or by messengers when they were not acting in an official capacity. Even in retirement, they were sufficiently conscious of their former professional position to describe themselves as "quondam nuncii regis". One of many messengers to whom Henry III. granted a pension from his established alms, Roger le Blund, received an allowance of three half-pence a day for some years as one who had formerly served the king in this capacity.<sup>(1)</sup> The same words "quondam nuncius regis" were used to describe John Chubbe, who had become a monk.<sup>(2)</sup> Another messenger, John de Barneby, who served the king for many years, styled himself "nuncius regis" when he was a party in a private lawsuit.<sup>(3)</sup> The descriptive phrase in each case clearly indicates that the man holds, or has held, a definite and permanent position, and that his work as a nuncius was more than a temporary occupation.

There are very few instances in the Wardrobe accounts of of messengers undertaking other tasks for the king than that implied by their title. The few exceptions include taking charge of dogs,<sup>(4)</sup> horses,<sup>(5)</sup> or of Wardrobe property.<sup>(6)</sup>

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(1) Cl.R. 1253-1254 p.3 and 1254-1256 p.35.

(2) Cal.Ch.R. 1257-1300 (1258) p.5.

(3) Cal.Cl.R. 1272-1279 (1277) p.416.

(4) e.g. Robin de Alemana in 1213 (Cole's Records p.240) and Thomas Squiret in 1289 (E.A. 208/12.)

(5) e.g. Galfridus le Waleis in 1285 (E.A. 308/8) and Roger de Windesore in 1284 (E.A. 308/7)

(6) e.g. Thomas Squiret in 1293 Misc. Bks. Th. of R. 202 f.20v.

"Robert de Hoton, Messenger" was put in charge of a gaol by Edward II. in 1325,<sup>(1)</sup> but this was business cognate to that of the capturing and keeping of prisoners, which, as we shall see, was a not uncommon duty of messengers. There are three instances of men who seem to have served the King in some other capacity before becoming messengers. Nicholas Ramage was first archer (sagittarius) in 1284 and sumpterman (sometarius) in 1285;<sup>(2)</sup> but having once joined the nuncii regis, he remained a messenger until 1302 without deviating from the normal routine of a messenger's life. Stephen de Hamslap and John de Waltham<sup>(3)</sup> were archers in 1319, but after their next appearance in 1323 were consistently called nuncii and did messenger's work.

Messengers attached to the smaller royal households, on the other hand, were sometimes required to perform services which seem to us to lie well outside the functions of a messenger. John Dagenet, messenger of the Black Prince, was ordered in September 1346 to supervise the threshing of 200 quarters of wheat, to engage the workmen, provide the barrels for the flour, and "to do all else that is necessary in the matter until Christmas."<sup>(4)</sup> But this was the exception, not

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(1) Cal.Ch.W. 1244-1326 p.561.

(2) 1284 E.A. 351/17 and 1285 E.A. 351/25.

(3) Add. MS. 17362.

(4) Black Prince's Register I 18.

The terms of this commission illustrate the responsible position of the messenger, and show that he was regarded, not as a menial, but as a trusted servant who could be relied on to supervise the work of others.

the rule, even in the smaller households: in the king's there was sufficient work which lay within their own province to occupy all the royal nuncii and cursores.

The nuncius regis, who had once entered the king's service, generally held the post for life. Even during the early part of Henry III.'s reign, men were employed for a number of years in succession. Under Edward I. when the careers of individual nuncii can be followed more closely in the surviving wardrobe accounts the same names occur regularly year after year.

The liberate rolls for 1227-1233<sup>(1)</sup> record payments to some seventy-one messengers. Not all of these were of the type who would have been called nuncii regis at a later date, but sixteen names reappear frequently during these years. Between 1227 and 1230, for instance, Walter Cornwaleis was paid for thirty-nine journeys, William de Vendôme for forty-one, and William Cointerel for thirty-five. It seems as though these sixteen men represented the permanent service, while the rest formed part of a fluctuating group of inferior messengers, though not yet distinguished by the word 'cokinus'. This belief is strengthened by the appearance of some of the sixteen in the close rolls with the title 'nuncius regis'. William de Vendôme, mentioned above, received a sum of two pence half-penny

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(1) Cal.Lib.R. I (1226-1240)

a day in 1231<sup>(1)</sup> conceded by the king "nuncio suo" from his established alms.

The surviving Wardrobe accounts for Edward I. give even clearer evidence that the king's messengers were men in permanent employment. For example, Alan Poydras and Robert de Stanlegh, both of whom appeared on the rolls for 1264-1265,<sup>(2)</sup> were still serving as nuncii at least until 1291; Roger de Windesore, Arnold Bon, and Thomas Squiret, who first figure in the accounts between 1276 and 1282, remained in the King's service until the end of the reign.<sup>(3)</sup> An even more striking example is that of Robert de Manfeld, who began his career as a messenger of Edward of Carnavon, Prince of Wales. Robert appears first in a list of imprests on wages in the Household dated 1296-1299.<sup>(4)</sup> When his master became King, Robert was made nuncius regis, served him in this capacity throughout his reign, and appears as late as 1334-5 in a roll of daily foreign expenses.<sup>(5)</sup>

As a body, the nuncii regis were recognised by other members of the Household as forming a distinct group. This is seen in the yearly entries relating to the payment of money

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(1) Cl.R. (1227-1231) 1231 p.568.

(2) E.A. 308/2.

(3) Roger de Windesore and Thomas Squiret appear in 1276 (E.A. 308/3) Arnold Bon in 1281-1282 (E.A. 308/5)

(4) E.A. 354/23. (1296-1299)

(5) E.A. 387/9.

for robes and shoes. In a counter-roll of payments for robes in 1284-1285, <sup>(1)</sup> for example, the members of the King's Household are grouped as follows:-

Milites,

Clerici,

Servientes hospicii regis,

Scutiferi regis,

Falconarii et venatores regis,

Menestrali regis,

Caretarii,

NUNCII REGIS,

Vadleti de diversis officiis in hospicio regis

Sometarii, garciones, palafredarii.

This is the order followed, with slight variations, in nearly all similar lists, and may perhaps be taken as a rough guide to the position and importance of the nuncii in relation to other members of the household.<sup>(2)</sup> Messengers sometimes preceded falconers and carters, but were always placed after squires, serjeants and minstrels. In general their position on the lists remained much the same throughout the period. In a list of 1325-6, containing "les nomis des genz de Lostel notre seigneur le Roi qui prenderont liverree des robes p~~o~~ur le passage de Roi"

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(1) E.A. 351/17.

(2) e.g. E.A. 351/25 and 26 (1285-7) Roll and Counter-roll of Payments for robes.

vers les partes de Fraunce lan de son règne xixme (1)

The order was as follows:-

Enfantz en garde (each with "son maitre")

Esquiers,

Seriantz Hospice,

Seriantz Dames,

Valletz de la Chaumbre,

Menestaux,

MESSAGERS,

Vadletz Doffice,

Summeters,

Palefreours,

Charetters,

Item Palefreours,

Garc,ens Hossice, p

Venours,

Pages de la Chambre.

Clearly the messengers formed a group as distinct as that of the Serjeants at Arms or any other Household officers. (2) In

(1) Documents subsidiary to the Wardrobe account for 1325-6. E.A. 381/11.

(2) Compare the position of papal cursores under the Avignon Papacy, as described by Yves Renouard. "Ils occupent une place bien déterminé dans la hiérarchie du personnel de la Curie, audessus du groupe de palefreniers pontificaux. - La fonction de cursor pape est une véritable dignité. Qui en est revêtu jouit de grands avantages matériels et moraux, devient un personnage." Yves Renouard "Comment les Papes d'Avignon expédiaient leur courriers." Revue Historique CLXXX pp.1-22 (1937).

the following reign, a "Description of the Household of King Edward III. in peace and War from the eighteenth to the twenty-first year of his reign"<sup>(1)</sup> shows the messenger group still an integral part of the Household organisation.<sup>(2)</sup>

Evidently, then, at least as early as 1300, the messengers formed a well-established group in the household. They could expect to be employed for many years and rarely gave up their posts until too old for service. The entries in the accounts, which are the main source of information, cannot by their nature explain exactly how the messengers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries appeared to their contemporaries. But the evidence does suggest that the nuncii regis were regarded by other members of the King's Household as a special body of men, distinct from the King's other servants, and from their own associates, the cokini: that they were in fact

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(1) "A Collection of Ordinances and Regulations for the Government of the Royal Household -" ed. the Society of Antiquaries, London 1790. pp.4,8,9, and 11.

(2) In the "Liber Niger Domus Regis Edwardi IV" and in the Ordinances made at Eltham in the XVIIth year of King Henry VIII", printed in the same collection, the same type of nuncii are still found, though diminished in numbers, among the "Officers and Mynisteres of the Howse". op. cit. p.48, 169 and 213.

a "Messenger Service".<sup>(1)</sup>

This view is corroborated by all that can be discovered about their appointment, and authorisation.

The nuncius regis seems to have been chosen by the King, and even as lately as the nineteenth century, the Sovereign had the right of scrutinising the list of names submitted for appointment.<sup>(2)</sup> Since the messenger was to be employed so near the king, and since, in the course of his duties, he might have to undertake arduous and responsible commissions, the king had an obvious interest in the appointment. A great deal might depend on the messenger's efficiency, and trustworthiness, for

- (1) Compare the account of "The Scottish King's Household" by M. Bateson in the Juridical Review for 1901 and 1902 (Vol. 13 and 14) taken from a MS. of 1305 (Corpus Christi College Camb. MS. no. 37). The nearest approach to messengers here are the 24 Sergeants who ran ahead on foot whenever the court moved. Vol. 13, p. 421. Yet we know that the king had both nuncii and cursores about this time, for two cursores regis Scocie, Thomas Girdelas and Richard Dikesone, brought letters to Edward III in 1334; (Nero C VIII f. 276v, and 278v.) while expenses of nuncii and cursores regis occur regularly in the Great Chamberlain's accounts for 1326-1370. (The Account of the great Chamberlains of Scotland and some other Offices of the Crown rendered at the Exchequer. Vol. I. Edinburgh for the Bannatyne Club 1837) and in the Exchequer Rolls of Scotland, 1264-1359. (The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland, Vol. I. ed. Stuart and Burnet, 1878)
- (2) "The candidates are nominated to the corps, their name and position being placed before her Majesty for approval previous to final appointment." Major Herbert Byng-Hall "The Queen's Messenger", 1865, p. 87. See also Wheeler-Holohan, op. cit. p. 6.



he was carrying important letters and documents (1) and was the only certain means of communication between the king and his representatives, in England or abroad. He might be employed on "secret business" (2) and was frequently put in charge of the men who conveyed large sums of money from London to the king when he was in the north. (3) During the Scottish wars, when wardrobe, chancery, and exchequer were often so far apart, the messenger's work was doubly important because it afforded the surest means of communication between the three. (4) The extent to which the king was obliged to trust to the messenger's fidelity, and the opportunities afforded for betraying this trust are illustrated by a story told in the Lanercost Chronicle (5) under the year 1296, as one of the notable episodes occurring during the siege of Edinburgh castle. This is the only instance I have met in which a messenger proved

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- (1) e.g. "xvij Aprilis (1312) Ricardo Swyn nuncio misso Parisius cum quibusdam memorandis et aliis negotia regis in partibus illis tangentibus ad ea ibidem Magistro Thomae de Cobham liberandum". (Nero C VIII f.107 v.) Chancery rolls were carried about by Gervase le Devenis (1276-8) (E.A. 350/28 m.2)
- (2) e.g. John de Tunstal and John de Canefeld, nuncii, sent overseas in 1324 "in quibusdam negotiis domini regis eis in secreto iniunctis". (E.A. 379/19 f.15 v.)
- (3) e.g. Robert de Manfeld took £4500 from London to Carlisle 1307. (E.A. 373/15.)
- (4) The division of the administration at such times led to messages such as this:- "xix die Jan. (1312) Ricardo de Thurrok cokino Scaccarii misso ad curiam regis in partibus borialibus et ad Cancellariam cum quibusdam litteris ---" (Nero C VIII f. 107 v.)
- (5) Chronicon de Lanercost ed. J. Stevenson (the Bannatyne Club) Edinburgh 1839. pp.177-179.

unfaithful. (1) Needing a courier to take important letters to London, Edward dispatched "cursorem suum velocissimum, et quem aestimabat fidelissimum, Wallensem quemdam, cui, commendatis pluribus epistolis ac soluto bravio, praecipit ut citissime versus Londinias explicaret vias." Temptation, however, proved too strong for the cursor: "continuo enim ingressus tabernam, quicquid in sumptus accipit itineris consumpsit in voracitem ventris. Mane-- ridiculum facturus Anglis, jubet socio suo peltem ante se portare, asserens se non inde discedere priusquam impetum castrensibus dederit. Accedens autem cum balista ante fores, inclamavit custodes murorum ut sibi restem demitterent qua introductus secreta eis suorum adversariorum omnia denudaret." The Constable, however, was too honest to take advantage of this perfidy; the English were informed and the traitor was sent down the rope again "cum litteris indemnatis." His end was an unpleasant one. "Sed ne poenam Lewyn, praedicti praevaricatoris, ~~fileam~~, statim deprehensus, judicatus, tractatus ac suspensus est solemni patibulo, pro ejus scelere extracto." (2) This, however, appears to be an exceptional case in which there may

(1) Unless Henry de Bitering, messenger, whose lands were restored to him in 1322 after he had been in disgrace as a rebel, was a king's messenger, which seems doubtful. (Cal.Cl.R. 1318-1325 p.574.)

(2) The chronicler throughout pretends to intimate knowledge of this affair; e.g. he remarks that when the cursor entered the castle "Constabularius castris, ut mihi asseruit, tunc vacabat."

have been some patriotic ideas of revenge as well as the recklessness natural to a man who finds that he has spent all his journey money before setting out, and who has had "a good time" into the bargain. The fact that this instance is made so much of by the chronicler suggests that such infidelity was both unexampled and unsuspected. <sup>(1)</sup>

The first surviving writ of appointment as king's messenger which Wheeler-Holohan could discover was not earlier than 1485, <sup>(2)</sup> though he quotes a warrant for the issue of money to an exchequer messenger dated 1454 in which the terms of appointment are given in detail. <sup>(3)</sup> Unless an earlier example of such a writ of privy seal, or of a letter patent of appointment is found, we must rely on such information as comes from items and memoranda in the wardrobe accounts, and from Nicholas Upton's "De studio Militari" which, though somewhat later than my period, may throw light on previous practice. <sup>(4)</sup>

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(1) A messenger sent to Edward during the siege of Stirling by the Scots in 1303 also turned traitor, with the result that the castle was forced to surrender. But this messenger was not in the king's service. His ultimate fate, after the recapture of the castle by Edward in 1304, was similar to that of Lewyn. (Flores Historiarum III 310 and 320. ed. Luard. Rolls Series 1890)

(2) V. Wheeler-Holohan op.cit. p. 5.

(3) Ibid. p.3. The document is E. 404/70.

4 (4) The work is dedicated to Duke Humphrey of Gloucester: it also speaks of "illum invidiosissimum et Christianissimum Principem Henricum quintum Regem Anglie et Regentem Francie et heredem apparentem in Regno illo Francie" as though he were the reigning monarch. Lib. IV pp. 113 and 257.

How were messengers appointed? There are three references in the wardrobe accounts for Edward I. to the admission of new messengers into the king's service. Two nuncii, Robert Petit and William de Alkham, entered the service in the new year of 1297. Their appointment was noticed in the accounts because they were too late to receive robes for that year and were only eligible for shoe-money for the coming summer "quia admissi fuerunt post natale".<sup>(1)</sup> The phraseology suggests that even under Edward I., messengers were formally appointed and admitted to their office. This idea is strengthened by a further memorandum, concerning the admission of a certain Galfridus de Bardeney into the household. Galfridus had been in Scotland as a messenger of John de Kingston, Constable of Edinburgh, before he entered the king's service in 1300.<sup>(2)</sup> "Memorandum quod xv die Marcii anno presenti xxvij admissus fuit Galfridus de Bardeney, qui fuit de municione de Edenburgh, per regem ad morandum in hospicio suo tamquam nuncius et ad percipiendum sicut unus alius nuncius suus." The third entry among wardrobe accounts which mentions the admission of a messenger to the service is a further reference to Robert Petit, "tempore quo primo factus fuit nuncius."<sup>(3)</sup> Wardrobe accounts for Edward II. and III. only add one further instance, that

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(1) Add. MS. 7965 f. 42.

(2) Lib. Quot. Gard. p. 283.

(3) Add. MS. 7965 f. 42. See below p. 55.

of Fulk de Hertwell "de novo facto nuncio apud Nottingham" in 1336,<sup>(1)</sup> but a chamber account for 1325 mentions a sum of money paid to a man "de nouell' fait messenger le Roi;"<sup>(2)</sup> The issue rolls for this period also provide one instance only in which a messenger's appointment is noticed, but this too relates to a messenger of the king's chamber. Here the appointment seems to have been made, or at least confirmed, by letters patent, granting him a yearly salary as long as he held the office.<sup>(3)</sup> In a similar way, a grant of Richard II. by letters patent to John Sewale "uni quatuor nunciorum de scaccario" of a daily wage to be received in the same manner as Thomas Monk, deceased, lately one of the aforesaid nuncii, was confirmed by Henry IV. in 1411.<sup>(4)</sup> But this written grant of office may not have been thought necessary at an earlier date: at least no trace of such letters has so far been found. The evidence shows only that the appointment was formal and to a definite office; while the

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(1) Nero C VIII f.299 v.

(2) Society of Antiquaries MS. 122 p.64 (24 May 1324- 10 Oct. 1326) This MS is incorrectly described as a Wardrobe account on the modern cover.

(3) Issue roll of Thomas de Brantingham, Bishop of Exeter, Lord High Treasurer of England, containing payments made out of His Majesties' revenue in the 44th year of King Edward III. A.D.1370. trans. and ed. Frederick Devon 1835 p.8.

(4) Issue roll no. /606. m.7. Much humbler members of the household were admitted to their tasks with a certain formality, e.g. a balista maker. (Issue roll no. 85).

statement that Galfridus de Bardeney was admitted to the king's household "per regem" may very well represent, not a convenient fiction, but an actual fact.

By the fifteenth century, when we get the first detailed description of the messenger service in the work of Upton, some form or ceremony seems to have been performed by a Herald at this admission of the new messenger to his office.<sup>(1)</sup>

Upton describes the ceremony appropriate for the creation of a pursuivant, and says that these were chosen from messengers who had completed three years' service as nuncii,<sup>(2)</sup> "qui eciam creantur ex cursoribus."<sup>(3)</sup> Thus he established a hierarchy of messengers, from cursores, the lowest, to Heralds, the highest, type. It seems possible that Upton has simplified the actual facts in order to fit all types of messengers into his picture of knighthood: on the other hand, certain details tally remarkably with Wardrobe evidence. But Upton's account of the two lower ranks of messengers, the cursores (sive nuncii peditantes) and the nuncii (qui equitantes appellantur) was only a preliminary to his real subject, that of knighthood. He was interested in messengers because "isti possunt esse milites propter peritiam in officiis habitam." He says little

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(1) "De Haraldis --- quorum officium est minores nuncios creare". Upton op.cit. Lib. I Cap.XII p.20.

(2) Ibid. Cap XI p.19.

(3) Ibid. Cap.X p.18.

about the creation of the lower messengers, except that it was performed by the Herald<sup>(1)</sup>.

Both "Messengers in Ordinary" and "Messengers Extraordinary" of the seventeenth century were sworn in upon appointment. The form of the oath then, was, with some modification, that of all the king's servants.<sup>(2)</sup> Upton declares that a similar oath was required in the fifteenth century from messengers of the second grade, the nuncii equitantes. Such an oath would constitute an extra guarantee of their integrity<sup>(3)</sup> and the direct tie between servant and lord would have been agreeable to the medieval idea. We know that an oath of this kind was taken by many others who served the king in different

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- (1) This was certainly the case by the seventeenth century. Francis Thynne, Lancaster Herald, in his "Discourse of the Duty and Office of an Herald at Arms" speaking of the creation of Herald and Pursuivants says "Then like as the Messenger is brought in by the Herald of the Province, so is the Pursuivant brought in by the Eldest Herald, who at the Commandment of the Prince, doth all the Solemnities." (Guillim Display of Heraldry 6th ed. 1724. p.34)
- (2) Wheeler-Holohan op.cit. p.14.  
The corresponding oath taken in the seventeenth century by exchequer messengers is printed in The First Report of the Committee on the Public Records (1800) p.254.
- (3) The modern messenger, for instance, is never obliged to give receipts for letters entrusted to him, though the recipient is. (P.H.M.Wynter "On the Queen's Errands" 1906 p.153.)

capacities,<sup>(1)</sup> even by the sailors who served during the campaign of 1372-3.<sup>(2)</sup> Upton merely says that the royal arms were placed upon the messenger's left shoulder "cum fidelitatis juramento domino suo speciali prestando."<sup>(3)</sup>

For pursuivants, he gives a form of oath,<sup>(4)</sup> in which they promise fidelity until death to the king as their lord in any business intrusted to them, and obedience to the heralds, under whom they would act. Except for the clauses relating to the heralds, the oath taken by the fifteenth century nuncius was probably very similar to that of the pursuivants. Although there is no evidence to show how far back the practice goes, it seems likely that the need for some guarantee of the messenger's integrity would call for an oath of fidelity in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as in

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(1) e.g. A memorandum on the issue roll for 1310-11 notes the appointment of a clerk to supervise work at Westminster and the Tower "et de bene et fideliter se habendo in officio predicto fecit sacramentum coram Thesaurario et Camerario de scaccario" (Issue Roll no. 157) Master Henry de Clyf, in 1325, on appointment to the custody of the rolls of chancery "in the Great Hall of Westminster at the marble stone took oath to execute the office well and faithfully". (Cal.Cl.R. 1325-1327 p.386) Again, in 1346, Edward III. ordered the Keeper of the wardrobe to provide robes for a certain John Berenger, clerk "as he is sworn to the king's service -- and on the said day the king retained him of his familiar household and granted him the yearly robes of the suit of one of his clerks" (Cal.Cl.R. 1346-1349 p.11) These examples could be multiplied.

(2) Issue roll no. 446 m.1.

(3) Upton op.cit. Cap.X pp.18-19.

(4) Upton op.cit. Cap.XI p.20.



Upton's day.<sup>(1)</sup>

The story from the Lanercost Chronicle already quoted confirms this, for there we are told that the Constable of the castle had scruples about allowing the cursor to break his oath though the rest of the Scots pressed for it.<sup>(2)</sup>

The messenger seems to have been appointed for good behaviour. The Issue roll of Thomas de Brantingham for 1370 contains an entry to John Stygan, Messenger of the King's Chamber, "to whom the Lord the King by his letters patent lately granted 100/- yearly — as long as he should well and faithfully conduct himself in the aforesaid office."<sup>(3)</sup> By the fifteenth century, the four messengers of the Exchequer at least were appointed for life,<sup>(4)</sup> the first stage perhaps towards turning this office into the sinecure which it eventually

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- (1) An oath was taken by the papal cursores on appointment. Baumgarten quotes several extracts from papal accounts which illustrate this; for example, from one for October 1367. "Die IIII mensis Octobris apud Viterbium, Marchus de Lusseria, qui portavit nova devote sociatatis in regno, fuit receptus in cursorem domini nostri Pape ad vadia consueta et iuravit" (Reg.Aven.Tom.193 f.449 v.)  
 In another extract for April 1414, the cursor "iuravit in manibus domini Lausenani regentis" (Arm.29 Tom.3 f. 6 v.)  
 Baumgarten P.M. Aus Kanzlei und Kammer erörterungen zur Kurialen Hof- und Verwaltungsgeschichte in XIII, XIV und XV Jahrhundert. pp. 231 and 234. (1907)
- (2) "Cum vero caeteri vellent igitur sacramenta detegi inhibuit qui praerant, et statim in eminenti loco stans acclamavit fortiter transeuntes quatinus notum facerent in curia regis proditorem suum eos qui deintus erant sollicitare de fraude cui nulla ratione contra fidem vellet assensum praebere."  
Chronicon de Lanercost p.178
- (3) Issue Roll of Thomas de Brantingham 1370. trans. and ed. Frederick Devon 1835. p.8.
- (4) 1454 Warrant of privy seal E.404/70 trans. Wheeler-Holohan op.cit. p.3

became. But the King's Messenger was liable to suspension, temporary or permanent, for misbehaviour.

Some warrant or symbol by which the authorised messenger could be distinguished from an impostor was undoubtedly necessary. There are several instances in which pretended messengers who had attempted to impose themselves upon the local authorities, were sent to gaol. A certain William had called himself messenger of the Chancellor "qui eius nuntius non est, ut idem cancellarius dicit" (1) Letters entered on the close rolls for 1251 headed "de quodam falso nuncio regis mittendo ad regem", ordered the bailiff of Taunton manor to send to the king "illum qui falso se fecit nuncium suum una cum garcione suo quos cepit et destinet in carcere apud Taunton" (2) There are references, too, to a scrutiny of foreign messengers at Dover and elsewhere, such as the king's messengers themselves might have to submit to abroad. (3) If foreign nuncii were obliged to produce some form of credential before entering the kingdom, surely the king's

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(1) Cl.R. (1234-1237) 1236 p.280

(2) Cl.R. (1247-1251) p.420. Salzman tells of a practical joke played in 1379, on the Countesses of Norfolk and Bedford by a man pretending to be a royal messenger. (Medieval Byways p. 129. 1913) See, too, the fifteenth century picture of a sham messenger reproduced by Jusserand English Wayfaring Life in the fourteenth century 2nd ed. 1920 p.223.

(3) e.g. Cl.R. (1247-1251) 1251 p.430. Only the king's envoys or others sent on his affairs were to be permitted to leave the kingdom in 1351. (Cal.Cl.R. 1349-1354 p.391)

messengers needed similar authorisation when they went overseas.

The easiest form of warranty would be the royal badge, worn in a conspicuous place. Wheeler-Holohan remarks that writing, either on paper or parchment, would soon get blurred in rain: a written warrant would not always serve its purpose in an illiterate age. The royal arms, painted on the messenger's box or pouch, would be recognised by everyone and would establish the fact that the man belonged to the king's household. The development of some additional symbol, to distinguish one of the messenger service from any other member of the household, seems to have followed later, though the modern silver greyhound probably derives from the Lancastrian greyhound badge which Henry VII. and VIII. frequently used for their personal servants. (1)

Upton, speaking of the need for messengers, says, "Primi sunt cursores, sive nuncii peditantes, quorum officium est pedibus transire, qui insuper portabunt Arma Dominorum suorum in pixidibus depicta, pendentibus in suis cingulis, sive cinctoriis supra renes, nec eis est permissum suorum Dominorum Arma alio aliquo loco portare". (2) When the cursor became a nuncius equitans, the badge was placed instead on

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(1) T. Willement. Banners, Standards and Badges from a Tudor Manuscript in the College of Arms. 1831. See esp.p. 99

(2) Upton op. cit. Cap. IX. p.18.

the left shoulder. This rule was probably not invariable. The pixis which was intended for letters could not be carried on the shoulder so easily. For this reason, perhaps, the nuncius drawn on the cover of the Wardrobe book for 1360 <sup>(1)</sup> wears his pixis, with the royal arms on it, at his belt.

Such pixides were issued to a new nuncius on appointment, and renewed when necessary: the Wardrobe seems to have kept a stock of them as a rule, although on one occasion the supply had been exhausted. This was in 1297, when Petit was appointed. An entry notes: "Robinetto Parvo nuncio regis --- pro una pixide sibi emenda tempore quo primo factus fuit nuncio, eo quod non erat aliqua pixis tunc temporis in garderobe inventa ij s." <sup>(2)</sup> And another entry recording the appointment of Galfridus de Bardeney on 15 March 1300, concludes "Et eodem die liberabatur eidem una pixis de armis ipsius regis." <sup>(3)</sup>

Cursores, too, were known by their pixides - Edward II.'s faithless Welshmen offered both letters and pixis to the Constable of Edinburgh. "Constabularius castri, ut mihi asseruit, tunc vacabat gentationi cum pseudo ille subintrans ante eum sistitur, pixidem cum regalis epistolis manu praetendens. 'Ecce' inquit 'domine, secrete regis Angliæ," <sup>a</sup>

(1) E.A. 309/11, described by Professor Johnstone in her article "John de Ocle, Envoy of Edward I." Speculum XI 1936, pp. 216 (Note 8) & 216.

(2) Add. MS. 7965 f.108 v.

(3) Lib. Quot. Gard. p.283.

scrutate et videte ----, "(1) For cursores, as for nuncii, the pixis was a symbol of office, and the first formal grant of one, the equivalent in men's minds of a formal appointment to that office. Thus to John de Stafford, cursor, "noviter recipienti pixides<sup>m</sup> eiusdem officii", the king made a gift of six shillings, entered under 11 April on the Issue roll for Easter 1356. (2)

The price of these pixides varied. That bought for Robert Petit on his first becoming a messenger cost 2/-, (3) but in two sets of accounts for 1276-1278, mention is made of pixides bought for wardrobe letters which cost only 1d. (4) Another, intended for letters to Rome, cost 2½d. (5) On the other hand, John Piacle in Paris paid 9d. "pro quidam pixide ad opus suum emptum, commoranti Parisius retro regem". (6) a/

Possibly the more expensive sort were intended for the nuncii who would always require them, and the cheaper variety were to be used on some particular occasion only. Whenever we are told the name of the messenger receiving a pixis, the

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(1) Chronicon de Lanercost p.178.

(2) Issue Roll no. 378. m.35

(3) Add Ms. 7965 f.108 v. - See above p.46.

(4) E.A. 350/26 m.1 "pro una pixide in qua ponuntur quedam litere in garderobe 1d." and also Add.Ms. 36762 m.5 "pro duabus pixidibus ad litteris imponendas ij d." Almost every Issue roll for the reigns of Edward I. and II. contains an entry relating to the purchase of pixides for letters. (e.g. Issue roll no. 85)

(5) E.A. 350/26 "pro una pixide in ferebantur littere regis ad Curiam Romanam ij d. ob."

(6) Chanc. Misc. 47/4/3 f.17.

sum paid for it ranges between Piacle's 9d. and Petit's 2/-, except in the case of John of Bristol nuncius of Alianor, sister to Edward III., who received on 4 May 1332 the sum of 13/4 "de dono ipsius domine ad quemdam pixidem de armis Anglie et Gelric sibi emendem apud Doueriam."<sup>(1)</sup>

Some entries speak instead of the messenger's 'hanaper' or basket. This was also used for carrying letters. William de Alkham, who entered the service at the same time as Robert Petit in 1297, received 12d. together with his expenses and the dispatches for one of his first journeys, "pro hanaperio emendo pro eisdem literis imponendo"<sup>(2)</sup> But on a later occasion, when he needed a new one, only 1d. was allowed.<sup>(3)</sup> John Somer too, was given 1d. "pro hanaperio" in the same account, but many entries which mention the purchase of hanapers, include their cost with the general total of the messenger's expenses.<sup>(4)</sup>

The bag for letters and the King's Arms became a familiar sight all over the country, and references to them even got into the sermons of the day. Dr. Owst, as an illustration of the fourteenth century preacher's fondness for homely comparisons, quotes a sermon of Master Rypon of

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(1) Add. MS. 38006 f.8.

(2) Add. Ms. 7965 f.113.

(3) In 1302-1303. E.A. 364/2 (no. 2).

(4) e.g. the hanapers bought for Boon and Robin Petit in 1300. (Lib. Quot. Gard. p.283,) or that for Galfridus of Westminster (Issue Roll no. 183 m.3.)

Durham (1) in which the clergy are compared to couriers travelling swiftly on foot. "Again it is the courier's duty to carry a box painted with the arms and insignia of his lord, containing his lord's letters sealed and enclosed in it. He has, moreover, his special credential to deliver by word of mouth." Rypon then enlarges on the comparison. "Pixis moraliter est anima sacerdotis, que pixis depingitur armis et insigniis Christi Jhesu, viz, virtutibus theologicis: in qua pixide includi debent littere Christi mittentés, scil, scientia litterarum Novi et Veteris Testamentorum, et sigillari sigillo Christi —" (2) These "courours and eke messengers with boistes" (3) must have been well known to everyone if such a detailed comparison could be drawn in a popular sermon. And clearly, the one feature that specially impressed itself upon the memory and differentiated the messenger from other travellers, was the pixis hanging at the belt with the king's arms blazoned upon it.

It is interesting to note that the royal arms, used after the seventeenth century in conjunction with the greyhound and the garter ribbon, continued to be the messenger's badge until 1905. When King Edward VII. decided to replace

(1) G.R.Owst, "Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England" 1933 p.30.

(2) ibid. footnote 3. This comparison was drawn in a similar manner by more than one fourteenth century preacher.

(3) Chaucer, "Hous of Fame" bk.iii, ll.2128-9.

the coat of arms with his monogram, he broke a tradition which can be traced back at least six hundred years.

The Middle Ages did not attach the same value to precise definitions as the Modern. Men were content to use a word loosely in one context which in another would bear a restricted meaning. The royal clerks who could best have described the workings of the Household, only hint at details, and posterity is left to read its first description of the messengers in the work of a fifteenth century canon of Salisbury. But sufficient information is given to justify us in speaking of the fourteenth century messengers at least, as a well-defined body of men, appointed to this office in the Household and recognised as holding it under certain conditions. The phrase "as long as he should well and faithfully conduct himself in the aforesaid office,"<sup>(1)</sup> used in 1370, implies a definite understanding as to the nature of the office. And the words used in the memorandum concerning Galfridus de Bardeney, "ad percipiendum sicut unus alius nuncius"<sup>(2)</sup> echoes very closely that clause in the nineteenth century Messenger's Warrant of Appointment which in 1858 led to serious controversy.<sup>(3)</sup> The question then in dispute was

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(1) Issue Roll of Thomas de Brantingham --- A.D. 1370. trans. Devon 1835. p.8.

(2) Lib. Quot. Gard. p.283.

(3) V. Wheeler-Holohan. A History of the King's Messengers. 1935, p.240.



whether the phrase in the Messengers' Warrant of Appointment "To have, hold, exercise, and enjoy the said place -- in as full and ample a manner as One of Her Majesties Messengers Do have, exercise, and enjoy -- the same" precluded any reduction of their salary or not.

## II.

*given*

The impression<sup>A</sup> by a study of the evidence is that though the nuncii regis and cursores of the king's wardrobe and household formed one section only of the total messenger service available for the crown, yet this was the most important section, both in numbers and in function, and upon it rested the main responsibility for message-carrying in connection with government business. The king's wardrobe was not the only department of the medieval administration which required and employed the services of messengers. Both chancery and exchequer had nuncii and cursores of their own, messengers controlled and paid entirely by those departments: so too every subordinate royal household had its official letter-carriers. But though such messengers existed, their importance declined rather than increased during this period. Here, as in other aspects of governmental activity, the period is marked by the advance of curial agencies at the expense of those offices which had already 'gone out of court' and were in consequence no longer so closely connected with the king's person.

To support this view, we may now enquire into the numbers of messengers employed during our period in the various departments. We may start with the older departments,

~~We may start with the older departments,~~ the chancery, exchequer and chamber: next take royal wardrobes evolved in imitation of and subordinate to that of the king: and last the royal household itself.

(1) Messengers of the Chancery and Exchequer.

Both these departments employed messengers of their own, entirely distinct in name and function from those of the wardrobe. They were divided, like the others, into 'equites' and 'pedites', nuncii and cursores. But they are distinguished in the wardrobe books, whenever their services had been borrowed by wardrobe officials "pro negotiis regis", by the words 'de cancellaria' or 'de scaccario'. Contrariwise, in the issue rolls of the exchequer, the messengers of the wardrobe are similarly distinguished on those occasions when they received money directly from the exchequer. The phrases 'nuncii hospicii domini regis' and 'nuncii garderobe' were used for the king's messengers<sup>(1)</sup> while for the cokini and cursores the usual phrases were 'cokini hospicii domini regis';<sup>(2)</sup>

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- (1) The phrase is used in a general context in 1311 "diversis nunciis et cursoribus de hospicio domini regis et garderobe" (Issue roll no.164) It is used of individual messengers, as in 1310 of Robert de Newenton and Robert de Leycester. (Issue roll nos.155 and 158). "Nuncius hospicii regis" occurs also on a wardrobe book for 1341-5 (E.36/204)
- (2) Expenses were paid to 5 "cokynis de hospicio regis" in 1315-6 (E.403/31095)

'cokini' or 'cursores garderobe';<sup>(1)</sup> 'cokini' or 'cursores regis'.<sup>(2)</sup> No such terms were ever applied to the messengers of the chancery or the exchequer. The technical term indicated that direct contact with the king through the household which was only enjoyed by the nuncii regis, and, to a lesser extent, by the cursores garderobe.

Very much less is known about these departmental messengers than about the nuncii regis or the cursores who were paid through the wardrobe. This is especially true of the chancery messengers, whose wages were not entered as a separate item in any account and were probably included with those of other chancery servants.<sup>(3)</sup> Such information as we have comes from isolated entries in the wardrobe accounts, on the rare occasions when nuncii and cokini de cancellaria had taken letters for wardrobe officials and therefore

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- (1) Croyland was called "cokyno garderobe regis" in 1301-4 (Issue roll no. 121) William le Clerk had been called 'cursor garderobe' in the roll for the previous Michaelmas (Issue roll n. 117), while Henry le Veel in 1313-4 and John Joseph in 1318-9 also received this title. (Issue rolls nos. 170 and 186).
- (2) e.g. John Whiting 'cokinus regis' in 1296-7 (Add.MS.7965 f.6v.) Robert de Chester and Warimus de Donemowe 'cursores regis' in 1315-6 (E.405/31095)  
One curious variant found in an issue roll is the phrase 'cokinus de curia' which is applied to a man elsewhere given the simple name 'cokinus'. (Issue roll no.91)
- (3) Were the nuncii de cancellaria members of the household of chancery, their position there corresponding to that of the nuncii regis in the king's household?  
See Tout The English Civil Service in the Fourteenth Century (reprinted from the Bulletin of the John Rylands Library 1916) p.22.

received their expenses from that department. One reference on the misae roll for 1209-1210 may relate to a messenger connected with the chancery. It states that money for travelling expenses and a tunic were given to "Ricardo nuncio Petri de Cancellarie." <sup>(1)</sup> But apart from this solitary and dubious instance, the earliest reference to messengers attached to this department occurs on the close roll for 1257; here five "cursores sequentes cancellariam regis" were given robes by the king. <sup>(2)</sup> At that date however the chancery had not yet ceased to move with the king from place to place, so that the entry may simply mean that the messengers referred to had followed the court during the Welsh campaign of that summer, in order to take any letters issued by the chancery. At a later date, such messengers would probably have been attached to the wardrobe, as were the cokini retained in the king's service during Edward I.'s campaign in ~~Wales~~. <sup>(3)</sup> *Scotland.* Under Edward I., however, the genuine nuncius de cancellaria appears. <sup>(4)</sup> Alan Poydras held that position for a short time in 1288-9, and in the same year Walter Trivet cokinus cancellarie is mentioned in a wardrobe account. <sup>(5)</sup> Another

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(1) Rot. de Lib. p.159.

(2) Cl.R. 1256-1259. p.166. See below p. 233

(3) Add. MS. 8835. f.73 v. (1303-4)

(4) The phrase is used in a roll of messengers' expenses for 1289-1291 (E.A.308/12)

(5) E.A. 308/10. In the following year, too, there is a reference to John nuncius cancellarie regis. (E.A.308/12)

~~(6) Issue roll no. 66.~~

~~(7) Issue roll no. 486 r. 35.~~

cokinus cancellarie, John de Lacy, was taking letters in 1291<sup>(1)</sup> and Reynard of York nuncius cancellarie in 1333-4.<sup>(2)</sup> Such references are not common and many of them omit the name of the messenger; in the latter part of my period, there are few even of the general type. One entry on the issue roll for 1369, however, shows that there were still nuncii and cursores specially attached to the chancery; expenses were paid to "diversis nunciis et cursoribus et aliis vallettis de Smethfeld, Hobourn, et de cancellariè conductis et missis viij die Augusti -- ad omnes partes Anglie et Wallie --", and the names of these messengers are given.<sup>(3)</sup> But since no distinction is drawn between the regular messengers of the chancery, and the hired letter-carriers of Holborn and Smithfield, it is <sup>not</sup> possible to draw any conclusion from this entry as to the usual number of messengers to be found in the service of the chancery at this time. Taking the evidence as a whole, we can only infer that chancery messengers took no very important share in the regular work of the messenger service.

The messengers of the exchequer are less elusive. Some entries are found in the wardrobe books, and their expenses constitute a fairly regular item on the issue rolls after 1307.

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(1) Issue roll no. 66.

(2) E.A. 386/11.

(3) Issue roll no. 438 m.35.

Prior to this date, though there certainly were exchequer messengers, they may have been semi-private nuncii for whom the usher only was responsible. As will be seen later, the usher of the exchequer was always responsible for the dispatch of writs and letters issuing from that department, and there is evidence to show that during the early thirteenth century, he was accustomed to engage and pay messengers for this purpose as part of a serjeanty obligation. The serjeanty itself and the duties attached are described in detail in an inquisition post mortem taken in May 1284 <sup>(1)</sup> on the death of Laurence de Scaccario the holder. At this date, the duties attached to it were not connected with the holding of any particular manor, but with certain fees and payments at the exchequer itself. The holder of the serjeanty must find two serjeant ushers, and, for this he took five pence a day whilst the exchequer was open; he further provided all the green wax for the seal of the exchequer, receiving one penny for every writ sealed. More interesting to us in this connection, are his other duties; "He caused the summonses and writs of the exchequer to be carried throughout England"

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(1) Cal. Inquis. p.m. vol.II no.528 pp.317-8.

In addition to this serjeanty, an undated inquisition for Henry III. mentions the service of levying the summonses of the exchequer in the fees of Peverel in the counties of Leicester, Warwick, and Nottingham as far as the Trent. Cal.Inquis. p.m. Vol.I no.906 p.306.

and received for each day (in going) three pence and in returning nothing, and it is worth twenty shillings as estimated." Evidently, then, we must allow for twenty shilling's worth of messenger service yearly which will not figure on the issue rolls as messenger expenses but as payment to Laurence de Scaccario or some other holder of the serjeanty. The messengers who actually took the writs and summons were thus not employed directly by the exchequer; their wages and expenses were received through the usher, by whom they were engaged, and to whom they were responsible. At the same time, they seem to have been treated as regular messengers who were entitled to some if not all of the privileges enjoyed by ordinary nuncii regis, for Laurence "had cloth of the exchequer for robes for his messenger once a year." All this points to the fact that the obligations described were still in force as late as 1284. It is possible, of course, that this may be only another example to add to those quoted by Miss Kimball<sup>(1)</sup> of tenants who refused to recognise that their serjeanty services had become obsolete, and who

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(1) E. Kimball Serjeanty Tenure in Medieval England (1936)p.99. Conway Davies takes it that this serjeanty was still in operation at this date. He remarks "this instance of an administrative office held by serjeanty supports the suggestion that it would seem as if serjeanty was an early manifestation of the method of government which afterwards became established in the household system." (Baronial Opposition to Edward II. (1918) p.52.) For earlier references to this usher serjeanty see Madox II 271-8.

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professed themselves willing to perform duties which were no longer required, and which had, in fact, ceased to be rendered. On the other hand, it may represent exchequer practice under Henry III. and even during the early years of Edward I.: if so, this would explain <sup>the absence of references to nuncii expenses in the exchequer</sup> records of this date, and would show that part at least of the money paid out to the ushers was in reality payment for messengers' services. It is perhaps worth noting that, when this serjeanty appears again in inquisitions post mortem, first on the death of Simon de Scaccario, Laurence's heir, in 1291, <sup>(1)</sup> and then on the death of Simon's daughter Maud in 1308; <sup>(2)</sup> no mention is made of the duty of providing messengers though most of the other services remained unchanged. Possibly with Laurence's death in 1284, the older arrangement was dropped, and the exchequer adopted the more up-to-date practice of paying and controlling its messengers directly, so that the regular appearance of nuncii expenses on the issue rolls represents in fact the gradual abandonment of the serjeanty system.

There may be, too, another factor which helps to account for the absence of references to the messengers of the exchequer on the early issue rolls. The duties performed by these messengers were always of a limited and definite nature. They took messages for the officials of the department and probably ran their errands locally: the only long

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(1) Cal. Inquis.p.m. vol.II no.820 p.501.

(2) Ibid. vol.V no.13 p.4; and vol.VII no.435 p.310.

journeys that they were called on to perform were the bi-annual visits to all sheriffs, taking the list of debts due in each county. This took place shortly before the Michaelmas and Easter sessions of the exchequer.<sup>(1)</sup> These long journeys were at first provided for under the terms of the serjeanty, and later appear as items on the issue rolls; but local journeys, if they took less than a day to perform, were probably covered by the messenger's wages, and were not entered as special expenses. There are occasional notes to the effect that writs had been sent out by a certain messenger who received <sup>nothing</sup> "quis in villa".<sup>(2)</sup> It is quite possible that the majority of these errands were never recorded at all; and this explains why, even after entries on the issue rolls to messengers became common, there were always fewer references to nuncii and cursores de scaccario than to their opposite numbers in the wardrobe.

The exchequer, as the department with the longest independent history, seems to have had a greater number of messengers at its disposal than the chancery.<sup>(3)</sup> The earliest reference that I have discovered to any nuncius de scaccario

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(1) The Pipe Roll 1295 (Surrey Membrane) ed. Mills intro.p.i  
(1924)

(2) e.g. Misc.Bks. Exch. V.R. 203. f.118 (1340)

(3) The exchequer seems, as a rule, to have sent out its writs by its own messengers, whereas the chancery relied entirely on wardrobe messengers for the conveyance of letters under the great seal. Dr. Hubert Hall says that there were already messengers attached to the exchequer of receipt under Henry II. (Antiquities of the Exchequer, 1891, p.78).

occurs in an account of payments at the wardrobe covering the years 1269-1274 <sup>(1)</sup> and is thus considerably earlier than the first definite instance of a nuncius de cancellaria in 1288-9. Roger and Nicholas de Scaccario who took letters in 1277-8 may have been nuncii <sup>(2)</sup> but they were not specifically described as such, so were perhaps the two serjeant ushers of the exchequer whom the holder of the usher serjeanty was bound to find. But the phrase 'nuncius de scaccario' reappears in the wardrobe accounts for 1296-8, applied to Richard de Thurrok, Simon, and William, who received their expenses for journeys undertaken for the exchequer. <sup>(3)</sup> Further instances occur in 1299-1300, <sup>(4)</sup> and in 1300-1, <sup>(5)</sup> and in 1316-7. <sup>(6)</sup>

The cokinus de scaccario is not found so early, but in the wardrobe accounts for 1296-7, Matthew Fraunceys is thus described <sup>(7)</sup> and Nicholas de Wroxton in 1302-3. <sup>(8)</sup> Four

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- (1) E.A. 350/5.  
 (2) Chanc. Misc. 4/1.  
 (3) Add. MS. 7965.  
 (4) John nuncius de Scaccario. (Lib. Quot. Gard. p. 296.) and John Rylands Library Latin 175 no. 231, f. 5.  
 (5) Add. MS. 7966. "xxviiij die Aprilis Thome nuncio de scaccario deferenti litteras domini J. de Drok (enesford) domino R. de Mantone pro negotiis regis". f. 127. A typical entry.  
 (6) Odo de Cornubia nuncius de Scaccario. (Society of Antiquaries MS. no. 120. p. 138) He is called cursor in the W. Book for the following year. (Soc. of Antiq. MS. no. 121. p. 95.)  
 (7) Add. MS. 7965. The words "de scaccario" were omitted at first and inserted above later. f. 109.  
 (8) E.A. 365/7.

cokini de scaccario figure in the liber cotidianus for 1303-4, Richard de Meleburn, Thomas Reyn, William Waleden, and John Bavent; and three of them in another account for the same year.<sup>(1)</sup> Considered as a whole, the evidences suggest that under Edward I. there were as a rule two or three nuncii and at least three or four cokini regularly employed in the exchequer; if more were needed, writs under the exchequer seal could always be entrusted to wardrobe messengers.<sup>(2)</sup> During Edward II.'s reign numbers may have increased slightly. There were certainly seven cokini de scaccario in the years 1315-6.<sup>(3)</sup> Under Edward III., ten cursores received expenses for journeys in 1330-1, nine in 1331-2, eight in 1333-5;<sup>(4)</sup> and in the following years the figures, when they can be traced, remain at this level. When writs of summons were sent out in November 1338 for the January parliament of 1339, their distribution was entrusted to "diversis cursoribus de scaccario"<sup>(5)</sup> and there are similar isolated references to exchequer messengers throughout the reign.<sup>(6)</sup>

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(1) Add.MS. 8835 and E.A. 366/14 and 17.

(2) e.g. Lib.Quot.Gard. pp.281,295,296.

(3) Issue rolls nos. 176,178,180.

In 1328, too, money was paid to "sex cursores de scaccario".  
(Issue roll no. 239.)

(4) 1330-1 Issue rolls nos. 255,256.

1331-2 Issue rolls nos. 261,262.

1333-5 Issue rolls nos. 274,276,281,284; and Nero C VIII

(5) Issue roll no. 304. f.287.

(6) In 1361 for instance among the debts of Queen Isabella are the expenses of divers cursores scaccario who had been sent out with writs on her behalf. (E.A. 394/10)

It is probable that the changing fortunes of politics affected the two oldest departments of the administration least: the organisation of the king's campaigns was undertaken by the wardrobe, on whose messengers fell all the extra messenger work involved. The ordinary routine of the exchequer went on undisturbed and unaugmented, and in consequence the number of its messengers remained unaltered. Even the slight increase among the cursores noticeable at the commencement of Edward III.'s reign may perhaps be explained by the fact that the term 'nuncius' was now employed less frequently in the exchequer. The office of nuncius de scaccario, though not obsolete, may have been already becoming a sinecure, the duties of which would be performed by a deputy, perhaps by a cursor. This supposition is based upon the fact that although the issue rolls of the reign frequently mention the cursores de scaccario, the word 'nuncius' is not once in evidence. Yet early in the fifteenth century, Henry IV. confirmed a grant of 4½d. a day for life to John Sewale, "uni quator<sup>u</sup> nunciorum de scaccario" in place of Thomas Monk, formerly one of the four and now deceased.<sup>(1)</sup> This shows that by 1400 the number of nuncii scaccario was fixed at four, and that these nuncii were given that office for life instead of during their good behaviour. In 1454, the four nuncii de scaccario were still appointed on the same

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(1) Issue roll no. 606 (Michaelmas 1310-11)

terms; (1) so it was also in a list of Queen Elizabeth's household for 1593, (2) and throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the office is known to have been a sinecure, duties of which were to be performed by "sufficient deputies". (3)

Besides the official staff of messengers attached to the departments of state, the great officers of those departments might have their individual messengers. The misae roll for 1212-1213 speaks of John, nuncius of Geoffrey de Nevill, Camerarius: (4) and during the early part of Henry III.'s reign there are frequent references to Geoffrey de Ferendon, (5) Jordan, (6) and Richard Curteys (7) nuncii de Justiciario.

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(1) Wheeler-Holohan op.cit. p.3 (E.404/70)

(2) Hubert Hall Antiquities of the Exchequer 1891 p.88. Lord Chamberlain's department. 5/182. See, too, A Booke of Offices -- 1613 (John Rylands Library MS.no.324 f.7)

(3) Wheeler-Holohan op.cit. p.268.  
N.E.D. s.v. Messenger quotes Philipps (1696 ed. Kersey 1706), who speaks of "Messengers of the Exchequer, four in number, who -- attend the Lord Treasurer to carry his Letters and Orders."

(4) Cole's Records p. 250.

(5) Receipt roll E.401/7 (1224-5); Roll of writs for issues E. 403/1201 (1225-6); Rot.Lit.Cl. 1204-1227 II, 108 (1226)

(6) Receipt roll, nos. 3 B (1219-1220); and 7 (1224-1225); Rot.Lit.Cl. 1204-1227 II, 19 (1225)

(7) Receipt roll no. 7 (1224-5); Rot.Lit.Cl. 1204-1227 II, 19, 89, (1225).

Both the treasurer and the chancellor employed messengers of their own. Most prominent among messengers of the treasurer under Edward I. was Thomas Wynebaud, who held the post for 17 years, perhaps more <sup>(1)</sup> and was so closely associated with the treasurer as to seem at times his servant rather in his individual than in his official capacity. Though generally known as nuncius thesaurarii <sup>(2)</sup> he was occasionally called messenger of the Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield while that prelate was treasurer, as in 1296-7, and in 1302. <sup>(3)</sup> However, on the occasions of the treasurer's absence, Wynebaud still continued his regular work, obeying the orders of the treasurer's representative, <sup>(4)</sup> so that on the whole it seems probable that he was the messenger of the official and not of the individual, if such a distinction is not in itself artificial. Although he was on several occasions sent abroad for the king's business, <sup>(5)</sup> Wynebaud was never described as nuncius regis, but was on the contrary clearly distinguished from members of the regular service. Later messengers of the

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(1) 1289-1306.

(2) e.g. "Thome Wynebaud nuncio thesaurarii eunti ad regem in Walliam ad deferendum sibi rumores de adventu Gallicorum in Angliam super expensis suis vj die Septembris xl s." (Issue roll no. 90)

(3) 1296-7 Add.MS. 7965 f.112v. E.A. 361/15; and 1301-2.

(4) In March 1302, for instance, he went to Rome "per preceptum J. de Drok(ensford) tenantis locum thesaurarii". (E.A. 361/12)

(5) e.g. In 1302 he was twice sent to the court of Rome, first in March by John de Drokensford, and then again between April and July by the king himself "ad certiorandum ipsum regem de negotiis suis quem habet in eandem curiam expediendis". (E.A. 361/12 and 15).

treasurer include Robert de Langeley, nuncius thesaurarii in 1303-4;<sup>(1)</sup> Matthew nuncius thesaurarii in 1325-6;<sup>(2)</sup> and John Dale nuncius thesaurarii in 1376.<sup>(3)</sup> References to cursores thesaurarii are less frequent, but Walter de Fremelesworth was so named once in 1307-8;<sup>(4)</sup> Ralph Frée was called cursor domini thesaurarii in 1363;<sup>(5)</sup> and John, curroure domini thesaurarii, appears in a roll of messenger expenses covering the years 1370-1377.<sup>(6)</sup>

Messengers of the chancellor, like those of the chancery, are less in evidence in the accounts both of the wardrobe and the exchequer. The first reference to such a messenger is perhaps to be found in the patent roll of 1302, when the king granted to John the chancellor's messenger by reason of his long service the custody of the park of Kennington.<sup>(7)</sup> John Haveryng, nuncius domini cancellarii, is mentioned in 1314-5;<sup>(8)</sup> and John le Messager, nuncius domini Johanni de

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(1) E.A. 364/24.

(2) Issue roll no. 218.

(3) Issue roll no. 460

(4) E.A. 373/15.

(5) Issue roll no. 415 m.1.

(6) E.A. 316/3. John, cursor domini Thesaurarii appears also in the Issue Roll for Michaelmas 1375-6. (Issue Roll n.459 m.3)

(7) Cal.Pat.R. 1301-1307, p.56. A mandate from the king to the chancellor dated 28 December 1298 suggests that thirteenth century chancellors did not, as a rule, employ the services of a special messenger. The king "has assigned the chancellor one of his messengers" to go to Canterbury for him on important business, so that the chancellor may remain in London. (Cal.Ch.W. I, 100)

(8) Issue roll no. 175.



Sandale domini regis cancellarii, in the following year.<sup>(1)</sup>

Robert Baldok as chancellor had a cursor named John Picard, who in June 1325 brought letters from his master to the king, and received expenses for the journey through the chamber.<sup>(2)</sup>

The close roll for 1331 explains how John Faukes, envoy of John, Bishop of Winchester, the chancellor, went to Gascony by the king's orders, and expended £24.4.0. "in horses lost on the journey and in other expenses, as is testified before the king by certain of his subjects to whom he gives credence, without his receiving anything from the king for such expenses."<sup>(3)</sup>

Later in the same reign, John Straunge, nuncius domini cancellarii, is referred to several times: generally termed 'nuncius', he is once spoken of as 'cursor'.<sup>(4)</sup>

These messengers attached to the person of the treasurer or chancellor held their offices presumably for the personal convenience of the official. They were not numerous, and played no great part in the organisation of either department.

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(1) Issue roll no. 179 m.12.

(2) Society of Antiquaries MS. no. 122. Accounts of the chamber from May 1324 to October 1326 (incorrectly entitled "Wardrobe Book" on modern cover) p.66. "Paie a Johan Picard corour Mestre Robert Baldok Chaunceler le Roi qui porta lettres au Roi de dit Chaunceler — v.s."

(3) Cal.Cl.R. 1330-1333 p.386.

(4) He was called 'nuncius' in 1356-7 and 1362-3 (Issue rolls nos. 386,387, and 412); 'cursor' in 1362-3 (Issue roll n.412)

(2) Messengers of the Chamber.

It seems probable that as long as the wardrobe remained the dominant household office, the chamber possessed no messengers of its own. By the middle of the fourteenth century, however, the chamber was regaining something of its old importance within the king's household, and this is marked by the appearance on the issue rolls of messengers of the king's chamber. The earliest reference which I have yet discovered is to John Typet, nuncius camere regis in 1356-7<sup>(1)</sup> and 1358-9.<sup>(2)</sup> He was called valletus camere regis in 1367<sup>(3)</sup> and this may mean that though still in the king's service, he was no longer a messenger: in 1370 when he again carried letters for the king, he was described as messenger, but not as messenger of the king's chamber.<sup>(4)</sup> On the other hand, a new messenger of the king's chamber, John Stygan, had appeared by 1369, "to whom the lord the king by his letters patent lately granted 100/- yearly -- as long as he should well and faithfully conduct himself in the aforesaid office."<sup>(5)</sup> Stygan remained as nuncius camere regis until 1376<sup>(6)</sup> when

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(1) Issue roll no. 386.

(2) Galba E. XIV.

(3) Issue roll no. 431.

(4) Issue roll of Thomas de Brantingham ed. Devon p.191.

(5) Ibid. p.8 and 128.

(6) 1370-1 (Issue rolls nos. 441.443) 1371-2. (Issue rolls nos. 444,446). Stygan had been employed by the king before 1370, but not with the title of nuncius camere; e.g. in 1367-8 (Issue roll no.434); 1368-1369 (Issue roll nos.436, 438); and he was not always given the title after 1370.

the king sent him to the Prior and convent of Christ Church, London, as a corrodarius.<sup>(1)</sup> John, cursor of the king's chamber, who is mentioned in the issue roll for 1371<sup>(2)</sup> was also sent to receive a corrody during the same year, this time from the abbot and convent of Eynesham;<sup>(3)</sup> possibly John the messenger and John the courier were one and the same person. In any case, the number of messengers, whether nuncii or cursores, attached to the chamber under Edward III. seems to have been strictly limited, and these messengers took comparatively little part in the work of the administration. There is as yet nothing to show that by the early seventeenth century the main body of king's messengers would be the messengers in ordinary of the great chamber.

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(1) Cal.Cl.R. 1374-7 p. 257.

(2) Issue roll no. 443.

(3) Cal.Cl.R. 1374-7 p.288. The same entry was enrolled again on p.359, with the name William substituted for that of John, and cancelled as being already enrolled.

(3) Messengers of the subordinate royal wardrobes.

The king's household was the model on which the households of the other members of the royal family were based, and thus it is not surprising to discover that in each of these separate royal households there were messengers who conformed to the same type as those employed by the king. Foremost amongst these subsidiary establishments was that of the queen, both in its proper dignity, and in the resources at its command: to uphold this position, her household staff was proportionally numerous, and always included two or three nuncii. The administration of the queen's estates provided plenty of work for such messengers.<sup>(1)</sup> In addition to letters addressed to the queen's bailiffs and officials, private correspondence between the queen and various members of the royal family was carried on continually. There were, too, all kinds of odd commissions which a messenger might be asked to perform, from taking presents of salmon to buying pomegranates and looms for the queen's use.<sup>(2)</sup> The services of the two or three nuncii attached to the queen's service had frequently to be supplemented by those of inferior

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(1) The duties of queen's messengers are indicated in passing by Professor Johnstone in her section on the queen's household in Chapters V pp. 231-289 (p.241).

(2) Add.MS. 35294 (1288-1290)

messengers. (1)

Isabella of Angoulême had three messengers in her service between 1212 and 1215. The misae roll of 1212-3 mentions two, Robin and Hicche (2) while the close roll for 1213-4 records the gift of robes for Christmas to Richard the queen's messenger and to four grooms of the queen's. (3) In 1221 Robert le Flemmeng nuncius domine regine matris received from Henry III. by the hands of the sheriff of London "unam robam partitam de viridi et burnetta cum furura de agnis." (4) But the first nuncius regine whose career can be traced in any detail is Simon le Messenger, nuncius of Eleanor of Provence in 1248. (5) He was still holding the same post in 1252-3, (6) this time in company with another messenger, Robert Long, (7) but in 1254 his allowance of 2½d. was given to two of the king's messengers. This suggests that Simon died early in that year. (8) Two other Simons appear in wardrobe books for the reign of Edward I., one Simon Atte Leigh, nuncius regine matris, who after Eleanor's death was given an allowance of

(1) e.g. in 1288-90. At that date Eleanor of Castile was employing 5 cursores in addition to her 3 nuncii. (Add MS.35294)

(2) Cole's Records. p.252.

(3) Rot.Lit.Cl. 1204-1227 I. 155.

(4) Rot.Lit.Cl. 1204-1227 I. 450.

(5) Close rolls 1247-1251 p.85.

(6) E.A. 308/1.

(7) Perhaps the same as Robert nuncius regine who received a robe as a gift in 1256, "quia retulit regi bonos romores de convalescencia Katerine filie sue". (Close rolls 1254-6 p.288)

(8) Close rolls 1255-4 p.101. He had received the pension first between 1249 and 1250 (L.T.R.M.R. no.24. P.R.O. abstract p.71)

4½d a day while in court, and received this money for the whole of 1296-7;<sup>(1)</sup> he was still in enjoyment of the pension in 1300.<sup>(2)</sup> The other was Simon Lowris or Lewys, nuncius regine consortis regis, who was messenger to Eleanor of Castile, and also known after her death as "Simon qui fuit nuncius regine". He was granted a daily pension of 3d. from the exchequer in 1294,<sup>(3)</sup> a grant which was later surrendered in return for a second pension of 3½d. a day while in court. Simon was receiving this sum throughout 1302-3,<sup>(4)</sup> in addition to the profits which he might derive from the custody of the manor and park of Guildford which had been granted to him for life in 1298.<sup>(5)</sup> He was probably a younger man than Simon Atte Leigh, for an undated account shows that for a short time at least he became a member of the king's messenger service,<sup>(6)</sup> and the grant of 1294 was said to be a reward "for his long service as messenger of the king and of Eleanor the late queen-consort". In addition to the services of Simon Atte Leigh, Eleanor the king's mother had employed a second messenger, William Crisp, who was also provided for by the king after her death. In 1292 William, envoy of the king's late mother received for his services the custody of

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(1) Add.MS. 7965 f. 40. His surname is given in E.A. 359/2.

(2) Lib.Quot.Gard. p.101.

(3) Cal.Pat.R. 1292-1301 p.81. See also Issue Roll nos.91 & 93 (1294-5)

(4) E.A. 364/13.

(5) Cal.Pat.R. 1292-1301 p.372.

(6) E.A. 372/14.

the warren of Pevensey with wages of 1½d a day,<sup>(1)</sup> and in 1300 in compensation of the queen's grant to him of ten acres of purpresture within the manor of Havering, he was given the custody of the park of Stoke Newland with wages of 2d. daily.<sup>(2)</sup> Four messengers, Nicholas Mew, Brehull, Walter, and Godfrey, were likewise attached to the service of Margaret, Edward's second queen, in 1299-1300,<sup>(3)</sup> and in 1311 there was still at least one cokinus hospicii domine regine Margarete engaged in carrying her letters.<sup>(4)</sup>

Isabella of France also employed two nuncii, William Bale and John de Noyon (or Loyon), who are first mentioned in an account for 1311,<sup>(5)</sup> and worked together until 1316.<sup>(6)</sup> The Janinus nuncius domine regine of 1317-8<sup>(7)</sup> is presumably the same man as John de Noyon, but in addition to these two nuncii, the queen found employment for eleven cursores during these years. The sum spent on her behalf and accounted for by her treasurer William de Boudon in the year 1316-7, was £114.0.10.,<sup>(8)</sup> which is larger than the corresponding figure for the expenses of the king's wardrobe on messengers during

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(1) Cal.Pat.R. 1281-1292 p.467.

(2) Cal.Pat.R. 1292-1301 p.522.

(3) Lib.Quot.Gard.

(4) E.A. 374/19.

(5) Nero C VIII. f.121 - 153.

(6) E.A. 376/7, 20.

(7) Society of Antiquaries MS. no. 121 p.60.

(8) Society of Antiquaries MS. no. 120 p.32.

The total sum spent on nuncii in the king's wardrobe for the year 1316-7 was £85.19.3. Ibid. p.149.

the same period, and must, I think, include expenses of solemn envoys in addition to those of her regular messengers; it gives, however, a clear indication of the amount of business undertaken for the queen by nuncii of all types.

John de Noyon was still in her service in 1320, but after the queen's departure for France in 1325, only one cursor garderobe regine, Arnald Guillaume, is mentioned in the accounts.<sup>(1)</sup> This gap probably arises simply from the deficiency in our material; though it would be tempting to see in it an indication of the drastic change in Isabella's personnel which was reported by some chroniclers. Professor Johnstone has shown that when Isabella left England her household was more impressive than on her two previous visits in the company of Edward II. Messengers she must have had, for after her departure the king sent orders to Robert de Kendale, the constable of Dover, "not to permit any messenger coming from the queen, the bishop of Norwich, and the king's other envoys, or from any other of his subjects in those parts in the company of the queen or others to deliver or show any letter or to recount any news to anyone whatsoever until he come to the king. When any such messenger arrive, Robert is to cause him to take oath to this effect forthwith and to send one of his men in whom he can confide to conduct such messenger to the king, and to take care

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(1) E.A. 381/7 (1325-6)



always lest the messenger do the contrary, and to cause the man to be sworn and straitly charged in Robert's presence."<sup>(1)</sup> On the other hand, we know that one of Isabella's messengers at least had been left behind in England when the queen set out for France. John de Noyon, nuncius regine, was sent as paying guest to the abbey of Thame from 4 December 1234 until 26 June 1325, the king allowing him 18 pence a week for board and 20/- a year for clothing and other necessaries. This allowance seems to have been paid regularly out of the exchequer <sup>(2)</sup> through two of the king's serjeants at arms, and does support the chronicler's report that the queen's household had been reduced before her departure abroad. Not until the queen's retirement in 1330 do the records of her nuncii recommence. A nuncius named Hugh Prior in 1332-3 and two cursores, William le Harpour and William de Morpath in 1344-5 and 1358-1360 were taking her business and private letters.<sup>(3)</sup>

At the same time, Philippa of Hainault as queen consort had her messenger Gilbert,<sup>(4)</sup> from 1331 until 1347 at least: during these years he was in the enjoyment of a yearly

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(1) Cal.C1.R. 1323-1327 p.361.

(2) Issue rolls nos. 211 and 213.

(3) E.A. 386/7; Misc.Bks. Exch.T.of R. 204: Cotton MS.Galba E XIV.

(4) John Rylands Library Latin MS. 235 (1331-2); (1346-7) / Issue roll no. 359.

pension from the king <sup>(1)</sup> paid regularly by the exchequer. Later, other nuncii regine appear: John, who with Gilbert shared the duties of messenger in 1344, <sup>(2)</sup> Henry Denny, her messenger in 1356, <sup>(3)</sup> and William Harding who served her until her death and afterwards found a place as a messenger in the king's household. <sup>(4)</sup> Hugh, nuncius Philippe regine, and William de Sleaford her cursor, also figure in an account of her wardrobe for 1358-1360. <sup>(5)</sup>

These details illustrate the prominent part played by nuncii regine in the households of their mistresses, and shows their status to have been in no way inferior to that of the nuncii regis. At times, indeed, it appears to have been slightly superior: certainly the allowance made to Simon Atte Leigh by Edward I. was more generous than the allowance which he granted to his own messengers, coupled as it was with the advantages of residence in court. As a rule, the queen's nuncii and cursores received the same rates of pay as those in the king's household, and were treated identically. Her officials could generally find work to occupy three to four nuncii and a proportionate number of cursores: by their presence in the queen's establishment they relieved

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(1) Cal.Cl.R. 1337-1339 p.64: Cal.Pat.R. 1330-1334 p.159.

(2) E.A. 390/8.

(3) Issue roll no. 378.

(4) Nuncius regine in 1360-1 (E.A. 309/11 and 1365-6 (Issue roll no. 425.

(5) Galba E.XIV.

the king's messenger service of any business arising out of the queen's estates; but they took no share in the regular work of the wardrobe messengers.

The same limitation applies as a rule to messengers in the households of the king's children, and their treatment also was much the same as that meted out to the nuncii and cursores regis. The earliest reference to such messengers occurs in the first account of messenger expenses which we possess, the misae roll of 1209-10. Here Henry the king's son, although only a minor, was the master of three nuncii, Roger, William, and Stephen, in addition to another properly attached to the service of the king's other children, but occasionally employed by Henry.<sup>(1)</sup> The second misae roll, that for 1212-1213, also mentions William (or Wilkin) nuncius Henrici filii regis.<sup>(2)</sup> The future Edward I., too, had his household messengers from an early age. Roger de Waleys, messenger of Edward the king's son, appears in the liberate roll for 1241-2,<sup>(3)</sup> and on the close roll for 1242<sup>(4)</sup> is an order from the king to Hugh Gifford "quod Rogero Walensi nuncio Edwardi filii regis necessaria ad unum equum inveniat quia rex concessit ei quod unum equum habeat ad custum regis". Edmund, Henry's younger son also had his messenger, Roger le

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(1) Rot. de Lib. pp. 127, 141, 161, 164, 169.

(2) Cole's Records pp. 243, 252.

(3) Cal. Lib. R. II, 90. Edward had no wardrobe, however, till 1254. (Tout Chapters I, 256).

(4) Cl. R. 1237-1242 pp. 390.

Messenger, to whom the king in 1272 granted alms of  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. and  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d a day.<sup>(1)</sup> This money was in arrears when Edward came to the throne,<sup>(2)</sup> and among the many daily pensions which he commuted in 1275-6 for a lump sum was this one to Roger, nuncio Edmundi fratris regis.<sup>(3)</sup> Later Edmund had as messenger a certain William, who went abroad in his suite in 1286.<sup>(4)</sup>

Edward I.'s children also employed their own messengers. The wardrobe officials of Henry the king's son accounted between 8 February 1273 and 27 October 1274 for money spent "inexpensis diversorum nunciorum", but unfortunately they give no names by which his messengers can be traced.<sup>(5)</sup> Henry's household seems to have been far less elaborate than that of Edward of Carnarvon after he became heir to the throne, and of this second household more details are known. Edward, too, had his messengers, and it is significant that they first appear in the accounts in 1296, only a few months after the prince's household had been separated from that of the king's other children.<sup>(6)</sup> The independence of his wardrobe was thus signalled by additions to his household which probably

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(1) Cal.Pat.R. 1266-1272 pp.614,617.

(2) Cal.Cl.R. 1272-1279 p.23.

(3) Issue roll no.33.

(4) He received protection with clause volumus. (Cal.Bat.R. 1281-1292 p.239).

(5) The Wardrobe and Household of Henry son of Edward I. Hilda Johnstone 1923 (Reprinted from the Bulletin of the John Rylands Library vol.7, no.3) p.2.

(6) Tout Chapters II. 166-8.

included three nuncii,<sup>(1)</sup> Robert de Redware, Robert de Manfield, and another, also called Robert, who may be the same as the Robert de Newenton whose name appears first two years later and who served Edward both as prince and as king. Robert de Manfield, too, was destined to remain in the prince's service through the whole of his subsequent reign and well into that of Edward III. Tout has remarked of this household that "a feature in the lists of officers of the king's son is the appearance of names among the lord Edward's household staff which were to remain in his service for the rest of his life".<sup>(2)</sup> If this was true of the higher officials, it was true also of the humbler members of his establishment, and especially so of the messengers. Two of them at least served him from the first days of his independent wardrobe and household until it became merged in that of the king, while the third of these messengers, Robert de Rideware, was provided for by a carrody,<sup>(3)</sup> and may have retired from the messenger service to become king's bailiff at Dartford.<sup>(4)</sup> Another nuncius, Robert de Cam, joined the prince's service in 1300-1.<sup>(5)</sup> Inferior messengers, too, found employment in the prince's wardrobe, though as in the king's, they were not admitted

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(1) Add.MS. 7965.

(2) Tout Chapters II p.168.

(3) Cal.Cl.R. 1302-7 p.222 (1306) and Cal.Cl.R. 1307-13 p.3 (1307).

(4) Issue roll. no. 164 (1312-13)

(5) E.A. 359/8 and Add. 7966.

to his inner household. Such cokini or cursores as John de Mouden and John Tunstall first appear in the accounts of the wardrobe about 1299;<sup>(1)</sup> in the prince's wardrobe book for 1302-3 no fewer than 16 inferior messengers were paid for journeys undertaken in Edward's name.<sup>(2)</sup> Many of these became cursores garderobe after 1307; others who do not reappear may have been engaged temporarily to meet the needs of an abnormal year.<sup>(3)</sup> But the numbers employed, in addition to the three or four nuncii already serving the prince, are an indication of the amount of correspondence carried on by Edward at this time, and provide another sidelight on the workings of his fully organised chancery.<sup>(4)</sup>

Other children of Edward I. also had their households and, as a matter of course, their household messenger<sup>S</sup>, Thomas de Brotherton, eldest son of Queen Margaret, had a separate establishment by 1302, which included a messenger, William Asscheby,<sup>(5)</sup> and, in 1303, a number of cokini and cursores in addition.<sup>(6)</sup> Accounts for the wardrobe of the king's sons in 1304-5 and 1305-6<sup>(7)</sup> show four and five cokini respectively taking letters for the princes, and in 1311-13 a new nuncius

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(1) E.A. 357/22 and 358/20 f. 8v.

(2) E.A. 363/18.

(3) Tout (Chapters II pp. 173-4) points out the greatly increased expenditure in the prince's accounts for this year as a result of his participation in the Scottish wars.

(4) Tout Chapters II, 180-1 3-4.

(5) 1301-3 (E.A. 362/17), 1303-4 (Add.MS. 35292) 1304-5 (E.A. 367/3), 1305-6 (E.A. 368/12).

(6) E.A. 366/15.

(7) Add.MS. 37656 and E.A. 368/12.

Roger de Tichefeld, and a cokinus John Chapelir.<sup>(1)</sup> William Payn, nuncius domine Marie filie regis, monialie de Ambresburia, is also mentioned, and seems to have been her official nuncius, even though she had already taken the veil.<sup>(2)</sup>

Edward of Windsor, born on 12 November 1312, had a wardrobe of his own by the following January,<sup>(3)</sup> and with this wardrobe a messenger named William Bost, who is frequently mentioned in the accounts for the next few years.<sup>(4)</sup>

Another messenger, William Russel, had taken his place in 1319-1320.<sup>(5)</sup> So far I have not discovered any reference to cursores employed by Edward before his accession, an omission which may either be due to gaps in our evidence, or may be explained by the fact that Edward was still a minor when he became king, so that his wardrobe as a prince had never attained to the dignity of independence. One messenger may therefore have sufficed for his personal letters and those sent out by his officials in the administration of his estates.

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- (1) E.A. 374/19. Roger was still messenger of Thomas of Brotherton in 1316-17 (Society of Antiquaries MS. no.120 p.34)
- (2) Add.Ms. 35292 f. 15v.
- (3) Sharp "The Central Administration system of Edward the Black Prince" in Chapters V. pp.289-400 (p.314 note 1)
- (4) 1312-3 (E.A. 375/5), 1313-4 (E.A. 375/9), 1315-6 (E.A.376/20), 1316-7 (Society of Antiquaries MS.no.120 p.140,141,142), 1317-8 (Society of Antiquaries MS.no.121 p.66,93.)
- (5) Add.MS. 17362. This may be the same William Russel who was acting as a messenger for the king in 1335-6. (Nero C VIII f.289-293v.)

His sister Eleanor, too, had her nuncius John de Bristol, who accompanied her on her marriage in 1333 to the Duke of Gelders. (1)

The Black Prince, like his father, was supplied with a household a few months after his birth. (2) At first dependent on the king, this miniature wardrobe was entrusted with the administration of the prince's earldoms of Cornwall and Cheshire, and in process of time secured its dependence. Unfortunately later accounts for the Black Prince's household are incomplete: there is little to reflect in messenger history, the gradual decline of the prince's wardrobe into a purely domestic office while its administrative and financial duties were taken over by the prince's exchequer. (3) But the Register supplies a considerable number of references to individual nuncii and cursores, and from this and other sources, we can trace the careers of several messengers in the prince's service, the earliest being those of Master John, cursor domini ducis in 1338, (4) Roger Pope, nuncius ducis, and John Dagenet cursor ducis from 1340 onwards. (5) The latter reappears as Dagenet the messenger in 1346, (6) and in

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(1) Add.MS. 38006 and E.A. 396/7.

(2) Sharp op.cit. p.294. Other children of Edward III. had a separate household in the Tower from 1334, of which accounts for 1340 and 1341 survive.

(3) Ibid. p.308-9, 331,343.

(4) Issue roll no. 301.

(5) E.A. 389/6

(6) Black Prince's Register I.18.



a household book of Queen Philippa for 1349-50.<sup>(1)</sup> In the issue roll for Michaelmas 1356-7 he is accompanied by Thomas, another messenger.<sup>(2)</sup> They were still nuncii ten years later<sup>(3)</sup> and in 1369 a fourth messenger, John Butte, was employed.<sup>(4)</sup> He seems to have remained in the prince's service until Edward's death: in the Prince of Wales' book for 1376-7,<sup>(5)</sup> he is again mentioned, and was a messenger of Richard II. in 1385-6.<sup>(6)</sup>

It seems probable, then, from these examples, that the Black Prince was accustomed to maintain 4 nuncii at least and a proportionate number of cursores. His nuncii, like those of Edward of Carnarvon, remained in his service for many years, making up part of that magnificent household which a prince of his importance was bound to maintain<sup>(7)</sup> and dealing with the correspondence which resulted from his administration of his own duchies and of the principality of Aquitaine. In this there is a certain difference between the messengers of an heir apparent who has come to years of

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(1) Misc. Bks. Exch. T. of R. 205.

(2) Issue Rolls nos. 382 and 386.

(3) Issue rolls nos. 429 and 431 (1366-1367.) Dagonet is also mentioned in 1367 (Issue Roll no. 433), 1369 (Issue Roll no. 438) and finally in 1370 (Issue roll of Thomas de Brantingham ed. Devon). Thomas also reappears in (Issue roll no. 437)

(4) Issue Roll no. 437.

(5) E.A. 398/8.

(6) Issue of the Exchequer ed. Devon. p. 228.

(7) Sharp op.cit. p. 344.

discretion, and those of the king's other children, or of the queen. The latter deal only with letters resulting from the private business of the individual; the former may undertake commissions for their master which would now be considered as part of the public administration. Medieval men drew no such distinction between a prince's private and public actions. But for our purpose such a distinction may be drawn; as servants of the individual, preoccupied with the private business of that personage, the messengers of these smaller royal wardrobes had no share in the greater messenger service or its work. If we could discover more about the household messengers of the Black Prince during his rule in Aquitaine, we might find that they played there a part not unlike that of the household messengers of the king in England during the earlier part of our period. Had the prince's rule in Gascony continued and had the new principality become established these messengers might in time have formed a messenger service in the modern sense, with an organisation as complete as that of the wardrobe messengers of the king. But since our knowledge of the prince's administration and the part played in it by the messengers is so incomplete, it is not possible to say how far the prince's messengers were employed by the central government for business relating to Aquitaine where formerly they would have used one of their own nuncii. The large sums entered on the issue rolls at

intervals to Dagenet and other nuncii from Gascony, suggests that royal officials were making use of them for the king's own business in the duchy, and were maintaining communications with the prince through his messengers, and not through their own.<sup>(1)</sup> Until further evidence for this is found, however, the amount of regular work taken by nuncii or cursores belonging to any subordinate royal household, not excluding the prince's, must be regarded as negligible.

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(1) In 1356, for instance, the issue rolls record several journeys undertaken by Dagenet, Roger Pope, and Thomas "in negotiis regis", some to Gascony, others to different parts of England. (Issue rolls nos. 378 m.8. and m.35; 380 m.1. and m.11.) Subsequent years produce similar entries on the issue rolls; in 1367-8, for instance, "Dagenetto nuncio domini principis misso in negotiis regis usque Plymuth --- per breve de private sigillo lxxvj s. v d." (Issue Roll no. 433)

(3) The Messengers of the King's Wardrobe.

The wardrobe messengers, therefore, if not the sole agents for messenger duties available to the crown, may be regarded as by far the most important. They included, since the king's household was for the greater part of this period dominated by the wardrobe, not only the cursores garderobe, but also the nuncii regis of the household. We must now consider the number of messengers employed in each of these groups, and the importance of each to the government as messengers. Such an inquiry will also demonstrate how far this messenger service proved adequate to meet the needs of the thirteenth and fourteenth century administration.

There are during this period two extant household ordinances which describe in detail the constitution of the king's household, the number of its officers, and their duties and emoluments. These are the ordinance of 1318, supplemented by that of 1323, and "the description of the household of king Edward III. in peace and war from the eighteenth to the twenty-first year of his reign."<sup>(1)</sup> Neither

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(1) The household ordinance of 1279 tells us nothing of the nuncii regis. Perhaps their inclusion in the later ordinance may be taken as an indication of the increased recognition accorded to them by that date.

of them professes to tell us more than the number of household messengers in the king's employ at the moment in question: The Ordinance of 1313, under the heading Messengers, speaks of "xij messagers qi mangeront en sale." <sup>(1)</sup> From this Jusserand concluded that the number of nuncii regis was fixed at 12, <sup>(2)</sup> and that this figure did not vary. But in the Household of King Edward III. in peace and war from the eighteenth to the twenty-first year of his reign, 17 messengers figure on the list of members of the household, coming between the yeomen of the king's chamber and the king's minstrels. <sup>(3)</sup> Further on in the same account of the household, among minstrels and falconers, are 27 "Messengers" who receive wages in time of war on the same scale as the king's archers. <sup>(4)</sup> Finally provision is made among the lists of those who should receive money for shoes and liveries for 20 messengers. <sup>(5)</sup> It would seem, then, that the number of messengers was not definitely fixed, but could fluctuate within certain limits according to the chances of peace or

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(1) Tout The Place of Edward II. in English History 2nd ed. 1936, p.272.

(2) Jusserand English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages 2nd ed. p.228 (1921)

(3) A Collection of Ordinances. p. 4.

(4) A Collection of Ordinances. p. 8 and 9.

(5) Ibid. p. 11.

These variations are explained by the fact that this is not a single ordinance but a collection of extracts from wardrobe accounts put together by a Tudor antiquary.

Tout Chapters I. 37-8.

war and the needs of the administration. To establish the exact number of nuncii regis employed by the crown throughout this period, a further examination of other classes of material is necessary.

This material, though abundant, offers certain difficulties. Our chief sources under John are the two misae rolls of 1209-1210, and 1212-3: the numbers of messengers employed here may be taken as a fairly accurate guide to the number of nuncii generally found in his service, though such an estimate can be only approximate. For Henry III. it is possible to speak with more certainty. Only two rolls of messengers' expenses have been preserved, but these are supplemented by frequent references to messengers in the patent and close rolls, and by numerous writs of liberate for messengers' expenses which give us the names of most of the individuals employed up to 1233. These various sources cover the greater part of the reign. Under Edward I., II., and III., material is plentiful. The exact number of nuncii employed by the king can be ascertained either from the lists of those receiving robes and shoes in the household, or from the accounts which show the expenses of messengers employed by the crown. These two sources combined provide evidence which covers almost every year during the reigns of Edward I. and II. There are fewer wardrobe books extant for Edward III., and fewer entries relating to messengers in those which do

remain, especially after the middle of the reign. But we are still able to discover the number of messengers in the king's service from the record of their expenses in the issue rolls, and from a few surviving rolls of memoranda relating to messengers' expenses.

The nuncius regis can thus be found in household lists as well as in the wardrobe accounts of expenditure for the conveyance of letters and messages. The inferior messengers, on the other hand, when he emerges towards the middle of Henry III.'s reign, can only be traced through the latter source. Not being a member of the king's intimate household, he is not mentioned in accounts of purely household expenditure, nor does he appear as frequently in the close and patent rolls as a recipient of royal bounty. It is therefore much more difficult to ascertain the exact numbers of these inferior messengers. A few of them were permanently attached to the wardrobe; these men often served the king for years in this capacity, and were always designated cokini or cursores by the accounting clerks. But in addition there were extra messengers - valets, serjeants, and grooms from the household, or local men hired as occasion demanded and sometimes not differentiated from the regular cursores. This was particularly the case during the early years of Edward II., when the change in messenger terminology already described had created a certain confusion. Less sure than

before to which of these inferior messengers the name cursor properly belonged, wardrobe clerks omitted the title, and the custom of writing nuncius or cursor after the name of every recognised messenger was never completely resumed in this department. The exchequer clerks were often more precise, since they must distinguish between messengers attached to their own department and those belonging to wardrobe or chancery. The issue rolls therefore at times supply information which the wardrobe books withhold, and as the sums paid directly to messengers by the exchequer increased during the fourteenth century, the importance of this source increases likewise. In the later rolls for Edward III., the general marginal reference "nuncius" is often replaced by the specific "nuncius" or "curgor" which definitely indicated the rank of the men concerned.<sup>(1)</sup> Thus while the numbers of inferior messengers was never fixed, it is possible to give figures which are approximately correct for Edward I. and III., and sufficiently definite for Edward II. to provide a basis for comparison between their numbers and those of the nuncii regis.

The misae roll of 1209-10 gives the names of 15 nuncii regis who took letters for the king during that year. This probably comprised the whole of John's messenger service:

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(1) e.g. in the issue roll for Michaelmas 1370-1, no. 441.



there is no mention of any inferior messenger comparable to the later cokini or cursores, and there are few payments to extra letter-carriers. For 1212-1213, the second misae roll gives the names of 16 messengers some of whom had been in the king's service since 1209; and the close roll for 1214-5 mentions 5 nuncii employed by the king.<sup>(1)</sup> Numbers were reduced slightly during the minority of Henry III. In 1220 the sheriff of Oxford was ordered to provide robes for 11 nuncii regis <sup>(2)</sup> and in the same year the receipt roll <sup>(3)</sup> endorses writs of liberate in favour of 12 nuncii whose names tally with those given in the sheriff's list except for the omission of Norman le Veauterer and the insertion in his place of Albericus the messenger and John English. Again there are no references to cokini. In the following year, 11 nuncii regis received robes, this time through the sheriff of London,<sup>(4)</sup> and in 1222-3 and 1223-4 9 and 13 nuncii respectively were provided with robes by the sheriff of Oxford.<sup>(5)</sup> The liberate rolls which commence in 1226,<sup>(6)</sup> record writs for the expenses of about the same number of regular messengers. Here for the first time the names of a number of casual

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(1) Rot.Lit.Cl. 1204-1227 I, 180. This single writ for messengers' expenses does not, of course, preclude the existence of other nuncii in the king's service during that year.

(2) Ibid. I, 444.

(3) Receipt roll no. 4.

(4) Rot.Lit.Cl. I. 484.

(5) Ibid. I, 527 and 580.

(6) Cal.Lib.R. I.

letter-carriers appear with those of the king's own nuncii. Clearly the demand for messengers was outstripping the supply, and the normal household messenger service was no longer adequate. The enrolled wardrobe account for 1236-7 and 1237-8 shows that there were then 18 and 17 nuncii regis respectively who received robes for Christmas.<sup>(1)</sup> But in the earliest surviving roll of expenses of messengers, that for 1252-3,<sup>(2)</sup> only 4 nuncii regis are found, supplemented by 15 cokini. This suggests a change in messenger organisation between 1233, the last year for which expenses of messengers were entered in detail on writs of liberate, and the date of this, the first detailed wardrobe account of their expenses. Between these two dates, the term 'nuncius' had become restricted to nuncii equitantes, and the new term 'cokinus' had appeared for those messengers who journeyed on foot; as a result of this, the number of nuncii had been reduced, while the necessary increase in the total number of messengers had been met by the new branch of the service.

Four nuncii, however, proved insufficient. In the close roll of 1259-1261, 8 messengers receive robes or are mentioned as belonging to the king's service;<sup>(3)</sup> while in addition to these there are 7 others<sup>(4)</sup> not called nuncii here, who are

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(1) Pipe roll no. 81.

(2) E.A. 308/1.

(3) Close roll 1259-1261 p. 131, 208, 259, 261, 332.

(4) Ibid. p. 12.

given that title in other documents. In 1264-5, the second roll of messengers' expenses for this reign <sup>(1)</sup> gives the names of 18 nuncii regis and in addition those of 19 cokini, also employed regularly by the king. In many cases the same names occur on close or patent rolls, which thus act as a further means of identification. All these sources combine to show that during the last ten years of Henry III.'s reign, the king was accustomed to employ nuncii and cokini in roughly equal numbers, while in all he required the services of 30-40 messengers.

For the first 15 years of the succeeding reign, the total numbers remained about the same. In 1277-8 28 messengers, and 1284-5 37 messengers, in all were members of the king's permanent service. <sup>(2)</sup> After this date there was a slight increase in personnel: 47 in 1288-9, <sup>(3)</sup> 43 in 1299-1300, <sup>(4)</sup> and 45 in 1303-4. <sup>(5)</sup> But while the total number of messengers employed rose gradually, the proportion of nuncii to cokini within that total showed considerable variation. The 28 messengers for 1277-8 included 13 nuncii regis, and 15 cokini - as in the preceding reign, the king was employing

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(1) E.A. 308/2.

(2) 1277-8 (Add.MS. 36762 and E.A. 308/4): 1284-6 (E.A. 351/17 and 308/8.)

(3) E.A. 308/10.

(4) E.A. 357/21 and Lib.Quot.Gard.

(5) Add.Ms. 8835.

nuncii equitantes and peditantes in nearly equal numbers.

But of the 37 messengers of 1284-6, only 10 were nuncii, and only 14 out of the whole 47 of 1288-9. In 1299-1300, again, there were 14 nuncii as against 29 cokini. A slight increase is noticeable towards the end of the reign - 17 nuncii regis in 1303-4, and 28 cokini. Such figures demonstrate clearly enough that the number of nuncii regis was by no means fixed under Edward I. But they also bear witness to the economical practices of Edward I.'s government which preferred to keep the number of household messengers low, increasing the number of cokini rather than that of nuncii whenever extra help was needed.

It is not difficult to see the reason for this. The nuncius regis was a member of the household, and as such a charge upon the king's resources whether he were employed or not. There were slack periods spent "in court", during which the messenger received food in hall and all the other benefits enjoyed by members of the king's household. Cokini, on the other hand, were excluded from the household, and were not entitled to the same privileges. Normally they were hired for the journey and no more though payments are sometimes recorded to cokini whom the king wished to "retain" in his service in

readiness for the next commission.<sup>(1)</sup> If he engaged them in this way, they received the same rate of pay as they would have been allowed when travelling. Such instances, however, are rare, and only serve to illustrate the exigences of war time. The same cokini followed the wardrobe year after year, but they were always treated as servants engaged for a particular piece of work only. They were free to leave the king's service when and as they desired, without the necessity of obtaining his licence to depart.<sup>(2)</sup> They were therefore, less likely to become a claim on the king in sickness or old age. They received neither livery nor maintenance except as a rare favour: and finally, they received lower wages while travelling for the king than did the nuncii regis. Economy, therefore, urged the employment of cokini rather than nuncii for shorter or less important journeys, and especially at times when the increase in messenger numbers would probably be a temporary measure.<sup>(3)</sup> This is illustrated by the years

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(1) e.g. during the Scottish war of 1304, a number of payments were made by the wardrobe to cokini "morantibus in curia pro literis regis portandis", and the payments entered in the accounts among "Soluciones facte peditibus retentis ad vadis regis in guerra Scotie". The 14 cokini whose services were thus retained were paid 2d. a day while in court between the months of May and November of that year. Add.MS. 8835 f.73 v. 74, 80, 96.

(2) See below p.

(3) In the same way, the Avignon Popes employed outside professional messengers and cursores mercatorum rather than increase the number of their permanent cursores. Yves Renouard "Comment les Papes d'Avignon expédiaient leur courrier" in Revue Historique CLXXX (1937) p.1-22.

1296-7 when 41 cokini found employment in the king's service: of these 23 were old hands who had already served the king for some years and were to continue as messengers of the wardrobe until the end of the reign.<sup>(1)</sup> The rest were hired for a short time and afterwards dismissed - merely temporary additions to the messenger service to meet the needs of war. But notwithstanding this large increase in the total number of messengers employed, the number of nuncii regis for this year remained at 14, as in 1288-9.

The same principle was applied under Edward II., and though the total number of messengers was often considerably increased, the number of nuncii regis remained almost unchanged. Only 6 appear in the first account for the reign, as against 30 cokini and a great many unspecified letter-carriers.<sup>(2)</sup> But later the numbers are much the same as in the previous reign - 12 nuncii regis and 24 cursores in 1310-11;<sup>(3)</sup> 9 nuncii regis and 16 cursores in 1315-6;<sup>(4)</sup>

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(1) The same 23 'old timers' figure on two different lists for this year - an account for February and March, (Chanc. Misc. 4/6) and the complete wardrobe book for the whole year. (Add. MS. 7965) The latter shows that the expansion of the messenger service occurred mainly during the second half of the year: besides the additional cokini, many letters were taken by grooms and valets and by persons to whom no title is applied.

(2) E.A. 373/15.

(3) E.A. 373/30, 374/2, 374/7, 374/8, and Nero C VIII f.30. Issue roll no. 155 (1310-11)

(4) E.A. 376/7

Issue rolls nos. 176, 178, 180 (1335-6)

8 nuncii regis and 28 cursores in 1319-20.<sup>(1)</sup> 1323-4 saw a slight increase - 10 nuncii and 30 cursores;<sup>(2)</sup> and by 1325-6 12 nuncii and 39 cursores are found in wardrobe and exchequer accounts.<sup>(3)</sup> It must be remembered that there were always a number of letter-carriers who were neither nuncii nor cursores; and that many who later became cursores served the king first as one of these unspecified messengers. It is not always easy to say exactly when a cursor became recognised as such, but the totals given above include only those messengers of whose identity there is no doubt.

The early part of Edward III.'s reign shows an increase in the numbers of nuncii and cursores which coincides with the government's preparations for the French war and the subsequent campaigns. There were 10 nuncii in 1330-2;<sup>(4)</sup> 11 in 1334-6;<sup>(5)</sup> 21 in 1340-2;<sup>(6)</sup> and the same number again

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- (1) E.A. 378/4 and Add.MS. 17362  
Issue rolls nos. 189,191 (1319-1320)
- (2) E.A. 379/19.  
Issue rolls nos. 205,207 (1323-4)
- (3) E.A. 381/14, 381/11.  
Issue rolls nos. 217,218 (1325-6)
- (4) E.A. 385/16, 385/4.  
Issue rolls nos. 247 and 252 (1329-1330); nos.255 and 256  
(1330-1331)
- (5) E.A. 387/9 and Nero C VIII f.285-295 v.  
Issue rolls nos.274 and 276 (1333-4); nos.281 and 284  
(1334-5)
- (6) E.A. 389/8.  
Issue rolls nos. 307 and 313 (1339-1340); nos. 317 and 320  
(1340-1)

in the years 1350-4.<sup>(1)</sup> 19 nuncii are still found in the king's service in 1359-1361,<sup>(2)</sup> but only 8 in 1365-7,<sup>(3)</sup> and only 7 in 1368-70,<sup>(4)</sup> and 1375-7.<sup>(5)</sup> The number of cursores employed similarly rose from 22 in 1330-2<sup>(6)</sup> to 52 in 1334-6:<sup>(7)</sup> there were 46 of them in 1340-2,<sup>(8)</sup> and at least 30 in 1350-4.<sup>(9)</sup> With the conclusion of war numbers began to fall. For the years 1359-1361<sup>(10)</sup> and 1365-7<sup>(11)</sup> I can trace only 17 and 15 cursores respectively, while out of the 50 inferior messengers employed in 1368-1370<sup>(12)</sup> only 8 are definitely called cursores. At the end of the reign, in the years 1375-7,<sup>(13)</sup>

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- (1) E.A. 392/12, 326/2.  
Issue rolls nos. 350 and 353 (1349-1350); nos. 355 and 358 (1350-1); nos. 359 and 364 (1351-2); nos. 365 and 368 (1352-3).
- (2) E.A. 393/11, 309/11.  
Issue rolls nos. 395 and 396 (1358-9); nos. 400 and 401 (1359-1360)
- (3) E.A. 315/1, 396/2.  
Issue rolls nos. 421 and 422 (1364-5); nos. 425 and 427 (1365-6)
- (4) E.A. 315/25, 315/33.  
Issue rolls nos. 433 and 434 (1367-8); nos. 437 and 438 (1368-9)
- (5) E.A. 316/40, 317/13, 317/40, 398/9.  
Issue rolls nos. 456 and 457 (1374-5); nos. 459 and 460 (1375-6)
- (6) E.A. 385/16, 385/4.  
Issue rolls nos. 247 and 252 (1329-1330); nos. 255 and 256 (1330-1331)
- (7) E.A. 387/9 and Nero C VIII f. 285-293 v.  
Issue rolls nos. 274 and 276 (1333-4); nos. 281 and 284 (1334-5)
- (8) E.A. 389/8.  
Issue rolls nos. 307 and 313 (1339-1340); nos. 317 and 320 (1340-1)
- (9) E.A. 392/12, 326/2.  
Issue rolls nos. 350 and 353 (1349-1350); nos. 355 and 358 (1350-1); nos. 359 and 364 (1351-2); nos. 365 and 368 (1352-3)
- (10) E.A. 393/11, 309/11.  
Issue rolls nos. 395 and 396 (1358-9); nos. 400 and 401 (1359-1360)
- (11) E.A. 315/1, 396/2.  
Issue rolls nos. 421 and 422 (1364-5); nos. 425 and 427 (1365-6).
- (12) E.A. 315/25, 315/33.  
Issue rolls nos. 433 and 434 (1367-8); nos. 437 and 438 (1368-9)
- (13) E.A. 316/40, 317/13, 317/40, 398/9.  
Issue rolls nos. 456 and 457 (1374-5); nos. 459 and 460 (1375-6)



14 cursores are found in the king's service in a total of 33 inferior messengers. For these years, however, evidence is scanty: there are no complete wardrobe books, and the figures quoted have been deduced from rolls of messengers' expenses and from entries in the issue rolls.

The enumeration of the above details, necessary though they are, may make tedious and bewildering reading. The chief points at issue may be illustrated by the following table, in which may be seen at a glance the fluctuations throughout the period.

	<u>Date</u>	<u>No. of Nuncii Regis</u>	<u>No. of Cokini and Cursores</u>	<u>Other Mes- sengers Exch. Chanc.</u>	<u>Sources.</u>
JOHN	1209-10	15	0		<u>Rot. de Liberate ac de Misis et Praestitis</u>
	1212-15	16	0		<u>Misae roll. Cole's Records.</u>
HENRY III	1220-1	11 12	0 0		<u>Rot. Lit. Cl. I, 444 Receipt roll no.4</u>
	1221-2	11	0		<u>Rot. Lit. Cl. I, 484.</u>
	1222-3	9	0		<u>Ibid. I, 527.</u>
	1223-4	13	0		<u>Ibid. I, 580.</u>
	1236-7	18	0		<u>Pipe roll no.81 Enrolled wardrobe account</u>
	1237-8	17	0		<u>Ibid.</u>
	1252-3	4	15		<u>E.A. 308/1.</u>
	1259-61	9			<u>Cl.R. (1259-1261).</u>
	1264-5	18	19		<u>E.A. 308/2.</u>
EDWARD I	1277-8	13	15	2 N.	<u>E.A. 308/4. Add.MS.36762.</u>
	1284-6	10	27		<u>E.A. 351/17. 308/8.</u>
	1288-9	14	33	I.N. I.C.	<u>E.A. 308/10.</u>
	1289- 1291	13	27	I N. 2 C.	<u>E.A. 352/24. Issue Roll no.66</u>
	1296-7	14	41	3 N. 3 C.	<u>Add.MS. 7965.</u>

<u>Date</u>	<u>No. of Nuncii Regis.</u>	<u>No. of Cokini and Cursores</u>	<u>Other Mes- sengers Exch. Chanc.</u>	<u>Sources.</u>
1299- 1300	14	29	2 N.	<u>Lib. Quot. Gard.</u> E.A. 357/21.
1303-4	17	28	1 N. 4 C.	Add. MS. 8833.
EDWARD II 1307-8	6	30	1 C.	E.A. 373/15.
1310- 1311	12	24	2 C.	E.A. 374/2, 7, 8. E.A. 373/30. Nero C VIII f.30 v. Issue Roll no.155.
1315-6	9	16	7 C.	E.A. 376/7. Issue Roll nos.176,178, 180.
1319- 1320	8	28		Add. 17362 E.A. 378/4. Issue Roll nos.189 and 191.
1323-4	10	30	3 C.	E.A. 379/19. Issue Roll nos.205 and 207.
1325-6	12	37	2 C.	E.A. 381/14, II. Issue Roll nos.217 and 218.
EDWARD III. 1330-2	10	22	10 C.	E.A. 385/2 and 4. 385/16. Issue Roll nos.252,255, 256.
1334-6	11	52	8 C.	E.A. 387/9. Nero C VIII f.285-293v. Issue Roll nos.276,281, 284.

<u>Date</u>	<u>No. of Nuncii Regis.</u>	<u>No. of Cokini and Cursores</u>	<u>Other Messengers Exch. Chanc.</u>	<u>Sources.</u>
1340-2	21	46	3 C.	E.A. 389/8. Issue Roll nos. 313, 317, 320
1350-4	21	30	1 C.	E.A. 392/12, 326/2. Issue Roll nos. 353, 355, 358, 359, 364, 365, 368.
1359-1361	19	17		E.A. 393/11, 309/11 Issue Roll nos. 395, 396, 400, 401, .
1361-2	14	13		Issue Roll nos. 409, 410.
1365-7	8	15		E.A. 315/1, 396/2 Issue Roll nos. 421, 422, 425, 427.
1368-1370	7	18	" <u>diversis N. &amp; C. de Canc</u> "	E.A. 315/25, 33. Issue Roll nos. 433, 434, 437, 438.
1375-7	7	14	2 C.	E.A. 316/40, 317/13, 40. 398/9. Issue Roll nos. 456, 457, 459, 460.

This family represents the number of extra letter-carriers to be found among the messenger accounts for any of the war years of Edward I. The wardrobe naturally preferred to use men who were already attached to the king's service in some capacity, and who were known to be trustworthy. But members of the household were not always available, and the government of King's found itself obliged to employ outside messengers.

The king, therefore, might count upon the services of between 13 and 14 nuncii regis, and between 25 and 40 regular cursores. This body of messengers was responsible for the conveyance of most of the letters issued by chancery as well as those under the privy and secret seals; and in normal times, their numbers proved adequate to meet the needs of the central administration. They did not always prove sufficient during times of stress, when the work of the messenger service was so greatly increased, and at such times the government relied first on the aid of other members of the household. In 1299-1300, for instance,<sup>(1)</sup> Edward I. made use of the services of 2 grooms, 1 usher, and 42 other named persons all probably connected in some way with the household, in addition to the messengers and servants of subordinate royal wardrobes, and his own nuncii and cokini. This example fairly represents the number of extra letter-carriers to be found among the messenger accounts for any of the war years of Edward I. The wardrobe naturally preferred to use men who were already attached to the king's service in some capacity, and who were known to be trustworthy. But members of the household were not always available, and the government at times found itself obliged to employ outside messengers.

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(1) Lib. Quot. Gard.

(4) Professional Messengers.

To conclude this survey of the types of messenger available for government purposes, therefore, we must turn last to a group of messengers drawn from sources which had nothing to do with either the court or the administration, and yet at times were utilised by both in emergency. These were the professional messengers of London.

To trace their ancestry, we must recall the feudal messenger to be found in most medieval villages, the villein who held his land under the obligation of taking letters for his lord,<sup>(1)</sup> and summoning his fellows to the manorial court.<sup>(2)</sup> The prevalence of this practice in England is illustrated by the frequency with which the word 'messenger' appears as a 'surname' in the chancery enrolments. Such feudal messengers

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- (1) "Le moyen âge, qui avait des vassaux-bergers ou fileuses de chanvre et des cuisiniers héréditaires, eut aussi des courreurs 'fiéffés', gratifiés d'une terre qu'ils possédaient féodalement en propre, moyennant l'obligation de remplir chez le seigneur, de père en fils, à perpétuité, l'emploi de courreur." Georges D'Avenel, L'évolution des moyens de transport (Paris 1919) p.142.
- (2) Bennett H.S. Life on the English Manor 1150-1400 (1937)p.70. An example of this villein messenger is found in an entry in the close roll for 1516 in an assignment of dower - among the tenants on this estate was one who owed four hens at Christmas, four message-carryings at Lent, and eighty eggs at Easter. (Cal.Cl.R. 1313-1318 p. 349) Other instances are given by Rees South Wales and the March 1284-1415 (1924) p. 86.

may have in time have abandoned their holding and taken to message-carrying as a profession, hiring their services out to any buyer. This we know was common on the continent, not only in such places as Avignon,<sup>(1)</sup> but also in large mercantile communities such as the Flemish towns, and in University cities such as Paris.<sup>(2)</sup> In Avignon, messengers often made arrangements with the inn-keeper that he should negotiate with their clients on their behalf. This practice brought into being the messenger-master, who engaged and paid a number of cursores, hiring out their services at such rates as would provide a margin of profit for himself. In Flanders, on the other hand, towns frequently preferred to appoint permanent messengers of their own,<sup>(3)</sup> a practice which probably cost a little more but may well have been more reliable. Such messengers were chosen by the magistrates and were sworn in upon appointment. Universities, too, might have semi-official, semi-private messenger services; the messengers employed were nominated by the rector but were not paid a salary and depended on fees from the students whose correspondence they carried.

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(1) See article already cited by Yves Renaud. Revue Historique CLXXX pp.1-22 (1937)

(2) Georges D'Avenel op.cit. p.70 and 145-6.

(3) Arnald, nuncius de Middelburgh, and the two other unnamed nuncii of the same town, who took letters for Edward III. in Flanders and Zealand in 1351, may have been messengers of this sort. (Issue roll no. 358) Nicholas, cursor de Lombardia, another of these foreign cursores, was employed by Edward III. in 1338-1340 (Misc.Bks.Exch.T. of R. no.203)

Our special concern, however, is with the messengers in the service of the city of London during our period. We have, by the fourteenth century, considerable evidence of their activities, and find them in the reign of Edward II. utilised occasionally by the king to supplement his own resources. The earliest indication of the use of such messengers <sup>(1)</sup> seems to occur in the issue roll of 1309-10. <sup>(2)</sup> Twelve London cursores are here mentioned by name, 9 of whom appear again in an account of charges on the wardrobe for 1310-11, <sup>(3)</sup> together with a further 4 not employed during the previous year. In both instances these London cursores are carefully distinguished from both cursores garderobe and cursores de scaccario who figure in the same accounts. Richard le Mercer cursor Londonii, was sent to Berwick by the chancellor, treasurer and council during the king's absence in April of the same year, and received expenses for his journey through the exchequer. <sup>(4)</sup> Eight further messengers of London were employed by Edward II. in 1313-4, <sup>(5)</sup> and the phrase is again found in the issue rolls for the following year, when seven such cursores had been hired to take commissions to custodians of the peace and for other miscellaneous

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(1) Unless "Thomas le Messenger of Marte Lane London" were one of these cursores. (Cal.Cl.R. 1302-1307 p.425)

(2) Issue roll no. 152.

(3) E.A. 374/2.

(4) Issue roll no. 158.

(5) Issue roll no. 170.



business.<sup>(1)</sup> Two were employed in 1315-6<sup>(2)</sup> and 9 in 1319-20.<sup>(3)</sup> Writs for parliament were taken out "per manus diversorum nunciorum London" in 1321<sup>(4)</sup> and two letter-carriers "de la Charing" were paid for journeys in 1324.<sup>(5)</sup> In spite of the clear distinction between the departmental cursores and these London cursores, some of the latter bear names found later among the cursores garderobe or even among the nuncii regis: it suggests that the temporary employment led in some cases to a permanent post.<sup>(6)</sup> Very occasionally, professional messengers of other towns or cities are mentioned in the accounts; in 1317, for example, Adam, le curroure de Eboraco, took letters for the wardrobe,<sup>(7)</sup> and in 1323-4 Ralph cursor of York, was similarly employed.<sup>(8)</sup>

Under Edward III., the practice of using these outside messengers ceased almost entirely. Probably it was a shift practised by Edward II. in his endeavours to make ends meet:<sup>(9)</sup>

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(1) Issue rolls nos. 172 and 175.

(2) Issue rolls nos. 176 and 180

(3) Issue roll no. 191.

(4) Add.MS. 9951 f.36v.

(5) Issue roll no. 207. See also I.R. 188 (1318-9)

(6) e.g. Joseph de Faversham, subsequently nuncius regis. Issue roll no. 191.

(7) Society of Antiquaries MS. no. 121 p.96.

(8) Stowe MS. 553 f.129v. and Issue roll no. 200.

(9) Though Edward I. used "hired cokini" in 1288-9 for certain urgent messages (E.A. 308/10), the non-royal professional messenger is rarely met in the accounts until Edward II.

the use of such unofficial letter-carriers suggests that though the ordinary messenger service had proved insufficient to cope with the king's increasing correspondence, he was unwilling to increase the numbers of his permanent messengers, preferring to employ casual and possibly cheaper labour. If the numbers were deficient, the fault may have lain more with the exchequer than with the wardrobe, which had a less rigid constitution and could expend more easily. Twice only did payments to London cursores come on the wardrobe books; on every <sup>other</sup> occasion they are made by the exchequer, and are entered on the issue rolls. Edward III.'s substantial increase in messenger numbers probably did away with the need for the frequent employment of outsiders from the city or its suburbs, for when, towards the end of the reign, numbers decreased, the unofficial professional messenger appears again on the rolls. Letters for the levy of money were taken in 1369 by "diversis nunciis et cursoribus et aliis de villa Westmonasterii et de London conductis et missis xv die Augusti" <sup>(1)</sup> and in December of the same year barons were summoned to Queen Philippa's funeral by "divers messengers and courriers and valets of the town of Westminster."<sup>(2)</sup> Such references, however, are comparatively rare. <sup>(3)</sup> 'Thomas Hamond, a courier of York;

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(1) Issue roll no. 438 m.36 (1369-70)

(2) Issue roll of Thomas de Brantingham 1370 ed.Devon p.408.

(3) Issue roll no. 449 (1373)

William de Bristol, cursor ville de Cicestrense; <sup>(1)</sup> William Stanley, cursor de villa Westmonasterii; <sup>(2)</sup> and William Sparewe, messenger de Lincoln, <sup>(3)</sup> are a few examples. <sup>(4)</sup>

No great importance, therefore, need be attached to these external messengers, hired from the city of London or elsewhere to undertake some urgent business. The wardrobe messenger service, like every healthy organism, had the power of growth and of readjustment, which enabled it to meet every new demand made upon it during our period. In this it differed from both exchequer and chancery, whose individual messenger services were static and show no trace of development. The ever increasing burden of official correspondence fell upon the wardrobe and its messengers, added to the importance of their position, increased their numbers, and gave them an established and valued position among servants of the crown which no other departmental messengers could rival.

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(1) Issue roll no. 456 (1374-5)

(2) E.A. 317/40 (1377)

(3) (File of payments to messengers from Edward III. to Henry VI.)

(4) E.A. 317/40 (1377-8)

(4) John de Freston, John Crull, and William Trench of the parish of St. Clement London, and John de Bekyngham of the parish of St. Bartholomew London, who were sent with writs and letters of privy seal in 1369-70 may also have been professional messengers, though they are not called 'cursor'. (Issue Roll of Thomas de Brantingham ed. Devon pp. 128, 129, 133, 138.)

## III.

ORGANISATION:- CONTROL OF THE MESSENGER SERVICE.

We may now pass to the organisation of the messenger service, and in particular to its position in relation to the king's wardrobe and household. The two centuries included in our period cover the growth and ascendancy of the wardrobe among departments of state; the subsequent modification and definition to which it was subjected; and its final decline into the wardrobe of the household. The history of the king's messenger service during these years, is of special interest because it exemplifies one side of this development; and because the rise and decline of the messengers of the household, reflecting the parallel career of the wardrobe, may throw light on the earlier and later stages of its history. The vigorous expanding wardrobe of the mid-thirteenth century drew the messengers into its sphere of influence and established its control over nuncii expenditure. Under Edward I, as the wardrobe became more important, so its messengers obtained added prestige among other members of the household. And when the reforms of the exchequer took much of the power and resources from the wardrobe, the control of the messengers and their expenditure also passed

from it to the exchequer. This cycle of rise and decline must now be examined in detail.

Our first enquiry must concern the early connection of the messengers with the wardrobe - how and when the messenger service became attached to this department rather than to the chancery, which issued the letters carried; the exchequer, as the treasury and chief financial department; or the chamber, which preceded the wardrobe as a household chancery and exchequer combined. Here two test questions must be asked. By whom were these messengers paid for their services? Through what channels did they receive the necessary instructions for their journeys and the actual documents which they were to take? The first question is obviously the more important. Effective control over the messenger service will be expressed more clearly by financial dependence than in any other way. The messengers might be at the service of any and every branch of the administration in turn, but the department to which they were attached was that department through which they received their pay. The first question therefore will be discussed here; the second may be left until we speak of the routine of the messenger's life.

## 1. The Rise of the Wardrobe.

Let us recall the main stages in the rise and growth of the wardrobe itself. At the commencement of our period, the exchequer and chancery had already developed out of the primitive and undifferentiated household. The former had absorbed the treasury and become settled at Westminster as the main financial department. The latter, though not yet out of court, was in 1293 to establish its complete independence.<sup>(1)</sup> In the household itself, expenditure was regulated by the chamber<sup>(2)</sup> which throughout the twelfth century had been accustomed to receive money directly instead of through the treasury. Even as early as Henry II, the chamber had become a second treasury like the thirteenth century wardrobe, and, unlike the wardrobe, it was not accountable to the exchequer. As the sovereign's privy purse, it was exempt from such accountability and itself audited accounts of officers who answered for their expenditure to the king in person. By John's reign, the chamber as the secretariat of a household had come to be intimately connected with the use of the king's small seal, and though all writs were still enrolled by the chancery, the chamber was well on its way to making itself as independent of chancery control in this sphere as it

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(1) Tout Chapters II, 51 and 76.

(2) Ibid. I, 105-6, 153-4, 158, 160, 162-3.

was already independent of the exchequer in matters of finance. Its further development, however, was prevented by the rival growth during the thirteenth century of the wardrobe.<sup>(1)</sup> Under Henry II the wardrobe had been no more than a place of safe deposit, and even under John, the chancery rolls show that the word "wardrobe" was still connected primarily with goods and possessions carried from place to place with the king, and with the storage of money, valuables and documents. But in the misae rolls of 1209-1210, another and newer aspect of the wardrobe is seen. Payments are recorded to this department as well as to the chamber, and the former was beginning to share the responsibility for household expenditure which had previously belonged to the chamber alone. Both were now financial departments: their functions were similar; and together they could be regarded as forming a single household treasury.<sup>(2)</sup> Not until after 1215 were wardrobe documents clearly distinguished from those of the chancery; while about the same time, the chamber and wardrobe as financial offices also drew apart. The growth of the wardrobe, encouraged perhaps by the exchequer to which it was accountable, progressed steadily during the early years of Henry III, and it is from the wardrobe that the earliest

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(1) Tout Chapters I, 164-6, 169, 179, 181.

(2) "The connection between the chamber and the wardrobe under John was as close as the relations of two institutions which nevertheless preserve a separate identity, well can be." Ibid. I, 169.

surviving household records originated. By the departure of the chancery from court, the wardrobe became a domestic chancery; and as a financial department of the household, it completely overshadowed the chamber by the mid-thirteenth century.

Into this scheme of developing and overlapping household departments, we must fit the messenger service. The first notable, and perhaps rather surprising fact, is that in the early stage the chancery itself was directly responsible for the king's messengers, neither wardrobe, chamber nor exchequer being so closely connected with them. This view is supported both by negative and positive evidence. To take the negative first, our earliest sources are the misae rolls of 1209-10 and 1212-13; the close rolls for 1204-1227; and the writs of liberate issued for messenger expenses during the first two decades of Henry III's reign <sup>which</sup> give no indication of the methods by which the money was paid out to the messengers concerned. The concise entries on the misae rolls closely resemble in form those of later household accounts, and give the minimum of information <sup>(1)</sup>; the writs of liberate do not indicate whether the money demanded passed through the hands of chamber or wardrobe clerks before it reached the messenger, or not. It is just possible that the

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(1) A typical example runs: "Robino de Alemannis nuncio eunti cum litteris ad Robertum de Braibroc pro barillis faciendis v. j. d." (Rot. de Lib. p.120)



name of one messenger, Ralph de Chambre,<sup>(1)</sup> indicates a connection with the older department, though there is no further evidence to confirm this suggestion. But apart from this one dubious instance, nothing appears to justify the supposition that the chamber preceded the wardrobe as the department which paid and therefore controlled the early messenger service. That the wardrobe itself, however, was not at this stage responsible for such payments is shown by the wardrobe account for 5 January 1224-10 April 1227, the earliest account still surviving.<sup>(2)</sup>

Though in form the same as later enrolled accounts, and so, presumably, including every kind of wardrobe expenditure, this summary does not include nuncii among the items to be accounted for by the wardrobe. Neither the expenses of the humbler messengers, nor those of envoys are included, and yet the sums thus spent would have been considerable. On the other hand, there is nothing to indicate direct payment by the exchequer to messengers. There are no issue rolls prior to 1240; and no entries relating to messengers' expenses on those which do exist

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(1) e.g. "Radulpho de Chambre nuncio ad robam emendam x s. per regem". Ibid. p.127 (1209). Ralph is also mentioned on pp.130,134,139, under 1209; and on pp.144 bis,148,151,165, under 1210.

The misae roll for 1212-1213, however, gives his name as Ralph de Cambre or Cambray (Cole's Records pp.233 and 235); and the close roll for 1214 calls him Ralph de Combre when on 28 November he received 12d for his expenses in going to Chichester. (Rot.Lit.Cl. 1204-1227 I,180).

(2) Printed by Tout Chapters I, 233-238.

for the remainder of the reign. <sup>(1)</sup> Indeed, the existence of so many writs of liberate addressed to the exchequer on messengers' behalf is in itself proof that the exchequer was not, at this date, responsible for the payment of such expenses without the warrant and authorisation of some other department.

On the positive side, we have the evidence of these writs of liberate, numbers of which were drawn in favour of messengers between the years 1219 and 1235. <sup>(2)</sup> Such writs originated in the chancery, and might be enrolled either on the liberate rolls with other writs for the king's expenses, or, less frequently, on the close rolls; <sup>(3)</sup> they are also found endorsed on the receipt rolls, and in special rolls of writs for issues. They authorised the treasurer and chamberlains of the exchequer to pay out of the treasury certain sums to named messengers for specified services rendered, and as a rule a number of these individual warrants were entered on one writ. Occasionally the expenses of special envoys were included with those of nuncii

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- (1) The only entry which mentions messengers in any connection is the record in 1260 of pensions paid to three nuncii regis, Roger de Stanlegh, Philip de Schocchevill, and Colin le Waleys. Issue roll no.18.
- (2) Some of these are endorsed on the receipt rolls (E.401/3b, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10b.); others appear on the exchequer "liberate" rolls (E.403/1202, 1203, and a schedule attached to E.401/11); or on rolls of writs for issues (E.403/1200, 1201); and in a few cases the actual writs have been preserved among warrants for payments (E.404/1 no.29, 30 and 38, 1219-1220). But the majority are found on the liberate rolls proper, from 1226, when the series commences, until 1233 (Cal.Lib.R.I).
- (3) e.g. Rot.Lit.Cl. 1204-1227, I, 180 (1214) and 193 (1215)

regis, though the recipients were clearly differentiated. Thus the writ for the smallest sum paid to a humble messenger went through the same procedure as the warrant which authorised the payment of large sums into the chamber or wardrobe, and the expenditure was officially vouched for by the testimony of the highest officials of the crown, by the council, or by both.<sup>(1)</sup>

The writs of liberate found so frequently in the liberate rolls may represent money drawn in advance for the expenses of the journey and paid out to the messenger before he went, the amount being calculated according to an accustomed scale of diete (a word used in a writ of liberate entered on the close roll for 1221<sup>(2)</sup> and in some of the early wardrobe rolls of messenger expenses). In that case, he may have received his own warrant from the chancery and collected the sum specified from the exchequer himself. On the other hand, it seems more likely, since there is usually more than one warrant on each writ, that these orders to the exchequer represent the department's method of repaying itself for money spent after the messenger had returned and made a final reckoning for the sums allowed to him. In either case, it seems most probable that the department which

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(1) Three early warrants still survive. (Files of warrants for payments E.404/1 No.29,30,38) They correspond with entries on the close roll. (Rot.Lit.Cl. 1204-1227 I, 411 and 413)

(2) Ibid.I.450. 1204-1227 I, 415

calculated the amount due and made out the necessary writ was the one which was finally responsible for the messenger and his expenses - that is, the chancery.

The chancery, indeed, is the only department which can be shown to have had any direct concern with the messengers at this period. All letters sent out at this date were either sealed with the great seal and therefore of chancery origin, or sealed with the privy seal and therefore enrolled by chancery prior to dispatch: the vast majority of letters were still, letters of great seal. Thus the messengers were of necessity more closely connected with this department than with either of the two household offices. It seems probable that they received instructions and documents for delivery from the chancery through which all letters were obliged to pass, and it is not at all improbable that they received money for their expenses at the same time and from the same source. An order from John to one Gionus de Cancellaria, commanding him to find robes for Richard the queen's messenger, and for some of her other servants, affords additional confirmation for the theory that at this period the chancery could and did concern itself with such household matters as would later have been dealt with by the wardrobe. <sup>(1)</sup> One entry on the misae roll for 1212-3 may also imply chancery responsibility

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(1) Rot.Lit.Cl. 1204-1227, I, 115.

for messengers and their expenses. Among expenditure incurred on the Thursday after Michaelmas at Lambeth, the clerk made the following note "Ibidem pacavimus cuidam nuncio qui tulit vi ligacias flechericiorum de Lndon' usque Colecestr' per preceptum domini regis et qui tulit coria damarum et castaneas de Colecestr' usque London' v d."<sup>(1)</sup>

In this connection, it is noteworthy that, after wardrobe control over messengers had been established, a number of payments to cursores regis were made by a chancery clerk, Adam de Haupfield, and entered in the liberate rolls in the form of writs in his favour.<sup>(2)</sup> There are seven such writs in all during the years 1242-1244, and the sums thus spent on messengers amount to £19.13.0. It may be possible to find in this a reversion to earlier practice. The curious phrase "cursores sequentes cancellariam" used of five regular messengers in the close roll for 1257<sup>(3)</sup> may also be explained by this early connection<sup>(4)</sup> between the messengers and the chancery.

(1) Cole's Records p.243.

(2) Cal.Lib.R. II 1240-1245 pp.136,139,141,147,169,177, and 189.

(3) Cl.R.1256-1259 p.166. See above p.31.

(4) Conway Davies points out one curious instance as late as 1294 in which wardrobe accounts were delivered to the keeper of the rolls of chancery to be kept there in testimony of the rendering of the account, and suggests that this interference by chancery with the wardrobe may imply previous chancery influence. (Baronial Opposition to Edward II p.181) May it not also imply that the chancery relinquished with reluctance its control over certain items of expenditure which by 1294 formed part of the wardrobe account?

An important change came when for these earlier methods of control there was substituted that of the wardrobe. The date of this may be fixed with considerable exactitude. In all liberate rolls up to 1233, messenger expenses form a regular item of expenditure. From October 1233 to October 1236 there are no liberate rolls in existence, so that we can draw no conclusion as to these three years, but when the series recommences, the writs of liberate for messenger expenses no longer appear. The payments to Adam de Haupfield already mentioned form the only important exception to this. Special envoys still drew money for their journeys by writs of liberate, but the expenses of nuncii regis were evidently met in some other way. At the same time, it is noticeable that the lump sums paid by writ of liberate for the king's expenses either to his clerks or to the officers of his wardrobe had increased very greatly since 1233. Taking into account the sums paid directly by the exchequer to the wardrobe and those paid indirectly, by the appropriation to the wardrobe of exchequer income at its source (indicated on the rolls by writs of allocate) the money received by that department in 1233 had totalled approximately £1,210. The corresponding figure for 1236 was £5,684. Evidently, therefore, the wardrobe was taking much greater responsibility than formerly for household expenditure. Probably among this increased responsibility

came the expenses of nuncii regis.

It is fortunate that the second enrolled wardrobe account covers precisely this period, 1234-1236.<sup>(1)</sup> Kirkham, keeper of the wardrobe, accounting for household expenditure between 19 May 1234 and 3 May 1236, included in each of his three separate accounts the item "et in expensis nunciorum missorum per diversa loca". Not only these, the expenses of regular messengers, but even a portion of the king's expenditure on solemn envoys as well had been taken over by the wardrobe.<sup>(2)</sup> Thus we may date this important change from the commencement of Kirkham's term of office as keeper in May 1234. From the first, the figures given for the expenses of regular nuncii in this account appear to comprise the whole expenditure on such messengers for the years in question. In 1226-7, the liberate rolls showed a total of £14. 6. 1. for the expenses of nuncii regis at home and abroad.<sup>(3)</sup> The enrolled accounts for 1234-1236 allowed £16.3.4. for the five months between 19 May and 28 October 1234: £58.13.1 for the whole of 1234-5: and £24.14.8½ for the first part of 1235-6, from

(1) Pipe roll 19 Henry III (E.372/79)

(2) But some writs of liberate for envoys' expenses continue to appear on the liberate rolls until much later. The enrolled account for 1234-6 charges itself with £101.0.2. for the first five months of Kirkham's period of office (compare the £495.0.5. represented by writs for similar expenditure on the liberate rolls for the year 1226-7) and subsequently omits this item altogether.

(3) See above p. 75.

October to 3 May, "sicut continetur in rotulo de nunciis". The expenses of nuncii, then, were increasing, and though the earliest roll of messenger expenses which survives is not earlier than 1251-3, such rolls were already being kept in 1234. Drawn up by the wardrobe, the expenditure recorded in these rolls of messenger expenses was made only by that department.

## 2. The Period of Wardrobe Control.

Graphs to show Wardrobe and Exchequer expenditure on messengers under Henry III, Edward I, Edward II and Edward III.

We come, therefore, to the period during which the wardrobe was in complete and absolute control of the messenger service. So complete was the change from the very start that there are few instances of messengers receiving money by special writ after 1234. The exchequer "liberate" rolls include three writs of liberate for messengers dated 23 June, 15 July and 17 July 1235, <sup>(1)</sup> and of these, the first two were for the expenses of messengers sent to Rome, and the last for the expenses of seven messengers sent to all parts of England with letters concerning an aid granted to the king. All these, it may be argued,

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(1) Exchequer "liberate" roll E.403/1203.



GRAPH SHOWING WARDROBE EXPENDITURE ON MESSENGERS.

SCALE  $\frac{1}{10}'' = £2$

£ 120

110

100

90

80

70

60

50

40

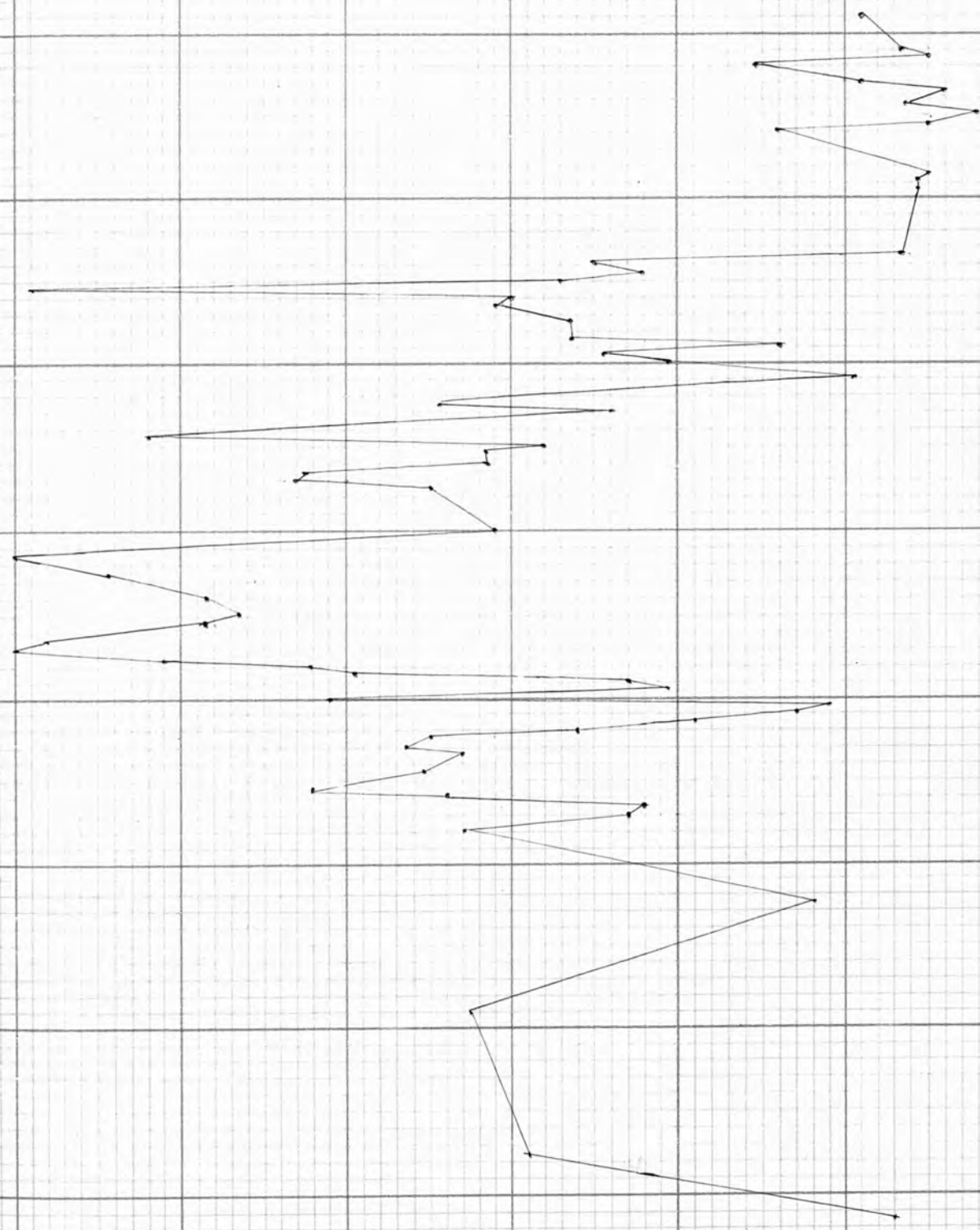
30

20

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1220 1230 1240 1250 1260 1270 1280 1290 1300 1310 1320 1330 1340 1350 1360 1370 1380

SCALE  $\frac{1}{10}'' = 2 \text{ years}$



GRAPH SHOWING EXCHEQUER EXPENDITURE ON MESSENGERS.

SCALE  $\frac{1}{10}'' = \pounds 2$

£120

110

100

90

80

70

60

50

40

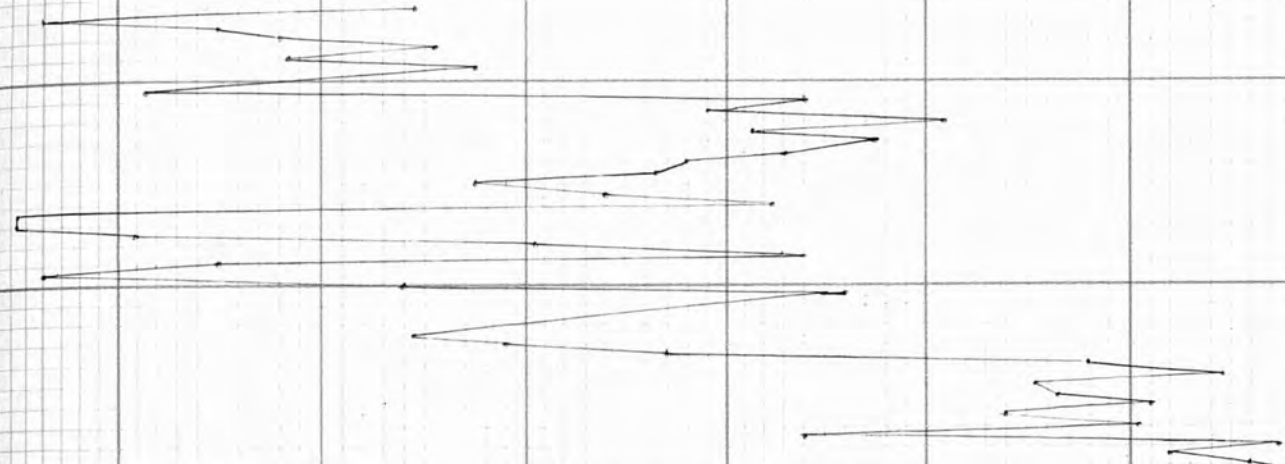
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1220 1230 1240 1250 1260 1270 1280 1290 1300 1310 1320 1330 1340 1350 1360 1370 1380

SCALE  $\frac{1}{10}'' = 2 \text{ years}$



were slightly exceptional payments. So too was a sum of 18/7½ spent on additional messengers hired in May 1239 to go "on the king's message" for his affairs in Cheshire,<sup>(1)</sup> and a further 37/0½ spent in January 1341 on doing justice and sending writs and messengers.<sup>(2)</sup> Only one such writ to named nuncii regis is found on the liberate rolls after the reorganisation of the service in 1234; this was to cover the expenses of Roger de Waltham and John Chubbe going to the court of Rome in 1251.<sup>(3)</sup> For the latter part of the reign, the rolls of writs for issues supply only two which are in any way connected with messengers - orders for the payment of pensions to two nuncii regis in October 1259 and to one in December 1262.<sup>(4)</sup> These scattered writs, and the case of the cursores paid by Adam de Haupfield, form the only exceptions to the general rule which seems to have been strictly observed, namely, that messengers' expenses ought to come within the wardrobe's province. The transference of the messengers to the control of the wardrobe, therefore, seems to have been complete in 1234: the change was made without any period of transition and uncertainty.

(1) Cal.Lib.R.I 1238-9 p.383.

(2) Ibid.II, 21.

(3) Ibid.III, 359.

(4) Roll of writs for issues No.1207.

This control was even more strongly marked during the next reign. Under Edward I the sums accounted for under the titulus de nunciis in wardrobe books appears to include without any important exceptions, all expenses on regular messengers, whether nuncii or cokini, so far as their official duties were concerned. This is, of course, what we should expect in continuance of the practice already initiated. The only sums paid normally to messengers by any outside source were the pensions granted to privileged individuals which might come from the exchequer direct or from the sheriffs; <sup>(1)</sup> and the only writs drawn in favour of messengers during this reign relate to such pensions. Some of these ordering payment of arrears are found on the rolls of writs for issues <sup>(2)</sup> while entries mentioning the actual payment occur <sup>(3)</sup> on the issue rolls: all are concerned with arrears from the previous reign, or the subsequent remission of the pension for a sum paid down. After 1276 these entries cease, for Edward seems to have avoided this form of provision for his nuncii. <sup>(4)</sup> One writ of liberate only for a messenger's

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- (1) If from the exchequer, the pension will be noticed on the issue roll, if from the sheriff on the pipe roll.
- (2) There are three sets of writs ordering arrears of pension to nuncii under Edward I; one dated 26 and 28 May 1273 for Nicholas le Waleys, Roger de Stanlegh, and John de Rotheby, nuncii regis; another dated 17 May 1275 for Thomas of Oxford, nuncius regine matris regis; and a third dated 9 June 1276 for Roger nuncius of the king's brother. (Rolls of writs for issues 1230, 1236, 1238)
- (3) Issue roll No. 21 (1272-3); No. 28 (1274-5); Nos. 31, 33, 34 (1275-6)
- (4) With the single exception of the pension to Simon Lowys, a messenger whose previous career in the queen's service entitled him to special treatment. (Issue roll No. 95 1295)

expenses occurs on the rolls of writs for issues during the whole reign, and that in 1273, while the king was still absent from England.<sup>(1)</sup>

A few entries on the issue rolls record direct payment to messengers, and on these a word must be said. The majority of them, although entered on the issue roll, are in reality payments by the wardrobe, and appear under the name of the keeper of the wardrobe. When the exchequer, in response to a writ of liberate, had issued a lump sum to that official, the latter was obliged to account to the exchequer for the details of its expenditure, and these accounts were copied onto the issue rolls below the entry recording the original transaction.<sup>(2)</sup> Such payments to messengers were, of course, of wardrobe origin, and had nothing to do with exchequer accounting; and the messengers mentioned received their expenses through normal channels. The only entries on the issue rolls which really represent direct exchequer expenditure deal with sums paid to nuncii regis going on longer and more expensive journeys than was usual at this date, and with payments made to messengers during the absence of the king and the wardrobe. To take one example, Roger de Wyndesore's journey to Ireland and then to Gascony to meet the king in 1288<sup>(3)</sup>

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- (1) For the expenses of Thomas Scott, nuncius regis, sent to Scotland 22 May 1273 (Roll of Writs for issues No.1230)
- (2) They are found on Issue roll No.57 (1287-8); No.59 (1289-1290); No.66 (1290-1); No.108 (1300-1); Nos.114,115 (1302-3); Nos.117,121 (1303-4); No.128 (1304-5); and No.134 (1306-7). See C.Johnson "The system of account in the wardrobe of Edward I" Trans.Royal.Hist.Soc. VI (4th series) 50-72 (1923)
- (3) Issue roll No.57.

illustrates both of these characteristics. Such entries are found most frequently on the issue rolls for 1290-1295,<sup>(1)</sup> but two isolated instances of sums paid to messengers by the treasurer or his clerk occur later.<sup>(2)</sup> The comparative unimportance of all such payments to nuncii by the exchequer is clearly seen from the figures cited in the table on page 186, and their existence can in no way imply exchequer responsibility for ordinary messenger expenses. There was no bar to the payment of messengers directly by the exchequer in cases of emergency or at times when the king was abroad, but it is quite clear that this was never regarded as the usual means by which this expenditure should be met. A messenger might serve the king for years without ever needing to draw his expenses from any source except the wardrobe.

From 1236 onwards continued expenditure in messengers can be traced in the enrolled wardrobe accounts, though the comparatively small sums paid to nuncii regis were often entered as one item with the expenses of envoys. For five months from 3 May to 27 October 1236<sup>(3)</sup> £67.12.10 was spent on nuncii, a sum so large that it almost certainly includes payments to nuncii sollemnes as well as regular messengers, while in subsequent accounts for 1236-8<sup>(4)</sup> and 1238-1240<sup>(5)</sup> the totals given are definitely said

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- (1) Issue rolls Nos.66 (1290-1); No.70 (1291-2); Nos.76,79 (1292-3); No.85 (1293-4); Nos.90,95,96 (1294-5); No.99 (1295-6)
- (2) Issue roll No.105 (1299-1300); and No.138 (1306-7)
- (3) Pipe roll No.80.
- (4) Ibid. No.81
- (5) Ibid. No.83

to represent money spent on both types of nuncii. No accounts are available for the period from 4 February 1340 to 28 October 1341, but again in those for 1241-1245<sup>(1)</sup> and 1245-1252<sup>(2)</sup> the two types are not distinguished. A roll of expenses of messengers covering the year from 24 June 1252-24 June 1253<sup>(3)</sup> however, shows that during this twelve months £65.16.1 was spent on regular messengers, nuncii and cokini. This agrees roughly with the £58.13.1 paid to such messengers for the year 1234-6, and probably represents the average level of expenditure under this head. Accounts for 24 June 1253 - 10 January 1255, and for 30 April 1256 - 28 October 1257 are also lost, but those for 10 January 1255 - 30 April 1256<sup>(4)</sup>; 28 October 1257 - 25 July 1261;<sup>(5)</sup> and 25 July 1261 - 31 December 1264,<sup>(6)</sup> all include other expenses besides those of regular messengers under the heading nuncii. The account for 1 January 1265 - 6 August 1265, however, which purports to be an account of expenditure on regular messengers only, and which can be checked by another roll of messenger expenses,<sup>(7)</sup> gives as the wardrobe expenditure on nuncii for these seven months the figure £13.5.10. This agrees exactly with the

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- (1) Ibid. No.88  
 (2) Pipe roll No.95, Chancellor's roll No.45.  
 (3) E.A. 308/1  
 (4) Pipe roll No.99  
 (5) Enrolled accounts (W. and H.) No.1.  
 (6) Pipe roll No.113.  
 (7) E.A.308/2; Pipe roll No.114

detailed account. But again for 6 August 1265 - 3 March 1268,<sup>(1)</sup>  
 and 4 March 1268 - 4 November 1272,<sup>(2)</sup> the sums given do not  
 appear to represent expenses of nuncii regis only.

These figures (as seen in the table on page 179) demonstrate the progress made by the wardrobe under Henry III in gaining control both over the nuncii regis, and over the special envoys, who during the course of the reign became accountable to the wardrobe alone for the sums expended by them when abroad on the king's missions. The appearance of a grade of messengers lower in status than the nuncii regis does not seem to have affected the position of the latter, from this point of view. The nuncii regis had probably been under wardrobe control for some time before the need for a large number of extra messengers led to the employment of cokini by the wardrobe: and from the first there was never any question as to the department which controlled and paid these nuncii peditantes. From their earliest appearance and as long as the wardrobe remained the effective department of government, the humbler messengers, whether known as cokini or cursores, were attached to that office, (and to that) only.

With the opening years of Edward I came the complete triumph of the wardrobe in all spheres of administration. For

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(1) Pipe roll 115.  
 (2) Pipe roll No. 116.



the messenger service this meant greater responsibilities and increased numbers. The steady development of the wardrobe led to a gradual rise in expenditure on nuncii all through the reign, which is clearly shown by the full accounts of the wardrobe under this heading. In 1276-7<sup>(1)</sup> the sum total is given as £46.10.9, and the details of individual journeys show that very little of this went to letter-carriers who were not regular messengers, and none to special envoys. The total similarly spent in the following year was £44.0.1½.<sup>(2)</sup> But the expenditure on messengers from 28 March 1282 until 31 October following,<sup>(3)</sup> including £26.16.8½ spent on letters "pro negotiis tangentibus guerram Wallie" was £70.19.10 for a period of five months only, which is a considerable increase on the previous figures. For this the war was clearly responsible.

The figures for the complete year 1283-4 were by no means startling, though still an increase on the earlier years of the reign. £67.4.7. was spent on messengers in 1283-4;<sup>(4)</sup> £73.14.0. in 1284-5.<sup>(5)</sup> From this point the figures as given by the rolls of expenses, or by the enrolled accounts, show a steady decrease until for 1289-90 the expenses of messengers totalled no more than £22.17.6½.<sup>(6)</sup> By 1296-7, however, they had risen again to a

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- (1) E.A.308/3 (Roll of expenses of messengers 1276-7)  
 (2) E.A.308/4 (Roll of expenses of messengers 1277-8)  
 (3) E.A.308/5 (Roll of expenses of messengers 1282-3)  
 (4) E.A.308/7  
 (5) E.A.308/8  
 (6) E.A.308/12

point higher than had ever before been reached. The total under this titulus in the liber cotidianus of the wardrobe for that year <sup>(1)</sup> was no less than £120.15.9½. Though no figure so high was again reached in this reign, expenditure remained substantial, as will be seen by the figures below: <sup>(2)</sup>

	£	s	d
1299-1300	87	11	1
1300-1301	83	8	6
1303-1304	87	6	0
1305-1306	99	10	2

These variations follow, in the main, the course of general wardrobe expenditure. The first peak of nuncii expenses in 1278 and 1279 corresponds with the first Welsh campaigns, during which the wardrobe was responsible for the king's entire war expenditure. Wardrobe expenses remained fairly high between 1280 and 1285 in spite of a short period of peace, and rose again from 1286-7 with the renewal of war in Wales and the king's expensive stay in Gascony. The wardrobe's absence abroad thus coincides with and accounts for the lowest period of messenger

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(1) Add. MS. 7965.

(2) 1299-1300 Lib. Quot. Gard. p. 303.

1300-1301 Add. MS. 7966. (Tout Chapters II, 120 note 1.)

1303-1304 Add. MS. 8835.

1303-1304 E.A. 369/11. I give the total here as it was first set down by the wardrobe clerks. A further page of miscellaneous expenditure, mainly by envoys, was added later, and brought the final total to £103.8.10.

expenditure during the reign. For three and a half years, the wardrobe was in Gascony with the king, and during this time, as Professor Tout noted, it took absolutely no part in English affairs, while throughout the same three years, the rolls of chancery show no trace of the letters sent out by warrant of the privy seal, which was with the king.<sup>(1)</sup> The administration was thus divided between the wardrobe, which still directed household expenditure, and the chancery, which became responsible for government at home. This division affected in particular the secretarial duties of both departments. The wardrobe could no longer be responsible for the dispatch of chancery letters, while, in the king's absence the number of letters which could still be issued by the chancery was greatly reduced. Only half the usual number of letters were enrolled on the patent rolls, and, though writs of course were still issued, no charters of any kind appeared. Thus we should expect to find expenditure on messengers for these three years reduced proportionally, even had the total sums given covered the whole expenditure on messengers both in England and abroad. But the regular messenger service of nuncii and cokini had gone abroad with the wardrobe,<sup>(2)</sup> and the details of their journeys given on the account for 1288-9

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(1) Tout Chapters II pp.62-4.

(2) Roll of expenses of messengers 1288-9 (E.A.308/10). The same total is given in the enrolled account for the year (Pipe roll No.138 m.26)

shows clearly that these were incurred in connection with the king's business only. The majority of journeys were to places or personages in Gascony, and did not involve passage by sea; many of the sums entered were originally paid in foreign coin and converted into sterling for purposes of accountancy. There can be no doubt that this roll represents only the expenses of messengers employed by the wardrobe while abroad, and does not include any of the payments which must have been made to messengers in England during the wardrobe's absence, either by the regent or by the chancery. It seems unlikely that any of the regular messengers had been left behind to deal with such business,<sup>(1)</sup> for both nuncii and cokini appear on the wardrobe's account, and all the nuncii regis known to have been in the king's service at this date received their annual allowance for robes and shoes through the wardrobe as usual. Yet no trace of any extra messengers appears on the issue roll for the year, which mentions<sup>(2)</sup> only the 20/- as messenger expenses accounted for by the keeper of the wardrobe as part of a writ of liberate. Thus, though the meagreness of the sums spent on messengers by the wardrobe is explained, we are still left with the question of the corresponding payments to messengers for English business,

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- (1) When Henry III went abroad in 1259-1260, a roll of wages for the members of the king's household who were left behind shows that no nuncii remained in England on that occasion. (Chanc.misc.3/46 No.10)
- (2) Issue roll No.59. (1288-1290)

to which no answer has yet been found. Whatever arrangement was made to replace the wardrobe messengers during these years, was apparently continued into 1289-1290,<sup>(1)</sup> after the wardrobe's return, for the figures given in the roll of expenses of messengers for the year was also very small, and can hardly represent the expenditure of all branches of the administration under this head. By 1290-1, however, the wardrobe established at Berwick, had again resumed responsibility for all messenger expenses.

Wardrobe expenditure as a whole was high again in 1295-6, the year which marked the commencement of Edward's troubles with France and Scotland simultaneously, and expenses continued to increase during the next years, reaching their greatest height with the Flemish campaign of 1297-8. This period constituted the peak of nuncii expenditure also; the sums thus spent rise steadily from 1293 onwards, are at their height in 1297-9, and gradually sink to the 1293 level again. The expenses of the whole expedition to Flanders were borne by the wardrobe, and the resultant increase in the sums spent under this head indicate the manner in which all expenditure on the king's behalf had grown during these years, and the rapidity with which the wardrobe could adjust itself to meet such demands. The Scottish campaigns of the final years of the reign put a similar strain

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(1) E.A. 308/12 (Roll of expenses of messengers 1289-1291)

upon wardrobe finances, and this again is reflected in the increase of messenger costs, which rise at the very end of the reign to a point as high as any ever reached in 1297. For the last year of Edward I, described by Professor Tout as "one of the most expensive years of the reign for the wardrobe"<sup>(1)</sup> the wardrobe paid, or owed, its messengers £99.10.2.

The reign of Edward II saw the supremacy of the wardrobe over the messenger service still unchallenged. The wardrobe in 1327 must have appeared to contemporaries to control as completely as ever the dispatch of letters: the effects of the household reforms which eventually ended the wardrobe's monopoly were not yet visible. For the messengers this is still the period of wardrobe supremacy, and the fluctuations in expenditure on messengers by the wardrobe were due, as under Edward I, to the varying fortunes of politics. The reign of Edward II saw a gradual but definite decrease in messenger expenses. Commencing with £120.10.11,<sup>(2)</sup> a sum as high as any spent on messengers under Edward I, the figures for this particular item of wardrobe expenditure alternately rise and fall throughout the reign, each temporary increase being followed by a further loss. For 1310 the figures dropped to approximately £62.18.5,<sup>(3)</sup> rose again to

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(1) Tout Chapters II, 121.

(2) Pipe roll no. 168

(3) The sum of such expenditure in the journals of the wardrobe for 8 July 1310-14 February 1311; and 14 February 1311-7 July 1311. The total expenditure on messenger items had not been entered in either of these two books. (E.A. 374/7 and E.A. 373/30)

£70.9.2. for 1315-6,<sup>(1)</sup> £85.19.3 for 1316-7<sup>(2)</sup> and £85.17.11 for 1317-8,<sup>(3)</sup> but fell once more for the years 1318-1321, to £63.2.0<sup>(4)</sup> £63.2.9<sup>(5)</sup> and £55.19.4.<sup>(6)</sup> The sudden increase to £104.8.11<sup>(7)</sup> was followed by £48.4.11 in 1324-5;<sup>(8)</sup> the subsequent rise to £69.14.8 in 1325-6<sup>(9)</sup> by an even sharper decline.

As in the previous reign, the political situation had its direct repercussions on the financial one, and thus upon the sums spent each year by the wardrobe on messengers' services. Tout has divided the reign into three political periods,<sup>(10)</sup> the first from 1307-1318, representing the struggle between the king and the barons for control of the administrative machinery; the second from 1318-1322, representing the triumph of the middle party under Pembroke; and the third from 1322-1326, representing the reaction which lasted until the king's fall. Under the first period, the financial situation inherited by Edward from the previous reign is shown fairly enough by this one item, nuncii, in the wardrobe accounts for his first regnal year, and

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- (1) For 8 July 1315-31 January 1316 from Pipe roll No.166; and for 1 February 1316-7 July 1316 from enrolled account (W. and H.) No.2 m. 1 d. and 17 d.
- (2) Enrolled accounts (W. and H.) No.2 m.18 and 1 d.; Society of Antiquaries MS. No.120.
- (3) Enrolled account (W. and H.) No.2 m.18 and 1 d.; Society of Antiquaries MS. No.121.
- (4) Enrolled account (W. and H.) No.2 m.18 and 1 d.
- (5) Enrolled account (W. and H.) No.2 m.2.; Add MS. 17362
- (6) Enrolled account (W. and H.) No.2 m.2.; Add MS. 9931
- (7) Enrolled account (W. and H.) No.2 m.2. and 18.
- (8) Ibid.m.24 and E.A.381/4
- (9) E.A.381/14. The enrolled account has £79.14.8. (Enrolled account (W. and H.) No.2 m.26)
- (10) Tout The Place of Edward II in English History 2nd ed.1936.

the abandonment of the Scottish campaign is indicated by the subsequent fall in messenger expenses. By 1310, these expenses had been reduced from £120.10.11 to £62.18.5; and most of this reduction was undoubtedly due to the cessation of war. But peace with Scotland was not the only factor making for a reduction in messenger expenses at this time. There was in addition that domestic rivalry between king and barons, which had as its object control of the household machinery and household finance.

The ordainers regarded the wardrobe with suspicion as the chief instrument of royal supremacy, and were concerned to reduce both its resources and its scope. For the first, they restricted wardrobe receipts, forbidding direct payment of money to the wardrobe, and insisting that the whole of the king's revenue should pass through the exchequer. The direct result of this was to reduce considerably wardrobe receipts for 1310-1311, and the succeeding years 1311-2 and 1312-3; and thus a corresponding reduction in wardrobe expenditure had to be made wherever possible. This reduction affected the messengers as constituting one branch of the household administration in which economies could be made, and this general restrictive influence may probably be regarded as the most important immediate effect of the ordainers' policy on the messenger service. In this general diminution of wardrobe resources, the ordainers saw the first



and easiest means of controlling and decreasing wardrobe operations, of safeguarding their own position, and of checking the king's executive power. But, in addition to this, they imposed more specific restrictions on the wardrobe's business and the agents through whom that business had hitherto been effected. They removed the privy seal from the control of the wardrobe officers, putting it instead into the charge of a special keeper, chosen by and responsible to themselves, through the departments of state under their control. Thus the seal which had hitherto been the symbol of the king's personal will was taken away from the household office which had formerly used it; and was made into a semi-independent and therefore semi-public instrument of government, with less authority than the great seal, and without the prestige attached to the king's personal seal. By its absence, the ordainers hoped to reduce the importance of the wardrobe as a secretariat and deprive it of the advantage which it had enjoyed through the control of the privy seal. This policy directly affected the messengers, who were necessary to the wardrobe simply in so far as the wardrobe was the king's domestic secretariat. Its final results may be discussed later, for the success of this part of the ordainers' plans was due, not to the ordainers themselves, but to the household reforms which replaced the ordinances. The immediate effect was not startling, yet the

inconvenience of the separation of the privy seal and wardrobe, and the king's development of the secret deal in retaliation, must have influenced in some degree the number of letters carried by messengers.<sup>(1)</sup>

In the second place, the ordainers imposed restrictions upon the king's freedom of action by clauses limiting his use of the prerogative powers of protection and pardon, and the wardrobe's issue of letters granting such privileges. The ordainers particularly resented the wardrobe's infringement of the now traditional jurisdiction of the chancery and law courts by the issue of writs of privy seal delaying actions. The facility with which letters of pardon had been granted to felons, and protections against actions at law given to persons in the king's service, had interfered with the administration of justice. The number of such letters issued every year was certainly increasing and enrollments of this nature had for many years occupied a prominent place on the patent rolls. But the ordainer's attack on the king's right to pardon or protect questioned his entire prerogative power, for, according to the ordinances no letters

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(1) "Some indication of the number of writs issued under the privy seal can be obtained from the fact that between 18 July 1310 and 13 February 1311, payments for the delivery of 139 writs of privy seal were made in the wardrobe." The corresponding number for the second half of the year was 157; and these figures do not include writs sent out and paid for by the exchequer. (Conway Davies Baronial Opposition to Edward II p.134.)

issued by the king against right were to be valid in a court of law. If strictly applied, these restrictions would have led directly to a considerable reduction in the number of letters issued under the privy seal and any reduction in the number of letters sent out must eventually affect the messenger service. It is possible that the fall in the figures for the expenses of messengers noticeable during the years of the ordainers' triumph, was due in part at least to their interference with wardrobe action, both by the removal of the privy seal and by the limitations imposed upon the issue of letters under that seal. This point must not, however, be pressed too far. In the first place, a great many of these letters of pardon or protection would have been applied for by private persons and collected by them or by their friends on their behalf.<sup>(1)</sup> Of the large number of pardons enrolled every year in the patent rolls, comparatively few were carried by royal messengers. In the second place, it is questionable how far the ordinances were applied in practice. The temporary reduction in the total number of letters sent out during the year must be due to a combination of circumstances, in which the conclusion of the Scottish war, the general reduction in

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(1) We have a few references to messengers carrying royal protections, e.g. Adam Fikays, a wardrobe courier took a letter of protection to John Arnceman (E.A.387/9 m.5 l334-5). They are, however, rare.

wardrobe expenditure, the ordainers' attack upon the issue of wardrobe writs, and the king's use of the secret instead of the privy seal for personal letters, all played some part. No restriction upon the king's right to issue protections or pardons could be long maintained while the demand for such letters was not merely constant but increasing. The Cowick ordinance in 1323 noted that "there have been more writs and letters made and delivered into the exchequer under the great and privy seals in every year at this present time than used in former times to be in ten years or more".<sup>(1)</sup> Under these circumstances, the effect of the ordinances upon the issue of letters, and therefore upon the messenger service, can have been only very transitory.

We have unfortunately no figures for messenger expenses during the year of the Bannockburn campaign, when the king's attempt to free himself from the ordinances and the renewal of the Scottish war must have increased the wardrobe's expenditure in this as on every item in the account. The raising and feeding of a medieval army involved frequent communication between the wardrobe, the barons, the sheriffs, and the king's purveyors; and Thomas of Lancaster, whose personal defection was in part responsible for the defeat, no doubt received his summons to attend

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(1) Tout Place of Edward II in English History 2nd ed.  
p.175.

the king on his expedition from the hands of one of the many messengers sent out with such letters. Yet notwithstanding the king's defeat by the Scots abroad and ordainers at home, the wardrobe's expenditure after Bannockburn did not decrease as it had done in 1311-1313. No economy or control could prevent general expenses from increasing: the only direct effects of that double defeat on the wardrobe were felt by the household personnel to whom the ordainers took exception. Even this purge did not touch the humbler members of the king's familia. Their presence had no political implications, and there could have been no motive for the removal of such royal servants as the nuncii regis except the opportunity that a wholesale reorganisation of the household might have presented to fill their places with baronial nominees, and provide for servants of opposition leaders at the king's expense. But after Bannockburn, the barons were posing as reformers of the household in the general interest. They could hardly have filled the royal household with their own dependents without destroying the illusion. A comparison of two lists of nuncii regis, one for 1312-1313, and the other for 1315-1316<sup>(1)</sup> shows that of the ten messengers employed by the king in 1312, eight were still in his service in 1316, while there is nothing to suggest that the other two had left the household for

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(1) E.A.375/8 and E.A.376/7.

political reasons. Popular rumour seems to have exaggerated both the change in personnel and the economies produced by it: (1) as far as the messenger service was concerned, this second victory of the ordainers was of far less consequence than the first.

The troubled state of the country during the years that followed Bannockburn are again indicated by increased expenditure. The Scottish invasions of 1316-17 sufficiently account for the rise in messenger expenses during that year, and the wardrobe book is full of messages relating to the Scottish war. (2) Historians have noticed the multiplication of writs and orders issued from 1315 onwards, in a vain attempt to preserve peace at a time when neither party had sufficient executive power to enforce its commands (3) and this too must have had its share in increasing messenger expenses. But with the conclusion of this first political period, the humiliation of Lancaster, and the rise of the middle party, expenditure as a whole sank to a more normal level. The three years of peace and reform are marked by moderate nuncii expenditure which neither rose to great heights nor fell to any very low figure. The expedition to relieve Berwick in 1319-1320, which increased the total wardrobe expenditure for that year, did not produce any noticeable rise in nuncii expenses, nor are there any traces of the subsequent reduction

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(1) Tout Chapters II 238.

(2) Society of Antiquaries MS. No.120.

(3) Tout Chapters II, 240.

that followed the Scottish truce; the slight rise in messenger totals for 1320-1321, which is not paralleled by any rise in general expenses, may be an aftermath of the year before. Yet the brief revival of a united baronial opposition and the almost immediate victory of the crown, were sufficient to send messenger expenses up to £104 again, the second peak of the reign, just as wardrobe receipts and expenses for 1322-3 were suddenly swollen to meet the increase of household personnel to war strength.

With the parliament of York which annulled the ordinances and made the king supreme, the third period of the reign begins. This was not marked by any important political developments at home; in the sphere of foreign politics the king's second defeat by the Scots between Byland and Rievaulx was the direct cause of the thirteen years truce concluded with that country in 1323, a truce which was, in effect, a recognition of her independence. The Scottish peace is marked in the wardrobe, and in particular in the figures for nuncii expenses, by a substantial reduction in expenditure; and for the rest of the reign this remained at a moderate level. Even the king's fall did not raise the totals of messenger or wardrobe expenses unduly.

It is evident, therefore, that during this period of wardrobe supremacy the fluctuations in messenger costs have the closest connection with general wardrobe history, both administrative and political. With widening responsibilities, the

expenditure of the wardrobe necessarily rose en gros et en detail, and among the details, at times of crisis, expenditure necessary for messengers employed inevitably played a large part. The reign of Edward I saw the wardrobe in full and undisputed control of the administration: that of Edward II marked the culmination of wardrobe activities and the failure of political attempts against ~~that~~ position.

Yet with the king's triumph went, not the continued supremacy of the wardrobe, but the first signs of its approaching decline. To understand the effects of this decline upon the messenger service, it is necessary to touch upon the influences already at work before the end of the reign to reduce the wardrobe's expenditure as a whole and curtail its sphere of action. These were not, in the main, political, but administrative; the challenge of the ordainers was followed by a far more dangerous challenge from the administration itself, and the wardrobe, which had, as an administrative department, survived the first attack upon its power, succumbed to the reforming and organising zeal of the middle party and of the king's own officials. We must therefore examine next the main administrative changes of the reign.

The first lasting change was that which separated the privy



seal from the wardrobe. This began in 1312 after the first attack on the household system by the ordainers, and was made permanent by the York ordinance on 1318 which constituted the office of the privy seal a sub-department of the household. The immediate effects of this on the messenger service were slight. The more far reaching result was the isolation of the privy seal from either chancery or wardrobe, and its constitution as a separate secretariat. By 1323, though still within the wardrobe, the privy seal had its own distinct organisation, and was already prepared to go out of court as an independent department. This move temporarily increased the importance of the privy seal, but ultimately made it unnecessary to any other branch of the administration, and a hindrance rather than a help to the government. The privy seal could never take on the formal character of the great seal for the authentication of solemn documents; yet it was no longer an expression of the personal will of the sovereign, and when its place as the king's private seal had been taken, first by the secret and griffin seals of the chamber, and later by the signet, the privy seal had no function. Its removal from the wardrobe, however, deprived that department of the exclusive use of any seal, and thereby contributed largely to the reduction of its secretarial business. For as the seal divided from the administration became useless, so the wardrobe

as a secretariat without a seal by which to give authority to its commands, was ultimately deprived of any useful function as a domestic chancery. Thus the York ordinance, in continuing this item of the ordainers' policy, virtually destroyed one side of wardrobe activity. To the messengers this was important because the wardrobe as a secretariat had needed their services to an extent that the wardrobe of the household certainly would not. The increase in letters of privy seal coming from the wardrobe in the early thirteenth century had brought the messengers under wardrobe control: the wardrobe had needed their services as a chancery, and, as a domestic exchequer, had been able to pay and to control them more easily than any other department. This was no longer the case. No longer an important secretarial department, the wardrobe did not need the services of the messengers, and was soon, through the curtailment of its financial activities, to lose the power of paying and controlling them also. The Liber Niger domus Regis Edwardi IV was probably correct when, in the mid fifteenth century, it ascribed the reduction in the numbers of wardrobe messengers then visible to "the avoydaunce of the privie Seale from household".<sup>(1)</sup>

The second important administrative development under Edward II, was in some respects the king's answer to the new independence

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(1) A Collection of Ordinances, p.49.

of the privy seal, namely, the reorganisation and development of the chamber, which made it, for the moment, the king's own secretarial and financial office. The baronial attempt to control the privy seal was countered by the use in the chamber of a new secret seal: their interference with the wardrobe's financial activities by the development of the chamber as the department dealing with the king's private expenditure. The appropriation of specific manors to the chamber between 1314 and 1318; and again later, increased its resources, and during these years it became almost free of exchequer control. It resumed its old position as a court chancery, equipped with its own secret seal and was prepared to rival the wardrobe in this function also. Thus, both as a financial office, and as a domestic chancery, the chamber seemed ready to take the wardrobe's place as the chief agent of curial government. Interrupted by the fall of Edward II, this policy was resumed by Edward III in 1330, and was a feature of the early years of his reign. His appropriation of lands to the chamber and his use in the chamber of the griffin seal, mark a deliberate attempt to replace the old wardrobe by a new and vigorous department with equal powers. This attempt failed. By 1355, Edward had been obliged to recognise that the days of government through purely household agencies were past. The administration of the country had become too complex a matter

to be controlled by any semi-domestic office, which had to accompany the king on his travels. The war in France and the consequent confusion were only the immediate and not the real causes of the chamber's failure. The chief gainers in the end from the reorganisation of the household were not the chamber, nor the privy seal, but the chancery and the exchequer. After 1355, Edward turned from the chamber as a domestic secretariat, and replaced the chamber's griffin seal with his signet as the sign of his personal pleasure. The king's secretary, in whose charge the signet was, thus became by degrees independent of the chamber and by the fifteenth century a powerful officer of the crown. Yet his authority never rivalled or disputed that of the chancery, which, in the failure of both wardrobe and chamber, remained the main source of official documents, and the one secretariat of state for public business. Chancery, then, benefited most by the reorganisation of the domestic chanceries under Edward II.

In a similar way, the exchequer gained by the failure of both wardrobe and chamber as private and domestic exchequers of the king. The reforms applied within the exchequer by its own officials enabled it at this stage to take over much of the work hitherto done by the wardrobe. The delays and difficulties involved in the traditional methods by which the wardrobe accounted for its expenditure to the exchequer provided an excuse to define

and thereby limit the duties of the various household officers. This process is marked by two main stages; first, the household ordinances of 1318 and 1323, and second, the ordinance of the exchequer of 1324. The effect of the household ordinances upon the position of the nuncii regis as members of that household will be discussed later: we are here concerned only with their influence on the development of the wardrobe as a whole. Deprived of control of the privy seal, and no longer of prime importance as the king's privy purse, the wardrobe's liberty was further curtailed by the restrictions imposed here in the name of order. "For the first time in its history, the wardrobe is in substance limited to its strictly household sphere",<sup>(1)</sup> and the use in these ordinances of the term 'wardrobe of the household' shows plainly enough the aims of the reformers. The detailed account given of each officer's work and emoluments did not merely prevent overlapping and neglect: it prevented any further expansion of the powers and functions of the wardrobe by confining its officers to certain routine duties, largely connected with the domestic side of the king's household. The wardrobe of Edward II had been unable to cope successfully with increasing business, and to remedy this state of affairs, the reformers preferred to reduce the amount of that business and limit the scope of the wardrobe's activities, rather than strengthen the

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(1) Tout Chapters II, 276.

wardrobe itself to meet them.

The second stage followed when, under Bishop Stapledon, the exchequer began to put its own house in order. With the new development of the chamber, the wardrobe was no longer so necessary to the king, and was still an object of suspicion to the former members of the baronial party; both therefore seem to have approved the further weakening of the wardrobe by the explicit removal from its purview of certain classes of business which it had previously controlled unquestioned. The household ordinances of 1318 and 1323 were therefore supplemented by certain clauses contained in the exchequer ordinance of 1324. These expressly removed from the control of the wardrobe a considerable number of 'foreign' accounts, for which the keeper of the wardrobe was no longer to be responsible. The clerk of the great wardrobe, for instance, was to account for his expenditure to the exchequer henceforward; so too, were the clerk of the hanaper of the chancery and the keepers of the king's forests and horses. Most significant for us, among the accounts now to be considered as foreign to the wardrobe, were the details of money paid out to and accounted for by the king's envoys and messengers. This ordinance, then, marks for us the end of wardrobe supremacy over the expenses of special envoys, which since 1234 had come almost exclusively on the wardrobe. From 1324,

the manner in which expenses for journeys abroad should be paid to envoys before their departure and accounted for by them after their return is clearly set out in this ordinance, in the section entitled "Coment deniers serront livrez as messagiers et as autres gentz destat envoie en message, et coment il deyvent acounter".<sup>(1)</sup> These solemn envoys were in future to receive their money from, and account directly to, the exchequer; the treasurer, acting nominally as the king's deputy, was to calculate the money due according to the estimated number of days during which the envoy would be absent, except on those journeys for which it had become customary to allow the envoy a fixed lump sum. In each case, the allowance was to be made and the money handed over by the exchequer, without any assistance or interference from the wardrobe. On the messenger's return, too, he was to account at once for his actual expenditure at the exchequer, not, as hitherto, at the wardrobe. Thus the responsibility for envoys' expenses was taken by this ordinance entirely away from the wardrobe.

Expenses of regular messengers, on the other hand, were still to be met by the wardrobe, but under certain regulations here laid down in the following section entitled "Coment faire paiement sur fees et gages en garderobe et as messegiers dedienz la terre".<sup>(2)</sup> These messengers, going mainly on journeys within

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(1) Red Book of the Exchequer e. Hall 1896 III pp.924-5

(2) Ibid. III pp.926-7.

the realm were the nuncii and cursores garedrobe, and for these the wardrobe was still to be responsible. They were to receive from that department a lump sum in advance, and to account for their expenditure of it immediately upon their return, "so that the account of the wardrobe be not delayed". The reformers considered that payment for these comparatively short journeys not involving the expenses of a passage by sea, might be safely left to the wardrobe. The messenger would presumably return within a short period and account at once for the money allowed to him. There was no reason why this should delay the presentation of the complete wardrobe account at the exchequer, and so no attempt was made to remove these expenses from the competence of the wardrobe. The first effect of the ordinance, therefore, was to insist even more strongly than before upon the distinction between regular and special messengers. The second was to include payments to messengers with other expenses of the wardrobe still met by that department, but now regarded as "foreign" because outside the strictly "household" expenses of the wardrobe. This regulation seemed to be one of name only, but its results were important for the messenger service. By placing the expenses of messengers among foreign accounts of the wardrobe, the reformers had altered the whole relationship of the wardrobe to the messengers and such a step was bound to lead



in time to complete exchequer control.

The separation of nuncii accounts from those expenses of the wardrobe which were now to be considered as specifically "household" expenditure, is seen in the immediate adoption of a new system of recording wardrobe expenses.<sup>(1)</sup> All foreign accounts were separated from the rest and entered in special books or rolls of daily foreign expenses. These new rolls replace, in effect, the liber cotidianus. Four main headings are found on these rolls; alms, necessaries, gifts, and nuncii; the sums spent on each being entered under the day of the month. To discover the total amount now spent by the wardrobe on messengers, therefore, it is necessary to pick out the relevant items for every day: in some, but by no means all, of the rolls, this has been done already by the accounting clerk, and a total entered at the end of the roll. For convenience, too, the total expenses of each day under these heads were entered on separate rolls giving only the summary of wardrobe payments, both household and foreign. This new system of account began immediately after the promulgation of the 1324 ordinance.<sup>(2)</sup> Thus from 1324 onwards, items of expenditure which had formerly been as

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- (1) See J. H. Johnson "The system of Account in the Wardrobe of Edward II", in Trans.Royal Hist.Soc. 4th series XII 75-104. (1929)
- (2) The first example covers the period up to July 1234. (E.A.379/19)

essentially a part of wardrobe accounts as the money spent on the king's kitchen, were treated as foreign, expenses incurred by the wardrobe, but not domestic, and therefore outside its real scope. This suggests a new discrimination between the king as sovereign and the king in person, directly opposed to the idea of kingship implicit in the whole household system. Formerly no distinction had been drawn between state and domestic matters: the various departments of state had all grown out of the household, and the expenses of the kitchen had been paid through the same department that under Edward I had conducted the king's entire Welsh and Scottish campaigns. In the division of wardrobe expenditure into these two categories, 'household' and 'foreign', we see the next stage, the growth of the idea that the sovereign's expenses may be distinguished from those of the king, and state expenditure from that of the privy purse. Such a theory was implied, though not consciously laid down in 1324, when the expenses of messengers in court were regarded as 'household', and their travelling expenses out of court as 'foreign' expenditure, even though both payments were still made through the same department.

Thus the ordinances and reforms of 1318-1324, intended primarily as a means whereby the presentation of the accounts could be hastened, had other and more far-reaching effects. The

York ordinance, by its insistence on the wardrobe as a household department principally concerned with the domestic side of court life, restricted the sphere of that department, and consequently its need for the services of messengers. Only in so far as the wardrobe was more than a domestic office could it employ or control a messenger service. The exchequer ordinance weakened wardrobe control over the messengers in another direction. Without intending to interfere with the control of the regular messengers, the ordinance, by its inclusion of nuncii expenses among the foreign expenditure of the wardrobe, destroyed the intimate connection which had hitherto existed between the king's nuncii and cursores and the wardrobe. So the arrangements made in 1324 could not be permanent, and the reforms foreshadow, even if they do not actually initiate, the final change from wardrobe control to control by the main financial department of the state - the exchequer.

(3) The decline of the wardrobe, and the transference of the messengers to the control of the exchequer.

We may therefore take 1324 as the date which marks the commencement of the wardrobe's decline, and of a new period in the history of the messenger service. It was not, however

for some years that the tendencies, noticed 1324, took effect, and the figures for nuncii in wardrobe accounts fluctuate from political rather than administrative reasons during the first decade of the following reign. Thus, while the last year of Edward II had raised the wardrobe's expenses on messengers to £69.14.8. as a result of the renewed war with Scotland, the figures for 1328 show a most significant drop following immediately on the conclusion of peace by Isabella and Mortimer. During that year, only £18.16.6<sup>(1)</sup> was spent on messengers. The coup d'etat of 1330 which gave Edward III real power is marked by an increase in expenditure to £40.17.11,<sup>(2)</sup> an increase probably due to the unsettled state of the country, and the reiteration of orders and instructions by a weak government. The continuance of this fairly high expenditure must be attributed first to Edward's personal extravagance, and second to his projected conquest of Scotland, which led him to renew the Scottish war in 1333. Tout noticed an increase in general wardrobe expenditure during the year which saw the first campaign and the victory of Halidon Hill;<sup>(3)</sup> and the same increase is found in the titulus de nunciis. Less than £30 had been spent on this item during 1332<sup>(4)</sup> but expenditure

(1) 21 August 1328-23 September 1329 (Enrolled accounts (W. & H.) No.2 m.30)

(2) January 1330-January 1331 (Ibid. m.32)

(3) Tout Chapters IV, 98.

(4) £28.11.1. (Enrolled Account (W. & H.) No.2 m.34 d.)  
The figure of £49.7.4 shown on the graph for 1331-2 is made up of expenses for Jan.1331-26 October of the same year; and 16 Oct.1331-Jan.1332. (Enrolled account (W. & H.) No.2 m.32, and Chancellor's roll No.125 m.41.)

could not be maintained at that level during wartime, and figures in the enrolled accounts rose steadily during the next years. Not only were more messengers required during the preparations for and the prosecution of a campaign, but the renewal of war brought the wardrobe to the fore once again as the natural instrument for the administration and organisation of such an expedition. Thus in 1333 and 1334, the wardrobe accounted for the expenditure of £53.0.1,<sup>(1)</sup> a figure higher than any since 1325; for the 37 months between 31 July 1334 and 31 August 1337, the total given in the enrolled accounts is £147.8.4.<sup>(2)</sup> which represents an average of £68.8.0 for a single year. This is but another corollary to the swollen receipts of both exchequer and wardrobe for these years, and such expenses were necessitated not only by the Scottish war but also by the negotiations carried on at the same time in preparation for the war in France. Under these circumstances, an exceptional burden was thrown upon the whole administration, and no difficulties were raised by the exchequer when the wardrobe again became essential to the workings of a wartime government.

The opening of war in France sent nuncii expenditure shooting up again. As under Edward I each fresh expedition had

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- (1) For 29 September 1333-30 July 1334 £53.0.1 is the figure given in the enrolled account (W. and H.) No.2 m.35. In the wardrobe book E.A.387/9 the same sum is given for 1334-5.
- (2) Enrolled account (W. and H.) No.2 m.36.

been marked by a rise in wardrobe expenses in connection with the messenger service, so in 1338 and 1339, the commencement of war is plainly shown by the figures under this head in the accounts. For 1337-8, £62.7.3 was accounted for by the wardrobe as messengers expenses, <sup>(1)</sup> and for 1339 the very large sum of £118.7.2. <sup>(2)</sup> The wardrobe's stay in the Netherlands proved particularly expensive, and the complicated negotiations carried on between Edward and the various towns and magnates of Flanders increased the king's expenditure on messengers to a sum only just short of the highest figure for nuncii expenses ever reached by the wardrobe. The following year saw a second expedition abroad, but expenditure in general was on a far more restricted scale and nuncii items totalled only £44.16.11 - with the exception of the naval victory of Sluys, Edward's military operations during that year were brief and comparatively unimportant. He had difficulty in obtaining money while abroad, and this precluded any notable undertaking after the failure of his siege of Tournai.

From this disappointing campaign abroad, Edward returned home in November 1340 determined to avenge his failure on his ministers. The king's anger against Archbishop Stratford

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(1) E.A.388/5; Enrolled account (W. and H.) No.2 m.37.  
 (2) The total spent between 12 July 1338 and 27 May 1340 was £306.0.19: this was made up of £61.12.6 for 12 July 1338 to 24 January 1339; £118.7.2 for 25 January 1339 to 24 January 1340; and £44.16.11 for 25 January to 27 May 1340.  
 (Misc.Bks.Exch.T. of R. No.203)

and other important officials provided an excuse for the court party to introduce changes of personnel and method into the administration and thus led to "the greatest ministerial crisis of the reign".<sup>(1)</sup> Edward's attempted despotism, however, was of short duration, for the parliament which met at Easter 1341 supported Stratford rather than the king, and obliged him to accept certain demands put forward by the parliament and the leading clerics, which reflect very strongly both the thought and language of 1311.<sup>(2)</sup> Though the king had no intention of keeping his promises, and seized the first opportunity to declare the statutes null, the crisis of 1341 had several important results. Again the unity of the administration had been emphasised, and a "constitutional" theory asserted which left no opening for a royal despotism exercised through the household offices. The long struggle between the curialists and the opposition had ended in the victory of the latter and the supremacy of the chancery and exchequer over the wardrobe was now assured. Edward might repudiate the restraints imposed by the statutes, but he could not restore the household to its former position in the administration.

The effects of this crisis on the wardrobe, and in particular on the wardrobe's messenger service must now be considered. They are clearly visible during the keepership of William Edington

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(1) Tout Chapters III, 118.

(2) Tout Chapters III, 126-7 and 132.

who received office in November 1341 and held it until April 1344. His term of office constituted for the wardrobe the most critical years of the reign, and decided its future sphere of influence. Presumably as an indirect result of the opposition's triumph, the wardrobe was from 1341 subjected even more strictly <sup>to</sup> ~~the~~ exchequer control, and all opportunity for independent action debarred. Even in times of war, when the wardrobe had usually found itself in complete control of the preparations for campaigns and of the conduct of the expeditions, the household department was in future to act only by authority of the exchequer. The wardrobe's role in later wars was to be that of paymaster and treasury to the forces. It was never to be in any sense the rival of the exchequer. In time of peace, the wardrobe's part was to be even more insignificant. Its sphere was to be strictly confined to the household, and the duties of its officers were henceforth to be purely domestic. This last step in exchequer ascendancy is attributed by Tout <sup>(1)</sup> to the influence of Edington himself, who intended to regularise the administrative machinery, and end the dual control by exchequer and wardrobe which had been a feature of the early fourteenth century. The ordinances of the household and the exchequer had left some anomalies and ambiguities which were now to disappear, and be replaced by a system in which the exchequer was to play not merely the most important but the

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(1) Tout Chapters IV, 113.



dominant part.

The application of this policy to the wardrobe is well illustrated by its effects on the messenger service, still in 1340 under full wardrobe control. For the first year of Edington's keepership, November 1341 to November 1342, he accounted for £50.15.3.<sup>(1)</sup> For the following year, when his new policy had taken effect, Edington answered for £13.8.8 as the whole wardrobe expenditure upon messengers for the year, and between November 1343 and April 1344 only £5.11.7 was spent on this item in the wardrobe. Nor was this decrease in wardrobe expenditure on messengers temporary. The figure for the three and a half years of Wetwang's keepership as given in the enrolled account was £94.8.10½<sup>(2)</sup> - that is approximately £27 for each year. For the twenty months from November 1347 to July 1349<sup>(3)</sup> wardrobe expenditure on nuncii totalled £13.14.6 - that is approximately £8 for a single year. This very low expenditure continued until the end of the reign. Wardrobe accounts for the expenses of messengers never rose above £30 and only reached that figure once, during the year 1366-7.<sup>(4)</sup> This is the more remarkable since a state of war existed during the

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- (1) The enrolled account gives the figure £69.15.6 which covers the entire period of Edington's keepership. (Enrolled account (W. & H.) No.2 m.40 d.) The amounts spent during each separate year may be obtained by adding up the items given in the detailed wardrobe account for the same period (Misc.Bks.Exch.T.R. No.204)
- (2) Enrolled account (W. & H.) No.2 m.41 and E.A.390/12 f.45
- (3) Enrolled account (W. & H.) No.2 m.42.
- (4) Enrolled account (W. & H.) No.4 m.10 d.

greater part of this time, and the number of messengers employed by the king increased rather diminished between 1340 and 1360. In addition, the cost of maintaining the messenger service should now have been higher than in previous reigns, for the accounts show that the rates of expenses allowed to messengers had been increased considerably to meet the rise in prices and the reduction in <sup>the</sup> value of money. We should therefore expect to find the total expenses of the messenger service greater not less during the second half of the reign, and it is obvious that the sums accounted for by the wardrobe officials do not represent the king's entire expenditure on nuncii.<sup>(1)</sup>

The following figures may be compared with those given on page 122 for the latter years of Edward I.

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(1) Mr. G. P. Cuttino in his unpublished thesis "English Diplomatic Administration 1259-1329" suggests that the apparent decline in wardrobe expenditure on regular nuncii may be due to two causes, first that the earlier accounts included a certain number of envoys' expenses, and secondly that ambassadors abroad frequently paid the expenses of messengers sent to them with letters, such expenses being accounted for in the envoy's account and not appearing on the wardrobe account for regular messengers. These suggestions are not tenable on further examination. Envoys' accounts were only included with the expenses of nuncii for certain years of Henry III's reign and a prolonged search through the particulars of envoys' expenses shows that though solemn envoys not infrequently hired professional messengers while abroad, they seldom made use of nuncii or cursores regis. In 379 parcels of expenses, only 3 cases occur. These were in 1304-5 (John de Benstede's expenses E.A.309/9); 1315-6 (Thomas of Cambridge's expenses E.A.309/22) and 1345-7 (Ivo de Clinton's expenses E.A.312/19)

	£	s	d	
1351-2	11	10	4	(E.A.392/5)
1353-4	9	19	6	(E.A.392/12)
1358-9	28	5	0	(Enrolled Account (W. and H) No.4 m.3) 11 months.
1359-60	10	9	10	(Ibid.m. 3d.)
1360-1	4	3	0	(Ibid. m. 5d.)
1361-2	9	4	11	(Ibid. m. 7d.)
1362-3	8	0	4	(Ibid. m. 7d.)
1364-5	17	7	0	(Ibid. m. 10 ) 14 months
1366-7	30	17	3	(Ibid. m. 10d.)
1367-8	10	0	14	(Ibid. m. 11 )
1369-72	10	18	4	(Ibid. m. 19 )
1372-3	18	2	4	(E.A.397/5)

So unimportant was the wardrobe's expenditure on nuncii after 1370 that in enrolling the total sums spent, the accounting clerks reverted to the procedure of a century before, and added these to the money spent on envoys, gifts, and miscellaneous expenses. No details are found on any of the rolls of foreign accounts from 1370 to the end of the reign, and none are given for the early years of Richard II. <sup>(1)</sup> This alone would indicate how completely the wardrobe has lost its former control over such expenses, and how much the importance and dignity of the wardrobe

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(1) Enrolled accounts (W. and H.) No.4 m.21 and 22. (1369-74);  
Enrolled accounts (W. and H.) No.5. (1375- )

had declined under Edward III.

It is clear, therefore, that after 1342 the wardrobe was no longer the main paymaster for the messenger service, though it still controlled a portion of the expenses of nuncii. Most of the money due to servants of the king outside the regular service who had taken letters was paid through the wardrobe and the titulus de nunciis in most later wardrobe books is filled almost completely with such entries. Of the small sums paid out by the wardrobe under this title, very little went to regular messengers, either nuncii or cursores. In an account for 1366-8 which gives wardrobe expenditure on nuncii from 1 February 1366-31 January 1367<sup>(1)</sup> 38 men were paid for messages taken for the king. Of these, one man was called "curroure" and two others may possibly be nuncii, but of the expenses of the regular messenger service there is no trace. In the account of the controller of the wardrobe for 1369-1370<sup>(2)</sup> the section of the book entitled nuncii consists of two entries relating to John Troll, probably a cursor<sup>(3)</sup> and one further entry in favour of the king's almoner who had been sent out of court on some business for the king. Low as are the sums accounted for by the wardrobe under the heading nuncii, they do not show how very little that department was

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(1) E.A.396/2

(2) E.A.396/11

(3) He was called cursor de hospicio regis in 1375 (issue Roll No.457 m.21)

in reality spending on the messengers who had formerly depended on it, and had been known as nuncii and cursores garderobe.

The wardrobe books themselves indicate by their size and form the decrease which had taken place in wardrobe business. Whereas under Edward I and Edward II the titulus de nunciis occupied in an average book between 6 and 8 folios closely written, the number of folios necessary in the wardrobe books of Edward III decreases just as the total sums spent diminish; they are no longer so closely written, and the margins left on either side are considerably larger. The comparative size of wardrobe books under Edward I and Edward III may be shown thus:

1296-7	8 folios (Add.MS.7965)	1335-6	5 folios (Nero C VIII)
1300-1	6 folios (Add.MS.7966)	1342-3	4 folios (Misc.Bks.Exch. T.R.204)
1303-4	7 folios (Add.MS.8835)	1353-4	1½ folios (E.A.392/12)
1305-6	9½ folios (E.A.369/11)	1359-61	½ page (E.A.296/2)

At the same time, the rolls of messengers' expenses kept by the wardrobe became nothing more than memoranda of letters sent out and sums due. The actual payments were all made by the exchequer, for whose benefit these rolls were compiled. A record of messengers' expenses for 1365, for instance, is headed "Fait a remembrer de diverses lettres de prive seal directe as diverses viscomites as toutes partes Dengleterre le xviiij iour de

Decembre lan xxxix<sup>(1)</sup> and is composed of columns of messengers' names against which are set the sheriffs to whom the letters were to be taken and the estimated cost of the journey to serve as a guide to the exchequer in paying out the sums required. Many of these lists are very carelessly written and from their appearance were obviously not intended as a final statement of account.

The sudden decline in wardrobe expenditure on messengers is paralleled in the exchequer accounts by an equally sudden rise. Up to 1340, the sums spent directly on messengers by the exchequer had been very slight: between 1313 and 1333 they had twice risen above £10, and from 1334 to 1341 they had generally remained between £20 and £30 in the year.<sup>(2)</sup> The figure for 1341-2, corresponding with the first year of Edington's keepership was £24.5.1.<sup>(3)</sup> But for the following year, when wardrobe expenditure on nuncii fell to £13.8.8, the exchequer accounted on its issue rolls for payments to messengers totalling £66.6.5½,<sup>(4)</sup> In 1343-4 the exchequer spent £82.13.5 on messengers<sup>(5)</sup> and, with fluctuations due to the general political situation, the subsequent

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- (1) E.A.315/1. Similar memoranda will be found in E.A.315/33 (1369); 316/3 (1370-1385); and 317/40 (temp.Edw.III)
- (2) See the complete list on p.179 which shows the total sums accounted for by the exchequer as spent on messengers throughout the period.
- (3) Issue rolls Nos.321, 326.
- (4) Issue rolls Nos.327,328.
- (5) Issue rolls Nos.331,334.

figures for messenger expenses in the exchequer remained at this level. From 1342 until the end of the reign the total expenditure of the exchequer on messengers, as shown by an addition of the separate items given in the issue rolls, was well above £50 a year except for the three years 1348, 1363, and 1365. The siege of Crecy and the Scottish invasion in 1346-7 raised messenger expenses for 1347 to £91.5.7½<sup>(1)</sup> and in spite of the Black Death and the pause in the French war, the sums recorded in the issue rolls did not show any permanent reduction. By 1349-50 they were again at £92.6.4<sup>(2)</sup> and during the following year had risen to the very high total of £128.11.2<sup>(3)</sup> a figure never reached by the wardrobe even in time of war. The Black Prince's campaigns in 1355 and 1356 are marked by even greater expenses - £131.18.8½<sup>(4)</sup> for the first year, and £131.14.½<sup>(4)</sup> for the second. This was to prove the peak of nuncii expenses during the reign. Though still high, the totals of exchequer expenditure on messengers became more moderate, especially after the peace of Bretigny in 1360. They did not rise again until 1368, when, as a result of the Black Prince's campaign in Spain, the exchequer was again paying out £117.12.5<sup>(5)</sup> to messengers in the course of a single year. For 1371-2 too, the figures given in the accounts

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- (1) Issue rolls Nos.340,341  
 (2) Issue rolls Nos.350,353  
 (3) Issue rolls Nos.355,358  
 (4) Issue rolls Nos.378,380: Nos.382,386,387.  
 (5) Issue rolls Nos.436,438.

totalled £103.3.5<sup>(1)</sup> and for the three years 1373, 1374, and 1375 they came to £104.3.7; £110.9.2; and £128.7.8 respectively.<sup>(2)</sup> These examples illustrate the increased expenditure incurred during the latter years of the reign. They show too how completely the exchequer had now taken over responsibility for the expenses of the regular messenger service, and ousted the wardrobe from its former position as paymaster and controller of the king's nuncii and cursores.

The entries relating to messengers which are thus found scattered among the entries in the later issue rolls of Edward III, refer mainly to the king's regular service of nuncii and cursores. Though there are a few references to messengers of the exchequer and additional hired letter-carriers, the bulk of the entries undoubtedly relate to men in the ordinary service, who would formerly have come under the control of the wardrobe and been described as wardrobe messengers. They still received that title occasionally,<sup>(3)</sup> though more and more rarely as time went

(1) Issue rolls Nos.444,446.

(2) Issue rolls Nos.451,455: Nos.456,457: Nos.459,460.

(3) Twelve cursores de garderobe domini regis received expenses for waiting in London in July 1349 (Issue roll No.348); and again in July 1352 (Issue roll No.364); William Clerk cursor de garderobe domini regis was given 26/8 of the king's alms in 1353 (Issue roll No.368); various cursores "tam de garderobe domini regis quam de scaccario" waited in London in July 1354 (Issue roll No.374); gifts were made to ten cursores de garderobe et de scaccario in 1355 (Issue roll No.378); and to eight cursores de garderobe domini regis in 1356 (Issue roll No.386). These are the only instances which I have noticed, and in several the description is intended to differentiate these cursores from those attached to the exchequer.



on, and in many cases the messengers who now received their wages and expenses from the exchequer were the same individuals who had previously taken them in the wardrobe, and who continued to serve the king in spite of the administrative change. There can be no question of a new messenger service started in 1341 on a different basis. The continuity of personnel in the messenger service which can be traced from 1200 at least was not broken when the control over the messengers passed from the wardrobe to the exchequer, and lasted at least until the end of our period. It is probable that further investigation would show the same continuity in existence through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and would link up the medieval nuncii and cursores with the seventeenth century messengers in ordinary whose names have been traced by Major Wheeler-Holohan.

Professor Tout, remarking on the meagreness of the titulus de nunciis in the later wardrobe accounts, suggested that, unless the details of messenger expenditure were concealed under some ambiguous term, "the inference is that the messengers bearing letters under the great and privy seals received henceforth<sup>(1)</sup> their wages and expenses elsewhere than from the wardrobe". The issue rolls leave no room for doubt on this point: they show most conclusively that the department which paid and therefore controlled the messenger service during the second part of

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(1) Tout Chapters V, 194.

Edward III's reign was the exchequer, and thereby throw light, not only on the history of the king's messengers, but also on that of the wardrobe in its decline.

25 Oct. 1241-25 Oct. 1242	£140	4	5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> <sup>a</sup>	Pipe roll no 98
28 Oct. 1242-28 Oct. 1243	£255	13	2 <sup>b</sup>	
25 Oct. 1243-28 Oct. 1244	£397	3	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> <sup>b</sup>	
28 Oct. 1244-14 Feb. 1245	£97	5	9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> <sup>b</sup>	
14 Feb. 1245-30 Sept. 1249	£104	3	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	Pipe roll no 99
30 Sept. 1249-14 Feb. 1252				
17 Feb. 1252-28 Oct. 1252	£49	7	0 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	Pipe roll no 100
24 June 1252-24 June 1253	£65	16	1	Pipe roll no 101

No accounts for June 1240-Oct. 1241

25 Oct. 1241-28 Oct. 1242	£140	4	5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> <sup>a</sup>	Pipe roll no 98
28 Oct. 1242-28 Oct. 1243	£255	13	2 <sup>b</sup>	
25 Oct. 1243-28 Oct. 1244	£397	3	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> <sup>b</sup>	
28 Oct. 1244-14 Feb. 1245	£97	5	9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> <sup>b</sup>	
14 Feb. 1245-30 Sept. 1249	£104	3	7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	Pipe roll no 99
30 Sept. 1249-14 Feb. 1252				
17 Feb. 1252-28 Oct. 1252	£49	7	0 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	Pipe roll no 100
24 June 1252-24 June 1253	£65	16	1	Pipe roll no 101

No accounts for June 1253-Jan. 1254

a Includes expenses of solemn envoys as well as details.  
 b Added by me.

WARDROBE EXPENDITURE ON MESSENGERS.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Source.</u>
19 May 1234-28 Oct. 1234	£16. 3. 4	Pipe roll no.79
28 Oct.1234-28 Oct. 1235	£58.13. 1	
28 Oct.1235- 3 May 1236	£24.14. 8½	
3 May 1236-27 Oct. 1236	£67.12.10	Pipe roll no.80
28 Oct.1236-27 Oct. 1237	£119.18. 3½ <sup>o</sup>	Pipe roll no.81
28 Oct.1237- 6 Feb. 1238	£9.16. 9½	
6 Feb.1238-27 Oct. 1238	£183. 9. 2 <sup>o</sup>	Pipe roll no.83
28 Oct.1238-27 Oct. 1239	£152.17. 3 <sup>o</sup>	
28 Oct.1239- 4 Feb. 1240	£82.18. 8½ <sup>o</sup>	
No accounts for Feb.1240-Oct.1241.		
28 Oct.1241-28 Oct. 1242	£140. 4. 5½ <sup>o</sup>	Pipe roll no.88
28 Oct.1242-28 Oct. 1243	£256.13. 2 <sup>o</sup>	
28 Oct.1243-28 Oct. 1244	£397. 2. 7½ <sup>o</sup>	
28 Oct.1244-14 Feb. 1245	£97. 5. 9½ <sup>o</sup>	
14 Feb.1245-30 Sept.1249 &	£811. 3. 7½	Pipe roll no.95
30 Sept1249-14 Feb. 1252		
17 Feb.1252-28 Oct. 1252	£49. 7. 0½	Chancellor's roll no.45
24 June1252-24 June 1253	£65.16. 1	E.A. 308/1

No accounts for June 1253-Jan.1255.

- o Includes expenses of solemn envoys as well as nuncii.  
o Added by me.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Amount.</u>	<u>Source.</u>
10 Jan.1255-30April 1256	£209.14.0 $\frac{1}{2}$ <sup>8</sup>	Pipe roll no.99
No accounts for 30 April 1256-28 Oct. 1257.		
28 Oct.1257-25 July 1261	£763.4.0 $\frac{1}{2}$ <sup>8</sup>	Enrolled account (W.and H.) no.1
25 July 1261-31 Dec.1264	£571.0.5 <sup>8</sup>	Pipe roll no.113
1 Jan. 1265-6 Aug. 1265	£13.5.10	Pipe roll no.114 E.A. 308/2
6 Aug. 1265-3 March 1268	£790.2.5 <sup>8</sup>	Pipe roll no.115
4 March 1268-4 Nov. 1272	£469.8.7 $\frac{1}{2}$ <sup>8</sup>	Pipe roll no.116
4 Nov.1272- 18 Oct.1274	£295.16.6 <sup>8</sup>	Pipe roll no.121 m22
18 Nov.1274-20 Nov.1275	£44.8.7	Pipe roll no.119 m22
20 Nov.1275-20 Nov.1276	£58.14.8	Pipe roll no.123 m23
20 Nov.1276-20 Nov.1277	£46.10.9	Ibid.& E.A.308/3 m23d
20 Nov.1277-20 Nov.1278	£44.0.1 $\frac{1}{2}$	Ibid.& E.A.308/4
20 Nov.1278-20 Nov.1279	£68.15.1 $\frac{1}{2}$	Pipe roll no.124 m24
20 Nov.1279-20 Nov.1280	£84.13.0 $\frac{1}{2}$	Ibid. m30 d.
Expenses in Wales 1281p5	£70.14.9 £70.19.10	Pipe roll no.136 m31 E.A. 308/5.
20 Nov.1283-20 Nov.1284	£67.4.7	E.A. 308/7
20 Nov.1284-20 Nov.1285	£73.14.0	Pipe roll no.136 m31 E.A. 308/8
20 Nov.1285-20 Nov.1286	£70.17.11	Pipe roll no.136 m31

<u>Date</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Source</u>
20 Nov.1286-20 Nov.1287	£52.8.2	Ibid. m31 d.
20 Nov.1287-20 Nov.1288	£38.12.2	Ibid. m31 d.
20 Nov.1288-20 Nov.1289	£26.10.9 $\frac{1}{2}$ £26.10.10 $\frac{1}{2}$	Pipe roll no.138 m26 E.A. 308/10
20 Nov.1289-20 Nov.1290	£22.17.6 $\frac{1}{2}$	Pipe roll no.138 m26 E.A. 308/12
20 Nov.1290-20 Nov.1291	£82.11.2	Pipe roll no.138 m25
20 Nov.1291-20 Nov.1292	£41.2.7	Pipe roll no.138 m26
20 Nov.1292-20 Nov.1293	£46.17.1	Pipe roll no.139 m6
20 Nov.1293-20 Nov.1294	£79.3.5	Pipe roll no.144 m20
20 Nov.1294-20 Nov.1295	£84.3.7	Pipe roll no.144 m20d.
20 Nov.1295-20 Nov.1296	£102.16.7	Ibid.m22 & Chancellor's roll no.92 m13
20 Nov.1296-20 Nov 1297	£120.15.9 $\frac{1}{2}$	Chancellor's roll no. 92 m13 Add.MS. 7965
20 Nov.1297-20 Nov.1298	£116.14.0	Pipe roll no.144 m22
No account for 1298-1299		
20 Nov.1299-20 Nov.1300	£87.11.1	Lib.Quot.Gard.p.303
20 Nov.1300-20 Nov.1301	£83.8.6	Add.MS.7966. f.128 v. E.A. 360/25 m.1.
No account for 1301-1303		
20 Nov.1303-20 Nov.1304	£87.6.0	Add.MS.8835
No account for 1304-1305		

<u>Date</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Source</u>
20 Nov.1305-20 Nov.1306	£103.8.10	E.A, 369/11

No account for 20 Nov.1306-8 July 1307

EDW.  
II. 8 July 1307-7 July 1308      £120.10.11      Pipe roll no.168

No accounts for July 1308-July 1310

8 July 1310-14 Feb.1311 & 14 Feb.1311-7 July 1311	£62.18.5 <sup>o</sup>	Journals E.A.374/7 & 373/30
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No accounts for July 1311-Sept.1313

29 Sept1313-30 July 1314	£303.14.0 <sup>o</sup>	Enrolled account (W.& H) no.2 m.4
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31 July1313-4 July 1314	£13.8.7	E.A. 375/9
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No accounts for August 1314-November 1314

1 Dec. 1314-7 July 1315	£26.13.2	Pipe roll no.166 & E.A. 376/7
8 July 1315-31 Jan.1316	£47.7.1	
1 Feb. 1316-7 July 1316	£23.2.1	Enrolled account (W.& H) no.2ml d & 17d
7 July 1316-7 July 1317	£85.19.3	Ibid. m.18 & 1 d.
7 July 1317-7 July 1318	£85.17.11	Ibid. m. 1 d. & 18
7 July 1318-7 July 1319	£63.2.0	Ibid. m. 1 d. & 18
7 July 1319-7 July 1320	£63.2.9	Ibid. m.2 & 18 Add.MS. 17362

<u>Date</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Source</u>
7 July 1320-7 July 1321	£55.19.4	Enrolled account (W.&H) no.2 m.2 & 18 Add.MS. 9931
7 July 1321-7 July 1322	£104.8.11	Enrolled account (W.&H) no.2 m 2 & 18
1 May 1321-8 July 1323 & 8 July 1323-19 Oct.1323	£176.1.11	Ibid. m.20
8 July 1323-17 Oct.1323	£18.12.7	Stowe 553
20 Oct.1323-7 July 1324	£17.17.2	Enrolled account (W.&H) no.2 m22
8 July 1324-7 July 1325	£48.4.11	Ibid. m.24 E.A. 381/4
8 July 1325-7 July 1326	£79.14.11	Enrolled accounts (W.&H) no.2 m.26
	£69.14.8	E.A. 381/14
8 July 1326-1 Nov. 1326	£18.9.0	Enrolled accounts (W.&H) no.2 m.26 E.A. 382/6
1 Nov. 1326-16 Jan.1328	£56.19.8	E.A. 382/9
EDW. III. 1 Nov. 1326-20 Aug.1328	£74.9.2	Enrolled account (W.&H) no.2 m.27
25 Jan.1328-19 Aug.1328	£19.7.2	E.A. 383/15 & 20
21 Aug.1328-23 Sept.1329	£18.16.6	Enrolled account (W&H) no.2 m.30
24 Sept.1329-26 Oct.1331	£98.9.9	Ibid. m.32
(24 Sept-25 Jan.1330	£12.14.3	
25 Jan.-25 Jan.1331	£40.17.11	
25 Jan.-26 Oct.1331	£44.16.9)	

<u>Date</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Source</u>
16 Oct. 1331-29 Sept. 1332	£4.11.0	Chancellor's roll no.125 m.41 d
29 Sept.1332-29 Sept.1333	£28.11.1	Chancellor's roll no.125 m.41 d. Enrolled account(W&H) no.2 m.34 d.
29 Sept.1333-30 July 1334	£53.0.1	Ibid. no.2 m.35
31 July 1334-31 Aug. 1337	£147.8.4	Ibid. m.36
6 Oct. 1334-29 July 1335	£53.0.1	E.A. 387/9 (Foreign exp.)
31 Aug. 1337-11 July 1338	£62.7.3	E.A.388/5 & Enrolled account (W&H) no.2. m.37
12 July 1338-27 May 1340 (1338-9 £61.12.6 1339-1340 £118.7.2 1340 £44.16.11)	£306.0.19	Ibid. m.38 & Misc.Bks.Exch.T.R.203
27 May 1340-25 Nov. 1341	£146.4.10	Enrolled account (W&H) no.2 m.40
25 Nov. 1341-11 April 1344 (15 Nov.1341-Nov.1342 £50.15.3 Nov.1342-Nov.1343 £13.8.8 Nov.1343-April 1344 £5.11.7) <sup>o</sup>	£69.15.6	Ibid. m.40 d. & Misc.Bks.Exch.T.R.204
11 April 1344-24 Nov.1347	£94.8.10½	Ibid. m.41 E.A. 390/12 f.45
24 Nov. 1347-5 July 1349	£13.14.6	Enrolled account (W&H) no.2 m.42
5 July 1349-13 Feb. 1350	£7.7.5	Ibid. no.3 m.51
14 Feb. 1350-5 Jan. 1353 & (1351-2 £11.10.4 E.A. 392/5)	£11.10.4	Ibid. no.4 m.1
2 Jan. 1353-23 Feb.1353		E.A. 397/5



<u>Date</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Source</u>
23 Feb.1353-22 Feb.1354	£9.19.6	Ibid. m.2 E.A. 392/12
23 Feb.1354-26 Feb.1357	£127.15.9	Enrolled account(W&H) no.4 m.2
6 Feb.1357-21 Apl.1358	£13.9.10 £8.18.2	Ibid. m. 1 d.
No account April 1358-Dec.1358		
16 Dec.1358-3 Nov. 1359	£28.5.0	Ibid. m.3
3 Nov.1359-7 Nov. 1360	£10.9.10	Ibid. m.3 d.
7 Nov. 1360-13 Nov 1361	£4.3.0	Ibid. m.5 d.
14 Nov.1361-13 Nov.1362	£9.4.11	Ibid. m.7 d.
13 Nov.1362-13 Nov.1363	£8.0.4	Ibid. m.7 d.
No account for Nov.1363-Nov.1364		
13 Nov.1364-31 Jan.1366	£17.7.0	Ibid. m.10 E.A. 394/20
1 Feb.1366-31 Jan.1367	£30.17.3	Enrolled accounts(W&H) no.4 m.10 d. E.A. 396/2
1 Feb.1367-12 Feb.1368	£10.0.14	Ibid. m.11
13 Feb.1368-12 Feb.1369	£13.4.11	E.A. 396/9
13 Feb.1369-27 June 1372	£10.18.4	Enrolled account (W&H) no.4 m.19 E.A. 396/10
27 June1372-27 June 1373	£18.2.4	E.A. 397/5

EXCHEQUER EXPENDITURE ON MESSENGERS

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Source</u>
HENRY III EDW. I	1272-1273	5/-	Issue roll no. 21
	1287-8	£2.13.4	Issue roll no. 57
	1288-9	£1.0.0	Issue roll no. 59
	1290-1	£4.19.3	Issue rolls nos. 66, 67, 70, 71
	1292-3	£2.5.0	Issue rolls nos. 76, 79.
	1293-4	£2.4.6	Issue roll no. 85
	1294-5	£13.7.11	Issue rolls nos. 91, 95, 96, 99
	1298-9	13/6	Issue roll no. 105
EDW. II	1314-5	£7.17.2	Issue rolls nos. 172, 175
	1315-6	£5.2.6	Issue rolls nos. 176, 178, 180
	1317-8	1/-	Issue roll no. 183
	1318-9	£4.18.4	Issue rolls nos. 186, 187
	1319-20	£16.5.6	Issue rolls nos. 189, 191
	1320-1	1/5	Issue roll no. 195
	1321-2	£4.3.3	Issue rolls nos. 197, 198, 199.
	1322-3	£5.5.11	Issue rolls nos. 200, 202, 203
	1324-5	15/-	Issue rolls nos. 211, 213
	1325-6	£6.13.3	Issue rolls nos. 217, 218.
EDW. III	1326-7	£3.17.10	Issue rolls nos. 226, 231
	1327-8	£2.5.1	Issue rolls nos. 232, 239
	1328-9	£1.8.8	Issue rolls nos. 241, 243
	1329-30	15/2	Issue rolls nos. 247, 252
	1330-1	£3.0.4	Issue rolls nos. 255, 256
	1331-2	£8.4.8	Issue rolls nos. 261, 262
	1332-3	£16.8.10	Issue rolls nos. 266, 269
	1333-4	£5.11.7	Issue rolls nos. 274, 276
	1334-5	£52.2.11	Issue rolls nos. 281, 284
	1335-6	£19.4.4	Issue rolls nos. 287, 290
	1336-7	£32.8.7	Issue rolls nos. 293, 295
	1337-8	£18.3.9	Issue rolls nos. 297, 301
	1338-9	£27.9.0	Issue rolls nos. 304, 306
	1339-40	£29.15.5	Issue rolls nos. 307, 313
	1340-1	£11.17.7	Issue rolls nos. 317, 320

<u>Date</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Source</u>
1341-2	£24.5.1	Issue rolls nos. 321, 326
1342-3	£66.6.5 $\frac{1}{2}$	Issue rolls nos. 327, 328
1343-4	£82.13.5	Issue rolls nos. 331, 334
1344-5	£25.11.11 $\frac{1}{2}$	Issue roll no. 335 (Michaelmas term only)
1345-6	£59.10.3	Issue roll no. 336 ( " " " )
1346-7	£52.18.3 $\frac{1}{2}$	Issue roll no. 339 ( " " " )
1347-8	£91.5.7 $\frac{1}{2}$	Issue rolls nos. 340, 341
1348-9	£48.2.5	Issue rolls nos. 344, 348
1349-50	£92.6.4	Issue rolls nos. 350, 353 $\boxtimes$
1350-1	£128.11.2	Issue rolls nos. 355, 358
1351-2	£110.15.9	Issue rolls nos. 359, 364
1352-3	£52.11.2	Issue rolls nos. 365, 368
1353-4	£79.11.1 $\frac{1}{2}$	Issue rolls nos. 373, 374
1354-5	£118.4.3	Issue rolls nos. 376, 377
1355-6	£131.18.8 $\frac{1}{2}$	Issue rolls nos. 378, 380
1356-7	£131.14.0 $\frac{1}{2}$	Issue rolls nos. 382, 386, 387
1357-8	£55.16.5 $\frac{1}{2}$	Issue rolls nos. 390, 393
1358-9	£72.13.5 $\frac{1}{2}$	Issue rolls nos. 395, 396
1359-60	£85.4.10 $\frac{1}{2}$	Issue rolls nos. 400, 401
1360-1	£67.19.7	Issue rolls nos. 406, 407, 408
1361-2	£64.8.9 $\frac{1}{2}$	Issue rolls nos. 409, 410
1362-3	£54.2.10	Issue rolls nos. 412, 415
1363-4	£45.15.3	Issue rolls nos. 417, 419
1364-5	£57.17.6	Issue rolls nos. 421, 422
1365-6	£38.0.8	Issue rolls nos. 425, 427
1366-7	£62.7.10	Issue rolls nos. 429, 431
1367-8	£52.3.3	Issue rolls nos. 433, 434
1368-9	£117.12.5	Issue rolls nos. 436, 438
1369-70	£183.9.9	Issue roll of Thomas de Brantingham ed. Devon
1370-1	£85.11.7	Issue rolls nos. 441, 443
1371-2	£103.3.5	Issue rolls nos. 444, 446
1372-3	£89.13.8	Issue rolls nos. 447, 449
1373-4	£104.3.7	Issue rolls nos. 451, 455
1374-5	£110.9.2	Issue rolls nos. 456, 457
1375-6	£128.7.8	Issue rolls nos. 459, 460
1376-7	£91.19.10	Issue rolls nos. 460, 462

$\boxtimes$  Excluding debts of wardrobe paid by exchequer to messengers.

#### IV. The Messengers in the Household.

The king's messenger service was, as we have seen, controlled successively by chancery, wardrobe, and exchequer. The messengers were given money for the expenses of their journeys and sent on the king's business by each of these departments in turn. Yet notwithstanding these changes, the messengers never ceased to be part of the king's household, under the authority of other officials and entitled to emoluments and privileges not accounted for under the title messengers. It is this side of their organisation to which we must now turn.

Both nuncii regis and cursores garderobe formed part of the king's household, the status of each being distinct. The former belonged to the inner circle of the king's servants, whose duties brought them into contact with the king; they could claim a share in many of the privileges traditionally accorded to members of this household group. The cursores, on the other hand, belonged to the outer circle of the wardrobe; their position was less clearly defined and their privileges fewer. We have already seen that this distinction between nuncii and cursores tended to restrict the number of messengers employed, and to increase the number of couriers.<sup>(1)</sup> The difference is indicated by the titles

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(1) See above p. 102.

applied to them: just as the close connection of the nuncii with the king is emphasised by the name nuncius regis, so the cursores, who did not share this contact, were seldom described as anything but messengers of the wardrobe. Household ordinances, which give no clue to the wages and privileges allowed to cursores garderobe, describe in increasing detail the position and emoluments of the nuncii regis. From these and from the accounts of wardrobe and exchequer we can build up a fairly complete picture of the king's messengers as members of the household.

#### 1) Clothing.

The first privilege claimed by the nuncii regis as members of the household was the yearly allowance of robes and shoes, or a sum of money in place of the actual clothing. It was the king's duty to clothe all the members of his intimate household, from the knights banneret at the top to the serjeants at arms, minstrels, carters, grooms, and messengers who formed the lower ranks of the same group. Under John, and during the minority of Henry III, when the wardrobe had not yet attained a responsible position in the management of the household, the provision of clothing was made either through the chancery, or through the sheriffs by writ of computate. <sup>(1)</sup> A chancery clerk in 1213-4

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(1) Nothing suggests that the chamber was ever responsible for this item of household expenditure.

was ordered to find robes for various members of the queen's household, including her four grooms and her messenger Richard;<sup>(1)</sup> and since the expenses of the king's messengers were controlled by the chancery, it is possible that this department was responsible also for seeing that the nuncii regis were suitably clad. In November 1214, a writ of liberate on the exchequer<sup>(2)</sup> was issued by the chancery in favour of Laurence the messenger for 10/- to buy one robe presumably as his allowance for Christmas. In this instance the purchase of the garment was left to the messenger; but it was more usual for chancery officials to procure the actual clothing by means of a writ of computate addressed to a sheriff. This writ gave the name of the messenger and a description of the clothing required, and was directed to the sheriff with the assurance "et computabitur tibi ad scaccariam". A number of such writs are found enrolled on the close rolls for the minority of Henry III. Thus in December 1219, the sheriff of Kent was ordered to provide one robe of blue for Robert de Alemannia the king's messenger.<sup>(3)</sup> Again during the following year, the sheriff of Oxford was required to find robes for eleven nuncii regis whose names are given in the writ, "scilicet cuilibet illorum tunicam et super-tunicam de russeto vel bluetto sine furrura".<sup>(4)</sup> The same

(1) Rot.Lit.Cl. 1204-1227, I, 155.

(2) Ibid. I, 180.

(3) Rot.Lit.Cl. 1204-1227 I, 410.

(4) Ibid. I, 444.

eleven messengers received robes for Christmas 1221 by the hands of the sheriff of London<sup>(1)</sup> and nine of them were still in the king's service a year later, taking their accustomed robes from the hands of the sheriff of Oxford.<sup>(2)</sup> The bailiffs of Oxford were again called on to supply robes for thirteen nuncii regis in December 1223,<sup>(3)</sup> and these orders recur regularly every twelve-month. One tunic and supertunic a year, given just before Christmas, seems to have been the messengers's usual allowance. The carrying out of the king's commands can be traced on the pipe rolls. Thus the grant of a robe to Robert de Alemannia in 1219 is recorded on the pipe roll for the following year under the account of the sheriff of Kent<sup>(4)</sup> and the thirteen robes provided in December 1223 by the bailiffs of Oxford were allowed for out of the firm of the county on the pipe roll for 1223-4.<sup>(5)</sup>

This method, common during the minority of Henry III, ceased after the wardrobe took control of the messenger service, and became responsible, not for their clothing only, but for the robes and footwear of the whole household. Letters close ordering the provision of clothing by the sheriffs disappeared. Instead, we have the regular twice-yearly figures for wardrobe

(1) Ibid. I, 484.

(2) Ibid. I, 527.

(3) Ibid. I, 580.

(4) Pipe roll No.65.

(5) Pipe roll No.68.

expenditure "pro calciamentis et pro robis" recorded in the complete wardrobe books, and, in addition, the special 'livery' lists of the great wardrobe, which give the names of all persons receiving clothing in the household, and the offices to which this privilege was attached.<sup>(1)</sup> Throughout the period of wardrobe supremacy, the clerk of the great wardrobe was under the control of and accountable to the keeper of the wardrobe, and thus the money spent in his department was in the strictest sense wardrobe expenditure. The nuncii regis figure on all 'livery' lists for this period. The complete accounts show that they were given either the garments and shoes, or an allowance in lieu of them to the value of  $\frac{6}{8}$  each half year for robes, and  $\frac{2}{4}$  each half year for shoes.<sup>(2)</sup> The wardrobe thus expended 18/- a year on clothing for every nuncius in the king's service, or found the messenger clothing to the same value.

A half yearly distribution now became common, and appropriate clothing was supplied for winter and summer to all members of the king's familia. The messengers generally received their robes 'per manus proprias', though on one or two occasions a senior messenger was deputed to collect the garments for all

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- (1) e.g. E.A. 351/17 (1284-5); 351/25 (1286-7); 352/24 (1289-91)  
 (2) Mr. Walker (Haste, Post Haste! p.29) believes that the yearly  $\frac{4}{8}$  'pro calciamentis' was intended to provide, not footwear for the messenger, but horseshoes for the horse. No authority for such a translation can be found either in Ducange s.v. Calciatura or in the Medieval Latin Word List s.v. Calciamentum.



nuncii regis and distribute them to the individuals. Thus in 1301-2, seven messengers took their robes and shoes by the hand of Nicholas Ramage, an old and trusted messenger.<sup>(1)</sup> In 1313 again, Robert de Newenton undertook to collect the garments still in arrears for the year 1310-1311 and distribute them among his companions.<sup>(2)</sup> This arrangement no doubt simplified the task of the great wardrobe clerks, and was a convenience to messengers who at the time of the regular distribution happened to be away on the king's business. No special writs or warrants were issued for this regular distribution of garments and shoes, or their equivalents in cloth or money. The great wardrobe had its own lists of members of the household who were eligible for this provision, and consequently the only warrants for robes which we possess are those authorising the issue of garments in unusual circumstances or to persons not ordinarily entitled to receive them.

Two surviving warrants for the issue of clothing temp.

Edward I:-

(1) For the robes of three nuncii regis (E.A.363/24 No.111)

(2) For a garment for James Flye cokinus garderobe, (E.A. 366/12)

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(1) E.A.361/14

(2) Cotton MS. Nero C VIII f.30 v.

1.

Dicitur  
 Libertatis Carta de Biddonpa Simon de Westmonasterio et Villa de Grobyll Primis Regis Roberti  
 suas pro suis amicis prius libertatis  
 III

2.

BDL 366 / 12

et Beati ad eius  
 Libertatis  
 et Beati regis  
 pro suo servitio

By the end of Edward II's reign, the household officials had begun to vary the traditional distribution of garments to the extent of spending the whole  $1\frac{3}{4}$  allowance per person on one robe instead of two. Cloth was more expensive, and the amount paid out to the great wardrobe officials was still the same. Thus in the ordinance of 1318, the paragraph dealing with the rights and duties of nuncii says that "chescune de eux prendre par an j robe dune seute, ou j marc en deniers, et pur chauceure iiiij s.viiij d."<sup>(1)</sup> Shoes were still given out twice a year under Edward III, and messengers figure among the 329 vallets, nuncii, falconers, packhorsemen and sometarii to whom calciatura "de sesonis hiemali et estivali"<sup>(2)</sup> was allowed in 1338. But though the number of garments and the manner of distributing them might change, the general principle, that messenger of the household ought to share in the household's privileges, was not disputed. First set down in writing in 1318, the custom remained more firmly rooted than before.

Even the transference of general messenger expenses of the direct control of the exchequer did not interfere with the distribution of clothing to them as members of the household. The "description of the household of Edward III" for the years 1344-7

(1) Tout Place of Edward II in English History 2nd. ed. p.272.

(2) E.A.388/5 m.19.

which is taken from a number of wardrobe accounts, still shows the messengers receiving robes and shoes in this capacity:

"Messengers every man by yere 13/4 calciatura or livery" and "Liveries entitled calciatura every man at 4/8 by yere",<sup>(1)</sup> The sum allowed had not increased with the general rise in prices, and it remained the same throughout the remainder of the fourteenth century. Under Edward IV the Liber Niger Domus Regis Edwardi shows that the messengers of the household were still receiving "every man for his clothing wynter and somer yerely, one marc: and eche for his chaunces iiii s.viii d."<sup>(2)</sup>

Absence from court on the king's business did not entail the loss of this allowance. On the messenger's return a special writ ordering payment might be made out in his name, and he could then claim his robes and shoes from the great wardrobe clerks. During the pre-wardrobe period, a sum of money was sometimes given instead, to save the trouble of a special order to a sheriff. Robert le Herberjur, coming from Rome in 1209, was given 10/- by the king with which to buy himself a robe in place of the one he should have received that summer. In the following year, when he again missed the regular distribution, he was allowed 20/- to cover both robes and shoes due at Christmas.<sup>(3)</sup> But after

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(1) Collection of Ordinances p.11.

(2) Ibid. p.48.

(3) Rot. de Lib. pp.112,139.

the wardrobe had established its control over all branches of household activity, the provision of clothing for messengers who had been abroad, was easier. Armed with a letter close from the chancery or a warrant for robes from the wardrobe, the messenger could present himself before the king's tailor or the officials of the great wardrobe, sure of obtaining his perquisites in due time. In 1258, for instance, a robe was ordered by letter close "quia Thomas le Escot nuncius regis nondum habuit robam suam de termino Natalis Domini proximo preterito eo quod tempore illo cum festinatione profectus fuit in nuncium regis ad curiam Romanum".<sup>(1)</sup> The letter is dated 3 May, and such delay was no doubt common, though unpopular. Two years earlier, in December 1256, the same Thomas le Escot and his companion John de Liuns seem to have threatened that they would not leave court again until they had received their accustomed robes for the coming Christmas. As the message was urgent, the king authorised the special issue of robes for these two nuncii by the officials concerned "quamcito ad eos venerint -- ita quod iter illorum pro defectu robarum suarum non retardetur".<sup>(2)</sup> This again was done by letter close. Under Edward I a warrant from the wardrobe was more usual: in 1302-3 a writ directed to the head of the great wardrobe authorised the issue of robes to three

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(1) Cl.R. 1256-1259 p.217.

(2) Cl.R. 1256-1259 p.14.

messengers, Geoffrey de Bardeney, Simon de Westminster, and William Brehull, nuncii regis "prout aliis nunciis prius liberastis".<sup>(1)</sup> Several of these warrants survive, showing that in these instances at least the robes were duly collected by the messenger and the writ surrendered, to find its way among other documents subsidiary to the account, into the safe keeping of the exchequer.

Messengers who joined the king's service after the distribution for the next half-year were not treated so well. They found themselves obliged to wait six months for their first robes and shoes, unless some special exception was made on their behalf. Henry III in 1257 ordered his tailors to provide clothing for Richard de Malmesbury nuncius regis "hac vice de gratia regis speciali ad instanciam Comitisse Leycestria".<sup>(2)</sup> Richard may have been in the service of the countess before he entered that of the king, for many messengers gained their first experience of the road as members of some magnate's household. He was fortunate in having such interest behind him; special grants of this sort were not common, even when the new messenger had previously been employed in a subordinate royal household. Robert Petit and William de Alkham lost their robes for the year

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(1) E.A. 363/24 No. 111. See photost. facing p. 6. following p. 193  
 (2) Cl.R. 1256-1259. p. 61.

and 2/4 of the shoe allowance by joining the king's service after Christmas 1296<sup>(1)</sup> even though one of them, Petit, had been messenger of Edmund the king's brother. This forfeiture of clothing is seldom mentioned in the accounts, but one not infrequently notices that a new nuncius did not receive robes or shoes during the first year for which his name appeared in the titulus de nunciis.<sup>(2)</sup>

In theory, then, every nuncius regis might expect to receive his fixed allowance of clothing twice a year. In practice, however, this regular distribution was not always maintained. The expenses of the Scottish and French wars of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries interfered with the normal routine of the wardrobe, and debts increased, the sums due for clothes and shoes fell into arrears. In this the messengers suffered among the other members of the household. Their traveling expenses had to be met immediately, but the money which they should have received for robes and shoes could and did remain unpaid for years. As a rule, the total amount due would be paid off in instalments, by means of a number of small imprests.

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(1) Add.Ms. 7965 f.42.

(2) Messengers were not the only members of the household who lost their clothing allowances in this way. An entry in the wardrobe book for 1285-1288 mentions John Barret and Vincent Haggard, "qui non habuerunt robas anno isto eo quod tarde venerunt pro calciamentis suis anni presenti". (Misc.Bks.Exch.T. of R. No.201 f.18)

Thus on 28 April 1297 Simon Lowys, then in the king's service, received an imprest of 10/- on his robes of the previous year<sup>(1)</sup> and Ralph de Convers and Arnold Bon nuncii regis were each given one mark on 12 February 1306 as imprest on sums due for robes from several years back.<sup>(2)</sup> Under Edward II and III, delay became still more usual. £4 and 18/8 were owing to John de Wyrsope and other nuncii for clothing and shoes which should have been issued in 1332: a note beside the entry adds that it is now cancelled "quia persolvitur ad receptam scaccarii xxv die Julii anno x", that is, 1337.<sup>(3)</sup> Wardrobe books for the early years of Edward III are full of such entries, and in many cases the money was finally paid, not by the wardrobe itself, but by the exchequer, as in the instance cited above. This is yet another example of the rapid decline in the wardrobe's position and resources. The provision of clothing for the household was part of the domestic duties of the wardrobe with which the reformers of 1318 did not intend to interfere, and yet, with the curtailment of wardrobe revenues and the removal of the great wardrobe from the keeper's control, the wardrobe of the household was unable even to fulfil its obligations on this score without exchequer help. In 1339 a writ was sent to the treasurer and

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(1) Chanc. Misc. 3/48. No.27.

(2) E.A.368/27 f.47.

(3) Add.MS. 35181 ff. 12 v. and 14.



chamberlains ordering them to pay five of the king's envoys without delay the £4.10.0 "in which the king is bound to them for their robes and shoes as may fully appear by a bill in the envoys possession under the seal of Edmund de la Beche sometime keeper of the wardrobe"<sup>(1)</sup>. The issue rolls record many similar payments: in 1351 for instance John de Arches, nuncius hospicii regis,<sup>(2)</sup> received from the exchequer the 26/- due to him for robes and in the following year, when the wardrobe again owed considerable sums to various nuncii for clothing and footwear, the exchequer paid them.<sup>(3)</sup>

Though these garments were provided by the king for his servants as part of his obligation towards them, they cannot be regarded as livery in the strict sense of the word. There is nothing to indicate that the messengers at this date wore a special badge on their clothing, as distinct from the king's arms which they carried on their pixis; or that they had a badge of their own at this time. As messengers of the wardrobe, it is possible though unlikely that they wore the wardrobe's coat of arms. In this connection, it may be worthy of note that on each of the fifty superpellicia given out at Christmas 1340 to members

(1) Cal.Cl.R. 1339-1341 p.7.

(2) Issue roll No.358 m.29.

John Lewer too received the 29/4 due to him in the king's wardrobe for robes and shoes on 12 March 1251 (Issue roll No.355)

(3) Issue roll No.359 m.15.

of the household was embroidered an R (rex) in red silk just below the collar,<sup>(1)</sup> but this early example of livery in the modern sense is unique, and the experiment does not seem to have been repeated. At the same time, it was no doubt convenient for the king to order identical garments for his messengers, and it is possible that the different grades of the household were by tradition assigned slightly different styles of clothing. The phrase "sicut uni de aliis nunciis regis" often found in warrants for the issue of clothing bears out this suggestion; and the materials of which the clothes were made varied very little during our period. The batches of cloth sometimes given to nuncii were nearly always the same in quality and amount.

No description of the garments themselves is given at any point during these two centuries, but Henry III commanded the sheriff of Oxford to provide a tunic and supertunic for each of his eleven nuncii in 1220,<sup>(2)</sup> and this was no doubt the usual dress of a thirteenth century messenger. The nuncius regis of the fourteenth century appears in a drawing on the inside cover of a book of expenses of messengers for 1360.<sup>(3)</sup> He wore a short tunic, buttoning down the front to the waist and up the sleeves to the elbow. A cape with scalloped edge covered his neck and shoulders. Over this he set a hood, ornamented with a band and a

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(1) H. Johnstone "A Year in the life of King Henry III" Church Quarterly Review Vol. XCVII, No. CXCV p. 323 (1924)

(2) Rot. Lit. Cl. 1204-1227 I, 444.

(3) E.A. 309/11. See frontispiece.

tall feather. His shoes were provided with immense spurs, symbols of the speed at which he could travel, and in addition to the shield-shaped pouch for letters that hangs at his belt, he must have carried a sword for self-defence. This was probably the usual costume of a king's messenger, and since the clothing of all nuncii regis was made in one batch by the king's tailor, the tunics at least may well have been identical in cut. Though not constituting livery in its technical sense, these garments and shoes supplied for the king's servants probably had the same effect as a uniform.

The type and colour of cloth used for the messenger's clothes certainly remained much the same throughout our period. Under Henry III, messengers were generally clad either in blue or russet robes, without fur or lambskin. Thus the robe ordered for Robert de Alemannis in 1219 and the robes provided for the nine nuncii in 1222 were to be of blue, while in 1220 and 1221 the sheriff was given a choice of either blue or russet.<sup>(1)</sup> The pipe roll entries supply details both of colour and price, confirming the purchase of 78 ells of blue cloth for the robes of nuncii in 1223-4 at a cost to the king of 16 pence the ell.<sup>(2)</sup> In this instance, the price had been stipulated in the original letter close, but this was unusual; price and quality were generally

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(1) Rot.Lit.Cl. 1204-1227 I, 410,527,444,484

(2) Pipe roll No.68.

left to the sheriff's honesty and discretion, guided no doubt by custom and supervised by the king's household officials. By 1253 at least it seems to have been sufficient to order clothes "sicut uni de aliis nunciis regis"<sup>(1)</sup> and blue was so commonly ordered for them that it may have become their customary garb. Certainly the robe ordered for a queen's messenger, Robert le Flemming, in 1221 was quite distinctive. The sheriff of London was bidden to procure "unam robam partitam de viridi et burnetta cum furrura de agnis"<sup>(2)</sup> and though particoloured garments for messengers became popular during the early fourteenth century, they were never composed of this particular mixture of cloth and colour.

Later wardrobe accounts sometimes speak of blue material, sometimes of striped, but generally the two sorts were allotted together if the garments were not given out ready made. Thus for the additional robes given in place of wages to messengers between 1296 and 1299. Robert de Manfeld and Robert de Rideware, the prince's nuncii, each received  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ells of ray, or striped material, and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ells of cloth of one colour. In this case the colour of the plain material was definitely stated to be blue. On the other hand, Simon nuncius regine, was given one piece of yellow cloth to make the robes allowed in place of wages in

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(1) Cl.R. 1251-1253 p.346.

(2) Rot.Lit.Cl. 1204-1227 I, 450.

1297, and one piece of pounacius or pounettus, a brightly coloured stuff.<sup>(1)</sup> Robert Petit and nine other messengers also received pounacius about the same time, but instead of the yellow, they were allowed  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ells of Stamford ray.<sup>(2)</sup> This striped material became very popular for messengers' clothing during the reign of Edward I, and remained in favour during much of the fourteenth century. John de Waltham, Nicholas de Offon, and other nuncii in a livery list for 1337-8 were allotted  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ells of "coloured" and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ells of ray,<sup>(3)</sup> while nine nuncii were given for their robes  $3\frac{1}{4}$  ells of "coloured" and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ells of ray in an undated account of the same reign.<sup>(4)</sup> Much of the cloth purchased for the king's household came from Stamford, and was bought by the king's buyers at the annual fair: occasionally the cloth itself was distributed to the messengers, but as a rule the king's tailors made up the garments for the whole household a little before the half yearly allowances were due.

Only a narrow cloth could be woven on medieval looms, and so at least six ells ( $7\frac{1}{2}$  yards) had to be allowed for each set of garments. Six ells of blue or russet was the usual allowance under Henry III, and the price of the cloth was generally 16d.

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- (1) E.A.354/23  
 (2) E.A.354/27  
 (3) E.A.388/3  
 (4) E.A.399/7

an ell, so that the sheriff expended about 8/- a head on the king's messengers. When a single garment was ordered for some individual, the cost was higher: 10/- was given to Laurence the messenger for his robe in November 1214<sup>(1)</sup> and 12/- was spent by the sheriff of Kent on the blue robe for Robert de Alemannia purchased in 1219.<sup>(2)</sup> When the wardrobe undertook the provision of clothing for the whole household, the cost per head was slightly reduced: by buying in bulk it was possible to clothe the king's servants at half a mark apiece for each set of summer or winter garments. 7 ells of cloth was now allowed for messengers, 3½ of each type of material. The plain cloth and the ray given to Robert de Manfield and Robert de Rideware in place of wages were each said to be worth 3/- the ell<sup>(3)</sup> and the 7 ells of ray and blue allowed to John Somer nuncius regis for the same in 1301 were valued at 2/8.<sup>(4)</sup> In the same account, the 7 ells of pounacium and Stamford ray allotted to each of 9 other messengers were reckoned at 2/4½ the ell. These figures, if trustworthy, indicate how much the price of cloth had risen since 1223; certain suspicion must however attach to valuations made for truck payments, and the cloth used for the everyday garments of the king's messengers was not necessarily of the same quality as

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(1) Rot.Lit.Cl. 1204-1227 I,180.

(2) Pipe roll No.65.

(3) E.A.354/23

(4) Add.MS.7966 f.165 and 165 v.

that bestowed on them in lieu of proper wages.

The wearing of fur during the middle ages indicated a certain social status and even the humbler lambskin was as a rule reserved for the higher grades in the king's service. Favoured messengers, however, might be given a garment trimmed with lambskin. The king in 1219 commanded the sheriff of Oxford by letter close "quod visis litteris istis habere facias latori presencium Roberto le Herbejur nuncio nostro unam robam de blu, cum furrura agmina, et computabitur tibi ad scaccarium".<sup>(1)</sup> Nine of Edward III's messengers were allowed a lambskin apiece in addition to their usual garments<sup>(2)</sup> and John Pygot nuncius regis received three pieces of coloured cloth, 3 pieces of ray, and one lambskin in November 1363.<sup>(3)</sup> The ordinary yearly robes of the king's messengers, however, were not trimmed in any way; and the usual phrase "sine furrura" is found in nearly all the letters close or warrants for the issue of robes, still extant.

Messengers of the subordinate royal households also received their summer and winter clothing with the other members of the individual household. The nuncii attached to the suites of the queen or the princes were entitled to robes and footwear, and their names appear regularly on the 'livery' lists among the

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(1) Rot.Lit.Cl. 1204-1227 I,409.

(2) E.A.399/7

(3) E.A.394/16 m.6.

accounts of the expenses of these households. The value of the clothing allowed to them was the same as for a nuncius regis, while the style of garment produced by the great wardrobe for these messengers was probably similar to that supplied for the messengers of the king's household. The only detailed description of the clothing of a queen's messenger occurs in the letter close already quoted, which authorised the purchase of a parti-coloured robe of green and burnet for Robert le Flemming, messenger of the queen mother, Isabella of Angouleme, in 1221.<sup>(1)</sup> This was to be trimmed with lambskin, and lambskin was also ordered for the Easter robe given in 1332 to Gilbert, messenger of queen Philippa.<sup>(2)</sup> A messenger in the household of the king's brothers received for his robes for Christmas 1311 6½ ells of ray and one lambskin;<sup>(3)</sup> and among the household expenses of queen Isabella in 1358-9 is the cost of supplying Thomas her messenger with 3 ells of ray at 6/- and one lambskin at 2/- "per ipsum emptis pro tunica sibi facienda ex precepto regine iv die Februarii".<sup>(4)</sup> Robert Long, queen's messenger, was to have "unam bonam robam" for the good news which he brought to the king in 1256 of the recovery of his daughter Katherine<sup>(5)</sup>

(1) Rot.Lit.Cl. 1204-1227 I, 450.

(2) Cotton MS. Galba E.111 f.188

(3) E.A.374/19

(4) Cotton MS. Galba E.XIV f.45 v.

(5) Cl.R. 1254-1256 p.288.

these advantages. See D. Wilkinson The Messenger under Edward III - (Manchester Historical Society 33.51, 1927) p. 97



but we are not told in what particular respect the excellence of the garment was to consist. As with nuncii regis, so with the messengers of the queen's household clothing was frequently in arrears. John de Noyon received his allowance for the two past years in 1316<sup>(1)</sup> and references of this sort are common under Edward II and Edward III.

Messengers of the exchequer also received robes, but not from the household. Laurence the usher was given cloth of the exchequer for the clothes of his messengers once a year as part of the elaborate system of obligation and privilege attached to his sergeanty.<sup>(2)</sup> Presumably the messengers of the exchequer continued to receive their accustomed clothing after the serjeanty system had been replaced, as far as letter-carrying was concerned, by the newer methods already in use in the wardrobe, but I can find no confirmation of this, and indeed very little to illustrate the position and wages of these nuncii. The chancery messengers may also have received robes, and been treated as members of the household of chancery, occupying a position there not unlike that of the king's messengers in the royal household,<sup>(3)</sup> but again there is no positive evidence to

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(1) E.A.376/7 f.125 v.

(2) Cal.Inq. p.m. II, 317-8 (No.528)

(3) Chancery clerks under Edward I and II were accustomed to receive robes, food, and lodging, in addition to their fees. Later the privilege of lodging fell into abeyance. But it is not clear whether nuncii cancellarie ever shared these advantages. See B. Wilkinson The Chancery under Edward III - (Manchester Historical Series No.51,1929) p.87

support this.

The cursores or cokini employed by the king, on the other hand, were not accustomed to receive clothing as a part of their wages. They did not figure on the wardrobe's lists "pro calciamentis et prorrubis", and on the rare occasions on which they received garments, they did so by special gift from the king. Thus in 1257 John de Karliol, cursor sequens cancellariam regis, was given a robe of the king's gift "qualem nuncii regis percipiunt" because he had been in Wales with the king's expedition.<sup>(1)</sup> Four other cursores were also given robes "de gracia regis" on the same occasion. In 1303-4, a special warrant addressed to the clerk of the great wardrobe authorised the issue of robes to James Fleye, cokinus,<sup>(2)</sup> and 8 cursoribus de garderobe domini regis received 14/- in 1357 "de elemosina domini regis pro faciendis robarum eis liberatis de dono regis".<sup>(3)</sup> The robes therefore cost 1/9 apiece to make, and perhaps consisted of a single garment only, and not, as with the nuncii regis, a tunic and supertunic. Even so, the sum is very small compared with the 6/8 allowed for the clothing of the regular messenger every half year, and is yet another indication of the difference in status between them.

(1) Cl.R. 1256-1259 p.166.

(2) E.A.366/12. See photostat facing p.6. following p.193

(3) Issue Roll No.386 m.9.

## 2. Food.

Nuncii regis also enjoyed the privilege of eating in hall whenever they were in "in court" waiting to be sent on the king's errand. <sup>(1)</sup> This privilege probably dates back to the earliest household messengers employed by the crown, but we have no definite information about it until 1300. The household ordinance of 1279 which tells us something about the rights and duties of the superior household officers, does not mention the nuncii regis, much less the cursores garderobe. Up to 1300, however, the right of the nuncii to receive food in hall seems to have been undisputed. Even the cursores and cokini engaged by the wardrobe may have been fed by the king as long as they were retained in his service. But the expenses of the Scottish war, and the increase in wardrobe personnel which resulted, made necessary some restriction on the number of persons entitled to food in hall. At St. Albans, therefore, when the court was on its way north, a statute was promulgated, reducing the numbers of those who were in future to be fed in the household. Its details have been lost, though Professor Tout has

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(1) Papal messengers, as members of the pope's household, were also fed in hall. Baumgarten quotes a household regulation temp. Clement V, "cursores quilibet consuevit recipere unam vidandum de pane cum carnibus, piscibus, ovis, ficibus". (Baumgarten, Aus Kanzlei und Kammer Erörterungen zur Kurialen Hof-und-Verwaltungsgeschichte im XIII, XIV, und XV Jahrhundert p.221)

established the title "de aula non tenenda in hospicio regis"<sup>(1)</sup> and the date on which it came into force, 13 April 1300.

This statute deprived certain ranks in the household of the right to eat in hall and arranged that they should receive instead money through the marshal's department, which drew up a list of all those now entitled to claim such compensation.

Among those affected were the nuncii regis. Their names are found among those of the king's servants to whom wages have been assigned in lieu of board in the Marshal's list for the first months of the new experiment. This list<sup>(2)</sup> is entitled "rotulus de vadiis scutiferorum et aliorum diversorum existencium ad vadia in rotulo marescalli, tam pro expensis equorum et garcionum suorum quam orum suorum incipiens die xiiij Aprilis quo die aula vacavit ex toto per statutum factum apud sanctum Albanum de aula non tenenda in hospicio regis", and this title gives a fair idea of its scope. The roll is in two parts. The first, recording the total vadia familie regis, regime et principis, has notes of the comings and goings of important officials and servants responsible for the domestic side of the household: the second, which gives in its main column the general expenses of the king's household, has at the side the names of the messengers who came and went from court during the first

(1) Tout Chapters II, 49-51.

(2) E.A. 357/28.

months of the new arrangement. Both nuncii and cursores figure here, though the household messengers far out-number the cursores garderobe, and we may conclude that while all nuncii regis had been accustomed to eat at the common tables, only a few of the inferior messengers employed by the wardrobe had shared this privilege. The list shows the length of time spent in court by each messenger from 13 April, when the statute first came into force, until 7 October of the same year.

Thirteen nuncii are mentioned, including one attached to the prince's service and these probably constituted the whole of the king's household messengers: but six cokini also received allowances in lieu of food, and these were certainly not the only cokini in the king's service at the time. Two, Richard de Werrington, and John Whiting, appear on the list for 5 June: the others received no allowance from the marshal until July or October. It seems probable that these messengers had not been retained in the king's service until the later part of the year, and that only while specifically engaged by the king could they claim any food or allowance at all. This is confirmed by an account for the ordinary wages of the household, which shows that there were, in all, ten cokini in court on 5 June; the names are given with the marginal note, "cokini venientes post statutum v die Junii",<sup>(1)</sup> yet of these ten, only two were apparently eligible

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(1) (E.A.365/22)

for the money allowance in place of food which was the right of all nuncii regis. The majority of wardrobe messengers had probably never shared the meals in hall, even while waiting in court for messages.

There seems to have been some question raised as to whether messengers attached to the households of the queen or the princes came within the ordinance if they happened to be at court. The Liber Quotidianus Garderobe notes that Simon nuncius regine was paid his 4½d a day up to 13 April "quo die vacat hic quousque sciatur voluntas ipsius regis".<sup>(1)</sup> This pension had been granted to Simon in 1296 for his good services to queen Eleanor, the king's mother, and was to be paid only so long as Simon remained in court: thus in 1296 he had taken it from 1 May until 17 August, when his services had been required and wages allowed to him up to the end of the year in libro de guerra at 12 d. a day.<sup>(2)</sup> Simon's case therefore was one demanding special regulation, and the king was apparently willing to permit in this instance a departure from ordinary practice. No allowance to Simon the messenger is mentioned on the marshal's list, so we may conclude that the pension in court was continued as before. A similar difficulty arose when the messengers in the household of Edward of Carnarvon came with messages to the king, and were obliged

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(1) Lib. Quot. Gard. p.101.

(2) Add. MS. 7965 f.40.

to wait a few days for the reply. One of the prince's messengers, who had been in court on 13 April, took his wage from the marshal with the rest until the 22nd of the same month, and Robert de Manfeld, another nuncius of Edward of Carnarvon, was treated in the same way until 30 April. He then "vacated" the marshal's list for the future "quia comedit in aula" but he was still to receive the sum due to him for the 21 days already spent at court at the rate of 3d. a day.<sup>(1)</sup> In the prince's own household, of course, the messenger took his wages in lieu of food with the rest.<sup>(2)</sup> Thus in July 1303, Adam de Belesey, the prince's cursor, took 2d. a day "pro vadiis suis et pro expensis per xv dies per quos morabat in curia et extra aula principis".<sup>(3)</sup>

This list compiled by the marshal of the household ends with 7 October, and shows that the new regulations were in force until that date. Indeed, for some members of the king's household, the exclusion from the common meals lasted all through the reign of Edward I. For others the restriction was gradually lifted. The marshal's roll for the first months of 1301, starting on 3 January, and entitled "Visus vadiorum tam militum valletorum de officiis et aliorum de hospicio regis nomine comedencium in aula factus apud Norhampton --" <sup>(4)</sup> gives the names

(1) E.A.357/28 m.2.

(2) Tout, Chapters II, 172.

(3) E.A.363/18. Account of the household of the Prince of Wales.

(4) E.A.359/14.

of knights and valleti to whom wages are assigned according to their rank. But the list contained no nuncii or cokini. There is nothing to suggest that they still received wages for board from the marshal, and no further record seems to have been kept of the days on which they left or returned to court. Their exclusion from hall may have been a temporary measure which was abandoned after Christmas 1300; the trouble taken to ascertain their comings and goings during the seven months covered by the earlier roll, indicates one of the practical difficulties experienced by the marshal's clerks in arranging allowances for such uncertain individuals as messengers. Another difficulty was no doubt the expense. With heavy expenditure for the campaign and debts still unpaid, it was perhaps easier for the king's officials to find food for the household than ready money for wages in lieu of it, and as soon as wardrobe organisation had recovered from the chaos of war, the king was no doubt glad to return by degrees to the old system.

The ordinances of the household of 1318 and 1323 make it clear that nuncii regis were still receiving food in hall under Edward II. They are described as "messagers qi mangeront en sale"<sup>(1)</sup> in contra-distinction, it would seem, to certain other messengers who did not share this privilege. These were probably

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(1) Tout The Place of Edward II in English History 2nd ed. p.272.



f. the cursores garderobe, who are not mentioned in either ordinance, and can have had no share in household life. The statute of St. Albans prevented any move towards bringing the interior wardrobe messengers of Edward I within the scope of the household. The definition of the household contained in the Ordinances of 1318 and 1323 made its constitution yet more rigid, and excluded all other classes of the king's servants from the traditional privileges. The motives for this were twofold, limitation of the scope of the household and reduction of its expenditure; and both would be served by a strict discrimination between the various grades existing within the wardrobe of the household. In the reformed wardrobe of 1318 the cursores certainly did not form part of that inner circle of the king's officials and servants who ate together.

The Liber Niger Domus Regis Edwardi IV provides some interesting details which may be cited here as throwing light on earlier practice. For it is evident that the Liber Niger was drawn up as a description of the existing and traditional state of the household, and did not embody many innovations. By the mid fifteenth century, there were but four messengers who could still claim the right of receiving food in hall, and were still known as the messengers of the household. "These sitt togeder in the halle at theyre meles; --- and if any of them be sicke

in courte, he taketh one loffe, one messe of grete mete, dim' gallon ale".<sup>(1)</sup> This allowance was probably much the same as the usual food provided by the king's cooks for the household, for bread, meat and ale were the basis of all medieval diets. The thirteenth and fourteenth century messenger had also taken his daily loaf, portion of meat, and half gallon of ale as described in the liber Niger of Edward IV; messengers of the Tudor household were to be treated in exactly the same way. The unsystematic medieval administrator never removed any institution because it had been replaced by a newer and more efficient instrument, and the Tudor household, in spite of changes, took over many relics left from previous centuries. Thus there were still four messengers among those members of the household "which have no Bouche of Court but -- dine and sup at the tables hereafter appointed".<sup>(2)</sup> At the same time, the solitary queen's messenger still on the household rolls was listed among those "which have no meate, board, nor bouche of the courte within the household but wages only".<sup>(3)</sup> But at what exact date the nuncii

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(1) Collection of Ordinances p.49.

(2) Ibid. "Ordinances made at Eltham in the XVII the year of King Henry VIII" p.169.

It is interesting to find how long this tradition continued. During the nineteenth century, four of the Messengers in Ordinary were detailed in turn to wait upon the king and were fed and lodged at the palace during their period of duty. (Wheeler-Holohan A History of the King's Messengers p.49)

(3) Collection of Ordinances p.170.

regine lost their ancient privilege of dining in hall, as members of the queen's familia, it is impossible to say.

### 3. Lodging.

The right to lie in the wardrobe was a privilege reserved for the highest wardrobe clerks.<sup>(1)</sup> It was certainly not extended to the cursores garderobe, and probably not even to the nuncii regis. None of the ordinances of the household suggest that lodging was provided for all the king's servants, and the wages paid to the messenger while in court were probably intended to cover this expense. The ordinance of 1318, which is the first to explain in detail the position of the messenger as a member of the familia regis, does not mention lodging among the privileges attached to the office. But it expressly forbade any members of the household "de quele condicioun qil soit" to bring his wife to court,<sup>(2)</sup> a regulation designed to restrict the numbers travelling with the king, and it laid down rules for the allocation of lodgings by the herbergers of the court. Those members of the household "qi ne purra estre herbergez dedeinz lostell en la ville ou le roy, serra herbergez par lez herbergez dedeinz le verge, solonge soun estate -- Et qi les officers

(1) Tout Chapters II, 49.

(2) Tout Place of Edward II in English History 2nd ed.  
p.280.

dostell soient herbergez a pluis apres la court qils purrout estre pretez affaire lour office toutz les foitz qi bosoigne serra; toutz les autrez de la dit mesnee a pluis pres qi la pays purra bonement souffrer".<sup>(1)</sup> This regulation, admirable as were its intentions, can have done little to obviate that wild rush for lodgings described in an earlier reign by Peter of Blois,<sup>(2)</sup> and since the lodgings of such humble members of the household would rarely have been secured in advance, the messengers who waited on the king were probably used to fending for themselves. Even in the fifteenth century, the Liber Niger, which gives more details relating to messenger life than any other ordinance, says nothing of this, though it mentions the fact that "logginge for their horses nygh to the courte"<sup>(3)</sup> was provided. Had lodging been found for the messengers themselves, this ordinance at least would have mentioned the fact. We must therefore suppose that the king was only responsible for the provision of stabling for the messengers' horses and not of accommodation for the men themselves.

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(1) Ibid. p.273.

(2) Quoted by Stretton "The Travelling Household of the Middle Ages" Journal of the British Archaeological Association new series XL, 75-103 (1935), pp.94-5.

(3) Collection of Ordinances p.49.

#### 4. Horses and Grooms.

Stabling, we have seen, was provided for the messengers' horses, as near the court as possible. The horses, however, had to be found by the messenger himself, as part of his equipment. The office of messenger did not carry with it the use of a horse, or even an allowance towards the cost of one; and though the king frequently renewed horses which had been lost in his service, he generally did so as a gift and of his special grace. This is indicated not only by the use of the words "de done o/ regis", but also by the fact that messengers' horses were not, as a rule, valued for compensation. Simon Atteleigh, after the death of his mistress Eleanor of Province, entered the king's service for the war of 1297 as a sergeant at a wage of 12d. a day from 17 August "quo die equus suus fuit appreciatus", and it is clear that hitherto his horse had had no official value set on it. <sup>(1)</sup> Thus the ordinary messenger, if he received anything, was probably glad to take less than the actual market price, and sums as low as 6/8 were sometimes given towards the replacement of horses.

An exception seems to have been made, however, on behalf

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(1) Add.MS. 7965 f.40.

of messengers sent abroad or into a dangerous area. During the Scottish wars, money was often paid to nuncii regis who had been so unfortunate as to lose their mounts while on the king's service, and when a messenger was ordered to proceed "cum summa festinacione, that command seems to have carried with it a promise of compensation. Robert de Newenton, messenger of Edward of Carnarvon, was given 40/- for the detriment which he had suffered by the death of his rouncey in the king's service in Scotland during 1301.<sup>(1)</sup> Under Edward II, when Robert had become a messenger of the king, he was sent with William de Lugteburgh, another nuncius, to Vienne with important letters. They accomplished the journey there and back in 39 days, but lost two hackneys en route "propter summam festinacionem qua iniuncti erant per regem", and were allowed to claim 60/- on this account in their final settlement with the wardrobe authorities.<sup>(2)</sup> Losses abroad were very common. In 1299 Edward I had allowed the payment of thirty shillings to Brehull, a messenger "pro restauracione unius equi sui nigri mortui in partibus transmarinis".<sup>(3)</sup> By 1331, a chancellor's messenger was demanding compensation for horses lost abroad on two journeys undertaken by the king's orders to the extent of £24.4.0 "as he has shown the king that

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(1) E.A.359/6 f.21.

(2) Cotton MS. Nero C VIII f.55.

(3) E.A.355/10.

he went by the king's orders upon two occasions from the city of York to Gascony upon certain of his affairs, and expended the aforesaid sum in horses lost on the journey and in other expenses, as is testified before the king by certain of his subjects to whom he gives credence, without his receiving anything from the king for such expenses".<sup>(1)</sup> The issue rolls show us that the sum was duly paid in instalments.<sup>(2)</sup> Instances of this description could be multiplied, but it will be sufficient to note that to one messenger, Richard Hert, compensation was paid no less than four times. In August 1357, he received 6/8 towards the price of a horse "de dono regis",<sup>(3)</sup> and when in April 1362 he was taking letters of privy seal to the north "pro arduis negotiis dominum regem tangentibus ibidem expediendo" and had the misfortune to lose a horse, he was allowed 20/- compensation by writ of privy seal on the exchequer.<sup>(4)</sup> Again in January 1367, Richard Hert nuncius regis received 40/- as part payment of 6 marks "quas dominus rex sibi mandavit de dono suo in recompensationem duorum equorum per ipsum in partibus borialibus in servicio regis perditorum, per breve de privato sigillo", and another 20/- on the same account were paid during February 1367.<sup>(5)</sup> Twenty to forty shillings was the amount generally allowed for

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- (1) Cal.Cl.R. 1330-1333 p.386.  
 (2) Issue roll No.276 mm.3 and 14 (1334)  
 (3) Issue roll No.387 m.26.  
 (4) Issue roll No.410 m.2  
 (5) Issue roll No.429 mm.23 and 26.

the purchase of messengers' horses, whether as a gift from the king, or in place of one lost through some accident of the road.<sup>(1)</sup>

The examples cited above show that though the compensation paid for lost horses was in its essence a gift made by the king of his goodwill, it had by the reign of Edward III become very usual and indeed almost customary. The messenger still depended on the generosity of his patron for the adequate replacement of the one thing necessary to his calling, but in the majority of instances, the sums allowed seem to have been sufficient. Messengers in the service of queen or princes had no cause to complain either. They were nearly always given some form of compensation, and occasionally received a horse as a gift: the Black Prince's register records not only the 20/- paid as compensation, to John Wetherherde the messenger in 1359, but also the hackney bought by the prince's officer for his messenger Dagonet in 1346.<sup>(2)</sup> Gilbert, the messenger of queen Philippa, was allowed first 13/4 for his expenses with a sick horse in May 1332; and then a further 40/- to replace it when it died in August.<sup>(3)</sup> No messenger whose services were valuable to the

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- (1) Papal couriers were also indemnified for lost horses. Rodocanachi mentions one who received 50 florins for a horse in 1390. (E. Rodocanachi "Les courriers pontificaux de xiv e au xvii e siècle" in Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique XXVI (1912) pp.392-428, p.395)
- (2) Black Prince's Register IV. pp.68 and 321.
- (3) John Rylands Library Latin MS. No.235 ff.17 v. and 19.



government would be left idle for lack of a horse to carry him.

A certain number of grooms were always kept to attend to the messengers' horses. They were in the king's service, not private servants of the nuncii regis, and shared in the household distribution of shoes and clothing, as well as the daily meals in hall. Thus in 1278, when there were 12 riding messengers, the account for necessary expenditure in the wardrobe shows that there were 7 garciones de nunciis regis who received shoes for the half year at Windsor on 17 July. <sup>(1)</sup> The reformers of 1318, in defining the position of every member of the intimate household, did not overlook the grooms attached by custom to various offices. The ordinance acknowledges that such grooms were entitled to robes and food if they worked under any of the principal officers of the household, or were attached to the king's Welshmen, archers, or messengers. <sup>(2)</sup> The number of grooms allowed to the nuncii regis is not defined, but common practice seems to have set a limit, roughly that laid down in the Liber Niger - "one clene childe" to each pair of household messengers. <sup>(3)</sup> This agrees nearly enough with the practice of 1278, 7 garciones to 12 nuncii regis, and shows how little household conditions had

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(1) Add.MS. 36762 m.4.

(2) Tout Place of Edward II in English History 2nd ed. p.275

(3) Collection of Ordinances p.49

changed throughout our period, and how nearly the Liber Niger of the fifteenth century reflects the household of the middle ages.

Though one groom was allowed between two messengers, the older members of the service each seem to have monopolised the time of one of these garciones, while the junior nuncii shared, or attended to their own horses. Nicholas Ramage was accompanied by his groom when he was sent to the Gascon towns in 1288-9,<sup>(1)</sup> and William de Dogmerefeld took his groom with him when delivering a letter to the seneschal of Gascony, Arnold of Mauleon in the same year. Ralph de Laundeles also had his groom in Gascony, to accompany him on a journey to the gascon towns similar to that undertaken by Nicholas Ramage. In all these cases it is clear that the words "garcio suus" do really imply a special tie between groom and nuncius, for when during the same year, the messenger William de Ledebury took letters for the king, Adam de Bayworth's groom was sent with him. This groom, whose name was Richard, seems to have been lent for the occasion, because William, then a newcomer to the messenger service, has as yet no groom of his own. In 1289-1290 Adam de Bayworth was sent to Ireland to the Archbishop of Dublin and received ten shillings "pro expensis suis et garcionis sui secum euntis, cum

passagio ad mare".<sup>(1)</sup> John Pyacle, too, had a groom called Robert of Lincoln at the same time, and by 1301 William de Ledebury had a groom of his own who went with him "per preceptum regis" when William was sent to the Bishop of Chester.<sup>(2)</sup> It seems to have been the rule that messengers did not take grooms with them except on dangerous journeys or journeys abroad unless, as in this instance, they had the special permission of the king or some important official. Robert de Newenton and William de Lughteburgh both took grooms when in 1310 they were sent together to the Council of Vienne with letters from the king,<sup>(3)</sup> and it may have been thought expedient that royal messengers should on occasion travel with a little more circumstance than was usual. Now and then a groom might even be sent on the king's business without the nuncius to whom he was attached; John le Tailleur garcio Radulphi de Say, was sent off with letters of the secret seal on business described as secret in October 1326.<sup>(4)</sup> So close was the connection between groom and nuncius that in some cases the groom would accompany the messenger when he retired. The king in demanding a corrody for a messenger would sometimes stipulate that provision must be made for the messenger's groom as well. Thus the abbot and convent of Muddleton were ordered

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- (1) E.A.305/12 m.1.  
 (2) ADD.MS.7966 f.126 v.  
 (3) Cotton MS. Nero CVIII. f.55.  
 (4) E.A.382/6.

"to admit Gervase the king's messenger and his groom to their house and minister necessaries to them" in 1285<sup>(1)</sup> and William de Alkham was given a corrody for himself and his groom at Vaudey in 1310.<sup>(2)</sup>

It was not uncommon for a messenger to commence his career in the king's household as a groom and to work himself up by degrees to be first cursor and then nuncius. Thomas de Wynebaud was groom and cokinus in 1288-9<sup>(3)</sup> before he finally became the treasurer's messenger and a notable figure among the nuncii. He was probably quite young when he first entered the king's service as a groom, a forerunner to the "one clene childe" of Edward IV's household. Many grooms, however, were content to remain as such all their lives, and the groom who follows the nuncius regis on the cover of the wardrobe book of messenger's expenses for 1360<sup>(4)</sup> is not a boy. He wears a pointed beard and a less elegant tunic and hose than the mounted nuncius regis. The tunic reaches nearly to his knees, and on his head are set a caped hood and hat of twisted cloth: at his side is a formidable-looking sword and knife, and a round pouch which does not bear the king's arms. In his hand he carries a huge staff, partly as an aid while walking, partly for self-defence, and when

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(1) Cal.Cl. W. I. 28.  
 (2) Cal.Cl. R. 1307-1313. p.248.  
 (3) E.A.308/10.  
 (4) E.A.309/11. See frontispiece.

travelling with a messenger on horseback he may have been expected to run along side, as the grooms in so many of the old ballads run beside their masters. Such a man received 2d. a day for his expenses away from court <sup>(1)</sup> and in court shared the advantages of the king's household, so that the position of groom, though regarded as one of the humbler offices of the household, was not one to be despised altogether.

#### 5. Wages.

Members of the king's messenger service, whether nuncii or cursores, were entitled to receive wages for the periods during which they remained in court waiting to be sent on the king's business, provided that they had been formally appointed as messengers or "retained" for the time being in the king's service. These wages were quite distinct from the sums received by the messengers for their expenses while travelling. <sup>(2)</sup> and were calculated on an entirely different scale. The expenses

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(1) e.g. Adam de Bayworth's groom, Richard, in 1288-9.  
(E.A.308/10)

(2) Nothing was paid to a messenger for delivering letters which did not involve one day's journey. Thus Douenald de Athol in 1321 took letters of privy seal to seven persons and received nothing for his expenses "quia omnes in curiam". (Add.MS.9931 f.38)

allowed to each messenger sent 'out of court' on the king's errand were intended to include the cost of food and lodging on the road for the messenger himself, and in addition, for the nuncius, the expenses of his horse. The wages allowed to the messenger while in court, on the other hand, were only supposed to cover the cost of lodging. The nuncius received his food in hall, and his clothing was, in theory, provided for him: he had stabling for his horse, and the services of a groom to attend to it. Thus for the brief intervals during which he was not employed, a wage of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d a day was, under Edward I, considered quite sufficient to meet his needs. On 13 May 1286, for instance, when the king went abroad, he left 5 nuncii regis behind in England, who, for the ensuing 153 days until his return on 23 October, could claim  $\frac{1}{2}$ d for each day spent in court. (1) Roger de Windesore, for one, was in court for 143 days out of the 153, receiving "per diem obolum quando est in curiam et extra curia nichil" and was allowed 5/11 as wages in consequence. Arnold Bon and Richard de Norwich spent 95 and 90 days respectively in court, and received 3/11 $\frac{1}{2}$  and 3/9. Thomas Skiret was in court for 127 days at 5/3 $\frac{1}{2}$ , and John de Barneby the fifth, for 155 days in court was allowed 6/5 $\frac{1}{2}$ . This money according to the account, was to be spent "pro conductione lecti

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(1) Chanc. Misc. 4/3 f.20 v and 21 v.

*1/2 d  
per  
week*

et pro gentaculo suo", and was presumably sufficient to pay for the hire of a bed and breakfast. Some days were spent by each nuncius 'out of court' during the king's absence, either on a message or, as in the case of Richard de Norwich, on a holiday; in the first case they received the usual expenses for travel, but in the second, nothing, either for expenses or for wages. Two other entries during the same reign suggest a wage of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d a day. Ten nuncii in 1301 received an imprest on their wages of  $16/7\frac{1}{2}$ <sup>(1)</sup> and the figure with its odd unexplained halfpenny must have been calculated on some such basis. The same may be said of the  $9/7\frac{1}{2}$ <sup>(2)</sup> received by Nicholas Ramage on his wages in the same year.

Towards the end of Edward I's reign, however, a more generous allowance was made to messengers in court. This may have been on account of the war with Scotland, which undoubtedly increased the risks run by the messengers as well as the amount of work which they were called on to perform. In 1299-1300, for instance, Robert Petit received 9d. pro vadiis<sup>(3)</sup> and by 1303-4 was among 8 nuncii who enjoyed a wage of 3d a day, according to a schedule of wages of officers of the household.<sup>(4)</sup> Nine nuncii regis had been given 3/- each wages in 1300, which at 3d would

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- (1) E.A.360/25 m.2.  
 (2) E.A.359/4  
 (3) E.A.357/23  
 (4) E.A.365/22

represent 12 days spent in court: at  $\frac{1}{2}$ d it would mean as much as 72 days idleness for each man, an unlikely figure in time of war, especially as seven of the same messengers again received 3/- each pro vadiis later in the same month. Arnold Bon, nuncius, who figured in both lists and collected the wages of the rest, received an additional 3/- at Caerlaverock on 12 July. <sup>(1)</sup>

The nuncii regis of Edward I, even at  $\frac{1}{2}$ d a day, were more fortunate than the cokini employed by the wardrobe. These messengers were not members of the household, and did not receive clothing, food or lodging from the king. All these they had to provide out of the wage allowed them while unemployed but still retained in the king's service. In many instances, they appear to have been engaged for the journey only and discharged as soon as their errand was completed, receiving no wage; they helped to swell the unruly crowd that followed the court from place to place, waiting for work. In time of wardrobe activity, however, they were sure of continuous employment, and in wartime might be paid a retaining wage to remain in court in readiness for the next message. Thus in 1297 the liber cotidianus accounts for the wages of a number of cokini retained in the king's service. "Gilberto de Lutegarshale pro vadiis suis ex xv sociorum suorum cokinorum a xxvj die Septembris usque

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(1) E.A.357/21 m. 7 d, 8 and 8 d.



xxvj diem octobris utroque computato per xxxj dies predicto Gilberto per diem iij d. et cuilibet alii cokino per diem ij d. Subtractis ivs. vj d. in toto pro vadiis quorundem ipsorum cokinorum idem tempus et solutione de vadiis suis titulo nunciorum sicut patet ibidem quia aliqui eorum fuerant sic extra curia per ij dies et alii per tres dies".

The total, given first in crokards, and then rendered into sterling, is 79/4.<sup>(1)</sup> Apart from the senior cokinus, then, each received wages at the rate of 2d a day. This seems to have been the normal rate.

In 1300, 7 cokini were paid for 4 days in court at 2d. a day<sup>(2)</sup> and again in the same year, first 6 and then 7 cokini received 2/- and 1/0 each during the month of July in wages at the same time as the 9 nuncii regis received theirs.<sup>(3)</sup> The same rate was still being paid in 1303 to the 9 cokini who were allowed 2/- imprest on the amount due to them, and to the 7 cokini whose wages at 2d. a day for 16 days came to 18/8<sup>(4)</sup> Robert de Coule, cokinus, standing in court for four score and six days in 1303 at 2d a day was paid his 14/4,<sup>(5)</sup> and John Whiting's wages at 2d. a day form an item in another wardrobe account covering the years 1300-1305.<sup>(6)</sup>

(1) Add.MS. 7965 f.84 v. et seq.

(2) L.A.357/23

(3) E.A.357/21 m.7d and 8

(4) Add.MS. 35292

(5) E.A.363/18

(6) E.A.360/24 No.4

In each of the examples cited, the cokini received wages only while in court. The money accounted for here was meant as an allowance towards the messenger's keep while he waited on the king's pleasure, and not as a regular salary covering the whole year. Thus 2/- apiece was paid to 8 cokini while they waited on the king in Scotland during September 1303<sup>(1)</sup> and the wardrobe book for 1303-4 contains a number of similar payments recorded under the heading "Soluciones facte peditibus retentis ad vadia regis in guerra Scotie annis xxxj et xxxij". To 14 cokini, retained at the king's wages and "morantibus in curia pro litteris regis portandis", wages were paid at intervals from May to November 1303.<sup>(2)</sup> The king wished to have sufficient numbers of messengers at hand during the campaign, and found it worth his while to pay them while in court during these summer months: it is significant of the basis on which these men were engaged that the payments cease with the approach of winter and the end of the campaign.

Needless to say these wages in court were not paid regularly either to nuncii or cokini. Imprests on wages frequently appear in wardrobe accounts, sometimes paid in money, sometimes in cloth. This last was a common expedient during times of financial stringency. Edmund Moses and ten other nuncii regis received "ad robas de prestitis super vadiis suis j. pannum

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(1) E.A.364/13 f.101 v.  
 (2) Add.MS.8835 ff.73 v. 74,80,96.

et xvj ulnas radiatas assisas precio in toto lxx s." <sup>(1)</sup> Two messengers of Edward of Carnarvon also received imprests of this kind,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ells of ray and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ells of blue each "ad robas de prestitis super vadiis". Imprests to Nicholas Ramage and others in 1300-1 also took the form of extra robes, <sup>(2)</sup> and in the complete wardrobe book for the same year, imprests in cloth are recorded to nearly all the king's messengers. <sup>(3)</sup> The practice cannot have had much to recommend it in the eyes of the nuncii, but was resorted to by the wardrobe officers when money was scarce and the cloth already in hand.

The reformers of 1323 knew only too well that the arrears into which household wages had fallen and the imprests allowed on money due, had brought confusion to wardrobe finances and helped to delay the yearly presentation of the complete account at the exchequer. The whole system of household wages needed reform, and the Ordinances of the third period of Edward II's reign contained several references to them. <sup>(4)</sup> The York ordinance of 1323 <sup>(5)</sup> ordered that a special clerk under the Marshal should keep account of the wages due to each member of the household. At the end of each half year, he was to make out a bill in his

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(1) E.A.354/23 Imprests on wages in the household for 1296-1299

(2) E.A.359/4

(3) Add MS. 7966

(4) J. H. Johnson "The system of account in the wardrobe of Edward II". Trans.Royal.Hist.Soc. 4th series XII, 75-104.

(5) Tout Place of Edward II in English History 2nd ed. pp.281-4.

own hand, notifying the amount, and when the sum had been paid, the bill was to be handed over to the wardrobe by the recipient. This regulation probably simplified the wages problem for the accountants, but it did not provide for the payment of the wages themselves. Messengers after 1323 received their bills for wages each half year, and were no nearer to getting the sums due to them than before. In some instances, wardrobe bills for wages were still unpaid two or three years after issue.

The exchequer ordinance of 1324<sup>(1)</sup> also had something to say on the subject of wages. The reformers now decided to forbid imprests altogether and ordered that wages should be paid regularly at fixed intervals and never in advance. The recipient should account for the money owing to him before receiving it, and should take no part payments or imprests on the whole before accounting. An admirable regulation, it worked like so many medieval regulations, far from perfectly. The fact still remained that the wardrobe could not find the necessary money to pay off old debts and start afresh. It was not politic to refuse imprests to members of the household whose wages were several years in arrears. Thus the reforms of 1323 and 1324 failed to attain their immediate object, the prompt payment of household wages.

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(1) Red Book of Exchequer III, pp.848-969

The final solution however came as an indirect result of the ordinances, for it was through the extension of the system of payment by bills that the wardrobe of Edward II contrived to pay off debts on household wages. By the middle of the reign, the wardrobe had ceased to issue wages in money. All sums due on wages were accounted for in the wardrobe and a bill for the amount issued which could be cashed as a rule, only at the exchequer. Thus several of the king's messengers were able to claim the wages still owing to them, and their names appear with the amounts paid in the issue rolls of the exchequer. And if imprests were now made on payments, they too were made by the exchequer. (1)

The nature of the wages received was also changing during the fourteenth century. While messengers were under wardrobe control, they were only entitled to claim wages in court; that is, for time spent waiting for a message, or for time spent on

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(1) See for instance the account of imprests made at the exchequer of receipt during the easter term of 1350 (E.A.326/2) Overdue allowances for robes were also met in this way by the exchequer. Thus John Faukes and a companion collected the 18/- for which they held wardrobe bills (E.A.393/11). But imprests to messengers both on clothing and on wages became less common after the establishment of this system. Even this arrangement had its inconveniences. Professor Tout mentions the private business carried on by chamber officers in cashing wardrobe warrants for exchequer payment to messengers. The messengers apparently found this quicker than going to the exchequer personally, and the officers of the chamber no doubt made some profit on the transaction. (Tout Chapters IV,317) Note 4.

tasks which did not take them away from the household.<sup>(1)</sup> The transference from wardrobe to exchequer control may have hastened the change from wages allowed intermittently for the days spent in court, to permanent wages paid whether the messenger were journeying for the king or waiting for work. The idea of a salary for either nuncii or cursores was new, and was hardly established by the end of our period. The household Ordinance of 1318 had said plainly that the messengers who shared in the common meals "ne aillont nulle part hors del hostell sils nessoient en messagez".<sup>(2)</sup> The advance of the new idea, however, is seen in the indiscriminate use of the phrases "pro vadiis et expensis" found in entries on the issue rolls towards the end of Edward III's reign. The words 'wages' and 'expenses' had hitherto stood for different types of payments; they were now becoming synonymous. Regular wages were certainly paid to messengers during the time of war, in addition to the allowance made for their expenses while travelling. We know that after 1347 at least, messengers were receiving such wages, from the "description of the household of king Edward III in peace and war" where they are listed among members of the household who

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- (1) Wages of 3d a day were allowed to nuncii regis who were set to guard wardrobe carts. Piacle, for instance, received 6d for the two days spent out of court in this way. (Misc.Bks.Exch.T. of R. No.201 f.13)
- (2) Tout Place of Edward II in English History 2nd ed. p.272.

take every man 6d a day wages. <sup>(1)</sup> It was these wages of war for the siege of Calais that were being paid off to messengers during 1350, <sup>(2)</sup> when Simon de Barnett "pro vadiis guerre coram Cales" received 73/-, Henry Croft the same, John de Waltham 43/8, John Lewer 70/2, and John Tailfer 76/4, William Fox nuncius received 100/- in part payment of the £6 due for wages of war in France and Sampson Usenges the whole of the 64/2 owed him by the wardrobe "tam de vadiis suis guerre existenti in obsequio domini regis in partes Francie quam robis at calciatura suis ut patet per billam Walteri de Wetewong nuper custodis garderobe". <sup>(3)</sup> The same course of development was in progress in the papal court from 1351 onwards, if not before; the cursores pape were accustomed to take wages of two gros <sup>(4)</sup> tournois a day and an allowance for lodgings into the bargain. The comparison is of interest for it shows that the organisation of the papal court was in this respect only a little ahead of contemporary practice. The change from irregular wages to fixed

(1) Collection of Ordinances p.9.

(2) Issue roll No.354 mm.8, 10, 19.  
See too the accounts of imprests on such wages recorded in E.A.326/2 m.6.

(3) Issue roll No.354 m.7.

(4) "Les courriers pontificaux reçoivent des gages fixes: 2 gros tournois par-jour et une indemnité de logement au moins à partir de 1351, sans compter la nourriture et peut-être le vêtement". Yves Renouard "Comment les Papes d'Avignon expédiaient leur courriers" "Revue Historique CLXXX p.3.

salary took place at Avignon just when the exchequer accounts in England first record the regular payment of wages in time of war.

In peace time, however, wages were still paid only to messengers in court, and the uncertainty of receiving even this made the whole question of wages unsatisfactory from the messengers' point of view. The financial difficulties which attended the later stages of the French war are indicated by the numerous gifts made by the king to his messengers in lieu of regular wages, "in auxilium sustentacionis sue", in the phraseology of the issue rolls. Robert de London and his twelve companions, nuncii of the king, received £8.13.4 on this account in 1357 by a writ of privy seal on the exchequer<sup>(1)</sup> and the same thirteen nuncii again received a gift in January 1358 "in auxilium sustentacionis sue".<sup>(2)</sup> Two years later, John Faukes, Simon Barnet, and Thomas Bulfot nuncii were given respectively 13/4, 13/4 and 20/- "pro vadiis et regardis in auxilium sustentacionis sue".<sup>(3)</sup> Cursores garderobe waiting at London in the king's absence, or waiting for instructions were also given money instead of wages. In 1348, 1349, 1354 and 1368, the issue rolls record payments of this kind to couriers

(1) Issue roll No.386 m.6.

(2) Issue roll No.390 m.27

(3) Issue roll No.400 mm.15 and 21.



"morantibus et attendentibus diversa viagia pro ipso domino rege".<sup>(1)</sup> In addition, the issue rolls record gifts, generally made about Christmas, "in subsidium expensarum suarum", or "in auxilium sustentacione sue contra istud festum Natalis domini".<sup>(2)</sup> All these payments, though described as gifts, seem to be made from some other motive than pure charity. They were probably intended to aid and pacify messengers whose wages were much in arrears, and who, without some advance or gift, might have left the king's service altogether.

An attempt to solve the problem in another way was made during the last two years of the reign. The policy of granting regular pensions at the exchequer in lieu of a daily wage in court had already been tried in isolated instances, but it had never been a common means of providing for the salaries of messengers until 1376. The pension given to Gilbert messenger of queen Philippa almost as soon as he entered her service, was an instance of this kind, and it had not been intended in the first place as more than a temporary expedient. The original grant of July 1331 contains the proviso that the pension is to be drawn only until the king provides Gilbert with the equivalent

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- (1) 1348 (Issue roll No.341 m.32); 1349 (Issue roll No.348 m.21)  
 1354 (Issue roll No.374 m.18); 1368 (Issue roll No.437 m.23)
- (2) In 1351, for instance, when £10 was given to the king's cursores; (Issue roll No.355 m.9); or in 1366, when 6/8 was distributed to 4 couriers on 12 December by order of the treasurer and chamberlains. (Issue roll No.429 m.22)

in land or rents.<sup>(1)</sup> It was worth 10 marks a year, and was in fact held by the messenger throughout his long career in the queen's household. The success of this pension may have suggested the policy followed later. In 1376 entries appear on the issue rolls recording payment of 4½d daily in lieu of wages to most of the then nuncii regis, and in some cases the form of the grant is preserved on the patent rolls. John Nouseley, John Cook, John Elyot, William Hardyng, each received by virtue of letters patent dated 4 October 1376 their daily 4½d "as long as he be in the office of messenger not labouring at the king's wages among the king's messengers".<sup>(2)</sup> So for 117 days, John Elyot took his wages of 43/10½ from the exchequer on 27 April following.<sup>(3)</sup> His original letter patent had for some reason been surrendered in December 1376 and renewed in the form of a grant for life,<sup>(4)</sup> but the money received in April was still due to him under the terms of the first letter patent, and it was therefore entered on the issue roll as part of a pension for wages "quamdiu fuerit in dicto officio nuncii non laborans ad vadia regis". The other messengers who did not surrender their grants continued to receive their pension in lieu of wage according to the original grant. The success of the experiment,

(1) Cal.Pat.R. 1330-1334 p.159 and Cal.Cl.R. 1337-1339 p.64.

(2) Cal.Pat.R. 1374-1377 p.351.

(3) Issue roll No.462 mm.5 and 9.

(4) Cal.Pat.R. 1374-1377 p.397.

however, cannot be judged on the results of one year, and further investigation outside the limits of our period is necessary to discover whether the exchequer pension did at last solve the problem of wages in court. Fifteenth century messengers at least do not seem to have received their wages in this way; by the reign of Edward IV, household messengers took wages both in and out of court, according to the Liber Niger, which tells us that "whyles they be present in courte, everyche of them taketh by the chekker rolle iii d. --- and if he be sent by the heedes of the countyng-house, then he taketh out of courte, wages and all, v d. by day, as other yomen of the household".<sup>(1)</sup> The annual salary had become well established by the reign of Henry VIII, whose messengers had "wages paid within the household" of £5.17.4. per annum.<sup>(2)</sup> Thus the wages of messengers were at last regularised, and their payment became the automatic process which it had never been during the two centuries of our period.

... John Dacour. Finally in 1454 a similar list described the silver gift box inscribed with the prince's arms, together with a parchment 6. Gifts to the household. inscribed with the ... which the prince gave to John Dacour, his messenger.

It was customary for the king to make gifts to his household at the New Year, and at other times of festivity; and in

(1) Collection of Ordinances pp.48-49.

(2) Ibid. p.169.

Issue roll No. 400 nos. 15 and 31.

(3) Black Prince's Register IV pp. 68, 70, 150.

these general gifts the messengers as members of the household, had the right to share, as long as they, or any one of them, were in court at the time to put forward a claim. <sup>(1)</sup> Very little trace of these donations has survived. Queen Isabella's new year gifts to her household in 1330, however, included a belt valued at 5/- which was given to her nuncius, William de Bale, <sup>(2)</sup> and perhaps the "rewards" which were paid to a number of messengers with their wages in 1359 should properly come under this heading. <sup>(3)</sup> The Black Prince's Register preserves several lists of gifts made by the prince to members of his household; among the first, presents given in 1346, comes the hackney bought at Tichfield and given on 31 May to John Dagonet the messenger. Next comes the gift, among entries for 1347, of 2 ells of rayed cloth which had been bought on the 9 April to give to Clays de Ispannia the prince's runner. A gray sumpter horse figures on the list of gifts made prior to 31 January 1349, given by the prince to his messenger John Dagonet. Finally in 1355, a similar list describes the silver gift box enamelled with the prince's arms, together with a garnished girdle, silver gilt, and enamelled with the ribbon, which the prince gave to John Dagonet, his messenger" <sup>(4)</sup>

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(1) "They have part of the gyftes gevyn to the household, if they, or any of them be present when it is geven, but none aprons". Liber Niger Domus Regis Edwardi IV (Collection of Ordinances p.49)

(2) E.A.384/18

(3) Issue roll No.400 mm. 15 and 21.

(4) Black Prince's Register IV pp.68,70,150.

These lists bear out the statement of the Liber Niger that household messengers shared in every privilege open to the king's familia.

Besides the New Year present distributed in the court, it was usual to provide extra robes for all members of the household who went abroad with the king. The transfer of the wardrobe to Gascony was always marked by such a distribution, and a list still remains of those members of the household who were to have had robes if the king had actually gone abroad, as he planned, in 1326.<sup>(1)</sup> In the same way, the household of the king's sister was provided with new garments in preparation for her marriage to the Duke of Guelders and her progress abroad.<sup>(2)</sup>

In addition to these general presents, the king and the heads of the subordinate royal households would occasionally make presents of money or clothing to individual messengers. This might be as a reward for good news, or for valuable service, or as an expression of the king's favour. Henry III ordered the gift of a robe and one mark to Albericus his messenger in 1223,<sup>(3)</sup> and the provision of robes "de dono regis" to several nuncii in 1257.<sup>(4)</sup> Edward I gave Robert de Rydeware the cloth for the robe "which the king promised him when he went to

(1) E.A.381/11

(2) E.A.386/20

(3) Rot.Lit.Cl. 1204-1227 I, 542, 548.

(4) Cl.R. 1256-1259 p.160.

France<sup>(1)</sup>. John Faukes received £1 in 1355 of the king's gift,<sup>(2)</sup> and 8 cursores de garderobe domini regis were given 14/- each to make robes for them in 1357.<sup>(3)</sup> These are a few of many instances. The nuncius regis, and to a much lesser extent, the cursor garderobe, was a personage about court, occupying a definite position, and treated as an individual by wardrobe officials and by the king. The records of gifts made all through our period to nuncii regis are additional indication of the value attached to their services.

## 7. Discipline.

The nuncii regis were entitled, as members of the household, to receive from the king their clothing, food, stabling, the service of grooms, and their wages while in court. As full members of the household, therefore, they were under the authority of the officers of the household, and were liable while in court, to be disciplined upon occasion in the same way as other members of the king's household. In the words of the liber niger, they were to obey the commandments of the chamberlain, the steward and the treasurer of the household "for the honour and profit of

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(1) E.A.363/25 No.14.

(2) Issue roll No.376 m.32.

(3) Issue roll No.386 m.9.

the household".<sup>(1)</sup> The decline of the wardrobe had, by the end of Edward III's reign, left the chamber supreme as a household department. In the fifteenth century the chamberlain had unrivalled power over all the personnel of the household except those in the king's kitchen. Messengers were among the members of the household who were presented for their offices by the chamberlain, and could be discharged or suspended from their posts by him if they misbehaved themselves.<sup>(2)</sup> The wardrobe officers of the thirteenth and fourteenth century must have had similar powers. An unsatisfactory messenger would no doubt have been dismissed by them with equal promptitude, and in some instances we know that the appointment of the messenger was made "during good behaviour". This was specifically stated in the case of John Stygan,<sup>(3)</sup> and if we could discover further details about the appointment of nuncii regis, we might find that this stipulation was quite a common one. Temporary suspension from office was a usual penalty for misdemeanours committed by king's messengers during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries<sup>(4)</sup>

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(1) Collection of Ordinances p.48.

(2) The chamberlain "presenteth, chargeth and dischargeth all suche persons as be of the kinges chaumbre; except all suche officers of household as ministre for any vytayle for the kinges mouthe or for his chambre". Liber niger in Collection of Ordinances p.31.

(3) Issue roll of Thomas de Brantingham. ed Devon p.8.

(4) Wheeler-Holohan gives several instances of this (The History of the King's Messengers pp.16-17), and prints the forms for suspension and re-enstatement of messengers in use at that time. pp.37-38).

and was the punishment in use at the papal court during our period. Offences of a more serious character would in the medieval household have been dealt with through the authority of the Marshall. Trespasses committed within the verge of the court and by members of the king's household came within his jurisdiction and were punishable by him; and any offences on the part of nuncii regis must have been dealt with by the Marshal. I have not found any evidence to show that the medieval king's messengers ever offended against the regulations of the household, though Major Wheeler-Holohan assures us that the seventeenth century messenger was inclined to be unruly.

It was especially important that messengers should not leave the court at times when their services might be required for urgent business. Thus the Liber Niger stipulated "none of these to depart from courte but by leave of Stewards, Chambyr-layne, Treasurer etc."<sup>(1)</sup> A similar regulation was in force much earlier. It is mentioned in the ordinance of 1318, which speaks of messengers of the household who "eient conge de seneschall et de Tresorer; et sils le facent, soient oustre hors de lostell".<sup>(2)</sup> The application of this rule is indicated by a few entries in the wardrobe accounts. Edmund Moses, nuncius regis, was in 1299-1300 given permission to leave the king's

(1) Collection of Ordinances p.49

(2) Tout Place of Edward II in English History 2nd ed. p.272.

(3) Wheeler-Holohan op.cit. v.86



service for a time and was further given 13/- "de dono regis nomine stipendii sui". He was said to be "Licenciatus totaliter a servicio ipsius regis".<sup>(1)</sup> Robert de Manfeld, messenger of Edward of Carnarvon, when he had been attending the household of the king's sons on business for his master, and wished to return to Edward, had to obtain permission to do so before he could leave. Half a mark was given to him by the princes on 6 December 1303 "capienti licenciam suam de eisdem redeundo ad dictum dominum suum".<sup>(2)</sup> John Somer, a messenger of Edward I, was "licenciatus ex toto et habebit nomine etc xx s."<sup>(3)</sup> The abbreviation employed by the clerk in making this entry shows that the phrase was a common one, and that permission to leave the court for a time was frequently given. John Piacle, again, was allowed to return to his own home after his illness in 1299.<sup>(4)</sup> But unless the permission to depart was accompanied by a gift, no record will be found of these comings and goings in the accounts of either wardrobe or exchequer. It is possible that the messengers worked according to a rota which would leave those not at the head of the list free to take a holiday if the household officials would grant the necessary permission.<sup>(5)</sup>

Grooms too, if they belonged to the inner household, had

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- (1) E.A. 357/21
  - (2) E.A. 366/15
  - (3) E.A. 371/8 No. 129
  - (4) E.A. 356/8 m. 12
  - (5) Wheeler-Holohan op.cit. p. 86

to obtain permission before they might leave the household. The 25 grooms who were left in charge of the horses which the king intended to give away in February 1277, were described in the account as Licenciati because they were not with the court, and yet were to receive their usual shoes and robes. <sup>(1)</sup> The grooms attached to the nuncii regis also came within this category, and were as much a part of the household and under the discipline of its officers as the messengers themselves. Cokini garderobe seem to have been freer during the thirteenth century, and probably came or went as they liked, unless they had been specially retained by the king for his service. By the fourteenth century, they had become involved in the organisation of the court to a much greater extent; and one indication of this is found in the necessity, under which they now lay, of obtaining permission to leave it. Richard de Trokesford and Adam Cressenhale, wardrobe couriers, received 3/4 apiece of the king's alms, given to them in aid of their expenses in visiting their own part of the country, having been given permission to stay away until the king's return from Scotland. <sup>(2)</sup>

Among themselves, the messengers seem to have chosen a senior messenger as a doyen, to speak for the whole group if necessary and to collect money, gifts, or clothing due to

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(1) E.A.350/26 m.2.

(2) Cotton MS. Nero C VIII f.202 v.

messengers who were away from court when these were distributed. Robert Petit received his summer shoes when he first entered the king's service by the hands of Nicholas Ramage,<sup>(1)</sup> and Robert himself collected the money given to Brehull during his illness.<sup>(2)</sup> Arnold Bon twice distributed the sums due as wages to nuncii regis in 1300<sup>(3)</sup> and the wages of 3d a day allowed to Simon Lewis the former queen's messenger, were collected for him "per manus Bon nuncii".<sup>(4)</sup> Ramage again acted as senior in 1302, receiving the clothes and shoes of seven nuncii regis.<sup>(5)</sup>

In 1313, Robert de Newenton was the messenger always chosen for tasks of this kind; he not only collected the long overdue robes and shoes for 1310, but also accounted for the amount allowed to him for his companions with the wardrobe officials.<sup>(6)</sup> In the same way, Robert de London acted as intermediary for John del Arches, nuncius. In 1351, receiving for him at the exchequer the clothing allowance which the wardrobe could not pay.<sup>(7)</sup> Alan de Barley was even given the task of superintending the funeral of his fellow messenger, Andrew de Retford, in 1375.<sup>(8)</sup> The use of a senior messenger depended on

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- (1) Add MS.7965. f.42  
 (2) E.A.356/9 m.3 d.  
 (3) E.A.357/21 mm.7 d and 8.  
 (4) E.A.372/14  
 (5) E.A.361/14  
 (6) Cotton MS. Nero C VIII f.30 v. The money was paid "per compotum factum cum Roberto de Newenton ix die Novembris anno vij".  
 (7) Issue roll No.358 m.29.  
 (8) Issue roll No.456 m.21.

no hard and fast rule, and the position of doyen was not an official appointment; it was a matter of convenience and the selection was probably made by the messengers themselves. The collection of money for the group was certainly left to a few trusted members, chosen from messengers of long standing in the king's service. Such nuncii were privileged in the matter of grooms, and may sometimes have been known as "senior": the phrase occurs at least once in the accounts.<sup>(1)</sup> At a later date, the business arrangements of the king's messengers were entrusted to an agent who negotiated on their behalf with government officials, gave them their pay, and saw that the rota according to which they served was kept up to date.<sup>(2)</sup> The senior messenger of the medieval messenger service performed much the same service for his companions.

The senior cokinus or cursor filled a similar position. He too collected the wages due to his companions. Gilbert de Lutegarshale did so for the cokini "retained" in the king's service in 1297<sup>(3)</sup> and Adam Abel for the seven cokini who waited for the king's messages in 1300.<sup>(4)</sup> Adam himself received 2d. a day

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- (1) In the account of John Bishop of Winchester going abroad for the king on four occasions. "In expensis Johannis cursoris dicti episcopi senioris eunti de Whitsand usque Paris". This John was John Faukes, later one of the king's messengers. (E.A.309/27 m.1)
- (2) Wheeler-Holohan op.cit. pp.219-220. The modern corp of king's foreign service messengers still has a doyen. (Ibid. p.105)
- (3) Add.MS.7965 f.84 v.
- (4) E.A.357/21 mm. 7d and 8.

with the rest. But Gilbert's position was marked by a higher wage than that allowed to other cokini under Edward I. To Gilbert de Lutegarshale "pro vadiis suis et xv sociorum suorum cokinorum a xxvj die Septembris usque xxvj diem Octobris --- predicto Gilberto per diem iij d. et cuilibet alii cokino per diem ij d.", a total sum of 79/4 was paid, deducting from the amount due in wages for the month the sums already allowed under the titulus de nunciis for certain days spent out of court. At 3d. a day, Gilbert was receiving a wage equivalent to that of a nuncius regis, who would be obliged to support both himself and his horse on 3d. a day while travelling. The additional penny a day, not corresponding to anything received by senior nuncii regis, and not allowed to other senior cokini, suggests that perhaps Gilbert had acted in the character of a "messenger-master" towards the 15 socii for whose wages he was thus made responsible. It was not uncommon abroad to find men organising groups of messengers and hiring out their services to princes and prelates. If Gilbert had collected and engaged these cokini for the king the extra penny a day might be explained as a reward for his trouble. A responsible senior was even more useful among the cokini than among the nuncii regis: the latter were members of a household that was already conscious of its own unity but the cokini whose place lay on the

very fringe of the household and its life, had little to bind them together. <sup>(1)</sup>

Of the messenger-master in the other sense of the term, implying a special official set over the messengers in court, there is no trace. The office was found at Avignon by the fourteenth century and the official had apparently complete charge over the messengers while they remained within the papal household. <sup>(2)</sup> He disciplined them, paid them, and was responsible for their good behaviour. No such post was ever found necessary in the household of English kings during our period <sup>(3)</sup> and responsibility for the household messengers rested solely with the wardrobe and exchequer which in turn supplied the money for their wages and expenses; and with the ordinary officers of the

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- (1) Papal messengers also had their doyen. "Les Messagers pontificaux n'avaient pas tardé à former une association; à sa tête se trouvait un chef qui leur servait d'intermédiaire avec le curie Romaine". (Rodocanachi "Les Couriers Pontificaux du xiv<sup>e</sup> au xvii<sup>e</sup> siècle" Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique XXVI, 392-428 (1912), pp.395-6.
- (2) For the duties of the papal magister cursorum, see Baumgarten Aus Kanzlei und Kammererörterungen zur Kurialen Hof-und-Verwaltungsgeschichte in xiii, xiv, und xv Jahrhundert."
- (3) By 1509, however, there was in the king's household an official called in the letters patent of appointment "magister nunciorum cursorum sive postarum tam infra regnum nostrum Angliae quam in aliis partibus transmarinis in nostro dominio existentibus", who was in charge of all messengers, and responsible for the speedy dispatch of letters. (J. A. J. Housden "Early Posts in England" English Historical Review XVIII, 713-718).

household, notably the treasurer, steward, and chamberlain, by whom their duties and behaviour in court were regulated. The nuncii regis were in the first place servants of the king, and in the second members of a special group among the king's domestici servants, and throughout our period the organisation of the household overshadowed that of the messengers. <sup>(1)</sup> But during the middle ages, the king acknowledged a certain responsibility for the welfare of his household over and above his actual obligations towards them for clothing, food, and wages. The head of every household both royal and otherwise considered himself bound to look after the interests of his servants. Thus John de Gravina earl of Richmond maintained a number of masters of his household in 1334 because they had been born of the power of France, and among them was his messenger William Burdaut. <sup>(2)</sup> Similarly, the king felt that the care of his servants in sickness or old age was a duty which he ought not to neglect. It formed part of that belief in the importance of almsgiving which characterised the middle ages: in the words of Professor Johnstone "everyone who was anyone in the thirteenth century, from the king downwards, considered almsgiving as much a part of daily ceremonial as sleeping or eating". <sup>(2)</sup> All property carried with it an obligation

(1) Cal. Pat. R. 1324-1327 p. 57.

(2) H. Johnstone "Poor Relief in the Royal Households of thirteenth century England" Speculum IV 1929 (pp. 143-167) p. 150.

V. The Messengers in the Household. ii:-  
Provision for sickness and age.

We have spoken so far of the privileges which the nuncius regis as a member of the household was entitled to share, and of the officers who controlled the messengers as members of that household. But during the middle ages, the king acknowledged a certain responsibility for members of his household over and above his actual obligations towards them for clothing, food, and wages. The head of every household both royal and otherwise considered himself bound to look after the interests of his servants. Thus John de Britannia earl of Richmond maintained a number of members of his household in 1324 because they had been born of the power of France, and among them was his messenger William Burdaunt.<sup>(1)</sup> Similarly, the king felt that the care of his servants in sickness or old age was a duty which he ought not to neglect. It formed part of that belief in the importance of almsgiving which characterised the middle ages: in the words of Professor Johnstone "everyone who was anyone in the thirteenth century, from the king downwards, considered almsgiving as much a part of daily ceremonial as sleeping or eating".<sup>(2)</sup> All property carried with it an obligation

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(1) Cal.Pat.R. 1324-1327 p.57.

(2) H. Johnstone "Poor Relief in the Royal Households of thirteenth century England" Speculum IV 1929 (pp.149-167) p.150.



of this nature, and the king as head of his familia was responsible for the well-being and good behaviour of his servants as long as they remained in his service. The messenger, then, on entering the king's service, could hope for a gift from the king at the end of his career which would take the place of a pension and provide for his old age. If he died while still serving the king, he could expect to be buried at the king's expense.

#### 1. Provision during illness.

Illness seems to have been fairly common among messengers. Their life was a hard one, and there are few messengers known to us by more than name who did not fall ill at least once during their career in the king's service. Major Wheeler-Holohan remarked of the later king's messengers that scarcely a year passed without one or other of them applying for sick leave, either as a result of riding and carriage accidents, or of illness brought on by the hardships of their profession. <sup>(1)</sup> The

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(1) "Hardly a year passed without some messenger being so badly injured that either a long spell of sick leave (by which they suffered heavily in pocket) or permanent retirement, was necessitated" (Wheeler-Holohan op.cit. p.203). Elsewhere he comments on the strenuous life of the eighteenth and nineteenth century messenger who "only rested when he had reached the utmost of his endurance". (pp.158,202.)

same might be said of the medieval king's messenger service, but unfortunately the accounts which note the messenger's illness never suggest its nature, and it is impossible to say how much sickness was caused by accident and how much by disease. We can only judge the seriousness of the messenger's indisposition by the length of time spent out of court.

If the messenger were not seriously ill, it might not be necessary for him to be 'out of court' at all. The court was sometimes stationary for several weeks at one of the favourite royal manors, and the messenger who was indisposed for a few days could still remain within the verge of the court and was therefore entitled to his share of food in hall. Under these circumstances he would not receive any special allowance, and his name would not appear on the wardrobe accounts. The Liber Niger provided in its section on messengers that "if any of them be sicke in courte, he taketh one loffe, one messe of grete mete, dim. gallon ale", <sup>(1)</sup> and these were probably collected for him by a fellow messenger.

A serious illness, however always involved absence from court, since the king and his household seldom stayed many weeks in one place, and frequently moved from manor to manor without a prolonged stay anywhere. Some accounts mention the place where

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(1) Collection of Ordinances p.49.

the messenger had been left behind when the court passed on, and the allowance given to a nuncius during his illness was intended to replace the food which he should have received in hall, and to cover the cost of his lodging. In many cases 2d or 3d a day was considered sufficient: that is, the same sum that the messenger would have received when travelling for the king. Several messengers who fell ill while the king was in Gascony in 1286, received sick pay at this rate. John de Barneby was given 9d for the 3 days which he had spent out of court for this reason,<sup>(1)</sup> and the two nuncii regis who had to be left behind at Cognac because they were too ill to proceed with the king each received 3d a day.<sup>(2)</sup> The first of these, Norman, recovered fairly quickly, but the second, Adam de Bayworth, received his allowance from September 1287 until 2 February 1288, and remained for 51 days from that date at Bordeaux, too ill to follow the king. He received sick pay for a further 35 days during June and July. This instance shows how long the king might continue to support a messenger who had fallen sick; it was nearly a year before Adam was able to take the road again and be of use to the wardrobe. The same accounts tell us of two other messengers who were taken ill while abroad with the king. One, Jonynus, a Burgundian by birth, was obliged to remain in Paris

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(1) Chanc. Misc. 4/3 f.21.

(2) Ibid. f.21 v. and Misc. Bks. Exch. T. of R. No. 201 ff.21, 29, 29v.

for 15 days, during which he received sick-pay at the rate of 2d a day. The other was the queen's messenger, John de Petreton who, in addition to anything he may have received from the queen, was given 2/- by the king as a gift because he had been ill for 12 days at Agen. This again, is 2d a day. <sup>(1)</sup>

Another case of serious illness mentioned in the accounts was that of John Piacle, who fell ill at Huntingdon in 1296, and was forced to remain there for 77 days before recovery. "Johanne Piacle nuncio regis infirmato apud Huntingdon' anno xxiv. et moranti ibidem antequam convaluerit per lxxvij dies de dono et elemosina regis nomine expensarum quas fecit in eadem infirmitate sua et pro denariis ipsum solutis pro salario medicorum cure eiusdem Johannis intendencium, et pro diversis medicinalibus pro ipso empto in infirmitate sua predicta per manus proprias apud La Neylaund xvij die Decembris anno presenti xxvj s.viiiij d." <sup>(2)</sup>

He became ill again in 1299 when on his way home with good news, and after receiving a gift of one mark from the king at Canterbury, he was sent "ad domum suam propriam" to recuperate. <sup>(3)</sup> But his recovery was not permanent, for during July of the same year he had a second illness at Ware, and received 5/- for his expenses on that account. <sup>(4)</sup>

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- (1) Chanc. Misc. 4/3 f.16 v. and Misc. Bks. Exch. T. of R. No. 201 f. 28.  
 (2) Add. MS. 7965 f. 10.  
 (3) E.A. 356/8 m. 12.  
 (4) E.A. 355/27 m. 1 d.

Unlike the allowance of food in court, the money given to the messengers for their maintenance while sick was not a right which they could claim by virtue of their position, but a gift from the king which depended on his goodwill. It was generally paid by the king's almoner out of the king's alms. We often find therefore that instead of calculating the gift on a fixed daily rate, the almoner would give a lump sum of half a mark for a short illness and a mark for a long one. These sums were paid to the messenger on recovery. Thus Roger de Windsore, nuncius received an imprest of 6/8 from the treasurer in payment of the money owing to him from the time when he was ill at Winchelsea.<sup>(1)</sup> Nicholas Ramage, having been ill at London in 1297 received 6/8 "de elemosina regis nomine expensarum quas fecit in eadem infirmitate sua" in September of the same year.<sup>(2)</sup> Parvus Robinus was taken ill abroad in 1298 on his way to Germany and when he returned to England collected his allowance of 13/4 at Westminster on 15 April.<sup>(3)</sup> This was the usual practice and more convenient for the almoner, who could then account for a definite sum to the wardrobe officials. Sums paid in advance were always a trouble to accounting clerks, but in some cases it was necessary to allow the messenger a gift without delay, and since he could not then collect the money himself, it was handed to a fellow

(1) Misc. Bks. Exch. T. of R. No. 202.

(2) Add. MS. 7965 f. 9.

(3) E.A. 354/5 and 356/2 m. 2.

*about messengers;*

messenger for him. Thus Robin Petit received 13/4 for Brehull another nuncius when the latter lay ill at Ledes in September 1299. "Brehull nuncio regis moranti retro curiam apud Ledes pro infirmitate que detinebatur de elemosina regis nomine expensarum suarum quousque convaluerit per manus Parvi Robini socii sui apud Ledes xxviiij die Septembris".<sup>(1)</sup>

The prince's messengers were treated in the same way. They too received a lump sum as a general rule, which was only given to them after recovery. But when Robert de Rydeware was taken ill at Northampton while the prince was on his way to Langley to attend the funeral of the earl of Cornwall, the messenger received 6/8 for his expenses at Northampton on 11 January 1301, and a further 7/- after he had recovered sufficiently to join the prince at Lincoln on 19 February.<sup>(2)</sup> This was to cover the cost of his prolonged stay at Northampton, and the money he had spent on medicines during an illness which seems to have lasted longer than the prince's officials had expected when they left him behind in January.

If a messenger were taken ill when on the king's errand, he might have to send the message on by another hand. John Faukes, a messenger of Edward III, was taken ill at Paris on his way to Avignon with letters addressed to the king's envoy there. The matter was sufficiently urgent for John to hire a courier

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(1) E.A.356/9 m.3 d.

(2) Add.MS.7966 ff.66v and 67.

and pay him 6 florins valued at  $3/4$  each for taking the letters on at once. <sup>(1)</sup> In this, the messenger had to use his own judgment, and weigh the urgency of the message against the probable length of his delay and the expense of hiring an outside messenger. John Piacle, in the instance cited on page 259, brought the message on himself after his recovery. <sup>(2)</sup> He may have been influenced in his decision by the reward that would be given to the bringer of welcome news.

With the administrative changes of the mid-fourteenth century, the payment of sick-allowances became a charge upon the exchequer. So in December 1351 and in February 1356 Merlin the king's messenger drew money de elemosina domini regis at the exchequer in aid of his expenses while ill. <sup>(3)</sup> In some instances the injury proved so serious that the messenger was obliged to retire altogether. John Taverner, who had been maimed in the king's service was one such, and when it became clear that he could no longer act as messenger, a pension of 4d a day was found for him out of the king's alms. <sup>(4)</sup> Such allowances for sickness, though still in the nature of gifts, had become almost customary when nuncii regis fell ill, and the payment of them a duty incumbent on the king as the head of his household. If in

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- (1) E.A. 386/11  
 (2) E.A. 356/8 m.12.  
 (3) Issue rolls Nos. 359. m.13 and 378 m.27.  
 (4) Cal. Pat. R. 1348-1350 p.146.

health the messengers had served him well, the duty of supporting them in sickness was doubly important, and the instances quoted above could be multiplied for every reign during these two centuries.

Cursores garderobe were less fortunate than nuncii regis should they fall ill while on the king's service. They did not belong to his familia, and were not included in the king's obligations. Under Edward I there are only two instances of the king making any sort of allowance to a cokinus for illness. The first was in 1297 when John Whiting, cokinus regis, fell ill at Milton, and was obliged to remain there after the departure of the court. In this case, the king's almoner gave the messenger a sum of money in aid of his living expenses.<sup>(1)</sup> The second occurred in 1304 during the Scottish war, when two men, returning to the king in Scotland, were wounded by the Scots. One of them happened to be a cokinus, and on this occasion he was given something for his expenses and by way of compensation.<sup>(2)</sup> But cokini and cursores garderobe were not members of the household in the strict sense, and were not entitled to claim a share in the common meals with the nuncii regis: they were therefore equally unable to demand an allowance when ill, for this was based on the messenger's right to take his food in court. They

(1) Add.MS.7965 f.6 v.

(2) Add.MS.8835 f.104 v.



had no settled or permanent position among the king's servants, and were engaged only for the time, so that they had fewer opportunities of coming into contact with the king, and seldom participated in the gifts that came the way of nuncii regis. This must be the principal reason for the absence of payments to sick cursores under Edward I. There may be, too, another reason. Many of the illnesses of nuncii regis came as a result of riding accidents: the cursores who travelled on foot, were less likely to incur such injuries, and may have been less frequently on the sick list. But it is a sign of the increasing importance of the cursores during the fourteenth century that their names appear in the accounts in connection with gifts and allowances during illness.

The reign of Edward II brought a new name and a more definite position to the inferior wardrobe messengers. They were still excluded from the household but they had proved themselves as necessary to the administration as the nuncii regis, and a greater value was attached to their services. In consequence they were occasionally helped with gifts from the king's alms when they became ill. During the first month of the reign, Warin one of the king's cursores fell ill at Carlisle, and was left behind there when the court moved on to the Scottish war. A sum of 4/- was given to him of the king's gift to pay for his expenses while he remained at Carlisle. <sup>(1)</sup> This courier was one

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(1) E.A.373/15 f.20.

of those who had joined the household of Edward of Carnarvon while Prince of Wales; the connection between the inferior messenger and the head of the household seems to have been closer in the smaller establishments, and this intimacy was continued, when the prince's household became the king's. Under Edward III, the position of the cursores improved still further, especially after the exchequer had taken control of the expenses of messengers. The days of household administration were drawing to a close, and the privileges of membership were less important as a criterion of status: cursores profited from the decline of the household and from the necessities of the government. William de London the queen's courier had been given 12 d. from the queen's alms when ill at Clipston in 1331,<sup>(1)</sup> and such gifts become more common as the reign progressed. In 1351,<sup>(2)</sup> John Pynchon cursor was allowed 2/- de elemosina domini regis, and in the year following, 40/- were paid to John Blakerl,<sup>(3)</sup> "Infirmato", out of the king's alms. John Twycros,<sup>(4)</sup> another courier, received 5/- for the same reason in 1354 and William de Burton<sup>(5)</sup> was aided during two illnesses while in the king's service.

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- (1) John Rylands Library Latin MS. No.235 f.9.  
 (2) Issue roll No.358 m.27  
 (3) Issue roll No.359 m.13  
 (4) Issue roll No.373 m.19  
 (5) Issue roll No.400 m.21 and roll of writs No.1303 m.12 d.

The medieval idea of the obligations of kingship was definite and the Church's insistence on the due performance of the acts of mercy equally emphatic. By giving money to members of his household when they fell sick, the king fulfilled his duties both as king and as churchman in the eyes of his contemporaries; and the almoner who had charge of the king's conscience in this matter, made such allowances as a routine payment.<sup>(1)</sup> The inclusion first of nuncii only and then of nuncii and cursores within the scope of this obligation, is interesting to us as an example of the king's treatment of his household, and as an indication of the changes wrought by two centuries in the position of the messengers. The opening of our period found a service composed of one type of messenger only; the conclusion of it left a service of mounted and unmounted messengers with recognised positions and improving status, forming an integral part of the administration. The same process is illustrated again in the king's treatment of the messenger whose injuries proved too serious for treatment, or who had become incapacitated through old age.

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(1) We can find a parallel to this in the indemnities paid to papal cursores by his almoner. (Rodocanachi "Les Courriers Pontificaux du xiv<sup>e</sup> au xvii<sup>e</sup> siècle" Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique XXVI, 392-428 (1912) p.395.

## 2. Provision for old age.

As in sickness, so in old age, the king held himself morally responsible for the welfare of his immediate servants, if not for those more distant members of the court with whom his personal contact was slight. Nuncii regis profited by this when after years of service they could no longer undertake the strenuous duties of active service. As pension or in lieu of it, they might receive assistance in several ways; first by a direct grant of money from the wardrobe or exchequer, secondly by a grant of a daily allowance from the king's established alms, thirdly by the gift of some other post of which the duties would be less arduous or purely nominal, fourthly by the grant of a corrody at some abbey over which the king had influence. All these ways of providing for his messengers were utilised by the king.

These pensions differ from the grants of pension as wages already mentioned. They were given either to messengers about to leave the service, or to messengers who had served the king well and were still capable of working. Thus the grants always contain some such phrase as "pro diutino et laudibili servicio"; "pro bono servicio per ipsum eidem domino rege impendum"; "for long service and because he is now too old and infirm to labour in the office"; "because he is so feeble that he cannot well work

(1) Roll of Writs for Issues No. 137 verso; Issue roll No. 25

in attendance on the king," and the like. The variety is great, and the words used do not seem to be mere formula. Some such explanatory phrase always accompanies a grant of this sort, and is their first distinguishing mark. The second is the duration of the grant which, except in rare cases, is always for life. Thus if the messenger continued to work for a time, the pension served as a substitute for uncertain wages, and it was still his to claim when he retired.

(a) The direct pension.

The direct grant of a pension to be received daily from either wardrobe or exchequer, while it appeared the simplest of the four methods, proved on the whole the least satisfactory from the king's point of view. Henry III granted several pensions of this kind towards the end of his reign; in 1259-1260 three nuncii regis, Roger de Stanlegh, Philip de Schocchevill, and Colin le Waleys, were receiving sums from the exchequer for the period from 9 October to 4 April, 178 days, at the rate of  $3\frac{1}{2}d$  or  $2d$  a day. <sup>(1)</sup> This daily allowance was in part a wage, in part a pension but it was made for life, and would continue

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(1) Roll of writs for issues No.1307 dorse; Issue roll No.18.

after the messenger's virtual retirement from the service. This might be a gradual process; messengers frequently remained about the court, taking clothes and shoes as members of the household but doing, as far as we can tell, little or no work for the king. John de Rotheby was one of these, who "pro dūitino servicio" drew his allowance of three halfpence a day from the exchequer as long as he should live, and in the meantime still hung about the court and was treated as a member of the household. (1) Nicholas le Waleys nuncius regis, and Roger, messenger of Edmund the king's son held similar pensions. (2)

All these pensions were in arrears at the end of the reign, and one of the first actions of the new king's ministers while Edward was yet away, was to order the payment of arrears up to date. These payments were duly made. Thus Nicholas le Waleys received half a mark "super arrear[ag]iis duorum denariorum quos percipit ad scaccariam regis ad vitam ips[us] Nicholai" and a further 30/6 for the first 189 days of the new reign. (3) John de Rotheby and Roger de Stanlegh too received 10/- each in payment of arrears, and present pension at the rate of 1 d. a day for the same 189 days. But on Edward's return the whole system of daily pensions through the exchequer was abandoned; no more were granted, and those already existing were concluded. The

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(1) Cal.Pat.R. 1258-1266 p.241; Roll of writs for issues No.1307  
 (2) Issue rolls Nos.28 and 33.  
 (3) Issue roll No.21.

system, as a method of providing for the old age of incompetence of the king's messengers, was both inconvenient and uneconomic. Within two years from the date of his arrival in England, Edward had arranged the commutation of all such pensions, whether to messengers or others, for a lump sum paid on the spot. This was to cover all arrears as yet unpaid and was to be in full satisfaction of any future claim. The messengers for whom Henry III had made this provision, may have considered a lump sum better than a daily pension in arrears, but it is clear that the king was the one who chiefly benefited from the remission. The work of the exchequer was no longer hindered and its accounts involved with these daily sums, which, though small in themselves, were sufficiently numerous to be a nuisance. The sums allowed as compensation varied according to the value of the pension. Nicholas le Waleys formerly messenger of King Henry received in 1275 10 marks to cover both the remission of the pension of 2 d. a day, and also two years arrears: he had not been given anything from the exchequer since the payment of arrears in 1273. <sup>(1)</sup> Later in the same year, Roger de Stanleye quondam nuncius patris regis nunc, was allowed £10 "tam pro remissione illorum trium denariorum diurnorum quos idem Rogerus percipere consuevit ad scaccariam predictam quam pro remissione omnium ?

(1) Issue roll No.28 m.2.

arreragiorum eorundem";<sup>(1)</sup> and John de Rotheby and Roger le Messenger received 100/- shillings and 5 marks respectively by way of compensation during 1276.<sup>(2)</sup>

Edward's disapproval of the daily pensions from the exchequer which had been granted so freely by his father, continued until the end of his reign. He preferred to find other provision for his messengers, and the only exceptions to his general policy were made in favour of two nuncii regine, one Simon Atte Leigh, his mother's messenger, and the second, Simon Lowys, messenger of his first queen, Eleanor of Castile. The pensions of 3½<sup>d</sup> paid to Simon Lowys from the exchequer, and of 4½<sup>d</sup> paid to Simon Atte Leigh through the wardrobe<sup>(3)</sup> were in addition to their food and clothing in court, and to any advantages that either of them might reap from occasional employment by the king; and were intended as a reward for faithful service in the past.<sup>(4)</sup> I have not found any other instances of direct pensions from either exchequer or wardrobe granted by Edward I. Nor did Edward II use this method of providing for messengers who could no longer serve him actively.

The direct pension was revived by Edward III towards the end of his reign, when all other means had failed. He seems to

- (1) Issue roll No.30.  
 (2) Issue rolls Nos.30 and 33.  
 (3) The payments to the first were recorded in the issue rolls, those to the second in the wardrobe accounts, e.g. Issue rolls Nos.90 and 91; and Lib.Quot.Gard. p.101.  
 (4) "Pro diutino servicio quod regine dudum consorti regis impendit". Issue roll No.90 m.l. See above p. 80



have bestowed them equally on nuncii and cursores, which indicates the advance in status made by the latter while the direct pension had been in abeyance. John Pynchoun one of the king's couriers, was in 1353 granted 2d daily at the receipt of the exchequer for long service "and because he is so broken with age that he can labour no longer". From that date he seems to have drawn it regularly month by month. <sup>(1)</sup> Philip de Langedon, another courier, frequently employed by the exchequer, received a daily allowance of 3d. <sup>(2)</sup> Hitherto pensions had always been calculated on a daily basis. But the exchequer began to realise the convenience of an allowance reckoned at a fixed sum per annum and payable only at the two half-yearly sessions of the exchequer. The grant to John Pygot in 1364, therefore, was of this kind; £10 a year "pro bono servicio per ipsum eidem domino rege impendum, vel quousque aliter pro statu suo fuerit provisum". <sup>(3)</sup>

The temporary grant was in effect permanent, and John Pygot continued to receive his annuity for some years after the issue of the letters patent which authorised it.

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- (1) Cal.Pat.R. 1350-1354 p.488.  
During the early part of 1356, for instance, he was paid on 20 January, 17 March, and 9 April.  
(Issue roll No.378 mm.22,32,34)
- (2) Roll of writs for issues No.1303 m.7d.
- (3) Cal.Pat.R. 1361-1364 p.504; Issue roll No.423 mm 9 and 14.

## (b) The grant of established alms.

The second method by which the king could provide for his messengers was by a grant from the established alms. This was the method favoured by John and Henry III. In many counties, certain sums of money had by custom been set aside as "elemosina constituta" which could be granted by the king to any servant of his in need of a pension. Letters were sent to the sheriff ordering payment of the pension, and to the treasurer and barons of the exchequer ordering them to "compute" the same amount to the sheriff when he came to account before them. We have therefore the evidence of the letters sent to sheriff or exchequer, and also the corresponding entry on the pipe or chancellor's roll for the year. There may be too a note of the grant on the memoranda roll.

In one instance, we are told definitely that the grant was intended to support the messenger in his retirement. In 1205, the king ordered the sheriff of Gloucester to pay to Walter le Grant his messenger a certain 3½d a day which had been formerly paid to William le Lommer "quia illam ei dedimus ita quod se teneat ad liberacionem illam et amplius non sequatur curiam nostram."<sup>(1)</sup> Other entries are less explicit, but the comparative-ly

(1) Rot.Lit.Cl. 1204-1227 I, 54.

short time for which most of them were held tells its own tale. There were, of course, exceptions, for annuitants proverbially live long; Walwan, a messenger of king John was granted an allowance in 1202 and was still receiving it in the second year of the next reign.<sup>(1)</sup>

The printed pipe rolls for the first five years of John's reign give us the names of several nuncii regis then receiving pensions from the king's established alms. In the first year of the reign, Hamelin nuncius regis was paid 60/10 during the year out of the firm of Essex and Hertford, that is, a daily allowance of 2d.<sup>(2)</sup> Three messengers, Roger le Tort, Walwan and Lucas, shared an allowance of 22/10 during the first three quarters of the exchequer year 1202-3, after which Lucas was given the whole amount and Walwan was provided with another grant of 37/5½ in place of his share. Roger le Tort is not mentioned again, and redistribution may have been made on account of his death.<sup>(3)</sup> These allowances from the established alms were customary, and could only be allotted on the death or resignation of the former holder; the name of the previous beneficiary is generally mentioned in the pipe roll, and was always given in

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- (1) Great roll of the pipe 1202 ed. Stenton D.M. p.259;  
L.T.R.M.R. No.1 m.2d (P.R.O. transcript p. 171)
- (2) Great roll of the pipe 1199 (ed. Stenton D.M.) p.86;  
Rotulus Cancellarii 1201-2 (ed. Record Commission 1833)p.144
- (3) Great roll of the pipe ed. Stenton 1202-3 p.284 and 259;  
1203-4 p.123.

the letters to the sheriff and exchequer. Thus the succession of holders can in some cases be traced for a number of years. There was a certain tendency to replace a messenger by another messenger, but this was by no means a fixed rule, and all members of the king's household benefited equally.

The practice of granting elemosina constituta to messengers was continued by Henry III even more freely. All existing "liberationes" were allocated, and the system seems to have been extended by Henry beyond the traditional limits. The way in which an allowance could pass from hand to hand, is instanced by the grant given in 1231 to Roger Passavant the king's messenger<sup>(1)</sup>. It consisted of 1½d a day, taken out of the issues of the county of Essex and had been held previously by another nuncius now dead, William le Charett. Roger himself died within the year, and the alms then passed into the hands of Luke the sometarius of the wardrobe. Another allowance out of the issues of Herefordshire was held in turn by William le Engleis and Walter<sup>(2)</sup> Cornwaleis, the king's runners. Guyonettus or Guy, the king's messenger, was in 1257 granted alms of 1½d to be paid by the bailiffs of London; he held these for many years, and they were not regranted until 1273, when the same alms were given to John de Wallingford, a former messenger of king Henry, for his long

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(1) Cl.R. 1227-1231 pp.477 and 512.

(2) L.T.R.M.R. No.15 m.9 d. (P.R.O. abstract p.39) and L.T.R.M.R. No.27 m.3 (P.R.O. abstract p.262); Cl.R. 1237-1242 p.34 and 1242-1247 p.17.

service to the late king.<sup>(1)</sup> Most striking of all is the succession of holders of a grant of alms in Hereford, which may be the same as the allowance made to Walter Cornwaleis in 1244. In 1248, a pension was given to Simon the queen's messenger, and the barons of the exchequer were asked to allot the next vacant grant of alms to Simon for life. The pension thus bestowed was worth 2½d a day and was taken by the queen's messenger from the issues of Hereford until 1254, when it was divided between two nuncii regis, Roger Stanlegh and William Sholle.<sup>(2)</sup> Roger held his into the next reign, but William probably died about 1267,<sup>(3)</sup> for the grant was passed on to another nuncius, Adam de Lindesey. Adam, like Roger, held the allowance until the accession of Edward I.

These two pensions shared the fate of all grants of established alms still in force when Edward came to the throne. As with the allowances from the exchequer, so with these accustomed alms, Edward refused to tolerate an arrangement so inconvenient to the crown. There were a number of grants to messengers, and some to other members of the household, still in force, although much in arrears at the end of Henry's reign. The new government ordered the payment of arrears in full while

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(1) Cl.R. 1356-1259 p.54 and Cal.Cl.R. 1272-1279 p.13.

(2) Cl.R. 1247-1251 p.93; Ibid. 1253-1254 p.101.

(3) Ibid. 1264-1268 p.304.

Edward was still out of England in 1273<sup>(1)</sup> but as soon as the king began to direct affairs in person, the pension system was swept away. William le Burguillon, who had had a grant of 1d a day from the sheriff of Buckingham, and Alan de Lindesey, who still held his alms of 1½d out of the issues of Hereford, received lump sums in compensation of 5 marks and 6 marks three and fourpence respectively.<sup>(2)</sup> Roger le Messenger, nuncius of Edward's brother Edmund, and Thomas of Oxford, messenger of the queen mother, also lost their daily pence, while even John de Wallingford, whose grant had been given in Edward's name for his good services to king Henry, was obliged to be content with 100/-<sup>(2)</sup>. The item "in elemosina constituta" disappeared from the pipe rolls of Edward I after 1275 except for a few grants to religious houses.

Edward had thus effected a certain economy in disposing of the grants made by his father. The diversion of revenue before it reached the exchequer was no more to his mind than the payment of unnecessary sums to pensioners from the exchequer itself. He did not grant any such allowances to messengers, and Edward II again seems to have followed his father's example. It was left to Edward III to renew the old practice, and bestow pensions which were paid either directly to the recipient by the sheriff

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(1) Those due to Roger le Messenger, for instance, were ordered by letter close (Cal. Cl. R. 1272-1279 p.23)

(2) Issue roll No.28 mm 1 and 2.

or through the exchequer when the sheriff accounted for the firm of his county including the unpaid allowance.

John Russel, who for good services in 1343 received 2 d. a day from the issues of the county of Nottingham, may have been the messenger of the household of the same name.<sup>(1)</sup> The original grant was enlarged in 1345 by a further 10/- yearly for life from the same county to pay for his clothing,<sup>(2)</sup> Nicholas de Ufton, king's messenger, secured a grant of 4½ d daily in 1346 "in consideration of good services to Edward ii and the present king" out of the firm of Northumberland, and when in the following year a new sheriff was appointed, he was ordered to continue the allowance daily henceforth for life.<sup>(3)</sup> John Taverner's allowance out of the issues of Lincoln after he had been maimed in the king's service, has already been mentioned.<sup>(4)</sup> William Fox one of the king's messengers, as a supplement to the wages of gatekeeper at Newcastle, was in 1352 given a pension for life in the same county of 4 d. a day beyond the wages pertaining to the office of keeper.<sup>(5)</sup> Cursores too might receive allowances of this sort. Robert Blakherl, for instance, one of the king's couriers "for long service and because he is now so feeble that

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- (1) Cal.Cl.R. 1343-1346 p.200. The same man had had a corrody at Creyk since 1334. (Cal.Cl.R. 1333-1337 p.350)  
 (2) Cal.Pat.R. 1345-1348 p.16.  
 (3) Ibid. 1345-1348 p.56; Cal.Cl.R. 1346-1349 p.334.  
 (4) Cal.Pat.R. 1348-1350 p.146.  
 (5) Ibid. 1350-1354 p.366.

he cannot well work in attendance on him" was given 3d a day "in aid of his sustenance" out of the issues of the county of Oxford.<sup>(1)</sup> Henry<sup>(2)</sup> courier of the king's chamber received a similar grant in 1357. Indeed, towards the end of the reign, the majority of the king's messengers must have been in receipt of some allowance. John Faukes in 1355,<sup>(3)</sup> Richard Hert in 1360,<sup>(4)</sup> Henry Croft, John Taylfer, Andrew de Retford, Robert de London, William Clerk, Alan de Berle, and Walter Cardinal in 1362, all had letters patent granting them pensions of 4½ d a day out of the issues of various counties.<sup>(5)</sup> Thus Henry Croft "for long service and because he is now too old and infirm to labour in the office" of messenger, took a daily pension of 4 d. monthly out of the farm of the city of London. The sheriff of Kent was bidden to pay 4½ d a day henceforth to John Taylfer "taking his acquittance for every payment, as the king of his favour and for John's good services has granted him by letters patent 4½ d a day -- for life, or until other order be taken for his estate". A chamber messenger John Typet received £10 yearly out of the issues of Kent from 1356 onwards.<sup>(6)</sup> It is clear that all these

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(1) Ibid. 1350-1354 p.356.

(2) Ibid. 1354-1358 p.564.

(3) Ibid. 1354-1358 p.245.

(4) Ibid. 1358-1361 p.479.

(5) Cal.Pat.R. 1361-4 pp.174 and 195. Cal.Cl.R. 1360-4 p.318

(6) Cal.Pat.R. 1354-8 p.365.



pensions continued to be paid after the messengers' retirement. To take one instance, in January 1374, Cecilia the wife of Walter Cardynall "nuper nuncius regis" collected 66/8 from the exchequer of account, which sum was due to her husband on a pension of 4½d a day granted to him by letters patent out of the issues of Somerset and Dorset. <sup>(1)</sup>

It is interesting to see how Edward III was obliged to resume the practices of the early thirteenth century, and grant direct pensions to his old servants. Edward I had abolished both the exchequer pension and the daily alms; Edward III restored both. The alternatives employed to meet the same need, and the reason for their failure by the middle of the fourteenth century will form the subject of the two next sections - the grant of offices, and the corrody system.

(c) The grant of other offices, houses or land.

The third method by which the king could provide for his messengers was by the grant of some less strenuous post in his service or at his disposal; or by the gift of land or houses. These grants might be permanent or temporary. If the office

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(1) Issue Roll No.451 m.19.

were one in the king's own service, it was generally bestowed for life. The king however made full use of his powers over the lands and revenues of vacant bishoprics or the lands of minors whose wardship lay in his hand, and often made grants to members of his household from the incomes of such land, or from among the offices attached if any chanced to fall vacant. Such grants were by their nature temporary, but they served to support the king's servants until some permanent post became available.

Henry III does not appear to have ever given his messengers additional offices in his own service. Edward I, on the other hand, frequently did so, for it proved an alternative to the direct grant of money, which he was always anxious to avoid. Edward III too was glad to provide his servants with lucrative posts in place of money grants. These posts were most commonly connected with the king's castles, forests, or parks. Positions in the household do not seem to have fallen as a rule to messengers, though one exception may be found in the appointment of John Messenger "to lodge the cart-horses and sumpter horses of the household, and purvey hay, oats, litter and other necessaries for them" in March 1347, an appointment which was repeated in July and again in September of the same year. <sup>(1)</sup>

The first grants of offices made by Edward I were to messengers

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(1) Cal.Pat.R. 1345-1348 pp.294,353,406.

who had served his father, or had been in the household of his mother Eleanor of Provence. In 1272, his government in England granted in his name the post of gatekeeper of Windsor to a certain Robert Lightfoot, who had been one of the cokini garderobe under Henry III, and this office was held for many years by the ex-messenger. <sup>(1)</sup> After the death of Eleanor the queen mother her nuncius, William Crisp, was made custodian of the warren of Pevensey, with  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d a day for wages which he was to receive from the bailiff. <sup>(2)</sup> The queen herself had granted him 10 acres of purpresture within the manor of Havering, and these escheated to the king when she died, and the manor was taken into his hand. Nine years later, Edward allowed ~~him~~ <sup>the messenger</sup> as compensation, the custody of the park of the manor of Stoke Neyland for life, with 2d a day out of the issues of the manor, to be paid by the bailiff. <sup>(3)</sup> Eleanor's other messenger, Simon Atteleigh, was one of the two exceptions to Edward's policy of no money pensions. The other exception, Simon Lewis, his wife's messenger, was granted, in addition to his daily 3d, the custody of the manor and park of Guildford for life in 1298. <sup>(4)</sup>

To his own messengers, Edward often made similar grants. William de Dogmersfeld received the stewardship of the forest of

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- (1) Cal.Cl.R. 1272-1279 pp.34,393 and 1279-1288 p.447.  
 (2) Cal.Pat.R. 1281-1292 p.467.  
 (3) Cal.Pat.R. 1292-1301 p.522.  
 (4) Ibid. 1292-1301 pp.81 and 372.

Shirwood in 1298<sup>(1)</sup> and Roger de Wyndsore the office of viewer of the works at Windsor castle during the king's pleasure, with wages of 2d a day for his maintenance.<sup>(2)</sup> John Pyacle, king's messenger, "in consideration of his long service and especially for the news he brought to the king of the birth of Edmund the king's son" was given the custody of the passage of the town of Southampton for which he was to answer at the exchequer; and a mandate to that effect was sent to the sheriff of Southampton in 1302.<sup>(3)</sup> Even the messengers in the older departments, the chancery and exchequer, were sometimes provided with offices in the king's service. Thus John le Messager "by reason of his long service to Robert late bishop of Bath and Wells, the chancellor, "was given custody of the park of Kennington, with wages from the keeper of the manor. He was still parker of Kennington when Edward II became king, and continued in the office for some years after that."<sup>(4)</sup>

The only grant of office made by Edward II to a messenger which I have traced, is the appointment of Robert de Hoton, messenger, as gaol keeper of Stafford in 1315.<sup>(5)</sup> Another messenger who had been in Edward's service while he was prince of Wales

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(1) Ibid. 1292-1301 p.323.

(2) Ibid. 1292-1301 p.407

(3) Ibid. 1301-1307 p.7.

(4) Ibid. 1301-1307 p.56; Cal.Cl.R. 1307-1313 pp.11,22,87.

(5) Cal.Pat.R. 1313-1317 p.366.

Robert de Rideware, seems to have become bailiff of Dartford soon after Edward's accession; he was answering for the firm of that place at the exchequer in 1311 and 1312.<sup>(1)</sup> No formal letter of appointment, however, was enrolled by chancery; and apart from these two possible instances, no messengers under Edward III received offices from the king.

Edward III resumed the practice, and extended it. Both nuncii and cursores benefited from these grants, though the nuncii regis still reaped the advantage of closer contact with the king and his officials. Three cursores are mentioned on the patent rolls in this connection: Adam le Corour, Adam Leonard, and William Haneworth. The first of these was appointed to the humble post of chief swineherd of the town of Nottingham for life, but the grant was later surrendered, perhaps in return for another of which we have no record.<sup>(2)</sup> Adam Leonard, cursor, was given the bailiwick of the park of Wrichewode by Bamburgh during good behaviour in 1331,<sup>(3)</sup> and William de Haneworth was made parker of Ayleshamburgh in the same year for services to the late king.<sup>(4)</sup> Among the nuncii regis who were assisted in this way, were John de Paris and Nicholas de Ofton, who each received the post of porter in a royal castle, the one at Hereford, and the

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- (1) Issue rolls Nos. 159, 164.  
 (2) Cal. Pat. R. 1327-1330 pp. 169, 185.  
 (3) Ibid. 1330-1334 p. 54.  
 (4) Ibid. 1330-1334 p. 35.

= after see p. 278.

other at Newcastle on Tyne. <sup>(1)</sup> The latter held his position of porter from 1336 to 1352, when it passed into the hands of another nuncius regis, William Fox; and with it the duties of gaol keeper within the castle. <sup>(2)</sup> Nicholas Maol, another messenger, was allowed the custody of the meadows at Woodstock park for his services to the late king. <sup>(3)</sup> A different type of office to which a messenger might be appointed, is exemplified by the position of portejoie in the chancery given to Adam Merlin at some date prior to 1354. He petitioned the king in November 1354, complaining of the insufficiency of the wages attached to the office, and was allowed a further  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d a day out of the issues of the hanaper of the chancery to make up the required amount. <sup>(4)</sup> These instances are typical both of the post and the salary which a messenger who had served the king well might expect to receive.

The prince's messengers, too, were given additional offices in the service of the king or the prince. The pensionary nature of these grants is emphasised by the wording of the letter dated 1 March 1365 giving the prince's messenger, John Bolton, a yearly sum out of the issues and profits of the castle, lordship and honour of Wallingford. The grant is said to have been made for life "for past and future services". Thus the messenger was

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(1) Ibid. 1330-1334 p.52; 1334-1338 p.263.

(2) Cal.Pat.R. 1350-1354 p.295.

(3) Ibid. 1330-1334 p.219.

(4) Cal.Pat.R. 1354-1358 p.148.

provided for as long as he remained in the prince's household, and after that, for as long as he should live.<sup>(1)</sup> The gift of an office which involved any real duties, however, was always accompanied with the proviso "during good behaviour" or "during the king's pleasure". The messenger if he were still in active service, would be obliged to perform the duties of the position by deputy, and the king sometimes found the work of these substitutes unsatisfactory. Roger Pope, the Black Prince's messenger, for instance, had had the bailiwick of the honour of Wallingford; but in 1359 the prince seized it again for the misconduct of Roger's underbailiff, allowing £4 compensation to Roger for his good services as a messenger.<sup>(2)</sup> The grant of offices to men still undertaking the duties of nuncius cannot have increased the efficiency of local administration.

In addition to permanent posts in the king's castles or manors, there were at times temporary positions which had come into the king's grant. Many of these were offices attached to bishoprics which were in the king's hand during a voidance, and he made full use of the opportunity to assist his servants without expense to himself. Walter Cardinal the king's messenger, was put in possession of the bailiwick of the hayward of Alresford in 1345 "now in the king's hands by reason of the voidance of the

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(1) Black Prince's Register IV, 549

(2) Black Prince's Register IV, 292.

see of Winchester, for such time as it shall remain in his hands<sup>(1)</sup>. John Tynet benefited on two occasions by such temporary grants. In 1354 he was given the bailiwick of the lathe reeve of St. Augustine's Canterbury, with the accustomed wages or fees attached to the office: and in 1366 again was placed, during the vacancy of the archbishopric, in charge of the bailiwick of the liberty of Southwark, which he was to hold as long as the see remained vacant.<sup>(2)</sup> In other cases, temporary provision for a messenger was found in the care of lands during a minority; the wardship of the estates of lesser tenants-in-chief sometimes found its way into the hands of nuncii regis or nuncii principis. Thomas de Kendale the Black Prince's messenger was one who profited by a grant of this kind. For his good services to the king and the prince, he was granted in 1357 the wardship of lands late of John Atte Hill of Wamplyngham tenant-in-chief, which were valued at  $3/4$  a year. With these lands went the marriage of the heir, and as a concession to Thomas, the grant was freed of all rent payable to the king.<sup>(3)</sup> A more important grant of the same type was made by Edward in 1374 to his chamber messenger, John Stygan. The latter was to have the keeping of 80 acres of land, 7 acres of meadow, and  $53/8$  of rent in the county of Derby, together with the marriage of the heir, another tenant-in-chief; and the whole

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- (1) Cal.Pat.R. 1343-1345 p.562.  
 (2) Ibid. 1354-1358 p.10: 1364-1367 p.235.  
 (3) Cal.Pat.R. 1354-1358 pp.511,515.



grant was confirmed in 1376.<sup>(1)</sup>

Offices, permanent or temporary, were not the only means of support which could be given by grant to a king's messenger. Houses and land sometimes fell into the king's hand and were available for distribution among his servants. Henry III made a number of gifts to messengers from such escheats, and though few such grants are recorded under Edward I or II, the practice was resumed by Edward III. John Chubbe, one of Henry III's messengers, was given a house in Bridport, Dorset, which he held until 1257. It then reverted to the king's hand because the messenger "had taken the religious dress", and was regranted to the king's mason: the inquisition taken at the time showed that the house was worth 1 mark annually.<sup>(2)</sup> Less valuable, but still worth acceptance, was the house in Shrewsbury given by the same king to his messenger, Robert Blund.<sup>(3)</sup> The rent of this message was 12d a year, which Robert and his heirs were to pay to the bailiffs of the town in perpetuity. The grant was made in 1231, and Robert did not retire from the king's service till shortly before 1250, when payment of all arrears of pension were ordered

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(1) Ibid. 1370-1374 p.456; 1374-1377 p.469.

(2) Cal.Ch.R. 1257-1300 p.5; and Cal.Inquis.Misc. I, No.2045. Can it have been the same John Chubbe who in 1270 was deposed from the abbacy of Tavistock abbey? (Cal.Pat.R. 1266-1272 p.402)

(3) Cal.Ch.R. 1226-1257 p.134 and Cl.R. 1227-1231 p.519.

on his behalf. He probably let the house in the interval, and enjoyed the proceeds, but we may imagine that he retired to Shrewsbury for the last years of his life. He was undoubtedly still alive in 1253, for a false report of his death in that year nearly lost him his allowance, but two years later, a long career in the king's service was at last brought to a close. <sup>(1)</sup>

Another nuncius regis whose gratitude the king earned by his gifts, was Nicholas le Messenger. He received a quitclaim in 1253 of all the king's right in a messuage in Stamford then in his escheat and the sheriff of Lincoln was ordered to give him seizin of the property in January 1254 "donec aliud rex inde preceperit". A virgate of land in Brochton, also escheated to the king, was later added. <sup>(2)</sup> Even if the king was not able to provide a complete house for his messenger, he might make a gift of timber towards the building of one. This may have been the object of the two grants of Windsor oaks which Henry made to Walter de Mawordyn in 1261 and 1266. <sup>(3)</sup> The same idea probably underlay the gift of chestnut trees to Robert de Rideware the prince's messenger, by Edward I. Robert came from Newenton in Kent, and the grant suggests that he was building a house in his

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(1) Cl.R. 1253-4 p.3 and Cal.Pat.R. 1247-1258 p.179;

Cl.R. 1254-1256 p.35.

(2) Cal.Pat.R. 1247-1258 p.179; Cl.R. 1253-1254 p.19.

Ibid. 1268-1272 p.288.

(3) Cl.R. 1261-1264 p.36; Ibid. 1264-1268 p.279.

native village at the time. "Order to cause Robert de Rideware, envoy of Edward, the king's son, to have in the king's wood of Castaveis of Middelton four of the best chestnut trees near the king's highway from Newenton to Sidingburn, to wit, two on one side of the street and two on the other, of the king's gift".<sup>(1)</sup> Chestnut wood was largely used for roof beams, and Robert, who left the prince's service in 1307, may have intended to retire to Newenton when he obtained the grant.

A great many grants of different sorts were made by Edward III to his two chamber messengers, John Stygan, nuncius, sometimes called the king's servant or serjeant; and John Curroure, cursor of the chamber. In 1373, John Stygan was allowed to accept a grant from a certain John Frende "of the life estate which he has of the king's grant in a messuage in Grublane without Crepulgate in the suburb of London", and to retain the messuage for life.<sup>(2)</sup> The grant of wardship made in 1374 to the same messenger, and its confirmation in 1376 has already been mentioned. In the year following the original grant, John Stygan, or Stygeyn, had been given for life a messuage with four shops in the parish of St. Andrew, Cornhill, London, which the king had recovered in a lawsuit.<sup>(3)</sup> He had too in 1376 the £10 yearly

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(1) Cal.Cl.R. 1296-1302 p.263.  
 (2) Cal.Pat.R. 1370-1374 p.289.  
 (3) Ibid. 1374-1377 p.84.

"which Thomas le Despenser is bound by letters patent to pay at the exchequer for the manor of Bautre co. York -- now in the king's hands."<sup>(1)</sup> All these grants were additional to the pension of 100/- at the exchequer which in 1375 he exchanged for a corrody at Christ Church Priory London.<sup>(2)</sup> John Curroure was also the recipient of a number of grants from the king. In 1374 he was given a messuage in Northampton "which is in the king's hands on account of an outlawry on a plea of trespass, and is extended at 20/- yearly, to be held as long as it shall be in the king's hand for that cause".<sup>(3)</sup> Again in 1375 he received from the king two shops in Berking in the county of Essex "which pertain to the king because they were built by Thomas Sampkyn of Berking without licence on the king's highway, and are arrented at 10/- yearly at the exchequer".<sup>(4)</sup> Finally in the same year, John Curroure of the king's chamber received as a grant for life "the office of porter in the abbey of Eynesham, with the fees and profits pertaining to the office as Richard de Faxton deceased held it in his lifetime at the king's mandate. This however is marked as "Vacated because surrendered and nothing thereof was done",<sup>(5)</sup> probably because a close roll letter

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- (1) Ibid. 1374-1377 p.381 and Cal.Cl.R. 1374-1377 p.398.  
 (2) Cal.Pat.R. 1370-1374 p.170.  
 (3) Ibid. 1370-1374 p.420.  
 (4) Ibid. 1374-1377 p.83.  
 (5) Cal.Pat.R. 1374-77 p.204.

dated on the following day, 8 December, recommended him to the abbot and convent of the same abbey for a corrody which he appears to have received in due course. <sup>(1)</sup>

(d) The grant of a Corrody.

The fourth and last way in which the king could help his ageing servants was by requesting or demanding a corrody for them at some abbey or hospital over which he had influence. Houses of royal foundation and houses which had benefited from royal patronage in the past and still held land in frank almain, could not refuse to grant allowances to the king's servants. In addition, the king had certain ill-defined rights over all religious houses during vacancies. Even monasteries not directly liable to this charge might be asked for a corrody and find refusal difficult. Larger foundations suffered most from such demands, which were sometimes denied, sometimes granted with the proviso that the gift was not to serve as a precedent, for many corrodies began as free gifts and through regrant on the death of the original holder became customary. The practice was frequently denounced by visiting bishops, as a source of ill-

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(1) Cal.Cl.R. 1374-77 p.288.

Author remarks that such corrody arrangements, though few in number, formed a very small minority of the whole: it may safely be said that in at least nine-teen cases out of twenty the corrody was a commercial transaction". (ibid. p.261)

discipline, and by the king himself as a cause of financial difficulty. But since the grant of a corrody was the easiest and cheapest way in which the king could pension off his servants, the convenience of the practice generally overcame pious scruples; and when abbots or priors were reluctant, all possible means of persuasion were employed. Thus royal requests and orders for the grant of corrodies to members of the household are frequent items in the close and patent rolls.

It has been estimated however, that in most religious houses the number of royal corrodarii receiving maintenance was small compared to the number who had paid the monastery for the privilege or had received a private grant from the house. In Glastonbury, for instance, there were at one time nineteen corrodians, of whom only six were royal nominees. Further, the average value of their corrodies was only £4.6.0 per annum, whereas the ordinary corrodian received £7.16.0 or more. <sup>(1)</sup> The king's use of the corrody as a form of pension was inconvenient to the individual houses, but it did not contribute to any great extent towards the burden of debt and misspent revenue which during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries hampered so many of the less provident religious houses in England.

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(1) Coulton, G. G. Five Centuries of Religion III, 245. The author remarks that "such enforced corrodians, though too numerous from one point of view, formed a very small minority of the whole: it may safely be said that in at least nineteen cases out of twenty the corrody was a commercial transaction". (Ibid. p.241)

The corrody originated as a charitable grant of food and shelter made by the abbot or prior, and convent, for the lifetime of the recipient. The original purpose however was soon lost, and the corrody became a kind of annuity which could be purchased by a gift to the house. Needy monasteries were inclined to grant corrodies in order to obtain money. The corrodarius then became a liability on the income of the house until his death, and since annuitants generally live so much longer than they are expected to do, the monastery spent the lump sum paid down at first, and often found that it had made a bad bargain. When the grant had originally been made at the king's request, it was, from the financial point of view, even less welcome, for in that case the monastery gained nothing at all. The records of the king's grants of corrodies to messengers illustrate the length of time for which a house might have to provide maintenance. Robert de Rideware, for instance, held his from 1307 to 1330, twenty-three years;<sup>(1)</sup> Peter le Messenger who died at Muchelneye in 1317, had been a messenger of Edward I<sup>(2)</sup> and William le Messenger who was given his corrody at the priory of La Launde by the request of Edward II,<sup>(3)</sup> lived on until 1366. The grant of such corrodies therefore was always made unwillingly.

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- (1) Cal.Pat.R. 1307-1313 p.9; 1327-1330 p.494.  
 (2) Cal.Cl.R. 1313-1318 p.452.  
 (3) Ibid. 1364-1368 p.267.

The corrody system did not, however, end as a simple grant of food and maintenance. It was possible to hold more than one corrody at once and to turn the allowance of food into the equivalent in money. In these cases the corrody was divested of all its charitable nature and became merely a source of income. For even the messenger who had retired could not live in two widely separated houses at the same time, and the grant of a second corrody to be held together with the first can only have been intended as a money allowance to augment his original pension.<sup>(1)</sup> In some instances it seems clear that the messenger did not live at either house but continued in the king's service. He must have taken a yearly pension in money from the monastery and treated it simply as a form of income. Douenald de Athol, for instance, was sent to have a corrody at the abbey of St. Thomas the martyr at Dublin in 1319.<sup>(2)</sup> Yet in 1325-6 he was among the messengers who were to have gone abroad in the king's familia,<sup>(3)</sup> and while the queen was in France he frequently took letters to her. In 1331 he was sent to have a second corrody at the hospital

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(1) The distinction between the grant of food, called a corrody, and the grant of money, called a pension, was never absolute; and the commutation of other types of services and rents in kind for their equivalent in money helped to confuse the two still further in the fourteenth century. (See Snape English Monastic Finance p.139.

(2) Cal.CI.R. 1318-1323 p.117.

(3) E.A. 381/11.



of Kylmaynan in Ireland<sup>(1)</sup> although at his death in 1344 he was still receiving the allowance from St. Thomas' Dublin.<sup>(2)</sup> During all the years that he had had it, from 1319 to 1344, he can have spent very little time in Ireland.

Another typical case is that of Robert de Newenton, who entered the service of Edward of Carnarvon in 1296. He was active in the king's household all through the reign of Edward II, and was almost certainly the Robert de Newenton who received a corrody at St. Augustine's Canterbury in 1310.<sup>(3)</sup> Robert was one of the foremost among the king's messengers, acting as senior on several occasions, and receiving special grants of protection in 1315 and 1319.<sup>(4)</sup> It may have been this Robert de Newenton who in 1315 got into trouble for his outspoken criticism of his master,<sup>(5)</sup> but the queen protected him, and the episode does not seem to have affected his career in the king's service. He continued his work as a messenger until the end of the reign, and on without a break well into that of Edward III. Throughout the whole of this time, he must have taken his allowance or some equivalent from St. Augustine's Canterbury. In his case, the grant of a corrody was clearly meant in the

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(1) Cal.Cl.R. 1330-1333 p.319.

(2) Ibid. 1343-1346 p.481.

(3) Ibid. 1307-1313 p.341. His namesake, Robert de Rideware of Newenton had already one or perhaps two corrodies.

(4) Cal.Pat.R. 1313-1317 p.374 and ibid. 1317-1321 p.426.

(5) See below p. 462

first instance as a substitute for a regular salary, and only in the second place as a pension. The king was, in fact, using the corrody much as the crown had always treated the benefices in their gift - as a means whereby the king's servants could be paid without the king's expense. The benefice was reserved for clerks: the corrody formed its equivalent for laymen.

This contention is borne out by several references to non-resident corrodarii. Edward II, in requesting that the prior and convent of Trinity Church London should find suitable maintenance for his messenger Simon "who long served the late king, and is now blind," added the clause "whether staying within or without their said house"<sup>(1)</sup>. During the following reign, the Precentor of the Hospital of St. Nicholas, Carlisle, made it one of the grounds of his complaint to the Bishop of Carlisle that he had granted two corrodies at the king's request, and that neither of the beneficiaries had ever lived in the Hospital or kept its rules. In a process before the Bishop, it was stated that "he has also delivered two corrodies to Adam le Barbour and Edmund de Staynwigges on letters patent of the king commanding him to receive them as brethren for life, and these have never made nor are now making stay in the hospital, nor observing the rules at all"<sup>(2)</sup>. Had the house

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(1) Cal.Cl.R. 1313-1318 p.69.

(2) Cal.Pat.R. 1340-1343 p.123.

not been involved in financial difficulties, the case would never have been brought up, and the two corrodarii mentioned would have continued to draw their allowances as brethren. Neither of them were messengers, but similar complaints were no doubt made in private about the non-residence of many royal messengers who took corrodies at different religious houses.

The grant of a corrody, therefore, may have been intended as a pension to support the messenger on retirement, or it may have been a form of wages while the corrodarius remained in the king's service. The exact nature of the grant can only be seen when the career of the recipient is known, and there are many instances which fall halfway between the two categories. On the whole, the corrody may be regarded as a pension, for it was granted for life and not during service, and it did provide a home and food for many who could no longer work for their living.

Henry III, as a good son of the church, was chary of taxing its revenues too far by demands for corrodies. When the abbess and convent of Berking had acceded to one such request, he undertook not to charge the nuns or their house "with lay-brethren, messengers, or other persons against their will", so long as the present corrodarius should live, and the house not

be in the king's hand by voidance. <sup>(1)</sup> The special mention of messengers among the persons who might, except for this promise, have been charged on the house, suggests that of all the king's servants, messengers were the most frequently in need of pensions, and most frequently the subject of royal demands.

It was not until Edward I had virtually abolished the pensions from the exchequer and from the established alms in the counties, that the corrody became a common means of providing for messengers. To Edward it seemed the most economical and the simplest way of fulfilling his obligations towards his servants. The expenses of the pension fell, not on the exchequer or the wardrobe, but on the religious houses which in the past had received their share of the king's charity. The complications of recurring payments were avoided, and the messenger given not only sustenance but also lodging if he chose to avail himself of it. Most of the grants made by Edward I seem to have been intended as pensions and not salary. So in March 1285 the chancery warrants include an order "to write under the great seal to the abbot and convent of Middleton, county Dorset, to admit Gervase, King's messenger, bearer of these, who is broken with age, and his groom, to their house and minister necessaries to him, and write back to the king

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(1) Cal.Pat.R. 1247-1258 p.180.

what they have done in this".<sup>(1)</sup> To a man "broken with age" the calm of a monastic existence must have been a pleasant relief after the perpetual bustle and restlessness of a messenger's life.

Another messenger for whom Edward I sought provision was Geoffrey le Waleys, a nuncius regis who had been in his service since at least 1283. Three attempts were made about the same time to find a corrody for Geoffrey; the abbots of Burton-on Trent, Tavistok, and Gloucester were all requested to allow the messenger "victuals and vesture for life for him in the abbey".<sup>(2)</sup> No indication of the replies received can be found; and the mere presence on the rolls of several requests does not necessarily mean that the earlier ones had been refused, for there are instances of two letters sent on the same date to different houses demanding maintenance in each for the same man. It is possible, however, that Geoffrey was unsuccessful in obtaining a grant at any of these abbeys; and he may well be the same Geoffrey le Messenger who died in 1341 possessed of a corrody at Pritelwell Priory, which had been granted at the request of Edward I.<sup>(3)</sup> Another old nuncius regis in the service of Edward I who received a corrody at the request of the king, was William de Ledebury, his messenger since 1288.

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(1) Cal.Ch.W. I, 28.

(2) Cal.Cl.R. 1302-1307 pp.91 and 104; Cal.Ch.W. I, 175.

(3) Cal.Cl.R. 1339-1341 p.657.

The letter asking for a grant to William has not been enrolled, but the close roll of 1325 mentions his death and the fact that he then held at the late king's request a corrody in a cell of the abbey of Reading.<sup>(1)</sup> These examples illustrate the king's persistence in support of his servants, and the reluctance of many houses to accede to his requests. They also show that the king's care was confined to one type of messenger only, the nuncius regis. No cokini appear among the letters in which Edward begged or demanded maintenance for his messengers. As in the case of men receiving sick-pay or money pensions, it was always the privileged messenger who benefited from the king's generosity or importunity.

Edward II extended the system of corrodies begun by his father, and appointed corrodians to houses that were not of royal foundation, and in which he had no rights of presentation. The corrody therefore was even more unpopular with churchmen than under the late king, and Edward's abuse of the system increased the number of refusals and evasions which can be traced through the chancery enrollments. Hospitals suffered from the king's demands even more than abbeys or priories, for Edward was able to declare that "the hospitals in the realm were founded by the king's progenitors for the admission of

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(1) Ibid. 1323-1327 p.354.

poor and weak persons and especially of those in the king's service who were unable to work". With this as his excuse, he appointed corrodians to such foundations as the episcopal hospital at Worcester, over which he had no authority, and in houses where his right was undisputed, he demanded more than the single corrody customary hitherto.<sup>(1)</sup> The dealings of the king with one religious house, the priory of St. Andrew at Northampton, as recorded in the chancery enrolments shows the opposition aroused by his behaviour.<sup>(2)</sup> On 12 October 1325 the king addressed a letter close to the prior and convent, asking for a corrody for his messenger, Richard Swyn. The grant in this case was not a fresh one, but was to be the same as had been previously allowed to a servant of Edward I now dead. The convent replied, refusing the king's demand, and excusing themselves on the grounds that they were already providing maintenance for several royal nominees. The king seems to have retorted with further demands and eventually procured the corrody for Richard Swyn, who held it until somewhere about 1335. Edward III then re-allotted it to John Swyn one of the staff of the chancery, but according to the prior and convent, he had been premature, for Richard the former

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(1) Cal.Cl.R. 1323-1327 p.358 (Cited by Clay The Medieval Hospitals of England p.213)

(2) Cal.Cl.R. 1323-1327 p.515; Cal.Ch.W. I,571; Cal.Cl.R. 1333-1337 p.532; ibid. 1337-1339 p.624; ibid. 1339-1341 pp.112,455.

holder was still alive. They did not protest at the time, but when the king tried to appoint yet another person to the same corrody, the prior refused on the grounds that before Richard's death, his corrody had been regranted at the king's command. The third corrodian, Robert de la Chapele, "sued before them for such maintenance" and was refused admittance, whereupon the king wrote again to the convent, reaffirming his previous order. The sequel remains unknown. But the story of this struggle shows how determined the convent was to dispute the king's orders at each fresh appointment, and the difficulty with which the king enforced his commands.

Another case in point is that of William de Lugteburgh, nuncius regis. In 1323, Edward II requested the prior and convent of Holy Trinity London to admit William to a corrody in their house. This request must have been refused, and the demand dropped, for in 1333, Edward III sent the same messenger "who long served both the king and his father, and for whose maintenance no provision has yet been made" to the abbot and convent of Battle. The king's order was not disputed, for a corrody was in fact vacant, but the abbot delayed to obey the royal command, until the unfortunate messenger died without having received any maintenance from the house. <sup>(1)</sup> Thus the

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(1) Cal.Cl.R. 1318-1323 p.694; Ibid. 1333-1337 pp.128 and 538.



attempt made by Edward I and his son to provide for their servants without expense to themselves began to break down, and Edward II, by his extension of the system beyond its original limits, defeated his own ends.

The whole practice of demanding corrodies was condemned by statute in 1314-1315, and in the Articuli Cleri, the king was again petitioned to refrain from abusing his power.<sup>(1)</sup> Edward II seems to have paid little attention to these complaints, but his refusal to moderate his demands resulted in much more drastic restrictions after his fall. Edward III was obliged to promise in 1327 that he would "no more such things desire but where he ought" and that "there shall be no more grants of corrodies at the king's requests".<sup>(2)</sup> These promises, like so many others made under compulsion, were not strictly observed when Edward had the power to demand such grants but the number asked and obtained was certainly fewer, and the tone in which the letters patent or close are couched much more conciliatory. A request for "competent maintenance" from the abbot and convent of Thorneton concludes with the plea that "the king will be specially bound to them" should they accede to his suggestion.<sup>(3)</sup> In other cases, he was obliged to promise that no further

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(1) Clay The Medieval Hospitals of England p.213; Snape English Monastic Finance p.139

(2) Clay op.cit. p.213.

(3) Cal.Cl.R. 1339-1341 p.275.

demand should be made during the lifetime of the recipient, or after his death. Thus Robert de Rideware, a messenger of Edward of Carnarvon who had been sent by Edward I to the prior and convent of Leeds, was given an additional grant in 1307 by Edward II from the king's hospital at Ospringe.<sup>(1)</sup> This corrody was duly paid until Robert's death in 1330, although he had acted as bailiff of Dertford for some years after his retirement from the messenger service and may have had a house at his native village of Newenton. It is quite possible that he lived at Newenton and took his corrody from Ospringe in the form of money, never staying within the hospital precincts at all. This may explain the anxiety of the hospital to avoid a successor to Robert, for it was more inconvenient for a monastery to find ready money than to provide food and lodging within the house itself. In response to an appeal from the Master and Brethren of the hospital, Edward III promised in 1330 "that they shall be free from providing sustenance out of their house, such as, at the late king's request, they provided for Robert le Messenger of Newenton, now deceased".<sup>(2)</sup> The promise was renewed in 1334. Now the allowance given in 1307 to Robert had been held by another corrodarius before him at the king's appointment, and the innovation, if there had been one, had been made by Edward I.

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(1) Ibid. 1302-1307 p.222; 1307-1313 p.3; Cal.Pat.R. 1307-1313 p.9.

(2) Cal.Pat.R. 1327-1330 p.494; Ibid. 1334-1338 p.30.

This promise, therefore, meant one pension the fewer for the king's servants from outside sources and one more to be found from the king's own revenue.

The same promise followed the king's order to the abbot and convent of Fountains "to admit Patrick le Messenger to that house and provide him with maintenance befitting his estate until the king has ordained concerning him." By letter patent made at the same time the king promised that their concession to Patrick should not be made a precedent.<sup>(1)</sup> In this instance, the house was already supporting another messenger, John de Waltham,<sup>(2)</sup> and the abbot was fully justified in his protest against the establishment of a second corrody, and a possible chain of royal corrodians. But even John de Waltham's grant was not allowed to continue after his death. In July 1353, a letter was enrolled by the chancery, stating that "whereas the king lately granted for the security of the abbot and convent of Fountains, who, at his request, had granted for life to John de Waltham, late his messenger now deceased, sustenance from their house, that such grant should not prejudice the house as a precedent, and afterwards, notwithstanding the same letters, commanded the abbot and convent to grant to John de Cherteseye, his servant, such sustenance in their house as John de Waltham

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(1) Cal.Cl.R. 1341-1343 p.653; Cal.Pat.R. 1340-1343 p.504.

(2) Cal.Cl.R. 1346-1349 p.609.

had had at his request; and whereas on search of the rolls of the chancery and the exchequer, it is not found that the abbot and convent hold any lands in chief or that the abbey is of royal foundation whereby they should be held to grant such sustenance, the king, for the tranquillity of them and their successors, by these presents discharges the abbot and convent of the grant of the said sustenance to the said John de Cherteseye or any other person at the king's command". The entry is worth quoting in full, as a typical example of Edward's dealings with religious houses; this corrody had been obtained in the first place only with a promise of future immunity, and when at the death of the original holder the king attempted to fill his place, the abbot and convent were able to resist his attempts on the strength of his own promise. The episode shows how careful the heads of religious houses were to guard themselves against the king's encroachments, and how difficult Edward III now found it to provide for his servants without spending money himself.

The corrody question had become more insistent by the middle of the fourteenth century because the king was now providing corrodies for inferior as well as privileged messengers. The change had begun under Edward II, but is yet more marked during the early years of the next reign. Close rolls for

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(1) Cal.Pat.R. 1350-1354 p.479.

Edward II record several requests for allowances sent to religious houses on behalf of the king's cursores: Robert de Ryburgh was sent in 1318 to the prior and convent of Guisburgh in Cleveland,<sup>(1)</sup> while three attempts were made to find maintenance for Robert de Crouland, first at Reading, then at Burton-on-Trent, and finally at Ravesley.<sup>(2)</sup> Under Edward III, such requests became more frequent. Richard de Trokesford or Toxford was sent to three houses before he secured provision for himself, to Byland in 1329, to St. Leonard's hospital York in 1332, and to Whitby in 1338.<sup>(3)</sup> Two other cursores regis, John Pynchon and Adam Danark were sent together in August 1334, with 6/8 for their expenses by the way, to find a place for themselves at either of two priories to which they had letters, Bridlington and Ellerton.<sup>(4)</sup> Adam Leonard, Richard Frere, Gilbert de Sheffield, Richard Fox and William Atte Halle again were couriers for whom the king did his best to find provision.<sup>(5)</sup> At the same time, there were still the nuncii regis to be considered, and Edward sent out many letters asking for sustenance for household messengers, such as John Lewer who was sent to Darley, Adam Merlin, who was sent to Kirkstall, William

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(1) Cal.Cl.R. 1313-1318. p.599.

(2) Ibid. 1313-1318 pp.463,564,610; 1318-1323 p.117.

(3) Ibid. 1327-1330 p.587; 1330-1333 p.581; 1337-1339 p.512.

(4) Cotton MS. Nero C VIII f.202 v.

(5) Cal.Cl.R. 1337-1339 p.411; 1339-1341 p.107; 1333-1337. p.506; 1346-1349 p.610; 1330-1333 p.135.

Harding who was sent to Dunstaple. <sup>(1)</sup> Nuncii regis and cursores garderobe now took almost equal shares in the grants of maintenance, whether these took the form of a corrody or were a direct pension from the king.

Three cursores garderobe, who were considered too old for strenuous tasks, were left behind in England when the king went abroad in 1339; and for these messengers he asked that temporary provision should be made. Richard Frere "who had long served the king and his father"; and Robert de Cestria "who is so broken by age that he cannot travail in the king's company beyond the seas" were placed till the king's return at Trentham and Leicester respectively with "suitable maintenance". It was more difficult to find accommodation for the third, Brice de Corbrigge, and application was made first to the prior of Bernewell, and then to the abbot of Eynsham on his behalf. <sup>(2)</sup> These arrangements suggest comparison with the plans made by Edward I for the five messengers left behind in England in 1286 who received wages in court during the king's absence; and with the allowance made to John de Noyon the queen's messenger, for his board when he was left at Thame in June 1325. <sup>(3)</sup> In the earlier instance, the king provided for his messengers at his own expense; in the next, he

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(1) Ibid. 1333-1337 p.515; 1354-1360 pp.74,389; 1374-1377 p.63.  
 (2) Cal.Cl.R. 1339-1341 p.107,219,222,241.  
 (3) Chanc.Misc. 4/3; Issue rolls Nos.211,213.

paid a sum towards the man's board but asked a religious house to give him shelter. Edward III, however, expected the monasteries he approached to find the messengers both food and lodging, without making any offer of compensation. It is not surprising that one of the four houses addressed refused the king's demand; and the others may have agreed only because the arrangement was to last no longer than the king's absence abroad. Religious communities were compelled to safeguard their interests against such requests because every small concession opened the door to further royal demands.

It was probably the increasing reluctance of religious houses to take the king's corrodarii which forced Edward III back upon his great-grandfather's methods of providing for his servants. We have noted how in the granting of direct exchequer pensions and allowances from the established alms, Edward III was returning to the methods of Henry III, which Edward I had abandoned. The remission of all direct grants by Edward I had been part of a definite policy, which aimed at providing pensions through the church's charity, and sparing the royal purse. This policy had now run its full course and the vein was worked out; between promises of immunity from the king himself and passive resistance to the king's commands by the monasteries the number of regular corrodies had been reduced and any further increase

seemed impossible. If they intended to grant corrodies at all, the heads of religious houses preferred to grant them to men who would pay the house something for the privilege. The best interests of the church they knew, would be served by the entire abandonment of the system, for besides impoverishing a house, the presence of corrodarii often led to breaches of discipline and general slackness. Episcopal visitors were obliged to rule that monks might not play games with the pensioners residing in their houses, and the introduction of chess or draughts into the monastery was probably one of the least dangerous consequences of the presence of layment within the enclosure. <sup>(1)</sup>

For all these reasons, it is clear that the number of grants made to the king's nominees was gradually decreasing during the reign of Edward III, though so slowly that not until the end of the reign did the results manifest themselves. The end of a long reign was always marked by numerous grants of pensions; the old king doubtless wished to provide for his old servants, and they on their part probably pressed for grants, not knowing what their chances under a new king might be. But Edward III could no longer satisfy the needs of his servants with corrodies, and with three exceptions the grants made during the last years of this reign were all pensions paid by the

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(1) Capes W. History of the English Church in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries (1900) p.294.



exchequer, the almoner, or the sheriffs; and therefore, directly or indirectly, by the king himself. The three exceptional cases, in which a corrody was found for a messenger at the very close of our period, were those of William Harding, John Stygan, and John Curroure. The first instance, William Harding's allowance from the priory of Dunstaple in 1374,<sup>(1)</sup> was granted to an old servant of queen Philippa, who had acted as her messenger for many years; and we have seen in other cases the special care taken to provide maintenance for such members of a late queen's household. In the second instance, that of John Stygan, the king still had an undisputed right to one place at houses of royal foundation, and so was able to give this chamber messenger a corrody on the death of his last nominee, taking from him at the same time the pension which he had previously drawn at the exchequer during good behaviour.<sup>(2)</sup> In the third instance, the king had during a vacancy appointed John Curroure, cursor of his chamber, to the office of porter at Eynsham abbey. This was in accordance with a well-established custom, and could not be gainsaid by the convent, so the abbey seems to have bought off the unwanted porter with a corrody, and the original grant was "vacated because surrendered, and nothing thereof was done".<sup>(3)</sup> Apart from these instances, the king was unable to find any

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(1) Cal.Cl.R. 1374-1377 p.63.

(2) Cal.Pat.R. 1374-1377 p.170

(3) Ibid. 1374-1377 p.204; Cal.Cl.R. 1374-1377 p.288.

maintenance for messengers in need of support unless he provided it himself.

### 3. The Value of Pensions and Corrodies.

There were, then, four means whereby the king could provide for his messengers, either before or after their final retirement. But this suggests the further question, how far were the sums allowed in pension or the means provided as corrody adequate for the messenger's support? To answer this question fully it would be necessary to undertake investigations into the cost of living far outside the scope of this thesis. Some indication however can be given by a comparison of the amounts allowed and other details of wages and prices found in the wardrobe accounts.

In the early thirteenth century, king John had given 3½d a day to the messenger who was to live on his pension and nothing else "ita quod se teneat ad liberacionem illam et amplius non sequatur curiam nostram".<sup>(1)</sup> During his reign and the succeeding one, the rate of expenses allowed for a king's messenger on horseback or an accountant coming to the sessions of the exchequer was 3d., and by this standard, 3½d was probably sufficient

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(1) Rot.Lit.Cl. 1204-1227 I,54. 1206-1257 p.134.

for the ordinary living expenses of the retired nuncius. A daily pension of 1d. 1½d or 2d. a day, therefore, bore much the same relation to the cost of living as an old age pension of 10/- a week does to-day. Bed and breakfast could be obtained for ½d a night, <sup>(1)</sup> but the more solid meals of the day could hardly have cost the messenger less than the 1½d or 1½d (for fish or meat days) which was allowed per head to the king's almoner when he fed the poor. <sup>(2)</sup> A penny a day would buy a less generous meal, of the kind provided by Henry III's almoner when ordered to fill the great hall as full as it would hold with poor; but would not leave anything for the expenses of lodging or clothes. This inadequacy was recognised by the king, who allowed some of his messengers to accumulate several grants of different kinds, whose total value would make up the pension to a living rate. Walwan, nuncius, who in 1203 had only one pension of 2d a day, paid out of the issues of the county of Essex, had by 1218 acquired an additional grant of 2d a day out of the firm of the town of Hertford which he held together with the first. <sup>(3)</sup> Robert Blund had two pensions of 1½d each out of the issues of Gloucestershire, and the gift of a house in Shrewsbury, <sup>(4)</sup> and

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(1) Chanc. Misc. 4/3 ff. 20v and 21 v.

(2) H. Johnstone "Poor Relief in the Royal Households of Thirteenth Century England" Speculum IV, 149-167 (1929) p. 153

(3) Great Roll of the Pipe ed. Stenton 1203 p. 123; L.T.R.M.R. No. 1 (P.R.O. transcript pp. 188, 171)

(4) Issue roll No. 31; Cal. Ch. R. 1226-1257 p. 134.

Roger de Stanlegh, who was allowed an exchequer pension of  $3\frac{1}{2}d$  in 1259, seems to have had a second of  $1d$  a day before the end of the reign. <sup>(1)</sup> Roger le Messenger was even better provided for. He held a pension of  $1d$  a day from the sheriff of Kent, two further grants of  $2\frac{1}{2}d$  and  $1\frac{1}{2}d$  from the king's alms, and a pension from the exchequer as well. <sup>(2)</sup> Since the messenger was only paid a sum sufficient to cover his expenses on the road, and had a small wage irregularly paid while in court, he could not be expected to save much towards his old age, even if he had wished to do so. The provision of maintenance for messengers was therefore doubly necessary, and this seems to have been recognised by Henry III, who was not one to count the cost of his generosity, and whose almsgiving was always "lavish and uncalculating." <sup>(3)</sup> The inadequacy of smaller pensions is proved again by the two grants of  $4\frac{1}{2}d$  and  $3\frac{1}{2}d$  made by Edward I to mark his appreciation of the services of the queen's messenger Simon Lowys, and the queen mother's messenger, Simon Atteleigh. From Edward, who even in almsgiving was business like and restrained, the grant of such sums (which were to be additional to food and clothing received in court) are proof of the insufficiency of any lesser

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(1) Issue rolls Nos. 18 and 21.

(2) Cl.R. 1268-1272 p.454; Cal.Pat.R. 1266-1272 pp.614,617; Issue roll No.33.

(3) Johnstone "Poor Relief in the Royal Households of thirteenth Century England" Speculum IV, 149-167 (1929) p.154.

amount.

By the reign of Edward III, the cost of living had risen considerably. Travelling expenses were higher, and in some cases reckoned on a basis of 6d a day for a mounted messenger. The normal sum now granted for a daily pension as a form of wage, was  $4\frac{1}{2}d$ , and if we may take 5d or 6d as sufficient for the expenses of man and horse while travelling, then  $4\frac{1}{2}d$  was probably adequate for the living expenses of the man himself. Most of the pensions given by Edward III towards the end of his reign to messengers were valued at  $4\frac{1}{2}d$ , and even if the standard of living possible was not very high, the messenger was able to support himself without great hardship on such a sum. For comparison, the prices paid by king's messengers when sent out by the king, are worth quoting. In 1343, two men were sent by Edward on a journey to Avignon and back, and the particulars of their expenses on the way have survived.<sup>(1)</sup> The two men were John Faukes, nuncius regis, and Robert de Arderne, who set out for Dover on 26 July. Continental prices no doubt varied considerably from English ones, so I will not cite any of the sums set out in the account as spent abroad. But in the interval between receiving their instructions and expenses at London and their embarkation at Dover, the two messengers had spent 10d on a meal at London, 8d on the same at Rochester, and a further 6d on a meal at Canterbury.

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(1) E.A.312/4. The complete account is given in Appendix C.

Thus the pair of them had spent a shilling apiece on food during the first day of their journey. On the return, a similar expenditure took place. Jacke Faukes, coming back alone from Avignon, celebrated his landing at Dover by spending 2d on drink, another penny on the same item at Canterbury,  $4\frac{1}{2}$ d on a dinner at Rochester, and 9d on supper when he got to London. The single man had thus spent  $1\frac{1}{4}\frac{1}{2}$  on meals for one day, a sum far exceeding any pension ever allowed to a king's messenger. Travelling at the king's expense he would of course spend more than if he were living at home at his own charges, and his meals may have been extravagant. On the other hand, unreasonable expenditure would have been disallowed when the bill was presented at the exchequer and no exception was taken to any of the items mentioned here, although the auditor had detected and corrected several trifling slips in copying. The charges made by wayside inns to a messenger travelling post haste for the king cannot be a very reliable guide to the average price of a meal cooked at home in fourteenth century England, but allowing for the innkeeper's profit and the economies possible at home, we may conclude that  $4\frac{1}{2}$ d was not an over-generous allowance for a messenger who had no other means of support. If however, he possessed any additional income, either from a corrody, or office, or from his own lands and houses, then he might find himself quite comfortably off on such a sum.

In a few special cases, some extra support was provided. Adam Merlin, nuncius regis, who complained of the insufficiency of the wages of portejoie of the chancery (an office which he held in addition to his own) received a grant of  $1\frac{1}{2}d$  a day to supplement it. Besides both these offices, he was recommended for a corrody at Kirkstall abbey.<sup>(1)</sup> Nicholas Ufton, who had alms of  $4\frac{1}{2}d$  daily had also the profits of the office of porter at Newcastle on Tyne,<sup>(2)</sup> and William Fox, who succeeded him in the latter office, had a wage-pension of 4d to increase the stipend attached to that position.<sup>(3)</sup> Such instances show that a pension by itself was not considered sufficient to support a king's messenger. Extra grants however were not general, and many retired messengers were dependent on the king's pension, together with the proceeds of land or tenements of their own. Entries on the chancery enrollments show us that some at least of the nuncii regis of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had small holdings which they still maintained while in the king's service. John de Barneby nuncius regis brought a plea of trespass against persons who had interfered with his land in Leicestershire in 1277,<sup>(4)</sup> and other messengers may also have had some private

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- (1) Cal.Pat.R. 1354-1358 p.148; Cal.Cl.R. 1354-1360 pp.74,389  
 (2) Cal.Pat.R. 1345-1348 p.56; 1334-1338 p.263.  
 (3) Cal.Pat.R. 1350-1354 pp.295,366.  
 (4) Cal.Cl.R. 1272-1279 p.416.

England. (S.A. 1274 (2))  
 Should Henry I. History of Agriculture and Prices in  
 England II (1257-1400) 225-230.

means, or some local connection on which they could rely.

In estimating the cost of living, we have only taken into account the general level of food prices, compared to the sum allowed as pension. There were of course other items which every messenger must provide for himself after retirement; shoes, clothing, and shelter. The last is very difficult to assess, for the estimated value of houses given by the king to nuncii regis varies greatly. Edward I's messengers paid no more than  $\frac{1}{2}$ d a night for their beds; John Faukes on the other hand spent 5d "en boire et pur son lit", at Chastelnoef.<sup>(1)</sup> Sleeping accommodation rarely forms an item in a messenger's account however. Clothes and shoes are easier to price. We know that the thirteenth century messenger was generally clad in cloth valued at 16d an ell, and that later the wardrobe allowed  $1\frac{3}{4}$  for each set of garments. Thorold Rogers gives  $1\frac{1}{5}$  to 2/- as the usual price per ell for bluet;  $1\frac{1}{4}$  to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  for russet; and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to  $3\frac{1}{4}$  for raye, during our period.<sup>(2)</sup> He quotes  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d to 8d for shoes of the ordinary type. This is much less than was paid for shoes by Jacke Faukes and Robin de Arderne, who each bought a pair of boots and a pair of spurs before they set out, and spent between them  $6\frac{1}{8}$  on this item. It is clear that the retired messenger would not be able

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- (1) This is the only time that John Faukes mentions the price of a bed at all; possibly he would have paid less in England. (E.A.312/4 f.2)
- (2) Thorold Rogers A History of Agriculture and Prices in England II (1259-1400) 536-538.



to spend anything like the 18/- allowed by the wardrobe every year for his clothes and footwear while he remained in the king's service, but again, he might be fortunate enough to have a special grant of clothes from the king. Nicholas le Waleys and William Choll "quondam nuncii regis"<sup>(1)</sup> were given two robes of the king's gift in 1266, and John Russel's allowance of alms from the issues of Nottingham was enlarged in 1345 by an extra 10/- yearly to pay for his clothing.<sup>(2)</sup>

On the whole, then, the messenger who retired from the king's service with a pension, found himself obliged to be contented with a lower standard of living than before. In the king's household he had had many things found for him which he now must provide for himself out of his allowance. Tout comments on this in speaking of the fourteenth century civil service; "the medieval civilian's prosperity" he says "was not to be reckoned merely in wages. Besides money payments there were also wages in kind. In the old days, when the public servant was attached to the court, he had, as we have seen, no salary or a very small one. But he made up for this by receiving lodging, clothing, food, drink and firewood, at the king's expense. He had, therefore, as little need of money as a soldier in the trenches or a monk in a

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(1) Cl.R. 1264-1268 p.170.

(2) Cal.Pat.R. 1345-1348 p.16.

(1) Tout "The English Civil Service in the Fourteenth Century" (reprinted from the Bulletin of the John Rylands Library 1915) p.21.

convent".<sup>(1)</sup> The loss of all this when he retired and the necessity of buying for himself out of a slender pension all the incidental things which he had hitherto taken for granted, must have made a startling change for the civilian, and not less for the king's messenger.

In demanding a corrody for any of his servants, the three main items specified by the king were the same: food, clothing and shelter. These constitute the "necessaries of life" which the house was to minister to the aged corrodian. Thus a corrody would provide the messenger with the same amenities as he had enjoyed in the king's household, and relieve him from the necessity of providing them for himself. The corrodian, according to his rank, might either have fixed rations from the buttery, or share the common meal; and the internal arrangements made by every monastery differed in some respects. But in all religious houses, whatever the order, food, clothing, and shelter had to be found for the king's nominees.

A few letters demanding provision for messengers are more specific. These tell us some further details about the life of the messenger who had retired to the house from which his corrody came, or intended to do so. In the first place, he might or might not have the services and company of his groom. Gervase,

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(1) Tout "The English Civil Service in the Fourteenth Century" (reprinted from the Bulletin of the John Rylands Library 1916) p.21.

the nuncius regis who was sent by Edward I to Middleton, took his groom with him and the latter was to share all the privileges granted by the house of the messenger.<sup>(1)</sup> William Dalkam at Vaudey was to have "reasonable maintenance according to the requirements of his estate in food, clothing, shoelather, and other necessaries, and what is necessary for the maintenance of a groom".<sup>(2)</sup> The stipulation gives another indication of the status of a nuncius regis, and what his estate was considered to be. It was evidently not so humble that he should be expected to do without a servant of his own. The same phrase "maintenance befitting his estate" occurs again in the grant to Patrick le Messenger in 1342 and in several other letters dealing with corrodies.<sup>(3)</sup> But very few define the requirements of a nuncius regis beyond these vague phrases. The only exceptions are two letters close addressed to the abbot and convent of St. Thomas Dublin and to the prior of the hospital of Kylmaynan respectively, both in favour of the same messenger, Douenald or Donald de Atheles. The king's clerks may have considered that Irish houses would be unaware of the requirements of a messenger "such as befit a royal envoy"; they certainly thought it necessary to give extra details in both cases. The head of the house

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(1) Cal.Ch.W. I, 28.

(2) Cal.Cl.R. 1307-1313 p.248.

(3) Cal.Cl.R. 1341-1343 p.653.

addressed is requested to deliver to the messenger "sufficient maintenance for life in food and drink, clothing, shéeleather, livery for a horse and groom, a suitable chamber within the enclosure of the abbey, candle, firewood, and all other necessaries," and asked to make letters patent for the messenger specifying what he should receive. <sup>(1)</sup> All these smaller items such as firing and light, must have been provided in nearly every case, if not in all. Yet these are the only instances in which such necessary things as candles and firewood are mentioned.

The messenger who receives a corrody from the king at the end of his career was in many respects better off than his colleague who received a pension. He had a fitting chamber, with everything found, the company and services of his groom, and a share in the common life of the house. He had been accustomed in the king's household to be one of a large number, acting under the orders of controlling officers; and he preferred this communal type of existence. The messenger who retired with a pension missed the companionship and the amenities of his old life, and found his allowance barely sufficient to cover all his needs. He can hardly have paid the wages of a servant on 4½d a day. So he may have envied his colleague for the security of his new existence, just as the corrodian may have wished at times for the pensioner's freedom of action. The material advantages attached to the corrody, from the recipient's point of view, as well as its convenience to the king, may explain the popularity

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(1) Ibid. 1318-1323 p.117; 1330-1333 p.319.

of this form of pension during the early fourteenth century, and show why both king and messenger regretted the restrictions placed upon such grants as the century progressed.

#### 4. Death.

There remains yet one more aspect of the king's responsibility towards his messengers to consider. This is, the king's attitude towards such members of his household who died in his service. There are several instances recorded in which men still among the king's active messengers died and were buried at the king's expense. Two cursores garderobe, Robert de Crouland and Robert de Riburgh, were buried in November 1319 at York and the king's almoner accounted at the wardrobe for 5/- spent by his vallet "pro exequiis factis circa corpora Roberti de Crouland' et Roberti de Riburgh' cursorum garderobe defunctorum mense Novembris anno presenti".<sup>(1)</sup> While the wardrobe was supreme, it was the almoner who dealt with such matters; after its decline, similar expenses had to be met by the exchequer. That department had no vallets to attend to household funerals, and when a messenger died in the king's service, the exchequer

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(1) Add.MS. 17362 f.3.

officials deputed one of the other nuncii regis to make all necessary arrangements. Thus when Andrew de Retford, king's messenger, died in April 1375, a sum of 7/4 was allowed in his name and appeared on the issue roll as given to Andrew de Retford "defuncto, nuper nuncio regis, in denariis sibi liberatis per manus Alani de Barley de elemosina regis pro sepultura corporis sui per consideracionem thesaurarii et camerariorum". (1)

In short, the king seems to have made himself responsible for the decent burial of any messengers who, while yet in his service, should die through accident or disease. Compared with other sums allowed for the funerals of other members of the household, the 5/- or 7/4 spent for these messengers does not appear unliberal, and was certainly not the medieval equivalent of a pauper's burial.

It is not clear whether in such an event, the wives and dependants of the messengers received anything for their future support. We know that some of the king's messengers were married, and can trace the names of a few of their wives, chiefly in connection with pensions or grants allowed to messengers and released in their absence to their wives. Thus Christiana, wife of John de Cantuaria, collected his allowance of 1d a day from the sheriff of Essex while John, with another messenger John Blund, was sent by the king with letters for the court of Rome

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(1) Issue roll No.456 m.21.

in May 1227.<sup>(1)</sup> Duca or Douce, wife of Thomas de Oxford queen's messenger, received 100/- in quittance of her husband's pension in 1275<sup>(2)</sup> and Constance, wife of Simon Lowys, collected his grant from the exchequer in 1295<sup>(3)</sup> When Walter Cardinal's daily allowance of 4½d was in arrears in 1374, his wife Cecilia was given an imprest on the amount due of 66/8.<sup>(4)</sup> In these pensions granted to the messenger for his lifetime, his wife naturally shared. But what provision was made for her if she outlived her husband, and what allowance if any was given to the wife of a messenger whose death was directly due to accidents incurred in the king's service, it is impossible to say. In one instance only is compensation mentioned, and it is not certain whether this messenger belonged to the regular service. William Crayling in 1384 was sent to the Netherlands with important documents, and while on his way to deliver them, was killed at Sluys "on account of the message aforesaid". His widow Natalicia received the sum of £13.4.10 to assist her in paying William's debts and as a form of compensation.<sup>(5)</sup> This money, and the robe given by Henry to Marsilie widow of Henry le Messenger in 1268<sup>(6)</sup> are the only references which I have noticed to messengers' dependants.

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- (1) Cal.Lib.R. 1226-1240 pp.32,34.  
 (2) Issue roll No.28.  
 (3) Issue roll No.91.  
 (4) Issue roll No.451.  
 (5) Issues of the Exchequer ed. Devon p.225.  
 (6) Cl.R. 1264-1268 p.461.

All these provisions for illness, age or death were in their nature gifts, made by the king to his servants of his free will. They could not be claimed as a right, and the king was not compelled except by custom and christianity to grant them to anyone. Much therefore depended upon the generosity of the king himself, and the strictness with which he interpreted his obligations towards his familia. Professor Johnstone has pointed out the varying attitudes towards almsgiving in general taken by John, Henry III, and Edward I and how characteristic the almsgiving of each proved to be. <sup>(1)</sup> The same may be said of the distribution of pensions and gifts among members of the household, and the use made of the king's alms to provide for sick or aged messengers. Henry III's generosity, curbed at once by Edward I, the unsystematic endeavours of Edward II to fulfil his duties in this respect, and finally the more lavish but hardly more systematic almsgiving of Edward III, were all typical of the men in whose name the grants were made. No king, however, denied his obligation, even though he might attempt to fulfil it at the church's expense, instead of his own. The king's messenger could expect some reward for long and faithful service when he had made his last journey for the king.

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(1) H. Johnstone "Poor Relief in the Royal Households of thirteenth century England" Speculum IV 149-167 (1929) "John's niggardliness, Henry's lavishness, Edward's via media, are different ways of treating a recognised obligation, denied by none of them". (Ibid.p.162)



VI. The Messenger's Duties.

The first and most important duty of the king's messenger service was, of course, the taking of letters. All other tasks performed by the messengers were subsidiary to this one, and the wardrobe accounts for the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries show that by far the greater part of a messenger's time was so occupied. It must be understood that though the nuncii regis of the fourteenth century were privileged beyond the cursores garderobe, they never separated themselves from this larger messenger group, or confined their services to more dignified tasks than the ordinary transport of letters. In this respect, their development followed a different course to that taken by the cursores pape during the later part of this century. These highly privileged papal messengers grew from letter-carriers into ceremonial messengers, who were only sent out on important errands, and whose time was largely occupied with attendance at court functions and at the public processions, during which their duty was to proceed before the pope and keep back the throng with their rods of office. <sup>(1)</sup> The reason for

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(1) Yves Renouard op.cit., p.7. et.seq.

this divergence in function is not found in a greater restriction in the duties imposed on the nuncii regis. As will be seen the tasks undertaken by them, in addition to their main work, were multifarious. But the king had no alternative on which to depend whereas the pope could supplement his own cursores by employing either the common public messengers to be found in most Italian cities, or the fully organised messenger systems of the great mercantile and banking firms. Renouard notes how, throughout the fourteenth century, the need for economy forced the Avignon papacy to employ paid messengers as little as possible, and rely more and more on the uncertainties of outside service. This policy prevented the development of the papal cursores as a messenger service, and turned their energies into other channels. In England, on the other hand, the miscellaneous tasks of the nuncii regis never became sufficiently important to obscure the real purpose of the household messengers, and the prompt dispatch of the king's letters at home and abroad remained their primary duty.

There were however other duties which messengers were sometimes asked to undertake. In the first place, they might be charged with the arrest of prisoners for the king, and the responsibility for prisoners, who had to be brought from one part of the country to another, was often given to members of the king's messenger service. In the second place, they were

sometimes put in charge of considerable sums of money which had to be transported from the exchequer to the court, wherever that might be. Thirdly, they might be sent to escort foreign envoys, partly as a mark of respect to the government from which the envoys came, and partly in order to watch the movements and limit the activities of such foreign agents in England.

Messengers themselves were occasionally employed as spies. Finally, the messengers of wardrobe and household could be called upon to undertake any urgent commission, from buying horses to supervising the grinding of corn: in the words of Wheeler-Holohan<sup>(1)</sup> "they were employed whenever persons of authority and standing were needed to perform the king's errands!"

There does not appear to have been any hard and fast distinction between the tasks entrusted to nuncii regis, and those allocated to cursores garderobe. It is true that on the whole the messenger had more responsibility than the courier, that important dispatches, valuable articles, and large sums of money were generally entrusted to nuncii regis. When messengers were urgently needed, however, and a courier of long service was at hand, the king's officials had no scruples in employing the inferior messenger, even mounting him if

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(1) Wheeler-Holohan. op.cit. p.7.

necessary, or providing him with a groom as escort. (1) No distinction was drawn at this period between messengers employed for home or foreign service. Both nuncii and cursores were sent abroad with the king's missives, and though the mounted messenger was generally called upon to undertake long and arduous journeys, there are plenty of instances of cokini and cursores being sent as far afield as Rome. The enrolled wardrobe account of 1236-1238, for instance, includes among the expenses of that department the money spent "in expensis nunciorum peditum (2) euntibus ad curiam Romanam". Neither type of messenger had a monopoly of journeys abroad, and the modern division of the messenger corps into two distinct bodies for home and foreign service does not correspond with any distinction found among the earlier messengers.

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(1) Roger Mynot cursor spent 10/- on a journey to York "pro vadiis suis et conductione equorum" in 1363 (Issue roll no.415 m.28); and Robert de Cestre cursor received 3/- for writs taken in July 1324 "pro expensis suis et unius gacionis sibi associatis pro dicto negotio festinando". (E.A.381/4 m.2).

(2) Pipe roll no.81.

(1) The Carriage of Letters.

The various duties outlined above must now be examined in detail. First among them comes the transport of letters. The majority of these were letters of great or privy seal to be taken to different parts of England and Wales. It is of interest here to compare the amount of home and foreign correspondence, and to note how far the number of journeys within the realm exceeded the number of those abroad. The roll of expenses of messengers extant for 1252-3 records 182 journeys by nuncii, cokini, and casual letter-carriers. Of these four only (including one of the king and queen of Scotland) were to foreign personages. <sup>(1)</sup> In 1299-1300, out of 359 entries under the titulus de nunciis in the wardrobe account, 19 only re-  
lated to journeys abroad. <sup>(2)</sup> In 1305-6, out of 416 entries, 13  
were to places overseas. <sup>(3)</sup> Again, among the relevant entries in the first roll for daily foreign expenses, only 4 out of 274  
refer to messengers travelling outside the realm. <sup>(4)</sup> The French wars of Edward III raised the yearly total of foreign letters for those periods when the court was abroad, but scarcely

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(1) E.A. 308/1.

(2) Lib.Quot.Gard. This figure does not include Scottish journeys since the court was, for much of this year, established in the north.

(3) E.A. 369/11.

(4) E.A. 379/19 (1323-4).

increased the ordinary total. For 1334-5, when the roll of daily foreign expenses gives us details of 249 journeys, 20<sup>(1)</sup> were to places overseas and 5 to Scotland. Thus it is clear that the average messenger was more accustomed to travelling in England than abroad, and that more letters were dispatched in the ordinary routine of government than were sent out during the course of foreign diplomacy.

(a) Letters sent abroad.

Letters sent abroad during our period may be divided into four groups: first, those sent to English possessions, second, those sent to English agents at foreign courts, third, those sent to relations of the royal family, and fourth, those sent on diplomatic business.

The first group consisted of administrative orders and letters corresponding to the royal commands sent to the sheriffs at home. Those for Gascony were sent, as a rule, directly to the seneschal, who acted upon the instructions himself or forwarded<sup>(2)</sup> them by his own messengers to the appropriate officers. The

(1) E.A. 387/9.

(2) Some of the accounts for the expenses of Gascon messengers are to be found among exchequer accounts at the Public Record Office. One for 1303-4, for instance, gives the sums spent on messengers by the seneschal's deputy "pro partis et negotiis domini regis." (E.A.159/10). Another, for 1309-1310, contains a long list of messengers sent out with the seneschal's letters. (E.A. 163/3).

partis?

constable of Bordeaux was also in close touch with the home government, and messengers taking letters to the seneschal had generally some communication for the constable also in their boxes. To take one instance, John le Blak, nuncius regis, was sent to Gascony in 1307 with letters for both seneschal and constable, the journey costing the wardrobe 33/4.<sup>(1)</sup> After Calais had fallen into English hands, a similar correspondence was maintained between the king and the governor of the town. Messengers were sent regularly with instructions and brought back reports on the state of affairs, This regular intercourse not only kept the king's officials abroad in touch with developments at home, but also enabled the king to obtain information on the progress of his foreign possessions. In time of war, it was particularly necessary to send speedy news of truces entered into by the king, giving their terms and duration. Thus Berengar Calder, nuncius, was sent to Calais with letters "de treuga proclamanda" in November 1353.<sup>(2)</sup> Repeated orders for the better fortification and provisioning of the town are found among the accounts for the expenses of messengers in the exchequer.<sup>(3)</sup>

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(1) E.A. 373/15 f.24.

(2) Issue roll no.373 m.12.

(3) e.g. Instructions about the victuals needed for Calais and permission to sell others not required were taken out by John Elyot and John Knouseley nuncii regis, and Andrew Piers cursor in 1375-6. (Issue roll no.459 mm.18, 24, 27).

and John Elyot nuncius was sent in April 1377 "pro secretis negotiis regis" to the captain of the town of Calais and the captains of the castles of Ardres and Guines. <sup>(1)</sup> Messengers sent out by the home government were rarely paid their expenses both there and back, for it was expected that the recipient of the original letter would reply by the same messenger and pay for his return to England.

The second group of letters, those sent to English envoys abroad, also contained instructions from the king who expected a reply by return. King John sent his messenger Robert le Herberjur, with messages for his envoys in Rome in 1210 <sup>(2)</sup> and the accounts of Edward I's messengers provide numerous instances of such journeys. Robert Petit in October 1297 took letters to Reginald Ferre and Richard de Havering who were engaged on the king's business in Germany, <sup>(3)</sup> and Simon Lowys took similar instructions to Robert de Burghesh and Roger Sauvage "profectis in nuncium regis ad regem Francie" <sup>(4)</sup> in August 1304. Such messengers were nearly always charged with letters from the envoys, to take back to the king, and the expenses of the return journey were either included in the envoy's account, or paid by wardrobe or exchequer to the messenger himself when he returned.

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- (1) Issue roll No.462 m.1.  
 (2) Rot.de.Lib. pp.128,153.  
 (3) Add.MS. 7965 f.113 v.  
 (4) Add.MS. 8835 f.109.

"Mmain  
 or were  
 they actually  
 sent to  
 Germany"



Thus the account for 1340-1342 contains the expenses of William Fox, nuncius, who brought back the letters of the king's envoy Bartholemew de Burghash to Westminster with news of the truce (1) between Edward and the king of France, which he had arranged.

When special envoys were sent abroad on a diplomatic mission, it was not unusual for a messenger to be sent with them in order to bring back immediate news of their safe arrival. Robert Snelling cokinus, was sent in July 1299 with William de Melton as far as London "ad reportandum regi nova de expen- (2) ditione sua." William de Dogmersfeld and Geoffrey le Galeys nuncii regis, were messengers frequently employed by the king for this duty. In 1290 Dogmersfeld was sent to Paris with Otto (3) de Grandison the king's envoy to the French court, and in 1299 le Galeys went abroad twice with solemn messengers. In April of that year he accompanied the Archdeacon of Richmond "ad partes transmarinas pro litteris suis ad regem reportando," and in May was sent again with another messenger William de (4) Alkham, in the train of two envoys going abroad. The home government could then be certain of receiving news from the solemn messenger at the earliest possible moment, and with the greatest secrecy. The envoy might also find a messenger

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(1) E.A. 389/8

(2) E.A. 355/18 m.3.

(3) E.A. 308/12 m.1.

(4) E.A. 356/8 mm.10 and 12 d.

useful; this is illustrated by the particulars of expenses drawn up by John de Benstede on his return from a mission abroad in 1305. He shows how valuable had been the services of Guillotus, nuncius regis, who accompanied him as far as Paris by the king's orders, and was sent ahead by the envoy to find the king's other agent, Otto de Grandison, then in Toulouse. Bensted was thus enabled to go straight to Bordeaux, where thanks to the offices of the messenger, Otto de Grandison joined him in due course and they were able to consult upon the king's affairs and send home a report by the same nuncius.<sup>(1)</sup>

Other instances might be taken from accounts of Edward II or III. Warin the king's courier, for one, was sent in 1335 with envoys going to Flanders so that he might bring back their letters without delay.<sup>(2)</sup> One entry provides an early instance of the use of the word ambassador for the king's diplomatic agents abroad: the sum of 12d. was paid by the wardrobe in November 1334 to Richard Clerk "deferenti litteras Ambassatoris Regis Anglie existencis in partibus Francie eidem domino Rege".<sup>(3)</sup> Solemn envoys travelled much more slowly than a single messenger, unimpeded with baggage; and on some occasions when the king wished to send further instructions, a messenger would be sent

(1) E.A. 309/9 (C.L.Kingsford "John de Benstede and his missions for Edward I" Essays Presented to R.Lane Poole 1927, 332-359 pp.337-8 and 353.

(2) E.A. 309/22.

(3) E.A. 387/9.

after the mission had started out, with a good chance of catching up the party before it left Dover. Thus Robert le Hunte, one of Edward II's cursores, was sent in 1323 with letters of great seal addressed to certain formal messengers who had set out towards the French court "eunti de London' usque Douorr' vel ultra partes transmarinas" and the clerk has added in the margin against the sum of 6/- paid for his expenses "pro eo quod ivit Paris".<sup>(1)</sup> If no regular messenger were available, the king would order the treasurer or his deputy to provide one. Such an order was sent by Edward II to the treasurer in 1310 when he required "an envoy to carry without delay to Gascony two pars of letters under the great seal to J. Bishop of Norwich John de Britannia, earl of Richmond, and their fellows - and to deliver to the said envoy reasonable expenses."<sup>(2)</sup>

On the envoy's return to England, again, a messenger might be sent to meet the ship at Dover in order to bring back the news as quickly as possible. Thus Adam de Bayworth was sent to Dover to meet the Treasurer when he came from abroad<sup>(3)</sup> and again<sup>(4)</sup> "ad expectandum ibidem nunciis de transmarinis partibus."

(1) Issue roll no.205 m.7 d.

c.f. the story told of Wolsey who posted so eagerly on the king's errand that he met the messenger sent after him on the Dover road as he returned from his mission. (Walker Haste, Post, Haste! pp.129-130).

(2) Cal.Cl.R. 1307-1313 p.289.

(3) E.A. 308/7 (1284-5)

(4) E.A. 308/8 (1285)

When the court was in Gascony the proceeding was reversed, and it was English news that was eagerly expected. Adam Attenasse, cokinus, was sent with letters to merchants in Bordeaux and told to go on from there to Libourne to meet William de Bliburgh, and bring back information.<sup>(1)</sup> The envoys on their part, generally employed messengers of their own or hired courriers to take news of their proceedings to the king. In many of the particulars of envoy's expenses a special section is set aside for the expenses of messengers, and the total spent under this head was in some cases quite considerable. Thus in 1327 an envoy in Aquitaine claimed £19.2.2 for messengers alone, and showed by his detailed list that he had employed 21 persons during the four months that he had spent abroad.<sup>(2)</sup> John Bishop of Winchester took his own personal messengers with him, Adam, his nuncius, and John Fauk his cursor: their expenses came to 46/3, including the 4/- spent "pro quadam littera de conductu in curiam regis francie habendo pro predicto Adam<sup>e</sup> et Johanne."<sup>(3)</sup> So either through his own messengers or through those of his envoys, the king obtained fairly regular information of the doings of his diplomatic agents abroad, and was able to keep them informed of his pleasure.

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(1) E.A. 308/10 (1288-9).

(2) E.A. 309/36.

(3) E.A. 309/27. The account covers four journeys, of which the one mentioned is the first.

The third group, letters sent abroad to relations of the royal family, needs little comment. Such communications were maintained with some regularity, and had, no doubt, a diplomatic as well as a personal significance. While Eleanor of Castile was queen, messengers were sent on several occasions to take letters into Spain,<sup>(1)</sup> while during the lifetime of queen Philippa, the number of letters to Hainault was considerably increased.<sup>(2)</sup> The most regular correspondence seems to have been carried on between Isabella of France, and her brother, especially during the years 1311-1315.<sup>(3)</sup> For this duty, the queen's own messengers were generally employed and the sums spent on such letter-carrying figure more noticeably on the accounts of her household than on the wardrobe books of the king's.

The fourth group of foreign letters carried by household or wardrobe messengers were the letters sent on diplomatic business. The court of Rome was the only foreign court with which constant diplomatic intercourse was maintained, and of the messengers sent abroad during any year, the majority were

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- (1) Arnold Bon, Thomas Squiret, and Ralph Laundesle took several letters to Spain while the court was in Gascony in 1288-9 (E.A. 308/10).
  - (2) Gilbert nuncius regine, for example, was sent twice to Hainault between March and May 1332 (John Rylands Library Latin MS. no.235 f.32).
  - (3) William Bale her messenger took her letters to the kings of France and Navarre, and John de Noyon nuncius regine, was sent abroad several times on the same errand. (Cotton MS. Nero C VIII. E.A. 375/9 f.34 and 376/20).

carrying letters destined for the papal curia. In some instances, the messenger was presumably intended to deliver the letter himself; Henry III in the writ which he sent to the Treasurer in June 1335 authorising the payment of six marks to Thomas de Brackel and Walter de Lutegereshal "nunciis nostris <sup>(1)</sup> quos mittimus ad Romanam curiam" does not mention any intermediary by whom the letters were to be delivered to the papal officers. Nor, to take one later example, is there any indication of the methods of delivery given in the wardrobe's record of the journey of William de Lugteburgh and Robert de Manefeld <sup>(2)</sup> nuncii regis with letters of great seal for the pontiff. In many entries, however, we are told specifically that the messenger was to hand over his dispatches to some royal envoy or agent, who would find enclosed in his own instructions, a formal letter addressed to the Pope which he would present himself with due ceremony. Sometimes the letter was to be handed by the messenger to a cardinal, <sup>(3)</sup> as was the missive taken by John Russel nuncius regis in 1319, but more usually, the intermediary was either an English envoy already at the court, or some agent employed by the king in such negotiations. Gilbert de Lutegarshale cokinus, was sent in 1302 with several letters for persons in Aquitaine and for a certain Master Reymund Arnald de

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(1) Exchequer "liberate" roll 1203 m.1.

(2) E.A. 375/5 (1312-1313).

(3) Issue roll no.186 m.4.

Rama "et cum litteris sub magno sigillo summo pontifici directis pro dicto magistro Reymundo."<sup>(1)</sup> This Master Reymund, had, we<sup>(2)</sup> know, been chosen by Edward I as an envoy on several occasions and it was natural that he should prefer to use his agent for the formal presentation of a letter addressed to the pope. John Joseph, cursor, took letters of Edward II in September 1317 addressed to the pope, the pope's secret notary master Peter Faber and the cardinals, with instructions to deliver the whole<sup>(3)</sup> bundle to master Andrew the king's agent in the court of Rome. This was probably the course pursued by Jacke Faukes, nuncius regis, whose expenses on a journey to Avignon have survived in detail. He omits to tell us anything of the letters he took or of their destination, but he had been responsible for their delivery in the curia, there would no doubt have been some<sup>(4)</sup> incidental expenses to record. The more important the letter the more formal had to be its presentation, and the king on one occasion, apologised in his letter for not sending it by a more dignified messenger. Speed, he said, did not permit of a solemn envoy,<sup>(5)</sup> and the remark illustrates the difference between envoy and messenger, not only in status, but in rate of progress on the road.

(1) E.A. 361/16.

(2) e.g. in 1300 (Lib. Quot. Gard. p.56).

(3) Society of Antiquaries MS. no.121 p.96.

(4) E.A. 312/4 (See Appendix C.)

(5) Cal.Cl.R. 1279-1288 p.431.

i.e.  
Andrew  
Salpiti.

Cost was a further consideration. By employing some intermediary, the king could lessen considerably the expenses of his own messenger. Thus a letter for the pope was in November 1323 enclosed in one to the merchants of the Bardi "ad ulterius transmittendum".<sup>(1)</sup> By this means the wardrobe avoided the whole cost of the journey abroad, for the letter was put with the other packages sent by the society and only taken by the king's messenger as far as London. From there, the merchants' own courier would be responsible for transport and delivery. Again, in 1334, a letter addressed to the pope was taken by the king's cursor to the archbishop of Canterbury for further dispatch.<sup>(2)</sup> This form of economy was most often practised in connection with letters for Rome or Avignon because messengers outside the royal service could be found on that route. But Gascon dispatches were sometimes taken in a similar way by outside agencies. Douenald de Athol the king's messenger left the court with letters to a number of English magnates "et decem et octo brevia sub magno sigillo ad liberandum Thome Lercediakne ad deferendum in Vasconia diversis magnatibus ibidem".<sup>(3)</sup>

Beyond the court of Rome, the king does not seem to have maintained regular diplomatic relations with any foreign power. But wardrobe and exchequer accounts show, in their records of

(1) E.A. 379/19 f.2.

(2) Cotton MS. Nero C VIII f.286.v.

(3) E.A. 381/4 m.12 (1324-5).



the expenses of messengers, the general trend of foreign policy, and the interest taken at any given time in the affairs of Europe could be gauged with some accuracy by the number and urgency of the letters dispatched abroad by the king. The commencement of Edward III's campaigns in France is marked in the accounts of the messenger service by a sudden increase in correspondence with the Netherlands. This is of course what we should expect, but the extent of Edward's correspondence with the Emperor, the Counts of Flanders and Hainault, the Dukes of Brabant and Gelders, and with Jan van Artevelde is not always realised, nor the number of letters sent between 1338 and 1340 to the heads of various Flemish towns.<sup>(1)</sup> Both before and during the king's expedition, messengers were continually passing between England and Flanders, and negotiations between the king and his would-be allies were in constant progress. It is clear that the Flemings required more than a little persuasion to throw in their lot with Edward. That they proved unsatisfactory as allies, and that they played a very small part in the later phases of the French war might be judged from the absence of such correspondence later; none of the wardrobe or exchequer accounts for later years record anything like the same number of letters, either to the towns or to the magnates. Thus the course

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(1) Misc.Bks.Exch.T.of R. no.203 (1338-1341); E.A.389/8 (1340-1342).

of diplomacy is reflected in the history of the messengers' service, and from their movements alone, had we no other guide, we might gather what line the king's foreign policy was taking through the fourteenth century.

(b) Letters sent out within the realm.

Letters sent out through the organisation of the king's messenger service within the realm were mainly of the administrative type. The vast majority were addressed to the sheriffs and concerned every aspect of their work. The accounts give a brief summary of the contents of the letters taken by each messenger as a check upon the numbers sent out, should any question arise. From these notes we can see the workings of one part of the machinery of government in peace and war, and the number of letters and writs addressed to each sheriff throughout England, in the course of a year, emphasises the complexity of the sheriff's business. In time of peace, it is the routine of government that appears from the regular instructions taken out by the messengers. Orders for the promulgation of statutes and royal commands, for the collection of taxes, the opening and closing of the ports, the establishment of the

staple, the control of money, all reached the sheriff through the king's regular messenger service. To give only a few instances, messengers in 1299 were taking the king's letters under the great seal with the form of a magna carta and the charters of the forests as reissued by Edward I, and, in addition, the new statutes made at Westminster in that year, to all the sheriffs in England. <sup>(1)</sup> Thomas de Hertford cokinus took the new statute with other letters to the sheriffs of Gloucester, Hereford, Worcester, Shrewsbury and Stafford in 1285-6. <sup>(2)</sup> Couriers were carrying letters and statutes in May 1331 <sup>(3)</sup> and as the reign of Edward III progressed, an entry of this kind was made on the issue rolls after every parliament. Few tell us which statute was to be proclaimed, and the exceptions indicate perhaps which enactments seemed sufficiently important to the departmental clerks to deserve mention. Among them are the revocation of the statute of labourers, which was sent out by divers nuncii and cursores on 9 November 1359, at the cost of 38/3 to the exchequer; <sup>(4)</sup> and the law regarding purveyance by the king which was proclaimed after the Winchester parliament of 1371. <sup>(5)</sup> Writs and letters about the collection of taxes and customs are plentiful, and, under Edward III, were issued after

(1) E.A. 356/8 m.1.

(2) E.A. 308/8.

(3) Issue roll no.256 mm. 8 and 19.

(4) Issue roll no.400 m.8.

(5) Issue roll no.443 m.16.

presumably  
the whole  
Statute  
law apart  
from its  
Chapters  
in the  
Case.

every parliament which granted a fresh levy to the king. So in the same year, instructions were at once sent out for the collection of the money conceded by parliament and convocation. (1) Every change in Edward's staple policy necessitated a fresh set of regulations, sent throughout the country by the messengers and published in every district by the sheriffs. The reestablishment of the staple in Calais in 1362, for instance, was proclaimed in obedience to letters sent out on 27 July by a number of messengers who received £4.6.9 for their expenses. (2) Summons to parliament addressed to the magnates in every county passed through the sheriffs' hands, and with these individual summons, the royal messengers brought the writs instructing them to arrange the election of knights of the shire. In some counties, the sheriff must have received letters from the central government almost every week in the year, if we may judge from the dates on which payments to messengers are recorded.

In time of war, the king's messengers were responsible for the distribution of writs authorising the levy of troops either for defence or for the army, the collection of foodstuffs for the king's forces and the provision of ships. All these were part of the work of the sheriffs, and writs authorising each of

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(1) *Ibid.* mm. 1 and 4.

(2) *Issue roll* no.410 m.37.

these necessary actions had to be conveyed to the local officer by a messenger from the central government. The French wars of the fourteenth century have left their traces in the accounts for messengers' expenses in numerous letters and commissions of this nature. (1) Letters to the tenants-in-chief demanding their military service were also sent to the sheriffs for distribution, thereby increasing the sheriff's duties, but sparing the time and expenses of the king's messenger. This is illustrated best by the arrangements made by Edward I for his campaigns; in 1282, the expenses of messengers taking such notifications form part of the wardrobe's expenditure for the year. Alan de Gyseburgh, a nuncius, took letters to the sheriffs of Devon, Somerset, Dorset, Cornwall, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Gloucestershire, and Herefordshire "quod dicti vicecomites transmittant litteras regis omnibus servicia domino regi in guerra debentibus," a journey which took the messenger six days to accomplish. (2) The various delays incidental to medieval warfare, are reflected in the messages sent out to cancel earlier instructions remand victuals ordered, and even, in some cases, to postpone the campaign altogether.

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(1) See for instance the entries relating to messengers in the roll and counterroll of daily foreign expenses for 1337-9. (E.A. 388/5 and 6) or the issue rolls for the years 1367 to the end of the reign which are full of commissions for the defence of the country and the collection of troops. (Issue rolls nos.429-462).

(2) E.A. 308/5.

Pauses in the war are marked for the messenger by letters instructing the sheriff to proclaim the truce publicly, and the news of the final conclusion of peace would reach the ears of the ordinary citizen by the same means. So in 1372, the peace entered into between the king and the count of Flanders at Calais was proclaimed<sup>(1)</sup> and William Harding the king's messenger took the letters ordering a similar proclamation by the sheriff of Gloucester in July 1375 "pro treuga capta inter dominum regem et adversarium suum Francie proclamanda".<sup>(2)</sup> Another side of the king's war-preparations is seen in the letters sent out by messengers to all bishops, abbots, and priors, and to the university of Oxford "de orando pro rege et exercitu suo super mare existentibus ad resistendam maliciam inimicorum suorum et pro statu regni Anglie".<sup>(3)</sup>

The importance of the messenger service as a factor in the administration is again seen in the commissions taken by nuncii and cursores to itinerant justices, coroners, justices of the peace, and indeed every local officer who represented the central power. The bailiffs on the king's manors, the mayors of towns, the officials of every port that could produce a ship for the king's service, even the heads of religious houses whose horses were requisitioned to carry the king's

(1) Issue roll no.444 m.30.

(2) Issue roll no.457 m.21.

(3) Issue roll no.446.

victuals, all were probably familiar with the king's messenger and disliked the sight of one whose appearance generally meant fresh demands on their time and resources. One rather unusual commission may be mentioned here, for it shows how the records of the central government can, at times, reaffirm the statements of chronicles, and give an insight into the publicity methods of Edward I. In 1291, John de Oxenedes' chronicle tells us, the king wrote to all religious houses, asking them to insert in their chronicles an account of his actions "considerans et perpendens per tenorem chronicarum virorum religiosorum jus suum in regno Scotiae non modicum fuisse declaratum, volens hujusmodi facti sui reique gestae memoriam perpetuis temporibus fore divaturam."<sup>(1)</sup> The messengers who took this letter, Arnold Bon and Richard de Norwich, received their expenses from the exchequer, and the sum paid to them was entered as spent on sending letters to all abbots, priors and men of religion that<sup>(2)</sup> the deeds done in Scotland might be entered in the chronicles. So the king hoped to win perpetual recognition for his claims at the cost of 7/- spent on the expenses of his two messengers, and the chronicler who inserted the king's letters received his instructions and probably a certain amount of news as well from the mouth of men who, as messengers, were in a position to see

(1) Chronica Johanne de Oxenedes ed. Ellis H. (Rolls Series 1859) pp.280-283.

(2) Issue roll no.70.

and hear much that went on at court and at the war.

The messenger service was thus the essential link between the king and his local representatives, through whom he controlled the great mass of his people and a study of the types of letters sent out by the messengers during any year shows us from a new angle the machinery by which a medieval king could make his commands known and obeyed. The carriage of letters within the realm formed by far the most important duty of the king's nuncii and cursores, and to this all other tasks were subsidiary.

(2) The arrest and custody of prisoners.

Among the secondary duties attached to the messenger service were two which, like the carriage of letters, can be traced back to the serjeanty system of Norman kings. These were first the arrest and escort of prisoners, and secondly the transportation of money and valuables. In South Wales and the Marches, the escort of prisoners to the lord's court was a duty frequently imposed on tenants and in some instances the latter were responsible for the prisoner's safe keeping prior to the trial. <sup>(1)</sup> This type of serjeanty was not restricted to Wales or to the lands of tenants. To a serjeanty in Galtres forest

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(1) W. Rees South Wales and the March 1284-1415 (1924) pp.60-61.



near York was attached the obligation of keeping prisoners of the forest for the king,<sup>(1)</sup> and the custodianship of gaols was sometimes associated with the holding of land.<sup>(2)</sup> Closely allied to the duty of keeping prisoners was another, that of making attachments and distrains in the name of the court and of collecting the lord's debts. On the manor of Marden in Herefordshire, tenants were obliged, among other duties, to make distrains on men for debts owed to the king;<sup>(3)</sup> and a serjeanty holder who was obliged to carry writs in the district between the rivers Tyne and Coquet, was also expected to make summonses and attachments at the coroner's order.<sup>(4)</sup> A third obligation often associated with serjeanties was that of conveying treasure. To take one instance, the holder of a piece of land in Cirencester was to conduct the king's treasure within the county at his own expense and beyond the county at the king's.<sup>(5)</sup>

These three serjeanty obligations, the custody of prisoners, the making of distrains and summonses, and the transport of treasure were originally separate and distinct

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- (1) E. Kimball Serjeanty Tenure in Medieval England (1936) p.49.  
 (2) The keeping of Winchester and Exeter gaols was a serjeanty obligation throughout the thirteenth century, as that of the Fleet had been until John's reign. (Ibid. pp.89 and 98).  
 (3) Ibid. p.99.  
 (4) Ibid. p.86.  
 (5) Kimball op.cit. p.101.

duties unconnected with the dispatch of writs and letters. But where more than one obligation was attached to any serjeanty, the separate services performed by the holder became confused. In the majority of instances cited by Miss Kimball, three or more of these duties were demanded of the same man. Thus, to the dispatch of writs was generally added some further duty, the making of summonses or the conveyance of treasure. The serjeanty messenger was so frequently obliged to take charge of money or collect debts that an artificial connection grew up between these services, and they began to be regarded as in some way part of the messenger's work. The Herefordshire tenants mentioned above were expected to summon certain lords, make distrains for debts, and conduct treasure from Hereford to London. When for the serjeanty messenger was substituted a messenger of the king's household, the same duties were demanded of him as had been demanded of his predecessor.

It is perhaps possible to trace in one instance some definite connection between the serjeanty and the household messenger. The tenants of Marden, whose duties have been described, were fulfilling their obligations to the king until well into the thirteenth century. Now Henry III had at least two messengers, Walter and Simon de Maworthin, <sup>(1)</sup> in his regular

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(1) Walter de Maworthin nuncius regis received a pension in 1263 (Cl.R. 1261-1264 p.233); Simon de Maworthin was in the king's service in 1264-5 (E.A. 308/2).

service who came from this village, and who may have been the descendants of the original serjeanty messengers. The list of serjeanties throughout England (given in the Red Book of the Exchequer) for 1212-1217 includes one held by Walter de Mauwerdin "pro summonendis iiiij baronibus ad conducendum thesaurum regis ad Londiniam."<sup>(1)</sup> Yet another messenger William English, was connected by marriage with the same place.<sup>(2)</sup> It is easy to see how duties attached to the original serjeanty were carried on by the messenger after he had entered the king's household.

Some connection between the king's messenger and the custody of prisoners was maintained all through the middle ages, and subsisted into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Allowance was made to Albericus the king's messenger in 1221 for handcuffs which he had bought for the use of prisoners<sup>(3)</sup> and the keeper of Newgate gaol was ordered by letter close to receive and keep in safe custody certain prisoners who would be delivered to him by Robert Blund.<sup>(4)</sup> Bon, another of the king's nuncii, was similarly employed on two occasions during September 1294. The first time he was sent to bring from Wengham to Thurrok "x piscatores de partibus transmarinis captas in mari per nautas Anglie," and on the second to fetch another alien also in the

(1) Red Book of the Exchequer ed. Hall II, 452.

(2) Cl.R. 1231-1234 p.276.

(3) Rot.Lit.Cl. 1204-1227 I, 453.

(4) Cl.R. 1242-1247 p.463.

keeping of English sailors. <sup>(1)</sup> Further instances of this duty attached to the office of messenger are found during the fourteenth century. The Black Prince's Register for 1347 contains an order addressed to the justice of North Wales "in pursuance of a writ from the king, to receive by indenture from Thomas Bolefot and John le Taverner, king's messengers, the body of Arnold de la Meynade and to keep him safely in the castle of Caernarvan, as they will answer for him body for body". <sup>(2)</sup> The Register provides a further instance of this in 1362, when John Dagonet the prince's messenger received a mark for his expenses in bringing the son and heir of Sir John Berners before the prince's council on 16 May in that year, escorting and keeping him safely. <sup>(3)</sup> Another side of the same duty is seen in the permanent establishment of a messenger or ex-messenger of the crown as keeper of a town or castle gaol. Grants of such an office, either in addition to the duties of messenger or in place of them, were not unusual. There is an interesting petition among Chancery Warrants, sent by Robert de Hoton 'messenger' and enclosed by the king in a letter ordering investigation of the case. "Master Robert le Messenger of Hoton shows the king that although the king granted to him the keeping of the gaol of Stafford for life and gave him his charter and sent

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(1) Misc.Bks.Exch.T.of R. no.202 f.23.

(2) Black Prince's Register I, 82.

(3) Ibid. IV, 475.

a writ to the sheriff to deliver the bailiwick to him, the sheriff would not deliver it nor perform the king's command at which many of the people of the county have marvelled, whereby he is at great mischief, and on the point of begging his bread, wherefore he prays the king that a remedy be made for him and he may enjoy the office. The sheriff has demanded surety of keeping prisoners of 2,000 marks which he never had, and Robert tendered sufficient surety of the best serjeants of the county but he refused them."<sup>(1)</sup> We have unfortunately found no clue to the solution, but other instances show that to grant the custodianship of a gaol to a messenger was in no way unusual, and that the sheriff had no grounds for his refusal on this score.<sup>(2)</sup> William Fox nuncius, for example, was made castle porter at Newcastle in 1352 and in addition keeper of the gaol and the prisoners there.<sup>(3)</sup>

No special allowance seems to have been made to the messenger in charge of prisoners, but any reasonable expenses are allowed at the wardrobe or exchequer among the messenger's ordinary travelling expenses. Thus Arnold Bon, put in charge of ten alien fishermen, was reimbursed for the expenses of their

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(1) Cal.Ch.W. I, 561. The original grant is found among letters patent (Cal.Pat.R. 1313-1317 p.366).

(2) Some gaols were attached to the sheriff's farm and therefore not conferable by the king. Stafford gaol may have been one of these. (cf. Cal.Pat.R. 1343-1345 p.157).

(3) Cal.Pat.R. 1350-1354 p.295.

journey, including the money which he paid to cross the Thames. <sup>(1)</sup> Wheeler-Holohan quotes in full the regulations which allowed the seventeenth century messenger to claim 6/8 a day "for keeping a prisoner close with diet" or 3/4 "for keeping a prisoner who finds his own diet"; but even at this date, nothing was allowed "for searching after prisoners." <sup>(2)</sup> Examples of messengers' warrants to arrest dated 1723 and 1762 are given by Thomson in his work on the secretaries of State, for by the eighteenth century those officials had the right to requisition the services of messengers "to convey <sup>(3)</sup> dispatches and arrest suspected persons." Indeed, this remained part of the messenger's office until the division of the king's messenger service into two branches for home and foreign service in 1372. The survival of this incidental duty until so late affords another illustration of the tenacity of

(1) Misc.Bks.Exch.T.of R. no.202.

(2) Wheeler-Holohan op.cit. pp.12-13.

Compare the sums paid "in sustentacione v. servientum peditum intendencium Ade Cok' et Johannem de Balkervill' ad querendum et capiendum malefactores itinerantes in comitatu Norht' quorum quilibet percipit in die ij d.", a payment which was continued for 52 days during 1236-7 (pipe roll no.81). Perhaps the name Cok' should be extended to Cokin-us, in which case this entry would provide an early instance of the use of the word, and another example of powers to arrest entrusted to a messenger.

(3) Thompson The Secretaries of State 1681-1782 pp.175-176. Several instances of actual arrests are cited by the N.E.D. s.v. Messenger.

custom and the close continuity of tradition among the king's messengers.

(3) Conveyance of money and valuables.

The origin of this duty attached to the messenger service will probably be found, in the serjeanty obligation already mentioned, which was so often connected with the taking of writs or the making of summonses that it was at last regarded as part of the ordinary office of a messenger. The duty illustrates the responsibility placed on the king's messengers, and the trust reposed in them, for the sum put into their charge was generally considerable. In some instances, chancery enrolments preserve for us mandates authorising the delivery of money to messengers of royal households. Thus in 1265 the abbot and convent of Thame were ordered to deliver to Edward the king's son or his messenger the £80 deposited in their house by Simon de Mont-  
cho? fort. <sup>(1)</sup> Again in 1274, a mandate was sent to the papal nuncio then in England, Master Reymund de Nogariis, bidding him "deliver to the king's messengers all the money arising from the tenth of the bishopric of Lincoln deposited at Oxford, and of the bishopric of Norwich deposited at Dunwich, the king discharging the church of Rome and the said Master Reymund of

all risk of robbers or other risk." <sup>(1)</sup> In other instances, we learn of the employment of messengers on this work from the wardrobe accounts or issue rolls. William de Ledebury nuncius regis and Thomas de Lincoln were sent to conduct money to the court in 1288-9, receiving the sum of, one shilling for their own travelling expenses. <sup>(2)</sup> Nicholas Ramage, another messenger, transported £200 from Conway to Crukyn in 1283. <sup>(3)</sup> Nor were nuncii regis always chosen for this responsible task. Simon, one of the cokini garderobe of Henry III was sent to the sheriff of Oxford in 1253 "pro denariis habendis ad expensas regine" <sup>(4)</sup> and William de Corf cursor received 8d. for bringing money from Westminster to the Tower in 1322-3 during the Michaelmas session of the exchequer. <sup>(5)</sup> Instances of this duty performed by messengers, either of the household or the wardrobe, can be found throughout the whole of our period. To take two later examples, John Elyot, nuncius, went to Sandwich with a valet named Thomas "pro salve conducto monete," in April 1375, <sup>(6)</sup> and three nuncii were paid the sum of 8d. "pro portagio auri et argenti de theserauria (sic) usque receptem scaccarii" in May 1377. <sup>(7)</sup>

(1) Ibid. 1272-1281 p.53.

(2) E.A. 308/10.

(3) E.A. 351/9.

(4) E.A. 308/1.

(5) Issue roll no.200

(6) Issue roll no.456 m.20.

(7) Issue roll no.462 m.9.



The duty imposed by the original serjeanty obligation had generally been that of transporting money from the locality to the exchequer, during its sessions at Westminster. But from Westminster the sums needed for the daily expenses of the court had to be transferred to the wardrobe, and it was as a rule for this that the services of messengers were required. During peace time and in England, the inconveniences of moving large quantities of specie were obviated by the use of tallies, but this was not possible when the court was abroad in Gascony or when the conduct of war made ready money essential. Thus in 1293-4 the messenger Bon was on two occasions entrusted with the carriage of large sums of money which had to be taken to Portsmouth for dispatch abroad. On the first occasion, 16/- were allowed for the expenses of transport on the sum of £1000; on the second, he was put in charge of £2333.6.8. which with the aid of another man, he was to see safely dispatched to Gascony.<sup>(1)</sup> During the following year, in November 1295 Roger de Windesore nuncius was sent with £80 which was needed for the king's army in Gascony. He took the money by sea from Winchelsea to Plymouth in a cog named the St. Edward, having received 13/4 at Winchelsea for his expenses before he set out, and delivered it safely at Plymouth to be transferred there into another ship bound for Gascony.<sup>(2)</sup> Again during the Scottish wars of Edward I

(1) John Rylands Library Latin MS. no.230.

(2) Misc.Bks.Exch.T.of R. no.202 f.24 v.

and II, and even during the years when the exchequer itself had been moved as far north as York, it was necessary to employ messengers to transport money from London to the north and from York to the actual seat of war. In June 1303, the queen's messenger Godfrey, was sent to fetch the queen's money from York and bring it safely to Tynemouth.<sup>(1)</sup> Robert de Manfeld, messenger of Edward of Carnarvon, was put in charge of money required by Robert de Clyshull the prince's clerk to pay the Welsh foot-soldiers then in Scotland. To secure the passage of so much money, Mansfeld had with him seven archers, whose wages he paid, and an extra horse which he hired to carry the specie. The total expenses of the transit, however, including the archers' wages, only amounted to 13/4.<sup>(2)</sup> A more responsible task came in 1307, when the same messenger, then in the service of the king, was ordered to arrange for the carriage of £4,000 from London to Carlisle.<sup>(3)</sup> For this he was obliged to hire four carts, each with five horses, at 2/6 a day. This figure included the wages of the carters, but Manfeld still had to pay them additional wages for the one day spent in London while the carts were being loaded. To protect the money from attack, 12 men-at-arms were engaged at 1/- a day each, and 16 archers on

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(1) Issue roll no.115.

(2) Issue roll no.108 (1301).

(3) E.A. 373/15 f.11.

foot at 3d a day. One can imagine the cumbersome five-horsed wagons setting out with their 28 guards on horseback and on foot, and Manfeld superintending the whole cortége. They set out on 8 August, and took eleven days to reach Carlisle. There they waited 7 days while the money was divided: part remained in safe-keeping at Carlisle, but £1333.6.8 was repacked to be taken to the king for immediate use. For this new cords and panniers had to be bought. Scottish roads would not take carts, and the money had now to be conveyed by packhorse. Manfeld was responsible for the purchase of these panniers, and for the further wages of the archers and men-at-arms while they waited at Carlisle, and for another 4 days which they spent on the road. The money had to be escorted as far as Castle of Tibres where the king was then staying. Finally, Manfeld dismissed the archers and men-at-arms with 12 days' wages to cover the expenses of their return journey to London: travelling without the carts it was supposed that they would do the journey in 12 days, whether on horse or on foot. The total amount spent on the carriage of the money had been £28.19.1, according to the account struck between Manfeld and the wardrobe; and the whole responsibility for the safety of the money and the expense incurred, had rested on the shoulders of the messenger.

Perhaps in this category we should place the tallies taken

by nuncii and cursores to pay for provisions commandeered by the king, or supplied by his local officials. Thus Richard Swart in November 1335 took a writ from the exchequer and a tally for a hundred marks made out for the collector of customs at Yarmouth who was ordered to pay a certain William Lusser<sup>(1)</sup> for fish provided. The tally system was a great advantage to the crown, both because it postponed the final payment in cash and because it did away with the need for large sums of cash. The messengers were saved many journeys, and the cost of removing specie or coin was avoided.

Closely allied to the duty of escorting money was the care and transport of valuables so often undertaken by messengers in the king's service. The king's jewels formed a monetary reserve more easily portable than coin or bullion, and, as every complete wardrobe book demonstrates, this reserve was constantly changing in amount through gift and purchase. Messengers were often asked to convey valuables to or from the court. A cokinus named Stophole was sent to two Italian merchants for jewels in 1284-5,<sup>(2)</sup> and William Burre and Robert de Newenton nuncii brought a gold crown and other jewels valued altogether<sup>(3)</sup> at £75 from London to the king at Wye in January 1308.

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(1) Cotton MS. Nero C VIII f 293.

(2) E.A. 308/7.

(3) E.A. 373/15 f.26 v.

Their packages included a gold cypher worth £40, and were bulky enough to require an extra horse. The two messengers hired a hackney to carry the valuables and this with their own expenses, cost the wardrobe 4/-, which they received at London before they started.

Many of the valuables taken by messengers were intended by the king as gifts. Among these were most of the pieces of cloth of gold which not infrequently formed part of the messenger's baggage. Piacle, one of the king's messengers, was sent in great haste to bring 4 pieces of cloth of gold from Kildeford to Gillingham where the court happened to be in March 1297,<sup>(1)</sup> and his haste may be explained by another entry which records the dispatch of twenty pieces of cloth of gold to the court of Rome on 11 April following.<sup>(2)</sup> Robert Petit, another messenger, was sent with them as far as Plymouth, and received 8/- for his expenses and the cost of hiring hackneys to carry the cloth. Cokini, too, took gifts and valuables for the king. In 1305-6, John Whiting cokinus was sent to the clerk of the great wardrobe to fetch several pieces of cloth of gold to the court,<sup>(3)</sup> while in the same year William Clerk, another cokinus, took an offering from the king of a piece of cloth of gold to be

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(1) Add.MS. 7965 f.109 v.

(2) Ibid. f.17.

(3) E.A. 369/11 f.146 v.

laid on the shrine of St. Kenelm at Winchcombe in the king's name <sup>(1)</sup> Edward III also employed his messengers when he needed any valuable article, or when he proposed to make a special offering at any shrine. John Faukes his nuncius was sent to London to fetch a golden ship which the king intended to offer as an oblation at Walsingham, that famous place of medieval pilgrimage. <sup>(2)</sup>

(4) Escort of foreign envoys and messengers.

The escort of foreign envoys was a duty often imposed on messengers. It had two objects, first to show respect to the representatives of a foreign power and afford them safe conduct while in England: and second to prevent any unwelcome activity on the part of the envoys. The necessity for the first is obvious, and some knowledgeable guide to the customs and ways of a strange country must have been useful to the envoys in the absence of maps and information. The second comes from a deep-rooted medieval suspicion of all strangers and a belief that all foreign representatives were, in reality, spies. For this there were ample grounds, Philip de Comynnes writing later, gave very sage advice on the treatment of envoys, and his

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(1) Add.MS. 37655 and E.A. 368/27 f.83 v.  
 (2) Misc.Bks.Exch.T.of R. no.204 (1341-5).

suggestions were no more than the practice of medieval courts. He divided these visitors into two groups, friendly and hostile, and advised that both be dismissed as soon as possible. "If they come from true friends of whom there can be no suspicion, treat them with good cheer and grant them frequent audience but dismiss them soon, for friendship among princes does not endure for ever. If from hostile courts, send honourable to meet them, lodge them well, set safe and wise men about them to watch who visits them and keep malcontents away, give them audience at once and be rid of them. Even in time of war one must receive envoys, but see that a keen eye is kept on them, and for every one sent to you, do you in return send two, and take every opportunity of sending, for you can have no better spies, and it will be hard to keep a strict watch over two of three."<sup>(1)</sup>

This counsel had been often practised before Commynes wrote, and the English government of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was careful to see that any foreign visitors to England were watched by "safe and wise men". The king's messengers were the ones usually chosen for this duty, and the accounts provide many instances of nuncii and cursores set to watch solemn envoys or messengers of their own rank who had come from abroad on missions to the king.

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(1) Commynes Mémoires Bk.III, chap.viii (Quoted by J.E. Neale, "The Diplomatic Envoy" History XIII, 204-218).

Edward I seems to have displayed especial caution in this matter. Both messengers and envoys coming into England or leaving again were escorted by his nuncii regis or cokini garderobe. The accounts do not always distinguish between messengers and envoys by name, but the amount spent is generally indication enough of the visitor's rank. Arnold Bon, nuncius regis, was sent in 1385 to conduct the Duke of Brabant's messenger as far as Witsand, and claimed 4/- for the expenses of both.<sup>(1)</sup> Clearly the foreigner was a regular letter-carrier, whose mode of travel would be similar to that of the king's messenger. William de Ledebury was put in charge of a foreign nuncius in 1289, and a gift from the king for the latter was presented by the hands of the messenger.<sup>(2)</sup> An inferior messenger, Robert Romeyn, was ordered to go with the Duke of Brabant's valet, Admettus, who had brought letters from the Duke and was now returning homewards; the cokinus escorted his charge out of England and went on with him to Brabant carrying the king's reply.<sup>(3)</sup> In much the same way, Edward II's nuncius John de Caneford, was sent with the returning courier of the king of France "pro securiori expedicione" in March 1324 when

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(1) E.A. 308/8.

Bon was again employed as guide in January 1295, when he met and escorted a messenger from Gascony bringing letters to the king. (Issue roll no.90).

(2) Chanc.Misc. 3/46 no.29.

(3) Misc.Bks.Exch.T.of R. no.202 (1293-5).



advantage was taken of the departure of the foreign messenger to send letters to France and watch the stranger's progress at the same time. <sup>(1)</sup> That English messengers abroad were subjected to the same vigilance is shown by the item in Jacke Faukes account in 1343, for the expenses of a serjeant accompanying him while he went to obtain a safe-conduct to travel through <sup>(2)</sup> France.

Care was thus taken to prevent spying on the part of the ordinary letter-carrier. Even greater attention was paid to the solemn envoy who would be in a much better position to collect information. The rank of the latter demanded the formality of an escort, and policy showed the wisdom of granting it. William de Dogmersfeld in May 1294 was sent in the train of the Duke of Brabant when he returned from a visit to the English court. <sup>(3)</sup> The same messenger was again assigned to escort three friars minor who had come as envoys to the king's son. The messenger hired horses for them, paid their expenses, arranged their passage back, and while so doing was able to <sup>(4)</sup> control their movements effectively. In 1301, the queen's messenger Godefrey, was employed on similar business. The queen sent him as far as Northampton "in comitiva nunciorum Alemannie"

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(1) E.A. 379/19 f.8.

(2) E.A. 312/4. See Appendix C.

(3) Misc. Eks. Exch. T. of R. no. 202.

(4) Add. MS. 7965 f.34. (1296-7).

and he received an imprest of 4/0 from the wardrobe on his expenses. <sup>(1)</sup> Robert de Rideware, nuncius of Edward of Carnarvon, was likewise sent to conduct two French persons from Nottingham to Dover in April 1303. The strangers fell ill on the road, and the messenger was obliged to wait until they recovered sufficiently to proceed. This kept him on the road between Nottingham and Dover from 7 April to 25 June, and having seen his charges safely out of the country, Rideware returned to the king in Scotland, taking 21 days to cover the distance from Dover. He had therefore been 70 days employed on this <sup>(2)</sup> task.

Edward II gave his messengers similar tasks when he became king. Philip de Melton, a casual letter-carrier sometimes employed in his service was sent from Nottingham to London in 1307 to conduct the envoys sent by the king of Portugal to Edward who was at Carlisle. <sup>(3)</sup> Adam Abel took letters for the king to envoys of the king of France in England, <sup>(4)</sup> and Adam Baggard cursor was sent "in comitiva Roberti de Aungiers nuncii regis Francie speciali precepto regine ad docendum predictem Robertum rectum iter inter Clipston in Schirewod et Norhampton." <sup>(5)</sup>

(1) E.A. 359/10.

(2) Add.MS.35292 f.45 v.

(3) E.A. 373/15 f.24 v.

(4) Cotton MS. Nero C VIII f.100.

(5) E.A. 376/20 m.4 d. (1315-16).

A guide was hired to take the cardinals' messengers carrying the papal bulls from London to Scotland in August 1316.<sup>(1)</sup> Again, when Robert, brother of the duke of Burgundy sent envoys to England, a messenger had to be dispatched with letters patent of safe conduct and a permit for their entry sent to the keeper of the passage at Dover.<sup>(2)</sup> Four men were sent in June 1333 by the chancellor and treasurer, who were then at Newcastle "pro salvo conductu nunciorum domini regis Francie,"<sup>(3)</sup> and John de Paris nuncius regis was guide to a certain Norman who needed escort on the road between London and Windsor.<sup>(4)</sup> One of the most curious examples of this duty is found in an entry of 1295 to Simon Lowys, then in the king's service. He was put in charge of a party of important persons from Guernsey, who were waiting in London for the king's return and for six weeks the messenger spent a mark weekly for their food and lodging on orders from the treasurer.<sup>(5)</sup> One wonders whether he beguiled their enforced leisure by acting as guide to the sights of London.

#### 5. Espionage.

Great pains were thus taken by English governments to

- (1) Society of Antiquaries MS.no.120 p.149.
- (2) E.A. 379/19 f.9 v. (1323-4).
- (3) Issue roll no.267 m.13.
- (4) Issue roll no.364 m.10 (1352).
- (5) Issue rolls nos.95.

fulfil one part of Commynes' instructions. The other part of his advice, that retaliation in kind should follow, was probably obeyed also, though it is more difficult to trace. One or two references in the messengers' accounts, however, suggest that spying could be a part of the duties of a king's messenger. "Take every opportunity of sending, for you can have no better spies." No doubt every messenger going abroad was instructed to be on the alert for valuable news, but occasionally the king's command was more definite. In December 1299 Nicholas Ramage was engaged on some such mission in Scotland. He received money "pro expensis suis et unius exploratoris constabularii castrorum de Rokesburgh venienti ad regem de partibus Scotie et morandi extra curia per quinque dies, per preceptum Regis pro dicto explorando eisando."<sup>(1)</sup> Similar errands were undertaken by messengers in France. In 1339, for instance, William de la Pole advanced money to two messengers sent to Normandy to find out about the French galleys lying in port there.<sup>(2)</sup> Towards the end of the reign the issue roll printed by Devon provides yet another example. Sir Frank de Hale, a knight who had been in the retinue of John Duke of Lancaster in France, spent as much as £73.6.8 in sums paid "to divers messengers and valets sent to divers parts to watch the desires and actions of the

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(1) Lib. Quot. Gard. p.281.

(2) Misc. Bks. Exch. T. of R. no.203 f.112 v.

French enemies during the time the said duke remained in the service of the king there." <sup>(1)</sup> The amount thus expended suggests that Edward had been in the habit of employing a large number of spies in France, a percentage of whom were messengers, probably men in his regular service. A parallel can be found in a fourteenth century description of the powers of the constable of France in wartime. This speaks of messengers and spies in one sentence, as though there were little or no distinction between them. "Item, le Connestable a la cure d'envoyer messenger et espies pour le fait de l'ost par tout ou il voit qu'il appartient a faire, les courreurs et autres <sup>(2)</sup> chevaucheurs, quand il voit que mestier en est." It was apparently a medieval commonplace that envoys made the best spies, and that no scruples need prevent any power from employing its agents on this duty under cover of their diplomatic activities.

#### (6) Miscellaneous Duties.

Under the heading of miscellaneous duties, we may include all those commissions which a messenger might be asked to perform and which do not seem, strictly speaking, to lie within his

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(1) Issue roll of Thomas de Brantingham ed. Devon p.493.

(2) Anselme Histoire de la Maison royale de France 3rd ed. 1730 VI, 234.

province. They illustrate Wheeler-Holohan's remark that the king's messenger was employed whenever a person of authority and standing was required, no matter what the task might be. Thus we find messengers supervising work, making purchases, guarding wardrobe carts and belongings, taking charge of animals, collecting debts from the exchequer for wardrobe officials, and fetching any article the king or queen might require. Finally, we must mention here the secret business sometimes performed by messengers, tasks specially enjoined upon them by the king himself.

Members of the messenger service, whether nuncii or cursores, were at times set to supervise work performed by others. Their duty was to see that the actual work was done competently and to regulate the expense incurred; the exchequer or wardrobe paid the final amount as warranted by the messenger. Thus messengers' names are sometimes found in accounts against sums which had been paid on their authority. Henry, nuncius regis, in 1221-2 was one of two men in charge of workmen carrying timber from Stafford to Westminster, and the bill for their expenses was paid by the sheriff of Kent and entered on the pipe roll as authorised "per breve regis et per visum Henrici nuncii".<sup>(1)</sup> A wine-press at Kenilworth was repaired in 1236 at a cost of 47/8

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(1) Pipe roll no.66.

"per visum et testimonium Johanni de Bayes et Gregorii cokini."<sup>(1)</sup>

One of the king's messengers, Roger de Windesore, was for a time given the post of viewer of the works at the castle of Windsor, with 2d a day for his maintenance;<sup>(2)</sup> in all these instances, the messenger seems to have been in sole charge of the work and his word accepted as reliable by the king's officials without further question.

Another side to the same duty is seen in the mission of Robert de Cestre, a wardrobe messenger, to Gascony in 1315. He was sent from England with one of the king's special envoys, and was in charge of a horse carrying coffers full of letters which were to be distributed in Gascony. The horse was not a hired packhorse, but belonged to the king. Robert left London on 4 August, and was responsible for the entire maintenance of the horse, its hay, oats, shoeing, and farriery, for 61 days up to 4 October. The horse was then sold in Bordeaux for 20/- by the envoy "per visum Robinetti de Cestre cursoris garderobe," and Robert was able to testify to the sale before the wardrobe authorities when the final account between the king and the envoy was settled. In the meantime he received his wages from the latter for the time during which he had looked after the

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(1) Pipe roll no.80.

(2) Cal.Pat.R. 1292-1301 p.407.

horse and the days spent after its sale waiting for the  
 envoy's letters. <sup>(1)</sup>

Messengers in the Prince's household might also be required to supervise work done for the prince. In September 1346, for instance, a commission was made out empowering Dagenet the messenger of the Black Prince to make full arrangements and incur any necessary expenses for the threshing of 200 quarters of wheat, attached by the prince's officials from the Archbishop of Canterbury. He was to cause the wheat to be threshed, hire threshers, provide empty barrels to hold the flour and be responsible for the whole business until Christmas. <sup>(2)</sup> So for three months, the messenger was put in sole charge of these operations, and expected to do the best that he could for his master without assistance or supervision from any other officer.

The payment of other messengers was occasionally left in the hands of a nuncius regis and he accounted with the wardrobe for the amount spent, often without further examination. Robert de Manfeld Edward II's trusted messenger, was in May 1312 enjoined by the king to hire and pay a number of cokini and cursores for the king's private messages, and the amount thus spent stands in the wardrobe book as allowed on the king's own

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(1) E.A. 309/22.

(2) Black Prince's Register, I, 18.



word, "prout eidem Roberto per ipsum regem fuerat iniunctum."<sup>(1)</sup>

The trust reposed in the word of a messenger is illustrated in another way by the account of the expenses of William Fox cursor, who was sent to Winchelsea on 3 June 1370 with letters to the mayor and bailiffs of the town. The king wished to know the number of ships available in the port and clearly expected to receive an evasive reply from the local authorities. He therefore gave special instructions to the messenger, to bring back an independent report on the matter, preferring to trust the word of his own messenger, and confident that no collusion between the courier and the bailiffs would impair the value of his reply.<sup>(2)</sup> Again in 1376, John Elyot, nuncius regis, was sent to Ireland to summon the barons of the Irish exchequer to the council, and to bring back a report on the state of the country.<sup>(3)</sup>

Purchases made by messenger were of many kinds. Thomas Wynebaud, the treasurer's messenger, was sent to the fair at Stamford to buy palfreys for the king, as he records in the memorandum which he sent into the wardrobe, asking for the payment of his expenses for this and other journeys.<sup>(4)</sup> Bon, one of the king's messengers, was sent for fruit for the king's use

(1) Cotton MS. Nero C VIII f.104 v. Similar instances may be found in the wardrobe book for 1299-1300. Two nuncii regis, Alkham and Bon, were repaid sums spent on nuncii and cokini taking the king's writ throughout England. (Lib. Quot. Gard. pp. 282, 283).

(2) Issue Roll of Thomas de Brantingham trans. Devon p.180.

(3) Issue Roll no.459 m.28.

(4) E.A. 371/8 no.35 A. (temp. Edward I).

in 1286<sup>(1)</sup> and Peter de Auland, a wardrobe courier, was dispatched to York while the king was in Scotland to procure two bridles, again for the king's own use.<sup>(2)</sup> Instances of this personal kind are common; but there are also a few entries which record the purchase of articles for the king's service instead of for his person. John Typet, a messenger attached to the king's chamber, was allowed to buy a horse "to go upon urgent business for the lord the king to Dover", and although messengers were not as a rule provided with horses by the king, in this instance the council authorised the purchase of a mount from a certain John Bargeman.<sup>(3)</sup>

Cokini and cursores garderobe, as messengers more closely attached to the wardrobe than the nuncii regis, and as slightly inferior to them in status, were often left behind the king in charge of carts or goods belonging to the wardrobe which it was not convenient to remove at once. Thus Adam Attenasshe, cokinus garderobe, spent 8 days watching the wardrobe's carts in September 1286.<sup>(4)</sup> Nearly connected with this was the task of helping to remove the wardrobe when the court was travelling. A miscellaneous assortment of carts and wagons conveyed the goods and furniture of the wardrobe after the king, and the

(1) Chanc.Misc. 4/3 f.8.

(2) E.A. 356/8 m.3 (1298-9).

(3) Issue roll of Thomas de Brantingham trans. Devon p.199.

(4) Chanc.Misc. 4/3 f.19.

household officials in charge of the removal often needed the services of messengers to assist them. Adam Attenasshe, again, was often employed to escort carts of corn, wine, or harness, both for protection on the road and for the better control of the carters who drove the five-horsed wagons. In January 1286 (1) he hired a cart to fetch the wardrobe's store of grain from Oxford to Colecoumbe, a journey which took two days, and for which he was paid at the rate of 22 pence a day in addition to his wages of 2d. From Colecoumbe he was sent with one hired horse to carry part of the grain to Childebergh, receiving for this 4d a day. Next he helped to remove the wardrobe from Colcoumbe to Wynborn, escorting one cart laden with corn which he had hired at the same rate as before. This removal took six days. From Wynborn to Duntun took another two, but this time Adam's cart was loaded with wardrobe harness, and he was obliged to hire additional horses; 5d was added to his usual  $\frac{3}{8}$  "pro ij equis auxiliantibus per viam." Finally his two carts, one with grain and one with harness, took the road from Hungerford to Langley where they arrived 5 days later, and here for the time their journeying ended. Another cokinus, Stephen de Westbury, meanwhile, had been escorting two carts laded, one with wine, and one with harness, to Langley. He arrived there

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(1) Ibid. ff.4 and 4 v.

some days before the court and was paid 2/6 for guarding the contents of his carts until the king's arrival. <sup>(1)</sup>

With the court abroad as it was during part of 1286, other messengers, too, might be required to look after wardrobe property. Thomas Skiret, nuncius regis, was sent, while the king was in Gascony, to Bordeaux, with coffers belonging to the wardrobe. He was paid something, but not the whole amount, towards the expenses of their carriage, and the residue was still owing when the account was made up. <sup>(2)</sup> The same messenger was employed to guard the wardrobe's coffers while the court was in Wales during part of 1294-5. Edward was blockaded in Conway castle during that winter, and obliged to remain there until the main English army came up in January; his messenger therefore was employed as guard to ensure the safe-keeping of the wardrobe's valuables within the castle, receiving wages which amounted in all to 15/- <sup>(3)</sup>. The money was paid in two instalments, first 10/- as an imprest on the whole from the wardrobe officials, and finally the remaining 5/- from Melton himself. The episode gives a sidelight on the arrangements made by the wardrobe for its safety and convenience during a long blockade,

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(1) Chanc.Misc. 4/3 f.4 v. Other instances of messengers guarding wardrobe carts or transporting grain and wine for that department may be found in E.A. 364/22 (1302-3), E.A.367/27 (1303-4), and E.A. 372/9 (temp.Edw.I.)

(2) Chanc.Misc. 4/3 f.22 v.

(3) Misc.Bks.Exch.T.of R. no.202 f.20.v.

but the duty thus imposed upon Skiret was not merely an expedient of wartime. It recurs as one of the possible tasks which any messenger might be asked to undertake, in war or in peace.

Documents and accounts belonging to the wardrobe often had to be carried from one place to another as the court moved or for the convenience of the king's officials. Robert Snelling cokinus was sent by the cofferer to fetch certain wardrobe rolls in 1297,<sup>(1)</sup> and another cokinus was dispatched in October 1301 from York, where the king then was, to find the particulars of Otto de Grandison's expenses at the court of Rome, which were needed by the same official.<sup>(2)</sup> Edward II sent a messenger from the Tower of London in March 1325 with letters of privy seal addressed to William de Boudon and Robert de Kendale "una cum <sup>u</sup>godam rotula<sup>o</sup> sub eodem sigillo continente nomina iturorum cum <sup>^</sup>domina regina ad partes transmarinas".<sup>(3)</sup> This list of the queen's household must have corresponded with the list of the king's household drawn up for the same purpose later in the year; it does not appear to have survived. Yet another instance of a messenger carrying wardrobe documents may be found when Fulk de Hertwell in 1334 took certain memoranda touching the

(1) Add.MS. 7965 f.111.

(2) E.A. 359/2.

(3) E.A. 381/4 m.16.

complete account of that department to the cofferer at York. (1)

Exchequer removals were rare but equally difficult to arrange without the help of messengers. A number of cursores assisted in the transfer of the exchequer from York to London in 1338, first by taking writs proclaiming the removal, and (2) second by requisitioning the necessary carts from the sheriffs. Exchequer documents were more frequently moved than the department itself. Accounts and memoranda were sometimes taken from Westminster for the convenience of the king or his officials and presently returned to the treasury. Roger Mynot, a wardrobe courier, who had taken letters to the chancellor at Hatfield, was sent back to Westminster with documents belonging to the exchequer of receipt. The courier paid 5d to a labourer for carrying the rolls, and was allowed to claim the sum from the (3) exchequer with the amount due for his first journey.

Although the messengers of the wardrobe were often asked to assist in its removal from place to place, it was not as a rule necessary for nuncii regis or cursores garderobe to act as (4) harbingers. The household was sufficiently provided with

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(1) E.A. 387/9.

(2) Issue roll no.301 mm. 9 and 21.

(3) Issue roll no.421 m.20 (1364-5).

(4) Stretton G. "The travelling Household of the Middle Ages" Journal of the British Archaeological Association New Series XL, 75-103 (1935) p.82. King John had a messenger known as Robert le Herberjur, but so far as can be discovered from the accounts, he did not act as harbinger while nuncius regis.

officers whose whole duty was to precede the court, and arrange for its reception. These men held their posts by grant, and had a well-recognised position in the household: their allocation of lodgings was made according to a recognised rule of precedence.<sup>(1)</sup> In a normal way, the harbingers of the household did not require assistance. But in the smaller royal households, where organisation was less complex, the messenger might be required at times to arrange lodging for his master. In an account for the expenses of the king's sons, dated 1306, an entry states that William de Assheby, nuncius of Thomas de Brotherton, had been sent by the king's command, to the king's sereschal in London "ad cameras providendas ad opus dominorum Thome et Edmundi filiorum regis contra adventum eorundem apud Novum Templum London'"<sup>(2)</sup>

This, however, was exceptional; and I have only discovered one other instance of the duty of harbinger being performed by a messenger of the king's household or wardrobe. This was in December 1347 when Sampson the king's messenger was sent to Guildford to find lodging for the envoys of the king of Spain.<sup>(3)</sup>

Taking charge of animals was another occupation which seems to lie outside the messenger's usual province, and yet a number of instances can be found in which nuncii regis and

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(1) As laid down in the Ordinance of 1318 (Tout The Place of Edward II in English History 2nd ed. p.273).

(2) E.A. 368/12 f.4.

(3) Issue roll no.340 m.23.

cokini garderobe were given this duty to perform. Geoffrey le Waleys, nuncius regis of Edward I, was sent to Dover to wait for the arrival of the king's horses<sup>(1)</sup> and Gilbert, queen Philippa's messenger, was dispatched to the king with a grey war-horse, a gift from the queen to Edward III.<sup>(2)</sup> The animals however with which the messenger was mainly concerned were dogs. In 1285 one account informs us that John de Bristol cokinus had been sent to the bailiffs of the bishop of Winchester at Sutton and Alresford to inquire about two deer-hounds lost in the forest thereabouts.<sup>(3)</sup> Edward II's interest in country life and sport has often been noticed by historians,<sup>(4)</sup> and an episode which occurred in September 1316 seems to illustrate this side of the king's character. Robert Fitz Payne who had lately died, had owned some dogs in which the king took an interest, and by his special command, these were brought for him to see by Martin le Messagier. The dogs were then returned by the same man to the executors of the deceased, and the king's curiosity satisfied at the cost of 5/- for the expenses of the messenger and the dogs.<sup>(5)</sup> Under Edward III we have similar records of payments made to messengers in connection with the king's dogs. Robert de Cestre

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(1) E.A. 308/8 (1284-6).

(2) Cotton MS Nero C VIII f.273 v.

(3) E.A. 308/8 Johnstone H.

(4) See for instance "The Eccentricities of Edward II" English Historical Review XLVIII, 264-267 (1933).

(5) E.A. 376/7 f.83 v.



was sent by night to the sheriff of Southampton "pro uno  
leporario camere regis perduto querendo" in 1337. <sup>(1)</sup> William  
 Fox was paid his expenses for fetching the king's dog <sup>(2)</sup> and  
 William Walshman was twice sent with the king's hounds to  
 Bamburgh in August 1335. <sup>(3)</sup> With duties of such a varied nature,  
 the messenger needed to be a man of many accomplishments and one  
 able to adapt himself as circumstances required.

The decline of the wardrobe and the consequent reorganis-  
 ation of the financial system of the household, brought with it  
 a new duty for the king's messengers. The wardrobe no longer  
 issued money direct for the payment of salaries and allowances  
 due to its officials. Instead, bills authorising payment of  
 the amount were issued by the keeper of the wardrobe and the  
 actual sums had to be collected at the exchequer. This arrange-  
 ment was far less convenient for the officials who had money to  
 collect, and it was not uncommon for wardrobe officers to  
 employ a messenger to fetch their allowances and imprests.  
 Accounts of imprests paid during the second half of Edward III's  
 reign frequently record that the wardrobe bill had been cashed  
 for the official by some messenger. Thus Wetewong the keeper  
 of the wardrobe collected the 56/4 owing to him by a bill which

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(1) E.A. 385/16 m.2.

(2) E.A. 387/9 m.6 This account covers the years 1334-6.

(3) Cotton MS. NERO C VIII f.292 v.

he himself had issued, through the agency of Nicholas de Ufton nuncius regis, and a further £10 through another messenger William Fox.<sup>(1)</sup> Thomas de Clopton, lately keeper of the wardrobe, collected sums due to him in the same way. Among the imprests made at the exchequer of receipt during the Easter term of 1350, were a number of payments on behalf of the former keeper, collected by the hands of various nuncii. Thomas Bulfot, Andrew de Scardebrik, Walter de Gourde, Sampson de Usenges, and Robert de London, all attended the exchequer at different times during that session to receive imprests for Clopton.<sup>(2)</sup> These instances could be paralleled by many others, and though the collection of money from the exchequer occupied a relatively small proportion of the messenger's time, it yet became a regular part of his duties as the fourteenth century progressed.<sup>(3)</sup>

Miscellaneous duties, also included the numerous commissions undertaken by messengers for members of the royal family. Messengers were often sent to fetch necessaries or to look for individuals, to take gifts or to make enquiries. A cokinus named "le Haler" (perhaps the same as the messenger Nicholas le Holer of later accounts) was dispatched to Southampton "pro vinis habendis ad opus regine." Chever the king's

(1) E.A. 326/8 (1348)

(2) E.A. 326/10.

(3) Other instances of this will be found in E.A. 326/11(1350-1) E.A. 327/2 (1360); E.A. 327/4 (1361-4); E.A. 327/6 (1362-4); E.A. 327/10 (temp. Edw. III).

cokinus was sent about the same time to London for electuaries,<sup>(1)</sup> and a cursor of the queen's household received his expenses for a journey to the same city to fetch a great hide-bound coffer and a book.<sup>(2)</sup> Thomas, another cursor in the queen's service, was dispatched to town on 25 March to bring back linen ready for Easter.<sup>(3)</sup> Russel, one of the cursores,<sup>(4)</sup> attached to the service of Edward of Carnarvon, received 2/- on 2 May 1307 for the hire of a hackney from London to Dover when he brought cloth and furs for the prince's body.<sup>(5)</sup> Wardrobe messengers in the king's service were kept busy all that spring fetching necessaries for the prince's tournament, and lampreys against the arrival of the cardinal; his seneschal met all the cost of hiring horses and carts, and the expenses of transport.<sup>(5)</sup> All these were journeys undertaken to fetch back some object needed, but messengers in royal households were often sent out with gifts from the king or queen. A certain cursor in the queen's household was sent out on 18 November "qui tulit i, malum granatum apud Lextun ad Henricum de Bello Monte qui infirmabat ibidem, precepto domini Guidonis Ferrer'" In the same account are the expenses of Pederton the queen's nuncius

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- (1) E.A. 308/1 (1252-3)  
 (2) Add.MS. 35294 (1289-1290).  
 (3) Ibid. f.8.  
 (4) Add.MS. 22923 f.2 v. (1306-7).  
 (5) Ibid. ff.7 v. 8, 8 v. and 15.

for the carriage of a deer which the queen sent to Edmund the king's brother in London, and which was three days on the road in his charge.<sup>(1)</sup> Other messengers again were employed to look for persons needed by the king or his officials. Simon, cokinus garderobe, was ordered to search for the sheriff of Oxford throughout his bailiwick<sup>(2)</sup> and Fulk de Hertwell nuncius régis, was dispatched by the council to the king himself<sup>(3)</sup> "ubicunque inventus fuerit in regno Scotie."

Last of the miscellaneous duties, we come to the special and secret commissions enjoined upon individual messengers by the king in person. The mere use of the word 'secret' does not necessarily imply this sort of work, for, as Professor Tout points out, the term was used in referring to letters of secret seal.<sup>(4)</sup> This was especially common about the middle of Edward III's reign, with the king's increasing use of that seal. There are plenty of references available to messengers sent "in quibusdam secretis negotiis regis versus partes Scotie,"<sup>(5)</sup> but in addition to these, there are entries which can only refer to special business undertaken for the king. John de Tunstall and John de Canefeld, nuncii regis, were sent by Edward II with two

(1) Add.MS. 35294 ff.10 v & 14.

(2) E.A. 308/1 (1252-3).

(3) Cotton MS. Nero C VIII f.306 (1337).

(4) Tout Chapters V, 193.

(5) e.g. The entry to William Fox, nuncius, in the issue roll for May 1352 (Issue roll no.364 m.7).

serjeants at arms "ad partes diversas in quibusdam negotiis domini regis eis in secretis iniunctis," each receiving 4/-<sup>(1)</sup> for his expenses. This business secretly enjoined upon the two messengers cannot have been simply the delivery of letters, which they would have done in the ordinary routine of their office. The discretion of the wardrobe clerks in recording the expenditure, however, effectually prevents us from discovering the exact nature of their task and leaves the phrase "in secretis negotiis" as obscure as before.

All these instances show how varied the messenger's tasks could be, and how wide the scope of his employment. It is clear that, like the papal cursores, the king's messenger had become a personage, to whom responsibility could be entrusted and who could be allowed to exercise his own initiative in the fulfilment of his duties. His work was executive and administrative rather than diplomatic, and might lead to no higher post than that of steward or overseer, but within these limits, there was interest and variety enough.

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(1) E.A. 379/19 f.15 v. (1323-4).

1. A warrant for the payment of a messenger  
temp. Edward I:-

Expenses and arrears of Robert Petit,  
nuncius regis. (E.A.371/8. No.186 A.)

2. A warrant for the issue of robes to a  
messenger going abroad temp. Edward I:-

Simon of Westminster's journey to  
Brabant. (E.A.363/24. No.46).



## VII. The Messenger on the Road.

We can now follow the messenger in the pursuance of his duties, and build up from indications in the accounts of wardrobe and exchequer a picture of the routine of a messenger's life. Wheeler-Holohan has described the departure of a modern messenger, and his mode of travel; we can now set against this an account of the nuncius regis or cursor garderoberie on the road.

### 1. Expenses.

Expenses and wages were always kept distinct in wardrobe accounts and were not confused in those of the exchequer until towards the end of our period. Expenses were allowed for the number of days spent by the messenger upon his actual journey or in any other business enjoined upon him by the king. They were intended to cover the costs of the journey, food, lodging by the way, and, for a mounted messenger, the care of his horse. A small margin may have remained when all these outlays had been met, which constituted the messenger's profit, but the sums accounted for in wardrobe books under the title of messengers were not intended in the first place as recompense for the labour involved.

The cost of any journeys was paid on the estimated time which it would take. By the opening of our period, this had already become fixed, and for ordinary journeys, there was a scale



By which the messenger's allowance would be calculated. This seems to have been based on some division of counties into groups. A similar grouping was well-established in the exchequer, which paid the journey-money of accountants coming to the half-yearly sessions on this basis. If the department were at Westminster, then those counties nearest London came into the first group, and accountants from Surrey, Sussex, Kent or Middlesex received one day's expenses. Hampshire, Buckingham, Bedford, Cambridge, Huntingdon, Hertford, Essex, Northampton, Oxford, and Berkshire came in the next group, and were considered to be two days journey from Westminster. Wiltshire, Warwick, Leicester, and Rutland were three days distant from the capital; Somerset, Dorset, Lincoln, Nottingham, Derby, Norfolk, Suffolk, Gloucester, Worcester, and Bristol, four days; Devon, Hereford, Shropshire, and Stafford formed the fifth group, five days journey away; Cornwall, York, Lancashire, and Cheshire the sixth; and finally Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmorland, and Wales were counted as eight days from London. (1)

A similar scale came into operation when the exchequer was established at York. The wardrobe probably worked to the same plan. When messengers had to be sent out to a great many counties with letters or writs, similar groups were arranged. One messenger would be sent to each, and the division of counties was generally after the exchequer plan. So the amount of money

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(1) Red Book of the Exchequer ed. Hall III, 835-9

allowed for the expenses of each messenger was calculated according to the department's estimation of the distance to be travelled, and not according to the messenger's own statement.

The general practice seems to have been to pay the messenger for his outward journey only. The recipient of the letter might wish to send back a reply, in which case he would pay the messenger's expenses; and it is possible that the returning nuncius or cursor accepted private commissions. The detailed accounts of expenses of messengers of Henry III and the early years of Edward I. are careful to state the fact whenever the messenger had been paid for both journeys. Roger Dikhull cokinus was sent to the constable of Bristol in 1289<sup>(1)</sup> and paid 12d. "pro expensis eunti et reseunti cum summa festinacione". But William de Ledebury nuncius, who included Bristol in his journey to a number of south and west coast towns, only received money for his expenses for the 12 days spent in going round the coast between Southampton and Bristol. Sometimes the return expenses would be paid in full, sometimes only in part. Thus Adam Attenashe, a cokinus who took letters for Northumberland, Westmorland, Lancashire and Yorkshire, and spent six days on the journey, received double expenses, but John de Bristol, another wardrobe cokinus, who took out letters a few days later, only received the regular allowance for the seven days he was to spend on the road and 2d. extra above his outward expenses for the return journey.

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(1) E.A. 308/12 (1289-1291) The following illustrations are all taken from the same account.

The usual rate allowed to mounted messengers for home journeys during the thirteenth and much of the fourteenth century was 3d. a day. Most of the payments to nuncii regis given in the misae roll for 1209-1210<sup>(1)</sup> are sums which divide easily by three, and such amounts as 3d, 6d, 9d, 12d, and 15d. constantly recurring suggest that 3d. was the unit of pay even if the fact is not definitely stated in the account. The same type of payments occurs also in the corresponding roll for 1212-1213.<sup>(2)</sup> Here there are no sums which could not result from a 3d. rate except three payments to a messenger named Albericus who was specially treated by the king, and one to a messenger taking charge of dogs. It seems that under John, 3d. a day was the normal rate for journeys within the realm, and this is borne out by a writ of 1214 enrolled among the letters close which orders the payment of three nuncii regis at the rate of 3d. a day.<sup>(3)</sup> This was the amount allowed by the exchequer for its accountants, as laid down in the Red Book, and for messengers taking out its writs "pro qualibet dieta ad brevia portanda iij d."<sup>(4)</sup> The same allowance per diem was usual under Henry III. This is specifically stated in some of the writs recorded among the letters close during his minority. In 1221, for instance, a writ ordering a clerk to pay out money received from the king for the

(1) Rotuli de Liberate ac de Misis et Praestitis regnante Johanne ed T.D.Hardy 1844 pp.109-170.

(2) Cole's Records, pp.231-269

(3) Rot.Lit.Cl. 1204-1227 I.180.

(4) Red Book of the Exchequer ed.Hall III,837

expenses of four nunciis regis, mentions that they are to receive allowance for 8, 7, 9, and 3 days respectively -that is two shillings, twenty one pence, twenty eight pence, and nine pence. (1) The word used is the same as that employed by the exchequer "Dieta", which can mean either a day's allowance or a day's journey, and the same word is found again in later accounts for messengers' expenses under Henry III. In the two extant rolls of expenses of messengers for his reign, covering the years 1252-3 and 1264-5, (2) the word is used constantly and the whole trend of the figures suggests strongly a 3d. basis, even when this is not stated in the entry. John de Wallingford Nuncius took letters to the sheriff of Northumberland shortly after Easter 1265, and was allowed expenses for 8 days which at 3d. amounts to two shillings. This corresponds with the amount which would have been allowed by the exchequer for such a journey on the division of counties cited above. To go to both Westmorland and Cumberland added another two days to the time allowed and so Colin de Wodestok another messenger received expenses for ten days amounting to two shillings and six pence during the same week. Alan Poydras taking letters to York received 18d. "ad vi dietas" as he would have done by exchequer calculations. All these journeys started from Westminster where the Court had spent Easter, and the counties

(1) Rot. Lit. Cl. 1204-1227 I, 450.

(2) E.A. 308/1 and 2.

named would therefore be in the same relation to the court as the accounting sheriffs to the Westminster exchequer.

The same rate of expenses prevailed under Edward I. This is clearly stated in the extant rolls of messengers' expenses for the early part of his reign, and may be deduced from the sums paid out to nuncii regis and entered under the titulus de nunciis in complete wardrobe accounts for the later years of his rule. So Thomas Schiret, nuncius, taking letters to the Bishop of Ely, a three days journey, received nine pence on 7th. March 1277,<sup>(1)</sup> Nicholas Ramage for sixteen days on the road was allowed four shillings and Adam de Lindesey six shillings for twenty four days of travel, while Roger de Carliol was paid at the same rate for the twenty one days which he had taken on a journey in April 1282.<sup>(2)</sup> In another roll of messengers' expenses for 1284-1286, payments are entered to Adam de Bayworth nuncius of sixpence for a two days journey to the sheriff of Somerset and Dorset, two shillings for an eight days journey to the bishops of Chichester and Salisbury, and two shillings again for taking the new statute to several sheriffs and spending eight days on the road.<sup>(3)</sup> Such instances could be multiplied indefinitely.

This rate was probably the basis of the expenses paid out by the King's messengers who took Edward's correspondence during the Scottish campaigns. But with the increasing business of the

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(1) E.A. 308/3.  
 (2) E.A. 308/5.  
 (3) E.A. 308/8

wardrobe, it had become usual to hold back routine and less urgent letters until a number had accumulated and the messengers sent out were given many more commissions to perform. Their expenses were therefore higher even though the general rate remained the same. The short journeys costing three pence, six pence and nine pence so common under John and Henry III. had disappeared before 1296, and the wardrobe book for that year shows the messengers setting out with large bundles of letters and writs to sheriffs, magnates and ecclesiastics, and seldom less than five shillings in journey money. <sup>(1)</sup> When shorter journeys were required, cokini were as a rule chosen and the mounted nuncii regis reserved for the more arduous tasks.

The same procedure is seen in the wardrobe books of Edward II, and again the amount paid in expenses to messengers was considerable, even at the 3d. rate. We know that three pence was still the basis of all reckoning from the household ordinance of 1318 <sup>(2)</sup> which stipulates that household messengers should receive three pence a day for a strictly limited time. The emphasis laid on this point suggests that the 3d. rate had sometimes been extended and that the timetable approved by the exchequer had been neglected. With more complicated business to perform the messenger was naturally longer away from court, even though the counties visited might be only two or three days distant. There

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(1) Add. MS. 7965.

(2) Tout Place of Edward II in English History 2nd. ed. p. 272.

were, too, accidents on the road which had to be considered separately, and circumstances outside his control might delay the messenger. In such cases he had been accustomed, while expenses were strictly limited, to put in a claim for reimbursement when he returned. If his excuses were accepted by the wardrobe officers, the amount would be credited to him and paid off gradually in instalments. The household ordinance of 1318, in the section which deals with messengers, ordered that "pur lez temps sils ne remaignent au iour assignez, et ne purront escuser par resonable enchesoun, eient la pain deuaunt". If they had sufficient excuse, the ordinance implied, their reasonable demands would be met, but otherwise, "quant ils serront enuoiez en messagez, serront leur iournez limitez en certain".

A discrepancy was thus established between theory and practice. The ordinance laid down three pence as the rate per diem, but the actual accounts do not bear out this rule. Instead they show an increasing tendency to pay messengers in a lump sum, and not by the day. Messages had become so complicated and unavoidable delays so much increased, that a strict computation by the exchequer dietae had become inequitable. So the wardrobe began to treat its messengers as it treated its envoys, and the frequency with which certain sums occur in the accounts show that the daily rate was, in some cases at least, being replaced by a set payment. The necessity for some such change was recognised by the framers of the exchequer ordinance, which

permits a method of payment not depending strictly on time and distance. The section on messengers within the realm speaks of lump sums paid to them on their departure and accounted for afterwards by "ceux qe deyvent prendre en gros devant la mein pour messageries et autres bosoignes faire dedeinz la terre".<sup>(1)</sup> Possibly there were two methods of calculation current about the end of Edward II's reign and carried on into that of Edward III; first, that based on a fixed number of days established beforehand, and second, that based on a fixed sum estimated as sufficient by the department and accounted for afterwards by the messenger. The accounts for the early years of Edward III do not state ~~which~~<sup>which</sup> method was applied, but the sums mentioned suggest that both were in vogue, and that the type of journey determined the method of calculation. The lump sum generally consisted of one mark or some fraction of one mark. In the roll of foreign expenses for 1337-8,<sup>(2)</sup> for instance, the figures  $1/8$ ,  $3/4$ ,  $6/8$ ,  $13/4$  occur again and again. These represent an arbitrary payment, the sum in gross for which the messenger would account later, and thus such entries are sometimes followed by a second recording some additional payment made later. The rest of the messenger expenses in this account are made up of amounts varying from two to twelve shillings. They progress by sixpences without exception. Either the  $3d.$  rate had been doubled, or the practice of paying outward messengers only had been abandoned.

(1) Red Book of the Exchequer. ed Hall III, 926-7.

(2) E.A. 388/5



Similar figures are found in later accounts both of wardrobe and exchequer which record expenditure on the king's messengers. The same explanation must be given. Comparison of the amounts paid for certain journeys with corresponding expenses allowed earlier, warrants the conclusion that the rate of expenses had been increased. In war time at least, the messengers who took the king's letters received a higher rate of pay; wages "in court" and expenses "out of court" were both increased during the French campaigns of Edward III. Such an increase was reflected in the wardrobe accounts from which the "description of the household of King Edward III" has been put together. These messengers are listed among members of the king's retinue who receive sixpence a day during the campaign; and since wages and expenses were always kept at the same level, the rise in wages probably had its parallel in the rates allowed for expenses. Messengers could maintain that the cost of living was increasing rapidly and that they could no longer travel on so small a sum as three pence a day. The pensions granted by Edward to his messengers in lieu of wages were valued at  $4\frac{1}{2}d.$  a day and he can hardly have given them less when they were actually employed. The Black Prince's messengers certainly received sixpence a day while they travelled with his letters. The Register contains several letters ordering the prince's officials to pay messengers or account with

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(1) Collection of Ordinances p.9  
 (2) Cal. Pat.R. 1374-1377 p.351

them for lump sums already received. John de Bolton the prince's messenger was to receive sixpence a day during his attendance on the prince's council in England,<sup>(1)</sup> and Roger Pope, another nuncius in his service who had been away from the prince's household on business for his master, was to account for his expenditure with the treasurer, allowing sixpence a day for the time spent travelling.<sup>(2)</sup> The same amount had been paid to this messenger some years previously when he was given the money for certain journeys undertaken in the prince's business. In 1340, Roger Pope had taken letters from Wallingford, where his master was, to Bristol, which took him nine days, and for which he received expenses reckoned at the 6d. rate.<sup>(3)</sup> John Stygan the chamber messenger in 1366, also took sixpence a day when sent out of court to divers places, and in addition to this a certain sum for horses he had hired.<sup>(4)</sup> We have noticed earlier when discussing the question of household wages, that the fourteenth century saw a gradual change in the attitude adopted towards salaries, and a growing confusion between the words "wages" and "expenses" and the ideas which they had connoted. This confusion reacted upon the rates allowed for expenses as well as upon the wages allowed in Court. A regular salary to which the actual expenses of travelling should be additional was not yet established, but at

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(1) Black Prince's Register IV, 486 (1363)

(2) Black Prince's Register IV, 470 (1362)

(3) E.A. 389/6 mm. 1 and 3.

(4) E.A. 396/2.

the end of our period the thirteenth century idea of expenses based on fixed rates per diem was giving way to an allowance which should include both wages and expenses. The result became apparent later, and was expressed by the household officers of Edward IV by the statement that messengers sent out of court by the king's officials take five pence by day "wages and all".<sup>(1)</sup>

The nuncius regis of Edward III might therefore expect to receive between three pence and sixpence a day for his expenses; the exact amount varying perhaps with the political situation. In wartime he certainly received sixpence; in peace, that figure may have been diminished by one penny a day to the standard of the Liber Niger. But as war was a constant feature of the reign, the figures given in the wardrobe and exchequer accounts for messengers are all calculated on the more generous figure, unless the officials chose to pay their messenger in a lump sum.

The cokini and cursores garderobe also received expenses rather than wages when travelling. Under Henry III, when they first appear in wardrobe accounts, they were allowed the same rate of expenses as nuncii. The first two rolls of messengers' expenses extant, those for 1252-3 and 1264-5, show clearly that no difference had yet been made between the travelling expenses of a privileged and of an unprivileged messenger. Chever cokinus took three letters shortly after midsummer 1252, one to Amesbury, one to the Earl of Cornwall, and one to Winchester; in each case he received three pence for the expenses of his journey.<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Collection of Ordinances p.49.

(2) E.A.308/1

Russell cokinus who took letters to the king and to the constable of Tickhill castle received sixpence and three pence respectively for the two commissions. This equality of allowance probably had its origin in the inequality of status between the two messengers. The nuncius regis received many advantages from the household of which he was a member. The cokinus had to find clothing and food for himself, and had therefore to save enough from his allowance to support himself when idle. Whatever the reason, the same allowance was still given to both in 1264-5. John Long cokinus who was sent from Worcester by the King with letters for seven sheriffs, received expenses "ad ix dietas ij s. ij d."; and the same messenger when sent on a later occasion with letters to a number of magnates and ecclesiastics was allowed two shillings and sixpence for the ten days he was to spend on the road.<sup>(1)</sup>

Under Edward I. the allowance generally made to cokini remained at three pence a day. Clement Meintanant, cokinus, going to the Mayor and bailiffs of Southampton in 1277 received 12d. for four days journey; and Roger le Neweman, another cokinus, took sixpence for two days spent on the king's message. There were, however, some exceptions to this rule. The messenger mentioned above, Clement Meintenant, received allowance for his expenses at the rate of two pence a day only for five days, and Gointerel cokinus, when he took letters to the marshal, ~~was paid~~

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(1) E.A. 308/2

(3) E.A. 308/22

was paid at this rate also. <sup>(1)</sup> A twopenny rate again occurs in some payments to cokini in the account for 1282. <sup>(2)</sup> A messenger taking letters to Bristol received four pence and another taking a journey of two days for the king received expenses at a rate specifically stated as two pence a day. With these exceptions, cokini were treated in the same way as nuncii regis all through the early years of this reign.

The change from a rate of three pence a day to two pence for cokini was a gradual one. Edward I. needed more messengers and increased the numbers of couriers to meet the requirements of the wardrobe. It was perhaps the other side of this policy to reduce the allowance made to them while in his service. He probably argued that the mounted messenger had to maintain his horse on the additional penny still given to nuncii regis. But whatever the reason adduced, the accounts show plainly that this economy was part of a long-standing policy, which was not put into operation before 1280 and had become completely effective before 1291. In the wardrobe's roll of messenger expenses for that year, the expenses of twenty nine cokini were recorded for forty five journeys which they had made through the year. In ten cases, the unit of pay was expressly stated as two pence a day; in none does the sum given indicate a threepenny basis. <sup>(3)</sup> From this date until the conclusion of the reign, cokini never received a daily allowance of more than two pence while travelling for the

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(1) E.A. 308/3

(2) E.A. 308/5

(3) E.A. 308/12

king, except in the rarest instances. It seems to have been part of the king's policy to emphasise the difference between nuncii and cokini, and to fix a definite line between privileged and unprivileged messengers. The variation noticed in the rate of expenses allowed to each shows more clearly than anything else the inferior position imposed upon the cokini under Edward I.

Under Edward II. and III. the same policy was pursued, though the cursores of those reigns benefited with the nuncii regis from the general rise in prices and wages, and from the war conditions of the mid-fourteenth century. When lump sums were paid out to messengers in place of a daily allowance, the cursor received less than the privileged messenger but still more than if the old ruling had been applied. Two pence a day was still the normal rate for short journeys, and these were nearly always undertaken by messengers on foot. In the account for 1337-8 already cited, <sup>(1)</sup> a number of short journeys costing eight pence ten pence or fourteen pence are recorded, all of which were made by cursores or unrecognised letter-carriers who received the same low rate. Two cursores, Robert de Leycestre and Henry de Corf, who took letters to a number of bishops, abbots, magnates, and knights about the provision of archers for the king's forces, received together the sum of eight shillings and four pence, which probably represents twenty five days at two pence a day.

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(1) E.A. 388/5

To save space, payments to messengers were often entered as sums spent "on divers messengers and couriers", for the details if (1) required could be found elsewhere, "ut patet in libro nunciorum", (2) or among the memoranda in the hanaper for this term. But the accounts of messenger expenses recorded on the issue rolls for the Michaelmas and Easter terms of 1369-1370 includes a number of payments to couriers made in gross and generally consisting of fractions of a mark. (3) This roll is a fair example of the issue rolls of Edward III's later years, and the payments recorded in it represent the ordinary practice of the exchequer. Though still inferior, the position of the second grade of messenger was improving with time, and even the economic distinction imposed by Edward I. was gradually disappearing.

Journeys abroad were at first reckoned on the same basis as journeys at home. Nuncii generally received expenses at three pence a day, plus the cost of their passage, and any additional outlay incurred was refunded later. Thus William de Ledebury and Geoffrey le Waleys spent forty two days "in passagio maris euntibus et redeuntibus percipientibus per diem iij d". A further four shillings was added to the amount later for their expenses in returning to the king "pro magna festinacione qua habuerunt". (4) A similar scale of expenses was applied when

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- (1) e.g. Issue roll no. 396 m. 12  
 (2) e.g. Issue roll no. 441  
 (3) Issue Roll of Thomas de Brantingham ed. Devon  
 (4) E.A. 308/12 (1289-1291)

Ledebury was sent to the Abbot of Cîteaux with letters from the king. The same account provides several other instances of messengers sent abroad, but no example of cokini employed outside England. They were sent abroad occasionally, but the accounts do not make any statement as to the basis on which their expenses were reckoned.

The daily allowance system and the regulations laid down for wardrobe and exchequer worked reasonably well for messengers going routine journeys in England. It was far less convenient for the expenses of nuncii or cursores who had to be sent abroad. Here there were many factors which could not be settled beforehand. Horses had to be hired abroad, often at exorbitant prices; and the messenger might find himself faced with a choice between a long delay at Dover and the expenses of chartering a special vessel to take him. For such journeys, the messenger, whether nuncius or cursor might be treated in one of two ways. In the first place, he might be given approximately a half of two-thirds of his allowance before he left England, and could send in an account on his return for the remainder. This was done on longer journeys, to Rome, Avignon, or Spain. One such instance is provided by the account given in full in Appendix C. <sup>(1)</sup> Jacke Faukes and his companion received Ten pounds before setting out; spent thirteen pounds fourteen shillings and ten pence; and claimed seventy four shillings and ten pence from the exchequer

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(1) E.A. 312/4 (1343)



when they presented the particulars of their expenses. By this method the messenger abroad was treated in exactly the same way as a solemn envoy.<sup>(1)</sup> On the other hand, he might be given a lump sum and told to make it cover all his expenses. This method seems to have been adopted for shorter journeys, to Ireland, Calais, or Bordeaux. There were more messengers travelling on these routes, and the constant repetition of the round figure for such journeys shows that these had become customary amounts, fixed in the same way as the allowances for messengers at home. Thus ten shillings was the recognised amount for a messenger to Dublin unless he were expected to take writs beyond the city itself.<sup>(2)</sup> A mark was the corresponding figure for a messenger going to Calais. This method was convenient for the wardrobe and exchequer because it avoided the presentation of particulars of accounts for every messenger going abroad; and facilitated the keeping of accounts. Sums could be entered on payment without waiting for later corrections, and the time of departmental auditors was saved. This probably explains why out of so many particulars of accounts surviving in the Public Record Office, only one is concerned with the expenses of a regular messenger.

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(1) Larson "The Payment of Fourteenth Century English Envoys" English Historical Review LIV, 403-414 (1939)

(2) e.g. Issue rolls nos. 232 m.10, 307 m.2

Every royal messenger received the first part of his expenses before he left the court, whether his journey were within or without the realm. In the first case, the sum received would normally constitute his whole expenses; in the second, it might be either two-thirds of the estimated amount or a lump sum according to the destination. This money was paid out to the messenger as a rule by the officials of wardrobe or exchequer. Up to 1342, the wardrobe as the controlling department paid the messenger the required sum; after 1342, the exchequer. The normal procedure, however, might be altered in certain cases. It was no uncommon event for an individual official to pay messengers from his own pocket, and claim the sum later, which would then be entered in the accounts as due to him for money spent on messengers. In the wardrobe book for 1303-4, one and a half folios of messengers expenses are bracketed and a marginal note added that these were all paid by John de Drokenford the keeper. <sup>(1)</sup> Another keeper, Warlee, provided the expenses of the nuncii and cursores of the king's household and wardrobe who took out the writs for parliament in January 1313, <sup>(2)</sup> and further instances of this method of payment occur in the wardrobe book for 1323-4 under December <sup>(3)</sup> and May. On other occasions, money for messengers was advanced

(1) Add. MS.8835 ff.108v-109

(2) Issue roll no.164

(3) E.A. 379/19 ff 3v and 10v.

by clerks of different administrative departments or of the king's officials. A typical reference to such payment is the entry on the issue roll for 1299 recording the repayment of half-a-mark to William de Eston the treasurer's clerk "quos prius liberavit Piacle nuncio regis pro expensis suis portanti litteras regine quando rex fuit apud Ponte de Wente".<sup>(1)</sup> A note was made after a similar payment to divers cursores by Robert de Asskhogh, clerk of John de Sandale, that further particulars of the money spent would be found in a schedule placed among other bills and memoranda in the wardrobe,<sup>(2)</sup> but these schedules seem to have been lost, or were perhaps not kept once the full account had been passed by the auditors.

Payments of this kind were most frequently made at times when wardrobe and court was away from Westminster, and the officials of chancery or exchequer wished to send out messengers for the king's business. So in March 1335, Simon de Semere, Clerk of the seneschal of the household was repaid the sums he had spent on cursores taking letters to magnates "in <sup>wardrobe</sup>absencia, -- in itinere regis inter Berewic et Karliol' mense Julii proximo preterito".<sup>(3)</sup> Two years later Reginald de Donyngton, clerk of the privy seal accounted for money spent on divers messengers at the time when the king and his family were separated, and when

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(1) Issue roll no.105; John Rylands Library Latin MS no.231 f.1.v

(2) Issue roll no.170 M 5 (1314)

(3) Cotton MS. Nero C VIII f.293 v.

the council too was dispersed in various parts of the country.<sup>(1)</sup>  
 Wetewong when clerk of the king's chamber also paid for  
 messengers sent out "rege existente per se".<sup>(2)</sup>

Letters relating to the affairs of individual departments were often paid for by the officers of the department concerned, and the amount reclaimed from wardrobe or exchequer later. Thus the chamber which had spent money on messengers in 1335 recovered it from the wardrobe.<sup>(3)</sup> John de Wodehouse, keeper of the hanaper of chancery, was allowed to claim thirteen pounds two shillings and one penny due to his department for the expenses of envoys and couriers in 1338,<sup>(4)</sup> and William de Ravendale, clerk of the hanaper in 1343 received from the exchequer twenty shillings and two pence which he had spent in the same way.<sup>(5)</sup> When the chamber began to develop its own resources, it did at times pay for its messengers from them. An account of its expenses for 1349-1350 includes money given to a courier taking letters to the escheator about lands forfeit to the chamber.<sup>(6)</sup> As a rule however, chamber messengers, such as John Stygan and John Troll, received their expenses and were therefore partially controlled by the Exchequer. The

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(1) Ibid. f.310 v.

(2) Ibid. ff.309, 309 v.

(3) Cotton MS Nero C VIII f.300

(4) Cal Cl.R. 1337-1339 p.291

(5) Issue roll no.327 m.25. Similar payments are recorded in 1343 under 8.October (Issue roll no.331 m.2)

(6) E.A.391/20

fourteenth century chamber never attained to the independence of action once possessed by the wardrobe, and this small matter of the payment of its messengers illustrates the limits placed upon it.

In addition to officials, clerks, and departments of government, all kinds of minor officials of the crown, both central and local, were at times the actual paymasters for the king's messengers. The close roll for 1221 gives the contents of a writ ordering repayment of such expenditure to Godfrey the Spingurnel.<sup>(1)</sup> Doorkeepers in the households of the king or the queen often paid the immediate expenses of inferior messengers. Walter and Reginald the king's janitors paid a number of cokini<sup>(2)</sup> "per preceptum regis" in 1288-9 and 1289-1290, and Stephen the queen's doorkeeper provided money for the expenses of three cokini<sup>(3)</sup> taking out letters of her seneschal and treasurer in 1299. Three cursores sent with urgent messages to collectors of clerical tenths were paid by the constable of the Tower of London, Ralph de Sandwich.<sup>(4)</sup> The sheriff of York was allowed to collect the sums given to divers cursores and cokini "per mandatum regis" from the wardrobe in 1331, so that his account with the exchequer should not be rendered more complicated, and any special writ of

(1) Rot.Lit.Cl. 1204-1227 I.447

(2) E.A. 308/10 and 12.

(3) E.A. 355/17.

(4) Add.MS. 8835 f.109 (1303-4)

allocate for the amount avoided.<sup>(1)</sup> A contrary policy had been pursued by Henry III in 1229, when the keepers of the bishopric of Durham who had advanced money for messengers accounted for the expenditure out of the temporalities of the see among their other expenses.<sup>(2)</sup>

Expenses of writs sent out by the exchequer were often met by the usher of that department. This practice was of long standing, and dated back to the days of the usher serjeanty still in force until the death of Laurence de Scaccario in May 1284.<sup>(3)</sup> Under the terms of this feudal obligation, the holder of the serjeanty was responsible for the dispatch of the half yearly summonses to all sheriffs and accountants, and was allowed twenty shillings yearly for his expenses. When the serjeanty system was at last replaced by newer methods, the usher still used to pay messengers on occasion, and reclaim the amount from the wardrobe. Thus in 1297 John Dymok and Robert Dunelm the two ushers paid out the necessary amounts to the cokini who took writs for the collectors of foodstuffs needed by the army in Scotland.<sup>(4)</sup> Again in August 1301 the usher of the exchequer received two marks from the wardrobe with which to pay for other letters sent to the barons and clerks of the exchequer during the vacation for a more speedy levy of money and other business "unde respondebit in

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- (1) Cotton MS. Nero C. VIII f. 107 v.  
 (2) Pipe roll no. 73.  
 (3) Cal. Inquis. p. m. I. 317-8 no. 528.  
 (4) Add. MS. 7965 f. 114.

garderobe <sup>(1)</sup> ". Robert de Neuclyn ostiarius de scaccario in 1305-6 also spent money on messengers and the nuncii and cokini who went out with letters to all sheriffs prohibiting tournaments in the same year received their journey-money from the hands of Robert Dunelm the usher. <sup>(2)</sup>

The practice was continued to a certain extent under Edward II and Edward III. In 1319-1320, Henry Dymmok the valet of John Dymmok the usher hired and paid for the king certain London messengers, and claimed his money from the exchequer. <sup>(3)</sup> Writs sent to all sheriffs in 1321, 1322 and 1323 were paid for through the ushers, <sup>(4)</sup> and John Bray, usher of the great exchequer was responsible for similar payments made on the king's behalf in March 1329. <sup>(5)</sup> But as the exchequer gradually took over the entire business of paying messengers' expenses, there was no longer any need for the usher to act as intermediary. So the practice fell into disuse before the end of our period, and with it one of the last relics of the feudal methods in vogue at the commencement of the thirteenth century.

Messengers going abroad generally received their expenses in the wardrobe or exchequer. John Faukes tells us that he had taken his ten pounds at the exchequer of receipt from the

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(1) Issue roll no.108.

(2) E.A. 369/11 ff.

(3) Issue roll no.191 m.8 and 150

(4) Issue rolls nos.197, 200, and 207 m.12.

(5) Issue roll no.241 m.12

(1)  
 treasurer William de Cusance, and many of the payments to  
 messengers recorded on the rolls for Edward III are marked as  
 allowed by order of the treasurer and chamberlains. (2) But it was  
 sometimes more convenient to find the ready money outside the  
 exchequer, and repay the loan later. Edward I. made use of a  
 London merchant, Eli Russel, when he wished to send messengers to  
 Germany, Brabant, and Flanders in 1297. (3) But the most usual  
 intermediaries were the foreign merchants and bankers with whom  
 the king dealt. Thus the Frescobaldi paid the expenses of the  
nuncii and cokini sent to Rome and France during 1305-6. (4) These  
 merchants had agents in every country and could supply money to  
 envoys and messengers outside England; this saved the trouble of  
 carrying a large amount of coin abroad, and also overcame the  
 difficulties of currency and exchange. The Bardi of Florence  
 supplied both envoys and regular messengers sent abroad by  
 Edward II and III. William de Lue, John Russel and Robert de  
 Cestre were among the king's nuncii and cursores financed by  
 their agents. (5) The first took letters to the bishop of Hereford  
 in Paris during 1318-19; the other two messengers were on their  
 way to Avignon with letters for the Pope. A number of similar

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(1) E.A. 312/4 (1343)

(2) e.g. Issue roll No. 231 mm. 5.7.8.22 (1327)

(3) Add. MS. 7965 f. 114

(4) E.A. 369/11 f. 144

(5) Issue roll no. 187 (1319)



payments are recorded between 1334 and 1336.<sup>(1)</sup> Mr. Larson finds that solemn envoys in the fourteenth century received their assignments principally from the exchequer, secondly from the Bardi and only in the third place from the wardrobe. Foreign bankers did not play such a prominent part in the finances of nunciis regis and cursores garderobe, but when messengers were sent to distant places overseas, the organisation of such international firms often proved useful.

The Black Prince similarly ordered his messenger John Bolton to wait on his council in England while he was abroad, so that he could undertake any commissions required by the council, and also be at hand to bring urgent letters to the prince.<sup>(2)</sup> Messengers were also kept waiting at the exchequer when writs were being prepared which must go out at once. Memoranda rolls sometimes tell us the name of the messenger to whom the document was handed. Thus on 4 October 1307, at the sixth hour, a writ addressed to the

(1) Teate roll no. 443 (1371).

(2) Black Prince's Register IV, 486 (1365).

(1) E.A. 387/9 mm. 3 and 11.

(2) Letters and Instructions.

The messenger ordered to proceed on the king's business thus received expenses for his journey according to his status and the type of journey which he was about to undertake. He took his allowance from the hands of the wardrobe officials or from some other source as instructed, and had next to collect the letters or writs which were to form his consignment. It seems from occasional references that messengers were kept in constant attendance if urgent messages were anticipated. Thus messengers were sent to Winchester by Edward III while Parliament was in progress, each "ibidem expectando super negotiis regis officium suum tangentibus".<sup>(1)</sup> The Black Prince similarly ordered his messenger John Bolton to wait on his council in England while he was abroad, so that he could undertake any commissions required by the council, and also be at hand to bring urgent letters to the prince.<sup>(2)</sup> Messengers were also kept waiting at the exchequer when writs were being prepared which must go out at once, Memoranda rolls sometimes tell us the name of the messenger to whom the document was handed. Thus on 4 October 1307, at the sixth hour, a writ addressed to the

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(1) Issue roll no.443 (1371).

(2) Black Prince's Register IV, 486 (1363).

Sheriff of Northumberland ordering him to take the oath of the assessors and collectors of the twenty-fifth in that county, was handed for immediate delivery to the exchequer messenger, John Cook.<sup>(1)</sup>

This commission was urgent, but at the same time the messenger was given a number of letters which had waited for dispatch to the same county and which were not important enough to warrant the sending out of a special messenger. Similar examples are found on the memoranda rolls of the early years of Edward III. The Lord Treasurer's remembrancer noted that a certain group of writs had all been handed to Robert le Hunte cursor de scaccario on the 10 August 1332 "et memorandum quod hec dicte tres littere patentis liberantur predicto Roberto le Hunte dicto x die Augusti ad deferendum sub periculo etc."<sup>(2)</sup>

If the messenger employed by the exchequer were not one of the regular king's messenger service, nor yet one of the department's own couriers, then the letter-carrier might be made to take oath to deliver the writs entrusted to him safely. The same roll mentions that this safeguard had been taken in one instance. "Et memorandum quod ista commissio una cum rotulis de quibus fit mencio in eadem liberatur Ricardo de Harffeld xvi die Julii hoc anno qui prestitit sacramentum de liberanda eadem commissionem cum rotulis prefatis Johanni et Roberto." A

(1) Cited by Willard Parliamentary Taxes on Personal Property 1290-1334 p.49.

(2) L.T.R.M.R. no.108 m.19. Further instances will be found in the same roll mm.10 d,11d,12d,17,17d,18,18d,19,19d.

regular messenger, however, had already taken an oath of fidelity when he entered the king's service, and on such messengers no further oath was imposed.

Letters and writs made in the course of the department's ordinary routine were not dispatched at once. The expenses of sending a special messenger were only justified by extraordinary business, and letters which could wait, were kept until a messenger could take them with more important commissions. In busy times this would not be very long. In slack periods it might be as much as a month before the letter was actually put into a messenger's bag, and a further week or more before, by roundabout ways, it finally reached the man to whom it was addressed. <sup>(1)</sup> Everything depended on the importance attached to the message by the department, and when haste was required the king's officers did not hesitate to send out a nuncius regis with a single writ or letter. Private writs might also be handed to the messenger together with the official commissions entrusted to him for delivery, and though most of the legal writs bought by private citizens were carried away by the purchasers, there were still a number to be taken by the messenger <sup>(2)</sup> which must have added appreciably to the contents of his bag.

(1) J.F. Willard "The Dating and Delivery of Letters Patent and Writs in the Fourteenth Century" Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research X, pp.5 and 9.

(2) Fowler Rolls for the Office of the Sheriff of Bed. and Bucks. 1332-1334 p.12.

The wardrobe kept its own record of the letters dispatched by its messengers. These are the lists of messengers' expenses, which were made out in great detail during the period of wardrobe supremacy, and in less detail later. They were still kept after the exchequer had taken over the actual payment of the messengers, as a guide to the amount due to the individual nuncius or cursor, and as a check on the number of letters entrusted to each man. If any question arose about the delivery of these letters, the department had its record of their dispatch. The exchequer had a different method. Letters handed at once to the messenger were mentioned on the memoranda rolls. Letters which had to wait for dispatch were handed to the marshal, who was supposed to make a note of the day on which the document was handed to him and the day on which he gave it into the charge of a messenger. This practice had been neglected somewhat under Edward II, and the reformers who attacked the inefficiency of the exchequer in 1323 laid down most strictly the procedure to be followed by the marshal, and his subordinate ushers. They tell us that sheriffs had often excused themselves for disobeying the king's commands on the grounds that they had not received the writ in time, and the reformers suggest that letters had sometimes been set aside and forgotten by the officers who should have sent them out. "Face le Mareschal del Eschequier desore

distinctement remembrer devers lui tutz les briefs qi lui serront liveres a entrer pur le Roi et a liverer as husschers de envoier avant, et face remembrer quantz des briefs il les livre et queu jour il les livre, et combien a chescun viscounte ou autre, et face remembrer qe les husschers les facent envoier hastivement avant, et qe les husschers lui facent avoir bille de chescun viscounte qi testmoigne la receyte des briefs qil avera receu pur le Roi, et quant, et ou, et par qi; et tieles billes garde le Mareschal devers lui prestz a moustrer quant le Tresorier ou Barons les demanderont. Et si les husschers ne lui liveront tieles billes, et aveigne qe ascuns briefs soient poynt retournez, soient eux de ce chargez et puniz par la discrecoin des Barons. Et uncore a plus grant seute faire qe les briefs soient mieux retournez, ordine est qe desore chescun viscounte qi avera brief del Eschequier pur le Roi illoques a retourner, endosse le brief tut a de primes, nomaunt son noum, et puy quel jour, et ou, et par qi, il receust, et apres ce endosse ce qil avera fait de execution."<sup>(1)</sup> Under this system, the marshal who received the sealed letters or writs had first to make a note of the addressee, the date, and the number sent to each sheriff, and had then to hand them to the ushers for actual

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(1) Red Book of the Exchequer ed. Hall III, 888-889.

dispatch. This procedure could probably be traced back to the days of the usher serjeanty, when all documents sent out of the exchequer were taken by the usher or his messengers. The serjeanty had fallen into abeyance long before the reforms of 1323, but the practice of handing all letters to the usher for actual dispatch had remained. The ushers still gave the ordinary writs into the hands of the messengers, and were still responsible for keeping the receipts returned by the sheriff. If obeyed in full, the ordinance would have instituted a double check on the messenger; the marshal for his part would have a note of the nuncius or cursor who took out the letters, and the sheriff in sending back to the ushers any returnable writs would endorse upon the document itself his own name and the name of the messenger from whom he received it, as well as the action which he had taken in the matter. This final injunction was reiterated  
(1)  
in 1325.

In this way, the messenger collected his letters from the hands of the wardrobe or the exchequer. The first-named department seems to have collected the letters for dispatch from the chancery, and to have been responsible for sending out all letters patent or close issuing from that department, except on

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(1) Ibid. III, 966-967. A sheriff's memorandum mentioning the receipt of writs and summonses from Robert Forneys, exchequer messenger, as quoted by Dr. Fowler. op.cit. p.12.

the rare occasions when messengers waited in the chancery to take the letters as soon as they were sealed. The patent roll for 1218 mentions that certain letters had been sent out from that department by Roger de Roches, nuncius regis,<sup>(1)</sup> and the roll for 1255 has a similar note, "be it known that these two pairs of letters were made according to the form which Master Gilbert de Millers sent to court, and were sent to Gascony by Henry de Chelmerford the king's messenger on Sunday next after St. Bartholemew, the king being then at Newcastle-upon-Tyne."<sup>(2)</sup> While the king was in France in 1259, he allowed the French king to make use of his messenger service, and the close rolls note the delivery of writs under his seal to such messengers as Robert Harang, Guyonettus, Thomas le Scot, and John de Wallingford.<sup>(3)</sup> The dispatch of letters addressed to the king's envoys in the court of Rome by the hand of John de Braban the queen's messenger is also recorded in the close rolls under the following year, 1260.<sup>(4)</sup> As a rule however, letters from the chancery were kept and sent out as convenient by the wardrobe and its messengers.

Interesting details are sometimes added by the clerk who made a note of the dispatch of the messenger. "Be it remembered

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- (1) Patent rolls 1216-1225 p.208.  
 (2) Ibid. 1247-1258 p.424.  
 (3) Close rolls 1259-1261 pp.259,261.  
 (4) Ibid. 1259-1261 p.274.



that these letters were delivered to Sir Peter de Lacy on the eve of Whitsun, after eating, in the chamber of Sir Peter de Gildesburgh, to have them quickly dispatched" says one note in the Black Prince's register. <sup>(1)</sup> In a number of entries, the actual time of delivery is stated. Thus in 1313, Henry le Veel cursor received money for his expenses and letters to take out at the hour of prime, and other cursores employed by the exchequer under Edward II took messages at prime and terce. <sup>(2)</sup> A number of similar entries occur in the issue rolls of Edward III also, during the year 1372. Andrew Piers was sent out "at matins" <sup>(3)</sup> William Harding at noon, and Richard Stokes in the evening. A messenger might be sent on the king's business at all hours of the day. The letters mentioned here were intended for Calais, and are part of the constant stream of letters and instructions always going out to the king's possessions overseas.

The messenger therefore took his letters and his expenses, and was ready to start. He had his own horse, if a nuncius regis and stabling was always provided near to the court so that no time need be wasted when the message was urgent. Instructions for the journey were probably given by the officers of the wardrobe, or by the ushers of the exchequer, except in special cases. If the messenger had been detailed to wait upon the

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(1) Black Prince's Register I, 80.  
 (2) Issue rolls nos. 170 m. 8, 172, 178.  
 (3) Issue roll no. 446 m. 7.

council, then he might receive instructions from its members, as did Francis de Gaunt in November 1342, or as the messengers waiting on the council did in February 1355.<sup>(1)</sup> In matters of great importance, the king gave personal instructions. John de Caneford was sent on secret business enjoined upon him by the king himself,<sup>(2)</sup> and John Faulkes the messenger sent to Avignon in 1343 says in his account that he and his companion had gone to the expense of hiring a special boat "par cause de la Roi comanda gils ne lessassent pur nulles despenses daler et reuenir en xviiij iours ou lun de eux sur peine de vie et membre."<sup>(3)</sup> On routine journeys within the realm, however, the messenger was dispatched without such ceremony, his pouch full of writs and letters, his expenses safely hidden away.

Nuncii regis sent abroad sometimes received extra money to buy themselves some garment for the journey, new boots, bridle or spurs. There are several references in the accounts, and in the chancery enrolments to robes given to messengers who were either setting out or just returned from some long journey abroad, King John in 1209 authorised the payment of 10/- to Robert le Herberger who had just returned from Rome to buy a garment,<sup>(4)</sup> and Henry III ordered similar robes for Thomas Escot.<sup>(5)</sup>

(1) Issue roll no.327 m.12, 376 m.26.

(2) E.A. 379/19 f.15 v.

(3) E.A. 312/4. See Appendix C.

(4) Rot.de Lib. p.112.

(5) Cl.R. 1256-1259 pp.14, 217.

The clothing given to Colin le Walleys and Walter de Mawordyn when they returned from France and had to go immediately into Wales in the king's service may have been provided as a recognition of their good work and of the hardships they were incurring. (1) In two cases, the actual warrant for the clothes has survived. These are the warrants in favour of Robert de Ryde-ware, "pro roba sua dono regis quam idem Rex ei promisit quando idem Robertus ad partes Francie transfretavit", and a similar document ordering clothes for Simon de Westminster when he was going to Brabant for the king. (2) Both are dated 1303. Other messengers were permitted to buy themselves boots or spurs and enter the sums spent on the king's account. Thus John Faukes and his companion bought two pairs of boots and two pairs of spurs in London before they started on their journey, and spent 6/8 between them which John Faukes accounts for among his other expenses. Any reasonable expenditure which could be said to facilitate the messenger's travel seems to have been allowed by the wardrobe.

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(1) Ibid. 1259-1261 p.5.

(2) E.A. 363/25 no.14 and 363/24 no.46. See the photostat facing p. following p. 417

## 3. The Road.

The messenger who was sent out on a routine message took his own horse and did not hire extra mounts. The distance which he could travel in one day was therefore limited by the capacity of his horse, and was probably little more than an unmounted messenger could cover on foot, or even less. Dr. Fowler thinks that the average rate of progress, allowing for time spent in resting the horse and in meals, did not exceed 3 miles per hour, if as much, on a long journey for which the nuncius had only one mount. <sup>(1)</sup> The cokinus or cursor going on foot would perhaps be outdistanced on the first half of the day, but by nightfall he might easily have caught up the mounted messenger, and the total number of miles accomplished by both in a day would be roughly the same. Robert de Rideware, returning to the king in Scotland from Dover in 1303 took 21 days to accomplish the journey, which is exactly the same time as a modern walker takes to cover the distance between London and Edinburgh on foot. <sup>(2)</sup> The accounts always distinguish between these ordinary journeys, performed without undue haste, and the urgent journeys for which the messenger had had to hire additional horses, and <sup>which were</sup> ridden with

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(1) Fowler Rolls from the Office of the Sheriff of Bed. and Bucks. 1332-1334 p.14.

(2) Add.MS.35292 f.45 v.

(3) Proc. R.S. Arch. Soc. of R. No. 205, f. 116 v.

(4) Issue Roll No. 353 s. 40 (1350-1)

great haste.

By the fourteenth century ~~at least~~ there were certain facilities for posting at least on the major roads of the kingdom. Edward I is believed to have set up posting stations on the roads between London and Scotland, and between London and the Marches of Wales. The horses thus available for hire were not reserved solely for the use of nuncii regis, but the latter had a prior claim to the horses, if they required them.<sup>(1)</sup> On the Dover road and the road to York there were certainly some arrangements of this kind which made it possible for the messenger to increase his pace. So even in the accounts for the reign of Henry III there are extra payments recorded to messengers for haste, and Edward I increased the expenses of his cokinus "de gratia quia festimavit"<sup>(2)</sup> Later, references to hired horses became more common, though it was never the general practice to rely on such mounts for journeys in England. It was less certain, and it was more expensive. Joseph de Faversham, nuncius regis, spent as much as 45/- on one journey with the expenses of hiring horses,<sup>(3)</sup> and the comparatively short journey from London to Ipswich cost John Lewer 4/- "pro expensis et pro conductione unius equi in eodem viagio"<sup>(4)</sup> Horse hire, in fact,

(1) Walker G. Haste, Post, Haste, Post Haste! p.28

(2) E.A. 308/5. The phrase occurs in an entry to John Truand, cokinus.

(3) Misc.Bks.Exch.T. of R. No.203, f.116 v.

(4) Issue roll No.355 m.40 (1350-1)

often more than doubled the ordinary cost of travel. Robert de London nuncius regis, when sent by the treasurer with an urgent letter of privy seal in August 1362 received  $3/4$  for his own expenses and  $6/8$  for the hire of one horse, an additional expense specially warranted by the chamberlain.<sup>(1)</sup>

Messengers going abroad seldom took their own mounts. The expenses and the difficulties of transport weighed the balance in favour of hiring posts when abroad, and on the roads of France and Germany, the system of posts seems to have been well established before the fourteenth century. John Faukes and his companion do not seem to have had any difficulty in obtaining mounts when they required them, or if not riding horses, then as in the stage between Dourdan and Montberson, they journeyed "par charette". It was necessary therefore to arrange extra posts on the road to Dover, so that messengers coming from abroad might find mounts to bring them to the court. This explains the injunction sent by the king to the bailiffs of Canterbury and Rochester in 1372.<sup>(2)</sup> "To the bailiffs of the city of Canterbury. Strict order as they would save themselves harmless, to cause any of the king's messengers of whose coming to the king with letters or otherwise with reports from over sea they shall have knowledge hereafter, upon warning received, to have

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(1) Issue roll No.410 m.38.  
 (2) Cal.Cl.R. 1369-1374 p.389.

with all speed for reasonable payment hackneys to ride from that city to the city of Rochester, so that the king's business be not hindered by their default". A similar letter was sent to the bailiffs of Rochester for the journey from Rochester to London, so that by this means, messengers coming from Dover could be certain of horses at these two stages. They were the usual stages for the hire of horses, as is shown by the account of Jacke Faukes' expenses and by many particulars of expenses of envoys, the usual rate to pay for hired mounts being about 10 d for the first stage out of London and 1/- for the second. The messengers for whose coming provision was thus made were expected to have ready money for the hiring of such horses, and it is remarkable that even when accounts for household clothes and for food and equipment generally were much behindhand, the necessary expenses of the king's messenger service were always paid regularly. Only the additional amounts claimed afterwards came under the imprest system of the wardrobe. The same stipulation about payment was inserted in an earlier letter close to reassure the recipient of the letter as to his chances of receiving again any outlay made on the king's behalf. Edward I wrote to the justice of Chester, ordering him to "cause William Clerk, courier of the king's wardrobe, whom the king is sending to Ireland for certain affairs that he has much at heart to have

speedy and safe passage to those parts at the courier's cost".<sup>(1)</sup>  
 Again similar letters were sent to others, so that the messenger should have no difficulties by the way.

The posting system was only rudimentary, and the horses supplied at ordinary posting stations were probably not very good specimens. A later master of posts was to complain to Henry VIII that the only certain post horses in England were the hackneys to be obtained on the road between Dover and Gravesend, and that on other roads, the king's most urgent command only released horses taken by the constable from carts and ploughs for the use of the king's messenger.<sup>(2)</sup> The medieval messenger probably had similar experiences, and was wise to rely principally on his own horse. His haste sometimes resulted in the death of the horse he rode, and, as we noted in an earlier chapter, he might then be allowed some compensation for his loss by the king as a gift. All these difficulties explain why the time taken on the journeys mentioned in these accounts is seldom less than would be taken by a man on foot. A messenger going from York to Hull "cum maxime festinacione" still took two days to cover the distance.<sup>(3)</sup>

It was not usual for messengers to travel without rest.

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- (1) Cal.Cl.R. 1302-1307 p.62.  
 (2) From a letter of Brian Tuke addressed to Cromwell 1533.  
 (Cited by Walker Haste, Post, Haste! p.44)  
 (3) Issue roll No.231 m.3 (1327)



If the message on which they were sent was not specially important, there was no need to travel with such great urgency. A one-horsed messenger could not go too far in one day without injuring his beast, and night travel as well was out of the question. When the account tells us of messengers journeying "de nocte et de die per preceptum regis" as did certain cokini sent out by the janitor in 1289, we may conclude first that they did not go on foot, and second that they hired horses for the business. A certain cokinus was sent by night to the king's huntsmen, and similar journeys were generally rewarded with additional expenses and perhaps a personal gift. John Piacle, one of Edward I's nuncii was sent on "x die Aprilis sero" 1297 with letters of the treasurer's deputy and the barons of the exchequer to the keeper of the Tower of London and other officials "cum summa festinatione" and received "pro expensis et pro hakeneis conducendis tam per noctes quam per dies", the sum of 10/7. William de Burgh and John de Stretton, messengers of Edward II, were also sent out at night on two occasions and letters taken by night with great haste are recorded in many accounts for Edward III.

(1) E.A.308/10.

(2) E.A.308/8 (1284-6)

(3) Add.MS. 7965 f.109 v.

(4) E.A.379/18 f.3 v. (1323-4)

(5) e.g. E.A.387/9 m.4; Cotton MS. Nero C VIII ff.293 v 309.

(6) E.A.309/8 in an entry to Richard Coeur under 3 August.

(7) E.A.308/6

(8) Issue roll No.75.

A messenger going to the king in 1337-8 with news from Scotland was paid extra for his haste, and Walter de Colchester nuncius regis in October 1337 took letters by night on account of their urgency. <sup>(1)</sup> Whenever the accounts speak of haste or say that expenses were paid to a messenger "eunti tam per noctem quam per diem cum omne celeritate" <sup>(2)</sup> we may conclude that horses were hired for these journeys and the regular appearance of such entries shows that outside agencies supplying horses that could be hired were sufficiently numerous to form an alternative if need arose to the messenger's own mount. The horses hired might be inferior, but they were sufficiently reliable to be accepted by the king's officials as a means of transport.

Cokini and cursores were occasionally mounted, and allowed extra for horses, if the need were great. In 1285 a certain cokinus sent in haste to the constable of Carisbroke castle received 2/6 for the two days journey, of which the 6d was probably his own expenses reckoned at 3d a day, and the rest the hire of horses, allowed at 1/- a day. <sup>(3)</sup> The cokinus who in December 1292 received 5/- for taking letters from the treasurer to the king for his expenses "quia ivit cum festinacione", <sup>(4)</sup> probably also hired horses for his journey. This was unusual,

(1) E.A.388/5 and 6.

(2) E.A.389/8 in an entry to Richard Smert under 3 August.

(3) E.A.308/8

(4) Issue roll No.76.

however, and throughout our period, cursores in the king's service were accustomed to travel on foot.

Journeys overseas involved the hire of a special boat, or passage in one of the regular ships. The second course was by far the cheaper, but meant a considerable wait at Dover, and consequently the messenger who had to return within a limited time generally hired a boat for himself. There are some instances of men crossing by the ordinary boats taking passengers, and then their passage only cost a few shillings. The sum charged was regulated by Edward III in 1330, and the price fixed at 2/- for a horseman and 6d for a footman, which the statute declares to be the old rate. "Whereas before this time, a Horseman was wont to have his Passage over the sea from the Port of Dover for ij s. and a Footman for vj d and now late the Keepers of the Passage and the Passangers have taken more, to the great damage of the People: It is agreed, that at the same Port and all other Passages of this Land as well in fresh Waters as in Arms of the Sea, they that do pass shall from henceforth pay as they were wont to pay in old Time, and of more shall they not be charged nor the Passengers nor Keepers of the Passage take no more".<sup>(1)</sup> The strictness of the injunction leads one to suppose that it was not kept, and with the general rise in prices

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(1) Statutes of the Realm I, 263 (4 E.111 c.8)

(2) E.1.356/1 m.2 d.

during the century, it is hardly likely that the king succeeded in keeping down the cost of sea travel. Most of the messengers whose expenses in this matter are given separately hired their own vessels. As the exchequer or wardrobe seldom paid the messenger more than two thirds of the total cost of a journey abroad, the messenger had either to find the extra out of his own purse, or else obtain credit for the last stages of his journey. This probably explains the shipmasters' bills which are found in wardrobe and exchequer accounts, and had clearly been settled by the department and not by the messenger. In the year 1275, for instance, the issue roll records payment by the exchequer of the money owing to a shipmaster, Brecun de Dover, who had given a passage to divers nuncii "ante adventum regis in Angliam".<sup>(1)</sup> A wardrobe account of 1298-1299 includes similar payments,<sup>(2)</sup> Robert Petit had crossed in the ship of a certain William de Kenstan, who charged him 13/4; and the same master had on another occasion taken William de Ledebury to Montreuil charging the same amount "pro fretto eiusdem batelli" there and back. A different shipmaster, William Goldewombe, sent in his bill at the same time for taking James de Newbury a cokinus. A mark seems to have been a very usual charge if the boat were hired specially. Two messengers going together paid

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(1) Issue roll No. 28. Exchequer of. Salt II, 722-4.  
 (2) E.A. 356/1 m. 2 d.

less apiece, but Jacke Faukes and Robin d'Arderne were charged 20/- for the barge they chartered in 1343. All these prices include the return journey as well as the outward one, and Jacke on his return had only custom to pay and the cost of getting from ship to land.

Customs and port dues were another charge which messengers had to consider. These were the same for nuncii regis or cursores as for special envoys, and at Dover generally consisted of one penny a head portage (port-dues) and two-pence a head custom. If the messenger were a free man of London, Canterbury, Norwich, or Rochester, however, he could avoid this second payment on the strength of an old rule in practice and recognised during the reign of Henry III. <sup>(1)</sup> Faukes was thus able to escape with payment of one penny for portage only, though his companion, Robin de Arderne, who did not enjoy the privilege of citizenship in any of these places, had to pay his extra twopence. Faukes was a Londoner, and by no means the only Londoner among the king's messengers, if we may take surnames as any guide; the advantage of this freedom may have been an additional inducement to the king in selecting his messengers for foreign service.

Besides the cost of shipment across the channel, we have some instances in which use was made of water transport inland.

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(1) Red Book of the Exchequer ed. Hall II, 722-4.

The Thames was a most convenient highway, and messengers often shortened the Dover road by taking ship to Gravesend first. From Westminster to London, the watermen charged Faukes and Arderne a penny, and Faukes alone the same amount. But when John Knouseley nuncius regis was sent by the chamberlains from Westminster to London and back by boat, he was charged 8d for the double journey, and Roger Bourn, a cursor, was asked the same on another occasion. The 6½d spent in boat hire by the cursor John Walsh was probably paid to watermen on the same stretch of river. (1) Arnold Bon, the messenger of Edward I who was put in charge of foreign prisoners, paid something to be ferried across the Thames, but the amount is not divided from his other expenses.

Apart from their prior claim to post horses, the king's messengers do not seem to have been invested with any special privileges. They did not have any of the advantages of papal cursores, who by virtue of letters carried by them could obtain free lodging at fixed stages. (2) Langland mentions messengers as travellers who could if they liked take a short cut through standing crops (3) but in the ordinary way, the king's messenger was not treated as a privileged being. The French mystery play

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(1) Issue rolls Nos.460 m.31 (1376); 425 m.19 (1365-6); 408 m.36 (1361).

(2) Renouard, "Comment les Papes d'Avignon expédiaient leur courrier" Revue Historique CLXXX p.5.

(3) Cited by Jusserand English Wayfaring Life 2nd ed. p.234.

quoted by Michel and Fournier in their section on inns, contains some references to couriers, and shows that in the popular estimation, the average courier was one who might think himself very fine but was not held so by the innkeeper and his assistants.

"Je suis au roi, je porte son seau et son bref" says Auberon the courier, but the taverner is not impressed. He has probably anticipated the sequel, when the messenger who has drunk well, promises to pay on the return journey. "Honnis soient tous les courriers; car toujours ils sont à la fuite" concludes the innkeeper's boy. Habits of this sort prevalent among French couriers were probably found as well among their English equivalents and a tendency to leave unpaid debts was as common here as abroad. In this investigation of the nature of the messenger service during two medieval centuries, we have only seen the official side of the picture; our sources show us only the messenger who forms a cog in the machinery of administration, not the person with whom innkeepers and travellers had to deal upon the road.

Difficulties and dangers resulting from bad roads have often been described in works dealing with medieval travel, and perhaps slightly exaggerated. At least we have nothing in the accounts to suggest that messengers were likely to be held up

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(1) F. Michel et E. Fournier La Grande Bohème, Histoire de Classes Réprouvées. Vol. I Hostelleries et Cabarets p.233.

by impassable roads, and though the ways were rather soft for wheeled traffic, they were easier than modern surfaces to the feet of horses or men. A more common difficulty was probably that of finding the way in unfamiliar country; and without a map and with little general information, the messenger was often glad to use the services of a guide. This was not the rule, in England, where constant travelling with the court would no doubt familiarise the messenger with the general lie of the country side, but was frequently done in Scotland, and overseas. William de Horington cokinus hired a guide to take him to the king's seneschal in July 1299<sup>(1)</sup> and two years later, several of the messengers serving the king in Scotland were obliged to avail themselves of native aid. Edmund Moses and John Somer, coming from Selkirk to Peebles hired a guide named John de Heddon, to whom they paid two shillings when they got to Peebles.<sup>(2)</sup> John de Brehull cokinus had the assistance of a Scot when he took out the king's letters in September of the same year.<sup>(3)</sup> Abroad, the messenger Piacle was twice forced to spend money on guides during 1297, when he was sent with letters to the Count of Savoy and the Duke of Brabant<sup>(4)</sup> Edward II's messenger, John de Caneford, made use of a returning French courier and went back with him

(1) E.A.355/18 m.2.

(2) E.A.359/6 f.21 (1300-1) *Life of Sir Francis Palgrave ed.*

(3) Add.MS.7966. *The Rise and Progress of the English*

(4) Add.MS.7965 ff.113 and 113 v.



"pro securiori expedicione" in March 1324.<sup>(1)</sup> Such information about the state of the roads and the direction to take as was available to the medieval traveller in the form of livres des postes, would be of some assistance to a messenger going to Rome or Avignon, for which directions were fairly common, but would be of little help in journeys off this beaten track. The example which goes under the name of Matthew Paris' Itinerary shows the amount of information given, and the necessity for the services of a guide to supplement these bare details.<sup>(2)</sup>

Messengers travelling abroad were often sent in pairs for greater security. The difficulties of obtaining extra money abroad to meet unexpected needs caused the messenger to carry a considerable amount of coin with him, as well as valuable dispatches, and therefore <sup>he might</sup> run into some danger. Very often a nuncius and cokinus were sent together, and almost every wardrobe account will supply instances of this arrangement. In some cases, the reason is stated. So Edward I sent the cokinus Morgan with his messenger Nicholas Ramage "si forte nuncius deficit in fortitudine", and the clerk noted against the expense that it was incurred "per preceptum regis".<sup>(3)</sup> Ramage had a companion on another journey in 1297 when he and a cokinus named Richard de

(1) E.A.379/19 f.8 v.

(2) Printed in Collected Works of Sir Francis Palgrave ed. R.H.I. Palgrave "The Rise and Progress of the English Commonwealth" II, 21.

(3) E.A.308/10 (1288-9)

Marchia were sent with Philip de Everdon to inspect the fleet; one of the messengers was to remain with Everdon, "quousque idem certificare posset regem de statu flote" and the other was to return immediately with letters containing Everdon's reply. (1)

Some instances of messengers who were accompanied by their grooms have been given as illustration of the position occupied by the latter, and the presence of a groom when the messenger went abroad was not uncommon. Cursores too might be allowed the aid of a groom if the king or his officers decided to employ them abroad. Robert de Cestria for one, had a groom to help him in July 1325 when he was given a large number of writs to take to south and west coast ports. He received 3/- for his expenses and those of one groom associated with him "pro dicto negotio festinando". (2) Groom and courier received expenses at the same rate, but if courier and nuncius were sent together, the ordinary distinction between the allowances made to each was still preserved. Richard Swyn nuncius and Robert de Cestria cursor, were sent by Edward II to all the important towns in Gascony and a number of Gascon magnates. For this, Richard received 40/- and Robert 20/- in December 1315. (3) Even when they travelled together on the same business, the inequality of status was not forgotten.

(1) Chanc. Misc. 4/6

(2) E.A. 381/14 m. 2.

(3) E.A. 376/7

Chancery Misc. No. 121 p. 103.  
of E. No. 203 f. 111 v.  
Serjeanty Tenure in Medieval England p. 40-1  
Cited from Text of Writs for Chancery Misc. 1155-1221 ed.  
H. Haller 1907

Another plan sometimes adopted to ensure the safe arrival of important despatches, was to send them in duplicate by two messengers travelling separately. The same courier, Robert de Cestria, and Dounenald de Athol the king's messenger took identical letters in February 1318, and the first was sent "per aliam viam predicto negotio festinando".<sup>(1)</sup> Duplicate letters were again used in 1338 when Edward III was abroad and diplomatic negotiations important.<sup>(2)</sup>

Few definite privileges were attached to the position of messenger, but yet the nuncius regis travelling for the king had certain advantages from being a servant of the king. Custom decreed that messengers who required assistance could demand the help of any of the king's subjects, a practice dating back to the prehousehold messengers of Norman kings. In feudal times, a second serjeanty had sometimes been added to the serjeanty of messengership, which required the holder to assist the messenger when he travelled, by all means in his power. Thus an Oxfordshire example cited by Miss Kimball lays down that "if Arsic and his heirs send their messenger (nuncius) to court, Purcel and his heirs shall assist the messenger faithfully, so far as they can in speech, in all the things which he has to do at court."<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Society of Antiquaries MS. No.121 p.102.

(2) Misc.Bks.Exch.T. of R. No.203 f.111 v.

(3) E. Kimball Serjeanty Tenure in Medieval England pp.40-1  
(Cited from Feet of Fines for Oxfordshire 1195-1291 ed.  
H. Salter 1930)

The messenger represented the man who had sent him - in the case of a nuncius regis or a cursor, the king - and an insult to the messenger was regarded as an insult to the sender. The treasurer of St. Pauls brought an action against a certain John Baryl of Harleston, who had insulted his messengers by forcing them to put up gallows and hang robbers for him outside Cambridge<sup>(1)</sup>. Jusserand quotes an instance in which a messenger sent by the queen claimed the enormous sum of £2,000 as indemnity to himself and his sovereign when he was arrested during the course of a journey, and though this was probably not a regular messenger, the incident shows the importance attached to the position of envoy or nuncius.<sup>(2)</sup> Perhaps the most striking example of all is the story given by Rishanger under the year 1266, when telling of the king's extraordinary leniency towards the garrison of Kenilworth castle, who during Montfort's rebellion had flouted his authority.

"Et mirum quod Rex taliter indulisit eis, cum ipsi patriam depraedati fuissent --- et parum ante cursorem

Regis apprehendissent et sibi manum amputassent, ac

Domino Regi ex parte exhaereditorum ridiculose misissent".<sup>(3)</sup>

The story illustrates the dangers which might attend the profession of messenger, and also the importance attached by contemporaries

(1) L.T.R.M.R. No.14 m.10d. (P.R.O. abstract p.63) 1241.

(2) Jusserand English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages 2nd ed. p.232 (from Rotuli Parliamentorum 1,48, 1289-1290)

(3) Rishanger Chronica et Annales ed. Riley (Rolls Series) 1865 p.43.

to such an insult to the authority of the crown. If messengers had not been accustomed to general respect, the maiming of a courier would not have attracted the attention of the chronicler, or been thought worthy of record.

The messenger's life was not free from excitement and danger. In time of civil war, he might, as representative of the king, run grave risks, and during the Scottish and French wars of the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the career of a messenger was full of difficulties. Alan the king's cokinus was wounded by the Scots when coming to Edward I with letters in February 1304<sup>(1)</sup> and John Taverner, messenger of Edward III was so badly maimed that he had to leave the king's service.<sup>(2)</sup> Out of England, the messenger or courier had other dangers to encounter. His dispatches might be important enough to attract attention from unfriendly powers, just as the sums of money he carried might attract robbers. When even the justiciar of Ireland could be plundered by malefactors on the seas, and a bishop fear to travel on account of disturbances,<sup>(3)</sup> the king's messenger might expect attack and had need to carry weapons of

(1) Add.MS. 8835 f.104 v.

(2) Cal.Pat.R. 1348-1350 p.146.

(3) Cal.Pat.R. 1258-1266 p.319. In 1303 the king again remarked upon the malefactors who made channel crossings dangerous. (Cal.Cl.R. 1302-1307 p.81)

(1)

(2)

(3)

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Issues of the Exchequer ed. Devon p.215.

Issue roll No.250 p.30.

defence. Special envoys coming to England through France or the Netherlands were on several occasions stopped by the king's enemies and imprisoned, or even killed for the sake of their dispatches. Edward II in 1311 complained that the king of Norway had "committed to hard prison" the bearer of the king's former letter, one Geoffrey le Taverner of Grimsby, <sup>(1)</sup> while another special envoy returning to England was imprisoned by the Duke <sup>of Brabant</sup> at Antwerp. <sup>(2)</sup> William Crayling, "who was lately sent as a messenger from the king and was taken in the said message by persons of Lesclus in Flanders and killed on account of the message aforesaid" was yet another whose services to the king led him into danger. <sup>(3)</sup> The nuncius regis did not as a rule carry messages so valuable to the enemy, and yet they might be sufficiently important to lead to the messenger's arrest abroad. John Taverner, the messenger who was later to be maimed in the king's service, "quem dominus rex transmisit ad partes Francie pro quibusdam negotiis ipsum dominum regem tangentem, et qui captus fuit apud Whitsand et ibidem imprisonatus", <sup>(4)</sup> was granted 60/- by the king in compensation in July 1337. He obtained his release before long, and was again active as a messenger, undaunted by his experience, until his retirement in 1348.

(1) Cal.Cl.R. 1307-1313 p.349.

(2) Ibid. 1323-1327 p.647.

(3) Issues of the Exchequer ed. Devon p.225.

(4) Issue roll No.295 m.30.

It is very probable that English kings retaliated when such attacks were made on their messengers abroad. King John in 1213 rewarded the knight Alan Hanselin "qui fecit capi nuncios Regis Francie cum litteris",<sup>(1)</sup> and the reiterated commands issued to prevent the ingress or egress of unauthorised foreign messengers suggests that a strict watch was maintained at Dover and other ports. Licence to leave the kingdom had to be obtained by everyone except the king's messengers and envoys and any merchant who could establish his identity before the port officials.<sup>(2)</sup> In some cases even, an oath might be imposed on the traveller.<sup>(3)</sup> If such precautions were taken over ordinary passengers, the difficulties experienced by a foreign envoy bringing letters to England and returning home must have been considerable, even though only a fraction of the king's orders were obeyed. Edward III commanded that all envoys coming into England should be searched<sup>(4)</sup> and throughout our period great pains were taken by the authorities to exclude unofficial news and the free entry of messengers from overseas. Both in England and abroad, strange messengers were obliged to obtain letters of safe conduct before they could proceed. Such letters were granted to Scottish messengers who wished to pass through England

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(1) Cole's Records p.261.

(2) Cl.R. 1261-1264 p.401; Cal.Cl.R. 1323-1327 p.361; Issue rolls Nos.456 m.12 and 15; 460 m.28.

(3) Cl.R. 1264-1268 p.37.

(4) Cal.Cl.R. 1337-1339 p.620.

England on their way north<sup>(1)</sup> and had to be sought by English messengers who intended to travel through France. John Faukes mentions this in his account of his journey to Avignon in 1343. The two messengers sent out by Edward III managed to pass through French territory on the outward journey without such a permit, but for the return, Faukes was obliged to spend time and money in procuring such a passport from the Chancellor and then in having it ratified by the king himself.<sup>(2)</sup>

Protection and safe conduct from their own master were not as a rule considered necessary for nuncii or cursores. They did not enjoy any special immunity from legal proceedings, even when sent abroad, unless the journey was likely to be very protracted.<sup>(3)</sup> Robert de Newenton received simple protection on two occasions and so too did Dounenald de Asseles or Atheles, when he was sent to Ireland on the king's business in 1324 and 1328.<sup>(4)</sup> When the whole household went abroad with the king, the household messengers might receive protection together with other members of the court, and this explains the name of William le Messenger among the lists of those of the king's household who were given letters

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- (1) e.g. Rotuli Scotiae I, 58; II, 174.  
 (2) E.A. 312/4. Similar safe conducts for France were obtained by the Bishop of Winchester for his two messengers. (E.A. 309/27)  
 (3) Cal. Pat. R. 1313-1317 p. 374. Ibid. 1317-1321 p. 426.  
 (4) Ibid. 1321-1324 p. 410; 1327-1330 p. 309.



of protection in 1322<sup>(1)</sup> and of an earlier William le Messenger among similar lists for the household of Edmund the king's brother in 1286<sup>(2)</sup> John de Arches, who received protection with clause volumus in 1357 may have been the king's messenger of that name, and in this case the recipient of the protection was given powers to nominate attorneys also.<sup>(3)</sup> Similar power was given to the king's courier, Roger Mynyot, in January 1359, when he was about to leave for Ireland on the king's business.<sup>(4)</sup> The nature of this duty is not explained, but it was expected that the messenger would need protection for a year, and perhaps this was one of the secret commissions sometimes entrusted to messengers by the king.

Beyond the difficulties of travel and of arranging private affairs during his absence, the messenger had often great trouble to deliver his message. Persons who anticipated an unpleasant communication from the government would sometimes take pains not to receive the letter, or if they did, would abuse and ill-treat the bearer. Henry III sent a writ to John de Baliol demanding his services in the campaign against Lewelyn, and Baliol, who did not wish to comply, arranged for the messenger to be attacked in Sherwood forest, and his writ stolen. The king wrote again in

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(1) Cal.Pat.R. 1321-1324 p.42.

(2) Ibid. 1281-1292 p.239.

(3) Ibid. 1354-1358 pp.622,604.

(4) Ibid. 1358-1361 p.131.

anger, declaring that this behaviour increased the seriousness of the offence, "ac iidem nuncii apud Shirwod in veniendo versus vos arestati et littere ille eis ablate fuerunt ita quod ad vos nondum devenerunt, de quo quam plurimum sumus fastiditi".<sup>(1)</sup>

Edward II also complained that he had frequently sent letters of privy seal to Thomas Wake, ordering him to come to the king for consultation on the king's affairs, "and Thomas, as the king learns, has received certain of the letters, and has taken care not to receive others, hiding himself so that the bearers thereof cannot come to him to deliver them".<sup>(2)</sup> Robert de Newenton the King's messenger, was actually assaulted when he tried to deliver writs of privy seal in 1318, and in contempt of the king's authority the recipients threw the writs on the ground and trampled on them.<sup>(3)</sup> Other instances of this reluctance to receive are given by Salzman<sup>(4)</sup> and the difficulty of presenting his missive must have added considerably to the troubles of a messenger's life. In many cases, he evaded the difficulty by handing all his letters for the county to the sheriff, and leaving the final distribution to the local officer, who could use his powers to force writs on unwilling recipients. This method had another advantage in the eyes of the king; it saved the messenger's

(1) Cl.R. 1261-1264 p.381.

(2) Cal.Cl.R. 1323-1327 p.549. depicting a messenger handing

(3) Cal.Pat.R. 1317-1321 p.176. reproduced by the Rev. G.

(4) Salzman Medieval Byways pp.155-157.

time and was cheaper than direct delivery. (1)

His letters delivered, either directly or through a sheriff the messenger was free to return to the king. He did not go empty handed as a rule, for the sheriff had often to return the original writ to the king, and might have a number of such writs ready for a messenger. There might also be letters from the sheriff to the central government, or from magnates to the king. The messenger seldom took as long on his way back as he had done on the outward journey, for he could now go by the shortest route, without deviations for delivery of dispatches. If he had been paid on an estimated number of days, his business was now complete, but if he had been paid in gross, he had still to render his account for his expenses. The representation of a detailed and written account such as that drawn up by John Faukes witnesses to great powers of memory or to literacy on the messenger's part. Either supposition is possible, for unlettered persons are often capable of unusual feats of memory, and it is not impossible that the ordinary messenger trusted to his memory for the details of expenditure which he must produce for the wardrobe or exchequer. On the other hand, literacy was not

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(1) Instances of this method may be found in accounts for 1324-5 (E.A.381/4 m.16); 1325-6 (E.A.381/14); 1337-8 (E.A.388/5).

A manuscript illustration depicting a messenger handing missives to an official is reproduced by the Rev. G. Walker in Hasfe, Post, Haste! p.29.

confined to clerks and seems to have been widely spread among the king's servants even among those who belonged to the lower strata of the household. But whether he trusted to his memory or committed a few notes to writing by the way, the nuncius regis of the fourteenth century had generally to account for his expenses on food and travel. He would then receive a writ addressed to the Treasurer, Barons, and Chamberlains, ordering payment of any deficit to the messenger, and this he would present at the exchequer of account, where in process of time he would receive the sum due. The final stages in his process of account were thus the same as those of an envoy. Entries to messengers on the issue rolls sometimes state that complementary payments had been made on the authority of a writ of privy seal presented by the messenger, or by warrant of a writ "de nuncio mittendo".<sup>(1)</sup>

It seems to have been the custom to select certain messengers among the nuncii and cokini, and to employ them rather than any others for foreign service. It is very noticeable how often certain men were sent abroad, while other messengers of equally long standing seldom or never left the country. The messenger who was to go abroad for the king needed special qualifications;

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(1) e.g. Issue rolls Nos. 188, 302, 412.

a knowledge of some language or languages besides his own; a facility for finding his way in strange country; and abundant common sense to deal with all the hazards of the journey. Some messengers must have possessed these characteristics beyond their fellows, and every journey abroad would add to their store of experience. Thus a messenger who had once been sent abroad for the king would be more likely to be chosen again than his less travelled colleague. But all messengers whether nuncii or cursores, and whether employed in England or overseas, must have been endowed with these qualifications in some degree. The practice of choosing as nuncii men who had already served the king as cursores, or who had been trained as messengers in some other household, would bring into the king's service only men who had proved themselves beforehand as capable and trustworthy in their office.

the two centuries of messenger history covered here, a special interest. They are a commentary on administrative progress, and the repercussions of politics on departmental life can to some extent be tested by their effect on the messengers. This humble body of men were influenced by politics, not because they took any active part in them or were of importance to the course of English History, but because their work was essential to the maintenance of any government, and by the number of letters

### Conclusion.

We have now traced the organisation of the king's messenger service as it regulated the position of the messengers in the administration, in the household, and on the road. The history of the king's messenger service during our period is the history of the wardrobe, and the critical dates in its development were also times of crisis in its history. So Kirkham's keepership marked the commencement of the messengers' connection with a wardrobe that was already starting on its notable career; and Edington's keepership a little over a hundred years later saw the conclusion of the chapter in messenger history, as it wrote finis to wardrobe ambitions and independence. This gives the two centuries of messenger history covered here, a special interest. They are a commentary on administrative progress, and the repercussions of politics on departmental life can to some extent be tested by their effect on the messengers. This humble body of men were influenced by politics, not because they took any active part in them or were of importance to the course of English History, but because their work was essential to the maintenance of any government, and by the number of letters

sent out, we can judge of the importance attached to any measure or event. The part played in history by communications is often taken for granted: a study of the accounts for the king's messenger service shows that behind every political move lay countless letters and writs taking the king's command to all parts of the country, and that on these preparations were built the success of further operations. In the household, the messenger's position illustrates the privileges enjoyed by lesser members of the king's familia, and the conservatism of court custom. Another aspect of wardrobe and household re-organisation is seen in the use of wardrobe bills for paying wages and clothing allowances after the middle of Edward III's reign, and the application of the principle of subordination to the wardrobe of the household in a domestic as well as an administrative capacity.

These are the points of general interest underlying a study of the king's messengers. There is too, the particular interest attaching to any minute study of people and things. The conditions under which their work was done, the life they led outside their duties, their clothing, food and wages, and social standing, all these details, petty in themselves, make up a picture of medieval life tantalisingly incomplete. The

typical nuncius regis commenced his career either as a groom in the king's household or as a messenger in the household of some magnate. He might become a cursor first, and then nuncius, or, like Petit and Alkham, he might step straight from messenger-ship in some lesser house to the position of nuncius regis. This office he held until with age or infirmity, he was obliged to retire on a pension or corrody. Some adventurous individuals might choose to go on pilgrimage when they had done with the business of messenger, like Geoffrey de Bardeney who obtained a safe conduct going on pilgrimage to the land of Jerusalem, or William Clerk, courier of the king's wardrobe who received assistance from the king that he might go to Jerusalem and Mount Sinai. <sup>(1)</sup> Others turned to a new way of life like John Chubbe, <sup>(2)</sup> who in 1257 "took the religious dress". But the majority were content to settle down in their native place where perhaps they had built themselves a house or been granted an office or land by the king. The messenger was more often than not a married man, who may have hoped to establish his sons in the king's service. If surnames are any guide, father and son often did succeed each other in the office of messenger. Outside the

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(1) Cal.Pat.R. 1321-1324 p.26; Issues of the Exchequer ed. Devon p.159.

(2) Cal.Ch.R. 1257-1300 p.5.



household, we know that the messenger was often quite comfortably placed, that he had a small-holding, was a lesser tenant-in-chief, could lend money to others, and hoped to make a suitable marriage for his daughter. Stephen de Hamslap and John de Arches, mess<sup>er</sup>gers, obtained recognitions from the chancery of money owed to them, (2) and William le Engleis got permission from the king to marry his daughter to the son of a tenant in chief of Marden, Hereford, a village from which came several king's messengers. (3) John Dagonet the Black Prince's messenger was even able to lend ready money to his master. (4) From such details we gather something of the messenger's conditions of life outside his service to the king.

His personality and the ideas which he held are shown most vividly by the conversation between Robert de Newenton nuncius regis, and Saer Kaym, sub-bailiff of Newington, when, in July 1314, they discussed the king's defeat by the Scots, and Robert expressed his opinion that with a lazy, irreligious king, who preferred manual labour to the business of government, no other outcome could be expected. (4) Edward II did not

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(1) Cal.Cl.R. 1323-1327 pp.169, 185.

(2) Cl.R. 1231-1234 p.276.

(3) Black Prince's Register IV, 481.

(4) A full account of this episode has been given by Professor Johnstone "The Eccentricities of Edward II" English Historical Review XLVIII, 264-267 (1933).

accord with Robert's conception of a king, and he was outspoken enough to say all he thought. So for a moment the bare statement in the accounts comes alive and the messenger with his bag stands out clearly from the parchment page, talking to the bailiff of his own village and telling all the rumours and gossip of court and wars. Such moments, throwing light on the man himself, illumine also the organisation of which he formed a part, and help us to understand some part of the life led by a messenger, and the work undertaken by the messenger-service during two medieval centuries.

1255-1256	Pipe roll no. 95
1256-1257	Accounts (W. and H.) no. 1
1257-1258	Pipe roll no. 101
1258-1259	Pipe roll no. 102
1259-1260	Pipe roll no. 103
1260-1261	Pipe roll no. 104
1261-1262	Pipe roll no. 105
1262-1263	Pipe roll no. 106
1263-1264	Pipe roll no. 107
1264-1265	Pipe roll no. 108
1265-1266	Pipe roll no. 109
1266-1267	Pipe roll no. 110
1267-1268	Pipe roll no. 111
1268-1269	Pipe roll no. 112
1269-1270	Pipe roll no. 113
1270-1271	Pipe roll no. 114
1271-1272	Pipe roll no. 115
1272-1273	Pipe roll no. 116
1273-1274	Pipe roll no. 117
1274-1275	Pipe roll no. 118
1275-1276	Pipe roll no. 119
1276-1277	Pipe roll no. 120
1277-1278	Pipe roll no. 121
1278-1279	Pipe roll no. 122
1279-1280	Pipe roll no. 123
1280-1281	Pipe roll no. 124
1281-1282	Pipe roll no. 125
1282-1283	Pipe roll no. 126
1283-1284	Pipe roll no. 127
1284-1285	Pipe roll no. 128
1285-1286	Pipe roll no. 129
1286-1287	Pipe roll no. 130
1287-1288	Pipe roll no. 131
1288-1289	Pipe roll no. 132
1289-1290	Pipe roll no. 133
1290-1291	Pipe roll no. 134
1291-1292	Pipe roll no. 135
1292-1293	Pipe roll no. 136
1293-1294	Pipe roll no. 137
1294-1295	Pipe roll no. 138
1295-1296	Pipe roll no. 139
1296-1297	Pipe roll no. 140
1297-1298	Pipe roll no. 141
1298-1299	Pipe roll no. 142
1299-1300	Pipe roll no. 143
1300-1301	Pipe roll no. 144
1301-1302	Pipe roll no. 145
1302-1303	Pipe roll no. 146
1303-1304	Pipe roll no. 147
1304-1305	Pipe roll no. 148
1305-1306	Pipe roll no. 149
1306-1307	Pipe roll no. 150
1307-1308	Pipe roll no. 151
1308-1309	Pipe roll no. 152
1309-1310	Pipe roll no. 153
1310-1311	Pipe roll no. 154
1311-1312	Pipe roll no. 155
1312-1313	Pipe roll no. 156
1313-1314	Pipe roll no. 157
1314-1315	Pipe roll no. 158
1315-1316	Pipe roll no. 159
1316-1317	Pipe roll no. 160
1317-1318	Pipe roll no. 161
1318-1319	Pipe roll no. 162
1319-1320	Pipe roll no. 163
1320-1321	Pipe roll no. 164
1321-1322	Pipe roll no. 165
1322-1323	Pipe roll no. 166
1323-1324	Pipe roll no. 167
1324-1325	Pipe roll no. 168
1325-1326	Pipe roll no. 169
1326-1327	Pipe roll no. 170
1327-1328	Pipe roll no. 171
1328-1329	Pipe roll no. 172
1329-1330	Pipe roll no. 173
1330-1331	Pipe roll no. 174
1331-1332	Pipe roll no. 175
1332-1333	Pipe roll no. 176
1333-1334	Pipe roll no. 177
1334-1335	Pipe roll no. 178
1335-1336	Pipe roll no. 179
1336-1337	Pipe roll no. 180
1337-1338	Pipe roll no. 181
1338-1339	Pipe roll no. 182
1339-1340	Pipe roll no. 183
1340-1341	Pipe roll no. 184
1341-1342	Pipe roll no. 185
1342-1343	Pipe roll no. 186
1343-1344	Pipe roll no. 187
1344-1345	Pipe roll no. 188
1345-1346	Pipe roll no. 189
1346-1347	Pipe roll no. 190
1347-1348	Pipe roll no. 191
1348-1349	Pipe roll no. 192
1349-1350	Pipe roll no. 193
1350-1351	Pipe roll no. 194
1351-1352	Pipe roll no. 195
1352-1353	Pipe roll no. 196
1353-1354	Pipe roll no. 197
1354-1355	Pipe roll no. 198
1355-1356	Pipe roll no. 199
1356-1357	Pipe roll no. 200
1357-1358	Pipe roll no. 201
1358-1359	Pipe roll no. 202
1359-1360	Pipe roll no. 203
1360-1361	Pipe roll no. 204
1361-1362	Pipe roll no. 205
1362-1363	Pipe roll no. 206
1363-1364	Pipe roll no. 207
1364-1365	Pipe roll no. 208
1365-1366	Pipe roll no. 209
1366-1367	Pipe roll no. 210
1367-1368	Pipe roll no. 211
1368-1369	Pipe roll no. 212
1369-1370	Pipe roll no. 213
1370-1371	Pipe roll no. 214
1371-1372	Pipe roll no. 215
1372-1373	Pipe roll no. 216
1373-1374	Pipe roll no. 217
1374-1375	Pipe roll no. 218
1375-1376	Pipe roll no. 219
1376-1377	Pipe roll no. 220
1377-1378	Pipe roll no. 221
1378-1379	Pipe roll no. 222
1379-1380	Pipe roll no. 223
1380-1381	Pipe roll no. 224
1381-1382	Pipe roll no. 225
1382-1383	Pipe roll no. 226
1383-1384	Pipe roll no. 227
1384-1385	Pipe roll no. 228
1385-1386	Pipe roll no. 229
1386-1387	Pipe roll no. 230
1387-1388	Pipe roll no. 231
1388-1389	Pipe roll no. 232
1389-1390	Pipe roll no. 233
1390-1391	Pipe roll no. 234
1391-1392	Pipe roll no. 235
1392-1393	Pipe roll no. 236
1393-1394	Pipe roll no. 237
1394-1395	Pipe roll no. 238
1395-1396	Pipe roll no. 239
1396-1397	Pipe roll no. 240
1397-1398	Pipe roll no. 241
1398-1399	Pipe roll no. 242
1399-1400	Pipe roll no. 243
1400-1401	Pipe roll no. 244
1401-1402	Pipe roll no. 245
1402-1403	Pipe roll no. 246
1403-1404	Pipe roll no. 247
1404-1405	Pipe roll no. 248
1405-1406	Pipe roll no. 249
1406-1407	Pipe roll no. 250
1407-1408	Pipe roll no. 251
1408-1409	Pipe roll no. 252
1409-1410	Pipe roll no. 253
1410-1411	Pipe roll no. 254
1411-1412	Pipe roll no. 255
1412-1413	Pipe roll no. 256
1413-1414	Pipe roll no. 257
1414-1415	Pipe roll no. 258
1415-1416	Pipe roll no. 259
1416-1417	Pipe roll no. 260
1417-1418	Pipe roll no. 261
1418-1419	Pipe roll no. 262
1419-1420	Pipe roll no. 263
1420-1421	Pipe roll no. 264
1421-1422	Pipe roll no. 265
1422-1423	Pipe roll no. 266
1423-1424	Pipe roll no. 267
1424-1425	Pipe roll no. 268
1425-1426	Pipe roll no. 269
1426-1427	Pipe roll no. 270
1427-1428	Pipe roll no. 271
1428-1429	Pipe roll no. 272
1429-1430	Pipe roll no. 273
1430-1431	Pipe roll no. 274
1431-1432	Pipe roll no. 275
1432-1433	Pipe roll no. 276
1433-1434	Pipe roll no. 277
1434-1435	Pipe roll no. 278
1435-1436	Pipe roll no. 279
1436-1437	Pipe roll no. 280
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1441-1442	Pipe roll no. 285
1442-1443	Pipe roll no. 286
1443-1444	Pipe roll no. 287
1444-1445	Pipe roll no. 288
1445-1446	Pipe roll no. 289
1446-1447	Pipe roll no. 290
1447-1448	Pipe roll no. 291
1448-1449	Pipe roll no. 292
1449-1450	Pipe roll no. 293
1450-1451	Pipe roll no. 294
1451-1452	Pipe roll no. 295
1452-1453	Pipe roll no. 296
1453-1454	Pipe roll no. 297
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1459-1460	Pipe roll no. 303
1460-1461	Pipe roll no. 304
1461-1462	Pipe roll no. 305
1462-1463	Pipe roll no. 306
1463-1464	Pipe roll no. 307
1464-1465	Pipe roll no. 308
1465-1466	Pipe roll no. 309
1466-1467	Pipe roll no. 310
1467-1468	Pipe roll no. 311
1468-1469	Pipe roll no. 312
1469-1470	Pipe roll no. 313
1470-1471	Pipe roll no. 314
1471-1472	Pipe roll no. 315
1472-1473	Pipe roll no. 316
1473-1474	Pipe roll no. 317
1474-1475	Pipe roll no. 318
1475-1476	Pipe roll no. 319
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1489-1490	Pipe roll no. 333
1490-1491	Pipe roll no. 334
1491-1492	Pipe roll no. 335
1492-1493	Pipe roll no. 336
1493-1494	Pipe roll no. 337
1494-1495	Pipe roll no. 338
1495-1496	Pipe roll no. 339
1496-1497	Pipe roll no. 340
1497-1498	Pipe roll no. 341
1498-1499	Pipe roll no. 342
1499-1500	Pipe roll no. 343
1500-1501	Pipe roll no. 344
1501-1502	Pipe roll no. 345
1502-1503	Pipe roll no. 346
1503-1504	Pipe roll no. 347
1504-1505	Pipe roll no. 348
1505-1506	Pipe roll no. 349
1506-1507	Pipe roll no. 350
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1508-1509	Pipe roll no. 352
1509-1510	Pipe roll no. 353
1510-1511	Pipe roll no. 354
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1512-1513	Pipe roll no. 356
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1514-1515	Pipe roll no. 358
1515-1516	Pipe roll no. 359
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1518-1519	Pipe roll no. 362
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1522-1523	Pipe roll no. 366
1523-1524	Pipe roll no. 367
1524-1525	Pipe roll no. 368
1525-1526	Pipe roll no. 369
1526-1527	Pipe roll no. 370
1527-1528	Pipe roll no. 371
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1530-1531	Pipe roll no. 374
1531-1532	Pipe roll no. 375
1532-1533	Pipe roll no. 376
1533-1534	Pipe roll no. 377
1534-1535	Pipe roll no. 378
1535-1536	Pipe roll no. 379
1536-1537	Pipe roll no. 380
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1539-1540	Pipe roll no. 383
1540-1541	Pipe roll no. 384
1541-1542	Pipe roll no. 385
1542-1543	Pipe roll no. 386
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1552-1553	Pipe roll no. 396
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1565-1566	Pipe roll no. 409
1566-1567	Pipe roll no. 410
1567-1568	Pipe roll no. 411
1568-1569	Pipe roll no. 412
1569-1570	Pipe roll no. 413
1570-1571	Pipe roll no. 414
1571-1572	Pipe roll no. 415
1572-1573	Pipe roll no. 416
1573-1574	Pipe roll no. 417
1574-1575	Pipe roll no. 418
1575-1576	Pipe roll no. 419
1576-1577	Pipe roll no. 420
1577-1578	Pipe roll no. 421
1578-1579	Pipe roll no. 422
1579-1580	Pipe roll no. 423
1580-1581	Pipe roll no. 424
1581-1582	Pipe roll no. 425
1582-1583	Pipe roll no. 426
1583-1584	Pipe roll no. 427
1584-1585	Pipe roll no. 428
1585-1586	Pipe roll no. 429
1586-1587	Pipe roll no. 430
1587-1588	Pipe roll no. 431
1588-1589	Pipe roll no. 432
1589-1590	Pipe roll no. 433
1590-1591	Pipe roll no. 434
1591-1592	Pipe roll no. 435
1592-1593	Pipe roll no.

APPENDIX A.

Wardrobe accounts used for the purpose of this thesis.

1. Enrolled Accounts.

1224-1227	Tout <u>Chapters</u> I, 233-238.
1234-1236	Pipe roll no.79
1236	no.80
1230-1238	no.81
1238-1240	no.83
1241-1245	no.88
1245-1252	no.95
1252	Chancellor's roll no.45
1255-1256	Pipe roll no.99
1257-1261	Enrolled accounts (W.and H) no.1
1261-1264	Pipe roll no.113
1265	no.114
1265-1268	no.115
1268-1272	no.116
1272-1274	no.121
1274-1275	no.119
1275-1278	no.123
1278-1280	no.124
1282-1285	<u>Chronica Johannis de Oxenedes</u> (ed.H.Ellis Rolls series 1859) pp.326-336
1283-1284	Pipe roll no.128
1281-1288	no.136
1288-1292	no.138
1292-1293	no.139
1293-1298	no.144
1296-	Chancellor's roll no.92
1307-1308	Pipe roll no.168
1314-1315	no.166
1331-1333	Chancellor's roll, no.125
1313-1349	Enrolled accounts (W.and H) no.2
1349-1350	no.3
1350-1373	no.4
1374-1377	no.5

2. Original accounts of the wardrobe.

Henry III	E.A. 308/1	1252-3	Expenses of messengers
	308/2	1264-5	" "
	350/5	1269-1274	Payments at the wardrobe
	350/7	1271-2	
Edward I	E.A. 308/3	1276-7	Expenses of messengers
	350/26	1276-8	Necessary expenses
	Add. MS. 36762	1277-8	" "
	E.A. 308/4	1277-8	Expenses of messengers
	Chanc. Misc. 4/1	1277-8	Journal of wardrobe
	3/18	1281-2	
	Archaeologia XVI		
	pp. 32-79	1281-2	Roll of expenses of Edw. I
	E.A. 308/5	1282	Expenses of messengers
	351/9	1282-4	Issues of wardrobe
	Chanc. Misc. 3/29		First three membranes of E.A. 351/9
	E.A. 351/28	1285-7	Daily household expenses
	372/5	1283-4	" "
	308/7	1283-5	Expenses of messengers
	351/17	1284-5	Payment for robes
	308/8	1284-6	Expenses of messengers
	Chanc. Misc. 4/3	1285-6	Necessary expenses
	E.A. 351/25, 26	1285-7	Payments for robes
	351/30	1285-7	Daily expenses
	Misc. Bks. Exch. T.		
	of R. 201	1285-8	Wardrobe account
	E.A. 352/11	1287-8	Queen's wardrobe account
	308/10	1288-9	Expenses of messengers
	Chanc. Misc. 3/46		
	(29)	1288-9	Wardrobe account
	Add. MS. 35294	1288-1290	Expenses in queen's wardrobe
	Chanc. Misc. 4/5	1289-1290	Controbler's account
	Archaeologia XV		
	pp. 350-362	1289-1290	Extract from <u>Rotulus familiae</u>
	E.A. 308/12	1289-1291	Expenses of messengers
	352/24	1289-1291	Payments for robes
	John Rylands Library		
	Latin MS. 230	1293-4	Receipts of wardrobe

Original accounts of the wardrobe. (contd).

Misc. Bks. Exch. T.		
of R. 202	1293-5	Wardrobe account
E.A. 353/25	1294-5	Wardrobe receipts and issues
John Rylands Library		
Latin MS. 229	1295-8	Wardrobe book
E.A. 354/5	1295-1301	Debts of wardrobe
Add. MS 7965	1296-7	Wardrobe account
Chanc. Misc. 3/48		
(20, 27, 28, 31)	1296-7	Cash accounts and others
4/6	1297	Wardrobe account
4/7	1296-7	" "
E.A. 354/10	1294-1307	Imprests
354/23	1296-9	Imprests on wages
354/27	1296-1307	Imprests of wardrobe
355/1	1297-8	Imprests in household
355/3	1297-8	Imprests
355/9	1297-9	Account of wardrobe
355/4	1297-9	Part of same
355/10	1297-9	Payments in wardrobe
355/13	1297-1302	Household accounts
355/17	1298-9	Expenses and gifts
356/1-9	1298-9	Wardrobe account
355/18	1298-9	Wages of household
355/27	1298-9	Household account
356/21	1298-9	Wardrobe account
357/7	1298-1300	Wardrobe account
357/4	1298-1300	Household account
357/11	1298-1302	Wardrobe account
357/15	1298-1307	Debts in wardrobe
357/21	1299-1300	Wardrobe account
357/22	1299-1300	" "
357/23	1299-1300	" "
Lib. Quot. Gard. ed	1299-1300	" "
Soc. Antiquaries		
John Rylands Library		
Latin MS. 231	1299-1300	Wardrobe receipts
E.A. 357/28	1299-1300	Payments after the statute of St. Albans
358/18	1299-1301	Various payments
358/20	1299-1301	Household expenses
358/27	1299-1307	Household account

Original accounts of the wardrobe (contd).

	359/1	1300-1	Wardrobe account
	359/2	1300-1	" "
	359/4	1300-1	Imprests in cloth
	359/5	1300-1	Journal of wardrobe
	359/6	1300-1	Payments for Prince
	359/8	1300-1	Journal of wardrobe
Add. MS.	7966 A.	1300-1	<u>Liber cotidianus</u>
	359/10	1300-1	Imprests and Warrants
E. A.	359/14	1300-1	View of wages
	360/18	1300-1	Liveries for household
	360/23	1300-5	Wardrobe account
	360/24	1300-5	" "
	360/25	1300-2	" "
	361/12	1301-2	" "
	361/13	1301-2	Journal of wardrobe
	361/14	1301-2	Wardrobe account
	361/15	1301-2	Journal of wardrobe
	361/16	1301-2	" "
	362/17	1301-3	Wardrobe account
	363/10	1302-3	" "
	363/18	1302-3	Wardrobe of Prince
	363/24	1302-3	Subsidiary documents
	363/25	1302-3	" "
	364/2	1302-3	Payments in wardrobe
E. A.	364/13	1302-3	" "
	364/14	1302-3	Wardrobe account
	364/22	1302-3	" "
	364/24	1303-4	" "
	365/7	1302-3	" "
	365/8	1302-3	" "
Add. MS.	35292	1303-4	" "
E. A.	365/22	1303-4	Household officers' wages
	365/30	1303-4	Wardrobe account
Add. MS.	8835	1303-4	<u>Liber cotidianus</u>
E. A.	366/12	1303-4	<u>Warrant for issues of cloth</u>
	366/14, 17	1303-4	Wardrobe account
	366/15	1303-4	Wardrobe of king's sons
	366/24	1303-4	Wardrobe account
Add. MS.	37656	1304-5	Wardrobe of king's sons
E. A.	367/3	1304-5	" "
	309/9	1304-5	Particulars of envoy's expenses
	368/6	1304-6	Payments in wardrobe

Original accounts of the wardrobe (contd.)

	368/12	1305-6	Household of king's sons
	368/27	1305-6	<u>Liber unde respondebit</u>
	Add. MS. 37655	1305-6	Journal of wardrobe
	E. A. 369/11	1305-6	Wardrobe account
	Harl. MS. 152	1305-7	Imprests of wardrobe
	E. A. 308/19	1306-7	Divers expenses
	370/16	1306-7	Daily household expenses
	Add. MS. 22923	1306-7	Account of Prince's treasurer.
	Chanc. Misc. 3/22	temp. E. I.	Wardrobe of king's sons
	3/52(27)	"	Warrant for paying two messengers
	E. A. 371/1	"	Households of queen and king's sons
	371/2	"	Household accounts
	371/8 (15, 35, 115c, 117b, 129, 140, 173, 207, 215)	temp. E. I.	File of accounts
	372/4	"	Daily household expenses
	372/14	"	Wardrobe account and other documents
Edward II.	Add. MS. 35093	1307-8	Wardrobe account
	E. A. 373/15	1307-8	" "
	Cotton MS. Nero C VIII ff. 1-48	1309-1311	Divers accounts
	E. A. 373/30	1310-1311	Journal of wardrobe
	374/2	1310-1311	Charges of wardrobe
	374/5	1310-1311	<u>Liber unde respondebit</u>
	374/7	1310-1311	Journal of wardrobe
	374/8	1310-1311	Wardrobe account
	Cotton MS. Nero C VIII ff. 50-120	1311-12	<u>Liber cotidianus</u>
	ff. 121-153	1311-12	Queen's wardrobe account
	E. A. 374/16	1311-13	Imprests of wardrobe
	374/19	1311-12	Wardrobe of king's brothers
	375/2	1312-13	Daily household expenses
	375/5	1312-13	Payments in wardrobe
	375/8	1312-13	<u>Liber cotidianus</u>
	375/9	1313-14	Account book of wardrobe

Original accounts of the wardrobe (contd.)

E.A. 376/1	1312-13	Wardrobe account
376/6	1314-15	Payments by N. de Hugate
325/8	1314-15	Imprests
375/19	1314-15	Payments by queen's wardrobe
376/7	1315-16	Account of wardrobe
376/20	1315-16	Queen's wardrobe account
309/22	1315-16	Particulars of envoy's account
E. 403/31095	1315-16	Memorandum of messengers' expenses
Society of Antiquaries		
MS.no.120	1316-17	Wardrobe book
no.121	1317-18	" "
Add.MS.17362	1319-1320	Liber cotidianus
E.A. 378/4	1319-1320	Part of same
Add.MS.9931	1320-1	<u>Liber cotidianus</u>
Stowe MS.553	1321-3	" "
E.A. 379/18	1323-4	Daily household expenses
379/19	1323-4	Foreign expenses in wardrobe
380/1	1323-4	Wardrobe account
380/8	1324-5	Daily household and foreign expenses
Egerton MS.2814	1324-5	" " "
E.A. 381/4	1324-5	Daily foreign expenses
381/7	1325-6	Queen's expenses
381/11	1325-6	Subsidiary documents
381/14	1325-6	Daily foreign expenses
382/6	1326-7	" " "
382/9	1326-7	Daily household and foreign expenses
382/15	temp.E.II	Wardrobe accounts
325/13	"	Imprests
Edward III.		
E.A. 383/13	1328-8	Daily foreign expenses
383/14	1328-9	" " "
383/15	1328-9	" " "
383/20	1328-9	" " "
384/9	1329-1330	Daily household and foreign expenses
384/10	1329-1330	" " " "

(1) Unrecorded in List XXIV as account of great wardrobe.



Original accounts of the wardrobe (contd.)

E.A. 384/18	1300	Queen's New Year gifts
385/2	1300-1	Daily household and foreign expenses
385/4	1300-1	List of household
385/16	1331-2	Daily foreign expenses
John Rylands Library		
Latin MS. 235	1331-2	Queen's household
Cotton MS. Galba		
E. III	1332-3	Queen's great wardrobe
Add. MS. 38006 &		
E.A. 386/7	1332-3	Household of king's sister
E.A. 386/1 & 2	1332-3	Daily household and foreign expenses
386/8	1332-4	" " "
Add. MS. 35181	1332-7	Receipts, Imprests, Debts
E.A. 386/10	1333-4	Daily foreign expenses
386/11	1333-4	Particulars of account (1)
325/15	1333-4	Imprests
386/16	1333-5	Daily household and foreign expenses
387/5	1334-5	Wardrobe account
Cotton MS. Nero		
C VIII		
ff. 179-326	1334-5	<u>Liber cotidianus</u>
E.A. 387/9	1334-6	Daily foreign expenses
388/3	1337-8	" " "
388/5 & 6	1337-9	" " "
388/8	1337-9	Roll of liveries
388/9	1337-1342	Wardrobe Account
Misc. Bks. Exch. T.		
of R. no. 203	1338-1341	Wardrobe account
E.A. 389/6	1340-1	Expenses of prince
389/8	1340-2	Daily foreign expenses
Misc. Bks. Exch. T.,		
of R. no. 204	1341-5	Lieutenant's account
E.A. 312/4	1343	Particulars of envoy's account
390/8	1344-5	Book of liveries
390/12	1344-7	Wardrobe account
312/19	1345-7	Particulars of account
309/27	1344-7	" " "

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(1) Described in List XXXV as account of great wardrobe.

Original accounts of the wardrobe (contd.)

E.A. 391/9	1347-8	Account of debts
326/8	1348-9	Imprests
Misc. Bks. Exch. T.		
of R. no. 205	1349-1351	Queen's household
E.A. 326/10	1350-1	Imprests
326/11	1350-1	"
326/2	1350-5	"
392/12	1353-4	Wardrobe account
Cotton MS. Galba		
E. XIV	1355-1360	Household expenses of late Queen Isabella
John Ryland's Library		
Latin MS. 236	1357-8	Household of Queen Philippa
E.A. 393/11	1359-1361	Wardrobe account
327/2	1360-1	Imprests
309/11	1360-1	Expenses of messengers
327/4	1361-4	Imprests
394/10	1361	Debts of Queen Isabella
327/6	1362-4	Imprests
394/16	1363-5	Great wardrobe liveries
315/1	1365-6	Expenses of messengers
396/2	1366-8	Wardrobe account
315/25	1368-9	Expenses of messengers
315/33	1369-1370	" " "
396/11	1369-1370	Household account
316/3	1370-1385	Expenses of messengers
397/5	1371-4	Wardrobe account
316/40	1375-6	Expenses of messengers
317/13	1376-7	" " "
398/8	1376-7	Account of prince of Wales
398/9	1376-7	Wardrobe account
398/18	temp. E. III	Names of King's household
327/10	"	Imprests
398/22	"	Household accounts
317/39	"	Expenses of messengers
398/11	"	Debts
398/14	"	List of household offices
317/40	"	Payments to messengers
399/7	"	Liveries

APPENDIX B.

Issue Rolls used for the purpose of this Thesis.

Henry III.	E403/18	1259-60	Michaelmas
Edward I.	E403/21	1272-3	Easter
	28	1274-5	Michaelmas
	30	1275-6	Michaelmas
	31	1275-6	Michaelmas
	33	1275-6	Easter
	34	1275-6	Easter
	57	1287-8	Easter
	59	1288-90	Michaelmas
	66 & 67	1290-1	Easter
	70 & 71	1291-2	Michaelmas
	76	1292-3	Michaelmas
	79	1292-3	Michaelmas
	85	1293-4	Easter
	90	1294-5	Michaelmas
	91	1294-5	Michaelmas
	93	1294-5	Michaelmas
	95	1294-5	Easter
	96	1294-5	Easter
	99	1295-6	Michaelmas
	105	1299-1300	Michaelmas
	108	1300-1	Easter
	114	1302-3	Easter
	115	1302-3	Easter
	117	1303-4	Michaelmas
	121	1303-4	Easter
	128	1304-5	Easter
	134	1306-7	Michaelmas
	138	1306-7	Easter
Edward II.	146	1308-9	Easter
	152	1309-10	Easter
	154	1309-10	Easter

E403/155	1310-11	Michaelmas
157	1310-11	Easter
158	1310-11	Easter
159	1311-12	Michaelmas
162	1311-12	Easter
164	1312-13	Michaelmas
165	1312-13	Easter
170	1313-14	Easter
172	1314-15	Michaelmas
175	1314-15	Easter
176	1315-16	Michaelmas
178	1315-16	Easter
180	1316-17	Easter
183	1317-18	Michaelmas
186	1318-19	Michaelmas
187	1318-19	Easter
188	1318-19	Easter
189	1319-20	Michaelmas
191	1319-20	Easter
195	1320-21	Michaelmas
197	1321-2	Michaelmas
198	1321-2	Easter
199	1321-2	Easter
200	1322-3	Michaelmas
202	1322-3	Easter
205	1323-4	Michaelmas
207	1323-4	Easter
211	1324-5	Michaelmas
213	1324-5	Easter
217	1325-6	Michaelmas
218	1325-6	Easter
240	1327-8	Michaelmas
341	1347-8	Easter
344	1348-9	Michaelmas
Edward III.		
E403/226	1326-7	Michaelmas
231	1326-7	Easter
232	1327-8	Michaelmas
239	1327-8	Easter
241	1328-9	Michaelmas
243	1328-9	Easter
247	1329-30	Michaelmas
252	1329-30	Easter

E403/255	1330-1	Michaelmas
256	1330-1	Easter
261	1331-2	Michaelmas
262	1331-2	Easter
266	1332-3	Michaelmas
269	1332-3	Easter
274	1333-4	Michaelmas
276	1333-4	Easter
281	1334-5	Michaelmas
284	1334-5	Easter
287	1335-6	Michaelmas
290	1335-6	Easter
293	1336-7	Michaelmas
295	1336-7	Easter
297	1337-8	Michaelmas
301	1337-8	Easter
304	1338-9	Michaelmas
306	1338-9	Easter
307	1339-40	Michaelmas
313	1339-40	Easter
317	1340-1	Michaelmas
320	1340-1	Easter
321	1341-2	Michaelmas
326	1341-2	Easter
327	1342-3	Michaelmas
328	1342-3	Easter
331	1343-4	Michaelmas
334	1343-4	Easter
335	1344-5	Michaelmas
336	1345-6	Michaelmas
339	1346-7	Michaelmas
340	1347-8	Michaelmas
341	1347-8	Easter
344	1348-9	Michaelmas
348	1348-9	Easter
350	1349-50	Michaelmas
353	1349-50	Easter
355	1350-1	Michaelmas
358	1350-1	Easter
359	1351-2	Michaelmas
364	1351-2	Easter
365	1352-3	Michaelmas
368	1352-3	Easter

E403/373	1353-4	Michaelmas
374	1353-4	Easter
376	1354-5	Michaelmas
377	1354-5	Easter
378	1355-6	Michaelmas
380	1355-6	Easter
382	1356-7	Michaelmas
386	1356-7	Michaelmas
387	1356-7	Easter
390	1357-8	Michaelmas
393	1357-8	Easter
395	1358-9	Michaelmas
396	1358-9	Easter
400	1359-60	Michaelmas
401	1359-60	Easter
406	1360-1	Michaelmas
407	1360-1	Michaelmas
408	1360-1	Easter
409	1361-2	Michaelmas
410	1361-2	Easter
412	1362-3	Michaelmas
415	1362-3	Easter
317	1363-4	Michaelmas
419	1363-4	Easter
421	1364-5	Michaelmas
422 & 3	1364-5	Easter
425	1365-6	Michaelmas
427	1365-6	Easter
429	1366-7	Michaelmas
431	1366-7	Easter
433	1367-8	Michaelmas
434	1367-8	Easter
437	1368-9	Michaelmas
438	1368-9	Easter
	1369-70	<u>Issue roll of Thomas de Brantingham ed.</u>
		Devon. Michaelmas and Easter
441	1370-1	Michaelmas
443	1370-1	Easter
444	1371-2	Michaelmas
446	1371-2	Easter
447	1372-3	Michaelmas

E403/449	1372-3	Easter
451	1373-4	Michaelmas
455	1373-4	Easter
456	1374-5	Michaelmas
457	1374-5	Easter
459	1375-6	Michaelmas
460	1375-6	Easter
461	1376-7	Michaelmas
462	1376-7	Easter

to Avignon.

The account of the journey of Faukes, and the dates of his journey, were the work of Faukes himself, who died in 1443. The account of the journey has independently been recorded by Faukes in the "Journal" and "Chronique" of Faukes, which are found in every entry thereafter in the "Journal" and "Chronique" of Faukes. The auditor has corrected this up to August 1, but no further.

The places passed through by the two messengers on the outward journey have been partly identified by Miroet and Déprez.<sup>(1)</sup> The route seems to have been as follows:-

1st day: Westminster, London, Rochester, Canterbury, Dover.  
 2nd day: Dover, Wissant, Saint Riquier, Pois, Paris.  
 3rd day: Paris, Bourdan, Montberon, Ouzouer sur Loire.  
 4th day: Ouzouer sur Loire, Cosne sur Loire, Nevers, Jercy-le-Four.  
 5th day: Jercy-le-Four, Chalon, Lyon.  
 6th day: Lyons, Avignon.

The return journey, made by Faukes alone, was slightly different. He spent some time between Avignon, Vienna and Châteauneuf before his final departure.

(1) Léon Miroet et Eugène Déprez "Les Ambassades Anglaises pendant la Guerre de Cent Ans. Catalogue Chronique 1387-1450" Bibliothèque de L'École de Chartes LIX, 560-577 (1925)

## APPENDIX C.

Particulars of a messenger's account. (E.A.312/4)

The expenses of Jacke Faukes, a king's messenger, on a journey to Avignon in 1343.

The account is written on paper, and occupies two folios. It covers the days from 26 July to 23 August 1343, but the accountant has inadvertently repeated the same date in the second and third paragraphs, with the result that every entry thereafter is one day behind the correct date. The auditor has corrected this up to August 1, but no further.

The places passed through by the two messengers on the outward journey have been partly identified by Mirot and Déprez.<sup>(1)</sup> The route seems to have been as follows:-

1st day: Westminster, London, Rochester, Canterbury, Dover.  
 2nd day: Dover, Wissant, Saint Riquier, Pois, Paris.  
 3rd day: Paris, Dourdan, Montberson, Ouzouer sur Loire.  
 4th day: Ouzouer sur Loire, Cosne sur Loire, Nevers, Cercy-le-Tour.  
 5th day: Cercy-la-Tour, Chalon, Lyon.  
 6th day: Lyons, Avignon.

The return journey, made by Faukes alone, was slightly different. He spent some time between Avignon, Vienne and Châteauneuf before his final departure.

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(1) Léon Mirot et Eugène Déprez "Les Ambassades Anglaises pendant la Guerre de Cent Ans. Catalogue Chronique 1327-1450" Bibliothèque de L'École de Chartes LIX, 550-577 (1898)



Faukes' route when returning was:-

- 1st day: Châteauneuf, Vienne, Lyon.
- 2nd day: Lyon, St. Martin.
- 3rd day: St. Martin, Nevers.
- 4th day: Nevers, Bourges.
- 5th day: Bourges, Châteauneuf (on the Loire)
- 6th day: Châteauneuf, Paris.
- 7th day: Paris, Beauvais, Arras.
- 8th day: Arras, Montreuil, Wissant.
- 9th day: Wissant Dover.
- 10th day: Dover, Canterbury, Rochester, Dartford, London.
- 11th day: London, Westminster.

(1) A mistake was made here in the date by the scribe who wrote out the account and continued throughout. The error was added by the scribe who wrote the word "probatum" after each group of entries, and who has corrected the mistake in each dating clause up to 1 August.

E.A. 312/4 Particulars of the expenses of Jacke Faukes 1343.

Fait a remebrer (sic) qe le xxvj iour de Juyl lan xvij, Jacke Faukes resceut a la Resceite de Sire W.de Custance Tresorier nostre seigneur le Roi pur les despenses du dit Jacke et de Robin de Arderne vers la Court de Rome x li. de sterling. Summa patet.

Dont ils acomptent auer despenduz mesme le xxvj iour de Juyl apres qils furent deliurers en batellage de Westminster a Loundres j d. Item en ij paires botes et ij paires de sporons vj s. viiij d. Item mesme le iour en manger et boire a Loundres x d. Item pur ij chiuais lower de Loundres tanques Roucestre xx d. Item en manger et boire a Roucestre viij d. Item pur deux chiuaux lower de Roucestre a Canterbirs le susdit iour ij s. Item en manger et boire a Canterbirs vj d. Item mesme le iournee pur deux chiuaux de Canterbirs a Doure xvj d.

Summe xiiij s. ix d. probatur

Item le xxvjj<sup>(1)</sup> iour de Juyl a Doure a dyner vj d. Item en batellage pur lour amener tanques a la barge ij d. Item en portage ij d. Item pur la custume R. de Arderne pur ce qil nestoit pas franc homme de Loundres ij d. Item pur lower de la Barge par cause qe le Roi comanda qils ne lessassent pur

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(1) A mistake was made here in the date by the clerk who wrote out the account and continued throughout. The second j was added by the auditor who wrote the word "probatur" after each group of entries, and who has corrected the mistake in each dating clause up to 1 August.

nulles despenses daler et reuenir en xviiij iours ou lun de  
 eux sur peine de vie et membre xx s. Item mesme la iourne en  
 batellage pur lour amener de la Barge tanques a la terre a  
 Guitsand iiiij d. Item en portage ij d. Item pur une male  
 iiiij d. Item pur lour custume a Guitsand iiiij d. Item en  
 lour despenses de manger et boire illœqe viij d.

Summe xxij s. x d. probatur

Item le xxviij iour de Juyl en lower de deux chiuais de  
 Guitsand a Seint Richer x s. Item pur lour despenses en  
 chemynant xx d. Item en chiuachure de Seint Richer tanques a  
 Poys xl d. Item despenduz en manger et boire par le chemyn  
 xij d. Item en chiuachure de Poys fin a Paris vj s. viij d.  
 Item despenduz en chemyn ij s. Item en manger et boire a  
 Paris viij d.

Summe xxv s. iiiij d. probatur

Item le xxix (1)<sup>iour</sup> de Juyl en chiuachure de Paris tanques a  
 Dardues et pur reenuoier les chiuaux vij d. Item despenduz en  
 chemynant xviiij d. Item en chiuachure de Dorduies a Mount  
 Kerson par charette v s. Item despenduz en cheminant ix d.  
 Item pur j charette de Mount Kerson a Oueroir ij s. vj d.  
 Item despenduz en cheminant vj d.

Summe xvij s. iij d. probatur

La somme de ceste partie lxxix s. ij d. probatur

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(1) viij deleted.

f.1 v.

Item le xxx<sup>(1)</sup> iour de Juyl pur ij chivaux lower de Oueroir tanques a Cone sur Loire iiij s. Item despenduz en cheminant xij d. Item pur ij chivaux de Cone fin a Anouers xl d. Item despenduz en cheminant xij d. Item pur ij chivaux de Aneuers tanques a Chescurteis iij s. x d. Item despenduz en chemin viij d.

Summe xiiij s. x d. probatur

Item le xxxij iour de Juyl en chivauchure de Chefcurteis tanques a Calon vj s. Item despenduz en cheminant ix d. Item en chivauchure de Calon tanques Lyons iiij s. vj d. Item despenduz en chemynant x d. Item a Lyons pur lour despenses a soper ix d.

Summe xij s. x d. probatur

Item le xxxij<sup>(2)</sup> iour de Juyl pur un bat achate pur lour passage de Lyons a Auignon qi cousta vj petitz florins de Florence qi vaillent par iij s. la piece xviiij s. Item pur lour August~~t~~ despenses mesme le iour et le premer Daugust qils vindrent a Auignon a heure de vespre ij s. vj d. Item mesme le premer iour Daugust a soper a Auignon et pur lour litz ix d.

Summe xxj s. iij d. probatur

Item acomptent auer despenduz demurrantz a Auignon du premer iour Daugust susdit tanques le vij iour du dit mois qe Robin Darderne departi versus engleterre qi sont v iours vij s.

---

(1) ix deleted.

(2) Deleted but not corrected.

Item le vij iour Daugust susdit baille au dit Robin pur ses despenses versus Engleterre xl s. Item pur les despenses de Jacke Faukes du dit vij iour Daugust tanques le x iour du dit mois apres manger qil chiuauchea versus Vienne qi sount iij iours et demi ij s.

Summe xlix s. probatur

Summe de touz les despenses tanques a Auignon et illoeqe ad les susdites xl s. baillez a Robin viij li. xvj s. j d. probatur

Item acompte le dit Jacke en chiuauchure de Auignon tanques a Vienne le susdit x iour Daugust apres manger et le xj iour du dit mois ix s. Item pur ses despenses en cheminant ij s. v d. Item pur ses despenses demurrant a Vienne mesme le xj iour Daugust et le xij<sup>e</sup> iour purent auoir les lettres sealez du Chancellor de France de sauf conduit pur les messages Dengleterre xvij d. Item deliure pur les despenses dun sergeant darmes par comandement du dit Chancellor alant ad lui ouesque les (f. 2) dites lettres tanques au Chastelnoef sur Loire purent sauoir purent sauoir du Roi de France sil voulisse assentir as dites lettres du xij<sup>e</sup> iour Daugust tanques le xvj iour du dit mois qi sount v iours chescun iour j. florin de Florence. Et pur sa demoere a Chastelnoef<sup>(1)</sup> par j iour j florin de Florence qi sount vj florins. Et autres vj florins pur le returner du dit sergeant versus Vienne vaillent mesme les xij florins par iij s.

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(1) Viene deleted.

la piece xxxvj s. Item en chiuachure du dit Jacke de Viene tanques Lyons le susdit xij iour Daugust ij s. ouesques ses despenses en chemin.

Summe l s. xj d. probatur

Item le xiiij iour Daugust en chiuachure de Lyouns tanques a Martine en noneyne ij s. ix d. Item despenduz en chemynant ix d.

Summe iij s. vj d. probatur

Item le xiiij iour Daugust en chiuachure de Martine tanques a Aneuers iij s. Item despenduz en cheminant xiiij d.

Summe iij s. j c. probatur

Item le xv iour Daugust en chiuachure de Aneuers a Bouyn' xl d. Item en ses despenses par chemyn xij d.

Summe iij s. iij d. *pre* probatur

Item le xvij iour Daugust en chiuachure de Bouyn' tanques au Chastelnoef iij s. vij d. Item pur ses despenses par chemin xv d. Item mesme le iour en boire et pur son lit a Chastelnoef v d. ob. Item le xvij<sup>e</sup> iour demourant illoeqe despendi en compeignie et pur son lit v d.

Summe vj s. viij d. ob. probatur

Item le xviiij iour Daugust en chiuachure du Chastelnoef tanques Paris nocte et jour sur diverses chiuaux iij s. vj d. Item despendu en chemynant xviiij d. Item en manger et boire a Paris viij d.

Summe vj d. viij d. probatur

Item le xix iour Daugust en chiuachure de Paris a Beauueis xl d.

Item pur despenses par chemyn iiij d. Item mesme la iournee en chiuachure de Beauueis tanques Areyns et les despenses de lui et son chiual et un garson x d.

Summe iiij s. vj d. probatur

Item le xx iour Daugust en chiuachure de Areins tanques a Moustroil ij s. x d. Item en boire iij d. Item mesme le iour en chiuachure de Moustroil fin a Guitsand ij s. vj d. Item despendu par chemyn vj d. Item en soper a Guitsand vj d.

Summe vj s. vij d. probatur

(f. 2 v) Item le xxj iour Daugust a Guitsand a diner iij d. Item paie pur sa custume vers Lewe apres manger ij d. Item en portage j d. Item en batellage ij d. Item pur sa porcon de lower de la nyef vj s. viij d. Item a Doure en portage et batellage ij d.

Summe vij s. vj d. probatur

Item le xxij iour Daugust a boire <sup>(1)</sup> a Doure le matin ij d. Item en chiuachure tanques Canterbirs viij d. et en boire a Canterbirs j d. Item en chiuachure de Canterbire a Roucestre x d. Item en manger et boire a Roucestre iiij d. ob. Item en chiuachure de Roucestre a Derteford vj d. et en boire j d. Item de Derteford a Loundres v d. Item despenduz a Loundres a soper ix d. Item lendemayn en batellage versus nostre seigneur le Roi a Westminster j d.

Summe iij s. xj d. ob. probatur

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(1) diner deleted.

Summe de touz les despenses du dit Jacke de Auignon tanqes a  
Loundres

iiij li. xviiij s. ix d. probatur

La somme ci de touz les susdit despenses tout ioynit

xiiij li. xiiij s. x d. probatur

Et ensi a le dit Jacke plus despendu qe resceu

lxxiiij s. x d.