

John Capgrave, O. E. S. A.

(Lynn, 21 April 1393 - Lynn, 12 August 1464 *)

Exactly five centuries ago the capitular Fathers of the English Augustinian province assembled for their chapter in the friary at Lynn ¹⁾. It was early in August 1455. They unanimously re-elected Magister John Capgrave as provincial for a further two years ²⁾. He had been elected for the first time at the chapter in Winchester,

*) In a second article we shall give a list of Capgrave's biographers and a critical enumeration of his works.

We wish to express our thanks to the Very Rev. Fr. Roth, O. E. S. A., from whose collected source-material we were allowed to quote several items.

¹⁾ The most ancient probate will concerning the Augustinians at King's Lynn is that of Adam de Geyton for the year 1276. He left legacies to the Austin friars of Lynn among others. Cf. H. HARROD, *Report on the deeds and records of the borough of King's Lynn* (King's Lynn, 1874), p. 35.

²⁾ General Archives O. E. S. A., Register Dd 6, f. 16: 'Neapoli. 4 Februarii 1456. Confirmavimus in priorem provincialem huius provincie [i. e. Anglie] magistrum Iohannem Capgrave electum unanimiter et concorditer in capitulo Lynie celebrato 6a die mensis Augusti 1455, approbando electionem et confirmationem eius per vicarium nostrum de eo factam dando sibi omnem auctoritatem et potestatem sicut alias habuit in huiusmodi officio provincialatus et confirmavimus omnia acta et diffinitiones in dicto capitulo, precipiendo ut observaret et observari faceret similiter diffinitiones capitulorum generalium'.

Provincial chapters of the Order were celebrated every year, but in the year 1385, during the general chapter at Esztergom (Strigoni) in Hungary, the English province received a dispensation to hold its chapter every second year, cf. *Analecta Augustiniana*, v (1913-14). 55. Pope Eugene IV extended this dispensation to all ultramontane provinces of the Order by the bull *Admonet nos*, dated 30 Sept. 1438, cf. *Anal. Aug.*, vi (1915-16). 322-24. His successor, Nicholas V, granted the same provinces the right to hold provincial chapters every three years, by the bull *Romani Pontificis* of 25 May 1453, cf. *Anal. Aug.*, vi (1915-16). 399-400. It would appear that the English province did not use this privilege. The next mention of a provincial chapter after 1455 is that of 1459, cf. *Anal. Aug.*, vii (1917-18). 27, which seems to suppose the previous one was in 1457.

22 July 1453³⁾. The coincidence that it is five hundred years since the greatest of all English Austin friars was again chosen head of his province is a timely occasion for a survey of his life and an investigation of some points left unsolved by his biographers.

FIRST PERIOD: 1393-1417

I. Origin and date of birth.

Until the Rev. F. C. Hingeston published two of Capgrave's works⁴⁾ all of his biographers, following the lead set by Bale⁵⁾, styled him *Cantianus* — native of Kent. But Capgrave himself, in the prologue to *The life of St Katharine* states that he was born in Lynn —

' If ye wyll wete qwat that I am ;
My cuntre is northfolke, of the town of lynne ' ⁶⁾.

Lynn — today it is called King's Lynn, and in former days Bishop's Lynn — is situated thirty seven miles north of Cambridge on the right bank of the River Ouse, where it flows into Wash Bay on the North Sea. Lynn belonged to the diocese of Norwich,

³⁾ General Archives O. E. S. A., Register Dd 6, f. 16: ' Rome. 8 Maii 1454. Confirmavimus in priorem provincialem fratrem Iohannem Capgrave provincie Anglie electum unanimiter et concorditer in capitulo provinciali Veyntonie celebrato 1453 in festo Marie Magdalene approbando electionem ac confirmationem eius per vicarium nostrum de eo factam, dando sibi auctoritatem in temporalibus et spiritualibus ut aliis provincialibus dare consuevimus, precipiendo singulis fratribus dicte provincie, ut sibi sicut legitimo pastori obediant. Confirmavimus acta predicti capituli precipiente[s] prefato provinciali ut illa observari faciat '.

⁴⁾ J. CAPGRAVE, *The chronicle of England*, ed. F. C. Hingeston (Rerum britannicarum medii aevi scriptores, London, 1858), and J. CAPGRAVE, *Liber de illustribus Henricis*, ed. F. C. Hingeston (Rerum britannicarum medii aevi scriptores, London, 1858). In the same year Hingeston also published an English translation of the work.

⁵⁾ J. BALE (1495-1563), *Scriptorum illustrium Maioris Britanniae, quam nunc Angliam et Scotiam vocant, catalogus*, i (Basle, 1557), 582.

⁶⁾ J. CAPGRAVE, *The life of St Katharine of Alexandria*, ed. C. Horstmann (Early English Text Society, original series n. 100, London, 1893). 16. Mr Horstmann published the text of Arundel MS 396 in the British Museum and that of Rawlinson MS (Poet. 118) in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. We quote the text of the Rawl. MS, because it gives the most Capgrave-forms according to F. Furnival in the introduction, pp. xxiv-xxvi.

and was a seaport of some importance, especially for the trade with the Scandinavian lands.

About the youth of John Capgrave we are fortunately well informed by himself, a rare thing in medieval history. First to his birthday.

In *The chronicle of England*, dealing with the events in the seventeenth year of King Richard II, he records —

'In this yere, in the XXI. day of aprile, was that Frere bore wech mad these Annotaciones' ⁷⁾.

Here a difficulty arises. Richard II was proclaimed king on 22 June 1377. Consequently the seventeenth year of his reign runs from 22 June 1393 to 21 June 1394. The date of Capgrave's birth is then supposed to fall on 21 April 1394 ⁸⁾. Hingeston dates this passage to the year 1393. So does everyone after him. By what criterion does Capgrave compute each year of a king's reign? From the anniversary of their proclamation or from the beginning of the civil year? We examined some dates as given by Capgrave ⁹⁾, and found that in almost every case he computed according to the civil year. Hence, the seventeenth year of King Richard's reign begins on 25 March 1393 — *computatio anglicana* — and Capgrave's birthday falls on 21 April 1393.

II. Memories of his youth.

When Capgrave was composing his chronicles in later life, and came to deal with the first years of his century, he could not help recalling his own personal memories of the time. He tells of a comet appearing in England's sky ¹⁰⁾, of a severe winter he en-

⁷⁾ J. CAPGRAVE, *The chronicle of England*, ed. F. C. Hingeston, p. 259.

⁸⁾ Furnivall has the same date (cf. *The life of St Katharine*, p. v) but he does not consider Capgrave's criterion of chronology.

⁹⁾ 'This yere [i. e. the 7th of Edward II] deied Philip the Kyng of Frauns' (*The chronicle of England*, p. 180). This year runs from 8 July 1313 to 7 July 1314. Philippe le Bel died 29 Nov. 1314. 'In the secund yere of Rychard [i. e. II] deied Gregori the XI' (*Ibidem*, p. 233). The second year runs from 22 June 1378-21 June 1379, and Pope Gregory XI died 27 March 1378.

'In the XIII yere, this Kyng [i. e. Henry IV] deied, the XX. day of March' (*Ibidem*, p. 302). The 14th year is from 30 Sept. 1412 till 29 Sept. 1413. Henry IV died 20 March 1412.

¹⁰⁾ *The chronicle of England*, p. 278, under the year 1401.

dured in 1407 ¹¹), of the floods in 1413 ¹²), of the beggars who stole three children at Lynn in 1416 ¹³). But it was in particular the preparations for the wedding of Princess Philippa (1393-1430), and her departure from Lynn to Denmark, which made a deep impression on the young lad. For nearly two years the people of Lynn continued to talk of the events —

' In this yere [i. e. 1404] were sent embassiatouris fro the Kyng of Denmark for to have the Kyngis doutir Philip to be joyned in wedlok to her King ' ¹⁴).

This happened in autumn of the said year, as may be found in the *Regesta* of King Eric XIII of Denmark, Sweden and Norway, under the date 18 November 1404 —

' Ericus rex Henrico IV, regi Angliae, gratias egit pro litteris ejus per Petrum Lucke traditis et adventum ambassiatorum suorum ¹⁵) brevi annuntiat; regem rogat, ut filiam suam in proximo futuro mensi Maji ad Daniam transmittat ' ¹⁶).

Nevertheless, the future queen of Denmark did not leave England before summer, 1406. During the course of that year several commissions and appointments were made by King Henry ordering ships in the ports of Lynn, London and off the coast of Norfolk to be seized for the crossing and safe-conduct of the queen and her company ¹⁷). Finally after a sojourn of nine days at Lynn with her royal family ¹⁸) Princess Philippa set out to join her future husband ¹⁹). Capgrave was an eye-witness of these happenings ²⁰).

¹¹) *Ibidem*, p. 295.

¹²) *Liber de illustribus Henricis*, p. 112.

¹³) *The chronicle of England*, p. 316.

¹⁴) *Ibidem*, p. 292.

¹⁵) viz. Augustinus, episcopus Asloensis [i. e. Oslo]; Turo Benedicti, miles; Aubernus, praepositus ecclesiae XII apostolorum Bergensis; Petrus Lycke, archidiaconus Rodskildensis; et Andreas Olavi, miles. Cf. *Regesta diplomatica historiae Danicae*, series ii, t. i, pars i (Copenhagen, 1889). 509, n. 3922, 3923.

¹⁶) *Ibidem*, p. 509, n. 3921.

¹⁷) *Calendar of Patent Rolls. Henry IV (1405-08)*, iii (London, 1907). 156, 206, 224, 233, 236.

¹⁸) 'The Kyng broute hir to Lenne, for to take schip there. And in that towne he lay nyne daies, the two qwenes, thre sons of the Kyng, Herri, Thomas and Umfrey; and many othir lordes and ladies' (*The chronicle of England*, p. 292).

¹⁹) See *Schultz Danmarks historie*, ii (Copenhagen, 1941). 204.

²⁰) 'Unicam filiam huius excellentissimi regis ego vidi in villa de Lenne, ubi

There were other contemporary events which Capgrave did not record. They are not so important in themselves but they shed sidelights on the importance of the Augustinian friary at Lynn.

Firstly there is the visit paid to Lynn in 1413 by the duke and duchess of Clarence —

'On Monday before the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, 1 Henry V [i. e. 4 Sept. 1413], it was reported that John Botiller, esquire to Thomas, Duke of Clarence, brother of the King, had been sent to the Mayor [Bartholomew Petipas²¹]] and saluted him and certified that the Duke and Duchess with 300 horses, would be at Lynn that day to supper and to take up their abode at the Augustine Friars²²).

Secondly, in the same year we read of disputes between the bishop of Norwich and the administrators of Lynn about the bishop's tolls. The discussions were held 'in the cloister of the Augustine Friars on the north side, near the lavatory', and a number of the members of the Corporation are recorded as having been present in the chapter-house of the Augustine Friars to attest the release of claims by executors of the late bishop of Norwich²³). Hence it follows not only that the buildings of the friary were quite extensive, but also that it occupied a central place in the civil life of Lynn.

III. *He becomes an Augustinian friar.*

In the same stanza of the prologue to *The life of St Katharine* where he speaks of his birthplace Capgrave also tells that he en-

navem intravit, cum, Angliam relinquens, ad coniugium regis Norwegiae festinavit. Dicunt qui noverunt eam, in tantam sapientiam succrevisse, ut omnes causae regni ad eam confluerent, rege saepissimis infirmitatibus continue vexato, et ipsam provido consilio omnia feliciter terminasse. Haec est quidem regalis progenies [viz. 4 sons and 1 daughter] quam ego oculis conspexi' (*Liber de illustribus Henricis*, p. 117). See also C. ALLEN, *Histoire de Danemark*, trad. E. Beauvais, i (Copenhagen, 1878). 222, 228, 243, where she is called: 'la sage reine, l'excellente reine'.

Philippa was not the only daughter of Henry IV. Blanche, the elder sister, had been married in 1401 to Louis XII, elector palatine of the Rhine (cf. *The chronicle of England*, p. 279). Capgrave certainly alludes to the fact that he saw her.

²¹) Cf. H. HILLEN, *History of the borough of King's Lynn* (Norwich, 1907), p. 165.

²²) H. HARROD, *Report on the deeds... of King's Lynn*, p. 104.

²³) *Ibidem*, pp. 102-103. (Italics mine).

tered the Order of the Hermits of St Augustine. We give the whole stanza —

' If ye wyll wete qwat that I am:
My cuntre is northfolke, of the town of lynne;
Owt of the world to my profite I cam
On-to the brotherhode qwech I am Inne —
Godd geue me grace neuyr for to blynne
To folow the steppes of my faders be-for,
Whech to the rewle of Austen wer swore ' ²⁴).

Furnivall having considered the expression ' my faders ' and rejected the strict interpretation, remarks ' he doubtless meant only by « faders before » the spiritual fathers or Austin Friars who had gone before him ' ²⁵). However, we believe the expression should be understood in the literal sense, namely his blood relations. This opinion is based on a hitherto unnoticed reference in the General Archives of the Order ²⁶). There in the year 1390 we meet another John Capgrave. The entry reads —

' Venetiis, 13 Octobris 1390. Confirmavimus et rectificavimus nominationem et electionem factam de fratre Iohanne capgrave provincie anglie per venerabiles viros Magistros priores et bacchallarios sui limitis Oxonie in capitulo Jeremute [i. e. Gorleston or Little Yarmouth in 1390] ad locum eidem limitis *in universitate Oxonie* de proximo incumbentem, ut suos actus scolasticos usque ad gradum magistralem magis quiete possit proseguere, de nostra gratia spetiali. Nolentes ut predictam nominationem vel electionem per eundem limitem quoquomodo possit infringi, si ita est ut fertur, nisi quod absit, hec sua demerita postularent '.

A later hand added in the margin of the Register — ' Doc-tissimus omnium Anglorum Ordinis nostri '. There is a dearth of further information, but it is possible that we have here an uncle of John Capgrave Junior. Apart from that suggestion there are two points worthy to note. We have italicized the words ' *in universitate Oxonie* ' in the excerpt from the General Register. We know that John Capgrave Jnr studied at the University of Cambridge — Lynn belongs to the *limes Cantabrigensis* ²⁷) — while the Capgrave of

²⁴) *The life of St Katharine*, p. 16.

²⁵) *Ibidem*, p. v.

²⁶) General Archives O. E. S. A., Register Dd 3, f. 136.

²⁷) The English Augustinian province was divided into five limits: Oxford, Cambridge, York, Lincoln, and Ireland.

1390 (we should like to style him the uncle) studied at Oxford, for he belonged to the Oxford limit. Perhaps we have here the key to the Oxford-Cambridge problem concerning to John Capgrave Jnr. Both universities claim him as an alumnus. Below we shall say more on this question.

With regard to the marginal comment the scribe was not aware of the year in which John Capgrave Jnr was born, and whatever was attributed to him he applied to the elder John Capgrave.

Torelli, when dealing with Capgrave, makes the pertinent comment —

' Finally it may be remarked that in the same reign and in our same province of England, after this Magister John Capgrave flourished another Magister Fr. John Capgrave, also very learned and erudite, who is supposed to have been a nephew of the first ' ²⁸).

But he makes the same mistake as the scribe of the marginal comment.

When did the younger Capgrave knock at the door of the friary at Lynn ²⁹), seeking admittance to the Hermits of St Augustine? The argument may be cast as follows. He tells that his ordination to the priesthood took place four or five years before 1421. Therefore it occurred in the year 1416 or 1417. He includes this personal reference when describing the birthday of King Henry VI, under the date 6 December 1421 —

' Audiui enim, cum nota esset Londoniae nativitas regis nostri [i. e. Henrici VI] vocem ecclesiarum, et strepitum campanarum quoniam et tunc studens ibi eram, in quarto anno vel quinto ex quo ad sacerdotium promotus sum, et adhuc a memoria non rediit jubilatio illa populorum ' ³⁰).

²⁸) L. TORELLI, *Secoli Agostiniani*, vii (Bologna, 1682). 314 (= an. 1485, n. 15).

' Nota in fine, che fiorì pure nello stesso Regno, e Provincia nostra d'Inghilterra, doppo questo un altro Maestro F. Giovanni Capgrave molto dotto anch'egli, & erudito, qual si stima essere stato Nipote del primo '.

²⁹) Capgrave only once expressly reports that he belonged to the Lynn community. This occurs in the dedicatory letter to Edward IV in *The chronicle of England* (ed. Hingeston, p. 1). The address reads as follows — ' To my Sovereyn Lord Edward, be the grace of God Kyng of Ynglond and of Frauns, Lord of Yreland, a pore Frere of the Heremites of Seynt Austyn, in the convent of Lenne, sendith prayer, obediens, subjeccion, and al that evir, be ony deute, a prest schuld offir onto his Kyng '.

³⁰) *Liber de illustribus Henricis*, p. 127.

It is curious that though he is generally precise in his statements he does not remember exactly the year of his ordination. We may safely place it in 1416 or 1417, probably in 1417 as we shall show further on. It may be assumed therefore that Capgrave entered the Augustinian Order about 1410³¹⁾. For the first years of his religious life there seems to be no information. He appears again in the year 1421 while studying in London. We shall take this as the first part of the second period in our survey of Capgrave's life.

SECOND PERIOD: 1417-1425

I. Studies in London: 1417-1422.

From his very youth Capgrave was a real student, gifted with a sharp intelligence and a tenacious memory. He stuck to his books 'like a limpet to its rock', as Bale³²⁾, Leland³³⁾, and Pamphilus³⁴⁾ tell us in the same words³⁵⁾. No doubt his Superiors proposed to the Provincial that the young friar be sent for higher studies to a *studium generale*. We next find him in the *concursorium* of the

³¹⁾ E. MAUNDE THOMPSON in *Dictionary of National Biography*, iii (London, 1908). 929, wrongly gives 1417 or 1418 for the date of his ordination to the priesthood. Henry VI was not born in 1422, but 6 Dec. 1421. He was proclaimed king on 1 Sept. 1422.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica, iv (London¹⁴, 1929). 792, supposes that Capgrave entered the Augustinian Order after having lectured at Oxford — 'He became a priest, took the degree of D. D. at Oxford, where he lectured on theology, and subsequently joined the order of Augustinian Hermits'. (Italics mine).

³²⁾ J. BALE, *Scriptorum illustrium... catalogus*, i. 582. 'Is vero vel ab ipsa pueritia libris perinde ac concha suis scopulis adhaerens...'

³³⁾ J. LELAND (1506 ?-1552), *Commentarii de scriptoribus britannicis*, ed. A. Hall, ii (Oxford, 1709). 453.

³⁴⁾ J. PAMPHILUS, *Chronica Ordinis Fratrum Eremitarum Sancti Augustini* (Romae, 1581), f. 82v.

³⁵⁾ It is interesting to note that Capgrave in writing the life of Henry of Friemar, O. E. S. A. († 1340), uses almost the same expression which his own biographers apply to him. 'Non mediocriter... in libris studuit, sed sic studio se in illa aetate [i. e. in his youth] confixit ut etiam, ad maturam aetatem veniens, numquam ab eo divelli potuit', cf *Liber de illustribus Henricis*, p. 181. (Italics mine).

London house ³⁶⁾. When did he come there? Was it after his ordination, or did he spend his entire course of studies in the London friary? The coming of Capgrave to London may in all probability be dated to 1417.

This may be proved firstly by the fact that Capgrave reported in all detail the stealing of the three children by three beggars at Lynn in 1416 ³⁷⁾. He does not again refer to Lynn until 1 August 1446 when King Henry VI visited the friary ³⁸⁾. He does not mention the visit of Henry V to Lynn in 1421 ³⁹⁾.

Secondly, he was made a lector by the Provincial in 1422 on the completion of his theological course ⁴⁰⁾. In the document already mentioned he is called *cursor Londoniis*. Since it was a rule of the Order that nobody was allowed to stay longer than five years in the *studia generalia* ⁴¹⁾ — and we know from another source

³⁶⁾ *Concursorium* is the same as *studium generale*, cf. *Anal. Aug.*, v (1913-14), 107, n. 1. Yet we do not find the London study expressly mentioned as a *studium generale* — being immediately under the charge of the Prior General, who appointed students to it from every province of the Order, as was done for example with Oxford, Cambridge, York, Lincoln. Only two foreigners are mentioned in the General's Registers as assigned for studies to London. There is mention of Friar William of Toulouse in 1385 (Register Dd 2, f. 51v), and of Friar George *de prucia* in 1419 (Register Dd 4, f. Vv) who still had a room there as a lector in 1438 (Register Dd 5, f. 24). All the other students came from different English friaries.

³⁷⁾ See note 13.

³⁸⁾ See p. 418.

³⁹⁾ H. HARROD, *Report on the deeds... of King's Lynn*, p. 106. — '9. Henry V [i. e. 1421] 18th of April. At the Augustine Friars he [i. e. the king] was waited on by the Corporation who presented him with the « gift » they had hurriedly raised amounting to over 150 pds'.

⁴⁰⁾ General Archives O. E. S. A., Register Dd 4, f. 55: 'Bononie. 8 Aprilis 1421. Concessimus venerabili viro Willelmo Wellis provinciali provincie Anglie, ut completa forma debita fratrum Iohannis Capgrave [MS: Catgrave] cursoris Londoniis ac Gilberto Grey possit ipsis conferre gradum lectorie in universitate Oxoniensi vel Cantabriggensi, prout ipsi coniunctum vel divisim elegerint, habita tamen depositione quatuor magistrorum etc. Et si ipse provincialis non posset dictos fratres lectorare, committat alteri vices suas auctoritate nostra. Concedentes insuper dictis iuvenibus et volentes, ut scilicet primo, videlicet fratri Iohanni, quod annus primus lecture sententiarum computetur pro primo anno universitatis, et quartus annus lecture naturalium commutetur similiter in annum theologie dicto fratri Gilberto Grey de gratia speciali'.

In fact Capgrave did not obtain his lectorship before 1422, because on 6 Dec. 1421 he still calls himself a student,

that he went to Cambridge in the year 1422 — we may suppose that his entry to the London house took place in 1417. The only record of his time in London, as already mentioned, is that dealing with the birthday of King Henry VI. No particulars survive about his studies there.

II. *Studies at Cambridge University: 1422-1425.*

Having been created a lector early in 1422 Capgrave was appointed by the Prior General to study at Cambridge ⁴²). The question whether Oxford or Cambridge may count Capgrave among its students — a question passed over in silence in the document of 8 April 1421 — becomes definite a year later when Cambridge was chosen, and is solved by some passing references in Capgrave's own works.

As we have already seen Capgrave got a dispensation from his first year at the university. So he was required to spend only one year — a regulation for the benefit of the religious Orders ⁴³) — studying theology before his 'opponency', that is before his baccalaureate. This fits in with his statement in the prologue to *The life of St Gilbert of Sempringham*, when he talks about the religious families living under the rule of St Augustine —

'... but if men like for to knowe this mater diffusely thei may lerne it in a sermon that I seid at Cambrig the yer befor myn opposition' ⁴⁴).

⁴¹) Decree of the General Chapter at Aquila, 1400. — 'Nullus studens in studio generali ultra quinquennium possit aut debeat morari sub pena privationis studii', cf. *Anal. Aug.*, v (1913-14). 220.

⁴²) General Archives O. E. S. A., Register Dd 4, f. 75v: 'Arimini. 13 Aprilis 1422. Assignavimus fratri Iohanni Capgrave, lectori formato provincie Anglie, proximum bacchalario, promoti locum alienigenis debitum in universitate Cantabriggensi eiusdem provincie, ita quod cum promotus pro limite Cantabriggensi debeat commutari et quartus annus ab anno presenti pro oppositione sibi deputetur in eadem universitate. Eoque ordine procedat usque ad gradum magisterii inclusive, non obstante quacumque ordinatione aut statuto quomodolibet huius oppositum dictante, super quibus omnibus dispensamus' (Italics mine).

⁴³) H. RASHDALL, *The universities of Europe in the middle ages*, ed. Powicke-Emders, iii (Oxford, 1936). 159, n. 5.

⁴⁴) J. CAPGRAVE, *The lives of St Augustine and St Gilbert of Sempringham and a Sermon*, ed. J. Munro (Early English Text Society, original series n. 140, London, 1910), p. 61.

This year was 1422 as may be read in the first lines of the *Tretis* —

' And here begynnyth a tretis of tho orderes that be vndyr the reule of oure fader Seynt Augustin drawe oute of a sermon seyde be frer Ion Capraue at Cambrige, the yere of our Lord a M.cccc.xxij ' ⁴⁵).

At the end of the first year Capgrave was made a bachelor of divinity by authority of the Prior General —

' Fecimus fratrem Iohannem Capgrave lectorem provincie Anglie Bacchalarium auctoritate nostra, assignantes ei promotum Bacchalarium promoti locum alienigenis debitum in nostro conventu et universitate Cantabrigensi de gratia speciali ' ⁴⁶).

Since it was normal to continue for a further two years before securing the doctorate ⁴⁷) it is likely that he finished his studies at Cambridge in 1425.

III. A student at Oxford ?

The only two of Capgrave's biographers who expressly style him a doctor of Cambridge are Gandolfo — who saw the Prior General's Register ⁴⁸), and Tanner ⁴⁹) who saw *The life of St Gilbert of Sempringham* — though Tanner also gave Oxford according to Bale, Pits ⁵⁰) and Wharton ⁵¹). All the other biographers, starting with Bale and Leland, stated that he took his degree at Oxford, or at least they were uncertain. Hingeston ⁵²) suggested that he may have received his early education at Cambridge, since it was convenient to Lynn, and that he afterwards went to the sister

⁴⁵) *Ibidem*, p. 145.

⁴⁶) General Archives O. E. S. A., Register Dd 4, f. 106: Rome. 20 Martii 1423.

⁴⁷) H. RASHDALL, *The universities of Europe*, iii, p. 159.

⁴⁸) D. GANDOLFO (1653-1707), *Dissertatio historica de ducentis celeberrimis Augustinianis scriptoribus* (Rome, 1704), p. 208.

⁴⁹) Th. TANNER (1674-1735), *Bibliotheca britannica-hibernica* (London, 1748), p. 152.

⁵⁰) J. PITS (1560-1616), *Relationum historicarum de rebus Anglicis, tomus primus*, ed. W. Bishop (Paris, 1619), p. 671.

⁵¹) H. WHARTON, *Appendix ad Historiam litterariam clarissimi viri Gulielmo Cave* (Basle, 1744), p. 164.

⁵²) *The chronicle of England*, p. x.

university. This is most unlikely. Capgrave himself never alluded to Oxford in his literary works, nor is there any mention of it in the Prior General's Registers as being his place of studies. These registers are the most important source of information on this question. Every appointment for the studies at a university was made by the General.

The English items in Register Dd 4 end with the year 1439 — some folios are missing, but if Capgrave, after having received his bachelorship changed to Oxford, it would certainly be mentioned in the Prior General's Registers. If he lectured at Oxford it must have been between the years 1439 and 1453 — the Register Dd 5 begins with the year 1453. But this is a conjecture which appears improbable.

We believe that the doubt which exists has taken rise from Capgrave's first biographers, who confused John Capgrave Senior and John Capgrave Junior. The truth appears to be that the Capgrave of 1390 gained his degree at the University of Oxford, while the younger and more famous John Capgrave took his doctorate at Cambridge.

THIRD PERIOD: 1425-1464

I. *Literary activity: 1425-1450.*

The first definite date we have during this period is 1437. Between the years 1425 and 1437 we can determine neither his activities nor the house to which he was sent after completion of his studies. It is possible that Capgrave returned to his native friary, dedicating himself to historical studies and theological commentaries. It was probable between 1425 and 1437 that he composed his 'Super libros Sententiarum', his 'Determinaciones theologice' and his 'Ad positiones erroneas'. All three works are now lost. We have some little further information about the commentary 'Super libros Regum', a work cast in four books. In his 'Commentarius in Genesim', dedicated to Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, he tells in the dedicatory epistle about his method of commenting on the Pentateuch, and says —

'... in quibus [i. e. libris], sicut in libris Regum « vires pro-
lum », triplex expositio inveniatur ' ⁵³).

The ' Commentarius in Genesim ' was written between 11 Oct-
ober 1437 and 21 September 1438, as may be read at the end of the
work —

' Incepit frater Iohannes Capgrave hoc opus in translatione sancti
Augustini doctoris, que occurrit mense octobris [i. e. die 11] anno
Domini m.cccc.xxxvij. et fecit finem eiusdem in festo Mathei apos-
toli et evangeliste [i. e. 21 Sept.] anno Domini m.cccc.xxxviii ' ⁵⁴).

Hence it is evident that his commentary on ' Kings ' appeared
before 11 October 1437.

After completing the ' Commentarius in Genesim ' Capgrave
systematically continued — as he had promised Duke Humphrey ⁵⁵)

⁵³) *Liber de illustribus Henricis*, appendix iv, p. 231.

Capgrave dedicated the commentaries ' Super libros Regum I ' and ' III ' to
Duke Humphrey. These the duke donated to the library of Oxford University
on 25 Febr. 1444. Among the 135 MSS which he gave the university there also
figure the commentaries ' Super Genesim ' and ' Super Exodum '. For Capgrave's
MSS cf. *Epistolae academicae Oxoniensis (Registrum F). A collection of letters
and other miscellaneous documents illustrative of academical life and studies at
Oxford in the fifteenth century*, ed. H. Anstey (Oxford Historical Society) i
(Oxford, 1898). 232-233; and *Liber de illustribus Henricis*, appendix iv, pp. 222-228.

Commentaries on ' Kings II ' and ' IV ' were dedicated to John Lowe,
O. E. S. A. († 1467), bishop of St Asaph, who in 1444 was transferred to the
see of Rochester, cf. J. LELAND, *Commentarii de scriptoribus britannicis*, ed.
A. Hall, ii (Oxford, 1709). 453.

It is not unlikely that the two volumes ' Super libros Regum ' belonging to
the former library of Austin Friars at Cambridge and reported by Leland in his
Antiquarii de rebus britannicis collectanea, iii. 12 (in Th. Hearns edition: iv
(London, 1770). 15), were his.

John Lowe, having been Provincial from 1425 till 1433, was made bishop of
St Asaph on 17 August 1433, cf. C. EUBEL, *Hierarchia catholica medii aevi*, ii
(Munster, 1914). 97.

This would suggest that the two commentaries were written probably between
1433 and 1437.

⁵⁴) O. COXE, *Catalogus codicum MSS qui in collegiis aulisque Oxoniensibus
hodie asservantur*. Coll. Oriel. (Oxford, 1852), p. 11 (= MS 32, now preserved in
the Bodleian Library, Oxford as MS Oriel 32); and *The chronicle of England*,
p. xiii.

⁵⁵) ' Si enim placuerit [i. e. Commentarius in Genesim] et ad notitiam meam
pervenerit, tunc, sub protectione maiorum meorum, ad Exodum festino, et deinde
ad reliquos Moisei libros ', cf. *Liber de illustribus Henricis*, appendix iv, p. 231.

— to comment on the other books of the Pentateuch. However, only his commentary on 'Exodus' is still extant. It was written between 17 January 1439 and 6 May 1440, as we may read in the colophon —

'Incepit hoc opus frater Iohannes Capgrave in festo sancti Antonii confessoris que occurrit mense Ianuarii [i. e. 17 Jan.] anno Domini m.cccc.xxxviii⁵⁶) et fecit finem in festo sancti Iohannis ante portam latinam [i. e. 6 May] anno Domini m.cccc. xl. Feliciter '⁵⁷).

In that same year, 1440, Capgrave wrote his 'Life of St Norbert' at the request of John Wygenhale, abbot of West Derham. The last stanza of this work runs —

'The freris name that translate this story
Thei called Ion Capgrave, which in assumpcion weke
Made a ende of all his rymyng cry,
The yer of crist our Lord, withouten ly,
A thousand four hundred & forty evene.
After this lyf I pray God send us hevene.
ffeliciter '⁵⁸).

In the year 1441 Henry VI founded two colleges — Eton College near Windsor, and King's College, in honour of St. Nicholas, at Cambridge. Capgrave was present at the laying of the foundation stone of King's College on 2 April 1441⁵⁹). He tells of his acquaint-

⁵⁶) i. e. 1439 according to the Roman calendar.

⁵⁷) *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, vi, part i, Accessions 1890-1904* (Oxford, 1906). 148, n. 32386 (= MS Duke Humphrey b. i).

⁵⁸) *The lives of St Augustine, etc.*, p. xiii; and J. KIRK FLEET, O. Praem., *The White Canons of St Norbert. A history of the Premonstratensian Order in the British Isles and America* (West de Pere, Wisc., 1943), p. 121. The MS which Furnival could not locate in the Philipps collection at Cheltenham, an. 1892 (cf. *The life of St Katharine*, pp. xlv-xlv), has been preserved since 1923 in the Henry E. Huntingdon Library at San Marino, California, as codex HM 55 (cf. S. DE RICCI, *Census of medieval and renaissance manuscripts in the United States and Canada*, i (New York, 1935). 46. There are also given the different owners of the MS from 1600-1923). In the year 1910 it was still at Cheltenham (MS 24309) having been bought in 1861. It was seen for J. Munro by H. MacCracken (cf. *The lives of St Augustine, etc.*, pp. xii-xiv). W. Clawson, professor of English at University College, Toronto, delivered a lecture about this MS at a meeting of the Modern Language Association in 1928. He announced at that time an edition of the work for the E. E. T. S., but as yet it has not appeared (cf. KIRK FLEET, *op. cit.*, p. 121).

⁵⁹) *Liber de illustribus Henricis*, p. 133. — 'Hic etiam devotissimus rex Henricus in XIX. anno regni sui, duo solemnina fundavit Collegia, et magnas expensas

tance with Master William Millington, first provost of this college ⁶⁰). Was this a mere visit by Capgrave to Cambridge, or had he obtained a special invitation through his patron, Duke Humphrey, the king's uncle? Was he perhaps living in Cambridge at this time?

It is presumably about this time that his 'Vita S. Augustini' ⁶¹), now lost, was written. This work was dedicated to John Watford, abbot of the Canons Regular at Northampton. According to Dugdale ⁶²). Abbot John ruled this monastery from 1430 until his death in 1445. Capgrave himself entitled his work 'Concordia' ⁶³). It is a singular loss that the 'Concordia' has disappeared — let us hope

magnamque sollicitudinem circa eorum erectionem impendit. In positione quoque primorum lapidum ipsa praesentia sua opus decoravit, et summa, *ut vidimus*, devotione hanc fundationem suam summo Deo obtulit. Primum est apud Eton prope Wyndesoris, in honore B. M. Virginis erectum. Alterum apud Cantabrigiam in honore S. Nicolai Pontificis stabilitum: de cuius fundatione quidam egregius versificator tales composuit versus.

« Luce tua, cui natus erat, Nicholae sacer, rex
Henricus sextus hoc stabilivit opus.

Unctum qui lapidem postquam ponebat in Eton,
Hunc fixit, clerum commemorando suum.

M. Domini C quater quadraginta monos patet annus,
Passio cum Domini concelebrata fuit.

Annus erat decimus nonus regis, sed Aprilis
Hic flectente genu rege, secunda dies *)

Confessor Nicholae Dei, cum Virgine sumpta
Coelis, da regi gaudia summa Poli ».

*) 2 April 1441 was Passion sunday (Italics mine).

⁶⁰) *Ibidem*, p. 133. — 'His autem collegiis duos praefecit valentes Praepositos quorum unum novi, *Magistrum Willelmum Millington*. Ipse enim in Cantabriggensi collegio praesidem in scholasticis inquisitionibus et profunda litteratura ac maturis moribus multos antecessores suos praecellit' (Italics mine).

⁶¹) J. LELAND, *Commentarii de scriptoribus britannicis*, ed. A. Hall, ii (Oxford, 1709). 454. — 'Vita divi Augustini, ad Ioannem Cauterofordum, abbatem fani loannis, quod Avonae mediterranae celebre est'; and J. BALE, *Index Britanniae scriptorum*, ed. R. Lane Poole (Oxford, 1902), p. 188. — 'Idem [i. e. Capgrave] scripsit ad Ioannem Watforde, abbatem canonicorum regularium prope Northamptonam: « De Augustino et suis sequacibus ».

⁶²) W. DUGDALE, *Monasticon anglicanum*, ed. Caley-Ellis, ii (London, 1830). 115.

⁶³) 'This mater [i. e. the foundation of the Hermits by St Augustine] is proved with grete evydens in the book which I mad to a gentil woman in Englisch, and in the book which I mad to the abbot of Seynt lames at Northampton in Latin, which boke I named *Concordia*, because it is mad to reforme charite betwix Seynt Augustines heremites and his chanones' (*The lives of St Augustine*, etc., p. 146). See also G. SANDERLIN, 'John Capgrave speaks up for the Hermits', in *Speculum*, xviii (1943). 358-362.

that it may yet come to light — for it would be at least an interesting contribution to the literary controversy between the Austin Canons and the Austin Hermits, namely who were to be considered as the true spiritual sons of St Augustine. This work is referred to by Capgrave in his *Ye solace of pilgrimes* when he deals with the church of St Tryphon (now St Augustine's) in Rome, and in particular with the translation of St Monica's relics from Ostia to that church —

'Who seynt Monica cam thidir and in whos tyme with al the declaration wer long to telle, who wil rede it he may se it a book that I mad titled to seynt austin which is cleped *Concordia* because it is a maner of a concord be twix chanonys and us. The sentens of that translation I wil write her schortly. The pope martyn ⁶⁴) that was last at instans of a frer of our ordre called petir bischop electensis sexten [i. e. sacristan] on to the pope that tyme, for so it is comounly that this ordre hath that office ⁶⁵), be instaunce also of a gret clerk cleped augustinus de roma general of that ordre for that tyme ⁶⁶), gave leve that freres of this ordre schuld go to hostie and bring this body to rome that same place of seynt triphonis of which place this special chapetr is mad. He thout he seid in his bull convenient that heremites of this ordre be the very childyrn of seynt austyn and eke for the cherk be real power brout hem in to pavy ⁶⁷) wher thei have possession of the body of seynt austyn it was also convenient that thei which have the

⁶⁴) Martinus PP. V, 1417-1431.

⁶⁵) Peter Assalbiti, bishop of Oloron, later of Condom and then of Alet, was confessor, librarian, and sacristan to the Pope from 1401 (?) - 1440, cf. F. EHRLÉ, *Historia Bibliothecae Romanorum Pontificum*, i (Rome, 1890). 722-41, especially: p. 740; and G. MONTI, 'Il Sagrista del Palazzo Apostolico', in *Bolletino Storico Agostiniano*, xiii (1936-37). 140. See also A. ROCCA, *Chronhistoria de Apostolico Sacratio* (Rome, 1605), pp. 67-68 who mentions the petition for the translation.

⁶⁶) Augustinus Favaroni de Roma († 1443 as archbishop of Naples) was General of the Order from 1419-1431.

⁶⁷) 'Anno 721. Ossa S. Augustini Ipponensis episcopi olim translata ad Sardiniam, vastate modo a Saracenis Sardinia Liuthprandus rex Langobardorum dato magno pretio transfert Papiam', cf. *Sigeberti Chronica* (Monumenta Germaniae Historica, *Scriptores*, vi. 330).

Capgrave reports the translation at the year 712 — 'In the same tyme Luidbrando, Kyng of Lumbardis, hering that Sarasines had distroyed Sardini, where Seynt Augustin body was leid, whan it was broute fro Ypone, he sent thidir solempne legates, and bouthe that body of the Sarasines, and thei broute it to Gene, where the Kyng met it with gret reverens, and let it on to Papie, and set it there in a Cherk of Seint Petir, which he cleped « Celum Aureum »' (*The chronicle of England*, pp. 101-102).

son schuld also have the modir ⁶⁸⁾. This translation was made the yere of our lord a. m ccc xx ⁶⁹⁾ swech tyme as palme sunday fell the ix day of april ⁷⁰⁾.

Capgrave now reached the zenith of his literary activity. About 1445 he finished his poem *The life of St Katharine of Alexandria* in five books ⁷¹⁾. At the end of the next year appeared

⁶⁸⁾ For the historical background of this 'Bull' cf. the learned article of the late A. CASAMASSA, O. E. S. A., 'L'autore di un preteso discorso di Martino V', in *Miscellanea Pio Paschini (Lateranum, nova series, an. XV)*, ii (Rome, 1949). 109-125.

⁶⁹⁾ A little blank in the MS after the year 1420 indicates that Capgrave did not remember exactly the year of the translation. It occurred in 1430, when Palm sunday fell on the 9th of April.

⁷⁰⁾ J. CAPGRAVE, *Ye solace of pilgrimes. A description of Rome circa A. D. 1450*, ed. C. Mills (London, 1911), pp. 92-93.

⁷¹⁾ Capgrave's contemporary Osbern Bokenham O.E. S. A. (1393 — after 1463), has a precious reference to this work in his *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* (ed. in 1835 for the Roxeburgh Club; by C. Horstmann, Heilbronn, 1883; and by M. Serjeantson, E. E. T. S., original series, n. 206, London, 1938).

His prologue to the Life of St Katherine states —

' But who-so lyst knowleche for to have,
and that mater envereyd to be,
My fadrys boók, Maystir Ioon Capgrave,
Wych that but newly compylyd he,
Mote he seke, & here there shall se
In balaadys rymyd ful craftyly
All that for ignorance here nowe leve I
But for as-much as that boók is rare
And straunge to gete, at myn estymacyoun,
Compendyously of al I wyl declare
No more but oonly the passyoun,
Of kateryne Howard to gostly consolacyoun,
And to conforte eek of Denstoun kateryne,
If grace my wyt wyl illumyne' (ed. Serjeantson, pp. 173-74).

(Italics mine).

This life of St Katherine which occurs in Bokenham's MS after that of St Mary Magdalene was written in 1445 at the request of the countess of Eu (cf. *Ibidem*, pp. 136, 139). So it may be deduced that Capgrave wrote his work about 1445.

The year when the well-known Chaucerian poet Osbern Bokenham died is commonly given as 1447 (?). But in the Prior General's Registers we found him still mentioned under the year 1463. Dd 6, f. 18: 'Londoniis. 23 Aprilis 1463. Exemimus a iurisdictione prioris localis et ab onere omnis officii magistrum osbernium et concessimus ei auctoritatem quod posset confiteri peccata sua sacer-

the *Liber de illustribus Henricis*, dedicated to King Henry VI ⁷²).

On the first of August 1446 King Henry paid a visit to the Austin friary at Lynn, and took it under his special protection. Capgrave introduced the community to the royal visitor, showed him the buildings, and gave a short survey of the foundation and history

doti ydoneo nostri ordinis totiens quotiens fuisset oportunum, ponendo eum immediate sub provinciali qui erat et qui pro tempore futurus erat'; and Dd 6, f. 18v: 'Tornaci, 28 Maii 1463. Missimus litteras vicariatus ad provinciam Anglie [i. e. for the provincial chapter in 1464] et in primo loco posuimus magistrum osbernum boknam [sic] in 2^o loco magistrum iohannem slolee in 3^o loco magistrum thomam herli'.

⁷²) The last historical event mentioned in this work is the visit of King Henry VI to Lynn, August 1446. On p. 109, dealing with the children of Henry IV, Capgrave says — 'Quartus filius, *qui adhuc superest*, dux est Glovernie, Humfridus' (Italics mine). Duke Humphrey of Gloucester died in Febr. 1447. If the *Liber de illustribus Henricis* had been finished after the death of Humphrey, Capgrave certainly would have mentioned this. So we may deduce that he finished the *Henries* between August 1446 and February 1447. It may be presumed also that after having finished the third part, Capgrave would have added a note in the margin, if Humphrey had already departed this life.

The work is divided in three parts:

Part 1 contains the lives of six emperors Henry I-VI who lived between 918-1198.

Part 2 those of six kings of England, Henry I - Henry VI (1100-1446).

Part 3 contains the lives of twelve other Henries who lived between 1031 and 1406. They are:

1. Henry (= Eric) VI, king of Denmark (1241-1250).
2. Henry I, king of France (1031-1059).
3. Henry, son of Richard, king of the Romans (1216-1271).
4. Henry, count of Champagne, who became king of Jerusalem in 1192.
5. Henry [Sanglier], archbishop of Sens († 1142).
6. Henry, duke of Lancaster, grandfather of Henry IV († 1361).
7. Henry Bohun, earl of Hereford († 1220).
8. Henry de Beaumont († 1340).
9. Henry le Despenser, bishop of Norwich († 1406).
10. Henry of Huntingdon, the Chronicler (1108-1135).
11. Henry of Gand († 1293).
12. Henry of Urimaria [= Friemar], O. E. S. A. († 1340).

On Henry de Beaumont, of the family who had large estates in Norfolk, Capgrave says — 'I have undertaken to commemorate the memory of the illustrious Henries; and chief among these it delights me to leave a record of those of the name of Beaumont, since I am their servant, and bound to this race by special affection' (*Book of the Illustrious Henries*, tr. F. Hingeston (London, 1858), p. 196).

There are two MSS extant of the work. The autograph is preserved in Corpus

of the convent. He reports the events in the *Liber de illustribus Henricis* —

' Hic rex devotissimus in XXIII. anno regni sui, in illa solemnī peregrinatione qua sanctorum memorias visitavit ⁷³), locum Fratrum Heremitarum Sancti Augustini in villa de Lenne in suum accepit favorem, promittens sacerdotibus suis ibidem manentibus, vivo vocis oraculo, quod amodo locus ille sibi et successoribus suis de corpore legitime procreandis immediate pertineret ⁷⁴). Ipse quoque et successores sui, ut praemittitur, fundator sive fundatores non solum nomine essent, sed rei veritate. Acta sunt autem haec in Ad Vincula Sancti Petri [i. e. 1 Aug.] sub anno Domini MCCCCXLVI: regni vero incliti domini nostri ut praemisum est, anno XXIII.

Et quoniam multi bilingues, et mendaciis pleni, post recessum regis dixerunt, ut audivi, quoniam locus habuit fundatorem ab ipsis primordiis suis, cuius tamen nomen nesciunt insinuare, idcirco scriptor praesentis negotii, qui et dominum regem in hac materia informavit, videns famam suam in parte laesam, eo quod domino regi informationem mendosam praesentaverit, ut aiunt, veritatem huius rei ex antiquis cartis et sigillis hic lucide manifestat:

Sciendum ergo est, quod dicti Fratres Heremitae Sancti Augustini intraverunt primo villam de Lenne ibidem commoraturi, anno regni regis Edwardi Primi post conquestum XXII [i. e. 1293] ⁷⁵). Hoc autem invenitur probabile ex ipsa licentia regis, qui scripsit se filium Henrici regis, et hunc numerum annorum regni sui in carta sua consignat, cuidam bonae conversationis viduae, quae dicta est Margareta Suthmere. Terra autem ab eadem primo fratribus ipsis concessa habuit in longitudine centum pedes, et XXIII in

Christi College, Cambridge as MS 408 (cf. M. R. JAMES, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the manuscripts in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge*, ii (Cambridge, 1911). 293-94). Another in the Cottonian collection in the British Museum, Tiberius A. viii (cf. *A Catalogue of the manuscripts in the Cottonian library deposited in the British Museum* (London, 1802), p. 33).

⁷³) ' In the summer of 1446, the king and his court made a tour of the monasteries in England and paid his devotion at the celebrated shrine of Our Lady of Wasingham ' (cf. A. GASQUET, *The religious life of King Henry VI* (London, 1923), p. 9).

⁷⁴) His successors did not forget this, as may be seen in the visit King Henry VII paid to the friary, 25 August 1498 — ' which King was met at the Green At[his]half Witton Gapp, with the foresaid Mayer [Robert Trewe] and the Commons of Lynn, which King was presented at the Friars Augustines with ten great pikes, ten tenches, three couple of breams, twelve swans, two oxen, twenty sheep, a ton of wine, thirty dozen bread, two tons of ale, two tons of beer, two loads of wood; and a pipe of wine was given to the Mayor for his guests ', H. HARROD, *Report on the deeds... of King's Lynn*, p. 112.

⁷⁵) Capgrave did not know that the Austin friars were already at Lynn in 1276 (see note 1).

latitudine. Sic locus noster, in angusto inceptus, per parcelas multas concrevit, sicut in diversis cartis regiis declaratur. Nam aliam cartam habemus, Humfrido de Wykyn [i. e. 3 Edward III, A. D. 1329] concessam de terra sua, et alteram Roberto de Wykyn [i. e. 12 Edward III, A. D. 1338], pro messuagio suo. Item aliam Thomae de Lexham [i. e. 33 Edward I, A. D. 1304-5], pro suo. Item aliam largioris gratiae quibusdam de Lenne pro quinque messuagiis ⁷⁶⁾).

Videte, suavissime domine, locellum vestrum ex multis parcellis adunatum et cordi vestro imprimate *triginta* ibi esse *sacerdotes*, praeter diaconos, subdiaconos, et minoris ordinis plantulas juveniles numero quasi *sexdecim*; et cogitate quoniam hi specialem memoriam vestri habent. Si autem aliqua specialiora cupitis, iubeat magnanimitas vestra, et servi vestri obtemperabunt.

Valeat in aevum vestra regalis magnitudo, ad honorem Dei, ecclesiae fulcimentum, et regni solidamen ⁷⁷⁾).

As already mentioned Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, died in February 1447. The loss was keenly felt by Capgrave, confessor and counsellor to the duke. Capgrave had already dedicated several works to Humphrey ⁷⁸⁾, and in his *Liber de illustribus Henricis* he mentioned his intention of writing the duke's life (p. 109).

Humphrey, surnamed the Good, was born in 1390, three years before Capgrave. After the death of his brother, Henry V, he became regent of England, from 1420-1421, for his nephew, Henry VI. He established relations with the Low Countries by his marriage with the famous Jacqueline de Hainault in 1422/23 ⁷⁹⁾. The Augustinians were in his good graces. Not only was John Capgrave his

⁷⁶⁾ For these and other donations, see *The chronicle of England*, appendix v, pp. 368-369, notes; and *The life of St Katharine*, p. xi, n. 2.

⁷⁷⁾ *Liber de illustribus Henricis*, pp. 137-139.

Soon after his death the pious king was styled 'Beatus' and was credited with many miracles, though this cult was not ratified by the authority of the Church, cf. *Henrici VI Angliae regis miracula postuma*, ed. P. Grosjean (Brussels, 1935); and A. GASQUET, *The religious life of King Henry VI* (London, 1923).

⁷⁸⁾ 'Commentarius in Genesim', 'Commentarius in Exodum', 'Commentarius in Regum I and III', 'Commentarius in Epistulas S. Pauli'. For the last one, cf. J. BALE, *Scriptorum illustrium... catalogus*, i. 582: 'Domino suo honorabili Humfrido'.

See also B. L. ULLMAN, 'Manuscripts of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester', in *Studies in the Italian Renaissance* (Storia e Letteratura, raccolta di Studi e Testi, 51, Rome, 1955), pp. 345-355 (originally published in the *English Historical Review*, lii (1937), pp. 670-672).

⁷⁹⁾ For the life of Humphrey, see K. H. VICKERS, *Humphrey duke of Gloucester* (London, 1907).

confessor, but another Augustinian, John South, acted as his chaplain ⁸⁰).

Whether or not Capgrave kept his promise is uncertain. It is probable he did, but we have no clear evidence on which to decide. Bale in his *Index Britanniae scriptorum* ⁸¹) mentions the 'Vita', but is there depending on Capgrave's own statement in the *Henries*. Vickers reports that Pits declares he had seen it in the library of Balliol College at Oxford ⁸²). In fact Pits makes no such statement. However, the following passage from Pits is of interest —

'Singularem habuit patronum Humfredum Glocestriae ducem, principem optimum, apud quem multum valuit gratia, nec minus auctoritate. Erat enim illi a confessionum secretis, multa ad eum scripsit, & sub eius tutela patrocinioque sua pleraque in lucem emisit. Sed ex operibus eius videamus, quantum huic eximio Doctori debeat respublica litteraria. Non desunt qui affirmant eum in omnes & singulos libros sacrorum Bibliorum scripsisse commentarios omni eruditione refertos eosdemque fusissimos. Quicquid autem de eo sit, illud certe constat, eum maiorem utriusque instrumenti partem doctissimis explicationibus illustrasse, & pleraque sua praefato Duci suo optimo maecenati nuncupasse' ⁸³).

II. Capgrave visits Rome : 1450.

John Capgrave was among the many pilgrims who were drawn from England to the heart of christianity for the jubilee of 1450. How long he stayed there we do not know. However, we may say with more than probability that he was there during Lent and Easter for he describes the stations which are held in a number of the churches of Rome during these seasons. Furnivall supposed that Capgrave went to Rome between the years 1422 and 1437, before he wrote his annals, legends of saints, and his commentaries on the Bible ⁸⁴). Since the discovery in 1907 of *Ye solace of pil-*

⁸⁰) *Calendar of entries in the Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland. Papal Letters*, ix (1431-1447). 571 (= 15 Kal. Iunii 1446) — 'To John South, an Augustinian friar. Dispensation at his own petition and that of Humphrey, duke of Gloucester whose chaplain he is, to hold any benefice with cure, even a parish church or its perpetual vicarage, even if of lay patronage, and to resign it, simply or for exchange, etc.'.

⁸¹) p. 189.

⁸²) K. VICKERS, *Humphrey duke of Gloucester*, p. 387.

⁸³) J. PITS, *Relationum historicarum*, pp. 671-672.

⁸⁴) *The life of St Katharine*, p. viii.

grimes in the Bodleian Library at Oxford this supposition is no longer teneable — or so it seemed to Bannister in his introduction to the edition of the work ⁸⁵).

Capgrave made a good use of his time in Rome. He visited most of the churches of which he has left descriptions. He noted many ancient monuments and copied their inscriptions. His transcripts were so accurate that the editor does not hesitate to say —

'From those inscriptions which still exist (and there are several) it will be seen that our Augustinian friar is in every case letter-perfect. We can therefore accept his testimony as to those which have since dissapeared. His keenness of observation is remarkable, and he has this one great superiority to most mediaeval writers: viz., that he is most careful not to put down a thing unless he has either seen it himself, or has, in his opinion, the best authority for it' ⁸⁶).

Later when we come to speak of Bishop William Grey there will be mention of Capgrave's illness in Rome.

When returned in England Capgrave set about casting the notes of his Roman visit into regular literary form, arranging them in a book which 'me thinkith best to kalle it *solace of pilgrimes*' ⁸⁷). The work is divided into three parts.

Part 1 contains a description in twenty six chapters of civil Rome and all its gates, walls, bridges and monuments.

Part 2 'tretith of the cherchis in rome and of the spirituale tresour conteyned in hem' — that is, in the seven main churches and the forty seven stational churches.

Part 3 'of othir cherches of rome', is only partly preserved and deals in twelve chapters with twelve churches dedicated to Our Lady.

This description of Rome is the last made during the Middle Ages by an Englishman, and it is also the best ⁸⁸).

⁸⁵) J. CAPGRAVE, *Ye solace of pilgrimes. A description of Rome circa A. D. 1450* (MS Bodley 423), ed. C. A. Mills (London, 1911), p. xv.

⁸⁶) *Ibidem*, p. xii. See also p. 1 — 'No man blame me thow he be leve not that I schal write but that I fynde in auctores & that is for a principall, or ellis that I sey with eye and that is for a secundari, or ellis that I suppose is soth lete that be of best auctorite'.

⁸⁷) *Ibidem*, p. 2.

⁸⁸) Cf. G. B. PARKS, *The English traveler to Italy. I. The Middle Ages to 1525* (Storia e Letteratura, raccolta di Studi e Testi, 46, Rome, 1954). 350, 588, 592, and

Capgrave does not tell us in what year he went to Rome, but we may presume it was in 1450. *Ye solace of pilgrimes* was written after 1447, for he mentions the recent death of Henry cardinal Beaufort, bishop of Winchester (11 April 1447)⁸⁹). On the other hand we know it was written before 1452 when John Kemp became cardinal bishop of St Rufina and archbishop of Canterbury. Capgrave describes Kemp as being still cardinal titular of St Balbina and archbishop of York⁹⁰). Several times when describing scenes in Rome Capgrave speaks of very big crowds. This suggests the celebration of the Holy Year, 1450. Capgrave mentions three Augustinian churches — St Tryphon (now St Augustine's)⁹¹), Santa Maria del Popolo⁹²) and Santa Susanna⁹³).

The expenses for the trip to Rome were paid by Sir Thomas

especially, pp. 596-599, where he speaks of 'the critical method; the merit of the interpretation, the translation from the Latin, the explaining of terms architectural or ecclesiastic; he direct personal observation; and, the exceptional account for its medieval purpose'.

See also A. GWYNN, S. I., *The English Austin friars in the time of Wyclif* (London, 1940), p. 280 — 'The accuracy with which this English friar has described so many Roman monuments, and copied so many Latin inscriptions, is the best possible proof that the traditions of Augustinian learning were not confined to Italy in the fifteenth century'.

⁸⁹) *Ye solace of pilgrimes*, p. 133 — 'Of he stacion at seint eusebie ... this cherch was the title of that honorable fader *herry bischop of wynchester that deyd now late*' (Italics mine).

Henry Beaufort was bishop of Winchester from 19 Nov. 1404 to 11 April 1447, cf. C. EUBEL, *Hierarchia catholica*, i (Munster, 1913). 530. On 24 May 1426 he was made cardinal titular of St Eusebius, cf. *Ibidem*, ii (Munster, 1914). 6. For his life see F. WILLIAMS, *Lives of the English cardinals*, ii (London, 1868). 70-109.

⁹⁰) *Ye solace of pilgrimes*, p. 107 — 'Of the stacion at seynt balbine... it is now the title on to that worthi man of this lond *cardinal & arschbiscop of yorke*'. With John Kemp we shall deal below.

⁹¹) See above p. 415.

⁹²) *Ye solace of pilgrimes*, pp. 11; 163-165.

⁹³) *Ibidem*, p. 123 — 'A fair cherch it is and a praty place annexid therto fer fro ony dwelleres half a myle on sum side on sum side a hol myle this place is newly gave to the freris which be sleped heremytes of seynt austyn, there dwell now iiii for the place is not grete'.

The convent of S. Susanna was established in 1448 and belonged to the Roman province. Later it joined the Congregation of Carbonaria and finally that of Lombardy. In 1587 Sixtus PP. V withdrew the convent from the Order, cf. Th. DE HERRERA, *Alphabetum Augustinianum* (Madrid, 1644), p. 367.

Tudenham (1399-1461), lord of the manor of Oxburgh, in the north western part of the county of Norfolk, not far from King's Lynn ⁹⁴).

III. Literary activity: 1451-1453.

Ye solace of pilgrimes did not absorb all Capgrave's attention. It was at this time that he composed two lives of saints, the *Life of St Augustine* written at the instance of a pious lady ⁹⁵), and the *Life of St Gilbert of Sempringham* finished in 1451 ⁹⁶).

⁹⁴) *Ye solace of pilgrimes*, pp. 1-2, and p. 1, n. 2.

'On to all men of my nacioun that schall rede this present book and namely on to my special maystr *sir thomas tudenham* undyr whos proteccioun my pilgrimage was specially sped I recomende my simpilnesse praying hem of paciens in the redyng that thei take no hed at no craftly langage wher non is but at the good entent of the maker'.

⁹⁵) J. Capgrave's *lives of St Augustine and St Gilbert of Sempringham, and a Sermo*, ed. J. J. Munro (Early English Text Society, original series, n. 140, London, 1910), pp. 1-60. The text is edited from MS Add. 36704 in the British Museum.

A full description of the codex is given in the *Catalogue of Additions to the MSS in the British Museum in the years 1900-1905* (London, 1907), pp. 191-192.

'A noble creatur, a gentill woman, desired of me with ful grete instauns to write on-to hir, that is to sey, to translate his treuly oute of Latyn, the lif of Seynt Augustyn, grete doctour of the cherch. Sche desired this thing of me rather than of a-nother man be-cause that I am of his profession, for sche supposed verily that I wold do it with the bettir wil. Sche desired eke this lif of this Seynt more than of ony othir for sche was browt forth in-to this world in his solempne feste [i. e. 29 Aug.]' (p. 1).

In writing the *Life of St Augustine* Capgrave adapted (and made additions of his own) Jordanus of Saxony's text for some chapters, cf. R. ARBESMANN, O. E. S. A., 'Jordanus of Saxony's Vita S. Augustini, the source for John Capgrave's Life of St Augustine', in *Traditio*, i (1943). 341-353. See also, G. SANDERLIN, 'John Capgrave speaks up for the Hermits', in *Speculum*, xviii (1943). 358-362; and JORDANUS DE SAXONIA, *Liber Vitasfratrum*, ed. Arbesmann-Hümpfner (New Yor, 1943), p. xxv, n. 3.

⁹⁶) 'Thus endith the lif of Seint Gilbert, translat in-to our moder tonge, the yere of the incarnation of our Lord a Mcccclj' (*The lives of St Augustine, etc.*, p. 142).

Saint Gilbert of Sempringham (1083/9-1189) founded two Orders, one for nuns following the rule of St Benedict, another for canons regular under the rule of St Augustine. Gilbert was canonized by Pope Innocent III in the year 1202. Vita S. Gilberti in *Acta Sanctorum, Februaris* i (Venice, 1735). 567-573 (=4 Febr.). Here there is also mention of a life of St Gilbert by Capgrave, but in reality it is the one found in the *Nova Legenda Angliae*.

Another MS of St Gilbert's life is mentioned by Th. Smith in his *Catalogus*

Capgrave wrote this latter life at the request of Master Nicholas Reysby who had already read Capgrave's *Life of St Augustine*. His purpose was to present St Gilbert's life in English, so that the Gilbertine nuns might read it to their profit. The prologue speaks for itself —

'To my wel-beloved in our Lord God maystir⁹⁷⁾ of the order of Sempingham, which ordre is entytled on-to the name of Seynt Gilbert, I. ffrer I. C.⁹⁸⁾ amongis doctouris lest, send reverens as to swech dignyte, desiring clenness to your soule and helth to your body. Now with-inne fewe dayes was notyfyed on-to me that the lyf of our fader Seynt Augustyn, which that I translāt in-to our tunge at instaunce of a certeyn woman, was brout to your presens, which lykyd you wel, as it is told, save ye wold I schuld adde therto alle thoo relygyous that lyve undyr his reule. But to this I answer that it was not my charge, but if men like for to knowe this mater diffusely thei may lerne it in a sermon that I seid at Cambrig the yer befor my opposicion⁹⁹⁾, which sermon unphap I wil sette in Englisch in the last ende of this werk. Than aftir ye had red this lyf of Seynt Augustyn ye saide to on of my frendes that ye desired gretly the lyf of Seynt Gilbert schuld be translāt in the same forme. Thus mad he instaunce to me, and I graunted both your peticion, this for I wold not frustrate him of his mediacion. To the honour of God and of all seyntis than, wil we begynne this tretys, namelych for the solitarie women of your religion which unneth can undyrstande Latyn, that thei may at vacaunt tymes red in this book the grete vertues of her maystir. For her may thei loke a in a glasse, who thei schal transfigure her soules lych on-to that exemplary in which thei schul loke'¹⁰⁰⁾.

After finishing the *Life of St Gilbert of Sempringham* Capgrave wrote the *Tretis* on the Orders living under the rule of

librorum manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Cottonianae (Oxford, 1696), p. 94 — 'Vitellius D. xv, n. 4. The life of Gilbert, Founder of the order of Sempringham: translated by Frere John Capgrave, 1432, in old English'. This work was lost before 1802, because in the catalogue of that year (p. 428) the MSS Vitellius. D. viii-xx are missing. The year 1432 is probably a misreading or misprint for 1452.

⁹⁷⁾ In the margin of the MS is written — 'Nicholas Reysby'. Reysby was know to be Master (= General) in 1445 and receiver in that year of Henry VI's exemption of the houses of the Order from aids, subsidies and tallages &, cf. R. GRAHAM, *St Gilbert of Sempringham and the Gilbertines* (London, 1901), p. 155, quoted by Munro, *op. cit.*, p. 154. In 1463 Reysby was still Master of Sempringham, cf. *Calendar of Patent Rolls. Edward IV, 1461-1467* (London, 1897), p. 309.

⁹⁸⁾ A later hand added in the margin, 'John Capgrave'.

⁹⁹⁾ See note 44.

¹⁰⁰⁾ *The lives of St Augustine, etc.*, p. 61.

St Augustine. This was to fulfill the promise he had made to Nicholas Reysby. Capgrave draws a comparison between St Augustine and the patriarch Jacob. Just as Jacob had twelve sons so, Capgrave declares, are there twelve religious institutions which claim St Augustine as their spiritual father. In the modern world there are many more religious families who live under the rule of St Augustine, and it is certain that even in Capgrave's day there were more than twelve religious groups who looked to the bishop of Hippo as their inspiration. However, as with so many medieval writers Capgrave was adjusting the facts to fit his comparison. He analysed the Hebrew names of Jacob's sons, he applied their characteristics to the twelve religious families. Judas represents the Hermits of St Augustine — 'the first begotten child'; Ruben represents the Canons Secular, and Gad the Canons Regular, Aser stands for the Dominicans, Nephtali for the Knights of St John, Manasses for the Teutonic Knights, Simeon for the Gilbertines, Levi for the Premonstratensians, Issachar for the Canons Regular of the Holy Cross ¹⁰¹), Zabulon for the Order of St Bridget ¹⁰²), Joseph

¹⁰¹) The canons regular of the Holy Cross — in England known as the Friars of the Holy Cross, or Crutched Friars — were founded in the Netherlands by Blessed Theodore de Celles († 1236). This is the only one of the four principal groups of Crutched Friars, mentioned by M. HEIMBUCHER, *Die Orden und Kongregationen der katholischen Kirche*, i (Paderborn, 1933). 419-422, which had houses in England. They were not mendicants as suggested in KNOWLES-HADCOCK, *Medieval religious houses. England and Wales* (London, 1953), p. 204, but Augustinian Canons. Before 1410 they had houses, among others, in London, Oxford, Donyngton, and Welnetham, cf. HERMANS, *Annales canonicorum regularium s. Augustini ordinis S. Crucis*, ii (Bois-le-Duc, 1858). 189-190; and KNOWLES-HADCOCK, *op. cit.*, 204-205. It would not seem, however, that they had any great influence, otherwise Capgrave would have known them. He says — 'Off this ordre have I as yet no certeyn knowleche, who was her founder, or undir what Pope or kyng thei begunne' (cf. *The lives of St Augustine*, etc., p. 147). The English Provincial, Jacobus Anglus († 1308), became their sixth Magister General, cf. HERMANS, *op. cit.*, i, pt. i (Bois-le-Duc, 1858). 62. For the history of this Order in England, see H. F. CETTLE, 'The Friars of the Holy Cross in England', in *History*, xxxiv (1949), 204-220.

¹⁰²) The Order of St Bridget or 'Ordo Salvatoris' was established as a double Order of men and women by St Bridget of Sweden († 1373), cf. M. HEIMBUCHER, *Die Orden und Kongregationen*, i. 620-625. Capgrave has a note about this Order in *The Chronicle of England*, pp. 307-308 — 'In this yere [i. e. 1414-15] the Kyng [i. e. Henry IV] foundid thre houses of religion, fast be his place wech thei clepe Schene... The thirde is of Seynt Bride Ordre; thei have Seynt Austyn reule; with certeyn additamentis. And thei clepe it now the reule of oure Sa-

for the Canons Regular of St Victor, and Benjamin for the Order of Petirston ¹⁰³).

Bale in his *Index* has a precious note —

'Idem [i. e. Capgrave] scripsisse fertur ad Ioannem Kempe Cardinalem divae Balbinae ac archiepiscopum Cantuariensem, « Manipulum vitae christianae », l. I' ¹⁰⁴).

Above 'vitae' is written 'doctrinae'. If this is true we have an indication by which to date the lost 'Manipulus doctrinae christianae'. John Kemp (c. 1380-1454) was created cardinal titular of St Balbina on 18 December 1439, being already archbishop of York ¹⁰⁵). He became cardinal bishop of the diocese of St Rufina

vioure. Thei have no thing propir, peny, ne halfpeny, ne touche no mony. Thei noubir of hem is, sistires LX, prestis XIII, dekenes IIII, lewed men VIII, which acordith to the noubir of XIII Aposteles, and LXXII discipules. Thei were no lynand, but wolland. Thei have o cherch: the women above; the men be the ground. Aftir her profession no man may license hem but the Pope. This religion must have sufficient dotacion. Before the fest of Al Seintis thei must count that thei have sufficiently for the nest yere; and al the remanent thei schal gyve in elmesse. On of the XIII prestis schul thei chese to her confessoure, and to him schal thei alle obeye. Ne seculer man ne woman schal entyr the nunnes cleystir'. The house mentioned by Capgrave, which is called Syon, was the only one of this Order in England. It was situated in the parish of Twickenham, cf. Th. TANNER, *Notitia monastica*, ed. J. Nasmith (Cambridge, 1877), Middlesex xi [= f. 171]. A priest of Syon, Blessed Richard Reynolds, was martyred together with three Carthusian priors under Henry VIII in 1535, cf. A. GASQUET, *Henry VIII and the English monasteries* (London, 1906), pp. 65-67.

KNOWLES-HADCOCK, *Medieval religious houses*, p. 178 give Twickenham as a foundation (1415-1431) which was moved to Syon in 1431 and dissolved in 1539. But in actual fact Syon already existed in 1419, cf. *Calendar of Patent Rolls. Henry V, 1416-1422*, ii (London, 1911). 333, where there is mention of William Knyght 'Servant of the abbey of St Saviour, Syon', under the date 29 March 1419. This suggests that there was only one foundation — Syon, but that it was situated in the parish of Twickenham and changed its site from one place to another within the parish. Hence the apparent confusion of Syon with Twickenham.

¹⁰³) This 'ordre which is not in the world, as thei sey, but in Northfolk' was the youngest. 'Four houses has thei and on of hem is fall on-to the kyngis hand, & he gave it to Walsingham; the house hite Petirston: other informacion of hem have I not at this tyme' (*The lives of St Augustine*, etc, p. 148).

Nothing particular is known of this order. Knowles ranks it among the Augustinian Canons (cf. *op. cit.*, p. 150). See also Th. TANNER, *Notitia monastica*, ed. J. Nasmith (Cambridge, 1877), Norfolk liii [= f. 194v].

¹⁰⁴) J. BALE, *Index Britanniae scriptorum*, p. 188.

¹⁰⁵) Cf. C. EUBEL, *Hierarchia catholica*, ii (Munster, 1914). 61.

on 28 July 1452 ¹⁰⁶), and on the same day he was translated to the see of Canterbury ¹⁰⁷). Bale's statement is not fully correct. Kemp was not at the same time cardinal of St Balbina and archbishop of Canterbury. According to Bale's reckoning we should therefore date the 'Manipulus' to approximately about the year 1452, and certainly before 1454.

How close were the relations between Capgrave and Cardinal Kemp? Did their friendship begin when Capgrave was studying in London and Kemp ruled there as bishop between November 1421 and July 1425? ¹⁰⁸). Was the bond between them due to Kemp's wisdom, learning and uprightness? — though in public life he proved himself more a statesman than a bishop ¹⁰⁹). These are questions which remain open though it is our opinion that the friendship between the two men was due to common respect and intellectual interests.

IV. *Capgrave as Provincial: 1453-1457.*

Capgrave had gradually become acknowledged as a leading light of the English Augustinian Province. His name was known and his influence was felt both among the nobility and the clergy. It was for these reasons — and doubtless also because of his spiritual qualities — that he was chosen head of the Province at the chapter of Winchester on 22 July 1453 ¹¹⁰).

Since Capgrave was now in charge of the spiritual and temporal welfare of the English Province he had little time for his studies. We can trace none of his literary productions to this period of his life. Nor does any evidence remain of his work as Provincial.

After a further two years the Austin friars assembled in Capgrave's native town of Lynn, and unanimously re-elected him as Provincial ¹¹¹). This is an indication that his method of government had won the confidence of the English Augustinians. The Prior

¹⁰⁶) *Ibidem*, p. 60.

¹⁰⁷) *Ibidem*, p. 117.

¹⁰⁸) *Ibidem*, i (Munster, 1913). 311.

¹⁰⁹) Cf. E. BURTON, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, viii (New York, 1910). 616. For the life of John Kemp, see F. WILLIAMS, *Lives of the English cardinals*, ii (London, 1868). 110-123.

¹¹⁰) See note 3.

¹¹¹) See note 2.

General's Registers have also no special document about Capgrave's second term as Provincial. However, at Oxford are preserved two charters which treat of the Augustinian friary there, and which make mention of Capgrave as Provincial. The texts of these documents have been published several times ¹¹²⁾. We here print the relevant synopsis of the first charter as given in Salter's *Calendar of the Boarstall Cartulary* ¹¹³⁾ —

' n. 624. April 21, 1456. — A charter of John Stockton, prior of the Austin Friars at Oxford, stating that Henry III had given land to the Austin Friars, at their foundation ¹¹⁴⁾, at the instance of Sir John Handlow of Borstall; that the said Sir John gave much towards their buildings, and by his desire he was buried in their church, though he died before it was finished; that he was always reckoned their second founder next after Henry III; that Edmund Rede is descended from him and claims to be recognized as Founder, and that on Apr. 21, 1456, with a solemn procession he was received as founder in the church of the Austin Friars'.

It is here of little moment that the historical facts mentioned in this charter are somewhat inaccurate ¹¹⁵⁾. What interests us is the mention of Capgrave —

' Et hoc jure dictus prior et conventus, considerantes veram

¹¹²⁾ Wh. KENNETT, *Parochial Antiquities*, ed. B. Bandinel, ii (Oxford, 1818), 399-401; J. CAPGRAVE, *The chronicle of England*, ed. F. Hingeston (London, 1858), appendix ii, pp. 329-334; A. WOOD, 'Survey of the Antiquities of the City of Oxford', ed. A. Clark, (Oxford Historical Society) ii (Oxford, 1890), 454-455; and *The Boarstall Cartulary*, ed. H. E. Salter (Oxford Historical Society) (Oxford, 1930), pp. 223-224.

¹¹³⁾ *The Boarstall Cartulary*, p. 223.

¹¹⁴⁾ The Austin friars were already in Oxford before 1266, looking for a suitable place to establish a house in the university (cf. A. WOOD, *op. cit.*, ii, 446). There are two charters in the Hospital of St John the Baptist, Oxford, between 1266-1267, concerning gifts of land to the Austin friars in the parish of St Peter in the East, to settle 'extra portam orientalem', cf. *A Cartulary of the Hospital of St John the Baptist*, ed. H. E. Salter (Oxford Historical Society) i (Oxford, 1914), 25 (= n. 22), 29 (= n. 26) with a facsimile for the last one.

This plan, however, was not carried into execution. In 1268 the friary was founded, under the patronage of King Henry III, in the northern suburb of the city, outside Smith Gate where Wadham College now stands, cf. *Calendar of Charter Rolls. Henry III - Edward I, 1257-1300*, ii (London, 1906), 98 (= 24 May 1268).

The text is also found in A. WOOD, *op. cit.*, ii, 447.

¹¹⁵⁾ Cf. *The Boarstall Cartulary*, p. 223, n. 2.

propaginem successionis, libero et maturo animo ipsum venerabilem armigerum Edmundum, et haeredes suos, in Fundatorem dictae domus suscepimus ac admisimus, ex jure sibi acquisito ex praefato lineali descensu. Et ad preces eorum venerabilis magister Johannes Capgrave, prior provincialis, summo studio incitatus est ut huic receptioni et recognitioni dicti fundatoris nostri praesens esset, et ad perpetuam rei memoriam suis literis testificaret, ne filii sine patris consensu aliquid novum conderent, nec labor filiorum sine patris consensu citius frustraretur ' ¹¹⁶).

From this it appears that Capgrave was present at Oxford for the reception of Sir Edmund Rede of Borstall, and the recognition of his rights on 21 April 1456. We also gather from the document that Capgrave was regarded as a true father with the interests of his subjects at heart. On the same day some rooms in the friary and a part of the garden were granted to Sir Edmund and his son William to serve for their use whenever they were visiting or staying at Oxford —

' Sciant presentes et futuri quod nos Iohannes Stockton, prior conuentus Oxonie ordinis fratrum heremitarum sancti Augustini, et eiusdem loci conuentus unanimi consensu, assensu, voluntate et licencia fratris magistri Iohannis Capgrave nostri prouincialis dedimus [concessimus et hac presenti carta nostra confirmauimus] ¹¹⁷), Edmundo Rede de Borstall in comitatu Buk' armigero et fundatori nostro ac Willelmo filio suo primogenito quasdam cameras nostras in nostra domo desuper edificatas que iacent in longitudine inter ecclesiam nostram ex parte australi et refectorium nostrum ex parte boreali cum quadam parcella terre nostre iacentis in gardino nostro que se extendit a vico qui ducit ad Beaumounde in longitudine ad predictas cameras quinquaginta pedes et in latitudine xxiv pedes cum libero introitu et exitu temporibus congruis [habendas et tenendas] prefato Edmundo et Willelmo ad terminum vite eorum seu eorum alterius diucius uiuentibus de capitalibus dominis feodi illius per seruicia inde debita et de iure consueta. In cuius rei testimonium huic presenti carte nostre identitate [tam] sigillum nostrum commune quam sigillum nostri prouincialis predicti presentibus est appensum. Hiis testibus, venerabilibus viris Georgio Nevyl tunc cancellario Uniuersitatis Oxonie, Iohanne abbate de Oseneye, Roberto priore sancte Frideswyde, Ricardo magistro sancti Iohannis extra portam orientalem, Roberto Attewode maiore uille Oxonie, Ricardo Spragett, Iohanne Clerke et multis aliis. Data in domo

¹¹⁶) A. WOOD, *op. cit.*, ii. 455, reprinted in *The chronicle of England*, appendix ii, pp. 331-332.

¹¹⁷) From the text published by Hingeston.

nostra capitulari vicesimo primo die mensis Aprilis anno domini MCCCCLVI^{to} ¹¹⁸).

When did Capgrave finish his term as Provincial? We have already mentioned that the first mention of a chapter after 1455 was that at Orford in 1459 ¹¹⁹). Bearing in mind that Capgrave's first term as Provincial ran from 1453-1455 it would seem that a chapter was held in 1457. This appears to be proved from the fact that the privilege of celebrating triennial chapters was not adopted as a practice in England ¹²⁰) as may be seen from the following event. We found that the chapter of 1459 was followed by another in 1462. A quarrel then arose, principally sustained by the London house, as to whether the Provincial, John Bury ¹²¹), after a term of three years might be validly re-elected. The General asserted the right of re-election and referred for proof to the papal bulls. Nevertheless the English Province did not avail of the privilege. We find that chapters continued to be held every two years — as for instance in the years 1464, 1466, 1468 and 1470 ¹²²).

V. The last years: 1457-1464.

As soon as Capgrave was relieved from the duties of Provincial he resumed his literary occupations. He now had the opportunity to fulfill his wish to dedicate a work to Bishop William Grey. It should be recalled that when Capgrave fell ill during his sojourn in Rome he was visited by Grey, then acting as the king's proctor in Rome. The dedication of a work was Capgrave's gesture of gratitude to Bishop Grey.

William Grey (or Gray) was a well-known humanist who lived in Italy during the years 1445-1454. He received a degree in theology from the university of Padua in the year 1445, and at Ferrara

¹¹⁸) *The Boarstall Cartulary*, pp. 223-224.

¹¹⁹) See note 2.

¹²⁰) *Ibidem*.

¹²¹) Hingeston, *The chronicle of England*, p. 370, note, and Furnivall, *The life of St Katharine*, p. xiii, wrongly suppose that the Provincial's seal on an indenture of 12 June 1461 is that of Capgrave. John Bury was Provincial, 1459-1464.

The statement by Hingeston (*Ibidem*, p. 371, note), that Capgrave succeeded William Wallys, a Black friar [i. e. a Dominican] of Lynn († 1421) in the office of Provincial of their Order, is, at the very least, absurd.

¹²²) General Archives O. E. S. A., Register Dd 6, ff. 18-19.

followed Guarino's lectures in Greek. Before his appointment in 1449 as king's proctor at Rome he began to collect a valuable library of works on the classics, philosophy and theology. He later presented his library of over two hundred volumes to Balliol College, Oxford ¹²³). Among these works were two compositions by Capgrave, as we shall shortly see. Pope Nicholas V, that munificent patron of the humanists, tried unsuccessfully to have Grey appointed bishop of Lincoln in 1450. Four years later when Bishop Bouchier was translated to Canterbury Grey was nominated to the vacant see of Ely ¹²⁴). Here he remained until his death on 4 August 1478.

Capgrave dedicated three works to William Grey. Two of these are still extant. These works are not dated but from internal evidence we know they were written after Grey's consecration in 1454 and after Capgrave had finished his second term as Provincial in 1457. All this appears from the dedicatory letter of the 'Commentarius in Actus Apostolorum'. We here include the text as given by Hingeston ¹²⁵), collating it with the *incipit* as found in Bale ¹²⁶) —

[Domino suo] venerabili [et super omnes] dilecto, [Domino Willelmo Eliensi] episcopo, suus inter doctores [minimus] ; titulo Heremitarum [sancti Augustini insignitus] ; omnem [subjectionem] mentis [et] quicquid aut dici aut cogitari melius possit.

Reminiscor, sancte antistes, quanta pia visitatione vestra in me miserum peregrinum atque Romae infirmum dilectionis exenia tribuistis ; et nunc, a sollicitudine officii mei penitus absolutus, licet tarde veniens munus possibilitatis meae vobis decrevi mittendum ¹²⁷).

Diu enim corde gessi aliquid opus ad utilitatem ecclesiae condere ; in quo opere nihil praestantius ad me pertinere arbitrabar, quam ad prudentiam vestram illud mittere ; maxime cum studium vestrum diversis mundi plagis exercitatum ; ad summam apicem fama vestra pervenerit.

Accipite igitur quod mitto, et favorabili paternitate librum tractate. Bona quae ibi sunt, pia auctoritate roborate ; mala autem, si

¹²³) Cf. G. B. PARKS, *The English traveler to Italy*, i. 430, 431 ; and F. DE PARAVICINI, *Early history of Balliol College* (London, 1891), pp. 319-321 ; 350-351.

¹²⁴) Cf. *Dictionary of National Biography*, viii (London, 1908), 655 ; and C. EUBEL, *Hierarchia catholica*, ii (Munster, 1914), 150.

¹²⁵) *Liber de illustribus Henricis*, appendix iii, pp. 221-222.

¹²⁶) J. BALE, *Index Britanniae scriptorum*, p. 188 : 'Domino suo venerabili et in Christi visceribus summe dilecto, Guillelmo Eliensi episcopo, etc.'.

¹²⁷) Italics mine.

sint, funditus evellere studeatis ; ut sic liber, a dominatione vestra praecedens, asterisco vel obelo consignatus, securius ad alios descendat, tanta auctoritate vallatus ' ¹²⁸).

The ' De fidei symbolis ' was also dedicated to Bishop Grey. This appears to have been written about 1460 if we may judge from the dedicatory epistle in which Capgrave speaks of his approaching death —

' Quum psalmigraphus ait : « Secundum nomen tuum, ita et laus tua » ¹²⁹) mihi quoque (ut reor) loquitur, cui animus jam hebes est, corpus fatescit, et — juxta sancti Job eloquium — « Spiritus meus attenuatur, dies breviantur, et solum mihi superest sepulchrum » ' ¹³⁰).

' De fidei symbolis ' was written after the ' Commentarius in Actus Apostolorum ' if we may judge from the fact that he calls himself ' suus ut olim orator sedulus ' ¹³¹). Here is how the dedication reads ¹³²) —

' Domino suo singulari, et super ceteris magis sibi propitio, domino Willelmo Eliensi episcopo, suus ut olim orator sedulus, quidam Johannes, inter doctores minimus, tituloque Heremitarum Sancti Augustini insignitus, De Monumento Pileato vulgariter nominatus, honores, preces, vota et quicquid melius tam rudis zelator cogitare possit '.

This is the only place where Capgrave latinises his name. ' Monumentum ' is understood as ' grave ', and ' pileatum ' for ' cap '.

During his remaining years Capgrave found solace in pondering on the Creed ¹³³). He arranged the different expressions of Catholic

¹²⁸) The work is preserved in the library of Balliol College at Oxford as MS 189, cf. O. COXE, *Catalogus codicum MSS qui in collegiis aulisque Oxoniensibus hodie asservantur*. Coll. Balliol. (Oxford, 1852), p. 62.

¹²⁹) ... in fines terrae, Ps. 48 (47), 10.

¹³⁰) Job, 17, 1.

¹³¹) Italics mine.

¹³²) The whole letter is printed in the *Liber de illustribus Henricis*, appendix ii, pp. 213-217.

¹³³) ' Vidique bonas et laudabiles consuetudines multorum, qui morti appropinquantes, hoc ultimum habent solamen, ut fidem corde teneant, labiisque Symbolum pronuncient, juxta illud Apostoli in Prima ad Corinthios: « Psallam

faith together as an aid against the incredulity of the enemies of the Church ¹³⁴) — 'adversus viperina venena haeresum et errorum' ¹³⁵). These are the Symbols of Faith as collected by Capgrave ¹³⁶) —

1. De Symbolo Apostolorum
2. De Symbolo Nicaeno
3. De Symbolo Nicaeno altero
4. Symbolum Athanasii
5. Aliud Symbolum eiusdem
6. Symbolum Chrysostomi
7. Symbolum Ieronymi
8. Symbolum Toletanum
9. Symbolum Carthaginiense
10. Symbolum Augustini
11. Aliud eiusdem
12. Item aliud eiusdem
13. Item aliud
14. Symbolum Maximi
15. Symbolum Boethii
16. Symbolum Rabani
17. Symbolum cuiusdam auctoris
18. Item Symbolum Hugonis
19. Quatuor libelli Augustini de Symbolo.

If Hingeston's opinion is correct we should identify the 'Venerabilis Dominus' to whom Capgrave dedicated the 'Commentarius

spiritu, psallam et mente » [1. Cor., 14, 15]. Quod dictum, ut nonnulli scribunt, intelligitur de melodia linguae exteriori et gaudio mentis interiori'.

'Pro hac re ad mentem rediens, totam spem meam in Fide constituo, Symbolum Fidei labiis revolve; ut, cum dies extremus veniet, et in adventu Domini nostri, cum veniet, etsi raram, tamen inveniet fidem super terram' (*Liber de illustribus Henricis*, appendix ii, p. 214).

¹³⁴) 'Cum ergo sit Symbolum principium salutis ipsis credentibus, et multa et diversa in eo contineantur, mihi quoque bonum visum est de origine huius Symboli iam investigare; et post haec, per quot Patres, per quot Concilia Symbola sint edita; ut habeat dominatio vestra non ea quae non habebat, sed promptiora quaedam Fidei testimonia in unum collecta, tanquam in uno fasciculo, ex multis ramis credibilium confecto, adversus inimicos Legis et Evangelii' (*Ibidem*, p. 215).

¹³⁵) *Ibidem*, p. 216.

¹³⁶) Of this work two MSS are extant. The copy presented to William Grey, in the library of Balliol College, as MS 190 (cf. O. COXE, *Catalogus codicum*, etc. Coll. Balliol., p. 62-63). The autograph MS in the library of All Souls College, Oxford, as MS 17 (cf. O. COXE, *Catalogus codicum*, etc. Coll. Omnium Animarum, p. 5).

in *Apocalypsim S. Ioannis* ' with William Grey ¹³⁷). In that case the work on the Apocalypse may well have been written before ' *De fidei symbolis* '.

John Capgrave completed his scriptural writings with the commentaries dedicated to Bishop Grey. His purpose with these writings was to facilitate the studies of future generations. He then turned to historical studies. He undertook the ambitious project of a universal chronicle, from the beginning of the world until the year 1417. It was in this way that his well-known *Chronicle of England* came into existence. Shortly after the year 1461 he composed the dedicatory letter to King Edward IV. The dedication begins —

' To my Sovereyn Lord, Edward, be the grace of God Kyng of Ynglond and of Frauns, Lord of Yrland, a pore Frere of the Heremites of Seynt Austyn, in the convent of Lenne, sendith prayer, obediens, subjeccion, and al that evir, be ony deute, a prest schuld offrir onto his Kyng.

It is somewhat divulgid in this lond, that I have aftir my possibilite be occupied in wryting, specialy to gader eld exposiciones upon Scripture into o colleccion; and thos that were disparplied in many sundry bokis, my laboure was to bringe hem into o body, that thei which schal come aftir schal not have so mech laboure in sekyng of her processe. Now is age com, and I want ny al that schuld longe to a studier; yet it plesed me, as for a solace, to gader a schort remembrauns of elde stories, that whanne I loke upon hem, and have a schort touch of the writing, I can sone dilate the circumstaunes.

This werk send I to yow, where ye may turne and se schortly touchid the most famous thingis that have be do in the world fro his beginnyng onto the yere of oure Lord Crist a M.CCCC. and XVII ' ¹³⁸).

The general description of historical events diminishes as the eleventh century approaches, and from the year 1216 until 1417 Capgrave follows the facts year by year. Hingeston says — ' His chronology is confused in many places and very far from accurate: from the beginning of the Christian Era to the early part of the thirteenth century, Kings, Emperors, and Popes are often erroneously represented to be contemporaries. His English chronology, however, with a few exceptions which have been carefully noticed whenever they occur, is on the whole precise and accurate ' ¹³⁹).

¹³⁷) *The chronicle of England*, p. xv.

¹³⁸) *Ibidem*, p. 1.

¹³⁹) *Ibidem*, p. xxiii.

It is a pity that Capgrave did not finish his account of contemporary history which would have been of more than ordinary value. We have seen from his description of Rome how careful was his observation and how balanced his judgement. However, the lack is in part supplied by his account of contemporary events as found in the *Liber de illustribus Henricis* which he completed in 1446.

In the *Chronicle* we see him as a lover of England and of the Church. Nevertheless, he tries to be objective as his subject allows. He fulminates against heretics, especially when he treats of Wyclif and the Lollards. We found the same attitude in his dedicatory letter to William Grey which prefaces the 'De fidei symbolis'. Another notable trait is his somewhat exaggerated submissiveness to kings and those in authority. This may be explained by his high estimation for superiors, be they lay or clerical. Of this question we shall later have a little more to say.

Perhaps the most important mark of the *Chronicle* is that it was the first history of England not written in Latin. It has the further interest that it was composed in the dialect of Norfolk ¹⁴⁰).

Before concluding this account of Capgrave's life it is timely to mention those other works of his which cannot be accurately dated. The *Nova Legenda Angliae*, attributed to Capgrave claims particular attention. It is paradoxical that much of Capgrave's notoriety rested on this work which in reality was not from his pen. He would appear, however, to have been its editor. The real author of this work was John of Tynemouth, a monk of St Alban's. This Benedictine is the compiler of the lives of the English saints which he arranged in a 'Sanctilogium' according to the calendar, and finished in the year 1366 ¹⁴¹). Capgrave rearranged John of Tyne-

¹⁴⁰) Two MSS of the *Chronicle* have been preserved, both at Cambridge. The autograph in the University Library, MS Gg. iv. 12 (cf. *A Catalogue of the MSS preserved in the library of the University of Cambridge*, iii (Cambridge, 1858), 152), used for the text edited by Hingston. The other, the dedicatory copy, in Corpus Christi College as MS 167, cf. M. R. JAMES, *A Descriptive Catalogue of MSS in the library of Corpus Christi College Cambridge*, i (Cambridge, 1912), 378.

Here there is no occasion to mention the Augustiniana in the *Chronicle*. There are several items on St Augustine and the English Province. Perhaps we shall treat of this topic in a later article.

¹⁴¹) A. POTTHAST, *Bibliotheca historica medii aevi*, i (Berlin², 1896), 185.

For John of Tynemouth, see *Nova Legenda Angliae*, ed. C. Horstmann, i (Oxford, 1901), xxxiii-lxvi.

mouth's work on an alphabetical basis ¹⁴²), and according to Tanner added fourteen further saints to the list, bringing the total to one hundred and sixty eight ¹⁴³).

There are three extant manuscripts of this work. One is in the library of York Minster, MS xvi, c, i ¹⁴⁴), another in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, MS Tanner 15 ¹⁴⁵), and the third is to be found in the Cottonian collection in the British Museum, Tiberius E, i. This last manuscript was badly burnt in the fire of 1731, and what remains is now preserved in a case ¹⁴⁶).

The *Nova Legenda Angliae* was the first work attributed to Capgrave which saw print. It was published in folio at London by Wynkyn de Worde in the year 1516 ¹⁴⁷). In the same year an abrid-

¹⁴²) 'It is hardly fair to name Capgrave with our Collection, his share being, at most, restricted to the change of the original arrangement — and yet it is his name by which the Collection was known in modern times. How he came to that honour no one knows — perhaps through a note in a MS of this new arrangement, though of the existing MSS none contains it. The testimony of the early bibliographers, who under his name give the *Vitae Sanctorum Anglorum* (Leland) or *Catalogus Sanctorum Angliae* (Bale, Pits) with the opening words (of the Prologue) 'Sancti patres qui priscis fuere', is inconclusive, as the Prologue certainly was added, as has been shown in the Ed. of 1516, long after Capgrave. The tradition may have started with Leland, who, not knowing John of Tynemouth even by name, or MS Tib. [cf. note 146], ascribed his work to Capgrave, the best-known name in hagiology of the preceding century. The earlier Bollandists, give the lives of our Collection under Capgrave's name, not from the Ed., of which they possessed no copy, but from a MS Rubeae Vallis made from it. So Capgrave's share in the work, within the limits indicated, remains an open question which I have no means of deciding' (C. Horstmann in the introduction to the *Nova Legenda Angliae*, i, lxvi-lxvii).

¹⁴³) This report about Tanner is given by Hingeston in appendix i to the *Liber de illustribus Henricis*, p. 191, but we could not find it neither in the *Bibliotheca britannico-hibernica*, nor in the *Notitia monastica*.

¹⁴⁴) *Nova Legenda Angliae*, i, xv.

¹⁴⁵) *Catalogi codicum manuscriptorum bibliothecae Bodleianae. Pars iv. MSS Tanner curavit A. Hackman* (Oxford, 1860), 18. This MS has been written in 1499.

¹⁴⁶) *A Catalogue of the manuscripts in the Cottonian library deposited in the British Museum* (London, 1802), p. 40. This is the only MS known to exist having the series according to the calendar (cf. *Nova Legenda Angliae*, i, xi). A description is given *Ibidem* from p. xi-xiv; and in Th. SMITH, *Catalogus librorum manuscriptorum bibliothecae Cottonianae* (Oxford, 1696), pp. 28-29. The same catalogue has another MS, in which the lives are arranged alphabetically, MS Otho. D. ix (pp. 76-77). This disappeared in the fire of 1731, for in the catalogue of 1802 (p. 369) it is wanted.

¹⁴⁷) 'Noua legêda Anglie. — (in fine): Impressa lôdonias î domo Winândi de

ged English translation was printed in quarto by Richard Pynson which starts with 'Here begynneth the Kalendre of the newe Legende of Englande' ¹⁴⁸). A second edition of the Latin version was printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1527 ¹⁴⁹). Carl Horstmann re-edited the *Nova Legenda Angliae* in two volumes at Oxford in 1901, utilising fresh material from manuscript and printed sources. The prologue of this work has also been printed as an appendix in the *Liber de illustribus Henricis*, pp. 195-209.

We here append a list of the works commonly attributed to Capgrave by his biographers.

Commentarius in Leviticum
 in Numeros
 in Deuteronomium
 in historiam Josuae
 in Judices et Ruth
 in Psalterium
 in Ecclesiasten
 in Isaiam
 in Danielelem
 in xii Prophetas minores
 in iv Evangelia
 in Epistulas canonicas
 De illustribus viris O. E. S. A.
 Orationes ad clerum
 Sermones per annum
 Lecturae scholasticae
 Ordinariae disputationes
 Epistulae ad diversos

There is also mention of a 'De sequacibus Augustini' but it would seem that this is the same as Capgrave's 'Vita S. Augustini' (or 'Concordia'), which is titled 'De Augustino et suis sequacibus' by Bale ¹⁵⁰).

The extent of Capgrave's literary activity may be gauged from an impressive list of forty one works.

Worde... anno dñi M.CCCCCxvi. xxvij die Februarii', cf. J. BRUNET, *Manuel du libraire*, i (Berlin⁵, 1922), cols 1560-61.

¹⁴⁸) J. GRAESSE, *Trésor des livres rares et précieux*, ii (Berlin, 1922), 41.

¹⁴⁹) A. POTTHAST, *Bibliotheca historica*, i, 185.

¹⁵⁰) See notes 61, 63, and J. BALE, *Index Britanniae scriptorum*, p. 492: 'Eulogium scripsit monachus quidam Malmesburiensis tempore regis Edwardi tertii, A. D. 1361 — ex Capgrave De sequacibus Augustini, ca. 10'.

VI. Capgrave's death: 12 August 1464.

Capgrave's mature scholarly life came to a close at Lynn on 12 August 1464 in his seventy second year. He was buried there in the Austin friary, so much associated with his life.

The year of his death has also been given as 1484. The origin of this error may be traced to Pits' misreading of Pamphilus. Pits states.

' Teste Pamphilo, Linniae mortuus et sepultus est die duodecimo Augusti anno salutis reparate 1484, Richardo tertio usurpatore per summum scelus Angliae regnum invadente ' ¹⁵¹).

But Pamphilus clearly places the death in the year 1464 ¹⁵²) which may be seen also in Gandolfo ¹⁵³) and Torelli ¹⁵⁴). Thus the *D. N. B.*'s note about Pamphilus is wrongly stated ¹⁵⁵).

Pits' mistake is repeated by Elssius ¹⁵⁶), Labbe ¹⁵⁷) and Torelli ¹⁵⁸). The latter defends his statement by declaring that Pits as an Englishman was better informed and of greater authority than those who placed the death in 1464. Le Mire, who is said by Gandolfo to follow Pits, in reality gives the date 1464 ¹⁵⁹), while Vos confuses two facts when he reports — ' Obiit anno 1464, cum Richardus III Angliae regnum invasisset ' ¹⁶⁰).

CONCLUSION

It will be seen that Capgrave's life was not one of stirring events, of court politics and high diplomacy. His was rather the tranquil existence of the scholar, with much of his time passed in the quiet of the Lynn Austin friary amid his beloved manus-

¹⁵¹) J. PITS, *Relationum historicarum de rebus Anglicis*, p. 673.

¹⁵²) J. PAMPHILUS, *Chronica Ordinis Fratrum Eremitarum Sancti Augustini*, f. 83.

¹⁵³) D. GANDOLFO, *Dissertatio historica*, p. 209.

¹⁵⁴) L. TORELLI, *Secoli Agostiniani*, vii, 314.

¹⁵⁵) *Dictionary of National Biography*, ii, 930.

¹⁵⁶) Ph. ELSSIUS, *Encomiasticon Augustinianum* (Brussels, 1654), p. 336.

¹⁵⁷) Ph. LABBEUS, *Bibliotheca bibliothecarum* (Paris, 1664), p. 85.

¹⁵⁸) L. TORELLI, *op. cit.*, vii, 314.

¹⁵⁹) A. MIRAEUS, *Bibliotheca ecclesiastica*, i (Antwerp, 1639), 279.

¹⁶⁰) G. VOSSIUS, *De historicis latinis libri iii* (Leyden, 1651), p. 633.

cripts. Without exaggeration Capgrave may be ranked as a scholar of some repute in the fields of theology and history, and as a figure not without importance in the story of early English prose and poetry.

Capgrave's character has been eulogised in the highest terms by his biographers ¹⁶¹). His own works mirror sufficient of his character to corroborate the substance of their praise. It may be true as Dr Furnivall states in such extreme terms that 'Capgrave being an Englishman, was of course by race and nature a flunkey, and had an inordinate reverence for kings and rank' ¹⁶²), but it does appear an exaggeration to interpret Capgrave's motives as a desire to have royal support for his position as prior of Lynn or Provincial of the Austin friars ¹⁶³). When Capgrave in his *Liber de illustribus Henricis* praises Henry IV — not unaware that his comments would come to the notice of the reigning monarch who was Henry's grandson —, then later in the dedication of his *Chronicle* to Edward IV styles him as an intruder, he is not behaving as a sycophant but as one reverencing authority and using common sense in adapting himself to changed circumstances ¹⁶⁴).

When Capgrave scarifies the evils of his time it is not that 'he shared the hates and prejudices of his Papal Church and Order' ¹⁶⁵), of Capgrave shows himself on many occasions to be objective. He is not afraid to criticize either the abuses allowed by Rome or the enemies of the Church. This may be seen in the passage about Robert Grosseteste in the *Chronicle* ¹⁶⁶), and in his several denunciations of 'the noble Reformer Wyclif, who lasht the abuses of the Romish hierarchy, and double-thongd the hypocrisy, the vice and corruption of the Friars', as Furnivall not very impartially puts in ¹⁶⁷). Furnivall does not appreciate that Capgrave

¹⁶¹) Cf. *Dictionary of National Biography*, iii, 930.

¹⁶²) *The life of St Katharine*, p. xv.

¹⁶³) *Ibidem*, p. xv.

¹⁶⁴) '... Capgrave, who was clearly not a respecter of persons, but loved and revered the King of the time being, whoever he might happen to be, simply because he was the King' (F. C. Hingeston in the general introduction to the *Liber de illustribus Henricis*, p. xvi).

¹⁶⁵) F. Furnivall in the introduction to *The life of St Katharine*, p. xvi.

¹⁶⁶) *The chronicle of England*, p. 156.

¹⁶⁷) Cf. *The life of St Katharine*, p. xvi.

could not in conscience support what was radically opposed to the principles of his faith.

Capgrave's balanced approach to a question may be seen from an extract of the *Henries* as rendered into English by Hingeston¹⁶⁸) —

' Now forasmuch as different writers have given different accounts of the deposition of king Richard [i. e. II] and the elevation of king Henry [i. e. IV] to the throne, — and no wonder, since in so great a struggle one took one side, and one the other, — I, who stand as it were in the middle between the two parties, consider that I hold a better and a safer path, since, having investigated both sides of the question, I set myself diligently to elucidate the truth alone, not indeed to the prejudice of any one who may write of these things after me, if he shall undertake to discuss this matter with more accurary and clearness '.

Capgrave's piety is noted by almost everyone of his biographers and Elssius styles him ' Beatus ' ¹⁶⁹). It is said that King Henry VII tried to institute the process for his beatification, because of Capgrave's devotion to Henry VI ¹⁷⁰).

Glancing back over Capgrave's life and literary activity we may sum up his importance on three scoress. — He was

- a) a devout religious, and a loyal son of the Church ;
- b) a profound scholar, a keen observer, and a trustworthy witness ;
- c) the first English-speaking historian with a literary reputation.

We may therefore endorse the common opinion of his biographers, and consider John Capgrave as the greatest of all English Austin Friars.

Hunc quoque caelestem felix tulit Anglia foetum
Esse cui Angelico contigit ingenio ¹⁷¹).

Alberic DE MEIJER, O. E. S. A.

¹⁶⁸) J. CAPGRAVE, *Book of the Illustrious Henries*, tr. F. C. Hingeston (London, 1858), p. 107.

¹⁶⁹) Ph. ELSSIUS, *Encomiasticon Augustinianum*, p. 336.

¹⁷⁰) Cf. *Ye solace of pilgrimes*, p. xii.

¹⁷¹) Th. GRATIANUS, *Anastasis Augustiniana* (Antwerp, 1613), p. 109.