NOTES ON SOME MANUSCRIPTS OF
HOCCLEVE'S REGIMENT OF PRINCES

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In one of the scrap-books of the notorious collector John Bagford (1650–1716), which are now part of the Harleian collection, is preserved a hitherto unnoticed leaf from a manuscript of Thomas Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes*. It is a single parchment leaf (Fragment 90, MS. Harley 5977), mounted on a guard, and measuring 155 × 105 mm (written area, approximately 150 × 70 mm), with twenty-eight long lines to the page, and no stanza division (fig. 1). It contains lines 2472–527 (according to the line-numbering of Furnivall's edition of the poem), written in a neat mixed (Anglicana and Secretary) hand of the middle of the fifteenth century; the initial letter of each line is marked with a single vertical red stroke. The leaf has been heavily trimmed, and no trace now remains of any marginal glossing, foliation, signature, or catchword. The Bodleian Library contains a companion to this Harley fragment in MS. Rawlinson D. 913, fol. 63. This consists of lines 2185–247 of the *Regiment* (with a stanza omitted at lines 2213–19), and must once have formed part of the same manuscript as the Bagford leaf. Indeed, the two leaves could well have originally made up two halves of the same sheet. The Rawlinson fragment has been slightly less heavily trimmed than the Harleian one (it measures 165 × 100 mm), but in all other respects the two conform exactly. Their common origin is confirmed by a note on the recto (in what Macray's catalogue identifies as Hearne's hand): 'About a King's Coronation Oath. This Fragment I had of Mr. Bagford.' This is not quite all there is to be said about the manuscript of which these two fragments appear to provide the sole evidence. The lacuna which occurs at lines 2213–19 of the Rawlinson leaf gives a strong indication of the textual affiliations of this lost copy, for this gap is to be found in at least four other copies of the *Regiment*: Bodleian MSS. Ashmole 40, Bodley 221, Laud Misc. 735, and Selden Supra 53. Moreover, these manuscripts (which, for the sake of convenience, I shall refer to as the Bodley group) all share with the Bagford fragments a number of readings not found in the majority of copies, as represented by British Library, MSS. Royal 17 D. VI (from which Thomas Wright took his text), and Harley 4866 (the base-text for Furnivall's edition). At line 2192, for instance, the Rawlinson fragment reads 'coronacion', where Harley 4866 has 'creacioun', at 2193 'mouth' (as against 'tunge'), at 2197 'kyngly' (for 'knyghtly'), at 2199 'And' (for 'Lo'), and at 2209 'kunnyng' (for 'comunynge'); all these Rawlinson readings are shared by the manuscripts of the Bodley group. The same is essentially true of the Harleian fragment, which at line 2474 reads
To thyn easse concorde up to thi so
Sufframce, and to thi self holynes
to the nedg grege with meataid new
mercy in dede. And reene his syfresse
After thi power so thon thyn Almes
And reene vpon hym ys f° might yape
For f° wil full the dede contir yape
Who so yt be that jufypet yvray
Refare to solewe. first mot be god dede
And done hym as he talityd as he ctn or myd
fn sufficet not to do no noyns dede.
But who a nope wold, hym yt for dede
For wought to a nope is no ut wyches
But yt is Abinence of Wilktones
If erunal and of help we se butons
the on to thole by yght of brothede
Wan f° A mida nole in to ctuvos
his brother or with hym contul and rede
to correte and amende his mised dede
But ys f° he be aeg or any malaide
Ampystre hym helpe his graef to remeved
Every man oweth to sity, and unse
to teche his brother wat yng is to do
And what beonchly yt is to reynt
that. f° is good prakcying hym thet
And thus he mot contul his brother to
Do f° is good and right to good he pay
yn ympai not only but in wrrke Alway.
'gredy' (for 'greved'), at 2475 'releue' (for 'rew'), at 2476 'do thou thy Almes' (for 'rewe his distresse'), and at line 2510 'restreyned' (for 'refreyned'); unfortunately MS. Selden Supra 53 must be left out of the comparison in this case, since it lacks the relevant leaves. In one respect, however, the manuscript now represented by the Bagford fragments must have differed significantly from the manuscripts of the Bodley group. The two fragments are separated by 224 lines, according to Furnivall's edition, and since this total is divisible by twenty-eight, we must conclude that eight pages were originally bound between them and that these pages carried a complete text. One feature shared by all four members of the Bodley group, on the other hand, is the omission of a stanza at lines 2269-75. The Bagford fragments, therefore, appear to represent a manuscript that was originally more complete than at least four of the manuscripts to which it is textually related; though a number of unique readings (such as 'As I do' at line 2190, or 'errours' at line 2488) suggest that this manuscript cannot have been their direct ancestor, its greater completeness means that it would almost certainly have preserved an earlier stage in the development of this interesting sub-group than any of the Bodley manuscripts we have been discussing. Authoritative statements about the textual reliability of the manuscripts of the Regiment of Princes must await a full critical edition, but though the sub-group we have been considering preserves an incomplete text, it may prove to be far from textually worthless. To give only one example, lines 2458-61 (as they appear in MS. Harley 4866 and Furnivall's edition) have an imperfect rhyme-scheme, whereas the Ashmole, Bodley, and Laud manuscripts, by beginning the stanza with Furnivall's line 2460, produce not only orthodox rhyme royal but also better sense. In the light of this, we can only regret that what may well have been an important witness to this sub-group should now survive only in Bagford's two fragments.

Amongst the manuscripts of Hoccleve's Regiment, MS. Arundel 59 has attracted a certain amount of attention, because it has been identified as the work of a London scribe, active during the reign of Edward IV, and known to have been responsible for an unusually large number of surviving manuscripts. Eleanor Hammond first recognized this scribe, and identified six manuscripts (including Arundel 59) copied in whole or in part by him; to her list Dr. A. I. Doyle has added a further two manuscripts and two fragments. It is perhaps rather surprising that yet one more example of his work should hitherto have escaped notice, since it constitutes a second copy of the Regiment of Princes (MS. Harley 372, fols. 71-112), a volume of which Miss Hammond must certainly have been aware (fig. 2). MS. Harley 372 is an undecorated paper manuscript of 114 leaves, measuring 295 × 210 mm, in a late-nineteenth-century binding. The first seventy leaves are taken up with a miscellaneous collection of poems by Chaucer, Lydgate, and Sir Richard Roos, but at fol. 71 the hand changes, and the rest of the volume consists of the final two-fifths of Hoccleve's Regiment. A comparison of parallel passages from the Arundel and Harley manuscripts reveals that they are indisputably by the same hand: they are identical in aspect and duct, and all the scribe's most obvious trade-marks (such as the distinctive forms of p, capital I, and capital B, and the 'predilection for peculiar ie spellings') are present in both. Two forms which occur regularly in Harley 372, the open s at the end of
So highly seek that in my estate
for to espresse or troduce any of the
 glimpse my sight for the world is so
good and the barest straunt of him and me
he there commot for him, for somewhat, yow ne
e stan solo brennep. A blessed image
worth her and fly from me
in thyn goodly countes and many a cone
to yow and haps beth and thy remembrance
to god they some make amandment
howe the sons, some arraye some
And the godd, some fonde and sometyme
He thought how of the day of the remembrance of
from herte in one. So quickly leaght off
that to met other men my remembrance
Of God, yow, I have these few behavynge
So make to my rede in thisafter
that they the hem of hym, light, thought and mynd,
In the remembrance may again hym fonde
He thought that in the day of his en
again folk, thought on god, and in this report
then to remayn they be hold and ben
Who of the sight of hym, so fast remayn,
of thynes god and thought, thoughted, or entailed, amusement of to hide
thought of the behavynge, toward them bred
yet Jet you felt, God, oppress and ride.
a word, and the decorative knot over a final n, particularly with words ending in ‘-ioun’,
do not appear in Arundel 59, but are common enough in other examples of the scribe’s
work (see, for example, Plate II in Hammond’s ‘Scribe of Chaucer’), and this discrepancy
may mean no more than that the two copies were made at widely different times. There
can be little doubt that the two sections of which MS. Harley 372 is made up were not
originally bound together. Not only are the watermarks of these two sections quite
different: through the first seventy leaves the watermark is a ring set with a stone, whereas
for the remaining section it is either a bull (resembling Briquet, 2786) or a bull’s head
(similar to Briquet, 15054), but a stronger indication is that leaves 70b and 71a are both
heavily soiled, a fact which suggests that some time in their history the two sections must
have circulated separately as independent booklets. Also, it can be shown that fols. 71–112
were never, as might have been supposed, intended as a self-contained excerpt from the
second half of Hoccleve’s Regiment. At the top of fol. 71a there is an overlay with the words,
‘The Author of this Treatise is Thomas Hoccline. Scholler to Geffrey Chaucer’, written
in an eighteenth-century hand; the text then begins with line 3312, the first line of a new
section (De Misericordia). This overlay has now been lifted to reveal the final three lines
of the previous section, a clear indication that what we now have is only a partial
survival from an originally complete text of the Regiment. One final point deserves mention:
the second part of MS. Harley 372 seems at one time to have belonged to John Stow: on
fol. 103a, opposite line 4983, he has written ‘Chaucer’, and eleven lines later, ‘his picture
shuld be here’. Four other products of our scribe’s hand appear to have been owned by
Stow: Trinity College, Cambridge, MS. R.3.21, and British Library, MSS. Add. 34360,
Harley 2251 (see Hammond, p. 31), and Harley 78, fol. 3a (see Doyle, p. 428). That five
of the eleven known examples of our scribe’s work should have passed into Stow’s hands
argues strongly in favour of their London provenance; whether it also confirms Miss
Hammond’s hypothesis that a commercial scriptorium was responsible for keeping these
manuscripts together between Edward IV’s reign and that of Elizabeth I must remain,
however, more problematical.

3 I have examined all the manuscripts of the poem in the Bodleian and in the British Library (about
half the known manuscripts of the Regiment). It is difficult to resist quoting Furnivall’s reason for
the choice of his base manuscript: ‘I have printed
the text from the Harleian MS. 4866 because it has the best portrait of Chaucer’ (p. xvii).
5 A. I. Doyle, ‘An Unrecognized Piece of Piers the Ploughman’s Creed and Other Works by its
6 A. I. Doyle (ibid., pp. 429–30) gives a detailed list
of all the distinguishing features of the scribe’s
hand.