

**COMMUNICATION DURING MEDIEVAL
WARFARE: THE CAMPAIGN OF EDWARD III
OF ENGLAND IN THE LOW COUNTRIES
(1338-1340)**

by

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At the beginning of the third millennium instant oral and written communication is taken for granted. Even meetings between heads of state require only a few hours of travel by airplane. But in the Middle Ages communication depended upon oral or written messages delivered by special messengers. And in the case of kings, popes, princes, and their officials communication was severely impeded by their constant itinerations and the roads, often impassable. Although Charlemagne's favorite residence was at Aachen, he was seldom there because of his campaigns and travels about the realm to ensure control of recalcitrant officials and disloyal vassals. Nor did Henry II of England reside for long at any place, being constantly on the move throughout the Angevin Empire. Even toward the end of the Middle Ages when court life was more sedentary, with their love of pageantry and *joyeuses entrées*, the dukes of Burgundy frequently toured their possessions in the Low Countries and France.¹

¹ Charlemagne's campaigns and travels can be followed in Einhard's biography. For modern commentary see A. Kleinclausz, *Charlemagne*, Paris, 1934; L. Halphen, *Charlemagne et l'empire carolingien*, 2^d ed., Paris, 1949; J.F. Verbruggen, "L'armée et la stratégie de Charlemagne," in W. Braunfels, ed., *Karl der Grosse*, Düsseldorf, 1965, I, 420-434; and especially D. Bullough, "Europae Pater: Charlemagne and His Achievement in the Light of Recent Scholarship," *English Historical Review*, LXXV, 1970, 81-90; and B. Bachrach, "Charlemagne's Cavalry: Myth and Reality," *Military Affairs*, XLVII, 1983, 181-187. For the frequent movements of Henry II see B. Lyon, "Henry II: A Non-Victorian Interpretation," in *Documenting the Past: Essays in Medieval History Presented to George Peddy Cuttino*, Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1989, 21-31; R.W. Eyton, *Court, Household, and Itinerary of King Henry II*, London, 1878; W. Stubbs, *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi Benedicti Abbatis*, London, 1867, II. For the Burgundian dukes see O. Cartellieri, *The Court of Burgundy*, New York, 1929; J. Huizinga, *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen*, Amsterdam, 1919. For the latest corrected edition see *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen: Studie over Levens- en gedachtenvormen der Veertiende en Vijftiende Eeuw in Frankrijk en de Nederlanden*, ed. Anton van der Lem, Amsterdam, 1997. See also the recent English translation by R.J. Payton and U. Mammitzsch, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, Chicago, 1996. For more on the movements of the Burgundian court see W. Prevenier and W.P. Blockmans, *The Burgundian Netherlands*, Cambridge, 1986, and *The Promised Lands: The*

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In his *History of the Persian Wars*, Herodotus relates how the Persian kings developed a network of roads and post stations in order to communicate efficiently with their satraps. And the marvellous Roman roads ensured communication between Rome and the provinces. With the Empire's dissolution, however, came political particularism and decay of its roads. The aftermath was that during much of the Middle Ages roads were what Marc Bloch described as mostly paths or ways over which one passed. The only alternatives were rivers where they existed and, of course, oceans and seas. A number of studies have investigated and described aspects of medieval travel and the condition of roads as well as the messenger service of the kings of England and France and of the popes. Of these the most valuable has been that of Mary C. Hill on the messengers of the English kings from 1199 to 1377. In contrast to T. F. Tout in his administrative history of medieval England, her study emphasized the role of messengers in the service of the royal household.²

Tracing the origin and development of the English royal messenger service, Ms. Hill made an important distinction between envoys and messengers (*nuncii*) whose sole role was to bear messages. Unlike envoys, they were not empowered to negotiate or to conclude a transaction. As the messenger service grew, a cadre of royal mounted *nuncii* was supplemented

Low Countries Under Burgundian Rule, 1369-1530, Philadelphia, 1999; P. Arnade, *Realms of Ritual: Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent*, Ithaca and London, 1996; W. Paravicini, "Die Residenzen der Herzöge von Burgund, 1363-1477," in W. Paravicini and H. Patze, eds., *Fürstliche Residenzen im spätmittelalterlichen Europa*, Sigmaringen, 1991, pp. 207-263.

² M.C. Hill, *The King's Messengers 1199-1377. A Contribution to the History of the Royal Household*, London, 1961, and "Jack Faukes, King's Messenger and His Journey to Avignon in 1343," *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, LVII, 1942, 19-30. See also J.A.J. Housden, "Early Posts in England," *Ibid.*, XVIII, 1903, 713-718; F.M. Stenton, "The Road System of Medieval England," *Economic History Review*, VII, 1936-37, 1-21; A. Larson, "The Payment of Fourteenth Century English Envoys," *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, LIV, 1939, 403-414; G. Stretton, "The Travelling Household of the Middle Ages," *Journal British Archaeological Association*, XL, 1935, 75-103, and "Some Aspects of Medieval Travel," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 4th ser., VII, 77-97; E. Rodocanachi, "Les courriers pontificaux de XIVe au XVIIe siècle," *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique*, XXVI, 1912, 392-428; Y. Renouard, "Comment les Papes d'Avignon expédiaient leur courrier," *Revue Historique*, CLXXX, 1937, 1-22; B. Behrens, "Origins of the Office of English Resident Ambassador in Rome," *Trans. Roy. Hist. Soc.*, 4th ser., XLIX, 640 ff. The articles of D.E. Queller are unsatisfactory because they do not distinguish between *nuncii* and envoys. See "Diplomatic Personnel Employed by the Counts of Flanders in the Thirteenth Century," *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, XXXIV, 1956, 68-98, 385-422, and "Thirteenth Century Diplomatic Envoys: *Nuncii* and *Procuratores*," *Speculum*, XXXV, 1960, 196-213.

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by unmounted messengers known as *coquini*, *cokini*, or *cursores* who bore less important messages and travelled shorter distances. Ms. Hill described the conditions of service, delving into the clothing, shoes, equipment, food, and lodging provided the *nuncii* and their assistants, the grooms and boys. She provided detailed figures on the wages and remuneration of expenses incurred by *nuncii* on the trips. The *nuncii* came from humble backgrounds with no linguistic and writing training. Sometimes before entry into the royal service they served as messengers for bishops or other lords. The most seasoned and reliable were entrusted with important messages to kings, princes, and popes. In a sense the *nuncii* were the eyes and ears of the king because they reported what they observed and heard on their travels. In foreign lands they often had to procure guides so as to arrive at their destination. When *nuncii* of foreign rulers came to England, the English *nuncii* often served as guides as well as observers to ensure that these foreign *nuncii* did little "spying". After years of service the royal *nuncii* were provided with pensions and other sources of support including donations of land.

Beginning in John's reign (1199-1216) Ms. Hill found that there were about 15 royal *nuncii* but no *cokini*. By Edward I's reign (1272-1307) the number of *nuncii* was roughly the same but they were augmented by numerous *cokini*, numbering 41 in 1296-1297 when Edward was at war. Under Edward III (1327-1377) the number of *nuncii* remained about the same but occasionally there were as many as 50 *cokini*. In 1234 the wardrobe assumed the management and remuneration of *nuncii* and *cokini*, an arrangement that continued until 1342 when the exchequer supplanted the wardrobe. From May 1234 to October 1235 the wardrobe expenditures on messengers totalled 74 lb. 16s. 5d. By comparison, from July 1338 through November 1341 the expenditures totalled 452 lb. 6s. 5d.

In her treatment of the pertinent exchequer, chancery, and household records Ms. Hill stated that one of the most informative was the Wardrobe Book of William de Norwell (the keeper) for 12 July 1338 to 27 May 1340 when Edward III was engaged in the first phase of the Hundred Years' War in the Low Countries. The subsequent discussion that amplifies and revises some of Ms. Hill's conclusions, relies primarily on the copious information this record provides.³

Given the arduous diplomatic negotiations with Edward's Low Country and German allies and the necessity of frequent communication during campaigns, messengers were in great demand. Ms. Hill estimated that in this period Edward had somewhere between 11 and 21 *nuncii* in his service, that

³ When Ms. Hill used this record it was not published but now see Mary and Bryce Lyon, eds., *The Wardrobe Book of William de Norwell, 12 July 1338 to 27 May 1340*, Brussels, 1983. For the functions of the wardrobe see B. Lyon's introduction to this edition, pp. v-cxxiii, and J.H. Johnson, "The King's Wardrobe and Household," in J.F. Willard and W.A. Morris, eds., *The English Government at Work, 1327-1336*, Cambridge, Mass., 1940, I, 250-299.

is, those who were lesser members of the household and entitled to wages, expenses, clothes, shoes, equipment, and food. Norwell's Wardrobe Book identifies 16 of these *nuncii*. Under the rubric of *Incipiunt Robe et Calciatura* appear the names of all those in the household entitled to winter and spring clothes and shoes. Among them are the principal officials of the household as well as minor personnel such as squires, clerks, hunters, falconers, valets and the 16 *nuncii*.⁴ For the period 1338-1340 Ms. Hill's research in the exchequer records gave her a total of about 50 *cokini*. The Wardrobe Book has only a few references to *cokini* or *cursores*, most of whom were in the service of Edward's allies such as the duke of Guelders. An interesting exception is the courier Simon de Canterbury who was apparently held in high esteem by Edward's officials because he delivered messages on 18 different occasions to mostly important allies of Edward or to various English earls and prelates. His total remuneration was only 1 lb. 6s. 10d.⁵ Under the rubric *Incipiunt Nuncii* all names listed are termed *nuncii* including the clerks and other royal officials who bore messages and who often were empowered to enter into negotiations as envoys.

The Wardrobe Book is clear in its distinction between procurators (long-term representatives of Edward III at the papal court), envoys, and those who simply served as *nuncii*. For many reasons, political, diplomatic, and ecclesiastical, the English kings were in frequent contact with the popes. Traditionally the popes had legates in England who served as quasi-permanent representatives. The English kings had no such permanent representatives but would remunerate clerics close to the papal court to keep them informed of papal business. Sometimes they would also appoint procurators to reside for considerable times at the papal court. Because of Edward's claim to the French crown and the outbreak of hostilities, he did what he could to maintain favourable relations with the popes, who then had their court and residence in Avignon. The Wardrobe Book refers to envoys, procurators, and *nuncii* sent to Avignon. For serving as procurator at the papal court Master Andrew Sapiti received an annual fee. John de Ufford, king's

⁴ Wardrobe Book, p. 306: "*Nicholao de Uffeton, Johanni des Arches, Josepho de Faversham, Waltero de Colcestre, Fulconi de Hertwell, Thome Bulfot, Ade Mertlyn, Johanni de Waltham, Roberto de Wirsop, Johanni Lewer, Roberto de Londonia, Sampsoni Usenges, Theodorico de Durdraht, Willelmo Fox et Nicholao Maul nunciis regis cuilibet eorum 2 mr. pro robis suis de annis xii et xiii et 2s. 4d. pro calciatura sua de dimidio anno xii et 4s. 8d. pro toto anno xiii, 25 lb. 5s. Roberto Blawer nuncio regis pro robis et calciatura suis per idem tempus, 33s. 8d.*"

⁵ Wardrobe Book, p. 300: A payment of 18s. was made to "*Henrico Trygger et duobus sociis suis cursoribus missis cum rumoribus ad regem de Colonia de expedicione negociorum suorum.*" Another payment of 45s. was made to "*Nicholao Lumbard cursori de Lumbardia et duobus sociis suis missis in Franciam et alibi ad diversas gentes in negociis regis secretis.*" For the missions of Simon de Canterbury see pp. 275-282, 285, 288-289, 297.

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clerk, archdeacon of Ely, and professor of laws, received a yearly fee of 50 marcs for serving as procurator at the court of Rome for a year's time. By special royal concession he also received 50 marcs annually in addition to the fee. A marginal entry referring to John de Ufford states that the king has ordered the keeper of the wardrobe to pay John an additional 100 lb. as wages so that his remuneration will be commensurate with that of other procurators at the papal court.⁶ Nicolinus de Flisco and Master John Petri, professor of civil law, were appointed in November 1338 to serve as procurators at the court of Rome and to stay there on certain business entrusted to them. They were instructed to request that the king's well-wishers assist them.⁷

When Edward used an envoy for negotiations it is so noted as are the envoys of foreign princes and ecclesiastics. Some members of the household wore three hats. Primarily they served as clerks or higher officials, occasionally as messengers, and sometimes as envoys. Usually those empowered to serve as envoys came from the higher echelons of the household. John de Montgomery, household banneret, and John Wawayn, a royal clerk and canon of Darlington, were sent "*per regem et consilium suum ad partes transmarinas ad tractandum ibidem cum quibusdam personis nobilibus et potentibus et aliis de partibus illis et ad alligancias et federa vacinenda et quascumque personas pro guerra regis dominum Philippum de Valesiis.*" For 307 days of service John de Montgomery received 20s. daily, and John Wawayn, 1 marc, with their total remuneration coming to 511 lb. 13s. 4d. Later Montgomery was sent to negotiate with the dukes of Bavaria and Austria. Wawayn was sent on other negotiations in Germany. The costs were not inconsiderable, totalling 644 lb. 18s. 8d.⁸ John Charnels, a banneret, who also served Edward as a clerk, keeper of the great wardrobe, and deputy treasurer of the exchequer, was sent on arduous negotiations from Brabant to Zeeland, a trip that required use of 2 ships. He received 28 lb. for his labours. Robert Askeby, clerk of the chamber, was sent with a message from Brabant with powers to transact certain negotiations with Edward's allies and received

⁶ *Wardrobe Book*, pp. 301-445. In letters patent dated 12 January 1339 John de Ufford is empowered "to present letters from the king to the Pope and the cardinals of the church of Rome and to prosecute with these certain business already enjoined on him and to be enjoined by the king" (*Calendar of Patent Roels, 1338-1340*, London, 1897, p. 197). For Andreas Sapiti see J.P. Kirsch, "Andreas Sapiti, englischer Prokurator an der Kurie im 14 Jahrhundert," *Historische Jahrbuch*, XIV, 582 ff.

⁷ *Cal. Pat. Rol., 1338-1340*, p. 195.

⁸ *Wardrobe Book*, pp. 218-219. It is noted that Montgomery and Wawayn received 39 lb. to purchase arms and clothes for themselves and their retainers so as to maintain their proper state. For hiring clerks to draw up an agreement between Edward and Louis of Bavaria they received 9s. For retaining a military guard they received 21 lb. For the services of various Germans used in negotiations with the emperor and for expenses for their horses they received 50 lb. 13s. Finally, because they lost money in exchanging pounds sterling into florins of Florence, losing 4d. on each florin, they received 100 lb. as recompense.

7 lb. 10s. Theobald Mygger and a companion, both of the household, were sent to negotiate with some of Edward's allies. He went to Trier for talks with the archbishop and his companion went to Montfoort in Guelders to negotiate with the duke of Guelders. Their expenses were 18s. The household knight William Daubeny and Richard de Montgomery were sent to Flanders with powers to negotiate a peace "*inter ipsum regem et homines de Flandria*." And Henry de Langton, the king's clerk, was sent to Cologne with powers to negotiate certain urgent business.⁹

Those envoys carrying messages and empowered to negotiate on behalf of the king, were described as doing so "*pro negociis regis*," "*pro negociis secretis regis*," or "*pro negociis arduis regis*." If sent to negotiate with individuals of political and military importance such as the duke of Brabant or the emperor Louis of Bavaria, the negotiations obviously had political, military, diplomatic, or economic objectives. Often, however, members of the household were sent on missions simply "*pro negociis regis*." They bore messages empowering them to negotiate for military supplies, ships and other supplies to be provided by various officials in England such as sheriffs and collectors of customs. Essentially these were business or logistical missions. One such mission was that of Reginald de Cobham, banneret and chancery clerk, sent "*in negociis regis per aquam usque partes Selandie pro denariis per ipsum solutis pro lodmannagio usque dictas partes*." For this transaction he received 20s.¹⁰ At other times Edward sent household officials back to England with requests for troops or supplies. Quite obviously this was the reason for the trips made by Thomas de Badby, clerk of the pantry and buttery.¹¹

At times Edward used individuals from the Low Countries as envoys or messengers. For example, John de Gaunt, citizen of Ghent, was granted 1,000 lb. "*pro negociis arduis et secretis ipsius domini regis*."¹² Hanekin of Leuven, clerk of the duke of Brabant, received 18d. for bearing "*litteras regis sub privato sigillo*" from Brussels to Antwerp and returned during the night "*cum summa festinatione*."¹³ Jakemart de Mons received 4s. 6d. for delivering

⁹ These negotiations and expenses were recorded on pp. 221, 300-301 of the *Wardrobe Book. The Cal. Pat. Rol, 1338-1340* contains many cases of key officials negotiating for Edward. For example, on 4 January 1339 Edward appointed William de Montague, earl of Salisbury, Henry de Ferrars, the royal chamberlain, and Geoffrey le Scrope, chief justice of the king's bench, to treat for peace with Count Louis of Nevers of Flanders, with Bruges, Ghent, and Ypres, and with other Flemish towns (p. 377). There are other such cases on pp. 190, 194, 384, 398, 407.

¹⁰ *Wardrobe Book*, pp. 214, 221.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 229-230.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25, 456-457.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 278. Hanekin also received a gift of 4 lb. 10s. for writing "*diversas litteras et munimenta pro negociis regis*" (p. 240).

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letters to John de Beaumont of Hainaut, one of Edward's most valuable allies.¹⁴ Occasionally individuals from Rhenish Germany bore letters and negotiated for Edward. Heinrich Kemp from Cologne received 52 lb. 18s. 3d. "*super negociis regis secretis faciendis in Almannia in denariis eis liberatis per mercatores de Peruchia.*"¹⁵

Given the frequent, even daily communications with such as Jacob van Artevelde, the counts of Hainaut and Juliers, the duke of Guelders, the lord of Cuyck, the emperor Louis of Bavaria and numerous Rhenish potential allies, as well as the regular communications with officials of the exchequer and chancery, English notables, and officials located all about England, Edward's communication service had to be put on a kind of "war-footing." Twenty-seven officials of the royal establishment served as envoys and messengers. Impressed into service were some of the personnel of the household of Queen Philippa. Five *nuncii* serving Oliver de Ingham, seneschal of Gascony, maintained regular communication with Edward, delivering messages and returning to Gascony with royal replies.¹⁶ In addition there were the *nuncii* who served as messengers or envoys for foreign princes and ecclesiastics and who usually returned with replies from Edward. Louis of Bavaria had 7 such *nuncii* as did Jacob van Artevelde.

The point must now be made, which Ms. Hill did not, that the household staff of 16 *nuncii* was unequal to delivering the large number of messages and had to be reinforced not only by the royal officials who bore messages and negotiated but also by the extraordinary number of those impressed into delivering messages who were simply termed *nuncii*. It is impossible to ascertain the backgrounds of the majority of these 150 odd *nuncii*. Some are, however, noted as serving in other capacities in the household such as sumptermen and valets. Most had English names like Christopher de Beverley, Robert de Boston, William de Clapton, William Cook, John de Dunstaple, Richard de Elton, and John de Lincoln, called a citizen of London. None are noted as receiving clothing, shoes, food, or lodging. Where they lived and how they survived is largely unknown except for a few. Most did not carry enough messages to support them. Christopher de Beverley, for example, carried only one message, that to the constable of Bordeaux, receiving "*pro expensis suis*" 6s. 8d. John de Lincoln carried 2 messages, one

¹⁴ *Wardrobe Book*, p. 287. On 12 October 1338 Edward empowered his loyal ally Reginald, duke of Guelders and Zutphen and husband of Edward's sister Eleanor, to arrange a marriage between the son of Count Louis of Flanders and Edward's daughter Isabella. Reginald was also empowered to conclude an alliance with Count Louis (*Cal. Pat. Rol, 1338-1340*, p. 193).

¹⁵ *Wardrobe Book*, p. 441.

¹⁶ For example: "*Poncetto nuncio domini Oliveri de Ingham venienti ad regem cum literis dicti domini sui et redeunti cum literis regis pro expensis suis, 20s*" (*Ibid.*, p. 298). Peter de Blama was the chief messenger of Oliver de Ingham (*Ibid.*, pp. 255, 258, 280, 287, 290).

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"*sub magno sigillo*" to the earl of Arundel for which he received 10d., and the other to Robert de Morley, admiral of the northern fleet, for which he received 6s. Many messages were delivered to officials and notables in England but the majority had continental destinations. Henry Russel bore one message to Bruges and "*pro expensis suis eundo, morando, et redeundo*" received 54s. For taking letters to the duke of Guelders and the lord of Valkenburg, Hanekin Pierson received 4s. 6d.¹⁷ These and many other cases suggest that the household staff impressed a heterogeneous group of individuals from Edward's force in Brabant to augment the understaffed core of 16 *nuncii*. The busy wardrobe clerks had little time to identify these messengers and simply performed their primary function of recording the sums of money paid them.

The cadre of 16 *nuncii* generally delivered messages of greater import addressed to Edward's Low Country and Rhenish allies as well as to some of his principal officials in England. Except for exceptional cases when messages had to be delivered with the utmost swiftness, *nuncii* normally averaged about 5 kilometers an hour on horseback and seldom travelled more than 40 kilometers a day. Their journeys, often of considerable distance, took much time. The Wardrobe Book notes that Walter of Colchester made 34 trips between 12 July 1338 and 27 May 1340. Adam Merlin made 24, Simon de Canterbury 19, Joseph de Faversham 18, Sampson Usenges 16, Thomas Bulfot 15, William Fox 11, Fulcon de Hertwell 10, Robert de Wakefield 10, Henry de Corf 8, and John Lewer 7. The other *nuncii* averaged 5 or 6 trips.

The frequent trips of Walter de Colchester, mostly to important individuals, were sometimes of considerable distance. On 28 July 1338 Walter received 5s. "*pro expensis suis*" for carrying a message from Antwerp to John of Hainaut, lord of Beaumont, the loyal ally of Edward, and a brother of Count William of Hainaut. This trip, taking Walter to the southwest part of Hainaut, covered about 260 kilometers roundtrip. Assuming that he averaged about 40 kilometers daily and returned to Antwerp promptly, the trip took about a week. On 9 August Walter received 5s. for delivering another message from Antwerp to John of Hainaut. On 5 October he received 14s. for bearing a message from Antwerp with great haste to Count William of Hainaut at Mons, a distance of about 108 kilometers. On 16 October Walter received 4s. 6d. for taking messages "*sub magno sigillo*" to the bishop of Liège and the count of Namur, a distance of about 180 kilometers. On 31 October he delivered a message from Antwerp to the count of Hainaut; on 13 November he delivered letters from Antwerp to the duke of Brabant and the count of Virneburg (probably in the vicinity of Brussels); on 20 November he delivered letters of John Darcy, steward of the household, from Antwerp to the *bourgmestre* and captains of Bruges; on 26 November he carried letters destined for John de Stratford, archbishop of Canterbury and chancellor, to Richard de Bury, bishop of Durham, and Henry de Burghersh, bishop of Lincoln and treasurer

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 273, 286-287, 293, 296.

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of the exchequer, the three being then in France on negotiations. On 29 December he delivered messages from Antwerp to the lord of Cuyk and to William van Duivenvoorde, lord of Oosterhout, both being in eastern Brabant and allies of Edward.

In late January 1339, still in Antwerp, Walter made 2 trips. He made 2 in February, one of them to Jacob van Artevelde in Ghent. In March he made 4 trips, including 2 to the lord of Cuyk and one to the lord of Valkenburg. In April he made 4 trips, one of them to the archbishop of Cologne. He made only one trip in May but it was a lengthy one to take a message to Robert de Morley, admiral of the northern fleet. On 10 June he received 13s. 6d. for delivering one message with the greatest haste to William de la Pole, merchant-banker of Hull and baron of the exchequer, and another to Paul de Monte Florum the Italian financial agent of Edward, both men being in Bruges. Four days later, now located in Vilvoorde, he took a message with the greatest haste at night to Gerard le Heumer, king's herald, at Antwerp. Then back in Antwerp, he delivered 2 messages in July and 2 in August, one from Brussels to Bruges from Henry de Ferrars, banneret and chamberlain of the household, "*pro negociis domini regis*" to Jacob van Scotelaere, provost of Our Lady's at Bruges and an influential political figure there. During Edward's autumn campaign against Philip VI in the Cambrésis, Walter carried messages on two occasions to various Rhenish allies as well as to members of the royal council in England. Back in Antwerp in January 1340, Walter delivered letters to the bishop of Norwich and the earls of Northampton and Oxford as well as letters to the abbots of Bury St. Edmunds, St. Benedict of Hulme in Chester, and four other individuals. Returning with Edward from Antwerp to Westminster in February, Walter delivered 1 message in March, 1 in April, and 2 in May, one of which included commissions for procuring supplies in the counties of Bedford and Buckinghamshire. This is the last reference to Walter. For his 34 trips his total remuneration was 16 lb. 8s.¹⁸

During the 685 days covered by the Wardrobe Book, the cadre of 16 *nuncii* traveled on 188 missions, and the other 150 on 180. The total of 368 missions means that about every other day at least one document had to be drawn up by the royal clerks and delivered. Mostly these documents were issued under the privy seal but some under the great seal. When a message was addressed to only one individual this involved drawing up the original and then enrolling a copy on the Patent or Close Rolls so that there would be a copy in the royal records. A message addressed to a number of individuals such as officials of the chancery and exchequer, sheriffs and collectors of customs, ecclesiastics, and notables entailed drafting of multiple copies.¹⁹

¹⁸ For the trips and remuneration see *Ibid.*, pp. 271, 274-287, 292-295, 297, 299, 306, 354.

¹⁹ For the operations of the chancery see B. Wilkinson, *The Chancery Under Edward III*, Manchester, 1929, and his article in *The English Government at Work*, vol. I

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Frequently a messenger's pouch contained as many as 20 messages. Records from the exchequer and chancery indicate that messengers were also entrusted with delivery of money as well as royal jewelry and gold and silver plate to such royal creditors as bankers, merchants, and pawnbrokers.²⁰ If considerable sums were involved, armed guards generally accompanied the messengers.²¹

In addition to the messages carried by the busy envoys and *nuncii* of Edward, were the numerous messages received by him from his allies, officials, and lenders of money. A message to the duke of Brabant, for exemple, usually required a message from the duke to Edward. On and on went the exchange of messages. The *nuncii* and envoys of the Low Country and Rhenish allies received payment for their services as did those of Edward, but in addition Edward invariably rewarded them upon delivering a message with a *donum* paid by the wardrobe. The section entitled *Titulus Donorum* is filled with these *dona*. Perhaps Edward's *nuncii* were also rewarded by the recipients of messages, but on a less lavish scale. To curry favor with his allies and to hold his alliance together, Edward was extremely generous, not only with these *dona*, subsidies, *fiefs-rentes*, and other pecuniary favors but also with alms and other donations to churches, prelates, and religious orders in

²⁰ The messenger John Lewer delivered letters on one mission to the duke of Brabant, duke of Guelders, marquis of Juliers, John de Beaumont, Henry de Valkenburg, and to the "*capitaneis et scabinis villarum de Bruges, Ispre et Gandavi*" (*Wardrobe Book*, p. 288). The messenger Thomas Bulfoot delivered letters to 17 different prelates and officials in England (*Ibid.*, p. 291). Among the *Diplomatic Documents of the Exchequer* in the Public Record Office the pouches of some messengers are preserved. For Edward's financial transactions with bankers, merchants, and pawnbrokers see E.B. Fryde, "The Financial Resources of Edward III in the Netherlands," *Rev. Bel. de Phil. et d'Hist.*, XLV, 1967, 1142-1216, and *Studies in Medieval Trade and Finance*, London, 1983; C. Tihon, "Aperçus sur l'établissement des Lombards dans les Pays-Bas aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles." *Rev. Bel. de Phil. et d'Hist.*, XXXIX, 1961, 334-364; P. Rogghe, "Italianen te Gent in de XIVe Eeuw. Een merkwaardig Florentijnsch hostellers- en makelaarsgeslacht: De Gualterrotti," *Bijdragen voor de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, I, 1946, 197-226, and "Simon de Mirabello in Vlaanderen," *Appeltjes van Het Meetjesland*, IX, 1958, 1-52; J.E. Ziegler, "Edward III and Low Country Finances: 1338-1340, With Particular Emphasis on the Dominant Position of Brabant," *Rev. Bel. de Phil. et d'Hist.*, LXI, 1983, 802-817; E.S. Hunt, "A New Look at the Dealings of the Bardi and Peruzzi with Edward III," *Journal of Economic History*, L, 1990, 149-162. There is also much valuable information in J. de Sturler, *Les relations politiques et les échanges commerciaux entre le duché de Brabant et l'Angleterre au moyen âge*, Paris, 1936. Some of the loans of the Bardi and Peruzzi to Edward and their receipt of jewelry as collateral are recorded in the *Wardrobe Book*, pp. 59-61. These loans totaled 14,330 lb. 3s. 6d.

²¹ For a mission in Germany John Wawayn had a guard of "6 hominum suorum ad arma in comitiva sua existentium" for a total of 185 days (*Wardrobe Book*, p. 221).

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the Low Countries and the Rhineland.²²

Of the *dona* the following examples are typical. John Siflard, squire of the emperor Louis of Bavaria, received a gift of 54s. for delivering some letters to Edward. John Dammay, knight of John Infante Manuel of Spain, came to Edward "*cum litteris dicti domini sui*" and received a *donum* of 10 lb. Peter de Douny, messenger of Frederick II, king of Sicily (1272-1337), delivered letters and received a gift of 20s. Master Herman le Clerc, an astrologer, came to Edward at Antwerp from Germany with letters from various magnates and received 20 lb. The duke of Guelder's messenger Arnold received 20s. John of Vienne, messenger of the pope, received 4 lb. 10s. Hanekin, messenger of the archbishop of Mainz, received 22s. 6d. These individuals who both bore messages and served as envoys usually received more generous gifts. For example, Berthold, count of Griesbach and Neuffen, secretary of the emperor, negotiated with Edward and received a gift of 75 lb. 3s. Also negotiating for the emperor was Ulrich, prothonotary, who received 15 lb.²³ While in the Low Countries Edward communicated with over 50 foreign princes and prelates.

As would be expected, communications between Edward and his principal Low Country and Rhenish allies were the most frequent. Of these allies the most courted were the emperor Louis of Bavaria and the mercurial Jacob van Artevelde who as a *hooftman* (captain) had assumed control of Ghent's municipal government and the difficult task of maintaining some solidarity on political and economic matters among the fractious guilds. For awhile he was a kind of spokesman for all of Flanders. Edward and Louis of Bavaria exchanged 22 messages, most involving negotiations.²⁴ Of these messages Edward sent 15 and Louis of Bavaria, 7. The total cost of these

²² See B. Lyon, "The Fief-Rente in the Low Countries: An Evaluation," *Rev. Bel. de Phil. et d'Hist.*, XXXII, 1954, 422-465, *From Fief to Indenture: The Transition from Feudal to Non-Feudal Contract in Western Europe*, Cambridge, Mass., 1957, "What Were Edward III's Priorities: The Pleasures of Sports or Charity?" *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, XCII, 1997, 126-134, "The Dividends from War in the Low Countries (1338-1340)," in *Peasants and Townsmen in Medieval Europe: Studia in Honorem Adriaan Verhulst*, Ghent, 1995, pp. 693-705.

²³ *Wardrobe Book*, pp. 239-242, 247, 254, 256.

²⁴ For the relations of Edward and Louis of Bavaria see H.S. Lucas, *The Low Countries and the Hundred Years' War, 1326-1346*, Ann Arbor, 1929; F. Trautz, *Die König von England und das Reich, 1272-1377*, Heidelberg, 1961. For the trip of Edward to Coblenz in the fall of 1338 to negotiate with Louis of Bavaria, see R. Pauli, "Die Beziehungen König Eduards III von England zu Kaiser Ludwig IV in den Jahren 1338 und 1339," *Quellen und Erörterungen zur bayerischen und deutschen Geschichte*, XVII, 1858, 413-440. For a recent study on the first decade of the Hundred Years' War see J. Sumption, *The Hundred Years War, Trial by Battle*, Philadelphia, 1999.

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communications came to 132 lb. 15s. 1d.²⁵

Sometimes foreign envoys received rewards other than *dona*. In a section of the Wardrobe Book headed with the title of *Recepta Jocalium et Liberacio Eorundem*, the keeper of the wardrobe, William de Norwell, accounted for all the jewelry and gold and silver plate in his custody. He was also responsible for noting and describing the jewels and plate taken from the wardrobe to compensate bankers, merchants, and pawnbrokers who had loaned money to Edward, among them numerous Low Country and Italian merchant-bankers, and some Jewish pawnbrokers. To ingratiate himself with well-placed envoys of Louis of Bavaria he bestowed on them some of his gold and silver plate. On one occasion he gave Louis' secretary Count Berthold a decorated silver pitcher valued at 6 lb. On another occasion Berthold received a water pitcher decorated in gold and engraved with baboons and other figures valued at 6 lb. 13s. 4d. Gerlach, count of Nassau, who served as an envoy for Louis of Bavaria, received a cup and a pitcher decorated with the arms of England and France valued at 40 lb., and as a further reward for his labors an advance of 150 lb. Apparently he lost a horse while coming to Edward because Edward purchased one for 10 lb. and gave it to him.²⁶

Although the Wardrobe Book records ten written communications between Edward and Jacob van Artevelde, these were far outnumbered by the times Edward and Jacob met and negotiated in person. The distance between Ghent and Antwerp was short and Edward and his queen Philippa resided at Ghent from late January to late February 1340. After Edward's departure for England Philippa remained in Ghent where she lived in the abbey of St. Bavo. Here in March she gave birth to John of Gaunt. When Jacob sent messages to Edward or envoys for negotiations, he relied upon those close to him. His servant and serjeant, Jacob of Ghent, delivered letters to Edward who, at this time, was at Marcoing near the Cambrésis, and received a gift of 9s. Back in Antwerp Edward received a message borne by Jacob's valet and at the same time another delivered by a valet of Jan van Koekelaere, a prominent *échevin* of Bruges. On 17 September 1339 Jan van Artevelde, brother of Jacob, went to Edward at Anderlecht "*pro quibusdam negociis secretis dominum regem tangentibus*." He received a gift of 9 lb. On 4 November 1339 Jan received

²⁵ Information on the exchange of messages, expenses and *dona*, and missions of envoys is provided under the rubrics of *Incipiunt Necessaria*, *Titulus Donorum*, and *Incipiunt Nuncii*.

²⁶ *Wardrobe Book*, pp. 398-400, 432. Numerous officials of Louis of Bavaria received *dona* of jewelry and plate, among them, notaries, secretaries, the imperial commendator, etc. (*Ibid.*, p. 239). For a study of how jewels, silver spoons and goblets, and gold platters had a role in medieval diplomacy, economics, and military operations see K. Brush, "The Recepta Jocalium in the Wardrobe Book of William de Norwell, 12 July 1338 to 27 May 1340", *Journal of Medieval History*, X, 1984, 249-270.

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another 9 lb. for delivering letters from his brother to Edward at Antwerp. On another occasion Jacob's chaplain was sent with a message to Edward.²⁷

Edward III's expenses for communications during his campaign in the Low Countries were considerable. The exchequer financed some but the wardrobe made most of the payments to procurators at the Roman court, the numerous envoys, and the large number of *nuncii*. The total of the wardrobe's communication expenses come to 5,911 lb. 11s 7d. and are recorded under the following rubrics.²⁸

Incipiunt nuncii - 306 lb. 19d.

Robe et Calciatura - 26 lb. 18s. 8d.

Titulus Donorum - 715 lb. 10s. 7d.

Incipiunt Necessaria (sundry expenses) - 3,012 lb. 13s. 5d.

Titulus de Prestitiis Factis (imprest) - 1,379 lb. 10s. 9d.

Recepta de Scaccario (money paid by exchequer on behalf of wardrobe) - 418 lb. 2s. 10d.

Recepta Jocalium at Liberacio Eorundem - 52 lb. 13s. 4d.

The total figure for the wardrobe's communication expenses differs from the 452 lb. 6s. 5d. that Ms. Hill computed from July 1338 through November 1341, that is, for 41 months. But William de Norwell's Wardrobe Book indicates expenditures of 5,911 lb. 11s. 7d. for a period of only 23 months. The only way to explain this discrepancy in expenditures is to assume that Ms. Hill took only the expenses of *nuncii* from the total given at the end of this category of expenditures. Under *Incipiunt Nuncii* Norwell's Wardrobe Book shows total expenditures as 306 lb. 19d. for a period of 23 months. If Ms. Hill selected total expenditures only from those under *Incipiunt Nuncii* in the subsequent wardrobe books, this could explain the large discrepancy. As can be seen, I have calculated total expenditures for the *Incipiunt Nuncii* plus those given in 6 other categories.

Comparison of these expenses for *nuncii* and envoys with other expenditures recorded in the Wardrobe Book provides some perspective on the financial burdens of Edward while in the Low Countries. Distribution of alms and oblations cost 1,234 lb. 12s. 8d. Payments to fighters whose horses were killed came to 6,531 lb. 13s. 4d. Wages for bannerets, knights, squires, and men-at-arms totaled 93,916 lb. 17s. 4d.; wages for archers, 27,272 lb. 13d.; wages for ship captains and their crews, 5,797 lb. 11s. 6d. Transportation

²⁷ *Wardrobe Book*, pp. 260, 262-263, 268, 270, 297. For messages to Jacob see pp. 274-275, 278, 286, 297. For the role of Jacob van Artevelde in the politics of Ghent and Flanders and for his relations with Edward, see Lucas, *The Low Countries and the Hundred Years' War*; H. Van Werveke, *Jacques van Artevelde*, Brussels, 1943; P. Carson, *James Van Artevelde: The Man from Ghent*, Ghent, 1980; David Nicholas, *The Metamorphosis of a Medieval City: Ghent in the Age of the Arteveldes, 1302-1390*, Lincoln, 1987, and *The Van Arteveldes of Ghent: The Varieties of Vendetta and the Hero in History*, Ithaca, 1988.

²⁸ *Wardrobe Book*, pp. 2 ff., 211 ff., 301, 306, 398, 401-402, 415 ff.

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costs for returning some of Edward's force and their horses to England from Sluis came to 1,540 lb. 6s. 8d.²⁹ Except for the wages to bannerets, knights, squires, men-at-arms, and archers, the communication expenses were among some of the highest.

To explain the remuneration and wages of proctors, envoys, and *nuncii* is a challenge. Proctors at the Roman court generally received yearly fees plus compensation for their expenses, but there were only a few of them. In his meticulous study of the payment of English envoys in the period between 1327 and 1336, A. Larson concluded that envoys were paid according to a scale of wages that prevailed into the fifteenth century. Archbishops received 100s. daily; bishops, 66s. 8d.; abbots, 40s. or 30s.; knights, 40s. 20s. or 13s. 4d.; professors of civil law, 20s. or 13s. 4d.; lesser clerks, 6s. 8d; and notaries, 6s. 8d. or 3s. 4d. In addition there was remuneration for expenses incurred with transportation, guards, lodging, food, and sundry items.³⁰ In her study of royal messengers in the fourteenth century Ms. Hill found that the royal cadre of *nuncii* and *cursores* received daily wages of 3d. and 2d. while at court waiting to take messages. On missions away from court they were remunerated for their expenses. During the reign of Edward III the method of payment was altered, with *nuncii* and *cursores* receiving wages when both at court and out of court. With this change Ms. Hill concluded henceforth all remuneration was considered to be wages because the relevant records used the phrase "*pro vadiis et expensis*."³¹

The evidence in the Wardrobe Book would seem to contradict Ms. Hill's conclusion that all remuneration was in the form of wages. In the sections devoted to payment to *nuncii* they are always described as bearing letters for the king and being paid "*pro expensis suis*." This suggests that while in court the royal cadre of *nuncii* continued to receive daily wages but while on missions they received no wages but were remunerated for all the expenses involved. A short trip resulted in less remuneration than did a longer and more arduous one. Walter of Colchester's remuneration for his 34 trips usually differed for each trip. For his short trips he received for expenses 2s., 2s. 6d., or 3s. For more extensive trips he received 9s., 14s., 21s., and 28s. For one trip to deliver a message to the admiral of the northern fleet his expenses came to 40s. Some *nuncii* received as little as 6d. to cover their expenses. Also it must be reiterated that the 150 *nuncii* who were not of the royal cadre received no wages. In some cases where they were also minor servitors such as sumptermen and grooms they did receive wages while in court but how the others who served only as *nuncii* sustained themselves is a mystery.

Except for those *nuncii* of the royal cadre who received wages, no others did and yet with other personnel who served the king, it was quite different.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 204, 211, 309 ff., 362, 386, 392.

³⁰ *Eng. Hist. Rev.*, LIV, 1939, 406-407.

³¹ *The King's Messengers*, pp. 49-51.

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Masters and constables of ships received daily wages of 6d. and the sailors 3d. The royal falconers and hunters received 12d., the assistants of falconers 2d., and the keepers of hunting dogs 2d.³² Bannerets received 8s., knights 4s., and squires and men-at-arms 2s.³³ It would appear that those who received daily wages were regarded as performing daily tasks for the king whether they be falconers, hunters, sailors, or fighters. Apparently the 150 *nuncii* were only considered working for the king when they bore messages.

Given the obstacles to medieval travel - the poor roads, the slowness, the frequent movements of rulers, and the uncertain and shifting relations of states - quick and efficient communication was not and could not be expected. But the data in this Wardrobe Book indicates that Edward III and his officials took measures to provide serviceable communications during his long stay in the Low Countries. Care was taken to maintain amicable relations with Low Country and Rhenish lords so that Edward's envoys and messengers could pass through their lands in relative safety. Aware that the royal cadre of *nuncii* was unable to deliver the volume of messages made necessary by Edward's diplomatic efforts, by his military operations, and by the necessity of communicating regularly with officials in England, the wardrobe staff rapidly augmented the cadre of *nuncii* with the other odd 150 *nuncii*. Despite these efforts it is impossible to ascertain how often messages failed to arrive at their destinations or when delayed messages hindered military operations.

In the centuries that followed, communications remained largely what they were in the fourteenth century. There came some improvement in land and water transportation and eventually postal services were developed, but more rapid communication by way of the telegraph and telephone came only with the technological and transportation advances during the second half of the nineteenth century. Yet even these advances were not sufficient during wars. Communications were miserable during World War I. In combat zones the most reliable means of getting messages to commanders at the front was by carrier pigeon or by runners whose perilous trips often brought death or wounding with the result that messages were not delivered. With World War II came tremendous improvements in communication, but most of these are outmoded and replaced by technological marvels of the present day.

³² For the royal falconers, hunters, and sailors see B. Lyon, "The Infrastructure and Purpose of an English Medieval Fleet in the First Phase of the Hundred Years' War (1338-1340)," *Handelingen der Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent*, LI, 1997, 61-76, and "Coup d'oeil sur l'infrastructure de la chasse au moyen âge," *Le Moyen Age*, CIV, 1998, 211-226.

³³ *Wardrobe Book*, pp. 325 ff. See also A.E. Prince, "The Army and Navy," in *English Government at Work*, I, 332-393.