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for custody, were also normally kept in the privy seal office, which explains why Hoccleve devoted a whole section of his formulary to copies of such documents (ff. 174a–7b, 180a–8b). This view is corroborated by the fact that some of the letters here entered may be found in the originals in the Cottonian manuscripts, a duplication which suggests that the Cottonian documents are in parts the relics of the former privy seal archives.

III. COLLECTIONS OF DIPLOMATIC DOCUMENTS

Besides Hoccleve’s formulary, a small part of which only is devoted to the diplomatic correspondence, there may still be found in various libraries other manuscripts in which some clerks of the crown have copied documents with a view either to obtaining precedents and formulae for their own work, or to collecting information on a subject in which they were particularly interested; these compilations are numerous enough for the fourteenth and fifteenth century to supplement the too meagre information given by Chancery records, from the “Liber epistolaris Ricardi de Bury”, dating from Edward I and Edward II, to the beautiful volume compiled by Thomas Bekington, Henry VI’s secretary. But it is sometimes difficult to trace their author and to decide in which administrative office they were compiled.

Such, for instance, is a codex acquired by the John Ryland’s

1 The bull of Urban VI “Ad futuram rei memoriam,” issued at the petition of the English Government and condemning the alliance formed between Wenceslas and schismatic princes (April 2, 1383), f. 174a, is in original in Cleop. E II, f. 197; see Foed., IV, 168. Similarly, one of the letters written by Charles II of Navarre to Henry of Lancaster in 1354, after the murder of Charles of Spain (f. 147a), is also known by a contemporary copy in Calig. D III, f. 68; see R. Delachenal, “Premières négociations de Charles le Mauvais avec les Anglais”, in Bibl. de l’Ecole des Chartes, vol. LXVI (1900), pp. 273.

2 A good instance of this is the Harley MS. 431, in which are copied royal letters and papal bulls of the later part of the Schism, especially valuable for the Conciliar period; one of these letters, sent by Henry IV to Gregory XII on Nov. 12, 1408 (f. 47a), was also copied by Hoccleve in his formulary, f. 201b. On its contents, see Historical MSS. Commission, IVth Report, App. I, pp. 378–97.

3 Lambeth MS. 211. Published in two volumes of the Rolls Series under the title of The Official Correspondence of Thomas Bekington; it contains one letter of Richard II, below, no. 241.
library,\(^1\) which contains important documents of Edward III’s reign, covering roughly the period 1330–1360. These documents have been arranged by the copyist according to their subjects, with headings referring to various foreign countries, Germany, Flanders, Scotland, Brittany, France. The official who compiled this collection worked chiefly on the archives of both Chancery and Exchequer: the Treaty Rolls, the Patent Rolls, the Scots Documents, Diplomatic Documents and Chancery Miscellanea were largely used by him. But several other documents here transcribed cannot be found nowadays in the Record Office, which adds to the value of the collection. For instance, the section devoted to the alliances with German princes in 1338–40 (ff. 34b–8) consists of unpublished documents; is it too rash to think that they come from the now lost privy seal archives? The suggestion does not seem improbable, as two letters from Lewis of Bavaria, dated September 6 and 15, 1338, filed in this section, are also copied in Hoccleve’s formulary (f. 148b and 162 b), whose privy seal character is beyond any doubt. Similarly the section devoted to Brittany comprises not only the copy of the well-known treaties and agreements of 1356, but also a draft of a treaty between Edward III and Charles of Blois, dated Westminster, March 1, 1353. This unknown treaty, written in the form of a notarial instrument, was never ratified\(^2\); therefore, it never found its way to the Chancery and was probably kept by some less formal office, such as the privy seal. The same conclusion could be drawn from the important documents relating to France (ff. 55–64), where one finds: (a) the draft of a treaty of peace between England and France signed at Guines on April 6, 1354, after the long negotiations conducted by the cardinal of Boulogne; (b) instructions, obviously issued under the privy seal, given to the duke of Lancaster in October of the same year, when ambassadors of both sides were going to Avignon for the ratification of the treaty, where the negotiations broke down; (c) instructions given to Nicholas Lovaing, sent to the Black Prince after the battle of Poitiers, in December 1356; (d) five letters written by Innocent VI to the Prince at the same time; (e) the draft of the second treaty of London, concluded


\(^2\) “Quem tamen alligancia non tenuit (sic) nec fuerat ejecuta.”
by John of France on March 24, 1359, which was afterwards rejected by the Dauphin and never ratified.\footnote{The treaty of London was already known from a fourteenth-century copy in local French archives, and published by E. Cosneau, \textit{Les grands traités de la guerre de cent ans}, pp. 2–32. The importance of the discovery of an almost contemporary copy need not be emphasised.} It is natural to suppose that these treaties of Guines and London, drafted by notarial experts, were then authenticated by the privy seal; the King waited for their ratification before sending them to the Chancellor, but, as in both cases the negotiations broke down, the great seal was never affixed to them; and, had not an intelligent clerk transcribed them in his collection of diplomatic documents, they would have been lost for ever.\footnote{ These documents are now published by Dr. Bock in the \textit{Bulletin of the John Ryland's Library}, vol. XV (Jan. 1931), pp. 84–99.}

Next in order chronologically is a quite different collection of letters, which covers the later years of Edward III and the first years of Richard II, roughly the period 1370–90.\footnote{Cambridge University Library MS. \textit{Ms. Dd. 3}, 53. A long summary of its contents was published in the \textit{Catalogue of MSS. of Cambridge University Library}, vol. I, pp. 106–51. For the sake of convenience, I will hereafter call it \textit{C}.} Unlike the John Ryland’s MS., this Cambridge codex is not exclusively devoted to diplomatic documents. But, in other respects, it is a more consistent collection, as nearly all the letters entered in its folios are taken from the archives of the small seals.\footnote{After a few folios devoted to privy seal warrants directed to the Chancellor, ff. 5–8b, there are one or more folios missing; then ff. 9–12a are copied letters patent of the great seal, all styled “Rex etc. omnibus etc.” with the following closing formulae: “In euis etc.” or “T(este) meipso.” Again, in the next section, ff. 13a–14b, six letters of the great seal are mixed with warrants. But afterwards, all the documents are either privy seal or signet letters.} We have here a book of precedents compiled for the use of one or two clerks of the privy seal.\footnote{There are at least two handwritings. Hand A ends abruptly f. 14b, while B takes the pen on f. 15a and goes on to 59a. Then, after a few blank folios, A starts again on 63a finishing the letter interrupted at 14b and filling the last section (63a–94a).} All sorts of letters, similar to those copied by Hoccleve, but arranged with much less order, are entered in this book, letters patent, warrants, writs and letters close being hopelessly mixed. But the chief feature of the later sections of this MS. is the constant mixture of privy seal and signet documents; for instance, in the ff. 39–59, written by B, we see, amongst all...
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sorts of warrants devoid of any indication as to the sealing authority, two letters patent of the privy seal (ff. 40b and 45a), two signet letters (ff. 43a, 44b), a writ of the signet (f. 57a), and a letter of Edward III to John of Gaunt "donne souz notre prive seal en absence de notre signet" (f. 43a). Again, in the section ff. 63a-85b of A's handwriting, are entered warrants to various officials, including chancellor, treasurer, keeper of the wardrobe, keeper of the hanaper, steward of the household, treasurer of Calais, justices of the Common Bench, etc.; but a few letters are intermixed, and one writ directed to Alan Stokes, keeper of the privy wardrobe, is said to be "donne souz notre signet" (f. 79a). This suggests the existence of a close relationship between signet and privy seal, as the same clerk could get access to the archives of both offices.

As in Hoccleve's formulary, an important part of the Cambridge MS. is devoted to the King's diplomatic correspondence, which covers two sections; the first one (ff. 23-35b) contains documents in Latin, first petitions to the Pope and cardinals, then, after a few privy seal warrants (ff. 29a-30b), letters to various foreign princes. Most of these documents belong to Richard II's reign, although a few of them are a little older. Here again, as in the previous sections, there are references to both privy seal and signet. The last part of the manuscript, covering ff. 86a-94a, contains diplomatic letters in French, belonging mostly to the last years of Edward III; a few writs and even a letter patent have found

1 For instance a letter to "Treschere et tresamee cousine" inviting her to be present at the Earl of Cambridge's wedding with Isabella of Castille, f. 71b; another to "Tres chiere et bien amee", asking her to marry Thomas Trevet, knight of the chamber, f. 81b, etc.
2 For instance f. 26a, a letter from Edward III to Gregory XI, circa 1376, and ff. 32a-3b other letters to Raymund Beranger, great master of the Hospital, and to unnamed persons. A few letters have proved impossible to date; not knowing if they were issued by Edward or Richard, I did not include them in my collection: e.g., f. 24a, to the Pope, asking for the canonisation of Thomas de la Hale, a monk of Dover who had been slain by the French; f. 25a, to the Pope, commending J. de Seremeston, priest of Durham diocese; f. 26b, to the Pope, commending Robert Thunelby, the Pope's penitentiary.
3 Privy seal, f. 25b; below no. 17.—Signet, f. 23a, 24b, 25b, 27a and 28b; below, nos. 41, 14, 15, 11 and 33.
4 A letter to Robert II of Scotland, May 1373, announcing the appointment of ambassadors, namely Thomas Musgrave, knight, and John de Appleby, dean of St. Paul (see Exch. Various Accounts, Bde. 316, nos. 23 and 25), is copied twice, once in this section, f. 92b, another time in an earlier part of the MS., f. 56b.
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their way into this section, which seems to have been taken entirely out of privy seal archives.¹

There is no clue as to the authorship of this collection. But the date when it was compiled is easy to ascertain. Although one warrant gives inadvertently the style "Henricus" (ff. 29a), it is probable that the clerks who copied the documents were working during Richard II's reign, and as no letter seems posterior to 1388, it can be assumed that the MS. was written circa 1390. Almost all the writs are headed either "R., Rex, Roy", or "Richard", while, in many cases, the letter was actually issued by Edward III.²

The Cambridge MS. contributed over thirty letters to our collection. But the bulk of this volume is taken from another codex, preserved in Edinburgh University Library, which requires a detailed description.³ It is in three sections: ff. 27–80, 81–120, and 121–54. Chronologically, the middle section ff. 81–120 comes first, which is complete in itself: these forty folios, divided into five quires of eight folios each, were written throughout by a single hand, and its author finished it with an "Explicit" at the end of f. 120b. We first find (ff. 80a–91a) fifty-six signet letters in French, mostly directed to the keeper of the privy seal and ordering the dispatching of warrants for the issue of the great seal. None of them is dated, all the closing formulae having been left out, and the names of persons and places being often represented by initials only. But in comparing them with Chancery enrolments we can ascertain that these signet letters nearly all belong to the year 1387.⁴

¹ A letter to the King of Armenia, f. 93b (below, no. 66) and a writ to the treasurer of Calais, f. 89b, are said to be given under the privy seal. Another letter from Edward III is known, from other sources, to be issued under the same seal. See below, p. xxiii.

² A letter patent of the privy seal, by which the King promises to repay before Whitsun next, to his cousin Richard Earl of Arundel, a loan of 1,000 marcs sterling, is headed: "Richard etc. A toutz ceux qi cestes lettres verront." But the King asked John, Lord of Neville, steward of the Household, William Lord Latymer, chamberlain, John Knyvet, chancellor, Richard Lescrope, treasurer, and Nicholas Carew, keeper of the Privy Seal, to be pledges to his promise, and to seal the letter "ovesque le prive seal notre dit Sr le Roy come ses officers". Those officers were in charge in the period 1372–5.³

³ MS. Laing 351. See, for a short description, Cath. Borland, A Descriptive Catalogue of the Western MSS. . . . in Edinburgh University Library, pp. 269–70. It will hereafter be quoted under the abbreviation E.

⁴ Feb. 26, a writ for John Parker, f. 83a (C.P.R. III, 286); March 10, for Richard of Conyngton, f. 83b (ib., 298); March 26, for the bishop of Llandaf, f. 89b, (ib., 284); May 1, for William Tamworth, f. 84a (ib., 314); June 10,
This is particularly interesting as Professor Tout has noticed that warrants of the signet, i.e. signet letters directly sent to the Chancellor, after having been very numerous in the first years of Richard’s reign, ceased almost altogether by the end of 1386: it looks as though, after the condemnation of Michael de la Pole and the setting up of the baronial committee, administrative rules were once more stringently enforced, and that the King had to go through both signet and privy seal offices to make known his will to the Chancellor.

From f. 91 onwards, the character of the documents changes slightly. We still find a few letters to English officials (ff. 92–93), but the rest of the first section is exclusively a collection of diplomatic letters belonging to the last years of Edward III, and the early years of Richard II. Up to f. 96, they are in French, subsequently nearly all in Latin. Besides, the copyist was anxious not only to compile formulae of administrative documents, as shown by the titles he put before each letter, but also to collect fine examples of style; he did not hesitate to add to the authentic letters he could gather, a few literary exercises such as two imaginary letters issued in the name of “Pentesilia, roigne de Perse” and “Judith fille au noble roy Josue” (ff. 95b–6a). This, however, is exceptional; and all the other documents are authentic ones; we note, for instance, that a few letters are for Master John Rounholt of Thoren, f. 82a (ib., 315); June 12, for John Warde of Sussex, f. 84a (ib., 362); July 29, for John Faton, f. 87a (ib., 340); August 11, concerning the priory of Scarborough (C.F.R. X, 200). We can add f. 84b a letter of familiarity for Henry Bowet, which may be dated April 1387 (see below, no. 76 n.). One letter, issued at the petition of the King’s mother, must be prior to Aug. 1385 (f. 88a), while another, in favour of Thomas Blount, f. 86a, can be dated Feb. 1389 (C.P.R. IV, 10). All the Chancery writs here referred to are issued “by writ of privy seal”, which shows the normal procedure followed by the King in addressing the Chancellor, through the signet and the privy seal.

1 Chapters, V, 206; Maxwell Lyte, p. 116.
2 The earliest datable document is a letter from the grand master of the Hospital, announcing the taking by storm of Alexandria, 1365 (f. 114a); there are a few letters concerning the release of the duke of Bourbon in 1366, and others relating to the conference of Bruges of 1376.
3 The bulk of the documents belonging to Richard’s reign covers the period between 1385 and 1389.
4 We must note that two letters, ff. 98a and 100a, bear the heading Non emanavit which shows that, after having been drafted in the privy seal office, they were not accepted, or sent away; see below, nos. 88 and 57.
duplicated here and in the Cambridge MS., as shown by the following list:

1. E. 91a; C. 86a. Edward III to the archbishop of Ravenna and Rouen, papal mediators. The Oxford MS. Ashmolean 789 (f. 107b), a collection of documents compiled by the papal nuncios during the conferences of Bruges of 1374–7, gives the exact date (Sept. 28, 1376), and has a reference to the privy seal as the issuing authority. It has been printed from C. by J. Lemoine, Duguesclin à Jersey, in Revue Historique, vol. LXI (1896), pp. 59–60.

2. E. 94b; C. 87b. Edward III to William de Grandson.

3. E. 95a; C. 87a. Edward III to William Elmham, congratulating him on his conduct during the siege of Bayonne by the Bastard of Castille.

4. E. 109a; C. 32a. A letter of Edward III commending the bishop of Bangor and his other ambassadors to the Roman court, circa 1373.

5. E. 110a; C. 31b. Richard II to the towns of Stettin and Lübeck, 1385; see below no. 58.

6. E. 113a; C. 28b. The cardinal of Naples to Richard II, Genoa, April 1, 1386. The original is in Cotton. MS. Cleop. E II, f. 122, and has been published by Champollion-Figeac, Lettres des rois... II, 247.

7. E. 115b; C. 29a. Damian de Cataneis to the King, undated (probably 1387).

8. E. 116a; C. 28a. Wenceslas to Richard II, Prague, Dec. 20, 1389; see below, no. 99 n.

Thus the two compilers of the Edinburgh and Cambridge MSS.—for the handwritings are too widely different to allow us to attribute them to one author—were working on the same set of archives, and at about the same time, i.e. after the middle of Richard’s reign. Their identity, however, remains unknown. A letter copied in E. 99a, bears at its end, inscribed in a rectangle, the name of Michael

1 E. 119a contains also the copy of a letter to Richard II, from the cardinal of Todi, July 11, 1389, the original of which is in Cleop. E II, f. 141, and f. 120a; a letter from Courtenay to the archbishop of Ravenna, also in original in the same B.M. manuscript, f. 131b. For similar instances in Hoccleve’s formulary, see above, p. xvii.

2 E. 96b contains a letter of Edward III for a servant of the cardinal of Canterbury, Simon Langham, who died in 1376, but styled “Ricardus”: we have seen the same mistake made by C., above, p. xxi, n. 2.
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Sergeaux; but it is difficult to see in him either the author or the owner of the MS. For Sergeaux does not appear as King’s clerk before the first months of 1394, and if, later on, he was entrusted with many secretarial tasks, he had no connection with either privy seal or signet offices.

To this first collection of letters was soon added an even more important contribution: a few months after the first copyist had written his “Explicit”, another clerk got hold of his work, decided to continue it, and wrote what is now the last section of the MS. (ff. 121–154). But, unlike his predecessor, he restricted his work almost exclusively to the King’s diplomatic correspondence, and filed the documents more or less in chronological order, starting where the first clerk had stopped, i.e. at the end of 1389, and carrying his work up to the spring of 1393. This collection is the most valuable since, from f. 138 onwards, all the letters are dated not only by the day of the month, but also the regnal year. Indeed, were it not for some odd documents or marginal

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1 See later, no. 77.
2 He was sent to France as notarial expert in the peace negotiations (Feb. 26, 1394, J.R. 546, m. 22). In July 1395 he was entrusted, together with J. Barnet, R. Ronhale and R. Selby with the task of inquiring into the legitimacy of the grant of Aquitaine to Lancaster (Baldwin, The King’s Council, p. 505).
3 The division into quires is less regular than in the middle section. After a quire of 8 folios (one page now missing after f. 125), there are five other quires, comprising respectively 5, 4, 6, 10 and 2 folios.
4 Except ff. 125–7 where we find: (1) a few warrants of the privy seal, (2) three imaginary letters similar to those already found in the middle section, “Niobas, regne de Naby”, “Emelie, princesse d’Europe”, and “Philippa la beale”, (3) an extract of the Statute of 1382 against Lollardism (Stat. II, 25).
5 A few blank spaces were afterwards used by a later owner of the MS. for entering other documents, such as f. 137, a letter from the archbishop of Cologne to the duke of Bedford; f. 142, from the English Parliament to the French peers, Feb. 14, 1403; and f. 154, amongst other unfinished transcripts, a fragment of a French poem:

Apres ce que Alisaundre Dodosieur conquis
Et a force de son espee occist le roy Melchis
Floridas esmaria, si amesna Dauris,
Adonques s’en chivaucha li roi, leas, gaiez et joliz,
Voirs est que Hector fu prudhomme assis
Mais pour un iour soulem[en]t Porrus avoit le pris.

6 Two letters from Courtenay, archbishop of Canterbury, ff. 129 and 134 (below, nos. 111 n.); other letters from members of the council, ff. 132b, 138b (below, nos. 134 n., 142 n.); from E. Stafford (ff. 143 and 153b, below, nos. 164 n., 211 n.); from Lancaster, f. 135b (below, no. 116 n.).
notes which prove the private character of the collection, we should be tempted to see in it an official register, analogous to Chancery and Exchequer rolls, where clerks of the privy seal transcribed day by day the letters issued by their office and sent abroad to foreign courts. It is safer to suppose that this collection was made, for his private use, by an anonymous clerk of the privy seal.2

The latest section of the MS. is now placed at the beginning of the Codex, ff. 27–80, but it was originally compiled as a continuation of the last one.3 The same clerk filled the first folios, up to f. 50, and, as in the previous section, restricted his work almost exclusively to the diplomatic correspondence of the privy seal, entering his copies in chronological order, from the spring of 1393 to the end of 1395.4 The last thirty folios were kept in a more disorderly manner: various clerks worked on them, and filled them up with documents of a much more miscellaneous character: e.g. ff. 51–2, a few letters dating back to 1390; ff. 53–6, some interesting documents, issued for the most part by the cardinal of Boulogne during the French-English negotiations of 1353–4; ff. 61–6, a correspondence between Charles V of France and Edward III covering the years 1364–7;5 ff. 67–75, diplomatic letters for the years

1 Various Latin verses are entered in the margins:
   f. 135b: Principis obsta cero medicina paratur
       Cum mala per longas convaluer e moras.
   f. 136a: Ecce novem novas nonus sumpsit sibi nomen
       Nonum dans omen novo cap it ipse coronas.
   f. 146b: Cereus hic Christum designat sive columnpnam
       Que fuit Hebreis lux noctis et umbra diei.
   f. 154: De nite conceptum quem mater puerpara finxit
       Pater eum vendens liquefactum irsinxit (sic).

2 The privy seal is referred to in a warrant to the Chancellor (f. 125), in a warrant to the judge of Aquitaine (f. 128), and in a letter patent of familiarity (f. 143b). Several diplomatic letters are also known from other sources, to have been issued under the privy seal, ff. 128a, 130b, 146a, 148b (see below, nos. 123, 130, 142, 157, 169).

3 This section contains seven quires of 6, 12, 8, 6 and 6 folios respectively. The third quire, ff. 45–52, has two pages missing, one after f. 50, where an unfinished letter stops abruptly, and the other torn out after 51. There are two unnumbered pages after 66, but ff. 76 and 77 are missing.

4 A few documents are duplicated here and in the previous section, for instance, ff. 29a and 154a (nos. 180), ff. 31b and 152b (no. 182), ff. 50b and 146a (no. 157).

5 I published these documents in Le Moyen Age, vol. 29 (1928), pp. 264–81.
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1390-1. Many folios had been left blank by these clerks, and were partly filled later on, during the reign of Henry IV.\(^1\)

The principal author of the two last quoted sections of the Edinburgh MS. is unknown. That he was a clerk of the privy seal is beyond any doubt; not only do numerous letters mention this seal,\(^2\) but the copyist also entered some documents issued by Edmund Stafford, the keeper of the privy seal, all dealing with his preferment to the see of Exeter in 1395 (ff. 45-7). The only documents that were not either given under the privy seal, or kept in its office are: (a) a bull of Benedict XIII, issued shortly after his election, on September 17, 1394, and directed to the town of Florence: he promised therein to work for the union of the Church and was apparently trying to bring the Republic over to its side; (b) a letter of Florence to Boniface IX, sending him Benedict’s bull with some unsympathetic remarks; it must be supposed that the two documents were then forwarded to the King of England by Boniface, who thereby desired to convince Richard II of the bad faith of his rival (f. 36).

But if the author remains anonymous, various facts may help us to discover his identity; a fairly large proportion of the petitions copied here are issued in favour of John Prophet\(^3\); moreover, several letters bear at their end the signature: “J. Propheta” or “J. P.”.\(^4\) It would be wrong, however, to think that these are autograph signatures; a comparison with the numerous memoranda written by Prophet, which are still preserved in the P.R.O. or elsewhere,\(^5\) will be enough to discredit this suggestion. It

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\(^{1}\) e.g. a letter to the cardinal of Florence, f. 36a, another from the cardinal of Bari, f. 57, a few documents dating from 1398-1400, ff. 58-60, a petition to Innocent VII together with a letter to King of Aragon, ff. 71-2, and various other documents, ff. 78 and 80.

\(^{2}\) The privy seal is explicitly mentioned on f. 31a (below, no. 216), f. 50a (no. 208), f. 50b (no. 157), and f. 73 (no. 109); a few warrants are mixed with diplomatic letters, f. 30b, 32a, 49a, 51-2; but there are two signet letters, f. 67 (no. 211) and 73b (no. 121), and one great seal writ, in favour of the count of Foix, March 10, 1390, taken from the Gascon Rolls (see *Foed.*, VII, 644).

\(^{3}\) In the previous section, f. 146b (below, no. 155), and in this one, f. 27a (no. 115), f. 29a (no. 156), together with a petition of William Courtenay for the same clerk, f. 31b, and, on f. 36b, in a later handwriting, a document issued by Henry IV.

\(^{4}\) ff. 32b, 33a, 33b, 39a, 40a and 41b; see below, nos. 201, 194, 127, 200, 198 and 210.

\(^{5}\) Some of them were published in facsimile by Prof. Baldwin in his *King’s Council*.
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looks as if the writer of the MS. entered in his volume letters copied from the drafts kept in the privy seal office, drafts which might have been written and signed by Prophet. It is also possible that the compilation was done under his supervision and for his own use, as a book of precedents for the diplomatic correspondence for which he was probably responsible.1 For Prophet was one of the most active and influential clerks of the privy seal. He entered the office in March 1391 and, before the end of the following year, was promoted to be clerk of the council 2; among his duties were his continuous attendance at the council meetings of which he wrote reports; he had to see, afterwards, that the instructions there given were carried out and privy seal letters dispatched when necessary.

IV. NOTES ON THE DIPLOMATIC

The formulae used by the King's clerks in the wording of diplomatic letters do not differ much from those employed in other privy seal and signet letters; we need not, therefore, indulge in long explanations, as these matters have been exhaustively studied by M. Déprez in his Etudes de diplomatique anglaise.

According to the importance and purpose of the document, privy seal letters could be issued in different forms: we note in our collection (a) letters patent, (b) letters in the form of writs, (c) letters close.

We have already seen that letters patent of the privy seal, far from being "exceptional", as M. Déprez wrongly thought,3 were

1 In spite of the great historical value of the letters, the later section of the MS. was like the earlier one, primarily intended to provide the reader with precedents and formulae: we note, f. 44b, the following sentence: "Scribatur conservatoribus Rome sic", and the formula of address; f. 58, a few words, of a similar nature, but in English "To . . . (erased) . . . and to my cousin wise desiring your . . ."; f. 59b, the address of a letter from Henry IV to Reginald, duke of Jülich. The copyist, as in the previous part, also liked Latin verses; the first folio (f. 27) starts with this sentence: "Lingua loquax mater erroris est et eciam veritatis noverca." f. 39b: "Mulier amicta sola."

2 Prof. Tout has dealt with Prophet's career in his Chapters, V, 97. The first reference to this official as clerk of the council is in the Issue Roll for 1393 (I.R. 540, m. 20). But our collection has an earlier one, of October 1392, below, no. 155.

3 Etudes de diplomatique anglaise, pp. 47-51.