The present essay is an attempt to demonstrate the institutional nature of Chaucer's satire of the pardoner—to indicate that Chaucer's satire is not directed against false pardoners or against pardoners of any particular establishment, but against the state of institutional decay which made the existence of the pardoner possible. To this end the background of the pardoner will be discussed: his function in the Church, abuses of that function, and legal action to restrain those abuses. Following this, an examination of English collection systems will be made, and finally an application of the foregoing material to the noble ecclesiast of the Canterbury Tales.

I

The pardoner is unfortunately so celebrated in literature for the abuses with which he is found associated that his true function within the Church is almost entirely obscured. From the pages of Langland, Chaucer, and Wyclif one could conclude only that the pardoner is a singularly conscienceless salesman of pardons for sin. Yet however true such a conclusion may be in terms of actual practice, in terms of canon law it is completely untrue. Under the law which defined his duties and regulated his activities, the pardoner, or “questor” as he is officially called, had no power to forgive sin or to sell the indulgences he carried about with him. The truth would seem to be that our impressions of the pardoner are derived so completely from representations of his abuses that we are in danger of forgetting that they are abuses—that under canon law very few indeed of the pardoner’s actual practices were permitted.

It is necessary first of all to notice that indulgences, as they are called in ecclesiastical documents, or pardons in lay terminology, have nothing at all to do with the forgiveness of sin. Penance involves three acts: contrition, confession, and satisfaction. An indulgence is effective only in regard to the last of these, satisfaction; that is, it is effective in reducing or removing entirely the temporal punishment or “poena” which remains after the sacrament of confession and absolution has removed the moral guilt or “culpa.” This is made clear in a limiting clause contained in the indulgences themselves. The papal form letter “Si iuxta sententiam,” which was employed as a model for indulgences to be communicated by pardoners, provides that indulgences may be granted only to those who are contrite and have confessed their sins. This same phrase

1 Raymundus de Pennafort, Summa (Rome, 1603), p. 442.
Chaucer's Satire of the Pardoner is incorporated in so many English indulgences that it may be called general. It is to be found, for instance, in indulgences granted by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and by the Bishops of Winchester, Exeter, and Durham. That pardoners frequently if not usually absolved "a poena et a culpa" cannot be doubted, but such absolution was an abuse and occupies an important place in Clement V's catalogue of the abuses practiced by pardoners.

Nor was a pardoner privileged to sell the indulgences he carried with him. An indulgence, as has been said, is granted to one who is properly contrite and confessed. However, an indulgence is a special concession, and the Church may require evidence that such a concession is deserved. No indication seems to have been more acceptable in this respect than the act of alms-giving. Thus Innocent III at the Council of the Lateran (1215) reasserted the doctrine that the work of mercy is a means of laying up treasure in heaven and an act appropriate for the reception of an indulgence. At the same time he prescribed the form "Quoniam, ut ait Apostolus" as the text to be followed in eleemosynary indulgences throughout the Church. From this seems to have developed the more emphatic statement contained in the papal form letter "Si iuxta sententiam," and echoed, as elsewhere, in an indulgence of Archbishop Melton of York: "Give, therefore, alms that all worlds may be yours, for the giving of alms frees from death, purges sins, and leads the way to eternal life. As water extinguishes a raging fire, so does alms-giving resist sin."

Since the institutions—principally hospitals—for whose support

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4 Registrum Roberti Winchelsey, ed. Rose Graham, Canterbury and York Ser., LXXVI, 249.


7 The Register of Thomas de Brantyngham, Part I, ed. F. C. Hingeston-Randolph, Exeter Episcopal Registers, vi, 566.


9 "et aliqui ex ipsis ... a poena et a culpa ... absolvant: nos, abusus huiusmodi ... aboleri volentes," etc. Corpus Juris Canonici, ed. Aemilius Friedberg (Leipzig, 1922), II, 1190.)

10 Hagedorn, Chap. vi.

11 "Forma litterarum praedicatorum" (Mansi, Concilia, XXII, 1050). See also Nikolaus Paulus, "Die Formel: In remissionem peccatorum iniungimus," in Geschichte des Ablusses im Mittelalter (Paderborn, 1922-23), t, 120-131.

12 Tangl, p. 282.

eleemosynary indulgences were granted had an understandable interest in extending the indulgences so granted to the widest circle of beneficiaries, the pardoner became a generally indispensable means to indulgence publication. Yet it must not be forgotten that no matter how indispensable the pardoner's role was, it was in canon law a small and narrowly defined one. The pardoner as instituted was nothing more than a messenger or "nuntius" who communicated indulgences from the Pope or Bishop, who had the power to grant them, to the believer who had fulfilled the conditions necessary to receiving them. As Clement V at the Council of Vienne (1311-12) defined the function of pardoners: "Their sole concern is to communicate to the people the indulgences confided to them and to humbly request alms."  

II

It is not surprising that the pardoner refused to accept the limited position assigned him by canon law. 15 He was not interested in the moral aspects of his mission, but in its financial success or failure. 16 Consequently he used every device he knew to assure himself a large and open-handed audience.

The gathering of the audience was a simple matter. His letters contained instructions to the local clergy that he was to be admitted to their churches on Sundays and feastdays, and permitted to state his business "intra missarum solemnia," generally after the reading of the Gospel. 17 Should the local clergy prove recalcitrant, his letters not infrequently contained a provision empowering him to excommunicate anyone impeding the progress of his collections. 18

Once his eyes were met with the joyful spectacle of the people gathered together to hear the cause of his pious advent, the pardoner's emotions could scarcely be restrained. With tears streaming from his practiced eyes, he brought forth a multitude of indulgences and preached so moving a sermon on the powers they granted him for cleansing the soul spotted

14 "quum solum ipsis competat indulgentias sibi concessas insinuare populo, et caritativa postulare subsidia suppliciter ab eodem" (Corpus Juris Canonici, ii, 1190).
15 In the whole matter of canon law the authors are deeply indebted to the generous personal assistance of Professor Stephan G. Kuttner of Catholic University and to Nikolaus Paulus' thorough discussion of the canon law governing the pardoner, "Die Quästor en oder Almosensammler als Verkünder von Ablässen," in Geschichte des Ablasses, ii, 265-291.
16 "peccuniarum questui solum operam impudenter impedunt, et non profectum animarum querunt" (The Register of John de Grandisson, Part ii, ed. F. C. Hingeston-Randolph, Exeter Episcopal Registers, iv, 1178).
17 See below, n. 73.
18 Bullarium Romanum, iii, 768.
by sin that few could restrain themselves from giving what they had. Upon his numerous fortunate contributors the pardoner conferred sweeping indulgences, nor did he pause in his delivery to question their qualifications for receiving them. He absolved from any sin—perjury, homicide, and others. Legal distinctions were as nothing to him; he absolved "a poena et a culpa." The realms of the dead he likewise declared within his universal jurisdiction, for he could free relatives or friends of contributors from purgatory, or even from Hell.

But, alas! he had almost forgotten to mention his relics. Perhaps they were genuine relics, or perhaps, if he were a pardoner of the most abandoned sort, relics of obscure origin—cremated hands and feet, bones of beast or man—which gained in his mouth miraculous powers.

The happy mortal, he explained, who kissed these relics should never again feel pain in his teeth, his mouth, or his face.

19 "effusis lacrimarum profluviis, ad quas habent oculos eruditos... sic motive proponunt, tamque indulgentiarum numerositatem contra statutum generalis Concilii, & relaxationem peccaminum pollicentur, quod vix est aliquis, etiam ipsorum agnoscentes nequitias, qui se a subventione eorum valeat continere"—C. Moguntinum (Mansi, xxIII, 1102).

20 "benefactoribus locorum, quorum quaestores existint, remissionem plenariam pecatorum indulgeant" (this and following citations are derived from Clement V's catalogue of abuses practiced by pardoners: Corpus Juris Canonici, ii, 1190).

21 "indulgentias populo motu suo proprio de facto concedant."...

22 "a periiuriis, homicidiis et peccatis alis sibi confitentes absolvant"...

23 "et aliqui ex ipsis eos a poena et a culpa, (ut eorum verbis utamur,) absolvant"...

The direct effect of this false forgiveness of sin was an erroneous belief on the part of the victim that he was duly confessed and absolved. One of Berthold von Regensburg's numerous indictments of the pardoner reads: "di verderbest dem almehtigen gote ein michel teil selen. Swenne dA if stest unde vergibest einem alle die siinde die er ie gete Emmlichen und wil für baz niht mér büzezen"—Predigten, ed. Franz Pfeiffer and Joseph Strobl (Vienna, 1862, 1880), i, 117.

24 "animas tres vel plures parentum vel amicorum illorurn, qui eleemosynas eas conferunt, de purgatorio, (ut asserunt mendaciter), extrahant, et ad gaudia paradisi perducant" (Corpus Juris Canonici, ii, 1190).

25 "damnatis in inferno liberationem pro modica pecunia promittentes"—C. Bitterense (Mansi, xxIII, 693); "ab inferno, ubi nulla est redemption. Unde... contra iustitiam suam animam patris vel matris vel alicuius se pro certa pecunia extrahere dicunt"—"De Helmosinis Colligendis: Capitulum lxxxvii," Liber Regulae S. Spiritus, ed. A. Francesco la Cava (Milan, 1947), p. 199.

26 See discussion below, n. 51.

27 "luridis manibus seu pedibus crematorum" (Bullarium Romanum, iii, 389).

28 "Hi profanissimi, pro reliquisae saepe exponunt ossa profana hominum, seu brutorum, & miracula mentiuntur"—C. Moguntinum (Mansi, xxIII, 1102).

29 "Et cum forsitan ossa gallinae deferant secum dicunt: Quicunque illa obscuratus fuerit, in dentibus, ore vel fatie, nunquam dolorem sentiet" (Liber Regulae S. Spiritus, p. 199). The abuse of false relics is, however, the rarest of the pardoner's abuses; see discussion below, n. 51.
His address concluded, the pardoner solemnly gathered together his rings, brooches, coins, wheat, and animals, and with a sly smile departed in the direction of the nearest tavern.

These practices could not, of course, be carried on without awakening violent and widespread indignation within the Church. In 1215, at the Council of the Lateran, Innocent III promulgated the first general code for the control of pardoners. The canon “Cum ex eo,” whose language may be found echoed in canons several hundred years later, provided that no questor, to use the official title of the pardoner, might be admitted who did not possess papal or episcopal letters. Even if duly accredited, he was not to be permitted to preach but only to read what was contained in his letters, and this was limited to a simple form. Further, questors

30 “pro uno firmaculo, anulo vel adminus uno denario conferendo” (“Registrum Radulphi Baldock, etc.”, ed. R. C. Fowler, Canterbury and York Series, vii, 134).
31 “bladum a simplicibus extorqueant” (Liber Regulae S. Spiritus, p. 199).
32 “pecuniam, animalia, et cetera queque bona” (Register Grandisson, i, 444); “pecunia et alia bona” (Memorials of Beverley Minster: Chapter Act Book, Part i, ed. A. F. Leach, Surtees Soc., xcvi, 204).
33 “vitee sanctitatem exteius praetendentes... eleemosynas... postea in ebrietatis & luxuriae, in omni conspectu prodigliatere consumere non erubesceunt”—Synodus Exonensis (Mansi, xxiv, 829); “consument in commessionibus, ebrietate, ludis, & luxuriae”—C. Moguntinum (Mansi, xxviii, 1102). Examples could be multiplied. The proclivity of the pardoner for the tavern seems to have been one of his best known characteristics.
34 “Eleemosynarum quoque questores... admissi, nisi apostolicas vel diocesani episcopi litteras veras exhibeant, prohibemus”—C. Lateranense, iv (Mansi, xxii, 1050).
35 “Et tunc, praeter id quod in ipsis continebitur litteris, nihil populo proponere permittantur” (idem). The effect of this provision was to deprive every eleemosynary questor of the right to preach. Abuses in preaching were by no means limited to lay pardoners (see Paulus, ii, 289), and we have found no basis for J. M. Manly’s assertion that “friars and others specially found and declared fit” were permitted to preach eleemosynary indulgences (Some New Light on Chaucer [New York, 1926], p. 129). On the contrary, friars, or more properly hospital brothers engaged in collections, are necessarily included because collections for hospitals were presumed to be carried on by members of the order operating the hospital, but that any exception from this rule was made in their favor does not appear. The much used papal form letter “Si iuxta sententiam” specifically prohibits brothers from preaching except as provided in the Lateran Council. This form letter states that “friars and others specially found and declared fit” were permitted to preach eleemosynary indulgences (Some New Light on Chaucer [New York, 1926], p. 129). On the contrary, friars, or more properly hospital brothers engaged in collections, are necessarily included because collections for hospitals were presumed to be carried on by members of the order operating the hospital, but that any exception from this rule was made in their favor does not appear.
must amend their lives—they must be discreet and cease living in taverns.\(^{37}\)

The second major step against the abuses of pardoners was taken in 1267 by Clement IV in the decretal "Sedis Apostolicae." This pronouncement by Clement stripped the questor of two important privileges often granted him in his letters of authorization: the power to demand shelter and food from the local clergy, and the power to command the local clergy to summon the people to hear his commission expounded.\(^{38}\)

The third and perhaps most important piece of legislation was the "Abusionibus" of Clement V, promulgated at the Council of Vienne (1311–12). This canon reaffirmed all of the provisions of the Lateran Council and added two new provisions, important because for the first time legal jurisdiction over the questor was clearly defined. The diocesan bishops were empowered to examine the credentials of questors before they were granted the freedom of their dioceses, and to punish them for any unpermitted actions, no matter what immunities they might previously have enjoyed.\(^{39}\)

Such was the law of the pardoner in England in Chaucer’s day. The *Regimen Animarum*, a contemporary English handbook for parish priests, gives the following summary of the legislation of Innocent III, Clement IV, and Clement V:

Quid iuris de questoribus qui discurrunt per ecclesias cum litteris remissionum et predicant abusiones? Dic quod illi questores vacantes commissationibus et ebrietatibus non debent admirto nisi exhibeant litteras apostolicas vel litteras episcopi diocesani, et sic preter id quod in ipsis litteris continetur nihil proponere populo permittur. Forma eorum communis est: "Quoniam, ut ait Apostolus," etc. Item debent esse modesti et discreti, nec in tabernis et aliis locis incongruis hospitari debent, nec inutili aut sumptuosas facere expensas, nec habitum false religionis portare. Extravagantibus, De Penitenciis et Remissionibus, "Cum ex eo." Et addit Clemens IIII in quadam decreta provulgata in curia que sic incipit,

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\(^{36}\) "Forma litterarum praedicatorum," which begins, "Quoniam (ut ait Apostolus) omnes stabimus ante tribunal Christi" (Mansi, xxII, 1049–50).

\(^{37}\) "Qui autem ad quaerendas eleemosynas destinantur, modesti sint & discreti, nec in tabernis aut locis aliis incongruis hospitentur" (idem).

\(^{38}\) Bullarium Romanum, iii, 767–768.

\(^{39}\) Corpus Juris Canonici, ii, 1190. On the technical aspects of this canon, see Paulus, ii, 284–285.
“Sedis Apostolice,” ubi statuitur quod prelati, rectores, et alii clerici curati non tenentur eos recipere in hospitiis nec eis in necessariis providere, etiam cuuiuscumque religionis sint aut conditionis, nec tenentur facere convocationem populi ad sermones vel exhortationes eorum, etiam si de tali convocatione mentio fiat in litteris eorum, quia Papa revocat; et si propter hoc alia sententia excommunicationis vel interdicti promulgatur, irrita est et inanis. Et dicit Papa Clemens Quintus de istis quod questores eleemosinarum non debent ab aliquo admitter nisi exhibuerint litteras episcopi diocesani, nec licet eis populo predicare nec aliiud exponere quam quod in litteris continentur predictis; et debent episcopi diocesani diligenter examinare litteras apostolicas, ne quicquam fraudis committi valeant per easdem ante quem questores admittantur. Et quia aliqui questores multiplicit deceptione animarum concedunt populo indulgentias motu proprio; de facto cum votis dispensant: a perjuriis, homicidiis, et peccatis aliis confitentes absolvunt; mala ablata et incerta, data sibi aliqua pecunie quantitate, remittunt; tertiam vel quartam partem de penitentiis inuinctis relaxant; animas parentum vel amicorum illorum qui eleemosinas eis conferunt de purgatorio, ut asserunt mendaciter, extrahunt et ad gaudia paradisi perducunt; benefactoribus locorum quorum questores existunt remissionem plenariam peccatorum de facto indulgent; et aliqui ex istis eos a pena et a culpa absolvunt. Dominus Papa volens huiusmodi abusus abolere per quos vilescit ecclesiastica censura et auctoritas clavium ecclesie deducitur in contemptum, expresse revocat omnia et singula privilegia si que sunt premissa vel eorum aliquo sunt in aliquid locis, ordinibus, vel personis questorum huiusmodi quo cumque concessa, ne ipsorum pretextu sit eis materia quam ad premissa talia auctoritate apostolica uterius favendi. Qui autem deinceps in premissis vel in aliquo premissorum delinquint, vel aliis suis privilegiis abusi fuerint, per episcopos locorum puniuntur, privilegio quo cumque nonobstante.

40 “De Questoribus,” Regimen Animirum (Harley 2272), f. 9b et seq. The MS. is dated 1343. Through the kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum, we are enabled to publish in its entirety this valuable summary by an English manualist of the law governing the pardoner in Chaucer’s own time. The section has appeared only in brief extracts in Owst’s Preaching in Med. England, Chapt. iii. At ll. 24–26, “questores . . . diocesani,” the text varies from that of the “Abusionibus” (Corpus Juris Canonici, ii, 1190) in its insistence on episcopal letters. We have somewhat modernized and corrected the text.
These three pronouncements answered for Chaucer’s time the question, “Quid iuris de questoribus?” The pardoner must bear papal or episcopal letters; he must be examined and licensed by the Bishop. If he is permitted to enter the churches of the diocese, he is forbidden to do more than read his letters and collect contributions. If he errs in his practices or in his mode of life, he is to be punished by the Bishop. This was the simple code governing the pardoner.

Enforcement, however, was a very different matter. Churches and bridges were built, the poor fed, the sick healed, all on the proceeds of indulgences. If those proceeds failed, construction of the church stopped, the care of the sick ceased. There was always a temptation on the part of the regular clergy who operated the great hospitals to avoid the regulations that their collectors be brothers “idonei et bone conversationis” and to employ less worthy but more productive brothers. There was likewise pressure to farm out collection rights to groups of professional questors who were willing to pay a good round sum for making unrestricted use of the indulgences granted the hospital.

On the part of the parish clergy also there existed an equally pressing and perhaps equally understandable temptation—to have for their own needs a part of the vast collections drawn from their own parishioners, who might normally be expected to contribute to the support of the parish and the parish priest. It was a painful experience for the parish

41 To the authority of the Regimen Animarum on this point, one may add that of Wyclif. In the Tractatus de Blasphemia—ed. M. H. Dziewicki (London, 1893), p. 272—he discusses the law of the pardoner and its non-enforcement, noting the “Cum ex eo” and “Abusionibus.” The less important “Sedis Apostolicae,” however, he does not mention.

42 See letter addressed to collector for fabric of Beverley Minster asking him to turn in his collections immediately, “Quum magister operis ecclesiae nostrae pecunia hiis diebus indigeat vehementer” (Chapter Act Book, i, 281).

43 “in hospitali S. Antonii Viennensis diocesae jaceat magna multitudo languencium, cecorum, claudorum, aridorum, et aliorum variis morborum generibus laborancium, spectaculum graciam de supernis, quorum corpora et membra sunt de diversis infirmitatibus graviter deformata, ad quorum vitae sustentacionem prope dicti hospitalis non suppetunt facultates, nisi devocio Christi fidelium ad illud per elemosinarum largicionem manus porrexerit adjutrices” (The Register of William of Wykeham, Part II, ed. T. F. Kirby, Hampshire Record Soc., xiii, 107).

44 “Si iuxta sententiam” (Tangl, p. 282).

45 See Innocent III’s complaint against the Knights of St. John that illiterate lay brothers were being used for collections: “fratres Hospitalis sancti Joannis laici et illiterati” (Patrologia Latina, cccxiv, 425).

46 “Quia inverecundi quaestores turpissimos suos quaestus ad firmam emunt”—“Articuli... editi per universitatem Oxon.,” Concilia Magnae Britanniae, ed. David Wilkins (London, 1737), ii, 365; “Nec praedicatio alicujus provinciae eis, vel quibusdam alis, committatur ad firmam”—C. Parisiensis (Mansi, xxii, 821).
priest to see the pardoner collect in a day more than he received in months.\textsuperscript{47}

Thus the pardoner became to the Church a vice within itself, a vice which even the strongest measures failed somehow to eradicate. An infinity of church councils might inveigh against his practices,\textsuperscript{48} universal suspensions of licenses might be made,\textsuperscript{49} requirements that collectors be actual brothers of good reputation emphatically stated,\textsuperscript{50} yet aside from a very real limitation upon his most spectacular abuse, that of false relics,\textsuperscript{51} the professional collector everywhere continued with little change his indestructible existence.

III

In 1308, the Chapter of St. John of Beverley began construction of the nave of its new minster, having completed the shrine\textsuperscript{52} of the Saint to whose miraculous offices were attributed the victory of Athelstan at

\textsuperscript{47} Attempts on the part of the parish clergy to squeeze from the pardoner a part of his receipts seem to have been very general. Typical is the formulary "Querelam gravem," which states, "iidem presbiteri quandam partem elemosinarum pauperum exigunt impudenter" (Tangl, p. 267). Almost all English licenses direct the local clergy to release the collection to the pardoner "absque diminutione qualibet."

\textsuperscript{48} See Paulus, \textit{ii}, 266–287.


\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Jean XXII: Lettres Communes}, n. 49814.

\textsuperscript{51} The carrying of false relics seems to have been the most effectively controlled of all the pardoners' abuses. Genuine relics might legally be carried by the pardoners if the diocesan bishop's permission were obtained (C. Parisiense [1213]: Mansi, xxII, 821; \textit{Cilium Oculi Sacerdotis}, cited by G. R. Owst, \textit{Preaching in Medieval England} [Cambridge, 1926], p. 109, n. 1), but the sale of such relics was forbidden by the Lateran Council of 1215, and the prohibition, at least in so far as pardoners were concerned, was apparently observed. Traffic in false relics seems also to have been very infrequent. Although one may find the standard abuses of pardoners repeated over and over again, the abuse of false relics does not appear among them. There is no mention of it in any of the manuals which treat of the pardoners, and it is noticed in only a few church councils: C. Moguntinum (1261); C. Lugdunense (1274); C. Trevirense (1310) (Mansi, xxIII, 1102; xxIV, 131; xxV, 269). The relative infrequency of the practice of employing false relics may perhaps be attributed to a considerably sterner attitude toward this abuse. Thus the Synod of Exeter (1287) provides—without mentioning pardoners—that anyone causing false relics to be venerated be treated as a heretic: "tanquam haereticos censemus graviter puniendos" (Mansi, xxIV, 830). Only the hardiest of adventurers seem to have been willing to take this risk (for an example of such a group, see \textit{Bullarium Romanum}, \textit{iii}, 389).

\textsuperscript{52} The shrine seems to have been built between 1302 and 1308, and major work upon the nave to have been undertaken immediately after the completion of the shrine (\textit{Chapter Act Book}, 1, \textit{xxIII}, xciv–xcv).
Brunanburh and later that of Henry V at Agincourt. The beginning of the new fabric was signalized by the discharge of the former chief collector, John de Fitling, and the appointment of a new collector or questor, Elyas de Lumby. Thus we are afforded the rather rare opportunity of observing the setting-up and operation of a system for the procurement and publication of indulgences.

On 18 December 1308 a contract was drawn up between Elyas de Lumby and the Chapter. In exchange for his privileges of collection in the Province of York and diocese of Lincoln, Elyas promised to post a bond of £20 per year as security for his estimated collections, and to remit any amounts received above this sum, deducting only expenses for himself, his horse, his servant, and a robe “with tabard.” His duties are worth noting. In addition to collecting, he is to:

1. Procure licenses and indulgences from neighboring Bishops and other prelates.
2. Revoke all appointments of questors previously made.
3. Arrest and prosecute all false questors illegally collecting in the name of the Chapter.
4. Substitute questors, with power to revoke the substitution.

Elyas, as “nuntius specialis,” apparently enjoyed a position of considerable authority and responsibility.

At the outset of his career Elyas de Lumby faced real difficulties. As the Chapter’s chief agent he was expected to maintain or expand the area within which the Chapter collected, and further, to obtain indulgences, the lifeblood of collections. St. John of Beverley had long enjoyed a privileged position in the Province of York, but had never penetrated farther into the Province of Canterbury than the diocese of

63 *Chapter Act Book*, 1, xxii; *Acta SS Bolland.*, xv, 166.
64 Ibid., 1, 229–231.
65 If one catalogues from the fragmentary existing records the institutions, all possessing indulgences, which were collecting in the Province of York, Beverley Minster’s main area of operations, within the same years (1302–28) the results are impressive. With the exception of St. Mary Roncesvalles, all of the major hospitals are represented—St. Anthony of Vienne (The Register of William Greenfield, Part 1, ed. William Brown, Surtees Soc., cxxiv, 107), St. James of Altopascio (ibid., 1, 131), Holy Ghost in Saxia of Rome (ibid., 1, 107). With them are the major churches of York: the metropolitan church of St. Peter (ibid., 1, 4) and the collegiate church of St. Wilfrid (Memorials SS. Peter and Wilfrid, Pt. II, ed. J. T. Fowler, Surtees Soc., lxxviii, 82). Somewhat earlier will be found the inevitable bridge and burned monastery.
66 Beverley Minster had received indulgences from Archbishops John le Romeyn for repair of the existing fabric (Chapter Act Book, 1, 2) and Thomas Corbridge for the shrine (ibid., 1, 3). In collections Chapter questors were allowed to state their business immediately after the privileged metropolitan church of St. Peter, a not inconsiderable advantage (ibid., II, 72, in Surtees Soc., cviii).
Lincoln.\textsuperscript{67} The Chapter would have liked also to extend its collections into Norwich and Ely,\textsuperscript{68} but any such attempt was rendered difficult at this time by a sudden catastrophe which had overtaken all collections in the Province of Canterbury. Archbishop Robert Winchelsey, moved by continuing reports of abuses practiced by pardoners within his province, had revoked the licenses of all questors.\textsuperscript{69} Even Lincoln was now closed to the Chapter.

To remedy this situation, Elyas set forth on 12 September 1309 with letters to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Lincoln.\textsuperscript{60} Apparently his mission was at least partially successful, for although he seems to have received no indulgences,\textsuperscript{61} collections in Lincoln were later resumed.\textsuperscript{62}

From what records of Beverley Minster are available, Elyas de Lumby's success and lack of success as "nuntius specialis" would appear to have been typical. He retained for the Chapter the freedom of the dioceses of York, Durham, Carlisle, and Lincoln, but was unable, as were those who followed him, to make any substantial headway in the Province of Canterbury.\textsuperscript{63} Despite earnest efforts, St. John of Beverley remained a local collection system.

\textsuperscript{67} Elyas de Lumby's letter of appointment indicates that collections were customarily made in Lincoln (ibid., I, 229). The letter which he carried to the Bishop of Lincoln thanks the Bishop for past favors (ibid., I, 253).

\textsuperscript{68} On 7 June 1314 simultaneous letters were addressed to the Bishops of Norwich and Ely (ibid., I, 317). The Bishop of Norwich replied that his diocese was already filled with collectors for recently burned religious buildings within the diocese, and with collectors whom he felt obliged to admit "propter mandata superiorum nostrorum." He could admit no more "absque gravi scandalo" (ibid., I, 318). The implication would seem to be clear that by this date (1314) Beverley Minster had still to obtain any further privileges within the Province of Canterbury. There is no indication that Beverley Minster was ever licensed to collect in the dioceses of Norwich and Ely.

\textsuperscript{69} 11 April, 1309 (Reg. Baldock, etc., pp. 103–105).

\textsuperscript{60} Chapter Act Book, I, 252–253.

\textsuperscript{61} Elyas's letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury reads: "Vestram paternitatem in Domino requirimus et rogamus quatinus Elye de Lumby, clerico . . . dignemini indulgere, et super hujusmodi indulgentia vestras litteras concedere munere caritatis" (Chapter Act Book, I, 252). This request is principally for permission to collect, but an appeal for the grant of indulgences would seem to be at least implied. If one compares this letter with John of Gaunt's frank request to "ercevesques et evesques" to grant collectors of St. Mary Roncesvalles "pardon et indulgence, et sur ce de granter lettres de mandement a voz obedienters," the parallelism of phrase will be apparent (Register, I, 45, Camden Soc., 3rd Ser. xx).

\textsuperscript{62} On 23 Dec. 1312 three questors were appointed for Lincoln (Chapter Act Book, I, 299). Collections were probably resumed considerably earlier than this record indicates.

\textsuperscript{63} Beverley Minster tried again in 1314, relying on the influence of William de Melton, in 1309 Provost of Beverley and in 1316 elected Archbishop of York (DNB). He is requested to give aid to John de Lincoln, a successor Elyas de Lumby, who has "quaedam negotia
Once the areas into which collectors were permitted to go were established, the operation of the system itself was simple and effective. Over each main area was set a chief collector, as John of Stork for the Province of York, and Richard Monechant for the diocese of Lincoln. Since it was difficult if not impossible to cover all this territory personally, each chief collector possessed the right of substitution. Thus John of Stork delegated to subordinates the Deanery of Craven and the Archdeaconry of Nottingham. These substituted questors were responsible not only to the Chapter, but to the chief collector who appointed them and set the period of their employment.

If the system of appointments and sub-appointments seems to have been simple enough, the actual sending out of questors was a considerably more complicated matter and involved a double problem. Questors must be duly accredited, so that they might be received without incident; they must also be so rigidly controlled that the funds collected could be obtained from them with as little difficulty as possible. Beverley Minster met both of these problems in what one presumes to have been a traditional fashion.

The licensing of the questor as it appears in the Chapter records was almost as complicated a procedure as the arming of Sir Thopas. First came copies of the all-important indulgences, sealed by the Chapter to guarantee their validity, and later counter-sealed by the examining
Bishop. With his indulgences the questor carried a letter showing his appointment by the Chapter, the purpose of which was to provide a check upon his identity. After the Bishop had verified the authenticity of the questor and his documents, he would likewise furnish the questor with a sealed letter. This letter was his license to collect within the diocese. It instructed Archdeacons, their Officials, and the lesser clergy to receive him, stated the time at which he might be heard, admonished the local clergy to abstain from making deductions from his collection, and limited the validity of the license to a specific period of time. Lastly, the questor might also be provided with a royal writ of protection.

The complicated problem of licensing questors was, however, but a routine matter compared to the problem of assuring the return of the monies and goods collected. The Chapter’s solution of this problem, again doubtless a customary one, shows nevertheless considerable energy and ingenuity. Before receiving his credentials, the questor was required to sign a bond guaranteeing payment of the estimated total of his collections. Should he fail, he and all his possessions were declared

70 The seal of the diocesan Bishop was the regular guarantee to the clergy of the diocese that the pardoners’ credentials were genuine. The inspection of all papal letters was required of the diocesan Bishop by the Council of Vienne; see Reg. Anim (p. 257, above), ll. 28–29. These he seems to have sealed, just as he did indulgences which he himself granted to institutions within his own diocese (Reg. Brantyngham, i, 489, 350). The Archbishop also examined and sealed papal letters (Reg. Baldoch, i, 211).

71 Walter de Stamford and Alexander de Derby likewise received from the Chapter letters of appointment or “procuratoria” (“Facta fuerunt duo procuratoria unum Waltero et aliud Alexandro”—Chapter Act Book, i, 317). Questors were examined by the Bishop or his Official to make sure that the questor bearing the letter of appointment was the questor named in it (Reg. Greenfield, i, 131–132).

72 “nostras Literas, vero sigillo nostro munitas, nostrique anuli impressione in dorso sigillii consignatas” (Reg. Brantyngham, i, 320). The practical application of the provision for the episcopal inspection of pardoners’ credentials imposed by the Council of Vienne seems to have been that no questor could be admitted without letters from the diocesan Bishop. See Reg. Anim. (p. 257, above), ll. 24–26, and n. 40.

73 “Proviso quod hujusmodi negotium expediatur sicut decet statim post Evangelium lectum” (Chapter Act Book, ii, 72–73). The more usual form is the vaguer “intra missarum solemnia.” On this point see Owst, Preaching, Appendix i.

74 “absque diminutione qualibet fideliter persolvant et restituant” (Chapter Act Book, ii, 72). This provision is of extremely general occurrence.

75 “presentibus post triennium minime valituris” (Reg. Wickwane, p. 22). Most licenses ran for two or three years.

76 The text of this letter of protection does not appear in the Chapter Act Book, but it is specified as one of Richard Monechant’s credentials in a letter of revocation (ii, 27).

77 “juramento corporali praestito obligari dicto Capitulo in viginti libris sterlingorum” (Chapter Act Book, i, 230). This bond appears to have been used generally, for the summons addressed to Robert de Pagula, also a questor for Beverly Minster, reminds him to render his accounts “prout juramento corporali a te praestito es astrictus” (i, 320).
forfeit, and all legal defenses against the Chapter's claim were waived. Finally, his credentials were handed over to him—for which he likewise signed a bond—and he was sent forth upon his duties with the reminder that the Masters of the Works expected him to appear for an accounting at no very distant date, and should he fail to appear, he would be haled into court. He also possessed the salutary knowledge that the Chapter's intelligence system functioned faultlessly—that should he offer part or all of the contributions he gathered to Venus and Bacchus, the patron saints of pardoneurs, he would be greeted by letters from the Chapter in the hands of new questors relieving him of his position. This misfortune had befallen numerous gentlemen of his acquaintance.

At first glance the Chapter's administration of its system of collections seems ideal. There were no complaints concerning the behavior of its questors and little diversion of funds. However, the very rigidity of the control exercised indicates the very real danger which lay in the nature of the men Beverley Minster employed. All these questors bear the title “clericus,” so that one supposes that they were in some capacity members of the Chapter. This was not in fact true. In the few instances in which the formula “clericus” is expanded, we find “Patrick Lili of Beverley,” “Thomas Gamell, citizen of Lincoln,” “John of Bristol and John of Stork, citizens of Beverley.”

The best example, however, of the kind of connection which existed between these men and the Chapter is to be found in the records of a brother collector, John de Lincoln. In 1306, John de Lincoln was collector for the fabric of St. Peter of York. During the same year he was also collector in York for the Hospitals of St. Anthony of Vienne and

78 “in admissione praefati officii liberata per indenturam” (I, 298).
79 See citation of Robert de Pagula (I, 320).
80 I, 298.
81 John de Fitling, Elyas de Lumby, John de Bristol, Robert de Pagula, Richard Mone-chant, Thomas Gamell, and Thomas Bradele all were called to a sudden accounting or relieved of their positions at one time or another.
82 The term “clericus” would here seem to indicate that the questor was literate, had received a church education, and the first tonsure. For discussion of whole problem, see Karl Krebs, “Der Bedeutungswandel von M.E. Clerk,” Bonner Studien zur englischen Philologie, xxxi (1933).
83 Chapter Act Book, I, 369.
84 Ibid., 11, 28. He is the only collector to whose name “clericus” is not affixed. However, in other cases the title sometimes is used and sometimes not.
85 “burgenses Beverlaci” (II, 79).
86 Reg. Greenfield, 1, 4–5. John de Lincoln seems always to have enjoyed a certain distinction. He is here named as collector for the whole Province of York, a position he could hardly be expected to fill without substituting additional questors.
87 Ibid., 1, 107.
of the Holy Ghost in Saxia of Rome. It is more than likely that he did not attempt to fill all these offices in person but substituted questors according to the usual custom. By November, 1312, John de Lincoln had changed positions and was employed by Beverley Minster as its collector in York. In 1313 he was the Chapter's collector in Lincoln and in 1314, special agent for the Chapter at Canterbury. His name then disappears. Had we comparable records of other churches in Lincoln and York, we should very likely find it again.

In general it may be said that the collectors within the Beverley Minster system of whom we have any record were with rare exceptions professional collectors, hired and fired at the will of the institution employing them, moving about within an area whose inhabitants they knew well enough to make their professional talents appreciated. Something more may be added to the portrait of the professional collector if we notice that the office of collector seems to have run in families, and that the name of the most constantly employed questor, "Monechant" or "Moanchant," suggests a family vocation of professional collecting.

If we turn from the local collection systems, of which Beverley Minster is the best example, to a consideration of the international systems of the great hospitals—St. Anthony of Vienne, St. James of Altopascio, Holy Ghost in Saxia of Rome, St. Mary Roncesvalles, etc.—we note an immediate difference. The materials previously examined concern the relationship between the institution and its collectors and are contained in the records of the institution itself; the records in which the major hospitals appear are all contained in the registers of English Bishops and deal in one way or another with the imposition of external controls, those of the Pope, Archbishop, or Bishop upon questors for these hospitals. One immediate explanation for this fact is that so far as the present writers are aware, no body of information about the internal affairs of these hospitals comparable to that furnished by Beverley

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88 Idem. He obtained appointment to all of these offices on the same day, 21 May 1306.
89 Chapter Act Book, I, 298. He must have been employed at some time preceding November 1312, for the record cited is of his being relieved of his duties by Elyas de Lumby. He was soon re-employed.
90 Ibid., I, 307.
91 Ibid., I, 323–324. See also above, n. 63.
92 There are mentions of "dominus Willelmus de Humbleton, capellanus" (ibid., I, 280); "Joanne de Langtoft, capellanus" (I, 298); and "Sir J. Smith" (I, 299). These names occur scarcely more than once each.
93 Reg. Greenfield, I, 107; Memorials SS. Peter and Wilfrid, II, 83.
94 Chapter Act Book, I, xcvi. See here editor's remarks on professional collecting.
Chaucer's Satire of the Pardoner

Another less obvious but possibly equally valid explanation is that the local institutions gave less occasion to the appearance of their names in Bishops' registers than did the foreign hospitals. The reason for this disparity may perhaps be indicated by following a single collector for a foreign hospital as he goes about his duties.

On 19 June 1310 Brother Bonaventura of the Hospital of Altopascio in Tuscany, together with a fellow collector, presented his credentials to the Official of the Archbishop of York as was customary. Apparently all was in order, for Brother Bonaventura possessed letters from Leonard Patrasso, Cardinal-bishop of Albano, and fulfilled, along with his honest friend, the standard provision contained in his letters that the bearers be "confratres . . . vel nuncii idonei et honesti." However, under questioning, Brother Bonaventura turned out to be no brother at all but merely an ordinary collector or "procurator substitutus," while his companion, who is referred to only as "ille Anglicus," was recognized by the Official as a "quaestuarius notorius," or in more Chaucerian language, a pardoner known from Berwick into Ware.

96 The recently published Liber Regulae S. Spiritus (Milan, 1947) is an excellent addition to our knowledge of these hospitals, but the rule of such a hospital unfortunately sheds little light on the actual procedures used in the gatherings of alms. See "De Helymosinis Colligendis," pp. 198-199.

97 Reg. Greenfield, I, 131-132. Some light is shed by this incident on the usual procedure in matters concerning the pardoner. The questors here had come first to the Archbishop, who sent them to his Official, because he remembered "quod in domo archiepiscopi non consueverunt negocia hujusmodi expediri set ad officialem omnia mittebantur."

98 Reg. Greenfield, I. 132. This would appear to be one of the commonly used paraphrases of the formulary "Si iuxta sententiam," which provides that collectors be brothers of the Hospital "idonei et bone conversationis" or their nuntii "dummodo non sint questuarii" (Tangl, p. 281). Archbishop John le Romeyn of York in 1287 uses approximately the language of the letters here mentioned in licensing "fratres hospitalis predicti [Sancti Jacobi de Alto Passu] vel eorum nuncii" (Reg. Romeyn, 1, 7).

99 "qui videtur procurator substitutus cum in substitutione nominetur Bonaventura alumnus et confrater hospitalis" (Reg. Greenfield, I, 131). The sense of "cum" would here appear to be "whereas."

100 "Preterea ille Anglicus qui venit cum eo questuarius est notorius, cui in privilegiis committi negotium prohibitur" (ibid., I, 132). The Official refused to permit him to collect because his letters forbade their use by questors of evil repute or "questuarii"; see n. 98, above, and Paulus: "Es sollte damit verhindert werden, dass die religiösen Genossenschaften
Since Anglicus has about him some of the lurid atmosphere of Chaucer's pardoner and like him represents a foreign hospital, let us for a moment accept him as a type figure and observe through him the actions of the class he represents.\textsuperscript{101}

Anglicus, one may assume, was not usually so unfortunate as at York.\textsuperscript{102} A contribution of five marks to the fabric of the cathedral,\textsuperscript{103} or to the Bishop's charity,\textsuperscript{104} would customarily assure his receipt of a letter of recommendation to the clergy of the diocese.\textsuperscript{108} He would then proceed on his way arriving in due course at the curia of one of the rural archdeaconries into which the diocese was divided. The Archdeacon himself would not be in residence—he was characteristically an absentee—but in his stead his Official would be carrying on to the best of his ability the Archdeacon's numerous duties—in particular that of guardian of the morals of all within his jurisdiction.\textsuperscript{106}

The Archdeacon's Official took a kindly interest in pardoners, whether licensed or not. If the pardoner had no license—that is, if he were simply in business for himself—the Official was likely to consider this so suspicious a circumstance as to require a deposit of perhaps fifteen marks to re-establish his shaken faith in the pardoner. When this deposit had been duly made, however, the pardoner received the freedom of

\textsuperscript{101} The following examples do not actually concern Anglicus himself. The entry noticed above is the only one mentioning him. All examples used, however, are from records of pardoners for foreign hospitals. Anglicus is employed as a type figure.

\textsuperscript{102} The rather stern attitude of the Official in this case may in some measure be due to the privileges which the questors were demanding, nothing less than the convocation of all the clergy in the diocese: "Petunt insuper convocacionem cleri vestri per totam vestram diocesim quam sine precepto vestro eciam si nuncius esset idoneus concedere non auderem" (Reg. Greenfield, i, 132).

\textsuperscript{103} "Emanavit Litera pro Nunciis negociorum Sancti Antonii, Vienensis Dyocesis, per annum duratura; et dabunt Fabrice Exoniensi v marcas" (The Regisler of Walter de Stapeldon, ed. F. C. Hingeston-Randolph, Exeter Episcopal Registers, ii, 398). Italics are editor's.

\textsuperscript{104} "Apud Lawyttone . . . emanarunt quatuor Mandata Archidiaconis et eorum Officialibus, pro subsidio Domus Sancti Antonii; et dabit dicti subsidii Collector ad elemosinam Domini v marcas" (ibid., ii, 326). See also the license of John de Wintone to collect in the diocese for the same Hospital: "et dabit singulis annis vj marcas" (idem).

\textsuperscript{106} On the customary nature of this contribution, Paulus observes: "Es war nämlich vielfach üblich, dass die Sammler sowohl den Bischöfen als den Pfarrgeistlichen eine Abgabe entrichteten" (Geschichte des Ablasses, ii, 290). This, of course, does not mean that all Bishops adopted this procedure.

\textsuperscript{108} "per se et suos inquirant in parochia in qua officium visitationis impendunt in rebus vel personis aliquid fuerit corrigendum et excessus si quos ibidem invenerint vel tunc vel in proximo capitulo corrigitur"—W. Lyndwood, Provinciale (London, 1529), f. 5a.
archdeaconry,¹⁰⁷ the freedom to enter any church he chose and explain his fictitious business. In addition he received a certain amount of security, for if the Bishop heard of his activities, he would address his complaint to the Archdeacon or his Official. Records of arrests are not often to be met with.¹⁰⁸

The authorized pardoner was also welcome at the Archdeacon’s curia. If the fraudulent pardoner found it necessary to make a deposit, the authorized found it no less necessary to purchase a license,¹⁰⁹ a license the Official had not the slightest legal right to grant.¹¹⁰ But the Official never demanded something for nothing. Almost all the practices pardoners found most effective in their profession, particularly preaching and absolving, were illegal,¹¹¹ and the Official, through the right of inspection within the archdeaconry, possessed the power to summon the pardoner before the court over which he himself presided and to hand him over to the Bishop’s court.¹¹²

Anglicus was of course in no position to contest the Official’s right to license him. With his new license and without another substantial sum he departed in search of his prey—an audience. This was obtainable with the least difficulty in the church of the parish priest where Anglicus’s original license provided that he was to be heard at the regular sermon time.¹¹³ When Anglicus arrived, the parish priest might not neces-

¹⁰⁷ See Bishop Grandisson’s citation of Richard de Chuddele, Official of the Archdeacon of Cornwall, for receiving a deposit of fifteen marks sterling “per quosdam ficticos elemosinarum quaestores Sancti Sepulchri” (Reg. Grandisson, I, 426–427).

¹⁰⁸ Bishops seem to have understood the practices of Archdeacons, but rarely to have become explicit as did Bishop Grandisson. Complaints were directed to Archdeacons of the regions in which the Bishop knew pardoners to be operating without his license, “in... jurisdictionis nostrae elusionem manifestam” (“The Register of Richard de Kellawe,” ed. T. D. Hardy, Rerum Brit. Med. Aev. Scrip., Pt. LXII, iii, 326). It is inconceivable that the Bishop should know of the activities of these pardoners while the Official, whose profitable business it was to seek out irregularities, did not know of their presence in his own archdeaconry.

¹⁰⁹ “Ceterum mirantes audivimus quod quidam inferiores ministri, ut de majoribus ad presens ob eorum reverenciam taceamus, a predictis fratribus et nunciis [Sancti Antonii] pecuniam, pro concedenda eis licencia proponendi necogia pauperum hospitalis predicti et ad opus ipsorum elemosinas colligendi in locis in quibus idem ministri potestatem habent et jurisdiccionem exercent, extorquere nituntur” (Reg. Romeyn, I, 9). The class of “inferiores ministri” was headed by the Archdeacon’s Official. The “maiores ministri” here glanced at would appear rather clearly to be the Archdeacons themselves.

¹¹⁰ The diocesan Bishop alone was entrusted with examination and licensing. See above, notes 70, 72.

¹¹¹ See above, pp. 253–255.

¹¹² The Archdeacon is the minister of justice regularly appealed to for the apprehension of pardoners (see above, n. 108; Chapter Act Book, II, 27–28). The Council of Vienne, however, placed punishment in the hands of the Bishop: “per episcopos locorum puniuntur” (Regimen Animarum, I. 53).

¹¹³ See above, n. 73.
sarily be happy to see him. In fact, memories of the past Sunday when he had seen the weekly offering disappear into the pockets of pardoners for the Hospital of St. Anthony, the monks of Humberston, and the bridge at Stamford were very likely still with him. If the priest were large and robust, or possessed parishioners of that description, Anglicus might find himself cast out of Holy Church in a very real sense. It happened to the best licensed of pardoners, so frequently, in fact, that there was a special Papal letter for complaints against just such offenses.

In this predicament there were two general courses open to Anglicus. In concert with brother collectors he could so harass the unfortunate priest as to drive him into submission, or he could take a course more conducive to future friendly relations and divide the proceeds of his mission with the priest. “For the parisch prest and the pardonere parten the siluer” is Langland’s description of this elevating sight.

Now at last he mounted the pulpit and with lips raised to heaven and tongue sweeping the earth for praise and coins began his sermon. What his sermon, or more properly his exhortation, was we can gather from a number of contemporary accounts. He came from a hospital so large, as he described it, that all the hospitals in the world put together could easily have been contained within it. He granted more years of pardon than come before doomsday. He confessed and absolved;

114 In York, in the year 1287, for instance, existing records indicate that the following institutions were licensed to collect:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of License</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19 Mar. 1286-87</td>
<td>St. Anthony of Vienne</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 July 1286</td>
<td>Humberston Abbey</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Nov. 1286</td>
<td>St. Cuthbert, Durham</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Oct. 1287</td>
<td>St. James of Altopascio</td>
<td>2 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Apr. 1286</td>
<td>Bridge at Stamford</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Sept. 1286</td>
<td>Cathedral Whithorn</td>
<td>7 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

115 “Querelam gravem” (Tangl, p. 267).
117 Piers Plowman, B. Prologue 81. See also Wyclif: “he (the pardoner) schal be sped & rescveyed of curatis for to have part of pat he getip” (The English Works of Wyclif Hitherto Unprinted, ed. F. D. Matthew, EETS, O.S., lxxiv, 154).
118 “Manducemus ergo ut evangelizemus, non evangelizemus et (ut?) manducemus, sicut predicatores conducti, qui ponunt in celum os suum cum bene predicant, set lingua eorum transivit in terra cum laudem vel lucrum captant” (Liber Regulae S. Spiritus, p. 198). The figure is from Psalm 72, v. 9 (Vulgate).
119 “et non est ita largum et magnum hospitale in toto mundo . . . si omnes hospitales domus essent in unum congregate”—John Bromyarde, Summa Praedicantium (Basle, 1484), ii, Tit. “Mors,” cxxxix.
120 “grauntynge mo yeris of pardon than come before domes day” (Wyclif, Unprinted English Works, p. 154).
extracted souls from purgatory and from Hell for a modest sum.  
And in conclusion, with great benevolence, he blessed them all.

And so from the Bishop’s charity to the grasping fingers of the impoverished parish priest, the trail of corruption spread by the pardoner for St. James of Altopascio, St. Anthony, St. Mary Roncesvalles, or any of the distant hospitals was complete—corruption not easily removed, for Crime and Justice had become inseparable companions. This prostitution of office by which control became assistance we can find expressed in the sober words of Bishop Grandisson addressed to the Archdeacons’ Officials: “Supported by your wrongful favor and assistance, pardorners travel at will through our diocese seducing the simple and untaught people, and so much as in them lies, deceive their very souls.”

The laxity of control which the foreign hospitals exerted on their questors, the opportunities this laxity afforded for the spreading of corruption within the legal framework of the Church, these, it would appear, were the causes for the unenviable reputation which collectors for the foreign hospitals enjoyed. Beverley Minster, operating within four close-lying dioceses, could rule its questors with an iron hand; the foreign hospitals were not in a position to take such action. To seize authorized questors practicing diversion of funds, or fraudulent questors possessing no authorization, they found it necessary to appeal to the Pope or to the Archbishop, who must in turn take action through his subordinates. Thus we find John XXII sending nuntii to Sweden and Norway to suppress fraudulent collectors purporting to be of the Hospital of the Holy Ghost in Rome, and to Poland and Germany to prosecute fraudulent questors of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem. The same situation is to be found much intensified in the records of St. Anthony of Vienne.

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121 See discussion above, p. 254.
122 Cilium Oculi Sacerdotis (f. 41') reads: “Nec benedictionibus eorum populus se prostrat.” Owst, Preaching, p. 109, n. 2.
123 “Sicque prefati questores, per nostram Diocesim pervagantes, vestris opere et auxilio et favore suffulti indebito, populum simplicem et indocum seducunt et, quantum in eis est, fallunt spiritualiter et deceptant” (Reg. Grandisson, II, 1179).
124 Paulus, II, 287.
126 St. Anthony seems to have had the most far-flung collection system of all. Consequently one finds Papal letters of complaint in her behalf against the operation of false pardorners (Les Registres d’Innocent IV, n. 1411); against refusal to admit collectors to...
Those foreign hospitals which like St. Mary Roncesvalles had branches in England found themselves in little better plight. Control of these hospitals from outside of England was difficult if not impossible, and their wealth, to which charitable collections were no small contributing factor, made them tempting political prizes.127 This weakness in the hospital rule seems to have been reflected in a weakened rule of the hospital’s questors. The complaints of local English clergy against the unrestrained actions of questors for the Knights of St. John “in Anglia” necessitated the issuance of a Bull by Urban V.128 Wulfran, Bishop of Bethlehem, was so disturbed by his inability to suppress the abuses of collectors for the “Fratres Bethleemitani de Anglia” that he ordered them suspended, and, if they refused to acknowledge the suspension, apprehended and their goods divided.129

127 The Hospital of St. Mary Roncevall at Charing Cross was a daughter house of St. Mary Roncesvalles in the Pyrenees. From its foundation (ca. 1230) to the Black Death (1348-49) it was the prosperous central house of the Order in the British Isles. The effects, however, of disease, war, and schism made themselves felt, and in 1382, 1390, 1393, 1396, king’s clerks were Wardens of the Hospital. It is interesting to note that the king’s clerk was not forgetful of collections. False questors were suppressed and a sealed chest containing “bulls, apostolic instruments, and other muniments” was seized: James Galloway, Historical Sketches of Old Charing (London, 1914), pp. 1-27, 41; Manly, New Light, pp. 125-126. The history of the “naturalization” of this alien house corresponds rather closely to that of another, the London house of St. Anthony of Vienne (Clay, Mediaeval Hospitals, pp. 208-209).

128 See above, n. 116.

129 “Historical Papers and Letters from the Northern Registers,” ed. J. Raine, Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores, Pt. LXI, 187-188. According to Riant, the “fratres Bethleemitani,” an order of hospitalers, arose at the beginning of the thirteenth century. (Etudes sur l’Histoire de l’Eglise de Bethléem [1888], 1, 96). Matthew of Paris seems to regard them as newly arrived in England in 1257, when he comments upon their habit with its distinctive star, and records the gift to them of an establishment in Cambridge (“Chronica Majora,” ed. H. R. Luard, Rer. Brit. Med. Aev. Scrip., Pt. LVII, v, 631). It would appear, however, that the Brothers of Bethlehem never were at Cambridge (H. P. Stokes, Outside Trumpington Gates,” Cambridge Ant. Soc., XLIV [1908], 31) and that the Brothers had arrived in England and established themselves at Bishopsgate in London by 1247 (Dugdale, Monasticon [1661], II, 381-383). The famous Hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem at Bishopsgate was clearly a dependency of the Church of Bethlehem (Cal. Papal Letters, XI, 6-8), and was served by the Brothers of Bethlehem, as appears rather definitely from the 1247 grant of the Bishopsgate establishment, where the starred habit of the Brothers is prominently mentioned: “signum stellae deferant publice in Capis, & Mantellis”; “Habitum cum stellis gerentis” (Monasticon, II, 382, 383). The difficulties which the Bishops of Bethlehem experienced in controlling pardoners for their international collection system are indicated by Riant: “À leurs fonctions hospitalières, ils joignaient celles de...
To the notoriety incident to the uncontrolled activities of these questors may perhaps be added another factor. There is some evidence that the foreign hospitals conducted collections not directly, as did Beverley Minster, but by farming out the collection rights on payment of a fixed fee, after which the purchaser was free to go about his business as his professional instincts dictated.\footnote{In the "Reply of Friar Daw Thopas" ("Political Poems," ed. T. Wright, \textit{Rer. Brit. Med. Aev. Scrip.}, Pt. xiv, ii, 78–79) the worthy friar avoids the accusation of farming brought against the friars by saying:

\begin{quote}
I trowe thou mensys the pardonystres
of seint Thomas of Acrs,
of Antoun, or of Runcevale,
that rennen so faste aboute.
\end{quote}

The institutions here named are St. Thomas of Acre, St. Anthony of Vienne, and St. Mary Roncesvalles.}

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that rennen so faste aboute.
\end{quote}

The institutions here named are St. Thomas of Acre, St. Anthony of Vienne, and St. Mary Roncesvalles.}

\footnote{J. S. P. Tatlock, \textit{Mind and Art of Chaucer} (Syracuse, 1950), p. 92.}

\footnote{"Preface" to the \textit{Fables, Ancient and Modern}.}

\footnote{"For myn entente is nat but for to wynne" (vi [C] 403).}

IV

Having explored with some thoroughness the law of the pardoner and the operation of that law in England, we are prepared to ask the question: What attitude, if any, toward this complex situation is Chaucer expressing in the person of his remarkable artistic creation, the "gentil Pardoner of Rouncivale"?

It is to be noted first of all that Chaucer's Pardoner is precisely an artistic creation. Like all the Canterbury Pilgrims he is constructed upon the principle of what Tatlock has very accurately termed the "vivid type."\footnote{\textit{For myn entente is nat but for to wynne" (vi [C] 403).}} The Miller's golden thumb, the Knight's love of chivalry, the Friar's generosity to the women within his "haunt," all are generic characteristics which give to the Pilgrims that suggestion of containing within themselves the whole world of their time which Dryden seems most fully to have apprehended.\footnote{J. S. P. Tatlock, \textit{Mind and Art of Chaucer} (Syracuse, 1950), p. 92.} The Pardoner too is a generic figure. In attitude, practices, and credentials, he is very much what a contemporary who had been in church during sermon time might have expected.

Like the usual professional collector, the Pardoner's interest in his duties is limited to what those duties yield him in cash and negotiable commodities.\footnote{"Preface" to the \textit{Fables, Ancient and Modern}.} What he collects he spends in taverns amidst no very
spiritual company, yet he is concerned for professional reasons that to the "lewed peple" his life should have the appearance of sanctity. In practices as well as moral principles, he is typical. He preaches at length and with great eloquence; he absolves the folk who kneel beneath his holy Bull of any sin at any time. As pious alms anything anyone has to offer is acceptable—coins, brooches, spoons, rings, wool. Even the Pardoner’s credentials are standard. Within his wallet repose a wide variety of indulgences, and his letter of admission, directed to the lower clergy of the diocese, is sealed with the Bishop’s seal. What at first glance seems most remarkable about his credentials—their presentation to him by the Pope himself—is of course but a common device of pardoners to dazzle their simple contributors. Chaucer’s collector of alms is very much like all collectors of alms.

See above, n. 33.

"Nay, I wol drynke licour of the vyne,
And have a joly wenche in every toun"

(vi [C] 452–453).

See above, n. 33.

"Thus spitte I out my venym under hewe
Of hoolynesse, to semen hooly and trewe"

(vi [C] 421–422).

See above, n. 33.

See F. N. Robinson’s note to vi [C] 333 (Complete Works [Boston, 1933]). Preaching as an abuse is discussed above, n. 35.

"Com forth anon, and kneleth heere adoun,
And mekely receyveth my pardoun"

(vi [C] 925–926).

See above, n. 122.


(A) 686–687; vi (C) 342–343:

Bulles of popes and of cardynales,
Of patriarkes and bishipes I shewe.

All of the prelates here mentioned regularly granted indulgences except Cardinals, and Cardinals might do so when they possessed jurisdiction. A foreign hospital might conceivably gain indulgences at one time or another from all of them. There is thus no inherent improbability in the source of the credentials. It is, however, difficult to know whether Chaucer is here getting at the much criticized plethora of indulgences “comen from Rome al hoot,” or whether he is bringing out a common characteristic of pardoners, the tendency to exaggerate the indulgences they do have: “indulgencias alias quam Literis nostris in ea parte testimonialibus annexas” (Reg. Grandisson, ii, 1178); “cum veris sibi indultis falsa quedam et subdola miscere dicuntur in suis exortacionibus” (Reg. Baldock, etc., p. 139).

By context the seal would seem to be that of the Bishop. See Piers Plowman, B Prologue, 68–69. However, the term “lige lorde seel” may allude rather to the royal protection than to the episcopal license (see above, n. 76). Brown (ed. Pardoner’s Tale [Oxford, 1935], p. 27) and Mrs. Marie Hamilton, (“Credentials of Chaucer’s Pardoner,” JEGP, xl [1941], 70) hold the latter opinion.

“Which were me yeven by the popes hond” (vi [C] 922). “Und er gibt, er habe von dem hõbeste den gewalt, daz er dir alle dtne stünde abe neme umbe einigen helbelinc oder einen heller” (Berthold von Regensburg, Predigten, 1, 208).
Such are the typical aspects of the Pardoner. Yet, like the other Canterbury Pilgrims, he is something more than a purely generic figure. Aside from the rather striking qualities of person and personality which lie outside the scope of this study, Chaucer has increased the vividness and suggestiveness of his portrait by the addition of two particular characteristics: Roncesvalles and false relics. He has further given definite meaning to his whole presentation by bringing his heightened portrait into ironical juxtaposition with the figure of the Summoner.

It is, of course, difficult to weigh with accuracy the significance of the Pardoner's being “a gentil Pardoner of Rouncivale.” Manly believed that the satiric humor to be discovered in the Pardoner lies chiefly in what he took to be a covert allusion to political chicanery in the Hospital of St. Mary Roncesvall at Charing Cross. However much truth there may be in this interpretation, it is difficult to believe that the intricate interdevelopment of personality and satire which moves through the General Prologue, Prologue, and Tale exists solely as embellishment for an allusion to the Hospital at Charing Cross. It seems more likely that, like Dante, Chaucer was seeking for artistic purposes a particular name for a generic corruption, and chose a name which at a particular point of time possessed the most vivid connotations. It has not previously been observed that at about the time Chaucer was thinking about pardoners, St. Mary Roncesvalles was conducting a building fund drive for its branch at Charing Cross. But whatever may have been the particular factors which guided Chaucer's choice, it seems certain that that choice would have fallen upon a foreign hospital, for the failure of these hospitals to control the pardoners within their own employ, or within the employ of their branches, had gained them an inescapable notoriety. Whenever there is mention of abuses, it is these hospitals which are specified, both in ecclesiastical documents and in contemporary satire. The name of

143 New Light, pp. 124–130. See also S. Moore, MP, xxv (1927), 59–66.
144 “Paradiso,” xxxix, 124 ff. (cited by Paulus, Geschicichte, ii, 282). It is interesting that Dante chose St. Anthony of Vienne, perhaps the most widely known of all.
145 In 1393, there is an entry in the Ely Episcopal Registers: “Indulg. for Hosp. B.V.M. of Rouncevall Pampilion’ dioc., and for construction of a branch of it at Charing Cross” (ed. A. Gibbons [Lincoln, 1891], p. 398). Another reference in Winchester ca. 1399 records the granting of an indulgence by Bishop Wykeham for subscribers to the same building fund (Reg. Wykeham, ii, 490). Building funds were notoriously unending, and we have no reason to suppose that these two references represent either the beginning or the end.
146 St. Anthony (Reg. Innoc., iv, n. 1411; Honorius, iii, in Bull. Rom., iii, 389; Reg. Jean xxii, n. 49762, etc.); St. James of Altopascio (Reg. Greenfield, i, 131–132); Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem (Reg. Grandisson, i, 426–427); Holy Ghost of Rome (Reg. Grandisson, ii, 1175–79); Knights of St. John (Wilkins, iii, 84), Brothers of Bethlehem (Reg. Baldock, i, 103–105; Northern Registers, pp. 187–188). We have not discovered a reference to a purely local institution's being cited in this connection, but the foreign hospitals and
the foreign hospital in this connection carried a rather clear connotation of corruption and labelled the pardoner who bore that name as of the most ingenious and treacherous sort.

The second particular attribute of the Pardoner, that of false relics, may be said to accomplish the same end from a different point of view. As has been shown, the carrying of false relics was an abuse so rare that no contemporary manual even discusses it, while allusions to the practice are only very infrequently to be met with elsewhere.\textsuperscript{148} More luridly than the name of the hospital he represents, the Pardoner's false relics mark him as a dangerous man with souls.

Yet this exemplar of spiritual abuse, the Pardoner, is presented duly licensed,\textsuperscript{149} riding in company with the Summoner, the agent of the Archdeacon's court, the man who should be putting him behind bars. In this paradox, this ironic portrait of justice and crime singing in close harmony, we reach the center of Chaucer's satire.\textsuperscript{150}

their branches, as indicated above, are frequently cited, and occasionally in a group. Thus Bishop Grandisson specifies as offenders collectors for the hospitals of the Holy Ghost, St. Anthony, and St. John (\textit{Reg. Grandisson}, ii, 1179).

\textsuperscript{147} Contemporary satire does not afford a very satisfactory basis for comparison since references to pardoners by the names of the institutions they represent are not numerous. However, such references as we have come upon seem to bear out the general pattern. Thus \textit{Piers Plowman} mentions "Paumpelon" (St. Mary Roncesvalles) and "Rome," which may possibly be the Hospital of the Holy Ghost, of Rome (C. Passus, xx, 218), while the "Reply of Friar Daw Thopas" refers to St. Anthony, St. Thomas of Acre, and St. Mary Roncesvalles (see above, n. 130).

\textsuperscript{148} See above, n. 51.

\textsuperscript{149} See above, n. 140. One wonders whether it is not the relics rather than the credentials which lead Jusserand to the conclusion that the Pardoner is "false" (\textit{Chaucer Soc. Essays}, v). Jusserand would have us believe that two separate groups of pardoners existed: the one a saintly pardoner—who tended rapidly to disappear—and the other an evil pardoner, like a mildewed ear blasting his wholesome brother. Yet in practice no such distinction existed. It was quite possible to be a true pardoner one day and a false one the next—and vice versa. Thomas of the Brothers of Bethlehem, who preached such abuses as to attain the distinction of being cited personally by the Archbishop of Canterbury, had in fact been an accredited pardoner, but had simply refused to accept his suspension from office (\textit{Reg. Baldock}, etc., pp. 103–105; see also above, n. 129). Alexander de Derby, on the other hand, was apprehended by the Chapter of Beverley Minster and confessed that he had collected in the Chapter's name without any authorization. Yet less than two months after the suspension of sentence, he was duly licensed and collecting for Beverley Minster (\textit{Chapter Act Book}, i, 316–317). The only real distinction between a true and a false pardoner is the possession of a license. Jusserand gives us no good reasons for considering the Pardoner's credentials invalid.

\textsuperscript{150} The satiric end of the Pardoner-Summoner relationship has been recognized by C. R. Sleeth, "The Friendship of Chaucer's Summoner and Pardoner," \textit{MLN}, lvi (1941), 138. However, Sleeth seems to follow Jusserand in considering the Pardoner "false," a conclusion not justified, it seems to us by Chaucer's presentation (see above, nn. 140, 149).
er is upon the corruption which had permeated a system of justice, cor-
ruption which permitted flagrant and undisguised abuse to become the
companion of a law enforcement deformed almost beyond recognition.
Before our eyes, Crime and Justice, the Pardoner and the Summoner,
amble together in vinous jocularity down the road to Canterbury.

Chaucer's satire of the Pardoner is not upon the Pardoner but upon
those who make the Pardoner possible.

Like Langland and Gower, Chaucer looks back to an age when religious
faith formed the keystone to a whole way of life. The shift from a theo-
centric to an egocentric universe which he sees going on about him fills
him with pain. Like Langland and Gower, he views with indignation
those who hold "after the newe world the space." The Church in institu-
tion and in doctrine is perfect, yet there are within the Church those
who have no God but gain and by their practices render the Church
itself suspect in the eyes of the world.

No force contributed more powerfully to this conclusion than did the
existence of the pardoner. To men of deep religious feeling everywhere
the corruption which the pardoner spread wherever he went, the error
he poured into the people, the shadow of ridicule he cast upon the Church
were bitter. One finds this feeling iterated and reiterated in Church
council after Church council; one finds it also in the utterances of such
outspoken Bishops as John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter, and Wil-
liam Durandus, Bishop of Mende.

In the Council of the Lateran and elsewhere (see Reg. Anitn., ii. 11–12) the wear-
ing of the habit of an order as a kind of camouflage is noted. There is no indication that
the Pardoner takes the least trouble to disguise his activities. Although Mrs. Hamilton
has argued skilfully that the Pardoner is an Augustinian canon (JEGP, ii, 1–72), there
seems to be little of the religious left about him. Whatever he may have been before, and
there are definite hints of the apostate about him (vi [C] 439–453), he would seem here
to be the strongest example of the "quaestuarius notorius," the professional collector at
his worst.

The Summoner, the personification of the non-enforcement of law, is here definitely
associated with the Archdeacon, but that Chaucer intended to limit the reference of the
Summoner to the Archdeacon is doubtful. The location of the Archdeacon's Hell, which
the Summoner privately reveals to a "good felawe": "Purs is the ercedekenes helle,"
seyde he" (i [A] 658) is to be found in Gower's Vox Clamantis: "Torquentur bursa sic reus
atque rea" (iii, 194) applied to ecclesiastical justice in general. One suspects that Chaucer
associated the Summoner with the Archdeacon for the same reason that he associated the
Pardoner with a foreign hospital: both seem to have enjoyed unenviable reputations (see

See Durandus's analysis of the effects of the unrestrained abuses of pardoners. He
mentions the deception of the people, the corruption within the Church, and the con-
What Chaucer has done is simply to present satirically the indignation which earnest men everywhere within the Church were expressing directly. Like Swift's economic proposals,\textsuperscript{154} these utterances must be sought out. Like Swift's \textit{Modest Proposal}, the satire of the Pardoner is not easily forgotten.

\textbf{Rutgers University}

New Brunswick, N. J.

\textbf{Cathedral School}

Dallas, Texas

tempt of the power of the keys which the Church brings upon itself by permitting such abuses (Paulus, \textit{i}, 284). These are almost precisely the aspects of the pardonner which Chaucer places before us.

\textsuperscript{154} \textit{Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufacture, Proposal that all the Ladies and Women of Ireland should appear constantly in Irish Manufactures}, etc. This is of course not to say that there is no irony in these works.