

Chapter 7

Gothic Architecture and the Civilizing Process: The Great Hall in Thirteenth-Century England

Matthew M. Reeve

Introduction

Historians of medieval art no longer need to preface studies of secular architecture with an apology. Secular architecture, which has long been the subject of archaeological study, has entered, albeit tentatively, into the mainstream of studies on medieval art. Yet historians of medieval secular architecture have justifiably been criticized for positioning their research outside of the broader intellectual and historiographical narratives of art history and the humanities, which borrow liberally from the related fields of sociology, linguistics, and anthropology. While adherence to traditional, archaeological methods of analysis is demanded by the fragmentary character of many of the buildings themselves, the sheer weight of recent archaeological scholarship on secular architecture has laid the foundations for broader, more contextual studies of these buildings as defining examples of architectural style in themselves, as centres for the performance of aristocratic ritual, and as meditations on the shifting nature of the concept of aristocracy itself.

This chapter will consider the architectural locus of English aristocratic life, the great hall.¹ In doing so, I shall turn away from formalist approaches to consider the relationship of architecture to developments in etiquette, decorum, and manners. It has not, as far as I know, been noted that the arrival (or revival) of the ground floor aisled hall in England, of the type characterized by the bishop's halls at Hereford, Lincoln, and Wells, the archbishop's hall at Canterbury, and

¹ For a current overview of English secular architecture, see John Goodall, 'Patronage, Function and Display: The Secular World', in Tim Ayers and David Bindman (eds), *The History of British Art 600–1600* (New Haven and London, 2008), pp. 115–35. The great hall has recently been the subject of a general survey: Michael W. Thompson, *The Medieval Hall: The Basis of Secular Domestic Life, 600–1600* (Aldershot, 1995).

the royal halls at Winchester and Dublin castles, among others, was paralleled by a new discourse on etiquette and comportment in the earliest English manuals of courtesy. These texts were, by and large, products of ecclesiastical culture: they were written by bishops or clerics to provide instruction for the secular aristocracy in manners and *mores*. This chapter will consider relationships between these new texts and the buildings in which their prescriptions on etiquette were performed and perfected.

Bodies and buildings: Discourses on courtesy

It will be clear to most readers that my title references Norbert Elias's highly influential study of aristocratic mentalities, *The Civilizing Process*.² Elias sought to illustrate the development of aristocratic manners as a gradual but linear process of refinement: the dynamics of change in aristocratic society involved the engagement of social and psychological mechanisms that commended moderation or 'courtliness' over brutishness, vulgarity, and excessive displays of emotion. The locus for Elias's civilizing process was the royal court and a motivating factor in it was competition: the courtier most versed in good manners and 'courtesy' would curry favour from the lord, thereby increasing his own place and prominence. Elias's civilizing process was top-down and regocentric: the development and implementation of manners and social codes occurred at the highest levels of secular aristocratic society (particularly royal circles) and were imposed upon those of similar, or more often lesser, rank. Elias of course was not concerned with architecture, although he clearly understood the role of buildings as models for and the settings of the rituals of the civilizing process.³ Although Elias's theories have featured prominently in studies of medieval court culture, they have not, as far as I am aware, been applied to the history of medieval architecture,⁴ even

² Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, trans. E. Jephcott (Malden, MA, 2000). The subsequent scholarship on Elias and the Civilizing Process is vast. I cite some recent reassessments relevant to the Middle Ages in note 4.

³ Ibid., p. 5.

⁴ I have briefly suggested this approach elsewhere: Matthew M. Reeve and Malcolm Thurlby, 'King John's "Gloriette" at Corfe Castle', *Journal for the Society of Architectural Historians*, 64/2 (2005): 168–85, esp. p. 179. For interpretations of *The Civilizing Process* in medieval studies, see, for example, Malcolm Vale, 'Ritual, Ceremony and the "Civilizing Process": The Role of the Court, c. 1270–1400', in Steven Gunn and Antheun Janse (eds), *The Court as a Stage: England and the Low Countries in the Later Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 13–27; Frédérique Lachaud, 'Littérature de Civilité et "Processus du Civilisation" à la fin du XIIe siècle: le cas anglais d'après l'*Urbanus magnus*', in *Les Echanges Culturels au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 2002), pp. 227–39; John Gillingham, 'Civilizing the English? The English

if they are surprisingly analogous to the narratives of 'court styles' in recent scholarship.⁵

In considering the possibility of a 'civilizing process' in secular architecture, I follow what I take to be the most compelling critique of Elias's thesis, C.S. Jaeger's *The Origins of Courtliness*.⁶ Jaeger has argued that courtesy and courtliness (*curialitas*) were not the *products* of courtly life, but rather active components in its formation.⁷ Jaeger emphasizes the role of the cathedral schools as the fertile loci for new formulations on decorum, in which etiquette and *mores* formed a central part of the scholastic curriculum. Based ultimately upon classical sources such as Macrobius's *Saturnalia* and Cicero's *De Officiis*, the pedagogical processes involved in obtaining courtesy, including polite speech, bodily comportment, dress, and other forms of etiquette were conceived as stages in the cultivation of Christian virtue. As Jaeger argues, a principal disseminator of ideas of *mores* were the courtier bishops such as Thomas Becket, who, by the twelfth century, had long served as teachers of manners and *mores* for the young aristocracy. Jaeger has seen the arts of the period as a rebellion against violence and arbitrariness: 'In the courtly period the urge to representation allied itself with the forces of civility, urbanity, and refinement.'⁸ It is my contention that these forces were particularly applied to the settings of civilizing rituals: the architecture and decorations of great halls.

The contents and meanings of courtesy literature in England are varied, but a brief introduction here will help to set this study in context.⁹ Created largely by

Histories of William of Malmesbury and David Hume', *Historical Research*, 74 (2001): 17–43.

⁵ Classically in Robert Branner, *Saint Louis and the Court Style in Gothic Architecture* (London, 1965), and Jean Bony, *The English Decorated Style: Gothic Architecture Transformed 1250–1350* (Ithaca, 1979). The most important revisions to this thesis remain Caroline Bruzelius, *The Thirteenth-Century Church at St-Denis* (New Haven, 1985), and Paul Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets: Kingship and the Representation of Power 1200–1400* (New Haven and London, 1995).

⁶ C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals 939–1210* (Philadelphia, 1985), and subsequently, idem, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 900–1200* (Philadelphia, 1994).

⁷ Jaeger, *Origins of Courtliness*, p. 3.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Fuller discussions of courtesy literature in England can be found in Dorothy Oschinsky, *Walter of Henley and Other Treatises on Estate Management* (Oxford, 1971); Severus Gieben, 'Robert Grosseteste and Medieval Courtesy Books', *Variorum*, 5 (1967): 47–74; Allison G. Elliott, 'The *Facetus*: or the Art of Courtly Living', *Allegorica*, 2 (1977): 27–57; Gwendolyn A. Foster, 'Etiquette Texts and Performance', in *Troping the Body: Gender, Etiquette, and Performance* (Carbondale, 2000), pp. 1–18; John Gillingham, 'From Civilitas to Civility: Codes of Manners in Medieval and Early Modern England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 12 (2002): 267–89.

clerics to offer advice on manners and decorum to the secular aristocracy, these texts provide a translation of the ethics and ideals of etiquette and comportment from the clerical sphere to the secular world. In Robert Grosseteste's *Household Rules*, written ca. 1235–45 for the countess of Lincoln, the bishop offers a range of advice on manners, etiquette, and display in the great hall, and proposes his own household at Lincoln as a model for the secular household of his reader.¹⁰ In the context of John of Garland's *Morale Scolarium* of ca. 1240, a text written to make scholars rather than the laity 'more genteel', he nevertheless prefaces his section 'Concerning Table Manners' by stating that, because he does not give dinners, his advice on the etiquette of dining and feasting is addressed to the nobility instead in order to promote civility over rusticity.¹¹ Daniel of Beccles, another clerical writer, apparently wrote his *Urbanus Magnus* (the *Book of the Civilized Man*) for the court of Henry II, which Henry may have used to educate the 'uncourtly'. Daniel's pedagogical bent is explicit: he advises his reader to 'read and reread this book if you wish to be adorned with good manners, if you wish to be respected and to lead a civilized life (*urbanem ducere vitam*) as a noble householder (*nobilis heros*), and to obtain *gracia morum*, or elegance of manners.'¹²

The relationship between advice on etiquette and architecture is complex, but I want to suggest three ways in which these new texts may be valuable for understanding how architecture was used, and more elusively, how the civilized building and the civilized body were inflected by and interpreted within common conceptions of decorum. First, as the setting for the performance of the civilizing process, the great hall features centrally in the texts. Grosseteste for instance advises that the reader 'be seated at all times in the middle of the high table, that your presence as lord or lady is made manifest to all ... [in order to earn] great fear and reverence'; and that lords should not use the attached chambers (which featured in the end bays of most of our halls) as 'hiding places' since it was dishonourable and because it was the lord's duty to present a splendid image in hall during the social meal.¹³

Second, both the body and architecture were interpreted within the same fundamentally ethical parameters by clerical writers, and frequently using the same terminology. Historians of medieval architecture are most familiar with

¹⁰ Oschinsky, *Walter of Henley*, pp. 405, 390. On the dating, see Michael Burger, 'The Date and Authorship of Robert Grosseteste's *Rules for Household and Estate Management*', *Historical Research*, 74 (2001): 107–16.

¹¹ Louis J. Pactow, *The Morale Scholarum of John of Garland*, University of California Memoirs, vol. 4 (Berkeley, 1927), pp. 159–60.

¹² Josiah G. Smyly (ed.), *Urbanus Magnus Danielis Becclesiensis* (Dublin, 1939), lines 1–2, 14.

¹³ Oschinsky, *Walter of Henley*, pp. 403, 407.

the critiques of the schoolmen Alexander Nequam and Peter the Chanter on the lavishness and superfluity of the new Gothic churches.¹⁴ Secular architecture and great halls in particular were also subject to these stoical critiques: Nequam likewise railed against excessive carving on hall roofs as an 'illegal invention' – an example of vanity and luxury – and he warns his readers that they can expect both vanity and luxury in other aspects of aristocratic life, including clothing and food; and Hugh of Fouilloi critiqued the inappropriate use of secular imagery in bishop's halls.¹⁵ Indeed, the discourses on architecture of the early modern period, in which architecture and its ornamentation were read as analogues for the propriety of the body, had an established pedigree in the Middle Ages.¹⁶ The body/building analogy had a celebrated precedent in Jean of Jandun's fourteenth-century critique of the Palais de la Cité in Paris: borrowing his wisdom from the Virtues and Vices, Jean states the hall is not decorated to reflect luxury or vainglory, or fortified to house vainglorious assemblies, but is 'appropriately adapted to the industrious, efficacious, totally solicitudinous, and prudent monarchy'.¹⁷ In Jean's critique, the hall becomes a personification of sorts for the character of the royal body and the Capetian monarchy itself. Jean's use of the Virtues and Vices as structuring

¹⁴ Victor Mortet, 'Hugh de Fouilloi, Pierre le Chantre, Alexander Neckham et les critiques dirigées au douzième siècle contre le luxe des constructions', in *Mélanges d'histoire offerts à M. Charles Bémont* (Paris, 1913), pp. 105–37. For a recent study of the ethics of conduct, see Jean-Claude Schmitt, 'The Ethics of Gesture', in Michel Feher, Ramona Naddaff, and Nadia Tazi (eds), *Fragments for a History of the Human Body* (3 vols, New York, 1989), vol. 2, pp. 128–47.

¹⁵ *Patrologia cursus completus*, Series Latina, ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris, 1844–55), CLXXVI, p. 1019; Urban Tigner Holmes, *Daily Living in the Twelfth Century: Based on the Observations of Alexander of Neckham in London and Paris* (Madison, WI, 1952), p. 100. This commentary should be contrasted with the moralizing and allegorical reading of classical battles in great halls offered in Alain de Lille's *Anticlaudianus*; see Alan of Lille, *Anticlaudianus: or The Good and Perfect Man*, trans. James J. Sheridan (Toronto, 1973), p. 50.

¹⁶ For the early modern period, see for example, Nicholas Cooper, 'Rank, Manners and Display: The Gentlemanly House, 1500–1750', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 12 (2002): 291–310; Christy Anderson, 'Masculine and Unaffected: Inigo Jones and the Classical Ideal', *Art Journal*, 56/2 (1997): 48–54; and George Dodds and Robert Tavernor (eds), *Body and Building: Essays on the Changing Relation of Body and Architecture* (Cambridge, MA, 2005). For the Middle Ages, see Linda Elaine Neagley, 'Architecture and the Body of Christ', in James Clifton et al. (eds), *The Body of Christ in the Art of Europe and New Spain, 1150–1800* (Munich, 1997), pp. 27–36, and below.

¹⁷ Eric Inglis, 'Gothic Architecture and a Scholastic: Jean de Jandun's "Tractatus de laudibus Parisius" (1323)', *Gesta*, 42/1 (2003): 63–85. See also Michael Davis, 'Désespoir, Espérance, and Douce France: The New Palace, Paris, and the Royal State', in Margaret Bent and Andrew Wathey (eds), *Fauvel Studies: Allegory, Chronicle, Music, and Image in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Français 146* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 187–214.

devices for the description of a great hall and its inhabitants was equally current in the thirteenth century, when the Virtues and Vices were regularly painted in the interior of the halls and chambers of royal architecture in England, notably including the Painted Chamber at Westminster by Henry III (Figure 7.1).¹⁸

Third, terminology: the adjective *curialitas* had recently been introduced after the classical words *curia* and *curialis* (originally referring to the Roman senate). By the twelfth century *curialitas* was employed as a synonym for *aula* and *palatium*. In other words, courtliness/elegance and the great hall itself had a specific semantic unity in contemporary language.¹⁹

An architecture of courtesy

In the literature on the great hall in thirteenth-century England, the lion's share of attention has been paid to royal patronage, and especially the great halls of Henry III. This is not without some justification: not only is the physical evidence better preserved in general, but the imagery, fittings, and ornamentation can be reconstructed with some precision through the documentary record in the Close and Patent Rolls.²⁰ Henry III's halls have been considered thoroughly avant-garde buildings, reflecting and constructing the King's quasi-sacred identity through the range of pious or moralizing themes employed in the painted imagery and in the use of a new ecclesiastical language of architecture borrowed from High Gothic church design.²¹

But such a perspective biases the picture of artistic innovation towards royal initiative. The fact remains that the innovations for which Henry III's halls

¹⁸ Paul Binski, *The Painted Chamber at Westminster*, London Society of Antiquaries of London Occasional Paper, n.s. 9 (London, 1986). For the precedents of this tradition in ecclesiastical architecture, see John Osborne, 'The Dado Programme in Giotto's Arena Chapel and Its Italian Romanesque Antecedents', *Burlington Magazine*, 145/1202 (2003): 361–5. These ideas, of course, were also prevalent in later secular wall painting, such as the Palazzo Pubblico frescoes

¹⁹ Gillingham, 'From *Civilitas* to *Civility*', p. 282; Jaeger, *Origins of Courtliness*, pp. 122, 127, 154–61.

²⁰ The standard surveys remain Tancred Borenius, 'The Cycle of Images in the Palaces and Castles of Henry III', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 6 (1943): 40–50; R. Allen Brown, Howard M. Colvin, and Arnold J. Taylor, *History of the King's Works*, vol. 2, *The Middle Ages* (London, 1963).

²¹ See most recently, Sally Dixon-Smith, 'The Image and Reality of Alms-Giving in the Great Halls of Henry III', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 152 (1999): 79–96; Paul Crossley, 'The Nave of Stone Church in Kent', *Architectural History*, 44 (2001): 195–211.



Figure 7.1 Virtues and Vices, Painted Chamber at Westminster Palace, copies by C.A. Stothard

are regularly praised – the ground floor plan with aisles; the use of elaborate, two-level entrance porches; and the employment of an ecclesiastical language of ornament in the piers and fenestration – can be succinctly located in the earlier residences of his episcopal advisors. Understanding the history of great halls as a component of a larger history of manners and aristocracy – of a process of civilizing – does much to change our understanding of these halls. In what follows, I want to consider the relationship of architecture to etiquette



Figure 7.2 Canterbury Great Hall, exterior

and in particular the parallel influence of ideas from the clerical to the secular aristocracy. I do so in the belief that more than simply 'emulation' informed the architectural aspirations of patrons such as Henry III. Through their forms and functions, these buildings came to embody and promote a new sense of corporeal correctness and elegance – a new mode of Christian/aristocratic living. To borrow the clever wit of a later advisor on manners and etiquette, architecture as much as manners in the period can be said to come from Heaven.²²

The history of the great hall in thirteenth-century England must begin with the building of the great hall at the archbishop's palace at Canterbury. The precise dates of the hall are not known: the hall may have been commenced by Archbishop Hubert Walter (d. 1205) and halted during the Papal Interdict (1207–13), but it is clear that the majority if not the entirety of the standing fabric was built by Archbishop Stephen Langton between 1213 and 1220.²³ The hall was certainly complete by July of 1220 when it was used for the festivities surrounding the translation of Thomas Becket.

The structure of the great hall was impressive: built in five bays at ground floor level with a two-level porch on the north side, and a private solar raised over a vaulted undercroft in the end bay, the hall measured 168 × 64 feet, making it the second largest great hall in England after the royal hall at Westminster (Figure 7.2). While adhering to a tradition of ground-floor aisled halls, the

²² Quentin Crisp, *Manners from Heaven: A Divine Guide to Good Behavior* (New York, 1984).

²³ Jonathan Rady, Tim Tatton-Brown, and John A. Bowen, 'The Archbishop's Palace, Canterbury', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 144 (1991): 1–60.

interior enrichments derive from the architectural vocabulary of Gothic great church architecture. Most significantly, expansive two-light, transomed windows – the tracery of which was made of Purbeck marble – spanned almost the entire elevation of the hall. These splendid windows created a vertical sweep of glass that would have flooded the hall with light, a feature that endowed the hall with the sacred luminosity of the High Gothic church interior (Figure 7.3). The rapprochement with great church design is also evident in the piers: formed of bundles of Purbeck marble shafts, and with foliate capitals and bases in the same material, the hall piers most closely reflect the designs of the cathedrals at Lincoln and Salisbury. These features have not gone unnoticed in the literature on the great hall, but a larger question remains: what factors endorsed this opulent and overtly sacral look for the archbishop's hall?

Some evidence may be provided by a largely overlooked eyewitness account of the festivities of 4 July 1220 that took place in the newly finished hall, entitled the *De Vita et Passione Beati Thome Cantuariensis*.²⁴ Probably penned by the court poet Henry of Avranches, whose authorship has also been attributed to the descriptions of Lincoln and Salisbury cathedrals, the poem provides a detailed account of the feast that took place in the hall and also provides details about the names that were attributed to the hall as early as 1220. Henry's account of the architecture is minimal and celebratory, and not without the usual topoi: Henry describes it only as 'that miraculous hall (*mirabilis aula*) without equal', which tells us rather less than an architectural historian would like to know. More important is the name he gives it: Henry calls the great hall not only 'Saint Thomas's Hall', but he goes further to specifically allegorize the hall as Becket himself, calling it 'the hall that is St Thomas'.²⁵ In so doing, Henry appears to ally the great hall with the broader hagiographic identity of the cathedral as the saint's resting place. We may suggest, as Paul Binski has done for the eastern arm of the cathedral, that, in the mind of the court poet at least, the great hall was an

²⁴ Josiah Cox Russell and Paul Hieronimus, *The Shorter Latin Poems of Henry of Avranches* (Cambridge, MA, 1935). For discussion of the poem and the political context of the Becket translation in general, see Richard Eales, 'The Political Setting of the Becket Translation of 1220', in Diana Wood (ed.), *Martyrs and Martyrologies*, Studies in Church History 30 (Oxford, 1993), pp. 127–39.

²⁵ Russell and Heironimus, *Shorter Latin Poems*, l. 73: 'In Debrobernensi mirabilis aula stat urbe non habitura parem ... Hinc constat Sancti Thome quod dicitur aula.' In the fourteenth century, the lesser hall at the Palace was also called 'Becket's Hall' (Rady et al., 'The Archbishop's Palace', p. 5).

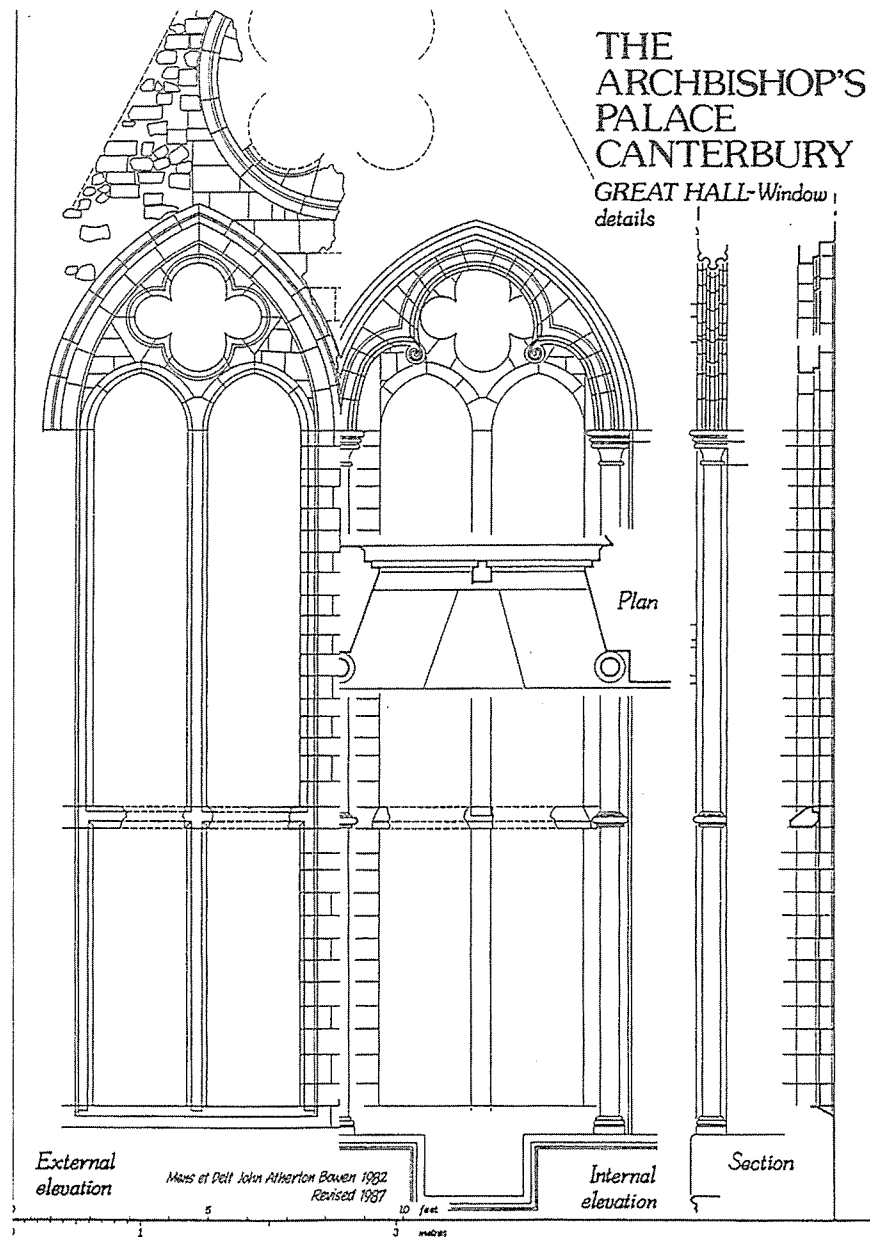


Figure 7.3 Canterbury Great Hall, window

architectural manifestation of the personality of Becket himself, a personification or 'real presence' of England's latest and greatest martyr.²⁶

In allegorizing the *mirabilis aula* as Becket, or simply as 'Becket's Hall', Henry was in fact appropriating a vital image of Becket's hagiography in which the saint was seen as a splendid, opulent, and mannered courtier, whose manners were performed to particular effect in the context of the great hall during the social meal. Herbert of Bosham's *Life of Becket* focuses in considerable detail on Becket's corporeal elegance and visual splendor: 'he tended to grandeur and magnificence beyond what his office ... called for. He was extraordinarily lavish, generous to all, excelling all in sumptuousness and grandeur, as great in heart as he was grand in appearance. Nothing could come around him but what was splendid and magnificent.' Feasting and the etiquette of banqueting in hall were uniquely central in Becket's hagiography. As Jaeger notes, Herbert of Bosham casts Becket's Hall as not just a setting for the performance of the social meal, but as a schoolroom of honest behaviour, a place of performance as much as pedagogy and training in manners.²⁷ Becket is the *magister* at table and he is a model for all to emulate. He embodies all the elevated qualities the of the 'prince of the table': he is *magnificus*, *erudite*, *circumspectus*, and so on. Significantly enough, Becket's command of manners is cast in explicitly religious language: his conduct over the 'corporeal meal' was 'civil and courtly' (*civilem et domesticam custodiam*), while his overseeing of the 'spiritual meal' is decidedly liturgical in tone. Becket thus oversees the feast as a school of manners in which he stood as priest and *magister*. Over one-third of the 300 lines of *De Vita et Passione* is dedicated to a lavish description of the feast that took place in the archbishop's hall. It is not surprising that Henry's focus on the event in Becket's hall is the etiquette of the feast: the quality of the wines and the food and the seatings and the ordering of the courses. Indeed, Henry implies that the excellence of the food and wine was a gift from Becket himself.²⁸

Following Henry's poem, the great hall can be read as a studied response to a range of ideas prevalent in the hagiography of its namesake, which, like the hall itself, was to become a model for subsequent constructions of nobility in the thirteenth century. Henry's poem leaves no doubt that the sheer size of the hall (which could reportedly fit 33,000 people!) and the festivities performed within were signs of Becket's magnanimity and largesse. Aspects of the style might also be read in the light of Becket's broader hagiographic image, which focuses equally

²⁶ Paul Binski, *Becket's Crown: Art and Imagination in Gothic England, 1170–1300* (New Haven and London, 2004), p. 9.

²⁷ For a discussion of Hubert of Bosham's *Life* and these references, see Jaeger, *Envy of Angels*, pp. 298–308.

²⁸ Russell and Heironimus, *Shorter Latin Poems*, lines 249–53.

on his religiosity and his aristocratic splendour. The opulent use of marble in the hall – something Henry elsewhere relates specifically to nobility (*nobilitas*)²⁹ – may also reflect Becket's royalness and opulence. Most importantly, however, the quasi-sacral character of the hall can be usefully understood as a reflection of the heightened religiosity of the social meal in Becket's court and more broadly the quasi-religious tenor of his court's manners and etiquette. For the performance of heavenly manners in Becket's hall, a heavenly setting was surely appropriate.

The great hall at Canterbury provided an important model for subsequent great halls from the episcopal and royal milieus. The bishop's hall at Lincoln – a monumental addition to the bishop's palace built by Bishop Hugh de Wells between ca. 1221 and 1225 – clearly reflects the influence of Canterbury (Figure 7.4).³⁰ Lincoln's compound marble piers with marble foliate capitals, and its soaring two-light, transomed windows, are a close approximation of the Canterbury designs. The connection with Canterbury also extended to the use of marble for the window tracery and shafting, as in the archbishop's hall. As we have seen, the bishop of Lincoln's household had a reputation for good manners, a feature that also is also evident in the hagiography of Lincoln's recently canonized bishop, St Hugh.³¹ The great hall at Canterbury, and subsequently that at Lincoln, was also influential for the design of later episcopal halls erected at Wells and Norwich. The notable similarities in plan may suggest that episcopal halls were recognized as a specific building type during the thirteenth century.³² I shall have more to say about the influence of Canterbury and the episcopal halls of the period on royal building below, but for now I want to underline the point that what suggested Canterbury as a model was not only the style and visual

²⁹ *The Metrical Life of St Hugh of Lincoln*, trans. and ed. Charles Garton (Lincoln, 1986), pp. 54, 56. Marble in a different form was used in twelfth-century palace architecture as well. See for example Nicholas Riall, *Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester: A Patron of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (Winchester, 1994).

³⁰ Edward James Willson, 'The Ancient Episcopal Palace, Lincoln', in *Memoirs ... of the City and County of Lincoln, Communicated to the Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, July 1848* (London, 1850), pp. 1–18. Willson's excavation notes are now at London, Society of Antiquaries MS 786. See Hugh Chapman et al., *Excavations at the Bishop's Palace, Lincoln* (Sleaford, 1975).

³¹ As a model of good conduct, St Hugh, bishop of Lincoln, was known to withdraw after dining to his private chamber (*camera*) to entertain his more distinguished guests with improving stories of famous men from history. *Magna Vita Hugonis*, trans. and ed. Decima Douie and D. Hugh Farmer (London, 1962), p. 202.

³² See Matthew M. Reeve, 'Robert Burnell (1275–92) and the Transformation of the Bishop's Palace', in Robert Dunning (ed.), *Jocelin of Wells: Bishop and Builder* (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 169–96.

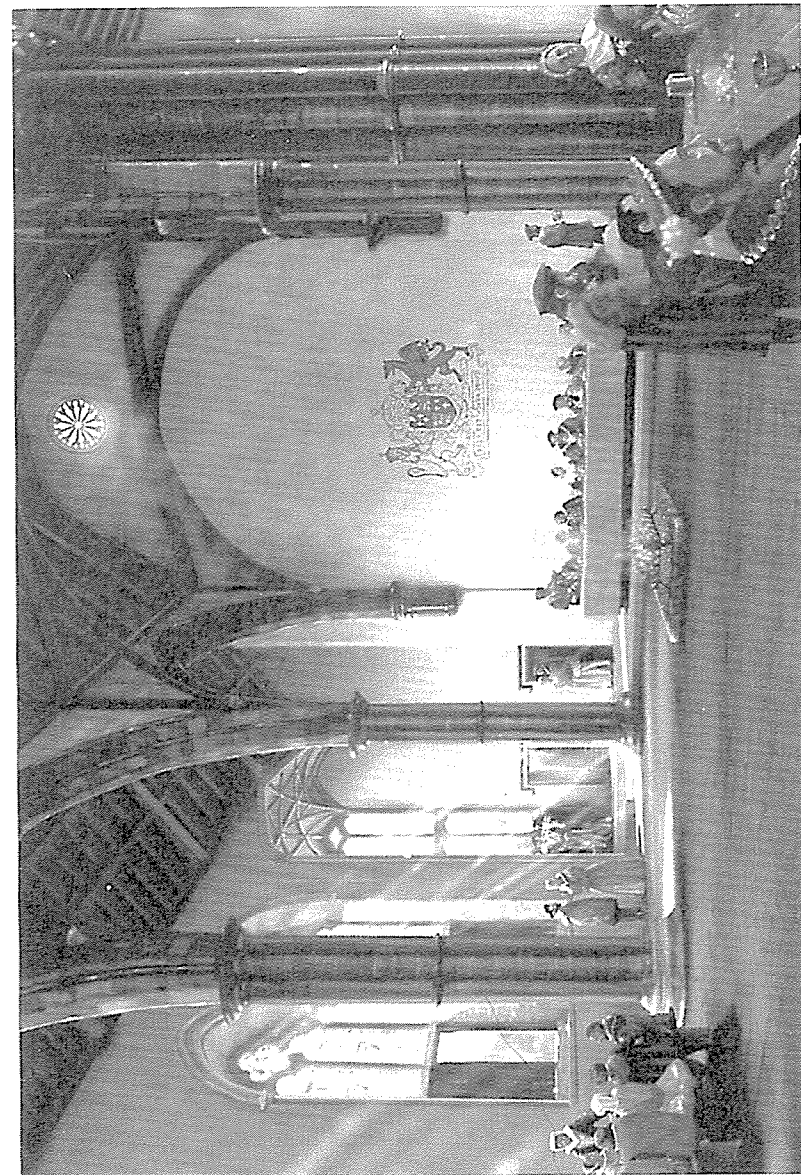


Figure 7.4 Lincoln Great Hall reconstruction

appeal of the building but what it signified: a new mode of corporeal splendour and elegance – a new, refined style of living and being.

I noted above that a disproportionate amount of attention had been paid to Henry III's great halls. Taking the longer view, these structures now seem somewhat derivative buildings based closely upon the precedents established by episcopal palace building in the second and third decades of the thirteenth century. Indeed, the royal accounts provide substantial evidence not only of Henry's employment of architects or designers from the episcopal milieu (such as Elias of Dereham),³³ but also of his direct emulation of their great halls. A well-known reference in the Close Rolls for 1243 records the building of the great hall at Dublin Castle for Henry III, which was ordered to be built '[o]ne hundred feet in length and eighty feet in width with sufficient glass windows and casements, after the fashion of the hall at Canterbury.'³⁴

The new fashion for expansive traceried windows, what are called 'upright windows' (*fenestrae estantivae*) in the royal accounts,³⁵ has often enough been seen as a Henrician invention, with a nod to Canterbury as a strange one-off appearance before entering royal architecture (Figure 7.5). Scholars have linked the luminescence supplied by these windows to the coronation blessing *Prospice*, which invokes God to 'Grant that the glorious dignity of the royal hall may shine before the eyes of all with the greatest splendor of kingly power and that it may seem to glow with the brightest rays and to glitter as if suffused by illumination of the utmost brilliance'.³⁶ This is a compelling suggestion, although the text in fact originates in the eleventh century when hall interiors were rather more gloomy, thus indicating that the text was originally referencing a traditional topos of royal majesty rather than anything in the built environment. The architectural evidence leaves little doubt that the new fashion for expansive upright windows (and thus luminosity) began in the episcopal not the royal milieu, where it served to heighten the religiosity and spectacle of the social meal and other performances. Henry III's emulation of the palaces of the episcopal elite – many of whom substantially ran the kingdom during his youth and were responsible

³³ Nicholas Vincent, 'Master Elias of Dereham (d. 1225): A Reassessment', in C.M. Barron and J. Stratford (eds), *The Church and Learning in Later Medieval Society: Essays in Honour of R.B. Dobson*, Proceedings of the 1999 Harlaxton Symposium (Donnington, 2002), pp. 128–59.

³⁴ Calendar of Close Rolls, 1242–47, 23.

³⁵ Brown, Colvin, and Taylor, *History of the King's Works*, p. 123.

³⁶ Dixon-Smith, 'Image and Reality', p. 80, n. 6, citing translation in Christopher Wilson, 'Rulers, Artificers and Shoppers: Richard II's remodelling of Westminster Hall, 1393–1399', in Dillian Gordon et al. (eds), *The Regal Image of Richard II and the Wilton Diptych* (London, 1997), pp. 33–60, at p. 34.



Figure 7.5 Winchester Great Hall, interior

for instituting the rigorous reforms of the post-Lateran (1215) period – is readily explicable within the contexts of the pedagogical tradition I have outlined above. As a boy king who was raised in the midst of these powerful ecclesiastics, it is not surprising to understand that much of his own architectural taste and his vision for corporeal splendour was formed as much in episcopal as royal circles.

One aspect of the influence of episcopal halls that we cannot trace with confidence in a royal setting is wall painting. The lack of evidence for the decoration of episcopal halls in the period and the wealth of evidence for Henrician programmes has tipped the scales in royal favour, but there seems every reason to suggest that episcopal halls were also originally adorned with an expansive range of painted images that likewise built upon the themes of etiquette and decorum considered above. Many of the images commissioned by Henry relate closely to courtesy and discourses on etiquette and comportment as much as they do to themes of royalty (such as the Virtues and Vices of the Painted Chamber at Westminster; see Figure 7.1). One overlooked example of a specific dialogue on etiquette appears to be the so-called *Camera Marculphi* in Westminster Palace, which Henry ordered to be painted in 1252 with the *Historia Salomonis et Marculphi*. The subjects were derived from the relatively recent (ca. 1200) *Dialogue of Solomon and Marcolf*, in which the rustic figure of Marcolph debates King Solomon in a parody of a scholarly *disputatio*.³⁷ Solomon and Marcolph engage in an active debate in which Solomon – the urbane and scholarly king – juxtaposes and corrects Marcolph's rusticity. The debate, in other words, is about conduct and etiquette, and Solomon's *urbanitas* defeats Marcolph's *rusticitas* and good conduct is vindicated.

Conclusions

It has been possible in this short chapter only to hint at some ways in which a civilizing process might be meaningful in an account of English secular architecture, and more broadly to hint at how an integrated history of architecture and etiquette in the period might be written. I have tried to argue that architecture was indeed the subject of a process of civilizing during the thirteenth century, due to the influx of new ideas of conduct and comportment emanating from the clerical world; in architectural terms this translated into a

³⁷ Ernest W. Tristram, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century* (London, 1950), pp. 89, 575. For the texts and textual traditions, see, *Solomon and Marcolf*, Harvard Studies in Medieval Latin 1, trans. Jan M. Ziolkowski (Cambridge, MA, 2008); for the visual traditions, see Michael Curschmann, 'Marcolf or Aesop? The Question of Identity in Visio-Verbal Contexts', *Studies in Iconography*, 21 (2000): 1–45.

new, sacral character for the hall interior through the employment of designs borrowed from the High Gothic church interior. I have of course necessarily been selective in my examples, and much remains to be said about how other aspects of secular design – the chapel, the chamber etc. – might fit into this history. Yet Elias's discourse on courtesy and civility – when read in the light of the important modifications by C.S. Jaeger – suits the architectural and social movements of Gothic England well: it helps to illustrate the broader ethical objectives and pedagogical processes involved in obtaining *curialitas*, and it significantly informs aspects of the style and functions of the buildings that housed and abetted it.