

Household Scribes and the Production of Literary Manuscripts in Early Modern England

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Abstract

In early modern English households, literate servants such as tutors, chaplains, stewards, secretaries, and ladies in waiting were well positioned to assist their employers in the assembly and copying of verse miscellanies, anthologies, and other literary manuscripts. Looking at several literary manuscripts, some with known servant contributions and others that suggest the participation of household retainers, the essay explores the likelihood that literate servants often performed scribal tasks above and beyond their formal job descriptions, even serving as scribe for their employers' hobbies and leisure activities. Although copying was an arduous task, servants appear to have viewed these duties not simply as part of their job but also as gift exchanges, as appeals for promotion or patronage, and as a means by which they might gain access to manuscript literature and literary circles. Studies of early modern letter writing have called attention to many of the copy tasks of literate household servants, but the integral role of literate servants in the collection, copying, and preservation of literary manuscripts deserves much more attention.

Keywords: Copyist, Household, Manuscript, Scribe, Servant, Verse Miscellany

In early modern English print culture, the names of publishers and printers appeared with regularity on title pages, where they earned book producers both credit for their labors and, occasionally, blame for a work's content. The standardization of producer attribution allowed the print industry to lead buyers to book stalls and to regulate the members of its official company, the Stationers. Although not every apprentice working the press was acknowledged in a publication, many of their names are nevertheless discoverable in the company's extensive records. As D.F. McKenzie notes, the Stationers' Register and other print industry documents 'probably represent the fullest account by far of any workforce in Early Modern England' (2002, 554).¹ In the same

¹ See also Arber 1875-1894.



time period, manuscript production was a much more anonymous process. The copyists who contributed to early modern literary manuscripts, from the casual scribbler to the practiced secretary, were rarely identified in the manuscripts or in contextual records. As Peter Beal has observed, print and manuscript production formed ‘a kind of paradoxical inversion’:

The wider the audience or market for the product, and the more mechanized the technology of production, the more detailed and personalized the information given about its production. Correspondingly, the narrower the audience, the more specifically targeted it is, and the more personalized both the means of production and mode of distribution ... the less need be said about it. (1998, 18)

Beal’s formula suggests that one place to look for these anonymous literary scribes is in the households of manuscript collectors and owners. Especially in the case of literary manuscripts assembled for the enjoyment of their owners, the copyists were likely to have been literate servants, friends, visitors, and neighbors close at hand. The familiarity of these copyists may have rendered their names unnecessary. Yet there is another equally sound explanation for their anonymity. Since the collecting of manuscript literature was a socially fashionable activity, those assisting a friend or employer in the enjoyment of this hobby might have eschewed labeling their activities as a labor or claiming their work as printers and craftsmen did (*ibid.*).²

The trend in manuscript studies of late, however, has been to look in another direction for the identity of these anonymous scribes – at the possibility that literary manuscript production was a commercial affair. Two pioneering studies by Harold Love and H.R. Woudhuysen are often cited for having uncovered evidence of professional and commercial scribal enterprises in the early years of print, and Beal is likewise credited for his work on the professional ‘feathery scribe’, whose hand appears in a variety of manuscripts, including a few that are literary (Woudhuysen 1996; Beal 1998; Love 1998). It is perhaps ironic, then, that these scholars also offer so much evidence that manuscript production was frequently non-commercial, and that literary manuscripts, in particular, were often compiled from materials acquired through social networks and copied within the collector’s household or by means of *ad hoc* commissions. Love, for instance, uses the term ‘scribal publication’ to describe not just ‘author publication’ and ‘entrepreneurial publication’, but also the ‘non-commercial replication’ of manuscripts, or what he calls ‘user publication’ (47). The seeming contradictions in these studies have much to do with their breadth; they discuss a wide range of manuscript

² For more on the fashionability of collecting manuscript literature, see Marotti 1995. For discussions of the ambiguous social status of pen-men, see Beal 1998, 10 and throughout, and Goldberg 1991.

producers, and they compare practices across several decades. These studies are likewise attempting to give definition to a culture that produced very disparate products, from the university poetic miscellany to the subscription newsletter to the sought-after libel distributed widely as propaganda. Unlike the products of the print industry, the variety of manuscripts from the period were not produced or disseminated in any standardized way. Thus the studies by Beal, Love, and Woudhuysen document both professional and amateur manuscript production and prove invaluable for their many rich examples of household manuscript production, for their insightful analyses of the roles of secretaries and amanuenses in the household, and for their judicious admissions that, before the middle of the seventeenth century, there is little direct evidence that *literary* manuscripts were produced and sold on speculation.³

Mark Bland offers a helpful distinction between commercial and non-commercial manuscripts that allows me to situate household copyists amidst the many types of pen-men discussed by Beal, Love, and Woudhuysen. Even when non-commercial manuscripts were used to advertise one's skills or to woo a patron, 'their distribution through a network depended on connection, not coin' (2010, 83). Based on this definition, a collector's commission of a long project from a scrivener or the purposefully broad distribution of a manuscript libel would not count strictly as commercial. Most literary manuscripts fall into Bland's non-commercial category. Professional copyists were occasionally employed in making literary manuscripts, but literary manuscript production was initiated, more often than not, by would-be owners seeking to make and record social and literary connections rather than by entrepreneurial copyists.⁴

This broader notion of non-commercial manuscript production is particularly useful in exploring verse miscellanies and other literary manuscripts produced for personal use, and it allows me to take a step back from the

³ Woudhuysen suggests that scriptorium publishing may have existed before the Restoration, but also concedes that it 'may also be a particular feature of the Restoration' (1996, 19). Beal argues that the feathery scribe worked with a scriptorium, though only a few of his products were literary (1998, 104 and throughout). Beal also summarizes the problem of finding evidence of early modern scribal enterprises (1-30). Love explains that, although he is exploring organized scribal publication, 'it would be a mistake to assume too great a degree of regularity and too high a degree of organization in the procedure by which scribal texts were written, copied and communicated' in the period (1998, 32). More recently, Eckhardt has argued for a re-examination of 'amateur involvement' in the production of manuscript verse miscellanies with attention to household as an important locus for manuscript production (2009, 18-20).

⁴ Woudhuysen acknowledges that many of the period's surviving manuscripts appear to be non-commercial (1996, 145). His careful and qualified presentation of evidence is exemplified on pp. 25 and 157-158, where he notes that only a few verse miscellanies seem to be produced by known professional scribes, and when professional hands do appear in miscellanies, this is not necessarily evidence of a commercial enterprise.

direction of manuscript studies to reexamine the production of verse miscellanies within households. Those who undertook to assemble these manuscripts needed access to manuscript networks, leisure time for a hobby, and a good understanding of the pleasures and values of participating in these social practices. It is conventional to describe miscellany compilation as a 'coterie' activity, but such a label suggests that manuscript networks were comprised primarily of friends and family members of relatively equal class status, and it belies the broader participation of literate servants in literary collecting. The potentially substantive role of the literate household servant in manuscript production deserves much more attention, as does the possibility that servant-employer relationships may have been integral to the manuscript connections and networks that carried poetry from collector to collector. As I explore the likelihood that secretaries, tutors, chaplains, and stewards were the anonymous copyists of many literary manuscripts, I consider especially what it might mean for retainers to serve in this way, performing sometimes arduous tasks in the interest of their employers' hobbies. Many of these literate servants were not secretaries or copyists by definition, but their skills in using a pen were nevertheless tapped when the leisure activities of their employers required a scribe. Their *ad hoc* labors, which were to varying degrees professional but also non-commercial, and which situated them somewhere between members of a literary circle and professional scribes, help to resolve some of the contradictions in recent accounts of manuscript culture. By rebalancing just a bit the valuable evidence uncovered by scholars of manuscript production, literate servants emerge as core participants in early modern manuscript culture.

The observations in this article offer a subtle correction not only to research that explores commercial manuscript production in the age of print but also to those studies of coterie circulation where copyists, when they are acknowledged at all, have either been reduced to the status of hired scribes or absorbed into coterie circles as equals.⁵ The term 'coterie' is often intentionally artificial, a line drawn by critics around a set of individuals in order to examine something they have in common, whether an association with a particular court or patron, an affiliation with an educational institution, or participation in a literary exchange. The term is also used for characterizing

⁵ The seminal book on coterie culture, Marotti 1986, tends to see coterie circles as groups of equals and to absorb potential servants into this circle. See also O'Callaghan, who writes that 'convivial practices [such as verse exchange] were intended to facilitate social exchanges among the elite and affirm social identity, designating the participants as cultivated and learned men fit to participate in the structures of governance' (2007, 5). Other pertinent studies of coterie culture include McDowell 2009. Although class difference is addressed in these books in discussions of patronage and patronage circles, the potential centrality of high level servants and their employers to coterie culture is not examined in depth.

certain self-defining and self-idealizing early modern social and intellectual circles, and it is frequently employed in studies of friendship and sociability, where mutuality rather than service is the focus (see, especially, Trolander and Tenger 2007). Recent reevaluations of the term 'coterie' have argued that it obscures the actual social reach, complexity, overlap, and inclusivity and exclusivity of literary networks (see, for instance, de Groot 2006). Many recent scholars of manuscript circulation prefer to use 'literary community' and 'scribal network' instead of 'coterie', because these terms more readily capture the broad and flexible contours of working literary networks (see, for instance, Eckhardt 2009, 20; May and Wolfe 2010, 132-134).

My use of the term 'household' here is intended to build upon the idea of the broader literary network, even though a household is itself a somewhat circumscribed set of individuals, where participants, albeit of varying occupations and classes, share a sense of association and membership. By using 'household', I want to call attention to verse collectors' reliance on the proximity and convenience of literate household members and the easy reciprocity of favors that a household community allowed, though household members clearly had more extensive literary connections outside of this milieu that fed and were fed by the literary projects in the household. I am also using the term 'household' to better understand the shifting and ambiguous social positions of the anonymous literate servants who copied so many manuscripts for amateur collectors. Their employment as scribes functioned to both define their positions as servants and to enable them to broaden their own literary networks. As such, literate household servants occupy a unique position, not one that invites a fixed definition, but certainly one that invites more critical scrutiny.

Any of a number of household servants and retainers were probably called upon when a literary collector needed copy assistance. Mark Bland suggests that 'an employee who wrote regularly, such as a steward or tutor, might be asked to help with other transcriptions' (2010, 98). Woudhuysen cites the apt example of John Langley, a household steward and tutor who seems to have copied poetry for his master, Lionel Cranfield, the first Earl of Middlesex (1996, 84). Although evidence regarding personal secretaries is not plentiful, Woudhuysen has uncovered a few instances in which secretaries contributed to literary projects: Francis Bacon had retainers copy literature, Henry Wotton's secretary copied poems for Wotton or possibly for himself, and Rowland Woodward copied John Donne poems for his employer (1996, 83-84). The literary copying done by John Rolleston, William Cavendish's secretary, has also earned a great deal of attention (see, for instance, Kelliher 1993; Eckhardt 2009). We know of several cases in which family members assisted; Sir John Harington's daughters copied poems into British Library Manuscript Additional 36529, perhaps as academic exercises or for their own entertainment, but also perhaps as a form of service (Heale 2010, 150-155). Scriveners were sometimes commissioned for large projects, but it is doubtful that members of scribal professions such as law

clerks and scribes played a major part in copying literary manuscripts.⁶ And one cannot forget that many collectors ‘served as their own secretaries’ – this phrase is quite common – purposely assuming the role of literate servant for reasons of efficiency or as a gesture of humility and intimacy.

Although it would be advantageous (in the absence of names) to be able to generalize about those copyists who entered literary texts into early modern manuscripts, it is significant that they are hard to type. They come from many different professions, backgrounds, classes, and situations, and they make use of their copy skills in different ways, too.⁷ Competing models of service in the period probably contributed to the diversity of the scribal labor pool. One finds some literate servants, such as Francis Bacon’s chaplain William Rawley, enjoying long-term service to one family, and music tutor Thomas Whythorne, working with shorter-term contracts. I discuss both of these servants below. Still other servants accepted piecemeal jobs on a regular basis. My essay does not delve into critical arguments about the emergence of contractual service and cash wages, except to observe that competing models of service in the period seem to have afforded collectors more variety but also fewer regular sources of scribal labor.⁸ In other words, would-be manuscript owners had several places to turn to when they needed a copyist, but none of the options was consistently practical, reliable, or available. The diversity and ambiguity of potential manuscript copyists could be said to characterize post-print manuscript culture more generally; as print became the more speculative commercial industry in the sixteenth century, the scribal profession, which could include university-educated government clerks and also common scribes, lost some clarity. A growing number of university men seeking employment, increases in literacy in the general population, and the gravitation of career scribes to legal and governmental copying diversified (perhaps even watered down) the pool of copyists available for leisure projects. Would-be owners of manuscript literature, for reasons of convenience and perhaps for lack of a ready industry, sought help from whomever was willing and close at hand.⁹

What this disparate group of copyists seems to share is that the copying of *literature* was not their primary occupation. Only in the cases of scholars hired by antiquarians and amanuenses hired as retainers might literary copying be an everyday responsibility. Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos argues that service contracts

⁶ Woudhuysen 1996, 62, 145, 157. See the chapter ‘Producers’ for the possible contributors to literary copying (29-87).

⁷ A number of studies observe that servants are not a unified class. See, for instance, Weil 2005, 2-4.

⁸ For pertinent arguments about early modern service, see Burnett 1997; Evett 2005; Rivlin 2012.

⁹ For a more detailed discussion of the difficulties of enlisting scribes in post-print England, see North 2011.

in early modern England were often informal, and other scholars have observed that servants regularly performed tasks outside of their primary duties (2008, 59). R.C. Barnett offers an example from 1581, when William Cecil hosted a dinner for a visiting embassy from France and employed his secretaries as interpreters and serving men (2012, 7-8). While on diplomatic duties in Venice, Henry Wotton engaged his chaplain in translating King James's controversial *Premonition to all most Mighty Monarchs* (1609) into Italian (Wotton 1907, I, 466). In her study of English noble households before 1600, Kate Mertes notes that high level servants were often tasked with responsibilities outside of their formal contractual titles. These duties were often managerial or secretarial, because employers needed servants they could trust for matters involving money, diplomacy, and correspondence (1988, 21-25, 42-43, 47-48). The late fifteenth-century gentlewoman Elizabeth Stoner employed several gentlewomen as companions, though one of them also functioned as her amanuensis (*ibid.*, 43). Although Mertes' focus is earlier than most of my examples here, the points that she makes about Tudor household service remain applicable. Job descriptions do not seem to have defined the true responsibilities of trusted literate servants in a household.

The flexibility of high-level servants makes it difficult to determine under what terms, with what recompense, and with what sort of agency copy labor might have been performed. Negotiations were rarely if ever recorded. The unusual duties of household servants could be evidence that they were at the mercy of their employers' whims, or conversely, that they used their positions to enjoy a leisure activity and to participate in a system of favor and gift exchange. Literature often functioned as an appeal to patronage or as a gift in itself, and it is possible that the production of literary manuscripts was not considered work in the narrow sense, but rather, as an exchange of favors. The diverse groups of copyists who assisted with literary manuscripts also share something else, a direct connection with the would-be owner of a literary manuscript. The fact that owners negotiated *ad hoc* for scribal labor means that they were often closely involved with the manuscript production process and with the enlisted scribes. Although such collaboration between collector and copyist does not make the relationship an equal one, it argues that scribal labors were possibly rewarded through patronage, reciprocal favors, or through the activity itself rather than through payment.¹⁰ By way of contrast, when works were sent out to be copied by a scrivener, records are much more plentiful, as the early seventeenth-century letters of Henry Wotton attest (Wotton 1907).¹¹

¹⁰ Woudhuysen notes that manuscript owners rarely record how they acquired a manuscript or what they paid for it (1996, 51).

¹¹ See, for example, his promise to send a work out to be copied for Lord Zouche (Wotton 1907, II, 255). In another letter to Lord Zouche, Wotton claims that a work sent out to be copied is not yet finished (II, 288).

In the following pages, this essay analyzes more closely some of the available examples of household servants participating in the copying of early modern literary manuscripts. My investigation asks not only what role these servants played in the production and transmission of literary manuscripts, but also how the service of literary copying defined their status in the household, positioning them as employees at the beck and call of their employers, as participants in the exchange of favors, as contributing members of a literary community, or some combination of these possibilities. In gathering examples and background, I have surveyed several different kinds of evidence – household accounts, familiar and official letters, diaries and memoirs, prefaces to printed works that discuss a text's history, and literary manuscripts themselves. In my secondary research, I have tapped studies of household and secretarial service, work on manuscript transmission and collection, research on patronage and gift exchange, and histories of letter writing and transmission. I owe a great deal to H.R. Woudhuysen, although our conclusions differ, and also to James Daybell, whose study of letter-writing connects household servants and *ad hoc* scribal labor most convincingly (Woudhuysen 1996; Daybell 2012). Most studies say little about the relationship that household servants had to the scribal labors they performed, partly because direct evidence of their participation is so scarce. I have tried to cobble together a few tentative answers here and, when evidence does not allow it, to point to questions that are worth asking.

Although we have the names of very few of the scribes who copied literature into early modern manuscripts, the music tutor and composer Thomas Whythorne offers us an invaluable exception (Whythorne 1961). The relationships that he documents in his autobiography between literate servants and their employers offer one of the most intriguing pictures of the broad responsibilities of retainers and how their literacy was tapped. Whythorne (c. 1528-1596) served in numerous noble households during his career, most often as tutor but also as a serving man and once as a financial agent while his employer was abroad. His difficulty in negotiating the flirtations of some of his mistresses and fellow servants only highlights the ambiguous status of a literate servant. As a music tutor especially, he participated in the leisure activities of the households, writing poetry, composing, and performing music on a regular basis. His conversations with his employers were often social and friendly. On the other hand, he seems to have been very much at the mercy of some of his employers, hoping desperately for the security of an annuity, and moving from job to job when the fortunes or favors of his employers changed. He also exhibits an awareness of the social hierarchy, both in instances when he proceeds with caution in responding to the advances of a mistress, in instances when he should scold an adult pupil but does not, and also in instances when he challenges the superiority of fellow servants who are hoping to climb higher than him. His position is clearly one in between class categories.

The complexity of Whythorne's status is typical of educated servants in elite households. In examining the correspondence of household secretary Edmund Molyneux and the Sidney family for which he worked, Lynne Magnusson observes that the well-born Molyneux occasionally suffered from Philip Sidney's curt rebukes but also enjoyed the sincere affections of matriarch Mary Sidney and favors from patriarch Sir Henry Sidney nearly equal to those he awarded his sons (1998, 803, 813). Early modern servants, Magnusson explains, 'were not drawn from any single social class or status group: a very large proportion of the population was employed as servants at some stage in their lives, including those deriving from high-ranking families, most often for a transitional period during youth or early adulthood' (803-804). She identifies serving-men as belonging to the more privileged set of retainers who had daily access to their masters and joined them in their 'employments and pastimes' (804). Secretaries and tutors appear to have enjoyed an even higher status, if Molyneux and Whythorne are typical examples. Early in his career, for instance, Whythorne is hesitant to take a position that requires him to work as both serving man and music tutor:

A skoolmaster I did not mislyk, but to be A serving kreatiur or serving man, it was so lyk the lyf of A water spannel þat must be at kommaundement to fetch or bring heer or karry þar, with all kynd of drudzery, þat I kowld not lyk of þat lyf. (1961, 37)

Out of necessity, however, he takes this position. As he gains experience and respectability, he is able to negotiate the terms for one stint as a music tutor and insist that he have the status of a friend rather than a servant (94). Whythorne's privileges also seem to have varied according to the status of his employers. In the household of a privy councilor, he seems to socialize with the servants, and in less elite households, with the householders themselves. In his capacity as music tutor, he shared his poetry and music with his employers on a regular basis and shared in their leisure activities to some extent (95).

The evidence for Whythorne's participation in literary copying comes primarily from his description of his first position, in the household of author John Heywood, though we can assume that he occasionally performed similar services in other households. As Heywood's 'servant and skoller' (13), Whythorne was immersed in a literary environment. When Heywood was preparing to publish various pieces of his work, including lyrics to be sung, a book of English proverbs, and a dramatic interlude, it was Whythorne's responsibility to make fair copies (13-14). These facts suggest that Whythorne's primary responsibilities were as amanuensis to Heywood, though he also served as Heywood's pupil, his 'skoller', in music and poetry writing. As an amanuensis, Whythorne had access to much of Heywood's literary output, and he copied many items by Heywood a second time into his own miscellany, a manuscript now lost. About Heywood's compositions, he writes:

befor þe wer published I did wryt owt for him, or had þe yvs of þem to read þem. and I hav þe copiez of most of þem in A book at þis present of myn own wryting. (14)

Whythorne also helped Heywood with his own collecting of others' works, copying poetry by Henry Howard, the earl of Surrey, and Sir Thomas Wyatt, among other items (14). He acknowledges what he gained from reading the items he was copying, 'I a<ft>erward gav my self to imitat and follow þeir trads and devyses in wryting <a>z okkazions moved me' (14). Indeed, Whythorne includes many of his own compositions in his autobiography and details with whom he shared his poems. Although his service to Heywood was more scribal than his later positions, it is very likely that Whythorne's skills as a copyist were tapped on numerous occasions as he worked as a tutor, musician, and financial agent. Certainly, the fact that one employer first hired him as a tutor and then later as his personal financial agent demonstrates that employers would take advantage of whatever talents a literate servant brought with him and that formal job descriptions were not adhered to strictly (136). Although he was probably paid by Heywood for his copy labors, Whythorne later uses composing and copying his own works in gift exchanges with both friends and employers (45, 66, 100-102, 120). His intrigues with various women account for some of the gifts he gives and receives, but they also illustrate the mix of social and professional obligations that defined his service. Whythorne's employment in several sixteenth-century households was never very simple. Perhaps it is his tendency to dramatize the personal in his autobiography, but each household seems to bring with it a new negotiation between his formal duties as tutor and the challenges of the other services he is expected to perform.

Anne Southwell's manuscript miscellany (Folger Shakespeare Library V.b.198), compiled in the 1620s and 1630s, bears witness to the name of another household servant who assisted with literary copying. Numerous hands are represented in this collection of poems, letters, receipts, and miscellaneous materials. Southwell's own distinct hand can be seen correcting fair copies of her own work, revising, and composing. Her second husband, Captain Henry Sibthorpe, also contributed to the manuscript and owned it at her death. The other copyists, some of whom produced fair copies of Southwell's works or entered miscellaneous poems and other items, are not identified directly in relation to their literary entries. Still, there are close similarities between the hands that copy these entries and those of several witnessed rent receipts and agreements near the back of the manuscript (ff. 71-72). Samuel Rowson, for instance, appears to have been a member of Southwell's household from at least 1632 to 1636, the dates of the receipts that he copied and witnessed.¹² Southwell lived in Acton, Middlesex, from

¹² Victoria Burke also guesses that Rowson and others were household servants (2002, 95).

1631 until her death, and this may be where much of Rowson's copying took place (Klene 2004, xxi). His participation during these years is confirmed by Jonathan Gibson, who dates various sections of the Southwell miscellany and calls attention to Rowson's presence after 1632 (2010, 217-221; 2012, 89). The fact that Rowson served in the capacity of a witness and scribe may indicate that his primary duties in the Southwell-Sibthorpe household were managerial or secretarial. He was nevertheless also willing to copy literary texts on several occasions, and when one looks only at the leaves of Southwell's miscellany that have not been tipped in, Rowson emerges as one of the most important scribes in V.b.198's compilation.¹³ Although his hand varies, making certain identification difficult, he probably copied over two dozen leaves of the manuscript. Rowson's hand is found entering poems such as 'Nature, Mistris off affection' (f. 11v), poems attributed to Anne Southwell (f. 22r) and a bestiary toward the end of the miscellany (ff. 68r-v). As Gibson warns, the entries in the Southwell manuscript were not copied sequentially or chronologically, so it is not possible to determine if Rowson's copy duties spanned as many years as his witnessing duties (2012, 88-94). Still, the possibility is intriguing. Rowson's entries are scattered throughout the manuscript, and although he may have copied them in different places as an organizational strategy, changes in ink and in the character of his writing suggest that he did not enter all of the items at once. The multiple and relatively short stints offer further proof that Rowson resided in the Southwell-Sibthorpe household; a collector with half a dozen poems and short prose pieces to enter into a miscellany was unlikely to seek a professional copyist, especially if the household was large enough to include literate servants.

Rowson's potentially extended participation in the production of this literary miscellany also argues that he was able to enjoy the manuscript as a reader and not simply as a hired hand. He may have made the decision to cluster the poetry near the beginning of the manuscript and the prose near the end (Gibson 2012, 89). His interest in the politics of continental Protestantism may be reflected in the two elegies for Gustavus Adolphus and one for Elizabeth Stuart, Queen of Bohemia, that he copied in the same general section of the manuscript (ff. 22r, 24r-v). On the other hand, these elegies may simply follow from the preceding elegies on Southwell's acquaintances that were entered in a hand somewhat similar to Henry Sibthorpe's. Poems attributed to Anne Southwell appear in both of these stints, and it could be that Sibthorpe began a designated set of entries only to hand the pen to Rowson. We cannot know for certain whether Rowson offered his copy services for the pleasure of accessing

¹³ Gibson observes that folios 16r-23v make up a booklet added to the main manuscript before Rowson began his contributions. The addition of this booklet precedes the tipping in of leaves containing some of Southwell's poetry (2010, 218-219).

the literature that Southwell and Sibthorpe wrote and acquired, for the favors it might earn him as an ambitious servant, or because it was somehow part of his duties in the household, but some mix of these possibilities seems most likely. Whether for service or for pleasure, Rowson's participation in the literary manuscript production at Acton was potentially significant. As a household copyist involved in the compilation of this manuscript at different times over several years, there is every reason to think he may have helped with the circulation and acquisition of verse and prose items, with the selection of entries, and with more editorial tasks. Whatever the extent of his participation in his employer's manuscript projects, it is unlikely that Rowson was simply a hired copyist performing a prescribed task with no real investment in the use of the manuscript. Rowson's broader investment in the Southwell-Sibthorpe household is evident in his mixed duties. If literate servants were flexible enough to take on literary scribal duties, then they were also flexible enough to make more of these scribal duties than a scrivener would.

It may be no coincidence that some of the best evidence of scribal service in households comes from manuscripts owned by women. Many elite literate women made greater use of secretaries for small projects, because their less practiced handwriting made such tasks more laborious. A woman of the middling classes, however, was probably even more inclined to seek copy assistance. Ann Bowyer, a draper's daughter who compiled a personal manuscript in the first decade of the seventeenth century, copied some but not all of the poems, wise sayings, and miscellaneous items in Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 51. One of the other hands in the manuscript probably belongs to a household member who is learning to write (Burke 2001, section 12). But a third hand appears to be a competent copyist, perhaps a tutor and maybe even a literate apprentice. On folio 7r, Bowyer copies 10 ½ lines of Donne's 'A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning'. Another hand with a sharper quill takes over immediately after Bowyer enters the word 'trepidations' (Burke 2009, 60-62). It would not make sense for Bowyer to hire a scrivener to finish so short a poem. What we might be seeing here is a collaboration of sorts among household members, whereby Bowyer can both request a favor from a servant or family member near at hand and share a personal interest in the same gesture.

The change of hands and the pause at 'trepidations' tempt one to read this division of labor in the context of the poem's message. The two lovers anticipate physical separation but take consolation in their spiritual unity, exemplified by the expanse of gold leaf the goldsmith's hammer produces and the feet of the drafting compass that must separate to create a perfect circle. Yet the division of labor in this poem may not be intentional at all. Bowyer might have tired and left the poem for a friend to finish. It is just as plausible that she was interrupted, for she has paused mid-line with the rhyme unresolved. If something in Ann Bowyer's life competed with her desire to possess this poem – a younger sibling, another labor, or even the copyist who finishes the

poem for her – she would not be alone. The majority of compilers of personal miscellanies had competing obligations. We may only get a glimpse of them in poems like Bowyer's 'Valediction', but other responsibilities may have significantly influenced the choices compilers made. The fact that collecting manuscript literature was a time-consuming hobby argues that hours had to be carved out of busy days to work on a manuscript. The reliance on household scribes in this situation makes a lot of sense. Literate servants would be near at hand when a collector was interrupted. Manuscripts with many changes of hand may offer evidence that servants, too, were interrupted, and that some miscellanies were pieced together a few items at a time as household business allowed. Not surprisingly, quite a few manuscript miscellanies exhibit the pattern of shared labor found in Bowyer's manuscript. In considering servant-employee collaboration in leisure activities, it might be profitable to ask not only whether an activity counted as leisure for the servant but also whether the master or the servant controlled the time spent on an activity.

Interpreting the relationships between scribes and manuscript owners is mostly speculative, but there are logical inferences that can help us understand the production and social uses of these collections in the household. Long stints in a single, neat hand may point to the commission of a professional copyist or to the enlistment of a dedicated servant for a specific, extended task, thus taking that servant away from other duties. Short stints entered at different times in different hands argue that the miscellany compilation was a shared leisure activity in the household, but also one subject to interruption, time constraints, and perhaps a slow stream of source texts. The significant presence of the owner's hand, as a scribe and not simply as a corrector, also signals a household endeavor, and the collector's hand generally offers evidence about his or her control over the copyists. In the Elizabethan sections of the Arundel Harington Manuscript, Sir John Harington has copied the first few lines of several poems or sets of poems, but left the greater part of the labors to other copyists (Hughey 1960, I, 32-33; II, 276, 301, 303). A poem beginning 'And thinkes thow I have nowght to load', a fragment of a university libel, shows the work of seven different copyists, beginning with a title inscribed by Sir John (Hughey 1960, II, 276). Although we do not know for certain that Harington's assistance came from a household servant, it seems likely. The small projects that Harington began – the longest of which is a sequence of twenty-one Constable sonnets – would not necessarily merit a professional commission (Hughey 1960, I, 336). Harington had several secretaries in his large household, and a number of literary manuscripts originating with Harington and his father have survived. Harington's control over the entries in the Arundel Harington Manuscript may indicate that he was working with inferiors rather than with friends, though the university libel has the markings of a collaboration. The more typical division of labor, found in the instances when Harington begins poems, strikes a reader as quite different from the one in the Bowyer manuscript, where the copying

might better be described as shared. This does not mean that the Harington copyists did not enjoy the task at hand, but, with a few exceptions, they seem to have been more at the mercy of the collector than other scribes were.

Harvard MS Eng. 703 offers another example of a verse miscellany in which the divisions of labor within the manuscript itself point to the employment of household scribes. This collection of verse and prose belonged to Henry Cholmley and was compiled between 1624 and 1641 (Beal 1980, 1987, II, 44). It contains several poems by Thomas Carew, other fashionable verse of the early Stuart years, and poems associated with Cholmley's friends and family (de Groot 2006, 196-199). The stints by most of the copyists are relatively short, and the manuscript is marked by several changes of hand. A hand identified as Henry Cholmley's copies more poems than any other, with two longish stints at the beginning of the miscellany. The dozen or so subsequent copyists are much less prolific. There is a cluster of five poems by Thomas Carew in a single hand on folios 29-31, and this is a typical entry. The Carew sequence makes its subject the cruel mistress, describing the temptations the lover faces and the complaints he voices as he deals with her disdain. The most familiar of the group, 'Know Celia, since thou art so proud', functions in this cluster as a response to the two complaints that precede it. In 'Know Celia' the poet threatens to 'uncreate' Celia, whose 'killing power' he gave to her in the first place (Eng. 703, f. 30, ll. 14, 7). Carew is not identified as the author of the group.

The copyist of this cluster is also anonymous, though unlikely to be a scrivener or industry professional. With Cholmley's dominant presence in the manuscript, the short additions in other hands are more likely to be the work of household members. Someone near at hand was enlisted or volunteered to enter the Carew poems, which either Cholmley, his source manuscript, or the scribe himself recognized as a neat thematic cluster. In this case, the scribe might have been a friend or relative. The fact that Cholmley has added a subscript below a poem on folio 19, 'by my brother Sr Hugh Cholmley', may be evidence that Henry Cholmley's brother was involved with the manuscript's production. Jerome de Groot (2006) has identified several other members of Cholmley's circle from historical sources and references in the manuscript itself, though de Groot does not look beyond the elite members of the coterie or consider the household more broadly. Cholmley's neighborhood connections were extensive, but there are simply too many hands in the manuscript to grant them all to Cholmley's brother and friends. The practiced hand that adds several fashionable poems by Henry Wotton, Ben Jonson, and others between folios 31v and 37v may be that of a secretary, for instance, as is perhaps the hand that adds a tongue-in-cheek prose exchange between Mr. Chudleigh and Sir Nicholas Selwin accusing and defending a woman of administering a potion of hate to an admirer (Eng. 703, ff. 43-49). Smaller stints of one or two items are also common, and are typical of a manuscript compiled over time.

In Harvard MS Eng. 703, one again finds a poem split between two copyists. ‘Snatched from our longing, hoping eyes’ is an elegy on the 1629 death of King Charles’s newborn son (ff. 40-41). The hand that begins this elegy is the same hand that copied the Carew cluster earlier in the manuscript. The second hand belongs to Cholmley himself. The fact that the Carew hand appears again in the same poem with Cholmley offers further proof that this copyist was a member of Cholmley’s household. In comparison to Sir John Harington’s method of having secretaries finish his poems, and Ann Bowyer’s instance of handing the pen to another household member, Cholmley seems to have accepted the pen from his copyist. It may even be the same pen. In the section of the poem that he copies, Cholmley leaves a purposeful space between his sixth and seventh lines. We know that Cholmley’s spacing is deliberate, because he does not divide any of the other lines of this poem into stanzas or otherwise leave spaces. This gap suggests that he might have intervened in the copying of this item because of uncertainty about two lines in the middle of the verse. Perhaps the lines were illegible or missing in his source text, and his copyist sought his assistance. Cholmley’s solution was to leave room for two lines on the manuscript leaf:

how could fresh innocense endure
and ayre our sinns made so impure

though shelterd in a glorious wombe
he hasts from thense in to a tombe (f. 41, ll. 17-20)

The forty-eight lines of the Harvard version do not necessarily seem incomplete, but a thirty-two line version in Bodleian Library Ashmole 38 indicates that epitaphs of different lengths were in circulation.

Even though Cholmley finishes rather than starts the epitaph for the infant prince, the divisions of labor seem to point to his editorial agency. He took charge of a problematic poem and made a decision about how to account for lines he thought might be missing. Cholmley may also have been planning to proofread and correct this section of the manuscript at a later time. Like many owners of verse miscellanies, Cholmley double checked the work of several copyists, correcting mistakes and adding titles or subscripts. On folio 50, for instance, Cholmley inserted a missing line into a poem entered by a third scribe. Sometimes corrections such as these are evidence that an owner is proofreading the efforts of a professional scribe, but probably not in this case. The items entered by the two copyists on folios 41 and 50 of the Cholmley manuscript are very small contributions, not projects one would send out of the house to have completed. Cholmley is almost certainly correcting two members of his household. If they are literate servants, Cholmley’s editorial agency can be read as a sign of his social advantage, even in the collaborative enjoyment of a hobby.

The manuscripts compiled by Southwell, Bowyer, Harington, and Cholmley each offer us a different picture of the lines between professional and amateur and the relationship between master or mistress and servant, yet all of them seem to have been produced with household labor. Although the work of scribes was considered a menial labor by some, unworthy of a nobleman, the fashionable practice of collecting and recording manuscript literature was pursued nevertheless by compilers with means and leisure. The hand copying that went into producing manuscripts was difficult work, but because handwriting was also associated with intimacy, authenticity, cultured tastes, good government, and the immediacy of a social exchange of gifts, even the most elite wielded the pen on occasion (Goldberg 1991, 109-170; Daybell 2012, 86-87). Inherent in the practice of collecting manuscript literature are many class paradoxes. It was an activity that involved the master-collector in the details of labor and production, and it was an activity that gave servants a chance to read, gather, and trade manuscript literature that had not reached print. The exchange of products and services in the production of literary manuscripts in the household seems to have been modeled on favor and gift exchange rather than on other service models, though the collectors of several of the miscellanies maintain their editorial control. Although the evidence is scarce that might tell us exactly what agreements existed between collectors and copyists, one might imagine a spectrum, whereby very ambitious copy projects required a commission and monetary exchange, while the modest rhythm of household verse collecting allowed masters and servants to negotiate informally and to share a cultural fashion across class lines. Very elite households could employ their literate servants for major projects, too, which means that some professional-looking manuscripts in a single hand may still be the work of a household servant. We cannot be certain that servants enjoyed scribal labors, but the fact that Whythorne and others took advantage of such labors to collect manuscript literature for themselves argues that the mutual interest was at least part of the reward.

Those secretaries, chaplains, and tutors who were themselves literary collectors offer another perspective on the functions of literate servants. For the servant-collector, employment in a well-connected family granted him access to elite manuscript networks. This was certainly the case for Thomas Whythorne while he worked for John Heywood in the middle of the sixteenth century. In the Elizabethan period, the same could be said for Henry Stanford, who served as tutor to the Paget family and chaplain for the Carey family and whose miscellany preserves a surprisingly rich collection of late Elizabethan courtier verse (May 1988; North 1998). One finds another excellent example of a servant-collector in Thomas Manne, who was amanuensis to Henry King in the early seventeenth century and who compiled his own collection of poetry (British Library MS Additional 58215), in which King and his

circle are prominently represented (Hobbs 1992, 82-86).¹⁴ Collector-servants who copied literary manuscripts for their master or mistress may have viewed the access this task afforded as an expected perk. The fact that we have so few records of payments or contracts for service is perhaps evidence that copy labor was defined differently from other types of labor; it was the exercise of a servant's talents and good will in the interest of mutual pleasure with the promise of future and less tangible rewards. This alternative definition of copy labor may have been particular to the copying *in* households. It would certainly not apply to the copying of literary manuscripts by scribes or clerks for a commission, even if the would-be manuscript owner was deeply involved in the project.

Another high level servant offers us a sense of how these less tangible rewards might have worked. William Rawley, who served Sir Francis Bacon as a chaplain and secretary, was a household retainer whose ambiguous responsibilities allowed him to take full advantage of the access to literary culture that his employer afforded him. Bacon must have been impressed with Rawley, for he offered him many favors and recommended him for several positions, both before and after his disgrace. Rawley remained with Bacon until Bacon's death and later edited many of his works (Stewart 2004). It is clear from Rawley's later investment in Bacon's works that he treasured the intellectual atmosphere in Bacon's household. In a 1657 preface to Bacon's *Resuscitatio*, a collection of Bacon's short works, letters, and papers to which Rawley added a biography, Rawley describes the type of service he provided to Bacon and how it prepared him to become Bacon's chief early editor:

Having been employed, as an *Amanuensis*, or dayly instrument, to this *Honourable Authour*; And acquainted with his *Lordships* Conceits, in the composing, of his *Works*, for many years together; Especially, in his writing time; I conceived, that no Man, could pretend a better Interest, or Claim, to the ordering of them, after his Death, then myself. (Bacon 1657, sig. [(a)3])

Given that Rawley accepted positions as chaplain to both Charles I and Charles II after Bacon's death, one might question whether Rawley's formal duties in the Bacon household were initially scribal or spiritual. In spite of his claim to be Bacon's amanuensis in the preface to *Resuscitatio*, on the title page, Rawley identifies himself as 'Doctor in Divinity, His Lordships First, and Last, CHAPLEINE. Afterwards, CHAPLEINE, to His late Maiesty'. Rawley chose the more prestigious of his job titles in advertising himself to his general readers. The scribal responsibilities that Rawley undertook for Bacon are framed here as labors of love, tasks that he took on because of his own interests in his employer's intellectual projects.

¹⁴ See also the British Library Manuscript Catalogue entry for BL MS Add. 58215.

Not only did Rawley edit Bacon's work, he also assembled and hand copied his own miscellany, a collection of court anecdotes, epigrams, short poems, jests, recipes, and other odds and ends. Lambeth Palace Library MS 2086 appears to have been compiled between 1620 and 1640, while Rawley worked for Bacon and after.¹⁵ Although the manuscript does not contain the wealth of contemporary poetry that other collections do, it illustrates the social access afforded by service to a high-level courtier. Rawley's anecdotes mention Sir Walter Raleigh, Philip Sidney, Fulke Greville, Margaret Clifford, Lucius Cary, and King James, not to mention Sir Francis Bacon. Many of the anecdotes are told from the point of view of someone close to the figures mentioned, as if such stories were overheard and traded at court or in the elite household initially before reaching a broader audience. The emphasis is on sharp wits, retorts, and one-upmanship. Folio 31r is a typical leaf, containing an older, popular epigram by John Heywood, an excerpt of a libel against reputed sycophant Richard Corbett, and an anecdote about Bacon and Fulke Greville:

Mr Bacon, and Mr Foulk Greuill striued to giue each other *the pre[ce]*
 dency: said Mr Greuill, good Mr Bacon goe you first, you are a
 Reader: Mr Bacon answered; Nay, good Mr Greuill, goe you
 first, you are a writer. (Lambeth Palace Library MS 2086, f. 31r)

This anecdote, with its attention to the ambiguities of status could be said to reflect Rawley's own shifting position as servant. Greville flatters Bacon by referring to his title as reader, or lecturer in law. Bacon chooses to hear the more mundane meaning of 'reader' and gives Greville precedence for being an author, a position that is not based on social status but one that rather accrues respect in relation to a literal reader. In editing Bacon's works, Rawley could use his literary services in the Bacon household to give credibility to his publications, but he still resorted to his more prestigious position as chaplain to kings when identifying himself on the title page. Given Rawley's clear interest in poets and luminaries, and given that his manuscript strikes a reader as a personal record book rather than a show piece, it may be that Rawley collected the literary works of the authors he knew in another manuscript. It is hard to believe that Rawley was satisfied with only the quips and epitaphs that he gathers in the Lambeth manuscript. Whether there are other Rawley manuscripts extant or not, William Rawley is a clear example of a household servant whose literary duties stretched beyond his formal duties as chaplain and gave him access to both the works of his employer and to his employer's social and intellectual circles.

¹⁵ A full description of this miscellany is available through *Scriptorium: Medieval and Early Modern Manuscripts Online*, <<http://scriptorium.english.cam.ac.uk/manuscripts/full-description.php?ms=Lamb2086>>, accessed 15 January 2015.

As Woudhuysen also reminds us, dozens of early modern authors began their public careers as personal or governmental secretaries, Edmund Spenser and John Donne among them, so secretarial status did not necessarily make a servant a passive participant in literary culture – quite the opposite (Woudhuysen 1996, 79). Secretarial skills and connections allowed poets and collectors alike to tap into literary networks as both collectors and authors. The fact that poetry writing was used to advertise a university graduate's employability probably explains why so many poets took secretarial positions. Looking at this situation the other way around, however, may also be beneficial. The fact that so many authors sought employment as secretaries may mean that they found some literary satisfaction in such positions, too, and that the positions cultivated their literary talents.

In tying up this examination of the household servants and their participation in literary manuscript production, it is helpful to consider two other types of documents that can teach us something about scribal labor in the household: family letters and household accounts. Letter writing was a central activity in literate households, and wealthy correspondents often relied on secretaries to compose, take dictation for, and copy letters. Other household servants performed these duties, too, when needed. High level retainers served as messengers when business required discretion and agency, and even in the case of more mundane correspondence, household servants were employed as messengers (Mertes 1988, 122-124). The world of epistolary exchange has been fairly well documented and it does not need to be repeated here.¹⁶ What the culture of letters shows us is the proximity of copyists in the household, the *ad hoc* nature of their duties, and their readiness to write and copy at a moment's notice (Daybell 2012, 76). Letter writing was often performed under time constraints, with messengers waiting to depart or urgent news that needed a quick answer. A literate servant was only useful, in these cases, when he or she was near at hand. James Daybell suggests that women were especially likely to turn to their household secretaries or other literate servants under this sort of pressure (2001, 59-60). Given that letters were one of the central means by which poems were traded among collectors, secretaries in literary households would almost certainly have helped with the transmission of literary texts sent with correspondence, and it is likely that they also helped to recopy material received with an epistle into the more permanent repository of the anthology or miscellany. One could argue that poetry collecting had much more in common with epistolary culture than it did with print culture. Personal and political news and private sentiments could be expressed in both letters and poems, and poems, like letters, often

¹⁶ See, for instance, Mitchell and Green 2003; Schneider 2005; Daybell 2012; Stewart and Wolfe 2004.

refer to their own transmission. Most importantly, however, both poetry collecting and letter writing were activities based on reciprocity and exchange.

Household accounts are also extremely helpful in documenting the presence of literate servants in the household, though one rarely finds evidence of payment for literary copying. The absence of such records may be a clue as to how literary copy labor was perceived within the household, for quarterly wages for literate servants, costs of pen and paper, payment to messengers, and supplies for schoolmasters are found in abundance.¹⁷ Household accounts suggest that servants regularly handled pen and paper. At the level of household clerk, they kept financial records, copied legal documents, paid bills and collected income from loans and rents. Other servants delivered letters, procured paper and quills, and sought out books for their master or mistress. In the households of antiquarians, historians, and scholars, servants often performed research and reading for their employers (Hammer 1994, 167). Even if more literary scribal labors are not recorded in household accounts, business-oriented copy tasks are sometimes set down. The notorious Elizabethan bibliophile, Richard Stonley, who, according to Joad Raymond, stole government money to finance his book collecting, kept household records in a diary, now Folger Shakespeare Library V.a.459-461 (2003, 5). In one record, Stonley notes that he paid a law clerk to have copies made as part of some of his legal business (V.a.459, f. 23r). In other account records, Stonley paid wages to his clerk (possibly a chaplain) and his wards' tutors (V.a.459, f. 5v, f. 21v). He likewise paid for a ream of paper (V.a.459, f. 33v), and for books purchased outside the home. He records book purchases almost every day. While there are no payments recorded for copying literary manuscripts, it is hard to believe that a bibliophile would not have produced a few. An inventory of his books after his arrest includes two paper books into which he may have intended to copy manuscript literature (Hotson 1949-1950, 60).

Household accounts do occasionally document the labors and costs that go into leisure activities, especially hunting, hawking, tennis, and gambling. The entertainments provided by musicians and players are also tallied in accounts. In an interesting Henrician example, the Earl of Northumberland's chaplain was granted a scribe to copy out actor's parts if he agreed to provide the household with interludes (Percy 1770, 44). Such records give us a sense of the way that the maintenance of leisure activities was counted among the business of the household, though not necessarily the labors of retainers in behalf of those leisure activities. As was the case with Cecil's dinner party, where his secretaries served the visiting dignitaries, the flexibility and broad

¹⁷ I have drawn this information from a number of household accounts, including Folger V.a. 459; Percy 1770; Adams 1995. See also Jones 1918.

usefulness of literate servants was often their main attraction. The canny servant would cultivate this flexibility by performing duties outside of his job description that nevertheless demonstrated his talents and opened up opportunities for him to educate himself and make connections. It is these labors that go unrecorded in household accounts, but all of the raw materials are in the accounts, and indeed, in the household – the paper, the pens and ink, the appreciation for arts and entertainment, and the literate chaplain or tutor.

The anonymity of the copyists who labored to produce literary manuscripts in the age of print has, I believe, contributed to a critical neglect of their importance. These silent scribes offer a stark contrast to the printers in the Stationers' Company, who advertised their names as an industry standard. I have tried to read the silence of manuscript producers and the scarce records of their service and payments as a kind of evidence in itself. The absence of names may be indication that copyists saw their efforts as an opportunity rather than a burden, a chance to participate in an elite cultural fashion. The absence of payments to these household scribes may define much literary copying as favors in a system of gift exchange rather than as commissioned service. These assumptions risk idealizing scribal labor, however, and oversimplifying the role of the literate household servant. It is just as likely that the *ad hoc* nature of literary collecting required constant negotiation of duty and task, status and agency, and favor and recompense. Still, there is no doubt that literary copy labors brought the servant into direct contact with an employer and provided a superb opportunity for the servant to show off his or her cultivation and to gain access to some of the most fashionable and sought-after literature of the period.

It is wise to keep in mind that scribal labor was still a labor. Servants could devote a great deal of time and effort to these projects, judging from the length of many miscellanies. Collectors devoted considerable labor to their collections, too, even in the act of proofreading and correcting the copyist's entries. I have suggested that the opportunity to share in a leisure activity might have attracted the literate servant to literary copying. The contrary may be true as well. When literate servants were enlisted to help produce literary manuscripts, they might very well have appreciated that their employer was laboring, too, often alongside of them, thus ennobling a task that could be laborious and even menial in a scrivener's shop. The editorial agency granted to servants in such situations probably varied greatly, with the proximity of the collector in the household offering some benefits and freedoms but also some restraints. The importance of literate servants to early modern manuscript culture does not lie exclusively in their agency as copyists, however. It also lies in their roles as readers and collectors themselves. When literate servants begin to trade literary texts and collect their own manuscripts, they share and extend the connections that their employers established. They may even broaden their employer's scribal network with their own connections and sources of literature. Sooner or later, these literate servants may have

servants of their own assisting with scribal projects, sharing and extending their connections again. Since the line between collector and servant is often a temporary or situation-specific one, who is to say that the servants rather than the collectors are not the more important links in the scribal networks that enabled early modern manuscript culture?

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