Doorkeepers, the chamberlain and petitioning at the papal court, c.1150-1200

Abstract: This paper looks at the ‘second rank’ of courtiers at the papal curia: the doorkeepers (hostiarii). The hostiarii, who were subordinated to the papal chamberlain, were part of the pope’s personal household, but they played a significant role in curial administration: a clear division between ‘private’ household and ‘public’ administration is difficult to see. The hostiarii witnessed many financial and patrimonial deals which papal representatives struck; they could allow or deny entry into the pope’s presence to petitioners and litigants; and they had a role in the production of papal letters and privileges. They were important figures at the curia.

From the name – schola hostiariorum domini papae: ‘the college of doorkeepers of the lord pope’ – we would probably be justified in guessing that such men guarded a door (or doors) in the pope’s palace. Might we even hope to know more than that? By considering the layout of the Lateran palace in the later twelfth century, together with other sources, it is possible to make an educated guess at where in the Lateran palace the hostiarii stood, who they were, what they did, who gave them orders and – finally – why they were important figures in papal administration.

The papal court in the twelfth century was a busy place. The chancery – the collection of notaries and scribes ruled over by the papal chancellor – composed
papal letters and privileges in response to the requests of petitioners from all over Europe. But the court – the curia – also had many other members: it was like any other royal court in Europe with its butlers, marshals, servants, nobles and so on. Amongst these servants were the *hostiarii* – the doorkeepers.¹ The college of papal doorkeepers was also one of many colleges – *scholae* – of Rome in the twelfth century. Much attention has been paid to the role of the *schola hostiariorum* in Roman liturgy and ceremonial.² The *hostiarii* also served the pope in material ways too, however.

This paper will show, first, in what sense the *hostiarii* guarded the doors of the papal palace: standing before the main exterior door, but possibly also guarding the internal door between the more bureaucratic areas of the palace, and the more public areas. I will then show – through a brief prosopography of the later twelfth-century *hostiarii* – that the doorkeepers often served as witnesses to financial and patrimonial deals which papal officials contracted with nobles in Rome and Lazio. From this it can be concluded that these financial deals were negotiated in the areas of the Lateran palace where *hostiarii* were stationed. We know that petitions to the pope were also sometimes written in these same areas and so it may well also be the case that some of the same scribes wrote these financial documents as composed petitions to the pope. Standing between the pope and petitioners, *hostiarii* controlled access to the pope, and could sometimes participate in the course of papal letter-production, by taking approved petitions from the pope to be turned into letters and privileges.
Naturally all this sheds considerable light on the structure of the papal household and papal administration in the later twelfth century, a period of increasing business for the curia. How papal administration worked at this time is an understudied topic. More broadly, however, looking at the papal *hostiarii* allows us a window into a change which was – at more or less the same time – affecting every major ruler in Europe: the slow and uncertain increase of institutions and trained bureaucracies, over what had been a, primarily affective, household administration.

What doors then, did these papal doorkeepers – *hostiarii* – guard? A brief extract from a witness-statement – describing events between 1188 and 1190 – allows us to begin to answer this question. The witness explained that he had had a petition drawn up outside the first door – *in introitu primi ostii* – to the Lateran palace. This ‘first door’ was apparently guarded by one ‘Fortunatus’. This Fortunatus was not elaborated upon, but we can identify him. A Fortunatus, *noster hostiarius* or *hostiarius domini papae*, appeared on several occasions in papal documents at this time. In 1175 he was sent as a papal emissary to Sermoneta. In 1176, 1178 and 1179 he appeared as a witness to several financial and patrimonial documents of the pope. We can therefore, not entirely unsurprisingly, place an *hostiarius* outside the *primum ostium* to the Lateran.

But was it only here that an *hostiarius* stood? The first door to the Lateran stood at the top of a long staircase arising from the campo Laterano – the open space
surrounding the palace. Inside this door a long corridor ran perpendicular to it (East-West). If one entered the Lateran palace, went through the door which Fortunatus guarded, turned left and walked down the corridor, one eventually reached a second door, on the right, which led into the private papal apartments, and the triclinium of Pope Leo III, where consistories were held.9 There are, in my view, reasons to suspect an hostiarius stood here too, on this second door.

First, this second door and the first door were two of a kind. In 1195-6 they were both replaced with massive bronze doors which were very similar, both constructed on the orders of Cencio, the papal chamberlain.10 As we shall see below, the papal hostiarii were responsible to the chamberlain. Secondly, the 1192 Liber censuum – a curial document which gathered information of payments owed to the pope, rituals and so on – strongly implied that there were two papal hostiarii regularly on duty: ‘hostiarii should receive a meal from the lord pope every day for two of their schola [my emphasis] for guarding the palace’.11 We can fit this together nicely by suggesting that one hostiarius stood by the primum ostium; one by the secundum ostium. Finally, one – slightly later – piece of positive evidence suggests this was the case. When Thomas of Marlborough pled his case to Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) in 1205, he and his opponent were both summoned into the pope’s presence on a Saturday morning. Thomas was encouraged because he was placed in front of his opponent, although ‘the summoners [apparitores] had almost always done this, for I had on many occasions rewarded them so that I might get in more
easily (the summoners [apparitores] there are the same as the doorkeepers [hostiarii]). Royal hostiarii also summoned lords to councils, and issued commands to citizens, in the mid-twelfth-century Sicilian chronicle of Pseudo-Hugo Falcandus. The papal summoners, the hostiarii, presumably stood outside the second door in the Lateran palace, since the triclinium where consistories were held was through here, as were the papal chambers. Thomas and his opponent must have been waiting in an anteroom or in the long corridor outside.

While guarding the two doors, and in addition to summoning litigants and keeping the crowds out, hostiarii must frequently have witnessed financial and patrimonial deals between the papal court and Roman nobles, or lords in the patrimony. These deals were rarely conducted by the pope himself, at least as far as we can tell, but normally by specific cardinals or papal courtiers who were deputed for the purpose, called procurators in the documents. From these documents we can assemble a brief prosopography of some other papal hostiarii, in addition to Fortunatus. First, and most obviously, there were those who were specifically called hostiarii in witness lists, but there were also other titles which were interchangeable with that of hostiarius domini papae.

One Peter Butticularis was a witness to many documents and transactions from the 1150s right through to the 1180s: 1157, 1158, 1159 and 1170. In 1175, this Peter Butticularis was signed ‘Peter Butticularis, hostiarius’. He was so described again in 1176. In 1178 a Peter hostiarius appeared as a witness and then in 1179 Peter
Butticularis reappeared as a witness but was not titled as an *hostiarius*. Peter *hostiarius* (not called Butticularis) then appeared again as a witness later in 1179 and in 1181. Finally, late in 1181, at the opening of Lucius III’s pontificate, Peter *hostiarius* witnessed the grant of land from Lucius to the monastery of the Holy Trinity for the building of a *census*-paying church (one pound of incense annually) dedicated to the Virgin. Considering that these two Peters were both known to be *hostiarii* from 1175-81 and neither appears after 1181 or ever in the same document, it seems plausible to assume that they were the same person. Peter witnessed financial-patrimonial documents from 1157-9 simply as Peter Butticularis, and from 1175-81 as Peter *hostiarius* or Peter Butticularis, *hostiarius*.

Other *hostiarii* were Albert and Albertinus who witnessed the promise of fidelity and annual taxes – three denarii from each house with *boves*, one denarius from others – from the consuls of Alessandria to Pope Alexander III in 1170. Albert *hostiarius* also witnessed another transaction that year and a loan from the pope to a Roman noble in 1174 and a renunciation of debts in 1175. Albertinus *hostiarius* appeared again as a witness in 1181. Finally, Nicholas *hostiarius* witnessed one of the fourteen cash settlements which Cencio, papal procurator and the future chamberlain, made to various Roman nobles in 1188-9.

In the 1190s *hostiarii* disappeared as witnesses of financial documents, but four *viscerii* – or *uscerii* – *domini papae* step in to fulfil the same role in documents of 1193-5. Rather than being a derivation of *viscereus* – viscera, innards – *viscerius* and
uscerius probably both come from usserius, itself from usseria, meaning doorway. In the same manner hostiarius comes from ostium or ostiaria, also meaning doorway. Thus the viscerii/uscerii we find replacing the hostiarii in the 1190s were the same, under another title. Flexibility in titles was not alien to the twelfth-century papal court: during the 1160s and 1170s the papal official known as the dapifer became known as the seneschalcus – seneschal – instead.

This assumption – that the viscerii, uscerii and hostiarii were the same – receives confirmation from the fourteen cash settlements made between Cencio – as procurator of Pope Clement III – and the Roman nobility in 1188-9. In the twelve printed documents – two are unedited – the witnesses to these settlements were fairly consistent: Obicius, canon of St Peter’s, Peter Malagrume – sometimes called Peter Gregorii Malegrume – Peter de Cencio and Maorus were the four most common. John Petri Pantaleonis, Nicholas hostiarius, Master Romanus and the primuscerius also appeared as witnesses to at least one document each. Peter de Cencio and Peter Malagrume appeared together as witnesses in nine documents; and in one further document Malagrume was absent but Peter de Cencio was a witness along with Nicholas, hostiarius. Why was their presence important? Because Peter de Cencio was one of the four viscerii who appeared as witnesses between 1193 and 1195. Another was Paul Malegrume, presumably a relation – perhaps a brother – of Peter Malegrume. Although not called viscerii or hostiarii in 1188-9, they were – like the hostiarii – witnessing financial transactions, alongside an
actual hostiarius, Nicholas. It seems very likely that in 1188 Peter Malagrume and Peter de Cencio were accompanying the procurator Cencio and witnessed documents alongside the hostiarius Nicholas. De Cencio and Peter Malegrume’s relative, Paul, then continued to do this as viscerii in the 1190s.

The change in title – from hostiarius to viscerius or uscerius – in the documents of 1193-5 might be simple scribal preference: all four documents of 1193-5 with viscerii/uscerii witnesses were written by the same scriniarius, John Leone. A later notarial document of John Leone confirms this. On 22 April 1217 he wrote a confirmation for the two papal chamberlains, Pandulf and Sinibaldus, where two of the witnesses were Peter Capocci and Peter Nicolas, uscerii of the lord pope.32 Nine days before, Peter Capocci had been listed as an hostiarius of the lord pope, and Peter Nicolas as his socius, in a witness list written by a different scribe.33 We can see therefore that hostii/uscerii/uscerii consistently witnessed papal financial deals between 1150 and the 1210s and all three titles were interchangeable.

Interestingly, there are several documents which were not only witnessed, but written, by an hostiarius or, at least, a former hostiarius. In July 1179, Peter Gallocia, a papal subdeacon and procurator, (later to be cardinal-bishop of Porto) repaid two debts to Peter de Cencio Petri de Nicolao and to Romanus Johannis de Anastasio and their colleagues.34 Once the debts were repaid the creditors issued charters of renunciation. The scribe for both these documents was ‘Andreas, scriniarius of the holy Roman church and of the sacred Lateran palace’.35 Roman civic notaries – as
Andreas was – normally referred to themselves as ‘scriniarius of the holy Roman church’ but the addition ‘and of the sacred Lateran palace’ is unusual.\(^{36}\) It suggests that the Lateran palace was where this particular scriniarius spent most of his time. Andreas did not consistently call himself a scriniarius of the Lateran palace when he wrote grants for Pope Eugenius III in 1153 – although there seems to be one document where he uses that title – but he did consistently add ‘and of the sacred Lateran palace’ when he wrote documents for Boso, chamberlain of Pope Adrian IV between 1157 and 1159.\(^{37}\) The impetus for this new specificity – that Andreas was associated primarily with the Lateran – came from his appointment as an hostiarius of Adrian IV. In 1157 the papal hostiarii swore an oath of fidelity to Boso as the pope’s chamberlain and one of these hostiarii was ‘Andreas scriniarius’.\(^{38}\) How long Andreas continued to be an hostiarius is difficult to say, but he continued to call himself a scriniarius of the Lateran palace until the late 1170s, as we have seen.

The appearance of hostiarii as witnesses to these financial and patrimonial deals leads us the suspect that they were conducted in places where we know hostiarii were present: inside or outside the first door to the Lateran, and perhaps outside the second – internal – door as well. As I said above, for most of these documents the active participants were cardinals or other papal officials serving as procurators. There is therefore little reason to assume the documents were written and the deals negotiated in the pope’s presence. Hence the outlying areas of the Lateran palace might seem like a plausible location. Peter Saracen, the papal
seneschal between 1170 and 1207, served as a procurator for Pope Celestine III in 1195 when dealing with the family of the late ‘Andreotti’. While we should assume that he was capable of physical movement, it is nonetheless relevant to note that the witness testimony of 1188-90 which described Fortunatus as guarding the *primum ostium*, also mentioned that Saracen was present here. It does appear that the area outside the first, and perhaps also without the second, doors was a location where these kind of deals could be negotiated, or at least finalised. The appearance of *hostiarii* as witnesses would then make sense, because those were the places where *hostiarii* were on duty.

The financial documents to which *hostiarii* were witnesses were almost invariably written by ‘*scriniarii* of the Holy Roman Church’, such as Andreas. Turning back to the witness testimony of 1188-90, we read that the witness was having petitions to the pope drawn up in this place, outside the first door to the Lateran, which Fortunatus guarded. There was, at this time, no single place where petitions to the papal chancery might be written. Some were probably written by petitioners in their home kingdoms before setting out; any surviving texts of twelfth-century petitions tend to be from cartularies kept by the petitioner. Some requests, in the twelfth century and before, were delivered orally to the pope, rather than being written down. However, some petitions were drawn up in Rome by petition-writers – called *petitionarii* – who knew the style and form required of such petitions. These *petitionarii* were not a professional body, but simply those who knew the
requisite formulae. They were not paid by the papal court, but by those for whom they drew up petitions. They were entirely free-lance.43 Considering that a) some petitions were drawn up at the entrance to the Lateran palace; and b) there were, frequently, some scriniarii there too (because they wrote the financial and patrimonial documents) it seems reasonable to suspect that some of the scriniarii also worked as petitionarii, writing petitions and guiding them through the labyrinth of the papal bureaucracy. Considering that at least one hostiarius was a scriniarius, the hostiarii might also sometimes have offered their services as petition-writers.

In the second half of the twelfth century, the hostiarii’s oaths of office were sworn to the papal chamberlain. Although normally special procurators were appointed to transact financial business, the papal chamberlain was still a consistent figure in the administration of the papal finances. The procurators were, by their nature, temporary appointments. I suspect that, in general, procurators were appointed for specific deals with local nobles or clergy in the patrimony because they had personal knowledge of those locals involved, or because they simply happened to be ‘in’ with the pope at that moment.44 I mentioned above that, in 1195, Peter Saracen served as the procurator of Celestine III when dealing with the widow, sister-in-law and sons of Andreotti. A namesake of Peter Saracen – probably a relative, perhaps his son – was a papal courtier in the early thirteenth century. He was often known as Peter Saracen de Andreotti.45 A familial link seems likely.

Conversely, the papal chamberlain – who sometimes also served as a procurator for
such local deals, again probably depending on his own personal situation – always seems to have been the person who received census-payments from monasteries across Europe. This money came from the many petitioners and litigants who might not have had personal links with any papal courtiers. An ex officio administration thus co-existed with a more affective, inter-personal one, where temporary appointments were made for specific business at the whim of the pope. Since the chamberlain was the permanent head of the papal household and guardian of the pope’s treasure, it makes sense that the hostiarii had to confirm to the chamberlain that they would be loyal.

Under both Chamberlain Boso in December 1157 and Chamberlain Cencio in the late 1180s, the hostiarii swore to the chamberlain ‘on behalf of the lord pope’ that they would not steal nor loot, nor consent to stealing or looting, of the palace. The chamberlain would then accept the oaths and give the hostiarii their standing-orders which specified they should each serve a week in turn and – in addition – they should all come to serve the pope ‘whenever and in whatever manner it should be pleasing to the chamberlain of that time’.

Links between the hostiarii and the camerarius can be seen from the work of Matthias Thumser. Thumser has argued that Chamberlain Cencio, later Pope Honorius III, was a member of the Capocci family. This suggestion has been queried by some and accepted by others. It is, at any rate, certain that Cencio was related to several people who called themselves Capocci. As John Doran saw, it is
thus important to note that a Bobo Capocci was prior – that is, the head – of the papal *hostiarii* when Cencio received the oath of the *hostiarii* to the chamberlain (c.1188).\textsuperscript{51} Cencio’s standing-orders to the *hostiarii*, recorded in the *Liber censuum*, specified that ‘you [the *schola*] should not have power to send anyone into the *schola* [of *hostiarii*] except by order of the chamberlain’: admission into the *schola hostiarorum* depended on the chamberlain’s approval, and so probably did the appointment of prior of the *schola*.\textsuperscript{52} Cencio must therefore have appointed Bobo. Cencio also had a *consanguineus*, Cardinal Peter, who was referred to as Peter Capocci.\textsuperscript{53} It is worth noting that this Peter Capocci – long before he was elevated to be a cardinal – appeared under Pope Honorius III (Cencio) as an *hostiarius domini papae*.\textsuperscript{54} This possible familial link between Cencio and the two Capocci emphasises the connection between the *hostiarii* and the *camerarius*.

The ability of the chamberlain to stack the *schola hostiarorum* with his own appointees can be further seen with the appearance of Paul Malagrume and Peter de Cencio as *viscerii* in 1193-5. As discussed above, the *viscerii* were probably *hostiarii* by another name. De Cencio and Peter Malegrume first appear as witnesses to the financial transactions which Cencio managed as Pope Clement III’s procurator in 1188-9. Cencio then became papal chamberlain in late 1189.\textsuperscript{55} By 1193 Paul Malagrume and Peter de Cencio were both papal *viscerii*: members of the *schola hostiarorum* or *schola visceriorum*. They had probably been promoted to the *schola* by Cencio, who – as head of the papal household – needed to be sure that he could rely
on the members of the *schola*. Interestingly, even when Cencio ceased to be papal chamberlain, Peter de Cencio continued to work with his successors, although not as an *hostiarius/viscerius*: in 1213, Pope Innocent III’s chamberlain, Stephen, confirmed a loan that Peter de Cencio – now a moneylender – had made to the archbishop of Cologne at the Lateran.\(^{56}\)

It was also during Cencio’s tenure as chamberlain (1189-97) that the two sets of doors of the Lateran – which the *hostiarii* guarded – were replaced. The replacement doors, made of bronze and completed in 1195-6, must have given the strong impression that the chamberlain controlled access to the pope: inscribed upon one were the words ‘This work was done in the fifth year of the pontificate of the Lord Pope Celestine III, by order of Cencio, cardinal of S. Lucia [and] chamberlain of the same pope’. The other set of doors carried a similar message.\(^{57}\) No-one trying to enter these doors could have been unaware of the chamberlain’s authority. Through the *hostiarii* the chamberlain could further control access to the pope. Such control over access would have been most important when petitioners needed papal approval for graces or judgements.

What more can be said about the role of *hostiarii* and the chamberlain in the petitions-process? Studies of the twelfth-century papal chancery are difficult to produce: the material is simply much less abundant than for the thirteenth-century chancery, so ably studied by Peter Herde.\(^{58}\) Almost needless to say therefore, we must be very wary about reading back anything from the thirteenth century into the
twelfth. However, it is possible to try and take the evidence from the later twelfth century on its own terms, with only some judicious comparisons with the thirteenth century. That evidence tells us that the *hostiarii* could exercise control over the admission of petitioners into the pope’s presence, and – sometimes – over the transfer of approved petitions to the papal notaries for writing up.

The English chronicler Roger of Howden (d.1201) was impressively well-informed about the first four years of Pope Innocent III’s pontificate (1198-1201). He recounted that Innocent faced some unrest from the Romans because they wanted the pope to give them payments, an event also recorded in the *Gesta Innocentii III*, a biography compiled by a curial insider. Howden recorded some details of Gerald of Wales’ mission to the curia, details corroborated by Gerald himself in his own writings. And – more relevantly for us – Howden informed his readers that Innocent ‘immediately after his election, as one who had known all the excesses of the roman curia since infancy […] ejected most of the *janitores* and *hostiarii* from the curia, in order that petitioners (both clerics and laymen) should be freer in having access to him’. Again this was confirmed by the author of the *Gesta Innocentii*: Innocent ‘ordered the doorkeepers [*hostiarios*] removed from the chambers of the notaries, so that there would be free access to them’.

These two accounts are not quite the same: were the *hostiarii* removed so that petitioners could get access to Innocent, or access to the chancery-notaries? I have argued above that the *hostiarii* guarded the interior and exterior doors of the Lateran
The palace. How then could *hostiarii* be ‘removed from the chambers of the notaries’ when they weren’t there, if one accepts the argument I have outlined? It is important to clarify here that the notaries’ chambers were where papal letters were drafted once petitions had been approved by the pope or (vice-) chancellor. Within the notaries’ chambers, the drafts were composed by a notary or his *abbreviatores*. It seems unlikely to me that there were papal *hostiarii* guarding all the chambers of the various notaries – although the notaries might have employed their own *custodes*. The most plausible suggestion to my mind is that the *hostiarii* who stood outside the pope’s triclinium and chambers – the interior Lateran door – could prevent petitioners getting access to the pope, but sometimes also had to take approved petitions from the pope to the chambers of the notaries. We know from the chronicle of William of Andres that, in 1207, Pope Innocent gave a received petition to his *hostiarius* to be delivered to a chancery notary (in order for the notary to compose the relevant drafts and have them read). Sometimes, therefore – but probably only in an ad hoc manner – the *hostiarii* bore approved petitions, from the pope, to the notaries’ chambers. Both Howden and the *Gesta* were emphasising that Innocent tried to prevent the *hostiarii* from demanding tips from petitioners: the *hostiarii* apparently demanded such tips when petitioners were trying to get access to the pope (which Howden reflects), but also if an approved petition was sent to the notaries via an *hostiarius* (as the *Gesta* suggests). Since we know that some petitioners and proctors had ‘preferred’ notaries and *abbreviatores* – who were sympathetic to them and whom they wanted to draft their letters – *hostiarii* might
have received tips in return for delivering approved petitions to these ‘preferred’ producers.67

Such an argument directs us next towards Pope Innocent III’s so-called ‘chancery ordinances’. These were a series of reforms which Pope Innocent is thought to have initiated during his pontificate, although not all of them can be securely assigned to him.68 One, which can be dated to before 1206, was that notaries were only to receive petitions if they had been presented at the Data communis or handed over (to the notary) by the pope or at the pope’s command. This was so that the notary could later say who had ordered him to receive the petitions and draft the letters.69 The Data communis was a specific event – introduced as part of this reform – when a papal notary received written petitions from supplicants and bore them to the pope, or the chancellor, or vice-chancellor as necessary.70 Obviously, this ordinance would affect the hostiarii. If some petitioners could now present their written petitions directly to a chancery notary at the Data communis, then the hostiarii had less chance to receive access-fees from petitioners seeking entry into the papal presence. Notwithstanding this new rule, hostiarii could still be ordered by the pope to pass on approved petitions to a particular notary, since this is what we found in William of Andres’ chronicle in 1207. But the ordinance would have an effect on that too. According to this ordinance, the pope was trying to make sure that the notaries recorded who had passed petitions to them. This had a triple effect on the hostiarii: 1) if hostiarii – or any other papal functionary – took bribes before passing on an
approved petition from the pope to a notary, then, if the notary had recorded from
whom he received the approved petition, the chancellor could identify the corrupt
hostiarius, if and when someone complained. 2) If an hostiarius dared to pass on a
petition to a notary without getting papal (or chancellarial) approval, then the
hostiarius could subsequently be identified in the same way. 3) If an hostiarius had
been ordered to pass an approved petition to a particular notary or abbreviator, and a
different notary had actually received it, the deceitful hostiarius could be identified.

It is very tempting to speculate that some of the unidentifiable markings on
Innocent III’s original engrossments – discussed by Patrick Zutshi – were meant to
indicate particular hostiarii who bore approved petitions from the papal presence to a
notary.71 The increase of such markings on papal letters from Innocent III’s
pontificate – recording, for example, the scribe who made the engrossment – testifies
to a greater concern, in general, with making officers at each stage of letter-
production accountable. Regarding hostiarii and those who carried petitions from the
pope to the notaries, however, it might be more likely for any such markings
referring to them to have been on the drafts or the received petitions, rather than the
engrossments: Thomas Frenz, in his study of the various types of markings found on
original papal documents, did not identify any of them as referring to the person
who distributed the received petitions.72

This thesis means that, in fact, the papal hostiarii were not really ‘moved’ or
‘removed’ at all. Their ‘moving’ (as discussed by Howden and the Gesta) was
somewhat metaphorical. Instead, after Innocent’s reforms, many petitioners could simply give their written petitions in at the *Data communis*. In addition there were now (ideally) checks to prevent *hostiarii* – and other papal officials – from demanding cash before passing on approved petitions to the notaries. The *hostiarii* were probably not physically moved, which is why we continue to hear that they guarded the papal triclinium and chambers in 1205 (Thomas of Marlborough) and bore petitions to the notaries in 1207 (William of Andres). Matthew Paris reported that, in 1245, an angry postulant cut off the hand of a papal *hostiarius* who refused him entry to the pope’s presence. There were still plenty of *hostiarii* at the papal court at the end of the thirteenth century, although by then they had divided into an *hostiarius* of the *camera*, an *hostiarius* of the chancery, a *hostiarius* of the chapel, minor *hostiarii* and major *hostiarii*. In the thirteenth century the *hostiarii* clearly continued to stop and allow entry into the pope’s presence even after Innocent III’s curial reforms. It seems that this aspect of Innocent’s reforms – curtailing the influence of the *hostiarii* – had, at best, only limited effect. One impetus for change in the role of the *hostiarii* in the thirteenth century might have been the frequency with which the papal court was away from Rome. But actually the *hostiarii* – along with the rest of the papal courtiers – probably did more-or-less the same job when the papal court was outside Rome as they did when it was in Rome. As I point out below, the curia had frequently been outside Rome in the twelfth century too.
To accuse papal – and, indeed, royal – hostiarii of demanding access-fees – as both Howden and the anonymous author of the Gesta were implying – was a cliché of accusations that the curia was scandalously venal. The poem De Mundi Cupiditate, of the Pseudo-Walter Map, explained that ‘concerning the [papal] chancery, a third [instruction] is given| if a poor-man has business within | he should not go empty to the hostiarius | but must pay a purse, if he wishes to enter’. In turn, therefore, a claim to have reduced the exactions of the hostiarii marked one out as a ‘reformer’: Bishop Gentile of Agrigento, in the mid-twelfth century, would apparently boast that, were he to be made a chief minister of the king of Sicily, ‘there would be no place in his administration for the theft and extortion of the notaries and the ushers [hostiarii] […] everything would be restricted to a prescribed amount.’ Bishop Gentile – and Innocent III – could present themselves as new brooms by claiming to take an uncompromising attitude to their hostiarii.

A corollary to the suggestion that an hostiarius would allow a petitioner entry to the pope’s presence – if the petitioner paid – is that an hostiarius could also – at the instructions of the pope or of the chamberlain – deny petitioners entry into the pope’s presence. One possible case came in 1171, when Pope Alexander III heard the news of Archbishop Thomas Becket’s murder. According to an emissary of King Henry II, writing to Richard of Ilchester, the archdeacon of Poitiers, when news of Becket’s death reached the curia Alexander shut himself away, even from his own familiars, for eight days. Further, it was forbidden for any English petitioners to have
access to the pope or to advance their business at the curia. Undoubtedly it would have been the *hostiarii* who prevented English nuncios from gaining access to Alexander.

But it could also be the chamberlain, not only the pope, who frustrated petitioners. We have already seen that the papal chamberlain had oversight of the *hostiarii*. It should not, therefore, be surprising that the chamberlain could intervene to prevent petitioners getting access to the pope. When Alexander III locked himself away, one of the papal courtiers who intervened on behalf of Henry II’s envoys was a Brother Franco, described as Henry’s *fidelis*. Three years later, in 1174, Franco was made papal chamberlain. Doubtless, after Franco’s appointment, Henry II’s envoys found that getting access to the pope was easier, although refraining from murdering archbishops might have helped too. Other petitioners, however, did not find that Franco helped them in their business. One such was Peter of Veroli in 1181.

The Church of San Paterniano of Ceprano had been given to the Templars in 1173 by Pope Alexander III. Some years later Brother Franco, chamberlain of the pope, knight of the Temple and recipient of three condemnatory verses in Walter of Châtillon’s satirical poem *Propter Sion non tacebo*, apparently persuaded the bishop of Veroli to concede the church of St Giles to the same Templars. The clerics of a separate church, St Andrew’s, then claimed such a gift was prejudicial to their pre-existing rights over the church of St Giles. An agreement was reached between
Franco and St Andrew’s that the Templars should have St Giles’ for twenty-nine years and then it should return to St Andrew’s ‘under pain of excommunication’.

In 1181, therefore, Peter of Veroli arrived in Tusculum – where the papal court under Alexander was based for most of the 1170s – to request papal letters confirming the agreement between Franco and St Andrews’. But Peter found that the chamberlain was averse to having the penalty of excommunication explicitly included in the letters. Peter then refused to surrender the instrument of confirmation – the document of the bishop of Veroli and Church of St Andrew confirming that the Templars would hold St Giles’ – to Chamberlain Franco. Amidst this impasse a Roman judge, John de Parentia, asked Peter if he could read the instrument of confirmation and Peter said yes. Then John, without Peter’s permission – *me invito* – handed the instrument of confirmation over to Franco.85 Peter perhaps should not have been surprised: John de Parentia, Roman judge and advocate, had been a witness to papal financial-patrimonial transactions for twenty years and therefore probably had close links to the papal chamberlain.86 Having lost any leverage he had over Franco, Peter then found that he still ‘could not impetrare letters of the lord pope in the stated form’ and the papal letter eventually issued did not include the notice about excommunication. Because of this ‘violence and fraud’ Peter later issued a formal cancellation of the instrument of confirmation.87

Franco’s ability to prevent Peter of Veroli’s petition from being accepted in the form Peter wanted shows that Franco, as chamberlain, could affect whether
petitioners got what they wanted. It is unclear whether Franco was able to prevent
Peter of Veroli getting access to the pope, or whether he was just preventing the
production of a papal letter. It is possible that the papal hostiarii were among those
who stopped Peter of Veroli getting access to the pope, or getting his petition turned
into a letter. It is, however, also possible that other members of the papal household
intervened to frustrate Peter of Veroli’s petitions. The papal chamberlain was the
head of the entire papal household and so, although we know that the hostiarii were
specifically responsible to him, so were all the pope’s familiares. In 1181, the papal
curia was still a court where bureaucracy co-existed with familia: household officers –
including the chamberlain and the hostiarii – not only served the pope’s person, but
had a role in the administration of justice, of graces and of favours.

This paper was intended to outline what a particular group – the twelfth-
century schola hostiariorum – did at the papal court, and within the papal household.
Through the hostiarii, we have illuminated some of the structures and practices of the
later-twelfth-century curia: the writing of petitions, gaining access to the pope, who
hostiarii were and to whom they were answerable, where financial deals between the
pope and the Lazian nobles were negotiated. These financial deals were negotiated
in the areas of the Lateran palace where hostiarii were stationed; petitions were also –
at times – written here. Between petitioners and their desires stood the hostiarii: the
hostiarii could stop or allow access to the pope, and sometimes bore approved
petitions from the papal presence to the notaries who drafted the letters.
Of course the positioning of *hostiarii* in the Lateran entrance, as described here, was how things were when the pope was at the Lateran palace in Rome. It was not uncommon, during the twelfth century, for the pope to travel outside Rome with the curia: Eugenius III (1145-53) had a palace constructed at Segni; Adrian IV (1154-9) took a house at Monte S. Giovanni; Alexander III (1159-81) spent a great deal of his pontificate at Tusculum; Lucius III (1181-5) sought to secure Ferrara as a residence for the curia. After 1188 the papal court was much more consistently in Rome, but other residences were always available. Nonetheless it is not implausible to suspect that a similar structure was used for the itinerant papal court wherever it was: the *hostiarii* accompanied the papal court when it left Rome and so they probably fulfilled the same jobs when the court was not at the Lateran. Despite the implication in Cencio’s 1192 *Liber censuum* that *hostiarii* did not travel with the curia outside Rome – *hostiarii* were said to receive extra payment when the pope was out of the city – some *hostiarii* did accompany the papal court: two *hostiarii* served as witnesses to an act in Benevento. If *scriniarii sanctae Romanae ecclesiae* – Roman civic notaries – were involved in writing petitions, then they could still have done so when the papal court was at Tusculum – which is close to Rome. We also have evidence of Beneventan notaries composing financial and patrimonial documents when the papal court was at Benevento, so there was obviously a role for the local notariate. William of Andres’ description of Pope Innocent giving a petition to an *hostiarius* happened when the curia was in Viterbo but, as William himself said, ‘I came to Viterbo and there found Rome’. 
The detail on the roles of the papal hostiarii casts light on the papal court at a formative stage. But more broadly the later twelfth-century hostiarii illustrate important changes which were occurring at this time. As the papacy – and royal courts across Europe – became more official and less personal, more bureaucratic and less like a household-administration, the hostiarii were caught in the middle. Their control over access to the pope – a very personal authority – was mixed with being on the front-line meeting the driver of papal bureaucracy: the ever-increasing number of petitions. Petitioners had to present their petitions to the pope or to the (vice-) chancellor and so it was the hostiarii who faced a wave of supplications. The responses to the increase in petitioning, such as the creation of the Data communis, showed that the household-administration was no longer sufficient to meet the problem. Linked to this was the desire – suggested by Innocent’s chancery reform – to make papal officials routinely accountable for the petitions they passed to the notaries: accountability, honesty and the cultivation of responsible conduct were now administrative concerns. The trends sketched in this paper were the consequences of a two-bit Mediterranean lordship becoming the court of appeal for a continent.

On the one hand, as we have seen, appointment to the college of hostiarii appears to have been based on family links or personal loyalty to the pope or the chamberlain; on the other hand, there was, from perhaps 1150 and certainly by 1200, an increasing emphasis being placed on the competence of officers, not merely their
loyalty. The administrative office of the papal chamberlain – the camera – was becoming ever more organized and complicated, and coming to have a monopoly over financial administration. Yet, the chamberlain retained control over household offices – such as the hostiarii – to which he appointed those with affective links to him or to the pope. When petitioners came to Rome and the chamberlain, or the pope, or perhaps even the hostiarii, had a personal interest in their business – such as with Peter of Veroli in 1181 – these affective relationships influenced whether the petitioners got access or got what they wanted. Justice was not yet blind to petitioners who had the misfortune to be from near-by places, where papal officers might have a personal interest. The papal hostiarii show the changes and challenges facing great central administrations as they navigated through the complexities of the ‘Crisis’ of the twelfth century.

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The twelfth-century Sicilian royal court had its own hostiarii, for example: The History of the Tyrants of Sicily by ‘Hugo Falcandus’ 1154-69, trans. G. A. Loud, T. E. J. Wiedemann (Manchester, 1998), pp. 35, 53, 114, 140, 181, 204, 208. Like the papal hostiarii, the Sicilian royal hostiarii were subordinate to the chamberlain(s): H. Takayama, The Administration of the Norman Kingdom of Sicily (Leiden-New York-Cologne, 1993), p. 18.


As recently noted by Jane Sayers in her review of Pope Alexander III (1159-81): The Art of Survival in Speculum, lxxxviii (2013), 773-5: ‘The emphasis throughout the book is on the views and reactions of the provinces rather than on the central government of the church [...] The activities of the curia [...] do not receive attention. Some prosopography of the curia [...] would have helped the reader [...] now the significance of Alexander’s central government needs review.’ Taken out of context, these quotations might give the impression that Sayers’ review was negative. That would be a false impression.


6 Davidsohn, p. 639.


10 Iacobini, i. 77-82.

11 *Liber censuum*, i. 304.


15 *Liber censuum*, i. 385-7 (nos 98-100) (1158); 387-8 (nos 101-2) (1157); 394-5 (no. 112) (1159); *Le ‘Liber Pontificalis’: Texte, Introduction et Commentaire*, ed. Louis Duchesne (2 vols., Paris, 1892), ii. 422-3 (1170).

16 Volpini, no. 5, pp. 391-2.

17 ‘Documenti per la storia ecclesiastica’, no. 9, pp. 119-20.


21 It is entirely possible that Peter also held other positions – such as a canonry in a Roman church – and so might appear in other sources without his *hostiarii* title and with another title. Considering the ubiquity of the name ‘Peter’ this is impossible to prove.


23 *Liber pontificalis*, ii. 422–3; *Liber censuum*, i. 405–6 (no. 128); Volpini, no. 5, pp. 391–2.

24 *Liber censuum*, i. 406 (no. 129).


See entries for viscerius, usserius and usseria at the Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British and Irish Sources, and Du Cange and others:

<http://logeion.uchicago.edu/index.html#viscerius> [accessed 16 March 2016],
<http://logeion.uchicago.edu/index.html#usseria> [accessed 16 March 2016],

K. Jordan, ‘Die Entstehung der römischen Kurie’, Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte. Kanonistische Abteilung, xxviii (1939), 97-152, at p. 143. The equivalence of the two is confirmed by Boso’s vita of Pope Alexander which referred to Peter Saracen as the pope’s dapifer in 1177 (Liber pontificalis, ii. 441) while Saracen was called Alexander’s seneschal in documents of the 1170s and later (see below).

On John Petri Pantaleonis, see M. Thumser, Rom und der römische Adel in der späten Stauferzeit (Tübingen, 1995), p. 160. Primuscerius was probably a simple error for primicerius, the chief of the ancient Roman notariate, but could be an alternative for the head (prior) of the college of hostiarii/viscerii/uscerii: primus uscerius.

Volpini, nos 10, 11, pp. 398-400, 400-2; T. Hirschfeld, ‘Zur Chronologie der Stadtpraefekten in der Zeit der Erneuerung des Senates’, Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken, xvi (1914), 93-107, at pp. 105-7; ‘Documenti per la storia ecclesiastica’, nos 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, pp. 197-8, 199-200, 201-2, 202-3, 204-5, 205-7. See also no. 20, pp. 207-8 for the document with Peter de Cencio and Nicholas,
hostiarius and see nos 12, 13, pp. 195-6, 196-7 for the first two settlements where neither Malagrume nor Peter de Cencio appear.

31 Liber censuum, i. 424-5, 438-9, 433-6, 436-8 (nos 166, 183, 180-1, 182). The other two were Peter Robert and Clement.

32 Liber censuum, i. 259-60 (no. 27).

33 Della antichità Estensi ed Italiane, ed. L. A. Muratori (2 vols., Modena, 1717-40), i. 423-4; Thumser, p. 55, 218n.

34 On Peter, see Wickham, Medieval Rome, pp. 284-5.

35 ‘Documenti per la storia ecclesiastica’, nos 10-11, pp. 120-2.


38 Liber censuum, i. 420, 1n.

39 Saracen was first described as the papal seneschal in 1170 (Liber censuum, i. 240-1 [no. 15]; Livraghi, no. 1) and last appeared in 1207 (Variorum ad Innocentium III Epistolae, no. 12, in PL cxxvii, cols. 298-9). See Liber censuum, i. 438-9 (no. 183) for the 1195 deal with the Andreotti. On the later Saracen family see M. Vendittelli, ‘In Partibus Anglie’: Cittadini romani alla corte inglese nel Duecento: la vicenda di Pietro Saraceno (Rome, 2001); The Letters and Charters of Cardinal Guala Bicchieri, ed. N. Vincent (Woodbridge, 1996), no. 84, pp. 65-7. Peter Saracen was also a senator consilarius of Rome in 1190-91: Liber censuum, i. 404-5 (no. 126).
40 Davidsohn, p. 639; von Heckel, ‘Das Aufkommen’, pp. 295-6; Sohn, p. 61; Berthe, p. 78, 4n.


44 One obvious exception would be Volpini, no. 5, pp. 391-2 where the representative of Pope Alexander III who repaid a debt owed to Romanus de Johanne was an emissary of the archbishop of Canterbury to the pope. Here the representative might have been chosen for his lack of personal knowledge of the participants.

45 Vincent, Guala, no. 84, pp. 65-7. Pace Thumser, pp. 26-8. Note that – quite apart from having the same name – both of our Peter Saracens were Roman (de Andreotti was a civis Romanus; the seneschal was a senator consiliarius); and both were papal courtiers.

46 Between c.1150 and 1200, whenever census-payments were sent to the papal court by the payers, it always seems to have been the chamberlain who received them, see the receipts for census-payments from monasteries in Portugal (1157, 1163), the


48 *Liber censuum*, i. 420 (no. 159). One such time was when the pope was crowned, *Liber censuum*, i. 304-5 (no. 57 [XXL44]).

49 Thumser, pp. 60-61.

‘lifetime of service’, p. 74. On the date of this oath see Volpini, no. 11, pp. 400-2.

52 Liber censuum, i. 420 (no. 159): et non habebitis potestatem mittere aliquem in scola, nisi de mandato camerarii.


55 He was first named camerarius on 5 Dec. 1189, Volpini, no. 11, pp. 400-2, having only been named procurator in the documents of 1188-9.


57 Iacobini, i. 77, 26n, ii, fig. 83. The inscription on the other door is at: i. 79, 36n; ii, fig. 81. It should be noted that, at this time, as well as being chamberlain, Cencio was also dating the papal solemn privileges, a role normally carried out by the chancellor: C. R. Cheney, ‘The office and title of the papal chancellor, 1187-1216’, Archivum Historiae Pontificiae, xxii (1984), 369-376. Cheney’s observations that Cencio-
Honorius never bore the title *cancellarius*, and that two Roman/Lazian inscriptions to a *Cencius cancellarius Urbis* probably refer instead to Cencio ‘chancellor of the Roman senate and people’ (recorded 1202), call into question the traditional identification of Cencio-Honorius with the *Cencius cancellarius* who remodelled the tomb of S. Lorenzo, *pace* R. Krautheimer and others, *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae: The Early Christian Basilicas of Rome (IV-IX Cent.)* (5 vols., Vatican City, 1937-77), ii. 14, In.


Chronica magistri Rogeri de Hovedene, iv. 44.

Deeds of Pope Innocent, pp. xxv, 56; Gress, p. 60.


In the fourteenth century, the approved petitions could also be sent to the notaries’ chambers by the notaries themselves, or the vice-chancellor, or ‘specially mandated ad hoc’ abbreviatores: Berthe, pp. 102-3, 75n. Simple petitions received in the Data communis were distributed by specially appointed abbreviatores: M. Tangl, Die päpstlichen Kanzleiordungen von 1200-1500 (Innsbruck, 1894), no. 9, pp. 43-5.

Presumably it was often the case that, if a petition had been presented to the pope by a notary, then that same notary would then take it to his chamber and assign its
drafting, if it were approved. Sayers (*Papal Government*, pp. 18, 17n, 32-3) suggests that, from the mid-thirteenth century, the papal chancery had a *distributor* who distributed the petitions to be turned into drafts. But the *distributor notarum grossandarum* – attested from c.1254 – actually distributed the completed drafts to be engrossed (by scribes): Rabikauskas, *Diplomatica pontificia*, pp. 71, 78; Tangl, no. 7.9, p. 66; Berthe, p. 104. Zutshi suggests that, in the fourteenth century, it was normally the vice-chancellor who chose which *abbreviatores* drafted which petitions: ‘Petitions to the pope in the fourteenth century’, in *Medieval Petitions: Grace and Grievance*, ed. W. M. Ormrod, G. Dodd, A. Musson (Woodbridge, 2009), pp. 82-98, at 89-90.

66 The existence of a specific *cancellarie hostiarius* – ‘hostiarius of the chancery’ – in 1193-4, might refer to an *hostiarius* who sometimes carried approved petitions from the pope to a chancery notary: Kehr, ‘Die Minuten von Passignano’, no. 16, pp. 38-40; on the date of this document, see Wickham, ‘Ecclesiastical dispute and lay community’, p. 53, 84n. Davidsohn read this *hostiarius*’ name as Paganus (‘Petitions-Bureau’, p. 639, 3n); Kehr as Paganinus.


69 Tangl, no. 2.1, p. 54; von Heckel, ‘Studien über die Kanzleiordnung’, p. 260. See also von Heckel, ‘Studien über die Kanzleiordnung’, pp. 276-7 for a discussion of what was meant by camerarius in this ordinance (perhaps the cubicularii). Zutshi, ‘Innocent and reform’, p. 92; Bresslau, ii, pp. 685-6.


73 Matthiae Parisiensis Chronica Majora, ed. H. E. Luard (7 vols., 1872-83), iv. 418.


La *Historia o Liber de Regno Sicilie*, pp. 91-2; *The History of the Tyrants of Sicily*, p. 140. This passage is doubly similar to the account of Innocent III’s reforms in his *Gesta*: in limiting the extortions of the *hostiarii*, and in reducing fixed payments to a minimum amount: Gress, p. 60; *Deeds of Pope Innocent*, p. 56. Coincidentally, one of the MSS of
Pseudo-Hugo Falcandus also contains the text of the *Gesta Innocentii: The History of the Tyrants of Sicily*, p. 50-51; Gress, pp. 117*-119*.

79 Although not addressing hostiarii, in 1199 one of the first acts of King John of England and his new chancellor, Hubert Walter, was also to reform chancery practices: T. Rymer, *Foedera, Conventiones, Literae et ciuscunque generis Acta Publica*, ed. A. Clarke, F. Holbrooke and J. Caley (4 vols. in 7, 1816-69), I. i. 75-6.


82 Franco was recorded as chamberlain continuously between 1174 and 1181: see the various documents printed in ‘Documenti per la storia ecclesiastica’, Volpini and the *Liber censuum*. Also *Papsturkunden in Frankreich*, NS iii. 244 (no. 187); *Papsturkunden für Templer und Johanniter*, ed. R. Hiestand (2 vols., Göttingen, 1972-84), ii. 235-6; *Epistolae Pontificum Romanorum Ineditae*, ed. S. Loewenfeld (Leipzig, 1885), no. 297, pp. 171-2.


86 Liber censuum, i. 398 (no. 117) (1159); ‘Documenti per la storia ecclesiastica’, nos 10-11, pp. 120-2 (1179); ‘Papsturkunden in Salerno. La Cava und Neapel’, pp. 254-5 (1181).


89 Liber censuum, i. 240-1 (no. 15); Livraghi, no. 1. Contrary to Twyman, p. 190 (‘It seems likely that these groups were termed scholae of the city because […] their functions were strictly limited to Rome’) following Liber censuum, i. 304-5 (no. 57 [XXI.44]).
Toubert, ii. 1054.

Willelmi Chronica Andreænsis, p. 737.


W. E. Lunt, *Papal Revenues in the Middle Ages* (2 vols., New York, 1934), i. 9-11. Although, to my mind, this process was even more fitful than Lunt envisaged.

Money was now, and would continue to be, the prime means of getting access at the curia for most petitioners. But gifts, fees, bribes and tips – the difference was more rhetorical than objective – are distinct from affective relationships. Paying access-fees does not necessarily depend on, or create, a lasting personal relationship between two parties, cf. S. Kettering, ‘Gift-giving and patronage in early modern France’, *French History*, ii (1988), 131-51, at pp. 147-51.