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9.2 Archival practice and the production of political knowledge in the office of Sir Francis Walsingham

This paper will explore the practice of archiving political and diplomatic papers in the government of late Elizabethan England.[1] The term 'practice' invokes two key ideas of particular relevance in this context. Firstly, that of the relationship of reality to theory, or of activity to ideal, where 'practice' is set up as the physical instantiation of or opposing force to 'theory': it is *what actually happens*. Secondly, the idea of practice as habituated behaviour, where activity becomes ingrained by repetition to become systematised. It is *the way things end up happening*, the norm or standard practice. This paper is about the ideal and daily reality of archival preservation in early modern government, during a time when the sheer volume of its letters and treatises helped develop archival systems. The repeated acts of receiving, keeping and re-using letters created the structures that held them.

Archiving is a necessary and even inherent aspect of what one could call the information age, defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as "the era in which the retrieval, management, and transmission of information, esp. by using computer technology, is a principal (commercial) activity".[2] The "retrieval, management and transmission" of information must be prefaced by its storage. Archiving allows one to keep things by allowing one to let go of them; it allows the individual to forget without losing the possibility to know, by making retrieval possible. Neil Rhodes and Jonathan Sawday's 1998 *conference and resulting* collection of essays was a prescient early examination of information preservation and retrieval in the early modern period, in which they compared the print to the digital revolution.[3] Ann Blair's study of information management navigates note-taking and the coming of print to uncover how early modern figures dealt with a similar kind of "information overload" as that complained of in the age of the internet.[4] With such appealing modern parallels, one has to be careful to not imply an equivalence or teleological development across time periods. Rather, the wealth of information and the stresses of managing it *now* help to explain our interest in

1 My thanks go to Markus Friedrich for his insightful feedback on this chapter.

2 "information, n.". *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. URL: http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/95568?redirectedFrom=information [last accessed: 29.03.2014].

3 Rhodes, Neil/Sawday, Jonathan (eds.): *The Renaissance Computer. Knowledge Technology in the First Age of Print.* London 2000.

4 Blair, Ann: *Too Much to Know. Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age.* London 2010.

a comparable (though different) situation *then*; our located selves and inflected choices make ignoring parallels as fatal as imposing an equivalence.

Like the invention of writing, building archives and libraries permits the further expansion of knowledge by shifting its immediate possession beyond the mind or hand of the individual.[5] By introducing a middle stage, a holding area, whether that is the codex, the catalogue or the computer, the individual (and importantly, potentially *any* individual) can reach far further than their hand or mind could otherwise stretch. The term "information age" is clearly a modern one, but its connotations are seen by the aforementioned writers as echoing in technological developments in the early modern period; I would argue that if this applies to the print revolution, this should also be seen as related to the increased accessibility of paper, the improvement of postal routes and the growth of the archive.[6] An early modern information explosion is therefore due not only to print; it is also due to the humble letter, whether within the consciously scholarly Republic of Letters or as entailed by changing state apparatus and the increase in travel (for leisure, trade, exploration and diplomacy).[7]

The history of archives obviously extends way before and beyond England in the sixteenth century. People and institutions (especially religious, legal or royal) have kept books, papers and collections of both throughout civilisation.[8] The archive was not new. What I would suggest converged in the sixteenth century was a massive expansion of up-to-date, accessible information on an expanding world, and a conceptual shift in the role and activities of princes and their advisors; a shift that both resulted in and required this emphasis on information and archiving.[9] In Elizabethan government, one can see the increased use of educated and resourceful administrators and specialists in government service, people who were not necessarily of high birth but who had connections and had often gained experience abroad. These are the so-called "men of business", part of the world of "knowledge transactions" and "scholarly service", who can

5 Of course this is not necessarily the case in practice; as will be argued, the theoretical possibility of knowledge does not necessarily make it possible to know – it depends on access, whether in terms of permission or practical capability. However, the blunt ability to know more is made more possible by writing and by the storage of that writing.

6 See also Megan Williams' contribution in this volume.

7 For increasing numbers of travellers from England, see Warneke, Sara: *Images of the Educational Traveller in Early Modern England*. Leiden 1995, pp. 50–51.

8 See especially Campbell, James: *The Library. A World History*. London 2013, pp. 20–23.

9 For one notable discussion, see Sharpe, Kevin: *Sir Robert Cotton, 1586–1631. History and politics in early modern England*. Oxford 1979.

be seen as manifestations of this interesting shift in the work of government.[10] In this, one can see something new being added to the typical and traditional sources of knowledge, something additional to classical exemplar and historical precedent. I would argue that, as well as being conveyed in individual letters that were read on reception, the substance of political exchange and international information was itself becoming a long-term source of knowledge, a resource to be used in this evolving political, scholarly climate.[11] Further, I would argue that this is facilitated at base by its existence in writing (that is, in letters rather than just in speech), and because of its preservation in archives.

These government men were the diplomats, agents, travellers and domestic clerks of Elizabethan crown service. Travel and letter-writing vastly increased the amount of information available, making them on the one hand extremely valuable political activities because they made information-based decision-making more possible, and on the other actively unhelpful if the unwieldy mass of oftentimes contradictory input was not in some way organised and tamed. The method of conveyance of information over long distances created the possibility that this information had not just one life – when it was originally sent and read – but also another archival after-life, because it could be stored, copied and kept. In their chapters in this volume, Randolph Head and Megan Williams discuss the conceptual and material foundations required to store and re-use the growing amount of documents. This chapter adds yet another perspective. It analyses how the office of the secretary of state in England coped with the information overload, both physically and mentally, and put it to the service of an increased demand. Developing methods of coping (i.e. archiving) permitted this transformation of information on political relations and international activity into a long-term resource, to be used in politics, policy, and later – when accessed by us or our forebears – in writing history.

10 See Collinson, Patrick: Servants and citizens. Robert Beale and other Elizabethans, in: *Historical Research* 79/206 (2006), pp. 488–511; Jardine, Lisa/Sherman, William: Pragmatic readers. Knowledge transactions and scholarly services in late Elizabethan England, in: Fletcher, Anthony/Roberts, Peter (eds.): *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain*. Cambridge 1994, pp. 102–124. Vaughan, Jacqueline: *Secretaries, statesmen and spies. The clerks of the tudor privy council, c. 1540–c.1603*. [Unpublished doctoral thesis 2006]. Williamson, Elizabeth: *Before 'diplomacy'. Travel, embassy and the production of political information in the later sixteenth century.* [Unpublished doctoral thesis 2012], especially pp. 9, 22–83.

11 See especially Sharpe, Cotton, pp. 80, 147.

The number of letters delivering information, intelligence and news that the Elizabethan secretary of state and other statesmen received is staggering.[12] The question therefore presents itself: how was such a volume managed, and used? This paper will consider the collection of papers and letters of Sir Francis Walsingham, principal secretary under Queen Elizabeth I in the 1570s and 1580s. It is very difficult for us to build a picture of what this collection looked like and what the daily practice was in relation to such a mass. Revisiting early modern archival practice is challenging because, almost by virtue of the papers being there for us to consult, their original use has been overlaid with subsequent archival intervention: in order to preserve the contents of the archive, the archive itself is changed and thus destroyed – it is overlaid with consecutive practices that take us up to the present day. This is particularly true of early modern governmental correspondence, where many items have been re-appropriated, re-bound, lost, moved and re-assembled at different points across centuries. In fact, one key point is that this process is not a separate, later imposition on the early modern letter, but rather was part of the letter's life after reception; this appropriation begins contemporaneously with the letter.

Building a picture of Walsingham's papers is further compounded by the fact that the main thing that is known about them is that they were famously dispersed shortly after his death. According to the lament of Robert Beale, "all his papers and bookes both publicke and private were seazed on and carried away".[13] Robert Beale was a diplomat and clerk of the Privy Council, and therefore was heavily involved in the management and centralisation of the papers of state because of the access that these positions granted. Though Walsingham's collection is no longer neatly intact, there are two early modern treatises on the office of the principal secretary that give an insight into its administrative practice, or at least

12 As well as anecdotal evidence of this volume from the recipients, for an example facilitated by our modern information age consider that the State Papers Online database brings up 1173 results when searching for letters addressed to the secretary of state Sir Francis Walsingham in 1582, and 108 in the month of January, for example: these numbers cover only those letters extant in the select UK repositories calendared in the *SPO* database: *State Papers Online*, Gale Cenage Learning. URL: http://gale.cengage.co.uk/state-papers-online-15091714.aspx [last accessed: 07.09.2013].

13 Read, Conyers: *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth*. Vol 1. Oxford 1925, p. 431. See also Adams, Simon/Bryson, Alan/Leimon, Mitchell: Walsingham, Sir Francis (c.1532–1590), in: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [= ODNB]. Oxford 2004; online edition, May 2009. URL: http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28624 [last accessed: 07.09.2013], where mention is made that there is other evidence that the papers were kept as one collection, possibly subsumed into the Cecil papers.

into ideal versions of it. One is by Robert Beale and one by Nicholas Faunt, and both are dated 1592.[14]

In his treatise, Beale advises that the principal secretary should keep reference books, and lays heavy emphasis on the way such papers should be recorded and kept. His description includes specification of desirable books and bundles to collect, and advice to mark the address leaf of a loose letter with its abbreviated contents, endorsing the letter with the information one would need to file and retrieve the correct one amongst many. Beale also refers to the architecture of archiving, with instruction to keep all secret information locked away in a special cabinet, and within this in boxes or small drawers ("tills"). This describes the practices by which the early modern administrator could cope with such a wealth of information, and suggests some of the forms that the information might have taken.[15]

Nicholas Faunt was an intelligencer, administrator and hitherto secretary to Walsingham. In the first section of a "discourse touchinge the Office of principall Secretarie of Estate, &c, Aprill 1592", Faunt details the general office work connected to the principal secretary and the duties of the confidential clerks (a position he held under Walsingham from about 1578).[16] In the second section he goes on to describe the information available to the office, and the management thereof. His descriptions point to the extensive organisation that the role entails, and to previous failings in this respect. He refers to the need for "sundrie bookes of paper" containing the instructions and letters of diplomats as sent and duplicated by the principal secretary.[17] He advocates two main secretaries: the secondary secretary should be in charge of "ordinarie matters" and the smooth running of the administration, and the primary secretary "wouldbee cheifly charged with Forraine matters, and others y^{t} may more nearely his [sic] Majestie and the state, both to keepe his lettres of negotiacions that dayly come in from Forraine partes,

14 Beale, Robert: "A treatise of the office of a councellor and principall secretarie to her majestie". British Library Add. MS 48149, ff. 36–96. Printed in: Read, Walsingham, pp. 423–443. See also Taviner, Mark: *Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity*. [Unpublished doctoral thesis 2000], p. 116. Faunt, Nicholas: "A discourse touchinge the Office of principall Secretarie of Estate, &c, Aprill 1592". Bodleian Library Tanner MS 80, ff. 91–94. Printed in: Hughes, Charles: Nicholas Faunt's Discourse Touching the Office of Principal Secretary of Estate, &c. 1592, in: *The English Historical Review* 20/79 (1905), pp. 499–508.

15 For a non-governmental context, see an account of possible archiving by merchants, involving storing letters strung up by threading a string through a hole punched into the top corner, Stewart, Alan/Wolfe, Heather (eds.): *Letter-Writing in Renaissance England.* Washington, D.C. 2004, p. 182.

16 Hughes, Faunt's Discourse, p. 499; Levin, Carole: Faunt, Nicholas (1553/4–1608), in: ODNB. URL: http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/9211 [last accessed: 07.09.2013].

17 Hughes, Faunt's Discourse, p. 503.

and to answere them when need shalbee".[18] Accordingly, when one considers the paperwork of the secretary of state, it is important to realise that this role involves more people than just one man (indeed the number of assistants is criticised by Faunt as a potential security risk). Secondly, this demonstrates that letters are not just responded to, but are kept, endorsed and filed, and sometimes bound into books: letters to the principal secretary become an active archive. They are processed and used.

However, one must remember that these are treatises of advice that at time of writing refer back to the then-deceased Walsingham's time in office, and hence are not real-time, unbiased descriptions of actual practice; they are part theory, part advice and part narrative (even recent historical) account. Walsingham died in 1590, and though his post was unofficially covered by William and Robert Cecil, several candidates were suggested during the early 1590s, and so in 1592 the secretaryship was a contested matter.[19] Beale addresses his treatise explicitly to job contender Edward Wotton, and both treatises can be seen as advertisements for their authors, as self-promotion. Indeed, Faunt even puts his treatise in the context of a corrective to practice – or lack of formal practice – that went before: he comments on the "late greate Confusion in the keepinge of loose papers", even when "digested in to bundells or other-wise kept in Coffers".[20]

Insight into the actual condition of the paper world of the principal secretary can be garnered through an extant manuscript memorandum that provides further evidence for the paper technologies associated with Walsingham's position.[21] The endorsement reads: "A memorial of things delivered out of my custody".[22] It is a list of books and manuscripts compiled by the principal secretary at a time when his health was worsening, shortly before he succumbed to his illness. It divides 38 books, bundles and papers between three fellow crown servants, along with a certain number to be delivered home.

I have suggested that these materials were an increasingly valued source of knowledge; who then had access to them? Though an elite government post such as the principal secretaryship extended beyond one man, this manuscript suggests that such paper was definitely considered to be his, particularly considering the choice of words regarding "his custody" and keeping a proportion "delivered

18 Ibid., p. 502.

19 Williamson, Before 'diplomacy', p. 211; Adams/Bryson/Leimon, Walsingham.

20 Hughes, Faunt's Discourse, p. 505.

21 "Memorandum of State Papers delivered to the Lord Treasurer, to Mr Wolley, to Mr Freke, and of those sent home", March? 1590, The National Archives SP 12/231/56. All transcriptions are the author's own. See also Alford, Stephen: Some Elizabethan Spies in the Office of Sir Francis Walsingham, in: Adams, Robyn/Cox, Rosanna (eds.): *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture.* Basingstoke 2011, pp. 46–62, especially p. 48.

22 "Memorandum", The National Archives SP 12/231/56, f. 56^{r}.

home". There is a sense of ownership. Further, the people closely tied to such an office were likely to be the statesman's own men: his servants and clients (which is certainly the case with Beale and Faunt). Both of these aspects point to a lack of division between the personal and the public; early modern government in England (as throughout Europe) was built on powerful individuals and their clients and associates, making distinction between private and public papers, or social and political worlds, problematic at best. Despite the aforementioned explosion of information, and while the role of educated professionals in legal, state and diplomatic posts was growing, daily life still functioned on connections and relationships, and on patronage: birth, luck, and social contacts mediated access to this kind of information, excluding most people. Though one could argue that bureaucracy, paperwork and administrative practices were developing in this period, and with them possibilities for useful men to make their way in crown service, this remained coupled with a strict social order and advancement being wholly reliant on some form of patronage.

If, as well as birth and luck, knowledge is power, then the accessibility of information is its prerequisite. There is something very individual about collections of state papers in the sixteenth century, and early modern libraries and archives certainly did not have the same associations of public access and passive, objective openness that they might have today.[23] Collections, even of crown records in the Tower, were generally tied to individuals, whether owners or 'keepers'. Bill Sherman concludes that the great mathematician and polymath John Dee must have navigated his own huge library by memory.[24] As well as the greater emphasis placed on having a strong memory in the sixteenth century more generally, this draws attention to the personal control that could be maintained by limiting the written description of a collection or archive. Considering the "confusion" that Faunt referred to, and the scrappy physical appearance of the memorandum about delivering manuscripts, which looks hastily written at best, perhaps these comments can apply to Walsingham's papers too. Sherman suggests that: "the apparent disorder and inaccessibility of the library were quite possibly part of its design, since they served to make the librarian indispensable for unlocking its secrets and bringing it to life."[25]

If someone is unable to find what they are looking for then, even if they are permitted access to it in theory, they are not granted access to it in reality. This issue is as pertinent now as then, and can be related again to the modern information age. It appears for example that the web is democratic; it is the

23 Whether these associations are accurate or misleading is another question entirely.

24 Sherman, William: *John Dee. The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance.* Amherst 1995, p. 32.

25 Ibid., p. 32.

ultimate archive of accessible information, that one can add to as easily as take from. However, because of its sheer size, the perception of democratic accessibility in the web is a myth.[26] Websites are as good as invisible when they are not sufficiently well-connected: if there is not a clear trail taking the reader to them they are not accessible; in terms of being found by the average reader they may as well not exist. Perhaps a similar risk applied to the vast growth in incoming political letters to the Elizabethan elite. This is where the finding aid comes in. In modern times, the finding aids are hubs like Google and Yahoo that search, promote and connect sites, based on the number of links and their degree of search engine optimisation; without these the web would be unnavigable. These ideas of searchability and accessibility, and their relationship to meaning, value and use, are highly pertinent at the moment. Thirty years after Tim Berners-Lee christened the World Wide Web, we know that we are in an information age and we are in the process of working out ways to cope with it. In the academic world, this manifests in things like the ubiquitous Digital Humanities, in 'distant reading', and in visualisation and network analysis.[27] The increased quantity of information itself causes us to require and develop ways of managing it: with an exponentially vast amount of primary and secondary sources available to us, we need such navigation methods, without which our jobs as scholars, even as readers, would be very different and very difficult.

Equally, without a way to keep, process and refer to the many letters the Elizabethan elite were sent, they would have no political life after reception: they would be read once and then forgotten. Instead, they are kept, and even this first action is telling of their value. Next, the letters are endorsed, and often either collected in a bundle or in a book. If a letter was received by Walsingham, it would likely have ended up in his collection – his archive of papers. Though the aforementioned memorandum of manuscripts gives a sense of some of the material associated with the role of principal secretary, it is neither extensive in detail nor exhaustive in content. Piecing together the whole picture through examples of individual manuscripts is difficult, if not impossible, particularly since information on provenance is often absent, and what survives only represents a small and now confused proportion of what once existed.

However, there exists a manuscript that does give us access to the contents of Walsingham's library of state papers: it is recorded and described in detail in a

26 This is leaving aside the practical issues of social and economic access. For a discussion of connectedness, access and hubs within the internet, see Barabasi, Albert-Laszlo: *Linked. The New Science of Networks*. Cambridge 2002.

27 For the idea of distant reading and the digital humanities, see Moretti, Franco: *Distant Reading*. London 2013. How successful these are, and how they enhance or debilitate (or are already part of) traditional scholarship, is up for debate: these are early days and there is much to be learned.

neat octavo pocket book found in the British Library's Stowe collection.[28] This manuscript is of incredible use and value: it is a hub in the otherwise lost and unnamed mass of papers and books, which recovers and links together the resources of government. It rebuilds the archive. In addition to this, its very existence is revealing: it was made, updated, and used, and so opens up the collection to not just us, but to anyone with access to this one manuscript. Being an index, it is the key to the collection. It was most likely compiled in 1588, and is apparently in the handwriting of Walsingham's secretary Thomas Lake, later secretary of state under James I. It is bound in eighteenth-century red tooled morocco and labelled on the spine "Walsingham's Table Book".

This under-studied[29] manuscript contains three types of index. The first index lists 67 unique items under "A Note of all the written bookes in the Chests or abroad", and the second details the contents of several of these books.[30] There is a third section that is discernible from the above two in that it lists mainly loose papers touching various countries and subjects. In the first index, 49 items are specifically referred to as books, with the remainder defined variously as "discourse", "treatie", "diarie", "register" or "memorial", though all 67 are listed under the aforementioned heading as "written books".[31] This indicates that there was a concern not just to keep bundles and boxes of paper, but to form them into concrete and identifiable codices: this makes the papers both more portable and more permanent as a collective unit. The books are further divided under subheadings including "France & Flanders." (14 items), "Scotland." (6 items), "Ireland." (19 items), "Books of Home matters." (24 items), "Books of Diverse Matters." (4 items).[32] There is also an item listed as "A book of diverse orders gathered out of y^{e} counsell book of Ireland", which provides evidence for both the existence of similar books in the Privy Council, and for the flow of infor-

28 Sir Francis Walsingham's Table Book, British Library [=BL], Stowe MS 162.

29 There is a very brief mention of this manuscript in Walsingham's entry in the *ODNB*, though it does not appear in recent biographies of Walsingham or in recent work on the Privy Council and Elizabethan governance, such as Mears, Natalie: *Queenship and Political Discourse in the Elizabethan Realms*. Cambridge 2005. In *Mr Secretary Walsingham* Conyers Read refers to it in parentheses following discussion of Walsingham's memoranda books or journals, in his twenty-eight page "Bibliographical Note". It reads: "(compare also on this subject the book entitled Walsingham's Table Book in British Museum, Stowe MSS 162, which is an inventory of official records compiled doubtless for Walsingham's use)", Read, Walsingham, p. 452. For extensive discussion and a transcription of the first section of the table book, see Williamson, Before 'diplomacy', pp. 215–222 and pp. 303–307.

30 Ibid., f. 1^{r}.

31 Williamson, Before 'diplomacy', appendix 4.

32 Ibid.

mation between the various cogs of government, in terms of the re-copying and re-framing of information into new products.[33]

The second index provides contents lists for some of these books, as part of subsections divided by subject or country, and with a typical style shared across most sections. Firstly, the subject's book or books are listed with full contents, including page numbers: these are, as the title of the first index states, the books located in the "Chests or abroad".[34] Following this, there is an account of the contents of the box of papers relevant to that subject located in Walsingham's study in London.[35] For example, the title "A table of the matters conteined in the book of Musters" is followed by a paginated contents list for the book, spanning the subsections of "Lieutenancies" and "Treatises for training", with the second part of the Musters subsection entitled "In the study at London in the boxe of Musters", followed by an (unpaginated) account of the loose papers therein.[36]

For each subsection, there is a subject or country keyword in the top outside corner, presumably to aid navigation, such as "Navy", "Plots Ire*land*", "France", "Flan*ders*".[37] The presence of these keywords and the fact that there is contemporary pagination in the volume suggests that the table book is intended to be perused as a quick reference guide: a finding aid or index to the great number of books connected to the office of the principal secretary. The content lists and specification within them by page number (for the books but not for the bundles) provides a manner by which the whole library could be navigated, even if this is not immediately apparent to the modern reader of the individual letter-book (for example, if there are no indices in the book, no page numbers, or if the page numbers have by now been trimmed off). The need that prompted the creation of this index could suggest a real and active usage of these various books and bundles of letters and discourses, rather than just their passive preservation, particularly considering the titular description of records "gathered" from one book to another. Another clue to use is seen in the easily-missed marginal annotations that also suggest a date for the volume.

Evidence for dating the compilation of the volume is found at the end of an entry concerning books sent into and out of Ireland. Following the text that dates this item as "from 84 to this p*resen*t", another hand has added in the year "1588", thus at some point instructing the reader that the "present" that the index was written in was 1588. This annotation appears to have been added at a later date than that of the book's initial construction. The date of this later hand

33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
36 BL, Stowe MS 162, f. 5^{r}, f. 12^{r}.
37 Williamson, Before 'diplomacy', appendix 4.

can be inferred with reasonable likelihood because it is written in the same ink as that used to write other marginal annotations. Unlike the primary text, the "1588" addition has faded to a pale taupe colour. The same colour appears in two vertical pen lines in the margin, adjacent to a comment reading "the book missing" – an obvious point to highlight – and, as well as the pen lines, this colour completes the marginal annotation (begun in a different ink) that reads: "S^{r} R. Cecill hathe it of me. 1596". This marginal annotation would therefore date the second hand to 1596.

The sheer number of volumes of international correspondence in this table book indicates their value, and also that they were a political resource of the kind that was labelled, indexed and filed. One could speculate that if the table book was created in 1588, this may have been because Walsingham, ageing and in declining health, had previously navigated his papers by memory, and his imminent successor could not be expected to do the same. Additionally, that it was updated in 1596 confirms that eight years after its construction, the book and the material it references were still relevant. Since both the later additions to the text show a later user reviewing the list in terms of its accuracy, they may even suggest that the table book, and so maybe the collection itself, passed into new hands at this time. Significantly, it is this transference, this continued use, which is permitted by the creation of such a book, whether it happened or not in this case. As well as imposing order on a potential "confusion" of documents, this book offers accessibility. If the ability to navigate the mass is necessary in order to construct knowledge from it, then the attempt to offer a route through the material, whether by binding a codex, endorsing and filing a letter, or creating a full index, is what turns it from bare information into a consultable, re-usable resource. The practice of archiving is inherent in the production of knowledge.

This is about setting practice and setting narrative, and whoever gathers and composes information and imposes coherence leaves their mark upon it (even if anonymised). I would argue that the same applies whether this refers to writing the letters that collectively become historical sources, to the gathering of political books and papers into a library or archive, or to the management and manipulation of such a collection. It was mentioned at the start of this chapter that one meaning of practice is habitualised behaviour that, by repetition, becomes the norm. Practice was also mentioned as engaging the relationships of action to theory or reality to ideal. It was seen that Walsingham's volumes of papers were for years kept in a far from ideal manner, at least in Faunt's eyes; how does this criticism reconcile with the order of the table book? The need identified by Faunt to deal more effectively with an expanding landscape of paper, and the solution provided by the table book, can be seen as manifestations of an evolving practice in the wake of an increasing world of information, and also as part of its cause. They are part of an expanding archival system in early modern Elizabethan

government that existed already but developed because of use and growth. This development can be seen as both a cause and effect of wider changes in political and administrative activity, as emphasis shifted to evidence and the empirical, and politics and policy could use its own paperwork in support of itself.