

EDWARD IV, THE WOODVILLES, AND THE POLITICS OF IDEALISM, C. 1464-83

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines performance and propaganda in the reign of Edward IV and explores the ways in which Edward, his queen Elizabeth Woodville, and her brother Anthony sought to legitimize their newfound positions. It argues that all three sought to 'perform idealism' to bolster their claims to their respective positions, presenting themselves as close to the contemporary ideal figures of king, queen, and nobleman. This view makes Edward's marriage to Elizabeth a deliberate political act, rather than merely a marriage of love, as some have argued. This thesis argues that 'performing idealism' was thus a deliberate strategy deployed by individuals in a precarious social position to justify their privilege. It also examines chivalry and the Order of the Garter under Edward, his foreign policy, the patronage of William Caxton, and the education of Edward V to explore the many ways Edward sought to justify his claim to the throne.

Key Words

Wars of the Roses, Edward IV, Richard III, Henry VI, Margaret of Anjou, Elizabeth Woodville, Anthony Woodville, Nobility, Edward V, William Caxton, Great Britain, England, Chivalry, Order of the Garter, Middle Ages, Fifteenth Century, Queenship, Kingship, Performance

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Abbreviations

- Black Book* Anstis, John, ed. *Register of the Order of the Garter, From Its Cover in Black Velvet, Usually Called the Black Book*. London: John Barber, 1724.
- The Arrivall* Bruce, John, ed. *Historie of the Arrivall of Edward IV in England and the Finall Recouerye of his Kingdomes from Henry VI*. New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968.
- Complete Peerage*, v. 3 Cokayne, G.E., ed. *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, and the United Kingdom, Extant, Extinct, or Dormant: Volume 3*. London: George Bell and Sons, 1892.
<https://archive.org/details/completepeerage03cokahrish>
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<https://archive.org/details/completepeerage06cokahrish>
- CCR, 1461-68* *Calendar of the Close Rolls Preserved in the Public Records Office: Edward IV, Vol. 1, 1461-1468*. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1949.
- CCR, 1468-76* *Calendar of the Close Rolls Preserved in the Public Records Office: Edward IV, Vol. 2, 1468-1476*. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1949.
- CCR, 1476-85* *Calendar of the Close Rolls Preserved in the Public Records Office: Edward IV, Edward V, and Richard III, 1476-1485*. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1954.

- CPR, 1461-67* *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward IV: 1461-67.* London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1897. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=iau.31858020272112;view=1up;seq=5;size=125>
- CPR, 1467-77* *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward IV and Henry VI: 1467-77.* London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1900. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951d02046614m;view=1up;seq=5>
- CPR, 1476-85* *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward I, Edward V, Richard III: 1476-1485.* London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1901. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=msu.31293104198936;view=1up;seq=5;size=125>
- Eng. Chron.* Davies, John Silvester, ed. *An English Chronicle of the Reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI, Written Before the Year 1471.* London: Camden Society, 1856.
- PLP* Davis, Norman, ed. *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.
- Vale's Book* Kekewich, M.L., et al, eds. *The Politics of the Fifteenth Century: John Vale's Book.* Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1995.
- Political Poems* Wright, Thomas, ed. *Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History, Composed During the Period from the Accession of Edward III to That of Richard III, Vol. 2.* London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1861.

Introduction

King Edward IV of England was, in 1464, probably the most eligible bachelor in Europe. The king's advisors were negotiating a number of marriage alliances, most importantly with England's resurgent foe, the king of France, for his daughter's hand. It was a shock that no one could have seen coming, then, at a parliament in 1464, that Edward announced he could not marry this French princess, for he was already married!

Edward told the assembled magnates that he had wed, in secret, on the first of May that year, one of his own subjects, Elizabeth Woodville. The lords in attendance, we are told, were shocked. No English king had married an Englishwoman since before the Norman conquest. No English king had married for love.¹ No English king had married so below his station, to the daughter of a minor country noble, Lord Rivers, who was actually in attendance at this parliament. Opponents lamented this marriage, ruing the lost opportunity of a marriage alliance between England and the powers of the continent, and blamed this ruinous decision on Edward's youthful desires, impetuous nature, and poor judgment. The magnate most wroth with Edward's marriage was Richard, the Earl of Warwick,² perhaps the most powerful man in England, who had virtually placed Edward on the throne by throwing his support behind the Yorkist claim. Warwick had been a chief negotiator with the French on a potential marriage alliance, and had not only seen his preferred strategy repudiated, but also saw this act of independence as a

¹ Edward, the "Black Prince" of Wales, married an English widow for love a century previous, although he ultimately never succeeded his father as king.

² A brief note on nomenclature: This thesis will identify most individuals by their full name, and will use their short title as a short form. So, for instance, in 1460 'Warwick' refers to Richard Neville, the Earl of Warwick, and 'Rivers' to Richard Woodville, the Earl Rivers. 'Edward' refers to Edward IV. 'Margaret' refers to Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry VI. 'Anthony' refers to Anthony Woodville, the second Earl Rivers. 'Elizabeth' refers to Elizabeth Woodville, wife of Edward IV. 'Edward V' refers to the eldest son of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville. 'York' refers to Richard the third Duke of York, father of Edward IV, and occasionally as a short form for the party name of his and his son's supporters, more generally referred to as 'Yorkists.' Richard III is sometimes referred to as 'Gloucester,' being the Duke of Gloucester before his accession in 1483.

rebellion against his own hold over Edward's crown. The marriage to Elizabeth, and her family's subsequent promotion over others' interests, would lead eventually to a second phase in the Wars of the Roses, as Warwick and others rebelled against Edward, supposedly over this Woodville marriage.

Or so the story goes, as constructed by historians from the limited number of near-contemporary sources available. Many have seen this incident as a prime example of Edward's poor decision making, and as a key factor in the troubles that beset his reign and eventually led to the downfall of his dynasty, in 1483 with the usurpation of the throne by his younger brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, and the murder of his son and heir, Edward V.³ Some scholars, including Ross, have blamed Elizabeth and her family directly, for their grasping and underhanded methods to secure power for themselves at the expense of older, more established families.⁴ Other historians have contested the influence of the Woodvilles, but still agree that Edward's decision to marry Elizabeth was a poor choice for a king who completely forgot the realities of fifteenth-century politics; in other words, the in-laws themselves were not the issue, but Edward's failure to abide by contemporary political norms did ultimately doom him.⁵

The purpose of this thesis is to contest the traditional assessment of Edward's marriage to Elizabeth and the role of the Woodvilles within his reign. I argue that if the marriage is examined in the context of Edward's broader strategy of legitimization, it can be interpreted as a rational political decision that was made to help secure his reign in the uncertain times of the early 1460s. While Edward's exact motives in marrying Elizabeth are not certain, and personal attraction may

³ Charles Ross, *Edward IV* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 87-89. Ross is especially critical of the marriage as a major factor in the ultimate downfall of the Yorkists. He criticizes her "rather cold beauty" before noting that she was "far from suitable as a queen," given her birth and her "grasping and ambitious" character.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Michael Hicks, *Edward IV* (London: Arnold, 2004), 111.

very well have played a role, the marriage did bring with it many benefits and was not inconsistent with Edward's overall strategy, and thus should not be dismissed simply as a poor choice. Investigating the marriage as a rational action provides us with an opportunity to examine the role that idealism and the performance of idealism played in Edward's political strategy. This thesis, therefore, is chiefly concerned with how Edward, his queen Elizabeth, and his brother-in-law Anthony, performed an idealized role in order to justify their social position. Its main argument is that Edward and his family were consciously evoking and performing idealism as a political strategy, which provides a possible new interpretation of the role of the Woodvilles in Edward's reign. Certainly, in contrast to what some, following the lead of William Stubbs,⁶ have suggested, the Woodvilles were not meant to be a counter-faction to balance out Edward's Neville backers, but that does not mean Elizabeth, the marriage, and her family had no political role to play in Edward's reign. Elizabeth's father and brother performed administrative and military roles for Edward, but these alone do not explain his choice to marry her. Nor do the marriages her siblings made into other prominent noble houses. While the Woodvilles provided some practical support to Edward, their chief advantage as a partner in Edward's regime was symbolic: intentionally or otherwise, they came to be a crucial part of his broader strategy to perform as an ideal king, a strategy which was necessary to grant this usurping king the legitimacy needed to rule. The Woodvilles' utility on this front can be observed and is significant, even if Edward did ultimately marry Elizabeth for other motives, something which remains fundamentally unknowable to historian due to the paucity of evidence for any conclusive answer.

⁶ J.R. Lander, "Marriage and Politics in the Fifteenth Century: The Nevilles and the Wydevilles," *B.I.H.R.* 36 (1963): 120n.

Of course, the efficacy of this strategy can certainly be questioned, and indeed one would have to conclude (with the benefit of hindsight) that Edward's marriage to Elizabeth did indeed have some disastrous consequences for Edward's heirs, but that does not mean that in the spring of 1464 the marriage was destined to bring down a dynasty. A prolonged examination of the available primary sources, a consideration of context and contemporary political thought, and an inquiry into ideology and ideals all suggest a new possible explanation for this marriage, that it was in fact made with a deliberate political goal in mind. This introductory chapter will briefly provide some context to both the Wars of the Roses and the Woodville family before addressing the historiography, sources, theoretical framework, and summarizing the remaining chapters.

Historical Context

Edward came to secure the throne in March of 1461 aged only eighteen following his decisive victory at the bloody Battle of Towton. His father, Richard, duke of York, had been engaged in a struggle with the Lancastrian King Henry VI defined by intermittent armed conflict since approximately 1452, following what the Yorkists saw as years of Henry's ineffective rule and failure to accommodate leading peers, such as York, in government, as well as a dynastic dispute.⁷ Henry was committed to peace and generally ill-suited to governance given the demands of his time. Contemporary political norms required the king to "listen to counsel" and to "exercise will," two areas in which Henry repeatedly failed.⁸ Two major factors leading to the outbreak of armed conflict were Henry's failure to address adequately factionalism within the realm and his own failure to produce a male heir. Henry was not the warrior king that his father

⁷ Michael Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), 12-21, 40-45.

⁸ John Watts, *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 363-64.

was, and the failure to live up to this legacy created room for his competitors to challenge his legitimacy. In both his failure to be a sufficiently strong king and by not having a male heir until relatively late in his life, Henry caused a severe constitutional crisis that deepened the factionalism of his reign and contributed further to the challenges of his dynasty, ultimately resulting in a civil war.⁹ A complex set of factors aside from dynastic politics created the context for this civil war, including economic troubles,¹⁰ unsustainable government financing,¹¹ an unresolved European conflict involving France and Burgundy,¹² and the appearance of what Michael Hicks called "overmighty subjects and idols of the multitude."¹³ Edward's father Richard, duke of York and uncle Richard Neville, the earl of Salisbury, were two such overmighty subjects and idols of the multitude, who had the private military might and popular support to push their reform packages and, ultimately, claim the throne for York. Salisbury's son, Richard, earl of Warwick, was another such figure.

Following York's death in battle against the Lancastrians in 1460, his son Edward was proclaimed king by a very limited number of Yorkist peers and a good deal of popular support,¹⁴ and much of his early reign was defined by attempts to legitimize his own position on the throne and end the factional conflict in England.¹⁵ By the fifteenth century the commons could play a

⁹ Watts, *Henry VI*, 365.

¹⁰ Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*, 49-55.

¹¹ Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*, 61-65

¹² Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*, 55-60

¹³ Michael Hicks, "Bastard Feudalism, Overmighty Subjects, and Idols of the Multitude During the Wars of the Roses," *History* 85 (2000): 386-88, 400-02.

¹⁴ Edward's claim was also bolstered by his successes in battle, which were seen as vindicating his claim via trial by battle. C.A.J. Armstrong, "The Inauguration Ceremonies of the Yorkist Kings and their Title to the Throne," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 30 (1948): 51-73, esp. pp. 54, 63 and 69. Cf. J.R Lander, "Marriage and Politics in the Fifteenth Century: The Nevilles and the Wydevilles," *B.I.H.R.* 36 (1963): 125-29 and Michael K. Jones, "Edward IV, the Earl of Warwick, and the Yorkist Claim to the Throne," *Historical Research* 70 (1997): 347

¹⁵ Edward used propaganda heavily to stress his *de jure* claim to the throne long after he held *de facto* control. His arms and genealogical tables, for instance, put forward the claim to the crowns of England, Spain, and France. Furthermore, by including the arms of Brutus, the legendary ancient founder of Britain, he could also claim to be "legitimate heir and successor to the ancient kings of Britain." Adrian Ailes, "Heraldry in Medieval England:

decisive role in politics, and it could be argued that to some degree the king governed only with the consent of both the great magnates and the commons. Appeals to the common weal, and a genuine desire to restore order and the proper order of governance, were rallying cries for reformers, armed and otherwise.¹⁶ The perceived flaws of Henry and his government soon became weaponized in the propaganda war to win support from the commons, which ultimately provided York with the military resources to triumph. The Yorkists did have a claim to the throne, although it was tenuous at best. The Lancastrians had seized the throne in an earlier coup in 1399 against Richard II. While the Lancastrians did hold a legitimate claim, the Yorkists argued that their own was stronger and that this Lancastrian coup had been illegitimate, despite the popularity and successes of Henry IV and especially his son, Henry V, whose victories in France had made him a national hero. Henry VI became king at a very early age, but never showed any of the virtues of his father or grandfather. He displayed a lack of political maturity throughout his reign that allowed 'overmighty subjects' such as Richard of York and his cousins and staunch allies, the Nevilles, eventually to overthrow him. Indeed, a historiographical debate continues over Henry's effectiveness, his qualities, his 'madness,' and whether he ever really recovered from that 'madness'.¹⁷

Symbols of Politics and Propaganda," in *Heraldry, Pageantry, and Social Display in Medieval England*, ed. Peter Coss and Maurice Keen (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002), 100. Cf. Antonia Gransden, "Propaganda in Medieval Historiography," *Journal of Medieval History I* (1975): 370, 374-377 and Raluca Radulescu, *Romance and its Contexts in Fifteenth-Century England: Politics, Piety, and Penitence* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2013), 22-24.

¹⁶ Watts, *Henry VI*, 266-82, and Michael Hicks, *Richard III and His Rivals: Magnates and Their Motives in the Wars of the Roses* (London: Bloombury, 2003), 59. Cf. Anne F. Sutton and Livia Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III's Books: Ideals and Reality in the Life and Library of a Medieval Prince*, (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1997), 110, and Katherine J. Lewis *Kingship and Masculinity in Late Medieval England* (London: Routledge, 2013), 22, and Raluca Radulescu, "Literature," in *Gentry Culture in Late Medieval England*, ed. Raluca Radulescu and Alison Truelove, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 110.

¹⁷ David Grummitt, *Henry VI* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 4-9. Henry's mysterious illness was certainly one of the immediate causes of the political chaos of the 1450s. See Grummitt, *Henry VI*, 168-77, Claire Trener and Peregrine Horden, "Madness in the Middle Ages," in *The Routledge History of Madness and Mental Health*, ed. Greg Eghigian (London: Routledge, 2017), online edition, 62-80, esp. 73-74. Vivian Green, *Madness of Kings: Personal Trauma and the Fate of Nations*, (Stroud: History Press, 2016), Google Books edition, ch. 4, Hicks,

Much of Henry's unpopularity was due to his failures in France, and under his reign the gains made by his father were largely reversed, as the Valois kings of France seized back much territory gained by the English at the pinnacle of the Hundred Year's War.¹⁸ Indeed, Henry VI had been crowned as king of both England and France, so successful was his father Henry V in that conflict, but he was unable to retain his dual inheritance. Furthermore, Henry VI married a French wife, Margaret of Anjou, who came to be extremely unpopular in England, at least in Yorkist circles. Yorkists often blamed Margaret for the failures of Henry's reign, a topic which will be explored in chapters one and two.¹⁹ She was seen as too active a queen, too militant, and too close with some favourites (romantic links were, of course, made) while unfair to other key figures in the realm, especially Richard, duke of York. Margaret cuts a fascinating figure in her time and, while historians continue to debate her motives and the truth of many allegations made against her, it must be remembered that at least among Yorkists, she was a key scapegoat in the rebels' cause, and her actions did little to counter this opinion. Scholars of queenship have noted that queens, as women and as foreigners, close to power but *not* the anointed king, are an easy target for critics of a regime;²⁰ male councillors were also more likely to be criticized for a regime's failings than the king himself.²¹

Edward's chief political blunder was to allow the Warwick rebellion that eventually led to Henry's readeption and Edward's exile to Burgundy in 1470-1471, in what is generally known

The Wars of the Roses, 75-82. On the flip side, to many Henry VI is regarded as a saint, for political as well as religious reasons. See Leigh Ann Craig, "Royalty, Virtue, and Adversity: The Cult of King Henry VI," *Albion* 35 (2003), 187-209, Grummitt, *Henry VI*, 232-44.

¹⁸ Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*, 55-60.

¹⁹ Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*, 123-30.

²⁰ Janos M. Bak, "Queens as Scapegoats in Medieval Hungary," in *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe*, ed. Anne J. Duggan (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), 332-33, Radulescu, *Romance and its Contexts in Fifteenth-Century England*, 15.

²¹ Raluca Radulescu, "Talking of Cronycles of Kinges and of Other Polycyez': Fifteenth-century Miscellanies, the *Brut*, and the Readership of *Le Morte Darthur*," in *Arthurian Literature XVIII* ed. Keith Busby (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001), 137-39.

as the Second War (1469-1471).²² Edward and some of his key supporters, including Anthony Woodville, remained in Burgundy with the tacit support of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, Edward's brother-in-law after his marriage to Edward's sister, Margaret. Edward's eventual return to England again saw military victory at first Barnet and then Tewkesbury, and he reigned again from 1471 to his death in 1483. His second reign was characterized by further administrative reforms, an abortive campaign against France, and an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to secure the place of his eldest son, Edward, as his successor.²³

The careful preparations made for Edward V were undermined chiefly by Edward IV's unexpected early death in 1483, which left the realm in crisis and left a power vacuum for his youngest brother, Richard III, to exploit. Edward V had been, since 1473, raised on his estates in Wales by a council led by his mother, Elizabeth, and uncle Anthony Woodville, who undertook the task of educating the future king.²⁴ Upon hearing the news of Edward's death, Anthony led Edward and a large party of armed retainers from Wales to London, but they were intercepted on the way by Edward's uncle, Richard, duke of Gloucester, who imprisoned Anthony and ruled for several months as Edward V's protector, before eventually proclaiming himself King Richard III following the death of Edward V and his younger brother, deaths which Richard almost certainly had a hand in.²⁵ Richard was killed in 1485 at Bosworth, leading to the accession of Henry VII and the beginning of the Tudor dynasty; Henry VII would soon marry Edward and Elizabeth's eldest daughter, Elizabeth of York, in a move to bolster his own legitimacy, remove a potential rival claim, and, as later historians saw it, to symbolically unite the houses of York and Lancaster and end the civil war. This brief sketch of the Wars of the Roses is, of course, a gross

²² Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*, 186-206.

²³ Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*, 209-15.

²⁴ Nicholas Orme, "The Education of Edward V," *B.I.H.R.* 62 (1984): 119-130.

²⁵ Charles Ross, *Richard III*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 63-95.

simplification, but should serve as a reminder of the key events and will provide a useful framework moving forward as we examine a number of specific aspects of Edward's reign, especially his relationship with the Woodville family.

While we might describe men like York or Warwick as 'overmighty subjects,' the same cannot be said of the Woodvilles around the time of Edward's marriage to Elizabeth Woodville in 1464. Her father Richard Woodville was an accomplished soldier, Knight of the Garter, and minor landholder who was deeply connected to the Lancastrian cause. Her mother, Jacquetta of Luxembourg, was the widow of Henry VI's uncle and former regent of France, the duke of Bedford. She had some connections to Margaret of Anjou and was the king's aunt by marriage, further deepening the family's ties to the Lancastrians.²⁶ Jacquetta had, as a member of the House of Luxembourg, close ties to the dukes of Burgundy, and she was even cousin to the Holy Roman Emperor. This Burgundian connection was later exploited by Edward, and indeed this thesis argues the Woodvilles played a major role in Edward's main foreign policy decision, namely his alliance with Burgundy in order to resume the French war. As detailed in chapter one, this policy decision was a major factor in the breakdown of relations between Edward and Richard Neville, although Neville's propagandists at the time attributed the breakdown to Elizabeth and her 'grasping' family.

Richard and Jacquetta had, aside from Anthony and Elizabeth, eleven other children, most of whom would eventually marry into the elite families of the realm. Elizabeth herself was a widow at the time of her marriage to Edward, having married Sir John Grey in 1452. Grey was

²⁶Philippa Gregory, David Baldwin, and Michael Jones, *The Women of the Cousin's War*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011), 47-150. This chapter is the most complete biography of Jacquetta, despite its limitations. The authors suggest that Jacquetta and Margaret may have been close given their shared experiences, their kinship by marriage, and by the fact that Margaret gave Jacquetta, as one of her ladies in waiting, a more substantial gift than was usual. Pp. 75-76. Cf. Kenneth Glenn Madison, *The Wydevilles, 1086-1491: The Background and Rise of a Family in Medieval English Politics*. (PhD. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1968), 121-22.

killed in 1461 at the Battle of St. Albans. She was left with two children from this marriage, Thomas (later the Marquess of Dorset) and Richard Grey.²⁷

Following York's rebellion, Richard Woodville and his eldest son Anthony fought to defend Henry VI at the Battles of Blore Heath and Ludford. After the Yorkists were forced across the Channel, Richard was given the task of securing the south coast.²⁸ While he was assembling a force to retake Calais from the Yorkists, a daring raid by the Yorkists was able to kidnap both Richard and Anthony and bring them back to Calais. There, Richard Woodville and his son were 'reheted' as men 'made by marriage' by Salisbury and Warwick, while the young Edward IV also "reheted hym in lyke wyse."²⁹ Clearly, despite Richard's exemplary record of service, there remained a certain prejudice towards 'new men,' or at least this sentiment could be held by their enemies.³⁰ This sense of being 'made by marriage' would define Anthony's career during the period covered by this thesis, and indeed his performance and self definition seems to be a deliberate attempt to ensure no one else could accuse him of being unworthy to hold his privileged positions again.

The Woodville men were somehow able to escape their captors in Calais and returned to England to fight once more for Henry VI at the decisive Battle of Towton, where Edward decisively claimed the English crown. It was at this point that the Woodvilles, along with scores

²⁷ T.B. Pugh, "Grey, Thomas, First Marquess of Dorset," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/11560>

²⁸ Gregory, Baldwin and Jones, *Women of the Cousin's War*, 108-12.

²⁹ "#88, William Paston II to John Paston I, 28 January 1460," in *PLP*, 162. The full section of the letter reads: "Lord Ryuers was brought to Caleys and by-for the lordys wyth viijxx torches, adn there my lord of Salesbury reheted hym, calling hym knaves son that he schuld be so rude to calle hym and these other lordys traytours, for they schull be found the Kynges treu liege men what he schuld be found a traytour, &c. And my lord of Warrewyk reheted hym and seyde that his fader was but a squyer and broute up wyth King Herry the v, and sethen hym-self made by maryage and also made lord, and that it was not his parte to have swyche langage of lordys beyng of the Kyngys blood. And my lord of Marche reheted hym in lyke wyse, and Ser Antony was reheted for his langage of all iij lordys in lyke wyse."

³⁰ The name of the barony claimed by Richard Woodville, Rivers, is itself likely due to a claim of a distant ancestor in the aristocracy, belying his gentry origins. Madison, *The Wydevilles*, 99-103.

of other former Lancastrians, submitted to the Yorkists and pledged their loyalty to Edward.³¹ Following a royal pardon and a short time away from court, Richard reappeared on the political scene, holding a number of positions under Edward IV; Anthony also appeared in parliament during this period as Lord Scales, in right of his wife.³² While their stock certainly rose following Edward's marriage to Elizabeth, they were already well integrated back into the political establishment. Their skill, loyalty, and experience would prove a benefit, rather than a hindrance, to Edward. Their reintegration into government, and ultimately into the king's family, was a model for how to reconcile the opposing faction in the civil war.

Historiography

There are three major debates in late medieval English historiography with which this thesis will engage. The first is the question of Edward and Elizabeth's marriage and its purposes, as previously discussed. Another is the role of propaganda, and the extent to which it affected politics in fifteenth-century England. The final debate concerns idealism and its relationship to politics: was there a relationship between the chivalric ideals in the literature of the age and political reality? Finally, and with these debates in mind, we can ask the last remaining question: what was the political significance of the Woodvilles in the period of the Wars of the Roses?

The Woodville family was, in many ways, "made by marriage," both Richard's marriage to Jacquetta and later Elizabeth's to Edward. Richard's marriage to Jacquetta turned a respectable country family into minor nobility, but Elizabeth's marriage to Edward transformed

³¹Hicks, *Magnates and Their Motives*, 47 and Hicks, *Edward IV*, 187.

³²Susan Higginbotham, *The Woodvilles: The Wars of the Roses and England's Most Infamous Family* (Stroud: The History Press, 2013), 34.

them further still into one of the foremost powers in Yorkist England.³³ The lands, incomes, and retainers of the queen's household and the Prince of Wales's household (controlled by the Woodville faction) made them a force to be reckoned with.

Edward's purpose in marrying Elizabeth is less clear, and the answer much more contentious. Charles Ross sums up the two main schools of thought on the matter: that it was either "the impulsive love-match of an impetuous young man" or "the only way to obtain her favours."³⁴ Either way, Ross concludes, "modern attempts to read a political motive into the marriage are very unconvincing."³⁵ Ross characterizes Elizabeth very negatively, ultimately blaming the collapse of the Yorkists on Edward's marriage to her. Many others have followed Ross's general characterization, which is certainly based on much of the relevant sources, although crucially they are almost all Ricardian or Tudor and written well after the marriage itself, and therefore their legitimacy is questionable.³⁶ Hicks generally follows Ross et al. in characterizing the marriage as "ill-advised."³⁷

Modern reconsiderations of the marriage include firstly J.R. Lander, who stresses the pedigree of the Woodvilles and minimizes their newly-won royal advantages.³⁸ This more pragmatic view of the Woodvilles stretches back to historians such as W. Stubbs at the turn of the twentieth century, who proposed that Edward was using the Woodvilles as a counter-faction to Warwick's influence, a thesis now challenged because of the lack of royal grants to the

³³ Hicks, *Magnates and their Motives*, 227.

³⁴ Ross, *Edward IV*, 86.

³⁵ Ross, *Edward IV*, 87.

³⁶ Anthony Pollard, "Elizabeth Woodville and Her Historians," in *Traditions and Transformations in Late Medieval England*, ed. Douglas Biggs, Sharon D. Michalove, and A. Compton Reeves (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 146. Cf. Michael Hicks *Edward IV* (London: Bloomsbury, 2004), 107-14.

³⁷ Michael Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*, 5.

³⁸ Lander "Marriage and Politics," 134, 139.

Woodvilles by Lander and others;³⁹ the large number of advantageous Woodville marriages, however, slightly complicates this rejection. Other early historians characterized Elizabeth as a sympathetic figure, a grieving mother, although the first biography of her (published 1938) combined this characterization with another of her as “femme fatale,” not coincidentally taking on some of the traits of Wallace Simpson; this “femme fatale” characterization has largely continued in twentieth-century historiography.⁴⁰ Recent scholarship, beginning in the early 1990’s with the rise of queenship studies and first applied to Elizabeth by Anne Sutton and Livia Visser-Fuchs,⁴¹ has examined the ways Elizabeth both conformed to and broke with contemporary expectations of queenship. This framework allows a new consideration of the politics of the marriage.

Queenship studies, a trend led by John C. Parsons, Anne Crawford, Theresa Earenfight, Joanna Laynesmith, and others, provides some unique insight into the question.⁴² Emphasizing the importance of studying queenship as a unique institution, with its own set of norms, expectations, roles, and attendant ideologies, allows for a framework to understand the actions, reputations, and significance of many medieval queens, including Elizabeth. By considering what queenship “meant” in fifteenth-century England, Laynesmith demonstrates that Elizabeth Woodville represented a major break from previous queens of England, who tended to be foreign-born (usually French), younger princesses. Elizabeth, in contrast, was English, from a

³⁹Lander "Marriage and Politics," 120n, 137.

⁴⁰Pollard, "Elizabeth Woodville and Her Historians," 145-47.

⁴¹ Anne F. Sutton and Livia Visser-Fuchs, "A 'Most Benevolent Queen': Queen Elizabeth Woodville's Reputation, Her Piety, and Her Books," *The Ricardian* 10 (1995): 214-45.

⁴²Queenship studies have, since emerging in the early 1990s, reinvigorated the study of medieval royalty and the interaction between politics and culture. Key texts on queenship in later medieval England include *Medieval Queenship*, ed. John C. Parsons (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997); Helen E. Maurer *Margaret of Anjou: Queenship and Power in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003); Joanna Laynesmith *The Last Medieval Queens: English Queenship 1445-1503* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Lisa Benz-St. John *Three Medieval Queens: Queenship and the Crown in Fourteenth-Century England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); and Theresa Earenfight *Queenship in Medieval Europe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

modest social position, and was widowed with her own young children.⁴³ Building heavily on Laynesmith's interpretation, but taking it one step further, I will argue that marriage to Elizabeth may have been a deliberate attempt by Edward to distance his reign from that of Henry VI and his unpopular wife, the French Margaret of Anjou. Indeed, Edward's marriage to Elizabeth can be seen to be a calculated political maneuver in light of recent developments in queenship studies.

One of the reasons the political landscape of fifteenth-century England is often regarded as so unique was the ability for commoners to enter the political debate. Throughout the Wars of the Roses the populace was constantly engaged by various claimants, and Hicks emphasizes the importance of propaganda and "public relations" to the successful rebels of the period, including Edward IV and his father, Richard of York.⁴⁴ McCulloch and Jones have also noted the considerable political power the populace held and the attempts made by the Yorkist claimants to access this power, and Radulescu and others have also done admirable scholarship on Yorkist propaganda.⁴⁵ Put simply, the Yorkists needed the support of the popular element to maintain their power.

The Woodvilles played an important role in the public relations war, both during the Wars and after. Many Lancastrians, Ricardians, and later Tudor revisionists stressed the intense dislike for the Woodvilles held by both commoners and aristocratic rivals. This interpretation has been challenged by Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, Pollard, Laynesmith, and others, and is now largely regarded as a later invention by rivals, though a negative view of Elizabeth and her family

⁴³Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*, 262-64.

⁴⁴Michael Hicks "Bastard Feudalism, Overmighty Subjects, and Idols of the Multitude During the Wars of the Roses," *History* 85 (2000): 400-03.

⁴⁵ D. McCulloch and E.D. Jones, "Lancastrian Politics, the French War, and the Rise of the Popular Element," *Speculum* 58 (1983): 95-138 and Raluca Radulescu, "Yorkist Propaganda and 'The Chronicle from Rollo to Edward IV'," *Studies in Philology* 100 (2003): 401-24.

remains a common view in the historiography. Anthony and Elizabeth both seem to have been fairly popular in their lifetime, Elizabeth for her beauty, Englishness, and successful performance of queenship, and Anthony for his chivalric virtues. I believe it can thus be argued, by focusing on Elizabeth's marriage and patronage and Anthony's political career, that the Woodvilles fulfilled an important role in the propaganda battle for Edward.

Theory

The theoretical framework that guides the argument in this thesis is a variation on Michael Hicks's theory of idealism, which I call the performance of idealism. It is the idea that a culture creates a set of norms by which members of a specific group are expected to live to correctly perform the role of a member of that group, and by doing so confirm their position as a member of that group. This performance is especially important when it is done to justify privilege. For any position in society, and especially those positions which are in some ways exclusive or privileged, there is an 'ideal' by which all holders of that position are to be judged by. If the holder performs their role relatively close to that ideal, they are judged to be successful and to be legitimate holders of that position; if they fail to compare positively to the ideal standards, they are judged to be illegitimate holders of that position. This performance of the ideal is one of the more significant ways an individual can gain legitimacy in their privilege, although it is certainly not the only one; it is accordingly more significant when the holder lacks the other accepted means of legitimacy, for instance the 'correct' birth, credentials, demeanour, or appearance.

In this case, it is argued that King Edward IV, a usurping king who had claimed the crown by force, was forced to perform the role of an ideal king in order to generate enough legitimacy to maintain his position. Both he and his wife, Queen Elizabeth Woodville, had to perform their respective roles as ideal king and queen especially well, as the ideal had been challenged by their predecessors, King Henry VI and Queen Margaret of Anjou. Henry and Margaret could not adequately perform the ideal role given both their personalities and their circumstances, and had thus seen their legitimacy suffer; this was something Edward must have been keenly aware of. Furthermore, Elizabeth's brother, Anthony Woodville, had to perform the role of ideal noble to justify his own position as a high peer. The Woodville siblings had been born to relatively humble origins, and thus lacked the degree of legitimacy in their new status that high birth had generally garnered previous holders of those positions. Edward, likewise, while a royal cousin and descendant of King Edward III, had a somewhat tenuous legal claim to the throne and had clearly claimed it only following a bloody struggle begun by his father.⁴⁶ The ways in which these three individuals performed the ideal were thus essential to their political survival in their newfound privileged positions, and were more apparent than the performance of their contemporaries precisely because of their otherwise tenuous legitimacy.

Performing ideal kingship was especially important for Edward, as he had to justify his place on the throne during a period of major instability. Contemporary 'mirrors for princes' offer one vision of an ideal king. Ideal kings should be able soldiers, and yet should not be tyrants and instead should rule with the consent of the ruled.⁴⁷ They should be wise and just and treat their

⁴⁶ For a discussion of the legal debate around Edward's right to the throne, see page 28-29, esp. n. 73.

⁴⁷ Ulrike Graßnick "'O Prince, Desyre to be Honourable': The Deposition of Richard II and Mirrors for Princes," in *Fourteenth-Century England IV*, ed. J.S. Hamilton (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 168.

subjects fairly, while ruling within and respecting the laws of the realm.⁴⁸ Ideal kings should 'live like kings' and practice some conspicuous consumption, and yet they should not overly tax their subjects, and should remain solvent.⁴⁹ They should seek and heed the counsel of their advisors and the peers of the realm.⁵⁰ Kings are explicitly advised to have many children, and to educate them well.⁵¹ As ideal men, they should be brave, strong, honourable, consistent, and display self-control.⁵² Queens were vital to ideal kings both as part of 'mature kingship,' but also as a way of 'completing' them: for instance, Edward's sexual rapaciousness and other "rowdy conduct" was accepted and even encouraged as a young man, but marriage was assumed to 'tame' this behaviour and aid in the young man's maturity.⁵³ Edward was an astute battlefield commander, an able administrator, and displayed a knack for politics; given the trying circumstances of his reign, he can be judged largely as a successful king. While modern critics are right that some of his political maneuvers proved ultimately unsuccessful, many of these judgments could only be made with the benefit of hindsight. Edward's consistent attempts at performing idealism help to contextualize some of Edward's more contentious political decisions, especially as they relate to the Woodvilles.

The basis for this framework is Hicks's call for considering idealism as a motive for action in late medieval English politics. In a concise essay (published as a chapter in *Magnates and their Motives*), he persuasively argues that such ideals as good lordship, honour, salvation, good governance, and lineage impacted politics during the Wars of the Roses, and indeed

⁴⁸ Graßnick, "O Prince, Desyre to be Honourable," 169.

⁴⁹ Graßnick, "O Prince, Desyre to be Honourable," 170.

⁵⁰ Graßnick, "O Prince, Desyre to be Honourable," 169-171.

⁵¹ Graßnick, "O Prince, Desyre to be Honourable," 173.

⁵² Katherine J. Lewis *Kingship and Masculinity in Late Medieval England* (London: Routledge, 2013), 2-9.

⁵³ See Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity*, 9.

before.⁵⁴ The model advocated by Hicks considers such ideals as potential motives, or at least as ingredients in analyzing the complex motivations of individuals, who rarely directly state *why* they take a particular political position or action. Historians in the McFarlane school (including Hicks himself, in his early years) interpreted all political actions "in purely material terms. Self-interest, self-advantage, and self-preservation featured largely; ideological considerations and the principles that manifestos appealed to were disregarded as mere propaganda and lip service."⁵⁵ Over the course of his career Hicks found that "motives are more complex," and he thus advocates that scholars "restore idealism as an ingredient in explanations of contemporary politics."⁵⁶ Hicks himself demonstrates how such ideals as good lordship and good governance clearly impacted politics.⁵⁷

If we heed his call to "find a place for [literary] ideals" in our analysis, it is hard to ignore the ideal *figures* that populate medieval literature. In romances, poems, advice books and political treatises we frequently find what I am calling ideal figures, especially, for our purposes, ideal kings, queens, and nobles. What I mean by this is that there existed, in a constantly shifting, forever ambiguous standard, a certain ideal, against which real persons could be judged.⁵⁸ Recent research has demonstrated that political propaganda was explicit about comparing what kings did with what they were expected to do, especially during the troubled reign of Henry VI.⁵⁹ This comparison was possible because the literary world did not exist apart from the political world.

⁵⁴ Hicks, *Magnates and their Motives*, 41-59.

⁵⁵ Hicks, *Magnates and their Motives*, xii.

⁵⁶ Hicks, *Magnates and their Motives*, 43.

⁵⁷ Hicks, *Magnates and their Motives*, 229-46 and Michael Hicks, *Richard III* (London: Collins and Brown, 1991). This concept is also related to Hicks's later concept of 'idols of the multitude,' his name for figures that appealed to public support to generate political and military support from the commons by appealing to ideals of good governance and inheritance. Those figures with little establishment support needed to be these 'idols' to make an impact in national politics, as Edward IV did in 1461. Hicks, "Bastard Feudalism, Overmighty Subjects, and Idols of the Multitude," 400-03.

⁵⁸ David Crouch, *The Birth of the Nobility* (London: Routledge 2005), Kindle edition, 29-30, 80.

⁵⁹ Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III's Books*, 111.

People formed an ideal of how someone should behave and when they failed to do so, whether for legitimate reasons or not, there were political consequences. This has arguably been a feature of medieval English political history going back to at least the Anarchy, when the Empress Maude's right to rule was challenged because she did not fit the mould of an ideal king in a fairly essential way: she was a woman.

For kings and other political leaders, how they held up to this ideal was fundamental for their legitimacy. Successful kings recognized they needed to appeal to this ideal form, and through propaganda, display, *and* real political actions they sought to do so, often by the creative use of chivalry and the Arthurian cult. Edward III was the most successful on this front, although we see its beginnings during the reign of Edward I, who subverted the Arthur myth to crush the Welsh and stole the Scone Stone to deny legitimacy to the Scottish kings.⁶⁰ Both kings came to the throne in troubled circumstances and had extra motivation to ensure their subjects recognized their legitimate claim to the throne and would not resist their authority.

Given that Edward IV likewise came to the throne under incredibly trying conditions following the unsuccessful reign of his predecessor, it seems a useful course of inquiry to examine his reign through the lens of idealism. This is made more urgent by its potential to explain one of the most intriguing questions of Edward IV's reign: why, given it seemed to serve no practical benefit and indeed on the face damaged his claim, did he marry Elizabeth Woodville? This thesis argues that considering this marriage, and indeed Edward's reign, through the lens of idealism provides an alternative answer to this question.

⁶⁰ Marla Lynn Morris, *The Role of Ritual and Ceremonial in the Reign of Edward I* (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Texas, 2012), 48-52 and Warwick Rodwell, *The Coronation Chair and Stone of Scone: History, Archaeology, and Conservation* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2013), vii.

Of course this is an adaptation of Hicks's proposed theory, a framework based on the principles he lays out but modified to reflect three other historiographical trends. The first is, broadly construed, the concept of performativity, or the idea that one constructs one's self through one's public actions, non-verbal communicative cues, and rhetoric.⁶¹ Scholars such as Judith Butler have suggested that identity is constructed in large part by how one 'performs' it, primarily through one's appearance, actions, and words. This idea has also been taken one step further by Ryan P. Naughton, who argues that in medieval literature knights 'performed' knightly identity by taking part in chivalrous quests, in part to justify their privileged position.⁶² It must then be asked whether real knights such as Anthony Woodville also 'performed' knighthood, and how they did so, not to mention how other social elites 'performed' their respective roles. Some scholars have done work on this front regarding various aspects of aristocratic lifestyles, including Nicholas Orme, David Crouch, James Weldon, Susan Crane, and many others, albeit mostly with a focus on literature.⁶³ Scholarship on advice literature, such as that by Judith Ferster, Ulrike Graßnick, and Margaret Kekewich, will also be helpful in considering ideals of royal identity and how they relate to propaganda.⁶⁴

Performativity is at the heart of gender studies, and it is no coincidence that gender as a framework is also important to this thesis. A crucial part of being an ideal king was being an ideal man, as we shall see, and gender is thus an important consideration when evaluating

⁶¹ James Loxley, *Performativity*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 2-3, 139-143, 150-156.

⁶² Ryan P. Naughton, *The Construction of Knightly Identity in Late Middle English Romances* (PhD. diss., Purdue University, 2010), vi.

⁶³ Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); David Crouch, *The Birth of the Nobility*; James Weldon, "Jousting for Identity: Tournament's in Thomas Chestre's *Launval*," *Parergon* 17 (2000): 107-23; Susan Crane "Knights in Disguise: Identity and Incognito in Fourteenth-Century Chivalry," in *The Stranger in Medieval Society*, ed. F.R.P. Akehurst and Stephanie Cain Van D'Elde (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 63-79.

⁶⁴ Judith Ferster, *Fictions of Advice* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996); Graßnick, "'O Prince, Desyre to be Honourable,'" 159-74; M.L. Kekewich, *Books of Advice for Princes in Fifteenth-Century England, with Particular Reference to the Period 1450-1485* (PhD. Diss., Open University, 1987).

Edward's reign. Here the work of Katherine J. Lewis on masculinity is especially important,⁶⁵ as is queenship studies as a discipline, as addressed above.

Furthermore, Olga Fradenburg's concept of sovereign love provides an important framework for aspects of this thesis. This theory states, essentially, that for the ruled to recognize the legitimacy of the ruler, the ruler must be different from them, as "extraordinary" or "ideal," and yet accessible so that "coerced relations" become "elective" ones.⁶⁶ Queens are often essential to this process of creating "sovereign love," by corporealizing the power of the monarch while allowing them to remain set apart from the ruled.⁶⁷ In other words, a queen can represent the ruled as well as acting as a site for the ruled to identify with the sovereign. This theory helps to explain part of Elizabeth's appeal, as part of a broader performance of ideal queenship at precisely the time that this ideal was responding to Margaret of Anjou's troubled reign, as the second chapter demonstrates. More broadly, the importance that Fradenburg places on symbolism and performance in any ruler's quest for legitimacy dovetails with Hicks's call for analyzing ideals to explain actions.

Taken together, this complex of theories suggests that it was not only ideals which guided politics, but also ideal (or idealized) figures. To gain the legitimacy they needed to secure their political or social position; real people not only appealed to common ideals but also performed as closely as possible to the standards set by these idealized figures. I call this the performance of idealism, which is perhaps a cumbersome term for a fairly straightforward idea: that by conforming to the standard ideal of how a person in such a role should behave, one can bolster one's claim to possess that role legitimately.

⁶⁵ Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity*.

⁶⁶ Louise Olga Fradenburg, "Sovereign Love: The Wedding of Margaret Tudor and James IV of Scotland," in *Women and Sovereignty*, ed. Louise Olga Fradenburg (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 78-79.

⁶⁷ Fradenburg, "Sovereign Love," 80-81.

Sources

The main primary sources for this study are the contemporary chronicles and near-contemporary histories, such as *The Arrival of Edward IV*, Vergil, More, Fabian, Mancini, *Warkworth's*, and *Croyland*. Contemporary songs which are recorded in *Wright's Political Songs* are an important source for assessing both popular feeling and the propaganda that tried to influence it; texts which survive in *John Vale's Book*, especially Edward's letters to London, are another. The *Register of the Order of the Garter* is used to analyze the Order in chapter three. Other sources include the Paston Letters, Warwick's manifesto, , Anthony's writings, and government records, especially the Close, Charter, and Patent Rolls. The record of Elizabeth's coronation is especially important when considering how Elizabeth was presented to the public. Contemporary romances such as the *Morte d'Arthur*, advice books (so called 'mirrors for princes'), and political treatises provide insight into the 'ideal' roles of king, queen, and noble, and will be accessed mostly through secondary sources for the sake of brevity. Sutton and Visser-Fuchs' study of Richard III's library is particularly important for analyzing the types of texts with which medieval audiences could be expected to be familiar, especially as they relate to ideals.⁶⁸ Also important to this thesis are the works of William Caxton, whose printing career and relation to the Yorkists is examined in chapter three. Caxton was a friend to Anthony Woodville and collaborated with him on several projects; furthermore, much of Caxton's output in the years leading up to 1483 can be considered pro-Yorkist propaganda, as the third chapter argues.

⁶⁸Anne F. Sutton and Livia Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III's Books: Ideals and Reality in the Life and Library of a Medieval Prince*, (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1997),

One of the main challenges associated with studying the politics of this period is that almost no source is beyond suspicion, leaving historians with few truly independent sources. As this thesis is concerned primarily with performance, this plethora of propaganda is actually something of a boon. Those continental sources that are less overtly propagandistic, such as Waurin and Commines, therefore receive less attention in this thesis than they do in other studies of the period. The second chapter in particular argues Elizabeth's queenship makes a good deal more sense politically when the way she was presented in Yorkist texts and at physical ceremonies, especially her coronation, is contrasted with the way that Margaret of Anjou was presented in those and other Yorkist texts. In other words, assessing the accuracy of claims made in these tracts is generally less important than noting that these claims were made, and attempting to explain why those claims may have been appealing to contemporaries.

Outline

The first chapter addresses some of the practical roles played by the Woodvilles in Edward's reign and provides further context for the period, especially by emphasizing the degree to which politics was 'popular' during the fifteenth century. Chiefly, it addresses the suggestion that the Woodvilles may have been a 'counter-faction' for Edward to balance out his other chief backers. I conclude that while they were not a 'counter-faction,' they certainly did provide Edward with some practical benefits, including the service of Richard and Anthony Woodville and the large number of unmarried children who subsequently married into the families of Edward's followers. They also held two key symbolic benefits. Firstly, as former Lancastrians, the favour they were shown by Edward may have indicated his willingness to embrace former enemies. Secondly, the family connections to Burgundy allowed Edward to signal his broader

foreign policy aims, namely to renew the war in France. This foreign policy strategy was itself portraying Edward as an ideal king by fighting their traditional enemies in a deliberate contrast to Henry, but also sowed the seeds for conflict with Warwick and the second phase of the Wars.

Chapter two focuses in more detail on Elizabeth's symbolic value to Edward, suggesting a possible political motivation for their marriage heretofore mostly overlooked by scholars. It examines the figures of ideal kings and queens and suggests that Elizabeth was presented as an ideal queen, thus bolstering Edward's position rather than weakening it. Yorkist propaganda and other contemporary sources noted the contrast between Margaret of Anjou and Elizabeth, and exploited the gender anxieties of Henry's reign to present Edward as an ideal king.

The final chapter examines how Elizabeth's brother Anthony Woodville also performed idealism to justify his privilege, illustrating that this theoretical framework extends beyond monarchs. Anthony was very much a 'new man,' and yet little evidence survives of contemporaries challenging his privilege, and indeed early historians had a great deal of praise for him. This is in contrast to other new men even in the Woodville orbit, such as Elizabeth's son Thomas Grey. Anthony's successful performance as a nobleman, I argue, granted him this status. The chapter also offers something of a biography of Anthony and examines how Edward used the cult of chivalry and ideal nobles like Anthony to justify his own position as another part of the performance of ideal kingship, especially via an analysis of the Order of the Garter under Edward's reign.

The Woodvilles were politically important to Edward chiefly because of their public relations value, as ideal figures who helped to legitimize his reign. Elizabeth and Edward's love marriage cast Edward as a romantic king in the Arthurian vein, rather than as a usurping tyrant,

and gave him the potential to link himself with many important families through marriage ties. Elizabeth's queenship marked a deliberate break with the tradition of foreign-born queens culminating in the unpopular Margaret of Anjou, and allowed Edward to consider resuming the hugely popular French wars. Elizabeth represented a marriage to the English people, and especially to his partisan enemies, and her role was vital in securing the health of the realm and the regime. Performing idealism was not limited to the king and queen, however. Anthony performed as an ideal nobleman— martial, pious, and wise – which not only legitimized his own social place, but by association legitimized Edward, his lord, who could command the respect of this ideal knight. Combined with a robust propaganda campaign, which included the sponsorship of chivalric romance literature, Edward sought to legitimize his reign by invoking Arthurian idealism, with himself at the center of the court as ideal king, in which the Woodville family played a crucial role.

Chapter 1: “Edward, Yorkist Politics, and The Woodvilles”

Edward IV came to the throne in 1461 as a young man who had never expected to be king. His father, Richard of York, had rebelled against the Lancastrians, led by King Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou, barely two years earlier, in 1459. While this rebellion was ultimately successful, Richard died in battle in the final stage of the struggle, leaving his eldest son Edward to carry on his father's cause and assume the throne. Richard of York had received few magnate backers aside from his cousin Richard Neville, earl of Salisbury, and Salisbury's son Richard, the earl of Warwick. Many peers supported York's grievances but refused to join him in battle against the lawful king, and the battles leading up to Edward's accession were extraordinarily bloody. Edward had seized the throne of a divided kingdom.

In Edward's attempt to reunite this kingdom, to assert his legitimate authority, and to heal the factional divide, the Woodville family were an important tool. The Woodvilles, previously loyal Lancastrian partisans, filled a handful of important roles in Edward's government that have received limited attention from historians. The unprecedented nature of Edward's marriage to Elizabeth Woodville has received considerable attention, but, in seeking to explain the motives behind this marriage, historians have not considered sufficiently the involvement and utility of her family in Edward's governance.⁶⁹ The marriages made by Elizabeth's younger siblings to prominent members of Edward's realm have sparked debate among historians about Edward's motivations, Elizabeth's agency, and aristocratic class in late fifteenth-century England, but, as I

⁶⁹ See historiographical overview in Introduction, pp. 11-15.

will argue, again the political utility of these marriages and their advantages to Edward have not been sufficiently considered.⁷⁰

This chapter will examine the practical political roles the Woodville family had in Edward's reign, including the military, diplomatic, and administrative posts held by Woodville men. In attempts to explain Edward's marriage to Elizabeth as a rational decision, her family has often been treated as something of an afterthought; instead, I will argue, they were a central factor in Elizabeth's appeal. The chapter will also explore Edward's tenuous position and the role of propaganda in the Wars of the Roses, as well as marriage politics and the role of the Woodvilles in English-Burgundian relations.

This chapter will broadly concur with the existing historiographical opinion that the Woodvilles were not meant to act as an alternative support base separate from the Nevilles,⁷¹ but will stress the potential importance of the marriage alliances established through Woodville relations as well as their Burgundian connection, in addition to the myriad roles played in governance by Richard and Anthony in Edward's First Reign. The Woodville marriages allowed

⁷⁰ Ross explains the other Woodville marriages as the king looking after his in-laws, while allowing his nobles to create a new connection to Edward, noting importantly that "the other Yorkist noblemen had no scruple about allowing theirs or daughters to marry the queen's kinfolk." Charles Ross, *Edward IV*, 92-94. Hicks echoes this theory, saying further that the Woodville marriages were "no doubt...wanted" by the nobility, but that "there was no political advantage to the king in binding [the nobles] more tightly to the crown." Michael Hicks *Edward IV*, 209. Lander, in contrast, sees the marriages as an attempt by Edward to expand his support base, although he still distances himself from the Stubbs theory that the marriages were an attempt to create a new royal faction. Lander also challenges the idea (more forcefully than Ross or Hicks) that Elizabeth manipulated the "blindly enamoured" Edward into granting her family these prestigious and rewarding marriages. J.R. Lander "Marriage and Politics," 118-20, 137-38 and 143. Charles Wood is a modern representative of the theory that Elizabeth was a masterful manipulator who took advantage of "the allure of her sexual favours and her capacity to withhold them to gain her ends," including those ends which benefited her family, such as the marriages. Charles T. Wood, "The First Two Queens Elizabeth, 1464-1503," in *Women and Sovereignty*, ed. Louise Olga Fradenburg (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 126-27.

⁷¹ The idea of the Woodvilles as a "counter faction" comes originally from Stubbs, but has been challenged by, among others, J.R. Lander, who instead sees them as part of a support base that Edward was certainly attempting to grow and diversify, but not set up as an alternative to the Nevilles and other, older supporters. Lander also convincingly argues that the Woodvilles never operated effectively as a unified faction in the traditional sense. Lander, "Marriage and Politics," 120n. Michael Hicks sees the Woodvilles as a faction but not one that was designed to counterbalance the Nevilles, and he criticizes the faction for ultimately being a "malign" influence. Hicks, *Magnates and their Motives*, 212-13, 218-19, and 222-28.

Edward to reward his followers and tie major magnates closer to him, while the Woodville's Burgundian connection played an important role in Edward's larger foreign policy shift to favour the Burgundians at the expense of the French. Richard and Anthony were important royal servants, and their importance was increased by their status as former Lancastrians. Elizabeth's family's prominence was not an accidental consequence of the marriage, but rather further supports the conclusion that marrying Elizabeth, was at least in part, a rational, calculated political choice made by Edward.

Yorkist Rebellion

Edward's claim to the throne in the early 1460s was somewhat tenuous. He had defeated the Lancastrian forces and been crowned, but the Lancastrian king, Henry VI, and his influential wife, Margaret of Anjou, both remained alive. His father, Richard of York, had been acknowledged by many as Henry's heir in the 1450s, but while Henry remained alive Edward's claim was never certain. Edward was crowned by a small number of leading magnates, with many prominent magnates seemingly abstaining from his coronation and early parliaments.⁷² He had a blood claim to the throne, but the main Yorkist claim essentially depended on inheritance through a woman, a dicey legal principle that was much debated.⁷³ Edward was not, essentially,

⁷² Those present at the council at Baynard's council include the Archbishop of Canterbury, bishop of Salisbury, Bishop of Exeter, Duke of Norfolk, Earl of Warwick, and a number of minor barons. Lander attributes this paucity of elite support to the lack of a true Yorkist party before 1461, though Ross stresses that the haste with which this meeting was called may have prevented other elite Yorkist backers from attending. Ross though ignores Lander's claim that significantly fewer dukes and earls attended the early Yorkist parliaments than supported the Lancastrians. Hicks counts "at most seven" peers for the Yorkists and "at least" nineteen for the Lancastrians at the decisive Battle of Towton. Lander, "Marriage and Politics," 128-29, 138. Ross, *Edward IV*, 34. Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*, 162-63.

⁷³ The Yorkist claim rested on descent from Edward III's second son, Lionel, while the Lancastrian claim was from Edward III's third son, John of Gaunt; furthermore, they insisted that Henry IV's usurpation from Richard II had been illegitimate and that all the Lancastrian kings were thus usurpers. Edward could have argued that he was the rightful heir to Henry, as his father had been, if both Henry and Edward of Lancaster had been killed in the fighting, but both remained alive in the early 1460s and thus their legal claim had to be rejected wholesale. Lancastrian supporters, such as Fortescue, could however highlight the fact that the Yorkist claim therefore depended on inheritance through Lionel's daughter Philippa, which was contrary to the principles of English law. There was

a king by inheritance, right, or election: he was a king by conquest, and, in the early 1460s, this conquest was incomplete.

Much of Edward's early reign was thus defined by the dual processes of sporadic resistance to royal authority and the buttressing of his own legitimacy.⁷⁴ Edward utilized many of the tools at his disposal in order to secure his position, using both symbolic and practical methods to shore up his legitimacy among his subjects. Royal propaganda stressed Edward's right of inheritance to the throne, and the semi-fictional lineages, circulated in support of his claim, remain some of the most fascinating documents produced during Edward's reign. Increasingly common in the later Middle Ages, such lineages not only stressed connections between the contemporary king and his most notable ancestors, but they also often constructed connections with historical figures and mythic heroes of romance, pagan myth, or Biblical history.⁷⁵ Edward's own lineages – composed for distribution to the nobility and gentry – traced his ancestry as far back as Cadwalader, the last Romano-British king in Arthur's lineage, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth, and they "portrayed his accession to the throne as a fulfillment of the prophecy of the return of the British race," drawing on Arthur's legend.⁷⁶ Indeed, identification with prophecy and the Arthurian mythos, along with book production and dissemination, including the work of Caxton, would be a crucial part of Edward's soft-power campaign, something that will be discussed in more depth in chapter three.

certainly no clear answer to this problem while Henry and his heir remained alive. Ross, *Edward IV*, 33-34. M.L. Kekewich, "'Thou Shalt Be Under the Power of the Man': Sir John Fortescue and the Yorkist Succession," *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 42 (1998): 195.

⁷⁴ Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*, 167-86.

⁷⁵ One clearly Yorkist manuscript survives that includes a text that "could have been easily circulated" by Edward to demonstrate his claim to the throne, and disparage the Lancastrian kings, similar to Lydgate's anti-Lancaster poetry. Lineages and histories similar to this "were likely to be composed and incorporated into miscellaneous volumes for the consumption of a wide readership from among both the nobility and the gentry." Raluca Radulescu "Yorkist Propaganda and 'The Chronicle from Rollo to Edward IV,'" 405-06.

⁷⁶ Radulescu, "Yorkist Propaganda," 408.

Propaganda was a key theatre of war during the Lancastrian and Yorkist conflict. Both sides attempted to persuade nobles and fighting men from around the kingdom to support their claimant, generally by a combination of stressing their legitimate claim to the throne, the suitability of their candidate, and the benefits brought to the people by their candidate. Royal lineages – mostly with Richard II’s deposition being a key issue – were only part of this conflict. Personal attacks – mostly against counselors – were also frequently included in propaganda, especially charges leveled against the Lancastrians regarding the undue influence of Margaret, William de la Pole, duke of Suffolk, and other advisors of Henry VI, who were accused of crippling the kingdom. Popular outcry over a lack of law and order and reverses in France – demonstrated ably in Wright’s political songs – were seized upon by Richard, duke of York, who “made the Yorkist cause the popular cause.”⁷⁷ Reform, not revolution, was the rallying cry of Richard York, a tactic later adapted by Richard, earl of Warwick against Edward IV and Richard, duke of Gloucester (later, Richard III) against Edward V.

Of course, the documentary propaganda produced by Edward’s regime had an audience limited essentially to those who could read it or hear it read aloud, and we can thus assume these documents were aimed at an audience of aristocratic peers, county nobles, gentry, successful townspeople, and the professional classes, in short, the influential classes.⁷⁸ Edward’s propaganda aimed at Londoners specifically included instructions for the letters to be read aloud, and it can be assumed that much of his other propaganda would similarly have been read aloud

⁷⁷ McCulloch and Jones “Lancastrian Politics, the French War, and the Rise of the Popular Element,” 97.

⁷⁸ See, for instance, Radulescu “Yorkist Propaganda,” 401-24, who examines one miscellany of the type popular with gentry and nobility and the propaganda within. The Paston Letters also include an inventory of books showing a number of miscellanea that could have included such propaganda, including romances, histories, books of statutes, and “mynolde boke off blasonyngys,” but this cannot be ascertained for certain. “#316, Inventory of Books,” *PLP*, 516-18.

to audiences beyond just their intended recipients.⁷⁹ For Edward, England's commons were a latent force whose support was essential to governing in the later Middle Ages, and wooing them was crucial to maintaining his legitimacy.

In England, since the Peasant's Revolt in 1381, what has been called "the popular element" was coming to play an important, even decisive role in national politics.⁸⁰ While the great peers retained *de jure* power, a series of uprisings suggested that *de facto* power potentially rested with the popular element, if it could be harnessed. The commons were, of course, the economic engine of the country, but they were also increasingly important in military campaigns that, from at least the fourteenth century, were reliant upon an effective infantry to overpower forces with greater resources, armoured cavalry, and fortifications. Edward III engaged the popular element to a large extent in his wars in France, and their support in taxes, in manpower, in prayer and in good will were crucial to his successes there. This popular engagement, it has been argued, led directly to the Peasant's Rebellion in 1381, as the popular element began to realize their latent power and demanded greater inclusion in the politics of the day. Effective Lancastrian monarchs, Henry IV and Henry V, likewise commanded popular support, and indeed Richard II's ultimate failure was due, at least in part, to Henry IV's utilization of popular unrest.⁸¹

Part of the reason the commons were so vital in these later medieval conflicts was the increasing wealth of the gentry class that was coming to dominate England. Not only did the commons comprise the vast majority of man-power available for recruitment, but a perhaps

⁷⁹The letter includes the clause that "ye woll doo oure saide lettres to be wele, avysely and distinctly bi good deliberacion openly radde." "Edward IV's Letter and Instructions to Thomas Cook, Alderman of London, for a Benevolence, 13 March 1462," in *Vale's Book*, 137.

⁸⁰McCulloch and Jones, "The Popular Element," 136-38.

⁸¹ McCulloch and Jones, "The Popular Element," 98-104.

surprising degree of England's wealth was held by the gentry, a group of land-owning non-nobles with significant incomes and much lower expenses than the barons.⁸² The gentry generally served as retainers for the great magnates, so much so that Pugh can safely declare that "the political and military power of a late medieval magnate depended essentially on the following he could recruit among the gentry."⁸³ Personal, familial and marriage links could lead to alliances between the elites, but to recruit support from the country gentry and urban merchants elites, the elite had to rely on propaganda. Much of the surviving Yorkist propaganda was thus presumably aimed at this group of merchants and gentry who made up the bulk of aristocratic retainers. This supposition, of course, requires further investigation elsewhere.

Richard, duke of York, and his Neville allies were masters of using this popular element in their campaign against Lancaster; Henry VI, in contrast, did little to attract public support. Yorkist propaganda nurtured concerns common in popular unrest, including Margaret's domination of her husband, Henry's failures in France, and the manipulation of Henry by his councilors, as well as the reforms necessary for successful government.⁸⁴ York's attempt to woo the commons was an attempt to overcome his lack of support amongst the greater aristocracy, the majority of whom may have been sympathetic to York's proposed reforms, but certainly did not share his revolutionary ambition.⁸⁵ The commons played a key role in York's rebellion, both in providing some of the manpower for the rebel armies, but also in handing London to the rebels, a

⁸² T.B. Pugh, "The Magnates, Knights, and Gentry," in *Fifteenth-Century England 1399-1509: Studies in Politics and Society*, ed. S.B. Chrimes, C. Ross, and R.A. Griffiths (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972), 97-98, partially citing H.L. Gray, "Incomes from Land in England in 1436," *E.H.R.* 49 (1934): 607-39.

⁸³ Pugh, "The Magnates, Knights, and Gentry," 101.

⁸⁴ McCulloch and Jones, "The Popular Element," 121, 128-29, Hicks, *Wars of the Roses*, 117, 122-24 and 141-42.

⁸⁵ Lander counts only Salisbury, Warwick, and Lord Clinton among the Yorkists at the first battle of St Albans, and these three were joined only by Lord Grey of Powys at Blore Heath and Ludford. Lander, "Marriage and Politics," 124-25. Cf. Hicks, *Edward IV*, 115.

decisive turning point in the conflict.⁸⁶ Certainly the popular element alone was not enough to overthrow a king, but, when allied with 'idols of the multitude' such as Richard, Duke of York and the Neville earls of Salisbury and Warwick, they became a major actor. It is only a slight exaggeration to say that by winning the popular element, York won the war. Edward would remember this key lesson in the early years of his reign when his position was most tenuous, and many of his actions can be explained by attributing them to an attempt to retain the support of the commons. It should also be remembered, of course, that this attempt ultimately failed, and Warwick's manifesto and rebellion do, given our available sources, appear to have been popular enough amongst the people to justify the return of Henry VI; this, however, does not mean that Edward did not attempt to retain this support in his first reign.

A number of surviving popular songs from the period give us perhaps the best insight into popular feelings and attitudes during the Wars of the Roses. Written about 1449, "On the Popular Discontent at the Disasters in France" illustrates the concern regular subjects felt regarding the English reverses in France under Henry VI, lamenting the loss of territory and the deaths of such heroes of the French wars as John de Mowbray. More pointedly, perhaps, it directly criticizes royal advisors such as Buckingham (a "spokeless wheel") and the "green" Thomas Daniel, echoing (or perhaps foreshadowing) the Yorkist complaints. Other songs criticized treasurer James Fienes, who "made the kyng so pore,/ that now he beggeth fro dore to dore" and Lancastrian advisor the duke of Suffolk.⁸⁷ Other songs despair simply at the "corruption of the time," decrying a general lack of law and order and conditions that breed

⁸⁶ Ross, *Edward IV*, 32. McCulloch and Jones, "The Popular Element," 123, cite papal legate Coppini, who reported that up to 30,000 armed men (almost certainly exaggerated) came to Edward's side during his march to London, and that the city "threw wide the gates of the city" and warmly greeted Edward and Warwick. Margaret, meanwhile, had been refused entry earlier in the campaign.

⁸⁷ "A Warning to King Henry," in *Political Poems*, 229, and "Verses Against the Duke of Suffolk," in *Political Poems*, 231.

treachery and a distrust of truth, in part due to royal mismanagement and poor counsel.⁸⁸

Lawlessness is, perhaps unsurprisingly, one of the major concerns of those reading and writing these poems, indicating a demand towards the end of Henry VI's reign for, above all else, peace, stability, and the return of the rule of law.⁸⁹ Some of the poems are overtly propagandistic, such as "A Political Retrospect," which questions the Lancastrian claim to the throne and repeats York's main complaints about Henry's general unfitness for rule and Margaret's corrupting influence; it also praises the ability, chivalry, and righteousness of Edward.⁹⁰ Following Edward's return in 1470, another political song is recorded by Wright, again praising the King in reclaiming his throne.⁹¹ Taken together, these songs indicate a political consciousness on the part of the commons in England and an attempt to influence this consciousness towards the Yorkist cause in order to mobilize support for Edward.

Edward himself strived to become a master propagandist and was especially effective at his accession in 1461 and his restoration to the throne in 1471, the most tentative times in his reign. His letters to the aldermen of London, written in 1462 to request a cash gift, highlighted both Henry's manipulation by his wife and the potential threat of French invasion.⁹² It deliberately connected the Lancastrian cause with the French, thus appealing to a latent sense of English nationalism that the Yorkists would attempt to exploit throughout Edward's reign, not only in anti-French propaganda and an eventual "invasion" of France, but also through Edward's marriage to Elizabeth and his support of English chivalric orders. Another letter from Edward to the great men of London emphasized the connection between the Lancastrians and the Scots,

⁸⁸ "On the Corruption of the Times," in *Political Poems*, 235-7.

⁸⁹ For instance, "many lawys, and lytylle ryght;/ many actes of parlament,/ and few kept wyth tru entent." "On the Times," in *Political Poems*, 252-53.

⁹⁰ "A Political Retrospect," in *Political Poems*, 267-70.

⁹¹ "Recovery of the Throne by Edward IV," in *Political Poems*, 271-82.

⁹² "Edward IV's Letter and Instructions to Thomas Cook," in *Vale's Book*, 135-37.

raising the potential of a Scottish invasion owing to the planned marriage of Edward of Lancaster to the sister of Scottish king, James III.⁹³ Margaret had relied on Scottish and northern troops periodically, something that probably contributed to her eventual downfall.⁹⁴ After York's death at Wakefield, her northern armies marched south and looted heavily, causing at least one contemporary writer to cast Edward as the savior of southern England.⁹⁵ On account of her army's reputation, London was thus denied to her, while it was opened to Edward in 1460, with citizens apparently rejoicing at his entry.⁹⁶

After Edward's readeption in 1471, he sponsored the publishing of *The Historie of the Arrivall of King Edward IV*, a chronicle relating the glorious return of Edward from abroad. Its introduction describes how it relates "the mannar how the moaste noble and right victorious prince Edwarde....aryved in England... and reconqueryd the sayde realme, upon and against th'Erle of Warwick, his traytor and rebell," and clearly notes that it was "complied and put in this forme suinge, by a servaunt of the Kyngs, that presently saw in effect a great parte of his exploytes."⁹⁷ The *Arrivall* consistently deploys grandiose language when describing Edward, "the sayde moaste noble kyng" who is compared to Julius Caesar,⁹⁸ and disparages Warwick as well as Henry VI and his predecessors, notably "the Usurpowr Henry of Derby."⁹⁹ The text describes the love that the people bore towards Edward and how they rejoiced at his initial return and eventually flocked to his banner.¹⁰⁰ The chronicle emphasizes the role of the people of London, who declared the Lancastrians to be so weak that they had no choice but to stay true to

⁹³ "Edward to [the Mayor of London, 1463]," *Vale's Book*, 148-49.

⁹⁴ Ross, *Edward IV*, 53. A joint Scots, French and Lancastrian army invaded in 1463, which was mildly successful in the short term, but strategically harmful for the propaganda coup it gave to the Yorkists.

⁹⁵ Ross, *Edward IV*, 30-31.

⁹⁶ Ross, *Edward IV*, 32.

⁹⁷ *The Arrivall*, 1.

⁹⁸ *The Arrivall*, 1, 7.

⁹⁹ *The Arrivall*, 1, referring to Henry IV.

¹⁰⁰ *The Arrivall*, 4,7.

York.¹⁰¹ This text, like the letters to London, was likely composed to be read aloud to the masses, and these appeals to the loyalty of London designed to honour them. This is reminiscent of the praise given to the Londoners, led by Anthony Woodville, against the Bastard of Fauconberg in the political song “Recovery of the Throne by Edward IV,”¹⁰² a poem deeply similar in tone to the *Arrivall* and likely also composed by a Yorkist partisan.¹⁰³ Finally, there is an exaltation to God, Mary, St. George, and “[all] the Saynts of heven,” for their role in the “perfecte recover of the iuste title and right of owr sayd soveraygne Lord Kynge Edward,” who had chivalrously “escaped and passyd many great perils, and aungars, and difficulties... and, by his full noble and knyghtly cowrage, hath optayned two right-great, crwell, and mortall battayles.”¹⁰⁴ Finally, there is an exhortation to God to help in peacefully and justly ruling the realm.¹⁰⁵ Edward’s restoration propaganda stresses his rightful inheritance of the throne, praises those loyal to him, and condemns the usurpers and traitors who forced him overseas. Furthermore, it emphasizes his divinely ordained status and chivalric credentials, to stress that his claim to the throne was not simply legal or by right of conquest, but pre-ordained by his virtue.

Yorkist propaganda met with a good deal of success, and it is no exaggeration to attribute Edward’s accession to the Yorkist manipulation of the popular element. For example, Margaret’s failure to enter London due to the urging of the commons proved a decisive moment in the First War.¹⁰⁶ However, the common complaints against the Lancastrians as being excessively

¹⁰¹*The Arrivall*, 15-16.

¹⁰² “Recovery of the Throne by Edward IV,” *Political Poems*, 278-79.

¹⁰³ Cf. the *Arrivall*’s depiction of the battle, p. 35-8.

¹⁰⁴ *The Arrivall*, 39-40.

¹⁰⁵ *The Arrivall*, 39.

¹⁰⁶ Hicks, *Wars of the Roses*, 161.

influenced by evil counselors was eventually leveled at the Yorkists as well, and this charge fell most harshly on the easiest targets available, the Woodvilles.

Richard and Anthony, their Political Roles, and Royal Grants

Richard and Anthony Woodville were staunch Lancastrians until Edward's victory at Towton, and indeed the Woodvilles had deep ties to the Lancastrian regime. They were among hundreds of Lancastrian nobles and notables pardoned by Edward in an attempt at reconciliation immediately following his accession.¹⁰⁷ The new Yorkist regime recognized quickly that they needed to win the support of former Lancastrians both because they were the majority and because their removal would have been massively unpopular. Many Lancastrians were killed in the fighting and many others were attainted – providing Edward with a vast store of grants with which to endow his supporters– but a significant proportion of those who had fought for Henry VI went unpunished or had their attainders quickly reversed. Some, such as Richard Woodville, began working for Edward's government almost immediately.

Richard had long been a faithful Lancastrian, beginning his service with the Duke of Bedford while the latter served as regent of France for the young King Henry VI. Richard served as a household knight to the duke and proved himself a loyal servant and capable military commander, despite his relatively humble origins. Richard was knighted by Henry himself in 1426, ironically in the same ceremony as Richard, duke of York.¹⁰⁸ Richard would become

¹⁰⁷ Hicks, *Wars of the Roses*, 174-78. Cf. J.R. Lander, "Attainder and Forfeiture, 1453 to 1509," in his *Crown and Nobility 1450-1509* (London: Edward Arnold, 1976), 127-58.

¹⁰⁸ Higginbotham, *The Woodvilles*, 12.

lieutenant of Calais by the time of Bedford's death, one of the most important positions in English royal government, given the strategic importance of Calais.

It was in Bedford's service that he met Jacquetta, Bedford's young wife, whom Richard married soon after Bedford's death. This controversial match incurred the ire of King Henry, but, after paying a substantial fine, Richard would continue to be an important servant for the king, with an income derived chiefly from Jacquetta's substantial dower and from grants made for royal service.¹⁰⁹ Born the son of a household squire, Richard soon became a baron, after being created Lord Rivers in 1448, and subsequently a Knight of the Garter in 1450.¹¹⁰ Following the onset of the Wars of the Roses and the expulsion of the Yorkists to Calais, it was Richard who was entrusted with guarding the southern coast of England and eventually retaking Calais, a task he failed due to problems of recruitment and logistics. Thus, despite his relatively humble origins, Richard was a leading man among the Lancastrians and highly influential.

Following Edward IV's victory at Towton, Richard remained on his estates for several months before eventually re-entering the court sphere with his reappearance at the Yorkist parliament in 1463.¹¹¹ There, he was joined by his eldest son Anthony Woodville, who had been created Baron Scales following the death of his father-in-law Thomas Scales in 1460.¹¹²

Anthony's marriage to Scales' only child and heir, Elizabeth Scales, brought considerable landholdings to the Woodville circle, and made Anthony an independent baron at approximately the age of twenty, while his father remained alive. From this parliament onwards, Anthony and

¹⁰⁹ Hicks estimates Richard and Jacquetta's wealth at about 2000 marks/annum during Jacquetta's lifetime, Michael Hicks "Woodville, Richard, First Earl Richards," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004), online ed., ed. David Cannadine, September 2011. Cf. Hicks, *Richard III and His Rivals*, 210-12.

¹¹⁰ Hicks, "Woodville, Richard," *DNB*.

¹¹¹ Hicks, *Richard III and His Rivals*, 212.

¹¹² Higginbotham 34. Cf. Michael Hicks *Who's Who in Late Medieval England* (Chicago: St. James' Press, 1991), 346.

especially Richard would be important to the young King Edward, but it was after his marriage to Richard's daughter, Elizabeth Woodville, in 1464 that their elevation in Yorkist circles really began.

Richard Woodville was elevated from Lord Rivers to Earl Rivers in 1466 and was shortly thereafter made Lord Treasurer in 1466 and Constable of England in 1467, two hugely important positions in royal government.¹¹³ Perhaps these positions would not have been granted to Rivers had he not been the king's new father-in-law, but his lifetime of able service to the crown certainly rendered him a logical fit for these roles.¹¹⁴ These grants were practical, given Rivers' considerable talents, but they were also highly symbolic, a way of demonstrating to the realm some continuity in royal government from Henry's reign to Edward's. Rivers was one of many former Lancastrians to continue to serve Edward following his accession, albeit with a profile considerably higher than many, not least because of Elizabeth.

Anthony's grants, for the most part, did not come until after Edward's resumption in 1471. One of the major debates about the Woodvilles has been the idea, first proposed by Stubbs,¹¹⁵ that the Woodvilles were elevated by Edward to serve as a sort of 'counter-faction' to Warwick. This seems unlikely to be the case, given that, besides Richard Woodville, few Woodvilles received any grants from the crown until Edward's resumption, preceded as it was by Richard's death at Warwick's hands in 1469.¹¹⁶ Following Warwick's treachery, the Woodvilles may have become an important part of a new Yorkist faction through grants and

¹¹³Higginbotham, *The Woodvilles*, 49-50. Cf. Hicks "Woodville, Richard," *DNB*. These offices would have brought Rivers £1586/annum according to Hicks.

¹¹⁴J.R. Lander, "Marriage and Politics," 139-40, notes that he "no less qualified than many other men for the office."

¹¹⁵J.R. Lander, "Marriage and Politics, 120n.

¹¹⁶ See Appendix.

marriages, but Anthony's career highlights the fact that Edward did not count on their support until after 1471.

The actual grants made to Richard and Anthony in Edward's first reign were, all things considered, fairly minimal.¹¹⁷ Richard's most significant grants were associated with his positions as Constable and Treasurer of England, but no extra significant incomes were granted with these positions. As Ross, following Lander, notes, "the king probably judged him rich enough already from the very extensive dower revenues of Duchess Jacquetta."¹¹⁸ Richard was granted some income from fees collected in ports and the la Zouch lands during the minority of the la Zouch heir, but these grants were few and far between.¹¹⁹ The la Zouch grant notes that it was made in return "for certain burdens undertaken by him at the king's command," but aside from a grant authorizing repayment of a debt to Rivers and others, there are few grants made in direct recompense for Rivers' service.¹²⁰

Anthony, likewise, received relatively little from Edward. Anthony was given custody of the king's castle at Portchester and governance of the town of Portsmouth,¹²¹ but Anthony's major grant, that of the lordship of the Isle of Wight, appears to have been purchased rather than simply granted by Edward.¹²² It seems likely that the purchase was made possible because of a loan from Edward, as Pidgeon has argued.¹²³ Edward's only role in this grant, possible loan aside, seems to have been backing Anthony in the subsequent dispute between Anthony and the

¹¹⁷ See Appendix.

¹¹⁸Ross, *Edward IV*, 96.

¹¹⁹*CPR 1467-77*, 59 and 97.

¹²⁰ *CPR 1467-77*, 33-34.

¹²¹ *CPR 1467-77*, 41.

¹²² *CPR 1461-67*, 535. Ross, *Edward IV*, 96, assumes that it was a grant, but Pidgeon has argued convincingly that it was in fact purchased, due to the exchange of land and cash between the Woodvilles and the previous title holder, Geoffrey Gate. Lynda Pidgeon, "Antony Wydeville, Lord Scales and Earl Rivers: Family, Friends and Affinity. Part 2," *The Ricardian* 16 (2006): 12-13.

¹²³ Pidgeon, "Antony Wydeville," 12-13.

previous title holder, Geoffrey Gate, one of Warwick's knights,¹²⁴ ensuring that the arrest warrant issued to Anthony for defaulting on his payment issued during Henry's readeption was not acted upon during his Second Reign.¹²⁵ The dispute was subsequently resolved in 1475, with Anthony seemingly facing no retribution, probably in part due to Edward's influence.¹²⁶ This appears to be the only incident where Edward helped the Woodvilles to seize land somewhat nefariously, making it a singular occurrence rather than a pattern, as contemporary complainants often alleged.¹²⁷ Anthony also served as a diplomat for Edward, chiefly to Burgundy, perhaps due to his maternal connections to that country, addressed below.

The scarcity of grants given to the Woodville men before Edward's second reign was certainly not due to a lack of services performed by Richard and Anthony to Edward. Along with other trusted Yorkist partisans including Edward's brother's George, duke of Clarence, and Richard, duke of Gloucester, as well as Richard, earl of Warwick and William, Lord Hastings, both Woodvilles were frequently made commissioners of oyer and terminer or commissioners of array. Anthony was often enlisted for specific counties, along with other commissioners, while on at least one occasion Richard was part of a "general commission of oyer and terminer throughout the realm," which included Richard, earl of Warwick, as great chamberlain; Henry Bourchier, earl of Essex, as Steward of the household; Richard, earl Rivers, as treasurer; as well as William, Lord Hastings; and others.¹²⁸ In the commissions of array in preparation for conflict with Richard, earl of Warwick, the Woodvilles again played an important part, commensurate with their rank and kinship with Edward. Anthony also performed a number of smaller roles in

¹²⁴ John Warkworth, *A Chronicle of the First Thirteen Years of the Reign of King Edward the Fourth*, ed. James Orchard Halliwell (London: Camden Society, 1844; New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968), 19. Hereafter "*Warkworth's Chronicle*."

¹²⁵ *CCR* 1468-76, 157.

¹²⁶ *CCR* 1468-76, 433 & 436.

¹²⁷ Ross, *Edward IV*, 97-100.

¹²⁸ *CPR* 1467-77, 170.

royal governance for Edward, including as commissioner of *wallis et fossatis*,¹²⁹ military captain,¹³⁰ agent in securing a prisoner's release (along with Warwick),¹³¹ and investigator in a theft case with potential diplomatic ramifications between England and Burgundy.¹³² Anthony was also Chief Butler of England from 1473.¹³³

The Woodvilles' status as former Lancastrians must be part of any assessment of their importance to Edward, as well, because their symbolic presence as loyal members of the new Yorkist administration demonstrated that there was a place in Edward's regime for former Lancastrian partisans. Jacquetta's dower and the Scales inheritance were substantial enough to make the Woodville men important players whether or not Edward had married Elizabeth, but they were nonetheless minor figures compared to many of the upper nobility, and, with the deposition of Henry, had few allies left among the major magnates. The Woodvilles were clearly a family with ambition, as Anthony's advantageous marriage to Elizabeth Scales shows, but to maintain themselves, provide for their many children, and continue to advance in society they *needed* Edward, making them ideal tools for Edward's will. They had enough wealth, experience, and influence to fulfill several important roles within Edward's government in the First Reign, but not enough to challenge him in anyway, unlike Richard Neville, George, duke of Clarence, or Richard, duke of Gloucester.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ *CPR 1467-77*, 169.

¹³⁰ *CPR 1467-77*, 127.

¹³¹ *CCR 1461-68*, 328.

¹³² *CPR 1467-77*, 57.

¹³³ *Complete Peerage*, v.6, 371-72.

¹³⁴ Hicks identifies Richard, duke of York, Richard, earl of Warwick, and Richard, duke of Gloucester as among those "overmighty subjects" who were also "idols of the multitude," an identity that allowed them realistically to compete with the sovereign politically and militarily; all three defeated established kings at various points during the Wars. The Woodvilles were never able to transform themselves into either, making them much safer allies for Edward, and also leading to their – and Edward IV's – eventual downfall. Hicks, "Bastard Feudalism, Overmighty Subjects, and Idols of the Multitude," 386-403.

Some historians see the Woodville marriages as Edward merely providing for his new in-laws, which they certainly did; however the fact that most of these marriages must have seemed politically beneficial to Edward has been largely discounted and demands further interrogation.¹³⁵ Hicks is right to point out that the families the Woodville siblings married into were already close to Edward, but it seems a stretch to suggest that therefore there was little political advantage in "binding them more tightly to the crown."¹³⁶ Creating familial ties to those individuals he counted on seems a sound strategy to further secure the support of those crucial allies.¹³⁷ Given that nearly all of the individuals who married Woodville siblings had supported him against the Lancastrians too, it seems likely that creating a marriage bond between the crown and them was a way for Edward to reward his loyal followers while costing the crown little. William Herbert, for instance, was given the earldom of Pembroke following the Yorkist accession, while his teenaged son was married to the young Mary Woodville.¹³⁸ Henry Bouchier likewise fought for the Yorkists and was rewarded with the earldom of Essex, and shortly thereafter his eldest son William married Anne Woodville.¹³⁹ Clearly these loyal Yorkists and others saw some value in marrying into Edward's family, and likely viewed it as a reward for their service. Elizabeth's sisters were thus a resource for Edward to use in his post-accession quest for stability on the throne.

¹³⁵Eg. Ross, *Edward IV*, 94: "apart from the seven great marriages, the queen's kinsfolk got little in the way of tangible rewards."

¹³⁶ Hicks, *Edward IV*, 209.

¹³⁷ At the time of Elizabeth's marriage to Edward, her siblings Anne, Richard, Jacquetta, John, Martha, Mary, Edward, Thomas, Catherine, and Lionel were unmarried. Anne married first William Bouchier and then George Grey, Earl of Kent; Mary married William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke; Jacquetta married John le Strange; John married Catherine Neville, Dowager Duchess of Norfolk; Eleanor married Anthony Grey, son of the Earl of Kent; Margaret married Thomas FitzAlan, Earl of Arundel; and Catherine married Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham.

¹³⁸ *Complete Peerage* v. 4, 206-07.

¹³⁹ Linda Clark, "Bouchier, Henry, First Earl of Essex," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/2987>

Richard's grant as Constable was odd for its inclusion of the clause "...and grant of the reversion of the office on the death of the said earl of Ryvers to his son Anthony Wideville, lord of Scales and Nuselles, for life, receiving 200l yearly as above."¹⁴⁰ This office was not generally hereditary, and Rivers' predecessor the earl of Worcester's grant had had no such clause,¹⁴¹ nor did the grant to his successor, Richard, duke of Gloucester.¹⁴² Edward's grant to both Richard *and* Anthony is puzzling, and has not been addressed in detail in the existing scholarship.¹⁴³ Perhaps the grant included Anthony as a token of favour to both of the Woodville men, a trust put in their ability and loyalty; perhaps it was intended as a slight to the existing senior members of the Yorkist faction, including the earl of Worcester, who was, with Richard's promotion to the office, demoted to deputy governor of Ireland.¹⁴⁴ In any case, Anthony never did take the office of Constable, though he was granted an income of £200 in April 1470, several weeks after Losecote Field but almost a year after Richard Woodville's execution.¹⁴⁵ This grant may have been in return for Anthony's service during the initial stages of Warwick's rebellion or in lieu of the £200 promised him in Richard's original grant, even if it did not accompany the prestigious office, granted in October 1469 to Gloucester.¹⁴⁶

The services provided by Richard and Anthony during Edward's First Reign demonstrate that they were important servants of the crown, along with such notables as Richard, earl of Warwick; William, Lord Hastings; and the dukes of Clarence and Gloucester. Their service may

¹⁴⁰ *CPR 1467-77*, 19.

¹⁴¹ *CPR 1461-67*, 74.

¹⁴² *CPR 1467-77*, 178.

¹⁴³ Several scholars mention the unique wording of the grant, but none speculate on the reasons for including Anthony in it; it requires further investigation. Ross, *Edward IV*, 95-6, Rosemary Horrox, *Richard III* (Cambridge: CUP, 1989), 33.

¹⁴⁴ Benjamin G. Kohl, "Tiptoft, John, First Earl of Worcester (1427-1470)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* ed. H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004), online ed., ed. David Cannadine, September 2015.

¹⁴⁵ *CPR 1467-77*, 206.

¹⁴⁶ *CPR 1467-77*, 178.

not have been truly exceptional, but it demonstrates a level of trust in both the loyalty of the Woodville men and in their abilities as administrators and commanders. They could be counted on as able lieutenants, and Anthony's service and loyalty earned him the vital post of Governor of the Prince of Wales during Edward's second reign, a role that will be further explored in chapter three.

Foreign Policy and the Burgundian Shift

The Woodvilles also played a key role in one of the defining trends in Edward's reign, his shift to Burgundy and alliance with the duchy against France. It appears that Edward's preferment of Burgundy over France, the power Warwick advocated allying with, was the true cause of the eventual split between Edward and Warwick.¹⁴⁷ The advancement of Elizabeth and her family certainly may have played a part, especially because of their eventual dominance in the marriage market, but otherwise there is little to suggest, outside of Warwick's propaganda, that the Woodvilles were the underlying cause of the split.¹⁴⁸ It must be remembered that Warwick and the Nevilles were still in receipt of a substantial number of grants and incomes from the crown and took full advantage of having an ally on the throne.¹⁴⁹ Warwick had long been negotiating for Edward a French marriage, a proposal ultimately derailed by Edward's

¹⁴⁷ Hicks concludes, while acknowledging the problems with our biased sources, that the Warwick-Edward dispute probably began with a foreign policy disagreement, but the marriage was quickly brought into the conflict, either as fuel or as ammunition. Michael Hicks, *Edward IV*, 114-15. Warkworth sees the termination of George Neville, Warwick's brother and bishop of Exeter, from the post of Chancellor (and possibly the restoration of a Percy to the Earldom of Northumberland, at the expense of John Neville) as the final straw in the split between Warwick and Edward. *Warkworth's Chronicle*, 3-4.

¹⁴⁸ Lander tackles the pro-Neville Pseudo-Worcester on Edward's marriage to Elizabeth and especially the marriages of the Woodville siblings, noting that they were not condemned especially harshly and many other sources omit the Woodville marriages entirely. Lander thus accuses historians of relying too carefully on one problematic source: Lander, "Marriage and Politics," 135.

¹⁴⁹ Hicks notes that "it is only a slight exaggeration to label the years 1461-7 'The Rule of the Nevilles,'" Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*, 187, and elsewhere argues that Warwick was rewarded disproportionately compared to other major Yorkists in the First Reign: Hicks, *Edward IV*, 206-07.

secret marriage to Elizabeth.¹⁵⁰ This marriage sent a clear message to Warwick and the rest of the English aristocracy that Edward was not interested in any sort of alliance with France.

Perhaps too much has been made of Elizabeth's maternal connection to Burgundy, but it is certainly not an insignificant factor in considering her appeal. While her paternal Woodville relations were of quite humble origins, her mother Jacquetta was not only the Dowager Duchess Bedford but also the eldest daughter of Peter, Count of St. Pol and member of the House of Luxembourg, a major Burgundian family.¹⁵¹ Indeed, it could be argued that Bedford had married Jacquetta precisely because of her ties to the duchy, as a surrogate for his deceased Burgundian wife. Jacquetta remained a minor player in English court politics in the troubled 1450s, and Edward would certainly have known of Elizabeth's connections (tenuous as they were) to Burgundy at their marriage or before, when Hastings first contracted with her for the marriage of their children.¹⁵² Few other noble women in England who might have otherwise been eligible spouses for Edward could claim *any* familial connections to Burgundy, accentuating the importance of Elizabeth's, however tenuous they may have been. Elizabeth's connections to the Burgundians may be an important part of the answer to the question of why Edward chose to marry Elizabeth specifically. Other noble English women may have been able to provide him with heirs, a symbolic connection to the English nation, or to the Lancastrians, but Elizabeth was unique in *also* providing a connection to the Burgundians that was heartily exploited by Edward in her coronation and related ceremonies.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Hicks, *Wars of the Roses*, 186-89.

¹⁵¹ Lander, "Marriage and Politics," 130, Gregory, Baldwin and Jones, *The Women of the Cousin's War*, 55-56, and Hicks, *Edward IV*, 129.

¹⁵² Gregory, Baldwin and Jones, *Cousin's War*, 75-76 and Lander, "Marriage and Politics," 132-33. See pp. 59-60 for further discussion on this marriage arrangement.

¹⁵³ *Coronation*, 34-36.

If the Woodville connection to Burgundy mattered at all in practice, it is best evidenced in the service of Richard and Anthony Woodville as diplomats to Burgundy in 1466-7, as they secured a marriage between Edward's sister Margaret and Charles, the heir of the Duke of Burgundy. This marriage would serve as the lynchpin of an alliance between England and Burgundy, which would eventually allow Edward to wage a campaign against France, the mortal enemies of the English.¹⁵⁴ The dukes of Burgundy had long asserted their independence from the French crown, and it was this independence that had helped the English crown to wage such a successful war against the French under Henry's father and grandfather. Henry VI was crowned king of both England and France at his accession and held a significant portion of French territory in his early years. The English alliance with Burgundy formed a crucial part of this, as English forces there could only hold out against French resistance with the support of the Burgundians. Henry's uncle, the Duke of Bedford, was regent of France from 1422-35 and had married firstly a Burgundian bride and then Jacquetta in order to safeguard this alliance. This alliance did ultimately falter, and English holdings in France were reduced to nil by the period of Henry's personal reign, with only Calais remaining in English hands. Edward always styled himself King of England and of France in his letters and proclamations; his professed interest in France must be taken seriously.¹⁵⁵

The marriage of Edward's sister, Margaret, to Charles, the future Duke of Burgundy, was seen by Edward as the first step to reasserting English claims to French territory. Phillip, the Duke of Burgundy (r.1419-1467) had produced no legitimate daughters who could have been ideal candidates for marriage to Edward, but marriage between his heir and Edward's sister was

¹⁵⁴ Hicks, *Wars of the Roses*, 209. See J.R. Lander, "The Hundred Years' War and Edward IV's Campaign in France," in his *Crown and Nobility* (London: Edward Arnold, 1976), 220-41. and Hicks, *Edward IV*, 123-47 for a complete overview of the 1475 campaign.

¹⁵⁵ Hicks, *Edward IV*, 125

a mutually agreeable way to secure an alliance against France. The negotiations for this marriage began in 1466, with Richard and Anthony Woodville travelling to Burgundy to discuss terms. Elizabeth's coronation, and indeed the Woodville's self-fashioning, had emphasized their familial connection to Burgundy through Jacquetta of Luxembourg, making the Woodville men natural choices for this task. When marriage was eventually agreed to, it was Anthony in 1467 who escorted Margaret to Burgundy, representing his brother-in-law Edward, but also reasserting his family's claim to Burgundian ancestry through Jacquetta. Anthony was, by all accounts, an urbane and enlightened man, just the type to revel in the chivalric grandeur of the Burgundian court.¹⁵⁶ These personal attributes as well as familial connections with both Edward and Jacquetta made the Woodville men perfect for this crucial task of securing an alliance with Burgundy.

Edward's alliance to Burgundy was a critical part of his fashioning as the rightful king of England. His propaganda, especially in the immediate aftermath of 1461, made clear the connection between the Lancastrian cause and France – not only Henry VI's failures in pressing English claims in France, but the threat that France posed to English territory in Britain. Edward, to appear as the rightful king, needed to be in conflict with France. With a Burgundian alliance, secured in no small part by the Woodvilles, Edward could perform one of the major ideal roles of the English king – to fight for English rights in France.

Edward's letter to the aldermen of London is most instructive of his distinction between the French Lancastrians and the English Yorkists, a theme repeated in much Yorkist propaganda

¹⁵⁶Anthony is best remembered to historians as the sponsor of printer William Caxton, for whom he translated several works, and as a celebrated tournament champion. Mancini says of him that: "Lord Rivers was always considered a kind, serious, and just man, and one tested by every vicissitude of life. Whatever his prosperity he had injured nobody, though benefiting many," set up in direct contrast to the "immoderate," "licentious," and "insolent" Edward; Dominic Mancini, *Usurpation of Richard III*, ed. C.A.J. Armstrong (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 67-69. His reputation is more fully explored in ch. 3.

owing especially to the activities of Margaret of Anjou.¹⁵⁷ In this letter, he (after identifying himself as King of England and of France, of course) charges that:

Oure greate adversarie Henry naming hymselfe king of England, bi the malicious councaill and excitation of Margarete his wife naming her selfe queen of England, have conspired, accorded, concluded and determined with oure outwarde ennemyes as wele of Fraunce and of Scotland as of othre divers countrees, that oure saide outwarde ennemyes in grete number shall in all haste to thayme possible entre into this oure reume of Englande to make in the same suche cruell, horrible and mrotall were, depopulacion, robberye and manslaughter ashere before hathe not biene used among cristen people. And with all wayes and meanes to thayme possible to distroye utterly the people, the name, the tongue and all the blood Englisshe of this oure said reume.¹⁵⁸

The connection between the Lancastrian cause and the “outwarde ennemyes” of France and Scotland are made clear, specifically in the influence of Margaret.¹⁵⁹ This letter then requests – in no uncertain terms – significant sums from the people of London in order for Edward to defend the realm adequately from those who wish to “distroye utterly the people” of England. Edward here casts himself as the just and righteous defender of England and, therefore, its rightful king. By allying himself with foreign enemies long in conflict with the English people, Henry had lost any moral claim to be king of England.

Also referenced in Edward’s letter to the Londoners is another egregious act by Henry: it is charged that in return for help reclaiming his English crown, Henry would surrender to Louis his claim to the French throne, as well as the numerous other territories the English crown claimed in France.¹⁶⁰ This, to Edward (and presumably those hearing it), was nearly as unforgiveable as inviting French soldiers to England in the first place. The English king had a

¹⁵⁷ See H. Maurer “Delegitimizing Lancaster: The Yorkist Use of Gendered Propaganda During the Wars of the Roses,” in *Reputation and Representation in Fifteenth Century Europe*, ed. D.L Biggs, S.D. Michalove, and A.C. Reeves (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), 9-38.

¹⁵⁸ “Edward IV’s letter and instructions to Thomas Cook,” *Vale’s Book*, 135-36.

¹⁵⁹ Some scholars identify the foreign backing of Henry VI as a problem for the Yorkists, but, as this and other propaganda shows, they clearly tried to turn this into an advantage by aligning themselves firmly with the English. Hicks, *Edward IV*, 127.

¹⁶⁰ “Edward IV’s Letter and Instructions to Thomas Cook,” *Vale’s Book*, 136.

just claim to the throne of France, and Edward needed to demonstrate that he intended to pursue this claim, even half-heartedly, as his French invasion inevitably proved to be when it finally came in the mid-1470s.¹⁶¹

Hicks asserts that Edward “had no pressing need to commit himself to intervention on either side...[but] instead he contracted aggressive alliances that committed him to war,” and puzzles over the fact that Edward pursued alliances against France with not only Burgundy and Brittany, but also the less utilitarian Aragon, Castile, Denmark, Naples, and Scotland.¹⁶² In fact, pursuing war against France and demanding recognition from foreign powers was a core part of the theatrics of kingship for Edward. Yorkist propaganda had been harping on the Lancastrian links to France and their failings there for years, which made Warwick’s proposals for the marriage of Edward to a French princess unworkable for Edward. Much of Edward’s claim to the throne came from his performance as an ‘ideal’ king, and his opposition to France formed a significant part of this. The Woodville marriage thus closed the possibility of a French marriage to Edward and his counselors, with Edward symbolically rejecting France for an English woman, one with Burgundian familial ties no less.

Conclusion

After reviewing the evidence, it is thus clear that the Woodvilles served a number of important political roles for Edward, even if they were not utilized as a faction separate from the existing court party. In both practical governance and Edward’s expression as an ideal king –

¹⁶¹ Hicks, *Edward IV*, 130-47.

¹⁶² Hicks, *Edward IV*, 128-31.

both of which were vital to his claim to legitimate rulership following his coup – the Woodvilles were key accomplices.

Historians have rightly argued that Edward still depended on the Nevilles during his first reign and that the Woodvilles were not a competing powerbase for the young king, but this chapter has showed that historians have underemphasized the roles that the Woodvilles did play for the Yorkist crown. The marriages of the Woodville children allowed Edward to increase his personal ties to some of the most important magnates of the realm as well as loyal Yorkist allies, rewarding his followers while costing the crown little, and, as Ross and Laynesmith have further articulated, the existing nobility were clearly happy to take this opportunity.¹⁶³ Richard Woodville provided experience in several key posts in royal government and earned those posts by virtue of his experience rather than his marriage ties to Edward. Together with his son Anthony, their familial relationship to Edward was more important in the negotiations with Burgundy, and the Woodville role in this Burgundian turn in Edward's foreign policy – perhaps the defining theme in Edward's first reign – has been overlooked even by scholars sympathetic to the political function of Edward's marriage to Elizabeth, including Laynesmith. Finally, by marrying Elizabeth, favouring her family, and utilizing the services of Richard and Anthony, Edward showed the English people that he was to be the King of England, rather than simply the leader of the Yorkist faction. The Woodvilles were a family clearly aligned with the Lancastrians and yet with no powerbase of their own, thus making a perfect target for Edward to demonstrate his ability to heal the factional divide. Lancastrians willing to accept Edward as king had a place within this new power structure, a message driven home by the Woodvilles. This chapter has also demonstrated the importance of propaganda and of winning popular support during the

¹⁶³ Ross, *Edward IV*, 94 and Laynesmith, *Last Medieval Queens*, 53-55.

Wars of the Roses, underscoring the need to analyze the Woodvilles as a part of Edward's effort to secure popular support. The following chapters will analyze this in more detail by focusing on the ways in which the Woodvilles allowed Edward to perform the role of ideal king.

Chapter 2: Elizabeth and English Queenship

This chapter will examine in more detail the character and political career of Edward's queen, Elizabeth Woodville. This is not a biography proper: the focus is Elizabeth as queen rather than Elizabeth the person. This study of Elizabeth's political utility for Edward is an attempt to answer one of the defining questions of Edward's reign – *why* arrange the Woodville marriage – without resorting to unprovable assumptions about the pair's romantic or sexual relationship, as scholars have too often done. While this thesis puts forward the case for the marriage having been a deliberate, politically motivated act, it has to be admitted from the outset that the motivation of this marriage remains ultimately unknowable. Perhaps Edward was simply a libidinous teenager who 'desired her favours' and was duped into marriage. Perhaps the pair were truly in love, and Edward was so overcome that he put his personal desire ahead of the good of the realm. The ultimate failure of the Yorkist regime has generally been blamed on Elizabeth and her family in some way (not without some reasonable evidence), and this has generally led historians to assume that Edward's choice to marry Elizabeth must have been at the outset a poor decision. Granted, the Woodvilles in the final analysis likely did not help the Yorkist regime, as anti-Woodville rhetoric justified Richard III's usurpation, but that is not to say that the marriage to Elizabeth had no political utility at the time of its conception. In any case, this approach offers some insights into the way Elizabeth was presented by the Yorkist faction to benefit its cause.

Scholars' assumptions about Elizabeth have not come from nothing. Certainly, the evidence surrounding her marriage and accession generally indicates that this must have been

anything but a political match, given how contemporaries received it. This evidence, however, is problematic. Much of it comes from later than 1464 and is backdated as part of Warwick's propaganda campaign (and later, Richard III's) to justify the deposition of Edward IV (or V). A rereading of the available evidence offers at least the potential for a reassessment of Edward's marriage and Elizabeth's queenship. Hicks' theory of idealism as a motivating factor, Laynesmith's conclusions about late medieval English queenship, and recent work on gender and queenship suggest that Elizabeth may have been in fact a reasonable choice for Edward to marry in 1464. While the last chapter has argued this by examining the role of the Woodville men in Edward's regime, this chapter will look specifically at Elizabeth as queen. It will argue that Elizabeth and Edward sought deliberately to redefine English queenship, not only in order to separate Edward from his Lancastrian predecessors, but also to legitimize his position as king. This was essentially a question of gender. A king needed a queen, and Elizabeth's performance as an ideal queen seems to have been intended to help secure Edward's place on the throne.

This chapter will briefly examine Elizabeth's biography to provide further context, focussing especially on her parents and first husband. It then examines several contemporary texts regarding her marriage to Edward in 1464, contrasting the two different narratives of the impact the marriage had on Edward's relationship to Warwick. The chapter then examines English queenship, especially Margaret of Anjou's performance as queen, emphasizing that Margaret was unable to present herself as an ideal queen given the circumstances of Henry's reign, which made her a vulnerable target of Yorkist propaganda. This assessment focuses on nationality, virginity, and maternity, as well as what we might call proper female behaviour. It then examines Elizabeth's presentation in propaganda and other texts, arguing that she was presented by supporters as an ideal queen in deliberate contrast to Margaret, and that Edward, by

being seen to have an ideal queen, strengthened his own position as ideal king. The chapter ends by considering Elizabeth as an intercessor between the ruler and the ruled, and a necessary part of mature kingship.

In the Yorkist portrayal of Elizabeth, we see a new ideal of queenship being articulated, and the performance of this new ideal lent legitimacy to Edward by making him appear the ideal king. Elizabeth was simultaneously a 'noble virgin,' a devoted mother, a loving wife, an object of desire, and representative of the English nation;¹⁶⁴ by loving her, Edward could demonstrate his love for the realm. The contradictions between this supposed ideal and her actual life and personality were exploited by propagandists and confirmed by excellent scholarship in recent years. As with all propaganda, however, the public image of Elizabeth – as constructed through her public performances and in Yorkist propaganda texts – remains just as (if not more) politically significant as her actual acts and character.

Elizabeth: Her Biography, Sources, and Reputation

Elizabeth Woodville was born to Richard Woodville, Lord Rivers, and his wife Jacquetta, dowager Duchess of Bedford, around 1437, probably at Grafton, Northamptonshire.¹⁶⁵ She was the first of their dozen or so children. Richard and Jacquetta had married in (probably) 1437

¹⁶⁴ Fradenburg states that queens can be representative either of the unity of a realm, by representing a people, or representative of divisive forces, by representing frequent enemies. If we accept this principle, then Elizabeth represents the English nation, making Edward's marriage to her a powerful statement. Louise Olga Fradenburg, "Rethinking Queenship," in *Women and Sovereignty*, ed. Louise Olga Fradenburg (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 4-5.

¹⁶⁵ Susan Higginbotham, *The Woodvilles*, 14. Many of the dates in this early part of Woodville history are debated by historians owing to a paucity of evidence. The precise dates are not relevant for this thesis.

following what appears to have been a scandalous romance between a wealthy widow and her husband's former knight.¹⁶⁶

Elizabeth's mother Jacquetta was the daughter of Pierre de Luxembourg, Count of St. Pol, an influential cousin of the Duke of Burgundy, making Jacquetta a distant cousin of Sigismund, the Holy Roman Emperor.¹⁶⁷ Elizabeth's connection to a prominent European family has, perhaps, had too much made of it, but her maternal family was certainly not from the same obscure origins as her father's.¹⁶⁸ Indeed, Jacquetta's family claimed descent from Melusine, a legendary water spirit popular in European fiction.¹⁶⁹ The significance of this is difficult to assess in this study, but given Edward's personal interest in alchemy, the mythical and alchemical content in his propaganda, and the place of magic and myth in the fifteenth-century

¹⁶⁶ Lynda Pidgeon, "A Family 'Made by Maryage': Sir Richard Wydevile and Jacquetta, Duchess of Bedford." *Northamptonshire Past and Present* 62 (2009): 19-21. Jacquetta's quick remarriage caused some consternation on the continent; the fact that it was to a social inferior made it more notable. The couple were forced to pay a hefty fine to Henry VI, as the dowager-duchess did not seek the king's blessing before marriage, but the fact that they were forgiven by Henry for this affront likely further indicates their high status within Henry's court, as discussed below.

¹⁶⁷ Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III's Books*, 130. J.R. Lander "Marriage and Politics," 130.

¹⁶⁸ Lander emphasizes her maternal connections, rejecting previous scholars who focussed on her paternal family. Lander, "Marriage and Politics," 130-34.

¹⁶⁹ Baldwin, Gregory and Jones, *The Women of the Cousins' War*, 55-56. Jean D'Arras, *Melusine*, trans. A.K. Donald (London: EETS, 1895). Accessed via Archive.com <https://archive.org/details/melusine00jeanuoft/page/n10>. Melusine was likely an ancient fertility spirit that became connected with the founding myth of the house of Luxembourg, as she supposedly bore children for their ancestor, Siegfried I. In one of the more popular versions of the legend, Melusine was a political advisor for her many sons, who all became either princes or lords. This theme of a powerful maternal figure at the heart of a dynasty would certainly be a powerful message when harnessed by Elizabeth; Jane E. Burns, "Magical Politics from Poitou to Armenia: Melusine, Jean de Berry, and the Eastern Mediterranean," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 43 (2013): 275-301. Related myths can be found throughout Europe, and likely represent a narrative about the difficulties of asserting 'masculine' authority or order over 'feminine' wild or liminal spaces; Gregory Darwin, "On Mermaids, Meroveus, and Melusine: Reading the Irish Seal Woman and Melusine as Origin Legend," *Folklore* 162 (2015): 123-41, esp. 128-34. For a general overview of the myth, see E. Sidney Hartland, "The Romance of Melusine," *Folklore* 24 (1913): 187-200.

worldview, this legendary descent may not be insignificant.¹⁷⁰ That said, with an absence of evidence, this subject must regrettably be left to novelists.¹⁷¹

Jacquetta was only seventeen in 1433 when she married John, Duke of Bedford, who was the regent of France and uncle of King Henry VI of England.¹⁷² Bedford had been regent of France for his nephew since 1422, and represented the continual English presence on the continent dating back to Henry V's impressive conquests at the beginning of the century. English kings since Edward III had claimed the throne of France, but Henry V was the first to make this claim a reality, with his son and heir the infant Henry VI crowned king of both France and England.¹⁷³ Bedford was responsible for maintaining the English dominance there and retaining the crown for his nephew when he came of age. A crucial part of his strategy for retaining France rested on the assistance of England's sometime ally, the Duke of Burgundy; Burgundy's support had been vital to English victories on the continent. To secure this alliance, and thus France, Bedford married the Duke of Burgundy's sister Anne in 1423. Anne died childless in 1432 at a pivotal time in England's domination of France, as Charles VII and Jeanne D'Arc were slowly rolling back English gains on the continent. Bedford quickly married teenaged Jacquetta, perhaps as an attempt to retain his alliance with Burgundy. Equally possible, and perhaps more likely, he simply hoped Jacquetta would provide an heir for the then childless duke. In any case, the marriage was not popular in Burgundy, with Bedford criticized for not allowing the traditional

¹⁷⁰ Edward's interest in alchemy and the supernatural is explored more fully in Jonathan Hughes *Arthurian Myths and Alchemy: The Kingship of Edward IV* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2002).

¹⁷¹ Laynesmith, *Last Medieval Queens*, 40n, regarding Hughes' theory notes "Melusine's supposed guarantee that her noble progeny would reign for ever could have made her a useful figure in political propaganda but this potential does not appear to have been acted upon." Given the gender tensions of the time and the powerful female agency inherent in the Melusine myth, perhaps it was wisely considered a subject for Edward to avoid, as Anthony did in his translation of the *Dictes* when he chose not to translate some material concerning the problems of women dominating their husbands.

¹⁷² Baldwin, Gregory and Jones, *Women of the Cousin's War*, 57-65.

¹⁷³ Chris Given-Wilson, "Late Medieval England, 1215-1485," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Medieval England*, ed. Nigel Saul (Oxford: OUP, 1997), 128.

mourning period to pass before remarrying.¹⁷⁴ While the House of Luxembourg was of similar status to Burgundy, Jacquetta's father was from a relatively minor family within the House, and this may have been doubly offensive as a marriage 'below his station' – an insult to Anne. The Treaty of Arras, signed in 1435 just after Bedford's death, brought peace between France and Burgundy and led to the further erosion of English control in France and their gradual expulsion by the 1450s, with the exception of Calais.¹⁷⁵

Jacquetta, now dowager-duchess and in control of one third of Bedford's lands, shortly after her husband's death made her scandalous marriage to one of his knights and loyal captains, Richard Woodville. Richard was apparently from humble origins, his father a squire in Bedford's household, a career which Richard would likewise pursue, eventually earning a reputation as a loyal servant and effective soldier.¹⁷⁶ Knighted by Henry VI himself in 1426, commanding troops in 1429, being made a retinue knight of Bedford in 1435, and finally promoted to Captain of Calais shortly thereafter, Richard's rapid advancement distinguishes him as a soldier of exceptional ability and a man on the rise.¹⁷⁷ Marriage to Jacquetta cemented his place in Lancastrian England, providing him with significant lands and eventually a title: Baron Rivers.¹⁷⁸ The couple were close with Queen Margaret,¹⁷⁹ served Henry VI until 1460, and Richard repeatedly fought against the Yorkists, although after defeat at Towton they had little choice but to bend the knee to Edward IV.

¹⁷⁴ Baldwin, Gregory and Jones, *Women of the Cousin's War*, 58.

¹⁷⁵ Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*, 56-57.

¹⁷⁶ Pidgeon, "A Family 'Made by Maryage'" 19-20. Cf. Madison, *The Wydevilles*, 88, 91-92, 97-99.

¹⁷⁷ Higginbotham, *The Woodvilles*, 12.

¹⁷⁸ *Complete Peerage*, v.6, 371. This title grant in 1448 came with no additional lands, and most Woodville income came from Jacquetta's dower lands. Cf. Pidgeon, "A Family 'Made by Maryage,'" 25-28.

¹⁷⁹ Madison, *The Wydevilles*, 121-22.

Elizabeth's first husband was likewise a committed Lancastrian. Elizabeth married Sir John Grey about 1450. Grey was of the Ferrers-Grey family that dominated regional politics in the Midlands, and, while Grey himself was a fairly minor actor, he was Lord Ferrers de Groby at the time of his death. His father was Lord Ferrers de Groby by right of his wife, Grey's mother, and his paternal grandfather was Lord Grey de Ruthyn.¹⁸⁰ Grey was killed commanding the Lancastrian cavalry at St. Albans in 1461, leaving two sons, Thomas (later Marquis of Dorset) and Richard Grey.¹⁸¹

Elizabeth was forced to seek help shortly after her husband's death, apparently due to a property dispute with her mother-in-law. Turning first to William, Lord Hastings, Edward's lifelong advisor, Elizabeth sought to gain support for her cause, to ensure her son Thomas would inherit the Ferrers de Groby estates. The pair agreed to marry their eldest children when they came of age, presumably in return for Hastings' (and thus, the king's) support in Elizabeth's dispute with the Greys.¹⁸² Assuming that Elizabeth and Hastings actually met to make this arrangement, this is likely how Elizabeth came to the attention of Edward. Alternatively, it is possible that Edward and Elizabeth met several times independently around the same time, given Edward's presence in Northamptonshire and her likely presence at court events, including the famous Loveday.¹⁸³ The "traditional" story goes that they met when she took her boys to petition the king directly regarding their inheritance when he was hunting.¹⁸⁴ Additionally, Richard Woodville was well-known to Edward, by 1464 serving in parliament and as a Knight of the Garter; it is not inconceivable that Edward may have become aware of Elizabeth through her father's connection to the court. In any case, within weeks of their probable first meeting the pair

¹⁸⁰*Complete Peerage*, v.3, 341.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² Lander, "Marriage and Politics," 131-32.

¹⁸³ Higginbotham, *The Woodvilles*, 29.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

married, apparently in secret, which would later lead Edward's opponents to cast doubt on the validity of the marriage.¹⁸⁵ Edward, unusually, was younger, aged about twenty two, than his bride Elizabeth, then aged about twenty seven.

It is possible that Jacquetta played a role in arranging the marriage between Elizabeth and Edward, as Gregory has suggested.¹⁸⁶ Certainly she was later charged by Richard III's supporters with using magic to induce the couple to wed, which may reflect contemporary belief that she did orchestrate the union. It is even possible, as John Leland as argued, that she did in fact use magic, given the evidence available and to the exposure she had had over her life to magic, which likely would have engendered a belief in the supernatural.¹⁸⁷ Both the fact that she was one of the only witnesses to the highly unusual marriage, and the fact that she had spent so much of her life close to the centre of political action, make it easy to suspect she may have played a role in arranging the marriage. Aside from Richard III's *Titulus Regius*, which alleges witchcraft,¹⁸⁸ however, no other contemporary sources support the argument that Jacquetta orchestrated the marriage, although it is a reasonable and believable claim. Given Elizabeth's plight at the time it wouldn't be unusual to think that her well-connected parents may have taken an interest in the future of their daughter and grandsons. Barring some new evidence emerging, we likely will never know Jacquetta's involvement for certain.

Contemporary attitudes to the marriage are remarkably difficult to assess. Almost all our sources come from the period after 1470, and most pin the break between Warwick and Edward

¹⁸⁵ Kavita Mudan, "'So Mutable is that Sexe': Queen Elizabeth Woodville in Polydore Vergil's *Anglica Historia* and Sir Thomas More's *History of King Richard III*," in *The Rituals and Rhetoric of Queenship: Medieval to Early Modern*, ed. Liz Oakley-Brown and Louise J. Wilkinson (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2009), 107.

¹⁸⁶ Gregory, Baldwin, and Jones, 128-31.

¹⁸⁷ John Leland, "Witchcraft and the Woodvilles: A Standard Medieval Smear?" in *Reputation and Representation in Fifteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Douglas L. Biggs et al (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 274.

¹⁸⁸ "Titulus Regius," Richard III Society, Accessed 28 February, 2019
http://www.richardiii.net/2_7_0_riii_documents.php

on this marriage. Given the hindsight these writers had, and their need to explain the break between Warwick and Edward, it is difficult to gauge the attitudes of contemporaries to the wedding, which is vital to reading a political motivation into the Woodville marriage.

Warkworth's Chronicle relates the basic facts of the marriage, that while Warwick was negotiating a French marriage for Edward, the King married Elizabeth, whose husband “was slayne at Yorke felde in Kyng Herry[‘s] Partye” and whose father was Lord Rivers, making her Lancastrian connections clear.¹⁸⁹ The *Chronicle* then gives the standard mythology of the marriage, that it was held in secret on the first of May, before immediately connecting the marriage to the dissension between Warwick and Edward.¹⁹⁰ Interestingly, however, while it is implied that the marriage began this dissension, much attention is given to the fact that Edward removed Warwick’s brother, George Neville, from the Chancellorship; it is this that caused tensions to build. This seems to be the event that the text asserts as the real break between Warwick and Edward, and, while it is certainly plausible that the marriage begins this feud, the removal of the Great Seal from Neville control appears to be the main contributor in the eventual Second War.

A further aggravating factor was the surrender by John Neville of the title of Earl of Northumberland, which was restored to the Percys. The text in *Warkworth's Chronicle* reads: “for so moche as the Kynge and his counselle thought that he wolde holde with his Erle of Warwyke, therfor the Kyng and his counselle made the countre to desire that thei myght have the ryghtfull heyre Percy...to be the Erle of Northumberlond and so it was doone.”¹⁹¹ The wording of this passage makes it unclear if Edward restored Percy as a result of popular pressure, or if

¹⁸⁹*Warkworth's Chronicle*, 3-4.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹*Warkworth's Chronicle*, 4.

Edward manufactured this popular pressure to justify the removal of Neville from the position to deny Warwick's faction the resources of the title. The ambiguity of "made," possibly meaning either 'understood' or 'created,' makes either reading possible, though with radically different implications. In any case, this was understood by Warkworth to be a major factor in Warwick's eventual rebellion, and Elizabeth is nowhere in sight. The marriage may have temporarily angered Warwick, but it was the subsequent treatment of the Nevilles that led to the Second War, not Elizabeth. The final straw was Clarence's marriage to Warwick's daughter.¹⁹²

Mancini's text is similarly problematic regarding the marriage to Elizabeth, but does offer some important clues. Written in 1483 and expressly trying to explain Richard III's usurpation, Mancini places a good deal of the blame at the Woodvilles' feet. Edward, he says, "indulged his appetites" by marrying Elizabeth, "a lady of humble origin... despite the antagonism of the magnates of the kingdom, who disdained to show royal honours towards an undistinguished woman promoted to such exalted rank."¹⁹³ Mancini never mentions Warwick by name, but stresses that the marriage angered the nobles "with whom he afterwards waged war," squarely pinning the blame for Edward's recurring wars – and the eventual failure of his dynasty – on Elizabeth, and on Edward's intemperate nature.

This presentation also emphasizes Edward's rash and lustful nature, a characterization furthered in the next section, which describes how he "placed a dagger at her throat, to make her submit to his passion."¹⁹⁴ This sexual aggression is tempered by his foil Elizabeth, who resisted the King, "determined to die rather than live unchastely... Whereupon Edward coveted her much

¹⁹²Warkworth's *Chronicle*, 6.

¹⁹³ Mancini, *Richard III*, 61.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

the more, and he judged the lady worthy to be a royal spouse.”¹⁹⁵ Elizabeth’s chastity and feminine honour in the face of this aggression follows a centuries old pattern of the noble virgin, determined to die rather than to surrender to sin.¹⁹⁶ This characterization was evidently spread outside of England, as well, as Fahy’s research suggests.¹⁹⁷ Mancini crucially notes before relating the story of her near-rape that “The story runs that . . .,” suggesting that this is the popular tale explaining the pair’s marriage, a conclusion again bolstered by Fahy.

This tale transforms Elizabeth into the noble virgin – despite the fact that she was not actually a virgin – and is directly cited as part of the reason she ought to be queen. Edward here is a hyper masculine figure who requires a feminine presence to temper his sexual rage, and Elizabeth is the hyper feminine figure who does just that. This characterization is played out in her coronation where she is linked repeatedly to the ideal women of the Bible, especially noble mothers;¹⁹⁸ likewise Elizabeth’s Grey children are not ignored in our sources as perhaps we might expect, but are repeatedly mentioned, highlighting Elizabeth’s fertility.¹⁹⁹ This almost quaint, fairy-tale story of their meeting (albeit one with sexual violence at its core) communicates to listeners that Elizabeth is an ideal woman, both fertile and pure, and thus a necessary presence at the heart of Edward’s court.

Lewis, applying a gendered lens to fifteenth-century kingship, sees Henry VI’s failures as a man as central to his ultimate downfall.²⁰⁰ While Edward IV is only briefly covered in this excellent text, she notes that his lack of self-control was central to his own downfall, his

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ See, for instance, Kate Cooper, *The Virgin and the Bride: Idealized Womanhood in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).

¹⁹⁷ Conor Fahy "The Marriage of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville: A New Italian Source," *E.H.R.* 76 (1961): 660-72.

¹⁹⁸ Joanna L. Laynesmith, “Fertility Rite or Authority Ritual? The Queen’s Coronation in England, 1445-87,” in *Social Attitudes and Political Structures in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Tim Thornton (Stroud: Sutton, 2000), 58, 67.

¹⁹⁹ Mancini, *Richard III*, 61.

²⁰⁰ Lewis *Kingship and Masculinity*, 257.

deteriorating physical state and sexual indiscretions highlighted by Richard III's propaganda and indeed commented on by many neutral observers.²⁰¹ Mancini, indeed, and many subsequent historians, have used Edward's marriage to Elizabeth to highlight his lack of self-control.²⁰² Lewis notes that self-control was an essential part of masculinity, and Edward's failure in this regard was thus a failure in masculinity as well, in a way very different from Henry's, but ultimately similar.²⁰³ Richard, in contrast, highlighted his own self-control (and thus, superior masculinity).²⁰⁴ For Edward's opponents, Elizabeth perfectly demonstrated his failure of masculinity (via his lack of self-control), similar to the way that, for Henry's opponents, Margaret demonstrated his (via his passivity and cuckoldry).

While Edward's lack of self-control is certainly not up for debate, it may be posited that this was, given the exceptional circumstances, not seen as such a bad thing as it otherwise might have, at least in the initial years of his reign. Edward was only 18 when he took the throne, and it was expected that young men would spend some time 'sowing wild oats.'²⁰⁵ The stories of Edward from the 1460s show him to be a womanizer, but this lack of self-control does not appear to have become a major political issue until the 1470/80s, and indeed then criticisms focused primarily on his eating habits. Perhaps following the passive, asexual, 'unmanly' Henry, Edward's own indiscretions were overlooked – not ideal, certainly, but a correction of the scales from the previous monarch. Elizabeth's rejection of Edward was perhaps intended to be seen as the beginning of his 'taming' and maturation, with her serving to balance out his aggression. Of

²⁰¹ Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity*, 255-56.

²⁰² Mancini, *Richard III*, 61. He writes that "Edward on taking possession of the kingdom behaved for a while in all things too dissolutely. One of the ways he indulged his appetites was to marry a lady of humble origin, named Elizabeth..."

²⁰³ Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity*, 2, 9.

²⁰⁴ Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity*, 255-56.

²⁰⁵ Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity*, 9.

course, this did not in fact happen, allowing Richard to target Edward's failure of masculinity in the 1480s, a subject that indeed requires more attention.

Continental sources have also been used by historians to judge contemporary attitudes towards the marriage, notably the chronicle of Jean de Waurin. While Waurin does write that Edward's council was unhappy with his decision to marry Elizabeth due to her parentage, it should be remembered (as Laynesmith has commented) that "Waurin's chronicle favours Richard Neville" and also that continental attitudes to nobility differed from English attitudes.²⁰⁶

Polydore Vergil's account of the Wars of the Roses, written about 1534, has been significant to the historiography of the period. Vergil wrote his *Historia Anglica* in part to explain the rise of the Tudors, and Edward is not characterized kindly in its text. The meeting between Edward and Elizabeth is described as simply stemming from "king Edwardes mynde alteryd uppon the soddayn"; Edward was "led by blynde affection, and not by reule of reason."²⁰⁷ In the words of Kavita Mudan, "all trappings of romance are removed, leaving only an imprudent choice made by a young and foolish king."²⁰⁸ Furthermore, this "imprudent choice" leads directly to the break between Edward and Warwick, who "adjudgyd king Edward as a man unworthy of the regall scepter."²⁰⁹ The details of this marriage are sacrificed to make a political point about Edward's character and to explain the break between him and Warwick, something common to almost all surviving sources.

²⁰⁶ Laynesmith, *Last Medieval Queens*, 53-55. Cf. S.H. Rigby, *English Society in the Later Middle Ages: Class, Status, and Gender* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995).

²⁰⁷ Polydore Vergil, *Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English History*, ed. Henry Ellis (London: Camden Society, 1844; New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968), 116-17.

²⁰⁸ Mudan, "'So Mutable is that Sexe'," 106-07.

²⁰⁹ Vergil, *Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English History*, 118.

Thomas More, another sixteenth-century historian, in contrast to Vergil, celebrates Elizabeth as a “*mater dolorosa*,” and indeed treats her relationship to Edward much more like a romance than as history.²¹⁰ This has political implications, of course, as it gives Edward the appearance of being a figure *of* romance, rather than a political actor.²¹¹ The literary license this source takes with history does make it a problematic source, but the contrasting visions of More and Vergil at least give us a glimpse at the potential readings of the marriage from English circles in the early sixteenth century, long after the inception of the Tudor regime.

Of the remaining sources, two brought to light by Lander give us perhaps the most tantalizing view into the reception of the marriage in England, being both English in origin and apparently contemporary. One of these is a letter from Lord Wenlock, a Warwick partisan, stating that the marriage caused ““great displeasure to many great lords, and especially to the larger part of all his council,”” though Lander highlights that ““this letter was written for diplomatic consumption by one of Warwick’s protégés,”” making it not above suspicion.²¹² Note that this piece of propaganda – and many later examples hostile to the marriage – highlight the displeasure of the lords, rather than the commons.

The difficulty in assessing the views of the commons, whom the marriage may have been intended to fascinate, makes the draft of a letter – unaddressed and undated – which survives in the Howard household book, our most intriguing and mysterious source. This letter states that the

²¹⁰ Mudan, “‘So Mutable is that Sexe’,” 116. Cf. Pollard, “Elizabeth Woodville and Her Historians,” 145-58. Pollard argues that Elizabeth has generally been treated as either a *mater dolorosa* or as a *femme fatale* in her historiography. Here, *mater dolorosa* refers to the tragedy of the eventual loss of her two sons, one of her main claims to fame outside of specialist historiography. More and other later historians have used this seminal event from late in her career to characterize her, rendering her a likeable and tragic figure; this sympathetic portrayal and accessible humanity often stands in contrast to their preferred villains, such as Richard III.

²¹¹ Mudan, “‘So Mutable is that Sexe’,” 115-16. It must be acknowledged that few middle fifteenth-century sources do acknowledge this possibility, but the cultural context would have supported that reading of their marriage, which is addressed later in this chapter.

²¹² Lander, “Marriage and Politics,” 133.

writer had “bene in diverse plasese wethen Norfolke Soffolke and Heseke, [hand] and have ad komyenskasyon of thes marygge, to felhowe the pepel of the konteryes wer desposed, and in good feythe they ar desposed in the beste wysse and glade ther of.”²¹³ This letter is of course not above suspicion, not only because its time of origin is unclear, but also because it may have been intended for Lord Rivers (and thus hardly neutral) as Lander speculates. If it is authentic, it demonstrates that the commons were pleased with this match, something unclear from any other source, but potentially at the heart of the Woodville marriage. At the very least it indicates that popular perception of the wedding mattered to contemporaries, if partisans on both sides were willing to lie about it.

Ideal Queenship

According to Laynesmith, the essential characteristics of English queens between the Norman conquest and 1464 were that they were rich, foreign virgins.²¹⁴ Generations of English monarchs had selected queens that legitimized their position by choosing from the more established monarchies in Europe, often creating important political ties, but also symbolic ties that legitimized their own right to rule.²¹⁵ A core function of queenship – although historians now recognize that this was just one of many roles – was also birthing and rearing children;

²¹³ Cited in Lander, "Marriage and Politics," 133. From *Manners and Household Expenses of England in the Thirteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, ed. T.H. Turner (London: Shakespeare, 1841).

²¹⁴ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*, 28-71. Henry I's wife Edith/Matilda is a partial exception to this, in that she was a Scottish princess but descended through her mother from the old Anglo-Saxon royal line, dating back to Alfred the Great. Her political utility for Henry thus came from her connection to the Anglo-Saxon people, recently conquered by Henry's father William of Normandy. This case is an interesting parallel with Edward IV, as it is an example of a conquering king marrying an English woman to strengthen his case for the throne, by virtue of both her royal descent and her nationality.

²¹⁵ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*, 34-36.

queens perpetuate the royal line.²¹⁶ A queen must thus be fertile but also a virgin, to make the king's paternity clear. Her virginity also signified feminine purity and carried with it a connection to the Virgin, Mary. Throughout the Middle Ages, queenship evolved to become more concerned with symbolic idealism, and the connection to Mary – the queen of Heaven – was created, an essential part of the ideal performance of queenship, and thus kingship.²¹⁷ The nobility of candidate-queens was also a major part of their selection, as parents passed on their *nobilitas* to their offspring. This, likewise, underwent a key change in the fifteenth century, as nobility increasingly became defined more by deed than by birth.²¹⁸ Appearance could also be a demonstration of *nobilitas*. Elizabeth's beauty, something highlighted in many of our sources, may have been enough to signal her virtue.²¹⁹ These changes will be discussed further in the next section, as will the notion of "ideal queens" and how this informed kingship. For now, it should simply be stressed that queens and queenship were an essential part of performing kingship, and queens were seen as major partners in a king's reign. The choice of queen was thus, as Laynesmith claims, "the most important single decision ever made by any medieval king."²²⁰

While all queens were unique, a certain 'ideal' of queenship, an ideal that contemporary queens were expected to 'perform,' can be articulated through a variety of existing sources such

²¹⁶ For instance, John Carmi Parsons, "Ritual and Symbol in the English Medieval Queenship," in *Women and Sovereignty*, ed. Louise Olga Fradenburg (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 61-62. Cf. Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*, 28-29.

²¹⁷ For the connection between earthly queens and Mary, see for instance John Carmi Parsons "Ritual and Symbol," 60-77; John Carmi Parsons "'Never was a Body Buried in England with Such Solemnity and Honour': The Burials and Posthumous Commemorations of English Queens to 1500," in *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe*, ed. Anne J. Duggan (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), 317-37; and Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex* (Oxford: OUP, 1976), 103-21. For the connection between Elizabeth Woodville and Mary, see Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens* 32 -34, and Anne Sutton "Chevalerie...in Som Partie is Worthi for to be Commendid, and in Some Part to Ben Amendid': Chivalry and the Yorkist Kings" in *St George's Chapel, Windsor, in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. Colin Richmond and Eileen Scarff (Windsor: Deans and Canons of Windsor, 2001), 128.

²¹⁸ Laynesmith, *Last Medieval Queens*, 56-57.

²¹⁹ Laynesmith, *Last Medieval Queens*, 49-53.

²²⁰ From Laynesmith, *Last Medieval Queens*, 28, citing *Letters of the Queens of England 1100-1547*, Anne Crawford, ed. (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1997), 3. It may be more accurate to say that it was the 'single most important decision ever made for a medieval king,' as many rulers had their brides chosen for them when they were young, including Henry VI.

as advice books, literature, and histories. Ideal queens were mothers, of course, but they were also mediators and intercessors. They were chaste and charitable. They were emotion to the king's reason, human to his divine, corporeal and accessible to his inaccessible "superreality."²²¹ Queens 'complete' kings, temper them, and allow for the full functioning of sovereignty. Above all, however, queens were subservient and appellant to their king, not his equal and not capable of leadership.²²² While many European kingdoms had a reigning queen at some point, England and France never did, and England's limited experiences with female regents, particularly in the later Middle Ages, were almost universally negative.²²³ England may thus have been particularly sensitive to gender anxieties as they related to the crown. Margaret was such an obvious target for the Yorkists because of her transgressions against these ideals. Elizabeth, on the other hand, complied with the basic ideals of queenship (or at least was presented as complying with them), while also ever so slightly altering these ideals in ways that distanced her from Margaret (and thus Edward from Henry) while confirming the legitimate authority of her king.

Margaret of Anjou

In order to analyze Elizabeth's performance of ideal queenship, we must first turn to her predecessor, Margaret of Anjou. Yorkist propaganda frequently contrasted the two queens, and

²²¹ Fradenburg, "Sovereign Love," 78-81.

²²² Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*, 11 and Parsons, "Ritual and Symbol," 62.

²²³ See, for instance, Armin Wolf, "Reigning Queens in Medieval Europe: When, Where, and Why," in *Medieval Queenship*, ed. John Carmi Parsons (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 169-88. England's only reigning queen during the Middle Ages was the Empress Maude/Matilda, whose reign was challenged during her lifetime by her cousin Stephen of Blois, who was crowned king. England's most notable female regent, Isabella of France, wife of Edward II, also earned the moniker, "the she-wolf of France," and was notorious for deposing her husband with her lover, Roger Mortimer, and sitting as regent for her son, Edward III. Another foreign queen, Catherine of Valois, wife of Henry V and mother of Henry VI, may have set a further troubled precedent for Margaret of Anjou; her impetuosity and independence made her a source of concern for the male regents following Henry V's death. Joan of Navarre, wife of Henry IV, may have also been a significant antecedent. She briefly served as regent for her stepson Henry V while he was in France (a common duty), but within five years had been convicted of witchcraft and imprisoned.

targeted much of their anti-Lancastrian rhetoric at Margaret, who, by being a transgressive, foreign queen who had failed as a mother, forfeited her right to queenship and, by extension, implied that Henry had forfeited his right to kingship. Elizabeth was presented as a return to the traditional role of the ideal queen, while also reflecting the changes in the ideal necessitated by the attacks on Margaret's foreignness.

Margaret was born in 1430 in Lorraine, daughter to “Good King Rene,” Duke of Anjou and titular King of Naples, and brother-in-law of Charles VII, King of France.²³¹ Her marriage to Henry VI of England was part of negotiations between the two realms designed to bring the Hundred Year’s War to an end, and she was represented by the English as a peacemaker, a traditional role for a queen to play, when, aged about fourteen she married Henry, then aged about twenty-five.²³² Indeed, she was, in contrast to her later reputation as the “She-Wolf,” a highly traditional choice for queen. Like most previous queens she was foreign, and her family’s illustrious connections strengthened the reputation of Henry’s regime. She was of a family that could claim regal connections and more than one duchy, being the daughter of a titular king and the niece of a reigning king.²³³ She was young and (presumably) a virgin. Her marriage secured a useful foreign policy gain for Henry.

In symbolical presentations, Margaret was associated with traditional queenly roles as the intercessor and mediator, including frequently being associated with Mary.²³⁴ Events during Henry’s reign, including crucially his unexplainable incapacity in 1453-54, forced her to transcend the traditional bounds of queenship, exposing her to the full force of anti-Lancastrian

²³¹Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*, 1n.

²³² Laynesmith, “Fertility Rite or Authority Ritual?” 66.

²³³ Rene’s lack of de facto control may have been counted against her, but is not mentioned in any sources I am aware of.

²³⁴ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*, 31; Laynesmith “Fertility Rite or Authority Ritual?” 66.

politics. Margaret became an active agent for Henry and then for her young son, Prince Edward from 1453 and became a negotiator and the effective ‘leader’ of the Lancastrian party, but, according to the Yorkists, she was effectively a “woman out of place.”²³⁵

Opponents of kings in later Medieval Europe always found it safer and more effective to target peripheral figures to the king rather than the king directly: ‘evil counselors’ and queens were more likely to feel the sting of the propagandist’s pen than the king himself.²³⁶ Yorkist propaganda – their official histories, political songs, pamphlets and poems – relied on both the argument that Lancastrians did not possess rightful title to the throne, due to Henry IV’s coup in 1399, and that Henry was personally unfit to rule anyway.²³⁷ Many of their complaints centered on Margaret.

Maurer argues that Margaret was presented as a “woman out of place” more than an ‘evil queen’; her active role in Lancastrian politics meant that she was a transgressive woman, and “in suggesting that Margaret was disorderly, a deeper disorder in the kingdom was implied.”²³⁸ Gender roles – and Margaret’s perceived transgressions of them – were central to the negative characterization of Margaret.²³⁹ From the mid-1450s Margaret began to take on a more active role in governance, something that was “publicly apparent” and the subject of much gossip.²⁴⁰ Margaret’s active role in governance drew criticism along gendered lines that also criticized Henry for his passivity – his shortcomings as a man – which were further highlighted in

²³⁵ Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*, 211.

²³⁶ Bak, “Queens as Scapegoats in Medieval Hungary,” 232-33.

²³⁷ One poem, for instance, references the Lancastrian usurpation and the poor treatment of Richard II, “Goddes trew knyght,” with particular venom reserved for Margaret, who wished to “destroie the right lyne” with her “wykked affynite,” before heartily praising Edward IV. “A Political Retrospect,” *Political Poems* 267-70.

²³⁸ Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*, 210-11.

²³⁹ Maurer, “Delegitimizing Lancaster: The Yorkist Use of Gendered Propaganda,” 9-38.

²⁴⁰ Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity*, 230-31.

propaganda that made Henry a cuckold by implying that their son, Edward, Prince of Wales, was “a bastard gotten in avoutry.”²⁴¹

Perhaps the most obvious function of queens is as mothers of future kings. The presence of queens allows kings to designate a successor clearly and legally, thus providing stability for the realm. As primogeniture gradually replaced other forms of selecting political leaders, this maternal function of queens began to be increasingly emphasized, with symbols and ceremonies that evoked – and wished for – fertility.²⁴² The increased association of queens with the Virgin Mary may also be seen as stemming from the increasing importance of their role as mothers. For queens of the central and later Middle Ages, providing an heir ensured their place beside the king and relieved the realm of the potential turmoil of a king dying without a clearly designated heir. Indeed, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that the turmoil of the Wars of the Roses comes down to Margaret’s failure to provide Henry with an heir (at least according to the views of contemporaries), or perhaps to Henry V’s failure to have more than one legitimate child. The years without an heir to the realm, especially after Henry’s own minority, provoked a national conversation about the future of the Lancastrian dynasty. The successes of Henry IV and V secured a relatively peaceful transition to the Lancastrians, but with Henry VI’s minority, limited rule, and failure to provide an heir, York’s original protests and desire to be recognized as heir seem natural enough. While the origins of the crisis involved many factors, the spark was this ‘failure’ of Margaret to live up to one of the key ideals of queenship, motherhood.

Margaret was married to Henry VI in 1444 when she was fourteen, yet was unable to produce a son (or a daughter, for that matter) for several years; their son, Prince Edward of

²⁴¹ Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity*, 232. Quote from *Eng. Chron.* 79.

²⁴² Parsons, “Ritual and Symbol,” 61-62.

Lancaster, was eventually born in October 1453. The delay between the couple's marriage and having a firm male heir was thus nearly ten years, leaving the Lancastrians in a tenuous position during the other crises of those intervening years.²⁴³ Edward's legitimacy was complicated by the fact that his father entered into his period of 'madness' in August 1453, and he was thus not immediately able to recognize his son, one of the key acts of legitimizing an heir. He was presented to Henry again in December 1454, where he was finally formally recognized as heir.²⁴⁴ This delay, along with Margaret's closeness to several of Henry's advisors, opened up Prince Edward to charges of bastardy from Henry's political rivals. After Prince Edward's birth, there came no other children, meaning Margaret had produced 'the heir' but not 'the spare.' Surviving childhood was no certainty, even for a prince, so his position could not be reckoned safe for several years after 1454, and thus having no 'spare' was a real risk.²⁴⁵ His premature death in 1471 marked the end of the Lancastrian cause, showing the consequences of failing to produce enough male heirs for the king. While economic and political circumstances may have ultimately doomed the Lancastrian regime, Margaret's 'failure' as a mother was clearly a major factor in their eventual loss of power. The delays and challenges associated with Henry's heir produced insecurity in the realm that ultimately weakened the legitimacy of the Lancastrians and allowed them to be challenged by rival factions. It was thus crucial that the next queen be able to produce quickly legitimate heirs for Edward IV to spare the realm further insecurity.

Margaret's foreignness was also a major avenue of attack for anti-Lancastrian propagandists, and she is often accused of having to rely on foreign troops to win back the throne. Even when not explicitly referring to her foreign connections, her foreign birth is nearly

²⁴³ Hicks, *Wars of the Roses*, 49-74, 93-136.

²⁴⁴ R.A. Griffiths, "Edward [Edward of Westminster] Prince of Wales (1453-1471)," in *DNB*. Last Updated 23 Sept. 2004. Accessed 2 Oct. 2018.

²⁴⁵ Hicks, *Wars of the Roses*, 43-44.

always highlighted in descriptions of her. Edward's letter to Thomas Cook in March 1462 is most illustrative on this account, alleging that Henry "bi the malicious councaill and excitation of Margarete his wife naming her selfe queen of England, have conspired, accorded, concluded and determined with oure outewarde ennemyes as wele of Fraunce and of Scotland" to invade England to "distroye utterly the people, the name, the tongue and all the blood Englisshe of this oure said reaume."²⁴⁶

Another letter in this period sent to London details the alliance made between Margaret and the kings of Scotland, long enemies of England, in order for "our said reaulme and...our subgiettes therof to be as muche as she may undre the dominacion and power of the same Scottes and Frensshemen, whom she hathe excited and provoked to shewe theime of the grettest and largest cruelte and tirannye ageinst our said subgiettes that thei can."²⁴⁷ Finally, her attainder in March 1461 makes explicit that her disorderly troops are "commyng from the north parties of youre seid reame, destroyng and spoilyng the same in their commyng," casting her as the archetypal tyrant relying on foreign troops, hostile to England.²⁴⁸ The foreignness of her troops suggests both that she cannot demand authority from English soldiers and that she is willing to despoil her own realm for personal gain. Using foreign soldiers from the north also associated Margaret with the real or perceived violence and barbarism of these 'foreign' men. If one of the fundamental duties of the sovereign was to protect the English from these foreign incursions, then Margaret was here surrendering her claim to sovereignty by actually inviting these foreigners *in* to exercise "cruelte and tirannye ageinst our said subgiettes."²⁴⁹ Finally, by

²⁴⁶ "Edward IV's Letter and Instructions to Thomas Cook," *Vale's Book*, 135-36.

²⁴⁷ "Edward IV to [the mayor of London, 1463]," *Vale's Book*, 148-49.

²⁴⁸ Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity*, 232. Margaret likely recruited both Scots and English Northerners, although the distinctions are blurred. In any case, for those in and around London, Northerners had long been a source of fear for their apparent barbarism.

²⁴⁹ "Edward IV to [the mayor of London, 1463]," *Vale's Book*, 148-49.

implying that Margaret is "undre the dominacion and power" of the Scots and French, the text casts her as literally an agent of the enemy. This powerful language equates, in the reader's mind, support for Margaret with support for England's traditional rivals and with treachery to the English.

At least one of the surviving political poems from the period also attacks Margaret based on her foreignness as well as her gender transgressions. In a poem about "gret wrongys doon of oold antiquite," the Lancastrian usurpation from Richard II, "in whos tyme ther was haboundaunce with plentee/ of welthe and erthely joye," much ire is directed at Margaret for her corrupting influence.²⁵⁰ The poem invokes scripture to explain how an unjust king leads to chaos in the realm, before continuing

also scripture saithe, woo be to that regyon/ where ys a kyng unwyse or innocent;/
moreovyr it ys right a gret abusion,/ a woman of a land to be a regent,/ Qwene Margrete I
mene, that ever hathement/ to governe alle Engeland with myght and poure,/ and to
destroie the right lyne was here entent²⁵¹

Henry may be unfit for his office, but Margaret and her "wykked affynite...entende uttyrly to destroye thys regioun."²⁵² Of course, Henry is hardly beyond reproach in this piece of propaganda, with one verse explaining how it is "gretly agayne kynde and nature" for an Englishman to "corrumpe hys owne nacion,/willyng straungiers for to recure,/ and in Engeland to have the domynacioun."²⁵³ Here Henry surrenders his legitimacy as king by his marriage to a foreign queen, rather than reinforcing it.

Here then the traditional queenly role of mediator and negotiator is flipped on its head to reveal a queen acting *against* the interests of her (supposed) people, conspiring with foreigners to

²⁵⁰ "A Political Retrospect," *Political Poems*, 267.

²⁵¹ "A Political Retrospect," *Political Poems*, 268.

²⁵² "A Political Retrospect," *Political Poems*, 269.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

bring destruction rather than fortune to the English, bringing death rather than life. The inversion of this traditional female archetype – the life-bringer or life-sustainer – as well as the inversion of the queen-as-mediator ideal was deployed effectively by the Yorkists to bolster Edward’s claim in this formative period of his reign.

One historical source remains less clearly an example of outright Yorkist propaganda, although it was possibly influenced by it. In *An English Chronicle of the Reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI*, a “version of the English Chronicle called the Brute,” Margaret’s depiction closely mirrors that of obviously Yorkist-sponsored propaganda. Among the earlier references to Queen Margaret comes immediately after a description of “bloody rayne” falling “in a lyttle toune in Bedfordshyre.”²⁵⁴ This strange phenomena is immediately followed by the note that “in this same tyme, the reame of Englonde was oute of alle good gouernaunce...for the kyng was simple and lad by couetous counseylle.”²⁵⁵ Here, the natural world as out of right order parallels the fact that England was “oute of alle good gouervnaunce”; other chronicles appear to parallel the natural world and political realm in their own depictions of fantastic weather.²⁵⁶ Margaret in the *English Chronicle* is a ‘woman out of place.’ She and her “affynyte rewled the reame as her liked, gaderyng riches innumerable.”²⁵⁷ The weather was likewise ‘out of order,’ as was her sexual conduct. The anonymous author of the chronicle notes “the quene was defamed and desclaundered, that he that was called Prince, was nat hir sone, but

²⁵⁴*Eng. Chron.*, 79

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ *Warkworth’s* also features unnatural weather (in the form of “blasynge sterres” and severe winters), which seem to portend political events (with an anti-Yorkist spin), and of course the *English Chronicle* recounts the “iii sonnys in the firmament shynynge fulle clere,” before the Battle of Mortimer’s Cross. P. 110. See Laura Maddern, “Weather, War and Witches: Sign and Cause in Fifteenth-Century English Vernacular Chronicles,” in *A World Explored: Essays in Honour of Laurie Gardiner*, ed. Anne Gilmour-Bryson (Parkville, Vic: University of Melbourne, History Dept., 1993), 77-98.

²⁵⁷*Eng. Chron.*, 79.

a bastard gotten in avoutry.”²⁵⁸ As tensions escalated into open war, Margaret is described as ‘making’ her son give his supporters “lyuery of Swannys,” before stirring Henry to order the Lancastrian forces to resist the Yorkists at Bloreheath, where those who had received the livery of swans were killed.²⁵⁹ Margaret is clearly being described here as the major actor or agent behind the Lancastrian faction, and it is implied that their defeat is due in part to this agency on the part of Margaret. The final mention of her in the text of the chronicle is to report that in her flight to Scotland, she is robbed in Lancashire; while this may be a literal reporting of the facts, a symbolic reading would indicate that Margaret has now become the ultimate anti-queen, fleeing her kingdom with no wealth beyond the clothes on her back, making her role-reversal from the ‘ideal queen’ complete.²⁶⁰

Margaret of Anjou flouted traditional expectations of queenship during the crises of the 1450s and following York’s coup, and this failure to perform ideal queenship ultimately contributed in large part to the failure of Lancaster in the Wars of the Roses. Of course, as Maurer has argued in detail, it was Henry’s own shortcomings that necessitated Margaret to take the course of action that she did, and, indeed, she did not “offend” expectations of queenship until she had no other choice.²⁶¹ Henry was no ideal king, forcing Margaret to be a less than ideal queen, given contemporary notions of queenship, and turning her into prime fodder for anti-Henry propaganda. Indeed, as Lewis stresses, the precipitant for this chaos was in fact Henry’s own failure of masculinity, which required a failure in femininity from Margaret, and by

²⁵⁸ Ibid. Lewis, Laynesmith and others have discussed the relationship between sex and order in governance in various works, but the relationship between nature and order in governance is often overlooked.

²⁵⁹ *Eng. Chron.*, 79-80. The text makes Margaret clearly the major actor: “anone by hire stiryng the kyng assembled a grete power [army]...and wente forthe in to the felde called Bloreheth.”

²⁶⁰ *Eng. Chron.*, 98-99.

²⁶¹ Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*, 211.

attacking her their enemies could really question both.²⁶² Edward would remember these lessons, and Elizabeth's own queenship would consciously invoke ideal queenship at every possible opportunity, even while it adapted the ideal to suit the particular demands on the Yorkist regime after the crises of the 1450s.

Elizabeth and Ideal Queens

In Yorkist propaganda, in her coronation, and in some histories we see Elizabeth presenting herself or being presented as an ideal queen, oftentimes in a rather deliberate contrast with Margaret's perceived failures to perform this ideal. Elizabeth was depicted as both a mother and a virgin and was invoked as a symbol of conciliation and as an intercessor between the king and his people. Her English nationality, something which once would have been a break from the ideal, can be understood to actually reinforce her intercessory powers, while at the same time steps were taken to associate her with her mother's family, the ducal house of Burgundy. Elizabeth, as a non-traditional choice for queen, had to be especially careful to present herself as an ideal queen in order to justify her role *as* queen. Perhaps more significantly, her performance as ideal queen was, I argue, an important part of Edward's own campaign to present himself as an ideal, and thus legitimate, king.

Queenly rituals, especially the marriage and coronation, often focused on the queen's virginity, purity, and wished-for fertility. Elizabeth's, in contrast, eschewed most virginal symbols and instead concentrated on her proven fertility and maternity.²⁷¹ She was somewhat

²⁶² Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity*, 233-34.

²⁷¹ Laynesmith, *Last Medieval Queens*, 33, and Laynesmith "Fertility Rite or Authority Ritual," 67. Fabian reports only 4 witnesses to the wedding, as well as the priest. Laynesmith, *Last Medieval Queens*, 78.

rare in being a queen who came to office as a mother (who had not had children with the king prior to his accession, at least),²⁷² and was thus forced to turn this difference, this break from the ideal, this potential weakness, into a strength. Following a period of turmoil marked, at least in part, by Margaret's 'failure' to produce an heir, Elizabeth clearly desired to highlight the fact that she would give Edward heirs and thus give the realm and its new dynasty stability, desired so much after the turbulent 1450s and early 1460s. Elizabeth certainly delivered on this hope, producing ten children for Edward, including two sons who survived infancy.

Along with maternity, virginity was another ideal queens were expected to live up to.²⁷³ Marriage and coronation rituals highlighted the virginity of queens, who were (purportedly) virgins at their accession. Their virginity was equated with a certain purity of spirit and an innocence that made them 'not quite women,' as they had not yet 'indulged in carnality.' In a more practical sense, their virginity before marriage and chastity within marriage also ensured any offspring would be the king's, allowing the queen to perform her role as mother adequately.

As she was already a mother, Elizabeth's purity and chastity thus had to be delineated in other ways. Obviously an image of virginity could not be projected onto this widowed mother who was older than her new husband. Her chastity can, however, be seen in the stories circulated after their marriage, of Edward's attempted rape, in the context of which she was presented as "determined to die rather than live unchastely," as noted previously. It is impossible to say with any certainty that these stories were being propagated 'from above,' as it were, but they certainly cultivated an image of Elizabeth as 'noble virgin' that complements her presentation as ideal mother in other sources, most notably her coronation, that were clearly promulgated by the

²⁷² Only two prior queens since the Norman conquest, Eleanor of Aquitaine and Joan of Navarre, had had children by a man other than the king before their coronation. Joan of Kent also had children prior to her marriage to the Black Prince, although she never became queen.

²⁷³ Ibid.

regime. The persistence and variation of these stories may give us the briefest of hints that Edward's regime tolerated them, at the very least, though again this must remain speculative. This projection of chastity stands in stark contrast to Margaret, who was long the subject of rumours of adultery.²⁷⁴

As was the case with most late medieval queens, Elizabeth was compared to the Virgin Mary by supporters. One pro-Yorkist poem, "On the Recovery of the Throne by Edward IV," ends with a depiction of Elizabeth's suffering while Edward was in exile and fighting to win his crown back. The poem asks "O glorius God, what payne had *sche*?/ What langowr and angwiche did *sche* endure?/ When hir lorde and sovereyn was in adversite./ to here of *hir* wepyng it was grettpete,/ when *sche* remembirde the kynge, *sche* was woo," invoking sympathy by emphasizing Elizabeth's suffering, in what appears a reference to Mary's weeping for her Son. The poem also extorted her to "for the love Jhesu,/ And his blessed modir in any wise,/ Remembir *suche* personus as have be trewe,/ Helpe every man to have justice," asking her to continue to perform the expected role of the queen – as intercessor and royal partner – with an explicit reference to Mary.²⁷⁵ Elizabeth was also associated with Mary visually, perhaps best seen in a 1471 portrait. In this portrait she wears blue and red, the colours of Mary, and also wears her hair loose, as a virgin would. She was surrounded in the portrait by gillyflowers, symbolizing motherhood, and roses, symbolizing virginity; both flowers were also associated with Mary. Finally, she was pictured holding the sceptre and orb that were intimately associated with the king, but also with Christ and the Virgin.²⁷⁶ The association with Mary was common for a queen, but took on added significance for Elizabeth when contrasted with the anti-Lancastrian image of Margaret, who had

²⁷⁴*Eng. Cron.*, 79. Cf. Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity*, 234-35, and Karen Pratt, "The Image of the Queen in Old French Literature," in *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe*, ed. Anne J. Duggan (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), 254-56.

²⁷⁵ "On the Recovery of the Throne by Edward IV," in *Political Poems*, 281-82. My emphasis.

²⁷⁶ Laynesmith, *Last Medieval Queens*, 33.

lost all of her Marian associations by 1461. This connection implied in short-hand that she was an ideal queen: a virgin, a mother, and an intercessor.

Elizabeth was deliberately presented in contrast to Margaret, not only as a mother but also in her nationality and her femininity. As has been noted, Margaret's association with England's enemies, the French and Scottish, was a frequent black mark against her. A critical part of Edward's claim for legitimacy came from Margaret's association with these rivals, especially the French, which cast Henry in a negative light by association. Margaret was, for instance, a friend of Frenchman Pierre de Breze, grand seneschal of Normandy, who raided the Yorkshire coast in 1457, apparently without reproach from Margaret.²⁷⁷ Relationships like this likely cost support from some among the English nation. She was also associated with the 'wilds' of Northern England in Edward's attainders of Margaret, where she was presented as an "archetypal tyrant" devastating the English people and church; her soldiers were presented as "ravysshyng and defoulyng religiose wymmen, maydens, [and] wydowes."²⁷⁸ The problem presented by this characterization for Margaret is that she is both a foreigner and a woman out of place; that is, she was performing a masculine role in politics rather than a feminine one traditionally associated with queens, such as acting a mediator between two warring factions. This basic characterization was given added force in Gregory's Chronicle, where her soldiers are described as "the Quenys galentys," referring to a "well-established foppish type in contemporary literature, who aped strength...but possessed none," thus highlighting the "immorality" of the Lancastrian cause.²⁷⁹ This was further amplified by the rumours of her adultery, where she was again presented as actively disobeying contemporary gender

²⁷⁷ McCulloch and Jones, "Rise of the Popular Element," 122.

²⁷⁸ Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity*, 232.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

expectations.²⁸⁰ These associations were especially important in the early 1460s while armed resistance under Margaret continued against Edward's reign, particularly in the north. Her unusual level of agency in political and military affairs was a stark contrast with Elizabeth, who remains a largely passive figure in much of the Yorkist propaganda.

The significance of this for Elizabeth's queenship is two-fold. Firstly, by being English (or at least, by not being French nor unduly associated with foreigners) she was rendered distinct from Margaret and thus made Edward distinct from Henry. She indicated that Edward was committed to the English people rather than to foreign interests, in contrast to Henry who was unwilling or unable to stand up to foreign incursion and then actively relied on foreign support. Secondly, while Elizabeth does not seem to have been any more passive than many of her predecessors, she was certainly considerably less active than Margaret had been and mostly restricted herself to traditional queenly roles; she did not, for instance, have an active political role in the crises of 1469-71, and was instead confined to sanctuary. This again presents a contrast between the passive, feminine Elizabeth and the active, masculine Margaret. If Elizabeth had a political role in this period, it is not highlighted in the subsequent Yorkist telling of the story. Elizabeth did certainly seem to expect an active role in Edward V's government, and indeed took an active role in his education and the management of his estates as a member of his council, suggesting she did possess a strong will and interest in political matters, as we might expect.²⁸¹ This agency, however, is largely absent from the Yorkist propaganda concerning the period from approximately 1464 to 1471. As Margaret's disorder challenged the masculinity (and thus, legitimacy) of Henry, Elizabeth's apparent good behaviour affirmed the masculinity of

²⁸⁰ Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity*, 233-34.

²⁸¹ See Laynesmith, *Last Medieval Queens*, 152-53, 176.

Edward, transforming him in the early part of his reign into a more legitimate king via his wife's successful performance as ideal queen.

The final chief ideal of queenship was their role as intercessors between the 'real' world of subjects and the 'superreal' world of sovereigns. Fradenburg convincingly argues that kings were forced to present themselves as essentially different – or “superreal” – than their subjects in order to buttress their authority, but that an excess of this superreality would have actually weakened their legitimate authority, making the queen necessary as a means of making kings more relatable and approachable.²⁸² The king's distance and different-ness made him the inaccessible, extraordinary ideal, but required the queen's “corporealization” to manifest full sovereignty, and thereby create “sovereign love...whereby the sovereign may be desired as inaccessible ideal, and loved as flesh – [which] enables the subject to feel simultaneously at one with, and free of, power.”²⁸³ This then “assists the experiential transformation of what Pierre Bourdieu calls ‘coerced relations’ into elective and reciprocal ones.”²⁸⁴ Queens, as mediators between rulers and ruled communities, are thus essential for the full functioning of sovereignty, and the legitimization of the ruler's authority. The increasing associations between queens and the Virgin Mary, the queen of heaven and intercessor for humanity to her Son, was likewise significant in this, and Parsons notes that daily court rituals deliberately connected the two.²⁸⁵ Elizabeth's Englishness may have highlighted this function, and indeed her Englishness seems to have been accentuated in her coronation.²⁸⁶ Queens were thus expected to serve as intermediaries

²⁸² Fradenburg, “Sovereign Love,” 78-81.

²⁸³ Fradenburg, “Sovereign Love,” 79.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁵ Parsons, “Ritual and Symbol,” 68.

²⁸⁶ Laynesmith, “Fertility Rite or Authority Ritual?” 61.

between ruler and ruled, approachable and amenable to mercy, in contrast to the stern justice expected of the king. Queens were a crucial element of mature kingship.²⁸⁷

Queens also tended to represent some sort of political unity, as queens like Margaret frequently symbolized a peace between two rival factions.²⁸⁸ The use of marriage alliances was a commonplace tactic at multiple levels of elite society, as elites could cement their commitment to a particular goal by ‘sacrificing’ the bodies of their children, surrendering them to a higher cause, such as peace between England and France in the case of Margaret. As put forth in the first chapter, I believe Elizabeth can be understood to fulfill this function as well, serving to represent the link between Lancastrian and Yorkist. Her familial and affinal connections to Lancaster were well known, and indeed many sources take pains to note this connection. This potential symbolic understanding of Elizabeth – whose marriage may have been understood as a representation of the end of factional conflict – is of course tenuous, but is a proposition worth considering, given not only her role in factional politics outlined in the first chapter, but also the later role of her daughter, Elizabeth of York, who of course ‘successfully’ unified the factions with her marriage to Henry Tudor.

This is in addition to Elizabeth Woodville's connections to Burgundy, which, while overlooked by many contemporaries (both allied and hostile) who portrayed her as the daughter of a minor noble, were emphasized in her coronation by including a representative of the Duke

²⁸⁷ Laynesmith reminds us that in *Le Morte d'Arthur* the 'possession' of Guinevere corresponds with Arthur's kingship as an adult, and the loss of his kingdom is preceded by the loss of his queen via her affair with Lancelot. Laynesmith, *Last Medieval Queens*, 28-29.

²⁸⁸ Polydore Vergil, among others, makes it clear that Margaret's appearance in the English political drama was a result of a peace treaty with France following a period of French ascendancy. *Three Books of English History*, 68.

of Burgundy who also happened to be Elizabeth's uncle.²⁸⁹ It appears then that Elizabeth was presented as neither wholly foreign nor wholly domestic, perhaps an attempt to differentiate Edward's reign from that of Henry's while also capitalizing on the fact that she was English and thus more identifiable to the English nation. As seems typical of his character, Edward was trying to have his cake and eat it too.

This speculation, that Elizabeth may have indeed been presented as a mediator between the rival factions of the Wars, can be elaborated upon by returning to Fradenburg, who notes that queens also symbolize the people the sovereign rules.²⁹⁰ This identification of queen with nation (or, more accurately, 'the ruled') is critical to her conception of the queen's role in creating 'sovereign love' and thus legitimate authority for the sovereign. In practical terms, we may also describe queens as mediators between the ruler and the ruled, a related concept. Christine de Pizan's *Livre des Trois Vertus* is explicit about the importance of this role for the queen.²⁹¹ Creating sovereign love went beyond purely practical concerns, however: its presence, created by the queen, allows the ruled to identify with a king who is necessarily 'superreal', and fundamentally different from them.²⁹² This identification of course generally comes with the symbolic public construction of the queen, herself *always* a foreigner. Perhaps this is where one of Elizabeth's most notable exceptions from the previous ideal comes back into play. This framework sees Elizabeth's Englishness become a strength, rather than a weakness. Her marriage represents an end to the factionalism of the 1450s, but, furthermore, it represents Edward's commitment to the English people. Elizabeth's nationality is thus crucially important to

²⁸⁹*Coronation*, 34-36. Jacques de Luxembourg, Jacquetta's brother, was invited along with "one hundred persons...of any nationality except French," further indicating that the marriage was part of a broader anti-French, pro-Burgundian effort.

²⁹⁰ Fradenburg, "Sovereign Love," 81.

²⁹¹ Pratt, "The Image of the Queen in Old French Literature," 240.

²⁹² Fradenburg, "Sovereign Love," 78.

understanding her value to Edward, although it seems not to have been consciously drawn upon in Yorkist propaganda or presentations of her.

England's two most disastrous queens had been French, including Elizabeth's immediate predecessor, the much-hated Margaret. It seems then a natural enough assumption that taking a French wife, as Warwick was arguing for, would have been an unpopular move for Edward in the early part of his reign. Distancing himself from the failed reign of Henry was vital and following the old script of marrying a French princess would seemingly have echoed Henry far too much for Edward's supporters' liking. Given Henry's failures in prosecuting the Hundred Years' War as well, Edward seems to have reckoned that he had more to gain by renewing conflict with the French to reverse the earlier English losses, as addressed in the first chapter; a marriage alliance with the French thus served little domestic political benefit. Marrying foreign princesses generally helped with political legitimacy at home and abroad, but the calculation may have been made that a domestic marriage sent a more important domestic political message than a foreign one.²⁹³ In any case, Edward was able to achieve international recognition through his use of the Order of the Garter, which is addressed in the third chapter. This is the clearest example we have of the ideal changing based on the present context - the failures of Henry and Margaret suggests that the ideal of a foreign princess had actually changed, and the new ideal queen was in fact English. While Margaret represented for Henry the newfound peace between England and France, Elizabeth represented for Edward the peace between Yorkist and Lancastrian. She signaled that Edward did not *want* peace with the French, at least until after the losses of Henry's reign had been reversed. Finally, her nationality made her accessible to Edward's subjects in a way that a foreign queen never quite would be, and this provided an

²⁹³ E.W. Ives, "Marrying for Love: The Experience of Edward IV and Henry VIII," *History Today* 50 (12): 48.

avenue to create 'sovereign love,' yet another tool for Edward in his quest for legitimacy. Marrying an Englishwoman distanced him from his predecessor, signaled a popular foreign policy ambition, and symbolized the union between ruler and ruled in a way that marriage to a foreign queen could not, all indicating that this aspect of an ideal queen – her nationality – had changed after Margaret's tenure.

Another factor which must be considered when analyzing Elizabeth's marriage to Edward is the potential political value of romantic love. Perhaps the simplest reading of their marriage is simply that they did love each other, so much so that Edward abandoned all political considerations to make her his bride.²⁹⁴ This reading, however, can also be interpreted through a political lens. Given the premium put by the reading public on courtly love, romantic love carried with it a certain value. A king who chose to indulge in romantic love may have been regarded positively by the populace, not only by again breaking with his predecessor, but also by embodying the ideal of courtly love to which many may have aspired. We see contemporary love marriages in the case of Elizabeth's own parents as well as Catherine of Valois's marriage to Owen Tudor, implying that it was not completely foreign, if not exactly accepted, in high politics.²⁹⁵ Elizabeth was presented as both a 'damsel in distress' and a famous beauty, with her other positive qualities making her an obvious love match for Edward.²⁹⁶ The tale of their meeting echoes popular romances.²⁹⁷ The effect of this was to turn Edward into a chivalric hero by way of his association with Elizabeth, which may have been part of his performance of

²⁹⁴ Ross, *Edward IV*, 86. One contemporary (c. 1468-70) chronicle described this as a love marriage, when he reminds his readers to "take heed what love may do."

²⁹⁵ Madison, *The Wydevilles*, 85.

²⁹⁶ Mudan, "'So Mutable is that Sex'," 115. Many contemporary sources describe both Elizabeth and Edward as beautiful, which was significant as it was believed physical beauty was a marker of inner beauty, or a virtuous person. Higginbotham, *The Woodvilles*, 29-30 and Anne Sutton "'Chevalerie'," 116.

²⁹⁷ Hicks, *Edward IV*, 107. The traditional date of the wedding on 1 May, considered by contemporaries the most romantic day of the year, was likely a significant part of this.

idealism. Thomas More, writing in the early sixteenth-century, argues that marriage *should* be undertaken for love, which, in the words of Mudan, means that "within the confines of a romance, Edward's willingness to thrust aside diplomatic advantage for love is worthy of applause."²⁹⁸

Indeed, in courtly love, the romantic 'quest' for a man to find his lover can be interpreted as an "educational game...the exact counterpart of a tournament," in the words of George Duby.²⁹⁹ In ideal terms, the man was to demonstrate "the pinnacle of male values...sexual aggression" in his courting while the woman was to accede to his demands only slowly and cautiously, so that by "prolonging the temptation...the young man learned how to master himself."³⁰⁰ This narrative form is presented almost exactly in the tale of Edward and Elizabeth's courtship, where he displays his youthful sexual aggression before being tamed and matured by her steadfast refusal. The love that blossoms from this leads to marriage (and thus, correctly regulated sexual activity) and symbolizes the maturation of Edward, as he has now learned to control his passions. Elizabeth is thus featured in this story as the agent of Edward's maturation, transforming him from an impetuous, appropriately aggressive youth into a proper man, able to control his desires.³⁰¹ Their love story was thus not only popular for transforming the handsome young king into a hero of romance, but also for literally transforming this very young king into a proper man. Given that so much of Henry's failures had resulted from his failure as a man, and thus that so much of Edward's projections focussed on his correct performance as an ideal man, this love story can be interpreted as the opening act of a performative propaganda salvo.

²⁹⁸ Mudan, "'So Mutable is that Sex'," 115-16.

²⁹⁹ Georges Duby, *Love and Marriage in the Middle Ages*, trans. Jane Dunnett (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 57.

³⁰⁰ Duby, *Love and Marriage*, 57-58.

³⁰¹ Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity*, 2.

Edward's marriage for love, in other words, could be interpreted as a shrewd political choice to gain popular support by distancing himself from his unpopular predecessor.

One tradition of ideal kings held that they were generally expected to sacrifice personal happiness for the good of their people,³⁰² and yet contemporaries also recognized the need for the king to have a good and happy marriage. Indeed, and rather paradoxically, marriages were supposed to eschew material or political considerations and focus instead on the happiness of the freely consenting pair.³⁰³ For those who subscribed to this latter tradition, Edward's marriage was to be applauded. The circumstances of Edward and Elizabeth's marriage, and the love story they implied, were thus not obviously positive or negative and instead likely depended on one's political predisposition towards Edward. It should also be remembered that there was a notable precedent of a king (or rather, heir to the throne) marrying for love, as Edward (the Black Prince) had married Joan of Kent, another English widow, for love in 1361.³⁰⁴ This precedent, combined with the relative lack of outcry over what some may see as the king putting himself before the realm, suggests that the story of this love match may have had a net positive effect politically.

Elizabeth's coronation highlighted the way she was presented by the Yorkists. While her appearance and the ceremony communicated several themes, above all it reinforced her power and position. The coronation seems to have been grander than her predecessors, likely to make up for the fact that her marriage to Edward had been secret, and not a public event.³⁰⁵ This secret marriage denied Edward a traditional opportunity for display, although it also factored into the

³⁰² Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III's Book*, 110-11. The authors also stress that contemporary advice books noted the importance for the realm of a good and happy marriage for the sovereign.

³⁰³ Duby, *Love and Marriage*, 19-20.

³⁰⁴ Laynesmith, *Last Medieval Queens*, 38.

³⁰⁵ Laynesmith, *Last Medieval Queens*, 78-79.

construction of their partnership as a love match, itself a propaganda coup.³⁰⁶ During her coronation Elizabeth wore multiple purple garments and a great crown, and carried the regal symbols of the sceptres "of the Reaume" and of Saint Edward, giving her a distinctly royal look.³⁰⁷ This sceptre may have been the same floriated sceptre Anne Neville is pictured with in the Rous Roll, which visually implied a connection to the intercessory powers of the Virgin Mary, or indeed the one she is pictured holding in the presentation image of the *Dictes*.³⁰⁸ The connection to Mary was also a way to highlight the wished-for fertility of a new queen.³⁰⁹ Elizabeth also wore white robes under the purple garments, signifying a connection to divinity, sinless-ness, and virginity, and wore her hair loose, as a virgin would be expected to.³¹⁰ In addition to her regal and pious appearance, the performative actions clearly indicated her exalted role in the body politic. She was attended by dozens of high ranking servants and at the feast was served by several high peers, as was traditional.³¹¹ She was led into the church by Clarence and Warwick, probably the two most significant nobles in the country.³¹² The ceremony included dozens of peers, barons, and high clergy, as well as newly created Knights of the Bath and

³⁰⁶ Secret love was one of the defining hallmarks of courtly love, and sympathetic contemporaries would likely have viewed the couple's secrecy as a positive, rather than a negative. Indeed, Andreas Capellanus's rule that "when made public, love rarely lasts" implies that true love is almost necessarily secret. Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, in *The Broadview Anthology of British Literature: The Medieval Period*, 2nd ed., (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2009), 368. Cf. John H. Perry "Opening the Secret: Marriage Narration, and Nascent Subjectivity in Middle English Romance," *Philological Quarterly* 76 (1997): 133.

³⁰⁷ *Coronation*, 15, and Laynesmith, *Last Medieval Queens*, 105-06.

³⁰⁸ Parsons, "Ritual and Symbol," 62-65. Parsons writes that "The sceptre's persistent floriation in art and on the queen's seals strongly recalls the flowering rods of Aaron and Jesse, Biblical images commonly seen as figures of the Virgin Mary... for an era keenly aware of symbolic meanings, then, the floriated sceptre with which the queens were commonly represented would have had strong Marian connotations closely related to the intercessory role." A close-up image of the presentation image can be seen online in Erica Wagner, "The Authorial Portrait - Shameless Promotion for 1,000 Years," *TheTimes.co.uk*, 22 May 2010, <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-authorial-portrait-shameless-self-promotion-for-1000-years-rnlzq0sz2pb>

³⁰⁹ Parsons, "Ritual and Symbol," 67.

³¹⁰ Laynesmith, *Last Medieval Queens*, 93-94.

³¹¹ Elizabeth's brother Anthony was the cupbearer. *Coronation*, 19.

³¹² Laynesmith, *Last Medieval Queens*, 79.

others.³¹³ Even if her marriage had been a private affair, this coronation was clear in communicating that she was most certainly Edward's queen, someone who could not only produce his heirs, but also someone who secured his kingship by her very presence.

Elizabeth's coronation was another opportunity for Edward to gather the great and good of the realm together to once again recognize him as the sovereign, several years after his own coronation. The rich display, which generally stuck to the script of previous queenly coronations,³¹⁴ forced onlookers to acknowledge that Edward was indeed the king now, rather than the leader of a rebel faction, by including participants from all sides of the conflict.³¹⁵ Significantly, for instance, the Lancastrian earl of Oxford was Elizabeth's chamberlain on the day, highlighting again Elizabeth's role as a mediator between the factions.³¹⁶ Mastering the art of royal display was nearly as important in claiming legitimate authority as was success in battle, and Elizabeth's coronation was a chance for Edward to communicate his power as a national leader.³¹⁷ By having guests from either side of the factional split of the conflict in the 1450s – indeed, by marrying the daughter of a prominent ally of his previous enemy – Edward could thus use Elizabeth to present himself as an ideal king, able to unify the nation around his – and her – presence.

³¹³ The duke of Buckingham was one of those created a Knight of the Bath at Elizabeth's coronation, along with her brothers Richard and John Woodville, further enhancing the prestige of the Woodvilles in the public sphere. Buckingham also soon became the queen's ward. Laynesmith, *Last Medieval Queens*, 91-92. Cf. Fionn Pillbrow, "The Knights of the Bath: Dubbing to Knighthood in Lancastrian and Yorkist England," in *Heraldry, Pageantry, and Social Display in Medieval England*, ed. Peter Coss and Maurice Keen (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002), 195-218.

³¹⁴ See Laynesmith, *Last Medieval Queens*, 82-110.

³¹⁵ *Coronation*, Editor's notes, 12-13.

³¹⁶ Armstrong, "The Inauguration Ceremonies of the Yorkist Kings and their Title to the Throne," 68.

³¹⁷ Henry VI also used his coronation for an important display of propaganda in 1429. McCulloch and Jones, "The Rise of the Popular Element," 107.

Conclusion

Elizabeth conformed to ideals of queenship, but also altered some of those ideals to perform queenship more effectively for her king, Edward. Elizabeth was no rich, foreign virgin as so many of her predecessors had been, but she was presented nonetheless as an ideal queen: a proven mother, the possessor of a virginal purity, and English. Elizabeth's potential weaknesses were, for the Yorkists, turned into her strengths, and the redefinition of queenship that took place in her reign contributed to the legitimacy of Edward's authority as king. She was not like other queens, and that was a good thing. Her unique biography allowed for the most effective construction of Fradenburg's 'sovereign love': not only was she accessible, but the fact that she was a relatively humble Englishwoman – a Lancastrian, moreover – allowed her to fulfill the corporeal ideal of sovereignty superbly. Elizabeth's mediation between the ruled and the ruler was made more effective because of her former status *as* ruled. She was not physically a virgin, but she was nonetheless presented as the noble virgin, she who was chaste enough to refuse a king, despite the risk of violence. She was also a *proven* mother: her fertility did not have to be wished for, it could be demonstrated. This break from tradition becomes a redefinition following the disastrous queenship of Margaret of Anjou, who challenged the legitimacy of the traditional ideal queen. Her ideal femininity helped Edward become more properly masculine, and the portrayal of both in Yorkist propaganda as conforming to their 'correct' gender roles stands in stark contrast to the performance of Henry and Margaret.

The choice of Elizabeth as queen thus can be interpreted as politically rational. Edward needed to leverage all symbolic weapons in the war of ideas in the 1460s, and, given the Yorkist attacks on Margaret's queenship, the break – the redefinition – that Elizabeth's own queenship represents can be seen as a rational choice to make for Edward in 1464. Margaret of Anjou was

unpopular because she had failed to act the part of the ideal queen. She was seen as too active in politics, even commanding troops; she was a 'woman out of place.' She was foreign-born, but also became deeply associated with both the French and the Scots at a time of heightened English nationalism and anti-French sentiment. She was frequently accused of sexual misconduct. She had, by delivering a son belatedly, and then only one of suspicious parentage, failed at perhaps the chief task of a queen: motherhood. I must stress that these failures to perform ideal queenship were in large part due to Henry's own flaws as a king, but nonetheless by not appearing as an ideal queen she undercut her own political legitimacy as well as that of her husband.

All things considered, the effectiveness of Edward's strategy can be questioned. Elizabeth's status as outlier – not only as queen, but as a new sort of queen – made her a vulnerable target, not only to Warwick and his Lancastrian allies in the latter part of the 1460s and early 1470s, but, with fatal consequences, to Richard III in his coup in 1483. Queens, as Laynesmith noted, are always vulnerable because of their anomalous position in the political landscape, and Elizabeth was no exception in this regard.³¹⁸ This ultimate failure does not necessarily mean that a rational reading of Elizabeth's marriage is out of the question, and, when the evidence is read critically and new theoretical approaches applied, the possibility becomes apparent. Queenship studies has provided new answers to old questions, while new readings of the sources overturn the misogynistic assumptions that Elizabeth's only possible value to Edward was as sexual companion, someone who convinced the king to “abandon male intellect for female carnality.”³¹⁹

³¹⁸ Laynesmith, *Last Medieval Queens*, 2-3. Cf. Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*, 13.

³¹⁹ Wood, “The First Two Queens Elizabeth,” 126.

Chapter 3: Anthony Woodville and Ideal Knighthood

This thesis has, thus far, argued for a greater appreciation of the ways in which Edward and his queen sought to conform to contemporary ideals. In their actions and in their propaganda they performed as ideal king and queen respectively, while subtly developing and altering those ideals to reflect better their own context and personalities. Through the performances of these ideal roles they achieved a greater degree of legitimacy, as through myriad ways they accrued the symbolic capital necessary for the maintenance of their authority. Edward and Elizabeth constructed their legitimacy not only through their own performance, but also through the performance of those associated with them. This chapter will demonstrate this through an analysis of Anthony Woodville, the older brother of Elizabeth, who elevated his reputation and secured his position through his performance as an ideal noble.

Anthony is often represented as something of an ideal knight, and a brief glance at his life certainly furthers this characterization. Given his performance as a tournament champion, valiant soldier, and devoted pilgrim, many writers have used Anthony as a foil to the often less-than heroic figures of the Wars of the Roses.³²⁰ Anthony, as we will see, seems to have deliberately cultivated this image, though the relative paucity of sources leaves his real character open for debate. As with the rest of this thesis, this chapter will concentrate mostly on the public image that remains in our sources. This was created through performance, notably the propaganda and para-propaganda of Edward's regime, as well as near-contemporary historians' accounts.

³²⁰ For just one example, Ross compares Anthony very favourably to his parents and sister, although he maintains that he could still be "overbearing." Ross, *Edward IV*, 97-98.

Anthony has, for most historians, largely remained an extended footnote, as will be discussed in further detail below, largely because of the lack of sources.

Theories on identity formation, performance, propaganda, authority, and soft power applied earlier in this thesis to Edward and Elizabeth apply equally to a non-royal individual attempting to justify his own unexpectedly illustrious position in society. All elites or privileged members of a society have to in some way justify their unequal power and wealth, and this was manifestly true with the aristocracy of medieval England. This task was especially important for aristocrats who did not have the established family backgrounds – the ‘correct’ genealogy – that so often justified this privilege. Ryan P. Naughton has explored ideal performance in the “knightly identity romances” of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-centuries, arguing that knightly identity in literature was constructed by the performance of chivalric acts.³²¹ In the most important chivalric tale of late fifteenth-century England, the *Morte d'Arthur*, for instance, knights must constantly go on 'quests' to perform correctly masculine behaviour and thus be recognized as worthy knights.³²² This performance is equally true of real-life aristocrats, who considered themselves first and foremost knights, and who had to perform chivalric acts to construct their identity, in doing so justifying their privilege.

Anthony Woodville, the eldest brother of Elizabeth Woodville, makes an excellent case study for testing the applicability of this theory – or complex of theories – to a non-royal individual. The Woodvilles, as has previously been observed, came from a long line of respectable country gentry, but with Richard’s marriage to Jacquetta they found themselves ‘rubbing elbows’ with the most powerful individuals in the country. With Elizabeth’s marriage to

³²¹ Naughton, *The Construction of Knightly Identity*, vi.

³²² Dorsey Armstrong, *Gender and the Chivalric Community in Malory's Morte d'Arthur* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 69

Edward, they were closely connected to the throne, with a Woodville grandchild set to inherit the crown. This rapid rise has earned them the epithet of social climbers, or a “family made by marriage,”³²³ a reputation perhaps overblown in subsequent historiography but certainly something originally leveled at them by contemporaries – their enemies, at least. To justify their enhanced position, they had to “perform nobility.” A brief glance at Anthony’s impressive life, as a knight, tournament champion, soldier, counselor, educator, administrator, pilgrim, writer, and patron, certainly inspires a mental-portrait of a man as close to an ideal noble as anyone in his age.

This chapter will argue that Anthony did indeed present himself as an ideal noble, in large part to justify his own newly acquired social position. Someone in a position as tenuous as he had little recourse but to strive to appear as blemish-free as possible, and the performance of ideal knight – the pious, courtly, and loyal soldier – earned Anthony an impressive reputation among contemporaries and later historians. Furthermore, this chapter will argue that Anthony’s performance as an ideal knight and noble played a part in Edward IV’s own quest for legitimacy. A crucial part of ideal kingship in courtly literature was commanding the respect and loyalty of his knights, and it appears that Edward leveraged his associations with ideal knights like Anthony and Sir John Astley to bolster his own reputation and further perform ideal kingship.³²⁴ This chapter then will explore not only Anthony’s own biography, but the wider place that the cult of chivalry had within Edward’s reign, and the ways he used the presentation and performative aspects of chivalry to his advantage. Some of these are obvious, such as the Order of the Garter and the famous 1467 Smithfield Tournament that, as a romance come to life, helped

³²³ “#88, William Paston II to John Paston I, 28 January 1460,” in *PLP*, 162.

³²⁴ Armstrong, for instance, writes about kingship in the *Morte* that “Lancelot is the greatest knight because he is the most ‘preux’ when compared to his fellows; Arthur is the greatest king because he commands the loyalty of such knights.” *Gender and the Chivalric Community*, 68.

form the alliance between Edward and the Duke of Burgundy, while others are subtler, including the sponsorship of chivalric literature via England's first printer, William Caxton. This manipulation of the cult of chivalry demonstrates the multitude of ways that Edward sought to legitimize himself as an ideal king, and the importance of using idealism as a lens to explore political acts in the fifteenth century, as originally proposed by Michael Hicks.

Knighthood and *Nobilitas* in the Fifteenth-Century

While this chapter frequently refers to Anthony as an ideal knight, the term ideal noble may be more appropriate, as it moves beyond those elements of elite culture limited only to warfare. *Nobilitas*, the Latin root for the English 'nobility,' is a difficult to define concept with constantly shifting meanings across time, but which may be best summarized as a "personal status denoted by a collection of attributes and recognized by behaviours" that, in the fifteenth-century, included wealth, noble parentage, martial skill, largesse, courtesy, service, and loyalty.³²⁵ It was, in short, the attribute that made some men more deserving of social status than others and was a reaction to the "parvenus" who were seen by the aristocrats as displacing their wealth, prestige, and influence.³²⁶ Kennedy has identified two major traditions of chivalry that co-existed in Anthony's time: the Religious tradition and the Rational tradition. She identifies these with the writings of Ramon Llull (c.1232-1315) and Christine de Pizan (c.1364-1430), respectively.³²⁷ Llull's writings emphasize the knight as a member of a religious "order"

³²⁵Crouch, *The Birth of the Nobility*, chapter 8, and Constance Brittain Bouchard, "*Strong of Body, Brave, and Noble*": *Chivalry and Society in Medieval France* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1998), 26-27, 173, and Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 143-162, esp. 143-146 and 153.

³²⁶ Keen, *Chivalry*, 145-146.

³²⁷ Ramon Llull's *Book of the Order of Chivalry* was written in the late thirteenth century, but was still widely read in the fifteenth century. Caxton translated it into English from a French translation and published it in 1484, and we know Edward owned another manuscript copy later in his life. The text is best described as a Christianized, idealized version of Vegetius's *De Re Militari*. The publication date is significant because one of the main themes of

analogous to priests with a duty to God above any earthly sovereign and stress that their personal virtue was key to the performance of their office. Lull's French and English translators, more so than the original text, argue that knights ought to be of noble birth.³²⁸ Christine de Pizan's work reflects a more "humanist" view of chivalry, which saw the knight primarily as a courtier, soldier, and royal servant. Her works tend to stress "the practical details of a knight's career" and "assume that the knight is a careerist," though they do not reject Lull's point about the importance of personal morality. Kennedy writes that in Christine's work "an idealized portrait of the knight as soldier emerges": loyal to the king, able in war, prudent in governance, and virtuous.³²⁹ Service is indeed at the heart of fifteenth-century chivalry, service both to king and to women; as we shall see below, it is the ideal of service that characterizes Anthony best.³³⁰

It is striking that in 1528, only a few decades after Anthony's death, Baldassare Castiglione's writings widen the scope of gentlemanly behaviour to include knowledge of classical languages and cultures, a character which unites "affability and pleasantness," and a taste for art and music, in addition to the more recognizable chivalric traits of "prudence, humanity, justice, generosity and unconquerable spirit, and...military discipline."³³¹ If we accept that the seeds of humanism, present in Christine's writings before becoming explicit in

the work is the decline of chivalry, and Caxton's epilogue includes a call for its revival. Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III's Books*, 80-82, and S. Carole Weinberg "Caxton, Anthony Woodville, and the Prologue to the *Morte Darthur*," *Studies in Philology* 102 (2005): 61. Both Christine de Pizan's *Livre des fais d'armes et de chevalerie* and *Epistre d'Othea* were written in the early fifteenth century and were widely read by the aristocracy and gentry in England and France. Caxton later published several of her works, and one of Anthony's translations is her *Moral Proverbs*. Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III's Books*, 110.

³²⁸ Beverly Kennedy, *Knighthood in the Morte Darthur*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1992), 13-15.

³²⁹ Kennedy, *Knighthood in the Morte Darthur*, 16-17.

³³⁰ Richard Beauchamp was, in the Beauchamp Pageant, remembered as an ideal noble primarily for his lifetime of service to the king, including at war and in tournaments but also as councillor and administrator, demonstrating the variety of roles a fifteenth-century ideal noble was expected to play. Pilbrow, "The Knights of the Bath," 212-15.

³³¹ Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. Leonard Eckstein Opdycke (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903), electronic edition, 9-10.

https://archive.org/stream/bookofcourtier00castuoft/bookofcourtier00castuoft_djvu.txt

Castiglione's, had indeed already changed the ideals in the middle part of the fifteenth century, Anthony's performance as an ideal noble during this period of change is even more striking.

William Caxton, Anthony's friend and the first printer in England, published both Lull's work as well as Christine de Pizan's, and displayed throughout his career an interest in chivalric publications, most famously romances like the *Morte d'Arthur*. These romances were very popular with his contemporaries and highly valued for their literary merit, as a form of entertainment and enjoyment, and for their performative role in identity making, especially for the gentry and middle classes. A crucial part of aspiring to a higher role in society was being seen to read the 'right' books, and chivalric romances were a major category of such books.³³² The market for these books has generally been regarded as the main reason Caxton chose to publish so many works of this type, including most famously the *Morte d'Arthur*, but also *The Historie of Jason*, *Godefroy of Bologne*, *The Book of the Knyght of the Towre*, and *Blanchardyn and Eglantine*. Many of Caxton's romances blurred the lines between history and romance, and nearly all of the fiction he published can be viewed as at least partially didactic. This pre-existing market also demonstrates the appetite of a large section of the public (the middle class and elite power-broking public, at least) for the cult of chivalry.

Caxton's publication of these texts both provides evidence for, and stimulated the demands of, a diverse array of contemporaries who had their expectations of royal and elite behaviour shaped by these texts. These works must have helped promote Edward's image around

³³² Richard C. McCoy, *The Rites of Knighthood: The Literature and Politics of Elizabethan Chivalry* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 3-6, and Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III's Books*. Sutton and Visser-Fuchs describe in great detail the 'typical' books owned by medieval magnates, a canon which magnates were 'expected' to own. Likewise, Anne Sutton elsewhere notes that fifteenth-century knight Sir John Astley "owned the right books...useful tracts on administrative, ceremonial and military matters"; Anne Sutton "Chevalerie," 132. Cf. Pierre Bordieu and Loic Wacquant, "Symbolic Capital and Social Classes," *Journal of Classical Sociology* 13 (2013): 297, 299-300.

his realm, given their tendency to emphasize a strong king. Edward's actions, display, and propaganda certainly attempted to meet these expectations, and the fact that his court stimulated some of the demand for Caxton's chivalric publications indicates that there was an attempt to shape the discourse of ideal kingship on the part of Edward, who could then match that ideal in myriad ways.

While good birth was an essential part of determining one's *nobilitas*, a wide-ranging debate in medieval philosophy concerned the balance between lineage and personal merit as origins for *nobilitas*.³³³ Lineage or heredity of course remained a major – if not the major – determinant for *nobilitas*, but individual merit, virtue, valour, or skill-at-arms also played an “important part.”³³⁴ Oliver de la Marche (c. 1425–1502), a courtier and writer on chivalry in the court of Charles the Bold of Burgundy, for instance, distinguished between gentlemen who inherited their status, both gentility *and* nobility through birth, and nobles, who could receive nobility from a number of other methods, including service to a prince, leading an “honourable existence,” or feats of arms, among others. He concludes, however, by stating that “he is the happier, and is to be the more esteemed, who commences his nobility in virtue.”³³⁵ Other writers agreed with the general principle that both blood and virtue granted nobility, but that virtue was superior, including Andreas the Chaplain, who wrote in the twelfth century that “he who gets his nobility only from himself is to be preferred...to him who derives it as a sort of inheritance from those from whom he gets his being.”³³⁶ Still others cited the ancient Greek philosopher, Aristotle, ““who tells us that he is noble who is ennobled by his virtues.””³³⁷ Individuals desiring

³³³ Keen, *Chivalry*, 157-61. Cf. Andrea A. Robiglio "The Thinker as a Noble Man (Bene Natus) and Preliminary Remarks on The Medieval Concepts of Nobility," *Vivarium* 44 (2006): 205-47, esp. 242-44.

³³⁴ Keen, *Chivalry*, 148-53.

³³⁵ Keen, *Chivalry*, 149-51.

³³⁶ Keen, *Chivalry*, 157-58.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*

nobility, which was, of course, a prerequisite to authority, could thus acquire it even if they did not possess the ‘right’ lineage. The virtue – in service, loyalty, skill-at-arms, religious devotion, and literary ability³³⁸– displayed by Richard and especially Anthony Woodville thus granted them a degree of nobility that deflected their ‘original’ charge, that of being “made by marriage.” Mancini, indeed, condemns Edward Woodville and Elizabeth’s Grey sons as “ignoble and newly made men” after labeling them “promoters and companions of [Edward’s] vices,” while Anthony generally received no such charge despite his equally ‘ignoble’ birth.³³⁹ This serves as perhaps the clearest demonstration that, in the fifteenth century, being “newly made” was only a charge leveled at those who did not *act* the part, something that Anthony achieved by performing idealism.

Individuals aspiring to elite status had to make careful use of the performative aspects of chivalry to construct for themselves a public self that was worthy of respect and wealth. Performing knighthood in the fifteenth century generally included bearing arms (real and or symbolic); owning land; being a suitably devout and dutiful Christian; displaying largesse; reading the ‘right’ books; behaving courteously, honourably, and loyally; and fighting, either in real battle, tournaments, or jousts.

Warfare and Piety

While Anthony and his father Richard were at times dismissed by their enemies as nothing but a family “made by maryage,”³⁴⁰ in fact their climb, from country gentry to barons,

³³⁸ Robiglio, “Thinker As A Noble Man,” 226-27, 245-47. Robiglio suggests that intelligence, education, or literary ability have a larger part to play than has traditionally been assumed, at least in the philosophical discourse on nobility, even if it remained inferior to other ‘types’ of nobility.

³³⁹ Mancini, *Richard III*, 69.

³⁴⁰ “#88, William Paston II to John Paston I, 28 January 1460,” in *PLP*, 162.

followed a well-established pattern in England, where many of the great families were constantly replenished or replaced by those who had formerly been part of the gentry or even members of the merchant classes.³⁴¹ Warwick's own distant ancestor, indeed, had been a merchant, and high peers from great noble families such as the de la Poles, the Hollands, the Beauforts and the Bourchiers likewise all had "mixed social origins," as described by T.B. Pugh.³⁴² The Woodville men owed a great deal to Jacquetta's birth, land, and connections, but their performance as ideal nobles, particularly the loyalty and skill displayed in Richard and Anthony's military service, played a part in their rapid climb as well. Depending as it did on royal favour, the composition of the aristocracy of the later Middle Ages in England was regularly shifting, and families such as the Woodvilles often "climbed" through a combination of loyal service, shrewd marriage pacts, good business sense, and military skill, just as others fell through bad fortune, disloyalty, or the lack of a male heir.³⁴³ Marriage links between these 'old' and 'new' families were of course important, both to maintain the power of the 'old' and to justify the privilege of the 'new'; a lineage, after all, "is what aristocrats have."³⁴⁴ The ways these "new" nobles had to justify their new social position will be explored in this section, and indeed Anthony's career offers an ample illustration of the measures aristocrats sought to legitimize themselves. It will demonstrate how Anthony conformed to the expectations of an ideal noble as a warrior, a loyal servant, and a pious individual. The following section will discuss Anthony's most significant political role, as

³⁴¹ Madison, *The Wydevilles*, 224-26.

³⁴² Pugh, "The Magnates, Knights, and Gentry," 87-88. Cf. Lander "Marriage and Politics," 148.

³⁴³ Lander, for instance, notes that in England "between 1439 and 1504 there were sixty-eight new creations of peers. Of these only twenty-one were for the husbands or sons of old peerage heiresses, leaving forty-seven completely new creations. The nobility had constantly to be recruited from below and its basis was plutocratic rather than aristocratic. Its numbers were maintained by promotion from a group of rich untitled families whose way of life differed little, if at all, from that of the lesser nobility: a pool, in fact, from which the numbers of the parliamentary peerage were constantly restocked." Lander, "Marriage and Politics," 148.

³⁴⁴ Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility*, 97. Keen, *Chivalry*, 146-48.

the governor of Edward V, which was, it will be argued, secured precisely because of his successful performance as an ideal noble.

Anthony's performance as an ideal knight is apparent from his first appearance in the historical record, as a teenager of approximately sixteen years old, fighting alongside his father Richard on the Lancastrian side in the decisive battles of Blore Heath in 1458 and Ludford in 1459, and was key in his rise to prominence.³⁴⁵ As has been noted, Richard, far from being obscure and unimportant, was one of Henry VI's most experienced commanders, placed in charge of defending the south coast from the Yorkists abroad in France.³⁴⁶ Anthony accompanied his father in his military exploits and benefited by this family reputation, thus gaining his own reputation for military prowess and valour at a young age.

The Woodvilles, like many Lancastrians after the disastrous battle of Towton, switched their allegiances to York and began to work themselves into the new king's favour. Richard was a potential asset for Edward (as demonstrated in chapter one) and, as a proven commander as well as a Knight of the Garter with a reputation for chivalric performance, had the ability to retain his family's increased prominence despite the changes on the throne.

The Woodville's entrance into Edward's orbit and Elizabeth's marriage to Edward provided more opportunity for chivalric display and more public attention to such performance. Tournaments were an important part of this. Anthony tourneyed first in 1458 with his father. A tournament accompanied Elizabeth Woodville's coronation in 1465, and Anthony likely participated in this, given his well demonstrated proclivity for chivalric display later in life.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁵ Higginbotham, *The Woodvilles*, 14, 19.

³⁴⁶ Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*, 144-45 and Geoffrey Hodges, "The Civil War of 1459 to 1461 in the Welsh Marches: Part 1 The Rout of Ludford," *The Ricardian* 6 (1984): 286-93.

³⁴⁷ Higginbotham, *The Woodvilles*, 39. Cf. Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III's Books*, 91.

Like his father, Anthony appreciated the display and the sport of tournaments and became a celebrated jouster after tournaments such as those at Smithfield and Eltham in 1467, and at several more in the 1470s.³⁴⁸

Success in tourneying was a route to social prominence. The Smithfield tournament of 1467, in which Anthony engaged in a two-day combat against the “Bastard of Burgundy,” Anthony de Bourgogne, son of the Duke of Burgundy, adhered to many of the chivalric conventions of the age and has echoes of not only romance literature but also chivalric advice literature, both of which dealt extensively with tournament protocol and the importance of obeying a lady. No less a chivalric authority than Geoffroi de Charny (c.1300-1356), for instance, notes that those who perform great deeds of arms “should be praised and honored, and so also should the noble ladies who have inspired them...and one should indeed honour, serve, and truly love these noble ladies...who inspire men to great achievement, and it is thanks to such ladies that men become good knights.”³⁴⁹ Elizabeth and her ladies supposedly bade Anthony to defeat the Bastard, and he made it clear in his invitation that the challenge was only made in obedience to his queen.³⁵⁰ The tournament represented “display on a grand scale” and was designed to promote the image of Edward's court at home and abroad.³⁵¹ It was clearly a major social event, and the Bishops of Ely and Salisbury even gave their palaces over to the competing champions. Anthony entered on a magnificent horse in white-gold, followed by the Dukes of

³⁴⁸ Ben Daw, “Elections to the Garter Under Edward IV,” *Medieval Prosopography* 19 (1998): 200-01.

³⁴⁹ *The Book of Chivalry of Geoffroi de Charny: Text, Context, Translation*, ed. Richard W. Kaeuper and Elspeth Kennedy (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 87, 95. For just one example of the importance of knights obeying ladies in romance, see *Sir Lanval*, who upon meeting the fairy queen tells her that he will “do what you command; / for you I will give up everyone,” (l.127-128) and whose central quest is to refrain from admitting their secret love, a command tested by Arthur's queen, whose command he must refuse. “Sir Lanval,” in *The Broadview Anthology of British Literature* v.1, ed. Joseph Black et al (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2010), 188-203.

³⁵⁰ Higginbotham, *The Woodvilles*, 54 and “Tournament Between Lord Scales And The Bastard of Burgundy, A.D. 1467” in *Excerpta Historica*, ed. Samuel Bentley (London, 1833), 171-222, esp. 176-80.

³⁵¹ Pidgeon, “Antony Wydeville,” 7, and R.R. Davies *Lords and Lordship in the British Isles in the Late Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 55-81.

Clarence and Buckingham; the Earls of Arundel and Kent; and the Lords Herbert and Stafford, all bearing Anthony's equipment.³⁵² This indicates the social prestige that skill at arms granted a man: he was shown to be served by some of the greatest lords of the realm, including the king's own brother. The two combatants jousting on the first day, while on the second they continued the duel on foot, hacking at each other with axes until they were separated, even after Edward called a halt to the fight. The tournament would continue for the next few days, with other Burgundians fighting Edward's other knights.³⁵³

The comment that this tournament only took place because Anthony was obliged to follow Elizabeth's instructions is no small detail. One of the hallmarks of ideal nobility was unflinching loyalty to ladies, a requirement especially pertinent in regards to queens. Malory's Lancelot, for instance, is introduced by highlighting his two major characteristics, his martial skill and his obedience to ladies, Guinevere first and foremost.³⁵⁴ The importance of this tournament for Anthony thus takes on added importance because it demonstrates his loyalty to women, casting him as a Lancelot-figure, while his kin-relationship to Elizabeth dispels the potential negative association of Lancelot as a nearly-ideal knight whose reputation is sullied by the fact that he put personal love before loyalty to the king. Indeed, Anthony's long period as a bachelor may further accentuate this, as it was (intentionally or otherwise) reminiscent of Arthur's band of knights, almost none of whom were married.³⁵⁵

This tournament was of course no mere theatre, but was the opening salvo of a diplomatic campaign designed to woo the Duke of Burgundy into supporting Edward's claim to the thrones

³⁵² Higginbotham, *The Woodvilles*, 34.

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Armstrong, *Gender and the Chivalric Community*, 73. Armstrong writes that in Malory's text "the measure of a knight - indeed, of a man - is found in his 'chevalry,' a word that invokes some combination of martial prowess and courteous behaviour toward women," or even "devotion to the feminine."

³⁵⁵ Armstrong, *Gender and the Chivalric Community*, 70.

of both England and France. This alliance was eventually sealed through the marriage of Edward's sister Mary to the future Duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold, allowing Edward to bolster his anti-French credentials with a planned invasion, as discussed in the first chapter. Anthony and Richard Woodville were vital to this diplomatic effort, making several trips to Burgundy, and, when Mary did finally leave for Burgundy and marriage, it was Anthony who accompanied her as a representative of Edward and Elizabeth.³⁵⁶ Whilst in Burgundy he would again fight in a grand tournament, although he did not compete against the Bastard of Burgundy, as they had sworn they would not fight again.³⁵⁷ Combat, real or mock, was the hallmark of this class of elites, and these acts of violence were central to performances of identity. By the fifteenth century, the joust had become the pre-eminent display of skill-at-arms (short of participation in real war), and the ideal knight was expected to be as competent in the joust as he was in the battlefield or at the dinner table.³⁵⁸

Anthony also continued to fight successfully in war, especially during the Second War following Neville's defection to the Lancastrians in 1469. Having become the Second Earl Rivers after his father Richard's execution by Warwick in 1469, Anthony would play a more important role in the war than he is often given credit for. Anthony fought at Barnet in April 1471, perhaps commanding the reserve.³⁵⁹ Another important contribution to the war effort was his successful defence of the Tower of London against the "Bastard of Fauconberg," a distant Neville relation. In May 1471 the Bastard tried to seize the Tower (with Henry VI imprisoned within), which was defended by Anthony and the citizens of London. *Warkworth's Chronicle* notes that had Anthony and the city officials not led the defence, the citizens would have opened

³⁵⁶"#330, John Paston to Margaret Paston, 8 July 1468," in *PLP*, 539; Hicks, *Edward IV*, 129.

³⁵⁷"#330, John Paston to Margaret Paston, 8 July 1468," in *PLP*, 539.

³⁵⁸ Keen, *Chivalry*, 83-101, 177-92. cf. David Crouch, *Tournament* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2007), 111-31.

³⁵⁹ Hicks *Who's Who in Late Medieval England*, 346, and Higginbotham, *The Woodvilles*, 78.

the gates to the Bastard.³⁶⁰ Anthony's sally against the Bastard's forces receives special mention in the pro-Yorkist chronicle *Arrivall of King Edward IV*, which also stresses the strategic importance of the Tower.³⁶¹ Despite the importance of Anthony's victory here, the incident receives slight mention in modern historiography; Hicks, for instance, in his survey on the Wars only notes that Edward abandoned London to the Bastard, and that the Bastard's "assault on London was repelled."³⁶² The Lancastrian recovery of Henry VI would have been a turning point in the war, something contemporary sources attest to. Instead the Lancastrians were defeated on this front and in others, and the deaths of Henry VI and his son, Edward of Lancaster, would bring an end to the Second War. A contemporary popular poem may sum up feeling the best: "God would the earl Rivers should be there."³⁶³

Anthony's piety was noted by many contemporaries. He lived in an era characterized by extreme lay piety, and in many ways he conformed to the religious ideals that nobles ideally were expected to live by. Especially in the relative peace of the 1470s Anthony appears an increasingly religious figure compared to many of his contemporaries. Indeed, it is this contrast that has seemingly magnified this aspect of his personality, as Anthony works as a perfect foil for many of the perceived flaws of his age, including the excess of Edward IV's court and the factional politics of rivals like Warwick or Richard III. This comparison is present in contemporary sources. Mancini, for instance, describes Edward thusly: "In food and drink he was most immoderate: it was his habit, so I have learned, to take an emetic for the delight of gorging his stomach once more...he was licentious in the extreme," immediately contrasting him with Anthony who "On the other hand...was always considered a kind, serious, and just man,

³⁶⁰ *Warkworth's Chronicle*, 41. *Warkworth's* was a piece of Lancastrian propaganda, so the credit and praise given to Anthony is doubly surprising.

³⁶¹ *Arrivall*, 179-83.

³⁶² Hicks, *Wars of the Roses*, 203.

³⁶³ Quoted in Higginbotham, *The Woodvilles*, 75.

and one tested by every vicissitude of life. Whatever his prosperity he had injured nobody, though benefiting many.”³⁶⁴ His religiosity, therefore, may be both genuine but also a crucial part of Anthony’s performance as an ideal noble, as concerned with the hereafter as with his own martial duties.

This is also the area in which gender most clearly intersects with Anthony’s (and Edward’s) performed identities. As briefly noted in the second chapter, self-control was a key aspect of ideal masculinity, and Edward’s lack of self-control was used against him in propaganda associated with Richard III; few contemporaries, as evidenced by Mancini’s description above, seem to have disagreed with this general assessment.³⁶⁵ Mancini describes Edward as being sexually rapacious, financially greedy, and “immoderate” in his consumption of food and beverages. The contrast with Anthony, here as someone with an excellent degree of self-control, thus serves to critique the king while also demonstrating another area of Anthony’s idealism, in that his self-control casts him as an ideal man.

Anthony went on numerous pilgrimages, an important form of lay piety at the time. Aside from pilgrimages within England, Anthony travelled to both Rome and to Santiago de Compostela, the two most important Christian sites after the increasingly inaccessible Jerusalem.³⁶⁶ Several Paston letters remark on Anthony's planned trip to "Portugal" (likely the Iberian peninsula more generally) in 1471 to fight the Saracens, a notion that apparently met with

³⁶⁴ Mancini, *Richard III*, 67-69.

³⁶⁵ Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity*, 2, 9; Mancini, *Richard III*, 61-67.

³⁶⁶ On pilgrimages, see Diana Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 42-43, 143-44. Pidgeon, 5. "#264, John Paston II to John Paston III, 28 September 1471," in *PLP*, 443, describes “the Kyng and the Qwyen and moche other pepell” going on pilgrimage to Canterbury, which may have included Anthony.

some resistance from Edward IV.³⁶⁷ It is not certain if he did in fact go to Iberia, with Pidgeon especially raising doubts, based on the fact that Anthony was fighting in Brittany in 1472.³⁶⁸ Crusading, of course, remained popular in chivalric circles and participating in it was one of the highest ideals of knighthood; his expressed desire to crusade thus further reflects his performance of idealism.³⁶⁹ He certainly did travel to Spain in 1473, to Santiago, where he claims to have read the *Dictes and Sayengis of the Philosophers* and been greatly affected by it; he would later translate the work into English for the benefit of Edward V.³⁷⁰ In 1476 he travelled to Rome and was robbed on the return journey, causing a minor stir in Italy and England.³⁷¹ While physical pilgrimages were a common method for devotees to undertake an interior spiritual journey, they also plainly demonstrated to others the piety of the individual and were thus performative. As piety was an essential characteristic of a knight, these pilgrimages thus confirmed Anthony's identity as an ideal knight.

When Anthony's martial prowess, evidenced by his fame in the jousting lists, was combined with a reputation for religiosity, he was one step closer to being the "perfect" knight. A glance at the career of Chaucer's Knight – fighting heathens and Saracens across Christendom – gives us a sense of what a knight was supposed to be. Anthony went so far as literally to combine the dual identities of warrior and holy-man in a 1477 tournament in which he entered the lists

³⁶⁷"#263, John Paston II to Margaret Paston, 18 April 1471," in *PLP*, 439-41;" #266, John Paston II to Margaret Paston, 8 January 1472," in *PLP*, 445-46; and "#350, John Paston III to Margaret Paston, 28 October 1471," in *PLP*, 569-70.

³⁶⁸ Pidgeon, "Antony Wydeville," 5, and "#269, John Paston II to John Paston III, 30 April 1472," in *PLP*, 449-50.

³⁶⁹ Sutton "Chevalerie," 123. Cf. Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, ed. Robert Boenig and Andrew Taylor (Peterborough: Broadview, 2012), 47-48, lines 49-66, 85-86. Chaucer's Knight is described as participating in multiple crusades, and is contrasted with the Squire, who had instead participated "in chyvachie/ in Flaundres, in Artoys, and Pycardie."

³⁷⁰ Pidgeon, "Antony Wydeville," 5. *The Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers: Facsimile Reproduction of the First Book Printed in England by William Caxton in 1477*, Anthony Woodville, trans. (London: Elliot Stock, 1877), Reprint, (Miami: HardPress Publishing, 2017), 2-3.

³⁷¹"#298, John Paston II to Margaret Paston or John Paston III," in *PLP*, 494, and Pidgeon, "Antony Wydeville," 5-6.

dressed as a hermit.³⁷²Anthony's identity rested on the dual principles of war and religion that defined the ideal knight. While not denying his likely genuine religious devotion, there were certainly political motivations at work in Anthony's religious actions and aspirations.

The standards for ideal knighthood thus allowed Anthony and those like him a performative opportunity to increase their cultural capital or to justify their social position that had, indeed, largely been acquired as a result of successful marriages. By meeting contemporary expectations about what a noble should be – chiefly successful in war and suitably pious – Anthony earned a positive reputation even among his enemies and was thus exempted from some of the later criticism of the other Woodville relations as 'newly made.' Performing idealism therefore justified the positions of not only Edward and Elizabeth, but also Anthony Woodville.

Education, Literature, and Edward V

Anthony's piety and skill with arms marked him as an elite knight according to contemporary expectations, and this status was enhanced by his service as the Governor of Edward V. In this role Anthony demonstrated the final axis of ideal nobility: his learning, his literary patronage, and his credentials as a courtier.

Anthony's ideal performance of *nobilitas* was important to Edward IV in demonstrating that his children with Anthony's sister Elizabeth were worthy to inherit the throne of England. Edward, therefore, gave Anthony a very public and important role in his heir's upbringing. Edward and Elizabeth's first son, Edward V was born in November 1470, while Elizabeth was in

³⁷² Pidgeon, "Antony Wydeville," 8.

sanctuary following Warwick's rebellion.³⁷³ Edward V's birth gave the Yorkist regime a badly needed element in their quest for legitimacy: a male heir. Yet, Edward's role as usurper and Elizabeth's relatively low birth meant that his son's succession was far from secure. Edward IV went to great lengths to ensure his son Edward's successful accession to the throne, beginning with a fine education in the classroom and at court. Anthony Woodville was chosen to be Edward V's governor, placing him at the heart of the Yorkist succession strategy that, due to the unforeseen circumstances of 1483, never came to fruition. Anthony's role as Edward V's governor was his most significant political contribution to the Yorkist regime and formed the backbone of what we may call a Woodville 'faction.'³⁷⁴ Finally, by publicly earmarking Anthony as a noble worthy of educating his son (a reputation with which few contemporaries seem to have disagreed), Edward may have been using Anthony's growing reputation to validate the Woodville bloodline, thus legitimizing both his queen and his heir.

Edward V's education and preparations were "more deliberate and formally planned" than the education of most previous princes, although they still roughly followed precedent.³⁷⁵ This development may have been entirely natural given the rising importance of humanism, with its theories regarding the perfectibility of humanity through education, although given the tumultuous context of Edward IV's reign – especially following the disruption of Warwick's rebellion – it seems likely that additional measures were taken to ensure that Edward V would be prepared for the throne when the time came. This required both an appropriate upbringing as well as the increased legitimacy that an excellent education could provide. Anthony's status here as an elite peer and knight *sans reproche* seems to have been a part of this strategy, granting

³⁷³ Cora L. Scofield *The Life and Reign of Edward the Fourth* (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1923), Reprint (New York: Octagon Books, 1967), 546-47. Orme states the birth was 2 December, rather than 2 November. Orme, "The Education of Edward V," 119.

³⁷⁴ See Chapter One, p. 3, esp. n. 6.

³⁷⁵ Orme, "Education of Edward V," 119.

Edward V some measure of respect through his association with Anthony. Princes had for centuries been educated by knights, but Henry V chose first the Duke of Exeter and then the Earl of Warwick to educate his son, indicating that prestige must have played a role in the selection of ‘masters’ for the prince. Along with Anthony as ‘governor,’ a new title that seems to be reflective of the increased prestige value of this position, John Alcock, Bishop of Rochester, was also appointed as Edward’s ‘teacher,’ likewise a new title. While Edward’s actual education was still conducted principally by “specialized tutors of lesser rank,” he was thus formally associated with two widely respected elites from his earliest years.³⁷⁶ If ideal kingship was primarily a matter of heeding wise counsel, it naturally followed to provide the prince this counsel as early as possible.

Edward V’s education seems to have been quite typical for a prince, although we are fortunate to have a record of his education surviving in the form of ordinances that may be unique.³⁷⁷ Edward was brought up from 1473 in a large household, governed by his council, along with other young sons of noble families, and educated in religion, grammar, and athletics.³⁷⁸ The ordinances for his education repeatedly stress the importance of surrounding Edward V with “worshipfull folkes,” and give Anthony leeway to determine personal access to the prince.³⁷⁹ This again stresses the point that much of good kingship simply involved surrounding oneself with the ‘right’ people; clearly Anthony was one of these ‘right’ people, and indeed regarded highly enough to judge the respectability of others. Interestingly, part of his education program included “noble storyes as behoveth to a prynce to understande and knowe,”

³⁷⁶ Orme, "Education of Edward V," 119-20.

³⁷⁷ Orme, "Education of Edward V," 121-22.

³⁷⁸ Orme, "Education of Edward V," 123-25.

³⁷⁹ Orme, "Education of Edward V," 127-28. One clause further specifies: "we wyll that noe person, man nor woman, beinge within our sayd sonnes houshoulde be customable swearer, brawler, backbyter, comen hasorder, adventorer, and use wordes of rybauldrye."

indicating the pedagogical importance of fictions and romances to the education of young elite men.³⁸⁰ This was a crucial part of developing a chivalrous and righteous character, so much so that the ordinances demanded “that the comunicatyon at all tymes in his presence be of vertu, honor, cuninge, wisdom and deedes of worshippe, and of nothings that should move or styrre him to vyces.”³⁸¹ Wise counsel, a good education, and advice literature thus sought to not only prepare Edward for the duties of kingship, but also granted him some of the symbolic capital necessary to claim legitimate authority.

One major component of Caxton’s publications includes a variety of what we may broadly call ‘advice books,’ some of which were associated directly with Edward V and Anthony. These texts, often called “mirrors for princes,” are books which instruct the reader on a broad variety of topics related to governance and right living, often using historical figures as exemplars to emulate or by appealing to the authority of ancient experts. Mirrors, according to Graßnick,

intend to educate and advise kings and princes about governmental competence, soft skills and personal behavior; they deal with the body natural and the body politic by constructing the image of an ideal king...rather than transmitting specific rules the texts want a ruler who behaves like an ideal king in every situation. They hope to influence the ‘*habitus*’ of the kings and princes: mirrors for princes demand that a king behave and act politically in a correct and consistent way; they want the king to act according to their image of an ideal king in every situation³⁸²

These useful pedagogical tools also had other related applications, which contributed to their popularity. They were useful to a more general audience as well, as their advice on governance was often as relevant to governing a household as it was a kingdom, and they also frequently provided advice on personal relationships, because “the need for princes to learn the skills of

³⁸⁰ Orme, "Education of Edward V," 127.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² Graßnick, “O Prince, Desyre to be Honourable,” 161.

social interaction was as essential as it was for other young men.”³⁸³ However, mirrors were also objects that provided kings “cultural...[and] symbolic capital” which lay at the heart of legitimizing a ruler’s authority.³⁸⁴ The political community expected a ruler to be well-counseled, and advice literature literally objectified that counsel. For a dynasty as new as the Yorkists, advice literature would be an important part of both Edward V’s education as well as his legitimation by means of acquiring this symbolic capital.

Caxton’s most important mirrors include *The Dictes and Sayengs of the Philosphres*, translated by Anthony Woodville and published in 1477. This translation of the *Dictes* was written expressly for the education of Edward V, as Woodville notes in his prologue and Caxton implies in his epilogue to the text.³⁸⁵ The *Dictes* is a florilegium which collects quotes from notable classical and biblical authorities on a wide range of subjects; while this is somewhat distinct from a mirror proper, it may still readily be counted as part of the wider genre of advice literature, in that its purpose is didactic in nature. Interestingly, Anthony’s translation leaves out a passage of “certayn and dyuerce conclusions towchyng women” from Socrates, which Caxton speculates may be because “som fayr lady hath desired hym to leue it out of his booke Or ellys he was amorous on somme noble lady...or ellys for the very affeccyon, loue and good wylle that he hath vnto alle ladyes and Gentyll women.”³⁸⁶ As Pidgeon notes, it is more likely that this section was originally omitted because it cautions specifically against the “dangers of a woman

³⁸³ Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III’s Books*, 127.

³⁸⁴ Graßnick, “‘O Prince, Desyre to be Honourable,’” 165.

³⁸⁵ *Dictes*, 2-3. Cf. William Caxton, “The Dictes and Sayengs of the Philosphres, Epilogue, First Edition,” in *Prologues and Epilogues of William Caxton*, ed. W.J.B Crotch (New York: Burt Franklin, 1971), 18-20.

³⁸⁶ Caxton, “Dictes Epilogue,” 18-22.

dominating her husband," a sensitive issue if contemporaries did indeed see Edward as being dominated by his queen.³⁸⁷

Other advice literature published by Caxton during the lifetime of Edward V include Christine de Pisan's *Moral Proverbs*, also translated by Anthony, and *The Game and Play of Chess*, as well as a series of histories including *The Recuyell of the Histories of Troye*, *Godfrey of Bologne*, and the *History of Jason*. Caxton seems to have been interested in publishing a series of works on the Nine Worthies, the mytho-historical "champions of chivalry" whose virtue and deeds were to be emulated, as he also published Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* and a work on Charlemagne;³⁸⁸ these may be considered as didactic to a point as well, although both were published after 1483.³⁸⁹ Indeed, Caxton's prologues and epilogues to the *History of Jason* and *Godfrey of Bologne* state explicitly that they are intended for Edward V's consumption.³⁹⁰ This collection means that a great deal of Caxton's publications during Edward IV's reign were some form of advice literature, and, given that many of these works were sponsored by Anthony or some other member of the Yorkist court, it seems apparent that there was at least some political influence behind the decision to sponsor this type of literature. A crucial part of English royal politics had long been the convention that the monarch is seen publicly to take wise advice from

³⁸⁷ Pidgeon, "Antony Wydeville," 122.

³⁸⁸ Keen, *Chivalry*, 121-24, 141. The nine worthies included Joshua, David and Judas from the Old Law, Hector, Alexander, and Julius Caesar from the Pagan Law, and Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godfrey de Bouillon from the Christian Law.

³⁸⁹ Weinberg "Caxton, Anthony Woodville, and the Prologue to the *Morte Darthur*," 54-62. Caxton had seemingly planned to print an Arthurian story as part of his series on the Nine Worthies, but it has been argued that the manuscript copy of Malory was given to Caxton by Anthony Woodville by at least 1481, perhaps indicating a desire on Anthony's part to see it published. Caxton likely intended the Malory text to be a didactic text for Edward V, but the events of 1483 spoiled this; evidence from the text suggests the editorial work did not begin until 1484. Given that the epilogue to the *Book of the Order of Chivalry*, the only text dedicated to Richard III, included "openly lament[ing] the decline of chivalry in England," a text like Malory's with such a similar theme may have brought the publication date forward as a subtle critique of Richard III. In any case, the change from a bear to a boar that fights the dragon under Vortigern's fortress is an explicit criticism of Richard III, identified by his symbol of the white boar. This hatred for Richard would seem to confirm the argument that Caxton had an affinity for both Anthony and Edward.

³⁹⁰ Weinberg, "Caxton, Anthony Woodville, and the Prologue to the *Morte*," 53.

good counselors, and in the early life of young Edward V advice literature supplemented the advice of counselors, which communicated the message that the future king would be willing to seek advice from his trusted counselors as well as providing him a credentialed education. Publicly educating the prince in this way vested him with the symbolic authority he would need to succeed successfully to the throne after the death of his father. Anthony's significance as educator, then, should not be overlooked.

With the rise of humanism throughout the fifteenth century, literary patronage became increasingly significant as way to mark oneself as a man of worth. It also served to popularize and circulate different models of *nobilitas*. Anthony appears to have used his patronage of William Caxton, the first commercial printer in England, as another way to distinguish himself as a man of worth and a possessor of *nobilitas*. Moreover, he was not merely a patron, but an active participant in the literary process, most notably as a translator. Caxton set up his press in Winchester in 1476 and began a remarkable publishing career that produced over thirty-four works over fifteen years.³⁹¹ It is generally Anthony who is credited with convincing Caxton to return from his home in Bruges to set up shop in England, and Caxton would publish some of Anthony's own translations, although Edward IV also encouraged his work.³⁹² Caxton's publication choices should not be seen as merely the rational choices of a savvy businessman (though they were certainly that), but also an extension of Edward IV's soft-power campaign. Many of Caxton's publications celebrated the cult of chivalry, with a spirit of loyalty to a strong king at its center, which helped to reinforce Edward's authority. Other publications were a public acknowledgement of the education of Edward V and continued the tradition of providing advice

³⁹¹ *Prologues and Epilogues of William Caxton*, ed. W.J.B Crotch (New York: Burt Franklin, 1971), ciii, cxxiv.

³⁹² Richard Deacon, *A Biography of William Caxton* (London: Frederick Muller, 1976), 118.

literature for the future king in order to demonstrate to followers that he would be a competent ruler.

It is impossible to conclude with any certainty that it was Anthony who brought Caxton and his press to England,³⁹³ but it is clear that he was an important backer, patron, and partner, especially in the crucial early years in Westminster. Caxton printed three works translated by Anthony, firstly the *Dictes*, then Christine de Pizan's *Moral Proverbs* and the *Cordiale, or Four Last Things*. Harry suggests that the two met in the mid-1470s following Woodville's pilgrimage to Rome rather than in the 1460s during Anthony's trips to the continent, as has been suggested by others, but in either case the pair appear to have had a genuine friendship, as well as a professional relationship.³⁹⁴ There is some evidence of book circulation among some court figures in this period, and Anthony likely provided Caxton with some of the French manuscripts needed for his own translation and publication, including Lull's *Order of Chivalry*.³⁹⁵

Castiglione's definition of a noble includes a good education and interest in arts as well as the 'traditional' martial chivalric pursuits. While Anthony Woodville was no renaissance prince, his contemporaries and near contemporaries like Christine de Pizan and William Caxton also encouraged nobles and princes to read and study examples from the past; in this, they were merely echoing the calls from mirrors, as discussed above. Modern scholar Robiglio notes that one 'type' of nobility was one which "connected nobility to intellectual virtue," and a "well-born

³⁹³ Crotch, civ-cv, suggests that the decision to move to Westminster was related to Caxton's circle of family and friends, guild connections, and the proximity to the court, while Deacon, 103, suggests it may have been related to the declining trade between England and Burgundy around this period.

³⁹⁴ David Harry, "Learning to Die in Yorkist England: Earl Rivers' Cordyal," *The Yorkist Age*, eds. Hannes Kleineke and C. Steers (Donnington: Paul Watkins Publishing, 2013), 384, and Weinberg, "Caxton, Anthony Woodville, and the Prologue to the *Morte*," 47-52.

³⁹⁵ Harry, "Learning to Die," 384.

man" was one who, amongst other traits, "will possess natural intelligence."³⁹⁶ Anthony's work in translating texts for Caxton and patronizing others, then, especially the *Dictes*, with its myriad classical quotations,³⁹⁷ must thus be seen as at least in part an exercise in performance. By engaging in literature in a more active way than many other nobles, he was meeting and indeed exceeding contemporary expectations for noble behaviour and proving himself as a "well-born man," despite his perhaps dubious family history.

The *Dictes* and *Moral Proverbs* may be considered to be advice literature intended for the education of Edward V, but Woodville's translation of the *Cordiale* indicates further the genuine religiosity of the man. *Cordiale* is part of a literary tradition that can be characterized as content about "learning to die," which relates to the more general *memento mori* movement in fifteenth-century art and religion. Anthony's translation of the *Cordiale* communicates to historians – and, crucially, Anthony's contemporaries – that he was someone who was genuinely pious, more concerned with the spiritual world than the material, and who was cognizant of the latest 'fashions' in devotion.³⁹⁸ Anthony's pilgrimages, his reported hair shirt, and his "'Death-day Ballad'" all complete this image of a deeply religious man.³⁹⁹ This religiosity of course, however, had a dual purpose, which, even if unintended, is significant: it played a crucial role in establishing Anthony as an ideal noble, thus legitimizing his social privilege in the material world. The *Dictes* and *Moral Proverbs* also communicate to contemporaries that the translator and sponsor is concerned with their spiritual health and morality and is deeply interested in

³⁹⁶ Robiglio, "Thinker as a Noble Man," 242, 244-45. Robiglio notes that the medieval philosophical tradition of recognizing intellect as a crucial part of nobility originated in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but is the root of the idea of the "philosopher-gentleman" which "was to have a long life in Europe's courtly society."

³⁹⁷ Knowledge of Aristotle was, Robiglio notes, particularly important. Considering Anthony was a 'gentleman-scholar' who otherwise had little academic pedigree, his choice to translate a text full of Aristotelian quotes may not have been accidental. Robiglio, "Thinker as a Noble Man," 246.

³⁹⁸ Harry, "Learning to Die," 385-89, 396-98.

³⁹⁹ Harry, "Learning to Die," 385.

intellectual pursuits and a classical education. For Caxton's aristocratic, gentry, and bourgeois readers, Anthony was presented not as a calculating political operator, but as a practitioner of the new humanist learning towards which social elites were beginning to aspire.

Anthony was himself perhaps something of a poet, with at least two works attributable to him, both likely from his time imprisoned by Gloucester.⁴⁰⁰ These include a death-day poem reflecting on the mutability of life, further indicating his personal spirituality and genuine interest in the *memento mori* movement.⁴⁰¹ Further, one of these poems possesses refined language and uses rare word variants found only in the Wycliffe Bible and Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*.⁴⁰² Anthony thus had a genuine literary interest and must have possessed a large library, including perhaps some manuscripts from the famed Bedford Library; certainly Elizabeth Woodville was herself possessed of a keen literary interest.⁴⁰³

Anthony lived before the humanist movement is usually said to have begun in England, although he does prefigure it in several interesting ways. He wrote in English rather than in Latin, likely reflecting his aristocratic, rather than scholastic or religious, education. His 'writing' mostly concentrates on religious subjects, and not on other common humanist subjects such as language, love, or history. While he likely dabbled with original writing, he is best known as a translator rather than an author. Nevertheless, his active involvement in literature - not merely sponsoring productions, but directly contributing to them - indicates that he, like later humanists,

⁴⁰⁰ Omar Khalaf, "An Unedited Fragmentary Poem by Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 264," *Notes and Queries* 58 (2011): 489.

⁴⁰¹ Pidgeon, "Antony Wydeville," 16. The text reads, in part, "lo, in this trance, / now in substance, / such is my dance / willing to die...my life was lent / me to one intent. / it is nigh spent. / Welcolme Fortune!"

⁴⁰² Khalaf, "An Unedited Fragmentary Poem by Anthony Woodville," 489. This contrasts with Pidgeon (15-16) who seems to question his literary interests, in part by describing his will as "business like" and summarizing him as a person whose "whole life appears to have been one of 'going through the motions.'"

⁴⁰³ Weinberg, "Caxton, Anthony Woodville, and the Prologue to the *Morte*," 48, Margaret Kekewich, "Edward IV, William Caxton, and Literary Patronage in Yorkist England," *Modern Language Review* 66 (1971): 483, and Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III's Books*, 35-36.

was seeking to mark himself as a man of worth via literature. His publications communicated to readers that he was a man of some learning, of some knowledge of the classical past, and was deeply pious, all traits which reflected positively on his *nobilitas*.

It is likely that Anthony's literary activities helped contribute to his persona of the ideal nobleman, one who was seriously interested in chivalry, piety, morality, and education, all topics increasingly valued in late medieval England. Being seen as something of a scholar and certainly as a major patron of the arts foreshadowed many of the growing demands on nobles to expand their horizons from solely martial pursuits, as Christine de Pizan prefigures and Castiglione makes explicit. Moreover, with his sponsorship of chivalric literature Anthony played a key role in Edward's public relations campaign, Caxton's publications being one piece of a broader strategy for leveraging the cult of chivalry into political authority.

Edward IV and Chivalry

This chapter so far has demonstrated that Anthony established himself as an ideal noble. This accomplishment also had implications for his brother-in-law Edward IV, who leveraged his association with Anthony as part of his larger legitimation of his reign and use of the cult of chivalry to project his own authority.

Edward's use of the cult of chivalry to project his own authority was not limited to literary patronage. Royal association with chivalric acts and chivalric heroes also formed an important part of this soft-power strategy, with its precursors in the traditional English royal association with King Arthur and with ideal knights, such as William Marshall. Edward's sponsorship of tournaments and his association with individual knights like Anthony Woodville

and John Astley was another way of manifesting his image at the center of an ideal courtly world. Edward's use of the premier chivalric order in England, the Order of the Garter, is our best example of how Edward was able to use the cult of chivalry to promote his own authority at home and abroad. By associating himself with King Arthur through myriad tactics, Edward was able to present himself as an ideal king and, in doing so, increase his political legitimacy. Seen through this lens Anthony becomes a crucial part of Edward's political machinations rather than a mere footnote. The relationship between ideal noble and ideal sovereign was reciprocal, and both Anthony and Edward benefitted from their relationship by exploiting the symbolic capital that was created by an effective monarch-knight relationship. Anthony's performance justified his own social position while also, by association, buttressing Edward's legitimacy as king.

English kings dating back to the twelfth century looked to the mythic King Arthur to provide them with legitimacy and prestige. Geoffrey of Monmouth's Arthur was a figure to rival the French monarch's Charlemagne as a legendary predecessor and, combined with the growing cult of Edward the Confessor, suggested that the English monarchs possessed supernatural powers, or at least, heritage, and thus, legitimacy.⁴⁰⁴ Arthur's tomb was 'discovered' at Glastonbury in the late 1180s, and from that point on various English monarchs periodically linked themselves to Arthur at politically convenient times,⁴⁰⁵ with Edward III perhaps the most effective practitioner of this strategy. Edward's Order of the Garter was originally conceived of as a re-establishment of the Knights of the Round Table and made the monarch's status as 'Arthur's heir' much more explicit; this foundation was, of course, in the context of a king

⁴⁰⁴ Gerould Hall, "King Arthur and Politics," *Speculum* (1927): 49-51. Cf. R.S. Loomis "Geoffrey and Arthurian Origins," *Speculum* 3 (1928): 16-33.

⁴⁰⁵ Henry II had made clear, with the discovery and subsequent reburial of Arthur, that he was in fact dead and would not return to save the Welsh, while Edward I, following his conquest of Wales, "realized that it would be advantageous to attach to the crown whatever glory Arthurian legend might offer." Mary E. Griffin, "Cadwalader in the Wigmore," *Speculum* 16 (1941): 114, 117.

following his father's disastrous reign and fighting a war of conquest in France, where Arthur had famously triumphed.⁴⁰⁶

Kinship with Arthur was also used by the Mortimer family, who claimed descent from Cadwalader, the last king of the Britons and Arthur's heir, first to glorify themselves in the thirteenth century and later to suggest a claim to the throne in the fourteenth century.⁴⁰⁷ This claim was taken up by Edward IV, a descendant of the Mortimers through his grandmother Anne Mortimer, positioning Edward as the rightful descendant of Arthur and "his accession to the throne as a fulfillment of the prophecy of the return of the British race."⁴⁰⁸ Following Edward's death, Henry Tudor would also claim descent from Arthur and even named his eldest son Arthur, "to declare that in the house of Tudor the ancient line of British kings was restored," a powerful statement which suggested the Tudors held rightful claim to England but also Wales, Ireland, Scotland, and France.⁴⁰⁹

The Arthurian legend had, by the fifteenth century, become a model for all knights to follow.⁴¹⁰ As Keen suggests, Arthurian stories, for their knightly readers and listeners, "offer[ed] a reflection of themselves and their world not quite as it was but as they would have it be," presenting a powerful ideal towards which the aristocracy ought to strive.⁴¹¹ A crucial part of this ideal world was of course the 'correct' balance of power between the sovereign and his noble followers. Arthur himself is the perfect king in most English Arthurian tales, governing by following the good advice of his barons - one of the chief political concerns in fifteenth-century

⁴⁰⁶ D'arcy Jonathan Dacre Boulton, *Knights of the Crown* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000),108.

⁴⁰⁷ Griffin, "Cadwalader in the Wigmore," 119-20.

⁴⁰⁸ Radulescu "Yorkist Propaganda," 408.

⁴⁰⁹ Griffin, "Cadwalader in the Wigmore," 120.

⁴¹⁰ Keen, *Chivalry*, 118.

⁴¹¹ Keen, *Chivalry*, 115.

England.⁴¹² Towards the end of his reign in the *Morte d'Arthur* he appears no longer to seek advice from his counselors, and it is ultimately bad counsel – and his failure to recognize that bad counsel – that destroys Camelot.⁴¹³ The similarities between the *Morte* and Yorkist propaganda criticizing Henry VI's evil counsel are obvious, showing one way that an ideal model of kingship can be used to criticize a real king.

Edward IV, in presenting himself as a 'new Arthur,' was thus clearly presenting himself as an ideal king. Part of this self-presentation involved the association of Edward with the finest knights of his age, including Anthony Woodville as well as another ideal knight, Sir John Astley. Astley was the closest thing to a paragon of chivalry in fifteenth-century England, making his name as a young man fighting in tournaments, for which he was rewarded by Henry VI with an annuity and a knighthood.⁴¹⁴ He presumably fought in the Lancastrian French wars and then subsequently for the Yorkists in the civil wars, having been given by Edward IV a £40 grant and becoming a Knight of the Garter in 1462.⁴¹⁵ Astley was a famous tournament advisor, most notably at the Smithfield tournament in 1467. He fought for Edward in France in 1475 and was granted £60 a year for life, a grant that was continued by Richard III.⁴¹⁶ He received another grant, of £100, from Henry VII in 1485.⁴¹⁷

Astley's political survival through the reigns of four kings indicates that individuals like him – chivalric heroes – must have had a political utility to monarchs that went beyond partisanship. Astley was not useful solely because of his service on the battlefield, nor does he seem to have been a particularly effective administrator, although he did fulfill some

⁴¹² Raluca Radulescu, "Malory and Fifteenth-Century Political Ideas," *Arthuriana* 31 (2003): 38, 40-41.

⁴¹³ Radulescu, "Malory and Fifteenth-Century Political Ideas," 45-48.

⁴¹⁴ Sutton, "Chevalerie," 131.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid. Cf. Daw, "Elections to the Garter Under Edward IV," 197-98.

⁴¹⁶ Sutton, "Chevalerie," 131.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

administrative duties for Edward.⁴¹⁸ His utility came from what he *represented*, the closest thing to an ideal knight in the mold of Percival that fifteenth-century England had. An Arthur needs a Percival, and the king who could command the loyalty of this man must surely have been deserving of respect in the eyes of contemporaries. Edward's association with Astley, and to a lesser degree knights like Richard and Anthony Woodville, thus bolstered his own reputation and authority. Knightly identity had its foundation on loyalty to a lord, while inverse lordly identity came from the authority to command this loyalty.⁴¹⁹ The cult of chivalry, the expectations, codes, and pageants that bound together elite society, had political uses in the fifteenth century.⁴²⁰

The best example of Edward's political use of the cult of chivalry is in his handling of the Order of the Garter. The Order of the Garter was founded around 1348 by Edward III in a deliberate attempt to win support from the aristocracy for his wars in France by using the language and symbolism of chivalry. The Order was modeled on the Arthurian Knights of the Round Table, and, like that famous body, was designed to surround the sovereign with the finest paragons of chivalry from his realm and throughout Europe.

The order was not an empty gesture, or playacting chivalry, as Huizinga famously argued,⁴²¹ however: it was implicitly political. As Bolton writes, "if on one level the order stood as a tribute to the traditional ideals of the knightly vocation, then on the other it represented a

⁴¹⁸ Daw, "Elections to the Garter Under Edward IV," 197-98.

⁴¹⁹ Kim Esmark "Man of Honor: Aspects of Medieval Knightly Identity in the Verse Biography of William the Marshall," in *The Birth of Identities: Denmark and Europe in the Middle Ages*, ed. Brian Patrick McGuire, (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1996), 77-81, 88-90.

⁴²⁰ See Radulescu, "Malory and Fifteenth-Century Political Ideas," 37, citing Elizabeth Pochoda, *Arthurian Propaganda: Le Morte d'Arthur as an Historical Ideal of Life* (Chapel Hill: University of Carolina Press, 1971).

⁴²¹ For some recent criticism of Huizinga regarding chivalry, see Boulton, *Knights of the Crown*, xix-xx, Keen, *Chivalry*, 3,219-220, 237, and Cecil B. Clough "The Order of the Garter and Fifteenth-Century Italian Ruling Dynasties," *The Ricardian* 19 (2009): 50.

sophisticated instrument of patronage in monarchical relations with the nobility.”⁴²² Along with this patronage it also served useful diplomatic functions, as early in its history the Order accepted members from across Europe, mostly foreign princes.⁴²³ At a basic level the Order served a dual function for its various members: it allowed individual members to be acknowledged for their chivalric attributes (as Collins demonstrates effectively, the Order never became wholly a partisan organ),⁴²⁴ and it allowed the sovereign to reward loyal followers in what was effectively a cost-free way. The Order of the Garter also, however, continued to furnish its members – and its sovereign – with a useful reserve of cultural and symbolic capital that, like that symbolic capital generated by the ownership of chivalric or advice literature, invested its possessor with real political legitimacy, shoring up that individual's place in the social hierarchy. The Order allowed the king to demonstrate that he was able to command a following from Europe's most distinguished knights, which bolstered his claim to legitimate authority over not just this band of knights, but the realm itself. Just as Arthur's strength lay in commanding the respect and loyalty of his Knights of the Round Table, so too did the English monarch's strength lay in commanding the loyalty of the knights of the Garter. It is worth remembering that in Mallory's *Morte d'Arthur*, the effective end of Camelot comes when the fellowship of the Round Table is broken and Arthur no longer commands the loyalty of his followers, *not* when Arthur himself is killed.

The membership of the Order consisted of only the sovereign and not more than twenty-four companions, nominally elected by the surviving members when a replacement was necessary, although the king in fact retained sole control of appointing new members.⁴²⁵ Edward III's original plans for the Garter portrayed it as a body completely devoid of politics, devoted

⁴²² Hugh E.L. Collins, *The Order of the Garter 1348-1461: Chivalry and Politics in Medieval England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 1.

⁴²³ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁴ Collins, *The Order of the Garter*, 34, 151-54, 282.

⁴²⁵ Boulton, *Knights of the Crown*, 118-22, 125-38.

only to the celebration of chivalry, yet in the first century or so of the Order's existence, as Collins states, "it is apparent that diligence in arms, although the dominant criteria for selection, was not the sole consideration," and that wealth, social prestige, and political importance were also important considerations.⁴²⁶ Collins's study of the Order from 1348-1461 reveals that the Garter could be both political and simultaneously *above* politics, due to the complex relationship between chivalry and politics in later medieval England. It served to buttress the social status of its members while also providing the king with a means of patronage and a diplomatic tool, but never became entirely subsumed in the factional politics of the contentious reigns of Henry IV or Henry VI. If it had, the Order would have lost its political utility. A brief exploration of the Order's functions under Edward IV reveals much the same: while Edward certainly used the Order of the Garter to reward followers, shore up support among the English aristocracy, and honour foreign dignitaries, it retained its allure by the inclusion of certain chivalric heroes, the avoidance of too much overt partisan favouritism, and by the apparent independence of its membership in choosing new companions.

Edward certainly used the Garter throughout his reign to reward his followers, such as Lord Hastings; Lord Montagu; John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester; Lord Herbert; William FitzAlan, Earl of Arundel; Lord Howard; his brothers the dukes of Clarence and Gloucester; and brother-in-law Anthony Woodville, then Lord Scales.⁴²⁷ Edward's sons, the Prince of Wales and Duke of York, were also made knight companions at a very young age.⁴²⁸ It is difficult to see these appointments as anything other than simple patronage, a way for Edward to reward his supporters with the cultural capital membership brought companions, along with the more

⁴²⁶ Collins, *Order of the Garter*, 83-84.

⁴²⁷ Many of these elections are omitted, unfortunately. For these members' presence in the order, see Daw, "Elections to the Garter Under Edward IV," 194-212. For records relating to Anthony Woodville and Richard, Duke Gloucester, see *Black Book*, 181-82.

⁴²⁸ *Black Book*, 193.

traditional grants of lands and titles. The voting records that survive, however, do indicate that the membership of the Order retained its traditional role in selecting new companions, at least to a certain degree.⁴²⁹

Upon his accession in tumultuous circumstances in the spring of 1461 Edward became the sovereign of the Order of the Garter, which was comprised almost entirely of Lancastrian supporters, including Richard Woodville; the earl of Warwick being the notable exception to this rule. Edward did not attend the chapter on 17 May 1461, nor did any other companions aside from Henry and John Bouchier (lords Bouchier and Berners, respectively), although these companions did remove Henry VI's ensigns and replace them with Edward's.⁴³⁰ Edward did attend in April 1463, but not again until 1467; in the interval, the chapters held were very small affairs. Edward did attend the majority of chapters in the 1470s, due perhaps to the recognition of the potential political value of the order after the 1469-71 rebellion. It is worth noting, however, that few members were ever removed from the order, and it may be that the Order was a potential vehicle for those who, like Lord Rivers, attempted to ingratiate themselves with the new regime after Towton.⁴³¹ The Order was thus a way to contain Lancastrian support after 1461, by signaling that they were a part of Edward's regime and could be forgiven for their initial resistance to him. Alternatively, companions may not have been removed to avoid the optics of appearing too partisan. The symbolic capital of the Garter depended on its perceived status as being above politics, and so much of the deliberate political maneuvering relating to the Order is extremely subtle. Nonetheless the Order appears to have functioned as a tool to contain

⁴²⁹ Voting records survive for 1473, 1474, 1475, 1476, 1480, 1482, and 1483 (under Richard III, after Edward's death).

⁴³⁰ *Black Book*, 172.

⁴³¹ Warwick seems to have been removed after his rebellion, as was Lord Duras in 1476, because he "flew like a bat" to the French king. *Black Book*, 184 and 196.

Lancastrian support in the early part of Edward's reign, as well as a means of rewarding loyal Yorkists.

The Order of the Garter also had a diplomatic function for the English monarch, as Collins suggests, based on “its value as a symbol, [with membership] a gesture to promote or fortify bonds of friendship with other foreign rulers.”⁴³² During Richard II’s reign several continental barons were elected as companions as part of that king’s anti-French campaign, setting the precedent for English kings to use membership as a diplomatic bartering chip, a ‘charm campaign’ element in a broader foreign policy;⁴³³ indeed, it rarely served much diplomatic value if offered alone.⁴³⁴ Membership in the Garter was considered prestigious enough for non-English members to accept without significant political ramifications as companions took no vows to the Sovereign outside of the realm of the Order itself. The presence of foreign members within the ranks of the Garter also gave the Order (and the English sovereign) additional prestige, both domestically and abroad.⁴³⁵ Collins writes, however, that, under Henry VI’s authority in the election of foreign members there was an “apparent departure from the traditional policy that had seen membership restricted to princes from areas of known interest to the crown,” which reflected the “directionless” foreign policy of Henry’s reign.⁴³⁶ This apparent directionless policy regarding the Garter continued into Edward’s reign, with the admission of a greater than average number of foreign companions, including five from Italian states with seemingly little political value, something remarked upon but not explored by Collins. He writes that the end of the Plantagent-Valois conflict after 1475 made the diplomatic utility of the Garter less significant, as membership no longer signified that foreign princes were

⁴³² Collins, *Order of the Garter*, 157.

⁴³³ Collins, *Order of the Garter*, 156-57.

⁴³⁴ Collins, *Order of the Garter*, 185.

⁴³⁵ Collins, *Order of the Garter*, 157.

⁴³⁶ Collins, *Order of the Garter*, 185.

favouring the Plantagenets; rather, it signaled only “vague cordiality” in these years.⁴³⁷ This did not affect the prestige value that foreign members brought to the Garter, however, which could still offer a sense of chivalric identity and social exclusivity to its companions.⁴³⁸ It is this fact which offers a clue into Edward’s use of the Garter regarding foreign companions.

Edward’s foreign companions include three kings, those of Naples, Aragon-Castile, and Portugal respectively, as well as the dukes of Milan, Burgundy, Urbino, Modena and Ferrara and the earl of Douglas. The dukes of Milan, Burgundy, and Urbino were all noted chivalric figures, making them ideal members of the Order. While their membership may have offered little more than additional prestige to the Garter, this prestige was vital in increasing the symbolic capital of Edward and therefore his domestic legitimacy, as it signified his acceptance among the elites of Europe. This acceptance was traditionally accomplished by marriage, but given the marriage politics discussed already in this thesis, this was an important task that was left to the Garter to secure. The inclusion of the king of Naples and the dukes of Milan, and Burgundy in his First Reign especially signaled to Edward’s subjects and domestic rivals that he enjoyed recognition from the leading men of Europe as (at least) an equal prince. The additional prestige generated by these foreign companions, many well-versed in the cult of chivalry, also increased the symbolic capital generated by membership of the Order for English companions, making it a more valuable tool of patronage for Edward.

Alternative theories have been posited for the foreign members elected under Edward, mostly connected to his foreign policy. While these arguments certainly have merit, it is sufficient to note that the Garter was, for Edward, a useful reserve of symbolic capital that helped

⁴³⁷ Collins, *Order of the Garter*, 186.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*

invest him with greater legitimacy while tying important peers of the realm and foreign allies more closely to him. The Order of the Garter retained its chivalric principles under Edward IV, even as it was used for overtly political reasons. Indeed, the solemn ceremonies that accompanied the installation of the Duke of Ferrara indicate the symbolic value of ceremony and the political utility of chivalry. Ferrara was installed via his proxy “sir Francis, a knight of untainted reputation,” and was sworn in by perhaps the three most notably chivalric figures of the Order, Anthony Woodville, Earl Douglas, and Sir John Astley. This theme – the political importance of performance – lay at the heart of the Order of the Garter.⁴³⁹

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the ways that nobles such as Anthony Woodville could justify their privilege by correctly performing the accepted roles of an ideal noble. It has demonstrated the ways in which chivalry impacted the political uses of idealism for both nobles and the kings they served. Anthony Woodville was, both by the circumstances of his birth and then by the circumstances of his sister’s marriage, forced to justify to his peers his elevated social status. This justification, I argue, was largely accomplished by the performance of a set of ideals to which noblemen – the social group he belonged to, broadly speaking – were expected to conform. His service at war, his success at tournaments, his loyalty to both his sovereign and his queen, his education, his piety, and his literary patronage defined him to contemporaries as an ideal noble. His extraordinary personal abilities allowed him to perform this idealism adeptly and earn his privilege as a member of what has been called the ‘new’ nobility, but this pattern was

⁴³⁹ *Black Book*, 208.

likely also carried out by many 'new' aristocrats, who had to create their nobility by virtue rather than by bloodline.

Chivalric idealism also served to reinforce the power of the king during Edward's reign. Edward's position as sovereign of the Order of the Garter, his ability to command the loyalty of exalted knights such as Anthony Woodville, Sir John Astley, and even the Duke of Burgundy, increased his own legitimacy as monarch. While Edward used the Garter for patronage and diplomacy, the symbolic capital it granted deserves equal attention in any analysis of royal interactions with the Garter. This was highlighted by the literary context of Edward's reign, especially with the press of William Caxton producing multiple chivalric romances and manuals during Edward's reign or shortly thereafter, meeting market demand for such literature while also stimulating it. Anthony and, to a lesser extent, William Caxton were also part of a strategy to ensure that Edward V would peacefully secure the throne, establishing his own legitimacy by virtue of his stellar chivalric education and ability to receive good advice, that crucial component of good kingship.

The performance of idealism could thus, in varied ways, meet the requirements of both a monarch and an aristocrat, both with tenuous claims to their positions, in increasing their legitimacy by imbuing them with the necessary cultural capital. While monarchs such as Edward had a greater capacity for 'performing' this idealism in their propaganda and official histories, humbler elites like Anthony literally had to perform these roles, making doubting their sincerity more of a challenge for opponents and skeptics alike. This need to conform to ideals may have, for individuals such as Anthony, been explicit and highly self-aware, or it may have been internalized to such a degree that it became engrained in the *habitus* of both the performer and their audiences alike. It was, I suspect, the latter, and as scholars have interrogated this *habitus*,

now they must begin to evaluate critically motives and actions in light of this *habitus* and the ideals it created.

Conclusion: Idealism, Identity, and Legitimacy

This thesis has argued that, while the motives for Edward IV's marriage to Elizabeth Woodville will probably never be known for certain, it was, at least in part, a rational political choice and should not simply be dismissed as an 'impulsive' act. The marriage led to a redefinition of queenship that separated Edward's regime from his predecessor's, something that was vital given that Yorkist propaganda had made the vilification of Henry's queen Margaret of Anjou a central theme. The many siblings that Elizabeth brought to the family allowed Edward to tie his supporters even more closely to him while spending very little of the cash-strapped crown's monies. Elizabeth's father and eldest brother served a number of political and administrative roles for Edward, perhaps most importantly as diplomats to Burgundy; their role in securing this alliance allowed Edward to renew hostilities with the French, his signature foreign policy achievement. The Woodville's previous associations with the Lancastrians may have signalled that Edward was willing to be conciliatory to his former enemies, a policy seen in other aspects of his reign. Furthermore, Edward's relationship to Anthony showed his contemporaries that he could command the loyalty of a great knight, thus making him a great king.

This marriage thus can be regarded as one of the actions that Edward IV took to legitimize his reign following his conquest in 1461. To legitimize himself, Edward had to perform the role of an ideal king, and the Woodvilles were crucial to this performance. It was also the case that Elizabeth and Anthony Woodville were compelled to perform an ideal role in order to justify their own social positions, and indeed in doing so they supported Edward's reign. Edward, Elizabeth, and Anthony were all in unique ways 'new' to their positions, and all three

experienced great precarity in their social and political place; performing idealism was a strategy meant to imbue them with the necessary social capital to enjoy their privilege relatively uncontested.

The first chapter of this thesis addressed the practical and symbolic roles played by the Woodville family in Edward's reign, along with providing useful context on Edward's reign in general. The Woodvilles were no 'counter-faction' to Warwick, although they did have a number of important practical roles in Edward's government. The family's large numbers of children also ensured Edward could reward his followers at little cost. The family assisted Edward's main foreign policy ambition, a pro-Burgundy, anti-French agenda that was facilitated by their family connections to Burgundy. Edward's need to perform as an ideal ruler also helps explain his continued claim to the French throne, despite the near-impossibility of making this claim a reality.⁴⁴⁰ Finally, by showing such favour to a committed Lancastrian family, Edward's treatment of the Woodvilles signalled to his other barons that he intended to be the king of England, rather than a partisan leader. These symbolic roles were, I suggest, notable because of the fact that politics was 'popular' in fifteenth-century England, and Edward needed to win the propaganda war to generate popular support before and after his coup.

The second chapter investigated the ideals, or the norms, by which kings and queens were judged to illustrate a possible political motivation for Edward's marriage to Elizabeth. The chapter argued that the failure of Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou to perform correctly the traditional roles of king and queen respectively established a need for the young Edward to perform the role of ideal king differently, necessitating an ideal queen of a different type.

⁴⁴⁰ Hicks, *Edward IV*, 128-29. Hicks notes that Edward "had no pressing need to commit himself to either side [of the French-Burgundian conflict]" and that getting involved was a serious mistake but, as this thesis argues, it was a necessary part of performing ideal kingship.

Elizabeth's character and qualities made her ideally suited for this role, which had evolved following Margaret's rather disastrous performance, most notably by making a non-royal Englishwoman an acceptable queen to a majority of contemporaries. Elizabeth's performance of ideal queen was a central part of Edward's performance as ideal king, which gave him the necessary legitimacy and authority (in large part due to what Fradenburg has called the creation of sovereign love) to rule despite his precarious political position.

The third chapter extended the central argument of this thesis by arguing that not only did Edward and Elizabeth's performance of the ideal grant them the legitimacy required to maintain their privileged social and political position, but that Elizabeth's brother, Anthony Woodville's, performance likewise granted him the legitimacy to maintain his own privilege. Anthony was born to a fairly humble family that likely would have seen its status erode in his lifetime if his sister had not married a king, and yet contemporaries almost never challenged his position as an earl and royal confidant; indeed, he was remembered as one of the greatest nobles of his generation. This reflects a correct performance of the role in which he found himself cast, as an elite noble at a time of great change in what nobility 'meant,' including in his unique role with regard to fifteenth-century literature. The chapter further examined how Edward's position as ideal king rested on commanding the loyalty of ideal nobles such as Anthony and takes a cursory look at his use of other noblemen and chivalric conventions such as courtly love literature and tournaments. The Order of the Garter under Edward is also analyzed, to demonstrate another way in which Edward proved himself a masterful propagandist who was keenly interested in symbolic capital as a means of legitimizing himself as an ideal king.

This thesis has sought to build on the concept of the performance of the ideal, as first articulated by Michael Hicks, by combining his theory with the ideas of several other historians

and theorists to create a more comprehensive theoretical framework, to explain the motivations that lay behind the political actions of Edward IV and his family.⁴⁴¹ In particular, it has drawn upon Butler's ideas about performance, by emphasizing that not only is one's gender and class identity expressed through the 'performance' of ritual in daily life, but that this performed identity is central to understanding political power and legitimacy, at least in an era of personal politics. This follows Naughton, who likewise has expanded on Butler's idea by arguing that in medieval literature knights constructed their identity by performing *as* knights, and therefore that their bearing was more significant than their birth. This thesis has extended this idea by applying it to the real world and demonstrating that indeed performance was vital to securing the social legitimacy those in power needed to maintain that power. Gender is a vital aspect of this performance, not only in the particular gendered attacks on Margaret and the supposed contrast that Elizabeth offered, but in Edward's own portrayal of masculinity. Lewis has argued convincingly that Henry's failure of masculinity was a major aspect of the opposition towards him, and this thesis has thus explored some of the ways Edward used gender to draw a distinction between himself and his predecessor. It has argued that Edward needed to perform as an ideal king to secure his place on the throne, and his attempts to perform this role explain many of his more controversial actions. It further argued that this concept can be applied to Elizabeth and Anthony Woodville, who likewise had to perform an ideal role to justify their social privilege. While it does not break new ground in terms of the primary sources used, and relies heavily on the excellent work of scholars in a number of fields, by tying together several aspects of fifteenth-century studies this thesis provides a useful new way to consider Edward's reign, the

⁴⁴¹ See Introduction, pp. 15-22 for an overview of the theory. Essentially, it states that a culture creates an expectation of how someone in a given role will behave, which we may call an ideal. Individuals in that role are judged according to how they measure up to this ideal, and thus must 'perform' that idealized role in order to be seen to legitimately hold that role. It is especially important for those with privileged roles, such as aristocrats, monarchs, politicians, and the wealthy.

significance of the Woodvilles, and the importance of performance to governing in the fifteenth century.

In analyzing Elizabeth's performance, and indeed more so Elizabeth's part in Edward's performance, this thesis also presents a more complicated picture of the Woodvilles to the success or failure of Edward's reign. Along with the practical benefits they brought to Edward discussed above, they also brought some significant public relations benefits, albeit ones which could turn into liabilities in the hands of his opponents. While Elizabeth's true character remains elusive, the contrast she presents with Margaret of Anjou makes her a more significant part of any analysis of Edward's reign than she is usually given credit for.

Anthony seems to have been more successful in his performance than his sister or brother-in-law, achieving a reputation as a perfect noble despite his humble origins, and indeed his reputation today is even higher than it was in his own lifetime, at least among those who know of him. He remains a popular character for modern historians and fiction writers, who generally contrast him with the Machiavellian scheming of contemporary barons. This is a consequence of his success at performing idealism, a task doubly difficult given the changing nature of nobility in the middle of the fifteenth century. The surviving evidence indicates that his social status was only seriously challenged once: by Edward and his Yorkist allies in 1459-60, although it is possible that his humbler status and relationship to queens Elizabeth Woodville and Elizabeth of York made him less of a target.

Edward was arguably less successful in performing idealism, in that he remained the target of criticism throughout the early part of his reign, although it is notable that of all the claimants of the Wars of the Roses prior to Henry VII he was the only one to die peacefully and

on the throne. Historians debate his success as a king more generally, and this thesis only complicates that.⁴⁴² This thesis has argued that he had a more coherent strategy for legitimizing himself than he is sometimes given credit for, although one can rightfully question how successful this attempt was, given the repeated strains of his reign and his dynasty's ultimate failure. This strategy called for Edward to marry an ideal queen in order to restore the gender imbalance of the previous regime. This marriage moved him into a stage sometimes called "mature kingship," which assumes that a queen is a central part of governance, in part because she allows the effective creation of "sovereign love." Edward's quest for legitimacy also included resuming the war with France and restating the English king's traditional role as protector from foreign invaders, including the French and the Scots. Following the factionalism of the First Stage of the Wars of the Roses, Edward presented himself as the king of a united England, reconciling former Lancastrians, including his wife's family. The king also utilized the cult of chivalry by using the Order of the Garter as a reserve of symbolic capital: its effective operation showed that Edward could command the loyalty of the best knights in Europe, making him an ideal, and thus legitimate, king. The inclusion of a large number of foreign knights in the Order also signalled the foreign acceptance of Edward as king, increasing his domestic legitimacy. Finally, Edward and his allies sponsored a printing program from William Caxton, which included titles that glorified chivalry and strong kings. These popular books were also part of a public campaign to educate his young son Edward V, in order to secure an eventual peaceful

⁴⁴² Much of the debate has focussed on Edward's role in governance, especially the question of whether or not he was the origin of the "New Monarchy" of the early modern period, or on his role in curtailing excessive aristocratic power: see Hicks, *Edward IV*, 150-52, 172-87. Hicks concludes that Edward was all-in-all an effective king, especially given the travails of the period, and rebuffs the criticisms of others as anachronistic, most notably Ross, who regarded him as an effective battle commander but naive politician. Hicks, *Edward IV*, 229-30 and Ross, *Edward IV*, 351. This thesis does not engage directly in the debate over Edward's successes as governor, reformer, or commander, but does provide alternative explanations for some of his more controversial political choices, such as the alliance with Burgundy and the inclusion of so many foreign members in the Order of the Garter.

transition for his heir. All in all, this was a remarkable programme given the challenges of his times, and one which might be considered his chief achievement, despite its limited successes.

The problematic nature of contemporary evidence leaves the feelings and motives of late medieval people difficult to gauge, but this thesis argues that the application of theories regarding power, monarchy, performance and idealism to this unique moment in English history can provide insights not only into Edward's motives for his marriage to Elizabeth Woodville, but also the wider use of the performance of idealism. This theory provides a convincing alternative in explaining the motives of several major late medieval figures and likewise could conceivably be used to explain the actions of many others. Not all actions of late medieval people can be explained by simple material desires, as Hicks noted, and ideals certainly played a role in their decision-making process, in part by shaping their worldview and in part by constructing ideal roles that they were compelled to 'perform' to justify their social position. This thesis has thus further developed the theories of Michael Hicks on idealism, Judith Butler on performance, Katherine Lewis on legitimacy, and Ryan P. Naughton on chivalric performance. In doing so, it has articulated a new theory that might be called the performance of idealism, which is the idea that a culture creates a set of normative actions, behaviours, or appearances by which members of a specific (often privileged) group are expected to correctly perform and, by doing so, confirm their position as a member of that group.

This thesis also joins in the recent historiographic trend to analyze more fully the political roles of queens.⁴⁴³ Elizabeth, and many other queens, have been treated as a passive piece in the historical drama that unfolded around them; with few exceptions, they have been considered only as mothers, as bargaining chips in diplomacy or family politics, as objects of desire, or, when

⁴⁴³ See p. 13-14 for a brief discussion of queenship studies.

they were active and visible on the political stage, as malign influences. While this thesis has focussed on Elizabeth's role primarily from the perspective of Edward IV, hopefully future studies will focus more on Elizabeth as an active agent in the construction of her queenship.⁴⁴⁴ Here, I am interested more in the public construction of my principal characters – and thus, what survives in propagandistic tracts and acts of performance – than their true natures and daily actions, all of which, of course, are vital aspects of the construction of their character. Nevertheless, I hope that by putting Elizabeth – even as a passive character – in the centre of Edward's reign and kingship, I am complementing the work of other historians who are reconstructing the history of queens, queenship, and monarchy in the medieval period.

This thesis has also engaged with a number of other historiographical trends, most notably recent scholarship investigating the role of propaganda and other public texts in late medieval English politics. It also engages with the scholarship of chivalry under Edward IV, the history of the Order of the Garter, and kingship and masculinity. By uniting these trends under the umbrella of ideal performance, it increases their relevance to the study of medieval politics.

One of the chief characteristics of the Wars of the Roses was the ways in which the major political figures sought to influence public opinion, something largely due to the fact that contemporary systems of military organization depended on having a large number of supporters amongst the lower nobility and gentry as well as the influential merchants and craftspeople of the towns.⁴⁴⁵ The high nobility depended on the military support of the growing class of minor landholders known as the gentry, which thus made the gentry into perhaps the most important

⁴⁴⁴ Laura Christine Oliver's 2012 thesis conducts an explicitly feminist reading of Elizabeth's life and actions, and is a useful starting point for those interested in the agency of late medieval elite women. Laura Christine Oliver, "She Would Have More if She Were Ruled and Guided by Them': Elizabeth Woodville and Margery Kempe, Female Agency in Late Medieval England," (Baylor University, MA thesis, 2012).

⁴⁴⁵ See p. 14.

social group during the period. They were joined by wealthy townsfolk who had their own stake in high politics. These two influential groups were, crucially, reading publics with significant political agency, and thus all competitors during the Wars made their cases for these groups' support with elaborate propaganda, including letters, proclamations, genealogies, political treatises, songs, and even histories. Hicks framed this situation most concisely in his description of those "overmighty subjects" who also strove to make themselves "idols of the multitude," something generally accomplished by winning the propaganda war.⁴⁴⁶ This thesis has relied heavily on this line of scholarship, and, indeed, has taken it further by suggesting that much of Edward's reign can be framed as a reaction to this political situation. It has been a relatively accepted conclusion that the Yorkist rebellion was built largely by appealing to the masses, and thus it is a natural leap to interpret much of Edward's subsequent reign as trying to continue his mass appeal.⁴⁴⁷ This of course covers his marriage to Elizabeth, something which seems to have helped ensure that the "pepel of the konteryes wer desposed" towards Edward and his queen.⁴⁴⁸ It also likely included the alliance with Burgundy and the resumption of the war in France, however ill-fated that attempt turned out to be. Edward's propaganda, this thesis contends, thus extended into the realm of performance. Finally, this thesis explored how Caxton's printing campaign was intimately connected with a propaganda effort by Edward IV to increase both his own legitimacy and that of his son, Edward V. Understanding the ways that leaders sought to control public opinion is thus crucial to any investigation of the Wars of the Roses.

Also important are the ways in which this thesis explains the contemporary reputation enjoyed by Anthony Woodville by arguing that a chivalric ideal of a nobleman, not drastically

⁴⁴⁶ Hicks, "Bastard Feudalism, Overmighty Subjects, and Idols of the Multitude," 400-402.

⁴⁴⁷ Hicks, *Wars of the Roses*, 162-63, and McCulloch and Jones, "Rise of the Popular Element," 137-38.

⁴⁴⁸ Lander, "Marriage and Politics," 133. From *Manners and Household Expenses of England in the Thirteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, ed. T.H. Turner (London: Shakespeare, 1841), 196-97.

different from previous centuries, continued to exist in the late fifteenth century, and that Anthony was one of a handful of nobles whose political survival depended on performing this ideal. Chivalric norms often going back hundreds of years continued to influence the actions of Anthony, fellow knights like Sir John Astley, and even the king's Order of the Garter, which, while a potent political tool, remained confined by the norms of its chivalric heritage. This thesis has argued that chivalry, far from being in decline in the late fifteenth century, remained a crucial set of ideals that influenced politics in myriad ways and was in fact a vital aspect of Edward's kingship.

Finally, this thesis has extended Lewis's analysis of medieval kingship in making masculinity a key component of ideal performance. This thesis has argued that gender anxieties lay at the heart of the propaganda offensive against Henry VI, and thus that Edward had to be shown to perform masculinity correctly, something accomplished in part by marrying Elizabeth, who was presented as an ideal woman. This view is complicated by the fact that Edward remained immoderate in his vices, and thus a less than ideal man, of course, but this fact was not included in Yorkist propaganda, nor indeed was it apparent in the 1460s when this public relations battle was at its fiercest. Elizabeth was presented as an ideal woman, which carried the implication that Edward was an ideal man and, therefore restored the gender imbalance of the years of Henry's reign. If individual performance of an idealized role is a central part of politics, as this thesis has argued, then it follows that gender is a necessary category of analysis. In this case, focussing on gender gives scholars a different understanding of political decision making.

Overall, this thesis has argued that Edward used the Woodvilles as part of his strategy to secure legitimacy on the throne following his accession in 1461. His wife and her family brought several practical benefits to Edward, and they also signalled several significant policy

developments. Most significantly, they were also a crucial part of presenting himself as an ideal king, something that was necessary for him to gain legitimacy as a usurping king. Particularly important was Elizabeth's redefinition of ideal queenship, which distanced Edward from his predecessor and his unpopular queen, Margaret of Anjou. Furthermore, the equally tenuous social positions of Elizabeth and Anthony Woodville were likewise secured by their ability to perform idealized roles. This thesis has thus demonstrated there is a utility to the theory that idealism could serve as a motivator for political action, and has helped to develop the theory further by applying to a contentious issue in the historiography of late medieval England.

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Appendix: Richard and Anthony Woodville in the Patent, Close, and Charter Rolls of Edward IV

In the first chapter I state that I do not support the conclusion that Edward married Elizabeth in order to use her family as the basis of a base of support separate and apart from Warwick, in part because the Woodville men were not granted a particular excess of lands, incomes, or privileges in the 1460s. Below is a chart containing what I believe to be the most relevant entries in various royal records of Anthony and Richard Woodville during the reign of Edward IV. It is not quite exhaustive, although it includes the vast majority of relevant records. It demonstrates that the grants made to the two principal Woodville men were not especially noteworthy. There are a number of patents ordering the two men to serve in various commissions, reflecting their place in several counties where they were especially prominent. There are also some grants of offices, as outlined in the first chapter. Many grants do not have a financial compensation explicit in them, although we can suppose they were able to turn these offices into a source of income: Anthony, for instance, appointed many deputies in his role as Chief Butler of England, presumably in return for a cash payment from those deputies.⁴⁴⁹ Anthony was also granted a significant sum of money to raise a regiment of men, something which he evidently failed to do. He may have pocketed a larger than expected some of the money meant for this regiment, as the pardon for this dereliction of duty states that he did not meet the terms of the indenture.⁴⁵⁰ In sum, these are mostly the types of grants we would expect to see from minor peers with regional influence. They certainly don't compare, in the 1460s at least, with the grants made to Warwick and Hastings, who served in 'national' commissions, not restrained to particular geographic areas as the Woodvilles were. One notable exception is Anthony's commission as Governor of Edward V,⁴⁵¹ addressed at length in chapter three, which does give him more of a national profile, especially in combination with his post as Chief Butler. These roles, however, fell to him well after the Second Phase of the Wars of the Roses when Edward could not depend on Warwick.

⁴⁴⁹ For example, *CPR 1467-1477*, 433.

⁴⁵⁰ *CPR 1467-1477*, 109, 156.

⁴⁵¹ *CPR 1467-1477*, 417.

Anthony
Patent Rolls

Vol.	Pg #	Date	Précis
1	97	12 July, 1461	Pardon to Richard and Anthony Woodville of all offences committed, and "grant that he may hold and enjoy his possessions and offices"
	188	27 May, 1462	Grant to Anthony and Elizabeth Scales of several properties owned by one Thomas Tudenham, currently "in the king's hands by reason of his forfeiture...without rendering anything to the king."
	304	18 Feb., 1463	Commission of oyer and terminer to various, incl. Richard and Anthony, within co. Cambridge.
	390	15 Dec., 1464	Commission to Anthony et al. to investigate various commercial crimes relating to sales from Norfolk and Suffolk to Calais.
	491	8 Oct., 1464	Commission to various, incl. Richard and Anthony, to arrest several persons.
	529	18 July. 1466	Commission of oyer and terminer to various, incl. Richard and Anthony, within various south-western counties and towns of Bristol and Southampton.
	533	24 Sept., 1466	License for Anne, duchess of Exeter to grant various manors to various persons, incl. Richard and Anthony
	535	10 Nov., 1466	Grant to Anthony the Isle of Wight and castle of Carisbrooke, seemingly in exchange for various lands given by Richard and Jacquetta to one Geoffrey Gate.
2	19	24 Aug., 1467	Grant for life to Richard the office of constable of England, and grant of the office to Anthony upon Richard's death
	41	19 Nov., 1467	Grant for life to Anthony of the custody of castles and towns of Portchester and Portsmouth.
	55	13 Jan., 1468	Commission of oyer and terminer to various, incl. Richard and Anthony, within various Midlands counties.
	56-7	13 Feb., 1468	Commission of oyer and terminer to various, incl. Anthony, within Isle of Wight and co. Southampton.
	69-70	"	Commission of oyer and terminer to various, incl. Richard and Anthony, within various Midlands counties.
	100-101	4 Apr., 1468	Commission to Anthony et al. to inquire into the complaint of a Burgundian merchant who alleges his ship was wrecked on the south coast and its wares stolen, "contrary to the form of the truces between the king and his kinsman the duke of Burgundy," and to grant the merchant restitution and arrest the offenders.
	105	30 Aug., 1468	Commission for two royal servants to provide ships, soldiers, masters and mariners for Anthony at the port of London.
	109	7 Oct., 1468	Appointment of Anthony "King's knight, as governor and captain of the king's armed power shortly proceeding to sea and elsewhere for the resistance of the king's enemies."
	126-28	3 Aug., 28 Nov., 12	Commission of oyer and terminer to various, incl. Anthony, within several counties.

		Dec., 1468	
	152	24 Mar., 1469	Grant to Anthony the custody during minority of Robert Gedding, and 20 marks/annum for his maintenance.
	156	4 May, 1969	Pardon to Anthony for "all offences committed by him and all debts and accounts due from him to the king" in relation to the indenture he held to raise a force to defend the coast, "although he did not serve for the [full term of the indenture]."
	169	5 May, 1469	Commission <i>de walliis et fossatis</i> to various, incl. Anthony, in counties of Norfolk and Cambridge.
	170	22 May, 1469	Commission of oyer and terminer to various, incl. Anthony, within various northern counties and the city of York.
	195-96	29 Oct., 1469	Commission of oyer and terminer to various, incl. Anthony, within counties of Norfolk and Suffolk.
	197	16 Nov., 1469	Commission of array to Anthony and the dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk within the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk.
	199	12 Feb., 1470	Commission of array to various, incl. Anthony, within counties of Norfolk and Suffolk.
	206	4 Apr., 1470	Grant for life to Anthony of £200 yearly.
	220	2 June., 1470	Commission of array to various, incl. Anthony, within co. Southampton.
	221	23 June., 1470	Commission for two captains to take command of the soldiers and sailors at Sandwich, presently commanded by Anthony, "for the conduct of the same."
	267	21 July., 1471	Grant, for 22 marks paid to the king, to a merchant, who owned a ship whose captain was Anthony.
	283	8 July, 1471	Appointment of various, incl. Anthony, to be administrators of the principality of Wales and other lands owned by Edward V until the prince turns 14.
	285	3 May, 1471	Commission to Anthony et al. to array the king's lieges of Kent and arrest and imprison "certain persons stirring up insurrection."
	292	12 Oct., 1471	Request for safe conduct for Anthony, "who is going to fight the infidels."
	339	20 June, 1472	Grant to Anthony to take 1,000 soldiers to Brittany "and other parts beyond the seas at his own expense," and license for anyone who wishes to join his force to do so.
	373	4 Jan., 1473	License for various, incl. Anthony, to grant Thomas Grey, son of Elizabeth, various lands.
	375	23 Jan., 1473	Several grants for life to Anthony for a total of £200/annum, in exchange for a previous grant of £200/annum surrendered by Anthony (different sources of funds).
	376	27 Nov., 1472	License for Anthony to inherit freely all lands from his late father.
	393	25/29 June, 1 July, 9	Several appointments by Anthony as Chief Butler of deputies at various ports.

		November, 1473	
	403	31 May, 1473	Commission of oyer and terminer to various, incl. Anthony, within several Midlands counties.
	406	18 Aug., 1473	Commission to various, incl. Anthony, to investigate disparity between expected and actual royal incomes in co. Norfolk.
	410	1, 5 July, 1473	Several appointments by Anthony as Chief Butler of deputies at various ports.
	412	1 Aug., 1473	Appointment by Anthony as Chief Butler of deputies at port of Newcastle.
	415	17 May, 1473	Grant for life to Anthony of the office of Chief Butler.
	417	10 Nov., 1473	Appointment of Anthony as governor of Edward V.
	421-22	11 Feb., 1474	Grant to Anthony of various lands and incomes.
	423	5 June, 1473	Grant to Anthony of various and incomes.
	429	26 Feb., 1474	Commission to Anthony and others to rectify various offences against royal authority in Wales, Gloucester, and Shropshire on behalf of Edward V.
	443	13 July, 1474	Appointment by Anthony as Chief Butler of deputy at port of Dartmouth.
	450	30 June, 1474	Exemplification, at Anthony's request, of the letter's patent appointing him Lieutenant of Calais, as he has lost the letters. (Cross referenced with French Roll, 10 Edward IV, m.1).
	475	10 Oct., 1474	Grant to Edward of the lands of Christopher Throgmarton during his minority.
	553	29 June, 1475	Pardon to Anthony for "all offences committed by him against the statutes of liveries and retinues."
	565	11 Feb., 1476	Appointment by Anthony as Chief Butler of deputy at port of Sandwich.
	582-3	16 Mar., 1476	License for various, incl. Anthony, to grant Thomas Grey, son on Elizabeth, various lands.
3	9	26 Nov., 1476	Appointment by Anthony as Chief Butler of deputy at port of Boston.
	22	15 Nov., 1476	Commissioner of oyer and terminer to various, incl. Anthony, re: certain specific offences in co. Essex.
	48	8 Oct., 1477	Appointment by Anthony as Chief Butler of deputy at port of London.
	50	12 May, 1477	Commissioner of oyer and terminer to various, incl. Anthony, in the county of Middlesex.
	61	13 Feb., 1478.	Appointment by Anthony as Chief Butler of deputy at port of Bridgewater.
	77	28 Apr.,	Pardon to various, incl. Elizabeth and Anthony, "of all donations,

		1477	alienations, and perquisitions of lordships, manors, and lands late of John, late duke of Norfolk."
	103	20 June, 1478	Grant to City of London of £7000 owed to them by the crown, and granting them the office of coroner when the current coroner, appointed by Anthony as Chief Butler, has departed.
	112	4 July, 1478	Commission to various, incl. Anthony, to arrest various named individuals.
	113	10 July, 1478	Commission <i>de walliis et fossatis</i> to various, incl. Anthony, in "parts of the Mershland."
	115	13 Nov., 1478	Grant to Anthony and his heirs "in consideration of the injuries perpetrated on him and his parents by George, late duke of Clarence," various manors from Clarence's estate.
	130	8 Dec., 1478	Grant to John, bishop of Worcester and Anthony various lands and incomes in Wales.
	132	22 Jan., 1479	Grant to Anthony and his heirs "in consideration of the injuries perpetrated on him and his parents by George, late duke of Clarence," various manors from Clarence's estate, of at least 1,000 marks in value.
	135	14 Dec., 1478	Grant to Anthony and his heirs "in consideration of the injuries perpetrated on him and his parents by George, late duke of Clarence," various manors from Clarence's estate, of at least 1,000 marks in value.
	167	18 Nov., 1478	Appointment by Anthony as Chief Butler of deputy at port of "Jernemuth."
	180	1 Mar., 1480	Grant to of Portchester and Portsmouth to Edward Woodville, "in lieu of a like grant to...Anthony...surrendered."
	183-84	13 Feb., 1480	Commission of oyer and terminer to various, incl. Anthony, to investigate several offences committed in London.
	223	5 Nov., 1480	License for the alienation in mortmain by various, incl. Anthony, of various lands.
	241	15 Feb., 1481	Concerns the finances of a monastery in York, "lately held" by various, incl. Anthony
	248	8 Nov., 1481	Appointment by Anthony as Chief Butler of deputy at port of Chichester.
	261	12 Mar., 1481	Grant to various, incl. Anthony, a constableness in co. Gloucester.
	263	7 Dec., 1481	Commission to various, incl. Anthony, to "enquire into all escapes of felons" in co. Southampton.
	317	7 Nov., 1482	Appointment by Anthony as Chief Butler of deputy at port of Dartmouth.
	322	24 Aug., 1482	Commission of oyer and terminer to various, incl. Anthony, in various south western counties.
	322	20 Sept., 1482	Commission to Anthony et al. to enquire into "who were defenders...of the fishermen at sea" in Norfolk and Suffolk, and gather various financial information relating to this.
	332	14 Nov., 1482	Appointment for life of Anthony as chamberlain of various royal lands in co Kent, and captain of the royal castle of Queenborough, co. Kent.
	343	12 Nov.,	Commission to Anthony et al. to examine a conflict between several

		1482	individuals in co. Norfolk.
	345	18 Mar., 1483	Commission of oyer and terminer to Anthony et al., concerning several offences in co. Hereford and the Welsh Marches.
	353-55	27 April 1483,	Commission to Anthony et al. to investigate "certain subsidies granted to the late king by the commons....from aliens" in the counties of Norfolk, Kent, and Essex.

Close Rolls

Vol.	Pg #	Date	Précis
1	328	23 Feb., 1466	Memo of a loan made by various, incl. Anthony, to several men, seemingly for the purpose of paying a prisoner's ransom.
	330	24 Nov., 1465	Several records relating to the lease of the rights of several manors by Anthony, and a bond made from the leasor of those lands to Edward.
	380	2 Nov., 1466	"Endenture (sic) of defeasance of a recognize or bond" made by Anthony to Geoffrey Gate in exchange for the use of several manors.
2	51	23 Feb., 1469	Ralph Boteler, Lord Sudeley, to Richard and Anthony, et al., gift of various lands and offices.
	102	14 Nov., 1469	Grant of portions of Sudeley land jointly owned by Richard, Anthony et al. to be granted from William Hastings to Richard, duke of Gloucester.
	157	19 Oct., 1470	Memo from Henry VI to sheriff of Northampton to arrest Anthony as a result of a debt owed to Geoffrey Gate.
	234	23 Jan., 1473	To the customs agents at the port of London, ordering them to pay Anthony £133/annum.
	287	4 June, 1473	Appointment by Anthony as Chief Butler of William Fyssher as a coroner in the City of London.
	309	22 June, 1473	Richard Staumford, citizen of London, to Anthony and one Richard Adlyngton, citizen of London, gift of all his goods to settle a debt owed.
	338-39	22 July, 1474	Order to the Sheriff of Northampton to pay Anthony £20/annum, which had been granted to his father Richard and his heirs. Recognizance of Anthony inheriting all of Richard's lands and titles.
	342	10 Feb., 1474	Order to the sheriff of Southampton to pay Anthony a small sum daily for the maintenance of Portchester and Portsmouth, which were entrusted to Anthony.
	381-82	22 and 24 Feb., 1475	Records of various land deals between one group of individuals buying land from another group, which included Anthony.
	433	24 Sept., 1475	Anthony to Geoffrey Gate, release and quit claim of all actions, quarrels, and suits by the said Geoffrey.

	436	8 Nov. 1475	Geoffrey Gate to Anthony, release and quit claim of all actions, quarrels, and suits by the said Anthony.
3	30	2 Dec., 1476	A release and quitclaim on various lands from one William Huse to various, incl. Queen Elizabeth and Anthony.
	34	15 Mar., 1472	A release and quitclaim on various lands from one Cecily Leverich to Anthony et al..
	174	1 Feb., 1480	Part of a contract for Anthony to serve as Lord Dudley's deputy as constable of the Tower of London in exchange for £100/annum.
	209	24 July, 1480	A release and quitclaim on various lands from one Margery Marchall to various, incl. Anthony.
	231	26 Jan., 1479	A contract containing rents on several properties between Thomas, abbot of St Mary's York and various, incl. Anthony.
	290-91	15 Nov., 1482	Summons to parliament for many, incl. Anthony.
	352	20 Feb., 1483	A release and quitclaim on various lands from a certain William and Thomas Hide to John Marchall, who held such lands by enfeoffment of Anthony et al..

Charter Rolls

Pg #	Date	Précis
253	4 May, 1481	Grant to Anthony Woodville and other significant figures to hold a weekly market and 2 yearly fairs in Bradford, co. York.

Richard Patent Rolls

Vol.	Pg #	Date	Précis
1	81	12 Dec. 1461	Grant for life to Richard of the office of chief rider of royal forest of Saucy, co. Northampton (restoration of previous grant).
	83	"	Grant for life to Richard of the office of steward of royal forest of Saucy, co. Northampton.
	97	12 July, 1461	Pardon to Richard and Anthony Woodville of all offences committed, and "grant that he may hold and enjoy his possessions and offices."
	169-70	10 Dec. 1461	Grant and confirmation to Richard and Jacquetta, for the life of the latter, the dower assigned to her on the death of her late husband John, duke of Bedford. Includes restoration of several other grants from Henry VI.
	212-13	20 Sept., 1462	Reversion of some "lordships, lands, and possessions" from Richard and Jacquetta to the crown on her death.

	226-27	25 Jan., 1463	Reversion of some "lands, rents and services" from Richard and Jacquetta to the crown on her death.
	279	8 June, 1463	Commission of oyer and terminer to various, incl. Richard, within London and co. Middlesex.
	303	7 Oct., 1463	Commission of oyer and terminer to various, incl. Richard, within various south-eastern and Midlands counties.
	304	8 Feb., 1463	Commission of oyer and terminer to various, incl. Richard, within various southern counties.
	304	18 Feb., 1463	Commission of oyer and terminer to various, incl. Richard and Anthony, within co. Cambridge.
	431	11 Mar., 1465	Grant to one John Donne, "for his good service to the king's father," various lordships and incomes, incl. the right to enfeoff several, including Richard, William lord Hastings, and William, Lord Herbert.
	470	25 May, 1465	Grant to several, incl. Richard, various lands held by one Thomas Tresham, currently in the king's possession "by reason of an act of forfeiture."
	491	8 Oct., 1464	Commission to various, incl. Richard and Anthony, to arrest several persons.
	533	24 Sept., 1466	License for Anne, duchess of Exeter to grant various manors to various persons, incl. Richard and Anthony.
	535	3 Nov., 1466	Grant to Geoffrey Gate several properties of Richard and Jacquetta, seemingly in exchange for the lordship of the Isle of Wight, which Gate gave to Anthony.
	547	26 Feb., 1467	Grant for life to William, earl of Arundel, various lands, with remainder to Thomas Arundel, Lord Mautravers, son-in-law of Richard and Jacquetta.
2	19	24 Aug., 1467	Grant for life to Richard the office of constable of England, and grant of the office to Anthony upon Richard's death.
	33	"	Grant to Richard et al. of various incomes from port duties in repayment for a loan of £6,500 made to the crown.
	55	13 Jan., 1468	Commission of oyer and terminer to various, incl., Richard and Anthony, within various Midlands counties.
	59	27 Dec., 1467	Grant to Richard and various others of several incomes in repayment for the £2,000 owed by the crown to them.
	97	1 Sept., 1468	Grant to Richard Woodville "for certain burdens undertaken by him at the king's command," of various lands and lordships held by the late William la Zouche during the minority of his heir.
	170	15 May, 1469	Commission to Richard and others to inquire into various treasons and offences in Northampton committed by one Thomas Taillour.
	170	22 May, 1469	Commission of oyer and terminer "throughout the realm" to various, incl. Richard.
	327	22 Mar., 1472	Grant, during minority, to Jacquetta, the custody of all lordships, lands, and responsibilities of the minor John la Zouche.
	334	7 Mar., 1472	Grant to one William Parre and his heirs the reversion of certain lands on the death of Jacquetta.
	342-43	5 Aug.,	License for George, duke of Clarence, to enter freely into all lands etc. of

		1472	the lordship of Richmond, which Richard and Jacquetta (now deceased) had held for life.
	584	21 May, 1476	License for various persons to found a fraternity in Stony Stratford to pray for the souls of the king, Elizabeth, Richard and Cecily of York, Edmund, earl Rutland, Richard and Jacquetta, and the king's progenitors.

Close Rolls

Vol.	Pg #	Date	Précis
1	220-21	24 Feb., 1465	Order to pay the treasurer a yearly sum to Richard and Jacquetta and arrears owed to her from parts of her dower that had been seized by the crown.
	356	24 May, 1466	To the sheriff of Northampton to pay £20/annum to Richard to support his creation as an earl for "the merits and praiseworthy services of the said Richard."
	427-28	27 Dec., 1467	Instructions for customs collectors related to Richard in his position as treasurer.
2	25-26	10 June, 1468	Results of a dispute between John, earl of Shrewsbury, et al.. and several "jurors in certain inquisitions taken at Derby."
	51	23 Feb., 1469	Ralph Boteler, Lord Sudeley, to Richard and Anthony, et al., gift of various lands and offices.
	102	14 Nov., 1469	Grant of portions of Sudeley land jointly owned by Richard, Anthony et al. to be granted from William Hastings to Richard, duke of Gloucester.

Charter Rolls

Pg #	Date	Précis
214	24 May, 1466	"Creation of Richard Wydewyll, Lord of Rivers, to be earl of Ryvers."
234	26 Nov., 1468	Grant from Edward to Richard to grant him and his heirs "free chace and warren in all his demesne lands and woods" in Northampton or "elsewhere in England."