

# Literary and historical representations of Edward II and his favourites, c. 1305-1700

---

**Kit Rafe Heyam**

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Leeds  
School of English

August 2017

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

© 2017 The University of Leeds and Kit Rafe Heyam

The right of Kit Rafe Heyam to be identified as Author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

## Acknowledgements

---

The writing of this thesis – something which has been academically, emotionally and politically important to me – could not have happened without the support and hard work of a great many wonderful people. Thanks and gratitude are due to a few in particular:

To my PhD supervisor, Paul Hammond: thank you enormously for your support, advice, wisdom, encouragement and calm during the five years of this project.

To the rest of the School of English Medieval and Early Modern Research Group, and to the Leeds medievalists and early modernists beyond it: thank you for providing a supportive academic home, for the many opportunities you have given me, and for all of your advice and inspiration.

To Richard Thomason: thank you for patiently leading me through the labyrinth of medieval Latin.

To Lynne Kay, Jeannie Holt and Liz Draper: thank you for being the inspirational English teachers who believed in me, encouraged me to be unfashionably enthusiastic about words, and gave me the opportunity to escape from Bolton into a world full of people who shared that enthusiasm. I'm still tearfully grateful.

To Louise Joy, David Clifford, Hero Chalmers and Raphael Lyne: thank you a transformative four years in Cambridge, and for helping to turn an inarticulate teenager who just really loved books into a passionate early modernist with the confidence to start a PhD. Honourable mention for Hero: thank you for putting Marlowe's *Edward II* on a reading list and recommending I read Alan Bray.

To my family: thank you for not throwing the books out of the window when toddler-me demanded to be read to for the hundredth time, for supporting me in doing this even when you thought it was weird/a terrible idea, and for mostly understanding what it was about.

To my activist communities in York and beyond, and especially the past and present committees of York LGBT History Month: thank you for being the space I needed to work out why this thesis was so important to me, and for helping me to develop the confidence to fight for that. To all the people – past, present, and future – who inspired that activism: thanks, love and solidarity.

To my friends: thank you for your love and support while I (somehow) completed this thesis during a period of personal and political upheaval. I couldn't have done it without any of you (and not just because some of you very kindly proofread chapters: thank you, Hannah and Izzy). Highly honourable mentions with glitter on for Andy Law, Blake Gutt, Eddie Demelza Tindall, Hannah Coates and Helen Kingstone.

To my husband Alex: much of the above could also apply to you (including the proofreading!) Thank you for the love, patience, kindness, inspiration, encouragement and cups of tea you gave me throughout – and for, in the widest sense, *always* understanding what it was about.

# Abstract

---

This thesis examines the development of Edward II's historiographical reputation during the period 1305-1700, focusing on the developing consensus concerning the sexual and romantic nature of his relationships with his male favourites and the anally penetrative nature of his murder. It considers this consensus as shaped by chronicle/historical texts, poetry, drama and political writings. Three techniques are central to the study: a historicist approach to the terminology and conceptualisation of sex; analysis of individual texts in relation to wider historiographical traditions and their own historical contexts; and consideration of literary concerns (elements that contribute to the creation of an enjoyably readable narrative) when accounting for decisions made by writers of all genres.

The thesis is structured thematically, beginning with a detailed examination of the terminology with which sexual transgression is discussed in medieval and early modern texts and the formation of a consensus concerning Edward's sexual behaviour (Chapter 1). I explore the representation of Edward's relationships with his favourites as transgressive, in terms of their romantic and sexual nature and the favourites' undesirable characteristics (Chapter 2); the use of Edward's reign by English and French political writers (Chapter 3); and the role of literary decisions, principally the persistence of sensational details and the use of *de casibus* narrative structure, on the development of accounts of Edward's deposition, imprisonment and death (Chapter 4). I engage in and contribute to debates concerning the changing nature of Edward's reputation for sexually transgressive behaviour; to the analysis of the individual texts which constitute that reputation; to the interpretation of the penetrative murder narrative; and to the historiography of sex between men in medieval and early modern England. An appendix table collates the textual history, sources, influence and significance of the majority of accounts of Edward's reign written during the period 1305-1700.

# Contents

---

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1: The Terminology of Sexual Transgression .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Introduction.....	11
I. Historiographical terminology.....	12
II. Sodomy.....	15
III. Minions .....	26
IV. Ganymede .....	36
V. Lechery and goats .....	47
VI. Effeminacy .....	52
VII. Riot .....	54
VIII. Stock phrases .....	56
IX. Wantonness.....	59
Conclusion .....	61
<b>Chapter 2: Transgressive Relationships.....</b>	<b>63</b>
Introduction.....	63
I. Representing Edward II's favourites.....	63
i. Unsuitable companions.....	63
A 'basely born' Frenchman .....	64
'Wastefully insolent with the treasury' .....	69
'I fear that his pride will bring about his ruin' .....	71
Gaveston and early modern anti-courtier sentiment.....	76
ii. Attractive choices.....	81
Physical attractiveness.....	82
Agency and culpability: explaining attraction .....	86
II. Emotional relationships .....	104
i. Excessive love and its political consequences .....	104
ii. Romanticising Edward and Gaveston.....	112
Romanticisation in historical texts .....	112
The role of Marlowe: establishing a romantic relation.....	114
The role of Marlowe: mourning and revenge.....	121
III. Sexual relationships.....	128
i. Inciting sexual transgression .....	128

ii. Disrupting marriage .....	134
Conclusion .....	137
<b>Chapter 3: Politicising Edward II .....</b>	<b>139</b>
Introduction .....	139
I. Evil counsel or evil nature? .....	140
i. Evil counsel.....	140
The political rule of Edward's favourites .....	143
Sexual and emotional aspects of political rule .....	147
ii. Evil nature .....	150
iii. Foregrounding the counsel/nature question in early modern texts .....	156
II. Edward II as political exemplum .....	163
i. Polemical invocations .....	165
Elizabeth I.....	165
Henri III .....	171
James VI and I.....	174
Charles I and James II .....	177
ii. Other political allusions.....	179
Conclusion.....	190
<b>Chapter 4: The Literary Transformation of Edward II.....</b>	<b>193</b>
Introduction .....	193
I. Fall.....	193
i. Deposition.....	193
ii. Imprisonment .....	196
iii. Repentance .....	203
iv. <i>De casibus</i> .....	205
II. Death.....	215
i. Development of a consensus .....	216
ii. Precedents for penetration.....	219
iii. Sexual mimesis.....	225
iv. Pain and torture.....	228
Marlowe's murder scene .....	231
v. Martyrdom and other sensational details.....	238
III. Sympathy and psychological realism.....	242
Conclusion.....	245
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>249</b>

<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>257</b>
Primary texts .....	257
Secondary texts.....	277
Reference works.....	301
<b>Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>303</b>
Primary texts .....	303
Secondary texts.....	306
Reference works.....	306
<b>Appendix: Representations of Edward II's reign composed between 1305 and 1700</b> .....	<b>307</b>





# Introduction

---

Despite the multifaceted nature of Edward II's reign and the scholarship it has generated, two aspects of his historiographical reputation have attracted a disproportionate amount of academic attention from literary critics as well as historians: the nature of his relationships with his male favourites, particularly Piers Gaveston and the younger Hugh Despenser, and the manner of his death.<sup>1</sup> A consensus on both of these aspects was reached during the four centuries after Edward's death: it held that his relationships with his favourites were sexual and romantic, and that he was murdered by anal penetration with a red-hot spit. This thesis aims to trace, and to account for, the formation of that consensus. It represents a contribution to the existing historiography of Edward's reign; to the literary criticism of the chronicles, poetry, plays and political texts which constitute his historiographical reputation; and to the history of the conceptualisation and discussion of sex in medieval and early modern England.

Hundreds of accounts of Edward II's reign were written during the period 1305-1700, which forms the scope of this study. In 1305, two years before Edward's accession to the English throne, a quarrel with his father Edward I led to the first exile of Piers Gaveston, who was then a member of young Edward's household. This was the first occasion for contemporary chroniclers to remark on the closeness of Edward's relationship with Gaveston, and to comment on aspects of it that they considered transgressive or unacceptable. 1700 as a closing date was chosen in order to confine the study to medieval and early modern conceptualisations of sexual behaviour, but to include the Exclusion Crisis and Glorious Revolution, events which made Edward II as a deposed monarch politically salient. This temporal span is long, but provides an opportunity to analyse the formation of the consensus referred to above; in any case, medieval and early modern writers paid little heed to modern periodisation when constructing their accounts, drawing on sources from across this semi-arbitrary divide.

These numerous accounts span the interrelated genres of chronicles and historical texts, poetry, drama and political writings: I see 'historiography' in this period as a capacious term encompassing all accounts of history, whether they state allegiance to fact, present themselves as primarily artistic endeavours, or address both ends. Their focuses

---

<sup>1</sup> See J. R. S. Phillips, 'Introduction', in *New Perspectives*, pp. 1-3, for a representative sample of the diverse historiographical considerations that Edward's reign has attracted. For a summary of historiographical treatments of Edward's sexual behaviour, see Jochen Burgtof, "With My Life, His Joyes Began and Ended": Piers Gaveston and King Edward II of England Revisited', in *Fourteenth-Century England*, ed. by Nigel Saul (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), V, 31-51 (pp. 33-36).

vary, but the overwhelming majority agree on a small number of details fundamental to Edward's reign. His relationships with Gaveston and the Despensers are recounted at length, far more so than those with other favourites such as Robert Baldock, and are (unlike those other relationships) characterised by excessive intimacy and by the favourites' undue influence over political matters. His highly emotional deposition is followed by imprisonment and mistreatment sometimes amounting to torture, and by a murder which is quickly established as anally penetrative, painful and undetectable on the body.

When these accounts have previously been considered by historians or literary critics, it has usually been for one of three reasons. Firstly, they have been examined as potential sources of factual information about events and/or popular opinion during Edward's reign or later.<sup>2</sup> Texts of all genres do, of course, hold value for this purpose; but as I will show, caution must be exercised when appraising a text according to this criterion. The orthodoxy that a contemporaneous chronicle is a more reliable source for contemporary opinions than a retrospective one may not always hold true when those opinions concern topics about which chroniclers are demonstrably cautious – among them sexual transgression, deposition and regicide. As such, the inclusion or omission of a particular opinion or detail from contemporary texts is not in itself sufficient evidence that the opinion was not held, or the detail did not occur. The usefulness of considering accounts of Edward's reign as factual evidence depends on the acknowledgement of this factor. It depends, too, on scholars interpreting those accounts accurately in relation to their historical context. Of particular relevance here are the ways in which any given writer and their contemporaries conceptualised sex. As my opening chapter shows, many attempts to deploy accounts of Edward's reign as factual evidence fall short of these two criteria. More problematically, there is evidently a temptation towards selective or partial treatment of sources when using them in this way. In a small number of works, it is difficult not to be concerned by the misrepresentation of certain sources, or the privileging of one source over another. Michael Goodich, for example, asserts that Thomas Burton (writing c. 1388-96) 'attributed [Gaveston's] death to "too much sodomy"'; in actuality, this text states that Edward himself 'delighted too much in sodomitical vice' (*vitio sodomitico nimium delectabat*), without linking this to any particular event.<sup>3</sup> Goodich also omits to mention any historiographical disagreement concerning the penetrative manner of Edward's murder; his work thereby suggests, through selective handling of evidence, that

---

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Phillips; R. M. Haines, *King Edward II* (Montréal; London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> Michael Goodich, *The Unmentionable Vice: Homosexuality in the Later Medieval Period* (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 1979), p. 11; Burton, III, 355.

Edward's near-contemporaries believed unequivocally that he engaged in sex with men. On the other side of the debate is J. R. S. Phillips, who – while dismissing the multiple English sources which 'can be interpreted as implying homosexuality' as 'much later in date or the product of hostility' – affords relative credibility to a single Hainault source that suggests adultery between Edward and the wife of the younger Hugh Despenser.<sup>4</sup> Phillips's unbalanced treatment of sources may not result from conscious bias, but does suggest a heteronormative perspective which scholarly treatments of Edward's sexual behaviour would do well to avoid. These examples, and others which could be adduced, demonstrate the need for critical reading of secondary as well as primary sources when considering such contentious issues.

Among the accounts of Edward's reign written during the period 1305-1700 are several texts whose significance and reputation extends beyond their contribution to this area of historiography. Among them are the popular fourteenth-century history known as the *Brut*; Holinshed's *Chronicles*; Marlowe's *Edward II*; Michael Drayton's several poems which engage with Edward's reign; and Elizabeth Cary's two histories. These texts have frequently been considered in isolation by literary critics.<sup>5</sup> Clearly, there is much to discuss about each of these complex works – but considering them as part of a wider historiographical process can contribute usefully to these discussions. This point is particularly relevant to Marlowe's *Edward II*, which has received disproportionately more attention than any other text considered in this thesis, often from critics with little knowledge of the early modern historiography of Edward II. This thesis does not position itself primarily as a reading of Marlowe's play, but it does suggest some ways in which future readings might be revised in light of the historiographical tradition with which Marlowe was engaging.

Marlowe's *Edward II* is also largely responsible for a final way in which scholars have habitually engaged with the primary sources of this thesis: as source material for literary texts. Despite efforts by scholars such as Annabel Patterson to debunk the idea that historical texts such as Holinshed's *Chronicles* are valuable only insofar as they shed light on drama and poetry, it is undeniable that a great many accounts of Edward II's reign have received more scholarly attention as sources for Marlowe and Drayton than they have as

---

<sup>4</sup> Phillips, pp. 97–98.

<sup>5</sup> See e.g. Julia Marvin, 'Albine and Isabelle: Regicidal Queens and the Historical Imagination of the Anglo-Norman *Prose Brut* Chronicles', *Arthurian Literature*, 18 (2001), 143–91; Igor Djordjevic, *Holinshed's Nation* (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate, 2010); Melnikoff; Kelly Quinn, 'Mastering Complaint: Michael Drayton's *Peirs Gaveston* and the Royal Mistress Complaints', *English Literary Renaissance*, 38 (2008), 439–60; Janet Starnier-Wright and Susan M. Fitzmaurice, 'Shaping a Drama out of a History: Elizabeth Cary and the Story of Edward II', *Critical Survey*, 14 (2002), 79–92.

representations of Edward in their own right.<sup>6</sup> Care must be taken to acknowledge the popularity of histories as reading material, not just as source material. John Stow's account of Edward's reign in the *Annales*, for example – which contains both derivative and innovative elements – had a twofold influence on the formation of Edward's historiographical reputation: Marlowe used it as a source, but it was also itself widely read.

To date, these medieval and early modern accounts of Edward's reign have not been considered together, and the successive writing of them has not been analysed as a process by which his historiographical reputation was shaped. This thesis aims to fill that gap. My emphasis on *reputation* is deliberate. Despite the efforts of numerous historians to the contrary, I concur with W. M. Ormrod that:

...the nature of the evidence makes it impossible to tell what Edward actually did – let alone what he thought himself to be doing – whether and when he engaged in emotional and physical contact with women or men. Rather, we are dealing here, of necessity, with *reputations*: with what people thought and said about Edward II's personality, and the place of his sexuality within it, during his lifetime and in the generation after his demise.<sup>7</sup>

This thesis, of course, proceeds far beyond Ormrod's temporal scope. I analyse not just Edward's immediate reputation, but the process of mythologizing during the period 1305-1700 which results in the formation of a historiographical consensus.

More crucially, this is the first attempt to consider the medieval and early modern historiography of Edward II from a perspective grounded in the current scholarly understanding of the history of sex. A substantial body of scholarship has demonstrated that the modern terminology of 'sexuality' – 'gay', 'homosexual', 'bisexual' – is inaccurate for the description of medieval and early modern subjects, who conceived of sex as a matter of discrete acts ('sex between men') rather than intrinsic identities ('homosexual[ity]').<sup>8</sup> Similarly, our modern perceived dichotomy between hetero- and homosexual (culturally entrenched, though equally unsatisfactory for modern identities) is incompatible with medieval and early modern conceptualisations of sex.<sup>9</sup> A more relevant classification system is that of acceptable/unacceptable sex acts; the latter category comprises not just same-sex interaction, but also (for example) adultery, non-procreative

---

<sup>6</sup> Annabel Patterson, *Reading Holinshed's Chronicles* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), Introduction and Chap. 1.

<sup>7</sup> W. M. Ormrod, 'The Sexualities of Edward II', in *New Perspectives*, pp. 22–47 (p. 22).

<sup>8</sup> Vern L. Bullough, 'The Sin Against Nature and Homosexuality', in *Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church*, ed. by Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1994), pp. 55–71.

<sup>9</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), *passim*.

sex, bestiality and masturbation.<sup>10</sup> Even this seemingly clear categorisation is ultimately simplistic, since it ignores the influence of other contextual factors on society's interpretation of any particular act.<sup>11</sup> Though a great many scholars have built on this knowledge, historians of Edward II's reign have largely failed to engage with it. Instead, they have interpreted accounts of his reign using modern terminology and assumptions. Their conclusions regarding the nature of Edward's reputation – both during his lifetime and in subsequent centuries – are therefore necessarily inaccurate. Throughout this thesis, my analysis proceeds from a position grounded in the ways in which the writers and readers of medieval and early modern England conceptualised sexual behaviour. Only by doing this, I argue, can we interpret texts of this period in a responsible way and reach accurate, useful conclusions. I engage throughout with historians and literary critics in order to demonstrate the ways in which their sometimes anachronistic terminology can, like their sometimes insufficient attention to historiographical tradition, obstruct their interpretive efforts. In this sense, my abstention from the ongoing and ultimately futile debate about the facts of Edward's sexual behaviour is an important liberating strategy. As Phillips puts it, 'Edward II has never been the "possession" wholly of historians'; 'other traditions have built up, and continue to build up around him'.<sup>12</sup> These 'other traditions' have been overwhelmingly characterised by what Ormrod calls 'the somewhat naive and sterile positivist debate that aims to claim Edward either as gay or as straight'.<sup>13</sup> The language of ownership employed by both historians is striking: although neither presents it as a useful endeavour, it is this pursuit of 'claiming' Edward that results in misrepresentations of the historiographical record like those of Goodich and Phillips, described above. It is not my intention in this thesis to 'claim' Edward II for any modern category of sexuality, or even to claim (in the non-possessive sense) that he engaged in any particular sexual acts. Similarly, my analysis of Edward's developing historiographical reputation deliberately acknowledges the ambiguity of certain texts and terminology.

I am here distinguishing the uncritical use of modern terminology (primarily by historians) from its conscious deployment for a particular theoretical purpose: Marlowe's

---

<sup>10</sup> Allen J. Frantzen, 'The Disclosure of Sodomy in *Cleanness*', *PMLA*, 111 (1996), 451–64 (pp. 451–52); Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*, Morningside edn (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 14–17, Chap. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Mario DiGangi, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. ix–x.

<sup>12</sup> Phillips, 'Introduction', p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Ormrod, p. 22.

*Edward II*, in particular, has been the subject of substantial analysis of this kind.<sup>14</sup> However, this thesis deliberately pursues a historicist rather than theoretical approach. Consideration of Edward II's sexual behaviour should, I believe, be contextually grounded in two senses: as well as proceeding from a thorough understanding of the historical context in which and for which accounts of his reign were written, it should acknowledge its own modern historiographical context, considering the state of scholarly thinking on Edward II at this particular critical moment. As the brief analysis above suggests, this modern context is far from apolitical. The question of what Edward's sexual behaviour objectively constituted (as opposed to what his contemporary and subsequent reputation was) dominates and segregates discussion; one side would claim Edward and his favourites as part of a queer-historical genealogy, while the other too frequently proceeds from a distaste for that opposing motive rather than from consideration of the available evidence. As such, at this critical moment in the study of Edward II, I am convinced that a historicised rather than a queer-theoretical approach is the best way to investigate the formation of his reputation.

In approaching these texts and the terminology they use, close reading is my central methodology. This thesis contends that in order to effectively trace the development of Edward's historiographical reputation, we must look beyond the techniques traditionally ascribed to the historian. For three main reasons, we must also employ techniques associated with literary scholarship. Firstly, close textual analysis can help us move beyond dismissing certain terms (such as 'sodomy') as hopelessly ambiguous, instead asking what interpretation of an ambiguous term is encouraged by any given text. Secondly, cross-genre investigation is crucial if we are to gain a complete picture of the shifting historiographical consensus concerning Edward and his favourites: drama, poetry, chronicles and political writings all play a significant role in this process. Thirdly, by considering the decisions that writers of histories made with their readers in mind, we can account for the development of many historiographical trends and the emergence of certain key stories, not least the story of Edward's penetrative murder.

Chapter 1, 'The Terminology of Sexual Transgression', focuses on the words and phrases used by medieval and early modern writers to refer to Edward II's sexual behaviour and that of his favourites. It engages critically with the terminology and assumptions employed by a number of previous scholars, and suggests ways in which scholarly discourse concerning Edward might be revised in light of developments in the

---

<sup>14</sup> For an overview of critical treatments of sexuality in Marlowe's play, including arguments from a queer theory perspective in favour of the use of modern terminology, see Judith Haber, 'The State of the Art: Desire, History and the Theatre', in Melnikoff, pp. 73–96 (pp. 95–96).

history of sex, before considering a succession of key words and phrases. Investigation of the use of the terms ‘sodomy’ and ‘minion’ in accounts of Edward’s reign enables a discussion of the interpretation of ambiguous terminology; investigation of the far less ambiguous term ‘Ganymede’ enables an analysis of the shift in historiography from ambiguity to clarity concerning the nature of Edward’s sexually transgressive behaviour; and investigation of other strategies by which writers have indicated this behaviour (including allegorising Edward as a goat, and several other common words and phrases) enables me to trace the gradual development of the historiographical consensus concerning it.

Chapter 2, ‘Transgressive Relationships’, considers the representation of Edward’s relationships with his favourites. It firstly analyses trends in the depiction of Piers Gaveston and the younger Hugh Despenser, many of which have implications for the depiction of Edward: if a text presents a king’s favourites as having qualities which make them unsuitable as companions or political advisors, this implicitly calls his judgment into question. Secondly, it analyses the representation of these relationships as emotional and sexual, tracing their increasing romanticisation and the trend towards accusing Edward’s favourites of inciting and participating in his sexual transgressions.

Chapter 3, ‘Politicising Edward II’, analyses the ways in which the representation of Edward’s relationships with his favourites affected the representation of his political rule, and the use of his reign as a political exemplum. The ‘heightened interest in Edward II’s story during the late Elizabethan and Jacobean periods’ observed by Kirk Melnikoff can, I argue, be attributed in part to its relevance to a compelling political concern of both those periods: overmighty favourites who enjoyed excessive and disproportionate intimacy with the monarch.<sup>15</sup> The first half of the chapter, ‘Evil counsel or evil nature?’, analyses the persistent concern with the question of whether Edward’s transgressive behaviour and poor political decisions resulted from the bad advice of his favourites – including their emotional and/or sexual manipulation of him – or from his own intrinsic flaws. The complex implications of this question, including the relationship between Edward’s level of agency and his level of culpability, are also considered. The second section, ‘Edward II as political exemplum’, analyses the deployment of Edward and his favourites in polemical contexts – principally in order to critique contemporary favourites or to demonstrate precedent (positive or negative) for deposition and regicide – and the use of contemporary political allusions in other accounts of Edward’s reign.

---

<sup>15</sup> Kirk Melnikoff, ‘Introduction’, in Melnikoff, pp. 1–20 (p. 5).

Chapter 4, ‘The Literary Transformation of Edward II’, traces the influence on Edward’s historiographical reputation of literary decisions: the use of techniques, and the emphasis and foregrounding of details, which create an exciting, enjoyably readable narrative. The chapter focuses on the role of these decisions in the development of a consensus concerning Edward’s deposition and death, including the presentation of his reign as a *de casibus* narrative. It argues for a reassessment of the assumption that the story of Edward’s anally penetrative murder arose as a form of retributive sexual mimesis, calling attention instead to its presentation as a torturous yet invisible murder method, and to its status as a sensationalised detail. It also analyses strategies used to align the reader’s sympathy with Edward.

Through these four chapters, this thesis demonstrates that the formation of Edward II’s historiographical reputation over the period 1305-1700 took place across and between texts of several genres. In many ways, it also took place as a result of creative, literary decisions made by writers in all of those genres. As such, it establishes the paramount importance of considering historical texts *as texts*. Not only were they written for readers to enjoy and, particularly following the advent of printing, to purchase; they were written *by* readers, who consumed earlier historical texts as sources and responded to what they suggested and implied as well as to the facts they explicitly laid out. Medieval and early modern historiography of Edward II, including his sexual behaviour, is – as this thesis shows – a cumulative process, and one which pays no regard to the generic distinctions of any period.

The thesis is accompanied by an appendix table, ‘Accounts of Edward II’s reign composed during the period 1305-1700’. This table provides a guide to the majority of the primary sources consulted for this thesis. It summarises their date of composition; textual history and alternative titles; sources and influentiality; and a brief summary of their significance in relation to this study. Since the thesis cites a large number of primary sources, the appendix is intended as a quick reference for these details: it provides an alternative to reminding the reader of each source’s significance and textual history every time a quotation from it is used, which would prove intrusive and repetitious. I hope it will also provide a useful resource for future scholars of Edward II’s historiographical reputation.

I have silently modernised u/v and i/j in quotations from early modern texts, and expanded contractions. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own. I have



usually provided quotations in the original language where this is helpful for the clarity or justification of arguments that rest on close textual analysis.



# Chapter 1: The Terminology of Sexual Transgression

---

## Introduction

Our evidence for medieval and early modern perceptions of Edward II's sexual behaviour is, necessarily, refracted through language. With this in mind, it is important to begin with an analysis of some key terminology – a fraught issue in both primary and secondary sources. Since Edward's historiographical reputation comprises Latin and French texts as well as English, caution should also be exercised in translation, as this chapter shows.

I first consider the field of historiography to which this thesis contributes, examining the terminology used by modern historians and asking how it could be shifted to more accurately reflect historical conceptualisations of sex. Following this, I examine two problematic terms in the historiography of Edward II: 'sodomy' and 'minion'. 'Sodomy' has too often been either read as definitively indicating sex between men, or dismissed as too ambiguous to shed any light on Edward's sexual reputation; I aim to challenge this through close readings of the term's uses in relation to Edward or his favourites. 'Minion', which gained currency in the late sixteenth century, can refer either to a politically over-mighty royal favourite or to a person engaged in sexual relations with someone of a higher social status or political rank. Much more widely used than 'sodomy', this will be considered in a cross-section of texts, including its French origins and its likely transference into English from criticisms of Henri III's favourites.

I then analyse the emergence and use of the term 'Ganymede' in the early modern historiography of Edward II: the only term used which unequivocally indicates a sexual relationship between king and favourites. This section also considers the ways in which historiography began to shift from ambiguity concerning the sexual nature of Edward's transgressions to consensus that they were not only sexual, but specifically comprised sex with his male favourites. Finally, I explore a selection of words, phrases and techniques that recur across several texts and can potentially denote sexual transgression. I focus on the animal symbolism that allegorises Edward as a goat; the concept of 'effeminacy'; the term 'riot', often used to describe Edward's behaviour under Gaveston's influence; the stock phrases that describe Edward's vices as 'adultery and other' and 'appetites and

pleasures of the body'; and the adjective 'wanton', used to describe Edward's behaviour and character.

This chapter illuminates the diversity of techniques with which writers hint at or indicate sexual transgression, and demonstrates the extent to which interpretation of these often ambiguous words and phrases depends on their context. Considering each word or phrase in multiple texts, many of which directly influenced each other, can shed light on how they were interpreted by at least some of their readers.

## I. Historiographical terminology

The modern historiography of Edward II's sexual behaviour is a fraught and contested field. While many scholars provide readings grounded in the attitudes and conceptions of Edward's contemporaries, many others rely on terminology or assumptions that have been shown to be inadequate or anachronistic; more recent texts do not automatically contain more informed treatments.<sup>1</sup> Admittedly, my aims here differ from that of most previous scholars: while they have attempted to establish the facts of Edward's sexual behaviour, I am interested in *perceptions* of that behaviour, and their shaping over time through an interconnected series of texts. As such, I am not concerned with the 'reliability' of individual texts as sources of information about what Edward was doing sexually. Rather, as a close reader, I see even 'unreliable' texts as valuable for their representations of Edward's sexual behaviour, and for their influence over the perceptions of readers and future writers. It must therefore be noted at the outset – since discussion of this topic has rarely been apolitical – that my critique of certain scholars in the survey that follows is *not* based on their acceptance or non-acceptance of Edward's sexual relationships with his male favourites. Rather, I wish to engage critically with the terminology used to discuss Edward's sexual behaviour, and the assumptions that inform scholars' interpretation of sources, before suggesting some modifications to the discourse in which future scholarly discussions of this issue could take place.

Uncritical use of sex-related terminology (modern or medieval) characterises many academic treatments of Edward's reign. The issues surrounding interpretation of the term 'sodomy' will be discussed below; here, I want to focus on the many references to Edward

---

<sup>1</sup> For a positive example, see J. S. Hamilton, *Piers Gaveston, Earl of Cornwall, 1307-1312* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press; London: Harvester-Wheatsheaf, 1988), pp. 16–17.

and/or his favourites as ‘homosexual’ or ‘gay’.<sup>2</sup> Despite the inaccuracy of these terms for medieval subjects, as outlined in my introduction, many scholars continue to use them. Similarly, despite the anachronism of assuming a dichotomy between homo- and heterosexual in this period, many critics continue to treat Edward’s marriage and children as evidence against his sexual involvement with men. For R. M. Haines, the assertion that Edward ‘was clearly capable of sustained heterosexual relationships’ is a counter-argument to other evidence of his ‘homosexuality’; similarly, Pierre Chaplais states (in support of his argument that Edward and Gaveston were sworn brothers rather than lovers) that ‘Edward’s attitude towards women does not appear to have been very different from that of other men of his time’.<sup>3</sup> J. R. S Phillips, in the most recent substantial scholarly biography, argues further that Edward’s father-in-law, Philip IV of France, desired grandchildren and would not have sanctioned Edward’s marriage to his daughter Isabella ‘if [Edward’s] sexual proclivities had been clearly proclaimed over so long a period’.<sup>4</sup> Even if Edward’s sexual interaction with men had been obvious, few contemporaries would have assumed that it indicated his unwillingness or unlikelihood to procreate. Moreover, Phillips’s assumption that it would have been ‘clearly proclaimed’ is deeply problematic. Owing to the unacceptability of sex between men in fourteenth-century England, it is anachronistic to expect clarity or openness regarding it. In addition, the extent to which it was acknowledged as extant and as cause for concern depended largely on the political expediency of doing so.<sup>5</sup> Michael Prestwich’s assumption that ‘the king’s own sexual preferences...would be reflected in the manner and style of the court’ is similarly flawed, as is his consideration of whether Edward could have been ‘openly gay’.<sup>6</sup>

This misguided search for clarity is also problematic when applied to textual exegesis. Glossing Thomas Gray’s *Scalacronica* (c. 1355-63), Andy King writes: ‘Note that although Gray refers to [Gaveston’s] *divers crimes et vices*, he makes no explicit reference to any homosexual relationship between Gaveston and Edward’.<sup>7</sup> ‘Explicit reference’, King suggests, would be necessary to prove a ‘homosexual relationship’ between Edward and

---

<sup>2</sup> This should be distinguished from the term ‘queer’, which does not tend to be used as an uncritical anachronism, but carries a specific theoretical weight. However, as outlined in my introduction, this thesis does not take a queer-theoretical approach.

<sup>3</sup> R. M. Haines, *King Edward II* (Montréal; London: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003), p. 42; Pierre Chaplais, *Piers Gaveston: Edward II’s Adoptive Brother* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Phillips, p. 101.

<sup>5</sup> Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*, Morningside edn (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 67–80; Vern L. Bullough, ‘Formation of Medieval Ideals: Christian Theory and Christian Practice’, in *Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church*, ed. by Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1994), pp. 14–21 (p. 20).

<sup>6</sup> Michael Prestwich, ‘The Court of Edward II’, in *New Perspectives*, pp. 61–75 (pp. 70, 71).

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Gray, *Scalacronica, 1272-1363*, ed. and trans. by Andy King, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), pp. 55, 223 n. 38. King’s treatment of Edward’s sexual behaviour is not uniquely problematic, but merely a representative example.

any of his favourites. But how would he expect this ‘explicit reference’ to be made? Explicit fourteenth-century descriptions of sex between men do exist – such as in the depositions against the Knights Templar, discussed below – but there is a contextual gulf between a document intended to discredit a heretical sect and a history like the *Scalacronica*, written during the reign of Edward III. As well as the political sensitivity of accusing the reigning monarch’s father of sexual transgression, it is important to remember the historic status of male-male sex – in particular as an aspect of ‘sodomy’ – as an ‘unnameable’ sin. The idiomatic description of sodomy as ‘not to be named among Christians’ was popularised by Thomas Aquinas around 1255.<sup>8</sup> The mental and social obstructions exerted on thinking or writing about ‘sodomy’ by this religiously inflected prohibition should not be underestimated. King’s comment is based on modern assumptions about the availability to Gray of discourse for such ‘explicit references’, and the political possibility of making them – as well as a failure to consider the religious and idiomatic discouragement from coherently discussing sex between men. To reiterate, I am not criticising King’s exegetical conclusion – Gaveston’s *divers crimes et vices* are indeed ambiguous – but I am questioning the methodology by which that conclusion was reached.

It seems clear that updating the terminology with which Edward II’s sexual behaviour is discussed, and the assumptions that underlie those discussions, would create a much-needed common framework of understanding and enable scholars to engage more fruitfully with each other’s work. This framework should be based on our current understanding of the history of sex. Key to this is referring to Edward’s ‘sexual behaviour’ – not his ‘sexuality’ or ‘sexual orientation’ – thus avoiding anachronistically implying that this behaviour was conceptualised in terms of Edward’s identity. This should help to combat the assumption that procreation and sex with men were mutually exclusive. A shift in terminology might encourage historians to acknowledge the importance of language to the full understanding of Edward’s sexual behaviour. Rather than claiming – as Haines does in his discussion of this topic – that ‘The medieval connotation of “sodomite” need not concern us here’, we should recognise that awareness of this connotation (more correctly, *connotations*) allows more responsible, informed readings of medieval texts.<sup>9</sup> The study of the history of sex must incorporate the history of the *language* of sex; in fact, ‘The

---

<sup>8</sup> Mark D. Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 150–51. For fourteenth-century uses of this idiom, see (e.g.) Geoffrey Chaucer, ‘The Parson’s Tale’, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson and F. N. Robinson, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 288–328 (p. 320); Thomas Castleford, *Castleford’s Chronicle: Or the Boke of Brut*, ed. by Caroline D. Eckhardt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), ll. 38948–49.

<sup>9</sup> Haines, *King Edward II*, p. 43.

medieval connotation of “sodomite” is of great concern to any historian of Edward II’s sexual reputation.

## II. Sodomy

The term ‘sodomy’ is rarely used by medieval and early modern writers with reference to Edward II or his favourites, and no use can be conclusively documented in Edward’s lifetime. This rarity – and the term’s ‘convenient ambiguity’<sup>10</sup> – has been treated by some scholars as evidence that Edward did not engage in sex with men (or, more cogently here, that no contemporaries believed he did).<sup>11</sup> ‘Sodomy’ has been treated in a way analogous to Gregory Bredbeck’s summary of the scholarly treatment of ‘homosexuality’: scholars have either worked on the ‘assumption that we can trace an atemporal conception...throughout history’ or asserted that ‘because we *cannot* trace this particular concept through history, nothing can be traced’.<sup>12</sup> Such assumptions are erroneous in two respects. The term ‘sodomy’ is, in medieval and early modern sources, neither necessary nor sufficient to suggest sex between men. It was not this period’s only mode of referring to sex between men; nor can it be assumed to denote sex between men with any specificity. ‘Sodomy in the Middle Ages,’ Robert Mills summarises, ‘was a fluid and wide-ranging category, which served only intermittently to refer to a clear variety of sexual activity or to evoke the behaviour of a particular kind of person.’<sup>13</sup> Sodomy was not always sexual, but could indicate a range of socially disruptive activities: sometimes it stood for specific sins such as heresy and witchcraft, but frequently its significations were less coherent.<sup>14</sup>

The uses of ‘sodomy’ regarding Edward and his favourites thus merit reassessment with this semantic multiplicity in mind.<sup>15</sup> These uses are so sparse and temporally dispersed that, for the most part, no textual influence can be demonstrated between them; an effective reassessment thus requires separate analysis of each individual usage. In the following section, I will use close reading to demonstrate the strategies that can be used to determine the meaning of ‘sodomy’ in any given text. It should be stressed that my focus is on the *term* sodomy, and not the concept: almost every aspect of Edward’s life could be

<sup>10</sup> W. M. Ormrod, ‘The Sexualities of Edward II’, in *New Perspectives*, pp. 22–47 (p. 37).

<sup>11</sup> See e.g. Phillips, p. 98; Jochen Burgtorf, “‘With My Life, His Joyes Began and Ended’: Piers Gaveston and King Edward II of England Revisited”, in *Fourteenth-Century England*, ed. by Nigel Saul (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), V, 31–51 (p. 35).

<sup>12</sup> Gregory Bredbeck, *Sodomy and Interpretation: Marlowe to Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. xi.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Mills, *Seeing Sodomy in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Bray, chap. 1.

<sup>15</sup> The noun ‘sodomitry’ and the adjective ‘sodomitical’ do not appear to have meanings distinct from that of ‘sodomy’ in the period under discussion; instead, they should be treated as variants and/or derivatives.

(and has been) described as ‘sodomitical’, but this will be discussed at thematically appropriate points away from my consideration of terminology.

Firstly, it is necessary to discuss the earliest and most problematic instance of Edward II being (possibly) described as a ‘sodomite’. Despite Robert Mills’s claims, this instance is *not* the *Flores Historiarum*. Mills is misleading in his assertion that this text, whose continuation covering Edward’s reign was composed around 1326-30 by Robert of Reading, ‘characterise[s] Edward as a sodomite’.<sup>16</sup> In fact, the text’s only reference to Edward’s sexual behaviour is as follows:

O vesana stultitia regis Anglorum, a Deo et hominibus cunctis reprobanda, qui sibi propriam infamiam et concubitus illicitos peccatis plenos non dilexisset, nequaquam tam generosam regni consortem et dulces amplexus conjugales in contemptum generis sui a latere suo removisset!<sup>17</sup>

O the insane foolishness of the king of England, condemned by God and all men, who should not have loved his own sin and illicit copulations, full of sin, nor by any means removed from his side the noble consort of his realm and her sweet marital embraces, in contempt for her noble birth!

The writer accuses Edward of ‘unlawful’ and ‘sinful’ sexual activity, and suggests that this is adulterous, but nowhere explicitly mentions sodomy. Moreover, Antonia Gransden has argued that the *Flores* may constitute ‘official history’ written for Isabella and Mortimer’s party, meaning that we should treat its accusations with some suspicion – even if, as I will show, Robert of Reading may have been drawing on other accusations or rumours which had emerged during Edward’s reign.<sup>18</sup> In general, Mills overplays Edward’s association with sodomy: he may have been ‘England’s most notorious high-ranking “sodomite”’ by the time Chaucer wrote ‘The Miller’s Tale’, but only in that there were few other candidates.<sup>19</sup> It is misleading to equate Edward’s tenuous association with sodomy in a very few texts at this time with ‘notoriety’.

In fact, the earliest connection of the word ‘sodomite’ with Edward II is the accusation ascribed in April 1334 to Adam Orleton, who was Bishop of Hereford during Edward’s reign. The circumstances of the ascription are complex, but can be briefly summarised as follows.<sup>20</sup> In December 1333 Orleton was translated from the bishopric of

---

<sup>16</sup> Mills, p. 351 n. 97.

<sup>17</sup> *Flores*, p. 229.

<sup>18</sup> Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, 2 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), II, 17–18.

<sup>19</sup> Mills, p. 278.

<sup>20</sup> See, for more detail, G. A. Usher, ‘The Career of a Political Bishop: Adam de Orleton (c. 1279-1345)’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 22 (1972), 33–47; R. M. Haines, ‘Looking Back In Anger: A Politically Inspired Appeal against John XXII’s Translation of Bishop Adam Orleton to Winchester (1334)’, *English*



Worcester to the more prosperous see of Winchester by papal provision, against the will of Edward III, who had another candidate in mind. An appeal to the papal curia against Orleton's promotion was subsequently mounted by John Prickehare, probably a literate layman of the diocese of Winchester. Had the Pope known of Orleton's earlier misdeeds, Prickehare claimed, 'he would by no means have made the translation' (*si scivisset hujusmodi Translacionem nullo modo fecisset*).<sup>21</sup> These misdeeds principally comprised a sermon preached at Oxford in October 1326, shortly before Edward II's deposition. In this sermon (Prickehare alleged), Orleton had:

pernaciter asseruit...et docuit publice Clero et populo ad audiendum Verbum Dei congregatis in multitudine copiosa...quod idem Dominus Edwardus, qui tunc...Rex Anglie extitit coronatus legitime et inunctus, et cui predictus Magister Adam...astrictus extitit ex debito...fidelitatis vinculo juramenti, fuit tyrannus et sodomita.<sup>22</sup>

perniciously asserted...and publicly instructed the clergy and the people, congregated in an abundant multitude hearing the word of God...that ...Lord Edward, who then...was the legitimately crowned and anointed King of England, and to whom the aforesaid Master Adam...was bound by his debt...[and by] the chain of his oath of fidelity, was a tyrant and sodomite.

In response, Orleton claimed that his only reference to tyranny had concerned the younger Hugh Despenser. As for the 'sodomite' comment, 'that thing about the unnameable vice that I was falsely declared to have said, was nowhere said or proposed by me, as God is my witness' (*quod de innominabili vicio falso proponitur me dixisse, nusquam fuit a me dictum vel propositum, Deo teste*).<sup>23</sup> This latter denial is particularly important, since it appears to have been missed by Ian Mortimer in his recent examination of the Orleton/Prickehare affair.<sup>24</sup> Although Prickehare's claims are widely agreed to have been politically motivated, Mortimer takes them at face value, and thus as evidence that 'Orleton was the original source for the public idea that Edward was a sodomite'.<sup>25</sup> Part of Mortimer's evidence for this assertion is that Orleton, 'in his defence, did [not] deny that he had said these things; rather, he claimed that he was innocent of defaming Edward III's father on the grounds that he had meant Despenser (not the king) was a tyrant and a sodomite'.<sup>26</sup> Yet as we have seen, Orleton *did* deny ever calling anybody a 'sodomite'. Granted, he never explicitly

---

*Historical Review*, 116 (2001), 389–404; R. M. Haines, *Archbishop John Stratford* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1986).

<sup>21</sup> *The Register of John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter (A.D. 1327-1369)*, ed. by F. C. Hingeston-Randolph (London: Bell, 1894), p. 1542.

<sup>22</sup> Hingeston-Randolph, p. 1542.

<sup>23</sup> Hingeston-Randolph, p. 1545.

<sup>24</sup> Ian Mortimer, 'Sermons of Sodomy: A Reconsideration of Edward II's Sodomitical Reputation', in *New Perspectives*, pp. 48–60.

<sup>25</sup> Haines, *Archbishop John Stratford*, p. 82; Haines, 'Looking Back in Anger', p. 391; Usher, pp. 45-46; Mortimer, p. 51.

<sup>26</sup> Mortimer, p. 50.

states, ‘I did not use the term “sodomite”’, but sodomy had been long established as ‘the unnameable vice’ in theological discourse; there is no real ambiguity about what Orleton claimed to have been ‘falsely declared to have said’.<sup>27</sup>

Certainly, it was in Orleton’s interest to deny ever having slandered Edward III’s father in such a manner. But if we are to question his denial owing to his vested interest in the outcome, we must subject Prickehare’s accusation to equal suspicion. It is far from certain that Orleton ever called Edward II a ‘sodomite’ in 1326, or that ‘Orleton was the original source for the public idea that Edward was a sodomite’. Whether such a ‘public idea’ existed among Edward II’s contemporaries – and what indeed it would indicate, given the semantic multiplicity of the term ‘sodomite’ – is also open to question, and will be considered more fully below.

With Orleton’s ‘accusation’ thus cast into doubt, the first source definitively to associate sodomy with Edward II is the *Chronicle of Meaux Abbey*, written by Thomas Burton during the 1390s. Burton’s summary of Edward’s character states that ‘This Edward delighted too much in sodomitical vice’ (*Ipse quidem Edwardus in vitio sodomitico nimium delectabat*).<sup>28</sup> Latin’s lack of articles makes the translation of this clause problematic: is it ‘the sodomitical vice’, or ‘a sodomitical vice’? Articles provide evidence of what a writer understands by ‘sodomitical vice’: ‘the sodomitical vice’ would indicate one specific act, whereas ‘a’ would indicate one of a range of possible transgressions. For this reason, I have not included any article in my translation. I do, however, deviate from the previously accepted translation by favouring ‘sodomitical vice’ over ‘the vice of sodomy’.<sup>29</sup> In order to justify this decision, consider this contrasting example from the *Annales Londonienses*, which clearly *should* be translated as ‘the vice of sodomy’: ‘*quidam Templarius...quemdam consanguineum suum opprimere voluit vitio Sodomiae*’.<sup>30</sup> Here, ‘sodomiae’ is a noun in the genitive case; Burton’s ‘sodomitico’, conversely, is an adjective whose ablative case agrees with the noun ‘vitio’. Precise translation is important for effective analysis of meaning. ‘The vice of sodomy’ is, despite the ambiguity of ‘sodomy’, more specific than ‘sodomitical vice’: the latter refers to some vice that has socially or sexually disruptive (i.e. sodomitical) attributes, while the former directly identifies the vice committed as the act of sodomy.

<sup>27</sup> Jordan, pp. 150–51; Mills, pp. 3–4.

<sup>28</sup> Burton, III, 355.

<sup>29</sup> See (for examples of the latter translation) Mortimer, p. 52; Burgtoft, p. 35; Hamilton, p. 16.

<sup>30</sup> *Annales Londonienses*, pp. 192–93; emphasis added. That “Sodomiae” should be translated “of sodomy” and not “of Sodom” is demonstrated by the Vulgate, in which the genitive of Sodom is “Sodomae” (Deuteronomy 29.23).

A brief cross-section of Latin references to sodomy highlights the diversity that meticulous translation can illuminate. The dissolution of the Templars, who were accused of sodomy among other misdeeds, provides a useful focal point for these references.<sup>31</sup> ‘Sodomies’ sometimes occur in the plural (*facinus sodomorum*)<sup>32</sup> and the term is delineated with varying degrees of specificity. Some texts offer no explanation;<sup>33</sup> others clarify ‘sodomy’ or ‘sodomitical vice’ by equating it with the assertion that the Templars ‘can mingle carnally together, one with another’ (*ad invicem poterant unus cum alio carnaliter commisceri*)<sup>34</sup> or that ‘none should use women, but whatever they should want to do with each other’ (*nullus utatur mulieribus, sed quilibet altentro cum voluerit*).<sup>35</sup> This selection of quotations demonstrates the richness of sodomitical language that existed in this period. Translating ‘*vitio sodomitico*’ as identical to ‘*vitio sodomiae*’ fails to convey that richness, and the complexity of understandings and definitions that it indicates. This said, while these definitions are undoubtedly illuminating sources for the understanding of ‘sodomy’ in relation to the Templars, caution should be exercised when transferring that understanding to other contexts. Sodomy accusations in this period are heavily context-specific, and a writer for whom sodomy equals sex between men in one case should not be assumed to be using the same definition elsewhere. This is particularly important in the derivative world of medieval historical texts, where a definition of sodomy may be copied from an earlier writer, or (as with the Templars) from an official document.

As well as the accusation against Edward, Burton’s account of his reign contains two other references to sodomitical acts: one concerning the Templars, the other a cook in the household of the Pope’s marshal, which appears to be original to Burton’s text:

Anno Domini 1320...cocus mareschalli domini papae, propter vitium sodomiticum comissum cum famulo suo in coquina, puero scilicet 15 annorum, invito et reclamante, extra civitatem Avinionem una cum dicto puero ductus est ad ultimum supplicium. Ubi uterque in igne ad postem ligatus diversis cordis et locis fuit. Cumque, consumptis faculis et combusto poste, ac praefato coco totaliter incinerato et combusto, carbones spargerentur, inventus est puer praedictus in omni parte sui corporis illaesus, et ab igne tam in vestibus quam capillis et carne penitus intactus. Asserebat enim beatam Virginem, cujus auxilium imploraverat, sibi in ipso

<sup>31</sup> While chronicle accounts of the Templars’ fall provide a useful source for references to sodomy roughly contemporary with Edward’s reign, the mere inclusion of their story should not (as Bruce R. Smith implies) be taken as a hint about Edward’s own sexual behaviour – particularly in the case of later chronicles which do not even explicitly mention the sexual accusations against the Templars. [Bruce R. Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare’s England: A Cultural Poetics* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 217].

<sup>32</sup> *The Chronicle of Walter of Guisborough*, ed. by Harry Rothwell (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1957), p. 387; *Bridlington Chronicle*, pp. 28–29.

<sup>33</sup> *Guisborough*, p. 387; *Bridlington Chronicle*, pp. 28–29.

<sup>34</sup> *Annales Londonienses*, p. 192.

<sup>35</sup> Walsingham, fol. G<sup>r</sup>.

incendio aparuisse, et ipsum a vinculis et periculo liberasse. Eadem hora auditus est sonus mirabilis de majori campana in ecclesia beatae Mariae de Dones. Eodemque die, quidam infans mortuus vitae et sanitati meritis ipsius gloriosae Virginis extitit restitutus. Eodemque anno papa concessit regi Angliae decimam cleri totius regni sui.<sup>36</sup>

In AD 1320...a cook of the marshal of the Lord Pope, because of sodomitical vice committed with his attendant in the kitchen – a boy of 15 years, unwilling and crying out in protest – was led to the greatest punishment, along with the said boy, outside the city of Avignon. Where they both were tied to a post in a fire, with many cords and ropes. And when the torch had been consumed and the post burned, and the aforesaid cook totally incinerated and combusted, his ashes scattered, the aforesaid boy was found uninjured from the fire in every part of his body; both in clothes and in hair and flesh, thoroughly intact. For he claimed the blessed Virgin, whose help he had implored, had appeared to him in this fire, and liberated him from his bonds and from danger.

Here, ‘sodomitical vice’ is, by context and implication, a sexual act that can involve two participants: in this case, both male. It is unclear whether the boy protests during the act of ‘sodomitical vice’ or during his procession to punishment, but this ambiguity makes it possible to interpret this event as the cook’s rape of his attendant. Burton’s emphasis on the attendant as ‘boy’ (*puero*) rather than man, while specifying his age and subordinate employment status, supports this interpretation by highlighting the unequal power balance of their relationship. Mary’s intercession on behalf of the boy – a response to his appeal *in extremis*, a motif typical of Marian miracles – may suggest that he should be considered less culpable, but may also simply be a display of mercy.<sup>37</sup>

This account appears only shortly before Burton’s famous statement on Edward II, which uses the same phrasing (*vitio sodomitico*).<sup>38</sup> Although Burton may not have perceived Edward as guilty of the same transgressive acts as the cook, he does not explicitly encourage a contrary interpretation. It is reasonable to assume that readers would have recalled the recent 1320 incident – particularly given its sensational content – when they encountered Burton’s reference to Edward’s sodomy.<sup>39</sup> The passage reads as follows:

De cuius quidem Edwardi meritis, an inter sanctos annumerandus sit, frequens in vulgo sicut de Thoma comite Lancastriae disceptatio fuit. Sed revera nec carceris foeditas nec mortis vilitas, cum ista sceleratis debeantur, nec etiam oblationum frequentia aut miraculorum simulacra, cum talia sint indifferentia, nisi corresponderet sanctimonia vitae praecedentis, quenquam

<sup>36</sup> Burton, III, 321.

<sup>37</sup> *The Myracles of Oure Lady: Ed. from Wynkyn de Worde’s Edition*, ed. by Peter Whiteford (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsverlag, 1990), pp. 12–17.

<sup>38</sup> Burton, III, 355.

<sup>39</sup> For Burton’s readers (real and imagined), see Burton, I, pp. lii–liii, 72.

sanctum probant. Ipse quidem Edwardus in vitio sodomitico nimium delectabat, et fortuna ac gratia omni suo tempore carere videbatur.<sup>40</sup>

Concerning the merits of this Edward, whether he should be numbered among the saints was frequently debated by the people, just as it was concerning Thomas, earl of Lancaster. But in fact, neither foulness of imprisonment, nor vileness of death along with atrocious things, deserves this; nor do even frequent offerings, or semblance of miracles, prove anyone a saint; such things should be indifferent, unless they should correspond with holiness of the preceding life. This Edward delighted too much in sodomitical vice, and all his time seemed to be deficient in terms of fortune and grace.

The opening of this passage is copied almost verbatim from an extremely influential paragraph in Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*. Burton is the only writer to incorporate reference to sodomy when copying it. Though he does not specify whether Edward's 'sodomitical vice' involved two participants, or indeed was sexual, recollection of the 1320 affair would have implied to readers that this was the case. Similarly, since both participants in the 1320 act(s) were male, this encourages a reading of Edward's 'sodomitical vice' as sex between men. While the use of 'too much' (*nimum*) appears to suggest that there is an acceptable level of enjoyment to take in 'sodomitical vice', I would argue that it functions more to create a semantic field of generalised excess (as associated with sodomy) than to suggest measurable levels of sexual pleasure.

Burton was not the only writer to interpolate sodomy into an existing historiographical account of Edward II. Discussing Edward's relationship with Gaveston in his *Chronographically History* (1641), Thomas Heywood writes:

by his loose and effeminate conditions, he drew the King to many horrible vices, as adultery (& as some think) sodomitry, with others: therefore the Lords againe assembled, and maugre the king, banisht him into Flanders.<sup>41</sup>

Heywood's source is Robert Fabyan's *Newe Cronycles*, in which Gaveston 'brought the kyng by meane of his wanton condicions, to manifold vices, as avoutry *and other*'.<sup>42</sup> Unlike the many other historical texts that take this sentence from Fabyan (discussed below), Heywood identifies the 'other'. The phrasing by which he does so – 'as some think', rather than (as is more conventional in similar contexts) 'as some say' – could, given the censure attached to 'naming' sodomy, be seen as a deliberate device. Alternatively, it may indicate that his addition of 'sodomitry' was inspired by popular understanding rather than written source.

---

<sup>40</sup> Burton, III, 355.

<sup>41</sup> Heywood, fol. 2B<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> Fabyan, fol. 2K1<sup>r</sup>; emphasis added. For variant spellings of 'adultery' (including 'avoutry'), see 'adultery, n.', OED (3rd edn, 2011).

The significations of ‘sodomitry’ for Heywood’s readers were hardly less vague than for Burton’s: arguably more so, given that the use of the term with reference to the Templars’ sexual transgressions was now a far more distant memory. However, Heywood collocates ‘sodomitry’ with two other terms that carry sexual connotations: ‘adultery’ unambiguously denotes extramarital sex, while ‘effeminate’ (as will be discussed more fully below) denotes excessive sexual interest in women, reflecting (or possibly causing) a ‘womanlike’ lack of sexual control.<sup>43</sup> As such, it seems clear that he is foregrounding the sexual aspects of ‘sodomitry’. Heywood does not specify whether Gaveston (who ‘drew’ Edward to such ‘horrible vices’) is the procurer or the source of these sexual transgressions (see Chapter 2). However, as I will shortly show, Edward’s historiographical reputation had shifted by 1641 to the extent that readers may well have been more likely to interpret his ‘sodomitry’ as sex between men.

In Jean Froissart’s *Chroniques* – the one other historical text to associate Edward with sodomy – it is not the king but the younger Hugh Despenser who is labelled ‘heretic and sodomite’.<sup>44</sup> Of the fifty surviving manuscripts of the *Chroniques* that definitely cover Despenser’s execution, forty-four comprise the ‘first redaction’ of Book I.<sup>45</sup> Taken largely from the *Vraies Croniques* of Jean le Bel, this ‘first redaction’ relates the execution as follows:

on li coppa tout premiers le vit et les couilles pour tant qu’il estoit hérites et sodomittes ensi que on disoit, et meysmement dou roy meysme, et pour ce avoit décachiet, sicomme on disoit, li roys, le royne en sus de lui et par son enort. Quant li vit et les couilles lui furent coppées, on les jetta out feu et furent arsses. Apriès on li fendi li ventre et li osta-on le coer et toute le coraille, et le jetta-on ou feu pour ardoir, et pour tant qu’il estoit faux de coer et traytres et que par son traytre conseil et enort li rois avoit honni son royaumme et mis à meschief, et avoit fet decoller les plus hault barons d’Engleterre par lesquels li royaummes devoit estre soustenus et deffendus...<sup>46</sup>

his member and his testicles were first cut off, because he was a heretic and a sodomite, even, it was said, with the King, and this was why, as it was said, the King had driven away the Queen on his suggestion. When his

<sup>43</sup> Katherine B. Crawford, ‘Love, Sodomy, and Scandal: Controlling the Sexual Reputation of Henry III’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 12 (2003), 513–42 (p. 518).

<sup>44</sup> Brereton, p. 44. I quote and analyse the text from Froissart rather than le Bel due to the former’s comparative popularity; however, Froissart took this section from le Bel almost verbatim. See *Chronique de Jean le Bel*, ed. by Jules Marie Édouard Viard and Eugène Déprez, 2 vols (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1904), I, 28.

<sup>45</sup> Numbers calculated from *The Online Froissart*. While the actual number may be slightly higher than fifty, the sample I consulted is weighted so highly in favour of the ‘first redaction’ that I am confident additional manuscripts would not skew this representation. See Lettenhove, I.ii, for details on the redactions of the *Chroniques*.

<sup>46</sup> Lettenhove, II, 87–88.

private parts had been cut off, they were thrown into the fire to burn. Afterwards, they cleaved open his belly and tore out his heart and all the vital organs, and threw them into the fire to burn, because he was false of heart and a traitor, and because by his treasonable advice and promptings had led the King to bring shame and misfortune upon his kingdom and to behead the greatest lords of England, by whom the kingdom ought to have been upheld and defended...<sup>47</sup>

At stake here is, firstly, the nature of Despenser's status as sodomite; and secondly, its relation to Edward. Froissart indicates the former with more clarity than at first appears. In the two mutilations described above – Despenser's castration, and the removal of his heart – Froissart creates a causal chain of reasoning. Despenser is castrated because he is a heretic and sodomite, sins expressed by his role in Edward and Isabella's separation. Similarly, his heart is removed because he is 'a false-hearted traitor', a crime expressed by his role in the 1322 executions of English nobles. Through these parallel punishments, Froissart establishes a pattern whereby a transgression is punished by the mutilation and burning of the corresponding body part, and an example is then given of how that transgression manifested itself. The implication, then, is that being a 'sodomite' is a transgression related to the genitals – that is, a sexual transgression. Moreover, it is a sexual transgression that resulted in the disruption of Edward's marriage.

'Heretic and sodomite' was, of course, a well-established collocation – but while this means that the accusation should be treated with caution, it does not render it meaningless, as the preceding attention to the stylistic context of the term indicates.<sup>48</sup> If anything, it is the heresy accusation rather than the sodomy accusation which appears to be tokenistic and added for shock value. Despenser's heresy is not detailed further, but Froissart does effectively elaborate on his sodomy by connecting it to the genitally-focused punishment of castration. This suggests that Froissart perceived 'sodomite' to be the central descriptor of Despenser, and added 'heretic' because it was frequently associated with 'sodomite'.

What, then, is Edward's connection to his favourite's sexual transgressions? Brereton follows convention, translating *enssi que on disoit, et meysmement dou roy meysme* as 'even, it was said, with the King'. However, two alternative translations could alter the implications for Edward considerably. Firstly, the phrase *du roy* could also be translated as 'of the king'. 'Of the king' could be syntactically linked to 'sodomite' – making Despenser the 'sodomite of the king' – or, alternatively, to 'it was said'. The first reading presents

---

<sup>47</sup> Adapted from Brereton, p. 44

<sup>48</sup> Vern L. Bullough, 'Postscript: Heresy, Witchcraft and Sexuality', in *Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church*, pp. 206–26; 'The Sin Against Nature and Homosexuality', *ibid.*, pp. 55–71.

Despenser and Edward as sexual partners with an unequal power dynamic: Despenser is ‘the king’s sodomite’. The second accuses Edward of sodomy more directly: ‘[Despenser] ...was a heretic and sodomite, as was even said of the king’. Support for this reading is provided by the fact that, although Brereton collapses *meysmement* and *meysme* into a single word (‘even’), *meysmement* could in this period be translated as ‘likewise’.<sup>49</sup> This would render the phrase ‘he was a heretic and a sodomite, as it was said, and even likewise of the King’. This critique of the accepted translation is crucial, since it suggests that le Bel and Froissart may be the earliest writers to accuse Edward of sexual involvement with his male favourites. It is, however, equally crucial to recognise the remaining ambiguity, and the fact that no English writer made a similar assertion with any explicitness for another three centuries.

The ‘third redaction’ of Froissart’s *Chroniques* – found only in one unfinished manuscript, but ‘most probably intended...as the definitive version’ – demonstrates that Froissart’s caution increased over time.<sup>50</sup> Adding to le Bel’s text, Froissart emphasises the influence of public report on his story of Despenser’s (or, as above, possibly Edward’s) sodomy, distancing himself from its creation:

il estoit et avoit esté herites et sodomites, ensi que renonmee puble [sic] couroit par toute Engleterre et dou roi meismes.<sup>51</sup>

he was, and had been, a heretic and sodomite, as was publicly renowned and current throughout all England, and even of the king.

This version also removes the adverb *meysmement*, rendering Edward’s connection to Despenser’s sodomy more ambiguous. Later writers who translated Froissart or used him as a source were similarly cautious, either emending ‘sodomite’ to ‘so demed’ or omitting the clause altogether.<sup>52</sup> In France, an anonymous writer used Froissart as one source for the 1588 Catholic League pamphlet *Histoire Tragique et Memorable, de Pierre de Gaverston* (largely a translation from Thomas Walsingham’s *Chronica Maiora*). The writer draws a more explicit link between Despenser’s sin and his genitally-focused punishment (‘in detestation of his sodomy, they cut off his shameful parts’) but the link between Despenser’s sins and those of his king is less clear.<sup>53</sup> Following Despenser’s execution, the writer asserts, ‘We can judge

<sup>49</sup> ‘Même’, DHLF.

<sup>50</sup> Brereton, p. 25.

<sup>51</sup> Froissart, Città Del Vaticano Reg. Lat. 869, fol. 10<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>52</sup> For ‘so demed’, see *Here Begyneth the First Colom of Sir Johan Froysart of the Cronycles*, trans. by John Bouchier, Lord Berners (London: Richard Pynson, 1523), fol. A5<sup>v</sup>; for omission, see Grafton (*Chronicle*), fol. S6<sup>v</sup>. Since Froissart’s ‘first redaction’ was the most popular in manuscript and the basis for the first printed *Chroniques* [e.g. Jean Froissart, *Le premier [-le quart] Volume de Froissart des Croniques* (Paris: pour Antoine Vérard, 1499)], Berners almost certainly worked from this text.

<sup>53</sup> *Histoire Tragique*, fol. H3<sup>r</sup>.



by this little discourse, in what state England was during the reign of this foolish and effeminate Edward’ – but it is unclear whether ‘this little discourse’ indicates specifically Despenser’s punishment for sodomy, or the whole story of Edward’s reign.

Alan Stewart suggests further that the effect of the section of the *Histoire Tragique* which outlines Edward’s fate ‘is to fuse Gaverston [as the pamphlet spells it] to Despenser, and thus to imply that, if Despenser is guilty of sodomy, then Gaverston might also be guilty of sodomy’.<sup>54</sup> However, this potential implication notwithstanding, only one text – the earliest version of Michael Drayton’s *Peirs Gaveston* – explicitly accuses Edward’s earlier favourite of sodomy. Narrating his life, Gaveston attributes the accusation to gossip:

Some slanderous tongues, in spightful manner sayd,  
That heer I liv’d in filthy sodomy,  
And that I was King Edwards Ganemed,  
And to this sinn he was intic’d by mee.  
And more, (to wreck their spightfull deadly teeme,)  
Report the same to Isabel the Queene.<sup>55</sup>

The adjective ‘slanderous’ creates a defensive tone, but this is somewhat undermined by Gaveston’s suggestion that the claim ‘that I was King Edwards Ganemed’ is similarly ‘slanderous’. Gaveston has previously described his relationship with Edward in precisely these terms (‘My Jove with me, his Ganimed, his page’), and the reader’s memory of this is likely to inspire scepticism about his denial of ‘filthy sodomy’.<sup>56</sup> This tension between Gaveston’s denial of sexual transgression and his unapologetic descriptions of his sexual relationship with Edward is characteristic of the poem.<sup>57</sup> Here, although Gaveston uses the singular first person pronoun ‘I’ (thus refraining from explicitly accusing Edward of sodomy) the term ‘Ganemed’ indicates the sexual nature of their relationship with relative specificity.<sup>58</sup>

Finally, one indirect accusation of sodomy levelled at Edward should be mentioned: Thomas Deloney compares the smell of Edward’s prison (after his deposition) to ‘that foule lake where cursed Sodome stood’.<sup>59</sup> This comparison is found nowhere else; it seems

<sup>54</sup> Alan Stewart, ‘Edouard et Gaverston: New Ways of Looking at an English History Play’, in Melnikoff, pp. 97–117 (p. 107).

<sup>55</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 1267–72.

<sup>56</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, l. 213.

<sup>57</sup> Louis Zocca, *Elizabethan Narrative Poetry* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950), p. 82. Indeed, it may well be characteristic of early modern men’s conceptions of their own sexual behaviour, as Alan Bray persuasively argues: ‘The individual could simply avoid making the connection [between the acts he knew were sinful and his own desires or behaviours]: he could keep at two opposite poles the social pressures bearing down on him and his own discordant sexual behaviour, and avoid recognising it for what it was.’ (p. 67).

<sup>58</sup> See Bruce R. Smith, pp. 191–92, and fuller discussion of the term ‘Ganymede’ below.

<sup>59</sup> Thomas Deloney, *Strange Histories* (London: William Barley, 1602), fol. B8r.

likely that Deloney intended to suggest that Edward committed sodomy without making this sensitive accusation explicitly.

This survey of the few medieval and early modern uses of the language of sodomy in relation to Edward II – and indeed their paucity in the first place – indicates that the writing of sodomy was as complex an activity as our reading of it. Responsible interpretation of this language requires us to be alert not only to the ambiguity of the language itself, but to the decisions taken by writers that alternately obstruct and encourage specificity of meaning. Moreover, it requires us to contextualise the language of sodomy on a wide scale – within the attitudes and modes of reference typical of its period – and on a small scale within the stylistic framework of its particular text. By approaching each reference to sodomy and its derivatives in this way, we can go some way towards establishing contemporary perceptions of Edward’s sexual behaviour.

### III. Minions

The terminology of overmighty royal favourites exploded in Europe during the sixteenth century. Favourites (*favoris*), privates (*privadoes*) and minions (*mignons*) became the subject of intense discussion in print and manuscript.<sup>60</sup> While renewed interest in Tacitus’s account of the Roman favourite Sejanus is likely to have played some role in prompting these discussions, this is only a very partial explanation: J. H. Elliott argues sensibly that Tacitus would not have had the influence he did ‘if playwrights, spectators and readers had not been convinced that they, too, were living in an age of overmighty favourites’.<sup>61</sup> Although ‘favourite’ is the term most commonly used to describe Edward II’s relationships with Piers Gaveston and the two Hugh Despensers in modern scholarly discourse, it is used relatively rarely in early modern texts, appearing twice in Marlowe’s *Edward II* and once in Charles Caesar’s *Numerus Infaustus*, along with the term ‘darling’.<sup>62</sup> Both terms, however, are dwarfed in these texts and elsewhere by the dominant early modern term for Edward’s favourites: ‘minion’.

‘Minion’ is, like ‘sodomy’, an ambiguous term with the *potential* to indicate sexual transgression. The OED’s definition, more recently updated than that of ‘sodomy’, helpfully emphasises this semantic multiplicity. A ‘minion’ can be ‘a (usually male) favourite of a sovereign, prince, or other powerful person; a person who is dependent on a patron’s

<sup>60</sup> J. H. Elliott, ‘Introduction’, in *The World of the Favourite*, ed. by J. H. Elliott and L. W. B. Brockliss (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 1–10 (pp. 1–2).

<sup>61</sup> Elliott, ‘Introduction’, p. 2.

<sup>62</sup> Marlowe, I.i.5, III.ii.44; Charles Caesar, *Numerus Infaustus* (London: for Ric. Chiswell, 1689), fols. E6<sup>r</sup>, F2<sup>r</sup>.

favour'; 'a hanger-on'; 'a male or female lover'; a 'frequently derogatory' term for 'a man or woman kept for sexual favours'; 'a fastidious or effeminate man'; and both 'a term of endearment or affection' and 'a derogatory term...slave, underling'.<sup>63</sup> The term is used in all these senses to refer to Edward's favourites, and frequently sustains several meanings simultaneously. While it very rarely lacks a politically pejorative aspect, the extent to which it implies sexual involvement varies between texts. Emphasis on potential is therefore a crucial interpretive strategy: I want to ask here whether writers encourage potential sexual connotations, or obstruct them.

The first English text to use the term 'minion' for any of Edward's favourites was Marlowe's *Edward II*. In this, Marlowe was almost certainly influenced by the French *mignon*, which had been used to denote a powerful favourite since the early fifteenth century.<sup>64</sup> *Mignon* emerged as a term for 'someone who lends themselves to the pleasure of another', later developing 'the pejorative sense of "passive homosexual"'.<sup>65</sup> It was 'especially employed to indicate the young favourites [*jeunes gens favoris*] of the entourage of Charles VII... then the effeminate favourites [*favoris efféminés*] of Henri III'.<sup>66</sup> The adjective 'effeminate' seems key to the term's original application to Henri III's favourites, in that (although it was originally applied to men) 'mignon' could by the sixteenth century function as an 'affectionate appellation' for a female lover, 'with the sense of "elegant, pretty, pleasant"' [*gracieux, joli, agréable*] and indicating 'smallness' and 'kindness' (*petitesse et gentillesse*).<sup>67</sup> This is borne out by the evidence of seventeenth-century French dictionaries. Compilers emphasise the association of *mignon* with physical beauty – 'delicate, pretty, nice' (*Delicat, joli, gentil*) – in particular as an adjective used to describe different aspects of the body, blazon-like ('a *mignon* face, a *mignon* mouth, *mignon* shoes'), but Antoine Furetière specifies that 'a *mignonne* beauty is opposed to a great, full, majestic beauty' (*Une beauté mignonne est opposée à une beauté grande, pleine, majestueuse*).<sup>68</sup> Dictionaries also reveal that

<sup>63</sup> 'Minion, n.1 and adj.', OED (3rd edn, 2002).

<sup>64</sup> Philippe Contamine, 'Pouvoir et Vie de Cour Dans La France Du XV<sup>e</sup> Siècle: Les Mignons', *Comptes-Rendus Des Séances de l'Académie Des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 138.2 (1994), 541–54 (p. 544); 'Mignon', DHLF.

<sup>65</sup> DHLF. The latter meaning should be taken to indicate the receptive partner in anal sex between men, without the anachronistic connotations of identity based on sexual attraction carried by the word 'homosexual' (*homosexuel*).

<sup>66</sup> DHLF; see also David Potter, 'Marlowe's *Massacre at Paris* and the Reputation of Henri III of France', in *Christopher Marlowe and English Renaissance Culture*, ed. by Peter Roberts and Darryll Grantley (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), pp. 70–95 (p. 86); Contamine, pp. 541–42 and *passim*.

<sup>67</sup> DHLF.

<sup>68</sup> *Le Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* (Paris: Jean Baptiste Coignard, 1694), II, fol. 13<sup>v</sup>; Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire Universel* (The Hague; Rotterdam: Arnout & Renier Leers, 1690), fol. 3S<sup>v</sup>.

*mignon* was trivialising, used as a term of address for beloved children; as well as, of course, signifying a ‘favourite’ (Pierre Richelet specifically mentions Henri III).<sup>69</sup>

Pierre L’Estoile’s *Registre-Journal du Regne de Henri III* – part diary, part scrapbook of pamphlets and satirical verses, compiled contemporaneously from 1574-1611 – notes that the popularity of the term ‘mignon’ emerged following Henri’s 1576 visits to the parishes of Paris. Henri was collecting subsidies to fund the payoff of Protestant mercenaries (an unpopular aspect of the treaty that ended the fifth war of religion) and was accompanied by his favourites. This entourage of expensively dressed young men, accompanying the supposedly cash-strapped king on a mission to collect funds for religious purposes, was at best tactless and at worst offended the populace.<sup>70</sup> L’Estoile’s description integrates details of the *mignons*’ offensively elaborate dress and hairstyles with accusations of sexual transgression: they indulge in ‘fornicating’ (*paillarder*), while their clothing is ‘unchaste’ (*impudiques*), and their headgear like that of ‘whores in the brothels’ (*comme font les putains du bordeau*).<sup>71</sup>

Over the next thirteen years of Henri’s often unpopular rule, accusations of sexual sin on the part of his *mignons* – and of their sexual involvement with Henri – increased in frequency and clarity.<sup>72</sup> Both king and favourites were called ‘bugger’ (*bougre*) and ‘sodomite’ (*sodomite*) in contexts that encourage a sexual interpretation, and Henri’s love for his *mignons* was described as excessive.<sup>73</sup> Indeed, as we have seen, *mignon* could explicitly indicate the receptive partner in anal sex between men. This is reflected in the fact that the ‘mignons’ were described as ‘shameless Ganymedes’ (*Ganimèdes effrontés*) and as practising ‘among themselves the art / Of lewd Ganymede’ (*Entre eux ils pratiquent l’art / De l’impudique Ganimède*).<sup>74</sup> ‘Ganymede’ was, in early modern Europe, one of the most specific terms available for referring to sex between men, and the only such term whose sexual

<sup>69</sup> Furetière, fol. 3S<sup>v</sup>; Pierre Richelet, *Dictionnaire François* (Geneva: chez Jean Herman Widerhold, 1680), II, fols. E3<sup>r</sup>, E4<sup>v</sup>; *Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française*, II, fol. I3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>70</sup> Crawford, pp. 523–24.

<sup>71</sup> L’Estoile, II, 42–43; trans. by Crawford, p. 524. I cite a more recent critical edition than was available to Crawford.

<sup>72</sup> See Joseph Cady, ‘The “Masculine Love” of the “Princes of Sodom” “Practising the Art of Ganymede” at Henri III’s Court: The Homosexuality of Henri III and His Mignons in Pierre de L’Estoile’s *Mémoires-Journaux*’, in *Desire and Discipline: Sex and Sexuality in the Premodern West*, ed. by Jacqueline Murray and Konrad Eisenbichler (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), pp. 123–54. While I have serious reservations about Cady’s insistence that the sexual slanders and satires against Henri and his mignons represent sixteenth-century awareness of homosexual identity in a way directly comparable to modern conceptions, his essay provides a valuable synthesis of these accusations from across L’Estoile’s *Registre-Journal*.

<sup>73</sup> Crawford, p. 542; Cady, pp. 132, 136–37.

<sup>74</sup> L’Estoile, II, 185, 46; see Cady, pp. 139–40, for further examples.

denotations were really foregrounded; it referred, similarly, to the receptive partner in anal sex.<sup>75</sup>

The parallels between Henri and Edward II did not go unnoticed. In 1588, the French Catholic League sponsored the pamphlet *Histoire Tragique et Memorable, de Pierre de Gaverston*. This text explicitly equated Gaveston with his sixteenth-century counterpart Jean Louis de Nogaret de La Valette, also a minor noble from Gascony, whom Henri had created Duc D'Épernon. By implication, this aligned Henri with the deposed Edward. This text and its influences – including a minor pamphlet war – will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. Its relevance here is that it contains the first reference to any of Edward II's favourites as a *mignon*. The writer uses the term frequently, often substituting it where Walsingham (from whom the text is translated) uses Gaveston's Latinised first name, 'Petrus'.<sup>76</sup> Given the writer's parallel with Nogaret, his use of *mignon* suggests that the term's connotations as established regarding Henri's favourites – fashionable, effeminate dress, sexual transgression, and an excessively close emotional relationship with the king – were also intended to apply here.

Alan Stewart has recently argued convincingly for the influence of the *Histoire Tragique* on Marlowe's *Edward II*, suggesting that 'this attack on the duc d'Épernon shapes and informs Marlowe's play', and that 'we should understand [the] English historical frame [of *Edward II*] as co-existing with another: that of contemporary French politics'.<sup>77</sup> Although Stewart stops short of suggesting that Marlowe read the *Histoire Tragique*, it seems very plausible that he did – it was, as Stewart says, 'clearly a best-seller' with a 'remarkable' impact – and that his use of 'minion' for Gaveston is drawn from it.<sup>78</sup> There is stronger evidence for the influence of a later Catholic League pamphlet on *The Massacre at Paris*, suggesting that Marlowe had some familiarity with and access to the French libels.<sup>79</sup> Marlowe's knowledge of Henri from this play may also have suggested the topic of *Edward II*, prompting Marlowe to investigate the French king's fourteenth-century English

---

<sup>75</sup> Bruce R. Smith, pp. 195–96.

<sup>76</sup> Compare e.g. *Histoire Tragique*, fol. E<sup>r</sup> (*chasser ce mignon hors de sa Cour*) to Walsingham, fol. F6<sup>v</sup> (*dictum Petrum a sua propoelleret comitiva*).

<sup>77</sup> Stewart, pp. 110, 97.

<sup>78</sup> Stewart, pp. 99, 102, 108. This said, not all the points that Stewart identifies as indicating the *Histoire Tragique*'s influence on Marlowe are equally convincing: for example, Marlowe's choice to open his play with Gaveston's recall from exile could equally have been derived from various chronicles, and Stewart's argument that both pamphlet and play '[focus] on the mignon's relationship with the king' is not strong evidence for influence (p. 115).

<sup>79</sup> Vivien Thomas and William Tydeman, *Christopher Marlowe: The Plays and Their Sources* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 251, 278–80; Julia Briggs, 'Marlowe's *Massacre at Paris*: A Reconsideration', *Review of English Studies*, 34 (1983), 257–78 (pp. 263–65).

counterpart.<sup>80</sup> Overall, however, Richard Hillman is correct to say that ‘it seems less fruitful to speculate about Marlowe’s inspiration than to recognise that, even if he derived this theme from English historical sources, it came to him multiply overlaid and countersigned by the contemporary discourse of French political satire’.<sup>81</sup> The anonymous writer of *Thomas of Woodstock*, Marlowe’s contemporary, also uses the term ‘minion’ liberally to denote Richard II’s favourites, and his emphasis on their excessive interest in fashion (they ‘sit in council to devise’ new and impractical footwear) seems a clear and deliberate echo of Henri’s favourites.<sup>82</sup>

Outside the historiography of Edward II, English uses of ‘minion’ are diverse. In some cases, it clearly connotes sexual transgression: for Edmund Spenser, the ‘mincing mineon’ Perissa warrants condemnation for ‘looseness’, while for John Payne a ‘secret minion’ is an adulterous partner.<sup>83</sup> Elsewhere, ‘minion’ appears as part of a condemnation of a monarch’s excessive reliance on the company and advice of young, fashionable men, or as part of anti-court discourse which castigates the preoccupation of courtiers with petty matters of fun and fashion rather than weightier affairs of state. (The use of this discourse in relation to Edward II’s favourites will be discussed more fully in Chapter 2). Henry VIII’s young, unpopular favourites were, as Edward Hall notes, ‘called the kynges minions’, and were ultimately expelled from court – a parallel with Edward II’s favourites which may have affected the connotations of the term ‘minion’ for writers and readers familiar with Hall’s *Union*.<sup>84</sup> For Robert Naunton, reflecting positively on Elizabeth I’s reign in the early seventeenth century, the salient connotation of ‘minion’ was that of a favourite with excessive power over the monarch. Naunton explicitly contrasts Elizabeth’s ‘favourites’ with the precedents of ‘Gaveston, Vere [and] Spencer’, who acted ‘by their own wills and appetites’ rather than following their monarchs’ instructions.<sup>85</sup>

When Marlowe chose the term ‘minion’ to apply to Gaveston, then, he was choosing a profoundly unstable and ambiguous term with the potential to signify sexual transgression; anti-court sentiment; a young, fashionable favourite with insufficient concern

---

<sup>80</sup> Briggs, p. 263.

<sup>81</sup> Richard Hillman, *Shakespeare, Marlowe and the Politics of France* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p. 98.

<sup>82</sup> *Thomas of Woodstock, Or, Richard the Second, Part One*, ed. by Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), II.iii.88. For ‘minion’ see (e.g.) I.ii.43; for fashion see (e.g.) III.ii.201–07.

<sup>83</sup> Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. by Thomas P. Roche and C. Patrick O’Donnell (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), II.ii.37; quoted in Laurie Shannon, ‘Monarchs, Minions and “Sovereign” Friendship’, *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 97 (1998), 90–112 (p. 95); John Payne, *Royall Exchange* (Harlem: Gulis Romaen, 1597), fol. D2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>84</sup> Edward Hall, *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustrate Famelies of Lancastre [and] Yorke* (London: Richard Grafton, 1548), fol. 3M2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>85</sup> Robert Naunton, *Fragmenta Regalia, Or, Observations on the Late Queen Elizabeth, Her Times and Favorits* (London: n.p., 1641), fol. A3<sup>r</sup>–A3<sup>v</sup>.

for governance; and a favourite with singular and/or excessive political power. He had previously used the term to apply to Henri III's favourites in *The Massacre at Paris*, but the situations differ in one crucial respect, which can best be observed in a close linguistic echo between the two plays: Henri's 'mind...runs on his minions', while Edward's 'runs on his minion'.<sup>86</sup> H. J. Oliver argues that this echo indicates that 'Marlowe thought of the two situations as identical' – but in fact they are crucially different.<sup>87</sup> Henri has many minions, who are overwhelmingly spoken of in the plural, as a band of followers; his preoccupation with them emphasises his excessive reliance on flatterers. Edward, by contrast, has one – suggesting Gaveston's dangerously unchecked political influence but also Edward's excessive emotional commitment and loyalty to him.

Far more so than *Massacre, Edward II* establishes a rich complexity of meaning for 'minion'. The play exclusively applies the term to Gaveston – Spencer is 'never a "minion"', always one of [Edward's] (always plural) "flatterers"<sup>88</sup> – which further highlights the singularity observed above.<sup>88</sup> Edward's nobles use it as a contemptuous metonym emphasising Gaveston's low social status ('thy base minion') and to mock Edward's excessive love for his favourite ('The King is lovesick for his minion').<sup>89</sup> Later, Edward takes defensive ownership of the term: 'Were he a peasant, being my minion, / I'll make the proudest of you stoop to him.'<sup>90</sup> Moreover, the use of 'minion' to refer to Gaveston, who the play quickly establishes is Edward's sexual partner (see Chapter 2), is crucial in cementing its sexual connotations in the play. As Vincenzo Pasquarella points out, Lancaster's attempt to reassure Isabella – 'now his [Edward's] minion's gone / His wanton humour will be quickly left' – suggests a causal association between the term 'minion' and Gaveston's influence over Edward's sexually transgressive ('wanton') behaviour.<sup>91</sup> Perhaps most interestingly, Marlowe also imbues 'minion' with a long history, applying it to a succession of male-male pairs:

The mightiest kings have had their minions:  
Great Alexander loved Hephestion;  
The conquering Hercules for Hylas wept;  
And for Patroclus stern Achilles drooped.  
And not kings only, but the wisest men:  
The Roman Tully lov'd Octavius;

---

<sup>86</sup> Christopher Marlowe, 'The Massacre at Paris', in *Dido, Queen of Carthage and The Massacre at Paris*, ed. by H. J. Oliver (Methuen, 1968), pp. 91–163 (XIV.43–46); Marlowe, II.ii.4.

<sup>87</sup> *Dido and Massacre*, p. lvi.

<sup>88</sup> Stewart, p. 112.

<sup>89</sup> Marlowe, I.i.132, I.iv.87.

<sup>90</sup> Marlowe, I.iv.30–31.

<sup>91</sup> Vincenzo Pasquarella, *Christopher Marlowe's Representation of Love* (Rome: Aracne, 2008), p. 74; Marlowe, I.iv.198–99.

Grave Socrates, wild Alcibiades.<sup>92</sup>

The role of this passage in establishing multiple sexual, emotional and political aspects of Edward and Gaveston's relationship – and in inspiring later writers to use the same technique – is discussed in Chapter 2. Here, I want to note that this passage represents Marlowe's engagement with an early modern textual practice that allowed writers to discuss love and sex between men provided that their discussion could be interpreted as humanist classical imitation.<sup>93</sup> It is vital to contextualise this technique by recognising that it is employed by other writers; failure to do this risks misrepresenting Marlowe as a single rebellious defender of relationships between men.<sup>94</sup> Richard Barnfield, for example, prefaced the second edition of his homoerotic poem *The Affectionate Shepheard* with an assertion that his work was 'nothing else, but an imitation of Virgill, in the second Eclogue of Alexis'; E. K.'s gloss to Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender* similarly aligns the love of Hobbinol for Colin (the propriety of which clearly causes him some concern) with Virgil's second eclogue.<sup>95</sup> The very status of Virgil's second eclogue as an established example of one man's unrequited love for another, however, enabled these poets' claims of *imitatio* (Barnfield's probably more deliberately than E. K.'s) to act simultaneously as signals concerning their poems' content. Marlowe applies the same practice not to texts, but to human relationships. Analogous to Virgil's eclogue, the classical pairings Mortimer cites were established in this period as deep emotional male-male partnerships. Suggestions that these relationships were sexual were also not infrequent: in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, for instance, Thersites describes Patroclus as Achilles's 'masculine whore'.<sup>96</sup> Through Mortimer's speech, Marlowe aligns Edward and Gaveston with this catalogue of classical pairs – simultaneously exonerating them (and exonerating himself from discussion of love and sex between men) and confirming the nature of their relationship. In addition, Marlowe's application of the term 'minion' – an intrinsically newfangled figure with powerful contemporary resonance – to these classical couples destabilises its contemporary political currency. His statement that 'The mightiest kings have had their minions' can be contrasted with Samuel Daniel, whose 1618 *Collection of the History of England* describes Gaveston as 'the first Privado of this kinde ever noted in our History', thus depriving

---

<sup>92</sup> Marlowe, Liv.390-96.

<sup>93</sup> See Stephen Guy-Bray, *Homoerotic Space: The Poetics of Loss in Renaissance Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), pp. 3–23 and *passim*.

<sup>94</sup> Claude J. Summers falls into this trap ['Sex, Politics and Self-Realisation in *Edward II*', in '*A Poet and a Filthy Play-Maker*': *New Essays on Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by Kenneth Friedenreich, Roma Gill, and Constance B. Kuriyama (New York: AMS Press, 1988), pp. 221–40 (p. 223)].

<sup>95</sup> Richard Barnfield, *The Complete Poems*, ed. by George Klawitter (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1990), p. 30; Edmund Spenser, *The Shepheardes Calender* (London: Hugh Singleton, 1579), fol. A2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>96</sup> V.i.17, *Oxford Shakespeare*. See also Spenser, *Shepheardes Calender*, fol. A2<sup>r</sup>, for anxiety concerning Socrates and Alcibiades.



Edward and Gaveston of any legitimating precedent for their actions.<sup>97</sup> To Daniel, Edward is transgressing by not emulating positive examples from history as early modern kings were expected to do; to Marlowe, he is acting in a well-established classical tradition.

Marlowe's use of 'minion' as a term for Edward's favourites can be shown to have influenced several subsequent writers. In the following section I will examine the term's significations in the two historical texts that seem likely to have been directly influenced by Marlowe, before demonstrating the different emphases of meaning given to the term in seventeenth-century accounts of Edward's reign.

Edward II's 'minions' first appear in a historical text in 1607. Edward Ayscu, whose *Historie* highlights positive interactions between England and Scotland prior to their union under James VI and I, contrasts Edward with his Scottish counterparts:

while this youthfull king sought nothing more, then to spend his time in voluptuous pleasure & riotous excesse, making such his familiers, and chiefe minions about him, as best fitted his humor: Bruse on the other side wholly indevored by all possible meanes, how to restore his country to her former liberty and quiet estate...<sup>98</sup>

This passage is heavily derivative of Holinshed's *Chronicles*: the phrase 'passing his time in voluptuous pleasure, and riotous excesse' originates in Holinshed, as does the suggestion that Edward was 'desirous to advance those that were like to him self'.<sup>99</sup> Holinshed, however, does not use the term 'minions' in relation to Edward II (he does use it elsewhere to denote a favourite, describing Richard Ratcliffe as Lord Lovell's 'mischeevous minion').<sup>100</sup> Between the publication of Holinshed's and Ayscu's texts, Marlowe's *Edward II* was printed twice and (according to the 1594 title page) had been 'sundrie times publicly acted in the honourable citie of London'.<sup>101</sup> It is therefore plausible that Ayscu's use of 'minion' for Edward's favourites was directly influenced by its frequency in Marlowe's play. An important factor to support this is that, while Ayscu does not name Edward's 'chiefe minions', the original passage in Holinshed is specifically about Gaveston. Marlowe's play also applies the term to Gaveston in particular. Ayscu, when reading this passage in Holinshed, may have been encouraged by familiarity with Marlowe's *Edward II* to associate it with the term 'minion'.

---

<sup>97</sup> Daniel, fol. Q4r.

<sup>98</sup> Edward Ayscu, *A Historie Contayning the Warres, Treaties, Marriages, and Other Occurrents Betweene England and Scotland* (London: G. Eld, 1607), fol. K4r.

<sup>99</sup> Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / p. 318.

<sup>100</sup> Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / p. 746.

<sup>101</sup> Marlowe, pp. 1–2.

Given the comparative popularity of Ayscu's and Marlowe's texts (the former was never reprinted), it seems likely that subsequent uses of 'minion' in historical accounts of Edward's reign were initially also influenced by Marlowe, before beginning to influence each other. John Speed's *History of Great Britaine*, published only four years after Ayscu's *History*, was the first historical text to refer to a specific favourite of Edward II as a 'minion': like Marlowe, Speed uses the term to refer to Gaveston. At Edward's marriage to Isabella, Speed reports:

There was also present (as no Sunne-shine but hath shadow) *Peirs* of *Gaveston*, the beloved Minion of this *Edward*, whose reentertainment the dying king had so seriously forbidden, whom notwithstanding, together with his own new wife, he brought into *England*.<sup>102</sup>

This is Speed's only use of the term 'minion' in his account of Edward's reign. The term does occur at several other points in the *History* as a whole, always referring to overmighty favourites: sometimes as a wholly political condemnation, sometimes also associated with sexual transgression.<sup>103</sup> When referring to Gaveston, Speed uses the term to foreground the king's love for his favourite ('beloved minion'), its implied comparability to his love for Isabella ('together with his own new wife'), and their inseparability ('as no Sunne-shine but hath shadow'). The 'shadow' image is multi-layered: it presents Gaveston as a overshadowing the king's (sun's) glory, suggesting his negative influence, but also as casting a dark cloud over the wedding by his very presence. But should this use of 'minion' be read as indicating any sexual relationship between Edward and Gaveston? Certainly, Speed's Edward transgresses sexually: he commits 'adultery', as well as enjoying 'sensualities and riotous practises' and 'sinnefull delights'.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, he is 'drawn' into those transgressions by Gaveston, whom Speed describes as both physically and mentally attractive: 'he had a sharpe witte in a comely shape, and briefly, was such a one, as wee use to call *very fine*'.<sup>105</sup> But these descriptions occur after the 'minion' reference, so cannot inform a reader's initial interpretation of the term. Speed does also refer in the 'minion' paragraph to Edward I's prohibition of Gaveston's recall, which *is* narrated before this point: Gaveston, he writes, was banished in Edward I's reign 'for abusing the tender yeares of the Prince with wicked vanities'.<sup>106</sup> Though this sentence certainly could be read as involving incitement to sexual sin, it is ultimately ambiguous. More importantly, even if it is read as sexual – and even if we take into account the later references to 'adultery' and

---

<sup>102</sup> Speed, fol. 4S2r.

<sup>103</sup> Speed, fols. 3S2r, 4Cr.

<sup>104</sup> Speed, fols 4S2v, 4S2r.

<sup>105</sup> Speed, fols. 4S2r–4S2v.

<sup>106</sup> Speed, fols. 4R3r–4R3v (note that this page is missing in the EEBO facsimile).

‘sinnefull delights’ quoted above – there is no conclusive suggestion in Speed’s text that Gaveston is a participant in Edward’s sexual transgression rather than an inciter of it. Speed’s *History* thus forms a good example of the inherent ambiguity of ‘minion’ and the impossibility of specific definition in all cases.

Two examples from the 1620s exemplify the different emphases given to the term in accounts of Edward’s reign. Elizabeth Cary uses ‘minion’ in an anti-court sense: recounting Edward’s choice of the younger Despenser as a favourite, she writes, ‘he was young, and had a pleasing aspect; a personage though not super-excellent, yet well enough to make a formal Minion’.<sup>107</sup> Youth and beauty, then, are essential qualifications for a favourite to be termed a ‘minion’. For Francis Hubert, ‘Mynions of the King’ are primarily characterised by excessive political power (‘Though Edward had, yet Spencers rul’d the Crowne’) and ‘rapine, and unjust oppression’.<sup>108</sup> In the 1629 revision of his poem on Edward’s life and reign, Hubert offers Henry VIII’s powerful ministers Cardinal Wolsey, Thomas Cromwell, Edmund Dudley and Richard Empson as examples of ‘Princes Minions’.<sup>109</sup>

Finally, Daniel’s *Collection of the History of England* is worthy of note for its combination of the political and sexual meanings of ‘minion’ with reference to Edward’s favourites. Daniel’s account of Edward’s reign contains five uses of the term – not a huge number, but the highest density in any historical text – and its influence over later histories allows us to consider how its account of Edward’s reign was subsequently read. Following Gaveston’s death, Daniel enters into a diatribe on ‘The miserable estate of Minions’.<sup>110</sup> He casts remarkably little blame upon Gaveston: his ‘arrogancie’ is the ‘usual’ result of royal favour, while his lack of ‘understanding and judgement’ is owing to his inability, rather than unwillingness, to see clearly from his high estate. While not praising Gaveston’s character, Daniel asserts that ‘extraordinary favour’ induces bad behaviour in even ‘the best of men’. Given the publication date of 1618, and the generalised terms in which this passage is presented, it seems possible that Daniel is using Edward and Gaveston’s example implicitly to criticise James VI and I for his indulgence of George Villiers. This is supported by Daniel’s statement that Gaveston, ‘for that hee was the first Privado of this kinde ever noted in our History, and was above a King in his life, deserves to have his Character among Princes being dead.’<sup>111</sup> Defining Gaveston as ‘first’ of his kind implies that he was

---

<sup>107</sup> Cary (folio), fol. O<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>108</sup> Hubert (1628), stanzas 248–53.

<sup>109</sup> Hubert (1629), stanzas 529–30.

<sup>110</sup> Daniel, fol. Q4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>111</sup> Daniel, fol. Q4<sup>r</sup>.

not the last or only; rather he ‘deserves to have his character’ noted *because* he was the original of an extant type. Daniel is probably responding here to the contemporary conviction that the people of early seventeenth-century England ‘were living in an age of overmighty favourites’, but he also seems aware of the potential links between his text and specific contemporary political circumstances, as is suggested by his condemnatory treatment of Adam Orleton’s sermon promoting Edward’s deposition.<sup>112</sup>

#### IV. Ganymede

While the quotation above foregrounds the political rather than sexual aspects of ‘minion’, Daniel had previously used the term ‘minion’ in his *Civil Wars* to describe the relationship between Queen Margaret and William de la Pole, which had been established as an adulterous sexual one by Shakespeare’s *Henry VI* plays.<sup>113</sup> And there is evidence to suggest that at least one reader interpreted Daniel’s ‘minion’ as indicating a sexual relationship between Edward and Gaveston. Francis Sandford’s *Genealogical History* (1677) follows Daniel’s phrasing almost verbatim but, crucially, inserts the term ‘Ganimed’. Daniel’s phrase, ‘After the Funeralls performed at Westminster, hee [Edward] passes over to Bologne’, becomes, ‘His Fathers Funerals performed, over He passes with His Ganimed to Boloigne’.<sup>114</sup>

The use of the term ‘Ganymede’ is the most specific, and the most unequivocal, way in which early modern writers indicate the sexual nature of Edward’s relationship with Gaveston – and Sandford’s is the only historical text in which it appears. Indeed, it was one of the most specific and unequivocal terms available to them with which to indicate sex between men: according to Bruce R. Smith, ‘For Renaissance Englishmen, like their counterparts all over Europe, the story of Jupiter and Ganymede was the best known, most widely recognised myth of homoerotic desire.’<sup>115</sup> The unequal social statuses of the partners in that myth – Jupiter the god, Ganymede the beautiful boy he abducted and made his cupbearer – made it particularly appropriate to Edward II’s situation. ‘More explicitly than any other myth,’ argues Smith, the myth of Jupiter and Ganymede ‘articulated the social and political dynamics that complicated male-male desire in the cultural context of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. In social terms, it spoke to the tensions in

---

<sup>112</sup> Daniel, fol. Rv.

<sup>113</sup> Samuel Daniel, *The Civile Wars Betweene the Houses of Lancaster and Yorke* (London: [Humphrey Lownes for] Simon Watersonne, 1609), V.91 (fol. L4<sup>v</sup>).

<sup>114</sup> Daniel, fol. Q2<sup>v</sup>; Sandford, fol. 2P2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>115</sup> Bruce R. Smith, p. 192.

power that were at the heart of homoerotic relations between men in early modern England.’

The ‘Ganimed’ of Sandford’s text is clearly Gaveston: he is the only favourite Sandford has so far mentioned, and his presence at Edward’s wedding in Boulogne is subsequently noted.<sup>116</sup> So what is the origin of Sandford’s interpolation of it – and with it, the explicit suggestion that Edward and Gaveston’s relationship was sexual? When the rest of the *Genealogical History* is so derivative (either of Daniel or of Richard Baker, whose *Chronicle* itself substantially relies on Daniel), a short burst of outright invention seems unlikely. It is more plausible that Sandford’s ‘Ganimed’ makes explicit what he already found implicit in his sources. Yet neither Daniel nor Baker make particular effort to suggest that any of Edward’s transgressions were sexual; indeed, Baker explicitly asserts ‘that neither Gaveston nor the Spensers had so debauched him, as to make him false to his bed, or to be disloyall to his Queene’.<sup>117</sup> Sandford also used Walsingham’s *Chronica Maiora*, an influential text for the romanticisation of Edward and Gaveston’s relationship, but Walsingham’s focus is emotional rather than sexual. A remaining factor is Daniel’s frequent description of Gaveston as Edward’s ‘minion’. If Sandford was seeking a term for Gaveston, able to replace his name in quasi-metonymic fashion as ‘Ganimed’ does, ‘minion’ was the precedent most prominently available. That Sandford perceived ‘minion’ to have sexual connotations is further suggested by his reference to Roger Mortimer as Isabella’s ‘mignon’: the adulterous, sexual nature of their relationship was well established, and indeed Sandford later mentions that Mortimer was accused of having been ‘too familiar with the Queen’.<sup>118</sup> It is therefore possible that Sandford’s use of ‘Ganimed’ represents an acknowledgement that, to him, Daniel’s use of ‘minion’ indicated a sexual relationship.

The use of ‘Ganymede’ in the historiography of Edward II is a crucial piece of evidence for the existence of a conviction that Edward’s relationship with Gaveston was sexual. As such, as well as analysing uses of this term, this section will consider the origins of that conviction (principally found in Marlowe’s *Edward II*).

Although the term ‘Ganymede’ was available to medieval writers, the earliest use of it in an account of Edward’s reign is William Warner’s *Albions England* (1589).<sup>119</sup> Warner

---

<sup>116</sup> Sandford, fols. 2P2<sup>r</sup>–2P2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>117</sup> Baker, fol. T4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>118</sup> Sandford, fols. 2Q2<sup>r</sup>, 2T<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>119</sup> See, for example, V. A. Kolve, ‘Ganymede / Son of Getron: Medieval Monasticism and the Drama of Same-Sex Desire’, *Speculum*, 73.04 (1998), 1014–67; Mills, pp. 209–42. Although Geoffrey le Baker mentions Ganymede in his account of Edward’s reign, I do not believe this should be treated as a reference to

does not explicitly use the term with reference to Edward, but digresses from his relation of Edward's reign to tell a story involving 'Ganymedes' (a seemingly incongruous blending of mythological and chronicle material typical of *Albions England*, as Helen Cooper notes).<sup>120</sup> Thomas of Lancaster, 'over-warred' from conflict with Edward, flees into the woods and meets a hermit, to whom he complains that the country 'doth decline / Through wilde and wanton Guydes'.<sup>121</sup> His prediction of this 'decline', he says, is based on 'Presidents too like and fire too likely heere to flame'. He then recounts these 'Presidents', which are a succession of historical wars caused by lust. The implication is that the wars in England have similar origins – that is, that Edward's promotion of Gaveston and the Despencers, which has so angered his nobles, is a result of his sexual attraction to these men.

Lancaster's narrative eventually focuses in on Ireland in the time of the Norwegian King Turgesius, who defeats five Irish kings to become sole ruler of Ireland. One of the defeated men, the former King of Meth, becomes Turgesius's favourite; his flattering techniques ('what he [Turgesius] sayd that other [Meth] soothde') and excessive power (he is described as 'a pettie King') are reminiscent of Edward's favourites. Following the lustful Turgesius's request for the hand of Meth's daughter in marriage, Meth offers him a choice between his five nieces, who, he says, are 'farre more fairer' than his daughter.<sup>122</sup> The five nieces visit Turgesius in his chamber, and he extols their beauty, before comparing them to Jupiter's lovers:

How many view I fairer than Europa or the rest,  
And Girle-boyes, favouring Ganimæde heere with his Lord a Guest.  
And Ganimædes we are, quoth one, and thou a Prophet trew,  
And hidden Skeines from underneath their forged garments drew,  
Wherewith the Tyrant and his Bawds, with safe escape, they slew...<sup>123</sup>

---

Edward's or his favourites' sexual behaviour. The context is a description of the Isle of Lundy, to which Edward and his followers attempt to flee following Isabella's invasion in 1326. On Lundy, le Baker writes, 'There are pigeons and also sparrows, called the birds of Ganymede by Alexander Neckham' (2012, p. 22, trans. by Preest). Barber and Preest cite Alexander Neckam [*Alexandri Neckam de Naturis Rerum Libri Duo*, ed. by Thomas Wright (London: Longman, 1863), Book 1, chap. XLVI (pp. 97–99)], as le Baker's source for this, but this chapter is actually about cranes, which Neckam describes as 'the birds of Palamedes' (not Ganymede). Sparrows, treated in Book 1, chap. LX (pp. 109–10), are described as 'lustful' (*libidinosa*) but not explicitly connected with Ganymede, so the reference to Ganymede is either a misremembrance or deliberate interpolation on le Baker's part. However, since le Baker's text is unusually sympathetic towards Edward and nowhere hints at a sexual relationship between the king and his favourites, instead emphasising his faithfulness and devotion to Isabella, it seems very unlikely that the mention of Ganymede here is intended to refer to Edward's sexual behaviour.

<sup>120</sup> Helen Cooper, 'The Elizabethan Havelok: William Warner's First of the English', in *Medieval Insular Romance: Translation and Innovation*, ed. by Judith Weiss, Jennifer Fellows, and Morgan Dickson (Cambridge: Brewer, 2000), pp. 169–83.

<sup>121</sup> William Warner, *Albions England* (London: Thomas Orwin for Thomas Cadman, 1589), fol. Q2v.

<sup>122</sup> Warner, fol. Q3r.

<sup>123</sup> Warner, fol. Q4r.

The story is bizarre, but its subtext clear: lust, and particularly the presence of ‘Ganimædes’ at court, have been Turgesius’s downfall. Lancaster’s subsequent tale, in which an instance of adultery leads to the invasion and conquest of Ireland, has a similar moral. He concludes, ‘Alone observe what changes heere through onely lust befell: / And note our England surfetteth in greater sins than it’.<sup>124</sup> It seems reasonable to conclude that Warner’s interpolated reference to ‘Ganimædes’ is intended to hint that the nature of Edward’s non-specific ‘greater sins’ is, specifically, sex with men.

Marlowe’s *Edward II* is the first text to use the term ‘Ganymede’ explicitly with reference to Edward and Gaveston’s relationship. This reflects the fact that Marlowe instigated a shift in understanding of Edward and Gaveston’s relationship, from cautious ambiguity to a consensus about its sexual nature. As will be explored fully below and in Chapter 2, Holinshed’s *Chronicles* (Marlowe’s principal source) present Edward as sensually indulgent and probably sexually transgressive; these transgressions are presented as incited by Edward’s favourites, particularly Gaveston. Marlowe goes further, presenting Edward and Gaveston’s relationship as unequivocally both sexual and romantic. As such, it is useful here to contextualise Marlowe’s choice to use the term ‘Ganymede’ with an examination of his choice to instigate that shift: his choice to, as Michel Poirier first observed in 1968, ‘insistently [stress] what Holinshed mentioned discreetly in his *Chronicle*’.<sup>125</sup>

It should first be noted that, while *Edward II* is of course a literary work, it is based on a historical subject, and hence Marlowe did not have entirely free rein over the plot of his play. What some critics characterise as Marlowe’s deliberate plot choices are in fact the consequence of his adherence to the salient facts of Edward’s life. For example, Michael Lee sees Edward’s choice of ‘yet another man’ as a sexual and romantic partner after Gaveston’s death as evidence that early modern authors ‘[conceived] same-sex desire as...something approaching an identity’ – but in dramatizing Edward’s choice of the two Hugh Despensers as his second significant favourites, Marlowe is merely following his sources.<sup>126</sup> Similarly, Christopher Wessman questions the lack of scholarly comment on what he calls Marlowe’s ‘skilful and highly self-conscious interconnection’ between ‘Pierce of Gaveston; the noble peers; “peers”, as in looking; and “pierce” as in penetrating’ – but

---

<sup>124</sup> Warner, fol. Q4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>125</sup> Michel Poirier, *Christopher Marlowe* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1968), p. 38.

<sup>126</sup> Michael Lee, ‘Classifying Early Modern Sexuality: Christopher Marlowe, *Edward II*, and the Politics of Sexuality’, *Quidditas*, 34 (2013), 111–24 (pp. 111–12, 119).

Marlowe did not invent Gaveston's first name, or the story of Edward's penetrative murder.<sup>127</sup>

Other critics have more usefully sought the origins of Marlowe's choice to emphasise and make explicit the sexual and romantic nature of Edward's relationship with Gaveston. Charles Forker suggests that 'the whole climate of sexual politics' found in *Edward II* is influenced by Shakespeare's first tetralogy, drawing a particular connection between Marlowe's protagonist and Shakespeare's Edward IV as 'sensualists, their judgement clouded by sexual attachments'.<sup>128</sup> Several critics argue for the influence of contemporary portrayals of Henri III: Hillman rightly points out that 'the sexual accusations against Henri and his minions in [the 1589 pamphlet *Les Choses Horribles Contenuës en une Lettre Envoyée à Henry de Valois*] amply mandate the most fundamental alteration made by Marlowe to his English chronicle sources' – that is, his explicit treatment of Edward's sexual involvement with his favourites.<sup>129</sup> Curtis Perry believes that, while 'Marlowe's interest in the meaning of erotic favouritism undoubtedly had a great deal to do with the sodomitical libel surrounding the minions of Henri III... the way Marlowe uses favouritism to think about prerogative owes something to *Leicester's Commonwealth*, a text that lies behind the vivid characterisation of Gaveston in the first half of the play'.<sup>130</sup> The 1584 libel *Leicester's Commonwealth* draws a pejorative comparison between Leicester and Gaveston; and, as has frequently been noted, the entertainments Gaveston imagines for Edward in I.i bear several similarities to the entertainments arranged by Leicester for Elizabeth I on her visit to Kenilworth in 1575.

While all of these arguments are useful and plausible, it is also necessary to look beyond the influence of specific source texts; *Edward II* is more than a patchwork of near-contemporary writings. Meg F. Pearson widens the focus to consider the culture of commercial playwriting. Chronicle plays were commercially successful, she argues, and so were sought after by theatre shareholders.<sup>131</sup> Marlowe, she notes, was 'staging the most notorious portions of Edward II's life, particularly his brutal, secret murder'.<sup>132</sup> This is a crucial observation: aware of the potential commercial value of his historical subject, and that the literate portion of his audience might well have been familiar with Edward's

---

<sup>127</sup> Christopher Wessman, 'Marlowe's *Edward II* as "Actaeonesque History"', *Connotations*, 9 (1999), 1–33 (p. 19).

<sup>128</sup> Marlowe, p. 30.

<sup>129</sup> Hillman, p. 107.

<sup>130</sup> Perry, pp. 191–92.

<sup>131</sup> Meg F. Pearson, "'Die with Fame': Forgiving Infamy in Marlowe's *Edward II*", *Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 42 (2009), 97–120 (p. 101).

<sup>132</sup> Pearson, p. 98.



historiographical reputation, Marlowe gave them an intensified version of what they were expecting. ‘The chronicle plays,’ writes Pearson, ‘...stage not only the famous speeches, the battles, the victories and the defeats; they have the capacity to stage the quiet, unknown moments behind the scenes that often have a more profound influence on reputation.’<sup>133</sup> Chroniclers like Holinshed simply make assertions about Edward’s nature and his sensually indulgent behaviour, state that this behaviour was encouraged by his favourites, and leave the reader to join the dots; Marlowe’s dramatic form allowed him to *show* interactions between Edward and Gaveston, those ‘quiet, unknown moments behind the scenes’ that Holinshed’s assertions obliquely suggest took place.

Those moments are numerous and striking.<sup>134</sup> Firstly, as mentioned above, Marlowe invokes the figure of Ganymede. Spurned by Edward in favour of Gaveston, Queen Isabel complains:

Like frantic Juno will I fill the earth  
With ghastly murmur of my sighs and cries;  
For never doted Jove on Ganymede  
So much as he on cursed Gaveston.<sup>135</sup>

Isabel’s comparison here has several interrelated effects. First, of course, it equates Edward’s love for Gaveston to Jupiter’s for Ganymede, indicating that it is a deep emotional attachment with a component of sexual attraction. However, Edward’s affection here is presented as greater than Jupiter’s. Jupiter is frequently represented as being disempowered, and distracted from his rule, by his love for Ganymede (the opening to Marlowe’s *Dido, Queene of Carthage*, is a particularly good example of this characterisation) – and so Edward’s love, which exceeds even this, is clearly transgressive. The verb ‘doted’ also indicates excessive and foolish love.<sup>136</sup> Several critics have also observed the particularly disruptive connotations of Jupiter and Ganymede’s relationship, both in terms of the family (Isabella aligns herself with Juno, Jupiter’s spurned wife) and in terms of Jupiter’s role as king of the gods. In *Dido*, ‘Jupiter is prepared to overturn the order of heavens for Ganymede’s love’, and there is substantial evidence that Edward’s love in *Edward II* exactly parallels this (see Chapters 2 and 3).<sup>137</sup>

---

<sup>133</sup> Pearson, p. 98.

<sup>134</sup> See Pasquarella, pp. 74–100, for a near-comprehensive summary of the ways in which Marlowe indicates the sexual and romantic nature of Edward and Gaveston’s relationship.

<sup>135</sup> Marlowe, I.iv.178–81.

<sup>136</sup> ‘Dote | Doat, v.1’, OED (1897).

<sup>137</sup> Michael Hattaway, ‘Christopher Marlowe: Ideology and Subversion’, in *Christopher Marlowe and English Renaissance Culture*, pp. 198–223 (p. 211); on the disruption of the family, see Sara Munson Deats, ‘Myth and Metamorphosis in Marlowe’s *Edward II*’, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 22 (1980), 304–21 (p. 313).

Yet unlike its use in other texts, the ‘Ganymede’ reference in *Edward II* is far from the sole locus of evidence that Edward and Gaveston’s relationship is presented as sexual. In fact, this is strongly suggested by Gaveston’s opening speech:

Sweet prince I come. These, these thy amorous lines  
Might have enforced me to have swum from France,  
And, like Leander, gasped upon the sand,  
So thou wouldst smile and take me in thine arms.<sup>138</sup>

Gaveston here aligns himself and Edward with the mythological lovers Hero and Leander, which, as Forker says, ‘quickly establishes the erotic nature of his relationship to Edward’.<sup>139</sup> He also explicitly establishes its physical expression, both through his imagination of Edward’s embrace and through his later reference to ‘The king, upon whose bosom let me die’ – a pun that combines a romantic swooning embrace with a sexual reference to orgasm.<sup>140</sup> This line crystallises the hints given by the Leander comparison moments earlier, ensuring the audience are well aware that Gaveston is speaking about the king as his sexual partner.

Minutes later, in the same scene, Gaveston envisages the entertainments he will stage for Edward. He speaks dismissively of the poor men who wish to serve him:

...these are not men for me,  
I must have wanton poets, pleasant wits,  
Musicians that, with touching of a string,  
May draw the pliant king which way I please.  
Music and poetry is his delight;  
Therefore I’ll have Italian masques by night,  
Sweet speeches, comedies, and pleasing shows,  
And in the day, when he shall walk abroad,  
Like sylvan nymphs my pages shall be clad,  
My men, like satyrs grazing on the lawns,  
Shall with their goat-feet dance an antic hay.  
Sometime a lovely boy in Dian’s shape,  
With hair that gilds the water as it glides,  
Crownets of pearl about his naked arms,  
And in his sportful hands an Olive tree,  
To hide those parts which men delight to see,  
Shall bathe him in a spring, and there hard by,  
One like Actaeon peeping through the grove,  
Shall by the angry goddess be transformed,  
And, running in the likeness of an hart,  
By yelping hounds pulled down, and seem to die.  
Such things as these best please his majesty,

---

<sup>138</sup> Marlowe, I.i.6–9.

<sup>139</sup> Marlowe, I.i.9n.

<sup>140</sup> Marlowe, I.i.14.

My lord.<sup>141</sup>

Gaveston's imagined 'Italian masque' is clearly homoerotic, and, as Thomas Cartelli identifies, it is 'powerfully seductive', such that Edward's nobles will find it hard to compete with Gaveston for both the king's and the audience's affections.<sup>142</sup> The locus of this seduction is the 'lovely boy in Dian's shape', who is imagined as sensuously beautiful ('hair that gilds the water'), 'naked', and teasingly coy ('sportful hands'). Crucially, though superficially taking 'Dian's shape', the erotic figure remains essentially a 'boy' who is referred to with male pronouns. The genitals he hides with those 'sportful hands' – 'those parts that men delight to see' – are therefore, by implication, sexed male. This is potentially a cause of anxiety for the audience: as Ralf Hertel observes, 'Gaveston's envisioned masque presupposes a natural homoerotic desire when he refers to the genitals of the lovely boy in Dian's shape as "those parts which men delight to see" – not just some men, but men in general.'<sup>143</sup> Such anxiety is compounded by the enjoyment an audience might well take in Gaveston's beautiful, lyrical, sensory description; he specifies that his intended audience, Edward, will be 'please[d]' and 'delight[ed]' by his plans, thus providing a guide for the reaction of his other audience in the Elizabethan theatre. This scene, then, introduces the audience to the play's oft-noted ambivalent treatment of Edward and Gaveston: 'the Elizabethan audience might well feel in two minds about the King and his favourite, being properly scandalised by their behaviour and yet taking in it a measure of delight'.<sup>144</sup>

Gaveston's reference to Actaeon's metamorphosis has attracted an enormous amount of critical attention. Sara Munson Deats summarises the myriad possible interpretations of the symbolism of Actaeon.<sup>145</sup> Most useful is her attention to early modern exegesis of Ovid, which allows us to surmise the likely associations intended by Marlowe and the likely interpretations of his audience. Arthur Golding's *Epistle* to his translation of the *Metamorphoses*, Deats writes,

allegorises the Actaeon fable as a caveat against debauchery of all kinds as well as a warning against 'flattering freaks', and interprets the hounds as Actaeon's own devouring desires, a reading commonplace in this period. ...Golding...pictures Actaeon as a cautionary warning against all kinds of indulgence, including flattery, gambling, lechery, and gluttony.<sup>146</sup>

---

<sup>141</sup> Marlowe, I.i.49–71.

<sup>142</sup> Thomas Cartelli, 'Edward II', in *The Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by Patrick Cheney (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 158–73 (p. 163).

<sup>143</sup> Ralf Hertel, *Staging England in the Elizabethan History Play* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), p. 215.

<sup>144</sup> Clifford Leech, 'Marlowe's *Edward II*: Power and Suffering', *Critical Quarterly*, 1 (1959), 181–96 (p. 188).

<sup>145</sup> Deats, 'Myth and Metamorphosis', pp. 310–11.

<sup>146</sup> Deats, 'Myth and Metamorphosis', p. 311.

Similarly, Jonnes Sambucus's 1564 *Emblemata* 'reduces the fable to a denunciation of excessive love of venery'; and Abraham Fraunce glosses the story as showing that 'A wiseman ought to restraine his eyes, from beholding sensible and corporall bewty, figured by Diana: least, as Actaeon was devoured of his own dogges, so he be distracted and torne in peeces with his affections and perturbations'.<sup>147</sup> Added to this sexual interpretation is, of course, Gaveston's assertion that the actor will 'seem to die': once again this carries a double meaning, suggesting both Actaeon's literal death and the actor's feigned orgasm (continuing in the erotic vein of Gaveston's previous imagined scene). The invocation of Actaeon thus foreshadows Edward's sexually transgressive behaviour and its culmination in a death with potential erotic aspects (see Chapter 4).

There are numerous other hints at the nature of Edward and Gaveston's relationship throughout the play, even in scenes primarily focused on Edward's political transgressions (for example, Edward's wish for 'some nook or corner left, / To frolic with my dearest Gaveston' can be read as a wish for uninterrupted sexual dalliance owing to the dual significations of the verb 'frolic').<sup>148</sup> That said, care should be taken not to indiscriminately interpret every potential sexual pun as an incontrovertible innuendo (David Clark's insistence that Mortimer Junior's description of Gaveston as a 'night-grown mushrump' contains 'a pun on rump' and 'indicates Mortimer's disquiet about the king and his minion's night life' is a case in point).<sup>149</sup> The sexual and the political are certainly frequently inextricable in *Edward II*, but there is a difference between recognising these interconnections and projecting sexual innuendo onto every reference to Edward and Gaveston. The latter leads to an oversimplification of the play. It is not a one-dimensional exploration of a sexual relationship between two men; nor are Edward's nobles objecting solely to the sexual component of his relationship with Gaveston, but to this combined with its disruptive implications for his family, his patronage, and his rule. It is useful here to remember Mario DiGangi's problematisation of our understanding of what constituted acceptable intimacy between men in early modern England:

...erotic relations in early modern England were evaluated according to their perceived consonance or dissonance with dominant social ideologies, and these evaluations were inevitably, and demonstrably, partial, limited, contradictory. Because the political significance of male relations therefore

<sup>147</sup> H. David Brumble, 'Personal, Paternal, and Kingly Control in Marlowe's *Edward II*', *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*, 34 (2008), 56–70 (not internally paginated).

<sup>148</sup> Emma Katherine Atwood, "'All Places Are Alike': Marlowe's *Edward II* and English Spatial Imagination', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 43 (2013), 49–70 (pp. 59–60).

<sup>149</sup> David Clark, 'Marlowe and Queer Theory', in *Christopher Marlowe in Context*, ed. by Emily Bartels and Emma Smith (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 232–41 (p. 235).

depended on the contingencies of interpretation, the definitional boundaries of orderly and disorderly homoeroticism were open to negotiation, manipulation, and contestation – in short, to local struggles for social and ideological power.<sup>150</sup>

It is unrealistic to expect that the nobles in Marlowe's play would express their condemnation of Edward's relationship with Gaveston exclusively with reference to the king's sexual behaviour. The phrase 'night-grown mushrump' refers to Gaveston's unacceptably rapid rise to power from a relatively low birth. There are far better and more salient examples of points at which Marlowe represents Edward and Gaveston's relationship as sexual and romantic, as the preceding analysis has shown.

Brief mention should here be made of how this aspect of Marlowe's portrayal of Edward influenced Shakespeare's portrayal of England's other famously deposed king, Richard II. Shakespeare deviates from his sources to hint at a sexual relationship between Richard and his favourites. Bolingbroke tells Bushy and Green:

You have, in manner, with your sinful hours  
Made a divorce betwixt his queen and him,  
Broke the possession of a royal bed,  
And stain'd the beauty of a fair queen's cheeks  
With tears drawn from her eyes by your foul wrongs.<sup>151</sup>

As Forker rightly observes, 'This detail strongly suggests a borrowing from *Edward II*'.<sup>152</sup> He suggests that the borrowing functions 'as a subtle means of undermining our respect for Bolingbroke at a point in the action when he needed to begin manipulating audience sympathies in the direction of Richard', since 'the words convey expediency and underhandedness in the speaker, who is shown to behave in the episode like a military dictator presiding at a show trial of expendable dissidents'.<sup>153</sup> This is certainly plausible, and an observation made by Igor Djordjevic about Shakespeare's other history plays provides useful contextualisation:

It is interesting that Shakespeare's 'St Crispin's Day' oration in *Henry V* has more in common with [Holinsbed's version of] Richmond's speech before Bosworth than with its direct chronicle source [i.e. Henry V's speech in Holinsbed]. This is hardly accidental, because for Shakespeare as a chronicle reader the two characters may well have been interchangeable.<sup>154</sup>

---

<sup>150</sup> Mario DiGangi, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. x.

<sup>151</sup> *Richard II*, III.i.11–15, *Oxford Shakespeare*.

<sup>152</sup> Charles R. Forker, 'Marlowe's *Edward II* and *The Merchant of Venice*', *Shakespeare Newsletter*, 57 (2007), 65–70 (p. 66).

<sup>153</sup> Marlowe, p. 39.

<sup>154</sup> Igor Djordjevic, *Holinsbed's Nation* (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), p. 233.

Just as one warlike Harry was easily interchangeable for another, it seems reasonable that one chronicle account of a deposed king was, to Shakespeare, fair game as source material for a play about his great-grandson.

The influence of Marlowe's *Edward II* can be demonstrated by observing the number of writers after Marlowe who align Edward and Gaveston's relationship with that of Jupiter and Ganymede, compared to only Warner's subtle implication before the publication of Marlowe's play. Drayton's *Gaveston* describes himself and Edward in these terms ('My Jove with me, his Ganimed, his page') and then emphasises the already explicit sexual implications of this comparison: 'Frolick as May, a lustie life we led'.<sup>155</sup> In *Englands Heroicall Epistles*, Drayton's character of Isabella again uses 'Ganimed' as a term for Gaveston, and makes it clear that his sexual relationship with Edward is at the expense of Isabella's own: she is outraged 'That English EDWARD should refuse my Bed, / For that lascivious shamelesse Ganimed'.<sup>156</sup> Similarly, the Edward of *Poly-Olbion* promotes 'Faire Ganimeds and Fools' to court office.<sup>157</sup> Influenced by Drayton, both Francis Hubert and Elizabeth Cary describe Gaveston as Edward's Ganymede.<sup>158</sup> Later in the seventeenth century, in John Bancroft's *King Edward the Third*, the character of Mortimer collocates Ganymedes with Edward's neglect of Isabella, using them as a justification for his adulterous relationship with her.<sup>159</sup>

As we have seen, Francis Sandford is unique among chronicle texts in using the term 'Ganymede' with reference to Edward and Gaveston. Yet his casual substitution of 'Ganymede' for the 'minion' in his source text points to this underlying consensus which is more explicitly expressed in poetry and drama. If Sandford were making a new, potentially shocking suggestion, cautionary phrases could be expected: 'According to Daniel', or 'As some say'. By including 'Ganimed' without comment, mid-sentence, Sandford suggests that he expects his readers to take his reference to sex between men at face value; almost, I would venture, as a fact they already know.

---

<sup>155</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, l. 214.

<sup>156</sup> *EHE*, ll. 61–62.

<sup>157</sup> Michael Drayton, 'Poly-Olbion', in *Works*, ed. by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931), IV, XVII.195.

<sup>158</sup> Hubert (1628), stanza 107; Cary (folio), fol. B2v; Cary (octavo), fol. B2r. Virginia Brackett argues that this is evidence of Drayton's influence on Cary's text ['Elizabeth Cary, Drayton, and Edward II', *Notes and Queries*, 41.4 (1994), 517–19 (p. 518)]. While this is plausible, many of the other pieces of evidence she offers – such as the fact that 'both writers relate the destructive effects of Edward's overthrow' – are aspects of the early modern historiography of Edward as a whole rather than specific to Drayton, rendering her overall argument less convincing.

<sup>159</sup> John Bancroft, *King Edward the Third* (London: for J. Hindmarsh, R. Bently, A. Roper, and Randall Taylor, 1691), fol. B4v.

Since Sandford seems to have substituted ‘Ganimed’ for Daniel’s ‘minion’, might we therefore be able to read the popularity of ‘minion’ in the early modern historiography of Edward II as evidence of a cultural assumption by which Edward was assumed to have engaged in sex with men? Ultimately, while this term’s applicability to both political and sexual transgressions lent it contemporary relevance – especially during the reign of James VI and I – its ambiguity is often difficult to unravel. When considering this ambiguity, it is instructive to look back to Marlowe’s innovative usage. Marlowe’s passage on the minions of ‘mightiest kings’, as detailed above, depends for its significance on the early modern device of using classical references simultaneously to obscure and indicate discussion of love and sex between men. The efficacy of this technique relies on the wider strategy of tactical ambiguity that (as Annabel Patterson has argued) characterised textual approaches to sensitive topics in early modern England: provided a text could *potentially* be interpreted as not requiring censorship (or, in the case of sex between men, censorious interpretation), it was usually given the benefit of the doubt.<sup>160</sup> As an early modern habit of thought, this has far-reaching implications – it can be recognised, for example, in the cognitive dissonance that (Alan Bray argues) allowed people to avoid reconciling men in their community with the figure of the ‘sodomite’, until they had a compelling (often political) reason to do so.<sup>161</sup> And it can, I think, help us to understand the popularity of the term ‘minion’ for Edward II’s favourites. Its dual meaning – situated at the intersection of the political and the sexual – allowed writers to suggest that Edward may have engaged in sex with his male favourites, while maintaining the potential for a political interpretation that simply condemned those favourites’ excessive power. The relative rarity of ‘Ganymede’, especially in historical texts, can perhaps be explained by its comparative explicitness. Even this brief survey of two complex terms has demonstrated the political sensitivity of Edward’s story – which will be explored further in Chapter 3 – and the flourishing of ‘minion’, with its convenient ambiguity, should be seen in light of this.

## V. Lechery and goats

The use of the terms ‘sodomy’, ‘minion’ and ‘Ganymede’ is analogous to that of certain common phrases and topoi with the potential to denote sexual transgression. The derivative nature of chronicle texts meant that certain phrases and concepts became extremely popular, outliving their context by decades. That change of context means that their significations shifted, depending on the interpretation encouraged by the rest of the

---

<sup>160</sup> Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), pp. 10–11.

<sup>161</sup> Bray, pp. 9, 67–80.

text. The following sections analyse representative examples of these ‘stock’ phrases, images and concepts, demonstrating different writers’ modes of engagement with them, and the context-dependent nature of their meanings.

The earliest mode of reference to Edward’s sexual transgression is the goat allegorisation found in medieval prophetic texts.<sup>162</sup> The tradition of allegorising prominent political figures as animals was established by Geoffrey of Monmouth’s ‘*Prophetia Merlini*’. This text was popularised by its inclusion in Geoffrey’s *Historia Regum Britanniae*, but ‘was completed and in circulation before the rest of the *Historia*, c. 1135’ and subsequently enjoyed ‘independent circulation in later medieval England, often appearing without the *Historia*’.<sup>163</sup> The technique of animal allegory was, according to Rupert Taylor, a typically English form of ‘symbolical’ prophetic discourse.<sup>164</sup> The standard set of symbolic animals associated with Merlin’s prophecies included ‘the Boar, the Lion, the Eagle, the Lynx, the Goat, the Ass, the Hedgehog, the Heron, the Fox, the Wolf, the Bear, the Dragon, the Bull, and the Owl’.<sup>165</sup> One of the animals which appears in the *Historia* is a ‘goat of the castle of Venus’ (*hircus veneri castris*).<sup>166</sup>

In the early fourteenth century, this passage found its way into the *Annales Londonienses* (probably composed contemporaneously up to 1316), this time as an allegory for Edward II. The allegory – Edward as *hircus veneri castris*, ‘the goat of the venereal [which Lesley A. Coote glosses as ‘beautiful’] castle’ – appears at the start of the account of his reign. The writer expresses high hopes for Edward as the ‘son of Edward the Conqueror’: using the goat allegory to link him to Alexander the Great via the Bible, the prophecy asserts that he will ‘manfully defeat and take possession of Scotland, Norway, Dacia, France, and all the lands which the most glorious soldier Arthur gained by the sword.’<sup>167</sup>

The location of this prophecy in the *Annales Londonienses* account of Edward’s reign indicates that it was probably written down around 1307. As such, the prophecy is predictive rather than retrospective; it does not constitute a meaningful representation of

---

<sup>162</sup> My reference to ‘prophetic texts’ is based on Lesley A. Coote’s assertion that ‘prophecy is a discourse, not a genre’ [‘A Language of Power: Prophecy and Public Affairs in Later Medieval England’, in *Prophecy: The Power of Inspired Language in History 1300-2000*, ed. by Bertrand Taithe, Tim Thornton, and Rhodri Hayward (Stroud: Sutton, 1997), pp. 17–30 (p. 18)].

<sup>163</sup> Coote, ‘Language of Power’, p. 26 n. 1.

<sup>164</sup> Rupert Taylor, *The Political Prophecy in England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1911), pp. 4–5.

<sup>165</sup> Rupert Taylor, p. 45.

<sup>166</sup> Rupert Taylor, p. 136.

<sup>167</sup> Trans. by Lesley A. Coote, *Prophecy and Public Affairs in Later Medieval England* (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2000), p. 84.



Edward for my purposes, since it is not based on the actual events of his reign.<sup>168</sup> However, it provided a precedent for the later allegorisation of Edward as a goat in false prophecies written after the fact; in these texts, as I will show, the goat allegory does indicate Edward's sexually transgressive nature. Although Coote's gloss of *venerei* as 'beautiful' accords well with the tone of the passage as it appears in the *Annales Londonienses*, *venerei* could also be translated as relating to lust or sexual pleasure.<sup>169</sup> While it seems likely that this sense was not intended at the time of writing, the collocation of this passage with accusations of 'lechery' in later texts make it reasonable to conclude that a dual interpretation of *venerei* would have been available to later readers of the *Annales Londonienses*.

The earliest unequivocal description of Edward as sexually transgressive is found in the prophetic text *The Last Kings of England*, also known as *The Prophecy of the Six Kings*.<sup>170</sup> This was preserved in and popularised by the 'long version' of the *Brut*, composed around 1333. However, it also circulated independently; its relationship to the *Brut* is analogous to that of Geoffrey's 'Prophetia Merlini' to his *Historia Regum Britanniae*, as outlined above. *The Last Kings of England* purports to recount Merlin's prophecies about the final six kings of England, each of whom is allegorised as a different animal. The animal symbols are taken from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Book of Merlin*. In Geoffrey's text, as Taylor notes, 'the animal names are arbitrary and mean nothing'; but in *The Last Kings*, 'the animal species used to identify particular kings in the text have been chosen for their appropriateness, according to the point which the writer wishes to make about that individual'.<sup>171</sup>

T. M. Smallwood has identified eight versions of *The Last Kings*.<sup>172</sup> The earliest version, 'The "Original" Prose Version', contains references to Edward as a goat, to his 'lechery', and to Gaveston's rise and fall; it does not mention the Despensers or Edward's downfall, which prompted Smallwood to suggest that it was written around 1312.<sup>173</sup> This is, therefore, the earliest suggestion we have that Edward's sexual behaviour was in some way

---

<sup>168</sup> The several other predictive prophecies written about Edward II had no discernible influence on his historiographical reputation, and as such they will not be considered in this thesis. For information on these prophecies, see J. R. S. Phillips, 'Edward II and the Prophets', in *England in the Fourteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1985 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. by W. M. Ormrod (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1986), pp. 189–201. Rupert Taylor's argument that 'Adam Davy's Five Dreams of Edward II' could have been written during the early years of his reign as opposed to around the time of his accession (Rupert Taylor, pp. 94–98) has been generally refuted by Phillips (op. cit.) and V. J. Scattergood ('Adam Davy's Dreams and Edward II', *Archiv Für Das Studium Der Neueren Sprachen Und Literaturen*, 206 (121st year), 253–60).

<sup>169</sup> *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List from British and Irish Sources*, ed. by R. E. Latham (London: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1965), p. 507.

<sup>170</sup> See Appendix, 'Accounts of Edward II's reign composed during the period 1305-1700', for a full list of the alternative titles by which this text is known. I use the title favoured by Lesley A. Coote in *Prophecy and Public Affairs in Later Medieval England* (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2000).

<sup>171</sup> Rupert Taylor, p. 110; Coote, *Prophecy and Public Affairs*, p. 103.

<sup>172</sup> T. M. Smallwood, 'The Prophecy of the Six Kings', *Speculum*, 60 (1985), 571–92 (pp. 572–73).

<sup>173</sup> Smallwood, pp. 575–76.

transgressive: the *Flores Historiarum* (which, as noted above, accuses Edward of non-specific, adulterous sexual sin) was composed around 15 years later. It also means that, while the harsh tone of the *Flores* accusations supports Gransden's argument for political motivation, they may not have been entirely invented by Robert of Reading; indeed, it would have been advantageous for Robert to draw on rumours or opinions that were already circulating, since this would render his accusations more plausible.

The most popular version of *The Last Kings* is what Smallwood calls 'The English Prose Translation'. This text, a translation of 'The Revised Prose Version', was composed later and as such does cover the Despencers and Edward's deposition. This is the version included in the *Brut*. It would be difficult to overemphasise the influence of the *Brut* – and therefore of this version of *The Last Kings* – on Edward's historiographical reputation. 'In the absence of official history in England,' John Taylor argues, the *Brut* 'became for the mass of its medieval readers the standard history of the day': 'many Englishmen and Englishwomen must have obtained their view of Edward II's reign from the text of the prose *Brut*.'<sup>174</sup> Julia Marvin argues that *The Last Kings* was interpolated into the *Brut* to enhance its authority: the prophecies combine Merlin's established authority with the common technique of 'apparently fulfilled prophecy concerning events that have already occurred'.<sup>175</sup> The relevant prophecies from *The Last Kings* appear at the conclusion of the relevant monarch's reign. Following Edward's deposition, the writer summarises his reign by retrospectively noting the prophecies that were fulfilled:

Of þis Kyng Edward, propheciede Merlyn, and saide þat þere shulde come a gote out of a car, þat shulde have hornes of silver and a berde as white as snowe; and a drop shulde come out at his noseþrelles þat shulde bitokne miche harme, hungre, and deþ of þe peple, and gret losse of his lande; and þat in þe bigynnyng of his regne shulde ben hauntede michel lecherie; and saide soþ, allas þe tyme! ffor Kyng Edward, þat was Kyng Edwardus sone, þat was born in Carnarivan in Walys, for soþ he hade Hornes as silver, and a berd as snowe, when he was made Prynce of Walys, & to miche he 3af him unto realte [i.e. riot] and folie. And soþ saide Merlyn in his prophecie þat þere shulde come out of His nose a drop; ffor in his tyme was grete hunger amonges þe pore men, and stronge deþ amonge þe ryche, þat deiden in strange lande wiþ miche sorw, and in Scotland; and afterwarde he loste Scotland and Gascoigne; and whiles þat him-self was Kyng, þer was miche lecherie hauntede.<sup>176</sup>

<sup>174</sup> John Taylor, 'The French *Prose Brut*: Popular History in Fourteenth-Century England', in *England in the Fourteenth Century*, pp. 247–54 (pp. 247, 252).

<sup>175</sup> Julia Marvin, 'Arthur Authorized: The Prophecies of the *Prose Brut* Chronicle', *Arthurian Literature*, 22 (2005), 84–99 (p. 93).

<sup>176</sup> *Brut*, p. 243.

In bestiary tradition the goat ‘is known for “fervent and hoot worching of generacioun”, and so becomes a symbol for moral degeneration, which often means sexual immorality’.<sup>177</sup> The statement that ‘in þe bigynnyng of [Edward’s] regne shulde ben hauntede michel lecherie’ reflects these associations. The meaning of lechery as ‘habitual indulgence of lust’ is relatively stable in this period, though in this context its meaning cannot be narrowed further than non-specific sexual sin.<sup>178</sup> Interestingly, the prophecy of ‘lecherie’ is decoupled from the initial ‘gote’ allegorisation, enabling a double-edged accusation of sexual transgression: ‘gote’ establishes the connotations, before ‘lechery’ makes them explicit.

As the *Annales Londonienses* demonstrates, ‘the symbol [of the goat] had been associated with Edward since the beginning of his reign...but in order to glorify, not to revile, the king’ through the link to Alexander the Great.<sup>179</sup> This established association seems likely to have been one influence on the inclusion of the goat allegory in *The Last Kings*. But was this also influenced by Edward’s emerging reputation for sexual transgression? As mentioned above, the goat allegory and ‘lechery’ accusation appear in the earliest version of *The Last Kings*, probably composed around 1312. Smallwood argues that the mention of ‘lechery’ in this version is merely one of ‘a confused medley of commonplace themes of late medieval English prophecy, mostly sensational’ found in the text.<sup>180</sup> Whatever the intention of this initial collocation of ‘goat’ and ‘lechery’ with Edward, however, its impact was powerful: it influenced the inclusion of those details in the ‘English Prose Translation’ of *The Last Kings*, and thus their inclusion in the *Brut*, which played a very significant role in the formation of Edward’s historiographical reputation for sexual transgression.

The goat allegory in *The Last Kings* may have influenced a later goat allegory in *The Prophecy of John of Bridlington*. This highly cryptic verse prophecy, written in the 1360s, usually circulated with an explanatory commentary written by John Ergom (although the prophecy was previously also attributed to Ergom, A. G. Rigg argues convincingly that the prophecy and commentary are not in fact by the same person).<sup>181</sup> As Rupert Taylor notes, ‘None of the symbols [in *The Prophecy of John of Bridlington*] are taken from *The Book of Merlin*, as [they are] in [*The Last Kings*], except the Goat which stands for Edward the Second’.<sup>182</sup> Ergom’s commentary states that Edward is ‘compared to a goat because of some of his conditions’ (*rege...hirco comparato propter aliquas conditiones suas*), thus implying but not stating outright that

<sup>177</sup> Coote, *Prophecy and Public Affairs*, p. 104.

<sup>178</sup> ‘Lechery, n.’, OED (1902).

<sup>179</sup> Coote, *Prophecy and Public Affairs*, p. 104.

<sup>180</sup> Smallwood, pp. 576–77.

<sup>181</sup> A. G. Rigg, ‘John of Bridlington’s *Prophecy*: A New Look’, *Speculum*, 63 (1988), 596–613.

<sup>182</sup> Rupert Taylor, p. 54.

Edward shared the sexually transgressive nature associated with the goat. The overall tone of the prophecy is moralistic: Coote argues that it ‘appears to have been a condemnation of the ineffectiveness and moral degeneracy of Edward II (as in [*The Last Kings*]) and a celebration of the victories of his successor’, although Ergom’s commentary also condemns sexual transgression at Edward III’s court.<sup>183</sup>

Although Merlin appears to have still held popular importance in early modern England, Thomas Heywood’s *Chronographicall History* is unique among early modern texts in using this allegory.<sup>184</sup> The prophecy in Heywood’s text, rendered into early modern English verse, is decoupled from the explanatory commentary and unusually does not mention Edward’s lechery, simply stating the allegory: ‘A Goat shall then appeare out of a Carr, / With silver hornes (not Iron) unfit for warre’.<sup>185</sup> Later, however, he does refer to Edward’s sexual transgressions, explaining the prophecy twice: he states first that ‘by the Goat [is symbolised] the King who was given to all intemperate effeminacie’ and second that ‘By the Goat is figured lascivious Edward...his hornes of silver and not of Iron, denotes his effeminacie, being unserviceable for war, as may appeare, in his successe against the Scots’.<sup>186</sup>

## VI. Effeminacy

Heywood’s accusation of ‘effeminacie’ is levelled at Edward II relatively infrequently. The first text to connect effeminacy with Edward was the French pamphlet *Histoire Tragique et Memorable de Pierre de Gaveston*. Gaveston, the writer claims, ‘effeminated and infatuated [*effemine & infatue*] the heart of the king, and turned it away from keeping the promise that he had given in full Parliament to not treat of the affairs of the kingdom without the advice of the lords.’<sup>187</sup> This passage is, like most of the pamphlet, translated from Walsingham’s *Chronica Maiora*. In the equivalent passage, Walsingham accuses Gaveston of ‘depriving [*enervavit*] the king to such a degree, I will not say infatuated [*ne dicam infatuavit*], that he should turn away his heart and will from the pact that he had agreed’.<sup>188</sup> The French writer translates Walsingham’s verb *infatuavit* as *infatué*, and adds *effeminé*, for which no equivalent exists. It seems likely, then, that *effeminé* was perceived by the French writer to complement the connotations of *infatuavit*, which carries the dual sense

<sup>183</sup> Coote, *Prophecy and Public Affairs*, p. 119; *Bridlington Prophecy*, pp. xxxvi–xxxvii.

<sup>184</sup> Tim Thornton, *Prophecy, Politics and the People in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), p. 54.

<sup>185</sup> Heywood, fol. 2a3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>186</sup> Heywood, fols. 2B<sup>v</sup>, 2B3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>187</sup> *Histoire Tragique*, fol. D4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>188</sup> Walsingham, fol. F6<sup>r</sup>.

of excessive affection and foolishness. Edward's attachment to Gaveston, and Gaveston's resulting political influence over the king, is shown in Walsingham's text to have affected his ability to govern wisely and to remain politically constant. The French writer's translation indicates that he perceives these abilities as intrinsically connected with masculinity; his later description of Edward as 'foolish and effeminate' (*fol & effeminé*) supports this point.<sup>189</sup>

Elizabeth Cary's use of 'effeminate' has similar connotations. She describes Edward's grief at Gaveston's exile, but indecision over whether to recall him unilaterally:

his effeminate weakness had left him naked of that Royal resolution, that dares question the least disorderly moving of the greatest Subject. He was constant in nothing but his Passions, which led him to study more the return of his left-handed Servant, than how to make it good, effected. He lays aside the Majesty of a King, and thinks his Power too slender; his Sword sleeps like a quiet harmless Beast, while his Tongue proves his better Champion.<sup>190</sup>

Edward's 'effeminate weakness' here manifests as indecision; inconstancy; passionate emotion rather than reason; irresolution and a tendency to overthink rather than act; and a preference for exercising his will through persuasive speech rather than military compulsion.

Based on this evidence, I would suggest that the adjective 'effeminate' and its derivatives should not be interpreted as terminology of sexual transgression in the case of Edward II. The term should, in any case, not be taken in early modern contexts as suggesting a propensity for same-sex activity or a preference for a receptive sexual role: as Smith observes, the early modern distinction between effeminate and masculine men 'seems to be, not between male and female as modes of self-identity, or even between male and female as postures in making love, but between sexual moderation and sexual excess.'<sup>191</sup> When used with reference to Edward, it usually functions (as in Heywood's text above) to indicate his political and military inadequacy, which appears to have been a common association of 'effeminacy' in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England.<sup>192</sup> Edward was famous for his military defeats in Scotland, as well as for being politically compelled by others: he was forced by his nobles to sign the 1311 Ordinances, and perceived as being politically controlled by his favourites, before his eventual

---

<sup>189</sup> *Histoire Tragique*, fol. H4r.

<sup>190</sup> Cary (folio), fol. G2v.

<sup>191</sup> Bruce R. Smith, p. 196.

<sup>192</sup> Ian Frederick Moulton, "'Printed Abroad and Uncastrated?': Marlowe's *Elegies* with Davies's *Epigrams*," in *Marlowe, History, and Sexuality*, ed. by Paul Whitfield White (New York: AMS Press, 1998), pp. 77–90 (p. 79); Perry, p. 221.

deposition took the form of forced abdication. When Edward's 'effeminacy' is causally linked to his favourites, it has to do with their political control over him and their distraction of him from his royal duties. Only in texts like Heywood's – where the 'effeminate' Edward is described as 'lascivious', accused of 'adultery' and 'sodomity', and allegorised as a goat – is the potential of 'effeminate' to connote sexual indulgence and passion foregrounded. It should be stressed, then, that these terms in Heywood's text are mutually dependent for their sexual significations.

## VII. Riot

Alongside the goat allegories and accusations of 'lechery', the term 'riot' also occurs in several early cases. Although 'riot' may refer to sexual transgression in certain contexts, it is ambiguous, also signifying general disordered behaviour. Its earliest use with reference to Edward's reign is in the poem 'On the Evil Times of Edward II', a generalised complaint about abuses and corruption at every level of society. The writer bemoans, 'That riot reyneth now in londe everiday more and mo[re], / The lordis beth wel a-paith therwith and listneth to here lo[re], / But of the pouer mannes harm, therof is now no speche'.<sup>193</sup> The word 'riot' is not used specifically for Edward's behaviour, and it is difficult to establish its precise meaning here beyond general social disorder. The OED places this poem, composed at some point between 1312-26, on the cusp of two likely meanings for 'riot': 'Waywardness; contrariness', emerges as a rare meaning c. 1225, while from c. 1330 we see the more strongly condemnatory 'pursuit of a wanton, dissolute, or extravagant lifestyle; debauchery, dissipation'.<sup>194</sup>

The first text to employ 'riot' with specific reference to Edward himself is the *Brut*, whose generally sensational character suggests that it represents an early instance of the second definition cited above. The passage from *The Last Kings of England* found in the *Brut* asserts, 'when he was made Prynce of Walys...to miche he 3af him unto realte [i.e. riot] and folie'.<sup>195</sup> The *Brut* writer uses 'riot' four times with reference to Edward, and its semantic field is complex. In the other three cases, it is linked to Gaveston's influence over Edward, and suggests undesirable irresponsibility. The dying Edward I enjoins his barons 'pat pai shulde nought suffre Piers of Gavaston come a3eyn into Engeland forto make his sone use ryaute' (a request later reiterated almost verbatim as justification for Gaveston's exile). His

<sup>193</sup> Thomas W. Ross, 'On the Evil Times of Edward II: A New Version from MS Bodley 48', *Anglia: Journal of English Philology*, 75 (1957), 173–93 (ll. 391–93).

<sup>194</sup> 'Riot, n.', OED (3rd edn, 2010).

<sup>195</sup> *Brut*, p. 243.

fears are soon fulfilled, when ‘Kyng Edwardes sone sette by þe Scottes non force, for þe ryaute of Piers of Gavaston’.<sup>196</sup> ‘Ryaute’ here clearly represents a distraction from state affairs, an unsanctioned and disordered activity, but the nature of the activity is not clear.

This lack of clarity persists. An anonymous fifteenth-century translation of Higden’s *Polychronicon* condenses his description of the king’s character – ‘lavish in giving, splendid in banqueting, ready in speech, diverse in deeds, unfortunate against his enemies, wild in his household’ – into the phrase ‘ziffyngge hym to ryette’.<sup>197</sup> In Holinshed’s *Chronicles* and Marlowe’s *Edward II*, the concepts of ‘riot’ and disorder are invoked to condemn both Gaveston and the nobles.<sup>198</sup> As Thomas Cartelli observes, these semantic echoes ‘fram[e] [the nobles] actions in the same discourse of misrule the peers deploy against his relations with Gaveston’.<sup>199</sup> Jonathan Goldberg famously wrote of Marlowe’s play, using the term in its wider early modern sense to denote disorder and hierarchical disruption as well as sex between men, that ‘sodomy is the name for all behaviour in the play’.<sup>200</sup> It is, I would argue, equally justified to conclude that for Holinshed, riot is the name for all behaviour in Edward’s reign; and it seems plausible that Marlowe drew from Holinshed the sense of all-encompassing disruption and disorder that characterises *Edward II*.<sup>201</sup>

Despite the explicitly sexual nature of Edward and Gaveston’s relationship in Marlowe’s play, however, Gaveston’s ‘riot’ leaves no room for a sexual interpretation: instead, he ‘riots it with the treasure of the realm’.<sup>202</sup> It is only in texts that combine *ambiguous* uses of ‘riot’ with concurrent accusations of sexual misbehaviour that ‘riot’ can be considered terminology of sexual transgression. This applies to Holinshed’s reference to Edward’s ‘voluptuous pleasure, and riotous excesse’ (analysed further in Chapter 2); to Drayton’s Gaveston, who is clearly Edward’s sexual partner and spends public money ‘To feed my Ryot that could find no end’; and to Francis Hubert’s *Historie of Edward the Second*, a text which uses the term ‘Ganymede’, and in which the dying Edward I worries about his son’s potential for ‘ryot and excesse’.<sup>203</sup>

---

<sup>196</sup> *Brut*, pp. 203, 205.

<sup>197</sup> *Polychronicon*, VIII, 298–99. For this passage in the original Latin see Chapter 3, ‘Evil nature’.

<sup>198</sup> Marlowe, Liv.404 and Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / p. 318; Marlowe, II.ii.88 and Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / p. 326.

<sup>199</sup> Cartelli, p. 161.

<sup>200</sup> Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 123.

<sup>201</sup> See Deats, ‘Myth and Metamorphosis’, p. 306 for an examination of how this is conveyed through ‘classical parallels’ which ‘suggest mythological figures traditionally associated with either cosmic, political, or sexual disorder’.

<sup>202</sup> Marlowe, Liv.404.

<sup>203</sup> Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / p. 318; *Legend*, ll. 365–66; Hubert (1628), stanza 109.

## VIII. Stock phrases

Two phrases that became frequently used, almost “stock” references to Edward’s bodily (perhaps sexual) sins – ‘adultery and other’, and ‘appetites and pleasures of the body’ – allow us to productively assess how they were interpreted by subsequent writers. The former phrase originates in Robert Fabyan’s *Newe Cronycles* (composed c. 1504). Gaveston, Fabyan writes, ‘brought the kyng by meane of his wanton condycions to many folde vycis as avoutry and other’.<sup>204</sup> This is the earliest reference to Edward’s favourites inciting the king to any kind of sexual transgression. While adultery is clearly a sexual sin, Fabyan gives no suggestions as to the meaning of ‘other’: he does not specify sexual transgression, but gives no reason to rule it out, perhaps employing strategic ambiguity. Richard Grafton, borrowing this phrase for his *Chronicle At Large* (1569), makes no alterations.<sup>205</sup> However, as detailed above, Heywood’s *Chronographical History* defines ‘other’ as ‘sodomitry’, in a context that encourages the reader to interpret this term as indicating sex between Edward and Gaveston. The engagement of John Foxe and William Martyn with the phrase ‘adultery and other’ demonstrates different possible approaches to the ambiguity that Heywood crystallised as ‘sodomitry’. Foxe’s Gaveston ‘brought þe kyng (by meane of his wanton conditions) to manifold vices, as advoutry, and other such lyke’; his addition of ‘such lyke’ implies that Edward’s other vices are *like* adultery, encouraging the reader to interpret them as unspecified sexual transgressions.<sup>206</sup> By contrast, while Martyn also specifies Edward’s ‘other’ vices as sexual in nature, he takes pains to exclude interpretations involving sex between men. Martyn bases his account of Edward’s reign on Grafton, and therefore (while he rewords Grafton’s account) necessarily interpreted the phrase ‘adultery and other’ as part of the writing process, as can be seen here:

Hee [Gaveston] also tooke much pleasure to feede the Kings fancies with great varietie of new delights; and by his example, hee enured him to Banquet, Drinke, and to Carowse beyond measure: And his dishonest persuasions and enticements made him carelesse of the Bed and of the societie and fellowship of Isabell his Religious and vertuous Queene, the daughter of the French King Philip the faire, and sister to his Successor Charles the fourth; and trayned him to the adulterous consortship of wanton Curtizans and shamelesse Whores.<sup>207</sup>

Here, the ‘adulterous’ behaviour that Gaveston incites in Edward is clarified to involve female-gendered ‘Curtizans’ and ‘Whores’. Martyn’s alterations of his source usually tend towards moral condemnation of Edward. Having previously written a manual entitled

---

<sup>204</sup> Fabyan, fol. 2K1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>205</sup> Grafton (*Chronicle*), fol. R2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>206</sup> John Foxe, *Actes and Monumentes* (London: John Daye, 1570), fol. R2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>207</sup> Martyn, fol. N<sup>v</sup>.



*Youths Instruction* aimed at his son, Martyn states in his ‘Epistle Dedicatorie’ that his history is aimed at ‘young gentlemen’, and clearly perceived Edward’s reign (marked by the marginal note ‘An evill king’) as a negative moral example for his young male readers.<sup>208</sup> His interpolation of ‘Curtizans’ and ‘Whores’ here could therefore be seen as extending Edward’s applicability as a cautionary tale by accusing him of the kind of sins that might tempt ‘young gentlemen’. Yet his choice also removes the element of ambiguity in Grafton’s text, enabling him to avoid raising the suggestion to his young male readers of a sexual relationship between Edward and Gaveston. The conventional caution surrounding the mention of sex between men to younger readers, lest the raising of the concept prompt thoughts or desires that would otherwise not have occurred, was well established by this period.<sup>209</sup> Continually stressed in medieval confessional manuals, the persistence of these expressions of caution in the early modern period is evidenced by Philemon Holland’s preface to his 1603 translation of Lucian’s *Erotes*, which notes that the mentions of ‘the love of yoong boyes’ make it ‘more dangerous to be read by yoong men than any other Treatise of Plutarch’.<sup>210</sup> Martyn, who remains consistently aware of his audience (discussed further in Chapter 3), appears to respond to this culturally enforced caution and silencing.

A similarly context-dependent ambiguity can be discerned in a stock description of Edward’s character which originates with Thomas Cooper’s *Epitome of Cronicles* (1549):

This Edward was fair of body, but unstedfast of maners, & desposed to lightnes. For he refused the company of his lordes and men of honour, & haunted among vilaines & vile personages. He gave him self also to over much drinking, & lightly would disclose thinges of great counsaile: & besides, that he was geven to these vices of nature, he was much worse by the counsaile and familiarity of certain evil disposed persons, as Pierse of Gaveston, Hugh the Spensers, & other, whose wanton counsaile he folowing gave him self to the appetite and pleasure of ye body, nothing ording his common weale by sadnes, discretion, and justice: whiche thing caused first great variance betwene him and his nobles, so that shortly he became to them odible, and in the ende was deprived of his kingdom.<sup>211</sup>

In Fabyan’s *Cronycles*, Cooper’s main source here, the components of this paragraph appear in two separate locations. Fabyan opens his account of Edward’s reign by translating Higden’s popular description of the king’s character (the same description to which Burton, analysed above, added ‘sodomitical vice’):

This Edward was fayre of bodye, and greate of strength, but unstedfast of maners, and vile in condicions. For he would refuse the company of lordes

<sup>208</sup> Martyn, fols. ¶3<sup>r</sup>, N<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>209</sup> Jordan, pp. 92–113.

<sup>210</sup> Bruce R. Smith, p. 40.

<sup>211</sup> Lanquet-Cooper, fols. 3M4<sup>r</sup>–3M4<sup>v</sup>.

and men of honour, and haunte him with vilayns & vile persons. He also gave him to great drinke, and lightly he would discover thinges of great counsayle. With these and manye other disallowable condicions he was exercised, which tourned him to great dishonoure, & his lordes to greate unrest...<sup>212</sup>

Later, Fabyan relates Gaveston's return from exile:

Than the kyng gave shortly after unto Piers of Gavestone, the erledome of Cornwayle, and the Lordeshypp of Malynforde, and was ruled al by hys wanton counsayle, and folowed the appetyte and pleasure of hys bodie, nothyng ordering by sadnesse, nor yet by ordre of the lawe or justice.<sup>213</sup>

In Fabyan's text, Edward's tendency to '[follow] the appetyte and pleasure of hys bodie' – an ambiguous phrase that denotes pleasurable physical indulgence without specifying sexual acts – is presented as one of a series of events that took place early in his reign. By contrast, Cooper's conflation of these two sections places Edward's indulgence of 'the appetyte and pleasure of ye bodie' in the context of a summary of his character, presenting it as resulting from his disposition. Cooper's conflated paragraph became a popular element of Edward's reign in shorter, cheaper historical texts: among others, it appears in Grafton's *Abridgement of Chronicles* (1562); the anonymous *Breviat Cronicle*, usually attributed to its printer John Mychell (1552); and Stow's *Summary of Chronicles* (1565).<sup>214</sup> Even these near-verbatim copies can be illuminating: Grafton, for example, alters his source to state that Edward 'was geven to ...filthie pleasures of the Bodie'. The adjective 'filthie', which adds an element of moral condemnation, was frequently collocated with sexual matters: 'filthy parts' indicated the genitals, while Robert Cawdry's 1604 dictionary *A Table Alphabeticall* defines 'sodomitrie' as 'when one man lyeth filthye with another man'.<sup>215</sup> This does not mean that Grafton's 'filthie' definitively constitutes a reference to sex between men, but we should note the possibility of it being interpreted as such.

All these works were popular in the sixteenth century: Cooper's and Grafton's texts went through five editions, Mychell's eight, and Stow's nineteen (more than twice the number of his longer *Annales*). As such, it is crucial to consider this paragraph's influence on popular perceptions of Edward and his sexual behaviour. Its vague suggestion of bodily, possibly sexual transgression is characteristic of the lack of clarity with which this subject is treated in shorter sixteenth-century historical texts – probably reflective both of caution and of the lack of available space for further speculation.

<sup>212</sup> Fabyan, fol. 2I8<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>213</sup> Fabyan, fol. 2I8<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>214</sup> Grafton (*Abridgement*), fols. K2<sup>r</sup>–K2<sup>v</sup>; John Mychell, *A Breviat Cronicle* (Canterbury: John Mychell, 1552), fols. C6<sup>v</sup>–C7<sup>r</sup>; John Stow, *A Summarie of Englyshe Chronicles* (London: Thomas Marsh, 1565), fol. O<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>215</sup> Robert Cawdry, *A Table Alphabeticall* (London: J. R[oberts] for Edmund Weaver, 1604), fol. H6<sup>v</sup>.

The passage is significant, too, for its assertion that Edward ‘gave him self to the appetite and pleasure of ye body’ as a result of the ‘wanton counsaile’ of his favourites. The common assertion that Edward’s sexual transgressions were incited by his favourites, and the extent to which this implies that these sexual transgressions *constituted* sex with his favourites, will be discussed in Chapter 2.

## IX. Wantonness

This adjective ‘wanton’ (as in ‘wanton counsaile’) also deserves investigation. ‘Wanton’ appears in the OED’s definition of ‘riot’, and has a similar level of potential ambiguity; however, unlike ‘riot’, it is employed as a descriptor of both discrete behaviour and overall character or tendency. Numerous definitions are current during the period under discussion. In some cases ‘wanton’ indicates absence of reason, moderation and self-governance: ‘undisciplined, ungoverned; unmanageable, rebellious...lawless, violent...rude, ill-mannered...insolent in triumph or prosperity; having no regard for justice, propriety, or the feelings or rights of others’.<sup>216</sup> This lack of moderation can manifest in terms of material luxury (‘Of money or wealth’, ‘Of clothing, diet, etc.’): ‘Unrestrained or lavish to an irresponsible degree; wasteful, profligate’. It can also manifest in terms of sexual transgression: ‘Lustful; not chaste, sexually promiscuous’, used either to describe a person (‘esp. a woman’) or ‘dispositions, thoughts, language, action, or appearance, etc.’. The latter are ‘characterized by or inciting lasciviousness; lustful’. I have quoted extracts from the OED at such length here in order to demonstrate the complexity of meaning that can be conveyed by a writer’s use of a single adjective. All possible meanings of ‘wanton’ are character traits particularly associated with Edward; in a discursive field where those associations are at play, it is reasonable to conclude that the adjective ‘wanton’ has multiple simultaneous significations.

The earliest uses of the adjective ‘wanton’ in accounts of Edward’s reign refer to Gaveston’s ‘wanton counsel’. John Rastell associates this specifically with Edward and Gaveston’s ‘riotous’ invasion of the Bishop of Chester’s deer park, an episode in which ‘wanton counsell’ incites disorderly rule-breaking.<sup>217</sup> As shown above, it then became part of the stock phrase whereby Edward ‘gave him selfe of the appetyte and pleasure of the body’: here, Edward’s favourites’ ‘wanton counsaile’ is associated with bodily (potentially sexual) indulgence and a lack of discipline in either his self-government or the government of his kingdom. (This common association between different types of government will be

<sup>216</sup> ‘Wanton, adj. and n.’, OED (3rd edn, 2014).

<sup>217</sup> John Rastell, *The Pastyme of People* (London: John Rastell, 1530), fol. [2]C2<sup>v</sup>.

explored fully in Chapter 3.) Holinshed's *Chronicles* sexualise the adjective further. Initially, notwithstanding the 'prudent advertisements' of other nobles, Edward 'began to plaie divers wanton and light parts' – a phrase the OED states had established connotations of sexual transgression, meaning 'to dally, trifle; to behave lewdly or lasciviously; to flirt'.<sup>218</sup> Later, 'using the said Peers as a procurer of his disordred dooings', Edward 'gave himselfe to wantonnes, passing his time in voluptuous pleasure, and riotous excesse'.<sup>219</sup> 'Wantonnes' has been established as having sexual connotations through the phrase 'plaie divers wanton and light parts'; these connotations are reinforced by the adjective 'voluptuous' and by Holinshed's translation of his source text, Polydore Vergil's *Anglica Historia*.

It is revealing that, in his edition of Marlowe's *Edward II*, Charles Forker glosses 'wanton' differently every time it appears. In Gaveston's description of the seductive entertainments he plans to stage for Edward, 'wanton poets' are 'those whose appeal is amorous or lascivious'; when Lancaster threatens that Edward should 'look to see the throne where you should sit, / To float in blood, and at thy wanton head / The glozing head of thy base minion thrown', 'wanton' is glossed as 'reckless, undisciplined (probably with overtones of libidinousness)'; and the phrase 'wanton humour', used twice, is glossed as 'amorous mood'.<sup>220</sup> It is clear from Forker's convincing readings that, in Marlowe's text, the significations of 'wanton' are weighted differently depending on whether it is used to condemn Edward's sexually transgressive behaviour or his political failures. Of course, these areas of condemnation are never completely extricable in *Edward II*; indeed, Marlowe's repeated use of the politically and sexually pejorative adjective 'wanton' reminds us that condemnation of Edward's sexual behaviour is implicit in many of his nobles' criticism of his political decisions, and vice versa.

In the seventeenth century, John Speed's and Elizabeth Cary's uses of 'wanton' are particularly revealing. Speed describes the English army on their way to defeat at Bannockburn: 'King Edward and his people rather seemed to goe toward a Wedding or a Triumph, then to a battell, adorning themselves with all sorts of riches, gold, silver, and the like toies, in a kind of wanton manner, correspondent to the humour of the Prince whom they followed'.<sup>221</sup> This 'wanton' behaviour and appearance manifests as contextually inappropriate luxury which is incompatible with military success; Speed's description is analogous to Heywood's effeminate goat whose silver horns make him 'unserviceable for

<sup>218</sup> Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / p. 318; OED.

<sup>219</sup> Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / p. 318.

<sup>220</sup> Marlowe, I.i.50; I.i.130–32; Liv.198–99 (see also Liv.401).

<sup>221</sup> Speed, fol. 4S3r.

war'. In Cary's folio *History*, as Edward grows up, he is 'believed over-liberally wanton, but not extremally vicious'; Gaveston 'second[s] [Edward's] wanton disposition with all those bewitching Vanities of licentious and unbridled Youth'; the dying Earl of Lincoln tells his son-in-law Thomas of Lancaster that 'Your Sovereign cares not how the State be guided, so he may still enjoy his wanton Pleasures'; and Isabella sees 'the King a stranger to her bed, and revelling in the wanton embraces of his stolon pleasures'.<sup>222</sup> The semantic field of 'wanton' in Cary's writing connotes a lack of moderation, boundaries and self-discipline, and sexually transgressive behaviour; for Edward, this is directly opposed to effective government of the state and to a loving, sexual relationship with his wife.

## Conclusion

Did the people of medieval and early modern England believe that Edward II had sex with his male favourites? This is a more fruitful and responsible question to ask than one that attempts to establish the 'facts' of Edward's behaviour, but it still requires modification to be answered with any level of reliability: what were these hypothetical people reading, and when?

Accusations of sexually transgressive behaviour emerged against Edward during his reign, in *The Last Kings of England*, and shortly afterwards in the *Flores Historiarum*. Although the accusations in the *Flores* may have been politically motivated, their co-occurrence in *The Last Kings* suggests that Robert of Reading may have been capitalising on existing public opinion, and that the accusations would have appeared plausible to readers. Early uses of ambiguous terms like 'sodomy' should be seen in light of this; in particular, if we know that the immensely popular *Brut* was describing Edward as sexually transgressive through the goat allegory, this increases the likelihood that contemporary uses of 'sodomy' and its derivatives with reference to Edward specifically indicate sexual transgression.

But who believed these sexual transgressions comprised sex with men? The answer to this question must necessarily be less clear-cut: as I argued when discussing the critical background to which this study responds, to seek clarity of reference to sex between men in medieval or early modern texts is a fallacy. Some texts appear to encourage a sexual interpretation of the term 'minion'; many are too ambiguous to draw firm conclusions. But it is crucial to remember that no chronicle text existed in a vacuum, either for its writer or for its readers. Writers of historical texts were (as we have seen) responding to literary representations as well as their chronicle sources. Readers could and did consume multiple

---

<sup>222</sup> Cary (folio), fols. B<sup>v</sup>, C<sup>r</sup>, K<sup>v</sup>, 2a<sup>r</sup>.

accounts: their perceptions of an ambiguous sentence about Edward and Gaveston could be coloured by Marlowe's and Drayton's representations of a sexual and romantic relationship between king and favourite, as well as by the source chronicle before their eyes. Any analysis of Edward's historiographical reputation that does not consider the impact of texts other than chronicles will be partial and flawed.

It is almost impossible to overstate the role of Marlowe's *Edward II* in this process. Marlowe's repeated use of the term 'minion' cemented Edward's relevance to contemporary politics in three key ways: by associating him with Henri III's sexually transgressive *mignons*; with anti-court discourse that condemned young courtiers for their perceived prioritisation of fashion and entertainments over governance; and with the conviction that early modern people 'were living in an age of overmighty favourites'. His representation of a king and his favourite in a loving, romantic relationship with a clear sexual element was innovative and demonstrably influential. In the end, the very casualness with which Sandford uses the term 'Ganimede' for Gaveston – the first occurrence of this term in a chronicle text, one that describes itself as historical and treats multiple reigns rather than focusing entirely on Edward – is one of the most telling instances observed in this chapter. Sandford's text suggests a sexual relationship between king and favourite without fanfare, without any indication that their suggestion is shocking or needs explanation. This, to me, is the strongest evidence that by the mid-seventeenth century an element of consensus had been reached: Edward II was accepted to have been engaged in sexual and romantic relationships with Gaveston and one or both of the Despensers.

This consensus was unquestionably reached over time, and should not be unthinkingly applied to any text. But through close reading, through rigorous contextualisation in light of changing conceptions of sex, and through the consideration of writers *as readers* – that is, by paying attention to how writers interpret their sources and to how those texts are subsequently interpreted by later writers – we can fruitfully and responsibly reach conclusions about representations of Edward's sexual behaviour.

## Chapter 2: Transgressive Relationships

---

### Introduction

Historiographical representations of Edward II are in many ways inextricable from those of his significant favourites, Piers Gaveston and the two Hugh Despensers, and the dynamics of their relationships. Chapter 3 will contextualise depictions of Edward's favourites within their writers' contemporary political situations and prevailing attitudes; first, however, this chapter will examine the significant historiographical strands that characterise those depictions over the period 1305-1700. This has many implications for readers' perceptions of Edward himself; indeed, many writers demonstrate fundamental aspects of Edward's personality and reign through portraying interactions with his favourites, or describing the favourites themselves. Persistent details or anecdotes come to stand, metonymically, for a particular issue: for example, a collection of details clustered around Edward's coronation demonstrate Gaveston's pride (through his ostentatious dress), his social status (through condemnation of Edward's choice to let him, rather than another noble, carry the crown of St Edward during the ceremony), and Edward's excessive love for him (through claims that he neglected his wife for Gaveston during the feast). As such, this chapter will show that Edward's relationships with his favourites were in part presented as transgressive because those favourites had qualities that made them unsuitable companions. Those relationships were, of course, also transgressive in themselves: this chapter will also explore the increasing romanticisation of Edward's relationship with Gaveston, and the concurrently increasing consensus that this relationship was sexual in nature.

### I. Representing Edward II's favourites

#### i. Unsuitable companions

Negative representations of Edward's favourites were an important factor in the representation of Edward's relationships with them as transgressive. This first section considers the development of their reputations, focusing on the qualities that emerged as fundamental to their historiographical characterisation: social status, nationality, pride, financial wrongdoing, youth, and propensity for sexual transgression or indulgence.

## A 'basely born' Frenchman

Gaveston's social status is subjected to substantial scrutiny: of the historical texts considered for this study, nine mention Gaveston's standing and just one mentions the Despensers'.<sup>1</sup> The contemporaneously composed *Vita Edwardi Secundi* demonstrates that Edward's subjects were concerned with Gaveston's social status, and with his consequent unsuitability as a companion for a prince or king. As part of a moralistic condemnation of Gaveston's pride (discussed more fully below), the writer argues that:

in filio regis satis esset intollerabile supercilium quod pretendit. Publice tamen scitur quod non erat filius regis nec regalem prosapiam quicquid attingens.

the haughtiness which he affected would certainly have been unbearable enough in a king's son. Yet it was universally known that he was not a king's son, nor was he related to any royal stock whatsoever.<sup>2</sup>

The writer uses the fact that Gaveston's social status is common knowledge to pointedly identify the inappropriateness of his 'haughtiness': not only is he 'not a king's son', but this fact is 'universally known'. In addition, the difference between Edward (a king's son and a king himself) and his favourite (not 'related to any royal stock *whatsoever*') is forcefully emphasised.

Several writers describe the process by which Gaveston became Edward's companion, as in this example from Thomas Walsingham:

Iste Petrus filius fuerat cujusdam generosi, sed aliengenae de Wasconia, qui in obsequio militaverat laudabiliter regis patris, cujus obsequii gratia rex hunc Petrum puerulum in suam suscepit Curiam, adjungens eum filii suo curia, cum quo a pueritia adolevit. Invenit autem tantam gratiam coram regis filio, ut ipse spreto vel parvipensis magnatum regni filiis, huic solummodo adhaereret, ejus tantummodo servitium acceptaret.<sup>3</sup>

This Piers had been the son of a certain nobleman, but a foreigner of Gascoigne, who had fought praiseworthily in the service of the king's father. By way of thanks for his services the king took up this Piers, a little boy, into his court, attaching him to the court of his son, with whom he grew up from boyhood. And he found such great grace in the presence of the king's son, that he, having scorned or disdained the sons of the magnates of the realm, would only cling to him, would only accept his service.

<sup>1</sup> For Gaveston, see *Flores*, p. 139; *Vita*, pp. 29–31; *Annales Paulini*, p. 258; Trokelowe, p. 64; Walsingham, fol. F5<sup>r</sup>; Speed, fol. 4S2<sup>r</sup>; Baker, fol. S4<sup>v</sup>; John Foxe, *Actes and Monumentes* (London: John Daye, 1570), fol. R2<sup>v</sup>; William Howell, *Medulla Historiae Anglicanae* (London: for Abel Swalle, 1679), fol. K4<sup>v</sup>. Cf. Phillips, p. 96. For the Despensers, see Stow, fol. X6<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> *Vita*, p. 31, trans. by Childs and Denholm-Young.

<sup>3</sup> Walsingham, fols. F4<sup>v</sup>–F5<sup>r</sup>.



By recounting the story of how Edward and Gaveston were brought together as children, Walsingham highlights the artificially constructed nature of their friendship: they would not have met, or been brought up as equals, without Edward I's intervention or Gaveston's father's military 'service' (a term which also calls attention to the social difference between the two families). Moreover, by invoking 'the sons of the magnates of the realm', Walsingham points out that Edward's association with Gaveston was a choice: Gaveston fulfilled a role that could have been given to young men of higher social status, who (Walsingham implies) would have made more suitable companions. Gaveston's relatively acceptable status as a nobleman's son is, in any case, undermined and contradicted ('but') by his foreign birth.

Numerous critics have observed, following Irving Ribner, that 'Marlowe insisted that Gaveston be of lowly birth, when the chronicles report no such thing'.<sup>4</sup> This is broadly correct, but benefits from complication in several ways. Marlowe's 'basely born' Gaveston was not unprecedented in the late sixteenth century: on the contrary, William Warner's *Albions England* refers to 'Grange-gotten Pierce of Gavelstone, and Spencers two like sort' as 'Meane Gentlemen, created Earles'.<sup>5</sup> Warner's poem foregrounds the destructive nature of the civil war between Edward and his nobles; his intensification of the differences between Edward's 'meane' favourites and his hero Thomas of Lancaster serves that end. Lisa Hopkins identifies several connections between Warner and Marlowe, including echoes of Marlowe's earlier plays in *Albions England* and a possible social relationship.<sup>6</sup> Even without the latter, which cannot be proven, the popularity of Warner's work makes it plausible that Marlowe's 'basely born' Gaveston was influenced by the 'Grange-gotten' favourite of *Albions England*. The example of Warner's poem also prompts us to remember that Marlowe was adapting his chronicle sources for a different genre. Holinshed, for example, hints through third-person narration that Edward's other nobles believed Gaveston was acting above his station: 'The malice which the lords had conceived against the earle of Cornwall still increased, the more indeed through the high bearing of him'.<sup>7</sup> In a dramatic text, one of the most effective ways to convey this sentiment is through direct speech: that is, through having Edward's nobles repeatedly refer to what they consider to be Gaveston's low birth, and to use adjectives like 'base'. In any case, Marlowe's Gaveston

---

<sup>4</sup> Irving Ribner, *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare* (London: Methuen, 1965), p. 135. For a detailed consideration of issues of social status in Marlowe's *Edward II*, in particular the characters' use of the nomenclature of social estate to mock and attack each other, see James Siemon, "'Overpeered" and Understated: Conforming Transgressions and *Edward II*', in Melnikoff, pp. 145–73.

<sup>5</sup> William Warner, *Albions England* (London: Thomas Orwin for Thomas Cadman, 1589), fol. Q2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Lisa Hopkins, 'Christopher Marlowe and the Succession to the English Crown', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 38 (2008), 183–98 (pp. 191–95).

<sup>7</sup> Holinshed (1577), IV, section 1 / p. 849.

is not in any case unambiguously lowborn: ‘Mortimer, despite himself, grants Gaveston some noble status, declaring him “hardly...a gentleman by birth”’, while Kent’s assertion that ‘The least of these [promotions] may well suffice / For one of greater birth than Gaveston’ still suggests that Gaveston’s birth warrants some sort of advancement.<sup>8</sup> It is not, therefore, entirely necessary to ‘[wonder] why Marlowe insisted that Gaveston be of lowly birth’, or to posit that he wished to reflect his own experiences ‘as the ambitious son of a shoemaker’.<sup>9</sup> When Ribner’s assertion (taken for granted by several subsequent critics<sup>10</sup>) is problematised in this way, Forker’s argument that Marlowe’s aim was ‘the better to emphasise Edward’s wilful disregard of duty and his “unnatural” violation of aristocratic tradition’ appears a useful and sufficient explanation.<sup>11</sup>

These correctives notwithstanding, it is undeniable that Marlowe takes a sustained interest in the social status of Edward’s favourites. While Spencer and Baldock are also interested in explicit social climbing, Marlowe’s focus is (typically) on Gaveston.<sup>12</sup> His innovative, persistent use of the term ‘minion’ helps to accomplish this: a ‘minion’ is inherently lower in status than the person they serve.<sup>13</sup> In Lancaster’s phrase ‘thy base minion’, the adjective merely intensifies and foregrounds the existing connotations of the noun.<sup>14</sup> This phrase establishes Gaveston as comparatively low-born in the opening scene, so that Edward’s ceremonial gestures of equality towards his favourite shortly afterwards (‘Kiss not my hand; / Embrace me, Gaveston, as I do thee. / Why should’st thou kneel?’) appear dangerously inappropriate to Gaveston’s status.<sup>15</sup> The nobles subsequently complain that Gaveston’s birth is mismatched both to the promotions he receives (‘That *villain* Gaveston is made an *earl*’ highlights the gulf between Gaveston’s former and present status) and to his behaviour (‘This I scorn...that one so basely born / Should by his sovereign’s favour grow so pert, / And riot it with the treasure of the realm’).<sup>16</sup> Mortimer and Lancaster’s emblems of the canker and the flying fish are also, of course, thinly veiled

<sup>8</sup> Emily Bartels, *Spectacles of Strangeness: Imperialism, Alienation, and Marlowe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), p. 164.

<sup>9</sup> Ribner, *English History Play*, p. 135; Kirk Melnikoff, ‘Introduction’, in Melnikoff, pp. 1–20 (p. 9).

<sup>10</sup> E.g. Paulina Kewes, ‘Marlowe, History and Politics’, in *Christopher Marlowe in Context*, ed. by Emily Bartels and Emma Smith (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 138–54 (p. 140).

<sup>11</sup> Marlowe, pp. 51–52.

<sup>12</sup> Kate Bennett, ‘Baldock’s ‘Gentrie’: Social Climbing in *Edward II*, *Notes and Queries*, 44 (1997), 483–84.

<sup>13</sup> The opposition drawn by James Voss between ‘minion’ and ‘terms deprecating [Gaveston’s] birth’ is therefore a false dichotomy [*Edward II: Marlowe’s Historical Tragedy*, *English Studies*, 63 (1982), 517–30 (p. 520)].

<sup>14</sup> Marlowe, I.i.132.

<sup>15</sup> Marlowe, I.i.139–41. For the way in which these assertions of equality engage with classical (particularly Aristotelian) discourse of friendship, see below (‘Brotherhood and friendship’) and Laurie Shannon, *Sovereign Amity: Figures of Friendship in Shakespearean Contexts* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 3–4.

<sup>16</sup> Marlowe, I.ii.11, I.iv.402–04; emphasis added.

attacks on Gaveston's social climbing: his ability to '[get] into the highest bough of all' and become '*Æque tandem*' (finally equal) to the other nobles will ultimately destroy the cedar that represents Edward, while the flying fish's death at the hands of a bird the moment 'it takes the air' indicates that Gaveston's rise will be his downfall.<sup>17</sup>

While historical texts following Marlowe do not tend to foreground Gaveston's low social status in the same way, it seems likely that the play influenced the tone in which the nobles of Michael Drayton's *Barons Warres* complain about Gaveston: if he is to be promoted, 'What Priviledge hath our Free-Birth, they say? / Or in our Bloud, what Vertue doth remaine?'<sup>18</sup> Among seventeenth-century treatments of this issue, Elizabeth Cary's is uncharacteristically damning:

a man as base in Birth as in Condition...not guilty of any drop of Noble blood; neither could he from the height of his Hereditary hope, challenge more than a bare ability to live; yet his thoughts were above measure ambitious and aspiring, and his confidence far greater than became his Birthright.<sup>19</sup>

This description presents Edward's promotion of and close relationship with Gaveston as unforgivably unwarranted by the latter's social status, and is typical of Cary's overall harsh condemnation of the relationship.

Compounding the problem of social status is the issue of Gaveston's Gascon birth. The duchy of Gascony was one of England's overseas territories, but contemporary and subsequent chroniclers demonstrate that it was considered sufficiently 'foreign' to declare Gaveston an unsuitable companion for Edward when this suited their account. Like many aspects of close relationships between men in this period, 'foreignness' comes into play as a condemnatory factor only when prompted by other considerations such as Gaveston's arrogant behaviour and his disproportionate political rewards. The *Vita Edwardi Secundi* frequently collocates Gaveston's country of birth with his social status, presenting them as two connected reasons for the English nobles' animosity towards him. 'The earls and barons of England looked down on Piers,' the writer explains, 'because he was a foreigner and formerly a mere squire raised to such splendour and eminence, nor was he mindful of his former rank.' (*comites et barones Anglie ipsum Petrum, quia alienigenam et humilem quondam armigerum, ad tantum decus et honorem provectum, nec sui prioris status memorem, despiciebant.*)<sup>20</sup> Similarly, he later asserts that 'the principal causes which had aroused the anger of the

---

<sup>17</sup> Marlowe, II.ii.15–28.

<sup>18</sup> *Barons Warres*, I.25.

<sup>19</sup> Cary (folio), fol. B2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> *Vita*, p. 9, trans. by Childs and Denholm-Young.

barons against Piers' (*Hiis maxime de causis excitata erat contra Petrum indignacio baronum*) were that Edward 'was trying to promote the unknown over the known, the stranger over the brother, and the foreigner over the native' (*ignotum noto, extraneum germano, et advenam incole conebatur preferre*) – rhetorically juxtaposing Gaveston's attributes against those perceived to characterise more suitable companions.<sup>21</sup> Walsingham, also attributing baronial opposition in part to Gaveston's birthplace, uses a similar technique: the nobles decide to push for Gaveston's exile because 'they saw themselves so despised, and foreigners who neither strength nor wisdom commended, raised over them beyond their deserts, and put before them in all places' (*viderent se contemptui, & alienigenae quem nec virtus, nec sapientia commendabant, super se supra merita sublimari, & eis in locis omnibus anteferr*).<sup>22</sup> Here, as with the *Vita*, Gaveston's status as 'foreigner' is condemned in relation to the alternative candidates whom Edward has spurned in his favour.

While most early modern historical texts devote less attention to Gaveston's birthplace, focusing instead on transgressive aspects of his character and behaviour, it is clearly still considered a significant attribute by some writers. *The Faithful Analist* (1660), an epitome probably composed by William Gilbertson, uses John Stow's *Chronicle* or *Annales* as a source for Edward's reign, but gives just one sentence on Gaveston's life before his second exile: 'The Lords envying Pierce of Gavestone, Earl of Cornwall, a stranger born, banished him the land.'<sup>23</sup> This extract omits most of Stow's details about Gaveston, but retains the phrase 'a stranger born'. If Gilbertson is considered as a reader of Stow, it is clear that he read Gaveston's foreign birth as a salient and memorable fact (his preface claims 'There is nothing memorable from the Conquest to these present Times, that is here omitted') worth retaining in a highly condensed account.<sup>24</sup>

Marlowe, too, places less emphasis on Gaveston's foreign birth than on other attributes. However, many critics have noted the potential political and sexual significance of the moments at which Gaveston's foreign tastes and qualities (established in the opening scene with the exclamations 'Tanti!' and 'Mort Dieu!') are stressed.<sup>25</sup> Gaveston's 'short Italian hooded cloak' and 'Tuscan cap' speak, Amanda Bailey argues, to fears of fashionably dressed young upstart courtiers, either foreign themselves or influenced by French and

<sup>21</sup> *Vita*, p. 29, trans. by Childs and Denholm-Young. 'Known' (*noto*) should be understood here as 'noble', i.e. of famous lineage; this is thus another comment on Gaveston's social status.

<sup>22</sup> Walsingham, fol. F5<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> G. W., *The Faithful Analist: Or, the Epitome of the English History* (London: for W. Gilbertson, 1660), fol. B<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> G. W., fol. A5<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> Marlowe, I.i.22, 89.

particularly Italian dress and manners.<sup>26</sup> Bailey also notes the association of Italians with sodomy; this is possibly the reason that Elizabeth Cary briefly lends some credence to the idea of Gaveston being Italian by birth, although she later retracts this.<sup>27</sup> That the French were similarly associated with sexual transgression can be seen from Francis Hubert's description of Gaveston as 'French by his Birth, and French by his behaviour'; indeed, as Richard Hillman reminds us, this association (coupled with that of 'effeminacy' and gender nonconformity) would have been particularly potent when Marlowe was writing owing to the example of Henri III (see Chapter 1).<sup>28</sup> As such, Mortimer Junior's attack on Gaveston's Italian dress may express both the early modern anti-court sentiment associated with 'minion' (discussed more fully below with reference to Gaveston's youth) and Mortimer's own condemnation of Gaveston's sexual relationship with Edward. The political control that Gaveston exercises over Edward is, of course, also rendered more threatening by virtue of his foreign birth.<sup>29</sup>

### **'Wastefully insolent with the treasury'**

Financial wrongdoing is the accusation most frequently levelled at Edward's favourites. Of the historical texts considered for this thesis, twenty-five accuse Gaveston of financial misconduct, and twenty-nine accuse the Despensers. The financial misdeeds of the latter principally comprise piracy (the *Brut* popularised the story that the younger Despenser 'robbede ii Dormondes [i.e. dromonds, large ships] bisides Sandewiche, & toke and bar away all þe gode þat was in ham' during his exile) and impoverishment of the kingdom and Queen Isabella (discussed below, 'Disrupting marriage').<sup>30</sup> With regard to Gaveston, the anonymous poems written shortly after his death (now published together as 'Songs on the Death of Peter de Gaveston') and the verses known as 'On the Evil Times of Edward II' or 'A Poem on the Times of Edward II' provide evidence that contemporaries viewed him as guilty of financial malpractice. The second 'Song' celebrates Gaveston's death by recounting his former sins: 'The people of the kingdom was made sorrowful for the fraud upon the treasure, when Peter becomes wastefully insolent with the treasury'.<sup>31</sup> 'On the Evil Times' is comparatively less explicit. The writer complains that 'pore men be i-pyled' and 'the selver [from the taxes] goth', but exonerates Edward by suggesting he is

<sup>26</sup> Amanda Bailey, *Flaunting: Style and the Subversive Male Body in Renaissance England* (Toronto; London: University of Toronto Press, 2007), pp. 77–102.

<sup>27</sup> Bailey, pp. 77–78; Cary (folio), fols. B2<sup>v</sup>, H<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> Hubert (1628), stanza 30; Richard Hillman, *Shakespeare, Marlowe and the Politics of France* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p. 101.

<sup>29</sup> R. Hakim, 'Marlowe on the English Stage, 1588-1988' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leeds, 1990), p. 63.

<sup>30</sup> *Brut*, p. 214.

<sup>31</sup> *Songs*, p. 260, trans. by Wright.

unaware of this: ‘Wyst the kyng of Ynglond / For god he wold be wroth’.<sup>32</sup> Although Gaveston is not mentioned, the evidence of the ‘Songs’ indicates that popular blame for economic hardship in the early years of Edward’s reign was partially attached to Gaveston; it is therefore reasonable to suggest that the writer of this poem is also directing blame at Gaveston, though this is of course inconclusive.

The *Brut*’s story of Gaveston’s financial wrongdoing, recounting his theft of a gold table and trestles that had belonged to King Arthur and his transport of them overseas, was very influential, both directly and via Fabyan, Stow and Holinshed.<sup>33</sup> Through the link to Arthur and the physical removal of the items from England, this anecdote represents Gaveston as a perpetrator of crimes against the kingdom: the literal transport of objects with such a symbolic link to national identity sensationalises his misdeeds. This sense is present even in accounts that do not explicitly accuse him of stealing Arthurian relics. Thomas Castleford, for example, asserts that ‘To alienes he made large despens, / He wasted alle the aunciene tresore’: the adjective ‘aunciene’ carries similar connotations to Arthur’s table and trestles.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, Daniel states that ‘the King gave him the Jewels of the Crowne, which hee sould to Marchant strangers’.<sup>35</sup>

Marlowe and Drayton both connect Gaveston’s financial and sexual transgressions. As Vincenzo Pasquarella points out, Mortimer Junior’s accusation that ‘The idle triumphs, masks, lascivious shows, / And prodigal gifts bestow’d on Gaveston, / Have drawn thy treasure dry, and made thee weak’ ‘implies that sexual intercourse has drained the king’ – both through the causal connection with explicitly sexual ‘lascivious shows’, and because “‘treasure” was frequently employed by Renaissance writers as a metaphor for genitalia’.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, Drayton’s Gaveston states, ‘His treasure now stood absolute to mee, / I dranck my pleasures in a golden cup’.<sup>37</sup> The expensive ‘golden cup’ functions to indicate Gaveston’s profligacy, but the mention of ‘pleasures’ – which denotes sex between Edward and Gaveston elsewhere in the poem – links the financial and the sexual. The implication in both texts is that the financial favours Edward bestows on Gaveston result from their sexual relationship; more specifically, they are Gaveston’s reward for the sexual pleasure he gives Edward. The result, as Mortimer makes clear, is that Edward’s sexual relationship

<sup>32</sup> *A Poem on the Times of Edward the Second*, ed. by Charles Hardwick (London: Percy Society, 1849), stanza 61.

<sup>33</sup> *Brut*, p. 206.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas Castleford, *Castleford’s Chronicle: Or the Boke of Brut*, ed. by Caroline D. Eckhardt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), II, ll. 38899–900.

<sup>35</sup> Daniel, fol. Q3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> Marlowe, II.ii.156–58; Vincenzo Pasquarella, *Christopher Marlowe’s Representation of Love* (Rome: Aracne, 2008), p. 76.

<sup>37</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 793–94.

with Gaveston leads directly to his – and England’s – impoverishment. This foregrounding of the sexual element of Edward and Gaveston’s relationship, and its link to patronage and financial favour, is typical of Marlowe and Drayton’s accounts (indeed, Drayton’s later revision of his Gaveston poem adds further details of Gaveston’s monopolies, thefts, and sale of offices).<sup>38</sup> But it may also constitute a response to late sixteenth-century concerns about the financial repercussions of sexually attractive royal favourites, inspired by both Elizabeth I and Henri III of France, as discussed in Chapter 3.

### **‘I fear that his pride will bring about his ruin’**

Pride remains one of the most apparently memorable attributes of both of Edward’s favourites in medieval and early modern historiography. Twenty-three of the historical texts considered here mention pride, insolence or arrogance relating to Gaveston, and sixteen mention it relating to the Despensers. While Gaveston’s thefts are usually intended to speak for themselves by demonstrating his unsavoury character, his pride is frequently the subject of explicit moral condemnation. Nowhere is this more evident than in the *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, whose writer presents pride as Gaveston’s principal failing, using him as a moral exemplum on several occasions. Early in his account of Edward’s reign, he identifies Gaveston’s pride as the deciding factor in the baronial hostility against him:

But Piers, now earl of Cornwall, was unwilling to remember that he had once been Piers the humble esquire. For Piers reckoned no one his fellow, no one his equal, except the king alone. In fact his countenance exacted greater deference than the king’s. His arrogance was, then, intolerable to the barons and the main cause of both the hatred and the rancour. For it is commonly said,

You may be rich and wise and handsome,  
But insolence could be your ruin.

I therefore believe and firmly maintain that if Piers had behaved discreetly and humbly towards the great men of the land from the beginning, none of them would ever have opposed him.<sup>39</sup>

Condemnation of Gaveston’s pride is inextricably linked here to his comparatively low social status of ‘humble esquire’: his ‘arrogance’ is ‘intolerable’ largely because it is disproportionate to and inappropriate for his birth. However, the writer’s use of the moralistic couplet – which Wendy Childs notes ‘is found in a variety of European late medieval MSS’ – also connects Gaveston to a wider moralistic argument which condemns

---

<sup>38</sup> *Legend*, ll. 517–22.

<sup>39</sup> *Vita*, pp. 27–29, trans. by Childs and Denholm-Young.

pride as a sin in and of itself.<sup>40</sup> Even if Gaveston *had* been ‘rich and wise and handsome’ – that is, even if his pride were seemingly justified by his attributes – the verse argues that ‘insolence’ (*superbia*) would be unacceptable. While *superbia* could also be justifiably translated as ‘pride’, Childs’s choice of ‘insolence’ in this case represents its social expression: for the writer of the *Vita*, Gaveston’s pride manifests not just as inward conviction but as action in relation to others.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, her choice of the adverb ‘discreetly’ for *prudenter* (also carrying the sense of ‘wisely’) as a contrasting behaviour reinforces this notion, suggesting that Gaveston’s pride is exemplified by indiscreet behaviour: that is, by being deliberately noticeable or drawing attention to himself.<sup>42</sup>

Indeed, it should be noted that condemnation of Gaveston’s pride is frequently expressed by censuring his propensity for ostentatious dress. The contemporaneous *Annales Paulini* describe his attire at Edward’s coronation:

Petrus vero, non regis sed gloriam propriam quaerens, et quasi Anglos contempnens, ubi ceteri in deauratis vestibus incedebant, ipse in purpura, margaritis intexta preciosis, inter convivas, quasi rege pretiosior equitabat.<sup>43</sup>

Truly Piers, not striving for the glory of the king but for his own, and as if looking down on the English, where others were advancing in gilded garments, he in purple, embroidered with precious pearls, rode among the guests like a more precious king.

This story also appears in the *Flores Historiarum*, and persists in most longer texts (sometimes later transferred to Edward’s wedding rather than coronation).<sup>44</sup> Its account of deliberate flamboyance, calculated to draw attention and exceed the opulence of the other nobles, can be compared to two other recurring anecdotes used to illustrate Gaveston’s arrogance. In one, Gaveston disgraces the other nobles in a tournament held at Wallingford, where ‘Lord Piers’s side could not raise an earl, but almost all the younger and harder knights of the kingdom, whom persuasion or reward could bring together, supported him’ – thus defeating his opponents in a manner clearly felt to be unjust.<sup>45</sup> In another, Gaveston’s insulting nicknames for the other earls become well-known: ‘he demeaned himself with greater pride and insolence than at first, calling Sir Robert of Clare Earle of Gloster whoreson, the earle of Lincolne sir Henry Lacy Burstenbelly, sir Guy

<sup>40</sup> *Vita*, p. 28 n. 53.

<sup>41</sup> ‘Superbia’, DMLBS.

<sup>42</sup> ‘Prudenter’, DMLBS.

<sup>43</sup> *Annales Paulini*, p. 262.

<sup>44</sup> E.g. Daniel, fol. Q2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>45</sup> *Vita*, p. 7, trans. by Childs and Denholm-Young. See also (e.g.) *The Chronicle of Walter of Guisborough*, ed. by Harry Rothwell (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1957), p. 380n.; *John Capgrave’s Abbreviation of Cronicles*, ed. by Peter J. Lucas (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Early English Text Society, 1983), p. 136; Baker, fol. S3<sup>v</sup>.



Earle of Warwick, black dog of Arderne, and the noble Earle Thomas of Lancaster churle'.<sup>46</sup> What these stories share is an emphasis on the conspicuous, excessive nature of Gaveston's pride. They function metonymically to demonstrate that pride through a single, hyperbolic, entertaining example. In addition, they present his arrogance as impossible to ignore or tolerate, justifying the other nobles' actions against him.

Later in the *Vita*, the writer continues to use Gaveston's behaviour as inspiration for more general moralising, comparing him to Lucifer.<sup>47</sup> He invents a remorseful speech for Gaveston following his capture:

Piers when he heard the word death, sighing a little, groaned: 'Oh!', he said, 'where are my gifts through which I had acquired so many close friends, and with which I had thought to have sufficient power? Where are my friends, in whom was my trust, the protection of my body, and my whole hope of safety; whose vigorous youth, unbeaten valour, and courage was always on fire for hard tasks; who had promised, furthermore, to stand by me in war, to suffer imprisonment, and not to shun death? Assuredly, my pride, the arrogance that one single promise of theirs has nourished, the king's favour and the king's court have brought me to this loathsome position. I have no help, every remedy is vain, let the earls' will be done.'<sup>48</sup>

Becoming an exemplum, the character of Gaveston here enumerates his misdeeds and the causes of his downfall. He asserts didactically that qualities such as 'vigorous youth' and 'unbeaten valour' cannot be relied upon, and accepts his fate as inevitable ('I have no help'). Through this heavily moralistic characterisation, the writer provides a useful insight into contemporary perceptions of Gaveston's downfall. Although this text itself was not influential (it was not printed during the early modern period, and only Drayton and Stow are known to have consulted the manuscript) – and although the strength of its condemnation of Gaveston's pride is atypical – its attitudes provide some explanation for the persistence of pride and arrogance as Gaveston's overriding characteristics in later historical works. It reminds us that pride was the subject of religious condemnation as well as mere social annoyance – hinting, perhaps, at a connection between its preponderance as a slur against Gaveston and the dominance of monastic voices in medieval historiography of Edward's reign, although the *Vita* itself is likely to have been composed by a secular clerk.<sup>49</sup> In addition, as a contemporary perspective, it provides some indication of the memories of Gaveston (both personal and cultural) to which subsequent writers would be responding.

<sup>46</sup> Heywood, fol. 2A4<sup>v</sup>. See also (e.g.) *Flora*, p. 152; *Lanercost*, p. 194; Speed, fol. 4S2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> *Vita*, pp. 29–31.

<sup>48</sup> *Vita*, p. 47, trans. by Childs and Denholm-Young.

<sup>49</sup> *Vita*, p. xxiv.

That contemporary observers focused their condemnation of Gaveston on his pride in particular is also suggested by the second of the ‘Songs’ composed on his death:

Pange, lingua, necem Petri qui turbavit Angliam,  
 Quem rex amans super omnem praetulit Cornubiam;  
 Vult hinc comes, et non Petrus, dici per superbiam.  
 ...Nulli volens comparari, summo fastu praeditus,  
 Se nolente subdit collum passioni deditus;  
 De condigna morte cuius est hic hymnus editus.  
 Perdit caput qui se caput paribus praeponit:  
 Rite corpus perforatur cuius cor sic tumuit:  
 ...Trux, crudelis inter omnes, nunc a pompis abstinet;  
 ...Flexis ramis arbor illa ruit in proverbium;  
 Nam rigor lentescit ille quem dedit superbi;  
 Sic debet humiliari qui sapit sublimia.

Celebrate, my tongue, the death of Peter who disturbed England, whom the king in his love for him placed over all Cornwall; hence in his pride he will be called Earl, and not Peter... He who was unwilling to have an equal, clothed in the extreme of pride, against his will bends his neck to the executioner; of whose merited death this hymn is set forth. – He who placed himself as a head above his equals, loses his own head; justly his body is pierced, whose heart was so puffed up... Ferocious and cruel among men, he ceases now from his pomp... This tree with its branches bent falls into a proverb; for the stiffness which pride gave is softened; thus ought the ambitious and aspiring man to be humbled.<sup>50</sup>

Gaveston’s pride (variously *superbia* or *fastu*) is the central point that the writer raises and returns to in this short text. The repeated ‘He who’ is a necessary product of Wright’s translation into English, reflecting the fact that the writer twice refers to Gaveston simply by recounting his proud behaviour. Clauses such as ‘*Nulli volens comparari, summo fastu praeditus*’ reduce Gaveston to his pride itself: pride is not just his fundamental attribute, but his very being. For this writer, Gaveston’s death is a deserved product of his pride (‘justly his body is pierced, whose heart was so puffed up’) and, as with the *Vita*, his fall is a moral lesson (‘thus ought the ambitious and aspiring man to be humbled’). Interestingly, while Gaveston’s promoted status as ‘earl’ (*comes*) is twice referred to, the writer’s objection is not to his promotion *per se*; rather, it is to Gaveston’s apparent belief that that promotion raised him above his ‘equals’ (*paribus*) and his behaviour accordingly. Moreover, since this appears to have been a popular text (Wright notes that both the ‘Songs’ are ‘parodies on two hymns in the old church service’, and the surviving copy was transcribed a century after Gaveston’s death) it is important to pay attention to the description of Gaveston as ‘ferocious and cruel’ (*Trux, crudelis*). Condemnations of Gaveston from a non-noble perspective are relatively rare; where they do exist, they are usually reported second-hand in

---

<sup>50</sup> *Songs*, pp. 259–61, trans. by Wright.

texts which are otherwise condemnatory, and their reliability is therefore unclear.<sup>51</sup>

However, the second ‘Song’ provides some evidence that Edward’s subjects perceived Gaveston to have a harsh effect on their lives.

Gaveston’s pride was cemented as his fundamental characteristic by *The Last Kings of England*, the prophetic text included in the *Brut*. ‘Merlyn’, the writer states, ‘tolde þat an Egle shulde come out of Cornwaile, þat shulde have feþeres of golde, þat of pride shulde have non pier, and shulde despice Lordes of bloode’.<sup>52</sup> This figure is clearly Gaveston, who was created Earl of Cornwall by Edward and whose coat of arms featured an eagle.<sup>53</sup> This is one of a very small number of details given about Gaveston in the *Brut*, and the only one in the prophetic section taken from *The Last Kings*. When the enormous popularity of the *Brut* is considered, it is unsurprising that pride persisted as one of Gaveston’s dominant features in historiography. A typical example from an early modern text is Thomas Cooper’s *Epitome*, which states that, ‘The pryde and tyrannie of Piers of Gaveston caused grudge and malice betwene kyng Edward of England & his nobles: so that for this cause the said Piers by suite of the nobles was twise or thrise banished the realm’.<sup>54</sup> Here, as with the *Vita*, Gaveston’s ‘pryde and tyrannie’ are the ‘main cause’ of the baronial opposition that led to his exile.<sup>55</sup> Marlowe, too, establishes Gaveston’s pride from his opening scene, again demonstrating its fundamental importance to his character. The lines ‘Farewell base stooping to the lordly peers; / My knee shall bow to none but to the king’ indicate that Gaveston *has* previously ‘stooped’ to the other nobles, but is seizing the first possible opportunity to move away from this subordination.<sup>56</sup> His high self-perception is made more explicit when he later scathingly describes the other nobles as ‘Base leaden earls’, telling them his ‘mounting thoughts did never creep so low / As to bestow a look on such as you.’<sup>57</sup>

References to the Despencers’ pride in early modern historical texts frequently take a similar form: writers assert their pride as an uncontested fact and link it to their exile or to the civil war between Edward and his nobles. Richard Grafton’s *Abridgement of Chronicles*, for example, states that, ‘The Lordes and nobles of England, detesting the outrageous pride of the Spencers...caused ye king halfe against his minde to remove from him the Spencers

---

<sup>51</sup> E.g. *Vita*, p. 35.

<sup>52</sup> *Brut*, p. 243.

<sup>53</sup> Smallwood, pp. 575–76.

<sup>54</sup> Lanquet-Cooper, fol. 3N<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>55</sup> Gaveston’s ‘tyranny’ (discussed more fully below) seems here to represent various instances in Fabyan’s text of Gaveston exercising control over Edward and his political decisions.

<sup>56</sup> Marlowe, I.i.18–19.

<sup>57</sup> Marlowe, II.ii.74–78.

and banish them the Realme.<sup>58</sup> Earlier texts appear more inclined to detail the effects of their pride, which are largely specified as financial misconduct – le Baker, for instance, reports that, ‘driven on by their proud, ambitious spirits, they were pauperising high-born knights by demanding cruel ransoms, and were disinheriting their sons by knocking down their fathers’ estates for nothing.’<sup>59</sup> Telling anecdotes comparable to those that circulated concerning Gaveston are rare, but an example can be found in the *Anonimalle Chronicle*. When Thomas of Lancaster was captured, the writer relates, he was sent to ‘Pontefract, a place the said earl loved more than any other town in the land. And there the king had entered the said earl’s castle and, sir Hugh being with him, met the earl and contemptuously insulted him to his face with malicious and arrogant words.’<sup>60</sup> Interactions between people are rarely described in such detail in the *Anonimalle*: this example is therefore striking and memorable, contributing significantly to the text’s representation of the younger Despenser’s character. Its description of him is condemnatory not only through the adjectives ‘malicious and arrogant’, but also in its sympathy to Thomas of Lancaster, evinced by stressing the inappropriateness of his beloved Pontefract as a setting for his trial and the discourtesy of Edward and Despenser’s remarks ‘to his face’.

### **Gaveston and early modern anti-courtier sentiment**

Edward’s favourites – again, overwhelmingly Gaveston – are also condemned as unsuitable companions on the basis of their youth. In medieval texts, this condemnation often takes the form of comparisons between Edward and the Biblical king Rehoboam, who spurned old and experienced counsellors for younger men; these comparisons will be discussed in Chapter 3 with reference to the trope of ‘evil counsel’. In Marlowe’s *Edward II*, however, criticism of Edward’s choice of younger favourites intersects with criticism of young courtiers with excessively fashionable dress, as found in many anti-court texts. Curtis Perry argues that ‘hostility towards seemingly all-powerful royal favourites played a central role in the development and articulation of anti-court sentiment in England’; I want to expand this further by identifying specific hostility towards those favourites’ youth and fashionability.<sup>61</sup> As Charles Forker points out, ‘extravagance of dress was much satirized in Marlowe’s age’,<sup>62</sup> and attacks on royal favourites participate in this trend. Moreover, ‘at Elizabeth’s court...young men who were of good birth, poor estate, and average talent were perceived as using their bodies and the clothes they wore to exploit the traditional routes

<sup>58</sup> Grafton (*Abridgement*), fol. K1<sup>r</sup>. See also Fabyan, fol. 2K3<sup>v</sup>; Martyn, fol. O<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>59</sup> Le Baker (2012), p. 16, trans. by Preest.

<sup>60</sup> *Anonimalle*, p. 107, trans. by Childs and Taylor.

<sup>61</sup> Perry, p. 1.

<sup>62</sup> Marlowe, Liv.412n.

by which suitors obtained access to the mind and body of the monarch': criticism of young courtiers' fashionable dress implied that they had no other, worthier means (such as wisdom or political prowess) to gain the monarch's favour.<sup>63</sup> In this context, it is perhaps more useful to speak specifically of 'anti-courtier sentiment'.

Analysis of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century texts expressing a critical attitude towards courtiers reveals two opposing semantic fields. Age is associated with honest counsel, concern with worthy matters of governance, and unadorned speech and appearance; youth with flattery, preoccupation with trivial and inconsequential matters, and fashionable dress. The latter is exemplified by the anti-court poem 'The Cuckow', written by Richard Niccols, who later incorporated Edward into the *Mirror for Magistrates* canon. In Niccols's 'bower of blisse' – an allegory for Westminster – 'jetting jackes' are condemned for fashionable clothing which represents 'Whole manners, castles, townes and Lordships sold / Cut out in clippings and in shreds of gold'. Niccols associates these fashionable young men with effeminacy:

Their chambring fortitude they did descrie  
By their soft maiden voice and flickering eie,  
Their womans manhood by their cloaths perfum'd,  
Coy lookes, curl'd lockes, and thin beards halfe consum'd,  
Whose nice, effeminate and base behaviour  
Was counted comely, neate and cleanly gesture.<sup>64</sup>

This identification of fashionable hairstyles and perfume as effeminate is clearly reminiscent of the criticisms of Henri III outlined in Chapter 1. Like French commentators, Niccols also associates these courtiers with sexually transgressive behaviour elsewhere in the poem.<sup>65</sup>

The juxtaposition of these young courtiers with their older counterparts is perhaps best exemplified by the anonymous drama *Thomas of Woodstock*. The irresponsible Richard II chooses his favourites on the basis of their youth and attractiveness: 'Your youths are fitting to our tender years / And such shall beautify our princely throne.'<sup>66</sup> Bagot, Bushy, Green and Scroop flatter the king and are concerned with primarily trivial matters.<sup>67</sup> By contrast, Thomas of Woodstock is known as 'Plain Thomas', 'For his plain dealing and his simple clothing'.<sup>68</sup> His encounter with an anonymous, archetypal 'spruce Courtier' ridicules

---

<sup>63</sup> Bailey, p. 91.

<sup>64</sup> Richard Niccols, *The Cuckow* (London: F[elix] K[ingston], 1607), fol. B3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>65</sup> E.g. *The Cuckow*, fols. G<sup>r</sup>–G<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>66</sup> *Thomas of Woodstock, Or, Richard the Second, Part One*, ed. by Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), II.i.4–5.

<sup>67</sup> E.g. *Woodstock*, II.ii.206–10.

<sup>68</sup> *Woodstock*, I.i.99–100.

the latter, who reveals that the ‘council / Sat three days about’ his fashionable footwear, before launching into an overblown and nonsensical explanation of it: ‘This chain doth, as it were, so toe-ify the knee and so knee-ify the toe that between both it makes a most methodical coherence or coherent method.’<sup>69</sup> Woodstock’s statement that ‘In these plain hose I’ll do the realm more good / Than these that pill the poor to jet in gold’ is borne out by the play’s moral trajectory: the ghosts of the heroic Black Prince and Edward III attempt to rescue Woodstock, before his murder is presented as cruel and unjust, while Richard’s favourites are caught and punished one by one.<sup>70</sup>

Marlowe’s *Edward II* employs a broadly similar set of connotations in criticising Edward’s choice of the young Gaveston as a favourite. The scene in which Edward rewards his wife and nobles for agreeing to recall Gaveston from exile sets up a juxtaposition analogous to the one seen in *Woodstock*:

Warwick shall be my chiefest counsellor:  
These silver hairs will more adorn my court  
Than gaudy silks, or rich embroidery.<sup>71</sup>

The opposition between ‘silver hairs’ and ‘gaudy silks, or rich embroidery’ gains its full weight from the associations carried by those two phrases: age and experience versus ostentatious display and ‘show’ of the kind associated with the young Gaveston from the play’s beginning. Many of Marlowe’s audience would, I think, have recognised this opposition and appreciated its wider connotations. Significantly, *Edward II* and *Thomas of Woodstock* are closely contemporary; while I am not arguing for influence between the two plays, or for a ‘common source’ in the sense of a particular text, I am suggesting that both plays are products of and responses to a cultural climate in which the two opposing semantic fields described above were prevalent, recognisable and politically salient.

The scene from Marlowe quoted above, in which Edward displays love for his wife and doles out ceremonial honours among his older and higher-ranking nobles, represents a brief restoration of stability before the disruption that inevitably accompanies Gaveston’s return. Edward’s reference to Warwick’s ‘silver hairs’ as he nominates him ‘chiefest counsellor’ appears to represent a conscious recognition that a shift towards reliance on older rather than younger counsellors is a key aspect of that re-establishment of stability. It signals to Marlowe’s audience that Edward is, however briefly, accepting the consensus that older counsellors represent a wiser and more politically expedient choice.

<sup>69</sup> *Woodstock*, III.ii.203–04; III.ii.223–26.

<sup>70</sup> *Woodstock*, II.ii.36–37; V.i.55–102; V.i.213–79; V.iv, V.v.

<sup>71</sup> Marlowe, I.iv.344–46.

Marlowe's Gaveston is associated with show and fashion from his very opening scene (in which he describes the elaborate entertainments he plans to stage for Edward). Minutes after the 'silver hairs' passage, Mortimer Junior reinforces, expands and foregrounds this association:

While soldiers mutiny for want of pay  
 He wears a lord's revenue on his back,  
 And Midas-like, he jets it in the court,  
 With base outlandish cullions at his heels,  
 Whose proud fantastic liveries make such show  
 As if that Proteus, god of shapes, appeared.  
 I have not seen a dapper Jack so brisk;  
 He wears a short Italian hooded cloak  
 Larded with pearl, and, in his Tuscan cap,  
 A jewel of more value than the crown.  
 While others walk below, the king and he  
 From out a window laugh at such as we,  
 And flout our train, and jest at our attire.  
 Uncle, 'tis this that makes me impatient.<sup>72</sup>

Mortimer's objections to Gaveston encompass the majority of negative characteristics attached to him in early modern historiography: his social status, pride, foreignness, financial transgressions, and fashionable youth. Debra Belt has identified a number of echoes between this passage and various aspects of antitheatrical discourse.<sup>73</sup> These echoes, and particularly the accusation that Gaveston's 'proud fantastic liveries make such show', further the condemnatory association between Gaveston and the ostentatious behaviour and fashion suggested earlier in the scene by 'gaudy silks'. Bailey highlights the fact that, in contemporary late Elizabethan culture, 'Extravagantly attired young men were not singled out...merely for wearing Italian silks, velvets, and furs, but for wearing these imported items in an ostentatious manner'.<sup>74</sup> Importantly, then, Gaveston is not only associated with show and fashion, but with foreign fashions specifically. Italy in particular – the origin of Gaveston's 'short...hooded cloak' and 'Tuscan cap' – had connotations of sexual transgression, including sodomy, and accusations of Italian connections, fashions or influences could also be generally pejorative: "Thomas Nashe observes, "It is nowe a privie note amongst the better sort of men, when they would set a singular marke or brand on a notorious villaine, to say, he hath beene in *Italy*.""<sup>75</sup> Mortimer objects not only to Gaveston's preference for foreign fashions, but to his introduction of foreign servants ('outlandish cullions') to court. Moreover, those fashions are the result of excessive

<sup>72</sup> Marlowe, I.iv.405–18.

<sup>73</sup> Debra Belt, 'Anti-Theatricalism and Rhetoric in Marlowe's *Edward II*, *English Literary Renaissance*, 21 (1991), 134–60.

<sup>74</sup> Bailey, p. 80.

<sup>75</sup> Bailey, pp. 101–02.

expenditure, to the detriment of the realm. ‘A lord’s revenue’ has been used to clothe Gaveston rather than to pay destitute soldiers, and the image of ‘a jewel of more value than the crown’ in his cap highlights his usurpation of royal funds: the most valuable headgear in the kingdom should be worn by the king. This usurpation reflects Gaveston’s transgression of his social rank, also evidenced by his tendency to literally look down on the lords who ‘walk below’.

Marlowe’s portrait of a young, haughty, fashionably Gaveston must be contextualised within contemporary criticism of Elizabeth I’s favourites.<sup>76</sup> As Dennis Kay points out, ‘Gaveston...is figured as the quintessential Elizabethan courtier’ – indeed, other aspects of his character reinforce this, such as his use of ‘terms that explicitly echo the behaviours and discourses of royal celebration under Elizabeth.’<sup>77</sup> This association, once established, persisted: Dekker’s *Seven Deadly Sinnes of London* (1606) uses a figure named as ‘the Gaveston of the Time’ to condemn the sin of ‘Apishness’.<sup>78</sup> He is described as a ‘feirse, dapper fellow, more light headed than a Musitian: as phantastically attyred as a Court Jeaster: wanton in discourse, lascivious in behaviour: jocond in good companie: nice in his trencher’. In James Siemon’s view, Gaveston’s association with late Elizabethan and Jacobean anti-courtier sentiment was so entrenched that it is ‘surprising’ to see no reference to him in William Camden’s criticism of “‘the Nobilitie” and those wishing “they might seem noble”” for transgressions including apishness, foreign dress, and ‘jet[ting] up and downe’ wearing ‘Silkes, glittering with gold and silver’.<sup>79</sup> The presentation of Gaveston as the object of contemporary satire may be a product of his role in *Edward II* as Vice figure. In Ben Jonson’s *The Staple of News* (1626), the character of Mirth observes, ‘now they are attired like men and women o’the time, the Vices male and female!’: the Vice, an ‘old style allegorical figure’, is now portrayed as ‘a contemporary social type (a young heir, a usurer) whose function in society is in some way analogous.’<sup>80</sup> Marlowe’s Gaveston, then, is a ‘contemporary social type’ who conveys pride and prodigality among other Vice-like attributes.

---

<sup>76</sup> The same is true of the *mignons* of *The Massacre at Paris*: ‘Henry’s band is fastidious about the incidentals of costume and the beautifying buttons of Mugeroun’s coat, and maims its victims to make them ugly!’ [John Cutts, *The Left Hand of God: A Critical Interpretation of the Plays of Christopher Marlowe* (Haddonfield: Haddonfield House, 1973), p. 181.]

<sup>77</sup> Dennis Kay, ‘Marlowe, *Edward II*, and the Cult of Elizabeth’, *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 3 (1997), 1–30 (p. 9).

<sup>78</sup> Thomas Dekker, *The Seven Deadly Sinnes of London* (London: E[dward] A[l]lde and S. Stafford] for Nathaniel Butter, 1606), fol. E4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>79</sup> Siemon, pp. 151–52.

<sup>80</sup> Alan C. Dessen, ‘*Edward II* and Residual Allegory’, in *Christopher Marlowe the Craftsman: Lives, Stage and Page*, ed. by Sarah Scott and M. L. Stapleton (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 63–77 (p. 65).



Sara Munson Deats's claims that the baronial criticisms of Gaveston in Marlowe's play are primarily motivated by misogyny fail to convince.<sup>81</sup> 'Throughout the play,' she argues, 'the rancorous barons execrate Gaveston for all the feminine faults traditionally so vexatious to misogynists (and frequently associated with the *Femme Fatale*) – presumption, eroticism, hypocrisy, and extravagance, especially extravagance of dress'. These traits are indeed 'vexatious to misogynists' (although 'traditionally' is not a useful term here) – but as I have argued, they are also historiographically associated with Gaveston. It is more useful to read them as anti-courtier than as anti-women, and to recognise that the misogyny they evoke is an essential part of their use to condemn courtiers by feminising them.

The condensed nature of Mortimer Junior's speech, and the near-comprehensive set of accusations that it levels at Gaveston, allows us to observe the connections between these seemingly disparate characteristics that become attached to him over the period 1305–1700. Judith Haber's analysis foregrounds these links: 'Mortimer moves freely among, and implicitly equates, a number of *affronts to and inversions of traditional values*: the base is raised above the noble, the foreigner above the native-born, the frivolous above the serious and practical, the superficial above the substantive.'<sup>82</sup> Although 'traditional values' is a nebulous concept, it is clear that each of these 'inversions' are socially disruptive, and that they are causes of both anxiety and anger for the nobles in Marlowe's play; in addition, by echoing anti-courtier discourse, they would have played upon the anxieties of his audience. Gaveston's pride, meanwhile, fuels and aggravates this disruption. This combination of characteristics historiographically associated with Gaveston (and the Despencers) contributes to the representation of their relationships with Edward as unwise, inappropriate and transgressive.

## ii. Attractive choices

Why, then, might Edward have made such unwise choices of companions? Many texts suggest that Gaveston and/or the Despencers found favour because of their physical attractiveness. The foremost implication of this, particularly when contrasted with their unappealing personalities, is that Edward's choices of favourites reflect his impaired judgement. His judgment is shown to be based more on superficial or emotional factors than on sober assessment of character: in the words of Drayton's *Poly-Olbion*, Edward

---

<sup>81</sup> Sara Munson Deats, 'Edward II: A Study in Androgyny', *Ball State University Forum*, 22 (1981), 30–41 (pp. 37–39).

<sup>82</sup> Judith Haber, *Desire and Dramatic Form in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 33; emphasis added.

‘chose not men for wit, but only for their faces’.<sup>83</sup> However, this is by no means separate from condemnation of Edward’s sexual behaviour, which is frequently presented as a distraction from royal duty. Depictions of attractive favourites also suggest that Edward’s reliance on sexual attraction, rather than rational judgement, has resulted in inappropriate choices of close advisers – thus contributing to an overall politically-motivated condemnation of his sexual transgressions.

### Physical attractiveness

The anonymous *Chronicle of the Civil Wars of Edward II* (c. 1327) suggests that Edward’s love for Gaveston resulted from looking, and therefore perhaps from his physical appearance:

Quem filius regis intuens in eum tantum protinus amorem iniecit quod cum eo fraternitatis fedus iniit, et pre ceteris mortalibus indissolubile dileccionis vinculum secum elegit et firmiter disposuit innodare.<sup>84</sup>

The king’s son, regarding him, felt so much love for him that he entered into a compact of brotherhood with him and chose and decided to tie himself to him, against all mortals, in an unbreakable bond of affection.<sup>85</sup>

However, this is unique among early texts. The tradition of Gaveston’s beauty begins in earnest with the poems of Michael Drayton. It would be impossible to enumerate fully the ways in the narrator of *Peirs Gaveston* conveys his own extraordinary attractiveness: the poem heaps stanza upon stanza of copious description, simile and classical allusion. As Kelly Quinn points out, this technique is typical of royal mistress complaints, a sub-genre to which she convincingly demonstrates *Peirs Gaveston* belongs. ‘Gaveston,’ she writes, ‘shares with the female plainants an emphasis on his own beauty’, and ‘follows their convention of setting forth his own physical attributes’.<sup>86</sup>

My lookes perswading orators of Love,  
My speech divine infusing harmonie,  
And every worde so well could passion move,  
So were my gestures grac’d with modestie,  
As where my thoughts intended to surprize,  
I easly made a conquest with mine eyes.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Michael Drayton, ‘Poly-Olbion’, in *Works*, ed. by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931), IV, XVII.196.

<sup>84</sup> George L. Haskins, ‘A Chronicle of the Civil Wars of Edward II’, *Speculum*, 14 (1939), 73–81 (p. 75).

<sup>85</sup> Trans. by Pierre Chaplais, *Piers Gaveston: Edward II’s Adoptive Brother* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 12–13.

<sup>86</sup> Kelly Quinn, ‘Mastering Complaint: Michael Drayton’s *Peirs Gaveston* and the Royal Mistress Complaints’, *English Literary Renaissance*, 38 (2008), 439–60 (p. 444).

<sup>87</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 133–38.

This stanza and those around it form a self-reflexive blazon, each line identifying a different attractive physical attribute. Gaveston's youth, too, is mentioned frequently as a source of attractiveness, and the image of him as a beautiful, sexually attractive young man is furthered by Drayton's use of the term 'Ganymede' (see Chapter 1).<sup>88</sup> His self-descriptions abound with superlatives, as this stanza exemplifies:

If cunning'st pensill-man that ever wrought  
By skilfull arte of secret symetry,  
Or the divine Idea of the thought  
With rare descriptions of high poesy,  
Should all compose a body and a mind,  
Such a one seem'd I, the wonder of my kind.<sup>89</sup>

Strikingly, this description (along with many others) suggests that Gaveston's attractiveness is not limited to Edward; his appeal is universal:

The heavens had lim'd my face with such a die  
As made the curiost eie on earth amazed,  
Tempring my lookes with love and majestie,  
A miracle to all that ever gazed...<sup>90</sup>

Like the erotic masque in Marlowe's *Edward II*, this passage presents 'all' people 'on earth' as susceptible to Gaveston's beauty. This dangerous potential for homoerotic attraction is compounded by the verb 'lim'd': Gaveston's beauty, and its effect on Edward, is metaphorically compared to sticky birdlime with which birds are caught and held fast. This metaphor calls into question the extent to which Gaveston's observers can control their attraction to him. The hunting metaphor here casts Gaveston in the role of predator, as does his later description of his beauty as 'bayte' with which he 'fisht for Edwards love'.<sup>91</sup> Drayton's revisions to his poem suggest a sustained interest in this issue of control and agency. The stanza from *Peirs Gaveston* quoted above, beginning 'My lookes perswading orators of Love', becomes in *The Legend of Pierce Gaveston*:

My Lookes so powrefull Adamants to Love,  
And had such Vertue to attract the Sight,  
That they could fix it, or could make it move,  
As though it followed some Celestiall Light,  
That where my Thoughts intended to surprize,  
I at my pleasure conquer'd with mine Eyes.<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> E.g. *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 109–11.

<sup>89</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 157–62.

<sup>90</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 115–18.

<sup>91</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, l. 163.

<sup>92</sup> *Legend*, ll. 67–72.

Persuasion can be resisted; ‘powrefull Adamants’ less so. Gaveston’s ‘Lookes’ themselves become the agents of the verbs ‘attract’, ‘fix’ and ‘make it move’, controlling the observer’s sight in a manner compared to divine power.

There is a sinister edge to this suggestion of irresistible, predatory attraction: is it possible for Gaveston’s observers (including, but not limited to, Edward) to be damned for a homoerotic attraction they could not control? Simultaneously, however, does presenting Gaveston’s beauty as irresistible exonerate Edward from his poor choice of romantic and sexual partner? I would suggest that this issue plays into a wider cultural anxiety concerning the level of control that could be exercised over transgressive attraction or love. The antitheatrical writings of John Rainolds, concerned that onstage cross-dressing could result in unwitting same-sex attraction, illuminate this:

can you accuse your selfe, or anie other, of anie wanton thought stirred up in you by looking on a beautifull woman? If you can, then ought you beware of beautifull boyes transformed into women by putting on their raiment, their feature, lookes and facions.<sup>93</sup>

The phrase ‘accuse your selfe’ suggests that the reader is culpable, but Rainolds simultaneously places responsibility for their ‘wanton thoughts’ on extraneous forces. The thoughts are ‘stirred up in you’ by the sight of ‘beautifull boyes transformed into women’, a grammatical construction that leaves no room for agency in the person who experiences these thoughts. Similarly, he writes:

When Critobulus kissed the sonne of Alcibiades, a beautifull boy, Socrates saide he had done amisse, and very dangerously: because, as certain spiders, if they do but touch men onely with their mouth, they put them to wonderfull pain and make them madde: so beautifull boyes by kissing do sting and poure secretly in a kinde of poyson, the poyson of incontinencie.<sup>94</sup>

Once again, an element of personal responsibility is suggested: Critobulus *chose* to kiss this ‘beautifull boy’ and is censured for it (‘he had done amisse’). Again, however, Critobulus experiences a simultaneous lack of control: ‘the poyson of incontinencie’, itself an inability to control oneself, is ‘poure[d]...in’ against his will. More troubling still is Rainolds’s description of both cross-dressing actors and Alcibiades’s son as ‘beautifull boys’. The choice to look at or kiss someone ‘beautifull’ is an understandable one, an appealing prospect – and hence, a potent cause for anxiety. The ambivalence in Drayton’s poems over the extent to which Edward should be blamed for favouring the attractive Gaveston –

---

<sup>93</sup> John Rainolds, *Th’Overthrow of Stage-Playes* ([Middelburg: Richard Schilders], 1599), fol. E3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>94</sup> Rainolds, fol. D<sup>v</sup>.

and the extent to which he could help himself from doing it – should be seen in the context of these similar fears concerning transgressive attraction.

Following Drayton's depiction of a beautiful Gaveston, several writers took pains to contrast his outward appearance with his (lack of) inward virtue. Francis Hubert, having blazoned Gaveston's attractiveness with a series of comparisons to classical gods, asks, 'Why then should Nature set so faire a glosse / Upon a minde, that sinne doth see deforme?'<sup>95</sup> Similarly, Richard Niccols describes Gaveston as 'Shapt like an Angell; but of evill nature',<sup>96</sup> and John Speed writes:

he had a sharpe witte in a comely shape, and briefly, was such an one, as wee use to call *very fine*; Neither yet was he unhardie in arms...but of his Christian or morall vertues (which onely make men truly commendable) there is great silence in Authors, though not of his vices, whereof wee shall have occasion enough to speake hereafter.<sup>97</sup>

Speed's description of the younger Despenser is similar: 'of shape most lovely', but 'the verie spirit it selfe of pride and rapine'.<sup>98</sup> These descriptions suggest that Edward's judgement concerning his advisers is led by superficial factors instead of by character assessment, with hyperbolically disastrous consequences. Both are probably drawn, via Stow, from Geoffrey le Baker. Le Baker's description of Gaveston associates handsomeness with chivalric qualities, but without any condemnation of his character, suggesting that its aim is to justify Edward's choice of him as a companion: 'he was handsome, nimble, quick-witted, of an inquisitive disposition and fairly well practised in the arts of war' (*corpore elegans et agilis, ingenio acer, moribus curiosus, in re militari satis exercitatus*).<sup>99</sup> By contrast, le Baker's Despenser is characterised by extremes of both attractiveness and evil: 'extremely handsome in physique, excessively haughty in attitude and deeply depraved in deed' (*corpore formosissimum, spiritu superbissimum, actu flagiciosissimum*).<sup>100</sup>

Drayton and Elizabeth Cary present Gaveston's attractiveness in terms of gender nonconformity. While this is arguably also conveyed by the use of anti-courtier sentiment against Gaveston, these writers make the accusation far more explicitly. In Drayton's poems, these descriptions are exclusively voiced by the character of Isabella: in

---

<sup>95</sup> Hubert (1628), stanzas 37–38.

<sup>96</sup> *WNV*, fol. 3A2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>97</sup> Speed, fol. 4S2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>98</sup> Speed, fol. 4R2<sup>r</sup> (irregular signatures).

<sup>99</sup> Le Baker (2012), p. 3, trans. by Preest.

<sup>100</sup> Le Baker (2012), p. 6, trans. by Preest.

*Mortimeriados* she scathingly calls him ‘Mistresse Gaveston’,<sup>101</sup> while in *Englands Heroicall Epistles* she complains:

And in my place, upon his Regall Throne,  
To set that Girle-Boy, wanton GAVESTON.  
Betwixt the feature of my Face and his,  
My Glasse assures me no such difference is...<sup>102</sup>

Drayton’s ‘Annotations’ gloss this stanza as ‘Noting the effeminacie and luxurious wantonnesse of Gaveston, the Kings Minion; his Behaviour and Attire ever so Womanlike, to please the Eye of his lascivious Master.’<sup>103</sup> The three references to sexual transgression here (‘effeminacie’, ‘wantonnesse’ and ‘lascivious’), coupled with the potential sexual connotations of ‘Minion’, suggest that Drayton’s chief intention in representing Gaveston as womanlike is to foreground his propensity for the sexual indulgence generally associated with women (see Chapter 1, ‘Effeminacy’). The description of Ganymede as a ‘female wanton boy’ in Marlowe’s *Dido Queene of Carthage* functions in a similar way.<sup>104</sup> That Gaveston’s womanlike nature is also physically attractive, however, is indicated by the statement that ‘his Behaviour and Attire’ are calculated ‘to please the Eye of his lascivious Master’, and by Isabella’s denial of any ‘difference’ ‘Betwixt the feature of my Face and his’. Cary similarly foregrounds Gaveston’s beauty as the most salient aspect of his femininity:

Nature in his outward parts had curiously exprest her workmanship, giving him in shape and Beauty so perfect an excellence, that the most curious eye could not discover any manifest error, unless it were in his Sex alone, since he had too much for a man, and Perfection enough to have equal’d the fairest Female splendour that breath’d within the Confines of this Kingdom.<sup>105</sup>

Gaveston’s beauty, to Cary, is excessive for a man – something which could arguably function as an explanation for Edward’s equally excessive attraction to him.

### **Agency and culpability: explaining attraction**

While the above descriptions of attractive favourites clearly condemn Edward’s choices, they inevitably maintain some of the justificatory elements of le Baker’s representations. If Gaveston and Despenser are really ‘most lovely’ to behold, can Edward be entirely blamed for promoting them to positions where he is able to see their beauty more frequently? Moreover, several of the extracts above note (following le Baker) that

<sup>101</sup> *Mortimeriados*, l. 1078.

<sup>102</sup> *EHE*, ll. 63–66.

<sup>103</sup> *EHE*, p. 165.

<sup>104</sup> Christopher Marlowe, ‘Dido, Queen of Carthage’ in *Dido, Queen of Carthage and The Massacre at Paris*, ed. by H. J. Oliver (Methuen, 1968), pp. 1–90 (l.i.51).

<sup>105</sup> Cary (folio), fol. B2<sup>v</sup>.

Gaveston is witty as well as handsome: that his personality, as well as his body, is attractive. While still not an entirely sound political reason to select an adviser, this additional factor complicates the question of the wisdom of Edward's choice. These texts are ambivalent about the extent to which Edward should be blamed for his choice of the attractive, witty Gaveston as a favourite – an anxiety linked to the persistent concern in early modern texts about whether Edward is intrinsically flawed, or misled into transgression by his favourites' counsel, as will be discussed in Chapter 3. It applies only to Gaveston: Despenser, whose positive qualities are solely physical, is far more clearly presented as an undesirable choice of favourite.

A response to this anxiety concerning culpability can, firstly, be seen in the small number of texts which state that Edward's favourites bewitched him. This accusation is found in two independent contemporaneous texts: the *Vita Edwardi Secundi* and the *Annales Paulini*. The *Vita* states that 'Our king...was incapable of moderate affection, and on account of Piers was said to forget himself, and so Piers was regarded as a sorcerer' (*Modum...dileccionis rex noster habere non potuit, et propter eum sui oblitus esse diceretur, et ob hoc Petrus maleificus putaretur esse*).<sup>106</sup> The *Annales Paulini* observes regarding Edward's coronation that:

Karolus et Lodowicus patrum reginae, cernentes quod rex plus exerceret Petri triclinium quam reginae, cum indignatione ad Franciam remigarunt. In omnem igitur terram exiit rumor iste, quod rex plus amaret hominem magum et maleficium quam sponsam suam elegantissimam dominam et pulcherrimam mulierem.

Charles and Louis, uncles of the queen, discerning that the king would minister more to Piers in the dining room than to the queen, returned to France in anger. Therefore in all the land was this rumour, that the king loved a magical and maleficent man more than his spouse, a most elegant lady and beautiful woman.<sup>107</sup>

Notably, both of these early texts qualify their accusations by attributing them to public perception or public report: Gaveston in the *Vita* is 'regarded as a sorcerer', and his identification as 'magical and maleficent' in the *Annales Paulini* is a 'rumour'. Geoffrey le Baker, who suggests that Gaveston and the Despensers 'had bewitched the king's mind' or heart (*animum regalem...incantasse*), similarly reports attributes it to rumour among the nobles.<sup>108</sup> This caution, not found in later texts, probably reflects the political sensitivity of the accusation, but we should not forget to also consider it at face value. The second 'Song' written on Gaveston's death exclaims, 'Glory to the Earls who have made Peter die with

---

<sup>106</sup> *Vita*, p. 29, trans. by Childs and Denholm-Young.

<sup>107</sup> *Annales Paulini*, p. 262.

<sup>108</sup> Le Baker (2012), p. 10, trans. by Preest; Le Baker (1889), p. 10.

his charms [*carminibus*]!', indicating that some contemporaries believed Gaveston to have engaged in magical practices, though not specifically bewitching Edward.<sup>109</sup>

The contemporaneity of the *Vita* and *Annales Paulini* may also explain their refusal to tease out the implications of their accusations. For the writer of the *Vita*, identifying Gaveston as a 'sorcerer' appears to be a means of explaining Edward's propensity to 'forget himself' where affection for Gaveston is concerned; that is, of absolving him of some responsibility for the excessive and inappropriate love he bears his favourite. The writer expresses confusion about the reasons behind that love at other points in the text – exclaiming, for example, 'Certainly I do not remember having heard that one man so loved another' – but offers no firm explanation, focusing instead on condemning Gaveston's various undesirable attributes.<sup>110</sup> The mention of sorcery functions more as a hint that Edward's love for Gaveston is suspiciously excessive than as a clear-cut accusation. The *Annales Paulini* is even more oblique, implying that Edward only loves Gaveston more than his 'elegant...and beautiful' wife *because* Gaveston is 'magical and maleficent' but failing to make this explicit.

Early modern writers, safe in their temporal remoteness, generally display less anxiety regarding such claims. Grafton, for example, describes Edward as 'bewitched with the love of the...Spencers', and implicitly uses this as an explanation for their recall from exile.<sup>111</sup> The 1577 version of Holinshed's *Chronicles* contains no reference to bewitchment, but Abraham Fleming's 1587 additions remark that it is, 'A wonderfull matter that the king should be so enchanted with [Gaveston]'.<sup>112</sup> Mortimer Senior in Marlowe's *Edward II* echoes this closely, asking (in response to Isabella's reports that Edward is neglecting her in favour of Gaveston), 'Is it not strange that he is thus bewitch'd?'<sup>113</sup> The most detailed expansion of the witchcraft accusation, however, is made by Stow:

The King gave unto Pierce of Gavaston all such giftes and Jewels as had bin given to him, with the Crownes of his Father, his ancestours treasure, and many other things, affirming that if he could, he should succede him in the Kyngdome, calling him brother, not granting any thing without his consent. The Lords therefore envying him, told the king, that the Father of this Pierce was a Traytour to the King of Fraunce, and was for the same executed, & that his mother was burned for a Witch, and that the said

<sup>109</sup> *Songs*, p. 261, trans. by Wright.

<sup>110</sup> *Vita*, p. 29, trans. by Childs and Denholm-Young.

<sup>111</sup> Grafton (*Chronicle*), fol. R5<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>112</sup> Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / p. 319.

<sup>113</sup> Marlowe, I.ii.55.



Pierce was banished for consenting to his mothers witchcraft, and that he had now bewitched the King himself.<sup>114</sup>

The collocation of this charge with a description of the financial and political favours bestowed on Gaveston suggests that, again, witchcraft is offered as a possible explanation of Edward's excessive love for his favourite. However, the accusation is presented as a result of the nobles' 'envy'. Drayton, using Stow as a source, frames the accusations in a similar way: the envious nobles, 'lunatick and wood' with 'execrable rage', are primarily motivated by a desire to 'scandalize' Gaveston's 'name and fame'.<sup>115</sup> As a result, it is unclear how much credence Stow and Drayton's readers are intended to give the claim that Gaveston bewitched Edward. It is important to distinguish between plausibility in the fourteenth-century world they describe – that is, whether Edward's nobles were convinced of Gaveston's witchcraft – and plausibility for their own early modern readers. It is also important to apply the same distinction to motivations: to separate analysis of these writers' motivations for including this anecdote from what they present as the nobles' (fictional) motivations for telling Edward this information. While the nobles' actions, in the world of the text, resemble a formal, orchestrated attempt to discredit Gaveston by accusing him of witchcraft – an example of what Stuart Clark calls 'casting political opponents as disturbers of the established order', analogous to accusations against heretical sects like the Templars or political opponents like Robert Dudley – Stow and Drayton's reasons behind the inclusion of this anecdote, and its effect on their readers, fit less comfortably into this model.<sup>116</sup>

Indeed, consideration of the work of Clark and his successors on demonology – particularly concerning male witches – demonstrates that these stories of Edward's favourites do not fit readily into a demonological paradigm. Clark argues that male witches were 'literally unthinkable' for demonologists: weak-willed, subservient to the Devil and easily susceptible to carnal lust, witches, 'for culturally specific reasons, were expected to be female'.<sup>117</sup> Lara Apps and Andrew Gow problematise this notion, identifying statistically significant numbers of male witch prosecutions across Europe, but ultimately accept Clark's point that witches' quintessential qualities were associated with women, arguing that male witches were 'feminised' by this association.<sup>118</sup> Yet this weak, subservient role

---

<sup>114</sup> Stow, fol. X4r. It seems likely that Stow invented this detail, though given his large number of sources it may possibly originate in a manuscript that has now been lost and was not used by any earlier writers.

<sup>115</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 1249-60. Cf. *EHE*, p. 165; Hubert (1629), stanza 218; Baker, fol. S4v.

<sup>116</sup> Stuart Clark, *Thinking With Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 558; *Leicester's Commonwealth*, ed. by D. C. Peck (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1985), p. 191.

<sup>117</sup> Clark, pp. 130, 111.

<sup>118</sup> *Male Witches in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Lara Apps and Andrew Gow (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 13, 118–19, 127–28, 131–32.

clearly does not correspond with portrayals of Edward II's bewitching favourites. On the contrary, historiography consistently emphasises Gaveston and Despenser's power: their political control over Edward, their ability to make him love them and emotionally 'forget himself', their manipulation of patronage and their political situation. Moreover, nowhere in these texts are demons or the devil called to mind. This can be contrasted with the accusations levelled at Henri III, which describe in minute detail the diabolical practices that his favourites allegedly induced him to perform. The 1589 pamphlet *Les Sorcelleries de Henry de Valois*, for example, 'accused the king of maintaining a diabolic cult' and detailed the idols, drugs and heretical practices involved.<sup>119</sup> No comparable details accompany accusations that Edward's favourites have bewitched him. Instead, the focus is on the seemingly inexplicable intensity of Edward's love for them, with magic offered as a possible explanation for these otherwise mysterious emotions. Gaveston and the Despensers have a historiographical reputation as unsuitable and undesirable companions – making it necessary to explain why Edward nonetheless chose to favour them so extravagantly. In this sense, Grafton's phrasing concerning bewitchment is particularly revealing: Edward is 'bewitched *with the love of the...Spencers*'.<sup>120</sup> It is Edward's 'love' for his favourites, not the men themselves, which has 'bewitched' him: an emotional power, not a magical one. Grafton's assertion also reflects the literary trope that associates love with witchcraft, highlighting its emotionally involuntary aspects: Shakespeare's Henry V tells Katherine, 'You have witchcraft in your lips', while Romeo is 'bewitched by the charm of looks'.<sup>121</sup>

An analogous case, in which witchcraft is invoked to explain an otherwise inexplicable love, can be found in Shakespeare's *Othello*. Brabantio, incredulous that Desdemona would voluntarily have married a Moor, accuses Othello of bewitching her. 'If she in chains of magic were not bound', Desdemona would never, Brabantio tells Othello, have 'Run from her guardage to the sooty bosom / Of such a thing as thou'.<sup>122</sup>

For nature so prepost'rously to err—  
Being not deficient, blind, or lame of sense—  
Sans witchcraft could not.<sup>123</sup>

---

<sup>119</sup> David Potter, 'Marlowe's *Massacre at Paris* and the Reputation of Henri III of France', in *Christopher Marlowe and English Renaissance Culture*, ed. by Peter Roberts and Darryll Grantley (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), pp. 70–95 (pp. 82–83).

<sup>120</sup> Emphasis added.

<sup>121</sup> *Henry V*, V.ii.274, *Oxford Shakespeare*; *Romeo and Juliet*, II Chorus 6, *ibid.* See also Pasquarella, pp. 77–78.

<sup>122</sup> *Othello*, I.ii.66–72, *Oxford Shakespeare*.

<sup>123</sup> *Othello*, I.iii.62–64.

More significant here than the opportunity to discredit Othello by accusing him of ‘practices of cunning hell’ is Brabantio’s insistence that Desdemona simply ‘*could not*’ have fallen in love with Othello without magical intervention. ‘It is a judgment maimed and most imperfect,’ he maintains, ‘That will confess perfection so could err / Against all rules of nature’.<sup>124</sup> Brabantio’s faith in the ‘perfection’ of Desdemona’s ‘judgement’ and ‘nature’ – and his desperation to explain away its apparent error – arguably corresponds to the problems faced by writers forced to recount Edward II’s inappropriate emotional responses and poor choices of advisor. Elizabeth Cary suggests bewitchment as an explanation for both:

Such a masculine Affection and rapture [as Edward’s love for Gaveston] was in those times without president, where Love went in the natural strain, fully as firm, yet far less violent. If the circumstances of this passionate Humour, so predominant in this unfortunate King, be maturely considered, we shall finde them as far short of possibility as reason; which have made many believe, that they had a supernatural opinion and working, enforced by Art or Witchcraft.<sup>125</sup>

...

The Ladder by which [the younger Despenser] made his ascent, was principally thus: he had been always conformable to the King’s Will, and never denied to serve his appetite in every his ways and occasions; which was vertue enough to give him wealth and title. Some others think this feat was wrought by Witchcraft, and by the Spells of a grave Matron, that was suspected to have a Journey -man Devil to be her Loadstone: which is not altogether improbable, if we behold the progression; for never was Servant more insolently fortunate, nor Master unreasonably indulgent. Their passages are as much beyond belief, as contrary to the rules of reason.<sup>126</sup>

Like Brabantio, Cary finds it hard to believe that Edward’s excessive love for Gaveston – and the extraordinary favour he subsequently enjoyed – was *possible* (‘far short of possibility’; ‘beyond belief’) without ‘Art or Witchcraft’. Contributing to this judgement is the lack of ‘reason’ evident in either area – a persistent concern of Cary’s, as will be discussed in Chapter 3. Nathaniel Crouch expresses an identical sentiment, reporting that

<sup>124</sup> *Othello*, I.iii.99–101. Cf. *Hamlet*, I.v.42–46, *Oxford Shakespeare*.

<sup>125</sup> Cary (folio), fol. H2<sup>v</sup>. Cary’s suggestion that Edward’s love is atypical for ‘those times...where Love went in the natural strain’ implies that it is, comparatively, unnatural. However, although the term ‘unnatural’ has subsequently become associated with love and sex between men, medieval and early modern writers do not deploy it in this way with reference to Edward II. On the contrary, ‘unnatural’ is largely a political condemnation in the historiography of Edward, used to describe disloyalty, rebellion, deposition or regicide (e.g. Marlowe, IV.vi.9; *Barons Warres*, I.9) or Edward’s own political sins of disregarding and attacking his nobles (e.g. Marlowe, IV.i.8). Where it is used with any relevance to Edward’s emotions, it is again primarily political in connotation, referring to his disproportionate preference of his favourites over other nobles rather than to the gender of his love objects. For example, the *Chronicle of the Civil Wars* describes Edward’s request that his father grant Gaveston the earldom of Cornwall as an ‘unnatural request’ (*petitionem importunam*) [Haskins, p. 75]. Only Drayton comes close to describing Edward and Gaveston’s sexual relationship as ‘unnatural’, when Gaveston complains obliquely of ‘such as stucke not to accuse my Youth, / To sinne in the unnaturall’st thing’ (*Legend*, ll. 189–90).

<sup>126</sup> Cary (folio), fol. O<sup>r</sup>.

Edward's nobles 'did verily believe [Gaveston] had bewitched the King, or else certainly he could never retain such an unreasonable Passion for so profligate a Wretch'.<sup>127</sup>

There is, I would suggest, some evidence for a tradition that accuses political favourites of bewitching monarchs, providing explanation for their undue influence and intersecting with the literary association between love and bewitchment. Accusations against Edward's favourites fit far more readily into this paradigm. This can be seen by considering the accusations made against Henri III's favourite, the Duc d'Épernon, in the *Histoire Tragique et Memorable de Pierre de Gaveston*. In his preface, the writer tells Épernon that 'such leeches of minions as you have enchanted our kings [and] their liberality, or, to say it better, their unrestrained prodigality' (*telles sangsues de mignons comme vous, ont enchanté nos Roys, leurs liberalitez ou pour mieux direz, leurs effrenées prodigalitez*).<sup>128</sup> Later, he translates Walsingham's phrase 'in time love grew' (*lapsu temporis crevit amor*) as 'and [Edward] was so bewitched by [Gaveston's] love' (*tellement ensorcelé de son amour*).<sup>129</sup> This is clearly a different type of accusation from *Les Sorcelleries de Henri de Valois*: the focus is not on the methods with which the favourite has 'enchanted' the king, but on the *effects* of this enchantment (that is, love and financial favour). A further example can be found in George Eglisam's 1626 pamphlet *The Forerunner of Revenge Upon the Duke of Buckingham*. Recounting Buckingham's attempts 'to sollicit the Marquis [of Hamilton] to match his eldest sonne with Buckingham's neece', Eglisam writes:

The matter of money was no motive to cause the Marquis match his sonne so unequally to his degree, seing Buckingham him selfe the chief of his kindred was but a novice in nobilitie...and he being infamous for his frequent consultations with the ringleaders of witches, principally that false Doctor Lamb publikly condemned for witchcraft. Wherby the Marquis knowing that the king was so farre bewitched to Buckingham that if he refused the match demanded, he should find the kings deadly hatred against him.<sup>130</sup>

The 'false Doctor Lamb' mentioned is John Lambe, an astrologer who was charged in 1608 with sapping the strength of Thomas, Lord Windsor and raising evil spirits; 'Lambe's relationship with the hated Buckingham and his supposed magical powers on Buckingham's behalf were common knowledge'.<sup>131</sup> As such, Buckingham's sorcery in this pamphlet takes a more concrete form than the nebulous accusations levelled at Gaveston

<sup>127</sup> R. B., *The Unfortunate Court-Favourites of England* (London: for Nath. Crouch, 1695), fol. A5<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>128</sup> *Histoire Tragique*, fol. A4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>129</sup> *Histoire Tragique*, fol. B3<sup>v</sup>; Walsingham, fol. F5<sup>r</sup>. See Alan Stewart, 'Edoüard et Gaverston: New Ways of Looking at an English History Play', in Melnikoff, pp. 97–117 (p. 105).

<sup>130</sup> George Eglisam, *The Forerunner of Revenge Upon the Duke of Buckingham* (Frankfurt: n.p., 1626), fol. B2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>131</sup> Anita McConnell, 'Lambe, John (1545/6–1628)', ODNB.

and Despenser by medieval writers: Eglisam has a specific and current example of a magical companion on which to draw. Yet even in this context, collocated with an accusation of ‘frequent consultations with the ringleaders of witches’, the focus and effect of Buckingham’s ‘bewitchment’ of James is clearly emotional: it results in the king’s loyalty to Buckingham and ‘deadly hatred’ for his enemies. Eglisam suggests in his preface that Buckingham’s other bewitchments have similarly emotional manifestations: ‘others albeit they know as well as I, and ar obliged as deeply as I, yet dare not complaine so safely as I, being out of there reach *who ar inseparable from him by his enchantements*’.<sup>132</sup> As with Edward and his favourites, Buckingham’s bewitchment of James and others is principally a form of emotional control that results in political influence or protection. Clark’s work is once again instructive here. Examining the 1590 North Berwick witch trials, Clark observes that kings were perceived to be immune to witchcraft: in North Berwick, James VI himself was considered untouchable, since he was ‘a man of God’.<sup>133</sup> His later bewitchment by Buckingham, therefore, seems to have been conceptualised differently. As such, in Edward’s case, it is important to distinguish between the practice of accusing political opponents of witchcraft in order to discredit them, and the use of witchcraft as an explanation for otherwise inexplicable emotional attachment. The examples cited above align more closely, and more fruitfully, with the latter paradigm.

Francis Hubert’s 1629 version of *The Historie of Edward the Second* provides evidence of increasing scepticism concerning the convenient excuse that witchcraft accusations provided. As Purvis Boyette observes of Marlowe’s *Edward II*, ‘If [Gaveston] has bewitched the king, Edward is clearly a happy and willing victim’.<sup>134</sup> In Hubert’s poem, Edward admits as much. ‘It is too true,’ he says, ‘my dotage was extreame’ – ‘But that the same was wrought by Magick Spell / Is such a Tale as old wives use to tell’:<sup>135</sup>

Spirits may suggest, they may perswade to ill,  
But all their power cannot compell the will.  
...  
Besides, when any Errour is committed  
Whereby wee may Incurr or losse or shame,  
That wee our selves thereof may be acuttid  
Wee are too ready to transferre the blame  
Upon some Witch: That made us doe the same.  
It is the vulgar Plea that weake ones use:  
I was bewitch’d: I could nor will: nor chuse.

---

<sup>132</sup> Eglisam, fol. A2<sup>v</sup>; emphasis added.

<sup>133</sup> Clark, p. 552.

<sup>134</sup> Purvis E. Boyette, ‘Wanton Humour and Wanton Poets: Homosexuality in Marlowe’s *Edward II*’, *Tulane Studies in English*, 22 (1977), 33–50 (p. 43).

<sup>135</sup> Hubert (1629), stanza 219.

But my affection was not caus'd by Art;  
 The witch that wrought on mee was in my brest.  
 My Gaveston wholly possest my heart  
 And that did make him swell above the rest...<sup>136</sup>

Hubert scathingly recognises that witchcraft accusations provide a convenient way to ‘transferre the blame’ away from the monarch. In fact, as Edward admits, he was personally at fault: ‘The witch that wrought on mee was in my brest.’ Kings who develop transgressive attachments to their favourites, Hubert suggests, are fully in control of their actions; any ‘plea’ of bewitchment simply betrays the fact they were too ‘weake’ to withstand their emotional impulses (‘My Gaveston wholly possest my heart’). These stanzas, added to the poem as Hubert revised it in 1629, reflect a growing climate of scepticism concerning witchcraft in general, but also indicate a lack of patience with its use as a political get-out clause. Nevertheless, the prospect Hubert offers – that of a king who might knowingly and deliberately enter into an emotional and sexual relationship with a male social inferior – was threatening, in much the same way as the suggestions made by Drayton and other writers that Edward might have deliberately chosen Gaveston for his attractiveness. This was a pressing enough concern for early seventeenth-century writers, who recognised Edward’s attachments to his favourites as possible precedents for those of James VI and I; but far more so for contemporaneous fourteenth-century observers, many of whom walk a difficult line between criticising Edward’s choices and blaming his favourites.

In general, earlier texts are far more likely to offer certain explanations of Edward’s love for his favourites. In addition to bewitchment accusations, these explanations can take the form of emphasising that their relationship had existed since boyhood; highlighting the spirit of brotherhood that existed between them (an assertion overwhelmingly confined to medieval texts); or comparing their relationship to that of other well-known male-male pairs.<sup>137</sup>

Texts composed during Edward’s reign, such as the *Annales Londonienses* and *Annales Paulini*, are the first to draw attention to the longevity of Edward’s relationship with Gaveston: the former text, in a typical example, first identifies him as ‘Piers Gaveston, who

<sup>136</sup> Hubert (1629), stanzas 220, 224–25.

<sup>137</sup> For simple reasons of historical accuracy, the detail of shared upbringing is almost exclusively applied to Gaveston. The only exception is Froissart, who refers to the younger Despenser as having been ‘nourished with [Edward] since his infancy’ (Besançon 864, fol. 3<sup>r</sup>). Froissart never mentions Gaveston; since his account of Edward’s reign is based on information gained by Jean le Bel during his visit to England, it seems likely that this detail represents a conflation of Edward’s two favourites based on mishearing or hasty reading of sources.

was his companion in his youth, while his father lived'.<sup>138</sup> Drayton and Hubert both explicitly use this story to explain the depth of Edward and Gaveston's emotional bond; for example, Hubert's Edward recalls:

Wee liv'd together even from prime of yeares,  
Whereby our joynt affections were combin'd,  
The mutuall consort of our infant pheares,  
Doth keepe a long possession of the minde,  
And many deepe impressions leaves behind:  
Wouldst thou have love last even to the tombe,  
Then let it take beginning at the Wombe.<sup>139</sup>

The effect of this detail in general, and of Hubert's formulation in particular, is to simultaneously justify Edward's love for and favour towards Gaveston – rendering it plausible and explicable – and to suggest that his choices of advisors and companions are unwisely based on sentiment.

Relatedly, it is only Gaveston who is linked to Edward as 'sworn brother', or about whom writers state 'Edward called him his brother'. This detail is found in almost all contemporaneous accounts of Edward's reign. The *Lanercost Chronicle* recounts Edward 'speaking openly of [Gaveston] as his brother' (*vocavit ipsum publice fratrem suum*) during his father's reign, describing this as 'improper familiarity' (*familiaritatem indebitam*) and linking it causally to Gaveston's 1305 exile.<sup>140</sup> The *Annales Paulini* and *Vita Edwardi Secundi* both note on several occasions that Edward referred to Gaveston as his brother; the former, in which the collocation is so frequent it becomes expected, explicitly attributes this statement of brotherhood to 'excessive love' (*prae amore nimio*).<sup>141</sup> A more concise form of this sentiment is retained by the *Brut*, which states that Edward 'so miche lovede [Gaveston] þat he callede him his "broþer"'.<sup>142</sup> Both the *Vita* and *Annales Paulini* suggest that these statements of brotherhood had a more formal manifestation than simple verbal convention, referring to Gaveston as Edward's 'adopted' (*adoptivi*) brother.<sup>143</sup> Similar suggestions are made by a version of the fifteenth-century London chronicles, which refers to Gaveston as 'the kynges sworn brother'; and by the *Chronicle of the Civil Wars*, which, as detailed above, reports that Edward and Gaveston 'entered into a compact of brotherhood'.<sup>144</sup> George Haskins, who transcribed the latter for publication in 1939, writes *firmitatis fedus* rather than

<sup>138</sup> *Annales Londonienses*, p. 151.

<sup>139</sup> Hubert (1628), stanza 31.

<sup>140</sup> *Lanercost*, p. 184, trans. by Maxwell; *Chronicon de Lanercost*, ed. by Joseph Stevenson (Edinburgh: Maitland Club, 1839), p. 210.

<sup>141</sup> *Annales Paulini*, p. 259.

<sup>142</sup> *Brut*, p. 205.

<sup>143</sup> *Vita*, pp. 50–51, trans. by Childs and Denholm-Young; *Annales Paulini*, p. 263.

<sup>144</sup> E.g. *A Chronicle of London, from 1089 to 1483*, ed. by Edward Tyrell and Nicholas Harris Nicolas (Felinfach: Llanerch, 1995), p. 46; Haskins, p. 75.

*fraternitatis*; however, Pierre Chaplais (having examined the manuscript more recently), maintains that the word is *fraternitatis*. Since I have not had the opportunity to see this manuscript, I shall accept Chaplais's reading, though not without noting that it conveniently supports his own thesis. In *Piers Gaveston: Edward II's Adoptive Brother*, Chaplais argues that the true nature of Edward's relationship with Gaveston was not romantic or sexual, but 'a compact of adoptive brotherhood, be it brotherhood-in-arms or some other kind of fraternity'.<sup>145</sup> This, he argues, was the reason for Edward I's hostile treatment of their relationship and his exile of Gaveston in 1305; this, too, was the reason Gaveston was asked to carry the crown of St Edward at Edward II's coronation. While Chaplais usefully points out that a large proportion of the texts that say Edward 'called Gaveston his brother' are contemporaneous, his argument ultimately fails to convince: it is a big leap from recorded assertions of brotherhood to the existence of a formal compact, something for which Chaplais admits we have 'no record evidence'.<sup>146</sup> More problematic are Chaplais's reasons for so forcefully advancing an alternative thesis to what he calls the 'gratuitous assumption that [Edward and Gaveston] were lovers'.<sup>147</sup> To call this line of argument a 'gratuitous assumption' is troubling: it suggests that scholars opposed to Chaplais are incapable of evidence-based argument, and carries an implied accusation of sensation-seeking which is less frequently levelled at scholars who posit the historical existence of male-female sexual relationships. This problematic assertion is compounded by Chaplais's own treatment of the history of sex. Not only does he ask anachronistically whether Edward and Gaveston's relationship was 'of a homosexual nature'; he also attempts to rebuff this possibility by asserting that 'Edward's attitude towards women does not appear to have been very different from that of other men of his time' and that 'there is no specific reference in any contemporary chronicle to such a relationship'.<sup>148</sup> As I argued above, arguments of both types rest on flawed assumptions about the conceptualisation of sex in medieval England: the first implies the existence of a modern homosexual/heterosexual dichotomy, and the second ignores the substantial restrictions on thinking, speaking and writing about sex between men that existed in this period.

In any case, in the context of Edward's historiographical reputation, assertions of brotherhood were relatively short-lived. The *Brut* and London chronicles were popular and influential, but later writers do not retain this detail. It may be that both texts had more interesting, sensational attributes which resulted in their references to brotherhood being

---

<sup>145</sup> Chaplais, p. 109.

<sup>146</sup> Chaplais, p. 109.

<sup>147</sup> Chaplais, p. 109.

<sup>148</sup> Chaplais, pp. 5, 8, 113.



overlooked; or that as representations of Edward's relationship with Gaveston became increasingly romanticised and characterised by incitement to sexual transgression (discussed below), writers did not perceive the idea of brotherhood – formally sworn or colloquially asserted – to 'fit' their narratives. Particularly in early modern texts, Edward's relationship with Gaveston is seldom presented as justifiable, explicable or desirable; the chivalric respectability of sworn brotherhood may have been perceived to undermine authorial condemnation of that relationship. The only early modern texts in which Edward calls Gaveston his brother are Stow's *Annales* and Marlowe's *Edward II*. Neither posit a formal compact of sworn brotherhood, instead framing the detail as an example of Edward's excessive favour towards Gaveston compared to the other nobles: the full sentence from Stow is, 'The King gave unto Pierce of Gavaston all such giftes and Jewels as had bin given to him, with the Crownes of his Father, his ancestours treasure, and many other things, affirming that if he could, he should succede him in the Kyngdome, calling him brother, not granting any thing without his consent.'<sup>149</sup>

One of the most valuable aspects of Chaplais's work is his collation of the comparisons drawn between Edward and Gaveston and the Biblical figures of David and Jonathan. These comparisons take different forms in different texts, and their significations should not be conflated, but rather seen as fulfilling three distinct functions.

In the first case, early in the *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, allusions to David/ Jonathan and Achilles/Patroclus are used in contrast to Edward and Gaveston. The comparison presents Edward and Gaveston's mutual love as excessive, deviant from the norm:

Sane non memini me audisse unum alterum ita dilexisse. Ionathas dilexit David, Achilles Patroclum amavit; set illi modum excessisse non leguntur.

Certainly I do not remember having heard that one man so loved another. Jonathan cherished David, Achilles loved Patroclus; but we do not read that they went beyond what was usual.<sup>150</sup>

Attention to the Vulgate, and to the dominant medieval interpretation of David and Jonathan's relationship, can illuminate the comparison. Their love is clearly mutual and intense: the Vulgate states that 'the soul of Jonathan was bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul' (*anima Ionathan conligata est animae David et dilexit eum*

<sup>149</sup> Stow, fol. X4<sup>r</sup>. See also Marlowe, II.ii.35.

<sup>150</sup> *Vita*, p. 29, trans. by Childs and Denholm-Young. Anthony Heacock notes several similarities between the portrayal of these two relationships from the Vulgate and *Iliad*: 'sounding remarkably like the relationship between David and Jonathan, [Achilles] even loves [Patroclus] as he loves himself, surpassing that which a man feels towards his brother or son; that is, greater than men feel towards women' [*Jonathan Loved David: Manly Love in the Bible and the Hermeneutics of Sex* (Sheffield: Phoenix Press, 2011), pp. 107–08].

*Jonathan quasi animam suam*).<sup>151</sup> For Edward and Gaveston's love to exceed even this is striking. Yet the *Glossa Ordinaria*, the 'standard commentary [to the Vulgate] of the middle ages', interprets David and Jonathan's relationship typologically: 'Jonathan [in loving David] signifies those of the Jews who believed in Christ and, perceiving the grace of the Holy Spirit through Christ, abandoned all and followed him' (*Ionathas significat eos qui de Iudeis in Christum crediderunt et percepta gratia Spiritus sancti pro Christo relictis omnibus ipsum secuti sunt*).<sup>152</sup> The writer of the *Vita*, then, is contrasting Edward's relationship with Gaveston – which he implies 'went beyond what was usual' – with a non-transgressive relationship that symbolises the divinely sanctioned adherence to Christ of early Christian converts.

However, the *Vita* is inconsistent in its use of exempla. After Gaveston's death, he and Edward are aligned rather than contrasted with Jonathan and David. The writer defends Edward against public 'derision' of his 'moderate' response to Gaveston's murder:

certus sum regem ita doluisse de Petro, sicut aliquando dolet pater de filio.  
Nam quanto magis procedit dileccio, tanto magis dolet infortunio. In  
planctu David super Ionatan amor ostenditur, quern dicitur super amorem  
mulierum dilexisse. Fatetur et sic rex noster; superaddit quod mortem Petri  
vindicare disposuit.

I am certain the king grieved for Piers as a father at any time grieves for his son. For the greater the love, the greater the sorrow. In the lament of David upon Jonathan, love is depicted which is said to have surpassed the love of women. Our king also spoke like that; and he added that he planned to avenge the death of Piers.<sup>153</sup>

This reference constitutes the second type of comparison between Edward/Gaveston and David/Jonathan, which relates specifically to grief and lamentation. In contemporary theology, David's lament over Jonathan is 'a keystone of the erotic interpretation of the relationship' between the two men, based on David's statement at the close of the lament: 'I grieve for you, my brother Jonathan, exceedingly beautiful and amiable above the love of women' (*doleo super te frater mi Ionathan decore nimis et amabilis super amorem mulierum*).<sup>154</sup> However, Vulgate commentaries emphasise the singularity and the superlative nature of David's lament.<sup>155</sup> Nicholas de Lyra's *Postillae*, a fourteenth-century text, notes that, 'This is counted as a remarkable [*singularis*] lamentation over Jonathan, because David uniquely [*singulariter*] loved him', while Theodore's earlier commentary describes the lament as 'the

<sup>151</sup> Vulgate, I Samuel 18.1.

<sup>152</sup> Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941), p. 13; *Glossa*, I Kings 18.1.

<sup>153</sup> *Vita*, p. 53, trans. by Childs and Denholm-Young.

<sup>154</sup> Heacock, p. 29; Vulgate, II Samuel 1.26

<sup>155</sup> *Glossa*, II Kings 1.21.

greatest pain' (*summum dolorem*).<sup>156</sup> These descriptions of David's emotions – both grief and love – as 'highest', 'remarkable' and 'unique' all align with the *Vita*'s description of Edward's love for Gaveston ('beyond what was usual'). Indeed, the *Vita* reports that not only did Edward speak like David, he also 'added that he planned to avenge the death of Piers': Edward is first established as equally grief-stricken to David, before his additional desire for revenge is revealed. Since the *Glossa* explicitly states that David did *not* return to avenge Jonathan's death, Edward here is meeting the example of David and then exceeding it; rather than accepting the will of God as David did, he is taking justice into his own hands. The function of this comparison between Jonathan's and Gaveston's deaths, then, is to highlight the intensity of Edward's grief and its excessive manifestations: like his love, it 'went beyond what was usual'.

The third type of comparison equates Edward I's anger at his son's relationship with Gaveston to Saul's anger with Jonathan as described in the Vulgate. This comparison is made implicitly in Walter of Guisborough's *Chronicle* and the *Chronicle of the Civil Wars*, both of which describe the confrontation leading to Gaveston's 1305 exile in terms that closely mirror the Vulgate. The Biblical scene is as follows:

Iratus autem Saul adversus Ionathan dixit ei  
 fili mulieris virum ultro rapiantis numquid ignoro quia diligis filium Isai  
 in confusionem tuam et in confusionem ignominiosae matris tuae  
 omnibus enim diebus quibus filius Isai vixerit super terram  
 non stabilieris tu neque regnum tuum  
 itaque iam nunc mitte et adduc eum ad me quia filius mortis est  
 respondens autem Ionathan Sauli patri suo ait  
 quare moritur quid fecit  
 et arripuit Saul lanceam ut percuteret eum  
 et intellexit Ionathan quod definitum esset patri suo ut interficeret David.<sup>157</sup>

Then Saul was angry against Jonathan and said to him, 'You son of a woman who wantonly ravished a man! Do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother's disgrace? For all the days that the son of Jesse lives on earth, you shall not be established, nor your kingdom. Therefore now send and lead him to me, because he is the son of death. And Jonathan, responding to Saul his father, said, 'Why shall he die? What has he done?' And Saul took up a lance to strike him, and Jonathan understood that his father was determined to kill David.

Guisborough relates the confrontation between Edward I and his son in clearly similar terms:

<sup>156</sup> *Bibliorum Sacrorum Cum Glossa Ordinaria Iam Ante Quidem a Strabo Fulgensi Collecta* (Venice, 1603), col. 520.

<sup>157</sup> Vulgate, I Samuel 20.30–33.

Quo vocato dixit ei rex, ‘Quid negotii misisti per hominem istum?’ Qui ait, ‘Ut cum pace vestra dare possem domino Petro de Caverston comitatum de Pontyff.’ Et ait rex, ‘Fili meretricis male generate, vis tu modo terras dare qui nuncquam aliquas impetrasti? Vivit dominus, nisi esset timor dispersionis regni nuncquam gauderes hereditate tua.’ Et apprehensis capillis utraque manu dilaceravit eos in quantum potuit et in fine lassus eiecit eum.<sup>158</sup>

The king said to [Prince Edward], ‘On what business did you send this man?’ [Prince Edward] said, ‘That with your peace I might be able to give the earldom of Ponthieu to lord Piers Gaveston.’ And the king said, ‘Ill-begotten son of a whore, how do you want to give lands, who never obtained any? God living, unless it was for fear of destruction of the realm, you would never enjoy your inheritance.’ And having seized his hairs with both hands, he tore them as far as he could and finally, weary, threw him out.

The *Chronicle of the Civil Wars* describes the episode very similarly: Edward asks that Gaveston be given the earldom of Cornwall, whereupon his father ‘threw him to the ground and trampled him with his feet, saying that all the realm of England should be lost by him’ (*ipsum ad terram dejecit pedibusque conculcavit, dicens totam regionem anglicanam per ipsum fore amittendam*).<sup>159</sup> Hannah Kilpatrick has since argued that the contraction ‘ipm̄’, which Haskins expanded as ‘ipsum’, should in fact be ‘ipsam’.<sup>160</sup> In the quotation above, *ipsum ad terram dejecit* is translated as ‘he threw *him* to the ground’; according to Kilpatrick’s reading, this should be ‘he threw *it* to the ground’, ‘it’ being Prince Edward’s ‘request’ (*petitionem*) in the form of a physical petition. This reading, Kilpatrick argues, is syntactically less ‘uncomfortable and round-about’ than the alternative demanded by ‘ipsum’. However, given the text’s close echoes of the Vulgate scene between Saul and Jonathan, which does involve the threat of physical violence from father to son, I have reservations about accepting Kilpatrick’s reading over Haskins’s; her argument about syntactic ‘awkwardness’ is valid, but the sentence remains ambiguous.

As I have shown, medieval exegesis elevates David and Jonathan’s relationship to a symbol of the love between Christian converts and Christ. What, then, were Guisborough and the writer of the *Chronicle of the Civil Wars* hoping to suggest by paralleling Jonathan’s admirable love and favour for David with Edward’s transgressive love and favour for Gaveston? As well as the connotations of intense love and grief explored above, it is instructive to consider the social aspects of David and Jonathan’s relationship. Like Edward, Jonathan is a king’s son; his beloved friend David is, like Gaveston, a lower-born

<sup>158</sup> *Guisborough*, pp. 382–83.

<sup>159</sup> Haskins, p. 75.

<sup>160</sup> Hannah Kilpatrick, ‘Correction to Haskins’ *Chronicle of the Civil Wars of Edward II*, *Notes and Queries*, 58 (2011), 356–58 (p. 357).

man taken into his household. Their friendship prompts Jonathan to tell David, ‘you will reign over Israel and I will be second to you’ (*tu regnabis super Israhel et ego ero tibi secundus*) – disrupting the social hierarchy, and angering Saul.<sup>161</sup> The parallels with Edward and Gaveston’s situation are striking. Aelred of Rievaulx’s dialogue *Spiritual Friendship* foregrounds this hierarchical aspect of David and Jonathan’s relationship, and above all Jonathan’s declaration of equality, repeating it four times in four short verses: “‘You will be king,” he said, “and I will be second after you.””<sup>162</sup> To Aelred at least, this aspect of David and Jonathan’s relationship was just as significant as David’s lamentation. This is clearly the aspect with which Guisborough and the writer of the *Chronicle of the Civil Wars* are engaging: the young Edward’s desire to bestow an earldom upon Gaveston constitutes a levelling of their respective social statuses comparable to that between Jonathan and David, but not comparably acceptable. Given the accepted veneration of the Biblical relationship, these writers (who condemn Gaveston elsewhere) must take care not to venerate Edward and Gaveston’s relationship by association. It may be for this reason that, despite the numerous parallels between the two pairs – a king’s son and a lower-born member of his household, with an intense love for each other that collapses their difference in status and angers the king, followed by the death of one and the grief of the other – no other texts make this comparison.

As I argued in Chapter 1, Marlowe’s approach to the question of explaining and excusing the love between Edward and Gaveston was to apply the early modern technique of excusing romantic and sexual relationships between men through appeal to classical precedent (‘The mightiest kings have had their minions...’) Drayton uses the same technique, comparing Edward’s grief at Gaveston’s exile to that of Hercules for the dead Hylas, and their love to that of Hero and Leander.<sup>163</sup> However, not all writers were content to compare such heroic figures to the problematic Edward and Gaveston. Several critics have suggested, rightly, that Marlowe’s catalogue of heroic couples ‘may also operate as a foil to the irresolute young King’, but Hubert appears unhappy to even allow the possibility of direct equivalence between Edward and Alexander.<sup>164</sup> His narratorial Edward first states, ‘I Alexander, hee Stephestion [sic]’, before correcting himself (‘Oh no, I wrong them to usurpe their names, / Our loves were like, but farre unlike their fames.’)<sup>165</sup> Similarly, while

<sup>161</sup> Vulgate, I Samuel 23.17.

<sup>162</sup> *Aelred of Rievaulx: Spiritual Friendship*, ed. by Marsha L. Dutton, trans. by Lawrence C. Braceland (Trappist: Cistercian Publications; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2010), bk. 3, verses 92, 94, 95.

<sup>163</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 1027–32, 1417–22.

<sup>164</sup> Sara Munson Deats, ‘Myth and Metamorphosis in Marlowe’s *Edward IP*’, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 22 (1980), 304–21 (pp. 308–10). See also Haber, p. 33; Simon Shepherd, *Marlowe and the Politics of Elizabethan Theatre* (Brighton: Harvester, 1986), p. 204.

<sup>165</sup> Hubert (1628), stanza 135.

Cary compares Edward and Gaveston's relationship to the valorised friendship between Damon and Pythias, she does not use this comparison to elevate and legitimise their relationship as Marlowe might have done; instead, she voices it in the context of mocking Edward for his fantasies about Gaveston's return from exile:

The Operations of the Fancy transport sometimes our Imagination to believe an actual possession of those things we most desire and hope for... Such as the condition of this wanton King, that in this bare overture, conceits the fruition of his beloved Damon, and apprehends this Golden Dream to be an essential part of his fantastique Happiness.<sup>166</sup>

Friendships like that of Damon and Pythias, Cary suggests, belong in a 'Golden Dream' and not at the English court; Edward's attachment to Gaveston is an aspect of his 'wanton' behaviour and his propensity to pay more attention to 'Fancy' than reality.

Part of the issue here is the question of whether it is possible for a king like Edward to have an intimate friend like Damon. Francis Bacon, Cary's contemporary, argued that it was not:

Princes, in regard of the distance of their fortune from that of their subjects and servants, cannot gather this fruit [i.e. friendship], except (to make themselves capable thereof) they raise some persons to be as it were companions and almost equals to themselves, which many times sorteth to inconvenience. The modern languages give unto such persons the name of favourites, or privadoes.<sup>167</sup>

Edward and Gaveston were considered highly relevant to this debate: David Wootton cites them as one of 'certain paradigm cases of friendship and favouritism' of which 'seventeenth-century readers were acutely aware'.<sup>168</sup> Laurie Shannon usefully points out the many disjunctions between classically valorised friendship, and the situation of Marlowe's Edward and Gaveston:

The rules of *amicitia* run afoul of the monarch's proverbial singularity, his public function of representing polity in generic terms, and his duty to sublimate his affective life to the good of the realm. A monarch so engaged to a particular friend is, from the constitutional perspective of the realm's priority, a captive sovereign – a sovereign subject to an interest at odds with his political purpose. While kings could (and good kings must) have their

---

<sup>166</sup> Cary (folio), fol. D2r.

<sup>167</sup> Quoted by Mario DiGangi, 'Marlowe, Queer Studies, and Renaissance Homoeroticism', in *Marlowe, History, and Sexuality*, ed. by Paul Whitfield White (New York: AMS Press, 1998), pp. 195–212 (pp. 204–05).

<sup>168</sup> David Wootton, 'Francis Bacon: Your Flexible Friend', in *The World of the Favourite*, ed. by J. H. Elliott and L. W. B. Brockliss (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 184–204 (p. 186).

counsellors, Renaissance texts stress the difference between a monarch's private friend and this counsellor role.<sup>169</sup>

While I cannot agree with Shannon that Marlowe is deliberately pointing up these disjunctions in order to explain why Edward and Gaveston's relationship ends so tragically – *Edward II* is not as morally coherent or didactic as that assessment implies – I do think this argument can be applied to Drayton's *Peirs Gaveston*. Drayton's character of Edward uses what Shannon calls 'doubled-soul language' (part of 'the idiom of virtuous friendship'), in the context of his farewell lament over Gaveston's first exile: 'Farewell my Love, companion of my youth, / My soules delight, the subject of my mirth, / My *second selfe* if I reporte the truth'.<sup>170</sup> This collocation implies that the 'doubled-soul' nature of Edward and Gaveston's friendship – inappropriate to their respective social positions – has led to its dissolution. Kelly Quinn is correct that 'the echoes of the conventions of friendship are, it seems, part of Gaveston's narrative strategy of justifying his behaviour by describing it in the context of friendship ideals',<sup>171</sup> but that strategy is not uniformly successful. Similarly, Marlowe's use of such language in the opening of *Edward II* – in which Edward describes himself to his returning favourite as 'Thy friend, thyself, another Gaveston!' – is quickly followed by conflict with Edward's brother and his other nobles over the relationship and its political manifestations.<sup>172</sup>

While the concept of friendship is under discussion, it is important to stress the absence of a strict dichotomy in early modern England between what we would now distinguish as friendship and love. Rather, these concepts existed on a semantic continuum.<sup>173</sup> Critics have noted Marlowe's general concern with 'male companionship', as well as the fact that the word 'friend' and its derivatives occur substantially more often in *Edward II* than in *Doctor Faustus* or either part of *Tamburlaine* – and certainly, both Edward and other characters refer to his relationships with his favourites as friendships.<sup>174</sup> But this should not be seen as indicating Edward's euphemistic denial of the romantic and sexual nature of those relationships (as Forker's sceptical quotation marks – 'Edward's extravagant expression of devotion to his "friends"' – would seem to imply), still less as a

<sup>169</sup> Laurie Shannon, 'Monarchs, Minions and "Sovereign" Friendship', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 97 (1998), 90–112 (p. 93).

<sup>170</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 475–77; emphasis added.

<sup>171</sup> Quinn, p. 455.

<sup>172</sup> Marlowe, I.i.142.

<sup>173</sup> See Paul Hammond, *Love Between Men in English Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), pp. 30–31; 'friend, n. and adj.', OED (3rd edn, 2013).

<sup>174</sup> Constance B. Kuriyama, 'Second Selves: Marlowe's Cambridge and London Friendships', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 14 (2001), 86–104; Sean Lawrence, *Forgiving the Gift: The Philosophy of Generosity in Shakespeare and Marlowe* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2012), p. 126. E.g. Marlowe, I.i.142, 147; III.i.125; IV.vii.66–67.

reason to conclude that ‘Marlowe was merely using the conventional means of depicting friendship’ and therefore modern critics have catastrophically misunderstood the play.<sup>175</sup> What Marlowe’s frequent references to ‘friendship’ and use of conventions like the ‘Neoplatonic model of united souls’ *do* achieve is to foreground the impossibility of Edward and Gaveston’s situation.<sup>176</sup> Marlowe’s Edward conceives of his relationship with Gaveston as idealised friendship not dissimilar to that which Aelred attributed to David and Jonathan four centuries earlier – ‘one mind, one heart, one purse’ – but as Bacon argues, such a friendship ‘many times sorteth to inconvenience’ when one of the parties holds a royal office.<sup>177</sup> As Winston Churchill’s *Divi Britannici* states explicitly, Edward’s relationship with Gaveston might have been laudable in a different context:

the greatest Crime ever objected against him, was that which one would have thought might have past for the greatest Vertue, his excess of kindness to those he thought worthy to be his Friends; a real effect of good Nature, and perhaps all circumstances considered, not otherwise ill, then as it met with ill-natur'd Interpreters.<sup>178</sup>

The problem, as Shannon neatly puts it, is that ‘Any king’s effort to enact friendship according to its classically derived script...will look like *mignonnerie* so long as the king remains a king’.<sup>179</sup> In fact, the very sixteenth-century resonance of the term ‘minion’ enabled later writers such as Marlowe to present Edward and Gaveston’s relationship as an anachronism, better fitted to a classical context than to an English political one.

## II. Emotional relationships

### i. Excessive love and its political consequences

The need for writers to explain Edward’s love for his favourites is particularly pressing given the frequency with which it is presented as transgressive and/or excessive. These assertions emerge before Edward’s accession as justifications for Gaveston’s first exile in 1305. Adam Murimuth, for example, states that Edward I exiled Gaveston ‘because he gave bad counsel to his son, who loved this Piers with inordinate affection’ (*quia dedit malum consilio filio suo, qui ipsum Petrum inordinata affectione dilexit*).<sup>180</sup> Here, Prince Edward’s ‘inordinate’ love for Gaveston is undesirable, but not the main factor in Edward I’s

<sup>175</sup> Marlowe, IV.vii.66n; L. J. Mills, ‘The Meaning of *Edward IP*, *Modern Philology*, 32 (1934), 11–31 (p. 18).

<sup>176</sup> Hillman, pp. 104–05.

<sup>177</sup> *Spiritual Friendship*, bk. 3, verse 99.

<sup>178</sup> Winston Churchill, *Divi Britannici* (London: Tho. Roycroft, 1675), fol. 2C2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>179</sup> Shannon, ‘Monarchs, Minions and ‘Sovereign’ Friendship’, p. 105.

<sup>180</sup> Murimuth, p. 9.



decision to exile him. By contrast, the *Annales Paulini* present this excessive love as Edward I's principal motivation:

...the king of England – discerning [*cernens*] that his son, the prince of Wales, might love [*adamaret*] a certain Gascon knight beyond measure [*ultra modum*] – because this king concluded that many troubles could happen to the kingdom after his death, by the counsel of his earls and barons the king compelled this knight to abjure his realm as long as he should live.<sup>181</sup>

Although *adamaret* often indicates sexual love, it can also indicate love of an inanimate object; without other examples of usage from the same writer, interpretive caution should be exercised.<sup>182</sup> In either case, the element of close observation (*cernens*) and Edward I's decision to exile Gaveston based on a subjunctive possibility (*adamaret*) suggests that Prince Edward's emotions were under scrutiny, presumably because of their potentially transgressive nature and political implications.

Two mid-fourteenth century chronicles emphasise Edward's lack of emotional moderation. John of Tynemouth's *Historia Aurea* closely follows Higden's *Polychronicon*, but makes one addition: where Higden writes 'with Piers thus killed the king, as previously, clung to others', Tynemouth paraphrases before adding 'with immoderate attachment' (*cum imoderatia adhesioni*).<sup>183</sup> Similarly, the writer known as 'John de Trokelowe' – probably William Rishanger – connects Edward's love for Gaveston to the commonplace phrase 'But I know that he who loves, does not know to have measure' (*Sed scio, si quis amat, nescit habere modum*), found in a number of other European texts of the period.<sup>184</sup> Shortly afterwards, he reinforces this point:

spretis magnatum terrae liberis, sibi soli in tantum adhaesit, quod nec patris sui praeceptum, aut suasio magnatum, eos ab invicem usque ad mortem animo saltem potuit separare.<sup>185</sup>

having dismissed the free magnates of the land, [Edward] clung to [Gaveston] alone with so great a measure, that neither the commands of his father, nor the recommendations of the magnates, could separate them from each other in spirit, even unto death.

Trokelowe concretises the effects of Edward's excessive love: it results in the neglect of his father's commands and his nobles' recommendations, and is greater than his love for the other 'magnates of the land'. This theme is further emphasised by Trokelowe's account of Edward's return from his wedding in France:

<sup>181</sup> *Annales Paulini*, p. 255.

<sup>182</sup> 'Adamare', DMLBS.

<sup>183</sup> *Historia Aurea of John of Tynemouth* (Lambeth Palace Library MSS 10–12 [microfilm], 1347), fol. 225<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>184</sup> See e.g. Charles Fontaine, *La Fontaine Damours et La Description* (Rouen: pour Pierre Prevost, 1540).

<sup>185</sup> Trokelowe, p. 64.

ad regnum Angliae redeuntes, cum omni honoris et reverentiae studio ab omnibus proceribus admittuntur. Inter quos Petrum occurrentem, datis osculis et ingeminitatis amplexibus, familiaritate venerabatur singulari. Quae familiaritas specialis, a magnatibus praeconcepta, invidiae fomitem ministravit.<sup>186</sup>

returning to the realm of England, with all honour and reverence and eagerness they were admitted to all the nobles. Among them, Edward running to Piers: having given kisses and repeated embraces, he was being adored with singular familiarity. Such special familiarity, having been perceived by the magnates, served as tinder for envy.

Again, Edward's love for Gaveston is presented as excessive through contrast with his behaviour towards other nobles.

Trokelow's text formed the main source for Thomas Walsingham's *Chronica Maiora*, which retains many of the references to immoderate love.<sup>187</sup> However, one aspect of his depiction of Edward's love towards Gaveston bears clarifying. On Gaveston's return from exile, Walsingham writes, Edward 'cheerfully took him up, like a gift from heaven' (*tanquam caeleste munus*).<sup>188</sup> Many subsequent writers appropriate this phrase to highlight the intensity of Edward's love; in particular, John Stow's use of it influenced several historical texts.<sup>189</sup> Yet Walsingham does not use this phrase exclusively to refer to excessive love between men; it is also used to depict the Scots' embrace of the traitorous Andrew Harclay.<sup>190</sup> Care should be taken to distinguish the implications of this phrase in Walsingham's text (where it clearly carries no romantic connotations) from the suggestions it carries in later texts, none of whom use the same phrase to refer to Harclay and the Scots.

Several early modern depictions of Edward's relationships with his favourites are characterised by images of surfeit. In his 1596 revision of *Peirs Gaveston*, Drayton added three stanzas focused on ideas of excess. Gaveston describes his and Edward's sexual appetites as 'unrul'd', expressing their inability to 'moderate our blisse'. Their love, too, cannot be 'moderated': 'O wondrous love,' Gaveston complains, 'were there a meane in thee / Reason might understand what thou dost meane'.<sup>191</sup> In the original poem, meanwhile, Drayton describes Edward's grief for Gaveston's second exile in terms of several burst boundaries: 'Tide-ceasles sorrow, which doest over-flow, / Youth-withering cares, past compasse of conceite, / Hart-kylling grieffe, which more and more doest

<sup>186</sup> Trokelowe, p. 65.

<sup>187</sup> Walsingham, fol. F5<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>188</sup> Walsingham, fol. F6<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>189</sup> Stow, fol. X5<sup>v</sup>. See also Baker, fol. S4<sup>r</sup>; G. W., fol. B<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>190</sup> Walsingham, fol. I<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>191</sup> Drayton, V, 31.

grow'.<sup>192</sup> Richard Niccols uses similar images: Edward has 'quaff'd so deepe' in 'Fancies cup' that he is 'surfetting with love' for Gaveston.<sup>193</sup> A particularly significant contribution to the representation of Edward's excessive love was made by William Martyn's *History and Lives of the Kings of England*. Edward, Martyn writes, 'doted on [Gaveston], and that his affections towards him were unlimited'; the Despensers, who he loved 'immoderately', were 'more deer to him then his Queen and children, and all his friends beside'.<sup>194</sup> When Gaveston returns from exile, Martyn writes,

his arrivall so abundantly replenished the Kings conceits with extraordinarie joy, that *nothing* else (in comparison of it) gave him *anie* contentment: Neither could *anie* man (besides him) expect for *anie* gracefull entertainment from the King.<sup>195</sup>

Martyn's repeated absolutes, emphasised above, highlight the depth and all-consuming nature of Edward's love, as does the adverb 'abundantly'; along with the adjective 'extraordinarie', this suggests that his love transgresses accepted or expected bounds.

A concrete manifestation of Edward's excessive love for his favourites – and one with which historiography is understandably preoccupied – is the political promotions he grants them. This is an example of Edward's favourites' influence over his body natural spilling over into influence over the body politic – or, as Laurie Shannon writes, of 'the political scandal of a monarch's unsuppressed private self, with the individuated and self-centred body natural eclipsing the body politic, whose 'Nature and Effects' were supposed to have transformed (altered or repressed) the private body'.<sup>196</sup> Excessive love in a medieval or early modern political context could be particularly disruptive because of the importance of homosocial bonds to medieval government.<sup>197</sup>

Reports of the promotions granted to Edward's favourites vary, but there is a reasonable consensus over a core set of honours. Hugh Despenser the Younger was made Earl of Gloucester, his father Earl of Winchester; the two were given preferential treatment

---

<sup>192</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 973–75.

<sup>193</sup> *WNV*, fol. 3A2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>194</sup> Martyn, fols. N<sup>v</sup>, N4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>195</sup> Martyn, fol. N<sup>v</sup>; emphasis added.

<sup>196</sup> Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), *passim*; Shannon, 'Monarchs, Minions and 'Sovereigne' Friendship', p. 94.

<sup>197</sup> Claire Sponsler, 'The King's Boyfriend: Froissart's Political Theatre of 1326', in *Queering the Middle Ages*, ed. by Glenn Burger and Steven F. Kruger (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), pp. 143–67 (pp. 147–48); Gwilym Dodd, 'Parliament and Political Legitimacy in the Reign of Edward II', in *New Perspectives*, pp. 165–89. Sponsler's observation specifically concerns Froissart's portrayal of Edward and Gaveston's relationship, but scholarship on the nature of fourteenth-century English government indicates that Froissart's portrayal reflects contemporary political reality; see J. Conway Davies, *The Baronial Opposition to Edward II: Its Character and Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918), pp. 30–31.

in an inheritance battle over lands in the Welsh Marches.<sup>198</sup> Gaveston was made Earl of Cornwall (an earldom ‘closely associated with the crown’), Lord of Man (*quae specialiter spectat ad coronam*, ‘which specially belonged to the crown’) and possibly chamberlain (an office which implied intimate access to the monarch).<sup>199</sup> He received certain marks of honour at Edward’s coronation: in particular, the story of him bearing the crown of St Edward is frequently used in longer texts to suggest excessive favour, as in the *Annales Paulini*:

The king voluntarily handed over the royal portions of Saint Edward to diverse earls and barons, as the pure cross, sceptre, staff, spurs and sword; but the crown of Saint Edward he handed over to Piers to carry with soiled hands [*manibus inquinatis*]. Because of which, not unjustly, the people and clergy were angry.<sup>200</sup>

Again, the writer contrasts the proportionate favours given to ‘diverse earls and barons’ with the excessive favour bestowed on Gaveston, an inequality which results in widespread anger. Gaveston is also given the honour of marrying Edward’s niece, the sister of the Earl of Gloucester. This arranged marriage should be interpreted as confirming, not disrupting, the intimacy between Edward and Gaveston: as Stephen Orgel observes in light of Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice* and James VI and I’s arranged marriages for his favourites, ‘a wife is the supreme gift of male friendship, not at all a repudiation of it’.<sup>201</sup>

Various writers report that these favours led directly to Gaveston’s arrogance and ostentatious dress.<sup>202</sup> Most texts also depict the hostile reaction of Edward’s other nobles to these promotions. Recounting political protections offered to the younger Despenser, the *Chronicle of the Civil Wars* states that, ‘The earls and barons [bore] anger that he should have been admitted to such grace with them not consenting’.<sup>203</sup> The nobles of Marlowe’s *Edward II*, meanwhile, are persistent and scathing in their assertions that Gaveston has been excessively ennobled. Edward tells Gaveston at the outset that he values his royal office primarily for the opportunities it gives him to honour his favourites: ‘but to honour thee / Is Edward pleased with kingly regiment’.<sup>204</sup> Observing the granting of these honours, Kent

<sup>198</sup> Phillips, pp. 366–67.

<sup>199</sup> Phillips, p. 122; Walsingham, fol. F5r. See Chaplais, pp. 101–05, for discussion of whether Gaveston was really appointed chamberlain; this claim occurs repeatedly in medieval and early modern texts.

<sup>200</sup> *Annales Paulini*, p. 261.

<sup>201</sup> Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare’s England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 77; see also Simon Shepherd, ‘A Bit of Ruff: Criticism, Fantasy, Marlowe’, in *Constructing Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by J. A. Downie and J. T. Parnell (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 102–15 (p. 112).

<sup>202</sup> See e.g. Speed, fol. 4S2r, for consequences of Gaveston’s favours at Edward’s coronation; Walsingham, fol. F6v, for Gaveston’s arrogance resulting from his marriage.

<sup>203</sup> Haskins, p. 77.

<sup>204</sup> Marlowe, I.i.163–64.

warns Edward, ‘Brother, the least of these may well suffice / For one of greater birth than Gaveston’.<sup>205</sup> Lancaster, Warwick and the Mortimers are less polite, displaying pointedly critical emblems and sarcastically greeting Gaveston by his multiple epithets.<sup>206</sup> As in Trokelowe, Marlowe’s nobles are envious: as Jonathan Goldberg points out, ‘the signs of royal favour they desire are exactly those conferred upon Gaveston’.<sup>207</sup> The negative representations of Edward’s favourites outlined above also underlie the nobles’ critical reactions. Catherine Belsey’s observation on Marlowe’s play – that Edward’s ‘desire’ is ‘shown...to be in excess of its object’, and ‘Gaveston...is arguably not worth what it costs to keep him’ – can be applied to the wider historiography. Low-born, arrogant favourites – especially if they are also foreign – are especially unworthy of patronage and political reward.

As well as representations of excess, many writers highlight the transgressive nature of Edward’s love by highlighting its potential to distract him from royal duties. The commentary on *The Prophecy of John of Bridlington* states that Edward ‘was called a fool’: ‘he is particularly called a fool who, because of the love of a certain man or woman who clings to him, does not worry about what he does to please them, and this king had the same way’ (*ille proprie dicitur infatuatus qui, propter amorem alicujus viri vel mulieris cui adhaeret, non curat quid faciat ad eis complacendum; et talem modum habuit iste rex*).<sup>208</sup> The connotations of ‘*infatuatus*’ combine love and foolishness, indicating that Edward’s carelessness about the consequences of ‘what he does to please’ his favourites results from his love for them. Similarly, the *Anonimale Chronicle* notes that, on Gaveston’s return from his third exile, ‘the king received him joyfully despite [*encontre*] the Ordinances made by himself and his council, and kept him with him and his company in the face of all protests’: the adverb *encontre* positions Edward in opposition to the Ordinances and other strategies of cooperation and consultation with his nobles.<sup>209</sup> Polydore Vergil – whose *Anglica Historia* was a major source for Holinshed’s account of Edward’s reign – highlights Edward’s lack of adherence to his duty by contrasting his duty with his actual behaviour. In 1312, he writes, ‘Edward was so far removed from being deterred from his way of life by Piers’ death for the future, that he even took the most wicked scoundrels into his friendship and made them members of this Privy Council’ – emphasising, through the use of ‘so far removed from’ (*tantum abfuit*) and

---

<sup>205</sup> Marlowe, I.i.157–58.

<sup>206</sup> Marlowe, II.ii.15–28, 64–70.

<sup>207</sup> Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodomities: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 119.

<sup>208</sup> *Bridlington Prophecy*, p. 133.

<sup>209</sup> *Anonimale*, pp. 84–85, trans. by Childs and Taylor.

‘even’ (*etiam*), the distance between the ideal effect of Gaveston’s murder on Edward and its real consequences.<sup>210</sup>

For William Martyn, Edward’s emotional and physical excesses are symptomatic of his lack of self-control, which incapacitates his political rule. The Despensers, he writes, ‘corrupted [Edward] with monstrous vices, and made him altogether carelesse of those duties which by Almighty God were required at his hands’.<sup>211</sup> ‘His Government’, meanwhile, ‘was altogether eclipsed by the foule interposition of his vices betwixt himselfe and it’ – an image which positions Edward’s ‘vices’ as a physical, opaque barrier between the king and his capacity to rule, severing from him what should be an intrinsic characteristic of royalty.<sup>212</sup> Similarly, Martyn links Edward’s lack of adherence to his nobles’ requests with his emotional tendencies: ‘their labour was quite lost, and their fidelitie was requited with unthankful frownes; rather testifying his determination to continue subject (though he were a King) too his follies, than in anie sort to amend anie thing which was amisse’.<sup>213</sup> The description of Edward as ‘subject’ is potent, suggesting that his ‘follies’ deprive him of royal status.

The issue of distracting love is central to Marlowe’s *Edward II*: at multiple points, Edward indicates that Gaveston is more important to him than England. The opening scene establishes this: ‘sooner shall the sea o’erwhelm my land, / Than bear the ship that shall transport thee [Gaveston] hence’.<sup>214</sup> Similarly, Edward treats his royal office as disposable in his quest to secure permission to live with and promote Gaveston: ‘Curse me, depose me, do the worst you can’.<sup>215</sup> His suggestion that his other nobles ‘Make several kingdoms of this monarchy, / And share it equally amongst you all’ would, as many critics have noted, have signalled particularly alarming irresponsibility.<sup>216</sup> In addition to this abstract disinterest, Edward is indifferent towards more concrete political threats to the realm. Mortimer Junior and Lancaster enumerate the political consequences of his relationship with Gaveston, piling disaster upon disaster:

MORTIMER JUNIOR.           The idle triumphs, masks, lascivious shows,  
  And prodigal gifts bestow’d on Gaveston,

---

<sup>210</sup> Vergil, chap. 18, trans. by Sutton.

<sup>211</sup> Martyn, fol. N4r; emphasis added.

<sup>212</sup> Martyn, fol. N2r.

<sup>213</sup> Martyn, fol. N2r.

<sup>214</sup> Marlowe, I.i.151–52; see also I.iv.48–50.

<sup>215</sup> Marlowe, I.iv.54–57.

<sup>216</sup> Marlowe, I.iv.70–73; see Emma Katherine Atwood, ‘All Places Are Alike’: Marlowe’s *Edward II* and English Spatial Imagination’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 43 (2013), 49–70 (p. 59); Lisa Hopkins, ‘Englishmen Abroad: Mobility and Nationhood in *Dido*, *Queen of Carthage* and *Edward II*’, *English*, 59 (2010), 324–48 (pp. 345–46).

LANCASTER. Have drawn thy treasure dry, and made thee weak;  
The murmuring commons, overstretched, break.  
Look for rebellion, look to be depos'd.  
Thy garrisons are beaten out of France,  
And, lame and poor, lie groaning at the gates.  
The wild O'Neill, with swarms of Irish kerns,  
Lives uncontroll'd within the English pale.  
Unto the walls of York the Scots made road,  
And unresisted drave away rich spoils.

MORTIMER JUNIOR. The haughty Dane commands the narrow seas,  
While in the harbour ride thy ships unrigged.

LANCASTER. What foreign prince sends thee ambassadors?  
MORTIMER JUNIOR. Who loves thee, but a sort of flatterers?<sup>217</sup>

The nobles go on, identifying Scottish invasion as a particular threat and thereby invoking Edward's most famous defeat at Bannockburn. The causal link they draw between these threats and Edward's relationship with Gaveston is borne out by III.i, in which Edward appears genuinely distracted by thoughts of his favourite, his conversation leaping suddenly away from news of the seizure of Normandy and back again:

Valois and I will soon be friends again.—  
But to my Gaveston; shall I never see,  
Never behold thee now?—Madam, in this matter,  
We will employ you and your little son;  
You shall go parley with the King of France.<sup>218</sup>

The impression given here is that Edward is unable to concentrate on political matters for more than a few seconds before his passionate emotions command his attention. Francis Hubert presents a similar moment, perhaps influenced by this scene or others like it:

When they did say, that Scottish Bruce did burne  
My Northerne borders, and did wast the same,  
Then sighing I, to Gavestone would turne,  
And say (sweete Peeres [sic – indicating Gaveston, not the peers]) my selfe  
feeles fancies flame,  
I saw, I love, I dye for such a dame:  
Cupid I feare a Bruce to me will prove,  
My hold's by him, my heart is fier'd with love.<sup>219</sup>

Here, as in Marlowe, Edward becomes distracted by 'fancies flame' immediately after receiving news of a political emergency. What distinguishes Hubert's text, of course, is that Edward's love is not for Gaveston, but for 'such a dame'. The key issue, it is important to recognise, is Edward's propensity to allow emotion to distract him from politics. Edward's most historiographically well-known emotions, and those most consistently represented as

<sup>217</sup> Marlowe, II.ii.156–94.

<sup>218</sup> Marlowe, III.i.67–71.

<sup>219</sup> Hubert (1628), stanza 163.

excessive and distracting, are those towards his favourites – but as Hubert shows, the objects of those emotions are not of fundamental importance. Just as claims that Edward chose his favourites for their attractiveness function primarily to demonstrate the irrational basis on which he selects counsellors, so depictions of love distracting him from his duties function primarily to demonstrate his failure to prioritise or manage his emotional responses; to ‘sublimate...private interests in the required interests of the realm’,<sup>220</sup> as kings must do. In light of this, the accusation made by the Earl of Lincoln in Elizabeth Cary’s account is usefully and tellingly non-specific: ‘Your Sovereign cares not how the State be guided, so he may still enjoy his wanton Pleasures’.<sup>221</sup>

## ii. Romanticising Edward and Gaveston

During the period 1305-1700, Edward’s relationship with Gaveston is increasingly romanticised in historiographical accounts. The emotional dimension of the relationship is foregrounded, with the effect of inducing pathos for their separation by exile and Gaveston’s ultimate death; and writers demonstrate that their love for each other is romantic, that of a pair of lovers. Romanticisation can take the form of emphasising Edward and Gaveston’s fidelity or loyalty; the length and durability of their relationship; non-rational reasons for their attraction to each other; and Edward’s grief at Gaveston’s exile and death. Although Marlowe’s *Edward II* plays a key role in this process, instigating a shift of focus to the emotional components of this relationship, the trend can also be observed independently.

### Romanticisation in historical texts

A useful case study of early romanticisation is the development of the account of Gaveston’s capture at Scarborough in 1312. The chronicle attributed to ‘Trokelowe’ reports that when Gaveston had been taken into custody, ‘he humbly begged that he might deserve to enjoy the conversation of the lord king, with the king having likewise begged the same thing’ (*humiliter petiit ut Domini Regis frui mereretur colloquio, Rege similiter hoc idem petente*).<sup>222</sup> This detail, depicting Edward and Gaveston’s mutual desire for a final conversation, encourages sympathy for their separation. Trokelowe later enhances this pathos through his account of the birth of Edward’s son, shortly after Gaveston’s death:

Because of his birth all England was made joyful...and his father was made so cheerful, that he might temper the sorrow which he had conceived for the death of Piers. Therefore from that day his love of his son increased,

<sup>220</sup> Shannon, *Sovereign Amity*, p. 157.

<sup>221</sup> Cary (folio), fol. K<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>222</sup> Trokelowe, p. 76.



and the memory of Piers faded; and the lord king humbly began to be accustomed to stoop to the will of his nobles.<sup>223</sup>

While this passage deals with the diminishing of Edward's grief for Gaveston, by presenting it as something that needs to be 'tempered' (*temperaret*) and 'fade' (*evanuit*) Trokelowe actually emphasises its significance. Through these two extracts (coupled with the description of Edward's excessive love for Gaveston, quoted above), Trokelowe engages the reader's sympathies with Edward and Gaveston's relationship.

Thomas Walsingham, who popularised Trokelowe's account by using it as a source for his *Chronica Maiora*, intensifies this engagement through two significant additions. When Gaveston was captured, Walsingham writes, he did 'not request anything, except that they should allow him *at least once* to enjoy the plentiful conversation of the lord king' (*nihilque postulavit aliud, nisi ut domini sui regis saltem semel frui colloquio copiam sibi darent*).<sup>224</sup> Walsingham's interpolation of 'at least once' (*saltem semel*) is significant here, and not just because the additional detail presents a more vivid picture of a pleading Gaveston. Though ostensibly signifying Gaveston's desire for more than one conversation with Edward, Walsingham's diminutive presentation of his final request suggests its importance to Gaveston: if he cannot have anything else, he would like just one conversation with Edward. A similar technique of diminution is also used by Elizabeth Cary: missing his exiled favourite, Edward 'enters into the business of the Kingdom, and with a seeming serious care surveys each passage, and *not so much as sighs, or names his Gavaston*'.<sup>225</sup> Here Cary highlights what Edward really wants to do through understatement ('not so much as') and denial; again, this emphasises Gaveston's importance to Edward.<sup>226</sup> Walsingham makes a similar addition to Trokelowe's version of Prince Edward's birth, stating that 'love of his son grew, and the memory of Piers vanished *in his heart*' (*in ejus corde*).<sup>227</sup> This addition foregrounds the fact that 'the memory of Piers' was characterised by love, intensifying the pathos evinced by Trokelowe's original account.

A similar process of romanticisation occurs in the alterations made by Richard Baker to Samuel Daniel's account of Gaveston's capture. Baker writes:

---

<sup>223</sup> Trokelowe, pp. 79–80.

<sup>224</sup> Walsingham, fol. G2<sup>r</sup>; emphasis added.

<sup>225</sup> Cary (folio), fol. D2<sup>v</sup>; emphasis added.

<sup>226</sup> When considering Cary's romanticisation of Edward and Gaveston, her depiction of another close male pair in her drama *Mariam* (Constabarus and Babus, who she compared to David and Jonathan) may be notable. See Meredith Skura, 'Elizabeth Cary and Edward II: What Do Women Want to Write?', *Renaissance Drama*, 27 (1996), 79–104 (p. 94).

<sup>227</sup> Walsingham, fol. G3<sup>r</sup>; emphasis added

But the Lords hearing where Gaveston was, assaulted the Castle with such violence, that Gaveston seeing no meanes to escape, was content to render himselfe; requesting onely, that he might but once be allowed to see the Kings face; and the King hearing he was taken, desired as much...<sup>228</sup>

Like Walsingham's text, this scene elicits sympathy for both men in its diminutive presentation of Gaveston's last request ('requesting onely...but once...'). It is also a romanticised alteration from Daniel's narration. Daniel's Edward does not share Gaveston's eagerness for one final meeting, which contrasts with the mutuality of Baker's account.<sup>229</sup> Moreover, Daniel's Gaveston makes a potentially political request to 'speake with the king?'; Baker alters this to the more clearly romantic request to 'see the Kings face'. This may have been influenced by the last request of Marlowe's Gaveston ('Tracherous Earl, shall I not see the king?'), though Daniel of course also had access to this text.<sup>230</sup> Laurence Normand observes a similar moment in James Melville's account of the relationship between James VI of Scotland and Esmé Stewart, Earl of Lennox, which helps to contextualise Baker's alteration:

Melville does indeed register Lennox as corrupting James's whole political outlook, describing the King as being 'sa miserable corrupted at the wrong time, at the start of his youth'... But quite unexpectedly, a sentence appears in a different register when Melville describes James's separation from Lennox: 'And sa the King and the Duc war dissivered [dissevered], and never saw uther againe'.<sup>231</sup>

Noting that this echoes Malory's language concerning 'the parting of Lancelot and Guinevere', Normand argues convincingly that a scene in which two people are parted and mourn the fact that they will no longer be able to see each other's faces is 'not the language of politics but rather of medieval or Renaissance romance'. As such, in Melville's text, 'it unsettles the surrounding discourse, emerging to represent the James-Lennox affair as a love story rather than a political conspiracy'. In Baker's account of Edward and Gaveston, the phrase thus foregrounds Gaveston's emotional – rather than political – motivations for requesting one final meeting and encourages the reader to interpret his relationship with Edward as romantic.

### **The role of Marlowe: establishing a romantic relation**

Attention must be paid here to Marlowe's *Edward II* and its influence. As Kathleen Tillotson observes, one of Marlowe's many innovations in the historiography of Edward

<sup>228</sup> Baker, fol. S4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>229</sup> Daniel, fol. Q3<sup>v</sup>; emphasis added.

<sup>230</sup> Marlowe, II.vi.15.

<sup>231</sup> Lawrence Normand, "What Passions Call You These?": *Edward II* and James VI, in *Christopher Marlowe and English Renaissance Culture*, pp. 172–97 (p. 182).

and Gaveston was to '[remove] the infatuation on Edward's side from mere weak sensuality, from crass material ambition on Gaveston's; in a word, he showed the relation as romantic'.<sup>232</sup> Recognition of this aspect of *Edward II* forces us to complicate the extent to which Gaveston fits into the 'theatrical type' of the 'stage favourite', whose 'recognisable set of characteristics' and shared vocabulary Blair Worden has outlined in an extensive survey of early modern drama.<sup>233</sup> The play does contain many of Worden's hallmarks, and Gaveston is at times both a 'Machiavel' and an 'over-reacher' – but he is also Edward's lover, a role in which he is not solely portrayed as self-interested or caricatured as the indulgence of a weak and foolish monarch.

As my analysis of Drayton will shortly show, one of Marlowe's key legacies was to shift Gaveston to centre stage as Edward's lover at the expense of the Despensers. However, the younger Despenser (Spencer) does of course feature as Edward's second lover in Marlowe's play, and so it is necessary to examine how the play influenced the foregrounding of Gaveston in spite of this. Although it is tempting to conclude that Edward's relationship with Spencer must therefore be qualitatively different from his relationship with Gaveston, arguments in this vein – like that of Gregory Bredbeck, who asserts that Edward's shift from Gaveston to Spencer is 'not an exchange of one love for another' but 'a change from personal passion to politic power' – do not stand up to scrutiny.<sup>234</sup> Spencer may be politically calculating, and may largely '[work] through the channels of orthodox monarchical power' to gain Edward's favour, but this does not make Edward's choice to favour him a shift from the personal to the political: his decision to promote Spencer 'merely of our love' is unambiguous in this respect.<sup>235</sup> Moreover, the play contains some expressions of parallelism between Gaveston and Spencer. Forker describes Edward's embrace of Spencer at III.i.177 as a 'deliberate parallel to the embracement of Gaveston at I.i.140', and Edward collocates them in his lament while imprisoned: 'O Gaveston, it is for thee that I am wronged; / For me, both thou and both the Spencers died...' <sup>236</sup> However, I would argue that Leonora Leet Brodwin's assessment comes closest to capturing the difference between Gaveston and Spencer in *Edward II*. 'However much Spencer may flatter Edward's delusions and Edward reward Spencer for it, and however much tenderness they ultimately come to feel for each other,' Brodwin argues, 'their relationship is totally lacking in that poetry which redeemed Edward's love for

---

<sup>232</sup> Drayton, *Works*, V, 24.

<sup>233</sup> Blair Worden, 'Favourites on the English Stage', in *The World of the Favourite*, pp. 159–83 (pp. 159–60).

<sup>234</sup> Gregory Bredbeck, *Sodomy and Interpretation: Marlowe to Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 73.

<sup>235</sup> Marlowe, III.i.145.

<sup>236</sup> Marlowe, V.iii.41–42.

Gaveston'.<sup>237</sup> Clearly, Brodwin's moralistic use of 'redeemed' is unhelpful here, and it would be easy to read her reference to 'poetry' as a similarly dated value judgement on Marlowe's representation of love between men. However, if we consider *Edward II* from the perspective of an early modern audience, the most striking difference between Edward's relationship with Gaveston and his relationship with Spencer is, in fact, poetry. Edward's scenes with Spencer lack the classical allusions, long grief-stricken partings and elaborate declarations of love that characterise his interactions with Gaveston – and these are a key technique with which Marlowe elicits audience sympathy for the king and his first lover, despite their many political transgressions.

As Catherine Belsey observes, 'Edward's desire for Gaveston is dramatically represented, made palpable for the audience, in terms of a succession of separations'.<sup>238</sup> To 'desire' I would add 'love': as Belsey herself notes, parting scenes are typical of early modern representations of romantic love. As Edward and Gaveston part before the latter's exile to Ireland, they employ emotive language that demonstrates the pain they feel at separation, resulting in intense pathos: 'hell of grief', 'too-piercing words', 'torments my wretched soul', 'most miserable'.<sup>239</sup> The same scene reinforces the romantic nature of their relationship: they exchange portraits in a typical early modern lovers' gesture, and Edward's request that Gaveston 'give me leave to look my fill' demonstrates that their love is based in part on physical attraction.<sup>240</sup> Their reunion at Tynemouth occasions a similarly lengthy pair of speeches which function in the same way: Edward describes the pain of his separation from Gaveston – 'thy absence made me droop and pine away' – and compares himself to 'the lovers of fair Danae', while Gaveston expresses his joy with rhetorical flourish ('The shepherd nipt with biting winter's rage / Frolics not more to see the painted spring, / Than I do to behold your majesty').<sup>241</sup> These scenes and others like them (their first reunion in I.i is also particularly important) ensure that Edward's love for Gaveston is memorable for Marlowe's audience and readers in terms of stage time, literary technique, and emotional impact. There is a sad irony in the fact that their final parting is rushed, and leaves no time for rhetorical expressions of love or grief: their last exchange is simply

---

<sup>237</sup> Leonora Leet Brodwin, 'Edward II: Marlowe's Culminating Treatment of Love', *ELH*, 31 (1964), 139–55 (p. 153).

<sup>238</sup> Catherine Belsey, 'Desire's Excess and the English Renaissance Theatre: *Edward II*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Othello*', in *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, ed. by Susan Zimmerman (New York; London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 84–102 (p. 84).

<sup>239</sup> Marlowe, I.iv.116, 117, 123, 129.

<sup>240</sup> Marlowe, I.iv.139.

<sup>241</sup> Marlowe, II.ii.52, 53, 61–63.

‘Gaveston, away!’ / ‘Farewell, my lord.’<sup>242</sup> By contrast, Edward’s lamentation after his separation from Spencer and Baldock focuses mainly on his imminent deposition.<sup>243</sup>

The audience sympathy inspired by these parting scenes would have been enhanced in a late sixteenth-century context by Marlowe’s consistent association of Gaveston’s exile with Catholicism. The Archbishop of Canterbury expresses his opposition to Gaveston in a speech that explicitly aligns him with Rome, telling his attendant to ‘certify the Pope’ of the abuses inflicted on the Bishop of Coventry.<sup>244</sup> When the nobles ally with the Archbishop shortly afterwards, they too become implicitly aligned with the head of the Catholic Church.<sup>245</sup> Following this, the first explicit exhortation that Edward exile Gaveston is made by the Archbishop, who begins by stating ‘You know that I am legate to the Pope’ and charges Edward to ‘Subscribe...to his exile’ ‘On your allegiance to the see of Rome’.<sup>246</sup> Edward articulates his submission to this command in the same terms – ‘The legate of the Pope will be obey’d’ – and repeats this when explaining it to Gaveston (‘The legate of the Pope will have it so’).<sup>247</sup> Having been compelled to agree to the exile, Edward’s angry soliloquy (which closely echoes Henri’s final, dying speech in *The Massacre at Paris*) asks, ‘Why should a king be subject to a priest?’<sup>248</sup> Marlowe’s choice of words is striking here: the exile has been forced by one priest and many nobles, and Edward could just as reasonably have asked, ‘Why should a king be subject to his peers?’ In light of this, Marlowe’s choice to continually stress the Archbishop’s role in separating Edward and Gaveston – and to continually remind us that the Archbishop is a Catholic – seems a deliberate attempt to align audience sympathies with Edward and Gaveston. While Arnold Cushner argues that Edward’s soliloquy is as anti-religious as it is anti-papist, ‘savagery’ which ‘is used...to portray Edward unfavourably’, it seems highly unlikely that Marlowe’s audience would miss the many components of the speech that clarify Edward’s target as specifically Catholic.<sup>249</sup> It opens with the exclamation ‘Proud Rome!’, before referring to ‘superstitious taper-lights’, ‘antichristian churches’, ‘papal towers’ and the Roman river ‘Tiber’; Edward is not threatening Christianity, but Catholicism, and his ‘savagery’ is therefore directed at an appropriate target. However, Irving Ribner’s claim that this speech is merely a mouthpiece

---

<sup>242</sup> Marlowe, II.iv.8–9. Melnikoff notes that Gaveston’s final words ‘before being carted off to execution’ are similarly, examples of what Steven Guy-Bray has called ‘prosaic’ and James Siemon ‘stifle[d]’ language [‘Introduction’, in Melnikoff, pp. 1–20 (p. 6)].

<sup>243</sup> Marlowe, V.i.5–37.

<sup>244</sup> Marlowe, I.ii.35–38.

<sup>245</sup> Marlowe, I.ii.42–45.

<sup>246</sup> Marlowe, I.iv.51–53.

<sup>247</sup> Marlowe, I.iv.64, 109.

<sup>248</sup> Stewart, pp. 114–15; Marlowe, I.iv.96.

<sup>249</sup> Arnold Cushner, ‘Some Observations on Marlowe’s *Edward II*’, in *Renaissance and Modern: Essays in Honor of Edwin M. Moseley*, ed. by Edwin M. Moseley and Murray J. Levith (Saratoga Springs: Skidmore College, 1976), pp. 11–20 (pp. 15–16).

for Marlowe's politically expedient Protestantism in line with Tudor orthodoxy is equally unconvincing.<sup>250</sup> Edward's anti-Catholic speech is not shoehorned in; it is relevant to the plot of the play and to Edward's character, in that, as I have shown, his separation from Gaveston has been consistently attributed to the Pope's authority. Ribner is correct to say that the resolution Edward displays in this speech is atypical, but Mark Thornton Burnett draws a more accurate conclusion from this: 'Typically Marlowe complicates a neat assessment by granting to a failing monarch sentiments that would have won instant approval among contemporary public amphitheatre audiences.'<sup>251</sup> Approval of Edward's anti-Catholic sentiment could – and likely did – coexist with disapproval of his irresolution and excessive concern for Gaveston over his political duties, and possible unease at his violent language.<sup>252</sup> As Phyllis Rackin rightly argues, 'the heterogeneity of the audience and the discursive instability of the [theatre] produced a polyvalent discourse that resisted the imposition of one single meaning'.<sup>253</sup> The association of Edward and Gaveston's separation with Catholicism can be seen as one technique with which Marlowe shifts audience sympathy in their direction, while allowing that the 'Proud Rome' soliloquy has multiple effects and contributes to the play's overall ambivalence.

Elsewhere in the play, Marlowe emphasises the romantic nature of Edward and Gaveston's love in a number of ways. Isabella's complaint – 'He claps his cheeks, and hangs about his neck, / Smiles in his face, and whispers in his ears' – depicts behaviour associated in other texts either with dandling children (as in Marlowe's *Dido*, in which Cupid asks, 'Will Dido let me hang about her necke?') or, more frequently, romantic love and sexual attraction.<sup>254</sup> As Pasquarella notes, Edward's behaviour towards Gaveston here echoes that of the amorous Neptune in Marlowe's 'Hero and Leander' ('He clapt his plumpe cheekes, with his tresses playd / And smiling wantonly, his love bewrayd').<sup>255</sup> Shakespeare's Petruchio similarly offers the fact that Kate 'hung about my necke' as evidence of 'How much she loves me', and Leontes in *The Winter's Tale* uses this behaviour as evidence of Hermione's adultery.<sup>256</sup> Indeed, Edward and Gaveston's love often echoes

<sup>250</sup> Irving Ribner, 'Marlowe's *Edward II* and the Tudor History Play', *ELH*, 22 (1955), 243–53 (p. 252).

<sup>251</sup> Mark Thornton Burnett, 'Edward II and Elizabethan Politics', in *Marlowe, History, and Sexuality*, pp. 91–107 (p. 103).

<sup>252</sup> Andrea Stevens, 'Edward II: A Stage History', in Melnikoff, pp. 43–71 (p. 46).

<sup>253</sup> Phyllis Rackin, *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 27.

<sup>254</sup> Marlowe, I.ii.51–52; Christopher Marlowe, 'Dido, Queen of Carthage' in *Dido, Queen of Carthage and The Massacre at Paris*, ed. by H. J. Oliver (Methuen, 1968), pp. 1–90 (III.i.30); see also Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimage* (London: William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1613), fol. 2K3<sup>r</sup>, for 'a woman with a Child hanging about her necke'.

<sup>255</sup> Pasquarella, p. 93.

<sup>256</sup> *The Taming of the Shrew*, II.i.303–04, *Oxford Shakespeare; The Winter's Tale*, I.ii.309–10, *ibid.* For other examples see John Lyly, *The Woman in the Moone* (London: [G. Simson] for William Jones, 1597), fol. C3<sup>v</sup>; Giovanni

that of other romantic pairs, both outside the play and within it. Edward's reply to Mortimer Junior's question 'Why should you love him whom the world hates so?' – 'Because he loves me more than all the world' – is 'a probable echo' of the Ghost's expression of love for Bel-imperia in Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*.<sup>257</sup> Gaveston's love for Edward is also repeatedly paralleled with Isabella's. To the Queen's 'Villain! 'tis thou that robb'st me of my lord', Gaveston replies, 'Madam, 'tis you that rob me of my lord'.<sup>258</sup> Similarly, both say they value Edward's love more than material reward, and echo each other's language when that love is demonstrated: 'O how a kiss revives poor Isabel!'; 'Renowned Edward, how thy name / Revives poor Gaveston!'<sup>259</sup> These examples and others present Gaveston's love for Edward as qualitatively equivalent to that of his wife.<sup>260</sup> Not only does this emphasise the romantic nature of that love, it highlights the way in which it disrupts established social structures by competing directly with Edward's marriage: although an early modern audience would not have assumed that Edward's desire for Gaveston prevented him from having a sexual relationship with Isabella, Marlowe makes it clear that Edward's favourite has displaced his wife from his affections.<sup>261</sup> Marlowe uses a similar parallelism with Margaret, Gaveston's wife-to-be, here with the primary effect of emphasising Margaret's naivety: her claim that the letter she has received from Gaveston 'argues the entire love of my lord' is belied by her echoes of Edward's phrasing ('my sweet Gaveston') and her image of Gaveston sleeping on her bosom (reminiscent of his reference to 'The king, upon whose bosom let me die').<sup>262</sup> This reminds the audience that Gaveston has another lover and that his marriage to Margaret will be purely political – as Edward's statement, 'Gaveston, think that I love thee well, / To wed thee to our niece', makes clear.<sup>263</sup>

While Kelly Quinn assumes that the clear romantic love between Edward and Gaveston in Drayton's *Peirs Gaveston* is evidence that Drayton and his contemporaries 'understand their chronicle sources to point to a romantic relationship', I would question this focus on Drayton's use of chronicles rather than drama.<sup>264</sup> Marlowe's *Edward II* exerts demonstrable influence on many aspects of *Peirs Gaveston* (as I emphasised in Chapter 1),

---

Boccaccio, *Amorous Fiammetta*, trans. by Bartholomew Yong (London: J[ohn] C[harlewood] for Thomas Gubbin and Thomas Newman, 1587), fol. G4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>257</sup> Marlowe, I.iv.76–77n.

<sup>258</sup> Marlowe, I.iv.160–61.

<sup>259</sup> Marlowe, I.i.170–73, I.iv.329–31; I.iv.332, II.v.40–41.

<sup>260</sup> See Lisa Jardine, *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (Brighton: Harvester, 1983), pp. 23–24.

<sup>261</sup> Marlowe, I.ii.49–50.

<sup>262</sup> Marlowe, II.i.63; II.i.59 (cf. I.iv.48, 306); II.i.65; I.i.14.

<sup>263</sup> Marlowe, II.ii.256–57.

<sup>264</sup> Quinn, p. 439.

and as such there is no need to stretch Drayton's chronicle sources to definitively indicate romantic love: Drayton could find this unequivocally represented in Marlowe. Drayton's technique of expressing this love through rhetorical speeches and parting laments suggests that he was substantially influenced by *Edward II*. No historical texts foreground Edward and Gaveston's partings, or represent them through emotional detail or direct speech. Moreover, Drayton's portrayal of Edward and Gaveston's farewell before Gaveston's second exile has several similar themes to the equivalent scene in Marlowe:

He wanted words t'expresse what he sustain'd,  
Nor could I speake to utter halfe my wrong,  
To shew his grieffe, or where I most was payn'd,  
The time too short, the tale was all too long:  
I tooke my leave with sighes when forth I went,  
He streames of teares unto my farewell sent.

But sending lookes, ambassadors of love...<sup>265</sup>

Here Gaveston and Edward refer to their mutual grief, to the insufficient time they have left together, and to the idea of wordless, grief-stricken parting; Edward, but not Gaveston, is depicted as weeping; and the importance of looking at one another is foregrounded. All of these are key aspects of the equivalent scene in Marlowe. Their function in Drayton is similar, emphasising the emotional, romantic component of Edward and Gaveston's relationship. Elsewhere, Drayton achieves this by using tropes from early modern love discourse. Missing Gaveston, Edward 'countes the howers, so sloyly how they runne, / Reproves the daye, and blames the loytring sunne'; later, Gaveston says, 'When did I laugh? and he not seene to smile? / If I but frownd, hee silent all the while.'<sup>266</sup> Drayton also highlights the equivalence of Edward and Gaveston's love to male-female love, frequently by making several similes in succession and shifting from a comparison without sexual or romantic connotations to one with both. The following stanzas, describing the pair's reunion after Edward I's death, are a good example:

Who ever sawe the kindest romane dame  
With extreame joye yeeld up her latest breath,  
When from the warres her sonne triumphing came,  
When stately Rome had mourned for his death:  
Her passion here might have exprest aright,  
When once I came into the Princes sight.

Who ever had his Ladie in his armes,

<sup>265</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 943–49; cf. Marlowe, I.iv.106–43.

<sup>266</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 455–56 (cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, III.ii.1–31, *Oxford Shakespeare*); 773–74 [cf. Simion Grahame, *The Anatomie of Humors* (Edinburgh: Thomas Finlason, 1609), fol. J<sup>v</sup>; Robert Roche, *Eustathia, or the Constance of Susanna* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1599), fol. D<sup>r</sup>].



That hath of love but felt the miserie,  
 Touching the fire that all his sences warmes,  
 Now clips with joy her blushing Ivorie.  
 Feeling his soule in such delights to melt,  
 Ther's none but he can tell the joye we felt.<sup>267</sup>

In the first stanza, Drayton establishes the intensity of joy felt by Edward and Gaveston; in the second, he introduces its romantic and sexual elements. As well as heightened emphasis, this technique lends Gaveston's narration a teasing tone; he is effectively lulling his readers into a false sense of security about the platonic nature of his and Edward's love, before injecting an explicitly romantic and sexual note. Moreover, as Quinn notes, 'Setting up but then defeating our expectation of parallels has the effect of emphasising Gaveston's maleness, and the impact of that maleness.'<sup>268</sup> Of course, as Drayton's often defensive Gaveston might himself argue, the simile of lovers is only a simile – but Gaveston aligns himself and Edward so exclusively with the imagined lovers ('Ther's none but he can tell the joye we felt') that there is really no room for doubt. Cary uses an identical technique when she reports that Edward and Gaveston's reunion 'was accompanied with as many mutual expressions, as might flow from the tongues, eyes, and hearts of long-divided Lovers'; the simile leaves ostensible space for defence, but the implication that they *are* 'long-divided Lovers' is clear.<sup>269</sup>

### **The role of Marlowe: mourning and revenge**

Marlowe's representation of Edward's grief at Gaveston's exiles and death was also influential. The dramatic form enabled him to use direct speech and stage directions to portray what the majority of his sources had simply described. As such, the scene following Gaveston's exile opens with the stage direction 'Enter KING EDWARD mourning'.<sup>270</sup> Edward is apparently in mid-lament: his opening line, 'He's gone, and for his absence thus I mourn', does not specify the name of the person in question, emphasising the intimacy of his relationship with Gaveston (the audience is in no doubt about who 'he' is). This referential opening line also establishes Edward's lack of concern for – possibly lack of awareness of – his observers; he is 'entirely self-absorbed', 'as if he were soliloquizing in public'.<sup>271</sup> Edward then evokes his grief in vivid, physical terms:

My heart is as an anvil unto sorrow,  
 Which beats upon it like the Cyclops' hammers,

<sup>267</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 607–18.

<sup>268</sup> Quinn, p. 443.

<sup>269</sup> Cary (folio), fol. F<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>270</sup> Marlowe, l.iv.304.

<sup>271</sup> Thomas Cartelli, 'Edward II', in *The Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by Patrick Cheney (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 158–73 (p. 165).

And with the noise turns up my giddy brain,  
And makes me frantic for my Gaveston.<sup>272</sup>

The adjectives ‘giddy’ and ‘frantic’ convey the increasing, all-consuming intensity of Edward’s emotional state. The OED defines ‘giddy’ as ‘Mentally intoxicated’, ‘incapable of or indisposed to serious thought or steady attention’; the more extreme ‘frantic’ as ‘violently or ragingly mad’ or ‘Affected by wild and ungovernable excitement; “mad” with rage, pain, grief’.<sup>273</sup> The association of a ‘giddy’ brain with erotic anticipation, and its all-consuming and incapacitating power, is confirmed by the use of this adjective by Shakespeare’s Troilus immediately prior to his first meeting with Cressida (‘I am giddy. Expectation whirls me round’).<sup>274</sup> Edward’s speech is strikingly intense, which must be enhanced by the physical performance of an actor, and which clearly shocks his on-stage observers. Isabella’s early comment, ‘Hark! how he harps upon his minion’, comes across to the audience as lacking in compassion. The verb ‘harp’ (‘to dwell wearisomely upon in speech or writing’) has a sardonic tone, verging on boredom, which is a cruel response to the pathos created by Edward’s description of his ‘sorrow’ and by the memory of his parting from Gaveston at the start of this scene; the audience, having been plunged into Edward’s mindset by their instinctive knowledge of who ‘he’ is that Edward misses, are more likely to perceive him as a subject with whom to identify than as an object of mockery.<sup>275</sup> Moreover, Isabella’s contemptuous use of ‘minion’ (which foregrounds Gaveston’s political role as favourite) feels inapposite straight after Edward has referred to Gaveston as ‘so dear a friend’ (foregrounding Gaveston’s emotional importance to him).<sup>276</sup> However, Lancaster’s exclamation – ‘Diablo! What passions call you these?’ – invites more empathy from an audience witnessing the phenomenon of a ‘frantic’ king, focusing on Edward’s ‘passions’ (a quasi-medicalised term very appropriate to the physicality with which he describes and enacts his emotions) and their unprecedented, alien nature.<sup>277</sup>

However, Edward’s emotional extremity cannot sustain its novelty and shock value forever: subsequent scenes of his grief and fear for the exiled Gaveston have the potential to inspire exasperation or comedy. As he awaits Gaveston’s return in II.ii, Edward remains distracted (‘I fear me he is wrack’d upon the sea’) and Isabella’s comment on his behaviour (‘Look, Lancaster, how passionate he is, / And still his mind runs on his minion’) is a more objective, less judgmental assessment of his state of mind and its perhaps surprising

<sup>272</sup> Marlowe, I.iv.311–14.

<sup>273</sup> ‘giddy, adj.’, OED (1899); ‘frantic, adj. and n.’, OED (1898).

<sup>274</sup> *Troilus and Cressida*, III.ii.16, *Oxford Shakespeare*.

<sup>275</sup> ‘harp, v.’, OED (1898).

<sup>276</sup> Marlowe, I.iv.309–10.

<sup>277</sup> Marlowe, I.iv.318.

longevity ('still').<sup>278</sup> When Edward responds to Lancaster's interjection by assuming that everyone's mind is as fixed on Gaveston as his own – 'How now! what news? Is Gaveston arrived?' – the audience's patience with his obsessive emotional preoccupation may well be wearing thin, particularly since the danger of the couple's perpetual separation (the main source of pathos thus far) has now disappeared with Gaveston's recall. Indeed, Edward's excessive fear for Gaveston's safety in this scene contributes to a sense of irony in the moments before he is told of his death. His fatalistic lines, 'Ah, he is mark'd to die! ...I shall never see / My lovely Pierce, my Gaveston again!'<sup>279</sup> are so typical of his continued worry that there is a sad irony in the fact that the audience knows his fears are justified this time around. In the wake of this verbose and rhetorical speech, Arundel's announcement of Gaveston's death is shocking in its directness: 'Yea, my good lord, for Gaveston is dead.'<sup>280</sup> Edward's immediate reaction is similarly terse, giving the impression of one shocked out of rhetoric and articulacy: 'Ah, traitors, have they put my friend to death?'<sup>281</sup> Exhorted by Spencer, however, he recovers as the scene progresses to deliver a vow of revenge laden with violent vocabulary:

EDWARD (Kneels and saith). By Heaven, and all the moving orbs thereof,  
 By this right hand, and by my father's sword,  
 And all the honours 'longing to my crown,  
 I will have heads, and lives for him, as many  
 As I have manors, castles, towns, and towers.  
 Treacherous Warwick! Traitorous Mortimer!  
 If I be England's king, in lakes of gore  
 Your headless trunks, your bodies will I trail,  
 That you may drink your fill, and quaff in blood,  
 And stain my royal standard with the same,  
 That so my bloody colours may suggest  
 Remembrance of revenge immortally  
 On your accursed traitorous progeny,  
 You villains that have slain my Gaveston.<sup>282</sup>

As with his earlier lament on Gaveston's exile, Edward does not name his favourite here; again, the audience instinctively knows the referent of 'I will have heads, and lives for him', heightening their level of identification with Edward. The stage direction 'Kneels' lends the vow a quasi-religious air, conveying its importance to Edward; the comprehensive nature of his oath (invoking divine authority, his own royal authority, and that of his father), and the bloody semantic field he creates, have a similar function. Given the force of this speech, it is hard to agree with David Bevington's claim that 'Only when they carry their

---

<sup>278</sup> Marlowe, II.ii.2–4.

<sup>279</sup> Marlowe, III.i.4, 7–8.

<sup>280</sup> Marlowe, III.i.90.

<sup>281</sup> Marlowe, III.i.91.

<sup>282</sup> Marlowe, III.i.128–42.

cause to the point of regicide do Isabella and Mortimer lose favour with the Elizabethan public': their view of Mortimer, at least, must be affected by the sympathy attached to Edward in this scene.<sup>283</sup>

As Forker points out, Marlowe's sources contain no precedent for this speech.<sup>284</sup> Holinshed, Marlowe's likely source for this scene, describes Edward as 'woonderfullie displeased' and 'making his vow that he would see his death revenged'; Marlowe chooses to foreground this vow and express Edward's planned revenge in violent threats.<sup>285</sup> In doing so, he participates both in the romanticisation of Edward and Gaveston's relationship, and in the development of Edward as a sympathetic historiographical character with psychological depth (a process begun by Geoffrey le Baker, perpetuated by Holinshed and Stow's use of his text, and continued by writers like Drayton and Cary who were influenced by Marlowe). However, this romanticisation is complicated by Edward's swift adoption of Spencer into Gaveston's 'place of honour and of trust', 'Despite of times'.<sup>286</sup> This is at odds with chronicle accounts of Edward's reign, many of which (as I have shown) emphasise the longevity of Edward's grief for Gaveston and the gap between his death and the rise of the Despencers as Edward's favourites. Marlowe's collapse of this timescale is partly a function of his chronologically condensed play, but by segueing straight from 'You villains that have slain my Gaveston!' into 'Spencer, sweet Spencer, I adopt thee here', he presents Edward as inconstant, suggesting that his vows of revenge and his devotion to Gaveston's memory may not be followed through.<sup>287</sup> In the subsequent scene this is shown not to be the case – Edward announces afresh his desire 'To be avenged on you for all your braves, / And for the murder of my dearest friend, / To whom right well you knew our soul was knit', a reminder of the depth of his attachment to Gaveston which renews the pathos of the situation. However, his earlier note of emotional inconstancy nonetheless reminds the audience that he lacks the resolution to be an effective ruler, and perhaps an effective avenger.

Drayton followed the precedent set by Marlowe: a striking feature of *Peirs Gaveston* is Edward's long laments on each of Gaveston's exiles (Drayton, unlike Marlowe, represents all three) and his death. The laments escalate in intensity. In the first, introduced as 'the passions of a princely love', Edward cries 'a flud of brackish teares' and complains

---

<sup>283</sup> David Bevington, *From 'Mankind' to Marlowe: Growth of Structure in the Popular Drama of Tudor England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 239.

<sup>284</sup> Marlowe, III.i.128n.

<sup>285</sup> Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / p. 321.

<sup>286</sup> Marlowe, III.i.144, 147.

<sup>287</sup> Marlowe, III.i.142, 144.

that ‘My life is but a very mappe of woes’.<sup>288</sup> The second lament, as analysed above, focuses on his grief’s propensity to exceed boundaries (‘Tide-ceasles sorrow’), as well as on its physicality: ‘Hart-kylling grieffe, which more and more doest grow / And on the Anvile of my hart doest beate’.<sup>289</sup> Echoing Marlowe directly, Edward describes his grief as a physical sensation which assails his heart and drains his youthful energy, as well as growing beyond understanding (‘past compasse of conceite’) and containment (‘over-flow’). This progresses quickly to madness:

Thus like a man grown lunatick with paine,  
Now in his torments casts him on his bed,  
Then out he runs into the fields againe,  
And on the ground doth rest his troubled head.  
With such sharpe passions is the King possest,  
Which day nor night doth let him take his rest.<sup>290</sup>

Each line here describes a new action, vividly evoking Edward’s frenzied movements; his madness comes to overshadow his emotions towards Gaveston. This reaches its climax in Edward’s reaction to Gaveston’s third exile, in the context of which he is compared to Orlando Furioso and Hecuba.<sup>291</sup> Edward rages physically, attacking the signs of his royal office (‘His princely robes hee doth in peeces teare’) and himself (‘Hee tuggs and rents his golden-tressed haire’).<sup>292</sup> He is physiologically affected, unable to sleep (‘With fearefull visions frighted in his bed, / Which seemes to hym a very thorny brake’) and ‘wants disgesture’.<sup>293</sup> His emotional reactions are described in minute detail:

And after silence, when with payne he speakes,  
A suddaine sigh his speech in sunder breakes.

Hee starteth up, and Gaveston doth call,  
Then stands hee still, and lookes upon the ground,  
Then like one in an Epileps doth fall,  
As in a Spasmo, or a deadly sound;  
Thus languishing in payne, and lingering ever,  
In the Symptoma of his pyning fever.<sup>294</sup>

Compared to the madness quoted above, Edward’s lament on Gaveston’s death (‘modelled on the famous revenge speech in *The True Tragedie of Richard the Third*<sup>295</sup>) is actually far more moderate. Drayton’s description of him is limited – ‘In greivous sighes hee now consumes his breath, / And into tears his very eyes relented’ – before Edward exhorts the heavens

---

<sup>288</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 450; 463; 505.

<sup>289</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 973–76.

<sup>290</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 1021–26.

<sup>291</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 1321–22; 1327–30.

<sup>292</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 1316; 1318.

<sup>293</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 1333–34; 1339.

<sup>294</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 1343–50.

<sup>295</sup> Drayton, *Works*, V, 28.

and earth to either ‘Revenge’ or ‘Bewaile’ ‘the death of my sweet Gaveston’.<sup>296</sup> His stated aim in avenging Gaveston – ‘That men unborne may wonder at my love’ – is undoubtedly achieved by Drayton’s poem.<sup>297</sup> But it is easy to lose Gaveston in this narration of Edward’s madness. In Drayton’s later version, *The Legend of Pierce Gaveston*, Edward’s laments are excised, meaning that Edward is far less vividly evoked. According to Tillotson, ‘The reduction of emphasis on the King may have been politic’; Quinn agrees, arguing that ‘Drayton’s 1619 revisions...seem designed to prune resemblances to James I’.<sup>298</sup> This seems plausible: Drayton was, as Quinn points out, ‘attempt[ing] to ingratiate himself with the Stuart court around this time’, and (as Chapter 3 will show) comparisons were frequently drawn between James and Edward and their respective favourites. Revising his poem to shift the focus away from the character of a king passionately in love with his male favourites would have helped to exonerate Drayton from drawing such comparisons.

Cary’s Edward, probably influenced by Marlowe and/or Drayton, also delivers a vengeful lament on Gaveston’s death. Although this has some elements likely to inspire sympathy for Edward – his grief is ‘beyond the height of sorrow’, and he not only blames the ‘cruel Tygers’ who murdered Gaveston but feels guilt himself (‘‘Twas not his fault, but my affection caused it’) – Cary does not encourage sympathy towards Edward’s continued grieving.<sup>299</sup> His emotional suffering is hyperbolically described – ‘He could not sleep, nor scarce would eat, or speak but faintly; which makes him living dye with restless torments’ – but ‘His nearer Friends’, instead of reacting with compassion, ‘freely let him know his proper error’.<sup>300</sup> They remind him of Gaveston’s pride and financial misconduct, and claim ‘His greatness would be lost in such fond actions, and might endanger him and eke the Kingdom’, before concluding with the threat that ‘unless he would resume more life and spirit, they fear’d the Subject would make choice of one more able’. There is very little patience for a grieving king here: the implication is that, because of Edward’s royal status, his grief has political consequences which render it unacceptable. This reflects a wider concern in Cary’s text about the conflict between Edward’s private and public life (as discussed further in Chapter 3): in his deathbed advice to his son, Edward I tells him, ‘Your former Errours, now continued, are no more yours, they are the Kings... Master your Passions with a noble temper’.<sup>301</sup>

---

<sup>296</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 1663–1704.

<sup>297</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, l. 1698.

<sup>298</sup> Drayton, *Works*, V, 24 n. 4; Quinn, p. 446.

<sup>299</sup> Cary (folio), fol. I2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>300</sup> Cary (folio), fols. I2<sup>v</sup>–K<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>301</sup> Cary (folio), fol. C<sup>v</sup>.

In keeping with this relative lack of sympathy towards Edward's grief for Gaveston, Cary refuses to romanticise their relationship in one crucial respect: Edward's love for his favourite is not represented as entirely reciprocal. Clearly, their relationship is always political, but Cary's representations of Gaveston make it clear that the value he attaches to Edward is almost exclusively so. Edward's letters to Gaveston in exile combine the two: 'wherein was drawn to the life the character of his Affection, and the assurance of his safety and intended promotion'.<sup>302</sup> Gaveston's emotional reaction, however, is initially to the latter: 'His long-dejected Spirits apprehend the advantage of so hopeful an opportunity'. This encourages a more politicised, less emotional interpretation of his urgent wish to 'be re-enfolded in the sweet and dear embraces of his Royal Master'.<sup>303</sup> Similarly, on Gaveston's departure into exile, Cary writes, 'With a sad heart he leaves his great Protector'; in the octavo version, this sentiment is modified to state that Gaveston departs 'with a more desire of revenge, than sorrow for his absence', explicitly attributing his 'sad heart' to the political injustice of his exile rather than to his separation from Edward.<sup>304</sup> Gaveston appears here to value Edward for the political security and promotion he offers, rather than as an object of romantic love; while of course Edward usually fills both roles, Cary's foregrounding of the former at the expense of the latter is a striking contrast to other contemporary accounts. This can be at least partly attributed to her reliance on Grafton, whose chronicle was thirty years old when Cary was writing; but as Karen Britland notes, 'The second [revised] version of her text bears witness to further reading beyond Grafton', including Marlowe and Drayton.<sup>305</sup> As Chapter 3 will explore, Cary's refusal to elicit sympathy for Edward and Gaveston by following her sources in romanticising their relationship may reflect a refusal to condone close relationships between kings and male favourites more generally, based on her disapproval of Charles I's relationship with Buckingham. This may also explain Hubert's poem, written during the reign of James VI and I, which depicts Edward as missing Gaveston mainly for the sexual pleasure he provided.<sup>306</sup> Elsewhere, the two repeat variations on the phrase 'though body staves, yet goes my soule with thee'; but lest the depth of their love attract too much sympathy and approbation, Hubert reminds the reader of the transgressive elements of the relationship.<sup>307</sup>

---

<sup>302</sup> Cary (folio), fols. E2<sup>v</sup>–F<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>303</sup> Cary (folio), fol. F<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>304</sup> Cary (folio), fol. G2<sup>r</sup>; Cary (octavo), fol. B4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>305</sup> Karen Britland, 'Kings Are but Men': Elizabeth Cary's Histories of Edward II', *Études Épistémè. Revue de Littérature et de Civilisation (XVI<sup>e</sup> – XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècles)*, 17 (2010), 31–53 (p. 37).

<sup>306</sup> Hubert (1628), stanzas 106, 188.

<sup>307</sup> Hubert (1628), stanzas 184–87.

### III. Sexual relationships

As Hubert's focus suggests, a significant historiographical tradition represents Edward's sexual or bodily transgressions as having been incited by his favourites (particularly, but not exclusively, Gaveston). Gaveston's propensity for this is explained or compounded, several texts claim, by his own lasciviousness.<sup>308</sup> Relatedly, numerous writers also state or imply that Edward's favourites played a part in the breakdown of his marriage to Isabella. Care should be taken when interpreting examples of both trends. It should not be assumed that favourites' incitement of sexual transgression equals their direct involvement in sex with Edward: as I will show, many texts describe his favourites arranging entertainments to gain favour, possibly including incitement of male-female adultery. Nor should we assume that favourites' disruption of Edward's marriage has romantic or sexual motivations or consequences, rather than (for example) financial ones. Some texts, however, do encourage the interpretation that Edward was romantically or sexually involved with his favourites.

#### i. Inciting sexual transgression

As discussed in Chapter 1, the earliest references to Edward's favourites inciting him to sexually transgressive behaviour are found in the group of texts influenced by Robert Fabyan, which state that Gaveston 'brought the kyng by meane of his wanton condicions to many folde vycis as avoutry and other'.<sup>309</sup> In addition to this, there is a persistent tradition of Gaveston arranging indulgent or titillating entertainments for Edward, which begins with Polydore Vergil:

*illius hominis societate repente depravatus ut ad maiora vitia palam irruperit. Namque tum demum Petro impulsore ac comprobatore ad suos principes respectum non habere, bonas artes minus colere, republicam minus curare sic ut mox deliciis sese daret ac vitam mollissimam luxuque circumfluentem traduceret. Cuius studium ut Petrus, qui adolescentem visus est non nolle infatuare, facilius iuaret, eum a primo armavit scurrarum, ganeonum, parasitorum, citharoedorum, ac omnium vilissimorum hominum pariterque sceleratissimorum catervis, ut princeps cum illis dies noctesque iocando, ludendo, comessando, ac multa alia parum honesta exercendo transigeret.*

[Edward] was so depraved by the company of this man that he openly broke forth with greater vices. For at length, by Piers' approval and instigation he began to have no respect for his nobles, to have no time for the goodly arts, and to have no concern for the commonwealth, with the result that he quickly gave himself over to delights and a very soft, wanton

<sup>308</sup> E.g. Fabyan, fol. 2K1<sup>r</sup>; *WNV*, fol. 3A2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>309</sup> Fabyan, fol. 2K1<sup>r</sup>.



way of life. And to assist his enthusiasm, Piers (who seemed to be anything but unwilling to infatuate the young man) surrounded him from the beginning with troops of clowns, wastrels, parasites, minstrels, and every manner of scurvy villain, so that his sovereign would spend his days and nights with these fellows in joking, playing, drinking, and many other dishonourable exercises.<sup>310</sup>

Dana Sutton's translation, while invaluable as the only modern English translation of this section of Vergil's text, merits some interrogation. The terms *mollissimam* (translated 'wanton') and *luxu* ('soft') are complex and difficult to translate. *Luxus* can mean not only 'sumptuousness, opulence, lavishness' (the sense that seems to have inspired Sutton's translation) but also 'licentiousness' 'with reference to sexual gratification'; it also calls to mind the 'mortal sin' of *luxuria* ('lack of moral restraint, wantonness, licentiousness'; 'sexual licence, lust').<sup>311</sup> *Mollissimam*, meanwhile, is the superlative form of an adjective whose relevant senses include 'soft, tender'; 'agreeable, blandishing, favourable'; 'weak, soft in character'; and 'effeminate in appearance or behaviour', including specifically 'effeminate man'.<sup>312</sup> In some cases it was specifically associated with sex between men: '1 Corinthians 6.10...rules that "neque molles, neque masculorum concubitores" (neither the soft/effeminate nor those who lie with males) will inherit God's kingdom'.<sup>313</sup> These terms, then, develop the sense of dereliction of royal duty established in the first half of the sentence: Edward's new, indulgent 'way of life' is a results directly from, and replaces, his loss of interest in affairs of state. They also establish the idea of Edward's indulgence in physical pleasure. Subsequently, when Vergil refers to his 'many other dishonourable exercises', this suggestion of physical pleasure remains in the reader's mind, and may encourage them to imagine these 'dishonourable exercises' as sexual ones. However, Gaveston's main role in this paragraph appears to be controlling rather than participatory. He provides 'approval and instigation', 'assists [Edward's] enthusiasm', 'surround[s]' him with entertainers, all with the aim of distracting him from political matters. Moreover, the sheer number of people mentioned in relation to Edward's 'dishonourable exercises' – 'clowns, wastrels, parasites, minstrels, and every manner of scurvy villain' – pushes Gaveston into the background when those scenes are imagined. The verb *infatuare* should also, as previously detailed, be translated with caution; in this case we should probably interpret Gaveston's desire to 'infatuate' Edward primarily as a means of securing political control.

---

<sup>310</sup> Vergil, chap. 18, trans. by Sutton.

<sup>311</sup> 'Luxus'; 'Luxuria', DMLBS.

<sup>312</sup> 'Mollis', DMLBS. See Chapter 1 for a full discussion of the concept of effeminacy in the historiography of Edward II.

<sup>313</sup> Robert Mills, *Seeing Sodomy in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), p. 262. The translation is Mills's.

This said, however, Holinshed's *Chronicles* – in places a straight translation of Vergil – do contain several indicators of sexual transgression, demonstrating the possibility of a sexualised interpretation. In particular, in the equivalent passage in Holinshed (in which Edward is 'corrupted' by Gaveston, who becomes 'a procurer of his disordred dooings), Vergil's *daret ac vitam mollissimam luxuque* becomes 'he gave himselfe to wantonnes, passing his time in voluptuous pleasure, and riotous excesse'.<sup>314</sup> 'Voluptuous', denoting indulgence in sensual pleasure, was frequently used as a condemnatory adjective for lust; 'wanton' had the dual sense of undisciplined and lustful.<sup>315</sup> Holinshed also adds the stronger moral condemnation 'filthie' to Vergil's *parum honesta* (translated by Holinshed as 'dishonorable'). Again, this had sexual connotations – 'filthy parts' could indicate 'private parts' – and Bruce R. Smith argues that it is particularly associated with sodomy, and therefore potentially with sex between men.<sup>316</sup> Holinshed's choices regarding his translation of Vergil may well indicate that he interpreted his source as suggesting sexual transgression. Opinions gained from his other sources, along with prevailing cultural conceptions of Edward II (as detailed in Chapter 1), may also have contributed to those choices. Through Holinshed's translation, Vergil's text subsequently became popular – and when Marlowe opened his play *Edward II* with Gaveston planning titillating entertainments for Edward, it seems clear that he was partly responding to this passage.<sup>317</sup> In representing Gaveston from the outset as encouraging Edward's sexual indulgence, Gaveston (as many critics have noted) conforms to the theatrical type of the Vice, 'luring the King from the straight and narrow path of duty through the typical Vice-like techniques of luxury and lechery'.<sup>318</sup>

In Drayton's *Peirs Gaveston*, similarly, Gaveston lures Edward into transgressive sex. Drayton undoubtedly follows Marlowe's precedent here, although Quinn argues that sexual and romantic involvement between monarch and favourite is also essential to the genre of *Peirs Gaveston*.<sup>319</sup> Most critics identify the following moment – which follows a description

<sup>314</sup> Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / p. 318.

<sup>315</sup> 'Voluptuous, adj.', OED (1920); 'Wanton, adj. and n.', OED (3rd edn, 2014).

<sup>316</sup> 'Filthy, n.', OED (1896); Bruce R. Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cultural Poetics* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 217.

<sup>317</sup> Marlowe, I.i.49–71.

<sup>318</sup> Deats, 'Study in Androgyny', p. 39.

<sup>319</sup> Quinn, pp. 439–40, *passim*. Alan Stewart's description of Drayton's endnote to *Peirs Gaveston* (in which he identifies historiographical debate concerning 'the byrth and first rysing of Gaveston' and outlines his own extensive reading and use of contemporary sources) as 'anti-Marlovian' is undermined by the demonstrable influence of Marlowe's play on Drayton's poem. Stewart argues that Drayton's comment 'every man rove by his owne ayme in this confusion of opinion' refers to 'Marlowe...injecting the politics of 1588 France into the early fourteenth century' (pp. 116–17) but this is not quite convincing; Drayton's endnote strikes me more as an assertion of the historical value of his own thoroughly researched text compared to that of others, rather than a specific attack on Marlowe. Stewart is then forced to conclude that it is 'odd' that 'the net effect of Drayton's *ad fontes* research is to produce a strangely de-historicised, almost escapist account of the Gaveston-Edward relationship – one that is unabashedly and persistently sexual and erotic'; this appears far less odd if

of the two men as 'Fraught with delight' and 'Blinded with pleasure' – as Gaveston anally penetrating Edward:

My youthfull pranks, are spurs to his desire,  
I held the raynes, that rul'd the golden sunne,  
My blandishments were fewell to his fyer,  
I had the garland whosoever wonne:  
I waxt his winges and taught him art to flye:  
Who on his back might beare me through the skie.<sup>320</sup>

Gaveston's persuasive and commanding role in this sexual act is clear: he is the subject and Edward the object of the first five lines of the stanza, explicitly controlling him despite his royal status ('I held the raynes, that rul'd the golden sunne') and openly facilitating his sexual transgression ('spurs', 'blandishments', 'waxt his winges', 'taught'). The final line of the stanza makes his penetrative role equally obvious. Gaveston identifies this moment as a turning point in his journey to sin and damnation: 'O me! even heere from paradise I fell'.<sup>321</sup> Scott Giantvalley concludes from this that 'for Drayton...it is not the homosexual desire that is wrong but only the enactment of that desire'.<sup>322</sup> However, this neat summary is a little simplistic, taking no account of important contextual factors: notably Edward and Gaveston's respective social statuses, and respective positions in the sexual act. Quinn's account of this moment, contextualised among other 'royal mistress complaints', is more nuanced and more convincing. She points out firstly that Gaveston's identification of this stanza as the moment of his fall is typical of the genre: 'In the royal mistress poems, the fall is usually caused by or consists of sexual activity' (as contrasted with the 'male complaints of the *Mirror [for Magistrates]*', in which 'the fall almost always results from some kind of political error').<sup>323</sup> Secondly, undermining Giantvalley's point, she argues that 'it is quite clear well before Gaveston says 'Here, here, here I fell from grace' [closely following the stanza analysed above] that he and Edward are sexually involved'.<sup>324</sup> The majority of passages quoted in Chapter 1 as evidence of Drayton's explicit representation of sex between Edward and Gaveston do indeed occur before this point. It is not, then, the act of sex with Edward that damns Gaveston, but the specific dynamics of that act:

---

we account for the fact that, far from attacking Marlowe's play for its insufficient historicism and objectivity, Drayton embraced it as a source and drew from it this focus and theme.

<sup>320</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 277–82. In *Legend*, this stanza is preceded by a sexually explicit simile comparing Edward and Gaveston to Venus and Adonis 'bent to amorous sport' (ll. 133–38).

<sup>321</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, l. 287.

<sup>322</sup> Scott Giantvalley, 'Barnfield, Drayton, and Marlowe: Homoeroticism and Homosexuality in Elizabethan Literature', *Pacific Coast Philology*, 16.2 (1981), 9–24 (p. 21).

<sup>323</sup> Quinn, p. 448. It is worth noting that Richard Niccols, in his late addition of Edward to the *Mirror for Magistrates* canon, unusually focuses his condemnation of sexual transgression on Isabella's adultery with Mortimer rather than on Edward's relationships with his favourites (*WNV*, fol. 3A7<sup>v</sup>).

<sup>324</sup> Quinn, p. 449.

Gaveston has frolicked happily as Edward's Ganymede and maintained his paradisiacal state, but it is here, when Gaveston mounts Edward's back, that Gaveston falls. The sin consists not of sexual involvement between Edward and Gaveston, but with Gaveston taking the active position, and so defiling the sun-bright temple that is the king's body, as their previous activities did not.<sup>325</sup>

Moreover, as Sara Munson Deats argues, the figure of Icarus (invoked here by Gaveston's statement that he 'waxt [Edward's] winges') could be associated with pride and political overreaching.<sup>326</sup> As will by now be a familiar concept, Gaveston's intimacy with Edward is rendered more unacceptable by its potential political consequences, his 'influence over an easily led King'.<sup>327</sup>

As explored above, *Peirs Gaveston* stresses its narrator's extraordinary attractiveness. In addition to this, the sexual relationship between Edward and Gaveston is represented as highly pleasurable: Gaveston introduces the passage analysed above (in which he and Edward are 'Blinded by pleasure'), with the line, 'The table now of all delight is layd'.<sup>328</sup> Narrating his fall following his penetration of Edward, Gaveston laments the dangers of acts that are both pleasurable and sinful, calling pleasure 'the very lure of sinne'.<sup>329</sup> Francis Hubert also displays some anxiety about the confluence of pleasure and sin. Gaveston entices Edward with descriptions of pleasurable sexual acts ('With one sweete night, thou wilt be so delighted, / That thou wilt wish the world were still benighted'), and Edward, though initially 'asham'd of sinne', learns to enjoy it ('sinne did say, my greatest sinne was shame, / Then by degrees did I delight therein: / And from delight did I desire the same').<sup>330</sup> However, elsewhere the consequences of such acts are collocated with their pleurability: Gaveston, for example, is 'Drown'd in delights, if one may terme them so / That hatch in lust, and breath their last in woe'.<sup>331</sup> Describing Isabella's adultery with Mortimer towards the end of the poem, Hubert ultimately denies that sinful acts can be pleasurable at all: 'For how can sin afford a full delight, / When as it is indeed a meere privation?' 'The virtuous pleasures are compleat and sound,' he concludes, 'And lawfull is at last delightfull found'.<sup>332</sup> Coming long after any descriptions of Edward's enjoyment of sexual transgression, this stanza functions as a moral, perhaps one that Hubert hopes will prove memorable to his readers. This effect is enhanced in his 1629 revision by the

---

<sup>325</sup> Quinn, p. 450.

<sup>326</sup> Deats, 'Myth and Metamorphosis', p. 307; Quinn, p. 450.

<sup>327</sup> Quinn, p. 450.

<sup>328</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 275, 265.

<sup>329</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, l. 319.

<sup>330</sup> Hubert (1628), stanzas 69, 84.

<sup>331</sup> Hubert (1628), stanza 42.

<sup>332</sup> Hubert (1628), stanza 386.

addition of an appendix poem entitled ‘Noli peccare’, with the repeated refrain ‘Forbear to sinne’.<sup>333</sup>

Cary condemns Gaveston’s persuasive and enabling role in Edward’s sexual transgression: ‘he was more properly a fit instrument for a Brothel, than to be the Steersman of the Royal actions’.<sup>334</sup> Gaveston, she writes, ‘the more to assure so gracious a Master, strives to fit his humour...seconding his wanton disposition with all those bewitching Vanities of licentious and unbridled Youth’.<sup>335</sup> This passage makes it clear that Edward has a tendency towards sexually transgressive behaviour, but that Gaveston facilitates that behaviour.<sup>336</sup> Moreover, by enabling that behaviour, Gaveston increases the likelihood that it will become a habit – an issue with which Cary’s text is very concerned. Gaveston’s facilitation of sexual transgression results quickly, ‘by the frequency of practice’ in ‘confidence’ and a lack of ‘that reserved secrecy which should shadow actions so unworthy’.<sup>337</sup> Elsewhere, Cary states that:

The customary habit of transgression is like a Corn that doth infest his owner; though it be par’d and cut, yet it reneweth, unless the Core be rooted out that feeds his tumour. The guilty Conscience feels some inward motions, which flashing lightly, shave the hair of Mischief; the scalp being naked, yet the roots remaining, they soon grow up again, and hide their baldness: the operations of the soul of true Repentance, grubs up the very depth of such vile Monsters, and leaves alone the scars of their abuses.<sup>338</sup>

The idea that habits become pervasive and hard to remove was proverbially recognised in this period as ‘custom is another nature’.<sup>339</sup> This proverbial idea was particularly associated with the ‘habit’ of sexual transgression, both in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean* and *Eudemian Ethics* and Augustine’s *Confessions* (the latter of which Cary is likely to have been familiar with) and in seventeenth-century texts such as Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*.<sup>340</sup> In Aristotle’s *Eudemian Ethics* and Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa Theologica*, it is specifically associated with sex between men. Aquinas, arguing that ‘natural law can be effaced [from the human heart], either by wrong

---

<sup>333</sup> Hubert (1629), pp. 170–71.

<sup>334</sup> Cary (folio), fols. Fr–Fv.

<sup>335</sup> Cary (folio), fol. C<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>336</sup> See also Cary (folio), fol. O2<sup>r</sup>, for a similar passage regarding the younger Despenser.

<sup>337</sup> Cary (folio), fol. C<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>338</sup> Cary (folio), fol. 2B2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>339</sup> Morris Palmer Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950), C932; cf. ‘habit, n.’, OED (1898).

<sup>340</sup> Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. by H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library, 73 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), Book VII, sections V (pp. 401–03), X (p. 429); *Eudemian Ethics*, trans. by Brad Inwood and Raphael Woolf (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 106; Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. by Carolyn Hammond, Loeb Classical Library, 26 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014) VIII.10 (24), VIII.11 (26), X.30 (41); *Hamlet*, III.iv.151–54, *Oxford Shakespeare*. For Cary’s familiarity with the Church Fathers, see Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 182.

persuasions...or *by perverse customs and corrupt habits*' gives the example that 'for instance robbery was not reputed to be wrong among some people, nor even, as the Apostle mentions, some unnatural sins.'<sup>341</sup> According to Gilby, who edited the *Summa*, the Biblical reference is to Romans 1.27, which leads on to Paul's condemnation of 'men [who] having left the natural use of women, burned in desire towards one another' (*masculi relicto naturali usu feminae excarserunt in desideriis suis in invicem*).<sup>342</sup> For Cary, such habits can be eradicated by 'the operations of the soul of true Repentance' (a hope not offered by the octavo version).<sup>343</sup>

Although many texts fail to specify whether the sexual transgressions Gaveston incites constitute same-sex activity, William Martyn is unusual in specifying that Gaveston encourages Edward into male-female adultery. In addition to the passage quoted in Chapter 1 (whereby Gaveston leads Edward into sex with 'curtizans' and 'whores'), Martyn writes that the Despensers' 'advice enclined the king to prosecute his lewd and wanton course of life among lascivious and wanton Whores and Concubines, and to set at naught the sweet companie of his modest and vertuous Queene'.<sup>344</sup> Yet Martyn's readers, having come to associate Edward with sexual indulgence in female 'curtizans', 'whores' and 'concubines', would not have been consequently less likely to infer that he also engaged in sex with men. Both were perceived as aspects of debauchery and sexual sin, part of a spectrum of activities that someone described as 'lascivious' might engage in.<sup>345</sup> Hubert, for example, presents Edward as having sex with both Gaveston and 'beutious Parramoares', and Drayton's Gaveston anticipates pleasure from his impending marriage.<sup>346</sup> Indeed, the pains Martyn takes to specify the gender of Edward's sexual partners might indicate that he is responding to contrary cultural assumptions, attempting to debunk the assumptions about Edward's sexual behaviour that persisted after Marlowe and Drayton's representations out of fear for his young male readers and their potential temptations.

## ii. Disrupting marriage

In the passages quoted above (and elsewhere), Martyn blames Edward's favourites for his failure to spend time with his wife Isabella.<sup>347</sup> The claim that Edward's relationships with his favourites disrupted his marriage features prominently in medieval and early

---

<sup>341</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, ed. and trans. by Thomas Gilby (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 1a2ae, 94, 6.

<sup>342</sup> Vulgate, Romans 1.27.

<sup>343</sup> Cary (octavo), fol. D4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>344</sup> Martyn, fol. N2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>345</sup> Martyn, fol. N<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>346</sup> Hubert (1628), stanza 540; *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 655–90.

<sup>347</sup> See also Martyn, fols. O<sup>v</sup>, O2<sup>v</sup>.

modern historiography: sometimes they result in his romantic/sexual neglect of Isabella, sometimes in her financial deprivation. The *Vita Edwardi Secundi* explains Isabella's failure to return from France in 1325-26 in terms of the latter:

Certainly she does not like Hugh, through whom her uncle [i.e. Thomas of Lancaster] perished, by whom she was deprived of her servants and dispossessed of all her rents; consequently many think she will not return until Hugh Despenser is wholly removed from the king's side.<sup>348</sup>

Similarly, an influential phrase from the *Polychronicon* recounts that, following the executions of nobles in 1322, 'the fortune of the Despensers began to increase and the queen to be servile in condition' (*coepit Dispensatorum fortuna invalescere et reginae conditio ancillari*).<sup>349</sup> Later texts blame Gaveston as well as the Despensers for Edward's financial neglect of his wife. While Marlowe's *Edward II* dwells mainly on Isabella's emotional neglect, Lisa Hopkins argues that (as in the rivalry in *Dido* between Juno and Ganymede for Jupiter's affections) 'a major battleground for the rivals is clothes and jewellery': while Gaveston's cap sports 'A jewel of more value than the crown', 'the only gem Isabella is offered is a rather ambiguous golden tongue to wear around her neck, which might easily be seen as a marker of shrewishness rather than a reward for eloquence'.<sup>350</sup>

More texts focus exclusively on Edward's emotional neglect of Isabella, attributing this to his favourites with varying levels of clarity. In an early example, the Lanercost chronicler writes obliquely that 'the King of France...detested [Edward] because, as was said, the King of England, having married his daughter, loved her indifferently because of...Piers' (*minus eam dilexit propter...Petrum*) – but is Gaveston turning Edward against Isabella for political ends here, or supplanting her as a love object and/or sexual partner?<sup>351</sup> The *Polychronicon* is similarly vague, stating that Edward 'neglected his queen Isabella' 'for [Gaveston's] sake' (*ejusque contemplatione Isabellam reginam suam neglexit*).<sup>352</sup> By contrast, Marlowe (and Drayton and Cary after him) dramatizes these claims of neglect vividly. Isabella bewails her 'grief and baleful discontent' at being explicitly replaced by Gaveston in Edward's affections: her complaint that 'the king regards me not, / But dotes upon the love of Gaveston' is later made ceremonially apparent by Edward's choice to seat Gaveston by his side, 'where the queen would normally sit'.<sup>353</sup> Similarly 'emblematic and shocking'<sup>354</sup>

<sup>348</sup> *Vita*, p. 229, trans. by Childs and Denholm-Young.

<sup>349</sup> *Polychronicon*, VIII, 314.

<sup>350</sup> Lisa Hopkins, "Truest of the Twain": History and Poetry in *Edward II*, *Marlowe Studies*, 3 (2013), 111–27 (p. 119).

<sup>351</sup> *Lanercost*, p. 196, trans. by Maxwell; Stevenson, p. 217.

<sup>352</sup> *Polychronicon*, VIII, 300.

<sup>353</sup> Marlowe, I.ii.48, 49–50; I.iv.8n.

<sup>354</sup> Marlowe, I.iv.8n.

is the moment in Drayton's *Peirs Gaveston* in which Edward and Gaveston performatively display their affection in order to publicly demonstrate Edward's preference for Gaveston over Isabella:

Thus arme in arme towards London on wee rid,  
And like two Lambes we sport in every place,  
Where neither joy nor love could be well hid  
That might be seal'd with any sweet embrace:  
So that his Queene, might by our kindnes prove,  
Though shee his Wife, yet I alone his love.<sup>355</sup>

Sympathy for the neglected Isabella also appears in Drayton's other accounts of Edward's reign, *Mortimeriados* ('this poore wife-widdowed Queene alone, / In thys dispayring passion pines away') and *Englands Heroicall Epistles* (Isabella favours Mortimer 'for the Spleene / She bare her Husband, for that he affected / Lascivious Minions, and her Love neglected').<sup>356</sup> Cary, drawing on both Drayton and Marlowe, states that there was little real competition between Isabella and Gaveston – 'It was in the first Praeludium of his Nuptials a very disputable Question, whether the Interest of the Wife, or Favourite, were most predominant in his Affections; but a short time discovers that Gaveston had the sole possession of his Heart, and Power to keep it' – and presents this as particularly unjust given Isabella's 'deserving beauty'.<sup>357</sup> Martyn, whose sympathies are weighted towards Isabella even more strongly than Cary's, similarly emphasises her attractive qualities in order to condemn Edward's choice of other sexual partners: Gaveston's 'dishonest persuasions and enticements made [Edward] carelesse of the Bed and of the societie and fellowship of Isabell his Religious and vertuous Queene', and 'the beames of her excellent vertues could not pierce the thicke clouds of his vanities; neither could her teares or her groanes mollifie his hard heart'.<sup>358</sup>

The *Lanercost Chronicle* and *Annales Paulini* also describe efforts to procure a divorce between Edward and Isabella through negotiations at the papal court.<sup>359</sup> This story, which only appears in these two texts, may reflect contemporary rumour. However, only the *Lanercost Chronicle* ascribes the plan to Hugh Despenser, and neither text gives any reason to interpret the scheme as indicative of romantic or sexual involvement between king and favourite. In the *Lanercost Chronicle* the story immediately precedes an account of how

---

<sup>355</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 859–64. In keeping with the less politicised tone of *Legend*, Drayton later revised this stanza so that the motivation for Edward and Gaveston's behaviour was 'that the Realme our Friendship might report' (*Legend*, l. 503).

<sup>356</sup> *Mortimeriados*, ll. 85–86; *EHE*, 'Argument'.

<sup>357</sup> Cary (folio), fols. F2<sup>r</sup>, 2A<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>358</sup> Martyn, fol. N<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>359</sup> *Lanercost*, p. 249; *Annales Paulini*, p. 337.



Despenser abridged Isabella's allowance, suggesting that his motivations in the 'divorce' story should be seen as financial or political.

## Conclusion

This chapter's analysis has demonstrated that any consideration of Edward II's historiographical reputation must also take into account that of Gaveston and the two Despensers. Representations of Edward's favourites have significant repercussions for his own reputation: claims about their physical attractiveness, for example, suggest that Edward's choices of advisors were unwisely based on emotional factors. I have also stressed the need to distinguish between the historiography of Gaveston and that of the Despensers: while representations of Edward's relationship with Gaveston become increasingly romanticised, foregrounding the longevity and depth of the love between them, a concurrent trend cannot be observed in representations of the Despensers. The romanticisation of Edward's relationship with Gaveston was already occurring before Marlowe's *Edward II*, enabled by a number of contextual factors: his singularity (the Despensers usually come as a father-son package), the fact he had known Edward since their youth, and Edward's well-reported grief after his murder. Marlowe, however, cemented Gaveston's status as Edward's lover for subsequent historiographical accounts. The Despensers did not disappear from historiography: as Chapter 3 will show, they remained important political exempla, and representations of them place a stronger emphasis on their political transgressions and control over Edward.

What many representations of Edward's relationships with Gaveston and the Despensers do share is a concern with Edward's level of agency in love. Did he choose to love his favourites, with all the undesirable political consequences attached to that decision, or did he have no choice in the matter? If he had no choice, to what extent was he culpable for his poor choices of advisor and the many political mistakes that followed? Texts that present Gaveston and the Despensers as witty and/or physically attractive, texts that foreground the fact that Edward had known Gaveston since his youth, texts that accuse Edward's favourites of bewitching him – all these function to destabilise the issue of blame and responsibility, resulting in ambivalent and unresolved accounts. Both Marlowe and Drayton appear to have recognised agency in love as a preoccupation of their chronicle sources, and foregrounded it accordingly. Chapter 3, 'Evil Counsel or Evil Nature', will consider a key historiographical concern that compounds the issue of Edward's responsibility further: to what extent was he intrinsically unfit to govern, as opposed to

merely led astray by his favourites? The impact of those favourites' attractiveness on their potential to lead him astray must be borne in mind during this discussion.

## Chapter 3: Politicising Edward II

---

### Introduction

The foregoing exploration of the historiographical representation of Edward II's favourites and their influence has, at several points, revealed tension concerning whether Edward's poor decisions and transgressions resulted from the bad advice of those favourites, or from his own intrinsic flaws. This chapter will begin by addressing this tension. Earlier texts, closer to Edward's reign and his immediate descendants, tended to cautiously attribute his failures to 'evil counsel'. This formulation – drawing on the sense of 'evil' as 'Doing or tending to do harm; hurtful, mischievous, prejudicial. Of advice, etc.: Misleading' – enabled writers to reconcile Edward's clearly catastrophic record as ruler with the idea that 'the king "is not only incapable of *doing* wrong, but even of *thinking* wrong: he can never mean to do an improper thing: in him is no folly or weakness"'.<sup>1</sup> The extent of Edward's agency – and therefore his culpability – in political decisions, relative to the agency and culpability of his favourites, was therefore frequently downplayed. Moreover, many of Edward's significant political acts were attributed to emotional motivations arising from his relationships with his favourites. Clearly, this is a complex political balancing act between exonerating Edward and characterising him as weak-willed, emotional and easily led. Influenced in particular by Ranulf Higden's popular account of Edward's reign in the *Polychronicon*, which catalogued his flaws and weaknesses, later texts began to question the idea that Edward was simply misled, and instead to represent him as intrinsically unfit to rule. In particular, the influence of Polydore Vergil ushered in a direct engagement with the issue of Edward's flaws, displaying anxiety about the obvious shortcomings of a divinely appointed monarch.

The use of Edward and his favourites as political exempla in the sixteenth and seventeenth century reflects the fact that early modern political commentators were acutely aware of this tension between 'evil counsel' and 'evil nature'. They were aware, too, that Edward's story represented a seminal English precedent for the deposition and execution of a monarch (as Edward's death was widely perceived by the sixteenth century) – and that it provided a parallel for the 'age of overmighty favourites' in which (as J. H. Elliott has

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Evil, adj. and n. 1', OED (1894); William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England In Four Books*, 8th edn, 4 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1778), I, 246, quoted in Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 4.

argued) the people of early modern England believed they lived.<sup>2</sup> The second half of this chapter will discuss the use of Edward's story as a political parallel and its deployment to support various (sometimes contradictory) political positions in early modern England and France, analysing the implications of this for Edward's historiographical reputation.

## I. Evil counsel or evil nature?

### i. Evil counsel

Allegations concerning Edward's favourites' 'evil counsel' typically begin in accounts of the events that led to Edward I exiling Gaveston in 1305. 'This year,' writes Adam Murimuth, '[Edward I] caused a certain Gascon, Piers of Gaveston, to abjure the realm of England, because he gave evil counsel [*dedit malum consilio*] to his son, who loved this Piers with inordinate affection.'<sup>3</sup> The *Brut* gives a similar account: 'Edward, þrou3 conseil and procurment of on, Piers of Gavaston, a squyer of Gascoigne, had broke þe parke3' of the Bishop of Chester.<sup>4</sup> Both texts recount the prince being punished by his father for crimes that were clearly instigated by Gaveston, and the influence of the *Brut* popularised this reading of the 1305 events.<sup>5</sup>

As might be expected of a contemporaneous text, the *Vita Edwardi Secundi* frequently ascribes Edward's bad political decisions to the influence of others: 'whatever wickedness was perpetrated in the king's court proceeded from his counsellors'.<sup>6</sup> More interesting, perhaps, is the fact that the *Brut* – a text that is highly critical of Edward – also repeatedly attributes his actions to variations on the phrase 'the false counsel of the Spencers'. The Despensers are blamed for, among many other acts, Thomas of Lancaster's execution and the seizure of Queen Isabella's lands.<sup>7</sup> These references to their 'false counsel' become so repetitive that they appear almost reflexive, a phrase automatically included in order to avoid slandering Edward. Given the incongruity of this suggestion with the pro-Lancastrian, anti-Edward bias of the *Brut* as a whole, the influence of concerns regarding royal infallibility here seems clear.

<sup>2</sup> J. H. Elliott, 'Introduction', in J. H. Elliott and L. W. B. Brockliss, eds, *The World of the Favourite* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 1–10 (p. 2).

<sup>3</sup> Murimuth, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Brut*, p. 196.

<sup>5</sup> See e.g. Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / p. 313.

<sup>6</sup> *Vita*, p. 73, trans. by Childs and Denholm-Young.

<sup>7</sup> *Brut*, pp. 223, 232.

Such unqualified attribution of Edward's misdeeds to 'evil counsel' is considerably rarer in early modern texts. While it appears in Francis Hubert's poems, it is presented as the opinion of Edward's dying father rather than the authorial voice. Given Edward II's later irresponsible behaviour in the poem, Edward I's conviction that he is not at fault (Sweete Ned, I blame not thee but Gavestone, / For he it is that sitteth at the Helme') subsequently appears naive and misguided.<sup>8</sup> Richard Niccols's addendum to the *Mirror for Magistrates*, *A Winter Nights Vision*, uses Edward's example to moralise against flattery, and therefore also focus the blame on Gaveston.<sup>9</sup> However, these examples are exceptions: more typical of early modern texts is the conflict over whether Edward's misdeeds are the result of evil counsel or intrinsic flaws, found in particular in Holinshed and Cary, and discussed more fully below.

The distinction between 'flattery' and 'evil counsel' deserves brief discussion here. Gaveston and the Despencers are typically characterised as offering bad advice or exerting control over Edward's political actions – not as flattering him in the sense that Curtis Perry calls 'instrumental favouritism', praising his decisions and enabling his every whim in order to ingratiate himself in the manner of the Roman Sejanus:

The theory of instrumental favouritism depicts imperial favourites as instrumental extensions of absolute power rather than, say, as bewitching lovers or corrupting counsellors. ...[T]reating favourites as imperial instruments means that tyrannical emperors are wholly to blame for their corrupt favourites rather than the other way around.<sup>10</sup>

It is this type of favourite who is in Erasmus's mind when he writes of the 'destructive' potential of 'a flatterer': 'his embrace suffocates and kills with poison brewed with honey'.<sup>11</sup> The rarity with which Edward's favourites are represented in this way no doubt relates to the weighting of blame that Perry identifies: if Edward's favourites merely enabled his designs, rather than exercising their own, then Edward is completely culpable for the political failings of his reign. Since historiographical accounts written during or shortly after Edward's reign were understandably less likely to assign blame to Edward, later writers were unlikely to find depictions of 'instrumental favouritism' in their sources. Texts in which Edward's favourites *do* fill this flattering role can often be explained through attention to contemporary political allusions. As John Cutts observes, the Spencers' flattery

---

<sup>8</sup> Hubert (1628), stanza 92.

<sup>9</sup> *WNV*, fol. 2Z8r.

<sup>10</sup> Perry, p. 231.

<sup>11</sup> Desiderius Erasmus, *Collected Works of Erasmus, Vol. 29: Literary and Educational Writings*, 7, ed. by Elaine Fantham and Erika Rummel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), p. 339, quoted and trans. by Heather E. Ostman, 'Backbiters, Flatterers, and Monarchs: Domestic Politics in *The Tragedy of Mariam*', in *Elizabeth Cary*, ed. by Karen Raber (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 303–27 (p. 312).

in Marlowe's *Edward II* 'is never obsequious enough to justify the barons' charge of smooth dissembling flatterers': there is a mismatch between Marlowe's portrayal of the Spencers, which is based on their behaviour in Holinshed, and the invented speech of his barons, which is closer to the Elizabethan discourse of condemning favourites.<sup>12</sup> Equally, Gaveston's 'skill in dissimulation and flattery' in the play has more to do with his literary function as an 'Elizabethan stage Machiavel' than it does with his historiographical reputation prior to Marlowe; and Hubert's depiction of Gaveston as one of several favourites who 'sow'd pillowes under-neath my sin, / And prais'd that most, that I delighted in' owes more to the frequently didactic tone of his poem's concern with late Elizabethan and early Jacobean favouritism than it does to his chronicle sources.<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth Cary, whose account of Edward's reign (as Barbara Lewalski and Karen Britland have observed) clearly reflects concerns about the power of the Duke of Buckingham, goes so far as to invent an additional flatterer who encourages Edward to recall Gaveston from exile (a 'green States-man' who 'strives rather to please, than to advise').<sup>14</sup> She also attributes Edward's attachment to Gaveston to the latter's flattering behaviour:

Not a word fell from his Sovereign's tongue, but he applauds it as an Oracle, and makes it as a Law to guide his actions. This kinde of juggling behaviour had so glewed him to his Master, that their Affections, nay their very Intentions seem'd to go hand in hand.<sup>15</sup>

Condemnation of Edward's favourites as 'instrumental' flatterers rather than evil counsellors, then, appears to indicate a particular writer's desire to foreground their relevance to contemporary politics.

Some early texts do recount Edward wilfully ignoring wiser counsel than that of his favourites. Murimuth, for example, describes Edward as 'ruled [*regebatur*] by counsel of this Piers, having scorned [*spretis*] the counsel of the other nobles, and especially those whose counsel his father had used before others'.<sup>16</sup> Comparisons between Edward and the Biblical Rehoboam – made by contemporaries in the *Lanercost Chronicle*, *Vita* and *Annales Paulini*,

---

<sup>12</sup> John Cutts, *The Left Hand of God: A Critical Interpretation of the Plays of Christopher Marlowe* (Haddonfield: Haddonfield House, 1973), pp. 229–30.

<sup>13</sup> Sara Munson Deats, 'Edward II: A Study in Androgyny', *Ball State University Forum*, 22 (1981), 30–41 (p. 39); Hubert (1628), stanzas 29–30. For contextualisation of the 'stage Machiavel', see Irving Ribner, *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare* (London: Methuen, 1965), p. 20.

<sup>14</sup> Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 206–07; Karen Britland, 'Kings Are but Men': Elizabeth Cary's Histories of Edward II', *Études Épistémè. Revue de Littérature et de Civilisation (XVIe – XVIIIe Siècles)*, 17 (2010), 31–53 (pp. 38–42); Cary (folio), fol. D<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Cary (folio), fols. F2<sup>r</sup>–F2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Murimuth, p. 11.

and later by Hubert – also suggest this element of choice.<sup>17</sup> In the words of Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*, 'kyng Roboam for gevyng feith to yonge counsaile lost the benevolence of his peple and deied a fool'; these comparisons therefore suggest that Edward spurned the counsel of older and more experienced nobles.<sup>18</sup>

### The political rule of Edward's favourites

Edward's favourites' control over his political actions is a fundamental aspect of historiographical accounts of his reign. While L. W. B. Brockliss argues that Gaveston and the Despensers did not, in fact, have power equivalent to early modern 'minister-favourites' (who were 'by and large surrogate sovereigns'), contemporary historiography undeniably presents them as such, through both general statements and specific anecdotes.<sup>19</sup> Charles Forker's assessment of Marlowe's *Edward II* is a fair description of medieval and early modern historiography of Edward as a whole: 'the theoretically distinct roles of monarch and minion seem to be reversed, or at least confused, by Gaveston's sexual and psychological dominance over Edward'.<sup>20</sup> Clearly, as Forker suggests, political control is not entirely separable from emotional and sexual concerns. A significant historiographical strand suggests that Edward's emotions towards his favourites (love and grief) motivate his political decisions, in what is usually presented as transgressive blurring of his private and public lives. Moreover, representations of Edward as politically passive potentially present him as likely to play a receptive role in a sexual relationship with a seductive favourite; common knowledge of the story of his murder by anal penetration could, from the late fourteenth century onwards, have exacerbated this. However, this initial section will focus primarily on the political control exerted by Edward's favourites.

Some variation of the suggestion that Gaveston controlled Edward's political decisions appears in almost every account. That of the *Annales Paulini* is typical: after providing a concrete example of Gaveston's disruption of royal prerogative ('if one of the earls or magnates should require the king's special grace concerning any negotiation to be obtained, the king would send him to Piers'), the writer asserts that 'Hence all the people were angry, two kings in one realm – as proverbially, so in reality – to reign together.'<sup>21</sup> The incongruous numeration of 'two kings in one realm' demonstrates the indecorous and unsustainable nature of the situation, while the reference to public anger highlights its

<sup>17</sup> *Lanercost*, p. 183; *Vita*, pp. 33, 63; *Annales Paulini*, p. 257; Hubert (1629), stanza 155.

<sup>18</sup> *Lydgate's Fall of Princes*, ed. by Henry Bergen, 4 vols (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1923), I, 216.

<sup>19</sup> L. W. B. Brockliss, 'Concluding Remarks: The Anatomy of the Minister-Favourite', in *The World of the Favourite*, pp. 279–309 (p. 283).

<sup>20</sup> Marlowe, p. 82.

<sup>21</sup> *Annales Paulini*, p. 259.

tangible political consequences. The importance of this political control to Gaveston's reputation among contemporaries is confirmed by one of the 'Songs' composed on his death – which refers to him as having 'reigned much too long' (*regnavit diu nimium*) – and by its inclusion in Thomas Castelford's verse chronicle.<sup>22</sup> Castelford's text is relatively sparse in detail on Edward's reign, but repeatedly emphasises the potency of Gaveston's 'wille' above that of Edward's will, depriving the king of visible political agency. As he writes of Edward, 'At Pers conseile halelie he wroght – / Wiȝouten his wille wel ner did noght'.<sup>23</sup>

The *Annales Paulini's* reference to 'two kings in one realm' is given anecdotal weight by a small number of assertions that Edward named Gaveston as his successor and/or appointed him regent while he travelled to France to marry Isabella. The former anecdote appears exclusively in early modern texts, following John Stow; the latter appears in the *Vita Edwardi Secundi* and was briefly popularised by inclusion in Higden's *Polychronicon* and Walsingham's *Chronica Maiora*, but not picked up by any of the early modern writers who relied on these texts.<sup>24</sup> The story was clearly shocking to contemporary observers: the *Vita* writer exclaims, 'What an astonishing thing, he who was lately an exile and outcast from England has now been made governor and keeper of the same land!' However, its lack of popularity in early modern texts, despite this sensational potential, is in keeping with the trend towards a more nuanced understanding of Edward's level of control and culpability. Marlowe's *Edward II* is a case in point. While Edward's nobles initially appear convinced that Edward's objectionable decrees are the work of his favourites (when he refuses to ransom Mortimer Senior, Lancaster says, 'Your minion Gaveston hath taught you this'), there is no evidence to support this claim; in fact, Vincenzo Pasquarella is correct to point out that 'Gaveston never shows interest in the kingdom's political affairs', and 'interferes only when forced to defend his right to love Edward'.<sup>25</sup>

Despite this consistent emphasis on Gaveston's excessive political power, only one writer (Thomas Cooper) accuses him of 'tyranny'.<sup>26</sup> By contrast, this accusation is repeatedly levelled at the Despensers. While representations of Edward's relationship with Gaveston are characterised by excessive love as well as political subordination,

---

<sup>22</sup> *Songs*, p. 259, trans. by Wright.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Castelford, *Castelford's Chronicle: Or the Boke of Brut*, ed. by Caroline D. Eckhardt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), II, ll. 38834–35; see also ll. 38861.

<sup>24</sup> For Gaveston being offered the succession, see Stow, fol. X4<sup>r</sup>; Speed, fol. 4S2<sup>r</sup>; William Howell, *Medulla Historiae Anglicanae* (London: for Abel Swalle, 1679), fol. K4<sup>v</sup>; James Heath, *Englands Chronicle* (London: for Benj. Crayle, N. Bodington, and G. Conyer, 1689), fol. L2<sup>r</sup>. For Gaveston as regent, see *Vita*, p. 9; *Polychronicon*, VIII, 296; Walsingham, fol. F5<sup>r</sup>; Burton, III, 279.

<sup>25</sup> Marlowe, II.ii.148; Vincenzo Pasquarella, *Christopher Marlowe's Representation of Love* (Rome: Aracne, 2008), p. 86.

<sup>26</sup> Lanquet-Cooper, fol. 3N<sup>r</sup>.



representations of his relationship with the Despensers emphasise political factors, usually identifying their roles in the 1322 noble executions and the treatment of Isabella towards the end of Edward's reign as specific examples of their political transgressions. The abundance of references to the Despensers' 'tyranny' reflects this shifted emphasis, and may also be influenced by the inclusion of this accusation in the legal arraignment against them. (This arraignment is quoted at length by Henry Knighton, though it should be noted that 'no record' of it exists in the Rolls of Parliament.<sup>27</sup>) One influence behind the arraignment's accusations of 'tyranny' (*tyruncye*) may be the repeated assertion that the Despensers have 'taken' (*purpris*) royal power: they have appropriated a level of power that is only proportionate when held by the king, and which in the wrong hands becomes 'tyranny'.<sup>28</sup> Later accusations of the Despensers' tyranny vary in their specificity. For Cooper, as with Gaveston, tyranny constitutes a generalised reference to excessive power: 'the queene...fearing the tyranny & mischief of the Spensers, fled with hir yonge son Edward into France'.<sup>29</sup> By contrast, William Martyn delineates the meaning of the term: '(as tyrants) they now did all in all as they themselves listed; and their will was the best law'.<sup>30</sup> The opposition Martyn draws here reflects the established contrast (originating with Plato) between the king 'who rules by reason' and the 'tyrant who is ruled by desire'.<sup>31</sup>

Many of the Despensers' political transgressions are specified as financial in historiographical accounts: their tendency for extortion and theft is emphasised, as is their role in the financial deprivation and neglect of Queen Isabella. Their other dominant historiographical feature is their control over access to Edward. Although this accusation is sometimes levelled at Gaveston (see above), it is more consistently and emphatically applied to the Despensers. Twenty-one of the chronicle texts considered for this thesis accuse the Despensers of controlling access. A typical (and early) example is Murimuth, who directly links this transgression to the nobles' decision to destroy the Despensers' lands in 1321:

Hoc anno, in odium domini Hugonis le Despenser, filii, qui duxit regem ad nutum nec permisit regem alicui esse utilem nisi sibi, nec permisit aliquem nobilem de regno cum rege colloquium optinere nisi raro, ipsomet Hugone verba audiente et responsionem ad libitum suum dante, insurrexerunt

---

<sup>27</sup> *Chronicon Henrici Knighton, Vel Cnuttbon, Monachi Leycestrensis*, ed. by J. Rawson Lumby (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1889), p. 437 n. 2.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. Knighton, p. 438.

<sup>29</sup> Lanquet-Cooper, fol. 3N3r.

<sup>30</sup> Martyn, fol. O<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> Rebecca Bushnell, *Tragedies of Tyrants: Political Thought and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 48.

comites et barones Angliae, et omnia bona dicti Hugonis et patris sui ac eis adhaerentium in Wallia et in marchia occuparunt et in Anglia devastarunt.<sup>32</sup>

This year, in hatred of lord Hugh Despenser the son – who led the king at his command, and neither permitted the king to be anything useful unless to him, nor permitted any noble of the realm to obtain a meeting with the king except rarely, with Hugh hearing the words and giving an answer as he pleased – the earls and barons of England rose up, and occupied all the goods of the said Hugh and his father and their adherents in Wales and the marches, and devastated them in England.

Murimuth's exclusive focus on the younger Despenser is not atypical: many writers, particularly those influenced by the *Brut*, partially exonerate the elder Despenser by describing his remorse or his censure of his son, while at least two texts conflate the two Hughs into one.<sup>33</sup> As well as emphasising Despenser's physical control over access to Edward, this passage also enables Murimuth to highlight his less specific, more far-reaching control. The phrase 'giving an answer as he pleased' suggests that Despenser's will is paramount, and the image of him leading Edward 'by his nod' inverts the appropriate political hierarchy between king and favourite. This suggestion – that the Despensers' power over Edward is all-encompassing – is reflected in numerous other texts. The *Brut* titles a section 'How Kyng Edward dede *all maner þing* as Sire Hugh þe Spenser Wolde', going on to assert that 'þe kyng him-self wolde nouȝt be governede by *no maner man*, but *oneliche* by [the Despensers]'.<sup>34</sup> A comparable later example is John Speed, who asserts that the Despensers '*wholy* swayed the unfortunate King'.<sup>35</sup>

In Marlowe's *Edward II*, despite the similarities between Gaveston and Spencer's introductions, it is notable that Gaveston's speech outlines his aim of inciting Edward to sexual transgression, while Spencer's states his intention to secure political promotion.<sup>36</sup> Asked by Baldock who he intends to serve following the Earl of Gloucester's death, he replies:

Not Mortimer, nor any of his side,  
Because the king and he are enemies.  
Baldock, learn this of me: a factious lord  
Shall hardly do himself good, much less us;  
But he that hath the favour of a king,

<sup>32</sup> Murimuth, p. 33.

<sup>33</sup> *Brut*, p. 214. For conflation of the two Hughs, see Thomas Gray, *Scalacronica, 1272-1363*, ed. and trans. by Andy King, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), and Sandford.

<sup>34</sup> *Brut*, p. 212.

<sup>35</sup> Speed, fol. 4R2<sup>r</sup> (irregular signatures).

<sup>36</sup> Sara Munson Deats, 'Marlowe's Fearful Symmetry in *Edward II*', in '*A Poet and a Filthy Play-Maker*': *New Essays on Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by Kenneth Friedenreich, Roma Gill, and Constance B. Kuriyama (New York: AMS Press, 1988), pp. 241–62 (p. 254); cf. Chapter 1.

May with one word advance us while we live.<sup>37</sup>

This distinction – the association of Gaveston with bad moral influence over Edward, and of the Despensers with political dominance – is not original to Marlowe: in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, for example, Gaveston's crime is 'the incouraging of the king to lewdnesse', whereas the Despensers are castigated for 'ruling all things about the king as seemed best to their likings'.<sup>38</sup> However, the popularity of Marlowe's play and its influence on subsequent historiography means that it hastened the adoption of this distinction as a consensus.

### Sexual and emotional aspects of political rule

In Drayton's poems, Gaveston openly describes the way he uses Edward's love and sexual attraction to secure political influence. He foregrounds the role of love in reversing their hierarchical positions – Edward is 'By byrth my Soveraigne, but by love my thrall' – and then offers a concrete, visual emblem of that reversal ('Oft would he sette his crowne upon my head').<sup>39</sup> That such a surrender of sovereignty is intrinsically linked to the sexual and romantic nature of their relationship is underlined by what follows: Edward, having crowned Gaveston, would 'in his chayre sit downe upon my knee, / And when his eyes with love were fully fed, / A thousand times he sweetly kissed mee'. Elsewhere in the poem too, descriptions of Gaveston's political control segue into descriptions of his sexual attractiveness: one stanza states that 'My words as lawes, Autentique he alloude, / Mine yea, by him was never crost with no', while the next describes Gaveston's beauty and Edward's transition from gazing at him to physical interaction.<sup>40</sup> Drayton's revised version, *The Legend of Pierce Gaveston*, intensifies its depiction of Gaveston's effective sovereignty with a metaphor that places him in the royal role of the Sun, and Edward in that of the reflective and feminine moon: 'From my cleere Eyes, so borrowing all His Light, / As pale-fac'd CYNTHIA, from her Brothers fire'.<sup>41</sup>

Kelly Quinn argues convincingly that this feature of *Peirs Gaveston* must be seen in relation to the genre of 'royal mistress complaint':

Drayton's readers would clearly have seen *Peirs Gaveston* as a variation on a familiar theme, but the nature of that variation is crucial: while the other plainants in this group are female, Gaveston is male. This difference signifies politically, and the poem demonstrates the dangerous power of

<sup>37</sup> Marlowe, II.i.4–9.

<sup>38</sup> Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / pp. 319, 325.

<sup>39</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 767, 769.

<sup>40</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 217–18, 225–27.

<sup>41</sup> *Legend*, ll. 129–30.

male royal consorts who translate their erotic sway into active political power.<sup>42</sup>

Unlike female ‘royal mistresses’ like Jane Shore, Quinn argues, ‘Gaveston wields power over the kingdom not only through his persuasive private influence over the King, but also, and chiefly, through his public positions of authority. These benefactions are, in many ways, a consequence of his maleness.’<sup>43</sup> This perceptive point highlights the relevance of Gaveston to early modern fears of seductive male favourites, both under Elizabeth I and James VI and I. When in a poem dedicated to James, William Drummond begged God to ‘save / My soueraing from a Ganemed / Quhoose hooourische breath hath pouer to lead / His Majestie such way he list’, he was not just expressing concern about a sexually attractive young royal favourite exerting control over a king, but expressing a particular fear about the maleness of that ‘Ganemed’ and the resulting potential for him to have substantial political influence that would be unavailable to a female mistress.<sup>44</sup> The particular relevance of Edward’s favourites to Elizabethan and Jacobean political concerns is discussed fully below.

Edward’s emotions towards his favourites are also frequently presented as influencing his political decisions. When writers depict his love for the Despensers, they often foreground its undesirable political consequences rather than its intrinsically transgressive excess: the *Brut*, for example, states that ‘what-so-ever the Spensers wolde have done, it was don. And so wel the Kyng lovede ham, þat þai might do wiþ him al þat þai wolde’.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, as noted in Chapter 2, many texts depict Edward responding to his grief at Gaveston’s death by vowing revenge against his nobles.<sup>46</sup> In addition to these non-specific expressions of vengefulness, several writers present Thomas of Lancaster’s execution as Edward’s revenge for Lancaster’s role in Gaveston’s death.<sup>47</sup> The contemporaneous *Lanercost Chronicle* stresses this particularly heavily. Lancaster is condemned to death ‘in revenge for the death of Piers de Gaveston (whom the earl had caused to be beheaded)’; although he is initially sentenced to be ‘drawn, hanged and beheaded’, ‘forasmuch as he was the queen's uncle and son of the king's uncle, the first two

<sup>42</sup> Kelly Quinn, ‘Mastering Complaint: Michael Drayton’s *Peirs Gaveston* and the Royal Mistress Complaints’, *English Literary Renaissance*, 38 (2008), 439–60 (pp. 439–40).

<sup>43</sup> Quinn, pp. 445–46.

<sup>44</sup> William Drummond, ‘For the Kinge’, in *The Poetical Works of William Drummond of Hawthornden*, ed. by Leon Emile Kastner, 2 vols (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1913), I, 296–99 (ll. 48–51).

<sup>45</sup> *Brut*, p. 224.

<sup>46</sup> E.g. Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / p. 321; Marlowe, III.i.129–42; *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 1657–1704.

<sup>47</sup> *Lanercost*, p. 234; *Vita*, p. 215; Anonimale, p. 109; Gray, p. 87; Burton, III, 344; *The Historical Collections of a Citizen of London in the 15th Century*, ed. by James Gairdner (London: Camden Society, 1876), p. 76; *This Is the Cronycle of All the Kyng[es] Names That Have Ben in Englande* (London: Rychard Pynson, 1518), fol. B2<sup>v</sup>; Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / p. 331.

penalties were commuted, so that he was neither drawn nor hanged, only beheaded *in like manner as this same Earl Thomas had caused Piers de Gaveston to be beheaded*.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, despite the fact that ‘he had borne arms against the King of England in his own realm’, ‘those who best knew the king’s mind declared that the earl never would have been summarily beheaded without the advice of parliament, nor so badly treated, had not that other cause prevailed, but that he would have been imprisoned for life or sent into exile’. The writer consistently reinforces the link between Lancaster’s death and his role in that of Gaveston ten years earlier, both by framing his execution as ‘revenge’ and specifically linking the methods of execution. The *Vita* also references this opinion, suggesting that it may have been widely held among contemporaries, and similarly connects the two methods of death: ‘The earl of Lancaster once cut off Piers Gaveston’s head, and now by the king’s command the earl of Lancaster has lost his head’.<sup>49</sup>

This connection is typical of the *Vita*: during its account of Gaveston’s lifetime, almost every decision Edward is reported as taking relates in some way to, or is motivated by, his relationship with Gaveston. In 1307, for example, a tournament is proclaimed ‘to further enhance Piers’s reputation and honour his name’; in 1310 the earls refuse to come to court because of Gaveston ‘skulking in the king’s chamber’.<sup>50</sup> The first part of the chronicle is overwhelmingly devoted to altercations between Gaveston and the other earls; Childs suggests that the instability this caused may have been the writer’s motivation to begin his contemporaneous chronicle.<sup>51</sup>

The claim that Edward’s executions of Lancaster and other earls constituted revenge for Gaveston’s death was popularised by inclusion in many of the London chronicles (‘the kyng dyd hede iiii schore lordys in a day for the dethe of the sayde Pers’) and later by Holinshed (‘Thus the king seemed to be revenged of the displeasure doone to him by the earle of Lancaster, for the beheading of Peers de Gaveston earle of Cornewall, whom he so deerelie loved’).<sup>52</sup> Cary, too, features it vividly through an invented speech in which Edward responds to a plea for mercy on behalf of Lancaster and other captured nobles: ‘When my poor Gaveston was tane, where was their mercy? ... shall I spare those that for my sake wrought his ruine?’<sup>53</sup> Like the suggestions that Edward chose his favourites for their attractiveness, the effect of the revenge-motivation story is to cast

<sup>48</sup> *Lanercost*, p. 234, trans. by Maxwell; emphasis added.

<sup>49</sup> *Vita*, p. 215, trans. by Childs and Denholm-Young.

<sup>50</sup> *Vita*, pp. 7, 19, trans. by Childs and Denholm-Young.

<sup>51</sup> *Vita*, p. xxii.

<sup>52</sup> *Historical Collections*, p. 76; Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / p. 331.

<sup>53</sup> Cary (folio), fols. T2<sup>v</sup>-V<sup>r</sup>.

doubt on Edward's capacity for sound political judgement, presenting his decisions as based on emotion rather than wise counsel and consideration.

Several texts also describe the 1321 siege of Leeds Castle as resulting from Edward's desire for revenge – in this case, for the owners' refusal to give Isabella lodging.<sup>54</sup> Ascribing one of Edward's decisions to revenge for Gaveston's death and one to revenge for Isabella's ill-treatment is not historiographically inconsistent: as I have argued previously, modern dichotomies between heterosexual and homosexual (that is, between Edward's emotional attachments to women and to men) do not apply to texts of this period. On the contrary, both episodes contribute to a portrayal of Edward's political actions as emotionally motivated. This is clear from Winston Churchill's account:

All differences [between Edward and his nobles] being thus compos'd, I cannot say calm'd, an accidental affront given to the Queen by one that was over-wise in his Office, put all again out of order beyond recovery. A Castelan of the Lord Badlismers at Leeds (denying her Majesty Lodging there as she was passing by in her Progress, out of a Distrust she might possess her self of the Castle, and keep it for the King) she exasperated the King to that degree, that he besieged the place, took it, and in it the politick Governour, whom without legal Process he hang'd up presently, and seizing all the Goods and Treasure of his Lord, sent his Wife and Children to the Tower.<sup>55</sup>

Here, the denial of lodging to Isabella is presented as unintentional and slight ('an accidental affront'), and not without reason (Badlesmere's castellan fears Isabella might seize the castle). In light of this, Edward's reaction appears rash and emotionally motivated (caused by Isabella's having 'exasperated' him), disordered ('without legal process') and disproportionate (as suggested by the succession of clauses delineating his escalating responses).

## ii. Evil nature

Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon* opens its account of Edward's reign with the following passage on his character:

Erat nempe Edwardus iste vir corpore elegans, viribus praestans, sed moribus, si vulgo creditur, plurimum inconstans. Nam parvipenso procerum contubernio, adhaesit scurris, cantoribus, tragedis, aurigis, fossoribus, remigibus, navigiis et caeteris artis mechanicae officiiis, potibus indulgens, secreta facile prodens, astantes ex levi causa percutiens, magis alienum quam proprium consilium sequens; in dando prodigus, in convivando splendidus, ore promptus, opere varius, adversus hostes suos

<sup>54</sup> *Annales Paulini*, p. 299; Murimuth, p. 34; Trokelowe, p. 111; Walsingham, fols. H4<sup>v</sup>–H5<sup>r</sup>; Howell, fols. K6<sup>r</sup>–K6<sup>v</sup>; Sandford, fol. 2Q<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>55</sup> Winston Churchill, *Divi Britannici* (London: Tho. Roycroft, 1675), fol. 2C3<sup>v</sup>.

infortunatus, in domesticos efferatus. Ad unum aliquem familiarem ardentem affectus, quem summe coleret, ditaret, praeferet, honoraret. Ex quo impetu provenit amanti opprobrium, amasio obloquium, plebi scandalum, regno detrimentum. Indignos quoque et ineptos ad gradus ecclesiasticos promovit, quod postmodum sudes in oculis et lancea in latere sibi [fuit].<sup>56</sup>

Truly this Edward was a man with an elegant body, outstanding in strength, but, if the public are to be believed, inconstant in mood. For, paying little attention to his nobles in companionship, he clung to fashionable idlers, singers, tragedians, grooms, diggers and rowers, sailors and other characters of mechanical skill; indulging in drink, easily giving out secrets, standing and striking out of trivial cause, following rather others' counsel than his own; lavish in giving, splendid in banqueting, ready in speech, diverse in deeds, unfortunate against his enemies, puffed up in his household. Towards one particular familiar he was ardently affected, whom he would cherish, enrich, prefer, honour. From which, with fury, came forth disgrace to the loved one, subservience to the lover [i.e. Edward], offence to the people, and harm to the realm. Likewise, he promoted unworthy and wicked ones to church positions, who afterwards were logs in his eyes and lances in his side.

This passage was enormously influential: versions of it persist in accounts of Edward's reign throughout the medieval and early modern period (in later texts usually via Robert Fabian's adapted translation). The commentary to *The Prophecy of John of Bridlington* (much of which is taken verbatim from the *Polychronicon*) demonstrates that this character description was treated as significant even by Higden's contemporaries: the commentator presents it as one of the 'three things to be [initially] observed' concerning Edward, offers it as evidence that the prophecy's description of Edward as an 'irrational king' (*Rex insensatus*) is justified, and repeatedly refers back to Edward's personal characteristics.<sup>57</sup>

Higden's description presents Edward's actions as consistently characterised by excess and disruptive of social norms and hierarchies, and highlights particular flaws – vengeance, drinking, a predilection for unsuitable company and 'rustic pursuits' – that are frequently mentioned in subsequent accounts.<sup>58</sup> But more crucially, when presented as an introduction to Edward's reign (as it is in the *Polychronicon*; some writers, such as Thomas Burton, shift it to the end of the reign) it frames the subsequent events as consequences of these personality attributes.<sup>59</sup> It prompts a personal interpretation of Edward's disastrous reign, providing justification for writers to blame his misdeeds on personality flaws rather than his favourites' influence.

---

<sup>56</sup> *Polychronicon*, VIII, 298–300.

<sup>57</sup> *Bridlington Prophecy*, pp. 132–34.

<sup>58</sup> See Hilda Johnstone, 'The Eccentricities of Edward II', *English Historical Review*, 48 (1933), 264–67.

<sup>59</sup> Burton, III, 355.

Most of the attributes in Higden's summary function metonymically, implying that Edward is flawed in particular ways. A preference for companions of low social status suggests that he is a poor judge of character and lacks the skill or discernment to select suitable advisors; alcoholism suggests bodily indulgence (see chapter 1); an inability to keep secrets suggests poor judgement and an impaired capacity for decision-making. All of them can be seen to encourage the conclusion that Edward is unfit for royal duties. Criticisms of Edward's character written prior to his deposition are very rare. One example can be found in the anonymous poem 'On the King's Breaking His Confirmation of Magna Charta', also known as 'The Sayings of the Four Philosophers'. This text is most concerned with condemning Edward as an inconstant oath breaker, though it may also criticise his rule and his nature in generalised terms: the lament 'For wille is red [counsel], the lond is wrecful [full of revenge]' suggests that Edward is ruling by personal will rather than advice ('red'), while 'For god [good] is ded, the lond is sinful' could be read as a reference to his misbehaviour.<sup>60</sup> In general, however, the most prominent character flaws attributed to Edward during his reign are those of being intrinsically unkingly, a disobedient son, and an ineffective military leader.

Murimuth's contemporary account of Edward's deposition is ambiguous on the first point. Edward, Murimuth writes, 'with tears and lamentations, responded that he felt much pain because he had thus not served the people of his realm, but *ex quo aliter esse non potuit*, he said that it was pleasing to him that his son was thus accepted by all the people'.<sup>61</sup> The untranslated Latin phrase could be rendered in English either as 'because *he* could not be otherwise', or as 'because *it* could not be otherwise': that is, as indicating Edward's incorrigibility or simply the inevitability of the situation. This phrase may have been partly politically motivated, reflecting 'the new regime's invocation of the canon law justification of insufficiency for [Edward's] deposition' – but whatever its origin, it stuck.<sup>62</sup> It is retained, with a similar ambiguity, in Walsingham's *Chronica Maiora*.<sup>63</sup> The only early modern English translator of this phrase, Robert Brady, chooses the latter ('it could be no otherwise'), but the polemical nature of Brady's text, written during the Exclusion Crisis as a Tory response to the Whig pamphlet *A Brief History of the Succession*, means it cannot be viewed as

---

<sup>60</sup> 'On the King's Breaking His Confirmation of Magna Charta', in *The Political Songs of England: From the Reign of John to that of Edward II*, ed. and trans. by Thomas Wright (Edinburgh: Privately printed, 1884), pp. 253–58 (p. 256).

<sup>61</sup> Murimuth, p. 51.

<sup>62</sup> Claire Valente, 'The Lament of Edward II: Religious Lyric, Political Propaganda', *Speculum*, 77 (2002), 422–39 (p. 430).

<sup>63</sup> Walsingham, fol. I6r.



representative of early modern interpretations.<sup>64</sup> Certainly several other early modern texts, though they do not include this specific phrase, appear to support the opposing interpretation. In Holinshed's *Chronicles*, Edward acknowledges that 'he was fallen into this miserie through his own offense'; Elizabeth Cary writes that Edward, 'by the imbecility of his judgment, and the corruption of his nature, was unfit longer to continue the Government'.<sup>65</sup> (Edward's unkingly nature in Cary's text is in part a function of his having ceded so much political control to Gaveston: 'In the view of these strange passages, the King appear'd so little himself, that the Subjects thought him a Royal Shadow without a Real Substance.'<sup>66</sup>) Marlowe's Edward does not acknowledge his faults during his deposition scene, a deliberate departure both from his main source and from the *de casibus* mode, and one that contrasts with Shakespeare's *Richard II*.<sup>67</sup>

Edward's unkingly qualities were also suggested by accounts of the pretender John Deydras (historiographically known as Tanner, Powderham, Poydras or Canne). Deydras claimed in 1318 that he, not Edward, was the rightful king: attacked and scarred by a sow as a baby, he had been exchanged by his panicked nurse for the child of a carter or water-bearer, who had grown up to be Edward II. This entertaining story is one of the only details concerning Edward II's reign to appear with relative consistency in the London chronicles. Its most striking feature is the evidence Deydras offers for his claims: 'he seyde that kyng Edward maners were acordyng with the maners of his fadyr the water-berere, for as moche as he loved swyche rude werkes, and for this seyenge moche peple yaf credence to hym and leved his wordes.'<sup>68</sup> Deydras's claims that Edward is not of royal birth are believable specifically because of his activities, which befit those of a lower ('rude') social status. Thomas Heywood, picking up this anecdote in 1641, extends this suggestion from Edward's actions to his character:

This King was of a beautifull aspect, and excellent feature: of a strong constitution of body, but unstedfast in promise, and ignoble in condition, as refusing the company of men of honour, to associate himself with lewd and vile persons, he was much addicted to bibacity, and apt to discover matters of great counsell and of supration, and adultery, perswaded therto by his familiars the French men, for whose death the King vowed an irreconcilable revenge against the Barons, which he after performed; indeed so unking-like was his misgovernment, that a base Villaine called John

<sup>64</sup> Robert Brady, *A True and Exact History of the Succession of the Crown of England* (London: for Cave Pulleyn, 1681), fol. G2r.

<sup>65</sup> Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / p. 340; Cary (folio), fol. 2L2r.

<sup>66</sup> Cary (folio), fol. F2v.

<sup>67</sup> Douglas Cole, *Christopher Marlowe and the Renaissance of Tragedy* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1995), pp. 114–15; Pasquarella, pp. 131–33. See also Chapter 4.

<sup>68</sup> *A Chronicle of London, from 1089 to 1483*, ed. by Edward Tyrell and Nicholas Harris Nicolas (Felinfach: Llanerch, 1995), p. 44; emphasis added.

Tanner, named himself the son of Edward the first, and that by the means of a false nurse, hee was stoln out of his cradle, and this Edward being a Carters son was laid in his place, *which the people for the former reasons were easily induced to believe...*<sup>69</sup>

Heywood links the story of Deydras to the character summary derived from Higden via Fabyan, demonstrating the potential of that summary to frame accounts of Edward's reign as discussions of his character. Edward's identity as a 'carters son' is believable because of his 'unking-like...misgovernment', a term that reveals the interconnection of Edward's poor rule of England (exemplified by Heywood's reference to his 'revenge against the Barons') and his poor government of himself, his passions and excesses. William Martyn expresses an identical sentiment, referring to Edward's 'evill government, both of himselfe and of his kingdome' and explicitly connecting his sexual transgression to his unkingly nature: 'his Maners (being grossely corrupted by lewd and gracelesse companions) were so lascivious, and unbecoming the condition of a King'.<sup>70</sup>

Edward's behaviour in relation to kingship in Marlowe's *Edward II* deserves particular scrutiny, as does his distinctly ambivalent attitude towards his royal status. As Charles Forker observes, 'Marlowe capitalises brilliantly on the dramatic ironies created by the huge gap between the inherent majesty of the crown and the feeble incapacity of its wearer'.<sup>71</sup> Edward deals clumsily with his royal power from the outset, relying on his royal status to command obedience ('Beseems it thee to contradict thy king?') rather than even attempting to plead the justice of his cause.<sup>72</sup> He switches repeatedly between threats and pleas towards his nobles, reducing the effectiveness of both: he acquiesces to Kent's suggestion that he behead his nobles ('let these their heads / Preach upon poles, for trespass of their tongues') before shifting in the same line to a polite request that they desist ('and therefore I would wish you grant—'), and when Gaveston is seized he reacts initially with panic ('Whither will you bear him?') before belatedly commanding ('Stay, or ye shall die')<sup>73</sup>. As detailed in Chapter 2, he indicates repeatedly that Gaveston is more important to him than his royal status or kingdom. On several occasions, he has to talk himself into kingly behaviour and reaffirm his royal identity: twice he presents this as conditional ('If I be king...'), elsewhere reminding himself to take on the symbolic royal qualities of a lion ('Edward, unfold thy paws') and asserting that vengeful thoughts arise 'when I call to mind

<sup>69</sup> Heywood, fols. 2B<sup>v</sup>–2B<sup>2r</sup>; emphasis added.

<sup>70</sup> Martyn, fols. N3<sup>r</sup>, N<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>71</sup> Marlowe, p. 91.

<sup>72</sup> Marlowe, l.i.91.

<sup>73</sup> Marlowe, l.i.116–17; l.iv.24.

I am a king', as if he had otherwise forgotten.<sup>74</sup> When he does belatedly acquire kingly bravery and decisiveness, asserting his desire to resist Isabella and Mortimer's invasion and 'die with fame', it is (as Baldock realises) both contextually inappropriate and insufficient: 'O no, my lord, this princely resolution / Fits not the time; away! we are pursued.'<sup>75</sup>

The contrast between Edward and his heroic father, Edward I, is often used to highlight his unkingly qualities: Francis Sandford, for example, recounts that, despite the 'general applause' Edward attracted on his accession owing to 'the excellent Government of His Father', 'He seemed to do nothing less then either to imitate His Father, or to performe those three positive Commands He had enjoyned Him by His Will'.<sup>76</sup> The latter comment refers to the story that Edward swore or promised his dying father that he would not recall Gaveston from exile. In twenty-one of the chronicle texts considered for this thesis, a significant proportion, Edward's love for Gaveston results in this disruption of his filial duty: the detail first appears in the anonymous continuation of Nicholas Trivet's Latin *Annales*, but was probably popularised by Thomas Walsingham.<sup>77</sup> Subsequently, of course, Edward (in John Rastell's words), 'as sone as his father was buried / sent for Piers of Gaveston his olde compyre / and advaunced hym to great honour / contrary to the promyse that he made to his father.'<sup>78</sup> Given the nobles' presence at Edward I's bedside and their implicit role as witnesses to the oath, this anecdote provides an early indication that Edward II will not, as expected, work in harmony with his nobles. Similarly, the memory of Edward I also functions to highlight Edward II's lack of success in military matters. Edward I had famously waged effective battle against the Scots; his son, equally famously, suffered multiple defeats. The *Brut* and Geoffrey le Baker's *Chronicon* were both influential in establishing the association of these defeats with Edward's propensity for ostentatious dress. At the Battle of Bannockburn, le Baker claims, the English army:

were so confident their victory was assured that they had brought with them, besides the supplies, necessary for war, of horses, weapons, and food, also the silver and golden vessels with which in time of peace men are accustomed to enrich the banquets of the princes of the world.<sup>79</sup>

The 'silver and golden vessels' brought by Edward's army function as symbols of their over-confidence. Holinshed reads this episode as indicating Edward's inability to prepare effectively and appropriately for military action ('a mightie armie bravelie furnished, and

<sup>74</sup> Marlowe, I.iv.105, III.i.135; II.ii.203; V.i.23.

<sup>75</sup> Marlowe, IV.v.7–9.

<sup>76</sup> Sandford, fol. 2P2<sup>r</sup>. See also Hubert (1628), stanza 28.

<sup>77</sup> *Nicolai Triveti Annalium Continuatio* (Oxford: Teatro Sheldoniano, 1722), pp. 1–2; Walsingham, fol. F3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>78</sup> John Rastell, *The Pastyme of People* (London: John Rastell, 1530), fol. [2]C3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>79</sup> Le Baker (2012), p. 7, trans. by Preest.

gorgiouſlie apparelled, more ſeemelie for a triumph, than meet to incounter with the cruell enimie in the field’), while John Speed ſees it as revealing of Edward’s nature and his reſulting unſuitability for military activity (‘King Edward and his people rather ſeemed to goe toward a Wedding or a Triumph, then to a battell, adorning themſelves with all ſorts of riches, gold, ſilver, and the like toies, in a kind of wanton manner, correſpondent to the humour of the Prince whom they followed’).<sup>80</sup> This connection between Edward’s rich battle dress and his ‘humour’ is the ſame as that drawn by Thomas Heywood, who (as analysed in Chapter 1) aſſerts that the ſilver horns of his allegorical goat (which originate in the *Brut*) ‘denotes his effeminacie, being unſerviceable for war’.<sup>81</sup> This historiographical ſtrand is the ſource of Mortimer Junior’s criticism of Edward’s army in Marlowe’s *Edward II*:

When wert thou in the field with banner ſpread?  
But once, and then thy ſoldiers marched like players,  
With garish robes, not armour, and thyſelf  
Bedaubed with gold, rode laughing at the reſt,  
Nodding and ſhaking of thy ſpangled creſt,  
Where women’s favours hung like labels down.<sup>82</sup>

As Christopher Weſſman argues, this is ‘inappropriate role-playing’, evidence of Edward’s ineffective deployment of the ‘public diſplays that ſhould accompany the preſtige of England’s King’.<sup>83</sup> It is alſo, I would argue, intrinſically connected to the anti-courtier ſentiment that characteriſes early modern condemnations of Edward’s favourites, as analysed in Chapter 2, of which diſparagement of exceſſively fashionable dress is an important part. The tone of Holinshed’s and Speed’s depictions of Edward’s military inefficacy ſhould alſo be read with this in mind.

### iii. Foregrounding the counſel/nature queſtion in early modern texts

Edward’s flaws are, of course, problematic because of their potential to affect his public role as well as his private life: to ſpill over, like his affection for his favourites (ſee Chapter 2), from affecting his body natural into affecting the body politic.<sup>84</sup> Both William Warner and Elizabeth Cary frame this obſervation as part of the dying Edward I’s advice.<sup>85</sup> Cary – whose other text, *The Tragedy of Mariam*, ſuggests a ſuſtained intereſt in the relationship between ‘public life and private deſire’ – reports that Edward I admoniſhed his

<sup>80</sup> Holinshed (1587), VI, ſection 10 / p. 321; Speed, fol. 4S3r.

<sup>81</sup> Heywood, fol. 2B3r.

<sup>82</sup> Marlowe, II.ii.181–86.

<sup>83</sup> Christopher Weſſman, ‘Marlowe’s *Edward II* as ‘Actaeonesque History’, *Connotations*, 9 (1999), 1–33 (p. 11).

<sup>84</sup> Kantorowicz, *passim*. For this iſſue in relation to Elizabeth I ſee Carole Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Preſs, 1994), p. 76.

<sup>85</sup> William Warner, *Albions England* (London: Thomas Orwin for Thomas Cadman, 1589), fol. Q2r.

son, 'Your former Errours, now continued, are no more yours, they are the Kings, which will betray the Kingdom. The Sovereigns Vice begets the Subjects Errour, who practise good or ill by his Example.'<sup>86</sup> Marlowe's character of Edward is notable for his lack of awareness that this blurring of private and public is at all problematic: although he recognises a distinction between 'private men' and 'kings', he still appears to believe that his nobles have a public duty to echo his love for Gaveston ('They love me not that hate my Gaveston'), and as Douglas Cole notes, he 'never [explicitly, I would add] conceives of his problem as a choice between conflicting claims of love and duty'.<sup>87</sup> The play deals repeatedly and clearly with the issue of the inappropriate spillage from private lives into public ones: it opens with Gaveston reading aloud an intimate letter, which 'prefigures his later actions when he openly advertises his intimate relationship with the king [and] uses his intimate access to the king to advance his public role', and Marlowe also 'continually establishes Mortimer's public power specifically by asserting his control – *sexual and emotional as well as political* – over the queen'.<sup>88</sup> Yet at no point does Edward realise the root cause of his quarrels with his nobles: as Speed would later put it, he is consistently 'forgetting, that those affections, which oftentimes deserve praise in a private person, are subject to much construction in a publike'.<sup>89</sup> Speed's reference to 'construction' acknowledges that the chief problem with Edward's 'affections' for Gaveston is not intrinsic, but external interpretation – but this 'construction' is, he suggests, unavoidable for a 'publike' person.

Alongside the accusations of particular flaws outlined above, early modern writers began to wrestle directly with the question of the extent to which Edward's personal flaws caused his behaviour and subsequent downfall. H. David Brumble offers some useful context for this growing concern in his analysis of Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*: human laws, Hooker writes, 'are never framed as they should be, unless [they presume] the will of man to be inwardly obstinate, rebellious, and averse from all obedience unto the sacred laws of his nature; in a word, unless [they presume] man to be in regard to his depraved mind little better than a wild beast'.<sup>90</sup> Edward may, therefore, have been badly influenced by his favourites; but he must also, inevitably, have shared 'humanity's depraved inclinations, which are humanity's inheritance from the Fall'. As detailed above, Higden's

<sup>86</sup> Lewalski, p. 196; Cary (folio), fol. C<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>87</sup> Marlowe, V.i.8–9, II.ii.37; Cole, p. 111.

<sup>88</sup> Ralf Hertel, *Staging England in the Elizabethan History Play* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 218–19; Joan Parks, 'History, Tragedy, and Truth in Christopher Marlowe's *Edward IP*', *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900*, 39 (1999), 275–90 (p. 283); emphasis added.

<sup>89</sup> Speed, fol. 4S2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>90</sup> H. David Brumble, 'Personal, Paternal, and Kingly Control in Marlowe's *Edward IP*', *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*, 34 (2008), 56–70 (article not internally paginated).

summary of Edward's character ushered in a historiographical concern with his inherent 'inclinations'. During the sixteenth century, this summary was modified and developed between texts to engage more explicitly with the issue of character flaws versus evil counsel. Robert Fabyan's translation of it became particularly influential.<sup>91</sup> As explored in Chapter 1, Thomas Cooper subsequently conflated Fabyan's character summary with a later passage concerning the 'wanton counsaile' of Edward's favourites, producing the following:

This Edward was fayre of bodie, but unstedfast of maners, and disposed to lightnesse. For he refused the company of his lordes and men of honour, and haunted amonge vilanes and vile personages. He gave hym selfe also to over muche drinkyng, and lightly woulde disclose thynges of great counsaile: and *besides, that he was geven to these vices of nature, he was made moche worse by the counsaile and familiarite of certaine evill disposed persones*, as Pierse of Gaveston, Hugh the Spencers, and other, whose wanton counsaile he folowyng gave him selfe to the appetite and pleasure of the body, nothyng orderyng his common weale by sadnesse, discrecion, and justice...<sup>92</sup>

Cooper, then, directly asserts that Edward is naturally disposed to vice ('given to...vices of nature'; Edward III, by contrast, possesses 'giftes of nature'<sup>93</sup>) but that, this inherent disposition notwithstanding, he was 'made moche worse' by the influence of his favourites. Yet 'worse', of course, suggests that the favourites' negative influence was not starting from scratch. Cooper therefore equivocates between the 'evil counsel' position of earlier texts, and the character assassination of later texts like William Martyn's.

In a separate strand of historiographical influence, Polydore Vergil's *Anglica Historia* displays a prolonged concern with this issue. The account of Edward's reign in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, which exerted considerable influence on texts of all genres, follows Vergil's account very closely, and will thus form the basis of my discussion here. Holinshed establishes Edward's 'nature' as a key concern at the opening of his account of the reign:

we find that in the beginning of his governement, though he was of nature given to lightnesse, yet being restrained with the prudent advertisements of certeine of his councillors, to the end he might shew some likelihood of good prooffe, [h]e counterfeited a kind of gravitie, vertue, and modestie; but yet he could not throughlie be so bridled, but that foorthwith he began to plaie divers wanton and light parts, at the first indeed not outragiously, but by little and little, and that covertlie. For having revoked againe into England his old mate the said Peers de Gaveston, he received him into most high favour, creating him earle of Cornewall, and lord of Man, his principall secretarie, and lord chamberlaine of the realme, through whose

<sup>91</sup> Fabyan, fol. 218<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>92</sup> Lanquet-Cooper, fol. 3M4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>93</sup> Lanquet-Cooper, fol. 3N3<sup>v</sup>.

companie and societie he was suddenlie so corrupted, that he burst out into most heinous vices...<sup>94</sup>

Initially, in contrast to Cooper, Holinshed presents Edward's 'nature' as innately tending towards 'wanton and light' behaviour. '[G]ravitie, vertue and modestie' are merely feigned, and the act of feigning them constitutes being 'bridled', restraining Edward's inherent disposition. Yet this idea of 'counterfeited' virtue is immediately compounded by the description of Edward's 'wanton and light' behaviour: these qualities, too, are 'parts' to be 'plaie[d]'. The verb 'plaie' functions partly to emphasise Edward's lack of seriousness, but the sense of dissimulation is nonetheless present, especially given Holinshed's earlier reference to 'counterfeited' qualities. Responsibility for Edward's bad behaviour is then ascribed to the 'companie and societie' of Gaveston, who 'corrupt[s]' him; immediately after this, however, the idea of a 'bridled' innate self recurs with the phrase 'he burst out into most heinous vices', which suggests that Gaveston's influence has breached whatever restraint had been placed on Edward's character by the 'prudent advertisements' of his other nobles.

Holinshed continues to vacillate on the question of whether Edward's innate 'nature' or the counsel of his favourites is to blame for his behaviour. The nobles' reasoning over exiling Gaveston and the Despencers leans towards the latter, but ultimately remains ambivalent. Their first decision to exile Gaveston is based on the 'hope that the kings mind might happilie be altered into a better purpose, being not altogether converted into a venemous disposition, but so that it might be cured, if the corrupter thereof were once banished from him'.<sup>95</sup> Similarly, they later reason that it may be possible to 'procure [Edward] to looke better to his office and dutie' if they can exile the Despencers, 'his nature being not altogether evill'.<sup>96</sup> While the verb 'converted', the description of Gaveston as a 'corrupter', and the nobles' hope in both cases suggests that the removal of Edward's favourites will prompt a change of behaviour, the repeated adverb 'altogether' means that both quotations stop short of completely exonerating Edward's 'nature'. The tone suggests that the nobles are trying to remain hopeful that Edward can be redeemed, but are not quite convinced. The result is, like Cooper's text, an equivocal account which stops short of concluding that Edward's favourites or his character bear sole responsibility for the problems of his reign.

---

<sup>94</sup> Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / p. 318.

<sup>95</sup> Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / p. 319.

<sup>96</sup> Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / p. 325.

Given such ambivalence in his main source, it is unsurprising that Marlowe also wavers on the question of evil nature versus evil counsel. While some nobles appear to believe that Edward's behaviour is the result of being misled by his favourites (Lancaster tells Isabella that 'now his minion's gone, / His wanton humour will be quickly left', and Mortimer Junior calls the Spencers 'The proud corrupters of the light-brain'd king'), Mortimer Senior suggests that his affection for Gaveston is a product of an immature disposition ('riper years will wean him from such toys'), and it is difficult to argue that the audience could interpret Edward's repeated scenes of emotional, 'giddy', inconsistent behaviour as entirely originating in poor advice.<sup>97</sup> Ultimately, Marlowe chooses not to make this question a central concern of his text. By contrast, both Francis Hubert and Elizabeth Cary repeatedly address it. Hubert is interested in whether Edward's favourites, his fortune, or his nature is to blame for his wrongdoing and ultimate fate. He implies an innate difference between Edward and his father when he observes that 'A King may leave his name unto his Sonne, / But to his Sonne, no King can leave his Nature', but does not leave his favourites blameless: Edward may be 'A sowre Crab from sweetest Apple-tree', but 'that small good, which nature did inspire / By soothing tongues, too soone was turn'd to ill'.<sup>98</sup> Yet his accession is prefaced with foreboding: 'Disastrous man, so borne, to suffer wracke, / As is the Aethiop to be alwayes blacke'.<sup>99</sup> Having proposed three possible determining factors, Hubert reaches no firm conclusion on the issue.

More strongly than Hubert, Cary rejects outright the possibility of inherited vice: 'He could not have been so unworthy a Son of so noble a Father, nor so inglorious a Father of so excellent a Son, if either Vertue or Vice had been hereditary.'<sup>100</sup> Were it not for 'divine Ordinances', 'it may else seem justly worthy admiration, how so crooked a Plant should spring from a Tree so great and glorious.' Edward has a promising start ('His younger years discovered a softly, sweet, and milde temper, pliable enough to the impressions of Vertue') but his flaws independently become apparent:

The Royal honour of his Birth-right was scarcely invested in his person, when Time (the Touchstone of Truth) shews him to the world a meer Imposture; in Conversation light, in Condition wayward, in Will violent, and in Passion furious and irreconcilable.<sup>101</sup>

---

<sup>97</sup> Marlowe, I.iv.198–99; V.ii.2; I.iv.400.

<sup>98</sup> Hubert (1628), stanzas 24, 28.

<sup>99</sup> Hubert (1628), stanza 124.

<sup>100</sup> Cary (folio), fol. B<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>101</sup> Cary (folio), fol. B<sup>v</sup>. Cary's octavo text condenses this passage so that the statement on Edward's 'Condition' occurs earlier in the introduction to his reign, colouring the reader's interpretation of what follows (fol. B<sup>v</sup>).



His father is aware of his flawed nature: ‘with an unwilling eye he beholds in his Son many sad remonstrances which intimate rather a natural vicious inclination, than the corruption of time, or want of ability to command it’.<sup>102</sup> This is compounded, however, by ‘continuance of practice, and [vices] made habituary by custom’: as analysed in Chapter 2, Cary is interested in the pervasiveness of ‘habit’, which was considered particularly relevant in the case of sexually transgressive behaviour. Nor are Edward’s favourites entirely blameless: describing the younger Despenser, Cary writes, ‘The King’s weak humour, naturally wanton, he makes more vicious’.<sup>103</sup> The issue is confused, too, by Edward’s propensity for dissembling: at several points Cary observes the disjunction between his outward appearance and inward state.<sup>104</sup> Given these confident assertions about Edward’s intrinsic flaws, then, Cary’s conclusion is curiously ambivalent: Edward, described as an ‘unfortunate king’, is reported to have ‘lost [his kingdom] partly by his own Disorder and Improvidence, but principally by the treacherous Infidelity of his Wife, Servants, and Subjects’.<sup>105</sup> ‘But what could be expected,’ Cary asks, ‘when for his own private Vanitie and Passion, he had been a continual lover and abetter of unjust actions, and had consented to the Oppression of the whole Kingdom, and the untimely Death of so many Noble Subjects?’

Following Holinshed, several other writers of longer historical texts engaged with this question to similarly ambivalent results.<sup>106</sup> Of these, the imagery used by Richard Baker is particularly interesting:

We shall have here no *Quinquennium Neronis*, no such five yeares, as Nero afforded in the beginning of his Raigne; but this King at his first entrance will shew what he is, and what he will continue to be as long as he lives, for though he tooke some great and grave men to be of his Councell, yet (as appeared afterward) he did it rather to the end they should be pliant to him, then that he had any meaning to apply himselfe to them; For let them say what they would, Gaveston must be the Oracle; all the Kings actions were but Gavestons impressions...<sup>107</sup>

Edward’s nature is not only immediately evident ‘at his first entrance’, but is presented as unchangeable ‘as long as he lives’. The characteristics he shows, however, are not entirely straightforward. His treatment of his ‘great and grave’ counsellors suggests strong will, at odds with the conventional presentation of Edward as easily led. This disjunction would be particularly evident to readers familiar with Marlowe and Drayton’s accounts, both of

---

<sup>102</sup> Cary (folio), fol. B2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>103</sup> Cary (folio), fol. X<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>104</sup> E.g. Cary (folio), fols. K<sup>r</sup>, 2B<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>105</sup> Cary (folio), fol. 2M<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>106</sup> E.g. Speed, fol. 4R2<sup>v</sup> (irregular signatures); Daniel, fol. Q2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>107</sup> Baker, fol. S3<sup>v</sup>.

which instead employ the adjective ‘pliant’ for descriptions of Edward from Gaveston’s perspective.<sup>108</sup> Yet Baker then moves towards this more conventional view, presenting Edward as little more than an extension of Gaveston’s will; the noun ‘impressions’ depicts him as a blank wax seal on which Gaveston can print his wishes. If this is an example of Edward showing ‘what he is, and what he will continue to be’, the reader is left with little clarity on what they have just been shown.

Baker engages in a longer discussion of Gaveston’s influence over Edward as part of justifying his murder in 1312. Asking, ‘But why should the Lords be so violent against Gaveston? might not the King place his Affection where he pleased?’, Baker justifies the nobles’ actions with reference to Gaveston’s corruption of Edward:

Vertues are but personall, Vices onely are communicative; it now made the King not onely more Vicious then otherwise he would have beene, but Vicious, where otherwise he would not have beene; and therefore great cause in regard of the King, to remove Gaveston from his company...<sup>109</sup>

Here, in contrast to the assertions Baker made in the extract quoted above, it is clear that Gaveston’s society has corrupted Edward: he has not only intensified existing ‘vicious’ behaviour, but added new vices too. This argument is justified through the assertion that ‘Vertues are but personall, Vices onely are communicative’ – a claim which, left unexplored, remains ambivalent about whether Edward bears any responsibility for his susceptibility to Gaveston’s ‘vices’. Compounding this ambivalence is Baker’s later suggestion that Edward’s excessive love for his favourites is itself a character flaw – that is, he was disposed to love the younger Despenser excessively: ‘It seemes it was the Kings nature, that he could not be without a bosome friend; one or other to be an *Alter idem*: and to seeke to remove such a one from him, was to seek to remove him from him selfe as impossible a thing as to alter nature’.<sup>110</sup>

It is striking that, despite the clear interest all of these writers take in the counsel/nature question, none of them presents a coherent account of it. Each one presents Edward as far more culpable for his transgressions than the early accounts; but each, equally, stops short of outright condemnation, providing ambiguity by blaming Edward’s favourites for their corruption and by suggesting that Edward was not entirely free to choose his own disposition. The consistency of this ambivalence – even in Cary’s otherwise forceful and didactic account – suggests that, although the time elapsed since

---

<sup>108</sup> Marlowe, I.i.52; *Legend*, l. 125.

<sup>109</sup> Baker, fol. S4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>110</sup> Baker, fol. T<sup>v</sup>.

Edward's deposition provided early modern writers with some freedom to discuss his personal failings, it remained politically risky to state unequivocally that Edward was unfit to rule, and that his deposition was therefore justified. In this sense, Cary's sudden change of heart in her conclusion is particularly instructive. After her sustained depiction of a king naturally inclined to vice, Cary's claim that Edward 'lost [his kingdom]...principally by the treacherous Infidelity of his Wife, Servants, and Subjects' appears incongruous. It seems likely that she was ultimately reluctant to condone deposition, even that of a deeply flawed monarch. Her text is at times didactic, foregrounding the connections between Edward's favourites and those of James VI and I, which would have made a positive treatment of deposition politically sensitive, even risky. She contents herself by stating that the failure of Edward's subjects to defend him was due to the 'Oppression' he perpetuated, but her conclusion still militates against the condemnatory tone of the preceding text. The political sensitivity of Edward's story, then, simultaneously sparked early modern writers' interest and enforced polyvalent, equivocal representation.

## II. Edward II as political exemplum

The exception to such enforced equivocality is, of course, in texts with deliberately polemical ends. This section relies substantially for its theoretical background on Curtis Perry's excellent introduction to the early modern discourse of favouritism in *Literature and Favoritism in Early Modern England*. Perry argues that this discourse has many stock elements independent of historical facts:

there is more to the discourse of favouritism than just a series of isolated court contexts: the kinds of invective levelled against successive favourites are so consistent as to hint at habits of political imagination that extend beyond the context of any single career. This is true in terms of the striking recurrence of what Robert Shephard has called the 'bogey myths' of favouritism – the way each favourite attracted a similar set of lurid scandal tropes – but also, more subtly, in the way that successive favourites are pigeonholed by observers into the same ethically charged stereotypes set in meaningful opposition to traditional models of honour and duty and service. ... The figure of the all-powerful royal favourite, in other words, is a cultural fantasy, one developed in relation to historical persons and situations but one best understood in larger mythic or ideological terms.<sup>111</sup>

The use of Edward II's favourites as exempla to critique early modern royal favourites in England and France must be seen in light of this. Perry contextualises what he calls 'the Elizabethan and early Stuart fascination with the figure of the corrupt royal favourite' by attributing this in part to 'a profound ambivalence about the legitimacy of personal

---

<sup>111</sup> Perry, p. 2.

intimacy as a political mechanism'.<sup>112</sup> As such, he argues, the trope of 'erotic favouritism' – 'the constant murmur of erotic gossip accompanying royal favouritism' – 'tells us relatively little about the actual practice of the politics of intimacy or about the nature of the relationship between various monarchs and their favourites.' Rather, 'the popularity of erotic constructions of favouritism has to do with the fact that they offer an alternative to the longstanding rhetorical tradition of blaming evil counsellors for misgovernment while exonerating their royal patrons'.<sup>113</sup> In the case of Edward II, however, this argument – the insistence that we should not interpret representations of sexual relationships between kings and favourites as indicating the belief that those relationships were actually sexual – can be overstated. For example, in response to Cary's description of Edward as having an 'effeminate disposition' and use of the term 'Ganymede' to refer to Gaveston, Perry writes, 'I understand this association to be based on the period's misogynistic assumption that women are less able to govern their passions and take the implication of sodomy as a kind of stigmatising shorthand for a more general failure of self-government'.<sup>114</sup> This fails to consider not only the specificity of 'Ganymede' (see Chapter 1), but also the fact that by the 1620s there was an established historiographical consensus, independent of any more general tropes of 'erotic favouritism', which held that Edward and Gaveston's relationship had been sexual. It is necessary, therefore, to consider early modern political uses of Edward's story in light of both the early modern discourse and tropes of favouritism, and Edward's existing historiographical reputation.

Perry emphasises the centrality of Edward and his favourites to the discourse he examines. Gaveston, he writes, is 'the paradigmatic personal favourite' for early modern commentators, and Edward's reign 'the central native exemplum of passionate and corrupting favouritism for late Elizabethan and early Stuart writers'.<sup>115</sup> Edward's story 'is utterly ubiquitous in the period's controversial political writing, where it serves as a highly contested precedent for arguments about the nature and limitations of English monarchy, and it is perhaps the most frequently retold political fable of the era as well'.<sup>116</sup> It not only speaks to the anxieties about personal rule referred to above – 'The idea of favouritism run amok always holds out the threat that the king's will might be extended to the point where it alone determines the composition of the public sphere' – but is useful because of its 'deeply ambiguous' potential: 'it can always be told either as a story about the tyrannical or

---

<sup>112</sup> Perry, p. 3.

<sup>113</sup> Perry, p. 135.

<sup>114</sup> Perry, pp. 220–21.

<sup>115</sup> Perry, pp. 46, 185.

<sup>116</sup> Perry, pp. 185–88.

absolutist potential of unbridled royal will or as a story of treason and rebellion'. 'Not coincidentally,' Perry observes, 'interest in the Edward II story peaks during the periods when English observers were most likely to be concerned with the expansion of royal prerogative and with related shifts in constitutional balance: the 1590s and the 1620s'.

### **i. Polemical invocations**

This section will first consider texts and incidents whose sole reason for mentioning Edward is to use his story as a political warning or condemnation. This cannot be a comprehensive selection, but instead is a survey of invocations that are particularly representative or were particularly influential. They reflect the fact that early modern 'playwrights, spectators and readers [were] convinced that they, too, were living in an age of overmighty favourites', and generally (as Blair Worden writes of Nathaniel Crouch's 1695 text *The Unfortunate Court-Favourites of England*), '[conceive] of favouritism as a universal and unvarying phenomenon'.<sup>117</sup> Texts which set out to draw parallels between different favourites, contemporary or historical, became increasingly common during the seventeenth century, reflecting the conviction that history was primarily useful insofar as it provided examples for the present day. The aspects which can be observed most commonly are the coupling of Edward with his great grandson Richard II as two deposed kings; the use of Edward's favourites as a benchmark of immorality and the statement that a particular contemporary favourite somehow surpasses this; and an emphasis on Edward's flaws in order to demonstrate that some people are simply inherently unfit to rule. If deposition is treated as the key issue, depending on the polemical angle of their text, most writers either emphasise the legality of Edward's deposition or condemn it and argue that it led indirectly to the Wars of the Roses. Some, however, engage with the opposing argument in order to bolster the credibility of their case, and focus their effort on identifying the many differences between Edward's situation and the contemporary issue under discussion – concluding either that the justifications for deposing Edward do not apply to the current political situation, or that the undesirable consequences of Edward's deposition would not befall contemporary England.

### **Elizabeth I**

Elizabeth, famously, knew that 'I am Richard the Second'.<sup>118</sup> But to many writers she was also Edward II, and her favourites were Gaveston and the Despensers. Edward

---

<sup>117</sup> Elliott, 'Introduction', p. 2; Blair Worden, 'Favourites on the English Stage', in *The World of the Favourite*, pp. 159–83 (p. 172).

<sup>118</sup> Marie Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), p. 2.

was, according to Paul Budra, a member of ‘the standard rogues’ gallery of Tudor myth’, and the popularity and influence of Marlowe’s *Edward II* affirmed his place in public consciousness.<sup>119</sup> The most significant common factor between Edward and Elizabeth was their preference for male favourites and the existence of sexual rumours concerning them. Simon Adams describes Elizabeth’s male favourites as ‘a controversial novelty’ compared to those of (for example) Henry VIII: they were novel in terms of their gender, their ‘physical and personal attraction for the Queen’, their status as ‘individuals’ rather than ‘a large [and/or] transient series of companions’, and the combination of political influence and personal intimacy they enjoyed.<sup>120</sup> Faced with a ‘novelty’, many political commentators responded by finding its nearest precedent: Edward II.

The importance of sexual rumours to the parallels that were drawn between Elizabeth and Edward should not be underestimated. As Robert Shephard has shown, ‘The frequency and intensity of the rumours about Elizabeth were much greater than those about James [VI and I]’.<sup>121</sup> Elizabeth’s refusal to marry was a key factor in the continuance of these rumours: effectively, ‘minions, more than marriage, were the reality of Elizabeth’s sexuality’.<sup>122</sup> Clearly, however, the resonances that contemporaries found between Elizabeth’s and Edward’s favourites were not restricted to matters of sexuality: in addition, ‘Bacon, Burghley, and Leicester were routinely vilified as atheist timeservers and ambitious Machiavellian upstarts whose advancement had come at the expense of the (Catholic) nobility, Elizabeth’s natural counsellors’.<sup>123</sup> As detailed above, the criticism that Edward chose to advance low-born favourites at the expense of those from more noble families – his own ‘natural counsellors’ – is routinely found in historiographical accounts.

Comparisons between Elizabeth’s and Edward’s favourites are most frequently found in relation to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Broadly, they represent contemporary reactions to an overmighty favourite whose influence was perceived to result

---

<sup>119</sup> Paul Budra, *A Mirror for Magistrates and the De Casibus Tradition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), p. 28. Elizabeth Donno provides further evidence of the topicality of Edward II’s reign during the Elizabethan period, noting that ‘Henslowe refers to a lost *play of mortymore* of 1602 (as well as to an earlier play, 1588/9, dealing with the Spencers)’ [Elizabeth Donno, ‘Admiration’ and ‘Commiseration’ in Marlowe’s *Edward II*, *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 79 (1978), 372–83 (p. 377)].

<sup>120</sup> Simon Adams, *Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 46.

<sup>121</sup> Robert Shephard, ‘Sexual Rumours in English Politics: The Cases of Elizabeth I and James I’, in *Desire and Discipline: Sex and Sexuality in the Premodern West*, ed. by Jacqueline Murray and Konrad Eisenbichler (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), pp. 101–22 (p. 102); see also Levin, *passim*.

<sup>122</sup> Deanne Williams, ‘Dido, Queen of England’, *ELH*, 73 (2006), 31–59 (p. 44).

<sup>123</sup> Paulina Kewes, ‘Marlowe, History and Politics’, in *Christopher Marlowe in Context*, ed. by Emily Bartels and Emma Smith (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 138–54 (p. 139).

from personal intimacy with the monarch.<sup>124</sup> Dudley was, in Carole Levin's words, 'deeply disliked as an arrogant upstart'; moreover, 'The rumours about Elizabeth's sexual misconduct that abounded throughout her reign almost entirely centred on her relationship with Dudley'.<sup>125</sup> Libels against Dudley are a pertinent place to begin this investigation since Perry identifies them as a key starting point in the construction of the figure of the royal favourite: 'Leicester libels...use the earl to construct an influential set of stereotypes concerning the domineering favourite that continue to shape perceptions and responses to court corruption for the next sixty years'.<sup>126</sup>

The most famous of these libels is the 1584 pamphlet commonly known as *Leicester's Commonwealth*. Written in dialogue form, this defamatory tract 'can be shown to have emanated...from a group of lay Catholic exiles, partisans of the Queen of Scots, who were based principally in Paris, more specifically from a subgroup among them composed of formerly pro-Anjou courtiers recently hounded from the English Court (in their view at least) by Leicester himself'.<sup>127</sup> D. C. Peck, the tract's most recent editor, summarises its position as follows:

With only slight oversimplification, the *Commonwealth's* purposes may be briefly defined as three. The first was to defame the Earl of Leicester in both his private life and his public role, and there seemed to be two motives for doing so: a practical motive, to introduce the Earl as a new scapegoat for the rising tensions of the time, thereby diverting attention from the Queen of Scots; and a personal one, to vilify a hated enemy. The second purpose was to advance again the Scottish claim to the crown of England, chiefly for Queen Mary but newly with her son James in mind as well. The third was to attempt to calm the growing religious anxieties in the realm (in part by writing them off to Leicester's agency) and thereby to procure more favourable treatment for the Catholics at home.<sup>128</sup>

*Leicester's Commonwealth* focuses particularly on Dudley's sexual behaviour:

Throughout, the appetite for power (marrying the queen) and for sex (with the other women) are conflated, seen as two aspects of the same unregulated appetite... The libel's over-passionate Leicester is thus an emblematic figure of failed self-government, a figure of inconstant and irrational desires incapable even of holding constant to a wicked purpose.<sup>129</sup>

However, despite the similar reputation that was beginning to attach itself to Edward's favourites, the writer does not draw comparisons between them on this basis. Instead, the

---

<sup>124</sup> See Adams, *passim*, for Leicester's actual influence at the Elizabethan court.

<sup>125</sup> Levin, p. 45.

<sup>126</sup> Perry, p. 24.

<sup>127</sup> *Leicester's Commonwealth*, ed. by D. C. Peck (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1985), p. 4.

<sup>128</sup> Peck, p. 4.

<sup>129</sup> Perry, p. 27.

first mention of Edward occurs via the suggestion that Leicester is aiming to dispose of Elizabeth:

Lawyer: ...I for my part would rather counsel them [Elizabeth's favourites] to make much of her Majesty's life, for after that they little knew what may ensue or befall their designments.

Gentleman: They will make the most thereof...for their own advantage, but after that what is like to follow the examples of Edward and Richard II, as also of Henry and Edward VI, do sufficiently forewarn us, whose lives were prolonged until their deaths were thought profitable to the conspirators and not longer.<sup>130</sup>

No historiographical account of Edward II suggests that his favourites actively pursued his deposition or murder after he ceased to be 'profitable' to them, presumably because they famously shared his fate. In this quotation, Leicester is aligned with the 'conspirators' who were responsible for Edward's deposition and death; the primary purpose of invoking Edward here is to darkly remind the reader of the possibility of deposition and inspire them to fear for Elizabeth's future. It is some time later that the writer invokes Edward in relation to his indulgence of favourites, condemning Elizabeth for favouring Leicester: 'too much favour towards wicked persons', he writes, explicitly naming 'excessive favour towards Peter Gaveston and two of the Spencers', 'was the chiefest cause of destruction' for all of England's deposed kings.<sup>131</sup> In addition, the writer uses what became a common technique, claiming that his subject is 'worse than' Edward's favourites: 'this man, who by the favour of her Majesty so afflicteth her people as never did before him either Gaveston, or Spencer, or Vere, or Mowbray, or any other mischievous tyrant that abused most his prince's favour within our realm of England'.<sup>132</sup>

In all of these examples, the role of Edward and his favourites is that of admonitory precedent: the reader is asked to learn from his example what evils can result from overmighty favourites, and address the Elizabethan situation accordingly. This is standard early modern English practice with regard to history: it fulfils one of the purposes of history outlined by Thomas Blundeville in his *True Order and Method of Writing and Reading Histories*, 'that we maye be stirred by example of the good to followe the good, and by example of the evill to flee the evill'.<sup>133</sup> Such admonition was recognised to have seditious potential. *Leicester's Commonwealth*, by condemning Dudley as worse than Gaveston et al. and

---

<sup>130</sup> Peck, p. 138.

<sup>131</sup> Peck, p. 188.

<sup>132</sup> Peck, p. 189.

<sup>133</sup> Thomas Blundeville, *The True Order and Methode of Wrying and Reading Hystories* (London: Willyam Seres, [1574]), fol. F3r.



then stating that ‘too much favour towards wicked persons was the chiefest cause of destruction’ of three deposed kings, was coming dangerously close to threatening Elizabeth with deposition. Philip Sidney’s reply to the tract in defence of Leicester addresses this point:

[The writer of *Leicester’s Commonwealth*] in some places brings in the example of Gaveston, Earl of Cornwall, Robert Vere, Duke of Ireland, and De la Pole, Duke of Suffolk. It is not my purpose to defend them, but I would fain know whether they that persecuted those councillors, when they had had their will in ruining them, whether their rage ceased before they had as well destroyed the kings themselves, Edward and Richard II and Henry VI.<sup>134</sup>

Sidney, of course, knows perfectly well that those kings ultimately shared their favourites’ fates. His reply usefully demonstrates the ‘dark side’ of political texts that use comparisons with Gaveston and the Despencers to condemn contemporary favourites. Edward as a political exemplum carries inevitable and constant ambiguity – what Perry calls ‘reversibility of application’ – which makes the invocation of his story both potent and risky.<sup>135</sup>

In addition to Dudley, comparisons were also drawn between Edward’s favourites and William Cecil by a ‘network of exiled English Catholics’ – a comparison possibly influenced by the writers’ exposure to libels circulating in France (discussed below) which compared Gaveston to Henri III’s favourites.<sup>136</sup> Here, social status was the key point of identification: these comparisons constitute objections to a favourite whose influence is considered disproportionate and undeserved in relation to his low birth. ‘Cecill,’ Robert Persons writes, ‘being the causer of the most enormous evils...is a traitor himself, and the greatest, that ever England nowrished, and farr more noysome and pernicious to the realme, then ever were the Spencers, Peeter of Gaverstone, or any other that ever abused either Prince or people’.<sup>137</sup> Once again, Edward’s favourites are invoked as a benchmark of evil influence which contemporary favourites have improbably managed to exceed. Later in the same text, Persons used this comparison to threaten Cecil: ‘thincke betymes upon the end of pierse of Gaverston, & the Spencers, & others that have abused their Princes favours in England heretofore, to the debasing of true nobilitie, and pilling of the people’. Ironically, it appears that Cecil did not need exhorting to ‘thincke betymes’ on the examples

---

<sup>134</sup> Peck, pp. 252–53.

<sup>135</sup> Curtis Perry, ‘Yelverton, Buckingham, and the Story of Edward II in the 1620s’, *Review of English Studies*, 54 (2003), 313–35 (p. 332).

<sup>136</sup> Alan Stewart, ‘Edoüard et Gaverston: New Ways of Looking at an English History Play’, in Melnikoff, pp. 97–117 (pp. 109–10).

<sup>137</sup> Robert Persons, *An Advertisement Written to a Secretarie of My L. Treasurers of Inghland, by an Inghlishe Intelligencer* ([Antwerp, 1592), fol. D9<sup>v</sup>.

of Edward and his favourites: he 'left a six-page manuscript dated 1595, containing notes on the reign of Edward II and marking enemies of the Crown'.<sup>138</sup>

Persons also considered Edward relevant to the Elizabethan succession crisis.<sup>139</sup> His 1595 pamphlet *A Conference About the Next Succession*, dedicated to the Earl of Essex, aimed to show – through discussions of 'Princes deposed for defect in government' – that 'succession to government by neernes of bloode is not by Law of nature, or divine, but only by humane & positive Lawes of every particuler common wealth, and consequently, may uppon just causes be altered by the same'.<sup>140</sup> Accordingly, it focuses on Edward having 'acknowledged his owne unwoorthines' and having been 'for his evel goverment deposed', embodying Marie Axton's concept of 'contractual kingship'.<sup>141</sup> The *Conference* attracted several responses. Peter Wentworth sought to reassure Elizabeth that naming a successor would not result in her deposition, using Edward as a supporting example: Edward's deposition, he argues, was not forced by his successor, but 'who so readeth the storie, he shall finde that he was deposed by his Nobilitie and commons, as one (in their judgement) not worthie to be a king'.<sup>142</sup> In a less provocative response, John Hayward condemns Edward's deposition, arguing that it resulted in divine punishment in the form of Richard II's deposition and murder. Hayward's representation of Edward shows the influence of the sympathetic account of his deposition, imprisonment and death derived ultimately from le Baker:

...many of our histories report [Edward] to bee of a good and courteous nature and not unlearned; imputing his defectes rather to Fortune, then either to counsell or carriage of his affaires. His deposition was a violent furie, led by a wife, both cruell & unchast; & can with no better countenance of right be justified, then may his lamentable both indignities and death, which therupon did ensue.<sup>143</sup>

Hayward's assessment of the consensus on Edward's 'defects' is, as this chapter has shown, something of a misrepresentation of the historiographical record – but one which serves his anti-deposition agenda well. He later claims that 'king Edward and king Richard, both surnamed the Second...were not insupportable either in nature or in rule; & yet the people

<sup>138</sup> Jean R. Brink, *Michael Drayton Revisited* (Boston: Twayne, 1990), p. 47.

<sup>139</sup> For more detail see Mark Thornton Burnett, 'Edward II and Elizabethan Politics', in *Marlowe, History, and Sexuality*, ed. by Paul Whitfield White (New York: AMS Press, 1998), pp. 91–107 (pp. 94–95).

<sup>140</sup> Robert Persons, *A Conference about the Next Succession* (Imprinted at N. [i.e. Antwerp: By A. Conincx], 1595), fols. F3<sup>v</sup>, \*3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>141</sup> Persons, *Conference*, fols. F2<sup>v</sup>, S7<sup>r</sup>; Axton, p. 97.

<sup>142</sup> Peter Wentworth, *A Pitthie Exhortation to Her Majestie for Establishing Her Successor* ([Edinburgh]: [Robert Waldegrave], 1598), fol. F8<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>143</sup> John Hayward, *An Answer to the First Part of a Certain Conference, Concerning Succession* (London: Eliot's Court Press, R. Bradock, P. Short, T. Snodham, R. Field, and J. Harrison for Simon Waterson, and Cuthbert Burbie, 1603), fol. K<sup>r</sup>.

more upon wantonnes then for any want, did take an unbridled course against them'.<sup>144</sup> Strikingly, Hayward's condemnation of Edward and Richard's deponents is expressed in identical terms ('wantonnes' and 'unbridled') to condemnations of Edward himself elsewhere. These two observations usefully demonstrate the selective reading of history employed by polemical writers.

### Henri III

As shown in Chapter 1, comparisons were also drawn between Edward's favourites and those of Henri III of France, which are likely to have influenced Marlowe's portrayal of Edward and Gaveston and his choices of terminology. In this case, accusations of sexual transgression were central to the comparisons.<sup>145</sup> If the homophobic and transmisogynistic tone of his writing can be left aside, Arthur Tilley's account of the situation provides a useful summary of the key issues to which Henri's subjects objected:

The great nobles, indignant at seeing high offices of state, which they regarded as hereditary in their own families, heaped upon dissolute youths like [Henri's favourites] Joyeuse and Épernon, rallied to the Guises, while the 'Politiques', though too loyal to the principle of hereditary monarchy to break with the king, were too much alienated by his outrages on common sense and decency [i.e. his perceived sexual transgression and gender nonconformity] to be very active in his cause.<sup>146</sup>

To this should be added religiously motivated opposition: in particular, the Catholic League were incensed by Henri's moderate attitude towards Protestants, his attempts to negotiate, and his decision to name a Protestant successor. By the 1580s, this resulted in 'a virulent and deliberate campaign of vilification directed against the king'.<sup>147</sup> One aspect of this campaign was a pamphlet war centred around a comparison drawn between Gaveston and Henri's powerful favourite Jean-Louis de Nogaret de La Valette, Duc d'Épernon.

The pamphlet war began in 1588 with the anonymous *Histoire Tragique et Memorable, de Pierre de Gaverston*. Several redactions of this text exist: earlier versions simply give an account of Gaveston's life (largely translated from Thomas Walsingham's *Chronica Maiora*), while later ones add Edward's fate (largely derived from Froissart's *Chroniques*).<sup>148</sup> It was sufficiently influential – and had sufficiently seditious potential – to attract the attention of

<sup>144</sup> Hayward, fol. O<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>145</sup> For a summary of the accusations of sexual transgression levelled at Henri III, see Katherine B. Crawford, 'Love, Sodomy, and Scandal: Controlling the Sexual Reputation of Henry III', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 12 (2003), 513–42.

<sup>146</sup> Arthur Tilley, 'Some Pamphlets of the French Wars of Religion', *The English Historical Review*, 14.55 (1899), 451–70 (p. 461).

<sup>147</sup> David Potter, 'Marlowe's *Massacre at Paris* and the Reputation of Henri III of France', in *Christopher Marlowe and English Renaissance Culture*, ed. by Peter Roberts and Darryll Grantley (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), pp. 70–95 (p. 76).

<sup>148</sup> For detail on the different versions of this pamphlet, see Stewart, pp. 102–05 and n. 30.

the English ambassador to France, Edward Stafford (who sent a copy of it to Francis Walsingham with a letter describing it as ‘the vyldest book that ever I sawe’); of James VI of Scotland (who ‘twice importuned his agent in Paris to acquire a copy’); and of contemporary French historians (it ‘was enough of a political event in its own right to be discussed at length in Pierre Matthieu’s 1594 account of the Wars of Religion, and Jacques-Auguste de Thou’s standard *Histoire universelle*).<sup>149</sup> As a result, it survives in ‘amazingly high’ numbers. Its most significant contribution to Edward and Gaveston’s historiography was its use of the term ‘mignon’ and its sodomy accusation, and it may also have attracted the attention of Marlowe.<sup>150</sup> In addition, however, several versions of the text are prefaced with a long mock dedication to Épernon which draws a detailed parallel between him and Gaveston, using anagrams (common in pamphlets of the French wars of religion) to transform ‘Pierre de Gaverston’ into ‘Periure de Nogarets’.<sup>151</sup> The situation in contemporary France, claims the writer, is worse than that of Edward II’s England, but less because Épernon is inherently worse than Gaveston than because Henri’s nobles do not have the courage to exile Épernon as Edward’s did Gaveston.<sup>152</sup> He also uses Gaveston’s fate to threaten Épernon in a satirical dedication:

tous ceuz qui ont abusé de la faveur des Rous, au prejudice & detrimen du pauvre people, comme Gaverston & vous avez faict, reçoivent tousjours une fin funeste et honteuse, pour un guerdon de leurs forfaits.<sup>153</sup>

all those who have abused the favour of kings, to the prejudice and the detriment of the poor people, as Gaveston and you have done, always receive a fatal and shameful end as a reward for their crimes.

Épernon, or someone writing on his behalf, responded to the *Histoire Tragique* with a pamphlet which became popularly known as *L’Antigaverston*. This text denies the validity of the comparison, asserting that ‘this history is a calumny invented and published by those of the [Catholic] League...to inflame more and more the fire of sedition which consumes our poor kingdom’, and particularly stressing Épernon’s native French heritage and noble

---

<sup>149</sup> Stewart, pp. 100–02.

<sup>150</sup> Joseph Cady is wrong to claim that ‘The fact that the two best-known English texts about Edward and Gaveston, Marlowe’s *Edward II* (first performed 1592) and Drayton’s *Peirs Gaveston* (1593), could not have been influences on the [*Histoire Tragique*] seems further evidence’ that ‘the Edward II-Gaveston story functioned widely in informed European Renaissance culture as a symbol of male homosexual attraction’: this ignores the existence of the chronicles on which the pamphlet is manifestly based. [Joseph Cady, ‘The “Masculine Love” of the “Princes of Sodom” “Practising the Art of Ganymede” at Henri III’s Court: The Homosexuality of Henri III and His Mignons in Pierre de L’Estoile’s *Mémoires-Journaux*’, in *Desire and Discipline*, pp. 123–54 (p. 141).

<sup>151</sup> *Histoire Tragique*, fol. A<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>152</sup> *Histoire Tragique*, fol. A4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>153</sup> *Histoire Tragique*, fol. A2<sup>v</sup>.

birth.<sup>154</sup> Responding in turn, a pamphlet entitled *Replique à l'Antigaverston* argues that Épernon is worse than Gaveston:

Si Gaverston estoit hay des Anglois, pour ce qu'il estoit estranger, vous ne devez estre envié des François pour ceste occasion, mais plustost pour vostre vie infame & detestable, & orgueil insupportable.<sup>155</sup>

If Gaveston was hated by the English because he was foreign, you should not be hated by the French for that reason, but more because of your infamous and detestable life, and your insufferable pride.

Two additional pamphlets continued the conversation.<sup>156</sup> Following this, 'almost immediately, other libels, poems and plays started to employ the example of Edward and/or [Gaveston]'.<sup>157</sup>

As well as these comparisons between Henri's and Edward's favourites, pamphleteers drew direct comparisons between the two kings. A section of the *Histoire Tragique* addressed 'To the reader' in some redactions begins, 'If the condition of Piers Gaveston was miserable, that of king Edward was more so'; it goes on to state that Edward's penetrative murder was 'not only sanctioned but carried out by "the barons of the country"', suggesting that Henri is also at risk of being put to death by his nobles.<sup>158</sup> Stewart notes that 'A 1589 pamphlet lamenting Henri's assassination of the Guise brothers notes how the English had strongly hated the cruelty and perfidy used by their kings Richard II and Edward II against the nobles of their country, and for that cause principally had deposed them from their royal dignities.'<sup>159</sup> The pamphlet *Les Choses Horribles Contennee en une Lettre Envoyée à Henry de Valois* similarly condemns Edward for having 'put to death good lords', this time in the context of comparing Henri's alleged toleration of sorcery to Edward's harbouring of 'Gaveston, who in the end was found to be a devil in disguise [*diable desguisé*]'.<sup>160</sup> Again the comparison is used implicitly to threaten Henri: 'for his just recompense, this king Edward was skewered alive with a burning iron'. This willingness to condone Edward's deposition and murder is a marked feature of French political uses of his reign, and reflects the heightened political stakes of Henri III's France compared to

<sup>154</sup> *Lettre d'un Gentil-Homme Catholique Apostolicque & Romain & Vray François & Fidelle Serviteur du Roy à ung Sien Amy sur l'Histoire de Pierre de Gaverston* (Rheims: Jehan de Foigny avec permission de Monseigneur le cardinal de Guise, 1588), fols. A4<sup>v</sup> C<sup>r</sup>–C2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>155</sup> *Replique à l'Antigaverston* (n.p., 1588), fols. C4<sup>v</sup>–D<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>156</sup> *Responce a l'Antigaverston* (n.p., 1588); *Lettre Missive en Forme de Response, à la Replique de l'Antigaverston* (Reims: Jean de Foigny, imprimeur de M. le cardinal de Guise, 1588).

<sup>157</sup> Stewart, p. 108.

<sup>158</sup> *Histoire Tragique*, fol. G3<sup>v</sup>; quoted and trans. by Stewart, p. 107.

<sup>159</sup> Stewart, p. 108; the text in question is *De l'Excommunication, & Censures Ecclesiastiques, Encourues par Henry de Valois, pour l'Assassinat Commis és Personnes de Messieurs le Cardinal & Duc de Guise* (Paris: Guillaume Bichon, 1589), fol. I4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>160</sup> 'Les Choses Horribles Contennee en une Lettre Envoyée à Henry de Valois par un Enfant de Paris', in *Variétés Historiques et Littéraires*, ed. by Édouard Fournier (Paris: Pagnerre, 1855), VI, 201–07 (p. 205).

Elizabeth I's England: the Catholic League's desire to oust Henri from the throne was well known, to the extent that concealing it would have been pointless and unnecessary. Although the Gaveston libels disappeared after Henri's assassination, they 'resurfaced, retooled against Cardinal Mazarin, among the Mazarinades published during the "Fronde" of the mid-seventeenth century'.<sup>161</sup>

## James VI and I

Political uses of Edward's reign in Jacobean texts were prompted, like those under Elizabeth, by the existence of powerful male favourites whose relationships with the monarch were subject to sexual rumours. 'As had been the case with Elizabeth,' Shephard writes, 'the presumption was that the king was not distributing honours and office to the deserving – by whatever standard – but rather was misusing his royal authority to reward those who would gratify his sinful sexual urges'.<sup>162</sup> Jacobean uses of Edward as a political exemplum place particular emphasis on his unwise choice of *young* counsellors and favourites. While the Duke of Buckingham was of course a particularly problematic figure, seeming 'to many' to be 'the second coming of Edward's favourites',<sup>163</sup> James was being compared to Edward before he even acceded to the English throne. Francis Walsingham, on a 1583 diplomatic mission to Scotland, used Edward's deposition to threaten the young James VI. According to his own report, Walsingham warned James that 'divers princes' – and particularly 'young princes' – had been deposed as a result of 'errors' encouraged by evil counsel; he cited the Earls of Lennox and Arran as particular examples of people who had provided evil counsel. Just 'as subjects are bound to obey dutifully', Walsingham admonished James, 'so were princes bound to command justly; which reason and ground of government was set down in the deposition of Edward the Second, as by ancient record thereof doth appear'.<sup>164</sup> Walsingham had previously written to James warning against evil counsellors, but had not explicitly mentioned Edward as an example of this. His choice of Edward here (over, for example, Richard II) as a 'precedent' of deposition may reflect the circulation of sexual rumours concerning James's relationships with favourites such as Lennox (see Chapter 2), which made Edward a closer parallel. The 1581 execution of James Douglas, Earl of Morton (who had previously been Regent of Scotland, and whose

---

<sup>161</sup> Stewart, p. 109, n. 37.

<sup>162</sup> Shephard, p. 110. This article is also an excellent source of contemporary quotations concerning James's perceived sexual relationships with his favourites. See also Perry, pp. 131–32.

<sup>163</sup> Perry, p. 188.

<sup>164</sup> Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth*, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), II, 218.

downfall was allegedly precipitated by Lennox's opposition) may also have been seen to parallel Edward's execution of Thomas of Lancaster.<sup>165</sup>

Roger Coke's eyewitness memoir of James's reign, printed in 1694, similarly focuses on the youth of James's favourites (it contains four references to Rehoboam), and on James's unreasonableness compared to that of Edward:

neither was it any great wonder, that Edward 2d. a young Man, should be Governed by Pierce Gaveston, a Person of far more accomplished Parts than Buckingham, for Gaveston was bred up with Edward and had so far by his flatterys prevail'd upon him, that Edward could not enjoy any pleasure in his Life without him. But for an Old King, having been so above Fifty One Years, to dote so upon a Young Favourite, scarce of Age, yet younger in understanding, tho' as old in Vices as any in his time, and to commit the whole ship of the Common-wealth, both by Sea and Land to such a Phaeton, is a President without any Example.<sup>166</sup>

While not going so far as to praise or exonerate Edward, this passage does contain some of the justificatory elements observed in Chapter 2, in that it treats Edward's love for Gaveston as explicable given their mutual upbringing. However, Coke's comparison relies for its condemnatory meaning on his readers' knowledge that Edward is a negative precedent, and that for James to have surpassed even him is shocking. This is a similar technique to claiming that contemporary favourites are worse than Edward's, which Coke also does elsewhere in his text: 'the Duke of *Buckingham* were accused of more Crimes in Parliament, than is recorded of *Pierce Gaveston*, and the *Spencers* in *Edward* the Second's time'.<sup>167</sup>

Comparisons between Edward and James's favourites were not restricted to written texts. Perry has detailed the 1621 incident in which, during Parliament, Sir Humphrey Yelverton angrily told Buckingham that he 'should have "read the articles against Hugh Spencer in this place, for taking upon him to place and displace officers"'. The parallel drawn... caused an uproar, bringing the proceedings to a halt until Buckingham himself urged that Yelverton be allowed to continue.<sup>168</sup> James, fully aware of the implications of this comparison, observed, 'if he Spenser, I Edward 2.'<sup>169</sup> Yelverton subsequently denied that he had even meant to compare Buckingham to Despenser, much less James to Edward: 'Lett me never fynde mercy with God, nor any chyld of myne, yf I ment to

---

<sup>165</sup> I am grateful to Hannah Coates for bringing this early example to my attention, and for suggesting the parallel between Morton and Lancaster.

<sup>166</sup> Roger Coke, *A Detecion of the Court and State of England During the Four Last Reigns, and the Inter-Regnum* (London: n.p., 1694), fol. H<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>167</sup> Coke, fol. 2B5<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>168</sup> Perry, 'Yelverton', p. 313. See the full article for a detailed analysis of this affair and its 'textual resonance'.

<sup>169</sup> Perry, p. 136.

compare my Lord of Buckingham with Spencer, or the King James with Edward 2; but only to saye, as yt were, remember Lott's wife, and so to put my Lord of Buckingham in mynde that he was in many of theis courses abused.<sup>170</sup> 'Yelverton was censured, imprisoned and fined', presumably an indication that James did not find his denial plausible.<sup>171</sup> In fact, Perry proposes that 'Yelverton helped to solidify the association between Buckingham and Spencer in the culture's imagination... There is every reason to believe that Yelverton's outburst was much discussed'.<sup>172</sup> He cites considerable evidence in the form of various contemporary accounts, which often widen the comparison by reporting Yelverton to have actually compared James to Edward, when in reality he had merely compared one aspect of Buckingham's influence (his control over patents) to one aspect of Despenser's influence.<sup>173</sup> As such, although 'none of the extant accounts of [Yelverton's speech] seems particularly interested in the erotic implications of Yelverton's parallel' – despite the invocation of the Biblical story of Sodom in Yelverton's later reference to 'Lott's wife' – overall 'Yelverton's comparison... may well have implied a mental connection between the sodomy frequently associated with Edward II and gossip about James's sodomitical intimacies with favourites such as Buckingham'.<sup>174</sup> However, 'such a connection makes sense primarily within the context of a larger and more nebulous concern with the king's personal and political weakness and the resulting corruption of his court'.

Perry's point about 'mental connection[s]' and topics 'frequently associated' with monarchs is crucial to understanding the significance of politicised invocations of Edward II and his favourites like the one made by Yelverton. When a comparison focuses on political crimes and is made in a political context, it should not be understood as primarily intended to implicitly allege sexual transgression. However, we should recognise that Edward and his favourites, like any historical figures, had full and complex historiographical reputations which Yelverton's (or anyone's) comparison would have called to an audience's minds. This is true not just in the area of sexual transgression, but in terms of Edward's ultimate fate – hence James's strong reaction to the problem that 'if he

---

<sup>170</sup> Perry, 'Yelverton', p. 314.

<sup>171</sup> Perry, 'Yelverton', p. 314.

<sup>172</sup> Perry, 'Yelverton', p. 320.

<sup>173</sup> Perry, 'Yelverton', pp. 320–23.

<sup>174</sup> Perry, 'Yelverton', p. 324.



Spencer, I Edward 2', and the existence of royalist counter-interpretations of the Yelverton affair.<sup>175</sup>

## Charles I and James II

During the English Civil War, and later the Exclusion Crisis and reign of James II, it was understandably Edward's deposition that attracted the most political commentary.<sup>176</sup> For some writers, he was an example that provided a legal precedent for deposition: 'That Kings may be deposed, is cleer by the forementioned Precedent, and that Precedents are Law, will not be denied by any man that deserves to wear a bare Gown.'<sup>177</sup> Such uses of Edward's reign, when coupled with the technique of claiming that the current situation is worse than any historical precedent, resulted in some unusual defences of Edward: one writer contrasted him and Richard II with Charles I, excusing the two deposed kings as having been 'truly misled by evil Councillors' but condemning Charles as being 'hurried on by his own inordinate desire of Arbitrary power, to rule both without and against Law'.<sup>178</sup> In the same text, Edward's love for Gaveston is validated as deep and long-lasting – 'Edward chose for his companion, and chief Councillor, *Peirce Gaveston*, whom (being bred together from their childhood) he passionately loved' – compared to Charles's feigned and calculated love for Buckingham: 'This King chose to be governed by the Duke of *Buckingham*, whose enemy he was till a few months before his fathers death; and it is more then doubted by honest and discreet men, that they contracted friendship, and agreed to divide the Empire upon condition of poysoning the old man'.<sup>179</sup> The writer presents Edward and Richard's deaths as just and as a predictable *de casibus* conclusion: 'the unhappy *Richard* was sent first to the Castle of Leeds in Kent, after to Pontefract, where *in order to the Publike Safety*, he departed this life. Thus also *mutatis mutandus*, died Edward the second'.<sup>180</sup>

Texts on the opposing side instead invoked Edward's story as a warning about the evils of deposition. A speech attributed to Thomas Mercks, Bishop of Carlisle, supposedly dating from Richard II's deposition, argues: 'As for the Deposing of King Edward the second it is no more to be urged, than the Poisoning of King John, or the Murdering of any other good and lawful Prince: We must live according to Laws, and not to Examples:

<sup>175</sup> For example, the text *Observations Concerning Sir Henrie Yelverton's Charge* 'capitalises on the story's reversibility in order to recast Yelverton and his supporters in the mould of Edward's rebellious bishops' (Perry, 'Yelverton', p. 331).

<sup>176</sup> An exception is the 1648 playlet *Crafty Cromwell*, in which 'Gaveston' is used as shorthand for Charles I's overnight favourites (Lois Potter, 'Marlowe in the Civil War and Commonwealth: Some Allusions and Parodies', in *A Poet and a Filthy Play-Maker*, pp. 73–82 [p. 75 n. 11]).

<sup>177</sup> *The People Informed of Their Oppressors and Oppressions* (London: n.p., 1648), fol. A4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>178</sup> *The People Informed*, fol. A2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>179</sup> *The People Informed*, fol. A2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>180</sup> *The People Informed*, fol. A4<sup>r</sup>; emphasis added.

And yet the Kingdom was not then taken from the lawful Successour'.<sup>181</sup> Not only is the legal authority of precedent disavowed here, but the proposed course of action in contemporary England is shown to be more drastic and less excusable than the course taken in 1327, when Edward's eldest son succeeded him.

The *Bishop of Carlisle's Speech* was reprinted during the Exclusion Crisis, as was Robert Persons's Elizabethan *Conference About the Next Succession*. The decisions to reprint these texts demonstrate awareness that Edward's story was being employed as a legitimating precedent by the Whig party – for example, John Somers's *Brief History of the Succession* (1681) focuses on the popular consensus over Edward's deposition: 'the People grew weary of his Irregular and Arbitrary Government', and, considering the 'many Instances of the King's Misgovernment, all which he had confessed, they concluded he was unworthy to Reign any longer'.<sup>182</sup> 'The Popish Plot and the ensuing Exclusion Crisis witnessed a revived interest in analogous situations from the past' for this reason.<sup>183</sup> The choice to print Elizabeth Cary's histories of Edward II, composed during the 1620s, also represents the application of an older text to a current political crisis (although Daniel Woolf has argued that Cary's texts were fabricated as Exclusion Crisis propaganda, his claims have since been convincingly refuted).<sup>184</sup> The printer's preface to the folio edition of Cary's text displays a clear politicised hermeneutic agenda despite its ostensible invitation of the readers' judgment:

Thou hast here presented to thy View the Life and Death of Edward the Second, one of the most Unfortunate Princes that ever swayed the English Scepter. What it was that made him so, is left to thee to judge, when thou hast read his Story. But certainly the Falsness of his Queen, and the Flattery of those Court-Parasites, Gaveston and the Spencers did contribute not a little thereto.<sup>185</sup>

Within Cary's text, however, her political allusions make the most sense when considered in relation to the reign of Charles I and the dominance of Buckingham, as will be discussed in the final section of this chapter.

Following the Glorious Revolution, new texts emerged which also used Edward as an exemplum to show the viability of deposition. One 1689 pamphlet reprinted the articles

---

<sup>181</sup> *A Pious and Learned Speech Delivered in the High Court of Parliament, 1. H. 4. by Thomas Mercks Then Bishop of Carlisle* (London: for N. V. and J. B., 1642), fol. A4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>182</sup> John Somers, *A Brief History of the Succession* (London: n.p., 1681), fol. B<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>183</sup> Daniel Woolf, 'The True Date and Authorship of Henry, Viscount Falkland's, *History of the Life, Reign, and Death of King Edward IP*, *Bodleian Library Record*, 12 (1988), 440–52 (p. 445).

<sup>184</sup> Woolf, pp. 440, 446. See Meredith Skura, 'Elizabeth Cary and Edward II: What Do Women Want to Write?', *Renaissance Drama*, 27 (1996), 79–104 (pp. 80–83) and Britland, p. 31, for a summary of the refutation of Woolf's arguments.

<sup>185</sup> Cary (folio), fol. A2<sup>r</sup>.

of Edward and Richard II's depositions, emphasising Edward's responsibility for his failings: he was 'incorrigible, without any hopes of Amendment', and cannot be excused with claims of 'evil counsel' since he allowed himself to be misled.<sup>186</sup> Robert Howard's *Historical Observations*, published the same year, takes a similar position; in fact, 'Howard helped bring about the revolution that put William of Orange on the throne'.<sup>187</sup> His text contains numerous generalised references to 'men', 'Princes' and what 'commonly' occurs, encouraging his readers to apply his statements about medieval kings to current events.<sup>188</sup> Of Edward's favourites, he writes that 'those of the loosest and most debauched Principles are aptest to feed the Humour of men, who love to be nourish'd by soft Flatteries'; but despite this oblique reference to sexual transgression, his emphasis is on the culpability of 'Princes', who themselves 'tempt the Tempters'.<sup>189</sup> On the Tory side, Edward was not frequently invoked as a precedent – presumably because of concerns that his example would remind readers that an English king had previously been successfully deposed, however unjustly – but Robert Brady did respond to Somers's text, calling Edward's deposition 'notorious Rebellion' and 'a Design of wicked popular Barons, and not the Action, much less the Choice of the People'.<sup>190</sup>

## ii. Other political allusions

In addition to the texts discussed above, which were explicitly and wholly politically motivated, many other writers unsurprisingly seized the opportunity to make political allusions as part of their accounts of Edward's reign. This is apparent in texts of all genres. As demonstrated in Chapter 1, Samuel Daniel was clearly aware that his account of Edward's deposition had politically subversive potential, and that his depiction of an overmighty favourite in Gaveston was likely to have been perceived as relevant to contemporary politics given Buckingham's prominence at the time of his text's publication (1618). A more heightened sense of contemporary political relevance can be observed in Richard Baker's *Chronicle of the Kings of England* (1643), which will serve as a case study in lieu of an extensive survey of historical texts here. Dedicated 'To the High and Mighty Prince Charles, Prince of Wales, and Duke of Cornewall: Eldest Sonne of our Sovereigne Lord, Charles, King of Great Britaine, France, and Ireland', the emphatically royalist tone of

---

<sup>186</sup> *A True Relation of the Manner of the Deposing of King Edward II* (London: Richard Baldwin, 1689), fols. A3<sup>v</sup>, A3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>187</sup> J. P. Vander Motten, 'Howard, Sir Robert (1626–1698)', ODNB.

<sup>188</sup> E.g. Robert Howard, *Historical Observations Upon the Reigns of Edward I, II, III, and Richard II* (London: for J. Partridge and M. Gillyflower, 1689), fol. D5<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>189</sup> Howard, fol. D4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>190</sup> Brady, *True and Exact History*, fol. G2<sup>v</sup>; see also Robert Brady, *The Great Point of Succession Discussed* (London: for H. Rodes, 1681).

Baker's chronicle is immediately evident.<sup>191</sup> Unsurprisingly, he expresses discontent at contemporary political events in his dedicatory epistle; but despite this stance, he does not take Edward's reign as an opportunity to point out the injustice of rebellion against a monarch.<sup>192</sup> Instead, he takes pains to justify the nobles' actions, stating after Gaveston's death that:

while the King was altogether ruled by Gaveston, and Gaveston himself was altogether irregular; the Common-wealth could have but little hope of Justice, but was sure to suffer as long as Gaveston was suffered. And this may be sufficient to justify the Lords, that it be not interpreted to be Rebellion, which was indeed but Providence.<sup>193</sup>

Here, the lords' execution of Gaveston in 1312 is presented as 'justice', and therefore admissible. (Similarly, later in the chronicle, Baker highlights the unfairness of Thomas of Lancaster's trial, again positioning Edward against the cause of justice.<sup>194</sup>) Baker is, however, careful not to present the nobles' execution of Gaveston as 'rebellion': to do so would equate 'rebellion' with 'justice', a stance inconsistent with his contemporary royalism. Instead, he states his intention to ensure 'that it be not interpreted to be Rebellion, which was indeed but Providence' – a lexical choice that suggests divine approval had shifted from Edward's side to that of his nobles.

Baker's exoneration of Edward's nobles is at first reinforced by a lack of sympathy towards the king himself. Referring to Edward I, he writes that, 'of foure sonnes which he had by his Wife Queen Eleanor, three of them died in his owne life time, who were worthy to have out-lived him; and the fourth out-lived him, who was worthy never to have beene borne.'<sup>195</sup> Despite the harshness of this construction, it may be significant that Baker does not quite complete its symmetry, stopping short of saying that Edward was worthy to have *died* as his brothers did – a decision perhaps motivated by unwillingness to advocate regicide in a 1643 text. Baker's attitude towards Edward then shifts as he begins to rely more on Geoffrey le Baker's *Chronicon* as a source around the point of the deposition. While this is a well-established trend in early modern chronicles (as detailed in Chapter 4), it is also a decision that allows Baker to present deposition as abhorrent despite his earlier tolerance of Gaveston's murder. Unlike many less well-researched chronicles, Baker was not transcribing unthinkingly from his main source (Daniel): his extensive range of sources gave him plenty of opportunities for alternative views on Edward's deposition, such as the

---

<sup>191</sup> Baker, fol. A<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>192</sup> Baker, fol. A<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>193</sup> Baker, fol. S4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>194</sup> Baker, fol. T3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>195</sup> Baker, fols. S2<sup>r</sup>–S2<sup>v</sup>.

pro-Lancastrian *Brut* or Froissart's Hainault-centric account. His choice to use le Baker as his main source for 1326-27 may have been a choice to follow convention, but has political significance nonetheless.

In poetry and drama, the political possibilities of Edward's reign have received by far the most critical attention in relation to Marlowe's *Edward II*. The play has been seen as engaging with 'seditious' 'resistance theory' in its depiction of Edward II's deposition and Edward III's election.<sup>196</sup> Critics have seen its depiction of a close relationship between a monarch and his young male favourite as either critically alluding to Elizabeth's favourites, or conversely seen Edward's ineptitude as pointing up Elizabeth's capability.<sup>197</sup> These apparently contradictory arguments are best reconciled by Mark Thornton Burnett, who asserts that 'The presence of Elizabeth haunts *Edward II*, in such a way as to evoke apparent similitudes and to destabilise clear-cut resemblances', and argues for the overall relevance to the play of the Elizabethan succession crisis.<sup>198</sup> Richard Hillman notes that the comparison between Edward and Henri III, analysed above in French texts, meant that Marlowe's play would also have reminded English audiences of Henri.<sup>199</sup> Some critics have even seen Edward and Gaveston as deliberate parallels for James VI of Scotland and his favourite Esmé Stuart, Duke of Lennox. Paulina Kewes claims that 'Marlowe goes out of his way to suggest a possible connection' on the basis of Gaveston's French birth, his inordinate sway over and intimacy with his king, and the aristocratic insurgency against Edward that results from their relationship.<sup>200</sup> However, these coincidental correspondences – none of which were invented by Marlowe – hardly constitute the playwright going 'out of his way', and Kewes herself admits that the parallel is not absolute: 'what undercuts the identification, however, is the fictive Gaveston's low birth (Lennox's lineage was illustrious) and vocal anticlericalism [compared to the Catholic Lennox]'.<sup>201</sup> Although it is true that James was being discussed as a potential successor to Elizabeth at the time of the play's publication, Lawrence Normand perhaps overstates his relevance when he claims that 'A play representing obliquely an episode of King James's life would

<sup>196</sup> Ronald Knowles, 'The Political Contexts of Deposition and Election in *Edward II*, *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 14 (2001), 105–21 (p. 105).

<sup>197</sup> For example, Curtis Bright sees the play as a 'political allegory in which Gaveston and the Spencers stand for Burghley' (*Surveillance, Militarism and Drama in the Elizabethan Era* [London: Macmillan, 1996], p. 134); Hertel argues that 'the case of the oversexed but inept King Edward might bring about a demystification of the erotic cult of Elizabeth (p. 221); Dennis Kay sees Edward as 'a negative exemplum, being defined negatively in terms of the well established cult of Queen Elizabeth' ['Marlowe, *Edward II*, and the Cult of Elizabeth', *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 3 (1997), 1–30 (pp. 3–4)].

<sup>198</sup> Burnett, pp. 93–94.

<sup>199</sup> Richard Hillman, *Shakespeare, Marlowe and the Politics of France* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), p. 73; see also Stewart, who argues specifically that the *Histoire Tragique* 'shapes and informs Marlowe's play' (p. 110).

<sup>200</sup> Kewes, p. 142; see also Lawrence Normand, 'What Passions Call You These?': *Edward II* and James VI, in *Christopher Marlowe and English Renaissance Culture*, pp. 172–97, for more on the Lennox/Gaveston parallel.

<sup>201</sup> Kewes, pp. 142–43.

be of immediate interest to an English audience whose monarch he was likely to become': the implication here is that Marlowe chose to dramatise Edward's story in part because of its parallels with James's, but surely far more 'immediate interest' would arise from its parallels with Elizabeth herself.<sup>202</sup> Similarly, Lisa Hopkins's suggestion that the play's reference to Bannockburn is an aspect that 'sit[s] up and beg[s] for a politicized reading', since it 'may well have been flattering to James of Scotland, to whom Marlowe might perhaps have been looking as a potential future patron', lacks sufficient evidence to convince, and again fails to take account of the fact that Marlowe took 'the stress on Edward's defeat' straight from his sources.<sup>203</sup> Although none of them state this explicitly, it seems likely that these critics' insistence on parallels between James and Marlowe's Edward stems partly from their knowledge that James was later to develop a reputation for being involved in sexual and romantic relationships with his male favourites. In fact, as Perry notes, 'though James had favourites who attracted resentment as early as 1579...the popular image of James as weak, debauched, and politically irresponsible was not prevalent until after he came to England'.<sup>204</sup> Andrea Stevens is certainly correct, however, to say that Jacobean performances of 'a play about a sodomitical king with problematic male favourites would have resonated in newly provocative ways'.<sup>205</sup>

In at least three instances, however, there is hard evidence of early modern readers recognising the political potential of Marlowe's *Edward II*. Through close attention to the minute differences between the 1612 quarto text and its predecessors, Mathew Martin argues that 'the editor of the 1612 quarto...aggressively repunctuated sections of the text, thereby foregrounding a particular reading of the play that resonates in complex ways with the Jacobean concern about royal favourites'.<sup>206</sup> Jeffrey Masten, on discovering a copy of the play bound with 'a long theological tract' on whether 'it is permissible to execute heretics and a text on "the reign of the Turks" and other "oriental" religions', suggests that '*Edward II* was thus bound...not as a play but as a theological-juridical text – a treatise (if you will) that explores the rightness of Edward's torture and horrific death'.<sup>207</sup> Siobhan Keenan, meanwhile, has called attention to the summary of the play written by the

---

<sup>202</sup> Normand, p. 177.

<sup>203</sup> Lisa Hopkins, 'Englishmen Abroad: Mobility and Nationhood in *Dido, Queen of Carthage* and *Edward IP*, *English*, 59 (2010), 324–48 (pp. 336–37).

<sup>204</sup> Curtis Perry, 'The Politics of Access and Representations of the Sodomite King in Early Modern England', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 53 (2000), 1054–83 (p. 1056).

<sup>205</sup> Andrea Stevens, '*Edward II*: A Stage History', in Melnikoff, pp. 43–71 (p. 47).

<sup>206</sup> Mathew Martin, 'Accidents Happen: Roger Barnes's 1612 Edition of Marlowe's *Edward IP*, *Early Theatre*, 16 (2013), 97–117 (p. 101).

<sup>207</sup> Jeffrey Masten, 'Bound for Germany: Heresy, Sodomy, and a New Copy of Marlowe's *Edward IP*, *TLS: The Times Literary Supplement* (21 December 2012), 17–19.

magistrate John Newdigate.<sup>208</sup> Newdigate's summary is dated 14 May 1601, three months after the Earl of Essex's failed attempt to overthrow Elizabeth, and it seems clear that his choice to read, digest and summarise the play was based on its 'newly topical' nature: as well as Marlowe's play, Newdigate's reading material for April and May 1601 included an unspecified history of Edward, Holinshed's account of Richard II's reign, and other 'figures... known for being active in shaping a commonwealth and/or its laws'.<sup>209</sup> As Keenan argues, 'this suggests that Newdigate was interested in Marlowe's history of Edward II not simply as literature or entertainment but as a work with topical lessons to teach about government'.<sup>210</sup> Unsurprisingly, his summary 'focuses more on the downfall of Edward and Mortimer than on the tragedy of Piers Gaveston'. Keenan rightly suggests that this is 'because their stories of misused and usurped power were more topical in the aftermath of the Essex rebellion and/or because he thought their tales offered the more significant moral lessons for contemporary readers, demonstrating the dangers of excessive or misdirected passion and ambition, respectively'.<sup>211</sup> To this I would add the fact that neither Marlowe nor his printer (who did not mention Gaveston in the title of the play) encourages his readers to see the play as Gaveston's tragedy, and nor is this common in early modern accounts: Drayton's tragedy of Gaveston is an anomaly compared to the numerous treatments of Edward's fall as tragic and the popular *Mirror for Magistrates* tragedy of Mortimer.

In light of this sustained critical attention, although Marlowe is far from being the writer who draws most attention to the contemporary political relevance of Edward's reign, it is relevant to make a few observations. As most modern critics agree, explicitly or implicitly, *Edward II* does little to confirm Irving Ribner's argument that 'The most common political doctrine proclaimed' in early modern English history plays is 'that of the absolute authority of the king, his responsibility to God alone for his deeds, and the sinfulness of any rebellion against him, no matter what the provocation'.<sup>212</sup> Certainly, there are aspects of *Edward II* that reinforce 'the sinfulness of any rebellion against' the monarch, or at least betray Marlowe's awareness that dramatizing deposition is a politically risky act. Edward's nobles are first referred to as 'rebels' by Gaveston after his capture, and by Edward after Gaveston's murder.<sup>213</sup> Similarly, Edward's favourites are more frequently

---

<sup>208</sup> Siobhan Keenan, 'Reading Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II*: The Example of John Newdigate in 1601', *Notes and Queries*, 53 (2006), 452–58.

<sup>209</sup> Keenan, pp. 454–55.

<sup>210</sup> Keenan, p. 455.

<sup>211</sup> Keenan, p. 457.

<sup>212</sup> Ribner, p. 309.

<sup>213</sup> Marlowe, II.v.6, III.i.101.

‘flatterers’ and less frequently ‘minions’ as the play progresses. Perhaps most interestingly, no specific reasons are adduced for Edward’s deposition: his complaint, ‘Ah, Leicester, weigh how hardly I can brook / To lose my crown and kingdom without cause’ is arguably justified in the face of Marlowe’s decision to refrain from relating legal reasons for the deposition of a monarch.<sup>214</sup> This also represents a departure from Marlowe’s sources – as Forker notes, ‘Edward’s failure of self-knowledge here is notable, especially considering Holinshed’s statement that “he knew he was false into this miserie through his owne offenses”’ – which further justifies explaining it in terms of the political sensitivity of representing deposition.<sup>215</sup> Despite this, however, ‘the absolute authority of the king’ is frequently called into question. I have already analysed Marlowe’s representation of Edward’s unfitness for a kingly role, and the extent to which his favourites and his emotions towards them distract him from his royal duties; in addition to this, Isabella is given a speech that explicitly censures Edward as a ‘Misgoverned king’, ‘Whose looseness hath betray’d thy land to spoil’ and who is the cause of civil war.<sup>216</sup> But Isabella’s speech is cut short, a device which reveals Mortimer’s control over her but which perhaps also functions to prevent her from going so far as to advocate deposition.

Drayton, too, exercises caution concerning the reasons for Edward’s deposition. As Kathleen Tillotson notes, he avoided narrating Richard II’s deposition altogether in *Englands Heroicall Epistles*, and his earliest representation of Edward’s deposition (in *Mortimeriados*) is couched ‘in emotional and not argumentative terms, with no account of the procedure and no speech from those responsible’.<sup>217</sup> His revision of the scene in *The Barons Warres* does include a short justificatory speech from Adam Orleton, followed by a cautionary stanza which is most forceful in the 1619 version:

Much more he spake; but faine would I be short,  
 To this intent a Speech delivering;  
 Nor may I be too curious to report,  
 What toucheth the deposing of a King:  
 Wherefore I warne thee Muse, not to exhort  
 The after-Times to this forbidden thing,  
 By Reasons for it, by the Bishop layd,  
 Or from my feeling what he might have sayd.<sup>218</sup>

---

<sup>214</sup> Marlowe, V.i.51–52.

<sup>215</sup> Marlowe, V.i.52n.

<sup>216</sup> Marlowe, IV.iv.9–11.

<sup>217</sup> Kathleen Tillotson, ‘Drayton and Richard II’, *Review of English Studies*, 15 (1939), 172–79; see also Brink, pp. 44–47.

<sup>218</sup> *Barons Warres*, V.9.



Drayton's anxiety here is evident: he is concerned to stress that in depicting Edward's deposition, he is not attempting to 'exhort / The after times' to follow in the footsteps of the fourteenth-century nobles. His treatment of Edward's death is similar, condemning his murderers in part for setting a precedent for regicide: Edward begs them, 'O be not Authors of so vile an Act, / ...Which after-Time with Horror shall distract, / When Fame shall tell it, how you kil'd a King'. Future criminals, he says, will be emboldened by this: 'they shall count their Wickednesse scarce sinne, / Compar'd to that, which done by you hath bin.'<sup>219</sup> This treatment is similar to Elizabeth Cary's, who exclaims following her account of the murder that 'It had been happy if such a Villany had never gain'd knowledge or imitation in the World: since it came to be entertain'd as a necessary servant of State, no man that runs in opposition, or stands in the way of Greatness, is almost secure in his own house, or among his Friends or Servants.'<sup>220</sup> In addition to these cautious treatments of the events of Edward's life, Kelly Quinn argues that 'Drayton's 1619 revisions to [*Peirs Gaveston*] seem designed to prune resemblances to James I – while noting, crucially, that 'Latter-day revisions do not necessarily mean... that resemblances were intentional?'<sup>221</sup>

Francis Hubert's revisions display similar awareness of his poem's political sensitivity, and of the fact that its relevance to contemporary politics may have increased since it was written. Gregory Bredbeck is wrong to cite Hubert's poem on Edward's reign as an example of 'The strategy of redacting the political narrative of Edward's reign into an exemplum of sexual ethics': written in the 1590s, the poem circulated only in manuscript because it was (in the words of Lawrence Chapman, Hubert's later printer) 'by supreamest Authoritie forbidden to bee printed'.<sup>222</sup> Such prohibition hardly constitutes a recognition that the poem's 'political narrative' had been 'redacted': rather, it indicates that its representation of deposition and regicide was considered potentially seditious. Revised versions, which also circulated in manuscript, refer to James as monarch rather than to Elizabeth. When one of these versions was printed without Hubert's authorisation in 1628, he panicked and hastily revised it, bringing out an authorised version in 1629. The preface to the 1629 edition stresses that it is not a topical Jacobean or Caroline composition ('It was conceived and borne in Queene Elizabeths time, but grew to more maturitie in King JAMES's'), and announces Hubert's intention 'to vindicate both It and my Selfe from those

---

<sup>219</sup> *Barons Warres*, 5.62.

<sup>220</sup> Cary (folio), fols. 2Q2<sup>r</sup>–2Q2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>221</sup> Quinn, p. 446.

<sup>222</sup> Gregory Bredbeck, *Sodomy and Interpretation: Marlowe to Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 49; Hubert (1629), p. 287. David Wootton appears to be unaware of this early date of composition, citing Hubert's poem as 'Anon' and claiming on the basis of the 1628 printed version that it was 'obviously written with Buckingham in mind' ('Francis Bacon: Your Flexible Friend', in *The World of the Favourite*, pp. 184–204 [p. 202 n. 6]).

grosse and sencelesse Errours wherewith that false Bastard [i.e. the 1628 edition] was too foulie deformed'.<sup>223</sup> Yet while some revisions appear aimed at reducing the poem's potentially inflammatory nature (the derogatory description of Gaveston as 'French by his birth and french by his behaviour' is cut, presumably to avoid insulting Charles I's French queen) and some at stressing that Edward's transgressions should not be emulated (Hubert adds a section entitled 'Noli Peccare', comprising seven stanzas each offering a different reason to 'Forbeare to Sinne'), others move to foreground the poem's applicability to contemporary politics.<sup>224</sup> As Perry shows, 'The additions shift the focus of the king's narrative from his own fall to the execution of the Spencers and this in turn provides an occasion to meditate upon the mutability of fortune for royal favourites... Where the Elizabethan version of the poem tends to gloss the story by blaming flattery or wicked counsel for the problems that beset monarchy, Jacobean additions tend to shift the focus more directly onto the problematics of royal character'.<sup>225</sup>

Hubert's opening stanzas, present in both the 1628 and 1629 versions, set out the way in which he expects his poem to be read:

In which Discourse, if I shall hap to touch  
 Those faults, that in our time are frequent growne,  
 Let not the gauld offender, winch or grudge:  
 For I intend a private wrong to none:  
 Onely I would have those same errours knowne;  
 By which the State, did then to ruine runne,  
 That (warn'd by theirs) our age like sins might shun.  
 ...  
 And thou (great King) that now dost weild our State,  
 Building on that, which former times did square,  
 Oh let it not be thought to derogate  
 From thy perfections, (admirable rare)  
 If I some errors of these times declare:  
 Sure never State was so precisely good,  
 But faults have scap'd, which could not be withstood.<sup>226</sup>

Edward's reign, then, functions as a warning to the present age, its ruler and his favourites; and any criticism of Charles is to be taken as constructive, not seditious. Having set out this disclaimer, Hubert proceeds to draw out numerous general, didactic statements from Edward's example. In a possible reference to James's foolishness in allowing his son to become friends with Buckingham, he admonishes:

---

<sup>223</sup> Hubert (1629), p. 2.

<sup>224</sup> Hubert (1629), pp. 170–71.

<sup>225</sup> Perry, p. 212.

<sup>226</sup> Hubert (1628), stanzas 4–6.

Princes, that doe intend your Heires such good,  
 As shall enable them for to succede,  
 And no way to disparage their high blood:  
 Oh, let it be your most respectiue heed,  
 To sow their tender yeares with vertues seede.<sup>227</sup>

Similarly, he extrapolates lessons from Edward's preference for young favourites – 'oh the quiet of that happy land, / Where aged Nestors beare the chiefest sway' – and uses Gaveston as an example to demonstrate that fashionable courtiers should not be trusted ('Therefore let Kings preferre them that are plaine').<sup>228</sup> Young monarchs, he claims, need the advice of older counsellors due to their innate tendency to sin: 'Youth apt to stray, is easily led awry, / We fall by Nature, what needes flattery'.<sup>229</sup> While none of these generalised statements address contemporary issues directly, it is precisely their lack of specificity that invites the reader to apply the lessons of Edward's reign to other political situations, as early modern readers of history were in any case disposed to do.

Hubert shares both his generalised didacticism and his politicised revision process with Elizabeth Cary. While Cary's history of Edward II was finally printed in the 1680s because of its relevance to the Exclusion Crisis (with the cuts to the octavo version probably having been made to emphasise that relevance), it was composed because of the story's relevance to the 1620s, 'with a French-born Queen, England in conflict with France, the King at odds with his Parliament and a powerful favourite in the form of the Duke of Buckingham'.<sup>230</sup> Cary reworked her history in manuscript, which Karen Britland argues was occasioned by a desire 'to intervene in the urgent debates of the 1620s about the limits of monarchical authority and the position of royal favourites... the revised version of the history is interesting for its introduction of more precise technical terms concerned with absolutist rule'.<sup>231</sup> Like Hubert, she frequently makes generalised statements on 'Princes', to the extent that Janet Starner-Wright and Susan Fitzmaurice argue, 'Cary's idea of history emphasizes a moral or didactic function rather than the transmission of facts'.<sup>232</sup> In addition, her use of the historic present arguably foregrounds the contemporary relevance of the story she recounts.<sup>233</sup> Her focus is on the management of favourites. She argues against the raising of low-born favourites ('Persons of meaner condition and birth exalted above proportion, as it taxeth the Kings Judgment, impaireth both his safety and Honour')

---

<sup>227</sup> Hubert (1628), stanza 33.

<sup>228</sup> Hubert (1628), stanzas 158, 81.

<sup>229</sup> Hubert (1628), stanza 73.

<sup>230</sup> Skura, p. 83; Britland, p. 39.

<sup>231</sup> Britland, p. 48.

<sup>232</sup> Janet Starner-Wright and Susan Fitzmaurice, 'Shaping a Drama out of a History: Elizabeth Cary and the Story of Edward II', *Critical Survey*, 14 (2002), 79–92 (p. 80).

<sup>233</sup> Britland, p. 38.

and cautions against singular attachments ('Neither is it proper, that the principal Strengths and Dignities should be committed to the care and fidelity of one man onely'), refusing to absolve the monarch of responsibility for his favourite's transgressions.<sup>234</sup> However, she ultimately refrains from explicitly concluding that Edward's deposition was justified, calling it 'no more than a mere Politick Treason, not more dangerous in the Act than in the Example', and lamenting that it provided a precedent for subsequent depositions: 'in his [Edward's] consenting [to his deposition] with a dangerous example to his Successours, he had both their Power and his own Guilt made evident to Posterity; which might have made the practice more frequent and familiar'.<sup>235</sup> As observed above in relation to the counsel/nature question, this is a common feature of early modern accounts of Edward's reign: with the exception of those whose specific purpose is to encourage the deposition of the current monarch, they engage in sustained criticism of Edward's actions but refuse to condone his deposition.

The incorporation of Edward into the *Mirror for Magistrates* tradition also warrants attention here. The *Mirror* self-consciously foregrounds its political relevance, as Baldwin's preface 'To the nobilitye and all other in office' makes clear: 'here as in a loking glas, you shall see (if any vice be in you) howe the like hath bene punished in other heretofore, whereby admonished, I trust it will be a good occasion to move you to the soner amendment'.<sup>236</sup> This preface implicitly acknowledges that, in Lily B. Campbell's words, 'the tragedies of the *Mirror* were chosen for their usefulness in teaching political truth, rather than for their historical importance'.<sup>237</sup> However, Richard Niccols's *Winter Nights Vision* – the first *Mirror* text to include Edward II – fits uneasily into this tradition, as Paul Budra explains:

Niccols dedicated his edition to Lord Charles Howard, the Earl of Nottingham, with an introductory verse that was a banal and sycophantic plea for patronage. ...Instead of displaying a critical mirror to a flawed magistrate, Niccols begs his favour. He presumed that his subject material would not be read as reflecting upon its titular reader, that the material was safe, apolitical, and quaint. ...Howard was not a magistrate to be swayed by the weight of exempla; he was a nobleman to be entertained with a collection of reassuringly familiar biographies that culminated in a comic vision of the reign of Elizabeth.<sup>238</sup>

---

<sup>234</sup> Cary (folio), fols. 2M<sup>v</sup>–2N<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>235</sup> Cary (folio), fol. 2L2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>236</sup> *Mirror*, pp. 65–66.

<sup>237</sup> *Mirror*, p. 54.

<sup>238</sup> Budra, pp. 32–33.

In addition, the dream vision device with which Niccols chose to open the poem ‘identified what followed as poetry, not history’.<sup>239</sup> Perhaps as a result of this move away from a ‘critical mirror’, perhaps simply because of its comparatively later date than previous editions, *A Winter Nights Vision* was not a commercial success.<sup>240</sup>

Niccols was no stranger to political allusions and criticism in poetry: as detailed in Chapter 2, several of his other poems are specifically anti-court. ‘The Beggars Ape’, whose animal characters correspond to specific courtiers, condemns the court as a place where ‘Onely they rise that can by guilefull wit / Serve their owne turne with gainfull benefit’; and ‘The Cuckow’ condemns sexual transgression and fashionable dress at ‘the bower of blisse’, an allegory for Westminster.<sup>241</sup> Moreover, as Glyn Pursglove points out, ‘To write in praise of Elizabeth was, for [Niccols] and for others, very frequently a means of articulating implicit criticism of James and his court’<sup>242</sup> – an observation which seems relevant to *A Winter Nights Vision*, which concludes with the panegyric ‘Englands Eliza’. His poem on Edward contains elements of the condemnation of sexually transgressive courtiers found in ‘The Cuckow’: describing Gaveston, he writes ‘In Court the leprous spots of his delights / Unto the Palace wals so fast do cleave’.<sup>243</sup> However, Niccols takes no clear position on the validity of resistance to royal authority. It would be ‘base’, he suggests, for Edward to ‘submit’ to his subjects’ will, and the executions of his nobles are necessitated by their rebellious behaviour: ‘O age infortunate, when subjects pride / Did force their Sovereigne to such deeds of woe’.<sup>244</sup> Later, however, Niccols condemns Edward for this decision:

Imprudent Prince, since rage did lift thy hand  
To lop the pillers of thy kingdome downe,  
On whose supportfull powers thy State should stand;  
Looke for a ruthlesse ruine of thy crowne.<sup>245</sup>

As a result, the poem has no clear didactic message, aside from a few generalised pronouncements about flattery and ‘dissimulation’ which could be read as oblique hints to James VI and I about the evils of relying on favourites’ counsel.<sup>246</sup> Niccols’s changes to earlier *Mirror* poems can also be seen as reducing their didacticism. Several cuts are made to the poem on Richard II, removing such phrases as ‘Let Princes therefore vertuous life

<sup>239</sup> Budra, p. 35.

<sup>240</sup> Budra, p. 38.

<sup>241</sup> Richard Niccols, *Selected Poems*, ed. by Glyn Pursglove (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1992), pp. 6–7, 10; Richard Niccols, *The Beggars Ape* (London: B[ernard] A[lsop] and T. Fawcet for L. Chapman, 1627), fol. B2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>242</sup> Niccols, *Selected Poems*, p. 6.

<sup>243</sup> *WNV*, fol. 3A2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>244</sup> *WNV*, fol. 3A7<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>245</sup> *WNV*, fol. 3A7<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>246</sup> *WNV*, fols. 2Z8<sup>r</sup>–2Z8<sup>v</sup>.

embrace / That wilfull pleasures cause them not to blunder' and 'See princes, see the power wherof we boste / Whome most we truste, at nede do us betray, / Through whose false faith my land and life I lost'.<sup>247</sup> It seems likely that these omissions are primarily related to versification rather than political content, since Niccols regularises the original ten-line stanzas to eight lines. However, since the final couplet of the original stanzas tends to extrapolate a didactic political message from the events relating in the preceding lines, this regularisation does affect the poem's political tone, and contributes to the move away from a 'critical mirror' identified by Budra.

## Conclusion

The ambivalence of early modern historiography concerning the question with which I began this chapter – 'Evil counsel or evil nature?' – is a crucial factor in enabling the diversity of political uses of Edward's story that I have analysed here. The fact that arguments for both sides coexist in historical texts enabled polemical writers from any party to use Edward's reign as a supporting argument, even when their direct opponents were using it too. As such, the history of Edward and his favourites as political exempla is an important reminder that the 'use of history' doctrine did not inevitably result in a consensus over the didactic significations of each historical figure or event. Edward's story was not a universal metonym for 'deposition is viable'; exhortations to remember his example could and did have polar opposite meanings in different contexts. Arguments about the interpretation of historical events were played out in the pages of pamphlets. That said, however, the above analysis has suggested agreement regarding certain lessons to be drawn from Edward's reign, all of which concern favourites. Edward is almost universally criticised for having chosen young favourites, raised their social status disproportionately, and relied excessively on their advice over that of others. It has also demonstrated the continuing relevance of Edward's story to contemporary political issues at multiple points during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, whether in terms of favouritism or deposition. Recognition of this is crucial to explaining and contextualising the 'heightened interest in Edward II's story during the late Elizabethan and Jacobean periods' identified by Kirk Melnikoff.<sup>248</sup> Melnikoff suggests that this 'heightened interest' derived in part from 'a larger cultural obsession with historical narratives of civil war and deposition'. However, this chapter has demonstrated an additional – and, I would argue, a

<sup>247</sup> Compare '[Tragedy 5]', *Mirror*, pp. 111–18 (ll. 9–10), to *WNV*, fol. X3<sup>r</sup>; and '[Tragedy 5]', ll. 78–80, to *WNV*, fol. X3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>248</sup> Kirk Melnikoff, 'Introduction', in Melnikoff, pp. 1–20 (p. 5).

more persistent – ‘cultural obsession’ with Edward’s story as a ‘historical narrative’ of favourites with excessive political power and intimate access to the monarch. This is particularly applicable to texts of the period that Melnikoff cites. As such, this ‘heightened interest in Edward II’s story’ arguably also derived from its heightened political relevance to issues of favouritism. Writers across genres worked to maintain that relevance through contemporary political allusions.

This chapter has emphasised writers’ recognition of the inescapable specific circumstances of Edward’s reign: as the first English king to be deposed, he was an important precedent for any subsequent arguments. His story had this significance whether any given writer wanted it to or not, meaning that those writers who were not using it to support a pro-deposition argument still had to negotiate its seditious potential. Edward’s reputation for sexual transgression – which was historiographically agreed, following Marlowe, to have involved sexual and romantic relationships with his favourites – also gave his story unique potential as a political exemplum, particularly during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James VI and I when similar rumours were circulating. Overall, it is this issue – the fact that the men represented as Edward’s ‘evil counsellors’ were also represented as his lovers – which most forcefully compounded the question of whether he was badly influenced or intrinsically flawed. As Perry argues, the question of culpability is central here:

...where the evil counsellor tradition has self-evident utility for public political debate, shielding the monarch from blame and thus making it possible to claim to be at once critical of government and loyal to the crown, imagining favour in erotic terms works in precisely the opposite direction. It attributes the favourite’s power to the erotic incontinence of the monarch, thereby blurring the distinction between the king’s own sins and the wickedness of his intimate servants. This redistribution of blame helps explain the appeal of erotic constructions of favouritism: thinking of favouritism as the result of unregulated erotic passion provided observers of the political scene with a useful vocabulary of corruption in which the king’s personal moral weakness could be held directly responsible for the improper distribution of his personal favour and thus for the corruption of his associates.<sup>249</sup>

Perry suggests that ‘erotic constructions of favouritism’ – criticism of the relationship between a monarch and their favourite in terms that implied their relationship was sexual in nature – are sometimes the result of a writer’s desire to frame the monarch as responsible for the favourite’s influence, and therefore for their actions: ‘a tension...stemming ultimately from the failure of traditional notions of majesty and the body politic – in which

---

<sup>249</sup> Perry, p. 136.

the mysteries of kingship should minimise the imperfections of the mortal officeholder – to square with the growing sense of political corruption in late Elizabethan and early Stuart England'. In the case of Edward II, however, the process Perry outlines was reversed. The suggestion that Edward's relationships with his favourites were sexual already existed; early modern writers were confronted both with this suggestion (and its implications as described by Perry), and with the claim that Edward's transgressions resulted from 'evil counsel' (in medieval accounts), and had to find a way to reconcile the two. That process of reconciliation is what we see in texts like Holinshed's *Chronicles*, which grapple repeatedly with the question of Edward's agency and culpability without ever reaching a firm conclusion. The issue is further complicated by the representation of Edward's favourites as attractive, even irresistibly so, as discussed in Chapter 2: Edward's 'erotic incontinence' is arguably mitigated or excused if his attraction to his favourites is understandable or beyond his control. Perry's analysis helps to explain why the question of 'evil counsel or evil nature' interests early modern writers on Edward II, but attention to the specifics of Edward's historiographical reputation – the extant consensus concerning his sexual transgression, and the further suggestions that his favourites were physically attractive, witty, and may have bewitched him – is needed to fully account for its centrality.



## Chapter 4: The Literary Transformation of Edward II

---

### Introduction

Accounts of Edward II's reign in historical texts become increasingly literary over the period 1305-1700. In referring to this literary transformation, I refer to the emphasis and foregrounding of details which contribute to an exciting, enjoyably readable narrative, often but not always at the expense of verifiable historical fact. This trend is evident from my analysis in the previous two chapters: the increasing consensus concerning the sexual nature of Edward's transgressions, and the increasing romanticisation of his relationships with his favourites, are key aspects of an overall move towards more sensational narratives. This chapter will consider two additional aspects of Edward's story that are crucial to this process: his fall from royal status, comprising his deposition and subsequent imprisonment, and his death. Numerous vivid circumstantial details and anecdotes cluster around accounts of Edward's treatment during and after his deposition. As well as creating an exciting narrative, these details function to elicit sympathy for Edward – resulting in a demonstrable shift in authorial tone around the point of his deposition, from condemnation of Edward's own actions to condemnation of his deponents and keepers. It is important to consider this shift in relation to the alignment of Edward's story with the *de casibus* mode, which occurs in many texts across a variety of genres and has the potential to enable both moralistic and sympathetic treatments of his reign. The development of a consensus concerning the mode of Edward's death – murder by anal penetration with a red-hot spit – will also be mapped, and the influences behind it explored. The significations of this murder method, I argue, merit reassessment: its interpretation by scholars as self-evidently sexually mimetic must be questioned and contextualised.

### I. Fall

#### i. Deposition

Adam Murimuth's contemporaneous account depicts Edward's reaction to his deposition as grief-stricken. Murimuth describes how Edward, 'with tears and lamentations, responded [to the news of his deposition] that he felt much pain because he deserved thus towards the people of his realm' (*Quibus auditus, ipse cum fletu et ejulatu respondit quod ipse*

*multum doluit de eo quod sic demeruit erga populum sui regni*).<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey le Baker subsequently used Murimuth's text as a source, combining it with what he claims is the eyewitness testimony of his patron Thomas de la More to create a highly emotional account. The bishops of Winchester and Lincoln (the former attended by de la More) travel ahead of the deposition party and, along with the earl of Leicester, cajole Edward with promises of honourable treatment, assertions that 'reject[ing] his temporal kingdom for the peace of his subjects' 'would be greatly to [his] credit with God', and threats to disinherit his sons if he does not comply. Edward responds with a mixture of resignation and heartbreak:

By these and other bullying threats and promises the pious heart of the king was won over, and, not without sobs, tears, and sighs, he climbed down and took the bishops' advice. Knowing that a good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep, he was more ready to end his life as a follower of Christ than to look with the eyes of a living body upon the disinheritance of his sons or a lengthy civil war in his kingdom.

Finally that detestable envoy, Adam Orleton of Hereford, brought to the secret quarters of the king the other envoys, whom he placed in order in the king's chamber according to their rank, while keeping for himself with everyone's permission the part which he had laid claim to long ago. At length his royal majesty wearing a black gown came out of his inner chamber and showed himself to his servants, but then, being conscious of the reason for which they had come, in the shock of sorrow he lost his wits and collapsed in a heap on the floor. The earl of Leicester and the bishop of Winchester rushed to his aid and just managed to lift up the semi-conscious king. When he had somehow recovered his wits and his strength as before, Adam of Hereford addressed him. With remarkable effrontery he showed no confusion in dealing with the mind of the king and explaining to him why the envoys had come, even though he believed that the king hated him above all other men. Then the bishop of Hereford added that the king should resign his crown to his firstborn son. If he did not do this, he would be forced after his own dethronement to endure the sight of the nobles choosing as king the man they thought fitter to govern the land. After hearing this, the king with tears and lamentations replied that he was deeply sorry that the people of his kingdom had been so antagonised by him that they were tired of his rule, but finally he did also add that he was very pleased that his son was so acceptable to the people that they wished to have him for their king.<sup>2</sup>

Le Baker's account bears quoting at length in order to demonstrate his consistently melodramatic representation of Edward's emotional reaction to his deposition. His performative grief – expressed through numerous types of audible lamentation, mourning dress (*togam nigram induta*) and collapse (*corrui*) – functions simultaneously to elicit sympathy from the reader and to portray Orleton as cruel in his 'effrontery' (*impudencia*) and lack of

<sup>1</sup> Murimuth, p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Le Baker (2012), pp. 26–27, trans. by Preest.

compassion.<sup>3</sup> In addition, le Baker highlights Edward's forbearance in the face of grief through the word 'somehow' (*utcumque*) and by prefixing the mention of his 'sobs, tears and sighs' (*singultibus, lacrimis et suspiriis*) with the phrase 'not without' (*non sine*), presenting these emotional factors as setbacks to be overcome. This forbearance and selflessness prompts a comparison to Christ, one of many similar allusions in le Baker's text which will be discussed more fully below in relation to Edward's death.

These details of Edward fainting, lamenting and wearing mourning robes became standard attributes of the deposition scene in early modern texts: of the historical texts considered for this study, they appear in six, sixteen and seven respectively. Their appearance in Marlowe's *Edward II* (derived directly from Holinshed and Stow) was both a consequence of and a contributing factor towards their widespread popularity. As in le Baker, Marlowe's Edward performatively acts out his loss of kingship and his all-consuming grief from the moment he is arrested at Neath Abbey. The party who arrive to arrest Edward and his favourites encounter a tableau of despair, with Edward slumped in the lap of the Abbot – 'the emblematic moment of Edward's defeat' – before Edward, in the words of Forker's stage direction, 'throws off his disguise' in a theatrical reveal.<sup>4</sup> By doing so, he commands the attention of both his captors and the audience, manipulating the scene to his advantage as best he can despite his loss of power: in Bruce R. Smith's words, 'This scene is typical of how Edward stage-manages his downfall with such stunning effect.'<sup>5</sup>

Marlowe's deposition scene suggests the influence of le Baker, via Holinshed or Stow, in Lancaster's opening line: 'Be patient, good my lord, cease to lament.'<sup>6</sup> This instruction suggests that Edward is visibly mourning, and is displaying a lack of 'patience' in his passionate grief. Edward's behaviour during the protracted deposition process, however, represents a departure from Marlowe's sources. As Meredith Skura points out, 'In the Elizabethan chronicles Edward's deposition and imprisonment had led to the moral closure of confession': the king, however sorrowfully, ultimately acknowledged his faults and resigned himself to losing the crown to his son, inspiring the readers' pity for his grief but also for his noble, self-sacrificing behaviour.<sup>7</sup> Marlowe's Edward, however, is

<sup>3</sup> For full Latin quotation, see le Baker (1889), pp. 27–28.

<sup>4</sup> Douglas Cole, *Christopher Marlowe and the Renaissance of Tragedy* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1995), p. 100; Marlowe, IV.vii.97.

<sup>5</sup> Bruce R. Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cultural Poetics* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 219.

<sup>6</sup> Marlowe, V.i.1.

<sup>7</sup> Meredith Skura, 'Elizabeth Cary and Edward II: What Do Women Want to Write?', *Renaissance Drama*, 27 (1996), 79–104 (p. 89).

indecisive, garrulous, self-centred and morally ambiguous. ‘By changing Edward’s response’, Forker observes, ‘Marlowe chooses...to emphasise the “marvelous agonie” of which Holinshed speaks... The more violent passions – self-pity, unreasoning anger, and personal hurt – rather than moral growth or sacramental desecration become the focus of Marlowe’s handling of the deposition’.<sup>8</sup> Forker argues that this shift of emphasis functions ‘mainly to emphasise power dominating weakness and the turbulent emotions thereby generated’. To this, I would add that presenting Edward as imperfect and exasperating in this scene militates against the shift in authorial sympathy which Marlowe found in his sources around the point of Edward’s deposition (as a consequence of their switch to reliance on le Baker as a source). Although Marlowe’s play contains a similar shift, he maintains some consistency by continuing to simultaneously foreground Edward’s flaws and elicit audience sympathy for him, even if the weighting of emphasis has shifted from the former to the latter. Moreover, Marlowe’s deposition scene provides a means for Edward to continue commanding attention and ‘stage-manag[ing] his downfall’: Roger Sales’s assertion that ‘Mortimer *forzes* [Edward] to act out a deposition scene’ as retribution for his previous indulgence in spectacle is not borne out by the text.<sup>9</sup> Edward’s vacillation over whether to willingly resign the crown provides him with the opportunity to delay his deposition; to command Winchester and Trussell back and forth despite his loss of royal authority; to indulge in hyperbolic rhetorical condemnation of his deponents (‘Isabel, whose eyes, being turned to steel, / Will sooner sparkle fire than shed a tear’); to instruct the audience and his on-stage observers on their sympathetic emotional responses (‘What, are you moved? Pity you me?’); to demonstrate his piety, albeit with a request that God make him unworldly, which ironically misses the point of what should be a self-sacrificing effort of renunciation (‘Now, sweet God of Heaven, / Make me despise this transitory pomp’); and to belatedly construct an identity as a concerned father (‘Let not that Mortimer protect my son; / More safety is there in a tiger’s jaws, / Than his embracements’).<sup>10</sup> Notwithstanding Edward’s clear emotional suffering in this scene, there is an equally clear thread of self-indulgence which is forced not by the absent Mortimer, but by the continually and excessively present Edward.

## ii. Imprisonment

There is evidence that sympathy for Edward’s imprisonment arose during his lifetime: an Anglo-Norman poem in the same manuscript as the *Anonimale Chronicle*, for

---

<sup>8</sup> Marlowe, p. 59.

<sup>9</sup> Roger Sales, *Christopher Marlowe* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), p. 130; emphasis added.

<sup>10</sup> Marlowe, V.i.104–05, 102, 107–08, 115–17.

example, castigates Isabella for her role in his imprisonment, pointedly still referring to the deposed Edward as 'king'.<sup>11</sup> Once again, however, these gained historiographical popularity via Le Baker, who is responsible for stories of Edward's ill-treatment while imprisoned at Kenilworth, Corfe and Berkeley. It is possible that he was inspired to interpolate these stories by the poem known as the 'Lament of Edward II', in which Edward complains, 'Every day my strength is sapped in prison by those who are evildoers' (*Tut dis enfeble en fermerye / Sui par ceaux qe felons sunt*); however, there is no hard evidence for le Baker's familiarity with this text.<sup>12</sup> Le Baker sometimes attributes Edward's mistreatment to Orleton via Queen Isabella (her actions are attributed at one point to 'the advice of her cunning master the bishop') and sometimes to Isabella herself, who 'found it hard to bear that the life of the husband she hated so deeply had been prolonged all this time'.<sup>13</sup> Though Edward is relatively well-treated at Kenilworth, orders are soon given to 'two evil knights, Thomas Gournay and John Maltravers', to move him around in order that 'no friend or neutral was allowed access to him or came to know where he was spending any length of time'.<sup>14</sup> Once removed from Kenilworth, le Baker states hyperbolically, Edward has 'no escape now from a life full of suffering' (*securus de vita plena doloris*).<sup>15</sup> Subsequently he experiences a sensational catalogue of abuses:

The inhumanity of his tormentors towards him was worse than that of wild beasts. He was not allowed to ride except at night, or to see anyone, or to be seen by any friend. When he did go riding, they compelled him to go thinly clad and bareheaded. When he wished to sleep, they would not let him. They prepared for him not food which he liked but food which he loathed. They contradicted his every word. They falsely declared that he was mad. In short, they opposed his wishes in everything, so that he might soon die of cold or lack of sleep or uncooked and uneatable food or at least of melancholy when he caught some common illness.<sup>16</sup>

Here le Baker opposes the reality of Edward's treatment to what is expected; he stresses, for example, that he is 'not allowed to ride *except* at night' (*equitare non licebat nisi de nocte*), and that he receives '*not* food which he liked *but* food which he loathed' (*non quales volebat sed quos nausiabat cibos ipsi preparavere*).<sup>17</sup> This culminates in the assertion that 'they opposed his wishes in everything' (*in omnibus sue voluntati se ipsos contrarios exhibere*), presenting Edward's imprisonment as a situation of absolute hardship.

---

<sup>11</sup> 'Against the Queen', Brotherton Collection BC MS 29, fol. 4<sup>v</sup>. Title from *Anglo-Norman Literature: A Guide to Texts and Manuscripts*, ed. by Ruth J. Dean and Maureen B.M. Boulton (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1999), no. 88.

<sup>12</sup> *Lament*, stanza 11, trans. by Aspin.

<sup>13</sup> Le Baker (2012), pp. 28, 30, trans. by Preest.

<sup>14</sup> Le Baker (2012), p. 28, trans. by Preest.

<sup>15</sup> Le Baker (2012), p. 29, trans. by Preest; Le Baker (1889), p. 30.

<sup>16</sup> Le Baker (2012), p. 29, trans. by Preest.

<sup>17</sup> Le Baker (1889), p. 30.

This distinction between expectation and reality is similarly highlighted in a later scene of mockery:

that villain Gournay made a crown out of hay and, daring to touch the Lord's anointed, put it on the head which once had been consecrated with holy oil, while the knights mocked him and said in bitter irony, 'Avaunt, sir king', which is to say 'Proceed, my lord king.'<sup>18</sup>

Here, once again, the crown of hay is juxtaposed against 'the head which once had been consecrated with holy oil' (*capiti, iam dudum per oleum sanctum consecrat*), while the 'bitter irony' (*yronia nimis acerba*) of the knights' mocking courtesies – Edward is not being treated as a king, and cannot proceed as he wishes – depends for its function on the gulf between Edward's status and his treatment.<sup>19</sup>

In addition, the image of the false crown alludes to Jesus's crown of thorns, suggesting a Christ-like endurance in the face of adversity and reflecting the similar image used in the deposition scene. Le Baker ultimately concludes that Edward's miraculous survival – not only of mistreatment, but of attempts to poison him – is probably the result of divine intervention: 'as I more truly believe, the Almighty on high kept his confessor for a more public martyrdom' (*quod verius credo, manifestiori martirio suum confessorem Altissimus reservavit*).<sup>20</sup> When imprisoned at Berkeley, Edward is 'shut up to exercise the virtue of patience like an anchorite' (*ubi paciencie exercens virtutem reclusus, ut anacorita*), a religious image which Le Baker expands by comparing him to 'the blessed Job' and reporting that 'he waited for the heavenly kingdom to replace the earthly.'<sup>21</sup> Edward even uses Jesus as a model, 'suffer[ing] with patience the loss of his royal crown and liberty out of his love for Jesus Christ, the poor crucified one'.<sup>22</sup> The anecdote of the false crown appears in many later texts, but few other writers foreground its Christological associations; although several critics have identified them in Marlowe's *Edward II*, there is little to suggest that Marlowe places more emphasis on the Christological elements of Edward's mistreatment than his sources do.<sup>23</sup> This is apparent when Marlowe's play is contrasted with Shakespeare's *Richard*

<sup>18</sup> Le Baker (2012), pp. 29–30, trans. by Preest.

<sup>19</sup> Le Baker (1889), p. 31.

<sup>20</sup> Le Baker (2012), p. 29, trans. by Preest; Le Baker (1889), p. 30. For the trope of 'the king's resistance to death', see Thomas Page Anderson, *Performing Early Modern Trauma from Shakespeare to Milton* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 113; Alan Smith, 'Marlowe's *Edward II*, 5.3.23', *The Explicator*, 52 (1994), 66–69 (p. 68); Marlowe, V.v.1–12.

<sup>21</sup> Le Baker (2012), p. 30, trans. by Preest; Le Baker (1889), p. 31.

<sup>22</sup> Le Baker (2012), p. 27, trans. by Preest.

<sup>23</sup> See Mathew Martin, 'Plays of Passion: Pain, History, and Theater in *Edward II*', in *The Sacred and Profane in English Renaissance Literature*, ed. by Mary Arshagouni Papazian (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), pp. 84–107; Lisa Hopkins, *Christopher Marlowe, Renaissance Dramatist* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), p. 42; Patrick Ryan, 'Marlowe's *Edward II* and the Medieval Passion Play', *Comparative Drama*, 32 (1998), 465–95.

*II* – in which Richard, unlike Edward, explicitly compares himself to Christ – and with Francis Hubert’s poem on Edward’s reign.<sup>24</sup> Hubert points out the Christological elements in le Baker’s account in order to blame Edward’s torturers for their blasphemy. Edward, narrating, tells Jesus, ‘See how these wicked men dishonor thee: / The Sponge, the Speare, the Crosse, the Crowne of thorne / Thine ensignes are, and may not else be borne’, and argues that the comparison is inappropriate: ‘Thou knewst no sinne, my sinnes the sand exceede’.<sup>25</sup>

Le Baker’s account is notable for its narrativity, in which these frequent Biblical allusions play a role. Discourse markers indicate that the story of Edward’s deposition, imprisonment and death has been constructed as a coherent literary account. Le Baker begins the section with, ‘Then [*Tunc*] began the final persecution of Edward, which continued until his death’; ‘First’ (*Primo*) his captors assail him with the stench of dead bodies, but ‘those tyrants, seeing [*videntes*] that the stench could not of itself cause the death of a very strong man’, decided to kill him by suffocation and penetration.<sup>26</sup> It seems plausible that this narrativity contributed to the popular and influential nature of le Baker’s depiction of Edward’s reign, along with its sensational and entertaining nature. In addition, le Baker’s account contains various self-contained anecdotes which proved easy to extract for use in later texts. An account of Edward’s forcible shaving proved particularly popular:

The enemies of God cast about for a means of disguising Edward so that he might not be easily recognised by anybody. They hit upon the idea of both cutting his hair and shaving his beard. So, when on their journey they came to a ditch in which water was running, they commanded Edward to dismount for a shave. They sat him on a molehill and the barber brought a basin of cold water which he had taken from the ditch. When the barber and the others said that cold water should be quite good enough for the occasion, Edward said, ‘Willy-nilly, we’ll have some hot water for my beard,’ and that his promise might come true, he began to weep copiously.<sup>27</sup>

Edward’s witty reply, and his neat means of twisting the situation to his advantage – though abused, he regains control over the situation through control over his bodily functions – appear to have made this anecdote popular, since it appears in nine other historical texts. All of these maintain Edward’s tearful reaction, except for one atypical independent continuation of the *Brut*, written in Anglo-Norman during the fourteenth century. The writer appears to have had access to le Baker’s *Chronicon*, resulting in a strongly royalist tone, as can be seen in the following passage:

<sup>24</sup> *Richard II*, IV.i.160–62, *Oxford Shakespeare*.

<sup>25</sup> Hubert (1628), stanzas 545–46.

<sup>26</sup> Le Baker (2012), p. 32, trans. by Preest; for Latin see le Baker (1889), p. 33. I have deviated from Preest’s translation here in order to retain the participle ‘seeing’ (*videntes*).

<sup>27</sup> Le Baker (2012), p. 30, trans. by Preest.

Et a le retourne de lour deduyt le treitour Gourney ly dist en reprovant coment il ly avoit fet despit et luy despersone en barbarie devant grants seignurs, et pur ce ly rendreit ore son guerdoun, et ove son cotell depitousement ousta la barbe le roy. Done parla le roy humblement come cely qe ne savoit point de malice, ‘Thomas, contre vostre foy moy faites celle deshonor, pur quelle fait vous sourdera vengeance, qar il est defendu par seint escrit qe roy ne chapelle ne soient touchez par malice pur ce qils sunt enointez.’<sup>28</sup>

And on their return from their entertainment, Gourney, the traitor, insultingly told him how he [i.e., Edward] had previously savagely slandered and insulted him in the presence of great lords, and on that account he would now give him his reward, and with his knife he pitilessly took off the king’s beard. Then the king said humbly, as one who showed no malice, ‘Thomas, you do me this dishonour against your faith, for which deed vengeance will rebound on you, for Holy Writ forbids that either king or priest be touched with intent to harm, because they are anointed.’

In this account the shaving of Edward’s beard is not a pragmatic decision to disguise him, but a moral affront, a symbolic punishment for the crimes Gourney accuses him of having committed. As such, the power dynamic shifts: while in le Baker’s account Edward is a victim of superior physical force, here he is offered the chance to present an alternative interpretation of events, removing Gourney’s justification for shaving him. Like this writer’s account of Edward’s murder (discussed below), this anecdote excises any elements which might present Edward as weak, submissive, or emotionally incontinent. Rather than resorting to tears, Edward in this passage remains confident of his enduring status as anointed king, and of his right to the accompanying courtesies.

Stow and Holinshed both use le Baker as their main source for Edward’s reign following his deposition, and influenced its use by a large number of subsequent writers (including Marlowe, who in V.iii and V.v describes the tortures enumerated by le Baker). A small number of distinctive early modern adaptations of le Baker deserve brief mention. Richard Niccols’s *Winter Nights Vision* (the late continuation to the *Mirror for Magistrates*) retains the shaving anecdote but renders it comparatively humourless, contributing to the maintenance of a sorrowful tone but also arguably to the poem’s relative unpopularity: ‘Let us have water warme in their despight: / This said, the teares did downe my cheekes distill, / As if they strove t’effect my wofull will’.<sup>29</sup> Elizabeth Cary gives Edward a long invented speech to his captors, focusing particularly on his separation from his children.<sup>30</sup> Most interestingly, Thomas Deloney’s *Strange Histories* embellishes le Baker’s reference to Edward

<sup>28</sup> V. H. Galbraith, ‘Extracts from the *Historia Aurea* and a French *Brut* (1317-47)’, *English Historical Review*, 43 (1928), 203–17 (p. 216).

<sup>29</sup> *WNV*, fol. 3B5<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> Cary (folio), fols. 2O2<sup>v</sup>–2P<sup>r</sup>.



being poisoned, inventing his resultant facial disfigurement ('An ugly scabbe ore spreads his Lyllie skinne, / Foule botches bicake upon his manly face') which he compares to leprosy, very possibly owing to its associations with sexual transgression.<sup>31</sup>

Importantly, le Baker also frequently focuses on the sympathy that Edward's peers, subjects and observers feel towards him. This manifests in relation to his imprisonment – he is kept at Corfe only 'until some townspeople got to know of it and made plans to set him free and take him overseas, just as he wished' – and also in relation to his grief for separation from Isabella.<sup>32</sup> Compared to a 'second Orpheus' who sings 'Countless...songs of love...with pleading voice, but in vain', Edward 'complained of no misfortune except that his wife, whom he was not able not to love, did not want to see him, although he had lived a widower from her embraces for more than [a] year, and that she did not allow their son, the new king, or any of their children to give him the comfort of their presence.'<sup>33</sup> Le Baker sets out the pity inspired by this – both real and potential – in some detail:

This love shown by the despondent Edward and his patience in adversity awoke such pity in the earl his guardian and in both their households that they did not omit to send messages of the despairing love of the noble lord for his wife to a heart that was harder than an adamantine anvil. For the queen was stirred not to love by these messages but to anger, for the iron lady in her secret thoughts began to be very afraid that the church, with its customary pity for the pitiful, might one day actually compel her to share again the bed of the husband she had repudiated. For she thought that a man who, by his endurance of adversity and the rich fragrance of all his virtues, had brought his own enemies, whom she herself had placed as attendants over him, to take pity on him, would be much more likely to arouse the pity of men who did not know him and who were the very pupils of pity.<sup>34</sup>

This passage is an example of le Baker's tendency to set out ideal emotional responses as a guide for his readers. Here, he describes Edward's situation with emotive juxtapositions – he shows 'love' (*amor*) despite being 'despondent' (*languentis*), and 'patience' (*paciencia*) despite 'adversity' (*adversis*) – before indicating the causal effect of that situation on his

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Deloney, *Strange Histories* (London: William Barley, 1602), fol. B8r.

<sup>32</sup> Le Baker (2012), p. 29, trans. by Preest. Claire Valente ['The *Lament of Edward II*: Religious Lyric, Political Propaganda', *Speculum*, 77 (2002), 422–39 (pp. 428–29)] is incorrect to say this detail only appears in the *Lament*.

<sup>33</sup> Le Baker (2012), pp. 27–28, trans. by Preest. Although Orpheus was associated with sex between men in this period [see Robert Mills, *Seeing Sodomy in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), chap. 3; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ed. by George Patrick Goold, trans. Frank Justus Miller, Loeb Classical Library, 43 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), X, pp. 70–71], it seems unlikely that le Baker intended to invoke this association, given the lack of references to Edward's sexual transgressions elsewhere in his text. However, his reference to Orpheus may have carried these connotations for subsequent readers, particularly as the consensus concerning the sexual nature of Edward's relationships with his favourites developed further.

<sup>34</sup> Le Baker (2012), p. 28, trans. by Preest.

keepers' emotional reactions: Edward's qualities themselves become the subject of the verb 'awoke', demonstrating that they directly inspired pity.<sup>35</sup> It is particularly notable that Isabella is afraid of pity from religious quarters; alongside the Biblical allusions, this contributes to le Baker's representation of Edward as a Christ-like martyr worthy of veneration. Through dramatizing Isabella's fear in this regard, le Baker also emphasises the fact that even her employees – 'his own enemies, whom she herself had placed as attendants over him' – pity Edward, thus further encouraging the reader's sympathy.

In light of the reluctance to consider medieval conceptualisations of sex among modern historians, as outlined in Chapter 1, I wish to stress once again that le Baker's focus on Edward's love for Isabella need not preclude the suggestion that his relationship with Gaveston was romantic and/or sexual, and nor need it prevent le Baker's readers from interpreting his text (which, as discussed in Chapter 2, attempts to justify Edward's love for Gaveston) in this way. Claire Valente, frustratingly, suggests that the fact that 'a contemporary poet found it plausible to include the loss of Isabel's love as one cause for the king's lament' should be seen to contradict 'his affection for male favourites, particularly Piers Gaveston'.<sup>36</sup> The assumption that love for Isabella and love for his male favourites must be mutually exclusive rests on an inaccurate and anachronistic understanding of how sexual attraction and behaviour was perceived in this period: these were not, as they are today in popular understanding, categorised along gendered lines. As such, the above passage should not be interpreted as le Baker's attempt to demonstrate that the love between Edward and Gaveston was neither romantic nor sexual; instead, we should recognise that it functions primarily to elicit sympathy for Edward and to emphasise the cruelty of Isabella's treatment of him, and that (as Valente admits) it aligns him with the figure of the courtly lover.<sup>37</sup> That said, it is interesting that neither Stow nor Holinshed retain this passage in their accounts of Edward's reign. The reasons for this omission lie, I would argue, not in the potential incompatibility between Edward's love for a woman and his love for men, but in the potential incompatibility between his sexual transgressions during his reign (which Stow and Holinshed draw from other sources than le Baker) and the chaste faithfulness to Isabella that appears in le Baker's account. Marlowe and the poet Thomas May, who included an account of Edward's imprisonment and death in his 1635 poem *The Victorious Reigne of King Edward the Third*, are atypical in their retention of this detail; various factors distinguish both writers from standard early modern historiography.

---

<sup>35</sup> Le Baker (1889), p. 29.

<sup>36</sup> Valente, pp. 432–33.

<sup>37</sup> Valente, p. 423.

Marlowe, as a dramatist, is influenced by other English history plays (Forker shows convincingly that the imprisoned Edward's wistful reference to his courtship of Isabella derives from an echo of Shakespeare's *2 Henry VI*), while May's poem focuses on the reign of Edward III and the overthrow of Isabella and Mortimer, a moral angle well served by emphasising Isabella's emotional cruelty and infidelity to her husband.<sup>38</sup>

### iii. Repentance

A significant historiographical strand presents Edward as reformed and repentant after his deposition. Valente argues that, in contemporary accounts, this strand has political origins: Isabella and Mortimer, she says, made various attempts to manipulate the historical record, suggesting that this 'humble and contrite' representation of Edward 'stems at least in part from rampant publicity by the new regime'.<sup>39</sup> However, I would argue that we should also consider literary concerns, particularly when accounting for the continued presence of this strand in later historical texts. Although Valente is broadly right to say that 'the chronicle accounts portray Edward as asking pardon of his subjects, not of God, and wailing more than he prays', the element of repentance is still very much observable in these chronicle accounts, even if less emphasis is placed on its religious aspects.<sup>40</sup> Presenting Edward as repentant enables these writers to treat him sympathetically while still condemning his behaviour during his reign, and also fits his story into a moral or religious framework, allowing it to function as an exemplum.

The earliest text to present Edward as repentant is the 'Lament of Edward II'. This Anglo-Norman poem, which purports to have been written by Edward during his imprisonment, 'survives in two manuscripts, both probably dating from before 1350'.<sup>41</sup> Subsequently a Latin translation was made, which appears in the anonymous *Annales Rerum Anglicarum* (composed around 1460 and erroneously attributed to William Worcester by Thomas Hearne).<sup>42</sup> The poem was almost certainly not written by Edward; rather, it represents a didactic complaint against the changeable nature of fortune in which 'his fall is

<sup>38</sup> Marlowe, pp. 27–28; Thomas May, *The Victorious Reigne of King Edward the Third* (London: [John Beale?] for T. Walkley and B. Fisher, 1635), fol. B7<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> Valente, p. 430.

<sup>40</sup> Valente, p. 429.

<sup>41</sup> Valente, p. 422.

<sup>42</sup> 'Wilhelmi Wyrcester Annales Rerum Anglicarum', in *Liber Niger Scaccarii, Nec Non Wilhelmi Worcestrii Annales Rerum Anglicarum*, ed. by Thomas Hearne, 2 vols (London: W. and J. Richardson, 1771), II, 424–521 (pp. 425–29). For authorship, see K. B. McFarlane, 'William Worcester: A Preliminary Survey', in *Studies Presented to Sir Hilary Jenkinson*, ed. by J. Conway Davies (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 196–221 (pp. 206–07). Valente (p. 425) appears not to know the fifteenth-century Latin version, though she postulates its existence based on Robert Fabyan's quotation of a Latin stanza. See Diana Tyson, 'Lament for a Dead King?', *Journal of Medieval History*, 30 (2004), 359–75 (p. 363), for a consideration of the relationship between the French and Latin versions, and a convincing suggestion that the former is the original.

meant as a lesson for us all', typical of Anglo-Norman lyric and probably influenced by Boethius's *Consolatio*.<sup>43</sup> The poem presents Edward's situation as evidence of the universal instability of fortune:

Fortune trop m'ad traversé,  
 Eure m'est faili tut mon age.  
 Bien sovent l'ay esprové:  
 En mond n'ad si bel ne si sage,  
 Si curtois ne si preysé  
 Si eure ne lui court de avantage,  
 Qe il ne serra pur fol clamé.

good luck has eluded me all my life. Full often have I experienced this:  
 there is no one on earth so fair nor so wise, so courtly nor so famed, who, if  
 luck does not favour him, will not be proclaimed a fool.<sup>44</sup>

Edward recognises that his sufferings are just punishment for his sins, and repents to God: 'They make me suffer cruelly, granted that I have well deserved it. ...Ah, Lord of salvation I repent and beg thy mercy for all my sins!' (*Pener me funt cruelement, / E duint qe bien l'ai deseri... / Hay sire de salu je me repent / E de toutz mes mals vus cri merci!*)<sup>45</sup>

Robert Fabyan, in his *Newe Cronicles* (c. 1504), translates and abbreviates the Latin version of the poem, although Isabel Aspin argues that he also had access to the French text.<sup>46</sup> Thomas Heywood's *Chronographical History* (1641), which uses Fabyan as a source, retains only the poem's culminating prayer asking for Jesus' grace.<sup>47</sup> This choice foregrounds the religious motivations for Edward's reformed state, excising elements that would seem to blame the vagaries of fortune for his situation.

Several other texts also describe Edward as repentant without the inclusion of the 'Lament'. Grafton links his repentance specifically to his toleration of the younger Despenser's piracy, saying he 'repented full sore, and tooke therof great remorse of conscience as appereth in the ende of his reigne.'<sup>48</sup> Samuel Daniel reports that Edward, on being deposed, 'confessed, how he had beene misguided (the common excuse of a poore spirit) and done many things whereof now hee repented, which if hee were to governe again, he would become a new man'.<sup>49</sup> By collocating Edward's repentance with the 'common excuse' of the 'evil counsel' trope – a trope Daniel is elsewhere reluctant to

<sup>43</sup> Valente, p. 423; Howard Patch, *The Goddess Fortuna in Mediaeval Literature* (London: F. Cass, 1967), p. 67. Patch argues that 'it is fair to suspect that, when a medieval man in prison complained of Fortune, he was induced to think of blaming the goddess by remembering what Boethius did under similar circumstances'.

<sup>44</sup> Valente, p. 435; *Lament*, stanza 1, trans. by Aspin.

<sup>45</sup> *Lament*, stanza 3, trans. by Aspin.

<sup>46</sup> Fabyan, fols. 2K8<sup>v</sup>–2L1<sup>r</sup>; *Lament*, p. 95.

<sup>47</sup> Heywood, fol. 2C3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>48</sup> Grafton (*Chronicle*), fol. R5<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>49</sup> Daniel, fol. R2<sup>v</sup>.

accept, referring to Edward's 'habitual indisposition in the whole state of his Minde, not to be cured' – Daniel makes clear his sceptical attitude towards both.<sup>50</sup> Hubert uses Edward's repentance to reinforce his poem's didactic tone: after news of Isabella's invasion has reached them, Edward 'confesse[s]' to Spencer that 'Whilst my sweet canded fortune lasted still, / I never thought on things that were unseene; / I only was obsequious to my will.'<sup>51</sup> Like the rest of Hubert's poem (as detailed in Chapter 3), this section is clearly intended to present Edward as a negative exemplum whose function is to warn the reader about the consequences of such behaviour; this is evidenced by the title of the 1628 version, which frames Edward's example as 'deplorable'. Edward's confession ends on an admonitory note: as he lies 'prostrate at my makers feet', he concludes, 'I find a God whose judgements now I meet: / Damn'd Atheist thou, that saiest there is no God, / Thou wilt confesse one, when thou feel'st his rod.'<sup>52</sup> Niccols's *Mirror for Magistrates* poem on Edward contains a similar sentiment of religiously inflected repentance, typical of the *Mirror*. Edward addresses God: 'Thou art most just in all, thou gav'st a crowne, / But ah, mine owne misdeeds have cast me downe.'<sup>53</sup> However, this is a relatively late turn in the poem (coming as part of Edward's response to his deposition), which is – unusually for the *Mirror* – not counterbalanced by expressions of repentance from Edward's ghost at the beginning of the poem. Edward's ghost opens by stating that he deviated from his father's 'vertuous' path, and describing his relationship with Gaveston in condemnatory terms ('His [Edward I's] bones were yet scarce cold, his royall throne / Scarce warme beneath me was, when in the same / I did embrace my deare, lov'd Gaveston'), but does not overtly express repentance.<sup>54</sup> This contributes to Niccols's substantial reduction of the *Mirror's* didacticism (as shown in Chapter 3).

#### iv. *De casibus*

Just as the 'Lament' railed against Fortune, it is common for writers to align Edward's story – explicitly or not – with the *de casibus* mode. The term *de casibus* originates with Boccaccio's fourteenth-century poem *De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*, a series of verse biographies of people whose lives took the form of a catastrophic fall from high status – with accompanying happiness, success and wealth – to low, and which was translated into English by John Lydgate in the fifteenth century as *The Fall of Princes*. Paul Budra defines the ensuing mode of '*de casibus* literature' as 'a type of history writing that brings together

---

<sup>50</sup> Daniel, fol. Q2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>51</sup> Hubert (1628), stanza 459.

<sup>52</sup> Hubert (1628), stanza 463.

<sup>53</sup> WNL, fol. 3B4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> WNL, fols. 3A<sup>r</sup>, 3A2<sup>r</sup>.

large numbers of biographies, all of which depict a life that moved from a good situation to a bad, with the purpose of demonstrating by the weight of the accumulated example that a falling pattern is typical of the lives of great persons'.<sup>55</sup> The assumption that this pattern is 'typical' has religious origins: Boccaccio's *De Casibus* begins with Adam and Eve, suggesting that, 'As a result of the first fall of man, Fortune holds great power over those in high places. Thus a great man's fall from high estate is a natural consequence, the tragic but inevitable result of the sin of Adam and Eve.'<sup>56</sup> While the historical texts under consideration here do not fit into this format of what Budra calls 'concatenated biographies' (unlike, for example, the *Mirror for Magistrates*), they frequently do draw attention to the ways in which individual kings' reigns demonstrate that 'a falling pattern is typical of the lives of great persons'; indeed, the *de casibus* mode is particularly associated with royalty.<sup>57</sup> As the many representations of Edward as repentant, and the political uses analysed in Chapter 3, suggest, medieval and early modern writers do not neutralise the didactic potential of Edward's story when they fit it into a *de casibus* framework. This does not mean that there is no room for ambiguity regarding the relative extents to which Fortune and Edward's personal flaws are responsible for his downfall; and we should acknowledge that sympathetic depictions of the deposed king help to militate against condemnations of him expressed earlier in the narration of his reign, when he was at the top of Fortune's wheel. However, the use of *de casibus* elements in accounts of Edward's reign should not be seen primarily as attempts at exoneration.

Instead, I would argue, the use of these elements should be seen as an example of the use of literary techniques in historical texts, and as part of the 'literary transformation' with which this chapter is concerned. Tricia McElroy writes persuasively of the way in which 'Historical writing [in the early modern period] ...is filled with generic forms – some obvious, others more inconspicuous – that arrange historical facts into shapes and patterns that help us to perceive and comprehend the past.'<sup>58</sup> One example McElroy gives is of the romance genre; as we have already seen in Chapter 2, tropes of this genre also make their way into historiographical accounts of Gaveston's arrest at Scarborough shortly before his death. The treatment of Edward's story in historical texts appears to indicate recognition of how his story can be aligned with the 'shapes and patterns' of the *de casibus* mode. This begins with the *Brut*, but becomes more explicit in early modern texts. It can take the form

---

<sup>55</sup> Paul Budra, *A Mirror for Magistrates and the De Casibus Tradition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), p. 18.

<sup>56</sup> Louis Zocca, *Elizabethan Narrative Poetry* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950), p. 6.

<sup>57</sup> Budra, p. xiii; Patch, pp. 59–60, 164–66.

<sup>58</sup> Tricia McElroy, 'Genres', in *The Oxford Handbook of Holinshed's Chronicles*, ed. by Paulina Kewes, Ian W. Archer, and Felicity Heal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 267–83 (p. 268).

of describing Edward's life as a 'tragedy' (a concept that Budra argues was associated with *de casibus* in the early modern imagination) and of emphasising the metabasis (the shift from a higher to a lower status, a crucial aspect of *de casibus* literature) inherent in his story.<sup>59</sup> Emphasis on the *de casibus* elements of Edward's story should be seen as a creative decision made with readers in mind: it creates a clear narrative arc with which readers would likely have been familiar from literary texts, enhancing the pleasurable readability of accounts of his reign. In addition, it can be considered a sensationalising technique in that it usually involves (indeed, to an extent requires) the emphasis of Edward's transgressions while king and of his sufferings when deposed.

The first implicit alignments of Edward's story with the *de casibus* mode occurred in genealogical rolls produced during his reign, before his deposition and death. Olivier de Laborderie argues that 'it is probably not fortuitous that we find in three rolls written between 1321 and 1327...a Wheel of Fortune explicitly warning kings against the vanity and instability of earthly power.'<sup>60</sup> Not all genealogical rolls include a depiction of the Wheel of Fortune, but these three rolls, produced during the latter part of Edward's reign, do. Although it is possible that the makers of some of these rolls included the Wheel of Fortune as a reference to the executed Thomas of Lancaster rather than as a warning to Edward—the rolls in question are, after all, 'also the first rolls to represent Thomas of Lancaster'—it does not seem likely that this applies to all three rolls mentioned by Laborderie. In particular, it seems unlikely that the makers of the roll known as 'the Chaworth roll' intended their readers to draw a moral or teleological *de casibus* message from Lancaster's execution: the roll was produced for a patron with connections to the Lancaster family, and fails to mention his execution at all.<sup>61</sup> The example of the Chaworth Roll, then, may well justify Laborderie's suggestion: 'Was [the inclusion of the Wheel of Fortune on rolls produced during the period 1321-27] not a veiled threat to Edward II, who is portrayed in all [genealogical roll] continuations that cover his reign as having been influenced by evil counsellors and as having abused his power?'

Many other accounts of Edward's reign use the technique of detailing his previous and current situation in order to highlight the contrast between them, and thus the metabasis that has taken place. The frequency with which this technique is used strongly

---

<sup>59</sup> Budra, chap. 3; Kelly Quinn, 'Mastering Complaint: Michael Drayton's *Peirs Gaveston* and the Royal Mistress Complaints', *English Literary Renaissance*, 38 (2008), 439–60 (p. 443). See also Patch, p. 55.

<sup>60</sup> Olivier de Laborderie, 'A New Pattern For English History: The First Genealogical Rolls of the Kings of England', in *Broken Lines: Genealogical Literature in Late-Medieval Britain and France*, ed. by Raluca Radulescu and Edward Donald Kennedy (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), pp. 45–61 (p. 56).

<sup>61</sup> *The Chaworth Roll: A Fourteenth-Century Genealogy of the Kings of England*, ed. by Alixe Bovey, Olivier de Laborderie, and Marigold Anne Norbye (London: Sam Fogg, 2005), pp. 19–20.

suggests that a stress on metabasis forms an integral part of the alignment of individual stories with the *de casibus* mode. In the *Brut*, for example, the chapter on Edward's deposition and subsequent imprisonment is entitled 'How Kyng Edward was put adoune'.<sup>62</sup> The phrase 'put adoune' presents his deposition as a spatial movement between hierarchical layers, emphasising his transfer from a high estate to a lower one. This shift is also highlighted by the words attributed to William Trussell at the end of his renunciation of homage to Edward on behalf of the people of England, which explicitly state both Edward's loss of royal status and its replacement with 'no special position': 'fro þis day afterward 3e shulle nou3t be cleymede Kyng, neiþer for Kyng bene holde; but fram þis tyme afterward 3e shul bene holde a singuler man of all þe peple'.<sup>63</sup>

The *de casibus* elements found in Holinshed's *Chronicles* can be partly attributed to the influence of the *Brut*. They are also derived from Polydore Vergil, who encourages a *de casibus* interpretation of Edward's deposition: 'Having heard the ambassadors, Edward could not restrain his tears. Now he saw the maxim proven by his own example, that nothing is more piteous than a happy man transformed into a wretch [*hominem ex beato miserum fieri*].'<sup>64</sup> Like the *Brut* writer, Vergil identifies Edward's former and current state in order to highlight the gulf between them. In addition, by presenting Edward's life as 'proof of a 'maxim' (*verum*; Sutton's translation could also be rendered 'he saw it proven to be true'<sup>65</sup>), Vergil frames the story as one part of the 'accumulated example[s]' that function together to demonstrate *de casibus* teleology.<sup>66</sup>

The 1577 and 1587 Holinshed texts refer to Edward as an 'infortunate Prince', highlighting the adverse role of Fortune in his reign.<sup>67</sup> Abraham Fleming repeats this term in his interpolations to the 1587 edition, ending the narration of Edward's reign with the sentence, 'Thus far infortunat Edward the second': the concept of ill fortune thus comes to summarise Edward's reign.<sup>68</sup> A further interpolation exclaims upon Edward's deposition:

Ah lamentable run from roialtie to miserable calamitie, procured by them cheefelie that should have beene the pillers of the kings estate, and not the hooked engins to pull him downe from his throne! So that here we see it verefied by triall, that

—miserat infoelix est etiam rex,

<sup>62</sup> *Brut*, p. 241.

<sup>63</sup> 'Singular, adj. (and adv.) and n.', OED (1911); *Brut*, p. 242.

<sup>64</sup> Vergil, chap. 18, trans. by Sutton.

<sup>65</sup> '2 verus [CL]', DMLBS.

<sup>66</sup> Budra, p. 18.

<sup>67</sup> Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / p. 342.

<sup>68</sup> Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / p. 342.



Nec quenquam (mihi crede) facit diadema beatum.<sup>69</sup>

Like the *Brut*, Fleming employs spatial imagery to demonstrate Edward's metabasis. He also highlights the speed of Edward's fall ('run'); provides a guide for the reader's emotional response ('lamentable'); and draws out its moral applications through the Latin verse, which translates as 'Misfortune is even sent to the king / Nor (I believe) does the crown make anyone happy.' This passage also exemplifies the overall ambivalence of Holinshed's *Chronicles* towards Edward's culpability for his deposition, as opposed to that of Fortune or his nobles. While a 'run' would usually be a deliberate act, here Fleming states that Edward's 'run' was 'procured by' his nobles, but also that his fall provides evidence for the role of Fortune in kings' lives (i.e. that kings will *inevitably* experience misfortune). In this ambivalence, Holinshed's *Chronicles* is typical of early modern texts, which largely refuse a coherent model of agency or culpability with regard to Edward's deposition.

Holinshed and Fleming's treatment of Richard II's reign is similar, indicating that the alignment of particular reigns with the *de casibus* mode is common to the two deposed kings. The 1577 edition repeats the word 'infortunate' to describe Richard's 'chance', and highlights the general moralistic applicability of the situation: 'But such misfortune (or the like) oftentimes falleth unto those princes, which when they are aloft, cast no doubt for perils that maie follow.'<sup>70</sup> Similarly, he describes Richard as 'translated from principallitie to prison, & to fall from honor into horror', using alliteration and assonance to highlight his transition between opposing states.<sup>71</sup>

Poets and dramatists responded to these *de casibus* elements in their chronicle sources when constructing literary accounts of historical figures.<sup>72</sup> Shakespeare's Richard II famously anticipates his own *de casibus* story prior to his deposition ('I'll give my jewels for a set of beads, / My gorgeous palace for a hermitage, / My gay apparel for an almsman's gown', etc.).<sup>73</sup> Marlowe's *Edward II* similarly calls attention to the metabasis inherent in the plot, both through Edward's complaints about the disparity between his royal status and the conditions of his imprisonment ('Within a dungeon England's king is kept'; 'They give me bread and water, being a king') and through more generalised observations about the inevitability of a *de casibus* pattern in the lives of kings (Edward asks the Abbot of Neath,

<sup>69</sup> Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / p. 340.

<sup>70</sup> Holinshed (1577), IV, section 1 / p. 1116.

<sup>71</sup> Holinshed (1587), VI, section 12 / p. 501.

<sup>72</sup> As David Bevington has explored, *de casibus* elements in English drama also derive in part from the morality play tradition [David Bevington, *From 'Mankind' to Marlowe: Growth of Structure in the Popular Drama of Tudor England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 235].

<sup>73</sup> *Richard II*, III.iii.146–53, *Oxford Shakespeare*.

‘what is he whom rule and empery / Have not in life or death made miserable?’, and Leicester, on seeing him, quotes Seneca’s *Thyestes*: ‘Whom the rising sun has seen high in pride, him the setting sun has seen laid low’).<sup>74</sup> Several critics have noted the importance of visual and theatrical elements – the contrast between ‘ceremony’ and ‘bareness’ – to foregrounding this sense of metabasis on stage.<sup>75</sup> However, Marlowe (unlike Holinshed, one of his principal sources) does not accompany this with any emphasis on the repentance which was an expected element of the *de casibus* mode. It is perhaps simplistic to conclude (as Takashi Kurokawa does) that there is therefore ‘nothing in [Marlowe’s *Edward II*] of the moral implications of the *de casibus* tragedy which would emphasise King Edward’s downfall as divine retribution for his sin’; but it is certainly true that Marlowe’s representation of Edward’s fall is not didactic.<sup>76</sup> This can be contrasted with Hubert, who initially states that Edward was ‘cast by Fortune downe’ before correcting himself: ‘Did I say Fortune? nay by Folly rather, / By unrespect unto the rules of State’.<sup>77</sup> Hubert’s poem, like other early modern literary accounts of Edward’s reign, also details his metabasis at great length (‘Now of a Cushion thou must make a Crowne, / And play the mock-king with it on thy hed, / And on the earth thy Chaire of State sit downe’, etc.)<sup>78</sup> Neither Hubert’s most recent editor, Bernard Mellor, nor any recent editor of Shakespeare’s *1 Henry IV* appears to have noted the close echo between these lines and Falstaff’s (‘This chair shall be my state, this dagger my sceptre, and this cushion my crown’).<sup>79</sup> It is likely that Shakespeare’s play preceded Hubert’s poem; as such, the reference to Edward ‘play[ing] the mock king’ seems clearly intended to evoke Falstaff. Edward is not just descending from royalty to a ‘mock king’: he is descending from an office that commands respect to a disreputable comic figure who commands ridicule, a transition not without a touch of poignant comedy.

As alluded to above, by far the most influential early modern English *de casibus* text was the *Mirror for Magistrates*, a group of poems with which Edward has a complex

<sup>74</sup> Marlowe, V.iii.19, V.v.61; IV.vii.14–15, 53–54 (trans. by Forker). For other examples of the use of Edward’s story to demonstrate the likelihood of metabasis in the lives of kings and princes, see *Mortimeriados*, ll. 1779–85; Cary (folio), fol. 2K2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>75</sup> David Hard Zucker, *Stage and Image in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe* (Salzburg: Institut für englische Sprache und Literatur, Universität Salzburg, 1972), p. 115; see also David Bevington and James Shapiro, “‘What Are Kings, When Regiment Is Gone?’: The Decay of Ceremony in *Edward II*,” in *A Poet and a Filthy Play-Maker: New Essays on Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by Kenneth Friedenreich, Roma Gill, and Constance B. Kuriyama (New York: AMS Press, 1988), pp. 263–78 (p. 275); R. Hakim, ‘Marlowe on the English Stage, 1588-1988’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leeds, 1990), p. 69.

<sup>76</sup> Takashi Kurokawa, ‘De Casibus Theme and Machiavellism – In Connection with the Theme of *Edward II*,’ *Shakespeare Studies (Japan)*, 7 (1968), 61–80 (p. 64).

<sup>77</sup> Hubert (1628), stanzas 1, 2.

<sup>78</sup> Hubert (1628), stanzas 506–08.

<sup>79</sup> *1 Henry IV*, II.v.381–82, *Oxford Shakespeare*.

relationship.<sup>80</sup> Roger Mortimer features as the subject of one of the poems in the original version of the *Mirror*, which briefly mentions Edward as having been non-specifically murdered ‘through his means’.<sup>81</sup> The full title of Marlowe’s *Edward II* (‘...with the tragicall fall of proud Mortimer’) gestures towards the continuing recognisability of Mortimer’s character in the late sixteenth century, and his continuing association with the *de casibus* mode; this is reflected in Mortimer Junior’s function as a *de casibus* voice within the play (‘Base Fortune, now I see, that in thy wheel / There is a point, to which when men aspire, / They tumble headlong down’<sup>82</sup>). Following this, Hubert and Drayton’s poems on Edward and Gaveston employ conventions of the *Mirror*, and may represent attempts to insert these figures into the *Mirror* tradition: according to Lily B. Campbell, ‘By 1587 a good many hopeful poets were apparently writing poems in the manner of the *Mirror* tragedies’.<sup>83</sup> Both poems begin with the protagonists being summoned from death to tell their stories, and contain generalised laments on worldly mutability, both typical aspects of *Mirror* poems.<sup>84</sup> However, Edward himself was not incorporated into a volume explicitly bearing the *Mirror* title until Niccols’s 1610 *Winter Nights Vision*.

The guiding force behind the teleology of the *Mirror*, and whether it should be seen as ‘Fortune’ or as divine ‘Providence’, has been the subject of intense debate.<sup>85</sup> This thesis, however, is primarily interested in the extent to which the concept of Fortune is used to avoid blaming Edward for his fall, rather than in its compatibility with a Christian worldview. It is rare for accounts of this period to condemn Edward’s actions in overtly Christian terms and to present his fall as retribution in relation to this (Drayton’s depiction of Gaveston’s descent into hell as a result of his sexual relationship with Edward, detailed in Chapter 2, is an exception). In any case, Edward’s very late appearance in the *Mirror* tradition means that even if a ‘single ethics’ could be discerned in the original text (something that seems highly doubtful, given its multiple authorship, fragmentary textual history, and the fact that ‘The Renaissance mind had a vast capacity for holding logical oppositions in tandem’), it need not follow that this ‘single ethics’ would be retained in Niccols’s *Winter Nights Vision*, which differs in many ways from the preceding *Mirror*

---

<sup>80</sup> For a textual history of the *Mirror*, see Budra, pp. 11–13.

<sup>81</sup> [‘Tragedy 2’], *Mirror*, pp. 82–89 (ll. 38–39).

<sup>82</sup> Marlowe, V.vi.58–60.

<sup>83</sup> *Parts Added to The Mirror for Magistrates*, ed. by Lily B. Campbell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1946), p. 9.

<sup>84</sup> Hubert (1628), stanzas 15–16; Hubert (1629), stanza 519; *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 13–18, 1122–28.

<sup>85</sup> See Frederick Kiefer, ‘Fortune and Providence in the *Mirror for Magistrates*’, *Studies in Philology*, 74 (1977), 146–64, for a summary of and intervention in this debate.

editions.<sup>86</sup> As such, Niccols's account of Edward's reign will be analysed here primarily in relation to its implications for the historiography of Edward (and in particular the incorporation of *de casibus* elements into that historiography), and not in relation to its implications for the *Mirror* tradition.

The 'Argument' to Niccols's poem attributes Edward's fate to Fortune, and focuses more on the sympathetic aspects of his fall than on his transgressions. His recall of Gaveston from exile is mentioned but not (at this stage) condemned, and the only description of his behaviour with even potential negative connotations is Niccols's comment that 'the angrie King / Vowes his revenge' on Gaveston's death; later he is 'folorne' and 'betrai'd', killed 'by violent hand', and the poem begins by summoning 'his wronged ghost'.<sup>87</sup> The poem is thus framed from the outset as recounting Edward's fall to elicit sympathy for him, not to demonstrate the just retribution he received for his transgressions. The expectations this creates are borne out by the rest of the poem: as observed above, Edward expresses very little repentance, and the account of his mistreatment after his deposition is introduced as a consequence of Fortune's 'utmost hate'.<sup>88</sup> Niccols gives numerous examples of metabasis: on Edward's capture prior to his deposition, the narrator states, '*Leister*, thy king is now thy captive made,' and Trussell's renunciation of homage is described in similar terms: 'Leaving his liege that was of most command / The most dejected subject of this land.'<sup>89</sup> These depictions of metabasis appear to be primarily intended to elicit sympathy: Edward becomes not just a 'subject', but 'the most dejected subject of this land', and his transference from 'stately steed' to 'beast foresworne' is marked by references to emotional and physical pain (his 'woefull head' is uncovered, and 'sharpe windes... / with their nipping cold [augment] my woes').<sup>90</sup> Ultimately, therefore, Niccols's poem has more in common with other *de casibus* treatments of Edward than it does with other *Mirror* poems: in his sympathetic treatment of Edward's deposition and imprisonment in particular, Niccols is firmly in line with his contemporary historiographers.

---

<sup>86</sup> William Peery, 'Tragic Retribution in the 1559 *Mirror for Magistrates*', *Studies in Philology*, 46.2 (1949), 113–30 (p. 123); Budra, pp. 59, 32–33.

<sup>87</sup> *WNV*, fol. 2Z8<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>88</sup> *WNV*, fol. 3B4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>89</sup> *WNV*, fols. 3B3<sup>r</sup>, 3B4<sup>v</sup>; see also 3B5<sup>r</sup>. Niccols also emphasises the *de casibus* elements of Thomas of Lancaster's execution through metabasis (*WNV*, fol. 3A7<sup>r</sup>), and alters the existing *Mirror* poem on Richard II to foreground this theme further: 'Who for their prince a prison dyd provide' becomes 'Who for their Prince no Palace did provide, / But prison strong...' ([Tragedy 5], *Mirror*, pp. 111–18 (l. 84); *WNV*, fol. X4<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>90</sup> *WNV*, fol. 3B5<sup>r</sup>.

As mentioned above, Holinshed also describes Edward's reign as a 'pitifull tragedie'.<sup>91</sup> The use of this term should, firstly, be seen as a further manifestation of writers' alignment of Edward's story with the 'shapes and patterns' of the *de casibus* mode. Budra traces the process by which *de casibus*, originally conceived of by Boccaccio as 'history, not tragedy', became associated with tragedy through the influence of Lydgate's translation, Chaucer's use of the concept, and terminological shifts in successive editions of the *Mirror for Magistrates*.<sup>92</sup> Secondly, it functions to highlight the narrative arc of Edward's story, presenting it as a work of art to be consumed for pleasure as well as information. This is particularly apparent in the work of John Speed, who is the only other chronicler to characterise Edward's reign as a tragedy, and who does so with explicit reference to dramatic form: 'Having thus farre shewed the originall of the mischiefe, wee will hasten now to the last Act or Catastrophe of our Edwards tragedie'.<sup>93</sup> Notably, the title page of Marlowe's *Edward II* does not refer to the play as Edward's tragedy – it is only Mortimer's fall which is 'tragical' – but Edward himself clearly does perceive his story in such terms, telling Lightborn, 'I see my tragedy written in thy brows'.<sup>94</sup> Drayton's *Gaveston* similarly describes his own story as tragic several times, and Drayton's dedication to the first edition foreshadows this, referring to Gaveston's story as having been 'over-past by the Tragoedians of these latter times'.<sup>95</sup> Nicols's *Winter Nights Vision*, too, is presented as 'an addition of such tragedies, especially famous, as are exempted in the former historie'.<sup>96</sup>

The alignment of Edward's story with the *de casibus* narrative format can be attributed to several factors. As discussed above, it should firstly be seen in the context of history-writing as a whole, which frequently takes on the 'shapes and patterns' of more clearly literary genres and which (as Budra argues convincingly) is particularly disposed to fit into a *de casibus* format. Secondly, it should be seen as part of the 'literary transformation', observed in the rest of this chapter: part of an overall attempt to shape history *for* readers, creating an enjoyable, saleable narrative. Thirdly, it is consistent with the trend – stemming early modern writers' reliance on multiple sources for their accounts of Edward's reign, but overwhelmingly on le Baker for their narratives of his deposition, imprisonment and death – to condemn Edward's behaviour during his reign while

---

<sup>91</sup> Holinshed (1577), VI, section 1 / p. 884.

<sup>92</sup> Budra, p. 17; chap. 3, *passim*. see also Patch, p. 68.

<sup>93</sup> Speed, fol. 4R2<sup>v</sup> (irregular signatures); see also 4T2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>94</sup> Marlowe, V.v.73; Melnikoff's assertion that Marlowe's play 'effectively proffers tragedy in the guise of history' ['Introduction', in Melnikoff, pp. 1–20 (p. 16)] thus relies on something of a problematic dichotomy. For other references to Edward's story as tragic in other genres, see *Mortimeriados*, ll. 1464–77; Cary (folio), fol. 2O2<sup>r</sup>; May, fols. B5<sup>v</sup>–B6<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>95</sup> *Peirs Gaveston*, ll. 16, 1564; p. 158.

<sup>96</sup> *WNV*, t.p.

displaying sympathy towards him after his deposition. This tendency for sympathy post-deposition is not confined to Edward's reign: in Holinshed's account of the reign of Richard II, the king is criticised for 'insolent misgovernance, and youthfull outrage' but his deponents are subsequently damned for their 'unnaturalness, or rather tigerlike crueltie'.<sup>97</sup> Once deposed, these monarchs are both didactically useful – perfect for conveying a generic message about the mutability of worldly power – and are safely sympathetic figures; in Edward's case, to sympathise with him before his deposition would be to condone the many transgressions of which he is accused.

Le Baker's sympathetic account (which, as discussed, exerted substantial influence on Holinshed) does not mention Fortune or encourage a *de casibus* interpretation of Edward's reign. However, I would argue that this is not inconsistent with the suggestion above that *de casibus* references function partly to enable sympathy. Since le Baker does not condemn Edward at any point, his sympathetic treatment post-deposition does not represent a shift in tone as it does with (for example) Stow and Holinshed. Moreover, his refusal to attribute Edward's fall to Fortune or divine intervention reflects his determination to blame Orleton ('that eloquent traitor') and Isabella ('the enraged virago') for his deposition and ill-treatment; to frame Edward's story as part of a wider *de casibus* trend in history might threaten to exonerate them.<sup>98</sup>

As well as arguably enabling sympathetic treatments, a further effect of aligning Edward's story with the *de casibus* format is to enable writers to treat his reign as an exemplum or 'cautionary tale'. While this is often explicitly politicised or linked to contemporary events (as discussed in Chapter 3), it also functions more generally. As mentioned above, Vergil frames Edward's situation as a 'maxim', and Fleming (following a more general tendency in his additions to Holinshed) links his situation to various moralistic proverbs, Biblical references and Latin verses.<sup>99</sup> William Martyn – reflecting his intended young male audience, as detailed in Chapter 1 – asserts his intention to draw moral lessons from Edward's reign at the beginning of his account: 'his evill Government made his Kingdome to be unfortunat, and himselfe a president of wretchednesse to succeeding Ages: as in the discourse of his Historie it will more particularly appeare'.<sup>100</sup> Similarly, when discussing Edward's failures in Scotland, he writes:

<sup>97</sup> Holinshed (1587), VI, section 12 / pp. 507–08.

<sup>98</sup> Le Baker (2012), pp. 21, 20, trans. by Preest.

<sup>99</sup> E.g. Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / pp. 318, 325, 331.

<sup>100</sup> Martyn, fol. N<sup>r</sup>.

Of these disgraces, and of these troubles, we make this profitable use: That as the heroicall vertues of excellent Princes are crowned with many blessings from above, so for the iniquitie and hainous transgressions of wicked and ungodly Kings, both themselves and their people likewise, are severely punished by God, before whom Princes must fall as well as the common subjects...<sup>101</sup>

Martyn emphasises the use of history and the ‘profitable’ potential of Edward’s story, highlighting the universal applicability of its lessons through reference to the general categories of ‘Princes’ and ‘Kings’. He presents this universalised story in a religiously inflected *de casibus* format: the phrase ‘Princes must fall’ simultaneously indicates submission to God and a fall in status, ascribing divine responsibility to Edward’s fate. The fact that Edward *did* ‘fall’ – that is, the fact that his story can be so easily made to fit a recognisably *de casibus* narrative pattern – is integral to Martyn’s ‘profitable use’ of his example.

## II. Death

Modern historians and contemporary sources agree that Edward II died in Berkeley Castle on 21 September 1327. (The exception is Ian Mortimer, who maintains that Edward was secretly kept at Corfe after a staged funeral ‘to prevent any further attempts at rescue and to use as ‘a potent threat to the young Edward III’.<sup>102</sup> However, this argument has not been widely considered convincing; I share J. R. S. Phillips’s sense that ‘It is hard to see what advantage would be gained by such a tactic.’<sup>103</sup>) There is less historiographical consensus concerning how Edward died.<sup>104</sup> Here contemporary sources differ, and are clearly inflected by the politically sensitive nature of the event. Phillips’s meticulous assessment of the evidence leads to the plausible conclusion that ‘It seems more likely that he was murdered, probably by suffocation, and with the intention of leaving no outward mark on his body’.<sup>105</sup> However, this chapter will not attempt to draw a firm conclusion regarding the manner of Edward’s death. Instead, it will assess the medieval and early modern historiography of the event, analysing the way in which a consensus was reached, and the effects of this consensus on Edward’s historiographical reputation.

---

<sup>101</sup> Martyn, fol. N3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>102</sup> Ian Mortimer, ‘The Death of Edward II in Berkeley Castle’, *English Historical Review*, 120 (2005), 1175–1214; Phillips, p. 577.

<sup>103</sup> Phillips, p. 580.

<sup>104</sup> See Phillips, pp. 560–65, for an overview of the evidence regarding Edward’s death.

<sup>105</sup> Phillips, p. 563.

## i. Development of a consensus

Early historical texts frequently refuse to specify the manner of Edward's death. Robert of Boston notes simply that 'Lord Edward, formerly king, in the evening healthy [*sanus*] in Berkeley castle, was found dead the next day'; the Bridlington chronicle reports that he 'died in Berkeley castle'.<sup>106</sup> The 'short version' of the *Brut* (composed earlier than the more popular and sensational 'long version') varies between manuscripts in its presentation of Edward's death: the manuscript known as the *Anonimalle Chronicle* states that 'the king became ill [at Berkeley] and died', while another states that he died of grief (though Phillips notes that this 'might also be taken to mean that he died in pain').<sup>107</sup> The writer of the *Anonimalle* elsewhere demonstrates an unwillingness to engage with politically sensitive topics: Adam Orleton's sermon prior to Edward's deposition is omitted, as is the controversy surrounding the pretender John Deydras (see Chapter 3), with the writer stating explicitly that Deydras's self-justification 'will not be put in my text or repeated'.<sup>108</sup> These features, combined with the attribution of Edward's death to illness rather than foul play, suggest that not enough time had elapsed since these events for the writer of the *Anonimalle* to feel that they had lost their political sensitivity.

Two contemporary sources do mention the rumour of murder, indicating that Edward's death was immediately the subject of speculation. The *Lanercost Chronicle* reports, 'The deposed king died soon after, either by a natural death or by the violence of others' (*vel morte propria naturali vel ab aliis violenter inflicta*).<sup>109</sup> The choice given suggests either that two different reports had reached the priory (located a long way from the events themselves), or that two conflicting rumours were generally prevalent. The writer's refusal to endorse either possibility is likely to be indicative both of the confusion surrounding Edward's murder and, again, of the issue's obvious political sensitivity. Adam Murimuth, geographically and politically closer to the scene, offers more detail:

fuit mortuus Edwardus rex Angliae in castro de Berkeleye, in quo, ut praemittitur, fuit carceri mancipatus seu detentus invitus. Et licet multi abbates, priores, milites, burgenses de Bristollia et Gloucestria ad videndum corpus suum integrum fuissent vocati, et tale superficialiter conspexissent,

<sup>106</sup> Robert of Boston, 'Chronicon Angliae Per Robertum de Boston', in *Historia Anglicana Scriptores Varii*, ed. by Joseph Sparke, 2 vols (London: Gul. Bowyer, 1723), I, 114–37 (p. 131); *Bridlington Chronicle*, p. 97.

<sup>107</sup> *Anonimalle*, p. 22, trans. by Childs and Taylor; Phillips, p. 561.

<sup>108</sup> *Anonimalle*, p. 95, trans. by Childs and Taylor. For an overview of the story concerning Deydras and his claims to be the real Edward II, see Chapter 3.

<sup>109</sup> *Lanercost*, p. 259, trans. by Maxwell; *Chronicon de Lanercost*, ed. by Joseph Stevenson (Edinburgh: Maitland Club, 1839), p. 260.



dictum tamen fuit vulgariter quod per ordinationem dominorum J[ohannis] Mautravers et T[homae] de Gorneye fuit per cautelam occisus.<sup>110</sup>

Edward the king of England died in Berkeley castle, into which, as was said before, he was transferred to be imprisoned or detained against his will. And though many abbots, priors, soldiers, burgesses of Bristol and Gloucester were called to see his uninjured body, and superficially looked at it, nevertheless it was said commonly that by the arrangement of lords John Maltravers and Thomas Gurney he was killed by a trick.

Murimuth focuses on the fact that nobody was allowed to examine Edward's body at close quarters: his use of a subordinate clause beginning 'though' (*licet*) conveys a sceptical tone, as does the adverb 'superficially' (*superficialiter*). The issue of the physical appearance of Edward's body will be considered in more detail below, as part of an analysis of the emergence of the story that Edward was murdered by anal penetration with a red-hot spit, and the potential of that method to leave no marks on the victim's body.<sup>111</sup>

The earliest three texts in which this penetrative murder story appears are the Anglo-Norman 'long version' of the *Brut*, the long 'AB' version of Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*, and John of Tynemouth's *Historia Aurea*.<sup>112</sup> It is highly unlikely that the *Historia Aurea* is the origin of the story: it would be a sensational addition, and Tynemouth's text is 'mostly excerpt'.<sup>113</sup> Tynemouth's source must therefore have been the *Brut* or *Polychronicon*. It is not entirely clear which of these two texts was the earlier. According to Lister Matheson, the 'long version' of the *Brut* was 'generated between 1333 and 1350'; John Taylor asserts that the AB version of the *Polychronicon* 'probably belongs to the 1340's'.<sup>114</sup> Taylor also argues that John of Tynemouth did not have access to the AB *Polychronicon*, and instead used the earlier and shorter 'CD' version, which does not include the penetrative murder story.<sup>115</sup> This leads me to conclude that Tynemouth's source for this story must have been the *Brut*. This is not absolute evidence that the story originates in the *Brut* rather than the AB *Polychronicon*: just because Tynemouth could not access, or did not use, the AB *Polychronicon* in 1347 does not mean that it had not been written. However, I would argue in light of other evidence that the story was created by the *Brut* writer. The 'long version' of

<sup>110</sup> Murimuth, pp. 53–54.

<sup>111</sup> Modern parlance commonly renders this murder method as 'red-hot poker'. However, no medieval or early modern text uses the word 'poker' – which appears not to emerge in English until the sixteenth century [poker, n.2', OED (3rd edn, 2006)] – instead choosing the term 'spit' or 'iron'.

<sup>112</sup> Julia Marvin, 'Albino and Isabelle: Regicidal Queens and the Historical Imagination of the Anglo-Norman Prose Brut Chronicles', *Arthurian Literature*, 18 (2001), 143–91 (p. 170); *Polychronicon*, VIII, 324; *Historia Aurea of John of Tynemouth* (Lambeth Palace Library MSS 10-12 [microfilm], 1347) fol. 228<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>113</sup> 'Introduction', in *Nova Legenda Anglie*, ed. by Carl Horstmann (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), pp. ix–lxviii (p. lxvi).

<sup>114</sup> Lister M. Matheson, *The Prose Brut: The Development of a Middle English Chronicle* (Tempe: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998), p. 34; John Taylor, *The Universal Chronicle of Ranulf Higden* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 98.

<sup>115</sup> Taylor, p. 98; *Polychronicon*, VIII, 324 n. 4.

the *Brut* is, simply put, an inventive and sensational text. Julia Marvin has argued that the writer of this version deliberately and substantially reworked the ‘short version’ of the *Brut*; in addition, he includes many emotional and sensational details which Higden does not, including Edward’s grief at his deposition and imprisonment and the penetrative death of Humphrey de Bohun (see below).<sup>116</sup> These tendencies make it very plausible that the *Brut* writer also invented the story of Edward’s murder by anal penetration with a red-hot spit.<sup>117</sup> The scene, in the Middle English translation which became overwhelmingly the most popular version, is as follows:

And when tyme was forto gone to bed, þe Kyng went unto his bed, and laye, and slepte faste. And as þe Kyng lay and slepte, þe traitoures, false forsuorne aȝeins her homage and her feaute, come privelyche into þe Kyngus chaumbre, and her company wiþ Ham, and Laiden an Huge table oppon his Wombe, and wiþ men pressede and helde fast adoune þe iiiii corners of þe table oppon his body: wherwiþ þe gode man awoke, and was wonder sore adrade to bene dede þere, and slayn, and turnede his body opsadoun. þe tok þe false tiraunt3, and as wode traitoures, an horne, and put hit into his fundement as depe as þai might, and toke a spete of Copur brennyng, & put hit þrou3 þe horne into his body, and ofte-tymes rollede þerwiþ his bowailes; and so þai quellede here Lorde, þat noþing was perceyvede; and after, he was enterede at Gloucestr.<sup>118</sup>

Regardless of the origin of this story, it is undeniable that its popularity was initially cemented by the Anglo-Norman ‘long version’ of the *Brut*; by its Middle English translation; and by AB version of the *Polychronicon*, which was (according to Taylor) ‘extremely popular’.<sup>119</sup> *The Prophecy of John of Bridlington*, composed in the 1360s, gives a quasi-cryptic account of the murder which can be decoded to indicate the penetrative method: writing on Edward III, the writer predicts, ‘his father will die, pierced in the dark’ (*terebratus in atris*).<sup>120</sup> The commentary makes this explicit, describing Edward II as having been ‘killed in secret places, clearly in the anus or in the genital parts with a certain instrument, a horn or an iron’ (*eum occiderant in locis occultis, scilicet in ano vel in locis genitalibus cum quodam instrumento, corneo vel ferreo*).<sup>121</sup> Since the ‘Prophecy’ purports to be a twelfth-century text accurately foretelling the future, its inclusion of the penetrative murder story demonstrates the level of acceptance that it had attained by the 1360s.

<sup>116</sup> Marvin, pp. 153–55; *Brut*, pp. 252–53.

<sup>117</sup> Ian Mortimer [‘Sermons of Sodomy: A Reconsideration of Edward II’s Sodomitical Reputation’, in *New Perspectives*, pp. 48–57 (p. 51)] draws the same conclusion, though not explicitly based on the same argument.

<sup>118</sup> *Brut*, p. 253.

<sup>119</sup> Taylor, p. 98. For an overview of the textual history of the *Polychronicon*, see pp. 89–109.

<sup>120</sup> *Bridlington Prophecy*, p. 131.

<sup>121</sup> *Bridlington Prophecy*, p. 136.

The inclusion of this story by Geoffrey le Baker, whose sympathetic account adds details such as Edward's loud cry of pain, was also very influential.<sup>122</sup> Le Baker's account was heavily used as a source by early modern writers, including Stow, Holinshed and Richard Baker, all of whose accounts of Edward's reign were popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As such, the vast majority of early modern accounts include the penetrative murder method. It even appears in brief accounts which include very few other details about Edward's life, suggesting that it took on the status of a fundamental, basic fact about him. An anonymous verse chronicle composed around 1445, for example, devotes four of eight lines on Edward to describing his murder; by contrast, the verse on Richard II gives details of the Peasants' Revolt and the nobles who were put to death during his reign, but does not specify the manner of his death.<sup>123</sup> Of the minority of (usually short, sixteenth-century) historical texts that do not include the penetrative murder, the biggest proportion are those derived from Robert Fabyan, usually via Thomas Cooper.<sup>124</sup> Unusually for a writer who clearly uses the *Polychronicon* as a source, Fabyan is reticent about the method of Edward's murder, stating only that 'the said Edward by the meanes of sir Roger Mortimer was miserably slayne'.<sup>125</sup> It is possible that Fabyan's choice to write in the vernacular played a role in this decision, as is suggested by the fact that of the two surviving Middle English translations of the *Polychronicon*, only the anonymous fifteenth-century translator mentions the murder method.<sup>126</sup> Fabyan makes it clear that Edward was murdered, demonstrating that the issue is not the political sensitivity of regicide. This raises the possibility that the gruesome, potentially sexually mimetic nature of the penetrative method (discussed fully below) influenced Fabyan's silence concerning it.

## ii. Precedents for penetration

How and why, then, did the writer of the *Brut* first introduce the penetrative murder story? Mortimer and Phillips both argue for the possible influence of accounts of the murder of the Anglo-Saxon king Edmund Ironside.<sup>127</sup> Following Edmund's death in mysterious circumstances, and given its suspiciously convenient political outcome for the

<sup>122</sup> Le Baker (2012), p. 32.

<sup>123</sup> Linne R. Mooney, 'Lydgate's "Kings of England" and Another Verse Chronicle of the Kings', *Viator*, 20 (1989), 255–90 (pp. 283–84). An analogous example in a later short verse chronicle can be found in John Taylor's *Memorial of All the English Monarchs* (London: [By Nicholas Okes], 1622), in which Edward's 'wretched Life, and lamentable end' are narrated sympathetically and his murder specified as penetrative and painful ('Into his Fundament a red hot Spit / Was thrust, which made his Royall heart to split', fols. E6<sup>r</sup>–E6<sup>v</sup>), while Richard II is quasi-comically 'Deposed, and at Pomfret knock'd ith'head' (fol. E7<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>124</sup> A late anomaly is Charles Caesar, *Numerus Infaustus* (London: for Ric. Chiswell, 1689), in which Edward is 'barbarously and inhumanely stifled to death between two Pillows' (fol. F4<sup>v</sup>). It is very unusual for an early modern text to offer an actual alternative murder method, rather than simply avoiding stating one altogether.

<sup>125</sup> Fabyan, fol. 2L5<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>126</sup> *Polychronicon*, VIII, 325.

<sup>127</sup> Mortimer, pp. 51, 52; Phillips, p. 564.

Danish king Cnut, two competing stories emerged concerning his death. One version – recounted in Henry Knighton’s *Chronicon*, in the chronicle attributed to John Brompton, and later in the *Brut* – describes how Edmund was invited to stay with Eadric Streona, ealdorman of Mercia, and, upon bending to inspect an ingenious mechanical statue of an archer that was placed in his chamber, was shot by it and killed.<sup>128</sup> The second version – reported by Henry of Huntingdon, William of Malmesbury, and later the *Polychronicon* – features a story superficially similar to Edward II’s penetrative murder.<sup>129</sup> Edmund was once again staying at the house of the treacherous duke Eadric, when he got up in the night ‘to do the duty of nature’ (*ad requisita naturae*). Eadric’s son, hiding in the pit beneath the toilet seat, ‘struck the king twice with a sharp knife in the private parts, and leaving the weapon in his bowels, fled away’ (*regem inter celanda cultello bis acuto percussit, et inter viscera ferrum fugiens reliquit*).<sup>130</sup> It is significant here that neither of these sensationalised narratives reached the status of historiographical consensus: the disagreement between the *Brut* and the *Polychronicon*, the fourteenth century’s most popular historical texts, appears to have contributed to the dilution of both versions. Popular early modern historical writers tend to note the existence of historiographical debate without concluding in favour of either story.<sup>131</sup>

Yet though this story might sound superficially similar to Edward II’s ‘red hot spit’ murder, there are a number of crucial differences. Accounts of Edmund Ironside’s death are impersonal, making no mention of his pain or distress; by contrast, the *Brut* notes that Edward ‘was wonder sore adrade to bene dede þere, and slayn’.<sup>132</sup> More crucially, penetration does not even seem to be a truly fundamental aspect of the story in which Edmund is killed on the toilet, since this detail is not retained in every account. Holinshed, for example, simply writes that ‘king Edmund was slaine at Oxford, as he sat on a privie to doo the necessaries of nature’.<sup>133</sup> Historiography of Edmund’s murder, then, does not focus on its penetrative nature – which invites us to question Pierre Chaplais’s use of the analogue between the two murders to invalidate the interpretation of Edward’s as sexually mimetic.<sup>134</sup> Moreover, where accounts of Edward’s death devote most space to the logistics of the murder method, stories of Edmund focus on identifying his death as treason, and

<sup>128</sup> Edward Augustus Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England*, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1867), I, 713–14; *Brut*, pp. 119–21.

<sup>129</sup> Freeman, I, 712; *Polychronicon*, VII, 104–06.

<sup>130</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. and trans. by Diana E. Greenway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 360–61.

<sup>131</sup> E.g. Vergil, chap. 7; Holinshed (1577), I, section 5 / p. 258; Speed, fol. 3V<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>132</sup> Freeman, I, 712; *Brut*, p. 253.

<sup>133</sup> Holinshed (1577), I, section 5 / p. 257.

<sup>134</sup> Pierre Chaplais, *Piers Gaveston: Edward II’s Adoptive Brother* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 112–13.

detailing the punishment of his murderers for treachery. For a hardy warrior king to be traitorously murdered in a compromising position is unfair and self-consciously bathetic: the story appears calculated to outrage its readers. This focus can be found not only in thirteenth-century accounts, but in early modern ones, usefully demonstrating the way in which earlier accounts were read and interpreted by later writers. For example, the only detail of Edmund's death given by Stow is that 'he was slayne by the *treason* of Edrike of Straton'; he then describes Eadric's punishment in comparatively far greater detail:

This Edrike was not long unrewarded according to his deserts ...the Traytor was in the same Chamber tormented to death with firebrands and linkes, and then his feete being bounde together, he was drawne through the Streetes of the Citie, and cast into a ditch, called Houndes ditch, for that the Citizens there cast their dead Dogges, and such other filth, accompting him worthy of no better buriall.<sup>135</sup>

Stow's moralistic tone and condemnation of Eadric's act dominates the account. Similarly, John Speed contrasts Edmund's reputation ('renowmed Edmund') with the bathetic nature of his death in 'a place for natures necessity', described as 'unworthy and disloiall'. The adjective 'unworthy' could be equally applied to Eadric's behaviour (unworthy of his rank) and to the murder method (unworthy of its victim). These accounts can be contrasted with Stow's description of Edward II's death:

But these tyraunts perceyving that this woulde not force hys death, one night being the xxii. of September, they came rushing in uppon him, as he laye in his bedde, with greate heavye featherbeddes, as mucche in weyghte as xv. menne coulde beare, wherwyth they oppressed and smothered him, into whom also they thrust a plummets yron, being made redde hotte up into his bowels, through a certaine instrument like to the end of a Trumpet, or glistre pipe, put in at hys fundiment, burning thereby his inward partes, providing thereby least any wound being founde in the kings bodye, they might be caused to aunswere it. In this sort was this stoute King oppressed, crying with a lowde voyce, so that many as well within the Castell as without heard it, perceyving it was the cry of one that suffered violente deathe, which caused many of Berkeley (as they affirmed) to take compassion thereof, and to pray for the soule of him that was then departing.<sup>136</sup>

Stow's account – a typical early modern example – combines logistical details of the murder method with emotional details intended to elicit sympathy: the reaction of the Berkeley townsfolk to Edward's cry of pain ('compassion' and prayer) serves as a model for reader response. These aspects find no analogues in accounts of Edmund Ironside's murder.

---

<sup>135</sup> Stow, fols. I5<sup>v</sup>–I6<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>136</sup> Stow, fols. Z3<sup>r</sup>–Z3<sup>v</sup>.

It is also important to question how similar the two murder methods really are. Edmund's murdered body is not described: without assertions to the contrary, it must be assumed that an anal spear-wound would be messy and bloody. Conversely, stories of Edward II's murder frequently go to great lengths to describe its invisible nature. The *Brut* takes pains to point out that the red-hot spit was inserted through a horn, so that no marks were left on the skin: 'and so þai quelled here Lorde, *þat noþing was perceyvede*'.<sup>137</sup> Although the *Polychronicon* does not include this detail, it is significant that it quickly gained acceptance despite this.<sup>138</sup> Even Henry Knighton, who relies almost entirely on Higden's text as a source, deviates at this point to include it.<sup>139</sup> Despite its absence from the most recent English translation, Le Baker's *Chronicon* should be counted among the texts which include this detail and influenced its persistence in early modern texts.<sup>140</sup> Although David Preest translates the Latin word *tubam* as 'the tube leading to the secret parts of his bowels' (see full quotation below), *tubam* can also mean 'tube' in the inorganic sense of 'pipe'.<sup>141</sup> It could also be translated as 'trumpet' or 'horn'; certainly Holinshed, translating le Baker in 1577, referred to 'the pipe of a trumpet'.<sup>142</sup> It seems clear, therefore, that le Baker's text does constitute a reference to the penetrative murder method as invisible, leaving no outward marks.

Texts that narrate the penetrative murder without specifying that it left no outward marks are either very short or copied almost verbatim from Higden.<sup>143</sup> In the original story in the *Brut*, the writer's focus on the unseen nature of Edward's murder may have been inspired by Murimuth's focus on the lack of opportunities to closely examine his body (described above). From a literary perspective, the *Brut* writer could also postulate this method plausibly: there is a limit to the amount of suspicion that could be cast on the story of a murder that leaves no visible trace.

---

<sup>137</sup> *Brut*, p. 253.

<sup>138</sup> For examples of this detail in early modern texts, see (e.g.) Stow, fol. Z3<sup>v</sup>; Hubert (1628), stanza 579; *WNV*, fol. 3B7<sup>r</sup>. Although Cary does not narrate the penetrative murder specifically (see below), she does also note that 'all agree that he was foully and inhumanly murther'd, yet so, that there was no visible or apparent signe which way 'twas acted' (folio, fol. 2Q2<sup>r</sup>). See below for a detailed consideration of this aspect of Edward's murder in Marlowe's *Edward II*.

<sup>139</sup> *Chronicon Henrici Knighton, Vel Cnithon, Monachi Leycestrensis*, ed. by J. Rawson Lumby (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1889), p. 446.

<sup>140</sup> Le Baker (2012), p. 32.

<sup>141</sup> In fact, le Baker's *Chronicon* is the first citation for this in DMLBS.

<sup>142</sup> Holinshed (1577), IV, section 1 / p. 883.

<sup>143</sup> Short texts include John Hardyng, *The Chronicle of Jhon Hardyng* (London: Richard Grafton, 1543), fol. Y8<sup>r</sup>; Lambert van den Bos, *Florus Anglicus* (London: for Simon Miller, 1656), fol. G2<sup>v</sup>; George Meriton, *Anglorum Gesta* (London: T. Dawks, 1675), fol. I10<sup>r</sup>; Matthew Stevenson, *Florus Britannicus* (London: M. S., 1662), fol. F<sup>r</sup>. Near-verbatim copies of Higden include Thomas Otterbourne, *Duo Rerum Anglicarum Scriptores Veteres, Viz: Thomas Otterbourne et Johannes Wbethamstede*, ed. by Thomas Hearne, 2 vols (Oxford: e Theatro Sheldoniano, 1733), I, 113; Burton, III, 355.

The story of the death of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester – who also became associated with penetrative murder, a similarity apparently first noticed by Michael Evans – is instructive in this regard.<sup>144</sup> Humphrey's penetrative murder originates in Georges de Chastellain's *Temple de Bocace* (1463):

[he was] laid out stark naked on a bed, tied with cords... Making cries and groans as if to pierce the heavens, and, laid on his knees and elbows, he had a cow's horn, pierced at the end, placed in his fundament, through which was passed a burning-hot iron spit, passing as far as the heart, so as to appear that his death had come naturally, for he was placed naked on a bed between two sheets to give that impression.<sup>145</sup>

This story subsequently appears in a London chronicle composed around 1496, which again specifies the invisible nature of the murder: 'when he was founded deed he was laide opyn, that all men myght behold hym...but no wounde nor tokyn of wounde cowde be persaiued upon hym'.<sup>146</sup> Evans considers various reasons for the invention of this story with regard to Humphrey. He argues convincingly that sexual humour in the vein of Chaucer's *Miller's Tale* 'seems unlikely, given the otherwise reverential tone of the accounts' and given that Humphrey was not associated with any kind of sexual transgression.<sup>147</sup> Although 'death through extreme suffering might confer sanctity on the victim', a suggestion consistent with the fact that 'Both Edward and Humphrey are known to have enjoyed posthumous unofficial cults of sainthood', this is rendered problematic by the lack of any precedent for a saint being murdered by anal penetration with a red-hot spit.<sup>148</sup> The conclusion Evans arrives at is that these writers chose to ascribe this murder method to Henry owing to their need for invisibility:

Humphrey was almost certainly not murdered. Having set up a packed parliament at which to try him, Suffolk was hardly likely to kill him before proceedings began. Hence there was a need for the new regime to promote a murder story involving means that would leave no outward mark.<sup>149</sup>

It seems reasonable to suggest that a similar need for 'a murder story involving means that would leave no outward mark' prompted the choice of a similar method for accounts of the death of Edward II – who, while, he probably *was* murdered, was apparently not perceived to have died in a sufficiently exciting way. Having been invented for Edward, 'the story was probably 'borrowed', either intentionally or via popular rumour... and

<sup>144</sup> Michael Evans, *The Death of Kings* (London: Continuum, 2006), pp. 124–34.

<sup>145</sup> Quoted in Evans, p. 126.

<sup>146</sup> *Chronicles of London*, ed. by Charles Lethbridge Kingsford (Dursley: Alan Sutton, 1977), p. 157.

<sup>147</sup> Evans, p. 130.

<sup>148</sup> Evans, pp. 128–29.

<sup>149</sup> Evans, pp. 131–32.

moulded to fit the circumstances' of Humphrey's death.<sup>150</sup> Subsequently, Forker argues that the staging of Edward's murder in Marlowe's *Edward II* influenced the staging of Humphrey's murder in Shakespeare's *2 Henry VI*.<sup>151</sup>

These significant differences between the deaths of Edmund Ironside and Edward II do not rule out the possibility of influence. The two accounts share a sensational nature: both are exciting, lurid anecdotes crafted with readers in mind. Julia Marvin has argued convincingly that the writer of the 'long version' of the *Brut* made a 'deliberate effort' to alter the narrative found in the 'short version':

The judicious revision of source material, along with compilation of material from many sources, was, after all, a preeminent form of literary activity in the Middle Ages. The kind of writing labelled history was by no means immune to intention, opinion, taste and imagination.<sup>152</sup>

This 'literary activity', and these decisions made for reasons of creativity, almost certainly influenced the enormous popularity of the narrative. Moreover, there is evidence to strongly suggest that sensation-seeking characterised medieval historiography of Edward's reign more widely. A pertinent example is the story of the death of Humphrey de Bohun (earl of Hereford) at the battle of Boroughbridge in 1322. The *Brut* offers an exciting version of his death:

amonge oþere, Sir Humfray de Bohoun, Erl of Herford, a worþi knyght of renoune þrouȝout al Cristendome, stode & fauȝt with his enemys apon þe brigge. And as the noble lorde stode and fauȝt oppon þe brugge, a þef, a ribaude, scolkede under þe brigge, and fersly wiþ a spere smote the noble knyght into þe fondement, so þat his bowailles comen out þere. Allas þe sorwe! for þere was slayn þe floure of solace and of comfort, & also of curtesye.<sup>153</sup>

The visceral detail and emotional lament of this account can be contrasted with the *Polychronicon*, which briefly notes that 'Andrew de Harclay, running from the party of the king, killed the earl of Hereford on this bridge'.<sup>154</sup> Later texts display a clear preference for the more sensational version of Bohun's death, with six texts reporting the penetrative story compared to three (including Higden) which give no details. Significantly, even writers whose texts are largely based on the *Polychronicon* (such as Henry Knighton and

---

<sup>150</sup> Evans, p. 134.

<sup>151</sup> Marlowe, pp. 35–36.

<sup>152</sup> Marvin, pp. 153–54.

<sup>153</sup> *Brut*, p. 219.

<sup>154</sup> *Polychronicon*, VIII, 312.



Thomas Burton) chose to follow alternative sources for Bohun's death, retaining the penetrative story.<sup>155</sup>

Although Phillips suggests that the story of Edward's penetrative murder 'might have been a literal or poetic revenge for [Bohun's] death', this argument is not ultimately convincing.<sup>156</sup> The comparison is instructive in terms of the historiographical preference for sensational narratives, but there is only one text which employs the phrasing commonly used for Bohun's death (*inter celanda nature confossus ignominiose peremptus est*) to narrate Edward's murder; it seems doubtful that the relationship between the two stories is as direct as Phillips suggests.<sup>157</sup> More problematically, both stories appear in Geoffrey le Baker's *Chronicon*, which is sympathetic to both Bohun and Edward: on the death of the former, described as 'the most pious earl Humphrey' (*püissimus comes Humfridus*), he exclaims, 'Alas!' (*proth dolor!*)<sup>158</sup>

As le Baker's description of Bohun as 'chivalrous' indicates, Bohun's death also provides an instructive point of comparison for Edmund Ironside's murder. Both are presented as the lamentable death of a brave warrior by sneaky, treacherous means. Le Baker additionally specifies that the groin is 'a private part where soldiers are not usually protected', suggesting that Bohun's killer unfairly exploited a universal weakness. The *Brut*, too, emphasises Bohun's chivalrous qualities, as seen above (for example, he is described as 'a worþi knyght of renoune þrou3out al Cristendome'). Indeed, a further, even closer analogue for Bohun's death can be found in the story of a Viking who valiantly kept the bridge at the Battle of Stamford Bridge against the entire English army, until he was stabbed from below: this narrative has a very similar emphasis on the victim's bravery and his death by underhand means unworthy of his military prowess.<sup>159</sup> I would suggest that influence between the stories of the Stamford Bridge Viking, Edmund Ironside, and Humphrey de Bohun can be postulated much more plausibly and directly than between any of these stories and that of Edward II's penetrative murder.

### iii. Sexual mimesis

Of course, the echoes between the stories of Edmund and Edward should not be entirely ignored. As the above analysis indicates, the *Brut* writer would have come across

<sup>155</sup> Knighton, p. 425; Burton, p. 342.

<sup>156</sup> Phillips, p. 564 n. 260.

<sup>157</sup> *A Book of British Kings, 1200 B.C.-1399 A.D.*, ed. by A. G. Rigg (Toronto: Published for the Centre for Medieval Studies by the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2000), p. 86.

<sup>158</sup> Le Baker (1889), p. 14, my translation. I have deviated from Preest's translation for accuracy here.

<sup>159</sup> Freeman, III, 369–70. Freeman notes that 'The story is found in the Abindon Chronicle...[and] in William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon, with some variations.'

two competing stories about Edmund Ironside in his sources. Both suited the sensational nature of his narrative. While he chose to use the mechanical archer story to recount Edmund's death, the anally penetrative story remained as a 'spare'. One possibility is that the writer – requiring a sensational but plausibly invisible murder narrative for Edward II – remembered the story of Edmund's death by anal penetration and, deciding it was too good to waste completely, edited it to suit the story of Edward. This choice may also have been influenced by the story's sexually mimetic potential. As seen in Chapter 1, the *Brut* does present Edward as sexually transgressive. It is also unusual in arguably presenting Edward as complicit in his own anal penetration. Awakening to find that his captors are trying to smother him with a table, Edward 'turnede his body opsadoun', effectively allowing the insertion of the spit.<sup>160</sup> The story could, therefore, be read as Edward inviting his own penetrative murder just as he invited anal sex during his life – and thus as implying that his sinful sexual practices constituted an effective 'invitation' to retributive murder. This could be seen to align Edward's story with the *contrapassi* of Dante's *Inferno*, in which 'divine retribution assumes the form of...the just punishment of sin effected by a process either resembling or contrasting with the sin itself'.<sup>161</sup>

However, my consideration of other possible factors *before* sexual performativity is deliberate. Edward's historiographical reputation (as the previous three chapters have made clear) undeniably emphasises the closeness of his relationships with his male favourites. Combined with – and perhaps influencing – the historiographical acceptance of the 'red hot spit' story, this focus on sexual transgression has led historians to over-emphasise the sexually mimetic aspect of his murder. Marvin notes in passing that the penetrative murder was 'probably envisioned by whoever conceived of it (whether murderer or fabricator of the story) as retribution for the king's relations with Piers Gaveston'; the word 'probably' and the lack of evidence offered is indicative of the extent to which this interpretation has become received wisdom.<sup>162</sup> Similarly, W. M. Ormrod calls the penetrative murder story an 'anal rape narrative' which 'places the king in a submissive role as (unwilling – or willing?) recipient of sexual domination'.<sup>163</sup> This is a valid potential reading, but it is not the story's only signification, as I have suggested and as the following analysis will show.

The penetrative murder narrative emerges at a point where the historiographical consensus that Edward's transgressions were sexual at all – let alone that they specifically

<sup>160</sup> *Brut*, p. 253.

<sup>161</sup> Richard Lansing and Teodolinda Barolini, *The Dante Encyclopedia* (New York; London: Garland/Routledge, 2010), p. 190.

<sup>162</sup> Marvin, p. 172 n. 92.

<sup>163</sup> W. M. Ormrod, 'The Sexualities of Edward II', in *New Perspectives*, pp. 22–47 (p. 39).

constituted sex with his male favourites – was very much still emerging. Assertions that this story definitively constitutes ‘anal rape’ represent responses to the entire body of medieval and early modern historiography of Edward: these historians are, I would argue, interpreting the *Brut* in light of the subsequent consensus concerning sexual transgression that it helped to create. If we instead consider the *Brut* in its own context, we find only the very beginnings of this emergent consensus: as detailed in Chapter 1, the earliest unequivocal description of Edward as sexually transgressive is in the prophetic text *The Last Kings of England*, popularised by the *Brut* itself. Robert Mills also has recently challenged the assumption that anal sex between men was inevitably associated with punitive impalement in the medieval mindset, Dante’s *contrapassi* notwithstanding.<sup>164</sup> I am not arguing that the penetrative murder narrative has no sexually performative potential, but that situating it in its historical context (when Edward’s reputation for sexual transgression was not fixed) and its literary context within the *Brut* (which foregrounds the method’s invisible and painful, torturous nature) is necessary to achieve an accurate reading.

After the *Brut*, only a very small number of other texts could be interpreted as foregrounding the murder’s sexual performativity beyond its other significations. Richard Grafton’s *Chronicle at Large* closely echoes the *Brut*, stating that the frightened Edward ‘turned hys bodye’, enabling the insertion of the spit.<sup>165</sup> Owing to the extraordinary amount of critical attention attracted by Marlowe’s staging of Edward’s murder, he will be considered separately below. Yet in the entire period considered for this study, only one text explicitly presents Edward’s penetrative murder as punitive and sexually mimetic: Drayton’s ‘Poly-Olbion’. As shown in previous chapters, Drayton’s other poems concerning Edward explicitly present his relationship with Gaveston as sexual, and *Peirs Gaveston* specifies that Edward was the receptive partner in anal sex. In ‘Poly-Olbion’, Drayton states that Edward, ‘For that preposterous sinne wherein he did offend, / In his posterious parts had his preposterous end.’<sup>166</sup> This sentiment is conspicuously unique, and doubtless influenced by the unequivocal sexual transgression Drayton had presented in his depictions of Edward elsewhere. It provides evidence that the interpretation of Edward’s

---

<sup>164</sup> Mills, pp. 278–79.

<sup>165</sup> Grafton (*Chronicle*), fol. T2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>166</sup> Michael Drayton, ‘Poly-Olbion’, in *Works*, ed. by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931), IV, XVII.199–200. An unusual exception of a different kind can be found in Winston Churchill’s *Divi Britannici* (London: Tho. Roycroft, 1675), which presents Edward’s murder as punishment not for sexual transgression, but for his financial favours to Gaveston, which ‘it eat through the Bowels of [Edward’s] Fortune, and stopt not till it came to his Heart’ (fol. 2C3<sup>r</sup>). In fact, it is Adam Orleton’s death which is mimetically punitive: ‘The Fiend Tarlton, Bishop of Hereford, who invented the cursed Oracle that justified the murther, dy’d with the very same Torture as if the hot Iron that sear’d his Conscience had been thrust into his Bowels’ (fol. 2D<sup>r</sup>).

penetrative murder as punitive sexual mimesis was available to early modern writers and readers; it remains notable that no others chose to state this interpretation explicitly.

#### iv. Pain and torture

Far more than sexual performativity, early modern texts in particular encourage the interpretation of Edward's penetrative murder as painful and torturous. A set of verse couplets found in various fifteenth-century commonplace books and miscellanies choose to highlight this as part of a very short summary of Edward's reign, stating that he was 'tortured to a painful death' (*morte gravi cruciatus*).<sup>167</sup> The prevalence of this theme (in early modern texts at least) is due in large part to the influence of Geoffrey le Baker's account:

decima kalendas Octobris, in lecto cubantem subito preoccupatum, cum pulvinaribus magnis atque gravi mole amplius quam quindecim robustorum ipsum oppressum et subfocatum, cum ferro plumbarii incense ignito trans tubam ductilem ad egestionis partes secretas applicatam membra spiritalia post intestinas combusserunt, caventes ne, vunere in regio corpore ubi solent vulnera requiri per aliquem iusticie amicum reperto, sui tortores de lesione manifesta respondere atque pro ilia penam subire forent coacti.

Taliter obruitur miles strenuissimus, emisso clamore, audientibus infra castrum et extra satis noto quod esset violentam mortem patientis. Clamor ille expirantis multos de Berkeleya et quosdam de castro, ut ipsi asseruerunt, ad compassionem et oraciones pro sancta anima migrante evigilavit. Sic quem mundus odivit, suumque magistrum heard. Iesum Christum prius odio habuit, primo preceptorem de regno Iudeorum reprobatum, deinde discipulum regno Anglorum spoliatum recepit celsitudo regni angelorum.<sup>168</sup>

And so on 22 September they suddenly seized him as he lay on his bed, and smothered and suffocated him with great, heavy mattresses, in weight more than that of fifteen strong men. Then, with a plumber's soldering iron, made red hot, and thrust through a horn leading to the secret parts of his bowels, they burnt out his inner parts and then his breath of life. For they were afraid that if a wound was found on the body of the king, where friends of justice are accustomed to look for wounds, his torturers might be compelled to answer for an obvious injury and suffer punishment for it.

In this way the knight, for all his strength, was overpowered. His loud cries were heard by men inside and outside the castle, who knew well enough that someone was suffering a violent death. Many people in Berkeley and some in the castle, as they themselves asserted, were awoken by his dying shouts and took compassion on the sufferer, making prayers for the holy soul of one emigrating from this world. Thus the kingdom of the angels in heaven received one hated by the world, just as it had hated his master Jesus Christ before him. First it received the teacher, rejected by the

<sup>167</sup> Robert Ricart, *The Maire of Bristowe Is Kalendar*, ed. by Lucy Toulmin Smith ([Westminster]: Camden Society, 1872), p. 12. For a fuller textual history of these couplets, see the Appendix.

<sup>168</sup> Le Baker (1889), pp. 33–34.

kingdom of the Jews, and then the disciple, stripped of the kingdom of the English.<sup>169</sup>

Le Baker focuses here on the weight of the mattresses with which Edward is smothered; on the invisible nature of the murder, necessitated by the certainty that ‘friends of justice’ would punish the perpetrators if it were discovered; on the pain he experiences before dying (*membra spiritalia post intestinas combusserunt*); and on his dying scream. This latter detail, invented by le Baker, appears in many later texts. Le Baker delineates the effects of Edward’s cry: it directly resulted in ‘compassion’ and ‘prayers’, a description of contemporary reactions that sets out a guide by which the reader is also expected to respond. Marlowe, presumably inspired by Holinshed and/or Stow, indicates that Edward should cry out on being murdered through Matrevis’s exclamation: ‘I fear me that this cry will raise the town, / And therefore, let us take horse and away.’<sup>170</sup> As Brian Walsh notes, this is an arresting moment with the potential to ‘shock playgoers into a moment of collective attentiveness’; it may have influenced George Peele’s reference to Edward’s enduring ‘tragicke cry’.<sup>171</sup> Although Peele apparently refers to an auditory memory (‘even now me thinkes I heare’), this need not be taken literally – he might just as well be referring metaphorically to a ‘tragicke cry’ echoing down the ages – and the presence of this detail in historical texts means that he need not have obtained it from Marlowe.<sup>172</sup> The same should be said of the inclusion of this detail in Drayton’s *Barons Warres* and Deloney’s *Strange Histories* (in which Edward’s ‘most lamentable cries’ resound for a gruelling three stanzas: ‘long it was before the time he dyed’).<sup>173</sup>

Drayton’s account of Edward’s murder is, as his inclusion of the scream suggests, focused on its painful nature. His statement that Edward was penetrated with a ‘burning yron’ is immediately followed by an exclamation: ‘O payne beyond all paine, how much thou art! / Which words, as words, may verbally confesse, / But never pen precisely could expresse.’<sup>174</sup> Drayton also calls attention to the *method* of the murder specifically, suggesting to the reader that the means by which Edward was murdered – not the simple fact he was murdered – should be considered particularly noteworthy and cruel:

<sup>169</sup> Le Baker (2012), p. 32, trans. by Preest. I have deviated from Preest’s translation here to amend ‘tube’ to ‘horn’ (see above).

<sup>170</sup> Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / p. 341; Stow, fol. Z3<sup>v</sup>; Marlowe, V.v.113–14.

<sup>171</sup> Brian Walsh, ‘Marlowe and the Elizabethan Theatre Audience’, in *Christopher Marlowe in Context*, ed. by Emily Bartels and Emma Smith (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 68–79 (p. 75).

<sup>172</sup> George Peele, *The Honour of the Garter* (London: Widdowe Charlewood for John Busbie, 1593), fol. C<sup>r</sup>. For suggestions that Peele was influenced by Marlowe see (e.g.) Anderson, p. 114; Andrea Stevens, ‘Edward II: A Stage History’, in Melnikoff, pp. 43–71 (p. 48).

<sup>173</sup> *Barons Warres*, V.66–67; Deloney, fol. B8<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>174</sup> *Mortimeriados*, ll. 2056–58.

O let his tears even freezing as they light,  
 By the impression of his monstrous payne,  
 Still keepe this odious spectacle in sight,  
 And shew *the manner how* the King was slaine,  
 That it with ages may be new againe...<sup>175</sup>

The near-universal inclusion of the penetrative murder in early modern texts suggests that other writers and readers shared Drayton's conviction that 'the manner how the King was slaine' was of key historiographical importance. At least one of Drayton's readers appears to have been extremely struck by the 'manner' of Edward's death. Elizabeth Cary is unusual in not specifying that Edward was murdered by penetration, but her treatment of the murder clearly alludes to it – and it seems to have horrified her:

it may be better past over in silence, than so much as touch'd; especially since if it were in that cruel manner, as is by the major part agreed on, it was one of the most inhumane and barbarous acts that ever fell within the expression of all our *English* Stories; fitter rather to be pass'd over in silence, than to be discour's'd, since it both dishonoureth our Nation, and is in the Example so dangerous. It seems *Mortimer* was yet a Novice to *Spencer's* Art, of that same *Italian* trick of Poysoning, which questionless had wrought this work as surely, with a less noise, and fewer agents: It had been happy if such a Villany had never gain'd knowledge or imitation in the World: since it came to be entertain'd as a necessary servant of State, no man that runs in opposition, or stands in the way of Greatness, is almost secure in his own house, or among his Friends or Servants.<sup>176</sup>

All of Cary's sources explicitly include the penetrative method, so it seems clear that this is what she means by 'that cruel manner, as is by the major part agreed on' – as is also demonstrated by her earlier reference to the invisibility of the murder method (see above) and her allusion to the story of Edward's scream (in her suggestion that another method would have resulted in 'less noise'). Her text certainly foregrounds the horror of Edward's murder: as well as 'inhumane and barbarous', she suggests it was unprecedented and unspeakable, both due to its abject cruelty and to the fact it sets a dangerous political precedent. It seems, however, that her lack of explicit narration of the penetrative method struck the publisher or editor of the octavo version of her history as odd or incomplete. The preface states that, 'Our Author closes his History without declaring the Particulars of the Murder of this Prince, wherefore I shall give you an account thereof, as I find it set down by the aforesaid Sir *Richard Baker*.'<sup>177</sup> This addition, presented as a rectification of a perceived omission, indicates that the penetrative murder was, by the 1680s, an expected component of any account of Edward's reign.

<sup>175</sup> *Mortimeriados*, ll. 2059–63.

<sup>176</sup> Cary (folio), fols. 2Q2<sup>r</sup>–2Q2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>177</sup> Cary (octavo), fol. A3<sup>r</sup>.

### Marlowe's murder scene

The scene in Marlowe's *Edward II* in which Edward is murdered has been characterised by several critics as savage, abject and gratuitous, to the extent that it is beyond interpretation.<sup>178</sup> This conceptualisation is not useful for a study such as this; moreover, the widespread failure to address chronicle accounts of the same scene in relation to this view is problematic. As Ruth Lunney argues, the horror of Marlowe's murder scene (whatever precise nature that horror may take) must be seen in context: for an early modern audience, Edward's story was a 'cautionary tale' to which 'reacting with horror was an appropriate and quite conventional response'.<sup>179</sup> In fact, such a reaction 'had both aesthetic and didactic satisfactions: the audience was called on to indulge in the pleasures of participating in the sensational, as well as the pleasures of self-righteousness. These were the excitements of the playhouse.'

My ambivalent reference to the nature of the horror that is staged in *Edward II* is deliberate. It is probably no exaggeration to say that the question of how Edward dies in Marlowe's play – whether Marlowe intended the penetrative murder to be staged, and whether this took place in the early modern theatre – has attracted more critical attention than any other aspect of the historiography of Edward II. What the text specifies is as follows. Lightborn requests a red-hot spit, a table and a featherbed.<sup>180</sup> When he comes to murder Edward, he instructs Gurney and Matrevis, 'Run for the table,' and then tells them to 'lay the table down, and stamp on it'.<sup>181</sup> The spit is not mentioned again in the script or the stage directions. Edward dies with a cry loud enough that Matrevis fears it will 'raise the town'.<sup>182</sup>

It is this omission of the spit from the script (and given its unequivocal presence in Marlowe's sources, it is fair to call it an omission) that has provided critics with their most plausible argument against the early modern staging of the penetrative murder. As Thomas Anderson points out, 'Marlowe has Lightborn systematically instruct Matrevis and Gurney how to smother Edward so as not to bruise the body', but gives no such attention to the presumably more tricky act of inserting a red-hot spit through a horn into Edward's

<sup>178</sup> Janet Clare, 'Marlowe's "Theatre of Cruelty"', in *Constructing Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by J. A. Downie and J. T. Parnell (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 74–87 (pp. 81–82); Clifford Leech, 'Marlowe's *Edward II*: Power and Suffering', *Critical Quarterly*, 1 (1959), 181–96 (p. 195); Mathew Martin, 'The Traumatic Realism of Christopher Marlowe's *The Massacre at Paris*', *ESC: English Studies in Canada*, 37 (2011), 25–39 (p. 36).

<sup>179</sup> Ruth Lunney, 'Marlowe's *Edward II* and the Early Playhouse Audiences', in *Placing the Plays of Christopher Marlowe: Fresh Cultural Contexts*, ed. by Sara Munson Deats and Robert A. Logan (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 25–41 (pp. 35–36).

<sup>180</sup> Marlowe, V.v.29–30, 33.

<sup>181</sup> Marlowe, V.v.109, 111.

<sup>182</sup> Marlowe, V.v.113.

anus.<sup>183</sup> Andrew Hadfield has argued that, if the script is taken at face value, ‘then Edward has been pressed to death’, a punishment inflicted on those who refused to enter a plea at a criminal trial, thus avoiding being found guilty and ensuring the transfer of property to their heirs.<sup>184</sup> Stephen Orgel agrees, suggesting that modern critics’ insistence that Marlowe’s play does stage the penetrative murder is a sign that ‘we want the murder to be precisely what Marlowe refuses to make it: a condign punishment, the mirror of Edward’s unspeakable vice.’<sup>185</sup> For Christopher Shirley, meanwhile, the ambiguity of the murder scene – with penetration omitted from the script, but present in the minds of audience members who knew their history – ‘stages a critique of the jurisprudential effort that categorises Edward and Gaveston as sodomites’: ‘Marlowe’s stage omission, flickering in and out of sight, parallels Edward’s putative sodomy’.<sup>186</sup>

In the face of these arguments, the majority of critics still argue that Marlowe intended Edward’s penetrative murder to be staged.<sup>187</sup> Charles Forker, editor of the fullest recent edition, inserts a stage direction (after Lightborn’s instruction to ‘lay the table down, and stamp on it’) which reads, ‘Using the table and featherbed to hold him down, they murder EDWARD, who screams as the spit penetrates him.’<sup>188</sup> Orgel’s argument above – that this standpoint results from a desire to make Edward’s death ‘a condign punishment’ – relies upon the penetrative murder story being definitively punitive and sexually mimetic. But as I have shown above, this interpretation is not uncomplicatedly justified by the historiography that preceded Marlowe; and as I will show below, the extent to which Marlowe himself encourages this interpretation within his play is not absolute. More than a desire to make Edward’s murder a ‘condign punishment’, it seems to me that the numerous critics who argue for the staging of the penetrative murder – among them Forker, Frederic Tromly, and Vincenzo Pasquarella – are inspired by evidence within Marlowe’s text.<sup>189</sup> The wider historiography of Edward, with which this thesis has dealt, provides further supporting evidence for an argument already justified by the play itself.

---

<sup>183</sup> Thomas Page Anderson, ‘Surpassing the King’s Two Bodies: The Politics of Staging the Royal Effigy in Marlowe’s *Edward II*’, *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 32 (2014), 585–611 (p. 595).

<sup>184</sup> Andrew Hadfield, ‘Marlowe’s Representation of the Death of Edward II’, *Notes and Queries*, 56.1 (2009), 40–41 (p. 41).

<sup>185</sup> Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare’s England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 47–48.

<sup>186</sup> Christopher Shirley, ‘Sodomy and Stage Directions in Christopher Marlowe’s *Edward(s) II*’, *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 54.2 (2014), 279–96 (p. 284).

<sup>187</sup> Melnikoff goes so far as to refer to the fact of the staging as ‘infamous’ [‘Introduction’, in Melnikoff, pp. 1–20 (p. 1)], which rather undermines its contested status.

<sup>188</sup> Marlowe, V.v.112–13.

<sup>189</sup> Frederic B. Tromly, *Playing With Desire: Christopher Marlowe and the Art of Tantalization* (Toronto; London: University of Toronto Press, 1998), pp. 128–30; Vincenzo Pasquarella, *Christopher Marlowe’s Representation of Love* (Rome: Aracne, 2008), pp. 173–74.



Lightborn – Marlowe’s ‘ahistorical’<sup>190</sup> and quasi-demonic<sup>191</sup> invented murderer – provides veiled references to the method by which Edward will be murdered from his initial scene. When Mortimer asks, ‘And hast thou cast how to accomplish it?’, Lightborn replies, ‘Ay, ay, and none shall know which way he died.’<sup>192</sup> Accounts of Edward’s penetrative murder consistently stress the fact that it left no external marks: this is, historiographically speaking, a fundamental aspect of the story. Being smothered or pressed to death by a table might provide similar invisibility, but is not similarly historiographically established as an invisible murder method – or as Edward’s murder method. As such, this line of Lightborn’s constitutes Marlowe’s first hint to those audience members familiar with the penetrative murder story. Lightborn then lists the methods by which he has previously murdered people, ‘several of which involve invading the orifices of passive victims’, such as the ears and mouth.<sup>193</sup> ‘And yet,’ he says, ‘I have a braver way than these’. When Mortimer (in Tromly’s apt words) ‘reaches for the bait’ – ‘What’s that?’ – Lightborn teasingly withdraws: ‘Nay, you shall pardon me; none shall know my tricks.’<sup>194</sup> While this scene does work if taken at face value – demonstrating Lightborn’s sinister guardedness and his threatening capacity to exceed even Mortimer’s control – Marlowe’s choice to dangle the murder method just out of reach here surely relies for its full, teasing impact on the audience’s knowledge or suspicion of the method to which he is referring. Lightborn’s choice of adjective, ‘brave’, points to the theatrical ingenuity of the method he has chosen, and constitutes a further hint to the audience that Edward’s death will take the sensational, dramatic form they expect. The tension mounts as the audience anticipates the inevitable penetrative murder, but has confirmation of it continually offered and withdrawn. Lightborn’s false words of reassurance to Edward in the murder scene function in a similar way: ‘These hands were never stain’d with innocent blood, / Nor shall they now be tainted with a king’s.’<sup>195</sup> Again, these words depend for their full, chilling effect on the audience’s knowledge that what Edward takes as reassurance is in fact confirmation of the worst. Lightborn is not lying – there will be no blood – but is in fact gesturing once again towards a murder method which was continually associated with invisibility. Such double-bluffing is consistent with Lightborn’s pride in his choice of murder method, evident from his earlier conversation with Mortimer and from his comment to Matrevis and Gurney following

---

<sup>190</sup> Thomas Page Anderson, *Performing Early Modern Trauma from Shakespeare to Milton* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 97.

<sup>191</sup> Marlowe, p. 78.

<sup>192</sup> Marlowe, V.iv.23–24.

<sup>193</sup> Tromly, p. 128.

<sup>194</sup> Tromly, p. 128; Marlowe, V.iv.36–38.

<sup>195</sup> Marlowe, V.v.80–81.

Edward's death: 'Was it not bravely done?'<sup>196</sup> Here the word 'brave' recurs, confirming that Lightborn has indeed executed the murder he was planning all along.

The very fact that Lightborn keeps referring (explicitly or not) to the *method* of Edward's murder calls as much attention, if not more, to the means by which his death is achieved as to the fact that he dies. This, again, is consistent with the way in which Edward's story is told in the early modern period: the method of his murder is mentioned in the majority of cases, receiving a disproportionate amount of historiographical coverage. While not every audience member can have been familiar with this aspect of Edward's reputation, these hints do not only work for those who 'know Holinshed':<sup>197</sup> as shown above, the penetrative murder story appears to have been considered one of the most fundamental aspects of Edward's story, included or referenced in even the briefest of historical texts. Fundamental too was the scream which accompanied it. Marlowe's inclusion of this detail, like his references to the invisibility of Edward's murder, demonstrates his thorough engagement with the penetrative murder story. For audience members familiar with Edward's historiographical reputation, these details would have called the penetrative murder to mind, adding to the expectations already created by Lightborn's continual references to the method. Forker is right to describe Edward's penetrative murder as 'notorious', and to argue that 'Elizabethan audiences... would have expected to see it represented'.<sup>198</sup> In Jonathan Crewe's words, 'Even if the stage directions leave something to the imagination, they nevertheless script a scene that already exists in the contemporary public mind: if crucial details are left out, the equally crucial apparatus is specified.'<sup>199</sup>

For this is the most crucial argument: the spit of Marlowe's sources is not entirely absent from his play. On the contrary, Lightborn asks for it earlier in the murder scene: 'See that in the next room I have a fire, / And get me a spit, and let it be red-hot.'<sup>200</sup> The fact that it does not recur explicitly in a stage direction or verbal command should not allow us to simply erase these lines. As Forker says, 'From the perspective of modern theatrical practice, Q's stage directions are deficient in numerous places'.<sup>201</sup> Moreover, 'If the playwright had intended not to show it, there would be little reason for having the

---

<sup>196</sup> Marlowe, V.v.115.

<sup>197</sup> Tromly, p. 129.

<sup>198</sup> Marlowe, V.v.30n.

<sup>199</sup> Jonathan Crewe, 'Disorderly Love: Sodomy Revisited in Marlowe's *Edward II*', *Criticism*, 51 (2009), 385–99 (p. 393); see also Anderson ('Surpassing the King's Two Bodies', p. 596), who proposes the idea of 'the unwritten script of the play' which partially rests on 'the force of cultural memory'.

<sup>200</sup> Marlowe, V.v.29–30.

<sup>201</sup> Marlowe, V.v.30n.

murderer mention his weapon during his preparations, thereby setting up a disappointing anticlimax': Lightborn's lines can be seen as the early modern equivalent of Chekhov's gun.<sup>202</sup> It is fair to accept that a stage direction is missing, as is extremely common in early modern playtexts – Tromly's suggestion that references to the spit were deliberately 'withheld from the printed text' is unnecessary and also implausible, since references to it were printed in numerous chronicles – but we do not need to conclude that its absence renders the text hopelessly ambiguous.<sup>203</sup> Pasquarella has even advanced a theory – which seems potentially plausible, if convoluted – that because 'it is Matrevis who replies to Lightborn's [initial] request for the spit' ('Very well'), Lightborn's line, 'Matrevis, come!' constitutes an implicit request for the spit to be brought on stage.<sup>204</sup> Yet even admitting that there is insufficient evidence for this, the other evidence cited above allows me to conclude that it is overwhelmingly likely that Marlowe intended the penetrative murder to be staged, and that it was staged in early modern productions of *Edward II*.

Among critics who agree, many have argued (or assumed) that Marlowe's murder scene functions in the play as mimetic punishment for Edward's sexual relationship with Gaveston. This was first proposed by William Empson, who argued in 1946 that, 'The obscene torture by which [Edward] is...killed is an appalling parody of the homosexual act', while noting that 'This does not mean that Marlowe agreed with his audience that the punishment was deserved'.<sup>205</sup> Charles Masinton went further, arguing that in addition to the symbolic spit, 'The feather-bed calls to mind Edward's soft, pleasure-loving nature, and the table that is used to crush him brings to mind his docile, masochistic attitude and his submissive role as Gaveston's lover.'<sup>206</sup> More recent critics agree: for Gregory Bredbeck, 'The murder of Edward by raping him with a red-hot poker – quite literally branding him with sodomy – can be seen as an attempt to 'write' onto him the homoeroticism constantly ascribed to him.'<sup>207</sup> As detailed in Chapter 3, Jeffrey Masten interprets the decision to bind a copy of the play with theological and juridical texts as suggesting that the play could be read as 'a treatise (if you will) that explores *the rightness* of Edward's torture and horrific death' – a view which implies, though Masten does not stress it explicitly, a belief in the

---

<sup>202</sup> Marlowe, V.v.30n.

<sup>203</sup> Tromly, p. 129.

<sup>204</sup> Marlowe, V.v.31; Pasquarella, pp. 173–74.

<sup>205</sup> William Empson, 'Two Proper Crimes', *The Nation*, 163 (1946), 444–45.

<sup>206</sup> Charles G. Masinton, *Christopher Marlowe's Tragic Vision: A Study in Damnation* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1972), p. 111, quoted by Stephen Guy-Bray, 'Homophobia and the Depoliticizing of *Edward II*', *English Studies in Canada*, 17 (1991), 125–33 (p. 127).

<sup>207</sup> Gregory Bredbeck, *Sodomy and Interpretation: Marlowe to Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 76.

potentially punitive nature of the penetrative murder.<sup>208</sup> Assessing critical views like these, Stephen Guy-Bray retorts that ‘there is no real basis for thinking that an Elizabethan audience would have been as homophobic as a twentieth-century critic’.<sup>209</sup> Guy-Bray’s argument is provocative in its anachronism – but this is understandable, given the tone of Empson and Masinton’s criticism, and in fact a consideration of the Elizabethan audience’s experience of the play does provide some justification for his claim that Marlowe’s contemporary audience would not have felt ‘the punishment was deserved’. As I have argued, medieval and early modern accounts of Edward’s murder usually foreground its torturous nature and its invisibility more than its sexual mimesis. Many elements of Marlowe’s play continue this trend. Firstly, he foregrounds the invisible nature of the penetrative murder. Bredbeck is wrong to state that its sexually punitive potential ‘is highlighted in the play by the removal of any practical reason for this choice of death’, given Lightborn’s assurance to Mortimer that ‘none shall know which way he died’, and his subsequent concern that Edward’s body not be bruised by the table.<sup>210</sup> Emily Bartels reflects the play more accurately when she argues, ‘Rather than fitting the crime, the punishment fits Mortimer’s need for a murder and murderer that finally cannot be detected, like the “unpointed” message, “*Edwardum occidere nolite timere bonum est*”, that covers its treasonous tracks’.<sup>211</sup> Secondly, any condemnation of Edward’s behaviour in the play is significantly diminished by the sympathy he commands for his love and grief for Gaveston (see Chapter 2) and for his mistreatment while imprisoned (see above), as well as by his scream of pain. This is enhanced by the fear he expresses in the murder scene; Marlowe’s play is decidedly ambivalent about whether Edward has a ‘good death’ by early modern religious standards. Although he states his intention to die well, urging Lightborn to ‘let me see the stroke before it comes, / That even then when I shall lose my life, / My mind may be more steadfast on my God’, many critics seem to forget that his last words are those of fear.<sup>212</sup> It is true that ‘just before he is killed, Edward cries, ‘Assist me, sweet God, and receive my soul’...echoing Christ’s last words on the cross, ‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit’; but his actual final words are, ‘O spare me! Or dispatch me in a trice!’, a panicked exclamation which distracts his mind from piety, and which is followed

---

<sup>208</sup> Jeffrey Masten, ‘Bound for Germany: Heresy, Sodomy, and a New Copy of Marlowe’s *Edward II*’, *TLS: The Times Literary Supplement* (21 December 2012), 17–19; emphasis added.

<sup>209</sup> Guy-Bray, p. 126.

<sup>210</sup> Bredbeck, p. 76 n. 58.

<sup>211</sup> Emily Bartels, *Spectacles of Strangeness: Imperialism, Alienation, and Marlowe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), p. 159.

<sup>212</sup> Marlowe, V.v.75–77.

by a wordless scream.<sup>213</sup> Overall, Tromly's assessment of the tone of Marlowe's murder scene seems most apt:

While some of the visual imagery of the scene does have analogues in punitive Christian iconography (e.g., medieval representations of hell in which sodomites are impaled on spits), the play as a whole does not present the relationship of Edward and Gaveston as intrinsically sinful, and the extreme pleasure which Lightborn takes in murdering Edward renders the victim pitiable and the justice dubious. ...Edward's pain will not be moralised away.<sup>214</sup>

Tromly's reading of the murder scene is useful because of his efforts to contextualise it within the play as a whole.<sup>215</sup> This enables him to reflect the audience experience more closely than those critics who consider the murder scene as a decontextualised episode. To this, I would add that Edward's wider historiographical reputation is also an important context to consider: Marlowe did not find an uncomplicatedly punitive murder in his sources, and it therefore makes sense that he did not invent one.

This said, sex is not absent from Marlowe's murder scene. As many critics have noted, Lightborn conducts Edward's murder as 'an almost unendurable seduction of sorts', inviting him to 'Lie on this bed, and rest yourself awhile' and employing a combination of 'feigned sympathy, soothing comfort, and transparent lies' in order to '[toy] quasi-sexually with his human object'.<sup>216</sup> The penetrative nature of the earlier murders he narrates, and indeed the sexual potential of the verbs 'die' and 'kill', also establish the association of his murders with sex, and there is arguably a frisson of pleasure in his assurance that 'ne'er was there any / So finely handled as this king shall be.'<sup>217</sup> The parallels between Lightborn and Gaveston also lend a sexual element to the murder scene, since Gaveston is unequivocally established in the play as Edward's sexual partner: both characters function as 'vice' figures, and there is good evidence to suggest that they were played by the same actor in early modern productions, as they frequently are in modern ones.<sup>218</sup> Several critics have also seen

---

<sup>213</sup> Martin, 'Plays of Passion', p. 89; Marlowe, V.v.110.

<sup>214</sup> Tromly, p. 130.

<sup>215</sup> For a similar treatment, see Lunney, p. 31. Lunney reads Marlowe's murder scene in the context of other 'cautionary tales' in Elizabethan drama, concluding that 'the impact of Edward's death' is 'more disturbing and challenging' than 'that of other deserved deaths in sixteenth-century plays', encouraging the audience to grieve for the murdered king.

<sup>216</sup> Marlowe, V.v.71 and p. 79.

<sup>217</sup> Meg F. Pearson, "Die with Fame": Forgiving Infamy in Marlowe's *Edward IP*, *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 42 (2009), 97–120 (p. 109); Shirley, p. 287; Marlowe, V.v.38–39.

<sup>218</sup> Sara Munson Deats, 'Marlowe's Fearful Symmetry in *Edward IP*', in *A Poet and a Filthy Play-Maker*, pp. 241–62 (p. 248); Pasquarella, pp. 167–68. There is no justification for arguing that 'If [the penetrative murder was] performed, such a grotesque mimicry of the act of anal sex would surely complicate the play's otherwise more ambiguous representation of the King's relationship to Gaveston' (Stevens, p. 48): as Chapter 1 demonstrates, there is nothing ambiguous about the nature of their relationship, and as such, the staging or

Marlowe's choice to shift Edward's prison to a sewer, where he is showered with 'filth', as calling anal sex to mind, though Patrick Ryan argues that this is also potentially Christological.<sup>219</sup> With these features of Marlowe's murder scene in mind, it should be noted that he encourages the interpretation of the penetrative murder as sexually mimetic more thoroughly than his sources. Yet as I have argued, it does not follow that he therefore necessarily presents the penetrative method as punitive. As Darlene Farabee argues – in a sentence that could equally be applied to the *Brut* and to the many other texts (analysed above) which foreground pain and torture more than sexually mimetic punitivity – 'Edward's grisly execution is, as orthodox interpreters of the play have correctly insisted, iconographically "appropriate", but this very appropriateness can only be established *at the expense of* every complex, sympathetic human feeling evoked by the play.'<sup>220</sup>

### v. Martyrdom and other sensational details

As part of his sympathetic account, Geoffrey le Baker also uses his narration of Edward's murder to present him as a martyr, explicitly comparing him to Jesus. Indeed, earlier in the text le Baker explicitly describes Edward's future death as martyrdom, and juxtaposes his holy status against his diabolical keepers:

Often these servants of Belial gave the servant of God poison to drink, but either Edward by his physical strength emptied himself of the poison, as Galen in his third book about simple medicine says that men of a balanced constitution can do, or, as I more truly believe, the Almighty on high kept his confessor for a more public martyrdom.<sup>221</sup>

The description of Edward's captors as 'servants of Belial' echoes le Baker's earlier description of Orleton and Isabella's supporters as those 'whom the devil had joined to this alliance against God and his anointed'.<sup>222</sup>

The perception of Edward as a martyr was lent support by his great-grandson Richard II's attempts to canonise him.<sup>223</sup> However, those historical texts that give credence

omission of the penetrative murder is highly unlikely to affect the audience's perception of whether that relationship was sexual.

<sup>219</sup> David Stymeist, 'Status, Sodomy, and the Theater in Marlowe's *Edward II*', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 44 (2004), 233–53 (p. 245); Crewe, pp. 395–96; Ryan, p. 476. For an exploration of the multiple significations of sewers in early modern England, see Christopher D. Foley, 'Marlowe's *Edward II* and "The Woful Lamentation of Jane Shore": Tactical Engagements with Sewers in Late-Elizabethan London', *Early Modern Literary Studies*, Special Issue 23 (2014), [8].

<sup>220</sup> Darlene Farabee, 'The Critical Backstory: *Edward II*'s Critics in History to 1990', in Melnikoff, pp. 21–41 (p. 39).

<sup>221</sup> Le Baker (2012), p. 29, trans. by Preest.

<sup>222</sup> Le Baker (2012), p. 30, trans. by Preest.

<sup>223</sup> See Phillips, pp. 20–25; Evans, p. 192. Although the 'Lament of Edward II' has previously been seen as an early canonisation attempt, Valente argues convincingly that it was not, although it 'may have been intended to elicit prayers for the old king' (Valente, p. 433).

to the idea of martyrdom are in the minority, especially following the Reformation.<sup>224</sup> A strand of texts following the *Polychronicon* question whether the painful manner of Edward's death is itself justification for considering him a martyr, but are ultimately ambivalent about whether painful death can outweigh Edward's various crimes in life:

De cuius meritis, an inter sanctos annumerandus sit, frequens in vulgo, sicut quondam de Thoma comite Lancastriae, adhuc disceptatio est. Sed revera nec carceris foeditas nec mortis vilitas, cum ista sceleratis debeantur, nec etiam oblationum frequentia aut miraculorum simulacra, cum talia sint indifferentia, quemquam sanctum probant, nisi corresponderet sanctmonia vitae praecedentis. Bene namque cum unoquoque agitur si talia cum contritione culpam in eo diluant aut poenam debitam immuniunt, quamvis immediatam advelationem non efficiant; sed praesumpcio flagitiorum impunitatem sibi et sui similibus inaniter sperantium, ambitioque matronarum circumgirare affectantium rumore talis venerationis multum amplificat et dilatat, donec aedificatio super arenam fundata decidat et labescat.<sup>225</sup>

Concerning his merits, whether he should be numbered among the saints was frequently debated by the people just as concerning Thomas, earl of Lancaster. But in fact nether foulness of imprisonment nor vileness of death together with criminal things deserves this, nor even frequent offerings or likeness of miracles, prove anyone a saint: such things should be indifferent, unless they should correspond with holiness of the preceding life, which should prove [it to be] holy. On the other hand, any one thing done well, if done with great contrition, could wash his sin from him or diminish punishment, although it would not bring about immediate vanishing [of sin]; but the presumption and pride of scoundrels, emptily hoping that they and those like them will have impunity, and the ambition of women to go about [on pilgrimage], desiring gossip of such great worship, greatly amplifies and exaggerates it, until a building established on sand totters and falls.

This assessment – which, like Higden's description of Edward's character, provided a useful summary paragraph – appears in numerous medieval texts influenced by the *Polychronicon*. A version of it also appears in Holinshed's *Chronicles*, but the emphasis is shifted to make it clear that Edward's transgressions are ultimately inexcusable:

The fame went that by this Edward the second, after his death manie miracles were wrought. So that the like opinion of him was conceived as before had beene of earle Thomas of Lancaster, namelie against the common people. He was knowne to be of a good and courteous nature, though not of most pregnant wit.

And albeit in his youth he fell into certeine light crimes, and after by the companie and counsell of evill men, was induced into more heinous vices, yet it was thought that he purged the same by repentance, and patientlie

<sup>224</sup> E.g. 'Anonymi Chronicon Godstovianum', in *Guilielmi Roperi Vita D. Thomae Mori*, ed. by Thomas Hearne (Oxford: John Rance, 1716), pp. 180–246 (pp. 227, 228).

<sup>225</sup> *Polychronicon*, VIII, 324–26.

suffered manie reproofes, and finallie death it selfe (as before ye have heard) after a most cruell manner. He had suerlie good cause to repent his former trade of living, for by his undiscreeit and wanton misgovernance, there were headed and put to death during his reigne (by judgement of law) to the number of 28 barons and knights, over and beside such as were slaine in Scotland by his infortunate conduct. All these mischeefes and manie more happened not onlie to him, but also to the whole state of the realme...<sup>226</sup>

Despite describing Edward as repentant, and his youthful sins as ‘light’ and induced by his favourites, Holinshed is quick to point out that this repentance was no more than was necessary (‘he had suerlie good cause’) and to emphasise the far-reaching effects of his transgressions. As such, although the possibility of martyrdom is raised, the reader is not encouraged to accept it. Other early modern texts which address the fate of Edward’s soul are similar. Niccols’s *Winter Nights Vision* implies that Edward’s soul ascended to heaven as a result of ‘the pray’rs which godly folke had made, / When from the castle they did heare my cries’, and May’s Edward has an idealised “good death”, with his mind fixed on God, but neither assert that Edward became a saint or object of veneration.<sup>227</sup>

An anomalous but interesting account of Edward’s murder, which engages with the themes of pain, torture and martyrdom, can be found in the independent Anglo-Norman continuation of the *Brut* referred to above (with reference to its atypical depiction of the shaving anecdote):

ly assistrent roialment au table, mes ils mistrent en sa potage hautif venyme, le quele hautifment comencea a overer et il ousta la table ly dressaunt devettere qar il ne poest tenir la viande, et ensi apairila a son lit et entendant le faus compassement de ses enemys rendi grants suspirs hidousement, guamentant et les enemys ly assailerount forment pur hastier sa mort et il saut suis de son lit tout newe et ly tient forciblement dun baare de faire et hautement cria ‘Haile Marie mercy vous crie’. Si fust le crie oie dunc par tout la ville, et a tant les traitours parlerount hautement de luy treiere avale, et les uns ly treerount par les tendres membres et les autres par une toaile entour son cole. Et ensi le gentil roy abaterount a terre et pur estre seurs de sa mort boteront une corn en sa privete derere et parmi celle corn un fer ardaunt et par ensi fust il ars par tout le corps. Qe oist unkes mes de si felenouse treson et tourment fait a ascun roy de ses lieges saunz encheson ou proces de ley, ou dascun martire a si vile mort livere.<sup>228</sup>

...they assisted him royally at the table, but they put fast-acting poison in his soup, which began to work quickly, and he cleared the table to go to void himself, because he could not keep down the meat. And so he repaired to his bed and, understanding the false plotting of his enemies, he gave great and hideous sighs, and lamented. And the enemies assailed him strongly to

<sup>226</sup> Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / p. 341.

<sup>227</sup> *WNV*, fol. 3B7<sup>r</sup>; May, fol. C2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>228</sup> Galbraith, p. 217. See above for details of this manuscript.



hasten his death. He jumped out of his bed all naked and they held him forcibly with an iron bar and he loudly cried, 'Hail Mary, I cry to you for mercy!' This cry was heard through all the town, and so the traitors talked loudly of how to bring him down, and some held him by the tender parts and the others by a cloth around his bottom. And so they struck the noble king to the ground and, to be sure of his death, pushed a horn in his private parts and through this horn a burning iron and burnt him through all his body. Who has ever heard of such wicked treason and torment done to any king by his lords without reason or process of law, or any martyr delivered up to such a vile death?

Probably influenced by le Baker's description of Edward in his death scene as a 'knight' (*miles*) who is 'overpowered' (*obruitur*) despite his 'strength' (*strenuissimus*), the writer presents Edward as far from passive. Aware of his situation rather than surprised in bed, he attempts to fight his attackers despite his literal naked vulnerability, but is defeated by being unfairly outnumbered and assailed in a cruel and undignified manner. The image of him being 'held...by the tender parts' could be perceived as sexualised, but in this context it principally functions to suggest that Edward's attackers took advantage of his nakedness and subjected him to a painful attack unworthy of his valiant attempts to fight them. As such, this scene has closer parallels with the death of Edmund Ironside than any other accounts of Edward's murder. It is also notable that the writer uses the murder's 'wicked treason and torment' and its status as a 'vile death' as a justification for comparing Edward to a martyr.

Brief mention should be made of another sensationalised detail added by le Baker to the account of Edward's murder. Adam Orleton, he reports, sent Edward's keepers a note containing a 'sophistical ambiguity': 'To kill Edward do not fear is good' (*Edwardum occidere nolite timere bonum est*).<sup>229</sup> This ambiguous message enabled Orleton to communicate his desire that Edward be killed while retaining plausible deniability. While le Baker is the earliest writer to apply the story of the ambiguous note to Edward's reign, his is not the earliest example of this formulation: it also appears in accounts of the 1213 assassination of Queen Gertrude of Hungary.<sup>230</sup> It seems most likely that le Baker came across the phrase in the popular chronicle by the Cistercian monk Alberic of Trois-Fontaines, which he may have obtained via a local Cistercian abbey.<sup>231</sup> The detail subsequently became popular as part of the general early modern vogue for le Baker's text, appearing in eleven other accounts. It even appears in Camden's *Britannia* in a section describing Berkeley Castle,

<sup>229</sup> Le Baker (2012), p. 30, trans. by Preest; Le Baker (1889), p. 32.

<sup>230</sup> George Charles Moore Smith, 'Edwardum Occidere Nolite Timere Bonum Est', *Times Literary Supplement* (London, 9 August 1928).

<sup>231</sup> See Phillips, p. 564. The *Cartulary of Osney Abbey*, ed. by Herbert Edward Salter (Oxford: Clarendon Press for the Oxford Historical Society, 1929), shows frequent contact between le Baker's house and local Cistercian houses, particularly Thame and Rewley.

which gives no other details about Edward's reign, indicating that Camden considered it both an integral aspect of Edward's story, and a sufficiently entertaining detail to include in a text that is otherwise largely chorographical rather than historical.<sup>232</sup>

### III. Sympathy and psychological realism

The elicitation of sympathy for Edward is a key effect of all the 'literary transformations' analysed in the preceding pages: the increasingly sensationalised representations of his deposition, imprisonment and murder were written with this aim in mind, as were the romanticised accounts of his relationship with Gaveston explored in Chapter 2. In this final section, I want to consider other features of accounts of Edward's reign which function to align the reader's sympathy with him: intrusions of the authorial voice urging the reader to sympathy, and the use of psychological realism to humanise Edward even when he is making decisions the reader might be expected to condemn.

As noted above, Marlowe commands sympathy for Edward through his expressions of grief and fear for Gaveston and, later, himself. Other characters in the play guide the audience's emotional responses in different ways; there is substantial evidence to disprove Arnold Cushner's argument that 'Marlowe...gives us few hints as to how we are to respond.'<sup>233</sup> Various critics have observed that 'Kent functions in the drama as a barometer of moral feeling'.<sup>234</sup> His allegiance switches away from and back towards Edward in line with the audience's sympathies, and his comments in the final section of the play prompt the audience to recognise the political unacceptability of Mortimer's rebellion ('Proud traitor, Mortimer, why dost thou chase / Thy lawful king, thy sovereign, with thy sword?') and its emotional implications (conveyed not only through Kent's desperate attempt to rescue his brother, but through his description of his imprisonment as 'miserable').<sup>235</sup> Marlowe's invocation of anti-Catholic sentiments also functions to align audience sympathy with Edward and Gaveston. In addition, the concept of pity is invoked with markedly increased frequency following Isabella's invasion: pity for Edward is expressed by the Abbot of Neath, by unnamed or imagined subjects, and even (whether presented in performance as feigned or not) by Lightborn.<sup>236</sup> Hubert and Niccols, both of whose poems

<sup>232</sup> William Camden, *Britain* (London: Eliot's Court Press, 1610), trans. by Philemon Holland, fol. 2G6<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>233</sup> Arnold Cushner, 'Some Observations on Marlowe's *Edward IP*', in *Renaissance and Modern: Essays in Honor of Edwin M. Moseley*, ed. by Edwin M. Moseley and Murray J. Levith (Saratoga Springs: Skidmore College, 1976), pp. 11–20 (p. 18).

<sup>234</sup> Marlowe, p. 74; Thomas Cartelli, '*Edward IP*', in *The Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by Patrick Cheney (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 158–73 (p. 170).

<sup>235</sup> Marlowe, IV.vi.3–4; V.iii.63.

<sup>236</sup> Marlowe, IV.vii.70–71; V.iii.24; V.iv.2; V.v.49–50.

are narrated by Edward in the first person, employ similar techniques: Hubert's Edward complains disparagingly that those who can hear his story with 'eies as drie as sunny beames' are 'Flint-hearted men', while Niccols's ghost instructs as part of his preamble, 'Let every verse compos'd, such sad sound beare, / That for each word it may enforce a teare.'<sup>237</sup>

In Marlowe's source, the 1587 edition of Holinshed's *Chronicles*, Abraham Fleming's moralistic interjections can – as well as calling attention to aphoristic or commonplaceable elements through the interpolation of Latin phrases – function as a kind of emotional gloss. As noted earlier in this chapter, Fleming describes the metabasis of Edward's deposition as 'lamentable'; he also comments on Edward's negotiations with Thomas of Lancaster in 1321 that 'the kings clemencie and patience is highlie therein to be commended'.<sup>238</sup> Even the 1577 edition, however, contains some psychological details reminiscent of the detailed characterisation of Edward found in the later poems and plays which would use Holinshed as a source. Edward's acceptance of his deposition contains details of his facial expressions and emotional state which encourage sympathy: 'notwithstanding his outward countenance discovered how much it inwardlie grieved him; yet after he was come to himselfe, he answered that he was false into this miserie through his own offense, and therefore he was contented patientlie to suffer it'.<sup>239</sup> Holinshed's distinction between 'inward' and 'outward' invites the reader to empathise with Edward, not merely to observe him. This distinction is also evident throughout Elizabeth Cary's *History*, which contains levels of psychological realism unparalleled in any other account of Edward's reign. Substantial room is devoted to Edward's 'unquiet thoughts', 'restless passions' and 'inward agitation' regarding whether to recall Gaveston following his father's death: these emotional agonies are foregrounded and detailed well above political occurrences.<sup>240</sup> Later, when wishing to recall Gaveston from his second exile, Edward relies on his nobles' potential empathy for his emotional suffering in order to persuade them to relent, a device which encourages the reader to empathise also: 'he intreats them (if any of them had been truly touch'd with a disease of the same quality) that they would indifferently measure his Condition by their own Sufferings'.<sup>241</sup> As Meredith Skura observes, Cary's text is unique in its presentation of Edward's inner struggles:

<sup>237</sup> Hubert (1628), stanza 513; *WNV*, fol. 2Z8<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>238</sup> Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / pp. 328, 340.

<sup>239</sup> Holinshed (1577), IV, section 1 / p. 882.

<sup>240</sup> Cary (folio), fols. C2<sup>v</sup>–D<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>241</sup> Cary (folio), fol. E2<sup>r</sup>.

No other Edward agonises so excruciatingly about defying his father and the barons, except perhaps Hubert's, whose ghost, in the *Mirror* tradition, narrates his history in his own voice. Other Edwards wantonly follow their appetites without thinking; [Cary's] Edward must suffer through a painful and 'unnatural civil war in his breast' before he decides 'it to be treason, that his private appetite should succumb to public necessity' and allows himself to recall Gaveston.<sup>242</sup>

Cary was a dramatist, and her history of Edward is a quasi-dramatic text: Tina Krontiris argues that it 'appears to be an unfinished play or a biography influenced by drama', while Donald Stauffer is convinced that the text is written in end-stopped blank verse.<sup>243</sup> In fact, in its detailed examination of its characters' motivations and inner lives, the text could reasonably be seen as novelistic. Although Karen Britland has tried to dismiss this characterisation of Cary's work – arguing that she is in fact writing 'Tacitean "politic" history', and that her work has only been described as novelistic because of her gender – this attempt at a generic reshuffle does not adequately account for the text's level of psychological detail.<sup>244</sup> Francis Bacon's *Henry VII* – described by other critics as an example of said 'politic history' – contains no similar elements; Henry's psychological and emotional reaction to his son Arthur's death, probably the closest equivalent to Edward's grief, is not mentioned at all.<sup>245</sup> At most, the thoughts behind Henry's strategic decisions receive some attention, but the drama and/or the novel remain closer analogues for Cary's work.<sup>246</sup> Analyses of Cary's *History* that focus exclusively on her gender have the potential to obscure critical judgment both of the text's genre, and of its treatment of Edward.<sup>247</sup> It is simply untrue to state, as Janet Starner-Wright and Susan Fitzmaurice do, that 'Edward is a two-dimensional character' who does not develop throughout the history, in contrast to Isabella.<sup>248</sup> Cary's sympathetic treatment of Isabella – when it is sympathetic, which is not always the case – derives not from her allegiance to a fellow woman, but from Jean Froissart, via Grafton: Froissart, writing for John of Hainault, had a clear vested interest in sensationalising Isabella's plight in 1325-26 in order to emphasise John's chivalrous

---

<sup>242</sup> Skura, pp. 87–88.

<sup>243</sup> Tina Krontiris, *Oppositional Voices: Women as Writers and Translators of Literature in the English Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 91; Donald A. Stauffer, 'A Deep and Sad Passion', in *Essays in Dramatic Literature: The Parrott Presentation Volume*, ed. by Hardin Craig (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1935), 289–314 (pp. 289–90).

<sup>244</sup> Karen Britland, 'Kings Are but Men': Elizabeth Cary's Histories of Edward II', *Études Épistémè. Revue de Littérature et de Civilisation (XVIe – XVIIIe Siècles)*, 17 (2010) 31–53 (pp. 36, 46).

<sup>245</sup> Daniel Woolf, *The Idea of History in Early Stuart England* (Toronto; London: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. 262; Barbara J. Shapiro, *Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 146; Francis Bacon, *The Historie of the Raigne of King Henry the Seventh* (London: W. Stansby for Matthew Lownes and William Barret, 1622), fol. 2D3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>246</sup> E.g. Bacon, fol. D<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>247</sup> See Skura, *passim*.

<sup>248</sup> Janet Starner-Wright and Susan Fitzmaurice, 'Shaping a Drama out of a History: Elizabeth Cary and the Story of Edward II', *Critical Survey*, 14 (2002), 79–92 (p. 80).

magnanimity in supporting her. The emotional detail Cary provides creates one of the most rounded characterisations found in any early modern account of Edward's reign.

## Conclusion

Although this chapter has focused on issues not previously considered in this thesis – demonstrating that accounts of Edward's deposition, imprisonment and death in historical texts became increasingly sensationalised during the period under discussion – it should be considered as the culmination of the previous three chapters. The majority of significant changes in the historiography of Edward and his favourites can be summed up as part of an overall increasing emphasis on features of the text that enhance reading pleasure: a trend that, I have argued, can be considered a move towards the literary. During the period 1305-1700, accounts of Edward's reign increasingly emphasise what can be broadly summarised as the exciting and the emotional: his intensely close relationships with his favourites; his devastating grief at Gaveston's death; his theatrical sorrow at his deposition; his abject misery and degrading treatment while imprisoned; the fear and pain he experiences through a torturous and sensational murder. Small details and extractable anecdotes endure from text to text because they are memorable, exciting and enjoyable for the reader. Writers also emphasise the overall narrative structure of Edward's reign as a *de casibus* one: this enables reader to predict its trajectory, engaging them both through the pleasure of having their expectations fulfilled and through a growing sense of inevitability and impending doom. The anticipation of Edward's *de casibus* fall and (in later texts) of his anally penetrative murder creates an awful suspense that commands the reader's attention.

The observations made in these four chapters highlight the importance of considering this historiography as a whole unit – not as monolithic or homogeneous, but as a process whose wider tendencies can only be seen when individual texts are considered in the context of these cumulative tellings and retellings of Edward's story. At the same time, it is necessary to stress the disproportionate influence of certain key texts. Clearly, no one text can be considered 'the most influential': different texts can be shown to have exerted different levels of influence depending on which aspect of the narrative is under consideration. However, in the area of literary transformation, a compelling case can be made for the overwhelming importance of Geoffrey le Baker's *Chronicon*. Prior to its printing in 1603, Holinshed and Stow had access to le Baker's manuscript, and it clearly captured their imaginations. Through their popular texts, which used le Baker as a major source, details such as Edward's grief-stricken reaction to his deposition, and his various ill-

treatments at the hands of his keepers, entered the common currency of the retelling of his narrative in both short and long historical texts, and in the poetry and drama they influenced.

It is notable that neither Stow nor Holinshed used le Baker as their sole source for Edward's reign. This can partly be attributed to scholarly rigour: both writers produced meticulously researched texts based on multiple sources, and Holinshed's *Chronicles* in particular foregrounds many areas of historiographical debate.<sup>249</sup> However, it should also be considered a decision motivated by these writers' consideration of their readers. As argued above, the *Chronicon* provided a number of easily extractable anecdotes. Moreover, by rejecting le Baker's sympathetic account of Edward's reign and only following his narrative from deposition onwards, Stow and Holinshed enabled the foregrounding of equally sensational details such as sexual transgression, as well as a more clearly *de casibus* structure – two factors that influenced the readability of the narrative.

Throughout this thesis, I have undertaken close reading of texts of all genres. That historical texts are texts worthy of such an approach may seem obvious, but it is a position that is still treated as suspect or revolutionary in some scholarly quarters. Igor Djordjevic, for example, asserts that 'Annabel Patterson's *Reading Holinshed's Chronicles* has *appropriated* the chronicle narrative as a field of literary analysis'; similarly, William Marx describes Paul Strohm's approach to Richard II's reign as '*challenging* in the way it investigates a range of material traditionally regarded as "sources" and "documents" [including chronicles] using...techniques for the interpretation of literary texts'.<sup>250</sup> Consideration of the decisions made in the historiography of Edward II, however, indicates that a large proportion of the historical writers who contributed to that historiography were (as Marvin says of the *Brut* writer) 'deeply aware of history as a literary genre'.<sup>251</sup> Marvin argues persuasively that, 'Human agency should not always and only be an explanation of last resort' when considering the reasons that particular historical writers make changes to their sources.<sup>252</sup> This is enormously pertinent to the trends that have been observed in this thesis, which make most sense when viewed as creatively motivated, reader-focused alterations. I began my opening chapter by arguing that any consideration of Edward II's historiographical

---

<sup>249</sup> See, for example, the accounts of Andrew Harclay's peace treaty with Scotland and of Isabella's reasons for remaining in France in 1325-6 [Holinshed (1587), VI, section 10 / pp. 333, 336].

<sup>250</sup> Igor Djordjevic, *Holinshed's Nation* (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), p. 1 (emphasis added); William Marx, 'Reception and Revision in the Middle English *Prose Brut*', in *Readers and Writers of the Prose Brut*, ed. by William Marx and Raluca Radulescu (Lampeter: Trivium Publications, University of Wales, 2006), pp. 53–69 (p. 53); emphasis added.

<sup>251</sup> Marvin, p. 182.

<sup>252</sup> Marvin, p. 154.

reputation must pay attention to the changing terminology with which sexual transgression has been discussed and expressed; my final chapter has demonstrated that we must also consider narrative structure and devices that encourage emotional engagement with the text. Writers' choices in favour of these literary features have influenced their representation of Edward II and his favourites, and as such, they have shaped his historiographical reputation.





## Conclusion

---

This thesis has analysed the development of Edward II's historiographical reputation, particularly in relation to that of his favourites, during the period 1305-1700. It has considered the growth of his reputation for sexual transgression, and the formation of a consensus that this transgression specifically constituted sex with Piers Gaveston and (to a lesser extent) the younger Hugh Despenser; the concurrent romanticisation of his relationships with those favourites; the ways in which those favourites are presented as unsuitable and excessively controlling companions, both politically and emotionally; the concern over the extent to which Edward's favourites and their 'evil counsel' were responsible for his political transgressions, and the related deployment of king and favourites in English and French political debates of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and the impact of literary concerns, particularly the alignment of Edward's story with *de casibus* patterns, on the representation of his deposition, imprisonment and death. This analysis enables me now to suggest answers to some wider questions concerning Edward's changing reputation as a whole during this period, and to draw out the implications of my research for related areas of scholarship.

Firstly, while this thesis has deliberately eschewed the task of establishing the facts of Edward's sexual behaviour, it can usefully illuminate the question of the extent to which writers in medieval and early modern England presented his relationships with his favourites as romantic and/or sexual. It is clear that Edward's reputation for non-specific sexually transgressive behaviour developed during his reign: references to his 'lechery' appear in the earliest version of *The Last Kings of England*, composed around 1312, and Robert of Reading accused him of 'unlawful', 'sinful', adulterous sexual behaviour around 1326-30 in his continuation of the *Flores Historiarum*. By the early sixteenth century, Robert Fabyan was drawing a causal link between the influence of Edward's favourites and this sexually transgressive behaviour, and Polydore Vergil was accusing Gaveston of arranging titillating entertainments for Edward, resulting in behaviour described in terms that connote sexual transgression.<sup>1</sup> It may well be the case that readers of these texts, and others influenced by them, made the connection that the writers were unwilling to specify, and received the impression that Edward did engage in a sexual relationship with Gaveston. However, the first writer to explicitly "join the dots" was Marlowe. Following Marlowe's *Edward II*, discourse concerning Edward and his favourites shifted, with a markedly

---

<sup>1</sup> Fabyan, fol. 2K1r; Vergil, chap. 18.

increased willingness to specify that their relationships were sexual, and a higher incidence of explicit terms like ‘Ganymede’. By the time Francis Sandford casually deployed this term in a historical text in 1677, it seems that he assumed an existing knowledge of this among his readers.<sup>2</sup>

There is a tendency in modern historiography to minimise the importance of Edward’s sexual transgressions: to argue that both in fact and in the opinions of later writers, his deposition resulted from the disproportionate favour he bestowed on his favourites, rather than from the sexual and/or romantic nature of his relationships with them.<sup>3</sup> This thesis has demonstrated that arguments such as this rely on a problematic artificial separation. Edward’s favourites are frequently presented as using the king’s emotional attachment and sexual attraction to them in order to secure political influence. From contemporary historiography onwards, it is largely impossible to separate representations of Gaveston’s political influence from representations of his emotional importance to Edward; following the publication of Marlowe’s *Edward II*, this also applies to his sexual attractiveness to Edward. Kelly Quinn’s work, which argues that we should consider Drayton’s Gaveston in relation to female royal mistresses, has helpfully illuminated the particular political dangers that result from a king having a male sexual partner: namely, that such a partner has access to opportunities for influence and promotion that are unavailable to a female mistress.<sup>4</sup> As such, it is meaningless to argue that one problematic aspect of Edward’s favourites was the cause of the baronial opposition he faced: the political and the sexual/romantic are presented in medieval and early modern historiography as inextricably and causally linked.

Although this thesis has addressed ‘favourites’ in the plural, Piers Gaveston has consistently loomed larger than any of his successors. Despite Edward’s favourites being afforded relatively equal attention in contemporary accounts, representations of them started to diverge, particularly from the sixteenth century onwards: Gaveston became significant for his emotional impact on Edward’s life, and the Despencers for the political control they exerted. As such, they became suited to different genres and modes of representation. Texts that aimed to emphasise the political lessons to be learned from Edward’s reign would foreground the Despencers, whereas those that aimed to create an

---

<sup>2</sup> Sandford, fol. 2P2r.

<sup>3</sup> For a summary, see Jochen Burgtof, “‘With My Life, His Joyes Began and Ended’: Piers Gaveston and King Edward II of England Revisited”, in *Fourteenth-Century England*, ed. by Nigel Saul (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), V, 31–51 (pp. 33–36). See also J. R. S. Phillips, ‘Introduction’, in *New Perspectives*, pp. 1–3 (p. 3).

<sup>4</sup> Kelly Quinn, ‘Mastering Complaint: Michael Drayton’s *Piers Gaveston* and the Royal Mistress Complaints’, *English Literary Renaissance*, 38 (2008), 439–60 (pp. 445–46).

emotionally compelling narrative would foreground Gaveston. It was a text of the latter class – Marlowe’s *Edward II* – which brought the story of Edward’s reign to prominence in the 1590s, and thus cemented Gaveston’s centrality and his role as Edward’s most significant favourite. In politically motivated texts and contexts, the Despencers still retained a prominent position.

Three aspects of Gaveston were conducive to enjoyable, readable narratives, and were therefore popular with writers. Firstly, far more memorable, exciting details and anecdotes were attached to him than to the Despencers: his ostentatious behaviour at Edward’s coronation (or wedding), his pride in vanquishing other nobles at the Wallingford tournament, the insolent nicknames he gave to his fellow nobles, his flight with Edward in 1312, his capture and Edward’s last-minute failed attempts to save him from execution. Secondly, Edward had known Gaveston from his early life, and even the earliest chronicles describe his grief for his death as excessive; this enabled writers more easily to romanticise their relationship. Thirdly, Gaveston was an individual, rather than a member of a family dynasty: as well as being additionally conducive to romanticisation, this fact meant that Gaveston fitted better into the Elizabethan and Jacobean political paradigm of the individual dominant favourite. All of these factors contributed to Gaveston’s historiographical predominance.

As well as illuminating the medieval and early modern historiography of Edward and his favourites, this thesis has additional implications for other related areas of scholarship, three of which I will touch on here. Firstly, I have argued throughout for the importance of several techniques when investigating medieval and early modern historiography: historicising terminology and concepts in key areas; reading both the sources of a given text and the subsequent accounts that it influenced, in order to establish its significance as a historiographical contribution; and reading across genres, taking account of their distinctions but recognising that influence and public reading habits frequently traverse contemporary generic distinctions. In effect, these techniques amount to a threefold contextualisation – contextualising language and concepts in relation to contemporary understanding, contextualising texts in relation to earlier and later works, and contextualising any one genre alongside others – which has proved fruitful for this thesis, and may well yield results in other similar studies.

Secondly, there are aspects of this study which might usefully be considered in relation to the historiography of Richard II. Edward’s great-grandson has been present, often silently, throughout this thesis. The parallels between them – most obviously their

depositions, but also their excessive promotion of and reliance on favourites – were noted by many writers.<sup>5</sup> Representations of Edward intersected directly with those of Richard on at least one occasion: as Darlene Farabee puts it, ‘Other plays of the early modern period, particularly history plays by Shakespeare and his contemporaries, can be considered to be in a critical dialogue with Marlowe’s *Edward II*.<sup>6</sup> In some ways, it seems that Richard’s reputation underwent a parallel historiographical process to that of Edward: his reign was also given a *de casibus* shape, most influentially by its inclusion in the original *Mirror for Magistrates*, and he was also deployed as a political exemplum in very similar contexts. It would therefore be interesting to investigate whether the idea of ‘literary transformation’ could be similarly applied here. Richard did not, however, develop anything like the same reputation as Edward for sexual transgression, notwithstanding one sodomy accusation during his lifetime, accusations of ‘lust’ and ‘lechery’ in the *Mirror for Magistrates*, and Bolingbroke’s hint at sexual relationships with his male favourites in Shakespeare’s *Richard II*.<sup>7</sup> This is an obvious observation, but one that underlines the important role played by the *Brut* in the formation of Edward II’s historiographical reputation: by popularising *The Last Kings of England* and its accusations of ‘lechery’, it cemented sexual transgression as a salient fact about Edward. There was no comparable text for Richard, and therefore no comparable process.

Finally, this thesis allows me to intervene in some existing discussions concerning Marlowe’s *Edward II*, and to draw some additional conclusions. I have deliberately considered Marlowe’s play almost exclusively in the context of other accounts of Edward’s reign, but it is safe to say that this text has attracted more critical attention than all other accounts combined; as such, Marlowe criticism is perhaps the largest area of existing scholarship to which this thesis speaks.

There are several aspects of the play which, I would suggest, might be interpreted differently if they are considered in the context of other accounts of Edward’s reign. As I argued in Chapter 4, the historiographical consensus concerning the penetrative nature of Edward’s murder should be seen as a compelling argument in favour of its being included – and staged – in Marlowe’s play. Furthermore, the play’s moral structure, and its

---

<sup>5</sup> E.g. *Leicester’s Commonwealth*, ed. by D. C. Peck (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1985), p. 138; R. B., *The Unfortunate Court-Favourites of England* (London: for Nath. Crouch, 1695), *passim*; Cary (folio), fol. 2Q2<sup>v</sup>; Robert Howard, *Historical Observations Upon the Reigns of Edward I, II, III, and Richard II* (London: for J. Partridge and M. Gillyflower, 1689), *passim*.

<sup>6</sup> Darlene Farabee, ‘The Critical Backstory: *Edward II*’s Critics in History to 1990’, in Melnikoff, pp. 21–41 (p. 22).

<sup>7</sup> *The Chronicle of Adam Usk, 1377-1421*, ed. by Chris Given-Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 63; ‘[Tragedy 5]’, *Mirror*, pp. 111–18 (ll. 31–40); *Richard II*, III.i.11–15, *Oxford Shakespeare*.

ambivalent shaping of audience sympathies, has been the subject of substantial discussion. Kirk Melnikoff, in the most recent summary of critical approaches to the play, describes it as ‘relentless in its ambiguities and inversions and deeply unsettling in its tragic conclusion’, and as presenting ‘an equivocal portrait of an ardent king amid the internecine politics of a feudal court’.<sup>8</sup> Other critics identify the source of this moral ambivalence as a shift, or split, roughly half way through the play: as early as 1924, John Berdan observed that ‘[to a critic or audience] [t]oday, the action breaks into halves’.<sup>9</sup> Berdan tried to reconcile this apparently catastrophic lack of unity by arguing that Edward’s irresponsible behaviour would not in fact have attracted opposition from an early modern audience owing to his divinely ordained royal status. Sara Munson Deats has interpreted it, instead, as an example of ‘interrogative drama’, which ‘imitat[es] the form of a sophistical debate in which thesis provokes antithesis yet without resolving synthesis’.<sup>10</sup> I would argue that Marlowe’s ‘equivocal’ and ‘ambivalent’ play does result from a shift in sympathies – Paul Kocher is broadly correct to say that Marlowe ‘obtains in the first division of the play a dramatic clash between two parties, both of whom are half wrong and half right, and in the second division a dramatic concentration on pity of the defeated’ – but that this shift can be most convincingly explained in relation to his sources.<sup>11</sup> As Emily Bartels points out, ‘Holinshed seems to switch allegiance several times from the king to the barons to the king’.<sup>12</sup>

The most significant ‘switch’ is unquestionably located around Edward’s deposition, when the narrative voice of Holinshed (and Fleming, in the 1587 edition which Marlowe used) begins to express increasing sympathy towards Edward. This is also the moment at which Holinshed (like Stow) begins to rely on Geoffrey le Baker’s sympathetic chronicle as his main source. It seems likely that this was motivated by two factors: le Baker’s text was by far the most detailed, sensational and emotionally compelling treatment of these events available to Holinshed and Stow, and its representation of Edward’s abject misery facilitates a *de casibus* narrative structure. The shift in Marlowe’s play and its resulting moral ambivalence, then, results from an identical shift in his main sources: a shift with literary motivations.

---

<sup>8</sup> Kirk Melnikoff, ‘Introduction’ in Melnikoff, pp. 1-20 (p. 1). See also David Bevington, *From ‘Mankind’ to Marlowe: Growth of Structure in the Popular Drama of Tudor England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 235; Roger Sales, *Christopher Marlowe* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), p. 132.

<sup>9</sup> John M. Berdan, ‘Marlowe’s *Edward IP*’, *Philological Quarterly*, 3 (1924), 197–207 (p. 200).

<sup>10</sup> Sara Munson Deats, ‘Marlowe’s Interrogative Drama: *Dido*, *Tamburlaine*, *Faustus*, and *Edward IP*’, in *Marlowe’s Empery: Expanding His Critical Contexts*, ed. by Sara Munson Deats and Robert A. Logan (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2002), pp. 107–30 (p. 108).

<sup>11</sup> Paul Kocher, *Christopher Marlowe* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1946), p. 207.

<sup>12</sup> Emily Bartels, *Spectacles of Strangeness: Imperialism, Alienation, and Marlowe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), p. 148.

Any assessment of the significance or impact of Marlowe's play can also be enhanced by considering it in relation to the rest of Edward's historiographical reputation. Some critics have credited Marlowe with innovations which actually belong to chroniclers: it is unfair, for example, to claim that 'Marlowe made a personal drama out of the uncohesive mass of detail which constituted the large chronicles'.<sup>13</sup> He certainly streamlined the narrative he found in his chronicle sources, but those sources are far from uncohesive, and nor are they void of 'personal drama'; if anyone is to be credited with introducing the latter to the historiography of Edward II, it should be Geoffrey le Baker or possibly his source Adam Murimuth. Similarly, it may be fair to say that '*Edward II* is unusual among roughly contemporary history plays in the frequency with which it employs collective designations for [its] nobles' (in the form of 'stage directions and dialogue referring to "nobles", "lords", "barons", "earls and barons" or "peers"'), but it should be noted that this nomenclature is also found in most historical texts.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, we should certainly acknowledge the significant impact of Marlowe on Edward's historiographical reputation. After Marlowe, texts of all genres are significantly more likely to mention sexual transgression and to link this to Gaveston; to romanticise Edward and Gaveston's relationship; and to use the terms 'Ganymede' and 'minion'. This influence must, in part, have resulted from the play's popularity in print, which itself 'might also have been linked to the play's continued presence on the professional stage'.<sup>15</sup> Melnikoff argues that Marlowe's play both 'benefited from' and contributed to the 'currency' of Edward's story in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. I would argue, further, that Marlowe played a large role in creating a climate of enthusiasm for Edward's story in the first place: his play presented that story as emotionally compelling and politically relevant, fostering an appetite for further accounts and creating an environment in which the play then flourished in print and performance. In other words, Marlowe's *Edward II* played a major part in creating its own conditions for success. Political conditions were, clearly, also ripe for the play and the poetry it influenced: as I showed in Chapter 3, Edward's story was perceived by many late Elizabethan and Jacobean subjects to provide a salient parallel for the 'age of overmighty favourites' in which they lived.

Of the numerous critical arguments concerning Marlowe's *Edward II*, perhaps the one that best epitomises the findings of this thesis is Melnikoff's suggestion that it 'came to

---

<sup>13</sup> Maureen Godman, 'Stow's *Summarie*: Source for Marlowe's *Edward II*', *Notes and Queries*, 40 (1993), 160–63 (p. 161).

<sup>14</sup> James Simon, "'Overpeered" and Understated: Conforming Transgressions and *Edward II*', in Melnikoff, pp. 145–73 (p. 147).

<sup>15</sup> Melnikoff, 'Introduction', pp. 3–5.

stand as a successful historical narrative in its own right'.<sup>16</sup> As I have emphasised, Marlowe's play exerted an influence on texts of all genres, and represents one of the most influential contributions to the medieval and early modern historiography of Edward II. As such, it is not only viable but crucial that we think of it as a 'historical narrative'. The most influential texts in the shaping of Edward's historiographical reputation were the *Brut*, Higden's *Polychronicon*, Geoffrey le Baker's *Chronicon*, Thomas Walsingham's *Chronica Maiora*, Fabyan's *New Chronicles*, Holinshed's *Chronicles* and Marlowe's *Edward II*. Without exception, these are long and detailed accounts which supplement the facts of Edward's reign with exciting, emotionally compelling details and crafted narrative structure. The 'literary and historical representations' referred to in my title, then, should be understood not only as indicating the importance of considering multiple genres – chronicles, political writings, drama and poetry – but as indicating dual aspects of writing which can and do coexist within the same text. The formation of Edward II's historiographical reputation in the four centuries after his death was, without question, a literary and historical process.

---

<sup>16</sup> Melnikoff, 'Introduction', p. 4.





# Bibliography

---

## Primary texts

- Aelred of Rievaulx, *Aelred of Rievaulx: Spiritual Friendship*, ed. by Marsha L. Dutton, trans. by Lawrence C. Braceland (Trappist: Cistercian Publications; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2010)
- Alexander Neckam, *Alexandri Neckam de Naturis Rerum Libri Duo*, ed. by Thomas Wright (London: Longman, 1863)
- ‘Annales Londonienses’, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, ed. by William Stubbs, 2 vols (London: Longman, 1882), I, 1–251
- Annales Monastici*, ed. by Henry Richards Luard, 5 vols (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1864)
- ‘Annales Paulini’, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, ed. by William Stubbs, 2 vols (London: Longman, 1882), I, 253–370
- ‘Annals of Bermondsey Abbey’, in *Annales Monastici*, ed. by Henry Richards Luard (London: Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1864), III, 421–88.
- The Anonimale Chronicle, 1307 to 1334: From Brotherton Collection MS 29*, ed. and trans. by Wendy R. Childs and John Taylor (Leeds: Yorkshire Archaeological Society, 1991)
- ‘Anonymi Chronicon Godstovianum’, in *Guilielmi Roperi Vita D. Thomæ Mori*, ed. by Thomas Hearne (Oxford: John Rance, 1716), pp. 180–246, Eighteenth Century Collections Online <<http://0-find.galegroup.com/wam.leeds.ac.uk/ecco/infomark.do?docType=ECCOArticles&tabID=T001&userGroupName=leedsuni&prodId=ECCO&bookId=0131603300&type=getFullCitation&version=1.0&source=gale>> [accessed 1 September 2014]
- An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle*, ed. by Ewald Zettl (London: Oxford University Press, 1935)
- Aquinas, Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, ed. and trans. by Thomas Gilby (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964)
- Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, trans. by Brad Inwood and Raphael Woolf (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)
- *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. by H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library, 73, Rev. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014)
- Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. by Carolyn Hammond, Loeb Classical Library, 26 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014)

- Ayscu, Edward, *A Historie Contayning the Warres, Treaties, Marriages, and Other Occurrents Betweene England and Scotland* (London: G. Eld, 1607), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99836215](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99836215)> [accessed 3 January 2013]
- Bacon, Francis, *The Historie of the Raigne of King Henry the Seventh* (London: W. Stansby for Matthew Lownes, and William Barret, 1622) Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99857404](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99857404)> [accessed 13 November 2015]
- Baker, Richard, *A Chronicle of the Kings of England* (London: Daniel Frere, 1643), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:12021202](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:12021202)> [accessed 1 September 2014]
- Bancroft, John, *King Edward the Third, with the Fall of Mortimer, Earl of March* (London: for J. Hindmarsh, R. Bently, A. Roper, and Randall Taylor, 1691) Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:11902890](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:11902890)> [accessed 18 December 2015]
- Barnfield, Richard, *The Complete Poems*, ed. by George Klawitter (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1990)
- ‘Biblia Latina cum Glossa Ordinaria’, ed. by A. Rusch (Turnhout: Brepols, 1992), in Martin Morard et al. (eds.), *Glossae Sacrae Scripturae Electronicae* (Paris: CNRS-IRHT, 2016) <<http://gloss-e.irht.cnrs.fr/php/livres-liste.php>> [accessed 30 June 2017]
- Biblia Sacra Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, ed. by B. Fischer, I. Gribomont, H. F. D. Sparks, W. Thiele, Robert Weber, and Roger Gryson, 5th edn (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007)
- Bibliorum Sacrorum Cum Glossa Ordinaria Iam Ante Quidem a Strabo Fulgensi* (Venice, 1603) <[http://lollardsociety.org/?page\\_id=409](http://lollardsociety.org/?page_id=409)> [accessed 1 November 2014]
- The Bishop of Carlile’s Speech in Parliament, Concerning Deposing of Princes* (London: n.p., 1679), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99886166](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99886166)> [accessed 5 November 2015]
- Blundeville, Thomas, *The True Order and Methode of Wryting and Reading Hystories* (London: Willyam Seres, [1574]), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99840387](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99840387)> [accessed 13 September 2012]

- Boccaccio, Giovanni, *Amorous Fiammetta: Wherein Is Sette Downe a Catalogue of All an Singular Passions of Love and Jealousie*, trans. by Bartholomew Yong (London: J[ohn] C[harlewood] for Thomas Gubbin and Thomas Newman, 1587), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99838613](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99838613)> [accessed 9 September 2016]
- A Book of British Kings, 1200 B.C.-1399 A.D.: Edited from British Library MSS Harley 3860, Cotton Claudius D. Vii, and Harley 1808*, ed. by A. G. Rigg (Toronto: Published for the Centre for Medieval Studies by the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2000)
- van den Bos, Lambert, *Florus Anglicus: Or an Exact History of England* (London: for Simon Miller, 1656), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99867388](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99867388)> [accessed 3 March 2014]
- Boston, Robert of, 'Chronicon Angliae Per Robertum de Boston', in *Historia Anglicana Scriptores Varii, E Codicibus Manuscriptis Nunc Primum Editi*, ed. by Joseph Sparke, 2 vols (London: Gul. Bowyer, 1723), I, 114–37, Eighteenth Century Collections Online <<http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=leedsuni&tabID=T001&docId=CB129844482&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>> [accessed 22 January 2015]
- Brady, Robert, *The Great Point of Succession Discussed with a Full and Particular Answer to a Late Pamphlet, Intituled, A Brief History of Succession* (London: for H. Rodes, 1681), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:12115532](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:12115532)> [accessed 17 February 2014]
- *A True and Exact History of the Succession of the Crown of England* (London: for Cave Pulleyn, 1681), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:12115506](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:12115506)> [accessed 17 February 2014]
- [Bridlington Chronicle]/'Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvan', ed. by William Stubbs, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, 2 vols (London: Longman, 1882), II, 23–151
- Brooke, Ralph, *A Catalogue and Succession of the Kings, Princes, Dukes, Marquesesses, Earles, and Viscounts of This Realme of England* (London: William Jaggard, 1619), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99842814](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99842814)> [accessed 24 February 2013]

- The Brut, Or, The Chronicles of England*, ed. by F. W. D. Brie, Early English Text Society, 136 (London: Trübner, 1906)
- Burton, Thomas, *Chronica Monasterii de Melsa: A Fundatione Usque Ad Annum 1396*, ed. by E. A. Bond, 3 vols (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1866)
- Caesar, Charles, *Numerus Infaustus* (London: for Ric. Chiswell, 1689), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:12259127](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:12259127)> [accessed 21 February 2016]
- Camden, William, *Britain, or A Chorographical Description of the Most Flourishing Kingdomes, England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the Ilands Adjoyning*, trans. by Philemon Holland (London: Eliot's Court Press, 1610), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99842869](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99842869)> [accessed 14 February 2013]
- Campbell, Lily B., ed., *The Mirror for Magistrates* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938)
- *Parts Added to The Mirror for Magistrates* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1946)
- Capgrave, John, *John Capgrave's Abbreviacion of Cronicles*, ed. by Peter J. Lucas (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Early English Text Society, 1983)
- Cartulary of Oseney Abbey*, ed. by Herbert Edward Salter (Oxford: Clarendon Press for the Oxford Historical Society, 1929)
- Cary, Elizabeth, *The History of the Life, Reign, and Death of Edward II* (London: J. C., 1680), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:12623448](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:12623448)> [accessed 28 February 2016]
- *The History of the Most Unfortunate Prince King Edward II* (London: A. G. and J. P., 1680), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:12029796](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:12029796)> [accessed 8 December 2015]
- Castleford, Thomas, *Castleford's Chronicle: Or the Boke of Brut*, ed. by Caroline D. Eckhardt, Early English Text Society, O.S., 305-306 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)
- Cawdry, Robert, *A Table Alphabeticall* (London: J. R[oberts] for Edmund Weaver, 1604)
- Chaucer, Geoffrey, *The Canterbury Tales*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson and F. N. Robinson, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 288–328

- The Chaworth Roll: A Fourteenth-Century Genealogy of the Kings of England*, ed. by Alixe Bovey, Olivier de Laborderie, and Marigold Anne Norbye (London: Sam Fogg, 2005)
- 'Les Choses Horribles Contenu en une Lettre Envoyée à Henry de Valois par un Enfant de Paris', in *Variétés Historiques et Littéraires: Recueil de Pièces Volantes Rares et Curieuses en Prose et en Vers*, ed. by Édouard Fournier (Paris: Pagnerre, 1855), VI, 201–207, Gallica <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k27809c>> [accessed 1 April 2014]
- The Chronicle of Lanercost, 1272-1346*, ed. and trans. by Herbert Maxwell (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1913)
- A Chronicle of London, from 1089 to 1483*, ed. by Edward Tyrell and Nicholas Harris Nicolas (Felinfach: Llanerch, 1995)
- Chronicles of London*, ed. by Charles Lethbridge Kingsford (Dursley: Alan Sutton, 1977)
- Chronicles of the Mayors and Sheriffs of London, A.D. 1188 to A.D. 1274; The French Chronicle of London, A.D. 1259 to A.D. 1343*, ed. by H. T. Riley (London: Trübner, 1863)
- Chronicon Abbatie de Parco Lude: The Chronicle of Louth Park Abbey*, ed. by E. Venables, trans. by A. R. Maddison, Publications of the Lincolnshire Record Society, 1 (Horncastle, 1891)
- Chronicon de Lanercost*, ed. by Joseph Stevenson (Edinburgh: Maitland Club, 1839)
- Churchill, Winston, *Divi Britannici* (London: Tho. Roycroft, 1675), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:11953408](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:11953408)> [accessed 30 June 2017]
- Clapham, John, *Elizabeth of England: Certain Observations Concerning the Life and Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. by Evelyn Plummer Read and Conyers Read (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1951)
- Coke, Edward, *The History of the Successions of the Kings of England* (London: for Thomas Simmons ... and John Kidgel, 1682), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:12031816](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:12031816)> [accessed 14 March 2014]
- Coke, Roger, *A Detection of the Court and State of England During the Four Last Reigns, and the Inter-Regnum* (London: n.p., 1694), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:12117577](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:12117577)> [accessed 19 February 2016]
- 'Continuato Historiae de Episcopis Wigornensibus', in *Anglia Sacra*, ed. by Henry Wharton (London: Richard Chiswel, 1691), fols. 3Y2<sup>r</sup> – 3Z2<sup>v</sup>, Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:13196723](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:13196723)> [accessed 21 May 2014]
- Croniques de London*, ed. by G. J. Aungier (London: Camden Society, 1844)

- Daniel, Samuel, *The Civile Wars Betweene the Howses of Lancaster and Yorke* (London: [Humphrey Lownes for] Simon Waterstonne, 1609)
- *The Collection of the Historie of England* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1618), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99842987](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99842987)> [accessed 28 April 2013]
- Dekker, Thomas, *The Seven Deadly Sinnes of London* (London: E[dward] A[l]lde and S. Stafford] for Nathaniel Butter, 1606), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99840999](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99840999)> [accessed 13 March 2017]
- Deloney, Thomas, *Strange Histories, of Kings, Princes, Dukes, Earles, Lords, Ladies, Knights, and Gentlemen* (London: by [i.e. for] William Barley, 1602), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99841011](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99841011)> [accessed 1 March 2016]
- Dene, William, ‘Historia Roffensis’, in *Anglia Sacra*, ed. by Henry Wharton (London: Richard Chiswel, 1691), fols. 2Z2<sup>v</sup> – 3C1<sup>r</sup>, Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:13196723](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:13196723)> [accessed 21 May 2014]
- Le Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française* (Paris: Jean Baptiste Coignard, 1694)
- Donne, John, *The Poems of John Donne*, ed. by Robin Robbins (Harlow: Pearson, 2008)
- Drayton, Michael, ‘The Barons Warres, in the Reigne of Edward the Second’, in *Works*, ed. by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931), II, 9–128
- ‘Englands Heroicall Epistles’, in *Works*, ed. by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931), II, 129–308
- ‘The Legend of Pierce Gaveston’, in *Works*, ed. by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931), II, 431–50
- ‘Mortimeriados’, in *Works*, ed. by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931), I, 305–92
- ‘Peirs Gaveston’, in *Works*, ed. by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931), I, 157–208
- ‘Poly-Olbion’, in *Works*, ed. by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931), IV
- *Works*, ed. by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931)
- Drummond, William, ‘For the Kinge’, in *The Poetical Works of William Drummond of Hawthornden*, ed. by Leon Emile Kastner, 2 vols (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1913), I, 296–99

- Du Bartas, Guillaume de Salluste, *The Divine Weeks and Works of Guillaume de Saluste, Sieur Du Bartas*, ed. by Susan Snyder, trans. by Joshua Sylvester (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979)
- Eglisam, George, *The Forerunner of Revenge Upon the Duke of Buckingham* (Frankfurt: n.p., 1626), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99836101](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99836101)> [accessed 16 August 2013]
- Erasmus, Desiderius, *Collected Works of Erasmus, Vol. 29: Literary and Educational Writings*, 7, ed. by Elaine Fantham and Erika Rummel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989)
- Fabyan, Robert, *Prima Pars Cronecarum* (London: Richard Pynson, 1516), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99845619](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99845619)> [accessed 10 May 2015]
- Fontaine, Charles, *La Fontaine Damours et La Description* (Rouen: pour Pierre Prevost, 1540)
- Foxe, John, *Actes and Monuments of These Latter and Perillous Dayes Touching Matters of the Church* (London: John Day, 1563), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99857159](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99857159)> [accessed 13 March 2013]
- *The First Volume of the Ecclesiasticall History Contaynyng the Actes and Monumentes of Thynges Passed in Every Kynges Tyme in This Realme, Especially in the Church of England Principally to Be Noted* (London: John Daye, 1570), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:24114416](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:24114416)> [accessed 13 March 2013]
- Froissart, Jean, *Chronicles*, trans. by Geoffrey Brereton (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968)
- *Here Begynneth the First Volum of Sir Johan Froyssart of the Cronycles*, trans. by John Bourchier Lord Berners (London: Richarde Pynson, 1523)
- *Le premier [-le quart] Volume de Froissart des Croniques* (Paris: pour Antoine Vérard, 1499), Gallica <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8626792m>> [accessed 3 April 2014]
- *Oeuvres de Froissart: Chroniques*, ed. by J. Kervyn de Lettenhove, 25 vols (Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1967)
- *The Online Froissart*, ed. by Peter Ainsworth and Godfried Croenen, version 1.5 (Sheffield: HRIOOnline, 2013) <<http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/onlinefroissart>> [accessed 4 April 2014]

- Furetière, Antoine, *Dictionaire Universel* (The Hague; Rotterdam: Arnout & Renier Leers, 1690)
- Galbraith, V. H., 'Extracts from the *Historia Aurea* and a French *Brut* (1317-47)', *English Historical Review*, 43 (1928), 203–17 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/552003>> [accessed 17 November 2013]
- Grafton, Richard, *An Abridgement of the Chronicles of England* (London: Richard Tottyll, 1562), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99854952](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99854952)> [accessed 23 November 2014]
- *A Chronicle at Large and Meere History of the Affayres of Englande and Kinges of the Same* (London: Henry Denham, 1569), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99856395](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99856395)> [accessed 17 December 2015]
- Grahame, Simion, *The Anatomie of Humors* (Edinburgh: Thomas Finlason, 1609) Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99839139](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99839139)> [accessed 19 October 2016]
- Gray, Thomas, *Scalacronica, 1272-1363*, ed. and trans. by Andy King (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005)
- The Great Chronicle of London*, ed. by A. H. Thomas and I. D. Thornley (London: G. W. Jones, 1938)
- Guisborough, Walter of, *Chronicon Domini Walteri de Hemingburgh, Vulgo Hemingford Nuncipati*, ed. by Hans Claude Hamilton (London: Sumptibus Societati, 1848)
- *The Chronicle of Walter of Guisborough*, ed. by Harry Rothwell (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1957)
- G. W., *The Faithful Analist: Or, the Epitome of the English History* (London: for W. Gilbertson, 1660), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:64551285](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:64551285)> [accessed 24 February 2013]
- Hall, Edward, *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustrate Famelies of Lancastre [and] Yorke* (London: Richard Grafton, 1548), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99856251](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99856251)> [accessed 23 November 2014]



- Hardyng, John, *The Chronicle of Jhon Hardyng* (London: Richard Grafton, 1543), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99839519](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99839519)> [accessed 14 February 2013]
- *The Chronicle of John Hardyng*, ed. by Henry Ellis (London: G. Woodfall for F. C. Rivington; T. Payne; Wilkie and Robinson; Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown; Caddell and Davies; J. Mawman; and R. H. Evans, 1812)
- *John Hardyng Chronicle: Edited from British Library MS Lansdowne 204*, ed. by Sarah Peverley and James Simpson (Kalamazoo: Published for TEAMS in association with the University of Rochester by Medieval Institute Publications, 1999)
- Haskins, George L., 'A Chronicle of the Civil Wars of Edward II', *Speculum*, 14 (1939), 73–81 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2853841>> [accessed 6 February 2014]
- Hayward, John, *An Answer to the First Part of a Certain Conference, Concerning Succession, Published Not Long Since Under the Name of R. Dolman* (London: [by Eliot's Court Press, R. Bradock, P. Short, T. Snodham, R. Field, and J. Harrison] for Simon Waterson, and Cuthbert Burbie, 1603), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99839648](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99839648)> [accessed 23 November 2014]
- Heath, James, *Englands Chronicle* (London: for Benj. Crayle, N. Bodington, and G. Conyer, 1689), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:11147192](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:11147192)> [accessed 23 February 2013]
- Heylyn, Peter, *Cosmographie* (London: for Henry Seile, 1652), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:12138883](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:12138883)> [accessed 20 July 2014]
- Heywood, Thomas, *A Chronographicall History of All the Kings and Memorable Passages of This Kingdome* (London: J. Okes, 1641), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:19540181](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:19540181)> [accessed 10 May 2015]
- *Troia Britanica: Or, Great Britaines Troy* (London: W. Jaggard, 1609), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99854936](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99854936)> [accessed 27 February 2013]
- Higden, Ranulf, *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden Monachi Cestrensis: Together with the English Translations of John Trevisa and of an Unknown Writer of the Fifteenth Century*, ed. by Joseph Rawson Lumby (London: Longman, 1865)

- *Prolicionycion [sic]*, trans. by John Trevisa ([Westminster: William Caxton, after 2 July 1482])
- Hingeston-Randolph, F. C., ed., *The Register of John de Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter (A.D. 1327-1369)* (London: Bell, 1894)
- Histoire Tragique et Memorable, de Pierre de Gaverston* (Paris: n.p., 1588), Gallica  
<<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k79569x>> [accessed 31 March 2014]
- The Historical Collections of a Citizen of London in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century*, ed. by James Gairnder (London: Camden Society, 1876)
- Holinshed, Raphael, 'Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland', at *The Holinsbed Project*, ed. by Paulina Kewes, Ian W. Archer, Felicity Heal and Henry Summerson (first published 1577 and 1587) <<http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/>> [accessed 11 April 2014]
- Howard, Robert, *Historical Observations Upon the Reigns of Edward I, II, III, and Richard II with Remarks Upon Their Faithful Counsellors and False Favourites* (London: for J. Partridge and M. Gillyflower, 1689), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:15586191](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:15586191)> [accessed 27 February 2013]
- Howell, William, *Medulla Historiae Anglicanae* (London: for Abel Swalle, 1679), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:19569833](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:19569833)> [accessed 30 April 2014]
- Hubert, Francis, *The Deplorable Life and Death of Edward the Second, King of England* (London: [Nicholas Okes] for Roger Michell, 1628), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99839996](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99839996)> [accessed 2 March 2016]
- 'The Historie of Edward the Second, Surnamed Carnarvan', in *The Poems of Sir Francis Hubert*, ed. by Bernard Mellor ([Hong Kong]: Hong Kong University Press, 1961), pp. 4–171
- Huntingdon, Henry of, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. and trans. by Diana E. Greenway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996)
- Knighton, Henry, *Chronicon Henrici Knighton, Vel Cnitthon, Monachi Leycestrensis*, ed. by J. Rawson Lumby (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1889)
- 'Lament of Edward II', in *Anglo-Norman Political Songs*, ed. and trans. by Isabel S. T. Aspin, Anglo-Norman Texts 11 (Oxford: Published for the Anglo-Norman Text Society by Basil Blackwell, 1953), pp. 93–102

- Lanquet, Thomas, and Thomas Cooper, *An Epitome of Chronicles* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1549), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99843910](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99843910)> [accessed 1 September 2014]
- *Coopers Chronicle* (London: In the house late Thomas Berthelettes, 1560), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99843929](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99843929)> [accessed 27 February 2013]
- Le Baker, Geoffrey, *The Chronicle of Geoffrey le Baker*, ed. by Richard Barber, trans. by David Preest (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012)
- *Chronicon Galfridi le Baker de Snynebroke*, ed. by E. M. Thompson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889)
- ‘Vita Et Mors Edwardi Secundi’, in *Anglica, Normannica, Hibernica, Cambrica, a Veteribus Scripta*, ed. by William Camden (Frankfurt: Claudii Marnii, 1603)
- Le Bel, Jean, *Chronique de Jean Le Bel*, ed. by Jules Marie Édouard Viard and Eugène Déprez, 2 vols (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1904)
- *The True Chronicles of Jean Le Bel, 1290-1360*, trans. by Nigel Bryant (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011)
- Leicester's Commonwealth: The Copy of a Letter Written by a Master of Art of Cambridge (1584) and Related Documents*, ed. by D. C. Peck (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1985)
- Leigh, Edward, *Choice Observations of All the Kings of England* (London: for Joseph Cranford, 1661), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:12425741](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:12425741)> [accessed 27 February 2013]
- L'Estoile, Pierre de, *Registre-Journal Du Règne de Henri III*, ed. by Madeleine Lazard and Gilbert Schrenck, 6 vols (Geneva: Droz, 1992)
- Lettre d'un Gentil-Homme Catholique Apostolicque & Romain & vray François & fidelle Serviteur du Roy à ung sien Amy Sur l'Histoire de Pierre de Gaverston* (Rheims: par Jehan de Foigny avec permission de Monseigneur le cardinal de Guise, 1588), Gallica <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k73335m>> [accessed 30 March 2017]
- Lettre Missive en Forme de Responce, à la Replique de l'Antigaverston* (Reims: par Jean de Foigny, imprimeur de M. le cardinal de Guyse, 1588), Gallica <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k73336z>> [accessed 30 March 2017]
- Le Livre de Reis de Brittanie E Le Livre de Reis de Engleterre*, ed. by John Glover (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1865)

- Lydgate, John, *Lydgate's Fall of Princes*, ed. by Henry Bergen (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1923)
- Lyly, John, *The Woman in the Moone* (London: [G. Simson] for William Jones, 1597), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99845392](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99845392)> [accessed 9 September 2016]
- Major, John, *A History of Greater Britain* (Edinburgh: Printed at the University Press by T. and A. Constable for the Scottish History Society, 1892)
- Malmesbury, Thomas of, *Eulogium (Historiarum Sive Temporis)*, ed. by Frank Scott Haydon (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, and Roberts, 1858)
- Marlowe, Christopher, *Dido Queen of Carthage: and, The Massacre at Paris*, ed. by H. J. Oliver (Methuen, 1968)
- *Edward the Second*, ed. by Charles R. Forker (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995)
- *The Troublesome Raigne and Lamentable Death of Edward the Second, King of England, with the Tragical Fall of Proud Mortimer* (London: R. Robinson, 1594), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99856187](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99856187)> [accessed 11 September 2016]
- Marston, John, *The Scourge of Villanie: Three Bookes of Satyres* (London: J. R., 1598), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99840362](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99840362)> [accessed 30 March 2014]
- Martyn, William, *The Historie, and Lives, of the Kings of England* (London: William Stansby, 1615), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99849485](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99849485)> [accessed 28 November 2014]
- May, Thomas, *The Victorious Reigne of King Edward the Third* (London: [John Beale?] for T. Walkley, and B. Fisher, 1635), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99847798](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99847798)> [accessed 8 July 2015]
- Meriton, George, *Anglorum Gesta* (London: T. Dawks, 1675), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:12678106](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:12678106)> [accessed 24 February 2013]

- Munday, Anthony, *A Briefe Chronicle* (London: W. Jaggard, 1611), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99848204](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99848204)> [accessed 14 February 2013]
- Murimuth, Adam, and Robert of Avesbury, *Adæ Murimuth Continuatio Chronicarum; Robertus de Avesbury De Gestis Mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii*, ed. by E. M. Thompson (London: Printed for H.M.S.O., by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1889)
- Mychell, John, *A Breviat Cronicle Contaynynge All the Kinges from Brute to This Daye* (Canterbury: John Mychell, 1552), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:23708212](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:23708212)> [accessed 27 February 2013]
- The Myracles of Oure Lady: Ed. from Wynkyn de Worde's Edition*, ed. by Peter Whiteford (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsverlag, 1990)
- Naunton, Robert, *Fragmenta Regalia, Or, Observations on the Late Queen Elizabeth, Her Times and Favorits* (London: n.p., 1641), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:13127075](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:13127075)> [accessed 28 February 2014]
- Niccols, Richard, *The Beggars Ape* (London: B[ernard] A[lsop] and T. Fawcet. for L. Chapman, 1627), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99845760](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99845760)> [accessed 8 July 2015]
- *The Cuckow* (London: F[elix] K[ingston], 1607), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99848439](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99848439)> [accessed 8 July 2015]
- *A Mirour for Magistrates...Newly Enlarged with a Last Part, Called A Winter Nights Vision* (London: Felix Kyngston, 1610), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99839805](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99839805)> [accessed 29 February 2016]
- *Selected Poems*, ed. by Glyn Pursglove (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1992)
- Nicolai Triveti Annalium Continuatio* (Oxford: e Theatro Sheldoniano, 1722), Eighteenth Century Collections Online <<http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/ecco/infomark.do?docType=ECCOArticles&tabID=T001&userGroupName=leedsuni&prodId=ECCO&bookId=0761200300&type=getFullCitation&version=1.0&source=gale>> [accessed 28 February 2015]
- ‘On the Evil Times of Edward II: A New Version from MS Bodley 48’, ed. by Thomas Ross, *Anglia: Journal of English Philology*, 75 (1957), 173–93

- ‘On the Kings Breaking His Confirmation of the Magna Charta’, in *Anglo-Norman Political Songs*, ed. by Isabel S. T. Aspin, Anglo-Norman Texts 11 (Oxford: Published for the Anglo-Norman Text Society by Basil Blackwell, 1953), pp. 56-66
- ‘On the King’s Breaking His Confirmation of Magna Charta’, in *The Political Songs of England: From the Reign of John to that of Edward II*, ed. by Thomas Wright (Edinburgh: Privately printed, 1884), pp. 253–58
- Otterbourne, Thomas, *Duo Rerum Anglicarum Scriptores Veteres, Viz: Thomas Otterbourne et Johannes Whethamstede*, ed. by Thomas Hearne, 2 vols (Oxford: e Theatro Sheldoniano, 1733), I, Eighteenth Century Collections Online <<http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=leedsuni&tabID=T001&docId=CW3301181130&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>> [accessed 10 February 2014]
- Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ed. by George Patrick Goold, trans. by Frank Justus Miller, Loeb Classical Library, 42–43 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014)
- Payne, John, *Royall Exchange* (Harlem: Gulis Romaen, 1597), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99838310](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99838310)> [accessed 11 March 2014]
- Peele, George, *The Honour of the Garter* (London: Widdowe Charlewood for John Busbie, 1593), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99845940](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99845940)> [accessed 17 December 2015]
- The People Informed of Their Oppressors and Oppressions* (London: n.p., 1648), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99864717](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99864717)> [accessed 25 April 2016]
- Persons, Robert, *An Advertisement Written to a Secretarie of My L. Treasurers of England, by an Inglishe Intelligencer* ([Antwerp]: n.p., 1592), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99856866](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99856866)> [accessed 5 February 2016]
- *A Conference About the Next Succession to the Crown of England* ([n.p.]: Reprinted at N. with license, 1681), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:15746532](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:15746532)> [accessed 5 February 2016]

- A Pious and Learned Speech Delivered in the High Court of Parliament, 1. H. 4. by Thomas Mercks Then Bishop of Carlile* (London: printed for N. V. and J. B., 1642), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99859467](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99859467)> [accessed 5 November 2015]
- A Poem on the Times of Edward the Second*, ed. by Charles Hardwick (London: Percy Society, 1849)
- 'The Prophecy of John of Bridlington', in *Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History, Composed during the Period from the Accession of Edw. III. to that of Ric. III.*, ed. by Thomas Wright (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1859), pp. 123–215.
- Purchas, Samuel, *Purchas His Pilgrimage* (London: William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1613), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99857093](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99857093)> [accessed 5 November 2014]
- R. B., *Admirable Curiosities, Rarities, & Wonders in England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London: Tho. Snowden for Nath. Crouch, 1682), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:12259641](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:12259641)> [accessed 17 March 2017]
- *England's Monarchs* (London: for Nath. Crouch, 1685), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:12259654](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:12259654)> [accessed 17 March 2017]
- *The Unfortunate Court-Favourites of England* (London: for Nath. Crouch, 1695), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:12259744](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:12259744)> [accessed 17 March 2017]
- Rainolds, John, *Th'Overthrow of Stage-Playes* ([Middelburg: Richard Schilders], 1599)
- Rastell, John, *The Pastyme of People* (London: John Rastell, 1530), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99847134](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99847134)> [accessed 30 April 2014]
- Reading, John of, *Chronica Johannis de Reading et anonymi Cantuariensis, 1346-1367*, ed. by James Tait and Stephen Birchington (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1914)
- Reading, Robert of, *Flores Historiarum*, ed. by Henry Richards Luard, 3 vols (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1890), III
- Replique à l'Antigaverston, Ou Responce Faicte à L'histoire de Gaverston, Par Le Duc d'Espemon* (n.p., 1588), Gallica <<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k73368k>> [accessed 1 April 2014]

- Responce a l'Antigaverston de Nogaret* (n.p., 1588), Gallica  
<<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k73369x>> [accessed 31 March 2014]
- Ricart, Robert, *The Maire of Bristowe Is Kalendar*, ed. by Lucy Toulmin Smith ([Westminster]: Printed for the Camden Society, 1872)
- Richardson, Gabriel, *Of the State of Europe* (Oxford: John Lichfield, 1627), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99851376](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99851376)> [accessed 24 February 2013]
- Richelet, Pierre, *Dictionnaire François* (Geneva: chez Jean Herman Widerhold, 1688)
- Rishanger, William, *Johannis de Trokelowe, et Henrici de Blanforde, Monachorum S. Albani, Necnon Quorundam Anonymorum, Chronica et Annales*, ed. by H. T. Riley (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1866)
- Robbins, R. H. (ed.), *Historical Poems of the XIV and XV Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959)
- Roche, Robert, *Eustathia, or the Constancie of Susanna* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1599), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99847301](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99847301)> [accessed 5 May 2017]
- Rous, John, *Joannis Rossi Antiquarii Warwicensis Historia Regum Angliæ*, ed. by Thomas Hearne, 2nd edn (Oxford: e Theatro Sheldoniano, 1745), Eighteenth Century Collections Online <<http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/ecco/infomark.do?docType=ECCOArticles&tabID=T001&userGroupName=leedsuni&prodId=ECCO&bookId=1236600600&type=getFullCitation&version=1.0&source=gale>> [accessed 3 February 2014]
- Sandford, Francis, *A Genealogical History of the Kings of England, and Monarchs of Great Britain* (London: Tho. Newcomb, 1677), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:11904464](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:11904464)> [accessed 1 December 2014]
- Shakespeare, William, 'The History of Henry the Fourth [part One]', in *The Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley W. Wells (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)
- 'The Life of Henry the Fifth', in *The Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley W. Wells (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)
- 'The Most Excellent and Lamentable Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet', in *The Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley W. Wells (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)
- 'The Taming of the Shrew', in *The Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley W. Wells (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)



- ‘The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark’, in *The Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley W. Wells (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)
- ‘The Tragedy of King Richard the Second’, in *The Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley W. Wells (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)
- ‘The Tragedy of Othello the Moor of Venice’, in *The Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley W. Wells (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)
- ‘Troilus and Cressida’, in *The Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley W. Wells (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)
- ‘The Winter’s Tale’, in *The Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley W. Wells (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)
- Slatyer, William, *The History of Great Britanie* (London: W. Stansby for Rich. Meighen, 1621), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99852629](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99852629)> [accessed 24 February 2013]
- Somers, John, *A Brief History of the Succession* ([London], 1681), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:11910698](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:11910698)> [accessed 26 February 2017]
- ‘Songs on the Death of Peter de Gaveston’, in *The Political Songs of England: From the Reign of John to that of Edward II*, ed. and trans. by Thomas Wright (Edinburgh: Privately printed, 1884), pp. 258–61.
- Speed, John, *The History of Great Britaine* (London: William Hall and John Beale, 1611), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99853146](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99853146)> [accessed 6 June 2017]
- Spenser, Edmund, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. by Thomas P. Roche and C. Patrick O’Donnell (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978)
- *The Shepheardes Calender* (London: Hugh Singleton, 1579), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99846639](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99846639)> [accessed 6 April 2013]
- Stevenson, Matthew, *Florus Britannicus, or, An Exact Epitome of the History of England* (London: M. S., 1662), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:12728916](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:12728916)> [accessed 16 June 2013]

- Stow, John, *The Annales of England* (London: Ralfe Newbery and Eliot's Court Press, 1592), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99853083](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99853083)> [accessed 18 March 2013]
- *The Chronicles of England* (London: Henry Bynneman, 1580), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99852802](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99852802)> [accessed 3 December 2013]
- *A Summarie of Englyshe Chronicles* (London: Thomas Marsh, 1565), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99853071](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99853071)> [accessed 9 February 2013]
- Talbot, Thomas, *A Booke, Containing the True Portraiture of the Countenances and Attires of the Kings of England* (London: [R. Field for] John de Beanchesne, 1597), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99836071](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99836071)> [accessed 29 January 2014]
- Taylor, John, *A Briefe Remembrance of All the English Monarchs* (London: George Eld, for Henry Gosson, 1618), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99838226](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99838226)> [accessed 28 March 2013]
- *A Memorial of All the English Monarchs* (London: [By Nicholas Okes], 1622), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99853431](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99853431)> [accessed 28 March 2013]
- This Is the Cronycle of All the Kyng[es] Names That Have Ben in Englande* (London: Rychard Pynson, 1518), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:24383412](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:24383412)> [accessed 29 March 2013]
- Thomas of Woodstock, Or, Richard the Second, Part One*, ed. by Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002)
- Three Fifteenth-Century Chronicles*, Camden New Series, v. 28 ed. by James Gairnder (London: Camden Society, 1880)
- Trevisa, John, 'Dialogue Between the Lord and the Clerk on Translation (extract); Epistle to Thomas, Lord Berkeley, on the Translation of Higden's Polychronicon', in *The Idea of the Vernacular: An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory, 1280-1520*, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), pp. 130–38

- A True Relation of the Manner of the Deposing of King Edward II Together with the Articles Which Were Exhibited Against Him in Parliament: As Also, An Exact Account of the Proceedings and Articles against King Richard II and the Manner of His Deposition and Resignation* (London: Richard Baldwin, 1689), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:13804287](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:13804287)> [accessed 27 April 2016]
- Tynemouth, John of, *Historia Aurea of John of Tynemouth* (Lambeth Palace Library MSS 10-12 [microfilm], 1347)
- Usk, Adam, *The Chronicle of Adam Usk, 1377-1421*, ed. and trans. by Chris Given-Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997)
- Vergil, Polydore, *Anglica Historia (1555 Version)*, trans. by Dana F. Sutton, 2005 <<http://philological.bham.ac.uk/polverg/>> [accessed 21 January 2015]
- Verstegan, Richard, *A Declaration of the True Causes of the Great Troubles, Presupposed to Be Intended Against the Realme of England* ([Antwerp: J. Trognesium?], 1592), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99836986](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99836986)> [accessed 5 February 2016]
- Vita Edwardi Secundi*, ed. and trans. by Wendy R. Childs and Noël Denholm-Young (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005)
- Walsingham, Thomas, *Historia Brevis Thomae Walsingham [Chronica Maiora]* (London: Henry Binneman, 1574), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99853301](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99853301)> [accessed 26 May 2014]
- *Ypodigma Neustriae Vel Normanniae*, ed. by Matthew Parker (London: John Day, 1574), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99853306](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99853306)> [accessed 29 January 2013]
- Warner, William, *The First and Second Parts of Albions England* (London: Thomas Orwin, for Thomas Cadman, 1589), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99854782](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99854782)> [accessed 28 April 2016]
- Weldon, Anthony, *A Cat May Look Upon a King* (London: for William Roybould, 1652), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99868394](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99868394)> [accessed 16 November 2013]

- Wentworth, Peter, *A Pithie Exhortation to Her Majestie for Establishing Her Successor to the Crowne* ([Edinburgh]: [Robert Waldegrave], 1598), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:99854923](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99854923)> [accessed 24 February 2017]
- Whittlesey, Walter of, 'Walteri de Whittlesey Historia Coenobii Burgensis', in *Historia Anglicanae Scriptores Varii, E Codicibus Manuscriptis Nunc Primum Editi*, ed. by Joseph Sparke, 2 vols (London: Gul. Bowyer, 1723), II, 125–216, Eighteenth Century Collections Online <<http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=leedsuni&tabID=T001&docId=CB129844482&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>> [accessed 22 January 2015]
- 'Wilhelmi Wyrcester Anekdotia Quaedam Alia Historica', in *Liber Niger Scaccarii, Nec Non Wilhelmi Worcestrii Annales Rerum Anglicarum*, ed. by Thomas Hearne, 2 vols (London: W. and J. Richardson, 1771), II, 522–32, Eighteenth Century Collections Online <<http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/ecco/infomark.do?docType=ECCOArticles&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=ECCO&tabID=T001&type=multipage&version=1.0&userGroupName=leedsuni&docId=CW3301881510&contentSet=ECCOArticles&relevancePageBatch=CW101881509&source=gale>> [accessed 1 September 2014]
- 'Wilhelmi Wyrcester Annales Rerum Anglicarum', in *Liber Niger Scaccarii, Nec Non Wilhelmi Worcestrii Annales Rerum Anglicarum*, ed. by Thomas Hearne, 2 vols (London: W. and J. Richardson, 1771), II, 424–521, Eighteenth Century Collections Online <<http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/ecco/infomark.do?docType=ECCOArticles&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=ECCO&tabID=T001&type=multipage&version=1.0&userGroupName=leedsuni&docId=CW3301881510&contentSet=ECCOArticles&relevancePageBatch=CW101881509&source=gale>> [accessed 1 September 2014]
- Wotton, Henry, Sir, *A Short View of the Life and Death of George Villers, Duke of Buckingham* (London: for William Sheares, 1642), Early English Books Online <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:citation:12738322](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:12738322)> [accessed 3 May 2013]
- Wright, Thomas, ed., *Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History, Composed during the Period from the Accession of Edw. III. to that of Ric. III* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1859)

## Secondary texts

- Adams, Simon, *Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002)
- Allen, Don Cameron, 'Renaissance Remedies for Fortune: Marlowe and the "Fortunati"', *Studies in Philology*, 38 (1941), 188–97 <<http://www.jstor.org/wam.leeds.ac.uk/stable/4172524>> [accessed 3 June 2016]
- Altman, Joel B., *The Tudor Play of Mind: Rhetorical Inquiry and the Development of Elizabethan Drama* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1978)
- Anderson, Thomas Page, *Performing Early Modern Trauma from Shakespeare to Milton* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006)
- 'Surpassing the King's Two Bodies: The Politics of Staging the Royal Effigy in Marlowe's *Edward IP*', *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 32 (2014), 585–611 <DOI: 10.1353/shb.2014.0072>
- Apps, Lara, and Andrew Gow, eds, *Male Witches in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003)
- Armstrong, W. A., 'The Elizabethan Conception of the Tyrant', *The Review of English Studies*, 22 (1946), 161–81 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/508913>> [accessed 1 June 2015]
- Atwood, Emma Katherine, "'All Places Are Alike": Marlowe's *Edward II* and English Spatial Imagination', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 43 (2013), 49–70 <DOI: 10.1215/10829636-1902540>
- Auty, Robert, *Lexikon Des Mittelalters* (Munich: Artemis, 1980)
- Axton, Marie, *The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977)
- Bailey, Amanda, *Flaunting: Style and the Subversive Male Body in Renaissance England* (Toronto; London: University of Toronto Press, 2007)
- Bailey, Michael, 'From Sorcery to Witchcraft: Clerical Conceptions of Magic in the Later Middle Ages', *Speculum*, 76 (2001), 960–90 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2903617>> [accessed 18 November 2012]
- Baines, Barbara, 'Sexual Polarity in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe', *Ball State University Forum*, 23 (1982), 3–17
- Bakeless, John, *The Tragical History of Christopher Marlowe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942)
- Bartels, Emily, *Spectacles of Strangeness: Imperialism, Alienation, and Marlowe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993)

- Bartels, Emily, and Emma Smith, eds, *Christopher Marlowe in Context* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013)
- Beer, Barrett L., *Tudor England Observed: The World of John Stow* (Thrupp: Sutton Publishing, 1998)
- Belsey, Catherine, 'Desire's Excess and the English Renaissance Theatre: *Edward II*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Othello*', in *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, ed. by Susan Zimmerman (New York; London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 84–102
- Belt, Debra, 'Anti-Theatricalism and Rhetoric in Marlowe's *Edward IP*', *English Literary Renaissance*, 21 (1991), 134–60 <DOI: 10.1111/j.1475-6757.1991.tb01023.x>
- Benbow, R. Mark, 'The Providential Theory of Historical Causation in Holinshed's *Chronicles: 1577 and 1587*', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 1 (1959), 264–76 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40753545>> [accessed 13 September 2013]
- Bennett, Kate, 'Baldock's "Gentrie": Social Climbing in *Edward IP*', *Notes and Queries*, 44 (1997), 483–84
- Berdan, John M., 'Marlowe's *Edward IP*', *Philological Quarterly*, 3 (1924), 197–207 <<http://0-search.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/docview/1290875424?accountid=14664>> [accessed 21 December 2015]
- Betteridge, Tom (ed.), *Sodomy in Early Modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002)
- Bevington, David, *From 'Mankind' to Marlowe: Growth of Structure in the Popular Drama of Tudor England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962)
- Bevington, David, and James Shapiro, "'What Are Kings, When Regiment Is Gone?": The Decay of Ceremony in *Edward IP*', in *'A Poet and a Filthy Play-Maker': New Essays on Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by Kenneth Friedenreich, Roma Gill, and Constance B. Kuriyama (New York: AMS Press, 1988), pp. 263–78
- Bianco, Marcie, 'To Sodomize a Nation: *Edward II*, Ireland, and the Threat of Penetration', *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 2007, 1–21 <<http://purl.oclc.org/emls/si-16/bianedii.htm>> [accessed 21 December 2015]
- Blackstone, William, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 8th edn, 4 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1778), The Making of the Modern World <<http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/mome/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=MOM&userGroupName=leedsuni&tabID=T001&docId=U3601803051&type=multimult&contentSet=MOMEArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>> [accessed 27 April 2016]
- Boyette, Purvis E., 'Wanton Humour and Wanton Poets: Homosexuality in Marlowe's *Edward IP*', *Tulane Studies in English*, 22 (1977), 33–50

- Brackett, Virginia, 'Elizabeth Cary, Drayton, and Edward II', *Notes and Queries*, 41 (1994), 517–19
- Bray, Alan, 'Homosexuality and the Signs of Male Friendship in Elizabethan England', in *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. by Jonathan Goldberg (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), pp. 40–61
- *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*, Morningside edn (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995)
- Bredbeck, Gregory W., *Sodomy and Interpretation: Marlowe to Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991)
- Bright, Curtis, *Surveillance, Militarism and Drama in the Elizabethan Era* (London: Macmillan, 1996)
- Brie, F. W. D., *Geschichte und Quellen der Mittelenglischen Prosachronik The Brute of England oder The Chronicles of England* (Marburg: N. G. Elwert, 1905)
- Briggs, Julia, 'Marlowe's *Massacre at Paris*: A Reconsideration', *Review of English Studies*, 34 (1983), 257–78 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/517240>> [accessed 23 March 2014]
- Brink, Jean R., *Michael Drayton Revisited* (Boston: Twayne, 1990)
- Britland, Karen, "'Kings Are but Men": Elizabeth Cary's Histories of Edward II', *Études Épistémè. Revue de Littérature et de Civilisation (XVIe – XVIIIe Siècles)*, 17 (2010), 31–53 <DOI: 10.4000/episteme.660>
- Brockliss, L. W. B., 'Concluding Remarks: The Anatomy of the Minister-Favourite', in *The World of the Favourite*, ed. by J. H. Elliott and L. W. B. Brockliss (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 279–309
- Brodwin, Leonora Leet, 'Edward II: Marlowe's Culminating Treatment of Love', *ELH*, 31 (1964), 139–55 <DOI: 10.2307/2872157>
- Brown, Georgia E., 'Tampering with the Records: Engendering the Political Community and Marlowe's Appropriation of the Past in *Edward IP*', in *Marlowe's Empery: Expanding His Critical Contexts*, ed. by Sara Munson Deats and Robert A. Logan (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2002), pp. 164–87
- Brumble, H. David, 'Personal, Paternal, and Kingly Control in Marlowe's *Edward IP*', *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*, 34 (2008), 56–70
- Budra, Paul Vincent, *A Mirror for Magistrates and the De Casibus Tradition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000)
- Bullough, Vern L., 'Formation of Medieval Ideals: Christian Theory and Christian Practice', in *Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church*, ed. by Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1994), pp. 14–21

- ‘Postscript: Heresy, Witchcraft and Sexuality’, in *Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church*, ed. by Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1994), pp. 206–26
- ‘The Sin Against Nature and Homosexuality’, in *Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church*, ed. by Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1994), pp. 55–71
- Burger, Glenn, and Steven F. Kruger, eds, *Queering the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001)
- Burgtof, Jochen, ‘“With My Life, His Joyes Began and Ended”: Piers Gaveston and King Edward II of England Revisited’, in *Fourteenth-Century England*, ed. by Nigel Saul (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), V, 31–51
- Burnett, Mark Thornton, ‘Edward II and Elizabethan Politics’, in *Marlowe, History, and Sexuality: New Critical Essays on Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by Paul Whitfield White (New York: AMS Press, 1998), pp. 91–107
- Bushnell, Rebecca, *Tragedies of Tyrants: Political Thought and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1990)
- Cady, Joseph, ‘The “Masculine Love” of the “Princes of Sodom” “Practising the Art of Ganymede” at Henri III’s Court: The Homosexuality of Henri III and His Mignons in Pierre de L’Estoile’s *Mémoires-Journaux*’, in *Desire and Discipline: Sex and Sexuality in the Premodern West*, ed. by Jacqueline Murray and Konrad Eisenbichler (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), pp. 123–54
- Callaghan, Dymrna, ‘The Terms of Gender: “Gay” and “Feminist” Edward II’, in *Feminist Readings of Early Modern Culture: Emerging Subjects*, ed. by Valerie Traub, Lindsay Kaplan, and Dymrna Callaghan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 275–301
- Campbell, Lily B., *Collected Papers of Lily B. Campbell*, ed. by L. B. Wright (New York: Russell & Russell, 1968)
- Cartelli, Thomas, ‘Edward II’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by Patrick Cheney (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 158–73
- *Marlowe, Shakespeare, and the Economy of Theatrical Experience* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991)
- Chaplais, Pierre, *Piers Gaveston: Edward II’s Adoptive Brother* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994)
- Charney, Maurice, ‘Marlowe’s *Edward II* as a Model for Shakespeare’s *Richard II*’, *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama*, 33 (1994), 31–41
- Clare, Janet, ‘Marlowe’s “Theatre of Cruelty”’, in *Constructing Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by J. A. Downie and J. T. Parnell (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 74–87



- Clark, David, 'Marlowe and Queer Theory', in *Christopher Marlowe in Context*, ed. by Emily Bartels and Emma Smith (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 232–41
- Clarke, M. V., *Medieval Representation and Consent: A Study of Early Parliaments in England and Ireland* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1936)
- Clark, Stuart, *Thinking With Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997)
- 'Inversion, Misrule and the Meaning of Witchcraft', *Past & Present*, 87 (1980), 98–127 <<http://0-www.jstor.org.wam.leeds.ac.uk/stable/650567>> [accessed 19 September 2012]
- Cole, Douglas, *Christopher Marlowe and the Renaissance of Tragedy* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1995)
- Comensoli, Viviana, 'Homophobia and the Regulation of Desire: A Psychoanalytic Reading of Marlowe's *Edward II*', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 4 (1993), 175–200 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3704287>> [accessed 21 December 2015]
- Contamine, Philippe, 'Pouvoir et Vie de Cour Dans La France Du XVe Siècle: Les Mignons', *Comptes-Rendus Des Séances de l'Académie Des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 138 (1994), 541–54 <DOI: 10.3406/crai.1994.15382>
- Conway Davies, J., *The Baronial Opposition to Edward II: Its Character and Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918)
- Cooper, Helen, 'The Elizabethan Havelok: William Warner's First of the English', in *Medieval Insular Romance: Translation and Innovation*, ed. by Judith Weiss, Jennifer Fellows, and Morgan Dickson (Cambridge: Brewer, 2000), pp. 169–83
- Coote, Lesley A., 'A Language of Power: Prophecy and Public Affairs in Later Medieval England', in *Prophecy: The Power of Inspired Language in History 1300-2000*, ed. by Bertrand Taithe, Tim Thornton, and Rhodri Hayward (Stroud: Sutton, 1997), pp. 17–30
- *Prophecy and Public Affairs in Later Medieval England* (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2000)
- Crawford, Katherine B., 'Love, Sodomy, and Scandal: Controlling the Sexual Reputation of Henry III', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 12 (2003), 513–42 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3704668>> [accessed 23 March 2014]
- 'Privilege, Possibility, and Perversion: Rethinking the Study of Early Modern Sexuality', *Journal of Modern History*, 78 (2006), 412–433 <DOI: 10.1086/505802>
- Crawford, T. D., 'A Parody of Marlowe's *Edward II* in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*', *Notes and Queries*, 39 (1992), 361

- Crewe, Jonathan, 'Disorderly Love: Sodomy Revisited in Marlowe's *Edward IP*', *Criticism*, 51 (2009), 385–99 <DOI: 10.1353/crt.0.0111>
- Crundell, H. W., 'The Death of Edward II in Marlowe's Play', *Notes and Queries*, 179 (1940), 207
- Cunningham, Karen, 'Renaissance Execution and Marlovian Elocution: The Drama of Death', *PMLA*, 105 (1990), 209–22 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/462557>> [accessed 19 February 2016]
- Curley, Michael J., 'The Cloak of Anonymity and *The Prophecy of John of Bridlington*', *Modern Philology*, 77 (1980), 361–69 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/437589>> [accessed 14 August 2015]
- 'Fifteenth-Century Glosses on *The Prophecy of John of Bridlington*: A Text, its Meaning and its Purpose', *Mediaeval Studies*, 46 (1984), 321–39
- Cushner, Arnold, 'Some Observations on Marlowe's *Edward IP*', in *Renaissance and Modern: Essays in Honor of Edwin M. Moseley*, ed. by Edwin M. Moseley and Murray J. Levith (Saratoga Springs: Skidmore College, 1976), pp. 11–20
- Cutts, John, *The Left Hand of God: A Critical Interpretation of the Plays of Christopher Marlowe* (Haddonfield: Haddonfield House, 1973)
- Danson, Lawrence, 'Continuity and Character in Shakespeare and Marlowe', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 26 (1986), 217–34 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/450505>> [accessed 21 February 2016]
- Davis, R. H. C. and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Richard William Southern* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1981)
- Dean, Ruth J. and Maureen B. M. Boulton (eds.), *Anglo-Norman Literature: A Guide to Texts and Manuscripts* (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1999)
- Deats, Sara Munson, 'Edward II: A Study in Androgyny', *Ball State University Forum*, 22 (1981), 30–41
- 'Marlowe's Fearful Symmetry in *Edward IP*', in '*A Poet and a Filthy Play-Maker*': *New Essays on Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by Kenneth Friedenreich, Roma Gill, and Constance B. Kuriyama (New York: AMS Press, 1988), pp. 241–62
- 'Marlowe's Interrogative Drama: *Dido*, *Tamburlaine*, *Faustus*, and *Edward IP*', in *Marlowe's Empery: Expanding His Critical Contexts*, ed. by Sara Munson Deats and Robert A. Logan (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2002), pp. 107–30
- 'Mars or Gorgon? *Tamburlaine* and *Henry V*?', *Marlowe Studies*, 1 (2011), 99–124 <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res\\_ver=0.2&res\\_id=xri:lion&rft\\_id=xri:lion:ft:criticism:R04968858:0&rft.accountid=14664](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft:criticism:R04968858:0&rft.accountid=14664)> [accessed 15 December 2015]

- ‘Myth and Metamorphosis in Marlowe’s *Edward IP*, *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 22 (1980), 304–21 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40754613>> [accessed 8 February 2016]
- *Sex, Gender, and Desire in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1997)
- Deats, Sara Munson, and Robert A. Logan, eds, *Christopher Marlowe at 450* (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2015)
- *Placing the Plays of Christopher Marlowe: Fresh Cultural Contexts* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008)
- Denholm-Young, N., ‘The Authorship of *Vita Edwardi Secundi*’, *English Historical Review*, 71 (1956), 189–211 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/557698>> [accessed 18 November 2012]
- Dessen, Alan C., ‘*Edward II* and Residual Allegory’, in *Christopher Marlowe the Craftsman: Lives, Stage and Page*, ed. by Sarah Scott and M. L. Stapleton (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 63–77
- Devereux, E. J., ‘Empty Tuns and Unfruitful Grafts: Richard Grafton’s Historical Publications’, *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 21 (1990), 33–56 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2541131>> [accessed 27 February 2013]
- DiGangi, Mario, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)
- ‘Marlowe, Queer Studies, and Renaissance Homoeroticism’, in *Marlowe, History, and Sexuality: New Critical Essays on Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by Paul Whitfield White (New York: AMS Press, 1998), pp. 195–212
- DiMatteo, Anthony, ‘Identifying Marlowe’s Radicalism: A Response to Christopher Wessman’, *Connotations*, 9 (1999), 228–40 <<http://www.connotations.uni-tuebingen.de/dimatteo00903.htm>> [accessed 11 January 2016]
- Dinshaw, Carolyn, *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- and Postmodern* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999)
- Djordjevic, Igor, *Holinshead’s Nation: Ideals, Memory, and Practical Policy in the Chronicles* (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate, 2010)
- Dodd, Gwilym, ‘Parliament and Political Legitimacy in the Reign of Edward II’, in *The Reign of Edward II: New Perspectives*, ed. by Gwilym Dodd and Anthony Musson (Woodbridge; Rochester, NY: York Medieval Press in association with Boydell Press, 2006), pp. 165–89
- Doherty, P. C., *Isabella and the Strange Death of Edward II* (London: Constable, 2003)
- Donno, Elizabeth S., ‘“Admiration” and “Commiseration” in Marlowe’s *Edward II*, *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 79 (1978), 372–83

- Eckhardt, Caroline D., 'The First English Translations of the *Prophetia Merlini*', *The Library*, 6th ser., 4 (1984), 25–34 <DOI: 10.1093/library/s6-4.1.25>
- *The Prophetia Merlini of Geoffrey of Monmouth: A Fifteenth-Century Commentary*, Speculum Anniversary Monographs, VIII (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1982)
- Edwards, Christine, "In No Respect Can Contraries Be True": Passion and Reason in Marlowe's *Edward IP*, *Cerae*, 1 (2014), 53–74 <<http://openjournals.arts.uwa.edu.au/index.php/cerae/article/view/33>> [accessed 21 December 2015]
- Elliott, J. H., 'Introduction', in *The World of the Favourite*, ed. by J. H. Elliott and L. W. B. Brockliss (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 1-10
- Empson, William, 'Two Proper Crimes', *The Nation*, 163 (1946), 444–45
- Evans, Michael, *The Death of Kings: Royal Deaths in Medieval England* (London: Continuum, 2006)
- Farabee, Darlene, 'The Critical Backstory: *Edward IP*'s Critics in History to 1990', in *Edward II: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Kirk Melnikoff (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017), pp. 21–41
- Foley, Christopher D., 'Marlowe's *Edward II* and "The Woful Lamentation of Jane Shore": Tactical Engagements with Sewers in Late-Elizabethan London', *Early Modern Literary Studies*, Special Issue 23 (2014), [8] <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res\\_ver=0.2&res\\_id=xri:lion&rft\\_id=xri:lion:rec:abell:R05122722&rft.accountid=14664](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:rec:abell:R05122722&rft.accountid=14664)> [accessed 21 December 2015]
- Forker, Charles R., 'Marlowe's *Edward II* and *The Merchant of Venice*', *Shakespeare Newsletter*, 57 (2007), 65–70
- Frantzen, Allen J., 'The Disclosure of Sodomy in *Cleanness*', *PMLA*, 111 (1996), 451–64 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/463168>> [accessed 21 March 2014]
- Freeman, Edward Augustus, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England, Its Causes and Its Results*, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1867)
- Gadd, Ian, and Alexandra Gillespie (eds.), *John Stow (1525-1605) and the Making of the English Past: Studies in Early Modern Culture and the History of the Book* (London: British Library, 2004)
- Galbraith, V. H., 'The *Historia Aurea* and the Sources of the *St Albans Chronicle*', in *Essays in History Presented to Reginald Lane Poole*, ed. by H. W. C. Davis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), pp. 379–98
- Geckle, George L., 'Narrativity: *Edward II* and *Richard IP*', *Renaissance Papers*, 2000, 99–117

- Giantvalley, Scott, 'Barnfield, Drayton, and Marlowe: Homoeroticism and Homosexuality in Elizabethan Literature', *Pacific Coast Philology*, 16 (1981), 9–24  
<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1316454>> [accessed 5 October 2015]
- Given-Wilson, Chris, *Chronicles: The Writing of History in Medieval England* (London; New York: Hambledon and London, 2004)
- 'The *Vita Edwardi Secundi*: Memoir or Journal?', in *Thirteenth Century England VI: Proceedings of the Durham Conference 1995*, ed. by Michael Prestwich, R. H. Britnell, and Robin Frame (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), pp. 165–76
- Godman, Maureen, 'Stow's *Summarie*: Source for Marlowe's *Edward II*', *Notes and Queries*, 40 (1993), 160–63
- Goldberg, Jonathan, *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992)
- 'Sodomy and Society: The Case of Christopher Marlowe', in *Staging the Renaissance: Essays on Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*, ed. by David Scott Kastan and Peter Sallibrass (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 75–82
- Gomez Lara, Manuel J., 'Ambiguous Devices: The Use of Dramatic Emblems in Marlowe's *Edward II* (1592)', *SEDERI*, 15 (2005), 103–13  
<<http://www.sederi.org/yearbook/sederi-15/>> [accessed 15 December 2015]
- Goodich, Michael, *The Unmentionable Vice: Homosexuality in the Later Medieval Period* (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 1979)
- Gottfried, Rudolf, 'Samuel Daniel's Method of Writing History', *Studies in the Renaissance*, 3, 157–74 <DOI: 10.2307/2857106>
- Gransden, Antonia, 'The Continuations of the *Flores Historiarum* from 1265 to 1327', *Mediaeval Studies*, 36 (1974), 472–92
- *Historical Writing in England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982)
- 'Propaganda in English Medieval Historiography', *Journal of Medieval History*, 1 (1975), 363–81
- 'The Uses Made of History by the Kings of Medieval England', *Publications de l'École Française de Rome* 82.1 (1985), 463–78
- Graves, Edgar B., and Charles Gross, eds, *A Bibliography of English History to 1485* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975)
- Great Britain Public Record Office, *The Forty-Sixth Annual Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1886)
- Guy-Bray, Stephen, *Homoerotic Space: The Poetics of Loss in Renaissance Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002)

- ‘Homophobia and the Depoliticizing of *Edward IP*, *English Studies in Canada*, 17 (1991), 125–33
- Haber, Judith, *Desire and Dramatic Form in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)
- ‘The State of the Art: Desire, History and the Theatre’, in *Edward II: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Kirk Melnikoff (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017), pp. 73–96
- Hadfield, Andrew, ‘Marlowe’s Representation of the Death of Edward II’, *Notes and Queries*, 56 (2009), 40–41
- Haines, R. M., *Archbishop John Stratford: Political Revolutionary and Champion of the Liberties of the English Church Ca. 1275/80-1348* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1986)
- *King Edward II: Edward of Caernarfon, His Life, His Reign, and Its Aftermath, 1284-1330* (Montréal; London: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003)
- ‘Looking Back In Anger: A Politically Inspired Appeal against John XXII’s Translation of Bishop Adam Orleton to Winchester (1334)’, *English Historical Review*, 116 (2001), 389–404 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/580839>> [accessed 18 November 2012]
- Hakim, R., ‘Marlowe on the English Stage, 1588-1988’ (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 1990)
- Hamilton, J. S., ‘The Character of Edward II: The Letters of Edward of Caernarfon Reconsidered’, in *The Reign of Edward II: New Perspectives*, ed. by Gwilym Dodd and Anthony Musson (Woodbridge; Rochester, NY: York Medieval Press in association with Boydell Press, 2006), pp. 5–21
- *Piers Gaveston, Earl of Cornwall, 1307-1312: Politics and Patronage in the Reign of Edward II* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press; London: Harvester-Wheatsheaf, 1988)
- Hammond, Paul, *Figuring Sex Between Men from Shakespeare to Rochester* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002)
- *Love Between Men in English Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996)
- Hattaway, Michael, ‘Christopher Marlowe: Ideology and Subversion’, in *Christopher Marlowe and English Renaissance Culture*, ed. by Peter Roberts and Darryll Grantley (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), pp. 198–223
- Heacock, Anthony, *Jonathan Loved David: Manly Love in the Bible and the Hermeneutics of Sex* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011)
- Hebel, William, ‘The Surreptitious Edition of Drayton’s *Peirs Gaveston*’, *The Library*, 4th ser., 4 (1923), 151–55 <DOI: 10.1093/library/s4-IV.2.151>

- Helmholz, R. H., 'Canonical Defamation in Medieval England', *American Journal of Legal History*, 15 (1971), 255–68 <DOI: 10.2307/844648>
- Herring, Henry, 'The Self and Madness in Marlowe's *Edward II* and Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 9 (1979), 307–23
- Hertel, Ralf, *Staging England in the Elizabethan History Play: Performing National Identity*, Studies in Performance and Early Modern Drama (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014)
- Higginbotham, D., 'The Construction of a King: Waste, Effeminacy and Queerness in Shakespeare's *Richard II*', *Shakespeare in Southern Africa*, 26 (2014), 59–73
- Hillman, Richard, *Shakespeare, Marlowe and the Politics of France* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002)
- Hirsch, Brett D., and Christopher Wortham, eds, *'This Earthly Stage': World and Stage in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010)
- Hirsch, Richard S. M., 'A Second Echo of *Edward II* in I.iii. of *1 Henry IV*', *Notes and Queries*, 22 (1975), 168
- Holmes, G. A., 'Judgement on the Younger Despenser, 1326', *English Historical Review*, 70 (1955), 261–67 <<http://0-www.jstor.org.wam.leeds.ac.uk/stable/557468>> [accessed 13 January 2013]
- Hopkins, Lisa, 'Christopher Marlowe and the Succession to the English Crown', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 38 (2008), 183–98 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20479329>> [accessed 21 December 2015]
- *Christopher Marlowe, Renaissance Dramatist* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008)
- 'Englishmen Abroad: Mobility and Nationhood in *Dido, Queen of Carthage* and *Edward II*', *English*, 59 (2010), 324–48 <DOI: 10.1093/english/efq019>
- 'Fissured Families: A Motif in Marlowe's Plays', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 33 (1997), 198–212 <<http://0-search.ebscohost.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aft&AN=505675572&site=ehost-live>> [accessed 21 December 2015]
- 'Playing With Matches: Christopher Marlowe's Incendiary Imagination', *Marlowe Studies*, 1 (2011), 125–40 <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res\\_ver=0.2&res\\_id=xri:lion&rft\\_id=xri:lion:ft:criticism:R04968859:0&rft.accountid=14664](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft:criticism:R04968859:0&rft.accountid=14664)> [accessed 15 December 2015]
- "'Truest of the Twain": History and Poetry in *Edward II*', *Marlowe Studies*, 3 (2013), 111–27 <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res\\_ver=0.2&res\\_id=xri:lion&rft\\_id=xri:lion:ft:abell:R04968836:0&rft.accountid=14664](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft:abell:R04968836:0&rft.accountid=14664)> [accessed 15 December 2015]
- Horstmann, Carl, ed., 'Introduction', in *Nova Legenda Anglie* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), pp. ix – lxviii

- Houliston, Victor, 'Persons [Parsons], Robert (1546–1610)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004)  
 <<http://oxforddnb.com/view/article/21474?docPos=2>> [accessed 28 May 2017]
- Hulse, Clark, *Metamorphic Verse: The Elizabethan Minor Epic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981)
- Jardine, Lisa, *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (Brighton: Harvester, 1983)
- Johnstone, Hilda, 'The Eccentricities of Edward II', *English Historical Review*, 48 (1933), 264–67 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/552705>> [accessed 18 November 2012]
- Jones, W. R., 'Political Uses of Sorcery in Medieval Europe', *The Historian*, 34 (1972), 670–87 <<http://0-search.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/docview/1296494369?accountid=14664>> [accessed 14 November 2012]
- Jordan, Mark D., *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1997)
- Kantorowicz, Ernst Hartwig, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957)
- Kastan, David Scott, and Peter Stallybrass, *Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama* (New York; London: Routledge, 1991)
- Kay, Dennis, 'Marlowe, *Edward II*, and the Cult of Elizabeth', *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 3 (1997), 1–30 <<http://purl.oclc.org/emls/03-2/kaymarl.html>> [accessed 21 December 2015]
- Keenan, Siobhan, 'Reading Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II*: The Example of John Newdigate in 1601', *Notes and Queries*, 53 (2006), 452–58
- Kelley, Donald R., ed., *Versions of History from Antiquity to the Enlightenment* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1991)
- Kelly, Henry, 'English Kings and the Fear of Sorcery', *Mediaeval Studies* 39 (1977), 206–38
- Kelly, William B., 'Mapping Subjects in Marlowe's *Edward II*', *South Atlantic Review*, 63 (1998), 1–19 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3201388>> [accessed 15 December 2015]
- Kewes, Paulina, 'Marlowe, History and Politics', in *Christopher Marlowe in Context*, ed. by Emily Bartels and Emma Smith (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 134–54
- Kewes, Paulina, Ian W. Archer, and Felicity Heal, eds, *The Oxford Handbook of Holinshed's Chronicles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)
- Kiefer, Frederick, 'Fortune and Providence in the *Mirror for Magistrates*', *Studies in Philology*, 74 (1977), 146–64 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4173932>> [accessed 21 May 2014]



- Kilpatrick, Hannah, 'Correction to Haskins' *Chronicle of the Civil Wars of Edward IP, Notes and Queries*, 58 (2011), 356–58
- Kingsford, Charles Lethbridge, *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913)
- Kirk, Andrew M., 'Marlowe and the Disordered Face of French History', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 35 (1995), 193–213 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/451022>> [accessed 21 December 2015]
- Knowles, Ronald, 'The Political Contexts of Deposition and Election in *Edward IP*, *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 14 (2001), 105–21 <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res\\_ver=0.2&res\\_id=xri:lion&rft\\_id=xri:lion:ft:criticism:R01613121:0&rft.accountid=14664](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft:criticism:R01613121:0&rft.accountid=14664)> [accessed 15 December 2015]
- Knutson, Roslyn L., 'Marlowe, Company Ownership, and the Role of *Edward IP*, *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 18 (2005), 37–46 <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res\\_ver=0.2&res\\_id=xri:lion&rft\\_id=xri:lion:ft:abell:R03653675:0&rft.accountid=14664](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft:abell:R03653675:0&rft.accountid=14664)> [accessed 15 December 2015]
- 'Edward II in Repertory', in *Edward II: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Kirk Melnikoff (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017), pp. 119–44
- Kocher, Paul H., *Christopher Marlowe: A Study of His Thought, Learning, and Character* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1946)
- Kolve, V. A., 'Ganymede / Son of Getron: Medieval Monasticism and the Drama of Same-Sex Desire', *Speculum*, 73 (1998), 1014–67 <DOI: 10.2307/2887367>
- Krontiris, Tina, *Oppositional Voices: Women as Writers and Translators of Literature in the English Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 1992)
- Kuriyama, Constance B., 'Second Selves: Marlowe's Cambridge and London Friendships', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 14 (2001), 86–104 <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res\\_ver=0.2&res\\_id=xri:lion&rft\\_id=xri:lion:ft:criticism:R01613120:0&rft.accountid=14664](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft:criticism:R01613120:0&rft.accountid=14664)> [accessed 21 December 2015]
- Kurokawa, Takashi, 'De Casibus Theme and Machiavellism – In Connection with the Theme of *Edward IP*, *Shakespeare Studies (Japan)*, 7 (1968), 61–80
- Laborderie, Olivier de, 'A New Pattern For English History: The First Genealogical Rolls of the Kings of England', in *Broken Lines: Genealogical Literature in Late-Medieval Britain and France*, ed. by Raluca Radulescu and Edward Donald Kennedy (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), pp. 45–61

- Lanier, Douglas, 'Fertile Visions: Jacobean Revels and the Erotics of Occasion', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 39 (1999), 327–56  
<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1556169>> [accessed 21 December 2015]
- Lansing, Richard, and Teodolinda Barolini, *The Dante Encyclopedia* (New York; London: Garland/Routledge, 2010)
- Lawrence, Martyn, 'Rise of a Royal Favourite: The Early Career of Hugh Despenser the Elder', in *The Reign of Edward II: New Perspectives*, ed. by Gwilym Dodd and Anthony Musson (Woodbridge; Rochester, NY: York Medieval Press in association with Boydell Press, 2006), pp. 205–19
- Lawrence, Sean, *Forgiving the Gift: The Philosophy of Generosity in Shakespeare and Marlowe* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2012)
- Leech, Clifford, 'Marlowe's *Edward II*: Power and Suffering', *Critical Quarterly*, 1 (1959), 181–96 <DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-8705.1959.tb01378.x>
- Lee, Michael John, 'Classifying Early Modern Sexuality: Christopher Marlowe, *Edward II*, and the Politics of Sexuality', *Quidditas*, 34 (2013), 111–24  
<<http://humanities.byu.edu/rmmra/pdfs/34.pdf>> [accessed 15 December 2015]
- Legge, M. Dominica, *Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963)
- Levin, Carole, *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994)
- Levin, Carole, and Karen Robertson, *Sexuality and Politics in Renaissance Drama* (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1991)
- Levin, Harry, *The Overreacher: A Study of Christopher Marlowe* (London: Faber & Faber, 1954)
- Lewalski, Barbara Kiefer, *Writing Women in Jacobean England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993)
- Linkinen, Tom, *Same-Sex Sexuality in Later Medieval English Culture* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015)
- Lochrie, Karma, 'Response – Presidential Improprieties and Medieval Categories: The Absurdity of Heterosexuality', in *Queering the Middle Ages*, ed. by Glenn Burger and Steven F. Kruger (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), pp. 87–96
- Lunney, Ruth, 'Marlowe's *Edward II* and the Early Playhouse Audiences', in *Placing the Plays of Christopher Marlowe: Fresh Cultural Contexts*, ed. by Sara Munson Deats and Robert A. Logan (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 25–41
- MacKenzie, Clayton G., *Deathly Experiments: A Study of Icons and Emblems of Mortality in Christopher Marlowe's Plays* (New York: AMS Press, 2010)

- Martin, Matthew, 'Accidents Happen: Roger Barnes's 1612 Edition of Marlowe's *Edward IP*, *Early Theatre*, 16 (2013), 97–117 <DOI: 10.12745/et.16.1.6>
- 'Plays of Passion: Pain, History, and Theater in *Edward IP*, in *The Sacred and Profane in English Renaissance Literature*, ed. by Mary Arshagouni Papazian (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), pp. 84–107
- 'The Traumatic Realism of Christopher Marlowe's *The Massacre at Paris*', *ESC: English Studies in Canada*, 37 (2011), 25–39 <DOI: 10.1353/esc.2011.0051>
- Martin, Randall, 'Anne Dowriche's *The French History*, Christopher Marlowe, and Machiavellian Agency', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 39 (1999), 69–87 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1556306>> [accessed 21 December 2015]
- Marvin, Julia, 'Albine and Isabelle: Regicidal Queens and the Historical Imagination of the Anglo-Norman *Prose Brut* Chronicles', *Arthurian Literature*, 18 (2001), 143–91
- 'Arthur Authorized: The Prophecies of the *Prose Brut* Chronicle', *Arthurian Literature*, 22 (2005), 84–99
- Marx, William, 'Reception and Revision in the Middle English *Prose Brut*', in *Readers and Writers of the Prose Brut*, ed. by William Marx and Raluca Radulescu (Lampeter: Trivium Publications, University of Wales, 2006), pp. 53–69
- Masinton, Charles G., *Christopher Marlowe's Tragic Vision: A Study in Damnation* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1972)
- Masten, Jeffrey, 'Bound for Germany: Heresy, Sodomy, and a New Copy of Marlowe's *Edward IP*, *TLS: The Times Literary Supplement* (21 December 2012), 17–19
- 'Is the Fundament a Grave?', in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 128–45
- 'Toward a Queer Address: The Taste of Letters and Early Modern Male Friendship', *GLQ*, 10 (2004), 367–84 <<http://muse.jhu.edu/article/169789>> [accessed 11 January 2016]
- Matheson, Lister M., *The Prose Brut: The Development of a Middle English Chronicle* (Tempe: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998)
- McAdam, Ian, '*Edward II* and the Illusion of Integrity', *Studies in Philology*, 92 (1995), 203–29 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4174514>> [accessed 21 December 2015]
- McCarthy, Andrew, 'Marlowe's *Ars Moriendi*', *Marlowe Studies*, 2 (2012), 57–70 <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res\\_ver=0.2&res\\_id=xri:lion&rft\\_id=xri:lion:ft:abell:R04968843:0&rft.aaccountid=14664](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft:abell:R04968843:0&rft.accountid=14664)> [accessed 15 December 2015]

- McConnell, Anita, 'Lambe, John (1545/6–1628)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15925>> [accessed 14 March 2015]
- McElroy, Tricia, 'Genres', in *The Oxford Handbook of Holinsbed's Chronicles*, ed. by Paulina Kewes, Ian W. Archer, and Felicity Heal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 267–83
- McFarlane, K. B., 'William Worcester: A Preliminary Survey', in *Studies Presented to Sir Hilary Jenkinson*, ed. by J. Conway Davies (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 196–221
- McKisack, May, *Medieval History in the Tudor Age* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971)
- 'Samuel Daniel as Historian', *Review of English Studies*, 23 (1947) 226–43 <<http://0-www.jstor.org.wam.leeds.ac.uk/stable/509268>> [accessed 31 October 2012]
- McLaren, Mary-Rose, *The London Chronicles of the Fifteenth Century: A Revolution in English Writing* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002)
- 'The Textual Transmission of the London Chronicles', in *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700*, vol. 3, ed. by Peter Beale and Jeremy Griffiths (London: British Library, 1992), pp. 38–72
- Melnikoff, Kirk, 'Introduction', in *Edward II: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Kirk Melnikoff (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017), pp. 1–20
- Melnikoff, Kirk, ed., *Edward II: A Critical Reader* (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017)
- Merrix, Robert P., and Carole Levin, 'Richard II and Edward II: The Structure of Deposition', *Shakespeare Yearbook*, 1 (1990), 1–13
- Metzger, Marcia Lee, 'Controversy and "Correctness": English Chronicles and the Chroniclers, 1553-1568', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 27 (1996), 437–51 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2544143>> [accessed 27 February 2013]
- Mills, L. J., 'The Meaning of *Edward IP*', *Modern Philology*, 32 (1934), 11–31 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/434180>> [accessed 21 December 2015]
- Mills, Robert, *Seeing Sodomy in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015)
- Mooney, Linne R., 'Lydgate's *Kings of England* and Another Verse Chronicle of the Kings', *Viator*, 20 (1989), 255–90 <DOI: 10.1484/J.VIATOR.2.301358>
- Morse, Ruth, "'This Vague Relation": Historical Fiction and Historical Veracity in the Later Middle Ages', *Leeds Studies in English*, 13 (1982), 85-103 <<http://digital.library.leeds.ac.uk/id/eprint/175>> [accessed 21 May 2014]
- Mortimer, Ian, 'The Death of Edward II in Berkeley Castle', *English Historical Review*, 120 (2005), 1175–1214 <DOI: 10.1093/ehr/cei329>

- ‘A Red-Hot Poker? It Was Just a Red Herring’, *Times Higher Education*, 2013  
<<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/features/a-red-hot-poker-it-was-just-a-red-herring/176011.article>> [accessed 11 May 2015]
- ‘Sermons of Sodomy: A Reconsideration of Edward II’s Sodomitical Reputation’, in *The Reign of Edward II: New Perspectives*, ed. by Gwilym Dodd and Anthony Musson (Woodbridge; Rochester, NY: York Medieval Press in association with Boydell Press, 2006), pp. 48–60
- Moulton, Ian Frederick, ‘“Printed Abroad and Uncastrated”: Marlowe’s Elegies with Davies’s Epigrams’, in *Marlowe, History, and Sexuality: New Critical Essays on Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by Paul Whitfield White (New York: AMS Press, 1998), pp. 77–90
- Musson, Anthony, ‘Edward II: The Public and Private Faces of the Law’, in *The Reign of Edward II: New Perspectives*, ed. by Gwilym Dodd and Anthony Musson (Woodbridge; Rochester, NY: York Medieval Press in association with Boydell Press, 2006), pp. 140–64
- Napran, Laura, and Elisabeth van Houts, *Exile in the Middle Ages: Selected Proceedings from the International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, 8-11 July 2002* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004)
- Nicholson, Catherine, ‘Marlowe and the Limits of Rhetoric’, in *Christopher Marlowe in Context*, ed. by Emily Bartels and Emma Smith (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 27–38
- Normand, Lawrence, ‘“What Passions Call You These?”: Edward II and James VI’, in *Christopher Marlowe and English Renaissance Culture*, ed. by Peter Roberts and Darryll Grantley (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), pp. 172–97
- Orgel, Stephen, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare’s England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)
- Ormrod, W. M., ‘The Sexualities of Edward II’, in *The Reign of Edward II: New Perspectives*, ed. by Gwilym Dodd and Anthony Musson (Woodbridge; Rochester, NY: York Medieval Press in association with Boydell Press, 2006), pp. 22–47
- Ostman, Heather E., ‘Backbiters, Flatterers, and Monarchs: Domestic Politics in *The Tragedy of Mariam*’, in *Elizabeth Cary*, ed. by Karen Raber (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 303–27
- Parks, Joan, ‘History, Tragedy, and Truth in Christopher Marlowe’s *Edward II*’, *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 39 (1999), 275–90  
<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1556166>> [accessed 15 December 2015]
- Pasquarella, Vincenzo, *Christopher Marlowe’s Representation of Love: A Challenge to the English Renaissance Amorous Discourse* (Rome: Aracne, 2008)
- Patch, Howard Rollin, *The Goddess Fortuna in Mediaeval Literature* (London: F. Cass, 1967)

- Pati, Mitali, 'The Deranged Metaphor of the King's Body Politic in Marlowe's *Edward IP*, *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*, 20 (1994), 157–73
- Patterson, Annabel, *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984)
- *Reading Holinsbed's Chronicles* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1994)
- Pearson, Meg F., 'Audience as Witness in *Edward IP*, in *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama, 1558-1642*, ed. by Jennifer A. Low and Nova Myhill (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 93–111
- "'Die with Fame": Forgiving Infamy in Marlowe's *Edward IP*, *Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 42 (2009), 97–120  
<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25674378>> [accessed 15 December 2015]
- Peck, Linda Levy, 'Monopolizing Favour: Structures of Power in the Early Seventeenth-Century English Court', in *The World of the Favourite*, ed. by J. H. Elliott and L. W. B. Brockliss (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 54–70
- Peery, William, 'Tragic Retribution in the 1559 *Mirror for Magistrates*', *Studies in Philology*, 46 (1949), 113–30 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4172883>> [accessed 21 May 2014]
- Perry, Curtis, *Literature and Favoritism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)
- 'The Politics of Access and Representations of the Sodomite King in Early Modern England', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 53 (2000), 1054–83  
<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2901456>> [accessed 27 April 2013]
- 'Yelverton, Buckingham, and the Story of Edward II in the 1620s', *Review of English Studies*, 54 (2003), 313–35 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3661360>> [accessed 6 March 2016]
- Phillips, J. R. S., *Edward II* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2010)
- 'Edward II and the Prophets', in *England in the Fourteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1985 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. by W. M. Ormrod (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1986), pp. 189–201
- 'Introduction', in *The Reign of Edward II: New Perspectives*, ed. by Gwilym Dodd and Anthony Musson (Woodbridge; Rochester, NY: York Medieval Press in association with Boydell Press, 2006), pp. 1–3
- Poirier, Michel, *Christopher Marlowe* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1968)
- Potter, David, 'Marlowe's Massacre at Paris and the Reputation of Henri III of France', in *Christopher Marlowe and English Renaissance Culture*, ed. by Peter Roberts and Darryll Grantley (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), pp. 70–95

- Potter, Lois, 'Marlowe in the Civil War and Commonwealth: Some Allusions and Parodies', in *'A Poet and a Filthy Play-Maker': New Essays on Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by Kenneth Friedenreich, Roma Gill, and Constance B. Kuriyama (New York: AMS Press, 1988), pp. 73–82
- Preedy, C. K., '(De)Valuing the Crown in *Tamburlaine*, *Dido Queen of Carthage*, and *Edward IP*', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 54 (2014), 259–77 <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res\\_ver=0.2&res\\_id=xri:lion&rft\\_id=xri:lion:ft:abell:R05166800:0&rft.aaccountid=14664](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft:abell:R05166800:0&rft.aaccountid=14664)> [accessed 14 December 2015]
- Prestwich, Michael, 'The Court of Edward II', in *The Reign of Edward II: New Perspectives*, ed. by Gwilym Dodd and Anthony Musson (Woodbridge; Rochester, NY: York Medieval Press in association with Boydell Press, 2006), pp. 61–75
- Prichard, Carla Coleman, "'Learn Then to Rule Us Better and the Realm": Restoration of Order and the Boy King in Marlowe's *Edward IP*', *Renaissance Papers*, 1998, 29–38
- Quinn, Kelly, 'Mastering Complaint: Michael Drayton's *Peirs Gaveston* and the Royal Mistress Complaints', *English Literary Renaissance*, 38 (2008), 439–60 <DOI: 10.1111/j.1475-6757.2008.00132.x>
- Rackin, Phyllis, *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990)
- Read, Conyers, ed., *Bibliography of British History: Tudor Period, 1485-1603*, ed. by Conyers Read, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959)
- Read, Conyers, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925)
- Ribner, Irving, *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare*, Rev. edn (London: Methuen, 1965)
- 'Marlowe's *Edward II* and the Tudor History Play', *ELH*, 22 (1955), 243–53 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2871887>> [accessed 15 December 2015]
- Richardson, H.G., 'The Annales Paulini', *Speculum*, 23 (1948), 630–40 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2850445>> [accessed 21 May 2014]
- Rigg, A. G., 'John of Bridlington's *Prophecy*: A New Look', *Speculum*, 63 (1988), 596–613 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2852636>> [accessed 21 August 2015]
- Rufo, Jeffrey, 'Marlowe's Minions: Sodomitical Politics in *Edward II* and *The Massacre at Paris*', *Marlowe Studies*, 1 (2011), 1–19 <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res\\_ver=0.2&res\\_id=xri:lion&rft\\_id=xri:lion:ft:abell:R04968852:0&rft.aaccountid=14664](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft:abell:R04968852:0&rft.aaccountid=14664)> [accessed 23 February 2016]

- Rutkoski, Marie, 'Breeching the Boy in Marlowe's *Edward IP*, *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 46 (2006), 281–304 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3844643>> [accessed 23 March 2014]
- Ryan, Patrick, 'Marlowe's *Edward II* and the Medieval Passion Play', *Comparative Drama*, 32 (1998), 465–95 <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res\\_ver=0.2&res\\_id=xri:lion&rft\\_id=xri:lion:ft:abell:R01245568:0&rft.accountid=14664](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft:abell:R01245568:0&rft.accountid=14664)> [accessed 15 December 2015]
- Sales, Roger, *Christopher Marlowe* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991)
- Scattergood, V. J., 'Adam Davy's Dreams and Edward IP', *Archiv Für Das Studium Der Neueren Sprachen Und Literaturen*, 206 (121<sup>st</sup> year), 253–60
- 'The Political Context, Date and Composition of *The Sayings of the Four Philosophers*', *Medium Aevum*, 37 (1968), 157–65 <<http://0-search.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/docview/1293335780?accountid=14664>> [accessed 2 September 2015]
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985)
- Shannon, Laurie, *Sovereign Amity: Figures of Friendship in Shakespearean Contexts* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2002)
- 'Monarchs, Minions and "Sovereign" Friendship', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 97 (1998), 90–112
- Shapiro, Barbara J., *Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century England: A Study of the Relationships between Natural Science, Religion, History, Law, and Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983)
- Shepherd, Robert, 'Sexual Rumours in English Politics: The Cases of Elizabeth I and James I', in *Desire and Discipline: Sex and Sexuality in the Premodern West*, ed. by Jacqueline Murray and Konrad Eisenbichler (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), pp. 101–22
- Shepherd, Simon, 'A Bit of Ruff: Criticism, Fantasy, Marlowe', in *Constructing Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by J. A. Downie and J. T. Parnell (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 102–15
- *Marlowe and the Politics of Elizabethan Theatre* (Brighton: Harvester, 1986)
- Shirley, Christopher, 'Sodomy and Stage Directions in Christopher Marlowe's *Edward(s) IP*, *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 54 (2014), 279–96 <DOI: 10.1353/sel.2014.0015>



- Siemon, James, ““Overpeered” and Understated: Conforming Transgressions and *Edward IP*, in *Edward II: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Kirk Melnikoff (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017), pp. 145–73
- Sillitoe, Peter, ““Where Is the Court but Here?” Undetermined Elite Space and Marlowe’s *Edward IP*, *Literature Compass*, 1 (2004), unpaginated <DOI: 10.1111/j.1741-4113.2004.00065.x>
- Sirluck, Katherine A., ‘Marlowe’s *Edward II* and the Pleasure of Outrage’, *Modern Language Studies*, 22 (1992), 15–24 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3195014>> [accessed 21 December 2015]
- Skura, Meredith, ‘Elizabeth Cary and Edward II: What Do Women Want to Write?’, *Renaissance Drama*, 27 (1996), 79–104
- ‘Marlowe’s *Edward II*: Penetrating Language in Shakespeare’s *Richard IP*, *Shakespeare Survey*, 50 (1997), 41–55
- Smalley, Beryl, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941)
- Smallwood, T. M., ‘The Lament of Edward II’, *Modern Language Review*, 68 (1973), 521–29 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3724989>> [accessed 18 March 2014]
- ‘The Prophecy of the Six Kings’, *Speculum*, 60 (1985), 571–92 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2848176>> [accessed 24 July 2014]
- Smith, Alan, ‘Marlowe’s *Edward II*, 5.3.23’, *The Explicator*, 52 (1994), 66–69 <<http://0-search.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/docview/1290262365?accountid=14664>> [accessed 21 December 2015]
- Smith, Bruce R., *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare’s England: A Cultural Poetics* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1991)
- Smith, George Charles Moore, ‘Edwardum Occidere Nolite Timere Bonum Est’ (Marlowe’s *Edward II*, V, iv, 8), *TLS: The Times Literary Supplement* (9 August 1928), Times Literary Supplement Historical Archive <<http://0-find.galegroup.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/tlsh/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TLSH&userGroupNuse=leedsuni&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=&docId=EX1200224957&type=multipmul&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0>> [accessed 3 August 2014]
- Spiegel, Gabrielle M., *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997)
- Sponsler, Claire, ‘The King’s Boyfriend: Froissart’s Political Theatre of 1326’, in *Queering the Middle Ages*, ed. by Glenn Burger and Steven F. Kruger (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), pp. 143–67
- Starkey, David (ed.), *The English Court from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War* (London: Longman, 1987)

- Starner-Wright, Janet, and Susan M. Fitzmaurice, 'Shaping a Drama out of a History: Elizabeth Cary and the Story of Edward II', *Critical Survey*, 14 (2002), 79–92
- Stauffer, Donald A., 'A Deep and Sad Passion', in *Essays in Dramatic Literature: The Parrott Presentation Volume*, ed. by Hardin Craig (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1935), pp. 289-314
- Stevens, Andrea, 'Edward II: A Stage History', in *Edward II: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Kirk Melnikoff (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017), pp. 43–71
- Stewart, Alan, 'Edoüard et Gaverston: New Ways of Looking at an English History Play', in *Edward II: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Kirk Melnikoff (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017), pp. 97–117
- Stymeist, David, 'Status, Sodomy, and the Theater in Marlowe's *Edward II*', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 44 (2004), 233–53 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3844628>> [accessed 15 December 2015]
- Sullivan, Garrett A., "'My Life, My Company": Amity, Enmity and Vitality in *Edward II*', in *Edward II: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Kirk Melnikoff (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017), pp. 175–93
- Sullivan, Garrett A., Patrick Cheney, and Andrew Hadfield, *Early Modern English Drama: A Critical Companion* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)
- Summers, Claude J., 'Sex, Politics and Self-Realisation in *Edward II*', in 'A Poet and a Filthy Play-Maker': *New Essays on Christopher Marlowe*, ed. by Kenneth Friedenreich, Roma Gill, and Constance B. Kuriyama (New York: AMS Press, 1988), pp. 221–40
- Sunesen, Bent, 'Marlowe and the Dumb Show', *English Studies*, 35 (1954), 241–53
- Taylor, John, *English Historical Literature in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987)
- 'The French *Prose Brut*: Popular History in Fourteenth-Century England', in *England in the Fourteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1985 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. by W. M. Ormrod (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1986), pp. 247–54
- *The Universal Chronicle of Ranulf Higden* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966)
- Taylor, Rupert, *The Political Prophecy in England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1911)
- Thomas, Vivien, and William Tydeman, *Christopher Marlowe: The Plays and Their Sources* (London: Routledge, 1994)
- Thornton, Tim, *Prophecy, Politics and the People in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006)
- Thurn, David H., 'Sovereignty, Disorder, and Fetishism in Marlowe's *Edward II*', *Renaissance Drama*, 21 (1990), 115–41

- Tilley, Arthur, 'Some Pamphlets of the French Wars of Religion', *The English Historical Review*, 14 (1899), 451–70 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/548773>> [accessed 23 March 2014]
- Tillotson, Kathleen, 'Drayton and Richard II', *Review of English Studies*, 15 (1939), 172–79 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/508945>> [accessed 5 October 2015]
- Tout, T. F., *The Captivity and Death of Edward of Carnarvon* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1920)
- *The Place of the Reign of Edward II in English History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1936)
- Tromly, Frederic B., *Playing With Desire: Christopher Marlowe and the Art of Tantalization* (Toronto; London: University of Toronto Press, 1998)
- Tyson, Diana, 'Lament for a Dead King', *Journal of Medieval History*, 30 (2004), 359–75 <DOI: 10.1016/j.jmedhist.2004.08.003>
- 'Jean le Bel: Portrait of a Chronicler', *Journal of Medieval History* 12.4 (1986), 315–32
- Usher, G. A., 'The Career of a Political Bishop: Adam de Orleton (c. 1279–1345)', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 22 (1972), 33–47 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3678827>> [accessed 13 September 2013]
- Valente, Claire, 'The *Lament of Edward II*: Religious Lyric, Political Propaganda', *Speculum*, 77 (2002), 422–39 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3301327>> [accessed 28 October 2012]
- Vander Motten, J. P., 'Howard, Sir Robert (1626–1698)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13935>> [accessed 3 June 2016]
- Voss, James, 'Edward II: Marlowe's Historical Tragedy', *English Studies*, 63 (1982), 517–30
- Waith, Eugene M., 'Edward II: The Shadow of Action', *Tulane Drama Review*, 8 (1964), 59–76 <DOI: 10.2307/1124919>
- Walker, Simon, 'Remembering Richard: History and Memory in Lancastrian England', in *The Fifteenth Century IV: Political Culture in Late Medieval Britain*, ed. by Linda Clark and Christine Carpenter (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004), pp. 21–31
- Walsh, Brian, 'Marlowe and the Elizabethan Theatre Audience', in *Christopher Marlowe in Context*, ed. by Emily Bartels and Emma Smith (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 68–79
- Weil, Judith, *Christopher Marlowe: Merlin's Prophet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)
- Wells, Stanley, *Looking for Sex in Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004)
- *Shakespeare, Sex and Love* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010)

- Wessman, Christopher, 'Marlowe's *Edward II* as "Actaeonesque History"', *Connotations*, 9 (1999), 1–33 <<http://www.connotations.uni-tuebingen.de/wessman00901.htm>> [accessed 11 January 2016]
- Wiggins, Martin, 'Arundel and Maltravers: A Textual Problem in *Edward IP*, *Notes and Queries*, 44 (1997), 42–47
- Williams, Carolyn, "'This Effeminate Brat': Tamburlaine's Unmanly Son', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 9 (1997), 56–80 <[http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqi:res\\_ver=0.2&res\\_id=xri:lion&rft\\_id=xri:lion:ft:abell:R01528549:0&rft.aaccountid=14664](http://0-gateway.proquest.com.wam.leeds.ac.uk/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqi:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion&rft_id=xri:lion:ft:abell:R01528549:0&rft.aaccountid=14664)> [accessed 21 December 2015]
- Williams, Deanne, 'Dido, Queen of England', *ELH*, 73 (2006), 31–59 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30030002>> [accessed 15 December 2015]
- Wolfe, Heather, *The Literary Career and Legacy of Elizabeth Cary, 1613-1680* (New York; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)
- Woolf, Daniel, 'Community, Law and State: Samuel Daniel's Historical Thought Revisited', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 49 (1988), 61–83 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2709704>> [accessed 13 September 2013]
- 'Genre into Artifact: The Decline of the English Chronicle in the Sixteenth Century', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 19 (1988), 321–54 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2540467>> [accessed 27 February 2013]
- *The Idea of History in Early Stuart England: Erudition, Ideology, and "The Light of Truth" from the Accession of James I to the Civil War* (Toronto; London: University of Toronto Press, 1990)
- 'The True Date and Authorship of Henry, Viscount Falkland's, History of the Life, Reign, and Death of King Edward II', *Bodleian Library Record*, 12 (1988), 440–52
- Wootton, David, 'Francis Bacon: Your Flexible Friend', in *The World of the Favourite*, ed. by J. H. Elliott and L. W. B. Brockliss (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 184–204
- Worden, Blair, 'Favourites on the English Stage', in *The World of the Favourite*, ed. by J. H. Elliott and L. W. B. Brockliss (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 159–83
- Zaller, Robert, *The Discourse of Legitimacy in Early Modern England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007)
- Zocca, Louis Ralph, *Elizabethan Narrative Poetry* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950)
- Zucker, David Hard, *Stage and Image in the Plays of Christopher Marlowe* (Salzburg: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur, Universität Salzburg, 1972)

## Reference works

*Anglo-Norman dictionary*, ed. by William Rothwell, Louise W. Stone and T.B.W. Reid, 2 vols (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 1992)

*Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, ed. by R. E. Latham and David R. Howlett, 3 vols (London: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1975)

*A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. by Morris Palmer Tilley (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950)

*Dictionnaire Historique de La Langue Française*, ed. by Alain Rey, Marianne Tomi, Tristan Hordé, and Chantal Tanet, 3 vols (Paris: Le Robert, 1992)

*English Short Title Catalogue* (British Library) <<http://estc.bl.uk>>

*Middle English Dictionary* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2001)  
<<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/>>

*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Online edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)  
<<http://www.oxforddnb.com>>

*OED Online* (Oxford University Press) <<http://www.oed.com>>

*Revised Medieval Latin Word-List from British and Irish Sources*, ed. by R. E. Latham (London: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1965)



## Abbreviations

---

### Primary texts

- Annales Londonienses*** ‘Annales Londonienses’, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, ed. by William Stubbs, 2 vols (London: Longman, 1882), I, 1–251
- Annales Paulini*** ‘Annales Paulini’, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, I, 253–370
- Anonimalle*** *The Anonimalle Chronicle, 1307 to 1334: From Brotherton Collection MS 29*, ed. and trans. by Wendy R. Childs and John Taylor (Leeds: Yorkshire Archaeological Society, 1991)
- Baker** Richard Baker, *A Chronicle of the Kings of England* (London: Daniel Frere, 1643)
- Barons Warres*** Michael Drayton, ‘The Barons Warres, in the Reigne of Edward the Second’, in *Works*, ed. by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931), II, 9–128
- Brereton** Jean Froissart, *Chronicles*, ed. and trans. by Geoffrey Brereton (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968). (See also **Froissart**, **Lettenhove**)
- Bridlington Chronicle*** ‘Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvan’, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, II, 23–151
- Bridlington Prophecy*** ‘The Prophecy of John of Bridlington’, in *Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History, Composed during the Period from the Accession of Edw. III. to that of Ric. III.*, ed. by Thomas Wright (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1859), pp. 123–215.
- Brut*** *The Brut or The Chronicles of England*, ed. by F. W. D. Brie (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1906)
- Burton** Thomas Burton, *Chronica Monasterii de Melsa: A Fundatione Usque Ad Annum 1396*, ed. by E.A. Bond, 3 vols (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1866)
- Cary (folio)** Elizabeth Cary, *The History of the Life, Reign, and Death of Edward II* (London: J. C., 1680)
- Cary (octavo)** Elizabeth Cary, *The History of the Most Unfortunate Prince King Edward II* (London: A. G. and J. P., 1680)
- Daniel** Samuel Daniel, *The Collection of the Historie of England* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1618)
- EHE*** Michael Drayton, ‘Englands Heroicall Epistles’, in *Works*, ed. by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931), II, 129–308

- Fabyan** Robert Fabyan, *Prima Pars Cronecarum* (London: Richard Pynson, 1516)
- Flores** *Flores Historiarum*, ed. by Henry Richards Luard, 3 vols (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1890), III
- Froissart** Manuscripts cited from *The Online Froissart*, ed. by Peter Ainsworth and Godfried Croenen, version 1.5 (Sheffield: HRIOOnline, 2013) <<http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/onlinefroissart>> [accessed 4 April 2014]. (See also **Brereton**, **Lettenhove**.)
- Glossa** *Biblia Latina cum Glossa Ordinaria*, ed. by A. Rusch (Turnhout: Brepols, 1992; first published 1481), in Martin Morard et al. (eds.), *Glossae Sacrae Scripturae Electronicae* (Paris: CNRS-IRHT, 2016) <<http://gloss-e.irht.cnrs.fr/php/livres-liste.php>> [accessed 30 June 2017]
- Grafton (Abridgement)** *An Abridgement of the Chronicles of England* (London: Richard Tottyll, 1562)
- Grafton (Chronicle)** Richard Grafton, *A Chronicle at Large and Meere History of the Affayres of Englande and Kinges of the Same* (London: Henry Denham, 1569)
- Heywood** Thomas Heywood, *A Chronographicall History of All the Kings and Memorable Passages of This Kingdome* (London: J. Okes, 1641)
- Histoire Tragique** *Histoire Tragique et Memorable, de Pierre de Gaverston* (Paris: n.p., 1588)
- Holinshed (1577)** Raphael Holinshed, 'Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland', in *The Holinshed Project*, ed. by Paulina Kewes, Ian W. Archer, Felicity Heal and Henry Summerson
- Holinshed (1587)** <<http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/>> [accessed 11 April 2014]
- Hubert (1628)** Francis Hubert, *The Deplorable Life and Death of Edward the Second*, (London: Printed [by Nicholas Okes] for Roger Michell, 1628)
- Hubert (1629)** Francis Hubert, 'The Historie of Edward the Second, Surnamed Carnarvan', in *The Poems of Sir Francis Hubert*, ed. by Bernard Mellor ([Hong Kong]: Hong Kong University Press, 1961), pp. 4–171
- Lament** 'Lament of Edward II', in *Anglo-Norman Political Songs*, ed. and trans. by Isabel S. T. Aspin, Anglo-Norman Texts 11 (Oxford: Published for the Anglo-Norman Text Society by Basil Blackwell, 1953), pp. 93–102
- Lanercost** *The Chronicle of Lanercost, 1272-1346*, ed. and trans. by Herbert Maxwell (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1913)
- Lanquet-Cooper** Thomas Lanquet and Thomas Cooper, *An Epitome of Chronicles* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1549)
- L'Estoile** Pierre de L'Estoile, *Registre-Journal Du Règne de Henri III*, ed. by Madeleine Lazard and Gilbert Schrenck, 6 vols (Genève: Droz, 1992)



- Le Baker (1889)** Geoffrey Le Baker, *Chronicon Galfridi Le Baker de Snynebroke*, ed. by E. M. Thompson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889)
- Le Baker (2012)** *The Chronicle of Geoffrey Le Baker*, ed. by Richard Barber, trans. by David Preest (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012)
- Legend** Michael Drayton, 'The Legend of Pierce Gaveston', in *Works*, ed. by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931), II, 431–50
- Lettenhove** Jean Froissart, *Oeuvres de Froissart: Chroniques*, ed. by J. Kervyn de Lettenhove, 25 vols (Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1967). (See also **Breton, Froissart**.)
- Marlowe** Christopher Marlowe, *Edward the Second*, ed. by Charles R. Forker (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995)
- Martyn** William Martyn, *The Historie, and Lives, of the Kings of England* (London: Printed by William Stansby, 1615)
- Mirror** Lily B. Campbell (ed.), *The Mirror for Magistrates* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938)
- Mortimeriados** Michael Drayton, 'Mortimeriados', in *Works*, ed. by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931), I, 305–92
- Murimuth** Adam Murimuth, *Adæ Murimuth Continuatio Chronicarum: Robertus de Avesbury De Gestis Mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii*, ed. by E. M. Thompson (London: Printed for H.M.S.O., by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1889)
- Oxford Shakespeare** William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley W. Wells (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)
- Peirs Gaveston** Michael Drayton, 'Peirs Gaveston Earle of Cornwall. His Life, Death, and Fortune', in *Works*, ed. by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931), I, 157–208
- Polychronicon** Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden Monachi Cestrensis: Together with the English Translations of John Trevisa and of an Unknown Writer of the Fifteenth Century*, ed. by Joseph Rawson Lumby (London: Longman, 1865).
- Sandford** Francis Sandford, *A Genealogical History of the Kings of England, and Monarchs of Great Britain* (London: Printed by Tho. Newcomb, 1677).
- Songs** 'Songs on the Death of Peter de Gaveston', in *The Political Songs of England: From the Reign of John to that of Edward II*, ed. and trans. by Thomas Wright (Edinburgh: Privately printed, 1884), pp. 258–61.
- Speed** John Speed, *The History of Great Britaine* (London: William Hall and John Beale, 1611)
- Stow** *The Chronicles of England* (London: Henry Bynneman, 1580)
- Trokelowe** William Rishanger, *Johannis de Trokelowe, et Henrici de Blaneforde, Monachorum S. Albani, Necnon Quorundam Anonymorum, Chronica et*

*Annales*, ed. by H. T. Riley (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1866)

- Vergil** Polydore Vergil, *Anglica Historia (1555 Version)*, trans. by Dana F. Sutton, 2005 <<http://philological.bham.ac.uk/polverg/>>
- Vita** *Vita Edwardi Secundi*, ed. and trans. by Wendy R. Childs and Noël Denholm-Young (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005)
- Vulgate** *Biblia Sacra Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem*, ed. by B. Fischer, I. Gribomont, H.F.D. Sparks, W. Thiele, Robert Weber, and Roger Gryson, 5th edn (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007)
- Walsingham** Thomas Walsingham, *Historia Brevis Thomae Walsingham* (London: Henry Binneman, 1574)
- WNV** Richard Niccols, *A Mirour for Magistrates... Newly Enlarged with a Last Part, Called A Winter Nights Vision* (London: Felix Kyngston, 1610)

## Secondary texts

- Melnikoff** Kirk Melnikoff (ed.), *Edward II: A Critical Reader* (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare, 2017)
- New Perspectives** Gwilym Dodd and Anthony Musson (eds.), *The Reign of Edward II: New Perspectives* (Woodbridge; Rochester, NY: York Medieval Press in association with Boydell Press, 2006)
- Perry** Curtis Perry, *Literature and Favoritism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)
- Phillips** J. R. S. Phillips, *Edward II* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2010)

## Reference works

- DMLBS** *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, ed. by R. E. Latham and David R. Howlett, 3 vols (London: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1975)
- DHLF** *Dictionnaire Historique de La Langue Française*, ed. by Alain Rey, Marianne Tomi, Tristan Hordé, and Chantal Tanet, 3 vols (Paris: Le Robert, 1992)
- ESTC** *English Short Title Catalogue* (British Library) <<http://estc.bl.uk>>
- ODNB** *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Online edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com>>
- OED** *OED Online* (Oxford University Press) <<http://www.oed.com>>. Dates given in brackets refer to the year in which the entry was last updated.

## Appendix: Representations of Edward II's reign composed between 1305 and 1700

---

This table provides a short guide to the primary sources that will be cited in my thesis. Texts are listed in alphabetical order of author; anonymous works are listed under 'Anon', in alphabetical order of title. Each text is listed under the title and author by which it is generally known to historians and literary critics; any alternative titles and authors are listed under 'Textual history'. References to numbers of early modern printed editions indicate only those printed during the period 1305-1700. For reasons of brevity, details of specific manuscripts are given only when all or part of a text is unavailable in print, or when the titles given to printed versions of manuscripts are confusing or ambiguous (as with the London chronicles).

Texts in the 'Sources' and 'Used as source by' column are ordered alphabetically. Where several texts are listed in the 'Sources' column, if one is used significantly more than the others, I have underlined it to indicate this. The majority of texts also contain original material. The lists in these two columns should not be taken as exhaustive; I have included a text in those columns only when its reliance on another text is either obvious and not in doubt, or there is sufficient evidence to plausibly suggest it as a possibility.

The 'Importance' column is, likewise, heavily selective: it is intended to provide a reminder of the main significant aspects of each text as they reflect the thematic focuses of my thesis, rather than a comprehensive assessment.

Author	Title	Textual history 1305-1700 / modern editions	Language	Sources for Edward II's reign	Used as source for Edward II's reign by	Importance
Anon	Against the Queen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1326-27.</li> <li>• Brotherton Collection BC MS 29, fol. 4<sup>v</sup>.</li> <li>• No printed version.</li> <li>• Title from <i>Anglo-Norman Literature: A Guide to Texts and Manuscripts</i>, ed. by</li> </ul>	Anglo-Norman	Largely original.	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poem castigating Isabella for deposing and (especially) imprisoning Edward, who the writer implies is still the rightful king.</li> <li>• Evidence of sympathy for Edward's imprisonment during his reign.</li> </ul>

		Ruth J. Dean and Maureen B.M. Boulton (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1999), no. 88.				
Anon	Annales Londonienses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1316 (at which point narration stops).</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Modern edition: <i>Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II</i>, ed. by William Stubbs (London: Longman, 1882), I, 1–251.</li> <li>• Author possibly Andrew Horn - see <i>Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II</i>, ed. by William Stubbs, 2 vols (London: Longman, 1882), I, xxii–xxviii.</li> </ul>	Latin	Largely original.	Possibly Fabyan; possibly common source.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes version of Merlin's prophecies, with Edward as a goat.</li> <li>• Useful source for significations of 'sodomy' regarding Templars.</li> </ul>
Anon	Annales Paulini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed contemporaneously to 1341.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Modern edition: <i>Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and</i></li> </ul>	Latin	Largely original. Problematic relationship with Murimuth's work: unclear which is the source of	Drayton ( <i>Peirs Gaveston</i> ); possibly Murimuth (see 'Sources' column)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of three contemporary sources that says Edward called Gaveston his brother; also refers to him as 'his adoptive brother'.</li> <li>• One of earliest texts to accuse Gaveston of witchcraft.</li> </ul>

		<i>Edward II</i> , ed. by William Stubbs (London: Longman, 1882), I, 253–370.		which. <sup>1</sup>		
Anon	Annals of Bermondsey Abbey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1433.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version</li> <li>• Modern edition: <i>Annales Monastici</i>, ed. by Henry Richards Luard (London: Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1864), III, 421–88.</li> </ul>	Latin	Higden	None known.	Though account of Edward’s reign is brief, penetrative murder scene is described in detail, demonstrating its historiographical acceptance as one of the main features of his story.
Anon	Anonymi Chronicon Godstovianum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chronicle of Godstow Abbey.</li> <li>• Composed after 1430.</li> <li>• ‘Second version’ of Latin <i>Brut</i>.<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Latest edition: ‘Anonymi Chronicon Godstovianum’, in <i>Guilielmi Roperi Vita D. Thoma Mori</i>, ed. by Thomas Hearne (Oxford: John Rance, 1716), pp.</li> </ul>	Latin	Anon, <i>Brut</i> (‘long version’), with added continuations; Higden	None known	<p>One source for couplets concerning the kings of England which refer to Edward as ‘tortured to painful death’, having given very little other information about his reign. These couplets also appear in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Tenison’ continuation of <i>Flores Historiarum</i>, composed shortly after 1327 (see Gransden, I, 522–23);</li> <li>• commonplace book of William Horton, monk of</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, 2 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), II, 25–26.

<sup>2</sup> See Lister M. Matheson, *The Prose Brut: The Development of a Middle English Chronicle* (Tempe: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998), p. 43.

		180–246				<p>Lewes, born 1455 [Great Britain Public Record Office, <i>The Forty-Sixth Annual Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records</i> (London: Eyre &amp; Spottiswoode, 1886), Appendix II, pp. 64–67]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robert Ricart's <i>The Maire of Bristow Is Kalendar</i> (1479) [Robert Ricart, <i>The Maire of Bristowe Is Kalendar</i>, ed. by Lucy Toulmin Smith (Westminster: Printed for the Camden Society, 1872), p. 12];</li> <li>• historical miscellany found in College of Arms, Arundel MS 48, composed c. 1491 ['Wilhelmi Wyrcester Anekdotia Quaedam Alia Historica', in <i>Liber Niger Scaccarii, Nec Non Wilhelmi Worcestrii Annales Rerum Anglicarum</i>, ed. by Thomas Hearne, 2 vols (London: W. and J. Richardson, 1771), II, 522–32 (pp. 529–32)].</li> </ul>
Anon	L'Antigaverston (Lettre d'un Gentil-Homme Catholique)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Anon, <i>Lettre d'un Gentil-Homme Catholique Apostolicque &amp; Romain &amp; Vray François &amp;</i></li> </ul>	French	Anon, <i>Histoire Tragique</i>	Anon, <i>Replique à l'Antigaverston</i> ; Anon, <i>Responce à l'Antigaverston</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to <i>Histoire Tragique et Memorable de Pierre de Gaverston</i>, written by Duc d'Épernon or one of his</li> </ul>

		<p><i>Fidelle Serviteur du Roy à ung Sien Amy sur l'Histoire de Pierre de Gaverston</i> (Rheins: Jehan de Foigny avec permission de Monseigneur le cardinal de Guise, 1588).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Known popularly as <i>L'Antigaverston</i>.</li> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>				<p>supporters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Denies validity of comparison between Épernon and Gaveston, particularly stressing Épernon's French heritage and noble birth.</li> </ul>
Anon	Bishop of Carlisle's Speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: <i>A Pious and Learned Speech Delivered in the High Court of Parliament, 1. H. 4. by Thomas Mercks Then Bishop of Carlile</i>, (London: for N. V. and J. B., 1642).</li> <li>• Reprinted: <i>The Bishop of Carlile's Speech in Parliament, Concerning Deposing of Princes</i> (London: n.p., 1679)</li> </ul>	English	Unidentifiable due to brevity.	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purports to be speech arguing against Richard II's deposition delivered by Thomas Mercks, then Bishop of Carlisle</li> <li>• Delivers warnings about unlawfulness of deposition</li> <li>• First printed with relevance to Civil War; reprinted with relevance to Exclusion Crisis.</li> </ul>
Anon	A Book of British Kings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1399.</li> <li>• Continuation of verse version of 'Harley Epitome' (prose epitome of English history from Brutus to Henry III) with prose commentary.</li> <li>• No early modern printed</li> </ul>	Latin	Anon, <i>Lanercost Chronicle</i> ; Higden; Knighton; Walsingham ( <i>Chronica Maiora</i> )	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Mnemonic verse' summarising Edward's reign, focusing on favourites' political influence rather than sexual transgression.</li> <li>• Commentary, unusually, uses stock phrasing commonly employed with reference to</li> </ul>

		<p>version.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern edition: <i>A book of British Kings: 1200 BC - 1399 AD: edited from British Library MSS Harley 3860, Cotton Claudius D. vii, and Harley 1808</i>, ed. by A. G. Rigg (Toronto: Published for the Centre for Medieval Studies by the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2000).</li> </ul>				Humphrey de Bohun ( <i>inter celanda nature confossus ignominiose peremptus est</i> ) to describe Edward's murder.
Anon	Bridlington Chronicle / 'Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvan'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1361-72.</li> <li>• Comprises copy of existing contemporaneous chronicle (now lost) combined with poetic prophecies of 'John of Bridlington'.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Modern edition: 'Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvan', in <i>Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II</i>, ed. by William Stubbs (London: Longman, 1882), II, 23-151.</li> </ul>	Latin	Anon, <i>Prophecy of John of Bridlington</i> ; Higden	Possibly Burton; possibly common source.	Includes extracts from 'Prophecy of John of Bridlington' without explanatory commentary.
Anon	Brut (independent continuation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1377.</li> <li>• Full text: Corpus Christi</li> </ul>	Anglo-Norman	Le Baker ( <i>Chronicon</i> )	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adds heightened bodily violence to le Baker's</li> </ul>



		<p>College, Oxford, MS. 78.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Partially printed: V. H. Galbraith, 'Extracts from the <i>Historia Aurea</i> and a French <i>Brut</i> (1317-47)', <i>English Historical Review</i>, 43 (1928), 203–217.</li> <li>• MS follows Anglo-Norman 'long version' of <i>Brut</i> (see below) up to Edward I's death in 1307. After this, the text is 'effaced and overwritten' with an original, royalist composition.<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>				<p>sympathetic account of Edward's ill-treatment and murder.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Murder scene presents Edward as more heroic, less passive, than accounts in le Baker and 'long version' of <i>Brut</i>.</li> </ul>
Anon	Brut ('long version')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For full discussion of MSS and textual history, see Lister M. Matheson, <i>The Prose Brut: The Development of a Middle English Chronicle</i> (Tempe: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1998).</li> <li>• Also referred to as 'long continuation', reflecting former consensus that it</li> </ul>	Anglo-Norman / English	Largely original.	Anon, <i>Anonymi Chronicon Godstovianum</i> ; Baker; Boston, Robert of; Burton; Fabyan; Grafton ( <i>Chronicle At Large</i> ); Hardyng; Heywood ( <i>Chronographical History</i> ); Higden;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibly based on Anon, <i>Brut</i> ('short version') and possible common source with Anon, <i>London Chronicles</i>.</li> <li>• Popular and influential.</li> <li>• Contains 'English Prose Translation' of Anon, <i>The Last Kings of England</i>. Through this, popularised story of Edward's sexual transgressions.</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Julia Marvin, 'Albine and Isabelle: Regicidal Queens and the Historical Imagination of the Anglo-Norman *Prose Brut* Chronicles', *Arthurian Literature*, 18 (2001), 143–91 (p. 153).

		<p>was a continuation of a lost text extending to 1307. (See Marvin, pp. 153–54, for a convincing argument against the existence of this ‘lost’ text.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referred to in this thesis as <i>Brut</i>, since it represents the standard version of Edward II’s reign under that title.</li> <li>• Composed in Anglo-Norman between 1333 and c.1347. Matheson (p. 34) suggests 1333-50, but the text was used as a source for John of Tynemouth’s <i>Historia Aurea</i>, composed c. 1347.</li> <li>• Translated into English between 1350-80. Several continuations subsequently added (see Matheson).</li> <li>• Also known (in early modern period) as ‘The Chronicles of England’ or ‘The English Chronicle’.</li> <li>• First printed: <i>Cronicles of Englonde</i> (Westminster:</li> </ul>			<p>Holinshed; le Baker (<i>Chronicon</i>); Otterbourne; Rastell; Stow (<i>Chronicles</i> and <i>Annales</i>); Vergil; Whittlesey (used by continuator)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earliest known account of Edward’s murder by anal penetration with red-hot spit.</li> <li>• Popularised idea of Edward seeking revenge on his nobles for Gaveston’s death.</li> </ul>
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

		<p>William Caxton, 1480).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three editions 1480-86.</li> <li>• Modern edition: <i>The Brut, or, The Chronicles of England</i>, ed. by F. W. D. Brie, Early English Text Society, 136 (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1906).</li> </ul>				
Anon	Brut ('short version')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also referred to as 'short continuation' (see above, 'long version').</li> <li>• Composed after 1333.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Substantial variation between different MSS, especially in Edward II's reign.</li> <li>• Modern edition of fullest version, with parallel text translation: <i>The Anonimalle Chronicle, 1307 to 1334, from Brotherton Collection MS 29</i>, trans. by Wendy R. Childs and John Taylor (Leeds: Yorkshire Archaeological Society, 1991).</li> </ul>	Anglo-Norman	Largely original.	Anon, <i>Croniques de London</i> ; Burton; Knighton; Stow ( <i>Chronicles / Annales</i> ); Tynemouth, John of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Far less sensational (and therefore less popular) than 'long version'.</li> <li>• Different MSS give different explanations for Edward's death.</li> </ul>
Anon	Chaworth Roll	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1321-27.</li> </ul>	Anglo-	Particularly	None known.	Little information on Edward's

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Modern edition: <i>The Chaworth Roll: A Fourteenth-Century Genealogy of the Kings of England</i>, ed. by Alixe Bovey, Olivier de Laborderie, and Marigold Anne Norbye (London: Sam Fogg, 2005).</li> </ul>	Norman	similar to three other roll genealogies: Cambridge University Library MSS Dd.3.48 and Oo.7.32, and Bodleian MS Fr.d.1(R).		reign, but is example of several genealogical rolls which add a depiction of the Wheel of Fortune to their representation of the period 1321-27: possibly reference to Edward's predicted/remembered fall.
Anon	Chronicle of Louth Park Abbey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed mid-fifteenth century.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Modern edition: <i>Chronicon Abbatie de Parco Lude: The Chronicle of Louth Park Abbey</i>, ed. by Edmund Venables, trans. A. R. Maddison (Horncastle: Publications of the Lincolnshire Record Society, 1889).</li> </ul>	Latin	Anon, <i>Flores Historiarum</i> ; Murimuth	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heavily abbreviated and derivative.</li> <li>• Pro-Lancastrian, anti-Edward.</li> <li>• Omits explanation of Edward's death.</li> </ul>
Anon	Chroniques de Sempringham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1326.</li> <li>• Continuation of 'Le Livre de Reis de Britannie' written at Sempringham abbey.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> </ul>	Anglo-Norman	Largely original.	Possibly Anon, <i>Short English Metrical Chronicle</i>	Brief; nothing significant.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern edition (with parallel translation): <i>Le Livre de Reis de Brittanie e Le Livre de Reis de Engleterre</i>, ed. and trans. by John Glover (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1865).</li> </ul>				
Anon	Croniques de London	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed after 1343.</li> <li>• Also known as ‘French Chronicle of London’.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Modern edition (French): <i>Croniques de London</i>, ed. by G. J. Aungier (London: Camden Society, 1844).</li> <li>• Modern edition (English translation): <i>Chronicles of the Mayors and Sheriffs of London, A.D. 1188 to A.D. 1274. The French Chronicle of London, A.D. 1259 to A.D. 1343</i>, ed. and trans. by H. T. Riley (London: Trübner, 1863).</li> </ul>	Anglo-Norman	Anon, <i>Brut</i> (‘short version’)	None known.	Diverges from main source to present Edward’s death as murder: demonstrates increasing acceptance of this narrative.
Anon	Chronicle of the Civil Wars of Edward II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1327.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> </ul>	Latin	Largely original.	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attributes Edward’s love for Gaveston to physical attraction.</li> <li>• Elaborate rhetorical</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern edition: George L. Haskins, 'A Chronicle of the Civil Wars of Edward II', <i>Speculum</i> 14 (1939), 73–81.</li> </ul>				<p>responses to deaths of Gaveston and Thomas of Lancaster (favouring the latter).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Account of events leading up to Gaveston's first exile in 1305 depicts quarrel between Edward and his father in terms that closely echo the Vulgate's story of David and Jonathan.</li> </ul>
Anon	Histoire Tragique et Memorable, de Pierre de Gaverston	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previously attributed to Jean Boucher/Bouchet. For full discussion of authorship and textual history/multiple redactions, see Alan Stewart, 'Edoüard et Gaverston: New Ways of Looking at an English History Play', in Melnikoff, pp. 97–117 (pp. 102–08 n. 30).</li> <li>• First printed: Anon, <i>Histoire Tragique et Memorable, de Pierre de Gaverston</i> (Paris: n.p., 1588)</li> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>	French	Froissart; <u>Walsingham</u> ( <i>Chronica Maiora</i> )	Anon, <i>L'Antigaverston (Lettre d'un Gentil-Homme Catholique)</i> ; Anon, <i>Replique à l'Antigaverston</i> ; Anon, <i>Responce a l'Antigaverston</i> ; Marlowe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draws political comparison between Gaveston and Henri III's favourite Jean-Louis de Nogaret de la Valette, created Duc d'Épernon.</li> <li>• Largely translation of Walsingham (<i>Chronica Maiora</i>), but with heightened focus on sexual nature of Edward's transgressions</li> <li>• First text to refer to Gaveston as Edward's <i>mignon</i>, probably influencing Marlowe's choice of term 'minion'.</li> </ul>
Anon	Lament of Edward II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1327-50</li> <li>• Two different MS</li> </ul>	Anglo-Norman	Largely original.	Anon, <i>Annales Rerum Anglicarum</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purports to be written by Edward while imprisoned.</li> </ul>

		<p>versions: London, British Library, MS Royal 20 A II and Longleat MS 25.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earliest copy of Latin translation: ‘Wilhelmi Wyrcester Annales Rerum Anglicarum’, in <i>Liber Niger Scaccarii, Nec Non Wilhelmi Worcestrii Annales Rerum Anglicarum</i>, ed. by Thomas Hearne, 2 vols (London: W. and J. Richardson, 1771), II, 424–521 (pp. 425–29).</li> <li>• Earliest copy of English translation: Robert Fabyan, [<i>New Chronicles of England and France</i>] (London: Richard Pynson, 1516), fols. 2K6<sup>r</sup>–2L<sup>r</sup>.</li> <li>• Modern edition of London, British Library, MS Royal 20 A II: T. M. Smallwood, ‘The Lament of Edward II’, <i>Modern Language Review</i>, 68 (1973), 521–29.</li> <li>• Modern edition of Longleat MS 25 with</li> </ul>			<p>(used Latin translation); Fabyan (used English translation and possibly French original)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses Edward’s fall as didactic lesson about worldly mutability.</li> </ul>
--	--	--	--	--	---	---

		parallel English translation: 'Lament of Edward II' in <i>Anglo-Norman Political Songs</i> , ed. and trans. by Isabel S. T. Aspin (Oxford: Published for the Anglo-Norman Text Society by Basil Blackwell, 1953), pp. 93–102.				
Anon	Lanercost Chronicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on continuation of Richard of Durham's chronicle (now lost), which was probably contemporaneous. Writer(s) at Lanercost priory copied it after 1346.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Modern edition (Latin): <i>Chronicon de Lanercost</i>, ed. by Joseph Stevenson (Edinburgh: Maitland Club, 1839).</li> <li>• Modern edition (translation): <i>The Chronicle of Lanercost, 1272-1346</i>, ed. and trans. by Herbert Maxwell (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons,</li> </ul>	Latin	Continuation of Richard of Durham's chronicle (lost)	Anon, <i>A Book of British Kings</i>	Notes contemporary rumours that younger Despenser was attempting to procure a divorce between Edward and Isabella.



		1913).				
Anon	The Last Kings of England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also known as <i>Prophecy of the Six Kings</i>.</li> <li>• Exists in 8 known versions. For full discussion of MSS, textual history and different versions, see T. M. Smallwood, 'The Prophecy of the Six Kings', <i>Speculum</i>, 60 (1985), 571–92.</li> <li>• Earliest version ("Original" Prose Version) composed c. 1312.</li> <li>• Later version ('English Prose Translation') popularised by inclusion in <i>Brut</i> ('long version').</li> <li>• For early modern edition, see Anon, <i>Brut</i> ('long version').</li> <li>• For modern editions of different versions, see Smallwood.</li> </ul>	Originally Anglo-Norman; translated into English, Welsh, Latin	Largely original.	See <i>Brut</i> ('long version').	Earliest text to accuse Edward of sexual transgression: "Original" Prose Version' contains references to Edward as a goat and to his 'lechery'.
Anon	Leicester's Commonwealth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: <i>The Copie of a Leter, Wryten by a Master of Arte of Cambrige</i> (n.p. [Rouen], 1584). (Although</li> </ul>	English	Largely original.	Sidney	Draws political comparisons between Edward's favourites and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.

		<p>ESTC states the text was printed in Paris, D. C. Peck argues that it is more likely to have been printed in Rouen.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• French translation: <i>Discours de la Vie Abominable, Ruses, Trahisons, Meutres, Impostures, &amp;c. de my Lorde de Lecestre</i> (n.p., 1585).</li> <li>• Modern edition: <i>Leicester's Commonwealth: The Copy of a Letter Written by a Master of Art of Cambridge (1584) and Related Documents</i>, ed. by D. C. Peck (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1985).</li> <li>• See <i>Leicester's Commonwealth</i>, ed. by D. C. Peck (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1985), pp. 3–4, for refutation of previous attribution to Robert Persons.</li> </ul>				
Anon	<i>Lettre d'un Gentil-Homme Catholique</i> – see Anon, <i>L'Antigaverston</i>					
Anon (various authors)	London Chronicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed during fifteenth century</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> </ul>	English	All accounts of Edward's reign have unknown common	Fabyan; Holinshed; Stow ( <i>Chronicles / Annales</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mostly brief summary of Edward's reign. Two main detailed sections are: (1) story of John Deydras</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many different chronicles exist, but their relationships are complex and cannot be categorically determined. Since their narratives of Edward II's reign have few significant differences, and have a common source, they have been grouped together for the purposes of this table.</li> <li>• For full textual history of various MSS and details of modern editions, see Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, <i>Chronicles of London</i> (Dursley: Alan Sutton, 1977), pp. ix–xv. The one modern edition published since is <i>The Great Chronicle of London</i>, ed. by A. H. Thomas and I. D. Thornley (London: G. W. Jones, 1938).</li> </ul>		source, almost certainly a Latin chronicle; they may also share this source with Anon, <i>Brut</i> ('long version').		<p>(alias Tanner, Powderham or Canne) who claimed to be the legitimate son of Edward I, exchanged by his nurse for the son of (variously) a water-bearer, carter or tanner;</p> <p>(2) attempts of Isabella and Roger Mortimer to win London's support after their invasion in 1326.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two accounts (BL MS Egerton 1995, or 'Gregory's chronicle' and BL Harley MS 565) write that Gaveston was Edward's sworn brother.</li> <li>• Most accounts report Edward's death as murder on Mortimer's orders, but give no further detail. Exception is Lambeth MS 306 (the 'Short English Chronicle') which specifies penetrative murder.</li> </ul>
Anon	On the Evil Times of Edward II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1312-26.</li> <li>• Exists in 3 MSS: National Library of Scotland MS 19.2.1 (Auchinleck MS);</li> </ul>	English	Largely original.	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generalised complaint about abuses and corruption at every level of society.</li> <li>• Possible but inconclusive</li> </ul>

		<p>Peterhouse, Cambridge, MS 104; Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Bodley 48.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Modern edition of Peterhouse MS (fullest version): <i>A Poem on the Times of Edward the Second</i>, ed. by Charles Hardwick (London: Percy Society, 1849)</li> <li>• Modern edition with textual variants: Thomas W. Ross, 'On the Evil Times of Edward II: A New Version from MS Bodley 48', <i>Anglia: Journal of English Philology</i>, 75 (1957), 173–93.</li> </ul>				<p>references to power of specific favourites.</p>
Anon	<i>On the King's Breaking His Confirmation of Magna Charta</i> – see Anon, <i>The Sayings of the Four Philosophers</i>					
Anon	The People Informed of Their Oppressors and Oppressions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: <i>The People Informed of Their Oppressors and Oppressions</i> (London: n.p., 1648).</li> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>	English	Unidentifiable due to brevity.	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses Edward's example as legal precedent for deposition of Charles I.</li> <li>• Compares Charles unfavourably to Edward.</li> </ul>
Anon	Pipewell Chronicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed in first half of fourteenth century.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> </ul>	Anglo-Norman	Largely original.	None known.	Details legal process of Edward's deposition.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full chronicle: BL, Cotton Julius MS. A.i, fol. 50<sup>v</sup>–62<sup>v</sup>.</li> <li>• Account of Edward's deposition printed and translated in M. V. Clarke, <i>Medieval Representation and Consent</i> (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1936), pp. 194–95.</li> </ul>				
Anon	<i>The Prophecy of the Six Kings</i> – see Anon, <i>The Last Kings of England</i>					
Anon	Prophecy of John of Bridlington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed in 1360s</li> <li>• Cryptic verse prophecy with explanatory commentary by John Ergom, composed c. 1362–64. Prophecy previously also attributed to Ergom, but A. G. Rigg argues this is unlikely: 'John of Bridlington's Prophecy: A New Look', <i>Speculum</i>, 63 (1988), 596–613.</li> <li>• Extracts from verses included in Anon, <i>Bridlington Chronicle</i>.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Modern edition: 'The</li> </ul>	Latin	Prophecy: largely original. Commentary: Higden.	Anon, <i>Bridlington Chronicle</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continues tradition of allegorising Edward as a goat and condemns him for generalised sexual transgression</li> <li>• Gives cryptic account of Edward's murder which can be decoded to indicate penetrative method, demonstrating level of acceptance of penetrative murder story by 1360s (since prophecy purports to be a twelfth-century text accurately foretelling the future).</li> </ul>

		Prophecy of John of Bridlington', in <i>Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History, Composed during the Period from the Accession of Edw. III. to that of Ric. III.</i> , ed. by Thomas Wright (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1859), pp. 123–215				
Anon	Replique à l'Antigaverston	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Anon, <i>Replique à l'Antigaverston, Ou Responce Faicte à l'Histoire de Gaverston, Par Le Duc d'Espernon</i> (n.p., 1588).</li> <li>• Unclear whether this or <i>Responce a l'Antigaverston</i> (below) was printed first.</li> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>	French	Anon, <i>L'Antigaverston (Lettre d'un Gentil-Homme Catholique)</i> ; possibly Anon, <i>Responce à l'Antigaverston</i> ; Anon, <i>Histoire Tragique</i>	Possibly Anon, <i>Responce à l'Antigaverston</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to Anon, <i>L'Antigaverston (Lettre d'un Gentil-Homme Catholique)</i></li> <li>• Example of political use of Edward's story in France: aims to refute Épernon's attempts to defend himself against the political comparisons drawn by writer of <i>Histoire Tragique</i> between him and Gaveston.</li> </ul>
Anon	Responce a l'Antigaverston	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Anon, <i>Responce a l'Antigaverston de Nogaret</i> (n.p. [France], 1588).</li> <li>• Unclear whether this or <i>Replique à l'Antigaverston</i> (above) was printed first.</li> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>	French	Anon, <i>L'Antigaverston (Lettre d'un Gentil-Homme Catholique)</i> ; possibly Anon, <i>Replique à l'Antigaverston</i> ; Anon, <i>Histoire</i>	Possibly Anon, <i>Replique à l'Antigaverston</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to Anon, <i>L'Antigaverston (Lettre d'un Gentil-Homme Catholique)</i></li> <li>• Example of political use of Edward's story in France: aims to refute Épernon's attempts to defend himself against the political comparisons drawn by writer</li> </ul>

				<i>Tragique</i>		of <i>Histoire Tragique</i> between him and Gaveston.
Anon	The Sayings of the Four Philosophers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1306-07; reworked c. 1311 to apply to more recent political events. See V. J. Scattergood, 'The Political Context, Date and Composition of <i>The Sayings of the Four Philosophers</i>', <i>Medium Aevum</i>, 37 (1968), 157–65</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Also known as 'On the King's Breaking His Confirmation of Magna Charta'.</li> <li>• Latest edition with translation: 'On the Kings Breaking his Confirmation of the Magna Charta', in <i>Anglo-Norman Political Songs</i>, ed. by Isabel S. T. Aspin, Anglo-Norman Texts 11 (Oxford: Published for the Anglo-Norman Text Society by Basil Blackwell, 1953), pp. 56–66.</li> </ul>	Macaronic English and Anglo-Norman	Largely original.	None known.	Contemporary political comment which criticises Edward for oath-breaking and his favourites for financial wrongdoing; no mention of sexual transgression.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Latest edition: R. H. Robbins (ed.), <i>Historical Poems of the XIV and XV Centuries</i> (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 140.</li> </ul>				
Anon	Short English Metrical Chronicle, and continuations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exists in various states, composed over period c. 1327-40.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• All versions printed in <i>An Anonymous Short English Metrical Chronicle</i>, ed. by Ewald Zettl (London: Oxford University Press, 1935).</li> </ul>	English	Possibly Anon, <i>Livre de Reis de Brittanie</i>	None known.	Brief, but focuses almost entirely on actions of Edward's favourites and their effects, demonstrating their influence on the character of the reign as remembered by contemporaries.
Anon	Songs on the Death of Peter de Gaveston	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed 1312.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Modern edition: 'Songs on the Death of Peter de Gaveston', in <i>The Political Songs of England: From the Reign of John to that of Edward II</i>, ed. by Thomas Wright (Edinburgh: Privately printed, 1884), pp. 258–61.</li> </ul>	Latin	Largely original.	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parodies of hymns written in celebration immediately following Gaveston's death</li> <li>• Accuses Gaveston implicitly of bewitchment, and explicitly of pride and financial wrongdoing.</li> </ul>



Anon	A True Relation of the Manner of the Deposing of King Edward II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Anon, <i>A True Relation of the Manner of the Deposing of King Edward II Together with the Articles Which Were Exhibited against Him in Parliament: As Also, An Exact Account of the Proceedings and Articles against King Richard</i> (London: Richard Baldwin, 1689).</li> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>	English	Daniel; Walsingham ( <i>Chronica Maiora</i> )	None known.	Uses Edward's example as legal precedent for deposition of James II.
Anon	Vita Edwardi Secundi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Probably composed contemporaneously up to 1325-26, when narration stops.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Modern edition (with parallel translation): <i>Vita Edwardi Secundi = The Life of Edward the Second</i>, trans. by Wendy R. Childs and Noël Denholm-Young (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005).</li> <li>• See also N. Denholm-Young, "The Authorship</li> </ul>	Latin	Largely original.	Drayton ( <i>Peirs Gaveston</i> ); Stow ( <i>Chronicles / Annales</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of three contemporary sources to report that Edward called Gaveston his brother.</li> <li>• Compares Edward and Gaveston to other male-male pairings: the Biblical David and Jonathan, and Homer's Achilles and Patroclus.</li> <li>• Accuses Gaveston of witchcraft.</li> <li>• Earliest text to accuse Gaveston of inciting Edward's vices.</li> <li>• Gives Isabella speech in which she accuses Gaveston</li> </ul>

		of <i>Vita Edwardi Secundi</i> , <i>English Historical Review</i> , 71 (1956), 189–211.				of coming between her and her husband.
Anon	Wilhelmi Wyrcester Annales Rerum Anglicarum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1460.</li> <li>• Attributed to William Worcester by Thomas Hearne; authorship since disproved.<sup>4</sup></li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Latest edition: ‘Wilhelmi Wyrcester Annales Rerum Anglicarum’, in <i>Liber Niger Scaccarii, Nec Non Wilhelmi Worcestrii Annales Rerum Anglicarum</i>, ed. by Thomas Hearne, 2 vols (London: W. and J. Richardson, 1771), II, 424–521.</li> </ul>	Latin	Unidentifiable due to brevity.	Possibly Fabyan.	Contains Latin version of ‘Lament of Edward II’, supposedly written by Edward while imprisoned. For Anglo-Norman version, see Anon, <i>Lament of Edward II</i> . Diana Tyson concludes that ‘it is unclear whether either version is a translation or adaptation of the other, though a connection between them must be assumed’. <sup>5</sup>
Avesbury, Robert of	De Gestis Mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1356.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Modern edition: <i>Ada Murimuth Continuatio Chronicarum: Robertus de Avesbury De Gestis</i></li> </ul>	Latin	Largely original.	Foxe claims to use him as a source for the 1570 edition of <i>Acts and Monuments</i> , but in fact both details for which	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• History of Edward III which begins with brief sketch of Edward II’s reign.</li> <li>• Focuses on bad influence of the Despensers, twice correcting statements about Edward being ‘led’ by them</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> K. B. McFarlane, ‘William Worcester: A Preliminary Survey’, in *Studies Presented to Sir Hilary Jenkinson*, ed. by J. Conway Davies (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 196–221 (pp. 206–07).

<sup>5</sup> Diana Tyson, ‘Lament for a Dead King’, *Journal of Medieval History*, 30 (2004), 359–75 (p. 363).

		<i>Mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii</i> , ed. by E. M. Thompson (London: Printed for H.M.S.O., by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1889).			Avesbury is cited are not in Avesbury's text.	to say instead that he was 'seduced'.
Ayscu, Edward	Historie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Edward Ayscu, <i>A Historie Contayning the Warres, Treaties, Marriages, and Other Occurrents Betweene England and Scotland</i> (London: G. Eld, 1607).</li> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>	English	Holinshed; Marlowe	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aims to highlight positive interactions between England and Scotland prior to union under James VI and I: as such, prejudiced against Edward II due to Scottish wars.</li> <li>• Very derivative of Holinshed, but (unlike him) uses term 'minions' to refer to Edward's (non-specific) favourites. First chronicle text to use this term relating to Edward. Probably influenced by Marlowe.</li> </ul>
Baker, Richard	Chronicle of the Kings of England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Richard Baker, <i>A Chronicle of the Kings of England</i> (London: for Daniel Frere, 1643).</li> <li>• Thirteen editions 1643-96.</li> </ul>	English	Anon, <i>Brut</i> ('long version'); Capgrave; Cooper; <u>Daniel</u> ; Fabyan; Froissart; Grafton (both texts); Higden (trans. Trevisa);	van den Bos; Caesar; Churchill; Coke; Howard; Howell; R. B. (all texts); Sandford' Stevenson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deviates from Daniel (main source) to romanticise love between Edward and his favourites.</li> <li>• Royalist tone, but sees rebellion against Edward as justified; however, increased reliance on le Baker after deposition results in more</li> </ul>

				Holinshed; le Baker ( <i>Chronicon</i> ); Martyn; Speed; Stow ( <i>Chronicles / Annales</i> ); Vergil		sympathetic portrayal. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unusually retains Stow's accusation of witchcraft against Gaveston and his mother.</li> </ul>
Bancroft, John	King Edward the Third	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: John Bancroft, <i>King Edward the Third, with the Fall of Mortimer</i> (London: for J. Hindmarsh, R. Bently, A. Roper, and Randall Taylor, 1691)</li> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>	English	Probably le Baker ( <i>Chronicon</i> ); others unidentifiable due to brevity.	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presents Edward's death as crime to be avenged by his son.</li> <li>• Character of Mortimer associates Edward with Ganymede and Hylas, using this to justify his adulterous relationship with Isabella.</li> </ul>
Blaneforde, Henry	Chronicle of St Albans abbey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed after 1330 as continuation of Rishanger / 'Trokelowe'.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Printed in same volume as 'Trokelowe', ed. Riley.</li> </ul>	Latin	Largely original.	Walsingham (both texts)	Nothing significant (pages concerning Edward's reign lost after 1324).
van den Bos, Lambert	Florus Anglicus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Lambert van den Bos, <i>Florus Anglicus: Or An Exact History of England</i> (London: for Simon Miller, 1656).</li> <li>• Six editions 1656-62.</li> </ul>	English	Baker	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unusually describes Edward as an exemplar both of chastity and of moderation, on the (inaccurate) grounds of his lack of illegitimate children and unjust taxes.</li> <li>• Popular over period of six years, but not influential.</li> </ul>

Boston, Robert of	Chronicon Angliae	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1368.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Latest edition: ‘Chronicon Angliae Per Robertum de Boston’, in <i>Historiae Anglicanae Scriptores Varii, E Codicibus Manuscriptis Nunc Primum Editi</i>, ed. by Joseph Sparke, 2 vols (London: William Bowyer, 1723), I, 114–37.</li> </ul>	Latin	Anon, <i>Brut</i> (‘long version’)	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pro-Lancastrian account, following <i>Brut</i>: presents executions of nobles as unjust and partially motivated by revenge for Gaveston’s death.</li> <li>• Retains sensational detail of Humphrey de Bohun’s penetrative murder from <i>Brut</i>, but omits Edward’s.</li> </ul>
Brady, Robert	The Great Point of Succession Discussed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Robert Brady, <i>The Great Point of Succession Discussed with a Full and Particular Answer to a Late Pamphlet, Intituled, A Brief History of Succession</i> (London: for H. Rodes, 1681)</li> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>	English	Possibly Martyn, but brevity makes firm conclusion difficult; Somers	None known	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written during Exclusion Crisis; uses Edward’s reign as political example to show evils of deposition.</li> <li>• Response to John Somers, <i>A Brief History of the Succession</i></li> </ul>
Brady, Robert	True and Exact History of the Succession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Robert Brady, <i>A True and Exact History of the Succession of the Crown of England</i> (London: for Cave Pulleyn, 1681)</li> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>	English	Knighton; Persons ( <i>Conference</i> ); Somers; Walsingham ( <i>Chronica Maiora</i> )	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written during Exclusion Crisis; uses Edward’s reign as political example to show evils of deposition.</li> <li>• Response to John Somers, <i>A Brief History of the Succession</i>: states in full title that it was ‘Written for the information of such as have been deluded</li> </ul>

						and seduced by the pamphlet, called <i>The brief history of the succession?</i> . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also response to Persons, <i>A conference about the next succession to the crown of England</i> (n.p., 1681).</li> </ul>
Brooke, Ralph	Catalogue and Succession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Ralph Brooke, <i>A Catalogue and Succession of the Kings, Princes, Dukes, Marquesses, Earles, and Viscounts of This Realme of England</i> (London: William Jaggard, 1619).</li> <li>• Two editions 1619-22.</li> </ul>	English	Holinshed	None known.	Stated aim is to correct errors made in other historical texts; however, account of Edward's reign is derived from Holinshed without significant commentary.
Burton, Thomas	Chronicle of Meaux Abbey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1388-96.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Modern edition: <i>Chronica Monasterii de Melsa</i>, ed. by E. A. Bond (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1866).</li> </ul>	Latin	Possibly Anon, <i>Bridlington Chronicle</i> , but may be common source; Anon, <i>Brut</i> ('long version'); Anon, <i>Brut</i> ('short version'); <u>Higden</u> ; lost Cistercian chronicle (also used by	None known.	Earliest source to accuse Edward of 'sodomitical vice'. Includes two other references to sodomy, regarding Templars and a member of the Pope's household.

				chronicler of Woburn Abbey)		
Caesar, Charles	Numerus Infaustus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Charles Caesar, <i>Numerus Infaustus a Short View of the Unfortunate Reigns of William the Second, Henry the Second, Edward the Second, Richard the Second, Charles the Second, James the Second</i> (London: for Ric. Chiswell, 1689)</li> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>	English	Baker; Heylyn; Warner	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frames Edward's 'unfortunate' reign in <i>de casibus</i> mode</li> <li>• Unusually uses terms 'favourite' and 'darling' to refer to Gaveston and Despenser respectively</li> <li>• Very unusually for a late text, does not include penetrative murder story: Edward is 'stifled to death between two Pillows'.</li> </ul>
Camden, William	Britannia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: William Camden, <i>Britannia</i> (London: Ralph Newbery, 1586)</li> <li>• First translated: William Camden, <i>Britain</i>, trans. by Philemon Holland, (London: [Eliot's Court Press], 1610)</li> <li>• Thirteen editions 1586-1695.</li> </ul>	English	Holinshed	Leigh	Refers to Edward's murder when discussing Berkeley Castle and quotes ambiguous message ordering his death, but does not specify murder method.
Capgrave, John	Abbreviacion of Cronicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1462-63.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> </ul>	English	Walsingham ( <i>Chronica Maiora</i> )	Baker; Holinshed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First English source based substantially on Walsingham's <i>Chronica Maiora</i> (John Hardyng</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern edition: <i>John Capgrave's Abbreviacion of Cronicles</i>, ed. by Peter J. Lucas (Oxford: Published for the Early English Text Society by Oxford University Press, 1983).</li> </ul>				<p>probably also used it, but in far less detail).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First English source to report full accusations against Templars, including sodomy.</li> </ul>
Cary, Elizabeth	History of the Life, Reign, and Death of Edward II / History of the Most Unfortunate Prince King Edward II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed 1627-28.</li> <li>• First printed in two versions: Folio version: E. F., <i>The History of the Life, Reign, and Death of Edward II</i> (London: J. C., 1680) Octavo version: Henry Cary, Viscount Falkland, <i>The History of the Most Unfortunate Prince King Edward II</i> (London: A. G. and J. P., 1680).</li> <li>• Although Daniel Woolf argues that the text is a piece of Exclusion Crisis propaganda written in 1679-80 ('The True Date and Authorship of Henry, Viscount Falkland's, History of the Life, Reign, and Death of King Edward II', <i>Bodleian Library Record</i>, 12 [1988],</li> </ul>	English	Drayton (all texts but particularly Gaveston poems); <u>Grafton</u> ( <i>Chronicle At Large</i> ); Hubert; le Baker ( <i>Chronicon</i> ); Marlowe	Churchill (used octavo version)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exceptional level of psychological realism, particularly regarding Edward's grief</li> <li>• Describes Gaveston as Edward's 'Ganymede'.</li> <li>• Several references to bewitchment.</li> <li>• Folio text refuses to recount details of Edward's murder.</li> <li>• Foregrounds relevance of Edward's story to 1620s politics, especially Duke of Buckingham's dominance.</li> <li>• Printed in 1680 due to perceived relevance to Exclusion Crisis.</li> </ul>



		<p>440–52), Meredith Skura has convincingly refuted this argument: ‘Elizabeth Cary and Edward II: What Do Women Want to Write?’, <i>Renaissance Drama</i>, 27 (1996), 79–104</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debate over whether octavo version is an early version, a revision by Cary, or the product of cuts made by the printer in order to emphasise its relevance to 1680 rather than 1627-8.<sup>6</sup></li> <li>• Originally attributed to Elizabeth’s husband, but her authorship has since been convincingly attested.<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• Modern edition: <i>The Early Modern Englishwoman: A Facsimile Library of Essential Works, Vol. 2</i>, ed. by Betty Travitsky and Patrick Cullen (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996).</li> </ul>				
--	--	---	--	--	--	--

---

<sup>6</sup> Skura, pp. 82–83.

<sup>7</sup> See Skura, *passim*, for a summary of and astute contribution to the authorship debate.

Castleford, Thomas	Castleford's Chronicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1327.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Modern edition: <i>Castleford's Chronicle: Or The Boke of Brut</i>, ed. by Caroline D. Eckhardt (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Early English Text Society, 1996).</li> </ul>	English	Largely original.	None known	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earliest English source for Edward's reign.</li> <li>• Contains early English use of the idiom 'things that ought not to be named', regarding Templars' alleged sodomy.</li> </ul>
Churchill, Winston	Divi Britannici	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Winston Churchill, <i>Divi Britannici Being a Remark upon the Lives of All the Kings of This Isle</i> (London: Tho. Roycroft, 1675)</li> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>	English	Baker; Cary (octavo); Marlowe	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observes that Edward's affection and loyalty for Gaveston would have been laudable in a different context, suggesting that friendship is incompatible with royal status.</li> <li>• Suggests that Edward's murder is fated.</li> </ul>
Coke, Edward	History of the Successions of the Kings of England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Edward Coke [also spelt Cooke], <i>The History of the Successions of the Kings of England</i> (London: for Thomas Simmons ... and John Kidgel ..., 1682).</li> <li>• Two editions 1682-84.</li> </ul>	English	Baker; Speed; Stow ( <i>Chronicles / Annales</i> ); Walsingham (text not specified but probably <i>Chronica Maiora</i> )	None known.	Focuses mainly on deaths of kings; sympathetic account of Edward's death, derived from le Baker via Richard Baker or Stow.

Coke, Roger	A Detection of the Court and State of England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Roger Coke, <i>A Detection of the Court and State of England during the Four Last Reigns, and the Inter-Regnum</i> (London: n.p., 1694)</li> <li>• Three editions 1694-97.</li> </ul>	English	Unidentifiable due to brevity; possibly no specific textual source.	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eyewitness memoir of reigns of James VI and I, Charles I, Charles II and James II, and of Interregnum.</li> <li>• Compares James VI and I unfavourably to Edward based on his unwise choices of young favourites.</li> </ul>
Cooper, Thomas	Epitome of Cronicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuation of Thomas Lanquet's chronicle, which reached AD 17 at his death in 1545.</li> <li>• Sometimes printed under Lanquet's name.</li> <li>• Often known as 'Lanquet-Cooper'.</li> <li>• Also published as <i>Coopers Chronicle</i>.</li> <li>• First printed: Lanquet, Thomas, <i>An Epitome of Chronicles</i> (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1549).</li> <li>• Four editions (including one unauthorised) 1549-65.</li> </ul>	English	Fabyan	Baker; Grafton (both texts); Holinshed; Mychell; Stow (all texts); Talbot	Uses Fabyan's adaptation of Higden's paragraph concerning Edward's character, which focuses on Edward's transgressions as bodily and sexual, and blames his favourites for them. This paragraph gained popularity via Cooper, rather than from Fabyan directly.
Daniel, Samuel	Collection of the Historie of England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed edition covering Edward's reign: Samuel Daniel, <i>The</i></li> </ul>	English	Fabyan; Froissart; Grafton (text not specified);	Anon, <i>A True Relation of the Manner of the Deposing of King</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Popular and influential</li> <li>• Highest density of term 'minion' of any account of</li> </ul>

		<p><i>Collection of the Historie of England</i> (London: Nicholas Okes, 1618).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Six editions 1618-50.</li> </ul>		Holinshed; Speed; Stow ( <i>Chronicles / Annales</i> ); Vergil; Walsingham ( <i>Chronica Maiora</i> )	<i>Edward II</i> ; Baker; Howell; Hubert; Sandford	<p>Edward's reign (used to refer to both Gaveston and non-specific favourites).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First sustained sympathetic portrait of Gaveston (e.g. praising his conduct as lieutenant of Ireland).</li> </ul>
Deloney, Thomas	Strange Histories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Thomas Deloney, <i>Strange Histories, of Kings, Princes, Dukes Earles, Lords, Ladies, Knights, and Gentlemen</i> (London: William Barley, 1602)</li> <li>• Four editions 1602-12.</li> </ul>	English	Possibly Fabyan; le Baker ( <i>Chronicon</i> ), probably via Stow ( <i>Chronicles / Annales</i> ) or Holinshed; Marlowe	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection of songs, three of which deal with Edward: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 'Of the Imprisonment of King Edward the second'</li> <li>- 'Of King Edward the second, being poisoned'</li> <li>- 'Of the Lord Mautrevers and Sir Thomas Gurney, being banished'.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Unusually focuses on Edward being poisoned while imprisoned. This story originates in le Baker, but Deloney adds unique detail of Edward's subsequent scarring (compared to leprosy, probably with implications of sexual transgression).</li> </ul>
Dene, William	Historia Roffensis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1320-50.</li> <li>• Full text: BL Cotton MS Faustina B v.</li> <li>• First (partially) printed:</li> </ul>	Latin	Largely original.	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contains detailed, possibly eyewitness account of Edward's deposition.</li> </ul>

		‘Historia Roffensis’, in <i>Anglia Sacra</i> , ed. by Henry Wharton (London: Richard Chiswel, 1691), fols. 2Z2 <sup>v</sup> –3C <sup>r</sup> .				
Drayton, Michael	Englands Heroicall Epistles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Michael Drayton, <i>Englands Heroicall Epistles</i> (London: J[ames] R[oberts] for N. Ling, 1597)</li> <li>• Seven editions of <i>Englands Heroicall Epistles</i> alone 1597-1602, and three editions alone 1689-97.</li> <li>• Also reprinted with <i>The Barons Warres</i> in 1603, and as part of Drayton’s collected poems in 1619 and 1620.</li> <li>• Modern edition: Michael Drayton, ‘Englands Heroicall Epistles’, in <i>Works</i>, ed. by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931), II, 129–308.</li> </ul>	English	Holinshed; Marlowe; Stow ( <i>Chronicles / Annales</i> )	Cary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contains epistles between Isabella and Mortimer: Isabella has left Edward for Mortimer because of Edward’s romantic and sexual relationship with Gaveston.</li> <li>• Uncommon representation of Gaveston as gender-nonconforming.</li> <li>• Accuses Gaveston of bewitching Edward.</li> </ul>
Drayton, Michael	Mortimeriados / Barons Warres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Michael Drayton, <i>Mortimeriados: The Lamentable Civell Warres of Edward the Second</i></li> </ul>	English	Holinshed; Marlowe; Stow ( <i>Chronicles / Annales</i> )	Cary; May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purports to be epic story of Mortimer, but also contains long, emotional account of Edward’s deposition,</li> </ul>

		<p><i>and the Barrons</i> (London: J[ames] R[oberts] for Mathew Lowne, 1596). Two editions, 1596.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised under different title: Michael Drayton, <i>The Barrons Wars in the Raigne of Edward the Second</i> (London: J[ames] R[oberts] for N. Ling, 1603). One edition.</li> <li>• Also reprinted as part of Drayton's collected poems in 1619 and 1620.</li> <li>• Modern edition: Michael Drayton, 'Mortimeriados', in <i>Works</i>, ed. by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931), I, 305–92; and 'The Barons Warres', in <i>Works</i>, II, 9–128.</li> </ul>				<p>imprisonment and death.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncommon representation of Gaveston as gender-nonconforming.</li> <li>• Revisions between versions increasingly foreground Edward's cry of pain when murdered.</li> </ul>
Drayton, Michael	Peirs Gaveston / The Legend of Piers Gaveston	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Michael Drayton, <i>Peirs Gaveston Earle of Cornwall His Life, Death, and Fortune</i> (London: J[ames] R[oberts] for N[icholas] L[ing] and John Busby,</li> </ul>	English	Anon, <i>Annales Paulini</i> ; Anon, <i>Vita Edwardi Secundi</i> ; Holinshed; Marlowe; Rishanger /	Cary; Hubert; Niccols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Story of Gaveston's fall narrated in first person from beyond the grave: inserts him into genre of 'royal mistress complaint'.<sup>9</sup></li> <li>• Substantial, erotic detail on sexual nature of Edward and</li> </ul>

<sup>9</sup> Kelly Quinn, 'Mastering Complaint: Michael Drayton's *Peirs Gaveston* and the Royal Mistress Complaints', *English Literary Renaissance*, 38 (2008), 439–60.

		<p>1594). One edition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised under different title: Michael Drayton, <i>The Legend of Piers Gaveston</i> (London: [A. Jeffes for J. Busby?], 1595).</li> <li>• Also reprinted as part of Drayton's collected poems in 1619 and 1620.</li> <li>• According to William Hebel, '[There are] five forms of the poem: 1593, 1,740 lines; 1595, 1,722 lines; 1596, 1,854 lines; 1605, 702 lines; and 1619 with the same number of lines as 1605 but with the lines greatly rewritten.'<sup>8</sup></li> <li>• Modern edition: Michael Drayton, 'Peirs Gaveston', in <i>Works</i>, ed. by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931), I, 157–208; and 'The Legend of Pierce Gaveston', in <i>Works</i>, II, 431–50.</li> </ul>		Trokelowe; Stow ( <i>Chronicles / Annales</i> )		<p>Gaveston's relationship, including terms 'sodomy' and 'Ganymede'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unusually based on wide range of medieval sources.</li> <li>• Later revision ('The Legend of Piers Gaveston') removes Edward's long laments and vows of revenge found in earlier versions.</li> </ul>
--	--	--	--	---	--	---

<sup>8</sup> William Hebel, 'The Surreptitious Edition of Drayton's *Peirs Gaveston*', *The Library*, 4th ser., 4 (1923), 151–55 (p. 155).

Drayton, Michael	Poly-Olbion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'First Part' first printed: Michael Drayton, <i>Poly-Olbion</i> (London: [Humphrey Lownes] for M. Lownes, J. Browne, J. Helme, J. Busbie, 1612).</li> <li>• 'Second Part' first printed: Michael Drayton, <i>The Second Part, or a Continuance of Poly-Olbion from the Eighteenth Song</i> (London: Augustine Mathewes for John Marriott, John Grismand, and Thomas Dewe, 1622).</li> <li>• Five editions 1612-22.</li> <li>• Modern edition: Michael Drayton, 'Poly-Olbion', in <i>Works</i>, ed. by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931), IV.</li> <li>• Forthcoming edition/resources: see 'The Poly-Olbion Project' &lt;<a href="http://poly-olbion.exeter.ac.uk/">http://poly-olbion.exeter.ac.uk/</a>&gt;</li> </ul>	English	Camden; Holinshed	None known; brevity and verse form makes firm conclusion difficult.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contains short passage on Edward's life (XVII.193–200) and conflicts with nobles (XXII.337–404).</li> <li>• Former passage uses term Ganymede and uniquely presents Edward's penetrative murder as explicitly sexually mimetic and retributive.</li> </ul>
Fabyan, Robert	Newe Cronycles of England and Fraunce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1504.</li> <li>• First printed: <i>Prima Pars Cronecarum</i> (London:</li> </ul>	English	Possibly Anon, <i>Annales Londonienses</i> , but possibly	Baker; Cooper; Foxe; Stow (all texts); Daniel; Deloney; Grafton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Source (direct or indirect) for numerous short, popular printed histories in sixteenth</li> </ul>



		<p>Richard Pynson, 1516).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seven editions 1516-59.</li> </ul>		<p>common source;  Anon, <i>Brut</i> ('long version');  Anon, <i>London chronicles</i>;  Froissart;  Higden</p>	<p>(<i>Chronicle At Large</i>); Heywood (<i>Chronographically History</i>); Holinshed; Marlowe; Rastell; Speed</p>	<p>century.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earliest copy of English translation of 'Lament of Edward II'.</li> <li>• Origin of phrase 'adultery and other' to indicate Edward's transgressions.</li> <li>• Translates Higden's paragraph on Edward's character.</li> </ul>
Foxe, John	Actes and Monumentes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed in England: John Foxe, <i>Actes and Monuments of These Latter and Perillous Dayes Touching Matters of the Church</i> (London: John Day, 1563).</li> <li>• First edition does not contain full history of England, but mentions Edward briefly (see 'Importance').</li> <li>• Version containing history of Edward's reign first printed: <i>The First Volume of the Ecclesiasticall History Contaynyng the Actes and Monumentes of Thynges Passed in Every Kynges Tyme in this Realme</i> (London:</li> </ul>	English	<p><u>Fabyan</u>;  Froissart;  Hardyng;  Higden;  Malmesbury;  Murimuth;  Vergil;  <u>Walsingham</u> (<i>Chronica Maiora</i>). Foxe claims to use Robert of Avesbury as a source for the 1570 edition of <i>Acts and Monuments</i>, but in fact both details for which he (or</p>	Speed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1563 edition briefly mentions Edward's death, unusually by being 'stroken in with a hooote spit'.</li> <li>• 1570 edition focuses mainly on Gaveston's bad influence and Edward's love for him, with little sympathy or pathos even after Edward's deposition.</li> </ul>

		<p>John Daye, 1570).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eight editions 1570-1684</li> </ul>		possibly the printer) cites him are not included in Avesbury's text.		
Froissart, Jean	Chroniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1373-1400, with three redactions over this period.</li> <li>• First printed (French): <i>Le Premier (-Quart) Volume des Croniques</i> (Paris: Antoine Vérard, 1495).</li> <li>• First printed (English translation): <i>Here Begynneth the First Volum of Sir Johan Froyssart of the Cronycles</i>, trans. by John Bourchier (London: Richarde Pynson, 1523).</li> <li>• Modern edition (French): <i>Oeuvres de Froissart: Chroniques</i>, ed. by Kervyn de Lettenhove, 25 vols (Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1967).</li> <li>• Modern edition (English translation): <i>Chronicles</i>, trans. by Geoffrey Brereton (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968)</li> </ul>	French	Le Bel	Baker; <i>Histoire Tragique</i> ; Daniel; Fabyan; Foxe; Grafton ( <i>Chronicle At Large</i> ); Holinshed; Somers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follows Le Bel in calling Despenser a 'heretic and sodomite', but different MS versions implicate Edward to different extents in knowledge of and/or participation in this.</li> <li>• Where Le Bel is silent concerning Edward's death, Froissart acknowledges possibility of murder, but attributes opinion to an 'old squire' at Berkeley Castle.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MSS available at <i>The Online Froissart</i>, ed. by Peter Ainsworth and Godfried Croenen, version 1.5 (Sheffield: HRIOne, 2013) &lt;<a href="http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/onlinefroissart">http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/onlinefroissart</a>&gt;</li> </ul>				
Gilbertson, William	The Faithful Analist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: G. W., <i>The Faithful Analist: or, The Epitome of the English History</i> (London: for W. Gilbertson, 1660).</li> <li>• Three editions 1660-66.</li> <li>• Various editions published under the name of 'G. W.' or 'W. G.' However, Gilbertson's authorship is indicated by the fact that the first edition was printed for William Gilbertson, and the dedicatory epistle is signed W. G. (fol. A6').</li> </ul>	English	Stow ( <i>Chronicles / Annales</i> )	None known.	Nothing significant: brief summary.
Grafton, Richard	Abridgement of Chronicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Richard Grafton, <i>An Abridgement of the Chronicles of England</i> (London: Richard Tottyll, 1562).</li> <li>• Also printed as <i>A Manuell</i></li> </ul>	English	<u>Cooper</u> ; Stow ( <i>Summarie</i> )	Baker; Daniel; Martyn; Talbot	See John Stow, <i>Summarie of Chronicles</i> .

		<i>of the Chronicles of Englande.</i> • Five editions 1562-72.				
Grafton, Richard	Chronicle At Large	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Richard Grafton, <i>A Chronicle at Large and Meere History of the Affayres of Englande and Kinges of the Same</i> (London: Henry Denham, 1569).</li> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>	English	Anon, <i>Brut</i> ('long version'); <u>Cooper</u> ; Fabyan; <u>Froissart (trans. Bouchier)</u>	Baker; Cary; Daniel; Martyn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Augmented version of <i>Abridgement of Chronicles</i>.</li> <li>• Follows Froissart's account of younger Despenser's castration, but omits description of him as a 'sodomite'.</li> <li>• Accuses Despenser of witchcraft.</li> </ul>
Gray, Thomas	Scalacronica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1355-63.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Modern edition (Anglo-Norman): <i>Scalacronica</i>, ed. by Joseph Stevenson (Edinburgh, 1836).</li> <li>• Modern edition (with parallel English translation): <i>Scalacronica, 1272-1363</i>, ed. and trans. by Andy King (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005).</li> </ul>	Anglo-Norman	Higden; Tynemouth, John of	None known.	Unusually records Edward's sexual transgressions as incited by younger Despenser, rather than Gaveston.
Guisborough, Walter of	Chronicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed contemporaneously c. 1280-1312.</li> <li>• For full details on MSS and composition, see <i>The</i></li> </ul>	Latin	Largely original.	None known.	Account of events leading up to Gaveston's first exile in 1305 depicts quarrel between Edward and his father in terms that closely echo the Vulgate's

		<p><i>Chronicle of Walter of Guisborough</i>, ed. by Harry Rothwell (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1957), pp. xii–xxx.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No early modern printed version of account of Edward’s reign.</li> <li>• Modern edition: see above.</li> <li>• Previously attributed to Walter of Hemingford or Hemingburgh.</li> </ul>				story of David and Jonathan.
Hardyng, John	Chronicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two versions, with differing political allegiances, composed in 1450s and c. 1463.</li> <li>• No early modern printed text of first version.</li> <li>• Second (more popular) version first printed: <i>The Chronicle of Jhon Hardyng</i> (London: Richard Grafton, 1543).</li> <li>• Two editions under different titles, 1543.</li> <li>• Latest edition: <i>The Chronicle of John Hardyng</i>, ed. by Henry Ellis.</li> </ul>	English	Anon, <i>Brut</i> ('long version'); Higden; probably Walsingham ( <i>Chronica Maiora</i> )	Foxe; Holinshed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presents Edward’s favourites’ transgressions as purely financial.</li> <li>• Sympathetic portrayal of Edward as repentant and pious after his deposition; gives some credence to stories of miracles performed at his tomb, unusually noting Richard II’s attempts to have him canonised.</li> </ul>

		<p>(London: G. Woodfall for F. C Rivington; T. Payne; Wilkie and Robinson; Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown; Caddell and Davies; J. Mawman; and R. H. Evans, 1812).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern edition of first version: <i>John Hardyng Chronicle: Edited from British Library MS Lansdowne 204</i>, ed. by Sarah Peverley and James Simpson (Kalamazoo: Published for TEAMS in association with the University of Rochester by Medieval Institute Publications, 1999).</li> <li>• Forthcoming edition of second version: <i>John Hardyng's Chronicle: The Second Version</i>, ed. by Sarah Peverley and James Simpson (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer).</li> </ul>				
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Hayward, John	An Answer to the First Part of a Certain Conference, Concerning Succession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: John Hayward, <i>An Answer to the First Part of a Certain Conference, Concerning Succession, Published Not Long since Under the Name of R. Dolman</i> (London: [Eliot's Court Press, R. Bradock, P. Short, T. Snodham, R. Field, and J. Harrison] for Simon Waterson, and Cuthbert Burbie, 1603)</li> </ul>	English	Holinshed; Persons ( <i>Conference</i> ); Stow ( <i>Chronicles / Annales</i> )	None known.	Response to Persons, <i>A Conference About the Next Succession</i> , which condemns Edward's deposition and recounts his imprisonment and death sympathetically.
Heath, James	Englands Chronicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: James Heath, <i>Englands Chronicle</i> (London: for Benj. Crayle, N. Bodington, and G. Conyer, 1689).</li> <li>• Three editions 1689-99.</li> </ul>	English	Howell	None known.	Accuses Edward of adversely influencing Gaveston's behaviour, as well as vice versa.
Heylyn, Peter	Cosmographie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Peter Heylyn, <i>Cosmographie</i> (London: for Henry Seile, 1652).</li> <li>• Eleven editions 1652-82.</li> </ul>	English	Unidentifiable due to brevity.	Caesar	Brief summary that foregrounds Edward's excessive love for his favourites and its role in his downfall.
Heywood, Thomas	Chronographical History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Thomas Heywood, <i>A Chronographical History of All the Kings and Memorable</i></li> </ul>	English	Anon, <i>Brut</i> ('long version'); Fabyan (inc. 'Lament of	R. B. ( <i>Englands Monarchs</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accuses Edward of 'sodomitry' (context probably indicates that this means sexual sin, but no</li> </ul>

		<p><i>Passages of This Kingdome</i> (London: J. Okes, 1641).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three editions 1641-51.</li> </ul>		Edward II')		<p>additional specificity).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revives tradition of Merlin's prophecies.</li> <li>• Several times accuses Edward of 'effeminacy'.</li> <li>• Not specific about murder method, despite reliance on <i>Brut</i>.</li> </ul>
Heywood, Thomas	Troia Britanica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Thomas Heywood, <i>Troia Britanica: Or, Great Britaines Troy</i> (London: W. Jaggard, 1609)</li> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>	English	Fabyan	None known.	Verse 'Epitome of Chronicles'; nothing significant in account of Edward's reign.
Higden, Ranulf	Polychronicon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For full textual history, see John Taylor, <i>The Universal Chronicle of Ranulf Higden</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 89–109.</li> <li>• First short version (CD) composed c. 1327; longer, ultimately more popular version (AB) composed in 1340s.</li> <li>• First translated in 1380s by John Trevisa.</li> <li>• First printed (Trevisa's translation): <i>Prolicionycion [sic]</i>, ([Westminster:</li> </ul>	Latin	<i>Brut</i> ('long version')	Anon, <i>Annals of Bermondsey Abbey</i> ; Anon, <i>A Book of British Kings</i> ; Anon, <i>Bridlington Chronicle</i> ; Anon, <i>Anonymi Chronicon Godstovianum</i> ; Anon, <i>Prophecy of John of Bridlington</i> (Commentary); Baker; Burton; Fabyan; Foxe; Gray; Hardyng; Holinshed; Knighton; Otterbourne;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Popular and influential.</li> <li>• Contains assessment of Edward's character which was still being copied and adapted well into the seventeenth century, and encouraged perception that Edward's personal and political transgressions resulted from his character.</li> <li>• Along with <i>Brut</i> ('long version'), helped to popularise story of Edward's penetrative murder.</li> <li>• Probably used another less pro-Lancastrian source in</li> </ul>



		<p>William Caxton, 1482)].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern edition (with parallel translations by Trevisa and anonymous fifteenth-century writer): <i>Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden Monachi Cestrensis</i> ed. by Joseph Rawson Lumby, (London: Longman, 1865).</li> </ul>			<p>Rastell; Rous; Speed; Tynemouth, John of (used CD version); Vergil; Walsingham (both texts)</p>	<p>addition to the <i>Brut</i>.</p>
Holinshed, Raphael, et al	Chronicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Raphael Holinshed, <i>The Firste Volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande</i> (London: for John Hunne, 1577).</li> <li>• Second edition, with substantial revisions by additional authors (significant additions to Edward's reign by Abraham Fleming): Raphael Holinshed, <i>The First and Second Volumes of Chronicles</i> (London: [Henry Denham], 1587).</li> <li>• Modern edition with parallel 1577 and 1587 versions: 'Chronicles of England, Scotland and</li> </ul>	English	<p>Anon, <i>Brut</i> ('long version'); Anon, <i>London chronicles</i>; Capgrave; Cooper; Fabyan; Froissart; Hardyng; Higden; <u>le Baker</u> (<i>Chronicon</i>); Murimuth; Stow (<i>Summarie</i>); <u>Vergil</u>; Walsingham (both texts)</p>	<p>Ayscu; Baker; Brooke; Camden; Daniel; Drayton (all texts); Hayward; Hubert; Leigh; Marlowe; Munday; Niccols; Peele; Warner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Popular and influential</li> <li>• Main source for Marlowe.</li> <li>• Use of le Baker has significant effect on early modern trend towards expressing sympathy for Edward in accounts of his reign after the point of his deposition.</li> <li>• Presents Edward's transgressions as sexual and incited by his favourites.</li> <li>• 1587 edition includes moralistic interjections by Abraham Fleming, which censure Edward's behaviour before his deposition and his nobles' treatment of him afterwards.</li> </ul>

		Ireland', in <i>The Holinshed Project</i> , ed. by Paulina Kewes, Ian W. Archer, Felicity Heal and Henry Summerson < <a href="http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/">http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/</a> >				
Howard, Robert	Historical Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Robert Howard, <i>Historical Observations upon the Reigns of Edward I, II, III, and Richard II with Remarks upon Their Faithful Counsellors and False Favourites</i> (London: for J. Partridge and M. Gillyflower, 1689)</li> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>	English	Baker; Martyn; Speed	None known.	Whig text: uses Edward's example to show viability of deposition in relation to James II.
Howell, William	Medulla Historiae Anglicanae	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: William Howell, <i>Medulla Historiae Anglicanae. Being a Comprehensive History of the Lives and Reigns of the Monarchs of England</i> (London: for Abel Swalle, 1679).</li> <li>• Seven editions 1679-94.</li> </ul>	English	Baker; Daniel; Speed	Heath	Nothing significant: derivative account.
Hubert, Francis	The Historie of Edward the Second	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed between end of 1597 and end of 1600.</li> <li>• Circulated in MS until</li> </ul>	English	Daniel; Drayton ( <i>Peirs Gaveston</i> ); Holinshed;	Cary; Leigh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1629 authorised edition removes some contemporary political resonances but adds others (see Chapter 3).</li> </ul>

		<p>1628, with various revisions. For full collation of different versions, see <i>The Poems of Sir Francis Hubert</i>, ed. by Bernard Mellor ([Hong Kong]: Hong Kong University Press, 1961), pp. 299–325.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unauthorised version first printed: Francis Hubert, <i>The Deplorable Life and Death of Edward the Second</i> (London : [Nicholas Okes] for Roger Michell, 1628)</li> <li>• Authorised version first printed: Francis Hubert, <i>The Historie of Edward the Second</i> (London: B. A. and T. F. for L. Chapman, 1629).</li> <li>• Four editions 1628-1631.</li> <li>• Modern edition: Francis Hubert, 'The Historie of Edward the Second', in <i>The Poems of Sir Francis Hubert</i>, ed. by Bernard Mellor ([Hong Kong]: Hong Kong University</li> </ul>		<p>Marlowe; Stow (<i>Chronicles / Annales</i>)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narrated by Edward's ghost in tradition of <i>Mirror for Magistrates</i>.</li> <li>• Presents Edward and Gaveston's relationship as sexual, using term 'Ganymede', but displays anxiety around presenting it as pleasurable.</li> <li>• Unique comparison between Gaveston and Sardanapalus.</li> <li>• Criticises attribution of transgressive love to bewitchment, attributing it instead to personal weakness.</li> <li>• Unlike Drayton and Marlowe, plays down Edward and Gaveston's grief at separation.</li> <li>• Only early modern text to compare Edward to Rehoboam.</li> </ul>
--	--	---	--	--	--	---

		Press, 1961), pp. 4–171				
Jonson, Ben	Mortimer His Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debate over date of composition. Karen Britland (see below) summarises arguments on both sides and argues for a late date, c. 1637. However, I would argue that Jonson’s focus on Mortimer and Isabella’s relationship is most reminiscent of Drayton’s poetry, which may support an argument for an earlier date.</li> <li>• First printed: Ben Jonson, <i>The Worke of Benjamin Jonson</i> (London: Richard Bishop [and Robert Young], 1640).</li> <li>• Modern edition: ‘Mortimer His Fall’, ed. by Karen Britland, in <i>The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson</i>, 7 vols (Cambridge: CUP, 2012), 7.403-16</li> </ul>	English	Possibly Drayton ( <i>Englands Heroicall Epistles / Mortimeriados / Barons Warres</i> ); Le Baker ( <i>Chronicon</i> ); Stow ( <i>Chronicle / Annales</i> )	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fragment which sketches outline for play about Mortimer’s rise and fall; Edward only briefly referenced.</li> <li>• Presents romantic/sexual relationship between Mortimer and Isabella.</li> </ul>
Knighton, Henry	Chronicon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1390-95.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> </ul>	Latin	Anon, <i>Brut</i> (‘short version’); Higden;	Anon, <i>A Book of British Kings</i> ; Brady ( <i>True and Exact History</i> ); Somers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contains arraignment of younger Despenser (though this is not in Rolls of Parliament).</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Latest edition containing Edward's reign: <i>Chronicon Henrici Knighton, Vel Cnitthon, Monachi Leycestrensis</i>, ed. by J. Rawson Lumby (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1889).</li> </ul>		possibly Murimuth; lost chronicle of Leicester abbey		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Probably derives additional details on, and sympathy for, Thomas of Lancaster, from lost Leicester chronicle.</li> <li>• Largely reliant on Higden, but with some sensational additions, e.g. Humphrey de Bohun's violent death and Edward's emotional reaction to his deposition.</li> </ul>
Le Baker, Geoffrey	Chronicon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1347-60.</li> <li>• Attributed in early modern period to le Baker's patron, Sir Thomas de la More.</li> <li>• First printed: 'Vita Et Mors Edwardi Secundi', in <i>Anglica, Normannica, Hibernica, Cambrica, a Veteribus Scripta</i>, ed. by William Camden (Frankfurt: Claudii Marnii, 1603).</li> <li>• Modern edition (Latin): <i>Chronicon Galfridi le Baker de Snynebroke</i>, ed. by E. M. Thompson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889).</li> <li>• Modern edition (English translation): <i>The Chronicle</i></li> </ul>	Latin	Anon, <i>Brut</i> ('long version'); <u>Murimuth</u> ; eyewitness testimony from Sir Thomas de la More	Anon, <i>Brut</i> (independent continuation); Baker; probably Bancroft; Cary; Deloney (probably via Stow or Holinshed); Holinshed; Leigh; May; R. B. ( <i>Admirable Curiosities</i> ); Reading, John of; Speed; Stow ( <i>Chronicles / Annales</i> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strikingly sympathetic account of Edward's reign, especially his cruel treatment after his deposition.</li> <li>• Popular and influential (in early modern period via Stow and Holinshed).</li> <li>• Accuses Gaveston and the Despensers of bewitching Edward.</li> <li>• Earliest text to describe Gaveston as physically attractive and witty.</li> <li>• Origin of story that Edward's guards were sent an ambiguous Latin note, which could be interpreted as an instruction either to murder him or to spare his life.</li> </ul>

		<i>of Geoffrey le Baker</i> , ed. by Richard Barber, trans. by David Preest (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012).				
Le Baker, Geoffrey	Chroniculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1347.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Modern edition (Latin): <i>Chronicon Galfridi le Baker de Snynebroke</i>, ed. by E. M. Thompson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889), pp. 156–75.</li> </ul>	Latin	Largely original.	Malmesbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Far briefer and less sensational than <i>Chronicon</i>.</li> <li>• Nothing reported concerning Edward's imprisonment or murder.</li> <li>• Remarkably considering anti-Isabella stance of <i>Chronicon</i>, refers to Isabella as 'most noble'.</li> </ul>
Le Bel, Jean	Vraies Chroniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1352-56.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Modern edition (French): <i>Chronique de Jean Le Bel</i>, ed. by Jules Marie Édouard Viard, and Eugène Déprez (Paris: Librairie Renouard, H. Laurens, successeur, 1904).</li> <li>• Modern edition (English translation): <i>The True Chronicles of Jean Le Bel, 1290-1360</i>, trans. by Nigel Bryant (Woodbridge:</li> </ul>	French	Largely original.	Froissart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earliest source to accuse younger Despenser of being a 'heretic and sodomite', which (it is implied) denotes sexual transgression.</li> <li>• Possibly confuses Despenser with Gaveston (claims that Despenser was 'nourished with [Edward] since his infancy').</li> </ul>

		Boydell Press, 2011).				
Leigh, Edward	Choice Observations of All the Kings of England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Edward Leigh, <i>Choice Observations of All the Kings of England</i> (London: for Joseph Cranford, 1661).</li> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>	English	Camden; Holinshed; Hubert; le Baker ( <i>Chronicon</i> ); Speed; Vergil	None known.	Short account: focuses on contrasting Edward unfavourably with his father and recounting his imprisonment, ill-treatment and murder.
Malmesbury, Thomas of	Eulogium Historiarum Sive Temporis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1366.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Modern edition: <i>Eulogium (historiarum Sive Temporis)</i>, ed. by Frank Scott Haydon (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, and Roberts, 1858).</li> </ul>	Latin	le Baker ( <i>Chroniculum</i> ); Murimuth	Foxe	Nothing significant: brief and almost entirely derived from le Baker.
Marlowe, Christopher	Edward II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1591-92.</li> <li>• First printed: Christopher Marlowe, <i>The Troublesome Raigne and Lamentable Death of Edward the Second, King of England with the Tragical Fall of Proud Mortimer</i> (London: R. Robinson, 1594)</li> <li>• Four editions 1594-1622.</li> <li>• Many modern editions. Latest edition: <i>Edward II</i>,</li> </ul>	English	<i>Histoire Tragique</i> ; Fabyan; <u>Holinshed</u> ; Stow ( <i>Chronicles</i> / <i>Annales</i> )	Demonstrable influence on Ayscu; Cary; Churchill; Deloney; Drayton (all texts); Hubert; May; Niccols; Speed. Probably also influenced other historical texts.	Very influential in establishing consensus that Edward's relationship with Gaveston was both romantic and sexual, and in popularising term 'minion' for Edward's favourites.

		<p>ed. by Martin Wiggins, Robert Lindsey, and Stephen Guy-Bray, 3rd edn (London: Methuen Drama, 2014). Fullest recent edition (used in this thesis): <i>Edward the Second</i>, ed. by Charles R. Forker (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forthcoming edition: Christopher Marlowe, <i>Edward the Second</i>, ed. by Jeffrey Masten (Arden Early Modern Drama).</li> </ul>				
Martyn, William	Historie, and Lives, of the Kings of England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: William Martyn, <i>The Historie, and Lives, of the Kings of England</i> (London: [William Stansby], 1615).</li> <li>• Four editions 1615-38.</li> </ul>	English	Grafton (both texts)	Baker; possibly Brady ( <i>Great Point of Succession</i> ); Howard; R. B. ( <i>Englands Monarchs / Unfortunate Court-Favourites</i> ); Stevenson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hostile towards Edward, unusually lacking sympathy at any point – possibly because of the unsuitable example Edward presented to the ‘young gentlemen’ to whom the book is addressed.</li> <li>• Edward’s sexual transgressions presented as specifically with women.</li> <li>• One of two texts to use term ‘minion’ with reference to Despensers as well as Gaveston.</li> </ul>



May, Thomas	King Edward the Third	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Thomas May, <i>The Victorious Reigne of King Edward the Third</i> (London: [John Beale?] for T. Walkley and B. Fisher, 1635).</li> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>	English	Drayton ( <i>Mortimeriados/Barons Warres</i> ); le Baker ( <i>Chronicon</i> ); Marlowe	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Features Thomas de la More (thought in early modern period to be the writer of le Baker's <i>Chronicon</i>) as a character.</li> <li>• Emotive detail on Edward's imprisonment and death taken from le Baker: he has a classic 'good death', and his ghost subsequently seeks revenge on Mortimer.</li> </ul>
Meriton, George	Anglorum Gesta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: George Meriton, <i>Anglorum Gesta, or, A Brief History of England</i> (London: T. Dawks, 1675).</li> <li>• Two editions 1675-78.</li> </ul>	English	Speed	None known.	Unusual in emphasising financial, rather than emotional, motivations for Edward's anger after Gaveston's death.
Munday, Anthony	Briefe Chronicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Anthony Munday, <i>A Briefe Chronicle, of the Successe of Times</i> (London: W. Jaggard, 1611).</li> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>	English	Possibly Holinshed; unidentifiable due to brevity.	None known.	Very brief: omits Edward's death altogether, possibly owing to political sensitivity surrounding regicide (Richard II simply 'dies').
Murimuth, Adam	Chronicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1337.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Modern edition: <i>Adæ Murimuth Continuatio</i></li> </ul>	Latin	<u>Personal journal and observation</u> ; possibly Anon, <i>Annales Paulini</i> (see above,	Possibly Anon, <i>Annales Paulini</i> (see above, <i>Annales Paulini</i> ); Anon, <i>Chronicle of Louth Park Abbey</i> ; Foxe;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influential: origin of most sympathetic accounts of Edward's reaction to his deposition and treatment afterwards (transmitted via le Baker).</li> </ul>

		<i>Chronicarum: Robertus de Avesbury De Gestis Mirabilibus Regis Edwardi Tertii</i> , ed. by E. M. Thompson (London: Printed for H.M.S.O., by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1889).		<i>Annales Paulini</i> ); possibly lost Westminster chronicle also used by Robert of Reading.	Holinshed; Knighton; le Baker ( <i>Chronicon</i> ); Reading, John of; Reading, Robert of (used by continuator); Malmesbury; Whittlesey (used by continuator); Walsingham (both texts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notes that onlookers were not permitted to examine Edward's body closely after his death: possible suspicion of murder.</li> </ul>
Mychell, John	A Breviat Cronicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Anon., <i>A Breviat Cronicle Contaynyngge All the Kinges from Brute to This Daye</i> (Canterbury: John Mychell, 1552).</li> <li>• Seven editions 1552-60.</li> </ul>	English	Cooper; Rastell	None known; similarity to Cooper (and, through him, Grafton) makes firm conclusion difficult.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helped to popularise Cooper's description of Edward as influenced by his favourites' 'wanton counsayle' to '[give] him selfe of the appetyte and pleasure of the body'.</li> <li>• Omits Edward's murder entirely – possibly political decision.<sup>10</sup></li> </ul>
Naunton, Robert	Fragmenta Regalia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Robert Naunton, <i>Fragmenta Regalia, Or, Observations on the Late Queen Elizabeth, Her Times and Favorits</i> (London: n.p., 1641)</li> </ul>	English	Largely original	None known	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eyewitness account of Elizabeth's reign: compares her treatment of favourites favourably to Edward's.</li> <li>• Usefully distinguishes between Elizabeth's</li> </ul>

<sup>10</sup> Mychell altered the later sections of his chronicle to accommodate the changing mid-Tudor regime. See Marcia Lee Metzger, 'Controversy and "Correctness": English Chronicles and the Chroniclers, 1553-1568', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 27 (1996), 437-51.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five editions 1641-53.</li> </ul>				‘favourites’ and Edward’s ‘minions’.
Niccols, Richard	A Winter Nights Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Richard Niccols, <i>A Mirour for Magistrates ...Newly Enlarged with a Last Part, Called A Winter Nights Vision</i> (London: Felix Kyngston, 1610)</li> <li>• Four editions 1610-20.</li> <li>• For textual history of <i>Mirror for Magistrates</i>, see Paul Budra, <i>A Mirror for Magistrates and the De Casibus Tradition</i> (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), pp. 11–12 and <i>passim</i>.</li> </ul>	English	Drayton ( <i>Peirs Gaveston</i> ); Holinshed; Marlowe; Stow ( <i>Chronicles / Annales</i> )	None known	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inserts Edward into <i>Mirror for Magistrates</i> tradition.</li> <li>• Focuses on evils of flattery and on Isabella’s sexual transgressions rather than Edward’s.</li> </ul>
Otterbourne, Thomas	Chronica Regum Angliae	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1420.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Latest edition: <i>Duo Rerum Anglicarum Scriptores Veteres, Viz. Thomas Otterbourne et Johannes Whethamstede</i>, ed. by Thomas Hearne (Oxford, 1732), I.</li> </ul>	Latin	Anon, <i>Brut</i> (‘long version’); Higden; Walsingham ( <i>Chronica Maiora</i> )	None known.	Nothing significant: almost entirely derived from Higden.
Peele, George	Honour of the Garter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: George Peele, <i>The Honour of the</i></li> </ul>	English	Possibly Marlowe (but	None known	Brief mention of Edward’s murder and cry of pain. Many

		<p><i>Garter</i> (London: Widdowe Charlewood for John Busbie, 1593).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>		see Chapter 4); Holinshed		critics argue that this must necessarily be based on seeing a performance of Marlowe, but this is not entirely clear-cut (see Chapter 4).
Persons, Robert	An Advertisement Written to a Secretarie of my L. Treasurers of England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Author name also spelt Parsons (ODNB gives Persons).<sup>11</sup></li> <li>• First printed: <i>An Advertisement Written to a Secretarie of My L. Treasurers of England, by an Inglisher Intelligencer</i> ([Antwerp], 1592)</li> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>	English	Unidentifiable due to brevity.	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-Elizabeth text by Jesuit writer.</li> <li>• Criticises William Cecil by comparing him to Edward's favourites based on his influence and social status.</li> </ul>
Persons, Robert	A Conference about the Next Succession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Author name also spelt Parsons.</li> <li>• First printed: <i>A Conference about the next Succession to the Crown of England</i> ([Antwerp]: n.p., 1592)</li> <li>• Reprinted 1681.</li> </ul>	English	Unidentifiable due to brevity.	Brady ( <i>True and Exact History of the Succession</i> ); Hayward; Wentworth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-Elizabeth text by Jesuit writer.</li> <li>• Dedicated to Earl of Essex and uses Edward's example as part of argument justifying deposition.</li> </ul>
R. B. (Nathaniel Crouch)	Admirable Curiosities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: R. B., <i>Admirable Curiosities, Rarities, &amp; Wonders in England, Scotland, and Ireland</i> (London: Tho. Snowden for Nath.</li> </ul>	English	Baker; le Baker ( <i>Chronicon</i> ); Speed	None known	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentions Edward's tomb in connection with Gloucester, and gives sympathetic account of his deposition and death.</li> <li>• Edward unequivocally</li> </ul>

<sup>11</sup> Victor Houlston, 'Persons [Parsons], Robert (1546–1610)', ODNB.

		Crouch, 1682) • One edition.				admits his faults during deposition scene.
R. B. (Nathaniel Crouch)	England's Monarchs	• First printed: R. B., <i>England's Monarchs</i> (London: for Nath. Crouch, 1685) • Five editions 1685-94.	English	Baker; Heywood (text not specified but probably <i>Chronographically History</i> ); Martyn; Speed; Taylor ( <i>Briefe Remembrance</i> )	None known.	• Designed to accompany Crouch's other two books, so gives little detail on Edward's deposition, imprisonment or murder. • Derivative, critical account.
R. B. (Nathaniel Crouch)	Unfortunate Court-Favourites	• First printed: R. B., <i>The Unfortunate Court-Favourites of England</i> (London: for Nath. Crouch, 1695) • One edition.	English	Baker; Martyn; Speed	None known.	• Repurposes sections of various chronicle accounts of Edward's life to tell two discrete stories of his favourites' lives. • Frames witchcraft accusations against Gaveston as explanations for Edward's unreasonable love for him.
Rastell, John	The Pastyme of People	• First printed: John Rastell, <i>The Pastyme of People</i> (London: John Rastell, 1530). • One edition.	English	Anon, <i>Brut</i> ('long version'); <u>Fabyan</u> ; Higden	Mychell	Nothing significant: largely derivative.
Reading, John of	Chronicle	• Composed c. 1367. • No early modern printed version. • Modern edition: <i>Chronica Johannis de Reading et</i>	Latin	le Baker ( <i>Chronicon</i> ); Murimuth	None known.	Account of Edward's reign largely derived from Murimuth, but adds a few details which indicate that the supplementary source was

		<i>anonymi Cantuariensis, 1346-1367</i> , ed. by James Tait and Stephen Birchington (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1914).				probably le Baker (including a reference to Edward's captors as traitors, an account of the penetrative murder, and an accusation that Adam Orleton's translation to the bishopric of Winchester was the result of a bribe).
Reading, Robert of	Flores Historiarum ('Westminster' continuation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1326-30.</li> <li>• Robert of Reading died after completing the entry for 1325; thereafter, an anonymous continuator copied from Adam Murimuth.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Modern edition: <i>Flores Historiarum</i>, ed. by H. R. Luard (London: Printed for H.M.S.O. by Eyre &amp; Spottiswoode, 1890).</li> </ul>	Latin	Largely original.	Anon, <i>Chronicle of Louth Park Abbey</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibly represents 'official history' written for the Isabella/Mortimer party: hostile towards Edward II.<sup>12</sup></li> <li>• One of earliest texts to accuse Edward of sexual transgression, including implied adultery.</li> </ul>
Richardson, Gabriel	Of the State of Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Gabriel Richardson, <i>Of the State of Europe</i> (Oxford: [John Lichfield], 1627).</li> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>	English	Unidentifiable due to brevity.	None known.	Very short summary, but relatively sympathetic to Edward: implies that the accusations that led to his deposition were untrue.
Rishanger, William	See de Trokelowe, John					

<sup>12</sup> Gransden, II, 17-18.

Rous, John	Historia Regum Angliae	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1486.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Latest edition: <i>Joannis Rossi Antiquarii Warwicensis Historia Regum Angliae</i>, ed. by Thomas Hearne (Oxford: e Theatro Sheldoniano, 1745).</li> </ul>	Latin	Higden	None known.	Does not specify manner of Edward's murder, despite using Higden as a source.
Sandford, Francis	Genealogical History of the Kings of England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Francis Sandford, <i>A Genealogical History of the Kings of England, and Monarchs of Great Britain</i> (London: Tho. Newcomb, 1677).</li> <li>• Two editions 1677-83.</li> </ul>	English	Baker; Daniel; Walsingham ( <i>Ypodigma Neustriae</i> )	None known.	Only historical text to refer to Gaveston as Edward's 'Ganimed' (altered from Daniel's 'minion').
Sidney, Philip	Defence of Leicester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1585.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> </ul>	English	Anon, <i>Leicester's Commonwealth</i> ; others unidentifiable due to brevity.	None known.	Response to <i>Leicester's Commonwealth</i> : points out that comparisons between Leicester and Gaveston are potentially treasonous, implying a comparison between Elizabeth I and the deposed Edward.
Slatyer, William	History of Great Britanie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: William Slatyer, <i>The History of Great Britanie</i> (London: W. Stansby, 1621).</li> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>	English	Possibly Stow ( <i>Chronicles / Annales</i> ) but brevity makes firm conclusion difficult.	None known.	Sheds interesting light on term 'minion' by using it for Mortimer (re. his adulterous relationship with Isabella)(Sandford is only other writer to do this).

Somers, John	Brief History of the Succession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: John Somers, <i>A Brief History of the Succession</i> ([London]: n.p., 1680)</li> <li>• Two editions 1680; two editions 1689.</li> </ul>	English	Froissart; Knighton; Vergil; Walsingham (text not specified but probably <i>Chronica Maiora</i> )	Brady ( <i>True and Exact History</i> )	Whig pamphlet which focuses on popular consensus over Edward's deposition in order to encourage deposition of James II.
Speed, John	History of Great Britaine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: John Speed, <i>The History of Great Britaine</i> (London: [by William Hall and John Beale], 1611).</li> <li>• Eight editions 1611-50.</li> </ul>	English	Fabyan; Foxe; Higden (trans. Trevisa); le Baker ( <i>Chronicon</i> ); Marlowe; Stow ( <i>Chronicles / Annales</i> ); Vergil; Walsingham (both texts)	Baker; Coke, Edward; Daniel; Howard; Howell; Leigh; Meriton; R. B. (all texts); Weldon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influenced by texts of all genres: quotes <i>Mirror for Magistrates</i> and arguably contains allusions to Marlowe.</li> <li>• Earliest historical text to refer to Gaveston specifically as Edward's 'minion' (although Ayscu used this term four years earlier, he did not use it to refer to any specific favourites).</li> <li>• Shows sympathy for Edward throughout his reign, while simultaneously presenting his transgressions as largely sexual in nature.</li> </ul>
Stevenson, Matthew	Florus Britannicus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Matthew Stevenson, <i>Florus Britannicus, or, An Exact Epitome of the History of England</i> (London: M. S., 1662).</li> </ul>	English	Baker; Martyn	None known	Includes twelve-line verse following every king's reign: Edward's verse is strikingly condemnatory compared to that of Richard II.



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>				
Stow, John	Annales of England / Chronicles of England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: John Stow, <i>The Chronicles of England</i> (London: Henry Bynneman, 1580)</li> <li>• First printed as <i>Annales</i>: John Stow, <i>The Annales of England</i> (London: Ralfe Newbery and Eliot's Court Press, 1592)</li> <li>• Seven editions 1580-1632.</li> </ul>	English	Anon, <i>Brut</i> ('long version'); Anon, <i>London chronicles</i> ; Anon, <i>Vita Edwardi Secundi</i> ; Cooper; Fabyan; <u>le Baker</u> ( <i>Chronicon</i> ); Walsingham (both texts)	Baker; Coke, Edward; Daniel; Drayton (all texts); G. W.; Hayward; Hubert; Marlowe; Niccols; Slatyer; Speed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accuses Gaveston of bewitching Edward.</li> <li>• Helped to popularise le Baker's sympathetic account of Edward's treatment post-deposition.</li> <li>• 1592 <i>Annales</i> contain additional details from Walsingham, some of which highlight the love between Edward and Gaveston.</li> </ul>
Stow, John	A Summarie of Englyshe Chronicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: John Stow, <i>A Summarie of Englyshe Chronicles</i> (London: Thomas Marsh, 1565).</li> <li>• Also printed as <i>The Summarye of the Chronicles of Englande</i> and <i>The Abridgement of the English Chronicles</i>.</li> <li>• Nineteen editions 1565-1618.</li> </ul>	English	<u>Cooper</u> ; Fabyan	Grafton ( <i>Abridgement</i> ); Holinshed	Response to Grafton's <i>Abridgement of Chronicles</i> , which contained numerous errors; Grafton responded in turn by producing a second abridgement of chronicles ( <i>The Manuell of the Chronicles of Englande</i> , 1565). <sup>13</sup>
Talbot, Thomas	The True Portraiture of the Countenances and Attires of the Kings of England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Thomas Talbot, <i>A Booke, Containing the True Portraiture of the Countenances and Attires of</i></li> </ul>	English	Probably Cooper or Grafton ( <i>Abridgement</i> ); brevity makes	None known.	Brief description of Edward's life focuses on relationship with nobles, not favourites, and omits to mention his murder, creating unusually de-

<sup>13</sup> E. J. Devereux, 'Empty Tuns and Unfruitful Grafts: Richard Grafton's Historical Publications', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 21 (1990), 33–56.

		<p><i>the Kings of England</i> (London: [R. Field for] John de Beauchesne, 1597).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>		firm conclusion difficult.		sexualised account.
Taylor, John	Briefe Remembrance of All the English Monarchs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: John Taylor, <i>A Briefe Remembrance of All the English Monarchs</i> (London: George Eld, for Henry Gosson, 1618).</li> <li>• Five editions 1618-22.</li> </ul>	English	Unidentifiable due to brevity.	R. B. ( <i>Englands Monarchs</i> )	Brief poetic account. Places Edward's reign in <i>de casibus</i> framework, emphasising the role of 'fate and fortune' in his rise and fall.
Taylor, John	Memorial of All the English monarchs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Taylor, John, <i>A Memorial of All the English Monarchs</i> (London: [Nicholas Okes], 1622).</li> <li>• Two editions 1622-30.</li> </ul>	English	Unidentifiable due to brevity.	None known.	Treats Edward sympathetically compared to Richard II, focusing entirely on his ill-treatment and murder rather than condemning his decisions.
de Trokelowe, John	Chronicle of St Albans abbey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed after 1330.</li> <li>• Formerly (and still popularly) ascribed to John Trokelowe, but probably composed by Rishanger with Trokelowe as scribe.<sup>14</sup></li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Modern edition: <i>Johannis de Trokelowe, et Henrici de</i></li> </ul>	Latin	Largely original.	Drayton ( <i>Peirs Gaveston</i> ); Walsingham (both texts)	Provides basis for Walsingham's romanticisation of Edward's relationship with Gaveston.

<sup>14</sup> See Gransden, II, 5.

		<i>Blaneforde, Monachorum S. Albani, Necnon Quorundam Anonymorum, Chronica et Annales</i> , ed. by H. T. Riley (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1866).				
Tynemouth, John of	Historia Aurea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1347.</li> <li>• Lambeth MSS. 10, 11, 12.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Extracts printed in V. H. Galbraith, 'Extracts from the <i>Historia Aurea</i> and a French <i>Brut</i> (1317-47)', <i>English Historical Review</i>, 43 (1928), 203–17</li> </ul>	Latin	Anon, <i>Brut</i> ('long version' in Anglo-Norman); Higden (CD version)	Gray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Account of Edward's reign largely based on Higden, including character assessment. Some small additions which tend to emphasise the excessive nature of his love for Gaveston.</li> <li>• Early source for penetrative murder story (specifies that spit was inserted through a horn, but with no emotional or sensory details).</li> </ul>
Vergil, Polydore	Anglica Historia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1512-13.</li> <li>• First printed: <i>Historia Anglica</i> (Basle: n.p., 1534).</li> <li>• Three editions 1534-55 (all Basle; not printed in England).</li> <li>• First translated c.1575-1600: text in BL Royal MS 18 C VIII-IX.</li> <li>• Modern edition (with</li> </ul>	Latin	Anon, <i>Brut</i> ('long version'); Higden; Walsingham ( <i>Chronica Maiora</i> )	Baker; Daniel; Foxe; Holinshed; Leigh; Speed; Somers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sceptical historiographical assessment of several previously accepted facts, notably manner of Edward's murder.</li> <li>• Strong concern with evil counsel/evil nature question.</li> <li>• Basis for Holinshed's influential account of Edward's reign.</li> </ul>

		parallel English translation): <i>Anglica Historia (1555 version)</i> , ed. and trans. by Dana F. Sutton (Birmingham, 2005) < <a href="http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/polverg/">http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/polverg/</a> >.				
Verstegan, Richard	Declaration of the True Causes of the Great Troubles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: <i>A Declaration of the True Causes of the Great Troubles, Presupposed to Be Intended against the Realme of England</i> ([Antwerp: J. Trognesium?], 1592).</li> <li>• ‘Erroneously attributed to Robert Parsons [i.e. Persons]’ (ESTC).</li> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>	English	Unidentifiable due to brevity.	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-Elizabeth text by Jesuit writer.</li> <li>• Criticises William Cecil by comparing him to Edward’s favourites on the grounds of his influence and social status.</li> </ul>
Walsingham, Thomas	Chronica Maiora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed 1390s.</li> <li>• First printed: <i>Historia Brevis Thomae Walsingham, Ab Edwardo Primo, Ad Henricum Quintum</i> (London: Henry Binneman, 1574). Although a chronicle attributed to Walsingham was printed in 1515 [<i>The St Albans Chronicle</i> (London: Wynkyn de</li> </ul>	Latin	Blanforde; Higden; Murimuth; <u>Rishanger / Trokelowe</u>	Anon, <i>A Book of British Kings</i> ; Anon, <i>True Relation of the Manner of the Deposing of King Edward II</i> ; Anon, <i>Histoire Tragique</i> ; Brady ( <i>True and Exact History</i> ); Capgrave; Coke, Edward; Daniel; Otterbourne;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influential and known to many early modern historians.</li> <li>• Begins process of romanticising Edward’s relationship with Gaveston, through a number of alterations to Rishanger/Trokelowe’s text.</li> <li>• Earliest source for story that Edward regretted executing</li> </ul>

		<p>Worde, 1515)], this is actually the ‘long version’ of the <i>Brut</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Latest edition containing some (but not all) of the <i>Chronica Maiora</i>’s account of Edward’s reign: <i>Thoma Walsingham, Quondam Monachi S. Albani, Historia Anglicana</i>, ed. by H. T. Riley (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, and Green, 1863).</li> <li>• For fuller textual history and the problems with Riley’s edition, see <i>The St Albans Chronicle: The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham</i>, ed. by John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs, and Leslie Watkiss (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003).</li> </ul>			<p>Foxe; probably Hardyng; Holinshed; Speed; Stow (<i>Chronicles / Annales</i>); Somers; Vergil</p>	<p>Thomas of Lancaster and chastised his councillors for advising it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earliest source for story that Isabella pitied Edward’s deposition, prompting the future Edward III to refuse to take up the crown until his father voluntarily resigned it.</li> </ul>
Walsingham, Thomas	Ypodigma Neustriae	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed c. 1420.</li> <li>• First printed: <i>Ypodigma Neustriae vel Normanniae</i> (London: John Day, 1574).</li> <li>• Modern edition: <i>Chronica</i></li> </ul>	Latin	See Walsingham, <i>Chronica Maiora</i>	<p>Holinshed; Sandford; Speed; Stow (<i>Chronicle / Annales</i>)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vast majority of text is abbreviated version of <i>Chronica Maiora</i>.</li> <li>• A few minor additions of detail, e.g. concerning the reason for Gaveston’s first</li> </ul>

		<i>Monasterii S. Albani</i> , ed. by H. T. Riley (London: Longman, 1876).				exile ( <i>Chronica Maiora</i> gives no specific reason, but <i>Ypodigma</i> attributes it to his giving bad counsel to Prince Edward).
Warner, William	Albions England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First edition covering Edward's reign: William Warner, <i>The First and Second Parts of Albions England</i> (London: Thomas Orwin for Thomas Cadman, 1589).</li> <li>• Seven editions 1589-1612.</li> </ul>	English	Possibly Holinshed; brevity makes firm conclusion difficult.	Caesar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diverges from relation of Edward's reign to tell a story involving 'Ganymedes', though does not use the term with explicit reference to Edward and his favourites.</li> <li>• Presents Gaveston as low-born, demonstrating that Marlowe's invention of this detail was not unprecedented.</li> </ul>
Weldon, Anthony	A Cat May Look Upon a King	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Anthony Weldon, <i>A Cat May Look upon a King</i> (London: for William Roybould, 1652)</li> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>	English	Speed	None known	Brief epitome whose summary of Edward's reign focuses on his implied sexual transgression ('sinful delights'), military defeat, conflict with nobles and deposition and murder (no details given).
Wentworth, Peter	A Pithie Exhortation to her Majestie for Establishing her Successor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First printed: Peter Wentworth, <i>A Pithie Exhortation to Her Majestie for Establishing Her Successor to the Crowne</i> ([Edinburgh]: [Robert Waldegrave], 1598).</li> </ul>	English	Persons ( <i>Conference</i> )	None known.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to Persons, <i>A Conference About The Next Succession</i>.</li> <li>• Uses Edward as example to reassure Elizabeth I that naming a successor will not result in her deposition.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One edition.</li> </ul>				
Whittlesey, Walter of	Historia Coenobii Burgensis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Composed before 1329; not contemporaneous.</li> <li>• Walter of Whittlesey's contribution ceases at 1321, after which it is continued anonymously.</li> <li>• No early modern printed version.</li> <li>• Latest edition: 'Walteri de Whitlesey Historia Coenobii Burgensis', in <i>Historia Anglicanae Scriptores Varii, E Codicibus Manuscriptis Nunc Primum Editi</i>, ed. by Joseph Sparke, 2 vols (London: Gul. Bowyer, 1723), II, 125–216</li> </ul>	Latin	Unknown before 1321. Continuator probably used <i>Brut</i> ('long version'), and possibly Murimuth.	None known.	Circumspect about manner of Edward's death despite probable use of <i>Brut</i> .