

English Queenship 1445-1503

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Abstract

Medieval queenship has been the subject of increasing academic interest in recent years. A perception that the direct political influence of queens deteriorated throughout the period has meant that most research has concentrated on the early and high Middle Ages. It is the purpose of this thesis to redress this balance by focusing on the last of England's medieval queens: Margaret of Anjou, Elizabeth Woodville, Anne Neville and Elizabeth of York. The Wars of the Roses marked a period of political instability which brought into question existing ideologies of kingship and, within that, of queenship, reshaping the latter office and its rituals.

This thesis argues that ideologically and politically a queen was integral to the proper exercise of kingship in this period. Although motherhood was potentially a queen's most empowering peacetime role, this was only the most easily identified and unthreatening aspect of her multi-faceted and potentially subversive position as a woman at the heart of the English power structure. Although the personal influence of individual queens depended upon political circumstances and their own characters, they occupied an office which could be manipulated by themselves and others to support, legitimise and expand their husbands' kingship in a variety of ways.

Following an introductory assessment of the historiography of these queens, the first chapter provides an analysis of the process of choosing queens, examining themes of love, nobility and virginity as well as diplomatic motives. The second chapter explores the developing and paradoxical ideologies of queenship expressed in rituals surrounding marriage, coronation, childbirth and death. The third assesses the ideology and practice of royal motherhood, and the fourth the value and threat of the queen's family to kingship and the polity. The thesis concludes with a reassessment of the function of the queen's household, her *familia* and her vital role at Court.

*This thesis is dedicated with much love to my grandparents,
Joan and Ramsay Matthias, who have given me so much,*

and to my friends,

Anna Young and Nick Macdonald,

who have spent the last eighteen months of my research and writing, working with refugees, returnees and other victims of war in Croatia, Serbia and Kosovo (as I write now they are in Macedonia and Albania); because, from our very different worlds, we have helped to keep each other sane.

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List of Abbreviations

Add - Additional

BIHR - Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research

BJRL - Bulletin of the John Rylands Library

BL - London, British Library

CCLR - Calendar of Close Rolls, 1447-1500, 7 vols. (London, 1941-55).

CPL - Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland: Papal Letters, 18 vols. (London, 1912-94).

CPR - Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1441-1509, 8 vols. (London, 1897-1916).

CSP Milan - A.B. Hinds (ed.), Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Relating to English Affairs Existing in the Archives and Collections of Milan I (London, 1912)

CSP Venice - Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Relating to English Affairs Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice, and in other Libraries of Northern Italy 1202-1509 (London, 1864).

DNB - S. Leslie and L. Sidney (eds.), The Dictionary of National Biography, 63 vols. (London, 1885-1900).

EETS - Early English Text Society

EHR - English Historical Review

GEC - G.E. Cockayne and V. Gibbs (eds.), The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom: Extant, Extinct or Dormant, 13 vols. (London, 1910-59).

PRO - London, Public Record Office

Rot Parl - Rotuli Parliamentorum, 6 vols. (London, 1783).

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Table 2: The House of York

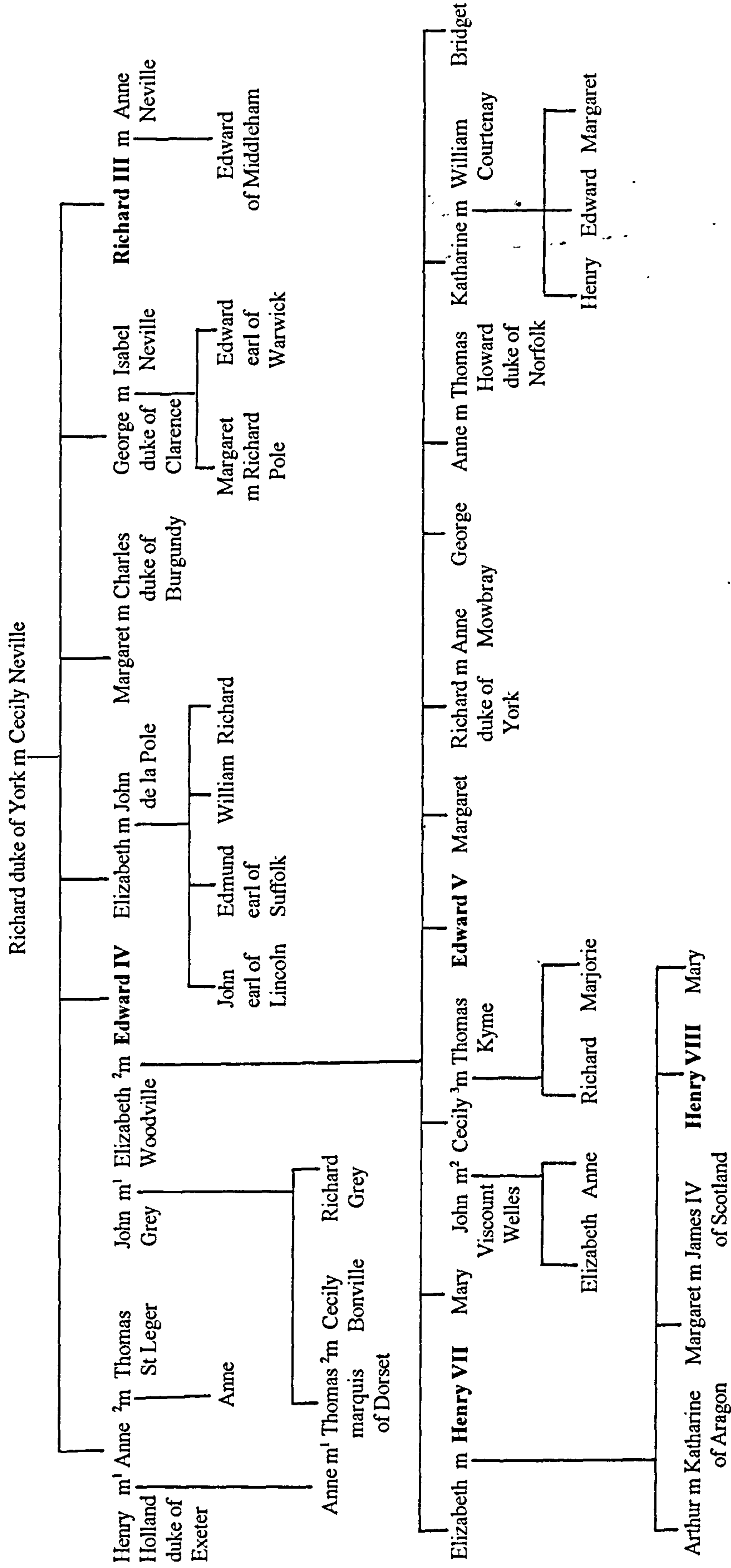
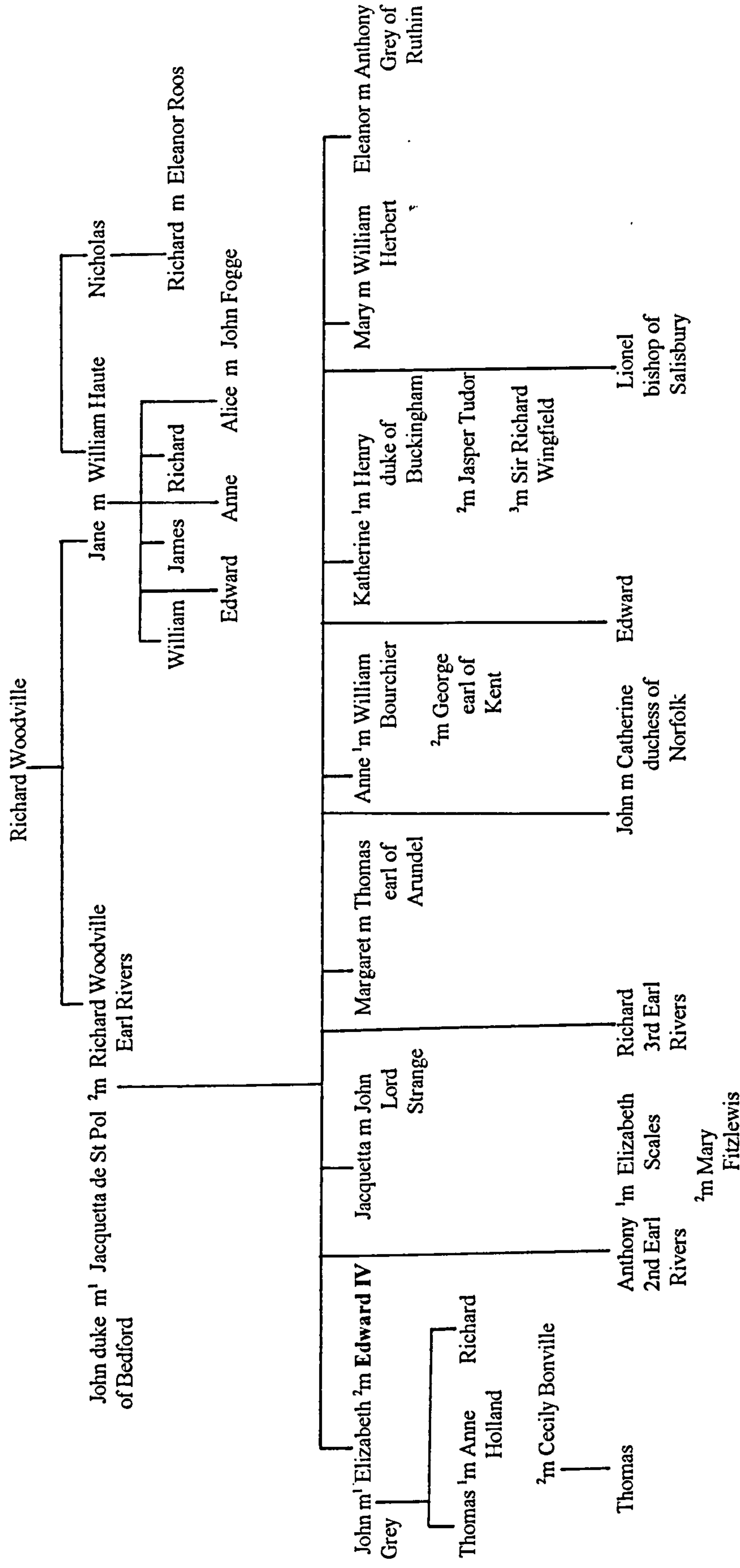


Table 3: The Woodvilles, Greys and Hautes



Introduction

1. Defining Queenship

A Quene ought to be chaste. wyse. of honest peple/ well manerd and not curyous in nourisshynge of her children/ her wysedom ought not only tappere in feet and werkes but also in spekyng that is to wete that she be secrete and telle not suche thynges as ought to be holden secrete . . . A Quene ought to be well manerd & amonge alle she ought to be tumerous and shamefast.¹

Caxton's 1474 edition of Jacobus' de Cessolis' *Game and Playe of the Chesse* contains the most extensive summary of a queen's role in surviving English fifteenth-century literature. De Cessolis was a Dominican monk at Rheims in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, and his description of queenship was essentially a summary of ideal womanhood.² Christine de Pizan included queens among the high-born ladies to whom she addressed her similar, but much more extensive, advice in *Le Livre du Trésor de la Cité des Dames* of 1405, but, unlike de Cessolis, she did not purport to be defining queenship exclusively. Moreover, de Pizan's work was not translated into English in the medieval period.³ In avoiding any attempt to define queenship more specifically, contemporaries were able to ignore the potentially subversive implications of an office at the heart of the political structure which could only be filled by a woman. Until recently, historians too have approached queens only as a series of individual women. Queens were most commonly referred to in the context of the political negotiations surrounding their marriages and for their ability to bear children; or otherwise as the subject of narrative biographies which focussed on their lives rather than their roles and which still served to separate them from mainstream history.⁴ Only those queens who publicly assumed a position independent from

¹Jacobus de Cessolis, *Game and Playe of the Chesse*, trans. William Caxton, ed. W.E.A. Axon (St Leonards on Sea, 1969), pp. 27, 32.

²Cessolis, *Game and Playe*, p. xxiv. For a very similar description of ideal womanly behaviour to that of de Cessolis, see Christine de Pizan's advice to the wives of clerks and of king's counsellors. Christine de Pizan, *The Treasure of the City of Ladies, or The Book of the Three Virtues*, trans. S. Lawson (Harmondsworth, 1985), pp. 145-9.

³It is quite possible that English queens of this period were, nonetheless, familiar with Christine de Pizan's work since the mother and mother-in-law of Elizabeth Woodville are both associated with copies of *Cité des Dames*. C.M. Meale, "' . . . alle the bokes that I have of latyn, englisch, and frensch": Laywomen and their Books in Late Medieval England', in C.M. Meale (ed.), *Women and Literature in Britain 1150-1500* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 135, 143.

⁴The classic example of the latter is A. Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England* (London, 1840-49) in which most of the medieval queens' biographies were actually written by Agnes's sister Elizabeth. For a

their kings, such as Eleanor of Aquitaine or Margaret of Anjou, received serious treatment in general histories, but this was as individual players on the political stage, not in the context of their office.⁵ The one aspect of queenship which did arouse attention during the first half of this century was the queen's household, its structure and resources, in relation to wider administrative history.⁶

It was only with the rise of feminism, and its influence on historical scholarship, that queenship as an office 'with prerogatives, norms, [and] limits within which each incumbent functioned' was first explored by Marion Facinger in 1968.⁷ The focus of Facinger's study was Capetian France 987-1237. She argued that the queen was genuinely 'the king's "partner" in governing' during the tenth century, and that queenly influence steadily increased until the first quarter of the twelfth century, but that thereafter the queen's political role gradually diminished so that by the beginning of the thirteenth century the public office of queenship had been 'shorn of all functions except the decorative and symbolic', although privately, as the king's wife, she might still exert influence.⁸ This development Facinger attributed primarily to the increasing bureaucratisation of government as the Capetian dynasty strengthened its hold on France, explaining that

So long as the court was small and itinerant . . . so long as the physical locus of administration was the hall or "common room" where the king and court ate, slept, and governed, so could the queen share every aspect of her husband's suzerainty except the military campaign.⁹

She concluded that 'by the close of the twelfth century the office of queen had assumed its

brief survey of the popularity, value and limitations of this work see J.C. Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile: Queen and Society in Thirteenth-Century England* (Basingstoke, 1994), pp. 240-47, but see also D. Dunn, 'Margaret of Anjou: Monster-Queen or Dutiful Wife?', *Medieval History* 4 (1994): 208-10.

⁵For example Margaret of Anjou in E.F. Jacob, *The Fifteenth Century 1399-1485* (Oxford, 1961), pp. 508-32, 564-69.

⁶H. Johnstone, 'The Queen's Household', in T.F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England* (Manchester, 1920-33), 5:231-289; H. Johnstone, 'The Queen's Household', in J.F. Willard and W.A. Morris (eds.), *The English Government at Work 1327-1336* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1940-50), 1:250-299; A.R. Myers, *Crown, Household and Parliament in Fifteenth-Century England*, ed. C.H. Clough (London, 1985); F.D. Blackley and G. Hermansen (eds.), *The Household Book of Queen Isabella of England* (Edmonton, 1971).

⁷M. Facinger, 'A Study of Medieval Queenship: Capetian France 987-1237', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 5 (1968): 3-48.

⁸Facinger, 'A Study of Medieval Queenship', pp. 4, 40.

⁹Facinger, 'A Study of Medieval Queenship', p. 27.

ultimate shape', as a patroness of the arts and literature, and 'the social companion of the king in the ritual performance of regal rites'.¹⁰ Five years later, Jo Ann McNamara and Suzanne Wemple extended this argument to the whole of western Europe, tracing the economic, political and ecclesiastical developments which eroded the role of families as units of power, allowing men to participate in new public institutions and consigning women to increasingly unimportant households.¹¹

It is consequently unsurprising that the majority of scholarship on queenship focussed initially upon the period prior to the thirteenth century.¹² The most prominent example of this was Pauline Stafford's 1983 study of the king's wife in the early middle ages, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, in which she examined these women not within the context of their dynastic history but comparatively, through the stages of their lives, encompassing far more than Facinger's narrow focus on questions of political power.¹³ Several essays on both late and early medieval queenship appeared in the 1980s, but this present decade has seen an explosion of interest in the subject, with conferences, essay collections and biographies which have established a number of major themes in the study of the subject.¹⁴

¹⁰Facinger, 'A Study of Medieval Queenship', p. 47.

¹¹J.A. McNamara and S.Wemple, 'The Power of Women Through the Family in Medieval Europe, 500-1100', first published in *Feminist Studies* 1 (1973):126-41, reprinted in revised form in M. Erler and M. Kowaleski (eds.), *Women and Power in the Middle Ages* (Athens, Georgia, 1988), pp. 83-101.

¹²W.W. Kibler (ed.), *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Patron and Politician* (Austin, 1976); J.L. Nelson, 'Queens as Jezebels: the careers of Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian History' in D. Baker (ed.), *Medieval Women*, Studies in Church History, Subsidia 1 (Oxford, 1978), pp. 31-77; P. Stafford, 'The King's Wife in Wessex' *Past and Present* 91 (1981): 56-78; L.L. Huneycutt, 'Images of Queenship in the High Middle Ages', *Haskins Society Journal* 1 (1989): 61-71; L.L. Huneycutt, 'Medieval Queenship', *History Today* 39 (June, 1989): 16-22.

¹³P. Stafford, *Queens, Concubines, and Dowagers: the King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (London, 1983).

¹⁴For example, D. Parsons (ed.), *Eleanor of Castile, 1290-1290: Essays to Commemorate the 700th Anniversary of her Death, 28 November 1290* (Stamford, 1991); L.O. Fradenburg (ed.), *Women and Sovereignty* (Edinburgh, 1992); P. Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow: the Social Imagination of Fourteenth-Century Texts* (Princeton, 1992), pp. 95-119; D.D.R. Owen, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Queen and Legend* (Oxford, 1993); J.C. Parsons (ed.), *Medieval Queenship* (Stroud, 1994); A. Crawford (ed.), *Letters of the Queens of England 1100-1547* (Stroud, 1994); D. Dunn, 'Margaret of Anjou, Queen Consort of Henry VI: a Reassessment of her Role, 1445-1453', in R.E. Archer (ed.), *Crown, Government and People in the Fifteenth Century* (Stroud, 1995); L.L. Huneycutt, 'Intercession and the High-Medieval Queen: the Esther Topos', and J.C. Parsons, 'The Queen's Intercession in Thirteenth-Century England', in J. Carpenter and S.-B. MacLean (eds.), *Power of the Weak: Studies on Medieval Women* (Urbana and Chicago, 1995); A.F. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs, 'A "Most Benevolent Queen", Queen Elizabeth Woodville's Reputation, her Piety and her Books', *The Ricardian* 10:129 (1995): 214-45; A.J. Duggan (ed.), *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge, 1997); P. Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in*

For late medievalists, the importance of the household has continued to be a major focus of attention. Margaret Howell has recently challenged Facinger's claim that queenship was in decline by describing Eleanor of Provence's extensive use of her household structure to exert influence at court and within the realm at large.¹⁵ Howell, perhaps deliberately in order to stress that Eleanor was a subject worthy of the same treatment as kings and earlier queens, scarcely touches on the rituals which Facinger maintained were so central to later queenship; but these have been addressed by John Carmi Parsons.¹⁶ He argues that the rituals and symbols of queenship were constructed to position the queen outside the male political arena and were often suggestive of her submission to the king; but that such rituals and symbols nonetheless acknowledged a degree of power and influence exerted in an unofficial sphere, primarily through the motif of intercession.¹⁷

Intercession as a potential avenue to power has received considerable attention. Lois Huneycutt argues that in the high Middle Ages churchmen particularly focussed on the intercessory role as an appropriate queenly ideal, repeatedly comparing queens with the Biblical heroine Esther.¹⁸ According to Parsons, the 'Esther topos' gave way to Marian imagery in thirteenth-century constructions of queenly intercession, a device whereby the queen's persuasive abilities could be divorced from the dangerous implication that a king might be subject to a woman's Eve-like charms.¹⁹ Such imagery also served to bind a queen's intercessory power to her expected role as mother, the Virgin Mary's primary function. Using fourteenth-century instances, Paul Strohm showed that in practice the notion of queen as intercessor could be used in male politics as a device to enable a king to change his mind or become reconciled with his subjects, her humble pleading allowing men to avoid losing face, and instead to appear gracious.²⁰ However, Strohm goes on to

Eleventh-Century England (Oxford, 1997); M. Howell, *Eleanor of Provence: Queenship in Thirteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1998).

¹⁵Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, pp. 266-73.

¹⁶J.C. Parsons, 'Ritual and Symbol in the English Medieval Queenship to 1500', in Fradenburg (ed.), *Women and Sovereignty*, pp. 60-77; Parsons, 'The Queen's Intercession', passim.

¹⁷Parsons, 'Ritual and Symbol', and 'The Queen's Intercession', passim.

¹⁸Huneycutt, 'Images of Queenship', and 'The Esther Topos', passim.

¹⁹Parsons, 'The Queen's Intercession', passim.

²⁰Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow*, pp. 95-119 passim.

argue that for contemporary writers, Maidstone and Chaucer, queenship involved 'tempering . . . kingly power by good advice. In their works, queenship not only supplements and confirms male power but acts, as "a powerful reminder of its limits"'.²¹

According to Facinger, another potentially influential characteristic of post twelfth-century queenship was patronage of the arts and literature. However, Madeline Caviness has recently explored this subject in relation to both abbesses and queens, concluding that their decreasing power and wealth during the thirteenth century gradually eroded their patronage of books for themselves and artistic commissions such as windows for churches, reaching 'something like a nadir' in the fourteenth century.²² Nonetheless, Parsons's study of Eleanor of Castile revealed a late-thirteenth-century queen whose literary patronage was extensive, and was significantly related to periods of crisis and transition in which her 'ability to deploy the written word could invest her actions with greater consequence'.²³

The importance of family has remained a central, although evolving, theme in studies of queenship.²⁴ Charles Wood argued that for queens, and for all women, the bonds of loyalty to marital and natal families could sometimes be contradictory, and focussed on Elizabeth Woodville's apparent assumption that her family should share her own good fortune.²⁵ Howell more recently suggested that the success of Eleanor of Provence's Savoyard uncles was due less to the queen's favour than to their own abilities, and that their strength then helped her to exert more influence.²⁶ Parsons has contested the traditional notion that royal daughters were isolated from their parents and valued only for their

²¹Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow*, p. 119. His reference is to John Coakley's work on relations between thirteenth-century friars and holy women, in which the women's prayers for the friars' work supplied a 'male lack' (J. Coakley, 'Female Sanctity as a Male Concern among Thirteenth-Century Friars,' unpublished paper, p. 103).

²²M.H. Caviness, 'Anchoress, Abbess and Queen: Donors and Patrons or Intercessors and Matrons?' in J.H. McCash (ed.), *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women* (Athens, Georgia, 1996), p. 143.

²³J.C. Parsons, 'Of Queens, Courts and Books: Reflections on the Literary Patronage of Thirteenth-Century Plantagenet Queens', in McCash (ed.), *Cultural Patronage*, pp. 177-88.

²⁴J.C. Parsons, 'Introduction: Family, Sex and Power: The Rhythms of Medieval Queenship', in Parsons (ed.), *Medieval Queenship*, pp. 1-11.

²⁵C.T. Wood, 'The First Two Queens Elizabeth', in Fradenburg (ed.), *Women and Sovereignty*, p. 127.

²⁶Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, pp. 49-70.

marriageability.²⁷ In a study of several Plantagenet mother and daughter relationships, he argued that queens were closely involved with their daughters' upbringing, and in their children's marriages, and that these roles were central to queens' self-definition in the context of the shared experience of royal women.

In the majority of these studies an underlying theme has been the limitations and the potential of womanhood in the context of kingship. Louise Fradenburg in her 1991 introduction to *Women and Sovereignty* suggested that there was a 'plasticity of gender in the field of sovereignty'.²⁸ This was as a result both of 'sovereignty's urge toward totality, inclusiveness, and exemplarity (its need to gain a purchase on both sexes and on all the cultural functions with which they are severally associated)', and of sovereignty's need to establish its otherness from its subjects.²⁹ This sense that a woman was a necessary element in the working of kingship does not necessarily indicate that her position was personally empowering. The debate of Facinger and Howell-regarding the possible 'decline' of 'queenship' centres actually upon the extent of political influence of queens, but this approach, like the earlier isolated biographies of individual women, is highly limiting. The study of queenship ought not to be simply an attempt to establish whether certain exceptionally placed women could influence the politics of nations. It should rather explore the entire web of issues - political, domestic, economic, gendered, ritualistic, and ideological - involved in the relationship between a wide variety of women, their equally varied husbands, and the constantly changing office of queen.

It is the purpose of this thesis to address that relationship during the lives of four very different women on the eve of the crisis in queenship of Henry VIII's reign. The thesis will engage with, and sometimes challenge, the themes in queenship raised above, as well as suggesting new ways of approaching an understanding of the queen's role, particularly with reference to the workings of the royal court. The queens in question are Margaret of Anjou, Elizabeth Woodville, Anne Neville and Elizabeth of York. The first two have been the subjects of much controversy. Forced, as they were, by political crises

²⁷J.C. Parsons, 'Mothers, Daughters, Marriage, Power: Some Plantagenet Evidence, 1150-1500', in Parsons (ed.), *Medieval Queenship*, pp. 63-78.

²⁸L.O. Fradenburg, 'Introduction: Rethinking Queenship', in Fradenburg (ed.), *Women and Sovereignty*, p. 2.

²⁹Fradenburg, 'Rethinking Queenship', p. 2.

into public positions uncommon to queenship, both were subject in their lifetimes to vigorously antagonistic propaganda campaigns, and have since been the subject of numerous biographies and recent attempts to redeem their reputations.³⁰ The latter two tend to excite the interest of the novelist rather than the historian: Elizabeth of York's only twentieth-century biographer 'adapted some techniques of the novel' in framing her narrative, which presents 'a life of reaction rather than action', while the known facts of Anne Neville's life are so few that only short articles have been devoted to her life.³¹

2. Introduction to the Historiography of the English Queens of 1445-1503

The only systematic attempt to consider queenship broadly in the fifteenth century is Anne Crawford's 1981 article on the consequences of royal marriage.³² Yet even this falls into the trap of repeating the stereotyped images of queens that have dominated their histories for the past five centuries. She sums up her article with the assertion that,

As an object lesson in how not to behave as queen consort, the French princess [Margaret of Anjou] and the English gentlewoman [Elizabeth Woodville] could hardly be bettered. In their personal lives, each paid a bitter price for their behaviour. In contrast, Elizabeth of York was probably everything a fifteenth-century Englishman could have hoped for in his queen - beautiful, fertile, pious and good, with apparently no thoughts beyond her God, her husband and her children, and above all, not a foreigner but an English princess.³³

³⁰For studies of the propaganda against them see P.A. Lee, 'Reflections of Power: Margaret of Anjou and the Dark Side of Queenship', *Renaissance Quarterly* 39 (1986): 183-217; Dunn, 'Monster-Queen or Dutiful Wife?', pp. 199-217; A.J. Pollard, 'Elizabeth Woodville and her Historians' (forthcoming). Biographies include M. Baudier, *An History of the Memorable and Extraordinary Calamities of Margaret of Anjou, Queen of England* (London, 1737); A.F. Prévost d'Exiles, *The History of Margaret of Anjou Queen of England*, 2 vols. (translated into English, London, 1755); M.A. Hookham, *The Life and Times of Margaret of Anjou*, 2 vols. (London, 1872); J.J. Bagley, *Margaret of Anjou, Queen of England* (London, 1948); P. Erlanger, *Marguerite d'Anjou et la Guerre des deux Roses* (Paris, 1961)[translated into English by E. Hyams as *Margaret of Anjou, Queen of England* (London, 1970)]; J. Haswell, *The Ardent Queen: Margaret of Anjou and the Lancastrian Heritage* (London, 1976); K. Davies, *The First Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1937); D. MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville (1437-1492) Her Life and Times* (London, 1938). Recent attempts to redeem their reputations have been made by Dunn, 'Margaret of Anjou: a Reassessment'; Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, 'A "Most Benevolent Queen"'.

³¹N.L. Harvey, *Elizabeth of York, the Mother of Henry VIII* (New York, 1973), p. xiii. For Anne see Strickland, *Lives of the Queens*, 3:429-48.

³²A. Crawford, 'The King's Burden? The Consequences of Royal Marriage in Fifteenth-Century England', in R.A. Griffiths (ed.), *Patronage, the Crown and the Provinces in Later Medieval England* (Gloucester, 1981), pp. 33-56. See also A. Crawford, 'The Piety of Late Medieval English Queens', in C. Barron and C. Harper-Bill (eds.), *The Church in Pre-Reformation Society* (Woodbridge, 1985), pp. 48-57.

³³Crawford, 'The King's Burden', p. 53.

As Parsons noted in his study of Eleanor of Castile, while traditional notions of good and bad kings have long been rejected by historians, their queens are often still to be found in moralising Victorian topoi, usually those constructed by Agnes and Elizabeth Strickland in their *Lives of the Queens of England*, published in the 1840s.³⁴ In fact, Elizabeth Strickland's portrayal of Margaret of Anjou was more complex than most of her accounts. She depicted Margaret primarily as a beautiful tragic heroine to be admired for her 'maternal tenderness . . . and the courageous manner in which she . . . upheld the rights of her royal husband,' always thwarted by fortune but motivated only by love for her son.³⁵ Strickland approached Margaret's involvement in the battles of Wakefield and St Albans with the explanation that accusations against her son's legitimacy and the attempts to disinherit him had acted

upon her passionate maternal love and pride [and] converted all the better feelings of her nature into fierce and terrific impulses, till at length the graceful attributes of mind and manners by which the queen, the beauty, and the patroness of learning had been distinguished, were forgotten in the ferocity of the amazon and the avenger.³⁶

This combination of the 'tragic heroine' and the 'virago' had existed within Margaret's reputation since Polydore Vergil combined Yorkist and Tudor representations of Margaret in his *Anglica Historia*.³⁷ This interpretation was developed and immortalised in Shakespeare's anachronistic depiction of Margaret as the spokeswoman of the disinherited Lancastrians in *Richard III*.³⁸ Subsequent biographers might emphasize one aspect or the other but all accepted both the tragedy of her story and her violent nature.³⁹ J.J. Bagley attempted a less emotional study, published in 1948, in which he argued that in her 'essentially medieval' attitude to monarchy and society Margaret 'was fighting to keep

³⁴Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile*, pp. 1-2.

³⁵William Shakespeare, *Henry VI part 3*, I iv 110. Strickland, *Lives of the Queens*, 3:287-8.

³⁶Strickland, *Lives of the Queens*, 3:311.

³⁷Polydore Vergil, *Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English History*, ed. H. Ellis, Camden Society, old series 29 (1844), pp. 68-72, 152-3.

³⁸William Shakespeare, *Richard III*, I iii 110-303.

³⁹See Bagley, *Margaret of Anjou*, p. 241 and R.A. Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI. The Exercise of Royal Authority* (London, 1981), pp. 270-1 for comments on other biographies of Margaret.

alive a world which was slowly but inevitably yielding place to something different'.⁴⁰ He maintained that

she did not cause the Wars of the Roses, but her intense bitter feeling, her refusal to compromise and her disregard of any other factor than the inheritance of her son were reflected in the brutal, callous nature of the prolonged struggle. For the sake of its own cause and for the welfare of the English people, the House of Lancaster might have wished for a wiser and more understanding leader, but nowhere could it have found a braver and more determined champion.⁴¹

P. Erlanger in 1961 claimed to be writing a revision of the traditional 'arbitrary anathematization' of Margaret, but his very novel-like and poorly researched work nonetheless presented her at Wakefield as 'an Amazon drunk on the stench of blood and gunpowder and the harsh taste of vengeance'.⁴² As Jock Haswell triumphantly observed in 1976, Margaret could not actually have been present at Wakefield.⁴³ He stressed the influence of Yorkist propaganda on succeeding representations of Margaret, but nevertheless claimed that,

relentless in the pursuit of her aims, she had no idea how to conciliate, or how to come to terms with those who opposed her.⁴⁴

He also suggested that if she had chosen to apply her feminine charms and beauty to the notoriously susceptible duke of York and his son Edward, 'one with Margaret's attractions might even have prevented the civil war'.⁴⁵ Instead he attributed the ensuing conflict almost entirely to Margaret's partiality and power.

More general histories of the period were also balancing their accounts of her destructive political domination with praise for her heroism. In 1964 S.B. Chrimes had argued that

Queen Margaret, whatever her shortcomings may have been, spared herself no efforts, hardships, or perils in her heroic desperation to keep her husband's and

⁴⁰Bagley, *Margaret of Anjou*, p. 8.

⁴¹Bagley, *Margaret of Anjou*, p. 9.

⁴²Erlanger, *Margaret of Anjou*, pp. 28, 175-6

⁴³Haswell, *Ardent Queen*, pp. 139-40.

⁴⁴Haswell, *Ardent Queen*, p. 58.

⁴⁵Haswell, *Ardent Queen*, p. 96.

above all her son's cause alive by every available means.⁴⁶

J.R. Lander similarly upheld Strickland's defence of 'fierce maternal instincts' as the reason behind Margaret's entry onto the political stage in the 1450s.⁴⁷ But this was not sentimentalised like Strickland: Lander's judgement was that the duke of York 'was no less unscrupulous than his last opponent, Margaret of Anjou, but he may well have been less clever'.⁴⁸ This then was the historiography which led to Anne Crawford's judgement on Margaret of Anjou.

The development of Elizabeth Woodville's reputation was more complex and less positive. Strickland's harsher portrait of Elizabeth proved to be rather more influential than her depiction of Margaret of Anjou. Strickland's attitude to Edward IV's queen may have resulted from the writer's affection for Margaret, and from the Strickland sisters' own claims to gentility beyond their birth.⁴⁹ Strickland's judgement, repeated almost verbatim by later historians, was that Elizabeth Woodville's strong influence over Edward IV was

most dangerous in the hands of a woman who possessed more cunning than firmness, more skill in concocting a diplomatic intrigue than power to form a rational resolve. She was ever successful in carrying her own purposes, but she had seldom a wise or good end in view; the advancement of her own relatives and the depreciation of her husband's friends and family, were her chief objects. Elizabeth gained her own way with her husband by an assumption of the deepest humility; her words were soft and caressing, her glances timid.⁵⁰

Nonetheless, Strickland also suggested that during the queen's time in sanctuary in 1471,

the feminine helplessness of Elizabeth Woodville, and the passive resignation with which she endured the evils and inconveniences of the Sanctuary-house in the hour of maternal weakness and agony, had created for her a tender regard throughout the realm, that actually did more benefit to the cause of York than

⁴⁶S.B. Chrimes, *Lancastrians, Yorkists and Henry VII* (London, 1964), pp. 88-9.

⁴⁷J.R. Lander, *Conflict and Stability in Fifteenth-Century England*, 3rd edn (London, 1977), p. 75 (first published 1969); J.R. Lander, *Government and Community in England 1450-1509* (London, 1980), p. 199.

⁴⁸Lander, *Government and Community*, p. 218.

⁴⁹For the Stricklands' claims to gentility see Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile*, p. 241.

⁵⁰Strickland, *Lives of the Queens*, 3:385-6. Historians repeating this judgement cited by Pollard include L. Stratford, *Edward the Fourth* (1910), p. 96; MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville*, p. 41.

the indomitable spirit of Margaret of Anjou effected for the opposite party.⁵¹

A.J. Pollard has recently referred to this ‘femme fatale’/‘mater dolorosa’ dichotomy in a study of Elizabeth’s developing reputation, maintaining that while these stereotypes have been commonly applied to queens for centuries, their coexistence as here is rare.⁵² As the above summary of Margaret of Anjou’s reputation indicates, such a dichotomy appears to have been a feature of the reputations of those fifteenth-century queens who were politically active, and thus a result of the dynastic upheavals of the period.

Pollard argues that the root of Elizabeth Woodville’s ‘femme fatale’ image was Richard III’s propaganda in 1483, which heavily influenced the visiting Italian observer Dominic Mancini.⁵³ He explains that Mancini’s work was unknown in England for centuries, and it was therefore the more sympathetic image of Elizabeth Woodville, promoted by Tudor propaganda against Richard III, that remained dominant until the eighteenth-century defenders of Richard III found her to be a useful scapegoat and motive for Richard’s usurpation.⁵⁴ He further suggests that the earliest of these Ricardian apologists, Thomas Carte, may have had access to Mancini’s work whilst in exile. This argument, however, ignores the existence of severe criticism of Elizabeth’s promotion of

⁵¹Strickland, *Lives of the Queens*, 3:393. Note that MacGibbon’s unacknowledged quotation of this passage in 1938 ends ‘a tender regard that was possibly as beneficial to the House of York as the indomitable spirit of Margaret of Anjou was harmful’, rejecting Strickland’s re-reading of Margaret’s role at this time. MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville*, p. 108.

⁵²Pollard, ‘Elizabeth Woodville and her Historians’.

⁵³Pollard, ‘Elizabeth Woodville and her Historians’. Dominic Mancini, *The Usurpation of Richard III*, (ed.) C.A.J. Armstrong (Gloucester, 1984) (first published Oxford, 1936).

⁵⁴Shakespeare’s Elizabeth Woodville, for instance, declares in 1471, ‘For love of Edward’s offspring in my womb. / This is it that makes me bridle passion/ And bear with mildness my misfortune’s cross’ (*Henry VI pt 3 VI i* 18-20). In 1483 she cries ‘Ah who shall hinder me to wail and weep/ To chide my fortune, and torment myself/ I’ll join with black despair against my soul/ And to myself become an enemy’ and turns to Margaret for help in cursing Richard (*Richard III II ii* 34-37). Those eighteenth-century Ricardians cited by Pollard were Thomas Carte, *A General History of England from the Earliest Times II 1216-1509* (London, 1750); D. Hume, *History of England II* (London, 1762); and Horace Walpole, *Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of King Richard III* (London, 1763) whose ‘exercise in enlightened rationality’ ‘made no pretence that his characterisation of Elizabeth was based on authority’. Pollard, ‘Elizabeth Woodville and her Historians’. In addition to sources cited by Pollard, it is relevant to consider the seventeenth-century work of George Buck, *The History of King Richard the Third*, ed. A.N. Kincaid (Gloucester, 1979), first published in 1619, in which it is principally Elizabeth’s family rather than the queen herself whom Richard is supposed to have feared, although Elizabeth Woodville is supposed to have plotted her daughter Elizabeth’s marriage to Richard during Anne’s lifetime, Buck, *History of King Richard the Third*, pp. 26, 189.

her relatives as early as August 1469 in a letter to the duke of Milan.⁵⁵ This letter goes on to eulogise the earl of Warwick and explain his plans to regain control of the government, thereby indicating that Elizabeth Woodville's negative reputation originated in Warwick's propaganda for his rebellion that year.⁵⁶ It was on this foundation that Richard III's propaganda was based.

Pollard traces the 'mater dolorosa' topos backwards through Strickland, Shakespeare and More to a poem of 1471: 'On the Recovery of the Throne by Edward IV'.⁵⁷ It is likely that this in turn originated in a plea from the mayor and aldermen sent to Edward to hurry back to London during Fauconberg's attack, which impressed upon the king the vulnerability of his queen and their children.⁵⁸

Yet, as Pollard observes, even this image was commonly tempered by themes of misogynistic discourse such as jealousy and mutability.⁵⁹ He cites Thomas More's observation on Elizabeth Woodville's reputed resentment of Clarence, 'as women commonly not of malice but of nature hate them whome their housebandes love', and Polydore Vergil's explanation for her decision to leave sanctuary in 1484: 'for so mutable is that sex'.⁶⁰ Moreover, Thomas More's description of her courtship with the king is typical of later Tudor accounts in its implications that she carefully 'kindled his desire' before refusing to be his mistress.⁶¹

The 'mater dolorosa' theme, nonetheless, survived into the twentieth century, in

⁵⁵*CSP Milan*, 1:131. See below Chapter IV.1 for the 1469 accusation against her family.

⁵⁶For the possibility that these accusations included witchcraft, see below Chapter IV.4. Carte may have based his assertions on this letter, rather than Mancini, although Carte places the Woodville domination of court in Edward's second reign.

⁵⁷T. Wright (ed.), *Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History*, Rolls Series 14 (1859-61), 2:281, see below Chapter III.4.iii. Compare with J. Bruce (ed.), 'The Historie of the Arrivall of Edward IV. in England and the Finall Recouerye of his Kingdomes from Henry VI. A.D. M.CCC.LXXI.', in K. Dockray (ed.), *Three Chronicles of the Reign of Edward IV* (Gloucester, 1988), p. 17, which was composed at about the same date.

⁵⁸This letter is described in both 'The Arrivall' and 'On the Recovery of the Throne', Bruce (ed.), 'Historie of the Arrivall', p. 34; Wright (ed.), *Political Poems*, 2:279.

⁵⁹Pollard, 'Elizabeth Woodville and her Historians'.

⁶⁰Thomas More, *The History of King Richard III and Selections from the English and Latin Poems* ed. R.S. Sylvester (New Haven and London, 1963), p. 7; Vergil, *Three Books of . . . English History*, p. 210.

⁶¹More, *History of King Richard III*, p. 61.

spite of the attempts of the later Ricardians to make Elizabeth the villain of the piece, or of the success of Strickland's histories. Katharine Davies' biography in 1937 portrayed Elizabeth as an essentially 'good' queen, basing her judgement on an assertion of her appropriately feminine, domestic virtues:

It would be idle to deny that once she had found herself Queen of England she did all in her power to advance her family, and that the consequent jealousy of the rival party at court caused the disasters which finally overwhelmed her and so many of her relations. But it is difficult to see what other faults can be laid to her charge. She was a good wife and mother, a loving daughter and sister, a woman of unimpeachable virtue which even her enemies never attempted to slander. In one of the most bloodthirsty periods of English history, the court of Elizabeth and Edward was urbane and refined.⁶²

However, the previous year, Mancini's rediscovered work had been published and was rapidly accepted as the most faithful account of the events of 1483. As Pollard notes, it was frequently cited in David MacGibbon's 1938 biography of Elizabeth, after which the 'femme fatale' image emerged triumphant.⁶³ This image was summarised by Charles Ross in his influential 1974 biography of Edward IV thus:

Elizabeth had nothing to recommend her except her obvious physical attractions. Her rather cold beauty was not offset by any warmth or generosity of temperament. She was to prove a woman of designing character, grasping and ambitious for her family's interests, quick to take offence and reluctant to forgive.⁶⁴

The existence in the reputations of both these queens of two partly opposing queenly topoi is largely accounted for by the propaganda of the various men who challenged and succeeded their husbands. It is also a consequence of the unusual circumstances in which each was forced to act independently of a husband, drawing her authority instead from her children. It is evident throughout this historiography that perceived maternal emotions have always been deemed positive attributes in queens, and indeed that an author wishing to present a queen in a favourable light would most effectively achieve this end by depicting her as vulnerable and concerned only with

⁶²Davies, *The First Queen Elizabeth*, pp. v-vi.

⁶³Pollard, 'Elizabeth Woodville and her Historians'.

⁶⁴C.D. Ross, *Edward IV* (London, 1974), pp. 87-9; compare with Chrimes' judgement in 1964 that she had 'little to recommend herself for the vacant post of queen', Chrimes, *Lancastrians, Yorkists and Henry VII*, p. 92.

domestic issues. It is, however, an ideal of womanhood that sits uneasily with the head of a large household, lord of large estates, and bedmate to the ruler of a kingdom. It is an ideal which fails to take into account the fact that a queen is no ordinary woman, and is not always as free to live out the ideal as Elizabeth of York apparently did.

Since the publication of Crawford's article there have been further developments in the reputations of both Margaret of Anjou and Elizabeth Woodville. In 1981 Anthony Goodman and John Gillingham in their histories of the Wars of the Roses both presented Margaret as 'forceful', and followed closely the (primarily Yorkist) chronicle accounts of Margaret's firm control over government in the 1450s.⁶⁵ Goodman argued that even in the 1460s Margaret was a skilful diplomat.⁶⁶ Gillingham did however characterise her as 'the warlike queen' and B.P. Wolffe in his biography of Henry VI the same year referred to her as the 'rash and despotic queen'.⁶⁷ Also that year, Ralph Griffiths published his study of the reign of Henry VI in which Margaret's role in politics and court was discussed in far greater detail than in previous lives of her husband.⁶⁸ Griffiths presented her major role in the political upheaval of 1453-60 and beyond without the domestic apologetics or misogynistic value judgements of most of his predecessors, and set the tone for further serious assessment of her queenship. He highlighted her 'good ladyship' - her devotion to her servants and skilful administration of her household - as well as the importance of connections between her household and that of the king in the effectiveness of her later political influence. He argued that she was in some respects a cause of hostilities towards Lancastrian kingship and described her dominance over Henry, 'a pathetic shadow of a king' by 1456.⁶⁹ In 1986 Patricia-Ann Lee traced the prejudices and political and literary motives for the early development of Margaret's evil reputation, and maintained that 'without her efforts Lancaster probably would not have survived as long as it did as a force

⁶⁵A. Goodman, *The Wars of the Roses: Military Activity and English Society, 1452-97* (London, 1981), p. 1; J. Gillingham, *The Wars of the Roses: Peace and Conflict in Fifteenth-Century England* (London, 1981), pp. 26, 99-101.

⁶⁶Goodman, *Wars of the Roses*, p. 59.

⁶⁷Gillingham, *Wars of the Roses*, p. 92; B.P. Wolffe, *Henry VI* (London, 1981), p. 302.

⁶⁸Griffiths, *Henry VI*, pp. 254-262, 715-895.

⁶⁹Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 775.

in English politics'.⁷⁰ In contrast, A.W. Boardman argued in 1994 that she was primarily responsible for the civil war.⁷¹ Diana Dunn's 1995 reassessment of Margaret's role between 1445 and 1453, argued that the periods before and after the political crises and the birth of her son in 1453 need to be recognised as two very different phases, concluding that 'her actions before 1453 deserve to be judged as those of a dutiful young wife and effective distributor of patronage rather than of an imperious and passionate power-seeker'.⁷² In 1996 Anthony Gross, not always convincingly, claimed that between 1453 and 1471 Margaret of Anjou was simply the figurehead for a group of loyal Lancastrian lawyers and administrators.⁷³ However, Helen Maurer has just submitted a PhD thesis reassessing Margaret's political influence again, considering the ways in which she pushed the potential of accepted forms of queenly agency to their limits.⁷⁴

Studies of Elizabeth Woodville, in contrast, have been hampered by the continuing fascination with her brother-in-law, Richard III. The Ricardian apologetic is now largely dependent upon the argument that the Woodville family posed such a threat to Richard of Gloucester, and the kingdom as a whole, that Gloucester had little option but to take the throne from his Woodville-dominated nephew. Although this argument has repeatedly been contested, a reassessment of the queen's role in 1483 has not yet been attempted.⁷⁵

Michael Bennett, in his 1987 account of Lambert Simnel, still dismissed her as 'an inveterate intriguer, capable in her vanity and fecklessness of some remarkable shifts and turns'.⁷⁶ But more often she is scarcely mentioned in general histories of the period.⁷⁷ In isolation from these political discussions, Anne Sutton and Livia Visser-Fuchs published

⁷⁰Lee, 'Dark Side of Queenship', p. 192.

⁷¹A.W. Boardman, *The Battle of Towton* (Stroud, 1994), p. 9.

⁷²Dunn, 'Margaret of Anjou: a Reassessment', p. 143.

⁷³A. Gross, *The Dissolution of the Lancastrian Kingship: Sir John Fortescue and the Crisis of Monarchy in Fifteenth-Century England* (Stamford, 1996), pp. 46-69.

⁷⁴E-mail communications with H. Maurer, University of California. Her PhD title is 'Margaret of Anjou: Queenship and Power in Late Medieval England, 1445-61'.

⁷⁵A.J. Pollard, 'Dominic Mancini's Narrative of the Events of 1483', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 38 (1994): 152-63.

⁷⁶M. Bennett, *Lambert Simnel and the Battle of Stoke* (Gloucester, 1987), p. 51.

⁷⁷For example, Goodman, *Wars of the Roses*; Gillingham, *Wars of the Roses*.

in 1995 a refutation of many of the commonest accusations against her, such as her supposed unfair demand for queen's gold from Thomas Cook, and involvement in the deaths of the earl of Desmond and George, duke of Clarence.⁷⁸ They also argued that Elizabeth Woodville was popular with her subjects and showed appropriate queenly piety. It is primarily with these more recent portrayals of Margaret and Elizabeth that this thesis will engage.

For Anne Neville and Elizabeth of York, the historiography has been rather different. Both remain the scarcely mentioned, idealised but shadowy partners to ruthless and controversial kings. The only major disputes in their reputations have been whether or not their marriages were happy, the conclusion usually depending upon the particular author's bias toward Richard III or Henry VII.⁷⁹ Anne's early death and single pregnancy led most historians to assume that she was 'fragile and delicate', and all but the most recent impress on their readers her tragic life.⁸⁰ Paul Murray Kendall in 1955, for instance, maintained that 'no one was more violently tossed upon the sea of strife than Warwick's frail daughter, Anne'.⁸¹ Strickland noted that 'tradition declares she abhorred' the 'crimes' of Richard III, but was herself inclined to assume that some of Anne's misfortune was punishment for tacit acceptance of Richard's usurpation.⁸² In Ross's biography of Richard III Anne appears almost exclusively as a pawn in men's politics, almost nothing of her queenship being known.

Richard III's defender, Sir George Buck, maintained that Elizabeth of York desired to marry Richard, complying with her mother's supposed attempts to bring about such a match, and was to this end impatient for Anne's death.⁸³ The evidence for this in a missing letter referred to by Buck still arouses controversy today, but is usually dismissed, as is the

⁷⁸Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, 'A "Most Benevolent Queen"', *passim*.

⁷⁹Strickland, *Lives of the Queens*, 3:438, 446-48; C.R. Markham, *Richard III: his Life and Character* (London, 1906), pp. 199-200; Buck, *History of King Richard the Third*, p. 18; P.M. Kendall, *Richard the Third* (London, 1955), p. 321; S.B. Chrimes, *Henry VII* (London, 1972), p. 302.

⁸⁰Markham, *Richard III*, p. 124; Kendall, *Richard the Third*, pp. 86, 105, 107, 210; Buck, *History of King Richard the Third*, p. 73; Strickland, *Lives of the Queens*, 3:448.

⁸¹Kendall, *Richard the Third*, p. 105.

⁸²Strickland, *Lives of the Queens*, 3:442, 445-6.

⁸³Buck, *History of King Richard the Third*, pp. 189-91.

narrative of 'The Song of the Lady Bessy', much quoted by Strickland, according to which Elizabeth was a major participant in the plot to replace Richard with Henry of Richmond.⁸⁴ Aside from these stories, Elizabeth appears active only in pious works and generosity to her subjects. Strickland, declared that 'during many trials the retiring conduct of Elizabeth bore fully out her favourite motto . . . "humble and reverent"'.⁸⁵ However, the consistent observations of various historians that the character of Henry VII deteriorated after her death - 'after the death of his wife the evil that was in him was accentuated; he contemplated curious marriages . . . and he gave way to the sin of avarice' - led Nancy Lenz Harvey in 1973 to assume that

Although she was without great power and never sought it, Elizabeth through her reign would be a subtle force behind the policies of her husband. She would attempt to continue the ideals and programs of her father . . . Not as monarch, not for ambition, not for ego and herself would she reign; but she could stand as an example and as a conscience to those who did.⁸⁶

The previous year Chrimes had observed in his biography of Henry VII that

Queen Elizabeth is described by contemporaries as a very handsome woman of great ability, as beloved, as a woman of the greatest charity and humanity. There seems, indeed, good reason to suppose that she was an admirable spouse in the king's eyes.⁸⁷

Hence Crawford's similar conclusion almost a decade later. This judgement has not so far been contested.

These historians, with the exception of Crawford, have assessed queens primarily in isolation from one another, either in narratives of their lives or, if in a broader history of the period, principally with reference to their practical political impact. Theirs has essentially been a study of queens and their personalities, rather than of queenship. Only Griffiths, Crawford, Lee, Dunn, Sutton and Fuchs have, to varying extents, presented their analyses against a notion of the ideology and office of queenship which has nonetheless yet to be fully articulated.

⁸⁴A. Hanham, 'Sir George Buck and Princess Elizabeth's Letter: a Problem in Detection', *The Ricardian* 7:97 (1987): 398-400; A. Kincaid, 'Buck and the Elizabeth of York Letter: a Reply to Dr Hanham', *The Ricardian* 8:101 (1988): 46-9; Strickland, *Lives of the Queens*, 4:11-17.

⁸⁵Strickland, *Lives of the Queens*, 4:19, 35.

⁸⁶J.D. Mackie, *The Earlier Tudors 1485-1558* (Oxford, 1957), p. 230; Harvey, *Elizabeth of York*, p. 148.

⁸⁷Chrimes, *Henry VII*, p. 302.

It is the purpose of this present thesis to develop this understanding further, so that queens need not be assessed primarily in terms of their political influence but considered in terms of their broader role. Moreover, in establishing the ideology and practice of queenship for this period, it is intended to extend our comprehension of kingship, because the two were, as I shall argue, fundamentally bound together. I will be examining the ways in which kings manipulated their wives' roles, as intercessors, as icons, as the feminine element necessary to legitimate sovereignty, as links to potentially useful family, and as indicators of the king's own more human side. Beyond this I will also suggest the extent to which the queen herself was actively involved in these roles, the way in which her style was affected by his, what her modes of supporting his kingship and of expressing her own identity were, if such a thing as her own identity existed, and the response of her contemporaries to her queenship.

3. Sources

In contrast to the previous studies of these queens, which have either focussed narrowly on their reputations and public political roles or attempted to reconstruct the sequence of events which made up their lives, the purpose of this thesis is to form a broad understanding of the ideology and practice of queenship during the Wars of the Roses. To this end, a wide range of historical, literary and art historical media will be drawn together to shape a portrayal of queenship which goes beyond the individual women.

It is in part the paucity of references to queens in the narrative sources for their husbands' reigns which has led to their marginal position in our understanding of this period. Unlike their early medieval predecessors, Emma and Edith, these queens did not commission accounts of their lives, nor was there at this time such a detailed chronicler as Matthew Paris, on whom Margaret Howell has relied heavily for her biography of Eleanor of Provence.⁸⁸ Chronicles do offer important narratives of events, but most of those written in England are from a London background, with a consequently Yorkist bias, and several were written to celebrate Edward IV's accession, which makes it particularly hard to judge Margaret of Anjou's true role in events.⁸⁹ Chronicles written after 1485, however, tend to show a Lancastrian bias, notably Fabyan's *New Chronicles of England and France*, in

⁸⁸Stafford, *Emma and Edith*, pp. 28-52; Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, passim.

⁸⁹A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c.1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (London, 1982), p. 222.

which Margaret becomes ‘that noble and moost bounteous pryncesse quene Margarete, of whom many and vntrewe surmyse was imagened and tolde’.⁹⁰ As Antonia Gransden has shown, whereas John Hardyng, John Rous and William Worcester all clearly changed their allegiance and bias as their kings changed, only the authors of *Warkworth’s Chronicle* and the *Crowland Continuation* seemed to attempt to avoid the bias of the ruling party of the time.⁹¹ In each case the identity of the author is uncertain. John Warkworth, Master of Peterhouse, Cambridge, may have been the author of his chronicle or simply the owner.⁹² The *Crowland Continuation* has frequently been attributed to Bishop John Russell, Edward IV’s Keeper of the Privy Seal and Richard III’s Chancellor.⁹³ Its editors, however, have argued for an author not quite so close to the king’s council at this time and suggested Dr Henry Sharp, the Prothonotary of Chancery, who would nonetheless have been better informed than most chroniclers of the time.⁹⁴

Another detailed chronicle-type source that has been commonly accepted as free from political bias until very recently is the account of *The Usurpation of Richard III* by Dominic Mancini, referred to earlier.⁹⁵ Although Mancini’s understanding of popular perceptions has recently been questioned, it remains a particularly useful source for one of the major crisis points of this period.⁹⁶ Edward IV’s return to the throne in 1471 also inspired short chronicles, and these were self-confessedly the product of Edward’s servants and therefore again biased, although useful in conveying contemporary ideals of queenship.

Tournaments, royal entries, coronations and other rituals were commonly described in short narrative accounts, often by heralds, recording for posterity the glory, and legitimacy implied thereby, of a particular sovereign. The more general accounts of ritual and court or household practice in the *Ryalle Book* or Edward IV’s *Black Book of the*

⁹⁰Robert Fabyan, *The New Chronicles of England and France*, ed. H. Ellis (London, 1811), p. 640.

⁹¹Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p. 251.

⁹²Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p. 258.

⁹³C. Ross, *Richard III* (London, 1981), p. xliv, n. 75.

⁹⁴N. Pronay and J. Cox (eds.), *The Crowland Chronicle Continuations: 1459-1486* (London, 1986), p. 90.

⁹⁵Mancini, *Usurpation of Richard III*.

⁹⁶Pollard, ‘Dominic Mancini’s Narrative’, *passim*.

Household were constructed under a similar agenda.⁹⁷ All of these therefore convey not only some evidence of actual events, but also much about the ideology of queenship. Valuable elaboration of these sources occurs in eyewitness accounts in city records, chronicles, or diaries of foreign travellers, such as Gabriel Tetzels, who provided a unique record of events surrounding Elizabeth Woodville's churching.⁹⁸

Sources which were less self-consciously aimed at conveying a particular image of kingship and queenship include the records of the royal administration, such as the king's household accounts, records of the great wardrobe, or chancery enrolments. The rolls of parliament occasionally shed light on queenship.⁹⁹ The most valuable administrative records are those for the queens' households, of which only three survive for this period, supplemented by several of Margaret of Anjou's jewel accounts.¹⁰⁰

Various letters also provide fragments of information. Many of Margaret of Anjou's letters regarding her servants and household survive, as well as some of more political relevance.¹⁰¹ A few also remain for Elizabeth Woodville and her daughter.¹⁰² Often more useful are the comments made in letters by contemporaries such as the Paston family, or foreign ambassadors, although these are prone to inaccuracy.¹⁰³ More personal indicators of their lives exist in books they owned or gave, often of a religious nature. Further indicators of the nature of their piety appear in the records of fraternities to which they belonged and of Queens' College Cambridge (for which the first three all claimed the title foundress), or in papal letters in answer to their requests. The religious dimension of their role is the most common source of pictures of the queens, in stained glass, on

⁹⁷F. Grose and T. Astle (eds.), *The Antiquarian Repertory* (London, 1807), 1:296-338; A.R. Myers (ed.), *The Household of Edward IV: the Black Book and the Ordinance of 1478* (London, 1959). For discussion of these works see Chapter II.1, 4.i and Chapter V.1.

⁹⁸M.H. Letts (ed.), *Travels of Leo of Rozmital through Germany, Flanders, England, France, Spain, Portugal and Italy 1465-67*, Hakluyt Society, 2nd Series 108 (1957), p. 46.

⁹⁹For instance, the concepts of queenship outlined in the denunciation of Elizabeth Woodville in Richard III's first parliament. *Rot Parl*, 6:240-41

¹⁰⁰Myers, *Crown, Household*, pp. 135-210, 211-229, 251-318; PRO E101/409/4, E101/409/17, E101/410/2, E101/410/8.

¹⁰¹C. Monro (ed.), *Letters of Queen Margaret of Anjou, Bishop Beckett and Others*, Camden Society, old series 86 (1863).

¹⁰²For instance, Crawford (ed.), *Letters of the Queens*, pp. 135-6, 157-8.

¹⁰³J. Gairdner (ed.), *The Paston Letters 1422-1509* (Edinburgh, 1910); *CSP Milan*; *CSP Venice*.

altarpieces or in manuscripts. Such images, inspired by issues of patronage and legitimacy, are often rich in surprising and telling symbolism. These are the places in which a queen's quasi-divine status is most explicitly delineated.

Another source particularly important to understanding the ideology of queenship is the pageantry of their royal entries, not only the texts of the verses read or shown, but also the evidence for the *tableaux vivants* or plays presented. These are complemented by the many literary representations of queens. Whereas Guinevere is the best known of literary medieval queens, and appears in a variety of contexts - as inspiration to knightly pursuits, judge and adulteress - her adultery and childlessness made her atypical among literary queens. A common topos is the victimized queen, falsely accused like Constance or Emaré. As with Guinevere, the origins of their stories lie long before the fifteenth century. From the non-noble Peronelle of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, who wins her crown by her beauty and her wit, to the mysterious Lady Loiaulte, who holds court at *The Assembly of Ladies*, there are a number of literary queens whose lives intersect especially pertinently with the ideology of fifteenth-century queenship.¹⁰⁴ Mirrors for princes, although generally limited in their references to queenship, as the quotation heading this introduction indicates, nonetheless give some further indications of this ideology, whereas Christine de Pisan's *Le Livre du Trésor de la Cité des Dames* indicates possible queenly practice.¹⁰⁵ Many of these diverse sources, however, are only of relevance to a few aspects of queenship. I will therefore introduce specific works more fully in the chapters to which they pertain.

4. Structure

My initial intention was to focus this thesis on Elizabeth Woodville, Anne Neville and Elizabeth of York in an exploration of their specifically English queenship. It soon became apparent, however, that their queenship could only be fully understood in the context of that of Margaret of Anjou, whose own queenship overshadowed, informed and overlapped with theirs. I nonetheless decided not to be drawn into detailed examination of Margaret's unique political role, but rather to focus on issues of queenship which were important to all

¹⁰⁴John Gower, *The English Works of John Gower*, ed. G.C. Macaulay, EETS extra series 81-2 (1900-1), 1:199-29; D.A. Pearsall (ed.), *The Floure and the Leafe and The Assembly of Ladies* (Manchester, 1962).

¹⁰⁵Pizan, *Treasure of the City of Ladies*, pp. 35-105.

four of the women in this study. Given the atypical backgrounds of the English-born queens, an obvious starting point was the question of how they came to be queens, a question which encompasses notions of ideal queenship and changing political ideologies at the close of the Middle Ages, and is the subject of my first chapter. My next question was how such atypical women were then publicly constructed within existing notions of queenship: hence, the second chapter addresses the ritual presentation of queens in this period, again noting changing ideologies and the implications thereof for kingship. Whereas previous analysis of queenly ritual, primarily coronation, has assumed that the main theme of such ceremonies was the queen's potential to produce heirs to the throne, I argue that a far richer and more complex ideology of queenship was explored, in which fertility was an issue of womanhood rather than queenship, and that the ritual was more concerned with the queen's wider role as an integral part of the king's public body.

The notion that a queen's primary role was as a mother (or rather, as a childbearer) has tended to lead to the exclusion of queens from political histories of the period. Having asserted that their role encompassed very much besides motherhood, I nonetheless felt that it was important to redeem notions of motherhood by focussing the first of my chapters about the practice of queenship upon queens as mothers. It is apparent that motherhood was not only a potentially enormously empowering role for a queen, but also a role which impacted significantly upon the wider political community. This was especially true for Elizabeth Woodville, several of whose natal family members became involved with her motherhood. Family was a particularly important issue for English-born queens because their relatives formed a unique and largely unprecedented factor in the English power structure, and it is therefore the role of family in fifteenth-century queenship that my fourth chapter addresses. Finally I turn to the queen's household and the royal court, which were the context for most of a queen's political, social and devotional activity - for the exercise of queenliness. The themes of patronage and intercession, so important to previous studies of queenship, are addressed at various points within this structure, as are the issues of legitimacy and complementarity which I believe are fundamental to the nature of English queenship in the second half of the fifteenth century.

Chapter I

Selecting Queens During the Wars of the Roses

1. Introduction

The choice of a wife was the most important single decision ever made by any medieval king. The ability to produce from her a male heir was his most important responsibility. For her to bear this son in time for him to be of age when his father died was scarcely less essential.¹

Thus Anne Crawford summed up traditional assumptions of the primary reason for medieval kings to acquire queens. Yet this contrasts with the marriage of the most famous of literary kings: Arthur. In the version of King Arthur's story most contemporary with the queens in this study, Sir Thomas Malory wrote,

In the begynnyng of Arthure, aftir he was chosyn kyng . . . many kyngis and lordis hylde hym grete werre . . . But well Arthur overcom hem all: the moste partye dayes of hys lyff he was ruled by the counceile of Merlyon, so hit felle on a tyme kyng Arthur seyde unto Merlion, 'My barownes woll let me have no reste but nedis I muste take a wyff, and I wolde none take but by thy conceile and advice'.²

Arthur does not say why his barons are so anxious for him to marry, although Merlin comments that 'a man of your bounté and nobles scholde not be withoute wyff'.³ There is no suggestion within Malory's work that Guinevere's proper role is to bear children, and her queenship is not apparently undermined by her infertility.⁴ Children are not necessary to the development of Arthur's story, but a queen is necessary now that Arthur has gained control of his kingdom. For Malory, as for previous creators of Arthur's story, Arthur's kingly image was made complete by his marriage to the fair Guinevere. This is not to refute Crawford's assessment of the importance of offspring to real late medieval kings, but it does indicate that kings needed queens for something more than childbearing, even in the

¹A. Crawford (ed.), *Letters of the Queens of England 1100-1547* (Stroud, 1997), p. 3.

²Thomas Malory, *Works*, ed. E. Vinaver, rev. P.J.C. Field (Oxford, 1990), 1:97.

³Malory, *Works*, 1:97.

⁴Whereas the literary tradition seems unconcerned by Guinevere's childlessness, chronicles occasionally noted it, for instance, some versions of *The Brut*: 'never þai haden childe to-gedres, and nopelesse Kyng Arthure louede her wonder wel and derlich', F.W.D. Brie (ed.), *The Brut or The Chronicles of England*, EETS original series 131, 136 (1906-8), 1:77.

fifteenth century when queens no longer occupied a prominent administrative role in the king's household.

The many ways in which a queen enriched and complemented her husband's kingship varied throughout her life. The potential to provide heirs and the promise of political alliance were two of the principal attributes of a queen at the point of marriage. They were, however, part of a larger issue integral to the nature of queenship: her ability to uphold and represent the legitimacy of his kingship.

This chapter will therefore begin by outlining the ways in which this role of legitimising kingship was enacted, developed and understood in the fifteenth century. It will then address the ways in which specific queens were chosen, using an analysis of the earlier history of choosing medieval queens as the context for discussing the selection of English queens from 1445 to 1503. This selection will be addressed through an examination of the four principal themes in choosing potential queens which were challenged during this period by Edward IV's marriage to the English-born widow, and daughter of a knight, Elizabeth Woodville: nationality, social status, virginity and love.

2. Legitimising Kingship

The most common means by which the queen's role legitimised kingship was in constructing implications of the king's Christ-like role. Much of this evolved from the ideology of marriage. St Augustine was among the first to expound the doctrine in which marriage was perceived as a sacrament along the same lines as baptism.⁵ In his *Liber de Illustribus Henricis*, compiled for Henry VI, John Capgrave reaffirmed this position on marriage, explaining that it was 'a sacrament, and a sign of a sacred thing, namely of the union that is between Christ and His Church'.⁶

The liturgy of the queen's coronation made reference to the future life in which she would meet 'the everlasting Bridegroom our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christe', just as any devout Christian would hope to do, man or woman.⁷ But this imagery was also explored

⁵P.L. Reynolds, *Marriage in the Western Church: the Christianization of Marriage during the Patristic and Early Medieval Periods* (London, New York and Cologne, 1994), p. 63.

⁶'Cum igitur conjugium sacramentum sit, et sacrae rei signum, scilicet conjunctionis Christi et ecclesiae', John Capgrave, *Liber de Illustribus Henricis*, ed. F. Hingeston, Rolls Series 7 (1858), p. 136.

⁷L.G. Wickham Legg, *English Coronation Records* (London, 1901), p. 268.

in the civic pageantry which greeted Margaret of Anjou's first arrival in London in 1445. Here there were references to the parable of the ten virgins awaiting Christ the bridegroom, to the lover and beloved finding rest in God in the *Song of Songs* (commonly understood then as a metaphor for the soul and Christ), and finally to a feast held by Christ the bridegroom. The context of the pageantry was Margaret's own recent marriage, so all these references reinforced the association of the queen's nuptials with those of Christ, thereby figuring Margaret as Church/humanity and Henry as Christ.⁸ It is important that this marriage of Christ and Church was not for the purpose of producing heirs but an end in itself, which brought into being the New Jerusalem and was thus the expression of God's ultimate purpose.⁹ In the same way, according to the pageants, a new era of 'welth, ioie, and abundance' was to follow Margaret's marriage.¹⁰

Figuring the queen as Church was also bound up with representations of the queen as Mary. As early as the second century, the Church as the bride of Christ had come to be identified with Mary His mother, and both were identified as the woman 'clothed with the sun' of Revelation 12, whose children would be persecuted by the dragon.¹¹ The 'crown of twelve stars' upon the woman's head contributed to the development of associations of queenship for both Mary and Ecclesia. The final pageant to greet Margaret of Anjou in 1445, drew on this ideology in a prayer to Mary:

Cristes Modre, Virgyn immaculate,
 God Hys tabernacle to sanctifie
 Of sterres xij the crowne hath preparate,
 Emprise, Queene, and Lady Laureate
 Praie for oure Queene that Crist will here gouerne
 Longe here on lyve in hir noble astate,
 Aftirward crowne here in blisse eterne.¹²

It was in the twelfth century that Mary's identity as Queen of Heaven became a popular motif throughout western Christendom, particularly in images of the Coronation

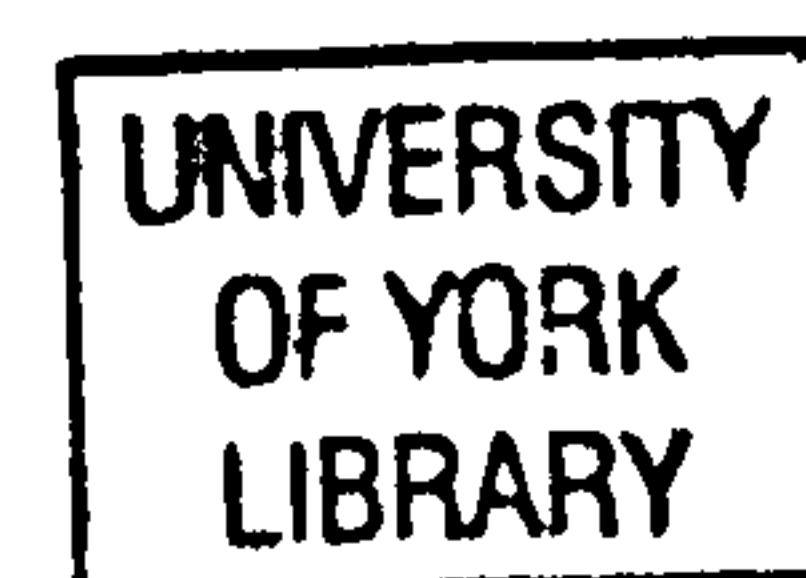
⁸G. Kipling, 'The London Pageants for Margaret of Anjou: a Medieval Script Restored', *Medieval English Theatre* 4 (1982): 21. See below Chapter II.3.

⁹Revelation 19:7-22:17.

¹⁰Kipling, 'London Pageants', p. 21.

¹¹G. Ashe, *The Virgin* (London, 1976), p. 128.

¹²Kipling, 'London Pageants', p. 23.



of the Virgin.¹³ Mariology was influencing and being influenced by the ideology of queenship which, at this time, according to Huneycutt, was being remodelled by churchmen to consist of the roles of ‘peacemaker, mother, nurse, benefactress and intercessor’, in contrast to the earlier notions of sharer in the king’s authority and head of his household.¹⁴ Although such ideology constructed new differences in kingly and queenly roles, the association with Mariology meant that queens should not necessarily be seen as decreasing in status. The powerful French regent Blanche of Castile associated herself with this iconography in the early thirteenth century, and was depicted in a Bible shared with her son in the attitude of the crowned Virgin interceding with her son the king.¹⁵

As Parsons has argued, this association of queenly and Marian intercession was made explicit in thirteenth-century England too, shaping coronation ritual and leading to Marian allusions in the rites of royal childbirth.¹⁶ Such Marian associations, no longer necessarily identified with intercession, persisted into the fifteenth century, not only in the words of the pageant scripts quoted above, but also in the painted images of the queens. The most explicit instance of the latter is a picture of Elizabeth Woodville in the records of the Skinners of London, produced in the 1470s to record her membership of their Fraternity of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary - Plate 1.¹⁷ The red dress beneath a blue cloak with loose blonde hair beneath a crown was a familiar representation of the Virgin Mary - Plate 2.¹⁸ Moreover, the orb and sceptre which she held were not the regalia with which a queen was crowned, although queens were commonly depicted carrying them, as were kings and

¹³M. Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: the Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London, 1990), pp. 113-16.

¹⁴L. Huneycutt, ‘Medieval Queenship’, *History Today* 39 (June, 1989): 16-22.

¹⁵Warner, *Alone of All her Sex*, p. 114, pl. 15.

¹⁶J.C. Parsons, ‘The Queen’s Intercession in Thirteenth-Century England’, in J. Carpenter and S.-B. MacLean (eds.), *Power of the Weak: Studies on Medieval Women* (Urbana and Chicago, 1995), pp. 147-177. See also below Chapter II.4.

¹⁷J.J. Lambert (ed.), *Records of the Skinners of London, Edward I to James I* (London, 1933), p. 237.

¹⁸See also Jan van Eyck’s ‘The Virgin in a Church’ (1425) in R. Hughes and G.T. Faggin (eds.), *The Complete Paintings of the Van Eycks* (London, 1970), pl. 1; or the Virgin Mary in stained glass at St Bartholomew’s in Yarnton, Oxfordshire, from the late fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries, P.A. Newton and J. Kerr, *The County of Oxford: a Catalogue of Stained Glass, Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi, Great Britain I* (London, 1975), p. 220, pl. 12a. Compare with the representation of the marriage of Henry V and Catherine of Valois in the Psalter and Hours of John Duke of Bedford in which both king and queen have blonde hair beneath their crowns and wear blue cloaks over red gowns (BL, Add MS 42131, fol. 151). R. Marks and N. Morgan, *The Golden Age of English Manuscript Painting 1200-1500* (London, 1981), pl. 34b.

the Virgin Mary.¹⁹ The roses and gillyflowers in the background were both flowers associated with the Virgin; the rose particularly with her virginity and the gillyflower with her purity and her motherhood.²⁰ Elizabeth's blue cloak is spread wide like that of Mary as Mother of Mercy, a connection emphasised by an alteration in the title of the fraternity on this page to read 'oure Fraternite of oure blissed Lady and Moder of Mercy Sanct Mary Virgyn the Moder of God'.²¹ It is not unreasonable to assume that the Skinners' Fraternity hoped thereby to encourage the queen to mediate with the king on their behalf, should the need arise, just as she was later to do very effectively for the London Mercers and Merchant Adventurers.²²

Constructing the queen in terms of the Virgin Mary/bride of Christ served to emphasise the king's role as a type of Christ. This ideology too was depicted in pageantry, such as that at Henry VI's 1432 entry into London where a Jesse Tree paralleled the depiction of his own ancestry.²³ Similarly, in his *Regement of Princes*, Thomas Hoccleve reminded the future Henry V that,

A king, by wey of his office
To god I-likened is.²⁴

Mary, the queen/bride/mother figure had become essential to the medieval understanding of God's workings and purpose: as mother she proved Christ's human aspect; as intercessor she was a channel between him and his people (to whom she was also mother since his commission to her from the cross); as bride she looked forward to the coming of God's

¹⁹T.A. Heslop, 'The Virgin Mary's Regalia and Twelfth-Century English Seals', in A. Borg and A. Martindale (eds.), *The Vanishing Past: Studies of Medieval Art, Liturgy and Metrology presented to Christopher Hohler*, British Archaeological Reports, International Series 111 (1981), pp. 53, 56. See below Chapter II.4.

²⁰A.F. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs, 'The Device of Queen Elizabeth Woodville: a Gillyflower or Pink', *The Ricardian* 11:136 (1997): 19-20, 22; J. Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, trans. F. Hopman (New York, 1956), p. 203.

²¹Lambert (ed.), *Records of the Skinners*, p. 237. Mother of Mercy was of course a Marian role more easily associated with earthly queenship than was assumption.

²²C.D. Ross, *Edward IV* (London, 1975), pp. 101-2.

²³R. Osberg, 'The Jesse Tree in the 1432 London Entry of Henry VI: Messianic Kingship and the Rule of Justice', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 16 (1986): 216.

²⁴Thomas Hoccleve, *Hoccleve's Works, The Regement of Princes*, ed. F.J. Furnivall, EETS extra series 72 (1897), p. 87; G.L. Harriss 'Introduction: the Exemplar of Kingship' in G.L. Harriss (ed.), *Henry V: the Practice of Kingship* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 10-11.

kingdom. A king could therefore draw parallels between his sovereignty and that of God if he brought into his own kingship the essential female and feminine element which Mary represented.

The most striking use of marriage in the discourse of legitimation by analogy with the sacred comes at the very end of the period under discussion: in the first marriage of Katharine of Aragon. In the fifth pageant to greet her on her entry into London in 1501, a 'prelate of the church' explained that just as mankind was redeemed by 'The maryage of God to the nature of man', so

... as oure soveraign lord, the King,
 May be resemblid to the Kyng Celestiall ...
 This noble Kyng doeth a mariage ordeigne
 Betwene his furst begoten sonne, Prince Arthure,
 And you, Dame Kateryne, the Kinges doughter of Spayne,
 Whom Pollici, Noblesse, and Vertue doeth assure
 To both realmes honour, proufite, and pleasure.²⁵

Effectively Katharine was being associated with the flesh or human order and Arthur with the divine - an extension of the common contemporary characterisation of women as flesh and men as mind/spirit.²⁶ It was particularly relevant in this context since, as I will argue later, queens were used to emphasise their king's more human aspects, be that in tempering their husbands' judgement with their mercy or in enacting scenes of domesticity to win their subjects' sympathy or to express intimate friendship to foreign visitors.²⁷ The image of Katharine and Arthur united to become the Messiah was developed in a poem on the day of the marriage ceremony which dwelt on the prophets who longed for Christ's coming, and Simeon's joy at seeing him as a baby in the temple, and then drew parallels with the wedding:

For this bond and unyon, I trust, shall never be broke.
 In Poulis many Simeons thought they had well taryed

²⁵G. Kipling (ed.), *The Recept of the Ladie Kateryne*, EETS original series 296 (1990), p. 41.

²⁶A. Blamires (ed.), *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended. An Anthology of Medieval Texts* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 2-3.

²⁷P. Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow: the Social Imagination of Fourteenth-Century Texts* (Princeton, 1992), pp. 96, 105; J. Bruce (ed.), 'The Historie of the Arrivall of Edward IV. in England and the Finall Recouerye of his Kingdomes from Henry VI. A.D. M.CCCC.LXXI.' in K. Dockray (ed.), *Three Chronicles of the Reign of Edward IV* (Gloucester, 1988), p. 17; C.L. Kingsford, *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford, 1913), pp. 379-88. See below Chapter III.4.iii, and Chapter V.3.i.

To see thus Spayne and Englonde toguyders to be married.²⁸

The whole of the 'recept' of Katharine of Aragon was very much a celebration of the Tudor dynasty, dwelling as it did upon the new King Arthur, its stages bedecked with the symbols of Tudors and Beauforts. The imagery which associated the future king's marriage with the entry into the world of the saviour of mankind, also dwelt heavily on the union of Spain and England and so implicitly on the Spanish royal family's acceptance of the legitimacy of the English ruling dynasty. Thus the acquisition of a future queen affected the king's legitimacy in a diplomatic sphere also.

For the Tudor royal house, after a century of intermittent civil war inspired by challenges to the English ruling dynasties, and almost half a century of English-born queens consort, the arrival of a European princess who was expected to be queen was a cause for triumph. The implications of nationality in the choice of queens will be further discussed later in this chapter, but it should be noted at this point that Edward IV's overtures to Philip of Burgundy's niece, Catherine de Bourbon, were rejected in 1461 because the duke was uncertain about the strength of Edward's hold on the throne.²⁹ Edward IV's foreign policy for the next decade was to be influenced by the threat of foreign support for the rival Lancastrian dynasty.³⁰ Henry VII too was faced with European support for rival claimants to his throne early in his reign: hence the importance of recognition by his fellow rulers which a foreign marriage proclaimed.

Another instance of a queen's ability to legitimise her husband's kingship was Elizabeth of York's status as the heiress to Edward IV, which meant that many of Richard III's contemporaries believed that he intended to marry her after his first wife's death.³¹ If Richard had any such intentions it may have been partly to thwart Henry Tudor, who had already sworn to marry Elizabeth if he became king, hoping thereby to gain Yorkist support in England.³² Elizabeth of York's role as a conduit of royal authority was far less common than that of queens who provided foreign or Marian legitimation, but was similar to that of

²⁸Kipling (ed.), *Recept*, p. 41.

²⁹C.L. Scofield, *The Life and Reign of Edward the Fourth* (London, 1967), 1: 211.

³⁰Ross, *Edward IV*, pp. 106-25.

³¹C.D. Ross, *Richard III* (London, 1988), p. 145.

³²S.B. Chrimes, *Henry VII* (London, 1972), p. 27.

Katharine of Aragon in that their importance lay in the weakness of their husbands' positions, and the lack of a secure structure of succession in recent years.³³ This period of insecurity not only enhanced the symbolic importance of queens at their marriage, but also altered the way in which they were chosen.

3. How Queens were Chosen

As a brief survey of king's marriages after the Norman conquest reveals, the first consideration in selecting a wife was almost always diplomatic. Henry I had deliberately fostered union between the English and their Norman conquerors by marrying the Anglo-Scottish princess Eadgyth.³⁴ His grandson Henry II may in part have been chosen as much as chooser when it came to his marriage with Europe's most eligible heiress, Eleanor of Aquitaine, but her ability to double his continental dominion was doubtless a major factor in that arrangement.³⁵ Thereafter, English royal marriages were almost always concerned with the protection of those continental possessions. Richard I allied himself with Berengaria of Navarre in order to strengthen his position on the south-eastern frontier of Aquitaine. John, in the middle of negotiations for marriage to a Portuguese princess in the hope of protecting the same border, then shifted to northern Europe for an alliance with Angoulême, which had been trying to assert independence from Aquitaine.³⁶ His son Henry III, having failed in his attempts to make alliances with Ponthieu or Brittany against the French king, accepted the more peaceful option of union with the French king's sister-in-law.³⁷ Even when the bride was not French, as in the case of Edward I's wife Eleanor

³³Instances analogous to that of Elizabeth of York in which women were perceived as potential channels to royal authority in medieval England include the marriage of Æthelbert of Kent's widow with her stepson Eadbald, and of Judith, widow of Æthelwulf of Wessex to her stepson Æthelbald; Cnut's decision to marry Emma, wife and stepmother of his predecessors Æthelred Unræd and Eadmund II; the antagonism of the English barons to Matilda's claims to the throne due to the authority her husband Geoffrey of Anjou would wield; the incarceration of Eleanor of Brittany by King John in case a husband of hers claimed his throne; and most recently Roger Mortimer's access to power through his liaison with Isabella of France. For analysis of the early medieval instances see W.A. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester, 1970), pp. 25-7.

³⁴C.A. Newman, *The Anglo-Norman Nobility in the Reign of Henry I: the Second Generation* (Philadelphia, 1988), p. 13.

³⁵R. Barber, *Henry Plantagenet* (London, 1964), p. 46.

³⁶J. Gillingham, *Richard the Lionheart* (London, 1978), p. 138; W.L. Warren, *King John* (London, 1961), p. 67.

³⁷F.M. Powicke, *The Thirteenth Century, 1216-1307*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1962), p. 73.

of Castile, it was still the French territories which tended to dictate the marriage choice, for in 1252 Eleanor's brother Alfonso had revived a Castilian claim to Gascony, spurring Henry III to make a treaty of friendship with Alfonso which included both the marriage and Alfonso's renunciation of all claims to Gascony.³⁸ Over forty years later it was again disputes over the lordship of Gascony which led to Edward I's second marriage, this time as part of the eventual truce with France, and it was in the peace treaty which followed that his son Edward also acquired a French bride, Isabella.³⁹

Philippa of Hainault was an exception to this tradition. She was initially considered as a possible bride for the future Edward III in 1319 as a means of allying England with the Low Countries, perhaps to prevent Scotland from making a similar alliance.⁴⁰ The marriage was eventually agreed by Queen Isabella as she prepared to overthrow her husband with the help of some of Philippa's countrymen.⁴¹ Philippa and Edward's son, Edward of Woodstock, broke with tradition still further in 1361 at a time when England and France were at least nominally at peace and potential alliances with Portugal and Brabant had come to nothing.⁴² The king was by this time negotiating for the hand of the young widow of the duke of Burgundy, the wealthy and reputedly beautiful Margaret of Flanders.⁴³ But some time in that spring the prince entered into a clandestine marriage with another beautiful widow, this one some years older than himself, related to him within prohibited degrees and already a mother: Joan of Kent. Moreover, Joan's first husband was still alive, their marriage having been annulled on the very dubious pretext of a precontract.⁴⁴ Edward of Woodstock was not only rejecting a traditional royal duty to marry for the good of his

³⁸M. Prestwich, *Edward I* (London, 1988), p. 9.

³⁹Prestwich, *Edward I*, p. 395.

⁴⁰M. Buck, *Politics, Finance and the Church in the Reign of Edward II: Walter Stapeldon, Treasurer of England* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 126. It may originally have been her elder sister Sibylla who was considered in 1319. D.A. Trotter 'Walter of Stapeldon and the Pre-marital Inspection of Philippa of Hainault', *French Studies Bulletin* 49 (Winter, 1993): 3.

⁴¹M. McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century 1307-1399* (Oxford, 1959), p. 83.

⁴²McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, p. 266.

⁴³K.P. Wentersdorf, 'The Clandestine Marriages of the Fair Maid of Kent', *Journal of Medieval History* 5 (1979): 217.

⁴⁴J.L. Chamberlayne, 'Joan of Kent's Tale: Adultery and Rape in the Age of Chivalry', *Medieval Life* 5 (Summer, 1996): 8.

realm rather than according to his own inclination, but was also spurning the potential for augmenting his kingship which foreign brides offered in a variety of ways. In the context of his family's strong hold on the throne, and because Joan never in fact became queen due to the prince's early death, the irregularity of this marriage never became a public issue as the next King Edward's did; but in various ways, as will be seen, the origins of the fifteenth-century queenship controversy lay in Edward of Woodstock's love match.

For Richard II, political relations with France once again shaped the choice of English queens. At the time of his first marriage, antagonism towards France had resulted in English support for the Roman Pope Urban VI, who encouraged Richard's councillors to arrange a marriage with the sister of Emperor Wenceslas as part of his projected Urbanist league against the Avignon papacy.⁴⁵ By the time of Anne's death in 1394, Richard was again trying to arrange peace with France. Hence in the truce that was at last achieved he agreed to marry the French princess Isabel of Valois.⁴⁶ The motives for Henry IV's marriage to Joan of Navarre are less obvious, for this widow did not bring the wealth of Eleanor of Aquitaine or Margaret of Flanders, but Henry may have hoped to be able to exert some influence in her son's duchy of Brittany.⁴⁷ His choice of an older woman was perhaps made in deliberate contrast to the unpopular child bride of his predecessor.⁴⁸

Henry IV's Lancastrian successors reverted to the traditional French royal virgins, though in strikingly different circumstances, for Catherine of Valois's wedding was a symbol of Henry V's acquisition of the kingdom of France, but her daughter-in-law, Margaret of Anjou, represented a poor compromise truce, unpopular with an important faction in the English nobility. In 1464, Edward IV, who claimed to be the true heir to Richard II and Edward of Woodstock, stunned his council and challenged images of queenship once again, by announcing his clandestine marriage to the English widow of a Lancastrian knight. She was succeeded by two more atypical queens: Anne Neville, an English noblewoman who was briefly married to Henry VI's heir in 1471, as the price her

⁴⁵McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, pp. 146, 427.

⁴⁶M.H. Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1973), p. 289.

⁴⁷J.L. Kirby, *Henry IV of England* (London, 1970), p. 135.

⁴⁸For Gower's criticism of the immaturity of Richard II's kingship see R.A. Peck, *Kingship and Common Profit in Gower's Confessio Amantis* (London, 1978), p. xxi. For Henry IV's supporters characterising Richard II as a boy in comparison with Henry IV as a man, see M.A. Aston, 'Richard II and the Wars of the Roses', in F.R.H. du Boulay and C. Barron (eds.), *The Reign of Richard II* (London, 1971), p. 309.

father demanded for his support for Lancastrians, but who was not expected to become queen at the time of her subsequent marriage to Richard duke of Gloucester; and Elizabeth of York whose unique position at this period has already been touched upon, and who was again a politically inspired choice.

Diplomatic value was by no means the only criterion in selecting queens, as the surviving instances of inspections of potential brides indicate. The noble blood, appearance, character, abilities, physical condition, and occasionally virginal status or potential for bearing children of prospective brides had to be assessed by ambassadors, and kings sometimes asked for paintings of the ladies in question.⁴⁹ Mirrors for princes made scant reference to the choosing of queens, tending to dwell rather on the dangers of succumbing to carnal desires.⁵⁰ De Cessolis rather vaguely advised that

A Quene ought to be chosen whan she shal be weddyd of the moste honest kynrede and peple/ for often tymes the doughters folowen the catches and maners of theym that they ben dyscended from.⁵¹

It was not until 1548 that a version of the *Secretum Secretorum* gave some guidance on this matter. It advised Edward VI to choose someone young, beautiful and of good character. It observed that it would be good if she brought lands and wealth to his kingdom and was of noble blood, but stressed that,

more decent it weare in myne opynyon
too marrye for looue, and lett riches slide.⁵²

This, however, was written after Henry VIII's unprecedented, and disastrous, series of 'love matches'.

After Edward IV's marriage was announced in 1464, a newsletter from Bruges reported the account of Venetian merchants who had come from London:

They . . . say that the marriage of King Edward will be celebrated shortly, but without stating where; it seems that the espousals and benediction are already over, and thus has he determined to take the daughter of my Lord de Rivers, a

⁴⁹P. Chaplais, *English Medieval Diplomatic Practice* (London, 1982), 1:88-93; Trotter, 'Walter of Stapeldon', pp. 1-4.

⁵⁰M.A. Manzalaoui (ed.), *Secretum Secretorum. Nine English Versions*, EETS original series 276 (1977), pp. 38, 46, 135.

⁵¹Jacobus de Cessolis, *Game and Playe of the Chesse*, trans. William Caxton, ed. W.E.A. Axon (St Leonards on Sea, 1969), p. 33.

⁵²Manzalaoui (ed.), *Secretum Secretorum*, pp. 457-9.

widow with two children, having long loved her, it appears. The greater part of the lords and the people in general seem very much dissatisfied at this, and for the sake of finding means to annul it, all the peers are holding great consultations in the town of Reading, where the King is.⁵³

Although there is no English corroboration of the merchants' assertion that the peers were attempting to annul the marriage, it clearly caused international controversy by challenging basic assumptions about the type of woman suitable to be a queen because of Elizabeth's nationality, and her social and marital status, and because kings in this period did not normally marry for love alone.

Attempts have been made to argue that Edward IV's marriage was politically motivated.⁵⁴ Wilkinson and others have maintained that the choice of Elizabeth Woodville allowed the young king to assert his independence from Warwick and the Neville clan, and provided Edward with a source from which to build up a new court party entirely dependent upon himself, with which to balance the Nevilles. As Ross has observed, however, a court party had already been formed by 1464 and if Edward IV wanted to reject Bona of Savoy, whom Warwick was proposing, there were other European options or members of the English nobility to choose from.⁵⁵ Ross and subsequent historians have generally maintained that 'it was the impulsive love-match of an impetuous young man' and 'the first major blunder of his political career'.⁵⁶ The rest of this chapter will therefore reassess the value of the traditional criteria for choosing queens, focussing on the areas which Elizabeth Woodville challenged - nationality, social status, virginity and love. It will suggest that at the close of the Hundred Years War and on the eve of the Renaissance new priorities were emerging in the selection of English queens, and that in the context of these priorities, Edward IV's motivation need not be seen purely as 'blynde affection'.⁵⁷

⁵³*CSP Venice*, 1:114.

⁵⁴B. Wilkinson, *Constitutional History of England in the Fifteenth Century, 1399-1485* (London, 1964), pp.146-8. Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 87, n. 3.

⁵⁵Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 87.

⁵⁶Ross, *Edward IV*, pp. 85-6.

⁵⁷Polydore Vergil, *Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English History*, ed. H. Ellis, Camden Society, old series 29 (1844), p. 117.

3.i Nationality

*Kings ought to marry princesses from neighbouring countries, not from far away lands.*⁵⁸

Saxo Grammaticus's thirteenth century *Gesta Danorum*, from which the above quotation is taken, is rare among medieval European mirrors for princes in giving advice on the choosing of queens. He argued against choosing brides from distant countries because those of neighbouring Nordic lands would share their king's language and culture. Implicit in his advice is the assumption that they would be of foreign royalty. In fact, prior to 1066, English kings had rarely married foreign brides, and it was only the new relationship with France that had occasioned the series of foreign queens outlined above. The French brides would indeed have shared their husbands' language and culture until the end of the fourteenth century. However, the increasing use of English among the higher echelons of society from the fourteenth century, and the difficulty experienced by the English embassy, according to Froissart, in comprehending the French peace proposals of 1393, indicate that Isabel and Catherine of Valois, Joan of Navarre and Margaret of Anjou may well have felt linguistically isolated.⁵⁹

Grammaticus believed that a queen's isolation from her family could be a positive consequence of foreign birth for it prevented her family from intervening in the king's affairs.⁶⁰ This separation of the queen from her previous existence enabled a redefinition of her status more exclusively in terms of her dependence upon the English king. When the pre-Conquest Queen Emma married Æthelred Unræd, her redefined identity extended to adopting the name of a sainted English queen, Ælfgifu.⁶¹ Eleanor of Castile was also encouraged to identify with sainted English royalty on her arrival in England, when she was presented with a *Life of St Edward the Confessor* in which Edith's queenly role had been

⁵⁸Saxo Grammaticus in his *Gesta Danorum* written c. 1200, quoted in I. Skovgaard-Petersen and N. Damsholt, 'Queenship in Medieval Denmark' in J.C. Parsons (ed.), *Medieval Queenship* (Stroud, 1994), p. 27.

⁵⁹J. Barnie, *War in Medieval Society: Social Values and the Hundred Years War 1337-99* (Ithaca, New York, 1974), pp. 97-8.

⁶⁰Skovgaard-Petersen and Damsholt, 'Queenship in Medieval Denmark', p. 27.

⁶¹P. Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh-Century England* (Oxford, 1997), p. 93.

idealised considerably.⁶² In our period, alongside the emphasis on the union with Spain which she embodied, Katharine of Aragon was effectively made English in the London pageantry that greeted her with references to her own descent from John of Gaunt. ‘Saint Ursula’ claimed also to be of Lancastrian lineage and ‘nere kynne’ to King Arthur, and on these grounds she and Katharine, she said, should always love one another ‘as two comon owt of oon cuntrye’, finally asserting that Katharine should be a ‘secunde Ursula’.⁶³ In practice, queens’ ties with their homelands were rarely immediately severed: Margaret of Anjou remained in close communication with her French relations, especially during the first years of her marriage, and her lack of family in England did not prevent her involvement in English factional politics.⁶⁴

Foreign queens could function as important channels for both cultural and political intercourse.⁶⁵ Although the extent of Eleanor of Aquitaine’s famed cultural influence has recently been challenged, Eleanor of Provence certainly brought poets and musicians as well as concepts of civilisation which occasioned the refurbishment of many palaces.⁶⁶ Her daughter-in-law, Eleanor of Castile, influenced by the strong literary culture of the court in which she grew up, established a scriptorium at the English court.⁶⁷

The political role of these queens could be more problematic, as when Eleanor of Provence sided with her Savoyard uncles against her husband’s de Lusignan kin, or when Margaret of Anjou gained great unpopularity for her perceived part in Henry VI’s decision to cede Maine to René and Charles of Anjou.⁶⁸ As in Margaret’s case, very often the reason

⁶²J.C. Parsons, ‘Ritual and Symbol in the English Medieval Queenship to 1500’, in L.O. Fradenburg (ed.), *Women and Sovereignty* (Edinburgh, 1992), p. 61.

⁶³Kipling (ed.), *Receyt*, p. 15. Compare with A. Zanger, ‘Fashioning the Body Politic: Imagining the Queen in the Marriage of Louis XIV’, in Fradenburg (ed.), *Women and Sovereignty*, pp. 101-120.

⁶⁴See Chapter III.4.ii and Chapter IV.2.

⁶⁵Crawford (ed.), *Letters of the Queens*, pp. 13-15.

⁶⁶K.M. Broadhurst, ‘Henry II of England and Eleanor of Aquitaine: Patrons of Literature in French?’, *Viator* 27 (1996): 53-84; Crawford (ed.), *Letters of the Queens*, p. 14; M. Howell, *Eleanor of Provence: Queenship in Thirteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 71-4.

⁶⁷J.C. Parsons, ‘Of Queens, Courts and Books: Reflections on the Literary Patronage of Thirteenth-Century Plantagenet Queens’, in J.H. McCash (ed.), *Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women* (Athens, Georgia, 1996), p. 177-88.

⁶⁸Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, p. 67; J. Haswell, *The Ardent Queen: Margaret of Anjou and the Lancastrian Heritage* (London, 1976), pp. 61-3.

for the marriage was to seal a peace treaty, so that the queen, and the entourage she brought with her, were essentially representatives of 'the enemy', perpetually marginal figures in English society. As such they were an obvious target for feelings of resentment against the monarchy. The queen in particular, being both foreign and female, and especially close to the throne, could safely replace her husband in criticisms of the monarchy where political discourse required the king to be impartial and divinely authorised, while his queen was a mere human who owed her estate to him.⁶⁹ The presence of elements of her native culture could also, as with Eleanor of Castile's carpets, function as negative symbols of 'otherness'.⁷⁰ Whether it was the positive or negative concepts of her foreign birth which most impressed themselves upon contemporaries depended principally upon the personalities of the queen and her king.

There were, however, other factors determining her popularity, as Margaret of Anjou found to her cost, and from the second half of the fifteenth century traditional attitudes to foreign queens were under attack. In stark contrast to Catherine of Valois, who was enthusiastically welcomed as a symbol of union between France and England following Henry V's victory over France, Margaret of Anjou arrived when England's fortunes in France were very different. The ceremony and celebrations which greeted Margaret were no less grand and optimistic, but the politics behind them were bitter. Henry VI's advisers were divided over the war with France, with Humphrey duke of Gloucester unwilling to accept the loss of the kingdom his brother had won, and Cardinal Beaufort conscious of the huge financial burden of the war and the increasingly obvious impossibility of reclaiming Charles VII's throne. In the early 1440s, the possibility of a marriage between Henry VI and a daughter of the count of Armagnac had been considered: such an alliance would have drawn England into the network of Burgundy, Brittany, Alençon and Armagnac then in conflict with Charles VII of France.⁷¹ The marriage was thwarted by Charles VII and continental relationships changed so that this never materialised. The earl of Suffolk, who by now led the Beaufort faction with the duke of Somerset, had also opposed the Armagnac

⁶⁹This difference tended to persist even after a king was dead or dethroned. See for instance Edward IV's construction of Margaret of Anjou described later in this section.

⁷⁰J. C. Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile: Queen and Society in Thirteenth Century England* (Basingstoke, 1994), p. 64.

⁷¹P.A. Johnson, *Duke Richard of York 1411-1460* (Oxford, 1988), p. 44.

marriage, arguing still for a French match, so it was he who was chosen in 1444 to lead an embassy to negotiate peace with Charles VII.⁷² For any Englishman to suggest Henry VI should renounce his claim to the French throne would have been treason, yet this was essentially what Charles VII wanted, so no meaningful treaty was possible. Consequently, only a brief two-year truce was arranged at Tours, along with a marriage agreement and promises of further talks. The previous autumn Suffolk had persuaded the king's council in England to accept the idea of marriage between Henry VI and a daughter of René, duke of Anjou. The French king had daughters of his own to offer, but preferred to avoid direct alliance with the English royal house. Moreover, in averting a proposed marriage between René's daughter, Margaret, and the count of Nevers, Charles sought to prevent an Angevin-Burgundian alliance. In spite of the poor terms of the marriage settlement arranged at Tours, including the meaningless dowry of Minorca and Majorca over which René had never had any control, Suffolk was rewarded with the wardship of Margaret Beaufort and the title of marquis.⁷³ But relations between the two countries would continue to be strained and Margaret had acquired enemies in England even before she arrived.

These did not initially, contrary to many accounts, include Richard duke of York.⁷⁴ According to his recent biographer, York avoided Gloucester's attempts to win his support and in 1439, although originally involved in the negotiations with Armagnac, readily adopted the king's new policy of peace with France, to the extent of trying to arrange a marriage between his own eldest son and one of the French king's daughters.⁷⁵ However, although relations did not apparently break down between Margaret and York until 1454, he had by then long been in opposition to the duke of Somerset. It was in the civil war which York rekindled that new priorities in the selection of queens appeared. Now it was not connections on the continent but her position in the English power structure which made a woman a potential queen.

The most obvious instances are Anne Neville and Elizabeth of York, but these English brides brought with them problems as complex as those of their foreign

⁷²E.F. Jacob, *The Fifteenth Century, 1399-1485* (Oxford, 1961) p. 474.

⁷³Jacob, *Fifteenth Century*, p. 476.

⁷⁴Johnson, *Duke Richard of York*, pp. 32-3, 128.

⁷⁵Johnson, *Duke Richard of York*, pp. 32, 49. This play for such powerful relatives on York's part might, however, be seen as a prelude to challenging Henry VI's kingship.

counterparts. For Anne Neville, the difficulty lay in Margaret of Anjou's understandable hatred and distrust of Anne's father, the earl of Warwick, who was nonetheless Margaret's only hope of regaining the throne for the house of Lancaster. Even after consenting to cooperate with Warwick in 1470, and reputedly keeping him kneeling for a quarter of an hour when he asked for her forgiveness at Angers, she still resisted marrying her son to her old enemy's daughter.⁷⁶ Ultimately she was persuaded by the French king to consent to the alliance, and initially the marriage was to have taken place in Amboise early in August 1470 before Warwick departed for England.⁷⁷ However, it was delayed, perhaps because Margaret was still trying to avoid totally committing her son to Warwick's daughter and hoped to annul the betrothal once Henry had regained the crown.⁷⁸ Some historians have asserted that the marriage was in fact never solemnised, but after Prince Edward's death contemporaries referred to Anne as his widow, and even the Beauchamp Pageant depicted him as her 'first husband'.⁷⁹ Moreover, this would explain the duke of Clarence's mysterious attempts to conceal Anne after her return to England in 1471.⁸⁰ Although he could not possibly have hoped to keep her permanently hidden from his brother Richard, he may have hoped, as her nearest male kin at this time, to gain some authority over the Lancastrian heir if Anne turned out to be pregnant. The marriage probably took place in December 1470 after Edward IV had fled to Burgundy.⁸¹

In Elizabeth of York's case it was not her family's power that made her a desirable bride, but her potential right to be queen regnant, which meant that Henry VII dared not

⁷⁶ Haswell, *The Ardent Queen*, pp. 190-91.

⁷⁷ *CSP Milan*, 1:140-2.

⁷⁸ *CSP Milan*, 1:142.

⁷⁹ *DNB*, 1:424; Haswell, *The Ardent Queen*, p. 191; *CSP Milan*, 1:177; BL, Cotton Julius MS E IV, fol. 28. If, as has been suggested, the pageant was actually commissioned by Richard and Anne, it seems surprising that a man who was only her fiancé should be so depicted, although it is possible that the pageant was commissioned by Anne's mother after Richard's death, and that the countess of Warwick wanted to emphasise her Lancastrian credentials under Tudor kingship. P. Tudor-Craig, *Richard III*, 2nd edn (Ipswich, 1977), p. 58. Another indicator that the marriage did take place is the reference in the books of Louis XI's Receiver of Finances to payments for 'my Lady Anne daughter of M. De Warwick and wife of the said prince', in August, September and October 1470. P. Erlanger, *Margaret of Anjou, Queen of England*, trans. E. Hyams (London, 1970), p. 221.

⁸⁰ N. Pronay and J. Cox (eds.), *The Crowland Chronicle Continuations 1459-1486* (London, 1986), pp. 132-3.

⁸¹ Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 147.

allow her to marry anyone else, lest she become the focus for a challenge to his power.⁸² Yet even as his wife, her claim to sovereignty threatened Henry's position, an issue to be discussed in the next section.

There were other English women whom it was believed might become queens during the conflicts of the fifteenth century. Anne Neville's sister, Isabel, was promised queenship, after her marriage to George duke of Clarence. Edward IV had forbidden the union, probably because he feared the consequences for his then heir, his daughter Elizabeth, if his nearest male relative were allied with his most powerful subject.⁸³ Warwick consequently arranged for Isabel to marry Clarence in Calais, and then imprisoned Edward and declared him illegitimate. Isabel's hopes of queenship, however, were short-lived, for Warwick received little support and was soon retreating back to France. This practice of powerful men marrying their daughters to potential kings was not new. Richard of York had spent a record dowry in marrying his daughter Anne to Henry VI's heir general, Henry Holland, in 1445.⁸⁴

Elizabeth Woodville, in contrast, had no such powerful family background to make her an irresistible bride. Indeed, Edward could easily have married a foreign princess. Early in his reign proposals regarding Catherine de Bourbon and Mary of Guelders, regent of Scotland, were rejected by Burgundy and Scotland. But in 1464 the earl of Warwick was negotiating with the French for the hand of Louis XI's sister-in-law, Bona of Savoy, and Henry the Impotent of Castile had offered his sister and eventual heiress, Isabella.⁸⁵ Edward's decision to reject Isabella may have lain in a reluctance to repeat the experiment

⁸²Because of her large family of sisters and her high public profile as a king's daughter, Henry VII could not resort to King John's treatment of Eleanor of Brittany in similar circumstances: life imprisonment.

⁸³The issue of a woman's right to the throne at this time was still unclear and it was most likely that Edward had arranged his daughter's betrothal at the age of four to Warwick's nephew, George duke of Bedford, specifically because he felt that a Neville interest in her sovereignty was the best means of preventing a civil war like that which had accompanied Matilda's reign. It was only after the death of Warwick and the birth of his own son that Edward felt a foreign match for Elizabeth would be safe.

⁸⁴R. A. Griffiths, 'The Sense of Dynasty in the Reign of Henry VI', in C.D. Ross (ed.), *Patronage, Pedigree and Power in Late Medieval England* (Gloucester, 1979), p. 24. Since Holland's descent through Henry VI's sister Elizabeth meant that, under the terms of the Salic Law, he could not inherit the French throne, Holland might not have been offered the throne anyway, even if Margaret had not produced a son. But York himself and York's greatest adversary, Edmund Beaufort, duke of Somerset, had similar loopholes in their claims to be Henry VI's heir, so in 1445 York was hedging his bets. Johnson, *Duke Richard of York*, pp. 99-100.

⁸⁵Ross, *Edward IV*, pp. 84-91.

of dual monarchy which had eventually proved so disastrous for the Lancastrians.⁸⁶

Bona of Savoy, on the other hand, was typical of so many queens chosen in the past. Edward had initially suggested marriage with the French king's daughter, Anne, but since she was only three Louis refused and offered Bona. In view of the youth of Richard II's second bride, it is not impossible that Edward's offer was serious, but it is more likely that while Edward needed to keep the French from supporting the Lancastrians, he was not keen to ally too closely with them, and he was therefore playing for time with the French, especially since he could scarcely afford to wait more than a decade for Anne to produce an heir. The daughter of a duke was less of a guarantee of long-lasting support from the French king than was a daughter of the king himself, making Bona a less attractive proposition than Anne in this respect. Moreover, the traditional alliances with French brides had become increasingly meaningless with the loss of English territories in France and the realisation that English kings had little chance of making good their claim to the French throne, impossible though that might be to admit in public. Rather, the experience of the Hundred Years War had developed anti-French sentiment to such an extent that another French queen could not have been popular. Edward himself, in his anti-Lancastrian propaganda, had constructed the previous French queen, Margaret of Anjou, as a threat to Englishness. In a letter of 1462, he informed Alderman Thomas Cook that Henry VI 'by the malicious counseyle and excitacion of Margaret his wife' planned to invade with an army of Scots and French

with all wayes and meanes to them possible to destroye uttarly the people, the name, the tonge, and all the bloud englyshe of this owr sayd Realme.⁸⁷

Moreover, he maintained that if Margaret regained power,

hir Oncle called Charles de Angew with the Frenchmen, shall have domination rule and governaunce of this owr Realme.⁸⁸

⁸⁶However, it was by no means certain that she would inherit Castile at this time since her sister-in-law had produced a daughter, who may have been Henry's in spite of the doubts of some at his court. M. Smith, 'England and Spain 1483: a Bride for Edward of Middleham?', *The Ricardian* 6:82 (1983): 233.

⁸⁷H. Ellis (ed.), *Original Letters Illustrative of English History*, 2nd series (London, 1827), 1:126-8. The letter was written to be conveyed to the inhabitants of Cook's ward to encourage them to give money for the defence of the realm. See also BL, Add MS 48031, fol. 36. Compare with Edward's proclamations of 1471 calling Margaret 'a Frenchwoman born, and daughter [sic] to our extreme adversary of all our land' who had 'assembled a great number of Frenchmen, besides other traitors and rebels' and invaded, associating her more closely with the French king than was actually the case. *CCIR 1468-76*, p. 189.

⁸⁸ Ellis (ed.), *Original Letters Illustrative of English History*, 1:127.

It was thus to Edward's advantage that his new subjects should continue to associate only the Lancastrians with England's traditional enemy.⁸⁹

In spurning the possibility of a foreign bride, Edward was rejecting the various buttresses to kingship outlined above which might have been useful for a usurping king. But his actions were not without precedent and may even have been in part inspired by Edward of Woodstock's choice of an English bride. That first Edward, who was sometimes himself called Edward IV prior to 1460, was of the line to which Edward IV claimed to be heir, and a more suitable role model than Richard II.⁹⁰ Evidence of Edward IV's deliberate self-association with that hero of chivalry is to be found in articles of Yorkist propaganda: genealogies showing Edward IV's descent both from ancient British and Norman kings were glossed with sections of the prophecies of John of Bridlington which had originally described Edward of Woodstock's triumphs, but now promised similar success to Edward IV.⁹¹ The emphasis placed in Yorkist propaganda on their supposed descent via the Mortimers from the earliest English kings before the conquest also made an English marriage appropriate. Certainly the only suggestion of criticism of Elizabeth's nationality that remains is that made by Isabella of Castile, a woman who felt herself scorned for a 'widow of England'.⁹² Yet it is evident that English queens were still considered to be an aberration, the result of special circumstances, for not only did Henry VII arrange a marriage for his heir with a Spanish princess, but Richard III also sought a Spanish bride for his son, as well as considering Catherine of Navarre.⁹³ Moreover, in the summer of 1485, after the death of Queen Anne, Richard III was involved in negotiations for his own remarriage either to the Infanta of Spain or Princess Joanna of Portugal, and after Elizabeth of York's death, Henry VII considered marrying Joanna of Castile.⁹⁴ The difference now,

⁸⁹No king married a French bride after Henry VI until Charles I.

⁹⁰R. Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales and Aquitaine* (London, 1978), p. 242.

⁹¹A. Allan, 'Yorkist Propaganda: Pedigree, Prophecy and the "British History" in the Reign of Edward IV', in Ross (ed.), *Patronage, Pedigree and Power*, pp. 182,187.

⁹²J. Gairdner (ed.), *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Reigns of Richard III and Henry VII*, Rolls Series 24 (1861-63), 1:31.

⁹³John Rous, *Historia Regum Angliae*, ed. T. Hearne (Oxford, 1745), pp. 216-17; Smith, 'England and Spain', p. 231.

⁹⁴B. Williams, 'The Portuguese Connection and the Significance of "The Holy Princess"', *The Ricardian* 6:80 (1983): 143.

was that the French possessions were no longer the principal influence on these negotiations, and French brides were apparently avoided. There had been since Edward I's reign an increasingly large section of the nobility specifically of royal blood, that class indeed from which Joan of Kent came, so this continued emphasis on foreign brides was clearly not simply because it was the only way to marry women of a similar social status: the other assets of foreign queenship still held true. The existence of potential brides among the highest English nobility also makes Edward IV's choice of a knight's widow particularly surprising, and so it is to the controversy of social status that I will now turn.⁹⁵

3.ii Social Status

*For defaute of goode lynage ne of goode londe ought she not to be refused*⁹⁶

In the fifteenth-century translation of the Vulgate *Merlin*, King Leodegan, having described his daughter as 'oon of the fairest of the world and the wiseste and oon of the beste lerned', emphasizes most of all her claim to nobility, through blood and land, in offering her as a potential bride to King Arthur.⁹⁷ Her beauty and wisdom were nonetheless an inevitable part of that nobility as nobility was understood in the literature of romance. A classic instance of this is given in *The Kingis Quair*, when the imprisoned James I of Scotland glimpses a young, beautiful and finely dressed woman from his prison window, from which he deduces that she must fulfil all the ideal qualities of a noblewoman:

In hir was youthe, beautee, with humble a port
 Bountee, richesse and wommanly facture,
 God better wote than my pen can report,
 Wisedome, largesse, estate and connyng sure.⁹⁸

It was on such assumptions that queens had hitherto been chosen, but the definitions of nobility were by no means clear in fifteenth-century England.

There were various reasons for expecting a queen to be of noble birth. Firstly it was an inevitable consequence of the diplomatic motives for the majority of royal marriages.

⁹⁵Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 87.

⁹⁶H.B. Wheatley (ed.), *Merlin or the Early History of King Arthur: a Prose Romance*, EETS original series 10, 21, 36, 112 (1865-99), 2:319.

⁹⁷Wheatley (ed.), *Merlin*, 2:319.

⁹⁸M.P. McDiarmid (ed.), *The Kingis Quair of James Stewart* (London, 1973), p. 87.

Secondly, it was expected that she would pass on her noble blood to her offspring for, as the St Albans writer describing Eleanor of Castile believed, ‘it is against the nature of things that bad fruit should sprout from a good root’.⁹⁹ Similarly, a poem to Henry VI mentioned the lineage of his father and mother, concluding,

Of goode rootes, sprynggyng by vertu
Must growe goode fruyte be necessité.¹⁰⁰

Thirdly, a queen’s noble status could be important to her husband’s sovereignty, as was revealed in tenth-century France, when Hugh Capet claimed that his right to rule was stronger than that of Charles of Lorraine because Charles had married the daughter of one of Hugh’s vassals. A contemporary chronicler explained that Hugh could not have tolerated being ruled by a woman whose ‘equals and even superiors’ had to kneel before him.¹⁰¹ A woman of high birth, on the other hand, complemented her husband’s exalted status and emphasized the concept of his ‘otherness’, his separation from his subjects. Hence the pageants welcoming Margaret of Anjou to London in 1445, and to Coventry at a time of political crisis in 1456, stressed her noble lineage: ‘Princes most excellent, born of blode riall’.¹⁰²

This expectation of noble birth was bound up with a desire for a queen who would enhance her husband’s majesty with her own beauty. There was a belief that spiritual qualities were revealed by physical beauty, hence the rumours that Edmund Crouchback had been debarred from the throne for his deformity, and later the invention of Richard III’s hunched back.¹⁰³ So this was not only a matter of aesthetics. The need for a beautiful queen, or at least one who was not ugly, led to stringent premarital inspections of prospective brides. Yet those appointed to report to their king on a girl’s appearance seem sometimes to have been so caught up in assumptions that noble girls inevitably filled the ideals of beauty in romance that they perceived the girls in these terms anyway. The most famous instance is Holbein’s portrait of Anne of Cleves, but much earlier, in 1319, the

⁹⁹Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile*, p. 65.

¹⁰⁰T. Wright (ed.), *Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History*, Rolls Series 14 (1859-61), 1:144.

¹⁰¹Huneycutt, ‘Medieval Queenship’, pp. 17-18.

¹⁰²M.D. Harris (ed.), *The Coventry Leet Book or Mayor’s Register 1420-1555*, EETS original series 134-5, 138, 146 (1907-13), 1:287.

¹⁰³A. Goodman, *The New Monarchy: England 1471-1534* (London, 1988), p. 39.

bishop of Exeter, Walter Stapeldon's, pen portrait of a daughter of the count of Hainault, probably Philippa, bore strong resemblances to accounts of romance heroines, even bearing some traces of rhyming couplets.¹⁰⁴ The prospective bride's family was not always willing to allow too thorough an inspection, as Henry VII's envoys found when attempting to report on the young queen of Naples in 1505, whose clothing made it hard to judge her figure and whose parents forbade them to paint a portrait.¹⁰⁵ It was perhaps for this reason that Henry VI reputedly sent a French knight who had been a prisoner in England to acquire a portrait of Margaret of Anjou in secret.¹⁰⁶

Another element sometimes important in physical appearance was a woman's apparent potential for childbearing. John Hardyng told an almost certainly apocryphal tale of the future Edward III's choice of bride, on which occasion Edward was advised to choose

. . . Hir with good hippis I mene
For she will bere good soonnes at myne entent,

to which everyone agreed, choosing 'Philip that was full feminine'.¹⁰⁷ That broad hips were regarded as beautiful is evident in Chaucer's description of the idealised Lady White in *The Book of the Duchess*, whose hips were 'of good brede'.¹⁰⁸ At the time of Stapeldon's inspection of Philippa she was too young for this potential to be judged. Henry VII however dictated that the young Queen of Naples be inspected not only regarding generally 'the features of her body' but also specifically 'to mark her breasts and paps, whether they be big or small'.¹⁰⁹ As Kim Phillips has argued, however, the young and slender ideal of beauty in much of literature and art at this time more often suggested virginity than

¹⁰⁴Trotter, 'Walter of Stapledon', pp. 1-3.

¹⁰⁵J. Gairdner (ed.), *Memorials of King Henry the Seventh*, Rolls Series 10 (1858), pp. 223-39.

¹⁰⁶Erlanger, *Margaret of Anjou*, pp. 62-3.

¹⁰⁷John Hardyng, *The Chronicle of John Hardyng*, ed. H. Ellis (London, 1812), p. 317.

¹⁰⁸Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. L.D. Benson, 3rd edn (Oxford, 1987), p. 956.

¹⁰⁹Gairdner (ed.), *Memorials of Henry the Seventh*, pp. 228, 232. Her clothing made the former question impossible to answer, but they reported 'the said queen's breasts be somewhat great and fully, and inasmuch as that they were trussed some what high, after the manner of the country, the which causeth her grace for to seem much the fullyer' (pp. 232-3).

fertility.¹¹⁰ Usually beauty was a less specific quality and was repeatedly attributed to queens by contemporaries such as chroniclers or foreign ambassadors, just as it was to the queens of literature, and perhaps often meant little more than noble appearance.¹¹¹ Nonetheless, one physical attribute which seems to have been important particularly to queens was the blonde hair traditionally attributed to virgins, be that in paintings of the Virgin Mary or in the verbal description of the Pearl Maiden. Marina Warner has drawn attention to the dual resonances of fertility and virginity in blonde hair, which result from its similarity to the colours of corn and of haloes.¹¹² In the fifteenth century blonde Virgins were common across Europe, and Warner argues that ‘blondeness is an index of the virgin’s youth as well as innocence, for many children are fair in infancy and grow darker with age’.¹¹³ This livery of youth and innocence was transferred to queens, even to the extent that an early fifteenth-century Bohemian image of the Queen of Sheba in full regalia, although black-skinned, possessed long blonde hair.¹¹⁴ All of the queens in this study were depicted with long blonde hair also - Plates 1-5. It is possible that Margaret of Anjou at least did not in fact conform to this ideal since the Milanese ambassador informed his duchess that Margaret, although beautiful, was ‘somewhat dark’.¹¹⁵ Elizabeth of York was explicitly referred to as blonde in the narrative of her coronation, perhaps a feature she had inherited from her mother, and the Crowland continuator noted that Anne Neville and Elizabeth of York were ‘alike in complexion’, so Anne too was probably blonde.¹¹⁶

It was, reputedly, for the sake of Elizabeth Woodville’s beauty that Edward IV defied tradition and married the widow of the Lancastrian knight Sir John Grey, daughter of

¹¹⁰ K.M. Phillips, ‘The Medieval Beauty Myth: an Aesthetics of Virginity’, *Medieval Life* 5 (Summer, 1996): 10-13.

¹¹¹ Crawford (ed.), *Letters of the Queens*, p. 4; *CSP Venice*, 1:298.

¹¹² M. Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde: on Fairytales and their Tellers* (London, 1995), p. 367.

¹¹³ Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde*, p. 368.

¹¹⁴ Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde*, p. 104.

¹¹⁵ *CSP Milan*, 1:19.

¹¹⁶ ‘Eisdem colore’, Pronay and Cox (eds.), *Crowland Chronicle Continuations*, pp. 174-5; John Leland, *De Rebus Britannicis Collectanea*, ed. T. Hearne (1774), 4:220. The earliest textual reference to Elizabeth Woodville having fair hair that I have found is in Edward Hall’s mid-sixteenth-century chronicle in his description of her mourning for her sons, so this could easily be the result of his knowledge of surviving pictures of the queen, or his attempt to depict her like the Mater Dolorosa (See Chapter III.3), Edward Hall, *Chronicle*, ed. H. Ellis (London, 1809), p. 379.

another Lancastrian knight, Lord Rivers.¹¹⁷ Opinion is divided upon the importance and effects of her social status. Lander argued in 1963 that ‘the social status of the Wydevilles and the Greys was not as lowly as many historians have assumed’, observing that Lord Rivers’s father had been a seneschal of Normandy under Henry V and that since 1450 his family had begun to marry into the peerage, while the Greys were related by marriage to the Bouchiers, Mowbrays and Berkeleys, and were effectively the equals of such as William Lord Hastings.¹¹⁸ More recently Christine Weightman has pointed out that Elizabeth’s mother, ‘Jacquetta de St Pol, was the daughter of one of the most noble families in Luxembourg and northern France and could claim descent from Charlemagne’, although she admits that Jacquetta’s marriage to Richard Woodville was ‘regarded as a shocking disparagement by her own family’.¹¹⁹ As Ross has noted, Edward himself, whilst still earl of March, took part in the ‘berating’ of Lord Rivers and his son at Calais, when the earl of Warwick had told Rivers,

his fader was but a squyer, and broute up with Kyng Herry the V^{te}, and sethen hymself made by maryage, and also made Lord, and that it was not his parte to have swyche langage of Lords, beyng of Kyngs blood.¹²⁰

Ross strengthens his point that Elizabeth was not a suitable queen by quoting from the Burgundian chronicler Jean de Waurin, regarding the council’s reaction to the suggestion that Edward might marry Elizabeth:

They answered that she was not his match, that although she was good and fair she was not a wife for so high a prince as he; and he knew this well, for she was not the daughter of a duke or earl, but her mother had married a simple knight, so that though she was the daughter of the Duchess of Bedford and the niece of the Count of St Pol, still she was no wife for him.¹²¹

¹¹⁷J.A. Giles (ed.), *The Chronicles of the White Rose of York*, 2nd edn (London, 1845), pp. 15-16.

¹¹⁸J.R. Lander, ‘Marriage and Politics in the Fifteenth Century: the Nevilles and the Woodvilles’, *BIHR* 36 (1963): 134.

¹¹⁹C. Weightman, *Margaret of York: Duchess of Burgundy 1446-1503* (Gloucester and New York, 1989), p. 26.

¹²⁰J. Gairdner (ed.), *The Paston Letters, 1422-1509* (Edinburgh, 1910), 1:506.

¹²¹‘... il luy fut dit quelle nestoit pas contre luy, ja feust elle bonne et belle, mais non pas femme quy en riens appartenist a si hault comme il estoit, aussi il le scavoit bien, car elle nestoit fille de duc ne comte, et que sa maere avoit este mariee a ung chevallier duquel ell avoit eu deux enfans avant son mariage, ja eust elle este fille a la duchesse de Bethfort et niepce au comte de Saint Pol, non obstant ce, tout considere, si nestoit elle pas femme pour luy’. Jehan de Waurin, *Recueil des Chroniques et Anchiennes Istories de la Grant Bretaigne, a present nomme Engleterre*, eds., W. Hardy and E.L.C.P. Hardy, Rolls Series 39 (1864-91), 5:455; Ross,

It should, however, be borne in mind that throughout the 1460s Waurin's chronicle favours Richard Neville, earl of Warwick, so that Waurin's source may well have been someone close to the earl (who later claimed that this wedding led to his rift with Edward and rebellion in 1469).¹²² Moreover, Waurin, like the correspondent of the duke of Milan who referred to Elizabeth in 1469 as 'a widow of this island of quite low birth', came from a society in which the nobility were far more strictly defined in legal terms.¹²³ In contrast to the continent, there was no 'true hereditary nobility in England based on a special legal status' and no law against marriages between classes.¹²⁴ Admittedly in the fifteenth century the nobility was not as fluid as it had been in earlier generations, and new titles were being introduced to sharpen social distinctions at the top of society.¹²⁵ Nonetheless, the high extinction rate of noble families meant that few had very ancient high lineage: even the earl of Warwick had a merchant's daughter for a great grandmother.¹²⁶ The noble class was constantly being replenished from the ranks of knights and gentry and the quality of nobility was therefore increasingly being seen as 'something which flowed from a royal grant, as a result of a definite act, rather than as something which was implicit in a man's territorial power': hence nobility flowed from the king rather than from the land.¹²⁷

This is not to argue that the English were less aware of social distinction. As Griffiths has shown, by the fifteenth century the king's immediate family were 'regularly distinguished from the rest of the nobility by all sorts and conditions of people', and in 1469 Clarence and Warwick warned Edward IV that Edward II, Richard II and Henry VI had all 'estrangid the gret lordis of thayre blood from thaire secrete Councelle'.¹²⁸ But in England the barriers were less rigid than on the continent because they were without the

Edward IV, p. 89.

¹²²Johnson, *Duke Richard of York*, p. 196, n. 1.

¹²³*CSP Milan*, 1:131.

¹²⁴A. Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love in England, 1300-1840* (Oxford, 1987), p. 254.

¹²⁵S.H. Rigby, *English Society in the Later Middle Ages: Class, Status and Gender* (London, 1995), p. 197.

¹²⁶J.A.F. Thomson, *The Transformation of Medieval England 1370-1529* (London and New York, 1983), p. 129.

¹²⁷Thomson, *Transformation of Medieval England*, p. 104.

¹²⁸R.A. Griffiths, *King and Country: England and Wales in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1991), pp. 3-4.

force of law. Whereas Jacquetta's brother and uncle were reputedly appalled at her marriage to Woodville, Henry VI's English advisers seem to have been fairly lenient, simply fining the couple for marrying without the royal licence - a fine which Cardinal Beaufort probably paid in exchange for some of the manors of her dower - and pardoning the couple soon afterwards.¹²⁹

It is very possible that, as the Yorkist lords in Calais claimed, it was through the agency of his wife that Woodville became Lord Rivers in 1449. Equally, without his marriage to Jacquetta, Woodville might not have become a member of Edward's royal council in 1463 and his daughter might never have come to the king's attention.¹³⁰ Thus Jacquetta's initial rejection of the boundaries of status had led to a more serious undermining of concepts of nobility, compounded by the subsequent marriages of her other children to spouses of far higher social standing than they might otherwise have aspired to. It was rarer for women to marry below their station than for men, and when they did the definition of their children's status was more complex.¹³¹ If the father was noble, then his children were automatically treated as noble too, as was the case for the Beauforts (the children of Edward III's son, John of Gaunt, and Katherine Swynford, who was the daughter of a knight). However, confusion existed over the nature of women's status, perhaps partly because the nobility had originally defined themselves, as 'those who fight' - a description irrelevant to women - but more because a woman's position tended to be defined by that of her nearest male relatives. Hence the difficulty, raised in John Russell's *Book of Nurture*, of deciding how to rank ladies of royal blood who had married knights, or poor ladies who had married royalty.¹³² Russell concluded that whereas a lady of royal blood should keep her rank, a lady of low blood should take her husband's rank for in both cases their descendants might eventually inherit the kingdom.¹³³

By the fifteenth century, debates on whether virtue or parentage was more important in defining nobility had become popular. An example is the *Controversia de nobilitate*

¹²⁹Waurin, *Recueil des Chroniques*, 4:207. D. MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville (1437-1492) Her Life and Times* (London, 1938), p. 11.

¹³⁰Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 89.

¹³¹R.A. Houlbrooke, *The English Family 1450-1700* (London and New York, 1984), p. 75.

¹³²F.J. Furnivall and E. Rickert (eds.), *The Babees Book* (London, 1923), p. 72.

¹³³Furnivall and Rickert (eds.), *Babees Book*, pp. 72-3.

written by Buonaccorso da Montemagno in 1428, translated by John Tiptoft, earl of Worcester, and published by Caxton, which strongly implied that it was the virtuous plebeian who most merited the hand of the senator's daughter Lucre.¹³⁴ In about 1497 Henry Medwall, in his play *Fulgens and Lucre*, made the answer quite explicit by allowing Lucre to choose the plebeian Gaius Flaminius,

. . . a man of excellent vertuose condicions,
Although he be of a pore stoke bore,
yet I wyll honour and commende hym more
Than one that is descendide of ryght noble kyn
whose lyffe is all dissolute and rotyde in syn.¹³⁵

While not necessarily undermining the political structure of the nobility, such humanist ideas may well have encouraged those who wished to marry outside their class. A story even more pertinent to Edward IV's position was the 'Tale of the Three Questions' in Gower's *Confessio Amantis*.¹³⁶ In it the young King Alphonsé was so impressed by Peronelle's wit and beauty that he said he would have married her had she been of more noble lineage, but since she was but a knight's daughter, he could not, and offered her whatever was in his power to give. She asked for her father to be ennobled, which done she pointed out that she could now be his queen:

This yonge king, which peised al,
Hire beaute and hir wit withal,
As he that was with love hent,
Anon therto yaf his assent.¹³⁷

In this context, it is hardly surprising to find that Richard Grafton, writing only a century after Edward's marriage, was confused about Elizabeth's status: in his continuation of Hardyng's chronicle he first wrote that after Edward's marriage,

for the humylytie or basenes of stocke that the lady was of, he wold no prynce
or kynges to have knowne of it, no not so much as her own father Rycharde the

¹³⁴A.J. Minnis, 'From Medieval to Renaissance? Chaucer's Position on Past Gentility', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 72 (1986): 238-9.

¹³⁵Minnis, 'From Medieval to Renaissance?', p. 239.

¹³⁶John Gower, *The English Works of John Gower*, ed. G.C. Macaulay, EETS extra series 81-2 (1900-1), 1:119-29.

¹³⁷Gower, *English Works*, 1:127.

earl.¹³⁸

But in telling the tale in greater detail a few pages later, he wrote,

there came to make a sute to the kyng by petycyon, dame Elyzabeth Greye (wyche after was hys queene) then a wyddowe, borne of noble blood, specyallye by her mother, whyche was duchesse of Bedforde.¹³⁹

Grafton's work is a patchwork of earlier accounts, and this inconsistency was presumably a result of his attempts to include conflicting sources. In the context of the complexity of English attitudes to nobility, it would appear that Grafton's problem of definition possibly originated in a lack of clarity regarding Elizabeth's status even among her contemporaries. A partisan of Edward IV, who was probably at Edward IV's court in the second half of his reign and wrote a chronicle of the reign early in the sixteenth century, appears to confirm this in a description that emphasises Elizabeth's 'noble' virtues without making reference to her birth:

King Edward being a lusty prince attempted the stability and constant modesty of divers ladies and gentlewomen, and when he could not perceive none of such constant womanhood, wisdom and beauty, as Dame Elizabeth . . . after resorting at divers times, seeing the constant and stable mind of the said Dame Elizabeth, early in the morning the said King Edward wedded the foresaid Dame Elizabeth.¹⁴⁰

It is also possible that Edward preferred not to choose a woman of higher status, such as his young cousin Isabel Neville, in order to avoid undermining the balance of power among the high nobility if one powerful landed family had closer connections with royalty than the rest. As will be seen, the Woodvilles' power under Edward rested in offices rather than land, and as such was easier to control.¹⁴¹ It is possible that his marriage into a family connected with the most widely respected Lancastrian, John duke of Bedford, also served

¹³⁸Grafton in Hardyng, *Chronicle*, p. 438. Lord Rivers was of course not yet an earl at the time of the marriage.

¹³⁹Grafton in Hardyng, *Chronicle*, p. 503. This second passage is taken almost verbatim from Thomas More's *History of Richard III*. Thomas More, *The History of King Richard III and Selections from the English and Latin Poems*, ed. R.S. Sylvester (New Haven and London, 1963), p. 60.

¹⁴⁰The author of this chronicle, known as 'Hearne's Fragment', has not been identified, but was probably resident in the house of Thomas duke of Norfolk at the time of writing the chronicle. He is not always accurate, for instance, he asserts that 'none outlanded prince there was, that durst marry with' Edward IV, and dates Edward's wedding 1st May 1463. Giles (ed.), *Chronicles of the White Rose*, pp. 15-16.

¹⁴¹See below Chapter IV.3.

to strengthen the loyalty of other ex-Lancastrians.

Nonetheless, in marrying Elizabeth Woodville, Edward was clearly challenging the accepted structure of society, in which the royal family were by now virtually a class of their own above the nobility. An anointed king of England had not married a woman from among his own subjects since the eleventh century. It was a dangerous act for a usurping monarch, even if the result was to display his own ultimate power to determine nobility. Its irregularity was reinforced by the clandestine wedding which Edward considered the only way to force his Great Council to accept his chosen bride. That wedding, more than any chronicler's statement, is proof that Edward knew that Elizabeth did not fulfil contemporary expectations of potential queens. It is noticeable that whereas Edward of Woodstock and Joan of Kent, later repeated their vows in public, it appears that Edward IV and his queen did not.¹⁴² This was perhaps because the first Edward and Joan were actually related within prohibited degrees and had to pay penance for their illegal wedding, but it was nonetheless practice to order couples to solemnize their union in church under threat of excommunication, and English Church councils throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries insisted that weddings should occur in churches.¹⁴³ Edward's marriage was thus an offence to the Church which might have been perceived to undermine the sanctity of his own role. It certainly made it easier for his brother Richard to suggest in 1483 that Edward's irreverence for the sacrament of marriage included an earlier clandestine pre-contract which annulled this marriage.¹⁴⁴

In contrast, for Elizabeth Woodville's daughter, the problem of her birth was quite the reverse. As mentioned above, her claim to the English throne was too strong for Henry VII to risk allowing her to be married to anyone else. On the other hand, in Bacon's words, if he relied on Elizabeth's title,

he could be but a *King at Curtesie*, and have rather a *Matrimoniall* then [sic] a *Regall* power; the right remayning in his *Queene*, upon whose decease, either with Issue, or without Issue, he [would have] to give place, and be removed.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴²Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales*, p. 173.

¹⁴³Barber, *Edward, Prince of Wales*, p. 173. J.A. Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago, 1987), pp. 499-502.

¹⁴⁴*Rot Parl*, 6:240-1.

¹⁴⁵Quoted in C.T. Wood, 'The First Two Queens Elizabeth', in Fradenburg (ed.), *Women and Sovereignty*, p.129.

So, in spite of his vow on Christmas day 1483 in Rennes Cathedral to marry Elizabeth of York as soon as he became king, Henry did not marry her until after his own coronation, thus avoiding the implication of joint sovereignty which might have been present in a joint coronation. Furthermore, Elizabeth was not crowned queen until she had produced an heir. Chrimes has tried to defend Henry's delayed marriage on the grounds that, never having seen Elizabeth, 'he must have time for making the lady's acquaintance, and opportunity for a little wooing'.¹⁴⁶ However, while Henry's immediate predecessors might have had chance to 'woo' their brides, it was hardly common practice, nor a right granted to his own son Arthur prior to his marriage. Henry attempted to emphasise his own right to the throne, for example, in an oration written to be delivered to the Pope on his behalf, in which he explained that he could have made a profitable foreign alliance, but at the request of the lords of the kingdom he married Elizabeth because:

The beauty and chastity of this lady are indeed so great that neither Lucretia nor Diana herself were ever either more beautiful or more chaste. So great is her virtue and her character so fine, that she certainly seems to have been preserved by divine will from the time of her birth right up until today to be consort and queen.¹⁴⁷

Thus he implied that it was her beauty and her virtue which made her a suitable queen rather than her royal blood. Evidence that contemporaries saw things differently exists in the observations of the Crowland continuator, who claimed that in Parliament

There was discussion about the marriage to the lady Elizabeth, King Edward's eldest daughter, in whose person it seemed to all, there could be found whatever appeared to be missing in the king's title elsewhere.¹⁴⁸

Comparisons with the virtuous Lucrece bring us to another attribute commonly expected of potential queens but lacking in Elizabeth Woodville: virginity.

¹⁴⁶Chrimes, *Henry VII*, p. 65.

¹⁴⁷'Hujus plane forma pudicitiaque tanta est, ut neque Lucretia neque Diana ipsa vel speciosior vel casta magis fuerat unquam. Tanta deinde est ei virtus ac morum elegantia, ut certe nutu quodam divino ab ipsa sua nativitate ad haec usque tempora sibi consors et regina reservata esse videatur.' Gairdner (ed.), *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Reigns of Richard III and Henry VII*, 1: 421.

¹⁴⁸'super matrimonio dominae Elizabeth primogenitae Regis Edwardi: in cujus persona visum omnibus erat posse suppleri, quicquid aliunde ipsi Regi deesse de titulo videbatur.' Pronay and Cox (eds.), *Crowland Chronicle Continuations*, pp. 194-5.

3.iii *Virginity*

The desire for virginity in queens-to-be was rooted both in practicality and ideology. Since a major reason for marriage was to produce heirs (except possibly in the case of Henry IV's queen, Joan of Navarre), it was necessary that the queen be young enough to bear children for some years to come. On a similarly practical level, the offspring of a previous marriage could threaten the stability of court structures by their favoured position, as was the case with the offspring of the second marriage of King John's wife, Isabella of Angoulême, who were fiercely disliked at the court of her eldest son Henry III.¹⁴⁹ Elizabeth Woodville's eldest son was a prominent, although less destructive, influence on Edward IV's polity, as will be shown in Chapter IV.

It was also necessary to be sure that the queen's offspring were also those of the king. A few months' delay would ensure that a widow was not bearing her previous husband's child, but it is likely that the early Christian notion that second marriages were primarily motivated by a desire for continued sex still influenced medieval thinking, and therefore the marital chastity of a remarried queen might be more questionable.¹⁵⁰ Besides this, there were still doubts regarding the validity of second marriages, in spite of the Church's acceptance. In the twelfth century Pope Alexander III had forbidden clerics to give the nuptial blessing at second marriages, and in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries on the continent young people commonly harassed such couples with *charivaris* on their wedding night.¹⁵¹ Something of this attitude lies in the response to Edward IV's wedding attributed to Cecily Neville by Thomas More:

Ye only widowed of Elizabeth Gray . . . shold yet suffice, as me semeth, to refrain you from her mariage, sith it is an vnfitting thing, & a veri blemish & highe disparagement, to the sacre magesty of a prince . . . to be defouled wt bigamy in his first mariage.¹⁵²

In view of the licentious reputations of both Edward IV and Henry VIII, and Henry VIII's own marriage to his brother's widow, besides the generally problematic nature of

¹⁴⁹H.W. Ridgeway, 'Foreign Favourites and Henry III's Problems of Patronage, 1247-1258', *EHR* 104 (1989): 590.

¹⁵⁰Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*, pp. 112, 142, 477.

¹⁵¹Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*, pp. 343, 540; C. Larrington (ed.), *Women and Writing in Medieval Europe: a Source Book* (London, 1995), pp. 14-15.

¹⁵²More, *History of King Richard III*, p. 62.

interpreting More's work on Richard III, it would be unwise to take this passage entirely at face value, but More was not the only author to point out the irregularity of Elizabeth's marital status. Shortly after the announcement was made, Caspar Weinreich of Danzig observed,

Although the coronation in England demands that a king should marry a virgin whoever she may be, legitimately born and not a widow, yet the king took this one against the will of all his lords.¹⁵³

Weinreich was perhaps referring to the strong symbolism of virginity attached to queens within the coronation ceremony, which helped to construct the sacred image of monarchy and will be examined in more detail in the next chapter. There are no remaining contemporary accounts of this objection in England, but Mancini later claimed that Clarence had proclaimed that 'The king, who ought to have married a virgin wife, had married a widow in violation of established custom'.¹⁵⁴

A virgin bride implies a young girl easily moulded to the role before her, whereas an older and more independent widow might be expected to attempt to shape the role herself. Moreover, virginity was closely associated with other virtues, so that not only were virgins deemed spiritually superior to chaste widows (who were themselves superior to wives), but also personifications of virtues almost always took the form of virgins.¹⁵⁵ Virginity was an important attribute in kingship also. Edward the Confessor, the ideal of sacred kingship, had reputedly taken a vow of chastity which his wife Edith shared on their wedding night.¹⁵⁶ It was a quality which made kings more like the Christ whom they were meant to represent on earth: hence a ballad which celebrated Edward IV's conquest in terms not unlike the second coming addressed Edward as

Thove vergyne knight of whom we synge,
Vn-Deffiled sithe thy begynnyng,

¹⁵³'wiwol die kronung in Engelandt held, das ein konig solde eine junkfer zur ehe nemen, wer sie auch sein mochte, jedoch echtegeborn, aber kein witwe nicht; diese aber nam der konig wider aller seiner herren dank.' Visser-Fuchs, 'Caspar Weinreich's Danzig Chronicle', p. 31.

¹⁵⁴'Contra morem viduam a rege ductam predicaret, quem virginem uxorem ducere opportuisset.' Dominic Mancini, *The Usurpation of Richard the Third*, ed. C.A.J. Armstrong (Gloucester, 1984), pp. 62-3, 110. The contemporary French chronicler Thomas Basin maintained that in 1483 Richard III had invoked an ancient royal decree which declared that the king's offspring could not inherit the throne if their mother had been married before. Thomas Basin, *Histoire de Louis XI*, ed. C. Samaran (Paris, 1972), 3:231.

¹⁵⁵M. Warner, *Monuments and Maidens: the Allegory of the Female Form* (London, 1985), pp. 249.

¹⁵⁶H.R. Luard (ed.), *Lives of Edward the Confessor*, Rolls Series 3 (1858), pp. 58-61.

Edwardes, *Dai gracia*.¹⁵⁷

The author of Gregory's Chronicle was somewhat more realistic in his record of the public expectation that their king should be chaste:

men mervelyd that oure soverayne lorde [Edward IV] was so longe with owte any wyffe, and were evyr fered that he had not be chaste of hys levyngge.¹⁵⁸

By the fifteenth century, kings were certainly not expected to remain virgins; heirs of their body were considered necessary for the stable succession of the throne. But the spiritual power of virginity, by which martyrs such as St Katherine or St Margaret had triumphed over their adversaries and Galahad had found the Holy Grail, remained an attribute desirable to kingship.¹⁵⁹ By this period virginity was more commonly associated with women, because it was deemed to enable them to overcome the frailty of their sex, and because chastity was the virtue by which a woman's reputation was most commonly judged.¹⁶⁰ Hence the value of virginity to kingship tended to be invested in the queen, not only in a preference for virgin brides, but also in the later construction of her image, commonly in terms of the virgin Queen of Heaven as mentioned above.¹⁶¹

Edward IV's choice of the widowed Elizabeth Woodville was thus a challenge to the sacred nature of kingship, a challenge compounded by his clandestine marriage. He had apparently rejected all the potential endorsements of his kingship that a wife could bring: the strength of diplomatic alliance, the opportunity to display his majesty in a public wedding, and the validating role by which a foreign, noble, virgin queen could make his sovereignty more 'whole'. That Edward was willing to take this gamble is still most convincingly explained by accepting that he had fallen in love. Certainly this was the view of most of his contemporaries, such as the Milanese ambassador to France who informed

¹⁵⁷F.J. Furnivall (ed.), *Political, Religious and Love Poems from the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lambeth MS No 306*, EETS original series 15 (1866), p. 4.

¹⁵⁸J. Gairdner (ed.), *The Historical Collections of a Citizen of London in the Fifteenth Century*, Camden Society, new series 17 (1876), p. 226.

¹⁵⁹J. Bugge, *Virginitas: an Essay in the History of the Medieval Ideal* (The Hague, 1975), p. 52. Malory, *Works*, 2:1025-30.

¹⁶⁰J. O'Faolain and L. Martines (eds.), *Not in God's Image: Women in History* (Glasgow, 1974), p. 514. Warner, *Monuments and Maidens*, p. 64.

¹⁶¹See J. Chamberlayne, 'Crowns and Virgins: Queenmaking during the Wars of the Roses', in K.J. Lewis, N. James Menuge and K.M. Phillips (eds.), *Young Medieval Women* (Stroud, 1999), pp. 54-7, 60-3.

his duchess in October 1464 that 'it is publicly announced here that the King of England has taken to wife an English lady, they say out of love'.¹⁶² Love, however, was the most complex of all the issues at stake in Edward IV's unorthodox marriage.

3.iv Love

'A man of your bounte and nobles scholde not be withoute a wyff. Now is there ony,' seyde Marlyon, 'that ye love more than another'.¹⁶³

Merlin's response to Arthur's request for advice on choosing a queen was typical of fifteenth-century romance literature, in which kings were expected to marry for love. The prince who appears in *The Isle of Ladies* has to enlist the help of the God of Love in order to win his queen; King Alphonsé in Gower's tale, as we have seen, received rather more cooperation from his beloved when he fell in love. If, as seems most likely, *The Kingis Quair* was written by James I of Scotland, this too accepts that a king marrying for love was entirely natural.¹⁶⁴

Love, however, meant many things, 'ranging from friendship to passionate mutual absorption', as Ralph Houlbrooke has argued.¹⁶⁵ While love was held to be integral to ideal marriage in all strata of society, the nobility in particular tended to believe that mutual affection was likely to develop after the wedding, as long as the partners were well matched.¹⁶⁶ The combination of emotional and economic considerations in most marriages was clearly expressed in Margaret Paston's letter to her eldest son John in May 1478, on hearing that he was contemplating marriage with one of the queen's relatives:

yf yt be so, that yowyr lond schuld come agayne by the reason of youyr maryage, and to be sett in rest, at the reverence of God for sake yt nowt, yf ye can fynde in yowre harte to love hyr, so that sche be suche one as ye can thynke to have issu by, or ellys, by my trowthe, I had rather that ye never maryd in yowyr lyffe.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶²CSP Milan, 1:114.

¹⁶³Malory, *Works*, 1:97.

¹⁶⁴McDiarmid (ed.), *The Kingis Quair*, pp. 28-48, 180.

¹⁶⁵Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, p. 76.

¹⁶⁶S. McSheffrey, *Love and Marriage in Late Medieval London* (Kalamazoo, 1995), p. 24; Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, p. 76.

¹⁶⁷Gairdner (ed.), *Paston Letters*, 3:231.

Love in marriage was thus by no means a mere literary construct in this period, but a daily reality of which Edward would have been aware.

Unlike the literary topoi, it was rare that kings actually married for love, but it was certainly not considered impossible, and English kings had been associated with marriage for love from an early date. An eleventh-century account told of King Edgar's passion for a nun of Wilton, Wulfhilde, who refused his advances, at which he imprisoned her in her room. After she had escaped via the abbey sewers, he turned his attention to her cousin, Wulfthryth, who was being educated at the abbey.¹⁶⁸ However, in spite of the great love they shared, she decided to end their marriage and enter the convent like her cousin.¹⁶⁹ From 1066 until 1464, sound diplomatic reasons can be given for almost all of the marriages of kings of England. It is true that King John's sudden marriage with the twelve-year-old Isabella of Angoulême, which spurred her betrothed, Hugh de Lusignan, to take up arms against him, inspired rumours that he was besotted, but there were practical reasons for the match also.¹⁷⁰ His son, Henry III, is supposed to have fallen in love with a sister-in-law of the king of Scotland but his barons argued that as the younger sister of the justiciar's wife she was unsuitable, and Henry acquiesced.¹⁷¹ It has been suggested that Henry IV fell in love with Joan of Navarre during his exile in Brittany and that this would explain his choice of a dowryless widow, although it is by no means certain that they had ever even met before her arrival in England in January 1403.¹⁷² Henry V, according to Titus Livius's 1437 *Vita Henrici Quinti*, and subsequent chronicles, is supposed to have fallen in love at first sight with Catherine of Valois, but she had by then already been selected as his wife for political reasons, and, in view of his delays in arranging the marriage, it is more than likely that this story is an example of chroniclers making their subjects conform to literary

¹⁶⁸P. Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers: the King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (London, 1983), p. 32.

¹⁶⁹J.A. Smith argues that Wulfthryth may in fact have been a nun who was violated by Edgar. J.A. Smith, 'Queen-making and Queenship in Early Medieval England and Francia' (DPhil diss., University of York, 1993), p. 140.

¹⁷⁰Warren, *King John*, p. 69.

¹⁷¹Powicke, *Thirteenth Century*, p. 73.

¹⁷²Kirby, *Henry IV*, p. 136.

standards.¹⁷³ Henry V, who constructed himself very much as a chivalric hero, would have been ideal material for such treatment. Edward of Woodstock was a very similar figure but in his case the accounts of his falling in love are more probably true considering the circumstances outlined in section 3 above.¹⁷⁴ It was in their tradition that Edward IV was moulding his own kingship.

However, Catherine of Valois and Joan of Kent were ladies of royal blood. Among the brides of literary royal love-matches cited above, Guinevere, the queen of *The Isle of Ladies*, and James I's wife were all beautiful, wealthy young women of similar station to their husbands, thereby fulfilling the general expectations of ideal marriage partners (with the exception of Guinevere's predestined unchastity). As Houlbrooke argued, 'a prior love which was compatible with the other criteria of a good marriage was in practice widely welcomed in lay society'.¹⁷⁵ Matches like that of King Alphonsé and Peronelle were very rare in literature.

Types of love which crossed class barriers were frequently explored in the lyrics of courtly love, where a young man declared his devotion to a, usually stony-hearted, married woman of higher status, and in the pastoral literature of clerics and knights seducing village girls and shepherdesses.¹⁷⁶ In all of these situations, however, the impossibility of marriage defined the nature of their 'love', which generally caused suffering to the partner of lower status. One instance in which a marriage was made across class boundaries was that of Griselda to the marquis in Chaucer's *Clerk's Tale*, but here the excessive cruelty with which the marquis subjected his lower status wife to his will, reflected the arguments of advice literature which warned against such marriages for that reason.¹⁷⁷ Thus Edward IV's love was not necessarily seen in the same context as that of idealised kings of literature and history.

How Edward IV first met Elizabeth Woodville has been a matter for some

¹⁷³A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c.1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (London, 1982), p. 212.

¹⁷⁴Herald of Sir John Chandos, *The Life of the Black Prince*, ed. M.K. Pope and E.C. Lodge (Oxford, 1910), p. 148.

¹⁷⁵Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, p. 76.

¹⁷⁶Larrington (ed.), *Women and Writing in Medieval Europe*, pp. 41-50.

¹⁷⁷Chaucer, *Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 138-53; Houlbrooke, *The English Family*, p. 75.

speculation.¹⁷⁸ Cora Scofield argued that the king was already enamoured of her even before his coronation. She explained that on his return from Towton in the spring of 1461 Edward visited a number of towns, staying at Stony Stratford for two days, during which time he could have visited Lord Rivers at his home at Grafton Regis and there seen Elizabeth, because just before he left, he wrote to the chancellor informing him that he had pardoned Lord Rivers ‘all manner offences and trespasses of him done against us’.¹⁷⁹ Just over a month later, Rivers’s son Anthony was also pardoned and Scofield maintained that these pardons were made at Elizabeth’s request. Ross objected to this suggestion on the grounds that there is no evidence to prove it, but both omit to mention that Jean de Waurin is in fact the first to claim that Rivers owed his pardon to Edward’s love for his daughter.¹⁸⁰ This idea may, however, be rooted in anti-Woodville propaganda, stretching backwards the tradition that all of their gains were a result of the king’s marriage. It is just as likely that by these pardons Edward sought to conciliate Jacquetta, widow of one of the most respected Lancastrians. So little is known of Elizabeth’s movements prior to 1464 that nothing can be said with certainty.¹⁸¹

It is known that on 13 April 1464 Elizabeth entered into an agreement with William Lord Hastings to marry one of her sons to a daughter or niece of Hastings, stating that if she regained lands over which she was currently in dispute with her mother-in-law, Hastings should receive half the profits during the minority of whichever son made the marriage.¹⁸² This attempt to gain powerful backing in her suit for her lands would not have been necessary had Elizabeth known of her imminent marriage to the king. Lord Hastings was a close friend of the king and these negotiations, which had taken some time, may well have been Edward’s way of providing for a woman whom he found attractive, desired as a

¹⁷⁸MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville*, p. 32.

¹⁷⁹Scofield, *Edward the Fourth*, 1:178.

¹⁸⁰Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 86 n. 1; Waurin, *Recueil des Chroniques*, eds. Hardy and Hardy, 5:352.

¹⁸¹It has been argued that Edward’s father, Richard duke of York, and cousin, the earl of Warwick, were vaguely acquainted with her in the early 1450s when both wrote letters to a ‘Dame Elizabeth Wodehill’ recommending the suit of one Sir Hugh John. But the identification with Elizabeth Woodville is unlikely since a wealthy widow named Elizabeth Wodehill was alive at the time. MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville*, pp. 15-17; G. Smith (ed.), *The Coronation of Elizabeth Wydeville* (London, 1935), p. 28.

¹⁸²Smith, *Coronation of Elizabeth Wydeville*, p. 31.

mistress, but had not yet decided he could marry.¹⁸³ Equally, it may have been through Hastings's connections with Elizabeth that she first came to the king's attention.

If, as is generally accepted, they were married on 1 May 1464, Edward had little time to enjoy her company before returning from her home at Grafton Regis to the men he had left at Stony Stratford that morning, and proceeding to Northampton later in the day.¹⁸⁴ Yet 1 May is a suspiciously apt day for a young king to marry for love. May had long been the month associated with love, possibly originating in pre-Christian celebrations of fertility, certainly celebrated in the poetry of the troubadours.¹⁸⁵ It is therefore in May that, for instance, *The Romance of the Rose* begins, and Chaucer meets the God and Queen of Love who instruct him to write *The Legend of Good Women*.¹⁸⁶ Moreover, it was in May 1465 that Elizabeth was crowned, making confusion of the two events more likely. If we accept that the marriage did indeed occur on 1 May, we also have to accept that less than three weeks beforehand Elizabeth was not expecting it, and that Edward kept it a secret for nearly five months, during which time he encouraged Warwick and Lord Wenlock to continue negotiating for an alliance with France, as well as appearing to consider Henry of Castile's offer of his sister.¹⁸⁷

Possibly the earliest surviving reference to the May date occurs in Gregory's Chronicle, which may have been written as early as 1469. In this account, having just described conflict in the north of England in the middle of May 1464, the author writes,

Nowe take hede what love may doo, for love wylle not nor may not caste no
faute nor perelle in noo thyng.¹⁸⁸

In a new paragraph he relates,

¹⁸³Scofield notes that some foreign chroniclers suggested that relations between Edward and Elizabeth had been 'too intimate' prior to the marriage, but this was probably mere speculation, based on the extraordinary circumstances, plus the poor communications which also led Louis XI to assert to the Milanese ambassador that they had already had two children. Scofield, *Edward IV*, 1:333.

¹⁸⁴Scofield, *Edward IV*, 1:332-333.

¹⁸⁵L. Whistler, *The English Festivals* (London, 1947), p. 135; F. Goldin (ed.), *Lyrics of the Troubadours and Trouvères. An Anthology and a History* (New York, 1973), p. 417.

¹⁸⁶Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, trans. C. Dahlberg (Princeton, 1971), p. 31; Chaucer, *Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 589, 687.

¹⁸⁷Smith, 'England and France', p. 230.

¹⁸⁸Gairdner (ed.), *Historical Collections of a Citizen of London*, p. 226.

That same yere, the fyrste day of May before sayde or wrete, oure soverayne lorde the Kynge, Edward the iiij, was weddyd to the Lorde Ryvers doughter; her name ys Dame Elyzabethe, that was wyffe unto Syr John Grey, sone and heyre unto the Lady Ferys of Groby. And thys maryage was kepte fulle secretely longe ...¹⁸⁹

Matter-of-fact as his account is, that short paragraph which prefaces it suggests that his source was rather more concerned with the issue of love in this context. By setting the wedding in May, Edward, or those who reported the marriage, were writing it into orthodox and accepted traditions of the practice of love.

Nor is this the only instance in which tales of Edward's marriage were shaped by literary examples. In Italy, in or before 1468, Elizabeth Woodville was included in Antonio Cornazzano's *De Mulieribus Admirandis* according to which she was forced to defend her virtue with a dagger against Edward's advances.¹⁹⁰ Dominic Mancini, writing in 1483, presented a similarly dramatic account, although this time it was Edward who wielded the dagger, placing it at her throat, but she still resisted, 'determined to die rather than live unchastely with the king'.¹⁹¹ There were other tales of kings who forced their advances upon ladies, notably the story of Edward III and the Countess of Salisbury, which involved rape in Jean le Bel's chronicle, but only an infatuation virtuously resisted in Froissart's accounts.¹⁹² Chaucer's *The Legend of Good Women* included the tale of Philomene, raped and imprisoned by her brother-in-law, the Thracian King Tereus, and of Lucrece, raped by the king's son Tarquinius.¹⁹³ These are shocking breaches of the codes of courtly love and service to all ladies which courtesy demanded.

Like the French stories of the Countess of Salisbury's rape, or of the *femme fatale*, Joan of Kent, ensnaring the foolish Edward of Woodstock, this account of Edward IV's behaviour very possibly originated in continental propaganda against the English king.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁹Gairdner (ed.), *Historical Collections of a Citizen of London*, p. 226.

¹⁹⁰C. Fahy, 'The Marriage of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville: a New Italian Source', *EHR* 76 (1961): 665.

¹⁹¹'morique potius statuisse, quam cum rege impudice vivere.' Mancini, *Usurpation of Richard the Third*, pp. 60-1.

¹⁹²A. Gransden, 'The Alleged Rape by Edward III of the Countess of Salisbury', *EHR* 87 (1972), p. 340.

¹⁹³Chaucer, *Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 618-20, 624-6.

¹⁹⁴S. Luce (ed.), *Chronique des Quatres Premiers Valois 1327-1393* (New York, 1965), pp. 123-4.

It was perhaps a not unnatural embellishment on Edward IV's existing licentious and cavalier reputation. He was alleged to have seduced many women from the London merchant classes, and Mancini declared that

it was said that he had been most insolent to numerous women after he had seduced them, for, as soon as he grew weary of dalliance, he gave up the ladies much against their will to the other courtiers. He pursued with no discrimination the married and unmarried the noble and lowly: however he took none by force. He overcame all by money and promises, and having conquered them, he dismissed them.¹⁹⁵

The characterisation of Elizabeth Woodville in this literature was again dependent on her status: according to Cornazzano she protested that her blood was too noble for her to be the king's concubine.¹⁹⁶ Chastity was essential to women's reputations at any level of society, and it was by no means only noble girls who were educated to resist pre-marital sex.¹⁹⁷ Nonetheless, Mancini maintained that, seeing her resistance,

Edward coveted her much the more, and he judged the lady worthy to be a royal spouse, who could not be overcome in her constancy even by an infatuated king.¹⁹⁸

It was a version of events later reiterated (presumably from a source other than Mancini) by Thomas More:

The king much merueling of her constauce, as he yt had not ben wont els where to be so stiffely sayd naye, so much esteemed her contynence and chastitie, yt he set her vertue in the stede of possession and riches.¹⁹⁹

Mancini's and Cornazzano's versions of the king's 'courtship' were thus essentially more

¹⁹⁵'Libidinis ut fuit intemperantissimus, ita in multas mulieres postquam eis potitus fuerat, fertur fuisse contumeliosus. Nam ut libidinis satietas eum cepisset, eas invitas aliis aulicis substernebat. Nuptas et innuptas: matronas atque humiles nullo discrimine egit, nullam tame vi rapuit. Omnes pecunia aut promissis expugnabat: expugnatas dimittebat.' Mancini, *Usurpation of Richard III*, pp. 66-7. C. Given-Wilson and A. Curteis, *The Royal Bastards of Medieval England* (London, 1984), pp. 13-14. In his history of England, Polydore Vergil recorded a story that Edward's rift with Warwick was actually the result of the earl's anger when the king seduced one of the women of Warwick's household. Vergil, *Three Books of . . . English History*, p. 117. It is possible, however, that these later accounts were the result of Richard III's attempts to discredit Edward IV's kingship by emphasising his immorality, one instance of which was the enforced public penance of Edward's mistress, Elizabeth Shore.

¹⁹⁶Fahy, 'Italian Source', p. 665.

¹⁹⁷McSheffrey, *Love and Marriage*, p. 16.

¹⁹⁸'Eduardus [in] eam multo magis exarsit, et que a fuernti rege de pudicitia expugnari non potuit, marito rege dignam iudicavit'. Mancini, *Usurpation of Richard the Third*, pp. 60-1.

¹⁹⁹More, *History of King Richard III*, p. 61.

violent precursors of the account of the Edwardian partisan quoted in section 3.ii above. Again Elizabeth was being constructed as noble by virtue if not blood.

However, unlike the narrative of their Mayday wedding, this theme of implied attempted rape does not belong in the medieval literary discourse of acceptable love.²⁰⁰ Like 'love' between classes, rape is transgressive. Mancini's account of the marriage continues with a description of the rage of Edward's mother on hearing of the match, in which she supposedly declared that her son was illegitimate - his behaviour in choosing a woman of lower status had proved that he could not be of the blood of kings.²⁰¹

There were thus two strands in the evolving narrative of Edward IV's courtship: that of traditional, orthodox romance originating in English accounts, and that of unchivalrous, non-noble, anti-feminist and transgressive behaviour, perhaps originating on the continent. The latter was nonetheless entwined very early on with the narrative of a virtuous noble lady resisting seduction. By 1469 a third strand had developed: that Elizabeth, or at least her mother, had bewitched the king into this marriage.²⁰² It is quite possible that all three were totally without foundation in events.

However they met, or whatever the context of Edward's proposal, both must have known they were taking a huge risk in so challenging the ideology of queenship. As argued in previous sections of this chapter, Elizabeth Woodville - free from the negative attributes of foreign birth, possessed of a family whose necessary dependence upon the king was bound to elicit loyalty and whose connections with the duke of Bedford would win over more previously Lancastrian support, evidently fertile, as beautiful (and probably as blonde) as any ideal queen, and apparently with a strength of character Edward deemed appropriate to the demanding office of queenship - was in many ways very well suited to be the first Yorkist queen. But these were not the primary motives in the traditional selection of queens. Whatever the nature of the attraction Edward felt for the woman he chose to make his queen, to call it love and associate it with May was the only means of writing his choice into a discourse of orthodox royal marriage.

It was perhaps to reinforce this narrative of romantic love that Elizabeth adopted a

²⁰⁰I. Mast, 'Rape in John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* and Other Related Works', in Lewis, James Menuge and Phillips (eds.), *Young Medieval Women*, pp. 103-32.

²⁰¹Mancini, *Usurpation of Richard III*, pp. 60-3.

²⁰²See Chapter IV.4.

deep red gillyflower as her personal device. The role of gillyflowers in Marian iconography has already been mentioned above, but the particular deep red shade chosen by the queen was also an emblem of virtuous love, betrothal and marriage.²⁰³ Hence James I, in *The Kingis Quair*, depicted the reassurance of love delivered to him by a turtle dove as a ‘red jorofflis’.²⁰⁴ It was a very common flower in illuminated manuscripts, but James I and Elizabeth Woodville may have had an extra motive for using it because another of its names was ‘queen of delights’.²⁰⁵ This combination of Marian, queenly and romantic associations made it an ideal emblem for a queen who had reputedly married for love.

It has been argued that Anne Neville too was chosen for love, supposedly having been Richard’s childhood sweetheart during their years at Middleham Castle.²⁰⁶ Ross, however, has argued that she was simply ‘the most obvious bride for Gloucester’ in terms of her status and wealth.²⁰⁷ In an interesting letter of February 1474 to Galeazzo Sforza, duke of Milan, Christofforo di Bollato, his ambassador in France, claimed,

the duke of Lancaster, who by force had taken to wife the daughter of the late Earl of Warwick, who had been married to the Prince of Wales, was constantly preparing for war with the Duke of Clarence. The latter, because his brother, King Edward, had promised him Warwick’s country, did not want the former to have it, by reason of his marriage with the earl’s second daughter.²⁰⁸

Ill-informed as the ambassador evidently is, including mistaking Richard of Gloucester’s title, the letter still undermines any idea of a love match. The Crowland continuator gave no motive for the marriage, but claimed that Clarence hid Anne disguised as a kitchen-maid in London to prevent the union, and that upon finding her Gloucester moved her to sanctuary at St Martin’s church, while they negotiated the partition of Warwick’s lands, including those rightfully belonging to his widow.²⁰⁹ It is a tale which has provided much food for novelists since and does, like the accounts surrounding her sister-in-law’s wedding,

²⁰³Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, ‘The Device of Elizabeth Woodville’, pp. 19-20.

²⁰⁴McDiarmid, *The Kingis Quair*, p. 113.

²⁰⁵Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, ‘The Device of Elizabeth Woodville’, p. 19.

²⁰⁶P.M. Kendall, *Richard the Third* (London, 1955), pp. 105-9.

²⁰⁷Ross, *Richard III*, p. 28.

²⁰⁸*CSP Milan*, 1:177.

²⁰⁹Pronay and Cox (eds.), *Crowland Chronicle Continuations*, pp. 132-3.

have a hint of the literature of romance, such as the abductions of Guinevere and Heurodis, but, given the generally reliable nature of this source, cannot be entirely dismissed. Whether this story is true or not, the acrimony, avarice and ruthless 'disregard for the rights of those who could not protect themselves' (principally the countess of Warwick) displayed by Gloucester and Clarence in negotiating the marriage, according to Ross, 'shed an unpleasant light on their characters' which is far from the world of literary love.²¹⁰

4. Conclusion

The later part of the fifteenth century saw a revolution in the manner of selecting queens. Margaret of Anjou was the last of the traditional French royal virgins of the Middle Ages, but while queens had previously been chosen to protect English claims to continental territories, her marriage was a sign of the growing awareness of the impossibility of this task. The intensity of anti-French sentiment, the circumstances of civil war, and increased uncertainty about the nature of nobility, combined with the longer tradition in literature of love matches for kings to provide the context which allowed Edward IV to follow the example of his namesake, Edward of Woodstock, in challenging the way queens were chosen. Edward had brought current ideologies to bear on an ancient institution, arguably opening the way, by undermining that institution, for a stunning series of divorces and judicial murders of queens in his grandson's reign. For those queens who preceded Henry VIII, each in unique circumstances, chosen for the sake of foreign diplomacy, for 'love', for land and for a kingdom, role models were in short supply. It is the purpose of the next chapter to explore how these new women were publicly constructed to fit the traditional, sacred role of queen.

²¹⁰Ross, *Richard III*, p. 27.

Chapter II

Representations of Queenship: Ceremonial Rites of Passage¹

1. Introduction

Item, whene a Quene shall be ressauyd out of a straunge realme, the King muste purvey sertayne lordes and ladys off estat to mete w[ith] hir at the see sidde, and convey hir to the palis where the Kinge wilbe weddid . . . And that done, she must bene conveid vnto hir crownacion to the cete of London.²

Early in the reign of Edward IV, regulations were drawn up for the king's chamberlain and ushers regarding the manner of conducting certain state occasions.³ The earliest existing manuscript of this *Ryalle Book* dates from about 1491-3, and includes various Tudor additions, thus providing a valuable source for idealised ritual behaviour for much of the period under discussion in this thesis.⁴ According to the preface of the *Ryalle Book* there was at the time of composition 'butt littill knowlege' of the matters it described, thus implying that the monarchy of Henry VI lacked the ceremony proper to a king, and that Edward IV's concern to conduct such ritual appropriately indicated his superior kingship.⁵ Royal ritual was thus an indicator of legitimacy, whatever its particular context, and therefore especially important during this period of dynastic upheaval. As such its most important audience was the high nobility upon whose support the king was most dependent, although some rituals were designed to involve a broader cross-section of his subjects.

Certain ceremonies were more closely connected with legitimacy than others, notably the king's coronation and funeral. As I have argued in Chapter I, his marriage was another.

¹I am very grateful to Joel Burden for many conversations about royal ritual and regalia in the past three years.

²F. Grose and T. Astle (eds.), *The Antiquarian Repertory* (London, 1807), 1:302, from BL, Add MS 38174.

³The regulations were once attributed to the reign of Henry VII, but it is clear from references to the king's brothers and to his youngest sister 'being a maid vnmarried' that they were originally drawn up for Edward IV. Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 1:297-8, 303.

⁴K. Staniland, 'Royal Entry Into the World', in D. Williams (ed.), *England in the Fifteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 1987), p. 299, n. 8. Another version of this *Ryalle Book* occurs in *A Collection of Ordinances and Regulations for the Government of the Royal Household* (London, 1790), but is from an incomplete seventeenth-century copy.

⁵Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 1:296. The text of the *Ryalle Book* nonetheless drew on Lancastrian precedents, as will be shown below in sections 2 and 4.

Moreover, the queen's principal rites of passage were occasions upon which the king could reinforce his position, and involve his subjects in an affirmation of his kingship. The abundant records in chronicles and financial accounts of such ceremonial events are indicative of their importance in the exercise of monarchy.⁶ The rituals of queenship are not only occasions upon which queens are most commonly visible to the historian, but also occasions upon which queens were most commonly visible to their subjects.

Church, civic and royal authorities constructed concepts of queenship for a variety of audiences; the élite court group present at a queen's churching, the larger noble congregation at her coronation, and the wider public who witnessed various street processions, were shown how she fitted into her sovereign's kingship. This representation of her expected role was frequently intended to educate the queen herself as well as her subjects, although occasionally she might take a hand in shaping the images herself.⁷ The chroniclers and artists who recorded these events, by their emphases, omissions and distortions, served to construct further notions of queenship for their readers.⁸

An entire thesis might easily be devoted to the various ceremonies of queenship, including the crown-wearings which marked the major religious festivals each year, state entries into cities, and more exceptional occasions such as the Love-day Procession of March 1458 to mark the supposed peace between Margaret of Anjou (and the king) and her Yorkist opponents. I have therefore chosen to limit the number of rituals analysed by concentrating upon those associated with the queens' major rites of passage: marriage, coronation, childbirth and death.

Marriage was in practice and ideology the process to which a woman owed her status as queen, but it was commonly overshadowed by the far more extensive and complex celebrations of coronation which followed it. The coronation was the key rite of passage in defining the ideology of queenship as understood by the different sectors of the political

⁶C.L. Kingsford (ed.), *Chronicles of London* (Oxford, 1905); Robert Fabyan, *The New Chronicles of England and France*, ed. H. Ellis (London, 1811); J. Gairdner (ed.), *The Historical Collections of a Citizen of London in the Fifteenth Century*, Camden Society, new series 17 (1876); F.W.D. Brie (ed.), *The Brut or The Chronicles of England*, EETS original series 131, 136 (1906-8); G. Smith (ed.), *The Coronation of Elizabeth Wydeville* (London, 1935); J. Leland, *De Rebus Britannicis Collectanea*, ed. T. Hearne (London, 1774), vol. 4; A.F. Sutton and P.W. Hammond (eds.), *The Coronation of Richard III: the Extant Documents* (Gloucester, 1983).

⁷For instance, see below Chapter III.2 and 4.ii for Margaret of Anjou's influence on pageantry at Coventry.

⁸See below section 3.iii regarding discrepancies in attribution of regalia.

community. It was essentially a series of rituals enacted for and by royalty, clergy, nobility and civic authorities, establishing expectations of and support for queenship. These rituals, in varying degrees, responded to the different potential in individual women, but also constructed them visually and verbally in terms of ideal queenship. Among the many roles of this ideal queenship, that which itself involved the most elaborate and formal ritual was childbirth. This included both ceremonial arrangements for the queen's lying in, and the subsequent churching which echoed the Marian imagery of the coronation. Childbirth, like marriage, was a rite of passage the queen shared with many women, although her royal status imbued the process of each with unique political significance. The funeral of a queen whose husband was still king could similarly be a highly political affair, affirming her husband's kingship. That of a widowed queen was more dependent upon the circumstances and desires of the woman herself. All four occasions - marriage, coronation, childbirth and funeral - were concerned with the queen's power to complement, legitimise and enrich her husband's kingship as an integral part of the king's public body.

2. Arrival and Marriage

And in this same yere, about Midlent, they brought Quene Margaret out of high douce France . . . And she landed at þe towne of Hampton; and þere she was worthely receyued . . . And after, oure Kyng come . . . and brought hir to an abbey in þe newe Forest . . . and there þe Kyng was wedded to Dame Margaret the Quene.⁹

It is possible that the *Ryalle Book's* account of the receiving of a queen was based upon chronicle accounts such as this of Margaret of Anjou's arrival, accompanied by the marquis of Suffolk and other nobles, in 1445. But this standard pattern of receiving foreign queens was broken in 1464 with Edward IV's clandestine marriage.¹⁰ For Elizabeth Woodville new methods of official reception had to be devised. Whereas Margaret and her predecessors were crowned within weeks of their arrival in England, Elizabeth Woodville and her daughter, for different reasons, both lived as the king's wife in England for several months before their coronations. For all three, the months between their weddings and their coronations provided an opportunity for their kings to indicate the nature of the queen's role

⁹Brie (ed.), *The Brut*, 2:488. This section is from Cambridge, Trinity College MS 09, 1, which ends in 1446, so Margaret's arrival and coronation were probably recent events at the time of writing, hence the detail with which they are recorded.

¹⁰For similar receptions of earlier queens see Brie (ed.), *The Brut*, 2:338-9, 350, 364, 426.

in each regime. Anne Neville alone, overshadowed as ever by her husband, was transformed from noblewoman to anointed queen in a matter of days. Integral though the coronation was to public understanding of their queenship, it was nonetheless their weddings which made them queens.

The rituals of Margaret's queenship began on about 24 May 1444, following the truce negotiated between France and England at that time.¹¹ Margaret entered Tours in procession with her parents and the king and queen of France for her proxy wedding in the church of St Martin, where the earl of Suffolk stood proxy for the king of England.¹² This was primarily an occasion for display by the French monarchy who arranged a great feast at which Margaret 'was set in þe myddes of the halle, as principall of this fest, and ryally by hir oone, as Quene of England', making explicit the fact that by virtue of marriage she was now queen, even though she had not yet seen either her king or her country. Food and drink were distributed not only to the attendant royalty and nobility, but also to the 'peple of comons'.¹³ This generosity in celebration of Margaret was the first stage in constructing her queenly role as that of generous patroness. After four more days of celebrations Suffolk returned to England for Henry to ratify the treaty and Margaret returned home to Anjou.¹⁴

It was not until the following March, after attending her sister's wedding in Nancy, that Margaret began her journey to England, in the company of the earl of Suffolk. Her brother John accompanied her as far as Paris, whence the dukes of Orleans and Alençon escorted her to the edge of Valois territory.¹⁵ The process emphasised her symbolic severance first from family and then from country, for at Pontoise almost all of her French companions departed and responsibility for her party was assumed by Richard duke of York, the English king's lieutenant and governor-general of France and Normandy. A total of £5,573 17s 5d was paid out of the English treasury on behalf of the queen between Suffolk's departure from England and the October after her wedding, a sum Henry VI could

¹¹B.M. Cron, 'The Duke of Suffolk, the Angevin Marriage, and the Ceding of Maine, 1445', *Journal of Medieval History* 20 (1994): 78.

¹²Brie (ed.), *The Brut*, 2:486.

¹³Brie (ed.), *The Brut*, 2:486.

¹⁴Cron, 'The Duke of Suffolk', p. 79.

¹⁵R.A. Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI: the Exercise of Royal Authority* (London, 1981), p. 487. The common assumption that Margaret underwent a second proxy marriage at Nancy has been convincingly refuted by Cron, 'The Duke of Suffolk', pp. 77-92.

ill afford.¹⁶ It was clearly an opportunity to impress upon the French, especially those in the remaining English territories, the magnificence of the English monarchy. When the party arrived at the capital of English France, Rouen, Margaret proved too ill to take part in the triumphal entry. It was, however, enacted all the same with the countess of Shrewsbury taking her place, in much the same way as the earl of Suffolk had taken that of Henry VI at the proxy wedding.¹⁷ These events were not about private individuals entering into lifelong union but were an entirely public contract in which the personal identities of the participants had become irrelevant. The personal union would come later, in Titchfield Abbey on 22 April 1445 when the two private individuals, Henry and Margaret, were joined in God by the bishop of Salisbury, William Aiscough, Henry's confessor.¹⁸ This private event was of so much less relevance to Henry's kingship than the triumphal procession or coronation that most chroniclers did not even know where it took place, either leaving a blank or giving the wrong site.¹⁹

Margaret's arrival in England was nonetheless announced across the country in churches the following Sunday when bells were rung and the *Te Deum* was sung.²⁰ Private though the actual wedding might have been, the fact of the marriage did have great public significance which Capgrave explored in his *Liber de Illustribus Henricis*:

this marriage the whole people believe will be pleasing to God and to the realm, because peace and abundant crops came to us with it. And I pray the Heavenly King that He will so protect them with His Own right hand, that their love may never be dissolved, and that such fruit of the womb may be granted unto them as the Psalmist speaks of when he says 'Thy wife shall be as the fruitful vine upon the walls of thy house, thy children like the olive-branches

¹⁶Kingsford, *Chronicles*, p. 155; A. Crawford, 'The King's Burden? The Consequences of Royal Marriage in Fifteenth-Century England', in R.A. Griffiths (ed.), *Patronage, the Crown and the Provinces in Later Medieval England* (Gloucester, 1981), p. 38.

¹⁷Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 497.

¹⁸Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 488. Margaret had again fallen ill on her arrival in England so the wedding probably took place later than had originally been intended. H. Nicolas (ed.), *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England* (London, 1834-7), 6:xvi.

¹⁹Gairdner (ed.), *Historical Collections of a Citizen of London*, p. 186; Ingulph, *Ingulph's Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland*, trans. H.T. Riley (London, 1908), p. 402; Kingsford (ed.), *Chronicles*, p. 155; Brie (ed.), *The Brut*, 2: 488; R. Flenley (ed.), *Six Town Chronicles of England* (Oxford, 1911), p. 119.

²⁰Flenley (ed.), *Six Town Chronicles*, p. 119.

about thy table'.²¹

As with any wedding in the fifteenth century, it was hoped that the union would be blessed with children. The wider issue of the fertility of the realm and its association with the king's marriage probably stretched back to pre-Christian notions of kingship, as well as reflecting the medieval understanding that good harvests indicated God's approval of king and kingdom. Yorkist chronicles frequently reversed Capgrave's depiction of the effects of Margaret's marriage, declaring that

for mariage of Quene Margaret, what losse hath þe reame of Englonde had, bi losyng of Normandy and Guyan, bi diuision of þe reame, þe rebelling of commynes Ageynst þer princes & lordes; what diuision Ayen ye lordes, what murdre & sleying of þame!²²

Similarly Richard III's first parliament maintained that

after the ungracious pretended marriage [of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville] . . . the ordre of all poletique Rule was perverted, the Lawes of God and of Gods Church, and also the Lawes of nature and of England, and also the laudable Customes and Liberties of the same.²³

Thus the nature of the king's marriage - or rather the extent to which the king's use of this sacrament and union were pleasing to God - was believed to impinge on the welfare of the realm in a very material sense. Again this was a question of the king's public identity rather than his personal relationships.

Elizabeth Woodville's wedding was far more private than that of Margaret of Anjou. If Fabyan is to be believed, it was witnessed only by the bride's mother, Jacquetta, two gentlewomen, and a young man 'to helpe the preest singe'.²⁴ The fact that no public reaffirmation of Edward's wedding seems to have been required after the September revelation is proof again that the wedding was considered a concern of his personal rather than his public existence. The announcement of the wedding was, however, followed by

²¹'Quas nuptias reputat omnis populus fore Deo gratas et regno, pro eo quod pax et abundania frugum cum ipsis adventarent. Ego autem precor Cælestem Regem ut Ipse dextra Sua sic eas protegat, ut nunquam amor eorum dissolvatur, ut fructus ventris eis concedatur talis, de quo ait Psalmista: - "Uxor tua," inquit, "sicut vitis abundans in lateribus domus tuæ. Filii tui sicut novellæ olivarum in circuitu mensæ tuæ.' John Capgrave, *Liber de Illustribus Henricis*, ed F.R. Hingeston, Rolls Series 7 (1858), p. 135.

²²Brie (ed.), *The Brut*, 2:512.

²³*Rot Parl*, 6:240.

²⁴Fabyan, *New Chronicles*, p. 654.

Elizabeth's participation in an exceptional but poorly documented ceremony which appears to have been very much like the Act of Recognition performed for kings. On 30 September 1464 the two most powerful lords in the country, Clarence and Warwick, led her into the chapel of Reading Abbey where she was 'openly honoured as queen by the lords and all the people'.²⁵ No further details are given but the implication is that it resembled, on a much smaller scale, Edward IV's ceremonial of 4 March 1461 when he formally 'tooke possession of the Realme of England' in a ritual which concluded with his entry into Westminster Abbey, bearing the royal sceptre, where 'alle the lordes dyde homage as to their soueraigne lord'.²⁶

In contrast to the ritual of the king's coronation, the queen's ceremony did not contain an Act of Recognition, for her relationship with the kingdom was rooted in her relationship with the king. Yet it would appear that, having adapted this ritual conveniently to buttress his own weak position after 'usurpation', Edward decided to adopt a similar process for his non-noble, clandestinely married wife in her weak position.

For both Edward and his queen, there was some delay before the actual coronation took place, but by the fifteenth century coronation and anointing were no longer necessarily considered an essential precursor to the functioning of kingship. Prior to 1272 coronations appear to have been understood literally as 'kingmaking' rituals, but Edward I's absence on crusade at the time of his father's death in 1272 precipitated a revision in this practice because it was necessary for Edward to be declared king whilst absent from the realm. As Wood has argued, the frequent usurpations and changes of royal dynasty in England, and the apparent lack of concern at the potential implications of the adultery of Edward II's queen, suggest that in practice legitimate inheritance was not the exclusive qualification for kingship in England that it was in France.²⁷ The Lords' decision to accept Richard duke of York as heir to the throne, but not king, in 1460 is indicative of the continuing tension

²⁵'Et in die Sancti Michaelis apud Radingham dicte domina Elizabetha, admissa in capella abbatiae ibidem, per ducem Clareciæ et comitem Warrwici ducta est, per dominos et totam gentem ut regina aperte honorata'. J. Stevenson (ed.), *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars of the English in France during the Reign of Henry the Sixth*, Rolls Series 22 (1861-4), 2:783. N. Pronay and J. Cox (eds.), *The Crowland Chronicle Continuations: 1459-1486* (London, 1986), p. 115.

²⁶Kingsford (ed.), *Chronicles*, p. 174.

²⁷C.T. Wood, 'Queens, Queens and Kingship: an Inquiry into Theories of Royal Legitimacy in Late Medieval England and France', in W.C. Jordan, B. McNab and T.F. Ruiz (eds.), *Order and Innovation in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honor of Joseph R. Strayer* (Princeton, 1976), pp. 385-400.

between the roles of inheritance and coronation in determining the right to kingship. In declaring himself king in Henry VI's lifetime, Edward IV was prioritising inheritance. The pre-coronation recognition ceremonies of Edward IV and his queen implied that by 1461 all that was necessary for the practice of kingship/queenship was formal recognition of their status by an élite section of the body politic in a holy space. Such a ritual combined public acceptance of both the secular and sacramental nature of their roles. It did not make them king or queen but publicly recognised the rights originating in the king's blood or the marriage ceremony. The rushed coronation of Richard III in 1483, however, indicated that in practice coronation was not deemed to have become redundant as a kingmaking rite yet.

For Anne Neville no such ceremonies of acceptance were required. She had been married to Gloucester for over a decade and, although it appears that no Papal dispensation had ever been granted to permit this union within prohibited degrees, there was no question at the time about her right to be queen beside her husband. She had arrived in London on 5 June 1483, ostensibly for her nephew's coronation, and so was already with her husband at the time of his usurpation.²⁸ Her role in events is not recorded, although since she was staying at Baynard's Castle when Richard was petitioned to accept the crown it is likely that she was present when he was first publicly acknowledged as king.²⁹

Elizabeth of York, in contrast, was in Yorkshire when her future husband claimed his crown, yet there are no records of a celebratory entry into London for her either.³⁰ The situation was unprecedented, for Henry VII needed to absorb Elizabeth's public persona as heir to the house of York into his public body as king, but wanted to avoid any suggestion that she legitimised his kingship, or that the throne might be rightfully hers. A triumphant entry into London might have been understood to signify her right to the throne, besides which Henry did not wish to marry her too soon, only to bring her safely out of reach of any potential challengers to his throne. Because a double coronation could have been read as a symbol of joint sovereignty Henry avoided this, but needed to make a public statement of the assimilation of the Yorkist claim into his own kingship. Consequently, their wedding, on 18 January 1486, became an occasion of public as well as private union,

²⁸Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 19

²⁹Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, pp. 25, 27.

³⁰S. Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry and Early Tudor Policy* (Oxford, 1969), p. 8.

drawing on the ideology of the king's wedding as a source of peace and fertility which Capgrave had discussed. Apart from a vague reference to general rejoicing and magnificent festivities by Bernard André, details of the wedding itself do not survive.³¹ But, in an early use of printing for propaganda, English translations of the papal bull granting a dispensation for their marriage were widely circulated: the letter began with observations on the civil war and expressly characterised their wedding as a union between members of the two warring parties.³² Medallions struck to commemorate the wedding, depicting the king and queen, provided more propaganda.³³ Moreover, the pageantry of union and roses which greeted Henry's progress to York shortly after the wedding, which occurred in poems celebrating the birth of Prince Arthur later in the year, and indeed continued to occur in the pageantry of the Tudor dynasty, confirmed that the wedding of Elizabeth of York was a rite of passage not just for two individuals but for a kingdom.³⁴

3. Coronation

The coronation was in practice a series of rituals which took place over several days. It was the one rite of passage which queens did not share with other women; which most explicitly established their unique role. It was also the occasion on which a wider variety of ideologies of queenship, sometimes conflicting, came together than on any other. The creators and audience of the sections of this rite of passage varied at different points, and it is important to remember that the rich symbolism of this process was probably not understood by all who witnessed it, particularly the words heard only once from a stage in a noisy street or the Latin texts of the liturgy in the abbey. The extent to which these events could have shaped understandings of queenship among the king's subjects depended on the level of involvement of these subjects in the enactment of the rites, their access to records of the process afterwards, their education, and the effectiveness of particular displays. Its value as propaganda for any but the most simplistic understandings of queenship is difficult to assess, but as an occasion for the political community to unite in expressing, constructing

³¹J. Gairdner (ed.), *Memorials of King Henry the Seventh*, Rolls Series 10 (1858), p. 38.

³²Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry and Early Tudor Policy*, p. 19.

³³D. Loades (ed.), *Chronicles of the Tudor Kings* (London, 1990), p. 33.

³⁴Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry and Early Tudor Policy*, pp. 19-24, 347-8.

and upholding their own ideologies of queenship, it provided a unique opportunity for affirming the political structures of the realm, for affirming kingship.³⁵

3.i The Journey to the Tower of London

All queens spent the penultimate night before their coronation at the Tower of London. The journey there naturally varied considerably in length for different queens, but it became the occasion for shaping images of ideal queenship appropriate to the individual women. For Margaret of Anjou, the first rite of passage which she shared with the English realm was the journey from her wedding in Hampshire to London. This entailed integrating the foreign princess into English kingship. En route she was greeted by various lords and their entourages, and stayed at manors belonging to the bishop of Winchester and the archbishop of Canterbury, a process which effectively formed an official recognition of her role by nobility and clergy, as the ceremony in Reading Abbey would do for her successor.³⁶

On arriving at the outskirts of London, Margaret was welcomed by representatives of the city: the mayor, aldermen, sheriffs and guild members who accompanied her to the Tower of London - thereby expressing the acceptance of the third estate - in much the same way as her recent predecessors had been welcomed.³⁷ At some point during the entry rituals, probably on her first arrival in the city (although the chroniclers give different days, and the similar royal processions through the city made by Elizabeth of York and Anne Boleyn occurred on the Friday before their coronations), Margaret was treated to a series of pageants, the scripts for which still exist.³⁸ These pageants have commonly been

³⁵See S. Anglo, *Images of Tudor Kingship* (London, 1992), pp. 1-4 regarding the issue of royal pageantry as propaganda.

³⁶Brie (ed.), *The Brut*, 2:488-9; Kingsford (ed.), *Chronicles*, p. 156; Flenley (ed.), *Six Town Chronicles*, p. 119.

³⁷Kingsford (ed.), *Chronicles*, p. 156; Gairdner (ed.), *Historical Collections of a Citizen of London*, p. 186; Brie (ed.), *The Brut*, 2: 339, 350, 364, 426.

³⁸The author of the continuation of *The Brut* to 1446 reports that 'many devises and storyes' were performed during her progress from the Tower to Westminster. Brie (ed.), *The Brut*, 2:488. The London Chronicle in BL, Cotton Vitellius MS XVI (probably written about 1496 drawing on earlier chronicles) reports that 'dyvers pageantes, countenautes of dyvers histories [were] shewed in dyvers places of the Cite in Roiall wise and costelew' after Margaret's meeting with the mayor et al at Blackheath. Kingsford (ed.), *Chronicles*, p. 156. But the most detailed chronicle account of the pageants is that in Gregory's chronicle (probably written by William Gregory a London skinner in high public offices, possibly an eyewitness) which refers to the sites of the 'notabyll devysys' and implies that this was her initial welcome to the city. Gairdner (ed.), *Historical Collection*, p. 186. The sites noted in the script coincide closely with those used for Henry VI's entry into London in 1432, running from Southwark to St Paul's as opposed to the route taken just before

ascribed to John Lydgate, but the earliest occurrence of this attribution is John Stow's chronicle of 1592 and Kipling has argued that it was in fact the work of at least two unknown poets and that there is no reason to believe Lydgate was in any way responsible.³⁹

Queenship was portrayed in these verses as a powerful, quasi-divine office. There were no references to the queen's role as provider of heirs to the throne, as there would be in Katharine of Aragon's welcome sixty years later.⁴⁰ Nor indeed was she instructed to love her new husband as Katharine would be.⁴¹ Essentially, Margaret was greeted as a bringer of peace; but she was also enjoined to observe a variety of virtues, which implied the assumption that she would exert considerable power in the realm. The most striking of these constructions of queenship was that expressed at Leadenhall where 'Dame Grace', who called herself 'Goddess Vicarie Generale', greeted Margaret with the words 'Oure benigne Princesse and lady sovereyne, Grace conveie you forthe and be your gide', and urged Margaret to observe her own virtues of Truth, Mercy, Justice and Peace.⁴² To present

her coronation. The *Great Chronicle of London* makes reference to a life of St Margaret and other pageants shown on the day before her coronation (A.H. Thomas and I.D. Thornley, [eds.], *The Great Chronicle of London* [London, 1938], p. 178) corroborating the *Brut* account, but since no such pageant appears in the script we have it would appear that pageants were arranged on both occasions, and that those for which we have most details occurred on her initial entry.

³⁹G. Kipling, 'The London Pageants for Margaret of Anjou: a Medieval Script Restored', *Medieval English Theatre* 4 (1982):12.

⁴⁰ G. Kipling (ed.), *The Receyt of the Ladie Kateryne*, EETS original series 296 (1990), p. 29. It is perhaps relevant that Katharine of Aragon's was a pre-marriage processional entry, rather than pre-coronation. J. C. Parsons has suggested that the Latin inscription on the Noah's ark at Margaret's entry - 'Ingredimini, et replete terram', meaning basically 'go forth and multiply' would indicate her required role as mother, and that 'affiliations between the Old Testament Arks and the Virgin Mother' would have come to spectators' minds. J.C. Parsons, 'Ritual and Symbol in the English Medieval Queenship to 1500', in L.O. Fradenburg (ed.), *Women and Sovereignty* (Edinburgh, 1992), p. 67. Parsons has in fact misread the description of the pageants given by John Stow: this heading actually belongs with the first pageant at which Margaret is addressed by Plente and Pees. The purpose of the Latin phrases in the manuscript that Stow was using is far from clear. Kipling has suggested that they were painted on the pageants, and has attempted to reconstruct appropriate scriptural references for later pageants since only two are recorded. Kipling, 'London Pageants', pp. 8, 18-23. They may simply have been a gloss on the meaning of the English text made by a scribe. Parsons's identification of this verse as Genesis 1:28 makes little sense in the context of the welcomes of Plente and Pees, but Kipling's suggestion of Genesis 8:17 - referring to the animals from the ark breeding abundantly upon the earth - fits better with the speeches that anticipate a new period of wealth and abundance. Yet even this would be fairly obscure to those not aware that the subsequent pageant was of Noah's ark, to which the scripture 'Iam non ultra irascar super terram' is applied, appropriately God's promise that He would curse the earth no more after the flood. Thus neither of these scriptures, nor indeed the ark (which represented a story of death and turbulence followed by peace) were intended to urge Margaret to 'go forth and multiply'.

⁴¹Kipling (ed.), *Receyt*, p. 14.

⁴²Kipling, 'London Pageants', p. 20.

God's assistant in the administration of justice in female form, and to expect her virtues to be applied by Margaret, was necessarily to compare the queen's relationship to the king with that of a vicar general to a bishop, and it does not construct the queen in the traditional role of intercessor with the king, but as assistant judge.

The predominant theme, however, was Margaret's role in the new peace with France, and the prosperity which it was anticipated would flow therefrom. The first pageant was a welcome to the city of London from the figure of 'Plente' who addressed Margaret as the 'causer of welth, joie, and abundance' - rather as Capgrave had done in the context of her wedding. 'Plente' was accompanied by 'Pees' who claimed that peace had been achieved through Margaret's 'grace and highe benignite', thereby ignoring all the noblemen who had actually contrived the treaty. But women, and particularly queens, as peacemakers was a standard trope. Christine de Pisan had expressed this in her injunctions to the wise princess to mediate between her lord and his barons because women's milder temperaments suited them to tempering men's belligerence.⁴³ Consequently, Margaret of Anjou's predecessor, Catherine of Valois, had also been made to embody the peace process: the subtleties at her coronation banquet included one of four angels carrying a 'reason' explaining that her marriage had brought the war to an end.⁴⁴ Thus Margaret was being made to take on an accepted important female role, a notion of ideal womanhood or queenship that would complement the ideal king, her meekness and mercy tempering his anger and judgement.

At Cornhill Margaret was again explicitly credited with 'purchasing' peace:

This tyme of Grace by mene of Margarete,
We triste to God to lyuen in quiete.⁴⁵

The language was almost Messianic, and the scene had shifted from comparisons with strife in this world to comparison with the war of the angels prior to Creation.

The last three pageants then focussed on images of heavenly experience, which nonetheless still related to Margaret's experience as queen and thus constructed her role as something beyond the human condition and closer to that of God. At the Great Conduit in Chepe the royal precursor of Christ, King David, was invoked and quotation made from

⁴³Christine de Pisan, *The Treasure of the City of Ladies, or The Book of the Three Virtues*, trans. S. Lawson (Harmondsworth, 1985), pp. 51-3.

⁴⁴Thomas and Thornley (eds.), *Great Chronicle*, pp. 117-19.

⁴⁵Kipling, 'London, Pageants', pp. 20-1.

Psalm 83 whose moral is that those who live closely with God will be rewarded.⁴⁶ Margaret was then enjoined to follow the example of the wise virgins who, the poet claimed, did not seek worldly praise but served the 'Spouse' (Christ) out of pure love. This interweaving of notions of Margaret's own recent earthly marriage and her relationship with God, as explained in Chapter I above, became more explicit when the allegory shifted to the *Song of Songs* in which the lover and beloved meet and find rest in God, thereby bringing her husband the king into the imagination of those able to follow the allegories. In the following stanza the king himself was constructed as peace when it was promised that 'Sponsus Pees the Kynge will make hys ffeste'. The developing images expressed the way in which the king through his marriage encompassed the peace which Margaret represented within his sovereignty. This last reference is to the New Testament imagery of Christ as bridegroom holding a feast, which must also have reminded the audience of the sumptuous feast which would follow Margaret's imminent coronation.

The penultimate pageant occurred at the Eleanor Cross in Cheapside, another striking celebration of English queenship. This cross - one of Edward I's memorials to his queen, Eleanor of Castile - like many emblems of queenship, was executed to promote the image of English monarchy as a whole, incidentally, in imitation of, and competition with, the French monarchy whom Margaret represented.⁴⁷ The Eleanor cross presented Margaret with an idealised image of English queenship, the foreign princess absorbed into English styles of dress and architecture, enshrined in the cross like a female (thus usually virgin) saint, implying a blending of spiritual and temporal authority in the English monarchy.⁴⁸ Here angels were singing and Margaret's journey through London was compared with the journey to the Heavenly Jerusalem and God's 'paleis'. Appropriately, then, the final pageant at St Michael's focussed upon the Last Judgement, warning Margaret that earthly status was no guard against damnation, but also describing the 'Ioie, laude, rest, pees and parfite vnite' of God's eternal kingdom, similar words to those which had earlier been used

⁴⁶The language of this psalm persistently refers to God in terms of kingship, although not in the extracts used in the poetry here, so that only those familiar with the psalm would have known how apt it was.

⁴⁷E.H. Hallam, 'The Eleanor Cross and Royal Burial Customs', in D. Parsons (ed.), *Eleanor of Castile, 1290-1990: Essays to Commemorate the 700th Anniversary of her Death, 28 November 1290* (Stamford, 1991), pp. 14-16; N. Coldstream, 'The Commissioning and Designing of the Eleanor Crosses', in Parsons (ed.), *Eleanor of Castile, 1290-1990*, pp. 61-3.

⁴⁸P. Lindley, 'Romanticizing Reality: the Sculptural Memorials of Queen Eleanor and their Context', in Parsons (ed.), *Eleanor of Castile, 1290-1990*, p. 83.

to describe England at her marriage. In conclusion, the pageantry which greeted Margaret on her entry into her new capital characterised her not as the provider of royal heirs and intercessor for the king's people, but as the cause of peace and plenty, the king's 'vicar general', a bride of Christ and an 'aungel of pees'. She thus appeared as a figure with her own secular and spiritual authority.

Evidence for the entries of Margaret's successors is, however, far less detailed. For Elizabeth Woodville it is possible to piece together some idea of the pageant on London Bridge from the Bridgemaster's accounts for 1465.⁴⁹ The scene included stuffed figures of eight men and six women, angels and children (played by members of the Society of Clerks and boys from the choir of the Church of St Magnus) in flaxen wigs. As she approached, Elizabeth was given six ballads, copies of which had also been fixed to the pageant on the bridge.⁵⁰

Elizabeth was first greeted by 'Saint Paul', who had probably been chosen in reference to her mother, Jacquetta de St Pol, a device which drew attention to the queen's claim to noble lineage. She was then addressed by one Salamon Batell in the guise of St Elizabeth, in reference to her own name. Beside 'Saint Elizabeth' on the drawbridge stood 'Mary Cleophas', sister of the Virgin and mother of four disciples. The presence of two such important mothers as St Elizabeth and Mary Cleophas was probably used to draw attention to the queen's role as mother, a more appropriate theme for Elizabeth than the images of peace or plenty which greeted Margaret, since the former's aptitude for motherhood had already been proved. The pageant occurred on the vigil of the feast of Mary Cleophas, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and Mary Madgalene.⁵¹ The date of

⁴⁹G. Wickham, *Early English Stages 1300 to 1660*, 2nd edn (London and Henley, 1980), 1:324-331. It is probable that materials used in previous pageants were re-used here since the overall cost was only £21 14s 6½d, and there are few references to the materials that would be needed for constructing the stage referred to in the account, or for the sort of props commonly used in such displays. There is, however, a reference to 'iii lode vterrs stuffurs' brought to the bridge in a carriage from the Guildhall; Wickham translates this as 'three loads of old material'. Most of the materials bought for the occasion were varieties of coloured paper, paints, cloths and foil. In contrast £122 8s 5d was paid for the Bridge House pageant for Katharine of Aragon's welcome in 1501. Wickham, *Early English Stages*, 1:288, 328.

⁵⁰This practice of handing out ballads probably originated when such pageants did not include speeches but were more simple showings. However, the implication of these accounts is that, as in Margaret's welcome, the actors did speak.

⁵¹D. Attwater, *The Penguin Dictionary of Saints* (Harmondsworth, 1965), p. 238. It is more than likely that Mary Magdalene, whose relics were supposedly in Burgundy (home of Elizabeth's more illustrious ancestors), was invoked later in the procession

the coronation may have been deliberately chosen to coincide with this feast, although it was perhaps also significant that it was the feast of Pentecost.⁵²

Mary Cleophas was probably a common representative of fertility since she also featured in Anne Boleyn's coronation procession, on which occasion one of her young sons delivered an oration on the fruitfulness of St Ann, Mary Cleophas' (and Mary the Virgin's) mother.⁵³ Mary Cleophas was also an appropriate companion for St Elizabeth since they were cousins, members of the Holy Family, and were most commonly represented in art beside the Virgin herself. Consequently, when Elizabeth Woodville arrived beside them, probably with her blonde hair loose beneath a jewelled coronet (as was the custom in the processions leading up to coronation), she would immediately have reminded onlookers of the Virgin Mary depicted with her sister and cousin in altarpieces and windows familiar to them.⁵⁴ For members of the audience acquainted with illuminated psalters and books of hours this image would have been reinforced by the presence of the angels whose wings were made up of nine hundred peacock feathers. Peacocks, as emblems of eternal life, were commonly included in scenes of the Nativity in such volumes, and by the early fifteenth century this had resulted in angels with peacock-feather wings appearing in a variety of scenes relating to Mary's motherhood, such as the Annunciation in the *Bedford Hours* - Plate 6.⁵⁵ Such visual impressions of Elizabeth as a type of the Virgin Mary very possibly made more impact on the audience than did the spoken texts.

For Elizabeth Woodville, those present in the procession with her may also have been important in constructing her image for her subjects. In January, Edward IV had sent envoys to Philip of Burgundy to arrange for Elizabeth's uncle, Jacques of Luxembourg, and a Burgundian entourage to be present at her coronation so that Elizabeth would be

⁵²Scofield, *Edward the Fourth*, 1:375.

⁵³Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 2:237.

⁵⁴E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven and London, 1992), p. 181; C. Woodforde, *The Norwich School of Glass-Painting in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1950), pl. 10.

⁵⁵J. Backhouse, *The Bedford Hours* (London, 1990), p. 112. See also the 'Madonna in a Rose Arbour' from a fragment of a book of hours also attributed to the atelier of the Master of the Duke of Bedford, and Jan van Eyck's 'Annunciation', F. Unterkircher, *European Illuminated Manuscripts in the Austrian National Library* (London, 1967), pp. 196-9; R. Hughes and G.T. Fagg, *The Complete Paintings of the Van Eycks* (London, 1970), p. 135. It is also noteworthy that both Saint Paul and Saint Elizabeth underwent unexpected transformations in status - Paul from persecutor of Christians to 'apostle', Elizabeth from the ignominy of a barren wife to the mother of a saint - which parallel Elizabeth Woodville's experience.

presented to her subjects, like her foreign predecessors, in the context of her noble family.⁵⁶

It is likely that Elizabeth Woodville's coronation procession followed much the same route as that of Queen Margaret since this was used for a number of royal entries.⁵⁷ Anne Neville and Richard III had only to travel from Baynard's Castle to the Tower, and no contemporary records for this remain.⁵⁸ The short length of the procession and the haste with which the whole coronation was arranged may have meant that there were none of the traditional pageants on this occasion.

Elizabeth of York's coronation was probably, like her mother's, deliberately timed to coincide with the feast of a major female saint, in this case St Katherine.⁵⁹ Henry might have had some qualms about associating Elizabeth's coronation with the feast of a woman who was queen by birth rather than by marriage. However, if, as Karen Winstead has argued, Capgrave's 1445 *Life of Saint Katherine* should be understood as an argument that 'government by a woman is unfeasible' Henry may have felt that the dating of the coronation reinforced his own position.⁶⁰ It is likely that St Katherine appeared somewhere in the pageants accompanying the coronation processions, but the surviving records are less detailed than for Margaret. In contrast to her predecessors, Elizabeth of York made her entry from Greenwich by barge along the Thames so that the city representatives had to come to meet her in barges 'freshely furnyshed with Baners and Stremers of Silk richely besene - with the Armes and Bagges of ther Crafts'.⁶¹ The pageants too were constructed upon barges which accompanied her along the river. Such a departure from tradition not only drew attention to her part in a new dynasty, but distanced her from the old regime in

⁵⁶Scofield, *Edward the Fourth*, 1:372.

⁵⁷Wickham, *Early English Stages*, 2:285.

⁵⁸It has been suggested that Richard and Anne arrived at the Tower by barge. Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 28, n. 108. However, the earliest account of this is in Richard Grafton's chronicle and is probably simply Grafton's assumption based on Tudor practice. Richard Grafton in John Hardyng, *The Chronicle of John Hardyng*, ed. H. Ellis (London, 1812), p. 516.

⁵⁹Fabyan, *New Chronicles*, p. 683.

⁶⁰K.A. Winstead, 'Capgrave's Saint Katherine and the Perils of Gynecocracy', *Viator* 26 (1995): 361-75. As J. Burden has suggested with reference to the identification of Catherine of Valois with St Katherine, it is also possible that such association implied that the queen's husband should be 'understood as a Christ-like spouse', J. Burden, "'Custarde royall with a lyoparde of gold syttyng therein, and holdyng a floure de lyce" Ritual Banqueting and the Iconography of Food' (unpublished paper).

⁶¹Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:218.

which rested her own claim to be queen regnant. The fact that her principal attendant was the king's mother rather than any of her own royal kin reinforced this process. Her absorption into the Tudor dynasty was made memorably explicit in the most splendid of all the pageants. This was 'a great red Dragon spowting Flamys of Fyer into Temmys' on a barge described as 'The Bachelers Barge'.⁶² When Elizabeth arrived at the Tower, Henry was there to greet her, having made a public entry into the city a few days earlier while the queen and Margaret Beaufort watched the pageantry in secret. Henry was thus able to enact the role of welcoming his queen to his kingdom as if she were the foreigner and he the sovereign who had always been in England.

Clearly the pre-coronation processions of these fifteenth-century queens were carefully crafted to be of relevance to each individual. Certain images, such as angels, were standard, and old props might be re-used, but they were a means of constructing queenship in a more personal way than the unchanging liturgy of the ceremony that followed. Thus, queens were not perceived simply as the female body that bore the king's heirs and sat beside him in public, or merely as the embodiment of certain general ideals of womanhood, but as individuals with particular contributions to make to kingship at different times.

The crucial question of who decided upon the images of queenship conveyed in these pageants cannot be answered from the evidence of these particular processions. However, Wickham has constructed a model of the arrangement of such royal entry ceremonies based largely on the welcome for Katharine of Aragon in 1501, with some reference to Henry VII's 1486 entry to York.⁶³ According to this interpretation, the king's wishes would be communicated to the Keeper of the Privy Seal, who would appoint a sub-committee to treat with the Court of Common Council, consisting of the mayor, sheriffs, aldermen and common councillors; the latter group would seek the views of the sub-committee but reserved the right of actually organising the welcome. Once an appropriate theme had been settled, this council, or the court of aldermen, would delegate pageants to the dignitaries

⁶²Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:218. According to an account of Anne Boleyn's coronation, 'commandement was given to the Haberdashers, of which craft the maior was, that they should prepare a barge for the bachelors', so this barge was presumably that of the craft to which the mayor at the time belonged. However, for Anne's coronation the bachelor's barge held only musicians and royal banners, while 'a great red dragon continually mooving and casting wildfire' was to be found in another vessel. Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 2:232.

⁶³Wickham, *Early English Stages*, 1:285-8. This model is confirmed by the description of Anne Boleyn's coronation entry. Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 2:232.

of the city companies who engaged the workmen and actors.⁶⁴ Thus the ideology expressed on these occasions was a combination of royal and civic interpretations of queenship.

The public ceremonies did not end with the queen's arrival at the Tower, but continued before a more élite audience with the reception of those to be created Knights of the Bath on the following day.⁶⁵ This was a part of both kings' and queens' coronations and began on the Friday with the prospective knights' ritual baths prior to a night vigil in the chapel of St John; the actual ceremony of knighthood occurred after mass the next morning.⁶⁶ In the pageantry earlier in the day the symbolism of queenship had been presented largely by the third estate, but with her entry into the Tower the second estate took over, declaring her part in the culture of chivalry to which only nobility could aspire. These knights would then ride close to the head of the procession to Westminster that afternoon. At Margaret's coronation forty knights were created, and at Elizabeth Woodville's thirty-eight, including members of the highest nobility, such as the duke of Buckingham and his brother, as well as the queen's own brothers, Richard and John, again deliberately establishing her position within the noble class.⁶⁷ At the coronation of Richard III and Anne Neville, although forty-nine men had originally been called for Edward V's cancelled coronation, there appear to have been only seventeen new knights, again possibly a result of the rush in organizing this ceremony.⁶⁸ For Elizabeth of York there were only

⁶⁴Wickham, *Early English Stages*, 1:287. An entry in one version of the *Great Chronicle of London's* account of Katharine of Aragon's welcome mentioned that the seventh pageant was 'ordeynyd & dyvysid by the Kyngis Commaundment the Cityzens thereof noo thyng made of counsayll', implying not only that the king could influence the pageantry decisively but also that its arrangement was usually the responsibility of the city authorities. London, Guildhall MS 3313, fol. 39, quoted in Wickham, *Early English Stages*, 1:285.

⁶⁵According to the *Annales* once attributed to William of Worcester, this ceremony was performed at the Tower on the day prior to Elizabeth Woodville's arrival, which seems both illogical and at odds with the evidence for Anne Neville, Elizabeth of York and Anne Boleyn, but cannot be discounted as a possible alternative order. Stevenson (ed.), *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars*, 2:783-4; Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 28; Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:219; Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 2:234.

⁶⁶Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, pp. 28-9.

⁶⁷John Benet, 'Chronicle for the Years 1400 to 1462', ed. G.L. Harriss and M.A. Harriss, *Camden Miscellany* 24, Camden Society, fourth series 9 (1972), p. 191; Stevenson (ed.), *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars*, 2:783-4.

⁶⁸Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p.28.

fourteen, but she was less in need of grand display to assert her position.⁶⁹

3.ii From the Tower to Westminster

The Saturday's procession from the Tower to Westminster Palace was apparently dominated more by the nobility than the commoners, for, although the streets were lined with guild members in their liveries, those who described these ceremonies focussed on the splendour of the royal cavalcade.⁷⁰ According to a continuation of the *Brut* chronicle, Margaret of Anjou wore

white damask poudred with gold . . . and hir here combed down about hir shulders, with a coronall of gold, riche perles and precious stones.⁷¹

The wardrobe accounts record that Anne Neville was given a kirtle and mantle made of 27 yards of white cloth of gold, furred with ermine and miniver, garnished with lace and tassles of white silk and Venetian gold. Her litter was furnished with white damask, cloth of gold and silk fringe.⁷² Elizabeth of York was clearly given similar clothing: a description of her coronation and various other ceremonial occasions of the period, perhaps compiled for use by heralds, in British Library, Cotton Julius MS B XII, portrayed Elizabeth as

rially apparelde, having about her a Kyrtil of whithe Cloth of Golde of Damaske, and a Mantell of the same Suede furrede with Ermyns, fastened byfor her Brest with a great Lace curiously wrought of Golde and Silk, and riche Knoppes of Golde at the Ende tasselld. her faire yelow Hair hanging downe pleyne byhynd her Bak, with a Calle of Pipes over it. She had a Serkelet of Golde richely garnyshed with precious Stonys uppon her Hede.⁷³

She sat among down pillows in a litter similarly decorated with white cloth of gold.⁷⁴ The detail of the description is indicative of the impact her appearance made upon her audience.

⁶⁹Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:219. It is possible that those men who entered the Order of the Bath on these occasions were expected to form a particular bond of loyalty with those crowned at the same time: the duke of Buckingham, for instance, was also to become Elizabeth Woodville's ward. If so, the small number of knights at Elizabeth of York's coronation was perhaps another means of limiting this queen's power base. (I am grateful to Mark Smith for this suggestion).

⁷⁰Stevenson, *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars*, 2:784.

⁷¹Brie (ed.), *The Brut*, 2:489. See also PRO, E 101/409/13.

⁷²Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 160.

⁷³Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:219-20.

⁷⁴Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:219-220; Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 33.

Women, after all, rarely wore white except as a token of virginity, hence the challenges Margery Kempe received to her white attire: 'Why gost þu in white? Art þu a mayden?'⁷⁵ For men it was a colour of priesthood, which perhaps explains Richard II's use of white on the vigil procession for his coronation.⁷⁶ White was the colour of Christ's clothes at the Transfiguration, foreshadowing the throng of white-robed people standing before the throne of God in the Revelation of St John.⁷⁷ Thus white clothing was heavenly clothing, appropriate to virgins and priests (who should also be virgins). But to the author of the description of Elizabeth of York, she was 'rially appareld'. This was of course in part a response to the wealth signified in this combination of white and gold - no one under the rank of lord was permitted to wear cloth of gold - but it also suggests that heavenly clothing was associated with royalty.⁷⁸ This combination of white and gold was also worn by Elizabeth Woodville, Edward IV and their sons (although not their daughters) in the depiction of their family in the Royal Window at Canterbury - Plate 7. This seems to imply that she shared something of the masculine aspect of royalty that was not open to other women. Virginity was supposed by many to enable women to attain spiritual masculinity, and the queen, by virtue of her white robes, was apparently being constructed as such a virgin in this ceremony. Loose hair was also an emblem of virginity, and understood as such in this context according to the description of Elizabeth Woodville's coronation which describes the jewelled coronet she wore as 'thatyre of virgins'.⁷⁹ Thus the queen's appearance here reinforced the ideal of virgin queenship raised in Chapter I, an ideology which superseded physical reality. Her symbolic virginity united the queen (type of Mary/Ecclesia) more closely with her divinely chosen king (type of Christ).⁸⁰

By the late fifteenth century kings do not appear to have worn white for this occasion.

⁷⁵S.B. Meech (ed.), *The Book of Margery Kempe*, EETS original series 212 (1997), 1:124. See also M.C. Eler 'Margery Kempe's White Clothes', *Medium Ævum* 62 (1993): 79, 82-3.

⁷⁶J. Burden, "'Le Roy est Mort! Vive le roy" The Funeral of Edward III and the Coronation of Richard II' (MA diss., University of York, 1995), p. 34; E.M. Thompson (ed.), *Chronicon Angliae*, Rolls Series 64 (1874), p. 154. The author of this chronicle associates the white clothing with innocence.

⁷⁷Mark 9:3; Revelation 7:9-17.

⁷⁸*The Statutes of the Realm* (London, 1810-28), 2:399.

⁷⁹Smith (ed.), *Coronation of Elizabeth Wydeville*, p. 17.

⁸⁰J.L. Chamberlayne, 'Crowns and Virgins: Queenmaking During the Wars of the Roses', in K.J. Lewis, N. James Menuge and K.M. Phillips (eds.), *Young Medieval Women* (Stroud, 1999), pp. 54-7, 60-3.

In most cases descriptions of their procession do not describe the colour of their clothing, indicating that their colour made less impact on onlookers than did that of their queens.⁸¹ A symbol of high status which both king and queen used (although again in different colours and fabrics) was a canopy carried over them by four knights of the body.⁸² Just as the guild members lining the streets affirmed acceptance of the queen by the commonalty, so the large number of members of the nobility in the cavalcade implied their approval, and thereby an affirmation of her husband's kingship. The model of queenship into which each woman was fitted upon the day before her coronation was thus one of nobility and purity, almost a blank sheet upon which her duties and roles might be inscribed the following day. But only almost, for even on this occasion they were allowed some symbols of individuality: Elizabeth of York's henchmen rode upon palfreys 'harnished with Clothe of Golde, garnysshed with white Roses and Sonnes richely embroderde' in token of her Yorkist origins.⁸³ A comment in the margin of the *Great Chronicle of London* beside its description of Margaret's equivalent procession reads 'ye qwenes bagge was the dayes ye, otherwise called ye margerett', so presumably some of the trappings which accompanied her were embroidered with her name flower.⁸⁴ Moreover, Margaret at least was greeted by further pageants, including one 'shewyng the lyfe of Seynt margaret'.⁸⁵ Once at Westminster Hall, refreshed and recovered, they had a supper of fish appropriate to the vigil of any major liturgical feast, in this case the coronation itself.⁸⁶

3.iii Anointing and Crowning

Scarcely anything has been written specifically on the ceremony of the queen's anointing

⁸¹The wardrobe accounts of Richard III's coronation record that he wore a doublet of blue cloth of gold embroidered with nets and pineapples, and a gown of purple velvet. Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 153.

⁸²Anne Neville's was of imperial, her husband's was red and green baldachin and Elizabeth of York's was cloth of gold, probably white. Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, pp. 32-3; Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:221.

⁸³Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:222.

⁸⁴Thomas and Thornley (eds.), *Great Chronicle*, p. 178.

⁸⁵Thomas and Thornley (eds.), *Great Chronicle*, p. 178. Anne Boleyn was similarly greeted by a celebration of St Anne's fertility, as well as various Roman deities. Grose and Astle, *Antiquarian Repertory*, 2:237.

⁸⁶Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 34.

and crowning in the fifteenth century. Parsons includes references to Margaret of Anjou's pre-coronation pageantry in his 1992 article 'Ritual and Symbol in the English Medieval Queenship to 1500', but the brevity of his survey implies that the coronation process remained virtually unchanged between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁸⁷ He argues that 'the rite's purpose was less to confirm [the queen] as a ruler, than to designate her as the king's legitimate wife and the mother of his lawful heir'.⁸⁸ In support of this argument, he suggests that the main themes of the coronation were the queen's roles as intercessor and mother, both of which constructed her in significantly Marian terms. As I shall argue here, the coronation rite changed several times in this period with significant implications for ideologies of queenship. One of these changes appears to have been the abandonment of the staged act of intercession performed by a queen on her coronation day for some of her new subjects, an incident crucial to Parsons's argument.⁸⁹ If such acts did still occur in the second half of the fifteenth century, they clearly made no impact on those describing the ceremonies, nor do they appear in surviving administrative records, indicating that even if they did take place, they did not characterise contemporary understanding of the meaning of coronation. I shall argue that the coronation was primarily concerned with the queen's role as an integral part of the king's public body.

The audience for the abbey ceremony, although smaller than that for the preceding processions, were the principal members of the political community, and consequently more important to the king and queen as witnesses of their royal status. However, as I will argue, even for those present much of the symbolism in this ritual seems to have been unclear. It is therefore important not to prioritise the implications of the liturgy significantly above those of the more explicit preceding pageantry in assessing fifteenth-century notions of queenship. Historians of the English coronation have commonly focussed much attention on trying to establish what actually happened in the ceremony, but it is equally important to an understanding of the ideology of queenship to be aware of what contemporaries believed had happened. From descriptions of the coronation ceremony by

⁸⁷He does note the addition of liturgy to accompany the queen's receipt of rod and sceptre, Parsons, 'Ritual and Symbol', pp. 62-3.

⁸⁸Parsons, 'Ritual and Symbol', pp. 61-2.

⁸⁹Parsons's main source for this is Eleanor of Provence's coronation in 1236. It is unclear whether the pardons and 'acts of grace' performed by Henry IV at Joan of Navarre's petition in the early months of their marriage were specifically related to her coronation. *CPR 1401-5*, pp. 199, 207, 209.

eyewitnesses and others, it is evident that there was sometimes a considerable disparity between the two.

The first English queen known to have experienced an inauguration ritual involving anointing and coronation was the French princess Judith, daughter of Charles the Bald, who married Aethelwulf of Wessex in 856.⁹⁰ The ceremony occurred at her father's insistence, anxious for the security of her status in a foreign land.⁹¹ Pauline Stafford has argued that the anointing was essentially a fertility rite, in that by making her a changed woman 'blessed by God', it suggested that the 'male offspring of her fertility would be especially entitled to rule', and thus safeguard Judith's own position when her already aged husband died.⁹² Certainly the similar ceremony Charles the Bald arranged a decade later for his own wife, Hermintrude, included a prayer for the birth of children.⁹³ However, there was no mention of fertility in the prayer of Judith's inauguration, and Julie Ann Smith has argued that, since anointing has no connection with fertility in any of the other rites in which it was used, it is unwise to assume such a connection in this ceremony.⁹⁴

Anointing was an issue of status, a ritual in which the Holy Spirit made the anointed a new person with a new relationship with God and its occurrence in the inauguration rituals of western kings probably stemmed from Old Testament examples of the process which made men fit to wield authority.⁹⁵ Its first occurrence in the Old Testament involves not the anointing of a person, but of a stone - that used by Jacob when he dreamt of a ladder into heaven and made a covenant to accept Yahweh as his God, in return for His protection.⁹⁶ Later in the Old Testament the ritual is used first for priests and then for kings, beginning with Saul, whose anointing is accompanied by an injunction to save Israel

⁹⁰P. Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers: the King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (London, 1983), p.129.

⁹¹Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, p. 130.

⁹²Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, p. 131.

⁹³J.A. Smith, 'The Earliest Queen-Making Rites', *Church History* 66 (1997): 31.

⁹⁴J. Nelson, 'Early Medieval Rites of Queen-Making', in A. Duggan (ed.), *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge, 1997), p. 308. J.A. Smith, 'Queenmaking and Queenship in Early Medieval England and Francia', (DPhil diss., University of York, 1993), p. 10.

⁹⁵P.E. Schramm, *A History of the English Coronation*, trans. L.G. Wickham Legg (Oxford, 1937), pp. 6-7.

⁹⁶Genesis 28:14-21.

from their enemies, so that anointing again involves promises on both sides.⁹⁷ In the New Testament, it is Jesus who is anointed - Christ means 'anointed one' - and He is the ultimate model of kingship.

As argued above, the role of the king's coronation in England altered as the practice of primogeniture theoretically triumphed over that of election. But the coronation survived as an occasion for the official solemnization of the monarch's oath - his covenant with his people and his God - and as a 'medium for the quasi-religious enhancement of the dynasty and for the manifestation of a dynasty-bound divine right'.⁹⁸ In this light, the queen's coronation cannot be seen simply as a glorified fertility rite, and the purpose for subjecting the king's wife to rituals similar to those which confirmed the king himself as God's representative must be considered.

The liturgy used in fifteenth-century coronation *ordines* still owed much to the ninth-century versions of this ceremony, but it had been revised on a number of occasions.⁹⁹ A version probably compiled shortly after the conquest explicitly stated that God had placed the queen among the people and made her a sharer in the royal power, so that 'the English people will rejoice in being governed by the power of the prince and by the ability and virtue of the queen'.¹⁰⁰ But this version was short-lived and although, as I have argued, such ideology might appear in the pre-coronation pageantry arranged by secular authorities, the liturgy devised by subsequent clerics was more circumspect regarding the queen's role.

At about the time of Richard II's coronation the fourth recension of the coronation *ordo* (that written for Edward II in 1308) was developed significantly by the monks of Westminster so that the structure of the ceremonial for the queen was much more similar to that of the king than had previously been the case, including prayers to accompany the receipt of a rod and sceptre.¹⁰¹ Queens had possessed sceptres since before the conquest,

⁹⁷1 Samuel 10:1.

⁹⁸ E.H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: a Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton, 1957), p. 330.

⁹⁹For discussion of the development of the coronation see H.G. Richardson, 'The Coronation in Medieval England. The Evolution of the Office and the Oath', *Traditio* 16 (1960): 111-202.

¹⁰⁰'Laetetur gens Anglica domini imperio regenda et reginae virtutis providentia gubernanda', Schramm, *History of the English Coronation*, p. 29; Richardson, 'Coronation in Medieval England', p. 176.

¹⁰¹There has been much debate regarding the precise dating of the revisions which do not seem to have been used at Richard II's coronation in 1377 and may have been devised shortly before the coronation of his

and may well have received them within the coronation ceremony earlier than this.¹⁰² However, this development in the liturgy at the close of the fourteenth century expresses a recognition that the purpose of the ritual for the king had become more similar to that for a queen - an affirmation of a pre-existing status and a blessing thereon, rather than the 'making' of a king or queen - so that the king's receipt of rod and sceptre had lost much of its original meaning.

Two very similar versions of this liturgy survive - the *Lytlington Ordo* in the *Westminster Missal*, and the *Liber Regalis* - and it is on these that fifteenth-century coronations were largely based.¹⁰³ For Anne Neville and Richard III's coronation a *Little Device* was drawn up, including a liturgy based on various fourth-recension texts, and details of the particular people involved with certain customs not recorded elsewhere.¹⁰⁴ This manuscript was adapted for Henry VII, perhaps by men who assumed that Henry too would be crowned with his queen. The actual liturgy used in the services of both coronations may nonetheless have been closer to the *Liber Regalis*, which appears to have been used in revisions of the *Little Device*, so it is on the *Liber Regalis* that my analysis of the queen's coronation in the fifteenth century will primarily focus.

Whether the queen was crowned alone or with her king, the initial stages of the ceremony were the same for her, beginning in Westminster Hall where a procession of clerics would arrive to escort her with her regalia to the Abbey. In stockinged feet she walked along a carpet that was rolled out from a cart before her to the abbey, beneath a canopy of purple silk carried on silvered lances by barons of the Cinque Ports, just as the king did.¹⁰⁵ Although her hair was again worn loose beneath a golden circlet, on this occasion the queen, like the king, was dressed in purple.¹⁰⁶ This procession was witnessed

queen, Anne of Bohemia, in 1382. Schramm, *History of the English Coronation*, p. 29. Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 202.

¹⁰²Parsons, 'Ritual and Symbol', pp. 62-3.

¹⁰³A few minor revisions to this, based on the French *ordo*, were made in the version given in the *Liber Regie Capelle* - a description of the activities of the Chapel Royal written in the 1440s - but these did not affect the queen's service. Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, pp. 202-3.

¹⁰⁴Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, pp. 204-6.

¹⁰⁵Legg (ed.), *Coronation Records*, p. 115.

¹⁰⁶Legg (ed.), *Coronation Records*, p. 122; Sutton and Hammond (ed.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 276; Smith (ed.), *Coronation of Elizabeth Wydeville*, p. 14.

by so many people that on several occasions onlookers were crushed to death. For them there would appear to be little difference between the coronations of kings and queens, and consequently, little difference in their understanding of the sacred nature of these offices. Even those present for the service inside the Abbey may often have failed to grasp all the implications of role differentiation, especially since it was conducted in Latin.

This role differentiation did include reference to fertility, but it was the king, not the queen, who was anointed with the prayer that 'his children may be kings to rule his kingdom, by succession of all ages'.¹⁰⁷ The queen in contrast received her oil to the words 'let the anointing of this oil increase your honour and establish you for ever and ever', a blessing which implies not fertility, but honour in this life and eternal life with God thereafter.¹⁰⁸ The only reference to childbearing in the queen's ceremony came as she first entered the abbey and paused to hear a prayer which included the request that 'with Sarah and Rebecca, Leah, Rachel and blessed honourable women she may deserve congratulations for her fertility and the fruit of her womb, to the honour of the whole realm and the maintenance of God's holy Church'.¹⁰⁹ Thus it was simply as a woman who had received neither anointing nor regalia that her fertility was prayed for. The right of the king's children to rule had been explicitly connected with the king's anointing, but not with hers.

The most important implications of the process of anointing for the queen lay not in the words which accompanied it but in the process itself, placing the queen in a quasi-sacerdotal role. Although she was anointed on her forehead, rather than the crown of her head like kings and priests, she still had to wear a coif like theirs to protect the holy oil.¹¹⁰ She was also anointed on the breast and to facilitate this wore a special laced dress for the

¹⁰⁷'Reges quoque de lumbis eius per successiones temporum futurum egrediantur regnum hoc regere totum' Legg (ed.), *Coronation Records*, p.92.

¹⁰⁸'Prosit tibi hec unccio olei in honorem et confirmacionem eternam in secula seculorum', Legg (ed.), *Coronation Records*, p.110.

¹⁰⁹'Cum sara atque rebecca. lira. rachel beatisque reuerendis feminabus fructu uteri sui fecundari. seu gratulari mereatur ad decorem tocius regni statumque sancte dei ecclesie regendum', Legg (ed.), *Coronation Records*, p. 109

¹¹⁰Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 224; BL, Cotton Julius MS B XII, fol. 39.

ceremony.¹¹¹ Kings were anointed on hands, breast, back, shoulders, elbows and head.¹¹² John Fortescue argued that it was because queens were not anointed on the hands that they could not cure scrofula.¹¹³ Kings themselves tended to argue that the gift of healing scrofula was a divine attribute vested in the rightful king, regardless of anointing, which is indicative of the contemporary confusion over the meaning and purpose of parts of these rituals.¹¹⁴

By the late fifteenth century the oil used for anointing kings was probably that reputedly given by the Virgin Mary to St Thomas Becket with a prophecy that the first king to be crowned therewith would regain Normandy and Aquitaine.¹¹⁵ The *Liber Regalis*, written before this development, states that the king should be anointed with chrism, and the queen with 'holy oil' at joint coronations but with chrism when crowned alone.¹¹⁶ It would therefore appear that it was felt necessary for chrism to be used at some point in any coronation, in any anointing of what amounted to the king's public body, but that if the king was himself anointed then it was not necessary to repeat the process with chrism for his wife in the same ritual. According to the *Little Device*, this distinction was to be made at Richard and Anne's coronation, for although both were to be anointed with 'holy oyle',

¹¹¹Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 229; BL, Cotton Julius MS B XII, fol. 39. The *Ryalle Book* stated that she should also be anointed on the back but no other source suggests this and it is probably an error based on the king's anointing since the *Ryalle Book* was aimed at secular servants who did not need to know such details. Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 1:303.

¹¹²Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, pp. 221-2.

¹¹³R. Crawford, 'The Blessing of Cramp Rings: a Chapter in the Treatment of Epilepsy', in C. Singer (ed.), *Studies in the History and Method of Science* (London, 1917), p. 171. A similar royal miracle was the blessing cramp rings. This ritual, performed by English kings from the reign of Edward II at the latest, occurred each year on Maundy Thursday, and, like the washing of feet on the same day, closely associated the sovereign with Christ. By the later fifteenth century the process involved the king placing rings at the foot of the cross for a moment and touching them, after which they would be distributed for the cure of epilepsy. In 1369 this ritual was also performed by Queen Philippa, but no such record remains for any other queen. As Marc Bloch observes, our limited knowledge about queens' private expenditure means that it is impossible to know how many other queens joined in this demonstration of sacred monarchy. M. Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France*, trans. J.E. Andersen (London and Montreal, 1973), pp. 92-107. It is nonetheless a demonstration of the lack of coherent ideology regarding the source of such miraculous powers.

¹¹⁴Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 7.

¹¹⁵T.A. Sandquist, 'The Holy Oil of St Thomas of Canterbury', in T.A. Sandquist and M.R. Powicke (eds.), *Essays in Medieval History Presented to Bertie Wilkinson*, (Toronto, 1969), pp. 334-8. Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, pp. 9-10, 240.

¹¹⁶Legg (ed.), *Coronation Records*, p. lviii.

after Richard had received oil on the crown of his head, a cross was to be made ‘with the holy creyme on his saide hed’.¹¹⁷ However, the version of the *Liber Regalis* in the *Liber Regie Capelle* (an account of the activities of the Chapel Royal during the 1440s) states that only one oil was to be used for all of the anointing of the king: the oil of St Thomas.¹¹⁸ Even those present in the Abbey may have been largely ignorant of the symbolism intended by the use of these different oils since Richard, and possibly Anne, were concealed from the congregation at the time of their anointing.¹¹⁹ The descriptions of their coronation unanimously assert that Richard and Anne were actually anointed at the same time, they make no distinction regarding the style of anointing, and claim that both king and queen were then revested in cloth of gold.¹²⁰ It is possible, although highly unlikely, that Richard and Anne did indeed depart from established procedure at this point, but the inventories of regalia make no reference to vestments for queens equivalent to the priestly garments embroidered in gold with which the king was traditionally vested after anointing, nor did the great wardrobe supply such items.¹²¹ Twenty manuscripts describing the ceremony survive, probably all deriving from one original and commonly owned by heralds.¹²² These manuscripts were presumably read by many who had not attended the ceremony and there was thus a particular secular audience who were under the impression that the ritual of anointing for king and queen was identical.

The details of queens being anointed at single coronations are more scarce. No description of Margaret’s ceremony survives, and the narratives for the two Elizabeths do not specify whether chrism or the oil of St Thomas was used, referring only to ‘holy unction’.¹²³ However, in the fifteenth century the treatment of the queen as part of the

¹¹⁷Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 222.

¹¹⁸W. Ullmann (ed.), *Liber Regie Capelle*, Henry Bradshaw Society 92 (1961), pp. 36-7, 90.

¹¹⁹Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, pp.40-41.

¹²⁰Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 277.

¹²¹Curiously the *Little Device*, unlike its predecessors, states that while the king was changing into more purple garments after the mass in order to allow the regalia to remain in the abbey (as the other fourth recension texts stipulate), the queen too would change into more purple robes. There is no obvious reason for the queen to be revested at this point, and it seems to be further evidence that those drawing up the ceremonies were unclear as to the meaning of aspects of the ritual.

¹²²Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, pp. 254, 257.

¹²³Smith (ed.), *Coronation of Elizabeth Wydeville*, p. 17; BL, Cotton Julius MS B XII, fol. 39.

king's public body, as constructed in the *Liber Regalis*, had moved a stage further. When the queen was crowned alone, and so presumably anointed with chrism (or the oil of St Thomas), the king was not publicly present. The records of the coronations of Catherine of Valois, Margaret of Anjou and Elizabeth Woodville make no reference to the king at all. In Elizabeth of York's case Henry VII was present but for both the coronation and the subsequent banquet he was concealed from public view on a 'goodlye stage covered and well besene with Clothes of Arras and wele latyzede'.¹²⁴ No contemporary explanation for this appears to survive. The *Liber Regalis* certainly states that a king may be present at his queen's coronation. A possible reason for these absences occurs in theory surrounding another royal ceremony: the king's funeral. In *The King's Two Bodies*, Ernst Kantorowicz suggested that the reason for the absence of new kings from their predecessors' funerals was that the king's effigy represented the public body of the king and as such precluded the presence of any other representation of the king's public body, in this case the new king.¹²⁵ In the light of this, it would appear that by the fifteenth century the queen, at the moment of her anointing with the oil that conferred authority upon the king, was so much a part of the king's public body that the king himself could not be present as the person of royal dignity, for that privilege was, for that moment, ceded to his consort. As Kantorowicz concluded regarding the funeral, 'there was no other solution except staying away'.¹²⁶

Another gesture both of the king and queen's unity and of their quasi-sacerdotal role occurred at the climax of the mass for Richard and Anne when they both drank from the same chalice, 'a sign of unity', according to the *Liber Regalis*, 'because just as in Christ they are one flesh by bond of marriage, so ought they also to partake of one chalice'.¹²⁷ Whether queens crowned alone drank from the chalice usually reserved for priests is unclear from the surviving evidence.

Symbols of unity with the king did not mean equality. At a joint coronation the queen's throne would be lower than his, and she was expected to bow to the king 'obeynge

¹²⁴Leland, *Collectanea*, 3:225.

¹²⁵Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, p. 240.; See J. Loach, 'The Function of Ceremonial in the Reign of Henry VIII', *Past and Present* 142 (1994): 43-68, for the difference in English and French royal funerals.

¹²⁶Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, p. 240.

¹²⁷'Quia sicut in christo sunt una caro federe conuigali. sic eciam de uno calice participare debent', Legg (ed.), *Coronation Records*, pp. 105-6; Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 226.

her selff affor the Kinges magestie'.¹²⁸ Moreover, in the queen's ritual there was not the exchange of oaths and homage which defined the king's relationship to the realm. As explained above, the symbolism of anointing was of the making of covenants, of obligations on both sides. The difference was that the king was making covenants with both God and his people, whereas the queen's was with God alone. The nature of this covenant appears in the liturgy which accompanied the giving of regalia to the queen:

Receive the ring of faith, seal of sincerity that you may avoid all infection of heresy and by the power of God compell barbarous nations and bring them to knowledge of the truth.¹²⁹

The injunction to convert barbarous nations originated in the early days of Christianity when it was Christian queens who played a vital part in the spread of the faith to their husbands' subjects in several English kingdoms. However, as the inspiration for their husbands to perform acts of Christian chivalry, such as Crusades, it was a relevant motif for most of the Middle Ages.

After receipt of the ring, the queen received the crown itself, with the injunction to labour to be beautified with the 'the gold of wisdom and pearls of virtue' that she might meet in death 'with the wise virgins, the everlasting bridegroom our Lord Jesus Christ'.¹³⁰ Again, the emphasis was on her behaviour, her cultivation of virtues and wisdom: that which is necessary for a position of authority, not simply for producing babies. However, these intimations of authority were placed in context by the orison referred to above which had been recited on her arrival in the church. Before praying that she be blessed with children, it read:

Almighty and everlasting God the fountain and wellspring of all goodness, who does not reject the frailty of woman, but rather vouchsafest to allow and choose it, and by choosing the weak things of the World, does confound those that are strong, who did once cause the Jewish people to triumph over a most cruel enemy by the hand of Judith a woman; give ear we beseech you to our humble prayers, and multiply your blessings upon this your servant .N. whom in all humble devotion we do consecrate our queen. Defend her with your mighty

¹²⁸Parsons, 'Ritual and Symbol', p. 62; Legg (ed.), *Coronation Records*, pp. 123-4; Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 224.

¹²⁹'Accipe anulum fidei. signaculum sinceritatis quo possis omnes heretica prauitates deuitare. et barbaras gentes uirtute dei premere. et ad agnicionem ueritatis aduocare.' Legg (ed.), *Coronation Records*, p. 110.

¹³⁰'auro sapienci. uirtutumque gemmis', 'cum prudentibus uirginibus sponso perhennie domino nostro ihesu christo', Legg (ed.), *Coronation Records*, p.111.

hand and with your favour protect her on every side, that she may be able to overcome and triumph over her enemies visible and invisible.¹³¹

Parsons has argued that it is an example of the liturgy's emphasis on the queen's inferior position because it 'remarked the frailty of woman and cited the example of Judith to stress that only with divine aid could she overcome such disabilities'.¹³² However, if this prayer is taken in its primary context of Christian thought, it is a celebration of the potential in the queen's gender. In language very reminiscent of the *Magnificat*, the prayer dwells on the central Christian theme of God's practice of choosing those who are lowly according to worldly values and using them for his greatest work. It could have referred to David or Gideon or Joseph, but as the reason for the queen's lowlier status is her gender, then the example of Judith is referred to in the orison. The notion of the lowliest being used for great things is also implied in other parts of the ceremony, specifically in the gestures of humility made by both king and queen in walking in stockinged feet, in prostrating themselves before the altar, or in other sections of the liturgy.¹³³ The opening orison of the queen's ceremony thus established the value of woman to the monarchy not only by her very important ability to bear children, but also because her gender made her an apt tool for God's work. The ring, crown and anointing were not responsible for this potential, but they symbolised the assimilation of this potential into the public body of the king, as these two became one.

Her inferior position was nonetheless supposedly reinforced in the symbolism of the

¹³¹'Omnipotens sempiterne deus fons et origo totius bonitatis qui feminei sexus fragilitatem nequaquam reprobando auertis. Sed dignanter comprobando potius eligis. et qui infirma mundi eligendo forcia queque confundere decreuisti. quique eciam glorie uirtutisque tue triumphum in manu iudith femine olim iudaice plebi de hoste seuissimo designare uoluisti: respice quesumus ad preces humilitatis nostre. et super hanc famulum tuam .N. quam supplici deuocione in reginam eligimus benedictionum tuarum dona multiplica. eamque dextera tue potencie semper et ubique circumda. sitque vmbone tui numinis undique firmiter protecta. quatinus uisibilis seu inuisibilis hostis nequicias triumphaliter expugnare ualeat.' Legg (ed.), *Coronation Records*, p.109.

¹³²Parsons, 'Ritual and Symbol', p. 62.

¹³³Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, pp. 219, 221, 256. It is while the king lies 'grovelynge' that the bishop officiating recites a prayer beginning 'God who visits those who are humble' ('Deus humilium visitator'), prior to the sermon, and following the coronation oath the king again prostrates himself for a much longer series of prayers. As the queen similarly lies before the altar prior to her anointing, the archbishop recites a prayer which refers to the God 'who calls down the proud from their seat, and exalts the humble and meek' (qui superbos equo moderamine de principatu deicis. atque humiles dinanter in sublime prouehis). In this prayer, the queen is then compared with the Old Testament heroine Queen Esther, who, having approached her king in very great humility, was able, like Judith, to save the Israelites. Legg (ed.), *Coronation Records*, pp. 87, 110.

last items of regalia she received. According to the *Liber Regalis* the queen received an ivory rod and a gilt sceptre, each topped with a dove, whereas the king was invested with a gold rod with a dove and a gold sceptre topped with a cross. The king was instructed to receive them as signs of kingly power and virtue that he might govern himself and defend church and people, but the queen's ceremony included only a shortened version of the prayer which followed the king's investiture, asking God to 'grant that .N. may order aright the high dignity that she has obtained and with good works establish the glories that [He has] given her'.¹³⁴ Yet here again contemporaries were clearly often unaware of the supposed significance in these differences. The author of the account of Elizabeth Woodville's coronation reported that she carried the sceptre of St Edward (used by Henry VI, Edward IV and Richard III) and the 'septor of ye Reaume' (exactly which this is meant to be is unclear but its title certainly implies that it was used for the king).¹³⁵ This is probably an error by the author since he states that it was the duke of Suffolk who carried this sceptre out, whereas in the Court of Claims for Elizabeth of York's coronation, Suffolk claimed to have carried 'a rodde septre of ivory w[ith] a dove of gilte' at her mother's coronation.¹³⁶ However, this cannot be taken as definitive proof since Suffolk also claimed to have carried this sceptre for Anne Neville, although the narrative accounts of her coronation say that Viscount Lisle carried it while Suffolk carried the king's sceptre.¹³⁷ Moreover, the narrative of Elizabeth of York's account says that it was the earl of Arundel who carried the 'v[e]rge of iverye w[ith] a dove in the tope' while Suffolk carried 'the septre'.¹³⁸ Thus either Suffolk or several of the narrators were in error. It is possible that by this time the queen only had one sceptre or rod with a dove and another without the dove

¹³⁴'dator perfectum tribue famule tue .N. adeptam bene regere dignitatem et a te sibi prestatam bonis operibus corroborare gloriam', Legg (ed.), *Coronation Records*, p. 268.

¹³⁵Smith (ed.), *Coronation of Elizabeth Wydevile*, p. 15; Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 233.

¹³⁶BL, Cotton Julius MS B XII, fols. 30-31. A Court of Claims was held before each coronation in the fifteenth century for peers and others to state and debate their hereditary claims to perform certain offices within the coronation.

¹³⁷The *Little Device* also stated that Suffolk should carry the king's sceptre. There is a note in the margin beside the reference to Viscount Lisle carrying the rod with a dove for the queen which says 'the duke of Suffolk', but this may have been part of the revisions for Henry VII's coronation. Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, pp. 217-18, 276.

¹³⁸BL, Cotton Julius MS B XII, fol. 38.

since the descriptions of both Anne's coronation and Elizabeth of York's refer only to a rod with a dove, and a sceptre.¹³⁹ If so, the queen's regalia was coming to look more like that attributed to the king in the *Liber Regalis*, a rod with a dove and a sceptre with a cross, although both of his were of gold.¹⁴⁰

Parsons has argued that the queen's sceptre was symbolic of her roles as mother and intercessor, but his argument is based not upon the sceptres actually used in the service, but the floriated sceptres of queens' seals from the High Middle Ages, or indeed most commonly used in pictures of fifteenth-century queens - Plates 1, 3, 8, 9. Such sceptres, he argues, resembled the rods of Aaron and Jesse commonly associated with the fertility of the Virgin Mary.¹⁴¹ However, similarly floriated sceptres are also often represented in the king's hand - Plates 3, 8, 9. Moreover, the rod of Jesse is as much an emblem of Christ's royal lineage as of Mary's fertility, while Aaron's rod, like Joseph's in apocryphal accounts of his marriage to Mary, was taken to be a symbol of virgin birth because it flowered in contravention of nature, and is thus a reference to Christ's divine lineage, rather than Mary's fertility.¹⁴²

A floriated sceptre did apparently exist since a list of regalia drawn up in 1359 describes a 'rod iron, gilt, having little flowers like bells on the top', and a 1606 inventory refers to a 'small staff with a floure de lyce on the topp'.¹⁴³ It has been suggested, on the basis of the poor materials used for this, that it was actually the sceptre found in Edward the Confessor's tomb - that is, the sceptre of St Edward - but it certainly does not answer the description given above of the king's regalia according to the *Liber Regalis*.¹⁴⁴ Not that kings necessarily carried these either, since Richard III was apparently given not the rod with a dove, but 'the crosse with the ball', probably the same item as the 'round golden

¹³⁹However, the *Little Device*, in accordance with its source manuscripts, specifies doves on both. BL, Cotton Julius MS B XII, fol. 38; Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, pp. 276, 278-9.

¹⁴⁰Legg (ed.), *Coronation Records*, p. 121.

¹⁴¹Parsons, 'Ritual and Symbol', p. 65.

¹⁴²Numbers 17:8; Hebrews 9:4; T.A. Heslop, 'The Virgin Mary's Regalia and Twelfth-Century Seals', in A. Borg and A. Martindale (eds.), *The Vanishing Past: Studies of Medieval Art, Liturgy and Metrology presented to Christopher Hohler*, British Archaeological Reports, International Series 111 (1981), pp. 57-8.

¹⁴³Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 233.

¹⁴⁴Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 233; Legg, *Coronation Records*, p. 97.

globe having on top the sign of the cross' described by Walsingham at Richard II's coronation, which was nonetheless described in the official account of the coronation simply as a sceptre.¹⁴⁵ Thus even when the *Liber Regalis* was first written, it may not have been an accurate account of regalia used.

Further evidence of contemporary confusion over appropriate regalia occurs in a number of pictures of crowned fifteenth-century queens, which show them carrying such orbs: Joan of Navarre carries an orb with a long cross in a picture in the Beauchamp pageant, Elizabeth Woodville carries one with a short cross in the records of the London Skinners, as does Anne Neville in the Rous Roll while her husband holds an orb with a longer cross - Plates 10, 1, 8. Similarly Margaret of Anjou and Henry VI carry matching floriated sceptres in the frontispiece to the collection of romances presented by the earl of Shrewsbury to Margaret at her wedding, as do Elizabeth Woodville and Edward IV in the presentation miniature of Anthony, Earl Rivers's translation of Christine de Pizan's *The Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers* - Plates 3 and 9. The artists, and presumably those who commissioned them, apparently did not see the king's and queen's regalia as emblems of role differentiation in the manner implied by the *Liber Regalis* or even the *Little Device*. It was perhaps primarily the clergy, who drew up these liturgies, who were anxious to make explicit in symbolism the differences between the roles of king and queen, a symbolism which was largely lost on their secular audience, for whom the queen's role was more closely integrated with kingship.

3.iv The Coronation Banquet

The banquet which followed the abbey ceremony was still very much an integral part of the inauguration ritual, shifting the context from the first estate back to the second, and reaffirming the abbey service in a more secular context. It occurred principally at Westminster Hall, after the queen had changed her robes and washed.¹⁴⁶ In her absence,

¹⁴⁵This item of regalia, which must have resembled today's orb, may have originated as a ball into which the sceptre with a cross was inserted, hence Grafton records that its meaning was 'monarchy' which is very much like that of the sceptre according to the *Liber Regalis* 'kingly power'. Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, pp. 278, 234, 244. See J. Burden's forthcoming University of York DPhil thesis 'The Practice of Power: Rituals of Royal Succession in Late Medieval England, c. 1327 to c. 1485', Chapter 2, for more detailed discussion of variations in the king's regalia.

¹⁴⁶At Henry VII's banquet some ate in the White Hall and it is possible that similar arrangements were made at other banquets. Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 286.

lords on richly caparisoned horses rode about the hall to push back the press of people, reinforcing the secular and chivalric atmosphere.¹⁴⁷ At Elizabeth of York's banquet the duke of Bedford was the chief of these lords and his horse's trappings were embroidered with red roses and dragons: emblems both of his own dynasty, and now of hers.¹⁴⁸ The detail in which many coronation banquets was recorded is in part a result of the greater interest of heralds in this section of the ceremony than in the religious service, but probably also reflects the considerable impact which this splendid display of royal largesse made upon the guests. In most cases the number of guests is impossible to judge, although an estimate of up to 3,000 has been made for that of Richard and Anne.¹⁴⁹ Some of these were of course members of the high nobility, carefully seated according to rank and gender, but many were citizens of London who received fewer courses and different dishes from the lords and ladies, but were still witnesses to the splendour of the occasion.¹⁵⁰ At Elizabeth Woodville's banquet Clarence, Arundel and Norfolk apparently rode into the hall followed by various knights on foot at the head of each course.¹⁵¹ The dishes served to royalty were beautifully crafted - Elizabeth of York for instance was given castles of jelly and a dish decorated with gold lozenges - and each course was completed with a subtlety, which usually represented some political message.¹⁵² The fact that none of the surviving descriptions of the banquets of the last four medieval queens managed to record the appearance of the subtleties must act as a warning against assuming that they were intended as propaganda (except for those seated immediately near the monarch), but as Burden has argued in his analysis of the subtleties at Catherine of Valois' banquet, they draw attention to the thoroughly political nature of this royal ritual.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁷Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 279; Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:225.

¹⁴⁸Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:225.

¹⁴⁹Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 285.

¹⁵⁰Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 286.

¹⁵¹Smith (ed.), *Coronation of Elizabeth Wydeville*, pp. 20-22.

¹⁵²Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:227. No illustrations of subtleties survive but it has been conjectured that they were 'elaborate confections of sugar, pastry, wax, paint and paper', Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 283. They apparently included three-dimensional figures, often with a written message attached.

¹⁵³Burden 'Ritual Banqueting'.

The banquet was an affirmation of the political status quo. Eating together had long been a potent symbol of community, particularly in the light of Christ's promised heavenly banquet, to which attention had been drawn in Margaret's entry pageantry. The various participants of the preceding ceremonies which made up the coronation were here drawn closer together: the queen (and king if he had been crowned that day) sat at table with the archbishop who had officiated in the abbey; the newly made Knights of the Bath carried in the dishes that were served by the appointed nobles; and the Lord Mayor, representative of the third estate, served the queen (and king) with wine in a golden cup at the climax of the banquet in a gesture which mimicked the culmination of the abbey ritual in the mass.¹⁵⁴ The banquet not only reinforced the widespread acceptance of the queen's role which the participants' presence in various aspects of the proceedings had represented, but also constructed the queen as an ideal 'lord' by stressing her generosity. When the queen was crowned alone it was she to whom thanks for the largesse was given. The form of words used at Elizabeth of York's banquet was probably closely based on those used to address a king:

Right high and mighty Prince, moost noble and excellent Princesse, moost Christen Quene, and al our most drad and Souveraigne liege Ladye, We the Officers of Armes, and Servaunts to al Nobles, beseche Almyghty God to thank you for the great and habundant Largesse which your Grace hath geven us in the Honor of your most honourable and right wise Coronation, and to send your Grace to liff in Honor and Virtue.¹⁵⁵

It was as much a blessing as a thanksgiving, because secular and sacred were thoroughly enmeshed.

3.v The Tournament

The final stage of the coronation was the tournament in Westminster sanctuary.¹⁵⁶ According to the *Ryalle Book* this should last for three days, as was the case for Margaret of Anjou.¹⁵⁷ Elizabeth Woodville's was probably only for a day and Elizabeth of York's

¹⁵⁴Smith (ed.), *Coronation of Elizabeth Wydeville*, pp. 19-20.

¹⁵⁵Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:228.

¹⁵⁶Brie (ed.), *The Brut*, 2: 489.

¹⁵⁷Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 1:304; Brie (ed.), *The Brut*, 2:489.

may have been delayed until later in the month.¹⁵⁸ The tournament for Elizabeth Woodville was nonetheless reputedly splendid. Preparations had begun the preceding March, and the purchase of 200 spears suggests that it included a general *mêlée* as well as the jousts.¹⁵⁹ The occasion served once again to locate the queen in the noble context of her Burgundian family because, at Edward's request, some of the knights who had accompanied Jacques de Luxembourg took part.¹⁶⁰ Members of Elizabeth's English family, whose significant reputation for jousting will be discussed in Chapter IV.2, probably also participated. It was, however, Lord Stanley who was deemed the most successful and was presented with a ruby ring, probably by the queen.¹⁶¹

It was possibly to ensure that Elizabeth's Burgundian relatives were present that her coronation had been so long delayed after her wedding was publicised. The effect of this, as argued above, was to establish that coronation was not essential to the exercise of queenship. This ideology was reinforced by Henry VII's decision to delay Elizabeth of York's coronation until after her first son was born, thereby also emphasising that a queen's anointing did not affect the right of her children to reign. It is therefore unsurprising to find that her son, Henry VIII, did not arrange coronations for any of his last four queens. Yet the great expense and the detailed records of these occasions indicate that the queen's coronation was still very much a valued ritual in the fifteenth century, albeit a ritual understood differently by different audiences. It was a celebration of monarchy and womanhood in which the queen's potential earthly and spiritual roles were explored in a variety of media, involving all three estates. The woman who had begun the rituals clad as a virgin emerged from this process with a richer sense of her divinely ordained role, and was returned firmly to a secular and noble context by the tournaments which preceded her return to 'normal' life.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸Stevenson (ed.), *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars*, 2:784; Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:228-9; Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 46.

¹⁵⁹R. Barber, 'Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* and Court Culture under Edward IV', *Arthurian Literature* 12 (1993): 144.

¹⁶⁰Scotfield, *Edward the Fourth*, 1:377.

¹⁶¹Stevenson (ed.), *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars*, 2:784.

¹⁶²For the importance of tournaments to the Woodville family reputation, see Chapter IV.2.

4. Childbirth

Once she was married and crowned, the next major rite of passage by which the queen's image might be shaped was that of childbirth. For dynasties under pressure, as was the case for each of the queens in this study, it was particularly important to produce an heir as early as possible now that heredity had theoretically triumphed over election in the choice of kings. It is therefore hardly surprising that much was made of these occasions, although the process did not always function according to plan. When Margaret of Anjou finally produced a son, the king was temporarily insane and unable to recognise him. Elizabeth Woodville, although proficient at producing daughters, was similarly tardy in providing her king with a son. Her first son was born seven years into their marriage, at which time Edward IV was in exile in Burgundy, whilst she was taking sanctuary in Westminster Abbey and unable to use the rooms prepared for her in the Tower of London, which were instead occupied by Henry VI.¹⁶³ Anne had already produced her only son prior to becoming queen, so that Elizabeth of York alone played the ideal queen, providing the Tudor dynasty with a male heir less than nine months from her wedding. But in an age of high infant mortality the birth of every child was cause for celebration and public interest.

For the most part, in contrast to the coronation, the rituals were witnessed by only a small élite at court, but there were public elements to the process. These included a pilgrimage made by the pregnant Margaret of Anjou, and religious foundations made in thanksgiving by queens after their safe deliveries. Such public and permanent expressions of piety not only fulfilled the queenly duty of promoting the faith but also functioned as dynastic propaganda. This is not to suggest that they were simply cynical gestures, for the need to please God would also have been a motivating factor.

When Margaret of Anjou discovered that she was at last pregnant in 1453 she made a pilgrimage to the Holy House of Nazareth at Walsingham, perhaps as much to pray for a son and safe delivery as in thanksgiving.¹⁶⁴ Walsingham was a popular place of pilgrimage among fifteenth-century monarchs seeking the Virgin's aid and, as a replica of the home in which the Virgin had received the Annunciation and Jesus had lived as a child,

¹⁶³Scofield, *Edward the Fourth*, 1:541.

¹⁶⁴A.R. Myers, *Crown, Household and Parliament in Fifteenth Century England*, ed. C.H. Clough (London 1985), p. 213.

seems to have been particularly associated for some with motherhood.¹⁶⁵ On her 1453 visit, Margaret offered a gold plaque, garnished with pearls, sapphires and rubies, which showed an angel holding a cross; at £29, this was the most expensive item of jewellery ordered by her in that year.¹⁶⁶ The royal progress to Walsingham, and the extravagant plaque left behind on display, brought the queen closer to her subjects - both physically by her presence and psychologically in displaying her concerns over motherhood which many would have shared - and it emphasised her dependence upon God for all things. Elizabeth Woodville and her daughter also made pilgrimages to Walsingham, or at least intended to do so.¹⁶⁷ As will be seen, God's aid was invoked at each stage of the actual process of birth.

4.i Taking her Chamber

Little is known of the ceremonies surrounding royal birth for most of the Middle Ages, but the records for the late fifteenth century show a highly ritualized set of proceedings, beginning with finely detailed regulations for the bedchamber and ending with a very formal banquet after the queen's churching.¹⁶⁸ As ever, the process involved a blending of the secular and the sacred, but these rituals were much more dominated by women than those of marriage and coronation. Older women in the royal family probably played some part in making arrangements: in Burgundy in 1456 the duchess apparently consulted a book about 'les etats de France' prior to preparing chambers for her daughter-in-law, the countess of Charolais.¹⁶⁹ Jacquetta's prominent role in her daughter's churching ceremony may imply that she was involved throughout the period of Elizabeth Woodville's first

¹⁶⁵C. Stephenson, *Walsingham Way* (London, 1970), pp. 22, 38-43.

¹⁶⁶Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 215.

¹⁶⁷James Haute, in a letter to Sir John Paston, mentioned Elizabeth Woodville's intention so to do in May 1469, a time when she had yet to bear a son. J. Gairdner (ed.), *The Paston Letters 1422-1509* (Edinburgh, 1910), 2:354. Elizabeth of York's pilgrimage in 1495 was probably prompted by the combination of the death of her four-year-old daughter Elizabeth and subsequent, perhaps consequent, premature birth of a son who died almost immediately. N.L. Harvey, *Elizabeth of York, the Mother of Henry VIII* (New York, 1973), pp. 169-70. In 1502 Walsingham was among the destinations of William Barton, a priest whom the queen paid to go on pilgrimage for her, and the offering of 6s 8d made there, the largest of the sixteen offerings he made, indicates the importance of the site to her. N.H. Nicolas (ed.), *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York* (London, 1830), p. 3.

¹⁶⁸See Chapter IV.3.i for further analysis of the space occupied by the queen for specifically queenly activities.

¹⁶⁹P. Eames, *Furniture in England, France and the Netherlands From the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1977), p. 263.

confinement, and Elizabeth of York's mother-in-law, Margaret Beaufort, headed the list of ladies who accompanied her to mass prior to her confinement, while Elizabeth Woodville joined them in the chambers shortly afterwards.¹⁷⁰ An account in British Library Cotton Julius MS B XII of Elizabeth of York's confinement tallies closely with the guidelines in the *Ryalle Book*. The floor was carpeted and walls and ceiling were hung with blue cloth of arras, covering all but one of the windows, the only decoration being golden fleur de lys, appropriate emblems of both kingship and the Virgin Mary, ideal of motherhood.¹⁷¹ The author explained that more decorative designs are 'not convenient about Wymen in suche cas'.¹⁷² The *Ryalle Book* gives precise details of the colouring and quality of furnishings for the queen's bed and the pallet bed which lay at its foot, complete with down pillows, ermine-edged scarlet counterpane and borders of velvet or cloth of gold.¹⁷³ The pallet, which was probably for use during the day, and as such half throne, half bed, was to be surmounted by a crimson satin canopy, an accepted mark of privilege, embroidered, according to the *Ryalle Book*, with crowns and the arms of king and queen.¹⁷⁴ As such it was a potent symbol of the queen's position, in which her claim to the authority of the crown derived from the fact that she shared a marriage bed with the king.¹⁷⁵ Although Margaret of Anjou's canopy had indeed been of crimson satin embroidered with gold crowns, for Elizabeth of York there were not crowns but Tudor roses - emblem of her union with the king - embroidered upon a canopy of gold, velvet and ermine.¹⁷⁶ The similarity of the *Ryalle Book's* recommendations and the records for Margaret of Anjou's lying-in

¹⁷⁰M.H. Letts (ed.), *The Travels of Leo of Rozmital through Germany, Flanders, England, France, Spain, Portugal and Italy 1465-1467*, Hakluyt Society, 2nd series 108 (1957), p. 46. Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:249. There is, however, no evidence in the manuscript account of preparations for the queen's chamber which appears in Leland to substantiate the claim that they were drawn up by Margaret Beaufort. Staniland, 'Royal Entry', p. 299.

¹⁷¹Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:179, 249.

¹⁷²Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:249.

¹⁷³Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 1:333, 336. See also PRO, E 101/410/12 for an extensive list of materials, furs, feather beds and so forth ordered from the great wardrobe for Margaret of Anjou's lying-in and Edward's baptism.

¹⁷⁴Eames, *Furniture*, p. 77.

¹⁷⁵Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 1:333.

¹⁷⁶Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:179.

suggests again that Yorkists and Tudors were drawing on Lancastrian precedent.¹⁷⁷

The other principal items of furniture within this room were two cradles: one 'littile' and one 'gret cradille of estat'.¹⁷⁸ The smaller cradle in Margaret of Anjou's chamber bore an image of St Edward, probably in anticipation of a son who would bear the saint's name.¹⁷⁹ There were also a cupboard and a 'riche Autar well furnyshed with Reliques', like some immense good luck charm.¹⁸⁰ One relic was sometimes worn by the queen in childbirth: the girdle of Our Lady. A number of girdles belonging to a variety of saints existed across the country 'helpful to lying-in-women', including one at Westminster 'which women with chield were wont to girde with'.¹⁸¹ Edward IV showed 'our Lady's girdle and ring' to the visiting Bohemian Baron Leo of Rozmital in 1466, probably the one at Westminster, and in December 1502 a monk brought 'our Lady gyrdelle to the Quene', presumably in preparation for the birth of her last daughter just over a month later.¹⁸²

When the queen felt it appropriate to retire from court life, probably about a month prior to the anticipated birth, the ritual process would begin.¹⁸³ Prior to her withdrawal into an essentially private world, the queen would attend mass in a suitably arrayed chapel. In Elizabeth of York's case it was two earls who held the towel as she took the sacrament.¹⁸⁴ She was then accompanied to the great chamber, hung like the inner chamber with 'riche Arrass', furnished with a chair of estate upon carpets, covered in cushions and with a cloth of estate above it, where she would stand or sit to receive wine and spices, much as at her coronation banquet.¹⁸⁵ Again, as at that banquet, the king was absent at this celebration of

¹⁷⁷Other parts of the *Ryalle Book* did explicitly refer to practice in the time of Henry V or Henry VI, Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 1:311, 313-4.

¹⁷⁸Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 1:336-7.

¹⁷⁹PRO, E 101/410/12.

¹⁸⁰Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:249.

¹⁸¹E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c1400-c1580* (New Haven, 1992), p. 384.

¹⁸²Letts (ed.), *Rozmital*, p. 48; Nicolas (ed.), *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, p. 78.

¹⁸³Staniland, 'Royal Entry', p. 301.

¹⁸⁴Whether she took both kinds is not explicit: the exact wording is 'toke hir Rightes' Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:249.

¹⁸⁵Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:179.

the female aspects of the king's public body.

The lords and ladies who had attended mass accompanied her to the inner chamber where further prayers were said for her in front of the beds. At this point men were technically shut out of that inner chamber. This was common practice at all levels of society, and illustrated in the Beauchamp Pageant images of the births of Henry VI and Richard Beauchamp, in which men were clearly allowed only as far as the door - Plate 11. As Lisa Howarth has argued, childbirth almost invariably occurred in the presence of a number of female relatives and friends, and the presence of physicians was perceived to cause great anxiety to the woman in labour.¹⁸⁶ For queens, however, the protocol of daily life in mixed company was supposedly preserved. When Elizabeth of York took her chamber 'after the olde Coustume', women took on the roles of butlers, servers and so forth within her chamber, collecting what they needed from the male officers at the door.¹⁸⁷ Professional midwives were rare but such women were employed to serve queens. One Marjory Cobbe, *obstetrix* to Elizabeth Woodville, and her husband were granted £10 yearly for Margaret's life in April 1469, and in the privy purse expenses of Elizabeth of York, an Alice Massy is referred to as the midwife at her last confinement.¹⁸⁸ Kay Staniland has suggested that the practice of excluding men evolved from the practical undesirability of men's presence during treatments such as herbal baths, traditionally administered to ease discomfort in late pregnancy.¹⁸⁹ However, the fact that doctors might attend women on other occasions, but only women delivered babies, implies an underlying sense that men's presence in this essentially female and polluted space was inappropriate.¹⁹⁰ Consequently, there is clearly surprise in the tone of the account in British Library, Cotton Julius MS B XII when a certain French kinsman of Elizabeth of York was permitted to visit her 'in her awne Chambre', and he emphasizes that only four men entered.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁶L. Howarth, 'The Practice of Midwifery in Late Medieval England' (MA diss., University of York, 1995), pp. 15-18.

¹⁸⁷Leland, *Collectanea*, 4: 249.

¹⁸⁸CPR 1467-77, p. 154; Nicolas (ed.), *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, p. 102.

¹⁸⁹Staniland, 'Royal Entry', p. 302.

¹⁹⁰M. Greilsammer, 'The Midwife, the Priest, and the Physician: the Subjugation of Midwives in the Low Countries at the End of the Middle Ages', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 21 (1991): 290.

¹⁹¹Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:249.

What passed within that chamber until the child was born is unrecorded, and the room may not even have been seen by the majority of courtiers at the time of baptism since the procession began in the great chamber and the *Ryalle Book* ordains that afterwards the gifts be presented at the queen's chamber door and the child taken to the nursery.¹⁹² The *Liber Regie Capelle* states that the child too should be brought into the inner chamber by the queen's ladies and offered to her, and then to the king who would also be present at this point.¹⁹³

4.ii Churching

While the new prince or princess was fêted, the queen, still ritually impure, remained in her inner chamber, recovering before her return to court life. The *Liber Regie Capelle* states that purification should take place sixty days after the birth.¹⁹⁴ In practice, Staniland has argued, the period in the fifteenth century was probably about forty days.¹⁹⁵ Even at this point the inner chamber did not become a public space, for a state bed was set up in the great chamber in which the queen lay in rich clothing.¹⁹⁶ Here the nobles and Chapel Royal gathered to witness two dukes raising the queen from the bed, lifting her back into a public sphere. The language of the *Liber Regie Capelle*, in which first two duchesses moved 'modestly' and 'humbly' to the bed to draw back the curtains, and then the dukes 'gently' and 'humbly' lifted the queen, constructed her as a fragile, precious and even sacred object.¹⁹⁷ A lit candelabrum was offered to her, signifying, like the torches lit at her child's recent baptism, that she was 'ready unto Christendome'.¹⁹⁸

In the grand procession to the chapel there were present rather more women than was often the case in court ceremonial, some summoned from a distance, to take part in a ritual

¹⁹²Ullmann (ed.), *Liber Regie Capelle*, p. 69. Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:182.

¹⁹³Ullmann (ed.), *Liber Regie Capelle*, p. 72.

¹⁹⁴Ullmann (ed.), *Liber Regie Capelle*, p. 72.

¹⁹⁵Staniland, 'Royal Entry', p. 307.

¹⁹⁶Ullmann (ed.), *Liber Regie Capelle*, p. 72.

¹⁹⁷'Debentque primo duo ducisse modeste atque humiliter transire ad lectum Regine et aperire curtinas lecti eiusdem ac reuoluere et aperire lectum. Sicque duo duces accedere debent ad eundem lectum et molliter atque humiliter eleuare Reginam de lecto', Ullman (ed.), *Liber Regie Capelle*, p.72.

¹⁹⁸Ullmann (ed.), *Liber Regie Capelle*, p. 72; Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:182.

which was still specifically about the female public body: Gabriel Tetzl, a chronicler in Leo of Rozmital's entourage, recorded some sixty maidens and ladies following Elizabeth Woodville and Jacquetta to the former's churching. There were, however, still a majority of men: sixty counts and dukes, forty-two members of the king's choir, musicians, priests bearing relics and scholars singing and carrying lights.¹⁹⁹

It has generally been assumed that churching was an essentially misogynistic ritual which drew attention to the curse on Eve of painful childbirth for her role in the Fall and emphasised women's inferior status. But as McMurray Gibson has argued, it was also a unique occasion of women's theatre which associated all women with the Virgin Mary's role in salvation, and women were apparently determined to continue this affirmation of their role even after the Reformation.²⁰⁰ McMurray Gibson suggests that women would have experienced their own churching in terms of that of the Virgin Mary as reenacted in Candlemas processions for the feast of the Purification of the Virgin.²⁰¹ If so, this would have been particularly true for queens since Candlemas processions depicted the Virgin as a queen and the grandeur of her celebration was more akin to that of Candlemas than were the churchings of other women. Moreover, during the initial procession specific association was made between the queen's purification and that of the Virgin with the use of the antiphon 'Lumen ad revelacionem gentium', which was used at the feast of the purification of the Virgin but not at ordinary churching ceremonies.²⁰² This was followed by the *Nunc dimittis*, the words of Simeon on seeing Christ, which again inevitably associated the queen with sacred motherhood.²⁰³ The churching itself took place at the church door, as did those of ordinary women, and since the *Liber Regie Capelle* does not specify the texts used it is reasonable to assume that the ordinary liturgy for this was used. It was ideally an archbishop who sprinkled the queen with blessed water and then led her by the hand into the church, a sacred version of the return to ordinary life performed earlier by the dukes.

¹⁹⁹Letts (ed.), *Rozmital*, p. 46.

²⁰⁰G. McMurray Gibson, 'Blessing from Sun and Moon: Churching as Women's Theater', in B.A. Hanawalt and D. Wallace (eds.), *Bodies and Disciplines: Intersections of Literature and History in Fifteenth-Century England* (Minneapolis, 1996), pp. 146-7, 149.

²⁰¹McMurray Gibson, 'Blessing from Sun and Moon', p. 147.

²⁰²Ullmann (ed.), *Liber Regie Capelle*, p. 72; F. Procter, *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer with a Rationale of its Offices*, rev. W.H. Frere (London, 1955), pp. 638-40.

²⁰³Ullmann (ed.), *Liber Regie Capelle*, p. 72. Luke 2:29-32; Parsons, 'Ritual and Symbol', p. 67.

The mass of the Trinity was then performed, and at the point of offering, the queen would present the candelabra (in lieu of the candle carried by most women), the chrisom cloth from her child's baptism (which a duchess had carried for her), and some gold.²⁰⁴ The king did not attend this service in which men could only be marginal.

At the banquet which followed Elizabeth Woodville's churching after her daughter Elizabeth's birth, the king was still absent, although this may not always have been the custom. Even if the king were present, he and his nobles would not have dined with the queen, for on the occasion attended by Tetzal and Rozmital they were feasted first with an earl, probably Warwick, representing the king, and then taken to an 'unbelievably costly apartment' to watch the queen's banquet, as Henry VII would later watch the coronation banquet of the child Elizabeth had just borne, from a concealed alcove. It would appear that for the duration of the meal the queen returned to an entirely female world, yet this time one on public display to men. She was served by ladies and maidens of noble birth who knelt throughout the three hours of the meal while the queen sat upon a golden chair, her mother and sister-in-law on either side. The silence kept during the meal and the ladies kneeling has led subsequent historians to criticise Elizabeth for her 'haughty' behaviour, yet she was almost certainly carefully conforming to tradition. Ladies had knelt beside the queen at her coronation banquet, and at those of her predecessors, and the Milanese ambassador to France in 1458 was under the impression that when 'duchesses speak to the queen [Margaret of Anjou] they always go on their knees before her', although probably in truth this only related to formal occasions.²⁰⁵ The English custom of silent formal meals was also noted by foreign observers on other occasions.²⁰⁶ At the close of the meal interaction with men was resumed for dancing, and the queen then returned to normal court life.²⁰⁷ In the reign of Edward III tournaments were commonly held to celebrate the queen's churching, but his fifteenth-century successors have left no records of such celebrations.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁴Ullmann (ed.), *Liber Regie Capelle*, p. 73.

²⁰⁵*CSP Milan*, 1:19

²⁰⁶Letts (ed.), *Rozmital*, p. 47; moreover, although Tetzal asserts that 'not one word was spoken', he also refers to the queen speaking with her mother and the king's sister, so he was perhaps exaggerating the formality of the meal.

²⁰⁷Letts (ed.), *Rozmital*, p. 47.

²⁰⁸J. Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry. Chivalric Society and Its Context 1270-1350* (Woodbridge, 1982), pp. 172-4.

After the safe delivery of their eldest sons, both queens Elizabeth gave thanks by founding chapels. Elizabeth Woodville's was in fact eight years after the event and probably as much a thanksgiving to Westminster Abbey for sanctuary as to God for her son. The chapel was attached to the old Lady Chapel of the Abbey and dedicated to St Erasmus.²⁰⁹ Elizabeth of York's foundation was more explicitly linked to the birth of Arthur at Winchester, a site chosen for her lying in by Henry to associate his firstborn with the legendary king after whom he was to be named. Here Elizabeth founded a chapel dedicated to Our Lady.²¹⁰

5. Funeral

The final major ritual of queenship was that surrounding the queen's death. If a queen died in her husband's lifetime, it tended to be another opportunity for the celebration and affirmation of kingship. For queens who died as widows, particularly after the fall of their dynasty, it was likely to be a much smaller affair. When Margaret of Anjou died a penniless exile beside the Loire in August 1482, her will beseeched the French king who had taken her lands to help pay for her to be buried with her parents at Saint Maurice d'Angers.²¹¹ No account of her funeral remains and the tomb she shared with her father was destroyed during the French Revolution.²¹² Two years later, reputedly during an eclipse of the sun, Anne Neville died 'and was buried at Westminster with honours no less than befitted the burial of a queen'.²¹³ She was buried not in the crowded chapel of St Edward the Confessor with her royal predecessors, but in the sanctuary of the abbey. Richard III

²⁰⁹ *CPR 1476-85*, pp. 133-4; Scofield, *Edward the Fourth*, 2:430; D. MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville (1437-1492) Her Life and Times* (London, 1938), p. 109.

²¹⁰ A. Crawford, 'The Piety of Late Medieval English Queens', in C.M. Barron and C. Harper-Bill (eds.), *The Church in Pre-Reformation Society* (Woodbridge, 1985), p. 52.

²¹¹ Haswell, *Ardent Queen*, p. 213.

²¹² Haswell, *Ardent Queen*, p. 214.

²¹³ 'et sepulta est apud Westmonasterium non cum minore honore quam sicut reginam decuit sepelin', Pronay and Cox (eds.), *Crowland Chronicle Continuations*, pp. 174-5. An eclipse of the sun occurred on 16 March 1485, which is consequently generally assumed to have been the date of Anne's death, considering the Crowland continuator's apparent reliability on other issues, but it is quite possible that with hindsight it seemed appropriate to associate the two events, just as the exchange of dresses between Anne and Princess Elizabeth, probably no more than innocent gestures of friendship between the two women, were later identified by this chronicler with Richard's plans to marry Elizabeth. T.R. von Oppolzer, *Canon of Eclipses*, trans. O. Gingerich (New York, 1962), p. 256; Pronay and Cox (eds.), *Crowland Chronicle Continuations*, p. 175.

was apparently attempting to draw upon the implications of legitimacy offered by a return to the Plantagenet mausoleum and ignoring Edward IV's attempts to make Windsor the spiritual home of the Yorkist dynasty. It is highly likely that Richard intended to erect a tomb for his wife, perhaps even a double one to share her privileged position in the sanctuary, but if such was the case, his violent death only five months later prevented that, and her exact place of rest is today unknown.

For Elizabeth Woodville and Elizabeth of York, who died in June 1492 and February 1503 respectively, more detailed accounts remain of their very different funerals. Much like that of her Lancastrian rival, Elizabeth Woodville's will dwelt on her lack of property at her death, and it asked that she 'be buried with the bodie of my Lord at Windessore . . . without pompes entreing or costlie expensis donne thereabought'.²¹⁴ Funerals were usually as impressive as could be afforded, although there were instances of nobles requesting simple burials.²¹⁵ In France in 1371 the dowager queen Jeanne d'Evreux had requested a relatively simple funeral, stipulating that few candles should be used, but Charles V, feeling that this was unfitting for a queen, organised a more lavish service in her honour the day after her burial.²¹⁶ Elizabeth probably wished to emphasise the departure she had made from the splendour of much of her life when she retired to Bermondsey Abbey. Her daughter, the queen, had just 'taken her chamber' prior to the birth of her second daughter so was perhaps not in a position to suggest an alternative, but Henry VII's failure to act as Charles V had done suggests that he preferred not to draw attention to the rights of Yorkist royalty.

Elizabeth Woodville's body was conveyed by river from Bermondsey to Windsor without ceremony, arriving at about 11 at night on Whitsunday with an escort of three men, one her chaplain, and two women, one her husband's illegitimate daughter Grace. The author of the account of her funeral was clearly struck by the simplicity of this queen's burial, since he emphasized that her coffin was 'suche as they use for the comyn peple w[ith] iiii wooden candelstikk about hit' and that new torches were not used during the

²¹⁴J. Nichols, *Wills of the Kings and Queens of England* (London, 1780), p. 350.

²¹⁵C. Daniell, *Death and Burial in Medieval England 1066-1550* (London, 1998), p. 51.

²¹⁶E.A.R. Brown, 'Death and the Human Body in the Later Middle Ages: the Legislation of Boniface VIII on the Division of the Corpse', *Viator* 12 (1981), p. 262.

masses but only ‘a dozeyn dyvers olde men holdyng old torchis and torchis ends’.²¹⁷ The coffin was nonetheless covered with black cloth of gold emblazoned with Elizabeth Woodville’s arms surmounted by crowns.²¹⁸ On the following Tuesday most of her closest female relatives arrived: three of her daughters, her daughter-in-law, granddaughter, and other ladies.²¹⁹ Female relatives typically assumed a central role in royal funerals. The *Ryalle Book* specified that at the funeral of a prince of the royal blood ‘all the ladies of his blood’ were to kneel closest to the hearse whilst the lords were further out.²²⁰ It is almost as an afterthought that the author of the account of Elizabeth Woodville’s funeral mentions that her son the marquis of Dorset and members of his affinity also arrived that day. For the first two masses on the Wednesday her son acted as chief mourner, but at the requiem mass it was her daughter Anne ‘instede of the qwene’ who offered the mass penny and the marquis did not make his offering until all the ladies had done so.²²¹ For Elizabeth of York, the chief mourner was her sister Katharine.²²²

At Elizabeth of York’s funeral, the king himself was absent yet again. This was

²¹⁷BL, Arundel MS 26, fols. 29-30.

²¹⁸BL, Arundel MS 26, fol. 29.

²¹⁹BL, Arundel MS 26, fol. 29. Her daughter Cecily is not mentioned. As the one of Elizabeth’s sisters most often involved in court ceremonial, apparently close to both the queen and Margaret Beaufort, she was probably attending her elder sister in her confinement.

²²⁰Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 1:308-9. The prominence of women at funerals is by no means restricted to English royalty. Studies of burial rites have shown that women have had a more prominent role as mourners at funerals for centuries in all manner of cultures, at all levels of society. P. Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. H. Weaver (London, 1981), pp. 144, 326; R. Huntingdon and P. Metcalf, *Celebrations of Death: The Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 27, 26, 74, 102. This association of women with the dead was manifested in other ways, as P. Stafford has shown in her study of early medieval European queens, for whom concern for the royal dead was a particular duty, their pious role being linked with strengthening their husband’s dynastic position. Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, p. 121. The shrouding of the body was also usually performed by women. Daniell, *Death and Burial*, p. 43.

²²¹BL, Arundel MS 26, fol. 30.

²²²The central association of women with the rites of the dead was similarly apparent at Elizabeth of York’s requiem mass where again all the ladies offered first. After the money offerings, thirty-seven palls, for the number of the queen’s years of life, were laid, all by women, the number assigned to each depending upon their status. Moreover, throughout the ten days that her body lay in the Tower chapel, six ladies were constantly kneeling beside it, giving place to their social superiors during the time of the masses sung each day. Grose and Astle, *Antiquarian Repertory*, 2:656-7, 661-2. An error appears to have been made by the author of this narrative since he accounts for 23 palls plus five from ‘every of the queen’s sisters’ of whom there were four in total at this time, although only two are named in the narrative or in the accounts of those for whom mourning was provided. Since Cecily had fallen out of the king’s favour following her second marriage and Bridget was a nun, they may both have been absent.

perhaps again, at least in part, because the focus of the ceremony was on an aspect of his public body; a fact which was expressed by the presence upon the coffin of an effigy of the queen dressed in crimson satin and black velvet robes of estate, wearing a crown over hair loose as at her coronation and holding a sceptre, symbol of royal authority.²²³

Such life-like effigies upon the coffins of kings and queens had been used from 1327, if not earlier, although not necessarily in every case, and there are no records for non-royal effigies until the mid-fifteenth century.²²⁴ Kantorowicz has argued that, for the duration of the funeral ceremonies, the king's effigy functioned as the public body of the king who never dies, hence the impossibility of the presence of the new king at these rituals.²²⁵ The queen, however, did die; there were long periods when there was no queen, so her effigy cannot have been for the same purpose.²²⁶ The importance of the queen in complementing and completing the king's public body, as articulated in the liturgy and anointing of the coronation ceremony, meant that it was deemed appropriate to respond to her death in a manner similar to that for her king.²²⁷ Queens were necessary to ideal kingship, but individual women could be replaced. Malory's Arthur had observed: 'quenys I might have enow', and, as mentioned in the previous chapter, widowed fifteenth-century kings began to negotiate for new brides within months of their queens' deaths.²²⁸

Besides the regalia, there were other echoes of the coronation in this final ritual, such as the canopy borne over her coffin in the procession to the Tower Chapel the day after her death, or the groups of thirty-seven virgins dressed in white ordained by the Lady Mayoress

²²³PRO, LC 2/1, fol. 46; Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 2:657.

²²⁴P. Lindley, *Gothic to Renaissance. Essays in Sculpture in England* (Stamford, 1995), pp. 97-103. In 1443 Henry Chichele, archbishop of Canterbury, had an effigy upon his coffin, as did Cardinal Beaufort four years later. C. Wilson, 'The Medieval Monuments', in P. Collinson, N. Ramsay and M. Sparks (eds.), *A History of Canterbury Cathedral* (Oxford, 1995), p. 480. An effigy was used at the reburial of Richard duke of York in 1475 in demonstration of his rightful role as king. P.W. Hammond, A.F. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs, 'The Reburial of Richard Duke of York, 21-30 July 1476', *The Ricardian* 10:127 (1994):125-6.

²²⁵Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, p. 420.

²²⁶The construction and painting of Elizabeth of York's effigy cost 40s with a further £5 2s 6d for clothing it. PRO, LC 2/1, fol. 46. 156 lb of pure wax and 80 ells of linen cloth were used to bind the body after it had been prepared with spices, balms and rosewater and she was then closed in lead by the king's plumber. PRO, LC 2/1, fols. 46-7. Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 2:655.

²²⁷This alternative use of the effigy probably provided the inspiration for its eventual emulation by members of the clergy.

²²⁸Thomas Malory, *Works*, ed. E. Vinaver, rev. P.J.C. Field (Oxford, 1990), 3:1184; See Chapter I.3.i.

to stand along the route from the Tower to Westminster.²²⁹ Perhaps, like the wise virgins mentioned in the coronation liturgy, they were to usher her into the presence of the Bridegroom, Christ. There was even a shadow of the coronation banquet in the supper held in the queen's great chamber after her removal to Westminster, presided over by the queen's sister Katharine.²³⁰ It was clearly a far smaller affair than those previous banquets, and probably consisted almost entirely of fish dishes, a suitably penitential meal for an occasion of mourning.²³¹

In spite of the dolorous circumstances, Elizabeth of York's funeral was, like her coronation, a celebration of Tudor monarchy. Anne Neville's was probably not entirely dissimilar but perhaps a little less flamboyant, since the narrator of Elizabeth's claimed that it involved the 'greatest livery of black gowns that ever was given in our days'.²³² 9,485 yards worth of black cloth were supplied by the great wardrobe not only to members of the king's and queen's households, right down to the bakehouse page, but also to members of the nobility - the largest quantity going to the queen's sister Katharine - and to 200 'poor folk' 'ewych bearing a weyghty torch' in the procession to Westminster.²³³ These were not the only mourning clothes provided; the London guilds also supplied their members with suitable attire for the occasion.²³⁴

The funeral was principally organised by two members of the king's council: his treasurer, the earl of Surrey, and the comptroller of his household, Sir Richard Guilford, but the involvement of a great number of the citizens of London in the procession and the Lady Mayoress' contribution mentioned above suggest that it was in part a cooperation with civic

²²⁹Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 2:656, 659. On this first day, because mourning clothes had not yet been made, those in the procession wore their 'most sadd and simplest Clothing'.

²³⁰Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 2:660.

²³¹PRO, LC 2/1, fols. 54-5.

²³²Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 2:659.

²³³PRO, LC 2/1, fol. 53. Those of higher status received more material and probably of a better quality since it varied in price from 1s to 4s a yard.

²³⁴The records of the London Skinners include the supply of 29 yards of black cloth, enough for up to ten gowns, besides 25½ yards of white frieze for eight members assigned to hold torches at Cheapside. For Henry VII's funeral 24 yards of black cloth were supplied for eight gowns. J.J. Lambert (ed.), *Records of the Skinners of London* (London, 1933), p. 141.

authorities, like the coronation.²³⁵ There was also a contingent of foreign mourners including Frenchmen, Spaniards, Venetians and Portuguese, many of whom also carried torches emblazoned with their country's arms, a gesture which, like Katharine of Aragon's marriage, confirmed European acceptance of the Tudor dynasty.²³⁶

The sight of the procession must have been a stunning and memorable experience to all involved. The coffin was covered with white and black velvet with a cross of white damask until it was taken to the Tower Chapel, which was hung with black cloth decorated with her arms. Here it was covered simply with black velvet and a cross of cloth of gold, emphasising her nobility even at death, and placed upon a hearse, where it remained for ten days. For the journey to Westminster the effigy was glued to the coffin and both were placed in a carriage covered with black velvet and blue cloth of gold, blue being the shade of mourning used by kings and queens.²³⁷ Beside it rode knights bearing banners of various royal arms, royal saints (Edward and Edmund), the Virgin, St George, St Katherine as queen (another reminder of the day of her coronation), her parents and the king's parents: all typical royal images, and closest to the carriage, at each corner, were carried white banners 'with gilt edges and images of our lady', which the author of the description of this funeral believed were 'in token that she dyed in Childbed'.²³⁸ This carriage was followed by an immense procession beginning with nobility on horseback and in carriages, then representatives of the city of London and the royal households, 100 servants walking beside them bearing torches, and in front rode various household members, clerics, Garter knights, and aldermen, preceded by the 200 poor men with torches. Somewhere between three and five thousand torches flamed along the route and representatives of the churches passed sang anthems.²³⁹ The burial ritual was not as drawn out or expensive as that of Eleanor of Castile, but it tapped into that celebration of Plantagenet queenship by drawing attention to the two London Eleanor crosses: thirty-seven virgins stood in Cheapside and representatives of the guilds, wearing white and bearing torches like the virgins, stood at

²³⁵Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 2:655.

²³⁶Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 2:659.

²³⁷Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 2:657; PRO, LC 2/1, fol. 52; BL, Arundel MS 26, fol. 30.

²³⁸PRO, LC 2/1, fol. 49; Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 2:657.

²³⁹Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 2:659.

Charing Cross.²⁴⁰ At Westminster the coffin, effigy and banners were placed upon a hearse hung with black cloth of gold, fringed with silk and gold and decorated with crosses of white cloth of gold. Its valance of black sarsenet was decorated in gold with her motto 'humble and reverent', and emblems of her queenship: roses, portcullises, fleurs de lys, and her arms impaled with those of her king beneath crowns.

The final ceremony, for all the grandeur of its setting, was little different from her mother's, involving three masses and presided over by the bishop of Rochester in both cases. During the third mass the palls of blue and green cloth of gold were laid and the bishop, Richard Fitzjames, appropriately gave a sermon observing how much the queen would be missed. The ladies then departed, having symbolically buried her with the palls, leaving the prelates and the king's chapel to perform the actual burial. Essentially it was the women's role to mourn, but the men's to do the physical burying. The effigy was taken away while the bishop of London hallowed the grave before the coffin was lowered in, at which her chamberlain and gentlemen ushers broke their staffs of office and cast them into the grave.²⁴¹

To aid his wife on her final rite of passage, Henry VII had already ordained six hundred and thirty-six masses to be said for her soul. To these were added £240 worth of alms, given out to 'bed-rid folks, lazars, blynde folkes and others'.²⁴² She was to appear once more in a public display of Tudor monarchy which would be seen by thousands more than had ever witnessed the processions and ceremonies of her short life: the magnificent double tomb to which her body was moved six years later, bedecked with Yorkist and Tudor emblems which were mirrored on the ceiling of the chapel in which it stood. In 1498, perhaps as a result of Perkin Warbeck's recent challenge to his legitimacy, Henry VII

²⁴⁰Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 2:657. The records of the London Skinners mentioned guild members standing at Cheapside, so the author of this narrative may have been mistaken as to the identity of the figures in white, or there may have been guild members at both crosses. Lambert (ed.), *Records of the Skinners*, p. 141.

²⁴¹Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 2:662-3.

²⁴²PRO, LC 2/1, fol. 53; Grose and Astle (eds.), *Antiquarian Repertory*, 2:663. The following year Henry made further provisions for her soul, as well as his own and other members of his family, in an indenture with the Abbot of Westminster involving various masses, collects, solemn sermons and ringing of bells, including a requiem mass on the anniversary of her death (until his own death when it should be moved to that date), during which service 100 nine-foot wax tapers would be burning and twenty-four torches. Money was to be distributed to paupers and monks attending the anniversary. London, Westminster Abbey Muniments 6637, fols. 2-6.

had abandoned his plan to be buried at Windsor in favour of asserting closer ties with the Plantagenet dynasty as a whole through burial at Westminster. The effigies of Elizabeth and Henry are of gilt bronze, the 'most prestigious form of memorial sculpture' in England at the time, but the position of the figures, which was eventually left to the discretion of Henry VII's executors, shows them not in the typical attitude of power of so many crowned royal effigies.²⁴³ Instead Henry wears a hat and Elizabeth a simple headdress over virginal loose hair, their hands together as if in prayer: images of piety and material wealth firmly entwined to the last.

6. Conclusion

In the last months of the twentieth century, the description of a hugely attended funeral procession through the streets of London for a woman who was both an icon of royalty and a mother dying tragically in her thirty-seventh year inevitably calls to mind the funeral of Diana Princess of Wales. Diana had no wax effigy - only hundreds of photographs in shops, papers, and among the strewn flowers - and her white roses were real not embroidered; but there is a sense that little has changed. Part of the value of ritual is of course its perceived hold on centuries of shared experience, especially to a monarchy whose right to rule is drawn primarily from the fact that their ancestors ruled also. But just as Diana's funeral became a vehicle for expressing twentieth-century expectations of royalty and for a new government to attempt to express its solidarity with 'the people', so fifteenth-century rituals of queenship were equally culturally and politically relevant to their own context.

The most dramatic and dynamic of these was the coronation, in part because it involved a combination of different forms of ritual which enabled many different parties to mould aspects of the ceremony to convey their own concerns. Consequently the civic pageants focussed more on the political effects of peacemaking and motherhood while the monks' liturgy was concerned with upholding the faith and virtuous conduct, but both responded to developing ideologies of queenship. A traditional wedding like that of Margaret of Anjou could be overshadowed by this more politically important public uniting of the king's public body with all that a queen symbolised. But Edward IV made a statement of his own personality, separate from the needs of his public role, in his choice

²⁴³Lindley, *Gothic to Renaissance*, pp. 48-9, 54.

of a clandestine wedding which necessitated the invention of a new ceremony of recognition for his queen: a process which in turn affected the role of coronation itself. Elizabeth of York's wedding, in contrast, fulfilled much of the symbolic role of unification with which the coronation was usually concerned.

Because so few records of the rituals of royal childbirth survive from before the fifteenth century it is harder to judge developments in this ceremony. It is clear from the *Ryalle Book*, in which the original details for the queen's chambers were updated with a second entry, probably around the time of Arthur's birth, that there was a continued concern to establish appropriate form in this matter.²⁴⁴ In spite of the tradition that men were not permitted into the chambers, the occasion became a vehicle for displaying successful queenship. The foreign embassy who were permitted to enter Elizabeth of York's chambers prior to Margaret's birth were not only honoured by their privileged access to the queen, but also observed a powerful image of dynastic triumph when they were received by the queen on her pallet beneath a 'marveillous riche Canope of Gold, with Velvet . . . garnished with rede'.²⁴⁵ Baron Rozmital's access to Elizabeth Woodville's churching performed similar functions. Such occasions express the flexibility of ritual.

Unlike Diana, these women have left no record of how they themselves responded to being constructed as icons of royalty. A queen was written, painted and acted into the role of consort to Christ's representative on earth, fulfilling the aspects of monarchy that the king could not: hers was the power of the weak (God's choice), the sacred power of chaste motherhood (Mary's representative), she was the inspiration for chivalry, promoter of faith, healing bridge between warring parties and the channel through which kingship flowed like Jesse's rod. How she and her subjects acted within these concepts is the subject of the next three chapters of this thesis.

²⁴⁴Staniland, 'Royal Entry', p. 299.

²⁴⁵Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:249.

Chapter III

Queens as Mothers

1. Introduction

Oure Quene was none abyll to be Quene of Inglond, but and he were a pere of or a lord of this ream . . . he would be on of thaim that schuld helpe to putte her a doun, for because that sche bereth no child, and because that we have no pryns in this land.¹

Such were the words attributed by a felon in the Prior of Canterbury's gaol to his neighbour on the Isle of Thanet in 1448. For this farm labourer, childbearing was a queen's defining function and Margaret's failure to produce a son in three years of marriage rendered her unworthy of her title. As I have argued in preceding chapters, the role of queen, as understood by the political classes, was very much richer and more complex than this. Nonetheless, motherhood was a major role for queens, as it was for most women. As I shall argue in this chapter, it enhanced a queen's status, provided opportunities to extend her influence in local and national politics, and enabled her to complement and promote her husband's kingship. Occasionally, however, it could also conflict with her other duties as queen.

Women were inevitably associated with reproduction. It was St Augustine who had observed, 'I do not see in what sense the woman was made as helper of the man if not for the sake of bearing children', and eight centuries later a Dominican, Nicholas of Gorran, maintained that a wife should 'generate children continually until her death'.² More positively, Geoffrey de la Tour-Landry, in his book of guidance for his daughters printed by Caxton in 1484, depicted motherhood as the greatest blessing for good wives.³ Thus it was not queenship as an office that was associated with childbirth, but the gender of the

¹Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, *Fifth Report* (London, 1876), p. 455.

²A. Blamires (ed.), *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: an Anthology of Medieval Texts* (Oxford, 1992), p. 79; C. Larrington (ed.), *Women and Writing in Medieval Europe: a Sourcebook* (London, 1995), p. 77. According to the author of 1 Timothy, in spite of a woman's greater responsibility for the fall, 'she shall be saved through childbearing', 1 Tim 2:15. Jerome later interpreted this passage in his *Adversus Jovinianum* to argue that a woman could make up for the loss of her virginity by producing children who remained virgins. Blamires (ed.), *Women Defamed*, p. 67.

³Geoffrey de la Tour-Landry, *The Book of the Knight of the Tower*, trans. W. Caxton, ed. M. Y. Offord, EETS supplementary series 2 (1971), pp. 112. See also P. J. P. Goldberg, 'Women', in R. Horrox (ed.), *Fifteenth-Century Attitudes. Perceptions of Society in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 128.

holder of that office.

As Alcuin Blamires has shown, much of medieval profeminine writing dwelt on women's essential role in the survival of humanity and the associated nurturing qualities of motherhood. However, for some writers these aspects of the female nature were an impediment to realising the full potential in women. In the mid-fourteenth century Boccaccio wrote a eulogy on the poetess Cornificia in his *De mulieribus claris*, in which he chastised women who imagined that their only purpose was producing and raising children, and therefore did not make the effort to cultivate their own abilities to do those things which made men famous.⁴ Blamires argues that similarly Christine de Pisan, half a century later, seemed to reproach her mother for encouraging Christine to fulfil traditional female roles in contrast to her father's encouragement of her intellectual activity.⁵

Historians are divided on the importance of such tensions between motherhood and more 'traditionally male' roles in the exercise of queenship. Ralph Turner, in his inquiry into Eleanor of Aquitaine's relationship with her children, argued that Eleanor invested little in them, being far too busy with the practice of queenship to spend time nurturing.⁶ This he claimed was typical of medieval noblewomen who had large households to manage, and so arranged for nurses to mother their children.⁷ John Carmi Parsons, in a like vein, claims that Eleanor of Castile's children spent most of their early years away from their mother who was constantly travelling, and that 'childbirth did not impede really important matters: Eleanor travelled within a week before a birth and afterward resumed her travels as soon as possible'.⁸ However, Turner's conclusions have recently been contested by Lois Huneycutt who cites the regularity with which Eleanor of Aquitaine took at least some of her young children on often arduous journeys as evidence for her involvement with their upbringing. She observes that 'no one without a "psychological investment" in a child would willingly choose to journey from England to the South of France in the company of

⁴A. Blamires, *The Case for Women in Medieval Culture* (Oxford, 1997), p. 70.

⁵Blamires, *The Case for Women*, pp. 94-5.

⁶R.V. Turner, 'Eleanor of Aquitaine and her Children: an Inquiry into Medieval Family Attachment', *Journal of Medieval History* 14 (1988): 321-35.

⁷Turner, 'Eleanor of Aquitaine', pp. 325, 333.

⁸J.C. Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile: Queen and Society in Thirteenth-Century England* (Basingstoke, 1995), pp. 33, 38-41.

two toddlers, especially given twelfth-century travelling conditions'.⁹ Margaret Howell has similarly argued that Eleanor of Provence had close emotional ties with her children, who were both a major source of her power, and a primary motivating force in her politics.¹⁰ Despite her lack of contact with her offspring as infants, Parsons too notes evidence of Eleanor of Castile's concern for her children, whose births added both to her status and to her influence with the king.¹¹ For all of these queens, motherhood was not simply restricted to childbearing, but entailed involvement in the children's growing up and political careers, and was a matter of the queen's own identity. It is with all three of these issues that this chapter is concerned.

Parsons has suggested that 'the contrasted reproductive roles of male rulers and their consorts affected the construction of images of rulership to suggest that men envied women's reproductive capacities and found them threatening to royal authority'.¹² Those fears became much more real in periods of political crisis when a queen's loyalties to her king and to her son could conflict, and it was at these times, particularly, that queens drew on their royal motherhood as a source of authority. However, it is because crises breed records whereas the peaceful exercise of queenship does not, that our view of queenly motherhood is easily distorted to focus on the abnormal. This chapter will therefore attempt to explore the exercise of queenly motherhood in the later fifteenth century in more peaceful circumstances, as well as assessing the tensions between mothering and other queenly roles in the political upheavals which brought queens and their sons to the fore. It will begin by looking at contemporary expressions of the importance of royal heirs. It will then establish the queen's role in bringing up her royal children. It will conclude with an exploration of motherhood and political crisis, encompassing the controversy over a queen's right to be regent, Margaret's defence of her son's kingdom and Elizabeth Woodville's motherhood in 1470, 1483 and 1485.

⁹L.L. Huneycutt, 'Public Lives, Private Ties: Royal Mothers in England and Scotland, 1070-1204', in J.C. Parsons and B. Wheeler (eds.), *Medieval Mothering* (New York and London, 1996), pp. 306-7.

¹⁰M. Howell, *Eleanor of Provence: Queenship in Thirteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 48, 61, 79, 101-3, 153, 220.

¹¹Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile*, pp. 20-21, 24, 25, 28, 31.

¹²J.C. Parsons and B. Wheeler, 'Medieval Mothering, Medieval Motherers', in Parsons and Wheeler (eds.), *Medieval Mothering*, p. xii.

2. The Need for Heirs - Ideologies of Motherhood

*'My lord of Suffolk and the Bysshop of Salisbury' ruled the king and when the king 'wold have hys dysporte wyth our sovrayn lady the quene . . . then the said Bisshop of Salisbury and othir mo that wer abowte our sayd sovrayn lord the kyng counselyd hym that he schuld not come nye her the wyche is cause that schee is not consewyd and so the lond is desavid of a prince.'*¹³

This testament to popular concern about Margaret of Anjou's childlessness was again a conversation reported by a prisoner, in this case in gaol at Westminster in January 1448, recalling the words of a London draper. Direct accusations of incompetence against the king or queen were rare; not only were they dangerous for the accuser, but they also implied mistrust of God in His choice of representative, hence 'evil counsellors' were more appropriate figures to blame even for the lack of a royal heir. The records for both the comments on Margaret's childlessness quoted here were accusations made by prisoners, and so may simply have been slander. If this is the case, they are still evidence that Margaret's failure to produce an heir was a subject of popular interest, but also that it was a politically sensitive subject. Kings needed children, preferably sons, to prove both that God approved of their kingship and that their dynasty offered security to the nation. Henry VI's lack of brothers to inherit the throne exacerbated the tension at this time since it was not clear who Henry's successor should be. In 1451 this prompted Thomas Young, MP for Bristol, to move that Richard duke of York (the father of three sons already) should be formally acknowledged as heir presumptive.¹⁴ Young was consequently imprisoned, because the Lancastrians were already concerned about York's potential claim to the throne.¹⁵

Even at times of political stability it was still considered essential to the proper order of things that a king should have a son, a concern reflected in the literature of the period. The story of *Blanchardyn and Eglantyne*, printed in 1489 by Caxton for Margaret Beaufort, began with a description of Blanchardyn's father, the king of Friesland,

Ryght habundant of the goodes of fortune. But priuated and voyde he was of

¹³PRO, KB 9/260.

¹⁴R.A. Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI. The Exercise of Royal Authority 1422-1461* (London, 1981), p. 692.

¹⁵Notably York's descent from Lionel of Clarence was omitted from the royal pedigrees tracing Henry's dual descent in the English and French lines which were popular in the 1430s and '40s. R.A. Griffiths, 'The Sense of Dynasty in the Reign of Henry VI', in C.D. Ross (ed.), *Patronage, Pedigree and Power in Later Medieval England* (Gloucester, 1979), p. 24.

the right desyred felicite in mariage/ That is to wyte, of lignage or yssue of his bodye/ Wherof he and the quene his wyffe were sore displesed/ I leve to telle the bewallyngis and lamentaciouns that the goode lady, the quene, made full often by her self al alone in solytary places of her paleys for this infortune.¹⁶

Consequently, the queen,

knowyng the vertuose effecte of devote and holy oryson/ exercysed with al her strengthe her right sorowful grevous herte to this gloriouse occupacion/ And after this fayre passetyme/ by veraye permyssion deuyne, concyued a right faire sone.¹⁷

A more extreme case occurred in the earlier *Tale of Sir Gowther*. In this story it was a duke whose wife failed to conceive, so the duke announced that in spite of their love for each other they must part.¹⁸ Again the 'barren' wife prayed for a child, but it was a 'felturd fende' disguised as her husband who fathered Sir Gowther. The long delay before the birth of Margaret of Anjou's son inspired rumours that the queen, desperate for an heir, had eventually turned to adultery.¹⁹ In literature adulterous queens were unlikely to have children - motherhood was a state of grace they did not deserve - whereas in practice it was most often queens whose sons' rights to the throne were under challenge who would be accused.²⁰ The only later medieval English queen whose adultery is universally accepted, Isabella of France, was never publicly accused, in part because there was no serious rival for her son, Edward III's, throne, and therefore nothing to be gained politically by making it a public issue.²¹ This issue of public and private adultery was explored in the Arthurian

¹⁶L. Kellner (ed.), *Caxton's Blanchardyn and Eglantine*, EETS extra series 58 (1890), pp. 11-12. By the end of the sixteenth century this passage had been adapted so that it was not so much a selfless desire to provide her husband with offspring, but her wish to 'frustrate the scandal that might arise by reason of her barrenness', that inspired her prayers.

¹⁷Kellner (ed.), *Blanchardyn and Eglantine*, p. 12.

¹⁸M. Mills (ed.), *Six Middle English Romances* (London, 1973), p. 149.

¹⁹Raphael Holinshed, *Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (London, 1808), 3:236.

²⁰Guinevere is rumoured to have had a child in some of those versions in which her adultery is with Mordred, but in these cases the father is clearly Mordred and there is no risk of confusion over inheritance: see L.D. Benson (ed.), *King Arthur's Death. The Middle English Stanzaic Morte Arthur and Alliterative Morte Arthure* (Exeter, 1986), p. 216. See also John Fortescue, *The Governance of England*, ed. C. Plummer (Oxford, 1885), pp. 354, 356; J. Calmette and G. Périnelle (eds.), *Louis XI et Angleterre: 1461-1483* (Paris, 1930), pp. 306-7; J.L. Chamberlayne, 'Cecily Neville, Duchess of York, King's Mother: The Roles of an English Medieval Noblewoman, 1415-1495' (MA diss., University of York, 1994), pp. 44-52.

²¹For further explanations for the contemporary silence regarding Isabella's adultery, see C.T. Wood, 'Queens, Queens and Kingship: an Inquiry into Theories of Royal Legitimacy in Late Medieval England and France', in W.C. Jordan, B. McNab and T.F. Ruiz (eds.), *Order and Innovation in the Middle Ages: Essays*

legend. In Malory's version, contemporary with the queens under discussion in this thesis, Guinevere's adultery, like Isabella's, was not initially a public issue, and scarcely affected the harmony of the Round Table. Only when Aggravayne, out of 'prevy hate' for Lancelot and Guinevere, made a public declaration of their adultery did it need to be dealt with in public, setting in motion the events that would destroy Arthur's kingship. Motherhood, however, was not the issue in this adultery narrative.

The implication of Sir Gowther's story, and the accusations against Margaret of Anjou, were that the queen's need for a child was so great that it came into conflict with her personal loyalty to her husband, and with the loyalty to his dynasty expected from her office. The earliest recorded allegation against Margaret was in February 1456, although it might well have been popular rumour before this. That February, a law apprentice, John Helton, was hanged, drawn and quartered for distributing bills which claimed that Prince Edward was not Henry VI's son.²² This was clearly considered a far more serious slander than the gossip about Margaret's fertility made by the prisoners quoted above, and Helton was forced to recant before his death.²³ Whatever Helton's motives might have been, the story was certainly seized upon by those who favoured Richard duke of York's claim to the throne, and had become so widespread by 1459, according to one Yorkist chronicle, that Margaret feared for her son's safe succession.²⁴ A newsletter from Bruges to Milan in July 1460 supports the chronicler's observation, reporting that

it is . . . thought that they will make a son of the Duke of York king, and that they will pass over the king's son, as they are beginning already to say that he is not the king's son. Similarly the queen also runs great danger.²⁵

Notably the chronicler, in spite of his Yorkist sympathies, accepted that the rumours of adultery were slander, yet by the time Raphael Holinshed was writing over a century later, the story had gained such a hold that he seems to have suspected that there may have been

in Honor of Joseph R. Strayer (Princeton, 1976), pp. 385-400. Her liaison with Roger Mortimer had begun long after Edward's birth and it is highly unlikely that the prince's father was not Edward II.

²²John Benet, 'John Benet's Chronicle for the Years 1400 to 1462', ed. G.L. Harriss and M.A. Harriss, *Camden Miscellany* 24, Camden Society, fourth series 9 (1972), p. 216.

²³Benet, 'Benet's Chronicle', p. 216

²⁴J.S. Davies (ed.), *An English Chronicle of the Reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI*, Camden Society, old series 64 (1855), p. 79.

²⁵*CSP Milan*, 1:27.

some truth in the

obloquie of the common people, who had opinion that the king was not able to get a child; and therefore stiked not to saie, that this was not his sonne, with manie slanderous words, greatlie sounding to the queenes dishonour, much part perchance vntrulie.²⁶

Such accusations not only undermined prince Edward's claim to the throne, but also ridiculed the king and cast Margaret as a figure unfit for the authority she was clearly wielding at that time.

But long before her child was even born, the queen's pregnancy was an issue of great public importance. In 1453 one Richard Tunstall, an esquire of the body and usher of the king's chamber, brought the news of Margaret's pregnancy to the king, and was rewarded with an annuity of £40.²⁷ It is not impossible that Margaret had confided her news to the king in private before this, but it had to be made a public matter. Parsons argues that pregnancy signified 'the king's subjection of his wife's body - her sexual function - to the interests of his lineage, limiting her capacity to exploit her sexuality to sway him'.²⁸ However, as the abundant literature of pregnant queens cast out by husbands who believed the accusations (by ambitious courtiers or spurned lovers) that they had been unfaithful testifies, the mysteries of pregnancy aroused suspicion and fear.²⁹ Out of this fear were born stories such as those of Emaré or Constance which record kings who believed their mothers' claims that the queens' children were hideous non-human creatures.³⁰

A genuine anxiety concerned the gender of the child. Edward I had attempted to guarantee his unborn child's sex in 1306 by making an offering for 'Lord Richard, the child

²⁶Holinshed, *Holinshed's Chronicles*, 3:236. Note also Edward Hall's *Chronicle*, published in 1542, which asserted that the duke of Suffolk was Margaret's lover, Edward Hall, *Chronicle*, ed. H. Ellis (London, 1809), pp. 204-239.

²⁷*Rot Parl*, 5:318.

²⁸Parsons, 'The Pregnant Queen as Counsellor and the Medieval Construction of Motherhood', in Parsons and Wheeler (eds.), *Medieval Mothering*, p. 46.

²⁹M. Schlauch, *Chaucer's Constance and Accused Queens* (New York, 1927), passim. A. Dickson (ed.), *Valentine and Orson*, EETS original series 204 (1937), pp. 14-26.

³⁰Mills (ed.), *Six Middle English Romances*, pp. 60-61; John Gower, *The English Works of John Gower*, ed. G.C. Macaulay, EETS extra series 81-2 (1900-1), 1:156-7; Schlauch, *Chaucer's Constance*, p. 60.

now in the queen's womb', but he was to be disappointed.³¹ In a similar vein, the king's physician, Master Dominic, is reputed to have foretold that Edward IV's first child would be a son and, no doubt hoping to be as well rewarded as Richard Tunstall, waited outside the queen's chamber during the birth, only to be informed that 'whatsoever the queen's grace hath here within, sure it is that a fool standeth there without'.³² Since he had usurped the throne and then failed to strengthen his position by the required foreign marriage, male heirs were especially important to Edward. Consequently, when Luchino Dallaghiexia reported to the duke of Milan in 1469 on the rejoicings at the birth of Elizabeth Woodville's third daughter, he noted that 'they would have preferred a son'.³³ In view of this, Elizabeth may not have been too impressed when, a few months later, she was greeted on her entry into Norwich with a pageant celebrating two pregnant mothers of sons: the Salutation of the Virgin and St Elizabeth.³⁴ It was probably intended only as a compliment to her name saint, rather than a reference to her failure to produce a son. However, it appears that before this pageant the central figure was the Angel Gabriel, flanked by giants, patriarchs, apostles and virgins, who must have brought to mind the Annunciation - with Elizabeth again in Mary's position - even if he did not speak to her of motherhood.³⁵ There was a constant pressure on queens to produce the children necessary to the security of the dynasty regardless of the age of the queen: Eleanor of Provence was little more than fourteen in 1238 under which year Matthew Paris remarked that 'it was feared the queen was barren'.³⁶

Even when Elizabeth of York had already produced sons, mere rumours of her pregnancy were sufficiently important for the Portuguese ambassador to inform his king in 1501 that

The queen was supposed to be with child; her apothecary told me that a Genoese physician affirmed that she was pregnant, yet it was not so; she is

³¹Parsons, 'The Pregnant Queen', p. 44. Henry III was more fortunate in 1245 after promising the abbot of Bury St Edmunds that if the child his queen was expecting was a boy he would name the child after St Edmund, Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, p. 45.

³²C.L. Scofield, *The Life and Reign of Edward the Fourth* (London, 1967), 1:393.

³³*CSP Milan*, 1:129.

³⁴H. Harrod, 'Queen Elizabeth Woodville's visit to Norwich in 1469', *Norfolk Archaeology* 5 (1859): 35.

³⁵The chamberlain's accounts in which these details survive do not include the speeches given.

³⁶... timebatur enim ne regina sterilis esset', Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. H.R. Luard, Rolls Series 57 (1872-83), 3:518.

plump and has large breasts.³⁷

It is therefore not surprising to read in the chronicle of the Hainaulter Mathieu d'Escouchy that in private Margaret of Anjou had often wept and complained piteously of the people's resentment at her lack of a son, although d'Esouchy was perhaps constructing her along lines similar to Blanchardyn's mother rather than reporting inside knowledge.³⁸ There was thus great concern that the queen should be pregnant, tinged with fear at the potential for her to give birth to a child of the wrong lineage, or the wrong sex, and at the implications of royal dependency on her pregnancy.

Parsons has argued that the queen's pregnancy was closely associated with her role as intercessor, noting instances of queens making appeals for pardon or royal favour from their childbed, and particularly Froissart's exaggeration of Philippa of Hainault's pregnancy at the time of her famous intercession for the burghers of Calais, to enhance the moral and emotional impact of her appeal.³⁹ Parsons argues that for barren queens, like Anne of Bohemia, or those who had finished their childbearing, intercession became a substitute for childbirth, another form of 'labor'.⁴⁰ Thus, he concludes, 'the queen has two bodies': one the biological individual who produced children and the other a 'nurturing mediator . . . identified with her official self'.⁴¹ Although it is possible that the French embassy who gained an audience with Elizabeth of York before her childbed were hoping she would intercede on their behalf to the king, I have found no firm evidence of an explicit association between intercession and pregnancy in the later fifteenth century.⁴² Nonetheless, the birth of children did impact upon perceptions of a queen's official role. Most notably, it was only when Elizabeth of York had produced a son who would, like Henry II, or even Henry VII, become a stronger focus for those loyal to his mother's lineage than a woman would be, that Henry VII was ready to arrange her coronation.

³⁷'Nō seij majs novas que escrever a vossa alteza somente que a ēprenhidã da rainha se presume que moveo; porē ho seu buticayro me dise que huū fiseco Jenoes afirmou que era prenhe e non foy asy; tene grande bariga e grandes peitos'. J. Gairdner (ed.), *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Reigns of Richard III and Henry VII*, Rolls Series 24 (1863), 2:101-2.

³⁸Mathieu d'Escouchy, *Chronique*, ed. G. du Fresne de Beaucourt (Paris, 1863), p. 303.

³⁹Parsons, 'The Pregnant Queen', pp. 39-61.

⁴⁰Parsons, 'The Pregnant Queen', p. 52.

⁴¹Parsons, 'The Pregnant Queen', pp. 52-3.

⁴²John Leland, *De Rebus Britannicus Collectanea*, ed. T. Hearne (London, 1774), 4:249.

From the moment of their birth, royal children, particularly eldest sons, became symbols of dynastic security and legitimacy. Henry VI and Edward IV both named theirs after the most illustrious, supposedly model kings: Edward the Confessor, and more recently Edward III from whom both claimed the throne.⁴³ Henry VII used similar tactics, claiming descent from the earliest British kings in naming his eldest son Arthur and specifically arranging for Elizabeth of York to give birth to this heir at Winchester, Arthur's legendary capital. These were references to legitimacy visible to anyone. For a more exclusive audience a poem in celebration of the occasion was composed by Pietro Carmeliano, an Italian in Henry VII's service.⁴⁴ This poem not only constructed Prince Arthur's birth as the promised return of King Arthur, but also as the fruit of a union advised by the saintly Henry VI to ensure peace and prosperity.⁴⁵ It consequently eulogised Prince Arthur's mother, describing her prior to her marriage as not only a 'beautiful, marriageable virgin', but one 'learned and wise' who had, since the murder of her brothers, inherited her father's rights.⁴⁶ Now that she had borne a son for the Tudor dynasty, and had thereby become more closely associated with her husband's lineage, it was more appropriate to celebrate her paternal lineage.

After the birth of a prince, the images of queenship employed at coronation could be re-employed and developed both to construct the new prince as a potential exemplar of kingship, and to define his mother's relationship thereto. When Margaret of Anjou entered Coventry in September 1456, she had just begun to attempt to move the court to her own Midland estates, following the crises of Henry VI's periods of insanity and the duke of York's second Protectorship. It is therefore possible that she arranged for the city to be advised of suitable themes for her reception, just as Richard III was later to send a messenger to York detailing the reception he expected after his usurpation.⁴⁷ In Margaret's

⁴³Henry VI's son was born and christened while the king was suffering from mental illness and unable to recognise the child, so it is possible that it was actually Margaret who decided their son's name, although it is more likely that possible names had been discussed before Henry's illness began.

⁴⁴W. Campbell (ed.), *Materials for a History of the Reign of Henry VII*, Rolls Series 60 (1877), 2:244, 289; S. Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry and Early Tudor Policy* (Oxford, 1969), p. 20.

⁴⁵S. Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry and Early Tudor Policy*, p. 20.

⁴⁶'Pulcherrima virgo/ Nubilis', 'docta et sapiens', Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry and Early Tudor Policy*, p. 20.

⁴⁷A. Raine (ed.), *York Civic Records I*, The Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series 98 (1938), p. 79.

case, the theme was a celebration of queenly motherhood.

Margaret was first greeted by a man playing Isaiah (a prophet supposed to have foretold much of Jesus' birth and life), who explicitly compared Margaret with the Virgin Mary with the words,

Like as mankynde was gladdid by the birght of Jhesus,
So shall this empyre ioy the birthe of your bodye.⁴⁸

He stood, moreover, beside a tree of Jesse, the symbol of Christ's lineage and Mary's fertility which had earlier been used to celebrate Henry VI's arrival at London. It was the character 'Jeremiah' who verbalised the connections, declaring to Margaret, 'Vn-to the rote of Jesse likken you well I may'.⁴⁹ He also claimed that 'The mellyflue mekenes of your person shall put all wo away', an image which again has echoes of Mary. He then focussed these Marian connections onto a celebration of Margaret's offspring,

The fragrante floure sprongon of you shall so encrece & sprede,
That all the world yn ich party shall cherisshes hym, love & drede.

The Marian theme was maintained in the second pageant where exemplars of Christianity - 'Edward the Confessor' and 'John the Evangelist' - greeted Margaret. 'Edward the Confessor' addressed her as 'Moder of mekenes', and 'John the Evangelist' referred to her as 'Most excellent princes of weymen mortall'. 'John the Evangelist' also made reference to his own virginity and that of Saint Edward, thereby drawing attention to the spiritual superiority they shared with the Virgin Mary, and, by virtue of the queen's symbolic virginity discussed in Chapter II, with Margaret.⁵⁰

Mary was an obvious model for queenly motherhood. This had been picked up in Wolfram von Eschenbach's thirteenth-century *Parzival*, in which the queen, Herzeloydē compared her decision to breastfeed Parzival with that of 'the supreme Queen [who] gave her breasts to Jesus'.⁵¹ The regularity with which ideal queens of romance breastfed their children - Constance, Emaré or Blanchardyn's mother, for instance - indicates the power of the image of perfect motherhood in the *Maria Lactans*, a figure who was often pictured

⁴⁸M.D. Harris (ed.), *The Coventry Leet Book or Mayor's Register 1420-1555*, EETS original series 134-5, 138, 146 (1907-13), 1:287.

⁴⁹Harris (ed.), *Coventry Leet*, 1:287.

⁵⁰For discussion of queens' spiritual virginity see above Chapter II.3.

⁵¹P.A. Quattrin, 'The Milk of Christ: Herzeloydē as Spiritual Symbol in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*', in Parsons and Wheeler (eds.), *Medieval Mothering*, p. 27.

crowned.⁵² Howell has argued that 'a sense of empathy with the Virgin as mother was almost inescapable for a devout thirteenth-century queen', noting Henry III's instructions to depict a Tree of Jesse in his wife's bedchamber at Windsor Castle, and the window in her chambers at Clarendon which showed a queen kneeling before the Virgin and Child.⁵³ But Mary's motherhood was primarily a passive role in that she accepted, endured and nurtured, and was thus only of limited value to queens. Marian imagery perhaps inspired the authors of accounts of Edward IV's return in 1471 who emphasised Elizabeth Woodville's endurance in sanctuary, 'in the which season natheles she had browght into this worlde, to the Kyngys greatyste joy, a fayre sonn'.⁵⁴ But when queenly motherhood involved the active defence of their son's rights, Mary offered no parallel.

At Margaret's 1456 arrival in Coventry, after the speeches by Old Testament and Christian heroes, the cardinal virtues - 'Rightwessnes', 'Temperaunce', 'Strength' and 'Prudence' - offered their services to her, promising to protect the queen by their counsel. Their pledges to 'defende you from all maner daunger' and 'Clerely to conseyue yo yn your estate most riall' were perhaps deliberate references to the current political instability, and their promises of advice imply an assumption that Margaret would be an important decision-maker in resolving this. Only in the last speech did 'Prudence' anchor these promises in Margaret's motherhood,

The blessyd babe þat ye haue born, prynce Edward is he,
Thurrowe whom pece & tranquillite shall take þis reme on hand;
We shall endowe both you & hym clerely to understonde.⁵⁵

The virtues which she was urged to cultivate both in the pageantry on her first entry into London, and at the moment of her crowning, were now to be employed in conjunction with her son. The failure to make any reference to her husband by this point suggests not only that Margaret was not perceived by the pageant organisers merely as an appendage of the king, but also that she was redefining her status so that she was understood in terms of her

⁵²Gower, *English Works*, 1:159; Kellner (ed.), *Blanchardyn and Eglantine*, p. 13; Mills (ed.), *Six Middle English Romances*, p. 64.

⁵³Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, pp. 73, 256.

⁵⁴J. Bruce (ed.), 'The Historie of the Arrival of Edward IV. in England and the Finall Recouerye of his Kingdomes from Henry VI. A.D. M.CCCC.LXXI', in K. Dockray (ed.), *Three Chronicles of the Reign of Edward IV* (Gloucester, 1988), p. 17. See below section 4.

⁵⁵Harris (ed.), *Coventry Leet*, 1:288.

relationship with her son. This was most explicit in the penultimate series of pageants: the speeches of the Nine Worthies. They greeted her first as mother of the prince, in 'Hector's' words,

Most pleasaunt princes recordid þat may be,
I . . . welcum yowe tendurly to your honoure
To this conabull cite, the princes chambur;
Whom ye bare in youre bosom, joy to þis lande,
Thro whom in prosperite þis empyre shall stand.⁵⁶

Only secondly, 'Alexander' declared,

The nobilest prince þat is born, whome fortune hath famyd
Is your souereyn lorde Herry, emperour & kyng.⁵⁷

Several subsequent Worthies also made reference to Henry, but their emphasis was on constructing Margaret as a queen in the language of chivalry, rather than that of religion which had gone before (although some touches of Marian imagery occurred here also).

'Josue', for instance, promised to

... abey to your plesur, princes most riall,
As to the heghest lady þat I can ymagyne
To the plesure of your persone, I will put me to pyne
As a knyght for his lady boldly to fight,
Yf any man of curage wold bid you vnright.⁵⁸

This too had implications for motherhood, as was apparent in 'Julius Caesar's' assertion that

Of quenes þat byn crowned so high non knowe I.
The same blessyd blossom þat spronge of your body,
Shall succede me yn worship, I wyll it be so;
All the landis olyve shall obey hym vn-to.⁵⁹

Just as Marian associations for Margaret made her son a type of Christ, so comparison with the queens of romance literature figured her son as a chivalric hero.⁶⁰ The latter

⁵⁶Harris (ed.), *Coventry Leet*, 1:289.

⁵⁷Harris (ed.), *Coventry Leet*, 1:289.

⁵⁸Harris (ed.), *Coventry Leet*, 1:290.

⁵⁹Harris (ed.), *Coventry Leet*, 1:291.

⁶⁰Motherhood provided other contexts for queens to be involved in chivalric display. For instance, when Elizabeth of York's son Henry was made duke of York, jousts were held supposedly for the particular pleasure of the queen, her ladies and her eldest daughter. BL, Cotton Julius MS B XII, fol. 89.

construction visualised a queen who commanded the respect and service of great knights and was therefore more appropriate to Margaret's current situation, whilst still envisioning her role within acceptable models.⁶¹

At the age of three there was little chance of discerning whether the young Prince Edward of Lancaster would inherit his father's peaceful disposition or Henry V's martial nature, but there was a strong implication in these verses that the latter was preferable. The king's eldest son was ritually constructed in this knightly guise at a very young age at his investiture as prince of Wales, at which time a sword was girded at his side and a garland placed upon his head. Edward of Lancaster was less than a year old at his investiture and a golden rod was probably substituted for the sword.⁶² Anne Neville's eight-year-old son, Edward of Middleham was probably equally unsuited to such knightly imagery since he appears to have been too sickly a child to attend his parents' coronation.⁶³ Nonetheless, he participated in his parents' ceremonial entry into York in August 1483, supposedly evidence both to the citizens of York and the 'many southern lords and men of worship' who had accompanied the king, of Yorkist dynastic security.⁶⁴ It was here that the king decided to take advantage of the occasion to invest Edward formally as Prince of Wales. Although Anne seems to have played no part at the mass in the Minster or the actual investiture at the Archbishop's Palace, she was involved in the more secular aspect of the ceremony - a procession through the streets - at which she and Richard, both wearing their crowns, led their son by the hand.⁶⁵

The images of dynastic security conveyed in such celebrations were reinforced in a variety of works of art celebrating the king's family. The most public of these was the Royal Window at Canterbury Cathedral, in which Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville were depicted with seven of their children kneeling at prie dieux, much like the figures of

⁶¹This borrowing of literary models for real queens was of course a reciprocal arrangement. Field has suggested that Malory adapted his sources for the tale of *The Knight of the Cart* so that Guinevere's escort of 'Queenys Knyghtes', 'a grete felyshyp of men of armys' that always rode with her, resembled Margaret's 'Queen's gallants' who were slaughtered at Blore Heath. P.J.C. Field, *The Life and Times of Sir Thomas Malory*, *Arthurian Studies* 6 (1993), p. 124. Thomas Malory, *Works*, ed. E. Vinaver, rev. P.J.C. Field (Oxford, 1990), 3:1121.

⁶²*CPR 1452-1461*, p. 172.

⁶³P.W. Hammond, *Edward of Middleham, Prince of Wales* (Cliftonville, 1973), p. 14.

⁶⁴Raine (ed), *York Civic Records I*, p. 79; Hammond, *Edward of Middleham*, pp. 16-17.

⁶⁵Hammond, *Edward of Middleham*, p. 18.

any noble donor family, except for their royal attire, and the presence between them of Edward the Confessor and St George above the family's arms - Plate 7. Its donor is unknown, perhaps Archbishop Bouchier or even Edward IV, but it is an unequivocal celebration of Yorkist legitimacy and fecundity which would have been witnessed by the many pilgrims to Thomas Becket's shrine.⁶⁶ The window was dedicated to the Virgin and included scenes of the Seven Joys of the Virgin (now destroyed). These joys varied, but at this period usually encompassed the major events of Christ's birth and childhood.⁶⁷ It was therefore in a context of holy motherhood/childhood that the images of Edward IV, Elizabeth Woodville and their children were viewed, although the window may not have been complete until their daughter Elizabeth was queen.⁶⁸ Traces of another family picture of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville remain in a window at Little Malvern Priory which was erected in the 1480s by Bishop John Alcock, President of the prince of Wales' council.⁶⁹ Thus, on the edge of his principality, the young Edward was presented in the wider context of his family for the prayers of the monks and their guests.

Elizabeth of York appears in two striking representations of her family that were both commissioned after her death. This was perhaps motivated by a desire to direct prayers for her soul, but possibly also because Henry VII was attempting to play on the popularity of his famously charitable wife to imbue the Tudor family with a sense of sanctity that only the dead can offer. One of these images was a votive altarpiece in which Henry, Elizabeth and all of their children (living and dead) kneel, men and women facing each other, beneath canopies bearing Tudor roses and portcullises, while above them St George is fighting the dragon - Plate 12.⁷⁰ It is a painting of religious and chivalric fantasy in which the royal family, although they kneel at prie-dieux, also appear to be at the tiltyard, and in which those children who had died very young are depicted as if they were continuing to grow up

⁶⁶M.H. Caviness, *The Windows of Christ Church Cathedral, Canterbury*, Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi, Great Britain 2 (1981), p. 259.

⁶⁷Caviness, *The Windows of Christ Church Cathedral, Canterbury*, pp. 252-3; H. Keyte and A. Parrott (eds.), *The New Oxford Book of Carols* (Oxford, 1992), p. 462.

⁶⁸Caviness, *The Windows of Christ Church Cathedral, Canterbury*, p. 259.

⁶⁹B. Rackham, 'The Ancient Windows of Christ's College Chapel, Canterbury', *Archaeological Journal* 109 (1952): 141.

⁷⁰O. Millar, *The Tudor, Stuart and Early Georgian Pictures in the Collection of her Majesty the Queen* (London, 1963), 1:52-3; 2:pl. 1.

in heaven. Thus heaven and earth intermingle and the communion of saints is manifest. Although the altarpiece may, like the Wilton Diptych, have been an essentially private piece of art, intended for a royal chapel, at 56" x 57½" it would have made quite an impression as a celebration of the Tudor dynasty in a more public space, like the Royal Window at Canterbury. The other picture is unlikely to have been commissioned by the king, or even influenced by him, but similarly depicts all of his children in a sacred context. It is the frontispiece to the book of a fraternity of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, in which Joachim and Anna kiss before a 'golden gate' which is actually a Beaufort portcullis - Plate 13.⁷¹ Borders of Tudor emblems link tiny representations of Joachim and Anna, including one in which Mary is visible in Anna's womb, her long loose blonde hair like that of the queen and her four daughters who kneel before the gate, facing Henry and three sons. This image of the royal family being drawn into the holy family would, however, have had a far more limited audience than that of Edward IV's family at Canterbury.

The queen's ability to provide a male heir was thus a question of concern at all levels of society. Yet childbirth was not an unequivocally positive aspect of queenship as far as men were concerned, because the king's lack of control over this process and his dependancy upon the queen's body drew attention to the limitations of his sovereignty. Allegations of queenly adultery highlighted the king's inability to control his wife's body. Nonetheless, the opportunities for affirming kingship and queenship inherent in royal childbirth were manifold. The queen's public image was affected by her status as mother because she had conformed to a principal ideal of queenship (and womanhood), thereby extending the opportunities to visualise her as Virgin or romance heroine, and had justified her anomalous position as a woman at the heart of the political structure of the realm by providing the means for that structure's continuation.

The birth of children, however, certainly did not mean that the queen was constructed only as mother. For instance, in the glass at Christ's College Chapel, Cambridge, again executed after her death, Elizabeth of York was depicted looking much like her mother at Canterbury, kneeling before a prie-dieu opposite her husband in a similar pose, without their children.⁷² Moreover, on Margaret's 1456 entry into Coventry, the final pageant

⁷¹Oxford, Christ Church MS 179, fol. 1.

⁷²Rackham, 'Ancient Windows', pl. 12 b. H.G. Wayment, *The Windows of King's College Chapel, Cambridge: a Description and Commentary*, Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi, Great Britain, supplementary volume 1, (1972) p. 25, pl. 19.3.

presented the most powerful model of womanhood yet: a woman who had rejected biological motherhood. This was St Margaret in the process of slaying the dragon, and claiming special powers of intercession with Christ.⁷³ It was St Margaret's virginity which made acceptable her attitude of power, but she was ironically normally identified with mothering on a much broader scale, as patron of mothers in childbirth. Nonetheless 'St Margaret' made no reference either to her own virginity or to the queen's maternity in the Coventry pageant, addressing the queen as

Most notabull princes of wymen erthle,
 Dame Margarete, þe chefe myrth of þis empyre,

and promising that 'by my power ye shall haue no distresse'. Similarly, queenship in practice was not entirely dominated by motherhood, although this was a central, and sometimes significantly powerful aspect.

3. Bringing up the King's Children - Motherhood in Practice

According to Jennifer Ward,

Noble mothers had nothing to do with the physical care of their children. This was the duty of nurses and servants . . . The life of the noblewoman and her responsibilities for her estates meant that she could not have devoted herself fully to her children even if she had wanted to and even if this had been the contemporary convention.⁷⁴

The same was naturally true of queens. Only imaginary queens like the mothers of Parzival or Blanchardyn were to be found breastfeeding their sons in imitation of the Virgin. But both noblewomen and queens were concerned to oversee their children's upbringing and education. Whereas noble children were commonly placed in other noble households, it was only the eldest sons of these fifteenth-century queens who left their mothers' households, and in this case for a household of their own as prince of Wales. Even after this departure, queens commonly exerted considerable influence on their eldest sons, although in the normal way of things they would expect to be closer to their daughters and younger sons.

Initially all the queens' children were brought up in the royal nursery, sometimes along with other noble children. Shulamith Shahar has suggested that royal children were

⁷³Harris (ed.), *Coventry Leet*, 1:292.

⁷⁴J.C. Ward, *English Noblewomen in the Later Middle Ages* (London and New York, 1992), p. 95.

sometimes breastfed by women of the minor nobility, a notion supported by the *Tale of Sir Gowther* in which the wives of knights were killed by the ferocious suckling of the half-human child.⁷⁵ However, Nicholas Orme suggests that a wetnurse was simply 'not from the lowest orders of society'.⁷⁶ This seems to have been true of the women employed to suckle the royal children of fifteenth-century England. It is impossible to determine with certainty the roles of each of the women referred to as nurses, but the only noblewoman in attendance on Margaret's son, Alice Lady Lovell, asked to retire when he was six 'because she [was] oppressed with grave infirmities in body and sight', and thus can hardly have been young enough to have been his wetnurse.⁷⁷ Edward of Westminster (the future Edward V) was nursed by a married woman, Avice Welles, who was granted a tun of Gascon wine yearly in November 1472, almost certainly marking the time at which he was weaned and her services were no longer required.⁷⁸

The influence of queens on this early stage of their children's lives is evident in the choice of personnel to care for their children. Elizabeth Woodville's daughter Cecily was nursed by Isabel Stidolf, the wife of one of the queen's servants, and Elizabeth Darcy, the lady mistress of the nursery for Elizabeth Woodville's children, was appointed to the same post for Elizabeth of York's children, probably as a result of the younger queen's childhood affection for Darcy.⁷⁹ At some time before 1497, Elizabeth Darcy was succeeded in this post by Elizabeth Denton, again probably an appointment made by the queen since Denton was one of her own ladies.⁸⁰

The queen was given extra money to support those children who were living in her

⁷⁵S. Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages* (London and New York, 1990), p. 61; Mills (ed.), *Six Middle English Romances*, p. 151.

⁷⁶N. Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry: the Education of English Kings and Aristocracy, 1066-1530* (London, 1984), p. 12.

⁷⁷*CPR 1452-61*, p. 567.

⁷⁸N. Orme, 'The Education of Edward V', *BIHR* 57 (1984):119; *CPR 1467-1477*, p. 358; *CPR 1476-1485*, p. 259. That Avice apparently nursed only Edward also suggests that she was a wetnurse, her own child's birth having coincided with his.

⁷⁹*CPR 1476-1485*, pp. 181, 203, 241; PRO, E 101/412/20; Campbell (ed.), *Materials for a History of the Reign of Henry VII*, 2:349. Elizabeth Darcy was the wife of Sir Robert Darcy and was widowed by 1488. *CPR 1485-1494*, p. 256; *CPR 1494-1509*, p. 5.

⁸⁰PRO, E 101/414/8, fol. 27; N.H. Nicolas (ed.), *The Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York* (London, 1830), p. 99.

household.⁸¹ Before the end of his third year, her eldest son would be furnished with a household of his own and his chamber would be staffed primarily by men, although the transition from the female realms of their mothers' households was gradual.⁸² When Lady Lovell's petition to resign as Edward of Lancaster's nurse was accepted, it was noted that the prince,

is now so grown as to be committed to the rules and teachings of men wise and strenuous, to understand the acts and manners of a man befitting such a prince, rather than to stay further under the keeping and governance of women.⁸³

The 40 marks yearly granted two months previously to another nurse of his, Joan Sloo, was perhaps in preparation for her imminent departure because the prince was now in his seventh year.⁸⁴ Despite the dismissal of his nurses, Edward of Lancaster would not have lacked regular female company because his household was closely associated with that of his mother and he travelled with her frequently. Elizabeth Woodville too maintained links with her eldest son after his household had been established, accompanying him to Ludlow for some time.⁸⁵ Edward of Westminster did not spend all of his childhood in Wales, but rejoined his family for major festivities and shared the lease on a house in Westminster with his chamberlain, Thomas Vaughan.⁸⁶

Nonetheless, it is clear that other children were expected to spend more time with the queen. When Edward IV fled England in 1470 the rest of his family were not with him, but the queen and her daughters were all in London and went into sanctuary together at Westminster. Again in 1483 all of Elizabeth Woodville's children apart from her eldest son were apparently near enough to head into sanctuary with her. Elizabeth Woodville took her eldest daughter on pilgrimage to Canterbury, and at least two of her daughters to Norwich.⁸⁷ Their presence with their mother among the ladies of her household is also suggested by

⁸¹*CPR 1467-1477*, p. 110.

⁸²For the first household of Prince Arthur see PRO, E 101/412/20, fol. 16.

⁸³*CPR 1452-1461*, p. 566.

⁸⁴*CPR 1452-1461*, p. 535.

⁸⁵D.E. Lowe, 'Patronage and Politics: Edward IV, the Wydevilles, and the Council of the Prince of Wales, 1471-83', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 29 (1981): 551.

⁸⁶BL, Add. MS 6113, fol. 111-2.

⁸⁷D. MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville (1437-1492) Her Life and Times* (London, 1938), pp. 89-90; Harrod, 'Queen Elizabeth Woodville's Visit to Norwich', p. 35.

the words 'elysabeth the kyngys dowther' and 'cecyl the kyngys dowther' in a book belonging to Elizabeth Woodville's lady-in-waiting Anne Haute.⁸⁸ In June 1497 Elizabeth of York was travelling with Prince Henry when the threat of the Cornish rebellion led them to take refuge in the Tower.⁸⁹ From Elizabeth of York's privy purse accounts it is evident that her daughters continued to receive much of their clothing through her household as late as 1503, and when her daughter Margaret left for Scotland, she took with her her mother's footman, Thomas.⁹⁰

The contrast between the queen's role in her eldest son's life, and those of her other children is particularly evident in the proxy wedding services for Elizabeth of York's children. Margaret's service took place in her mother's chamber; the presiding archbishop of Glasgow asked first the king and then the queen, as well as Margaret herself, whether they knew of any impediment to the marriage, after which he asked Margaret if the marriage was her will, to which she answered that if it was the king and queen's will it was hers also. At the end, the king and queen blessed her and while the men departed the queen dined with her daughter.⁹¹ However, if the surviving account of Prince Arthur's proxy wedding in 1499 is to be accepted, no mention was made of the queen in this service at all.⁹² Elizabeth Woodville's role in her second son's wedding was a little greater. The five-year-old bride, Anne Mowbray, was prepared for her wedding in the queen's chambers, and then escorted by the earls of Lincoln and Rivers to St Stephen's Chapel where the duke of York awaited her, while his parents, his brother and sisters and his grandmother Cecily Neville sat together beneath a canopy.⁹³ The subsequent wedding banquet, however,

⁸⁸BL, Royal MS 14 E III, fol. 1. The presence of the name 'E Wydevill' has led many to assume that this book belonged to Elizabeth the queen, but the book was certainly left to Anne Haute by her uncle Sir Richard Roos in 1482. Even if Anne had then given the book to the queen, the latter would not at this time sign herself with her maiden name, so 'E Wydevill' must refer to her brother Edward. J.R. Goodman, "That wommen holde in ful greet reverence": Mothers and Daughters reading Chivalric Romances', in L. Smith and J.H.M. Taylor (eds.), *Women, the Book and the Worldly* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 26; A.F. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs, 'A "Most Benevolent Queen", Queen Elizabeth Woodville's Reputation, her Piety and her Books', *The Ricardian* 10:129 (1995): 228-30.

⁸⁹A.F. Pollard (ed.), *The Reign of Henry VII from Contemporary Sources* (London, 1913-14), 1:147.

⁹⁰Nicolas (ed.), *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, pp. 19, 22-3, 34, 89, 93; Pollard (ed.), *Reign of Henry VII*, 1:233.

⁹¹Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:260-262.

⁹²Pollard (ed.), *Reign of Henry VII*, 1:206-8.

⁹³W.H. Black (ed.), *Illustrations of Ancient State and Chivalry from Manuscripts preserved in the Ashmolean Museum* (London, 1840), p. 29.

occurred in the king's chambers.⁹⁴ It seems likely that the queen's involvement with her children's weddings varied according to many circumstances. Parsons has argued that thirteenth-century queens took an active role in arranging their children's marriages, but for this period there is no evidence of such involvement, except for those occasions when Henry VI was not in a position to be involved in negotiations and Margaret, among the many ways in which she attempted to fill those kingly roles from which her husband was absent, arranged potential marriages for their son.⁹⁵

An area of parenting usually ascribed to fathers was the direction of their sons' education. Even Christine de Pisan, having advised the wise princess to watch over her children's upbringing, explained that the choice of teacher was the father's responsibility.⁹⁶ However, members of the queen's household contributed to the teaching of both Edward of Lancaster and Edward of Westminster. Margaret of Anjou's former clerk of the signet, George Ashby, wrote an educational treatise for her son, *The Active Policy of a Prince*.⁹⁷ John Giles, a tutor of Elizabeth Woodville's sons, had previously been a member of her household as tutor to her ward, the duke of Buckingham.⁹⁸ Margaret of Anjou herself owned a French copy of Giles of Rome's *De Regimine Principum*, which could have been used in the education of her son, as could the treatises on chivalry and nobility in a book, also containing romances, which was presented to her by the earl of Shrewsbury at the time of her marriage: such works were possibly deliberately included in Shrewsbury's volume for this purpose.⁹⁹ Similarly, it was with Elizabeth's licence and approval, if not

⁹⁴MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville*, pp. 125-6.

⁹⁵J.C. Parsons, 'Mothers, Daughters, Marriage, Power: Some Plantagenet Evidence, 1150-1500' in J.C. Parsons (ed.), *Medieval Queenship* (Stroud, 1994), p. 64; BL, Egerton MS 616; for further discussion of marriages arranged by Margaret see Chapter I.3.i and Chapter III.4.

⁹⁶Christine de Pisan, *The Treasure of the City of Ladies, or The Book of the Three Virtues*, trans. S. Lawson (London, 1985), p. 66.

⁹⁷Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry*, p. 102.

⁹⁸A.R. Myers, *Crown, Household and Parliament in Fifteenth Century England*, ed. C.H. Clough (London, 1985), pp. 308-9; *CPR 1467-1476*, pp. 592. The fact that her sons shared a tutor suggests that Richard duke of York spent much of his time in Ludlow with his elder brother, although no particular provision seems to have been made for Richard in the revised ordinances for his brother's household, and Richard was certainly with his mother at the time of his father's death, whereas Edward was still in Ludlow. BL, Sloane MS 3479, fols. 53-8.

⁹⁹A.F. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III's Books. Ideals and Reality in the Life and Library of a Medieval Prince* (Stroud, 1997), p. 112.

inspiration, that Caxton presented his translation of *Jason* to the prince of Wales in 1477.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, it was her brother Anthony, Lord Rivers, who not only translated for the prince the sayings of the philosophers, but was appointed his 'governor and ruler . . . that he may be virtuously, cunningly and knightly brought up'.¹⁰¹

Margaret of Anjou's particular influence over her son lay in the political turmoil which meant that they were more often in each other's company than was traditional. Although not officially a member of her son's council, Margaret was able to exert strong influence on it by virtue of the fact that it was based in the Midlands where she herself spent much of the last five years of her husband's reign.¹⁰² It was the first time since Edward III's reign that an infant prince of Wales had been given a council; lacking a recent precedent the queen was able to take advantage of the situation to establish her authority through the prince's entourage. The receiver general of the prince's rents, appointed at Coventry in September 1456, was Robert Whittingham, who was not only the keeper of Margaret's great wardrobe, but also the husband of one of her ladies.¹⁰³ Giles St Lowe, appointed as the keeper of the prince's great wardrobe the following January, was also married to one of the queen's ladies, as well as being an usher of the queen's chamber.¹⁰⁴ The chief steward of the prince's lands, appointed the same month, was John, Viscount Beaumont, who held the same position in Margaret's household.¹⁰⁵ Beaumont was also a member of the prince's council, as were the queen's former chancellors, Bishops William and Lawrence Booth.¹⁰⁶ The rest of the council was composed of three further bishops, three earls and two knights, so probably met only occasionally to discuss the business of the three-year-old prince. Margaret was directly involved with this council too. According to the regulations for the prince's household drawn up at the time he was created prince of

¹⁰⁰N.F. Blake, *Caxton and His World* (London, 1969), p. 86. It has been suggested that Caxton's *Book whiche the Knyght of the Toure Made* was printed at Elizabeth's request for her daughters but this cannot be convincingly proved, Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, 'A "Most Benevolent Queen"', p. 242.

¹⁰¹*CPR 1467-1476*, p. 417.

¹⁰²Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 781.

¹⁰³*CPR 1452-1461*, p. 323; Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 183.

¹⁰⁴*CPR 1452-1461*, p. 334; Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 183.

¹⁰⁵Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 190; *CPR 1452-1461*, p. 338.

¹⁰⁶*CPR 1452-1461*, p. 359.

Wales, all his officers and ministers were to be obedient to the commandments and warrants of his councillors 'or at ye least of 4 of them together w[ith] ye assent & consent of ye queene in all cases & matters concerning ye titles, rights, possessions and interests of ye sid Prince'.¹⁰⁷ Griffiths has suggested that these conditions allowed Margaret to attempt 'to establish control over the principality [of Wales] and Cheshire, not to speak of more distant estates in the Cornish peninsula and elsewhere in England.'¹⁰⁸ Margaret's close involvement in her son's council may well have been the precedent for Elizabeth Woodville's later appointment as a member of the council itself.

Much has been written on the extent and effects of the Woodville influence on Edward of Westminster, but the nature of his mother's role has usually been overlooked, or subsumed into the general picture of her family's role.¹⁰⁹ Initially her role was probably the most prominent in his household. She was the only member of his original 1471 council not already on the king's council and her name headed the list of those appointed as administrators in Wales during Edward's minority.¹¹⁰ It was, therefore, not only with the queen's 'assent' that the council (or four of them) made their decisions, but with her 'advise and exp[re]se consent', and this included nominating the prince's officers when posts became void.¹¹¹ The interests of many of Prince Edward's council were not primarily focussed on their role in this council, so ten new members were assigned prior to the prince's departure for Ludlow in 1473, among them the queen's cousin, Richard Haute, and her confessor, Edward Story.¹¹² Lowe has argued that of the twenty-five members of this council, only fourteen were fully active, the three principal members being the queen, Rivers and Haute, and that of the remaining eleven, at least eight had prior connections with

¹⁰⁷BL, Add MS 14289, fol. 11. For references to Margaret's assent in such cases, see *CPR 1452-1461*, p. 515; PRO, SC 6/1217/3 mm. 2-6.

¹⁰⁸Griffiths, *Henry VI*, pp. 781-3.

¹⁰⁹M. Hicks, 'The Changing Role of the Wydevilles in Yorkist Politics to 1483', in C.D. Ross (ed.), *Patronage, Pedigree and Power in Later Medieval England* (Gloucester, 1979), pp. 60-86; Lowe, 'Patronage and Politics', pp. 545-73; T. Westervelt, 'The Woodvilles in the Second Reign of Edward IV 1471-83' (MPhil diss., University of Cambridge, 1997).

¹¹⁰Lowe, 'Patronage and Politics', p. 556; *CPR 1467-1472*, p. 283.

¹¹¹BL, MS Additional 14289, fol. 12. The formula actually used in, for instance, confirming the prince's letters patent, was nonetheless the same as that used for Margaret, *CPR 1476-1485*, p. 7.

¹¹²Lowe, 'Patronage and Politics', p. 556-8.

the Woodvilles.¹¹³ The queen was one of the three members to hold a key to the prince's treasury; she travelled with him to Ludlow and she, along with the prince's other councillors, appears to have been the 'driving force' behind efforts to restore peace in the area by punishing those responsible for disorders in the previous autumn.¹¹⁴ Elizabeth 'oure Sovereigne and Liege Lady the Quene', presided over the commission to hear trials in Hereford with the infant prince until the king himself arrived.¹¹⁵ This official role for the queen may in part have been to compensate for the reduction in dower lands compared with her Lancastrian predecessors, but probably also belonged to the wider pattern of Edward IV's revision of the administration of royal estates.¹¹⁶ According to Wolffe, Edward's reforms 'appear to have been modelled on the normal methods of contemporary, large-scale, private estate management'.¹¹⁷ This enabled the king to be much more personally involved in their administration, with more direct access to their revenues.¹¹⁸ His wife's close involvement with the Welsh administration would enable him to maintain such personal influence even here.

Towards the end of the decade Elizabeth Woodville's involvement in the prince's administration decreased. In 1478 she arranged pardons for a number of Welshmen who had failed to appear before the king and council when requested to do so, but her role seems to have been gradually taken over by Sir Richard Grey, the younger son of her first marriage.¹¹⁹ In February 1483 Grey replaced his mother as a keeper of the treasury keys.¹²⁰ Her decreased involvement in Prince Edward's affairs was perhaps, like the dismissal of Alice Lovell from Edward of Lancaster's service, because the prince was now considered old enough to require only male guidance. This allowed the queen to concentrate on other queenly duties, such as the management of her own estates, and probably also enabled her

¹¹³Lowe, 'Patronage and Politics', p. 557.

¹¹⁴Lowe, 'Patronage and Politics', p. 562.

¹¹⁵Lowe, 'Patronage and Politics', p. 562; *Rot Parl*, 6:610.

¹¹⁶A. Goodman, *The New Monarchy: England, 1471-1534* (Oxford, 1988), p. 3.

¹¹⁷B.P. Wolffe, 'The Management of English Royal Estates under the Yorkist Kings', *EHR* 71 (1956): 3.

¹¹⁸C.D. Ross, *Edward IV* (London, 1974), pp. 374-5; B.P. Wolffe, *The Royal Demesne in English History. The Crown Estate in the Governance of the Realm from the Conquest to 1509* (London, 1971), p. 168.

¹¹⁹*CPR 1476-1485*, p. 128.

¹²⁰BL, MS Additional 14289, fol. 54.

to focus on her youngest son's administration. She was one of the feoffees of the estates York acquired on his marriage, as were Dorset, Rivers, Story, her erstwhile chancellor, William Dudley, and one of her Duchy of Lancaster receivers, Sir Thomas Burgh.¹²¹ Moreover, York's receiver was Elizabeth's own receiver of queen's gold, Thomas Stidolf.¹²² Lowe has consequently argued that she and her family dominated York's administration. With hindsight, Edward IV has been criticised for allowing his sons to be so influenced by an unpopular minority party, yet as Lowe observed, if they were really so unpopular it is highly surprising that Rivers did not anticipate Gloucester's enmity in 1483.¹²³ For the king, his in-laws provided the most obvious choice to surround the princes and form the prince of Wales's household, for their loyalty would be beyond question, and Rivers had already proved himself an able administrator. The inclusion of men such as Story, however, suggest that the queen herself was instrumental in the composition of her sons' households and administration too.

Not all queens were necessarily suited to the role Elizabeth performed in Wales. Richard III probably intended to use his son's household as a means of maintaining loyalty to his monarchy in the north of England rather than in Wales.¹²⁴ However, this had not been formally organised before Edward of Middleham's death. If this northern bias reflected his queen's familiarity with the north, or provided her with the means to help in the administration of those lands which had originally belonged to her parents, it was on an unofficial and now unrecorded basis. In this context it should be noted that on a number of occasions she appears to have been with their son in Middleham or Sheriff Hutton rather than with Richard and was consequently probably a significant influence on his household if not his council.¹²⁵

Henry VII avoided establishing a household for his eldest son on quite the same lines as Edward of Westminster's, apparently seeking to avoid the risk that the political fortunes

¹²¹Lowe, 'Patronage and Politics', p. 566.

¹²²Lowe, 'Patronage and Politics', p. 566.

¹²³Lowe, 'Patronage and Politics', p. 568.

¹²⁴C.D. Ross, *Richard III* (London, 1981), p. 182.

¹²⁵A. Weir, *The Princes in the Tower* (New York, 1992), pp. 97, 185; Hammond, *Edward of Middleham*, p. 19.

of any noble master of the household might compromise his son's position.¹²⁶ Henry's own cousin, Sir Richard Pole, was made chamberlain but his power did not compare with that of Anthony Woodville.¹²⁷ Again the household was established at Ludlow as a means of administering Wales.¹²⁸ Elizabeth of York perhaps had some influence over the choice of personnel surrounding him since her brothers' physician, Dr Argentine, was appointed to the same position in Arthur's household.¹²⁹ Ultimately more important was Elizabeth's relationship with her son Henry, who spent much of his childhood in her company near London. He was only ten when she died, and the extent of her influence is impossible to gauge, but as king he did favour some of those men previously in her service. He appointed some to his own queen's household, among them his mother's chaplain and almoner, Christopher Plummer, who became Katharine of Aragon's confessor.¹³⁰ One of Henry's gentlemen of the privy chamber was his mother's nephew, the marquis of Dorset, and his ushers of the chamber included a William Bulstrode who was probably a servant of hers mentioned in her privy purse accounts, or perhaps his son.¹³¹ Sir Francis Weston, whose prominence at Henry's court ended in allegations of adultery with Anne Boleyn, is believed to have been the son of Elizabeth's servant Richard Weston.¹³²

Of the eight sons borne by these four queens, Henry VIII was the only one to outlive his mother, which indicates the fragility of motherhood. The accounts of the great grief of Elizabeth Woodville, Anne Neville and Richard III, or Elizabeth of York and Henry VII at the news of their sons' deaths suggest that neither the frequency of infant mortality nor the

¹²⁶Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry*, p. 23.

¹²⁷*CPR 1485-1494*, p. 434; *CPR 1494-1509*, p. 29.

¹²⁸Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry*, p. 23.

¹²⁹Dominic Mancini, *The Usurpation of Richard III*, ed. C.A.J. Armstrong (Gloucester, 1984), p. 127.

¹³⁰Plummer was arrested in 1534 for his refusal to swear the oath of supremacy, and he only relented after Katharine's death. M. St Clare Byrne (ed.), *The Lisle Letters* (Chicago, 1981), 2:346-9.

¹³¹D. Starkey, 'Representation Through Intimacy: a Study in the Symbolism of Monarchy and Court Office in Early Modern England', in I. Lewis (ed.), *Symbols and Sentiments: Cross Cultural Studies in Symbolism* (London, 1977), p. 199. Nicolas (ed.), *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, p. 181. The names of Henry's fools in 1529-30 include Patch and Williams - more probably named after her fools than those actually mentioned in her accounts almost thirty years earlier. N.H. Nicolas (ed.), *The Privy Purse Expenses of Henry the Eighth from November 1529 to December 1532* (London, 1827), pp. 86, 319.

¹³²Nicolas (ed.), *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, p. 230.

separation caused by their royal status weakened the emotional bonds with their children.¹³³ The descriptions of Elizabeth Woodville's reaction to the news of the princes' deaths - falling into a faint, weeping 'with pitefull screeches' that 'replenished the hole mansion', beating her breast and tearing out her 'fayre here' - may owe much to Tudor propaganda and the iconography of the Mater Dolorosa.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt the Crowland continuator's depiction of Richard and Anne 'almost out of their minds for a long time when faced with the sudden grief', or the anonymous account of Elizabeth of York's attempts to comfort Henry on Arthur's death, only to collapse with grief on reaching her own chamber.¹³⁵ Such emotion is a reflection of the fact that these royal parents were very much involved with their children's lives. Queens may not have had a role in the diplomacy of their children's weddings, but they did undertake the nurturing of motherhood, even for their eldest sons. Their involvement in their children's political roles was dependent upon various circumstances, but could involve a substantial influence on the administration of the prince of Wales, which was apparently acceptable, even natural, because it was within frameworks of power established by the king and in cooperation with the king's servants. When the king was absent, insane, dead, or simply politically inept, queens could find themselves forced into taking on more publicly political roles, outside of the accepted sphere of queenship.

4. Motherhood and Politics

When the king was not in a position to exert his authority, the queen, as a part of his public body, usually became a figurehead for those most loyal to her husband. However, because she had not sworn an oath like the king at her coronation, her role was ambiguous. Since her position was technically dependent upon a man who was unable to exert authority, a queen might identify her status in terms of her relationship to the heir to the throne. This could involve the queen in a conflict of interests between her son and the king to whom she

¹³³L.C. Attreed, 'From Pearl Maiden to Tower Princes: Towards a New History of Medieval Childhood', *Journal of Medieval History* 9 (1983): 43-58; N. Pronay and J. Cox (eds.), *The Crowland Chronicle Continuations: 1459-1486* (London, 1986), p. 170; A. Crawford (ed.), *Letters of the Queens of England 1100-1547* (Stroud, 1994), p. 156.

¹³⁴Edward Hall, *Chronicle*, ed. H. Ellis (London, 1809), p. 379.

¹³⁵'Vidisses tantisper patrem et matrem iis novis apud Nottinghamiam ubi tunc residebant auditis prae subitis doloribus pene insanire', Pronay and Cox (eds.), *Crowland Chronicle Continuations*, pp. 170-71; Crawford, *Letters of the Queens*, p. 156.

normally owed her position. The final part of this chapter will therefore address the tensions and opportunities in queenly motherhood at times of political crisis. It will deal firstly with the phenomenon of regency: a position commonly held by queens in France, but not in England. It will then suggest the probable course and motivation of Margaret's political involvement from 1453, concluding with a revision of existing interpretations of Elizabeth Woodville's political role from 1483.

4.i Regency

When Edward IV invaded France in 1475, he summoned his three-year-old heir to London to stand in for him as head of state, with the title 'Keeper of the Realm'.¹³⁶ The prince was to be in his mother's charge, and both were to live in the king's household, for the management of which Elizabeth was granted £4,400 a year.¹³⁷ The queen and prince were essentially figureheads, and the business of the realm was to be conducted by a 'great council in England' which included John Alcock, the president of the prince's council, and the prince's chamberlain, Thomas Vaughan; men used to working with the queen. It is not improbable that the councillors discussed various matters informally with the queen, but her official position in no way approached the sovereign authority invested in regents.

Looking back at such powerful French regents as Catherine de Medici and Anne of Austria or, much earlier, Blanche of Castile, it may seem at first surprising that queens did not occupy a similar role in England. However, as André Poulet's exploration of the evolution of the 'vocation' of queen regent makes clear, it was largely as a result of particular personalities that such a practice developed in France.¹³⁸ Although in the mid-eleventh century Anne of Kiev had briefly shared some authority with her son Philip I while Count Baldwin of Flanders actually governed France, and in the late twelfth century Philip II appointed his mother, Adela of Champagne, as regent during his absence on Crusade, it was not until Louis VIII's death in 1226 that a young king's mother, in this case Blanche of Castile, became regent. This was a vital precedent but still not always adopted by her

¹³⁶Scofield, *Edward the Fourth*, 2:125.

¹³⁷BL, Cotton Vespasian MS C XIV, fol. 244.

¹³⁸A. Poulet, 'Capetian Women and the Regency: the Genesis of a Vocation', in Parsons (ed.), *Medieval Queenship*, pp. 93-116.

successors until the close of the fifteenth century.¹³⁹ The fact that Blanche's son Louis IX later preferred to leave her as regent during his absence on Crusade rather than his wife suggests that both Blanche's husband and son recognised her considerable leadership abilities, but that not all queens were fitted for such a role.

In England, the circumstances around particular minorities developed into a tradition in which no one person was given such sovereign powers during the king's childhood, certainly not the queen. By the time King John died, in 1216, relations with his wife Isabella had already broken down, so he was scarcely likely to have appointed her as regent. Moreover, England was in a severe political crisis, so the king's barons, who had previously been opposing John as a tyrant but could hardly take the same stance with his infant son, came to an agreement in which William Marshall, earl of Pembroke, was established as 'rector regis et regni', but he was not sole regent. Rather, he, the bishop of Winchester, and the Papal legate formed the core of a council who ruled.¹⁴⁰ This formed the precedent for all future minorities, with the exception of Edward III's, but since this latter was precipitated by the queen's decision to depose her husband it was scarcely a helpful model for the future.¹⁴¹ In the fifteenth century, Henry V apparently attempted to leave his kingdom to regents on the French model. He could not risk leaving the realm in the custody of his French queen, no matter how politically able she might have been, because his English nobles would not have accepted a regent whom they could not trust to put English interests first. In any case, Catherine of Valois's notable absence from the political scene after her husband's death suggests that she was quite happy for her brothers-in-law to govern her son's kingdom, especially since she barely knew England and probably did not relish opposing her brother's claims in France. Henry V's deathbed arrangements, however, were severely revised: although his brother John, duke of Bedford, was accepted as regent for France, his younger brother Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, was not permitted the same authority in England where the concept of regency was by now viewed with deep

¹³⁹Her great-grandson Philip IV ordered in 1294 that his wife, Joan of Navarre, should be governor of the realm in the event of his own death before their son was of age, and the first of the Valois kings, Philip VI, made his wife regent during his absence in 1338. However, in 1374 Charles V decreed that his wife's guardianship of their children and governing of the realm should be shared with his brother and hers.

¹⁴⁰M. Powicke, *The Thirteenth Century, 1216-1307* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 1-3.

¹⁴¹Although a council was established to guide the young Edward III, real power lay with the queen and her lover who had seized the reigns of government as soon as they had overthrown Edward II. W.M. Ormrod, *The Reign of Edward III. Crown and Political Society in England 1327-1377* (New Haven and London, 1990), pp. 3-7.

suspicion. Instead a protectorate was inaugurated in which Gloucester's authority was rigidly subject to a wider council.¹⁴²

Nonetheless, this is not evidence of a coherent ideology of monarchy in which queens were excluded from exercising their husband's authority in the king's absence. As in France, the process was dependent upon personalities and particular circumstances. Under Henry I, Stephen and Henry II, when the king was abroad the queen acted as regent on some occasions, but on others it was the justiciar or the king's eldest son.¹⁴³ Eleanor of Aquitaine exercised similar authority during her son Richard's reign, but neither of her daughters-in-law received such authority.¹⁴⁴ Howell has recently challenged the assumption that Eleanor of Provence shared the regency with her brother-in-law, Richard of Cornwall, during Henry III's absence in 1253-4, arguing that the queen was the principal authority, appointed 'to keep and govern the realm of England and the lands of Wales and Ireland, with the counsel of Richard earl of Cornwall'.¹⁴⁵ Moreover, in the will drawn up prior to his departure, Henry III dictated that in the event of his death, Eleanor was to be entrusted not only with 'the custody of the heir to the throne and their other children but of all the king's territories in Wales, Ireland and Gascony as well as the realm of England, until Edward came of age'.¹⁴⁶ 'Custody', however, is not the same as governance. A short regency during the king's absence abroad, accountable to the king on his return, was a different matter from regency during a minority. The former was also more ideologically acceptable in that, while the king still lived, the queen was, as I have argued in the previous chapter, a part of his public body, expected to complement his kingship and to perform those functions which he could not. On the death of her king, the framework in which a queen acted needed to be reconstructed on different terms.

Most kings after Henry III did not appoint their wives to such positions. Edward IV's decision to grant custody of the prince but not the realm to his queen in 1475 was perhaps a combination of the lack of recent precedents, the shadow of Margaret's attempts to

¹⁴²Griffiths, *Henry VI*, pp. 11-21.

¹⁴³H.G. Richardson and G.O. Sayles, *The Government of Mediaeval England from the Conquest to Magna Carta* (Edinburgh, 1963), pp. 152-3.

¹⁴⁴Richardson and Sayles, *Government of Mediaeval England*, p. 153; Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile*, p. 72.

¹⁴⁵Quoted in Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, p. 112.

¹⁴⁶Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, p. 111 (Howell's words).

exercise authority in Henry VI's absence, and Edward's assessment of the personalities involved. This did not stop Henry VIII appointing Katharine of Aragon as governor of the realm and captain general of the king's forces in England during his absence in France in 1513.¹⁴⁷ His trust was vindicated by her forces' triumph at Flodden, although the physical and mental demands of this exercise of her duty may have conflicted with her role as mother, for the son she bore the same month was either still-born or died immediately after his birth.¹⁴⁸

Consequently, when Henry VI suffered a mental collapse in 1453, there was no obvious precedent for arranging the government of the kingdom. Naturally he had not himself appointed a keeper of the realm, and there was no way of knowing for how long he would be ill. Margaret, who was heavily pregnant at the time and therefore physically restricted from becoming too actively involved in events, at first stood aside from the political struggle which immediately followed Henry's collapse. However, Cecily Neville clearly believed that she was willing and able to take some hand in affairs since she wrote to the queen protesting at her husband, the duke of York's, exclusion from the council called for that October.¹⁴⁹ On 13 October Margaret's son was born.¹⁵⁰ It was at some time shortly after this that Margaret presented a bill to parliament effectively claiming the regency of the kingdom for herself. The only surviving evidence for this is an anti-Beaufort newsletter by an author who admits to ignorance of the fifth article of the bill, so his accuracy on the other articles may be slightly suspect.¹⁵¹ The author, John Stodeley, reported that

the Queene hathe made a bille of five articles, desiryng those articles to be graunted; whereof the first is that she desireth to have the hole reule of this land; the second is that she may make the Chaunceller, the Tresorere, the Priue Seelle, and alle other officers of this land, with shireves and all other officers that the Kyng shuld make; the third is, that she may yeve alle the bisshopriches of this land, and alle other benefices longyng to the Kynges yift; the iijth is that she may have suffisant lyvelode assigned hir for the Kyng and the Prince and

¹⁴⁷J.J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII* (London, 1968), pp. 37-8.

¹⁴⁸A.F. Pollard, *Henry VIII* (London, 1905), p. 141.

¹⁴⁹Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 720.

¹⁵⁰V.H.H. Green, *The Later Plantagenets* (London, 1966), p. 329.

¹⁵¹J. Gairdner (ed), *The Paston Letters 1422-1509 AD* (Edinburgh, 1910), 1:265.

hir self.¹⁵²

Stodeley painted a vivid picture of the political turmoil at the time; many lords descending upon the capital with large retinues and Somerset's spies 'goynge in every Lordes hous of this land'.¹⁵³ Rather than interpreting Margaret's bill as evidence of her ambition for power, it could more fairly be seen as an attempt to provide an alternative to civil war. She was probably aware that Gloucester had been refused the office of regent, but this was when the king was a minor. For her, French royal practice would have seemed an obvious precedent. Perhaps more important to her perceptions of regency were the experiences of her own mother who had ruled Anjou during her father's long imprisonment, or her grandmother, Yolande of Aragon, who had managed all of Louis II of Anjou's affairs in France while he tried to conquer Naples, even to the extent of commanding the Angevin contingent at the battle of Baugé.¹⁵⁴ As the king's wife and the mother of the heir to the throne Margaret should have been able to offer a neutral and legitimate leadership. Her fears over York's claim to the throne and perhaps her concern for the imprisoned Somerset were additional motives, particularly the former since she had now acquired a new duty as queen: the protection of her offspring's right to the throne. It is possible that without the birth of a son on whose behalf she might claim to be ruling, Margaret might not have dared ask for this position.

However, not only was it alien to English monarchy to place sovereign authority in the hands of one not born to be king, but also Margaret's obviously close connections with the Beauforts and, previously, Suffolk, made her rulership potentially threatening to the dukes of Norfolk and York who were asserting their own authority. In spite of York's eventual triumph in adopting the role of Protector, the birth of her son is commonly seen as a watershed in Margaret's career, marking the beginning of her active participation in politics.¹⁵⁵

The fact that Margaret did assume an increasingly powerful role during the 1450s was

¹⁵²Gairdner (ed.), *Paston Letters*, 1:265.

¹⁵³Gairdner (ed.), *Paston Letters*, 1:267.

¹⁵⁴J. Haswell, *The Ardent Queen: Margaret of Anjou and the Lancastrian Heritage* (London, 1976), pp. 18, 26, 28-9.

¹⁵⁵A. Gross, *The Dissolution of the Lancastrian Kingship: Sir John Fortescue and the Crisis of Monarchy in Fifteenth-Century England* (Stamford, 1996), p. 46.

probably a factor limiting Elizabeth Woodville's potential influence later, because one strand of Yorkist propaganda focussed on Margaret's gender as an instance of the transgressive nature of Lancastrian sovereignty, notably in a poem of 1462:

Also scripture saithe, woo be that regyon
 Where ys a kyng unwyse or innocent;
 Moreovyr it ys right a gret abusion,
 A womman of a land to be a regent,
 Qwene Margrete I mene, that ever hathe ment
 To goverene alle Engeland with myght and poure,
 And to destroye the ryght lyne was here entente
 . . . Sche and here wykked affinité certayne
 Entende uttyrly to destroye theys regioun.¹⁵⁶

Although Margaret was never officially made regent, the implication of many contemporary commentators was that effectively this was what she became, but only as the Lancastrian hold on authority became too weak to control the kingdom.

4.ii The End of the House of Lancaster

Gross has recently argued that Margaret of Anjou's bid for the regency and her subsequent political involvement were principally motivated by a desire to protect her sources of patronage from possible encroachment by the Yorkists.¹⁵⁷ However, the parliament of 1454 specifically protected her land rights, confirming the grants and gifts made to her by the crown, and with the king's recovery at Christmas 1454, her position seemed to be even more secure.¹⁵⁸ In spite of this, much of York's patronage and influence was swiftly undermined after the king's recovery. To quote Griffiths, 'major constitutional and political changes . . . occurred at the queen's manor house of Greenwich, though the role of Queen Margaret in precipitating them remains obscure'.¹⁵⁹ Margaret was by no means the only person to feel threatened by York. The recently released duke of Somerset would obviously have wanted York's powers curbed too. For Margaret, York was now a threat not only because he had challenged her personal power, but also because, in assuming the Protectorship, he had taken on a role previously held by the king's acknowledged heirs

¹⁵⁶T. Wright (ed.), *Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History*, Rolls Series 14 (1861), 2:268-9; see also *CSP Venice*, 1:99

¹⁵⁷Gross, *Dissolution of the Lancastrian Kingship*, p. 49.

¹⁵⁸Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 738.

¹⁵⁹Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 740.

presumptive in 1422. In the light of Young's petition regarding York's succession only a few years earlier and the uneasiness over his potential claim noted above, Margaret must have seen York's actions in 1454 as a potential challenge to her son's inheritance. Whether she provoked York's eventual direct challenge and the ultimate destruction of the Lancastrian dynasty by consigning York to the political wilderness at this time is a moot point, but chroniclers tended to blame Somerset for York's exclusion in 1455.¹⁶⁰ With the king nominally in control once more, the queen probably stepped back into a more traditional role, providing an appropriate physical courtly setting at Greenwich for the exercise of kingship, but leaving the men to make the major decisions, notably 'Edmond duke of Somerset, be whom at that tyme the kyng was principally gided and governed, as he had be before by the duk of Suthfolk.'¹⁶¹ However, following the first Battle of St Albans at which Somerset was killed, York was able to regain a position of authority, and it was only after York's resignation from his second Protectorship, because of the king's intransigence over resumption in February 1456, that Margaret truly began to assert authority herself.

Margaret's son Edward was now old enough to be safely taken around the country as a rallying point for royalist support and confirmation of the Lancastrian dynasty's security. Consequently, that spring she took him on a tour of her Midland estates and his future patrimony of Chester. For the rest of the decade her Midland territories were more often the centre of court and government than was London, especially Coventry, which designated itself 'the princes chamber'.¹⁶² It was probably Margaret who encouraged the king to leave London where anti-alien riots were proving hard to contain, to join them in Coventry that August prior to a great council there in October. She was perhaps attempting to indicate that the centre of authority was with the royal family rather than the capital

¹⁶⁰'Nam dux Somersetie ymaginavit destruere nobilem ducem Eboraci consulens regi et dicens ducem Eboraci intendere regem destruere et regnare quod falsum inveniebatur,' Benet, 'Benet's Chronicle', p. 213. 'And this saide duke Edmond ever kep hym nygh the kyng, and durste nat departe fer from his presence, dreding alwey the power of the seyde duk of York and of the forseide erles, and over escited and stered the kyng ageyns thaym,' Davies (ed.), *English Chronicle*, p. 71; Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 740.

¹⁶¹Davies (ed.), *English Chronicle*, p. 71.

¹⁶²I have been unable to ascertain whether this title was used for princes prior to Edward of Lancaster, although it was also used for Edward of Westminster and Prince Arthur. On the former occasion it was asserted that this title had been held by Coventry 'of Antquite!' Harris (ed.), *Coventry Leet* 1:289, 391, 2:590-1.

city.¹⁶³ By the time of the council certain lords were chafing against her political involvement, notably the duke of York who, according to James Gresham's letter to John Paston on 16 October, departed the council 'in right good conceyt with the Kyng, but not in gret conceyt with the Whene [sic]'.¹⁶⁴ The duke of Buckingham blamed her for the dismissal of his Bouchier half-brothers, 'so sodeynly discharged from there offices of Chauncellerie and Tresoryship.'¹⁶⁵ The following spring she caused consternation among the councillors of Coventry when her officers insisted that in her procession out of the city,

the Meyre rode next before her with a Mase yn his hande and the Shirrefs with here Whyte yarde next before the Meyre like as they before tyme did before the kyng, savyng the kynges swerd was next to hym. And so they did never before the Quene tyll then, for they bere before that tyme alwey their seruauntes mases before the Quene.¹⁶⁶

She was not usurping the king's role because she did not adopt the masculine symbol of power, the king's sword, but she was attempting to share the dignity of kingship, investing the royal family as a whole with regal authority.

Much of the following year was spent in London following the Love-day reconciliation in which the prince does not appear to have been involved. However, as hostilities appeared imminent once more in 1459 Margaret took care again to construct her actions in terms of her role as mother, raising troops in her son's Cheshire lands in his name and distributing his emblem of white swans to 'alle the gentilmenne of the contre, and to many other thorough the lande'.¹⁶⁷ According to the Yorkist *English Chronicle*, by this time 'the quene with such as were of her affynyte rewled the reame as her lyked'.¹⁶⁸ However, whereas this chronicler had attributed Somerset's power to his influence on the king, Margaret's he depicted as resting in her maternity. He claimed that she was rallying the men of Cheshire,

trustyng thorough thayre streynghete to make her sone kyng; makyng pryue menys to some of the lordes of Englonde for to styre the kyng that he schulde

¹⁶³E.F. Jacob, *The Fifteenth Century, 1399-1485* (Oxford, 1961), p. 513.

¹⁶⁴Gairdner (ed.), *Paston Letters*, 1:408.

¹⁶⁵Gairdner (ed.), *Paston Letters*, 1:408.

¹⁶⁶Harris (ed.), *Coventry Leet*, 1:298.

¹⁶⁷Davies (ed.), *English Chronicle*, pp. 79-80.

¹⁶⁸Davies (ed.), *English Chronicle*, pp. 79.

resygne the croune to hyre sone: but she code nat bryng her purpos aboute.¹⁶⁹

He was not the only contemporary to suggest a conflict in the queen's interests. By March 1461 there were rumours at the French court that Margaret and the young duke of Somerset had persuaded Henry to abdicate, and that Margaret had poisoned the king.¹⁷⁰ These were almost certainly the pure invention of the Yorkists, trying to undermine Margaret's credibility by constructing her as a traitor to her own king, as scheming as the Guinevere of the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*, who had married Mordred and given him Arthur's precious sword, Clarent, with which he mortally wounded Arthur.¹⁷¹

However, when the prince was formally disinherited in October 1460, his interests were arguably at odds with those of his peace-craving father. The prince and Margaret were at the time well north of the capital, having fled after the Battle of Northampton that summer. There can be little doubt that the queen's primary motivating factor now was her son's right to the throne. The two travelled to Scotland where the regent Mary of Gueldres and Margaret held conference at Lincluden and agreed a marriage between the prince and James III's elder sister Mary.¹⁷² Such a treaty should only have been made by the king, but he was a virtual prisoner of the Yorkist lords, so Margaret took it upon herself to make these arrangements, as she would later agree to the prince's marriage with Anne Neville. Although the ultimate goal was a position of power for the prince, there is a sense of gender role reversal here in the queen's use of her son's marriageability to secure immediate powerful aid in her endeavours. Margaret was still at Lincluden when Somerset, Devon and other lords still loyal to the Lancastrian cause defeated the duke of York on 30 December 1460 at the Battle of Wakefield.¹⁷³ After this she marched down to join the triumphant Lancastrians and encourage them to wear the prince's livery of 'a bende crymesyn and blacke with esteryge ye fetherys' prior to the second Battle of Saint Albans.¹⁷⁴ Now that the king was firmly in 'Yorkist' hands, it was not only Margaret who needed to

¹⁶⁹Davies (ed.), *English Chronicle*, pp. 79-80.

¹⁷⁰*CSP Milan*, 1:55, 58.

¹⁷¹Benson (ed.), *King Arthur's Death*, pp. 216, 234-235.

¹⁷²N. MacDougall, *James III: a Political Study* (Edinburgh, 1982), p. 58.

¹⁷³Griffiths, *Henry VI*, pp. 869-72.

¹⁷⁴J. Gairdner (ed.), *The Historical Collections of a Citizen of London in the Fifteenth Century*, Camden Society, new series 17 (1876), p. 212.

construct her actions as loyalty to the prince of Wales, but also those who opposed York's claim.

Although the queen regained possession of her husband at the Second Battle of St Albans, the focus of attention on the prince was reinforced when he was knighted, dressed in purple velvet worked with gold, and encouraged to knight many others on the field, among them his receiver general, Robert Whittingham, who was also, as mentioned earlier, a member of his mother's household.¹⁷⁵ The seven-year-old prince was then apparently allowed to choose the fate of the captured traitors Lord Bonville and Sir Thomas Kyryelle, and he decided that they should be beheaded.¹⁷⁶ Margaret was again indicating that the authority was really that of her son. She perhaps hoped that such early exposure to war would encourage her son to emulate his popular grandfather Henry V, rather than his unfortunate father. If so, she was partly successful, for both John Fortescue and Giovanni Pietro Panicharolla, the Milanese ambassador in France, would later note the prince's overwhelming enthusiasm for 'martial exercises' and that his talk was like 'the god of battle'.¹⁷⁷ This, however, was in the context of his exile in one of Margaret's father's castles near St Mihiel-en-Bar, rather than the English court in which she had expected him to grow up.

Margaret and her son departed for France in the summer of 1463 and there kept an impoverished 'court' for the rest of the decade, the head of which was clearly the queen.¹⁷⁸ Her petition to Pope Paul II in 1467 regarding the 'divers and almost innumerable vows, impossible of fulfilment by her on account of her weak health, for example many fastings, the observance of which vows very often involves fasting four or five times a week', suggests that she had been bargaining desperately with God for her husband's throne and

¹⁷⁵Gairdner (ed.), *Historical Collections of a Citizen of London*, p. 214

¹⁷⁶Davies (ed.), *English Chronicle*, p. 108: 'the kyng assured [Lord Bonville] that he should have no bodyly harme; natheles natwythstandyng that sewrte, at instaunce of the quene, the duk of Exetre and therlle of Deuonshyre, by iugement of hym that was called the Prince, a chylde, he was beheded at Seynt Albons, and with hym a worthy knyghte of Kent called ser Thomas Kyryelle'. Compare with Waurin and the continuator of Monstrelet (who may have been Waurin) in which it is Sir Thomas and his son on whom the prince passes judgement. Jehan de Waurin, *Recueil des Croniques et Anchiennes Istories de la Grant Bretainge, a present nomme Engleterre*, ed. W. Hardy, Rolls Series 39 (1864-91), 1:clxxxii; 5:330. The details of these accounts should be treated with circumspection given the Yorkist bias of the *English Chronicle* and of Waurin's sources.

¹⁷⁷John Fortescue, *On the Laws and Governance of England*, ed. S. Lockwood (Cambridge, 1997), p. 3; *CSP Milan*, 1:117.

¹⁷⁸Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 889.

her son's future at the beginning of the decade, and now regretted this.¹⁷⁹ Margaret nonetheless still clung to the possibility of restoration, negotiating busily, perhaps encouraging Fortescue to broaden her son's education for kingship with his *De Laudibus Legum Anglie*. Her greatest hope eventually lay in the considerable compromise of an alliance with the earl of Warwick and the prince's marriage to Warwick's daughter.¹⁸⁰ This ended in disaster at Tewkesbury where the eighteen-year-old prince was slain, shortly after which Margaret was taken captive.¹⁸¹ For as long as the prince was alive, it had not been in Yorkist interests to kill the enfeebled King Henry, but on the night that Edward IV returned to London, Henry VI met his mysterious end.¹⁸²

Neither a mother nor a queen, Margaret was still a symbol of the Lancastrian kingship, and was forced to take part in Edward IV's triumphant entry into London on 21 May 1471.¹⁸³ Her subsequent fate is hard to discern. Griffiths maintains that 'Queen Margaret was kept in strict confinement until ransom terms were agreed with Louis XI in 1475', Lander says that she was 'a prisoner in the Tower of London', and Scofield explains that she was kept 'sometimes in the custody of Edward's sister, the Duchess of Suffolk, at Ewelme in Oxfordshire, and sometimes at the Tower of London, under the eye of Lord Dudley, the constable'.¹⁸⁴ Anne Crawford argues, however, that 'with the death of [her] son after Tewkesbury, Margaret ceased to be a threat to Edward and, although he might have been justified in imprisoning her, he could afford to be lenient and she was placed in the custody of her old friend, Alice Chaucer, duchess of Suffolk, at Wallingford'.¹⁸⁵ Although Alice Chaucer should by now have ceded her title as duchess to her daughter-in-law, the king's sister, she was still called duchess in official documents. It is certainly not impossible that it was actually she with whom Margaret spent much of her time since she

¹⁷⁹CPL, 12:273.

¹⁸⁰See above Chapter I.3.i.

¹⁸¹J.O. Halliwell (ed.), 'A Chronicle of the First Thirteen Years of the Reign of King Edward the Fourth, by John Warkworth', in Dockray (ed.), *Three Chronicles*, p. 18.

¹⁸²Halliwell (ed.), 'Chronicle . . . by John Warkworth', p. 21.

¹⁸³Ingulph, *Ingulph's Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland*, trans. H.T. Riley (London, 1908), p. 466; C.L. Kingsford (ed.), *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford, 1913), p. 375.

¹⁸⁴Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 892; J.R. Lander, *Government and Community. England 1450-1509* (London, 1980), p. 280; Scofield, *Edward the Fourth*, 2:23.

¹⁸⁵Crawford (ed.), *Letters of the Queens*, p. 124.

was then living at Ewelme, and Sir John Paston informed his mother Margaret in January 1472 that

As ffor Qween Margrett, I understond that sche is remevyd from Wyndesor to Walyngfforthe, nyghe to Ewelme, my Lady of Suffolk Place in Oxenforth schyre.¹⁸⁶

Jean de Waurin tells a quite different version of events in which Edward, taking pity on the queen, offered her 'a competent estate in any place she pleased', at which she chose London and was given fifteen noble attendants and resided in the house of Lord Audley.¹⁸⁷ This account conflicts with the evidence of surviving records of payment made for Margaret's 'diets' to John, Lord Dudley in 1473 and 1474.¹⁸⁸ Dudley was constable of the Tower, hence the assumptions of Scofield and others that Margaret was imprisoned there. However, it was not necessarily in this capacity that he was given money for Margaret - he was also one of the king's councillors and possibly Elizabeth Woodville's chamberlain.¹⁸⁹ Moreover, like Alice Chaucer, he had once been a loyal Lancastrian, treasurer of the king's household, wounded at the first battle of St Albans, and captured when fighting for the king at Blore Heath.¹⁹⁰

I would suggest that Margaret of Anjou's 'custody' was very far from close imprisonment. In September 1471, presumably while she was living at Windsor, the king arranged for £3 6s 7d weekly to be issued from the exchequer for her expenses.¹⁹¹ By the following January she had moved to Wallingford Castle, which was in the custody of Alice Chaucer, although whether Margaret herself was in Alice's custody is not clear from Paston's letter.¹⁹² If Waurin had misread Audley for Dudley, she perhaps moved back to London in 1473 when payments to Dudley first appear that Easter.¹⁹³ A possible indication

¹⁸⁶Gairdner (ed.), *Paston Letters*, 3:333; *DNB*, 16:56; *CPR 1467-76*, p. 417.

¹⁸⁷'Estat honneste en quel lieu quil lui plairoit', Waurin, *Croniques*, 5:674. Waurin may have misread his source, replacing Dudley with Audley.

¹⁸⁸PRO, E 405/56; E 405/57; E 405/58; E 405/59.

¹⁸⁹*CPR 1476-1485*, p. 137; *GEC*, 4:478.

¹⁹⁰Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 207.

¹⁹¹PRO, E 404/75/1, fol. 26.

¹⁹²J.K. Hedges, *The History of Wallingford* (London, 1881), 2:58.

¹⁹³PRO, E 405/56.

that she was not closely confined at this period exists in the payments made to William Dudley, the dean of the chapel of the king's household for her 'expenses' in September 1474.¹⁹⁴ As a prisoner in the Tower she was unlikely to have shared the services of a cleric so important to the king. More striking evidence of her freedom exists in the fact that in 1475 she joined the London Skinners' Fraternity of the Assumption of the Virgin, of which Elizabeth Woodville was already a member.¹⁹⁵ The occasion was celebrated in the fraternity's records with a miniature of Margaret, wearing the robes of the fraternity and kneeling before a desk, her crown and sceptre placed to one side, indicating that her former status was still important to her identity - Plate 14. Kneeling behind her was an attendant, and the background was patterned with marguerites and gold roses.¹⁹⁶ Moreover, two of Elizabeth Woodville's ladies and one of her household officers joined the fraternity on the same occasion.¹⁹⁷ That a fraternity so closely associated with the court could celebrate Margaret's membership in such a fashion suggests that, bereft of the son for whom she had fought so long, Margaret was no longer perceived as a threat to the Yorkists, and in practice lived a life little different from other medieval noble widows, albeit at the king's expense and even with some extra dignity as a result of her former queenship.

However, in October 1475, Louis XI seized the chance to deprive Margaret of her rights in Lorraine, Anjou, Bar and Provence by offering Edward a ransom of 50,000 crowns in the aftermath of the Treaty of Picquigny.¹⁹⁸ By November 1475 Margaret was in the custody of Thomas Thwaites, but this was possibly as a result of the negotiations with France, rather than a long standing arrangement.¹⁹⁹ Thwaites was ordered to deliver her to one of the king's councillors, Thomas Montgomery, to conduct her to King Louis; but before leaving England, she was made to renounce formally all claims to titles and lands in England, perhaps because Edward needed to be sure Louis XI could never again use her

¹⁹⁴PRO, E 405/57.

¹⁹⁵J.J. Lambert (ed.), *Records of the Skinners of London. Edward I to James I* (London, 1933), p. 83.

¹⁹⁶Lambert (ed.), *Records of the Skinners*, p. 88.

¹⁹⁷Lambert (ed.), *Records of the Skinners*, p. 83.

¹⁹⁸Scofield, *Edward the Fourth*, 2:157.

¹⁹⁹CPR 1467-1476, p. 571.

against him.²⁰⁰ On arriving in France she was made to renounce her claims there, supposedly as payment for Louis' aid in 1471.²⁰¹ She lived in her father's castle of Reculeé near Angers until 1480 when René died, after which one of his servants, Francois de la Vignolles, allowed her to live in a castle of his near Saumur.²⁰² She did receive a small pension from Louis XI, and when she died in 1482 the French king demanded possession of all her dogs as the only goods she still had of any value to him.²⁰³

4.iii The Depositions of Elizabeth Woodville

The circumstances of Elizabeth Woodville's exercise of queenly motherhood in the absence of her king were scarcely less complex or tragic, but ultimately she did live to see her husband's true heir upon the throne. Her public image as mother changed considerably along with the political climate. The first enforced absence of the king in 1470-71 was also the occasion of the birth of the future Edward V in sanctuary at Westminster, providing particularly useful material for Yorkist propagandists rebuilding the dynasty's image after Edward IV's return. The author of the 'Historie of the Arrival of Edward IV' maintained that the mayor and aldermen of London played on the vulnerability of the queen and her children in their warning to the king of the Bastard of Fauconberg's threat to the city, calling upon him

to approche and com to the citie, to the defence of the Qwene, than being in the Tower of London, my Lord Prince, and my Ladies his doghtars . . . and of the citie, whiche, as they all wrote, was likly to stand in the grettest ioperdy that evar they stode.²⁰⁴

The author moreover stressed the 'right great trowble, sorow, and hevines' experienced by the queen in sanctuary, and the king's role of comforting her on his heroic return.²⁰⁵ The poet of 'On the Recovery of the Throne by Edward IV' painted a very similar picture:

O quene Elizabeth, o blessid creature

²⁰⁰CPR 1467-1476, p. 571; Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 237.

²⁰¹Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 237.

²⁰²P. Erlanger, *Margaret of Anjou, Queen of England*, trans. E. Hyams (London, 1970), pp. 241, 244. Haswell, *The Ardent Queen*, pp. 212-3.

²⁰³Scofield, *Edward the Fourth*, 2:159.

²⁰⁴Bruce (ed.), 'Historie of the Arrival', p. 34.

²⁰⁵Bruce (ed.), 'Historie of the Arrival', p. 17.

O glorious God, what payne had sche?
 What langowr and angwiche did sche endure?
 When hir lorde and sovereyn was in adversité
 To here of hir wepyng it was grett peté.²⁰⁶

Yet when Edward arrived there was a scene of family bliss, in which the queen's vulnerability and domesticity could be contrasted with his heroism. The king was thus presented in an unusually human guise which might appeal to readers familiar with such partings themselves throughout the civil wars:

The king comfortid the quene, and other ladyes eke;
 His swete babys ful tendurly he did kys;
 The yonge priynce he behelde, and in his armys did bere.
 Thus his bale turnyd hym to blis.²⁰⁷

Elizabeth's behaviour was here being constructed along the lines of such patient literary heroines as Emaré, Constance and Eglantyne. The author of the 'Arrival' claimed that she sustained her suffering 'with all mannar pacience that belonged to eny creature, and as constantly as hath bene sene at any tyme any of so highe estate to endure'.²⁰⁸ This is an unfamiliar picture of Elizabeth, and although undoubtedly propagandist should not be entirely dismissed as evidence of popular perceptions of the queen, given that it is a rare instance of a contemporary description of her behaviour. Moreover, in October 1472 the speaker of the Parliament declared the

desyre of his Comyns, specially in the comendacion of the womanly behaviur
 and the great constance of the Quene.²⁰⁹

Elizabeth Woodville, however, had little option but to hold on patiently and hope for the best in this situation. When the king died just over a decade later, the situation was more complex. Charles Wood has suggested that Elizabeth attempted to exclude Edward IV's last remaining brother, Richard of Gloucester, from the powerful role of Protector in 1483 by arranging for a swift coronation for her son, and that it was the ensuing power struggle which culminated in the usurpation.²¹⁰ Admittedly, immediate coronations were

²⁰⁶Wright (ed.), *Political Poems*, 2:281.

²⁰⁷Wright (ed.), *Political Poems*, 2:274.

²⁰⁸Bruce (ed.), 'Historie of the Arrival', p. 17.

²⁰⁹MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville*, p. 109; BL, Add MS 6113, fol. 100.

²¹⁰C.T. Wood, 'The Deposition of Edward V', *Traditio* 31 (1975): 247-86.

not considered as essential by this period as they had been in the High Middle Ages, but on this occasion there was no particular reason to delay the coronation - Edward V was considerably older than Henry VI had been at his coronation - so the preparations need not be viewed with suspicion. The date of the coronation and the decision to govern by a council rather than to invest greater authority in Gloucester as Protector, were in any case decided by the old king's council, not a mere Woodville faction as has often been implied.²¹¹ Ross quotes the marquis of Dorset's reputed assertion that 'we are so important that even without the king's uncle we can make and enforce these decisions', as evidence of Woodville dominance, but in the context in which it appears in Dominic Mancini's *Usurpation of Richard III* it apparently refers to the council as a whole.²¹² Mancini's has been the most influential account of the events leading up to the usurpation because it is the only source written before Richard III's death. According to this, one of Gloucester's principal motives was his fear and hatred of the Woodvilles, including the queen. Pollard has recently shown how inadequate this source is, and suggested that Mancini was influenced by Gloucester's anti-Woodville propaganda, even though he was aware himself of the attempts to arouse antagonism toward the queen's kin.²¹³ Stories such as the theft of the king's 'immense treasure' by the queen and her family are highly dubious, and the assertion that Gloucester withdrew from court following Clarence's execution because he loathed the Woodvilles is simply untrue: he did not withdraw.²¹⁴ In fact no evidence of enmity between Gloucester and the Woodvilles prior to 1483 can now be found. This makes it harder to fathom Gloucester's motives in 1483, but also indicates that Elizabeth cannot be blamed for Gloucester's actions.

According to the Crowland continuator, Elizabeth seems to have taken the king's place in listening to his council immediately after Edward IV's death.²¹⁵ Ross asserts that the council vetoed her attempts to arrange for her son to arrive in London with a large

²¹¹Ross, *Richard III*, p. 68.

²¹²Mancini, *Usurpation*, pp. 72-5.

²¹³A.J. Pollard, 'Dominic Mancini's Narrative of the Events of 1483', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 38 (1994): 152-63.

²¹⁴Pollard, 'Mancini's Narrative', p. 158. See below Chapter V regarding the inaccuracy of Mancini's allegation that the queen filled the court with her affinity.

²¹⁵Pronay and Cox (eds.), *Crowland Chronicle Continuations*, pp. 152-3.

force.²¹⁶ However, the Crowland continuator, whom Ross cites, only says that ‘some people’ suggested a large force but others, such as Lord Hastings, were uneasy about the potential for the Woodvilles to dominate the new regime, so

the most benevolent queen, desirous of extinguishing every spark of murmuring and unrest, wrote to her son that he should not have more than 2,000 men when he came to London.²¹⁷

Elizabeth’s behaviour was clearly moderate and sensitive. It does appear that she expected to have some role in her son’s kingship, and the Crowland continuator’s report of the letters sent to her by Gloucester indicate that she had good reason to expect to be able to work with him and the other councillors:

the duke of Gloucester wrote the most pleasant letters to console the queen; he promised to come and offer submission, fealty and all that was due from him to his lord and king, Edward V, the first-born son of his brother the dead king and the queen.²¹⁸

In this context, her rapid and panicked entry into sanctuary at Westminster on the news that her brother and second son had been arrested is understandable. Lord Hastings was probably as surprised as she was, and although initially welcoming Gloucester and affirming his protectorate, must at some point have decided that complete domination by Gloucester was no more appealing prospect than complete domination by the Woodvilles. The reason for his sudden execution is far from clear, although some sort of plot with the queen or her son, the marquis of Dorset (who was now involved with his stepfather’s mistress, Elizabeth Shore), is not impossible.²¹⁹ Polydore Vergil and Thomas More, the only chroniclers to record Gloucester’s allegation of conspiracy, construct it as the duke’s

²¹⁶Ross, *Richard III*, p. 68.

²¹⁷‘Benignissima autem regina cupiens omnem murmuris et turbationis scintillam extinguere scribit filio suo ut in veniendo Londonias numerum duorum millium hominum non excedat’. Pronay and Cox (eds.), *Crowland Chronicle Continuations*, pp. 152-155. The possibility of bias in the chronicler’s account cannot be ignored, given that he was writing while Elizabeth’s daughter sat on the throne, but his admission that some council members were suspicious of the Woodvilles, whom he himself generally praises, suggests an attempt to be honest. It is quite possible that the chronicler was in fact a member of this council.

²¹⁸‘Interea scribit dux Glocestriae ad consolationem reginae dulcissimas literas; promittit adventum, obsequium, fidelitatem et omne debitum suum regi et domino suo Edwardo quinto, fratris sui defuncti regis atque ipsius reginae primogenito’, Pronay and Cox (eds.), *Crowland Chronicle Continuations*, p.155.

²¹⁹C.T. Wood, ‘Richard III, William, Lord Hastings and Friday the Thirteenth’, in R.A. Griffiths and J. Sherborne (eds.), *Kings and Nobles in the Later Middle Ages* (New York, 1986), pp. 156-61. Ross, *Richard III*, pp. 81-2.

imagination, but Wood has argued that the hurried execution suggests that Gloucester was forced by circumstances to destroy Hastings far sooner than would have been sensible if the conspiracy were his own invention.²²⁰ For Elizabeth to involve herself in a plot against Gloucester was to risk arousing his vengeance against her, or her son Edward V who was now in Gloucester's custody. However, another of her sons, Richard Grey, was apparently in far greater jeopardy, being escorted to a prison at Pontefract where he would eventually be executed with her brother Anthony. In spite of Edward V's needs, as the mother of Richard Grey, Elizabeth Woodville could scarcely be expected to remain passive in her Westminster sanctuary. Whether she actually planned to 'murder and utterly destroy' Gloucester and Buckingham, as the former asserted in a letter to the City of York, can only be a matter for conjecture.²²¹ More and Vergil later reported that Gloucester had accused the queen of using sorcery against him. This probably was their invention, writing Elizabeth into the literary tradition of righteous queens falsely accused by evil and ambitious men, but may nonetheless have been inspired by rumours of her involvement in a political plot against him.²²² Following Hastings' execution on Friday 13 June, the queen's position became even more vulnerable. Three days later, faced with the possibility of the arrest of her entire family by the soldiers who surrounded her sanctuary, she chose to put her hope in the assurances of the archbishop of Canterbury, and released her youngest son, supposedly to attend his brother's coronation.²²³ Within a week her marriage had been declared invalid, her queenship and her royal motherhood officially denied.

Although she never saw her sons again, Elizabeth Woodville's motherhood still made her a politically significant figure, because now her daughters were perceived by many as Edward IV's legitimate heirs. Consequently, she became involved in Buckingham's rebellion against Richard III in 1483, as guardian of the genuine Yorkist line. According to Vergil Elizabeth Woodville's involvement was masterminded by Henry Tudor's mother,

²²⁰Wood, 'Richard III, William, Lord Hastings', p. 157.

²²¹Ross, *Richard III*, p. 81.

²²²Schlauch, *Chaucer's Constance*, passim. The accusation was perhaps inspired, however, by an allegation in Richard III's first parliament that Elizabeth had enchanted Edward IV in order to marry him. For further discussion of the sorcery allegations, see below Chapter IV.4.

²²³Ross, *Richard III*, p. 87.

Margaret Beaufort, who intended Tudor to marry Edward IV's eldest daughter.²²⁴ Although it is possible that Margaret's role was overstated to please Vergil's patrons, Elizabeth Woodville appears to have been reactive rather than proactive. Even after the 1483 rebellion had failed, King Richard could not afford to allow the former queen and her daughters to remain in sanctuary as a potential focus for further dissent. As Ross has observed, Elizabeth Woodville's cautious departure from sanctuary in March 1484 was an act of pragmatism not unlike Margaret of Anjou's alliance with Warwick.²²⁵ She had at least arranged that suitable marriages would be provided for her daughters. There is, however, no evidence that she tried to promote a marriage between her daughter, Elizabeth, and her brother-in-law, Richard III, as some seventeenth- and eighteenth-century historians maintained.²²⁶

Henry Tudor's eventual triumph, and his marriage to Elizabeth of York, did not herald a new period of public royal motherhood for Elizabeth Woodville. Historians are divided on the reasons for Elizabeth's retirement to Bermondsey Abbey.²²⁷ I would argue that her decision to retire from the court was primarily motivated by the devastating impact of the loss of three sons, probably all murdered within a year. Her mother-in-law, Cecily Neville, similarly adopted a semi-monastic lifestyle following the violent death of her last son.²²⁸ Nor was it an unusual choice for a queen. Malory had depicted Guinevere's similar response to the news of her husband's violent death:

And whan quene Gwenyver undirstood that knyge Arthure was dede and all the noble knyghtes, sir Mordred and all the remanaunte, than she stale away with fyve ladyes with her, and so she wente to Amysbyry. And there she lete make herselff a nunne, and wered whyght clothys and blak, and grete penaunce she toke upon her, as ever ded synfull woman in thys londe.²²⁹

²²⁴Polydore Vergil, *Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English History*, ed. H. Ellis, Camden Society, old series 29 (1844), pp. 195-7.

²²⁵Ross, *Richard III*, p. 101.

²²⁶See Introduction.2.

²²⁷I. Wigram, 'Queen Elizabeth Woodville's Reputation', *The Ricardian* 10:131 (1995), p. 329.

²²⁸Chamberlayne, 'Cecily Neville', pp. 65-70.

²²⁹Malory, *Works*, pp. 717-8. In earlier versions it had been fear of Arthur or Mordred which drove Guinevere into the nunnery, but in the fourteenth-century Stanzaic *Le Morte Arthur* it was simply news of her husband's death and thus her own lack of position (and her sorrow), which inspired this act. It was the author of this poem who first associated Guievere with Amesbury, perhaps influenced by Eleanor of Provence's retirement there.

There was no longer a role for Guinevere in the secular world, which was not entirely true for Elizabeth Woodville, although as a queen who was mother to the queen her position was unique. Of previous dowager queens who were mothers of kings, Eleanor of Aquitaine had continued as a political force, Isabel of Angoulême and Catherine of Valois had remarried, and Eleanor of Provence had entered a nunnery. Elizabeth Woodville could hardly emulate Eleanor of Aquitaine since she was only the queen's mother, and the king's mother was clearly a dominant figure at court herself. She was much older than Isabel or Catherine, although a marriage was suggested for her with the king of Scotland.²³⁰ Eleanor of Provence and Guinevere remained the most helpful models. Had her son been king, Elizabeth might have chosen differently, but in a society which usually defined women according to their relationship to certain men, a queen who had lost both husband and sons had no obvious position and the only alternative to accepting a lower place in society was to step out of that structure altogether: probably an easy decision for a mother who had lost so much.

5. Conclusion

*God ha[s] left us yet a fair prince and two fair princesses, and . . . God is where he was, and we are both young enough.*²³¹

Elizabeth of York's reputed words of comfort to her husband after Prince Arthur's death suggest that she perceived that his grief was as much for the loss of his heir as for the person who was Arthur. Children had a significance beyond their own personhood, as heirs, potential marriage partners for cementing alliances, symbols of dynastic security and proof of God's approval. This was not only a royal characteristic, and indeed much of a queen's experience of motherhood was the same as that of other noblewomen. Nonetheless, her queenly status meant that her children were of significance to the entire realm, that her ability to give birth was a matter of gossip from the prisons of England to the courts of Europe, and that on her body depended the political stability of the kingdom. Although the practicalities of educating and caring for her children in normal circumstances were unexceptional, motherhood for a queen was a uniquely political role.

Motherhood was the most public aspect of the queenly function of complementing

²³⁰MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville*, p. 194.

²³¹Crawford, *Letters of the Queens*, p. 156.

kingship in an hereditary monarchy. With this came particular responsibilities for defending the rights of their offspring where possible, and commonly the role of figurehead in the king's absence, be that when Edward IV invaded France, or when Henry VI was imprisoned by the Yorkists. Regency, however, was not a feature of fifteenth-century English monarchy. This was more a result of particular circumstances than political ideology, but was consonant with the queen's position as part of the king's public body, dependent on him and therefore unable to represent him if he were insane or dead. Margaret of Anjou attempted to overcome such restrictions on her power by associating her actions with those of the prince of Wales. Elizabeth Woodville tried to work through those previously loyal to her king whilst appearing to remain passive, and later joined those who had already begun to challenge her political enemies. That Margaret's reputation suffered more in the immediate aftermath of these crises was probably a result of the political bias of those recording events rather than contemporary attitudes to women's roles. It was natural for mothers to defend even their adult children. For instance, Malory's tale of 'The Healing of Sir Urry' records the vengeance wrought by Sir Alpheus' mother on Sir Urry for killing her son, and in turn Sir Urry's mother's long journeys to find a cure for her son.²³² For queens it was a case of ordinary motherhood writ large and imbued with political implications.

The most outstanding aspect of queenly motherhood enjoyed by the first two queens in this study was their significant involvement in the government of Wales by virtue of their roles in their sons' households and counsels. This has evoked far less comment than their participation in political crises. Yet as evidence of how queenly motherhood was supposed to work in normal circumstances it is extremely important to the broader study of queenship. In this context queens were expected to engage on an equal, or even superior, footing with some of the king's principal officials in administering a substantial sector of the realm. It was for such purposes that a queen required the virtues and wisdom referred to at her crowning and state entries. This was not, however, an automatic right of queenship, but a task given to those queens considered capable of exercising such power wisely.

Motherhood was, then, an aspect of queenship whose opportunities and implications varied widely according to personalities and circumstances. It was not the defining role of

²³²Malory, *Works*, pp. 663-4.

queenship; that was marriage to the king, a role which potentially conflicted with motherhood on rare occasions, but was more commonly affirmed by the birth of children. Above all, motherhood was a role expected of all married women which, when enjoyed by queens, enhanced their status both ideologically and politically, and enriched the monarchy as a whole.

Chapter IV

The Queen's Family

1. Introduction

Since her coronation she has always exerted herself to aggrandise her relations, to wit, her father, mother, brothers and sisters. She had five brothers and as many sisters, and had brought things to such a pass that they had the entire government of this realm, to such an extent that the rest of the lords about the government were one, the Earl of Warwick.¹

Luchino Dallaghiexia's exaggerated portrayal of the rise of the Woodvilles in a frequently inaccurate newsletter to the duke of Milan was almost certainly based upon propaganda issued by the earl of Warwick in 1469. Nonetheless, it highlights the contemporary perception of the tensions that existed between the ambitions of a queen's natal and marital families. In his assessment of Elizabeth Woodville's queenship, Wood argued that, whereas 'a man's place tended to be defined primarily by his membership of a patrilineal family', women 'were understood by their society, within the context of a dual kinship relationship' in which their divided loyalties could ultimately prove destructive to both families.² The pernicious role of Elizabeth Woodville's natal family in Yorkist politics has been a feature of almost every discussion of Edward IV's marriage, and their position in the 1470s was summed up by Ramsay thus:

Edward's infatuation with regard to these men, which had already cost him the breach with the Nevilles, was destined to prove the ruin of his son.³

In 1963 Lander challenged the traditional view of the Woodvilles by arguing that their birth was neither so lowly nor their gains so great as had previously been asserted.⁴ In his biography of Edward IV, Ross reaffirmed Lander's conclusions, but argued that the

¹*CSP Milan*, 1:131.

²C.T. Wood, 'The First Two Queens Elizabeth, 1464-1503', in L.O. Fradenburg (ed.), *Women and Sovereignty* (Edinburgh, 1992), p. 127.

³J.H. Ramsay, *Lancaster and York. A Century of English History AD 1399-1485* (Oxford, 1892), 2:475; see for instance W. Stubbs, *The Constitutional History of England in its Origin and Development*, 5th edn (Oxford, 1903), 3:208, 226-7; P.M. Kendall, *Richard the Third* (London, 1955), pp. 54-6, 168-9; B. Wilkinson, *Constitutional History of England in the Fifteenth Century, 1399-1485* (London, 1964), pp. 146-8.

⁴J.R. Lander, 'Marriage and Politics in the Fifteenth Century: the Nevilles and the Wydevilles', *BIHR* 36 (1963): 129-50.

Woodvilles were nonetheless highly unpopular:

As a family, the Woodvilles were not conspicuous for charm and amiability. Like his daughter, Earl Rivers seems to have been greedy and grasping, and the duchess of Bedford was not much better. They could also be vengeful and overbearing . . . the main source of Woodville unpopularity was undoubtedly the contemporary belief that they exercised an excessive and malign influence upon the king.⁵

Lander's thesis has more recently been criticised by Hicks, who maintains that 'until 1464 the Wydevilles were least among nobles', that their gains in terms of marriage and lands were greater than Lander had allowed, and that these gains did not benefit the king or his son.⁶ In his 1997 MPhil dissertation, Westervelt attempted to reassess the role of the Woodvilles in Edward's second reign, arguing that the queen's family 'played a major part' in Edward IV's successful government in many parts of the realm, and therefore deserved their position in the political community, concluding that 'when the facts are looked at properly, it is hard to see the Woodvilles in a bad light'.⁷

Each of these more detailed assessments has concentrated on particular aspects of the Woodvilles' reputation and contribution to Yorkist politics. It is my purpose in this chapter to approach their role more broadly, and thereby achieve a more balanced understanding of their impact on Yorkist kingship. This needs to be seen in the wider context of other queens' families in later fifteenth-century politics. The families of Margaret of Anjou, Anne Neville and Elizabeth of York all impacted upon the identity and practice of their husbands' kingship.

One reason for this was that the difference between the king's kinship networks and those of his queen was not as clear cut as Wood's model implies. The purpose of many royal marriages was explicitly to 'unite' families, to forge bonds of allegiance between men through women. The perceived ideal nature of this bond is expressed in the language of Henry VI's letters to 'our very dear uncle of France', Charles VII, and 'our very dear father and uncle,' René and Charles of Anjou, in which he not only constructed himself in his wife's relationship to these men, but also presented his actions (the surrender of Maine) in

⁵C.D. Ross, *Edward IV* (London, 1974), pp. 97-9.

⁶M.A. Hicks, 'The Changing Role of the Wydevilles in Yorkist Politics to 1483', in C.D. Ross (ed.), *Patronage, Pedigree and Power in Later Medieval England* (Gloucester, 1979), pp. 65-6.

⁷T. Westervelt, 'The Woodvilles in the Second Reign of Edward IV 1471-83', (MPhil diss., University of Cambridge, 1997).

terms of his ‘regard to our said father and uncle, for whom it is most reasonable that we should do more than for others who are not so nearly connected with us.’⁸ In Edward IV’s reign it was commonplace to refer to the queen’s father or brother as the king’s kinsman, just as the husband of the king’s sister was also termed his brother.⁹ As with other noble families, the extent to which these legal bonds motivated loyalty and cooperation depended largely upon the personalities concerned, particularly the woman’s own closeness to her natal family.¹⁰ Nonetheless, it is evident from this language, and particularly Henry’s letter to Margaret’s family, that men did not consider themselves as independent of their wives’ kin as Wood implies. In this context, acts of generosity towards a queen’s family need not necessarily be perceived as instances of the queen manipulating the king, but rather as a response by king and queen to a joint sense of responsibility.

This chapter will begin by outlining the importance of the queen’s kin in constructing the identities, both positive and negative, of queen, king and kingship. It will then address the means by which kings managed and rewarded the queens’ families in order to strengthen their kingship, and to restrict the families’ potential to destabilise the political community. It will conclude by suggesting the value of various female kinship networks, involving members of the king’s natal family as well as those of the queen, in the effective exercise of fifteenth-century queenship.

2. The Queen’s Family and Identity

The importance of a queen’s natal family in her identity as queen was visually represented in the coat of arms she adopted. These arms appeared not only on her seal and on personal possessions such as books and prayer rolls, but often in more public spaces, notably as the arms of Queens’ College Cambridge, and in the windows of churches, as well as in the decoration of royal houses.¹¹ Usually, although not always, they were impaled with her

⁸‘Nostre treschier oncle de France . . . et noz treschiers pere et oncle’, ‘et pour contemplacion de nos diz pere et oncle pour lesquelz bien raisonnable chose est que feissions plus que pour autres qui ne sont pas si prouchains de nous’. J Stevenson (ed.), *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars of England in France during the Reign of Henry VI*, Rolls Series 22 (London, 1861-4), 2:639-40.

⁹*CPR 1467-76*, pp. 292, 283, 339, 415; *CPR 1476-85*, p. 115; PRO, E 404/75/1, fol. 12.

¹⁰J.C. Ward, *English Noblewomen in the Later Middle Ages* (London and New York, 1992), pp. 101-2.

¹¹Margaret of Anjou’s arms still exist at Queens’ College Cambridge, as well as in the Rycote Chapel at Oxford and were once displayed in the glass of her manor at Greenwich and in a window in Westminster Abbey. Elizabeth Woodville’s arms appear at Christ Church Cathedral Canterbury in both the Royal

husband's royal arms, thereby identifying her in the context of her husband's status as well. The principal motive in the selection of family connections referred to in a queen's arms seems to have been to draw attention to the nobility of her origins.

Margaret of Anjou's arms consisted of six quarterings - Hungary, Naples, Anjou, Bar, Lorraine, and even Jerusalem - in reference to her parental family's various claims to authority - Plate 15.¹² Elizabeth Woodville, who would simply have impaled her father's Woodville arms with those of John Grey during her first marriage, when queen, was granted permission to use a structure similar to that of Margaret of Anjou.¹³ It was not only a gesture of her current status, mimicking her predecessor, but also an opportunity to present her claim to the European noble ancestry expected of a queen. Her arms consisted of St Pol of Luxembourg, Baux, Lusignan-Cyprus, Ursins, St Pol and Woodville - Plate 16.¹⁴ All but the last referred to her mother's European connections, and enlarged upon her mother's own arms which were simply St Pol of Luxembourg quartered with Baux.¹⁵ The efforts to draw attention to her mother's lineage in the process of Elizabeth Woodville's coronation were thus sustained in subsequent constructions of her identity. The success of this strategy is suggested by the frequency with which chroniclers made reference to her as Jacquetta's

Window and on a roof boss in the north transept, and were once in the glass of the cloister at Fotheringhay College. Anne Neville's survive in the Rous Roll (BL, Add MS 48976) and in a copy of Vegetius' *De Re Militari* (BL, Royal MS 18 A XII, fol. 49). Elizabeth of York's arms appear at the foot of her tomb at Westminster Abbey and in the Lady Chapel at Winchester Cathedral. F. Sandford, *A Genealogical History of the Kings of England and Monarchs of Great Britain from the Conquest anno 1066 to 1677* (London, 1677), pp. 291, 299, 385, 435; A.R. Myers, *Crown, Household and Parliament in Fifteenth-Century England*, ed. C.H. Clough (London, 1985), p. 201; PRO, DL 28/1/11, fol. 7.

¹²The arms are as follows: barry of eight, argent and gules (Hungary), France Ancient with a label of three gules (Naples), argent, a cross potent between four plain crosses or (Jerusalem), France Ancient, within a bordure gules (Anjou), azure, two barbels haurient addorsed, and crusilly or, within a bordure gules (Bar), and or, on a bend gules, three eaglets displayed argent (Lorraine). Oxford, Jesus College, MS 124 (R). C. Boutell, *Heraldry, Historical and Popular* (London, 1863), p. 276.

¹³J. Louda and M. Maclagan, *Lines of Succession. Heraldry of the Royal Families of Europe* (London, 1981), p. 21; Sandford, *Genealogical History*, p. 299. Elizabeth Woodville's arms in turn became the model for the English-born queens of Henry VIII. Boutell, *Heraldry*, p. 149. According to Sandford she thus became the first English subject to multiply quarterings in a shield of arms.

¹⁴W. de Grey Birch, *Catalogue of the Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London, 1887), p. 102. These are argent a lion rampant, double tailed, gules, crowned or (St Pol of Luxembourg), Quarterly; 1 and 4 gules, a star argent; 2 and 3, azure, semée de lys or (Baux), barry of ten argent and azure, over all lion rampant gules (Cyprus), gules, three bendlets argent; a chief per fess of the second and or, charged with a rose of the first (Ursins), gules, three pallets vairée; on a chief or, a label of five points azure (St Pol), and argent, a fesse and canton conjoined gules (Woodville). Boutell, *Heraldry*, p. 277.

¹⁵Louda and Maclagan, *Lines of Succession*, p. 19.

daughter as well as Rivers's.¹⁶ Occasionally Elizabeth was identified only as her mother's daughter, as in the *Short English Chronicle*, probably written shortly after her coronation, which called her simply 'the duchess daughter of Bedford'.¹⁷

Anne Neville also drew on the arms of various female relatives, as well as using her father's Neville saltire in her shield - Plates 4 and 8. The first and fourth quarters were Beauchamp and Newburgh, and Clare and Despenser, in reference to her mother's inheritance; and the second quarter represented Montague and Monthermer, her paternal grandmother's barony.¹⁸ These arms were probably not intended to show a particular affinity to female relatives, but only to present the most illustrious lineage possible. Elizabeth of York, as Edward IV's heir, should have been entitled to use the royal arms, but Henry VII avoided officially accepting such an implication of her right to the throne because, like a joint coronation, the use of royal arms for queen and king might have suggested joint sovereignty. Nonetheless, Elizabeth and all her sisters quartered their father's royal arms with those of his Mortimer and de Burgh ancestors through whom he had claimed the throne, and there was no reference to their Woodville connections.¹⁹ Impaled with her husband's royal arms, Elizabeth of York's shield was apparently a space where such lineage could be acceptably displayed. It is unlikely that the references to Mortimer and de Burgh were intended purely to assert nobility; if such were the case aspects of her mother's uncontroversial European inheritance could have been included. Elizabeth of York's arms asserted her royal lineage which would later be adopted for both Henry VIII and Elizabeth I in genealogies asserting their sovereignty which traced their

¹⁶J. Gairdner (ed.), *Three Fifteenth-Century Chronicles*, Camden Society, new series 28 (1880), p. 180; Robert Fabyan, *The New Chronicles of England and France*, ed. H. Ellis (London, 1811), p. 654; Grafton in John Hardyng, *The Chronicle of John Hardyng*, ed. H. Ellis (London, 1812), p. 503; Raphael Holinshed, *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (London, 1803), 3:283. Compare with, for instance, a description of Margaret Woodville in letters patent of 1467: 'daughter of Richard earl Ryvers, and Jacquetta his wife, duchess of Bedford, mother of the king's consort Elizabeth, queen of England', *CPR 1461-67*, p. 547.

¹⁷Gairdner (ed.), *Three Fifteenth-Century Chronicles*, p. 80.

¹⁸Anne's elder sister Isabel, however, is shown in the Rous Roll with a far more complex shield of arms. The Neville saltire in Anne's arms on the Rous Roll has a label across, but this is absent from her arms in London, BL, Royal 18 A XII, fol.49.

¹⁹This was arranged first France and England quarterly (royal arms), second and third or a cross gules (de Burgh) and fourth or, three bars azure, on a chief of gold three pallets between two gyrons azure, over all an inescutcheon argent (Mortimer) and appears on the shield of arms at the foot of Elizabeth of York's tomb, but in the Lady Chapel at Winchester her husband's royal arms are impaled with party per pale France and England quarterly on the dexter side and quarterly Mortimer and de Burgh on the sinister. Sandford, *Genealogical History*, p. 465.

inheritance via Elizabeth of York, rather than via Henry VII.²⁰ For all Henry VII's attempts to assert his own right to kingship, the family connections expressed in his queen's arms were crucial to the sovereignty of the Tudor dynasty. That her sisters bore these arms also, made them a potential threat to Tudor sovereignty.

The families of other queens were not so fundamentally important to a king's position as was that of Elizabeth of York, but nonetheless frequently impacted on the negative and positive construction of both the queen's public identity and that of her king. Edward IV's use of Margaret's French nationality to represent her, and therefore her king, as threats to the English language and people, has been discussed above in Chapter I.²¹ The supposedly malign influence of her French family on her queenship was most often depicted in relation to the surrender of Maine. Her uncle, Charles VII of France, wrote letters to Margaret urging her to encourage Henry VI to hand over this territory shortly after her marriage. Margaret's biographers have tended to imply that Henry VI's reference to her requests on this matter, in the documentation surrendering Maine, is proof of her decisive role in politics at this early stage.²² Yet it is highly unlikely that the sixteen-year-old French girl can have materially swayed the judgement of the king on so vital and unpopular an issue. Griffiths maintains that 'her role was of no more than minor consequence,' simply reinforcing the king's own desire, because Henry believed that surrendering Maine was the only means of achieving peace.²³ Charles VII had probably involved his niece in these negotiations in an attempt to strengthen her link with her homeland at a crucially early stage, impressing upon her a responsibility to her parental family which might bear fruit when her influence at the English court had matured. However, the obvious unpopularity of this surrender may well have been a factor in Margaret's tendency to avoid involvement in English relations with France for most of her husband's reign. Yorkist chroniclers were nonetheless quick to associate the loss of French territories with Margaret, some maintaining that Suffolk had promised Maine as part of the marriage negotiations, and one

²⁰S. Anglo, *Images of Tudor Kingship* (London, 1992), pp. 101, 103.

²¹Chapter I.3.i.

²²J. Haswell, *The Ardent Queen: Margaret of Anjou and the Lancastrian Heritage* (London, 1976), pp. 61-4; P.A. Lee, 'Reflections of Power: Margaret of Anjou and the Dark Side of Queenship', *Renaissance Quarterly* 39 (1986):185.

²³R.A. Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI: the Exercise of Royal Authority* (London, 1981), pp. 252, 255.

even attributing the loss of Normandy and Guyenne to Margaret's marriage.²⁴ To associate Margaret more firmly with French interests made sense to these chroniclers, writing in the light of her 1462 alliance with Louis XI against the Yorkist regime. It was, however, only as a last resort that Margaret had turned to the French for help.

In 1457 there was a rumour that it was Margaret who had asked her father's confidant Pierre de Brézé to attack Sandwich in order to cut off supplies to Warwick in Calais, but this seems to have been unfounded.²⁵ Only after her son had been disinherited did she attempt to make an alliance with France's traditional allies in Scotland, and after Towton she and Henry surrendered Berwick to the Scots in return for their assistance.²⁶ Her negotiations with Louis XI in June 1462 were potentially even more threatening to England, when she secretly borrowed 20,000 *livres tournois* on the security of Calais.²⁷ Although for Margaret's family it was not uncommon to call on neighbouring princes for assistance in internal disputes in such a fashion, her negotiations provided strong fuel for Edward IV's propaganda in England.²⁸

Whereas Margaret's family, after the initial celebration of her role as peacemaker, was largely a negative influence on her identity, the contributions of Elizabeth Woodville's family to her identity were more varied. In spite of her English birth, Elizabeth's continental connections, like Margaret's, have been perceived as a source of tension. Ross claimed that 'Woodville influence was . . . exerted . . . strongly towards an English alliance with their Burgundian kinsmen'.²⁹ The Crowland Continuator, however, asserted that 'the queen's . . . kindred and affinity, in accordance with the king's will, arranged the marriage of Charles and Margaret and many other affairs likewise, against the earl [of Warwick]'s

²⁴J.S. Davies (ed.), *An English Chronicle of the Reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V and Henry VI*, Camden Society, old series 64 (1856), p. 61; F.W.D. Brie (ed.), *The Brut or The Chronicles of England*, EETS original series 131, 136 (London, 1906-8), 2:510, 512 (this section is from BL, Add MS 10099, fols.190-1).

²⁵Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 815.

²⁶Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 886.

²⁷Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 887.

²⁸See above Chapter I.3.i.

²⁹Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 105.

will'.³⁰ The subtle but important difference is the contemporary perception that the Woodvilles were the king's tools, rather than the other way around. The diplomatic and commercial situations to be taken into account by Edward in deciding his foreign policy were complex, and neither France nor Burgundy clearly offered the most advantageous alliance, but popular opinion was primarily against France whereas Edward's principal minister, the earl of Warwick, was in favour of France.³¹ The Woodvilles' links with Burgundy were in practice too tenuous for them to have a vested interest in directing England's alliance, but Edward contrived both to emphasise his queen's connections with foreign nobility and to entrust his foreign policy to unquestionably loyal servants by involving the Woodvilles closely in the administration of this policy.

More positively, the Woodvilles played a significant role in forming the identity of Edward IV's kingship. Edward endeavoured to cultivate an aura of chivalry for his court which, like the emphasis on proper ceremonial behaviour discussed in Chapter II, was designed to imply his legitimate descent from Edward III, who was, by this period, considered to have been one of England's greatest knights.³² The best recorded instance of Woodville chivalric behaviour was Anthony, Lord Scales', tournament with Anthony Count de la Roche, 'Bastard of Burgundy', in June 1467.³³ The tournament had been planned even before Elizabeth's coronation in a carefully conceived enactment of the literary motif of a queen and her ladies inspiring a chivalric quest.³⁴ According to a letter written by Scales, as he was speaking to the queen after mass he was suddenly surrounded by her ladies who bound upon his thigh a golden collar, garnished with pearls, attached to

³⁰Perduravitque favor comitis in omnem ipsius reginae parentelam quoadusque ipsius reginae cognati et affines istud aliud matrimonium quod inter Karolum et Margaretam actum est pro voto regis, invito comite, sicutet multa alia consilia fieri procurabant.' Pronay and Cox (eds.), *Crowland Chronicle Continuations*, pp. 114-15.

³¹Ross, *Edward IV*, pp. 104-9.

³²D.A.L. Morgan, 'The Political After-Life of Edward III: the Apotheosis of a Warmonger', *EHR* 112 (1997): 856-81; R. Barber, 'Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* and Court Culture under Edward IV', *Arthurian Literature* 12 (1993):138-9.

³³Gairdner (ed.), *Three Fifteenth-Century Chronicles*, pp. 92, 181; S. Bentley (ed.), *Excerpta Historica* (London, 1831), pp. 171-222; Barber, 'Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*', pp. 145-148.

³⁴For instance, Guinevere and her ladies despatching the knight to discover what all women want in the Wife of Bath's Tale, or Guinevere informing Arthur's knights of a table even greater than his in the ballad of 'King Arthur and the King of Cornwall'. Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. L.D. Benson, 3rd edn (Oxford, 1987), p. 117; F. Madden (ed.), *Syr Gawayne; a Collection of Ancient Romance-Poems, by Scottish and English Authors Relating to that Celebrated Knight of the Round Table* (London, 1971), p. 275.

which was a 'noble Floure de Souvenance enamelid, and in maner of an emprise,' and a scroll was dropped into his hat.³⁵ The Floure de Souvenance, or forget-me-not, was probably a device of Elizabeth's.³⁶ The scroll was read out before the king and it enjoined Scales to challenge to a tournament some 'noble man of foure lynages, and withoute any reproche' of his choice, for the 'augmentacion of knyghthode & recomendacion of noblesse . . . and to obeye & please my feire lady,' the queen.³⁷ Like her reputed Mayday wedding and chaste behaviour, this occasion was a means of writing Elizabeth into the noble culture of romance and chivalry, this time bringing her family with her.

The tournament itself was recorded in fine detail, probably by the Chester Herald, Thomas Whiting, as a memorial to Yorkist chivalric credentials.³⁸ Edward IV was clearly closely involved in the proceedings of the tournament which amounted to a propaganda stunt for his kingship: he invited Count de la Roche to attend parliament with him, commanded the London sheriffs to set up the tourney ground, confirmed the terms of the tournament, and had probably been connected with the affair since its inception.³⁹ The tournament also provided striking visual evidence of the extent to which Scales's sister's change in status had affected his own. Twice the record referred to his appearance as 'royal', and not without cause, for his horse was trapped in white cloth of gold, and some of the most powerful men in the land carried his armour before him: the duke of Clarence, the earl of Arundel, the earl of Kent, the duke of Buckingham, Lord Bouchier, Lord Herbert and Lord Stafford.⁴⁰ Before the year was out, Scales would be closely related in marriage to almost every one of them, marriages which, like Scales's royal attire, indicated the Woodvilles' new status as king's kin.

This was by no means the only instance of the Woodvilles' noble/chivalrous image.

³⁵Bentley (ed.), *Excerpta Historica*, p. 178.

³⁶There are small blue flowers, albeit of only four petals, among the roses and gillyflowers of the Skinners' picture of Elizabeth (Plate 1) and on her prie-dieu in the glass at Little Malvern Priory.

³⁷Bentley (ed.), *Excerpta Historica*, pp. 179-184.

³⁸Bentley (ed.), *Excerpta Historica*, p. 175.

³⁹Bentley (ed.), *Excerpta Historica*, p. 199.

⁴⁰Bentley (ed.), *Excerpta Historica*, pp. 203-5, 210. It is possible, since the duke of Buckingham was only eleven at the time, that the lord Buckingham mentioned was in fact simply the duke's uncle, Henry Stafford, although the fact that the young duke was a ward of the queen's increases the possibility that the child was called on for this ceremonial role. The Lord Stafford mentioned was probably Humphrey Stafford of Southwick, the one man in this group who was not destined to be related in marriage to the Woodvilles.

Elizabeth's father, three years after his love match with Jacquetta de St Pol, had taken part in the first recorded jousts in England for thirty years, against the duke of Norfolk at the Tower of London.⁴¹ The following year he was chosen to represent English knighthood in a 'feet of armes' with the Spanish knight Pedro Vasque de Saavedra, and when he was raised to the peerage as Lord Rivers in 1448, Henry VI made reference to his 'outstanding personal and military gifts'.⁴² Richard Barber has suggested that 'much of the revival of tournaments in England may have been due to the influence of the Woodville family'.⁴³ Such a reputation helps to explain Edward IV's willingness to accept this previously loyal Lancastrian into his affinity so soon after taking the throne. Anthony Woodville followed in his father's tradition, jousting before the king and queen at Whitsun 1458, and apparently establishing a sufficient chivalric reputation to have elicited a challenge from de la Roche some years before the tournament described above.⁴⁴ Shortly after his celebrated triumph against the Bastard of Fauconberg's attempts to defend the Lancastrian cause in 1471, Anthony, now Lord Rivers, requested permission to 'fight the infidels' in Portugal, although he probably never actually went.⁴⁵ In the jousts following Richard duke of York's wedding in 1475, it was Rivers who played the Prince's champion, dressed as 'the white hermit', challenging all comers, having subsidised certain gentlemen who claimed that the entrance fee was excessive.⁴⁶

Anthony Woodville also made a cultural impact on Edward's court with his patronage

⁴¹Barber, 'Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*', p. 142.

⁴²J. Gairdner (ed.), *The Paston Letters and Papers, 1422-1509* (Edinburgh, 1910), 1:41; D. MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville (1437-1492) Her Life and Times* (London, 1938), p. 12; Griffiths' words in Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 355; R. Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry* (London, 1970), p. 176. For a more recent positive assessment of Rivers's abilities as manifested in Henry VI's reign, see C. Carpenter, *The Wars of the Roses: Politics and the Constitution in England, c 1437-1509* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 171.

⁴³Barber, 'Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*', p. 142.

⁴⁴R. Flenley (ed.), *Six Town Chronicles of England* (Oxford, 1911), p. 160. Barber, 'Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*', p. 145. Scales also entered the lists of the Tree of Gold in celebration of Margaret of Burgundy's wedding in 1468, where de la Roche was the knight defendant, but, declaring that he and Scales were now brothers in arms, de la Roche arranged for Adolf de Cleves to take his place. Bentley, *Excerpta Historica*, p. 240; R. Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry*, 2nd edn (Woodbridge, 1995), p. 188.

⁴⁵C.L. Scofield, *The Life and Reign of Edward the Fourth* (London, 1967), 2:3-4; *CPR 1467-76*, p. 292; Gairdner (ed.), *Paston Letters*, 3:14.

⁴⁶G.D. Painter, *William Caxton: a Quincentenary Biography of England's First Printer* (London, 1976), p. 90.

of William Caxton, and his interest in humanism.⁴⁷ In his epilogue to Anthony Woodville's translation of *The Cordyal*, Caxton listed various European pilgrimages and works of religious charity undertaken by Woodville, as well as other translations and ballads the earl had written, and commented on the 'manifold bene fetes and large rewardes' he himself had received from the earl.⁴⁸ Mancini reported that

Lord Rivers was always considered a kind, serious, and just man, and one tested by every vicissitude of life. Whatever his prosperity he had injured nobody, though benefiting many.⁴⁹

This praise, which seems oddly out of keeping with Mancini's usual anti-Woodville stance, probably originated from Dr John Argentine, physician in the prince of Wales' household, or possibly even from an encounter with Rivers himself, given the earl's humanist interests.⁵⁰ Hicks has argued, however, that 'far from doing harm to no-one . . . there was nobody he hesitated to harm'.⁵¹ Although I will contest some of Hicks's assumptions later in this chapter, it cannot be denied that Rivers was ambitious and frequently ruthless. That he yet maintained such a positive reputation suggests that his was a charismatic personality, indeed so charismatic that the Carmelites of Doncaster reputedly venerated the hair shirt he was found to be wearing at his death.⁵²

Elizabeth Woodville's family thus contributed both to the public image of Edward's court as a centre of chivalry and culture in the tradition of that of Edward III, and to the effective enactment of the king's foreign policy with respect to Burgundy. They thereby identified Elizabeth within traditional queenly roles; as a bridge between her husband's court and the foreign court of her family, and as an inspiration to chivalry and culture.

In spite of the recent treason of Anne Neville's family, Richard III was anxious to identify himself closely with his wife's kin. Having acquired large parts of her parents' lands in the north of England through his marriage to Anne, Richard successfully contrived

⁴⁷Painter, *William Caxton*, pp. 5, 86-91, 113-16.

⁴⁸A. Woodville, trans., *The Cordyal*, ed. J.A. Mulders (Nijmegen, 1962), pp. 150-2.

⁴⁹'Dominus vero de Rivera semper habitus est vir gratus, gravis, et iustus omnique vita probatus: qui nemini unquam in tanta fortuna obfuerit, pluribus profuerit'. Dominic Mancini, *The Usurpation of Richard III*, ed. C.A.J. Armstrong (Gloucester, 1984), pp. 66-9.

⁵⁰Mancini, *Usurpation*, p. 19; M. Hicks, *Richard III, The Man behind the Myth* (London, 1991), p. 79.

⁵¹Hicks, 'Changing Role', p. 8.

⁵²John Rous, *Historia Regum Angliae*, ed. T. Hearne, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1745), p. 214.

to construct himself as the legitimate Neville heir in order to gain the northerners' loyalty.⁵³ As king, their loyalty was still vitally important to him, and he may well have been involved in commissioning at least one of the three surviving celebrations of Anne's lineage which culminated in depictions of Richard and Anne as king and queen.⁵⁴ One is a copy of the Salisbury Roll of Arms, the original of which was commissioned at the time of Richard Neville, earl of Salisbury's reburial in 1463, tracing the pedigree of the earls of Salisbury in full-length figures of the earls and their wives in heraldic mantles - Plate 4.⁵⁵ Another is the English version of the Rous Roll celebrating the Beauchamp earls of Warwick, probably composed to celebrate Richard and Anne's visit to Warwick in 1483 - Plate 8.⁵⁶ The third was the Beauchamp Pageant, celebrating the life of Anne's grandfather Richard Beauchamp, in which a genealogy wrongly described Anne as the eldest of Warwick's daughters, thereby presenting her son as the undoubted heir to the Beauchamp inheritance in preference to his cousins, Clarence's children - Plate 17.⁵⁷

Whereas identification with Anne Neville's kin gained Richard III the support of his northern subjects, identification with Elizabeth of York's kin gained Henry VII an entire kingdom. As explained above, the implications of her family connections potentially threatened his kingship also. Nonetheless, her role as a daughter of the house of York was a major aspect of her identity. Whereas her mother and Margaret of Anjou had adopted emblems personal to them - the gillyflower and the marguerite - Elizabeth of York used her father's white rose. Other Yorkist emblems such as the sun in splendour and the falcon and fetterlock were also used in Tudor iconography, most notably adorning the tomb of her eldest son, Arthur, in Worcester Cathedral, and the gates of Henry VII's chapel at Westminster Abbey.

Although Elizabeth of York's dead ancestors were valuable to her husband's claim to the loyalty of the English people, her living relatives did not provide such inevitably trustworthy servants as did her mother's family. On the contrary, among her kin were a

⁵³Hicks, *The Man behind the Myth*, pp. 56-60.

⁵⁴P. Tudor-Craig, *Richard III*, 2nd edn (Ipswich, 1977), pp. 57-8; A.F. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III's Books*, pp. 144-50; Hicks, *The Man behind the Myth*, pp. 57, 60.

⁵⁵The copy which shows Richard and Anne is BL, Loan 90. Richard himself was not earl of Salisbury, but his son Edward was given this title in 1478.

⁵⁶BL, Add MS 48976.

⁵⁷BL, Cotton Julius MS E IV.

large number of people with potentially better claims to the throne than Henry VII, primarily her de la Pole cousins whose role will be discussed later in this chapter. However, no queen's kin were entirely unproblematic; all needed to some extent to be managed by the king if their proximity to royal authority was not to threaten the stability of the realm.

3. Managing the Queen's Kin

Although queens of England chosen between 1066 and 1463 had always been of foreign descent, the question of how to manage the queen's kin was certainly not new in 1464. Henry I's half-English bride, Edith Matilda of Scotland, brought with her two dependent brothers, Alexander and David.⁵⁸ Henry's approach was to bind them more closely to the English royal family in service and marriage. To Alexander he gave the hand of his own illegitimate daughter Sybilla, and employment on his Welsh expedition of 1114.⁵⁹ To David, who became a prominent member of the Anglo-Norman court, he married Marie de Senlis, the wealthy heiress of one of his cousins.⁶⁰ Henry also arranged the marriage of the queen's sister, Mary, to Count Eustace III of Boulogne, and eventually that of their heiress also to his own nephew Stephen of Blois.⁶¹ Ultimately Alexander and David both became kings of Scotland, and Henry's generous treatment of them ensured peaceful relations between the two kingdoms. Mary's marriage, on the other hand, contributed to continued positive relations with Boulogne.⁶²

Henry III was less fortunate and less skilful with his wife's kin. Her uncles, William, Thomas, Peter, Boniface and Philip of Savoy were never dependent on Henry III and always had interests abroad as well as the commitments in England where their success enabled Queen Eleanor herself to exert more influence. Although they were able servants to Henry, English affairs did not always command their highest loyalties. They were also ambitious and often ruthless, and their influence and wealth bred jealousy and resentment against

⁵⁸R. Frame, *The Political Development of the British Isles 1100-1400* (Oxford, 1990), p. 26.

⁵⁹Frame, *Political Development*, p. 26.

⁶⁰C.W. Hollister, *Monarchy, Magnates and Institutions in the Anglo-Norman World* (London and Ronceverte, 1986), pp. 251-2; Frame, *Political Development*, p. 26.

⁶¹Hollister, *Monarchy, Magnates and Institutions*, p. 252.

⁶²Hollister, *Monarchy, Magnates and Institutions*, p. 252.

queen and king.⁶³ Contemporaries judged that Henry's generosity to them was not sufficiently repaid in service to England. Moreover, Eleanor was closely involved in arranging marriages between Anglo-Norman heirs or heiresses and Savoyards who became members of her affinity.⁶⁴ Such practice disrupted traditional noble marriage strategies and reputedly caused deep resentment. Even more unpopular and less politically useful to the king, however, were the Poitevin sons of queen Isabella of Angoulême, his mother, who opposed the Savoyards.⁶⁵

The potential queen Joan of Kent brought to her royal marriage two sons of a previous union, although, like Henry III's half-brothers, it was in her son's reign that their role was most important. Richard II was more fortunate, and perhaps more careful, with his half-brothers than Henry III had been. John Holland and his nephew, Thomas Holland, were members of Richard's inner circle in the 1390s, but were spared by Henry IV because their influence over the king was not considered as malign as that of the chamber knights of the 1380s, nor had Richard aroused resentment against them by so heaping them with honours as he had his cousin the earl of Rutland, or William le Scrope.⁶⁶

There was thus a careful balance to be struck in dealing with these figures who owed their place in the English power structure not to their fathers' positions, as was most commonly the case, but to their relationship to a woman in a unique role. The value of kinship networks was such that the king owed them a certain amount of his largesse, and if they were able politicians he might expect them to be exceptionally loyal and therefore especially valued servants. But if they appeared to the political community as interlopers gaining too many advantages and destabilising traditional political structures, the king would lose the respect necessary to authority, and potentially his throne.⁶⁷

⁶³M. Howell, *Eleanor of Provence. Queenship in Thirteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 25-6, 29-33, 46, 49-70.

⁶⁴Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, pp. 53-4.

⁶⁵Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, pp. 49-70.

⁶⁶C. Given-Wilson, *The Royal Household and the King's Affinity: Service, Politics and Finance in England 1360-1413* (London and New Haven, 1986), pp. 25, 161, 166, 185. They remained loyal to Richard and both lost their lives in a rebellion against Henry IV four months after the usurpation. M.H. Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages* (London, 1973), pp. 304-5.

⁶⁷In the manifesto issued by Warwick, Clarence and Archbishop Neville from Calais in 1469, Rivers, Jacquetta, Scales, and 'Ser John Wydevile, and his brethern', among others, were compared with the evil counsellors who had caused the depositions of Edward II, Richard II and Henry VI. J.O. Halliwell, 'A Chronicle of the First Thirteen Years of the Reign of King Edward the Fourth, by John Warkworth', in K.

The two principal methods of integrating a queen's family into the political community of her husband's realm, and of using them to his advantage, were to arrange marriages for them with nobles whose support was important, and to grant them lands or offices whose income would guarantee a lifestyle appropriate to their new status, and whose commitments would involve substantial service to the king.

3.i Marrying the Queen's Family

Henry VI's wife's kin were not a major factor in English politics. His mother, Catherine of Valois, had provided him with half-brothers, Edmund and Jasper Tudor, whom Henry seems to have managed effectively, because they do not appear to have caused significant resentment, but were useful to his kingship. Their ennoblement, to quote Griffiths, 'buttressed a dynastically enfeebled royal house', and Edmund also provided a suitable, if short-lived, husband for the wealthy heiress Margaret Beaufort, whose own potential claim to the throne meant that her husbands needed to be chosen with care.⁶⁸ One member of Margaret of Anjou's family who did settle in England was Marie, daughter of Count Charles of Maine, and her marriage to Thomas Courtenay, heir of the earl of Devon, was arranged at court in 1457, possibly by Margaret.⁶⁹ This alliance confirmed Devon's change of loyalties from York to the court party.⁷⁰

Elizabeth Woodville's family were notoriously different. According to Wood, the rapid series of advantageous marriages made by her family were a classic instance of the conflict inherent in a queen's dual (or triple) kinship networks.⁷¹ These marriages have been depicted by historians variously as a scheme to enrich and empower the queen's relatives in order to enhance her influence, directed either by Elizabeth Woodville, or by the besotted Edward IV to gratify her desires; or as a scheme of Edward's to construct an

Dockray (ed.), *Three Chronicles of the Reign of Edward IV* (Gloucester, 1988), pp. 46-8.

⁶⁸One of the accusations against Suffolk in 1450 was that he had planned to make his son king by marrying him to Margaret Beaufort. Griffiths, *Henry VI*, pp. 679, 698.

⁶⁹Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 802; R.A. Griffiths, 'The King's Court during the Wars of the Roses: Continuities in an Age of Discontinuities' in R.A. Griffiths, *King and Country, England and Wales in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1991), p. 58. Marie's cream and gold wedding gown was provided by the great wardrobe, PRO, E 101/410/14; E 101/410/19.

⁷⁰Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 802.

⁷¹Wood, 'First Two Queens Elizabeth', p. 127.

alternative court party so that he would no longer be dependent upon the Nevilles.⁷² The consequence of this was supposedly the resentment which led first to Warwick and Clarence's rebellion in 1469, and ultimately to Richard III's usurpation. In 1963 Lander argued that the assumption that the marriages were highly unpopular was based almost entirely upon a very pro-Neville chronicle fragment, once attributed to William of Worcester, and concluded that the marriages were neither as unpopular nor as surprising as had generally been maintained.⁷³ Hicks responded to this by arguing that the Woodvilles 'exploited Edward's sense of obligation to integrate themselves among the higher nobility,' and suggested that a number of the marriages were effectively achieved through bribery from the king.⁷⁴ That many of those who married the Woodvilles received material benefits from the king is incontestable, but whether they might fairly be seen as bribes is another matter.

I would argue that a detailed examination of each of the marriages indicates that they were not so much a grand plan by king or queen, forcing the nobility to accept her lowly family, as a scramble both by the Woodvilles and those already in royal favour to take optimum advantage of a new factor in the English power structure, with a degree of supervision from the king. The king's involvement was explicitly referred to in the only surviving Woodville marriage contract - that of Mary Woodville to William, son of Lord Herbert - which referred to the fact that the union was 'at the instance of our Souereyn Lord the King and his pleasure'.⁷⁵ Several of the weddings appear to have taken place at court.⁷⁶

Sir John Paston's lengthy negotiations towards a marriage with the queen's cousin, Anne Haute, and later his mother's enthusiasm for another potential match 'ryght nygh of the Qwenys blood' are well known.⁷⁷ It is thus unsurprising that more noble families actively sought alliances with those closer to the queen than the Hautes, her own brothers

⁷²Lander, 'Marriage and Politics', p. 120 n.1; MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville*, pp. 42, 60-2; Ross, *Edward IV*, pp. 87, 92-5.

⁷³Lander, 'Marriage and Politics', p. 134-51.

⁷⁴Hicks, 'Changing Role', pp. 60-83.

⁷⁵T.B Pugh, 'The Magnates, Knights and Gentry', in S.B. Chrimes, C.D. Ross and R.A. Griffiths (eds.), *Fifteenth-Century England 1399-1509: Studies in Politics and Society* (Manchester, 1972), pp. 92-3.

⁷⁶Griffiths, 'The King's Court', pp. 26-7.

⁷⁷Gairdner (ed.), *Paston Letters*, 3:231; C. Richmond, *The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century. Fastolf's Will* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 167-175.

and sisters, for by this means their offspring might be cousins to a king. They could expect better relations with Edward IV and hence more power, as happened to William Lord Herbert, or at least substantial grants of offices or lands befitting those who had just made a marriage alliance with the king's family.⁷⁸ Rivers and Jacquetta were fully involved in these negotiations: all of Mary Woodville's dowry was drawn from her mother's dower lands (which would otherwise have reverted to the crown on her death).⁷⁹

The most controversial of the marriages was that of Elizabeth's twenty-year-old brother John to the thrice widowed Catherine Neville, dowager duchess of Norfolk.⁸⁰ This the pseudo-Worcester calls a 'maritagium diabolicum,' scathingly referring to the duchess as a 'juvencula' of about eighty.⁸¹ Lander maintains, however, that she could not have been more than sixty-six and that such marriages of youth and age were by no means unusual.⁸² What was 'diabolical' was the economic threat posed to the Mowbray and Beaumont families by yet another marriage of the indomitable woman who had already proved herself happy to convey her husbands' property away from common law heirs: she secured dower lands from her first and third husbands to the daughter of her second marriage.⁸³ Lander does not attempt to suggest why an independent widow should have accepted such a marriage, but Hicks proposes that she hoped thereby to protect herself from such 'powerful reversionary interests' as the duke of Clarence or Lord Hastings, or perhaps because the Woodvilles themselves threatened her security of tenure.⁸⁴ That the king's own aunt might be forced unwillingly into such an alliance is highly improbable.⁸⁵

⁷⁸Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 78; Lander, 'Marriage and Politics', p. 138; *CPR 1461-67*, pp. 533, 547; *CPR 1467-76*, p. 25.

⁷⁹Similarly, in a grant of offices and lands to the earl of Arundel, which were to be inherited by his son Thomas and Thomas' heirs by Margaret Woodville, the reference to Rivers and Jacquetta probably indicates their involvement in this arrangement; *CPR 1461-67*, p. 547.

⁸⁰Stevenson (ed.), *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars*, 2:783; *GEC*, 9:607.

⁸¹Stevenson (ed.), *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars*, 2:783.

⁸²Lander, 'Marriage and Politics', p.136.

⁸³*CPR 1461-67*, pp. 178-9; *GEC*, 2:134; Lander, 'Marriage and Politics', p. 136.

⁸⁴Hicks, 'Changing Role', p. 69.

⁸⁵Due to the 1461 attainder on the duchess's Beaumont step-son, it was easy for the king to grant the reversion of six Lincolnshire manors from her Beaumont dower lands to John Woodville in August 1467. Although John later had seisin of these and certain other manors in her right, his gains from the Beaumont forfeitures were still significantly less than the 20 manors secured by Hastings. Ironically, the duchess

From the king's point of view, encouraging or allowing marriage with the queen's sisters could be used as a mark of favour to loyal supporters. Like the Herbert wedding, that of the queen's sister Eleanor to Anthony Grey, son of the earl of Kent, was almost certainly a means of strengthening Edward's ties with an already important supporter.⁸⁶ The queen's attempts to bind the wealthy young ward in her care, Henry duke of Buckingham, in loyalty to Edward's family by marrying him to her sister was to prove less successful.⁸⁷ Nonetheless, he was the only noble who might convincingly be portrayed as an unwilling participant in the Woodville marriages, and it was probably only in the light of later political developments that he resented his marriage. The earl of Warwick, however, reputedly felt 'secret displeasure' at the union, no doubt because the young duke would have made an appropriate husband for one of his own daughters.⁸⁸

Another marriage which might reasonably have aroused Warwick's ire was that of Elizabeth Woodville's son Thomas Grey to Anne Holland, only child of Edward IV's sister Anne. The younger Anne was already betrothed to the earl of Warwick's nephew, George Neville, but the two mothers, Anne and the queen, broke this contract. The queen paid her sister-in-law 4,000 marks, the duchess settled eleven manors on the queen's feoffees, and between them they persuaded the king to arrange for all of the lands of the older Anne's estranged husband, Henry Holland, to revert to her daughter, the queen's daughter-in-law.⁸⁹ The willingness of the king's own sister to wed her daughter to the queen's kin is perhaps the most convincing evidence that the majority of the nobility were happy to accept the Woodvilles into their midst and capitalise upon the unique opportunity provided by an English-born queen to bind their families more closely to royalty. The marriages served both to strengthen the network of non-Neville Yorkist supporters and to exalt the queen's family.

outlived her last husband by at least fourteen years because he was executed by Warwick in 1469, whereas she was still sufficiently active in 1483 to be in receipt of robes for Richard III and Anne's coronation. *CPR 1467-76*, pp. 19, 104, 352; Hicks, 'Changing Role', p. 69; A.F. Sutton and P.W. Hammond (eds.), *The Coronation of Richard III: the Extant Documents* (Gloucester, 1983), p. 377.

⁸⁶Lander, 'Marriage and Politics', p. 138.

⁸⁷Stevenson (ed.), *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars*, 2:786; *CPR 1461-67*, pp. 342, 463; *GEC*, 2:389.

⁸⁸...secretam displicentiam', Stevenson (ed.), *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars*, 2:786.

⁸⁹Stevenson (ed.), *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars*, 2:786; *CPR 1461-67*, p. 533; *CPR 1467-76*, pp. 32-33.

With the exception of Thomas Grey, whose wife died within two years of his reaching majority, those involved in these marriages were not those members of the queen's family who wielded the most power.⁹⁰ It is possible that occasionally their newly acquired relatives proved helpful to Richard, Earl Rivers or Anthony, Lord Scales, but it would be hard to argue that the marriages, rapid and impressive though they were, proved a major factor in the ultimate fall of Elizabeth's marital family.⁹¹

It was for the influential Anthony Woodville, however, that the most ambitious marriage plans were contemplated. In 1477, the king, having refused his sister, Margaret's, suggestion of a marriage between her step-daughter, Mary of Burgundy, and the duke of Clarence (fearing the political consequences in England), suggested Rivers should marry Mary instead.⁹² Commynes observed,

it is true that if my lady of Burgundy had wanted to agree to marry Lord Rivers, . . . he would have come to her aid with a good number of soldiers. But it would have been a very unequal marriage for he was only a minor earl and she was the greatest heiress of her time.⁹³

Mary was consequently persuaded to marry Archduke Maximilian instead.

That Rivers's lineage was not considered a drawback to other foreign rulers is indicated in James III of Scotland's suggestion in 1478 that Rivers should marry the

⁹⁰For Anne Grey's death see *DNB*, 8:644; *GEC*, 5: 215.

⁹¹Buckingham's resentment at his lack of power under Edward IV was probably far more relevant to his support for Richard III than any antagonism toward his Woodville wife. J.B. Harris, *Edward Stafford, third Duke of Buckingham, 1478-1521* (Stanford, 1986), p. 21. It has been argued that it was the Woodvilles who restricted his power by their domination in Wales, but more recently Westervelt has suggested that he proved inept at handling the small amount of power he was given by Edward IV on reaching his majority, and consequently was not trusted with more later. Hicks, *The Man behind the Myth*, p. 115; Westervelt, 'The Woodvilles', pp. 28-9.

⁹²Ross, *Edward IV*, pp. 250-1; Scofield, *Edward the Fourth*, 2:184-5.

⁹³'Il est vray que si madamoyselle de Bourgogne eust voulu entendre au mariage de monsr de Rivières, frère de la royne d'Angleterre, il l'eust secourue avec bon nombre de gens; mais c'estoit mariaige mal sortable, car c'estoit ung petit conte et elle la plus grand heritière qui fut de son temps'. Philippe de Commynes, *Mémoires*, ed. J. Calmette (Paris, 1925), 2:247-8. There is no contemporary evidence for assertions that this plan was another instance of Elizabeth's ambition for the advancement of her family. As Ross observed, 'England really had no suitable husband to offer Mary of Burgundy, other than the duke of Clarence'. Ross, *Edward IV*, pp. 250-1. Scofield's scathing assessment of Rivers's suitability for protecting Burgundy appears to be based on an incident recorded in the Paston letters in which the king accused Rivers of cowardice. Scofield, *Edward the Fourth*, 2:3. She suggests that this was in response to Rivers's desire to go on crusade in July 1471. That Edward should make such an accusation in a temper at the prospect of losing a valued servant as he was trying to consolidate his recently regained hold on the throne is unsurprising. It should not necessarily be taken as a measured judgement of Rivers's character.

Scottish king's sister, Margaret.⁹⁴ Again Rivers was being perceived as an appropriate alternative to the king's brother, Clarence, whose proposed union with Margaret of Scotland had also been vetoed by Edward IV.⁹⁵ Internal discord in Scotland followed by conflict with England, however, ultimately prevented this marriage.⁹⁶ Although neither foreign union took place, Edward IV evidently viewed his brother-in-law in similar terms to members of his own natal family: as a suitable guarantor of foreign alliance through marriage. Rivers eventually married a granddaughter of Edmund Beaufort, Mary Fitzlewis, whose East Anglian family connections strengthened the existing Woodville/Court influence in that region.⁹⁷

On first taking the throne, Henry VII similarly viewed his wife's relatives as potential tools in consolidating his position. Her eldest sister, Cecily, as Elizabeth of York's heir, was as much a potential threat as an asset, so her marriage to Ralph Scrope, the brother of one of Richard III's allies, was dissolved, and she was instead married to Henry's loyal half-uncle John Lord Welles.⁹⁸ It was in part a reward for Welles' service, and in part a means of neutralising Cecily's political potential. Her younger sisters, Anne and Katharine, however, as well as their mother, Elizabeth Woodville, Henry planned to use in an alliance with Scotland.⁹⁹ Elizabeth Woodville was to marry James III, while her daughters were to marry two of his sons. Henry had perhaps hoped by this means to avoid financial responsibility for his mother-in-law. The assassination of James III, however, brought an end to the scheme, and no further similar arrangements were made. As Henry's position strengthened and his own children were born, the queen's sisters were of less value to him. At the time of Henry VII's accession, Anne was nine and Katharine only six, so it is unsurprising that, in contrast to the immediate marriages of Elizabeth Woodville's kin, it was almost a decade after their sister's marriage that they finally married members of the

⁹⁴Scofield, *Edward the Fourth*, 2:251.

⁹⁵Scofield, *Edward the Fourth*, 2:251.

⁹⁶Ross, *Edward IV*, pp. 278-9, 290; Scofield, *Edward the Fourth*, 2:251-2.

⁹⁷R. Horrox, *Richard III: a Study of Service* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 80.

⁹⁸R. Horrox, *Richard III: a Study of Service*, p. 295.

⁹⁹Chrimes, *Henry VII*, p. 279.

English nobility.¹⁰⁰

In 1502, when Cecily chose a third husband for herself, Thomas Kyme, the king banished her from court and tried to deprive her of the life-interest in his estates that Welles had bequeathed her.¹⁰¹ She had not only insulted Henry by failing to ask his permission, but had also disparaged the royal family by bringing a mere esquire into it. In the wake of his son, Arthur's, death the previous year, Henry would have been particularly sensitive to the fact that any son of Cecily's by Kyme might easily challenge Henry's own offspring's right to the throne, especially if only daughters survived.

Arranging marriages for members of the queen's family was thus much more than a matter of gratifying the queen's ambition for their advancement. It enabled a king to strengthen his ties both with the English nobility and with foreign powers, and by placing her family within existing networks of noble authority, or in the care of men loyal to him, diminished their potential to disrupt the balance of power by their unique position. But marriage was only one means of managing the queen's family.

3.ii Offices and Lands

In his assessment of Elizabeth Woodville's response to the triple loyalties of her unique position, Charles Wood argued that Elizabeth

seems almost automatically to have assumed that her own good fortune had to be shared by the rest of her family. Thus all her female relatives quickly found themselves married into the high nobility; secular males received the most honorific of titles (son Thomas Grey, for example, becoming the marquis of Dorset); and clerical brother Lionel became archdeacon of Oxford at nineteen, dean of Exeter at twenty-two, and bishop of Salisbury at twenty-nine. To these honours were added showers of income derived from newly acquired estates and newly acquired spouses. The extent to which both Woodvilles and Greys began to prosper was truly remarkable, but their successes rested entirely on those of the queen. Though not a sovereign, it looked for the moment as though she were acting with the powers of one.¹⁰²

As I have argued in the previous section, Elizabeth Woodville did not play a major role in arranging the marriages that benefited not only her family but also the king and many of his

¹⁰⁰See below section 4.

¹⁰¹M.K. Jones and M.G. Underwood, *The King's Mother. Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 341.

¹⁰²Wood, 'First Two Queens Elizabeth', p.127.

nobles. She may well have encouraged the king to promote and reward these marriages in private, as has commonly been assumed, but she was scarcely 'acting with the powers of [a sovereign]'. The same must be said of most of the titles and estates acquired by her relatives, which clearly did arouse comment, if not resentment, in some quarters. It was in 1469 that Edward IV's fool, Woodhous, allegedly joked 'I have passed thorwth many Cuntrees of your Realm, and In placys that I have passid the Ryvers been soo hie that I could hardly scape thorw theym'.¹⁰³

Also in 1469, Warwick, Clarence and Archbishop Neville issued a manifesto asserting that certain of the king's 'true subgettes of diverse partyes of this his realme' had complained to them of

the disceyvabille covetous rule and gydyng of certeyne ceducious persones; that is to sey, the Lord Ryvers, the Duchesse of Bedford his wyf, Ser William Herbert, Erle of Pembroke, Humfrey Stafford, Erle of Devenshire, the Lordis Scalis and Audeley, Ser John Wydevil, and his brethern, Ser John Fogge, and other of theyre myschevous rule opinion and assent, wheche have caused oure seid sovereign Lord and his seid realme to falle in grete poverte of myserie, disturbyng the mynystracion of the lawes, only entending to thaire owen promocion and enrichyng.¹⁰⁴

The queen is notably absent from this list of corrupting influences on the king. In the light of the comment by Dallaghiexia which heads this chapter, it is unlikely that the authors of the petition considered Elizabeth entirely innocent of the crimes attributed to the rest of her family. Rather, it would have been impolitic and a contravention of the respect due to a king's consort, to accuse her directly.

As Lander observed, resentment against the Woodvilles among the nobility cannot have been as strong as Warwick had anticipated, for very few of them were prepared to support his challenge to the king.¹⁰⁵ Lander also argued that it was wrong to perceive the Woodvilles as exceptionally avaricious and ambitious, maintaining that 'contemporaries would naturally have expected the queen's family to enrich themselves as far as they could. By fifteenth-century standards they would have been quite abnormal had they not done so.'¹⁰⁶ His argument that the Woodvilles received far less than supporters such as Hastings

¹⁰³A.H. Thomas and I.D. Thornley (eds.), *The Great Chronicle of London* (London, 1938), p. 208.

¹⁰⁴Halliwell (ed.), 'Chronicle . . . by John Warkworth', p. 68.

¹⁰⁵Lander, 'Marriage and Politics', pp. 139, 147-8.

¹⁰⁶Lander, 'Marriage and Politics', p. 143.

or Herbert was challenged by Hicks on the grounds that by 1464 Edward simply had less to give, having already distributed most of the land forfeited by Lancastrians, and that in fact 'Edward's patronage was more substantial than Lander allowed'.¹⁰⁷

However, if, as I have suggested, kings felt a greater responsibility to their queen's kin than is generally acknowledged, it is more constructive to compare the Woodville gains with those of Edward's brothers at this stage. Although given the title duke of Gloucester, Richard was too young to be in a position of particular power in the 1460s and was in the custody first of Archbishop Bouchier and then the earl of Warwick.¹⁰⁸ George duke of Clarence, on the other hand, was given livery of his lands on 10 July 1466, when not yet 17.¹⁰⁹ These lands had mostly been granted to him between August 1464 and July 1465, the very same time that Edward was starting to provide for the Woodvilles.¹¹⁰ Clarence had been assigned possession or reversion of eighty manors by September 1464 but it was in the following months that the receipt of a large part of four major and several minor estates made him into a 'great magnate,' such that his total income by 1467 was about £3,400 yearly, second only to that of the Earl of Warwick.¹¹¹ By 1473 it was to have reached over £6,000, largely due to the addition of many of Warwick's lands.¹¹² Certainly Rivers's initial increase in fortune was also striking. Like Gower's King Alphonse, Edward made his wife's father an earl, but this was two years after the marriage and was not accompanied by the lands necessary to make his hereditary income up to the 1,000 marks traditional for an earl.¹¹³ Instead of granting away lands, Edward appointed Rivers Treasurer of England in March 1466 and then Constable of England in August 1467, effectively doubling his existing income to over £3,000, but binding receipt of this wealth to a heavy commitment of service.¹¹⁴ Rivers was consequently wealthier than any lord except Warwick or Clarence

¹⁰⁷Hicks, 'Changing Role', pp. 65-6.

¹⁰⁸M. Hicks, *False, Fleeting, Perjur'd Clarence. George, Duke of Clarence, 1449-78* (Gloucester, 1980), pp. 25-6.

¹⁰⁹Hicks, *False, Fleeting, Perjur'd Clarence*, p. 26.

¹¹⁰Hicks, *False, Fleeting, Perjur'd Clarence*, p. 32.

¹¹¹Hicks, *False, Fleeting, Perjur'd Clarence*, pp. 172, 179.

¹¹²Hicks, *False, Fleeting, Perjur'd Clarence*, p. 180.

¹¹³*GEC*, 11:21; Hicks, 'Changing Role', p. 66.

¹¹⁴*CPR 1461-67*, p.516; *CPR 1467-77*, p.19; Hicks, 'Changing Role', p. 66.

at this point, but given that in 1461 Clarence had been a ten-year-old boy with nothing and Rivers was the husband of the second lady in the land, and had proved his governing abilities under the Lancastrians, it is clear that Clarence had received by far the greater portion of Edward's bounty.

There were other Woodvilles to consider, most notably Elizabeth's eldest brother Anthony, but his material gains in the early years did not compare with those of his father. He was given several minor grants and appointed King's Lieutenant of the Isle of Wight in November 1466.¹¹⁵ His brother Lionel, only eleven at the time of the king's marriage, was nonetheless appointed archdeacon of Norwich in July 1467, and further ecclesiastical honours were to follow in the second half of Edward's reign.¹¹⁶ It was probably due to the queen that he became the warden of the hospital of St Katherine by the Tower of London, which had been founded by Queen Matilda in 1147-8 and had thereafter become a traditional site of queenly patronage.¹¹⁷ The queen's youngest brothers, Richard and Edward, however, do not appear to have benefited in any substantial manner, an impression strengthened by the fact that Richard was pardoned at the readeption in 1471.¹¹⁸ Her brother John, who had married the elderly duchess of Norfolk, was given a place in Elizabeth's household as her master of horse with an annuity of £40.¹¹⁹ Her sister Anne Lady Bouchier and her sister-in-law Elizabeth Lady Scales were her principal ladies in waiting, again in receipt of £40 a year.¹²⁰ Significant though these grants and appointments

¹¹⁵*CPR 1461-67*, p. 535.

¹¹⁶Lander, 'Marriage and Politics', p. 141; Wood, 'First Two Queens Elizabeth', p. 127.

¹¹⁷Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, pp. 283-6; *CPR 1467-76*, pp. 54-1.

¹¹⁸*GEC*, 11:24. They were still minors in 1464.

¹¹⁹A.R. Myers, *Crown, Household and Parliament in Fifteenth-Century England*, ed. C.H. Clough (London, 1985), p. 256.

¹²⁰Myers, *Crown, Household*, p.288. Anne's brother-in-law, John Lord Berners, became Elizabeth's chamberlain and his son, Sir Humphrey Bouchier was one of her stewards. Since Lord Berners had always been loyal to the Yorkists, was brother-in-law to Richard duke of York and had been imprisoned by the Lancastrians after the second battle of St Albans, these appointments probably accorded with the king's desires too. Her other steward, however, was James Haute, a kinsman of the William Haute who had married her aunt Jane Woodville. He was not the only representative of this branch of her family in her household for one of her ladies was Alice Fogge, second wife of Sir John Fogge who had previously been married to her cousin Alice Haute. Again there was also a connection with the king for John Fogge had been treasurer of the king's household since 1461. A comparison with references to the corresponding officials of Margaret of Anjou's household proves that none of these relatives received a higher fee than their predecessors, and Myers asserts that there is no reason to believe that they treated the posts as sinecures. Myers, *Crown, Household*, pp. 256, 287-8; Bentley, *Excerpta Historica*, p. 250; J.C. Wedgwood, *History of Parliament:*

were to the recipients, they do not amount to anything like the political domination or financial manipulation implied by Dallaghixia. As Hicks has shown, Rivers and Scales did pervert the laws of inheritance and extort land on several occasions prior to 1469.¹²¹ However, to see the queen's entire family as a horde of grasping and ambitious parvenus dominating the court, is to exaggerate the behaviour of the two principal members of the family and then unfairly attribute it to all their kin. Warwick's motives in 1469 were clearly resentment at Edward's refusal to allow the earl to dominate English politics, but the queen's kin provided useful scapegoats for his ambition, using a familiar discourse of evil counsellors supplanting true nobility. Richard of Gloucester was to adopt a similar strategy with greater success in 1483.

After the Lancastrian readeption of 1471, Edward made even fewer grants to his queen's relatives, although he did appoint a number of them to the prince of Wales' council as well as helping Anthony (now Lord Rivers) and Thomas marquis of Dorset to build up influence in Norfolk and the south west respectively.¹²² Hicks has drawn attention to the second Lord Rivers's continued unprincipled pursuit of his own advantage, criticising Edward IV for failing to check his activities and concluding that 'the Wydevilles' growing power at the expense of others again generated factions within the political consensus that ultimately undermined the crown. As only they benefited, not Edward or his sons, their influence, as Professor Ross observed, was malign.'¹²³ Yet as Hicks conceded earlier in this same article, his study concentrated 'on the benefits which the Wydevilles received from the crown, rather than on their services'.¹²⁴ Such an approach inevitably presents a strong conflict in the interests of the queen's three families.

Theron Westervelt has recently attempted to redress the balance with his study of the service provided by the Woodvilles during the second reign of Edward IV.¹²⁵ Westervelt's determination to refute Hicks's thesis sometimes leads him to assume a more positive role

Biographies of the Members of the Commons House 1439-1509 (London, 1936), p. 340; *CPR 1461-67*, p. 59.

¹²¹Hicks, 'Changing Role', p. 70.

¹²²Westervelt, 'The Woodvilles', pp. 9-53.

¹²³Hicks, 'Changing Role', p. 83.

¹²⁴Hicks, 'Changing Role', p. 60.

¹²⁵Westervelt, 'The Woodvilles', *passim*.

for the Woodvilles in Edward's administration than the evidence can justify. Nonetheless, he convincingly undermines the traditional negative view of the queen's family, arguing that the king permitted only Rivers, Dorset and Richard Grey to play a significant role in these years, and that they proved themselves able, hardworking, efficient and loyal administrators in areas of the kingdom where such men were greatly needed. On the prince's council in Wales they made an important contribution to establishing law and order, and were prevented from turning the principality into a personal power base by their lack of lands in Wales.¹²⁶ Due to his wife's estates, Rivers proved to be the only landowner in Norfolk with the 'unique combination of ability, loyalty and closeness to the king, vital in such a potentially touchy area', which made him an obvious candidate for authority there, building up 'a system of affinity to bring order to Norfolk'.¹²⁷ Similarly, when other potential leaders in the south west proved inadequate, Dorset's successive marriages to west country heiresses, as well as the queen's own interest in the Holland lands there, made him the most appropriate option.¹²⁸ Those Woodvilles who apparently lacked the administrative skills of Rivers and his nephews - Richard and Edward - were not granted authority.

Not only had the queen provided from her family several able and exceptionally loyal servants to the crown, but her family also had a web of connections in Essex and Northamptonshire which proved very useful in Edward's assertion of authority in these counties.¹²⁹ In response to Hicks's charge that the Woodvilles created factional divisions, Westervelt argues (as Hicks himself has elsewhere) that prior to 1483 the only evidence for relations between Gloucester and the Woodvilles are instances of friendship, trust and service.¹³⁰ Westervelt also argues that the enmity between Hastings and the Woodvilles is unlikely to have been as deep or long-standing as the events of 1483 led chroniclers to assert.¹³¹ The ease with which Richard III overturned Woodville power on Edward IV's

¹²⁶Westervelt, 'The Woodvilles', pp. 9-29.

¹²⁷Westervelt, 'The Woodvilles', pp. 33-4.

¹²⁸Westervelt, 'The Woodvilles', p. 46-8.

¹²⁹Westervelt, 'The Woodvilles', pp. 40-41, 54-5.

¹³⁰Westervelt, 'The Woodvilles', pp. 60-1; Hicks, *The Man behind the Myth*, pp. 96-9.

¹³¹Westervelt, 'The Woodvilles', pp. 61-65.

death might suggest that they were as unpopular as his propaganda maintained.¹³² However, the speed and surprise of his coup left little time for resistance. Of far greater significance must be the body of support received by the Woodvilles only a few months later from men who stood to lose a great deal by joining them in the series of risings known as Buckingham's rebellion.¹³³

In conclusion, the queen's shrewd, ambitious and often ruthless oldest brother did not deserve Mancini's accolade that 'whatever his prosperity he had injured nobody,' yet the energetic and intelligent characteristics which enabled Anthony Woodville, Lord Rivers to progress so far whilst still appearing to be a cultured nobleman were put to good use by the king who could count upon his loyalty. The rest of the queen's family and connections were similarly used and permitted to reward themselves according to their abilities, as Edward IV took advantage of the unique opportunities that his English queen's large family provided to consolidate his authority over the kingdom he had conquered. The interests of Elizabeth's non-royal families were closely bound with the success of her royal family, and thus the needs of all were more often in harmony than not.¹³⁴

The family of the second queen Elizabeth presented another unique challenge to the English monarchy. Henry's immediate strategy, like that of his predecessors, was to involve the queen's family in court life, attempting to encourage and publicly display their loyalty to his kingship. This was most strikingly apparent at the christening of Prince Arthur, which was dominated by Woodvilles, Yorks and their kin, and for once Lady Margaret Beaufort was nowhere to be seen.¹³⁵ Elizabeth Woodville was godmother, and given precedence over the godfathers. The queen's sister, Anne, carried the chrisom cloth while another sister, Cecily, carried the prince himself, and her sister-in-law, the marchioness of Dorset, carried the prince's train. The marquis of Dorset and the queen's cousin, the earl of Lincoln, assisted Cecily. Several of the queen's Woodville uncles and aunts also took part. This bias towards the queen's family and particularly the large number of women is unusual at a christening, being the result of the queen's English birth, the

¹³²Hicks, *The Man behind the Myth*, pp. 91-4, 101-7; A.J. Pollard, 'Dominic Mancini's Narrative of the Events of 1483', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 38 (1994): 152, 158.

¹³³Hicks, *The Man behind the Myth*, p. 132; A.E. Conway, 'The Maidstone Sector of Buckingham's Rebellion, October 18 1483', *Archaeologia Cantiana* 37 (1925): 102-5.

¹³⁴See Chapter III.4.iii for the Woodvilles' role as scapegoats at Richard III's usurpation.

¹³⁵John Leland, *De Rebus Britannicis Collectanea*, ed. T. Hearne (London, 1774), 4:204-7.

superiority of her family over that of the king, and the fact that her closest living relatives were women. There were some representatives of the king's side, but the staunch Lancastrian earl of Oxford arrived too late to perform his role as godfather, and the king's stepfather, the earl of Derby, not only presented his gift after Elizabeth Woodville, but had fewer men waiting on him. The effect of this Yorkist domination of the new prince's christening was to confirm Arthur's position as the legitimate male heir to their claim to the throne.

Moreover, following an insurrection at Warwick in April 1486 inspired by a former member of Richard III's household, Henry had strategically appointed the earl of Lincoln to preside over the conviction of a number of those involved, thereby implicating Lincoln in support for Tudor kingship.¹³⁶ Lincoln, as the eldest son of Edward IV's sister Elizabeth, was the senior male member of the House of York (apart from Edward, earl of Warwick, whose potential claim to the throne had already been rejected in 1483 on the somewhat dubious grounds of his father's attainder, besides which, he was still a minor and had been imprisoned in the Tower since the beginning of Henry VII's reign), hence the importance of identifying Lincoln with the Tudor dynasty.¹³⁷ But in March 1487 Lincoln suddenly left the court and joined Lambert Simnel's rebellion, perhaps hoping to take the throne himself when Simnel was revealed as an imposter.¹³⁸ Thus began a series of challenges to the Tudor dynasty by members of Elizabeth of York's family which would lead to the gradual destruction of the Plantagenet dynasty by her husband and son.¹³⁹

Lincoln himself was slain at the battle of Stoke, but in May 1499 his younger brother Edmund, earl of Suffolk, who had been employed by Henry in the French campaign of 1492 and against the Cornish rising in 1497, took affront at being tried before a common court of justice for murder, and decided to leave for Flanders.¹⁴⁰ By this time his cousin, Edward, earl of Warwick, was facing trial for treason, simply for having attempted to escape from

¹³⁶D.M. Loades, *Politics and the Nation 1450-1660: Obedience, Resistance and Public Order* (Brighton, 1974), p. 97.

¹³⁷Ross, *Richard III*, pp. 91-2.

¹³⁸Loades, *Politics and the Nation*, p. 98.

¹³⁹S.B. Chrimes, *Lancastrians, Yorkists and Henry VII* (London, 1964), p. 162-3.

¹⁴⁰Chrimes, *Henry VII*, p. 93; J.D. Mackie, *The Earlier Tudors 1485-1558* (Oxford, 1957), p. 167.

the Tower with Perkin Warbeck.¹⁴¹ Whether this was another motive for Suffolk's departure or not, he was soon persuaded by the king to return to enjoy his former status at court. In 1501, however, Suffolk departed again, this time with his brother Richard to the Burgundian court of Maximilian (and their aunt Margaret of York) to prepare a rebellion. Henry promptly imprisoned not only their brother William de la Pole but also their cousin William Courtenay on suspicion of complicity, despite the fact that Courtenay was the queen's brother-in-law.¹⁴² Indeed, it was perhaps the fact that he was married to Princess Katharine that made Courtenay more of a threat. He was finally released shortly after the accession of Henry VIII, but William de la Pole died in prison in 1539.¹⁴³ By this time Suffolk had been handed over to Henry VII by Philip and Juana of Castile and, despite the guarantee given to them that his life would be preserved, executed by Henry VIII.¹⁴⁴ Henry VII's initial attempts to reconcile the Yorkist claimants to his kingship was probably as much a result of their sheer numbers and the consequent impracticality of eliminating them all, as it was the consequence of any sense of obligation to his queen's kin. His later treatment of William Courtenay indicates that he was not prepared to allow obligations of loyalty to his wife's family to threaten his kingship, no matter how tenuously.

The ideological and practical values of the families of the two queens Elizabeth to their husbands' kingship could not have been more different. That a significant number of the men of each family died violently is more a reflection of the fragility of the dynastic claims of both kings than of the kings' ineptitude in managing their wives' kin. Perhaps if the de la Poles had been given significant political roles in the Tudor administration they would have been less inclined to rebel, just as their grandfather, Richard duke of York, might never have rebelled had he been more in favour at court. However, the recent history of usurpations, with its inherent challenges to both primogeniture and coronation as guarantors of legitimate kingship, meant that the de la Poles would always be a potential threat to the Tudors.

¹⁴¹Chrimes, *Henry VII*, p. 92. Warwick was beheaded in December 1499.

¹⁴²Mackie, *Earlier Tudors*, p. 167; Chrimes, *Henry VII*, p. 94. Polydore Vergil, *The Anglica Historia of Polydore Vergil AD 1485-1537*, ed. D. Hay, Camden Society, third series 74 (1950), pp. 122-7. Among other men imprisoned and executed for supposed involvement in Suffolk's threatened rebellion was Sir James Tyrell, who was at this time forced to confess to the murder of Edward IV's sons on Richard III's orders.

¹⁴³GEC, 4:330; Chrimes, *Henry VII*, p. 93.

¹⁴⁴Mackie, *Earlier Tudors*, p. 167; Chrimes, *Henry VII*, p. 94. Richard de la Pole, having been recognised in France as Richard IV in 1513, was eventually killed fighting for Francis I at Pavia in 1525.

As the preceding discussions have indicated, once the king had found appropriate husbands for the women of the queen's family, he was primarily interested in her male relatives. They were the potential loyal politicians or usurpers. The queen, however, continued her concern with the affairs of her female relatives.

4. Mothers, Daughters and Sisterhood

'The king is much influenced by his mother ... The queen, as is generally the case, does not like it'.¹⁴⁵

This oft-quoted observation on Margaret Beaufort's dominance, made in July 1498 by Don Pedro de Ayala in a letter to Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, has dominated perceptions of Elizabeth of York's relationship with her mother-in-law. Only a few days before Ayala wrote his letter, the sub prior of Santa Cruz had made a similar observation to the Spanish sovereigns; 'the queen is a "very noble woman" and much beloved. She is kept in subjection by the mother of the king'.¹⁴⁶ Perhaps some now unrecorded event in the summer of 1498 had inspired these judgements. It was not only the Spanish observers who suggested conflict between the two women. A certain John Hewyk of Nottingham was accused in 1500 of reporting

þat he had spokyn with þe Quenes Grace, and shuld have spokyn more with hire seid Grace had nat bene for þat strong whore þe Kynges moder.¹⁴⁷

Nonetheless, it is perfectly possible that Margaret had simply rescued her less assertive daughter-in-law from an overly persistent petitioner. Margaret Beaufort's close relationship with her son may well have aroused resentment in her daughter-in-law, but Margaret's most recent biographers have argued that her influence over her son, important at the start of his reign, quickly waned as he asserted his own position.¹⁴⁸

The Spaniards' observations need to be seen in the context of a strong tradition of

¹⁴⁵C.H. Cooper, *Memoir of Margaret Countess of Richmond and Derby* (London, 1874), p. 236.

¹⁴⁶Cooper, *Margaret Countess of Richmond*, p. 236.

¹⁴⁷W.H. Stevenson (ed.), *Records of the Borough of Nottingham* (London, 1998), 3:300-1. Jones and Underwood have suggested that Hewyk was seeking to enter the queen's service, whereas Lorraine Attreed conjectured that the incident occurred on a royal visit to Nottingham when Hewyk was among the crowds greeting his king and queen. Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, p. 161; L.C. Attreed, 'The Politics of Welcome: Ceremonies and Constitutional Development in Later Medieval English Towns', in B.A. Hanawalt and K.L. Reyerson (eds.), *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe* (Minneapolis, 1994), p. 208.

¹⁴⁸Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, pp. 74-8.

assumed conflict between wife and mother-in-law. Schlauch observed, in her survey of calumniated queens, that the literary tradition of jealous royal mothers repressing and destroying their daughters-in-law had existed in folk tales and romances for centuries.¹⁴⁹ Constance in Chaucer's *Man of Law's Tale*, or Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, and Emaré are among the most well known literary victims of their mothers-in-law. The first mother-in-law of the *Man of Law's Tale* is motivated by the fact that her son, the Sultan, has forsaken the religion he shared with her for that of his new wife, and the second considers it an insult to their royal status that her son should wed 'so strange a creature' as the shipwrecked beauty without a past.¹⁵⁰ The old queen whose son chose to marry Emaré is at first seemingly jealous of the younger woman's beauty, and then furious that the king rejects her order not to marry the girl.¹⁵¹ In each case marriage has broken a bond between mother and son, and the mother seeks revenge on her usurper. The Sultan's mother in Gower's version is concerned that 'If it so is/ Mi Sone him wedde in this manere,/ Than have I lost my joies here,/ For myn astat so schal be lassed'.¹⁵² Such tales probably originated in women's lived experience of rivalry for status and attention. Within the English royal family the most obvious instance of this was Isabella of France's attempt to continue as queen after deposing her husband. It is likely that the delay in arranging her daughter-in-law's coronation was a result of this unwillingness to cede queenship to the younger woman.¹⁵³ Cecily Neville responded to her eldest son's marriage by adopting a new title which stressed her dead husband's regal claim, thereby attempting to reassert her proximity to queenship now that another woman had a better claim to be identified with the king.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁹M. Schlauch, *Chaucer's Constance and Accused Queens* (New York, 1927), p. 113.

¹⁵⁰Chaucer, *Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 92-7.

¹⁵¹M. Mills (ed.), *Six Middle English Romances* (London, 1973), p. 58.

¹⁵²John Gower, *The English Works of John Gower*, ed. G.C. Macaulay, EETS extra series 81-2 (1900-1), 1:148.

¹⁵³W.M. Ormrod, *The Reign of Edward III. Crown and Political Society in England 1327-1377* (New Haven and London, 1990), p. 6. Equally, Roger Mortimer may have been the instigator of this delay, anxious to keep the young king in subjection and therefore unwilling to risk enhancing Edward's kingship by crowning his queen.

¹⁵⁴The title adopted was 'By the ryghtul enheritors Wyffe late of the Regne off Englande & of Fraunce and off ye lordschyppe off yrlonde, the kynges mowder ye Duchesse of Yorke', J. Smith (ed.), *Abbreviata Cronica 1377-1469*, Publications of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society (1840), p. 9; see also J.L. Chamberlayne, 'A Paper Crown: the Titles and Seals of Cecily Duchess of York', *The Ricardian* 10:133 (1996): 432.

Nonetheless, the tradition that Cecily Neville was so furious with Edward for marrying Elizabeth Woodville that she threatened to declare him a bastard, and thereby destroy his kingship, owes less to historical reality, than to exaggerated literary topoi, such as Constance's evil mother-in-law the Sultanness whose 'oghne Sone was nocht quit' in the slaughter she arranged at his wedding feast.¹⁵⁵

Although there was certainly potential for conflict between a queen and her mother-in-law, the relationship could also be very valuable to both women. Parsons and Howell have shown how Eleanor of Castile and her mother-in-law, Eleanor of Provence, regularly collaborated in their patronage, piety and concern for the younger queen's children.¹⁵⁶ In 1282 the two women together persuaded Edward I that his thirteen-year-old daughter was too young for marriage, and the older queen probably acted as an important role model for Eleanor of Castile as she settled into her new country.¹⁵⁷ Elizabeth of York's close involvement with the interests of her daughter-in-law Katharine also indicates that a queen's role could include nurturing her successor.¹⁵⁸ Margaret of Anjou, in contrast, had no such mother figure to guide her on her arrival in England. Early on this role may to some extent have been filled by the duchess of Suffolk who had accompanied her from France and to whom Margaret gave substantial New Year's gifts in her early years in England.¹⁵⁹ However, owing to the duke of Suffolk's growing unpopularity it was to prove an unfortunate friendship for Margaret's reputation and political entanglements, and in 1451 the Commons demanded the duchess's removal from the royal presence.¹⁶⁰ The lack of a politically neutral mentor in the form of the king's mother may have been a crucial factor in Margaret's unfortunate later career.

¹⁵⁵Mancini, *Usurpation of Richard III*, pp. 60-3; Gower, *English Works*, 1:149; Chaucer, *Riverside Chaucer*, p. 93. See also Chamberlayne, 'Cecily Neville', pp. 47-8.

¹⁵⁶J.C. Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile: Queen and Society in Thirteenth-Century England* (Basingstoke, 1994), p. 37; Parsons 'Mothers, Daughters, Marriage, Power: Some Plantagenet Evidence', in J.C. Parsons (ed.), *Medieval Queenship* (Stroud, 1994), pp. 63-78. See Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, pp. 288-9 for Eleanor of Provence's relations with her grandchildren.

¹⁵⁷Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile*, p. 37; Parsons, 'Mothers, Daughters', p. 63.

¹⁵⁸As well as the letters mentioned above, see Chapter V.3.i.

¹⁵⁹Myers, *Crown, Household*, pp. 222-3. New Year's gifts alone cannot necessarily be taken as proof of close friendship, but the Commons' perception of the duchess's undue influence is a stronger indicator of friendship with the queen.

¹⁶⁰Jacob, *Fifteenth Century*, pp. 500-1.

Elizabeth Woodville appears to have had few personal connections with her mother-in-law, perhaps because, unlike most queens, she had her own mother nearby, a factor to which I shall return later in this section. Cecily was a regular presence at court and it was perhaps to prevent rivalry between the women that Edward arranged for new 'queen's chambers' to be built at Westminster, allowing his mother to continue to use the old ones.¹⁶¹ Ties of kinship and shared devotional interests may have made Cecily closer to her second queenly daughter-in-law, Anne Neville: Cecily, like Anne, possessed a copy of Mechtild of Magdeburg's *Book of Ghostlye Grace*.¹⁶² At times of crisis, the queen might look to the women of her husband's family for help: in 1470, Edward IV's aunt, Anne duchess of Buckingham, loaned Elizabeth Woodville 100 marks to help out immediately after Edward had fled to Burgundy.¹⁶³

However, it is for Elizabeth of York's relationship with her mother-in-law, Margaret Beaufort, that most evidence has survived, and I would argue that between these two women, whose royal blood had caused their fortunes to swing so violently during this period, there probably existed more than cordial relations. Their relationship does appear to bear strong similarities to that of Eleanor of Provence and Eleanor of Castile, even to the extent that Margaret and Elizabeth also united to dissuade the king from sending the younger queen's daughter to be married at an early age. In this latter case the daughter was Margaret's namesake, only nine years old when her mother and grandmother prevented the king from sending her to Scotland, as he informed Pedro de Ayala, because 'they fear[ed] the king of Scots would not wait, but injure her and endanger her health', just as Margaret Beaufort herself had been permanently injured by her own very youthful pregnancy.¹⁶⁴ Queens and kings' mothers apparently considered that it was their role to temper the king's policies by representing human needs and practicalities. In a similar vein Elizabeth and Margaret both wrote to the Spanish court requesting that Katharine of Aragon should learn

¹⁶¹H.M. Colvin (ed.), *The History of the King's Works* (London, 1963-82), 1:537; J.L. Chamberlayne, 'Cecily Neville, Duchess of York, King's Mother: the Roles of an English Medieval Noblewoman, 1415-1495' (MA diss., University of York, 1994), p. 31.

¹⁶²J.G. Nichols and J. Bruce (eds.), *Wills from Doctors Commons: a Selection from the Wills of Eminent Persons in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, 1495-1695*, Camden Society, old series 83 (1863), p.3; BL, Egerton MS 2006 has 'Anne Warrewyk' and 'R Gloucester' written inside the front cover, probably in Anne's hand. See below Chapter V.2.iii.

¹⁶³PRO, E 404/75/1, fol. 10.

¹⁶⁴Cooper, *Margaret, Countess of Richmond*, p. 241; Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, p. 40.

French so that they would be able to make conversation on her arrival.¹⁶⁵ Margaret Beaufort's interest in her eldest grandson's marriage extended to working with Elizabeth on deciding who should attend the queen and Katharine during the festivities for Katharine's arrival, and to refurbishing her home at Coldharbour in order to entertain Katharine and Arthur after their wedding.¹⁶⁶ Two years later, Princess Margaret's last night with a member of her family prior to her departure for Scotland was spent with her grandmother Margaret Beaufort at Collyweston.¹⁶⁷ After Queen Elizabeth's death, the king's mother seems to have taken an even more maternal role for Prince Henry and Princess Mary.¹⁶⁸

The queen and her mother-in-law shared interests other than Elizabeth's children, notably their devotion to St Bridget of Sweden, a saint popular with both the houses of Lancaster and York, for whom Elizabeth's youngest sister had been named. They made a joint commission to Caxton for an edition of *The Fifteen O's*, which were reputed to have been written by Bridget.¹⁶⁹ Whereas Margaret is known to have visited the Bridgettine Abbey of Syon and left money to the nuns in her will, Elizabeth's involvement was more personal since her cousin Anne de la Pole was abbess there until 1501, and the queen clearly remained on friendly terms with Anne's successor who sent gifts such as rabbits and quails to the queen.¹⁷⁰ Elizabeth and Margaret also jointly presented a copy of Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*, commissioned by Margaret, to their lady-in-waiting Mary Roos.¹⁷¹ Mary Roos was probably not the only person with connections to both their households, and at Margaret's home at Collyweston, which was essentially 'a separate court

¹⁶⁵Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, p. 161.

¹⁶⁶Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, pp. 161, 177.

¹⁶⁷Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, p. 74.

¹⁶⁸Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, p. 79.

¹⁶⁹Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, pp. 182-3; William Caxton, *The Fifteen O's, and other Prayers*, ed. S. Ayling (London, 1869), p. 1.

¹⁷⁰Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, p. 180, 240; N.H. Nicolas (ed.), *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York* (London, 1830), pp. 13, 18.

¹⁷¹Painter, *William Caxton*, p. 187.

establishment in its own right', rooms were permanently reserved for the queen.¹⁷²

In 1486 two gentlemen of Guildford persuaded the queen and her mother-in-law, as well as two of the king's knights, to join them in founding a guild in honour of the Trinity, the Virgin Mary, St George and All Saints at the parish church of Holy Trinity, Guildford.¹⁷³ In another instance of combined patronage, both the queen and Margaret, as well as the prince of Wales, supported the candidature of one Thomas Pantry for the office of superior bedel of the arts at Oxford University in 1500.¹⁷⁴ That Elizabeth was not simply being persuaded into supporting her mother-in-law's causes is suggested by their support for opposing candidates for the office of superior bedel of divinity there the following year, on which occasion Arthur supported a third candidate.¹⁷⁵

Margaret certainly does seem to have been friends with Elizabeth's sister Cecily, for whom Margaret provided a refuge at Collyweston after Henry had dismissed her from court.¹⁷⁶ It was another instance of royal women tempering the king's politically motivated decisions. Cecily was of course not only the queen's sister, but also widow of Margaret's half-brother, and it was to these three women that Cecily's husband, Lord Welles, had committed the commissioning of his tomb.¹⁷⁷ A particular indication of Cecily's closeness to Margaret Beaufort is the fact that it is among Margaret's records that a dispensation survives for Cecily to maintain a regular pattern of worship in her household, like Margaret.¹⁷⁸ In this context it is noteworthy that another lady who maintained a religious household, the queen's grandmother Cecily duchess of York, bequeathed her breviaries to Margaret Beaufort and Cecily Welles.¹⁷⁹ It is more than likely that Margaret and the older

¹⁷²Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, pp. 85, 161. A letter from Henry VII to the queen's chamberlain, the earl of Ormond, asking him to come and advise the king regarding the quelling of Simnel's rebellion, implies that Ormond was attending both ladies at the time. Cooper, *Margaret, Countess of Richmond*, p. 40.

¹⁷³*CPR 1485-94*, p. 128.

¹⁷⁴Cooper, *Margaret, Countess of Richmond*, pp. 65-6.

¹⁷⁵Cooper, *Margaret, Countess of Richmond*, pp. 69-71. The success of Margaret's protégé was probably due to the fact that he had been inferior bedel before, although the chancellor supported Arthur's choice.

¹⁷⁶Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, p. 162.

¹⁷⁷J.W. Clay (ed.), *North Country Wills 1383-1558*, Surtees Society 116 (1908), p. 68. Along with the king, the three women were also to decide where he should be buried.

¹⁷⁸Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, p. 162.

¹⁷⁹Nichols and Bruce (eds.), *Wills from Doctors Commons*, pp. 2-3.

Cecily were also friends, and Margaret's emulation of Cecily's strategies in constructing her role as king's mother have been noted by Jones and Underwood.¹⁸⁰ Powerful ties of kinship, shared experience, and shared concerns probably bound all of these women in networks that transcended the stereotyped female rivalries depicted by the Spanish observers.

Whereas friendship between the king's mother and his wife was desirable, if not necessarily to be expected, the relationship between his wife and her mother was potentially threatening to his own dominance over his wife. Queens' natural mothers are a rarer feature in literature than mothers-in-law or stepmothers, but where they do occur they often present a threat to men or patriarchal structures. Nikki Stiller has argued that men's fear of the 'women's wisdom' that passed between mother and daughter led to perceptions of magical powers possessed by mothers in the realm of sexuality.¹⁸¹ La Beale Isode's mother, the queen, embodies the chaotic threat of such women when she provides the magic potion which should have guaranteed King Mark's love and therefore Isode's security in her new home, but instead has tragic consequences.¹⁸² Commonly the relationship between mother and daughter is the strongest kinship bond, and the one which most influences the daughter. Such influence was inevitably weakened by the distance between foreign-born queens and their mothers, although they could still impact on their son-in-law's kingship. Eleanor of Provence's mother, Beatrice of Savoy, mediated between her son-in-law, Henry III and Simon de Montfort in 1248, and later helped her daughter to rally a continental army to support Henry against his barons.¹⁸³ Details of Margaret of Anjou's relationship with her mother during her queenship do not survive, nor indeed with the grandmother, Yolande of Aragon, who was responsible for much of her upbringing. It seems unlikely that either had much influence, if any, on English affairs.

Elizabeth Woodville's mother, Jacquetta de St Pol, present in England, however, represented a potential threat to the established order. Jacquetta and her daughter were probably close: on her first husband's death Elizabeth had returned to live with her parents,

¹⁸⁰Chamberlayne, 'Cecily Neville', pp. 61-2; Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, p. 70.

¹⁸¹N. Stiller, *Eve's Orphans: Mothers and Daughters in Medieval English Literature* (Westport, 1980), pp. 73-85.

¹⁸²Thomas Malory, *Works*, ed. E. Vinaver, rev. P.J.C. Field (Oxford, 1990), 1:412.

¹⁸³Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, pp. 39, 215.

and throughout Elizabeth's queenship Jacquetta was regularly at court, notably taking a major role in the ceremonies surrounding the birth of Elizabeth's first child.¹⁸⁴ When Elizabeth went into sanctuary in 1470, and bore her first son, Jacquetta joined her.¹⁸⁵ By this time attacks had already been made on the reputation of Jacquetta herself which are indicative of the historical reality of the suspicions of mother-daughter relations expressed in literature. During Warwick's and Clarence's attempt to overthrow Edward IV in 1469, Jacquetta was accused of sorcery by Thomas Wake, a Northamptonshire man whose son had joined Robin of Redesdale and been killed at the battle of Edgecote.¹⁸⁶ He accused her of using lead dolls to bring about the marriage of the king and queen, and to destroy the earl of Warwick.¹⁸⁷ When Elizabeth Woodville's right to queenship was challenged again in 1483, this accusation was revived, now involving the queen herself. Her marriage to Edward IV, Richard III's parliament alleged, was invalid on the grounds of Edward's reputed pre-contract, of illegalities in the marriage ceremony itself, and that it was made

by Sorcerie and Wichecraft, committed by the said Elizabeth and her Moder Jaquett Duchesse of Bedford, as the common opinion of the people and the publique voice and fame is thorough all this land.¹⁸⁸

All the supposed corruption and oppression of Edward IV's government was then presented as a result of this evil marriage. Given that, some ten years later, Fabyan felt obliged during his account of Edward IV's marriage to comment on 'howe the kyng was enchanted by the duchesse of Bedforde,' it would seem that it was indeed a popular rumour.¹⁸⁹ As observed above, Vergil and More maintained that in 1483 Richard of Gloucester accused the queen of involvement in another female conspiracy - with her husband's mistress,

¹⁸⁴M. Letts (ed.), *The Travels of Leo of Rozmital through Germany, Flanders, England, France, Spain, Portugal and Italy 1465-1467*, Hakluyt Society, 2nd series 108 (1957), p. 47. Above Chapter II.4.i and ii. See also PRO, E 101/411/15, fol. 4; E 101/412/2, fol. 25.

¹⁸⁵M.D. Harris, *The Coventry Leet Book or Mayor's Register*, EETS original series 134-5, 138, 147 (1907-13), 1:359.

¹⁸⁶*CPR 1467-77*, p. 190; J.O. Halliwell (ed.), 'Chronicle . . . by John Warkworth', p. 7; Scofield, *Edward the Fourth*, 1:498.

¹⁸⁷Scofield, *Edward the Fourth*, 1:498. According to her petition for exoneration in 1470, the lead dolls were supposedly in the likeness of the king and queen, *CPR 1467-77*, p. 190.

¹⁸⁸*Rot Parl*, 6:241.

¹⁸⁹Robert Fabyan, *The New Chronicles of England and France*, ed. H. Ellis (London, 1811), p. 654.

Elizabeth Shore.¹⁹⁰ This too involved sorcery.¹⁹¹ Sorcery, like adultery, was a charge to which contemporary misogynistic discourse made women easily prone. As was the case with adultery, women at the heart of power were especially vulnerable, both because it was an easy accusation to make against political rivals, and because sorcery was perceived to be a particularly feminine source for the subversion of 'natural' male structures. Morgan le Fay's persistent attacks on Arthur's court would have been a particularly familiar example of this to the fifteenth-century audience of this propaganda. What had inspired these particular accusations of sorcery, however, was not simply the presence of women in wider political conflict, but the notion of women working together for political ends.

Later chroniclers also perceived Jacquetta greedily working in concert with her daughter, the queen, and her husband, Earl Rivers, to profit from Thomas Cook's misfortune when he was accused of treason in 1468.¹⁹² Recent analysis of the events has shown that although Jacquetta reputedly resented the fact that Cook refused to sell her a tapestry which she desired, the suggestion that she took the tapestry when he was imprisoned was based on misinterpretations.¹⁹³ Nonetheless, Jacquetta was the only woman named in Warwick and Clarence's manifesto as a malign influence upon the king, which may have reflected perceptions of her influence through the queen. Jacquetta was a person of political standing in her own right. In 1461 it was she, the duchess of Buckingham and Lady Scales, who were enlisted by the London authorities to negotiate with Margaret of Anjou to protect the city from the queen's army.¹⁹⁴ This may have contributed to her daughter's popularity in and affinity with London.¹⁹⁵

This mistrust of mother-daughter relationships may also have contributed to Elizabeth

¹⁹⁰See Chapter III.4.iii.

¹⁹¹Polydore Vergil, *Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English History*, ed. H. Ellis, Camden Society, old series 29 (1844), pp. 179-81; Thomas More, *The History of King Richard III and Selections from the English and Latin Poems*, ed. R.S. Sylvester (New Haven and London, 1963-87), pp. 47-9.

¹⁹²Thomas and Thornley (eds.), *The Great Chronicle of London*, p. 207; R. Holinshed, *Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (London, 1808), 3:287. See below Chapter V.2.iv for more details of the Thomas Cook affair.

¹⁹³A.F. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs, 'The Provenance of the Manuscript: the Lives and Archive of Sir Thomas Cook and his Man of Affairs, John Vale', in M.L. Kekewich, C. Richmond, A.F. Sutton, L. Visser-Fuchs and J.L. Watts (eds.), *The Politics of Fifteenth-Century England: John Vale's Book* (Stroud, 1995), p. 89 n. 87.

¹⁹⁴Kekewich et al. (eds.), *John Vale's Book*, p. 83.

¹⁹⁵See Chapter III.4.iii and Chapter V.2.iii.

Woodville's retirement from court even before her daughter had been crowned. As I have argued in Chapter III, the loss of her sons must have been a significant factor in this decision. But Polydore Vergil's claim that she was 'deprived . . . of all her possessions . . . because she had made her peace with King Richard' in 1484, although somewhat implausible, does indicate, over thirty years after these events, a belief that her retirement from court was not purely Elizabeth Woodville's own idea.¹⁹⁶ Historians unconvinced by Vergil's account have argued that her lands were forfeited because she was involved in Lambert Simnel's rebellion.¹⁹⁷ Whereas Bacon justified this astonishingly improbable story by commenting 'For certaine it is, shee was a busie negotiating woman', and Mackie called Elizabeth 'a flighty woman', Kendall used it to justify his assertion that Elizabeth's sons had been murdered not by Richard but by agents of Henry Tudor (prior to becoming king but unknown to Elizabeth Woodville), so driving Elizabeth to attempt to deprive her own daughter of the throne in her passion for revenge when she discovered the truth.¹⁹⁸ I would argue that Henry never meant to re-endow Elizabeth Woodville permanently, knowing that he could not afford to support two queens of England, but arranged to restore some of her lands as a consequence of the annulment of Richard III's *Titulus Regis*, only to reclaim them prior to her daughter's coronation so that Elizabeth of York could be appropriately dowered. News of Simnel's rebellion perhaps precipitated these arrangements since Henry needed to assert his Yorkist credentials by installing his queen in her role with appropriate honour in order to counter the threat of the pretender's Yorkist supporters.¹⁹⁹ Henry had perhaps hoped to have arranged an alternative settlement for the queen's mother before it became necessary to relinquish her lands in the form of the marriage to James III, mentioned above, which was still being discussed after the surrender of her lands.²⁰⁰

At about the time when the Scottish marriage was first suggested, in the summer of

¹⁹⁶ . . . in eo concilio Elisabetha relicta Edwardi Regis est omnibus possessionibus suis senatus decreto, multata, propterea quod illa facta reconciliatione cum Ricardo Rege'. Polydore Vergil, *The Anglica Historia of Polydore Vergil A.D. 1485-1537*, ed. D. Hay, Camden Society, third series 74 (1950), pp. 16-18.

¹⁹⁷F. Bacon, *The Historie of the Reigne of King Henry the Seventh* (London, 1641), p. 21; Mackie, *Earlier Tudors*, p. 69; Kendall, *Richard the Third*, p. 415.

¹⁹⁸Bacon, *Henry the Seventh*, p. 21; Mackie, *Earlier Tudors*, p. 69; Kendall, *Richard the Third*, p. 415.

¹⁹⁹Kendall further points to the arrest of Dorset some months later as proof of Elizabeth's complicity, although Dorset was later acquitted as entirely innocent. After the defection of the earl of Lincoln, Henry seems to have been suspicious of any significant Yorkist.

²⁰⁰Mackie, *Earlier Tudors*, p. 76.

1486, Elizabeth Woodville had taken out a lease on the abbot's house at Westminster, presumably having already decided not to live with the royal family.²⁰¹ Precisely when she moved to Bermondsey is not clear, but it certainly did not prevent her from attending court occasionally, notably in November 1489 when she was with her daughter, the queen, at the time of her confinement, and for the reception of a French embassy headed by her kinsman, François of Luxembourg.²⁰² By 1490 she was being compensated for her lack of lands with an annuity of forty pounds, and cordial relations with the king are suggested in his gift of fifty marks in December 1491 'unto oure right dere and right welbeloved quene Elizabeth moder unto our most dere wif the quene ayenst the fest of Cristemas next commyng'.²⁰³ Her willingness to live apart from the court may have made Elizabeth Woodville more 'dere' to her son-in-law, but she did not end her days in disgrace. Her role as mother to her younger daughters was in some respects adopted by the queen.

Anne Neville's mother played a similarly passive role in her daughter's queenship. The ruthless manner in which the countess of Warwick was deprived of her estates in 1471, to her sons-in-law's advantage has been commented upon in Chapter I.3.iv. It is nonetheless true that it was Anne and her husband who took responsibility for the countess's material welfare at the time of the dispute over her land, arranging for her to stay at Middleham, and thereby provoking rumours that Richard would gain all her lands.²⁰⁴ If the countess remained here, which is unclear, she perhaps took a hand in caring for her grandson, Edward of Middleham, who spent much of his life on his father's northern estates. It is also likely that she was to some extent responsible for commissioning the celebration of her father, the Beauchamp Pageant, whose role in defining the king's Beauchamp credentials has been observed above.²⁰⁵

Despite her usually passive role in affairs of Henry VII's court, Elizabeth of York did take an active role in asserting her sisters' interests. In the aftermath of Bosworth, Cecily had been swiftly united with Lord Welles, but the others remained single for almost ten more years, by which time the queen was sufficiently established to arrange matters to their

²⁰¹MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville*, p. 190.

²⁰²MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville*, p. 196.

²⁰³MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville*, p. 196.

²⁰⁴Ross, *Richard III*, pp. 29-30.

²⁰⁵Tudor-Craig, *Richard III*, p. 58. See earlier in this chapter, section 2.

advantage. On Anne's marriage to Thomas Lord Howard, Elizabeth made an indenture with Howard's father, the earl of Surrey, arranging for various of his lands and reversions, appointed by her council, to be granted to her son Henry, her half-brother Dorset, and others of her choosing, ultimately to the use of Anne and Lord Howard as jointure. Elizabeth also arranged to pay an annuity of £120 to the earl for Anne's diet and servants and to provide all of Anne's clothes until the couple came into possession of the lands.²⁰⁶ A similar arrangement was made with Edward Courtenay at the time of his son William's marriage to the queen's sister Katharine, and although the indenture for this does not survive the eleven men appointed to hold the Courtenay lands were identical with those eventually appointed to hold the Howard lands, so this was almost certainly also arranged by Elizabeth.²⁰⁷ Elizabeth continued to support her sisters throughout her life, paying for much of the upbringing of Katharine's children, and for the burial of Katharine's son Edward.²⁰⁸ She also regularly sent money for her sister Bridget, who was a nun at Dartford, although these sums were far smaller than those given to her married sisters.²⁰⁹ Like Elizabeth Woodville's sister Anne, and her sister-in-law, Lady Scales, Elizabeth of York's sisters were probably at times among her senior ladies-in-waiting.²¹⁰

5. Conclusion

*She exhibited from earliest childhood towards God an admirable fear and service; towards her parents a truly wonderful obedience, towards her brothers and sisters an almost incredible love, towards the poor and the ministers of Christ, a reverent and singular affection.*²¹¹

Thus runs Bernard André's eulogy on Elizabeth of York, in which her astonishing devotion to her family is an integral part of her perfect womanhood. As an exemplar of womanhood, a queen was expected to show such devotion. Through her elevation to queenship, a

²⁰⁶T. Madox (ed.), *Formulare Anglicanum* (London, 1702), pp. 115-116.

²⁰⁷*Rot Parl*, 6:480-1.

²⁰⁸Nicolas (ed.), *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, pp. 20, 25, 32, 62, 63, 70, 75, 76, 88, 97, 100, 103, 104.

²⁰⁹Nicolas (ed.), *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, pp. 29, 49-50, 99.

²¹⁰Nicolas (ed.), *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, p. 99.

²¹¹'Inerat illi ab unguiculus Dei timor et servitium admirabile, in parentes vero mira observantia, erga fratres et sorores amor ferme incredibilis, in pauperes Christique ministros reverenda ac singularis affectio'. J. Gairdner (ed.), *Memorials of King Henry the Seventh*, Rolls Series 10 (1858), p. 37.

woman's status within her natal family had altered so that she was in a position superior to that of her parents, and potentially able to further their interests and those of her siblings. By virtue of their blood ties and their access to the queen, these people were sought after as patrons and marriage partners, and for service to the king. But their anomalous position, dependent upon a female relative's marriage, made them vulnerable to resentment from the nobility and a potentially destabilising element in the political community. It was necessary for king and queen to manage her family carefully in order to benefit effectively from the ideological and practical support they could yield. The English birth of the Yorkist queens made this a more complex issue, and whereas Elizabeth of York's family were ideologically invaluable but a political liability, Elizabeth Woodville's family, despite their gentry status, enhanced the identity of king and queen as well as proving politically useful.

Not only the language used in describing the queen's natal family, but also the marriage plans for Anthony Woodville, indicate that the queen's kin were a more integral part of the royal family than has hitherto been accepted. The strongest indications of this integration occur in networks between the women of both families in affairs of patronage, piety, and arranging marriages, or tempering the politically motivated actions of the king. In his study of 'The First Two Queens Elizabeth', Wood concluded that 'women's typically more complex family allegiances posed enormous obstacles to their being the successful wielders of sovereignty'.²¹² What was more important to fifteenth-century queens was that their complex family relationships provided a support in their own isolated position and a variety of means of strengthening their husband's fragile sovereignty, to which they owed their status.

²¹²Wood, 'First Two Queens Elizabeth', p. 130.

Chapter V

Household, Court and Queenliness

1. Introduction

In those days you might have seen a royal court such as befitted a mighty kingdom, filled with riches and men from almost every nation and (surpassing all else) with the handsome and most delightful children born of the marriage . . . to Queen Elizabeth.¹

The court in fifteenth-century England is not an easy institution to define. Medieval historians have, until recently, tended to focus upon notions of the 'household', more easily imagined because of the surviving evidence of its administrative structures.² The king's household and court were so entwined, and mutually dependent, that separate definitions are unlikely to be satisfactory. Recently attempts have been made to describe the court at the close of the middle ages, D.A.L. Morgan identifying much of the splendour and order of Edward IV's court as the beginnings of the Tudor court, and R.A. Griffiths arguing that there was greater continuity between the Yorkists and their predecessors than this implies.³

Studies of the queen's role in this context have been limited to discussions of the nature of her household, relying heavily upon Myers's editions of the accounts of Margaret of Anjou and Elizabeth Woodville, published in 1958 and 1968.⁴ Such works have tended to focus upon the size and finances of the household, rather than the personnel, thereby constructing it as a discrete entity, but it is clear from the varying roles of those described as the queen's servants that her organisation was firmly interlinked with the king's household and court. This interdependence reflected the position of the queen herself who

¹'Videres diebus illis regiam curiam non aliam quam quae excellentissimum regnum deceat, repletam, divitiis omnium pene nationum hominibus et quo transcendit universa speciosis ac dulcissimis liberis, ex . . . matrimonio cum Elizabeth regina procreatis.' N. Pronay and J.W. Cox (eds.), *The Crowland Chronicle Continuations, 1459-1486* (London, 1986), p. 149.

²R.A. Griffiths, 'The King's Court during the Wars of the Roses: Continuities in an Age of Discontinuities', in R.A. Griffiths, *King and Country: England and Wales in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1991), p. 12.

³D.A.L. Morgan, 'The House of Policy: the Political Role of the Late Plantagenet Household, 1422-1485', in D. Starkey et al. (eds.), *The English Court: from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War* (London, 1987), pp. 25-70; Griffiths, 'The King's Court', pp. 11-32.

⁴A.R. Myers, 'The Household of Queen Margaret of Anjou', *BJRL* 40 (1957-8): 79-113, 391-431; Myers, 'The Household of Queen Elizabeth Woodville, 1466-7', *BJRL* 50 (1967-8): 207-35, 443-81. These articles have been reprinted in A.R. Myers, *Crown, Household and Parliament in Fifteenth Century England*, ed. C.H. Clough (London, 1985), pp. 135-210, 251-318. All subsequent references will be to the 1985 edition.

did not have an official public identity separate from that of the king. The queen's household, however, was not subsumed in the king's: it could exist physically apart for long periods of time, with a certain amount of movement of personnel between the two, and enabled a queen to continue to function in a queenly fashion when away from the king, attending to affairs which were specifically her concern, such as the management of her lands, spending time with her eldest son, or on pilgrimages.

The structure of household and court, in personal and geographical terms, were factors shaping the nature of queenship, but the queens themselves, and their kings, also responded to and adapted these structures, according to particular circumstances. These were the spaces in which queens most influenced the lives of their subjects in normal circumstances. The personal nature of government in a monarchy governing from a court is such that records of the advice offered by the queen or the many men who surrounded the king in this environment were rarely made. That women would advise their husbands, even kings, was accepted and expected: Christine de Pizan maintained that the wise princess would urge her husband to discuss matters with his councillors, and encourage others to advise him.⁵ Jacobus de Cessolis, recognising that queens would thereby be privy to important matters of state, advised that a queen's 'wysedom ought tappere in spekyng that is to wete that she be secrete and telle not such thynges as ought to be holden secrete'.⁶ The decision, however, must be that of the king; so when a queen was perceived to be directing the king's mind, rather than simply advising, she had overstepped her role, like an overmighty councillor. The informal nature of this advice leaves the historian with few chances of establishing the extent of a queen's influence in this context, but this should not mean that the potential is ignored.⁷

Another wall between the historian and an understanding of the queen's agency is her council. Christine de Pizan advised the wise princess to appoint a council of wise and loyal men with whom she should discuss the matters she had to deal with each day.⁸ Just like any major lord, or the king himself, the queen was expected to act upon the advice of her

⁵Christine de Pizan, *The Treasure of the City of Ladies*, trans. S. Lawson (London, 1985), pp. 50-51, 64, 72.

⁶Jacobus de Cessolis, *Game and Playe of the Chesse*, trans. W. Caxton, ed. W.E.A. Axon (St. Leonard's-on-Sea, 1969), pp. 27, 35.

⁷R. Horrox, 'Queens of Queens' College' and J. Nelson, 'Carolingian Queenship', (unpublished papers given at 'Medieval Queenship: Politics, Patronage and Power', Queens' College Cambridge, 18 March 1998).

⁸Pizan, *Treasure of the City of Ladies*, pp. 60-1.

councillors, and had various staff to carry out her business, with a secretary to write her letters. This was how good queenship, like good lordship, worked. There is no particular foundation for assuming that queens did not behave like lords or kings in taking active involvement with their councils. The councils of Margaret of Anjou, Elizabeth Woodville, and probably of their successors also, were assigned a chamber within Westminster Palace, at the heart of government; a prerogative first assigned to Joan of Navarre in 1404.⁹ Most of their councillors were senior members of their household, so the men's other responsibilities, particularly if the queen was travelling, would have meant that they did not always hold their daily meetings there. Nonetheless, Elizabeth Woodville's interest in that palace, indicated by the extra chambers built for her there, may have been due to her desire to keep close to her council, as well as to her king.¹⁰ Elizabeth of York's signature on each page of her privy purse expenses until 21 September 1502 also indicates concern to oversee her officials' actions, in this case apparently working through the accounts on a quarterly basis.¹¹ It is principally with the discernible activity of queenship - queenliness - that this chapter is concerned.

Queenliness was quite unlike the activity of any man; it was the feminine expression of kingship. The physical space the queen occupied, the company she kept, the subjects and foreigners with whom she was involved, the roles she took within court, constantly pointed to her gender. This was due in part to the image of court she was helping her husband to create, and to the perceptions of those recording her activity. She was never an honorary male, always an exceptional female. The role required of and opened up for the feminine in kingship was very much shaped by the personalities and style of the men and women on the throne. As Diana Dunn noted in her recent reappraisal of the first decade of Margaret's marriage: 'she took her lead from her older and more experienced husband and, in maintaining a large court, she was only doing what her background and status demanded.'¹² If there was such a thing as 'new monarchy', a defining characteristic was the carefully

⁹CPR 1452-61, pp. 114, 487; CPR 1461-67, p. 273; Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 258; P. Strohm, *England's Empty Throne. Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation, 1399-1422* (New Haven and London, 1998), p. 157.

¹⁰PRO, E 404/77/3, fol. 57.

¹¹PRO, E 36/210 to p. 55. Christmas, the queen's pregnancy and her death would explain why the last months were never examined by her.

¹²D. Dunn, 'Margaret of Anjou, Queen Consort of Henry VI: a Reassessment of her Role, 1445-53', in R.E. Archer (ed.), *Crown, Government and People in the Fifteenth Century* (Stroud, 1995), p. 128.

shaped presentation of magnificence as a touchstone of legitimacy, epitomised in Edward IV's concern with proper ceremony discussed in Chapter II, and his *Black Book of the Household*, supposedly devised to ensure the proper running of the household and, through that, the court.¹³ Both Elizabeth Woodville and her daughter played significant roles in this display. Edward IV's demonstrations of intimacy and Henry VII's development of the chamber were also reflected in their wives' queenliness. For most of their husbands' reigns, these four queens copied, complemented and embellished their kings' styles, and exercised political influence primarily through their households, those of their sons, and on an informal basis at court; only when the king became incapable of the proper exercise of kingship did any venture into the 'no woman's land' of publicly visible personal politics.

In the following discussion of queenliness, I will begin with that subject traditionally known as the 'household', considering its structure and fluidity, the ways in which it was perceived by contemporaries, and those aspects of queenliness that were bound up with personal servants: patronage, piety and the management of the queen's lands. The interdependency of queen's household, king's household and court will render inevitable a certain degree of overlap between this section and the second part of the chapter, set principally within the sense of court as a whole. Under the heading 'court' I will consider the queen's place within the ideal of court, the relationship of queenly roles with the space of court, and the construction of queenly identity and legitimacy through courtly piety.

2. The Queen's 'Household'

The principal sources for the study of the queen's 'household' during the Wars of the Roses are the treasurer's accounts for Margaret of Anjou in 1452-3 and Elizabeth Woodville in 1466-7, and the less extensive privy purse expenses of Elizabeth of York for 1502-3, the year of her death.¹⁴ The accounts of the earlier queens reveal not only Margaret of Anjou's

¹³*The Black Book of the Household*, drawn up in the early 1470s, presented Edward IV's household as the legitimacy successor to that of Edward III and other great kings such as Solomon. A.R. Myers (ed.), *The Household of Edward IV: the Black Book and the Ordinance of 1478* (Manchester, 1959), pp. 81-4. Although poets such as Alain Charretier in his *Curial*, translated in the 1480s (perhaps for Anthony Woodville), or Skelton in 'The Bouge of Court', portrayed the court as a corrupt institution full of deceit and greed, they did not condemn the magnificence of their rulers, only their excess. John Skelton, *The Complete English Poems*, ed. J. Scattergood (Harmondsworth, 1983), pp. 47-50; Alain Charretier, *The Curial*, ed. J. Furnivall, EETS extra series 54 (1888), pp. 3, 7-10.

¹⁴Published in N.H. Nicolas (ed.), *The Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York* (London, 1830); Myers, *Crown, Household*, pp. 135-210, 251-318. See also Hilda Johnstone on fourteenth-century queens' households, H. Johnstone, 'The Queen's Household', in T.F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History*

greater income, expenditure and household size, but also the names of many in the service of both queens, including their closest women attendants and their counsellors, and even indicate some of the business of their counsellors. Drawing on Hilda Johnstone's work on fourteenth-century queens, Myers observed a continuity in the queen's sources of income - queen's gold, cash grants and dower lands, the latter often including the same properties for successive queens.¹⁵ He argued that queens' households reflected their husbands' kingship: Margaret of Anjou's methods of generating income being inefficient while her spending was lavish, Elizabeth Woodville efficiently maintaining her household on a smaller budget.¹⁶ Myers also discussed some of the personnel of their households, suggesting that the rapid advancement of clerics in Margaret's household, compared with those in Elizabeth's, demonstrated 'the contrast in the character and opportunities of the queens they served'.¹⁷ He surmised that Margaret's council, 'though active, may well have been strictly subordinate to the wishes and commands of the queen,' and pointed out, citing her surviving letters, that she enthusiastically rewarded those who served her.¹⁸ He was less

of Mediaeval England (Manchester, 1920-33), 5:231-89; Johnstone, 'The Queen's Household', in J.F. Willard and W.A. Morris (eds.), *The English Government at Work 1327-1336*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1940), 1:250-95. Further discussions of the queens' households which draw principally upon Myers and/or Nicolas include A. Crawford, 'The King's Burden? The Consequences of Royal Marriage in Fifteenth-Century England', in R.A. Griffiths (ed.), *Patronage, the Crown and the Provinces in Later Medieval England* (Gloucester, 1981), pp. 33-56; R.A. Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI: the Exercise of Royal Authority* (London, 1981), pp. 254-262; D. Dunn, 'Margaret of Anjou: a Reassessment', pp. 107-43; D. Neal, 'The Queen's Grace: English Queenship, 1464-1503' (MA diss., McMaster University, 1996).

¹⁵Johnstone, 'The Queen's Household' (1920) and (1940) passim; Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 138. Dower lands were those lands granted to the queen by the king at the time of their marriage, and were intended to support her during her widowhood. For most of the Middle Ages these lands also provided income for the queens during the king's lifetime. Queen's gold was an extra ten per cent levied on voluntary fines paid to the king for licences, charters, pardons and a variety of other privileges. The earliest reference to this practice occurs in the *Dialogus de Scaccario* of Henry II's reign, and it may have been introduced at this time to compensate Eleanor of Aquitaine for the fact that, unlike previous queens of England, she was not entitled to receive income from her dower lands until her husband's death. In the thirteenth century queen's gold was one of the principal sources of a queen's income, but it dwindled in importance during the fourteenth century when queens were once more entitled to the income from their dower lands throughout their lives. W. Prynne, *Aurum Reginae* (London, 1668), p. 2; J.C. Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile. Queen and Society in Thirteenth-Century England* (London, 1995), pp. 72-8; C. Johnson (ed.), *Dialogus de Scaccario: the Course of the Exchequer by Richard Fitz Nigel*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1983), pp. 122-3; Johnstone, 'The Queen's Household' (1940), 1:253.

¹⁶Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 259.

¹⁷Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 148. His case study for this is Margaret's chancellor, Lawrence Bothe, who became Keeper of the Privy Seal, tutor to the Prince of Wales and bishop of Durham, compared with Elizabeth's chancellor, Roger Radcliff, who was only the dean of St Paul's.

¹⁸Myers, *Crown, Household*, pp. 152-3.

willing to accept Elizabeth Woodville's agency, arguing that 'there is no reason . . . to suppose that she understood finance, beyond the usefulness of money for gratifying her desires,' and that it was unlikely that she had really given the orders, as the accounts maintain, to disallow various fees and expenses claimed by her household members, preferring to attribute this strict economy to her receiver general.¹⁹ His basis for these judgements, however, seems to have been the prevailing reputations of the queens in question, rather than the evidence of the accounts themselves.

Elizabeth of York's expenses were not analysed in as much detail on their initial publication, but were used by Anne Crawford in her 1981 article, 'The King's Burden? The Consequences of Royal Marriage in Fifteenth-Century England'. She referred to this Elizabeth as 'one of the most domestic of queens' and maintained that although Elizabeth of York's 'own habits were simple and economical, her revenue had several unusual charges upon it [namely her sisters and their families] and sometimes simply did not meet her demands'.²⁰ As Myers had observed, the surviving accounts for this queen are very different from those of her predecessors, and he suggested that 'perhaps in imitation of the increased importance of the chamber in the king's household, Elizabeth of York's chamber was receiving and spending most of her money'.²¹

It is my contention that the households of Margaret of Anjou and Elizabeth Woodville were not as different as Myers maintained. I will also argue for a more fluid understanding of the 'household', for a greater emphasis on the role of their women servants, and for the importance of their *familia* - as those servants with the queen when she was in the company of the king's household were termed by contemporaries - in the power relations at court.²²

Any comparison between the three 'household' accounts is fraught with complications, not only because Elizabeth of York's finances were clearly arranged quite differently from those of her predecessors, but also because of the different stages of their reigns to which they apply: Margaret of Anjou had been queen for seven years; whereas Elizabeth Woodville's dower lands had only just been settled and she had consequently been very much dependent upon the king's household up to this time; Elizabeth of York,

¹⁹Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 259.

²⁰A. Crawford, 'The King's Burden?', p. 51.

²¹Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 252.

²²PRO, E 101/410/15; E 101/409/16; E 101/409/20.

in contrast, had been queen for seventeen years and had three living children, one of whom was married during the period of her accounts. Moreover, the internal cohesion implied by the term 'household accounts' applied by Myers is not borne out by the accounts themselves. The accounts refer to payments to servants both *infra* and *extra hospicium*, and to some whose position is not defined; many of the servants were only in occasional attendance upon the queen and the internal structure was rather different from that of the king's household. Those most closely attendant upon the queen were her chamberlain, knights carver and various ladies (personal attendants, damsels and gentlewomen of the chamber) who were paid by the year and formed the heart of the queen's 'court' (*curia*).²³ This 'court' was attended by a varying number of squires who were paid by the day, many of them also squires of the king and some the husbands of the queen's ladies.²⁴ Other servants designated *infra hospicium* in Margaret of Anjou's accounts were clerks of the closet and the queen's jewels, the yeomen, grooms and pages of the chamber, robes, beds, laundry, almonry and offices associated with the kitchen.²⁵ The absence of such domestic servants in Elizabeth Woodville's accounts is almost certainly due to the youth of her establishment, since Margaret too was not immediately allocated these servants.²⁶ This aspect of the household naturally accounted for a considerable amount of its expenditure - hence in part Elizabeth Woodville's smaller budget. By about 1471 Elizabeth's servants probably numbered about one hundred, only twenty fewer than described in Margaret of Anjou's surviving accounts.²⁷ Some of Elizabeth Woodville's chancellor's duties also come under the category *infra hospicium*, but others, like those of Margaret's chancellor, are defined *extra hospicium*. In this latter sphere also are the attorneys and apprentices at law of her council, her clerks of the receipts and the registers, her receiver general, auditors and those based in the king's exchequer or on her estates.

²³Elizabeth Woodville also counted her clerk of the signet, John Allen, within this group. Myers, *Crown, Household*, pp. 181, 184-5, 288-89.

²⁴Elizabeth of York's accounts do not mention this group, so they may have been paid entirely by the king in her reign. Alternatively, the difference in her accounts may reflect an even more fundamental difference in the structure of her 'household'.

²⁵Myers, *Crown, Household*, pp. 185-90.

²⁶Myers, *Crown, Household*, pp. 242-8.

²⁷Myers (ed.), *Household of Edward IV*, p. 93: this is not proof positive, but it is unlikely that a manual detailing the ideal running of the households would allocate more servants to the queen than she already employed.

Those receiving fees and wages from the queen in these accounts can thus be divided into the members of her court, her household (of which her court is a part) and her external officers. Their accounts also included large sums allocated to their clerks of the stables, keepers of their great wardrobes and treasurers of their chambers, out of which further servants, such as grooms of the stable in the first case, or minstrels, confessors or physicians in the last, may also have been paid.²⁸ As such it was significantly different from the household of the king. The king's household had developed out of the war retinues of the early medieval kings into the administrative and political organisation of the fifteenth century which provided for the king's personal and public needs, and organised the court through which his kingship was exercised.²⁹ It was, according to the *Black Book of Edward IV*, divided into two sections: the *domus providencie*, headed by the king's steward, consisting of such domestic offices as kitchens, buttery, laundry and chandlery, and the counting house; and the *domus magnificencie*, headed by the chamberlain, which included the Chapel, Signet Office, Jewel House, Wardrobes, minstrels, and at its heart the knights and esquires of the body, carvers, cup-bearers, sewers, ushers, and yeomen, grooms and pages of the chamber.³⁰ This latter clearly bore similarities to the queen's 'court', especially if combined with those servants who were probably paid from her chamber. In practice the queen's *familia* probably appeared to mirror the structure of the much larger king's household more closely than is implied by the financial accounts based on administrative structures whose reasons for, and processes of, development were rather different from those of the king.³¹

²⁸Myers, *Crown, Household*, pp. 205-8, 316-17. Accounts of Margaret's treasurer of the chamber, Edward Ellesmere, exist for the years 1445-7, 1448-9 and 1451-3, but these relate only to his office of Master of the Queen's Jewels, rather than as a Treasurer of the Chamber as a whole, the accounts for which might have more closely resembled the privy purse expenses of Elizabeth of York. Myers, *Crown, Household*, pp. 211-29; PRO, E 101/409/4, E 101/409/17, E 101/410/2, E 101/410/8.

²⁹Morgan, 'House of Policy', pp. 26-7; Griffiths 'King's Court', p. 15.

³⁰Myers, *Household of Edward IV*, pp. 76-197; Morgan, 'House of Policy', pp. 32-3.

³¹For a history of the development of the queen's household see L.L. Huneycutt, *Medieval Queenship*, *History Today* 39 (June, 1989), p. 16; Johnstone, 'The Queen's Household' (1920), p. 252; Parsons *Eleanor of Castile*, pp. 71-5; F.D. Blackley and G. Hermansen (eds.), *The Household Book of Queen Isabella of England* (Edmonton, 1971), pp. xi-xxvi; C. Given Wilson, 'The Merger of Edward III's and Queen Philippa's Households, 1360-9', *BIHR* 51 (1978): 183-7; A.F. Sutton and P.W. Hammond (eds.), *The Coronation of Richard III: the Extant Documents* (Gloucester, 1983), pp. 83-6.

2.i The Queen's Ladies

The most striking and distinctive difference between the two organisations was the presence of the queen's ladies. This is where the queen's 'household' more closely resembled that of an ordinary noblewoman. Such noblewomen, even when married, sometimes had quite extensive personal households of their own, although none approached the sheer size of the queen's *familia*.³² This was not only due to considerations of status and wealth, but was also a consequence of the fact that the queen was a substantial landowner with more extensive rights than any other married women, including the ability to acquire land independently of her husband and the right to plead by writ in her own name, and consequently required more male staff to administer this.³³ Nonetheless, the role of the queen's immediate circle of ladies was probably very similar to that of any other noblewoman. Elizabeth Berkeley, Countess of Warwick, had six gentlewomen and three women of the chamber in 1420-1.³⁴ In 1452-3 Margaret of Anjou's accounts refer to four ladies, her personal attendants, nine damsels, women of slightly lower status, most of them married to members of her household or that of her husband (as was commonly the case in noble households) and finally two women of the chamber.³⁵ In 1466-7, Elizabeth Woodville had five personal attendants, seven damsels, and two women of the chamber, making her total expenditure on her ladies' wages greater than that of Margaret of Anjou, since two of her personal attendants (her sister and her sister-in-law) received the high income of £40 yearly, whereas only one of Margaret's was accorded this status.³⁶

³²Quite apart from women such as Elizabeth Berkeley, countess of Warwick, who managed the couple's inner household whilst her husband was absent for most of the 1420s, there were women who paid for servants separately even when in their husband's company, such as Elizabeth, countess of Hereford, a century earlier, who had her own wardrobe and chamber. J.C. Ward, *English Noblewomen in the Later Middle Ages* (London and New York, 1992), pp. 51-2.

³³Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile*, p. 70.

³⁴Ward, *English Noblewomen*, p. 52.

³⁵In his notes to Ellesmere's accounts for 1452-3, Myers refers to the entries for these gentlewomen in William Cotton's accounts as male chamber servants, John Prince and John Batersby, although he translates the same names as Joan in the jewel accounts. In his notes to John Forster's accounts for Elizabeth Woodville, however, he correctly refers to them as women. Moreover, he suggests in the Ellesmere notes that the two Joans were sisters of the two Johns - there was indeed a John Prince, also in the Ellesmere account, but Joan is clearly identified as his wife in PRO, E 101/410/2.

³⁶Margaret's principal personal attendant, Ismanie Lady Scales, received £40, whereas the other ladies received only £20; her principal damsel, Barbelina Herberquyne, who had accompanied her from Anjou, received £26 8s 4d, while the rest received only £10, and her principal gentlewoman, Joan Prince, received 100s, while Joan Batersby received only 56s 8d. Elizabeth Woodville's structure was similar although, as

It was the regular presence of these women that characterised the queen's *familia* and fascinated the contemporary imagination. On public occasions they were accompanied by other noblewomen and their ladies, such as the king's sisters or mother and the queen's sisters: hence the procession of sixty maidens and ladies who so impressed Gabriel Tetzal at Elizabeth Woodville's churching, and in the magnificent silent meal that followed.³⁷ Tetzal's companion, Schaseck, was also struck by the 'women and maidens of outstanding beauty, whom we saw when my lord was invited to dine with the King'.³⁸ To appear splendid and beautiful was part of their role in the public life of the king's court, and it was the mystery of the unusually large secular female hierarchy who inhabited and dominated the queen's chambers that was probably behind the literature of exclusively female courts like *The Isle of Ladies* and *The Assembly of Ladies*.³⁹ Seaton's ingenious theory of double acrostic anagrams alluding to the ladies of Margaret of Anjou's *familia* in *The Assembly of Ladies* is not convincing, but her observations upon the architectural similarities of the poem's setting, 'Plesaunt Regard', and Margaret's similarly named Manor of Plesaunce, as well as the coincidence of Margaret's motto 'Humble et Loyall' with the queenly figure's title, 'Lady Loiaulte', are not quite so improbable.⁴⁰ The poem has also been attributed to the reign of Henry VII, but the most convincing dating, based both on the description of the

mentioned, she had two personal attendants - her sister Anne Bouchier, and her sister-in-law, Elizabeth Lady Scales - receiving £40. Her principal damsel, Anne Hastings, however, earned only 20 marks yearly. Myers, *Crown, Household*, pp. 182-4, 288-9.

³⁷See above Chapter II.4.ii.

³⁸M.H. Letts (ed.), *Travels of Leo of Rozmital through Germany, Flanders, England, France, Spain, Portugal and Italy 1465-67*, Hakluyt Society, 2nd series 108 (1957), p. 52.

³⁹Not all literary depictions of all-female gatherings can be equated with women: the hierarchy of Skelton's 'The Bouge of Court', for instance, are female because they are personifications of virtues. Some vestige of these alternative readings of the female body may lie behind the allegory of *The Assembly of Ladies*, but its characters are primarily women. John Skelton, *The Complete English Poems*, ed. J. Scattergood (Harmondsworth, 1983), pp. 47-8; D.A. Pearsall (ed.), *The Floure and the Leafe and The Assembly of Ladies* (Manchester, 1962); A. Jenkins (ed.), *The Isle of Ladies or The Ile of Plesaunce* (New York and London, 1980).

⁴⁰E. Seaton, *Sir Richard Roos c. 1410-1482: Lancastrian Poet* (London, 1961), p. 308. See A. Gross, *The Dissolution of the Lancastrian Kingship: Sir John Fortescue and the Crisis of Monarchy in Fifteenth-Century England* (Stamford, 1996), p. 51, for a recent interpretation of Margaret's *familia* based on these assumptions. It could also be noted that 'Loiaulte me Lie' was Richard III's motto, possibly adopted by Elizabeth of York; or that Elizabeth Woodville also owned Plesaunce and that the poem refers to her legendary ancestress Melusine, a copy of whose story was almost certainly in Jacquetta of Luxembourg's possession and consequently surely familiar to the queen. A.F. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III's Books. Ideas and Reality in the Life and Library of a Medieval Prince* (Stroud, 1997), p. 238; D. MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville (1437-1492) Her Life and Times* (London, 1938), pp. 124-5.

garden and on Lady Loialte's clothing, is to the middle of Edward IV's reign.⁴¹ As such it offers some interesting notions of queenliness from the middle of the period under discussion, although the dream setting, and the fabulous decor of crystal engravings and the gem-laden throne do distance it from reality, as does the uniform livery of blue, reminiscent of the Virgin's angelic entourage on the *Wilton Diptych*. But exotic magnificence was expected of the ideal monarchy, and the narrator's comparison between Plesaunt Regard and Paradise is echoed in Edward IV's *Black Book of the Household* which defined the hierarchy within the household by allusion to the hierarchy of archangels, seraphim and cherubim.⁴² Lady Loialte's particular interest in righting wrongs done to women was echoed in stories of Guinevere, ranging from the punishment of the rapist knight in the *Wife of Bath's Tale*, to Malory's representation of her role in judging Gawain and Pedevere for slaying women.⁴³ On the first two of these occasions Guinevere is aided by a 'court' or 'quest of ladies'. As will be seen, those occasions upon which real queens were most likely to take a central role in the normal affairs of court were those in which other women's business was involved, or in which superiority in knightly pursuits was to be determined by the queen and other ladies of the court.

The exclusively female household of Lady Loialte is actually very much at odds with the everyday structure of the queen's household, in which the chamberlain, ushers, secretary and other officers were all men. The poetic representation of the wholly female household may reflect a contemporary perception that, in spite of the presence of male servants, the queen and the ladies of the court did represent a discrete entity. Descriptions of the queen's *familia* at court do give this impression: for example, when Lord Gruthuyse visited Elizabeth Woodville's chambers with the king in 1472 to find her ladies at various occupations there was no mention of male servants, nor at the Christmas festivities of 1487 when the king sat at dinner in the great chamber 'and the Quene and my Lady the Kings Moder with the Ladies in the Quenes Chamber'.⁴⁴ The validity of this notion will be

⁴¹J.M. Berdan, *Early Tudor Poetry* (New York, 1981), p. 68; Pearsall (ed.), *The Assembly of Ladies*, p. 19.

⁴²Pearsall (ed.), *Assembly of Ladies*, p. 109; K. Mertes, 'The *Liber Niger* of Edward IV: a New Version', *BIHR* 54 (1981): 37.

⁴³Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. L.D. Benson, 3rd edn (Oxford, 1987), pp. 117-19.

⁴⁴C.L. Kingsford, *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford, 1913), pp. 386; John Leland, *De Rebus Britannicis Collectanea*, ed. T. Hearne (London, 1774), 4:234. See also Tetzels description of the all female banquet, or Elizabeth of York's arrival at Windsor in a sumptuous female cavalcade for the Feast of St George in 1488. Letts (ed.), *Rozmital*, pp. 46-7; Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:241.

explored later in this chapter. There was, as mentioned in Chapter II, an occasion upon which women did take on the roles of the various officers: when the queen was due to give birth.⁴⁵ The complete exclusion of men, as in *The Assembly of Ladies*, was ostensibly because it was feared that the presence of men would disrupt the process of something which was very much women's business. This was, moreover, ideally the time at which the queen, with God's help, most crucially affected the welfare of the kingdom. It was apparently only in the absence of men that the author of *The Assembly of Ladies* could envisage a woman appearing to wield the authority implied in Lady Loialte's role. However, Lady Loialte did not immediately pass judgement: like the wise rulers of any mirror for princes, or even Christine de Pisan's wise princess, she decided to listen to the counsel of others and consequently promised to call a parliament. The postponed judgement is an easy way for the poet to end his/her work, but it also conveys the tensions in the nature of the authority of queens themselves - they had a council and male household officers who could determine their actions, many of which had to be submitted to the king for approval, but a clever woman was still in a position to dominate her councillors and officers if she chose. I have found no evidence of the kings in this period rejecting the petitions or letters patent of their queens.⁴⁶

2.ii The Personnel of the Queen's Familia

The queen's *familia* was, along with her involvement in the prince of Wales's council if such was granted to her, her principal legitimate sphere of influence. Through it she could reward and promote those she favoured, and her principal officers were the permanent members of the council who helped her to administer her lands and financial claims, thereby affecting many people whom she never actually met. Many of the men in her service had originally served in the king's household; some, like the unfortunate John Hulston who was dismissed from Henry VI's household for being too often absent with the queen, held posts in both.⁴⁷ Occasionally men who began as servants in the queen's *familia*

⁴⁵Chapter II.4.i.

⁴⁶For instances of kings confirming their queens' letters patent see PRO, DL 37/21; DL 37/24; DL 37/25; DL 37/38.

⁴⁷PRO, SC 1/57/98. David Lloyd, king's esquire and master cook in March 1444 had become Margaret's master cook by September 1445, and Edward Hull, one of Margaret's knights carver and a member of her council in 1452, had once been a squire of the body to Henry VI. Similarly, David Gough, envoy of Elizabeth Woodville's council, had been described as 'king's servant' in 1462. Richard Brampton was

moved to the service of the king, and some men and women are to be found serving successive queens.⁴⁸ As mentioned above, many of the queen's ladies were married to men in the king's household.⁴⁹ Not only were the queen's servants commonly described as king's servants in official documents, but queens might extend their ladyship to men of their husband's households; several of Margaret's letters on behalf of such men survive, including one referring to the king's serjeant Thomas Fountains as 'our welbeloved servant,' and indeed such men may well have served the queen sometimes on an unofficial basis.⁵⁰ The queen's council also included, along with her principal officials, some of the

yeoman of the pantry for Henry VII in 1485, but by 1503 he had moved to hold the same office in the queen's household. Piers Carvenel was one of Henry VII's ushers of the chamber in 1485 but in 1502 received payment from Elizabeth for riding with a message to her daughter: whether he had moved to her household or she was making use of the king's servants is impossible to tell. Other servants holding posts in both households included Thomas Parker, a squire for both Margaret and Henry in 1453 (her receiver for Haverfordwest, and his usher of the chamber), John Wenlock (king's esquire and usher of the queen's chamber) or Thomas Moshirst (king's serjeant and groom of her chamber in 1446). Myers notes six of Margaret's yeomen who still held posts in Henry's household in 1452-3. Ralph Snayth received fees as a yeoman of Edward IV's household in 1466-7, but also an annuity from Elizabeth. Sir Thomas Lovell was treasurer of Henry VII's chamber and household as well as Elizabeth of York's first treasurer. William Denton was similarly carver to both, and one of Elizabeth of York's ushers, William Crowmer, was a servitor of the king. Myers, *Crown, Household*, pp. 185, 187, 299-301; Nicolas, *Privy Purse Expenses*, p. 179; *CPR 1441-1446*, p. 437.

⁴⁸Elizabeth Woodville's receiver general, John Forster, became usher of the king's chamber and ultimately marshal of the marshalsea of the royal household. There was, unsurprisingly, little continuity between the personal servants of Margaret of Anjou and Elizabeth Woodville, although the marriage of Margaret's damsel Eleanor Roos to one of Elizabeth's Haute relations gained her a place in the new queen's *familia*. The popular tradition that Elizabeth Woodville herself was one of Margaret's ladies is very hard to prove. As long ago as 1935 Smith observed that the earliest reference to this was made in Thomas More's *History of Richard III*, and that attempts to identify her with the 'Isabelle Domine Grey' of Margaret's accounts are misguided given that this married lady was among those accompanying Margaret from France and thus could not be the eight-year-old Elizabeth Woodville. Moreover, the Elizabeth Grey 'daily attendant on the queen's person' was recorded in June 1445 as the widow of Sir Ralph Grey, and their son, a minor, was in the king's household. Anne Neville's ladies were doubtless those she had employed as duchess of Gloucester so that again there is no continuity here, but Nicholas Gaynesford, one of Elizabeth Woodville's receivers and an usher of her chamber, also held the latter post in her daughter's household. His wife was a gentlewoman in both households. Jacques and Henry Haute, a servant and a chaplain to Elizabeth of York were probably members of the same Haute family who served her mother. Another chaplain in Elizabeth of York's household, Christopher Plummer, later served her daughter-in-law Katharine of Aragon. As far as servants on their estates were concerned, there was far greater continuity here, as Myers has observed. Myers, *Crown, Household*, pp. 162, 182-4, 257, 267; G. Smith, *The Coronation of Elizabeth Wydeville* (London, 1935), p. 27; Sutton and Hammond (eds.), *Coronation of Richard III*, p. 84; BL, Add MS 23938, p. 5; *CPR 1441-1446*, p. 353; *CPR 1484-1494*, p. 100; P.W. Fleming, 'The Hautes and their Circle: Culture and the English Gentry', in D. Williams (ed.), *England in the Fifteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 1987), p. 90; Neal, 'The Queen's Grace', pp. 129-33; M. St Clare Byrne (ed.), *The Lisle Letters* (Chicago and London), 2:346-9.

⁴⁹This could lead to a transfer from the king's service, as was the case when Katherine Gatewyne, who had arrived in England with Margaret, married Sir Robert Whittingham, usher of the king's chamber: he later moved to be keeper of Margaret's great wardrobe. Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 183.

⁵⁰C. Monro (ed.), *Letters of Queen Margaret of Anjou, Bishop Beckett and Others*, Camden Society, old series 86 (1863), pp. 103, 153.

most powerful lords in the land, presumably on a less permanent basis, such as Edmund Beaufort duke of Somerset in the 1450s.⁵¹ Such fluidity between households and court put the queen and her *familia* firmly at the political heart of the country.

In the 1480s Dominic Mancini claimed that Elizabeth Woodville had attracted to her party many strangers and introduced them to court, so that they alone should manage the public and private businesses of the crown, surround the king, and have bands of retainers, give or sell offices, and finally rule the very king himself.⁵²

There is very little evidence to substantiate this accusation, which is more appropriate to the rhetoric usually directed at foreign queens; indeed, there were more strangers in Margaret of Anjou's household. Most of the six ladies who had arrived in England with Margaret soon married servants of the king or queen, diluting if not cancelling out their foreignness, but it is noticeable that Margaret lavished considerably greater gifts upon the unmarried Osanna Herman and Barbelina Herberquyne than upon her other ladies.⁵³ When Osanna finally did marry in 1453, Margaret granted her £200, whereas her English damsel, Jacquet Stanlowe, had received only a silver gilt cup on her marriage the year before.⁵⁴ Margaret was nonetheless concerned for the welfare of all her servants and many of her extant letters were written to secure promotions or their rights to land, or to enhance their marriage prospects.⁵⁵

Whereas Elizabeth Woodville's household furnished support for her family of dubious popularity, Margaret of Anjou's provided a vital stage in the careers of many of Suffolk's party. These included such prominent figures as John Wenlock, usher of her chamber and later her chamberlain, George Ashby, her clerk of the signet, John Norreys, master of her jewels, William Bothe, her chancellor, and her confessor Walter Lyhert.⁵⁶ Suffolk's own wife, Alice Chaucer, who had been Margaret's principal companion on her

⁵¹Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 196.

⁵²'Multos etiam alienos sibi ascisebat, in regiamque aulam ita insinuabat, ut publica et privata regis negocia illi soli obirent; regi assisterent; clientelas haberent; prefecturas donarent vel venderent; et denique regem ipsum regerent.' Dominic Mancini, *The Usurpation of Richard III*, ed. C.A.J. Armstrong (Gloucester, 1984), p. 65.

⁵³PRO, E 101/409/4; E 101/409/17; E 101/410/2; E 101/410/8.

⁵⁴Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 204; PRO, E 101/410/8.

⁵⁵For instance, Monro (ed.), *Letters of Queen Margaret*, pp. 89-90, 92-3, 94, 107-8, 115, 157, 165.

⁵⁶Dunn, 'Margaret of Anjou: a Reassessment', p. 30.

initial journey from France, attended her for some time afterwards and continued to receive gifts from the queen even when no longer one of her ladies.⁵⁷ Given Suffolk's involvement in arranging the marriage, these connections are unsurprising; but with such powerful Suffolk interests in her company from the beginning, Margaret had little chance of being the impartial queen that historians have implied she should have been.⁵⁸ The objections of Jack Cade's rebels to the duchess of Suffolk, and the parliamentary demands for her dismissal from court in December 1451 after her husband's death, very possibly point to her perceived influence over the queen rather than upon the king directly.⁵⁹ Another influence on Margaret's loyalties was probably her secretary, Nicholas Caraunt, whose early career owed much to Cardinal Beaufort's patronage.⁶⁰

Elizabeth Woodville's *familia* provided employment and thus a place at court not only for a number of her relatives, but also for those who had been loyal to her in her previous widowhood, such as the lawyer, Robert Iseham, involved in her struggle to claim her marriage portion from her mother-in-law.⁶¹ She paid her fellow ex-Lancastrian Sir Richard Roos for his service to herself and her Grey sons in 1466-7.⁶² But her *familia* also provided a means of rewarding such loyal Yorkists as Thomas Young, the MP imprisoned in 1451 for submitting a petition to declare Richard duke of York heir to the throne.⁶³

Myers' observation that Margaret was more effective in promoting her servants to

⁵⁷Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 256; PRO, E 101/409/17; E 101/410/2.

⁵⁸Her knight carver, Andrew Ogard, had actually been in the service of both the duke of Bedford and the duke of York, but his death in 1454 meant that he was not an influence on her in the more crucial years of her reign, although her respect for him is indicated by her decision to keep his son and heir at her own cost after his death. Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 298.

⁵⁹See above Chapter IV.4 for similarities with Jacquetta de St Pol's role with respect to her daughter, the queen.

⁶⁰G.L. Harriss, *Cardinal Beaufort: a Study of Lancastrian Ascendancy and Decline* (Oxford, 1988), p. 273.

⁶¹She first appointed him seneschal of her manor of Geddington, and as one of her solicitors, and by 1475 he was one of her attorneys. Myers, *Crown, Household*, pp. 295-6, 314-5; Smith, *Coronation*, pp. 29-30.

⁶²Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 303. As Myers notes, the Lancastrian knight and translator of Alain Charretier's *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* appears to be the only knight of that name alive at the time. In his discussion of Elizabeth Woodville's household, Myers identifies Roos' wife Margaret as a personal attendant of Margaret of Anjou, but in his article on Margaret of Anjou he suggested this attendant was Roos' unmarried niece - given that all the other attendants were older married women, Roos' wife is the more likely candidate. Another of Roos' nieces, Eleanor, who married Elizabeth Woodville's cousin Richard Haute, was a damsel in the households of both queens. Myers, *Crown, Household*, pp. 182-3, 303-4; Seaton, *Sir Richard Roos*, p. 52.

⁶³Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 298. See above Chapter III.2.

higher office than was Elizabeth Woodville has some foundation, although the example he gives of their chancellors is somewhat unfair given the early death of Elizabeth's chancellor, Roger Radcliff.⁶⁴ Elizabeth Woodville's confessor, Edward Story, did become bishop of Carlisle, but the Yorkist queens seem to have been less interested in influencing the church hierarchy than was Margaret, perhaps because the Yorkist kings did not share Henry VI's enthusiasm for promoting his own men to the episcopate.⁶⁵ The promotion of servants in this manner enabled queens to extend their networks of influence; Margaret called upon her erstwhile confessor Walter Lyhert in his position as bishop of Norwich to encourage the city officials to appoint the cousin of her squire, Edmund Clere, as sergeant there.⁶⁶ Anne Neville and Elizabeth of York lacked the controversial servants of their predecessors, although Anne's included many northerners from her household as duchess of Gloucester.⁶⁷ The inclusion of members of the king's household and MPs within their *familia* ensured that these were still organisations close to the heart of politics, although without the repercussions that this held for Margaret of Anjou's queenship.⁶⁸ Elizabeth of York's household members were arguably more influential in her son's reign than in that of her husband.⁶⁹

2.iii 'Household' Piety

The queen's *familia* was an important base for the religious life of the queen, providing a forum for exchanges of influence and interest in piety as well as in politics. The gift and receipt of books of religious interest, involvement in fraternities and religious foundations, and the distribution of charity were the prime manifestations of 'household' piety. Whereas the exchange of books particularly related to personal devotion and personal networks,

⁶⁴Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 148.

⁶⁵Margaret even successfully recommended her chancellor Laurence Bothe for the bishopric of Durham in 1457 in spite of her husband's nomination of his chaplain John Arundel. Neal, 'The Queen's Grace', p. 139; Griffiths, *Henry VI*, pp. 248, 777.

⁶⁶Monro, *Letters of Queen Margaret*, p. 119. Lyhert's promotion in 1446 was probably a result of Suffolk's influence rather than that of the young queen, but the connection of previous service may still have been important. Griffiths, *Henry VI*, pp. 271, 285, 486, 645.

⁶⁷R. Horrox, *Richard III: a Study of Service* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 138; see Sutton and Hammond, *Coronation of Richard III*, pp. 168-70, 270-4.

⁶⁸Neal, 'The Queen's Grace', pp. 129-33.

⁶⁹See above Chapter III.3.

often between women, the latter categories involved the queen's relationship with a wider range of her subjects, with implications for her public identity.

One of these queens, almost certainly Margaret of Anjou, was given a copy of John Lydgate's *Life of Our Lady* by a member of the Caraunt family, presumably her secretary Nicholas.⁷⁰ She possessed another copy of the same work within a large manuscript which included Gower's *Confessio Amantis* and various prayers and ballads.⁷¹ Such books would have been read aloud at mealtimes and shared around the circle of the queen's friends.⁷² Elizabeth Woodville's lady-in-waiting Anne Haute brought to the queen's court the collection of Arthurian romances, including the spiritual *Quest of the Holy Grail*, which she had inherited from her uncle Sir Richard Roos in 1482.⁷³ Those who signed their names in the book, and were thus presumably familiar with its content, included Elizabeth Woodville's daughters Elizabeth and Cecily, her sister Jane and her brother Edward.⁷⁴ It has been suggested that it was the widow of one of Elizabeth Woodville's attorneys, Joan Luyt, who presented this queen with a book of Hours of the Guardian Angel; certainly it was presented by a woman to a queen Elizabeth and includes a miniature of the presentation - Plate 5.⁷⁵ The queen sits upon a canopied throne wearing a red dress and blue cloak, her blonde hair loose beneath a crown, rather like the image in the Skinners' guildbook.⁷⁶ According to the dedicatory poem, the queen specifically requested a copy of this

⁷⁰Dunn, 'Margaret of Anjou: a Reassessment', p. 114. This is Yale University Library MS 281. For Margaret's attempt to ensure Caraunt received the inheritance due to him from his predecessor as Dean of Wells see Monro (ed.), *Letters of Queen Margaret*, pp. 93-4. Sutton and Visser-Fuchs argue that the manuscript should be dated to the 1470s and was therefore Elizabeth Woodville's, A. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs, 'A "Most Benevolent Queen" Queen Elizabeth Woodville's Reputation, Her Piety and Her Books', *The Ricardian* 10:129 (1995), p. 232; P. Tudor-Craig, *Richard III*, 2nd edn (Ipswich, 1977), p. 359.

⁷¹Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton MS 73, fol. 121.

⁷²The household ordinances for both Edward of Westminster, prince of Wales, and Cecily Neville, duchess of York mention reading during meals. London Society of Antiquaries, *A Collection of Ordinances and Regulations for the Government of the Royal Household* (London, 1790), pp. 28, 37-9; C.M. Meale, "'... alle the bokes that I haue of latyn, englich, and frensch": Laywomen and their Books in Late Medieval England', in C.M. Meale (ed.), *Women and Literature in Britain 1150-1500* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 133.

⁷³BL, Royal MS 14 E III; Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, 'A "Most Benevolent Queen"', p. 228-9.

⁷⁴BL, Royal MS 14 E III, fols. 1, 162. See above Chapter III.3.

⁷⁵Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, 'A "Most Benevolent Queen"' pp. 230-1; A.F. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs, 'The Cult of Angels in Late Fifteenth-Century England: an Hours of the Guardian Angel presented to Queen Elizabeth Woodville', in L. Smith and J.H.M. Taylor (eds.), *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence* (London and Toronto, 1996), pp. 230-65.

⁷⁶See plate 1 and Chapter I.2 above.

uncommon work, indicating that ‘Elizabeth’s taste in devotional literature may have been both positive and sophisticated’.⁷⁷ Anne Neville’s tastes too seem to have been quite sophisticated although we can only judge from a single book owned by her, perhaps jointly with her husband: Mechtild of Magdeburg’s *Booke of Gostlye Grace*.⁷⁸ Elizabeth of York is associated with more popular devotional works, and with actively disseminating them within her household and beyond. As mentioned in Chapter IV, she and her mother-in-law presented to their lady-in-waiting, Mary Roos, a copy of Walter Hilton’s *Scale of Perfection*, which had recently been printed by Wynkyn de Worde at Margaret Beaufort’s request.⁷⁹ It is possible that a promise to purchase and give out a certain number of the books printed was part of the arrangement made by patrons with printers on such occasions, in which case Elizabeth of York is likely to have given copies of *The Fifteen O’s*, printed for her and Margaret Beaufort by Caxton in 1491, to her ladies also.⁸⁰

Carol Meale has commented upon ‘the comparative lack of patronage among royal women during the later medieval period’ which ‘remains something of a puzzle, although the evidence may simply not have survived’.⁸¹ That their patronage was more extensive than the surviving manuscripts suggest is indicated in a reference to £10 spent by Elizabeth Woodville buying a book from William Wulflete, ex-chancellor of Cambridge, which occurs in her only surviving household accounts.⁸² Moreover, the will of Katherine, Lady Hastings, makes reference to a book of hours given to her by a queen Elizabeth.⁸³ Again it is not clear which Elizabeth - either might have wished to express her gratitude to the widow of Lord Hastings if, as suggested earlier, he had been executed for his involvement

⁷⁷Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, ‘A “Most Benevolent Queen”’ p. 231.

⁷⁸BL, Egerton MS 2006; Mechtild of Magdeburg, *The Booke of Gostlye Grace*, ed. T. Halligan (Toronto, 1979), p. 4. See above Chapter IV.4.

⁷⁹F.J. Riddy, ‘“Women Talking about the Things of God”: a Late Medieval Sub-culture’, in Meale (ed.), *Women and Literature*, p. 108.

⁸⁰G.R. Keiser, ‘The Mystics and the Early English Printers: The Economics of Devotionalism’, in M. Glasscoe (ed.), *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England: Exeter Symposium IV* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 23. W. Caxton, *The Fifteen O’s, and Other Prayers*, ed. S. Ayling (London, 1869).

⁸¹Meale, ‘“... alle the bokes that I haue of latyn, englisch, and frensch”’, p. 151.

⁸²Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 318.

⁸³P. Tudor-Craig, ‘The Hours of Edward V and William Lord Hastings: British Library Manuscript Additional 54782’, in Williams (ed.), *England in the Fifteenth Century*, p. 359.

in a Woodville plot to protect Edward V.⁸⁴ However, this book may originally have been given to the queen, rather than commissioned by her. If, as is commonly asserted, the Hours of Elizabeth the Queen (London, British Library, Additional MS 50001) belonged to Elizabeth of York, it must have been a gift since it appears to date from the first quarter of the fifteenth century.⁸⁵ However, Elizabeth's connection with the manuscript is based on the presence of her signature - 'Elysabeth ye quene' - in the bottom margin of fol. 22, which is an improbable site for a mark of ownership. It is more likely that this was written by the queen in the book of a friend, much as successive members of the royal family entered their autographs in British Library, Additional MS 17012, a book of Hours of the Virgin, probably belonging to a lady of the court.⁸⁶ These were nonetheless tokens of the shared religious experience of the queen and her ladies, since, in British Library, Additional MS 17012, Elizabeth of York also wrote, 'madam I pray you forget not me to and pray to you that I may haue part of your prayers'.

One surviving devotional manuscript which certainly was created specifically for a queen is Oxford, Jesus College MS 124: a roll of prayers to the Virgin which was made for Margaret of Anjou - Plate 15. The artist was probably William Abell, who had undertaken several commissions for the king.⁸⁷ The prayers radiate out from a miniature of the Virgin crowned, holding her child on her right arm and a white flower in her left hand, perhaps a lily or a marguerite. Beneath the circle of prayers, Margaret, also wearing a crown over loose blonde hair, kneels at a prie-dieu, looking up to the Virgin, her coat of arms supported by two angels. The fact that all the prayers are in Latin perhaps indicates that Margaret had some command of this language. The manuscript was probably purely for private worship, but elsewhere Margaret made a more public statement of her devotion to the Virgin: for the Chapel of Mary of the Pew at Westminster, she commissioned a window in which she and

⁸⁴See above Chapter III.4.iii. Although two books of hours associated with Lord Hastings survive, it is impossible to identify either conclusively with that mentioned in Lady Katherine's will. For the argument that both were originally commissioned for members of the royal family - Princess Elizabeth and Prince Edward - by Margaret of York, see Tudor-Craig, 'The Hours of Edward V', pp. 356-69.

⁸⁵Tudor-Craig, 'The Hours of Edward V', p. 355.

⁸⁶BL, Add MS 17012, fols. 20-1, 192.

⁸⁷J. Alexander, 'William Abell "lymnour" and Fifteenth-Century English Illumination', in A. Rosenauer and G. Weber (eds.), *Kunsthistorische Forschungen Otto Pächt zu seinem 70 Geburtstag* (Salzburg, 1972), pp. 166-8.

the king knelt before the Virgin and child.⁸⁸ In the context of her two copies of the *Life of Our Lady*, the surviving evidence of Margaret's piety does suggest a particular devotion to the Virgin, quite possibly inspired by the extent to which she herself was identified with the Mother of God, by virtue of her office.⁸⁹

Elizabeth Woodville's identification with the Virgin through her membership of the Skinners' Fraternity of the Assumption of the Virgin has already been explored above, in Chapter I.2. For Elizabeth, this was part of the piety she shared with her servants. It may well have been her Yeoman of the Robes, John Chamber, who had suggested she join the Skinners' Fraternity, of which John was already a member.⁹⁰ Interest in the fraternity then spread to other household members; as mentioned earlier, in 1475 two of Elizabeth's damsels, Eleanor Haute and Alice Hulcote, along with Alice's husband John, one of the queen's officers, also joined.⁹¹ Another fraternity patronised by this queen's household was that of Christ Church Cathedral, Canterbury, of which both the queen and her personal attendant Alice Fogge were members.⁹² Like the Skinners' Fraternity, this guild included many wealthy London merchants. Unlike her predecessor, Elizabeth Woodville seems to have felt an affinity for London, or perhaps deliberately built upon Yorkist popularity in London and the roles played by her mother and brother in times of crisis to keep her dynasty in favour with the city.⁹³

The best known manifestation of queenly piety in this period is the foundation of Queens' College, Cambridge in 1448, and this also involved the queen's household members: Margaret not only sent her chamberlain, Sir John Wenlock, to lay the foundation stone, but also appointed her chancellor, William Bothe, to lead those appointed to draw

⁸⁸Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 201.

⁸⁹It is probable that BL, Egerton MS 1070, a book of hours possibly partly illuminated by her father, René, was also used by Margaret.

⁹⁰J.J. Lambert, *Records of the Skinners of London* (London, 1933), p. 81.

⁹¹Lambert, *Skinners of London*, p. 83; Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 216. Chapter III.4.ii.

⁹²Alice's husband, John, the king's treasurer, and four other important royal ladies were also members: the king's mother, his sisters Margaret and Anne, and his aunt the duchess of Buckingham. Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, *9th report* (London, 1883), pp. 115-17; Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 288; B. Dobson, 'The Monks of Canterbury in the Later Middle Ages', in P. Collinson, N. Ramsay and M. Sparks (eds.), *A History of Canterbury Cathedral* (Oxford, 1995), p. 146; BL, Stowe MS 1047, fol. 61.

⁹³See above Chapter IV.2 and 4.

up statutes for the new college.⁹⁴ These, however, were instances of service to the queen rather than of the shared pious interests of Elizabeth Woodville and her ladies.

2.iv Financial Resources

Along with the people who surrounded them, the nature of their financial resources strongly influenced each queen's role. Margaret of Anjou was promised a dower of 10,000 marks yearly, in line with the traditional Lancastrian provision, in spite of Henry VI's financial difficulties. Although, as for her immediate predecessors, much of this came from Duchy of Lancaster lands, just over half came from customs or the exchequer, both of which proved unreliable sources, constantly leaving the queen with inadequate funds.⁹⁵ Consequently, presumably with her council's advice, she strove throughout her queenship, and particularly in the early 1450s, to augment and exchange these rights for more land or for privileges such as a licence to ship wool tax-free.⁹⁶ This apparently proved a successful strategy for in 1455 the Yorkists were petitioning to limit her dower to 10,000 marks: Myers's pessimistic view of her income based upon figures for a single year must not be taken as representative of her entire reign.⁹⁷

In keeping with his policy of emulating Edward III, Edward IV granted only £4,500 worth of dower lands to his queen, even though this had proved insufficient for Philippa of Hainault.⁹⁸ This was not only an issue of implied legitimacy, for there were practical issues at stake also: the king had already granted away large amounts of land to his supporters in

⁹⁴Surprisingly no statutes were issued until 1475. J. Twigg, *A History of Queens' College, Cambridge, 1448-1986* (Woodbridge, 1987), p. 39; W.G. Searle, *The History of The Queens' College of St Margaret and St Bernard in the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1867-71), p. 28.

⁹⁵Her dower was to consist of £2,000 from duchy of Lancaster estates assigned to her, £1,000 from a cash annuity to be drawn from duchy of Lancaster estates, £1,000 from the customs of Southampton, £1,008 15s 5d from the duchy of Cornwall, and £1,657 17s 11d from the royal exchequer. This was soon augmented by an annuity of 500 marks from duchy of Lancaster estates previously in the possession of Humphrey duke of Gloucester, bringing her total potential income to £7,000. *CCIR 1447-54*, pp. 13-14; *CPR 1452-61*, p. 339; Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 137.

⁹⁶Griffiths, *Henry VI*, pp. 260-1.

⁹⁷B.P. Wolffe, *The Royal Demesne in English History: the Crown Estate in the Governance of the Realm from the Conquest to 1509* (London, 1971), p. 139; Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 142; For further details of Margaret of Anjou's finances see *CCIR 1447-54*, p. 223; B.P. Wolffe, *Henry VI* (London, 1981), pp. 137, 256; Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 260-1.

⁹⁸Given-Wilson, 'Merger of Edward III's and Queen Philippa's Households', pp. 183-7.

the early years of his reign and his supply was not inexhaustible.⁹⁹ Edward may have felt that the generosity extended to his queen's relatives, far beyond that expected for a foreign bride, might be held to compensate her for the reduction in her means of direct patronage.¹⁰⁰ In 1466-7 her income actually slightly exceeded this, being £4,540: this successful collection may in part have resulted from the higher percentage of land holdings or fee farms in her dower rather than the customs and exchequer grants so important to Margaret.¹⁰¹ Not only was this method more efficient, but it was also more appropriate to the wife of a king who was promising his subjects that he would 'live of his own', relying on his own lands rather than upon taxation.¹⁰² Edward appears to have further compensated his queen for her inadequate dower lands by not charging her for her *familia's* attendance at court. Margaret of Anjou paid a daily rate of £6 and later £7 for days spent with the king's household, but there is no record of Elizabeth Woodville ever paying such sums.¹⁰³ In the early 1470s the compilers of the *Black Book* did make a tentative reference to payment from the queen:

ita quod sit regina regnans and endowed with livelihood sufficient, than if hit please the king and hur highness, hit hath byn used by quenez to pay a certen dayly for theyre dietes, whan she cumith to this court.¹⁰⁴

That the book's compilers felt that the queen's landholdings were now sufficient to bear this added burden seems more probable than Myers' interpretation: 'Perhaps the haughty Queen Elizabeth Woodville had to be won by fair words!'¹⁰⁵

Anne Neville was not allocated any dower lands, perhaps, as Anne Crawford has

⁹⁹J.R. Lander, 'Marriage and Politics in the Fifteenth Century: the Nevilles and the Wydevilles', *BIHR* 36 (1963): 143; M.A. Hicks, 'The Changing Role of the Wydevilles in Yorkist Politics to 1483', in C.D. Ross (ed.), *Patronage, Pedigree and Power in Later Medieval England* (Gloucester, 1979), pp. 65-6.

¹⁰⁰Dower assignments were usually made after a queen's coronation, but for Elizabeth Woodville the delay between marriage and coronation was so significant that she was granted £466 13s 4d from the exchequer in December 1464 to tide her over Christmas and was promised a jointure of 4,000 marks. On 16 March 1465 she was allocated extensive lands and grants by letters patent 'in part support of her expenses in her chamber', to which a grant of duchy of Lancaster lands was added under the duchy seal two days later. R. Somerville, *History of the Duchy of Lancaster* (London, 1953), p. 238; *CPR 1461-67*, p. 430.

¹⁰¹Crawford, 'King's Burden', p. 46.

¹⁰²Neal, 'The Queen's Grace', pp. 109-15, 161-4; Wolffe, *Royal Demesne*, p. 152. For further details of Elizabeth Woodville's landholdings see Wolffe, *Royal Demesne*, pp. 152-5, 163-4, 182-9.

¹⁰³PRO, E 101/409/16; E 101/409/20; E 101/410/6; E 101/410/7; E 101/410/9; E 101/410/15.

¹⁰⁴Myers (ed.), *Household of Edward IV*, p. 92.

¹⁰⁵Myers (ed.), *Household of Edward IV*, p. 28

suggested, because her income from her mother's lordships of Glamorgan and Abergavenny were considered sufficient, perhaps because her king simply had not had time to arrange it before her death.¹⁰⁶ Elizabeth of York received a portion of her mother's lands and fee farms and an annuity from the town of Bristol which amounted in total to less than half of her mother's income, consequently rendering her heavily dependent upon the king for financial assistance in the form of gifts and loans throughout her marriage.¹⁰⁷ Henry VII had probably expected that his wife's grandmother, Cecily Duchess of York, would die a little sooner, but it was not until ten years into his reign that his queen received the duchess's lands, worth almost £1400. By this time Elizabeth of York was significantly in debt - in 1496 Henry VII had to issue £2000 from his chamber expenses to pay off her debts - a fact which no doubt constrained her potential for patronage.¹⁰⁸

The possession of these lands made a queen one of the principal landholders in England, hence the need for a council to aid in managing them. Like any baronial council, some of its members would have been more regular and committed than others, it being made up both of her principal officials and other noblemen. The officials included her receiver general, chamberlain, knights carver, chancellor, secretary, attorney general and other attorneys, Margaret's also included her chief steward.¹⁰⁹ In 1452-3 Margaret rewarded Edmund Beaufort, duke of Somerset with an annuity of 100 marks for his counsel, but it

¹⁰⁶The allocation of Anne's dower would have been complicated by the fact that she should have been given lands confiscated from Elizabeth Woodville, but Richard was probably unwilling to start granting these out until satisfied with the arrangements made regarding Elizabeth.

¹⁰⁷Elizabeth of York was not granted her dower lands until 26 November 1487, before which time her needs were paid for directly from the king's household, be that for clothes, horses or an apothecary. When her dower was finally granted it consisted primarily of her mother's recently surrendered lands and fee farms, which, according to a valor of 1496, yielded a net income of £1,889 7s 11¼d. She was also granted an annuity of £102 15s 6d from the town of Bristol. In 1489 she was granted some of her aunt Isabel Neville's property during the minority of the earl of Warwick. In March 1495 the queen was granted Fotheringhay, one of the major properties of her grandfather, Richard, duke of York, and a residence popular with her father, but it was her grandmother Cecily's death that year that most significantly improved her income, providing £1,399 6s 8¼d in 1496. A valor for lands which probably dates from after this inheritance recorded the queen's income at £4,344 4s 10½d, but this must have been a particularly profitable year, since her entire receipts (not just from land) in the year of her death, were only £3,585 19s 10½d, while a 1506 account of those properties previously in her hands recorded a net income of £3,360. W. Campbell (ed.), *Materials for a History of the Reign of Henry VII*, Rolls Series 60 (1873-77), 1:227, 529, 543, 2:302; London, Westminster Abbey Muniments 12172, 12173 and 12177; Neal, 'The Queen's Grace', pp. 165-7; *CPR 1485-94*, pp. 293, 369; *CPR 1494-1509*, p. 14; Nicolas (ed.), *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, p. 111.

¹⁰⁸PRO, E 101/414/6, fol. 60.

¹⁰⁹Myers, *Crown, Household*, pp. 152, 258.

seems unlikely that he was able to attend all of the daily meetings.¹¹⁰ Her auditors, receiver general and other members would tour her estates to inspect the accounts and compile a valor of her property each year.¹¹¹ They would arbitrate in disputes on her land and were presumably the means by which she learnt of infringements on her property such as the occasion when William Stonor was found to be ‘uncourteisly’ hunting deer in Elizabeth Woodville’s forests.¹¹² They would advise her on the best means of promoting her interests and probably suggested to Margaret of Anjou many of the prerogatives in the years before 1454 which Griffiths noted enabled her to expand her patronage.¹¹³ Queens were not permitted to replace men who already held offices in their dower lands, but they were responsible for filling posts that became vacant. Elizabeth Woodville granted several offices to her brother Anthony, as well as rewarding Robert Iseham, whose service to her has already been noted, by appointing him seneschal of her manor at Geddington.¹¹⁴ She was probably also responsible for the appointment of her brother Anthony, her treasurer Sir Thomas Vaughan, and her receiver general John Forster, as Justices of the Peace in Hertfordshire where she had substantial landholdings.¹¹⁵ In East Anglia she was able to build up a similar network of Woodville/queenly connections around her landholdings, with rewards to servants and kinsmen, to the extent that Horrox has suggested that by 1475 ‘the queen’s interest in East Anglia was regarded as the main instrument of royal authority there’, significantly augmented by the lands of her daughter-in-law Anne Mowbray in 1478.¹¹⁶ A number of Margaret’s surviving letters relate to the management of her lands, attempting to settle her tenants’ disputes, responding to tenants’ complaints about her officials, or ordering repairs.¹¹⁷ Fewer letters survive for the other queens, but Elizabeth

¹¹⁰Myers, *Crown, Household*, pp. 151, 196.

¹¹¹C. Rawcliffe, ‘Baronial Councils in the Later Middle Ages’, in Ross (ed.), *Patronage, Pedigree and Power*, p. 99; Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 258; Nicolas (ed.), *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, p. 101.

¹¹²Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 259; C. Carpenter (ed.), *Kingsford’s Stonor Letters and Papers 1290-1483* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 406-7; MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville*, p. 206.

¹¹³Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 261.

¹¹⁴PRO, DL 37/38, mm. 4,5; Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 295.

¹¹⁵Horrox, *Richard III: a Study of Service*, pp. 198-9.

¹¹⁶Horrox, *Richard III: a Study of Service*, p. 80.

¹¹⁷Monro (ed.), *Letters of Queen Margaret*, pp. 99, 104, 154.

Woodville took William Stonor to task severely for the deer-hunting episode.¹¹⁸

Lands were not their only source of income and at least three of the queens in this study maintained their claim to queen's gold, or at least employed clerks of queen's gold in the king's exchequer: Anne Neville is, as ever, a mystery. However, whereas Eleanor of Castile's queen's gold receipts could amount to more than £1,000 in a single year, public resistance to this prerogative had increased in succeeding centuries and queens had become less dependent upon this source, making them less inclined to pursue this prerogative with the aggression that caused such concern to Eleanor's subjects.¹¹⁹ Consequently, in 1452-3 Margaret of Anjou received only £53 1s 14d, much of this concerning fines paid years previously, and of the fifty-nine claims made in the period, forty-three were unpaid.¹²⁰ Elizabeth Woodville, in contrast, made only eleven claims in 1466-7 and received payment amounting to £37 from the ten which were successful, although in 1481-2 she received a mere £6 13s 4d and in 1502-3 her daughter apparently received nothing at all.¹²¹ The larger revenue and a larger number of surviving writs of queen's gold for the earlier part of Elizabeth Woodville's reign suggest greater enthusiasm on her part at this time. It was in this period that the notorious affair of Sir Thomas Cook occurred. Cook was an ex-Mayor of London accused of treasonous contact with Margaret of Anjou, ultimately charged only with misprision and fined.¹²² In the most influential account of this episode, Robert Fabyan's *Chronicle*, Elizabeth Woodville is accused of claiming 800 marks in queen's gold from the unfortunate Cook whose property had been looted and wife turned out of the house. The episode has commonly been used as an example of the rapaciousness of the queen and her family, but Sutton has recently argued that Elizabeth Woodville actually

¹¹⁸Carpenter (ed.), *Stonor Letters*, pp. 406-7. Elizabeth of York referred to the good and faithful service she had received from her husband's privy councillor, Sir Gilbert Talbot, in her letter appointing him steward of her lands in Feckenham. BL, Add MS 46454. For his gift to her of a wild boar in November 1502 see Nicolas (ed.), *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, p. 64.

¹¹⁹Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile*, p. 82; Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 141.

¹²⁰Myers, *Crown, Household*, pp. 172-81.

¹²¹Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 255; Nicolas, *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, p. 111. In W. Prynne, *Aurum Reginae* (London, 1668), pp. 68-104, are printed 162 surviving writs for queen's gold made by Elizabeth Woodville. For a breakdown of the quantities charged of people of different classes see Neal, 'The Queen's Grace', p. 171.

¹²²A.F. Sutton, 'Sir Thomas Cook and his "Troubles": an Investigation', *Guildhall Studies in London History* 3 (1978): 85-6.

exempted Cook from the fine.¹²³ It is indicative of the historiography of English queenship that it has always been assumed that it was the queen herself, rather than the clerk of the queen's gold (who worked in the king's exchequer) who was responsible for the supposedly unfair treatment of Sir Thomas Cook, yet when the queen's accounts record her efforts to economise it is assumed that this was really the work of her officers. Evidence of the king's response to his subjects' resentment of this prerogative occurs in warrants for issues of 1472, in which it appears that Edward had exempted the bishop of Durham from paying £70 in queen's gold some time previously, but the king had nonetheless borrowed the £70 from a Florentine merchant to ensure that his queen received the money owed.¹²⁴

The surviving evidence suggests that for Elizabeth of York the great wardrobe and the king's chamber were rather more important resources than queen's gold; clothes and materials for herself and her servants were regularly forthcoming.¹²⁵ Even the Venetian gold for a gown the queen was preparing for her king came originally from his chamber.¹²⁶ This probably reflects Henry VII's awareness of the inadequacy of her funds, but equally reinforces the impression that he wished to keep a restraint on her financial freedom. Margaret of Anjou and Elizabeth Woodville, in contrast, rarely received anything from such sources other than furnishings for their lying-in, their Garter robes, and liveries for some of their servants.

Elizabeth of York's privy purse expenses also refer to a steady stream of gifts, principally of food: oranges and apples from a poor man, butter and chickens from a poor woman, rose water from the Abbess of the Minoreesses, cheeses from the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Prior of Lanthony, cherries from the Mayor of London, and so on.¹²⁷ The bearers of the gifts received varying rewards: 8d to the poor woman, 6s 8d to the Mayor of London's servant. Such gifts cannot be seen as income but as an aspect of the networks of

¹²³Sutton, 'Thomas Cook and his "Troubles"', p. 91; see above IV.4.

¹²⁴PRO, E 404,75/2, fol. 38.

¹²⁵For instance, PRO, E 101/412/20, fols. 15, 17, 19; E 101/413/1; E 101/413/10; E 101/413/12; E 101/414/1; E 101/414/6, fols. 34, 46, 64, 68, 74-5; E 101/414/11, fols. 27, 38; E 101/415/7, fol. 20.

¹²⁶Several references to this gold occur in PRO, E 101/415/3, and may indicate that the queen was embroidering this for the king. However, in April 1502 Elizabeth herself purchased Venetian gold and silk and paid for this to be made into lace for the king's 'mantell of the Garter'. Nicolas (ed.), *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, p. 8.

¹²⁷Nicolas (ed.), *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, pp. 4, 5, 8, 14, 18, 23, 33.

patronage and sometimes of friendship in which the queen was involved. Elizabeth of York's household was, like many noble households including that of the king, a centre of traditional charitable acts, whether of alms to poor people and ex-servants of her family, paying for the burial of hanged men, or the provision of a young girl's dowry on entering a convent.¹²⁸ The prayers of the grateful poor were usually the only reciprocity expected in such instances, but the fruit, butter and chickens noted above may, like the flowers presented by children to today's royalty, have been gifts from some wider community in token of thanks and expectation of 'good ladyship'.¹²⁹ It is likely that the queen sent gifts to the Mayor of London and others, but if they came directly from her estates, as did Elizabeth Woodville's gift of a buck to William Stonor (before the trespass episode), they would not have featured in her privy purse expenses.¹³⁰ Such tokens acted as regular reminders of bonds of loyalty and patronage, but the major gift-giving event was at New Year. The payments to the servants bearing gifts to Elizabeth of York in 1503 carefully reflected the status of the giver.¹³¹ The value of the gifts given by Margaret of Anjou tended to follow similar etiquette, although her personal favouritism occasionally affected this.¹³² The forum for this gift-giving, however, was not the queen's household, but the environment of the court at its most magnificent.

3. The Court

The frontispiece to a collection of romances owned by Margaret of Anjou presents the English court in ideal fashion - Plate 3. The resplendent, crowned king and queen hold hands in a gesture of affection, perhaps of union, while before them kneels one of their mightiest subjects, the earl of Shrewsbury, in an act born of generosity and the hope of patronage, offering to his queen the book in which this illustration appears. Grouped behind the king on the left of the picture are his chamberlain and his nobles, behind the queen on the right, her smaller number of ladies watching the presentation attentively. Just

¹²⁸Nicolas (ed.), *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, pp. 1, 5, 14, 37.

¹²⁹F. Heal, 'Reciprocity and Exchange in the Late Medieval Household', in B.A. Hanawalt and D. Wallace (eds.), *Bodies and Disciplines* (Minneapolis, 1996), p. 181.

¹³⁰PRO, SC 1/44/64.

¹³¹Nicolas, *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, pp. 90-1

¹³²Myers, *Crown, Household*, p. 222; PRO, E 101/409/4; E 101/409/17; E 101/410/2; E 101/410/8.

outside the castle walls grow daisies as tall as bushes, the emblem of Margaret of Anjou, which was not just a pun upon her name but a flower repeatedly venerated in the literature of court and romance. A poem once attributed to the duke of Suffolk begins:

Myn hert ys set, and all myn hole entent,
 To serve this flour in my most humble wys
 As faythfully as can be thought or ment,
 With-out feynyng or slouthe in my seruyse;
 For wytt thee wele, yt is a paradyse
 To se this floure when yt begyn to sprede,
 Wyth colours fressh ennewyd, white and rede.¹³³

The poet goes on to lament that Chaucer, being dead, cannot help him in his praise of this flower, thus alluding to Chaucer's eulogy upon the daisy in the opening of *The Legend of Good Women* in which the beautiful queen of Love, probably meant to represent Richard II's queen Anne, was crowned with pearls made to look like daisies. The rest of the poem is not obviously applicable to Margaret, and Jacob's interpretation that it describes Suffolk's 'capitulation to the young queen' is improbable.¹³⁴ Nonetheless, the use of the daisy as a device for Margaret fitted her swiftly into an existing discourse of legitimate and praiseworthy courtly queenship. This painting was executed in France, presumably roughly according to Shrewsbury's specifications, and was an indicator to the queen of the public image of the ideal court: splendid and ordered, men and women divided in their roles by the geography of the court, a place for subjects to deal with their monarchs, where the king's officials did business, but where there was also an air of romance.

As E.F. Jacob noted, the illness of Henry IV, absences of Henry V and minority of Henry VI had so diminished the role of the English court that by 1445 it had virtually fallen into abeyance as a political institution.¹³⁵ However, Margaret's arrival became the occasion for the revitalising of the English court. Her household, separate from, yet integrated with, that of the king developed as a new factor in the political and social structure, and their meeting point was the court. As described above, Margaret increasingly dominated this court, playing host at Greenwich and later on her Midland estates where the court was clearly the central political institution. Although her successors did not dominate their husbands' courts to quite this extent, the regular presence of their households, and

¹³³H.R. Robbins (ed.), *Secular Lyrics of the XIV and XV Centuries* (Oxford, 1955), p. 186.

¹³⁴E.F. Jacob, *The Fifteenth Century, 1399-1485* (Oxford, 1961), p. 495.

¹³⁵Jacob, *Fifteenth Century*, p. 480; but see also Griffiths, 'The King's Court', pp. 30-1.

particularly their ladies, were integral to the nature of the fifteenth-century court.

A queen's influence varied between the different spheres of court life, but she could play a vital part in the exercise of her husband's kingship by her activities there. The gender divide of Shrewsbury's picture mirrored the geography of the court itself, but these boundaries could be transgressed, to positive or negative effect, on a variety of occasions. Their roles were not separate, but complementary, for the queen not only had much to contribute to the magnificent and romantic image of the court, but acted as an intermediary for certain of the king's subjects, and when his official business involved other women, such as foreign marriage alliances, she stepped in to provide the appropriate female element on his part. The rest of this chapter will explore this varying complementarity and its effects upon the Lancastrian, Yorkist and early Tudor courts.

3.i The archaeology of queen and court

Roberta Gilchrist, in her analysis of the archaeology of women's quarters within the medieval noble house, has argued that 'space was used to construct and reinforce a gendering of women's bodies which emphasised chastity and purity . . . bodies of high status women classified through gender were hidden through architectural mechanisms of segregation and enclosure.'¹³⁶ For a queen, chastity was only a part of her gendered role, and thus her relationship with the space of court was far more complex than that of the closeted tower maidens presented by Gilchrist. Queens as childbearers were vital to the continuation of the royal dynasty; as women, they were inferior to their kings, yet ideally they inspired the court to chivalrous deeds, served to emphasize their king's human qualities, became particularly involved in his dealings with other women and contributed to the very public display that was expected of monarchy. All of these elements of their role involved interaction with certain types of space.

The enclosed, sumptuous, relic-laden and richly symbolic settings of royal childbirth have already been mentioned above.¹³⁷ Although few people were present for the birth itself, this exclusive suite for which the great wardrobe had to provide such expensive

¹³⁶R. Gilchrist, 'Medieval Bodies in the Material World: Gender, Stigma and the Body', in S. Kay and M. Rubin (eds.), *Framing Medieval Bodies* (Manchester, 1994), pp. 57-8. But see K.M. Phillips, 'The Medieval Maiden: Young Womanhood in Late Medieval England' (DPhil thesis, University of York, 1997), pp. 86-100.

¹³⁷Chapter II.4.i.

furnishings held something of the mystery of the inner sanctum of the temple, and in the great processions and banqueting for the churcing that followed, the queen's role in dynastic perpetuation was displayed to any who might be at court at the time.

When Elizabeth Woodville gave birth to her first two sons, at Westminster Abbey and Shrewsbury Abbey, she used guest rooms often inhabited by men, but within royal palaces there were suites of rooms explicitly designed for her use. Although these were, like the lodgings of Gilchrist's noble ladies, separated from the sleeping quarters of the rest of the household, the issue at stake was status rather than chastity. The king's rooms too were separate, close to those of the queen. It was at Sheen, Henry V's palace completed by his son, that the royal lodgings were first placed in an explicitly separate building from the rest of the lodgings, exalting the royal family by its exclusive position.¹³⁸ Other buildings, such as Windsor Castle and Westminster Palace, had already developed this structure within existing buildings during the previous century. But the queen was also separated from the king. Shortly before Margaret of Anjou's arrival, Henry instructed his clerk of the works at Westminster, William Cleve, to make 'in all haste possible' a new hall with a scullery, saucery and serving-place 'honourable for the Queen's loggynge there' at Eltham.¹³⁹ Here the queen's lodgings were clearly not just bedrooms separate from the king's but a place for separate provision of meals also. The physical positioning of the queen's lodgings not only separated her household from that of the king, but could also indicate her lower status, just like their thrones at the coronation or the height of their canopies on days of estate. At Nottingham Castle, Edward IV's new design apparently included the French and Burgundian practice of positioning the queen's lodgings directly beneath the king's, instead of on the same level as had been previous English practice.¹⁴⁰ They probably still had a shared privy lodging.¹⁴¹ After the Lancastrians' royal lodgings at Sheen had burnt down, Henry VII built the Palace of Richmond in which, to judge from a description of the palace in 1501, the queen's lodgings were beneath the king's on the same side of the castle,

¹³⁸S. Thurley, *The Royal Palaces of Tudor England* (New Haven, 1993), p. 9.

¹³⁹H.M. Colvin (ed.), *The History of the King's Works* (London, 1963-82), 2:936.

¹⁴⁰Thurley, *Royal Palaces*, p. 18.

¹⁴¹Thurley, *Royal Palaces*, p. 18.

overlooking the gardens.¹⁴² The positioning of the privy closets within the chapel at Richmond also defined the queen's physical position according to her gender and status - whereas the king's was, naturally, on the right, not only did the queen have a closet on the left, but so too did the queen's mother and other 'gentilwomen'.¹⁴³ Like the oft-cited 'cumly closett' of the ladies in *Gawain and the Green Knight*, these did segregate the women from the rest of the court at worship, but the existence of a similar enclosed pew for the king indicates that it was again status rather than chastity which dictated this architecture.

The 1501 description of 'the pleasaunt Place of Richemond . . . this erthly and secunde paradise of oure region of Englund . . . the lantirne spectacle and bewtyouse examplere of all propir lodgynges' is indicative of the notion that kingship was equated with the highest standards and almost godly magnificence.¹⁴⁴ The tall towers, pleasant chambers, baywindows and galleries for 'daunsyng and other wise disport' of that 'verray paradise' Plesaunt Regard were all described at Richmond too.¹⁴⁵ The great hall, hung with portraits of 'noble kings', Brutus and Arthur among them, leading up to Henry VII himself, especially emphasised the function of palaces in defining royalty within the terms of literary and chivalric romance.¹⁴⁶ It was in the queen's great chamber at Richmond that the prizes were awarded for the jousts following her daughter Margaret's proxy wedding in 1502: Margaret 'by the Advice of the Ladyes of the Court' gave praise to those judged to have performed best. It was perhaps from earlier such instances of the ladies collectively deciding upon the best jousters that the literature of Lady Loyaultie's 'court' was derived, or of Guinevere's ladies deciding the knight's fate in the *Wife of Bath's* tale. Although the task of awarding the best jousters was commonly a female prerogative (Princess Margaret had given the prizes after her brother Henry was created duke of York), it was not

¹⁴²G. Kipling (ed.), *The Receyt of the Ladie Kateryne*, EETS original series 296 (1990), pp. 71-3. The description may have been written a few years later because the account of Katharine's wedding concludes with the news of Arthur's death in 1502. Thurley, *Royal Palaces*, p. 28.

¹⁴³Kipling (ed.), *Receyt*, p. 73.

¹⁴⁴Kipling (ed.), *Receyt*, p. 71.

¹⁴⁵Pearsall (ed.), *Assembly of Ladies*, pp. 109-10; Kipling (ed.), *Receyt*, pp. 71-3.

¹⁴⁶Kipling (ed.), *Receyt*, p. 72.

necessarily sited in a female space as here.¹⁴⁷ A large number of the court seem to have been present since the prize-giving was immediately followed by disguisings, morisques, dancing and finally a banquet. This location was perhaps chosen because the primary focus of events was, as far as the English king was concerned, upon a woman, his daughter Margaret. But the queen's chambers also served as the theatre of chivalry for the Fellowship of the Garter; a visit to her lodgings at Windsor providing a nod to the romance elements of the chivalric ethos whose martial and spiritual elements were observed at the feast of St George. Edward IV had virtually refounded the order, again stressing his legitimate descent from Edward III, by reorganising its collegiate establishment, rebuilding St George's chapel, increasing the proportion of English rather than foreign knights, and choosing them more often for their knightly reputation rather than for the political motives of Lancastrian appointments. This all contributed to the more chivalrous image of his new kingship, aided by the enthusiasm of his Woodville relatives in reestablishing the tournament.¹⁴⁸ It was, therefore, probably Edward IV and his queen who established the tradition whereby the knights came to the queen's chambers to break their fast on Sunday morning before the final high mass of the ceremonies, as recorded in 1476 and again in 1488.¹⁴⁹ Elizabeth of York clearly took part in much of the weekend's celebrations; it was her cavalcade that attracted most attention from the herald who recorded the 1488 feast, and the white roses with which her horse was decked no doubt reminded onlookers of her father's role in reforming the order.¹⁵⁰

It is hard to discern the level of the queen's agency in the physical appearance of the quarters in which these events took place, but some evidence of their influence on both the building and interior decoration does remain. Whereas Margaret of Anjou was concerned with the rebuilding of her own manors, most notably Plesance, but also Hertford and Tutbury, where she paid for one, or possibly two, new towers, her successors were more

¹⁴⁷J. Gairdner (ed.), *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Reigns of Richard III and Henry VII*, Rolls Series 24 (1861-3), 1:398.

¹⁴⁸R. Barber, 'Malory's *Le Morte Darthur* and Court Culture under Edward IV', *Arthurian Literature* 12 (1993), pp. 138-143.

¹⁴⁹BL, Stowe MS 1047, fol. 225; John Leland, *De Rebus Britannicis Collectanea*, ed. T. Hearne (London 1774), 4:241.

¹⁵⁰Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:241.

concerned with those palaces which they shared with their king.¹⁵¹ This perhaps indicates Margaret's greater autonomy, but possibly also a heightened sense of personal identification with their king on the part of the two Elizabeths, committing themselves to their husband's royal identity rather than constructing their own. Margaret clearly stamped her identity upon Plesaunce in a window of 51 feet of white glass 'flourished' with marguerites, and one escutcheon of her arms impaled with those of the king.¹⁵² This manor consisted of two separate wards which provided lodgings for king and queen. Extensive records of payments from Margaret's receiver general to Robert Kettilwell, 'clerk of the Quenyswerkys of the manor of Plesauns' exist for various furnishings and building works totalling £296 1s 10¾d for the years 1447-53.¹⁵³ Kettilwell, like all those who worked on the queen's building works, was principally in the employ of the king: he was the purveyor of works at the king's manor of Eltham.¹⁵⁴ Margaret also ordered windows of heraldic glass for the chapel from the king's glazier.¹⁵⁵ In 1452 she hosted the court's Christmas celebrations at this manor.¹⁵⁶

There is no firm evidence of Elizabeth Woodville's interest in palace building, but it might be inferred that she had some say in the addition of a bay window, like those at Plesaunce which was now in her possession, to her great chamber at Windsor in 1477-8.¹⁵⁷ Similarly it was in her lodgings at Eltham that two interesting innovations were made. These were the articulated facade caused by a sequence of bay windows and chimney breasts, later a popular fashion on early Tudor royal houses, and the gallery at the end of her lodgings, designed not to join up with other rooms but purely for recreation.¹⁵⁸ The new great chamber constructed for her use at Westminster Palace in 1482 again indicates that

¹⁵¹Colvin (ed.), *King's Works*, 2:849.

¹⁵²E. Hasted, *Hasted's History of Kent. Part 1, The Hundred of Blackheath*, ed. H.H. Drake (London, 1886), p. 55. A rather smaller window - 14 feet of white glass in a closet - was decorated with both her marguerites and her husband's hawthorn bud device. Colvin (ed.), *King's Works*, 2:949; PRO, DL 28/1/11.

¹⁵³PRO, DL 28/1/11.

¹⁵⁴Colvin (ed.), *King's Works*, 2:949.

¹⁵⁵Colvin (ed.), *King's Works*, 2:949.

¹⁵⁶Myers, *Crown Household*, p. 144.

¹⁵⁷Thurley, *Royal Palaces*, p. 19.

¹⁵⁸Thurley, *Royal Palaces*, p. 20.

her interest and habitation were particularly in the king's palaces.¹⁵⁹

Evidence for Elizabeth of York's influence on her husband's building is more explicit: in 1502 the king's mason, Robert Vertue, was instructed to build according to 'the new platt of Greenwich which was devised by the Queen'.¹⁶⁰ The £1,330 paid over the next six years there included a tower, a privy kitchen, a gallery, a new orchard and work in the gardens, any of which might have been the subject of Elizabeth's plan.¹⁶¹ Margaret of Anjou was certainly involved in the development of gardens: at the Manor of Plesaunce (which was pulled down for Henry VII to build Greenwich Palace) she had hedges put around the garden and an arbour was built for her to sit in.¹⁶² The cloistered garden at Byfleet near Sheen was also designed for her, with its centrepiece of an octagonal lead cistern decorated with the initials H and M crowned, the mottos of the king and queen, as well as devices of the king and religious emblems.¹⁶³ Given the many romances associated with gardens it was a fitting preparation to make for any bride, but queens were particularly associated with gardens, notably Eleanor of Provence and Eleanor of Castile.¹⁶⁴

Although Elizabeth Woodville can be linked only tentatively with building alterations, the Bluemantle Pursuivant of 1472 tells us explicitly that it was she who had ordained the very sheets and pillows to be used for Lord Gruthuysse's bed on his visit to Windsor that year.¹⁶⁵ The queen's role in Gruthuysse's visit, as described by the Bluemantle Pursuivant, both complemented the king's martial imagery with her domesticity, and revealed a further use for her separate chambers; as an inner sanctum beyond the king's lodgings where scenes of domestic 'normality' emphasised the humanity of the king and an invitation to dine was a sign of the king's personal affection. An emphasis on the human touch and accessibility as part of Edward's particular style was noted by Mancini,

¹⁵⁹Colvin (ed.), *King's Works*, 1:537.

¹⁶⁰BL, Add MS 59899, fol. 24.

¹⁶¹Thurley, *Royal Palaces*, p. 34.

¹⁶²Colvin (ed.), *King's Works*, 2:949.

¹⁶³PRO, E 364/83, rot. E.

¹⁶⁴Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile*, p. 53. H.M. Colvin, 'Royal Gardens in Medieval England', in E.B. MacDougall (ed.), *Medieval Gardens* (Washington DC, 1986), p. 9.

¹⁶⁵C.L. Kingsford (ed.), *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford, 1913), p. 387.

but he mentioned instances in a very public context.¹⁶⁶ The action within the queen's chambers added a more intimate atmosphere to the reception of Lord Gruthuise to whom the king was deeply grateful for his assistance during the recent Yorkist exile.

The Bluemantle Pursuivant, perhaps as a result of his familiarity with the ideal role differentiation expressed in literature such as *Gawain and the Green Knight*, perhaps because events were particularly constructed to reinforce this image, portrayed the king and queen operating primarily in quite different spheres. No mention was made of the presence of women when the king took Gruthuise hunting in Windsor park and, like the gracious host Bertilak, gave all of the six bucks slain to his guest. But queens did hunt too: Elizabeth of York owned goshawks and spaniels, and her daughter Margaret shot a buck during her journey to meet her Scottish husband.¹⁶⁷ Equally, the chambers arranged for Lord Gruthuise by the king on the first night of the visit were mentioned only very briefly, but considerable details of the rich hangings and furnishings of the chambers provided by the queen were recorded, as well as the entertainments within her lodgings. When the king took Gruthuise to the queen's chambers on the first evening they found the queen occupied with her ladies at *morteaulx* (a form of bowls) while others of her ladies played at ivory ninepins or danced.¹⁶⁸ It is clear that this was women's domain; the queen was the supreme host to whom the king presented Gruthuise, and although the king danced with his eldest daughter, Gruthuise appears to have been as much a spectator at this female theatre as was Tetzal at the post-churching banquet described in Chapter II.4.ii. Later in Gruthuise's visit 'The quene dyd order a grete banket in her owne chambre', at which the majority of those present were women.¹⁶⁹ The informality of the setting is indicated by the mix of men and women at the tables, and the chief place was dominated by women - the king and queen shared a mess with her mother and daughter, his sister (the duchess of Exeter), and the Lord Gruthuise.¹⁷⁰ Rank was nevertheless preserved in that the king and queen's table was shared with other nobles, but the queen's gentlewomen and lord Gruthuise's servants sat

¹⁶⁶Mancini, *Usurpation of Richard III*, pp. 64-5.

¹⁶⁷Nicolas (ed.), *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, p. 94.

¹⁶⁸Kingsford, *English Historical Literature*, p. 386.

¹⁶⁹Kingsford, *English Historical Literature*, p. 387.

¹⁷⁰Kingsford, *English Historical Literature*, p. 387. The number of ladies present was so great that one table was only of women.

in the outer chamber. The text implies that the chambers in which their guest spent that night were also located within the queen's lodgings: the queen had arranged for the preparation of the rooms and, with the king, she took Gruthuyse there accompanied by her ladies and gentlewomen. The furnishings in her lodgings are not described apart from these rooms, 'all hanged and besyne w[ith] whyt sylke and lynnenclothe, and all ye flowers covered w[ith] carpettes,' the bed itself boasted a 'counterpoynt cloth of gold furred w[ith] ermyne, ye tester and ye seler also shyning clothe of gold, curtens of whyt sarsenette'.¹⁷¹

The lack of similar accounts of other queens developing the human image of their husbands may lie as much in the uneven survival of records as in the less personal style of other kings. Elizabeth of York's chambers, however, were repeatedly used for royal business involving other women. The most spectacular and politically significant of these was the celebration of her daughter Margaret's proxy wedding to James IV of Scotland in 1502, mentioned earlier. The ritual took place in the queen's great chamber at Richmond.¹⁷² About ninety people were present, for once the majority of them men, to hear the ambassadors' commissions, papal dispensation and the proxy wedding itself.¹⁷³ The men then departed, while the queen and her daughter sat down to eat together, a potent symbol of communion.¹⁷⁴ The issue of female space was perhaps also the motivation behind arrangements for Katharine of Aragon to spend the evening before her wedding in 'goodly commynycacion, dauncyng, and disportes' within the queen's lodgings at Baynard's Castle in 1501.¹⁷⁵ The only men present were those of her own party and the queen's household. For both Margaret and Katharine the setting was probably also a comparatively unthreatening space at a nerve-wracking time.

A more problematic 'royal' bride who spent considerably longer in the queen's company was Katherine Gordon, wife of Perkin Warbeck. Although her husband was imprisoned, Katherine was brought to Elizabeth of York at Sheen in October 1497 and the king, who was in Exeter, sent £20 to pay for her 'diete' within the queen's household.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷¹Kingsford, *English Historical Literature*, p. 387.

¹⁷²Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:258.

¹⁷³Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:259-61.

¹⁷⁴Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:262.

¹⁷⁵Kipling (ed.), *Receyt*, p. 38.

¹⁷⁶Gairdner (ed.), *Reigns of Richard III and Henry VII*, 2:73-4.

The following year almost £160 worth of clothes were delivered to her from the king's great wardrobe, including such items as a black velvet gown lined with fur and edged with mink.¹⁷⁷ Katherine probably spent much of her life at court since two of her three subsequent husbands were gentlemen ushers to the chamber of Henry VIII.¹⁷⁸

Foreign ambassadors whose business included that of other women might also be received by the queen in her lodgings. In September 1497 the Milanese and Venetian ambassadors visited Henry VII at Woodstock in order to discuss various European affairs.¹⁷⁹ Afterwards they visited the queen whom they 'found at the end of a hall, dressed in cloth of gold,' flanked by Margaret Beaufort and Prince Arthur.¹⁸⁰ Their conversation here was brief, in part because the queen could not speak in such fluent French as her husband, so the ambassadors spoke in Italian and the bishop of London translated. The purpose of this visit, besides the obvious courtesy, was to present letters, from 'the Signory' and from 'our queen', probably referring to Joanna of Castile, wife of Archduke Philip of Burgundy, which had been collected by the Milanese ambassador during his recent stay in Fresen.¹⁸¹ Joanna of Castile was not the only foreign queen with whom Elizabeth corresponded: she sent letters to Isabella of Castile enquiring after the health of her future daughter-in-law and making arrangements for her arrival.¹⁸² After the wedding, letters from Elizabeth were also among those carried by the returning Spanish nobles to their sovereigns.¹⁸³

I have been arguing that the female space of the queen's lodgings was not the enclosing tower of Gilchrist's model, protecting women's chastity by segregation, but a far more complex and empowering arena to which men and women were invited for specific purposes in which the queen contributed to her husband's style of kingship. The archaeology of queenliness, was not, however, restricted to those chambers allotted to the

¹⁷⁷London, Public Record Office, E 36/209, fol. 6. See also E 36/209, fol. 17 and E 101/415/7, fol. 133.

¹⁷⁸S.B. Chrimes, *Henry VII* (London, 1972), p. 91.

¹⁷⁹*CSP Milan*, 1:323.

¹⁸⁰*CSP Venice*, 1:264.

¹⁸¹*CSP Milan*, 1:323.

¹⁸²A.F. Pollard, *The Reign of Henry VII from Contemporary Sources* (London, 1913-14), 1:187-8.

¹⁸³Kipling (ed.), *Receyt*, p. 77.

queen and her ladies. These chambers were defined by their particular association with the queen, not the other way around. The frontispiece to Anthony Woodville's translation of the *Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers*, in which king and queen are dressed in coronation regalia, is a highly idealised image of court life, but the assumption of the queen's presence beside her husband is important - Plate 9. Integral to the nature of fifteenth-century monarchy was public display of the sovereign, and the queen, as part of his public body, was very much a part of that display: she could not be hidden away in towers.

This was particularly evident in the New Year of 1472 when Elizabeth Woodville, too advanced in her pregnancy to wear her crown, nonetheless participated in the public processions and displays which reasserted the Yorkist hold on the throne.¹⁸⁴ The display and ritual celebration of kingship was one of the primary roles of the court, and the queen was expected to be present for crown wearings, anniversaries of coronations, the ennoblement of peers, and the observance of religious festivals.¹⁸⁵ Such celebrations might include festivities held in separate chambers for some part, if only to cope with the numbers present for banqueting, but a surviving description of several such occasions in Henry VII's reign reveals that the queen was most commonly at her husband's side.¹⁸⁶ The distinction of the queen's rank was perpetually advertised, sufficiently superior and one with the king to be the only person besides him to kiss the gospel and the pax at mass prior to the feast of St George, but nevertheless lower than the king, hence the 'Clothe of Estate hanging sumwhat lower than the Kinges' above her as she sat beside the king in his chamber on Twelfth Night.¹⁸⁷ It was not only at such major feasts that they were together, but for the reception of foreign ambassadors or papal legates, and indeed they commonly spent much of the year more or less in each other's company.¹⁸⁸

The role of the court as a site for political weddings has already been mentioned in the context of the marriages of the queen's kin. It was of course also a centre of networks for patronage and intercession. This was probably the context in which William Rous, a

¹⁸⁴MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville*, p. 111.

¹⁸⁵Griffiths, 'The King's Court', p. 16.

¹⁸⁶Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:234-249.

¹⁸⁷Leland, *Collectanea*, 4:238, 236.

¹⁸⁸*CSP Milan*, 1:341; *CSP Venice*, 1:180-1; Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 257; PRO, E 101/410/15.

clerk in Chancery, was able to gain Elizabeth Woodville's support to found the Fraternity of the Holy Trinity and the Sixty Priests of London in March 1466.¹⁸⁹ The majority of such acts of intercession for patronage or pardon made by these queens were on behalf of men connected with them through their household or estates, and should be seen as the exercise of their good ladyship rather than a uniquely queenly quasi-Marian role.¹⁹⁰ Margaret of Anjou's most politically significant request for a pardon, however, did affect the court as a whole. This was the request for the pardon of 'John Mortimer' and his followers on 6 July 1450.¹⁹¹ Mortimer was the pseudonym adopted by Jack Cade who, with his supporters, criticised a large number of royal household officials and courtiers for their malign influence upon the king.¹⁹² By the time the rebellion reached its violent conclusion in London, the king had fled to Kenilworth with most of his lords, leaving only a few members of his government in London.¹⁹³ It is possible that Margaret had remained at Greenwich and was in close contact with the bishops who then issued the pardons in an attempt to diffuse the rebellion.¹⁹⁴ Whether or not Margaret personally suggested this conciliatory move is of course impossible to know. Ladies, like bishops, were seen as natural mediators, as I have argued in Chapter II.3.i, and those seeking to stem the rebellion were possibly familiar with the stories of Philippa's intercession for the burghers of Calais, or Anne of Bohemia's for the citizens of London.¹⁹⁵ A more relevant precedent was the proclamation in 1381 that the amnesty for the Peasants' Revolt was at the intercession of Anne of Bohemia, a queen who had not yet even arrived on English soil.¹⁹⁶ As with the 1381 incident, Queen Margaret's supposed role did not impact upon public perceptions of the event sufficiently to appear in any chronicle accounts. However, whereas Anne's name was certainly used as a device to explain the government's change in their previously

¹⁸⁹*CCIR 1461-67*, pp. 432, 516.

¹⁹⁰For instance, *CPR 1446-52*, pp. 210, 530; *CPL 10:43*, 177; *PRO*, SC 1/51/100.

¹⁹¹*CPR 1446-52*, p. 338.

¹⁹²Griffiths, *Henry VI*, pp. 627-40.

¹⁹³Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 641.

¹⁹⁴Griffiths, *Henry VI*, p. 613.

¹⁹⁵P. Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow: the Social Imaginaton of Fourteenth-Century Texts* (Princeton, 1992), pp. 99-111.

¹⁹⁶*CCIR 1381-5*, pp. 104-5.

repressive policy, the situation is not so clear cut for Margaret.¹⁹⁷ Having taken a fairly conciliatory approach from the beginning, the government was less in need of saving face. Moreover, the king was absent but the queen may have been present. Whoever made the final decision to issue pardons in 1450, it was clearly not Henry VI, and thus Margaret appears not as intercessor with but representative of the king.

There were nonetheless instances of intercession and patronage unrelated to household or politics, most commonly for the benefit of the Church, such as Margaret of Anjou's letter to the pope on behalf of the rector of a London parish in July 1451.¹⁹⁸ Some of these may have come through connections at court.

The court also provided the forum for forging alliances to further interests in the localities: the court was the obvious meeting point for the 'feminine gang of three' - Alice Chaucer, Elizabeth Talbot and Elizabeth Woodville - to whom Colin Richmond has attributed a successful campaign to wrest two manors of the Fastolf inheritance from the Pastons and into the hands of Alice Chaucer's son, the king's brother-in-law, John de la Pole.¹⁹⁹ These, however, are rare glimpses of relationships within court because most have left no record. One type of courtly network which more commonly left documentary evidence was shared piety.

3.ii Courtly Piety

The court functioned as a base for queenly piety in many forms, through which the queen might fulfil her coronation injunctions to support the Christian life in her country, reinforce the legitimacy of her dynasty, and construct her own identity. The principal focus of the religious life of the court was the Royal Chapel, the staff of which followed the king on his journeys and arranged the major rituals of royalty. According to its dean in 1449, William Say, the queen was rarely absent from the daily procession and mass of the Virgin, whereas the king, for all his famed piety, was not so commonly present.²⁰⁰ Parsons has argued that this regular attendance not only recalled 'ancient queens' cultic duties' of daily presence

¹⁹⁷W.M. Ormrod, 'The Princess in the Tower' (unpublished inaugural lecture delivered at the University of York, 30 October 1998).

¹⁹⁸CPL 10:95-6; see also CPL 12:10; CPR 1494-1509, p. 244.

¹⁹⁹C. Richmond, *The Paston Family in the Fifteenth Century. Fastolf's Will* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 119-20.

²⁰⁰W. Ullmann (ed.), *Liber Regie Capelle*, Henry Bradshaw Society 92 (1961), p. 7.

at certain rituals, but also 'exploit[ed] links with the Queen of Heaven to enhance the image of the queen of England'.²⁰¹ The dean of the Royal Chapel also assisted at the regular reaffirmation of the king and queen's status in the form of crown wearing. In the fifteenth century these took place at Christmas, Easter, Whitsun, Epiphany, All Saints, the two feasts of St Edward the Confessor and on the anniversary of her coronation, dates which especially bound the monarchy to Christ's kingship.²⁰²

A powerful image of the binding of monarchy to Christ's kingship in the context of the court was made in the frontispiece to the Luton Guild Book - Plate 18. This was painted in 1475 when Elizabeth Woodville was named among the founding members of the Guild of the Holy Trinity established by Bishop Rotherham and the king. The gender divide of the Talbot frontispiece is reinforced by the male and female halves of court kneeling in a grand chamber, presenting the guild of the Holy Trinity to the enthroned God, upon whose lap is the crucified Christ, his wounds and his humanity emphasized by the positioning of God the Father's hands and his own, but his kingship implied also by the style of halo around the crown of thorns and the orb between his feet. The Holy Trinity upon the throne is balanced by the king (and male courtiers), queen (and female courtiers) and bishop kneeling at their feet; the small colourless figures in the street below contrasting with the brilliance of this charmed circle of the court. This image of spiritual legitimacy was complemented by the accompanying text of secular legitimacy in the list of members which declared that Edward IV's mother, the figure kneeling behind the queen, was the widow of the 'true and undoubted heir to the crown of England'.²⁰³

Queens were often involved in expressions of piety which also reinforced their husband's dynastic legitimacy. There was not necessarily any hypocrisy involved in such practices and they could still be genuine expressions of devotion given the sacramental nature of the kingship they were upholding. Elizabeth Woodville's membership of the guild at Canterbury may have been partly a means of sharing in the Yorkist identification with this major shrine: the royal sponsored cult of Thomas Becket had ironically come to

²⁰¹J.C. Parsons, 'Ritual and Symbol in the English Queenship to 1500', in L.O. Fradenburg (ed.), *Women and Sovereignty* (Edinburgh, 1992), p. 72 n. 30.

²⁰²Ullmann (ed.), *Liber Regie Capelle*, p. 18.

²⁰³'Nuper uxor militi et famosi ac prepotensis principi Ricardi veri & indubitati heredis corone anglie', Sotheby's, *Catalogue of the Bute Collection of Forty-two Illuminated Manuscripts and Miniatures* (London, 1983), p. 81.

symbolise the bond between Church and monarchy, but the cathedral also housed the tombs of men crucial to the Lancastrian and Yorkist claims to legitimacy, Henry IV and Edward the Black Prince respectively. Margaret of Anjou had augmented her husband's many pilgrimages to the site with three of her own, but Elizabeth Woodville chose to make her pilgrimages in her husband's company, and in June 1470 brought her four-year-old eldest daughter, the king's heir at the time.²⁰⁴ Elizabeth of York probably continued this tradition although in 1502 she paid one Richard Milner to make the pilgrimage for her.²⁰⁵ Elizabeth Woodville's place in this conjunction of Church and monarchy was particularly celebrated at Canterbury in the Royal Window there.²⁰⁶

The interweaving of public piety and the propaganda of legitimacy in Henry VII's reign extended to the veneration of Henry VI, which his queen not only joined in, making offerings to him at the high altar in Windsor, but actively promoted by the inclusion of an oration to the blessed King Henry among the prayers included with the *Fifteen Os*.²⁰⁷ Given Margaret Beaufort's earlier patronage of Caxton for the publication of *Blanchardyn and Eglantine*, and her reputation for active piety, it might be assumed that the king's mother was also the driving force behind the printing of this book.²⁰⁸ However, a recurring marginal pattern within the book hints at a different interpretation: most of the border patterns are of stylised flowers, mythical beasts and semi-human creatures, quite possibly re-used from other books, but one is of a vase of gillyflowers, the emblem of Elizabeth Woodville whose family had been such important patrons of Caxton, and just over half-way up the margin these flowers lead into a rose branch, crowned with the emblem of her daughter's marriage, the Tudor rose - Plate 19 - as if in reference to Elizabeth of York's adoption of her mother's patronage. Both Yorkists and Lancastrians had a strong interest in St Bridget, the reputed author of the *Fifteen O's*, so both Margaret Beaufort and her daughter-in-law had reason to be interested in this publication, but it was for Elizabeth's father that a passage of the saint's *Revelations* were included in a collection of prophetic

²⁰⁴W.G. Searle (ed.), *The Chronicle of John Stone* (Cambridge, 1902), pp. 93-4, 113-14, 117, 150.

²⁰⁵Nicolas (ed.), *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, pp. 3-4.

²⁰⁶See Chapter III.2.

²⁰⁷Caxton, *Fifteen O's*, p. 44.

²⁰⁸G.D. Painter, *William Caxton: a Quincentenary Biography of England's First Printer* (London, 1976), pp. 166-7.

abstracts purporting to prove the legitimacy of his kingship.²⁰⁹ Whatever Elizabeth of York personally felt about Henry VI, the man whose throne her father had taken, she was politically wise enough to see the value of his cult to her own dynasty.

Traditional expressions of piety also offered opportunities for more individual construction of queenly identity. The foundation of Queens' College is a classic case of this. Andrew Duket had already secured the king's patronage for the refounding of St Bernard's hostel in 1447 as the College of St Bernard, so it was probably the queen or her councillors who suggested that Margaret should take over the patronage, thereby aligning herself with her king's choice of patronage (in the wake of his foundation of King's College), and expressing an appropriate queenly interest in the religious life of her new country.²¹⁰ Her petition to the king requesting the right to found this college asked also for permission to rename the college 'the Quenes collage of sainte Margerete and saint Bernard', identifying herself, as her welcoming pageants had done, with the popular virgin martyr as well as ensuring that her involvement in the college's foundation was explicit.²¹¹ To this latter end, she also permitted the college to use her arms in its seal.²¹² The desire that this foundation should be 'to laud and honneure of sexe feminine' does not appear to have been reflected in any other acts of patronage by Margaret, and should probably not be attributed to feminist leanings in the nineteen-year-old queen, but rather to the courtly practice of constantly presenting the queen's actions in terms of her gender. Margaret, for 'diversas causas', was not present at the laying of the foundation stone, but the words with which it was inscribed identified her in god-like terms: 'Erit domine nostre Regine Margarete dominium in refugium et lapis iste in signum'.²¹³ This wording was presumably devised by the college but must have been approved by the queen, although there is no evidence of further patronage from her after this.²¹⁴

²⁰⁹See above Chapter IV.4. See also F.R. Johnston, 'The English Cult of St Bridget of Sweden', *Analecta Bollandiana* 103 (1985): 75-93.

²¹⁰Her petition to found the college explicitly compared this with the king's own foundation. Searle, *Queens' College*, pp. 2-16.

²¹¹Searle, *Queens' College*, p. 15.

²¹²Searle, *Queens' College*, p. 36.

²¹³Twigg, *Queens' College*, p. 1; Searle, *Queens' College*, p. 44.

²¹⁴Searle, *Queens' College*, p. 62. Searle suggests that the absence of such evidence was due to the college's reluctance 'to display a fallen queen's favour'.

Like Margaret, Elizabeth Woodville also associated herself with her name saint, this in an act designed to promote the faith and acquire indulgences for her subjects. In 1480 she petitioned Pope Sixtus IV to allow her subjects to enjoy the indulgences attached to the newly reestablished feast of the Visitation, even if the office was recited in private.²¹⁵ She also expressed to the Pope her desire for the 'devotion of the faithful of the realm for the [Ave Maria] to be increased more and more,' a prayer which, like the feast of the Visitation, drew attention to St Elizabeth, in this case through the use of St Elizabeth's words, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb'.²¹⁶ The Pope obliged by attaching indulgences to the use of the Psalter of the Blessed Virgin Mary and to the recitation of the Ave Maria at each Angelus bell.²¹⁷ He also dictated that copies of the letter granting these indulgences be exhibited across the country, thereby ensuring that everyone knew not only of the opportunities to gain indulgences but also of the queen's intercessory role in their spiritual welfare. Elizabeth's daughter, who of course shared her name saint, was apparently inspired by her mother to develop the devotions still further. Following her petition in 1492, the Pope granted 300 days of pardon to anyone reciting the salutation three times at each tolling of the Angelus bell.²¹⁸

Margaret of Anjou also acted as intercessor for her subjects' souls, although only for a small number 'nominated by her' to receive the Jubilee indulgences of 1450 despite being unable to travel to Rome. It was a typically Marian queenly role as well as a method of patronage, but was probably inspired by her husband, who made a similar request at this time.²¹⁹ Those who benefited were probably those familiar to her at court.

Whereas Margaret of Anjou's religious patronage constantly reflected her king's interests, Elizabeth Woodville was sometimes more independent, most obviously in her challenge to Edward IV's policy of undermining Lancastrian foundations. Even before her

²¹⁵CPL 1471-84, pp. 90-1.

²¹⁶CPL 1471-84, pp. 74-5; Luke 1:42; *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (Washington, 1967), 6: 898.

²¹⁷The Psalter of the Blessed Virgin Mary involved saying the Ave Maria 150 times, these being broken into decades by fifteen Pater Nosters, and at each Ave the person praying focused upon one of the joyful or sorrowful mysteries of Mary. It was developed principally by the Carthusians at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Towards the end of the century the simpler form of only fifty Aves and fewer mysteries, known as the Rosary, developed. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 12:669.

²¹⁸F. Grose and T. Astle (ed.), *The Antiquarian Repertory* (London, 1807), 1:218.

²¹⁹CPL 1447-55, p. 72.

coronation she was described as a patron of Queens' College, which was perhaps a bid by the college to encourage her to consider it as a queenly rather than a Lancastrian foundation, but may reflect her own initiative. Certainly she did offer her patronage, permitting the college to use her arms on their seal, and possibly in other ways because when the college statutes were finally issued in 1475 the Yorkist queen was entitled 'true foundress'.²²⁰ The statutes ascribed to her the appropriate motivation that she was 'specially solicitous concerning those matters whereby the safety of souls and the public good were promoted, and poor scholars desirous of advancing themselves in knowledge of letters, are assisted in their need'.²²¹ As was the case in the petitions for indulgences, Elizabeth chose to appear specifically as a benefactress to all subjects, in contrast to the more restricted courtly and clerical sphere of Margaret's patronage. Queens' College quickly became the favourite Cambridge college for the Yorkists and firmly associated with queenly piety, hence in March 1484 'the most serene Queen Anne . . . augmented and endowed the college with great rents'.²²² Richard III, as duke of Gloucester, was an important patron of Queens' and historians have commonly assumed that the benefactions made in his queen's name were entirely at his instigation.²²³ It should, however, be noted that many of the estates granted to the college in 1483, supposedly at Anne's request, had initially been her mother's property.²²⁴ Whoever's was the inspiration behind the benefactions, by July 1484 she had assumed the title of foundress, apparently simply by virtue of being a queen.²²⁵ After Bosworth, Henry VII confiscated the generous endowments of Richard and Anne, and Elizabeth of York did not take up her mother's role here, perhaps because the college had been too closely associated with Richard. This did not prevent Margaret Beaufort from taking on this traditionally queenly patronage after Elizabeth of York's death.²²⁶ But the

²²⁰'Vera fundatrix', Twigg, *Queens' College*, p. 9.

²²¹Twigg, *Queens' College*, p. 9.

²²²Searle, *Queens' College*, p. 100.

²²³C.D. Ross, *Richard III* (London, 1981), p. 135.

²²⁴*CPR 1476-85*, p. 477; Searle, *Queens' College*, p. 97; P.H. Ditchfield and W. Page (eds.), *The Victoria History of Berkshire* (London, 1906-27), 4:480.

²²⁵*CPR 1476-85*, p. 477.

²²⁶M.K. Jones and M.G. Underwood, *The King's Mother. Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 214.

association of queens with Queens' was not to be revived for four and a half centuries.²²⁷ Meanwhile, Eton College may also have benefited from Elizabeth Woodville's patronage: in 1467 Edward suddenly began to revoke the measures he had previously taken against the college, perhaps at her instigation, and the epitaph of its provost, Henry Bost, implies that Elizabeth made large gifts to the college towards the end of Edward's reign.²²⁸

4. Conclusion

It is through the study of court and household that the experience of queenship in fifteenth-century England becomes most apparent. The random survival of sources for this study nonetheless renders our understanding very far from complete. The queen's influence on national and local politics through personal contacts, and the extent of her cultural patronage, are two issues which seem to have suffered particularly in this context.

However, it is apparent that the household was not simply an administrative structure for her lands but a central factor in the political community of the court. It was also integral to the character of the court which, without a queen, could become little more than a king's household. The queen's role and that of her household were constantly shaped and understood in terms of her gender, which could limit the extent of her practical political role, but nonetheless emphasized the necessity of queenship to the proper exercise of sovereignty. The importance of the ladies of her *familia* in the public image of this court, indicated in the literary popularity of courts of ladies, is evident in the impact they made upon contemporary observers. But circles of ladies at court were not simply decorative or sociable. They were to be found working together in local politics, as well as sharing expressions of piety. Court and household provided a context for piety which was not only a supportive structure in which the queen might develop her spiritual life through sharing with friends in a similar position, but also an opportunity to reinforce the sacred legitimacy of the kingship of which she was a part.

Inevitably the political circumstances, financial resources and personalities of the kings and their queens were defining factors in the extent of queenly agency through court and household. Although queens certainly did sit with their ladies embroidering or

²²⁷F. Saizman, J.P.C. Roach and R.B. Pugh (eds.), *The Victoria History of the County of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely* (London, 1938-59), 3:409.

²²⁸C.D. Ross, *Edward IV* (London, 1974), p. 269; C.L. Scofield, *Life and Reign of Edward the Fourth* (London, 1967), 2:437-8.

listening to tales of romance on occasion, the concern manifested by these queens in the interests of their servants, as well as of their families described in the previous chapter, and their evident involvement in the running of their financial affairs, suggest that for all these women the office of queenship, as exercised through court and household, was one of considerable responsibility and influence requiring significant investments of time and energy.

Conclusion

In the second half of the fifteenth century the foreign, royal, virgin brides who had affirmed and legitimised English kingship for centuries, by their otherness and by their connections with England's claims to French kingship, were rejected. This was in part because the last of them had come to personify the conflict which had torn the realm apart and seen the bloodiest battles ever fought on English soil. It was Polydore Vergil who finally articulated the notion of Margaret of Anjou as the new Eve in the story of the fall of Lancaster: 'by meane of a woman, sprange up a newe mischiefe that sett all out of order'.¹ It was also because the first Yorkist king preferred to take a woman he found attractive to his marriage bed, rather than attempting to grow to love a foreign princess: a precedent his grandson, Henry VIII, was to follow, repeatedly, to disastrous effect for queenship.

However, the absence of foreign-born queens of England for over forty years was primarily the result of a crisis in notions of legitimate kingship. Following the usurpation of Henry IV, the criteria on which a man based his kingship became increasingly varied. The search for kingly legitimacy throughout this period, and for royal authority during the reign of Henry VI, reshaped expectations and constructions of queenship, as well as the rituals of sovereignty, concluding in the political accident of a queen to whom a king, Henry VII, owed his kingship. Such aberrations in traditional queenly practice provoked comment on, and more explicit expressions of, contemporary ideologies of queenship, thereby making the study of queens in this period particularly fruitful to the wider understanding of medieval queenship, and offering a context for appreciating Henry VIII's treatment of his queens in the following century.

The interdisciplinary methodology of this study has drawn attention to the disparity in ideologies of queenship from different sectors of the population, and to the range of levels on which the experience of queenship functioned. Queenship operated in a web of tensions between political/social reality and fictions of legitimacy, at the heart of which was the ideological and physical necessity of placing a woman in union with the sovereign, at the heart of a male-dominated power structure. This thesis is by no means an exhaustive study of the exercise of that queenship between 1445 and 1503. Rather it establishes the

¹Polydore Vergil, *Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English History*, ed. H. Ellis, Camden Society, old series 29 (1844), p. 70.

centrality of queenship to the nature of sovereignty during this period. It suggests that political historians should value not only the direct political influence of queens, but also the wide variety of practical and ideological instances through which a queen, as a woman, upheld and enriched the sovereignty of her king, and thereby of her adopted dynasty.

The thesis has argued that although the queen's role occasionally included intercession for the king's subjects, in the fifteenth century intercession was not the defining characteristic of queenship that Huneycutt and Parsons have depicted in earlier periods.² Nor is there significant evidence for the cultural patronage which Facinger identified with late-medieval queenship.³ Her assertion that the late-medieval queen was merely the 'social companion of the king in the ritual performance of regal rites' fails to take into account the importance of those rituals specifically constructed around the queen, in which the exploration of her potential roles as peace-weaver, adviser, upholder of Christianity, mother, romance heroine and type of the Virgin Mary became a celebration of ideals of womanhood and an exposition of the centrality of queenship to sovereignty.⁴ It was in motherhood and in her household, integrated with the court, that ideology became practice and the queen provided her king with that which a man could not - heirs and the necessary feminine attributes of sovereignty. It was also in these spheres, as well as through her family, that a queen interacted with the political community, frequently as an equal with (although different from) men. Her activities included providing scenes of domesticity with her king, sharing in the piety of her household and arranging building alterations for her homes, but by virtue of her office even these were imbued with political significance.

The primary difference between the impact of foreign and English-born queens was the role of the latter's families in the English polity, which was manipulated by both kings and nobles to strengthen their positions, but remained a potentially disruptive influence. In contrast to the traditionally-chosen Queen Margaret of Anjou, who tended to assert her own identity and independence within the monarchy through her building projects, her

²L.L. Huneycutt, 'Intercession and the High-Medieval Queen: the Esther Topos' and J.C. Parsons, 'The Queen's Intercession in Thirteenth-Century England', in J. Carpenter and S.-B MacLean (eds.), *Power of the Weak: Studies on Medieval Women* (Urbana and Chicago, 1995), pp. 126-46, 147-77.

³M. Facinger, 'A Study of Medieval Queenship: Capetian France 987-1237', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 5 (1968): 47.

⁴Facinger, 'A Study of Medieval Queenship', p. 47.

patronage and finally her 'regency', her English-born successors more often directed their activities (or had them directed) towards affirming their husbands' kingship. In their piety, this picture was reversed: Margaret primarily emulated her husband, but Elizabeth Woodville was more innovative than her king, acting with her household and the court, and even challenging her husband's attitudes by adopting traditional Lancastrian, but also queenly, sites of patronage, and Elizabeth of York acquired a reputation for great Christian charity which contrasted starkly with that of her husband. Nonetheless, there was a significant decline in the potential for patronage and political influence by queens during this period, albeit offset by strength of personality and family connections in the case of Elizabeth Woodville. Major factors in this decline included the English birth of the later queens - they had no foreign royal family to demand terms comparable with their predecessors - and the tensions in Henry VII's need both to display and to disguise his dependency upon his queen's lineage. Although individual women, particularly Elizabeth of York, found their agency curbed in this process, the centrality of the office of queenship to the exercise of English sovereignty was repeatedly affirmed, and indeed enhanced during this period, in texts, images and rituals, commonly as a direct consequence of the weakness of their kings' authority or legitimacy. Moreover, it is apparent that fifteenth-century queenship involved an extensive range of roles, largely understood in terms of the queen's gender, by which she enriched and upheld her husband's kingship at court and across the realm on a daily basis.

As a consequence of the breadth of the subject addressed here, there are inevitably areas requiring significant further enquiry which would contribute to a fuller understanding of this complex and crucial office. The impact of the queen as landholder - be that her own influence, or the way in which her lands were administered because they were hers - is an obvious instance of this. It is a subject touched on in assessments of royal landholding generally, and more specifically, but only briefly, by Neal in relation to the lands of Elizabeth Woodville and her daughter; but further study would inform our understanding of the queen's importance in the localities and her relationship with the nobility.⁵ The importance of the queen's role at the centre could be further explored by building on the work in this thesis to construct a more detailed social history of her household and *familia*,

⁵B.P. Wolffe, *The Royal Demesne in English History: the Crown Estate in the Governance of the Realm from the Conquest to 1509* (London, 1971), pp. 152-5, 163-4, 182-9. D. Neal, 'The Queen's Grace: English Queenship, 1464-1503' (MA diss., McMaster University, 1996), p. 109-15, 161-4.

and their connections with the king's household and beyond the court. My intention to focus on those issues which involved all four of the queens in this study has meant that I have omitted much which might have been said regarding Margaret of Anjou's unique political role. This is, however, the subject of Helen Maurer's recently submitted PhD thesis at the University of California, as well as of a biography currently being written by Bonita Cron.⁶

The present thesis argues both for a rethinking of the impact of the individual women who were queens during the Wars of the Roses, and for a readjustment in understandings of the value of queenship to the dynamics of politics in this period. Above all, it asserts that the office of the queen was essential to the effective exercise of sovereignty in the second half of the fifteenth century: an integral part of the king's public body.

⁶H. Maurer's thesis is entitled 'Margaret of Anjou: Queenship and Power in Late Medieval England, 1445-61'; B. Cron is working in New Zealand.



1. Elizabeth Woodville, from the Guildbook of the London Skinners' Fraternity of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, c. 1471.



2. Mary as Mother of Mercy, from *The Bedford Hours*, c. 1423.



3. Margaret of Anjou receives a Book of Romances from the Earl of Shrewsbury, 1445.



4. Anne Neville and Richard III from *The Salisbury Roll of Arms*, c. 1483.



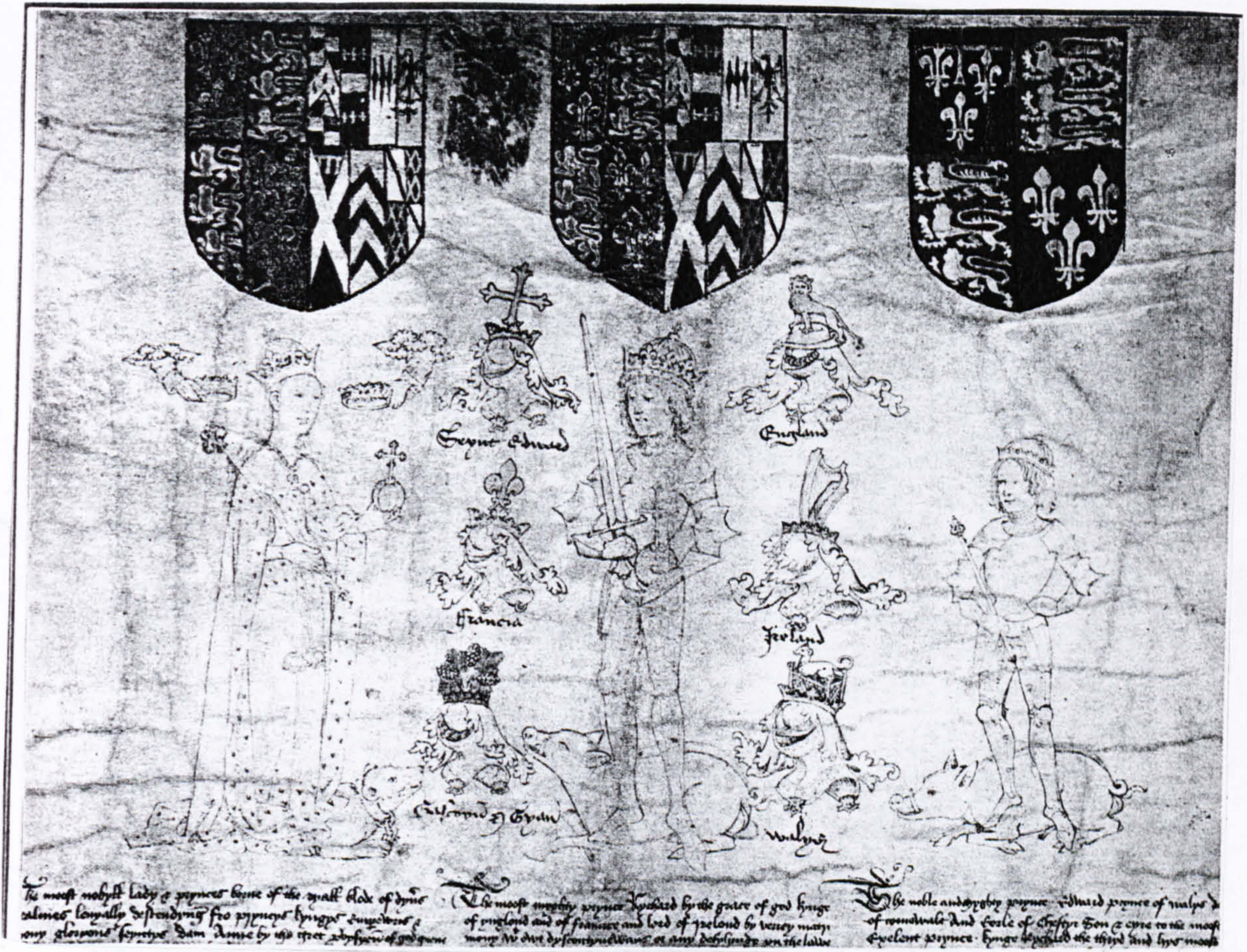
5. A woman presents a Book of Hours of the Guardian Angel to a queen, late 15th century.



6. The Annunciation, from *The Bedford Hours*, c. 1423.



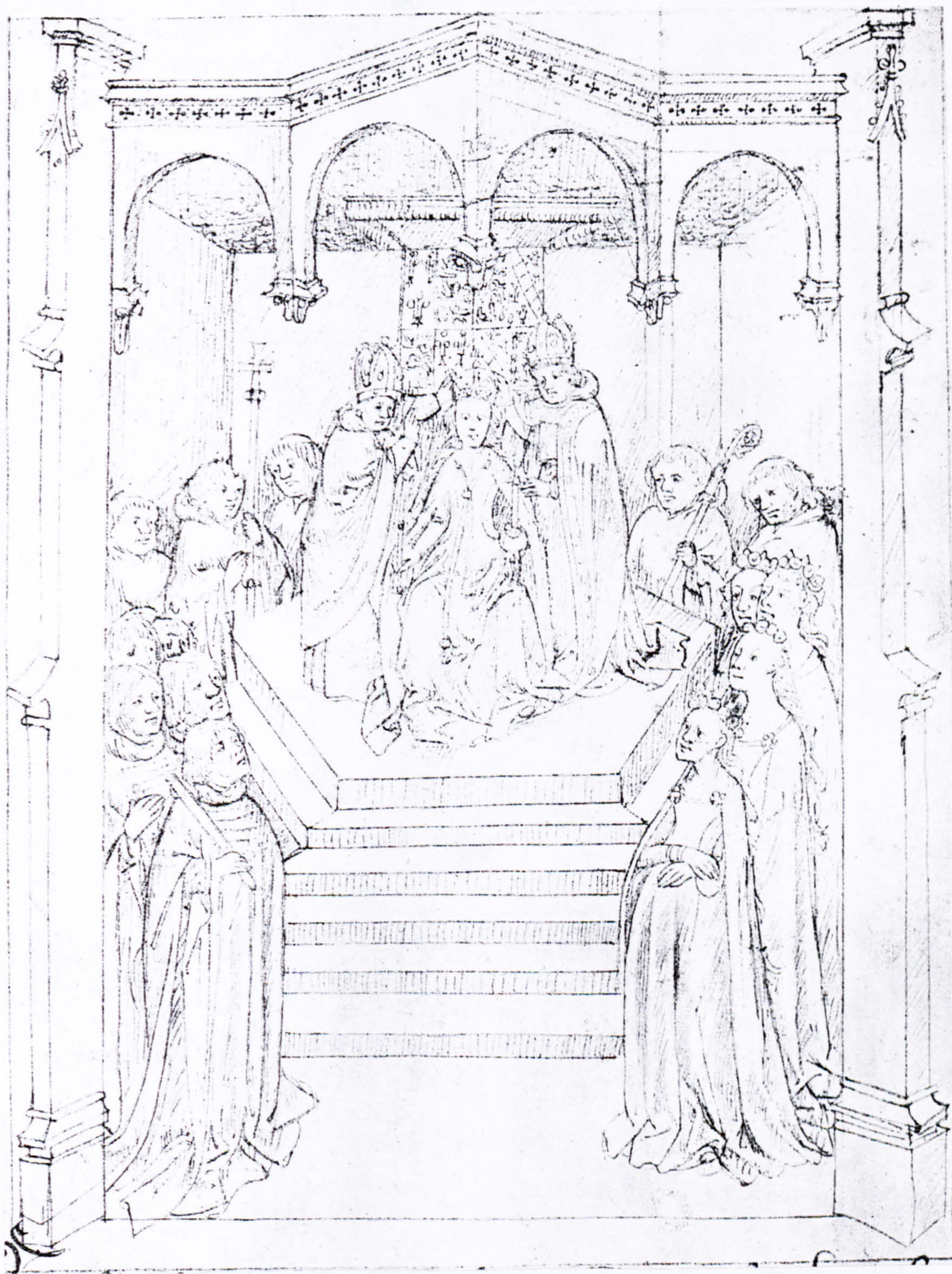
7. Elizabeth Woodville, Edward IV and their children in the Royal Window, Christ Church Cathedral, Canterbury, late 15th century.



8. Anne Neville and Richard III from *The Rous Roll*, c. 1483.



9. Anthony Woodville, Lord Rivers presents his Translation of *The Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers* for Edward Prince of Wales to Edward IV, 1470s.



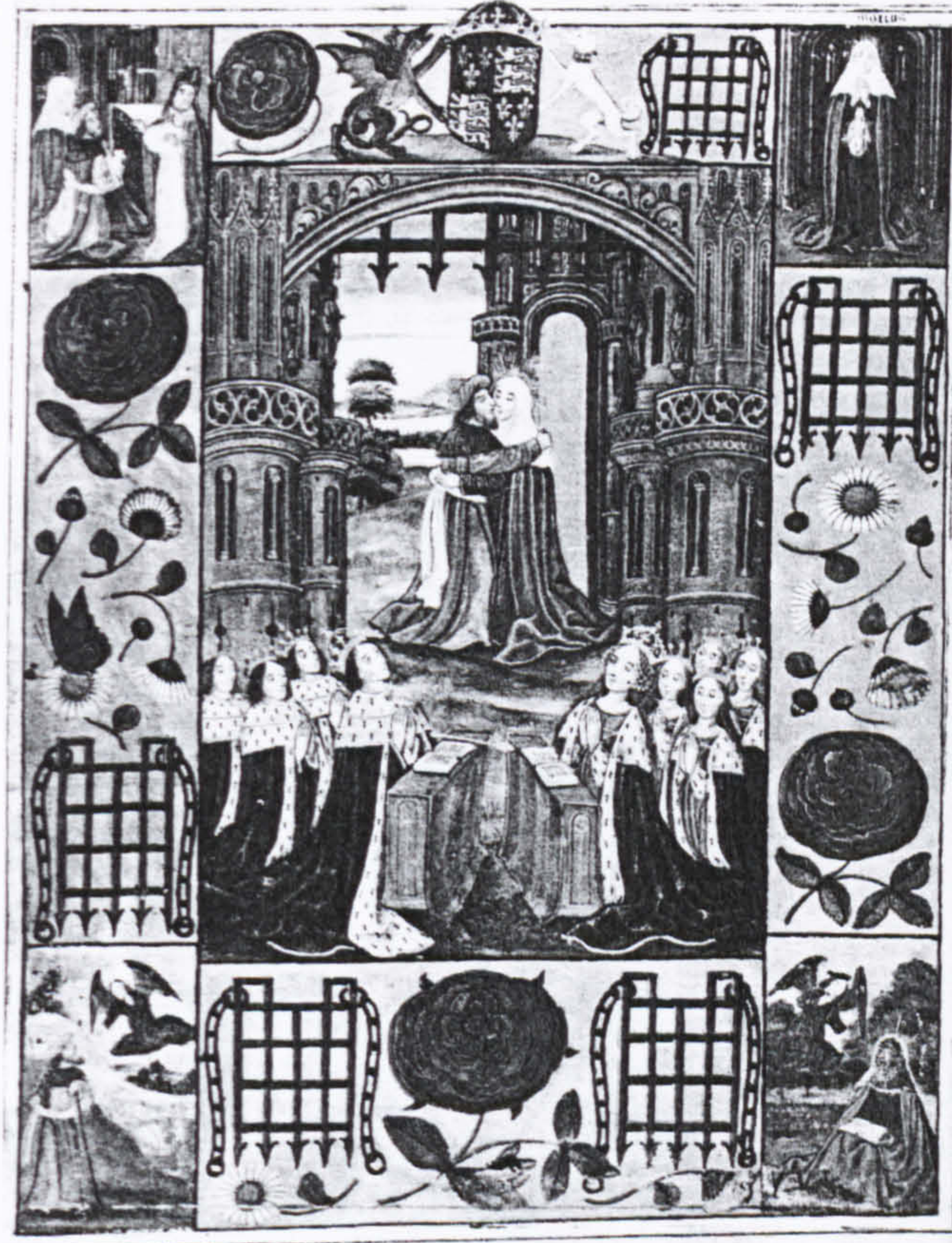
10. The Coronation of Joan of Navarre, from *The Beauchamp Pageant*, late 15th century.



11. The Birth of Henry VI, from *The Beauchamp Pageant*, late 15th century.



12. An Altarpiece showing Elizabeth of York, Henry VII all their Children kneeling below St George and the Dragon, c. 1504.



13. Elizabeth of York, Henry VII and their Children kneeling before Joachim and Anna at the Golden Gate, from the Ordinances of the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception, London, 1503.

Original in colour



14. Margaret of Anjou, from the Guildbook of the London Skinners' Fraternity of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, 1475.

Prayers to the Virgin Mary.

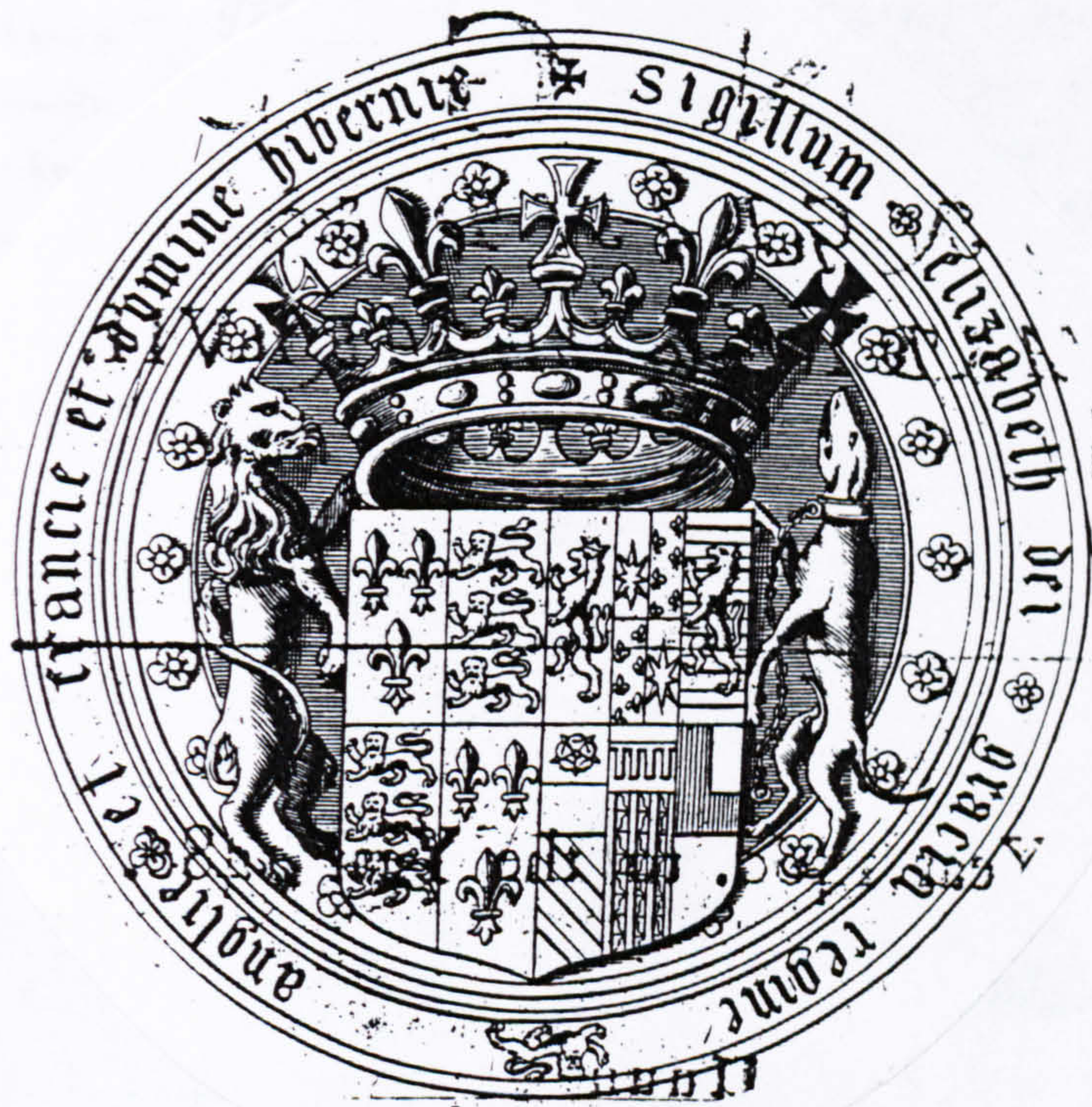
III

Que pueri hinc est quasi pueri
 In foetu matris in qua brachia
 Cuius uisus hinc est quasi pueri
 In foetu matris in qua brachia
 Cuius uisus hinc est quasi pueri
 In foetu matris in qua brachia

Holus ueritas no sua dicitur
 Ad te datus gratias dicitur
 Audi dicitur gratias dicitur
 Et dicitur gratias dicitur
 Et dicitur gratias dicitur
 Et dicitur gratias dicitur

Ane sancta mater dei radix vite robur
 lici mortis in angustis per te queso co
 solari da succere meditari de tuis delictis
Salve deo consecrata primum que mundo nata ut
 matris utrum dicitur sine macula ut uerba sancti ueniat

15. Prayer Roll of Margaret of Anjou, third quarter 15th century.



16. Engraving of the Seal of Elizabeth Woodville.

Here shewes howe the said Dame Anne Countesse of Warwiche daughter to the first
 Duke Richard. hole sister & heire to her said Duke of Warwiche, was married to
 Richard Nevill. son & heire to Richard Nevill the said Duke of
 Somersets & heire to her
 And the said Anne hadde
 7 daughters / the first was
 first wedded to James
 and secondly she was
 after King of England
 named Habel / was wedded
 to by this portraiture



Richard
 Nevill son
 to Richard Duke
 of Salisbury
 wedded Anne
 Countesse
 of Warwiche

Anne
 Countesse of
 Warwiche
 sister & heire
 to her said
 Duke of Warwiche

Montagu of Saleisbury
 by her forsaide husband
 called Anne queene of England
 & Edward son to King Henry
 wedded to Richard Duke of Glocester
 And her second daughter
 to George Duke of Clarence
 as more plainly sheweth



Edmund
 son
 to King Henry
 the first
 husband of
 Anne

Anne
 daughter
 to the forsaide
 Richard Duke
 first wife to
 King Edward
 the first

Richard the
 second
 husband to
 this Anne

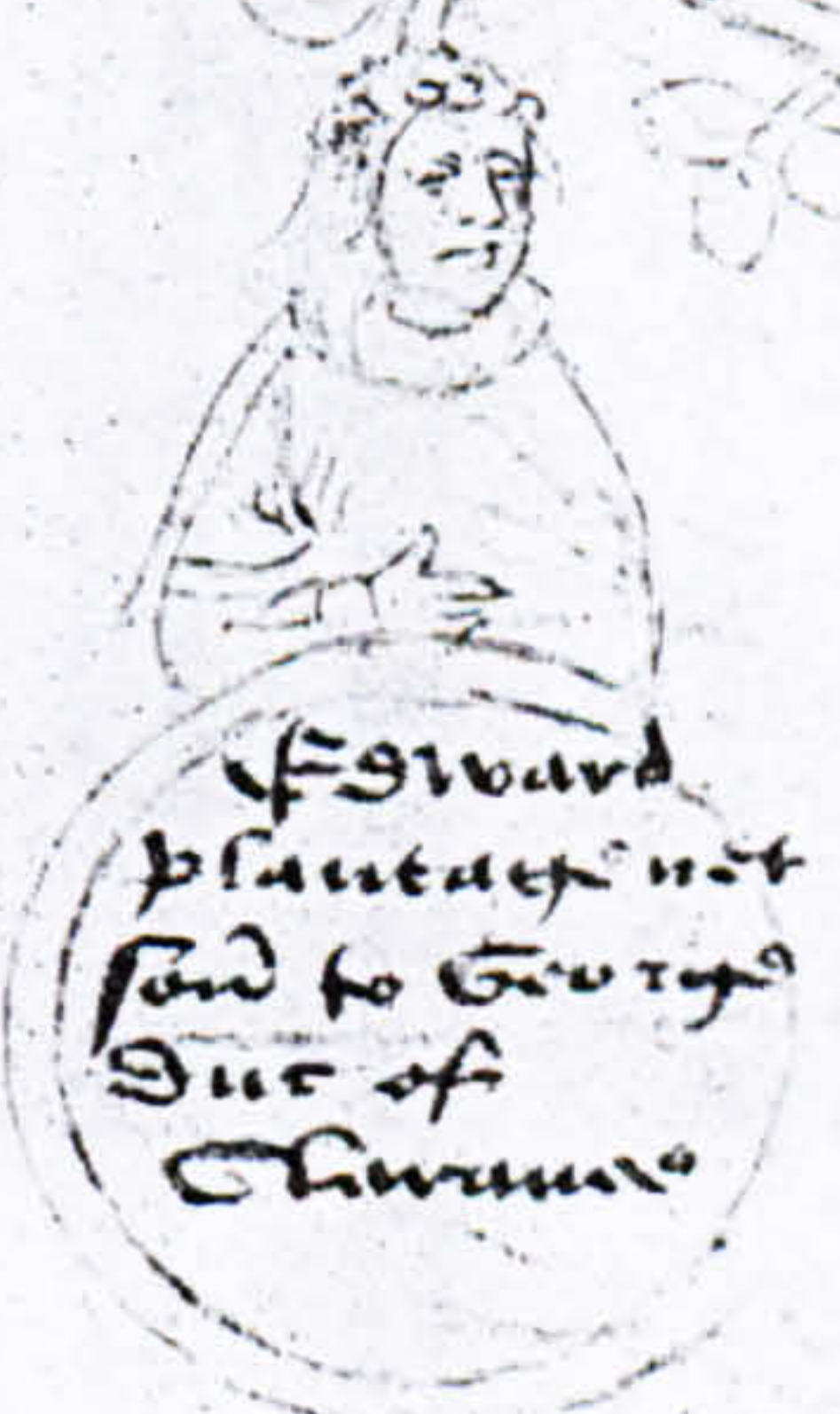


George
 Duke of Clarence

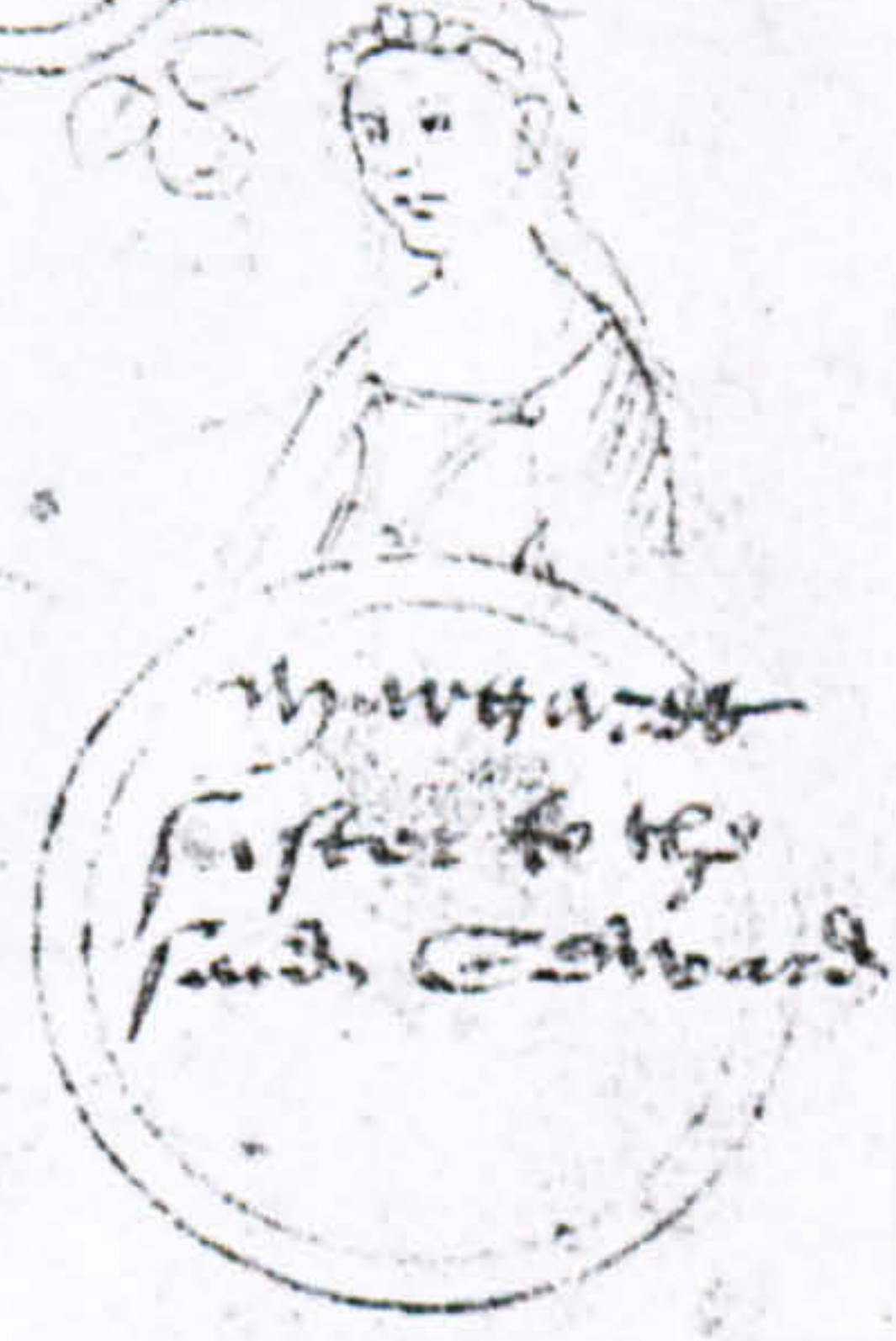
Isabel
 Duchesse of
 Clarence
 seconde daughter
 to this said
 Anne



Edward
 Plantagenet
 son to King
 Richard



Edward
 Plantagenet
 son to George
 Duke of
 Clarence



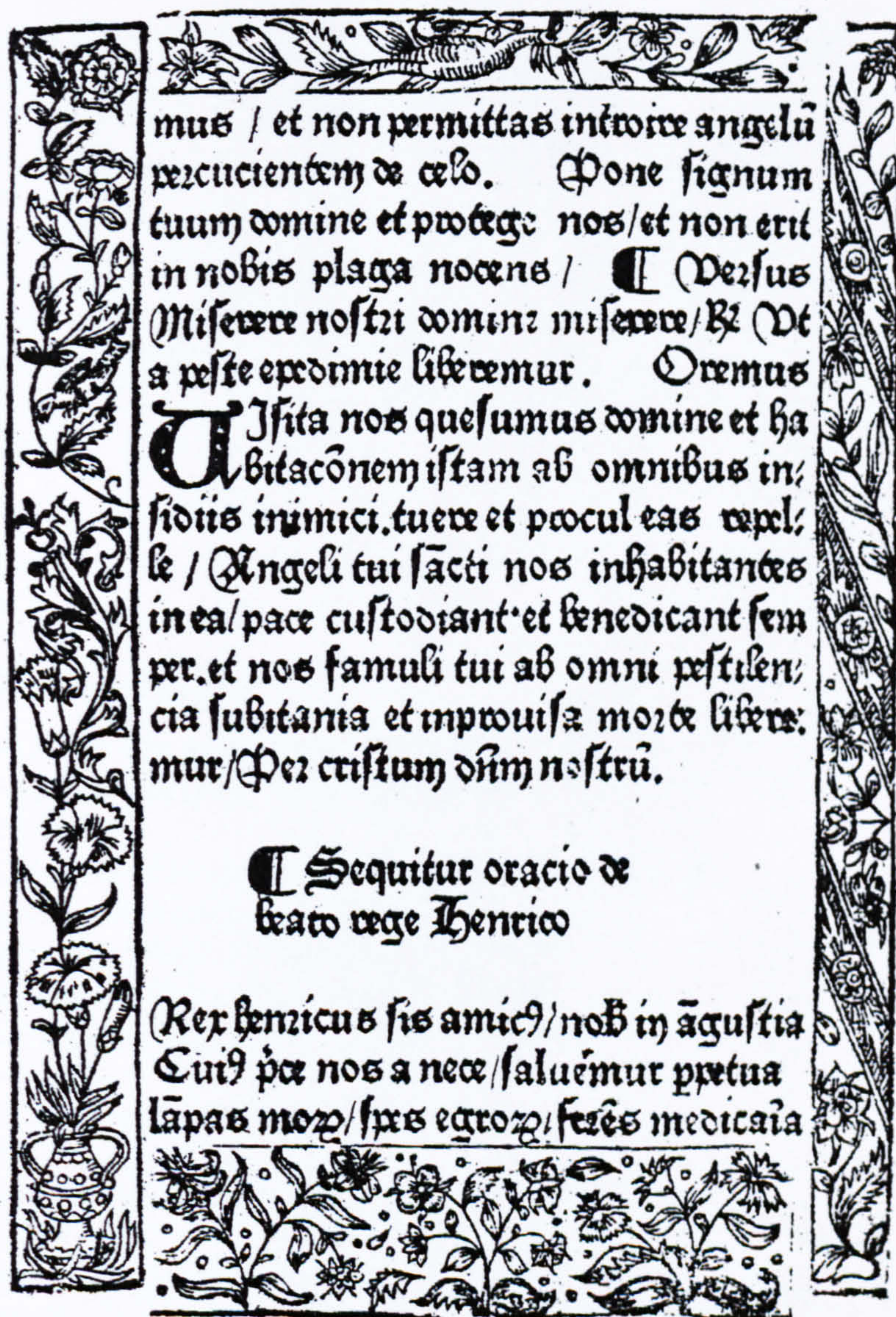
Margaret
 sister to the
 said Edward

17. Anne Neville and her Husbands in a Genealogy from *The Beauchamp Pageant*, late 15th century.

Original in colour



18. The Frontispiece to the Luton Guildbook, c. 1475.



19. Border Design of Gillyflower and Rose from William Caxton's edition of *The Fifteen O's*, late 15th century.

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Additional MS 6113
 Additional MS 14289
 Additional MS 46454
 Additional MS 48976
 Additional MS 59899
 Arundel MS 26
 Cotton Julius MS B XII
 Cotton Julius MS E IV
 Cotton Vespasian MS C XIV
 Egerton MS 616
 Egerton MS 2006
 Loan MS 90
 Royal MS 14 E III
 Royal MS 18 A XII
 Stowe MS 1047

London, Public Record Office

DL 28	Duchy of Lancaster: Accounts, Various
DL 37	Duchy of Lancaster: Chancery Rolls
E 36	Exchequer: Treasury of Receipt, Miscellaneous Books
E 101	Exchequer: Accounts, Various
E 364	Exchequer: Rolls of Foreign Accounts
E 404	Exchequer: Writs and Warrants for Issues
E 405	Exchequer: Rolls etc. of Receipts and Issues
KB 9	King's Bench: Ancient Indictments
LC 2	Lord Chamberlain's Department: Special Events
SC 1	Special Collections: Ancient Correspondence
SC 6	Special Collections: Ministers' and Receivers' Accounts

London, Westminster Abbey Muniments

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