

**HERALDRY,
PAGEANTRY AND
SOCIAL DISPLAY
IN MEDIEVAL
ENGLAND**

*Peter Coss
Maurice Keen,
Editors*

THE BOYDELL PRESS

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Edited by
Peter Coss and Maurice Keen

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First published 2002
The Boydell Press, Woodbridge
Reprinted in paperback 2003

ISBN 0 85115 850 1 hardback
ISBN 1 84383 036 1 paperback

The Boydell Press is an imprint of Boydell & Brewer Ltd
PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF, UK
and of Boydell & Brewer Inc.
PO Box 41026, Rochester, NY 14604-4126, USA
website: www.boydell.co.uk

A catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Heraldry, pageantry, and social display in medieval England / edited by Peter Cross and Maurice Keen.

p. cm.

"The collection of essays here presented derives its origin from a conference held at Cardiff University, in 1997, under the title 'Secular Society and Social Display in Medieval England' " – Introd.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-85115-850-1 (alk. paper)

1. England – Social life and customs – 1066-1485. 2. Pageants – England – History – To 1500. 3. Heraldry – England – History – To 1500. I. Cross, Peter, 1946- II. Keen, Maurice Hugh.

DA185.H55 2002

390'.0942 – dc21

2002018578

This publication is printed on acid-free paper

Printed in Great Britain by
Athenæum Press Ltd, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear

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Acknowledgements

The conference held at the Cardiff Centre for the Study of Medieval Society and Culture in March 1999 under the title 'Secular Society and Social Display in Medieval England' provided the genesis and inspiration for this collection of essays. The editors wish to acknowledge their gratitude to Cardiff University, which hosted and generously sponsored that conference, and to the participants for their papers and their contribution to its deliberations. They are also deeply grateful to the British Academy and to Balliol College, Oxford, who made grants in support of publication and in particular toward the cost of illustrations. Each contributor has his or her own debt of gratitude to those friends and colleagues who read and commented on their chapters; the editors, however, must acknowledge their special debt of gratitude to Mrs Angela Coss, for the infinite pains she took in bringing the individual typescripts into uniform and consistent shape as the volume's informal copy-editor. They must also thank the publishers Boydell and Brewer, and in particular Richard Barber and Caroline Palmer, for their ready help and guidance in the course of this book's preparation.

The editors wish also to thank the following for their permission to reproduce illustrations:

The Trustees of the British Library, the British Museum and the Public Record Office; the Churches Conservation Trust; the governing bodies of All Souls College, Christ Church and New College, Oxford, and of King's College and Trinity College, Cambridge; the Curators of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and the Syndics of Cambridge University Library; the Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London; the Guildhall Library of the Corporation of London; the Mercers' Company of London; the Masters of the Bench of the Inner Temple; and His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch.

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Introduction

Maurice Keen

THE collection of essays here presented derives its origin from a conference held at Cardiff University, in 1997, under the title 'Secular Society and Social Display in Medieval England'. It does not include all the papers which were delivered on that occasion, and it includes several that were added to the collection afterwards, but that was where the seed was sown, from which it grew.

In bringing that conference together Peter Coss and I, as its organisers, were prompted by a sense that, though the importance of the visual in the culture of the period covered by the essays in this book – roughly from the Norman Conquest to the accession of the first Tudor – is generally and widely accepted by historians, scholarly investigation of the visual has been characterised by specialism, by work focused within a particular dimension or around a particular medium. Studies of, for instance, sepulchral effigies and brasses, costume, heraldry, seals and *objets de luxe* have tended to be pursued separately, both by individuals and groups of scholars, with the consequence that they have been less well integrated than they deserve to be into the overall picture – into what the *Annales* School has called 'total history'. Our hope was that our conference, by bringing together a number of specialists with separate and different interests in the visual, could do something to weld together what seemed to us often fractured approaches.

I should stress that word 'secular' in the title of our original conference. Visible rituals, ceremony, sacerdotal vestments and insignia, church furnishings and the iconography of church painting and sculpture have always been central to the study of religious history. Several of the essays in this collection do, inevitably, touch on religious history: medieval England was a consciously Christian society, and many artefacts whose meaning was expressed visually were naturally located in churches, where they were sure to catch the eye of many, over many generations. But the religious aspects of visual culture are not the focus of this book, as its title makes clear. Heraldry and pageantry are not religious topics. Though the social and the religious cannot ever – at least for the period that it covers – be fully separated, it is the social rather than the religious significance of display that it seeks to explore.

By way of introduction to the collection, my best course may be to explain what is, so I believe, one of the reasons (not of course the only one) why for its period the visual has never quite achieved its fair crack of the whip from the historians of

secular society. Two very striking developments characterise the period that it covers, and more particularly the period c. 1200 to c. 1500 on which most of the essays concentrate. One is the exponential growth in the production of written documents, especially official documents, which gave impetus to the systematic preservation of records on a previously unprecedented scale. The second is the dramatic spread which the period witnessed of literacy among the laity. Because these two developments are so striking, historians' attention has been heavily focussed toward them, and justly so. Never, of course, to the point of blinding them to the importance of the visual, but to the point where it looks sometimes as if they have had to pinch themselves in order to remind themselves of it. The measurable growth in the production and survival of texts and documents has strengthened the historian's natural bias in favour of the written word: the other side of the picture is acknowledged in rapid genuflection, on some such lines as 'it needs to be borne in mind, of course, that this was still an age of largely visual culture'.

The 'still' in such acknowledgement can easily be misunderstood, as carrying an implication that it should not. It appears to suggest a tension between the written and visual elements in a culture, the one growing in importance at the expense of the other, and that the continuing significance of the visual has something archaic about it, reflecting a continuing influence from an earlier, less literate age. This in turn can, and perhaps often does, promote a misbalanced impression of the relation between the two cultural elements in the high to later medieval period.

It is of course true that, in an earlier age when literacy was much more thinly spread in the lay world, visible rituals and ceremonies had often to carry the force and convey the messages that later would be expressed in writing. The authority of the king was not something that could be explained to his greater subjects in treatises on political theory; it needed to be demonstrated to them visibly:

Also he [William I] was very dignified. He wore his crown three times each year as often as he was in England; at Easter he wore it at Winchester, at Whitsuntide at Westminster, at Midwinter at Gloucester: and there were with him all the rich men from over all England, archbishops and bishops, abbots and earls, thegns and knights.¹

In transactions that had legal or socio-legal significance, visible rituals could be particularly important, fixing in the minds of those witnessing a transaction that it had taken place on a specific occasion with the proper forms and in an appropriate gathering. Their memories would thenceforth serve as title deeds or record of process. Before written conveyances came into common use, the words of the donor of an estate and the transfer in the presence of witnesses into the hands of the donee of a symbolic object, perhaps a turf cut from the land or a knife to cut one, did service instead of a document.² The following account, of the settlement of a dispute between the Bishop of Lincoln and the Abbot of St Albans in the court of King Henry I gives a fine impression of how carefully managed ritual might on such

¹ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. B. Thorpe (Rolls Series, 1861), i, 355.

² See M.T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record* (London, 1979), 254.

an occasion need to be, in order to impress the memory of an important decision on all present:

Then the bishop arose, and resigned into the King's hands by means of his head-gear (which we call a *hura*) whatever right he had in the Abbey or over Abbot Robert. And the King took it and delivered it into the Abbot's hands, and invested the church of St Alban with complete liberty by the agency of the said Abbot. And then by his golden ring he put the Bishop in possession of the land at Tynehurst with the consent of the Abbot and chapter.³

Each stage in the process of this settlement was accomplished with a ritual gesture whose meaning those present understood, and needed to be so accompanied in order that it should hold.

It is further true that advances in record keeping and in the production of documentation reduced the significance of ritual and visible gesture in processes such as that described above, and on comparable occasions. They might continue to be formally observed, but the heart was taken out of them and they began to look archaic. In the twelfth century, for instance, the act of homage was an occasion of the highest import, fraught with meaning and with an established ritual procedure. Because it needed to be seen and witnessed, it took place in the lord's assembled court. Kneeling, the future vassal placed his hands between those of the overlord, and swore to be his faithful man: the lord accepted the homage with the words 'I take you as my man.'⁴ From the public performance of this ceremonial act flowed a whole range of ongoing obligations, of man to lord and of lord to man, which were clearly known to and understood by those whose witness made the contract between them binding. The following account of an act of homage of 1429 in Blackburnshire (Lancs.) preserves the ancient forms and demonstrates their capacity to endure, but it is clear at the same time that they have lost most of their old force and range of meaning:

John de Nowell did his homage to Thomas Hesketh in this manner: that Thomas de Hesketh was seated on a great stone with his hat on his head, and John Nowell, kneeling bareheaded before him, turned to face him squarely and held his hands between the hands of the said Thomas, and said thus, I become your man from this day forward and will bear you faith for the tenements I hold from you in Harwood . . . and when John Nowell had said this Thomas kissed him: and then a book was set before him, on which John Nowell laid his right hand and said thus, Hear this, Thomas de Hesketh, that I John Nowell will be faithful to you and bear you faith for the free tenement that I hold from you in Harwood, and will perform loyally all the customs and services which I owe you to do at the times assigned, so help me God.⁵

³ F. Pollock and F.W. Maitland, *The History, of English Law* (2nd edn, Cambridge, 1968), ii, 88.

⁴ See F.L. Ganshof, *Feudalism*, trans. P. Grierson (London, 1952), 66–8.

⁵ *English Historical Documents*, iv, ed. A.R. Myers (London, 1969), 1117–18.

All the old forms are preserved, but no one could describe this ceremony as ‘fraught with meaning’: it has become an archaism. It does not create a meaningful obligation of life long fidelity to Thomas for John Nowell: it simply acknowledges John’s legal obligations to him as formally his feudal tenant, obligations which were likely to be minor and financial rather than personal and social. The written certificate, in the form of an open letter from the Sheriff of Lancashire and from which the description of the ceremony is drawn, has moreover become effectively as important as the ceremony itself: it is the legal, attested record that is to be preserved and that will be referred to if litigation between John and Thomas arises. Old forms continue to be followed in this new age of documentation, but their vitality in the context of everyday social and legal relations between free men is substantially a spent force.

That however is one side of the picture only. It will not have escaped notice that virtually all the examples I have been quoting to illustrate the significance of visible rituals in the ill lettered early times relate in one way or another to legal processes or to the creation or affirmation of legally binding obligations, and this is no accident. The legal and the fiscal spheres were those in particular in which wider literacy and advances in record keeping made their sharpest impact. In other spheres, the advance of literacy among the laity did not have the same effect, of downgrading the importance of ceremony and of the visual in culture generally. The effect was rather the opposite, to extend the range, the potential and the capacity for elaboration of the visual in culture through interplay with the written word.

A very simple and straightforward example may serve to introduce the mechanics of the sort of interplay that I have in mind. Here are some of the numbered instructions for the illumination of a *de luxe* manuscript of Jean le Févre’s translation of the *Ecloga* of Theodulus of Athens, from the late fifteenth century:

no i “here there should be shown a friar minor presenting the book to the three estates, shown as the pope, a king, and a merchant.”

no iii “shows a queen lying or sitting on a bed, with a child to whom she is giving a rosy apple: at the foot of the bed is a king with a sceptre in his left hand, making a sign over the infant with his right hand”. [Saturn]

no vi “an angel holding in his hand a flaming sword, chasing before him a naked man and a naked woman”. [Adam and Eve]

no xx “Abraham about to behead his son, and an angel holding a sword and pointing out a ram caught in a bush on the mountain”. [Abraham and Isaac]

no xxvii “a man fully armed, with his shield and grasping his sword, and two men lying as dead: and nearby a fountain and over the fountain a great dragon with seven heads, the sword of the armed man swinging as if to cut off the heads of the said dragon”. [Cadmus]⁶

⁶ Bib. Nat., MS Fr. 1278, fos 299r–302v. I owe this reference to Dr Mark Warner. Jean Le Févre’s translation of Theodulus’ *Ecloga* has never, as far as I know, been published. The subjects of the illuminations referred to in the MS quoted above are readily identifiable by reference to the Latin text of the poem, printed by J. Osternacher, *Theoduli Ecloga* (Ripariae prope Lentiam, 1902).

Instructions survive for 64 illustrations in all, some very detailed, of scenes drawn principally from the Bible and from classical history and legend. There may have been more: I have not been able to identify the manuscript and it probably has not survived. The point is, though, that the execution of this object for display, what we would call a coffee-table book, with precise reference to the ideas and wishes of whoever it was that commissioned it, simply would not have been possible without the written word to guide the illuminator. The successful execution of the paintings depended on his skill: the detail and overall conception of the series of visual images to be presented depended on the instructions conveyed to him in writing, from which I have been quoting: and given their complexity could have been conveyed in no other way.

The means here employed in the commissioning of an illustrated book could be applied equally to, for instance, visual pageantry staged for political purposes and in order to achieve public impact. When Henry V came home from the expedition that climaxed at Agincourt, he was welcomed as he rode through London to Westminster with a series of elaborate pageants. On the tower of the gatehouse at London Bridge stood two giant figures, a man and a woman, the man with an axe in his right hand and the keys of the city in his left, with the words 'City of the King of Justice' painted on the wall by them. Passing onward, at the draw leaf of the bridge the King was faced with an arch, decorated in coloured linens, and surmounted by the image of St George, bareheaded with a scroll in his hand, declaring 'Honour and glory to God alone'. On the roof of a nearby house was a crowd of boys, dressed in white as angels and singing a canticle. At Cornhill he was met by a group of elders, dressed as patriarchs, who released a flock of sparrows, as thanks offering for victory, and who were chanting 'Sing to the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things.' At the cross in Cheap a pasteboard castle had been erected, decorated with the arms of St George, of the King, and of the Empire. On a temporary bridge running across from it to nearby St Peter's church, a chorus of maidens appeared to greet Henry, singing to tambourines, 'Welcome Henry the Fifte, Kyng of England and of France'. There was much more too, all vividly described by the author of the *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, which is how we know about it.⁷ But how did he know of it, and remember it in all its detail? Virtually certainly, as Kingsford long ago pointed out, he had before him the official – written – programme for the occasion.⁸ Without such a programme it would not have been possible to co-ordinate such an elaborately designed series of presentations as these, or to orchestrate their inter-connected themes, of God's blessing on the justice of Henry's cause, of the martial and Christian foundations of English kingship, and of the joy and gratitude of the King's people in the victory that was his and so theirs also.

In this case we can detect the written word in the background to visual propaganda: it does not have to stay in the background. In 1423 John Duke of Bedford, as Regent of France for Henry VI, commissioned a poster or placard, to be displayed at Notre Dame (and no doubt copied elsewhere), whose object was to explain and

⁷ *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, ed. F. Taylor and J. Roskell (Oxford, 1975), 100–12.

⁸ C.L. Kingsford, *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford, 1913), 47.

justify diagrammatically Henry VI's title to the French crown. At the same time, he commissioned an explicatory poem from Louis Calot, which was an essential companion piece to it, and which was subsequently translated into English by Lydgate.⁹ The poster took the form of an illustrated narrative genealogy of the descent of the French crown, in three vertical columns. (See plate IV) At the apex of the central column, 'the direct line of France', was a medallion picture of St Louis: medallions below showed the descent of his crown through his son Philip III to Philip IV and his sons, the last direct Capetians, with a medallion also for Philip IV's daughter Isabella (from whose marriage to Edward II the English claim to the French throne originally derived). The right-hand column showed, in medallions, 'the line of England', from Edward I down to Henry V. The left hand column showed what was called the 'collateral line of France', from Philip VI down to Charles VI and his daughter Catherine, she whom Henry V married. At the foot of these last two columns were shown two angels, leaning out from Catherine on the one side and Henry on the other, to crown the infant Henry VI, their son. Calot's poem was a necessary accompaniment to the poster, because there were nuances to its genealogical narrative that could not be fully explained pictorially, in particular the position of the Dauphin Charles, Catherine's brother (not illustrated). The poem could explain his exclusion from the Troyes settlement of the crown, on Charles VI's death, on Henry and Catherine and their heirs, on the ground of the Dauphin's criminal responsibility for the murder of Duke John the Fearless of Burgundy: it could also explain and emphasise, for French viewers and audience, the Frenchness of Henry VI's blood, that he was not an alien king over them. Interestingly, we find some of the themes of this poster repeated in the pageants staged in London in 1432 to welcome Henry VI home after his French coronation (was a copy or a record part of the inspiration?):

At the cross of Cheapside [again] was a royal castle of green jasper and herein two trees standing upright, showing the right title of the Kings of England and France, conveying from St Edward and St Louis by kings into the time of King Henry VI, every king standing with his coat armour, some leopards and some fleurs de lys.¹⁰

On this English occasion there was of course no such need for an explanation of genealogical nuances as there was in the case of Bedford's 1423 poster, aimed principally at a French public: besides, Lydgate's translation of Calot's poem had already supplied one.

The purposes both of the London pageants of 1415 and 1432 and of Bedford's poster were political and propagandist. The elaborate instructions for the *montage* of funerals, which we come across from time to time in the wills of the great, offer

⁹ See J.W. McKenna, 'Henry VI of England and the Dual Monarchy: Aspects of Royal Political Propaganda, 1422–32', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, xxviii (1965), 145–62; and B.J.H. Rowe, 'King Henry VI's Claim to France, in Picture and Poem', *The Library*, 4th ser., xiii (1933), 77–8. Lydgate's translation of Calot's poem is printed in *Political Poems and Songs*, ed. T. Wright (Rolls Series, 1859–61), ii, 131–40.

¹⁰ *Historical Collections of a London Citizen*, ed. J. Gairdner (Camden. Soc., new ser., xvii, London 1876), 174–5.

eminently comparable illustrations of the interplay between the visual and the written word in the context of display. Here the purpose was social rather than political, to bring home the dignity and standing, in kingdom or region, of the deceased and of his lineage. The most famous directions in this class are those of the Black Prince:

We will that at the time that our body is brought through the town of Canterbury as far as the priory, two war horses covered with our arms and two men bearing our arms and helms shall ride before our body, that is to say one for war bearing our quartered arms, and the other for peace bearing our badges of ostrich plumes, with four banners of the same design, and that each of those who carries the said banners shall have on his head a hat bearing our arms. And he who shall be armed for war shall have an armed man carrying behind him a black penon with ostrich plumes: and we will that the hearse shall be set up between the high altar and the choir, in which our body shall be placed, until the vigil masses and divine service are performed.¹¹

The instructions of Sir Brian Stapleton, KG, (d. 1394) are on the same lines, though more modest. He willed that his funeral *cortège* was to be headed by ‘a man armed with my arms, with my helm on his head, and that he shall be well mounted and a man of good looks of whatsoever condition he be’.¹² He also stipulated that his tenants should be assembled, in blue gowns, to meet the procession at Helaugh priory where he was to be buried, an instruction that brings out nicely his concern that the display of the occasion should assert and reflect his and his family’s standing in the social hierarchy. Testamentary instructions for the decoration of tombs, for the design of the effigy and the heraldry to be displayed, had the same purpose: they are discussed in detail in chapters below, by Nigel Saul on monumental brasses and by Brian and Moira Gittos on sepulchral effigies.¹³

There are many other areas, and other sorts of occasion, where we can see the interplay of written word and visual presentation at work in this newly literate age, to their mutual enrichment and to the enhancement of the cultural significance of the latter. We can see John Lydgate sitting down to pen ‘the devyse of a desguysing to fore the grete estates of the land . . . of dame fortune, dame prudence, dame right wysnesse and dame fortitudo’.¹⁴ We can see the founders of the Gild of St Helen in Beverley composing instructions for the procession to her altar on her feast day:

Then a fair youth, the fairest they can find, is picked out and clad as a queen, like to St Helena: and an old man goes before the youth, carrying a cross, and another old man carrying a shovel, in token of the Holy Cross. The sisters of the gild follow two by two, and then the brethren two by two.¹⁵

¹¹ J. Nichols, *A Collection of all the wills . . . of the Kings and Queens of England* (London, 1780), 68.

¹² M.G.A. Vale, *Piety, Charity and Literacy among the Yorkshire Gentry* (Borthwick Papers, 50, York 1976), 12.

¹³ See below, chs 8 and 9.

¹⁴ R. Withington, *English Pageantry* (Cambridge, Mass., 1918), i, 107.

¹⁵ *English Gilds*, ed. L.T. Smith (EETS, orig. ser., 40, London 1870), 148.

We can watch the civic elders of Coventry meeting to plan their reception for Queen Margaret of Anjou in 1456, devising pageants of the cardinal virtues, of angels, of the nine worthies, of St Margaret slaying a dragon 'by myracull'; and preparing little speeches to explain the loyal and apposite significations of these *tableaux vivants*.¹⁶ It would be possible to go on multiplying examples, but hopefully enough have been offered for the moment. In a whole series of contexts, aesthetic, political, social, monumental and pious, we can see the written word empowering visual display, enlarging its adaptability to occasion, and facilitating exuberance.

The experience of earlier generations had attuned minds to looking for significance in the visual, and to its importance as a means of communication. Wider literacy meant that more meaning could be packed into images, to be explained by word if necessary: that more complex staging was manageable in pageantry: that clear instructions could be given in order to ensure that ceremony and display gave precise expression to the ideas and messages that were intended. No wonder that this age of spreading literacy and of a revolution in legal documentation and record keeping was also a great age of display in the secular world.

In the descriptions of pageantry that I have been quoting, references to heraldry and its symbolism are a recurrent theme. When Henry V was welcomed home to London, the tower above the Cornhill conduit was decorated with the arms of England, of St George, of Edward the Confessor and of St Edmund the Martyr.¹⁷ In the 1432 pageant to welcome Henry VI the figures of the Kings of England and France were presented standing, each in his coat armour. Sir Brian Stapleton's funeral cortège was led by a mounted man armed in his arms. Heraldry was a vital element in later medieval secular display, and one that therefore deserves special attention. It is the central topic of the two chapters below contributed by David Crouch and Adrian Ailes,¹⁸ and important to the argument in a series of others.

The origins of heraldry are clearly connected with the fully mailed warrior's need for a mark of recognition on the field of battle and at tournaments. As David Crouch explains, heraldic arms very early developed a second important significance, as the identifying hereditary insignia of noble lineages. These origins take us back to the second quarter of the twelfth century, that is to say to a time when the growth of lay literacy and of written record production were in their infancy. Noting the rise of heraldry in the same period that saw the start of these developments, Michael Clanchy has described it as 'an alternative language of signs'.¹⁹ The description is an apt one: signs of identity and affiliation are just what heraldic arms were (and still are), and at the same time they served as icons of power and prestige. Moreover, it requires no written word to interpret their message and meaning. As

¹⁶ *Coventry Leet Book*, ed. M. Dormer Harris (EETS, orig. ser., 135, London 1908), pt. ii, 285–92.

¹⁷ *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, ed. Taylor and Roskell, 107.

¹⁸ See below, chs 2 and 5.

¹⁹ Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 230.

Adrian Ailes has written below, they could ‘openly speak of authority, presence, and even political intent’,²⁰ alike to the literate, the semi literate and the illiterate.

Heraldry was a medium with immense potential in the field of display. It could be used to assert a claim, to lands or lordship (as when Edward III quartered the lilies of France with the leopards of England), and to express such claims in political pageantry. It could be deployed, on tombs and in the stained glass of churches, to proclaim the distinction of the connections in blood of a family, and to implant its pedigree in the memory. It could express status, possession and patronage, on plate, on the embroidered vestments of a private chapel or collegiate foundation, in painted chambers in a castle or manor house or sculpted at its gatehouse. It could serve as a sign of personal authorisation or corroboration, through the armorial seal set on a written document or solemn charter. Perhaps above all, its potential to emphasise, enhance and decorate the significance of ceremony and celebrations was all but limitless. Deployed in that kind of context, it could convey messages to a very wide public, because they needed no elaborate explanation: all that was required was a knowledge, based on visual memory, of whose shield or shields they were that were displayed, and an ability to interpret the way in which they were marshalled and in what conjunctions with one another.

In this field also, nevertheless, the interplay between the visual sign and the written word was significant. By around 1300, the technical vocabulary of blazon, of conventional terms to describe the colours, metals and furs of heraldry and the charges on shields (bends, bars, chevrons, fleur de lys, lions rampant or passant and so on) was beginning to be well established.²¹ This meant, in the first place, that heraldic records and rolls of the arms of individual knights and knightly families no longer needed to be painted: a written record in blazon could provide absolutely precise descriptions of armorial shields (and was of course much cheaper to produce). The illuminator of a book or the craftsman commissioned to decorate a tomb no longer needed a visual model to work from (though he would naturally always prefer to have one), since he could accurately work from a description in blazon. As the circle of families and social groups assuming arms and claiming a right to them steadily widened, records in blazon greatly facilitated the efforts of the heralds, as experts in armoury, to keep track of them: and once they had acquired (in the fifteenth century) the right to grant or confirm arms, they facilitated also their business of ensuring that new coats did not trespass on the rights of the established possessors of similar insignia.²² No less importantly, the established vocabulary of blazon made it possible to explain and discuss heraldry, the colours and charges of shields, their symbolism and the nature of rights in them, at length in written treatises. There is a plethora of such treatises from the English fifteenth century:

²⁰ Below, 83.

²¹ The best account of the early history of blazon is G.J. Brault, *Early Blazon* (Oxford, 1972).

²² See e.g. the warrant of William Bellingham, Ireland King of Arms, in his grant of arms to Thomas Barow, 1477: ‘the wych blasun and armes I the foresaid Yrland Kyng of Armes witness thus belong to no oder person thus born within the realme of Yngland’ (*Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, 2nd ser., xvi, London 1897, 344).

Nicholas Upton's *De Studio Militari*, *Strangway's Book*, the *Boke of St Albans*, the *Tretis on Armes* – and many more.²³ Their subject matter extended to much more than just the technicalities of blazoning and marshalling, to include discussions of knighthood, the laws of war, nobility and social gradation. Thus heraldry developed into a kind of social science, the heralds into the professional scholars of its lore and the 'grammar' of its signs.

As such, the heralds came to play a very important role in the ordering and marshalling of such occasions as public processions, funerals, court feasts and ceremonial knightings (as Fionn Pilbrow makes clear in his study below of the order for making Knights of the Bath).²⁴ In their books, they wrote up and preserved records of the rituals followed on such occasions, to serve as guides for future comparable events. Thus the inventory of the books bequeathed by Thomas Benolt (d. 1534), Clarenceulx King of Arms, to Thomas Hawley, Norrey King, includes the following items (among many others): '*Item*, a booke of the fourme of coronations of kinges and burials of divers estates'; '*Item*, remembrances of the enterrements of the erles of Salisbury, Oxinford and Devonshire'; '*Item*, a rowle of paper of how the King of Scottes made homage to England'.²⁵ Another 'item' on Benolt's list is described as 'certain articles of justes written in paper'. Unsurprisingly, given the very early date at which we find heralds playing a special part in making arrangements for tournaments and jousts, these became the field in which their role as masters of ceremonies was in the later middle ages above all prominent. It is also one which, once again, illustrates the possibilities opened up in the context of display by the interaction of the visual and the written, in an apt and illuminating way.

The earliest tournaments were very rough affairs, mock battles which were excellent training in the arts of mounted combat. As time went by, however, the spectator-sport aspect of these events came to loom progressively larger: display, ceremony and junketing became more and more important as their accompaniment, especially in connection with the one to one tilting encounters of the joust. The procession on the first day of a festival of joust and tourney offered a particular opportunity for lavish and spectacular display. Before the Cheapside tournament of 1331 William Montagu, with sixteen knights, masked and dressed as Tartars, paraded mounted through London, each knight leading a lady by a silver chain.²⁶ In 1390 Richard II headed a procession to the jousts at Smithfield of twenty knights, all bearing his device of the white hart on their robes, shields and horse trappers, accompanied by twenty ladies displaying the same device in their dress.²⁷ As Juliet Barker has written, processions such as these made 'a supreme opportunity for the nobility to display their wealth so as to impress their social inferiors and even their peers'.²⁸ The stage management of the sort of sartorial display described above

²³ For a fuller list of heraldic treatises of this period, with bibliographical references, see R. Dennys, *The Heraldic Imagination* (London, 1975), 212–17.

²⁴ Below, ch. 10.

²⁵ A.R. Wagner, *Heralds and Heraldry in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1956), 152, 156.

²⁶ *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, ed. W. Stubbs (Roll Series, 1883), i, 354.

²⁷ J. Barker, *The Tournament in England, 1100–1400* (Woodbridge, 1986), 100.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 99.

would not, it is true, have called for much in the way of written instruction; but other aspects of the staging and ceremony of such occasions – as these became more elaborate – did come to do so.

Accompanying the written challenges of Jean de Boucicaut and his two companions, to the knights of England to come and joust with them at St Inglevert near Calais in 1390, came the written ‘articles’ of the joust (the same sort of articles as Benolt referred to in his heraldic book inventory). These explained in careful detail the procedure by which any of those who responded to the challenge should at the field select his adversary and indicate the terms of combat he proposed, by touching or sending to touch one or other of the two ‘targets’ which each of the challengers had hung before his pavilion, emblazoned with his arms.²⁹ When Chester Herald put together his very full account of the jousting between Lord Scales and Anthony, Bastard of Burgundy, at Smithfield in 1467, he included the full text of Scales’ challenge, of his articles for the jousts, and of the proclamation delivered at the lists before the Lord Constable set things going with the command to ‘an heraud to crye *Lessez aler*’.³⁰ Chester also recorded Scales’ account of what had led up to the issue of his challenge. As he (Scales) was coming away from the High Mass at Easter and making his obedience to his sister, Edward IV’s Queen Elizabeth, her ladies had gathered about him and bound on his thigh a gold ‘collar’ with a *floure de souvenance* enamelled attached thereto, and had dropped into his doffed bonnet a bill ‘in small parchemyn rollid’, outlining the adventure which the bearing of this ‘emprise’ committed him in honour to take up.³¹ A written bill was thus integral to the start of this story of staged chivalrous display, whose full course Chester went on to describe in detail and with relish.

We witness here a small but quite elaborate piece of theatre, in which the parts had clearly been carefully rehearsed, which prepared the way for the lavish public spectacle of the jousts themselves. This sort of elaboration of tourneying ceremony and ritual, designed to add to the piquancy, splendour and excitement of the festivities, could be extended further and still more amply. I know of no full English analogue to the Burgundian *pas d’armes* of the *Femme Sauvage* of 1470, which required in order to explain its setting and staging what amounted virtually to a short story, describing how the challenger (Anthony of Burgundy again) had been cured of wounds by the *Femme Sauvage* as he left the land of *enfance* for that of *jeunesse* (he was to enter the lists accompanied by a troop of her ‘wild women’).³² The extravagantly worded challenges for the jousts at Westminster in 1401, evocative of the literary worlds of romance and allegory, come quite near it, however. They include letters on behalf of champions with such names as, for instance, *Ardent desireux*, *Vouleté d’apprendre* and *Pouvoir perdu*, this last declared to be a knight from the realm of Love held prisoner by the Lady *Plaisance*.³³ Unfortunately

²⁹ *Oeuvres de J. Froissart*, ed. K de Lettenhove, xiv (Brussels, 1872), 55–8, 105–51.

³⁰ S. Bentley, *Excerpta Historica* (London, 1831), 171–212.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 177–8.

³² A. Planche, ‘Du tournoi au théâtre en Bourgogne’, *Le Moyen Age*, 81 (Paris, 1975), 102 nn. 27, 28.

³³ Bodleian, MS Douce 271, fos 40r–47r: for *Pouvoir Perdu* see fo. 41v.

it is not possible in this instance to identify who the real knights were to whom these highly literary challenges related, or how they identified visually their assumed personalities when they appeared in the lists. But it seems clear that they would have found means to do so, as others did on comparable occasions, for example when in 1343 Lord Morley and twelve others held the lists against all comers, dressed as the Pope and twelve cardinals.³⁴

Heraldry and the role of the heralds in the tourneying context thus provide a particularly instructive illustration of the way in which the language of signs and the language of words could interact in the field of display. At early tournaments, emblazoned shields simply identified the combatants: there was no need of more than a 'language of signs' for this purpose. The spectacle that tournaments offered, however, invited their further exploitation as occasions for visual display, with the aim of impressing the dignity and standing of the patron of the tourney and of the participants, and also, often, of celebrating the significance of the occasions on which they were held (they were the common accompaniment of such events as royal marriages, the knighting of young princes, or return from successful campaign). From here, in a world of spreading literacy, it was a short and natural step to delving into literature to find glamorous *motifs* for jousting festivals, and to deploying the resources of written eloquence to add *éclat* to the wording of challenges, the detail of articles for the joust, and of proclamations at the lists. The carefully preserved records of great jousting festivals served as models for future occasions, on the basis of which new refinements and fresh elaborations could be planned.

The exuberance and vitality of visual culture and display, not only on the tourneying field but in a host of other secular contexts, was a very marked feature of the later medieval period. The spread of literacy enabled the lay world, over the period c. 1200 to c. 1500, to make progressively more skilful and more ample use of the visible media that the church had so long and so effectively deployed, in combination with its liturgy, for purposes of religious instruction and spiritual edification. Through this age and beyond, the language of signs, symbols, ceremony and gesture was employed in a steadily widening variety of modes and manners for a whole range of purposes, political, social, commemorative, down to the purely theatrical. Throughout, literacy and documentation worked as enabling and facilitating agents, extending the possibilities both of elaboration and of control in the field of the visual, extending further its potential as a means of communication and opening ways to the expression and clarification of more complex nuances and messages.

Rather self-indulgently, I have allowed this introduction to become the vehicle for views which are my own about display in secular culture, and about the way in which its English medieval history is connected with spreading secular literacy. They are views which many of the contributors to this collection may not share; some will very probably disagree with them. I offer two excuses for having stated them at some

³⁴ *Adae Murimuth Continuatio Chronicarum*, ed. E.M. Thompson (Rolls Series, 1889), 230.

length. The first is the natural impulse I have felt to explain why, to me, the period covered by the essays in the book seems to me such an important one in the history of visual culture in England. The second is that expressing my views has given me an opportunity to touch on a number of topics and themes that those essays discuss and develop in greater depth and detail. But they still require, and deserve, some further introduction.

In ordering the essays into chapters, Peter Coss and I have endeavoured to maintain an element of 'grouping' by subject matter, and, within 'groups', by chronology. The significance of heraldic arms and badges are a common major theme in the first four chapters. In chapter one, David Crouch explores how early heraldry (in the twelfth century and into the thirteenth) suggests a self-image of the family, or lineage, that is more extended than one would expect in the light of the growing prevalence of primogeniture in inheritance law, and which is at odds with interpretations that present the 'progressive nuclearisation' of the family as one of the major sociological developments of the central middle ages. Following him, Peter Coss focuses his essay on the flowering of heraldic display that is so marked in England in the time of the first two Edwards, and on the 'creative interaction' that it reflects 'between the military calling on the one hand and heraldic, hence social status on the other'. The evidence that he presents, from rolls of arms, effigies, and surviving heraldic stained glass chimes well with many of Crouch's suggestions, in its emphasis on awareness of and pride in extended lineage connections and on cognate as well as agnatic relationships in that context. His exploration of the extension of the use of heraldic arms to esquires and ultimately gentlemen introduces a further dimension to the significance of heraldry as an associative medium, accommodating under a common aristocratic identity a progressively more graded hierarchy of gentility. Caroline Shenton, in her study of Edward III's early employment of the leopard emblem (derived from the English royal family arms), introduces the importance of the badge, and illustrates the symbolic potential for political purposes of heraldry and in particular of animal images and their associations (Edward III actually possessed some real leopards, and took them north with him in his 1334 campaign). Adrian Ailes in the last of these four chapters, also has much to say about badges, and their significance for retainers and servants as signs of belonging to an affinity wider than that of the lineage. He brings the discussion back, though, to the central theme of lineage in his exploration of the uses of heraldry as genealogical propaganda to support the dynastic claims of the English kings to the French crown and of the rival houses of Lancaster and York in the Wars of the Roses.

The two following chapters take us into a different area of visual culture, the interpretation of the appearance and display of visible possessions, of clothing and of plate. In the first, Frédérique Lachaud examines the thirteenth-century pre-history of later medieval English sumptuary legislation (which is generally accepted to be one of the clearest marks of that more graded late medieval sense of hierarchy that Coss has noted). From the early thirteenth century, she points out, ecclesiastical legislation, in its emphasis on decent sobriety of dress for the secular clergy, showed a perception of a need for a proper relation between 'inner being and exterior appearance'. This struck its echo in lay society, evinced in particular in tax exemptions on

moveables deemed appropriate to a particular status or function. People should not have to pay for what they were socially expected to display or possess. At first hesitant and ambivalent, this 'echo' becomes clearer with time. Fashion always showed a tendency to run ahead of regulation, but once the principle of relationship between inner or social being and outward appearance was clearly grasped, tighter rules were bound to follow in the wake of the sharper social gradings that begin to be noticeable in written texts around the turn into the fourteenth century. Marion Campbell's chapter which follows has what looks a narrower focus, the plate, cups and other 'founders' relics' preserved among the medieval treasures of Oxford and Cambridge Colleges. The narrowness, however, as she points out, is largely the consequence of subsequent history, of the fact that so great a part of the medieval heritage of plate and treasures was lost or melted down in the upheavals of the Dissolution and of English Civil War. If so much had not vanished, plate and its display would offer a much wider field for investigation. What colleges have preserved nevertheless opens the way to some very interesting discussion. The 'relics' that they treasured were at once commemorative and also emblems of the continuing collegiate identity of the societies brought together by founders' patronage and benefactions, significant of a sense of 'group belonging' with a history behind it, in a way that is comparable with what heraldic arms signified to a lay aristocratic family.

Commemoration is a part of the matter of Marion Campbell's discussion: it provides their central theme to the two chapters that follow, the first on secular sepulchral effigies by Brian and Moira Gittos, the second on monumental brasses by Nigel Saul. In both essays, the motivation behind the commissioning of memorials is a primary concern, since understanding that is the key to the messages that they were intended to convey visually. The ideal context for an effigy, as the Gittos point out, was a chantry foundation. The prayers there offered would not be for the soul of the founder only, but of his parents, ancestors, kin and patrons also: the design of the effigy, moreover, was likely to express the wishes of his relations and executors as much as his own desires. The result was essentially a social statement rather than an individual, merely commemorative one. Families threatened with extinction in the male line, it is noted, showed a particular anxiety for monuments that would offer an enduring memorial to their name and lineage. Heart burials at a site separate from the main internment (perhaps in the church of a home manor, when the latter was in a collegiate foundation) suggest a desire to multiply, in different modes and at different places, the associative connections of the family and the links between the living and the dead.

The motivations behind the commissioning of brasses, which Saul discusses in the following chapter, were very similar to those which inspired stone effigies. Saul detects a comparable concern (reflecting again as much the ideas of the executors as those of the deceased) to 'position his person in a system'; a similar anxiety to identify (especially through heraldry) with lineage, status group and patrons; a comparable keenness to preserve name and memory among families threatened with extinction in the male line. There were important differences between the two modes, however. The prominence on many brasses of patron saints and sacred symbols brings out more clearly than in the case of effigies the priority of the request

for intercession that they articulated. Brasses, moreover, because they could be so much less costly, came to be available to a much wider, more functionally varied clientele; and they could carry a longer, explicatory epitaph. The sheer number of brasses that have survived and the obscurity of many of the individuals that they commemorate is a truly remarkable feature, without parallel outside England. Is this, Saul asks pertinently, a symptom of the distinctive and insular development of English society at the end of the middle ages?

The last three chapters of the book have in common a chronological focus toward the fifteenth century, and bear on aspects of visual display that have connections with the history of governance. In the first of them, Fionn Pilbrow discusses the making of Knights of the Bath on great, royal state occasions, such as coronations, or the knighting of the king's eldest son. This elaborate dubbing ceremony, conducted before the witness of the whole court, conferred great honour, and was the reward of loyal service; but the service involved was not necessarily that of the new knight, as likely that of his lineage before him. The ceremony was chivalrous, but the service rewarded was not necessarily military: it might as easily be administrative, diplomatic or judicial. Its rituals gave public, visible and eloquent expression to the bonding between the king and the chivalrous, governing elite of his kingdom. Caroline Barron's following chapter, on chivalry and medieval London, starts from a position very different from Pilbrow's, but ends quite close to it. Unlike the urban patricians of the Low Countries, she notes, the great London merchants did not involve themselves in the chivalrous activities that centred round the royal court and household, in spite of living so close to them and although they were sensitive to the military needs both of kingdom and capital. We see them instead developing their own separate and civic brand of spectacle, in the processions and pageantry of the 'Marching Watch' and the 'Mayor's Riding', which gave expression to their own community's sense of its distinct civic identity and dignity. But in Yorkist and early Tudor days Barron sees things changing, and in consequence of deliberate royal policy. The knightships now conferred increasingly often on London aldermen symbolise the worlds of the court and the London business world being brought closer together, in the context of the national community over which the king presided. This leads directly toward the issue discussed by John Watts in the concluding chapter of this book. We can see all sorts of ways, he points out, in which the royal, personal authority of the king was given expression visually: but how far was there any attempt to give such expression to the impersonal, public face of governing authority and to the common weal that we call the state? In written texts the corporate nature of the national community and the distinction between the private and public aspects of kingship are well grasped, but signs of either kings or their agents seeking to project 'any distinct visual sense of power as routine, representative, communal or official' prove hard to find. Watts does find some hints in this direction, however, and they lead him to some interesting places, including the visual space of Westminster Hall. Perhaps significantly, these hints of a more collective sense of society seem to thicken, if only slightly, as one approaches the Tudor age.

A collection of essays on visual culture would be a poor thing without illustra-

tions. Ideally, our text would be an introduction to a second, pictorial volume: there would be plenty of material to choose from. But cost imposes limits. Luckily, the publishers have been generous in their allowance of pictures. We hope there are enough here to give some sense of the richness of the material available for the exploration of the varied strands of visual culture and communication that the essays here assembled explore.

The Historian, Lineage and Heraldry 1050–1250*

David Crouch

RECENT scholarship in the growing academic literature to do with heraldry has introduced a welcome focus on the contribution it can make to the study of the changing society of the middle ages. This is particularly welcome as ideas about the family and family structure in the middle ages continue to change, and my feeling is that the contribution of heraldry to the debate might be very useful. I pick out a particular idea in this paper: the idea of ‘lineage’ as it has developed and is developing in both English and French historiography. The concept and construct of ‘lineage’ is one that has been very much a central one in debate on the nature of medieval family structure and self-understanding. This is indeed as it should be, for the vernacular French word from which it was derived was much used by twelfth- and thirteenth-century writers, and was indeed understood then as a synonym for what we call ‘family’. How commentators on the family have interpreted the word has formed much of the debate on medieval family structures. The fact that heraldry was, in its earliest days, a symbolic system that reflected contemporary ideas of lineage and family makes the study of heraldry therefore all the more important.

Heraldry can offer a new dialectic with the historical models of family developed over the past 130 years. But before we proceed to what heraldry’s contribution to the wider social debate might be we need first to examine the debate so far. I have referred to ‘models’ of family development suggested by historians over the years; these models are many and varied: sociological–anthropological ones deriving from the nineteenth century’s first attempts to identify and classify family types; Marxian ones rooted in a historical materialist understanding of society, which linked family into overall concepts of social transformation; legal–empirical models which appropriated family to an evolutionary scheme of property rights and law; and, by no means least, the holistic historicism of the early *Annales* school of French history, which integrated family and family structure into huge schemes of historical and regional change. It is this last way of dealing with history and society which has been

* This study has much benefited from the advice of Dr Maurice Keen and Professors David Bates and Peter Coss, and any remaining errors and confusions are very much my own responsibility.

most active in formulating and adopting theories of family structure and development and which, in its constant search for new insights, has already begun to integrate heraldry into its schemas. We will begin with the key word, 'lineage' (and we will also bring into focus associated terms, such as 'parage') and see what these meant to medieval people. From there we will look to see what historians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have made of these terms, before we look to see how the twenty-first century might take the debate further.

What is Lineage?

By *lineage* I mean the way that families develop an image of themselves as on a track through time. Such as it is, that sums up the essentials of the modern view of lineage. Lineage is a simple idea, whatever complex theories have been built upon it. And, as even a cursory look at the contemporary sources reveals, the twelfth century shared this simple view. The word was in frequent use in the northern French vernacular when it emerges into literacy in the twelfth century. From the time of the *Song of Roland* through to Chrétien de Troyes, there is a strong consciousness of the *lign*, *lin*, or *franc lin*, which distinguishes a man or woman. The dying Roland reflected on the 'humes de sun lign', his heroic forbears, when he chooses to recall those things which had given dignity to his life.¹ Gaimar and Wace, in the middle of the century, use the word frequently and unequivocally to refer to people vertically linked by common ancestry. Perhaps the best instance of this is when Wace portrays Julius Caesar at Boulogne, surveying the distant cliffs of Britain and learning that its people were descended from Brutus, exclaiming, 'Indeed I know of this Brutus! He and we Romans are of one ancestry (*fumes d'un lignage*), the common source (*chiés*) of our relationship began in the city of Troy.'² In that respect the word 'lignage' can approximate to the word *parents*, or *parenz* (meaning 'kinsfolk' or 'relations'), in that what defines kinsfolk is some sort of common descent.³

¹ *La Chanson de Roland*, ed. F. Whitehead (2nd edn, repr. 1985), line 2379. The translation of the term *lin/lign* as 'line' might be contested. It might well have been used in a sense nearer the Latin *gens* (family), as seems to be the case in the Anglo-Norman poem on the voyage of St Brendan, which dates to the first half of the reign of Henry I of England: it says that Brendan 'fud de regal lin', Benedeit, *The Anglo-Norman Voyage of St Brendan*, ed. I. Short and B. Merrilees (Manchester, 1979), line 22. Similarly, a generation later, Wace portrays Edward the Confessor considering William of Normandy to be his best potential successor (*qui ert le mielz de son lignage*) meaning he was the best amongst those who shared his ancestry, *Le Roman de Rou*, ed. A.J. Holden, 3 vols (Société des anciens textes français, 1970–73), ii, pt 3, lines 5552–3. Nonetheless, the Latin antecedent term *linea* could not have been understood otherwise than in the modern English sense of a 'line'.

² Wace, *Le Roman de Brut*, ed. I. Arnold, 2 vols (Société des anciens textes français, 1938–40), i, lines 3870–73.

³ See Geoffrey Gaimar, *L'Estoire des Engleis*, ed. A. Bell (Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1960), lines 2693–4, where the Northumbrian nobleman Buern Buccerarl takes counsel with his *lignage*, who in the same passage are also called as a synonym, his *parenz*. I have noted an instance in a late twelfth-century romance where *lignage* and the term *germainis cosins* (that is the sons of the uncles of a person) are used as synonyms, see *Garin le Loherenc*, ed. A. Iker-Gittelman, 3 vols (Classiques français du moyen âge, 1996–97), i, line 570.

One understanding of 'lineage' is the sequence of ancestors that stand behind you in time; but, of course, this brings in other questions. For instance, the distinction of your lineage, the wealth and prowess of those ancestors, can be very important to your perception of your status in the world, and your claims to deference from those around you, who expected to see your ancestors' qualities reproduced in you.⁴ His ancestors were very much in the mind of Roland as he faced death (along with his beloved France, his own exploits and his duty to his emperor). Another vernacular term of the time enhanced this aspect of lineage: *parage*. 'Parage' in fact is rather more difficult to define than 'lignage' and 'parenz', it relates indeed to the word 'parenz' but more particularly to the noun *per* or *par* (which we translate as 'peer' or 'equal'). There are plenty of instances when *parage*, like *lignage*, is meant to signify 'family'. But a strand of its meaning also centres around the idea of status and dignity, the status of one man measured against another: status in birth, wealth and power.⁵ Wace again provides a good example of this latter sense. When, in the *Roman de Brut*, Cassibelan, king of Britain, refuses to pay tribute to Caesar and Rome, it is because they descend from one *lignage*; this means that the Britons stand in a relationship of *parage* to the Romans, they are equals in status (as drawn from birth), and it is arrogance (*hunte*) in Caesar to presume otherwise.⁶ So if 'lignage' is a twelfth-century word that indicates vertical perceptions of family tracked back through time, 'parage' is a word which can speak of a different perspective on family, betraying horizontal ideas, as seeing an individual and his connections focussed in the present moment.

Another concern about lineage is the degree to which it might also support pragmatic claims to particular lands and honors. In twelfth-century legal cases, the 'right' (*ius*) by which a man or woman claimed land as theirs was almost invariably their descent. We see this frequently enough in twelfth-century literary sources too. It was because he was of the *lignage* of Hengist that the Saxon, Cerdic, claimed the land from Humber to Caithness as his inheritance, according to Geoffrey Gaimar in the 1140s. It was because 'my *lignages*, my *encestres*' had held Soissons that Duke Beugon took such exception to the counterclaims of his enemy Fromond, in the later

⁴ So Orderic Vitalis in 1141 reported the prodigious valour of King Stephen on the field of Lincoln as the King being inspired by the deeds of his *antecessores*, *The Ecclesiastical History*, ed. M. Chibnall, 6 vols (Oxford, 1969–80), vi, 544. For an extended treatment, M. Keen, *Chivalry* (London, 1984), ch. 7. See also, for some insights into the relationship in later literature between lineage and individual status, E. Kennedy, 'The Quest for Identity and the Importance of Lineage in Thirteenth-Century French Prose Romance', in C. Harper-Bill and R. Harvey (eds), *The Ideals and Practice of Medieval Knighthood*, ii (Woodbridge, 1988), 70–86. For a belief in the transmission of personal qualities from father to son, see the description in the *Prose Lancelot* of Merlin, whose father was an aerial spirit: 'he had his father's nature, deceitful and wayward', *Lancelot do Lac*, ed. E. Kennedy, 2 vols (Oxford, 1980), i, p. 23, lines 7–8.

⁵ See for instance the scornful dismissal by King Nicholas of Elim faced with the young Alexander of Macedon: 'Boy, you're a fool! You have no idea who I am! You have no conception of my rank (*parage*)! I'm king of this realm, and others beside owe me tribute!', Thomas of Kent, *Le Roman de Toute Chevalerie*, ed. B. Foster, 2 vols (Anglo-Norman Text Society, 29–31, 1976–77), i, lines 577–9.

⁶ *Roman de Brut*, i, lines 3927–8: 'Ki sumes de vostre parage; per as Romains estre devum, ki d'un lignage descendom.'

twelfth-century romance, *Garin*.⁷ It is on this particular question that this paper will concentrate: how property, family identity and lineage are intertwined, and how heraldry illustrates that complexity.

In the view of lineage which is called ‘agnatic’ (which is particularly associated with the European later middle ages), the accent is on males succeeding males down the centuries carrying their properties with them. There is not one exclusive idea of the agnatic linear family. You might have brothers dividing the family property or even holding it in common (which latter model is technically called ‘parage’) and at its most liberal such an agnatic linear family might even have all male cousins sharing the family property (in which case it is hardly distinguishable from the undifferentiated ‘kin group’, the clan). The narrowest form, and the agnatic ideal, would be *uni-geniture*, where one male in every generation succeeded exclusively to the estates of his father. Usually that meant *primogeniture*, the succession of the eldest surviving son, the model of succession prevalent amongst royal and princely families in the eleventh century. This last form of lineage is understood by most historians to have become characteristic of the later medieval aristocracies of Western Europe.

Women in the agnatic scheme of things might be seen merely as the passive investors whose bodily capital makes the whole enterprise of succession from generation to generation possible. But in fact most schemes of lineage – even that involving primogeniture, as the twelfth-century English legal commentator known as ‘Glanvill’ tells us – allow women also to succeed and carry on the line, if only in default of male heirs. Glanvill does not portray the family as a simple agnatic line,⁸ and no family could be exclusively agnatic until lawyers devised the testamentary entail in late thirteenth-century England, by which the next male heir took an estate intact, and was always preferred over a female. Earlier medieval families naturally had a ‘cognate’ dimension, that is, they were sensible of wider connections through marriage into other families, and acknowledged female claims to succeed to property. The relative weight given to female links and female presence within families is one other of the defining features of the various modern types and schemes of family structures. Here we will find that heraldry can be of substantial help to historians in assessing where women stood in the twelfth-century family scheme of things, for heraldry tells a very different story of their place in family structure than does property law.

Historians and Lineage

Theories of family structure and change emerge as far back as the 1860s, and the full story of how Victorian students of the family produced both the discipline of sociology and laid the foundation of much of the current historical work on social

⁷ Gaimar, *L'Estoire des Engleis*, lines 13–14; *Garin le Lohere*, i, lines 5286–90.

⁸ See comments in P. Stafford, ‘La Mutation Familiale: A Suitable Case for Caution’, in J. Hill and M. Swan (eds), *The Community, the Family and the Saint: Patterns of Power in Early Medieval Europe* (Turnhout, 1998), 106–7, 107n.

change would take far more space than is available in this chapter. You may, however, refer to fig. 1 for a schematic guide to the evolution of the idea of lineage in historical scholarship, which will help you as we hurry past the main points of development. I hope to return to this subject in a future study. Briefly, the study of family developed in a world of Victorian natural philosophy that was dominated by Linnaean categorisation of types; hence the French academician and senator Frédéric Le Play (1806–82) made his contribution to early sociology in 1871 by his masterwork categorising family types, *L'organisation de la famille (selon le vrai modèle signalé par l'histoire de toutes les races et tous les temps)*, although he had been writing about the diverse nature of family structures since 1864.⁹ Late Victorian ideas on the family were otherwise dominated by Darwinian beliefs that social structures, like organisms, evolved in response to the social environment, and this produced the influential work on family evolution by the amateur-scholars, John Ferguson McLennan and Lewis Henry Morgan.

For our purposes here, we can begin the story rather later than the time of these pioneers, with the great sociologist Emile Durkheim (1858–1917). Durkheim never actually published a complete study of the family, but expounded the subject for two decades in his university teaching in Bordeaux and at the Ecole Normale Supérieure between 1888 and 1908. From what was reconstructed of that teaching by his pupil, Marcel Mauss, we find that his views are oddly familiar to any contemporary historian looking at the medieval family: he proposed a universal ‘law of contraction’ by which the family had evolved through several stages since its earliest manifestation as a diffuse clan, which when it settled down to agrarianism tightened into a clan more narrowly defined on blood kinship. In turn this narrows to an agnate or cognate kin group, and then that into a narrower patriarchy, out of which emerges the nuclear family.¹⁰ This model is most important for historians, as one of the eager students sitting in front of Durkheim in his last four years teaching at the ENS was Marc Bloch (1886–1944).

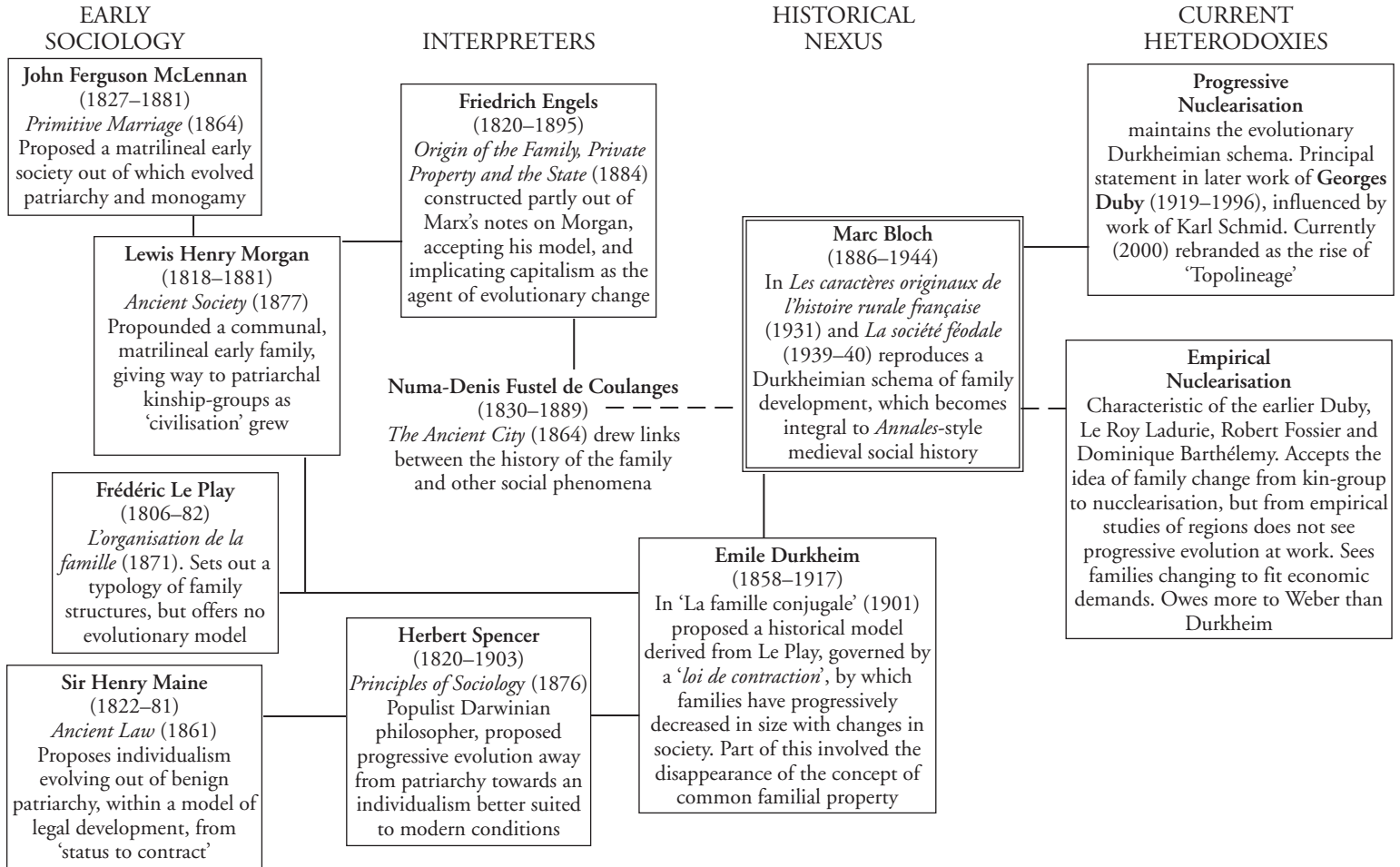
The nexus through which Durkheim’s social thought passed into medieval historiography was principally Bloch. Bloch’s classic work on feudal society reproduces a scheme of family development which is unmistakably Durkheim’s.¹¹ In his Durkheimian way, Bloch saw ‘family’ as a social entity with a real existence subject to evolution due to the pressure of social and economic forces. The ‘loi de contraction’ is one of Bloch’s conscious social principles, and it was neatly identified in his work, and tagged and translated by David Herlihy as the ‘theory of progressive

⁹ For Le Play’s importance in historiography see P. Burke, *History and Social Theory* (Cambridge, 1992), 53–4.

¹⁰ This model, along with the phrase ‘loi de contraction’ is expressed in the essay ‘La famille conjugale’, *Revue Philosophique*, 91 (1901), 1–14, published in conjunction with his student, Mauss. For a reconstruction and analysis of Durkheim’s thought on the family, E. Wallwork, *Durkheim: Morality and Milieu* (Harvard, 1972), 88–98.

¹¹ M. Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans. L.A. Manyon (2nd edn, 2 vols, London, 1962), i, 139 ‘... it looks as if from the thirteenth century onwards a sort of contraction was in process. The vast kindreds of not so long before were slowly being replaced by groups much more like our small families of today.’

Fig. 1. The lineage of the idea of lineage (highly simplified)



nuclearisation'.¹² The generation of historians which succeeded Bloch makes the same basic assumption, and indeed it seems to have been a commonly accepted idea at the time.¹³ Not surprisingly it surfaces in the work of the undoubted star of the post-war generation of French medieval historians, Georges Duby. And since it was taken up by Duby, it remains an important idea in the study of medieval society.

Duby's great master-thesis on the society of the Mâconnais initially diverged from Bloch's idea of progressive nuclearisation. He at first tacitly rejected the evolutionism implicit in Bloch's scheme of family development. His general reading and his empirical study of the charters and diplomas of the Mâconnais led him to believe that the family did not so much narrow, as adjust to political circumstances. Whenever royal or princely authority was weak, the family turned in on itself for protection, and brothers banded together to defend the patrimony. When society was peaceful and royal authority strong, then the nuclear units could look after themselves, and siblings went their own way. He nonetheless saw a narrowing of family structure in the twelfth century, as inheritance was restricted by fathers to only one or two sons, and this was one reason he later reverted to evolutionism.¹⁴ But another reason was the work of a German contemporary, Karl Schmid. In the 1950s, Schmid was a member of the great prosopographical investigation into German aristocratic society in the earlier middle ages known now as the 'Münster-Freiburg school'. Looking at the Rhineland, like Bloch, Schmid found a shift away from a horizontal, kin-based family to a society of vertically-organised lineages. For Schmid and his colleagues, the eleventh century saw a transition from a society made up of influential kin-groups of undifferentiated cousins (the *Sippe*) into a society based around lineages (the *Geschlecht*).¹⁵ Duby – and others amongst French historians of his generation – seized on Schmid's works and by the 1970s had integrated them into his own master-thesis.¹⁶ Out of Duby's treatment of the idea of

¹² D. Herlihy, 'Family Solidarity in Medieval Italian History', in *The Social History of Italy and Western Europe* (London, 1978), 174.

¹³ Note for instance Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. R. Baldick (New York, 1962). Emmanuelle Le Roy Ladurie's work on the family of the Languedoc (like Duby's initial work on the Mâconnais) was more nuanced than Bloch's; Le Roy Ladurie allows (for instance) that the fraternal kin-group (in French, the *frèrèche*) might resurface in times of economic stress, such as the late fourteenth century, *Les paysans de Languedoc*, 2 vols (Paris, 1966), i, 162, 167.

¹⁴ G. Duby, *La société au xi^e et xii^e siècles dans la région mâconnaise* (repr. Paris, 1971), 122, 324–5.

¹⁵ K. Schmid, 'Zur Problematik von Familie, Sippe und Geschlecht, Haus und Dynastie beim mittelalterlichen Adel: Vortragen zum Thema "Adel und Herrschaft im Mittelalter"', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, 105 (1957), 1–62. See for a general overview, *idem*, 'The Structure of the Nobility in the Earlier Middle Ages', in T. Reuter (ed. and trans.), *The Medieval Nobility* (Amsterdam, 1978), first published as 'Über die Struktur des Adels im früheren Mittelalter', *Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung*, 19 (1959), 1–23. For an accessible and informative critique of the German thought-world which produced Schmid's work, J.B. Freed, 'Reflections on the Medieval German Nobility', *American Historical Review*, xci (1986), 553–75. See also now, M. Aurell, 'La parenté en l'an mil', *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale: X^e–xii^e siècle*, 43 (2000), 128–9.

¹⁶ G. Duby, 'Lignage, noblesse et chevalerie au xii^e siècle dans la région mâconnaise: une révision', in *Hommes et structures du moyen âge* (Paris, 1973), 395–422, repr. in English, *The Chivalrous Society*, trans. C. Postan (London, 1977), 59–87, esp. 67–75. In 1964, Jacques Le Goff employed a kinship scheme deriving from the Münster–Freiburg model, *La civilisation de l'Occident médiévale* (Paris, 1964), translated by J. Barrow as *Medieval Civilization, 400–1500* (Oxford, 1988), 280–5.

social and family change has come the master-theory adopted and elaborated by many other historians, the idea of a social, familial or feudal ‘*mutation*’ (‘transformation’) around the year 1000.¹⁷

Duby developed during the 1960s into a systematic thinker, one of the greatest of the *Annales* tradition; he took ideas to their logical conclusion. His historical thinking is unusual and remarkable for the way that he interwove his ideas into a unified theory of social development; a characteristic normally expected only in theologians. The idea of lineage became very much one of the golden threads in his tapestry. If you suggest, as he suggested, that there was a fundamental crisis in family identity in medieval society, you might relate it to other perceived crises. The historiography of the twentieth century has been very keen to explain political and religious movements in earlier times as symptoms of social and economic change. If Europe was flooded by rootless younger sons in the late eleventh century, newly excluded from their family inheritance, isn’t it remarkable that the Crusades happened at just that time?¹⁸ Isn’t it remarkable also that the same period saw the emergence of the knightly order founded on the rootless bachelor seeking service with a lord? And did not that knightly order by its mercenary violence precipitate the rise of the principalities in medieval France?¹⁹ It is all just too neat, and Duby for one had no intention of resisting the seductions of that neatness; it would be asking too much of that rarest of creatures, a systematic historian.

Yet in the meantime – as the historical community was always half-aware – the ground has been cut from under this basic assumption.²⁰ Since the 1970s sociologists with an interest in the historical background to their discipline have decidedly rejected the idea of any evolutionary model of family, with the basic and primitive model being the broad patriarchy. Not only that, but any ideas of progressive structural change in families over time are now also rejected. A slow process of collation of observation has established that the nuclear (or conjugal) family can be found in all contemporary cultures, even the remote and undeveloped ones which were once

¹⁷ Duby referred to a wide-ranging eleventh-century social ‘*mutation*’ or ‘*bouleversement*’ as far back as 1966 in his three classic essays on medieval art and society republished as *Le temps des cathédrales: l’art et la société, 980–1420* (Paris, 1976), see esp. 45. Duby’s name is usually associated with that of Pierre Bonassie in the framing through regional studies of the period of mutation between 980 and 1030, *La Catalogne du milieu du x^e à la fin du xi^e siècle*, 2 vols (Toulouse, 1975–76), although the regionalist impulse in French medieval historiography is much older and embraces Boutruche in the 1940s and Bloch in the 1920s. A convenient summation of the whole mutationist thesis can be found in J.-P. Poly and E. Bournazel, *La mutation féodale, x^e–xii^e siècles* (Paris, 1980), esp. ch. 4; revised by the authors in 1991 and translated by C. Higgitt as *The Feudal Transformation, 900–1200* (London, 1991).

¹⁸ G. Duby, ‘Au xii^e siècle: les “jeunes” dans la société aristocratique dans la France du nord-ouest’, in *Hommes et structures du moyen âge*, 213–25, repr. in English, *The Chivalrous Society*, trans. Postan, 112–22, see esp. 120.

¹⁹ G. Duby, *Les trois ordres ou l’imaginaire du féodalisme* (Paris, 1978), repr. in English as *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*, trans. A. Goldhammer (Chicago, 1980), 98. For the rise of the principalities see now, D.R. Bates, ‘West Francia: The Northern Principalities’, in T. Reuter (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History iii, c.900–c.1024* (Cambridge, 1999), 398–419, esp. 414.

²⁰ One of the first mainstream notices of this was by David Herlihy, *The History of Feudalism* (London, 1971), 67–8.

assumed to resemble earlier forms of Western society. There is every reason to believe that family typology within cultures is much more complex than the interpreters of Le Play assumed. Different types and models of family occur within the same cultures, and it is no longer believed, as Engels and Weber believed – and the underlying philosophy of historical materialism advocates – that changes in family structure played a part in the creation of the modern industrial west. So, in sociological thought, changes in family structure have been uncoupled from association with broad social change; something approaching a cataclysmic change in outlook.²¹ So where does this leave the concept of the evolution of medieval lineage? The answer is that it does not affect the idea of lineage at all, but what it does affect is the general theory that lineages evolved out of the narrowing of earlier patriarchal family structures, and the particular idea that agnatic (that is, male-dominated) lineage was the characteristic perception of family by the twelfth century.

There are several current Anglophone critics of French work on the family, but I take just one here as an example since his work has a particular relevance to my heraldic argument. The careful studies of Stephen D. White of family relationships as they appear in the charters and diplomas of western France between 1050 and 1150 have been particularly revealing. In a study informed by current sociological thinking, and without claiming too much for the evidence, he has nonetheless been able to conclude that ideas of family over that time and in that place were complex, and give no real support for such a line of development as Duby and Schmid predicted. The idea of family where it related to property was generally limited, and rarely extended to first cousins. It might occasionally include maternal connections throughout the period under examination. The one developmental model that White could detect was a generational one. The legal family was broader at the beginning of a marriage, but narrowed as soon as children were born to a couple. But this was a cyclical change within the lifetime of a particular generation, not a long term change within society. White was reluctant to reflect on the wider implications of his evidence, but was willing enough to conclude that ideas of family and kin in his chosen period of study were complex and clearly changed according to need.²²

It is because of this, and other challenges to the Duby–Schmid orthodoxy, that

²¹ For a summary, see T.K. Hareven, 'The History of the Family and the Complexity of Social Change', *American Historical Review*, 96 (1991), 95–124, repr. and revised as 'Recent Research on the History of Family', in M. Drake (ed.), *Time, Family and Community: Perspectives on Family and Community History* (Oxford, 1994), 13–43. For historiographical studies which integrate sociological thought into the historical study of the family, Burke, *History and Social Theory*, 53–4, giving a succinct and brilliant sketch of these developments, following on from P. Laslett, 'The History of the Family', in P. Laslett and R. Wall (eds), *Household and Family in Past Time* (Cambridge, 1972), 16–21. See also on this D. Herlihy, *Medieval Households* (London, 1985), 136–8.

²² S.D. White, *Custom, Kinship and Gifts to Saints: the Laudatio Parentum in Western France, 1050–1150* (Chapel Hill, 1988), ch. 4. There are other major Anglo-American critiques embracing the long-standing and wide-ranging work of Constance Brittain Bouchard, summarised in her, *Strong of Body, Brave and Noble: Chivalry and Society in Medieval France* (Ithaca, NY, 1998), ch. 3, and the narrower work on documentation and the female dimension of Pauline Stafford, 'La Mutation Familiale', 103–25.

the current generation of post-*Annales* French scholars has developed a revisionist version of it. 'Progressive nuclearisation' is still accepted as a given (although it is now called by some *l'essor de topolignages*) and younger children were still excluded from succession as the allocation of property within a family narrowed. To fit the evidence empiricists continually throw up, the new version teaches that nuclearisation happened earlier, a century earlier than Duby suggested. It sees the cognatic kindred as a power base for the master lineage, rather than as something it cannibalised, and as such the kin-group, by this interpretation, remained a fact into the eleventh century, when 'secondary lineages' breaking off the master lineage became a threat to its integrity, and so in the end the revisionist interpretation reunites itself with the Duby-Schmid scheme.²³

Which brings us at last to England and its place in the debate. Studies of lineage and kinship for a comparable period (and to the standard of) those studies we have already looked at for France and the Empire barely exist.²⁴ The reasons are several, but the principal one is the perceived lack of continuity within the English aristocracy as a result of the Norman Conquest of 1066–70. If Franco-German scholarship was broadcasting that Continental family structure was evolving by stages from the ninth through to the thirteenth century, then it would seem that England - which was colonised abruptly by French lineages at the end of the eleventh century - had little independent contribution to make to the debate. Its own indigenous structures would then have been more or less eliminated at a stroke, so there was no English continuity comparable to that of the Continental kingdoms and regions. In any case the sort of evidence used so profitably by German and French historians barely exist for pre-1066 England, especially the private charter and diploma.

The rights and wrongs of these argument need not concern us here, although it should be said that even at the very least English social history should be useful for comparative purposes. This is certainly true in one particular area: the growth of the agnatic family. A rejection of progressive nuclearisation should be difficult to go along with if you have been brought up on medieval English history. Le Play looked to England to find his stem-family, and the way that the Common Law of inheritance developed in these islands meant that he had no difficulty finding it. The Common Law's interpreters from Glanvill onwards preached primogeniture in strong terms, as if it were the desirable norm in the later twelfth century that younger sons of knights be disinherited to favour the eldest.²⁵ England should be the very heart and centre of narrow lineage formation, by that belief. But in fact it is not.

²³ This is the scheme to be found in R. Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir dans le monde franc (vii^e-x^e siècle): Essai d'anthropologie sociale* (Paris, 1995), 414–27. For an English summary, *eadem*, 'Continuity and Change in the Tenth-Century Nobility', trans. J. Nelson, in A.J. Duggan (ed.), *Nobles and Nobility in Medieval Europe: Concepts, Origins, Transformations* (Woodbridge, 2000), 58–61.

²⁴ The survey 'Kinship, Marriage and Family', by J.A. Green, *The Aristocracy of Norman England* (Cambridge, 1997), ch. 10, is exceptional here in the degree to which it synthesises Continental scholarship and offers comparative observations.

²⁵ Glanvill in fact portrays a world where multiple heirs within a generation is not unusual, but stated (on unknown authority) that the *ius regni Anglie* was that his eldest son should succeed a man holding by knight's tenure, *The Treatise on the Law and Customs of the Realm of England commonly called Glanvill*, ed. G.D.G. Hall (London, 1965), 75. The *Leges Henrici*, a work of the first half of

To some extent, this discovery ought not be a surprise, at least to Anglo-American historians. Their distinct methodology produced clues to this before revisionism began to erode the Duby thesis in the late 1980s. The most provoking so far – even if unintentionally – is the study on Anglo-Norman aristocratic inheritance practices published by James Holt as far back as 1972.

Professor Holt's reconstruction and analysis of actual, rather than rhetorical, successions in England and Normandy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries uncovered a world which did not resemble Duby's French model for the twelfth century. True, inheritance of land was restricted, but it was not restricted to one son. When there was a multiplicity of sons, an Anglo-Norman landholder might try to accommodate several with lands.²⁶ The eldest two were generally always favoured, but there are instances of a share-out between three, four or even five sons. The eldest would usually, but not invariably, get the most, although if there was a title to be inherited, he did get that. Holt did not consider that multiple divisions of discrete feudal baronies were common after the Conquest (indeed he thought them 'unusual') and they were certainly moderated sometimes by reservation of the feudal patrimony to the eldest child and acquisitions to the younger.²⁷ But subsequent studies have tended to find that substantial provision in land for younger children from patrimony was by no means uncommon or unusual, and did not always take the form of an enfeoffment to secure the elder's rights. More and more such divisions are being reconstructed for the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and not just at the highest level of the barony, but even at the level of the county knight.²⁸

It may be that English or Anglo-Norman society was moving towards a stricter primogeniture, but it had not reached it by Glanvill's time. If there was then a concept of lineage, it existed independently of any harsh social mechanism to deprive younger siblings of land and concentrate the whole honor on one child in each generation. To see this one has only to note the succession to William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke in 1219, three decades after Glanvill was written. We know this succession was arranged by the father, for the discussion of it by his council around his deathbed and its commitment to writing in a sealed testament is attested by his biography. His eldest son and namesake got the earldom and the small patrimony, but mostly he inherited his mother's lands in Wales and Ireland. A second son, Richard, obtained the Norman lands, but also lands in England, all by right of his mother. The third son, Walter, was given a sizable inheritance from amongst his

the reign of Henry I, preach a form of priority for the eldest son in any division, see Green, *Aristocracy of Norman England*, 337.

²⁶ J.C. Holt, 'Politics and Property in Early Medieval England', *Past and Present*, 57 (1972), 3–52.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 10–15, a point supported for baronies-in-chief by Green, *Aristocracy of Norman England*, 338. Holt's careful position is over-asserted in J. Hudson, *Land, Law and Lordship in Anglo-Norman England* (Oxford, 1994), 109–10, who seems to imply that all divisions of patrimonial inheritance were therefore rare.

²⁸ For some late-eleventh- and twelfth-century Anglo-Norman non-baronial examples, D. Crouch, *The Beaumont Twins: The Roots and Branches of Power in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1986), 120–27 (Harcourt), 127–29 (Burdet), 117–18 (Tourville). For an example of the reign of Henry I at a knightly level (the Gay family), *idem*, 'Robert, Earl of Gloucester's Mother and Sexual Politics in Norman Oxfordshire', *Historical Research*, lxxii (1999), 323–33.

father's acquisitions. A fourth son was a clerk, and a fifth gained a large annual rent from his brothers' lands. Since the old Marshal's daughters had all benefited in marriage portions, all but his clerical child gained some share of their father's wealth, and the three elder boys each did very well for themselves in land.²⁹ In the very heartland of theoretical Common Law primogeniture, what we actually see is a family planning to distribute its landed endowment amongst its offspring – male and female – deep in the thirteenth century. This is not what either the historical theories of Duby or the juristic theories of Glanvill would suggest we should find; but it does reflect contemporary ideas on family structures revealed by the heraldry of the time, as we shall now go on to examine.

Exploring Lineage through Heraldry

'Heraldry' is a phenomenon as difficult to define as a 'castle'. But what I mean to deal with here is the display of a personalised (and usually hereditary) device on a shield – or other attributes – meant to identify an individual or the possessions of an individual. The very fact that we are beginning by talking about heraldry as related to individuals would seem to imply that heraldry (when it appears) is a symptom of change in family structure. I do not wish to imply that, however. In fact, as we will see, the earliest appearance of something resembling heraldry did not reflect any new dawn of individuality in Western culture. Early heraldry had as much to do with family and lineage as the recognition of the individual.

Current consensus places the beginnings of a systematised and self-conscious use of heraldry by aristocrats in the mid twelfth century.³⁰ So far as I know, the earliest conscious statements by twelfth-century writers on the heritability of a symbolic device come in the decades after 1150. A good instance of this is when the anonymous author of the romance *Garin* describes the equipping of Duke Garin's son, Gerbert, when he became a knight (*Garin* is a work composed in the north of the Ile de France dating from the third quarter of the century). The boy was given a shield

²⁹ D. Crouch, *William Marshal: Court, Career and Chivalry in the Angevin Empire, 1147–1219* (Harlow, 1990), 130–1.

³⁰ For significant modern contributions to the study of heraldry's origins, see P. Adam, 'Les usages héraldiques', 18–29; M. Pastoureaux, 'La diffusion des armoiries et les débuts de l'héraldique', in R.-H. Bautier (ed.), *La France de Philippe Auguste: le temps des mutations* (Colloques internationaux CNRS, no. 602, 1981), 737–59; *idem*, 'L'origine des armoiries: un problème en voie de solution?', in S.T. Achen (ed.), *Genealogica & Heraldica: Report of the 14th International Congress of Genealogical & Heraldic Sciences in Copenhagen, 25–29 August 1980* (Copenhagen, 1982), 241–54; B. Bedos Rezak, 'L'apparition des armoiries sur les sceaux en Ile-de-France et en Picardie (c.1130–1230)', in H. Pinoteau and others (eds), *Les Origines des Armoiries* (Bressanone, 1981), 23–41. For the model of evolution followed here, see generally the studies by A. Ailes, 'Heraldry in Twelfth-Century England: The Evidence', in D. Williams (ed.), *England in the Twelfth Century: Proceedings of the 1988 Harlaxton Symposium* (Woodbridge, 1990), 1–16; *idem*, 'The Knight, Heraldry and Armour: The Role of Recognition and the Origins of Heraldry', in C. Harper-Bill and R. Harvey (eds), *Medieval Knighthood: Papers from the Fifth Strawberry Hill Conference* (Woodbridge, 1992), 1–21; D. Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy in Britain, 1000–1300* (London, 1992), 220–6.

made for him in Paris: 'In the centre was a lion rendered in a dark colour. Garin of Lorraine had just such a shield: Garin was his father, and now the son carried it.'³¹ There were earlier stirrings – which specialists (following Michel Pastoureau) call 'proto-heraldry' – going back to the later eleventh century. The period when proto-heraldry became heraldry is – as we have seen – contemporary with that shift in family structures from kinship to agnatic lineage predicted by theorists since the 1960s. Since heraldry was intimately bound up with family identity, it should theoretically have much to tell us about developments in family structures.

The line of development of heraldry can be understood in this way: the manner of the decoration of shields and banners on the Bayeux Tapestry indicates that its designers knew nothing of individualised devices in the 1070s. The same characters appear in arms in different cartoons carrying different designs on their shields. At the turn of the eleventh century it seems clear from the contemporary accounts of the First Crusade that its leaders carried banners bearing generally recognised personal devices or patterns.³² But this is proto-heraldry, not true heraldry, because it cannot as yet be said that an individual took particular arms because the design was associated with past members of his family. The need to devise symbols for personal identification by barons in warfare and in peacetime was always a force towards the evolution of devices – as the early romances frequently tell us – but this need was independent of any family motivation.³³ However, by the 1120s, that step may well have been taken. Michel Pastoureau points to particular designs being associated with particular north-eastern French provinces already by that date, a period he calls one of 'gestation' which might spread back as far as the 1080s. He notes particularly a symbol of an oat-stook associated with the county of St Pol, first appearing on coins around 1100, and on comital seals by the 1140s; but in Pastoureau's words these could still be as much 'armoiries féodales' as 'armoiries familiales', by which he meant that the 'arms' might be only a regional or honorial totem, not a symptom of family identity. For Pastoureau (a pupil of Duby) heraldry leaned towards being a 'pratique collective' (a Durkheimian phrase) until as late as the 1220s, and thus he respected Duby's chronology of the late formation of lineages at the knightly level.³⁴

But the earliest heraldic evidence that reflects on the family is in fact to be found a century earlier. It is on the now famous Anglo-French group of seals belonging to various descendants of the great Norman baron, Roger de Beaumont (who died in 1093).³⁵ Roger's son, Count Robert of Meulan, married Isabel, or Elizabeth,

³¹ *Garin le Loherenc*, ii, lines 11526–30. See for other late twelfth-century examples, P. Adam, 'Les usages héraldiques au milieu du xii^e siècle: d'après le Roman de Troie de Benoît de Saint Maure et la littérature contemporaine', *Archivum Heraldicum*, lxxvii (1963), 20.

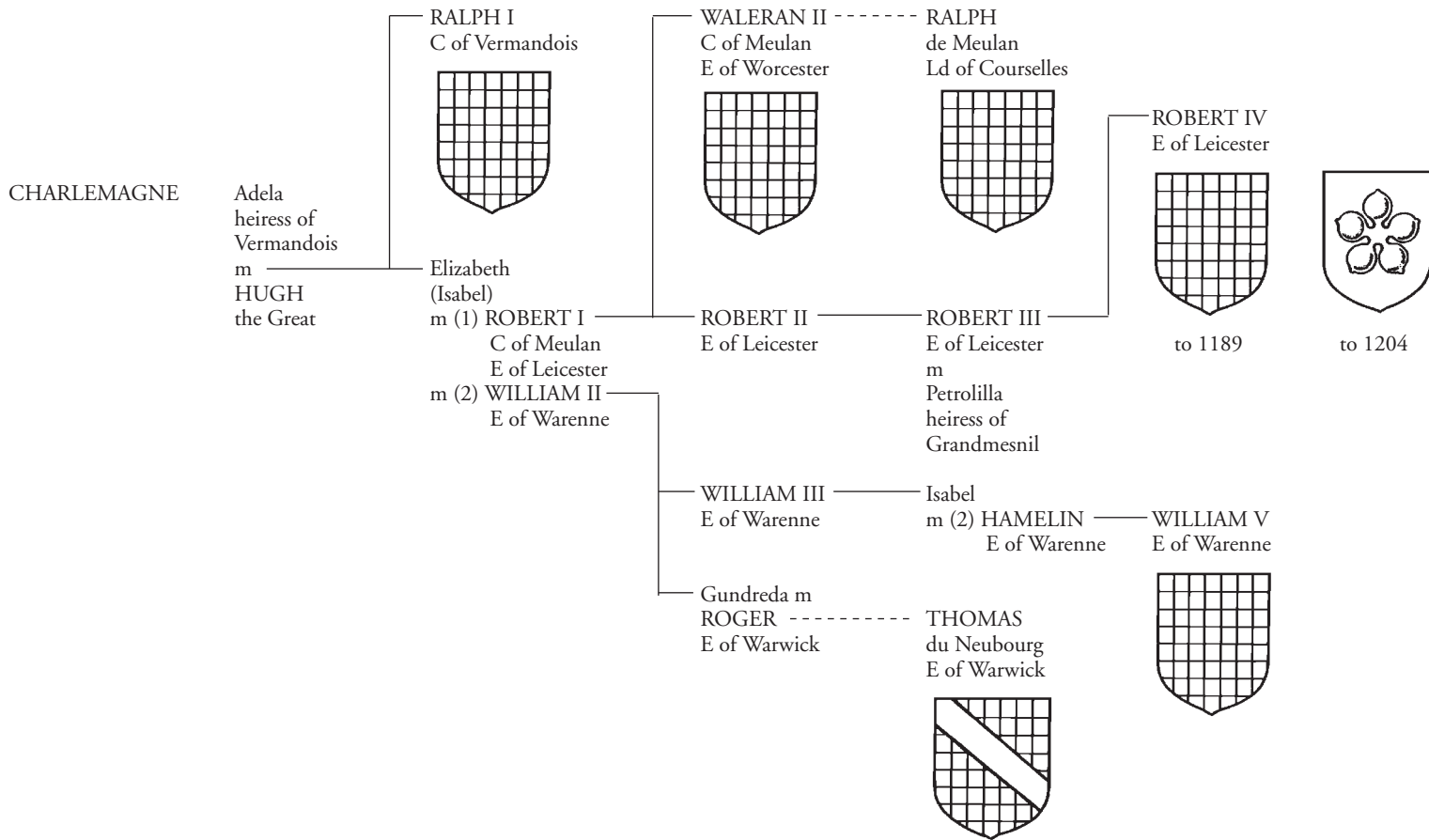
³² Crouch, *Image of Aristocracy*, 220–2.

³³ Ailes, 'The Knight, Heraldry and Armour', 3–4.

³⁴ The St Pol example was first noted by D.L. Galbreath, *Manuel de blason* (Lausanne, 1942), 34–5, and is put into context by Pastoureau in, 'L'origine des armoiries', 248–9, and see *idem*, 'La diffusion des armoiries', 747–9.

³⁵ Observed by G.H. White, 'The Beaumont Seals in the British Library Catalogue', *Notes & Queries*, 11th ser., cli (1926), 112, but prefigured (with insight but some inaccuracies) by W.S. Ellis, *The Antiquities of Heraldry* (London, 1869), 178–80.

Fig. 2. The 'Warenne' or 'Vermandois' group of checkered shields (after Ellis and Pastoureau)



daughter of Count Hugh the Great of Vermandois and niece of King Henry I of France. And here is where the heraldic connections begin. Isabel's brother, Count Ralph of Vermandois, adopted a seal in the 1120s which depicted Ralph as an equestrian figure bearing a banner marked by a criss-cross checker device. The same device occurs on the seal of Elizabeth's eldest son, Count Waleran of Meulan and Worcester, in the remarkable seal he commissioned in 1139, not just on his banner, but on his surcoat, shield and saddle cloths.³⁶ There is retrospective evidence that other descendants of Roger de Beaumont took the same design as their device: before 1189, Robert de Breteuil, grandson of Waleran of Meulan's twin brother the Earl of Leicester, carried the checky design on his signet seal. Even more significant is the fact that two lines descended from Elizabeth of Vermandois' second marriage (the earls of Warwick and the earls of Surrey) were using the same checky device – with the same colours of yellow and blue – in the early thirteenth century (fig. 2).³⁷

The heraldic family tree that we see here is the most literal evidence that it would be possible to find concerning aristocratic attitudes to family and lineage. The decade of the 1130s was one in which the mutationist thesis suggests that the emergence of lineage and the agnatic stem family would be far advanced. We would therefore expect that early heraldry – with its genesis within the higher aristocracy – would show this – and indeed Duby and Schmid thought that it did.³⁸ But in fact what the Beaumont evidence appears to show is a complex attitude to family; it betrays an ambiguity on questions of family descent which confirms what has already been said about the pluralism of contemporary attitudes. It is not Roger de Beaumont, but Isabel of Vermandois who is the focus of the lines of descent which show the checker shield. In one case, that of the earls of Warwick, the link is through another woman, her daughter, Countess Gundreda of Warwick. The same is true of the earls of Surrey, where the link is through her granddaughter and namesake, Isabel de Warenne. Why was Isabel of Vermandois such a focus of concern? The answer is, I think, in the line of descent she represented – not through her father to the Capetian kings of France, but through her mother, Adela, who was the heiress of the old line of Vermandois, which descended by direct male line to no less a personage than Charlemagne. That this is so is indicated by Geoffrey of Monmouth's concern in 1137 to flatter Isabel's son Waleran as being 'sprung from the line of the famous King Charles'.³⁹ He would not have done so unless Waleran himself was proud of the lineage, and fond of alluding to it. My contention is that

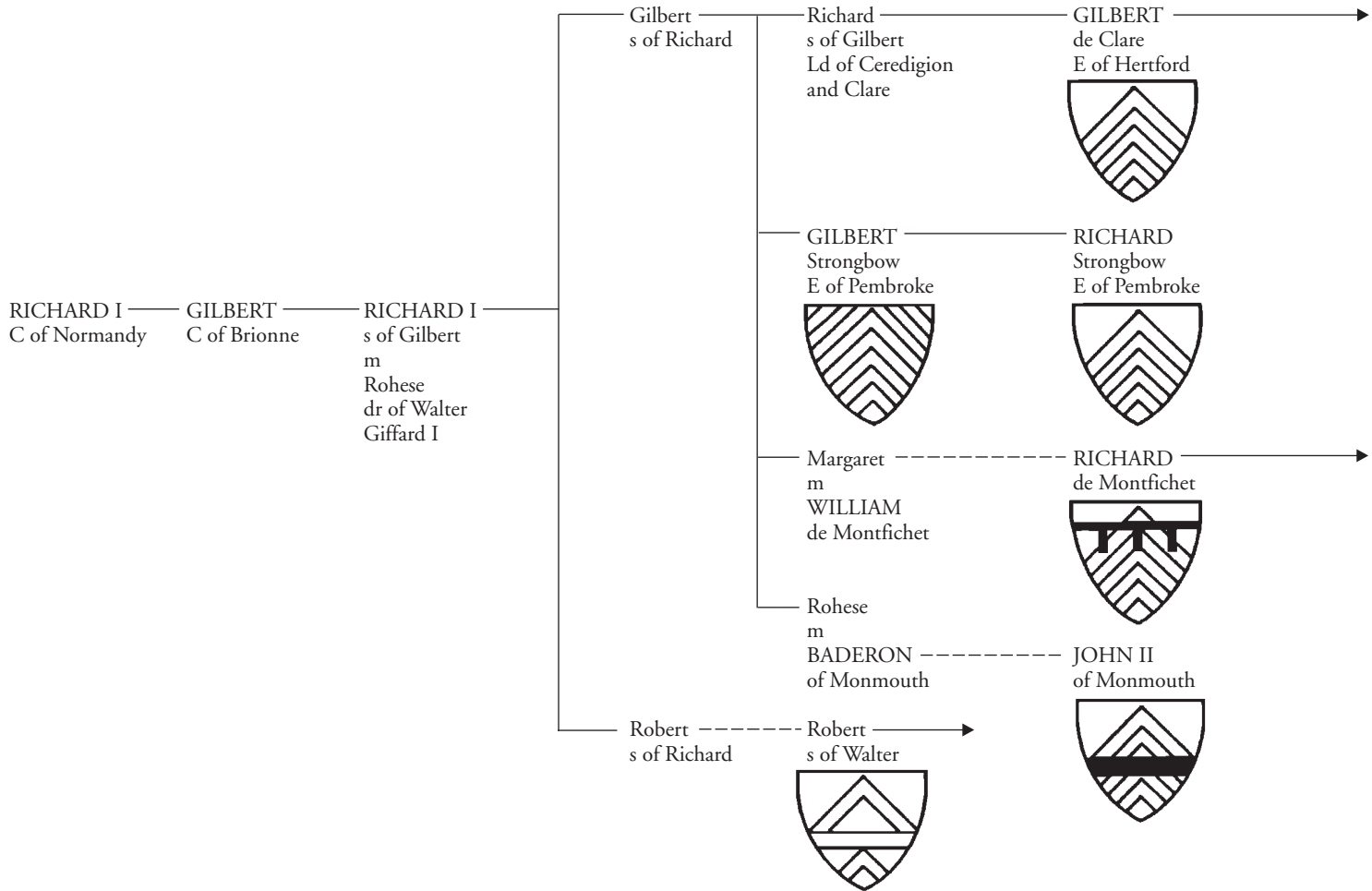
³⁶ The Vermandois–Meulan connection was first made by Sir Anthony Wagner, *Heralds and Heraldry in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1939), 14–15. For the date of Waleran's armorial seal, see E. King, 'Waleran, Count of Meulan, Earl of Worcester (1104–1166)', in D.E. Greenway and others (eds), *Tradition and Change in the Central Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of Marjorie Chibnall* (Cambridge, 1985), 167–8.

³⁷ G.H. White, 'The Warenne Group of Checkered Shields', in G.E. Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom*, ed. V. Gibbs and others, 13 vols in 14 (London, 1910–59), xii, pt 1, appendix D.

³⁸ G. Duby, 'Une enquête à poursuivre: la noblesse dans la France médiévale', *Revue historique*, 226 (1961), 1–22; repr. in English as, 'The Nobility in Medieval France', *The Chivalrous Society*, trans. Postan, 94–111, esp. 101.

³⁹ *The Historia Regum Britannie of Geoffrey of Monmouth*, ed. N. Wright (Cambridge, 1984), xiii.

Fig. 3. The Clare group of chevronny shields (after Ellis and Round)



his heraldry, alluding to the then counts of Vermandois, was another way of referring to the Carolingian link. Where Waleran led, so followed his brother and cousins – his agnates and cognates both – all proclaiming their common ancestry to the already legendary hero-emperor of the gestes.⁴⁰

What we have from this heraldic evidence then is a vision of family that is intriguing, and fruitful for comparison with the models we have so far been examining. At first sight we see here in the twelfth century the apparent structure of a kinship group so extended that it would have embarrassed a putative Carolingian *Sippe*. Charlemagne's place in their common ancestry is far further back than any conventional scheme of a horizontal kin-group would admit. Secondly the ancestry is remarkably cognate and matrilineal, worse, it is barely agnate at all; the preferred link of kinship is through the female rather than the male line.⁴¹ This is true not just once, but twice in the case of Meulan and Leicester, and three times in the case of the earls of Warwick and Surrey. Such is the view that can be derived from heraldry, but readings of other sources portray the Meulans, the Leicesters, the Warwicks and the Warennes as each strong, defined and simple conjugal families. The charters they generated in the twelfth century show a strong consciousness of family links between parents and children, less strong for siblings: but only very rarely do they allude to remoter links to grandparents, aunts and uncles, and rarest of all, to first cousins.⁴² But in their heraldry there is a clear consciousness amongst them in the early twelfth century of blood links which bound their lineages together. These were links that tied them both horizontally to distinguished contemporaries (*parage*), and vertically through illustrious characters in the remote past (*lignage*) that placed them in a wider historical context, and this vertical consciousness had generally little to do with agnatic kinship.⁴³

We see much the same when we look at another Anglo-Norman heraldic grouping, the Clare group of families (fig. 3). The point of focus for this group is the Domesday magnate, Richard fitz Gilbert, lord of Clare in Suffolk (and a lot of other places) in 1086. The reason for this convergence is that Richard was the son of Count Gilbert of Brionne, who was in turn the son of the semi-legendary Duke

⁴⁰ Crouch, *The Beaumont Twins*, 211–12.

⁴¹ Stafford, 'La mutation familiale', 106, points out that cognatic links were most likely to be deployed if they brought status.

⁴² The 134 acts of Waleran II of Meulan known to me (one of the largest samples of private charters for a lay individual in the twelfth century in England or France) refer to the following family members (in brackets the number of times mentioned): his wife (35) his sons (39) his father (8) his mother (1) his grandfather (1) his younger twin brother (4) his youngest brother (1) his sisters (2) his sister's son (1) his paternal great uncle (1) his maternal uncle (1) his brother-in-law (1). He acknowledges as 'cousin' one agnatic *cognatus* only, Robert du Neubourg (whose numerous appearances in his acts are because he acted as a comital justice after 1141).

⁴³ Though they mention only a few remoter relations Waleran's charters do show quite a lengthy linear consciousness of family (with the assistance of the charters of houses of religion under his patronage, which he claims at one point to have read). He confirmed grants of his paternal grandfather, great uncle and great-grandfather, Cartulary of St-Pierre des Préaux, archives départementales de l'Eure, H711, fo. 36r–v. He acknowledged as *antecessores*, counts Hugh and Waleran I of Meulan (respectively his grandmother's brother, and his great-grandfather), *Recueil des chartes de St-Nicaise de Meulan: prieuré de l'ordre du Bec*, ed. E. Houth (Paris, 1924), 15.

Richard I of Normandy, of whom heroic and magical tales were already being told in the 1130s, when the young Master Wace began collecting stories from Norman history. The Clare earls of Hertford and of Pembroke and their cousins, the fitz Walter lords of Dunmow, were thus descended through the male line from the ancient Norman ducal family, and therefore were agnatic cousins of the kings of England. This lineage would explain why they and the families that married into their lineage (such as the Montfichets of Essex, and the Monmouth family) took variants of the same heraldic motif of chevrons to allude to a common cousinship; although for the Montfichets and Monmouths it was through the female line.⁴⁴ It would also explain why female members of the family, although married into different aristocratic houses, still continued to employ chevrons on their own armorial seals: as did Rohese, Countess of Lincoln, sister of Earl Gilbert fitz Richard of Hertford (d. 1152) and Rohese's own daughter, Alice de Gant (d.c. 1185), who married Earl Simon III de Senlis of Northampton.⁴⁵ Again we see that remote but illustrious ancestry gave a consciousness of both vertical lineage and common horizontal cousinship.

From this I would suggest that these Anglo-French groups of families reveal exactly what sociologists would now lead us to suspect, that the twelfth-century mind, like the twentieth-century mind, could hold together different models of family in its consciousness, emphasising vertical links through time, when it wished; at other times extending to include wider horizontal links, and at other times again turning in on the conjugal family. This pluralistic understanding of families was not then narrowly agnatic. Despite the theoretical preference which twelfth-century legal theorists in England developed for primogeniture with the consequent agnatic stem-family which that would have entailed, some families saw no reason to jettison vertical links through female ancestors (matrilinearity) when it suited them and when it enhanced their prestige, and even when the link had brought no land.

There are further comparisons to be drawn from related but non-heraldic evidence. We know from the genealogies that Robert de Torigny compiled in the 1130s that five major noble families of Normandy proudly traced their lineage from the family of Gunnora, the wife of Duke Richard I.⁴⁶ That feeling for illustrious lineage is demonstrable elsewhere, even though the lineage from Gunnora was rather less spectacular than that of the Clares, but the Clare chevrons prove that the feeling could also promote active feelings in terms of horizontal links between conjugal families. In the case of the Clares we are further blessed by an incidental reference made by the vernacular chronicler, Jordan Fantosme, which adds more depth to this perception of family. In describing the events in East Anglia in 1173, Jordan notes the defection to the rebels of the Essex baron and royal forester, Gilbert de Montfichet. He has a messenger announcing to Henry II that Gilbert had garri-

⁴⁴ J.H. Round, 'The Introduction of Armorial Bearings to England', *Archaeological Journal*, li (1894), 44–8.

⁴⁵ C.H. Hunter Blair, 'Armorial upon English Seals from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Centuries', *Archaeologia*, 2nd ser., lxxxix (1943), 21–2. I must thank Dr Susan Johns for a reminder of this.

⁴⁶ E.M.C. van Houts, 'Robert de Torigni as Genealogist', in C. Harper Bill and others (eds), *Studies in Medieval History presented to R. Allen Brown* (Woodbridge, 1989), 215–33.

soned his castle in Essex 'and he said that *les Clarreaux* had allied with him'. '*Les Clarreaux*' refers to Gilbert's cousins, the earls of Hertford and the lords of Dunmow, and their auxiliaries.⁴⁷ The use of that one significant phrase indicates a contemporary perception in the 1170s that the various families in the Clare lineage formed a kin-group capable of common political purpose. If that was true in the 1170s, it had certainly been even more true in the 1140s when we know that the solidarity of the Clares and Giffards in the period of the civil war was notorious to several writers.⁴⁸ So in the case of the Clares we get something that looks pragmatically very like the kin-group that Duby thought was supposed to prefigure the evolution of the stem-family: using kinship links to further itself politically. The problem is that the Clare grouping occurs firstly in the wrong century, and secondly it (like that of the Beaumonts) is not agnatic and thirdly it is too far extended.

Yet if the Clares might lead you to suspect that the twelfth-century mind brooded late and long into the night on its family trees, and knew them intimately down to the last twig, then there is a fortunate corrective to that idea too. The *History of William Marshal*, a rare biography of a medieval layman other than a king, deals with a man who lived most of his life in the twelfth century. The biography was researched and written between 1225 and 1229 by a professional writer who drew on the family recollections of William Marshal's son, namesake and successor, and on those of his late household and his legal executors. From this we learn that Earl William Marshal II (1190–1231) knew his agnatic ancestry only back as far as his grandfather, John, who had died in 1165. The names of his uncles were known to him, but he got the story of their deaths wrong and did not know the precise way that the family estates had eventually come to his father. He knew he was related to the Tancarville family in Normandy, but wrongly believed that it was through his grandfather, when in fact it was through his grandmother. There were other people he vaguely knew were cousins, like the Evreux family of Lyonshall in Herefordshire, but he did not know the precise form of the link any more than we do. This was the extent of the knowledge of his family of the most powerful man in England after the king in 1231, a man who had in fact married the king's sister.⁴⁹ So in the case of the Marshals of Hamstead, the family operated in something of a genealogical fog, and in that respect is very like the twentieth-century conjugal family which has not had the assistance of an obsessive family genealogist. Other families were of course different. One of the members of the famous Warwickshire family, the Ardens, presented evidence to an inquest at much the same time as the Marshal biography was written. He gave the correct order of his ancestors back to the Conquest and his great-grandfather, although his evidence concerning his great-grandfather's marriage was incorrect, as more contemporary evidence tells us.⁵⁰ So different families had

⁴⁷ *Jordan Fantome's Chronicle*, ed. R.C. Johnston (Oxford, 1981), 120.

⁴⁸ See now, D. Crouch, *The Reign of King Stephen, 1135–54* (2000), 127–32.

⁴⁹ For this, D. Crouch, 'Introduction', in A. Holden and others (eds), *History of William Marshal*, 3 vols (Anglo-Norman Text Society, 2002, forthcoming).

⁵⁰ *Curia Regis Rolls of the Reigns of Richard I, John and Henry III*, 16 vols (HMSO, 1922–79), v, 241. Another such example of a longer genealogical memory (again associated with a family of English

different genealogical horizons both in regard to vertical 'lineage' and horizontal 'parage'.

To sum up, the heraldic and other evidence which I have presented does not favour any evolutionary model – or even a simple transformation – of family in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. There was no decisive move towards agnatic lineage. This is a significant statement with regard to England, which above all twelfth-century European kingdoms ought to show it. Far from there being any evidence in the Anglo-French heraldic families we have been examining of a Duby-esque 'mutation familiale' – the evolution from one family type to another at a time of crisis – all we see is pluralism. Some conjugal families had a strong idea where they fitted into a wider web of kin, although they did not amount to extended kin-groups; and some had only a weak idea of cousinship. Some families had a deep perception of ancient descent and great pride in it, whether French or English. Others, however grand, had little or no idea who their forbears were other than that they were (hopefully) noble. Cousinship on the mother's side could be important as a social mechanism: it gained William Marshal his first household place in Normandy, for instance. But affective relationships were not necessarily expected even between first cousins, and indeed William de Tancarville, William Marshal's cousin, dropped him from his household as soon as the Marshal was old enough to look after himself, and forced him out on to the tournament circuit for his living.⁵¹ In the light of this sort of evidence it is clear – indeed, it is imperative – that historians must start thinking as pluralistically about medieval family structures as sociologists do about modern ones.

The thirteenth century in England may yet prove that family structures there did gradually alter under legal pressures which promoted primogeniture, and as a result Le Play's agnatic stem-family did become a more dominant family form in English society.⁵² I note the following example. In 1263 Thomas, Simon and William, the three younger sons of Andrew of Braunston, Rutland, went to law against their eldest brother, Gilbert. They each sought $\frac{3}{4}$ virgate as their reasonable right of inheritance from their father against their brother. 'Gilbert came and said that Thomas and the others could not claim any part of the inheritance, for he says that all his predecessors from the time of the Conquest and time beyond memory held the land without it ever being partitioned.'⁵³ The appeal to a non-existent past of primogeniture and lineage to be found in this passage is revealing. Clearly the men of law had got through to the English landowner by then and primogeniture was being argued as a norm. But nevertheless, the younger Braunston brothers were still

blood) is that of Peter of Cornwall, prior of Aldgate (d. 1221) who knew his ancestors back to his great-grandfather, Theodulf, a pre-Conquest thegn of Devon and Cornwall, see R.W. Southern, *Medieval Humanism and other Studies* (Oxford, 1970), 225–8.

⁵¹ For William's relationship with his powerful cousin and erratic patron, Crouch, *William Marshal*, 19–34.

⁵² Stafford, 'La mutation familiale', 124–5, makes the important point that pluralism in family structures may depend on the co-existence of different norms of inheritance, and such coexistence was under attack in England in the late twelfth century.

⁵³ Public Record Office, JUST1/721, m 5d.

willing to argue otherwise, and indeed many divided successions between sons can still be found in the later thirteenth century, even if they are cloaked as paternal grants before death, or enfeoffments by elder brothers.⁵⁴ So the family and family succession still remained as flexible, indefinible and variformed in the 1250s as it had been in the 1050s, whatever the future held for it. Perhaps significantly, heraldry continued long after 1250 to mark out and identify family relationships far more widespread than allowed for by Gilbert of Braunston's vision of an agnatic stem family.

⁵⁴ These continuing tensions are noted by S.L. Waugh, *The Lordship of England: Royal Wardships and Marriages in English Society and Politics, 1217–1327* (Princeton, 1988), 16.

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Knighthood, Heraldry and Social Exclusion in Edwardian England*

Peter Coss

THE century of the three Edwards – the period, roughly speaking, from the Welsh Wars of Edward I to the great victories of Edward III in the first stages of the Hundred Years War – witnessed the full flowering of chivalric culture in England. Heraldry was everywhere. This was the time when rolls of arms proliferated.¹ It was the time when military effigies and figural brasses became a prominent feature of English churches. It was a period when great cathedrals and other major churches received vast glazing schemes and when stained glass spread steadily across the parish churches of England, much of it, again, with a high heraldic content.²

But it was not only in churches and on sepulchral monuments that heraldry was increasingly found. It was prominent on buildings, on seals, and in manuscripts. It was to be found on dress, on domestic plate, on caskets and chests, on wall paintings and on tiled pavements. Within all of these media, antecedents of one sort or another are to be found during the mid thirteenth century or, indeed, earlier.³ It was in Edwardian England, however, that they coalesced to form a remarkably coherent and extraordinarily inventive display of heraldic art; one which reached an increasingly wide spectrum of the elite. Scholars of the visual image are coming more and more to appreciate the stylistic interaction between media, the co-operation amongst the various artists and craftsmen, and the multiple stimuli that helped to

* I am most grateful to Dr Michael Siddons, Wales Herald Extraordinary, for his kindness in reading this essay and saving me from several errors in blazonry.

¹ On the latest reckoning no less than eighteen rolls, if we include the extraordinary heraldic poem, the *Song of Carlaverock*, belong to the reign of Edward I. See *Aspilogia III: The Rolls of Arms of Edward I*, ed. Gerard J. Brault, 2 vols (Woodbridge, 1997), I, 39–40. For a list of the later rolls see *Aspilogia II: Rolls of Arms of Henry III*, ed. A.R. Wagner (London, 1967), 260–2.

² For a recent survey see Richard Marks, *Stained Glass in England during the Middle Ages* (London, 1993), esp. ch. 7.

³ See J. Cherry, 'Heraldry as Decoration in the Thirteenth Century', in W.M. Ormrod (ed.), *England in the Thirteenth Century* (Stamford, 1991), 123–34, and references given there. For effigies see H.A. Tummers, *Early Secular Effigies in England in the Thirteenth Century* (Leiden, 1980). See also, more generally, David Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy in Britain 1000–1300* (London and New York, 1992) and Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (Yale, 1984).

determine consumer choice.⁴ In short, in Edwardian England knighthood and heraldry expressed the cultural hegemony of the landed upper class.

These days, visual images are commonly regarded as texts to be read and interpreted. But meaning does not simply inhere, transparently, within the text. An image has meaning only in relation to the society that produced it. Of course there are archaeological layers of meaning, provided by that society's own inheritance, in terms of style, form and ideology. There are also historical dimensions to the reading of any text; that is to say, there are additional perspectives which the historian, differently situated, can bring to it. In the last analysis, however, all readings are dependent upon the existence of contemporary meaning. It follows that in order to recapture what one might call the contemporary field of meaning we must try to read as contemporaries read. This is no easy task. There is the obvious danger that we may under read, so to speak, through ignorance, or more commonly partial ignorance, of contemporary response. But there is equally a danger that we may over read; that we may invest a text with meaning that it did not have and, therefore, cannot have.

It is with these observations in mind that I wish to examine some of the visual manifestations of chivalric culture in Edwardian England. My intention is to try to understand, as far as one can, what it was that gentle men and women saw when they contemplated their own heraldry and memorials, and indeed those of others. Only then can we begin to understand their historical significance.

It is clear enough, from the surviving cases before the Court of Chivalry in the later fourteenth century, that members of the gentle classes felt themselves to have expertise – to be informally educated one might say – in reading the significance of heraldic representation.⁵ Indeed, the rather esoteric nature of heraldic display seems to have been valued in its own right as a matter only for the gentle. In the prologue to *The Tale of Beryn*, a sub-Chaucerian work which tells of the adventures of Chaucer's pilgrims when they reached Canterbury, we hear of the Pardoner and the Miller hiving off to examine the glass. They:

Pyrid fast, & pourid highe oppon the glase [peered intently & pored]
Countirfeting gentilmen, the armys for to blase.⁶

Not surprisingly, they got it hopelessly wrong. This is evidence from a slightly later era, a time of rising expectations, when social distinctions were becoming unusually blurred. Nonetheless, it is indicative of an enduring habit of mind.

⁴ For co-operation and stylistic interaction between media see, for example, Lynda Dennison and Nicholas Rogers, 'The Elsing Brass and its East Anglian Connections', in Nigel Saul (ed.), *Fourteenth Century England I* (Woodbridge, 2000), 167–93; Paul Binski, 'The Stylistic Sequence of London Figure Brasses', in John Coales (ed.), *The Earliest English Brasses: Patronage, Style and Workshops 1270–1350* (London, 1987), esp. 102, 116; and Marks, *Stained Glass in England*, ch. 7. Consumer choice is explored elsewhere in this volume.

⁵ See Marks, *Stained Glass in England*, 10, and Jonathan Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries: Religion and Secular Life in Late Medieval Yorkshire* (Woodbridge, 1988), 13–35.

⁶ *The Tale of Beryn*, ed. F.J. Furnivall and W.G. Stone, Early English Text Society, extra ser., 105 (1909), lines 147–56.

In this context, the historian's eye is inevitably drawn to the Luttrell Psalter, that extraordinary illuminated manuscript made for Sir Geoffrey Luttrell of Irnham in Lincolnshire, most probably between c. 1340 and his death in 1345.⁷ The psalter contains a number of famous images of extraordinary force, including the framed miniature on fo. 202v which shows Sir Geoffrey Luttrell, who commissioned the manuscript, mounted on his warhorse below the words: *Gloria patri Dominus Galfridus louterell me fieri fecit*. (Plate 1) It is an image, arguably, which has been reproduced much more than it has been understood. In recent years, however, art historians Richard Marks and Michael Camille have subjected it to critical scrutiny and in so doing have greatly enhanced its utility to the social historian. Marks has encouraged us to look behind its 'glittering surface' to 'elucidate its meaning', a meaning which is symbolic and considerably more complex than one might initially suppose.⁸ Camille has taught us to position ourselves with Sir Geoffrey, outside of the manuscript, looking in upon himself. This was 'Geoffrey's projected self-image – a portrait of the way he wanted the world to see him'.⁹

It is an image with a series of interlocking dimensions. First and foremost, of course, Geoffrey is proclaiming his status through knighthood. The Luttrell arms – *azure a bend between six martlets argent* – are everywhere: on the knight's shield, on the crest of his helm, on his pennon, on his surcoat, on the decorative ailettes worn on his shoulders, and most spectacularly perhaps on the horse-trapper, as well as on the saddle and the horse's fan-crest. It is an extraordinarily lavish expression of identity. Furthermore, it combines this chivalric identity with a sense of great opulence.¹⁰

But there is more to the Luttrell portrait than this. For one thing, the arming of the knight by his lady carries romance overtones. More significant still is the divinely sanctioned social purpose which the miniature proclaims for the knight. This is revealed not so much by the image itself, as Camille was the first to point out, as by its position in the manuscript. The miniature occupies a prepared space at the end of the page containing Psalm 108, while the facing page contains Psalm 109. (Plate 2) The link between the Sir Geoffrey's image and Psalm 109 is made more specific by the border patterns around the latter. The imagery in the initial letter of this psalm (God the Father talking to an enthroned King David) and its opening line emphasize lordship. Both psalms, moreover, contain military imagery and reflect the duties

⁷ For what follows see Janet Backhouse, *The Luttrell Psalter* (British Library, London, 1989); Michael Camille, *Mirror in Parchment: The Luttrell Psalter and the Making of Medieval England* (London, 1998), 49–57; and Richard Marks, 'Sir Geoffrey Luttrell and Some Companions: Images of Chivalry c. 1320–50', *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, Band XLVI/XLVII (1993/4), 343–55. See also M. Camille, 'Labouring for the Lord: The Ploughman and the Social Order in the Luttrell Psalter', *Art History*, x, no. 4 (1987), and, most recently, Richard K. Emmerson and P.J.P. Goldberg, 'The Lord Geoffrey had me Made: Lordship and Labour in the Luttrell Psalter', in James Bothwell, P.J.P. Goldberg and W.M. Ormrod (eds), *The Problem of Labour in Fourteenth-Century England* (York, 2000), 43–63.

⁸ Marks, 'Sir Geoffrey Luttrell', 343.

⁹ Camille, *Mirror in Parchment*, 49.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 52.



Plate 1. The arming of Sir Geoffrey Luttrell, from the Luttrell Psalter (BL Add. MS 42130, fo. 202v). Reproduced by permission of the British Library

of knighthood to defend the faith and to protect the weak.¹¹ Geoffrey presents to us nothing less than ‘the epitome of the perfect Christian knight’.¹² Thus the image is not merely symbolic, but ideological. What is being evoked is the ideology of the three orders. The social and moral purpose of knighthood is reinforced throughout the manuscript, not least in those representations of rural life for which the manuscript is equally famous, suggesting as they do the deep social harmony that pervades under Sir Geoffrey’s patriarchal authority. This harmony constitutes, as Emmerson and Goldberg have recently emphasized, nothing less than the ideology of lordship.¹³ Within this context of the knight protector, Marks and Camille are surely right in arguing that Sir Geoffrey is being armed not for the tournament, as previous observers have tended to believe, but for war.¹⁴

There are other concerns too. Self-evidently, in emphasizing his knighthood through the medium of heraldry, Geoffrey was proclaiming his lineage. Psalm 108, which immediately proceeds the image, makes it plain that the continuance of a lineage is dependent upon righteous living, that is to say that it is dependent upon God’s will. The future of any lineage was naturally a matter of prime concern to its head. Its continuance required divine support. But it was also dependent upon worldly affinity. The miniature shows the knight being armed by his lady. If this invokes romance, it also points to more vital concerns. Geoffrey’s wife is in the process of handing him his helm and his triangular pennon, while to her right stands their daughter-in-law, silhouetted, waiting to pass on his shield. Both ladies wear gowns with the Luttrell arms impaling their own family arms. As Richard Marks aptly put it, Geoffrey was ‘parading’ his marriage alliances.¹⁵

In other words, within the space of a single image Geoffrey Luttrell conveys his social standing, his lineage and his earthly affinity with two other wealthy and powerful families. It is by taking these three dimensions in turn – namely, knighthood, lineage and association – that I aim to explore a little further what the Edwardian knight and his family saw when they encountered heraldic display. We will then be able to appreciate more fully what this meant in terms of social exclusion.

In Edwardian England knighthood was a stronger force – socially, politically and culturally – than it had ever been before. During the early to mid thirteenth century knighthood had been transformed. The rather inclusive knighthood of Angevin England, with its heavy service component, had largely given way before a new and more exclusive elitism, encompassing for the most part only the relatively rich

¹¹ It has been suggested that Psalm 108 had a special significance for the Luttrells at this moment, facing as they were the prospect of extinction should Geoffrey’s son and daughter-in-law fail to have an heir: *May his line be doomed to extinction, may their name be wiped out within a generation*. See Camille, *Mirror in Parchment*, 54.

¹² Marks, ‘Sir Geoffrey Luttrell’, 354.

¹³ Emmerson and Goldberg, ‘The Lord Geoffrey had me Made’, 47 (note 11), 54, 56.

¹⁴ See Marks, ‘Sir Geoffrey Luttrell’, 351, and Camille, *Mirror in Parchment*, 60. Their arguments, however, are different from mine: namely that Geoffrey is depicted with a lance that was not blunted at the tip, as it would be for a tournament *a plaisance*, that the papal ban had only been revoked in 1316, and that an evocation of the tournament would have been against the moral tone of the book.

¹⁵ Marks, ‘Sir Geoffrey Luttrell’, 350.



Plate 2. The opening of Psalm 109, from the Luttrell Psalter (BL Add. MS 42130, fo. 203r). Reproduced by permission of the British Library

within the ranks of the secular landowners. When we come to the early fourteenth century, the so-called *Parliamentary Roll of Arms*, with its 1,100 names, probably contains a high proportion of the knights living and functioning at the time. On this basis, Noel Denholm-Young suggested a working figure of 1,250 knights.¹⁶ Meanwhile, many of the elite county knights had been exercising high profile roles, as tax assessors, for example, and as justices of gaol delivery and of oyer and terminer. This they did not only at the behest of government but also because it reinforced their local position and social control. From the 1290s onwards, however, there was a veritable explosion in the number of commissions. By the time of the *Parliamentary Roll of Arms* a high percentage of knights were functioning as taxers, commissioners of array, keepers of the peace, justices of various kinds and, indeed, as MPs for the counties. Until the 1320s, knights had a virtual monopoly on county representation. Admittedly, even at this date it is possible to detect the persistence of a militaristic and retinue-centred culture which eschewed civilian matters. There were those who preferred the keeping of castles to the delivering of gaols, but even they tended to be drawn into the frame as commissioners of array. However, the numbers who remained entirely aloof from royal commissions were by now relatively few. Landowners were becoming veritable partners in government.¹⁷ Moreover, the military and civilian roles performed by the knights at this time were largely complementary. The Edwardian period as a whole saw what Andrew Ayton has aptly described as ‘the “re-militarisation” of the gentle-born’,¹⁸ a re-militarization which culminated in the high participation of the English gentry in the armies of Edward III.¹⁹

The prominence of knighthood in visual representation during this period is apparent wherever one looks. The last quarter of the thirteenth century and the first half of the fourteenth witnessed the veritable colonization of England’s churches by the knightly effigy, both in wood and in stone.²⁰ Increasingly sophisticated in many cases, they were nonetheless built around a series of standard features. The knight himself, for example, is normally shown either in an attitude of prayer or sword handling. Less mainstream were the products of a relatively short-lived north-eastern workshop of the later thirteenth century, with their strikingly austere militarism, whose chilling effect was only slightly tempered by their heraldry. (Plate 3) Then there are the two remarkable effigies of knights accompanied by their horses

¹⁶ N. Denholm-Young, ‘Feudal Society in the Thirteenth Century: The Knights’, in *Collected Papers of N. Denholm-Young* (Cardiff, 1969), 86.

¹⁷ I deal with these matters in some detail in my forthcoming book, *The Origins of the English Gentry*.

¹⁸ Andrew Ayton, ‘English Armies in the Fourteenth Century’, in Anne Curry and Michael Hughes (eds), *Arms, Armies and Fortifications in the Hundred Years War* (Woodbridge, 1994), 29.

¹⁹ For a recent review of the evidence for this see Andrew Ayton, ‘Edward III and the English Aristocracy at the Beginning of the Hundred Years War’, in Matthew Strickland (ed.), *Armies, Chivalry and Warfare in Medieval Britain and France* (Stamford, 1998), 173–206.

²⁰ As a rough guide, of the 143 knightly effigies assigned by H.A. Tummers to the thirteenth century more than half (seventy-seven) are said to belong to the very end of the century, with at least another nine assigned to the period 1270–90: Tummers, *Early Secular Effigies in England*, 135–43.

For a regional survey see Brian and Moira Gittos, ‘A Survey of East Riding Sepulchral Monuments before 1500’, in *Medieval Art and Architecture in the East Riding of Yorkshire* (British Archaeological Association, 1989), 91–108.



Plate 3. Effigy of a knight, from All Saints church, Hurworth, Durham. Note the austere militarism. (Photograph by Ray Stephenson)

and attendants to which Richard Marks has recently paid close attention.²¹ Such depictions are rare survivals, and were probably relatively unusual in their own day. Marks suggests that these images mirror a particular type of funeral procession, where the body of the knight was preceded by his horses wearing their heraldic trappers and led, if not ridden, by men dressed in the armour of the deceased.²²

These two effigies do not stand entirely alone, however, in their equestrian emphasis. Those of Edmund Crouchback and Aymer de Valence both show, in their gables, mounted and fully equipped knights – no doubt representing the deceased – praying in the saddle.²³ The warhorse, or *destrier*, we should not forget, was the most expensive and highly prized of all the knight's equipment. What all of these effigies have in common, however, is an especially creative interaction between the depiction of the military calling on the one hand and the representation of social status, primarily through heraldry, on the other. On the face of it, at least, there does not appear to have been the same tension between the civilian and the military knight that one finds so often in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.²⁴ True, moralists like the author of the *Simonie or Poem on the Evil Times of Edward II* might speak of the failings of contemporary knighthood – their penchant for fine clothing, for example, and their cowardice in the field – but that is rather a different matter.²⁵

The same symbiosis between militarism and social rank is apparent in other media. The various styles of London figure brasses of the first half of the fourteenth century show the same lavish attention to heraldic display combined with close attention to the fine details of contemporary armour, the latter having the incidental effect of enabling experts to date brasses and effigies.²⁶ The quality of secular figure brasses, which was high from the start, reached a peak of artistic endeavour with the brass to Sir Hugh de Hastings (d. 1347), with its eight mourners, all fellow knights of the Order of the Garter.²⁷

Both media also illustrate the female involvement in chivalric culture.²⁸ A late thirteenth-century effigy at Easington in County Durham depicts Isabella Brus, wife of John Fitz Marmaduke of Hordern. On her gown she displays three splendid popinjays, denoting her husband's arms.²⁹ One of the earliest surviving secular

²¹ At Minster-in-Sheppey and in Exeter Cathedral. See Marks, *op. cit.*, 343–6.

²² Marks, *op. cit.*, 350.

²³ Paul Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets: Kingship and the Representation of Power 1200–1400* (London, 1995), 118 and fig. 160 (for the Crouchback gable). For the effigy of Aymer de Valence see also L. Stone, *Sculpture in Britain: The Middle Ages* (London, 1972), pl. 120.

²⁴ See Peter Coss, *The Knight in Medieval England* (Stroud, 1993), ch. 3.

²⁵ *Thomas Wright's Political Songs of England*, new edn, ed. Peter Coss (Cambridge, 1996), xliii–xlv, 334–5 (lines 242–70): *And nu ben theih liouns in halle, and hares in the feld.*

²⁶ For the redating of the early figure brasses and the identification of styles see, especially, Paul Binski, 'The Stylistic Sequence of London Figure Brasses' and, for the recent debate between Claude Blair and Brian and Moira Gittos over the dating of the Goldsborough and related Yorkshire 'B' effigies, *Church Monuments Society Newsletter*, 11, nos 1 and 2 (1995 and 1995/6).

²⁷ The work of this engraver – who also produced the brass to Sir John de Wautone and his wife, Ellen, of Wimbish in Essex – has generally been regarded as in a class apart. See now Dennison and Rogers, 'The Elsing Brass and its East Anglian Connections', 167–93.

²⁸ On this issue see Peter Coss, *The Lady in Medieval England* (Stroud, 1998), ch. 3.

²⁹ This is depicted in Coss, *The Lady in Medieval England*, 79.

figure brasses, that of Margaret de Camoys of Trotton, Sussex, shows her dress literally festooned with shields, with other (larger shields) surrounding her person.³⁰ The same features are found in stained glass. The earliest extant donor portrait that remains intact is the striking depiction of Beatrix van Valkenburg, third wife of Richard, earl of Cornwall. Now in the Burrell Collection it almost certainly came from the Franciscan church in Oxford where Beatrix was buried in 1277. Magnificently attired, she is surrounded by roundels bearing eagles to signify Richard's title as King of the Romans.³¹ The joint portrait became increasingly popular during the fourteenth century, in glass as in other media. At Merevale Abbey in Warwickshire, for example, was a mid fourteenth-century donor portrait of a local landowner, Sir John de Hartshill, and his wife Margaret, holding their arms – *argent, semée of martlets gules, a chevron sable* – on a shield above their heads.³² The birds are not only on his surcoat but also on her dress in a manner which is reminiscent of the popinjays displayed by the lady of Easington.

Heraldry, as Richard Marks points out, was to transform the means by which donors could be recognised. It also emphasized the link between knighthood and lordship. This is made explicit where a local lord had the right of advowson. From the beginning of the fourteenth century, once again, comes the portrait of Sir John de Newmarch at Carlton Scroop, Lincolnshire. A kneeling figure in armour, he displays his arms both on his shield and on his ailettes. He is shown with the priest, William de Briddeshall, whom he presented to the living in 1307.³³ Similarly, at Mancetter, in north Warwickshire, there once existed two knights bearing the arms of Mancetter and Crophull respectively and facing one another. The lord of the manor at this date was Sir Guy de Mancetter and the rector Ralph de Crophull, no doubt presented to the living by Guy. The knights' arms are replicated on their dress.³⁴ The glass also appears to display an inter-familial relationship underlying the presentation.

To the informed onlooker, then, these portraits celebrate both knighthood and lordship. They also suggest lineage and it is to this issue that we must now turn. At Tewkesbury Abbey, famously, two of the clerestory windows contain a remarkable series of eight knights displaying their arms. These portraits can only be understood in their context. The east end of Tewkesbury Abbey had been remodelled by Edward II's favourite, Hugh le Despenser the Younger, to function as a grandiose mausoleum for the Despenser family. Much of the work was carried out before his execu-

³⁰ This is illustrated in Binski, 'The Stylistic Sequence of London Figure Brasses', 79.

³¹ Beatrix is shown in Jonathan Alexander and Paul Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400*, exhib. cat., Royal Academy of Arts (London, 1987), no. 26, Marks, *Stained Glass in England*, pl. X, and Coss, *The Lady in Medieval England*, col. pl. 1.

³² This glass is now in the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. See Marks, *Stained Glass in England*, 11, and R. Marks, 'Cistercian Window Glass in England and Wales', in C. Norton and D. Park (eds), *Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles* (Cambridge, 1986), 221–2 and pl. 96. 1998.

³³ See Alexander and Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry*, no. 227, and Marks, *Stained Glass in England*, 11.

³⁴ See Coss, *The Knight in Medieval England*, 90, drawing on P.A. Newton, 'Schools of Glass-Painting in the Midlands, 1275–1430' (London Ph.D. thesis, 1962), vol. I, ch. 2.

tion in 1326. The glazing of the choir's seven clerestory windows, however, was commissioned by his widow, Eleanor de Clare, sister of the last Clare earl of Gloucester who died at Bannockburn. Four windows are devoted to Old Testament prophets and kings while the great east window contains the Last Judgement and the Coronation of the Virgin. On the far right of this window is a donor portrait of Eleanor herself. She is depicted kneeling, at the foot of the cross, stripped of all her earthly finery. Eleanor herself died in 1337 and as the glass dates from c. 1340–44 it must have been completed under the guidance of her son, another Hugh le Despenser. The eight knights are found in the two westernmost windows. On the north side is Hugh le Despenser the Younger himself, together with a Clare – probably Gilbert, the first of his line to become earl of Gloucester in the early thirteenth century – Robert Fitzhamon (d. 1107), the founder of the abbey, and his son-in-law, Robert Fitzroy (d. 1147). (Plate 4) On the south side are three further Clare earls and Eleanor's second husband, William de la Zouche. The series as a whole depicts nothing less than the lineage of the honour of Tewkesbury, from the foundation of the abbey through the history of the Clares to the Despensers and la Zouche. The apocryphal arms of Robert Fitzhamon provide an excellent example of an aristocratic tendency to project their values back into a pre-heraldic past, in the interests of lineage.³⁵

Another early fourteenth-century donor depicted in his church was Sir Simon de Drayton. Simon succeeded his father at Drayton in Northamptonshire and did homage to the king for his land in 1302. In 1317 he acquired a royal licence to alienate in mortmain £5 of lands and rents in the manor to provide a chaplain to celebrate mass in the chapel of St Mary, Lowick church. This seems to have followed, or to have been part of, a rebuilding of the church, some elements of which still survive. Simon's donor portrait shows him kneeling and holding a model of his church. (See plate I)³⁶ He is in armour and carrying a shield bearing his arms: *argent, a cross engrailed gules*.³⁷ At the base of the light are the remains of a bidding prayer containing the word *Drayton*.

As in the case of the Tewkesbury knights, Simon's donor portrait is at one and the same time a celebration of his knighthood and of his lineage. Simon was a solid member of the Northamptonshire gentry, representing the county in parliament in eleven different years between 1321 and 1337. He functioned as a commissioner of array in 1326, 1333 and 1336, and was a justice of the peace in 1329. He had

³⁵ For detailed discussion of the Tewkesbury glass see G. McN. Rushforth, 'The Glass in the Quire Clerestory of Tewkesbury Abbey', *Transactions of the Bristol and Glos. Archaeological Society*, xlvii (1924), 289–324, and R. Morris, 'Tewkesbury Abbey: The Despenser Mausoleum', *ibid.*, xciii (1974), 142–55. See also Andrew Martindale, 'Patrons and Minders: The Intrusion of the Secular into Sacred Spaces in the Late Middle Ages', in D. Wood (ed.), *The Church and the Arts* (Studies in Church History, xxviii, Oxford 1992), 160–1, and Marks, *Stained Glass in England*, 89, 165.

³⁶ Another early example of a donor knight holding a church was at Bere Ferrers in Devon. See Marks, *Stained Glass in England*, 12 and reference given there.

³⁷ On both technical and stylistic grounds, the glass of which the donor portrait forms part should be dated to the first or second decade of the fourteenth century. The armour suggests a date between c. 1315 and the 1330s. See Marks, *Stained Glass in England*, 127–9, and C. Blair, 'The Wooden Knight at Abergavenny', *Church Monuments*, ix (1994), 38.

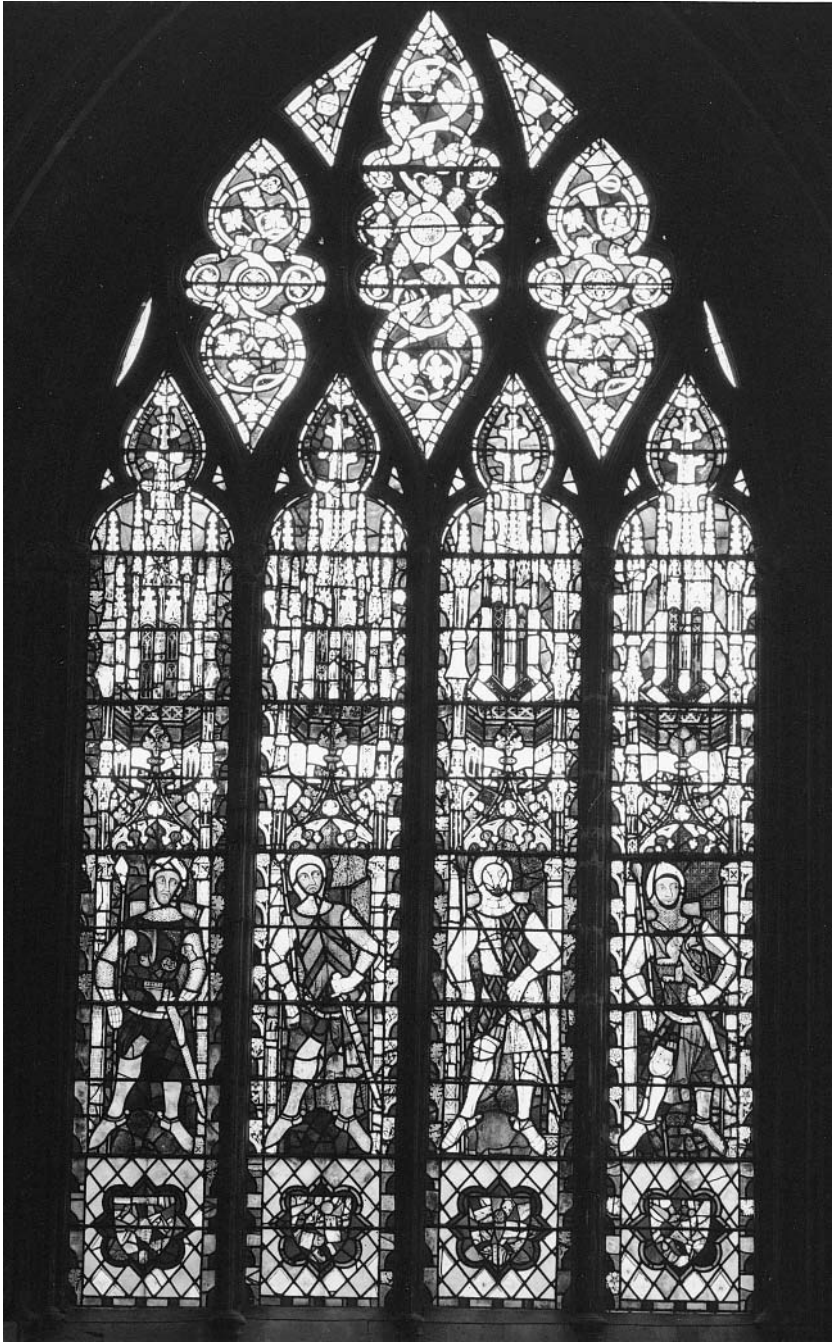


Plate 4. Clerestory window, choir, Tewkesbury Abbey. Photograph supplied by The Conway Library, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London

licence to create a park at Drayton in 1327 and received a grant of free warren in Drayton, Islip, Lowick and Irthlingborough. The rebuilding of his church should be seen in the context of a general improvement of his ancestral estate and as an expression of pride and status. Simon himself had borne his arms at the battle of Boroughbridge in 1322.

In terms of lineage, Simon de Drayton had much to celebrate. His family went back in the male line to Norman England, and he was descended from no less a figure than Aubrey de Vere, Henry I's chamberlain, who was himself lord of Drayton.³⁸ Not surprisingly, Simon's arms were of great antiquity. According to the antiquary, John Bridges, they were assumed by his ancestor, Walter de Drayton, who held the manor during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries: 'Designing with other heroes of the age to signalize himself in holy war for a mark of his intention he took for his arms Argent a Cross engrailed Gules, which coat was constantly born by his successors'.³⁹ There can be little doubt that the Drayton arms do, indeed, belong to the great age of heraldic dissemination of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. They were derived, however, from those of de Vere of Great Addington: *argent, a cross gules*. Walter de Drayton's father had been the son of Robert de Vere's second wife. The de Vere estates had thus been split, the elder line succeeding at Thrapston and Great Addington, Walter and his successors at Drayton.⁴⁰ The engrailed cross was, therefore, a mark of difference from the main de Vere line. Walter was certainly a key figure in the Drayton ancestry, and it was probably he who dropped the surname Vere in favour of Drayton. The toponym was a prominent expression of nobility and was adopted progressively by gentle families across the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Nevertheless, when Simon de Drayton and others looked at his arms in Lowick church they were no doubt reminded of his relationship to his cousins of Great Addington.

But did they also see a crusading past, as Bridges suggests? The cross was a common heraldic device and carries, it would seem, no necessarily specific association with the crusades or with the military orders.⁴¹ It is true that the eldest de Vere line, that of the earls of Oxford, was a prominent one when it came to crusade participation. Their arms, however, were *quarterly or and gules*, and were derived from the Mandevilles.⁴² The crusading credentials of the Northamptonshire de Veres, on the other hand, and of their Drayton cousins appear to be elusive. Nonetheless, it is possible that when Simon contemplated his cross he did indeed imagine an illustrious past, whether this was real or not.⁴³ Silver is as close as one can come,

³⁸ For the descent of the manor see *Victoria County History of Northamptonshire*, iii, 236–38.

³⁹ John Bridges, *The History and Antiquities of Northamptonshire*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1791), ii, 248.

⁴⁰ For the descents of Thrapston and Great Addington see *VCH Northants*, iii, 140, 156–7.

⁴¹ See, especially, Helen J. Nicholson, *Love, War and the Grail: Templars, Hospitallers and Teutonic Knights in Medieval Epic and Romance 1150–1500* (Leiden, 2001), 155–9. The shield and banner of the Templars was actually black and white, occasionally with a red cross on the latter. Matthew Paris gives their arms as *argent, a chief sable* and those of the Hospitallers as *gules, a cross formy argent* (*Aspilogia II*, 66–7).

⁴² See J.H. Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville* (London, 1892), 388–96.

⁴³ A family association with the Hospitallers is not impossible. Two de Veres had been priors of the order, *viz.* Gilbert de Vere in 1195–97 and Robert de Vere in 1269–70: see *The Cartulary of the*

heraldically speaking, to white, and in romance a red cross commonly denotes a warrior of Christ. In this context it is significant that the Templars wore a red cross on their white mantles, the Hospitallers the reverse.⁴⁴ Moreover, a red cross on a white background denoted St George. The warrior knight was extremely popular in fourteenth-century England. Edward I had begun the practice of displaying his banner alongside those of St Edmund and St Edward the Confessor. The Douce Hours of c. 1325–30 shows St George alongside Thomas, earl of Lancaster, while Walter Milemete's treatise of 1326–7 depicts the saint arming the young Edward III. He was, of course, extremely popular with this king. St George's chapel at Windsor was to become the focal point of his Order of the Garter.⁴⁵ The Elsing brass of Sir Hugh de Hastings was consequently to feature St George as a mounted warrior. But he had entered the imagination of England's landowners long before this. Simon de Drayton would surely have known the depiction of St George in stained glass in the parish church of Aldwinckle, Northamptonshire, which was contemporary with, or even slightly earlier than, his own donor portrait, and possibly that at Barton-on-Humber, Lincolnshire, which belongs to 1334–40.⁴⁶ Perhaps a touch of patriotic fervour as well as religious fervour mingled with his sense of personal and family pride as Simon contemplated his donor portrait.

Simon de Drayton died on or before 18 June 1357. In 1362 Drayton passed to his daughter, Katherine, and her husband, Henry Greene, father of Richard II's notorious servant. Simon's line, then, did not endure. Neither did his church, for Henry Greene the younger embarked on his own ambitious rebuilding. When he had finished this, the church was ablaze with heraldry.⁴⁷ In the east window were the arms of the king, the queen and other members of the royal family together with the arms of Sir Henry Greene himself. To be more precise, they were the arms of the

Knights of St John of Jerusalem in England, ed. M. Gervers (British Academy Records of Social and Economic History, new ser., 6, Oxford 1962), i, lxx and no. 205, ii, 571. Simon himself held the manor of Washingley, Huntingdonshire, from the order for life at zero rent: *The Knights Hospitallers in England, being the report of Prior Philip de Thame to the Grand Master Elyan de Villanova for A.D. 1338*, ed. L.B. Larking, Camden Soc., old ser., 65 (1857), 162, and *Calendar of Close Rolls 1330–33*, 34. However, the de Vere priors are more likely to belong to the family of the earls of Oxford than to the Northamptonshire family (see G.E. Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom*, ed. V. Gibbs et al. (hereafter *Complete Peerage*), 12 vols in 13 (London, 1910–59), x, appendix J), while Simon may well have paid handsomely for his beneficial lease to the improvident Prior Thomas le Archer, who had a strong tendency to mortgage the future in return for ready cash.

⁴⁴ Nicholson, *op. cit.*, 157–8.

⁴⁵ One should also note the wall painting of the saint with the king and his family once in Stephen's Chapel, Palace of Westminster. See Samantha Riches, *St George: Hero, Martyr and Myth* (Stroud, 2000), especially ch. 4 and pls 4.1–4.4.

⁴⁶ See Marks, *Medieval Stained Glass of Northamptonshire*, 9 and pl. 1; Penny Hebgin-Barnes, *The Medieval Stained Glass of Lincolnshire* (Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi, British Academy, 1996), 26 and pl. 1c.

⁴⁷ See Marks, *Medieval Stained Glass of Northamptonshire*, 126–8, and for detailed consideration of the heraldic glass see G.A. Poole, 'The Stained Glass in Lowick Church, with Remarks on Glass Painting Old and New', *Associated Architectural Societies Reports and Papers*, vi (1861), 53–64, and G.S. Stopford Sackville, 'Notes on Lowick Church with especial reference to its Monuments and Heraldic Glass', *ibid.*, xvii (1883), 55–76.

Draytons, for the Greenes had jettisoned their old arms – *azure, three bucks passant or* – and had substituted the arms of the more ancient and more illustrious family whose lineage had now become theirs. It was, no doubt, as much for this reason as for the intrinsic quality of the glass that Simon's donor portrait was preserved – not in his chapel, its original location, but in the north aisle. It was not merely a matter of contact with the parochial and manorial past. The Drayton lineage was now Henry's lineage, and the *cognoscenti* who observed the body of heraldic glass would have readily perceived this.

The donor portrait, however, does not stand alone. It constitutes the easternmost panel of four windows containing high quality early fourteenth-century glass. In addition to the donor they comprise eleven prophets and four kings from a Tree of Jesse, demonstrating the descent of Christ from David and his father, Jesse, as well as the prophets who proclaimed the coming of Christ.⁴⁸ David himself is there, although Jesse, Christ and the Virgin are all missing. None of these lights, however, is *in situ*. The Tree of Jesse must have constituted the east window of Simon's chantry chapel, and these panels were undoubtedly moved when the east end of the church was rebuilt.⁴⁹ In parish churches the Tree was often associated with the Virgin, to whom of course Simon's chapel was dedicated.⁵⁰ His donor portrait, as in examples elsewhere, would have been at the bottom right of his Tree.

There is every reason why the Tree of Jesse should have had particular appeal to a member of the fourteenth-century gentry. Its subject, after all, was lineage, and the most important lineage of all. Simon's heraldic arms focused attention on his own lineage, and the presence of himself and his arms within the depiction of the holy lineage must have felt reinforcing and reassuring. Faith and social status were strongly intertwined. The Tree of Jesse was very popular in fourteenth-century England. It is found in cathedrals, at York, at Gloucester and at Wells, for example, and in abbey churches – at Dorchester, where glass is deployed in remarkably effective combination with sculpture,⁵¹ at Merevale in Warwickshire and at St Augustine's, Bristol. A late fourteenth-century example occurs at Winchester College, where its founder, Bishop William Wykeham, portrays himself on the bottom right presenting his college to the Virgin.⁵² It comes as no surprise to find that the Despenser glass at Tewkesbury also contained a Tree of Jesse.⁵³ But it is also found in

⁴⁸ For Jesse windows of this period see, especially, C. Woodforde, 'A Group of Fourteenth-Century Windows Showing the Tree of Jesse', *Journal of the British Society of Master Glass-Painters*, vi (1935–37), 184–90. Newton, 'Schools of Glass-Painting in the Midlands', vol. i, ch. 4, and Marks, *Stained Glass in England*, 150 and note 27. For the earlier history of the Tree see A. Watson, *The Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse* (Oxford, 1934).

⁴⁹ The tracery of the north aisle windows contains elements from windows elsewhere in the church.

⁵⁰ Marks, *Medieval Stained Glass of Northamptonshire*, 129.

⁵¹ It is photographed in J. Sherwood and N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Oxfordshire* (London, 1974), pl. 30.

⁵² The existing east window is a nineteenth-century copy. However, the original donor portrait and various others from the medieval Tree are still extant in a window at the west end of the church. See J.H. Harvey and D. King, 'Winchester College Stained Glass', *Archaeologia*, ciii (1971), 166–74.

⁵³ Two sections of a Tree of Jesse were among the pieces of 'alien glass' removed from the choir in 1924 and placed in the eastern window of the vestry (Rushforth, 'The Glass in the Quire Clerestory of

parish churches, one example being Lowick. Another early fourteenth-century Tree of Jesse in a gentry church was at Mancetter, elements of which – including King David – still remain.⁵⁴ It belongs to the time of Sir Guy de Mancetter whose own donor portrait, as we have seen, was to be found in the church.⁵⁵ It has some stylistic similarities with another Tree of Jesse, this time at St Mary's, Shrewsbury, although they are not enough to determine that they were from the same workshop.⁵⁶

Here the donor portraits indicate that the glass was made for the Charltons of Powys. It has passed through many vicissitudes.⁵⁷ It was transferred from nearby St Chad's when that church was demolished in the late eighteenth century. According to tradition its original location had been the Franciscan church, where the donors were buried, although this has been doubted.⁵⁸ It was heavily restored, with the addition of much new glass, in 1859, and again in 1998.⁵⁹ This last restoration showed that more medieval glass had been retained than had previously been thought. Nonetheless, the donor portraits have been seriously ravaged by time. The earliest description of them is by Sir William Dugdale in his *Visitation of Shropshire* in 1663. The east window of St Chad's consisted of seven lights representing 'the stock of Jesse'. At the bottom in the centre was the Virgin. On her left were the figures of three knights 'kneeling to her', each holding a banner and bearing their arms on their surcoats. The nearest bore *or, a lion rampant gules*, and the other two the same arms differenced. On her right were three ladies. The nearest is shown kneeling in prayer and bearing the same arms on her gown, with her sleeves vary. Her long mantle flows behind. The two other women were in gold gowns with red sleeves but without arms. Underneath was the inscription: PRIES Pr MONSr JOHAN DE CHARLETON Qi FIST FARE CESTE VERRURA ET Pr DAME HAWIS SA COMPANION.⁶⁰ In 1825 Owen and Blakeway reported that the figures of one of the knights and two of the ladies had been lost, but that the muti-

Tewkesbury Abbey', 321–3). Its original location is unclear. Perhaps it had been in the Despensers' Lady Chapel.

⁵⁴ These were not, as has often been thought, part of the contemporary Tree at Merevale Abbey. There are considerable stylistic differences. See Newton, *op. cit.*, vol. i, 69, and John D. Austin, *Merevale Church and Abbey* (Studley, 1998), 95.

⁵⁵ For a general discussion of the Mancetter glass, much of it from the fourteenth century, see Newton, *op. cit.*, vol. iii, 890–901.

⁵⁶ Woodforde suggested that eight Jesse Trees in the midlands, surviving in whole or in part, were the product of a single master working between 1330 and 1350. They are at: Lowick, Merevale, Mancetter, Shrewsbury, Ludlow, Madley in Herefordshire, Tewkesbury and Bristol. Closer examination has revealed that they were the products of several workshops. For details see Newton, *op. cit.*, vol. i, ch. 4. See also Marks, *Stained Glass in England*, 162–4.

⁵⁷ For what follows I have received much guidance from Newton, *op. cit.*, vol. iii, 570–81.

⁵⁸ By Marjorie Chibnall in *VCH Shropshire*, ii, 89–90. Neither St Chad's nor St Mary's were simple parish churches. Both were collegiate institutions.

⁵⁹ By Mr David Evans of Chapel Studio for The Churches Conservation Trust, with Mr Alfred Fisher as stained glass consultant. I am grateful to Mr Fisher for corresponding with me on this matter. The discovery of an inscribed date high in the glass allowed the previous restoration to be pinpointed for the first time.

⁶⁰ College of Arms MS C35. I am very grateful to Mr Robert Yorke of the College of Arms for allowing me to consult the original. The manuscript contains drawings of the two principal donors, with their arms tricked.

lated figure of one of the ladies remained and had been repaired. She was under a rich Gothic canopy, the interior of which was brilliant ruby glass. Engravings were given of the two remaining knights, one with no face.⁶¹ The extant glass is a mixture of medieval and nineteenth-century elements. However, comparison with Dugdale's description and with the Owen and Blakeways' engravings indicates that they are faithful renderings. (See plate II)

The John de Charlton in question was undoubtedly John son and heir of Robert de Charlton of Wrockwardine, who married Hawise, daughter and heiress of Owain ap Gruffyth ap Gwenwynwyn. In her right he became lord of Powys and received a regular summons to parliament from 1313 until his death in 1353.⁶² Behind these bare facts, however, lie some deeply contentious matters, for John de Charlton was at the centre of an early fourteenth-century *cause célèbre*.⁶³ He was Hugh le Despenser's predecessor as chamberlain of the royal household and profited greatly from his favour with Edward II. He was a target of the baronial opposition to the king and in 1311 the Ordainers demanded his expulsion from the household. It was his marriage, however, which attracted most ignominy. Hawise had been a royal ward and had been obtained by John through royal favour. The problem was not simply his meteoric rise to the position of marcher lord as the fact that his succession to Powys was challenged by the lady's uncle, Gruffydd de la Pole, claiming that under Welsh law the lordship should pass to him. Gruffydd threw in his lot with Thomas, earl of Lancaster, the king's principal opponent, and the issue led to several bouts of armed conflict in the marches. Indeed, the matter was still causing trouble for Charlton as late as 1330 when the new king banned both parties from taking up arms.

The glass belongs to c. 1332–1353.⁶⁴ Significantly, the arms displayed there are not those previously borne by John de Charlton. In the *Parliamentary Roll of Arms* he figures as a banneret bearing *argent, on a chevron vert three eagles displayed or*. The arms on the Shrewsbury glass – *or, a lion rampant gules* – are, in fact, those of Hawise's family, the de la Poles (after Welshpool). They were clearly adopted by John, once his inheritance of the Powys lordship became clear. His family was now heir to a more illustrious lineage. In this case the statement being made was not only social but also a political one. It proclaims his succession to the lordship of Powys. The knights bearing the arms differenced are thought to be John and Owen, his sons by Hawise. Most interestingly, the arms of the Charlton sons echo the erstwhile family arms in their mark of difference, *viz. or, a lion rampant gules with a label of*

⁶¹ H. Owen and J.B. Blakeway, *A History of Shrewsbury*, 2 vols (London, 1825), ii, 316–19. The engravings are between 316–17 and 318–19.

⁶² *Complete Peerage*, iii, 160.

⁶³ For what follows see J.R. Maddicott, *Thomas of Lancaster 1307–1322: A Study in the Reign of Edward II* (Oxford, 1970), 140–1, 147 and n. 6, and Michael Prestwich, *The Three Edwards: War and State in England 1272–1377* (London, 1980), 101–2. For a detailed history of the barony and for the genealogies of the de la Poles and the Charltons see Richard Morgan, 'The Barony of Powys, 1275–1360', *Welsh History Review*, 10 (1980), 1–37.

⁶⁴ These were the dates assigned by Owen and Blakeway, *History of Shrewsbury* (317–18). They were accepted by N.H.J. Westlake (*A History of Design in Painted Glass*, 4 vols (London and Oxford, 1881–94), ii, 23–5), and by Newton (*op. cit.*, iii, 580).

three points vert: each point charged with three eagles displayed or – the label no doubt denoting the elder son – and *or, a lion rampant gules charged on the shoulder with an eagle displayed or on a lozenge vert*. Once again, the informed onlooker would have perceived, alongside the Tree of Jesse, these expressions of the Charlton lineage and would, no doubt, have understood their ramifications.

Lineage then lay at the heart of heraldry and at the heart of what our subjects saw and felt. With this in mind it is tempting to come away from sepulchral monuments and from stained glass with the idea that their primary referent was the past, a reflection of the era which saw the birth and early development of heraldry in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. This, however, would be a grave mistake. In Edwardian England heraldry was a living presence. It was used to advertise the relationship between families, primarily through kinship and affinity. From the thirteenth century such associations were commonly shown by placing arms together in a series. It is not difficult to find examples from the most elevated levels of society. The floor tiles at Hailes Abbey, which date from 1270–77, contain the arms of Richard earl of Cornwall, of his son Edmund, and of his three wives, together with those of four baronial families. They are found again in Hailes parish church, in wall paintings dating from c. 1320–30.⁶⁵ It is also found on more private items, most famously on the Valence casket, which dates from the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.⁶⁶

The association of arms is found quite commonly, of course, on tomb chests, and it is here that we tend to encounter them most often among county knights. An early example, from around the 1280s, is at Pitchford in Shropshire, where the wooden effigy of a sword-handling knight is accompanied by an integral tomb decorated with a series of seven shields.⁶⁷ More unusually, at Cogenhoe in Northamptonshire, and from around the same date as the Pitchford effigy, one finds a series of arms sculptured discreetly in stone in the nave of the church. (Plates 5, 6) In the south aisle of the nave lies the effigy of a crossed-legged knight bearing the Cogenhoe arms, viz. *gules a fess between three mascles argent*.⁶⁸ He is in all probability Sir Nicholas de Cogenhoe, who is accredited with building the nave. Nicholas held one and a half knights' fees at Cogenhoe and Harrowden and was active in county affairs. He was dead by 10 June 1281.⁶⁹ On the capitals of his new nave pillars are displayed nine grotesque heads and ten small shields. Four of the shields display the

⁶⁵ Alexander and Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry*, no. 131. See also Adrian Ailes, 'Heraldic Marshalling in Medieval England', *Proceedings of VIII Colloquium at Canterbury, Académie Internationale D'Héraldique* (1995), 19.

⁶⁶ Alexander and Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry*, no. 362. For discussion see Cherry, 'Heraldry as Decoration', and J. Titterton, 'The Valence Casket and its Original Owner', *Coat of Arms*, 10 (1993), 16–26.

⁶⁷ Shown in Tummers, *Early Secular Effigies in England*, pls 57–8. For detailed discussion see W. Watkins, 'The Monuments in Pitchford Church', *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society*, 53 (1949–50), 186–97.

⁶⁸ Tummers assigns a date of 1270–80 for this effigy: *Early Secular Effigies in England*, 137.

A mascle is a lozenge voided at the centre. It terms of the origins of these arms it may be significant that Roger de Quincy, earl of Winchester (d. 1264) bore *gules, seven mascles conjoined*.

⁶⁹ *Book of Fees*, 931, 938, 943; *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, ii, no. 400.



Plates 5 and 6. Late thirteenth-century heraldry on nave capitals from St Peter's church, Cogenhoe, Northamptonshire. (Photographs by Peter Coss)

Cogenhoe arms and one is blank. The other five are beyond doubt the arms of families associated with the Cogenhoes. Identification is not aided by the fact that one has the ordinaries but no tinctures.⁷⁰ However, ermine a chief indented is surely *ermine a chief indented gules*, born by Sir John de Mortein of Bedfordshire in the *Parliamentary Roll of Arms*, while barry of ten a bendlet seems certain to be the arms of the Pabenhams. In the same roll of arms, and in the same county, Sir John de Pabenhams bore *barry of six azure and argent, a bend gules with three molets or*. A fess and in chief three martlets must refer to the coat of arms of the Cheyneys of Buckinghamshire who bore *argent a fess and in chief three martlets gules*. The remaining two, one a bend sinister and the other consisting of two human hands in chief, are more difficult to assign.⁷¹ Despite some difficulties in identification and uncertainty over the nature of association, the scene is fascinating in terms of the way in which a not particularly wealthy or elevated Northamptonshire family of the late thirteenth century projected themselves.⁷² Cogenhoe was the centre of their interests, and it is not surprising that they lavished much attention on it, gradually rebuilding the church during the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In their relatively humble way, they were projecting themselves through their associations, precisely as Sir Geoffrey Luttrell was doing in his psalter.

However, it was not only on stone that relationships could be depicted. During the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries churches began to be glazed with a combination of grisaille⁷³ and heraldic glass. Extant examples include Selling in Kent and Norbury in Derbyshire.⁷⁴ Even in glass where we have the full tinctures, however, the reasons for the association of shields is often difficult to determine. No doubt kinship was the most prominent factor, followed perhaps by lordship and service in one guise or another. But the sheer fact of neighbourhood led inevitably to various forms of association, some of them largely hidden from us. Perhaps, as Peter Newton suggested, a bond of friendship was sufficient.⁷⁵ In the Scrope versus Grosvenor case of 1385 the prior of Marton reported that Robert Haket, lord of Quenby, and one of the Scropes had each commissioned windows in his church displaying the other's arms, so great being the love between them.⁷⁶ There were, no

⁷⁰ For a discussion of the arms in their setting see Albert Hartshorne, 'The Cogenhoe Family and Cogenhoe Church, Northamptonshire', in *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, 2nd ser., xix (London, for 1901–3), 227–44.

⁷¹ Hartshorne suggested that the former was associated with the Hastings, overlords of Cogenhoe, and that the latter belonged to a family called de Bretto. The Hastings family normally bore, of course, their famous sleeve or *manche*.

⁷² The Cogenhoes were hardly more than a one manor family. The inquisition on the death of Nicholas de Cogenhoe indicates that the Harrowden interest amounted to a single carucate of land.

⁷³ Defined, by P.A. Newton, as 'geometric or leaf patterns of regular design painted on or leaded into white glass (usually with little or no pot-metal)'.

⁷⁴ See Marks, *Stained Glass in England*, figs 119, 120 and 123.

⁷⁵ Peter A. Newton, *The County of Oxford: A Catalogue of Medieval Stained Glass* (London, 1979), 4.

⁷⁶ N.H. Nicholas, *The Controversy between Sir Richard Scrope and Sir Robert Grosvenor in the Court of Chivalry*, 2 vols (London, 1832), i, 140. It is quoted in Ailes, 'Heraldic Marshalling in Medieval England', 18.

doubt, very many heraldic manifestations of brotherhood-in-arms in medieval England.⁷⁷

The presentiality of heraldry in Edwardian England cannot be over stressed. The Charltons of Powys were by no means the only family to change their arms in the wake of an illustrious marriage. The famous Percy arms – *or, a lion rampant azure* – for example, are not the arms borne by the family in the thirteenth century. Henry de Percy, who bore the lion at Falkirk and Carlaverock, had adopted it following his marriage to Eleanor, daughter of Richard Fitz Alan, earl of Arundel, who bore *gules, a lion rampant or*. The traditional Percy arms had been *azure, a fess of five fusils or*.⁷⁸ The Lumleys of Chester-le-Street changed their arms twice in rapid succession following marriages, finally settling on *argent, a fess gules between three popinjays vert*, the arms of the Thwengs which they wore undifferenced as they came to replace this extinct family and to succeed to its lineage.⁷⁹ Examples could be multiplied. Changes in lordship could also result in new arms, as when both the Segraves and the Lacys changed their arms from the wheatsheafs of the defunct Norman lordship of Chester to the lion rampant, as a reflection no doubt of their new relationship with Edward I.⁸⁰ In the Segrave case this change was famous enough in aristocratic circles to be mentioned in the *Song of Carlaverock*.

New arms were brought into being to accommodate knightly younger sons. Some of these became established, signifying new lineages; others, however, were more transient. John de Grendon, a scion of the Warwickshire and Staffordshire family, seems to have changed his arms according to the retinue he served in. He served, first, with Edmund de Stafford in Flanders in 1297–98, and bore the Stafford arms differenced with a martlet. He then served with Robert de la Ward and changed his arms to the Ward arms differenced with a bend.⁸¹ In this age, military retinues could still provide the inspiration for new arms, just as they had done in the early days of heraldic dissemination. A revealing case is that of Eustace de Hatch who bore the arms *or, a cross indented gules*. Of unknown parentage, Eustace first appears as a trooper in Wales in 1276. He became a household knight and, eventually, a banneret. His lands, in Wiltshire and Dorset, were held in right of his wife. He was active in Edward I's Scottish wars and on two occasions the personnel of his retinue are known. Among his men-at-arms were three knights. All three seem to

⁷⁷ The classic treatment of this subject is Maurice Keen, 'Brotherhood-in-Arms', *History*, 47 (1964), 1–17, repr. in Maurice Keen, *Nobles, Knights and Men-at-Arms in the Middle Ages* (London, 1996), 43–62. For heraldic manifestations see S. Düll, A. Luttrell and M. Keen, 'Faithful unto Death: The Tomb Slab of Sir William Neville and Sir John Clanvowe', *Antiquaries' Journal*, 71 (1991), 174–90, and Ailes, 'Heraldic Marshalling in Medieval England', 18.

⁷⁸ Coss, *The Lady in Medieval England*, 40, and col. pl. 13.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 40–1 (col. pl. 13), and for a more detailed discussion of the Lumley case, P.R. Coss, 'Heraldry and Monumental Effigies in the North East', in T.E. Faulkner (ed.), *Northumbrian Panorama: Studies in the History and Culture of North East England* (London, 1996), 7–17 and col. pl. I.

⁸⁰ Coss, *The Knight in Medieval England*, 80–1 (col. pl. 10).

⁸¹ For this and other examples see Robert Norton, 'The Arms of Robert fitz Roger and Others', *Coat of Arms*, new ser., 3, no. 110 (1979), 161–3. See also *Rolls of Arms of Edward I*, ed. Brault, ii, 203.

have borne his arms differenced.⁸² One of them was his son-in-law, William de Hartshill, who abandoned his family arms in favour of the Hatch arms differenced with a martlet vert in the first quarter. William's son John, however, reverted to the family arms of *or, a chevron sable surmounted by an orle of martlets gules*. Both William's adopted arms and his family arms are found on his tomb at Saleby, Lincolnshire.⁸³ As in the case of the Charltons of Powys, the traditional family arms had determined the mark of difference.

The growing fashion for the marshalling of arms in Edwardian England is also testimony to the social vitality of heraldry. Impaling is especially significant in denoting current, or at the very least, recent relationships, because impaled arms were not inherited. Quartering, too, which became increasingly popular in the fourteenth century to denote hereditary entitlement to more than one coat of arms, was indicative of new as well as, increasingly, of ancient relationships.⁸⁴ The vibrancy of heraldic culture is best expressed, however, by reference to the famous Feast of the Swans, held at Whitsuntide (22 May) 1306. The context is well known.⁸⁵ At the banquet which followed the knighting of the king's son and heir, the future Edward II, the aged Edward I took an oath to avenge the murder of John Comyn and to wrest Scotland from the hands of the murderous Robert Bruce. The Feast of the Swans was a superb piece of royal theatre. But historians are surely right to see it also in terms of the old king's military preparations for another campaign in Scotland, to boost knighthood and to increase noble participation. On 6 April he wrote to the sheriffs informing them of the impending knighting of Prince Edward, the heir to the throne, and ordering them to have it proclaimed that 'all those who are not knights and who would wish to be should come to London this side of Whitsunday next to receive the necessary equipment from the King's Wardrobe and at his gift, so that they might receive knighthood from him on the same day'.⁸⁶

It was customary for princes and other young aristocrats to be knighted with other noble youths, kinsmen and friends. But this was to be something on an altogether different scale. The king was appealing, quite nakedly, to the snobbery that existed in English society. As Constance Bullock-Davies puts it, 'The social impact of this proclamation upon adventurous and ambitious young men, particularly those in the shires, is not hard to imagine. To be dubbed with the king's son, to have rich robes and equipment provided free, to have a holiday in London, to attend the subsequent royal banquet at Westminster, was the opportunity of a lifetime. . . . It was . . . a glittering bait dangled by a wily old fisherman.'⁸⁷

⁸² For the details see Robert Norton, 'The Arms of Eustace de Hatch and Others', *Coat of Arms*, new ser., 5, no. 121 (1982), 18–19.

⁸³ See H. Lawrance, *Heraldry from Military Monuments before 1350 in England and Wales*, Harleian Society, 98 (1946), 21. For further discussion of the knights concerned see also *Rolls of Arms of Edward I*, ed. Brault, ii, 195, 218, 220–1, and 422.

⁸⁴ For a recent discussion of marshalling in England, with many apposite examples, see Adrian Ailes, 'Heraldic Marshalling in Medieval England', 15–29.

⁸⁵ See especially Constance Bullock-Davies, *Menestrellorum Multitudo: Minstrels at a Royal Feast* (Cardiff, 1978).

⁸⁶ *Foedera*, I, ii, 983.

⁸⁷ Bullock-Davies, *Minstrels at a Royal Feast*, xv–xvi.

The Feast of the Swans was a startling success. The chroniclers note the knighting of 297–300 men, and the names of 282 of them have been recovered from the records.⁸⁸ They include not only the heir to the throne but also the earls of Warenne and Arundel and many who were to play crucial parts in the reign of the future Edward II. However, most of the recipients of knighthood were county knights. In fact the Swan knights were a cross-section of England's nobility: earls, barons, bannerets and knights. For these last the appeal to their elitist instincts was twofold. They would be knighted not only with royalty but also with the leaders of aristocratic society. It was surely this as much as anything else which drew them to Westminster. Chivalric knighthood drew much of its mystique from the principle of association.

One of the young barons who was knighted was John de Somery, lord of Dudley in the west midlands. John was aged twenty-six or twenty-seven in 1306 and had just been summoned to Carlisle for military service against the Scots. He was summoned to parliament in 1308.⁸⁹ Particularly interesting is the number of other Swan knights who hail from the same part of the country. They include no less than three members of the Birmingham family – Henry, Richard and William – as well as Henry de Erdington, Richard de Edgbaston, Nicholas de Sheldon and George de Chastell. There were others with interests which were not too distant, including Giles de Astley of the Astleys of north Warwickshire and Leicestershire.⁹⁰ The Birminghams were a wealthy family in their own right. William de Birmingham, who was head of the family, had succeeded his father only in 1302. Henry de Birmingham was undoubtedly his brother, for he received a reversionary right to the manor of Birmingham from him in 1324.⁹¹ Henry de Erdington was also young. His elder brother Giles, now dead, had been aged ten in 1282. Their mother was Maud, sister of Roger de Somery, and therefore aunt of John. The place of Richard de Edgbaston in his family pedigree is uncertain. Henry de Edgbaston had been head of the family in 1291 as was a John son of Henry in 1343.⁹² A family settlement of the manor of Edgbaston in that year gave a contingent remainder to Richard de Edgbaston, knight. The pedigree published by Sir William Dugdale gives a Richard de Edgbaston, knight, as a younger son of Henry and brother to

⁸⁸ The list is given as an appendix by Bullock-Davies, *ibid.*, 185–7.

⁸⁹ *Complete Peerage*, xii part I, 114. For an outline of John's career see John Hunt, *Lordship and Landscape: A Documentary and Archaeological Study of the Honor of Dudley c. 1066–1322* (BAR British ser., 264, Oxford 1997), 69–70. He died in 1322. Following the Hon. G. Wrottesley, I am assuming that he was the John de Somery who was a Swan knight. There is, however, a contemporary John de Somery, lord of Bygrave in Hertfordshire, who was pardoned in 1313 for his adherence to the party of Thomas of Lancaster and his consequent complicity in the murder of Piers Gaveston (*VCH Berkshire*, iii, 212–15).

⁹⁰ Among Swan knights with Staffordshire interests, G. Wrottesley lists also: John de Weston, Ralph Bagot, Peter de Gresley, Roger de Somerville, John de Harcourt, Ralph Basset, William de Handsacre, William de Wrottesley and William Trussel. See 'An Account of the Military Service Performed by Staffordshire Tenants in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries', *Collections for a History of Staffordshire* (William Salt Archaeological Society, vol. 8, 1887) part 1, 26.

⁹¹ *VCH Warwickshire*, vii, 58.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 67.

John. Dugdale's text, on the other hand, has Richard succeeding Henry and shows him employed on a variety of royal commissions between 1313/14 and 1333/34.⁹³ Perhaps there were two Edgbaston estates descending separately. Whatever is the case, Richard de Edgbaston was clearly the most important figure of his generation.

Nicholas de Sheldon was the son of Sir Henry de Sheldon, many times justice of gaol delivery at Warwick between 1279 and 1292.⁹⁴ The main family seat of George de Chastell, or Castello, was at Withybrook, north-east of Coventry. However, he also held the manor of Nechells in right of his wife, Alice, and was thus a close neighbour of the Birminghams, Erdingtons and Edgbastons.⁹⁵ By 1306 George may not yet have succeeded his father, William, for the last notice Dugdale makes of the latter is precisely in the regnal year 1306/7. Moreover, it is William de Chastell who figures on the *Parliamentary Roll of Arms*, which was compiled just a few years after the Feast of the Swans. It is difficult not to see these young men – Sir William de Birmingham and his brothers, Sir Henry de Erdington, Sir Richard de Edgbaston, Sir Nicholas de Sheldon and Sir George de Chastell – as a contingent (or part of a contingent) exercising a collective choice to attend the knighting at Westminster, and to attend, what is more, in the company of the illustrious young baron, John de Somery.

All of these families except the Sheldons were tenants or sub-tenants of the honour of Dudley.⁹⁶ However, we must be careful. We cannot see them as the honorial community of old, following their lord as his natural retinue.⁹⁷ The honour of Dudley had long since ceased to be a cohesive unit. The Birminghams, in particular, the wealthiest family within the honour, were a powerful and independent-minded family in their own right. William de Birmingham III, like other Somery tenants, had been a supporter of Simon de Montfort; in fact, he had been killed at the battle of Evesham. Roger de Somery, his overlord, by contrast had been a royalist. Nor should we see these men as constituting the Somery affinity. John de Somery figures on the roll of arms from the Dunstable tournament of 1309 leading a contingent of nine knights. It included none of the aforementioned Swan knights. The retinues which John subsequently took to the king's wars occasionally contained one or two of them, but not invariably. William de Birmingham and Richard de Edgbaston were in his retinue in 1318, but neither of them had been there in 1310, 1313, and 1316–17. Both men served with him again in 1319, and William de Birmingham once more in his last retinue of 1322. In 1316–17, by contrast, William de Birmingham had served in the retinue of John de Segrave. In 1306 Henry de Erdington had been in the retinue of John de Hastings.⁹⁸ These men bestowed their service where and when they thought it advantageous to them. What we see reflected in the Feast of Swans is a loosely structured aristocratic society.

⁹³ Dugdale, *Warwickshire*, ii, 894.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1003; *VCH Warwickshire*, iv, 201.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, vi, 295 and vii, 67; Dugdale, *Warwickshire*, ii, 881. The family may have originated in Castle Bromwich where they held a small estate: *ibid.*, 886, and *VCH Warwickshire*, iv, 44.

⁹⁶ The Edgbastons held directly of the Birminghams.

⁹⁷ For what follows see Hunt, *Lordship and the Landscape*, ch. 3.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, drawing especially on Wrottesley, 'Military Service Performed by Staffordshire Tenants'.

The arms borne by these men are also revealing. Most of them are blazoned in the *Parliamentary Roll of Arms*. Among the list of bannerets are Sir John de Somery bearing *or, two lions passant azure*, and Sir William de Birmingham with *azure, a bend engrailed or*. Two others are listed among the knights of Warwickshire. William de Chastell bore arms which reflected his name, viz. *gules, two bars and a quarter argent, and in the quarter a castle sable*. Henry de Erdington is listed immediately after Sir Percival de Somery who bore *azure, two lions passant or*, reversing the tinctures of Sir John de Somery as befitting a younger son or member of a junior line. Most interestingly, Henry's arms repeat those of Sir Percival with the addition of a *bordure gules*. This may reflect a direct relationship between the two men, or it may simply reflect the longstanding relationship between the Somerys and the Erdingtons, the latter also bearing the Somery arms differenced.

One might have expected Richard de Edgbaston's arms to bear some relation to either the Somerys or the Birmingham. In fact, he appears under Leicestershire where his arms follow those of Sir Giles de Astley. Giles was himself a younger son. His brother, Sir Nicholas de Astley, figured among the bannerets and bore *argent, a lion gules and on the lion's shoulder a cinquefoil argent*. Giles bore the same arms but differenced by a *label azure*. Richard de Edgbaston bore them too, his being differenced by a *baston azure*. The fact that they are differenced with the same tincture might suggest, again, that he had some form of association with Giles, rather than with the Astley family *per se*. Interestingly enough, these bear no relation to the Edgbaston arms as Sir William Dugdale portrays them from the glass in Warwickshire churches, where they are *per pale indented azure and or*. This may lend support to the suggestion that Richard de Edgbaston was not the head of the family. Instead of bearing the family arms differenced he had branched out on his own, as it were, drawing on his own associations.

The important point is that the arms of county knights reflected aristocratic associations, both old and new, and advertised their membership of what was a relatively small elite. It is in this light that we must understand not only the several varieties of rolls of arms but also the major heraldic programmes in stained glass which seem to echo them. Indeed, these schemes tend to combine the characteristics of general rolls, with their hierarchical, top down approach, and of local rolls comprising all the worthies of a region or locality.⁹⁹ One thinks first and foremost of the series of heraldic shields in the clerestory windows of the nave of York Minster which 'together with the series carved in stone in the spandrels of the arcade and the carved figures of standing knights in the triforium, constitute a *locus classicus* for the use of heraldry in fourteenth-century decorative schemes'.¹⁰⁰ They are also found in abbeys: at Tewkesbury, for example, where below the figural glass of the clerestory

⁹⁹ On this point see, especially, R. Marks and A. Payne (eds), *British Heraldry from its Origins to c. 1800*, exhibition cat., British Museum (London, 1978), ch. i. See also Newton, 'Schools of Glass-Painting in the Midlands', vol. I, 135–46, and Marks, *Stained Glass in England*, 87. For the basic categories of arms see *Aspilogia I. A Catalogue of English Mediaeval Rolls of Arms*, ed. A.R. Wagner (London, 1950), xiv–xv.

¹⁰⁰ David E. O'Connor and Jeremy Haselock, 'The Stained and Painted Glass', in G.E. Aylmer and R. Cant (eds), *A History of York Minster* (Oxford, 1977), 341.

windows there is an extensive series of coats of arms, and at Dorchester in Oxfordshire.¹⁰¹ Another favoured location for the display of series of arms was the gatehouse. That of Butley Priory in Suffolk, for example, has no less than thirty-five coats of arms. It is tempting to see these series as representing benefactors, but this explanation is increasingly challenged. Rather, they are an expression of aristocratic solidarity, often with a distinctly regional bias.¹⁰² Once again, we find the same phenomenon in parish churches. One example is at Lowick, where Sir Henry Greene substantially rebuilt Simon de Drayton's church. In the east window he placed the Greene arms together with those of the king, the royal arms impaling those of Anne of Bohemia, the arms of John of Gaunt and Constance of Castile, and those of Henry Bolingbroke and his wife, Mary de Bohun. In the chancel he had over sixty shields depicted, of which twenty-two still survive. In addition to those of himself and his wife, Matilda Mauduit, they include families to which the Greens were associated by marriage, and other local landowners.¹⁰³ Sir William de Etchingham had done very much the same thing in his church a generation earlier, during the mid 1370s. He placed the arms of the royal family in the east window, his own arms rather presumptuously with those of all the English earls in the chancel, and those of fellow east Sussex gentry families in the nave. As Nigel Saul has aptly said, these coats of arms 'proclaim in the language of visual symbolism the solidarity of all noble- and gentle-born, the sense of pride, perhaps even of separateness, felt by those of armigerous rank'.¹⁰⁴

These feelings of pride in lineage, solidarity and separateness take us back to the Luttrell Psalter and to the Tree of Jesse. The earthly lineage was far from eternal, but it could be given eternal sanction. This sanction is illustrated primarily by juxtaposition, as we have seen with the heraldic donor portraits. In many ways, King David, so prominent in the representations of Christ's genealogy, was the key figure. Michael Camille has pointed to the iconography of the initial D which opens Psalm 109 of the Luttrell Psalter. Here David (rather than the more usual Christ) is sitting at God's right hand. Divine lordship and earthly lordship are juxtaposed, the one sanctioning the other. The further juxtaposition of the psalm with Sir Geoffrey's own knightly image associates his lordship with David's and, by implication, validates it. Camille calls this juxtaposition 'audacious'.¹⁰⁵ For Emmerson and Goldberg, who think the juxtaposition is effectively between Sir Geoffrey and Christ, it is 'slightly shocking'.¹⁰⁶ But this is, surely, an example of over reading?¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ For the latter see Newton, *The County of Oxford*, 3–4, 78–88.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁰³ For the references see above, note 47.

¹⁰⁴ Nigel Saul, *Scenes from Provincial Life: Knightly Families in Sussex 1280–1400* (Oxford, 1986), ch. v. The quotation is from p. 151.

¹⁰⁵ Camille, *Mirror in Parchment*, 50.

¹⁰⁶ Emmerson and Goldberg, 'The Lord Geoffrey had me Made', 52–5.

¹⁰⁷ They use the phrase, specifically, of the equally famous image of the Luttrell family at supper (fo. 208). Camille had already argued that the scene has eucharistic overtones: *Mirror in Parchment*, ch. 2. Emmerson and Goldberg take this argument further and point to parallels with the iconography of the Last Supper. For them, Geoffrey is directly associated with Jesus, and this argument is carried through into their discussion of the equestrian portrait. However, the intended effect of the

Contemporaries are unlikely to have taken it this way. Rather, they would have appreciated the divine affirmation of knighthood and lineage. This affirmation, moreover, was, at one and the same time, both general and particular. On one level, to be sure, it was specific to Geoffrey and his lineage. But it also sanctioned the whole collectivity of knighthood, for David was commonly considered the founder of the order. As William Langland expressed it:

For David in hise dayes dubbide knyghtes,
Did hem swere on here swerd to serve treuthe evere;
(*Piers Plowman*, A Text Passus I, lines 96–7)

We are taken, once again, into the ideology of knighthood. In the last analysis, in heaven and on earth, knights flourished (or perished) collectively.

Noel Denholm-Young once wrote, famously, about the existence of 3,000 potential as opposed to 1,250 actual knights in the reign of Edward I.¹⁰⁸ By the end of the thirteenth century, however, knighthood was beginning to inhere within a comparatively restricted group of families. Moreover, it was by no means confined to heads of families as is sometimes supposed. One of the proudest features of wealthier knightly families was precisely their capacity to support several knights in each generation. The *Parliamentary Roll of Arms* shows us, for example, six la Zouches, two bannerets and four knights bachelor listed under Leicestershire, all bearing variants of the family arms, viz. *gules, with bezants or*. The same county has four Segraves in addition to their two bannerets, while Staffordshire boasts five Hastangs, bearing variants of *azure, a chief gules, overall a lion rampant or*.¹⁰⁹ Many families were represented by two knights. The Birminghams are one example with Sir William de Birmingham listed under the bannerets and Sir Thomas de Birmingham under Worcestershire.¹¹⁰ There were also Henry and Richard de Birmingham who, together with William, were knighted with Prince Edward at the Feast of the Swans in 1306. It is difficult to doubt that their appearance at the feast advertised the family's capacity to support these young men in knighthood. Indeed, a score or so of families had two members knighted at this highly prestigious occasion. Four families had three. In addition to the Birminghams, they were the Lacys, the Corbets and the Bassingbournes.¹¹¹ In this last case all three knights do figure in the *Parliamentary Roll of Arms*, where three versions of their spectacular gyronny are blazoned across three counties.

Nevertheless there were factors pulling this exclusive knighthood asunder. Most

pseudo-sacral connotations may simply have been to give divine authority to Sir Geoffrey's role as *paterfamilias*.

¹⁰⁸ Denholm-Young, 'Feudal Society in the Thirteenth Century: The Knights', 83–94. The validity of this suggestion depends upon what one means by 'potential'. Essentially, it is a backward-looking proposition. The age of a more inclusive knighthood had passed.

¹⁰⁹ See Coss, *The Knight in Medieval England*, pl. opp. 79.

¹¹⁰ The latter's main interest seems to have been at Oldberrow, where he held in right of his wife: *VCH Worcestershire*, ii, 424–5.

¹¹¹ See the list in Bullock-Davies, *Minstrels at a Royal Feast*, 185–7.

obviously there was the existence of a higher nobility, although the line of demarcation was never clear.¹¹² There was an important distinction, moreover, between the knights bachelor and the bannerets, those senior knights who carried their own square banners into battle as opposed to the triangular pennons of the ordinary knights and who were often found commanding their own contingents in the field. Bannerets were of considerable importance within the king's military household. They were significant, too, within magnate retinues, as can be shown from indentures of retainer. In 1317, for example, when Sir John de Eure contracted to serve for life with the earl of Lancaster, it was specified that he would receive exactly the same liveries as the earl's other bannerets. Sir Nicholas Cryel undertook that if he became a banneret after inheriting his estates he would continue to serve Sir Stephen Segrave as he had done before while a bachelor.¹¹³ To be sure this shows that the difference was 'one of degree rather than kind'.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, the difference was of considerable social significance. We see it in the *Parliamentary Roll of Arms*. After the king, thirteen earls and the bishop of Durham, it lists the bannerets together (nos 16–169). Most of the 1,100 knights, however, are listed according to the counties in which they resided.¹¹⁵ We see it also in those rolls of arms known as Occasional Rolls which commemorate a specific event by listing in blazon the arms of those who participated, be it a battle, siege or tournament. The Falkirk Roll, for example, celebrates the 111 bannerets who fought there with Edward on 22 July 1298.¹¹⁶ Then there is the extraordinary heraldic poem on the siege of Carlarverock which gives 106 blazons of lords and knights who were present with the king there in 1300. The knights are almost entirely bannerets.¹¹⁷ The first Dunstable Roll, giving the names of those who tourneyed there in 1309, arranges them according to the retinues and sub retinues – headed by bannerets – within which they fought.¹¹⁸

It is hardly surprising, then, that we encounter the distinction between bachelor and banneret within visual display. Sir William Dugdale's *Book of Monuments* illustrates the lost glass from the east window of the parish church at Drayton Bassett in Staffordshire. It depicts a standing knight holding his square banner and receiving his crested helm from his lady. Behind the knight stands his squire, holding the reins of his warhorse. Knight, horse and banner all reveal the arms of the Bassets of

¹¹² For a judicious treatment of this difficult subject and for the development of the parliamentary peerage see C. Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility in the Late Middle Ages* (London and New York, 1987), ch. 2.

¹¹³ *Private Indentures for Life in Peace and War 1278–1476*, ed. Michael Jones and Simon Walker (Camden Society Miscellany XXXII, Royal Historical Society 1994), nos 13, 27.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹¹⁵ After no. 1034 there is a list of great men recently deceased, followed by various additions which seem to consist largely of men omitted from the county lists.

¹¹⁶ Discussed in *Aspilogia I*, ed. Wagner, 27–9. See also C.H. Hunter Blair, 'Northern Knights at Falkirk, 1298', *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 4th ser., xxv (1947), 68–114. This gives the arms of members of the retinues of the northern lords who fought there.

¹¹⁷ *The Roll of Arms of the Princes, Barons and Knights who Attended King Edward I to the Siege of Caerlaverock in 1300*, ed. Thomas Wright (London, 1864).

¹¹⁸ A. Tomkinson, 'Retinues at the Tournament of Dunstable, 1309', *English Historical Review*, 84 (1959), 70–89.

Drayton: *or, three piles gules and a canton ermine*. The knight is Ralph, Lord Basset of Drayton, who became a banneret, it seems, in 1341 and died in 1342/43.¹¹⁹ This memorial does not stand alone. The effigy at Minster-in-Sheppey shows a knight – probably Sir William de Leybourne – with his horse, his esquire and his banner.¹²⁰ In the Shrewsbury Jesse, as we have seen, the highly connected Sir John de Charlton and his two sons proudly display their banners. Even if there was no dichotomy as such between a military and a civilian knighthood in early fourteenth-century England, it may yet be the case that such memorials are indicative of an especially assertive military elite. And those families who bore multiple knights in each generation are more likely to have subscribed to a cult of militarism.

Such distinctions were not only military; they were also social. Although some bannerets earned their position on the battlefield, a knight like Nicholas Cryel was always more likely to become a banneret than one of more modest endowment. The king, however, could promote a man to the rank of banneret socially as well as militarily. In 1335, for example, Edward III granted Reginald Cobham of Sterborough 400 marks a year ‘for his better maintenance in the estate of banneret . . . until the king provide for him four hundred marks yearly in land and rent for life’.¹²¹ There is no doubt that such men were being promoted into a narrower social elite. Banneret was recognized as a social gradation, in the poll tax preamble of 1379 for example, and some bannerets were summoned to sit with the barons in parliament. Noble society was cemented by deeply shared values and ideals. At the same time, however, it was also imbued with a profound sense of rank.

The existence of a narrower elitism is reflected in the major series of heraldic glass. In the clerestory of York Minster, for example, the shields are overwhelmingly those of northern magnates.¹²² The arms in the Despenser mausoleum, originally thirty-three in number, represented predominantly the relations and connections of the lords of Tewkesbury together with some additional figures of regional importance.¹²³ The most exclusive elite of all was the one surrounding the king. The heraldry of the great east window at Gloucester points assuredly to the military companions of Edward III, even if it can no longer be associated exclusively with the battle of Crécy.¹²⁴ Finally, of course, it is in the context of a first – military and social – circle that we should understand the Order of the Garter.

These considerations help to explain why knighthood failed to become the basis of a caste nobility in England. Of at least equal significance in this respect was the relationship between knights and those directly below them socially. Just as knights fought with bannerets, so they fought alongside other mounted men-at-arms including those normally referred to in indentures of retainer as *valetti*. Many of these were of gentle rank, or at the very least on the margins of gentility. But it was

¹¹⁹ Marks, ‘Sir Geoffrey Luttrell’, 346.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 343–45.

¹²¹ *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1334–8*, 346; Given-Wilson, *op. cit.*, 62.

¹²² For a list of the shields see F. Harrison, *The Painted Glass of York* (London, 1927), 202–4.

¹²³ Rushforth, ‘The Glass in the Quire Clerestory of Tewkesbury Abbey’, 289–324.

¹²⁴ See J. Kerr, ‘The East Window of Gloucester Cathedral’, *Medieval Art and Architecture at Gloucester and Tewkesbury* (BAA Conference Transactions, vii, 1981), 1985, 116–29.

not only in war that knights rubbed shoulders with other *gentils*. The indentures themselves remind us that lords required service in time of peace. Within aristocratic social life knights mixed with other men who were considered to be of gentle stock. Non-knightly lords were often the seigniorial neighbours of knights. They lived cheek by jowl with them and they shared many of the same concerns. On the ground the new knighthood of the mid to late thirteenth century had created something of an artificial divide.

That divide was bridged to some extent by the development of social gradation; in the first instance by the arrival of the esquires. From then on, the future of the English upper class was to be increasingly characterized by a separation between a higher nobility and a gentry, with the knights forming, of course, the highest rank within the latter. The appearance of the esquire as a social rung belongs to the middle third of the fourteenth century. Heraldry, once again, provides the key to observing important social changes and takes us directly into the self-perceptions that accompanied them. The heraldic accommodation with the new squirearchy does not appear to have been achieved easily, or indeed overnight. It is not until the late fourteenth century that rolls of arms came to include substantial numbers of men who were not knights. The lost roll of Sir Robert Laton (c. 1370) may well have been the first.¹²⁵ The first steps were taken with the wider use of heraldic seals. By the beginning of the fourteenth century the rule that only knights could seal their documents heraldically was already beginning to break down. In the first instance, however, the dam was breached by the male relatives of knights, cousins and younger brothers of knighted heads of families, a development which perhaps tended to reinforce traditional distinctions.¹²⁶ But it was also being breached sporadically by others, including household *valetti* of the great lords who were using seals that reflected the arms of their masters.¹²⁷ By the time we come to the 1330s and 1340s, however, we find heraldic sealing spreading rapidly downwards to encompass not only ex-knightly families of ancient stock but also those, old and new, who had never been knightly.¹²⁸ That the dam remained intact for so long is a tribute to pride in lineage and to the exclusive nature of chivalric knighthood.

¹²⁵ See Maurice Keen, 'Heraldry and Hierarchy: Esquires and Gentlemen', in Jeffrey Denton (ed.), *Orders and Hierarchies in Late Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (London, 1999), esp. 98–100.

¹²⁶ Coss, 'Knights, Esquires and the Origins of Social Gradation in England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser., 5 (1995), 173–4.

¹²⁷ See Adrian Ailes, 'Up in Arms: The Rise of the Armigerous *Valettus*', in A. Curry (ed.), *Thirty Years of Medieval Studies at the University of Reading: A Celebration* (Reading, 1996), 9–15.

¹²⁸ Coss, 'Knights, Esquires and the Origins of Social Gradation in England', 174–8.

Edward III and the Symbol of the Leopard*

Caroline Shenton

THE epitaph on Edward III's tomb in Westminster Abbey describes him as the *invictus pardus* – the 'unconquered leopard'. This image was not the passing fancy of the king's eulogist, but the final manifestation of a personal symbol which Edward had used throughout his reign. The overwhelming impact which the Order of the Garter had on contemporaries, and the fascination which it has held for antiquarians and historians since, has obscured from us the essential importance of this other sign to Edward III, particularly in the first twenty years of his reign, and an investigation into it takes us back well before the foundation of the Garter, to the years of the king's minority.

The symbol of three golden leopards on a red field had, by the reign of Edward III, been established for over a century as the royal arms of England. The threefold design can be traced back to its origin in 1198, and – even before the reign of Richard I – Plantagenet kings used blazons of one or two lions.¹ Edward III was no different from his predecessors in his conventional use of the royal arms. In the accounts of the Great Wardrobe, which was the household department responsible for the purchase and production of decorative textiles for the king, there are numerous examples of these arms embroidered on clothes, hangings, bridles and other textiles, and enamelled on precious metal goblets and plates.² Royal plate was punched with a leopard's head to indicate its provenance, a royal sign so well-known that when goldsmiths were compelled by statute in 1363 to use a maker's mark, the leopard's head became known as 'the king's mark'.³

* I wish to thank Frédérique Lachaud and Nicola Coldstream for their comments on a very early version of this article given as a paper at the Medieval Dress and Textile Society conference on livery and official dress at the Courtauld Institute in 1993, and also Adrian Ailes for his comments and corrections to the heraldic content of this final article. All errors and omissions remain my own. All manuscript references relate to documents in the Public Record Office, London, unless otherwise stated.

¹ J.P. Brook-Little, *Boutell's Heraldry* (2nd edn, London, 1983), 207; J. Alexander and P. Binski (eds), *Age Of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400*, exhib. cat., Royal Academy of Arts (London, 1987), 57.

² For example, two entries of many among the Great Wardrobe rolls for 1333–34: E 101/386/18, fo. 72: two tapestries or carpets with the arms of England and the Lyonel in the corners; fo. 85, two banners with the arms of Lyonel, plus pennants.

³ Alexander and Binski (eds), *Age Of Chivalry*, 166, 257–8; C. Oman, 'The Bermondsey Dish', *Burlington Magazine*, xciv (1952), 24; *Jackson's Hallmarks*, ed. I. Pickford (Woodbridge, 1991), 11. See for example the entry in the Patent Rolls in January 1377 relating to 'a cup of the king's of white

It is likely that war, so often a driver of a change, precipitated a shift in the use of the royal arms in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. During wartime, the royal arms were embroidered on standards, tents and the textiles worn by warhorses.⁴ The leopard had often been used as an emblem of English armies under Edward I. During his reign, the Plantagenet arms were frequently displayed in battle, with the sign of the three leopards being used interchangeably to signal the king personally and the kingdom as a whole.⁵ Frédérique Lachaud, in her study of the material culture of Edward I's court, saw in this phenomenon all the attributes of a badge – a personal sign using a figure borrowed from a coat of arms, originating in the twelfth century, but 'generally not largely used before the 1320s or even later'.⁶ The sprig of broom adopted by the Plantagenets from which they took their name is perhaps the earliest-known badge, while the Prince of Wales' feathers and the Lancastrian swan motif are, of course, the best-known fourteenth-century examples, themselves partly a response to the increasing complexity of heraldic symbolism.⁷

It is perhaps no coincidence that some of the earliest surviving evidence of the use of badges, along with livery and uniforms, occurs in the Weardale campaign of July to August 1327.⁸ That year's disastrous foray into Scotland affected the king deeply. Chroniclers tell of him bursting into tears with rage and frustration at the escape of the enemy, and of him refusing to send a dowry or attend the marriage of his sister to David Bruce following the Treaty of Northampton.⁹ Once he gained his majority and overthrew the regency of his mother and Mortimer, Edward returned to Scotland to avenge his humiliation of a few years previously. There is reason to suppose that he was struck by the military 'signes' which he saw on campaign there. It may even be that he used a leopard badge himself on this occasion, though there is no evidence of this. It is certain though that over the next two decades or so, decorative heraldic leopards on the king's battle clothes and standards in war in Scotland and France had a profound effect on onlookers. The eulogistic war-poems written over the first twenty years of Edward's reign illustrate a shift in their writers' perceptions of Edward. The early poems of the visionary 'John of Bridlington' contain a number

silver, plain, marked with a leopard . . . and eight cups of the king's of white silver, marked without on their bottoms with leopards' (*Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1374–1377*, 405–6). I am grateful to Adrian Ailes for this last reference.

⁴ A fine surviving example of this sort of textile is the horse-trapper probably used by Edward III on his visit to Coblenz in 1338: see Alexander and Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry*, 202.

⁵ F. Lachaud, 'Textiles, Furs and Liveries: A Study of the Material Court of Edward I, 1272–1307' (Univ. of Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1992), 314: 'it is important to stress the multiplicity of the emblems unfurled by the armies of Edward I. However the cross of St George and the leopards were predominant. They both seem to have had a wider significance. This is particularly the case for the leopards, which are described both as "arms of England" and "arms of the king" in the accounts: the Plantagenet familial emblem was used to denote the kingdom'.

⁶ Lachaud, 'Textiles, Furs and Liveries', 174.

⁷ Alexander and Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry*, 59.

⁸ A.E. Prince, 'The Importance of the Campaigns of 1327', *English Historical Review*, 1 (1935), 301–2.

⁹ *Chronicon de Lanercost*, ed. J. Stevenson (Edinburgh, 1839), 260; Thomas Grey of Heton, *Scalacronica* (Maitland Club, Edinburgh, 1836), 155; *Brut*, ed. F.W.D. de Brie, 2 vols (Oxford, 1908), i, 251; C. Shenton, 'The English Court and the Restoration of Royal Prestige, 1327–1345' (Univ. of Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1995), 150–1.

of animal symbols used to describe the king. In these early years the poet's favourite image for Edward was that of the Bull. This cannot be an astrological reference to the sign of Taurus, because Edward was born in November rather than in May; it seems rather that the poet found in him the traditional archetype of the Bull: physical vigour, the ability to deflect weapons with its hide, and horns which were skilfully used in fights.¹⁰

The pseudonymous author's most famous poem, *The Prophecy of the Bull*, written in 1327, describes the bull as strong, chaste, just and without sin. Although the daring of the leopard is also alluded to here, it is clear that the Bull is the primary metaphor in use:

Taurus erit fortis metuens nil tristia mortis
 Sobrius est castus, justus sine crimine fastus
 Ad bona non tardus, audax veluti leopardus;
 Semper erit taurus viridiscens utpote laurus
 Fertilis et plenus nummorum semper egenus.
 Agmina vaccarum dependet vi propriarum;
 Hic subjugabit hostes, reges superabit;
 Vix mundo talis stauri ductor liberalis;
 Rex erit et custos, et diliget undique justos.¹¹

[The bull will be strong, fearing not the sadness of death,
 He is sober and chaste, just, without sin, proud,
 Quick to do right, daring as a leopard;
 The Bull will always be flourishing like the laurel tree,
 Fertile and full of wealth, ever-wanting.
 The marching army of his cows depends on his power;
 Here he will subdue his enemies, he shall conquer kings;
 Scarcely in the world exists such a leader of freedom;
 The king shall be both protector and judge, and will care for those all
 around.]

A change has come over contemporary poets by the late 1340s. The victory poems which followed the Crécy–Calais campaign are packed with references to Edward as a leopard. The image is so universal that it suggests the popular imagination was fired by the deliberate extension of the English royal arms to the king's own person. The poem, *An Invective against France*, written in the autumn of 1346, contains five references to leopards in eleven lines, with the boar appearing as a subsidiary image:

Tertius Edwardus, aper Anglicus et leopardus
 Rex tuus est verus; veniens tibi dente severus
 Cor tibi confregit, tua legit, multa subegit,

¹⁰ A. Payne, *Medieval Beasts* (London, 1990), 53.

¹¹ 'Gesta Edwardi de Carnarvan Auctore Canonico Bridlingtoniensi cum Continuatione ad AD 1377', *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols (Rolls Series, 1882–83), ii, 96.

Bella peregit, fortia fregit, jura redegit . . .
 . . . Rex leopardinus est juste rex Parisinus . . .
 Alia rubescunt, leopardus lilia crescunt;
 Per se vanescunt, leopardis victa quiescunt,
 Alia miscentur, leopardis regna tremiscunt;
 Lex, pax servantur, Francorum corda gemiscunt.¹²

[Edward III, the English boar and leopard
 Is truly your king; Coming to you he
 Shattered your heart with a fang, he rules you, he conquers many,
 He fights wars, he breaks strength, he restores laws . . .
 . . . the Leopard-like king is by right the French king . . .
 Others blush, the leopard grows lily-white;
 The vanquished conquered by the leopard are silenced,
 Others are thrown into confusion, the kingdoms of the leopard tremble;
 Law and peace are served, the hearts of the French groan.]

Meanwhile contrasting animal imagery is applied to France, where the enemy is characterized, among other images, as a lynx, a viper, a wolf, a siren and a snake in the grass:

Lynxea, viperea, vulpina, lupina, Medea
 Callida, syrena, crudelis, acerba, superba
 . . . anguis in herba.¹³

[Lynx, viper, fox, wolf, crafty
 Medea, siren, cruel, sharp, proud
 . . . snake in the grass.]

Another poem, *On the Battle of Neville's Cross*, written late in 1346, is in similar vein. The images of lion and leopard are interchangeable in this poem and the French are characterized as lowly, cowardly animals – the hare and the lynx – compared to the magnificent English lion:

Si valeas paleas, Valoyes, dimitte timorem;
 In campis maneat, pareas, ostende vigorem,
 Flos es, flore cares, in campis viribus ares,
 Mane techel fores, lepus es, lynx, non leo pares.
 Francia flos florum, caput olim nobiliorum,
 Iam contra mores leopardus tollit honores.¹⁴

[If you want to prevail, come out, Valois, show yourself;
 You stay in the fields, you prepare. Show your vigour!
 You are the flower, free of a bloom, thirsty in the fields with your men,
 May you remain blotched, you are a hare, a lynx, not equal to the lion.]

¹² *Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History*, ed. T. Wright, 2 vols (Rolls Series, 1859), i, 27, 31.

¹³ *Political Poems and Songs*, i, 26.

¹⁴ *Political Poems and Songs*, i, 40.

France, flower of flowers, once head of nobles,
Now against custom the leopard carries away the honours.

A clue to the origin of the connection between Edward III and this new image is found yet another poem of the mid 1340s, *On Crécy and Neville's Cross*. In the poet's mind, Edward III has become indistinguishable from the standard under which he fights. The English fight 'under the standard of the leopard', the leopard referring both to the decorative arms on the standard and to the king himself:

Plebs nitet Edwardi de gestu Machabaeorum
Laus patet Anglorum sub vexillo leopardi.¹⁵

[The people glow with the war-deed of Edward Maccabeus
Renown endures under the standard of the leopard of the English.]

Exactly what late medieval commentators meant when they used the word 'leopard' is a complex problem. Medieval bestiaries identified unpleasant qualities with the leopard or 'pard'. The pard itself was a symbol of the anti-Christ and was 'spotted with crimes and a variety of wrong-doings'.¹⁶ It was believed that the leopard represented corruption and sin, because the animal was the result of the unnatural mating of a lion with a pard. The leopard was bad-tempered and quick to anger so that when in a poem of the 1260s Henry III and Richard of Cornwall were both described as 'angry as leopards', it was not a flattering portrayal.¹⁷ The leopard, according to bestiaries, was cowardly and two-faced, changing its allegiance frequently, so that the civil wars of 1258–65 also provided an opportunity to compare the future Edward I with the leopard,¹⁸ most notoriously in *The Song of Lewes*, where the metaphor was used for its most unflattering reasons.¹⁹ It therefore seems strange that Edward III should have chosen to apply such an apparently damning analogy to himself.

There was, however, an alternative definition of 'leopard' which explains why Edward III was more than happy to use it as his personal sign. 'Leopard' meant not only a pard cross-breed, but also the heraldic lion 'passant gardant'. A lion walking about and looking around him was thought to be behaving like a leopard and so was known as a lion-leopardé. According to the devisors of heraldic symbols, a lion passant gardant behaved exactly in this way and on coats of arms it was viewed side-

¹⁵ *Political Poems and Songs*, i, 52.

¹⁶ Payne, *Medieval Beasts*, 22; R. Barber, *Bestiary* (Woodbridge, 1993), 35.

¹⁷ *Political Songs of England from the Reign of John to that of Edward II*, ed. T. Wright (Camden Soc., 1st ser., vi, London 1847), 65: 'Song of the peace with England': 'Le bon roi d'Ingleter se traina a i part/ Li et Trichart sa frer irrous comme lipart.'

¹⁸ *Political Poems and Songs*, i, 128, 163. In the poem, 'In Praise of the Young Edward', the prince is described as 'warlike as a pard' ('belliger ut pardus'). In the 'Song on the Scottish Wars', he 'puts to flight his adversaries like a leopard'.

¹⁹ M. Prestwich, *Edward I* (London, 1988), 24; *Political Songs of England*, i, 93–94; *The Song of Lewes*, ed. C.L. Kingsford (London, 1890), 14. Over a century later Cuvelier described the liberation of Poitiers from the English in 1372, which involved 'le liepart felon' being chased out of town and being forced to 'make his nest' elsewhere: *Chroniques de Bertrand du Guesclin*, ed. E. Charrière (Paris, 1839), ii, 268, vv. 21192–3. I am most grateful to Adrian Ailes for this latter reference.

ways with full face and paws outstretched, just as it was on the arms of England.²⁰ The lion passant gardant was very probably used by Henry II of England during his reign, and had been used even earlier by Roger II of Sicily, around 1130.²¹

Edward's III association then, was with the lion-like leopard rather than the pard-like leopard. The lion was the king of beasts, a symbol of Christ and an animal of 'great courage, power and resolution, but with a slowness to anger and a noble compassion, killing only when hungry, sparing the prostrate and allowing any prisoners it encountered to go home unscathed'.²² It was the archetypal representation of the kingly state. It is true that the use of an occasional leopard symbol to represent the royal person was not unknown before Edward III's reign. In 1245, Henry III had two leopard statues cast in bronze to stand beside his throne at Westminster.²³ On the marriage of Edward I's daughter, Margaret, to the duke of Brabant in 1297, her trousseau included a silver circlet of leopards.²⁴ But the frequency and variety of leopard symbols used by Edward III suggests that there was a concerted attempt on his part to use the image as a personal symbol in a far more sophisticated and imaginative way than that used by his predecessors. Henry III and Edward I's usage was almost unwitting. Edward III's was obviously deliberate.

The two main vehicles which transmitted the king's will throughout the kingdom were royal writs and royal currency, so it is not surprising that there is striking evidence of leopard symbolism in seals and coins. Although the lion passant gardant had been used on great seal matrices since 1198,²⁵ the noticeable development under Edward III was its increasing prominence in the design. On thirteenth-century seals leopards were an incidental part of the decoration. For example, there was the first seal of Henry III (1226) where tiny leopard heads were carved into bas-relief niches; or the seal of Edward I which showed two small lions under the king's foot, while two small lions leapt up either side of the throne.²⁶ Following this pattern, between 1327 and 1340 the obverse of Edward III's second seal, used in England and the Low Countries, also showed two small lions underfoot, with fleurs-de-lys while the king bore a shield with three lions passant gardant. But the

²⁰ Brook-Little, *Boutell's Heraldry*, 65: 'The early heralds . . . consequently blazoned him as a lion-leopardé, or merely as a leopard, though they always drew him as a stylized lion without spots or other leopard-like characteristics. So it is that the lions of England were sometimes blazoned as leopards.'

²¹ L.A.M. Mendola, 'Pre-Armorial Use of the Lion Passant Gardant and the Fleur-de-Lis as Heraldic Badges in Norman Sicily', *The Coat of Arms*, new ser., x (1994), 210.

²² Payne, *Medieval Beasts*, 19. In addition, those with curly manes were said to be peace-loving, while those with smooth manes were fierce (Barber, *Bestiary*, 23). Lion-like qualities were combined with descriptions of the leopards in certain other poems of Edward I's reign. In the 'Song on the Scottish Wars', he was described thus: 'Edward our King is entirely devoted to Christ/ He is quick to pardon and slow to vengeance'; further analogy of the king with the Lion, Christ and Justice occurred in the 'Song on the Times': *Political Songs of England*, 163, 197–201.

²³ H.M. Colvin, R. Allen-Brown and A.J. Taylor, *The History of the King's Works: The Middle Ages*, 2 vols (London, 1963), ii, 102; *Calendar of Close Rolls, 1242–1247*, 293.

²⁴ Lachaud, 'Textiles, Furs and Liveries', 174.

²⁵ W. de G. Birch, *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 3 vols (London, 1887), i, 14.

²⁶ Birch, *Catalogue of Seals*, i, 16, 19.

next seal (1338–40) had larger lions, no fleurs-de-lys and three lions passant gardant on either side of the throne, probably because it was intended to be used only in England. By the time of the casting of the fourth (1340), fifth (1340–47) and sixth (1340–72) seals the king is flanked by two lions sejant (sitting) gardant with long curly tails on the obverse, and the reverse showed a lion stantant (standing) gardant on a helmet.²⁷ The leopard appeared only on the great seal for two very good reasons. Firstly the practical: the privy seal and secret seals were only around an inch in diameter and thus too small for any complex design to be clear.²⁸ Secondly, the privy seal was circulated only among government personnel, whereas the great seal travelled on documents throughout the kingdom exposing the seal – and thus the leopard symbol – to a far wider audience.

Developments in currency came later than in seals. Edward III was the first English king to mint a coin incorporating a leopard in the design. Leopards had appeared on jetons, English Exchequer counters, in the reigns of Edward I and Edward II, but never before on coins.²⁹ The first period of innovation occurred between January and August 1344 when two new gold coins were produced. The new florin contained a design which showed the king enthroned and flanked by two leopards. The new half-florin displayed, on one side, a crowned leopard bearing the arms of England and France round its neck, and on the other was a quatrefoil design with a leopard in each angle. So powerful was the design of the half-florin that it was given the nickname ‘The Leopard’. (Plate 7) On Good Friday 1344 three of these half-florins were given in alms at Marlborough by the king, obviously keen to show off his new device.³⁰ A third coin, the quarter-florin, minted at the same time, displayed a helmet topped with a crowned leopard.³¹ A second period of leopard-inspired coinage began around 1357 with the striking of the Gascon *Léopard d’Or*: the coin showed a crowned leopard on one side, and four leopards round a quatrefoil on the other. (Plate 8) The reverse of the *Guyennois d’Or* coin of 1361–62 was quartered with tiny leopards and fleurs-de-lys; the Black Prince’s *Chaise d’Or* and the English quarter-noble of the 1360s were similarly quartered.³² It is noticeable that the earlier the coin, the larger the leopard image. This suggests that the leopard symbol was stronger at court in the 1340s; from the late 1350s onwards the strength of the image was becoming weaker. So moving back in time to the 1330s, there we may expect to discover the most startling examples of leopard symbols used by Edward III.

The height of Edward III’s enthusiasm for leopards was reached in the five-year period 1333–38. Three striking instances indicate that the leopard sign employed by

²⁷ Birch, *Catalogue of Seals*, i, 21–8.

²⁸ H.C. Maxwell-Lyte, *Historical Notes on the Use of the Great Seal of England* (London, 1929), 42–4.

²⁹ I am most grateful to Dr N.J. Mayhew of the Heberden Coin Room, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, for this information.

³⁰ E 36/204, fo. 76v. ‘In oblationibus domini regis . . . die Paraceves in capella sua apud Marlebergh in perceptum iij. florennum de leopardo perceptum cuius liberet vj.s. et v.d. sterlingus, secundo die Aprilis anno xviii^{mo}.’

³¹ Alexander and Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry*, 491.

³² Alexander and Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry*, 477–8, 492.



Plate 7. 'The Leopard' half-florin of 1344, obverse (British Museum 1915.5.7.573). © Copyright The British Museum



Plate 8. The Gascon *Léopard d'Or* of 1357, obverse (British Museum CM E3620). © Copyright The British Museum

him in the 1340s and 1350s was not a random choice of symbol. Firstly, the young king owned a menagerie. This is perhaps unsurprising since all of Edward's immediate ancestors owned small private zoos. Edward II owned a lion, with a special chain, collar and its own keeper, which travelled around with the royal household in a special cart.³³ Edward I is well-known to have been a keen falconer³⁴ and Henry III built an elephant house at the Tower of London for just such an animal given to him by Louis IX. The chamber was forty feet by twenty feet, so the animal only survived for three years and is, apparently, buried in the bailey.³⁵ The continental craze for royal menageries was stronger than the English fashion: Frederick II Hohenstaufen owned the most exotic and famous of them all, with camels, mules, dromedaries, apes, leopards, peacocks, lynxes, panthers, bears, an elephant and numerous birds.³⁶ In fourteenth-century Prague, lions were kept in the Lion Court of the castle, simply as a heraldic symbol.³⁷ Edward III certainly owned a bear, given to him by his brother-in-law, on the occasion of the marriage of Edward's sister Eleanor.³⁸

³³ H. Johnston, *Edward of Carnarvon* (Manchester, 1946), 86.

³⁴ Prestwich, *Edward I*, 115–17.

³⁵ Colvin, *King's Works*, ii, 715.

³⁶ E. Kantarowitz, *Frederick II* (1931), 311, 358, 404.

³⁷ S. Kadri, *Prague* (London, 1992), 217.

³⁸ E.W. Safford, 'An Account of the Expenses of Eleanor, Sister of Edward III, on the occasion of her Marriage to Reynald, Count of Guelders', *Archaeologia*, lxxvii (1927), 129: 'Philippo de Wyndesore, custodiendi ursam presentatam domino Regi Anglie per dominum comitem Gerlensem, super

However, on 15 August 1333 the Wardrobe foreign expense roll recorded a payment of half a mark to Berengar Caldron, or Caudron, a man described as 'keeper of the king's leopards'.³⁹ Berengar was Aragonese; we know that Edward I's menagerie keepers were also from Aragon, so perhaps there was a tradition of employing Spanish experts.⁴⁰ Where the animals may have come from is unknown, though we may guess that one possible route may have been North Africa via Spain or Italy. The following year, payment was made to Dino Forsetto, a favourite merchant of the king, for the expenses of two lions, three leopards and one mountain cat incurred between September and October 1333, but more significantly, for the transportation of two of the leopards and the wild cat from London to York in the autumn of 1334.⁴¹ (Plates 9, 10) Edward therefore seems to have taken his cats to the north when fighting in Scotland. On one level they could have been used for hunting.⁴² (Plate 11) On another, courtiers and those on campaign with the king must have seen, or heard rumours of, the animal companions of Edward and have been struck by them. Having the very animals of the royal arms present during the campaign may have been viewed as a lucky mascot, and would certainly have meant that the king was personally associated from that time in some people's minds with the exotic and dangerous animals. The animals were still alive and living in the Tower of London in 1337, when allowances for the leopards' food and wages for Berengar were paid out.⁴³ By April 1342 a man called Robert of Doncaster was keeper of a single lion and single leopard.⁴⁴ By May of the following year this number had risen to one lion and two leopards, and went down to one lion and one leopard again in November 1343.⁴⁵ In 1365 the Black Prince sent his father a present of a live leopard and a lion, to replenish the menagerie.⁴⁶ An entry in the issue roll for 1370 refers to seven beasts kept in the Tower and looked after by a man called William del Garderobe.⁴⁷

expensis suis eundo per aquam de Novo Magio usque Lescluses in Flandria, apud Novum Magium xxv^{to} die May, per manus propriam, 6s.'

³⁹ E 101/386/10, m. 2: 'Berengaro Caldron custodi leopardorum Regis de dono Regis . . . dimidiam marcam.'

⁴⁰ Lachaud, 'Textiles, Furs and Liveries', 182.

⁴¹ E 101/387/9, m. 2 (11 February 1335). The payments remained outstanding until 1337: *Calendar of Close Rolls, 1333–1337*, 412–13; *Calendar of Close Rolls, 1337–1339*, 67. The identity of the mountain cat can only be guessed at: perhaps it was a lynx, a wild cat or even a mountain lion. Wild cats are certainly known to have been objects of curiosity in the later middle ages: see plates 9 and 10.

⁴² That leopards, rather than dogs, were known to be used for hunting is indicated by the existence of a Lombardic sketch of a 'hunting leopard' from the fifteenth century: see plate 11.

⁴³ E 403/309, m. 3. 'Berengaro de Arragon custodi Leonum et Leopardorum in Turri Londoniae existentis in denariis liberatis eidem super vadiis suis et putura earundem bestiarum per breve de magno sigillo . . . xx.s.' Other payments can be found in E 403/294 (17 July 1337, 30 July 1337); E 403/297, fos 36–7 (23 February 1338); E 403/302 (26 October 1338); E 403/307 (9 December 1339); E 403/310 (June 1340); E 403/318 (1341) and *passim*.

⁴⁴ E 403/326 (30 April 1342).

⁴⁵ E 403/328 (8 May 1343); E 403/330 (25 November 1343). Payments continued through 1344 and 1345: E 403/332 (6 July 1344); E 403/336 m. 4 (October 1345).

⁴⁶ *Issues of the Exchequer from King Henry III to King Henry VI Inclusive*, ed. F. Devon (London, 1837), 184.

⁴⁷ *The Issue Roll of Thomas Brantingham, 44 Edward III*, ed. F. Devon (London, 1835), 388, 429.

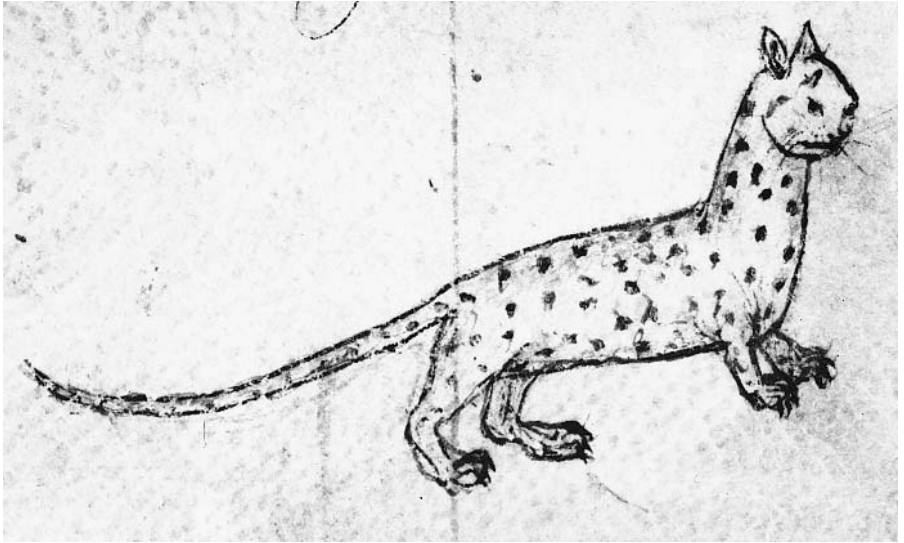


Plate 9. A spotted wild cat, fifteenth-century, Bodleian Library (MS Bodl. 546, fo. 40v). Reproduced by permission of the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford



Plate 10. A fifteenth-century wild cat, English, Bodleian Library (MS Douce 335, fo. 26v). Reproduced by permission of the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford

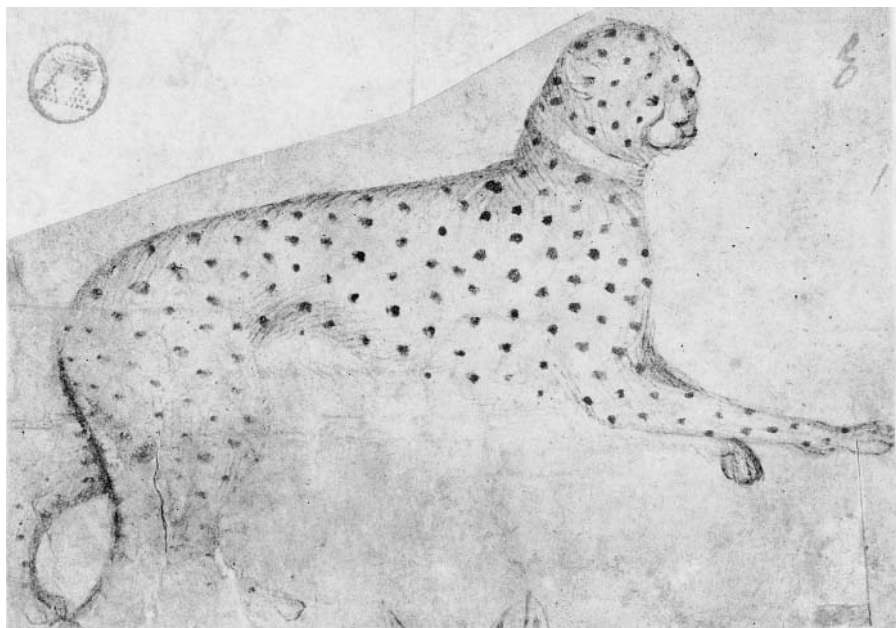


Plate 11. An early fifteenth-century hunting leopard, Lombard, Christ Church Picture Gallery (Cat. JBS 1058). Reproduced by permission of The Governing Body, Christ Church College, Oxford

A year after the first appearance of the leopards in the royal accounts, at the Dunstable tournament of January 1334, Edward appeared dressed incognito as a 'Monsieur Lyonel', in front of 115 other participants, nobles, the royal household and local people.⁴⁸ This was his most explicit use of the symbol yet, which fixed the person of the King as Leopard in the minds of his courtiers. Clearly, everyone knew who the mystery knight really was: the real surprise lay in the king's choice of identity. As Juliet Vale has pointed out, 'Lyonel' would have been known to most courtiers as the name of one of King Arthur's knights.⁴⁹ The name 'Leo' or 'Leon' was common in thirteenth-century France, and usually occurred in England as a Jewish name before the fourteenth century. It seems that 'Lionel' however, was Edward III's invention as a personal name rather than a mythological one; although the name 'Leonel' appears in the Hundred Rolls in 1273 it is clearly unlikely that this was any inspiration in 1334, especially when one considers the quantity of lion imagery elsewhere in his reign.⁵⁰ There is even some tentative evidence that outside the court,

⁴⁸ 'Roll of the Arms of the Knights at the Tournament at Dunstable, in 7 Edw. III', *Collectanea, Topographica et Genealogica*, iv (1837), 393: 'Mons[eiu]r Lyonel port d'argent ove une quarter de goules'; J. Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry: Chivalric Society and its Context, 1270–1350* (Woodbridge, 1982), appendix 12.

⁴⁹ Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry*, 68–9, 71.

⁵⁰ E.G. Withycombe, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names* (3rd edn, Oxford, 1990), 193, 197.

the name 'Lionel' was synonymous with the king by the mid-1330s. In a writ dated October 1336, addressed to Richard de Snowshill, a Yorkshire parson, a 'lawless man' (probably in fact the abbot of St Mary's, York) threatens the parson with violence if he remains in his post.⁵¹ The author calls himself 'Lionel, roi de la route de raveners' – a possible indication that the word 'king' and 'Lionel' were somehow linked in the writer's mind, and that 'Lionel' was somehow a name with a royal ring to it.

Finally, in 1338, Queen Philippa gave birth to a third son at Antwerp. He was christened Lionel.⁵² This, more than any other example, strikingly indicates how imaginative was Edward III's manipulation of the traditional imagery of English kingship. The diminutive coinage, 'Lionel', was not simply an affectionate play on words. 'Lyonellus' or 'little lion' – the meaning intended at the 1334 tournament – can also, obviously, be interpreted as 'son of the lion'.⁵³ May McKisack imagined that Lionel was so called for diplomatic reasons, making an association between his birth and the Lion of Brabant, Antwerp having been seized by the Dukes of Brabant in 1312. By naming his third son Lionel, Edward was able simultaneously to flatter his newly found allies and develop further his use of the sign of the leopard. From then on, Edward had a living metaphor, in the form of his son, to embody his view of kingship and the role of his family in sustaining that image.

We can now attempt a chronology of Edward's use of his personal symbol. There had been passing attempts at leopard symbolism during the reigns of Henry III and Edward I, but these do not appear to have been much more than a crude manipulation of the royal arms. During his minority however, Edward III struck on the idea of using the royal arms as a personal badge or emblem. By 1333 he owned at least three leopards and other exotic cats. In 1334 he wittily took the name of the leopard for himself in public, and later that year his pet leopards followed him to York and possibly on campaign in Scotland. In 1338 he baptized his second male heir with an original name meaning 'Son of the Leopard', bequeathing the symbol to the next generation of his family. By 1340, leopards had become a main feature on the Great Seal. In 1344, a newly-minted coin was called the Leopard, and from 1346 onwards the battle poems celebrating Edward's deeds became filled with images of him as leopard. From 1348, the Order of the Garter, and other Arthurian symbols for which Edward is better known, rose to prominence. It is also true that some minor symbols continued to be used for the king throughout his reign – for example, the 'boar' or the eagle (sometimes found on Edward III's helmets). However, the very effectiveness of the leopard as a personal emblem was also responsible for its decline. The successful prosecution of war in France demanded that a new symbol be instituted, which concentrated not on the king as an individual, separate from his com-

⁵¹ E.L.G. Stones, 'The Folvilles of Ashby-Folville, Leicestershire, and their Associates in Crime, 1326–1347', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., vii (1957), 134–5; J.R. Maddicott, 'The Birth and Setting of the Ballads of Robin Hood', *English Historical Review*, xciii (1978), 284.

⁵² Adam Murimuth, *Continuatio Chronicarum*, ed. E. Maunde-Thompson (Rolls Series, 1889), 87.

⁵³ Juliet Vale herself moves tentatively towards a link between the name Lionel and an association with leopards (Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry*, 68–9).

panions, but which emphasized the brotherhood and common purpose of his supporters; the Garter did this, but at the expense of the splendid and magnificent Leopard. The Black Prince attempted a revival of the Leopard through his own coinage and by replenishing the menagerie. But the Leopard's day had passed. Its success – from casual heraldic image in 1327 to all-pervasive symbol referring to Edward III by 1346 – lies in the king's single-minded manipulation of his public image in the court and beyond. In those years, the symbol changed from simile to metaphor. From being like a leopard at the age of sixteen, Edward III had actually metamorphosed into one twenty years later. Yet this early transformation was not totally forgotten after the Order of the Garter, for it explains why Edward, in death, was named as the invincible leopard for all eternity.

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Heraldry in Medieval England: Symbols of Politics and Propaganda*

Adrian Ailes

THROUGHOUT the middle ages heraldry was used in a variety of ways to symbolise politics and propaganda. In a secular society which was largely illiterate, and in which great significance was attached to outward trappings and social display, arms, banners and badges, often loaded with deep-seated significance but readily discernible to most, were swiftly enlisted in the war to win hearts and minds. Sometimes they were brazenly used as bold visual statements to encourage, persuade, and justify. They might openly speak of authority, presence, even political intent, while at other times, as with politics and propaganda, their message was much more subtle, particularly if their purpose was misrepresentation or even disinformation.

Heraldry appeared in the second quarter of the twelfth century. Yet as early as the mid-1170s William the Conqueror was deliberately being attributed with a shield of gold lions (possibly rampant) on a blue field which the then king, Henry II, very probably bore, thus symbolically reinforcing the important political message of Henry's Norman ancestry and, therefore, rightful claim to the Anglo-Norman throne.¹ Similarly Henry's own son and successor, Richard I, may well have adopted the now familiar three lions passant guardant coat of England to reinforce his right, again symbolically, to the kingdom over which he now ruled. Henry had probably borne a number of coats including one depicting two lions passant (possibly full-faced or 'guardant'). Whilst Richard was on Crusade, however, this coat was already being carried (doubtless with different tinctures) by various troublemakers at home, including Richard's brother, John count of Mortain. But by adopting arms very similar to these Richard was able to reaffirm his position as his father's rightful successor and to identify himself closely with the kingdom he was now determined to keep.²

* I am grateful to Professor Brian Kemp, Dr Anne Curry and Professor Nigel Saul for reading this paper and making useful suggestions.

Unless otherwise stated unpublished manuscript sources are in the Public Record Office, Kew.

1 G. Brault, *Early Blazon: Heraldic Terminology in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries with Special Reference to Arthurian Literature* (Oxford, 1972), 21.

2 A. Ailes, *The Origins of the Royal Arms of England: Their Development to 1199* (Reading, 1982), 57–8, 72–4.

Political considerations certainly lay behind the emperor Otto IV's marshalling his double-headed eagle with the lions of England sometime around the beginning of the thirteenth century. Although Otto was related to Richard and John (who was by now king) it was the close political alliance between Welf and Angevins against Capetian and Hohenstaufen that was primarily responsible for this rather curious chimerical combination.³ Similarly, although the barons Robert Fitzwalter and Saher de Quincy were cousins, it was doubtless their close political and military comradeship, first against Philip Augustus in Normandy and then against John in England, that they chose to emphasise by portraying each other's arms alongside their own on their respective equestrian seals.⁴

The long and troubled reign of the next king, Henry III, may have witnessed one of the first uses of heraldry to score political points by deliberately attempting to blacken the reputation of the opposition. The Trinity Apocalypse, now in Trinity College, Cambridge, has been dated on stylistic grounds to about 1255–60. (See plate III) In an Armageddon scene the arms *gules a lion rampant queue fourché argent* (a red shield charged with a white forked-tailed lion rampant) are prominently displayed amongst the forces of the Beast (or Antichrist).⁵ This blazon is none other than that of Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester, a prominent leader of the baronial reform movement, and from 1258 feared by the king as one of his most implacable opponents.⁶ If this manuscript, the most lavish of all thirteenth-century English apocalypses, was produced for Henry's queen, the significance of the Montfort arms, deliberately placed to the fore of the evil host, would surely not have been missed.

Likewise, in the Douce Apocalypse, the inclusion of de Montfort's forked-tail lion amongst the Devil's company would have been only too evident to the owners of the manuscript, Henry's heir, the Lord Edward, and his wife, Eleanor. So too, would the chevron banner of another leading rebel, Gilbert de Clare, earl of Gloucester, the so-called Red Earl, once again proudly borne above the forces of darkness.⁷ Shortly before 1270, when this manuscript was produced, relations

³ *Ibid.*, 61 and 106 n. 67; *Rolls of Arms, Henry III*, ed. T. Tremlett and H.S. London (Oxford, 1967), 15–16, 60; A. Murray, 'The Arms of Emperor Otto IV: English Influence on German Heraldry', *The Coat of Arms*, new ser., 11 (1995), 75–81 (and see 175); A. Rabbow, 'The Origin of the Royal Arms of England: A European Connection', *ibid.*, new ser., 13 (1999), 67–75 (67–8).

⁴ G. Henderson, 'Romance and Politics on Some Medieval English Seals', *Art History*, i, no. 1 (1978), 26–42 (32–8); J.C. Holt, 'Feudal Society and the Family in Early Medieval England, III: Patronage and Politics', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., xxxiv (1984), 1–25 (21–2).

⁵ Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.16.2, fo. 23 (Rev. xix.17–19); J. Alexander and P. Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England, 1200–1400*, exhib. cat., Royal Academy of Arts (London, 1987), 349–50.

⁶ De Montfort's arms: *Rolls of Arms: Henry III*, 37, 54 (where the colours are reversed) and (Glover's Roll), 115; Sir Anthony Wagner, *Historic Heraldry of Britain* (Chichester, 1972), 35. For Simon and the king: C. Knowles, *Simon de Montfort, 1265–1965* (London, 1965), 21, and J.R. Maddicott, *Simon de Montfort* (Cambridge, 1994), 149–50.

⁷ Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Douce 180: De Montfort's lion (incorrect tinctures) fo. 31, Clare arms fo. 87 (illustrated R. Dennys, *The Heraldic Imagination* (London, 1975), opp. 128). See also Alexander and Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry*, 351–2; *The Douce Apocalypse*, ed. A.G. and W.O. Hassall (London, 1961), 7.

between de Clare and the Lord Edward were fast deteriorating.⁸ It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that both de Montfort and de Clare found themselves heraldically portrayed among such evil company in this royal work.

This use of heraldry to blacken one's opponents was, however, rare until the fifteenth century. More common was the use of arms and badges to stress royal control, administration and dominion. During the reign of Henry III a shield bearing the royal arms was used on the Exchequer seal, privy seal and seal for Gascony, sometimes replacing the portrait of the king.⁹ During the reign of his successor, Edward I, cocket seals and the great seals for Ireland and Scotland followed a similar pattern.¹⁰ Later, the royal arms appeared on the seals of the common law courts and on shield-shaped weights, and thereafter, one or more lions were to feature often on the seals of royal officials.¹¹ In all these areas the use of the royal arms reflected the spread of English control and increasing royal bureaucracy. They came to represent not only the person and power of the king but also his wider governance and jurisdiction, especially with regard to the machinery of government.

From the beginning of the thirteenth century, if not before, individual leaders were referred to by the devices they carried. Writing around 1217 Gerald of Wales marvelled that he had seen the pards (or 'leopards' as lions passant guardant were now termed) and lions, presumably King John and his continental allies, turn tail at just the very scent of the French flower.¹² The *Song of Lewes*, written in 1264 by an ardent propagandist of the baronial cause, describes Edward I as a leopard (leo-pard), part brave and proud lion, but part unreliable and inconsistent pard.¹³ Edward III was to identify himself heavily with the royal symbol of a leopard in his struggles against France.¹⁴ As such men provided leadership around which their people could unite, so their personal emblems were extended to symbolise the wider family – the nation. A doodle sketched in an Exchequer memoranda roll depicts Edward I and Philip IV of France in 1297 glaring at one another alongside details of a truce in their bitter dispute over Gascony. (Plate 12) Here both men, *and* the

⁸ M. Prestwich, *Edward I* (London, 1988), 60–1, 70–1; M. Altschul, *A Baronial Family in Medieval England: The Clares, 1217–1314* (Baltimore, 1965), 126–8.

⁹ P. Chaplais, *Piers Gaveston: Edward II's Adoptive Brother* (Oxford, 1994), 37 and n. 77; H. Jenkinson, 'The Great Seal of England: Deputed or Departmental Seals', *Archaeologia*, lxxxv (1936), 293–338 (297, 308 and pl. lxxxix(2)).

¹⁰ J. Cherry, 'Heraldry as Decoration in the Thirteenth Century', in W.M. Ormrod (ed.), *England in the Thirteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1989 Harlaxton Symposium* (Stamford, 1991), 123–34 (131–2); T. Madox, *History and Antiquities of the Exchequer of the Kings of England*, 2 vols (London, 1769), i, 782–3; Jenkinson, 'Great Seal of England: Deputed or Departmental Seals', 319, pl. xcv(2). Under Edward III cocket seals often bore the king's head above a leopard, e.g., E 122/220/51 (Boston); these are similar to Statute Merchant seals, e.g., E 326/B6457 (Coventry), which date from at least 1312 (*Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, 2nd ser., vii (1877), 107–19).

¹¹ Jenkinson, 'Great Seal of England: Deputed or Departmental Seals', pls lxxxv(2), lxxxvi(1–3); Cherry, 'Heraldry as Decoration', 131–2 (cf. C. Beaune, *The Birth of an Ideology: Myths and Symbols of Nation in Late Medieval France*, trans. S.R. Huston, ed. F.L. Cheyette (California, 1991), 203); W. de Gray Birch, *Seals* (London, 1907), 60–1.

¹² Giraldus Cambrensis, 'De Principis Instructione Liber' in *Opera*, ed. G. Warner (Rolls Series, 1891), viii, 320–1. For 'pards' see Shenton, pp. 69–81, above.

¹³ Prestwich, *Edward I*, 24.

¹⁴ See Shenton, pp. 71–4, above.



Plate 12. Doodle in Exchequer memoranda roll, 1297, depicting Edward I (left) confronting Philip IV of France. Both men can be identified by their personal heraldic devices (PRO E 368/69 m. 54). Reproduced by permission of the Public Record Office, Kew

nations they represent, are clearly identified by their heraldic devices overhead – the leopard of England turning itself round to confront the lily of France.¹⁵ And in a somewhat nationalistic manuscript vignette from the border of a psalter dating to between about 1361 and 1373 Edward III, dressed in the royal arms, rides triumphantly astride a rearing English lion. He is shown accepting in surrender a sword and shield of France from John II, the French king captured at Poitiers in 1356.¹⁶

Heraldic emblems were thus being increasingly used to help foster a sense of national identity. If they were divinely sanctioned so much the better. Nowhere was this more keenly demonstrated than by those ‘most Christian kings’ of France, as they liked to call themselves. By 1316 the lilies were being identified with the Trinity, and during the 1330s a series of poems helped confirm and popularise their divine origins.¹⁷ From the 1350s the conflict with England in the so-called Hundred Years War spurred the French to produce various official texts on the celestial provenance of the lily and treatises on its symbolism. The mystic flowers were thus being consciously exploited in a propagandist way to promote political ideology and practical policy, namely the sacred kingship of France, the unique piety of its people, and the legitimacy of the Valois succession to the crown in 1328.

Their foes, the English kings, on the other hand, appear to have made no attempt to contrive or foster legends suggesting a divine provenance for their own lions passant guardant. That the beasts did, however, receive heavenly approval is suggested by two miniatures from the sumptuously illuminated Treatise of Walter of Milemete presented to the young Edward III in early 1327 shortly after his accession. In the first the king receives the royal arms of England from St George himself. (Plate 13) In the second the same arms are held (or possibly handed down from heaven) by an angel while the king kneels before the Throne of Grace.¹⁸

Edward III’s most famous use of heraldry was undoubtedly his decision to quarter the French royal arms with those of England. It was not, however, the first or last time that arms were to be interpreted as symbolic statements of political intent. In May 1325 Henry of Lancaster, earl of Leicester and cousin to the king (then Edward II), was accused of treason. One of the charges brought against him was that he had ceased to bear his own arms, the royal arms surmounted by a blue bend, and had adopted instead those of his late brother, Thomas earl of Lancaster, who had been executed for treason in 1322; Thomas had borne the arms, England with a label of France.¹⁹ Henry’s assumption of the arms of his brother was taken as a grave

¹⁵ E 368/69, m. 54.

¹⁶ British Library Egerton MS 3277, fo. 68v; Alexander and Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry*, 503.

¹⁷ For the divine origins of the *fleurs de lis* and their popularisation by French monarchs see Beaune, *Birth of an Ideology*, 210–25, and W.H. Hinkle, *The Fleurs de Lis of the Kings of France, 1285–1488* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1991).

¹⁸ Oxford, Christ Church MS 92, fos 3, 5; M. Michael, ‘The Iconography of Kingship in the Walter of Milemete Treatise’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, lvii (1994), 35–47 (39–40 and pls 1(b) and 3(b)); cf. the secret seal (1359) of David II of Scotland (H. Laing, *Impressions from Ancient Scottish Seals*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1850–66), i, no. 29, pl. 1 no. 4).

¹⁹ *The Life of Edward the Second*, ed. N. Denholm-Young (London, 1957), 137–8. *Rolls of Arms of Edward I*, ed. G. Brault, 2 vols (London, 1997), ii, 153–4; ‘Examples of Medieval Seals’, *Archaeological Journal*, x (1853), 325–37 (329–30).



Plate 13. Miniature from the *Milemete Treatise*, c. 1327, depicting Edward III receiving (somewhat warily it seems) the royal arms of England from St George, suggesting divine approval (Christ Church, Oxford, MS 92, fo. 3). (Photograph by Jane Inskipp.) Reproduced by permission of The Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford

insult to Edward II. In reply Henry, who had after all taken no part in his brother's rebellion, claimed that he had not adopted the arms of his brother but rather those of his father which were his by hereditary right, especially as his older brother had died without issue. No proceedings were in the end taken against him, but the episode is noteworthy for shedding light on the political importance that could be attached to the adoption of a particular coat.

This important sensitivity to arms as statements of political intent was most famously and forcefully expressed by Edward III in January 1340 when he formally assumed the title of king of France, and, as a symbol of his pretensions, quartered the French royal arms before his own. This action may have been a direct result of political expediency – a shrewd diplomatic move on the part of Edward to appease his Flemish allies who, it is said, had insisted that the English king adopt the French title and arms in order to release them from their homage (and financial debts) to Philip IV and thus allow them to join with Edward in an important military alli-

ance.²⁰ Whatever the precise reasons for the assumption of the French lilies in 1340, the new quarterly coat represented a clear signal of Edward's self-proclaimed position, dynastic ambitions, and war aims – a bold visual statement of intent by an image-conscious king to consolidate a spectacular political act.

Although Edward's earlier attempt in 1328 to claim the French throne by right of his mother Isabella, daughter of Philip IV, had proved unsuccessful, something of the young king's continental designs, and perhaps those too of his French mother, may be evident from their use of heraldry at this early date. On his accession Edward immediately added two *fleurs de lis* from the arms of France to the great seal of his father, Edward II, so that he could continue to use it whilst his new great seal was produced. This was not a particularly significant measure since the new Edward II had likewise added two castles to his late father's seal in honour of his mother, Eleanor of Castile. However, instead of dropping these temporary marks of difference on his second great seal (already a distinctive design) Edward III deliberately chose to retain the French royal symbols, indeed, giving them even greater prominence.²¹ This was at a time when a number of French families were adopting the *fleur de lis* to proclaim their descent from St Louis and the *princes de lis*. Thus, even at the outset of his reign it appears that Edward (or Isabella) for political and propagandist reasons was deliberately seeking to incorporate this French dynastic symbol into the official iconography of England. Moreover, the Milemete Treatise, presented to the new king in early 1327 shortly after his accession, depicts a shield bearing England quartering France (in that order). This presumably represented either Edward or his mother, or perhaps even both.²² As queen, Isabella had used a counterseal bearing the arms of England quartering France, Navarre and Champagne (for her father and mother).²³ In February 1329 she gave her son a gold goblet and ewer both enamelled on the base with the arms of England and France quarterly.²⁴ And from at least July 1331 her exquisite Exchequer seal bore simply England quartering France flanked by a leopard's head and a lily.²⁵ (Plate 14)

The idea of quartering the two royal arms was, therefore, hardly new in English court circles, yet the date 1340 was a major break with the past and an important

²⁰ *Chronique de Jean le Bel*, ed. J. Viard and E. Déprez, 2 vols (Paris, Société de l'Histoire de France, 1904), i, 167–8.

²¹ Alexander and Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry*, 494.

²² Christ Church MS 92, fo. 45v; M. Michael, 'The Little Land of England is Preferred before the Great Kingdom of France: The Quartering of the Royal Arms by Edward III', in D. Buckton and T. Heslop (eds), *Studies in Medieval Art and Architecture presented to Peter Lasko* (Stroud, 1994), 113–26 (115 and fig. 1). Isabella is also depicted with her more usual coat, England dimidiating France, and Edward with his three lions coat (Michael, 'Little Land', 116 and fig. 2).

²³ L. Cl. Douët d'Arcq, *Archives de l'empire: collection de sceaux*, 3 vols (Paris, 1863–68), 10021 (1326); W. de G. Birch, *Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum* [hereafter BM], 6 vols (1887–1900), 800.

²⁴ E361/2 rot. 31 m. 1; E101/384/1 fo. 16v. Before 1340 Edward also possessed a silver gilt basin with the same quarterly arms (E361/2 rots 16 m. 2, 39 m. 2; E101/388/9 fo. 23v).

²⁵ E43/703, E43/300. See also H. Johnstone, 'The Queen's Exchequer under the Three Edwards', in J.G. Edwards, V.H. Galbraith and E.F. Jacob (eds), *Historical Essays in Honour of James Tait* (Manchester, 1933), 143–53 (149–50); I am grateful to Anne Crawford for drawing this work to my attention.



Plate 14. Two impressions, dating to 1331, of the Exchequer seal of Isabella, daughter of Philip IV of France and widow of Edward II of England, clearly showing the arms of England (three leopards) quartering those of France (*fleurs de lis*) (PRO E 43/300 and E 43/703). Reproduced by permission of the Public Record Office, Kew

political watershed which found heraldic expression at the highest level. Edward was now formally and very publicly adopting the French title and royal arms, and, for the first time, was combining them with the English coat on his own seals. Moreover, in recognition of the more ancient and more illustrious status of his new kingdom he now quartered the French lilies *before* the English leopards.²⁶ Contemporaries noted that it was a serious matter to take the arms and title of a country which had not yet been conquered, and Edward took great pains to justify his actions in a manifesto addressed to the people of France.²⁷ Even the pope was later to try and dissuade the English king from continuing to include the French arms on his shield.²⁸

Henceforth, Edward employed the French lilies with enormous enthusiasm. From January 1344 coins bearing his titles as king of England and France incorporated the *fleurs de lis* and the quarterly arms. By 1348 his gold *écus* for Aquitaine even displayed the shield of France on its own.²⁹ Coinage was a quick and easy way to impress the local populace – the designs constituting a kind of propaganda in the pocket. In at least one case Edward was depicted on an illuminated charter as a French king dressed in blue robes lined with *fleurs de lis*.³⁰ Even after 1360, when he renounced the French title under the terms of the Treaty of Brétigny, Edward continued to use the quarterly coat. In 1366 he sent an agreement to Charles V in which the opening capital letter E (for Edward) encircled his quarterly arms and was decorated with two English lions supporting (possibly grasping) the French *fleur de lis*. This may well have been deliberately provocative.³¹

The French were, not surprisingly, indignant at the English arrogation of their sacred symbol. In July 1340 Philip VI is said to have been feverish with anger on seeing Edward's new great seal depicting the French royal arms and title.³² One of the reasons why Charles V may have reduced the number of lilies on his royal arms to three in about 1365 was simply to distinguish them from the version usurped by

²⁶ Geoffrey le Baker's statement (*Chronicon Galfridi le Baker de Swynebroke*, ed. E.M. Thompson (Oxford, 1889), 66–7) that in 1339 Philip VI was content for Edward to adopt the quarterly coat but angry he had placed England before France and on his seals called himself king of France is confusing. As already noted Edward (or Isabella) used England quartering France before 1340 but the reference to seals suggests sometime after February 1340. Edward and his family did occasionally use the quarterly coat reversed after 1340 ('Examples of Medieval Seals', 330, and Edward's charter (E 30/1105) granting Aquitaine as a principality to the Black Prince in 1363); cf. Michael, 'The Little Land', 118.

²⁷ *Chronique de Jean le Bel*, i, 167–8; J. le Patourel, 'Edward III and the Kingdom of France', *History*, xliii (1958), 173–89 (180).

²⁸ In 1345 (*Knighon's Chronicle, 1337–96*, ed. G. Martin (Oxford, 1995), 53); cf. *The Westminster Chronicle, 1381–94*, ed. L. Hector and B. Harvey (Oxford, 1982), 491.

²⁹ Alexander and Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry*, 490–2, 477.

³⁰ Charter dated 30 October 1373; E. Danbury, 'English and French Artistic Propaganda during the Period of the Hundred Years War: Some Evidence from Royal Charters', in C. Allmand (ed.), *Power, Culture and Religion in France, c.1350–c.1550* (Woodbridge, 1989), 75–97 (80 and pl. 2).

³¹ *Ibid.*, 86.

³² *The Wars of Edward III: Sources and Interpretations*, ed. C. Rogers (Woodbridge, 1999), 92; cf. the reaction of Charles V (Hinkle, *Fleurs de lis*, 43–4 and 188 n. 25).

England.³³ Ordinary French folk would not have taken too kindly to a gift from one of their fellow compatriots sent to the English at Honfleur, probably in 1346. This consisted of a sheep with the cross of St George painted across its shoulders and head, and the *fleur de lis* on its rear.³⁴ Some French manuscript illuminators ignored the quarterly coat and portrayed the English using only the three lions passant guardant.³⁵ Neither did the French take too kindly to the intrusion of the leopard in their midst. To scornful French writers the English beast was *le liepart felon*, to be chased out of town and to make his nest elsewhere.³⁶ It is not surprising, therefore, that, in January 1450, while the English were being expelled from Normandy, the French council ordered the removal of the arms of England from the castle and palace at Rouen since they were offensive reminders of the English occupation of the duchy.³⁷

The English kings certainly used the French arms, their quarterly coat, and their leopard symbol to promote their continental ambitions and war aims. The quarterly coat and the leopard were also enrolled as symbols of authority and possession. A grant to John Sperston dated January 1406 of the island of Alderney, which had been plundered by the French, requests that he repair the highest tower of the fortress there 'with the arms of England to remind and inform all who pass by that the island is held of the crown of England forever'.³⁸ From 1355, just as his son, the Black Prince, was about to invade the Languedoc, Edward III struck a new coin, the *léopard d'or*, portraying a magnificent crowned lion passant guardant (see above, plate 8), while Henry V, who did so much to revive his great-grandfather's claim to France, occasionally substituted the quarterly coat for the lily shield or sometimes replaced the *fleur de lis* with the English leopard on his Anglo-Gallic coinage struck between 1417 and 1422.³⁹ The Lancastrians also introduced the quarterly coat and

³³ Charles may have reduced the number to three in honour of the Holy Trinity and in response to the increasingly popular legend of Clovis receiving *three* golden *fleurs de lis* from heaven. It was not the first time that only three lilies were used, nor was the former coat totally abandoned. See Hinkle, *Fleurs de lis*, 42–3. The English kings did not follow suite until about 1406.

³⁴ Paris, Archives Nationales, Collection Lenoir, 22, fos 205–12. The date is mid-fourteenth century but probably refers to Edward III's march through lower Normandy in 1346. I am grateful to Dr Anne Curry for this reference; Beaune notes that 'an attack on the lilies became a horrible crime, a case of *lèse majesté*, because its victim was the Royal Dignity even more than the person of the king' (*The Birth of an Ideology*, 213).

³⁵ For example, British Library MS Cotton Nero E II, pt ii, fos 152v, 154v and 166, and Bibliothèque Nationale de France MS fr. 2813, fo. 399; I am grateful to Dr Justin Clegg for help with these references. See also L. Visser-Fuchs, 'Edward IV's "memoir on paper" to Charles, Duke of Burgundy: The so-called "Short Version of the Arrivall"', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, xxxvi (1992), 167–227 (201).

³⁶ Hinkle, *Fleurs de lis*, 57–8.

³⁷ C. Allmand, *The Hundred Years War: England and France at War c. 1300–c. 1450* (Cambridge, 1988), 138. When Paris fell in 1436 coins depicting the arms of France and England were systematically taken out of circulation (G. Thompson, *Paris and its People under English Rule: The Anglo-Burgundian Regime, 1420–1436* (Oxford, 1991), 239).

³⁸ *Calendar of Signet Letters of Henry IV and Henry V, 1399–1422*, ed. J.L. Kirby (London, 1978), 114.

³⁹ Alexander and Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry*, 477 and see also 490–2. Edward's *léopard* may, in fact, depict the lion of Aquitaine rather than the English lion (L.M. Hewlett, *Anglo-Gallic Coins* (London, 1920), xiv). J.W. McKenna, 'Henry VI of England and the Dual Monarchy: Aspects of

leopard into some Norman seals.⁴⁰ Under the Treaty of Troyes Henry's infant son, Henry VI, succeeded to the thrones of both England and France in 1422. The regent, John duke of Bedford, and his Anglo-French administration were very eager to persuade the local populace of the legitimacy of the dual monarchy and immediately issued coins juxtaposing the quarterly coat of England with the arms of France.⁴¹ Henry's seals for French affairs likewise bore the French arms and the English quarterly coat alongside each other.⁴² He even employed a Fleur de Lis Herald to treat with the French.⁴³

Much was done by the English on both sides of the channel to promote the dual monarchy and justify its existence. In a further attempt to win over French public opinion into accepting the boy king, Bedford commissioned a poem in 1423 explaining Henry's descent from the royal houses of England and France united in the person of the young king. Both poem and an accompanying genealogy were posted together on the walls of Notre Dame and doubtless in other churches under English occupation. A magnificent version of the family tree appears at the beginning of a book of poetry and romances presented to Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry VI, by John Talbot, earl of Shrewsbury in 1444. (See plate IV) The heraldry in this splendid piece of pictorial propaganda not only helped viewers understand what was being depicted, but, by portraying the French lilies in the background to the English line as far back as Edward III, reasserted the now well established dynastic claim of the English kings to the throne of France.⁴⁴

Henry's two coronations, in England in 1429 and in France at the end of 1431, also provided splendid opportunities to impress upon the public imagination the dual regality of their new king, and heavy propagandist use was made of the twin

Royal Political Propaganda, 1422–1433', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, xxviii (1965), 145–62 (146–7 and pl. 26(h, i)).

⁴⁰ G. Demay, *Inventaire des sceaux de la Normandie* (Paris, 1881), nos 1848, 1854, 1861, 1869, 1876, 1904, 1918, 1921, 1926, 1930, 1945; the quarterly shield and leopards were dropped after the loss of Normandy; A. Curry, 'Lancastrian Normandy: The Jewel in the Crown?', in D. Bates and A. Curry (eds) *England and Normandy in the Middle Ages* (London, 1994), 251. Gascony continued to use the three leopards alone on its seals, as it was held by the kings of England not in their capacity as kings of France (Malcolm Vale, *English Gascony, 1399–1453* (Oxford, 1970), 80–1, 107–8).

⁴¹ McKenna, 'Henry VI of England and the Dual Monarchy', 146–51, and pl. 26(d,e,g,i).

⁴² Henry VI used four seals for French affairs: two great seals (i) A.B and A. Wyon, *The Great Seals of England* (London, 1887), 79B, 80B; and BM 294; being D'Arcq, *Collection de sceaux*, 10041 dated 1425; (ii) Wyon 79C, 80C (at least 1429 x 1440); BM 297–99 (1436 x 1440); D'Arcq, 10042 (1430); and two *sceaux ordonnés*: (iii) Wyon 79D, 80D; BM 293; D'Arcq 10043 (1423); Jenkinson, 'Great Seal of England: Deputed or Departmental Seals', pl. 89 (3 and 4); and (iv) Wyon 79E, 80E; BM 296 (1435) being a mere fragment and an odd design for a *sceau ordonné* since it depicted the king enthroned, but see Jenkinson, 'Great Seal of England: Deputed or Departmental Seals', 311.

⁴³ J. Anstis, *The Register of the Most Noble Order of the Garter from its Cover in Black Velvet Usually Called the Black Book*, 2 vols (London, 1724), ii, 110; W.H. Godfrey and A. Wagner, *College of Arms Monograph 1963* (London, 1963), 258; Thompson, *Paris and its People under English Rule*, 233.

⁴⁴ British Library MS Royal 15 E VI, fo. 3; B.J.H. Rowe, 'King Henry VI's Claim to France in Picture and Poem', *The Library*, 4th ser., xiii (1933), 77–88; McKenna, 'Henry VI of England and the Dual Monarchy', 151–3 and pl. 27.

royal shields of the French lilies and the English quarterly coat.⁴⁵ The English were clearly proud of the lilies. In his magnificent book of hours, commissioned in 1423 as a present for Ann of Burgundy and later presented to Henry VI, Bedford incorporated a miniature of the popular French legend in which Clovis receives the *fleurs de lis* from God.⁴⁶ After the execution of Joan of Arc in 1431 Henry VI, in a letter intended for widespread circulation, accused her of great outrage, pride and presumption in demanding to have 'the very noble and excellent arms of France', which she had obtained in part from Charles VII and bore in the field.⁴⁷

With the weakening of the English hold on the continent the symbolic union of the two crowns represented by the juxtaposition of the leopards and lilies in public ceremonial and on seals and coins appears to have given way to a new emphasis. Henceforth, the red cross of the warrior knight, St George, was given a greater symbolic role as a propagandist motif of English force and occupation. In 1435 Parisians were ordered to wear the St George's cross and in March 1436 no other badge was to be worn in the capital.⁴⁸ In June of the same year eleven standards and a banner bearing the cross of St George were ordered for placing on the gates, castle and key points in Rouen, doubtless as a reminder of English rule.⁴⁹

The Hundred Years War also witnessed one of the most important developments in the use of heraldry to provide symbols of politics and propaganda, namely the increasing use of the badge. It was, in fact, very probably contact between the two opposing courts, that was responsible for the introduction of the badge in France.⁵⁰ This rise of the badge in England was closely connected with the growing practice of 'livery and maintenance', or more strictly livery and retaining. Under this system lords and magnates protected and maintained sometimes large numbers of men of various backgrounds to whom they regularly gave 'liveries'; in return the patron received armed support and other services. Livery could take the form of clothes, hoods, or badges. Of these, badges proved the most popular form of livery, since they could be cheaply produced and easily distributed. In 1454 the duke of Buckingham, for example, ordered the production of 2,000 'bends [bands, possibly armbands or sashes] with knots' so that he could quickly mobilise a force of men, the Stafford family badge being an heraldic knot.⁵¹ From the 1360s such devices were

⁴⁵ For the two coronations see *ibid.*, 157–8; B. Wolffe, *Henry VI* (London, 1981), 48–51, 60–2; and Thompson, *Paris and its People under English Rule*, 203–4.

⁴⁶ McKenna, 'Henry VI of England and the Dual Monarchy', 155 and pl. 28a.

⁴⁷ *Procès de condamnation de Jeanne d'Arc*, ed. P. Tissett, 3 vols (Société de l'Histoire de France, 1960–71), i, 426–7; ii, 372; Jean de Waurin, *Recueil des croniques et anchiennes istories de la Grant Bretagne*, ed. W and E.L.C.P. Hardy, 5 vols (Rolls Series, 1864–91), iii, 398. For Joan's denial of her arms (possibly to protect Charles VII) see *Procès de condamnation*, i, 114, 269–70, ii, 106, 227, iii, 118–19.

⁴⁸ Thompson, *Paris and its People under English Rule*, 173, 232.

⁴⁹ C. Allmand, *Lancastrian Normandy, 1415–1450: The History of a Medieval Occupation* (Oxford, 1983), 189.

⁵⁰ D. Bruna, 'De l'agréable à l'utile: le bijou emblématique à la fin du Moyen Âge', *Revue Historique*, 301/1 (1999), 3–22 (7).

⁵¹ N. Saul, 'The Commons and the Abolition of Badges', *Parliamentary History*, ix (1990), 302–15 (309).

hung pendant from, or incorporated into, a more exclusive form of livery – metal-mounted riband collars.⁵²

Whatever form it took, livery proclaimed that the wearer was a member of a larger affinity and belonged to a certain household or owed allegiance to its master or patron. By implication livery indicated adherence to the cause of that person or house. Worn by large numbers it could present a dramatic visual expression of political force. When Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry VI, made her son, Edward Prince of Wales, distribute livery blazoned with the Lancastrian swan badge before her defeat at Blore Heath in 1459, it was in the firm, but misguided, hope that it would rally support for him and actively strengthen her political aims.⁵³ Thus livery, and in particular badges, brought heraldry very much into the political arena, both on a local and a national level. In the regions and shires, bands of ruffians, local mafias who believed their lord's badges granted them immunity, assaulted enemies and damaged property. In February 1468 John Talbot, earl of Shrewsbury, distributed his badge of a white (talbot) dog to a gang of nineteen or more local youths recruited specifically to attack Lord Grey of Codnor⁵⁴ (plate 15). Such excesses resulted in a series of parliamentary statutes and ordinances from 1390 onwards attempting to curb and sometimes abolish the granting and receiving of livery.

On a national level the badge and the livery collar truly entered politics in the reign of Richard II. In 1377 a London mob attempting to lynch John of Gaunt tore the livery collar (doubtless of linked Ss) from the necks of his retainers, and in January 1394 the earl of Arundel complained in parliament that the king and his household were wearing Gaunt's collar – a sign of undue favour on Richard's part towards his powerful uncle.⁵⁵ The inclusion of the French king's livery collar of broom-cods round the neck of the young Richard II kneeling in the Wilton Diptych probably reflects the friendlier relations between the courts of England and France in the year before Richard's marriage to the six-year-old daughter of Charles VI in March 1396.⁵⁶

As the fourteenth century drew to a close Richard deliberately sought to create a royal affinity, whose members were to express their loyalty to him in their use of the white hart badge.⁵⁷ During his downfall the badge became a symbol of the king's

⁵² C.E.J. Smith, 'The Livery Collar', *Coat of Arms*, new ser., 8, no. 151 (1990), 238–53.

⁵³ J. Lander, *The Wars of the Roses* (Gloucester, 1990), 63–4.

⁵⁴ A.J. Pollard, *The Wars of the Roses* (London, 1988), 51; cf. a fifteenth-century lead talbot badge now in the British Museum (*British Heraldry from its Origins to c. 1800*, ed. R. Marks and A. Payne (London, 1978), 36). For Percy supporters using their crescent badge see C. Given-Wilson, *The Royal Household and the King's Affinity: Service, Politics and Finance in England, 1360–1413* (New Haven and London, 1986), 242.

⁵⁵ A. Goodman, *John of Gaunt: The Exercise of Princely Power in Fourteenth-Century Europe* (Harlow, 1992), 217; R. Lightbown, *Medieval European Jewellery* (London, 1992), 246. See also D. Fletcher, 'The Lancastrian Collar of Esses: Its Origins and Transformation down the Centuries', in J. Gillespie (ed.), *The Age of Richard II* (Stroud, 1997), 191–204.

⁵⁶ M.V. Clarke, 'The Wilton Diptych', in L.S. Sutherland and M. McKisack (eds), *Fourteenth-Century Studies* (Oxford, 1937), 272–92 (278–82). For a succinct summary of interpretations of the Diptych see N. Saul, *Richard II* (New Haven and London, 1997), 304–9.

⁵⁷ See, for example, *ibid.*, 244, 265–6 and fig. 8.



Plate 15. Lead talbot livery badge, fifteenth-century. The dog's collar contains the opening two letters, 'ta. . .' presumably for Talbot (BM M & LA 1933.3–8.3).
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cause. In July 1399, Henry Bolingbroke, now calling himself duke of Lancaster and soon to be Richard's successor, arrived in Warwick. He ordered the stone hart badge of Richard and the hind badge of Thomas Holand earl of Kent and duke of Surrey to be knocked down from the gate of the castle there.⁵⁸ In the following month he imprisoned one of Richard's household esquires, the 'indestructible' Navarrese, Janico Dartasso, for consistently refusing to take off his collar of the white hart, and submit to the Lancastrian cause.⁵⁹ In describing Richard's flight the Dieulacres chronicler wrote, 'Then, indeed, were those royal badges both of the hart and of the crown hidden away, so that some said that the esquires of the duke of Lancaster, wearing their collars, had been pre-ordained by a prophecy to subdue like greyhounds in this year [1399] the pride of that hated beast the white hart'.⁶⁰ And a

⁵⁸ *Chronicles of the Revolution, 1397–1400: The Reign of Richard II*, ed. C. Given-Wilson (Manchester, 1993), 135–6.

⁵⁹ S. Walker, 'Janico Dartasso: Chivalry, Nationality and the Man-at-Arms', *History*, lxxxiv (1999), 31–51 (32); Given-Wilson, *The Royal Household and the King's Affinity*, 174 (I am grateful to C.E.J. Smith for this reference). Even after Richard's deposition and death the aged countess of Oxford, thinking Richard to be still alive, tried to rally support for him by distributing silver and gilt harts (J. Ward, *Women of the English Nobility and Gentry, 1066–1500* (Manchester, 1995), 154).

⁶⁰ *Chronicles of the Revolution*, 155. The greyhound was a badge of John of Gaunt and his son, Henry IV, who wore a collar of linked greyhounds and gave a similar collar to his retainers (H.S. London, *Royal Beasts* (Heraldry Society, 1956), 39).

poem, *Richard the Redeless*, written at roughly the same time, speaks of the antagonism towards the king's favourites when it states that for every *hart* that was marked out, ten score more faithful *hearts*, that is loyal friends, were lost. This work, a political satire, contains a number of allusions to magnates by reference to their heraldic beast badges.⁶¹ Similar examples of nobles appearing under the guise of their badges appear in several political verses spawned during the campaigns with France and the Wars of the Roses in the fifteenth century.⁶²

Just as Richard wore the broom-cod collar of French king so the Emperor Sigismund proudly paraded his Lancastrian collar of Ss on formal occasions to denote his alliance with Henry V. Needless to say this much annoyed the French. Sigismund had been given the collar and been made a knight of the Garter in May 1416 on his visit to England, which resulted in a treaty between the emperor and the English king against France.⁶³ In England the political allegiances of many magnates during the internecine struggles that were to follow in the mid-fifteenth century were especially evident from their use of the royal livery collar. During the reigns of the Yorkist kings, Edward IV and Richard III, the Lancastrian collar of Ss was supplanted as the royal livery by the Yorkist collar composed of alternate suns and roses. This was often decorated with a white lion pendant (in allusion to Edward IV's Mortimer descent), or, under Richard, a white boar (that king's personal badge).⁶⁴

A particularly interesting badge of the house of York, and one which is reported to have carried an important political message, was the falcon within a fetterlock. Both Richard duke of York and his son Edward IV used the badge with the fetterlock closed, but Edward is said to have instructed his younger son, Richard of Shrewsbury duke of York, one of the princes murdered in the Tower in 1483, to portray the lock slightly open.⁶⁵ This was to show that he (Edward IV), unlike his father and great-grandfather Edmund of Langley, had successfully attained the crown. The story is usually regarded as apocryphal, but whereas Writhe's Garter armorial, compiled about 1488, attributes a falcon within a closed fetterlock to Edmund of Langley and Richard duke of York, Richard of Shrewsbury's entry

⁶¹ *Mum and the Sothsegger*, ed. M. Day and R. Steele (Early English Text Society, xcix, 1936), 8; Saul, *Richard II*, 388–9; and cf. *Political Poems and Songs*, ed. T. Wright, 2 vols (Rolls Series, 1859–61), i, 363–4.

⁶² See, for example, *ibid.*, ii, 221–3.

⁶³ C. Allmand, *Henry V* (London, 1992), 106–8, 245. Sigismund's arms were prominently displayed in London on Henry's return from Agincourt in November 1415 (see *ibid.*, 98).

⁶⁴ Lightbown, *Medieval European Jewellery*, 249; S. Friar, *Heraldry for the Local Historian and Genealogist* (Stroud, 1992), 127–30; cf. I. Arthurson, *The Perkin Warbeck Conspiracy, 1491–1499* (Stroud, 1994), 46.

⁶⁵ For Richard duke of York see London, *Royal Beasts*, 23, 25, and for a misericord dating to 1435 in St Lawrence's Church, Ludlow, depicting Richard's falcon in a fetterlock see G. Remnant, *A Catalogue of Misericords in Great Britain* (Oxford, 1969), 134, 135, and Friar, *Heraldry*, pl. 14. A banner displaying a 'faucon dedans ungn fedreloc' was borne at York's reburial in 1476 (Anne F. Sutton and Livia Visser-Fuchs, *The Reburial of Richard Duke of York 21–30 July 1476* (Richard III Society, 1996), 14. For Edward IV see London, *Royal Beasts*, 23–4; F. Madden, 'Political Poems of the Reigns of Henry VI and Edward IV', *Archaeologia*, 29 (1842), 318–47 (346) describing the battle of Towton (March 1461) where 'the Fawcon and Fetherlok was ther'; and cf. *British Heraldry*, ed. Marks and Payne, 37.

depicts the fetterlock open.⁶⁶ Moreover, the young prince's portrait in the stained glass of the north-west transept window of Canterbury Cathedral, dating from about 1482 and possibly designed by the royal glazier William Neve, also depicts his fetterlock unclasped. The story might be true after all.

Before the royal heralds became actively involved in the granting of arms from about 1440 onwards, individual grants from the king could sometimes carry political implications. By allowing certain individuals the use of particular coats, Richard II was able to win political favour, reward his chief supporters and label such men as current court favourites or close kinsmen. Such outward symbols, already identified in varying degrees with the king himself, reflected Richard's desire to create a new nobility in his own image, one which would ultimately enrich the position of the crown.⁶⁷ In 1385 he created his close companion Robert de Vere, marquess of Dublin, and in January 1386 gave him licence to bear the attributed arms of St Edmund the Martyr as long as he held the lordship of Ireland.⁶⁸ From 1394 or 1395 Richard began impaling the attributed coat of another of his favourite saints, Edward the Confessor, with his own royal arms possibly in a political move to appease the Irish who held St Edward in great esteem. By March 1396 he extended their use to a new court favourite, Edward earl of Rutland and Cork.⁶⁹ The following year Richard raised Edward to a dukedom along with four others who likewise were now allowed to use the Confessor's arms.⁷⁰ Not surprisingly Henry Bolingbroke, one of those newly created a duke, appears to have discouraged the use of the Confessor's impalement after his usurpation of Richard's throne in 1399.⁷¹

Following their legitimisation in 1397 the Beaufort children of John of Gaunt used (again presumably with permission) the royal arms within a compony (single row of chequers) bordure.⁷² In much the same way Henry VI, in 1452, having publicly recognised Edmund and Jasper Tudor as his half brothers and raised them to the earldoms of Richmond and Pembroke respectively, permitted them use of differenced versions of the royal arms. This was despite the fact that no royal blood

⁶⁶ London, *Royal Beasts*, 23; British Library Buccleuch MS Wrythe Garter Book, fo. 80, illustrated Dennys, *The Heraldic Imagination*, opp. 176.

⁶⁷ For Richard's attitude to the nobility and for his remodelling of the peerage in 1397 see Saul, *Richard II*, 245–8, 381–2.

⁶⁸ *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1385–89*, 78, and see *Calendar of Close Rolls, 1385–89*, 388. He quartered his new coat, azure three crowns or and a bordure argent, with his existing family arms (Wagner, *Historic Heraldry of Britain*, 53–4).

⁶⁹ Clarke, 'Wilton Diptych', 274–6; R. Dennys, *Heraldry and the Heralds* (London, 1982), 106–8.

⁷⁰ Clarke, 'Wilton Diptych', 275; Dennys, *Heraldry and the Heralds*, 112. The new dukes of Hereford and Exeter followed the duke of Aumale by impaling the Confessor's arms with a label of three points; the duke of Surrey impaled the Confessor's arms within a bordure and the duke of Norfolk impaled the Confessor's arms undifferenced.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 112–13. Henry Beaufort, however, used a seal in 1403 as bishop of Lincoln depicting the Confessor's arms impaling the royal arms all within a compony bordure for Beaufort (J.H. and R.V. Pinches, *The Royal Heraldry of England* (London, 1974), 84, and Wagner, *Historic Heraldry of Britain*, 61).

⁷² The Beaufort children bore the royal arms differenced with a compony bordure of argent (or ermine) and azure (Pinches, *Royal Heraldry*, 81–5; Wagner, *Historic Heraldry of Britain*, 61).

(at least of England) flowed through their proud veins.⁷³ In 1472 Edward IV rewarded Louis de Bruges, seigneur de la Gruthuyse, by granting him the earldom of Winchester coupled with ensigns worthy of an earl. Louis had given hospitality to the king and his brother, the duke of Gloucester (later Richard III), during their exile on the continent in the winter of 1470. The grant of arms specifically included the lion of England – a signal honour.⁷⁴

Needless to say, the royal arms were powerful symbols of status, political power, and the highest patronage in the land. Politically their use was especially sensitive. In 1425 John Mowbray, earl of Norfolk and earl Marshal, who bore the arms of England with a label of three points, disputed with Richard Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, in an early case of parliamentary precedence.⁷⁵ This was not simply a matter of seating arrangements. In an age of deference and awareness of rank it was essential for the nobility to maintain their worship and estate within the established social and political hierarchy. Mowbray's claims were based on his descent from Thomas of Brotherton, half-brother of Edward II, and, in token of his royal blood, his bearing of the royal arms; Mowbray bore (among a number of other shields) England with a label of three points. Detailed armorial precedents were hotly debated and pedigrees produced. In the end a compromise was reached whereby Norfolk was raised to a dukedom and, irrespective of his royal arms, could sit above the earl of Warwick.

Thirty-five years later, the royal arms were once again at the centre of a political dispute, though this time it was the crown of England that was at stake. In October 1460 Richard duke of York was determined to wrest the throne from the saintly but feeble Henry VI. He marched into London in regal style, his sword borne upright before him and his trumpet banners proudly displaying the royal arms of England 'entire and undifferenced'.⁷⁶ This was clearly more than social display. It was powerful political propaganda. The good citizens of the capital would have been in no doubt as to his lofty intentions. Until now, as duke of York, Richard had borne the royal arms differenced with a white label bearing three red roundels on each point. The king besought his lords to refute York's claims to the throne. Eventually they came up with five objections, the most practical resting on heraldic evidence alone. Why, asked their noble lordships, had York been carrying the arms of his *paternal* ancestor, Edmund of Langley, if he now claimed the crown through his *maternal* ancestor, Lionel of Antwerp, who had borne the royal arms differenced with a white label bearing red cantons on each point? To this York haughtily replied that he could just as lawfully have borne Lionel's arms and even those of Edward III.

⁷³ Edmund bore the royal arms in a bordure azure charged with alternate *fleurs de lis* and martlets and Jasper the royal arms in a bordure of martlets (Dennys, *Heraldry and the Heralds*, 118).

⁷⁴ *British Heraldry*, ed. Marks and Payne, 27.

⁷⁵ For what follows see *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, iv, 267–75; J.E. Powell and K. Wallis, *The House of Lords in the Middle Ages* (London, 1968), 453–4; R. Archer, 'Parliamentary Restoration: John Mowbray and the dukedom of Norfolk in 1425', in R. Archer and S. Walker (eds), *Rulers and Ruled in Late Medieval England: Essays presented to Gerald Harris* (London, 1995), 99–116.

⁷⁶ 'William Gregory's Chronicle', in J. Gairdner (ed.), *Historical Collections of a Citizen of London in the Fifteenth Century* (Camden Soc., 1876), 208.

He had simply chosen to bide his time before going public, verbally and heraldically, with so bold a claim.⁷⁷ Another parliamentary compromise was reached. Henry was to remain king with Richard as his heir. In the event York was killed shortly afterwards in December 1460 at Wakefield, but in March the following year Henry was deposed, and the crown, and with it the royal arms entire and undifferenced, fell to York's son and heir, Edward of March, now Edward IV.⁷⁸

The reigns of Edward and later his brother, Richard III, were constantly interrupted by dynastic rivalry, civil war and intermittent political crises. As a result they witnessed something of a boom in propaganda as the opposing houses of York and Lancaster each strove to mould public opinion and mobilise popular support. In this they were aided by the spread of literacy and the introduction of the printed word. Bible stories, ancient literature, legends of the early history of Britain and particularly royal genealogies were all enlisted to help justify Edward's accession.⁷⁹ And heraldry too played its part. A particularly attractive Yorkist genealogy, produced in 1468 or later, which may have been used for public display, is now in the Philadelphia Free Library. It boldly emphasises Edward's hereditary claims to the thrones of England, France and Spain by means of lineal descent, scriptural quotations, regalia, mottoes, and a splendid panoply of shields, banners and Yorkist badges.⁸⁰ The arms of Edward are depicted in particularly grandiose form: France and England, in turn quartering Castile and Leon. At their centre a small escutcheon of pretence bears the attributed arms of Brutus, legendary founder of Britain. Thus Edward could claim to be not only true sovereign of all three kingdoms, but legitimate heir and successor to the ancient kings of Britain.⁸¹

Such detailed and elaborate family trees were generally intended for a restricted audience. Under Richard III, propaganda entered a more modern phase. Richard made widespread use of proclamations to reach a much larger audience and sought to blacken the honour and reputation of his enemies. Again, heraldry played its part.

⁷⁷ *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, v, 375–9; P. Johnson, *Duke Richard of York, 1411–1460* (Oxford, 1988), 212–15.

⁷⁸ York's widow, Cecily Neville, impaled her arms with the undifferenced royal arms of her late husband (C.H. Hunter-Blair, 'Armorial upon English Seals from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Centuries', *Archaeologia*, 84 (1943), 23, and pl. xvii (a)), and at Edward IV's reburial of his father in 1476, 'an essential part of the propaganda of the house of York', York's banner once again consisted of the 'whole' royal arms without difference (Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, *Reburial of Richard Duke of York*, 7).

⁷⁹ See especially, A. Allan, 'Yorkist Propaganda: Pedigree, Prophecy and the 'British History' in the Reign of Edward IV', in C. Ross (ed.), *Patronage, Pedigree and Power in Later Medieval England* (Gloucester, 1979), 171–92; and C. Ross, 'Rumour, Propaganda and Popular Opinion during the Wars of the Roses', in R. Griffiths (ed.), *Patronage, the Crown and the Provinces in Later Medieval England* (Gloucester, 1981), 15–32.

⁸⁰ Philadelphia Free Library, Lewis MS E 201, discussed in A. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III's Books: Ideals and Reality in the Life and Library of a Medieval Prince* (Stroud, 1997), 139, pls VIII, a and b, and Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, *Reburial of Richard Duke of York*, pl. IV with detailed description.

⁸¹ For Edward as the red dragon symbolising the British and fulfilling Merlin's prophecy by defeating the English descendants of the white dragon, Henry VI and the Lancastrians, see Allan, 'Yorkist Propaganda'; Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III's Books*, 191–210; and S. Anglo, *Images of Tudor Kingship* (London, 1992), 45, 57.

In June 1485 Richard was expecting an imminent invasion from Henry Tudor, then in exile in France. In a somewhat desperately worded and particularly abusive proclamation, which blatantly appealed to English nationalism, Richard emphasised Henry 'Tydder's' supposed subservience to the French king by asserting that he had agreed to renounce the claim to the French throne 'and sever and exclude the arms of France from the arms of England for ever'.⁸²

Character assassination was not, however, a royal monopoly, and Richard did not take kindly to William Collyngbourn's celebrated lampoon pinned up at strategic points in the city of London in July 1484:

The Cat, the Rat and Lovell our Dog
Rule all England under a Hog.

The hog was, of course, a direct reference to Richard's white boar badge, the cat to Sir William Catesby whose device was a spotted cat, the rat to Sir Richard Ratcliff, and the dog (or wolf) to Lord Lovell whose crest was a wolf (*lupellus*). Collyngbourn was duly executed. The principal charge against him was, in fact, his treasonable correspondence with Henry Tudor in Brittany, but such was the political potency of this piece of heraldic propaganda that London chroniclers forgot the treason and recorded only the rhyme.⁸³

On 22 August 1485 Richard lay dead on Bosworth Field – or, as the Continuator of the Croyland Chronicle put it, 'the tusks of the boar [Richard] were blunted, and the red rose [Henry Tudor], the avenger of the white [the princes in the Tower]', now shone upon England.⁸⁴ It was an early example of the juxtaposition of perhaps the two most famous badges of the middle ages: the white rose of the house of York and the red rose of the house of Lancaster, the two opposing political factions in what was later to become known as the 'Wars of the Roses'. The red rose may not, however, have been much used during the wars.⁸⁵ It probably owes its popular usage to Henry VII quickly responding to the pre-existing Yorkist white rose in an age when signs and symbols could speak louder than words. It also allowed Henry to invent and exploit his most famous heraldic device, the Tudor rose combining the so-called 'Lancastrian' red rose and the white rose of York. This floral union neatly symbolised the restoration of peace and harmony and his marriage in January 1486 to Elizabeth of York. It was a brilliant piece of simple heraldic propaganda, which his successors (in whom the roses were truly combined) were to use repeatedly. Henry VII also made good use of a variety of other badges, such as the red dragon dreadful, the greyhound of Richmond and the Beaufort portcullis of his mother. These ubiq-

⁸² *The Paston Letters*, ed. J. Gairdner, 3 vols (London, 1895), iii, 318.

⁸³ P. Hammond and A. Sutton, *Richard III: The Road to Bosworth Field* (London, 1985), 196; Ross, 'Rumour, Propaganda and Popular Opinion', 16.

⁸⁴ Pollard, *Wars of the Roses*, 7.

⁸⁵ See J. Ashdown-Hill, 'The Red Rose of Lancaster?', *The Ricardian*, x (1996), 406–20; Anglo, *Images of Tudor Kingship*, 79–81; but cf. Pollard, *Wars of the Roses*, 5–7.

uitous and unambiguous 'dynastic hieroglyphs' once again helped confirm the legitimacy of the Tudor house.⁸⁶

On the local and family level, heraldry similarly played its part as symbols of politics and propaganda. The nobility and their families used arms and badges (including their livery) to great effect in promulgating their status and lordship, family connections, benefaction and patronage. The careful and often pretentious juxtaposition of shields alongside those of distinguished relatives, powerful neighbours, famous forebears, and even royalty could send out important political messages. Throughout the land gatehouses, parish churches, stained glass, monumental brasses, and tombs were festooned with heraldic arms, badges and mottoes.⁸⁷ All proclaimed a variety of messages in a preliterate age: local presence, power, honour and grandeur, lineage, loyalty, dynastic and perhaps political alliances. All were to some extent propagandist. Who, for example, could fail to understand the stark message of the Percys' great rise to power as celebrated in their massive heraldic lion set into the wall of Warkworth Castle in Northumberland, dominating the northern skyline and overlooking the town?

Legendary tales exalting the ancient origins of a favourite family emblem or device were often interwoven into so-called 'chronicles' and 'histories'. For example, in the Rous Roll, commissioned by the earls of Warwick in the late fifteenth century to celebrate their glorious ancestors, the famous muzzled bear badge of the Beauchamps was attributed to one of King Arthur's mythical knights of the Round Table. (Plate 16) Such works, particularly those heavily illustrated with heraldry, must have constituted effective weapons of family propaganda.⁸⁸

Ordinary folk, particularly those in the towns, were far from blind to the significance of these high and mighty signs and symbols, whether or not they were based on myth or reality. For them the lavish displays of royal, national, civic, even celestial heraldry at official entries into towns, royal progresses, civic pageants, coronations and possibly royal funeral processions, must have made a powerful appeal to a growing sense of national and civic pride, of monarchical authority, and of God's approval. In this respect not only was the heraldry on show decorative but it also imparted strong political messages. Londoners, for example, would readily have understood, and would have been stirred by, the patriotic symbolism present everywhere on the victor of Agincourt's return to London in 1415 and, later, the constant twinning of the shields of France and England at his son's English coronation in 1429 and on his return to the capital in 1432 shortly after his French coronation.⁸⁹ Again, the citizens of York would have been in no doubt as to the message of reconciliation presented by the crowned red and white roses brought together mechani-

⁸⁶ Anglo speaks of dynastic hieroglyphs in *Images of Tudor Kingship*, 35.

⁸⁷ See for examples A. Ailes, 'Heraldic Marshalling in Medieval England', in C.R. Humphery-Smith (ed.), *Académie internationale d'héraldique: VIIIth Colloquium Canterbury 1993* (Canterbury, 1995), 15–29.

⁸⁸ E. Mason, 'Legends of the Beauchamps' Ancestors: The Use of Baronial Propaganda in Medieval England', *Journal of Medieval History*, x (1984), 25–40 (35).

⁸⁹ Allmand, *Henry V*, 97–8; Wolffe, *Henry VI*, 48–51, 63–4; McKenna, 'Henry VI of England and the Dual Monarchy', 157–8, 160–1.

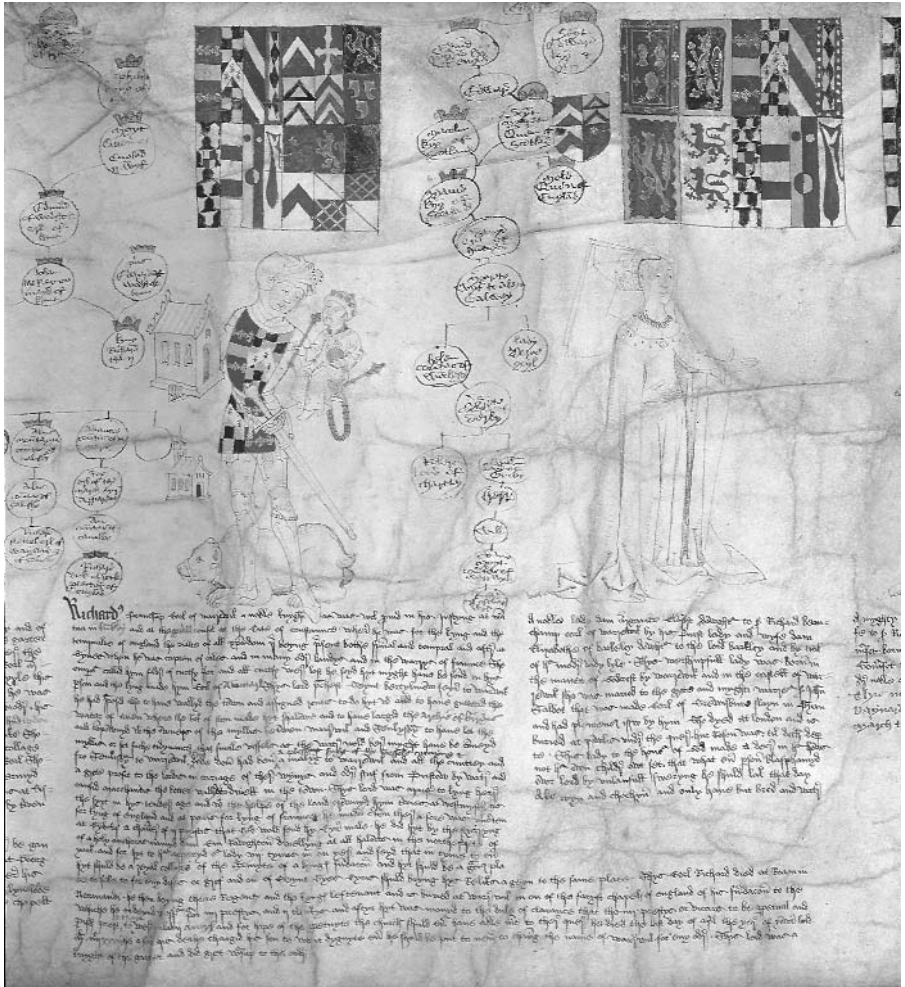


Plate 16. The Rous Roll, produced during Richard III's reign, celebrating the deeds of the ancient earls of Warwick (BL Add. MS 48976).

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cally and wonderfully before their very eyes in 1486 on Henry VII's first official progress to the north.⁹⁰

But the presence of such symbols on the streets was not always welcome, and individuals, all too aware of what these emblems stood for, sometimes objected to them. In 1377 Londoners, angry at John of Gaunt, fixed his arms upside down on the doors of Westminster Hall and St Paul's Cathedral along with bills declaring him to be the son of a Ghent butcher, substituted for a dead royal infant. The duke

⁹⁰ Pollard, *Wars of the Roses*, 6–7; Anglo, *Images of Tudor Kingship*, 82, 85.

demanded that those responsible for this heraldic effrontery be condemned to death.⁹¹ Hostility to the marriage of Richard II and Anne of Bohemia five years later resulted in some Londoners tearing down the arms of the king and the bride's father as the young couple processed through the streets.⁹² For Englishmen and Normans loyal to Henry VI who viewed the triumphal entry of Charles VII into Rouen in 1449 following its capture from the English, the use of the French royal symbols of the *fleur de lis* and winged hart must have imparted a painful political message.⁹³ That citizens could be fickle in their allegiances was symbolised by their readiness to drop the political badges of those out of favour and to take up the cause of a new party.⁹⁴ Following York's death at Wakefield wary Londoners painted Beaufort port-cullises on the doors and walls of their houses in case of a Lancastrian entry into the capital led by Henry Beaufort duke of Somerset.⁹⁵

But perhaps the last word should go to two Englishmen abroad in Antwerp. In October 1494 the impostor Perkin Warbeck, alias Richard Plantagenet, was received into the town and lodged in a building hung by the sympathetic local authority with a shield of his arms and a proclamation reading: 'The arms of Richard, prince of Wales and duke of York, son and heir of Edward IV, lately by the grace of God, king of England and France, Lord of Ireland'. Such propaganda, visual and verbal, prompted the two Englishmen to arm themselves with a large pot of muck which they tried unsuccessfully to throw over the offending escutcheon.⁹⁶ Their response shows that, even at the close of the middle ages, heraldry could still be politically sensitive and elicit a sharp response from the man in the street. Coats of arms, banners and badges were often much more than mere marks of identification or simple decoration, full of colour but empty of meaning. At various levels and in diverse contexts they were used to impart important political messages. They could stimulate affection and anger, express possession, presence and authority, promote national pride and local standing, and, as weapons of criticism, even misrepresent and distort. In many ways their successors are still with us.

⁹¹ Goodman, *John of Gaunt*, 61–2.

⁹² Saul, *Richard II*, 90 n. 29.

⁹³ M. Vale, *Charles VII* (London, 1974), 202–4 and cf. 198–9.

⁹⁴ This may explain discarded badges found in the Seine (Thompson, *Paris and its People under English Rule*, 172). See also Philippe de Comynes, *Memoirs: The Reign of Louis XI, 1461–83*, trans. M. Jones (Harmondsworth, 1972), 191–2.

⁹⁵ M. Jones and M. Underwood, *The King's Mother: Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby* (Cambridge, 1992), 43.

⁹⁶ J. Gairdner, *The History of the Life and Reign of Richard the Third* (Cambridge, 1898), 283.

Dress and Social Status in England before the Sumptuary Laws

Frédérique Lachaud

DRESS is accorded a prominent place in medieval sources:¹ detailed descriptions of clothing and dress accessories are a recurrent theme of romances,² and the documentary evidence,³ as well as archaeological finds, confirm the significant role of dress in the material culture of medieval populations.⁴ In recent years, under the influence of anthropology and semiotics, dress as a sign of status in medieval society has been examined, as well as the representation of outcasts and the use of clothing as emblem.⁵ Historians of the medieval economy and society have also underlined the place of dress in standards of living, and the financial investment this entailed.⁶

- 1 For general considerations on the sources for the history of dress, see F. Piponnier and P. Mane, *Dress in the Middle Ages*, trans. C. Beamish (New Haven and London, 1997) and H.M. Zijlstra-Zweens, *Of His Array Telle I No Lenger Tale: Aspects of Costume, Arms and Armour in Western Europe, 1200–1400* (Amsterdam, 1988), esp. 3–11 and plates.
- 2 E. Faral, *Recherches sur les Sources Latines des Contes et Romans Courtois du Moyen Age* (Paris, 1967), 344–8. Such descriptions probably helped to memorize passages of text: R. van Uytven, 'Cloth in Medieval Literature of Western Europe', in N.B. Harte and K.G. Ponting (eds), *Cloth and Clothing in Medieval Europe: Essays in Memory of Professor E.M. Carus-Wilson* (Pasold Studies in Textile History, 2, London 1983), 151–83.
- 3 The description of clothes could be used in court, as a way to test the memory of witnesses in order to check their deposition. See for instance the case of Alice la Marescal v. Elias de Suffolk, 1292–93, in particular the deposition of Mathilda Whittol: *Select Canterbury Cases c. 1200–1301*, ed. N. Adams and C. Donahue (Selden Society, xcvi, 1978–79), 359.
- 4 For the archaeological evidence on dress from English sites, see in particular F. Grew and M. de Neergaard, *Medieval Finds from Excavations in London, 2: Shoes and Pattens* (London, 1988), G. Egan and F. Pritchard, *Medieval Finds from Excavations in London, 3: Dress Accessories* (London, 1991) and E. Crowfoot, F. Pritchard and K. Staniland, *Medieval Finds from Excavations in London, 4: Textiles and Clothing, c. 1150–c. 1450* (London, 1992).
- 5 See M. Pastoureau, *L'Etoffe du Diable: Une Histoire des Rayures et des Tissus Rayés* (Paris, 1991) and R. Mellinkoff, *Outcasts: Signs of Otherness in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages*, 2 vols (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford, 1993), as well as the large literature on liveries, for instance F. Piponnier, *Costume et Vie Sociale: La Cour d'Anjou, XIVe–XVe Siècle* (Paris–La Haye, 1970), A. Page, *Vêtir le Prince: Tissus et Couleurs à la Cour de Savoie (1427–1447)*, Cahiers Lausannois d'Histoire Médiévale, viii (1993) and S.M. Newton, *Fashion in the Age of the Black Prince: A Study of the Years 1340–1365* (Woodbridge, 1980).
- 6 C. Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages: Social Change in England c. 1200–1520* (Cambridge, 1989), 78–89; C.M. Woolgar, *The Great Household in Late Medieval England* (New

Because of the inherent cost of clothing materials, dress was a good indicator of economic income, but sumptuary laws, which appeared for the first time in England during the reign of Edward III, suggest that it was also considered as a reflection of social status, with the authorities reacting against what they believed to be a blurring of social distinctions.⁷

The first sumptuary law to have survived, dated 1337, was aimed at limiting imports of luxury cloth and furs, and probably at encouraging a local cloth-industry. But it made special provisions, as far as the consumption of cloth was concerned, for the royal family and, in the section limiting imports of fur, for the royal family, the prelates, earls, barons, knights, ladies and clergy with benefices worth at least £100 a year, suggesting a conception of dress based on a hierarchical vision of society.⁸ The next sumptuary law, the *ordinance de novel apparail* of 1363, was much more detailed, and dealt primarily with the question of the transgression of social hierarchy, its justification being that the ordinance had to be taken *pur l'outraïouse et excessive apparail de plusieurs gentz contre leur estat et degree, a tres grant destruction et empovrissement de toute la terre*.⁹ Historians have debated the conditions surrounding the edict of sumptuary laws in the reign of Edward III, pointing out in particular the appearance of new fashions in the mid-fourteenth century, and styles of consumption touching more social categories than before.¹⁰ But was the blurring of social hierarchy through what we may term 'hyper-dressing', clothing oneself above one's station, a new phenomenon?

There may have been some official regulations concerning dress in fourteenth-century England other than the ones which have been recorded: a poem, traditionally called *On the Follies of Fashion*, which belongs to a collection dated to the 1340s, but which may have been written earlier, refers to the way ladies should wear their linen 'according to the law':¹¹ this cannot be a reference to the ordinance of 1337, since this text does not contain any prescription on linen, and there may

Haven and London, 1999), esp. 170–6. For some significant views on dress and the hierarchy of the aristocracy in twelfth- and thirteenth-century England, see D. Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy in Britain, 1000–1300* (London, 1992), 247–51.

⁷ See G.R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England* (2nd rev. edn, Oxford, 1966), esp. 390–411, and J. Scattergood, 'Fashion and Morality in the Late Middle Ages', in D. Williams (ed.), *England in the Fifteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1986 Harlaxton Symposium* (Woodbridge, 1987), 255–72.

⁸ *Statutes of the Realm*, i, 280–1, for the text of the ordinance; C.R. Bell and E. Ruse, 'Sumptuary Legislation and English Costume: An Attempt to Assess the Effect of an Act of 1337', *Costume*, vi (1972), 22–31. For sumptuary laws in England, see F.E. Baldwin, *Sumptuary Legislation and Personal Regulation in England* (Baltimore, 1926) and N.B. Harte, 'State Control of Dress and Social Change in Pre-Industrial England', in D.C. Coleman and A.H. John (eds), *Trade, Government and Economy in Pre-Industrial England: Essays Presented to F.J. Fisher* (London, 1976), 132–65.

⁹ *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, ii, 281–2. A full analysis of the ordinance is given in Scattergood, 'Fashion and Morality in the Late Middle Ages', 260–1.

¹⁰ For instance Dyer, *Standards of Living*, 207.

¹¹ British Library MS Harleian 2253, fo. 61v: published in *The Political Songs of England, from the Reign of John to that of Edward II*, ed. T. Wright (Camden Society, 1839), 153. This was dated by Wright to c. 1325, but N.R. Ker has suggested the fourth decade of the fourteenth century as a more probable date for the collection: *Facsimile of British Museum MS Harley 2253* (Early English Text Society, cclv, 1965), xxi. There was a sumptuary ordinance issued in 1316, but this concerned exclu-

have been official regulations on dress that have not been recorded. More significantly, a project for taxation presented to Edward I, probably before 1297,¹² includes some prescriptions on dress, which recall strongly two contemporary French sumptuary laws.¹³ The measures taken by Philip III in 1279 in the context of a renewal of military activity were purely economic: they dealt with dress as well as with the consumption of food and the breeding and trade of horses, and were to last for five years. Social status was the main criterion adopted by the authors of this edict, since the text distinguishes *escuiers* and *bourgeois* from other social categories, but economic income was taken into account to create sub-categories. The other ordinance, proclaimed by Philip IV in 1294, was much more comprehensive, and the aim of its authors was to control social behaviour, which is revealed by the prescription that clothes found to be contrary to the law were to be discarded.¹⁴ As for the English project, like the ordinance of Philip III, it was mainly a series of economic measures, which were to last only for the duration of the war with France: they included a general regulation of consumption for the whole kingdom, in the form of a limitation of the number of horses, dishes and robes for some specific groups. The clerks and squires of bishops and archbishops were to receive only one robe a year, which must refer to a limitation of the number of liveries of clothes: for the clerks, the cloth of these robes could not exceed the cost of 2s 6d an ell, and for the squires that of 2s an ell. Archbishops and bishops were to have a maximum of three new robes a year, at 3s an ell at most for the bishops' robes. Ladies and knights were to be allowed one robe a year, at 3s an ell at most. There are no other specific regulations in the project, which only states that the king, the earls, the barons, *et toute maniere de gent*, which must include the lower categories of society, *tiennent et tenir fachtent de mengier et de boire et de vesteure tant comme le were dure*. The identity of the author of this document remains unknown, although his writing suggests, for Langlois, that he was English, and not a professional clerk.

As far as it is possible to verify this, the project presented to Edward I came to nothing, while in other areas of Western Europe sumptuary laws had started to flourish during the second half of the thirteenth century, whether as a result of princely legislation or in the context of urban governments.¹⁵ This paper will attempt to address the question of the absence of sumptuary laws in England before the reign of Edward III, by focusing on the view authorities had of dress in the thir-

sively the consumption of food: *Annales Londonienses, in Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols (Rolls ser., 1882–83), i, 238–9.

¹² This is published in C.V. Langlois, 'Project for Taxation Presented to Edward I', *English Historical Review*, iv (1889), 517–21, mentioned in Crouch, *The Image of the Aristocracy*, 251.

¹³ H. Duplès-Agier, 'Ordonnance somptuaire de Philippe le Hardi', *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, xv (1854), 176–81; *Ordonnances des Rois de France de la Troisième Race*, ed. E.J. de Laurière et al., 22 vols (Paris, 1723–1857), i, 541–3.

¹⁴ *Ordonnances des Rois de France*, i, 541: 'Nul bourgeois, ne bourgeoise, ne portera vair, ne gris, ne ermines, et se delivreront de ceux que ils ont, de Pâques prochaines en un an.'

¹⁵ See the references given by R. Delort, *Le Commerce des Fourrures en Occident à la Fin du Moyen Âge: vers 1300–vers 1450*, 2 vols (Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 236, Rome 1978), i, 537ff, and the general bibliography on sumptuary laws in M. Madou, *Le Costume Civil* (Typologie des Sources du Moyen Âge Occidental, 47, Turnhout 1986), 48–9.

teenth century, and by attempting to compare this information with what we may know of the way people actually dressed.

A sector of society which was regulated by repeated prescriptions on dress was the clergy. Members of religious orders adopted some common rules of life and similar dress, which enabled them to identify with their vocation, and religious conversion was made effective by the adoption of a specific habit.¹⁶ The practice did not, however, always conform to this model. Nuns in particular were often criticized for not following closely the rules of their order. The council of Westminster of May 1127 decreed that abbesses and nuns were not to use expensive furs in their dress, but only dark fur of lamb or cat. In 1138, the legatine council of Westminster prohibited the use of *gris* and *vair* (two types of northern squirrel fur), sable, marten, ermine and beaver to nuns, as well as that of gold rings and elaborate hair-dress.¹⁷ In 1222, the council of Oxford proscribed veils and cloaks of silk for nuns, the use of gold or silver embroidery for the ornament of their veils, girdles of silk ornamented with gold or silver, burnet cloth 'or any other irregular cloth', the wearing of more than one ring, and imposed garments covering the feet but without excessive length.¹⁸

It was, however, the dress of the secular clergy that created most difficulties for ecclesiastical authorities, who took action from an early date.¹⁹ Decency in dress was prescribed, in particular when lay aristocratic fashions favoured short clothing for men,²⁰ and in the twelfth century multicoloured clothes, as well as sleeved upper garments, pointed and laced shoes, were not allowed.²¹ The Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 imposed a decent and clearly visible tonsure, and closed upper garments: in particular, cloaks were to be well fastened on the chest or shoulder. Garments were to be not too long nor too short, and the council proscribed red or green clothes,

¹⁶ The role of dress in the process of religious conversion could, however, raise problems, in particular for women who were caught, in the eye of the Church, between their duty to their husband and their religious inclination: D. Elliott, 'Dress as Mediator between Inner and Outer Self: The Pious Matron of the High and Later Middle Ages', *Mediaeval Studies*, liii (1991), 279–308, esp. 285–6.

¹⁷ *Councils and Synods with Other Documents Relating to the English Church, I: A.D. 871–1204*, ed. D. Whitelock, M. Brett and C.N.L. Brooke (Oxford, 1981), i, 749 and 778. There is, however, a royal ordinance for London, dated 5 May 1278, which regulates the making of furs, and which provides a prescription concerning the wearing of expensive furs by prostitutes in the city (Corporation of London Records Office, *Liber Horn*, fo. 267v; also *Calendar of Letter-Book A*, fo. 130v).

¹⁸ *Councils and Synods with Other Documents Relating to the English Church, II: A.D. 1205–1313*, ed. F.M. Powicke and C.R. Cheney (Oxford, 1964), i, 118–19.

¹⁹ The legislation of the French councils has been studied by L. Trichet, *Le Costume du Clergé: ses Origines et son Evolution en France d'après les Règlements de l'Église* (Paris, 1986). For a general introduction to the history of ecclesiastical dress in England, see J. Mayo, *A History of Ecclesiastical Dress* (London, 1984).

²⁰ For instance the letter from Pope John VIII to the English archbishops, bishops and clergy, dated to between 873 and 876, imposing the rejection of *laicalem et sinuosum set et curtum habitum* by clerics (*Councils and Synods I*, i, 3).

²¹ *Councils and Synods I*, ii, 675–6, 682 and 1070. The statutes of Stephen Langton for the diocese of Canterbury were intended to fight against the *luxuria* and *superbia* of clerics, and prescribed that priests and clerics were to wear the habit appropriate to their order. It also forbade some particular fashions: pointed and laced shoes, sleeved cloaks for priests and long hair for priests and clerics: *Councils and Synods II*, i, 26.

sleeves (cloaks with sleeves were to be used only in case of emergency), brooches and belts decorated with gold and silver, rings, other than the ones associated with an office, very ornate (*consuticiis*)²² or pointed shoes, and finally the use of gilded riding equipment.²³ Bishops were ordered to wear an upper garment of linen over their clothes in public and in churches.²⁴

These regulations were applied and regularly re-proclaimed in England during the thirteenth century, with variations that followed innovations in dress. For instance, the statutes for the diocese of London (1245 to 1259) ranged yellow among the colours forbidden to clerics. Those of Bishop Cantilupe for the diocese of Worcester in 1240 added silk cloth to the banned materials, and also proscribed *herigauds*, a type of open upper garment. The additional statutes to those of Bishop William Raleigh for the diocese of Norwich prescribed closed cloaks and specifically forbade wide neck openings. Buttons, brooches, and dress accessories of gold and silver, as well as embroidery and precious stones, were prohibited by the statutes of 1257 for the diocese of Salisbury, for all clerics in sacred orders. The interdiction of the coif, which hid the tonsure, also appears repeatedly in the thirteenth century.²⁵

The justifications put forward by ecclesiastical authorities when regulating the dress of the secular clergy were traditionally twofold: decency and measure on one hand, the necessity for dress to reflect the separation of the clergy on the other. For example, the synodal statutes for the diocese of Salisbury, proclaimed between 1219 and 1228, reproduced most of the sixteenth canon of the Fourth Lateran Council, adding: 'because the beginning of all sin is pride, we forbid pride in gestures, in habit, and in words'.²⁶ The necessity to maintain the honour of the clerical order, and to differentiate it clearly from the rest of society, was made quite clear, in the case of the secular dress of priests, by the statutes for the diocese of York between 1241 and 1255, 'as the life of priests must be cut off from the life of the common people'.²⁷ The synodal statutes for the diocese of Exeter in 1287 concluded their prescriptions on clerical dress by stating that 'in any case, clerics are to be distinguished from lay people by their exterior habit, by which the interior is shown'.²⁸ In particular, the dress of some clerics was sometimes found too similar to that of 'knights',²⁹ on which point the council of Lambeth of 1281 specifies that: clerical

²² See Du Cange, *Glossarium ad Scriptores Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis*, 6 vols (Paris, 1733–36), v. *consutitii*.

²³ For archaeological finds confirming the significance of the decoration of horse-harness in the material culture of the period, see J. Clark, G. Egan and N. Griffiths, 'Harness Fittings', in J. Clark (ed.), *Medieval Finds from Excavations in London, 5: The Medieval Horse and its Equipment c. 1150–c. 1450* (London, 1995), 43–74.

²⁴ *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils, i: Nicaea I to Lateran V*, ed. N.P. Tanner (London and Washington DC, 1990), 243.

²⁵ *Councils and Synods, II*, i, 306 (Worcester 1240), 358 (Norwich), 555 (Salisbury 1257), 565 (Salisbury 1257 to 1268), 646 (London 1245 to 1259).

²⁶ *Councils and Synods, II*, i, 63 for the synodal statutes for the diocese of Salisbury, issued between 1219 and 1228. See *ibid.*, 230, 272, 306, 348–9 and 602, for other attacks on pride.

²⁷ *Councils and Synods, II*, i, 486–7.

²⁸ *Councils and Synods, II*, ii, 1011–12.

²⁹ This was put forward at the council of the province of Canterbury at Oxford in 1222: *Councils and*

clothes should not be striped (*birratam*), and should be of a shape different from those worn by knights.³⁰ We may see an echo of these preoccupations in the criticism by Matthew Paris of the attire of two Franciscan friars at the court of Henry III, where, according to the chronicler, they rode horses with gilded saddles and wore precious clothes and the hose of knights, as well as spurs.³¹

A distinction was drawn in some councils between major and minor orders, but clearly there was a general attempt to control the way all clerics dressed. We may suspect that the interdiction from carrying arms, and the obligation of a clear tonsure³² may have been more immediately effective than the regulation of clothing; indeed, the dress adopted by some clerics prevented them from claiming benefit of clergy.³³ Repeated interdictions may not necessarily reflect, however, permanent and widespread transgressions: the regulations on dress were mostly made up of negative prescriptions, so they regularly had to be re-proclaimed in order to follow the evolution of lay fashions. Furthermore, there was perhaps, in the thirteenth century, a greater desire, on the part of ecclesiastical authorities, to ensure the visual separation of the clergy from the rest of the population. Other interventions on the question of dress in this period indicate a growing sensitivity of ecclesiastical authorities to these matters. For instance, in 1287, under pressure from the papacy, the Carmelite order had to abandon their habit of striped cloth for one of plain cloth; it has been argued that authorities were reacting to popular unrest, but the move was strongly criticized by some churchmen.³⁴ More generally, the concern of the Church to mark visually some marginal categories, such as the Jews, suggests that the notion that dress identified individuals or communities came to be more entrenched in the ecclesiastical discourse on society in the thirteenth century. The obligation for the Jews to wear a specific mark had been decided by the Fourth Lateran Council, because their outside appearance did not differentiate them from the Christian population.³⁵ In England, two white tablets, of linen or of parchment, were chosen in 1218 as a badge to be worn by the Jews on the upper vestment on the chest, 'so that with this sign the Jews can be clearly distinguished from the Christians'.³⁶ In spite of repeated

Synods, II, i, 116. See also the additional statutes for the diocese of Worcester, of various dates between 1240 and 1266: *ibid.*, 357–8, and the statutes of the legatine council of 1237: *ibid.*, 251–2.

³⁰ *Councils and Synods*, II, ii, 914.

³¹ Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ed. H.R. Luard, 7 vols (Rolls ser., 1872–83), iv, 599 (1247).

³² On this point, see in particular L. Trichet, *La Tonsure: Vie et Mort d'une Pratique Ecclésiastique* (Paris, 1990).

³³ For instance Roger of Wendover, *Flores Historiarum*, ed. H.G. Hewlett, 3 vols (Rolls ser., 1886–89), iii, 91–2 (1234). For the handing over to ecclesiastical authorities of persons arrested while dressed in clerical habit, see L.C. Gabel, *Benefit of Clergy in England in the Later Middle Ages* (Smith College Studies in History, 14, Northampton, Mass., 1928–29), 64 n. 13.

³⁴ *Chronicon Vulgo Dictum Thomae Wykes*, in *Annales Monastici*, ed. H.R. Luard, 5 vols (Rolls ser., 1864–69), iv, 312 (1287). The whole issue is discussed in Pastoureau, *L'Etoffe du Diable*, 17–24.

³⁵ C. Roth, *A History of the Jews in England* (Oxford, 1949); H.G. Richardson, *The English Jewry under the Angevin Kings* (London, 1960), esp. 178–84. See also the provincial council of Oxford in 1222 (*Councils and Synods* II, i, 121) and the statutes of Exeter of 1287 (*Councils and Synods* II, ii, 1045).

³⁶ *Rotuli Litterarum Clausurarum*, i, 378b.

pressures from ecclesiastics such as Stephen Langton, it was only in 1253, however, that this policy started to be more strictly enforced.³⁷

In the view of ecclesiastical authorities, outside appearances had to correspond to the inner being, and consequently dress was both a way to identify individuals as members of a specific group or order,³⁸ and to distinguish marginal populations.³⁹ This notion was, however, more general, some churchmen promoting the vision of a Christian society where each group, or *ordo*, whether of lay people or clerics, was seen as fulfilling a specific religious function,⁴⁰ and there is some evidence that dress was a significant element in this construct. The chronicle of John of Worcester, dated between 1130 and 1140, relates the three dreams of Henry I, where the king saw the prelates, knights and peasants of the kingdom remonstrating bitterly with him about high taxes, and each social order is described in an emblematic way, the peasants with their agricultural implements, the knights in mail-armour, wearing iron caps, and carrying weapons of various kinds, and finally the prelates with their pastoral staff.⁴¹ The paintings illustrating the chronicle in the manuscript of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, faithfully reproduce the written account of the dreams.⁴² Later iconographic representations also drew on dress as a way to illustrate discourses on the various 'orders' or 'estates' of society,⁴³ but this was a more general

³⁷ *Close Rolls 1251–1253*, 312–13. The *Statutum de Judeismo* of the Michaelmas parliament of 1275 imposed a badge of yellow felt on every Jew aged seven and above (*Statutes of the Realm*, i, 22; see also *Annales Monastici*, iv, 468).

³⁸ C. Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual: 1050–1200* (New York, 1972), esp. 120 and 123; J.F. Benton, 'Individualism and Conformity in Medieval Western Europe', in A. Banani and S. Vryonis, Jr (eds), *Individualism and Conformity in Classical Islam* (Wiesbaden, 1977), 145–58, esp. 151; C.W. Bynum, 'Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?', *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1982), 82–109.

³⁹ In thirteenth-century France, there were also urban regulations that aimed at identifying prostitutes by special marks: see J. Rossiaud, *La Prostitution Médiévale* (Paris, 1988), 69, and U. Robert, *Les Signes d'Infamie au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1891), 175–89.

⁴⁰ On this point, see in particular Y. Congar, 'Les laïcs et l'ecclésiologie des "ordines" chez les théologiens des XIe et XIIe siècles', *I Laici nella 'Societas Christiana' dei Secoli XI e XII: Atti della Terza Settimana Internazionale di Studi: Mendola, 21–27 Agosto 1965* (Milan, 1968), 83–117. On the functional analysis of social orders, see G. Duby, *Les Trois Ordres ou l'Imaginaire du Féodalisme* (Paris, 1978), esp. 88–91 and 95–8, and the comments of E.A.R. Brown, 'Georges Duby and the Three Orders', *Viator*, xvii (1986), 51–64; J. Le Goff, 'Note sur société tripartite, idéologie monarchique et renouveau économique dans la chrétienté du XIe au XIIIe siècle', *Pour un Autre Moyen Age: Temps, Travail, et Culture en Occident* (Paris, 1977), 80–90.

⁴¹ *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, iii, *The Annals from 1067 to 1140 with the Gloucester Interpolations and the Continuation to 1141*, ed. and trans. P. McGurk (Oxford, 1998), 200.

⁴² Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 157, 382–3.

⁴³ See in particular the drawing from the *Roman de Fauvain*, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS fr. 571, fo. 148, reproduced as frontispiece in R. Mohl, *The Three Estates in Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (New York, 1933), but wrongly described there as taken from the *Roman de Fauvel*. This illustrates the locution *chevauchier Fauvain*: it shows a bishop, a lord, an abbot and a lady on the back of Fauvain, while the poor hold onto its tail: A. Långfors, *L'Histoire de Fauvain* (Paris, 1914). See also the manuscripts of the translation of the *Economics and Politics* of Aristotle by Nicole Oresme: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS fr. 9106, fo. 244, and Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS 11201–2, fo. 138 recto and 263 recto. The former is reproduced in M. Camille, *Master of Death: The Lifeless Art of Pierre Remiet, Illuminator* (New Haven and London, 1996), 110–11. The latter is described in R. van Uytven, 'Showing Off One's Rank in the Middle Ages', in W. Blockmans and A. Janse (eds),

device, used by painters to render the social status or function of figures.⁴⁴ There is also some evidence that the idea of an equation between place in the social order and dress pervaded the vision of secular literature: in romances, for instance, there was a clear correlation between physical attributes, including dress, moral qualities, and social status.⁴⁵

The diffusion of such a representation of society may also contribute to explain why, while there were no sumptuary laws in England in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, authorities showed some concern about the issue of the dignity of appearance and lifestyle of some social categories. In the twelfth century, in the context of crusading expeditions and of levies for the Holy Land, a number of decisions were taken concerning dress. In 1184, it was decided to levy an aid on rents and movables of the non-crusaders, but some exemptions were made for the clergy and the knights: the movable goods of clerics to be exempted from the tax were the 'treasure, ornaments of churches, books, horses, vases, liturgical vestments, precious stones and utensils used everyday and deemed to be necessary to them', while knights were exempted on their horses, weapons, vases and personal clothes (*indumenta*).⁴⁶ In 1188, another levy for the Holy Land was imposed, and its form, which is reported by several chroniclers, shows two orientations.⁴⁷ The first was clearly penitential. Crusaders were not allowed to take women with them; they and, probably, the rest of the population, were forbidden to play games, and excessive luxury in food, as well as a number of clothing materials, vair, gris, and sable (all luxury furs), and the costly woollen cloth known as scarlet were proscribed.⁴⁸ In addition, clothes were not to be dagged (*decisos*) nor laced (*laceatos*), a reference to specific fashions, and in particular to the lacing of garments, a mark of fashionable dress in the twelfth century.⁴⁹ The second orientation reveals a conception similar to that of the tax of 1184, in so far as some categories did not have to pay the tax on the movables that were necessary to the display of their status: knights were exempted on their arms, horses, and clothes (*vestibus*). Clerics were exempted on horses, books, clothes and liturgical vestments (*vestibus et vestimentis*), and everything belonging to their

Showing Status: Representation of Social Positions in the Late Middle Ages (Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe, 2, Turnhout 1999), 19–34, esp. 31.

⁴⁴ M. Beaulieu, 'Le costume, miroir des mentalités de la France médiévale (1350–1500)', *Mélanges Offerts à Jean Dauvillier* (Toulouse, 1979), 65–87, and van Yrtven, 'Showing Off One's Rank in the Middle Ages'. On the representation of peasants in calendars, see P. Mane, *Calendriers et Techniques Agricoles: France–Italie, XIIIe–XIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1983).

⁴⁵ On this point, see D. Burnley, *Courtliness and Literature in Medieval England* (London and New York, 1998), esp. 37.

⁴⁶ W.E. Lunt, 'The Text of the Ordinance of 1184 Concerning an Aid for the Holy Land', *English Historical Review*, xxxvii (1922), 235–42, esp. 242.

⁴⁷ For a collation of the different versions of the ordinance, see *Councils and Synods*, I, ii, 1022–9.

⁴⁸ The terminology of medieval furs is described by E.M. Veale, *The English Fur Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1966), and Delort, *Le Commerce des Fourrures*, i, 7–92.

⁴⁹ This could be very tight and may also have revealed some of the naked body: J. Harris, '“Estroict vestu et menu cosu”: Evidence for the Construction of Twelfth-Century Dress', in G.R. Owen-Crocker and T. Graham (eds), *Medieval Art: Recent Perspectives. A Memorial Tribute to C.R. Dodwell* (Manchester and New York, 1998), 89–103, esp. 94.

chapel. The precious stones of lay and clerical people were also omitted from the taxation.⁵⁰

The idea that some categories of society were to be exempted from the tax on certain goods in order to maintain a certain level of ostentation continued into the thirteenth century with the forms of taxation on movable goods, or sets of instructions sent to tax collectors for the levies on movables. These show a deliberate attempt to differentiate between taxpayers according to their place in society,⁵¹ and, in the last decades of the thirteenth century, this policy concerned dress as well as some other movable goods, although customary exemptions may have been in place before then. In 1283, instructions given to tax collectors specified that only the *prudes hommes del reaume ke ne sunt burgeys ne marchauntz* were to be exempted on some movables, including dress.⁵² In 1290, the armour, horses, jewels, vases of gold, silver and bronze, and clothes of knights, *gentiz homes* and their wives were exempted from tax, but this policy did not extend to towns.⁵³ According to J.A.C. Vincent, representatives of boroughs may have protested against this, since early in 1291 some royal letters exempted a few goods from the tax in towns: a garment for the man and the same for his wife, a bed for the two of them, a ring, a brooch of gold or silver and a silk belt if these were accessories used every day, as well as a silver or mazer cup.⁵⁴ Similar exemptions to those made in 1290–91 were repeated for the next levies.⁵⁵ The evidence echoes the presumption that rural and urban populations were different categories, and that within the former, knights and gentlemen formed a specific group, whose status had to be adequately expressed through sumptuary display.

Does this mean, however, that variations in dress reflected the existence of a social hierarchy, and that, as a consequence, to dress above one's station was a transgression of social order? The literature of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries contains

⁵⁰ The second version, which is found in Benedict of Peterborough and in William de Newburgh, runs along the same lines, except that the precious stones are said to be exempted for clerics and knights, rather than for clerics and lay people.

⁵¹ For instance, in 1225, the form of taxation for the levy of a fifteenth specified that clerics, earls, barons, knights and freemen who were not merchants were to be exempted on their books, church ornaments, horses, weapons, jewels, vases and utensils, and the contents of their larders and cellars, as well as on hay, and finally on grain purchased for the garrisoning of castles. Merchants were exempted on weapons, riding horses, house utensils, and the contents of their cellars and larders for their own consumption. Finally, peasants were exempted on their rightful arms, utensils, meat and fish, and drink for their own consumption, as well as hay and fodder which were not for sale: *Patent Rolls 1216–1225*, 560–1.

⁵² *Parliamentary Writs*, i, 12.

⁵³ *Lancashire Lay Subsidies, Being an Examination of the Lay Subsidy Rolls Remaining in the Public Record Office London from Henry III to Charles II*, i, ed. J.A.C. Vincent (*Record Society for Lancashire and Cheshire*, xxvii, 1893), 78 n. 1.

⁵⁴ *Lancashire Lay Subsidies*, 178. Also *Bartholomei de Cotton Monachi Norwicensis Historia Anglicana (A.D. 449–1298)*, ed. H.R. Luard (Rolls ser., 1859), 178. See also M. Jurkowski, C.L. Smith and D. Crook, *Lay Taxes in England and Wales, 1188–1688* (Public Record Office Handbook, 31, Kew 1998), 21. For silk girdles, see I. Fingerlin, *Gürtel des hohen und späten Mittelalters* (Munich and Berlin, 1971).

⁵⁵ *Lancashire Lay Subsidies*, 182 for the levy of 1294, and *Parliamentary Writs*, i, 179 for the levy of 1307.

numerous attacks against the usurpation of aristocratic dress by the lower classes,⁵⁶ and a few individual cases testify that personal hubris could be expressed through dress, one of the most famous examples of this being the behaviour of Piers Gaveston at the coronation of Edward II: the fact that he wore purple clothes was interpreted by some as a deliberate attempt to put himself on an equal station with the king.⁵⁷ Before the fourteenth century, however, it was rather the excessive display of the rich and powerful that was the subject of satire and criticism. It has been argued that in the context of a growing commercialisation of the economy, avarice replaced pride as the first of sins,⁵⁸ but to some extent the evidence concerning dress contradicts this. The figure of the man punished in hell for his pride, which appears in the vision of a certain Turchillus, reported by Roger of Wendover for 1206, and who sees his beautiful clothes, the sleeves he used to lace tightly, transformed into a shape of fire that consumes his body, is exemplary of the role of dress in this context.⁵⁹ The preaching literature of the thirteenth century records themes such as the pride of women,⁶⁰ and the pride of the highly born and rich,⁶¹ including clerics of high rank.⁶² Accusations against excessive luxury were frequent, and the nostalgic comment of the author of the *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*⁶³ that the world was, in William's youth, not so proud as it is now, finds an echo in many other works. But the thirteenth-century literature on social estates, such as the *Livre des Manières* of Etienne de Fougères, or the poem known as *De Diversis Ordinibus Hominum*, does not mention usurpation of rank through dress.⁶⁴ As for the criticism of excessive fashions, which were sometimes felt to be a sign of evil times, the

⁵⁶ G.R. Owst, *Preaching in Medieval England: An Introduction to Sermon Manuscripts of the Period c. 1350–1450* (Cambridge, 1926), 172; *idem*, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England*, 369–70 and 404–11.

⁵⁷ *Annales Paulini*, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, i, 262.

⁵⁸ L.K. Little, 'Pride Goes before Avarice: Social Change and the Vices in Latin Christendom', *American Historical Review*, lxxvi (1971), 16–49. For the effects of the growing commercialisation, see E. King, 'Economic Development in the Early Twelfth Century', in R. Britnell and J. Hatcher (eds), *Progress and Problems in Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Edward Miller* (Cambridge, 1996), 1–22, esp. 7–8, and R.H. Britnell, *The Commercialisation of English Society 1000–1500* (2nd edn, Manchester and New York, 1996), *passim*.

⁵⁹ Roger of Wendover, *Flores Historiarum*, ii, 25–6.

⁶⁰ For instance in the *Manuel des Pechiez* of William of Wadington, where women are criticized for the excessive length of their dress and for wearing wimples dyed in saffron: *Robert of Brunne's "Handlyng Synne"*, ed. F.J. Furnivall, 2 vols (Early English Text Society, cxix and cxxiii, 1901 and 1903), i, 116–22. For the dyeing of wimples with saffron, see also the French song of the mercer in *Satirical Songs and Poems on Costume: From the 13th to the 19th Century*, ed. F.W. Fairhold (Percy Society, London 1849), 8.

⁶¹ For instance in the poem *De mundi miseria*, in *The Latin Poems commonly Attributed to Walter Mapes*, ed. T. Wright (Camden Society, 1841), 149–51. Also John of Wales, *Summa de regimine vite humane* iii, 10 (Lyon, 1511), fo. 252, where beautiful dress is seen to be more honoured at court than virtue.

⁶² Satirical passages such as that of Gerald of Wales against the pride of the concubines of priests have to be put in the context of a general attack against married priests: *Gemma Ecclesiastica*, dist. ii, cap. xxiii, in *Opera Omnia*, ed. J.S. Brewer, J.F. Dimock and G.F. Warner, 8 vols (Rolls ser., 1862), ii, 277.

⁶³ *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal Comte de Striguil et de Pembroke, Régent d'Angleterre de 1216 à 1219*, ed. P. Meyer, 3 vols (Société de l'Histoire de France, 1891–1901), i, 28–9, lines 761–8.

⁶⁴ Etienne de Fougères, *Le Livre des Manières*, ed. R.A. Lodge (Geneva, 1977); Wright, *The Latin Poems*

topos of the 'follies of fashion', well documented for the first half of the twelfth century⁶⁵ and again from the 1340s onwards,⁶⁶ was perhaps less prominent in the intermediate period, which may reflect a relative moderation in the shape of clothes, then ample and long for both sexes of the well-to-do.

In the case of knights, dress may have played a role in the development of the idea of an 'order of knighthood' from the late twelfth century onwards: the mantle of the ceremony of knighthood, the spurs and the sword, were essential elements in the image of dubbed knights. Specific dress, riding accessories, and arms, may also have contributed to the construction of a particular image for knights: in 1286, Osbert Giffard, a knight from the diocese of Salisbury, received a penance for having abducted two nuns from Wilton nunnery. He was also to be deprived of the 'knightly signs' (*insigniis militaribus*): the gilded spurs, the sword, the war saddle, the gilded bridle and the 'coloured clothes',⁶⁷ although it is clear that the latter at least were not restricted to knights. On the battlefield, knights were probably distinguished by the pennon or banner they were carrying, and perhaps by their superior armour, although this may be open to discussion. Heraldic devices would also have made possible the recognition of individual knights.⁶⁸ Knights often chose to have themselves represented clothed in military dress on their effigies, and the iconography repeatedly depicts knights in full armour in order to indicate their status. This general picture, however, may have to be nuanced. Armour was probably worn only in case of danger.⁶⁹ As for the evidence from funeral effigies, this is somewhat ambivalent, insofar as some knights may have opted for a representation in civilian dress.⁷⁰ Heraldic devices may have distinguished aristocratic dress, but in the thirteenth

Commonly Attributed to Walter Mapes, 229–36. For a list of works on social estates, see Mohl, *The Three Estates in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, *passim*.

65 See in particular H. Platelle, 'Le problème du scandale: les nouvelles modes masculines aux XIe et XIIe siècles', *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, liiii (1975), 1071–96.

66 F. Boucher, 'Les conditions de l'apparition du costume court en France vers le milieu du XIVe siècle', *Recueils de Travaux Offerts à M. Clovis Brunel* (Paris, 1955), i, 183–92, esp. 183–4; F. Piponnier, 'Une révolution dans le costume masculin au XIVe siècle', *Le Vêtement: Histoire, Archéologie et Symbolique Vestimentaires au Moyen Age, Cahiers du Léopard d'Or*, i (Paris, 1989), 225–42, and Zilstra-Zweens, 'Changes in Male Fashion in the 14th Century', in *Of his Array Telle I No Lenger Tale*, 27–40 and plates.

67 *Registrum Epistolarum Fratris Johannis Peckham Archiepiscopi Cantuariensis (1279–92)*, ed. C.T. Martin, 3 vols (Rolls ser., 1882–85), iii, 916–17.

68 On these matters see A. Ailes, 'The Knight, Heraldry and Armour: The Role of Recognition and the Origins of Heraldry', in C. Harper-Bill and R. Harvey (eds), *Medieval Knighthood IV: Papers from the Fifth Strawberry Hill Conference, 1990* (Woodbridge, 1992), 1–21, esp. 18 and 21, and P. Coss, *The Knight in Medieval England, 1000–1400* (Stroud, 1993), 73–99.

69 This is shown in the episode of the landing of William Marshal in Ireland in 1208: John of Erlée came to meet him dressed in a haubergeon, because of the insecure situation: *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*, i, 138, lines 13949–58.

70 This was perhaps the case at Winterbourne Bassett (Wiltshire) and at Compton Martin (Somerset): A. Hollaender, 'A Note on the Recumbent Effigies at St Katharine and St Peter's, Winterbourne Bassett', *The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, xlix (1940–42), 386–90, and A.C. Fryer, 'Monumental Effigies in Somerset, Part iv (b): Thirteenth and Fourteenth Century Civilians', *Proceedings of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society*, lxiv (1918), 40. References in H.A. Tummers, *Early Secular Effigies in England: The Thirteenth Century* (Leiden, 1980), 20–1.

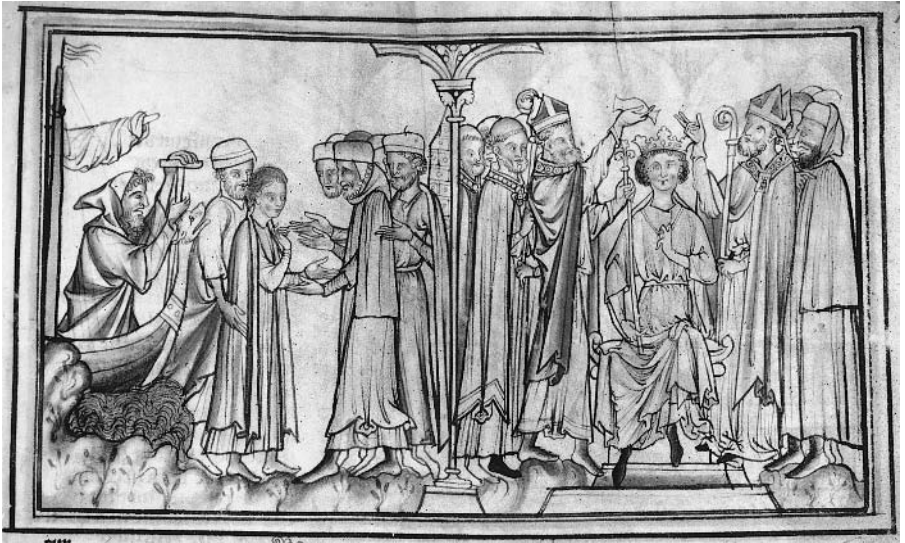


Plate 17. Magnate dress in the thirteenth century from *La Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei*, c. 1255–60 (Cambridge University Library MS Ee.3.59, fo. 9). Reproduced by permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library

century the decoration of dress accessories, such as girdles, or gloves,⁷¹ with heraldic patterns, is better documented than that of garments, although the *cointises* of silk worn on festive occasions may have supported heraldic devices.⁷² In fact, when inventories give us an idea of knightly wardrobes, it is difficult to see in what way the civilian dress of knights was different from that of the rest of the upper classes.⁷³ In the case of magnates at least, we may presume that their sumptuous dress, as well as their regalia, would have placed them apart,⁷⁴ but it is striking to observe that in some iconographic representations the dress of magnates is not marked by any

⁷¹ The capture of Richard I in 1192 was due to the fact that a young man of his entourage was carrying the king's gloves under his belt, and these were probably decorated with heraldic devices: Roger of Wendover, *Flores Historiarum*, i, 220.

⁷² There are representations of coats-of-arms on the garments found in the royal tombs of Las Huelgas, near Burgos: M. Gómez-Moreno, *El Panteón Real de Las Huelgas de Burgos* (Madrid, 1946) and C. Herrero Carretero, *Museo de Telas Medievales: Monasterio de Santa María la Real de Huelgas* (Madrid, 1988).

⁷³ The goods of a former knight of the royal household, Osbert de Spaldington, were confiscated in June 1298 by the sheriff of York: they included three robes and some isolated garments, four brooches, seventeen rings and two 'flowers' of gold, eight silk purses and four girdles, including an old one, a sword-harness and spurs. The text is edited in F. Lachaud, 'An Aristocratic Wardrobe of the Late Thirteenth Century: The Confiscation of the Goods of Osbert de Spaldington in 1298', *Historical Research. The Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, lxxvii (1994), 91–100.

⁷⁴ The bibliography on the English regalia is substantial. For a general introduction, see P.E. Schramm, *A History of the English Coronation*, trans. L.G. Wickham-Legg (Oxford, 1937) and J.M. Bak, 'Medieval Symbolism of the State: Percy E. Schramm's contribution', *Viator*, iv (1973), 33–63. But

specific feature: in the manuscript of *La Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei*, for instance, the magnates are depicted wearing caps and mantles with sleeves, the kind of outfit that merchants would have worn as well.⁷⁵ (Plate 17)

Indeed, in the thirteenth century, the dress of urban élites, the *divites*, may have been little different from that of the landholding classes. In spite of the limitations of wills as a precise reflection of the testator's level of fortune, the number of garments and dress accessories mentioned in such documents testifies to the significant place of dress in the lifestyle of wealthy burgesses.⁷⁶ For instance, the will of Juliana Russel, widow of the London draper and king's merchant Elias Russel, dated 1305, mentions three robes, one of green cloth, another of scarlet and the last one of medley, all with matching mantles, as well as silk cloths.⁷⁷ Henry Perle, a burgess of the parish of St Mary the Virgin in Oxford, whose will dates from March 1290, left three robes to each of his daughters: for his daughter Margery, these robes were respectively of scarlet, burnet and green cloth.⁷⁸ The will of Juliana Wyth, also from Oxford, in 1282, mentions the elements of an extensive wardrobe: two robes, one of cloth of Ypres and the other of blue cloth, lined with silk, two mantles, one of murray, and the second one of green cloth, with a lining of *biches*, probably a type of vair, several other garments and undergarments, and multiple accessories (a purse and a girdle of silk, gold brooches, and shoes).⁷⁹

To some extent, the impression of large and diverse wardrobes of burgesses is confirmed by tax rolls. It is likely that the assessments were rarely realistic, since the aim of the assessors was to produce a global sum that would satisfy the royal government and, in many cases, there may have been an agreement with the taxpayer which was meant to produce a global evaluation of his resources, followed by an itemization of some goods. There were also serious discrepancies from one evaluation to the next: for instance, it has been shown that in 1297, 89% of the individual assessments in Shrewsbury included clothes. But the figures were respectively 90% in 1306, 65% in 1309, 43% in 1313 and finally 17.5% in 1316, the latter reflecting the economic difficulties of that year. In addition, clothes were probably underestimated when they were valued at all, and not all items repertoried were personal possessions, since goods for sale, including clothes, were normally taxed.⁸⁰ Even

for a wider reflection on regalia as a sign of power in medieval England, see Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy*, 177ff.

⁷⁵ Cambridge, University Library MS Ee. 3. 59, fo. 9 (c. 1255–60). I wish to thank Christopher Wilson for his comments on this point.

⁷⁶ For some considerations on the place of dress in wills, see M.M. Sheehan, *The Will in Medieval England: From the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to the End of the Thirteenth Century* (Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Studies and Texts 6, Toronto, 1963), 282–302.

⁷⁷ *Calendar of Wills Proved and Enrolled in the Court of Husting, London, A.D. 1258–A.D. 1688*, ed. R.R. Sharpe, 2 vols (London, 1889–90), i, 173–4. Also *ibid.*, 175–6 for the will of Edith, late wife of Robert le Paumer (legacies of silk girdles, brooches and rings).

⁷⁸ *A Cartulary of the Hospital of St John the Baptist*, ed. H.E. Salter, 3 vols (Oxford Historical Society, lxvi, lxxviii and lxxix, 1914–20), i, 466–7.

⁷⁹ *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey*, ed. H.E. Salter, 6 vols (Oxford Historical Society, lxxxix, xc, xci, xcvi, xcvi and ci, 1929–36), i, 411–13.

⁸⁰ An analysis of the place of clothes in urban tax rolls is given in *The Wealth of Shrewsbury in the Early*

when these limitations are taken into account, the urban tax rolls provide interesting evidence. At King's Lynn, in the ward of Henry de Gernemuta, forty-three individuals were assessed, among whom twenty were taxed on some item of clothing. Many had clothes as well as dress accessories: for instance, William de Cranewyz, who declared movable goods for £52 16s 9d *ob.*, had jewels valued at 20s 5d, a brooch of silver valued at 7s 6d, four robes for men and women, and a cloak (*capa*), the clothes being valued overall at 55s.⁸¹ In the case of the imposition of a twelfth in York in 1319, the estimates vary between 6s 8d and 13s 4d for men's robes, and between 5s and 16s for women's robes: Nicholas de Sexdecim Vallibus, a clerk, declared a robe for himself, priced at 10s, and one for his wife, priced at 1 mark. Nicholas le Flemyng, the town's mayor, declared two robes for himself, and two for his wife.⁸² All tax rolls show that some of the taxpayers were wealthy enough to own items of jewellery, as well as precious dress accessories, such as gold brooches and girdles of silk, sometimes ornamented with precious metal, and finally complete robes or individual garments, occasionally several sets, as well as cloaks and mantles, and this may be connected with archaeological finds from Southampton, Winchester, York or London.⁸³

Occasional mentions in narrative and literary sources evoke the wealth of some urban interiors,⁸⁴ and underline the significance of costly clothes in the standards of living of rich burgesses.⁸⁵ Also, descriptions of royal entries into towns regularly refer to the 'festive clothes' of burgesses, as a few examples will show.⁸⁶ After the triumph

Fourteenth Century: Six Local Subsidy Rolls 1297 to 1332. Text and Commentary, ed. D. and R. Cromarty (Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society, 1993), 40–1. For the second-hand market for clothes in the thirteenth century, see the well-documented Parisian evidence in Etienne Boileau, *Le Livre des Métiers*, ed. R. de Lespinasse and F. Bonnardot (Paris, 1879), 159–66.

⁸¹ *The Making of King's Lynn: A Documentary Survey*, ed. D.M. Owen (The British Academy, Records of Social and Economic History, new ser., ix, 1984) and G.H. Dashwood, 'Remarks on a Subsidy Roll in the Possession of the Corporation of Lynn Regis', *Norfolk Archaeology*, i (1847), 334–54.

⁸² London, Public Record Office, E 179/242/75 and 95.

⁸³ C. Platt and R. Coleman-Smith, *Excavations in Medieval Southampton 1953–1969*, ii: *The Finds* (Leicester, 1975); M. Biddle, *Object and Economy in Medieval Winchester* (Winchester Studies 7 ii: Artefacts from medieval Winchester, Oxford 1990) and the volumes on London excavations mentioned in note 4. For York, P. Walton, *Textiles, Cordage and Raw Fibre from 16–22 Coppergate* (The Archaeology of York: the Small Finds, London, 1989).

⁸⁴ The wealth of a bourgeois interior in Exeter is depicted in *Eliduc*: 'Sis ostels fu chiés un burgeis,/ ki mult fu sages e curteis;/ sa bele chambre encurtinee/ li a li ostes delivre'e' *Lais de Marie de France*, ed. K. Warnke (Paris, 1990), 276, lines 133–6.

⁸⁵ See for instance the plunder of Lincoln in 1217: *Spoliata itaque civitate universa usque ad ultimum quadrantem, ecclesias omnes totius urbis consequenter spoliantes, arcas universas cum armariis securibus ac malleis confregerunt, rapientes in eis aurum et argentum, pannos omnis coloris ac muliebria ornamenta, annulos aureos, cum scyphis et lapidibus pretiosis* (Roger of Wendover, *Flores Historiarum*, ii, 218). The punishment of William Fitz Osbert, a wealthy London citizen, in 1196, included taking away his expensive dress (*proceris vestibus*): *ibid.*, i, 244.

⁸⁶ For royal entries, but with a restrictive approach, see R. Withington, *English Pageantry: an Historical Outline*, 2 vols (Cambridge, Mass., 1918–26) and G. Kipling, *Enter the King: Theatre, Liturgy and Ritual in the Medieval Civic Triumph* (Oxford, 1998). See also, for the participation of urban representatives in the coronation festivities: J. Campbell, 'Was it Infancy in England? Some Questions of Comparison', in M. Jones and M. Vale (eds), *England and her Neighbours, 1066–1453: Essays in Honour of Pierre Chaplais* (London and Ronceverte, 1989), 1–17.

of Henry II over the Scots, Londoners left the city in order to meet the king, dressed in silk clothes (*Des riches dras de seie sunt vestu à desrei*), and riding their best horses.⁸⁷ When Henry III came back from the continent in 1243, cities and boroughs received orders to send delegates, dressed in precious clothes (*in vestibus preciosis*), to meet the king, and as Henry neared London, the citizens welcomed him outside the city, all clothed in festive dress (*adornati festive*).⁸⁸ At the turn of the thirteenth century, the festive dress of London citizens took on an emblematic dimension: in September 1299, Queen Margaret made her entry into London, and in her progress through the city she was surrounded by several noblemen, the mayor and the aldermen dressed in one suit of clothes, and three hundred citizens dressed in another.⁸⁹ In 1308, at the coronation of Edward II, the aldermen and citizens of London were present, clothed in 'silk and samite', with the arms of England and France depicted on their dress.⁹⁰ Even allowing for the stylistic overstatement of chroniclers, altogether such descriptions conjure up a picture of wealth and large sumptuary expenditure; it may also be significant that the chroniclers did not consider such a display of urban wealth, manifestly encouraged by the royal authorities, as reprehensible.

This calls into question the status of dress as a reflection of social order. Although some social groups were sometimes depicted wearing dress representative of their status, I would argue that the idea of a strict hierarchical view of society expressed by the means of dress was a fourteenth-century phenomenon, which culminated in the sumptuary laws of the reign of Edward III. This late development was perhaps the consequence of the slow construction of a complex social hierarchy,⁹¹ even of a certain social fluidity. Towns in particular were not demographically self-sufficient, and some members of the urban élites were gentry in their own right. The ambivalence of dress as a sign of social status in the thirteenth century also reflected a general economic and social situation: economic growth and the growth of trade meant greater access to luxury dress materials for more people, and towns, which were the places where some of this wealth flowed in the form of cash,⁹² were the obvious places for this to happen.

⁸⁷ 'Chronicle of the War between the English and the Scotch in 1173 and 1174, by Jordan Fantosme', *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, ed. R. Howlett, 4 vols (Rolls ser., 1884–89), iii, 362, lines 1929–33.

⁸⁸ Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, iv, 255. See also *ibid.*, iii, 617 for the reception of the count of Flanders in London in 1239, and v, 513 for that of Eleanor of Castile in 1255.

⁸⁹ *De Antiquis Legibus Liber. Cronica Maiorum et Vicecomitum Londoniarum*, ed. T. Stapleton (Camden Series, 1846), 249.

⁹⁰ *Annales Londonienses*, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, i, 152.

⁹¹ This has been the subject of some detailed analysis in the case of the 'gentry': P. Coss, 'Knights, Esquires and the Origins of Social Gradation in England', D. Crouch, 'From Stenton to McFarlane: Models of Society of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries', and M. Prestwich, '*Miles in armis strenuus*: The Knight at War', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th Ser., v (1995), *From Knighthood to Country Gentry, 1050–1400?*, 155–78, 179–200 and 201–20; K. Faulkner, 'The Transformation of Knighthood in Early Thirteenth-Century England', *English Historical Review*, cxi (1996), 1–23, esp. 13 and 20.

⁹² See the remarks on the distraint of debtors' goods in towns in *Dialogus de Scaccario. The Course of the Exchequer*, ed. C. Johnson (London, 1950), 108.

What did bring about a change in the perception of dress as a sign of status? The necessity of a sumptuary display for the knights and gentlemen was recognized by the royal authorities, and the discourse of the Church on dress may have influenced lay conceptions of social order. Another significant contribution to the evolution towards a greater consciousness of social rank was perhaps the policy of the great household. By the second half of the twelfth century at the latest, it was customary for a lord to clothe some members at least of his *familia* on a regular basis. (Plate 18) An arresting testimony of the importance of these liveries for the personal dignity of their beneficiaries is found in the *Chronica majora* of Matthew Paris, where the chronicler attributes the death of the duke of Normandy in 1134 to his anger and bitterness when he realized that the robe he was given had already been tried on by the king.⁹³ When liveries of robes can be studied in some detail, they show a well regulated and hierarchical system, which became increasingly complex with the years. Allowances of money for robes followed a strict hierarchy, and differences in the quality and quantity of liveries in kind also established a graded scale in the household, according to rank and not to office. This appears clearly in indentures of retinue, which usually specify the level of robes the new retainer was expected to receive: for instance, the agreement between Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk, and John Segrave, dated 1297, indicated that the latter was to receive two robes a year of the livery of the earl, *come le plus avant banaret ke il eyt*, and his five knights bachelor robes *ausi come les autres bachelers de la liveree la counte*.⁹⁴ The strict hierarchy of liveries of robes is also reflected in household ordinances, which stated precisely what each rank of the household was entitled to for their dress.⁹⁵ In the thirteenth century, cloths of different colour were used in order to underline differences in rank. For instance, the livery of robes for Christmas 1217 in the royal household was of green or burnet cloth, with furs of *bissus*, or *vair*, for the knights of the king, of burnet cloth with furs of *conin* for the chaplain and clerk of the king and for the sergeants of the king's household, of green cloth with lamb fur for some servants and finally of an unspecified type of cloth without fur for a lower category of servants.⁹⁶ The account of Bogo de Clare's household for the period from 25 December 1285 to 2 June 1286 records that Bogo himself had clothes of blue and *pers*, a kind of strong blue, master Gilbert de Sancto Leophardo a robe of *pers*, two household knights, Hugh de Turbeville and William de Montrevel, some robes of blue, and the

⁹³ Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, ii, 160–1.

⁹⁴ N. Denholm-Young, *Seigniorial Administration in England* (Oxford, 1937), 167. See also the indenture between Aymer de Valence, earl of Pembroke, and John Darcy, dated 1309, according to which John Darcy was to receive *robes covenables com un des autres valletz*: 'Private Indentures for Life Service in Peace and War, 1278–1476', ed. M. Jones and S. Walker, *Camden Miscellany*, xxxii, Camden Fifth Series, iii (1994), 1–190, esp. 49.

⁹⁵ For the ordinance of the royal household drawn up in 1279: T.F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England: The Wardrobe, the Chamber and the Small Seals*, 6 vols (Manchester, 1920–33), ii, 158–63. For the ordinance of 1318: *idem*, *The Place of Edward II in English History* (2nd edn. H. Johnstone, Manchester, 1936), 244–81.

⁹⁶ *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum*, 345.



Plate 18. The granting of livery from the Milemete Treatise, c. 1327 (BL Add. MS 47680, fo. 17v). Reproduced by permission of the British Library

squires some striped scarlet and yellow cloth, probably for some mi-parti liveries.⁹⁷ The roll of expenditure for the household of Richard de Swinfield, Bishop of Hereford, for the years 1289 and 1290, reveals that the winter robes were of *caineth* cloth, a kind of grey, for the bishop and his clerks, and of two different kinds of striped cloth (*pannus stragulatus*) for his squires, bailiffs and *narratores* on the one hand, and for the valets of office on the other. Grooms and pages received another type of cloth, unspecified in the account. For the summer, the bishop and his clerks had robes of blue cloth, and the squires some striped cloth.⁹⁸ Finally, the livery of

⁹⁷ M.S. Giuseppi, 'The Wardrobe and Household Accounts of Bogo de Clare, A.D. 1284–6', *Archaeologia*, lxx (1920), 1–56, esp. 42–56.

⁹⁸ *A Roll of Household Expenses of Richard de Swinfield, Bishop of Hereford, during part of the years 1289 and 1290*, ed. J. Webb (Camden Society, 1854–55), 111–12 and 183.

Thomas of Lancaster's household for Christmas 1313 was of scarlet for the earl, of russet for the bishop of Agen, of *bluetus asureus* for the knights, of medley for the clerks, of mi-parti cloth for the squires, and of ray for the *officiariis*.⁹⁹ Financial accounts for household liveries, household ordinances and indentures of retinue all demonstrate the importance of the notion of hierarchy in household clothing, and the way liveries of robes were used to express visually the essential categories that composed households: clerks, knights bannerets and simple knights, esquires and serjeants and finally menial servants. The diffusion of this system certainly contributed to an increased status-consciousness: aristocratic and royal households projected an ideal – and in fact a somewhat artificial – vision of society, and the growing use of liveries to create retainers and well-wishers may have contributed to transform dress into a systematic social marker.

Whether there was greater status-consciousness in the era of sumptuary laws than before, or whether there was in reality greater access to luxury goods in this period, with the imitation of upper-class fashions by some other categories of society as a consequence, is a complex question: a tentative conclusion would be that while there is no doubt that dress in the middle ages was an expression of wealth and power, it may in fact have remained for a long time an ambivalent mark of social status.¹⁰⁰ In the fourteenth century, however, dress may have become one of the means to express visually the social order. It is remarkable that, in the official recognition of esquires as a specific social group, it was the sumptuary law of 1363 that played a significant role,¹⁰¹ as though dress was given the function of delimiting social ranks. Sumptuary laws may only have condoned an existing reality,¹⁰² but I would argue that in the minds of the legislators, dress had become a significant element in the definition of the social structure. Two factors, however, should be mentioned in order to nuance this conclusion. The first is that social fluidity remained an important element of English society until the end of the middle ages. The aristocracy did not enjoy specific privileges, and knights and gentlemen sat together in parliament with representatives of the urban élites.¹⁰³ The sumptuary laws of the fourteenth century, although they place the knights and gentlemen higher than the burgesses, reflect this in so far as they combine income and social

⁹⁹ J.F. Baldwin, 'The Household Administration of Henry Lacy and Thomas of Lancaster', *English Historical Review*, xlii (1927), 180–200, esp. 198–9. For later examples, relating to the royal court, see Newton, *Fashion in the Age of the Black Prince*, *passim*, and F. Lachaud, 'Vêtement et pouvoir à la cour d'Angleterre sous Philippa de Hainaut', in P. Henriot and A.M. Legras (eds), *Au Cloître et dans le Monde: Femmes, Hommes et Sociétés (IXe–XVe siècle). Mélanges en l'Honneur de Paulette L'Hermite-Leclercq* (Paris, 2000), 217–33.

¹⁰⁰ Other categories of analysis may be sex, age, or occupation. Also, the same individual owned working clothes and festive clothes, clothes for hunting, for bad weather and for travelling, and dress would also change according to the time of year.

¹⁰¹ Coss, 'Knights, Esquires and the Origins of Social Gradation in England', 168–9.

¹⁰² S.L. Waugh, 'The Third Century of English Feudalism', in M. Prestwich, R. Britnell and R. Frame (eds), *Thirteenth-Century England VII: Proceedings of the Durham conference 1997* (Woodbridge, 1999), 47–59, esp. 52.

¹⁰³ Keen, *English Society in the Later Middle Ages*, 12ff.

status, and in this respect they are not different from earlier edicts, for instance the Assize of Arms of 1181, or the tariff for participating in tournaments under Richard I.¹⁰⁴ The second factor is that dress was, in essence, dynamic, and regulations were doomed to be always one step behind the dialectics of fashion.

¹⁰⁴ R. Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings, 1075–1225* (Oxford, 2000), 206–7.

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Medieval Founders' Relics: Royal and Episcopal Patronage at Oxford and Cambridge Colleges*

Marian Campbell

GIVEN their importance, the ancient treasures owned by the Oxford and Cambridge colleges are strikingly little known. This is only partly because many are rarely on public display, and partly because – apart from the silver – they have seldom formed the focus of sustained scholarly attention. The first exhibitions to include historic pieces from Oxford and Cambridge took place in the mid-nineteenth century, and the most recent exhibition – of Cambridge plate – was over twenty-five years ago. Where studies of the pieces in college collections do exist, they have tended to be by medium, on the silver, the books, or the textiles, or to concentrate on an individual college or a major benefactor.¹ But when studied as an ensemble, the picture that all these medieval pieces present is more subtle, for they throw light on contemporary *mentalités*, and on the changing outlooks of college founders, and of the colleges themselves. The vicissitudes of politics, or geography, only partly explain the differing patterns of loss and survival between objects in Oxford and Cambridge colleges.

Prime aims of all colleges were to combine the advancement of learning with the furtherance of religious worship. But in a sense, all medieval foundations were also commemorations of their founders, from Walter de Merton, founder of Merton College, Oxford in 1262, to Richard Fox, founder of Corpus Christi, Oxford in 1517.² Aside from books, goldsmiths' work and textiles make up the major part of these ancient college collections, and it is upon these latter that I shall concentrate.

* The genesis of this paper lies in a conference paper presented at the Louvre conference, *Trésors du Moyen Age*, in 1991. Thanks to the hospitality of St John's College, Oxford, I was able to deepen my knowledge during a Senior Studentship in 1993.

¹ For details of the exhibitions and for previous studies of the college collections see Appendix I.

² See C.N.L. Brooke and J.R.L. Highfield, *Oxford and Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1988); *History of the University of Cambridge*, gen. ed. C.N.L. Brooke, vol. 1, *The University to 1546*, ed. Damian Leader (Cambridge, 1988); *History of the University of Oxford*, gen. ed. T.H. Aston, vols 1–3 (Oxford, 1984–92); A.B. Emden, *Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1963) and *Biographical Register of the University of Oxford*, 3 vols (Oxford, 1957–59), also A.B. Cobban, *The Medieval English Universities – Oxford and Cambridge to c. 1500* (Aldershot, 1988).



Plate 19. Mazer belonging to Thomas Ballard, fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, English, before 1437. Maple wood, mounted in silver gilt. Reproduced by permission of The Warden and Fellows of All Souls College, Oxford

Oxford and Cambridge colleges together house some of the greatest and rarest surviving pieces of medieval plate in the country. Many are unique in Europe. They are largely of English origin, with the exception of a few, mostly French, items of great rarity. They date from the thirteenth century to the 1520s.

If one adopts the now conventional distinction between secular and liturgical pieces, it is the secular plate that predominates, that is plate for the table, and much of it consists of ceremonial salts, drinking vessels and spoons.³ There are covered cups, drinking horns, mazer bowls – that is bowls made of maple wood mounted with silver or gold – and coconut cups – silver mounted coconut shells – which were of great rarity and much prized in the Middle Ages. (Plate 19) An important addition to the sum of secular plate is the silver flagon at Magdalen College, Oxford of the period 1500–1520, a unique pre-Reformation survival of its kind.⁴ It might

³ Secular silver is discussed in C.C. Oman, *English domestic silver* (2nd edn, London 1947), C.J. Jackson, *An Illustrated History of English Plate* (London, 1911), part 3, 467–1064; the key study for medieval secular plate is R.W. Lightbown, *Secular Goldsmiths' Work in Medieval France: A History* (London, 1978).

⁴ Oxford and Cambridge colleges own a total of nine mazer bowls – with four each at All Souls College, Oxford, and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and one at Oriel; see W.H. St John Hope, 'On the English Medieval Drinking Bowls called Mazers', *Archaeologia*, 50 (1887), 129–93. Of the surviving eleven medieval coconut cups, Oxford and Cambridge own seven. These are mostly in Oxford, at Exeter, New College, Oriel and Queen's. All are fifteenth-century, except for the rare

seem surprising that there are also a few pieces of jewellery, all in Oxford. However, in the Middle Ages, jewellery was habitually worn by both men and women, not just for ornament, but to proclaim the rank and wealth of the wearer. Jewels of gold, silver and precious stones were prized for their intrinsic as well as their aesthetic value, in an age without banks.⁵ Where liturgical items are concerned – whether plate or textiles – there are very few medieval survivals, and all are at Oxford colleges: a fragmentary mitre at New College, and mitre finials at All Souls, and episcopal vestments and other textiles, variously at New College, Magdalen and St John's. Four chalices are divided between Brasenose, Corpus Christi and Trinity, with one pax and a crozier at New College, and another crozier at Corpus Christi.⁶

The nature of the pieces preserved, and the complete absence of all medieval liturgical items from Cambridge, may be accounted for by factors both religious, political and social. The fate of much of the medieval secular plate was probably rather mundane: when it had become too unfashionable in design or was too battered, it was simply melted down and remodelled. As a result, secular plate is in general now extremely rare, far rarer than church plate. As to liturgical pieces, as is well known, the Reformation wreaked particularly savage havoc upon shrines, reliquaries and ecclesiastical plate of all sorts. King Henry VIII's 1536 Act dissolving the lesser monasteries marks the beginning of a Protestant wave of destruction which lasted, with some intermissions, for a generation. By 1542 the French ambassador in London reported that men were employed at the Mint at the Tower of London night and day in order to coin money from this booty.⁷ Henry's son King Edward VI continued the spoliation, and systematically stripped treasure from parish churches, chapels and chantries.

The medieval colleges of Oxford and Cambridge were established and endowed with a religious as well as an academic purpose. In effect they were academic chantries where masses were said for the souls of their benefactors. Although as a result of their educational status the colleges were technically exempt from the Edwardian Act abolishing chantries, there is nevertheless some evidence that much of the colleges' ecclesiastical plate disappeared around the mid-sixteenth century. Although the plate of the university chapels remained intact at the accession of Elizabeth I, its

thirteenth-century cup at Caius College, Cambridge: C.C. Oman, 'Cambridge College Plate', *Connoisseur*, 87 (1959), 166, also Jones, *Cambridge Plate*, 27, and pls XXVII–XXVIII. For the Magdalen flagon, John Hayward, 'The Tudor Plate of Magdalen College, Oxford', *Burlington Magazine*, 125 (1983), 263–4 and pls 6–7.

⁵ For general discussion of this, R.W. Lightbown, *Medieval European Jewellery* (London, 1992), ch. 9, esp. 91, 95; for individual pieces see below, p. 137.

⁶ See Appendix II and below, nn. 35–42. Otherwise for the pax, of c. 1500 – a unique survival in silver and England, but without provenance, see C.C. Oman, 'The College Plate', in J. Buxton and P. Williams (eds), *New College Oxford, 1379–1979* (Oxford, 1979), 98 and pl. 74. At Trinity College, the London-made chalice and paten of 1527, still fully Gothic in style, was given c. 1556 by the college founder Sir Thomas Pope (d. 1559), Moffatt, *Old Oxford Plate*, 154–5 and pl. XXV.

⁷ M.L. Campbell, 'Metalwork in England c. 1200–1400', in J. Alexander and P. Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400*, exhib. cat., Royal Academy of Arts (London, 1987), 162, and fn. 5, and C.C. Oman, *English Church Plate* (Oxford, 1957), 112ff.

survival was of course offensive to the Protestant hierarchy.⁸ Later in the sixteenth century the new threat, at least to medieval chalices and patens, became the general insistence by the Protestant Church of England on a new and larger type of chalice or communion cup, suited to the church's new requirement that the congregation should partake of the communion wine.⁹

The sixteenth-century tide of Protestantism seems to have flowed most vigorously and distinctively in Cambridge, where no church plate at all is left of pre-Dissolution date. There, the campaign against 'superstitious plate' was epitomized by events at King's College, where the Provost, Dr Baker, was denounced and deposed for keeping a 'great heap of popish pelfe . . . crosses, pixes and paxes'.¹⁰ In Oxford, there is evidence that some colleges, like Corpus Christi, harboured fellows with Roman Catholic sympathies, and took care to hide items that might attract Protestant attention.¹¹ Again, in the seventeenth century, the political and religious schisms that provoked the English Civil war of the 1640s were reflected in the universities. Cambridge was in an area dominated by the Puritan army of Cromwell, Oxford was held by the Royalist forces. The King found himself very short of funds and asked the colleges of both universities for loans, in the form of either cash or plate. Losses of plate at Oxford were more serious, largely because of the geographical accident that the King's army actually occupied Oxford, and established a mint there. All the colleges provided plate to be melted down for the King, but only some could afford to redeem their plate for cash payments. For example, the largest recorded quantity of plate to be sacrificed in weight, nearly 300 pounds, was provided by Magdalen. By contrast Cambridge was sometimes luckier, and the proximity to it of the Cromwellian armies brought to grief some of the attempts by colleges to smuggle plate to the King.¹²

The different colleges at Oxford and Cambridge have survived, and flourish still, because of their success over the centuries in attracting gifts and bequests. Between the first college foundations in the thirteenth century, and the Dissolution of 1536 – which effectively marked the end of the Middle Ages – a total of 27 colleges was founded at Oxford and Cambridge, the earliest being University College Oxford in

⁸ Oman, *Church Plate*, 120ff and 159; for ecclesiastical law as it affected Oxford and Cambridge, J.R. Tanner, *Tudor Constitutional Documents, A.D. 1485–1603* (2nd edn, Cambridge, 1930), 106–7.

⁹ Oman, *Church Plate*, 129–30.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 160.

¹¹ J.G. Milne, *The Early History of Corpus Christi College Oxford* (Oxford, 1946), 71–2, and T. Charles-Edwards, 'A Short History of Corpus Christi College', in C. Ellory, H. Clifford and Foster Rogers (eds), *Corpus Silver: Patronage and Plate at Corpus Christi College Oxford* (Needwood, 1999), 22–6; Oman, *Church Plate*, 160.

¹² The Magdalen College 'loan' of plate in January 1642 was of over 296 lb, see John Gutch, *Collectanea Curiosa* (Oxford, 1781), I, section XXIV, 227, also Moffatt, *Old Oxford Plate*, ix–xi. For detailed notes on what each college gave, loaned, pawned and hid see Ian R.D. Reinhart, 'Oxford and the Civil Wars', in N. Tyacke (ed.), *History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 4 (Oxford, 1997), 775–8. Founders' donations and historic plate were supposedly exempt (n. 17, 777). In Cambridge, Corpus Christi escaped the Civil War depredations by concealing its plate, in 1643 dividing it up for safe-keeping between the fellows, *VCH Cambridge*, iii, 374. By contrast, Pembroke sent a great deal to Charles around July 1642, including the lids of the two surviving medieval cups, one of them that of the 'Foundress', *ibid.*, 349.

1249, the latest Corpus Christi College Oxford in 1517. The great majority of founders were bishops, followed by men and women of royal blood, with a very few commoners.¹³ Some founded – or refounded – two colleges. At Oxford, for example, Archbishop Chichele founded in the mid-fifteenth century St Bernard's (which later became St John's) and then All Souls, and at Cambridge in the early sixteenth century Lady Margaret Beaufort (mother of King Henry VII), re-established Christ's College (Godshouse) in 1505 and founded St John's in 1509.

A primary aim of all colleges was a religious one, epitomized by the fourteenth-century foundation, Queen's College, Oxford, founded 'to the glory of God, the advance of the church and the salvation of souls'. But no less important was the advancement of learning; different colleges tended to have a bias towards different branches of it. Yet in a sense too, all medieval colleges were founded to commemorate their founders, just as chantry chapels were. In the fifteenth century, Archbishop Chichele founded All Souls College Oxford specifically for secular clerks, who were to study theology and both canon and civil law. The statutes also specified that the College should be a place of prayer for the fallen of Agincourt, and for the souls of Henry V, Thomas Duke of Clarence and other captains 'who had drunk the cup of bitter death' in the French wars, as well as for all the souls of the faithful departed.¹⁴ Queens' College Cambridge was founded and refounded by two queens, firstly in 1446 by Henry VI's queen, Margaret of Anjou, who ordained special prayers for the King and Queen in life, and for their souls and those of their ancestors in death. She intended Queens' 'to laud and honneur of sexe feminine', and was the first of three royal patronesses of the College, followed by Elizabeth Wodeville, queen of Edward IV, and Anne Neville, queen of Richard III.¹⁵ Few founders were more explicit than Elizabeth de Clare, a grand-daughter of Edward I and foundress of Clare College, Cambridge. Her will of 1360 divides the plate left to her college in two, part of which was to be for the use of her chaplains 'as a perpetual memorial' to her. All of it has gone, her only relic being the College's silver seal, which depicts her. Royal women, often widowed or childless, are notably important in the early history of Cambridge college benefactions. Like the generous clerical benefactors of both universities, they had fewer direct claims on their wealth. By contrast, male lay magnates of the period, whose heirs had first claim on their estates, gave almost nothing.¹⁶

¹³ See note 2, especially Cobban, *Medieval English Universities*, 128–35. The pattern of development at Oxford and Cambridge was notably different. Provision for 'founders' kin' was greater at Oxford than Cambridge because of its more numerous episcopal founders, see Cobban, *Medieval English Universities*, 135, and G.G. Squibb, *Founders' Kin: Privilege and Pedigree* (Oxford, 1972).

¹⁴ For Queen's College, J. Highfield, in *History of the University of Oxford*, I, 244; for All Souls College, E.F. Jacob, *Register of Archbishop Chichele*, 1 (Canterbury and York Society, LIII, 1943), liii.

¹⁵ J. Twigg, *A History of Queen's College Cambridge, 1448–1986* (Woodbridge, 1987), 1–2, also R. Evans and R. Faith in *Late Medieval Oxford* (Oxford, 1992), vol. 2 of *History of the University of Oxford*, 638 and n. 10.

¹⁶ E.A. Jones, *Catalogue of the Plate of Clare College* (Cambridge, 1939), xiii; the silver seal, xv–xvi, 3, and pl. I; also *Treasures of Cambridge*, Goldsmiths' Hall Exhibition (London, 1959), cat. no. 103. For women as benefactors, Evans and Faith in *Late Medieval Oxford*, 637–8.

Even now, every college at Oxford and Cambridge still has a day set aside each year in order to commemorate its founder by means of a church service and a feast. The embodiment of this tradition is demonstrated by drinking horns at Queen's College Oxford, and at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.¹⁷ This latter was allegedly given c. 1347 by a Cambridge alderman, John Goldecorn, to the gild of Corpus Christi, which shortly afterwards united with the gild of the Virgin Mary to found the College as an institution of learning, whose members were also to pray for the souls of members of the fraternity after their death. This is all according to the sixteenth-century historian John Josselin. The link with Goldecorn is now doubted, but it is highly likely that the horn had been used by one of the two gilds on their feast day, and to this day it is used by Fellows at feasts and by undergraduates at a lunch given before they receive their degree. The decorative tip of the horn consists of a silver gilt head which is identified as that of St Cornelius, in a sort of punning allusion to his symbol – a horn.¹⁸ Another piece still at the college and more certainly linked with a member of the medieval college, John Northwode, is the fourteenth-century swan mazer, a unique survival of a jokey drinking cup, of a sort otherwise known from a drawing by the great thirteenth-century French architect, Villard de Honnecourt.¹⁹

All founders of colleges probably gave them gifts during their lifetimes. Records of such gifts tend not to survive, although the pieces sometimes do. On the other hand, the wills of many of these founders do survive, detailing bequests of plate and vestments to their foundations – but the number of items is often surprisingly small – one thinks of William of Wykeham, founder of the lavishly endowed New College Oxford in 1379, who bequeathed to it only his sandals, dalmatics and mitre in 1403 – items which were of course the principal symbols of his office as bishop.²⁰ In their wills, many founders requested masses to be said for themselves and their kin, but there is otherwise an absence of special directions for how their memory was to be preserved. Clearly in a certain sense, their gifts of plate or vestments were to serve this purpose, by acting as the founder's relics. It is undoubtedly this function which has helped to preserve many of those that we have.

If we look first at colleges with royal founders or associations: at Oxford, there are two such colleges, and at Cambridge seven with royal links. Though founded by a royal chaplain, Oriel College, Oxford, claims as its titular founder Edward II, who gave it its statutes in 1326. There are no recorded royal gifts, but there survives the so-called Founder's Cup, first recorded in a 1596 college inventory. It is a unique and ornate silver gilt cup engraved inside and out with Es, linked Ss and crowns, and

¹⁷ For the Queen's College horn, see Alexander and Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry*, no. 546; for the Corpus Christi horn, *ibid.*, no. 545, and *Treasures of Cambridge*, cat. no. 104.

¹⁸ Catherine Hall, 'The Gild of Corpus Christi and the Foundation of Corpus Christi College', in P. Zutshi (ed.), *Medieval Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1993), 82–91.

¹⁹ *Treasures of Cambridge*, cat. no. 106; Alexander and Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry*, no. 543.

²⁰ Wykeham's will, dated 24 July 1403, is printed by R. Lowth, *The Life of William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester* (London, 1759), appendix, xxxvii ff; the crozier, mitre, sandals and dalmatics are cited on xxxix. See Alexander and Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry*, nos 606–8 (mitre and crozier), and Appendix II.

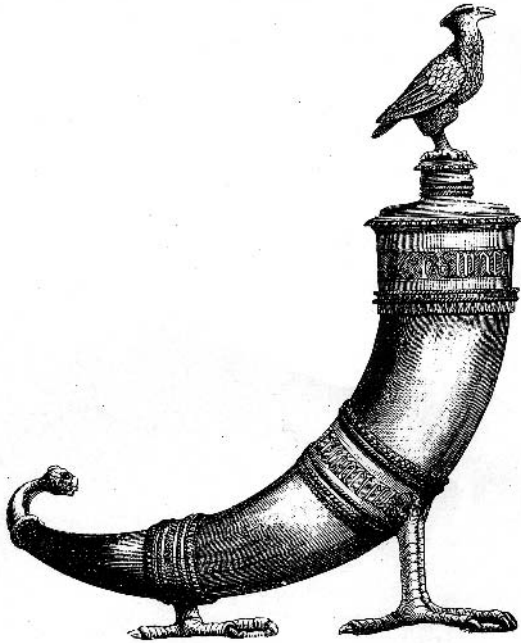


Plate 20. Drinking horn, Queen's College, Oxford, English, fourteenth-century, with an eighteenth-century replacement lid. Cow horn, mounted in silver gilt. From W.J. Cripps, *College and Corporation Plate* (London, 1881)

bears the hallmark of a Parisian goldsmith of c. 1350. It was for long thought to have been given by Edward II, the E being identified as his initial, and the Ss the famous English royal livery collar of Ss. No one commented on the apparent anachronism, that the royal collar was not introduced until the late fourteenth century, until a discovery about a century ago in the college accounts for 1493–94. These stated that the cup was bought in London in that year for £4 18s 1d²¹ – in other words, in the late fifteenth century the college bought a French second-hand cup of some antiquity, presumably because the initials on it fitted those of their royal founder. We seem to have here a self-conscious antiquarianism, a perceived need for a founder's relic.

No such problem beset Queen's College Oxford, founded in 1340 by Robert de Eglesfield, chaplain to Queen Philippa, patroness of the college. Here the only medieval founder's relic to survive – and there are no records of any others – is the drinking horn given by Eglesfield to the college, the original cover to which (now lost) had an eagle finial, in punning allusion to Eglesfield's name. The repeated

²¹ Moffatt, *Old Oxford Plate*, 34–5 and pl. XVII; Lightbown, *Secular Goldsmiths' Work*, 22–3, 114 and pls XIX–XX.

inscription on the horn, 'wacceyl', from the Anglo-Saxon for 'your good health' – reminds us both of its function, and of its historic role at college feasts.²² (Plate 20)

There are seven medieval royal Cambridge colleges, the earliest being the King's Hall, later Trinity, founded by Edward II in 1317. Clare College, founded in 1326 by Edward II's niece Lady Elizabeth de Clare, was bequeathed by her numerous vestments and service books, but a rather small quantity of chapel plate, effectively the minimum necessary to celebrate mass: two chalices, an enamelled pyx (for the Host), a pair of cruets (for wine and water), and a censer and incense boat. However, as mentioned earlier, only the college seal (of 1359), depicting her, survives.²³ It is probably no coincidence that her great friend Marie de St Pol, Countess of Pembroke, founded Valence Marie, now Pembroke College, in 1347. Her will of 1376 makes numerous lavish bequests, including to the Kings of England and France, but leaves her college only unspecified 'adornments, reliques, joyaux et autres choses'.²⁴ It is clear from early college inventories that Pembroke had rich vestments and altar cloths, which were probably her gift, and at least nine silver 'pieces' (cups) that were certainly hers, one of them called the Foundress's Cup. However, the cup now called the Foundress's Cup cannot be this, for it is datable to c. 1450, well after her death. It is inscribed with the name of St Denis, to whom the college is dedicated, and according to an early inventory, was given by a fifteenth-century fellow of the college. Yet already in an inventory of 1546, it is described as 'my ladies cup', another innocent testimony to a felt need for founder's relics.²⁵

Of the two great fifteenth-century royal foundations at Cambridge, there is no trace now of either early documents or plate at Queens' College, founded in 1446 by Queen Margaret of Anjou and refounded by her successor Queen Elizabeth Woodville.²⁶ And again, though nothing now remains at King's College, founded by Henry VI in 1441, it was outstandingly richly endowed. Quantities of vestments and church plate are recorded in college documents of eleven years later, among them being eight images of saints (including three of St Nicholas), eight crosses (two gold), fourteen chalices and patens (two gold), four altarpieces (two gold), thirteen reliquaries and monstrances, and candlesticks, censers, basins galore.²⁷ The two early sixteenth-century royal foundations at Cambridge, both set up by Lady

²² Alexander and Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry*, no. 546; Jackson, *Plate*, II, 589–95.

²³ See n. 16; Elizabeth de Clare's munificent will mentioning her college bequests is in J. Nichols, *A collection of all the wills of the Kings and Queens of England . . . and the Blood Royal* (London, 1780), 30–1.

²⁴ Her will is printed in H. Jenkinson, 'Mary de Sancto Paulo, Foundress of Pembroke College, Cambridge', *Archaeologia*, 66 (1915), 432–5; her bequest to the college (433) was probably lavish given her generosity to others, such as Westminster Abbey, St Paul's and the Friars Minor, all given gold chalices and reliquary-statues, of Saints Peter, Andrew, Paul and Louis of France.

²⁵ Jones, *Cambridge Plate*, 20 and pl. XVII; *Treasures of Cambridge*, cat. no. 108; Jayne Ringrose, 'The Medieval Statutes of Pembroke College', in Zutshi (ed.), *Medieval Cambridge*, 124–7.

²⁶ See n. 14; Margaret of Anjou was a discerning patron of goldsmiths and likely to have been generous: A.R. Myers, 'Jewels of Queen Margaret of Anjou', *Bulletin of John Rylands Library*, 42 (1959–60), 113–31.

²⁷ The 1452 inventories of vestments, altar cloths and plate at King's are printed, see G. Williams, 'Ecclesiastical Vestments, Books and Furniture . . . in King's College, Cambridge . . .', *Ecclesiologist*, 20 (1859), 304–15, and *ibid.*, 21 (1860), 1–7.



Plate 21. Foundress' beaker, Christ's College, Cambridge.
English with the mark for London 1507. From W.J. Cripps,
College and Corporation Plate (London, 1881)

Margaret Beaufort, were Christ's College in 1505 and St John's College in 1509–11. To both she gave or bequeathed plate, almost exclusively ecclesiastical – images, crosses, chalices²⁸ – but what survives – only at Christ's College – is entirely secular in nature. The Foundress's beaker is a London-marked piece of 1507, of silver gilt which is ornamentally overloaded. It is engraved with her badges, her namesake marguerites, and the rose and portcullis of the Beauforts.²⁹ (Plate 21) The three silver hourglass salts are of the same date, two decorated with roses, one also with the Beaufort portcullis and a fleur-de-lis.³⁰ And finally, the decorative so-called Foundress's Cup of c. 1440, which, however, bears inside it, not her arms or badge, but

²⁸ Lady Margaret's will is preserved amongst the archives at St John's College; the section describing legacies is most accurately printed in Charles H. Cooper, *Memoir of Margaret, Countess of Richmond and Derby* (Cambridge, 1874), 129–36 (appendix), with bequests to Christ's, 130–1. Early inventories indicate that the foundress gave the college much silver, principally ecclesiastical, but only the college seal of 1511 survives, *VCH Cambridge*, iii, 448–9; for the earliest inventory, St John's College Thin Red Book (MS C7.11), fo. 4–4v.

²⁹ Jones, *Cambridge Plate*, 71 and pl. LXXVII; *Treasures of Cambridge*, cat. no. 114 and pl. 7.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, cat. nos 112, 113, and pl. 6; Jones, *Cambridge Plate*, 70–1 and pl. LXXVI.

those of her relation Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, from whom she had presumably inherited it.³¹

To turn now to colleges founded by bishops and archbishops – in Cambridge there are three, two of them established in the thirteenth century by bishops of Ely – Peterhouse (1280) by Hugh de Balsham and Jesus College (1497) by John Alcock – but in neither case do objects associated with the founder survive.³² The third college, Trinity Hall, was founded by the Bishop of Norwich, William Bateman in 1350. Again we have no will or early inventory, but there survives a silver and enamel drinking cup known as the Founder's Cup: this bears unequivocal evidence of having been his, for his arms are enamelled inside the lid and base. The cup is otherwise very plain and without inscription, but has the incidental interest of bearing a hallmark – an exceptional feature at this date. The mark is that of the Papal Curia at Avignon, as used from 1352 to 1362. Since Bateman was King Edward III's ambassador to the Papal Court in Avignon, dying there in 1355, the cup can thus be narrowly dated to between 1352 and 1355.³³

Oxford is richer by far in both episcopal foundations and in relics of such founders. A total of eight bishops and one archbishop was responsible for founding nine colleges, from Merton in the thirteenth century, to Corpus Christi founded in 1517 by the Bishop of Winchester, Richard Fox. For six of these colleges we have significant evidence. If we look first at ecclesiastical items, it is notable that many of the pieces given could have been of no conceivable practical use to their colleges. The trappings of episcopal office with which a bishop or archbishop was formally invested when consecrated and which only he used on official occasions, could have had no subsequent function in a college, other than to serve as memorials.

These insignia of office included the crozier, mitre, episcopal ring, gloves, cope, leggings and shoes. New College, founded by William of Wykeham in 1379, preserves his crozier and now reconstructed mitre, and rings that possibly once were his, but it no longer has the dalmatic or episcopal 'sandals' (shoes) mentioned in his will.³⁴ Additionally at New College are preserved a pair of red knitted silk episcopal gloves decorated with the sacred monogram, and long thought to have been Wykeham's, until their identification as sixteenth-century work suggested rather that they belonged to William Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury (d. 1532), a sixteenth-century fellow of the college.³⁵ St John's College – founded by Archbishop Chichele in 1437 as St Bernard's College, and refounded in 1557 by Sir Thomas White – preserves fifteenth-century so-called founder's vestments. These however,

³¹ Jones, *Cambridge Plate*, 70 and pl. LXXV.

³² Bishop Hugh de Balsham (d. 1286), founder of Peterhouse, left it numerous vestments (including a chasuble, tunic and dalmatic, five copes): *Documents Relating to the University and Colleges of Cambridge* (London, 1852), II, 45. There is no evidence for gifts or bequests by Bishop John Alcock (d. 1500) to Jesus College.

³³ *Treasures of Cambridge*, cat. no. 102; Lightbown, *Secular Goldsmiths' Work*, 93 and pl. LXXII; Jones, *Cambridge Plate*, 32, pl. XXXV.

³⁴ For episcopal insignia see also Appendix II.

³⁵ Leigh Ashton, 'The So-called Gloves of William of Wykeham', *Burlington Magazine*, 54 (1929), 34–9; Irena Turnau, 'The Diffusion of Knitting in Medieval Europe', in N.B. Harte and K.G. Ponting (eds), *Cloth and Clothing in Medieval Europe* (London, 1983), 375–8.



Plate 22. Bishop Waynfflete's episcopal shoe, Magdalen College, Oxford. The fabric is Italian, possibly Venetian, the workmanship English, 1443–86. From D. Rock, *Church of our Fathers* (London, 1905)

were only given by a collateral descendant of White's in the seventeenth century.³⁶ In the eighteenth century the antiquary George Vertue noted with puzzlement seeing at St John's the 'Founder's crozier' – evidently not that of Sir Thomas White, but, one might have supposed, that of Chichele – except that the extant crozier is clearly not medieval in style but seventeenth century, and surely belonged to Archbishop Laud, former President of the College, who was secretly reburied there in 1663.³⁷

At Magdalen, the 1486 will of William of Waynfflete, who founded the college in 1458, makes no mention of bequeathing episcopal ornaments, but a college inventory of 1495 soon after his death – lists vestments which must have been his, including a remarkable pair of episcopal stockings of flowered red silk and two pairs of episcopal shoes, the smaller of soft white leather to be worn inside the larger, of crimson cut-velvet, patterned with lilies and gold and silver thread. (Plate 22) Lilies were prominent in the arms of the college as well as of Waynfflete himself, the lily of course being associated with the Virgin Mary. Also still extant are other textiles,

³⁶ This remarkable collection was given in 1602 by the niece of the founder, Mrs Amy Leech, to the College President, and is listed in W.H. Stevenson and H.E. Salter, *The Early History of St. John's College Oxford* (Oxford Historical Society, 1939), 472 (as appendix 27); see also M. Jourdain, 'Embroideries in the Possession of St John's College Oxford', *Connoisseur*, 44 (1916), 27–310.

³⁷ *Vertue Notebooks*, VI, published by the Walpole Society, 30 (1951–52), 85. Although there is no evidence for its ownership, the crozier is of a funerary type, and highly likely to have been Laud's. It was exhibited in London in 1850, and engraved in the *Illustrated London News*, 6 July 1850, 12. The only other known crozier of this date belonged to Laud's friend, Matthew Wren, Bishop of Ely (d. 1667), and is at Pembroke College, Cambridge (where the mitre used at his funeral is, with other plate from his private chapel), see Jones, *Cambridge Plate*, 25–6, pl. XXVI.

including two fragmentary copes, one of blue silk cope embroidered with applied lilies.³⁸ Waynfelete's gold-bordered mitre set with stones, his crozier and other remains, also recorded in the 1495 inventory, were in 1646 seized and carried off by the Puritans, not to be seen again.³⁹

At All Souls, various fifteenth-century inventories itemize different elements of episcopalalia – a crozier, sandals, mitres and vestments – likely to be those of Archbishop Chichele, the college's founder in 1438. A silver crozier is mentioned in an early inventory of 1448, sandals 'pro pontific' in 1452, and crozier and vestments in c. 1462.⁴⁰ All have gone. Two small mitres are mentioned c. 1462, and mitre fragments in 1452 – but only these poignant remains of his mitre still survive – two gold finials, in the form of leafy buds, once enamelled in translucent red.⁴¹ Bishop Richard Fox's foundation of 1517, of Corpus Christi College, still preserves the crozier which he surely had made when appointed Bishop of Winchester in 1501 – the dominant figure of St Peter alluding to the patron saint of the Cathedral – but it impiously sold off his mitre in the 1730s.⁴²

As is only to be expected, other liturgical gifts and bequests were made, of a more useful sort, such as William Smyth, Bishop of Lincoln's modest bequest to his college Brasenose (a pair of – unusually – very plain silver London-made chalices of 1498⁴³) or bishop Fox's sumptuous gold and enamel chalice at Corpus Christi. Made in London in 1507, this latter has the distinction of being the sole piece of medieval English gold plate to survive anywhere.⁴⁴ But none of these is actually inscribed – as for example was a chalice recorded as the gift of Wykeham to Lincoln Cathedral: 'memoriale Domini Willelmi de Wykeham', although their purpose was the same.⁴⁵

³⁸ The episcopal stockings or leggings and the shoes – all unique survivals in Britain – are discussed by W.H. St John Hope, 'The Episcopal Ornaments of William of Wykeham and William of Waynfleet', *Archaeologia*, 60 (1907), 485–7 and pls 51 and 52, also D. Rock, *Church of our Fathers*, 4 vols (2nd edn, London, 1905), II, 194–206; C. de Linas, *Anciens vêtements sacerdotaux* (Paris, 1860), part 3, 100, 106, 142, 170–8; see also Appendix II. The fragmentary copes are unpublished: both fifteenth-century, one is of blue and white satin with gold thread, the other of burgundy and white satin with lilies, and was used by A.W.N. Pugin as the pattern for the wallpaper designed for the College. Waynfelete amended his coat of arms after 1443 when he became provost of Eton, by borrowing from the Eton coat 'on a chief of the second, three lilies slipped argent': *Dictionary of National Biography*, s.v. Waynflete.

³⁹ St John Hope, 'Ornaments', 486–7.

⁴⁰ The 1448 inventory (All Souls MS 214), is printed by W.H. St John Hope, 'Inventory of Jewels and Plate at All Souls College, Oxford, 1448', *Archaeological Journal*, 51 (1894), 121; the 1452 'vellum inventory' (All Souls MS 399) cites the sandals at fo. 19 in the 'indentura iocalium'; the c. 1462 inventory (All Souls MS 210) is printed in 'An ancient inventory of books, plate, vestments . . . given by the founder to the college', ed. J. Gutch, *Collectanea Curiosa* (Oxford, 1781), II, 260, no. XV.

⁴¹ The small mitres, see Gutch, *Collectanea Curiosa*, 260; the mitre finials, described as the gift of Wraby – one of the executors of Chichele – are in MS 399, fo. 19, as '2 gold pommels with pearls made for the tops of an episcopal mitre'.

⁴² T. Wilson, 'Bishop Fox's Crozier', in Ellory *et al.* (eds), *Corpus Silver*, 54 and n. 15.

⁴³ Moffatt, *Old Oxford Plate*, 114 and pl. LVI.

⁴⁴ M. Campbell, 'The Gold Chalice and Paten', in Ellory *et al.* (eds), *Corpus Silver*, 76–110.

⁴⁵ Christopher Wordsworth, 'Inventory of Plate Belonging to the Cathedral of Lincoln', *Archaeologia*, 53 (1892), 13.

Amongst the relics of Oxford episcopal founders and benefactors there are also pieces of outstanding jewellery and secular plate. The jewellery, in particular, could not have been deemed to serve any subsequent function at all other than that of commemoration. There are two rings at New College of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries: respectively of silver gilt set with a crystal, and of gold set with a ruby; and at Corpus Christi one of the fifteenth century, of gold set with enamel and a sapphire. All the rings were probably episcopal in use.⁴⁶ Medieval bishops had numerous rings. It is rarely easy to distinguish episcopal from pontifical rings. Episcopal rings were an essential feature of the consecration ceremony of medieval bishops and had to be of gold set with a gem. The pontifical ring was worn on the fourth finger of the bishop's right hand, over his episcopal glove, when he celebrated mass; the hoop therefore had to be relatively large, and the ring was generally showy. But bishops would also have had purely decorative rings, signet rings and memorial rings, and such mementoes are recorded from the early fourteenth century.⁴⁷ It seems probable that the enamel and sapphire ring at Corpus Christi was Fox's episcopal ring,⁴⁸ and that the sapphire ring at New College belonged to Wykeham. The large crystal-set ring, with its Renaissance imagery, is more likely to have been Warham's, and is perhaps to be associated with his gloves.⁴⁹ Wykeham's will specified only that his successor as Bishop of Winchester should have his 'larger pontifical' ring, set with a sapphire, pearls, diamonds and balas rubies.⁵⁰

Undoubtedly secular is the gold brooch at All Souls, enamelled in white *ronde bosse* and set with a ruby, probably Parisian work of c. 1400, a unique survival anywhere of this form of jewel.⁵¹ (See plate V) At New College there are fragments of a silver and enamel girdle, of c. 1400, perhaps English, and a gold M-shaped brooch, enamelled and set with a carved ruby, showing the Annunciation, a rare example of Parisian work of c. 1400. (See plate VI) This was always called the Founder's jewel, until the discovery by the archivist some years ago of the record of its gift in 1455 by the Hylle family of Winchester. There is an obvious link between the dedication of New College to the Virgin Mary, and the jewel's iconography, but there may also be an as yet undiscovered link between the Hylle family and Wykeham himself, whose first foundation was of course Winchester College.⁵²

⁴⁶ An enamelled girdle and the Founder's jewel, both of the fourteenth century at New College, Oxford: Alexander and Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry*, nos. 609, 640. The rose jewel of c. 1400 at All Souls College, Oxford, see Lightbown, *Medieval European Jewellery*, 175 and pl. 73. Two rings are at New College, three at Corpus Christi, see C.C. Oman, *British Rings 800–1914* (London, 1974), 46–8, 86, 95 and col. pl. 1A, and C, and John Cherry, 'Three Rings Associated with Bishop Fox', in Ellory *et al.* (eds), *Corpus Silver*, 113–21.

⁴⁷ Oman, *British Rings*, 71.

⁴⁸ Cherry, 'Three Rings', 120.

⁴⁹ See n. 35.

⁵⁰ See O.M. Dalton, *Catalogue of Finger Rings, Early Christian . . . and Later, in the British Museum* (London, 1912), xxxviii.

⁵¹ Lightbown, *Medieval European Jewellery*, 175 and pl. 73. This fine jewel is likely to have been Chichele's, perhaps worn as a hat badge, and appears in an early inventory, the Vellum Book (All Souls MS 399), dated 1452, as '1 margarita vocatur Rubye Balasse in quodam flore aureo enamyled white' (fo. 19).

⁵² For the girdle see Alexander and Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry*, no. 609; for the jewel *ibid.*, no. 640.

In 1506 Archbishop Warham gave New College a quantity of mostly secular plate, from which two items can probably be identified, a contemporary Chinese celadon bowl mounted in silver gilt (incidentally, the only such piece in England), and the exuberant late fifteenth-century monkey-shaped salt, which is unique even in a wider European context.⁵³ Bishop Fox, founder of Corpus, gave the college, probably before his death, silver spoons, a pair of washing basins enamelled with his arms, and with London marks for 1493 and 1514, and a spectacular silver salt.⁵⁴ This was once more extensively enamelled, and is adorned with a crystal and pearls. On it decorative bands carry his emblem, the pelican in her piety, and the initials Rd, for Fox as bishop of Durham, an office he occupied from 1493 to 1501.

Strictly speaking, the unique fifteenth-century fantasy piece known as the Huntsman salt at All Souls College, is only a relatively recent relic, having been given by a collateral descendant of Chichele's in the eighteenth century. Of silver gilt with paint and enamel, it is variously ascribed to German or English workmanship.⁵⁵ (Plate 23) This form of ceremonial salt is otherwise known only from descriptions in inventories. At a feast it would have been placed in front of the guest of honour, to the right of the host. More remarkable still are three indisputably early Parisian pieces, all certainly in the college by the sixteenth century, and always associated with the founder. The earliest is a gold and enamel lid for a nautilus-shell drinking cup of c. 1300, enamelled with the royal arms of France and those of Champagne, Navarre and Flanders. (See plate V) The others are likely to have been Chichele's gift, and one listed in the earliest college inventory – an elegant and substantial pair of silver wine pots of c. 1400, with the marks of an unknown Paris goldsmith.⁵⁶

The question of how these pieces have been stored and displayed by the colleges can only be touched on here. Founders like Wykeham, Waynflète and Chichele built muniment towers to house documents and plate. Altar plate for everyday use

⁵³ For the celadon bowl, see Moffatt, *Old Oxford Plate*, 68, pl. XXXIV, and the monkey salt, *ibid.*, 66, pl. XXXIII; for more recent discussion of both see Oman, 'College Plate', in Buxton and Williams (eds.), *New College*, 297–8.

⁵⁴ T. Wilson, 'Early Sixteenth-Century Spoons', 267–318; P. Glanville, 'Bishop Fox's Ablution Basins', 175–96; M. Campbell, 'Bishop Fox's Salt', 129–74, all in Ellory *et al.* (eds), *Corpus Silver*.

⁵⁵ Moffatt, *Old Oxford Plate*, 86, pl. XLIII; contrary to Moffatt's assertion, the salt is indeed mentioned in the College's Benefactors book, in 1799, 52, on 6 February: 'Extract from the will of Mrs Catherine Griffiths. I give the picture of Archbishop Chichele and the salt cellar he used to the College, to whose family my dear husband's first wife was related.'

⁵⁶ The nautilus-shell drinking cup is the earliest piece of plate in an Oxford college – a unique piece of highly skilful enamelling, decorated with significant heraldry, it is now thought to have been commissioned by the King and Queen of France, Philippe le Bel and his wife Jeanne de Navarre, as a present to Isabella of Hainault and Raoul de Nesle (d. 1302). It is likely to have come to England with his daughter, Beatrice, who married Aymer de Valence, who was lord of the manor of Higham Ferrers, the birthplace of Archbishop Chichele. The lid is first documented in a college inventory of 1536. This coincidence suggests that it may have been given to him; tradition has always associated it with the founder. See *Treasures of Oxford*, cat. no. 36, and *L'Art au temps des Rois Maudits: Philippe le Bel et ses fils, 1285–1328*, exhib. cat. (Paris, Grand Palais, 1998) cat. nos 135, 210–11. For the wine pots, see *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, 2nd ser., xi (1885–87), 242–3; Moffatt, *Old Oxford Plate*, 88 and pl. XLIV; Lightbown, *Secular Goldsmiths' Work*, 28 and pl. XLII. The Paris marks, a crowned fleur-de-lys, can only be placed within the period 1379–1493.



Plate 23. The Huntsman salt, All Souls College, Oxford, English or German, c. 1420–40. It is silver gilt, the features coloured with gold paint, with a crystal bowl and cover. From H. Shaw, *Ancient Plate from the Colleges of Oxford* (London, 1837)

was probably kept locked in an inner vestry, as at Magdalen; however at New College, the founder's statutes specified that altar plate, relics and vestments be kept on the top floor of the muniment tower, secured by six locks. Plate for the table was often locked in the common hutch in the Treasury, as at Clare College, Cambridge, in 1560, or in the 'Treasury Chest' as at Oriel College, Oxford, in 1597. At Magdalen, the statutes specify that plate and jewels not in daily use was to be kept either in the lower room of the muniment building, or in a special chest in the highest room of the tower by the chapel. At New College, Wykeham ordained that plate of silver and gold for feast days was to be kept on the second floor of the muniment tower, secured by four locks. By the early nineteenth century, for convenience, many Oxford Colleges kept plate in both the lodgings of their head of college, and the Buttery.⁵⁷

Even from this necessarily rapid survey certain features are apparent. Founders and principal benefactors of colleges were almost invariably wealthy individuals without immediate heirs – pious widows with no surviving children, or members of the episcopacy. All endowed their foundations, but not all seem to have been equally desirous of immortalization. Where episcopal founders are concerned, a clear shift in practice seems to be discernible between the early and the later Middle Ages. In the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries Walter de Merton certainly, and also by inference Walter de Stapledon – who had founded Exeter College, Oxford – both left their trappings of office to their successors as bishop, and not to their newly founded colleges.⁵⁸ Then in the late fourteenth century, William of Wykeham appears to be the first to break with traditional practice, and to leave his episcopal insignia to his college – to be followed through the fifteenth century and into the seventeenth by Waynflere, Chichele and by Laud too, in a sense. These men's gifts – of objects made of luxurious textiles and precious metals, were mostly of considerable financial value, but did not just represent potentially bankable wealth, they represented the founder's memorabilia.

Today the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge may have less of a sense of indebtedness to their medieval founders, now seeming so remote in time. All sense of the

⁵⁷ The New College muniment tower is discussed by G. Jackson Stops, 'The Building of the Medieval College', in Buxton and Williams (eds), *New College*, 180–2. For chapel plate storage at Magdalen, see G.R.M. Ward, *Magdalen College Statutes* (Oxford and London, 1940), 100; at New College, see Jackson Stops, *op. cit.*, 180–2, Oman, 'College Plate,' *ibid.*, 293. For everyday storage at Clare College, Jones, *Clare College*, XV; at Oriel, see a nineteenth-century transcript of the 1596 inventory, Oriel v. ETC. A8/12. For special pieces, at Magdalen, see Ward, *Statutes*, 136; at New College, Jackson Stops, *op. cit.*, 180–2; for nineteenth-century Oxford customs, see J. and H. Storer, *The Oxford Visitor* (London, 1822).

⁵⁸ Merton left to his episcopal successors at Rochester his 'mitram pressiosam, cum baculo meo pastorali precioso & unum de anulis meis', see J.R.L. Highfield, *The Early Rolls of Merton College, Oxford* (Oxford Historical Society, new ser., xviii, 1964), 79–80. No will survives for Stapledon, but a full inventory details a valuable 'mitra solempnis', many copes and dalmatics, ninety-two rings – but no crozier (*Register of Walter de Stapledon, Bishop of Exeter*, ed. F.C. Hingeston-Randolph (Exeter, 1892), 562–6). It seems to have been normal practice well into the sixteenth century for bishops to leave their episcopalia to their successors – Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, in 1557 left gloves, mitre and crozier to his successors, see Maskell, *Monumenta Ritualia*, I, 287.

colleges as chantry chapels has gone, and the colleges flourish purely as institutions of education and research. But their medieval treasures are more carefully guarded than ever, and remain still, occasionally displayed at feasts, as the mute but tangible evidence of their founders' piety and generosity.

Appendix I: Exhibitions and Studies of College Collections

Medieval College plate began to be discussed and illustrated from the early nineteenth century, for instance Oxford pieces in H. Shaw and S.R. Meyrick, *Ancient Plate and Furniture from the Colleges of Oxford and the Ashmolean Museum* (London, 1837), and 'College Plate at Oxford', *Gentleman's Magazine*, new ser., xxxiv (1850), 167–72, and Cambridge pieces in J.J. Smith, *Specimens of Cambridge College Plate* (Cambridge Antiquarian Society Publications, Quarto ser., 1845). In 1850 the Royal Society of Arts in London included numbers of historic pieces from Oxford and Cambridge in their *Medieval Art* exhibition. The catalogue is unillustrated, but engravings of several appear in the *Illustrated London News* (6 July 1850), 8–12. Subsequent exhibitions – the *Art Treasures* (Manchester, 1857) and the *Special Exhibition of Works of Art of the Medieval, Renaissance . . . Periods on Loan* (South Kensington Museum, London, 1862) – received great publicity and many visitors. By 1881 exact electrotype copies of selected pieces of Oxford and Cambridge plate were being made and sold for educational use to students and manufacturers: see W.J. Cripps, *College and Corporation Plate – a Handbook to the Reproductions of Silver Plate in the South Kensington Museum* (London, 1881). The most recent exhibition of Oxford historic plate, with some textiles, was *Treasures of Oxford*, held in London in 1953; for Cambridge, see R.A. Crichton, *Cambridge Plate* (Cambridge, 1975), held in London and Cambridge.

There is much material cited under college headings in: *Victoria County History of Oxford*, vol. iii, ed. H.E. Salter and M.D. Lobel, *The University of Oxford* (Oxford, 1954); and *Victoria County History of Cambridge*, vol. iii, ed. J.P.C. Roach, *The City and University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1959).

Silver This has been extensively surveyed. See H.C. Moffatt, *Old Oxford Plate* (1906), and E.A. Jones, *The Old Plate of the Cambridge Colleges* (1910) – hereafter *Cambridge Plate*. In addition E.A. Jones catalogued various individual Oxford colleges: Magdalen (1940), Oriel (1944) and Queen's (1938), followed recently by C. Ellory *et al.* (eds), a survey of Corpus Christi's early silver. Typescript catalogues of plate also exist, for example C.C. Oman's catalogue of All Souls' silver, in the College library. At Cambridge, only Clare College has been individually catalogued, by E.A. Jones (1939). The varied range of medieval seal matrices and impressions at many colleges has been studied as a whole only by W.H. St John Hope, 'Seals of the Colleges and University of Cambridge', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, X (1883–85), 225–53.

Books For Oxford colleges, M.B. Parkes, 'The Provision of Books', in J. Catto and R. Evans (eds), *History of the University of Oxford II* (Oxford, 1984), 407; useful material is also embedded in T.H. Aston, 'Oxford's Medieval Alumni', *Past and Present*, 74 (1977), 3–40. For Cambridge, T.H. Aston, 'The Medieval Alumni of the University of Cambridge', *Past and Present*, 86 (1980). There is no overview for Cambridge, but for most colleges the catalogues of their manuscripts by M.R. James include material on their early libraries. Otherwise, see the *VCH* for Oxford and Cambridge colleges; individual gifts by fellows are usually noted by A.B. Emden, see above, n. 2. It is curious that books – so integral to an assessment of intellectual life and aspiration – should have been so under-investigated.

Medieval textiles Medieval textiles associated with early fellows are found only at Oxford, at St John's College, Magdalen and New College. The substantial collection of copes and frontals at St John's is virtually unpublished, although see *English Medieval Art*, Victoria and Albert Museum exhibition (London, 1930), cat. nos 360, 405, and is publicly exhibited occasionally at the College. At Magdalen, Waynflete's vestments and other items can be seen by appointment; see *Treasures of Oxford*, cat. nos 6, 367, 368, and W.H. St John Hope 'The Episcopal Ornaments of William of Wykeham and William of Waynflete', *Archaeologia*, 60 (1907), 485–7. For New College, *ibid.*, 465–84.

Appendix II: Episcopal insignia

Medieval illustrations of episcopal insignia are uncommon, but found in some pontificals – the liturgical books which were the personal manuals written for bishops, detailing the forms for performing the sacraments and other rites (dedicating churches, holding synods) that only they performed. See W.H. Frere, *Pontifical Services, Illustrated from Miniatures*, II (Alcuin Club Collections, IV, London 1901), fig. 23: the blessing of episcopal insignia – seen laid on an altar are a crozier, mitre, glove and sandals. *Ibid.*, fig. 37 shows the vesting of a bishop, the bishop being assisted into his leggings, with crozier *et al.* on the altar behind him. See also J. Brückmann, 'Latin Manuscript Pontificals and Benedictionals in England and Wales', *Traditio*, 29 (1973), 391f. For details of the episcopal consecration ceremony itself, and the blessing of the insignia, W. Maskell, *Monumenta Ritualia Ecclesiae Anglicanae*, I (2nd edn, Oxford, 1882), cxxxii–cxlii, and 268–90; for the history of the insignia, see Archdale King, *Liturgy of the Christian Church* (London, 1957), ch. 13.

Motivation and Choice: The Selection of Medieval Secular Effigies*

Brian and Moira Gittos

THE church at Glanvilles Wootton (Dorset) is dominated by its south chapel. Half the size of the nave itself, it is connected to the church by a large open arch, a doorway and a squint. Within the chapel, the effigy of a mid-fourteenth-century civilian lies in one of two tomb recesses, surrounded by rich mouldings, carved heads, original floor tiles (many heraldic) surviving in places and fragments of medieval glass in the big, Decorated, windows. This is the building which Sybil de Glanville must have had in mind in 1344 when she obtained a licence to found a chantry here, for the benefit of herself, Henry de Glanville, her ancestors and heirs.¹ Suppressed, denuded of its furnishings, robbed of its plaster and paintings, restored and re-arranged, it still offers some glimpse of the richness with which medieval tombs were once surrounded.

Sybil de Glanville's chantry is but one example. English churches contain several thousand medieval effigies; large and small, male and female, on altar tombs and in niches, some fine, expensive and well-crafted, some crude and seemingly made by the village stonemason. Much study has been expended on the detail of their armour and costume, identification and date. Attention is now turning towards an understanding of the motives behind their commissioning and the processes which resulted in the final form of the monument.² Who was responsible for this form of social display and how, and why, did it come about? This paper focusses on medieval sculpted memorials, considering their commissioning, evidence for patronage and factors influencing the final product. Three case studies develop the themes and illustrate some of the processes in action. Initially, however, it is necessary to explore in more general terms the context in which the monuments functioned and the several factors which helped determine choice.

* The assistance is gratefully acknowledged of Mark Downing, Paul Whittaker at the Worcestershire Record Office and especially Helen Gittos of Queens College, Oxford, who commented on the draft and sought out several references.

¹ *Calendar of Patent Rolls 17–19 Edward III, 1343–45*, 343.

² For example, A. McGee Morganstern, *Gothic Tombs of Kinship* (Pennsylvania, 2000).

Monuments in Context

The context within which monuments were established was both physical and intellectual. Both aspects come into play in the chantry chapel. The foundation of a chantry, with a list of nominated individuals who were to benefit from the chaplain's prayers was, in itself, an act of commemoration. Often chantries were provided with a physical manifestation through the designation of an area as a chapel. This involved considerable expense and it is reasonable to assume that anyone who could afford a chapel for their perpetual chantry would also have been in a position to commission a monument. The permanence of a three dimensional effigy was entirely appropriate for such a context, and would have provided an important focus.³ There are some outstanding fifteenth-century examples of this: Richard Beauchamp at St Mary's, Warwick and Alice, Duchess of Suffolk at Ewelme (Oxfordshire) are among the best known. Earlier correlations of effigies with chantries include Muriel FitzAlan at Bedale (Yorkshire) c. 1290;⁴ William de Ferrers at Beer Ferrers (Devon) c. 1328⁵ and the husband of Sybil de Glanville at Glanvilles Wootton (Dorset) c. 1344. At Stillingfleet (East Riding), Nicholas de Moreby (Rector of Linton) established a chantry for which licence to alienate in mortmain was granted in 1332 and it was ordained in 1336.⁶ The purpose was to pray for the souls of himself, his brothers Robert, Henry and William, their parents, ancestors, key relations and benefactors. The chantry is described as being in the south part of the church where architectural elements of this date survive with the effigy of Nicholas' brother Robert, identifiable by heraldry. Robert is last mentioned in the 1330s.⁷

The achievement of a male heir was crucial for medieval knightly families. When this was impossible, the impending loss of family identity (e.g. name, estates, arms etc.) seems to have prompted both the establishment of chantries and the provision of visually impressive memorials. In such circumstances, the monument was not simply personal but had wider significance, effectively encapsulating the honour of the family at its termination. The monument may be regarded as a permanent counterpart to the celebration of family honour often prominent at funerals.⁸ Some important effigies can be identified with 'last of the line' memorials. The military effigy to Richard Gyverny at Limington (Somerset) is undoubtedly the most accomplished product of the Ham stone carvers. He died without male issue after

³ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁴ H.B. McCall, *The Early History of Bedale* (London, 1907), 40.

⁵ *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1-4 Edward III, 1327-30*, 267.

⁶ *Register of William Melton, Archbishop of York 1317-1340*, vol. II, ed. D. Robinson, Canterbury and York Society pt CXLIII (1976-77), 174-9.

⁷ 'The Clinton Family II', *The Ancestor*, x (1904), 44-5.

⁸ J. Hughes, *Pastors and Visionaries: Religion and Secular Life in Late Medieval Yorkshire* (Woodbridge, 1988), 29.

endowing a chantry in the church.⁹ Brian FitzAlan of Bedale (ob. 1306), having suffered the deaths of his three sons and first wife, was succeeded by two young daughters from his second marriage.¹⁰ His effigy, which he probably commissioned, is an outstanding product of the Yorkshire Series B workshop.¹¹ The same source produced the now mutilated effigy at Escrick (Yorkshire) which is likely to represent Roger de Lascelles, whose estates were divided between his four daughters when he died in 1300.¹² As will become apparent in the case study below, the alabaster Marmion effigies at West Tanfield (Yorkshire), may be seen as representing an extreme reaction to the certain failure of the male line.

Another example is at Aldworth (Berkshire), where there is a well-known, extensive and important group of fourteenth-century secular effigies. The manor was held by the de la Beche family for many generations but the line failed in the mid-fourteenth century. Repeatedly, brothers died without surviving male issue. The last of the final group was Edmund, Archdeacon of Berkshire and a king's clerk. In 1351 he obtained a licence for the alienation in mortmain of land to found a college at Aldworth for himself and his ancestors.¹³ The sequence and span of production has been debated¹⁴ but it seems likely that the figures were all carved in one, or perhaps two, campaigns in the mid-fourteenth century. They now dominate the nave of the church, effectively turning it into a family mausoleum, asserting the last of the line's desire to perpetuate his family's memory and solicit prayers for their wellbeing.

An extreme example of a family pedigree in stone is the bizarre collection of retrospective effigies at Chester-le-Street which includes three genuine medieval examples. Two of these were obtained by licence from Durham Cathedral churchyard.¹⁵ The other eleven figures date from the late sixteenth century, when the collection was assembled by John, Lord Lumley to represent his ancestors.¹⁶ On a more grand scale, the Despenser tombs at Tewkesbury involved the mid-fourteenth-century transformation of the eastern arm of the church to an elaborate and complex scheme. Begun by Hugh le Despenser the Younger (ob. 1326) and completed by his successor Hugh, Lord Despenser (ob. 1349), it created a lavish family mausoleum which operated into the fifteenth century.¹⁷

There are other examples which no longer remain intact. The collection of tombs

⁹ Brian and Moira Gittos, 'The Medieval Monuments of Limington, Somerset', *Notes and Queries for Somerset and Dorset*, xxxii, pt 328 (Sept. 1988), 696–703.

¹⁰ G.E. Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom*, ed. V. Gibbs *et al.*, 13 vols in 14 (London, 1910–59), v, 394–6.

¹¹ Brian and Moira Gittos, 'Yorkshire Effigies and their Place in English Sculpture', *Medieval Europe 1992: Art and Symbolism*, Pre-printed papers 7 (York, 1992), 209–15.

¹² *Op. cit.* in n. 10, vii, 448.

¹³ *Calendar of Patent Rolls 24–27 Edward III, 1350–54*, 51.

¹⁴ J. Blair, 'The First Monumental Effigy Symposium', *Monumental Brass Society Bulletin*, 20 (1979), 17, reviewing an unpublished lecture by R. Emerson.

¹⁵ R. Surtees, *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham*, ii (London, 1820), 139.

¹⁶ P.R. Coss, 'Heraldry and Monumental Effigies in the North East', in T.E. Faulkner (ed.), *Northumbrian Panorama, Studies in the History and Culture of North East England* (London, 1996), 8–18.

¹⁷ R. Morris, 'Tewkesbury Abbey: The Despenser Mausoleum', *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, xciii (1975), 142–55.

to the de Vere family, Earls of Oxford, comprised some fourteen effigies, many surviving in the ruins of Colne Priory (Essex) until its destruction in the eighteenth century.¹⁸ The tombs remaining in St Stephen's Chapel, Bures, had been moved into Colne parish church after the Dissolution. Although only a vestige of the original assemblage, they provide some indication of a once vivid display of family history.

By contrast, nothing survives of the tombs of the Beauchamps of Hatch, which were once in their private chapel at Stoke-sub-Hamdon (Somerset) where Leland saw them:

. . . yn this maner place remaynith a very auncient chapelle, wheryn be diverse tumbes of noble menne and wimen. In the south west side of the chapelle be 5. images on tumbes, on hard joynid to another, 3. of menne harneshid and shildid and 2. of women.¹⁹

The de Vere (and probably the Beauchamp) groups were set up sequentially rather than as part of a dedicated campaign and this accretive process will be seen at West Tanfield, where it is also possible to consider the development of a broad family tradition of establishing monuments.

Heart burials are another form of commemoration whose motivation requires examination. Given that the case studies will include examples of this phenomenon, it is necessary to review this custom. Interment of the viscera separately from the body originated as a means of preserving the corpse for transport home from afar but gradually gained wider usage. In the majority of cases the secondary burial(s) served as a devotional focus, attracting additional prayers to ease the passage of the soul through purgatory. The burial arrangements for Eleanor of Castile exemplify the custom. Her body was interred at Westminster, her entrails in Lincoln Cathedral and heart at the Blackfriars, London. The deposition of the entrails at Lincoln was surely a matter of expediency, prior to the long journey south, but the heart burial at Blackfriars was, apparently, at her own request.²⁰ However, the practice was seriously curtailed by the Bull *Detestande feritatis* of Boniface VIII in 1299.²¹

Although there are many references to separate burials for the heart and bowels,²² very few surviving monuments can positively be identified with this practice.²³ At Leybourne (Kent) is a double niche containing a pair of stone caskets, one with a lead heart-case, inscribed with a prayer. It has been attributed to Sir Roger de Leybourne, who died in the Holy Land in 1271.²⁴ Two important non-secular examples are the fine Purbeck marble demi-effigy within a vesica to Bishop Aymer

¹⁸ F.H. Fairweather, 'Colne Priory Essex and the Burials of the Earls of Oxford', *Archaeologia*, lxxxvii (1938), 275–95.

¹⁹ *The Itinerary of John Leland*, ed. L. Toulmin Smith (Carbondale, 1964), i, 158–9.

²⁰ Elizabeth Hallam, 'The Eleanor Crosses and Royal Burial Customs', in D. Parsons (ed.), *Eleanor of Castile 1290–1990* (Leicester, 1991), 16.

²¹ Elizabeth 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), 221–70.

²² C.A. Bradford, *Heart Burial* (London, 1933), 100–24.

²³ G. Dru Drury, 'Heart Burials and Heart-Shrines', *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club*, xlvii (1927), 38–58.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

de Valance (ob. 1260) at Winchester Cathedral²⁵ and a tiny tapering slab at Abbey Dore (Herefordshire) with an episcopal effigy and an inscription referring to the heart of Bishop John (probably John de Breton, Bishop of Hereford ob. 1275).²⁶ Another Purbeck marble monument, in Chichester Cathedral, shows hands holding a heart within a trefoil, on which was once an inscription mentioning the heart of Maude (probably Countess of Arundel ob. 1270).²⁷ In similar vein, is the anonymous slab at Bredon (Worcestershire) but here the hands emerge from the top of a shield.²⁸

There are small military effigies which may represent heart burials at: Netley (Hampshire);²⁹ Bottesford (Leicestershire); Horsted Keynes (Sussex); Little Easton (Essex); Tenbury (Worcestershire) and Letchworth (Hertfordshire).³⁰ Of the three small civilian effigies at Berkeley (Gloucestershire) one may hold a heart.³¹ Others may be found at Curry Rivel (Somerset),³² Gayton (Northamptonshire),³³ Britford (Wiltshire)³⁴ and Filey (Yorkshire).³⁵ Possible alternative reasons for small effigies include the commemoration of children, restricted space or a limited budget.

Monuments identifiable with the burial of viscera are decidedly more rare. One of the most likely is the small Purbeck marble effigy beside the so-called Strongbow knight in Christchurch Cathedral, Dublin.³⁶ Cupped between the hands of this well-worn figure, is a ribbed, amorphous mass, a plausible interpretation of the viscera. Another (ecclesiastical) example is at Howden Minster (Yorkshire) where an inscribed Frosterley marble coffin-shaped cross slab records the burial of the viscera of Walter Kirkham, Bishop of Durham (ob. 1260).³⁷ Interestingly, this is a full-size slab, corroborating the evidence of Queen Eleanor's lost monument at Lincoln and Richard I's effigy at Rouen, that not all partial burials were marked by small monuments. Conversely, as with effigies, there are many small coffin-shaped slabs which might relate to incomplete burials but lack identifiable characteristics. A particularly fine, thirteenth-century example is on the chancel wall at Alvediston, Wiltshire.

An unresolved problem concerns the interpretation of full-sized, heart-holding effigies. There is a tacit assumption that such figures do not necessarily imply a heart

²⁵ *Winchester Cathedral, 900 Years 1093 to 1993*, ed. J. Crook (Chichester, 1993), fig. 9.5.

²⁶ R. Richardson, 'People in the Abbey', in R. Shoemith and R. Richardson (eds), *A Definitive History of Dore Abbey* (Little Logaston, 1997), 88–9 and fig. 62.

²⁷ *Op. cit.* in n. 23, 52.

²⁸ Rev. Charles Boutell, *Christian Monuments in England and Wales* (London, 1854), 114.

²⁹ H.A. Tummers, *Early Secular Effigies in England: The Thirteenth Century* (Leiden, 1980), pl. 120.

³⁰ *Op. cit.* in n. 23, 55.

³¹ Ida Roper, *Monumental Effigies of Gloucestershire and Bristol* (privately printed, 1931), 409–11.

³² A.C. Fryer, 'Monumental Effigies in Somerset: Part III (a) 13th and 14th Century Civilians', *Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, lxiii (1917), pl. II.

³³ *Op. cit.* in n. 29, pl. 162.

³⁴ N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Wiltshire* (Harmondsworth, 1975), 143.

³⁵ Rev. Henry Lawrance, 'Two Effigies on the East Coast', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, xxxvii (1949), pl. 1.

³⁶ Brian and Moira Gittos, 'Irish Purbeck: Recently Identified Purbeck Marble Monuments in Ireland', *Church Monuments*, xiii (1998), 8 and fig. 3.

³⁷ J.T. Fowler, 'Earliest Monumental Inscriptions in Howden Church in 1885', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, ix (1886), 398.

burial³⁸ and, as Fryer has pointed out, there is a full size stone coffin beneath the heart-holding lady at Withycombe (Somerset).³⁹ Examples of heart-holding effigies are widely distributed throughout England and, as with the cross-legged attitude, they seem to be a feature of the later thirteenth and the first half of the fourteenth century.⁴⁰ The evidence of wills suggests that, in England, the 1299 papal decree was a watershed, such that, for many years after this date, testators ceased to request heart burial.⁴¹ There is, therefore, a good case for interpreting the heart-holding effigy as having some other symbolism, perhaps associating the heart with the act of prayer or simply as a direct offering to God. The fact that heart-holding effigies do not appear to commemorate the higher echelons of society may be worth exploring.

Separate burial of different parts of the body created the need for multiple monuments for the same person but the twin memorials attributed to William Canynges in St. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol,⁴² demonstrate an alternative scenario. Canynges was a major figure in the city during the fifteenth century. A merchant and shipowner,⁴³ he served as member of parliament for Bristol and was five times mayor.⁴⁴ He was an important benefactor of St Mary Redcliffe,⁴⁵ endowing two chantries. It was, therefore, entirely appropriate that, following his wife's death in 1460,⁴⁶ he should establish a grand monument with freestone effigies for Joanna and himself. However, he eschewed commerce for the priesthood in 1468,⁴⁷ rebuilt the church at Westbury-on-Trim and was Dean of its college from 1469 until his death in 1474.⁴⁸ Following this career change, a second effigy was placed in St Mary Redcliffe, habited as Dean. As now arranged, the second figure appears a plainer and more modest monument than the mayoral figure under its grand canopy but this is probably misleading. The effigy as Dean is a high quality sculpture in alabaster, which has lost its polychrome, whereas the earlier monument is a local product re-painted, so the contrast would have been less marked in their original condition. These monuments should be considered as personal statements by William Canynges, who was evidently proud of his contrasting achievements and wished them to be celebrated separately, in a permanent and fitting manner.

The instances described above serve to illustrate some particular contexts for the

³⁸ *Op. cit.* in n. 23, 57.

³⁹ *Op. cit.* in n. 32, 7–8.

⁴⁰ Some late thirteenth-century examples are given in Tummers (*op. cit.* in n. 29), such as Gonalston, Notts. (plate 152), Hatford, Berks. (plate 181) and Stockerston, Leics. (plate 119). Fourteenth-century examples include the knights at Acaster Malbis, Bainton, Nunnington, Slingsby and Ingleby Arncliffe, all in Yorkshire.

⁴¹ *Op. cit.* in n. 20, 252 n. 122.

⁴² *Op. cit.* in n. 31, pl. 10.

⁴³ *William of Worcester Itineraries*, ed. John H. Harvey (Oxford, 1969), 130–3.

⁴⁴ *Op. cit.* in n. 31, 122.

⁴⁵ Linda Monckton, 'The Myth of William Canynges and the Late Medieval Rebuilding of St Mary Redcliffe', in L. Keen (ed.), *Almost the Richest City: Bristol in the Middle Ages*, BAA Conference Transactions, xix (1997), 57–67.

⁴⁶ *Op. cit.* in n. 31, 127.

⁴⁷ The date of his admission to the order of deacon is given as 2 April 1468 in E.E. Williams, *The Chantries of William Canynges in St Mary Redcliffe Bristol* (Bristol, 1950), 69.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

commissioning of monuments which have significantly influenced their finished form. From this basis we can move on to explore the respective roles of the patrons themselves, of their executors and of the masons.

Whose Choice? Patrons and their Masons

The example of William Canynges provides a good illustration of the role of an active patron. Evidence from surviving wills reveals a small but persistent proportion of testators who had commissioned their own monuments. Although fewer than those who instructed their executors, they form a significant contingent. A further group, who simply specified a church of burial, may have already prepared a monument. Mary de St Pol, Countess of Pembroke, in her long and important will of 1376 wished to be buried in Denny Abbey 'ou ma tombe est faite'.⁴⁹ A second noble lady, Isabel, Countess of Warwick, demonstrated the pains which could be taken, when specifying her cadaver tomb. This type had gained currency as a means of using monuments to remind the living of their fate. In her will, dated 1439, she requested burial in Tewkesbury Abbey and continued:

that my statue be made, all naked, with my hair cast backwards, according to the design and model which Thomas Porchalion has for that purpose, with Mary Magdelen laying her hand across, and St. John the Evangelist on the right side, and St. Anthony on the left; at my feet a scutcheon, impaling my arms with those of the Earl my husband, supported by two griffins, but on the sides thereof the statues of poor men and women in their poor array, with their beads in their hands.⁵⁰

The chantry chapel survives amongst the tombs of her Despencer relations but, sadly, not the effigy.

John Stourton (ob. 1438/9) of Preston Plucknett (Somerset) organised a joint tomb in Stavordale Priory with no less care:

Item, I will that two images carried thither by me, shall be ordained and placed in the middle choir of the said church, between the stalls there, and that underneath shall be made a certain tomb ordained and walled for the bodies of me and my wife to be placed therein reasonably and honestly after our death with one 'closet' of iron bars around the said tomb; and that the reading-desk shall be at the head of the said tomb.

Item, I will that the aforesaid church shall be throughout honestly paved with 'Tyle' of my arms and the arms of my mother.⁵¹

His detailed involvement with the tomb and its surroundings should be seen in the context of his patronage of the building and glazing works at Stavordale.

⁴⁹ Hilary Jenkinson, 'Mary de Sancto Paulo, Foundress of Pembroke College, Cambridge', *Archaeologia*, lxvi (1915), 432.

⁵⁰ *Testamenta Vetusta*, i, ed. N. Nicholas (1826), 239.

⁵¹ *Somerset Medieval Wills*, i, ed. F.W. Weaver, Somerset Record Society, xvi (1901), 143.

Other testators had erected a joint monument on the death of a spouse. Geoffrey Poole of Wythune (Buckinghamshire), in 1475, desired to be buried 'in the same tomb as Editha my wife'.⁵² Similarly, by July 1447 John Holland, Duke of Exeter, had set up a monument for his previous wife, his second wife (still living) and his sister, beside the high altar of St Katherine by the Tower, London.⁵³ The monument, now in St Peter ad Vincula in the Tower of London, has alabaster effigies for the duke but only two ladies.

In some cases the will required the executors to take the lead. Sir John Montacute (ob. 1389) said that he wanted to be buried 'in the Cathedral Church of Salisbury, between the two pillars' and he told his executors 'I will that a plain tomb be made for me, with the image of a knight thereon, and the arms of Montacute, having an helmet under the head'.⁵⁴ Although he was clear about the type of monument he wanted, he left them to deal with the details and the result has survived. It now stands in the nave and consists of an effigy and tomb chest, with six shields bearing the arms of his family in quatrefoil panels. The knight's head rests on a crested helm with his feet on a bold lion. The contractual arrangements for the celebrated tomb of Richard Beauchamp at Warwick, some fourteen years after the death, show his executors so involved in the detail, that they were providing a wooden pattern for the manufacture of the latton hearse.⁵⁵ However, when John de St Quintin (ob. 1397) of Brandesburton, East Riding (see below, Fig. 4), requested burial beneath a brass showing himself and his wives Lora and Agnes,⁵⁶ his executors did not fully comply. Only Lora was depicted with him.

The general arrangement might be the choice of either the subject or executors but, to a greater or lesser extent, both were in the hands of the mason as far as the execution was concerned. This influence is most readily seen in the design and detail of a monument. Where stylistic analysis reveals the work of either a single man or a workshop, it is apparent that much can be attributed to the mason. This is clear in the tightly knit Yorkshire series⁵⁷ and large groupings such as those in Purbeck marble and alabaster. The design capability, knowledge, competence and flair which the carvers brought to bear on their chosen material would determine the final appearance of the monument. The integral attendant figures which are a feature of north-eastern effigies around the turn of the fourteenth century are evidence of a prevailing local, sculptural, fashion. Some wills gave the mason wide scope. Thomas Lord Poynings, in 1374 willed to be buried in the Abbey of St Radegunds (Kent), which he had previously founded. He went on, 'I will that a tomb be made, with the image of an armed knight thereon of alabaster'.⁵⁸

⁵² *Op. cit.* in n. 50, 338.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 255.

⁵⁴ *Op. cit.* in n. 50, 124.

⁵⁵ Fred H. Crossley, *English Church Monuments A.D. 1150–1550* (London, 1921), 30.

⁵⁶ *Testamenta Eboracensia*, i, Surtees Society, iv (1836), 215.

⁵⁷ See for example, Brian and Moira Gittos, 'The Goldsborough Effigies', *Church Monuments*, ix (1994), 3–32.

⁵⁸ *Op. cit.* in n. 50, 92.

Occasionally, monuments were erected by individuals whose relationship to the deceased is unclear. The will of John Stourton (see above) required:

that a tomb shall be made by my executors at Dowlysshwake [Dowlish Wake, Somerset] of two images, one of a man armed and the other of a gentlewoman, designed for a memorial of John Keynes and his wife, at the cost of my said executors, and that the images shall be placed between the high altar of the church there, and the chapel, of the chantry of the said John Keynes.⁵⁹

Between the chancel and the north chapel at Dowlish Wake is an altar tomb with the effigies of an armed man and lady. From the heraldry on the tomb chest, the monument has been assigned to John Speke (ob. 1442). However, it has been very heavily restored and is probably earlier than 1442, while the arms are an insertion on fresh stone. The tomb is likely to be that specified by John Stourton but subsequently appropriated to the Speke family.

A testator may mention alternative burial sites, depending on the place of death. The will of Otto de Grandisson (1358) is a case in point.⁶⁰ His burial was at Ottery St Mary (Devon) but the uncertainty makes it unlikely that his tomb was already prepared. Otto's brother, Bishop Grandisson of Exeter, had founded a college at Ottery St Mary in 1337, to pray for the souls of family members.⁶¹ Since Otto did not require his executors to provide a monument and the effigy bears striking similarities to carving done for Exeter Cathedral during Grandisson's episcopate, it is possible that the bishop commissioned the tomb.

Selecting the Form of Monument

The changing popularity of monument types has been charted, chronologically, by an area study of medieval monuments.⁶² Effigies were numerically predominant during the fourteenth century, as were cross slabs in the thirteenth, and brasses in the fifteenth. Fashion in art and architecture, local style, economic factors, practicalities and availability, all influenced the precise form of effigy. For instance, cost-effective semi-effigial monuments, fashionable during the first half of the fourteenth century, would also have been affordable by the less affluent. On the other hand, a more elaborate monument might be feasible, if it were available from a local source. Occasionally, a subject's choice appears influenced by monuments which he had probably seen and admired, perhaps commemorating those of higher status or close associates. When John, Earl of Pembroke made his will in 1372, he stipulated that his tomb 'be made as like as possible to the tomb of Elizabeth de Burgh who lies

⁵⁹ *Op. cit.* in n. 51, 146.

⁶⁰ *Op. cit.* in n. 50, 61–2.

⁶¹ *Calendar of Patent Rolls 8–11 Edward III, 1334–38*, 562.

⁶² B. and M. Gittos, 'A Survey of East Riding Sepulchral Monuments before 1500', in C. Wilson (ed.), *Medieval Art and Architecture in the East Riding of Yorkshire*, BAA Conference Transactions, ix (1989), 105.

in the Minories, London . . . and I give for making the said tomb CXL *li*.⁶³ Similarly, in 1492, Henry Lord Grey of Codnor enjoined his executors 'to make a tomb over me like my Lord Beaumonde's tomb at Sempringham'.⁶⁴ There can be little doubt that this is what was happening when monuments of men such as Brian FitzAlan at Bedale and John de Lythegraines at Norton (Durham), who had worked so closely together in the service of both the King and Bishop (Anthony Bek), turned out to be so similar.⁶⁵

Whatever monument was ordered, it had to fit within a physical setting, and this could materially affect the choice. A testator who had given this a great deal of thought, was the chronicler Robert Fabyan, a wealthy draper of London, whose will is dated 1511. He specified burial in either a city church or at Theydon Garnon (Essex), according to his place of death and stipulated that, if he were buried in the city, his executors were to provide 'in the walle, near unto my grave, a litell tumber of freestone, upon which I will be spent liiis ivd att the most'. If he were buried in Essex, he requested that '. . . myn executors doo purvey a stoon of marbill to lay upon my grave . . .'.⁶⁶ Presumably the difference stemmed from the problem of fitting a monument into an already crowded church, whereas in the country he could have a larger monument while still constrained by the location '. . . atwene my pewe and the high awter . . .'. Although a late example and not involving an effigy, this must have been an increasingly common problem and one which would have been far greater had the testator been planning a three-dimensional tomb. A more general instance of location influencing design is that of partial burials. Because of their size, these were often lodged in walls, constraining the choice of monument. The conventional response was to use small niches, miniature figures and some dedicated types such as isolated heart-holding hands.

Where wills stipulate a burial site, a significant proportion specify interment in the churchyard. For example, Joan Lady Cobham of Starborough, the daughter of Sir Thomas de Berkeley, willed in 1369 '. . . to be buried in the church-yard of St Mary Overhere, in Southwark, before the church door, where the image of the blessed Virgin sitteth on high over that door'.⁶⁷ In 1404 John Ken wished to be buried in the churchyard of Kingston Seymour (Somerset) '. . . where I have caused a monument to be made for myself'.⁶⁸ The monument is not described but a fifteenth-century altar tomb stands east of the church. Lady Cobham's desire for churchyard burial probably sprang from religious sentiment but the option of burial within a church was not open to all. It seems that secular burials were not permitted in Durham Cathedral until Ralph, Lord Neville (in 1367) established a precedent.⁶⁹ Some of lesser status might never have been able to procure burial within the church

⁶³ *Op. cit.* in n. 50, 87.

⁶⁴ *Testamenta Vetusta*, ii, ed. N. Nicholas (1826), 414.

⁶⁵ *Op. cit.* in n. 57, 26.

⁶⁶ *Op. cit.* in n. 64, 510. Fabyan carefully specified very different schemes for the two monuments, possibly for the benefit of the alternative audiences.

⁶⁷ *Op. cit.* in n. 50, 81.

⁶⁸ *Op. cit.* in n. 51, 15.

⁶⁹ *Rites of Durham*, ed. Rev. Canon Fowler, Surtees Society, cvii (1903), 58.

but still have desired something more than a grave marker. It is becoming clear that effigial monuments were deliberately sited in churchyards. Philip Lankester has pointed out that the drilled holes seen on some monuments could best be interpreted as drainage channels.⁷⁰ At Newland (Gloucestershire) the monument to Jenkin Wyrall (mid-fifteenth century) had been in the churchyard until the 1950s. Whilst this can be viewed as the re-habilitation of a monument discarded by early restorers, the figure and its chest are massy and robust and this is probably a deliberate, expensive, churchyard monument. The four effigies and eight cross slabs in the churchyard at Leckhampton (Gloucestershire) were dug up when the church was enlarged in the nineteenth century.⁷¹ They are very weathered and, given their simple forms, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that they represent the medieval churchyard.

Monuments erected in churchyards would, necessarily, have been more robust than those designed for internal use which, together with damage due to weathering, can give an appearance of crudeness. This should not automatically be interpreted as poor workmanship. Particular design features, such as deliberate water shedding, a lack of fine detail and strong construction, are indicators that a monument was intended for external use. For these reasons, bas-relief and semi-effigial monuments would have been particularly suited to the churchyard.

To a greater or lesser extent, monuments reflect the aspirations and wishes of the patrons. In commissioning a monument, they would be seeking to express themes such as family pride and commemoration. They would, necessarily, be mindful of the constraints imposed by the burial location and economics, amongst other factors. Ultimately, however, it was the mason who provided the solution and it was he who determined the final, finished, effect.

Case Studies

With these general considerations in mind, let us turn to the three case studies, which illustrate and develop a selection of the processes already described. They have been chosen because it is possible to identify the figures and in each case, a rich reservoir of surviving evidence is available. They demonstrate the dynamic interactions of patronage, motivation and choice.

Coberley: the Berkeleys

Coberley (Gloucestershire) was the burial place of the Coberley branch of the Berkeley family.⁷² Despite nineteenth-century rebuilding, the fourteenth-century south chapel and several medieval monuments survive, including two military

⁷⁰ P. Lankester, 'Drainage Holes in Effigial Grave Covers', *Church Monuments Society Newsletter*, 11 (1995); see also P. Lankester 'Effigial Monuments in Churchyards', *Church Monuments Society Newsletter*, 12 (1996/7).

⁷¹ E. Miller, *The History of Leckhampton Church* (Leckhampton, 1987), 49.

⁷² Sir Henry Barkly, 'The Berkeleys of Cobberley', *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, xvi (1892-3), 96-125.



Plate 24. Monument in the chancel of St Giles, Coberley, Gloucestershire, commemorating the heart burial of Giles de Berkeley, ob. 1294. (Photograph by B. and M. Gittos)

figures of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Their identification is aided by the longevity of contemporary heads of the family. Giles de Berkeley was fifty-three at his death in 1294 and his heir and successor, Thomas, would have been in his mid-seventies when he died c. 1365.⁷³ Their combined lordship of Coberley spanned just over a hundred years. There can be little doubt, therefore, that the two military monuments at Coberley relate to Giles and Thomas.

A particularly useful piece of evidence is Giles' will⁷⁴ in which he wished,

... his body to be buried in the chancel of the church at Little Malvern before the image of St Giles the Confessor, and before his body the horse which carried his trappings. His heart to be buried in the chancel of St. Giles of Coberleye, and before his heart his horse called 'Lumbard'.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 109 (Giles) and 120 (Thomas).

⁷⁴ J.W. Willis Bund, *Episcopal Registers, Diocese of Worcester. Register of Bishop Godfrey Giffard, September 23rd, 1268, to January 26th, 1302*, Worcester Historical Society (1899–1902), ii, pt iv, 449–50. Confirmed by reference to the original manuscript.

What survives at Coberley, albeit re-sited in a nineteenth-century chancel wall, fits perfectly with Giles' expectations. In a shallow canopied recess, is a vesica with a moulded edge, encompassing a diminutive male figure, whose body is obscured by a shield. In front of this, he is holding what is presumably a representation of a heart casket. (Plate 24) There is local damage to the forearms and the base of the casket, while the features are all but obliterated. In other respects, the monument is well preserved, with the mail carved in neat rows of alternate crescents. The casket obscures the top centre of the shield, but would not have hindered recognition of Sir Giles' blazon: quarterly, or and azure, a bend gules (Charles Roll, c. 1285).⁷⁵ His last known public duty was as a juror on an Inquisition in 1292 and his apparent inactivity leading up to his death late in 1294, may have been due to failing health.⁷⁶ In these circumstances and with the evidence of his will, it seems likely that Giles would have been directly involved in selecting the form of his memorial at Coberley and the display of his arms may reflect the image which he wanted to convey, encapsulating his role as head of a knightly family.

Giles had seen success in royal and public service, being appointed Sheriff of Herefordshire in 1275 and Constable of Hereford Castle.⁷⁷ He entertained the King at Coberley in 1278,⁷⁸ was Justice of Assize in three counties and attended the 1283 Shrewsbury parliament.⁷⁹ The choice of Little Malvern Priory for his main burial reflects the family's strong links with a monastery close to their manor at Eldersfield. His father had confirmed a grant of the advowson of Eldersfield church to Little Malvern early in the 13th century.⁸⁰ Burial in a monastic church followed the precedent set by the senior Berkeley line who, prior to Thomas, 8th Lord (ob. 1361) had been buried at St Augustine's Abbey, Bristol, where they were major benefactors.⁸¹ Giles' wish to be buried before the image of St Giles, suggests that he regarded the saint as his patron. Coberley was also dedicated to St Giles so the principal burial at Little Malvern must have been invoking more than simply the protection of his patron, perhaps signalling a desire for association with his ancestors. The burial of his heart at Coberley probably betrays a personal wish to be remembered in his home manor. A hint of this is to be found in the more unusual provisions of his will. The horse mentioned in connection with Little Malvern was anonymous whereas the named horse, 'Lumbard', is associated with Coberley.

The second military effigy is life-size, in full armour and now rests on a low modern tomb chest in the south chapel beside the effigy of a lady, probably his first wife. Although rubbed and worn in exposed places, the figure is generally well preserved. (Plate 25) Sir Thomas's feet rest on a lion and the two angels holding the

⁷⁵ *Aspilogia III: The Rolls of Arms of Edward I*, ed. Gerard Brault (London, 1997), i, 285 (no. 387).

⁷⁶ *Op. cit.* in n.72, 108–9.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, fn. 5.

⁷⁹ *Parliamentary Writs*, i (1827), 465 (summoned as 'Egidius de Berkele').

⁸⁰ R.J.W. Bryer, *Not the Least: The Story of Little Malvern* (Hanley Swan, 1993), 116.

⁸¹ Brian Golding, 'Burials and Benefactions: An Aspect of Monastic Patronage in Thirteenth-Century England', in W.M. Ormrod (ed.), *England in the Thirteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1984 Harlaxton Symposium* (Grantham, 1985), 71–2.



Plate 25. Effigy of Thomas de Berkeley in the south chapel of St Giles, Coberley, Gloucestershire. (Photograph by B. and M. Gittos)

cushion beneath his head, unusually, have not been mutilated. He is cross-legged and originally carried his shield on his left arm. This was evidently a separate piece of wood or metal, with the attachment plugs still present. He wears a complete suit of mid-fourteenth-century armour, including bascinet and gauntlets. There are many points of distinctive detail, such as the fringes present around the lower edge of the coif and knee defences and his distinctive sword belt where flower-head mounts alternate with pairs of studs. His rowel spurs are shown in plan, nestling in a complex pattern, comprising the lower edge of his gown, the feet and tail of the lion and foliage. Buckles are shown on his leg and arm defences and the angels have tightly curled hair. The mail coif has a naturalistic fold beneath the chin and the cuffs of his gauntlets gape a little below the forearms.

Many of these features can be found on two other knightly effigies at Alvechurch (Worcestershire)⁸² and, more significantly, at Leckhampton only three miles from Coberley. The latter figure is now on a tomb chest, in the extreme south-west corner of the nave, together with a female effigy, presumably representing his wife. The fringed edgings, heavy gauntlets and particularly the distinctive mounts on his belt echo similar features at Coberley. (Plate 26) However, this appears to be the work of another sculptor and there are significant differences, in the handling of the features, the more developed shape of the bascinet, extravagant size of the ring-locket attach-

⁸² For accurate drawings of the knight at Alvechurch see C.A. Stothard, *The Monumental Effigies of Great Britain* (London, 1817), pls 71, 72.



Plate 26. Decorative details on the sword belt of John Giffard's effigy at Leckhampton, Gloucestershire. (Photograph by B. and M. Gittos)

ment of the sword-belt to the scabbard and the way his long gown is cut away at the front, in a semi-cyclas manner. This feature and the shape of the bascinet, combine to give the Leckhampton knight the appearance of being a little later than Coberley. The Giffard family held Leckhampton from 1330 until late in the fifteenth century and they had other possessions in the area, such as Brimpsfield Castle⁸³ and Weston-sub-Edge.⁸⁴ John Giffard of Leckhampton acknowledged a debt to Thomas and Maurice de Berkeley c. 1342⁸⁵ but seems to be last mentioned in 1346.⁸⁶ Leckhampton probably remained in the possession of his wife Joanna, who presented William of Blechesdon to the church in 1347.⁸⁷ This John is a good candidate for the effigy at Leckhampton and close dating of it and the figure at Coberley is feasible if the latter were associated with the chantry which Thomas is known to have founded at Coberley in 1344.⁸⁸

If, as the evidence suggests, Thomas did set up his own monument in his new

⁸³ E. Andrew and E. Brewin, *Leckhampton through the Ages* (Leckhampton, 1984).

⁸⁴ During the fourteenth-century Brimpsfield, Leckhampton and Weston-sub-Edge were each held by a different branch of the Giffard family and in every case the head of the household was named John, see Nigel Saul, *Knights and Esquires: The Gloucestershire Gentry in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1981), 309.

⁸⁵ *Calendar of Close Rolls 15–16 Edward III, 1341–43*, 135.

⁸⁶ *Calendar of Patent Rolls 19–21 Edward III, 1345–48*, 121.

⁸⁷ *Op. cit.* in n. 71, 57.

⁸⁸ *Op. cit.* in n. 72, 115.



Plate 27. A display of heraldry on the effigy of John de Meriet beside his two wives at Combe Florey, Somerset. (Photograph by B. and M. Gittos)

chantry chapel at Coberley then there is a strong case for recognising his influence and patronage, with regard to the effigy. Thomas was in his fifties when he founded the chantry and his depiction in a long gown rather than a cyclas (often shown on military effigies of the 1340s) may be as a result of his own preference rather than the sculptor's rendition of a typical knight.

The motivation behind the choice of John Giffard's monument at Leckhampton seems to be that of one neighbour and colleague following the example of the other. The Giffards and the Berkeleys of Coberley were near neighbours and are known to have supported one another.⁸⁹ In the next generation, the two heirs entered the service of John of Gaunt together.⁹⁰ One neighbour emulating another has a familiar twentieth-century resonance.

Combe Florey: the de Meriets

The monuments at Coberley commemorate members of a junior branch and this is also true of the de Meriet monuments at Combe Florey in west Somerset. In the north aisle are the life-size effigies of an armoured figure beside two ladies and in the north wall is a niche which contained a heart burial. The effigies are not in situ, simply resting on the floor. (Plate 27) The heraldry on the knight's shield and partic-

⁸⁹ *Op. cit.* in n. 84, 174–5.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 81.

ularly the ailette on his right shoulder, identify him as a de Meriet of Hestercombe (seven miles east of Combe Florey), as this branch differenced the family arms (barry, or and sable) with a bend ermine.⁹¹ Although the colour does not survive, symbols to represent ermine are carved on the bend. The de Meriets of Hestercombe held several manors in the area⁹² but evidently chose Combe Florey for burial.

The military figure has been identified as John de Meriet of Hestercombe who died in 1327⁹³ and this date accords well with the armour details which include elbow, knee and shin defences, additional to a complete suit of mail. John's brother Walter who held the manor until his death in 1345, was Prebendary of Wells Cathedral and therefore an unlikely candidate for the effigy.⁹⁴ Sir John de Meriet's first wife was Mary (daughter and co-heir of William de Mohun) who died c. 1300.⁹⁵ The lady immediately on John's left is carved from the same fine white limestone as the knight (possibly Beer stone from south Devon) and in a similar style. This strongly suggests that the two figures were originally set up together and, from the armour details, this is most likely to have been at the time of John's death.

John de Meriet's second wife, Elizabeth, survived until 1344⁹⁶ and this could explain why the lady nearest the wall seems a later addition. There was evidently an intention that the second female effigy should compliment that of Mary but, perhaps because the workshop which produced the original figures was no longer operating, or there were insufficient funds, a copy was procured from a slightly less accomplished source, utilising the yellowish-brown, shelly limestone quarried on Ham Hill near Yeovil (Somerset). The general arrangement of the later figure is remarkably similar to that of the first but is executed with less finesse. (Plate 28) The fluttery draperies down both sides of the figure are handled more mechanically than on Mary's effigy and the deep central folds lack the movement of the earlier figure. However, the deliberate attempt to harmonise the second figure with the original monument is apparent in the portrayal of the two dogs beneath her feet. Although clearly the work of different carvers, in both cases the dog on the effigy's left is crouching lower and biting the ear of his companion. From the copying of such a distinctive detail, it might be conjectured that the mason contracted to produce the Ham stone lady, visited Combe Florey, making sketches of the original, before commencing his commission. The desire to achieve a coherent monument to John and his two wives was clearly the motivating factor.

The heart burial at Combe Florey provides a useful comparison with that at Coberley. It too appears to have been reconstructed in a rebuilt wall. It has a larger

⁹¹ *Op. cit.* in n. 79, 411, 'Parliamentary Roll':

Sire Johan de Meriet: Barre de or e de sable de vi peces

Sire Johan de Meriet le nevue: meyme les armes a une bende de ermyne.

⁹² R.W. Greenfield, 'Meriet of Meriet and of Hestercombe', *Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, xxviii (1882), 179–215.

⁹³ A.C. Fryer, 'Monumental Effigies in Somerset: Part II, Chain-Mail Knights', *Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, lxii (1916), 76.

⁹⁴ *Op. cit.* in n. 92, 190–206.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 178–9.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 185–8.

niche with a trefoil head, decorated with two incised lines, in lieu of a hood-mould. In the base of the niche, is a coffin-shaped stone with a shaped recess for the heart casket – a heart coffin. The jambs comprise two panels of blue lias, each bearing a finely incised cross with trefoil terminals, the setting-out lines still plainly discernible. The panel of the east jamb is narrower and the shape of the incised cross respects this, demonstrating that the niche was originally tapered in plan, to accommodate the heart coffin. In the wall, above the recess, is a strip of blue lias which may originally have formed the sill. It carries a beautifully incised Norman-French inscription, more like a book-script than a monument.⁹⁷ It reads:–

+ LE : QUER : DAME : MAVD : DE : MERRI
ETE : NONAYNE : DE : CANNYNTONE :

What is missing is the coffin-shaped slab, which once covered the heart coffin. This could have borne a diminutive, recumbent effigy but, it is perhaps more likely to have been a plain slab with an incised cross, like those on the jambs. These crosses provide dating evidence, since four very similar devices are incised on the front of a tomb in the north chapel at Curry Rivel (Somerset). This chapel has a remarkable array of thirteenth century tomb recesses, two of the blue lias canopies being decorated with stiff-leaf and flower heads. Several recesses now house sculptured effigies but may not always have done so, as an incised cross-slab can be observed beneath one of them. These monuments are definitively thirteenth century and probably date from 1260 to 1280. The heart burial at Combe Florey should, therefore, be similarly dated and this is broadly corroborated by the epigraphy. Although described as a nun of Cannington (Priory), no trace of Maude has yet been found in the historical record. Heart burials were usually associated with wealth, as there was nearly always a primary monument elsewhere, to which the heart burial was complimentary. However, the simple incised detail and the emphasis on the cross, create a fitting setting for the monument of a religious.

The de Meriet family evidently had a preference for heart burials. In 1862 a lead heart-case was discovered buried in the north wall of the chancel of Merriott church.⁹⁸ In 1314, Sir John de Meriet (who can only have been of the Hestercombe branch since his namesake at Merriott was then under age⁹⁹) was absolved from excommunication for disembowelling his wife and was ordered to re-bury her heart with her body.¹⁰⁰ It is not clear when this transgression took place. It was probably some years previously, but after Pope Boniface's edict of 1299. The wife in question has to have been the Mary of the first effigy.

An interesting comparison with the sequence of figures at Combe Florey can be

⁹⁷ T. Hugo, 'Cannington Priory', *Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, xi (1861/2), 11.

⁹⁸ H. Norris, 'Notice of the Discovery of a Leaden Heart-Case during the Restoration of Merriott Church', *Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, xvii (1871), 74.

⁹⁹ *Op. cit.* in n. 92, pedigree facing p. 101, and *Calendar of the Register of John de Drovensford, Bishop of Bath and Wells, A.D. 1309–1329*, ed. E. Hobhouse, Somerset Record Society, 1 (1887), 165.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 70.



Plate 28. Effigies of the two wives of John de Meriet at Combe Florey, Somerset, with the Ham stone figure on the right.
(Photograph by B. and M. Gittos)

made with a similar group of three figures at Laxton, Nottinghamshire. Now resting on a structure made from earlier architectural pieces, they comprise a military effigy between two ladies.¹⁰¹ The knight can be identified confidently as Adam de Everingham, who died in 1341, holding Laxton.¹⁰² His father Robert died in 1287¹⁰³ and his son Adam in the 1387/8,¹⁰⁴ one too early and the other too late for the style of the monument, which displays the lion rampant of de Everingham on the knight's shield. The Parliamentary Roll gives: 'Sire Adam de Everingham: de

¹⁰¹ Rev. Henry Lawrance and T.E. Routh, 'Military Effigies in Nottinghamshire before the Black Death', *Thoroton Society Transactions*, 28 (1924), 131.

¹⁰² *Op. cit.* in n. 10, 186.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 185.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 190.

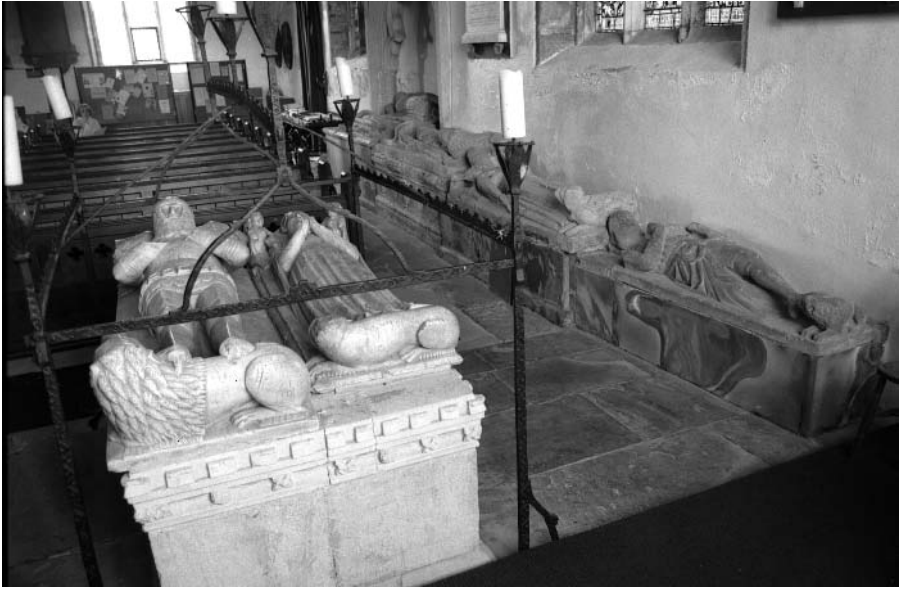


Plate 29. Tombs of the Marmions in the north aisle at West Tanfield, Yorkshire.
(Photograph by B. and M. Gittos)

goules a un lion or rampaund de veer'.¹⁰⁵ One lady appears to be contemporary with Adam's effigy and carved from similar stone.¹⁰⁶ It probably represents his second wife Margaret who was living 1333/4 but pre-deceased him.¹⁰⁷ However, the other female figure is very different. This is a high quality figure of oak, of a type which has been attributed to a London workshop.¹⁰⁸ It is rather earlier than the two stone effigies and, as Adam's first wife Clarice is last mentioned in 1321,¹⁰⁹ it was probably commissioned first, to commemorate her. The resulting sequence is, therefore, the reverse of Combe Florey with a single monument to the first wife followed by a pair of effigies for the knight and his second spouse. Adam survived both wives and was probably involved in commissioning all three figures. The switch from a mainstream London product to more locally produced figures is curious but may stem from the de Everingham's strong connections with Yorkshire¹¹⁰ and, as at West Tanfield, the absence of a main Yorkshire effigy workshop in the early 1320s probably prompted the patron to look further afield.

¹⁰⁵ *Op. cit.* in n. 79, 411.

¹⁰⁶ Lawrance and Routh (*op. cit.* in n. 101) rightly cast doubt on the often repeated claim that the effigies are carved in marble from Aubigny in France.

¹⁰⁷ *Op. cit.* in n. 10, 188.

¹⁰⁸ A.C. Fryer, *Wooden Monumental Effigies in England and Wales* (London, 1924), 97.

¹⁰⁹ *Op. cit.* in n. 10, 188.

¹¹⁰ Although Adam de Everingham's possessions also included Everingham, Kipping Cotes and Sherburn in Yorkshire, he was frequently styled 'of Laxton', which seems to have been his principal manor, to distinguish him from his namesake cousins Adam 'of Birkin' and Adam 'of Rokeby'. *Op. cit.* in n. 10, 187.

West Tanfield: the Marmions

For the third example, the group of effigies at St Nicholas, West Tanfield (Yorkshire), constitutes a surprisingly complete sculptural gallery of leading members of the Marmion family at its zenith, during the fourteenth century comprising three knights and four ladies. (Plate 29) Their significance as a sequence has not been recognised due, in part, to the poor condition of most of the figures and as a consequence of the confusion caused by the earliest knight being ante-dated to the mid-thirteenth century. Attention has been focused on the two best preserved effigies which are alabaster and rest on an altar tomb beneath a unique, contemporary, wrought-iron hearse.¹¹¹

The family relationships of the people represented by the monuments are shown in a pedigree. (Fig. 4) The earliest of this once outstanding display of the Marmion dynasty is John, first Lord, who died in 1322.¹¹² This is the most easterly figure against the north wall. He is in complete mail, with ankle-length gown, cross-legged and his feet on a lion. The hands are at prayer and a shield is supported by two straps over the left arm. The armour details and style of carving are closely paralleled by knightly figures in Lincolnshire (especially Rippingale)¹¹³ and it would appear that the West Tanfield knight was a product of a Lincolnshire workshop. This is unsurprising since the Marmions had possessions in Lincolnshire (the family having come from there) and John is described as 'Conservator of Peace' for the county in 1320.¹¹⁴ At the time of John's death in 1322, there seems to have been a hiatus in effigy production by the Yorkshire carvers, Series B having culminated in the unfinished effigy at Butterwick c. 1317 and Series C not apparently active until the late 1320s.¹¹⁵ The lack of a suitable indigenous source resulted in the provision of a wooden effigy from a London workshop to commemorate Nicholas de Meinell, Lord Meinell of Whorlton (Yorkshire), who also died in 1322.¹¹⁶

John was succeeded by his son John, second Lord. He served under Edward II against the Scots, was Commissioner of Array in the North Riding and summoned to Parliament in 1326.¹¹⁷ He died in 1335,¹¹⁸ a date which is appropriate for the large canopied recess in the north wall and the battered military figure it contains. This must once have been a most impressive monument, to judge by the surviving traces of finely rendered mail, the solitary enigmatic left eye, in an otherwise obliterated face and the recesses for inlaid shields on his belt, a rare detail. John had married Maude Furnivall by 1327 and their son Robert was technically the third Lord Marmion.¹¹⁹ However, he seems to have been unequal to the task and Maude

¹¹¹ J. Geddes, *Medieval Decorative Ironwork in England* (London, 1999), 243.

¹¹² *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, vi, 211, item 350.

¹¹³ *Op. cit.* in n. 29, pls 110–11.

¹¹⁴ Rev. C. Moor, *Knights of Edward I*, iii, Harleian Society, lxxxii (1930), 130.

¹¹⁵ *Op. cit.* in n. 57, 30 n.61.

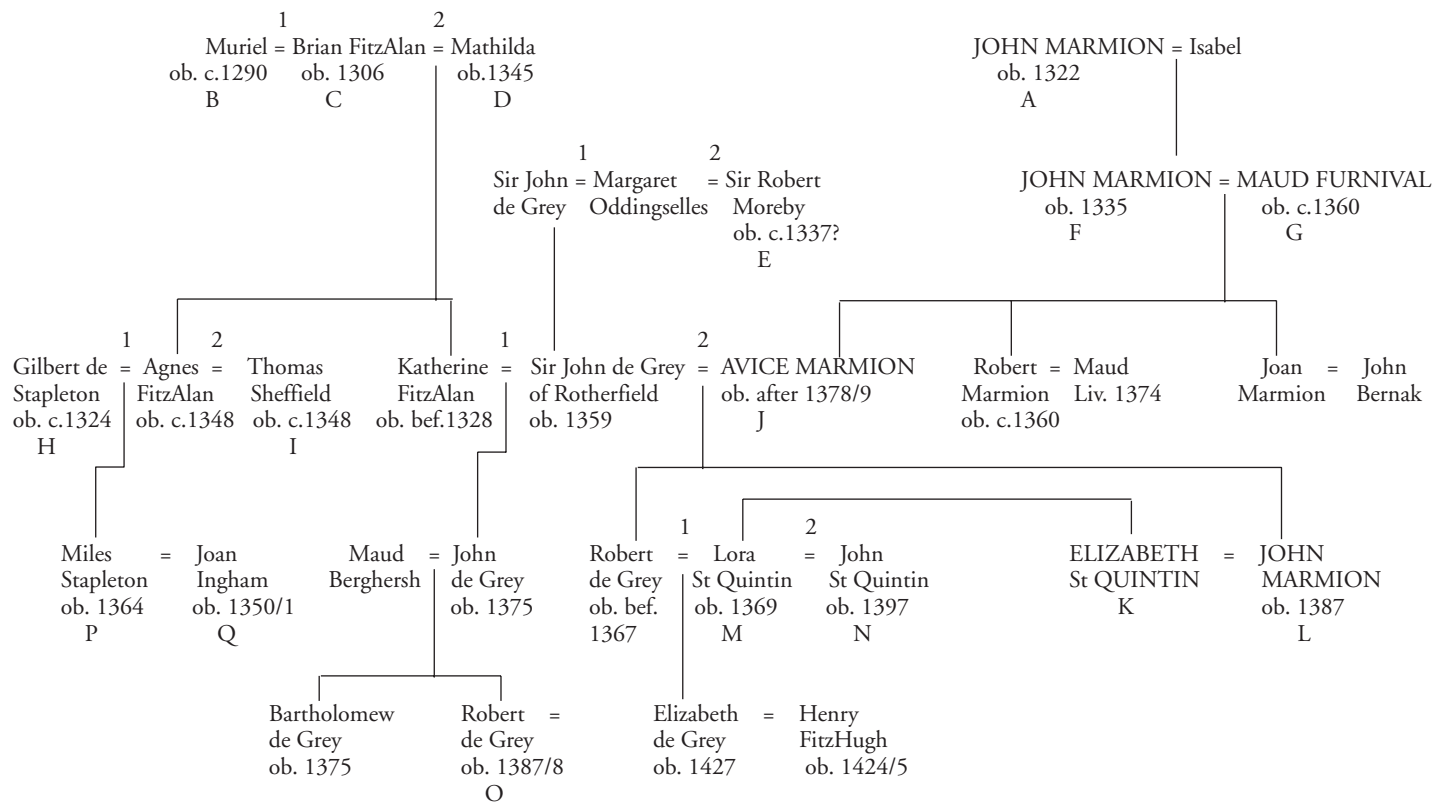
¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Op. cit.* in n. 10, viii, 520–1.

¹¹⁸ R. Gale, *Registrum Honoris de Richmond* (London, 1722), Appendix, 60.

¹¹⁹ *Op. cit.* in n. 117, 522.

Fig. 4. The extended family of Marmion of West Tanfield in the fourteenth century



The extended family of Marmion of West Tanfield in the fourteenth century: key

Individuals marked with a letter are those who are known to have had monuments (see below): those whose names are in capital letters have, or are likely to have, monuments surviving at West Tanfield.

- A Lincolnshire related, freestone knight, West Tanfield
- B Series A, sandstone lady, Bedale
- C Series B, magnesian limestone knight, Bedale
- D Series E, bas-relief lady, Danby Wiske
- E Series D, magnesian limestone knight, Stillingleefleet
- F Magnesian limestone knight, West Tanfield
- G Magnesian limestone lady, West Tanfield
- H Magnesian limestone knight, Kirkby Fleetham
- I Magnesian limestone knight, Bedale
- J Magnesian limestone lady, West Tanfield
- K Alabaster lady, West Tanfield
- L Alabaster knight, West Tanfield
- M Figure brass, Brandesburton
- N Figure brass, Brandesburton
- O Figure brass, Rotherfield Greys (Oxfordshire)
- P Figure brass, Ingham (Norfolk)
- Q Figure brass, Ingham

was obliged to assume control of family affairs following John's death.¹²⁰ In 1343 she made a contract granting the Marmion possessions to her daughter Avice and her husband Lord Grey of Rotherfield, on condition that the inheritance should pass to their son John who was to adopt the name and armorial bearings of the Marmions.¹²¹ That this was done whilst Robert was still alive, indicates that it was already clear he would not produce an heir and that desperate measures were needed to circumvent the impending failure of the male line. In the early 1360s a chantry was established at West Tanfield to honour John, Maud and their heirs,¹²² comprising a master and two brethren. It was still in existence at the dissolution.¹²³ The date of Maud's death is not recorded but it seems reasonable that she would have been commemorated by a memorial set up either at her own instigation or as part of Avice's organisation of the chantry. A date of c. 1360 is acceptable for the most westerly of the female figures, which, appropriately, is now alongside the tomb of John second Lord. She wears a long cloak over a close-fitting kirtle with her hands at prayer and her feet on a large hound. In addition to her veil and wimple she wears

¹²⁰ *Feet of Fines for the County of York from 1327 to 1347*, ed. W. Paley Baildon, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, xlii (1910), 164.

¹²¹ *Op. cit.* in n. 117.

¹²² *Yorkshire Deeds Vol. II*, ed. W. Brown, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, I (1914), 183–4, and *Calendar of Patent Rolls 35–38 Edward III, 1361–64*, 312.

¹²³ *The Certificates of the Commissioners Appointed to Survey the Chantries, Guilds, Hospitals, etc in the County of York, Part II*, ed. W. Page, Surtees Society, xcii (1895), 505.

a coronet, which is unusual and difficult to parallel except on monuments to the nobility.

Following Maud's death, it was the turn of Avice to assume the family mantle. Her husband Lord Grey died at Rotherfield, Oxfordshire in 1359 but she was still living in 1378/9.¹²⁴ Her two sons married the two daughters and co-heiresses of Herbert St Quintin of Harpham, John marrying Elizabeth and Robert, Lora.¹²⁵ Robert, the younger son, who had retained his father's name, died before 30 November 1367,¹²⁶ Lora re-married and is commemorated on a brass at Brandesburton (Yorkshire).¹²⁷ John did indeed assume the name Marmion but nothing was achieved, since he too died without issue and the Marmion estates passed to his niece Elizabeth, wife of Sir Henry FitzHugh.¹²⁸ The fine alabaster tomb, which must commemorate John and Elizabeth, thus represents the postponed end of the Marmion line. It is one of the earliest alabaster tombs in Yorkshire and unlike the others at West Tanfield, the figures are relatively well preserved with only local damage. The arms of Marmion (vair a fess gules) are carved in low relief on the knight's jupon and the lady's kirtle displays Marmion impaling St Quintin.

The two late fourteenth-century female effigies to the west of the first Lord are in a very poor condition but there are features of both which show that the carver or carvers were aware of the alabaster effigies. The animals at the feet of both ladies are very close in style to the lion shown with the alabaster knight. The bezants which decorate the front of the more easterly lady's sideless gown mimic the mounts on the alabaster knight's sword belt and the upright, rigid torsos of the alabaster lady's angels are replicated on the freestone effigies. These two ladies are, therefore, likely to be close in date to the alabaster tomb and one of them may well represent Avice. The reasons for the similarities are unclear and they may reflect a desire to create sympathetic monuments (cf. Combe Florey). Alternatively, the alabasters may simply have provided inspiration.

An important point to be made in relation to the pedigree shown in fig. 4 is the high proportion of the people who were commemorated by effigies. Unless the survival rate is unusually high, what is being demonstrated is a family tradition of commemorating their dead through monuments. This preference extended to many relatives outside the close grouping at West Tanfield and also covers a variety of monument types.

¹²⁴ *Op. cit.* in n. 10, vi, 147.

¹²⁵ H.B. McCall, 'The Marmion Tomb at Tanfield', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, xx (1909), 99, and *Calendar of Inquisitons Post Mortem*, xi, 68.

¹²⁶ *Op. cit.* in n. 124, fn. a.

¹²⁷ Mill Stephenson, 'Monumental Brasses in the East Riding', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, xii (1893), 205 and illus. facing 204.

¹²⁸ *Victoria County History for the County of York, North Riding*, i (1914), 386.

Conclusion

The tombs of the Marmions at West Tanfield encapsulate many of the themes discussed in the earlier part of this paper: family, pedigree and anxiety over the survival of the line. Taken together with Coberley and Combe Florey, they illustrate patronage, economic factors and some circumstances in which monuments were more likely to be created, such as the demise of the male succession, chantry foundations and family mausolea.

These, however, are not the only factors that influenced the selection of effigial monuments. Three others stand out: liturgy, symbolism and the monument's intended audience. Tombs necessarily existed in a liturgical environment. They could be used during the burial service, have a special role enshrined in chantry ordinances or be associated with other liturgical apparatus, such as Easter sepulchres and piscinas. There will have been a ritual purpose for the hearse at West Tanfield and many, more subtle, aspects of medieval effigies may have a liturgical explanation.

Every effigy incorporates a degree of symbolism, from simple conventions such as recumbency and the open eyes, to gesture and the use of supporters. The current level of understanding of this symbolism is far from adequate. Scenes such as the hounds chasing a stag into a forest at the side of the smaller knight at Coverham (Yorkshire) or the fights between lions and wyverns, for example, present many questions.

It is clear that much work is necessary before we can fully understand the nuances which would have been apparent to their original, intended, audience. What we have sought to show here is that each monument, even if unconsciously, was designed with an audience in mind. Full appreciation of that audience and their expectations can do much to explain the seemingly inexplicable.

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Bold as Brass: Secular Display in English Medieval Brasses

Nigel Saul

BRASSES are among the most familiar witnesses to the appetite of pre-modern English folk for commemorative display. Some 7,600 brasses have come down to us, mostly in the south and east; and perhaps as many as 50,000 were originally laid down. Many medieval and early modern brasses are of superb quality, amply attesting the expertise of the engravers. All of them, whether large or small, offer insights into the values and aspirations of the commemorated.

Much has been written about the history of brasses. The serious antiquarian study of the subject began around the third quarter of the eighteenth century. In this period the lengthy process of recording, describing and illustrating brasses began. Easily the greatest of the early works was Richard Gough's *Sepulchral Monuments*, a comprehensive record of British tombs and brasses from the middle ages and a work of unprecedented quality and scale.¹ In the generations after Gough, a series of writers sought to bring brasses to the notice of a wider public. In 1846 C.R. Manning compiled a substantial county-by-county list, while three years later C. Boutell produced a high-quality monograph and, to accompany it, a beautifully illustrated volume of engravings.² In 1861 new standards were set, and a new methodology established, by the publication of Haines' *Manual of Monumental Brasses* – an ambitious study which not only examined brasses in their art historical context but identified styles of engraving and speculated on their workshop origin.³ The high standard of Haines' scholarship was inadequately maintained by his successors. Many of the fairly numerous late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century books on brasses were of mediocre quality. Macklin's *Brasses of England* was the best of the corpus, and the monographs of Druitt and Suffling were useful; but most of the others were indifferent.⁴ Methodologically they were unadventurous. Haines'

¹ R. Gough, *The Sepulchral Monuments of Great Britain*, 5 vols (London, 1786–99).

² C.R. Manning, *A List of the Monumental Brasses Remaining in England, arranged according to counties* (London, 1846); C. Boutell, *Monumental Brasses and Slabs* (London, 1847); *idem*, *The Monumental Brasses of England: A Series of Engravings on Wood* (London, 1849).

³ H. Haines, *A Manual of Monumental Brasses* (Oxford, 1861, repr. Bath, 1970).

⁴ H.W. Macklin, *The Brasses of England* (London, 1907); H. Druitt, *A Manual of Costume as Illus-*

seminal insights on style were largely ignored; and almost invariably authors classified and described brasses according to the costume of the commemorated, in the manner of writers a century before. It was not until after the Second World War that signs of a fresh approach to the subject emerged. In 1949 J.P.C. Kent published a major article, 'Monumental Brasses – a New Classification of Military Effigies', which offered a complete stylistic analysis of military effigies from 1360 to 1480.⁵ Kent's article provided the model for a series of articles and monographs on style written in the 1970s and early 1980s. Eventually a stylistic listing was made of all non-military medieval brasses and the products of the local schools.⁶ Much of the work undertaken in this exceptionally fruitful period received magisterial summation in Malcolm Norris's *Monumental Brasses: The Memorials* and *The Craft*, published in 1977 and 1978 respectively.⁷

Today, brasses are better understood than any other type of medieval or early modern funerary monument. Not only is the broad history of brass design well charted; the main centres of engraving have been identified and the stylistic sequence of their products analysed. Yet it is a characteristic of much writing on the subject that it has been narrowly focussed. For nearly a century until the late 1960s virtually all text-books on brasses were costume-driven; that is to say, the costume of the effigies provided authors with their essential reference point, and narratives of the subject were built around this. The suggestions ventured in Haines' *Manual* that other approaches might be considered were largely ignored. In more recent times, despite the welcome abandonment of the long-standing obsession with costume, approaches have still been marked by narrowness of approach. Stylistic analysis has assumed a methodological dominance nearly as complete as that attained by costume a century ago. While the stylistic analysis of brasses was certainly long overdue, the preoccupation with style has resulted, however unintentionally, in an overly introspective approach to the subject. Today the trend in art-historical studies is to look at buildings and their fittings in terms of their functions and the assumptions and expectations of those who commissioned them. In the light of this development, there is a case for a more outward-looking and holistic approach to the study of brasses. For that reason, the emphasis will be placed here on interpreting brasses – indeed, church monuments generally – as part of the wider material culture of their age: in other words, as objects moulded by the assumptions and tastes of all those who were engaged in their creation, whether commemorated,

trated by Monumental Brasses (London, 1906, repr. 1970); E.R. Suffling, *English Church Brasses from the 13th to the 17th Century* (London, 1910, repr. 1970).

- 5 J.P.C. Kent, 'Monumental Brasses: – A New Classification of Military Effigies', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 3rd ser., xii (1949), 70–97.
- 6 Some of the key works are R. Greenwood, 'Haines's Cambridge School of Brasses', *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society*, xi (1971); R. Emmerson, 'Monumental Brasses: London Design, c. 1420–85', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, cxxxi (1978); S. Badham, *Brasses from the North East* (London, 1979); S. Badham, 'The Suffolk School of Brasses', *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society*, xiii (1980).
- 7 M.W. Norris, *Monumental Brasses: The Memorials*, 2 vols (London, 1977); *idem*, *Monumental Brasses: The Craft* (London, 1978).

executors or engravers. Brasses – in no wise the passive, inarticulate objects suggested by their appearance – emerged from, and contributed to, a discourse. They performed a variety of functions. In the first place, they provided a focus for the rituals of regular commemoration of the deceased: which explains why a request for prayers was invariably included in the epitaphs. Secondly, they acted as a link between the living and the dead, in a sense substituting for the dead. And, last but not least, they were integral to the strategies of legitimation by which families affirmed their position in the elite. If brasses are interpreted in the light of these functions, it becomes easier to understand something of their meaning to the commemorated. The question can be asked of how far they reveal the aspirations and self image of those honoured by their witness. In however small a way, the study of brasses can be made to contribute to the broader history of society.⁸

Of the various functions of brasses, the need to secure intercession must be considered the most important. Brasses were laid above all as stimuli to prayer. In a sense, the opening words of so many epitaphs summed up the position – *orate pro anima*, ‘pray for the soul of . . .’. None the less, considerations of status and display were always to play a major role in commemoration. The very fact that a person could afford commemoration was itself indicative of status, for the graves of the poor went unmarked. In the thirteenth century the most popular form of memorial was the Purbeck marble coffin-shaped slab. Slabs of this kind were widely patronised by both clergy and well-to-do laity, but they were strangely unrevealing about the background and identity of the commemorated. In most cases, their only decorative feature was a floriated cross. Once the use of effigial memorials became widespread, as they did from c. 1230, the potential for display was greatly increased. Those commemorated could manipulate the construction of their self image. Thus the deceased’s membership of one of the divinely ordained estates could be indicated through attire – cope or mass vestments for members of the first estate, armour for the second, and civilian attire for the third. At the same time, lineage and social connections could be advertised through the apparatus of heraldic display – the wearing of badges and collars, the inclusion of occupational symbols and so on. The growth of secular display on tombs and brasses is one of the most striking themes in the social history of the period. Yet, vital though it is, it should not obscure the continuing importance of piety as a motive in commemoration. The deceased’s need for prayer remained crucial. On many occasions effigial sculpture was commissioned in connection with chantry foundations, for example at Aldworth (Berkshire), Cobham (Kent) and Tormarton (Gloucestershire). And, if secular display increased, so too did the display of religious imagery. Representations of the Trinity, the Virgin and Child and of a range of patron saints were regularly included on brasses, as at Morley (Derbyshire). (Plate 30) Commemoration in the middle ages invariably referred to two related processes – commemoration of the individual and commemoration in the sense of annual prayers for the soul: and the former was but the means

⁸ For this objective to be fully achieved, it would be necessary to consider relief effigies and incised slabs as well. However, the constraints of space firmly preclude this. Consideration would also need to be given to brasses of ecclesiastics, which are by definition excluded in a book on secular display.

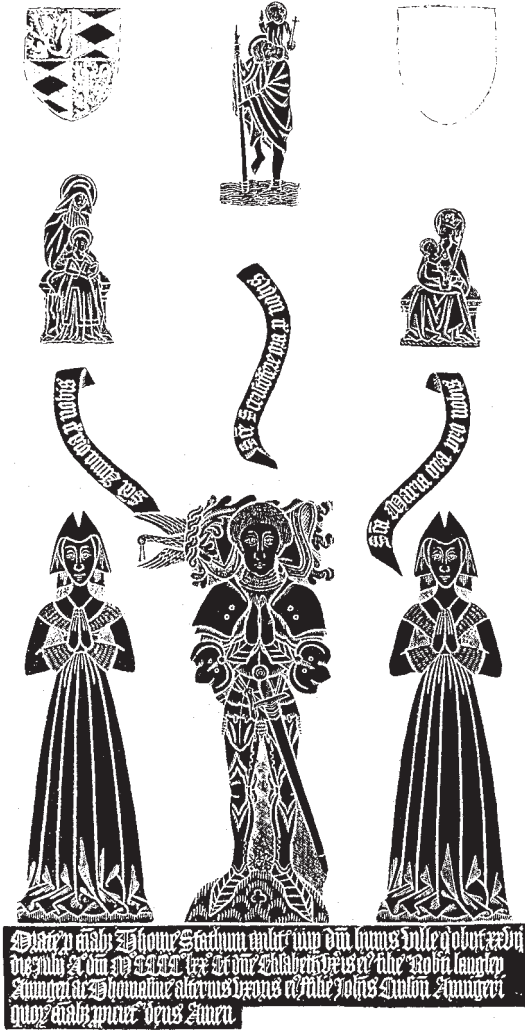


Plate 30. Brass of Sir Thomas Stathum, d. 1470, and his two wives at Morley, Derbyshire

to the latter. The growth of secular display needs to be considered as a parallel phenomenon to the growing manifestation of piety in funerary sculpture.

Many thousands of brasses were laid in medieval England. In the fifteenth century only stone or alabaster incised slabs appear to have matched them in number. Brasses owed their popularity to two main factors. In the first place, they were a highly flexible medium. The English brass was a separate-inlay product. In other words, it was made up of a number of elements (figure, epitaph, shields) which were separately cut out and laid into the slab. In this respect, it differed sharply from continental brasses which took the form of large rectangular plates engraved all over. The English brass, by virtue of its character, could be produced large or small, grand or simple. Secondly, and connected with this, brasses were easily affordable. The very largest brasses could be expensive: the St Quintins' brass at Brandesburton (Yorkshire) cost 20 marks, as did Sir Arnald Savage's brass to his parents at Bobbing (Kent). But small or medium-sized brasses could be purchased more cheaply. In the fifteenth century a typical two-figure brass with an epitaph cost no more than £2 to £3.⁹ A simple coat-of-arms and inscription for an esquire would cost less. And the consequence of affordability was, naturally, a wide appeal. Brasses were favoured by almost every rank of society. In the thirteenth century, when the first brasses were produced, the patrons of figure brasses were chiefly the bishops and the senior clergy.¹⁰ But over time, as the product range diversified, the lesser nobility, untitled gentry, country clergy and academics were all commemorated by these memorials. The most conspicuous early absentees were the townsmen – the burgess class. It is hard to be certain of this because of the heavy losses sustained by urban churches. However, there is very little evidence of burgess patronage of brasses before c. 1330.¹¹ It is conceivable that the burgesses held back because of reticence in self-expression; yet against this has to be set the obvious point that they would have been as needful of intercessory prayer as any group. Perhaps the likeliest explanation for their late entry is that in the period to c. 1340 brasses were perceived as an elite form of commemoration. It took a while for the taste for brasses to seep down through the ranks. Significantly some of the earliest civilian brasses come from workshops outside London less associated with prestige commissions.

A number of stages can be identified in the evolution of the market for brasses. The first, and most significant, of these was in the period c. 1270–c. 1340 when the makers of incised slabs shifted decisively into the production of brasses. The most active workshops at the time were those in London, but regional demand was satisfied by smaller workshops in the north, the north-east and the west. This first period

⁹ For evidence from wills relating to the cost of brasses, see R.H. D'Elboux, 'Testamentary Brasses', *Antiquaries Journal*, xxix (1949).

¹⁰ N. Rogers, 'English Episcopal Monuments, 1270–1350', in J. Coales (ed.), *The Earliest English Brasses: Patronage, Style and Workshops, 1270–1350* (London, 1987).

¹¹ There may have been one or two pre-1330 civilian brasses in St Frideswide's Priory (now Christ Church Cathedral), Oxford: see J. Bertram, 'The Lost Brasses of Oxford', *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society*, xi (1973), 322–6. Much, however, depends on the identification of despoiled slabs now almost effaced. The earliest extant brass to a civilian is that to John de Blagidone and his wife at East Wickham (Kent), c. 1325.

of growth was abruptly ended by the Black Death of 1348, which caused widespread dislocation in the workshops and an associated fall in production. However, from the early 1360s there was a rapid recovery, which ushered in a second period of growth. In this period, which lasted into the fifteenth century, the London workshops established a near monopoly of the market, producing huge numbers of brasses and marketing them in all corners of the land, from Northumberland in the north to Devon and Cornwall in the south-west. The class of patron broadened out, extending among the clergy down to chaplain level and among the laity to the franklins and yeomen. The market for London-made brasses remained buoyant well into the mid fifteenth century. However, in the years around 1470 there was something of a crisis in the industry. Production in the main London workshops faltered, while simultaneously there was a revival or expansion of activity in the regions. The two phenomena were almost certainly related. The revival of provincial activity posed an unprecedented challenge to the London engravers, whose products were anyway beginning to look dated. In response to the crisis, there was a process of takeover and reorganisation in the London workshops and effigial designs were updated. By the end of the century, with new managements in place, output in London underwent rapid expansion again. A higher proportion of the output than before was directed to the lower end of the market. Well-to-do and aristocratic patrons tended increasingly to prefer relief tombs.¹² All the same, on the eve of the Reformation in the 1530s more brasses were being produced in England than anywhere else in Europe.

How are these stages in the evolution of the market to be accounted for? Changes on the supply side almost certainly had a part to play. The revival of the provincial engraving centres in the mid to late fifteenth century provided a major stimulus to market growth. The main provincial *ateliers* – at Norwich, Coventry, York and elsewhere – catered essentially for local demands. With carriage accounting for a smaller proportion of their product costs than was the case for London-made products, the cost to the customer came down, and a clientele was called into being which had not looked to brasses before.¹³ Two centuries earlier it had been technical innovation which had stimulated the appetite for brasses in the first place. The use by the London marblers of metal inlays in incised slabs created a visually more exciting product which caught the fancy of customers and led to the development of a product range which had barely existed before.

But what about the period between the late thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries? How do we account for the considerable market growth which occurred then? And, more particularly, how is the rapid growth of the period 1360–1400 to be explained? It is doubtful if technical innovation had any role to play in this period. The natural temptation is to attribute the late fourteenth-century expansion to

¹² But the bishops and senior ecclesiastics maintained their patronage. At Canterbury, Archbishops Morton and Dean, who died in 1500 and 1503 respectively, both asked to be commemorated by brasses: C. Wilson, 'The Medieval Monuments' in P. Collinson, N. Ramsay and M. Sparks (eds), *A History of Canterbury Cathedral* (Oxford, 1995), 485, 487.

¹³ S. Badham, 'London Standardisation and Provincial Idiosyncrasy: The Organisation and Working Practices of Brass-Engraving Workshops in Pre-Reformation England', *Church Monuments*, v (1990), 6–8.

changes in the pattern of demand. In the half century after the Black Death there was a rapid improvement in popular living standards. For those who had survived the plague, life was good. With population falling, wages rose fast and land became more widely available. Lesser proprietors in the countryside were able to move one or two rungs up the ladder. The better-off peasantry could add piecemeal to their holdings, while the more ambitious of the village elites could take leases on the former demesnes. The rapid growth of the sub-gentry class is hinted at by the terminology of the poll tax returns of 1379. Terms like *franco lanus*, *serviens* and *firmarius* were widely used for the first time to describe the village 'kulaks'.¹⁴ The Franklin of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* was typical of this class. A proud, self-assertive man, he had done well for himself, and he wanted others to know it.¹⁵ It is surely significant in this connection that brasses of civilians figure prominently in the newly enlarged output. An impressive series of civilian half effigies survives from the 1360s on. Many of these brasses are in rural churches – for example, at Nuffield (Oxfordshire) (plate 31), Deddington (Oxfordshire), Ashbury (Berkshire) and Blickling (Norfolk).¹⁶ Almost certainly, newly prosperous landholders are represented among the commemorated. Growing betterment bred greater self-consciousness, which in its turn bred a desire for commemoration. Conceivably, in the fifteenth century this buoyant peasant prosperity contributed to the revival of activity in the provincial workshops. While at one level the revival of provincial engraving itself provided a boost to demand because it brought a lowering of costs, at another it could have been a response to it. The abundant evidence of peasant prosperity could have stimulated craftsmen in brass-related trades to revive *ateliers* that earlier had fallen by the wayside.

Within this broad picture of market expansion, it is clear that particular social or occupational groups viewed the brass with especial favour. Probably the most familiar of these groups is the Cotswold wool and cloth merchant community. The fine brasses to the Cotswold woolmen at Cirencester, Northleach and Chipping Campden (Gloucestershire) and Chipping Norton (Oxfordshire) have often been reproduced.¹⁷ It is hardly coincidental that these series all begin around 1400. The men commemorated by these brasses were the middlemen of the trade. They purchased the woolclip from the local producers – the great monasteries, the gentry and the demesne lessees – and sold it on to the exporters or local clothiers. Before the late fourteenth century this intermediate class had scarcely existed. The normal trading practice had been for the greater producers – the monasteries – to buy up the

¹⁴ See the returns for Yorkshire ('Rotuli Collectorum Subsidii Regi a Laicis anno secundo concessi in Westrythyngo in Comitatu Eboraci') printed in *Yorkshire Archaeological and Topographical Journal*, v (1879–80), 241–66; vi (1880–81), 1–44; vii (1881–82), 6–31, 145–86.

¹⁵ N.E. Saul, 'The Social Status of Chaucer's Franklin: A Reconsideration', *Medium Aevum*, lii (1983).

¹⁶ The brass at Nuffield commemorates one Benet English, whose property, now English Farm, survives in the parish today.

¹⁷ For Cirencester see W. Lack, 'Repairs to Brasses, 1990', *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society*, xiv (1991), figs 2–9; for Northleach, Norris, *Monumental Brasses: The Craft*, pls 189, 210, 215, and *Monumental Brasses: The Portfolio Plates of the Monumental Brass Society, 1894–1984*, ed. M.W. Norris (Woodbridge, 1988), nos 84, 179; for Chipping Campden, C. Whitfield, *A History of Chipping Campden* (Eton, 1958), pls 8, 9, 11.



Plate 31. Brass of Benet English at Nuffield, Oxfordshire, c. 1370

wool in their area (the *collecta*) and sell it to the exporters directly. After the mid fourteenth century, however, when a broader producer class came into existence and an increasing proportion of the clip stayed in England, the way was opened for the rise of the middlemen – men like William Grevel at Campden and William Midwinter and John Fortey at Northleach.¹⁸ (Plate 32) These men were affluent and self-confident and had a range of links with businesses in the capital, as the Cely family's correspondence shows.¹⁹ Their wealth paid for the rebuilding of local parish

¹⁸ For a classic account of these developments, see E. Power, *The Wool Trade in English Medieval History* (Oxford, 1941, repr. 1969), in particular ch. 3. See also E.B. Fryde, *Peasants and Landlords in Later Medieval England* (Stroud, 1996), ch. 6.

¹⁹ A. Hanham, *The Celys and their world: An English Merchant Family of the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1985).



Plate 32. Brass of John Fortey, d. 1458, at Northleach, Gloucestershire

churches. Rarely of gentle or armigerous rank, they developed an emblematic language of their own – that of the merchants' marks. And in brasses they found a commemorative medium suited to their tastes.

Another well defined occupational group with a liking for brasses was the lawyers. From the beginning of the fifteenth century a succession of apprentices, sergeants and justices of the central courts were commemorated by brasses showing them in their distinctive attire.²⁰ Almost certainly, the closely knit character of the legal profession was a formative influence on their taste. People who sat with one another on the bench and who acted for one another as executors were naturally inclined to want memorials based on those of their recently deceased colleagues. Not uncommonly, the brasses of lawyers known to one another came from the same workshop. In the late 1420s and 1430s a closely knit group of justices – John Juyn, John Martyn and John Cottesmore – were commemorated by brasses of the same London workshop: style 'B'.²¹ In the third quarter of the century another closely knit lawyer group is found commemorated by brasses of 'B's rival, style 'D'. The leading members of this group were Peter Arderne, Nicholas Assheton, Brian Roucliff, Thomas Urswick and William Yelverton.²² After the beginning of the fifteenth century, remarkably few memorials were commissioned by lawyers in stone or alabaster.²³ Brassas had won a commanding position for themselves as the most popular commemorative medium for the members of this profession.

A third clearly defined group who patronised brasses were the university academics. By the middle of the fifteenth century, long series of brasses to academics were being laid in the chapels of New College, Magdalen and All Souls and in the University church at Oxford, and in some of the chapels and churches of Cambridge.²⁴ In the sixteenth century smaller series of brasses followed at Christ Church, Oxford, and King's College and Trinity Hall, Cambridge. Few other memorial-types appear to have been favoured by the university men. Their preference for brasses went back a long way. Brasses to members of the universities rank among the earliest surviving. The half-figure in a cross to Richard de Hakebourne, Fellow of Merton, at Merton College, Oxford, dates from shortly after 1320.²⁵ In Merton and the University church, Oxford, rows of indents of brasses of similar

²⁰ For a list and discussion, see Macklin, *Brasses of England*, 173–82.

²¹ For these men, see E. Foss, *The Judges of England*, 9 vols (London, 1848–64), iv, 304–5, 333–4, 342. Their brasses are at St Mary Redcliffe (Bristol), Graveney (Kent) and Brightwell Baldwin (Oxon.) respectively. Martyn, Juyn and Cottesmore sat together in common pleas: Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Dodsworth 71, fo. 16r. The sergeant at law Thomas Rolf may also be associated with this group: his brass at Gosfield (Essex), 1440, is another product of style 'B'.

²² Foss, *Judges of England*, iv, 408–10, 458–62; v, 71–2.

²³ The only extant exceptions appear to be the tombs of Sir John Fortescue at Ebrington (Gloucestershire), 1476, and Sir Richard Choke at Long Ashton (Somerset), c. 1483.

²⁴ M. Stephenson, *A List of Monumental Brassas in the British Isles* (London, 1926, repr. 1964), 410–19; W. Lack, H.M. Stuchfield and P. Whittemore, *The Monumental Brassas of Cambridgeshire* (London, 1995), 20–83.

²⁵ P. Binski, 'The Stylistic Sequence of London Figure Brassas', in *The Earliest English Brassas*, fig. 81. Hakebourne's career as fellow and sub warden of Merton may be followed in A.B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500*, 3 vols (Oxford, 1957–59), ii, 847. Hakebourne is shown wearing mass vestments. Only after the middle of the century are academics

kind indicate the strength of demand from the academics in the pre-Black Death period.²⁶ It is hardly surprising that the academic community should have patronised brasses so extensively. The clergy, whose ranks included the academics, had been the keenest initial sponsors of brasses in the late thirteenth century. Over time, their attachment to the memorial-type deepened. It is no exaggeration to say that commemoration by brasses became something of a fashion in late medieval Oxbridge. The academics found in brasses the ideal medium for the expression of their self image.²⁷

But in what manner, and under what influences, was a commemorated's self image in brass realised and given shape? A testator in his will might well request that a brass be laid to his memory. Quite possibly, he might even trouble to specify exactly the form which the brass should take. But he was entirely dependent on others for the carrying out of his wishes. His executor would have to give the commission to the engraver; the engraver and his team would have to produce the brass and arrange for its delivery to the church; and a design assistant might be called on to advise the engraver on matters of composition and style. A number of influences were thus brought to bear in the making of a memorial. How are they to be identified and separated out?

It is by no means easy to offer a satisfactory answer to this question. The contributions of the various parties involved in brass production varied so widely from case to case. Some of the grander brasses clearly benefited from a great deal of attention by the patron or his agent. The brass of Sir Hugh Hastings at Elsing (Norfolk), 1347, is a case in point. (Plate 33) The task of choosing the comrades in arms to be represented as mourners for the deceased in the side shafts of the canopy could only have been undertaken by someone with intimate knowledge of Sir Hugh's career (very likely Henry, earl of Lancaster), while the devising of the elaborate iconography in the canopy itself would have required the services of a specialist in religious art.²⁸ Much the same goes for the other ornate commissions of the time which have saints and religious imagery in the canopies. The brass of Canon Rudhall in Hereford Cathedral, 1476, for example, contains a highly unusual selection of saints reflecting the commemorated's connections with the church of Hereford. Infor-

shown in academic dress. It is possible that the change is indicative of their increasing self-consciousness.

²⁶ Bertram, 'The Lost Brasses of Oxford', 353–64; A. Bott, *The Monuments in Merton College Chapel* (Oxford, 1964), 10.

²⁷ Doubtless, shortage of space in college chapels was a factor in their choice. Brasses, unlike high tombs, left floor space unencumbered. In New College, one of the larger Oxford chapels, well over half of the ante chapel floor must have been paved with brasses in the middle ages.

²⁸ For discussion of the Hastings brass, see Norris, *Monumental Brasses: The Memorials*, i, 18; L. James, 'The Image of an Armed Man', *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society*, xii (1975), 58. The mourners on the dexter side were King Edward III, the Earl of Warwick, Hugh, Lord Despenser, and Sir John Grey of Ruthin; and, on the sinister, Henry, Earl of Lancaster, Laurence Hastings, Earl of Pembroke, Ralph, Lord Stafford, and Aymer, Lord St Amand. The figures of Despenser and Pembroke are now lost. The reason for suspecting Lancaster's involvement is that he was one of Sir Hugh's executors: *Testamenta Eboracensia*, i, ed. J. Raine (Surtees Society, iv, 1836), 38–9. The other executors were clerks.



Plate 33. Brass of Sir Hugh Hastings, d. 1347, at Elsing, Norfolk

mation about which saints to include could only have come from the commemorated's close friends and executors.²⁹ Yet against these examples have to be set the many thousands of brasses which were obviously the routine products of prolific workshops. Client or patron involvement in these commissions can hardly have gone further than providing the engraver with details of the name and date of death of the commemorated for the epitaph. And between these extremes come the countless intermediate brasses which benefited from only moderate or, perhaps, just a little patronal involvement. To judge from the sheer range of memorials, there must have been infinite variety in the division of responsibility for their design. Provided due consideration is given to this point, however, a few generalisations can be offered.

The overall character of a brass was shaped by two main influences – that of the patron and that of the engraver. Usually, but not invariably, the engraver produced a brass in response to a commission from a client. In one fifteenth-century London workshop stock appears to have been engraved in advance, although this practice may have been exceptional.³⁰ Most commissions originated in one of three ways. Firstly, the commemorated could order the brass in his lifetime.³¹ This was the way in which many double brasses (brasses to husbands and wives) originated: either a husband or his wife would order a brass for them both when one or the other died. Secondly, a deceased's executors could place an order for a brass to his memory after his death. To judge from the testamentary evidence, this was the most common way in which brasses were commissioned; however, it needs to be remembered that this category overlaps with the first in that testators often requested burial in graves with deceased spouses. Thirdly, and exceptionally, a brass could be commissioned by someone's descendants many years after his death, usually to provide witness to lineage. A good example of a brass originating in this way is Richard Wakehurst's at Ardingly (Sussex). Although Wakehurst died in 1455, his brass was not laid to his memory until some fifty years later.³²

Many of the most personal and idiosyncratic brasses of the middle ages belong to the first category: they were commissioned by the commemorated while still alive. Two very familiar examples are the brasses of John, Lord Cobham, at Cobham (c. 1367) and Sir Simon Felbrigg and his wife at Felbrigg (c. 1416) (Norfolk).³³ The former is a 'founder's brass'. It shows the commemorated holding aloft a model of the chantry college which he had founded at Cobham with, around the edge, a

²⁹ Stephenson, *List of Monumental Brasses*, 174. Among the saints shown were St Thomas Cantilupe and St Ethelbert, who were both buried in the cathedral. See S. Badham, 'The Brasses and Other Minor Monuments', in G. Aylmer and J. Tiller (eds), *Hereford Cathedral: A History* (London, 2000), 334–5.

³⁰ Norris, *Monumental Brasses: The Craft*, 88–9; but see the reservations expressed by Badham, 'London Standardisation and Provincial Idiosyncrasy', 20.

³¹ When 'he' and 'his' are used in this discussion, they refer equally to 'she' and 'hers'; women were commemorated by brasses as often as men.

³² Wakehurst was a lawyer and effectively the founder of the family fortune: *History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1386–1421*, ed. J.S. Roskell, L. Clark and C. Rawcliffe, 4 vols (Stroud, 1992), iv, 731–3.

³³ Norris, *Monumental Brasses: The Craft*, pls 24, 38.

singular epitaph combining his pride in the foundation with a grim acceptance of mortality. (Plate 34)³⁴ Felbrigg's brass, commissioned on the death of his wife in 1416, memorialises his service as standard bearer to King Richard II: the royal standard, which he had borne in office, is shown tucked under his arm, while Richard's emblem of the white hart peeps out from under the canopy.³⁵ The personal, even the idiosyncratic, nature of these brasses is hardly surprising. In each case, the task of commissioning, and determining the character of, the product was undertaken directly by the commemorated. No mediatory influence, such as that of an executor, distracted from the purity and directness of the commemorated's vision. Cobham and Felbrigg could each fashion a brass entirely to his taste.³⁶

Most other medieval brasses – in other words, the great majority – fall into the second category. They were ordered shortly after the deceased's death by his executors. Typically, the instructions given to executors by testators were brief to the point of being perfunctory. William Malthouse in 1429, for example, asked for 'a marble stone with an inscription', while John Dommer of London requested simply 'a stone ordained by me'.³⁷ There is no evidence that testators generally felt the need to go into any detail about their memorials. Very likely they had worked out their commemorative arrangements in advance, as Bishop Wyvil of Salisbury (d. 1375) appears to have done so that our two categories overlap;³⁸ and where they had not, they appear to have assumed that the executors would be familiar with their tastes anyway. The trust which testators necessarily placed in their executors appears to have been justified. Executors generally went about their duties with care. One or two of them probably visited the engraver's workshop in person: a widow is shown inspecting an incised slab workshop in an early fourteenth-century manuscript.³⁹ The majority of executors almost certainly made an agreement with the engraver specifying the delivery date for the brass and the precise form that it should take. A

³⁴ Another example of a founder's brass is that of Sir John de la Riviere at Tormarton (Glos.): H.F. Owen Evans, 'Tormarton, Glos.', *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society*, xi (1972), 288–90.

³⁵ For Felbrigg's career and brass, see J.D. Milner, 'Sir Simon Felbrigg K.G.: The Lancastrian Revolution and Personal Fortune', *Norfolk Archaeology*, xxxvii (1978). Felbrigg's wife Margaret was a lady in waiting to Richard's queen, Anne of Bohemia. The whole brass is a study in Ricardian nostalgia.

³⁶ See R. Dinn, '“Monuments Answerable to Mens Worth”: Burial Patterns, Social Status and Gender in Late Medieval Bury St Edmunds', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, xlvi (1995), 251. Dinn rightly emphasises that the practice of lifetime commemoration points to a lack of a clearly defined point of death in the medieval mind.

³⁷ Public Record Office, London, PROB 11/3, fos 96v, 207v. The phrase 'a marble stone' (*lapide marmoreo*) in these examples implies a brass: in the middle ages London-made brasses were invariably laid in slabs of Purbeck marble. Much more evidence from wills is cited in J.R. Greenwood, 'Wills and Brasses: Some Conclusions from a Norfolk Study', in J. Bertram (ed.), *Monumental Brasses as Art and History* (Stroud, 1996), 82–102.

³⁸ The design of this brass is so remarkable that it must have been agreed between the commemorated and his executors in advance. In the upper part of the brass the bishop is shown looking out from a battlemented castle, while below a champion stands at the ready at the gate. The brass celebrates the bishop's recovery for the see of Salisbury of Sherborne castle and Bere chase. For discussion of the background, see E. Kite, *The Monumental Brasses of Wiltshire* (London, 1860), 14–19.

³⁹ Norris, *Monumental Brasses: The Craft*, pls 9, 10.

small number of them might even have supplied the engraver with a 'patron' or pattern.⁴⁰ Most brasses appear to have been laid down in a reasonable time. According to R. Greenwood's study of East Anglian wills, most brasses in the eastern counties in the early 1500s were laid within a year.⁴¹ There is little evidence to indicate widespread negligence on the part of executors.

But the very thoroughness with which executors went about their task raises the question of how far their own conception of the brass overrode that of the commemorated. Was it not bound to be the case that a brass would be fashioned more in the executors' image than its subject's? This is certainly an hypothesis with some truth in it. The executors' choices and decisions were necessarily a key influence in determining the form which any memorial should take. However, it is doubtful if the executors' taste ever entirely swamped the commemorated's. The executor's knowledge of, and sympathy with, the commemorated generally ensured that there was a broad conformity between their tastes and his. The tomb of Reginald, Lord Cobham (d. 1361) at Lingfield (Surrey) is illustrative of the point. Reginald's tomb, a fairly standard London-made job with a relief effigy, bears all the hallmarks of the taste of his wife's Berkeley kin; it is almost identical to the tomb of Reginald's in-laws at Berkeley (Gloucestershire) and the two were probably ordered at the same time.⁴² However, the rich display of heraldry on the sides is very much a reflection of Reginald's own career and achievements: virtually all the arms are those of his comrades-in-arms and associates. In other words, the tastes and priorities of Reginald's widow closely overlapped with his own. Of course, there are examples of where the brass as executed differed from the testator's instructions. At Brandesburton (Yorkshire) Sir John de St Quintin (1397), though asking to be shown with both of his wives, was shown with only one, because the second asked for burial with her first husband.⁴³ At Morley (Derbyshire) (plate 30) the figure of St Anne was added to the saints requested by Sir Thomas Stathum (d. 1470), a change probably brought about on the initiative of his widow.⁴⁴ In general, the signs are that where such changes were made it was for good reason. Circumstances in the family might change: a widow, for example, might remarry. The deceased's spouse might ask for particular features to be added. Or the engraver might have problems in delivering the brass in the form requested. Identifying the factors at work in these cases can add much to our understanding of the evolution of a brass. But rarely does it offer any support to the view that executors were given to misrepresenting the testator's will. In most cases a testator could count on his wishes being turned into

⁴⁰ A 'patron' was supplied to the coppersmiths Nicholas Broker and Godfrey Prest for the tomb effigies of Richard II and Anne of Bohemia in Westminster Abbey: J. Alexander and P. Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England, 1200–1400*, exhib. cat., Royal Academy of Arts (London, 1987), no. 446.

⁴¹ Greenwood, 'Wills and Brasses: Some Conclusions from a Norfolk Study', 92–6.

⁴² Reginald and Thomas, Lord Berkeley, both died in October 1361; Joan, Reginald's wife, was Lord Berkeley's sister. For detailed discussion of the tomb, see N.E. Saul, *Death, Art and Memory in Medieval England: The Cobham Family and their Monuments, 1300–1500* (Oxford, 2001).

⁴³ D'Elboux, 'Testamentary Brasses', 189.

⁴⁴ Since St Anne, the Virgin's mother, was an object of female devotion, it is reasonable to suppose that Stathum's widow requested her inclusion: Norris, *Monumental Brasses: The Craft*, 90.



Plate 34. Brass of John, 3rd Lord Cobham, d. 1408,
at Cobham, Kent. Engraving c. 1367

reality. The influences of executor and commemorated merged in a way which reflected the contributions of both but distorted the aspirations of neither.

Limitations on commemorative self-expression, however, could come from a quite different quarter. This was the highly standardised character of most late medieval effigial designs. From no later than the early fourteenth century in most of the big *ateliers* brasses were serially produced according to uniform designs. The same patterns or templates for effigies were used over and over again. Figures of priests in vestments, of knights in armour and ladies in their finery, could all be bought, in effect, 'off the peg'. In at least one workshop examples of stock were even lying around to be inspected. In such highly commercialised conditions the ability of a customer to influence the design of an effigy could hardly have been less. However, there is little or no evidence to suggest that customers were particularly concerned about this. They did not expect individual likenesses to be offered. Even in the fifteenth century the notion of representational art was still relatively undeveloped in England. Customers looked above all for work that was 'klene' or 'honest' – in other words, of good craftsmanship.⁴⁵ They could recognise shoddy work when they saw it.⁴⁶ But they certainly did not expect naturalistic portraiture. Sir William Tendring's brass at Stoke-by-Nayland (Suffolk) is one of the few attempts at a portrait to have come down to us.⁴⁷

What did concern people, however, to judge from testamentary evidence, was the proper representation of status.⁴⁸ As Sir Richard Knightley said in his will of 1528, echoing so many others in his position, 'I wish to be shown according to my degree.'⁴⁹ 'Degree' referred to rank, to a person's position in the threefold pecking-order of society. 'Degree' was most commonly represented through attire – armour for knights, mass vestments or copes for priests, and civilian attire for members of the third estate. Assumptions about 'degree' infiltrated the very language of the late-medieval funerary sculpture trade. In a tomb contract of the 1370s the word 'chivalrot' was used to denote an effigy of a knight; no further description was deemed necessary.⁵⁰ It was through the generally understood

⁴⁵ 'Klene' or 'klen' occurs in a letter of John Paston I concerning the tomb of his brother Edmund. John says 'It is told me that the man at Sent Bridis is no klenly portrayer; ther for I wold fayn it myth be portrayed by sum odir man, and he to grave it up.' He also says that his brother's stone should be 'klenly' wrought (*Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century*, ed. N. Davis, 2 vols (Oxford, 1971, 1976), i, no. 37). This letter has long been attributed to Edmund Paston but is assigned by Davis, on the evidence of the handwriting, to John I and given a date of c. 1449. 'Klene' meant skilful or clear.

⁴⁶ This is indicated by John Paston's comments about 'the man at Sent Bridis': above, n. 45.

⁴⁷ Tendring is shown bald-headed and with a long beard. Bushy beards are also shown on the brasses of John Knyvet, 1417, at Mendlesham (Suffolk) and Nicholas Canteys, 1431, at Margate (Kent), but in these cases as simple attributes of old age.

⁴⁸ S. Badham, 'Status and Salvation: The Design of Medieval English Brasses and Incised Slabs', *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society*, xv (1996), 413–33: a valuable survey.

⁴⁹ R.M. Serjeantson and H.I. Longden, 'The Parish Churches and Religious Houses of Northamptonshire: Their Dedications, Altars, Images and Lights', *Archaeological Journal*, 70 (1913), 321.

⁵⁰ W.J. Blair, 'Henry Lakenham, Marbler of London, and a Tomb Contract of 1376', *Antiquaries Journal*, lx (1980), 68.

conventions of attire that the engravers gave expression to much of what medieval patrons considered important about themselves and their position in society.

But attire, although the most obvious, was hardly the only means by which 'degree' was represented. The same quality could be represented by heraldry. Shields of arms at the corners of a slab indicated that the person buried beneath was one of the gentleborn, a member of the second estate, one of the blue-blooded. Testators, in their wills, were usually far more explicit about the arms to be shown than they were about the form of their effigies. The will of Sir Richard Poynings (d. 1429) is typical. Poynings asked (minimally) for a latten effigy 'made in my likeness' to be placed over his grave at Poynings (Sussex) – omitting even to mention attire; however, he went into great detail about the blazons to be shown: on the dexter side, a shield of his father's arms impaling his mother's and, on the sinister, another of his own arms impaling his wife's.⁵¹ Margaret Paston, forty years later, went into even greater detail about matters heraldic. Ever the status-conscious matriarch, she described the blazons to appear on no fewer than four shields: 'the first scochon shalbe of my hosbondes armes . . . the 11^{de} of Mawtebys armes and Berneys of Redham departed, the iii^{de} of Mawtebys armes and the Lord Loveyn departed, the iii^{te} of Mawtebys armes and Sir Roger Beauchamp departed'.⁵² In most cases, the blazons depicted were those of close kin: parents, spouses or collaterals. However, in the fifteenth century the arms of livery companies were increasingly shown on the brasses of civilians and merchants: the arms of the Calais Staple appear on a number of woolmen's brasses; while on the brasses of some leading servants of the crown the royal arms were included. The brass of the exchequer baron, Sir John Cassy, 1400, at Deerhurst (Gloucestershire) is an example.⁵³ Presumably the intention was that the commemorated should bask in the appropriated splendour of his employer.

From the last quarter of the fourteenth century use was also made of bastard feudal insignia to denote status. Receipt of a magnate's livery or collar was held to confer worldly honour on the person who wore it.⁵⁴ Gradually, as the habit of distributing these devices spread, so in parallel did the appetite for having them depicted on brasses. The Yorkist collar of suns and roses was shown on Sir Anthony Grey's brass at St Albans, the Bohun swan on the brass of John Peryent and his wife at Digswell, the Stafford knot on Canon Langton's brass at Exeter, and the Lancastrian SS collar on the brasses of a host of Lancastrian retainers and servants. Heraldic beasts, commonly shown as footrests to figures, could also be used to signify connections. The fork-tailed lion of the Burghershs, for example, on the brass of Thomas Chaucer at Ewelme indicated the reception of the non-knightly Chaucer into the noble world to which the Burghershs belonged.

⁵¹ Public Record Office, London, PROB 11/3, fo. 110v.

⁵² *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century*, i, no. 230. Margaret was born a Mautby: hence the heavy representation of that family's arms. She did not mention the brass effigy at all.

⁵³ Another example is the brass of the Lancastrian official John Leventhorp, 1433, at Sawbridgeworth (Hertfordshire), which also includes the arms of the duchy of Lancaster. Leventhorp was an executor of Henry V's will.

⁵⁴ R.L. Storey, 'Gentlemen-bureaucrats', in C.H. Clough (ed.), *Profession, Vocation and Culture in Later Medieval England* (Liverpool, 1982), 90–109.

If, by use of this repertory of motifs and devices, engravers could indicate the commemorateds' connections and social standing, so likewise by drawing on religious imagery they could articulate their feelings of piety and devotion. In the fifteenth century there was a growing trend to having saints and other religious imagery shown on brasses. In his will of 1470 Sir Thomas Stathum of Morley (Derbyshire) asked for the Virgin Mary and St Christopher to be shown on his brass, with scrolls issuing to their figures from the mouths of the deceased. A year or two later Thomas Muschamp, a London merchant, asked for votive scrolls to be included on his brass (now lost) at St Mary Magdalen, Milk St, London.⁵⁵ In 1518 another Londoner, the mercer Christopher Rawson asked for the Trinity and accompanying scrolls to be shown on his memorial at All Hallows by the Tower, London.⁵⁶ On a range of fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century brasses, representations of the Trinity, resurrection imagery, symbols of the Evangelists and much else were included. From the third quarter of the fifteenth century a notable addition to the range of salvific imagery was the *transi*, or cadaver, tomb, which offered the commemorated a new perspective on the familiar themes of mortality and earthly decay. *Transi* tombs appear to have been particularly popular with members of the Lancastrian court. A notable brass in this idiom is that of John Brigge at Salle (Norfolk).⁵⁷

A willingness by the engravers to accommodate individual taste was also reflected in the inscriptions on brasses of the late middle ages. In general, the trend was for these to become longer. In the thirteenth century they had invariably been very brief. Usually they had taken the form of a request for prayers and no more; in many cases even the date of death was omitted. But later they became more elaborate. It was almost *de rigueur* for the date of death to be included, to allow the anniversary to be marked. Performance of good works was also noted. Henry Notingham's inscription at Holme-next-the-Sea (Norfolk) recorded that he and his wife built the church spire and choir, while John Mordon's at Emberton (Buckinghamshire) recalled his gift of books and ornaments to the church.⁵⁸ At Morley (Derbyshire) John Stathum's inscription recorded his donation of three bells to the church.⁵⁹ On gentry epitaphs a growing interest in genealogy and blood ties bore witness to the gentry preoccupation with lineage. The inscription on the brass of Sir Thomas Chaworth and his wife at Launde (Leicestershire), 1458, now lost, read like a book of the Old Testament: here lies Sir Thomas Chaworth, son and heir of William Chaworth and Alice his

⁵⁵ For both of these: Norris, *Monumental Brasses: The Craft*, 90.

⁵⁶ D'Elboux, 'Testamentary Brasses', 189–90. The brass was executed exactly as requested: C.G. Misselbrook, *The Monumental Brasses of All Hallows by the Tower* (London, 1953), 10.

⁵⁷ M.W. Norris, 'Later Medieval Monumental Brasses: An Urban Funerary Industry and its Representation of Death', in S. Bassett (ed.), *Death in Towns: Urban Responses to the Dying and Dead* (Leicester, 1992); P. King, 'The English Cadaver Tomb in the Late Fifteenth Century: Some Indications of a Lancastrian Connection', in J.H.M. Taylor (ed.), *Dies illa: Death in the Middle Ages* (Liverpool, 1984).

⁵⁸ *Monumental Brasses: The Portfolio Plates of the Monumental Brass Society*, no. 105; W. Lack, H.M. Stuchfield, P. Whittemore, *The Monumental Brasses of Buckinghamshire* (London, 1994), 77, 80.

⁵⁹ W. Lack, H.M. Stuchfield, P. Whittemore, *The Monumental Brasses of Derbyshire* (London, 1999), 146.

wife, who was daughter and heiress of Sir John Caltoft and cousin and heiress of Sir John Brett; and here also lies Isabella, wife of Thomas Chaworth, daughter and one of the heirs of Sir Thomas Aylesbury, son and heir of Thomas Aylesbury and Joan, his wife, who was the daughter of Ralph, Lord Basset; and the aforesaid Isabella was daughter of Katherine, Sir Thomas Aylesbury's wife, who was daughter and heiress of Sir Laurence Pabenharn and his wife, who was one of the daughters and coheiresses of John, Lord Engayne.⁶⁰ Particularly striking in this epitaph is the concern to identify the heiresses and the family's links with the higher nobility. Not dissimilar is the inscription on the brass of Sir Thomas Green at Green's Norton (Northamptonshire), 1462: here lies Sir Thomas Green, son and heir of Sir Thomas Green, by Philippa, daughter of Robert Lord Ferrers of Chartley, by his wife Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Lord Despenser; this Sir Thomas was the son and heir of Sir Thomas Green by his wife Mary, daughter of Richard Lord Talbot and his wife Ankarette, daughter and heiress of John, Lord Strange of Blackmere.⁶¹ In this epitaph, like that at Launde, the attention given to connections with the nobility is notable: perhaps because the deceased may have been unsure of his social position.⁶² It is evident that a considerable store of genealogical detail could be drawn on for the composition of these epitaphs. Before the thirteenth century this information was almost certainly transmitted in the memory of the family. Later, as literacy became more widespread, it was preserved in written form – in cartularies and monastic chronicles. It is possible that families regarded tomb epitaphs as evidence which could, if necessary, be cited in defence of property and title. But, whether or not this was the case, there can be little doubt that the main spur to their composition was the gentry's preoccupation with status, lineage and honour. This concern can be sensed in the ornate hexameters that sometimes adorned the grander late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century brasses. The verses on the brass of Reginald, Lord Cobham, 1403, at Lingfield (Surrey), for example, celebrate his fame, his honour and his lavish hospitality: all noble attributes.⁶³ Sometimes these hexameters associated the commemorated with a notable ancestor or ancestors. A good example was once provided by the hexameters on Edmund Ingolthorp's brass of 1456 at Burrough Green (Cambridgeshire):

Thomas Bradstone, Walter Poole, Burgh inde Johannes,
 Hiis militibus heres fuit ille venustus,
 Sponsavit Comitis Wyrcester ille sororem
 Anno milleno quater et CCCC quoque deno
 Ecce dies bina Septembris quando trina,
 Militis huius erat.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ J. Nichols, *History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*, 4 vols in 8 (London, 1795–1811), iii, i, 328.

⁶¹ J. Bridges, *The History and Antiquities of Northamptonshire*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1791), i, 242.

⁶² He was descended from a fourteenth-century chief justice of common pleas.

⁶³ J.W. Flower, 'Notices of the Family of Cobham of Sterborough Castle, Lingfield, Surrey', *Surrey Archaeological Collections*, ii (1862), 140.

⁶⁴ C.R. Manning, 'Monuments of the de Burgh and Ingoldsthorpe Families in Burgh Green Church, Cambridgeshire', *Archaeological Journal*, xxxiv (1877); Lack, Stuchfield and Whittimore, *Monumental Brasses of Cambridgeshire*, 15, 18.

In these verses the deceased was linked to a series of distinguished ancestors stretching back to the Gloucestershire lord Sir Thomas Bradeston, who had died almost a century before. The intention was obviously to appropriate the fame of these earlier men to the family name. Bradeston had been a celebrated war captain, a banneret and a royal counsellor, while de la Pole was a diplomat under Henry V.⁶⁵ The name of Worcester, the commemorated's brother-in-law, was invoked because he was a magnate and a friend of Edward IV. Association with the courtier nobility enhanced the family's repute.

By establishment of a linkage, then, between the apparatus of heraldic, emblematic and literary display and the status-defined range of effigy types, engravers could aim to satisfy their clients' aspirations to a commemorative style suited to their self-image. The tastes of almost every client could be accommodated. The humbler or more self-effacing patron could order an epitaph, or a shield of arms and epitaph, perhaps with a small figure. The richer patron could go for a grander composition with figures, shields, and canopy. For those whose tastes were more pietistic than worldly, there were less conventional brasses – cross brasses of one form or another, and brasses in which religious imagery predominated. For the seriously austere, by the fifteenth century there were *transi* tombs to remind them of the one certainty in life: death. While a strictly mechanistic relation between a brass and the taste of the person commemorated should not be posited – for some brasses were laid long after the commemorated's death⁶⁶ – it is hardly unreasonable, in the light of the evidence, to argue for the use of brasses and tombs as a source for the ambitions and concerns of those they commemorate. Sometimes these ambitions and concerns find a clear echo in the memorials. In England, this is most obviously the case with the tombs and brasses of the Cobham family. The Cobhams' monuments form an exceptionally informative series. Through a study of the composition, design and decorative motifs of the larger Cobham monuments it is possible to sense something of what funerary sculpture can teach the general historian.

The Cobhams were a lesser baronial line resident in south-eastern England. Two main sets of memorials to members of the family have come down to us, one at Cobham itself, in Kent, to the senior branch of the family and the other at Lingfield (Surrey) to the Cobhams of Sterborough. The two series communicate sharply different messages.⁶⁷ The emphasis in the series at Cobham is firmly on lineage, on the continuance of the family line. The reason for this was that the Cobhams of Cobham were faced with dynastic extinction. John, the 3rd Lord Cobham, who died in 1408, was the last of his line. His daughter and heiress Joan, the wife of Sir

⁶⁵ *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom*, ed. G.E. Cokayne and others, 13 vols in 14 (London, 1910–57), ii, 273; N.E. Saul, *Knights and Esquires: The Gloucestershire Gentry in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1981), 76–7; *History of Parliament: The House of Commons*, iv, 103–5.

⁶⁶ An extreme example is the brass of Sir John de Lisle at Thruxton (Hants). De Lisle died in 1407, but on stylistic grounds his brass can be dated to no earlier than c. 1425.

⁶⁷ For a more detailed discussion with references, see Saul, *Death, Art and Memory in Medieval England*.

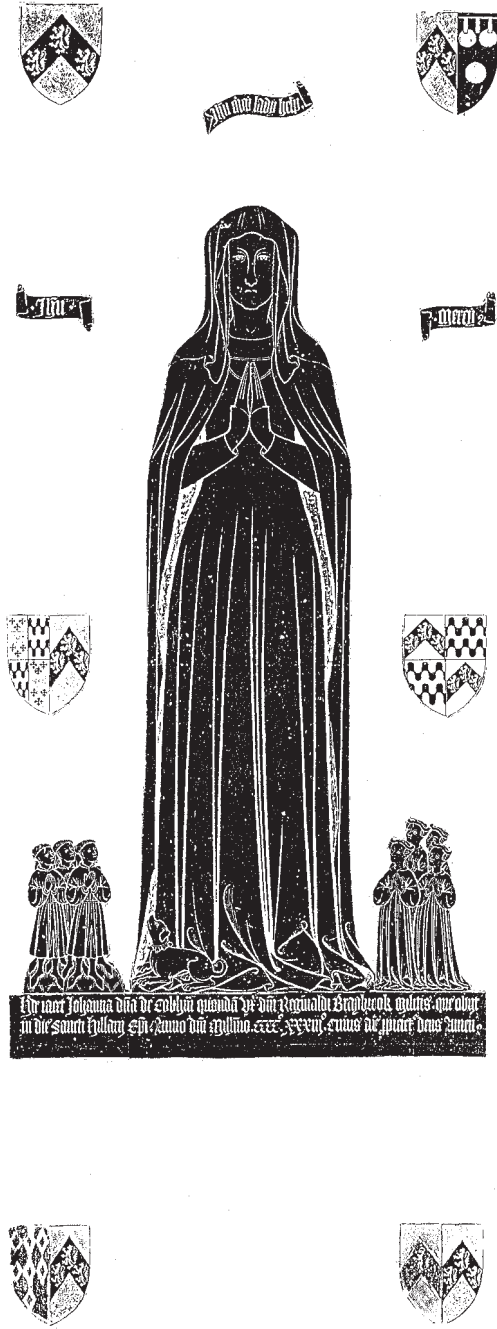


Plate 35. Brass of Joan, Lady Cobham, d. 1434, at Cobham, Kent

John de la Pole, failed to produce a male heir; and so likewise did his much-married granddaughter and heiress, also called Joan, who was subsumed into the Cobham identity. The brasses at Cobham bear visible witness to the family's disappointment. The brasses of Sir Reginald Braybrooke and Sir Nicholas Hawberk, two of Joan, the granddaughter's, five husbands, which were ordered by Joan herself, are among the earliest to show children; while Joan's own memorial of 1434 shows her as the fecund mother with a healthy brood of boys and girls whereas in fact she had no surviving male issue at all. (Plate 35) The brasses are poignant witnesses to the pain which the family felt at the disappointment of their hopes. The preoccupations of the Cobham monuments at Lingfield are very different. The Sterborough branch kept going in the male line for longer than their collateral kin. What worried the Sterborough branch was not so much threat of extinction but loss of status. Reginald, 1st Lord Cobham, a successful war captain under Edward III, had secured for his family a position in the peerage. However, his son and grandson failed to maintain the family's standing and they sank back into the gentry. Their monuments, for this reason, are notable for their bombast – for their assertion of a social position that the family was in danger of losing. Heraldry figures prominently: much more prominently than at Cobham. A square banner, the symbol of banneret status, is included on the brass of Eleanor, first wife of the third Reginald Cobham. (Plate 36) There is a very obvious striving after commemorative splendour. The massive tomb of the third Reginald (d. 1446), centre-stage in the chancel, was grossly disproportionate to the deceased's actual importance in the world. Decline in social status was compensated for by a self-consciously grandiose style in funerary sculpture.

Where it is possible, then, to study a multi-generational series of tombs together, as at Cobham and Lingfield, clear messages can be picked up about a family's preoccupations and ambitions. Generally, in such cases, the identity of the family can be seen to triumph over that of the individual. This outlook is particularly clear on brasses where children or other members of the family are shown. Here the commemorated is assigned a position in a genealogical sequence. It is tempting to see the history of late medieval funerary sculpture in one sense as witnessing a recovery of a sense of selfhood, even of individualism: to suppose that people regained a sense of their importance in this world after a period when it was their fate in the next that was stressed. This is a view which needs to be qualified somewhat. In late medieval funerary sculpture selfhood is invariably constructed in group rather than individual terms.⁶⁸ The deceased is seen primarily as belonging to a status or kin group.⁶⁹ A knight like Lord Cobham or Sir Thomas Chaworth is seen

⁶⁸ For discussion of this point, see P. Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (London, 1996), 102–12.

⁶⁹ For this reason, the distinction between male and female patronage of art and funerary sculpture made by C. Richmond ('The Visual Culture of Fifteenth-Century England', in A.J. Pollard (ed.), *The Wars of the Roses* (Basingstoke, 1995), 202–3) needs to be treated with caution. Women could be subsumed into a larger identity, as Joan, the Cobham heiress, was.



Plate 36. Brass of Eleanor, d. 1420, first wife of Sir Reginald Cobham, at Lingfield, Surrey

as the bearer of an ancient lineage, a lawyer like Sir John Juyn as a member of a profession, a clerk like Richard de Hakebourne as the representative of the first of the three estates. On very few memorials was the deceased seen as a unique human being, but more generally as a socially and culturally constructed entity. Image and text were geared to positioning his person in a system; and in medieval Christendom that system was the set of strategies for the afterlife which linked both the living and the dead in a relationship of mutual dependence.

Yet, while it was the convention of the age to construct identities in group terms, it is nonetheless indicative of individual self-assertion that so many people should have sought commemoration at all. In England from the mid fourteenth century the commemorative urge was spread particularly widely. Gentry and sub-gentry, chantry priests and chaplains, even ladies in waiting and serving men, sought a physical witness to their memory. The dominance of funerary sculpture achieved by brasses in this country appears unparalleled on the continent. Admittedly, comparisons between England and the continent are difficult because of heavier losses on the latter. But de Gaignier's late seventeenth-century drawings of French brasses afford some indication of the riches now lost. In his record of the contents of the major French churches de Gaignier records brasses to royalty, archbishops, noblemen, seigneurs, senior clerics and so on.⁷⁰ What he does not record, however, are small brasses to lesser folk – any equivalents of the little half figures to yeomen and lesser gentry so common in England. It is conceivable that the small effigial brass with a wide appeal may well have been a uniquely English phenomenon. Why this should have been so is by no means clear. A number of explanations are possible. One is that the separate inlay method used in England made for greater flexibility than the big rectangular plate engraved all over familiar on the continent: the needs of poorer clients could be more easily accommodated; the brass could be customised. Another possibility is that the commercialisation of the London-based workshops encouraged the formation of a particularly diverse market. The two big London *ateliers*, reaching out to all parts of the country, could serve all types of customer. Both suggestions may be part of the explanation. But neither by itself seems adequately to account for the popularity of the brass in England. Some further explanation is needed. It is tempting to wonder if there may have been a greater urge to funerary commemoration among the English. Conceivably, the burgeoning English gentry class, prosperous, confident and competitive, were keener to seek commemoration

⁷⁰ *Les tombeaux de la collection Gaignier, dessins d'archéologie du xvii^e siècle*, ed. J. Adhemar (Paris, 1974). The drawings are of monuments in varying forms – incised slabs, brasses, tombs in relief; however, the character of the memorial can usually be deduced. From Gaignier's record it is clear that memorials to civilians were certainly laid in France from the later fourteenth century. However, the majority of these memorials were incised slabs, and they commemorated administrators and members of the bourgeois elite: e.g. nos 757, 791, 1058. The only half-effigy recorded is a slab to a notary under a canopy: no. 803. In France and the Low Countries incised slabs were very much more popular than in England, where after 1300 they were employed chiefly in the midlands. Slabs were cheaper than brasses of equivalent size. All the same, the ones that Gaignier illustrates are deluxe products: they were not for the less well-off.

than their counterparts abroad. Perhaps the centralising policies of the crown, by drawing more of the king's subjects into an active political society, helped to stimulate an appetite for display. Certainly, those policies created the kind of closely knit society in which elite tastes could quickly be appropriated by those lower down. It may be that the study of brasses has something important to tell us about the social distinctiveness of English medieval society.

The Knights of the Bath: Dubbing to Knighthood in Lancastrian and Yorkist England*

Fionn Pilbrow

IN June 1464, Sir Ralph Grey, who had been holding Bamborough Castle against Edward IV, was defeated and the castle taken. He was brought before the king at Doncaster, where judgement was passed on him by John Tiptoft, earl of Worcester and Constable of England. The scene was recorded thus:

My lorde Erle of Worcestre, Connestable of Englonde, sitting in jugement, told hym jugement, and remambrid hym, saying unto hym; “Sir Rauf Grey, thou hast take the ordir of knyghthode of the Batthe, and any soe taking that ordir ought to kepe his faithe the whiche he makes; therefor remembre the the lawe!”¹

He was found guilty of having taken up arms against his ‘most natural sovereign Lorde, the whiche the wotest wele yave unto the suche trust, and in suche wise mynystred his grace unto the, that thou haddist his castels in the Northe partie to kepe’ and of having ‘betraied Sir John Asteley knyght, and brother of the gartier, the whiche remainethe in the hand of the kynges oure sovereign Lord enemyes in Fraunce’.² As a result the king

ordenned that thou shuldest have hadd thy sporys striken of by the hard heles, as was promysed at that time that he tooke of thy spurres; he said to yee, as y accustomed, that ‘And thou be not true to thy sovereign Lord, I shal smyte of thy sporys with this knyf herd by the helys’ and so shewne hym the maistre cooke redy to doo his office, with apron and his knyff.

Item, Sir Rauff Grey, the Kyng had ordenned here, thou maist see, the kyng of armes and heroudes, and thine own propre cote of armes, that whiche they shuld

* All of my research on this topic was undertaken under the supervision of Dr Christine Carpenter, to whom I owe a great debt of gratitude.

¹ *Warkworth's Chronicle for the First Thirteen Years of the Reign of King Edward the Fourth*, ed. J.O. Halliwell (Camden Society, 1st ser., x, 1839), 38. This account forms part of Halliwell's notes to the chronicle and is printed from College of Arms MS, L 9, fo. 119. The manuscript account is in the hand of Thomas Wriothesley, Garter King-of-Arms, 1505–34. See also BL Harleian MS 6069, fo. 61–61b.

² *Warkworth's Chronicle*, 38.

teere of thy body, and so thou shuldist as wel be disgraded of thy worshipp, noblesse and armes, as of the order of knyghthode; and also here is an oder cote of thin armes reversed, the which thou shuldest have werne of thy body, going to that dethe warde, for that belongethe aftyr the lawe.³

This final and great indignity to his arms, honour and family was spared on account of his 'noble grauntfader, the whiche suffrid trouble for the kynges moost noble predecesseurs'.⁴ Ultimately, Sir Ralph Grey was simply beheaded.

The judgement passed on Sir Ralph Grey was entirely correct as a matter of the law of arms, but this record does seem to make it clear that he was singled out in such a way because he had taken 'the ordir of knyghthode of the Batthe'.⁵ This article seeks to investigate who the Knights of the Bath were in late medieval England, and how and why they were created. This will, hopefully, illuminate two further areas: firstly, the interaction between the king and his chivalrous classes; and, secondly, the importance and potency of visual ceremony in this period. Ralph Grey's proposed degrading was as potent a visual symbol as his knighting must, as we shall see, have been.

The ritual bath, taken by an aspirant to knighthood on the eve of his dubbing, has a long pedigree in the story of the development of chivalry. It is afforded great prominence in the thirteenth-century descriptions of the stages in the ritual of making a knight given by numerous medieval chivalric and noble treatises such as the anonymous *Ordene de Chevalrie*, or Raimon Lull's *Libro de Caballera*.⁶ In fifteenth-century England, however, the use of this lengthy ceremony, which reflected clearly the fact that the martial, religious and courtly strands of chivalry had by this time become irreversibly intertwined, appears to have become a very particular and specifically royal occasion. It is in this period that we encounter for the first time references to those dubbed in this manner as having been admitted to the 'order of Knighthood of the Bath'. It is worth making unequivocally clear at this early stage that in the fifteenth century there was no 'Order of the Bath' in the same way as there was an Order of the Garter. The Order of the Bath, as we know it today, was founded by George I in 1725. The medieval Knights of the Bath were not a defined and limited brotherhood, but rather *all* those dubbed to knighthood using a particular ceremony. In this context the word 'order' was used by contemporaries in the same sense as it was so frequently used in the phrase 'the hyghe Order of Knyghthode'.⁷ Knighthood both saw itself, and was seen, as an order which, like the priesthood, demanded a lifetime of constant service, beginning with the oath taken,

³ *Warkworth's Chronicle*, 38.

⁴ *Warkworth's Chronicle*, 38.

⁵ *Warkworth's Chronicle*, 38.

⁶ *Ordene de Chevalerie*, in *Fabliaux et Contes des Poètes Français des XIe, XIIe, XIIIe, XIVe et XVe Siècles* (Paris, 1808), 63–4; Geoffroi de Charny, *Livre de Chevalerie*, in *Oeuvres de Froissart*, ed. K. de Lettenhove, vol. i, pt iii (Brussels, 1873), 514. In recent years, modern versions of both of these texts have been published: *Raoul de Hodenc, Le Roman des Eles and The Anonymous Ordene de Chevalerie*, ed. K. Busby (Amsterdam, 1983); *The Book of Chivalry of Geoffroi de Charny*, ed. R.W. Kacuper and E. Kennedy (Pennsylvania, PA, 1996).

⁷ *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory*, ed. E. Vinaver, 3 vols (Oxford, 1947), 829. All references to this

and the relationship entered into, at the ceremony of knighting. This terminology of the 'order' or 'office' of chivalry or knighthood, recurs all through the fifteenth century, in a wide variety of sources: in chivalric literature,⁸ in poetry from both inside and outside the court,⁹ in the chronicles,¹⁰ in the exhortations of Caxton,¹¹ in the minutes of the Privy Council,¹² and in the Rolls of Parliament.¹³ It is in this sense that the Knights of the Bath were members of an order.

Before entering on this main topic, some brief introductory remarks about dubbing to knighthood are needed. The act and ceremony of dubbing to knighthood represented the formal acceptance both of an esquire into the order of knighthood, and of the order of knighthood by that esquire, encapsulating a commitment by the esquire to live in remembrance of, and in accordance with, the order of chivalry.¹⁴ It was in theory, therefore, not a ceremony to be undertaken lightly: both Malory's King Arthur and Raimon Lull express worries about knighting someone 'yonge and tendir of ayge',¹⁵ for 'a knyzt in his enfancy he may neuer so moche remembre that whiche he promyseth to thordre of chyualrye'.¹⁶ Dubbing to knighthood was one of the defining moments in a knight's chivalric career. There was in practice, however, no set age at which knighting was appropriate, for there was no single set of circumstances under which knightings were carried out. Dubbing to knighthood could act as a coming of age, as a recognition or conferral of status or authority, as a recognition of or incentive to martial prowess, or as a recognition of service.

Within the ceremony of dubbing to knighthood, there were three key variables: when and where an esquire was knighted, and by whom. The occasion and location can be divided into two categories: martial and non-martial. Knightings at the

work, in which the page numbers run consecutively across the volumes, have been given by page number only.

- 8 *Pageant of the Birth, Life and Death of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, K.G., 1389–1439*, ed. Viscount Dillon and W.H. St John Hope (London, 1914), 5; *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyualrye Translated and Printed by William Caxton*, ed. A.T.P. Byles (Early English Text Society (EETS), orig. ser., clxxxix, 1932, corrected reissue, 1937), 8.
- 9 See, for example: *Hoccleve's Works*, ed. F.J. Furnivall and I. Gollancz, 3 vols (EETS, extra ser., lxi, lxii and lxxxii, 1892–1925), i, 14; *Twenty-Six Political and Other Poems*, ed. J. Kail (EETS, orig. ser., cxxiv, 1904), 13.
- 10 See, for example: *The Brut or Chronicles of England*, ed. F.W.D. Brie, 2 vols (EETS, orig. ser., cxxxi and cxxxvi, 1906–8), ii, 322; *The First English Life of King Henry the Fifth*, ed. C.L. Kingsford (Oxford, 1911), 81.
- 11 *The Prologues and Epilogues of William Caxton*, ed. W.J.B. Crotch (EETS, orig. ser., clxxvi, 1928), 82.
- 12 *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England*, ed. N.H. Nicolas, 7 vols (Record Commission, London, 1834–37), i, 324.
- 13 *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, vi, 532.
- 14 For example: 'et puis ycils chevaliers leur doivent donner la colée en signe que a tousjours mais leur doie souvenir de celle ordre de chevalerie qu'il on receue et de y faire les oeuvres qui a cest ordre de chevalerie pèvent appartenir' (*Livre de Chevalerie*, 515).
- 15 *Malory*, 46.
- 16 *The Book of the Ordre of Chyualry Translated and Printed by William Caxton*, ed. A.T.P. Byles (EETS, orig. ser., clxviii, 1926), 56.

beginning of a campaign,¹⁷ before a battle,¹⁸ after a battle or feat of arms,¹⁹ or at the successful conclusion of a campaign,²⁰ remained both common and especially honourable in the late middle ages. The new knight was associated with the martial honour of the occasion. Non-martial knightings tended to happen on great feast days and at major court ceremonies.²¹ On these occasions, it was usual for a number, sometimes a large number, of young men to be knighted. It seems clear that from a very early time these 'mass knightings' were occasions for elaborate ritual: the first account which gives any detail, John of Marmoutiers' description of the knighting of Geoffrey the Fair of Anjou, with thirty others, at Rouen in 1127 makes this clear.²² The famous feast of the Swans in 1306, when Edward I knighted his eldest son and up to three hundred others at Whitsun is another early example.²³ And importantly, as part of the ceremony on both of these occasions, the esquires took a ritual bath before their knighting. In both peace and war it was desirable to be knighted on occasions of great military, chivalric or ceremonial import, the gravity of the moment reflecting the gravity of the ceremony, and contributing to the honour of the participants.

As important was the identity of the giver of knighthood. The knight conferring knighthood and the esquire receiving it were linked together in a number of ways. The status, honour and prowess of the administering knight reflected on the honour of the recipient: this is why Arthur and Lancelot are repeatedly sought out by young knights to administer knighthood.²⁴ However, in addition to this, the knight conferring knighthood and the esquire receiving it entered into a relationship. The

¹⁷ Henry V dubbed knights on landing in Normandy in both 1415 and 1417 (*The First English Life of King Henry the Fifth*, ed. C.L. Kingsford (Oxford, 1911), 33; *Brut*, ii, 383).

¹⁸ Boucicaut, the Constable of France, 'the rather to encourage the harte of younge lords and gentlemen' made more than six hundred knights before Agincourt (*First English Life*, 56). Similarly, Lancelot and Cadore made knights before engaging the Romans (*Malory*, 241). See also: M.H. Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven and London, 1984), 79–80.

¹⁹ Edward IV made knights after Towton and Tewkesbury (W.A. Shaw, *The Knights of England*, 2 vols (London, 1906), ii, 13–15), instances which are recorded in the Paston letters (*Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century*, ed. N. Davis, 2 vols (Oxford, 1971–76), i, 165, and ii, 592–4). Henry IV knighted some of the successful English esquires after the tournament against the Hainaulters (*Brut*, ii, 369–70). See also: R. Barber, 'Chivalry and the *Morte Darthur*', in E. Archibald and A.S.G. Edwards (eds), *Companion to Malory* (Cambridge, 1996), 22.

²⁰ Richard, duke of Gloucester, made knights on conclusion of a treaty with the Scots in 1482 (Shaw, *Knights*, ii, 17–18).

²¹ Keen notes the importance of knightings at the Holy Sepulchre, which naturally retained great honour and standing, but they stand beyond the remit of this study (Keen, *Chivalry*, 78–9).

²² Keen, *Chivalry*, 64–5.

²³ C. Bullock-Davies, *Menestrellorum Multitudo: Minstrels at a Royal Feast* (Cardiff, 1978), xix–xxi; N. Denholm-Young, *History and Heralds, 1254 to 1310: A Study of the Historical Value of the Rolls of Arms* (Oxford, 1965), 48–9; N. Denholm-Young, *Collected Papers* (Cardiff, 1969), 124–7; J. Anstis, *Observations Introductory to an Historical Essay upon the Knighthood of the Bath* (London, 1725), App., 6 (N.B. the page numbering begins at 1 again in the Appendix); *Medieval Pageant: Writhe's Garter Book: The Ceremony of the Bath and the Earldom of Salisbury Roll*, ed. A. Wagner, N. Barker and A. Payne (Roxburghe Club, London, 1993), 4. These last two show that a bath was involved, which Denholm-Young doubted (*Collected Papers*, 127 n. 3).

²⁴ For example: *Malory*, 46–7, 100, 297, 611, 854. See also B. Kennedy, *Knighthood in the Morte Darthur* (Woodbridge, 1985), 30–1.

dubber, who must 'haue in hym self the vertue & ordre of chyualry', vouched for the virtue and honour of the esquire he was dubbing: thus to knight someone lacking in virtue dishonoured the dubber.²⁵ Conversely, unchivalric behaviour by a knight caused him 'to dishonoure the noble kyng that made the knyght',²⁶ while exemplary conduct reflected 'grete worshippe of Knyghthod, to youre self, and to hym, that made yow Knyght'.²⁷ The conferral of knighthood established on the part of the receiver a personal loyalty and a debt of gratitude and honour towards the giver.²⁸ Malory, whose work is such a valuable source because of the litany of changes he made to his sources to make them relevant to his time, repeatedly emphasises the personal bond that is generated. In the 'Great Tournament', Gareth 'woll ryde unto my lorde sir Launcelot for to helpe hym whatsomever me betdye. For he ys the same man that made me knyght'.²⁹ It is because Arthur is the knight who dubbed him and not because he is his king, that Lancelot repeatedly refuses to take up arms against him in the final collapse of the Round Table.³⁰ Indeed, the bond is perceived by Malory to be so powerful that he glosses over Arthur's knighting, noting only that he was 'made knyghte of the best man that was there', unusually leaving a character anonymous.³¹ With this in mind, it is interesting to note that Henry V was knighted by Richard II: perhaps this played some role in Henry's decision on ascending the throne to rebury Richard as Richard had desired.³²

Turning to the medieval Knights of the Bath, the historian is faced with significant problems. Modern knowledge of the subject both begins and ends with *Observations Introductory to an Historical Essay upon the Knighthood of the Bath* published in 1725 by John Anstis, Garter King-of-Arms. All subsequent work relies almost entirely on Anstis's research.³³ However, Anstis openly admits that he bases his work not on a comprehensive study of the subject but on evidence that cropped up in the research he did for his work on the Garter,³⁴ and Shaw, in his encyclopaedic reference work *The Knights of England*, notes that 'here and there, however, I have gone

²⁵ *Ordre of Chyualry*, 72–3, and see also 56–66.

²⁶ *Malory*, 1122.

²⁷ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 106.

²⁸ See, for example, *Ordene de Chevalerie*, 69.

²⁹ *Malory*, 1110. Arthur later praises him for this behaviour (*Malory*, 1114).

³⁰ *Malory*, 1058, 1187, 1215, 1231, 1249.

³¹ *Malory*, 16; Kennedy, *Knighthood*, 32–3.

³² The knighting is recorded in Irish sources: Shaw, *Knights*, i, intro. lx (N.B. the page numbering for both the preface and the introduction runs i, ii, iii etc.). Gillespie offers this debt of bond of honour as the reason for the reburial (J.L. Gillespie, 'Richard II: Chivalry and Kingship', in Gillespie (ed.), *The Age of Richard II* (Stroud, 1997), 128–9), and while this seems to be entirely reasonable as at least part of the motivation, it must be noted that contemporary sources do not explicitly offer it as an explanation.

³³ N.H. Nicolas, *History of the Orders of Knighthood of the British Empire*, 4th edn, 4 vols (London, 1842), iii, 1–27 (N.B. the page numbering starts from 1 again in the section on Bath); Shaw, *Knights*, i, preface, ii, intro., x–xviii; J.H.T. Perkins, *The Most Honourable Order of the Bath*, 2nd edn (London, 1920), 1–31; J.C. Risk, *The History of the Order of the Bath and its Insignia* (London, 1972), 5–7.

³⁴ Anstis, *Bath*, 44. That work is, of course, J. Anstis, *Register of the Most Noble Order of the Garter*, 2 vols (London, 1724).

behind Anstis to the original rolls and wardrobe accounts, with results which convince me that there is a rich harvest awaiting the man who will dare to do over again the work which Anstis did'.³⁵ Thus our knowledge of when ceremonies were held is demonstrably incomplete: the *Brut* records that two days before the coronation of Henry VI's wife, Margaret, in 1445, forty-six knights of the Bath were made, but this ceremony is not recorded in any of the published histories of the Bath.³⁶ Our records of who was created a Knight of the Bath are even more grievously lacking: the little we do know is summarised by Shaw.³⁷ His list recognises that on some occasions we are not sure how many knights were made, and that, overall, we only know the name (or part of the name) of roughly 40 per cent of the Knights we believe to have been created between 1399 and 1485.³⁸ Furthermore, there are errors in this list. For example, under 1426 Shaw includes a John Cornwall. However, Sir John Cornwall was a long-serving Knight of the Garter with a distinguished record of service in France, and his only son, John, was already dead, having been killed at the siege of Meaux in 1421.³⁹ As the list of summons preserved in *Foedera* makes clear,⁴⁰ Cornwall received a summons on behalf of John Fitzalan, later earl of Arundel, who was a minor and whose wardship was in his hands,⁴¹ in the same manner that Joan Beaufort, countess of Westmorland, received writs for her two sons, William and George, and for Richard, later duke of York, whose wardship she had received in her husband's will in October 1425.⁴² There remains a large amount of primary research to be done on this subject, and so the conclusions offered here are acknowledged, in that respect, to be preliminary, though I do believe the role played by the Bath is still clear.

The factors that had the greatest impact on the honour and worth of a knighting were the occasion and the personnel. In late medieval England, the ceremony of the Bath was incontrovertibly a royal occasion. It was used to mark events of the first rank of importance to the king, and thus to the realm: his knighting, his coronation, the coronation of his wife or the knighting and investiture of his eldest son.⁴³ That

³⁵ Shaw, *Knights*, i, preface, ii.

³⁶ *Brut*, ii, 489.

³⁷ Shaw, *Knights*, i, 109–301 records the names of all known knights of the Bath up to 1904.

³⁸ Shaw, *Knights*, i, 127–41. We are unsure of numbers in 1429 and 1475 (Shaw, *Knights*, i, 132, 136). There is, however, no recognition of the fact that there were 'circiter quinquaginta sive plures' Knights of the Bath made at Henry V's coronation (Anstis, *Bath*, App., 24; Shaw, *Knights*, i, 129–30).

³⁹ G.E. Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom* (hereafter *Complete Peerage*), ed. V. Gibbs et al., 13 vols in 14 (London, 1910–59), v, 253–54.

⁴⁰ *Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae etc.*, ed. T. Rymer, 10 vols (Hagae Comitibus, 1745, repr., Farnborough, 1967), IV, iv, 121.

⁴¹ *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1422–29*, 291; *Calendar of Close Rolls, 1422–29*, 276; *Calendar of Fine Rolls, 1413–22*, 420; *Calendar of Fine Rolls, 1422–30*, 63.

⁴² P.A. Johnson, *Duke Richard of York, 1411–60* (Oxford, 1988), 1.

⁴³ Knighting – 1426; Coronation – 1399, 1413, 1429, 1461, 1483; Wife's coronation – 1445; Knighting of son – 1475. This last instance is paralleled by the knighting of Alexander the Orphan, on the occasion of which 'twenty of the grettyste jantylmennes sunnys and the beste borne men of that contrey whyche sholde be made knyghtes' are summoned to receive knighthood at the same

the most important events in a king's life were marked by the creation of knights, and indeed that his knighting and the knighting of his eldest son both qualified as one of those important events, tells us a lot about the relationship between the king and chivalry, and the exercise of chivalrous kingship. Equally important is what this tells us about the situation for those receiving knighthood. Given that the worth of a knighting was affected by the chivalric importance of the occasion on which it was held, it is clear that the esquires who were created Knights of the Bath were afforded a great honour.

With these observations in mind, it is necessary to describe in some detail what this elaborate ceremony actually consisted of, and what its components signified. The second of these points is important, since it is often asked how far the emphasis in chivalric manuals on heavy, symbol-laden ceremonial related to actual practice: the answer, in this instance, seems to be very closely. For the purposes of description, we are fortunate in the survival, in a number of manuscripts, of a very detailed account of the fifteenth-century ceremony. The oldest of these has been dated to c. 1430.⁴⁴ It is clear that its detail aroused widespread interest among both the nobility and the gentry: records of the ceremony (based on or related to it) appear both in John Astley's book and John Paston's 'Grete Boke'.⁴⁵ In addition, we have in *Writhe's Garter Book* (compiled 1484–88) a pictorial series (some of which are reproduced here) illustrating each successive stage of the ceremonial, a marvellously vivid evocation of the ritual, pageantry and display of this great chivalrous and social occasion.⁴⁶

The future Knights of the Bath were summoned personally by writ directed either personally to them, their fathers or their guardians. This is in contrast to those knighted in the ordinary course of events in response to writs sent to the sheriff for general proclamation across the country. To take an example, two sets of writs were sent out before Edward V's abortive coronation of 1483. Writs dated 20 May were issued to all the sheriffs of England, obliging all those with lands to an annual value of 40 *livres* to take up the degree of knighthood on 8 June, two weeks before the proposed coronation.⁴⁷ Different writs dated 5 June were sent individually to a closed list of some fifty persons, 'charging you to prepare, and furnish yourself to

time, and a large ceremony, feasts and jousts are held (*Malory*, 636). The knightings of 1418 and 1421 were both held on St George's Day, the day of the annual feast of the Order of the Garter. It is not immediately obvious what occasion the knightings of 1400 and 1449 were commemorating.

⁴⁴ MS Cotton Nero D, ii, fos 259–60. See *Medieval Pageant: Writhe's Garter Book: The ceremony of the Bath and the Earldom of Salisbury Roll*, ed. Wagner, Barker and Payne, 5 n. 4, 69–74, for a reproduction of this text and other early versions. Quotations here are taken from a version preserved in MS Cotton Nero C, ix, fo. 168b, printed by Anstis (*Anstis, Bath*, App., 99–106). See also: Nicholas Upton, *De Studio Militari*, ed. E. Bysse (London, 1654), 8–10; Jacobus de Cessolis, *The Game of Chess, translated and printed by William Caxton, c. 1483* (London, 1976), 36–7.

⁴⁵ Viscount Dillon, 'On a MS Collection of Ordinances of Chivalry of the Fifteenth Century, Belonging to Lord Hastings', *Archaeologia*, 2nd ser., vii (1900), 67–9; G.A. Lester, *Sir John Paston's 'Grete Boke'* (Woodbridge, 1984), 80–5.

⁴⁶ Fos 53v–65r of the original MS in the collection of the Duke of Buccleuch: reproduced in the edition for the Roxburghe Club, ed. Wagner *et al.*, cited above, n. 44.

⁴⁷ *Foedera*, V, iii, 129.

receive the noble ordure of knighthood at our Coronation . . . commanding you to be here at oure Toure of London four Days afore the said Coronation'.⁴⁸ The Knights of the Bath would be knighted the day, or sometimes two days, before the occasion (be it a coronation or some other such ceremony), as opposed to two weeks before. Indeed, if it were a coronation, the Knights of the Bath would ride in front of the king in the procession to Westminster Abbey.

The esquire who was to be knighted, on arrival at the Court, would be met by the Steward or Chamberlain, or, in their absence, others of the King's Household officers, such as the marshals and ushers. (Plate 37) At this stage he was assigned 'two worshipful Squyers wyse, and wele noryshed in curtesy, and expert in the deedes of Knyghthood', to 'be governours to hym'.⁴⁹ These esquires were royally appointed and operated 'by the Kyngs commaundment'.⁵⁰ In the event that the aspirant knight arrived before dinner, which was the usual course of events as Edward V's demand that they arrive at least four days before the coronation indicates, he was required to serve the king at dinner, bearing either water or a dish of the first course. By this he symbolically took leave 'of servyce of Squyers'.⁵¹ Thereafter, he was led to his chamber by his governor-esquires, with nothing more required of him that day until evening.

In the evening, the governors sent for the Barber, an office held by the Serjeant of the Ewery, and required him to prepare a bath 'withinne and withoute wrapped with linnen cloth clere, and whyte, and covered with thycke Carpettes, or Mantelles, for colde of the nyght'.⁵² The esquire would then have his hair and beard cut by the Barber. That done, the Governors went to the 'kyнге, and to hym say thus: Mooste myghty Prince, oure soverayn Lord, loo hit wexeth nere unto the evyn, and oure Maister is redy unto the Bathe, whanne it pleaseth unto your royall mageste'.⁵³ Thereupon the king would order his Chamberlain to proceed to the chamber of the esquire, accompanied by the 'mooste worthy, and mooste wyse Knyghtes, that been there present, to thentent, that they shall the same Squyer truly counseyle, enforme, and teche wysely of the Ordre of Knyghthod'.⁵⁴ This group was attended by heralds, 'mynstrelles, syngynge and daunsynge' and 'other yonge Sqyers of the Housholde'.⁵⁵ When the governors were alerted to the impending arrival of the group by the minstrels' music, they made 'naked theyr Maister',⁵⁶ and put him in the Bath. (See plate VII) The Bath signified a cleansing of the esquire's sins.⁵⁷ It was, you could say, his baptism into the Order of Knighthood. On arrival at the door of the Chamber, the minstrels fell silent, and the Chamberlain and the other experienced knights

⁴⁸ *Foedera*, V, iii, 131.

⁴⁹ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 99.

⁵⁰ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 106.

⁵¹ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 99. An esquire should serve 'for otherwyse shold he not knowe the noblesse of the seynory when he shold be a knyght' (*Ordre of Chyualtry*, 21).

⁵² Anstis, *Bath*, App., 99.

⁵³ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 99.

⁵⁴ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 99.

⁵⁵ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 99.

⁵⁶ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 99.

⁵⁷ *Ordene de Chevalerie*, 63; *Livre de Chevalerie*, 514; Jacobus de Cessolis, *The Game of Chess*, 36.



Plate 37. The esquire is welcomed as he arrives at court to receive the order of knighthood. From Writhe's Garter Book. Reproduced by permission of His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch

entered 'prevely, withoute noyse, unto the chambre of the seyd Squyere'.⁵⁸ This group would 'everich to other . . . do reverence and worshipp' and decide which of them would be the 'fyrste for to counsell the Squyer in the Bathe, of the Ordre [of knighthood]'.⁵⁹ The first of the experienced knights would then approach the Bath, and in a quiet voice counsel the aspirant knight as follows:

Right dere brother, grete whorshippe be this Ordre unto yow, And Almighty God yeve yow the praysynge of all Knyghthod; Lo this is the Ordre; Be ye stronge in the feith of holy Chirche and Wydowes, and Maydones oppressed releve, as right commaundith, yeve ye evrych his owne, with all thy mynde, above all thyngge love and drede God; And above all other erthly thynges love the Kyng thy Sovrayn Lord, hym, and his right defende unto thy power, And before all worldly thyngis put hym in worshipp, and thyngs that be not to be taken beware to begynne; etc etc.⁶⁰

Having given his advice, the 'Knight Counseylour', in an act all the more reminiscent of a baptism, 'shall take in his hande water of the Bathe, and shall putte it upon

⁵⁸ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 100.

⁵⁹ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 100.

⁶⁰ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 100.

the shoulders of the Sqyuer, and take his leve'.⁶¹ Each of the experienced knights present would go through the same process offering advice to the youngster. Once all the knights had left, the esquire could get out of his Bath, and lie on his bed to dry. The bed signified the repose of those who had successfully battled with sin, and that the Knight could win a bed in Paradise himself through his knighthood.⁶² Once dry the esquire would warmly clothe himself, and make his way to the Chapel, wearing over his clothing 'a cape of black russet, with longe sleeves, and the hoode sewed unto the cape, in manere of an hermyte'.⁶³ The esquire would be led to the chapel by the group of experienced knights, heralds, young Household esquires and playing minstrels. Once in the chapel, there would be 'ordeyned spyces, and wyne for the Knyghtes and Sqyers', whereafter the esquire would silently convey his thanks to all his counsellors for 'theyr labour, and worshippes, that they have doon unto hym', and would turn his attention to the vigil.⁶⁴

The esquire, accompanied only by his Governor-esquires, the officers of arms and a watchman, remained silent in the Chapel all night in prayer and 'praysynge of God, the blyssed vyrgne Marie his Madir [of] holy Cherche, and the Ordre of Knighthode'.⁶⁵ (Plate 38) At daybreak, a priest would come, and the esquire would be confessed and hear mass, taking communion. Throughout this there are complicated rules governing whether or not the aspirant knight should have his hood up or down (depending on which part of the service had been reached) and on whether the esquire himself or one of his Governors should be holding the taper. Finally a point was reached when the aspirant knight offered the taper and a penny, 'the taper to the worshippe of God And the peny to the worship of hym, that shall make hym knight'.⁶⁶

His religious duties performed, the esquire was allowed to return to his bed to rest following his sleepless night, though his bedding was greatly improved with 'coverture of cloth of Gold, called Siglyten . . . lyned with blewe cardé'.⁶⁷ This expensive cloth was provided by the king. At the appropriate juncture, the Governors would repair to the king 'and seye to him thus, Moste victorious Prynce, whan that it lykith unto youre high Mageste, oure Master shall awake'.⁶⁸ On the king's command, the esquire would be revisited by the experienced knights, heralds, Household esquires and minstrels, who would wake him, clothe him and bring him before the king. The clothing process, however, was far from simple and was redolent with significance and symbolism. The knights, in order of prowess, would put an item of clothing onto the aspirant knight, 'the moste worthy, and moste wyse', leading the way

61 Anstis, *Bath*, App., 100.

62 *Ordene de Chevalerie*, 64; *Livre de Chevalerie*, 514.

63 Anstis, *Bath*, App., 100.

64 Anstis, *Bath*, App., 100.

65 Anstis, *Bath*, App., 101.

66 Anstis, *Bath*, App., 102.

67 Anstis, *Bath*, App., 102.

68 Anstis, *Bath*, App., 102.

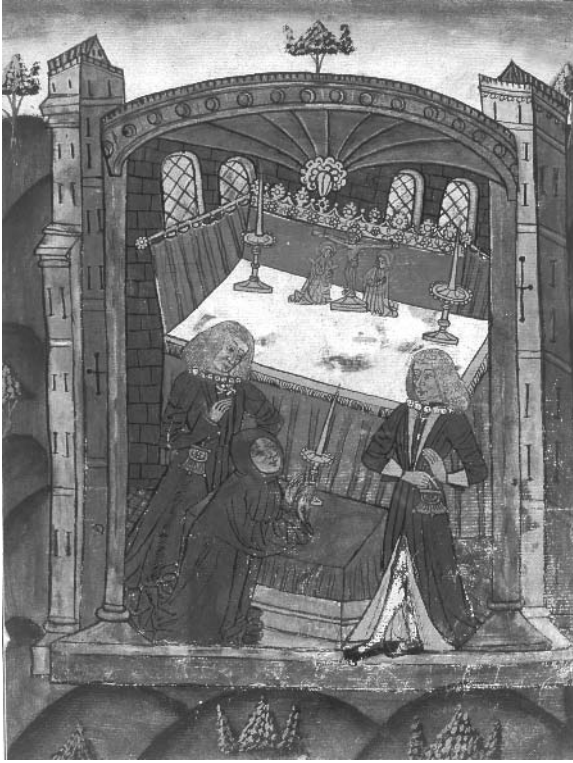


Plate 38. The esquire kneels to pray during his vigil in the chapel. From Writhe's Garter Book. Reproduced by permission of His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch

with the shirt.⁶⁹ Piece by piece, the aspirant knight was dressed, in the appropriate knightly clothing, every item having its significance.⁷⁰

The aspirant knight, his Governors and the experienced knights, accompanied by heralds and minstrels would ride to the King's Hall. The esquire's horse would be bedecked in specifically assigned accoutrements, predominantly coloured black and white, and he would be preceded by 'a yonge gentyll Squyer' who

shall bere the swerd of the Squyer; the poynte downward, with spores hangyng upon the Swerd, And the Swerd shall have a whyte scabard . . . and the yonge gentyll Squyer shall holde the swerde by the poynte.⁷¹

The spurs denoted the ardour, courage, swiftness and diligence that the knight would employ in the performance of his duty. The sword, the quintessence of knighthood, stood for chivalry and justice, the twin-edged nature of a knight's duty.⁷²

The party was greeted at the King's Hall by the marshals and ushers, and the aspi-

⁶⁹ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 102.

⁷⁰ *Ordene de Chevalerie*, 65–9; *Livre de Chevalerie*, 514–15; *Ordre of Chyualry*, 76–7.

⁷¹ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 103.

⁷² *Ordene de Chevalerie*, 66–7; *Livre de Chevalerie*, 515; *Ordre of Chyualry*, 76–7.

rant knight and his entourage would then await the king in the hall. When the king arrived, he asked for the sword and spurs which the Chamberlain would take from the aspirant knight and present to the king. The king would then command 'oon of the moste worthy that standille aboute' to put a spur onto the right heel of the aspirant knight.⁷³ 'And by the Kyngs commaundment, that lord knelynge on the oon kne, shall take the Squyer by the right leg, and putte hys foote upon his kne, and shall putte the spore upon his hele, and shall make a crosse upon the kne of the Squyer, and shall kysse it'.⁷⁴ The process was repeated for the left spur.⁷⁵ Finally the King, 'takyng the Swerd in his handes, shall gyrde therwith the Squyer (see plate X); Thanne shall the Squyere lyft up his armes on high, and the Kyng shall put his armes about the nekke of the Squyer, and lyftyng up his right hande, he shall smyte the Squyer in the necke, seyeng thus. *Be ye a good Knyght*, kyssyng him'.⁷⁶ This was the formal dubbing, the *collée* that aimed to ensure that the knight never forgot the order of knighthood nor the man who made him knight.⁷⁷ This done, the newly dubbed knyght would return to the Chapel, accompanied by the 'noble and wyse knyghtes',⁷⁸ where he removed his sword and offered it, with prayers and devotions, to God.

Outside the Chapel the Master Cook would be waiting, knife in hand, to cut off the newly dubbed knight's spurs and to take them as his fee. (See plate VIII) This served as a warning, a reminder. For if that knight, like Sir Ralph Grey, 'do aftyr any thyng that be defawte and reproof unto the Ordre of Kyghthod; The Maister Cooke thanne with a grete knyif, with which he dresseth his Messes, shall smyte of his spores from his heles, And therfore in Remembrance of this thyng, the spores of a new Knyght in order takynge, shalbe fee unto the Maister Cooke'.⁷⁹

Once this potent aide-memoire was completed, the new knight was taken into Hall and allowed, for the first time, to sit at the table of knights and be served as a knight, in contrast to his earlier waiting at table: another powerful visual statement of his changed status. However, he was not allowed in this first meal actually to eat or drink anything, supposedly mirroring the restraint shown by a bride on the day of her marriage.⁸⁰

Once the king rose, the new knight was permitted to return to his chamber and eat. At this stage the knights, esquires and minstrels took their leave, and the kings-of-arms and the heralds received their fees, which comprised the knight's clothing and array and a monetary fee. His clothing given away, the new knight was,

⁷³ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 104.

⁷⁴ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 104.

⁷⁵ Anstis recorded that the tombs of Sir John Norton and Sir John Legh showed both these men, knighted in 1501, with crosses on their knees for this very reason. The tomb of Sir John Norton in Wath, York., is no more and the pictorial representations of him and his wife in Additional MS 45131, fos 94–95b, do not show crosses on the knees. The memorial to Sir John Legh in St Mary's, Addington, that survives sadly also does not show crosses on the knees.

⁷⁶ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 104. These are the same words that Arthur uses to knight Torre (*Malory*, 100).

⁷⁷ *Ordene de Chevalerie*, 69; *Livre de Chevalerie*, 515.

⁷⁸ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 104.

⁷⁹ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 104.

⁸⁰ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 105.

of course, in need of a new outfit. The 'noble newe Knyght anoon shalbe arayed with robe of blewe with strayte sleeves, And shall have upon the lyft shuldere, a white lace of Sylk hangynge'.⁸¹ Froissart described the apparel at the knightings that accompanied Henry IV's coronation thus: 'than had they longe cotes with strayte sleeves, furred with mynyver lyke prelates, with whyte laces hangynge on their shulders'.⁸² The *Great Chronicle of London* also remarks on these robes, this time at Edward IV's coronation: the Knights of the Bath were 'in long blew Gownys with tarsellys of Whyte sylk upon theyr lyfft shulders, and hodys of the same blewe cloth of theyr gownys made lyke pryystys hodys and so sprad upon theyr shulders'.⁸³ The 'double Cordon of white Silk, to which white Tassels were pendant' was to remain hanging until he 'gete hym som name of worshippe by deservynge, by wytnesse of worthy Knyghtes, and Squyers, Kynges, outhere Herawdes of Armes, And trewe Herawdes clerely theraftyr reported: Which reporte moste entere into the eares of the worthy prynce, which hath made hym Knyght, or of som other, or elles of some noble Lady for to take away the lace fro the shulder'.⁸⁴ (See plate IX) The romantic and courtly roots for chivalry meant that there was still an important role for the lady who could be served. The final picture in the series (which is reprinted here) depicts this lace being removed. An opportunity to do this was rapidly presented to the knight, for tournaments were usually held a few days after the ceremony. For example, in 1445 after the knightings and the coronation of Queen Margaret, Henry VI's bride, the king 'iij dayes after, hold open Iustes and revell within the seintwary [Westminster], of lordes, knyghtes and other that wold com at the reverence of this fest royal'.⁸⁵ As the conclusion approached, the newly made knight was brought before the king, and took his leave of the king, saying 'Moost drad and moost myghty prynce of my lytll power and of what that I may I thanke yow of all the worshippes curtesies, and goodnesse, which ye have doon unto me'.⁸⁶ Finally, the Governor-esquires would take their leave of the newly made knight, begging his pardon for any negligence on their part.

It was undeniably a long, drawn-out and elaborate ceremony, but it was commensurate with the importance of the occasion, both in the lives of those dubbed, and in the chivalric and monarchical career of the king. It was, however, also an expensive ceremony for both the king and the Knight of the Bath.

For the king it was, of course, part of a wider celebration: a coronation, a knighting, a marriage or the like, which would of itself entail elaborate ceremonial. The court would be at its most splendid and majestic. Jousts and tourneys would be held for a number of days after the ceremony at the king's expense. In addition to all the general expenses, the king had more particular duties towards the Knights of the Bath. The full list is too long and detailed to go into here. The king provided some

⁸¹ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 105.

⁸² *The Chronicle of Froissart, translated out of French by Sir John Bouchier, Lord Berners, anni 1523–25*, ed. W.P. Ker, 6 vols (London, 1901–1903), vi, 380.

⁸³ *The Great Chronicle of London*, ed. A.H. Thomas and I.D. Thornley (London, 1938), 197.

⁸⁴ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 105.

⁸⁵ *Brut*, ii, 489.

⁸⁶ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 106.

cloth and mantles for the bath, notably the cloth of gold known as 'Siglyton' (or sometimes 'Racamatz'). He provided the blue robes with straight sleeves and white silk tassels. He could also provide spurs, gloves, girdles, stockings, a saddle and bridle: all of a specified quality and quality. Furthermore, the king was required, as ever, to demonstrate his largesse, giving freely to the Kings-of-Arms, heralds, pursivants, minstrels and other attendants. Indeed Henry IV increased this sum by 20 marks, and both Henry VI and Edward IV followed his lead in distributing extra sums amongst the heralds.⁸⁷

The Knights of the Bath also faced heavy expenses. The list of fees paid by Knights of the Bath created at the marriage of Prince Arthur in November 1501 runs to 26 items.⁸⁸ Some of these were relatively minor: 4s for the 'wyne sellor', 16d for the 'gromes of the hall' or the 8d paid to a priest to get him to say mass.⁸⁹ Some were less insignificant. The Marshal took the 'horse, sadell and Bridell' on which the Knight of the Bath rode to court on the day of his knighting or 100s.⁹⁰ The Chamberlain took as his fee 'all the Garmentes and all the array, with all the necessaries, in the which the Squeyer was arrayde, and clothed the day that he entred into Courte, for to take the Ordre, togedyr with the bed in the which he lay furst aftyr the Bathe, also wele the cloth of Gold called Siglaton, as other necessaries touchynge the sayd bed'.⁹¹ The Master Cook kept the Knight's spurs. The Serjeant of the Ewery, who held the office of Barber, took his fee for shaving the knight and having the Bath prepared. Indeed, Henry VI granted, on 25 July 1447, a petition from Robert Bolley, Serjeant of the Ewery, and Alexander Dovour, Yeoman of the Ewery, to set their fee as follows: from each knight, 24 ells of linen cloth round the Bath with a 'tapet' of the length of three yards of red 'worsted' and 20s for the shaving of each knight so created, 40s for each baron or his peer, 100s for each earl or his peer and 10 *livres*. for each duke or his peer.⁹² The heralds took the clothing in which the knight had been dubbed, as well as a monetary fee: 20s from a knight bachelor 'and so to double after their astates'.⁹³ Finally, the newly dubbed Knight of the Bath had, of course, to reward his Esquire-Governors with robes and fees.⁹⁴

This was an expensive and truly majestic occasion. The pictures in *Writhe's Garter Book* make it clear that the whole court must have been involved, and give a vivid impression of the impact that its elaborate ritual and display must have carried for the host of people that witnessed it. A record of the making of the Knights of the Bath at Henry V's coronation conveys the same impression of a great press of courtiers: the king 'sitting in royal state, the Throne being surrounded with a numerous Train of noble and great Personages, promoted them severally [some fifty aspirant

⁸⁷ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 23, 29, 30.

⁸⁸ Additional MS 46354, fos 23b, 25b, 26. There is another record of charges that attach to the making of a Knight of the Bath in the same MS on fos 37–8.

⁸⁹ Additional MS 46354, fo. 25b.

⁹⁰ Additional MS 46354, fo. 23b.

⁹¹ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 103.

⁹² *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1446–52*, 83.

⁹³ Additional MS 46354, fo. 25b.

⁹⁴ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 106.

esquires] to the Honour of Knighthood'.⁹⁵ This was a ceremony appropriate to the estate and dignity of the king. Its timing, expense and cost ensured that, and these elements were supported by the full canon of chivalric learning, history and pageantry. It is of the first importance that the knightings were always carried out by the king in person, even if he was only four and a half years old, as was the case with Henry VI in 1426.⁹⁶ Both the occasion, and the giver, of their knighthood bestowed honour on those that were created Knights of the Bath. That honour was further increased by the relationship into which the king and the esquire entered, and the degree of personal contact between them that was involved, in the creation of Knights of the Bath.

Most important of all, of course, the instruction given to the knight-to-be while he was in the Bath stressed that he should 'above all other erthly thynges love the kyng thy Sovrayn Lord, hym, and his right defende unto thy power, And before all worldly thyngis put hym in worshipp'.⁹⁷ This instruction was given by knights chosen by the king for their chivalric virtue, and sometimes by the king himself: Edward IV, and later Henry VII, are both noted as having personally talked to the bathing esquires.⁹⁸ And ultimately it was the king who personally girded the esquire with his sword and dubbed him.

The strength of the relationship contained herein is manifest, and it is here that the function of the ceremony has been located. Historians have tended to interpret Orders of Knighthood across Europe in terms of kings using the orders and their ceremonies to secure loyal service.⁹⁹ Although few historians have looked explicitly at the Bath, when they have done so they have treated it essentially in this way. F.H. Winkler, for example, wrote that in 1399 Henry IV, by creating Knights of the Bath, was trying to 'bind an important group of new men to him personally upon whose military prowess, local leadership and unflinching personal loyalty he could count in the difficult future which lay ahead'.¹⁰⁰ However, we must be cautious. Loyal service was inherent in, and at the very heart of, chivalry. The king had no

⁹⁵ Anstis, *Bath*, 41.

⁹⁶ In 1426, Henry VI, having received the order of knighthood from his uncle, the duke of Bedford, proceeded to dub the Knights of the Bath in person.

⁹⁷ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 100.

⁹⁸ Anstis, *Bath*, App., 36.

⁹⁹ Kennedy, *Knighthood*, 28–30. The view that the orders of chivalry functioned as tools of political control, offering the sovereign a source of patronage and a means to induce loyal service, derives largely from Malcolm Vale's analysis of the workings of the orders of the Golden Fleece in Burgundy and of the Croissant in Anjou (M.G.A. Vale, *War and Chivalry: Warfare and Aristocratic Culture in England, France and Burgundy at the End of the Middle Ages* (London, 1981), 34–62), and is espoused by Barber, who sees orders of chivalry as a monarchical attempt 'to bind together in mutual harmony the often faction-ridden members of their court' (Barber, 'Chivalry and the *Morte Darthur*', 23). Boulton, too, sees the Garter as a 'form of contractual retinue annexed to the royal household' (D'A.J.D. Boulton, *The Knights of the Crown: The Monarchical Orders of Knighthood in Later Medieval Europe, 1325–1520* (Woodbridge, 1987), 165, 496). As can be seen, this interpretation usually emanates from a pan-European study of orders, and not from concentrating on the special circumstances of England, let alone of the Bath.

¹⁰⁰ F.H. Winkler, 'The Making of King's Knights in England, 1399–1461' (Yale University Ph.D. thesis, 1943), 40, quoted by Kennedy (Kennedy, *Knighthood*, 29).

need to entice service, for the mutual chivalric culture of the king, nobility and gentry centred on loyal service to the king. Rather a king's role was to reward loyal service, not to solicit it. He was required to recognise prowess and virtue exercised in his service and to honour it, and how better to honour an individual than by knighting him in exceptionally honourable circumstances? After all, the Knights of the Bath were knighted with great ceremony and solemnity by the king himself, on occasions of the greatest importance. All the personal interaction with the king served as a particularly honourable introduction to a general obligation. It is in this frame of mind that we must approach an examination of the men who were created Knights of the Bath.

To facilitate an investigation of the Knights of the Bath, I have classified them in four categories: those from the immediate royal family, from families of comital rank or higher, from baronial families and from families not of peerage status. Almost all the sons or brothers of kings were created Knights of the Bath, seemingly irrespective of age. Henry IV's sons, Thomas, John and Humphrey, were dubbed by their father at his coronation, aged eleven, ten and nine respectively.¹⁰¹ Edward IV's brothers, George and Richard, were knighted in 1461, aged eleven and eight, and he dubbed his sons, Edward and Richard, in 1475 aged four and eighteen months.¹⁰² The exceptions in the period were Henry V, who had already been knighted by Richard II in Ireland when his father ascended the throne and knighted his brothers; Henry VI's son, Edward of Lancaster, knighted at the age of seven by his father on the field of the second battle of St Albans in 1461; and Richard III's son, Edward of Middleham, who does not appear to have been knighted, despite being aged ten at his father's coronation.¹⁰³ These royal sons and brothers were clearly not honoured in this way in an attempt by the king to secure or enforce loyalty. They were created Knights of the Bath on the merit of their birth alone, which was entirely natural in a society in which birth and virtue were conceptually so fundamentally entwined.¹⁰⁴ These same men/boys were created Knights of the Garter at a very young age. Birth, family and lineage mattered, as will become increasingly clear. It allowed the admonitions of the treatise and romance writers, that no one should be knighted when 'yonge and tendir of ayge',¹⁰⁵ to be ignored. Their virtue was their birth, a birth that guaranteed (in theory at least, for there were endless exceptions in practice) chivalric excellence, that is to say prowess and loyal service. Their creation as Knights of the Bath was a recognition and reward of this virtue.

For the sons of families of comital rank or higher, creation as a Knight of the Bath appears ordinarily to have been assured, assuming that a ceremony was held before a young man had had occasion to be knighted in a battlefield situation. This can be demonstrated by a comparison of the names of the Knights of the Bath with the

¹⁰¹ Anstis, *Bath*, 37.

¹⁰² George – *Complete Peerage*, iii, 260–1; Richard – *Complete Peerage*, v, 737–41; Edward – *Complete Peerage*, iii, 440; Richard – *Complete Peerage*, xii pt ii, 910–13.

¹⁰³ Henry – see n. 32 above; Edward of Lancaster – *Complete Peerage*, iii, 439; Edward of Middleham – *Complete Peerage*, iii, 440–1 (this may simply be an evidential hole).

¹⁰⁴ See for example: Keen, *Chivalry*, 143–67.

¹⁰⁵ *Malory*, 46.

records of peers individually summoned to Parliament.¹⁰⁶ Noble names that dominated fifteenth-century England such as Beauchamp, Bouchier, Courtenay, Fitzalan, Holand, Mortimer, Mowbray, Neville, Percy, Pole, Stafford and de Vere all appear in the lists of Knights of the Bath more than once during the period, despite the loss of names. Their birth was again the primary factor in this: it reflected honourably on the king to knight these young men. Hence, for example, Thomas Fitzalan was knighted at the age of fourteen in 1399, John Mowbray at only ten in 1426, and John de la Pole aged thirteen in 1475.¹⁰⁷ Once again, age does not seem to have been, in practice, a major hindrance. However, their birth had to be accompanied by loyal service, or, more accurately for men of such elevated blood, it could not be associated with disloyal service. Necessarily, given the age at which many of these men were knighted, it was usually the service of their father or of some other family member that was reflected. Loyal service by a family was repeatedly recognised by the conferral of chivalric honour: chivalric honour that reflected upon both the king and the father and son. Hence, in 1426 Ralph, William and George Neville were all knighted by the king, in recognition of the outstanding prowess and loyal service of their father, Ralph, earl of Westmoreland, KG.¹⁰⁸ Conversely, Henry Percy, born in 1449 into a Lancastrian family was not created a Knight of the Bath at either of the ceremonies held by Edward IV in the 1460s. Nor were any members of the Beaufort family in the same period.¹⁰⁹ The knighting had to be merited. Inevitably, in this period of political instability, loyal service became politically charged, but in essence chivalric honour was founded upon the exercise of prowess in loyal service by a knight and his line. Being dubbed to knighthood as a Knight of the Bath was a bestowal of honour. It was a recognition of, and reward for, loyal service. And the relationship worked both ways. The king was obliged to recognise and reward.

The relevance of loyal service becomes more evident with the Knights of the Bath of baronial status. As a comparison of the names of these men with the records of Parliamentary summons indicates, only a proportion of barons were Knights of the Bath.¹¹⁰ As the number of men of comparable status who were not created Knights of the Bath demonstrates, they had to do more than simply not be disloyal, and allow their birth to work for them. Men of such status would expect to be knighted, but the prowess and loyal service of a lord could be recognised and rewarded by knighting his son, younger brother or ward in an especially honourable manner. In 1399, the brother of William, Lord Willoughby, who had joined Henry IV at Ravenspur, was knighted, as was Piers, Lord Mauley, a minor whose wardship had been committed to Thomas Percy, earl of Worcester, another man who crucially

¹⁰⁶ *Journals of the House of Lords*, lvi (1826), 1011–1104; Shaw, *Knights*, i, 127–41.

¹⁰⁷ Fitzalan – Anstis, *Bath*, 38; Mowbray – *Complete Peerage*, ix, 607; Pole – *Complete Peerage*, vii, 688.

¹⁰⁸ *Dictionary of National Biography*, xl, 273–7.

¹⁰⁹ Percy – *Complete Peerage*, ix, 717–19; Beaufort – *Complete Peerage*, xii pt ii, 57–8.

¹¹⁰ *Journals of the House of Lords*, lvi, 1011–1104; Shaw, *Knights*, i, 127–41. As with the major peers, it is difficult to produce precise figures because the names of, for example, all the Knights created in 1429 are lost, but the general pattern is fairly clear.

helped Henry IV to become king.¹¹¹ Henry, Lord Grey and nominal earl of Tancarville, received the order of knighthood from Henry VI in 1426 aged only six, in recognition of the outstanding war service of his father, Sir John Grey, KG, for whom the title of earl of Tancarville had been created in 1419.¹¹² Henry, Lord Grey's knighting probably also owed much to the fact that he was a ward of the Crown who grew up at court with the king. In 1475, James Tuchet, later Lord Audley, was knighted in recognition of the service of his father, who, after being captured by the Yorkist earls in October 1459, served Edward IV with distinction.¹¹³ John Blount, Lord Mountjoy, knighted in 1478 was the son of Walter Blount, an eminent servant of the house of York elevated to the peerage by Edward IV, and himself created a Knight of the Bath in 1461.¹¹⁴ And we should not reject out of hand the idea that some of these young men had personally displayed exceptional prowess: Thomas, Lord de la Warr, for example, knighted in 1478 aged roughly twenty, had already been abroad with a royal army, and his prowess is attested by his later career and election to the Order of the Garter.¹¹⁵ The status of Knight of the Bath was an honour which had to be earned. The Lancastrian service of Lords Ros and Scrope of Masham, and the rebellious service of Lord FitzHugh (he led a minor rebellion on behalf of Warwick in July 1469), ensured that none of their heirs were made Knights of the Bath by Edward IV.¹¹⁶ George, Lord Latimer, created a Knight of the Bath by Henry VI, and his son Henry, fought for the House of Lancaster, and thus Henry was not knighted by Edward IV in the 1460s. However, Henry's son, Richard, had his wardship granted to Thomas Bourchier, archbishop of Canterbury, following his father's death at the battle of Edgecote, and he, therefore, was created a Knight of the Bath, aged only ten.¹¹⁷ The importance of loyal service within the family, especially as so much of the fifteenth century was so politically charged, is clear.

The names of Knights of the Bath from outside the peerage are very seriously affected by loss (especially in the reigns of Henry V and Henry VI). Nonetheless, it is obvious that their overall numbers represented only a small proportion of the potential recipients. They, more than any of the other social groups, were obviously being personally honoured. Even with only the surviving names, two important patterns are apparent. Firstly, while it would require extensive prosopographical work to investigate the prowess and virtue of each individual, it is still reasonably clear that those chosen had long records of service. Indeed, the majority of these men were created Knights of the Bath as adults, not as minors or young men. In their cases, the knighting even more clearly operated as a reward. A few examples must suffice here. John Luttrell was retained by John of Gaunt before 1399 and retained for life as a king's knight by John of Gaunt's son, Henry IV, in 1400, in

¹¹¹ Willoughby – *Complete Peerage*, xii pt ii, 661–3; Mauley – *Complete Peerage*, viii, 569.

¹¹² *Complete Peerage*, vi, 137–9.

¹¹³ *Complete Peerage*, i, 341–2.

¹¹⁴ *Complete Peerage*, ix, 335–7.

¹¹⁵ *Complete Peerage*, iv, 155–6.

¹¹⁶ Ros – *Complete Peerage*, xi, 105–6; Scrope – *Complete Peerage*, xi, 569–70; FitzHugh – C. Ross, *Edward IV* (London, 1974), 150–2.

¹¹⁷ *Complete Peerage*, vii, 479–81.

which year he was created a Knight of the Bath.¹¹⁸ Indeed, it seems that over half the sub-peerage Knights of the Bath made by Henry IV were either in, or had family links with, Lancastrian service.¹¹⁹ Of the handful of identifiable Knights of the Bath from Henry V's reign, half can be pinpointed as having been esquires of Henry's when he was Prince of Wales.¹²⁰ Similarly, Robert Darcy, knighted in 1465 by Edward IV, had been an esquire of Edward's father, Richard, duke of York, and Robert Mauntelle, knighted at the same time, was a king's esquire at the time of his dubbing.¹²¹

The knightings performed by Edward IV illustrate the second point: the range of service that could be rewarded. A high percentage of Edward IV's Knights of the Bath can be traced through the Patent Rolls, and they are to be found holding office at the centre and in the localities as sheriffs, justices of the peace and commissioners, and even aldermen.¹²² Richard Harcourt (who had already been rewarded in 1462 for service to Richard, duke of York and Edward, and had served as sheriff of Oxfordshire and Berkshire in 1461–62) and John Say (under-treasurer of the Exchequer, twice speaker of the Commons and later chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster), both knighted in 1465, are good examples from the first reign, and William Knyvet (various local offices in Norfolk including regular commissions of the peace) from the second.¹²³ This apparent move away from military and household service is probably explicable in two ways. Firstly, England was no longer at war with France, and secondly, the massive loss of names from before Edward's reign probably conceals the rewarding of such service before 1461. This rewarding of a range of service should not surprise us, for chivalric service could be rendered in non-military ways. And in the fifteenth century it increasingly was, as service became more exclusively focused on royal service. Governance and knighthood had long been viewed as necessarily interconnected,¹²⁴ as can be illustrated from their respective literatures.

It could, and sometimes has been, assumed that the chivalric treatises and the ecclesiastical treatises on governance presented mutually incompatible pictures. But the pictures of kingship and lordship presented in these sources (as in others, such as the romances) are remarkably consistent, if presented with different stresses. Both

¹¹⁸ S.K. Walker, *The Lancastrian Affinity, 1361–99* (Oxford, 1990), 274; C. Given-Wilson, *The Royal Household and the King's Affinity* (New Haven and London, 1986), 289; Shaw, *Knights*, i, 128.

¹¹⁹ This applies to service to either John of Gaunt or Henry IV. A family link is adjudged when at least two members of the individual Knight of the Bath's family were retained. See: Walker, *Lancastrian Affinity*, Appendix I, 262–84; Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, Appendix VI, 287–90.

¹²⁰ Knighted in 1413 – John Phelippes (*Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1413–16*, 67, 92, 131, 229, 334); John Rothenhale (C.T. Allmand, *Henry V* (London, 1992), 353). Knighted in 1418 – Louis de Robessart (Allmand, *Henry V*, 142, 317); John Stewart (*Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1413–16*, 321).

¹²¹ Darcy – *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1461–67*, 45; Mauntelle – *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1461–67*, 293.

¹²² In 1465, for example, five aldermen of London were elevated to the order of the Bath (Shaw, *Knights*, i, 135). Thomas Cooke, Henry Wafyr and Mathew Philip are noted as such by Shaw, but Hugh Wyche (*Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1461–67*, 185, 222, 320, 324) and John Plomer (Ross, *Edward IV*, 101 n. 1) are not.

¹²³ Harcourt – *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1461–67*, 7, 13, 198, 339, 534; Say – Ross, *Edward IV*, 345; Knyvet – *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1461–67*, 294, 432, 568; *1467–77*, 406, 622.

¹²⁴ See, for example, *Ordre of Chyualry*, 17–24, 27–9, 32, 41–2, 89–114.

genres of advice literature were based on the same belief: that the regulation of public life was achieved through the regulation of the moral life of the individuals involved. For example, James Yonge, in his dedication to James Butler, earl of Ormond, of his translation of the *Secreta Secretorum*, illuminates the relationship between the mirrors and the treatises: all wise men have agreed when 'treyntyng of prowes and worthynesse of Emperours, kynges, and al othyr gouernors of chualry; that Chyuary is not only kepete, Sauyd, and mayntenyd by dedys of armes, but by wysdome and helpe of lawes, and of witte, and wysdome of vndyrstondynge'. It is to improve these latter qualities that he has, on the earl's command, translated 'the boke of arystotle, Prynce of Phylosofors, of the goueraunce of Prynces'.¹²⁵ The two approaches were not contradictory: rather they worked in unison. Chivalry, knighthood, governance, lordship and kingship were all parts of the same whole, degrees of the same organic concept. It was entirely natural that chivalric service would involve more than the merely martial.

The career of Richard Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, KG, as depicted in the *Beauchamp Pageant*, illustrates this excellently. Although Beauchamp was one of the great chivalric figures of the early part of the century, the work was composed c. 1485–90, probably for his daughter, Anne, and it is thus at least indicative of attitudes across the century.¹²⁶ The focuses of his life are clear: bar his birth, baptism, final sickness and death, all the pictures illustrate either chivalric deeds or royal service. Beauchamp fulfilled the Christian duties of knighthood: with royal leave he visited the Holy Sepulchre. He was also a courtly knight: in 1414 he jousted successfully on behalf of the Empress, who had 'great love and favor' for him, and indeed, her husband, Sigismund, said of Beauchamp 'that if al curtesye were lost, yet it might be found ageyn in hym . . . the fadre of Curtesy'.¹²⁷ Beauchamp was undoubtedly a knight of great prowess. Yet the overwhelming impression given by the *Pageant* is of the importance of royal service in his life. Neither of his own marriages are represented nor are the births of any of his children, but the marriage of Henry V and the birth of Henry VI are, as is the coronation of Henry IV's wife, Joan (after which Beauchamp 'Kepte Justes for the Quenes part ageynst alle other commers').¹²⁸ He served successive English kings in war, both in England against domestic rebels, and on the Continent against the French and Burgundians. But, importantly, he also served as an ambassador to the Council of Constance, was sent to negotiate Henry V's marriage, and acted as a privy councillor. Then in the late 1420s and early 1430s he was Henry VI's tutor. Beauchamp fulfilled all the requirements of chivalry, but above all else he served the king in all fields. His career was, of course, outstanding, but it was also exemplary. It was an expression of all that was to be, and could be, aimed at, representing how chivalric service, in all its forms, was

¹²⁵ *Three Prose Versions of the Secreta Secretorum*, ed. R. Steele (EETS, extra ser., lxxiv, 1898), 121–2.

¹²⁶ *Pageant of the Birth, Life and Death of Richard Beauchamp*, iii–vi.

¹²⁷ *Pageant of the Birth, Life and Death of Richard Beauchamp*, 67–8, 69–70.

¹²⁸ *Pageant of the Birth, Life and Death of Richard Beauchamp*, 9–10.

not only not at odds with the winning of individual honour, but was the best means to it.¹²⁹

Thus it is clear that honourable chivalric service could be rendered in a number of interrelated ways, and in a personal monarchy in which the sovereign relied on a comparatively small group of men to serve him in a range of situations, it frequently was. The Knighthood of the Bath recognised the value of the loyal exercise of prowess and virtue in all fields of honourable endeavour. Chivalrous service, in the fifteenth century, was wide in its embrace, as William Worcester eloquently made clear when he chose as a role model for the chivalric class of England the Roman, Cato, who

was so manlie, prudent, and of holsom counceile, whiche in his yong daies occupied the office of a knight in exersising armes, anothir season he occupied the office of tribune as a chief iuge among the Romayns, another season was a legat as an ambassatoure into ferre countreis, yet anothir tyme in his gret auncien age, that he might not gretlie labour, was made consul of Rome to sit stille and advise the weies and meenys how the Romayns might alway be puissant to resist ayenst Cartage.¹³⁰

Knights could serve with honour in household, governmental and diplomatic service and in local office-holding. Indeed, frequently through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries there are records of judges being created Knights of the Bath.¹³¹ It is important to recognise that the Bath was a reward not solely for military service, for this helps us to delineate its role, especially in relation to other institutions of chivalry, such as the Garter, with its more explicitly military emphasis. Knighthood of the Bath was a reward for the loyal exercise of prowess and virtue in all fields of honourable endeavour.

What then can we say in conclusion about the Knights of the Bath, and the role played by their knighting ceremony in fifteenth-century English life? I hope I have given some indication, some taste of the majesty, expense and detailed ritual of these dubbings: these were impressive festivals of pageantry and social display. But they were more than that. The gory details of the sentence passed on Ralph Grey, with which this chapter opened – the tearing of his coat from his body, the reversal of his arms, the hacking of his spurs from his heels at the hands of the Master Cook – underscore tellingly the ideological and political significance in this time of ritual symbolism and visible rites. Grey's knighting and knighthood were literally reversed and undone. There is one detail of Sir Ralph Grey's story that remains to be emphasised: he cannot have been knighted by Edward IV, the king he betrayed, but

¹²⁹ Keen discusses the conceptual unity of individual honour and honourable service (Keen, *Chivalry*, 224–37).

¹³⁰ *The Boke of Noblesse*, ed. J.G. Nichols (Roxburghe Club, London, 1860), 61.

¹³¹ Shaw, *Knights*, i, 124–47. Most of them are marked as judges there, but the following are not: 1461 – John Markham, Robert Danby and William Yelverton; 1501 – Thomas Englefield (E. Foss, *Biographia Juridica: A Biographical Dictionary of the Judges of England, 1066–1870* (London, 1870), 435–6, 212–13, 777–8, 233–4 respectively). This is a matter on which further research is needed.

rather must have been knighted by Henry VI.¹³² His was, in essence, a crime of treason: he was in arms against the king (despite the mercy and trust shown by Edward IV). He had acted in breach of his oath of knighthood. That oath was owed to the reigning sovereign. The fact, formally emphasised, that he was a Knight of the Bath, who had been knighted by the king, at the king's invitation and the king's expense, clearly added something extra in contemporary perception. It added an additional degree of solemnity to the relationship between the person knighted and the monarch who had knighted him, and to the obligations thereby engendered and symbolised. But, in addition, it gave an extra weight to the ordinary obligations of knighthood, as owed to the reigning king, whether that king had personally carried out the knighting or not.

Herein lies, I think, the clue to the function of the Bath, and to its pre-eminently royal significance. The conferring of knighthood under any circumstances both reflected and increased the honour of the giver, and was thus an appropriate and necessary role for the king. In the Bath, the mutual chivalry of the governing class was celebrated. A dubbing to knighthood by way of the ceremony of the Bath was a bestowal of royal favour, and at the same time a symbolic acknowledgement of the socially bonding force among the aristocratic elite of the chivalric virtues. In making knights in this way the king performed a central function of his office as ruler. Henry IV is noted for having used the ceremony on an unprecedented scale at his coronation.¹³³ He did this not because he wished to manipulate chivalry and use the oath of knighthood to secure loyalty to the new regime. Indeed, most of the people he knighted had already notably displayed their loyalty to his cause. Henry used the ceremony in this way because it was a supremely kingly act, and in 1399 he had a great need to exercise, and to be seen to exercise, his kingship in a public and noticeable manner as was expected of a king. Knightings of the Bath on great royal occa-

¹³² His name is not listed as one of the known Knights of the Bath. The Ralph Grey recorded in 1429 (Shaw, *Knights*, i, 132) was his father, who died in 1443 (J. Raine, *The History and Antiquities of North Durham* (London, 1852), 327–8 and see also the pedigree inserted between 326 and 327; *Calendar of Fine Rolls, 1437–45*, 168–9). At his father's death, his mother was granted the keeping of the land and of Ralph's wardship in his minority (*Calendar of Fine Rolls, 1437–45*, 168–9). Ralph Grey, knight, was involved in negotiations with the Scots as early as 1451 (*Foedera*, V, ii, 32–4), was a commissioner in Northumberland in 13 November 1454 (*Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1452–61*, 220), was involved with William Neville, Lord Fauconberg in the wardenship of Roxburgh Castle from March 1455 (*Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1452–61*, 213, 217; *Calendar of Close Rolls, 1454–61*, 12–13), and was sheriff of Northumberland in 1455–56 and 1459–60 (*Calendar of Fine Rolls, 1452–61*, 144, 252). It seems possible that he was knighted in 1445 in the ceremony noted in the *Brut* chronicle (see above, n. 36), especially as his mother was, according to a grant of protection of 27 June 1445, at that time 'daily attendant on the queen's person' (*Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1441–46*, 353). On the other hand, when he was granted a licence to enter his lands on 2 December 1448, he was not noted as a knight (*Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1446–52*, 220). This raises the alternative possibility that he was knighted at an unknown ceremony sometime between 1448 and 1451.

¹³³ Kennedy, *Knighthood*, 28–9. Nine Knights of the Bath were made at Richard II's coronation in 1377, compared to 42, or 46 according to Froissart, at Henry IV's (Shaw, *Knights*, i, 126–8; *Chronicle of Froissart*, vi, 380).

sions were part of the normal functioning of chivalrous kingship, a visible expression of its underpinning ideology.

Bonding, not manipulation, was what lay at the heart of the social and political significance of the ceremony of the Bath. This is clearest, perhaps, where it served, especially amongst the greater lords, as an act of reconciliation: for example, when Henry IV knighted the sons of Lords Beaumont and Camoys, both distinguished servants of Richard II's, and when Edward IV knighted John, earl of Oxford, the heir of a firmly Lancastrian family.¹³⁴ However, it could only begin to function as an act of reconciliation because it was a conferral of chivalric honour based on a recognition of prowess and loyal service, and thus an acceptance of the loyalty of the individual and/or the family in question. This is why nearly all the Knights of the Bath made by Richard III in 1483 had also been sent summons by Edward V a month earlier.¹³⁵ These were men whose loyal and distinguished service to the house of York deserved recognition; Richard needed to reward them if he was to act as a proper king. The creation of Knights of the Bath necessarily had political overtones, but it is a mark of the free-standing importance of the ceremony that it had such political significance.

The function of the Bath can be further clarified by differentiating it from the role of the Garter. The Garter was a celebration of the highest chivalric achievement, centred on a fixed number of individuals *sans reproche*, paragons of chivalry, bonded personally to the king through their shared brotherhood. The Bath was not an order in the same sense. Though the description, the 'order of knighthood of the Bath', is found in the sources relatively frequently, it was by no means the only, or even the usual, method of referring to such knightings: more often it was simply referred to as 'the manner of making knights in time of peace', or 'the manner of making knights after the custom of England at the King's coronation', or some such similar variation.¹³⁶ There was no fixed limit to the number of Knights who could be created at any given ceremony, as was the case with the Garter (where a vacancy had to occur for a new knight to be admitted). Moreover, the Garter was, in this period, unequivocally martial. The Bath performed a wider, more general rewarding function. It recognised prowess, virtue and service, but not merely that of the exemplary knight or of the soldier. For the higher levels of the nobility it was, barring disloyalty or total ineptitude, a cog in the ordinary working of their relationship with the king. For the less exalted of birth, it was clearly of more individual significance, but the function was essentially similar. The Garter and the Bath both served important roles in the interrelationship and expectations of England's chivalric classes, but they were different ones.

The governing class of Lancastrian and Yorkist England expected to be able to win renown and salvation through the exercise of their prowess and virtue in the service of their sovereign lord, and for that loyal service to be recognised and their

¹³⁴ Beaumont – *Complete Peerage*, ii, 61; Camoys – *Dictionary of National Biography*, viii, 306–7; Oxford – *Complete Peerage*, x, 239–40.

¹³⁵ Shaw, *Knights*, i, 138–41.

¹³⁶ See, for example: Anstis, *Bath*, App., 99; Upton, *De Studio Militari*, 8.

prowess honoured. They expected to be ruled by a king whose kingship, in all its necessary magnificence and regality, was based squarely on qualities that included, centrally, those of knighthood. The king was a knight, and as a knight, needed to interact with his knightly class on the level of chivalric fellowship. But the king was also the sovereign lord, and thus was expected to care for and honour those who served him, at home and abroad, in war and in peace, treating them with respect and visibly recognising the value of their service. As a knight and as a king he was expected to honour chivalry: the realm needed a ‘cheualrous king in wittes hyȝe,/ To lede in were, and gouerne in pes’.¹³⁷ The ceremony of the Bath, the order for making knights in the time of peace, gave visible and dramatic expression to these kingly functions, and it provided an opportunity for the chivalrous bonding of the king and the knighthood of his realm.

¹³⁷ *Twenty-Six Political and Other Poems*, ed. J. Kail (EETS, orig. ser., x, 1839), 11.

Chivalry, Pageantry and Merchant Culture in Medieval London*

Caroline Barron

CHIVALRY has been defined as 'the code and culture of a martial estate which regarded war as its hereditary profession'.¹ The development, from the twelfth century onwards, of secular courts as centres of clerical and lay culture, provided the context in which chivalry developed from the code of individual warriors into 'a sophisticated secular ethic' with its own mythology, erudition and rituals which gave tangible expression to its 'ideology of honour'.²

If, therefore, chivalry was predominantly martial and aristocratic, as well as Christian, then we would not, perhaps, expect to find it flourishing in the peace-loving, mercantile urban communities of medieval Europe. Indeed it has been shown how, in late medieval Germany, it was the lesser nobility who formed knightly leagues in order to protect their interests in the face of the growing strength of the towns. At tournaments these knightly societies met 'to set themselves off against the townsfolk'.³ Yet, in the towns of Flanders and north-eastern France, in Ghent, Lille, Douai, Bruges, Tournai and elsewhere, the urban patriciate and the rural nobility joined together to promote, and to participate in, *festes* and tournaments in the fourteenth century. Dr Juliet Vale has argued that in the annual *feste de l'espinette* at Lille, and in the famous *feste du roy Gallehault* held at Tournai in 1331, for example, there is nothing to suggest that there was antipathy between the nobility and the urban elite. Not only did the towns provide and pay for the heralds, but they also erected the scaffolding and enclosed the market place for the occasion. The local burghers joined with the nobility in the battles. Dr Vale has argued that the urban patriciate knew enough of Arthurian romance and armorial traditions to

* I am very grateful to Maurice Keen for his generous discussions of the matters reviewed in this paper over a number of years.

¹ Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (London, 1984), 239, cf. 16–17.

² *Ibid.*, 253.

³ William Jackson, 'The Tournament and Chivalry in the German Tournament Books of the Sixteenth Century and in the Literary Works of the Emperor Maximilian I', in Christopher Harper-Bill and Ruth Harvey (eds), *The Ideals and Practice of Medieval Knighthood* (Woodbridge, 1986), 49–73, esp. 56–7.

be able to understand the framework of the tournaments, and to give and receive challenges. At Tournai it was the heralds who allocated arms and provided a link between the urban elite and the seigneurial rural society. It would seem that in this urban society of northern Europe the bourgeois inhabitants of towns considered themselves to be men of honour: they assumed a noble life-style and they bore arms.⁴ Prevenier has argued that in the Low Countries the well-to-do burghers imitated the behavioural patterns of the nobility, and could be found reading courtly literature.⁵ Chivalry, therefore, was as much a determinant of the code and culture of these northern townsmen as it was of the castle-bound rural nobility. John Larner has observed a similar pattern in Italy where the lords of the *contado* were happy to become citizens of the towns, and there was no clear distinction, at least in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, between bourgeois and knightly culture, rather they both shared the chivalric ethic.⁶

But when we cross the channel to England the picture appears to be quite different. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries London was influenced in many ways by the economy and culture of Flanders,⁷ and yet the mayor and aldermen of London never, so far as we can tell, organised civic jousts or tournaments, nor did the City pay the salary of a herald. Although tournaments, in the fourteenth century, took place quite frequently within the City, yet they were not of the City. London citizens do not appear to have taken part in these tournaments which were organised by the Crown for the delectation of the court. It is significant that, in this period, no Londoner ever became a member of the Order of the Garter.⁸

The heart or well-spring of chivalry in fourteenth-century England, and indeed throughout the medieval period, was the royal household. It was the household officers who organised the tournaments, and the Royal Wardrobe that equipped and clothed them. In the fourteenth century the royal household moved around the country much less frequently than it had done in the Angevin period. Moreover the radius of its activity had narrowed so that London was rarely more than a day's ride away. The most favoured royal residences were Windsor, Eltham and Sheen.⁹ Dr Vale has listed fifty-five tournaments (jousts and *hastiluda*) that took place at the court of Edward III between 1327 and 1357: many of these took place near London, at Stepney, Windsor, Dartford or Dunstable, and five took place within the City itself.¹⁰ The first of Edward III's London tournaments, and perhaps the most famous, was held in Cheapside in September 1331, only three months after the elab-

⁴ Juliet Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry: Chivalric Society and its Context 1270–1350* (Woodbridge, 1982), esp. ch. 2.

⁵ W. Prevenier, 'Court and Culture in the Low Countries 1100–1530', in Erik Korper (ed.), *Medieval Dutch Literature in its European Context* (Cambridge, 1994), 11–29.

⁶ John Larner, *Italy in the Age of Dante and Petrarch 1216–1380* (London, 1980), chs 5 and 9.

⁷ See Caroline Barron, 'Introduction: England and the Low Countries 1327–1477', in Caroline Barron and Nigel Saul (eds), *England and the Low Countries in the Late Middle Ages* (Stroud, 1995), 1–28, esp. 15–19.

⁸ Hugh E.L. Collins, *The Order of the Garter 1348–1461: Chivalry and Policy in Late Medieval England* (Oxford, 2000), esp. 39–44, 83–5, 288–95.

⁹ C. Given-Wilson, *The Royal Household and the King's Affinity* (London, 1986), 28–9.

¹⁰ Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry*, Appendix 12, 172–4.

orate tournament held in Stepney to celebrate the first birthday of the king's eldest son. The Cheapside tournament has been particularly remembered because the stand erected to accommodate the ladies of the royal household collapsed. In spite of this mishap, it was a spectacular occasion. A solemn procession on the Sunday, in which noble ladies dressed in red velvet tunics and white hoods were led on silver chains through the City by knights dressed as tartars, was followed by three days of tourneying.¹¹ In what was probably the last tournament of Edward III's reign in 1375, Alice Perrers, dressed as the 'lady of the Sunne', rode in procession from the Tower, through Cheapside, to Smithfield. She was accompanied by a host of lords and ladies 'every lady leading a lord by his horse bridle'. At Smithfield the jousting lasted for three days.¹² It is clear from these examples that the Londoners cannot have been unaware of the tournaments which were taking place in their midst: many of them would have been spectators along the route of the processions and at the subsequent jousting. The aldermen may well have expected to entertain the knightly challengers to dinner, but there is no evidence that the Londoners themselves took part in the jousting.¹³ It is perhaps significant that at the three-day tournament held in London in May 1359 to celebrate the marriage of John of Gaunt with Blanche of Lancaster, the king, his four sons and nineteen other knights josted disguised as the mayor and aldermen of London, which would suggest that they were not expected to joust on their own account.¹⁴ The king and the household knights josted for the Londoners as a mark of respect and as a compliment, but the event tends to emphasise the fact that the London merchants did not themselves take part in tournaments. In England, tournaments were royal, household, events and, insofar as the Londoners played a part in them, it was as honoured guests, spectators and, no doubt, also as suppliers.

It is possible that there was some reluctance on the part of the Londoners to play host to these royal extravaganzas. After the 1331 Cheapside tournament, all the later London jousts were held at Smithfield. It may be that the citizens had objected to the closure of the City's busiest market thoroughfare for three days while the jousting took place. Doubtless the Londoners welcomed the increased trade which an influx of image-conscious young aristocrats brought to the City, but it was clearly more convenient if the jousting itself took place outside the City walls. It appears that the sheriffs of London were responsible in this period for erecting the bars and stands at Smithfield in preparation for these festivities. With the memory of the debacle in Cheapside in 1331 still green, the sheriffs may have undertaken this task

¹¹ *Annales Paulini* in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols (Rolls Series, 1882–83), i, 354–5; Thomas Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana*, ed. H.T. Riley, 2 vols (Rolls Series, 1863–64), i, 193 who adds the detail that the jousts were held between the Cheapside Cross and Soper Lane.

¹² John Stow, *A Survey of London*, ed. C.L. Kingsford, 2 vols (Oxford, 1908), ii, 29–30.

¹³ Vale suggests that the Londoners may have been amongst the 'all comers' against whom royal teams made a stand in London locations, but there is no evidence for this, and it is likely that a chronicler with a London focus, such as the author of the *Annales Paulini*, would have mentioned London participation in such a challenge, *Edward III and Chivalry*, 63.

¹⁴ *Chronica Johannis de Reading et Anonymi Cantuariensis*, ed. James Tait (Manchester, 1914), 131–2, 275.

with some reluctance.¹⁵ Such jousts sometimes provoked civic violence and lawlessness. When Richard II organised the famous jousts at Smithfield in 1390 to which several foreign knights were invited who jousted with English knights displaying the royal badge of the white hart, the mayor found it necessary to instruct the aldermen to ensure that a proper watch was kept in the City during the time of the 'revels and jousts' so that the City might not incur 'danger or disgrace'.¹⁶ These royal tournaments held in, or near, London have been seen as socially divisive, deliberately making a divide between 'the nobility on the one hand and the merchant class of the city on the other'.¹⁷ Sheila Lindenbaum has noted the difference between these London tournaments, where the citizens were merely spectators, and the communal and participatory tournaments at Valenciennes. It is true that the Londoners were 'merely spectators watching the world of chivalry pass through their city and superimpose a foreign identity on the landscape', but the issue is whether they wished to be included or not.¹⁸ It may well be that they chose to be excluded and were perfectly content with their own, distinct, urban culture.

But these great spectacle tournaments of the fourteenth century were to become obsolete in the next century. The last of the 'old style' tournaments probably took place in 1409. On this occasion a great eight-day play at Skinners Well (Clerkenwell) north of the city was followed by royal jousting at Smithfield when English nobles, led by John Beaufort, earl of Somerset, met French knights in battle.¹⁹ But after this there seem to have been no large scale royal jousts held at Smithfield for several decades. This may have been due to the absence of Henry V, the minority and personality of his son and the shortage of money. It is true that Sir John Astley in January 1442 jousted with some knights of Aragon in the presence of Henry VI at Smithfield. Indeed Astley was sufficiently pleased with his performance on this occasion (and others) to commission a drawing of this encounter to illustrate his own chivalric common-place book.²⁰ But, on the whole, tournaments were not a distinctive feature of the reign of Henry VI. The grand royal jousts at Smithfield

¹⁵ Such sheriffs' accounts are found scattered among the Exchequer classes at the PRO; see Sydney Anglo, 'Financial and Heraldic Records of the English Tournament', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 2 (1960), 183–95, esp. 185–7, 193–4.

¹⁶ *Calendar of Letter Books: Letter Book H*, ed. R.R. Sharpe (London, 1907), 353; *Memorials of London and London Life in the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, ed. H.T. Riley (London, 1868), 521–2; see *The Westminster Chronicle*, ed. L.C. Hector and B. Harvey (Oxford, 1982), 433, 436, 450.

¹⁷ Sheila Lindenbaum, 'The Smithfield Tournament of 1390', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 20 (1990), 1–20, esp. 9.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 11; although we do not entirely agree in our interpretations of the tournament of 1390, I am extremely grateful to Dr Lindenbaum for her generous references and for many very helpful discussions.

¹⁹ J.H. Wylie, *History of England under Henry IV*, 4 vols (London, 1884–98), iv, 213; Stow, *Survey*, i, 93, and ii, 31, 171; it appears that a number of those who came to take part in the jousts, took the opportunity to join the fraternity dedicated to the Holy Trinity in the nearby parish church of St Botolph outside Aldersgate, see P. Basing, *Parish Fraternity Register: Fraternity of the Holy Trinity and SS Fabian and Sebastian in the Parish of St Botolph without Aldersgate* (London Record Society, 1982), xxiv.

²⁰ Now Pierpont Morgan Library MS 775, esp. fo. 277v. The manuscript was compiled about 1470 and Sir John died in 1486. This famous manuscript has been most recently described in Kathleen L.

held in 1467, therefore, have been characterised as part of a 'chivalric revival'.²¹ Throughout Europe, in the middle decades of the fifteenth century the large-scale, extravagant tournament was once more in fashion, spreading from Burgundy and France into Italy and Spain.²² The Smithfield tournament, in which Anthony Woodville, Lord Scales, the queen's brother, challenged Anthoine, count of La Roche, one of the illegitimate sons of Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy (known as 'The Great Bastard of Burgundy'), was as much a diplomatic as a chivalric event. It was the Yorkist court, influenced by the culture of Burgundy and anxious for a Burgundian alliance, which promoted the Woodville challenge, organised the tournament and ensured that no one was hurt during the jousting. The sheriffs of London found six thrifty carpenters to erect the lists, and the mayor and aldermen were allocated seats for the spectacle alongside the Burgundians who had come to cheer on their champion.²³ This was not a London occasion although it suited the participants that the jousts should take place in the City.

The attitude of the governors of London to the tournaments that took place within the mayor's jurisdiction seems to have been at worst grudging and anxious and at best tolerant and amused. There is little evidence that they were involved in this chivalric activity which was instigated by the king and members of his household.²⁴ The amused detachment of a fifteenth-century London chronicler who advised his readers who wished to have an account of the great tournament of 1467 that they should 'ax of em that felde the strokys, they can tell you best' may well reflect the nonchalant attitude of the London citizens.²⁵

If we may judge anything from the books bequeathed by London citizens in their wills, it would appear that here also their tastes were religious rather than chivalric. On the whole we are well-supplied with London wills and testaments for the years 1300 to 1500. There are, of course, problems in using the evidence of book bequests, or the lack of them, in wills since, by their nature, wills are likely to place greater emphasis on liturgical books. Moreover a testator might not list all his books in his will and the most popular texts might well have become old and worn, and so were not bequeathed.²⁶ But these eventualities would affect all will makers, not simply Londoners. Dr Susan Cavanaugh analysed hundreds of wills in which books are bequeathed, drawn up by men and women from all ranks of society in the period

Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts 1390-1490*, 2 vols (London, 1996), i, 385, 386, ii, 289-93; see also, Anglo, 'Financial and Heraldic Records', 191.

21 Arthur B. Ferguson, *The Indian Summer of English Chivalry* (Durham, North Carolina, 1960), 18-19, 21.

22 See Sydney Anglo, 'Anglo-Burgundian Feats of Arms: Smithfield June 1467', *Guildhall Miscellany*, 2 (1965), 271-83, esp. 272-3.

23 *Ibid.*, 277; *The Great Chronicle of London*, ed. A.H. Thomas and I.D. Thornley (London, 1938), 203-4.

24 For an opposing view, see Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry*, 62-3.

25 *The Historical Collections of a Citizen of London*, ed. J. Gairdner (Camden Society, 1876), 236.

26 These problems are well analysed in Kate Harris, 'Patrons, Buyers and Owners: The Evidence for Ownership and the Role of Book Owners in Book Production and the Book Trade', in Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (eds), *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475* (Cambridge, 1989), 163-99.

1300 to 1450.²⁷ Many of these books contain bequests of books of a chivalric nature: Guy de Beauchamp, earl of Warwick who died in 1315 bequeathed thirty-nine manuscripts to the Cistercian Abbey of Bordsley in Worcestershire: of these twenty-one might be described as chivalric and included manuscripts such as 'The Romance of William Longsword', 'The Romance of Troy', 'The Romance of the Brut', 'A Romance of Alexander with pictures' and a volume dealing with the death of Arthur and Mordred.²⁸ Many of the wills of aristocratic and knightly testators record bequests of this kind, if not on the same scale. There are sixty-one wills noted by Dr Cavanaugh which may be broadly characterised as those of Londoners. Almost all the books listed in these wills are religious: primers, missals, Bibles, Legends of Saints. Only three of these London testators mention chivalric books in their wills. Henry Graspays, a fishmonger who died in the Black Death in 1348 left his 'books of romanse' to his son, and William Kyng, a draper who had been an alderman, left his 'cronicles' in French to St Osyth's Priory in Essex, but all his other books, which he left to London parish churches, were religious.²⁹ In the next century, John Brinchele, a London tailor, left 'librum meum vocatum Talsys of Caunterbury' to William Holgrave, his executor, but he also listed three copies of Boethius which were to go to other London friends.³⁰ The evidence of these wills would suggest only a luke-warm interest among the Londoners in the chivalric tales which were so popular with the gentry and aristocracy.³¹

Other samples of the wills of Londoners reveal the same picture. Sylvia Thrupp considered the twenty books mentioned in a group of sixteen London wills drawn up between 1403 and 1483. Here again the majority of books were religious ones, and those that were not were broadly 'useful': a dictionary, a group of grammar books, two copies of Higden's *Polychronicon* and a copy of the *Brut*.³² Only seventy-five, or 6%, of the 1300 or so testaments proved before the Archdeacon of London between 1395 and 1416 mention books and, of these, only two bequeath books of a chivalric nature.³³ Moreover one of the testators was Nicholas Hotot, an esquire (and not really a Londoner) who owned a copy of the *Brut* as well as religious works in English and Latin.³⁴ The other testator was William Ragenhall, the rector

²⁷ Susan H. Cavanaugh, 'A Study of Books Privately Owned in England 1300–1450' (unpublished University of Pennsylvania Ph.D. dissertation, 1980).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 76–9.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 381, 485–6.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 139.

³¹ A strong case for the role of the gentry (as opposed to the aristocracy or an urban middle class) in the diffusion of romances, has been put by Peter Coss, 'Aspects of Cultural Diffusion in Medieval England: The Early Romances, Local Society and Robin Hood', *Past and Present*, 108 (1985), 35–79.

³² Sylvia L. Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London 1300–1500* (University of Michigan, 1948), 162–3, and cf. her discussion of the rather different reading favoured by the gentry, 248.

³³ *Testamentary Records in the Archdeaconry Court of London (1363)–1649*, ed. M. Fitch (British Record Society, 1979). I am very grateful to Robert Wood for allowing me to cite material which he derived from reading these wills.

³⁴ Corporation of London Record Office, MS 9051/1 fo. 127. Nicholas had married Alice Albon, daughter of John Albon, woodmonger, and owned some property in the city, *Letter Book H*, ed. Sharpe, 387, 422.

of St Mary Woolnoth, who owned a very considerable library which contained a history of the Trojan war and a Latin chronicle about the history of England. But Ragenhall was a cleric, not a citizen of London. John Carpenter, the influential common clerk of London who died in 1442, was an exceptional bibliophile, but he was certainly a Londoner. His extensive library contained a book on architecture, religious works, advice on letter-writing, legal treatises and classical authors: it did not contain romances or other chivalric literature.³⁵ As might be expected, chivalrous books and other chivalric objects passed through the hands of London merchants. In 1382 William Walworth, the adversary of Wat Tyler, recovered a debt from a merchant of Bruges by taking possession of 'a book of Romance of King Alexander in verse, well and curiously illuminated', which was valued at £10, and a very large cloth of Arras work representing the coronation of King Arthur valued at £6.³⁶ But when Walworth drew up his will three years later he bequeathed twenty-one books which were all carefully named, but the 'Romance of King Alexander in verse' was not among them. Walworth left his religious books to various monastic houses around London and his considerable collection of law books to his brother, Master Thomas Walworth.³⁷ Clearly he was not sufficiently attracted by the Romance, or by the King Arthur tapestry, to keep them among his own possessions.

As the example of William Walworth well demonstrates, Londoners were not ignorant of chivalry: it is simply that they do not appear, in this period, to have adopted its codes and practices for themselves. It is possible that the London merchants may have been unfamiliar with the French language in which much, but by no means all, of the chivalric literature was written. But, in fact, many of the books bequeathed in London wills were written in French, the mayor and other civic officials took their oaths in French and many of the London returns to the guild enquiry of 1388 were written in French.³⁸ It is clear that Londoners were present as spectators at the great tournament processions of the fourteenth and later fifteenth centuries, and that the mayor and aldermen, together with their ladies, were honoured guests at joustings. Many of the splendid aristocratic and knightly jousts had town houses in London where they stayed with their households and entertained on a lavish scale.³⁹ Among the founder members of the Order of the Garter, Henry Grosmont, earl of Lancaster, had a grand house at the Savoy, and the Beauchamp earls of Warwick lived near Newgate in what was later to be known as

³⁵ Cavanaugh, 'Books Privately Owned', 167–70.

³⁶ *Calendar of Select Plea and Memoranda Rolls of the City of London 1381–1412*, ed. A.H. Thomas (Cambridge, 1932), 10–11.

³⁷ Cavanaugh, 'Books Privately Owned', 904–6.

³⁸ See, for example, the books bequeathed in the will of John Carpenter. For the civic oaths, see *Munimenta Gildhallae Londoniensis: Liber Albus, Liber Custumarum et Liber Horn*, ed. H.T. Riley (Rolls Series, 1859–60), vol. i, 306–19; for the guild returns, see Caroline M. Barron and Laura Wright, 'The London Middle English Guild Certificates of 1388–9', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 39 (1995), 108–45, esp. 110. The Goldsmiths' Company kept its records in French until the middle of the fifteenth century.

³⁹ Caroline M. Barron, 'Centres of Conspicuous Consumption: The Aristocratic Town House in London 1200–1550', *London Journal*, 20 (1995), 1–16.

Warwick Lane.⁴⁰ Moreover, when these flowers of chivalry died, they were often buried in the Friary churches of London: Sir Thomas Malory himself was buried in the Greyfriars church in March 1471. Above all, of course, the Londoners were most aware of chivalric practices as the suppliers of the trappings of the chivalric way of life. Many romance tales must have been written in London workshops, lances, spears, swords and axes made by armourers, gold and silver chains, tokens and rings fashioned in the goldsmiths' shops, velvet gowns, hoods and tartar costumes sewn by London tailors, pavilions and canopies made by tentmakers, elaborate saddles and horse furnishings by the saddlers, the silk tassels, fringes and tokens worked by London silkwomen, and all the feasts supplied by the London victuallers.⁴¹ Chivalry was as important to the economic well-being of the City as it was to the cultural self-satisfaction of the nobility: the two worlds were interdependent, but separate.

While it may have been the case that the Londoners were largely indifferent to chivalry, they were not uninterested in military matters and, in particular, they were concerned with the defence of the City. By tradition the men of London were led into battle by the City's banneret, and office claimed in the thirteenth century, and perhaps earlier, by the Fitzwalter family who held the private fortress of Baynard's Castle lying to the west of St Paul's.⁴² In time of war the Fitzwalter banneret was expected to come to St Paul's bringing with him nineteen knights. There he was to be met by the mayor and aldermen who would hand over to him the City's banner bearing the image of St Paul in gold on a red ground, together with a well-trapisoned horse and twenty pounds in money. Thus authorised the banneret would muster the Londoners by ringing the great bell of St Paul's. The assembled host would then ride out of the City and the banneret would discuss with the mayor how the City might be best defended in the absence of the host.⁴³ This account, written into a City customal in the early fourteenth century, seems, perhaps, to be both fanciful and archaic. In the middle of the century the mayor and aldermen firmly denied Sir John Fitzwalter the privileges which had been his due in return for his military service which suggests that, by that date, these services were no longer of any value to the Londoners.⁴⁴ But the description of the role to be played by the Fitzwalters does suggest that, at the date when it was compiled, there was a clear distinction between the traditional knightly banneret and the non-fighting mayor and aldermen. It was the duty of the City's rulers to organise the defence of the City, and to pay for it, but not necessarily to carry it out themselves.

This account, however, seems to be in conflict with a customal dating from the reign of King John in which it was laid down that every parish should have its own *penuncellum* and every alderman was to have his own *baneriam*, and the men of the parish, grouped around their *penuncellum*, were to follow the alderman's banner 'to

⁴⁰ See M.D. Lobel, *The City of London from Prehistoric Times to c. 1520* (Oxford, 1989), 93, 97.

⁴¹ Anglo, 'Financial and Heraldic Records', 184–5.

⁴² Lobel, *City of London*, 59–62, 65.

⁴³ Copied into *Liber Custumarum* drawn up by Andrew Horn in the early fourteenth century, see *Liber Albus*, ed. Riley, vol. ii, part 1, 147–51; see also Stow, *Survey*, i, 62–5, ii, 278–9.

⁴⁴ *Memorials*, ed. Riley, 236–7.

the place appointed for the City's defence'.⁴⁵ Here the role of the alderman is seen to be more active and military, as it is again in 1377 when the City lay under the threat of a French invasion. On this occasion the aldermen were instructed to muster the men of their wards under their own pennon which was to bear the arms of the alderman in relief: he was then to lead the men of his ward 'whithersoever commanded for the defence of the City'.⁴⁶ The role of the alderman is here perceived to be much more military: he is the leader of his troops and is expected to have a banner bearing his arms. What these arms might be will be explored later. But the military role of the mayor and aldermen is, clearly, ambivalent. On the one hand, in times of crisis, as in 1377, the aldermen were made responsible not only for keeping the peace within their wards, but also for mustering troops for the City's defence. Yet, ten years later, Nicholas Exton, the mayor, refused Richard II's request for military help against the Appellants on the grounds that 'the inhabitants of the City were in the main craftsmen and merchants (*artifices et mercatores*) with no great military experience, and it was not permissible (*nec licuit eis*) for them to devote themselves to warfare, save for the defence of the City alone'.⁴⁷ Clearly this was an ambivalence that could be politically useful.

The men of London were able, doubtless, to fight: indeed a contingent of them was mown down at Lewes fighting for Simon de Montfort against the Lord Edward, but on this occasion they were a comparatively amateur army, a medieval version of the Home Guard, and not of the standard of the professional army of mounted knights who were trained to practise this specifically military function. In the fifteenth century, when the City was required to provide troops to fight in France, as in 1436, 1449 and 1451, the fighting force was raised by a levy on the city companies who procured, equipped and paid the soldiers.⁴⁸ In 1436, for example, the Goldsmiths provided two spearmen and twelve archers at a cost of £34 19s.⁴⁹ On these occasions the City appointed a captain to lead the London contingent: in 1449 they chose Sir John Astley (who had jousted at Smithfield with the knights from Aragon eight years earlier) and Sir Thomas Fyndern, a veteran French campaigner, in 1451.⁵⁰ In these instances the mayor and aldermen organised the fighting force, and raised the money to pay for it, but appointed professional military captains to lead it: they did not themselves fight. On the other hand, when the

⁴⁵ M. Bateson, 'A London Municipal Collection of the Reign of King John', *English Historical Review*, 17 (1902), 480–511, 707–30, esp. 727–8.

⁴⁶ *Letter Book H*, ed. Sharpe, 65; this precept to the aldermen was repeated in September 1386, *ibid.*, 286.

⁴⁷ Hector and Harvey, *Westminster Chronicle*, 217.

⁴⁸ Caroline M. Barron 'The Government of London and its Relations with the Crown 1400–1450' (Unpublished University of London Ph.D. thesis, 1970), 457–63.

⁴⁹ Goldsmiths' Hall, MS 1518, Account Book A 1332–1442, fo. 166; MS 1520 Account Book A 1444–1516, fos 32–3. 128 goldsmiths contributed to these costs.

⁵⁰ For Astley, see above p. 222; he was paid a total of £30 in wages for acting as Captain of the City's contingent, Corporation of London Record Office, Journal 5 fo. 12v; for Fyndern, see CLRO, Journal 5, fos 58v, 59. For a biography of Fyndern, see J.S. Roskell, Linda Clark and Carole Rawcliffe, *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1386–1421*, 4 vols (Stroud, 1992), iii, 152–4.

City itself was attacked, the aldermen were, inevitably, involved more directly. In July 1451 Jack Cade and his followers had to be driven by force out of the City, and fierce fighting took place on London Bridge. Among the Londoners killed were a draper, Roger Heysaunt, Matthew Gough a veteran of the French wars, and the alderman and goldsmith John Sutton, who must have been over fifty when this battle took place.⁵¹ (Plate 45) Ten years later a contingent of Londoners marched north under the leadership of a mercer, John Harowe, to fight, unsuccessfully, for Richard duke of York at Wakefield.⁵² So not all Londoners were devoid of military experience and one alderman, at least, died in the defence of the City.

What seems to have happened, however, is that the Londoners developed their own brand of chivalric spectacle which, while being influenced by chivalric tournaments and romances, yet had a distinct, possibly bourgeois, character of its own. This may be seen in the emergence of the city ceremonial of the Marching Watch at midsummer. Midsummer watches were recorded in the City from the early thirteenth century, but it appears that in the later fourteenth century the ritual of these occasions was enhanced, and a marching watch though the centre of the City was introduced to supplement the standing watches in the wards. In 1378 the aldermen and the good men of the ward were instructed to be 'arrayed in red and white, parti-coloured, over your armour'.⁵³ In the later sixteenth century, when the Midsummer Watch had been abolished for fifty years, John Stow wrote nostalgically of the communal festivities around the feasts of St John the Baptist (24 June) and SS Peter and Paul (29 June) when houses were decorated with greenery and every ward provided standing watches 'all in bright harnes'.⁵⁴ About two thousand men took part in the the Marching Watch itself: some were old soldiers, some musicians, some archers and some pikemen. The City companies provided a mass of torches and cressets, some nine hundred in all, and the marchers were accompanied by pageants and Morris dancers. The 240 ward constables marched with the Watch and, at the climax of the procession, rode the mayor, the City's king.

. . . the waytes of the City, the mayor's officers, for his guard before him, all in a livery of wolsted or say iacquets party coloured, the mayor himselfe well mounted on horseback, the sword bearer before him in fayre armour well mounted also, the mayor's footmen, and the like torch bearers about him, hench men twaine upon great stirring horses following him. The sheriffs watches came one after the other

⁵¹ Barron, 'Government of London', 523–4; I.M.W. Harvey, *Jack Cade's Rebellion of 1450* (Oxford, 1991), 96. Sutton completed his apprenticeship by 1417, and was warden of the Company in 1426, alderman in 1436, see T.F. Reddaway and E.M. Walker, *The Early History of the Goldsmiths' Company 1327–1509* (London, 1975), 310.

⁵² The battle took place 30 December 1469. John Harowe was probably born c. 1406, so he would also have been over fifty at the time of the battle, see Caroline M. Barron, 'London and the Crown 1451–61', in J.R.L. Highfield and Robin Jeffs (eds), *The Crown and the Local Communities in England and France in the Fifteenth Century* (Gloucester, 1981), 88–109, esp. 108.

⁵³ Sheila Lindenbaum, 'Ceremony and Oligarchy: The London Midsummer Watch' in Barbara Hanawalt and Kathryn L. Reyerson (eds), *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe* (Minneapolis, 1994), 171–88, esp. 184; *Memorials*, ed. Riley, 420–1.

⁵⁴ Stow, *Survey*, i, 101–3.

in like order, but not so large in number as the mayor's, for where the mayor had beside his Giant, three Pageants, each of the sheriffs had beside their Giants but two pageants, each their Morris dance, and one hench man their officers in jacquets of wolsted, or say party coloured, differing from the mayors, and each from other, but having harnised men a great many . . .⁵⁵

The addition of pageants to the Midsummer Watch seems to have taken place in the course of the fifteenth century.⁵⁶ What is clear is that by the time that Stow remembered in the 1520s, the Londoners had created their own 'chivalric ritual', less elitist than the chivalry of the Court, but yet displaying its own blend of glamour, spectacle and excitement.

At about the same time the City was developing another civic ceremony, the 'riding' of the new mayor from London to Westminster to take his oath to the sovereign. This took place every year on October 28th. Here, as in the Midsummer Watch, the mayor was the focus of the procession. What had originally been a straightforward business occasion had developed by the fifteenth century into a journey of considerable civic pageantry.⁵⁷ The mayor was now escorted as he rode by members of the different city companies dressed in their liveries and accompanied by minstrels. For the occasion the aldermen wore new liveries and, when they returned to the City, the new mayor gave a banquet at his home or at his company hall or (after the new kitchens were built in 1501–5) at Guildhall itself. Clearly the 'pantomime' additions to the riding were thought to be getting out of hand for in 1481 it was decided that 'there shall no disguysng nor pageoun be used or hadde'.⁵⁸ This pageantry that had come to surround the mayor's riding to Westminster reflects the increasing ceremony which had come to be attached to the office of mayor. Indeed it would appear that a sort of 'gentrification' was overtaking the mayor's office. The emergence of the mayor's swordbearer well illustrates this development. In the early fourteenth century the mayor's household was composed simply of a corps of sergeants,⁵⁹ but by 1381, when William Walworth rode out with Richard II to meet Wat Tyler at Smithfield, he was accompanied by John Blyton 'that bore the Mayor's sword of London', and it was Blyton who seems to have provoked the struggle in which Tyler was mortally wounded.⁶⁰ When, in June 1425, the duke of Gloucester and other lords visited the City, the clerk who compiled the City's Journals noted that, on this occasion, the mayor and his swordbearer took precedence over the duke and his swordbearer.⁶¹ In 1441 the

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 102–3.

⁵⁶ Lindenbaum, 'Ceremony and Oligarchy', 184 n.10.

⁵⁷ On the development of the Lord Mayor's Show, see Sheila Williams, 'The Lord Mayor's Show in Tudor and Stuart Times', *Guildhall Miscellany*, 10 (1959), 3–18; Michael Berlin, 'Civic Ceremony in Early Modern London', *Urban History Yearbook* (1986), 15–27.

⁵⁸ *Letter Book L*, ed. Sharpe, 187.

⁵⁹ Betty R. Masters, 'The Mayor's Household before 1600', in W. Kellaway and A. Hollaender (eds), *Studies in London History* (London, 1969), 95–114.

⁶⁰ *Chronicle of London*, ed. H.N. Nicolas (London, 1827), 74; in 1395, John Blyton 'late the Mayor's Esquire', was granted the mansion over Aldersgate, *Letter Book H*, ed. Sharpe, 433.

⁶¹ 5 June 1425, CLRO, Journal 2, fo. 15v.

mayor's swordbearer again led the duke of Gloucester and other lords into Guildhall for a special judicial session, and when the mayor welcomed the French ambassadors at London Bridge in July 1445 he had his gilt sword borne ceremoniously before him.⁶² The City, in transforming one of the mayor's sergeants into a swordbearer (and raising his salary), was acknowledging his important role in civic ceremony, and in adding dignity and honour to the mayor's office.⁶³

The accretions to the Midsummer Watch and to the Mayor's Riding were clearly influenced to some degree by the chivalric practices and spectacles of the royal court. But there is a significant difference between the chivalric tournament processions in Cheapside in 1331, or the progress of the 'lady of the Sun' through the London streets in 1375, and the London Midsummer Watch or Mayor's Riding. All these processions included men on horseback, fine costumes, spectacular lighting, music and pageantry but, whereas the courtly processions gave a prominent role to the ladies of the court, the civic processions were entirely male. There was no part allocated to the mayor's consort, nor to the wives of the aldermen: the civic processions expressed the need to defend the City and to rule it, and women had no role to play in either task. So, although the City adopted and adapted some of the ingredients of a chivalric culture from the royal tournaments and processions, this never extended to adopting in public the chivalric attitude to women. It might well have been considered that the women of London were too busy at work in the City to have time to cavort through the streets of London as chivalric playthings: they had a real role to play in the economy of the City and the spectacle of the mayor's wife riding through the streets of London dressed as Guinevere would have seemed inappropriate, if not absurd. In this respect the Londoners appear to have eschewed chivalric attitudes and substituted their own more sober values.

The culture of the Court met London culture directly in the various elaborate ceremonials devised to welcome the sovereign, or his consort, to the City. Here, if anywhere, one would expect the Londoners to adopt chivalric or romantic themes. But this appears not to have been the case. In 1392 the four 'reconciliation pageants' with which the City greeted Richard II were religious in theme and closely modelled on the liturgy used for Advent.⁶⁴ The welcome put on by the City for Henry V after his victory at Agincourt in 1415 was dominated by religious pageants in which

⁶² CLRO, Journal 3 fo. 78; *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars of the English in France*, ed. J. Stevenson (Rolls Series, 1861–64), i, 101–2, 156–7.

⁶³ John Medford, who described himself as 'esquire' and had a modest landed estate in Surrey, was the City's swordbearer from 1467 to 1485. He was given an annual salary of 20s and a reward of 40s, as well as a house over the gate at Guildhall. Medford was MP for Guildford in 1453. I am very grateful to Dr Matthew Davies and the History of Parliament Trust for allowing me to see the biography of Medford in advance of publication.

⁶⁴ Richard of Maidstone's poem describing the reception is printed in *Political Poems and Songs*, ed. T. Wright, 2 vols (Rolls Series, 1859–61), i, 282–300; partially translated in E. Rickert, *Chaucer's World* (Oxford, 1948), 35–9; for the liturgical aspects of the reception, see Gordon Kipling, 'Richard II's "Sumptuous Pageants" and the Idea of the Civic Triumph', in David M. Bergeron (ed.), *Pageantry in the Shakespearean Theater* (Athens, Georgia, 1985), 83–103.



Plate 39. Seal of Richard Whittington (BL Add. MS 14820H). Reproduced by permission of the British Library

choirs sang psalms and hymns.⁶⁵ In 1432 the City staged a reception for the young Henry VI on his return from his coronation in Paris. On this occasion the theme was less religious: instead the king was treated to a series of didactic pageants, many of them classical in inspiration. There was nothing light-hearted or chivalric: rather the king received numerous messages of instruction and good will.⁶⁶ When Margaret of Anjou arrived as Henry's bride in 1445 the civic welcome was inspired once again by religion: there were pageants of St Margaret, the wise and foolish virgins, and the Assumption of the Virgin.⁶⁷ Again the Londoners did not choose to refer to knights or Arthurian romance or courtly love: the focus was not on castles and courtly ladies but, rather the heavenly city inhabited by angels.

Although these London 'joyeuses entrées' were predominantly religious, and didactic, in theme and eschewed chivalric imagery, yet they frequently employed heraldic motifs of all kinds. In 1415 the conduit in Cornhill was converted into a tent bearing 'in four prominent places, the arms of St George, St Edward and St Edmund and of England encircled the middle of the tower, with, in between them, escutcheons of the royal arms . . .'.⁶⁸ So too, the Mayor's Riding came increasingly to use the language of heraldry. An account of the Riding in 1419 makes no reference to heraldic arms but by the sixteenth century the mayor was accompanied by two standard bearers, one carrying the arms of the City and the other the arms of the company to which the mayor belonged. The mayor was then followed by seventy or eighty poor men, each carrying a pike and target bearing the arms of all the past

⁶⁵ The best account is to be found in *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, ed. F. Taylor and J.S. Roskell (Oxford, 1975), xxxvii, 101–13. Lydgate's poem describing the pageants is printed in *ibid.*, 191–2.

⁶⁶ The best accounts are to be found in the City's Letter Book (most probably written by the Common Clerk, John Carpenter) and in Lydgate's poem which was closely based on Carpenter's letter, of which he must have had a copy, see *Letter Book H*, ed. Sharpe, 138–9; *Liber Albus*, ed. Riley, vol. iii, 457–64; Lydgate's poem is printed in *Great Chronicle*, ed. Thomas and Thornley, 156–70.

⁶⁷ Gordon Kipling, 'The London Pageants for Margaret of Anjou', *Medieval English Theatre* (1982), 5–27; *idem*, *Enter the King: Theatre, Liturgy and Ritual in the Medieval Civic Triumph* (Oxford, 1998), 188–201.

⁶⁸ *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, ed. Taylor and Roskell, 107.



Plate 40. Four Whittington Spoons, silver, maker unknown, 1410–20. Reproduced by courtesy of the Mercers' Company

mayors who had belonged to the same company as the present mayor, and, bringing up the rear, were two men bearing the royal arms and the personal arms of the mayor.⁶⁹ But although this public use of heraldry by the Londoners seems to have developed in the fifteenth century, yet it is clear from a study of their seals that some Londoners had been using armorial escutcheons since the fourteenth century.⁷⁰ An analysis of a group of the personal seals used by Londoners (almost all fourteenth-century) shows that over half used an armorial seal: those who did not chose religious imagery, a merchant's mark or some flora or fauna.⁷¹ Sometimes, when the Londoner came from knightly stock, as in the case of Richard Whittington, these arms were inherited. Whittington's seal, the silver spoons which once belonged to him and are now in the possession of the Mercers' Company, and the ordinances for his almshouses, all display the arms of the Whittingtons of Pauntley in

⁶⁹ Rickert, *Chaucer's World*, 39–40; William Smyth, 'Description of London c. 1588', printed in Sir E. Brydges, *The British Bibliographer* (1810), i, 540–2; John Goodall, 'The Use of Armorial Bearings by London Aldermen in the Middle Ages', *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society*, 20 (1961), 17–21.

⁷⁰ Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, 250–1.

⁷¹ R.H. Ellis, *Catalogue of Seals in the Public Record Office: Personal Seals* (London, 1978, 1981), 2 vols. I am grateful to Dr Elizabeth New for this analysis of the London seals. There were fifty-four seals catalogued (all but six were of the fourteenth century): 56% were armorial, 24% were miscellaneous – largely naturalistic, 14% religious, and 6% used merchants' marks.



Plate 41. Richard Whittington on his deathbed, March 1423 (Whittington College Ordinances 1442), attributed to William Abell, pen and ink on vellum. Reproduced by courtesy of the Mercers' Company

Gloucestershire with the anulet as a mark of difference.⁷² (Plates 39–41) But in the fourteenth century it seems likely that most Londoners who wanted a heraldic device for use on their seals, or to stamp their works of charity, simply assumed a coat of arms which they designed themselves along conventional and acceptable lines.⁷³ Sometimes the shield did not conform to developing heraldic practice. Several Londoners chose to use puns on their names: John Pyke's shield bore two pike, and John Wells displayed two wells on his shield.⁷⁴ On occasion the arms strayed yet further from what was to become acceptable heraldic practice: the shield might fail to be divided symmetrically, or the owner's initials might form the

⁷² Caroline M. Barron, 'Richard Whittington: The Man behind the Myth', in Hollaender and Kellaway (eds), *Studies in London History*, 197–248, esp. pl. 4c; Jean Imray, *The Charity of Richard Whittington* (London, 1968), pl. 1; Jonathan Alexander and Paul Binski (eds), *The Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400*, exhib. cat., Royal Academy of Arts (London, 1987), 283.

⁷³ Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, 252–3.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 252, 273.



Plates 42–3. 42 (left) First Mayoralty Seal of the City of London, from Llewellyn Jewitt and W.H. St John Hope, *The Corporation Plate and Insignia of Office of the Cities and Towns of England and Wales* (London, 1895), 121. 43 (right) Second Mayoralty Seal of the City of London, made in 1381, *ibid.*, 122

charges.⁷⁵ There is no doubt that by the end of the fourteenth century the use of arms was widespread among London citizens and when the mayor's seal was redesigned in 1381 it incorporated a neat blend of religious and heraldic imagery:

In which new Seal, besides the figures of Peter and Paul, which in the old one were rudely made, beneath the feet of the said figures a shield of the arms of the said city is perfectly graven, with two lions guardant; two serjeants-at-arms being above [one] on either side, and two pavilions (*tabernacula*), in which there are two angels standing above; and between the two figures of Peter and Paul the figure of the Glorious Virgin is seated.⁷⁶ (Plates 42–43)

This seal is definitely more heraldic than the City's common seal which had been designed in the previous century and employed exclusively religious and civic imagery. (Plate 44)

The easygoing attitude of the Londoners towards their coats of arms began to change in the fifteenth century as the heralds came to take control of such matters. William Bruges, the first King at Arms, was appointed in 1415. In fact some of the earliest formal grants of arms were made to city companies: the Drapers (1448), Tallow Chandlers (1456), Cooks (1461 and 1467) and the Confraternity in Guildhall Chapel in 1482.⁷⁷ In 1446–49 Robert Leigh, Clarenceux Herald, seems to have made a visitation of the City of London, and it may have been in response to this

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 253.

⁷⁶ *Memorials*, ed. Riley, 447–8.

⁷⁷ Anthony R. Wagner, *Heralds and Heraldry in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1956), ch. 8.



Plate 44. The thirteenth-century Common Seal of London, from Llewellyn Jewitt and W.H. St John Hope, *The Corporation Plate and Insignia of Office of the Cities and Towns of England and Wales* (London, 1895), 119

visit that a remarkable series of full-length painted figures of the mayor and aldermen were devised. (Plate 45) They are clearly closely modelled on the drawings in the Garter Book of William Bruges painted a decade earlier.⁷⁸ (See plate XI) All but five of the aldermen bear their own personal arms, and six have crests. Each alderman supports a frame of blank shields which were clearly intended to be painted subsequently with the arms of succeeding aldermen in the ward. Some of these have been filled in. In the case of the five aldermen who do not display their personal arms, this may be the result of the arms having been disallowed by Clarenceux. Stephen Forster, for example, used a non-armorial seal which bore his merchant's mark of a broad arrow head, and in the Leigh drawing no arms are ascribed to him.⁷⁹ In the early 1530s the heralds again visited the City in order to inspect funeral monuments in city churches. The purpose of the heralds' visitation was twofold: to record ancient tombs and coats of arms and, also, to remove or deface escutcheons which were wrongfully used or 'markys of marchands and other put into scochyns as tokyns of oner'.⁸⁰ But, in spite of the increasingly interventionist approach of the heralds, it is clear that the Londoners had, for a long time, been using heraldic shields and coats of arms, as it suited them, not as a means of advancement up the social ladder but as a convenient method of self-identification.

It may be enlightening to consider the ways in which London merchants chose to represent themselves on their funeral brasses. As a result of the Great Fire of 1666 very few tombs survive from medieval London, and several of these are of nobles or knights (e.g. in the church of St Peter ad Vincula in the Tower) rather than of

⁷⁸ Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts*, ii, 245–7, plates, 330–3.

⁷⁹ Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, 341.

⁸⁰ Wagner, *Heralds and Heraldry*, Appendix D, 141.



Plate 45. Alderman John Sutton from the Leigh Book, Guildhall Library. (Photograph supplied by Jeremy Butler). Reproduced by permission of the Guildhall Library, Corporation of London

London citizens.⁸¹ John Stow, however, describes in detail the brass of the notorious merchant, vintner and alderman, Richard Lyons who was murdered in 1381

his picture on his grave stone verie faire and large, is with his haire rounded by his eares, and curled, a little beard forked, a gowne girt to him downe to his feete, of branched Damaske wrought with the likenes of flowers, a large purse on his right side, hanging in a belt from his left shoulder, a plaine whoode about his necke, covering his shoulders, and hanging backe behinde him⁸²

It is clear, from this remarkable and unusual description from the pen of John Stow, that Richard Lyons, who was closely associated with the Court in the closing years of Edward III, was represented on his tomb, not as a knight but as a prosperous merchant. In the same decade, the London stockfishmonger, William Frith died and chose to be buried alongside his brother, John Frith a priest in Shottesbrook in Berkshire. William Frith may have been at the start of his London career: he had served as common councilman for the ward of Dowgate, two years before he drew up his will.⁸³ At Shottesbrook there is a joint brass for William and his brother John who may have been the warden of the college at Shottesbrook. William's brass depicts him very much as Lyons had chosen to be portrayed, except that William's gown is short rather than long, and he bears a sword rather than a purse. (Plate 46) But he is definitely not represented as a knight.⁸⁴ Simon Seman, another vintner, who was alderman of Bishopsgate ward from 1422 to 1433, and sheriff in 1424–5, was buried at Barton on Humber in north Lincolnshire. On his brass he is dressed as a civilian, standing on wine casks surrounded by an inscription and his merchant mark. In his case, he bears neither a sword, nor a purse, and his gown comes almost to his feet.⁸⁵ (Plate 47) None of these brasses suggests that the men commemorated were aspiring to knightly status: rather they were happy to be presented as prosperous civilians, garbed for peace rather than war.

It is worth observing that very few Londoners were knighted in this period. Richard de Refham was knighted c. 1312 and, twenty-five years later, the famous mayor, and builder of Penshurst Place in Kent, John Pulteney, was knighted.⁸⁶ But, during the rest of Edward III's reign, when Englishmen were winning knighthoods from their sovereign for service in the French wars, the Londoners appear to have eschewed, or avoided, such elevation. It was Wat Tyler who provoked Richard II into knighting five Londoners on a squalid English battlefield: the mayor William

⁸¹ Christian Steer is currently working on tombs of Londoners in the late medieval period for a University of London Ph.D.

⁸² Stow, *Survey*, i, 249; Nicholas Rogers, 'The Lost Brass of Richard Lyons', *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society*, 13 (1982), 232–6.

⁸³ *Calendar of Wills Proved and Enrolled in the Court of Husting, London, A.D. 1258 – A.D. 1688*, ed. R.R. Sharpe, 2 vols (London, 1889–90), ii, 259–60; *Letter Book H*, ed. Sharpe, 238; *Select Plea and Memoranda Rolls 1381–1412*, ed. Thomas, 87.

⁸⁴ Discussed in N.E. Saul, 'Shottesbrooke Church: A Study in Knightly Patronage', in *Windsor: Medieval Archaeology, Art and Architecture of the Thames Valley*, ed. Lawrence Keen and Eileen Scaff (British Archaeological Association, 2002), forthcoming.

⁸⁵ Illustrated in M. Norris, *Monumental Brasses: The Craft* (London, 1978), fig. 179.

⁸⁶ A.B. Beaven, *The Aldermen of the City of London*, 2 vols (London, 1908–13), i, 255.

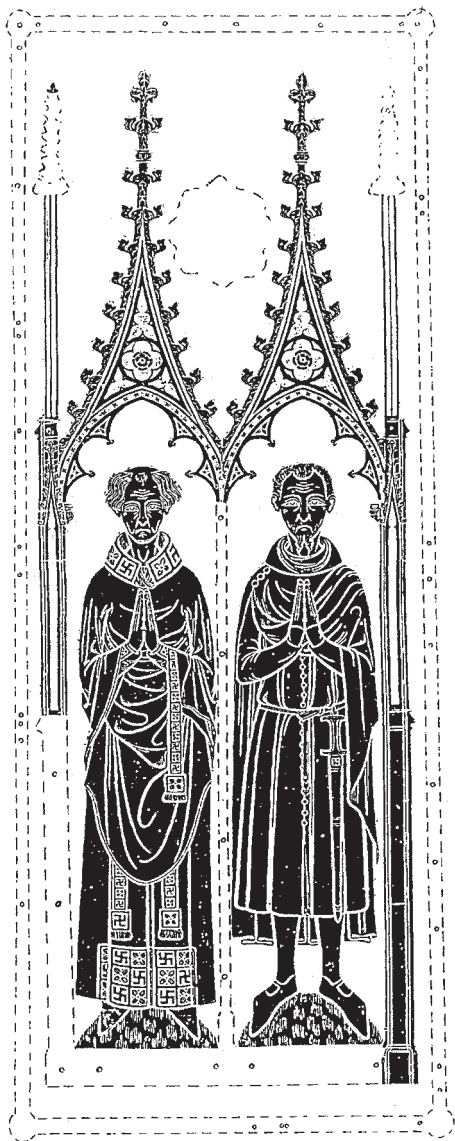


Plate 46. Brass of the brothers John and William Frith, fishmonger of London at Shottesbrooke, Berkshire, c. 1386



Plate 47. Brass of the London vintner Simon Seman at St Mary's church, Barton-on-Humber, Lincolnshire, c. 1433

Walworth, and four aldermen, Nicholas Brembre, John Philpot, Nicholas Twyford and Robert Launde.⁸⁷ In the sixteenth century the story of the knighting of the five Londoners was embellished in a significant way. When the king told Walworth of his intention to make him a knight, 'the Maior answered, that hee was neither worthie nor able to take such estate upon him, for he was but a Marchant, and had to live by his Marchandise only'. But the will of the king prevailed and he 'strongly stroke him on the necke' and to support their knighthoods, Richard gave the five men lands to provide the requisite unearned income.⁸⁸ In fact most London aldermen in the fourteenth century had more than enough manors to support a knighthood, but they were disinclined to seek such an honour: men like the mercers Adam Fraunceys and Richard Whittington, the draper John Hende and the goldsmith Drew Barantyn to name only a few examples. These Londoners were, without doubt, sufficiently wealthy to support a knighthood, and close enough to the Crown to have bought one had they so wished. It was to be sixty years before another Londoner was knighted: in 1439 William Estfield became Sir William, five years before his death. He was, without doubt, the outstanding Londoner of his generation: born in Yorkshire, he was apprenticed as a mercer, alderman in 1423, twice mayor (1429–30 and 1437–8), four times master of his company and three times an MP for the city. His seals, however, were not armorial, and on one of them he displayed his merchant's mark.⁸⁹ No other Londoner followed Estfield into the knightly class until the accession of Edward IV, but then the situation changed dramatically. At his own coronation Edward knighted the mercer, William Cantelowe, and at the coronation of Elizabeth Woodville in 1465 he knighted the mayor, Ralph Josselyn and three other aldermen, Thomas Cook, Hugh Wyche and John Plomer.⁹⁰ After the battle of Tewkesbury in 1471 Edward knighted the six aldermen who had already served as mayor, and six who had not and so, at a stroke, half the court of aldermen had become knights. After this it became customary for the mayor of London to be knighted, either during his mayoralty or soon afterwards. This change must reflect not only the Yorkists' anxious search for support, but also the increased desire of London merchants to become knights.

The reign of Edward IV saw not only a revival of chivalry but also a change in the nature of chivalric practice. Under the influence of Burgundy the king encouraged a rapid development in the outward and visible aspects of royalty in which chivalric protocol had an important role to play.⁹¹ It was in Edward's reign that William Caxton, apprenticed to the London mercer Robert Large in 1438, began to print the books which were to play so important a part in the 'Indian summer' of English chivalry: *The Recuyell of the Histories of Troy* (1475), *History of Jason* (1477), *Chroni-*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Stow, *Survey*, i, 220.

⁸⁹ Beaven, *Aldermen of London*, ii, 6; Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, 338.

⁹⁰ It has been suggested that Cantelowe rendered Edward significant help before his accession, see J.L. Bolton, 'The City and the Crown, 1456–61', *The London Journal*, 12 (1986), 11–24; Beaven, *Aldermen of London*, i, 256.

⁹¹ Gordon Kipling, *The Triumph of Honour: Burgundian Origins of the Elizabethan Renaissance* (Leiden, 1977).

cles of England (1480), *Godfrey of Boloyne* (1481), *Troilus and Criseyde* (1483), *Order of Chivalry* (1484) and *Morte d'Arthur* (1485).⁹² Caxton was not responsible for this revival of interest in chivalry but, rather, he responded to it. At the great Smithfield tournament in 1467 the mayor and aldermen were honoured guests rather than participants yet, in 1482 the king invited the leading citizens to hunt with him at Waltham, to dine with him at his hunting lodge on venison and Gascon wine, and take home with them to the City some of the day's spoils. Moreover, to round off the chivalric courtesy of the occasion, the king despatched two harts, six bucks and a tun of Gascon wine to the 'mayeresse and unto the aldyrmennys wyfys' so that they might also enjoy a feast in Drapers' Hall.⁹³ Doubtless Edward's motives were as much financial as chivalric, but it is clear that it was no longer unthinkable that the London merchants should participate in the festivities of the Court. Henry VII invited the mayor, aldermen and other Londoners to the Epiphany celebrations in 1494 when there were elaborate pageants, 'disguisings' and dancing. The king chose this occasion to dub the mayor a knight, and the feasting continued all night until at day break the king and queen returned to Westminster Palace and the mayor and his brethren took their barges back to London.⁹⁴ The knighthoods which were increasingly conferred on the London aldermen, and their participation in courtly festivities, symbolise the way in which the chivalric world of the Court and the mercantile world of the London citizens were moving closer together. Although, a hundred years earlier, it was rare to find Londoners in possession of chivalric manuscripts, by contrast many of Caxton's printed books found their way into London hands. For example the Huntington Library copy of the *Recuyell of the Histories of Troy* probably belonged at one time to Thomas Shukburgh the younger, a modest London draper, and the Philadelphia copy of *Godfrey of Boloyne* was in the possession of the mercer, Roger Thorney.⁹⁵

But what, of course, had also changed was the nature of medieval warfare. Caxton, in his introduction to the *Order of Chivalry*, urged Richard III to hold jousts twice a year 'to the end that every knight should have horse and harness and also the use and craft of a knight, and also to tourney one against one or two against two and the best to have a prize, a diamond or a jewel . . . that the noble order of chivalry be hereafter better used and honoured than it hath been in late days past'.⁹⁶ But Caxton was crying for a lost world. The increasing use of infantry in large-scale battles, and

⁹² George D. Painter, *William Caxton* (London, 1976), 211–13.

⁹³ *Great Chronicle*, ed. Thomas and Thornley, 229; the mayor and aldermen, and other citizens, appear to have gone hunting together, particularly by the fifteenth century, in Essex. From the late fourteenth century the City paid an officer 'the Common Hunt' to organise their hunts and to look after the City's hounds which were kept in kennels at Moorgate, see Masters, 'The Mayor's Household', 99–103.

⁹⁴ *Great Chronicle*, ed. Thomas and Thornley, 251–2; Robert Fabyan's account of this great party is so detailed that it seems likely that he was one of the Londoners who accompanied the mayor to Westminster.

⁹⁵ A.I. Doyle, 'English Books in and out of Court from Edward III to Henry VII', in V.J. Scattergood and J.W. Sherborne (eds), *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (London, 1983), 163–81, esp. 180.

⁹⁶ Painter, *William Caxton*, 142.

the devastating and indiscriminate fire power of guns, rendered the customs of chivalrous combat either irrelevant or suicidal. It has been pointed out that, although war was glamorised in the sixteenth century with elaborate armour and books of military instruction, yet in fact 'it was clear that war was in hard fact becoming more impersonal, brutal and squalid'. Gunpowder destroyed 'the dignity of knighthood by allowing a common soldier to kill a gentleman from afar'.⁹⁷ Moreover this new kind of warfare was not only squalid: it was also expensive. Maurice Keen has pointed out that 'It was one thing, in accordance with ancient ways, to expect a man at arms to come to the host equipped with his own horses and armour, but no one, in the new conditions of war, expected a master of artillery to provide his own cannon'.⁹⁸ Only princes could finance artillery warfare. But the chivalric code lingered on, tempered by the new humanism, as a set of values which lingers still, more readily felt than defined.⁹⁹ As the heroic deeds of English knighthood moved further away from the battlefield and onto the printed page, so it became increasingly possible for the merchants of London to become knights themselves. In this new wistful, and make-believe, world, they too could play a part.

⁹⁷ John Hale, 'War and Public Opinion in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries', *Past and Present*, 22 (1962), 18–33, esp. 23, 28.

⁹⁸ Keen, *Chivalry*, 241.

⁹⁹ See Steven Gunn, 'Chivalry and the Politics of the Early Tudor Court', in Sydney Anglo (ed.), *Chivalry and the Renaissance* (Woodbridge, 1990), 107–28.

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Looking for the State in Later Medieval England*

John Watts

Lionel, king of the rout of raveners salutes, but with little love, his false and disloyal Richard de Snaweshill. We command you, on pain to lose all that can stand forfeit against our laws, that you immediately remove from office him whom you maintain in the vicarage of Burton Agnes . . . And if you do not do this, we make our avow, first to God and then to the king of England and to our own crown that you shall have such treatment at our hands as the bishop of Exeter had in Cheap; and we shall hunt you down, even if we have to come to Corey Street in York to do it. . . . And if you do not take cognisance of our orders, we have bidden our lieutenant in the North to levy such great distraint upon you as is spoken of above.

Given in our Castle of the North Wind, in the Green Tower, in the first year of our reign.¹

IN our own day, when the government is more inclined to follow the language and agenda of entrepreneurs, it may be pleasing to remember that there was once a time when things were the other way round. This letter, sent to the chaplain of Huntington, Yorks., in 1336, offers a good insight on the kind of dialogue between government and people which we may expect to find in England towards the end of that distinctive age of political growth which stretched from the legal and administrative reforms of the mid-twelfth century to the establishment of parliament under the three Edwards. It reflects the dominance of the crown in the imagination of its subjects; it shows how deeply the language of the king's writs had penetrated; it reminds us of the extent to which authority was legal and written; and it hints at the confidence – even urbanity – with which people used the media of royal government to prosecute their private or local interests. This repertoire is a well-known one: Jim Holt, Michael Clanchy, Rees Davies and Peter Coss among others have made us

* I should like to thank Christine Carpenter, Benjamin Thompson, Rosemary Horrox and, in particular, Caroline Barron, for their most helpful comments on various drafts of this paper. I have also benefited from comments made on versions of it by the members of the Discussion Group on the State, at St Peter's College, Oxford, in 1998, and by those attending seminars at Sheffield University and the Centre for Medieval Studies at York, in 1999.

¹ Quoted in B. Hanawalt, *Crime and Conflict in English Communities, 1300–1348* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), 209.

familiar with the various routes – and, in particular, the cultural and conceptual routes – by which the king's law and its modes of thought and action became established in political society. What I would like to do in this paper is to develop this theme in two partly alternative directions. On the one hand, I want to switch focus from the propagation of the king's law to the propagation of a wider phenomenon, of which the law, perhaps, formed a constituent part: that network of authoritative and (in certain ways) public institutions, concepts and functions which historians are once again choosing to call 'the state' and which contemporaries struggled to capture with a variety of terms: 'the estate of the crown', the 'dominium politicum et regale', 'the policie', 'machina rei publicae' and so on.² At the same time, and without in any way questioning the emphasis which the historians mentioned above have placed on the *written* forms through which governmental ideas and assumptions were communicated, I want to examine a different area of contact: the visual culture of later medieval government. The title, then, is a painfully literal one. I want to consider what the world of government *looked* like in later medieval England, and to what extent its visual dimension promoted the sense of a state.

In pursuing this enquiry, I shall be scratching the surface of a potentially vast subject, and that from a position of relative ignorance in the study of visual and material evidence: this, I am afraid, will be a highly preliminary and speculative survey. My defence is that – in Britain at least – the approach taken here is a relatively unfamiliar way of thinking both about the problematic of the state and about the visual aspects of medieval rule. The study of mentalities has been the least developed aspect of the history of English state-formation, and – perhaps for obvious reasons – literate mentalities and literate modes of communication have had the lion's share of attention.³ But the sphere of the visual clearly deserves equal or greater attention: it too possessed means and languages, and – hard as they are to decode – their impact may have been particularly significant in a society which was only partly literate.⁴ It is becoming axiomatic that languages, both verbal and visual, help to constitute the reality that they depict; now that medieval historians begin to talk more confidently about 'the state' as a feature of our period, it is worth considering whether medieval men and women could have perceived such a thing to be at work

² *English Historical Documents*, iii, ed. H. Rothwell (London, 1975), 543–4 (Statute of York, 1322); *Sir John Fortescue. On the Laws and Governance of England*, ed. S.C. Lockwood (Cambridge, 1997), 84; S.B. Chrimes, *English Constitutional Ideas in the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1936), 168 (Bishop Russell's draft sermon of 1483); British Library Cotton MS Cleopatra E.iii, fo. 108r (another sermon of 1483).

³ The European Science Foundation volumes, and their CNRS precursors, do look at the role of mentalities and culture in the making of states, though treatment of England in these volumes is, inevitably, relatively thin. See e.g. *Culture et Idéologie dans la Genèse de L'Etat Moderne* (CNRS/Ecole Française de Rome, Rome, 1985) and A. Ellenius (ed.), *Iconography, Propaganda and Legitimation* (Oxford, 1998).

⁴ For this sentence and the next, see M. Camille, 'The Language of Images in Medieval England, 1200–1400', in J. Alexander and P. Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England, 1200–1400*, exhib. cat., Royal Academy of Arts (London, 1987), 33–40, esp. 33; *idem*, *Mirror in Parchment: The Luttrell Psalter and the Making of Medieval England* (London, 1998), 43–8; P. Binski, 'Hierarchies and Orders in English Royal Images of Power', in J. Denton (ed.), *Orders and Hierarchies in Late Medieval and Renaissance Europe* (Manchester, 1999), 74–93, esp. 74–5.

around them; it might even be argued that consciousness of the state is a prerequisite for the identification of such an apparently public and widely embracing power form.⁵

Meanwhile, although the visual culture of royalty – its palaces, paintings, tombs and furniture; its crowns, robes, sceptres and other symbols; its pageantry and ceremonial – has been extensively studied by art historians, and although the importance of their conclusions for an understanding of politics and political society is increasingly recognised, ‘the state’ is more than just the king and we need to look at things in a slightly different way if we want to understand how – if at all – it was apprehended in this period.⁶ Royal iconography, or symbology, was widely reproduced, and this has made it a dominant theme in discussions of the visual projection of power. Elements of this symbology – crowns, thrones, coins, seals – have been linked to the propagation of public authority, the last two because of their universal implication in the activities of government and social life, the first two because of their linkage with notions of the undying king which have long been held fundamental to the formation of the state. Routinisation of these images, their use in certain contexts – particularly in the absence of the king – and their conceptualisation (mainly in written texts of the period) might well make them into vectors of state power. But we must be careful. In certain locations, and reduced to their visual and physical forms alone, the paraphernalia of kingship may resonate a power which is purely and simply royal. A crown may be a more official symbol than the personal badge of a particular king, but it is not inevitably an expression of the kind of power that we associate with the state. Besides the more familiar presentations of royal government, therefore, we need to ask to what extent royal image-makers projected a sense of the routine, bureaucratic or collective elements of royal power, the sense of a community of ruler and ruled which is such a striking feature of the political language, and indeed political reality, of the time. And we need to think about how images were read by those who saw them. There is more to the visual impression of government than the intentions of image-makers: we need also to consider the unintended interaction, and/or multiplication, of images of power, the impact of vistas of rule which no-one had clearly set out to create.⁷

We should perhaps begin, however, by asking why this period deserves to be

⁵ For recent examples dealing with later medieval England, see J.-P. Genet, ‘Which State Rises?’, *Historical Research*, lxx (1992), 119–33; R.W. Kaeuper, *War, Justice and Public Order: England and France in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1988); W.M. Ormrod, *Political Life in Medieval England, 1300–1450* (Basingstoke, 1995) and S. Reynolds, ‘The Historiography of the Medieval State’, in M. Bentley (ed.), *Companion to Historiography* (London, 1997), 117–38.

⁶ See especially P. Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets: Kingship and the Representation of Power, 1200–1400* (New Haven and London, 1995) and other works by him cited in this essay. The problem of the relationship between images of the king and those of the state is discussed by J.M. Bak, ‘Medieval Symbology of the State: Percy E. Schramm’s Contribution’, *Viator*, iv (1973), 33–63; M. Pastoureau, ‘L’Etat et son Image Emblématique’, in *Culture et Idéologie*, 145–54; G. Sabatier, ‘Rappresentare il Principe, Figurer l’Etat: Les Programmes Iconographiques d’Etat en France et en Italie du XVe au XVIIe siècle’, in J.-P. Genet (ed.), *L’Etat Moderne: Genèse* (Editions du CNRS, Paris, 1990), 247–58.

⁷ Binski, ‘Royal Images of Power’, 75; S. Anglo, *Images of Tudor Kingship* (London, 1992), chs 1 and 5.

approached in terms of a 'state'. First of all, it is clear that there were in later medieval England, political structures which imply the kinds of power typically associated with the 'state' in historical and sociological writing. There was, for example, often an expectation and often a practice of regularity in certain spheres (law, justice, taxation, counsel, representation, the activities of officers, and so on). There were concepts of public obligation and public right: the system of taxation rested, initially clearly, on the former; the ideas of *communitas regni* and *status regni*, the formulation of the coronation oath, and the numerous impositions of councils, conditions and political statutes on the king expressed, in different ways, something of the latter.⁸ Notwithstanding the ubiquity of personal authority in the period, it was possible, at least at times, to distinguish between public and private power, and the former was generally held to have a kind of legitimacy which the latter lacked (this is perceptible, for example, in the distinctions drawn between the commons in parliament, as representatives of the communities, and the lords as representatives only of themselves; or in the greater authority which a statute was taken to possess over a royal ordinance; or in the recurring demand that the king should be counselled by substantial men who, in various ways, had the communal interest at heart).⁹ When, famously, amid the wreckage of the fifteenth-century civil wars, Sir John Fortescue began an early-modern tradition of writing about the English constitution, he placed public institutions (such as the law, parliament, and the judiciary) at its heart, and bound the king firmly to the interests of his subjects and to those formal structures which protected them.¹⁰ One could disagree with Fortescue's emphasis, and with his summation of the English polity (and I think we should), but the fact remains that it was possible to see that polity in the state-like terms that he did, and not only because of the scholastic and juristic tendency of his sources.

Nonetheless, these state-like characteristics and structures cannot be seen as the whole of the political framework, nor even as the whole of its more organised features (the royal household is an obvious exception on that score). Nor again can they be presented as the only, or even dominant, medium of political legitimation. Lordship, particularly that of the king, community, learning: other political media bestowed authority, even (in a sense) public authority. The king could, for example, be seen as absolute lord in the interests of his people, a concept articulated at various points in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, though little acknowledged in constitutional history.¹¹ I want to emphasise this point in relation to the king,

⁸ For taxation, see G.L. Harriss, *King, Parliament and Public Finance in Medieval England, to 1369* (Oxford, 1975), esp. chs 1, 6. For *communitas regni*, see *ibid.*, and S. Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900–1300* (Oxford, 1984), 262–73, and M. Prestwich, 'Parliament and the Community of the Realm in Fourteenth-Century England', *Parliament and Community* (Historical Studies ser., xiv, 1981). For impositions on the king, see for example R.F. Treharne, 'The Constitutional Problem in Thirteenth-Century England', in T.A. Sandquist and M.R. Powicke (eds), *Essays in Medieval History Presented to Bertie Wilkinson* (Toronto, 1969), 46–78.

⁹ N. Pronay and J. Taylor (eds), *Parliamentary Texts of the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1980), 90 (*Modus Tenendi Parliamentum*); Chrimes, *Constitutional Ideas*, 276–9; J.L. Watts, *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship* (Cambridge, 1996), 85–6.

¹⁰ *Fortescue*, ed. Lockwood.

¹¹ This is implicit, for example, in the Statute of York, 1322, and the declaration on Henry IV's royal

because it will recur throughout my paper. It seems to me to be fundamental to draw a distinction between king and state in this period, no matter how central the king was, or would have been, in its construction and operation. It has already been noted that the sense of a *communitas regni* was a fixture of political life and it could be argued that a great deal of the tension in later medieval politics concerned the delicate negotiations between its putative interests, and those of the highly personal, and potentially private, powers which existed within, above and around it. Similar tensions and compromises existed between the king (and other powers) and the legal and bureaucratic structures which standardised and routinised his authority – tensions and compromises over counsel, over justice, over the appointment of public officers, over the management of resources at the king's disposal. It seems to me that these legal and bureaucratic structures, as a formally organised, increasingly coherent, readily knowable and in all kinds of ways *public* framework of power were the raw materials of the English state, and they are ultimately distinguishable (if not easily separable) from the king.¹² As I have suggested, the king had many political roles and many political resources besides those which were expressed in writing, or which stemmed from his dealings with (and representation of) the *communitas* – he was a dynast, he was a warlord, he was partly sacral, he was a judge and a landowner and a householder, and so on; as we shall see, it may be a matter of some consequence for the evaluation of 'the state' that these roles predominated in the visual representation of royal power.

Finally, I want to emphasise that 'the state' must be formed and negotiated locally as well as nationally, and that the visual culture of government in the former space thus needs to be given equal, or even greater, consideration. Distinctions between 'centre' and 'locality' are not unproblematic, but it seems legitimate to identify a 'centre' in this period, and to say that – to a large extent – it was Westminster, at or near which the king spent most of his time and where permanent institutions of government were located. This centre was not, of course, an utterly unreal or foreign place to many of the members of England's extensive political society, but it is nonetheless clear that government was also (and mainly?) experienced locally, that its local visual culture must have been an element in the formation of that experience, and that the local experience of government helped to shape its reception and negotiation at a national level. What, I shall be asking, did this culture amount to, beyond the seals and writs with which we have been made familiar? But let us begin with the world of the centre.

liberty in 1399 (*English Historical Documents* . . . , iii, 543–4, iv, 186). The king's public role as lord of all his people is a prominent theme of my book *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship*.

¹² J.L. Watts, '“A newe ffundacion of is crowne”: Monarchy in the Age of Henry VII', in B. Thompson (ed.), *The Reign of Henry VII* (Stamford, 1995), 31–53, offers a preliminary discussion of this issue.

The State at the Centre

(i) *Buildings*

In a sense, of course, the centre of later medieval government was wherever the king was, so there are a range of venues, including the royal household on the move, which ought to be considered if we want to know what royal government looked like 'at the centre'. Here, however, we shall focus mainly on Westminster Palace, its decorations, fabric and layout, on the grounds that it had become a fixed political and administrative centre, albeit not an exclusive one. To what extent did the environment of the palace generate a sense of the state?¹³

By the time of Edward II, the use of the palace as a centre of government is captured by the distinction made in royal records between the 'Great Palace', which was centred on the Great Hall and composed – in a sense – of offices, and the 'Privy Palace', which contained the living quarters of the royal family. In practice, of course, government and politics were by no means restricted to the Great Palace: the Privy Palace included the Painted Chamber, the White/Lesser Hall and St Stephen's chapel, which were used for a variety of public purposes, including meetings of parliament.¹⁴ Even so, the two parts of the palace must have had slightly different resonances.

Westminster Hall seems to have been relatively plainly decorated until Richard II's reign, when it was remodelled, acquiring six (ultimately thirteen) large statues of kings, together with white harts along the bases of the windows and angels holding the royal arms on the ceiling.¹⁵ The kings carried orbs, sceptres and crowns and were ordained to 'stand in the great hall'. Two larger king statues were placed over the outside of the main door and four more were added to the north front. One was to be left in no doubt that this was a royal space. Whatever the impact and purposes of Richard's programme, however, it seems likely that the bureaucratic and legal functions of the Hall were its major feature. The Upper Exchequer and the Exchequer of Receipt were located in smaller rooms at either side of the north end of the room.

¹³ The discussion of Westminster is based mainly on R.A. Brown, H.M. Colvin and A.J. Taylor, *The History of the King's Works*, 6 vols (London, 1963–82), i, ch. XII. Other sources are indicated in footnotes.

¹⁴ The Painted Chamber seems to have been the normal meeting place for the commons in parliament when it met at Westminster in the second half of the fourteenth century (J.G. Edwards, *The Second Century of the English Parliament* (Oxford, 1979), 3–7. From the 1390s, the commons moved to the abbey refectory and seem to have met there until about 1416. Thereafter we don't know where they met until Edward VI's reign, when they moved to St Stephen's chapel. The Painted Chamber seems to have been used for meetings of the intercommuning committees of lords and commons in the meantime: *ibid.*, 8–9). P. Binski, *The Painted Chamber at Westminster* (Society of Antiquaries Occasional Paper, London, 1986), 34–5, mentions a variety of public events taking place within the room from the late thirteenth century. The parliamentary lords met in the White Chamber, which was also part of the Privy Palace.

¹⁵ The most recent discussion of Richard II's remodelling of Westminster Hall is E. Scheifele, 'Richard II and the Visual Arts', in A. Goodman and J. Gillespie (eds), *Richard II: The Art of Kingship* (Oxford, 1999), 255–71, esp. 260–1.

The court of Common Pleas met in a demarcated space a third of the way down the western wall: it was marked out by bars and with the wall behind painted green from 1290. Chancery and the court of King's Bench were at the southern end of the hall, on a dais which contained the room's only relatively permanent furnishings: a marble table and chair, used by the Chancellor and Chief Justice when giving judgments, and by the king in coronation ceremonies and formal feasts. In many ways, therefore, the room must have advertised the glories of the royal administration quite as much as those of the king himself. The royal symbolism seems to have been relatively routine (the king statues, for example, appear to have been of a type, and served as a model for later ones)¹⁶ and the regular use of the throne and table by the king's most important officers may have meant that these were associated with them as much as with him: when Edward IV, for instance, signalled his assumption of the crown by taking possession of the throne in Westminster Hall the government which he was coming to head must have seemed more real than the royal authority which supposedly informed it.¹⁷ Although the room was the scene of major state occasions – and the administrative paraphernalia might be bundled up to make way for them (as was Common Pleas, to make way for two great feasts of Edward II's reign) – these were infrequent, and the space was normally filled by the routine operations of government, and by people seeking to use them.

Elements of the room's decoration seem to have captured this. In Common Pleas, which may have been the busiest part of the room, the judges sat on high benches, with clerks seated lower down before them and also a 20-foot long exchequer table. As we shall see, exchequer tables were a ubiquitous feature of government, and may have had a symbolic value as well as practical uses: an exchequer cloth, or board, was used to bear the king's vestments in the coronation procession of Edward II, for example, and contemporaries who were encouraged to associate the game of chess with nobility and rulership would readily have made connections between the exchequer pattern and the imagery of rule.¹⁸ (Plate 48) It is also interesting to speculate about the meaning of the green wall behind the judges. Green, the colour 'most likyng to the sight', seems commonly to have been associated with nature and, by association, hunting, but Michael Clanchy has drawn attention to the tradition of justice being done in open countryside, 'at a certain green place', or in the greenwood.¹⁹ Was this the association intended by Edward I's painters? It is certainly

¹⁶ Colvin and Taylor, *King's Works*, i, 533.

¹⁷ C.A.J. Armstrong, 'The Inauguration Ceremonies of the Yorkist Kings and their Title to the Throne', in *idem*, *England, France and Burgundy in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1983), 73–95, esp. 80–2.

¹⁸ *Calendar of Close Rolls, 1307–13*, 53. For a popular late medieval work on the symbolism of chess, see *Jacobus de Cessolis. The Game of Chess, translated and printed by William Caxton, c. 1483*, ed. N.F. Blake (London, 1976). Chapter one of the fourth 'traytye' of this work indicates that the chessboard represented the city of Babylon, emblem of the earthly state, and the place where chess was supposedly invented. See also R. Éales, *Chess: The History of a Game* (London, 1985), 60–8.

¹⁹ *On the Properties of Things. John Trevisa's Translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus, De Proprietatibus Rerum*, ed. M.C. Seymour, 3 vols (Oxford, 1975–88), ii, 1289–91. M.T. Clanchy, 'Literacy, Law and the Power of the State', in *Culture et Idéologie*, 25–34, esp. 29 (quotation from H.S. Bennett, *Life on the English Manor*, cited there).

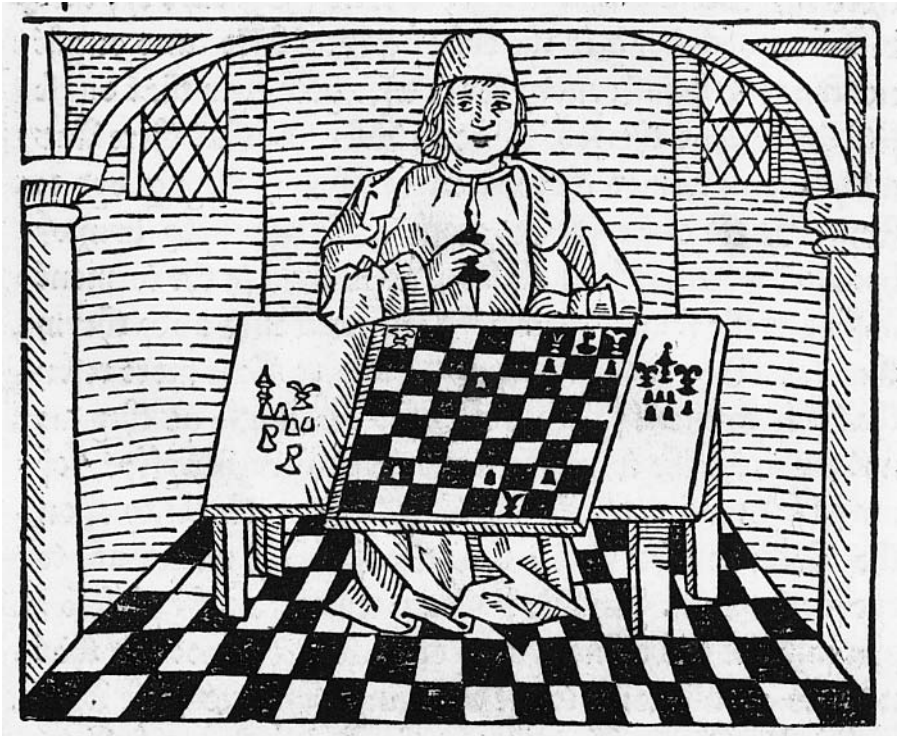


Plate 48. Woodcut, folio 5 recto from *The Game of Chess*, trans. from J. de Cessolis's treatise by W. Caxton. Reference (shelfmark) S.Seld. d. 6. Reproduced by permission of the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford

striking how much governmental paraphernalia was green, from the green wax of the exchequer, to the green hangings in the Star Chamber.²⁰ Here, perhaps, are the vestiges of a symbolic programme quite unrelated to the projection of an essentially royal kind of authority. Meanwhile, the entry between the Hall and the Receipt provided another example of the influence of officialdom over the Great Palace. It bore thirteenth-century sculptures of a clerk and an exchequer official carrying money-bags and sealed writs, together with a head saying 'Ingrediens Jani, rediturus sis emulus Argi.' The meaning of this is not easy to determine, but it could be, 'if you come in here like Janus [i.e. 'double', deceitful], you'd better go out like Argus [i.e. many-eyed, watchful]'. Interestingly, the Receipt itself contained, at least in the fifteenth century, a column decorated with the personal arms of the lords treasurers.

²⁰ See R.A. Griffiths, 'Public and Private Bureaucracies in England and Wales in the Fifteenth Century', in *idem*, *King and Country: England and Wales in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1991), 137–59, 140 and n., for 'green exchequer cloths'; J.F. Baldwin, *The King's Council* (Oxford, 1913), 357 for Star Chamber; and I.M.W. Harvey, *Jack Cade's Rebellion of 1450* (Oxford, 1991), 187, for a fifteenth-century reference to the green wax which shows that it was commonly recognised and spoken of.

In the Privy Palace, even in its highly public spaces, a different visual culture obtained. Here, the royal presence was much more strongly felt, and an alternative set of its associations received emphasis. Paul Binski has shown how the iconography of the Painted Chamber, dominated by three major picture series (from Henry III's reign, the Coronation of Edward the Confessor near the bed and the Triumphant Virtues at the windows; from Edward I's, the Old Testament battle scenes on the walls) created a sense of kingship as an exercise in personal virtue and chivalry.²¹ The accumulated message is that the king rules through Solomonic wisdom and Maccabean knighthood, afforded by magnanimity and under the inspiration of prelates. His authority is presented as divinely given and personally held; its exercise is predominantly martial, charitable/patronal and judicial (with strong overtones of mercy). Contemporaries seem to have noted and absorbed these images and with them, perhaps, the ambience of royal personal authority.²²

This collection of images was much more typical of the decoration of royal spaces than the more impersonal Westminster Hall. Henry III spread Solomonic, Edwardian and biblical imagery throughout his palaces, and seems to have instituted the practice of putting royal arms in prominent places in his buildings.²³ He also commissioned a series of paintings of the Crusades at Clarendon (with special emphasis on the deeds of his ancestor Richard I, a theme picked up by the production of series commemorating Edward I's life and wars by Edward II and by Walter Langton).²⁴ His successors' works were along similar lines – lots of angels, lots of kings (assisting in the Adoration of the Magi in the centrepiece of Edward III's refurbishment of St Stephen's chapel, for example), lots of royal (and sometimes baronial) arms.²⁵ It is a truism, but, overwhelmingly, rule was depicted by kings as a personal, familial, virtuous, sacral and purely royal affair, and the guiding concerns of kingly illustrators seem, on the one hand, to have been dynastic self-identification and, on the other, the projection of the most up-to-date accessories of kingship, such as thrones in the thirteenth century, or imperial crowns in the fifteenth.²⁶ Almost the only image I have encountered which tells a slightly different story, is the picture of a

²¹ This paragraph is based on Binski, *Painted Chamber*.

²² At least one eye-witness identified the Maccabean theme in Edward I's painting series and linked it to the king (Binski, *ibid.*, 97); the coronation series was the model for fourteenth-century illustrations of the coronations of Edward I and King Arthur (*ibid.*, 39).

²³ Colvin and Taylor, *King's Works*, i, 130. In 1254, the arms of Edward the Confessor, England, the Empire, Provence, France and Scotland were added to the decoration in the new nave of Westminster Abbey, for example (also the arms of the more important English barons, though these in a less prominent position). Royal arms were also placed on window shutters in the Tower (1240) and at Winchester (1266), and in stained glass at Rochester, Havering and Westminster Abbey.

²⁴ Langton's series emphasised the martial, sacral and dynastic aspects of Edward's career – his victories, his coronation, marriages and funeral – not the works of justice, taxation and consultation for which the king is (and to an extent was) also famous: Colvin and Taylor, *King's Works*, i, 128–9, 508; E.W. Tristram, *English Wall Painting of the Fourteenth Century* (London, 1955), 31.

²⁵ The painting of the Adoration featured the royal family kneeling with St George and below the scriptural scene (Colvin and Taylor, *King's Works*, i, 519). Its mixture of living members of the royal family, patriotic saints and biblical figures perhaps makes it an inspiration for Richard II's Wilton Diptych.

²⁶ Scheifele, 'Richard II', 256ff, 261; Binski, 'Royal Images of Power', 79, 88ff. For thrones, see *ibid.*,

king and queen surrounded by the baronage which Henry III commissioned for Dublin Castle in 1243.²⁷ Like the inclusion of baronial arms in the decoration of royal buildings, this could have been intended more as a demonstration of majesty (look at the great men whom I can command!) than of – for example – peerage, or counsel. Even if it did carry overtones of the mutuality of rule, it still seems to reflect a hierarchical conception and is far away from the notions of office, community, due process and the like which other parts of government were beginning to generate.

But those ideas were having quite an impact on literary and other linguistic presentations of kingship: mirrors for princes, sermons, poems and ballads commonly promoted organic or mechanical imagery which emphasised the interdependence of ruler and ruled (the body politic, for example, or the ship of state).²⁸ While the communal implications of crown and throne were being explored in speech and writing, however, the kings themselves seem to have viewed the objects concerned as purely symbolic of royal power. As a Lancastrian poet declared the meaning of the (open) crown to be ‘lordis, comouns and cleryge . . . all at on assent’, the Lancastrian kings were experimenting with the arched crown associated with imperial authority.²⁹ Rarely, if ever, did English rulers sponsor images reflecting the collective aspects of their rule, but it is worth noting that such images could have been made.³⁰ Lorenzetti’s famous frescoes on the walls of the Town Hall at Siena, with their depiction of the perfect magistrate, assisted by three theological and five civic virtues, were painted in 1337–40. They rest on a litany of concepts which overlap with those of English royal government and they share some visual tropes with it (the magistrate is dressed like a king, with crown, sceptre and shield; he wears the arms of the city, and has an animal at his feet).³¹ Yet the picture, like the real space of Westminster Hall, no doubt, is full of the people who benefit from this good rule. In 1340, Edward III’s commons – sitting, one assumes, under the pictures of ‘Largesse’ etc. – demanded ‘that all manner of revenues, including taxes . . . and all other kind of revenues arising from the kingdom be reserved to the

76–9, and J. Steane, *Archaeology of the Medieval English Monarchy* (London, 1993), 37–40; for imperial crowns, *ibid.*, 35, and C.E. Challis, *The Tudor Coinage* (Manchester, 1978), 49–52.

²⁷ Colvin and Taylor, *King’s Works*, i, 130.

²⁸ See e.g. Watts, *Henry VI*, 22–3.

²⁹ *Twenty-Six Political and Other Poems*, ed. J. Kail (Early English Text Society, orig. ser., cxxiv, London, 1904), 50. For Lancastrian experiments with imperial crowns (certainly from Henry VI’s reign, possibly from 1399), see Steane, *Archaeology of Monarchy*, 35, and the illustration of the 1446 King’s College charter. It is hard to feel sure that people would read images of the crown, or the sceptre or orb as anything other than insignia of royal power (see R.L. Storey, *The End of the House of Lancaster* (London, 1966), 35, for a seditious words case of 1450 in which a Sussex yeoman argued that the king was a fool on the basis that ‘he would oft-times hold a staff in his hands with a bird on the end, playing therewith as a fool’).

³⁰ Edward III’s golden noble (coin: value – 6s 8d), depicting the king on board a ship, may be an exception to this. It is normally taken to be a commemoration of the victory at Sluys in 1340, and, in fact, may have played a part in stimulating the use of ship-of-state motifs (one famous example of which appears in a poem lamenting Edward’s death in 1377: R.H. Robbins, *Historical Poems of the XIVth and XVth Centuries* (New York, 1959), 102–6).

³¹ Q. Skinner, ‘Ambrogio Lorenzetti: The Artist as Political Philosopher’, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, lxxii (1986), 1–56.

people'.³² At about the same time, a royal civil servant was saying, in a commentary on Aristotle, that 'the many govern as much as, or more than, the king alone, and on account of this the king calls parliament for the expedition of difficult business', and he added (in a phrase which was widely recycled in Edward's reign) that it seemed to each 'citizen' of England that 'he himself rules in and with the king'.³³ These are the sorts of ideas that Lorenzetti's painting expresses, but nothing much like it appeared in the centres of rule in fourteenth-century England.³⁴ Perhaps the nearest example is Henry VI's charter of 1446, confirming the privileges of King's College Cambridge. Here, the king is depicted beneath the various royal arms and a huge imperial crown, wearing another such crown and receiving the petitions of his lords and commons, their ranks fully demarcated. Though obviously a regal image, it is also a collective one – revealingly, under the circumstances – but it is perhaps telling that it appears on a public document of very restricted circulation: it was made for the fellows of King's, perhaps, to remind them where their fortune came from, not for Henry's subjects as a lesson in how they were ruled.³⁵ (Plate XII)

(ii) *Pageantry*

The late medieval English kings do not seem to have been particularly innovative or extravagant exponents of mass public displays. Crown-wearings took place at regular intervals on specified days and these featured processions and church services, though I am not aware of any sophisticated iconographic projects accompanying them.³⁶ Broadly speaking, the kings reserved their more elaborate symbolic displays for the aristocracy, in the shape of tournaments and Christmas plays (of which we have sketchy records, mainly concentrated in the reigns of Edward I and Edward III).³⁷ The town pageants which are sometimes described at length by the chroniclers, and which seem to predominate in the fifteenth century (and to become more complex as it wears on) were created and funded by urban corporations and do not

³² B. Wilkinson, *Constitutional History of Medieval England, 1216–1399*, 3 vols (London, 1948–58), ii, 195.

³³ S.H. Thomson, 'Walter Burley's Commentary on the *Politics* of Aristotle', in *Mélanges Auguste Pelzer* (Louvain, 1947), 557–78, esp. 577.

³⁴ Binski, *Painted Chamber*, 44, mentions the commissioning of an image of a city, to be placed opposite the queen's chamber at Winchester in 1246. This could conceivably have been rich in symbolism, but we do not know what it looked like.

³⁵ See illustration. For discussions of the royal foundations, see Watts, *Henry VI*, 167–71; B.P. Wolffe, *Henry VI* (London, 1981), ch. 8.

³⁶ However, a contemporary account of Henry VII's entry into York in 1486 suggests that contemporaries were aware of such items as the cap of maintenance, and its relationship to the crown, and the significance of the king's different robes: 'on his hede his cap of maintenaunce, for he was corownde on the morn . . . Also in the morne the trayne of the mayntell of the gartere coverde the trayne of the mantell of astate, and the furre of the astate sufficiently shewed the king kept his estate' (A.H. Smith, 'A York Pageant, 1486', *London Mediaeval Studies*, i (1937–48), 382–98, esp. 397).

³⁷ Covered by J. Vale, *Edward III and Chivalry* (Woodbridge, 1982), where it is argued that Edward I's tournaments were probably fairly straightforward affairs, albeit drawing on Arthurian symbolism, while Edward III's were becoming more sophisticated (*ibid.*, 67).

necessarily reflect the way in which the government would have sought to present itself, though a dialogue over their content seems likely.³⁸

The visual life of the former kind of entertainment must have been overwhelmingly martial and royalist. Even so, the idea and physical appearance of the Round Table, which was featured in a tournament of 1344, and originally intended to be the centrepiece of a new building at Windsor, presumably conveyed a sense of common counsel, and therefore, perhaps, a kind of collectivity – albeit of a rough-and-ready and socially-restricted kind.³⁹ Meanwhile, if Juliet Vale is right, and the well-known alliterative poem ‘Winner and Waster’ was written to accompany a play at Christmas 1352, then some of these festivities did address the full complexity of the English polity. The poem essentially concerns a dispute between the wealth-creating sectors of the population (the merchants, lawyers and clerics who produce the taxes which pay for the war) and the wealth-expending sectors (principally the warrior aristocracy). When judgement is delivered by the king – and there is a sub-text about royal law and justice as the appropriate means of settling disputes – it is that Winner and Waster are essential to each other. With its coverage of issues in parliamentary politics and its references to social tensions over such matters as dispute settlement and the rising fortunes of the peasantry the piece is a sophisticated commentary, but the fact remains that, for its audience, most of the richness of the experience must have lain in the language. Visually, the play offered the highly traditional spectacle of two armies converging, only to have their dispute halted not by officers and legal process, but by a single act of royal judgement delivered, without counsel, by a virtuous warlord.⁴⁰

A similar rhetoric of virtue and regality tends to dominate the civic pageants, though – apart from in one or two cases – it is difficult to be completely sure what went on, since chroniclers generally gave these less minute attention than historians have done. The dominant visual themes evoke connections between the kings of earth and heaven; government is typically presented in terms of kingship, and good government depends mainly on personal virtue; symbols of power are drawn from the regalia and/or from chivalrous martiality; magnanimity is suggested by the flowing of wines from the Conduit.⁴¹ So it is that in 1392, at the reconciliation of

³⁸ See below. The question of who devised civic pageants is considered by Caroline Barron, in relation to the festivities of 1392: C. Barron, ‘Richard II and London’, in Goodman and Gillespie (eds), *Richard II*, 129–54, 152–3. G. Kipling, *Enter the King: Theatre, Liturgy and Ritual in Medieval Civic Triumph* (Oxford, 1998), introduction, argues that royal entries should be regarded as collective celebrations of a ritual kind.

³⁹ Vale, *Edward III*, 67–8.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 73–4. Note that the lawyers are represented by a banner ‘with a bende of grene / With thre hedis white-herede with howes [hoods] one lofte, / Croked full craftyly and kembid in the nekke’: *Wynnere and Wastoure*, ed. S. Trigg (Early English Text Society, ccxcvii, Oxford, 1990), lines 149–51. See above, n. 19, for the possible symbolism of green, and below for the representation of law by lawyers (here, of course, it is lawyers themselves who are being represented, but it is interesting that the poet presents them as ‘ledis of this londe that schold oure lawes zeme [protect]’ (line 152), as if the upholding of law was a public and professional matter).

⁴¹ The theme of Advent, and the resulting field of christological associations, is particularly emphasised in Kipling, *Enter the King*, ch. 1 and *passim*. The free-flowing wines could also have been a eucharistic symbol.

London with Richard II, angels come down from a stage in the Cheap, and place jewelled crowns on the king's head; in 1415, at the post-Agincourt celebrations, there are angels, patriarchs, prophets and virgins (probably representing virtues); in 1429, at Henry VI's coronation pageant, there is a tower full of angels, and a castle set up at the Cheap, where 'great worship' was shown to the king; in 1445, to celebrate Henry's wedding, 'there was shewed and made many devises and storyes, with angeles and other hevenly thinges'.⁴²

Where fuller descriptions of these pageants exist, they reveal a more complex picture. The civic reception accorded to Henry VI on his return from his French coronation in 1432, for example, is unusually well-documented, because Lydgate wrote a poem for the occasion which was evidently circulated and appears in a number of London chronicles. The overall theme is not dissimilar from the examples above: a succession of virtues greet the king and bestow their gifts upon him; suitably equipped, he arrives at depictions of himself (a child king supported by Mercy and Truth), and of his rights and powers (a castle of jasper, bearing the royal family trees of England and France; the Jesse tree, to establish the parallels between royal and heavenly dynasties; a throne, surrounded by angels; and, at Westminster, the sceptre of Saint Edward).⁴³ Two features strike me as particularly interesting. One is a scene in which seven virgins bring forward elements of royal costume, assigning meanings to each. What is thought-provoking here is that, while crown, sceptre and sword come first (and the orb does not appear), mantle, shield, helm and girdle are also featured and bear equal importance (prudence, faith, health and love, respectively). Clearly, the devisers of the pageant needed seven items of clothing in order to use the seven virgins trope, which was useful because of the biblical parable, with its echo of the three theological and four cardinal virtues,⁴⁴ but this usage raises an interesting question about the symbolic stability and pre-eminence of crowns and sceptres: perhaps it was less than we imagine.⁴⁵ The second interesting feature is the tableau in which the infant king, supported by Mercy and Truth, is shown justice. Justice is symbolised by two judges, each with eight serjeants (the latter instantly recognisable to an audience, as a result of their distinctive robes and coifs). These appear 'ffor comune profyte, doom, and Rihtwysnesse' (i.e. common profit/weal, judgement and justice) and to symbolise how a good king loves equity and right. Although equity still generally carried a sense of merciful and prudent judgement unbound by the precise terms of human law, the language and imagery here tie the king quite closely to official, standard and routine justice. This is not a total trans-

⁴² These brief details and quotations from *The Brut or the Chronicles of England*, ed. F.W.D. Brie, 2 vols in 1 (Early English Text Society, orig. ser., cxxxi and cxxvii, London, 1906–8), 347–8, 380, 451, 489. For detailed analysis of these pageants, see Kipling, *Enter the King*, 11–19 (1392) and ch. 5 (1415); R. Osberg, 'The Jesse Tree in the 1432 London Entry of Henry VI', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, xvi (1986), 213–31; B. Crow, 'Lydgate's 1445 Pageant for Queen Margaret', *English Language Notes*, xviii (1980–81), 170–4.

⁴³ *Chronicles of London*, ed. C.L. Kingsford (Oxford, 1905), 97–116.

⁴⁴ In fact, the seven qualities mentioned do not correspond exactly to these.

⁴⁵ J. Burden, 'Rituals of Royalty: Prescription, Politics and Practice in English Coronation and Royal Funeral Rituals, c. 1327 – c. 1485' (University of York Ph.D. thesis, 2000), 75–91 comments on the variety in the positioning and content of the regalia in rituals, tombs and illustrations of the king.

formation of his theoretical or real position in the polity, but it is a foretaste of a later fifteenth-century trend towards seeing justice in exclusively legalistic and official terms.⁴⁶ Here – and possibly for reasons of general urban policy – there *is* an assertion of the pre-eminence of public and official authority.

(iii) *Officers*

To what extent were the central officers of the king, or state, visually identified as such? The answer seems to be surprisingly little. Officers were sworn in, sometimes, as in the case of the chancellor, with quite an elaborate ceremony.⁴⁷ Few of them seem to have had badges of office, however, and some of them (especially household officers) even lacked patents of appointment which would otherwise have conferred a rather utilitarian kind of distinctiveness.⁴⁸ Robes were widely distributed to the king's men, but it seems unlikely that – at least until the fifteenth century – these had any particular official quality: they were, rather more, an archaic payment in kind and a traditional signifier of a lord-man relationship – grants of cloth, not the issuing of a uniform.⁴⁹ In some respects, this may be surprising. From the later fourteenth century, dress was increasingly the object of regulation, and by the end of the century the lords in parliament, for example, had begun both to differentiate themselves from the rest, by the wearing of trimmed scarlet gowns, and to signal their own internal hierarchy by varying the numbers of bars of white fur which made up the trimmings.⁵⁰ But almost the only distinctively dressed officers at the centre were the judges and serjeants-at-law, and John Baker's researches into them raise some interesting points about contemporary attitudes to official costume.⁵¹ (Plate 49) In many ways, it was the serjeants-at-law, the members of an essentially independent mystery, or trade-guild, who had the uniform, while the judges seem to have dressed slightly differently only to distinguish themselves from the serjeants from whose ranks they had been drawn. Fortescue neatly captures the flavour of the distinction between judges and serjeants in his 1468 work on the laws of England: after a lengthy chapter on the ceremonies which accompanied the creation of serjeants, he added a rather shorter treatment of the judges, including the observation that 'a

⁴⁶ E.W. Ives, *The Common Lawyers of Pre-Reformation England* (Cambridge, 1983), chs III.10–III.11.

⁴⁷ In the fourteenth century, the chancellor sat on the throne in Westminster Hall, was given the seal by the king, and swore his oath: Colvin and Taylor, *King's Works*, i, 544.

⁴⁸ The only example of an officer of central government with a tangible (and basically non-functional) symbol of office that I can think of is the steward of the household, who carried a staff: A.R. Myers (ed.), *The Household of Edward IV* (Manchester, 1959), 142. The officers of corporations, however, commonly carried symbols of office: P.C. Madder, *Violence and Social Order: East Anglia, 1422–1442* (Oxford, 1992), 179, lists swords and maces among the mayor's paraphernalia in fifteenth-century Norwich, for example.

⁴⁹ Those permitted to receive the king's 'livere de drap' in 1401, for example, were listed by the commons in parliament as his menials, officers, councillors, judges of each bench, chancery clerks, barons of the exchequer and counsellors learned in the law (*Rotuli Parliamentorum*, iii, 477–8). See F. Lachaud, 'Liveries of Robes in England, c. 1200 – c. 1300', *English Historical Review*, cxi (1996), 279–98, for a discussion of the nature of livery of cloth in this period.

⁵⁰ M. Keen, *English Society in the Later Middle Ages, 1348–1500* (London, 1990), ch. 1; R.G. Davies and J.H. Denton (eds), *The English Parliament in the Middle Ages* (Manchester, 1981), 115–16, 159.

⁵¹ *The Order of Serjeants-at-Law* (Selden Society, suppl. ser., v, London, 1984).

justice so created shall not make an entertainment, solemnity, or any feast at the time of his taking office and dignity, for they are not any sort of degree in the faculty of law, but are only an office and magistracy, terminable at the will of the king'.⁵² In fact, Fortescue went on to recommend to the king that the judges' robes be made more splendid, so as to advertise the majesty of the law, but for him it is clearly their participation in the legal profession that justifies their distinctive dress and not the well-established convention that they were the king's delegates in the sphere of justice. Baker adds that other contemporaries believed that the serjeants should wear their uniform, with its white coif and brightly coloured tabard (often in striped cloth, which the judges were not to wear), because (a) it would help them remember their calling, with its high standards of truthfulness; (b) it made them easily identifiable in Westminster Hall, so that members of the public with legal business to transact could easily engage them; and (c) it signified their possession of the highest degree in the legal profession.⁵³ From all this, two points emerge with particular clarity. One is that, before the later fifteenth century, the king had no real interest in using clothes or other insignia to set his officers apart from other men. The second is that association with the king was not regarded as a reason for distinctive dress. Both points seem to me to raise questions about the extent to which government service was distinguished from the other activities of society at this time and thus, in turn, to distance us from any sense of a differentiated state.⁵⁴

(iv) *Brief conclusions*

Insofar as I have been looking at the right kind of things, it seems possible to suggest that the visual presentation of authority at the centre in the later middle ages was overwhelmingly royal, personal and sacral where there were any signs of contrivance, and pretty perfunctory, or functional, where there were not. Almost nowhere did kings and their agents set out to project a visual sense of power as routine, representative, communal, or official – the sorts of characteristics we associate with the state. It is possible to suggest that this impression would have been created within the space of Westminster Hall and its immediate environs, and to add that to an extent this seems to have been the work of officers themselves (thinking here of the column with treasurers' arms, the practices surrounding the use of the king's throne and the seating arrangements in Common Pleas), but this creation was essentially inadvertent – only the sculptures over the doorway from the Exchequer into the Hall reflect some acknowledgement of the building's official function on the part of its owner, and they are modest, possibly even humorous.

⁵² Fortescue, ed. Lockwood, 74.

⁵³ Baker, *Order of Serjeants*, 67. (a) finds an echo in Ptolemy of Lucca's observations on the importance of the royal image being stamped on coins (*On the Government of Rulers*, ed. J.M. Blythe (Philadelphia, 1997), 2.13.6), and also perhaps in the wearing of their lords' arms by messengers, including royal ones: see below at n. 78, and M. Hill, *The King's Messengers, 1199–1377* (London, 1961), 42–3.

⁵⁴ Cf. the interesting discussion of the 'partial differentiation' developing in early modern England by M. Braddick, 'The Early Modern State and the Question of Differentiation, from 1500 to 1700', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 38, 1 (1996), 92–111.

Until the end of the period, changes over time seem to have been relatively limited too. It is perhaps worth pointing out that late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century kings seem to have been less interested in wall-paintings than their thirteenth- and early-fourteenth-century predecessors, and that – possibly as a result of mere fashion – this robbed them of one particular medium for presenting a complex but readable visual account of power. They could, and did, cover their walls with tapestries, but a lot of these appear to have been of a formulaic kind, shaped by the general aristocratic tastes to which Flemish producers catered. Heraldic devices were commonly woven in, and now and again one gets the sense of a commissioned work with a particular intended resonance, as perhaps in the case of Henry VI's series on the vices and virtues, or his set of Lancastrian portraits.⁵⁵ On the whole, however, it seems that while Renaissance popes commissioned frescoes with complex political allegories, English kings and their leading subjects contented themselves with the stereotypical tapestry images of hunting, or ancient martiality.

There are some developments which merit some attention, even so. One is the spread of the arms and badges of the royal family across royal palaces, which is particularly marked under Henry IV and Henry VII.⁵⁶ To some extent, this must relate to the insecure status of these usurper kings, and their anxiety to associate their family insignia with the royal arms. These arms had themselves begun as the family arms of the house of Plantagenet, of course, and Henry III, who made so much of them, and displayed them with the more 'national-royal' arms of Sts Edward and Edmund, was only the grandson of the usurper, after all. At the same time, the increasing labelling of things royal with 'national-royal' and Tudor badges reflects a thickening of the visual (and, in fact, linguistic) texture of rule which becomes steadily more apparent as the period progresses and may therefore relate to general changes in political culture.⁵⁷ Huizinga argued long ago that signs and forms were multiplying to create an environment of great visual and signficatory complexity by the fifteenth century, and the sober evidence of accumulating means and materials of display – mass-produced images, new ceramic goods, including glazed tiles engraved with armorial bearings, badges themselves, printed books, and, from the end of the century, cheaply produced woodcuts – tends to bear this out.⁵⁸ Moralists

⁵⁵ S. McKendrick, 'Tapestries from the Low Countries in England during the Fifteenth Century', in C. Barron and N. Saul (eds), *England and the Low Countries in the Later Middle Ages* (Stroud, 1995), 43–60.

⁵⁶ See Colvin and Taylor, *King's Works*, ii, 935, for Henry IV's badge- and motto-laden window at Eltham; meanwhile, Richard Marks comments that the use of Tudor badges and dynastic paraphernalia in the windows and fabric of Henry VII's chapel at Westminster – and, in fact, in other buildings of his – is quite unprecedented in scale: 'The Glazing of Henry VII's Chapel', in Thompson (ed.), *Reign of Henry VII*, 157–74, esp. 168–9.

⁵⁷ For the spread of Tudor roses from 1485 onwards, see Anglo, *Images of Tudor Kingship*, 35ff and 80–2.

⁵⁸ J. Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth, 1955), 193–4, 237–8; N. Ramsay, 'Artists, Craftsmen and Design in England, 1200–1400', in Alexander and Binski (eds), *Age of Chivalry*, 49–54, esp. 54, and A. Payne, 'Medieval Heraldry', in *ibid.*, 55–9; E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* (New Haven and London, 1992), 155–6; P. Cartney, 'The Tyranny of Constructs: Some Thoughts on Periodisation and Culture Change', in D. Gaimster and P. Stampler (eds), *The Age of Transition: The Archaeology of English Culture, 1400–1600* (Society for Medieval Archaeology,

such as Erasmus made reference to this new profusion of media: the Renaissance prince should learn virtue from all possible sources, ‘now by a fable, now by example, now by maxims, now by a proverb. They should be engraved upon rings, painted in pictures, appended to wreaths of honour.’⁵⁹ The fifteenth-century expansion of the media of communication is a development needing much fuller exploration than it can be given here, but it seems reasonable to suggest that it was as part of this movement, that the crown itself began to demonstrate its property and presence more widely.

Second, there seems to have been some development of more official/representative images of rule, in particular senators, one of whom – for example – appears in the 1501 pageant welcoming Katharine of Aragon as ‘policy’, which seems to mean a fairly organised and expert kind of counsel in this context.⁶⁰ Senatorial imagery can be more easily documented in speech and writing than in pictures, and it would be easy to overstate its importance, but it is possible that not only was there a more extensive depiction of rule as the fifteenth century came to an end, but there was also a wider range of kinds of rule represented. Certainly, the kinds of imperial/senatorial/political rule which are more commonly discussed in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century present a more state-like image of government than the discourses of royal government in the period beforehand.⁶¹ Once again, however, there is generally speaking a gap between the visual presentation of authority and its presentation in language.

The State in the Locality

‘Ye be a justice of the peace and I would that you would keep the peace!’
(Shouted by a woman of the Knyvet family, from the battlements of a Norfolk castle, to a JP who was trying to gain entry.)⁶²

Few historians of this period would disagree that, notwithstanding the famous compromise between public-royal and seigneurial power represented by the term ‘bastard feudalism’, there was some kind of state-like organisation in the later medieval localities and some conceptualisation of it, even if the legitimacy which attached

monograph 15, Oxford, 1997), 9–23, esp. 18 (for a ‘ceramic revolution’ in the fifteenth century); D. Gaimster and B. Nenk, ‘English Households in Transition, c. 1450–1550: The Ceramic Evidence’, in *ibid.*, 171–95, esp. 181–2, for glazed tiles bearing the royal arms, from Henry VII’s reign onwards, with one or two earlier royal examples; C.F. Richmond, ‘The Visual Culture of Fifteenth-Century England’, in A.J. Pollard (ed.), *The Wars of the Roses* (Basingstoke, 1995), 186–209, esp. 193, for woodcuts, oddly absent from England until the turn of the century.

⁵⁹ *The Education of a Christian Prince*, by Desiderius Erasmus, ed. L.K. Born (New York, 1936), 145.

⁶⁰ *Chronicles of London*, ed. Kingsford, 237; discussed in Watts, ‘Newe ffundacion of is crowne’, 50.

⁶¹ I have addressed this question in an article entitled ‘“The Policie in Christen Remes”: Bishop Russell’s Parliamentary Sermons of 1483–4’, to be published in a festschrift for Cliff Davies, edited by S.J. Gunn and G.W. Bernard. See Pastoureau, ‘L’Etat et Son Image’, 227 for a linkage between the multiplication of images and the emergence of states, though he sites both phenomena in the twelfth century.

⁶² *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1461–67*, 67.

to such phenomena as the law and the discharge of office was often counterbalanced by other kinds of legitimacy (the interests of local order, the natural authority of lords, the virtues of negotiated settlements, loyalty to neighbours and families, historical claims, notions of convenience and reason etc.).⁶³ The boundaries between public and private were policed in various ways – by oaths and rules of conduct for officers, by the general tendency of the central government to oversee and defend its local agencies, and so on – though the kings of this period were far from unaware of the realities of local power. The question in this section of the paper is: to what extent was this acknowledged distinction projected visually? What, if anything, did the crown do to demarcate its mainly unpaid and often voluntary local officers and agents from what were coming to be known as ‘comen persons’?⁶⁴

(i) *Buildings*

To an extent, local government had a physical centre, at least at county level. Many counties still possessed a royal castle in working order which was entrusted to each sheriff annually as part of his commission. This building would serve as the sheriff’s offices (where his staff worked, where rolls, records and confiscated goods were kept, and where payments were made) as well as the county gaol and the venue for meetings of the county court. In other words, there was a tendency to concentrate the discharge of the sheriff’s more static functions in a single place (and in counties where the castle was unusable, there would usually be a designated shire-house). Interestingly enough, the same location was also a typical, though not exclusive, venue for the activities of other royal officers besides the sheriff – and this was sometimes at royal command, as well as on the grounds of convenience. Quarter sessions would tend to meet at least once per year in such a venue, and in 1326, the Norfolk assize justices were ordered to hold their assizes in ‘the shirehouse in the fee of Norwich castle and nowhere else within the city’.⁶⁵ Arrangements could be a great deal more flexible than this, of course: there is evidence of assizes being heard in the open air, for example (at the marble cross, in Earley, Berkshire, for example) and a 1503 reading on the JPs includes rules for (e.g.) holding sessions simultaneously in two different parts of the same town by a minimum of two justices in each case.⁶⁶ Equally, a large part of the activity of all royal officers was, of course, performed peripatetically. But it is interesting that there was also a recognised governmental centre, or depot, and occasionally we get some insight into its appearance. In 1392–93, for

⁶³ E.g., in different ways, C. Carpenter, *Locality and Polity: A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society, 1401–1499* (Cambridge, 1992), 281–91, Ormrod, *Political Life in England*, ch. 6.

⁶⁴ Quotation from *Early Treatises on the Practice of the JPs in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, ed. B.H. Putnam (Oxford, 1924), 338. For an example of the kind of issue which arose on these boundaries, see the section of Marowe’s 1503 reading on the powers of JPs, which deals with the question of how long a putative peacebreaker can be detained in the houses of a JP, a gaoler and a sheriff: *ibid.*, 337.

⁶⁵ M.H. Mills, ‘The Medieval Shire House’, in J.C. Davies (ed.), *Studies Presented to Hilary Jenkinson* (London, 1957), 254–71; also *Proceedings before the JPs in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, ed. B.H. Putnam (London, 1938), cxi.

⁶⁶ M.M. Taylor, ‘Justices of Assize’, in J.F. Willard and W.A. Morris (eds), *The English Government at Work, 1327–36*, 3 vols (1940–50), iii, 219–57, esp. 234; *Early Treatises*, ed. Putnam, 363.

example, the shire house at Northampton (here called the ‘aula justic’ – ‘hall of justice’ or ‘hall of justices’) contained two abacuses, railed off; some benches; eighteen chests, tables and various writs; scales for weighing pennies; and pouches for carrying messages.⁶⁷ There is nothing very exciting there, perhaps, but the furnishing of county offices could have some interesting implications. During the riot which disrupted sessions of the peace at Bedford courthouse in 1439, for example, Lord Fanhope jumped on a table described as ‘the cheker borde afore the benche’.⁶⁸ We know that sheriffs collected monies on particular days and in a place commonly called ‘the sheriff’s exchequer’: possibly after the model at Westminster, possibly after local copies of the table itself, which was, of course, an accounting device.⁶⁹ Evidently, for the 1439 sessions of the peace, the exchequer table was still set out, and placed in what appears to have been a position of significance in front of the justices. This could be a coincidence, but given that the Court of Common Pleas also had an apparently unnecessary exchequer table placed before it, it is just possible that the table was, as suggested above, a symbol of royal/governmental authority, that it stamped a symbolic value on the proceedings of sheriffs and other crown officers.⁷⁰

So there may have been *some* sense of a defined space for the exercise of government, but it seems at best very rudimentary and is possibly only casual anyway.⁷¹ Investigations of the format of – as an example – JPs’ sessions suggests that the accent was more on routine than on ritual: there was very little of the kind of sententiousness which might have drawn upon, or inspired, royal symbolism in the surroundings (and no evidence that I have come across of portable paraphernalia beyond the most functional kinds, with the arguable exception of a bible for the purpose of taking oaths).⁷² Philippa Maddern remarks that ‘the law-courts of the middle ages constituted an openly visible demonstration of legitimate authority’: it strikes me as revealing that the royal part in this legitimate authority was relatively little advertised.⁷³ It may be that it was the legitimacy of due process (in which the correct royal authorisation of course played a part) and the legitimacy of communal judgement that really counted for contemporaries. If this is so, it raises the possibility that while the agencies of government had come to be woven into the social

⁶⁷ Mills, ‘Medieval Shire House’, 257–8.

⁶⁸ *Proceedings*, ed. Putman, cxi.

⁶⁹ Mills, ‘Medieval Shire House’, 256.

⁷⁰ Above, p. 249. Paul Brand has pointed out to me that when King’s Bench itinerated, it took its bars and benches with it, even though it could presumably have operated perfectly well without them (this raises the possibility that these bore some kind of decoration – arms, or whatever – which we now know nothing about).

⁷¹ Although see Maddern, *Violence and Social Order*, 179, for fascinating evidence that the burgesses of Norwich distinguished between the royal spaces in the town and their own territory.

⁷² There was a set procedure for opening the sessions, but there is nothing particularly striking about its language, form or visual content. The JPs’ clerk ordered the crier to shout ‘Oiez’ twice and to tell those with business before the JPs to come forward and swear oaths to proceed honestly etc. These oaths were the main opening business of the sessions, and they, the Bible and perhaps the references in them to doing the king’s business and keeping the king’s counsel supplied the necessary authority for the sessions to proceed. See *Early Treatises*, ed. Putnam, 53–4.

⁷³ Maddern, *Violence and Social Order*, 65.



Plate 49. The Court of Common Pleas from the Whaddon MS, Inner Temple, London. Photograph by A.C. Cooper Ltd, London. Reproduced by permission of the Masters of the Bench of the Inner Temple

fabric of the localities, it was their combination of rationality and social reality, rather than their association with the crown, that was their most important feature. If 'the state' asserts the linkages between central authority and an incorporated public, then neither these agencies nor their royal co-ordinator were particularly state-like.

(ii) *Officers*

If we repeat the question posed above, concerning the central officers, we get the same answer, with the single exception that everyone who acted locally for the crown in a formal capacity was given a patent, or commission of some kind. Apart from royal messengers, royal serjeants and yeomen of the crown – all full-time employees, coming in from outside the county and acting on special royal business – there is no evidence of the king's local officers having uniforms, staffs or badges of office.⁷⁴ Given that many of these offices were held only for a short duration and widely rotated (e.g. tax-collector, special commissioner of oyer and terminer), that some of them were elected locally (e.g. customs collectors) and that there was a spectrum of public obligations upon all subjects, in which service in a royal office was only a particularly elaborate and onerous example, this is not perhaps surprising. On the other hand, royal offices generally carried the obligation of swearing an oath before other officers and most involved the holder in activities which, if he were not a royal officer, would have been controversial. It would thus have been relatively straightforward, and, one would have thought, desirable, to ordain the transfer of some kind of badge or other insignia at the beginning and end of the period of office. Why did this not happen?

Beyond the possibility that it simply would not have occurred to the crown to signal the official status of its part-time agents, three possible reasons suggest themselves. One is that the dependence of government on the willing participation of essentially aristocratic and independent powers was all too obvious: that the crown knew that it was to a certain extent the local and, in a sense, private standing of most of its agents which enabled them to act, and that there was consequently nothing to be gained by pointing up the (temporary) distinction between these men and their peers or neighbours. (And, making the point from the other direction, it might be argued that the tradition of local men performing offices of one kind or another on behalf of the crown was so ancient and well-established that it would have seemed inappropriate to redefine the relationship as, in a sense, a servile one: the crown had more to lose than its subjects by replacing the sense that such services were voluntary and honourable with the fiction that they were conducted at the king's pleasure and will alone.) A second point is that, if challenged, the king's officers and agents were always in a position to show their commissions. Once again, it appears that it was through the discreet and defensive medium of written authority that the English state preferred to proceed. A third point is that the crown could apparently rely on networks of local knowledge to advertise who its officers were: a glance at any of the

⁷⁴ The king's messengers carried specially designed pouches marked with the royal arms and also wore the same arms on their left shoulders (Hill, *King's Messengers*, 32).

fifteenth-century gentry correspondences makes it clear that people knew who was appointed to do what (and often who was up for consideration or replacement).⁷⁵ In fact, all three of these themes are apparent in the records of the scenes at Silsoe in 1437, when Lord Fanhope's men attempted to hold sessions of a special oyer and terminer commission, which they had obtained, in a town belonging to Lord Grey.⁷⁶ As Fanhope's men settled themselves by the church, Grey appeared and demanded to know what they were doing. Their reply was 'that they had come to sit there by force of the king's commission, directed to them and other persons, the which they showed him'. Grey urbanely said that he would remain nearby to see what they did, but one of his men observed that 'they who had a commission now might be without one on another occasion'. Shortly afterwards another special commissioner, who was rather more friendly to the Grey faction, arrived at the scene. This prompted Grey's man to remark, 'Fitz is come – one of the justices of the peace in the quorum – and the said Lord Grey and he shall hold this day sessions here and inquire as well for the king as for you.' This proposal was rejected – partly because it was the bias of the local bench against them which had led Fanhope's supporters to obtain their commission in the first place – but the episode illustrates the subtle dialogue between public authority and private power, and the instrumental way that local men handled its routines.⁷⁷ Clearer demarcation of that public (and royal) authority could only have disturbed the social working of that dialogue.

(iii) *Coins, seals, badges*

Coins and seals have been widely discussed as icons of central power distributed throughout the realm – the seal, in particular, has been identified as a major factor in Henry II's 'routinisation of charisma' – and I do not have much to add here.⁷⁸ It seems likely that their universal circulation is more important, in both cases, than what they actually bore stamped on them; though the basic design of each (king's head, sometimes figure, and name on coins; king fighting and judging on seals) cannot be without significance, and Paul Binski has shown that Henry III's substitution of a sceptre for the sword on the judgement side of his seal was noted and mocked by a contemporary observer.⁷⁹ If anyone paused to read them, coin and seal

⁷⁵ E.g. *The Paston Letters*, ed. J.D. Gairdner, Library edn, 6 vols (London, 1904), ii, 79–80, 180–2, 186.

⁷⁶ *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England*, ed. N.H. Nicolas, 6 vols (London, 1834–37), v, 35–9.

⁷⁷ Interestingly, although the crown bestirred itself to discover why its commission had been defied, and although the weight of the evidence made the Grey faction culpable, the long-term response was actually to *strengthen* Grey representation on the local bench, presumably as a recognition of how the balance of local power still lay and as an attempt to discourage further displays by the *parvenu* Fanhope.

⁷⁸ M.T. Clanchy, *England and its Rulers, 1066–1272*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1998), 109. Note that Ptolemy of Lucca was saying something very similar about coins as early as the fourteenth century: *On the Government of Rulers*, ed. Blythe, 2.13.5, 8.

⁷⁹ Binski, 'Hierarchies and Orders', 77–9. On the whole, neither coin nor seal images changed very substantially in this period (imperial crowns were added to coins under Henry VII; heraldic materials were introduced to the seal from Edward II's reign, and there was a general trend in favour of more elaborate images: e.g. in the depiction of thrones and robes: above, n. 26). A possible excep-

images would have projected the personal authority of the king, but because they were so widely and casually circulated, it seems unlikely that they had any impact on people's perceptions of kingship itself. If anything, they must have contributed to the sense of living in a single political community; and the seal, as the image of its government which was most commonly used in a governmental context, must have generated a sense of royal authority as both standard and routine, and legalistic and literate. Rather as Michael Clanchy has suggested, it probably should be seen as the pre-eminent visual representation of later medieval political authority.

What about badges, closely related to the questions of uniform and visual differentiation discussed above? These became a common means of expressing associations of service and lordship in the later fourteenth century.⁸⁰ Here the crown had perhaps been an innovator: Henry III's royal messengers wore an 'R', for 'Rex', embroidered on their collars, and there are many examples of royal badges from the early and middle fourteenth century – a crowned R; a crowned lion passant guardant; a sun in splendour (temp. Edward I – Edward II); a star in crescent (a royal symbol 1189–1307, but popular as a badge, c. 1400) – though their purpose is uncertain.⁸¹ Later in the century, as the use of badges became more widespread, kings seem to have developed personal devices, as well as the more generic ones associated with the crown, the most famous examples being Richard II's badge of the white hart, the Lancastrian collar (really necklace) of eses and the Tudor red roses and (really Beaufort) portcullises.⁸² These personal badges seem to have been used mainly for distribution to personal servants: Richard II's private army of retainers in 1387–88 and during the 1390s; Henry IV's Duchy of Lancaster retinue. As Helen Castor has recently argued, Richard's following seems to have been regarded as essentially unacceptable: it might be quite proper for a king to have a personal badge as a sign of particular devotion to this or that ideal, or saint, or place or whatever; it was quite clearly improper for him (as for other men) to make it into the insignia of

tion is the addition of a frieze on the second seal of Henry IV (1408–13), supposedly depicting (*inter alia*) Henry III's favourite saints (Edward the Confessor and Edmund king and martyr) and symbolising the usurper's descent from the Angevin kings (see Steane, *Archaeology of Monarchy*, 29–30).

⁸⁰ N. Saul, 'The Commons and the Abolition of Badges', *Parliamentary History*, 9 (1990), 302–15. Note that, historically, they had connotations of the marking of property, which may help to explain some of the outcry against them (servants becoming commodities): *ibid.*, 308; Anglo, *Images of Tudor Kingship*, 35.

⁸¹ Hill, *King's Messengers*, 28: this experiment was soon abandoned, apparently. For the badges, see Steane, *Archaeology of Monarchy*, pls 78, 79, 82. These items are not discussed in the text. The star-in-crescent is described as a livery which the king gives to yeomen and valets in a parliamentary petition which calls for its non-use in 1401 (*Rotulari Parliamentorum*, iii, 477–8).

⁸² Edward IV's use of the sun-in-splendour as his personal badge may well reflect a desire to rehabilitate an established royal symbol and thus to project a sense of belonging to the true and ancient royal line. There is a parallel here with the attempts of Henry III, in his works at Westminster, and Henry IV, in his novel great seal, to project continuity and propriety where, in reality, there was rupture (above, nn. 21, 79). For the Lancastrian collar, see D. Fletcher, 'The Lancastrian Collar of Eses: its Origins and Transformations down the Centuries', in J.L. Gillespie (ed.), *The Age of Richard II* (Stroud, 1997), 191–204. Despite the interesting hostility of Yorkist kings, the collar of eses gradually became an official symbol of the crown, as demonstrated by its incorporation in the regalia of the mayor of London in the sixteenth century.

a private retinue.⁸³ The legitimacy of the Lancastrian retinue was also questionable once its head became king (though in the wake of the usurpation, legitimacy was in short supply in any case), and, from early in the new reign, royal badge-giving was subject to legal restrictions which, broadly speaking, limited it to decorative and curial purposes. A petition of perhaps 1400, brought to light by Nigel Saul, fascinatingly makes reference to how 'all the people of your said realm used to be ruled and governed *loialement* [lawfully?] well and peaceably, as a *comyn entier* [single community?]', but that the introduction of badges (explicitly distinguished from livery of cloth), by the king and other lords, had introduced '*desseverance* [division?] and maintenance'.⁸⁴ Drawing this together, it seems plausible to suggest that attempts by the crown to create a visually distinct body of servants were greeted with dismay (possibly even surprise) in the period when these attempts were first made, that it seemed an initiative indistinguishable from the more-or-less private activities of lords, and that the response of political society was to restrict badge-giving to the domestic sphere, in which, in fact, the king most closely resembled other lords. Royal badge-giving and retinue-creating cannot therefore be read as an attempt to create an officer cadre, and it was not part of the visual representation of the state.

Or not at this time. One reason for going into detail about badge-giving is that it seems to occupy a different place in the polity of the later fifteenth century, and one more closely related to our topic. Royal agents, administrators and retainers swelled in numbers from the middle years of the century, and their royal identity seems to have been more clearly marked – albeit, in the first place, with 'official' rather than 'personal' markings. Yeomen of the crown seem to have worn silver-gilt crown badges when they were on royal business (evidence from the 1440s and later), and serjeants-at-arms to have worn crowns embroidered on their sleeves (evidence again from the 1440s).⁸⁵ A little later, Henry VII seems to have set about fusing together the different traditions of official and personal service to the crown, announcing that the retaining of all his subjects was reserved to him (1502, but back-projected to 1485); insisting that his estate officers should not be retained by anyone else (1487); and licensing them to wear, and distribute, Tudor badges (1504, but endorsing earlier practice).⁸⁶ Since, at the same time, the king was the holder of very extensive lands and virtually all other retaining was outlawed, the effect of all this must have been quite dramatic. If in the first place, it was a relatively unreflective response to the peculiar circumstances of the reign (usurpation, a massive royal estate, apparent public sympathy for schemes to protect the integrity of the judicial system and to

⁸³ *The King, the Crown and the Duchy of Lancaster* (Oxford, 2000), ch. 1 and *passim*.

⁸⁴ Saul, 'Abolition', p. 314: my translation.

⁸⁵ R. Horrox, *Richard III: A Study in Service* (Cambridge, 1989), 245ff; Maddern, *Violence and Social Order*, 196–7.

⁸⁶ J.M.W. Bean, *From Lord to Patron: Lordship in Late Medieval England* (Manchester, 1989), 223–4; D. Lockett, 'Crown Office and Licensed Retinues in the Reign of Henry VII', in R.E. Archer and S.K. Walker (eds), *Rulers and Ruled in Late Medieval England* (London, 1995), 223–38. An act of 1487 also forbade anyone to retain the king's tenants (Bean, *Lord to Patron*, 220). The king's tenants were a large group by 1485. The act also obliged them to answer only his summons and to do so 'always in the king's livery or sign'.

improve royal independence), it was also perhaps the beginning of a new pattern of authority. In the wake of the Wars of the Roses, there developed different attitudes to royal retaining and to the role of office, and the Tudor roses, which became so ubiquitous among the governing classes of sixteenth-century England, came rapidly to be more than just the personal badge of the ruling family. Is it too much to see them as the first logoes of a newly defined and confidently decorated state?⁸⁷

Conclusions

The main thing to conclude from this paper is that the visual representation of those elements of later medieval English government which approach the sense of a 'state' was distinctly thin – and interestingly so, given the relative richness of their linguistic identity and the magnitude of their political impact. It seems that, inasmuch as an English state existed in this period, it was still, *d'après* Michael Clanchy and Rees Davies, principally a written, recorded and routine affair. Its offices and activities were conceptualised, but – in a way – they were *only* conceptualised: they were made real by individuals whose self-presentation, particularly in visual terms, was principally personal. The signs of kings became the signs of kingship, became to a point the signs of state, but all by an unguided process and with continual refreshment of the personal element at the very top. Where towns across Europe displayed the mixture of monarchy and collectivity through which they were governed, the English crown did not proclaim its own *dominium politicum et regale* in a visual fashion; even its purely royal element was comparatively understated, and the tone of its presentation more celebratory than instructive. Was this because of the relatively restricted circle in direct contact with the king himself? Perhaps the Tudors' use of imagery provides an answer. Towards the end of the period, things were beginning to change – the thickening volume of language, the mounting interest in politics, the consequences of the mid-fifteenth-century crisis, the exigencies of Tudor dynasticism, the desire to govern more directly and continuously a larger number of people, all these may have conspired to produce a more clearly delineated and self-dramatic government for both centre and localities. 'Into the common people things sooner enter by the eyes than by the ears,' wrote Richard Morison in the 1530s, 'remembering more better that they see than that they hear';⁸⁸ his words reflect the new predicaments of a Tudor government in direct and deepening contact with a wider range of people. That government, its self-signification and its reception by its subjects take us much closer to the idea of a state than the regimes it succeeded.

⁸⁷ Above, n. 57.

⁸⁸ S.B. House, 'Literature, Drama and Politics', in D. MacCulloch (ed.), *The Reign of Henry VIII* (Basingstoke, 1995), 181–201, esp. 187.

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