

# The Image and Perception of Monarchy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe



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in Medieval and Early Modern Europe

Edited by

Sean McGlynn and Elena Woodacre

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P U B L I S H I N G

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The editors would also like to thank Cambridge Scholars Press for publishing the collection and for their enthusiasm about the proposed volume from the onset, with special mention to Carol Koulikourdi. Thanks also to Maddy McGlynn for typesetting the manuscript. Finally, a warm note of appreciation for our contributors for their efforts and their willingness to contribute their excellent scholarship to this collection. We were extremely fortunate that there was a plethora of wonderful papers from the conference; indeed it would have been ideal if we had been able to publish the entire proceedings. While this format limits us to a brief selection, we feel that this volume offers a coherent group of papers which demonstrates the high calibre of research on offer at the inaugural Kings & Queens conference and in the field of Royal Studies itself.

Sean McGlynn & Elena Woodacre  
April 2014

# INTRODUCTION

Monarchy – whether contemporary or historical – never ceases to elicit interest from the public. For some in academia, the study of kings and queens is an outmoded avenue of research that reflects the preoccupations of past ages rather than of the modern one looking to the future. But monarchy is so central to our understanding of the past that to bypass it is to compound our historical ignorance. As this collection demonstrates, there is no lack of vitality in monarchical studies and much important work is being done. Indeed, the research atmosphere is much more resilient and vibrant than might be expected.

In 2011, the editors discussed how monarchical studies tended to polarise around gender – focusing on either kings or queens – and period – either medieval or early modern – and that this was a barrier to dialogue between historians that served to limit our understanding of the larger phenomenon of monarchy by sectioning off whole areas into, as it were, autarkic sovereign states. We undertook to bring kings and queens together (as befitted the importance of royal couples) in a conference that encompassed both the medieval and early modern eras. We initially planned for a small-scale colloquium of between ten and twelve speakers, and perhaps as many as fifteen. When the responses to the call for papers started coming in, we quickly realised that we had tapped into a large reservoir of scholarly activity that indicated the need for a major platform. When the conference occurred a year later, there were some seventy papers delivered by scholars and researchers from all around the world. Such was the interest that the Kings and Queens conference has subsequently become an annual event with Kings and Queens 2 and 3 hosted by the University of Winchester; plans are currently in the works to host future conferences in the series in Europe and North America. The success of the first conference has also led to the creation of the Royal Studies Network<sup>1</sup> and the peer-reviewed e-journal, the *Royal Studies Journal*, to provide further outlets for sharing research in the field.

The inaugural (as it turned out) conference took place in April 2012 in the splendid and wholly appropriate setting of the historic stately home of Corsham Court in Wiltshire: among its justifiably famous picture

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<sup>1</sup> [www.royalstudiesnetwork.org](http://www.royalstudiesnetwork.org)<<http://www.royalstudiesnetwork.org>>

collection hang an allegorical portrait of Queen Elizabeth I and a huge equestrian portrait of King Charles I by van Dyck. (Lord Methuen delighted delegates by kindly leading a private evening viewing of the collection.) Elena Woodacre co-ordinated closely with the extremely helpful staff at Corsham Court to ensure the smooth running of the conference. The only disturbance came from the occasional cries of the peacocks parading through Capability Brown's gardens.

From the broad range of stimulating papers delivered, a few are presented here on the focused theme of image and perception of monarchy. Part One groups papers under 'Personality and Politics'; Part Two under 'Perceptions of Power'; Part Three under 'Image and Gender'; and Part Four under 'Ceremony and Memory'. Throughout, we are reminded that the image and perception of monarchy are not merely superficial or aesthetic matters but designed always to translate into practical politics and projections of power that are very real and ultimately tangible.

Beyond the four main sub-themes of this collection, a number of connecting threads can be drawn between the papers in this volume. One of these threads is the courtly context of monarchy, the home of ceremonial and politics, where the image of the ruler is honed and displayed. José Manuel Nieto Soria's insightful examination of the ceremonial of the late medieval Castilian court highlights the importance of ceremonial to the practice of monarchy through a very detailed discussion of the typology of ceremonies performed in the Castilian court under the influential Trastámara dynasty. While Nieto Soria's paper covers a range of ceremonial practices, from daily rituals to annual ritual and life cycle events, Lucinda Dean's paper focuses on a particular type of ceremony: coronation. Dean examines the impact that the repeated accession of minors had in medieval and early modern Scotland and how the ceremony of coronation not only reinforced the somewhat precarious authority of the new child ruler but also how it attempted to provide dynastic continuity and stability after the untimely death of kings.

Dynastic continuity forms a focus of Elizabeth Tingle's study of monuments to memory in early modern Brittany. She shows how burial places and commemorative strategies adopted by rulers were central to political patronage, propaganda and the legitimacy of dynastic power: mausolea and permanent chantries were designed to draw heavenly power down on the corporeal remains of ancestors to confirm the authority of deceased rulers who remained physically present in their communities after death. Thus, following the incorporation of Brittany into the French kingdom between 1489 and 1532, Tingle argues that the presence of the

royal and ducal dead contributed significantly to the legitimisation of French royal authority. This appeal to the past was equally strong in early medieval times, as Olivier de Laborderie demonstrates in his paper on establishing the reasons for King Egbert being regarded as the first monarch of England as perceived through thirteenth-century historiographical, explaining why Alfred the Great, promoted by that century's greatest chronicler Matthew Paris, was no longer deemed *protomonarcha Anglie*. He questions what this meant for the conception of royal legitimacy and insights of the 'reconstruction' of the English past, as well as what it tells us about the perceptions of royal power in the late 13th century.

A further connecting thread is the female aspect of monarchy; several papers in this collection examine the crucial role of both reigning and consort queens and the means through which they attempted to create their own image of power and authority. Zita Rohr's paper connects with what is perhaps the most fundamental aspect of queenship - motherhood. Rohr contrasts the divergent images of Yolande of Aragon and her contemporary Isabeau of Bavaria; while Yolande was a cultured and savvy political operator whom Charles VII referred to as his '*bonne mère*' (or good mother), Charles' biological mother Isabeau was perceived as an incapable regent, mired in corruption, affairs and willing to sell the birthright of her son to France's enemy. Anna Whitelock also examines an interesting divergence between the image and reality of the body of Elizabeth I. Whitelock highlights the incredible importance placed on protecting the physical body of Elizabeth I from illness, threats of assassination and the onslaught of aging. This last element proved impossible to combat completely and required the efforts of Elizabeth's ladies-in-waiting to carefully construct the image of an ever-youthful and regal Gloriana while the queen's physical corpus was deteriorating over time.

Woodacre's paper also examines reigning queens, but instead of looking at the physical body of the female rulers of Navarre, this paper examines how the queens and their male consorts were represented in their cartulary, seals and coins. Like Whitelock, Woodacre notes a distinct difference between the image crafted and presented in the official documentation and coinage of these medieval Navarrese queens and the reality of their reigns. Nadia van Pelt also examines the presentation of the image of a queen to her subjects, but via a ceremonial civic entry, rather than through the circulation of documents and coins. Anne of Denmark's visit to Wells is the subject of van Pelt's investigation; she notes the interaction of the queen with the city and the memory of the event through accounts of the royal entry and celebratory displays put on to welcome the

queen. Though not a queen, Margaret of York wielded considerable power, wealth and influence as the Duchess of Burgundy in the late fifteenth century. Erica O'Brien also demonstrates how female rulers such as Margaret were able to craft a particular image of themselves, but instead of using makeup and costume as Elizabeth I, the documents and coinage of the Navarrese queens or civic entries as in the example of Anne of Denmark, O'Brien looks at the vehicle of artistic patronage. This paper examines the portrayal of Margaret of York in manuscript illustrations and demonstrates through an analysis of the commission and artwork how it creates an image of the Duchess as a pious and devoted wife and a powerful patron.

The royal male of the species was no less concerned with his image. Sean McGlynn explores King Philip II of France's negative image as a reluctant warrior. The cautious and introspective Philip Augustus, though an outstanding military commander, had the great misfortune to reign at the same time as Richard the Lionheart, the epitome of macho-man chivalry. The contrasts in their leadership styles were cruelly and perhaps unfairly exposed during their involvement on the Third Crusade, much to Philip's detriment. McGlynn contests that Philip's alternative mode of military leadership was arguably more effective in the long run than Richard's, but this failed to excite the writers of the time who remained enamoured by Richard's more colourful exploits. The king's role as *miles* (knight) as being paramount to his prestige held firmly into the early modern period as Glenn Richardson shows. He compares four young monarchs in the early sixteenth century – Henry VIII, Francis I, Charles V and, innovatively, the emperor Babur – to offer new perspectives on maleness in European Renaissance monarchy, taking a comparative approach and looking beyond Europe to the Ottoman and Mughal empires. It brings into focus more explicitly than has been done for some time the issue of kingship as a specifically gendered, masculine, and not just neutral, form of authority expressed through personal dress, adornments, pursuits and public attributes - and, of course, rampant rivalry.

When the king was incapable of fulfilling his role, trouble inevitably ensued and much royal responsibility was placed into the hands of the queen. Two papers explore the consequences of the impact of mental instability suffered by a reigning king. Pursuing the widely understood metaphor of the realm or society as a human body, Rachel Gibbons explores the responses of France to the illness of Charles VI the Mad, whose crippling bouts of mental illness dominated French political life, leading to unstable periods of temporary regency, civil war between princely factions and (arguably) to the invasion by Henry V in 1415.

Gibbons shows how in perception and reality the health of the monarch was inextricably intertwined with the health of the Commonwealth, and that sickness in the royal body meant ill-health in the Body Politic. Alison Basil pursues the metaphor to demonstrate that this was the same for the England of Henry VI, when Margaret of Anjou was compelled to assert her authority in the name of her incapacitated husband. Henry inherited his own mental problems and, despite the reticence of chroniclers on the matter (unlike in France), the results reflected badly on the image of monarchy. Here, though, Basil argues that the issue was addressed in terms of inversion of the king's and queen's gender roles, with the enfeebled and emasculated Henry supplanted in the natural order of things by his more masculine wife. Though Margaret had little choice but to wear the trousers in the relationship, these enduring images damaged both their reputations.

Access to the monarch was central to government. Michael Hicks reveals the extent and reality of personal monarchy in late fifteenth-century England. As the medieval world was giving way to the early modern one, the nature of monarchy was not radically changing. For all the bureaucracy, councils and ministers of the time, informal channels and backstairs politics retained their importance. Hicks sheds a revealing light into this unofficial world and explores how rulers maintained control of this aspect and perception of personal monarchy. Moving eastwards to central Europe, Natalia Neverova investigates the access of diplomats to the emperor in the court of Rudolf II. These ambassadors eagerly reported back to their own monarchs on their perceptions of the moody and changeable emperor. Concentrating on the reports of the Venetian, French, Muscovite and papal embassies, Neverova is able to construct a fascinating image of a frequently evasive emperor and offers plausible explanations for his seemingly dismissive treatment of important ambassadors.

The most frequent observation from delegates after the conference was how the bringing together of research into both kings and queens for both the medieval and early modern periods made them more aware of the connections and continuities in monarchy across gender and time. It is hoped that some of these connections and continuities – as well as a few interesting dissimilarities – will be gleaned from this volume.



**PART I**

**POLITICS AND PERSONALITIES**

## CHAPTER ONE

# WHAT WAS PERSONAL ABOUT PERSONAL MONARCHY IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY?

MICHAEL HICKS

As Miranda's junior assistant, I was the lowest-ranking human being at *Runway*. However, if access is power, then Emily and I were the two most powerful people in fashion. We determined who got meetings, when they were scheduled (early morning was always preferred because people's makeup and their clothes were unwrinkled) and whose messages got named (if your name wasn't on the *Bulletin*, you didn't exist).

So when either of us needed help, the rest of the staff were obliged to pull through. Yes, of course there was something disconcerting in the realisation that if we didn't work for Miranda Priestly, these same people would have no compunction in running over us with their chauffeured Town Cars. As it was, when called upon, they ran and fetched and retrieved for us like well-trained puppies.<sup>1</sup>

Late medieval England was a monarchy. Monarchy is the most personal system of government. Monarchy meant the rule of a single individual who ruled and decided by himself or herself. The reality was always somewhat different, if only because every monarch needed others to execute his or her demands. A royal decision in his chamber was relayed through the chain of warranty – from the signet office to the privy seal office to chancery, checked and re-checked – before it was implemented. That all governmental acts were in the king's name, that all courts were the king's courts, and that all prosecutions were in the name of the king (*Rex v*), did not mean that they were products of the royal will in the sense that the king personally authorised them all.<sup>2</sup> One-man government was not feasible in the sophisticated polity that was late

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<sup>1</sup> L. Weisberger, *The Devil Wears Prada*, Broadway Books, London, 2003, 314-15.

<sup>2</sup> This is the thrust of J. Watts, *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship*, Cambridge UP, Cambridge, 1996.

medieval England. Apart from kings too young to govern, the rule of even adult kings such as those between 1422 and 1509 often appears bureaucratic rather than personal. This paper seeks to expose the personal elements of royal rule.

Theoretically government and therefore monarchy existed for the benefit of the governed. Royal powers needed therefore to be wielded reasonably, with proper consultation, and not arbitrarily or tyrannically.<sup>3</sup> England was a mixed monarchy, in which the king's capacity to coerce was limited. The cooperation of leading subjects was essential to implement decisions in the provinces, which further tempered royal authority. Kings were expected to seek out advice – which they could reject – but were expected also to listen to unpalatable advice and to act on it. Moreover kings were subject to the same divine judgement as anyone else – reason of state and pragmatism were no excuse. When Edward IV died, his committed councillor the Crowland Continuator squirmed excruciatingly to reconcile the king's sins of the flesh with his own desire that his late master should be saved.<sup>4</sup> Even Crowland recoiled from describing Edward's destruction of his brother: 'a fact most horrible', wrote Vergil, 'the worst example that any man could remember'.<sup>5</sup> *The Arrival of Edward IV* recorded the king's perjury in 1471 – his declaration that he was just returning for his duchy – like Henry of Bolingbroke before him.<sup>6</sup> Edward's false assurances were the necessary political price for survival and victory. Any Yorkshiremen so naive as to be deceived were simply unrealistic. Paris, to misquote Henri IV of France, was worth a mass.<sup>7</sup> Henry IV's execution of Archbishop Richard Scrope (St Richard) in 1405 and Edward IV's despatch of those Lancastrians extracted on safe conduct from Tewkesbury Abbey in 1471, though justified to themselves

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<sup>3</sup> J. Fortescue, 'The Governance of England', in *The Politics of Fifteenth Century England: John Vale's Book*, ed. M. Kekewich, C. Richmond. A. Sutton, L. Visser-Fuchs and J. Watts, Richard III and Yorkist History Trust [hereafter RYHT], Stroud, 1995, 227-8, 243-8.

<sup>4</sup> *The Crowland Abbey Chronicles 1459-86*, ed. N. Pronay, RYHT, Gloucester, 1986, 150-3 [hereafter *Crowland*].

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* 144-5; *Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English History*, ed. H. Ellis, Camden Society, vol. xxix, 1844, 167.

<sup>6</sup> *The Arrivall of Edward IV*, ed. J. Bruce, Camden Society, vol. i, 1838, 3-5; *Chronicles of the Revolution, 1397-1400*, ed. C. Given-Wilson, Manchester UP, 1993, 110; M. Hicks, 'The Yorkshire Perjuries of Henry Bolingbroke in 1399 Revisited', *Northern History*, vol. xlvi, 2009, 31-41.

<sup>7</sup> E. Dickerman, 'The Conversion of Henry IV: "Paris Is Well Worth a Mass" in Psychological Perspectives', *Catholic Historical Review*, vol. lxxiii, 1977, 1-13.

on pragmatic grounds, were nevertheless gross offences against God.<sup>8</sup> And of course what Edward IV did in 1471 to Henry VI (if he did) and what Richard III did in 1483 to the Princes in the Tower (if he did) were acts of regicide, martyrdom and infanticide. Kings of course never slew their victims in person. That menial task was undertaken by agents, so Thomas More alleged, such as Edward's brother Richard Duke of Gloucester or Sir James Tyrell (and even the latter supposedly delegated it to John Deighton and Miles Forest), but it was the kings who issued the commands who were nevertheless responsible and who shared in the sin.<sup>9</sup> Forgiving too easily, as Henry VI repeatedly did to Richard Duke of York (d. 1460) and other magnates and as Edward IV did to Henry Duke of Somerset (d. 1464), may have been errors of political judgement,<sup>10</sup> but at least they were not sinful. Apparently Edward IV was reluctant in 1478 to execute his condemned brother Clarence,<sup>11</sup> but he authorised it just the same. Whatever other powers Henry VI was prepared to relinquish, he always insisted on his prerogative of mercy.<sup>12</sup> Kings themselves were protected and assisted in their office by the laws of treason and by the allegiance and obedience due from all subjects regardless of the king's personal merits and defects.

Government was carried on in the king's name. It was the monarch himself who was meant to decide new policies, new initiatives, or any actions beyond the routine. The vast public records at the National Archives testify to the large bureaucracies at Westminster where permanent staff were absorbed by time-honoured duties defined by conventions, such as how chancery letters should be dated. Much responsibility was delegated – chancellors traditionally appointed to livings below a certain value and agreed the sheriffs for the coming year in conjunction with the treasurer, royal justices, and exchequer barons.<sup>13</sup> Government ran unless told to stop – and an amazing variety of out of date

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<sup>8</sup> Witness the miracles 'for his worthi clerke', *The Brut or the Chronicles of England*, ed. F. Brie, Early English Text Society, vols. 131, 136, 1908, 367; D. Pirovsky, *Martyrs in the Making: Political Martyrdom in Late Medieval England*, Boydell, Basingstoke, 2008, 64; *Death and Dissent: Two Fifteenth-Century Chronicles*, ed. L. Matheson, Boydell, Woodbridge, 1999, 113-14.

<sup>9</sup> T. More, *History of King Richard III*, ed. R. Sylvester, Yale UP, New Haven, Connecticut, 1963, 8, 83-5.

<sup>10</sup> As Charles Ross said: see C. Ross, *Edward IV*, Eyre Methuen, London, 1974, 52; also M. Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*, Yale UP, London, 2010, 78, 146-7.

<sup>11</sup> *Crowland*, 147; Vergil, *English History*, 168.

<sup>12</sup> Hicks, *Wars*, 78, 114, 158.

<sup>13</sup> A. Brown, *The Governance of England 1272-1461*, Edward Arnold, London, 1989, 144.

practices, such as the call of the pipe, final concords, tallies, and use of court-hand endured for centuries after 1485. Even the king's New Year's gifts were probably routine.<sup>14</sup> Coordination of the central departments was provided by the council of officials that met several times a week. Only departures from the routine, such as chasing up on potential wardships in 1422, tighter accounting in the late 1440s, and improved Yorkist estate management,<sup>15</sup> demonstrate to modern historians the decisions that had been taken. Such developments are hard to detect and even more difficult to attribute to their prime-mover: to a minister, to the council, or to the king. Much of the king's patronage was exercised by his heads of department. Bills of the chief butler, military commanders and treasurer authorised appointments under the great seal, of butlers in particular ports, of custodies of wards, of leases and protections.<sup>16</sup> Admittedly many thousands of warrants for the great seal (C 81), writs to the exchequer barons (E 208) and warrants for issue (E 404) initiated actions, but most were mediated through writs of privy seal which effectively conceal where the underlying decision was taken. Only a minority of signet letters and initialled petitions are traceable directly to the king. The problem is that actions in the king's name need not indicate any personal involvement by the king. If it is too far to say that nothing was begun by Henry VI,<sup>17</sup> the truth lies somewhere in between.

Most government actions were demanded by subjects, individuals or groups. They first petitioned, by word of mouth or in writing, set out what they wanted, and often enough were the first to inform the king what he had to give. If they did not ask for what they sought – and ask forcefully – they could not secure it. Often they were importunate and unmannerly in

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<sup>14</sup> J.Lutkin, 'Luxury and Display in Silver and Gold at the Court of Henry IV', *English and Continental Perspectives*, ed. L. Clark, in *Fifteenth Century 9*, Boydell, Woodbridge, 2010,167-8; for a parallel, see Weisberger, *Devil Wears Prada*, 54.

<sup>15</sup> C. Carpenter, 'The Lesser Landowners and the Inquisitions Post Mortem', *The Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions Post Mortem: A Companion*, ed. M. Hicks, Boydell, Woodbridge, 2012, 57 ; G. Harriss, 'Marmaduke Lumley and the Exchequer Crisis of 1446-9', *Aspects of Late Medieval Government and Society*, ed. J. Rowe, University of Toronto Press, Buffalo, Canada, 1986), 152-64 ;B. Wolffe, *The Royal Demesne in English History*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1971, 157-68, 172.

<sup>16</sup> TNA, C 81; L. Clark, 'The Benefits and Burdens of Office: Henry Bourghier (1408-83), Viscount Bourghier and Earl of Essex, and the Treasurership of the Exchequer', *Profit, Piety and the Professions in Later Medieval England*, ed. M. Hicks, Alan Sutton, Gloucester, 1990, 125-7.

<sup>17</sup> See M. Hicks, 'Henry VI: A Misjudged King', *History Today*, vol. 61 no. 1, 2010.

asking.<sup>18</sup> Here began the chain of warranty. Many thousands of petitions came to the king each year. Sixteen a day were approved by Henry VII:<sup>19</sup> how many failed? At least some petitioners appealed directly to the king's known preferences, like those who invoked the Resurrection or Christ's Passion to Henry VI.<sup>20</sup> Petitions suffered one of three fates: rejection, in which case they are forever lost; rewritten in correct form as signet letters and despatched along the chain of warranty (generally via the privy seal office, most of whose records are lost) to chancery, exchequer, law courts, or other officers, the originals being discarded; or initialled (with the king's sign manual), becoming signed bills and despatched direct to chancery. It is the signed bills now among the warrants for the great seal (C 81) which best reveal to us what the king actually saw. If endorsed, they can illuminate what he decided himself. Notes on many bills of the late 1450s bear respectful recommendations to King Henry about what should be done. These reveal that Henry VI did indeed make the decision, could moreover reject a request, but also perhaps that some sifting had already occurred before the supplication reached him. Any he did reject have disappeared. Only those he accepted, in whole or in part, survive.<sup>21</sup> Kings from Henry VI to James I complained of the importable burden of petitions.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps in the 1450s this was normal. In 1470 Sir John Fortescue proposed formal conciliar review of requests before they ever reached King Henry VI,<sup>23</sup> who found it difficult to refuse, yet whose prerogative to decide was beyond question. This was why suppliants strove to short-circuit the proper channels and bring themselves to the king's notice, intercepting him at prayer, on horseback, and as he moved around his palace.

Influencing the king demanded access to him, which was strictly controlled. We know the geography of the household from which he ruled: his hall, chapel, great chamber, bedchamber, oratory. It was his home and his environment, where his basic needs – to eat, drink, dress, pray, travel, sleep and relax – were met by a host of menial offices (kitchen, butteries, bakery), chapels, stables and mews, and the suite of rooms that accommodated his court. In the most splendid and costly style, the royal household was the greatest spending department of the era and employed

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<sup>18</sup> M. Hicks, 'Attainder, Resumption and Coercion 1461-1529', *Parliamentary History*, vol. iii, 1984, 16.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>20</sup> *CPR 1446-52*, 461; Hicks, *Wars*, 127.

<sup>21</sup> Hicks, *Wars*, 127-8.

<sup>22</sup> Hicks, 'Attainder', 16.

<sup>23</sup> *John Vale's Book*, 223.

550 of the king's servants.<sup>24</sup> There was a prescribed route from the world outside to the king to the verge of court, policed only by a porter, to the great hall ruled by the marshal and usher, and hence through the sequence of spaces beyond as far as the king himself – great chamber, chamber, bedchamber – each with their own genteel staff of knights, esquires, and gentlemen.<sup>25</sup> A key role was to shield the king from suitors, a function that enhanced their own rights of access, their role as potential intermediaries for others, and their capacity to protect themselves against complaints.<sup>26</sup> They acted as a series of filters, permitting fewer and fewer outsiders to penetrate each successive royal apartment. Such courtiers sought to restrict royal patronage to themselves or those whose cases they promoted. Their intercession for others had a market value: they might have to be paid to exercise it.<sup>27</sup> Household ordinances reveal how many staff there were in each location, how they were deployed, and to some extent what they were meant to do.<sup>28</sup> John Russell's *Book of Nurture* reminds us of etiquette and precedence.<sup>29</sup>

The royal day was punctuated by church services and meals, the menu and much else by the Christian ritual calendar, with times set aside for recreation and audiences, which we would love to know. The most formal occasions are depicted in illuminations of the presentations of books by the earl of Shrewsbury, Earl Rivers, Lord Herbert and the chronicler John Waurin to the king, always seated on his throne and attended by his courtiers and high nobility.<sup>30</sup> From the fifteenth-century there survive heraldic accounts of formal ceremonial occasions – banquets, creations, marriages, funerals and re-interments, coronations – that gave precedence to queens, princesses and other ladies, royal children and cousins, honorary officers and mere courtiers.<sup>31</sup> Such formal audiences did not

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<sup>24</sup> A. Myers, *The Household of Edward IV*, Manchester UP, 1959, especially at 88 ; D. Morgan, 'The King's Affinity in the Polity of Yorkist England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5<sup>th</sup> series, vol. xxiii, 1973, 2-4.

<sup>25</sup> Myers, *Household*, 76-197.

<sup>26</sup> I. Harvey, *Jack Cade's Rebellion of 1450*, Oxford UP, 1991, 187, 189.

<sup>27</sup> E.g. Clark, 'Henry Bourghier', 124.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. Myers, *Household*, 104-7.

<sup>29</sup> J. Russell, *A Book of Nurture*, ed. F. Furnivall, Roxburghe Club, London, 1867.

<sup>30</sup> E.g. P. Tudor-Craig, *Richard III*, National Portrait Gallery, London, 1973, pl.18; A. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs, *Richard III's Books*, Alan Sutton, Stroud, 1997, 34, pl.x; M. Hicks, *Edward V: The Prince in the Tower*, Tempus, Stroud, 2003, pl.49.

<sup>31</sup> E.g. *The Brut*, 445-7; *Excerpta Historica*, ed. S. Bentley, London, 1831, 171-215; 223-81 ; 'The Narrative of the Marriage of Richard, Duke of York, with Anne of Norfolk, the Matrimonial Feast and the Grand Justing', *Illustrations of Ancient State and Chivalry*, ed. W. Black, Roxburghe Club, 1840; *The Herald's Memoir*

occupy all a king's waking hours: worship, relaxation, recreation and other intimate settings offered access and opportunities to his immediate attendants. Household and court were a world apart from the masculine worlds of the House of Lords, local government, and civil war.

The chief officers, the steward and chamberlain of the household, were knights or increasingly peers, often indeed becoming peers in consequence. Some people had access automatically by right of rank. This applied to a powerful duke whom Henry VI would have preferred to exclude and Edward IV's lord treasurer who enjoyed an audience with his nephew the king every morning.<sup>32</sup> Courtiers on the spot, those who lived with the king, could exercise influence out of proportion to their standing, such as the king's confessor Bishop William Aiscough or Henry VIII's secretary Thomas More.<sup>33</sup> Such paradoxes still apply: American presidents often prefer to listen to their National Security Advisers rather than to their Secretaries of State, English Prime Ministers have kitchen cabinets, and secretaries of state harken to their advisers before their civil servants. In 2013 Monsignor Georg Gänswein became prefect of the pontifical household to Pope Benedict XVI:

'a job that puts him in charge of arranging all the Pope's public and private audiences. At the same time, he will continue as the Pope's private secretary, giving him even greater influence over the 85-year-old Pontiff... He describes his job as being a window on the world for the Pope ... [Already] the person closest to the Pope, he has become the most influential man in the Roman Curia'.<sup>34</sup>

This phenomenon is also faithfully portrayed in Lauren Weisberger's *The Devil Wears Prada*. Although on the bottom rung in rank and seniority, Miranda Presley's two personal assistants determined who met

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*1486-90: Court Ceremony, Royal Progress and Rebellion*, ed. E. Cavell, RYHT, Stroud, 2010. For an overview, see K. Afford, 'Precedence at Royal Court: Ceremonies of rites of passage during the Wars of the Roses', unpublished Winchester MA dissertation (2011).

<sup>32</sup> Clark, 'Henry Bourgchier', 128; *Henry VI: A Reprint of John Blacman's Memoir*, ed. M. James, Cambridge UP, Cambridge, 1919, 38.

<sup>33</sup> J. Guy, *The Public Career of Sir Thomas More*, Harvester, Brighton, 1980, 16; B. Wolffe, *Henry VI*, Eyre Methuen, London, 1981, 104; R. Lovatt, 'A Collector of Apocryphal Anecdotes: John Blacman Revisited', *Property and Politics*, ed. A. Pollard, Alan Sutton, Gloucester, 1984, 175.

<sup>34</sup> *The Times*, 17 January 2013.

with or were connected to the general editor and therefore wielded disproportionate power within their organisation.<sup>35</sup>

In the fifteenth century even great magnates and provincial notables depended on the introductions or mediation from those who did have access – ministers, household officers, and courtiers. The Yorkshire knight William Plumpton is documented both seeking the support of such superiors as Richard Duke of Gloucester and the king's chamberlain and receiving in turn numerous solicitations from those humbler in rank than themselves.<sup>36</sup> Most of those seeking provisos of exemption from the 1467 act of resumption had their bills presented to the king for signature by one of 22 ministers, household officials, and peers.<sup>37</sup> Suitors for favours, personal like Plumpton or corporate like the Mercers' Company of London,<sup>38</sup> had to use intermediaries to push their policies or urge their cases to the king. Probably already, like their Elizabethan and Jacobean counterparts,<sup>39</sup> suitors had to pay their intermediaries for the services. This is a topic still to be explored in the fifteenth century.

Jack Cade's rebels protested that access to the king was barred by those against whom they wished to complain.<sup>40</sup> They meant king's household men of genteel rather than noble birth, who were what Sir John Fortescue meant when he said they could not advise him,<sup>41</sup> yet advise him they did. In the last resort the king heard whoever he chose and chose to attend to those he found agreeable. Doubtless they were the flatterers denounced by critics who preferred the honest counsel man-to-man that no king can have appreciated.<sup>42</sup> Although Edward IV was the most affable of kings, it was not genuine informality, but rather a deliberate act of policy when the king entertained the mayor and aldermen of London or when he advanced Alderman Thomas Cook and others to knighthood.<sup>43</sup> About 1480

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<sup>35</sup> Weisberger, *The Devil Wears Prada*, 314-15, quoted above, n.1.

<sup>36</sup> *The Plumpton Letters and Papers*, ed. J. Kirby, Camden 5<sup>th</sup> series, vol. viii, 1996, 52; M. Hicks, *English Political Culture in the Fifteenth Century*, Routledge, London, 2002, 155-60.

<sup>37</sup> M. Hicks, *False, Fleeting, Perjur'd Clarence*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., Davenant Press, Burford, 2014, 33.

<sup>38</sup> *Acts of Court of the Mercers' Company 1453-1527*, ed. L. Lyell and F. Watney, Cambridge UP, Cambridge, 1936, 155; *Plumpton L and P*, 52.

<sup>39</sup> J. Hurstfield, *Freedom, Corruption and Government in Elizabethan England*, Cape, London, 1973, 142-3, 151, 156.

<sup>40</sup> Harvey, *Jack Cade's Rebellion*, 187, 189.

<sup>41</sup> *John Vale's Book*, 223.

<sup>42</sup> *The Courts of Europe: Politics, Patronage and Royalty, 1400-1800*, ed. A. Dickens, Thames and Hudson, London, 1977, 33-5.

<sup>43</sup> P. Kendall, *The Yorkist Age*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1962, 154, 156.

John Risley was literally privileged to chat with the king and to obtain his advice.<sup>44</sup>

Studying queens is now fashionable. Queens had intercessionary and compassionate functions and the most intimate of opportunities to press their case with the monarch, regrettably unrecorded. Of course such relations were somewhat formal. Just as courtiers of King Louis XIV knew that king and queen had sex twice a month because she took communion the next morning,<sup>45</sup> so too in late medieval England. King and queen had separate households: they had to commute to sleep together. When Richard III eschewed the queen's bed, everybody knew of it.<sup>46</sup> Three noble widows needed Edward's personal interest to get their rights. To secure their audience, they needed access: access that was provided to Edward IV's future queen by the chamberlain of his household, on terms that he ensured were implemented first. Inevitably the audience was public, in the presence of courtiers. Any assignation or promise to wed in the present tense had witnesses – perhaps including Bishop Stillington as Lord Privy Seal – but King Edward IV counted on their silence which (if true) was honoured for twenty years. If the king bedded the lady, even if the act itself was unobserved, the fact was known. A king cannot have ridden wholly unobserved to Grafton Regis, slept with her secretly in a hunting lodge, nor, as legend tells, have inseminated Elizabeth Wydeville completely privately.<sup>47</sup>

Kings had their own priorities in patronage. We know the efforts that Henry VI made to endow his Tudor brothers and Edward IV his sisters-in-law<sup>48</sup> and how Edward I, Edward III, and Edward IV manipulated the marriage market to advantage their closest kin.<sup>49</sup> Did Edward I have a policy towards the earls<sup>50</sup> – or Edward III or Edward IV? Most patronage however originated from suitors who identified vacancies, knew what in his gift they wanted and asked for it, often no doubt informing the king in the process of rewards of which he was hitherto unaware. Heightened

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<sup>44</sup> M. Hicks, 'The Last Days of Elizabeth Countess of Oxford', *English Historical Review*, vol. xciii, 1988, 88.

<sup>45</sup> N. Mitford, *The Sun King*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1966, 114-15.

<sup>46</sup> *Crowland*, 174-5.

<sup>47</sup> Hicks, *Edward V*, 28-40.

<sup>48</sup> R. Griffiths and R. Thomas, *The Making of the Tudor Dynasty*, Alan Sutton, Gloucester, 1985, 34-5; Hicks, *Clarence*, 33, 36; *The White Queen*, BBC 1, 2013, programme 1.

<sup>49</sup> Hicks, *Clarence*, 33; *Edward V*, 128-30, 132-4; K. McFarlane, 'Had Edward I a Policy towards the Earls?', *History*, vol. 50, 1965, 145-59, esp. 148, 156-8.

<sup>50</sup> McFarlane, 'Had Edward I a 'Policy' towards the Earls?', 145-59.

precedence among peers of the same rank was apparently conceived by the Beauforts as something Henry VI could bestow.<sup>51</sup> Such petitions were considered on their merits and the valuation placed by the king on the beneficiary, perhaps in conjunction with competitors, but probably not in the broader context of patronage and royal finances as a whole. Normally for service done and to be done, grants were permanent or for life, only occasionally for pleasure, but the fifteenth-century acts of resumption offered opportunities to review past patronage in the light of current performance and re-assessment of the recipient's usefulness. The signet office maintained records of all patronage that could inform Edward IV and Richard III wherever they were. Edward IV continued most grants, but refused some provisos of exemption in whole or in part, to express his displeasure and reduced valuation or for strategic reasons, e.g. to restore the unity of the prince's appanage or to transfer responsibilities elsewhere. He balanced the services of his clients against those to be offered by ex-Lancastrians if restored. First Edward met with those previously patronised to establish what they had, to decide what they might keep, and then initialled their formal proviso of exemption, sometimes further restricting what they were allowed to retain.<sup>52</sup> This was one of the ways in which Edward IV learnt the names and circumstances of everyone's standing everywhere that Crowland states he retained in his capacious memory.<sup>53</sup>

Another way was through homage. All significant landholders and many insignificant ones held property in chief of the king. Their numbers slowly expanded: whenever property was partitioned among coheirs, the king insisted that all held something in chief, directly of the king, so that they and their heirs owed lordship and potentially wardship to the king.<sup>54</sup> Whenever a tenant-in-chief died, an inquisition post mortem was held to find the heir. A chancery writ directed the taking of the heir's oath of fealty, usually by the escheator of a county where property was held, occasionally by a nominee of the heir, and often ordered delivery of seisin of the property. Fealty was routine and was taken only once. Homage, however, was not routine, and all kings insisted on taking it in person.<sup>55</sup> It was a solemn ceremony that kings apparently believed created a highly personal contract of loyalty with the feudal tenant. As the king was seldom to hand, homage was respited – performance of homage was not postponed

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<sup>51</sup> E.g. TNA, C 49/52/6.

<sup>52</sup> Hicks, 'Attainder', 23-4.

<sup>53</sup> *Crowland*, 152-3.

<sup>54</sup> E.g. *Calendar of Fine Rolls 1485-1509*.

<sup>55</sup> *CFR 1485-1509*, nos. 184, 186-7.

by the tenant, but by the crown – and a church festival was set for performance: Christmas, the Nativity of St John the Baptist, Easter, Michaelmas, All Saints.<sup>56</sup> Major festivals should have been marked by a particularly crowded court at which tenants in chief solemnly pledged themselves to the king. Sometimes this may have happened. But respite of homage did not constitute an appointment. Instead the tenant solicited a writ from the privy seal office to the king's chamberlain, who introduced him to the king and certified the homage by endorsing the writ – the chamberlain's signature authorising the letter close to deliver seisin.<sup>57</sup> In practice the precise date was determined by the writ and that was sought – and served – on dates convenient to the often obscure countryman who had to take the time and expense to attend court. Seldom however was it as straightforward as this. The homage of Henry Husy, son of Henry Husy, was respited to Easter 1384, but he performed homage on 29 May; John Cressy the elder, cousin and heir of Hugh Mortimer, was due at Michaelmas 1404, but performed on 27 December; and Ralph heir of his cousin Robert Woodford performed in 1459 homage respited to All Saints, 1456.<sup>58</sup> From the tenant, of course, the important thing was to secure seisin and, apparently, homage could wait. Further respites were common. John Langton, for instance, took eight years to perform homage (1433-41), John Forster seven years (1437-44), James Luttrell twelve years (1437-49), John Joye ten years (1456-66), and John Lord Audley thirteen years (1459-72).<sup>59</sup> Some, for whom no delivery of seisin was ever ordered, probably died first. Such protracted delays suggest a perception of the ceremony amongst tenants in chief significantly different from the king. For them homage was an inconvenient, even pointless, bureaucratic routine rather than the majestic pledging of loyalty that kings so valued.

On occasion Edward forced the great to exchange their grants or geographical sphere of influence. His own brother Clarence lost first the county of Chester in the 1460s, the Gournay lands in the West Country in 1471, and then his principal seat at Tutbury in 1473, to his great displeasure.<sup>60</sup> To enhance the prince's control over Wales, William Herbert II was obliged to accept the earldom of Huntingdon in lieu of that of Pembroke, certainly not at his desire, whilst John Neville belittled as a

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid 1383-91, 38, 60; 1391-1401, 132-3; 1399-1405, 245; 1452-61, 36, 87.

<sup>57</sup> The procedure is deduced from the files of certificates of homage, e.g. PSO1/61.

<sup>58</sup> TNA PSO 1/61/1, 7; PSO 1/64/33; *CFR 1383-91*, 253; *1399-1405*, 245; *1452-61*, 160.

<sup>59</sup> *CFR 1430-7*, 137-40; *1437-45*, 4, 288; *1452-61*, 156; TNA PSO 1/64/9, 43, 46; PSO 1/63/46.

<sup>60</sup> Hicks, *Clarence*, 23, 121, 134-5.

‘magpie’s nest’ the enforced exchange of a marquise and lands in Devon for his noble earldom of Northumberland.<sup>61</sup> Edward seriously miscalculated here. He had intended to retain Neville’s services and instead alienated him, to his own disastrous cost. Towards the end of his life Crowland reports that Edward could confront his greatest subjects with their offences to their faces,<sup>62</sup> but he did not always opt to do so. He knew how his brother Gloucester had terrified the aged countess of Oxford into surrendering her inheritance to him, but he declined to right this wrong.<sup>63</sup> The dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk were also amongst those he chose not to take on in person, though he pressured William Brandon, Norfolk’s eminence grise.<sup>64</sup> How far did New Year’s gifts indicate the reality of royal favour rather than mere routine?

The royal will is deduced primarily from royal actions sifted or deduced from the acres of parchment consumed by the central departments. Scarcely anything regrettably survives from the signet office and the chamber where the king actually lived and where key decisions were made. The surviving warrants for the privy seal correspond to two of Richard III’s unique signet registers, initiating what became letters patent and letters close and privy seal letters to other departments.<sup>65</sup> McFarlane long ago remarked how Henry V’s signet letters brought out the terse and direct flavour of a king who was definitely in command.<sup>66</sup>

Almost nothing of Richard III’s third register – out letters to addressees beyond government – survives as original documents. Even Richard III’s third register contains nothing like Henry VI’s letters to Richard Duke of York that start briefly *Cousin*<sup>67</sup> – an informal and intimate style of address that occurs almost nowhere else.<sup>68</sup> There are no such letters recorded in Harleian Manuscript 433, yet there must have been many of this kind. Of such letters, apparently, no copy was ever kept. Perhaps letters signed by the king, rather than sealed, were not so registered. None of the in-letters to kings exist except those that became

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<sup>61</sup> Hicks, *Edward V*, 113-14; *Death and Dissent*, 104.

<sup>62</sup> *Crowland*, 146-7.

<sup>63</sup> Hicks, ‘Countess of Oxford’, 88.

<sup>64</sup> Ross, *Edward IV*, 305; *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century*, ed. N. Davis, Oxford UP, 1971, i, 544; Hicks, ‘Countess of Oxford’, 88.

<sup>65</sup> *British Library Harleian MS 433*, eds. R. Horrox and P. Hammond, 4 vols., RYHT, Upminster, 1979-83.

<sup>66</sup> K. McFarlane, *Lancastrian Kings and Lollard Knights*, Oxford UP, 1972, 117-9.

<sup>67</sup> *John Vale’s Book*, 186.

<sup>68</sup> One other instance is that of Edward IV to his ‘Brother’ Clarence in September/October 1470, also an open letter, *John Vale’s Book*, 221.

signed warrants for action. What does survive however are several dozen of such out letters apparently addressed to the London alderman Thomas Cook and copied by his servant into *John Vale's Book*. These are representative perhaps of what other London aldermen, town councillors, sheriffs, justices of the peace, etc., could expect to receive.<sup>69</sup> The *liberate* rolls ordering local expenditure of timber, game, and fish for royal feasts, building works, and royal favourites that were so valuable for the thirteenth century, are of little use for the fifteenth, most probably because such commands now passed under the signet rather than the great seal. Almost certainly the stream of instructions and forward-planning of the royal itinerary continued.

Each king had a personal style that is difficult to reconstruct. Henry V's court had a military tone, that of Henry VI was domestic, and that of Richard III, if Crowland is to be believed, was frivolous and immoral.<sup>70</sup> Remember the court was the environment where the king took his pleasures, not just religious and sexual, and where he found like-minded company. Edward IV had a lifelong friendship with William Lord Hastings. They seem even to have shared a mistress, Mrs Elizabeth Shore. There are chamber accounts for Henry VII but not before, a privy purse account only for his queen,<sup>71</sup> so we lack the data we desire about the king's casual expenditure – petty purchases, gaming losses, etc. The outlines of daily routine defined by meals and services, a calendar defined by state occasions and religious festivals, and each king's itinerary are known, but relatively little about personal preferences in the mix.

All kings had different itineraries. We know that Henry VI was frequently in the Lancastrian heartlands, at Leicester and Kenilworth, Edward IV predominantly in the Thames Valley, but always returning to Westminster for Epiphany, and of Richard III's partiality for Nottingham Castle. All kings were concerned for their immortal souls, usually prioritising masses forever rather than a reformed lifestyle. The fellows and scholars of Eton and King's College Cambridge had to pray for Henry VI's soul as well as study.<sup>72</sup> Edward IV buried his father and brother in the chantry college of the house of York at Fotheringhay (Northamptonshire), but for himself created a new mausoleum for himself at Windsor.<sup>73</sup> Whilst duke of Gloucester, Richard III had founded chantry colleges at Barnard

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid, passim.

<sup>70</sup> Crowland, 174-5.

<sup>71</sup> TNA, E 101/413/2/1-3; *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, ed. N. Nicolas, London, 1830.

<sup>72</sup> Wolffe, *Henry VI*, 136-7, 144.

<sup>73</sup> Ross, *Edward IV*, 271-2, 274-6.

Castle (Durham) and Middleham (Yorkshire).<sup>74</sup> As king he planned a chantry of a hundred priests in York Minster,<sup>75</sup> which he may well have intended as his tomb.

Although generally hard up, Edward wanted all the marks of kingly magnificence – an imposing household, near Burgundian ceremonial, the great hall of Eltham and St George’s Chapel Windsor, and a library of illuminated books. We know that Henry VI was particularly pious, an epitome of fifteenth-century spirituality,<sup>76</sup> and how high a priority he gave to his two colleges. Less well-known is his love of hunting – he spent the whole summer of 1435 hunting in the forest of Rockingham<sup>77</sup> – and it was at his hunting palace of Clarendon in 1453 that he lost his mind.

And finally there are the king’s moods. Kings were people, had standards and values to apply and be infringed, and likes and dislikes like everyone else that they brought into politics. Richard II had a series of blazing rows with his greater subjects and harboured resentments over many years.<sup>78</sup> Edward IV sacked an erring signet clerk and apparently disapproved of Earl Rivers’ departure on pilgrimage when there was business to be done.<sup>79</sup> John Blacman records Henry VI’s prudishness and John Benet records his anger at the misconduct of his earl of Devon. Presumably he would have imprisoned Devon like other offenders had he obeyed his summons.<sup>80</sup> Mere displeasure, exclusion from court and the royal presence, was upsetting for Richard Duke of York and his duchess.<sup>81</sup> Kings could be managed, by dominant favourites, by exclusion of critics from the royal presence, and by dirty tricks discrediting competing

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<sup>74</sup> Hicks, *Richard III as Duke of Gloucester: A Study in Character*, Borthwick Paper 70, York, 1986, 21.

<sup>75</sup> R. Dobson, ‘Richard III and the Church of York’, *Kings and Nobles in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. R. Griffiths and J. Sherborne, Alan Sutton, Gloucester, 1986, 145-6.

<sup>76</sup> Lovatt, ‘Blacman Revisited’, 183.

<sup>77</sup> Wolffe, *Henry VI*, 80; but see Lovatt, ‘Blacman Revisited’, 185.

<sup>78</sup> For the importance of interplay of personality, see V. Galbraith, ‘A New Life of Richard II’, *History*, vol. xxvi, 1941-2, 229-30.

<sup>79</sup> Hicks, ‘Attainder’, 26; C. Scofield, *Life and Reign of Edward the Fourth*, 2 vols., London, 1923, ii, 3.

<sup>80</sup> ‘John Benet’s Chronicle or the years 1400 to 1462’, ed. G. and M. Harriss, *Camden Miscellany*, vol. xxiv, 1972, 205; Lovatt, ‘Blacman Revisited’, 186.

<sup>81</sup> C. Rawcliffe, ‘Richard Duke of York, the King’s “Obeissant Liegeman”: A New Source on the Protectorate of 1454 and 1455’, *Historical Research*, vol. lx, 1987, 237.

courtiers and factions. All such ploys were subject to the king's own preferences and his right to decide that could never be ignored.

The political system was highly bureaucratic. Most people encountered the regime through its agents, whether the clerks of the great officers of state or the unpaid officers that executed its commands in the localities. These systems were long established, endured from reign to reign and throughout the Wars of the Roses, and changed relatively slowly, although every king had priorities and emphases and could impel more decisive activity if require. Within these systems, however, the fifteenth-century kings differed and imparted a distinctive tone to their courts and their relations with their principal subjects.