

THE QUEEN'S GRACE:
ENGLISH QUEENSHIP, 1464-1503

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THE QUEEN'S GRACE: ENGLISH QUEENSHIP, 1464-1503

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Abstract

Medieval queenship, an institutionally and socially important condition marked by ambiguity and contradiction, is the subject of a growing body of research, to which this study's holistic approach seeks to make a valuable contribution by focusing on two queens consort of England between 1464 and 1503: Elizabeth Woodville and her daughter Elizabeth of York. The contemporary theory of queenship is elusive, combining the queen's subjection to her husband, and dissociation from the political sphere, with a marked legal independence and a versatile, powerful model in Marian symbolism, which stressed intercession as a priority for queens. This apparently incoherent conception is not easily understood through histories relying on narrative sources, whose evidence is scanty and vague. As a result, portrayals of both Elizabeth Woodville (negative) and Elizabeth of York (positive) have been determined by narrative attitudes toward gender and social status, which have accrued over generations of historical writing. The ceremonies of queenship (coronation, churching, royal entry, funerals), as prescribed for and enacted by both Queens Elizabeth, broadcast their role to the court and realm and to the queens themselves. They clearly established the queen's status as not equal to the king's, but also confirmed her autonomous authority (suggested by a general ceremonial separateness) and recognized her importance to the nation. That autonomy was made possible in a practical sense through the queen's landed estate and household, which enabled both queens to act as landed magnates and as patrons to different degrees; Elizabeth Woodville's greater resources allowed her to be the more active of the two. Moreover, the institutions of queenship enabled both queens to act as intermediaries between court and realm. Queens were very close to the centre of cultural and political life in fifteenth-century England, and are therefore significant figures requiring more sensitive, detailed studies.

Preface

In this study, original spelling has been preserved wherever typographically possible. The year is taken to begin on 1 January. In addition, please note the use of the following abbreviations:

<i>Al. Cant.</i>	<i>Alumni cantabrigienses</i> , ed. J. Venn
Bindoff	S.T. Bindoff, <i>The House of Commons 1501-1558</i>
<i>C.C.R.</i>	<i>Calendar of close rolls</i>
<i>C.I.P.M.</i>	<i>Calendar of inquisitions post mortem</i>
<i>C.Pap.Reg.</i>	<i>Calendar of entries in the papal registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland</i>
<i>C.P.R.</i>	<i>Calendar of patent rolls</i>
<i>Collectanea</i>	<i>De rebus britannicis collectanea</i>
Emden	A.B. Emden, <i>A biographical register of the University of Oxford</i>
H.M.S.O.	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
Myers	A.R. Myers, "The household of Queen Elizabeth Woodville, 1466-7"
<i>P.P.E.</i>	<i>Privy purse expenses of Elizabeth of York</i>
<i>R.P.</i>	<i>Rotuli parliamentorum</i>
<i>S.R.</i>	<i>Statutes of the realm</i>
<i>V.C.H.</i>	<i>Victoria history of the counties of England</i>

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Introduction

Whether consorts, regents or rulers, queens in the Middle Ages occupied an unusual position, frequently ambiguous and often problematic. The medieval vision of queenship seems to incorporate aspects of the kingly ideal (justice, mercy, piety) with those of idealized womanhood. Moreover, the queen exists at the intersection of several relationships (for example, man-woman, husband-wife, ruler-subject, mother-child) which have complex implications in the context of a royal court.

The questions arising from this situation have stimulated an intensifying scholarship, aimed at questioning the conventional view of queens as diplomatic pawns, baby machines, or romanticized figures without historical importance. This has involved, in part, exploring the careers and political influence of individual women, and determining their roles within their national and temporal contexts. It also has meant interpreting the symbolism with which queenship, as a concept, was loaded. Queenship articulates issues of consent and loyalty, connecting the private and the political; the "sovereign love" acted out in the marriage of king and queen models the symbolic relationship of ruler and community, wherein love and subjection are freely offered and accepted. Indeed, the queen's aforementioned situation at several "intersections" can be carried further. A collection of dualities, she embodies potential division and unity, the familiar and the foreign. As such she is often cast in the role of intercessor. And her loyalties, to her own family (or nation), her children, and her husband, may conflict.¹

¹L.O. Fradenburg, "Introduction: rethinking queenship", in *Women and sovereignty* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992), 1-10.

This study focuses on two important fifteenth-century consorts, Elizabeth Woodville and Elizabeth of York, whose careers illustrate such relationships in significant ways. By exploring both what they did and what they were expected to do, it aims to give some sense of the role these women played, within and around the limitations imposed by cultural conventions of gender, in various spheres of late medieval English court life.

Both queens are of interest for unique reasons. Elizabeth Woodville, wife of Edward IV, created a singular situation within the English court for two main reasons. Unlike most queens, she was not a foreign princess, but the first English consort since the Norman conquest, and her marriage to Edward accomplished no diplomatic purpose. However, she was nonetheless an outsider. As a member of a relatively minor gentry family, she was viewed by contemporaries as a distinctly unsuitable choice, and Edward's reason for marrying her has been put down to romantic impulse, whether carnal or emotional. The fact that not only contemporaries but also subsequent historians have dwelt on this aspect of the match begs further attention. Moreover, the Woodville family profited from the marriage, probably through the queen's influence. Much has been written about this development, not always carefully. There has been some debate over the real extent of this patronage and the amount of resentment it caused among the established nobility, some historians maintaining that both have been exaggerated by prejudiced commentators.² But it is clear that the advancement of Elizabeth Woodville's family did her own reputation harm, as she became an emblem of the

²For example: C. Ross, *Edward IV* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1974), 84-103; J.R. Lander, "Marriage and politics: the Nevilles and the Wydevilles", *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* XXXVI (1963):119-52; M.A. Hicks, "The changing role of the Wydevilles in Yorkist politics to 1483", in *Patronage, pedigree and power in later medieval England*, ed. C. Ross (Gloucester, U.K.: Alan Sutton, 1979), 60-87.

disruption imputed to them. Only those actions which could be understood in maternal terms, such as her attempts to protect the children of the royal marriage, gained praise from contemporaries.

Her own daughter Elizabeth of York deserves investigation because of her marriage to Henry Tudor. Although the younger Elizabeth's claim to the throne was arguably more valid than Henry's, and although the match represented a reconciliation of two contending factions, the establishment of a joint monarchy was never seriously considered. In fact, Henry's actions indicate a deliberate effort to separate his own claim from Elizabeth's, as he married her only after his own coronation and first parliament, and delayed her coronation for nearly two years until an heir had been born. Elizabeth of York's consortship denied her sovereignty, even as it brought her respect and approval for her ability, piety, maternal devotion and support of her husband -- or so conventional wisdom would have us believe.

History thus offers us a picture of these two women in terms of their conformity to an ill-defined standard. Part of the intent of this study is to clarify that standard. More importantly, it is time to widen the scope of scholarly inquiry on queenship. Much recent scholarship, meaningful as it may be, is ultimately too skewed toward evaluations of "power". For generations, writing on queens consisted mainly of superficial biographies. Scholarship has now swung to another extreme, wherein writers seem compelled to force diverse aspects of queenship through an increasingly predictable analysis, drawing questionable, overgeneralized conclusions from the circumstances of discrete lives, which themselves may be documented by very scanty evidence. There are many notable exceptions, but too often the result tends toward variations on a theme: the extent to which a queen's power and influence were limited by gender constructs, and the opportunities she was offered to

circumvent this through extraordinary situations like regencies.³ As important as power and influence are, they are not the only worthwhile foci for queenship studies. This study's more holistic approach aims to situate the first two Queens Elizabeth of England in the context of their place within, and outside, court -- an entity no longer considered trivial and itself the subject of resurgent study.⁴ To this end, the second chapter of this thesis explores the roles these women were given in the writings of both contemporaries and later historians. The third investigates the meaning they bore in court ceremonial and festivity, while the fourth describes how their estates and households facilitated relationships between queen, court and realm. Before that, however, it is important to consider the theoretical side of queenship -- its legal and official definitions and the range of its symbolism -- which is the subject of the following, first, chapter.

³Many of the articles in *Women and sovereignty*, and in *Medieval queenship*, ed. J.C. Parsons (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), two books which embody a good portion of recent literature on the subject, can be so described.

⁴See, for example, A.D. Scaglione, *Knights at court* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); R. Asch, *Princes, patronage and nobility* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); *English court culture in the later Middle Ages*, ed. V.J. Scattergood (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983); *Court, county, and culture*, ed. B. Y. Kunze and D.D. Brautigam (Rochester, U.K.: University of Rochester Press, 1992); *The English court*, ed. D. Starkey (Harlow, U.K.: Longman, 1987), and, for an overview, J.T. Rosenthal, "Kings, courts, and the manipulation of later medieval culture and literature", *Comparative studies in society and history* XXVII(1985):486-93.

1. Rules and roles: the theory of queenship

Medieval queenship was no more a static role than medieval kingship. The relationship of a Yorkist or Tudor king to his realm, his role in the life of his court, his presence outside it: all these were very different from what his Anglo-Saxon predecessors had known. The same can be said of his wife. Early medieval consorts across Europe enjoyed a remarkably flexible position. Their opportunities to participate in rulership were not limited to extraordinary situations such as regencies, but were part of everyday governmental life.¹ The general trend toward an increase in central royal authority during the eleventh and twelfth centuries did not eclipse the queen's position completely. The English coronation *ordo* of the eleventh century states that the queen shares in royal power, and that the English people are fortunate to be ruled by the power of the king and the ability and virtue of the queen. Matilda, consort of Henry I, referred to the Exchequer as "my court and the court of my husband", while royal charters from the tenure of the French queen Adelaide of Maurienne are dated not only with the king's regnal year, but also that of the queen.²

Several centuries later, the situation was different. By 1400, queenship had acquired a more visible apparatus of ritual and customary symbolism, but the queen's juridical role had been greatly curtailed. Her primary duty, to secure the succession through the production of an heir, remained the same, and this informed many aspects of her ritual and even her legal

¹P. Stafford, *Queens, concubines and dowagers: the king's wife in the early Middle Ages* (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd., 1983).

²L. Huneycutt, "Images of queenship in the high Middle Ages", *Haskins Society journal* I (1989): 63, 65, 66.

status. Her place in the scheme linking ruler and ruled was taken for granted: witness the anonymous fifteenth-century poem which ends each verse with a prayer for "the kynge, the queene, the peple, and thy londe".³ But how was this "necessary" status expressed officially?

Like so many other aspects of her life, the official position of the fifteenth-century queen consort was full of contradictions and ambiguities. As the Virgin Mary, the all-purpose model for queenship, was favoured above all women on earth, so was the queen favoured above all women in the realm. At the same time she was undeniably a subject, playing both roles at once in her institutional presence. For example, her official correspondence, effective in its own right, acknowledged the king's superior authority. In theory at least, the independence of her status did not mean an equivalent power.

The queen's legal privileges were extensive. Her legal ownership of her lands and possessions, her right to manage them independently, her right of independent legal action, with her own lawyers: these set her apart from all other married women, in effect giving her the legal status of an unmarried woman.⁴ Here we are confronted with paradox number one, the obviation of the very act which defined a queen's status, marriage to the king.

The royal charters granted to Elizabeth Woodville in 1465 and 1467, and to Elizabeth of York in 1488, exemplify this partial independence, their provisions accomplishing a variety of purposes.⁵ The queen's authority over her landed estate is repeatedly emphasized. She

³Poem 98, in *Historical poems of the XIVth and XVth centuries*, ed. R.H. Robbins (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 235-9.

⁴W. Blackstone, *Commentaries on the laws of England*, 22nd ed. (London: Spettigue & Farrance, 1849), 219-20.

⁵For Elizabeth Woodville, *Calendar of charter rolls 1427-1516* (London: HMSO, 1927), 207-10, 217-8; for Elizabeth of York, *Materials... Henry VII*, II:266-70.

was entitled to receive all goods and chattels forfeited by her men and tenants as fugitives and felons, regardless of their relationship to the king.⁶ The charter also assured the queen her own administrative identity. She was to have a return of all writs, and of "attachiements" of pleas of the crown, and her writs were to be executed by her own ministers within her own lands. Moreover, the document explicitly forbids the encroachment of the king's or anyone else's officials on the administrative territory of the queen:

So that no... minister of the crown, or of any other person, shall enter the said castles, lordships, &c., in the execution of his office... so long as [it] can be done within the said castles, lordships, manors, &c., by the queen's own sheriffs or ministers, although... the king's [officials] may find such men, holding entirely or not entirely... without the said castles, lordships, manors, &c....⁷

The charter gives a list of items, mostly foodstuffs, which the king's household officials were not to seize from the queen's estates. And it underscores the queen's separateness by setting her officials against those of the king who were not to interfere with different areas of her establishment: ministers and marshals of the king's court; admirals. Moreover, the queen's men and tenants were permitted, indeed expected, to resist any such infractions from the king's officials, "lawfully and with impunity".⁸

These documents may simply have formalized expectations which were already customary. There appears to be no record of any incidents of the kind the charters warn against, during the tenure of either Elizabeth of York or her mother, though perhaps previous experience had shown that they could happen. But even if we assume that the charters did

⁶*Materials... Henry VII, II:266.*

⁷*Materials... Henry VII, II:267.*

⁸*Materials... Henry VII, II:270.*

not grant these queens anything new, we may still question why their rights needed to be made explicit, for we still lack a theoretical reason for the separateness of the queen's establishment. One major reason is practical. The eighteenth-century legal commentator William Blackstone explained this official independence as freeing the king from "domestic" concerns.⁹ While Blackstone, here citing Sir Edward Coke (1552-1634), was remarking on English law as it stood in his own day, he presented that as the outcome of a historical evolution over preceding centuries, and provided a clue to the institutional conception of the medieval queen's role. The queen was the only married woman who did not sue, and was not sued, alongside her husband, since the king could not be a party as a plaintiff in his own court. Since the king did not have to exercise his unique legal powers on his wife's behalf, he was therefore above the domestic concerns of all other husbands, which would be inappropriate for a king to deal with in court.

But are there perhaps other, more abstract implications? Both king and queen are public persons. As the first wife and (ideally) mother of the realm, however, the queen is also its first private citizen. Although Blackstone's primary concern was legal definitions, his reasoning implies (to the modern reader) a conception wherein despite her special access to public issues, the queen's primary responsibility is to the private sphere. Upon closer inspection, the boundaries between public and private become blurred in the queen's case. The private act of childbirth ensures the succession; the rearing of children prepares future rulers; international relations are enacted in the domestic arena of the court. The careers of both Elizabeth Woodville and her daughter show that these paradoxes were acknowledged and

⁹Blackstone, 220.

acted out, both ceremonially and otherwise. The queen thus represents the private within the public, and to view her separateness as dividing her from the king's "public" concerns is perhaps to oversimplify a complex theme.

Other legal evidence throws a different light on the queen's status. In 1352, high treason in England was defined as crimes against the king's person and his regality. Not only the king's own life, but those of the queen and the royal heir, were protected under this statute; they were the only members of the royal family whose lives were thus sacrosanct. The violation of the queen, the king's eldest daughter, or the wife of his eldest son was also defined as treason.¹⁰ The reason for this is not difficult to understand. These women were agents of the succession, and thus not only their lives, but their reproductive integrity could be politically vital. This is Blackstone's explanation as well. But he adds that "the queen herself, if consenting", would also be guilty of treason in the case of sexual infidelity.¹¹ The queen's dignity and honour are then adjuncts of the king's; acts of treason against the queen are treasonous not as offenses against her as an individual, but because they threaten the king's security. In consenting to adultery, the queen would hardly be committing treason against herself. Moreover, the queen's status changes the way her actions are viewed. For no other woman in the realm would adultery be a criminal offense. Nor, as the career of Edward IV shows, would a king's adultery be treasonous.

In considering queenship we are faced with a question of ideal versus reality. Legal and official formulations, however precise, provide us with little more than a starting point to

¹⁰J.G. Bellamy, *The law of treason in England in the later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 87.

¹¹Blackstone, 223.

evaluate the position of a queen consort, when so much of her role was defined by less tangible factors: custom, tradition, precedent, personality. We must look elsewhere to find what a queen was expected to do, how she was to behave, or where she was considered to fit within the structure of the court. Cultural ideas of queenship are elusive, but we might expect some clues to be found in contemporary literature. These sources are, however, perhaps most eloquent in what they do not say. Queens are not, in fact, prominent in fifteenth-century secular literature and poetry, no matter how broadly one defines these genres. For example, although Chaucer's *Legend of good women* counts among its female exemplars a number of queens, their royal status has almost nothing to do with the way they are treated in the stories; they are good women who just happen to be the wives of kings.¹²

The most substantial single work of the century, Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, features as a pivotal character a queen who, in terms of popular recognition, probably outdoes any of the real medieval consorts. But Guenever's status, like those of Chaucer's ladies, does not occupy the attention of the narrative as much as her personal actions do. She only becomes a major figure insofar as her relationship with Launcelot contributes to an ultimately destructive tension within the court. Even here, Malory seems more concerned with Launcelot and Guenever as people -- indeed, as courtly lovers -- than as queen and knight.

We are given only fleeting glimpses of Guenever's place in the world of the court, of the authority she exercises, or of what was considered to be her rightful domain. On the one hand she is restricted. Her movements have the appearance of autonomy, but ultimately refer to the king's authority. Guenever goes to Sir Galahaut's jousts accompanied only by "such

¹²G. Chaucer, *The legend of good women*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. L.D. Benson, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 587-631.

knights as pleasen [her] best", but must first gain Arthur's permission.¹³ Yet the queen does seem to have her own area of action. In banishing Elaine after discovering that lady's involvement with Launcelot, Guenever explicitly forbids her "my court".¹⁴ She has a particular interest and role in incidents affecting women. When Sir Gawain kills a lady by accident, it is by the queen's ordinance that a "quest of ladies" is set on him, and when Launcelot witnesses Pedevere's murder of his own wife, he sends him to the queen, who determines the penance.¹⁵

The question arises: to what extent does the *Morte d'Arthur* reflect the attitude of the English elites of the fifteenth century with respect to queenship? Even if we take the fact that Guenever is a relatively minor character as an indication that Malory thought the roles and activities of queens unimportant, we are faced with the same question. While this is not the place for a detailed discussion of its authorial orientation, we must note that the story takes place in a safely distant, morally superior age; Malory inserts occasional, unfavourable comparisons between the behaviour of the characters and the prevailing morality of his own day.¹⁶ This deliberate distinction finds its way into the mechanics of the plot. For example, although historically in earlier centuries responsibility in the absence of their husbands often fell to queens across Europe, Malory's Arthur finds a different expedient.¹⁷ As he plans to

¹³T. Malory, *Morte d'Arthur* (London: Penguin Books, 1969), II:79.

¹⁴Malory, II:203.

¹⁵Malory, I:104, 228.

¹⁶Despite the uncertainty about the authorship of this text, I have used Malory's name here for the sake of convenience.

¹⁷Stafford, 117-20.

depart on campaign in Book V, he ordains that "the rule of the realm and Guenever his queen" should go to two knights of the Round Table; not only is the queen denied responsibility, she is herself made someone else's responsibility.¹⁸ The portrayal of the queen, then, may be either a conscious idealization or a subconscious presentism; Malory is either portraying what he believes to be the queen's proper status, or unwittingly transferring contemporary notions of queenship to the imagined past. In either case, he says most by his silence.

Medieval queenship found its most exalted and complex analogue in the Virgin Mary, whose role as Queen of Heaven inspired a wealth of literary and artistic veneration. *Maria Regina* is a concatenation of positive attributes of authority: maternal, merciful, a connection to the supreme divine power. Wright may be overstating the case by suggesting that "secular queenship may have found the perfect propaganda model in the developing imagery of the coronation of the Virgin from the twelfth century".¹⁹ What is meant by "secular queenship"? Mary displays, in a way no earthly queen would, aspects of queen consort, queen mother and queen regnant at the same time. But the last attribute, the only one useful to the kind of secular queen who could "propagandize" it, is the least substantial. Consorts and dowagers had little reason, or opportunity, to control their public images in such a deliberate way. Moreover, Queen of Heaven was only one of Mary's manifestations, and some have argued that by the fifteenth century this role was no longer the most important, or

¹⁸Malory, I:172.

¹⁹R.M. Wright, "The Virgin in the sun and in the tree", in *Women and sovereignty*, 50.

rather, that the emphasis within its imagery had changed.²⁰ Parsons, for example, notes that "the image of the triumphant Virgin, with scepter... was quickly superseded [after c. 1200] by the submissive, interceding Virgin who receives from her Son a crown -- but no scepter".²¹

Wright's characterization of the Virgin's queenship as "optimistic and unthreatening", though, brings out the most attractive features of this ultimate female authority, the features which help to explain why Mary's is the most common image of queenship in much of late medieval literature. Indeed, the references to historical queens in the shorter English poetry of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries seem scattered and insignificant when set against the volume of religious lyrics to the Virgin as queen.²² With little variation of tone and phrasing, these anonymous poems appeal to Mary's merciful authority, calling on her to intercede with her son, Christ the King. Most of these references to the Virgin's queenship seem standardized, and do not go far beyond laudatory phrases of the "Hail, heavenly queen" variety, best known today from the Latin hymn "Salve regina".

The diction of a few poems, however, hints at a more involved consideration of Mary's queenship. There is the combination of the regal and the maternal: "...maide mylde,/ Que semper es amica/ Bytwene mankynd and the Chylde;/ Ave domina."²³ Here, in less than four lines, we see the idealization of some of historical queenship's most important and

²⁰M. Warner, *Alone of all her sex* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983), 81-121.

²¹J.C. Parsons, "Ritual and symbol in the English medieval queenship to 1500", in *Women and sovereignty*, 66.

²²For example, Poem 79 in *Historical poems of the XIVth and XVth centuries* mentions the presence of Margaret of Anjou at the reconciliation of Henry VI and the Yorkists. But there is little we can draw from this example, since Margaret's role in the events of her husband's reign was extraordinary.

²³Carol 179, in *The early English carols*, ed. R.L. Greene (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935), 135.

problematic themes. The parental relationship, which gives all other mothers authority over their sons, here involves subjection; the child is sovereign, just as might happen on earth. And this casts Mary in the role of intercessor.

The Marian parallel is perhaps at its most appropriate with respect to the intercessory function of queens. Whether seeking the king's favour for their own ends, or pleading for mercy for themselves or others, those in need of royal attention were well advised to approach the queen, the person who, theoretically at least, was closest to the king and knew best how to appeal to him. As Strohm has pointed out, there are really two somewhat different Judeo-Christian models for queenly intercession, Mary and Esther.²⁴ Mary, a supplicant even as queen, pleads for undeserving sinners, while Esther, the political intercessor, risks death, daring to approach the king unbidden, to save her people. For both figures, the exercise of intercessory power entails subjection and humility, and thus the appearance of powerlessness. It is a form of authority which does not challenge the king's, and while in itself this is not greatly different from the standard patriarchal model, it is made different by its implications beyond the domestic sphere and because it is also connected to the queen's unparalleled separateness. Strohm shows how this vision of queenship is examined in fourteenth-century texts, contrasting it with another model, the queen as good counsellor, more common in earlier periods when consorts took a more active role in government. By the fourteenth century, as active participation by queens diminished, the intercessory role became the more idealized, the preferred focus for writers dealing with queens. With respect to Mary, the following excerpt shows how intercessory authority could

²⁴P. Strohm, "Queens as intercessors", in *Hochon's arrow: the social imagination of fourteenth-century texts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 95-119.

be extended to signify sovereign authority:

Haile be thou, quene, emperes of hel;
Of al pete thou arte the wel;
We prayn the, dame and damesel,
That thou bryng vs into thi hal.²⁵

Here the court of Heaven is as much Mary's as anyone's, just as another poem has it: "To whom obeiþ as ræt quene/ þe court of heuen on hyɜe".²⁶

But how does Mary attain this great dignity? The coronation of the Virgin was a favourite theme for medieval artists and writers, and as Wright has shown, its representation involved much symbolism dealing with the Virgin's "ancestry and cosmic role".²⁷ Wright stresses that the coronation of the Virgin was carefully made distinct from earthly coronations; the fact that it was "like no other" was very important.²⁸ (Surely, though, this "distinctiveness" sits somewhat oddly with the fact that a heavenly dignity was constantly represented as being conferred through an earthly form in the first place.) But whatever its wider application, certainly the splendour of Mary's coronation is consistently emphasized. Often this takes the form of conventionalized phrases, but it may be extended to imply more than grandeur. The coronation imagery may approach marriage imagery; Mary is "Ioyned in loyes with Cryst IHŪ".²⁹ Or it may involve more explicit overtones of sovereignty: "A

²⁵Carol 177, in *The early English carols*, 134.

²⁶"The seven joys of the Virgin in Heaven", in *Religious lyrics of the fifteenth century*, ed. C. Brown (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939), 59.

²⁷Wright, "The Virgin in the sun", in *Women and sovereignty*, 36-7.

²⁸Wright, "The virgin in the sun", in *Women and sovereignty*, 55.

²⁹Lyric 39 ("The coronation of the Virgin, II"), in *Religious lyrics of the fifteenth century*, 71.

sceptre in hand seyntly she has,/ Dispisyng our deth daily be dignyte".³⁰ Another poem describes her coronation as the fifth (the ultimate, and hence the greatest?) of the five joys of the Virgin.³¹

Mary's queenship is therefore not only a dignity but a consummation. She is a curious model, but that does *not* mean that "the evidence does not suggest a real connection between Mary's queenship and that of secular queens".³² As the epitome of both chastity and motherhood, Mary set an obvious example for earthly queens for whom these qualities had not only moral but political importance. Marian attributes might, in fact, be used very explicitly by different social groups to define their expectations of the queen: the poor's hopes for mercy, or the nobility's wish for a beneficent and influential relationship with the king.³³ In addition, though in visual art Mary's sovereignty may not have been as emphasized by the fifteenth century as earlier, surely its prevalence in poetry, especially in popular forms like carols, indicates that it was still very current. The matrix of sovereign, maternal, marital and intercessory issues that Mary displays is at the forefront of secular queenship.

The troubling fact remains, though, that we still must infer ideals of queenship; unlike ideals of kingship, on which treatises (e.g. John Fortescue's *The governance of England*) have been written, they are not explicitly stated for us. Nor, it would appear, were they explicitly stated for English queens themselves, for whom advice literature (before Katherine of Aragon)

³⁰Lyric 39, in *Religious lyrics of the fifteenth century*, 71.

³¹Lyric 31 ("The five joys of our Lady"), in *Religious lyrics of the fifteenth century*, 63.

³²Wright, "The virgin in the sun", in *Women and sovereignty*, 55.

³³Parsons, "Ritual and symbol", in *Women and sovereignty*, 66, gives examples from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

is conspicuously absent. Probably the nearest thing to it is Hardyng's address to Edward IV in his *Chronicle* (c. 1465), in which the chronicler recommends the book for the use of the queen, who might thereby "have a verie intellect/ Of your elders of greate antiquitee/ And of England, of which she is elect/ Sovereigne lady...".³⁴ Hardyng argues that to become better acquainted with English history, the "worthy regence of this your realme and noble monarchie", will not only satisfy her natural feminine curiosity, but also give the queen access to what is hers by right of marriage: a better understanding of her husband (through appreciating his ancestry) and his "hertes counsaill".³⁵ These comments imply an awareness that a knowledgeable queen could be an asset to her husband and the realm.

Aside from this, it seems that whatever queens needed to know they were expected to learn through experience. But we should not incautiously conclude that producing heirs was really all that mattered. The following chapters show that while the queen's generative role was her most crucial, it did not at all exclude her from others. Nor did her association with the private sphere mean that the queen was marginalized; fifteenth-century elite society was well aware of her significance for the political and social nation, enacting its concerns in ceremony and taking advantage of the opportunities she offered. Why, then, did it not describe the queen's role more coherently?

There are several possible reasons. Queens, unlike kings, did not operate within a precise legal framework; their moral duty was presumably best learnt from the object lessons of history and the Scriptures. Also, explicit statements, such as treatises, tend to appear in a

³⁴J. Hardyng, *The chronicle from the firste begynnyng of Englande* (London: 1543; facsimile reprint Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1976), f. ccxxxii.

³⁵Hardyng, f. ccxxxiii.

time of crisis, and the fifteenth century did not draw attention to any crisis of queenship. Even the extraordinary role of Margaret of Anjou, however much some of her contemporaries hated her for it, was necessitated by her husband's incapacity. But the unwillingness to theorize might serve another purpose. It appears, from the models it preferred and perhaps even from Malory, that elite society liked the queen to be non-threatening. We should perhaps not attribute this solely to late medieval misogyny. By *not* exploring the potentialities of a figure so close to sovereignty, fifteenth-century England allowed its monarchs to remain even more special and distinctive, qualities required to justify their status. Silence about queens might indicate a self-consciousness, perhaps even an anxiety, about the authority of kings.

2. Biography and historiography: narrative sources and their derivatives

Male virtues become female vices; reward and generosity, vengeance and protection are strengths and virtues when exercised by kings, but become partiality, intrigue, and personal vindictiveness when practiced by queens.¹

The transition from the Wars of the Roses to the early Tudor period must be one of the most familiar spans of English history. Not only has it been told in countless successive histories, it has passed early and often into the literary imagination, and its figures have acquired something approaching stock status. Along the well-travelled road from St Albans to Bosworth and beyond, Elizabeth Woodville and her daughter pop into view only occasionally, always at the same points, as predictably as highway markers. Whether the account comes from the sixteenth century or the twentieth, Elizabeth Woodville is forever marrying the king, vaguely "advancing her relatives", taking sanctuary and bearing children at the drop of a hat, being mistreated by Richard III, conspiring in favour of Henry Tudor, giving up her property, retiring from court, and dying obscurely. Elizabeth of York's repertoire is shorter and even less varied: a significant marriage, an impressive coronation, the birth of several children, a mysterious trip to Wales in the last year of her life. If she died more suddenly than her mother and at a younger age, she at least had the more glamorous funeral. And as far as most historians are concerned, that is that for English queenship in the late fifteenth century.²

Elizabeth Woodville and Elizabeth of York have thus come down to us largely as conglomerations of incidents. It is not difficult to see why. As for many medieval queens,

¹Stafford, 24.

²Here, as elsewhere, I have omitted Anne Neville, the wife of Richard III. This is justifiable because Anne was queen for less than two years, and the details of her tenure are virtually nonexistent.

the primary evidence is patchy at best. The episodes mentioned above account for perhaps one-quarter of the time either Elizabeth was queen. Contemporary narratives, the sources most frequently used by later writers, often do no more than mention these key events. That has not prevented historians from extrapolating from them, often very imaginatively, about the motives, character and general worth of both mother and daughter. It soon becomes apparent that in so doing, they have perpetuated a kind of critique which combines social and political biases with gendered assumptions. Despite the ambiguous evidence, they have felt obliged to come up with judgments on the careers of both queens, running generally against Elizabeth Woodville and in favour of Elizabeth of York.

This chapter illustrates, in part, how these assessments were created through the transformation of contemporary narratives into historical texts, themselves usually narratives. In so doing, it aims to identify what we can and cannot know from narrative evidence. This necessitates a literary approach; both queens exist now largely as ghosts behind literary constructions. (The line between sources and histories sometimes blurs. Essentially, "contemporary" here refers to those writers who could reasonably have been aware of the events at the time they occurred, whether or not they wrote about them immediately.) Through such an analysis we can determine to what extent issues of queenship, as seen in Chapter 1, played a part in creating both contemporary and subsequent images of these women.

Elizabeth Woodville

The queen of Edward IV has become known as one of the least attractive figures in late fifteenth-century English history. Anyone consulting a general work on the period will

learn that she was an unscrupulous and unpleasant woman: manipulative, greedy, ambitious, arrogant. In addition, according to this interpretation, she was a consistently bad influence on the king, on the court and on the politics of the reign. In short, she was a failure as a queen. But no one seems to have analyzed this characterization, which becomes highly questionable after careful examination of the contemporary narrative sources which have provided generations of historians with their chief evidence.

Many threads of narrative convention and prejudice have come together to create the figure of Elizabeth Woodville as we now know her. To disentangle these themes requires a thematic discussion. First, though, it is helpful to introduce them through examining what has been written about a crucial event: Elizabeth's marriage to the king in May 1464. Since this action has been called "the first major blunder of his political career", we must wonder why Edward undertook it.³

The chronicle of Crowland asserts that the king (aged 22 in 1464) was "prompted by the ardour of youth, and relying entirely on his own choice, without consulting the nobles of the kingdom".⁴ The circumstances of this decision, as contemporaries saw it, are outlined in the following passage, which contains the elements most commonly used in other chronicles:

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

³Ross, 87.

⁴*Ingulph's chronicle of the abbey of Croyland*, ed. and trans. H.T. Riley (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854), 439-40.

morning the said King Edward wedded the foresaid Dame Elizabeth...⁵

The essence of contemporary accounts is that the king's youthful ardour finally met its match in a woman not only beautiful but also wise and virtuous. Contemporaries certainly stress her attractiveness; Waurin (illustrating what details of the incident became known outside England) calls Elizabeth "la plus belle fille d'Engleterre", "que le roy... l'avoit prise à femme pour sa tres grande beauté".⁶ But it is imperative to note that they never attribute the king's attentions to Elizabeth Woodville's own initiative. Mancini, writing in 1483, in fact sharply opposed Edward's sexual appetite to Elizabeth's resolute chastity, making her into the heroine of the incident by citing a rumour that she remained "imperterritam" even when Edward held a dagger to her throat. In that version, Edward reasons that her ability to withstand a king makes her worthy to marry one.⁷ In the version of More, one of the earliest non-contemporaries to write about Elizabeth Woodville, she still is not a seductress, but attracts the king involuntarily. Her resistance is sincere, and impresses Edward ("he y^t had not been wont els where to be so stiffely said naye") so much that "he set her vertue in the stede of possession and riches".⁸

In contrast, emphases began to change not much later in the Tudor era. The influential history of Hall (1542) took its facts from More, but elaborated this initial attraction

⁵"Hearne's fragment", in *Chronicles of the white rose of York*, ed. anon. (London: James Bohn, 1845), 15-16.

⁶J. [de] Waurin, *Anchiennes cronicques d'Engleterre*, ed. Dupont (Paris: Librairie de la Société de l'histoire de France, 1859), III:278.

⁷D. Mancini, *The usurpation of Richard the third*, ed. and trans. C.A.J. Armstrong (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 60-1.

⁸T. More, "The history of king Richard III", in *The complete works of St Thomas More* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1963), 61.

scene, in terms which diminish the novelty of Shepard's observation (1992) that Elizabeth "created herself as an empowered subject":

[with] her sober demeanure, lovely loking, and femynyne smylyng, (neither to wanton nor to humble) besyde her toungue so eloquent, and her wit so pregnant, she was able to ravishe the mynde of a meane person, when she allured, and made subject to her, the hart of so great a kynge...⁹

Without overtly accusing Elizabeth of ulterior motives, Hall's account of her resistance to Edward's advances, "whiche demande she so wysely, and with so covert speache answered and repugned", suggests less sincerity than the early sources. In stressing Edward's "confidence... in her perfyte constancy" and "trust... in her constant chastitie" as deciding him to marry Elizabeth, Hall foreshadows both his own comment on the marriage, which he blames for many of the subsequent ills of the reign, and the "foly and inconstancy" he later imputes to the queen.

It is easy to see how such independent thought and action, with its undertones of dishonesty, could imply a "designing" or "calculating" character, qualities Elizabeth Woodville has been almost universally assigned. And because it comes from a sexual context, involving an attractive woman, it has gained connotations of seduction. A good king, of course, is supposed to have exemplary judgment. Such an impulsive decision, induced by desire, therefore becomes necessarily associated with medieval ideas of the feminine as "irrational", and Elizabeth Woodville, the object of attraction, is the focus of that construction.

⁹A.C. Shepard, "'Female perversity', male entitlement: the agency of gender in More's *The history of Richard III*", *Sixteenth century journal* XVI(2)(1995):318; E. Hall, *The union of the two noble and illustre families of Lancastre and Yorke* (Menston, U.K.: Scolar [sic] Press, 1970), "King Edward the iiiii", f. vi.

But why was this marriage such a mistake? A few writers have considered Elizabeth Woodville an unsuitable consort because of her own marital status. Mancini asserts that Edward had violated custom in marrying a widow, an idea used by Shakespeare and others.¹⁰ The only direct English authority for this is More, not a contemporary, though the idea is also found in a German chronicle reference to Edward IV.¹¹ More expresses his objection through the voice of Edward's famously pious mother, who invokes a canon law applying to clerks to state "the sacre magesty of a prince, y^t ought as nigh to approche priesthode in clenes as he doth in dignitie, [should not] be befouled w^t bigamy".¹² Also, Elizabeth Woodville had two sons already from her first marriage, and it is obviously politically inadvisable for a king to have stepsons.

In addition, for the king to marry an Englishwoman had no benefit for English foreign policy, as the careful selection of a foreign-born queen might. With this in mind, More has the king defend his choice not only on the grounds of love, but also by addressing the political concerns: "y^e amitye of no earthly nacion [is] so necessari for him, as y^e friendship of his own... in y^t he disdayned not to marye w^t one of his own land."¹³ More thus makes Elizabeth represent an opportunity for strengthened bonds between ruler and people in a

¹⁰Mancini, 63.

¹¹Armstrong, in Mancini, 110, note 13. The German source is Weinreich's "Danziger Chronik", in *Scriptores rerum prussicarum*, ed. T. Hirsch (Leipzig: 1870), IV:728-9: "Und wiwol die kronung in Engelandt held, das ein konig solde eine junkfer zur ehe nemen, wer sie auch sein mochte, jedoch echtgeborn, aber keine witwe nicht; diese aber neam der konig wider aller seiner herren dank" ("And although the Crown in England held that a king should take a virgin to wife, whoever she might be, however [she must be] legitimate, but not a widow; but the king took this one [Elizabeth Woodville] against the will of all his lords").

¹²More, 62; 241 note 62/25 (re canon law).

¹³More, 63.

country recently torn by civil war, a strain which is never developed in later histories.

The marriage is most commonly faulted by historians, though, for its alleged consequences. The old question of the dissent which supposedly resulted between the king, his advisors (whom he had slighted by ignoring them)¹⁴, and the nobility (see below) would take us too far away from the subject of queenship, though we must make reference to the issue so far as it reflected on Elizabeth Woodville herself. Some contemporaries attribute this animosity to the queen's low birth.¹⁵ Elizabeth's mother, Jacquetta of Luxembourg, was an influential woman, the sister-in-law of Katherine of Valois (Henry V's consort) and close to Margaret of Anjou, in whose household Elizabeth served in her youth. Jacquetta was of much higher birth than her husband Richard Woodville, Lord Rivers, and although he was a royal councillor to Edward IV, it was Rivers' relative inferiority that defined Elizabeth's status.¹⁶ In fact, as we shall see, the established nobility's resentment that a woman of such background should reign over her betters is arguably responsible, however indirectly, for creating a large part of the image she has been given in historical writing.

Yet other sources, including those closest to the events, make no mention of the dissent at all.¹⁷ Moreover, distortions in the record could appear soon after the events. A letter from Venetian merchants, preserved in a standard diplomatic calendar which is often

¹⁴*Great chronicle of London*, eds. A.H. Thomas & I.D. Thornley (Gloucester (UK): Alan Sutton, 1983), 202-3, sees the resentment originating in the king's failure to consult his council.

¹⁵E.g. *Ingulph's chronicle*, 440.

¹⁶"Breknock Computus" and "Parliamentary History", cited by A. Strickland, *Lives of the queens of England from the Norman conquest* (revised ed., London: Bell & Daldy, 1864), II:1-2; Ross, 89.

¹⁷For example, "Gregory's chronicle", in *The historical collections of a citizen of London in the fifteenth century*, ed. J. Gairdner (London: Camden Society, 1876), 226.

cited, claims that the king is about to marry in the face of great opposition from lords and people, and that "for the sake of finding means to annul it, all the peers are holding great consultations in the town of Reading".¹⁸ But the letter is dated 5 October 1464, when the king's marriage was a *fait accompli*, affirmed by this same council at Reading.¹⁹ On the other hand, we do not have much contrary evidence. Mason quotes "a letter of Sir John Howard" (later the duke of Norfolk), in which Howard claimed to have surveyed the opinion of "the people" in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, and to have found that they were well disposed toward the marriage.²⁰ But Mason does not say where this letter is, when it was written, for what purpose, or to whom, so it is difficult evidence to evaluate.

Subsequent unhappy results are said to be functions of Elizabeth's own unsavoury personality in her capacity as queen: her alleged greed, manipulation and vindictiveness. In perhaps the most convincing example of avarice, Fabian tells us that when Sir Thomas Cook was fined £8000 on suspicious charges (also not one of the king's prouder moments), the queen insisted on receiving an additional ten per cent, on the grounds that this was her

¹⁸*Calendar of state papers Venetian*, ed. R. Brown (London: HMSO, 1864), I:395.

¹⁹The two surviving accounts are vague as to the form of this meeting at Reading, but it is significant as the first recorded public appearance of the new queen, nearly five months after her marriage, at which she received a kind of acclamation. The marriage was "solemnly praised and approved" by the lords spiritual and temporal (*The Crowland chronicle continuations: 1459-1486*, ed. and trans. N. Poray and J. Cox (London: Alan Sutton, 1986), 114). It seems that Elizabeth was brought forth at the abbey and presented to lords and people ("per duces Clarencie et comitem Warwici ducta est, per dominos et totam gentem ut regina aperte honorata") (*Annales rerum Anglicarum*", attrib. William of Worcester, in *Letters and papers illustrative of the wars of the English in France*, Rolls Series v. 2:2, ed. J. Stevenson (London: HMSO, 1864), 783).

²⁰R.H. Mason, *The history of Norfolk* (London: Wertheimer, Lea and Company, 1884), 95.

traditional prerogative of "queen's gold" (see chapter 4).²¹ Elizabeth, whose household gives no indication of either extravagance or comfortable solvency, may well have needed the considerable sum of £800, and it is worth noting that Fabyan makes no direct criticism of her tactics. But queen's gold was customarily not levied on punitive fines such as Cook's, and Elizabeth's apparent greed and unfairness left a lasting scar on her historical reputation.

Other evidence of Elizabeth Woodville's vices is drawn from scattered incidents which are themselves open to more sensitive interpretation. It may well look greedy (as Ross and others have adduced) for Elizabeth to have arranged the marriage of her son Thomas Grey to the child heiress Cecille Bonville, in 1474, with reversion of the Bonville estates to Thomas' younger brother Richard, and all issues and profits to "the Quene, hir Executours and assignees" until Cecille's sixteenth birthday.²² But such an agreement was nothing extraordinary among the nobility, especially when both parties were minors. Marriages were a primary means of estate consolidation, and there is no evidence that the queen obtained this one dishonestly. The arrangement had a more questionable development nine years later, when Elizabeth paid the king 5000 marks for the marriage of her grandson, the issue of the Bonville marriage, to the infant daughter of the king's sister Anne, the duchess of Exeter. The girl was born of her mother's second marriage and in 1483 she was declared heiress by

²¹Fabyan (ed. Ellis), 656-7. Fabyan adds "for the which he [i.e. Cook] had after longe sute and great charge, ...to gyve to her a great pleasure, besyde many good gyftes that he gave unto his counsayll." In a marginal note, and on no apparent authority, Ellis corrects "his" to "her", an interpretation adopted by Ross (1974), who implies that the gifts were used to placate the queen's *council* (100). But *Great chronicle of London*, 208, notes the intercession of the queen's solicitor in Cook's favour, suggesting that "counsayll" actually refers to legal *counsel*, and indicating that the masculine form is correct. Ross also claims (100) that Fabyan gives "details" of these gifts, but this is false.

²²R.P., VI:104-9.

act of parliament.²³ Ross views this as wholly unscrupulous because it cut out the heirs of the duchess' first husband, but the lands had been granted to the duchess herself, and the revised patent of 1467 clearly gave the reversion of the estates to heirs of the duchess' body, not the duke's (see chapter 4 for this complicated question).²⁴

The idea that the queen's jealousy and malign influence brought about the downfall of the king's brother, George, duke of Clarence, is attested only by Mancini. Even More contrasts her possible role with that of Clarence's own ambition.²⁵ But the idea persisted in later histories. Hall thought it possible that the "sparck of privy malice" was "newely knydeled and set a fire by the Quene or her blode which were ever mistrusting and prively barking at the kinges lignage", but ventured no further.²⁶ By 1640 the possible had become fact: "the Queene and her kindred shallower in their spleene, spoke loud against him".²⁷ Sandford (1677), citing Polydore Vergil, implicates the queen's jealousy after the failure of her marriage project for her brother.²⁸ At any rate, this idea has not stood up to modern research.²⁹ Another story -- that the queen, out of jealousy, procured the execution of the earl of Desmond -- was disproved by 1915. Orpen points out that it first appeared "upwards

²³*R.P.*, VI:215-8; Ross, 337.

²⁴*C.P.R.* 1467-77, 32-3.

²⁵Mancini, 63-4; More, 7.

²⁶Hall, f. lii.

²⁷W. Habington, *The historie of Edward the fourth* (London, 1640), 190.

²⁸F. Sandford, *A genealogical history of the kings of England, and monarchs of Great Britain* (London: Newcomb, 1677), 385, 413.

²⁹J.R. Lander, "The treason and death of the duke of Clarence: a re-interpretation", *Canadian journal of history* II(2)(1967):1-29.

of 73 years after the event, in a memorial... by the earl's grandson to the privy council", petitioning for the return of a manor.³⁰

Elizabeth Woodville abused her influence most significantly, however, according to the standard interpretation, in the promotion of her numerous extended family, an unpleasant group of people whose influence at court created ultimately destructive tensions. Original narrative sources are, in fact, highly vague and reticent about Elizabeth Woodville's motivations, or even the extent to which she (as opposed to her family) was the focus of resentment. This has meant that historical writers interested in the subject have had to rely on more voluble, but non-contemporary, authorities, such as More -- a fact evident even from the present discussion.

It is clear that the Woodvilles profited after Elizabeth became queen. A flurry of appointments and, more importantly, advantageous marriages for Elizabeth's brothers and sisters, left few areas of influence untouched by the Woodville presence, though as Ross has made clear, this happened within two years of the marriage, and did not impoverish the Crown or exclude the established families from continued patronage.³¹ The relatively sudden change in the Woodvilles' prominence is universally imputed to the queen's influence, and it is certainly hard to believe that she had nothing to do with it. The most powerful statement on the subject, however, is from Mancini, not a firsthand witness, but often cited: "...regina multos de sua stirpe nobilitabat. Multos etiam alienos sibi asciscebat, in regiamque

³⁰G. Orpen, "*Statute rolls of the parliament of Ireland (review)*", *English historical review* XXX(1915):342. Orpen gives other, less sensational reasons for the earl's downfall, which disprove the connection to the queen.

³¹Ross, 92-3.

aulam ita insinuabat".³² Mancini's suggestion of real power in the queen's hands, the sense of infiltration by an outside agent, and his compression of the events of several years into one sentence left their mark on later writers, as we shall see. More's comments on the council of the young prince of Wales, while the king was still alive, at first seem similar:

...in effect every one as he was nerest of kin unto the Quene, so was planted next the prince. That drifte by the Quene not unwisely devised, whereby her bloode mighte of youth be rooted in the princes favour, the Duke of Gloucester turned unto their destruccion...³³

But this passage is more equivocal than it seems, especially when set against More's earlier comment on the downfall of Clarence. There, More claims that the queen and her relatives "highlye maligned the kynges kindred", but then adds "as women commonly not of malice but of nature hate them whome their housebandes love".³⁴ Given the vagueness of the term "maligned", this attribution of the queen's attitude to "natural" female jealousy rather than deliberate political cunning seems to dampen More's criticism of the queen, or at least to call into question interpretations which use it as evidence of a character given to intrigue.

The passage from More quoted above serves to point to a motivation for the duke of Gloucester's animosity; it is not primarily a comment on the queen herself. But More rarely separates Elizabeth from her family as he does here (however ambiguously), and so the passage has proven easy for later writers to seize on. This brings up another important point. References to the queen's "blood", "party", or "faction" occur often in most of the sources;

³²"...the queen ennobled many of her clan. She also admitted many outsiders to herself, and thus to the palace and the court." -- Mancini, 64.

³³More, 14.

³⁴More, 7.

consequently, historical writers have generally considered Elizabeth and her family as a monolith. More even has the queen herself suggest such a conflation ("...[Gloucester] is one of them that laboureth to destroye me and my bloode"). But he also says that after Elizabeth took sanctuary, opponents of Richard assembled in the City "either for favoure of the Quene, or for feare of themselfe" -- not in support of the queen's "party".³⁵ And in an apparently conscious distinction, More's Buckingham asks "Howe bee it there is none of her kinne the lesse loved, for that they bee her kinne, but for their owne evill deservinge."³⁶

It may seem obvious to say that the Woodvilles were so identified because they were related to the queen. But most writers infer, from the vagueness of references to them, that the queen was consciously at the head of this faction. This is where we run into interpretive problems, as the question of the queen's leadership shades into the question of her motivation. While Elizabeth clearly did nothing to counter the advancement of her family (and why would she?), there is no indication that she had any grand design beyond guaranteeing them some measure of security. More's "drifte by the Quene", meant to ingratiate her relatives with the prince, can be read as conniving, a master plan -- but to what end? What would be the point of "promoting" her family for its own sake?

No one seems to have considered that there are alternative ways of reading Elizabeth Woodville's alleged use of influence, some of which are implicit in the received version itself. It seems likely, as we shall presently explore, that the queen was resented for her social background. This would surely not inspire her with confidence in a royal court -- a place

³⁵More, 22.

³⁶More, 28.

where suspicion and intrigue existed at the best of times. Her inclination to trust her own family was therefore hardly unnatural, especially when she had vulnerable and politically important children. These facts cast doubt on the impression created by most histories that Elizabeth's actions in her own family's interest necessarily jeopardized the interest of the Crown. Her supposed influence in staffing the prince's council, for example, is noteworthy at least as much for its impulse to protect the royal heir as for any purpose of aggrandizement.

It is also consistent with her actions in 1483, when, after the accession of Richard III, Elizabeth Woodville was obliged to flee to sanctuary at Westminster with her children. Among them was the duke of York, younger brother of the recently deposed boy king Edward V, who had been captured by Richard. Eventually the queen was either persuaded or coerced to relinquish her politically crucial younger son to Richard as well. This provided later writers with an irresistible opportunity for real pathos. The scene was mostly More's creation, since the chronicles furnish only the barest details, but it was too good to change.³⁷ More is the only writer to provide us with a detailed description of the queen's second flight into sanctuary. His Elizabeth is not a tower of strength in the midst of crisis. Entirely passive, she is the one static element in a scene of confused activity, her emotional collapse echoing the physical disintegration of her surroundings.³⁸

When the queen is required to surrender her son, however, More has her deliver a lengthy and sophisticated monologue which is both an emotional protest against her separation

³⁷*Crowland chronicle*, 123, 157; Fabyan, 658-9; British Museum MS. Vitellius A XVI, in *Chronicles of London*, ed. C.L. Kingsford (n.p.: Alan Sutton, 1977), 182 & 190; *Great chronicle of London*, 211-12 & 230. None of these make real comments on the sanctuary episodes of either 1470 or 1483, though they mention them.

³⁸More, 21.

from her son and a careful argument of the reasons why he should remain with her. Elizabeth voices her defense mostly in terms of maternal affection and concern for her child's welfare, not drawing on her authority as queen in any effective way. More thus plays the scene in universal human terms; the queen-dowager is divested of her official persona and displays the same feelings as any worried mother. He also has her argue on less personal grounds, claiming to be the prince's lawful guardian for legal reasons (unrelated to queenship). But these seem supplementary, despite an apparent "privileging" of the female voice in this text.³⁹ The sympathetic portrait of Elizabeth operates largely through familiar images of protective, devoted motherhood.

Significantly, some sources do not agree with More on this episode. The Crowland chronicler claims that the queen "illa verbis gratanter annuens dimisit puerum".⁴⁰ The *great chronicle of London* suggests that the queen did not resist greatly, because she was fooled by "ffayer promesys" and had "no maner of Sispicion of Gyle".⁴¹ But More's version, however embellished, has been the most enduring. It was perpetuated, virtually verbatim, by Hall, drawn on by most post-Tudor writers, and by Holinshed, who was the main source for Shakespeare.⁴² Although in *Richard III* Shakespeare refers to the queen's strong personality (it is said of young York "Bold, quick, ingenious, forward, capable./ He is all the mother's,

³⁹More, 34-40; Shepard, 318.

⁴⁰"[She] willingly assented to these words and sent out the boy" (*Crowland chronicle*, 159). We should note, however, that *gravanter* in this sentence would mean "reluctantly"; might there be an error in transcription?

⁴¹*Great chronicle of London*, 230.

⁴²Hall, "King Edward the iiiii", lx-lxi; "King Richard the iii", iv.i; "King Edward the iiiii", v.ii, vi; R. Holinshed, *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (London, 1808), III:347 ff.

from the top to the toe”) and portrays Richard’s animosity toward her, he alludes to no popular resentment.⁴³ Elizabeth becomes a figure more pathetic than objectionable, and Shakespeare allows her an extra expression of grief (and wifely devotion) by placing her at the king’s deathbed.

The queen’s earlier stay in sanctuary (1470-1, during her husband’s exile) had inspired similar comments in a chronicle written in the 1470s:

[She] had a longe tyme abyden and sojourned at Westmynstar, asswringe hir parson only by the great fraunchis of that holy place, in right great trouble, sorow, and hevines, whiche she sustayned with all maner pacience that belonged to eny creature, and as constantly as hathe bene sene at any time any of so highe estate to endure; in the whiche season natheles she had brought into this worlde, to the Kyngs greatyste joy, a fayre sonn, a prince, where with she presented hym at his comynge...⁴⁴

This is the only account to do more than touch on the subject of the queen in hiding during the redeption. Its partisan nature (the text has a strong Yorkist bias) may account in part for its sympathetic tone towards the queen and also for its uncompromising reference to her “highe estate”.⁴⁵ It is perhaps more important to note that Elizabeth is here more acted upon than acting, a model of patient endurance. Her suffering and subsequent deliverance mirror the suffering she undergoes in giving birth to Edward’s son and heir; both adversities are thus made to point toward the same worthy result. Here passivity is lauded, where More makes it pathetic. But both uses (which, we should remember, are positive in their respective

⁴³W. Shakespeare, *Richard III*, III.i.155

⁴⁴“Historie of the arrivall of Edward IV in England and the finall recoverye of his kingdomes from Henry VI A.D.M.CCCC.LXXI.”, ed. J. Bruce, in *Three chronicles of the reign of Edward IV* (Gloucester, U.K.: Alan Sutton, 1988), 163. Warkworth [*Three chronicles of the reign of Edward IV*, 35] notes only the birth of the heir Edward in 1470 and the fact that the queen “abode styll in grete troble, tylle Kynge Edward came in ageyne tylle here”.

⁴⁵A. Gransden notes also that the text is useful because it was written very soon after the events it describes -- *Historical writing in England* (Ithaca (NY): Cornell University Press, 1982), II:263.

contexts) reflect expectations of female behaviour which have shaped portrayals of Elizabeth Woodville. Where the queen displayed the opposite characteristics, her reputation suffered.

Elizabeth Woodville's career was thus not devoid of opportunities for laudatory comments. Nor were such comments necessarily restricted to maternal issues. After Edward V's accession there was apparently a dispute about the cohort to accompany him from Wales to London. The Crowland continuator draws attention to Hastings' suspicion of "eorum de sanguine reginae", but then singles out the queen: "Benignissima autem regina cupiens omnem murmuris et turbulationis scintillam extinguere scribit filio suo ut in veniendo Londonias numerum duorum millium hominum non excedat."⁴⁶ In this account, then, Elizabeth Woodville, so often made the focal point of discord, is cast as peacemaker. We are not accustomed to hearing her praised as *benignissima regina*. While we should not overstress this one reference, it is worth noting that it is virtually the only contemporary source to assign an explicit attribute to Elizabeth Woodville *after* her marriage. Our surprise comes because the term contrasts not with other contemporary appraisals but with the unflattering assessment of later historians.

What is the nature of that assessment? We have seen how aspects of late medieval sexism affected writing about Elizabeth Woodville's marriage to the king. The same concerns, in different guises, affected writers' attitudes toward the rest of her career. First, there is the obvious hostility to women in the political sphere. For Mancini to have Buckingham say to the boy king that "non [est] officii mulierum regna administrare sed

⁴⁶ "However, the most benevolent queen, wishing to extinguish every spark of murmuring and unrest, wrote to her son that he should not have more than 2,000 men when he came to London" (*Crowland chronicle*, 154).

virorum" disqualifies the queen from regency because of her sex, not her factional role.⁴⁷

More has Buckingham claim "for as for her, here is no manne that wil bee at warre with women. Would God some of the men of her kynne, were women too, and then should al bee soone in reste."⁴⁸

Femininity is also associated with irrationality. This is plain in Polydore Vergil (1531), who imputed the king's marriage to his having been "led by blynde affection, and not by rule of reason."⁴⁹ In the same vein, More's male figures attribute Elizabeth's obstinacy (in not surrendering her son) to "womanish feare" and "mothers drede", while Polydore is content to say that by "promysing mountaynes", Richard eventually prevailed because "so mutable is that sex" that the queen yielded "without muche adoe".⁵⁰ Irrationality, in turn, is not far from vengeful female jealousy, one of Elizabeth's alleged vices, as we have seen. We know also that female passivity was positively constructed, which makes it easier to understand why writers have frowned on the evidence of Elizabeth Woodville's activity: her promotion of her family and other uses of her influence. What in a man might have been called shrewdness or initiative became "design" or "ambition" or "intrigue" for this woman.

But misogyny was not the only historical prejudice against Elizabeth Woodville, nor has it been the only historiographical one. Recall that the first wave of Woodville promotion, credited to the queen, took the form of advantageous marriages, "so rapid and numerous as

⁴⁷Mancini, 76-8.

⁴⁸More, 30.

⁴⁹Polydore Vergil, *Three books of Polydore Vergil's English history*, ed. H. Ellis (London: Camden Society, 1844/1968), 116-7.

⁵⁰More, 28; P. Vergil, ed. Ellis, 210; P. Vergil, *The Anglica historia of Polydore Vergil*, ed. & trans. D. Hay (London: Royal Historical Society, 1950), 18n.

temporarily to corner the aristocratic marriage market".⁵¹ We should not underestimate the resentment such a development would cause among a class where marriages held the key to land, money and power, especially when the beneficiaries, who were also receiving prestigious appointments, were their relative social inferiors. And it is entirely likely that the writers who relate this subject most quotably, More and (especially) Mancini, obtained their information from court (i.e. prejudiced) sources. Because she was of the wrong class, Elizabeth Woodville's loyalty to her ancestral family was turned into clannish "ambition"; her attention to their material interests became "grasping", the vulgar acquisitiveness of the *nouvelle riche*. She was seen to be abusing her queenly influence, moreover, not because she jeopardized the Crown, but because she failed to intercede for those who deserved it -- that is, in the minds of the established nobility, themselves. We must remember that the English nobility had no recent experience of an English queen, let alone one with her own children.

All the evidence shows that Elizabeth Woodville fulfilled her marital role as both wife and mother. Why, then, did her constancy not win her greater praise, especially in light of the king's numerous infidelities? (Her daughter, in comparison, was eulogized as an ideal consort and mother, on no more substantial evidence). The better-known writers seem to have felt compelled to comment on Edward's "fleshly wantonness", treating it indulgently, with careful disapproval. But no one contrasted this with the queen's behaviour.

In fact, the kind of praise we might expect a queen to receive was instead assigned to the king's most famous mistress. Although verifiable details about her are few, Jane Shore became a popular figure, her appealingly tragic life the subject of numerous stage works,

⁵¹Ross, 93.

poems and ballads from Elizabethan times through the nineteenth century. More provided the enduring portrait of Jane as kind, gracious, beautiful, and most notably an intercessor with the king: "...she would mitigate and appease his mind... For many that had highly offended, shee obtained pardon".⁵² Seeking no reward for her actions, More's Jane is a saintly courtesan. More seems to assume that her bad end (she was publicly humiliated by Richard III and died in poverty years later) balances what in such a figure are problematic characteristics.

At any rate, it is hard to resist the feeling that there is something wrong here. Illicit mistresses are not supposed to get better press than faithful wives, especially when the wife in question has borne heirs to the throne and is the grandmother of the monarch employing the author of the text. Even More's most generous comments on Elizabeth Woodville do not compensate for this disparity. One wonders whether Gairdner's unsupported statement, that the queen was "scarcely regarded with more respect by the nobility than the courtesans by whom she was dishonoured", might contain some truth.⁵³ The problem was confronted by Heywood, the playwright, whose *Edward IV* (1600) is kind to Elizabeth Woodville. Here the revelation of the marriage is turned into comedy, with Elizabeth the picture of purity and accommodation. Later in the play Elizabeth confronts the guilty Jane Shore. The queen expresses her rightful anger, but mercifully does not take revenge and forgives Jane -- thus becoming, in Jane's words, "The only perfect mirror of her kind,/ For all the choicest

⁵²More, 56.

⁵³J. Gairdner, *History of the life and reign of Richard the third* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1898), 70.

virtues can be named".⁵⁴ Heywood's Elizabeth is thus a queen who does not abuse her authority even under provocation. But his interpretation is an exception.

There are important episodes in Elizabeth's life which the narrative sources do not explain, and which have thus come down to us through an accretion of speculations by later writers. Her decision to leave sanctuary and to entrust herself and her daughters to Richard in 1484 has inspired, up to very recent times, some unnecessarily complex speculation in the absence of clear evidence, as if it were the unfathomable act of an irrational woman. It is perhaps most likely that the queen simply had little choice; her financial and political situations were both precarious. We have no record of her true involvement in the plan to support Henry Tudor against Richard III; More does not mention her, and Hall describes only her eager consent to the "plot".⁵⁵ And though any history from the Tudors onward will inform us that Elizabeth surrendered her property to Henry VII in 1487 in return for an annuity, and soon after retired from court, no contemporary documentation of the reason or circumstances has survived. Polydore Vergil was one of the first to suggest that the queen-dowager was being punished for complicity in plots against Henry. Hall, while asserting that this was unfair of the king, does not contradict Polydore, and mentions, however imprecisely, Elizabeth's "foly and inconstancy".⁵⁶

The most forceful and influential statement of this last idea, however, comes from Bacon in 1622, claiming that the queen-dowager's estates were "seized" and that she was

⁵⁴ T. Heywood, *The first and second parts of king Edward IV*, ed. B. Field (London: Shakespeare Society, 1842), Part I, I.i; Part II, II.ii

⁵⁵Hall, "King Richard the iii", f. xiii.

⁵⁶P. Vergil, ed. Hay, 18-9; Hall, "King Henry the vii", ff. vii-viii

"banished" into a nunnery, though he adds "for this act the King sustained great obloquy".⁵⁷ This began to be rejected even by the Victorians. Strickland noted, for example, that Elizabeth was chosen as godmother to the king's firstborn son, in place of the king's own mother, in 1486. The same author tried to clarify the significance of Elizabeth's final residence, pointing out that Bermondsey Abbey was a monastery, not a nunnery, and that the queen-dowager had a right of residence there as the widow of the heir to the abbey's founder.⁵⁸ As a privileged resident, Elizabeth would not have had to conform to even the monks' interpretation of poverty. But the undertones of suspicion are still detectable in modern accounts of the queen-dowager's last years.⁵⁹ Elizabeth Woodville died at Bermondsey and her funeral was, at her own request, unceremonious. Her will admits that she has nothing fit to bequeath to her daughter the queen, but requests that her own "small stuff" be disposed of fairly.⁶⁰ The will leaves her condition open to interpretation and does not in itself suggest that she was living any more poorly than she wished.

A chronological survey reveals that historical writers after 1600 were no less affected by the themes we have identified, perpetuating them with the occasional coating of contemporary prejudices. In the seventeenth century Elizabeth Woodville's reputation reached a new low, and not only because of Bacon. Buck, the apologist for Richard III, is ambiguous. He does not malign Elizabeth's behaviour in the face of the king's advances, and

⁵⁷F. Bacon, *History of the reign of king Henry VII*, ed. J.R. Lumby (Cambridge, U.K.): Cambridge University Press, 1880), 28-9.

⁵⁸Strickland, II:34-5.

⁵⁹S.B. Chrimes, *Henry VII* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1972), 76.

⁶⁰Strickland, II:36.

his only comment on her regarding 1483 is that if she could have "usurp[ed] the sovereignty", her family would have remained powerful even after the minority of the young king. Buck also does not seem revolted by the idea that the queen-dowager approved of a match between her daughter and Richard III. However, he condemns Edward IV's marriage altogether, tainting Elizabeth by association as a "poor widow of a man who hated the king and his family", and his analysis of the events of 1487 is similar to Bacon's.⁶¹

Habington, by contrast, is less ambiguous, though not completely consistent. Like Buck, while frowning on the king's marriage he does not fault Elizabeth. But he blames the treatment of Sir Thomas Cook and others on the queen, who "was almost necessitated... to wrack the Kingdome" to support her family's elevation in status, though "the universall malice that waited on her and hers" protected the king, who would otherwise have been blamed by "the people". In describing the end of Edward's reign, Habington is kind to the king, implying that he amended his earlier waywardness. The queen, however, is at the top of a list of reasons why the court was "all rotten with discord and envie".⁶² Habington says that Elizabeth tried to compensate for a sense of her own unworthiness by overreaching, "foolishly imagining pride could set off the humilitie of her birth":

Shee was likewise (according to the nature of woman) factious, as if her greatnesse could not appeare cleare enough without opposition. And they she opposed were the chiefest both in blood and power: the weaker shee disdayning to wrastle with, and they fearefull to contest with her. But what subjected her to an universall malice, was the rapine, the necessary provision of her kindred engaged her to... Against the Queene (for through her kindred they aym'd at her) opposed the Duke of *Glocester*,

⁶¹G. Buck, *The history of King Richard the third*, ed. A.N. Kincaid (Gloucester, U.K.: Alan Sutton, 1979), 177, 179, 212.

⁶²Habington, 33, 198.

the Duke of *Buckingham*, the Lord *Hastings*, and others of the most ancient nobilitie.⁶³

The centrality of social and gender bias to Habington's critique is even clearer in his mention of Edward's reception in London in 1469, where he describes "a generall affection borne him by the Merchants wives; who hav[e] (according to the uxorious humour of our Nation) a command ore their husbands".⁶⁴

In the eighteenth century, Hume amplified these distortions. His history casts doubt on Elizabeth's motives in her first meeting with the king ("either averse to dishonourable love from a sense of duty, or perceiving that the impression which she had made was so deep as to give her hopes of obtaining the highest elevation") and in 1483 ("anxious to preserve that ascendant over her son which she had long maintained over her husband"). Her moral bankruptcy is further illustrated by her willingness to marry her daughter to her brother-in-law, the murderer of her children. Hume assumes that Elizabeth was treated badly by Henry VII, then tries to imagine what she might have done to deserve this, constructing an irrational and vengeful woman in the process.⁶⁵

The Victorian era did not produce any revisions of Elizabeth Woodville. Turner's much-quoted national history, reflecting the tendency of the age, relegates her to a minor role. Turner goes on at length about the king's character but ventures nothing of consequence about the queen except the veiled criticism that she did not intercede to save the attainted duke of

⁶³Habington, 209-10.

⁶⁴Habington, 53.

⁶⁵D. Hume, *The history of England from the invasion of Julius Caesar to the abdication of James the second* (London: F. Warne & Co., n.d.), II:453-4, 486-7, III:16.

Clarence because of her prejudice in favour of the Woodvilles. Following Bacon on the events of 1487, Turner speculates, somewhat illogically, that Elizabeth's residence "had been the seed-bed of the conspiracies in [Henry's] own favour, and would naturally be the centre of all that would attack him."⁶⁶ Perhaps the more important nineteenth-century writer to note is Strickland, the first serious biographer of English queens, who researched carefully and for the most part did not romanticize.⁶⁷ Though her technique was surprisingly modern, her inconsistency in citing sources makes some of her assertions unverifiable. These often amount to character judgments: for example, that the queen "gained her own way [with the king] by an assumption of the deepest humility" (an idea Strickland imported, unacknowledged, from Bacon), or that her pride "was inflated excessively by the engagement" of her daughter to the dauphin of France.⁶⁸ Strickland's work cannot be ignored, because it was critically acclaimed and enjoyed great commercial success; her histories became widely distributed and are still often cited.

Elizabeth Woodville's reputation has also been affected by the fact that writing on Richard III was for a long time more distinguished by dogmatic loyalties than scholarly balance; generally, greater sympathy for Richard means less sympathy for Elizabeth. The most extreme example of this comes from the mid-twentieth century, in the work of Kendall, for whom Elizabeth is a principal villain. Kendall gives full credit to every story reflecting

⁶⁶S. Turner, *The history of England during the Middle Ages* (London: Longman, Green, Brown & Longman, 1853), III:94-5, 334.

⁶⁷An earlier biography, H. Coore's *The story of Queen Elizabeth Woodville* (1845), predates Strickland, but my attempts to locate a copy of this volume have failed.

⁶⁸Strickland, II:26, 14, 24. Bacon's version: "She... continued his nuptial love, helping herself by some obsequious bearing and dissembling of his pleasures, to the very end" (29).

badly on the queen (including that concerning the earl of Desmond, which had been disproved long before), using sources with little regard to their provenance, and writing in consistently overheated language. Elizabeth is described as grimly vengeful, dissembling, insatiably ambitious, as "feverishly arranging the future to suit her heart's desire". It is more a caricature than a portrait, with phrases like "beautiful and rapacious" betraying a worrisome attitude toward unconventional women. Kendall depends more on his own vocabulary than on his sources for his evaluations, and it would be easy to dismiss the book altogether. But, like Strickland's, Kendall's book was a great success in the popular market; moreover, its scholarly purpose brought it into university libraries, and it is still being cited. That his characterizations have not been rejected is shown by Hallam (1988), who sums up Elizabeth in four words: "greedy, ambitious, arrogant and unscrupulous".⁶⁹

These tendencies coalesced, by the twentieth century, into judgments of considerable assurance and uniformity, of which the following is a revealing example:

The Queen seems to have been a person of a cool calculating decision of character, without deep affection, but of steady dislikes and revengeful disposition. She retained a lasting power over the mind of her husband and was able to influence him to her will without publicly appearing in political affairs. She was to bear him a large family, but she soon lost her sole dominion of his fancy, and seems to have accepted the situation without much difficulty. She showed some ability in the way in which she forwarded the interests of her family. But her influence on her husband in the long run was bad. She brought nothing of value into public and Court life, no new element of refinement, purity, gentleness or mercy.⁷⁰

The concluding emphasis on feminine responsibility for refinement, purity and gentleness should surprise us no more, in an Edwardian writer, than his distaste for feminine calculation

⁶⁹P.M. Kendall, *Richard the third* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1955), 79-80, 91, 144, 69 *et passim*; E. Hallam (ed.), *The Wars of the Roses* (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988), 234.

⁷⁰L. Stratford, *Edward the fourth* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, 1910), 96.

or power over a husband's mind. However, it is somewhat more surprising to hear these themes echoed in Edward IV's most recent biography, published in 1974:

Elizabeth had nothing to recommend her except her obvious physical attractions. Her rather cold beauty was not offset by any warmth or generosity of temperament. She was to prove a woman of designing character, grasping and ambitious for her family's interests, quick to take offence and reluctant to forgive.⁷¹

This is Ross' definitive statement on the queen, and it shows disconcertingly that "temperament" and physicality were not considered inappropriate criteria even recently in evaluations of female figures. (To be sure, Ross notes Edward's reputation for handsomeness, but its role in this 400-page work is minute, compared to this paragraph.) It also embodies Ross' distaste for Elizabeth. He takes her influence over the king as given.⁷²

The only historical monograph devoted to Elizabeth Woodville dates from 1938, and it is clearly inadequate. MacGibbon attempts to be scholarly in his use of primary sources, but he also lifts entire evaluations from other writers, most notably reproducing Stratford's description, with some fanciful additions. Moreover, MacGibbon structures the book as a linear narrative. The lack of descriptive evidence seems to compel him to embellish this narrative with unsupported speculations, especially about the queen's inner motives, and to pad the volume with sequences of events which do not involve Elizabeth at all. The result is a strange hybrid of the monograph and the novel. Although, as the only book on Elizabeth Woodville, it continues to be used and cited, it can only be considered reliable for its basic

⁷¹Ross, 87-9.

⁷²Ross, 317.

information.⁷³

Since the original sources provide few evaluations of Elizabeth Woodville's life, later writers have felt compelled to supply their own. These often invoke a sort of tragic balance, implying that Elizabeth paid for her presumption. Sandford, for example, claims that she was "not more fortunate in attaining to the height of worldly honour than unhappy in the murder of her two sons, and loss of her own liberty" (her "mean estate" at Bermondsey, where Buck says she lived "not long, but very sorrowfully, and full of grief"). Polydore Vergil even suggests an awareness of this tragic structure in Elizabeth herself: "The woman, forseing in a sort within hir self the thing that folowyd furthwith after, could not be movid..."⁷⁴ Strickland asserts that in surrendering her son, "the hapless Elizabeth gave up, with tears, the precautionary measures her maternal instinct had dictated; the necessity for which not a soul... foreboded but herself".⁷⁵ The descent of Kendall's conclusion, that the queen "owned a destiny presenting the grand outlines of 'tragedie' which disintegrates upon inspection because it was developed by a mean, stupid, and cruel character", then becomes plain.⁷⁶ By now it should be evident that this is simply not a credible interpretation.

We have seen that being a devoted mother (or daughter, or sister) did Elizabeth Woodville no good when she was considered to be devoted to the wrong family and hence in

⁷³D. MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville* (London: Arthur Banker Ltd., 1938). For plagiarisms, see 31 (of Smith's *Coronation of Elizabeth Wydeville*), 41-2 (of Stratford); for exaggerations, especially of Elizabeth's influence on the king, 41-4, 64-6, 118, 137; for psychological projections, 85-6. This list is not exhaustive.

⁷⁴Sandford, 385; Buck, ed. Kincaid, 212; P. Vergil, ed. H. Ellis, 178.

⁷⁵Strickland, II:26.

⁷⁶Kendall, 254.

danger of contravening the social order as defined by fifteenth-century elite society. But since we are dealing with literary issues, it is useful also to note that creating her as unpleasant serves a literary purpose. Narratives seem to crave a Bad Woman, and from the earliest times Elizabeth fit the bill -- though not necessarily always in the same guise. In the earliest accounts Elizabeth is sexually virtuous and a faithful producer of heirs. Her error comes in reaching into the political sphere. By more modern times the distinctions have become blurred, so that the queen's perceived malign influence over the king is sexually shaded. Thus, in the era of queenship studies, we are told that the "collapse of Elizabeth Woodville's position" was due to a contemporary "preoccupation with queenly sexuality", or that Elizabeth "exerted her sexuality" or "grounded her queenship in her carnality", an interpretation of very questionable utility.⁷⁷ The confusion has arisen from the ambiguity of the evidence and the unwillingness of historical writers to consider the complex array of priorities facing Elizabeth Woodville, and the impossibility of her engaging them to the satisfaction of her contemporaries.

Elizabeth of York

The first Tudor consort is mainly remembered as a dynastic symbol, one element of an equation: York plus Tudor equals peace. In this interpretation, handed down to us by the Tudor chroniclers via Shakespeare, Elizabeth accomplished her most important work, if not without lifting a finger, merely by proffering a finger for a wedding ring. As the surviving heir of Edward IV, Elizabeth represented the most convenient solution to the political

⁷⁷J.C. Parsons, "Family, sex and power: the rhythms of medieval queenship", in *Medieval queenship* (ed. Parsons) (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 6.

instability of 1485. Marrying her did not in itself make Henry king, as he took pains to advertise in several ways: in dating his reign from the day before Bosworth (five months before his marriage); in claiming the kingdom by right of lineage and conquest; and by delaying her coronation nearly two years, by which time it was distant enough from the events of his accession to seem safely separate.⁷⁸ His own security demanded the clearest possible distinction of his claim from his wife's. As a result Elizabeth of York has rarely been examined seriously in her own right, a fact attributable to the sparseness of the narrative evidence. Just as that ambiguity did not prevent writers from constructing an objectionable Elizabeth Woodville, neither have they been deterred from creating her daughter as eminently attractive, for reasons deriving from equally deep-seated narrative priorities.

Aside from her birth, worth recording as the firstborn of Edward IV, Elizabeth of York left little trace in the sources throughout her childhood and adolescence, except those episodes affecting her mother and sisters.⁷⁹ She makes her first significant appearance in records of the reign of her uncle, Richard III, who in 1485 found himself compelled to deny rumours that he intended to marry his young niece after the death of his wife. This would warrant little discussion here except for the shadowy existence of a document which calls into question Elizabeth's own attitude. Supposedly Elizabeth wrote a letter, cited only by the Jacobean writer Buck, expressing her own inclination to marry her uncle and impatience that

⁷⁸Chrimes, 50-1.

⁷⁹Although several modern works place the birth of the princess Elizabeth in 1465, this arises from a confusion of dates. At this time the new year began on 25 March (*Handbook of dates for students of English history*, ed. C.R. Cheney, London: Royal Historical Society, 1970, 4-5); also, age was reckoned differently (K. Thomas, "Age and authority in early modern England", *Proceedings of the British Academy* LXII(1976):205-48). She was in fact born 11 February 1466; contemporary sources do not mention her until after her mother's coronation.

Queen Anne was not yet dead.⁸⁰ We do not know whether it ever existed. Speculation is of limited use, but it has been a very sticky issue for writers anxious to believe the best of Elizabeth; how could their gracious and pious princess (see below) countenance, let alone desire, an incestuous marriage -- especially to that Shakespearean villain, Richard III? Except for members of the Richard III Society, their precursors, and the Buck scholar Kincaid, most have dismissed the letter with horror and/or contempt. (As further evidence of the received view of Elizabeth Woodville in the twentieth century, Kincaid speculates that her "intriguing nature could easily have turned to her daughter's marriage with Richard [to gain] power for her family, and possibly young Elizabeth wrote the letter at her mother's prompting".)⁸¹

However important Elizabeth's marriage to Henry VII on 18 January 1486 was, it received relatively brief mention in contemporary accounts, and no description of the ceremony or festivities has survived. This suggests that the persistent idea of the marriage as a watershed in English history, the beginning of a glorious new age via a glorious new dynasty, is more Tudor propaganda than a contemporary evaluation. Polydore Vergil, who only arrived in England seventeen years after Henry's accession, stated just such a concept: "from the union the true and established royal line emerged which now reigns". Fabian, in contrast, says that Henry's supporters promised him that if he would marry Elizabeth, they would "ayde hym in suche maner, that he & also she were or myght be possessyd of theyr ryghtfull enharytaunce" (emphasis mine). This does not imply the obliteration of distinct lineages in favour of a new one. Elizabeth's separate symbolic function was still important

⁸⁰Buck, 191.

⁸¹Kincaid (ed.), *History of king Richard*, 308.

enough as late as 1603 for James I to mention her in the proclamation of his lineal descent from Henry VII.⁸²

The fact that no one seriously considered putting Elizabeth on the throne in her own right, despite her manifestly superior claim, suggests that perhaps the notion of a queen regnant was still too foreign to England in this period, despite the absence of any law against it.⁸³ The solution adopted by a later age, of king and queen as joint monarchs, also has no evident antecedents in the era of Bosworth. Again, the absence of a precedent in England must be partly responsible. But the social-political exigencies of 1485 provide a more satisfying -- and also a quite simple -- explanation. The stress placed by contemporary writers on the pacifying effects of the marriage must surely be a clue. Simply put, Henry Tudor's help was needed to overthrow Richard III, and Henry Tudor wanted to be king. There was more to be lost than gained for the Yorkists in emphasizing Elizabeth's claim.

The case for the succession may not have been viewed as open-and-shut. The Crowland continuator relates that in the parliament where the confirmation of Henry's authority was being worked out, "tractatum est, atque per Regem assensus, super matrimonio dominae Elizabeth... in cujus persona visum omnibus erat posse suppleri, quicquid aliunde ipsi Regi deesse de titulo videbatur" -- but then, frustratingly, changes the subject.⁸⁴ Note the king's assent to this discussion. Henry thus may not have seen Elizabeth or her partisans

⁸²Fabyan, 672; P. Vergil, ed. Hay, 7; Historical Manuscripts Commission, *The manuscripts of His Grace the duke of Rutland* (no. 24) (London: H.M.S.O., 1911), I:389.

⁸³Strickland attributed this to "Norman prejudice in favour of Salic law [having] corrupted the common law of England" (II:56).

⁸⁴"There was discussion, and with the king's assent, about the marriage to the lady Elizabeth... in whose person, it seemed to everyone, there could be found whatever appeared to be lacking in the king's title elsewhere" (*Crowland chronicle*, 194-5). Compare Chrimes, 50.

as possible rivals; he may simply have decided that to establish his claim as independently valid was the best available option.

In any event, Elizabeth of York was not crowned queen until November 1487, when she had already borne an heir to the throne. It is easy to see this as Henry's deliberate strategy. Like Elizabeth Woodville's, the coronation is never described precisely; the *Great chronicle of London* hints at sumptuous display but declines to go into detail, while most others allow "greate Solempnyte", or words to that effect, to suffice.⁸⁵

Records of the queen's activities in "ordinary" time, paltry enough for Elizabeth Woodville, are even thinner for her daughter. Her role in court ceremonial, where she was on public display, provoked little mention in narratives of the reign, and no assessment of her physical or personal qualities. For a better understanding of the queen's role in these areas we must look beyond the narrative sources to make inferences from other extant documents (see Chapter 3).

On 4 February 1503 Elizabeth of York gave birth to her last child, a daughter christened Katherine. A week later, evidently suffering from postpartum complications, the queen died, on her thirty-seventh birthday. In so doing she supplied later writers with most of the evidence they used to portray her personality. Elizabeth's death inspired more personal remarks than her marriage or her life: "that most Gracious and vertuous pryncesse þe Quene", "noble and vertuous", "of the greatest charity and humanity" and the like.⁸⁶ Despite being vague and conventional, these phrases have been uncritically adapted in later

⁸⁵*Great chronicle of London*, 241, 438 (editors); Vitellius, 194. Fabyan, 683, does not comment.

⁸⁶*Great chronicle of London*, 321; B.M. MS. Vitellius, in *Chronicles of London*, 258; "Annals of Ulster", cited in *The reign of Henry VII...*, III:289.

characterizations. Polydore Vergil, who arrived in England only in 1502, says "difficile sit iudicare, plus maiestatis ac morum gravitatis, an sapientiae et moderationis in ea fuerit"; Hall writing in 1542, that she "was commonly called good quene Elizabeth" -- the only source of this much-quoted phrase.⁸⁷ A less formulaic source calls Elizabeth "a very handsome woman and of great ability (*di gran inzegno*), in conduct very able (*di gran governo*)", a nebulous but intriguing comment.⁸⁸ The writer gives her appearance precedence among her qualities and does not feel the need to define "ability" or "conduct". *Di gran governo* may also mean "skilled in governance", which complicates the picture further.⁸⁹

There is no point in repeating here the details of the queen's spectacular funeral: the procession, the attire of the participants, the pealing of church bells, and so on.⁹⁰ It is more important to note that contemporary narrators always dwell on it, often devoting more space to it than to any other single incident of the decade, which shows how deep an impression it made. Did Elizabeth deserve such a tribute because she was a queen, or because she was an especially good queen?

Several interpretations are possible. The most personal, and most sentimental, sees Henry, the grieving husband, showing his true affection for his wife, in a public statement of private feeling. This has been helped by such comments as Hall's: that an "Ambassade" from the Emperor came in part "to comferte the kyng beyng sorowful and sad for the death of so

⁸⁷"It would be difficult to judge whether she possessed more of majesty and dignity of manner, or of wisdom and moderation" (P. Vergil, ed. Hay, 132); Hall, "King Henry the vii", f. lv.ii.

⁸⁸*The reign of Henry VII...*, I:231-2.

⁸⁹For this insight I must gratefully credit Dr. K. Bartlett of the University of Toronto.

⁹⁰For example, *Great chronicle of London*, 321.

good a queene and spouse", and that the king heard a special "co[n]solatory oracion" about her at St. Paul's.⁹¹ Next comes the idea of national memory: the funeral as laying to rest a good and beloved public figure, for whom anything less would not have been fitting. Then again, perhaps such display was merited by her rank alone. In order to believe this, we must believe that there was a consensus on queenly dignity -- or was it "merely" royal dignity? Finally, there is the possibility of political calculation: a grand occasion to appease any lingering ideas of Yorkist equality and entitlement, a strategic nod to the concept that Elizabeth's heritage was as important and honourable as Henry's own, however much he himself might have disbelieved this. The answer probably combines aspects of all these possibilities, which apply also to a lesser-known detail. In February 1508, the fifth anniversary of the queen's death was marked with ceremony just as solemn, if not quite as splendid, as the original funeral. André suggests ("ut in superioribus annis observatum est") that this had been a yearly occurrence, with no indication of why the fifth anniversary was especially noteworthy; we do not know whether it was observed in any future years.⁹² We may pose the same interpretive questions as for the funeral. It is difficult to compare these memorials of one consort with precedent, though the contrast with Elizabeth Woodville is obvious. Of the five consorts in the century previous to Elizabeth of York, three died as dowagers, two of them no longer resident at court. For the other two, Joan of Navarre in 1437 and Anne Neville in 1485, we

⁹¹Hall, "King Henry the vii", f. lvi.i.

⁹²B. André, "De vita atque gestis Henrici Septimi", in *Memorials of King Henry VII*, ed. J. Gairdner (London: Longman & Co., 1858), 108-9.

have no record of such impressive ceremonies, nor of comparable commentary.⁹³

It is not surprising that contemporary comments made at Elizabeth of York's death should be universally laudatory. But even those made in other contexts usually also seem generic and conventionalized because they are so nonspecific. Carmelianus, who claims "Regina Hellisabet... orbis inter reginas floruit absque pari", also praises Henry VII and the parents of Charles of Castile (who espoused Mary, daughter of Henry and Elizabeth) in equally vague terms.⁹⁴ Such sources are limited by their authorial nature. Carmelianus was a court poet whose business presumably was to produce, among other things, celebratory works on special occasions -- the sort of occasion where reference to the queen is most often found. The same applies to Walter Ogilvie, tutor at the court of Henry VII, whose panegyric of the king is one long (and sometimes marvellously garbled) exercise in superlatives. It was noted by Gairdner for its praise of the queen, somewhat misleadingly.⁹⁵ A typical sentence declares "adde vero quanta maiestate matronalique venustate aurea sua coniunx elizabeth reginarum gemma conspicua fulget". Moreover, according to Ogilvie, Elizabeth surpasses even Lucretia and Penelope in chastity and purity, and has bequeathed such qualities to her children.⁹⁶ The aspects of queenship praised in this text are thus familiar medieval attributes

⁹³*Crowland chronicle*, 174-5, claims that Anne was buried with honours befitting a queen, but does not describe them.

⁹⁴P. Carmelianus, "Petri Carmeliani de illustrissimorum principum Castellae Karoli et Marie sponsalibus carmen", in "The "spouselles" of the Lady Marye", *Camden Miscellany IX* (London: Camden Society, 1895), 34.

⁹⁵J. Gairdner, *Memorials of King Henry VII*, lxii.

⁹⁶National Library of Scotland MS. Adv. 33.2.24, ff. 3v-4r. I am grateful for the help of Dr. K. Bartlett of the University of Toronto and Drs. J. Alsop and H. Jones of McMaster University for their assistance with this manuscript.

of ideal womanhood.

Ogilvie actually spends more time praising Elizabeth's daughter Margaret, who became queen of Scotland. He takes pains to credit both sides of Margaret's parentage for her obvious greatness, though that too is done in thoroughly conventional terms. Thus Margaret's beauty is inherited both from Elizabeth, the white rose of York, and from the equally attractive king, the red rose, with a play on whiteness as symbolic of purity: "*hec margareta candore nives quem a matre rosa candida contraxent: superare videtur: purpureum vero genitoris roseumque decorem ab omni parte equavit*".⁹⁷ (Ogilvie dwells on the physical attractiveness of both men and women in Henry's family, which suggests that this mode of praise was not restricted to the feminine.) Such a noble admixture, Ogilvie implies, is reflected in the perfect balance of Margaret's character.

André, yet another court writer, emphasizes Elizabeth's piety in oft-quoted words, claiming that her admirable faith, her great love for her family, and her respect for the religious were present from her infancy ("*ab unguiculis*"). But André is hardly a precise historian, as he follows this passage with a joyous prayer Elizabeth is supposed to have uttered on learning of Henry's victory at Bosworth. (The reader is meant to believe that Elizabeth spontaneously echoed Virgil's fourth Eclogue, practically verbatim.) The princess's oration stresses that she is alone in the world, lacking good friends, too ashamed to turn to her mother ("*Pudor est*"), not daring to approach the peers ("*Non est audacia*"), and wholly dependent on the prospect of marriage with Henry. Her familial interest having been thus discounted, and her own connection to the throne conveniently omitted, the figure of

⁹⁷NLS Adv. 33.2.24, f. 4v.

Elizabeth is used to make Henry look all the more heroic. The one active role André gives the queen is that of a devoted wife: she is said to have inundated the king with so many loving letters during his absence in France, in 1492, that he was convinced to return.⁹⁸ The less self-interested, and better-known, Polydore Vergil called Elizabeth "tam ultra alias, prudentem, quam pulchram". He also contributed to her pious mystique by making a saintly analogy: she would prefer the torture of St. Catherine ("tormenta omnia, quae ferunt divam Catherinam ab amorem Christi") to a marriage with her uncle.⁹⁹

A more provocative comment comes from the Spanish ambassador Ayola, writing in 1498:

[The king] is disliked, but the Queen beloved, because she is powerless... The King is much influenced by his mother and his followers in affairs of personal interest and in others. The Queen, as is generally the case, does not like it.¹⁰⁰

A phrase like "beloved, because she is powerless" (and not for her innate goodness) cries out for quotation, though we must consider the possible roles of sarcasm, the pitfalls of translation, and a diplomat's political agenda. What "affairs of personal interest" means is anyone's guess, but whether or not the queen resented her mother-in-law -- the evidence, predictably, is inconclusive -- Ayola's wording suggests a familial rather than a political context for this perceived tension; Elizabeth is not objecting to her exclusion from political influence. The effect is trivializing, reducing the queen to the role of jealous wife.

⁹⁸"Bernardi Andreae vita Henrici VII", in *Memorials of King Henry VII*, 37-8, 60. My thanks to Dr. H. Jones for pointing out André's debt to Virgil.

⁹⁹P. Vergil, ed. Hay, 6, 2.

¹⁰⁰Document 2 in *The reign of Henry VII from contemporary sources*, ed. A.F. Pollard (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1913), II:4.

There is yet another narrative source for Elizabeth of York. The anonymous long poem known as the "Song of Lady Bessy" cannot seriously be considered a factual chronicle, as Strickland and others have used it, but its portrayal of the princess' involvement in the plan to recall Henry Tudor from France during the reign of Richard III provides an insight into the way the figure of Elizabeth passed into the popular imagination. Although the poem exists only in two seventeenth-century manuscripts, the more authoritative dating from about 1600, linguistic features indicate that the text is appreciably older.¹⁰¹ Bessy, as she is consistently called in the poem, is the instigator of the entire plot and a key organizer. Her literacy and facility with languages, which are noted as unusual, especially in the earlier manuscript, are important factors; they allow the plan to be kept secret, since it can be organized by means of written messages, and thus create Bessy as an exceptional woman who is not a security risk. She is repeatedly described as wise ("Faire fulle Bessie, .../That such counsell giveth trulye!"), which is noteworthy since "Wemens wytt is wonder to heare".¹⁰² Yet more surprising, perhaps, is the conception of Bessy's motives. The poem makes clear, especially in the earlier version, that Bessy has a conscious desire to be queen, supported by "prophesye" given by her father, and that this is her primary reason for seeking help: "for and he were Kynge I shoulde be Queene,/ I doe him love and never hym see". Nor is there any reference to the duality of the claim. Bessy speaks of rewarding in her own right those who help her, referring to her access to riches.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹J.O. Halliwell (ed.), "Most pleasant song of the lady Bessy", in *Early English poetry, ballads, and popular literature of the Middle Ages* (London: Percy Society, 1847), XX:vi.

¹⁰²"Most... Bessy", 57.

¹⁰³"Most... Bessy", 48, 44, 53.

However ahistorical its plot, the "Song" displays a sixteenth-century awareness of the potentialities of Elizabeth's position and an effort to reconcile them with expectations of feminine behaviour. Bessy initially grounds her case in constant reference to her father's authority, establishing her lineal rights and security.¹⁰⁴ She knows exactly who should be consulted and assembles a faction of loyal men who swear to make her queen, not to make Henry king.¹⁰⁵ But Lord Stanley, in whom she first confides, resists her rational arguments and yields only when she reacts emotionally -- by bursting into tears.¹⁰⁶ This gendered balancing act, cushioning "masculine" characteristics with "feminine" ones, continues in the text. Thus Bessy's tears as she recalls the prophecy that "mony a guyltles man first moste dye" temper both her confidence in her entitlement to queenship, and her vengeful wit at the death of Richard.¹⁰⁷ She solves the problem of conveying £19,000 of her own money to Henry in France through a "feminine" skill, sewing the coins into saddlebags.¹⁰⁸

The poem's title is ultimately somewhat curious, since Bessy herself is absent from much of the text, and the story is not really told from her point of view. It is interesting to note that the earlier version ends "save and keepe our comlye quene", with no mention of the king, indicating perhaps the idea that the story had a relevance to the writer's reigning

¹⁰⁴"Most... Bessy", 1-2.

¹⁰⁵"Most... Bessy", 8, 25-6.

¹⁰⁶"Most... Bessy", 9.

¹⁰⁷"Most... Bessy", 48.

¹⁰⁸"Most... Bessy", 26-7.

sovereign.¹⁰⁹ But despite the text's creation of Bessy as an autonomous agent, the fact remains that to achieve her end, she has to marry Henry. The political nature of the match is sweetened with hints of emotionality: Henry sends Bessy a "love letter".¹¹⁰ Still, to at least one sixteenth-century writer, a queen could be both politically powerful and virtuous, if there was a good enough reason for it.

Since Henry VII's reign did not inspire any account so resonant as More's had been for Richard III, Tudor writers such as Holinshed and Hall had little material to work with in their portrayal of Elizabeth of York, and so even Hall, who called his chronicle the *Union of the two noble and illustre houses of Lancastre and Yorke*, said very little of substance about her. In the seventeenth century a new strain entered historical writing on Elizabeth of York. While Sandford scarcely mentioned her, aside from spending one and a half pages on her funeral, Bacon exaggerated Henry's political exclusion of his consort -- for example, his insistence that the succession be determined only through his line ("he would not endure any mention of the lady Elizabeth") -- into personal mistreatment, so that Elizabeth faded to pitiable insignificance.¹¹¹ While Bacon's more obvious distortions were detected long ago, the effect lingered visibly. Hume amplified it, claiming that Henry's jealousy "bred disgust towards his consort herself... Though virtuous, amiable, and obsequious... she never met with a proper return of affection... and the malignant ideas of faction still, in his sullen mind, prevailed over all the sentiments of conjugal tenderness". Hume's only comment on the

¹⁰⁹"Most... Bessy", 79. In the same vein, the post-1660 manuscript ends "save and keepe our noble kinge", with no mention of the queen (42).

¹¹⁰"Most... Bessy", 69.

¹¹¹Sandford, 439; Bacon, 14-15.

queen herself is that she was "deservedly a favorite of the nation", the more loved because she was pitied.¹¹² Reflecting the fashion of his age, he calls no attention to Elizabeth's piety. This diminution of Elizabeth endured into the twentieth century in the work of Kendall.¹¹³

Not all historians, even in the nineteenth century, have clung to sentimental visions of Elizabeth. Lingard swings to the other extreme, accepting Buck's story of the letter without question, as evidence that she was "dazzled with the splendours of royalty" and "flattered with the idea of mounting the throne". He even assumes some influence on her part in claiming that the objection to Richard's "plan" to marry her was because "if Elizabeth should become queen, she would revenge on them [Richard's cohorts] the murder of her uncle and brother at Pontefract" -- though here he seems to have confused her with her mother. Elsewhere, displaying Bacon's influence via Hume, he reduces Elizabeth to insignificance in Henry's reign. Lingard claims that it was "supposed" that the king did not bring his wife along on his 1486 progress "through his jealousy of her influence, and his unwillingness to seem indebted to her for his crown", overlooking the fact that the queen was also advanced in her first pregnancy at this date. He alludes to discontent at the delay of her coronation, but states dismissively that afterward she was merely "brought forward on all occasions of parade".¹¹⁴

It should not surprise us, though, that the "good" Elizabeth mostly appealed to the Victorians. Turner pays her scant attention but notes that she was "beautiful and gentle", and

¹¹²Hume, III:11, 61.

¹¹³Kendall, 454-5.

¹¹⁴J. Lingard, *A history of England* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson & Co., 1854), V:283, 290-1.

claims that her relationship with Henry VII improved "after she was separated from her mother, and had exhibited her own piety and maternal virtues". M.A.E. Wood stresses her "almost maternal tenderness" and "unfailing love" toward her sisters, though Elizabeth's actions in that direction (arranging marriages and redirecting funds from her estates) are equally notable for astute calculation and independent initiative.¹¹⁵

Strickland conforms even more to type, finding righteousness in the queen's every move and summing her up as uniting beauty, serenity and goodness. These are explicit themes in Nicolas' 1830 edition of Elizabeth's privy purse expenses, a major source, to which Nicolas affixed his own "Memoir" of the queen.¹¹⁶ Like Nicolas, Strickland dismisses the Buck letter on the grounds of Elizabeth's "sweet and saintly nature", an *a priori* assumption. Her use of evidence is imaginative. André's story of Elizabeth's "loving letters" is taken uncritically at face value, and the queen's privy purse accounts (her only surviving financial records) are interpreted to show "beneficence", "economy", "selflessness", and so on, though they raise less flattering possibilities which Strickland does not address. Also, in a remarkable lapse of perception, Strickland uses the "Song of Lady Bessy" as a factual source, and pads out her section further with a long excursus on Henry Tudor. Strickland also sets Elizabeth up as a foil, balancing Henry's negative qualities (a moral analogue of her dynastic role). From this the idea evolved that Elizabeth exercised a beneficent influence over Henry, and that he underwent a moral decline after her death, something Elton dismisses as

¹¹⁵Turner, III:326 (and n. 29); M.A.E[verett]. Wood, *Lives of the princesses of England* (London: Henry Colburn, 1854), IV:4, 8, 22. In different editions this author may be named Everett, Wood, Green, or some combination thereof, but for the sake of consistency I have used "Wood" throughout.

¹¹⁶*P.P.E.*, xxxi-civ.

"incredible sentimentality".¹¹⁷

An unwillingness to tackle the evidence critically has resulted in some peculiar assessments even recently. The same historian who states that Elizabeth was "an ideal consort" since, "because of [her] breeding and common sense, she was content to remain in the background and never meddled in political affairs", also asserts that she was annoyed that the king never consulted her about politics.¹¹⁸ Another has somehow inferred that the queen was "delicate", frequently absent from court through illness, and subordinated to the king's mother.¹¹⁹ The most recent standard biography of Henry VII, by Chrimes (1972), deals with Elizabeth sensitively but quite briefly, and only in terms of her relationship with her husband. There is no serious biographical study of Elizabeth of York; Harvey's monograph (1973) is admittedly novelistic and popularized, drawing largely on sixteenth-century sources.¹²⁰

The enduring determination to understand Elizabeth of York as a model of gentle virtue has precluded much serious examination of her career. It is obvious that this construction of the younger queen owes much to feminine stereotyping, but we should note that it incorporates not only maternity and piety but also a general inaction. It is the

¹¹⁷Strickland, II:95; G.R. Elton, *England under the Tudors*, 3rd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 52 n 1.

¹¹⁸M.V.C. Alexander, *The first of the Tudors* (London: Crown Helm, 1980), 44, 167.

¹¹⁹H.W. Chapman, *The sisters of Henry VIII* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969), 70-1. Chapman may have exaggerated the content of, for example, the letter from the king's mother to the queen's chamberlain, where Margaret claims that Elizabeth "hathe be a lytyll crased but now she ys well god be thankyd" (*Excerpta historica*, ed. S. Bentley [London, 1831], 285), which is hardly evidence of chronic ill-health.

¹²⁰Chrimes, 302-4; N.L. Harvey, *Elizabeth of York* (London: Arthur Barker, 1973).

complement of the construction of Elizabeth Woodville; Elizabeth of York is acted upon whereas Elizabeth Woodville acts. The younger Elizabeth was arguably no more maternal, faithful, fertile or even pious than her mother, but writers have given her far more credit. Was this because her dynastic role, however symbolic and unexplored, required her to be appropriately attired? Or was it because nothing in her career presented any challenge to conventions of female behaviour?

Neither Elizabeth Woodville nor her daughter could be accused of inattention to family, but the same devotion that brought Elizabeth of York praise proved treacherous for her mother. Elizabeth Woodville's ancestral family, the children of her first marriage and her royal family constituted three potentially divergent interests. The evidence indicates that she tried to act on behalf of all three. For Elizabeth of York there was no division of loyalties, because parents, husband and children all fell within the sphere of the court. This meant that "influence" had a different significance for the two queens; no one objected to the younger queen using her status to provide for her sisters, or to appoint clergymen of her choice (see chapter 4), but for Elizabeth Woodville, influence exerted with similar intentions could be malign.

It is clear that the evaluations of these women as persons are not grounded in much firm evidence. Elizabeth Woodville might very well have been cold and haughty and her daughter thoroughly amiable, but the sources do not really supply either portrait. However, the desire to say "what sort of people" they were has influenced practically all the writing on them. It is time we realized that this is not a meaningful objective, and that pursuing it only leads us into the same traps of gender and social bias that have hampered our predecessors.

Narrative sources, in the final analysis, do not seem to furnish a much clearer vision

of queenship than what we have already inferred. As illustrated by both Elizabeth Woodville and Elizabeth of York, narrative ideals are largely traditional standards of feminine behaviour. Contemporaries saw little reason to hold queens up to any more explicit standard. Moreover, both queens appear infrequently enough in such accounts that their personae will always be indeterminate. As the next two chapters will show, this did not mean that queens were marginal or inconsequential figures. But, combined with the vulnerability of narrative sources to the social prejudices of their informants, it does mean that histories which rely on narratives are in fact very limited in their ability to help us understand queenship.

3. A "riche sercle": ceremonial queenship

Ceremonies acted out the concerns of the court, and of the realm as governed by the court, in fifteenth-century England. These special occasions were unlikely to escape the notice of contemporary writers, whose descriptions or mere notations of the queen's involvement provided, as we have seen, a good deal of the surviving episodic information about queens. In itself this justifies examining ceremonies. More importantly, it would be wrong to overlook these rituals as either uncommon or unimportant. A queen had only one coronation, but ceremonies were not rare events at court, and they were taken seriously.

It makes sense to examine first those ceremonies focused on the queen. Coronation officially initiated her career; her role in securing the succession was marked by ceremonies dealing with childbirth; her travels outside court entailed ceremony as she entered a city; in death she could be publicly commemorated. Such rituals could work in one or both of two directions; they might display the queen and her role to an audience, or show the queen herself what that role should be. Being relatively explicit, they can thus inform us more directly than other kinds of evidence about elusive ideals of queenship. Queens also had functions, of varying formality, in other contexts: holy days; diplomatic meetings; court festivities. Examining the queen's place in such events supplements what we learn from ceremonies and helps us to make use of the many scattered, passing references to the queen we find in narrative sources.

Coronation

The increased elaboration of the queen's coronation, a continental influence, began as early as the eleventh century in England. There is some evidence that the English ritual took on texts from a ninth-century Saxon marriage protocol, which makes sense given the dependency of consortship on marriage.¹ The coronation *ordines* went through four main revisions in succeeding centuries, and the fifth version, from the early fourteenth century, seems to have endured into the late fifteenth century without major changes, though there are some interesting minor variations. There are several extant manuscripts of this "fifth recension" of the service, which for the purposes of this study can be considered equally authoritative (this is not the place to explain their provenance).

There are also some later prescriptive texts, printed in the nineteenth century, which can be dated to 1491-3 from manuscript evidence.² This "Ryalle Book" (Staniland's term) contains protocols for various court and public ceremonies, among which is one "ffor the Ressavyng off a Quene, and her Crownacion".³ The text is more concerned with the material details of coronation, such as vestments and processions, than with the actual ceremony, which it sums up in a few lines. The "Ryalle Book" stresses, with considerable precision, the richness of the queen's clothing and of the litter in which she rode; though her dress was relatively simple, it was of the finest materials (damask, cloth of gold, ermine).

¹J. Brückmann, *English coronations, 1216-1308: the edition of the coronation ordines* (University of Toronto: Ph.D. Diss., 1964), 50, 218.

²K. Staniland, "Royal entry into the world", in *England in the fifteenth century*, ed. D. Williams (Woodbridge, U.K.: Boydell Press, 1987), 299 n 8.

³*Antiquarian repertory*, ed. F. Grose and T. Astle (London, 1807-8), I:302-4.

The significance of the queen's vestments, and indeed the extent to which they were traditional, is unclear. But, like the earlier prescriptions, this text also makes clear that, both in the procession to Westminster and in the coronation, the queen's head was to be "dischevellid w^t a riche sercle", explaining that she should be "bar-haudid and bare-vesagid till she com to Westm^r, that all men may behold hire".⁴ This wording indicates that the queen's appearance was to resonate with the opportunity represented by the coronation for the realm to see her as she really was, despite the impressive splendour surrounding her. Indeed, it might well be the only chance; later appearances were likely to involve more elaborate dress and less visibility.

There is more to be drawn from this aspect of the queen's appearance. According to Parsons, having the hair let down on her shoulders was symbolic of virginity.⁵ If this is correct, no one must have seen anything paradoxical in the appearance of either Elizabeth Woodville or her daughter, both of whom at the time of their coronations had borne children already, in the case of Elizabeth Woodville not the king's children. Virginity is, of course, a versatile metaphor. Coronation joined the queen with the realm just as she had been joined in marriage with the king, and so her physical virginity was less important in the coronation context than a sense of newness (but it is important to note that these concepts were connected). This was, of course, most evident when the realm embraced a foreign princess. The experience of the first two queens Elizabeth shows us that the appearance of custom was more important than the literal meaning, since their particular situations did not lead to any

⁴*Antiquarian repertory*, I:302-3.

⁵J.C. Parsons, "Ritual and symbol in the English medieval queenship to 1500", in *Women and sovereignty*, 62.

major innovations in this part of the ceremony (though there are possibly some in the coronation ritual itself). We must note, too, that it was not in the interest of either Edward IV or Henry VII to make their wives appear distinctive. Both queens embodied difficult shortcomings of the ideal of the ceremony. Neither mother nor daughter was "pure" in the sense of being free from factional ties or domestic complications, as a continental wife would have been. The imagery of coronation thus served conveniently, in part, to represent an ideal, and the services reinforced the queens' putative fulfilment of that ideal.

In this function as a site of interaction with the realm, the coronation shared some features with the royal entry (see below). The "Ryalle Book" stresses the involvement of the City of London, whose representatives "in y^r best arraye" were to meet the queen both on her first arrival in the city (if she came from outside England) and at her procession to Westminster.⁶ The ceremony of royal entry involved gestures of fealty, such as presenting keys to the city, and exchanges of gifts confirmed the relationship between ruler and people.⁷ Indeed, the Common Council of London voted a gift of 1000 marks (£666 13s. 4d.) to Elizabeth of York at her coronation.⁸ Lavish street pageantry was also integral. The "Ryalle Book", specifying locations but vague on details, implies that its elements were sufficiently conventional not to need explaining.⁹

⁶*Antiquarian repertory*, I:302-3.

⁷R. Strong, *Art and power: Renaissance festivals 1450-1650* (Woodbridge, U.K.: Boydell Press, 1984), 7-8.

⁸*London journal* 9, fo. 161, cited by Thornley (ed.), *Great chronicle of London*, 438.

⁹"And at the condit in Cornylle ther must be ordained a sight w^t angelles singinge, and freche balettes y'on in latene, engliche, and ffrenche, mad by the wyseste docturs of this realme; and the condyt in Chepe in the same wyse; and the condit must ryn bothe red wyn and whit wyne; and the crosse in Chepe must be araid in y^e most rialle wyse that myght be thought; and the condit next Poules

Examination of the actual coronation experiences of 1465 and 1487 is limited by the surviving sources, which are unequally informative for the two queens. Elizabeth of York, who apparently had stayed at Greenwich the previous night, entered London by water two days before her coronation. She was not only welcomed by the usual civic and guild representatives, but on her arrival at the Tower was given an official reception by the king, at which he created the customary Knights of the Bath -- his only public participation in the event. Both queens were attended in procession, both to Westminster palace and to the abbey, by ceremonial officers: the great steward, great chamberlain, marshal and constable of England. Although these offices existed only for the purpose of the coronation, they still represented governmental authority, here subjected to attendance on the queen, and they were occupied by close relatives or advisors of the king.¹⁰

The importance of the queen's coronation was further enhanced by the involvement in her procession of the lords and ladies of the realm, from the dukes on either side of the queen to the barons farthest ahead.¹¹ Proximity to the royal person, then, and not mere order in the procession, was the primary indicator of status. Of course, this was partly an opportunity for the social hierarchy to be publicly displayed. But it also shows that the inauguration of a queen, like that of a king, was an event which engaged the realm as a whole, requiring the participation of its most prominent members. Indeed, some of these roles in the ceremony

in the same wyse... and so going furthe till she come to Westm^r hall..." (*Antiquarian repertory* I:303).

¹⁰For example, Edward IV's brother, the duke of Clarence, was steward for Elizabeth Woodville, while at Elizabeth of York's coronation the great steward was the duke of Bedford, uncle of Henry VII; the constable was the earl of Derby, the king's stepfather (*The coronation of Elizabeth Wydeville*, ed. G. Smith (Cliftonville, U.K.: Gloucester Reprints, 1975), 15; *Collectanea*, III:227).

¹¹*Antiquarian repertory*, I:303.

belonged to the bearers of particular titles; the barons of the Cinque Ports, for example, had the right to bear the queen's canopy over her in the procession to the cathedral.¹² Here the role of gender is also thought-provoking. On many other occasions the queen and her ladies were kept apart from male participants. But here, men were closest to the queen; the queen's ladies and gentlewomen followed afterward, and their order was not prescribed or regulated, being "in chaires or upon pallfreys, or oy'wyse as it plessithe the Kinge and the Quene".¹³ Elizabeth of York's coronation procession was somewhat more complex than that called for in the "Ryalle Book", because it included members of the church hierarchy as well as London officials; indeed, like her mother in 1465, she was flanked by two bishops rather than two dukes. Elizabeth of York's own household was represented in the procession to Westminster Hall, as the master of her horse led her ceremonial horse before her litter.¹⁴

It is pertinent here to take a closer look at the prescribed ritual of the actual ceremony. As the temporal order was represented in the procession, the spiritual order was represented in the service, where two bishops appointed by the king were to "support" the queen.¹⁵ The first prayer said over the queen, when she entered the church, was made relevant to her by addressing God "whoe dost not reject the frailtie of the Woman, but rather vouchsafest to allowe and chuse it, and by chusing y^e weake things of the World, doest

¹²"Liber regalis", in *English coronation records*, ed. L.G.W. Legg (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co., 1901), 129.

¹³*Antiquarian repertory*, I:303.

¹⁴*Collectanea*, III:223; *The coronation of Elizabeth Wydeville*, 14-5.

¹⁵*English coronation records*, 190.

confound those y^t are strong".¹⁶ Biblical exemplars were then presented: Judith representing virtuous leadership, and Sarah, Rebecca and Rachel ideal motherhood. Queenship thus did not oppose feminine weakness, but embraced it as connected with virtue. The second prayer invoked Esther, whose intercession for her people was explicitly compared to the queen's opportunity of intercession for "thie christian Flock" in her advancement to "the most high and royall companie of o^r Kinge".¹⁷ Considering these analogies, it is surely significant that the service made no significant use of the figure of Mary, whose capacity as the interceding Queen of Heaven was still so current in popular imagery. Indeed, by this point even the queen's sceptre, whose earlier floriated form suggested a Marian connection to the biblical Tree of Jesse, had changed, to a form topped by a dove.¹⁸ The coronation service thus emphasized that the queen's proximity to regal authority gave her a real responsibility, not only to be an exemplary mother of heirs, but to effect good for her people; images of maternity (Sarah, Rebecca) were complemented with political ones (Judith, Esther).

The sources differ interestingly in their prescriptions for the next step, the anointing of the queen. The "Liber regalis" specifies one anointing, on the head, with sacred chrism, the same substance used for kings.¹⁹ But two variant manuscripts call for holy oil, a lesser dignity, and require the queen to be anointed on both her head and breast, an instruction they share with the most common order of the service for joint coronation of king and queen.

¹⁶*English coronation records*, 265.

¹⁷*English coronation records*, 266.

¹⁸Parsons, "Ritual and symbol", in *Women and sovereignty*, 65.

¹⁹*English coronation records*, 129.

Anointing on the breast involved the assistance of a female attendant, and the orders state that this should be "nobilior domina", or "one of the greater ladies of England".²⁰ Sandquist calls this lady "the queen's equivalent to the abbot of Westminster who performs similar duties for the king".²¹ But the lady's rank and title are not specified; the queen was thus ritually connected more loosely to the female social hierarchy than the king is to the male, reflecting perhaps the greater imprecision of status within the female nobility. Elizabeth of York was apparently anointed twice, attended by a mysteriously unnamed lady, and so it would seem that the variant practice was followed, though the account does not specify what substance was used.²²

At any rate, the prayer following the queen's anointing made reference to her being "through the imposition of our hands... created queen"; at Elizabeth of York's coronation this prayer followed the crowning and investiture.²³ There was no equivalent to this laying-on of hands, a feature of clerical ordination, in the king's coronation service. This, says Sandquist, has been taken to show "the affinity between clerical ordination and regal consecration", assuming that the expression was once used in the king's coronation.²⁴ Indeed this seems rather more likely than the next interpretation which comes to mind, that queenship was somehow a more consecrated state than kingship. But the fact remains that the queen was

²⁰T. Sandquist, *English coronations, 1377-1483* (University of Toronto: Ph.D. Diss., 1962), 78 n 149; *English coronation records*, 190.

²¹Sandquist, 63 n 117.

²²*Collectanea*, III:224.

²³Sandquist, 64; *Collectanea*, III:224.

²⁴Sandquist, 64 n 120.

originally included in this sacramental concept.

The queen received most of the king's symbols of regality. On being given the ring, symbol of faith, she was enjoined "by the power of God [to] compell barbarous Nations, and bring them to the knowledge of the truth"; the ensuing prayer asked that she be granted "successe in this her honour".²⁵ The jewels of the crown were compared to the many virtues which are to adorn its wearer. As for the sceptre, in the common orders it is not explicitly associated with rule; rather, the prayer which followed its presentation to the queen asked "that shee may order aright the highe dignitie that shee hath obtained, and with good workes establish the glorie that thou hast given her".²⁶ The variants, however, direct the queen to accept the sceptre as "insignis iusticie", a potentially important difference.²⁷ In the common orders the queen's sceptre was not blessed (unlike her ring and crown), and no prayer followed when it was given to her. This discrepancy, combined with the absence of an "accipe" formula, has been interpreted by Parsons as a distinction from the more formal investiture of a king with his sceptre.²⁸ The variant form suggests that this distinction was not utterly rigid.

We may well wonder what these variations mean. Without clearer indications of their date, it is hard to say whether they reflect changes in the practice of queenly coronation. But we must note that neither in 1465 nor in 1487 was the standard ceremony for the queen

²⁵*English coronation records*, 267.

²⁶*English coronation records*, 267-8.

²⁷Sandquist, 78 n 149.

²⁸Parsons, "Ritual and symbol", in *Women and sovereignty*, 63.

followed to the letter, especially in the investiture. Elizabeth Woodville apparently "helde in the right hande þ^e Septo^r of Saint Edward & in the lefte hande the septo^r of þe Reaume".²⁹ None of the *ordines* make any mention of two sceptres. Still more irregularly, Elizabeth Woodville is said to have had these symbols in hand when she entered the sanctuary, rather than being given them by the consecrator, the abbot of Westminster and the earl of Essex "wayting upon" them while the queen was otherwise occupied in the service. Actually, the text refers to these two men attending the "Septors Sp[irit]uall" and "Septors temp[or]all", without saying which was which.³⁰ The simplest explanation is that one of these two "sceptres" was actually the rod, which the queen receives in her left hand when she is crowned together with the king, and which is never mentioned in the *ordo* for the queen alone. But a "septo^r of þe Reaume" does not sound much like the ivory rod used, for example, in the coronation of Richard III and Anne Neville (see below). Nor is the queen's sceptre, which in a double coronation was quite different from the king's, anywhere else called the sceptre of St. Edward, whose very name evokes ancient imagery of English sovereignty. Unfortunately, the account of Elizabeth Woodville's coronation is too imprecise and confused to show by itself which *ordo* was more closely followed, but it is the only account we have.³¹

The same section of Elizabeth of York's coronation is also somewhat unclear. The younger queen received both rod and sceptre, though with what formula we do not know; the

²⁹*The coronation of Elizabeth Wydeville*, 15.

³⁰*The coronation of Elizabeth Wydeville*, 17.

³¹It does not, for example, say which prayers or responses were used, which would help to identify the service.

prayer recorded, "*Omnipotens Domine*", does not match the prayers given in any of the *ordines*. Further, the account first mentions "the Virge of Iverye, with a Dove in the Tope" (the queen's standard rod) but then refers to "her Septer and Rodde of Golde" (like the king's).³² It seems that both queens may have been crowned according to variant orders rather than the standard *ordo*. On the one hand these variants diminish the queen's distinctiveness by using aspects of the double coronation, including the lesser dignity of holy oil. On the other, they direct the queen to accept her sceptre, representing justice and arguably her most resonant symbol, in a manner like the king's, implying (like the earlier prayers) that she must work for justice as he does: a stronger conception than the common orders' vague instruction to order aright her high dignity.

It is frustrating that in neither case can we say confidently exactly what was done. But if we assume that there are no errors in the accounts, and that the differences were deliberate, we must ask several questions. In whose interest would it have been to associate Elizabeth Woodville with recognizable symbols of kingly authority? And who would have made such a decision? It is tempting to see it as a feature of the lavish display of Elizabeth's coronation, as a deliberate effort of Edward IV to remove lingering associations of her low birth and enthrone her as a fit consort -- thus validating his own choice. Those who actually viewed the coronation service, and who would have been most aware of its symbolism, would have been those most worth impressing.

Interpreting the changes for Elizabeth of York is more complicated, because the details that would tell us how the service reflected on her (what unction, prayers and

³²*Collectanea*, III:223, 224.

responses were used) are lacking. We must also consider the role of the king. There is nothing substantive to support the idea that etiquette or protocol prevented the king from openly attending his wife's coronation. Indeed, the "Liber regalis" makes provisions for the king to appear in her procession, in his robes of state.³³ Since coronations do not occur often enough for customs to "evolve" over a century, Henry VII's decision to watch the service concealed behind a lattice with his mother was more likely an individual decision. This concealment was more symbolic than real; the royal booth was "a goodlye Stage... well besene with Clothes of Arras", situated "betwixt the Pulpit and the High Auter", and there were numerous attendants on hand as well.³⁴ No one could possibly not have known that the king was present. Henry was thus, in essence, making clear his wish not to take part. Why? Strickland's interpretation, that the king "resolved that Elizabeth should possess the public attention solely that day", seems simplistic.³⁵ Did he aim to diminish her, by dissociating her from his regality *despite* her own status? Or did Henry's "absence" serve to validate Elizabeth's coronation, by making it stand on its own? This would involve a recognition, whether sincere or not, of her special importance. It would also be a form of honour; the king attended, but did not draw attention to himself.

In seeking the answer we should note that the same arrangement was made at the banquet following the service, a function for which The "Ryalle Book" also makes prescriptions. At the banquet, the queen is to be "servid of all maner estates like as the Kinge

³³*English coronation records*, 128.

³⁴*Collectanea*, III:225.

³⁵Strickland, II:79.

was at his crownacion", except that those most closely attending her are women. The text calls for the ceremonial officers (see above) to attend the banquet and the traditional taking of spice and wine, where the mayor of London serves the queen, taking the cup "for his fee".³⁶ In 1465 and 1487 the banquet, held in "the Hall", followed essentially the same pattern, with high-ranking ladies kneeling beside the queen and performing the intimate service of hiding her face at indelicate moments. The archbishop of Canterbury sat at the queen's right hand, his service distinguished from hers (at least in 1487) in being borne by squires rather than knights.³⁷ In Elizabeth Woodville's case the seriousness of the occasion was further emphasized as the two lords who had borne her "sceptres" continued to hold them on either side of her, first as she washed (presumably her hands) before the company, and also while she ate.³⁸ It is worth noting, as well, that Elizabeth of York was ceremonially "thanked" by the Garter King of Arms, and her largesse was cried. But while this thanks acknowledged the queen as "our most drad and Souveraigne liege Ladye" (and, rather puzzlingly, as "right high and myghty Prince"), it did not actually make a statement of allegiance.³⁹

The solemn and relatively public celebration of Elizabeth of York's coronation was followed the next day by a more private banquet when the queen "kepte her Astate in the

³⁶*Antiquarian repertory*, I:304.

³⁷*Collectanea*, III:226.

³⁸*The coronation of Elizabeth Wydeville*, 18-9.

³⁹*Collectanea*, III:228. The full sentence is "Right high and myghty Prince, moost noble and excellent Princesse, moost Christen Quene, and al our most drad and Souveraigne liege Ladye, We the Officers of Armes, and Servaunts to al Nobles, beseche Almyghty God to thank you for the great and habundaunt Largesse whiche your Grace hathe geven us in the Honor of your most honorable and right wise Coronation, and to send your Grace to liff in Honor and Virtue." Possibly "Prince" refers to the king and "Princesse" to his mother, but they were not officially present, and the text specifically says that the officers were thanking the queen.

Parlyament Chamber" after hearing mass together with the king, his mother, and numerous female attendants. Although it was held in a political and hence masculine space, this seems to have been an exclusively female event, the king's mother now taking the place of honour at the queen's right hand, and the other ladies in attendance representing the social spectrum from gentility to aristocracy.⁴⁰ Whether or not the queen and her ladies viewed jousting three days later, as the "Ryalle Book" prescribes, is not recorded, but they did "remeve into anoyr place where it plessithe the Kinge", namely Greenwich, since Parliament needed to resume.⁴¹ It appears from this that even the women's banquet was deemed important enough to inconvenience the government at least temporarily.

As mentioned earlier (Chapter 2), although the coronations of these queens were remarkably grand, there is nothing to show that this was thought anything other than appropriate. For comparative purposes, the coronation of Anne Boleyn in 1533 further indicates that though the fine points of the event were flexible, the broad outlines remained customary. The same social groups were represented in Anne's processions, though not necessarily in the same order. The fact that Anne Boleyn was six months pregnant did not preclude her appearance in the prescribed maidenly fashion. Indeed, the figure of St. Anne appeared in the pageant, about whose fruitfulness one actor made "a goodly oration to the Queene... trusting that like fruit should come of her".⁴² This shows how versatile ritual imagery could be for queens. The earlier queens' namesake St. Elizabeth, bearer of a son

⁴⁰*Collectanea*, III:228.

⁴¹*Antiquarian repertory*, I:304; *Collectanea*, III:228-9.

⁴²*Antiquarian repertory*, II:235-40.

after a barren life, probably delivered a similar wish for fertility, but even had the namesake been a virgin martyr, an equally useful example could have been drawn. In all, there are more similarities than differences over the seventy years separating the coronations of Elizabeth Woodville and Anne Boleyn.⁴³

Both Elizabeth Woodville and Elizabeth of York were crowned alone. But the queen who came between them, Anne Neville, was crowned with her husband, Richard III, and the records of that service are a useful supplement. Indeed, as Anglo shows, the "litle devise" for Henry VII's coronation was drawn up originally for Richard III and then "hastily altered and adapted" to omit references to the queen.⁴⁴ This document outlines not only the coronation itself but also the preliminary events on the evening before. In its original form, it illustrates quite plainly a combination of regality and inferiority. In the procession to Westminster, both king and queen were to be bare-headed. The queen's litter, however, was to be open to the sky, not covered like the king's, and she and her retinue were to follow the king's. On the day of coronation the queen's retinue again came second, covered by "a cloth of estate somewhat lower then the Kinges". But while she did not follow immediately behind the king, she was separated from his procession only by "the lords of greit astate, as Duks and Erllys".⁴⁵ In the actual service, both king and queen carried a rod and a sceptre, but the

⁴³Even the narrative accounts take substantially the same form and use very similar phrases, right down to the queen's attendants holding a cloth before her face during undignified moments at dinner. Moreover, descriptions of the ceremonies often resemble the *ordines*, sometimes so closely that it seems the author has simply copied an *ordo* and filled in the blanks with the names of the actual participants.

⁴⁴S. Anglo, *Spectacle, pageantry and early Tudor policy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 12-3.

⁴⁵"Device for the coronation of King Henry VII", in *Rutland papers*, ed. W. Jerdan (London: Camden Society, 1842), 6, 9.

queen's rod was of ivory, the king's of gold. Moreover, the king's seat was to be "a goode deale higher than the Quenys, which shalbe on the left hand of the Kinges".⁴⁶ The queen was anointed twice (on her head and breast), compared to four times for the king, and the document prescribes that she bow "afor the Kinges maieste" in being led to her seat of estate.⁴⁷ This last action, it would seem, emphasized that the queen, though the king's wife, was also still his political subject. In all, therefore, the queen partook of the same honour given to the king, but her place was made different and explicitly subordinate.

Just what did the coronation of a queen accomplish, and for whom? First, it publicly declared her legitimacy. Although part of that legitimacy consisted of being a fit consort for the king (hence the invocation of virginity and newness), it is too simplistic to view the coronation merely as a limiting expression of patriarchal convention. The ritual stressed regality and benevolent authority in its use of both exemplars and tangible symbols, balancing these attributes with a recognition of the queen's generative importance. Coronation thus proclaimed that the queen had responsibilities to her people, and instructed her to use her authority wisely and beneficially, to uphold justice and faith. It clearly made that authority different from and subject to the king's, but this did not render the queen irrelevant. We must remember that a king had to be constructed as unique, possessing powers and qualities shared by no one else, including his consort, who consequently could not be made too similar to him.

But it is important to note that the queen, unlike the king, did not swear a coronation

⁴⁶"Device...", ed. Jerdan, 10, 12.

⁴⁷"Device...", 20.

oath and was not publicly acclaimed (Elizabeth Woodville, as we have seen, had a separate acclamation). Her relationship to the realm was thus not explicitly defined; it had to be expressed in different ways. And Elizabeth of York was a brief generation away from the discovery that the legitimacy of coronation was of little use when a queen's procreative failure cast doubt on her status.

Ceremonies of childbirth

In the fifteenth century (as until quite recently), the last weeks of pregnancy meant literal confinement for women who could afford not to remain active. For the queen, entering this confinement was, not surprisingly, elaborated into a ceremony marking the importance of the coming birth. This occasion was known as "taking the chamber". It signified not only that the queen was about to bear a child, but that she was, for the coming weeks, to remain apart from the routine of court life.

The importance of the occasion was marked in several ways. The "Ryalle Book" makes clear that the queen's retirement from court called for elaborate ornamentation of her chamber.⁴⁸ Moreover, the ceremony was attended, like the coronation, by representatives of the entire nobility, in Elizabeth of York's case "the greate Parte of the Nobles of this Royalme present at this Parlement".⁴⁹ Not only were peers present, they were also involved; Elizabeth of York was led to and from the accompanying mass by the earl of

⁴⁸*Antiquarian repertory*, I:333.

⁴⁹*Collectanea*, III:249.

Oxford and the earl of Derby.⁵⁰ The queen stood under her "Clothe of Estate", surely a symbolic recognition of the political significance of this private function, childbirth.

Once the queen had entered her inner chamber, her chamberlain closed the curtains, defining an all-female space around her: "From thens forthe no Maner of Officier came within the Chambre, but Ladies and Gentilwomen".⁵¹ This custom was not totally inflexible. Elizabeth of York admitted a Luxemburgian delegation (kin of her mother, who was present) which particularly desired to see her, but she received only a small group, and that within her chamber; she made no official appearance.⁵²

Although baptism invariably followed royal birth, and its ritual was often elaborate, it cannot tell us much about ceremonial queenship, simply because the queen did not participate in the service but remained in her chamber. We should note, though, that the newly baptized infant was offered first to the queen, then to the king -- who, therefore, must have stayed behind with her.⁵³ Was this an acknowledgment of maternal priority?

Sixty days after the birth of a child came the queen's ritual of purification, or "churching". This marked the end of her confinement and her re-entry into the "mainstream

⁵⁰This pattern of attendance occurred at more common court festivities also. The "greteste estat" was to lead the queen behind the king when the monarch proceeds with his household officers and "alle oy' lordes" on New Year's Day; the context seems to indicate that this is a male peer. The more general indication for a "pryncpall feste" calls for a duchess and a countess to be seated next to the queen at "the bord", whereas the king was accompanied by "a bischope and a duke, or ij erles" (*Antiquarian repertory*, I:329, 324).

⁵¹*Collectanea*, III:249.

⁵²*Collectanea*, III:249.

⁵³Staniland, 307.

of court life", and as such it was marked by both church ritual and court festivity.⁵⁴ Indeed, it was a court occasion, witnessed by relatively few people. Staniland notes that the ceremonial of churching was more elaborate than that of baptism, and suggests that perhaps this was because more time was available for preparation.⁵⁵

To a modern reader, the more striking element of churching is the part which did not involve church. The queen's emergence from confinement was also the end of the feminine exclusivity which had surrounded her, and this is evident in the *Liber regie capelle*. When lords and ladies had assembled in the queen's chamber, two duchesses were to draw back the curtains which concealed the queen, now richly dressed, in her bed. However, their male counterparts, two dukes, were the first to approach the bed and touch the queen herself, "molliter atque humiliter elevare Reginam de lecto".⁵⁶ They attended her throughout the procession which followed, from her chamber to the altar in the chapel, where she made her offering of purification. A pragmatist might object that it simply made more sense to have the queen supported by two men, since she might still be physically weak, and was now expected, after two sedentary months, to walk around wearing heavy clothes. But such men would not need to be noble. Rather, churching, like taking the chamber, engaged peers of the highest rank in the symbolic subjection of body service, linking the queen to the entire nobility and not solely to the women of the realm. The ritual was, of course, rooted in the queen's generative role; the ceremony in the chapel involved the singing of an antiphon to the

⁵⁴Staniland, 308.

⁵⁵Staniland, 307.

⁵⁶"gently and humbly to raise the queen from the bed" -- *Liber regie capelle*, ed. W. Ullman (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1961), 72.

Virgin, whose imagery was so conspicuously absent from the coronation service.⁵⁷ But churching was not merely a celebration of the queen's contribution to the succession; the custom was not, at least according to the prescription, conditional on the survival of the child.

The *Liber regie capelle* indicates that after her churching, the queen was to hold state with her ladies in her chamber. The proceedings are not specified, though it is worth noting that the king had the final say.⁵⁸ At any rate, the gathering was an opportunity for impressive banquets, such as was recorded by Gabriel Tetzal, an aide to the German count Leo of Rozmital, who visited the English court in 1466 after the birth of Elizabeth of York. Aside from the visitor's astonishment at the lavish nature of the event, there are several meaningful observations for us to make here. First, Tetzal notes that the king did not attend these festivities (though he was not absent from court, having met with Tetzal's group), and it seems that only women were in direct attendance on the queen. The *Liber regie capelle* notwithstanding, we cannot interpret this to mean simply that men were excluded, since according to Tetzal "a powerful earl" sat in the king's place; however, it was predominantly a female event.⁵⁹

In addition, although this was a celebratory feast, it was strictly formal, with no conversation during its three-hour length. The queen sat alone at table as if enthroned, apparently separate in an "apartment", and even Elizabeth's own mother and her sister-in-law

⁵⁷*Liber regie capelle*, 73.

⁵⁸*Liber regie capelle*, 73. There is nothing here to support C. Scofield's claim [*The life and reign of Edward the fourth* (New York: Octagon Books, 1967), II:395] that "etiquette did not permit the king himself to be present".

⁵⁹G. Tetzal, *The travels of Leo of Rozmital*, trans. M. Letts (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1957), 46.

kneled when the queen spoke to them and while she ate. Elizabeth did not participate in the dancing which followed, and while this may have reflected her physical state as much as any protocol, it contributes to an impression of rigidity and depersonalization.⁶⁰ We must not forget that churching was at root a ritual purification (it is called *purificationis regine* in the *Liber regie capelle*). As such, it ultimately referred to an Old Testament construction of female biology as "unclean". This has intriguing implications for a queen, for whom childbirth is of central importance.

What was really being celebrated here? It is curious that the queen's "re-entry into court life", as Staniland puts it, should be governed by a protocol which isolates her even as it makes her an object of veneration. What if, in contrast, the queen's freedom from the "unclean" state of childbirth was the true subject? In this case, the queen was honoured through being divorced from her own physiology. Despite its impressive deferential gestures, it does not appear that the ceremonial of churching, or indeed of royal birth in general, opposed medieval constructions of the feminine as mysterious and ultimately dangerous. Here is one area where the queen was not really different from other women.

Finally, we should note that the amount of time occupied by the ceremonies of royal birth must at least partly account for the queen's apparent lack of visibility within the royal court. Confined to her chamber for up to six weeks prior to delivery and for two months after, she might spend a quarter of any year she was pregnant closed off from the court and the world beyond it. The fact that this would preclude her participation in any official functions suggests that by the fifteenth century, the queen's role in securing the succession

⁶⁰Tetzel, 47.

took precedence, when necessary, over her more overtly public roles.

Entries and visits

By the late fifteenth century, a monarch's entry into a city had become a highly ritualized occasion, as might be expected in an age when civic identity was not only stronger than it is now, but also more important to town-dwellers than their "national" identity. Entry ceremonies emphasized the king's legitimacy, presented him with examples, and illustrated the benefits of his rule to his subjects. As such, royal entry was "closely allied to the act of coronation".⁶¹ But the entry of a queen consort also involved ceremony, whose meaning must have been somewhat different.

We have seen that coronations called for a ceremony of royal entry. In the case of Elizabeth Woodville, the most concrete details remaining about any of her entries come from her reception into London just before her coronation in 1465. This pageant was prepared by the Bridge Masters, since the queen entered the city across the bridge from the south. It is documented in a statement of expenses and thus reflects the preparations rather than the actual event, but it exemplifies what Parsons has described as an opportunity for a queen to be shown what is expected of her, with references to forebears, name correspondences, religious figures, and models of maternal or pious virtue.⁶² Elizabeth Woodville was to be greeted by actors playing St. Paul, St. Elizabeth (her namesake), and St. Mary Cleophas, on whose feast day (24 May) the pageant took place. These figures were to give speeches, and at other

⁶¹Strong, 7-8.

⁶²Parsons, "Ritual and symbol", in *Women and sovereignty*, 61.

points groups of singers were to sing as the queen approached.⁶³

In the absence of the texts of their utterances, though, or of the ballads affixed to the stage they stood on, it is hard to say to what extent the pageant expressed real expectations of queenship. Certainly none of the saints represented has any obvious connection to it; St. Elizabeth at least is surely explained by Anglo's comment that name parallels were "an important part of the pageant tradition...[,] a superficial device to make a particular show both relevant and allusive".⁶⁴ The predominance of female figures, not only the "live" saints but also effigies on stage, would point to an emphasis on womanly examples in the pageant, except that the queen was to be first greeted by St. Paul. We must keep in mind, too, that this was only one part of the pageantry surrounding Elizabeth Woodville's entry and coronation, and it was not the most substantial.

Not all entry ceremonies were necessarily even this elaborate. Nor, arguably, did they necessarily serve this purpose. The queen was important enough that her travels required ceremony even on relatively short notice. When Elizabeth of York returned from Walsingham to London in September 1497 following the capture of Perkin Warbeck, the Lord Mayor met her at Bishopsgate and, along with the aldermen, conveyed her to the king's wardrobe, "the stretis beyng garnysshid with the crafftis of the Cite standyng In theyr best lyvereys as she passid by"; the next day, after receiving presents from the Lord Mayor, the queen departed to Sheen.⁶⁵ Although another account claims that the "blak ffreres" and not

⁶³M.A.S. Hickmore, "A royal pageant", in *Friends of Canterbury Cathedral Tenth annual report* (Canterbury: Raphael Tuck & Sons Ltd., January 1937), 52-3.

⁶⁴Anglo, 56.

⁶⁵*Great chronicle of London*, 283.

the aldermen accompanied her, the event remains primarily a civic one.⁶⁶ The representation of the London guilds was a common feature of pageants in this period, serving, it would seem, to confirm their role in the City's life. Nor was London unique. When Elizabeth Woodville visited Norwich, apparently without the king, in the summer of 1469, she was received by the corporation of the city. The expenses for her reception filled eight pages in the city chamberlain's accounts.⁶⁷

Even when the queen was not alone, she warranted separate attention, though her visibility in such ceremonies varied. Coventry, which received the young prince of Wales with his mother in 1474, chose to downplay Elizabeth Woodville in the entry pageant, making only one reference to her (a nod to her lineage).⁶⁸ The corporation of Salisbury, faced with an impending visit from the royal couple, ordered in July 1466 that Elizabeth Woodville have at her departure "by the hands of the Chamberlains of the City two fat oxen and twenty sheep, which are to be allowed the Chamberlains on account".⁶⁹ Thirty years later, Salisbury received the next Queen Elizabeth with her husband. The plans for this ceremony call for the mayor to bear the mace, representing his authority, before the king as Henry entered, and then "to ride ayen to feche in the Quene and my Lady the Kynge's modir in like

⁶⁶Brit. Mus. MS. Vitellius, in *Chronicles of London*, 218.

⁶⁷Mason, 95-6. I was unable to examine the Norwich accounts themselves, which might provide further information about this visit.

⁶⁸In the pageant a "king of Cologne" displayed a written text which read, in part, "Of on of us thre lynnyally, we fynde,/ His Nobull Moder, quene Elizabeth, ys comyn of þat kynde." -- *Coventry leet book or mayor's register*, ed. M.D. Harris (London: Early English Text Society, 1907-13), 336. Ross has interpreted this as an allusion to the Magi (89).

⁶⁹Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on manuscripts in various collections*, no. 55, vol. 4 (London: HMSO, 1907), 206.

maner, save only the Maire shall not delyver here no mase".⁷⁰ Here we may note that the queen's ceremonial "space" was flexible enough to include the king's mother, who was herself never a queen but was now in the position of dowager; though we do not know how exactly the two women were received, the text does not prescribe anything to distinguish them.

These ceremonies seem to indicate a consensus that cities, and by extension the realm, owed the queen something, but just what is not clear. Aside from the unique circumstance of coronation, the motives of entry pageantry for the queen are obscure. Was their primary purpose to instruct, to thank, or (not so) simply to honour? Whatever the answer, the experience of Elizabeth of York at Salisbury shows that at least one corporation saw fit to make a clear distinction between kingly and queenly regality, even as it left the latter ambiguous.

Death

Nowhere is the contrast between Elizabeth Woodville and her namesake daughter greater than in their respective deaths. As previously mentioned, Elizabeth Woodville, who died at Bermondsey monastery in June 1492, requested a small and private funeral and was interred with little ceremony beside her husband at Westminster. Her daughter the queen, who was nearing the end of pregnancy, did not attend. The opportunity for public commemoration thus bypassed Elizabeth Woodville, but we must remember that this was

⁷⁰Historical Manuscripts Commission *Various* 55(4), 212.

principally her own idea.⁷¹

Elizabeth of York, in contrast, died not only as queen, but as a result of performing her crucial duty of childbearing. The universal notice attracted by the aftermath of her death should not, therefore, surprise us. Most deeply affected, of course, was the court, which was expected regardless of station to attend the funeral *en masse*; the funeral accounts show that mourning cloth was issued to people of every rank.⁷² This in itself may not have been contrary to precedent. But beyond the court, Elizabeth of York's death was marked more publicly than any other event in her career. The capital saw the most activity, with great processions and 636 masses ordered by the king for the next day, but services and tolling of bells were carried out throughout the country.⁷³

Funerals, unlike coronations, are not ceremonies restricted to royalty, and so to some extent a queen's funeral is simply an ordinary funeral on a larger scale. But here we can also detect elements of the symbolic connection between the queen and the social order. Not only did "the Greatest estates and other Lords their present [lay] their hands to the Corps" (that is, the coffin, since the queen's body had been sealed in lead) in the procession, but a nightly watch was kept in the royal chapel by representatives of different ranks and of both sexes. This was carefully ordered; the gentlewomen who kept the first vigil "were relieved with vi ladies".⁷⁴

⁷¹British Museum MS. Arundel 26, ff. 29v-30.

⁷²Public Record Office MS. LC 2/1.

⁷³*Antiquarian repertory*, IV:655.

⁷⁴*Antiquarian repertory*, IV:656.

It does not appear that Elizabeth of York's own household officials had any major role in organizing her funeral. That task was instead given to the treasurer (the earl of Surrey) and the king's comptroller (Sir Richard Guildford).⁷⁵ The principal parts in the ceremonies, which were spread out over ten days, fell to close relatives. The chief mourners reported were Lady Elizabeth Stafford (possibly the queen's first cousin) and the queen's sister Catherine. The queen's household was represented not only by her ladies and gentlewomen (whose place in the procession was prominent) but also by both spiritual and temporal officers: the former her confessor and almoner, the latter her chamberlain, who cast his broken staff of office into the grave, presumably to signify that the household no longer existed. No sphere of government was left unrepresented, and representatives of other European nations took part as well. The City of London had naturally been involved in the practical planning of the funeral.⁷⁶ It was also heavily represented in the procession.

Considering the involvement of such a wide variety of people in the queen's funeral, the apparent absence of her husband is certainly striking. The surviving accounts do not mention the king's presence (which surely would not have escaped notice) at any of the funeral services. Neither was he explicitly represented; none of the numerous offerings at the masses is said to be for the king. The king's mother, present on almost all other occasions, also had no recorded role in the funeral. Whether this was a personal decision (for reasons of health?) or a matter of custom, it is not easy to explain. Why would etiquette bar the king

⁷⁵*Antiquarian repertory*, IV:655.

⁷⁶To name only one detail: each ward through which the procession passed was responsible for supplying the requisite number of candles and torches to light that section of the route (T. Lott, "Direction for the receiving of the corpse of Elizabeth queen of Henry VII by the Lord Mayor and Commonalty of London", *Archaeologia* XXXII(1846):126-31).

from his wife's funeral? Was it because public expression of grief was considered beneath the royal dignity? But why did he then not have a proxy of some kind in the ceremony?

For an answer to this problem we may look to what initially seems an unrelated issue. Elizabeth of York's funeral procession acknowledged, by means of white "banners of our Lady", that her death was due to childbirth. It also included an effigy, a figure clothed in the queen's robes of state, with crown and sceptre, and "her heire about her shoulders", in other words, representing the queen as she had appeared at her coronation.⁷⁷ Elizabeth, it seems, had to be represented with both political and maternal attributes. It did not apparently matter that her last child had been a daughter, who had already died by the time of the funeral; perhaps the fact that the birth *could* have secured the succession was more important, given that Elizabeth's first son, Arthur, had died the previous year, leaving his brother Henry as the only direct male heir.

The effigy, though, raises some further questions. Giesey indicates that by the late fifteenth century, effigies were treated as if alive in French royal ceremonial, which copied English practice. This involved the use of death masks for a more realistic representation, and meant that protocol barred the new king from the funeral of his predecessor. The guiding principle, according to Giesey, was that the royal dignity, or *dignitas regia*, was undying.⁷⁸ But this is of dubious applicability to queen consorts. Consortship is conferred by marriage, not by death, and there is no guarantee that a bereaved king will remarry at all, let alone immediately. In contrast to the continuity of ordained kingship, queenship is a state marked

⁷⁷*Antiquarian repertory*, IV:657.

⁷⁸R.E. Giesey, "Models of rulership in French royal ceremonial", in *Rites of power*, ed. S. Wildritz (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 46-8, 51.

by discontinuity for all involved. The foreign princess changes national allegiances even as she may import foreign influences, and the native-born consort, whether an Elizabeth Woodville or an Elizabeth of York, must reconsider the meaning of her family loyalties. Queenship also lacks the inevitability which is part of kingly continuity; there will always be a new king because, theoretically, that is the will of God, but the presence of a queen depends on conscious human choice.

A funeral effigy must therefore represent something different in the case of a queen. Here, perhaps, is a key to the earlier puzzle of the king's absence from the funeral. The queen's public role was at least partly maternal, and her funeral, the greatest public ceremony of the decade, found no real place for her private role as wife. Such a ritual seems to embody a denial of the humanity of queenship: that it springs from a marital relationship. The Marian banners are thus even more resonant than they first appear. The imposition of a custom meant to symbolize an undying dignity on the unsuitable subject of queenship seems similarly to indicate a cultural unwillingness to engage, if not a failure to recognize, at least one aspect of the queen's situation.

Other formal occasions

Elizabeth of York's involvement in the reception of Katherine of Aragon in 1501 illustrates some of the roles taken on by the queen elsewhere. First, Elizabeth's authority reached into the "foreign" delegation: the ladies to accompany Katherine on her arrival in England were to be notified by the queen's letters.⁷⁹ The final draft plan stipulates more

⁷⁹*Receyt of the Lady Kateryne*, ed. G. Kipling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 103.

specifically that the queen was to appoint ladies to wait upon the duchess of Norfolk, who in turn was to receive Katherine at Ambresbury and convey her to Baynard's Castle. Some of these ladies-in-waiting were to be the queen's own, and some "of the said princesse at the quenes nomination", which presumably meant that they were English ladies assigned to the princess' attendance.⁸⁰ The first draft also contains three items marked "By the quenes commaundement", all pertaining to the arrangement of attendants around the princess' litter and not particularly noteworthy. Another, marked "By the quenes apoyntement", recommends that the princess be attended after her offering at St. Paul's by "a lady of greate estate assigned therto by the kynge".⁸¹ The reference to the queen is not totally clear, since the king was to do the assigning; perhaps it means that the idea was hers.

Secondly, the queen was to have a separate meeting with her prospective daughter-in-law, who seems to have had a particular desire to see her. This was made an occasion of note. It was marked by the representation of the queen's household, as the master of the queen's horse led a litter "after all the ladies and company of gentilwomene". Apart from this, the record says simply that Elizabeth received Katherine "solemnely with moost honoure and behaviour", and that the rest of the day was spent in "pleasure and goodly communycacioun, dauncyng, and disportes".⁸² We do not know what the formalities were.

Finally, this meeting was private. Katherine would be received at the palace by the queen's chamberlain "at the fote of the grece that goth up to the quenes chambre", and led

⁸⁰*Letters and papers illustrative of the reigns of Richard III and Henry VII*, ed. J. Gairdner (London: Longman, Green, Longman & Roberts, 1861), I:407.

⁸¹*Receyt*, 104-5.

⁸²*Receyt*, 37.

there for a brief meeting with the queen herself.⁸³ It is hard to assess the "importance" of the queen's contributions, whether her personal role or those things she seems to have ordered. Was it a "small but necessary" part of the process of reception, or "necessary but small"? We have seen that private and public aspects intertwine in queenship rather intricately. Did the reception of a foreign princess by the queen merely complement the princess' reception by the realm, or did the queen represent the domestic aspect of the impending marriage? The sources are sufficiently obscure that we must consider evidence from other situations.

Royal marriages of this period were very frequently diplomatic events in essence. As for more explicitly diplomatic meetings, both Elizabeth Woodville and her daughter did participate in them. Unfortunately there are no texts of protocol defining queens' roles for such occasions, so we must make our inferences from scattered accounts. Waurin notes, but does not describe, the elder queen's presence at an "ambaxade" from France in 1467.⁸⁴ In the reign of Henry VII, according to Strickland, she also received a French ambassador "in great state", although then she was accompanied by the king's mother.⁸⁵ One wonders why Elizabeth of York did not perform this function, unless she was in the pre- or postnatal stage of confinement. In 1489 the royal couple and both their mothers received papal envoys, apparently all together (indicating that Elizabeth Woodville was hardly immured at

⁸³*Letters and papers... Henry VII*, 412.

⁸⁴Waurin, II:347.

⁸⁵Strickland, II:35.

Bermondsey even after her retirement).⁸⁶

On another occasion the Tudor queen did receive a Venetian ambassador, in a meeting separate from his audience with the king. She was accompanied by her ubiquitous mother-in-law and "her son the Prince". The queen's audience seems to have been formal, with the exchange of "a few words", Elizabeth answering the ambassador through the bishop of London. What she said is not recorded; her "handsome" appearance is.⁸⁷ In 1496 Elizabeth of York received the ambassadors of Spain, Venice and Milan while the king was absent from court.⁸⁸ In 1497 a Milanese delegation presented her with official letters, while for a Venetian delegate she was at the top of a list of individuals to whom letters of credence were to be given "after returning thanks to Henry VII".⁸⁹ Two years later (after the birth of Henry VII's third son Edmund) the duke of Milan instructed his envoy to "congratulate his Majesty on our behalf and the queen also, taking leave of her and her first-born, performing the proper offices with her and other friends so as to leave them all well disposed towards us."⁹⁰

The queen was not only acknowledged in person; following the treaty of Picquigny in 1476, Louis XI of France sent Elizabeth Woodville twenty "pipes" of wine (he had only sent

⁸⁶*Calendar of state papers Venetian*, I:553.

⁸⁷*Reign of Henry VII...*, I:162.

⁸⁸*Calendar of state papers, Milan*, ed. A.B. Hinds (London: HMSO, 1913), I:331.

⁸⁹*Calendar... Milan*, I:323; *Calendar... Venetian*, I:741.

⁹⁰*Calendar... Milan*, I:331, 374. In addition there is Habington's claim that Elizabeth Woodville accompanied the duke of Gloucester and "a mightie retinue of the greatest Lords into *Westminster Hall*" for the ratification of a peace treaty with Scotland (208).

twelve to the king).⁹¹ Nor was she necessarily restricted to meetings at court. Elizabeth of York accompanied her husband to Calais in June 1500 for a meeting with Philip of Burgundy, where her chambers occupied half of St. Peter's Church and apparently rivalled or exceeded in richness those set up for the formal talks between king and archduke.⁹² She also wrote to Lorenzo de Medici on at least one occasion, as a letter from Medici to the pope indicates, in order to secure a papal brief for the king.⁹³ For the most part, though, late fifteenth-century English queens were apparently not expected to participate in official diplomacy alongside their husbands. Why, then, were they included in such meetings? To say that their appearances represented mere "courtesies" or "formalities" is not helpful, because courtesies and formalities ultimately have meaning; either they are vestiges of earlier, more substantive functions, or they are symbolic in themselves. We have already noted the domestic, familial shadings in the meeting of Elizabeth of York and Katherine of Aragon. The first Tudor queen had certainly been involved in the formal communications arranging the marriage of her son, though to what degree is somewhat obscure, since her letters to the Spanish monarchs do not say much beyond formulaic assurances of good will.⁹⁴ When we consider the tendency toward ceremonial separateness, seen in the reception of Katherine of Aragon, the queen's presence at diplomatic functions seems to allude to a conception of the court as the first household of the realm. Diplomatic ceremony is thus domestic hospitality writ large,

⁹¹J. Calmette and G. Périnelle, *Louis XI et l'Angleterre* (Paris: Editions Auguste Picard, 1930), 209.

⁹²*Chronicle of Calais*, ed. J. Nichols (London: Camden Society, 1846), 50.

⁹³*Calendar... Venetian*, I:532. The purpose of the brief, to be obtained by the envoy "Robert the Englishman", is not stated.

⁹⁴*Reign of Henry VII...*, I:187-8.

and the queen, as mistress of the house, must be acknowledged.

This appears to be borne out by the visit of the Burgundian ambassador, Lord Gruthuse, in 1471. The king took Gruthuse for what sounds like a rather informal meeting with Elizabeth Woodville in her chamber.⁹⁵ The next night the queen ordered a "grete banket in her owne chambre", at which, contrary to usual practice, she sat at the same table with her husband, her eldest daughter and the ambassador; apparently, also, Gruthuse's bedclothes were of "the quenes owen ordinaunce".⁹⁶ We cannot tell from this account whether these arrangements were the queen's own idea, or to what extent they were considered either customary or unusual. But the episode seems to suggest an effort to present the court as a family, with the queen in the role of hostess. The same comment applies to Elizabeth of York in a similar, though perhaps more formal, situation following a royal audience with the Burgundian Wilwolt von Schaumburg:

Henry dismissed the embassy to the ladies' apartments, where sat Queen Elizabeth of York with her women in rich array. The Queen herself spoke to them graciously, and they were 'lovingly greeted'... by all the ladies; a dance being also accomplished in their honour, that they might see the customs of the country. '...[T]hemselves could not have told what further honour, that was omitted, could have been shown.'⁹⁷

There are two relevant points to be taken from the proxy marriage of Margaret Tudor, daughter of Henry and Elizabeth, to James of Scotland in 1502. First, it took place in the queen's great chamber, as did the ensuing banquet in Margaret's honour. Was this

⁹⁵"The record of Bluemantle Pursuivant", in *English historical literature in the fifteenth century*, ed. C.L. Kingsford (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 386. The passage describes the queen and her ladies playing games, and the king dancing with the very young Elizabeth of York.

⁹⁶"The record of Bluemantle Pursuivant", 387.

⁹⁷H. Cust, *Gentlemen errant* (London: John Murray, 1909), 189. I have tried in vain to find the original account Cust cites for this meeting.

considered appropriate because Margaret was the female half of the couple? Second, Margaret acknowledged both her father and mother in the ceremony.⁹⁸ This second point, though, needs further scrutiny. Margaret was asked whether she consented to the marriage of her own free will. "Then she answered, 'If it please my lord my father the king and my lady my mother the queen.' Then the king showed her that it was his will and pleasure, and then she had the king's and the queen's blessing."⁹⁹ The queen was thus not required to express her consent to the marriage; it was considered to be implicit in the king's, the mother's authority deferring to the father's.

In other festal observances we can detect two contrasting trends. Sometimes the queen presided together with the king, her actions and positions indicating that she occupied a special niche. The royal couple were to be served in equal manner at the final evening meal, the "void", on Twelfth Night, as was in fact done at that same feast in 1493.¹⁰⁰ In itself this was no departure from contemporary precedent; Edward IV's household ordinances required the queen to receive the same meal service as the king, with respect to both food and serving staff.¹⁰¹ King and queen were also to sit together at this feast, though it is worth noting that Elizabeth of York sat "under a Clothe of Estate hanging sumwhat lower than the Kings, on his lift Hande"; the position of honour at the king's right hand was taken by the

⁹⁸M.A.E. Wood, V:63, 65.

⁹⁹M.A.E. Wood, V:64.

¹⁰⁰*Antiquarian repertory*, I:329-30; Vitellius, in *Chronicles of London*, 200: "the kyng was served with lx disshes of dyvers confeccions, and the Quene w^t as many, and the Mair and his brethir w^t xxiiij".

¹⁰¹*The household of Edward IV: the Black Book and the ordinance of 1478*, ed. A.R. Myers (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1959), 204, 206.

archbishop of Canterbury.¹⁰² And whereas the queen had been directly and openly thanked at her coronation banquet, here -- though both the royal couple's largesse was cried -- "Garter gave the King Thankings for his Largesse, and besought the Kings Highnesse to owe Thankings to the Quene for her Largesse."¹⁰³ Did the presence of the king mean that the queen could not be directly addressed?

On important feast days, king and queen were to appear together in the royal chapel wearing their crowns and in elaborate formal dress. It seems that the queen was included in all these appearances, and although the *Liber regie capelle* is not very descriptive of her apparel, it does say that she was to be adorned like the king. Moreover, a duke was to accompany her.¹⁰⁴ The "Ryalle Book" supports these formulae, prescribing that the queen be "in the same forme when she is crownyde" with the king on the twelfth day of Christmas.¹⁰⁵ It also indicates that king and queen must display the symbols of their regality together:

Also the kinge goinge in a day of estat, in procession crownyd, the Quene ought not to go in y^t procession w^out the Quene be crownyde: but oy^r to abid in hir closet or travers, or els where it plesithe the Kinge y^t she shall abide.¹⁰⁶

This instruction may allude to the kind of situation which arose at Christmas 1471. Both

¹⁰²*Collectanea*, III:236.

¹⁰³*Collectanea*, III:236.

¹⁰⁴*Liber regie capelle*, 65.

¹⁰⁵*Antiquarian repertory*, I:328.

¹⁰⁶*Antiquarian repertory*, I:329.

Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville appeared crowned, and there was a "disguising".¹⁰⁷ However, in the procession on Twelfth-Day, the queen did not wear her crown "because she was grete with childe".¹⁰⁸ We have already seen the ambivalent implications of ceremonial queenship regarding childbirth, but this quotation probably does not indicate that pregnancy was in itself somehow considered incompatible with crowning (even before Anne Boleyn). Apparently whoever prepared the "Ryalle Book" in the 1490s thought such a sight inappropriate, but why? Was it diminishing the queen's honour to appear without her definitive attribute when her husband wore his? Or did the author simply think that a woman sufficiently advanced in pregnancy to be discomfited by a heavy crown (there cannot be many comparable situations) should not draw undue attention to herself and her condition?

On other occasions the queen and her ladies did not share the king's ceremonial space. It appears that the queen followed the king into the royal chapel for ordinary divine service; they were not to enter together.¹⁰⁹ In general, evidence from this period does not at all consistently bear out the popular image of king and queen enthroned side by side at formal functions. At the jousts and tournaments after Arthur's wedding, the queen and her ladies were "addressid and purveyid in like manir" to the king and seated on the same stage as he -- but lower, on his left hand. They entered their places before the king's party, from a hidden entrance.¹¹⁰ At another banquet some days later, Elizabeth's table was "in the upper

¹⁰⁷Scofield, II:26. I was not able to check Scofield's source for this statement, the "Tellers' Roll" of Mich. 11 Edward IV.

¹⁰⁸"The record of Bluemantle Pursuivant", 378.

¹⁰⁹*Liber regie capelle*, 63-4.

¹¹⁰*Receyt*, 52, 53.

part of the chambre and the tabill of moost reputacion of all the tables in the chambre"; she was seated together with the king's mother and the "Bisshop of Hispayne", the latter obviously representing the new princess. The king, however, kept a separate table.¹¹¹

The so-called "Record of Bluemantle Pursuivant" makes no mention of Elizabeth Woodville when Edward IV "kept his royall estate" at the visit of a Burgundian delegation in 1471, until the first "business" was over, at which point the crowned queen entered the "Whit Hall".¹¹² Elizabeth of York watched Katherine of Aragon's entry pageant apart from the king, in a "chambre" like his, together with his mother, the queen's sister, and other ladies.¹¹³ Similarly, she had watched Henry VII's entry into London in 1487 from the window of a house in which she and the king's mother were concealed -- even though the occasion of this entry, for which Elizabeth and Henry had left Warwick together, was her own coronation.¹¹⁴ The royal couple viewed the marriage of Katherine and Arthur together, but they were concealed in a latticed box "bycause they wold make no opyn shew nor apperaunce that day".¹¹⁵

Other occasions dictate a separateness which is an extension of the physical separation between the king's household and the queen's (see Chapter 4). For example, Wood asserts that kings and queens "never dined together, excepting on state occasions", and there is contemporary evidence to support this: Edward IV's ordinances state "few sit allone in this

¹¹¹*Receyt*, 59.

¹¹²"The record of Bluemantle Pursuivant", 382.

¹¹³*Receyt*, 30.

¹¹⁴*Collectanea*, III:218.

¹¹⁵*Receyt*, 39, 43.

courte, but king, quene, or prince".¹¹⁶ At Christmas 1482 the king "kept his estate all the whole feast in his great chamber and the Queene in her chamber, where were daily more than 2000. persons served"; Henry VII used the same arrangement in 1487.¹¹⁷ At this period New Year's Day was the occasion for exchanges of gifts. The "Ryalle Book" stipulates that such gifts are to be conveyed by servants, in a formalized manner, between the king's and the queen's chamber; the royal couple do not meet to exchange them.¹¹⁸

It is easy to read the recurring separation of the queen and her female circle from the king as a devaluation, as an indication that she was not important enough to be included within the king's (male) space. But separateness could also be a mark of autonomous status. We must consider, as well, to what degree this gender segregation was an accepted feature of court life of the fifteenth century. Did it really mean anything unusual as it applied to the queen, or was she merely its primary exemplar? As only one example, at the festivities following the marriage of Arthur and Katherine, even after dancing together men and women remained separate.¹¹⁹ In addition, even in "ordinary" time, a royal couple might not be together much; Weightman estimates that Margaret of York and Charles of Burgundy spent approximately one year together in the first seven years of their marriage.¹²⁰

Even the smallest gestures, such as those involving ritual sums of money, served as

¹¹⁶M.A.E. Wood, V:132; *The household of Edward IV*, 96.

¹¹⁷J. Stow, *Annales of England* (London, 1615), 434; *Collectanea*, III:234. One suspects that the number 2000 refers to the total served, rather than those in the queen's chamber.

¹¹⁸*Antiquarian repertory*, I:330.

¹¹⁹*Receyt*, 57-8.

¹²⁰C. Weightman, *Margaret of York* (Gloucester (UK): Alan Sutton, 1989), 72.

status markers. At the feast of the Purification of the Virgin, for example, the queen customarily offered five nobles, the same amount as the king.¹²¹ Yet the tradition of New Year's Day gifts of money to household members leaves a different impression: in 1488 the king gave £6 to his "Officers of Armes" and the queen 40s. to the same men. The king's gift was the only one larger than the queen's, but hers was equalled by the king's uncle, the duke of Bedford.¹²² This would seem to diminish its distinctiveness; perhaps only protocol prevented the duke from out-giving the queen, whose gifts were paid out of her often strained privy purse.

Elizabeth of York's recorded Christmas observances, like her visit to Salisbury, show that the queen's ceremonial space could be made to include others, in her case the king's mother. Lady Margaret seems to have presented herself as regally as possible, appearing "in like Mantell and Surcott as the Quene, with a riche Corownall on her Hede, and walking aside the Quenes half Trayne".¹²³ As a countess, Margaret presumably was expected to wear a ceremonial coronet of some kind, but here she seems to have been deliberately made similar to the queen. No matter whose idea this was, we should note that either etiquette did not prohibit such an encroachment on the queen's province of symbolism, or it was not considered important enough to be noted as strikingly novel. In 1487 Elizabeth of York and Lady Margaret attended the St. George's Day feast in the Garter livery -- an occasion at which Elizabeth Woodville had appeared in 1480, similarly dressed but separate from the king

¹²¹*Liber regie capelle*, 62-3.

¹²²*Collectanea*, III:234.

¹²³*Collectanea*, III:236.

and his retinue, with an unclear part in the ceremonies.¹²⁴ Lady Margaret was censured with the queen "next after the King", and went in procession with the royal couple, but she did not have an active role in the liturgy as did the queen, who with the king kissed the "Gospell and Pax".¹²⁵ The song celebrating the king, sung at this feast, makes only fleeting reference to the queen, seemingly in the same breath as the king's mother.¹²⁶ Given Margaret's prominence in these accounts, it is not hard to understand why some writers have thought she overshadowed the queen. However, there is no reliable indication that anyone, Elizabeth included, objected to this situation. In 1489 the king gave both his wife and his mother expensive robes, which appear to have been nearly identical except that the queen's was carefully distinguished by one feature; it was "furred with the wombs of menever pure" while Lady Margaret's was "furred with pure menever".¹²⁷ Perhaps such small distinctions were sufficient.

The queen might have a ceremonial presence without being literally present. She had her own set of emblems, distinct from the king's, and their appearance at certain events shows that it was customary to acknowledge her. The "Chalengers" at the "soleym justis of peace" in the year 10 Henry VII appeared "in the kynges lyverey [green and white]... w^t iiij Conysances of the Quene's lyverey upon their helmettes, blew and murrey".¹²⁸ It may not

¹²⁴Stow, 429.

¹²⁵*Collectanea*, III:238-40.

¹²⁶"O knyghtly Order, clothed in Robes with Garter:/ The Quenes Grace thy Moder, in the same." (*Collectanea*, III:242).

¹²⁷*Materials... Henry VII*, II:497.

¹²⁸Brit. Mus. MS. Vitellius, in *Chronicles of London*, 201-2.

surprise us that Prince Arthur's funeral procession in 1502 included a banner of his mother's coat of arms, alongside the king's and those of the Spanish monarchs.¹²⁹ But more strikingly, the bannerrolles for the litter of Mary Tudor, daughter of Elizabeth of York, at her departure for France, bore the arms not only of the queen but of Elizabeth Woodville, along with their husbands' arms.¹³⁰ The queen's lineage might therefore be as ceremonially important, or certainly as visible, as the king's. Elizabeth of York, indeed, had a ceremonial identity which outlived her. Anglo shows that Elizabeth of York provided a convenient political symbol for the Tudors, but that (as we might expect) this had nothing to do with her as an individual. She was merely the white rose of York, and was so used as late as 1559, in Elizabeth I's entry pageant, which was explicitly "grounded upon" a parallel between the two queens in their respective capacities for creating "concord" in the realm.¹³¹

Was there a guiding principle for ceremonial queenship, an analogue to the "biblical view of kingship" which informed ceremonies centred on kings?¹³² Parsons has concluded that medieval English ritual served mainly to confirm the queen's generative and intercessory functions and to dissociate her from the king's power.¹³³ Rituals of queenship do display, not surprisingly for the period, an ambivalence toward the feminine, dealing coherently with ideals of the queen's behaviour within her privileged position but more murkily with the

¹²⁹*Receyt*, 89.

¹³⁰M.A.E. Wood, V:36.

¹³¹Anglo, 347. Beyond this, Anglo is not very illuminating about her role in ceremonies, or the meaning of ceremonies associated with her.

¹³²Strong, 10.

¹³³Parsons, "Ritual and symbol", in *Women and sovereignty*, 60-1.

realities of childbirth and marital relationships. However, the variety of roles we encounter in the experience of Elizabeth Woodville and Elizabeth of York indicates that the picture is rather resistant to conclusive generalizations. For example, their coronations emphasized their responsibility for intercessory justice and mercy, but Elizabeth Woodville's coronation also shows that to associate the queen with obvious symbols of sovereign power was not inconceivable.

The dissociation of the queen from the king, moreover, whether implicit in ceremonies or explicit in formal and festive settings, should not be read as a diminution of her importance. Even the gestures which signified her subjection to the king reflected at least as much on the realm as they did on her, reinforcing the king's authority over all his subjects and stressing that not even his consort possessed the same power. Customs of queenship worked to confirm the queen's autonomous authority, more concrete aspects of which we have already seen (chapter 1) and will further explore (chapter 4). They recognized that she was important to the realm in several ways, with the power to effect order and stability, and therefore worthy of honour in her own right. Finally, what seem to modern readers to be contradictions in the vision of queenship -- the invocations of subjection *and* reverence, chastity *and* fertility, female weakness *and* regal authority -- may well not have been so to contemporaries. They may indicate, rather, the degree to which the queen was considered special; in her person such contrary elements could be reconciled.

4. The queen's good grace(s): queenship in the real world

In assessing the practical side of queenship, this chapter traces a semicircular path to show how the queen's links to the world outside court both influenced her and enabled her in turn to exert influence within it. Land generated finances which fed her household. That household was her most important locus for contact with the realm and with other parts of the court, but it might not be the only one, especially when her minor son had a council. The queen reached outward to the realm through patronage of different kinds; more literally, she might contact it in person, through travel. These different spheres provide answers to the central issues of this chapter: what practical means were required for Elizabeth Woodville and her daughter to establish and sustain their relationships with the realm, and just what did those relationships entail? In particular, what did the queen's autonomy and capacity for intercession, which we have already encountered as primary concerns, amount to in reality?

Lands

A queen's landed estate was arguably the primary means by which she existed, both literally and figuratively. The properties she held and administered (whether manors and lordships, pieces of wetland, castles or entire county hundreds) generated most of the income she used to sustain her household, which could then operate without much dependence on the Crown. The queen's estates could also act as a base for relationships with important families, members of whom might serve the queen (or king) at court and/or in the shires. And to many of her subjects who might never see her, the queen was known principally as a

landowner, whose practical directives (affecting, for example, rents and fees) would reach even her poorest tenants. Moreover, the estate came with a certain security. Since the queen's property supported part of the royal family, it was protected. Both Queens Elizabeth were exempted from acts of resumption during their husbands' reigns, sharing this privilege with relatives both royal and unique (i.e. the Woodvilles in 1473); they were also spared the tenths and other military levies, and were not affected by the reversal of attainder, meaning that the queen did not need to return property she had obtained from attainted persons.¹

A certain portion of the queen's lands, her dower, was assigned to her by the Crown early in her marriage, a long-established practice by the fifteenth century. About one-third of the total number of properties which came into the hands of Elizabeth Woodville and her daughter had been traditional dower lands since the time of Isabella of France in the early fourteenth century.² But both queens improved on their original estate over the course of their married lives, through a combination of fortunate inheritance, careful management and outright manipulation. And although some properties passed from mother to daughter, by the end of their respective lives their estates differed appreciably.

For unclear reasons, the Crown made two false starts at Elizabeth Woodville's dower assignment before settling it in 1466.³ The next year her holdings were augmented substantially by a parliamentary grant of properties from the duchy of Lancaster, the immense

¹For Elizabeth Woodville: *R.P.* VI:6, 8, 72, 75, 119, 123, 176, 200, 271, 303, 304; for Elizabeth of York, *R.P.* VI: 386, 387, 422, 517.

²B.P. Wolff, *The royal demesne in English history* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1971), 232-8. The number is approximate because of conflicting evidence about the queens' ownership of some properties, as well as the fact of shared ownership.

³*C.P.R. 1461-7*, 430, 445, 480.

estate whose relatively recent acquisition by the Crown had greatly altered the royal demesne and its political importance.⁴ There were numerous subsequent acquisitions and concessions, but these original grants determined the essential form of Elizabeth Woodville's estate for the rest of her career, until her property was confiscated by Richard III. Henry VII restored 27 properties and added seven new ones, meaning that Elizabeth lost at least 70 per cent of her pre-1483 estate, though she regained almost all her original fee-farms (see also below).⁵

By 1486, however, there was a new queen needing a dower of her own, and when Elizabeth Woodville left court the next year, her daughter received these 34 lands along with the fee-farms.⁶ The younger queen's estate did not change significantly until 1495, when a sizeable parcel, in reversion (granted to Elizabeth of York in 1491) from her grandmother Cecily, duchess of York, more than doubled it.⁷ Elizabeth of York acquired only eleven properties outside of these two grants. (For a complete list of both queens' lands, see Appendix I; for fee-farms, Appendix II).

Certain patterns appear when one locates these properties on a map. First, the estate of both Queens Elizabeth was almost totally southern and mostly central. There were virtually no properties north of Peterborough, and none in peninsular Kent or Cornwall. Most of the estates common to both queens lay in the Home Counties, roughly on the perimeter of modern London. Another line of estates stretched west from London to the

⁴*R.P.*, VI:628.

⁵*C.P.R. 1485-94*, 75.

⁶*Materials... Henry VII*, I:148-9.

⁷*S.R.*, II:595. There was some confusion (amusing to the modern reader) about the identity and location of certain of these estates, and another statute was required for clarification (*S.R.* II:640).

Somerset border. Elizabeth Woodville collected an additional outer ring of Home County manors, along with more concentrated clusters on the Sussex coast around Pevensey, in northern Norfolk (see below), and, most strikingly, in the Lambourne Downs and the Vale of Pewsey of Berkshire and Wiltshire. Another group lay in Northamptonshire, the county of her birth, much enhanced in the 1470s when the queen obtained a share in the extensive property of Sir Thomas Tresham in that region (see also below). As for Elizabeth of York, her lands were fewer (numbering about 96 properties in total, as compared to her mother's 130) and more scattered. But she had a noticeable concentration in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, on either side of the Cotswolds. Moreover, she had much more land in the West Country than her mother. The younger queen possessed the extensive forests of Exmoor and Mendip, along with three Dorset hundreds, and more properties extended far into Herefordshire, all thanks to the reversion from the duchess of York.

These concentrations are important to note, because given the small distances involved, the queen stood to exert stronger influence, of whatever kind, in an area where she had several lands. Elizabeth Woodville had a particular advantage where both she and other members of her family held land. Horrox asserts that "Elizabeth Woodville's possession of the duchy of Lancaster lands in [Hertfordshire] had resulted in a marked Woodville presence there by the end of Edward IV's reign", and reasons that by 1475, strengthened by marriage with several important families, "the queen's interest in East Anglia was regarded as the main instrument of royal authority there".⁸ This "interest" was not solely the queen's, because many of the individuals connected to her were also connected to the court in some other way:

⁸R. Horrox, *Richard III: a study of service* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 198, 80.

"It is more accurate to see the East Anglian affinity as a *court* connection rather than a narrowly Woodville one."⁹ But the subject would bear far more investigation, particularly for Elizabeth of York. We know very little about the younger queen's relationship to her estate, and no one has paid any attention to whether or not she was able to build up affinities through it. The tacit assumption seems to be that she was either too retiring or too tightly controlled by her husband to concern herself with such issues, ideas which could be helpfully tested against some fresh evidence.

The priorities of landholding are evident in Elizabeth Woodville's most complicated marriage manoeuvre. In 1466 the queen married her son Thomas Grey to Anne Holland, the only heir of the duchess of Exeter, who had been granted a sizeable estate in her own name in 1464.¹⁰ In 1469, letters patent placed the queen herself fourth in line to these lands, behind Anne Holland, the latter's heirs, and any other heirs of the duchess' body -- these last two steps being at this point wholly hypothetical.¹¹ But in 1472 the duchess divorced her long-absent husband and not long after married Thomas Saintleger. The couple were childless when Anne Holland died, also childless, in 1474, meaning the queen now stood to inherit the estate directly. Elizabeth immediately remarried Thomas Grey to yet another heiress, Cecily Bonville. The next year, however, the duchess bore a daughter, Anne Saintleger, who was still alive when the duchess herself died in January 1476 (at which point a separate provision

⁹Horrox, *Richard III*, 80.

¹⁰*The complete peerage*, eds. V. Gibbs & H. Doubleday (London, 1910-59), V:215.

¹¹*C.P.R. 1467-77*, 137-8.

of the 1469 patent gave the queen £60 per year from the duchess' fee-farms).¹² This left the queen without access to the estate until 1483, when she paid the king 5000 marks (£3333 13s. 4d.) for the marriage of Thomas Grey's son to Anne Saintleger, an arrangement which needed to be shored up by act of Parliament.¹³ (See Appendix III for a list of the Exeter lands.) It is not difficult to see why Elizabeth coveted this inheritance, of which poor timing in the end deprived her. Many of the 33 properties lay in eleven counties where she as yet had no exclusive holdings, especially in the West Country, including two hundreds in Devon and two in Somerset, and several others lay strategically near her own manors. Surely it is plausible that the queen desired more than the potential income. Land meant influence, a fact which informed the behaviour of the fifteenth-century nobility in no small measure.¹⁴

Not all of the queen's lands necessarily came by direct grants. Elizabeth Woodville bought the Fitzlewis manors in Essex, worth 1000 marks (£667 6s. 8d.) per year, from Richard duke of Gloucester, though by 1482 she had sold them -- perhaps to help raise the funds needed for the Grey-Saintleger marriage.¹⁵ (Unfortunately, such direct, private transactions leave scant traces in the public records, so without more involved research it is difficult to evaluate the prevalence of either queen's activities in the private land market.) Nor were all the queen's properties exclusively hers; joint arrangements had their advantages. Even shared profits and rents might handily supplement the queen's income, especially where

¹²*C.P.R. 1467-77*, 138.

¹³Ross, 337; *R.P.* VI:215-8.

¹⁴See, for example, Horrox, *Richard III*, 27-89, and A.J. Pollard, "The Richmondshire community of gentry during the Wars of the Roses", in *Patronage, pedigree and power in later medieval England*, ed. C. Ross, 37-60.

¹⁵*C.C.R. 1476-85*, 295.

the holdings were extensive. A single demise and quitclaim in 1476 from William Huse gave Elizabeth Woodville, with ten others, a share of 65 properties, among which were several towns and 14 hundreds in Sussex, and knights' fees from ten others.¹⁶ The benefits would not be solely financial. The Huse transfer included the town of Seaford and the hundred of Poynings, which most likely encompassed the queen's own manor of Endlewick in Sussex, the hundred of Grinstead around her manor of East Grinstead, and the manors of Dysworth and Seagrave near her town of Godmanchester in Leicestershire. Such overlaps could serve to build up a local affinity, especially in the case of the Huse transfer, which also involved the queen's brother and son. In addition, the shared properties gave her a foothold in areas where she had no land of her own, such as Derbyshire, Yorkshire and Shropshire.

The queen might also enter into temporary arrangements, such as custodies. The attainted Tresham lands were granted jointly to Elizabeth Woodville, the bishop of Salisbury (Richard Beauchamp) and William Dudley, dean of the chapel of the household, in 1475, along with a smaller set of manors of the earl of Wiltshire. These were to be held during the minority of the earl's heir, who did not come of age until at least 1487; this enhancement of the queen's presence in Northamptonshire thus lasted to the end of the reign.¹⁷ The same year Elizabeth obtained a seven-year share of five manors and one entire hundred in Oxfordshire.¹⁸ Finally, while the queen received her dower lands only for life, obviously to prevent Crown land from being alienated, her interest in shared properties often included her

¹⁶*C.C.R.* 1476-85, 30.

¹⁷*C.P.R.* 1467-77, 562.

¹⁸*C.P.R.* 1467-77, 543.

"heirs and assigns", potentially providing her with bargaining chips in land or marriage deals, or to provide for extended family.¹⁹ The Exeter lands would have fallen into this category.

The queen's land management was thus not restricted by tradition; it could be a fluid business involving incessant negotiation, risk, and hard-headed planning. Of course, this depended on the individual queen. Elizabeth of York is absent from the foregoing examples, and we may well wonder why her record is so different, showing few acquisitions apart from her two main parcels. Perhaps the younger queen did not share her mother's interest in the land market, for understandable reasons. In addition to her numerous extended family, Elizabeth Woodville had two heirs not shared with the king; their security thus required independent initiative on her part. In contrast, the Tudor queen had only royal heirs, and the two sisters she felt obliged to assist were provided for through annuities. But her household, as we shall see, could certainly have used some extra income, and it is puzzling that few attempts to deal with this problem (whether attributable or not to Henry VII's legendary avarice) have come to light. In 1490 Elizabeth of York was declared heir of her deceased brother, Edward V, in the matter of a single Shropshire property, raising the question of why this avenue was not taken elsewhere.²⁰ Elizabeth could not, of course, inherit any of the royal demesne from either her brother or her father. However, a royal grant to a third party in 1494 stated that Henry VII possessed certain lands of the earldom of March "in right of Elizabeth the Queen Consort".²¹ The evident rationale was that Elizabeth was the heiress of

¹⁹*C.P.R. 1467-77*, 419, 543.

²⁰*C.I.P.M. Hen. VII*, III:376.

²¹*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 8.

her father as the earl of March. But this March heritage did not apparently net the queen any additional lands or income. Whether the king judged it impolitic to call attention to Elizabeth's independent rights by assigning them to her benefit, or simply had more expedient intentions for these properties, the grant (in the king's name alone) shows that the queen's legal status as *femme sole* could be interpreted rather loosely.

The queen might influence internal matters on her properties. The council of Elizabeth of York prompted a manorial court order banning forestalling at markets in the liberty of Havering, and also had rockier dealings with this estate (see below).²² But her relationship with her tenants was probably quite distant most of the time. A potential exception of some consequence was the act of 1482 which granted Elizabeth Woodville "the wardships and marriages of the heirs of her tenants of so much of the Duchy of Lancaster as she [held] to her own use".²³ Although this sweeping legislation was repealed by Richard III and not revived, it indicates that for the queen to have control not only over her properties, but over their inhabitants, was not unthinkable.

Finance

A queen could be an expensive thing to have around. Perhaps reflecting the profligate experience of Margaret of Anjou, Edward IV's household ordinances warn that the queen's household is ultimately accountable to the king's treasurer, to avoid the harm caused by "keping ij housholdes so honorable with the groundez of one, so that one mought hurt and

²²M. McIntosh, *Autonomy and community: the royal manor of Havering, 1200-1500* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 251.

²³*R.P.*, VI:207-8.

minisshē the othyr his greate fame."²⁴ Also, the queen's dower lands represented lost revenue for the Crown, and the amount was significant enough that Fortescue used it to illustrate the difference between the situations of the French and English monarchs: the English queen received twice as much dower because the English king had more sources of income and hence could better afford the temporary alienation of land.²⁵ However, the administrative autonomy made possible by the system of dower lands must have outweighed any financial disadvantages. In December 1464, before Elizabeth Woodville's dower had been settled, a privy seal warrant ordered the exchequer to pay her £466 13s. 4d. for the expenses of her chamber, wardrobe and stable "against the feast of Christmas next", most likely representing wages for the quarter then ending.²⁶ Admittedly this works out to a smaller annual total than the £4000 Elizabeth Woodville would receive from her landed income in 1466-7. But we should not necessarily conclude from this that funding the queen's household directly would have saved the Crown money. This early payment was not necessarily in response to any detailed account, and we have no way of knowing whether it actually covered Elizabeth Woodville's expenses. It was a stopgap measure necessary because the queen had just begun living with her husband (see Chapter 2 above); the fact that the first abortive dower assignment followed in March 1465 indicates that it was a priority to set her up independently as quickly as possible.²⁷

²⁴*The household of Edward IV*, 92-3.

²⁵J. Fortescue, *The governance of England*, ed. C. Plummer (London: Oxford University Press, 1885), 131.

²⁶P.R.O., E 404/4/77.

²⁷"Annales rerum anglicarum", 783; *C.P.R. 1461-7*, 430.

Landed income had its limitations. The queen was barred from increasing rents and other dues on any of her properties classified as "ancient demesne". It might also be difficult to collect the total amount due from any given manor, as Elizabeth of York discovered. In 1487 she and her council decided to collect more rigorously the dues from the liberty of Havering-atte-Bower, a manor with a history of resistance to royal control, by installing a succession of resident rent collectors. Ten years of such attempts availed very little, and generated obvious resentment on the manor.²⁸ (The sources do not reveal whether this was part of a systematic effort by the queen to enhance her modest income from land). And like all landowners, queens lost a good portion of their revenue through assorted costs and fees at the source.

Queens had another potential source of income. We know of three men for Elizabeth Woodville, and one for Elizabeth of York, described as collectors of queen's gold.²⁹ This was the old prerogative by which the queen could claim ten per cent above the value of any voluntary fine of over 10 marks (£6 13s. 4d.) due to the king. These were not fines in the modern sense, imposed by courts for criminal offenses, but analogous to fees, usually paid for various licences, charters, custodies and so on.³⁰ Among the most common, to judge from the queen's gold writs for Elizabeth Woodville, were those for licences to alienate lands held in chief of the king, or to endow churches or found perpetual chantries. No details of the levying of queen's gold for Elizabeth of York have come to light, and for Elizabeth

²⁸McIntosh, 64-6.

²⁹W. Prynne, *Aurum reginae* (London, 1668), 137.

³⁰A complete list is given in Prynne, 6-7.

Woodville we have only a series of writs from different years throughout the reign, ordering its collection.³¹ This represents only the first part of the process, and we have no way of knowing how much was actually paid. In 1466-7 Elizabeth Woodville received a total of £37 from this source, in 1481-2 only £6 13s. 4d; she was not the first consort to experience difficulty in collecting queen's gold.³²

The writs show, however, that Elizabeth Woodville continued to make claims on a wide variety of fines, and some trends are worth noting (see also Appendix IV). First, the queen did not charge those of the highest rank more often than others. Of the 223 persons or institutions named in the writs whose rank is recorded, 43 are described as esquires (*armigeri*), compared to 31 nobles (including bishops), 32 knights, and 30 "gentlemen". The nobles were proportionally not even the most likely to be charged over £1, being equalled or surpassed in this respect by merchants, sole women, municipalities and clerics. Of these, the nobility did bear most of the largest charges, including £100 from the earl and countess of Warwick, and £70 from the bishop of Dunholm (Anthony Woodville, the queen's own brother, was charged £2).³³ However, the greatest amount recorded, £200, was required of a knight, Sir John Sentlow.³⁴ Perhaps the queen (or her council) cast the net as widely as possible, knowing that a high proportion of the claims would be unsuccessful. However, the more claims were made, the more onerous it must have been to pursue delinquent amounts,

³¹Prynne, 68-104.

³²Myers, 255.

³³Prynne, 75, 92.

³⁴Prynne, 70.

and apparently it was not always worthwhile. In 1478 Elizabeth Woodville forgave Chichester Cathedral the £3 it owed her: not a huge sum, but among the more substantial.³⁵ Without the Exchequer records, however, we cannot tell why so many of her writs appear to have had no positive result, or whether she was being unusually aggressive in pursuing them.

Extraordinary situations brought the risk of financial trouble. Elizabeth Woodville was granted £2200 per annum for her household expenses while her husband was in France in 1474-5, plus another £2200 "because that my Lord Prince is assigned by the king to be in household".³⁶ No such mechanism protected her after the death of her husband. At the end of six weeks, including three in sanctuary, she was left with £41 of £100; except for £10 kept for herself, all the rest had gone to pay off various debts, and it is worth noting that this was even before she was officially deprived of her estates by Richard III.³⁷ Without the machinery of her estates and household, a queen could not expect much. In 1488, a year after she surrendered her lands, Elizabeth Woodville was granted an annuity of 400 marks (£267 6s. 8d.), to be paid from the Exchequer, and she continued to receive smaller gifts of money from the king.³⁸ This was a small fraction of her income as queen, but it does not imply sudden poverty. Elizabeth's expenses had most likely been reduced greatly as well, with no need to maintain a queen's household. Her house at Westminster cost her only £10 annual rent (see below), and her residence at Bermondsey probably entailed even less expenditure.

³⁵Historical Manuscripts Commission *Report on various collections*, no. 1(2), (London: H.M.S.O., 1874), 203.

³⁶Scofield, II:125.

³⁷British Library, Harley Charter, 58.F.49.

³⁸*Materials... Henry VII*, II:319, 329, 555.

Direct comparison of the two queens' finances is tricky. For Elizabeth Woodville we have one complete household account dating from 1466-7, while for Elizabeth of York the so-called "privy purse expenses" of 1502-3 are all that remain. These do not contain quite the same kinds of information; Elizabeth Woodville's account documents the finances of her entire household, while the Tudor queen's account deals only with the receipts and expenses of her chamber, and does not include, for example, her wardrobe charges, which cost her mother over £900 in 1466-7.³⁹ (It should therefore really be called a chamber account to avoid confusion with the "queen's purse", meaning funds handled by the queen herself, to which it often refers.) Moreover, the large time gap between them encompasses a change in accounting methods. As Myers points out, most of Elizabeth of York's money, including wages, annuities and so on, was received and spent by her chamber, "perhaps in imitation of the increased importance of the chamber in the king's household".⁴⁰ Elizabeth Woodville met such expenses before money was transferred to her chamber.

We can make some comparisons, however, by combining these general patterns with the details of another document, Westminster Abbey Muniment 12173, an unpublished land valor for Elizabeth of York. This documents the income and charges from the queen's Crown and duchy of Lancaster lands (including fee-farms) for the year ending Michaelmas 1496. Even if the valor accounts for only part of her landed income, we can still observe some important proportionate differences. Elizabeth Woodville's total landed income in 1466-7, after charges (e.g. repairs and fees on the estates) was £4169, out of which £660, or 16 per

³⁹Myers, 316.

⁴⁰Myers, 252.

cent, went to payments by warrant.⁴¹ By contrast, in 1496 her daughter paid £454 by warrant solely on the net valor income of £1889, thereby spending 24 per cent.⁴² Secondly, once Elizabeth Woodville's wages, wardrobe expenses and the like were cleared, she was left with £1419 to be paid into her chamber.⁴³ But the 1496 valor shows that £1215 were delivered to Elizabeth of York, i.e. to her chamber -- out of which she probably paid her staff and numerous other expenses, if the practice of 1502-3 is any indication.⁴⁴ In the latter year wages, salaries and annuities alone cost the younger queen £591.⁴⁵

Moreover, it is quite possible that this presumably stretched sum of £1215 in fact did represent most of the queen's income. The 1496 valor does not seem to include the lands Elizabeth of York inherited from her grandmother, and the specification "Crown and duchy of Lancaster" neatly describes those which were transferred by royal grant from her mother (including the manors identified in the valor). The duchess died only in June 1495, and the transfer of lands to the queen was not settled until the next year.⁴⁶ By Michaelmas 1496 the funds from the new lands might well not have reached the queen's coffers, especially given

⁴¹Myers, 316, 287, 300, 304, 305. Warrants mostly effected payments to persons not resident in the household, or who were still owed outstanding amounts. Elizabeth Woodville's goldsmith, the yeoman of her horses, a pension granted from her lands, medications, and items for her carriage were paid for in this way (Myers, 309-16).

⁴²W.A.M. 12173, frame 3. The gross income was £2192, of which £2063 was from farms and farm rents, £74 from woodsales, and £56 from fines and casualties. The charges at source were as follows: £210 for fees and wages, £29 for annuities, £45 for repairs, and £19 for miscellaneous expenses. For clarity, amounts have been rounded to the nearest pound.

⁴³Myers, 318.

⁴⁴W.A.M. 12173, frame 3.

⁴⁵*P.P.E.*, 99-101.

⁴⁶*S.R.*, II:640.

the recalcitrance of some properties. Moreover, in order to accomplish the terms of her sister's marriage indenture, Elizabeth of York had diverted £120 per year from four of her fee-farms to her brother-in-law.⁴⁷ The most important effect of the new parcel, when it came, must therefore have been the infusion of much-needed cash. Indeed, a 1506 account by the receiver-general of the late queen's properties shows that by then they were providing the Crown well over £3000 per annum.⁴⁸

Despite the added income, though, by the queen's death her finances still left much to be desired. Her creditors had to be paid in instalments; she had to pledge her plate as security; and some household servants were not reimbursed their expenses for months. Moreover, her priorities are intriguing (see Appendix V for a breakdown of her spending). Elizabeth of York has gained a reputation for personal piety drawn largely from two sets of sources: eulogistic remarks (discussed in Chapter 2) and her chamber accounts. The latter indeed display frequent entries for alms, offerings and donations to religious houses (including a year's supply of beer to the friars of both Greenwich and Canterbury, a total of £14).⁴⁹ But this is never placed in the perspective of the queen's overall expenditure. Employing the broadest reasonable definition of "pious" expenses, we find that Elizabeth of York spent £97 in this area in 1502-3. This was 2.8 per cent of the total and appreciably less than the £461 she spent on luxury goods, such as expensive fabrics, for herself. Moreover, £593 went to pay outstanding debts, £374 for the queen's stable, and a further £333 to the king for an

⁴⁷*S.R.*, II:610.

⁴⁸Harvard University Houghton MS. PfMS AM 1304 (6). The net income was £3360, but £222 of this was uncollected debts.

⁴⁹*P.P.E.*, 56-7.

unclear purpose. Given that Elizabeth Woodville's account does not mention her stable, perhaps the Tudor queen was being made to carry more of her own expenses, for which her revenue was insufficient. Her chamber appears lucky to have ended the year in the black by £175 (a figure which must itself be interpreted cautiously).

However, aside from the luxury goods, which themselves can be partly explained by the queen's need to cut a queenly figure, it is hard to judge whether Elizabeth of York's spending was being mismanaged. The size of wages and gifts was governed by tradition; rewards to servants were necessary to maintain morale in the household; messengers needed to be paid, and monetary offerings were obligatory for any pious person, sincere or not. The queen probably had little freedom to reform her household's finances, even if she was aware of the need. It is thus unproductive to wonder why more of an effort was not made to cut costs. In all, it would appear that the queen's established autonomy did not guarantee her financial security, as much as that may have been the intention. Since Elizabeth of York had greater problems than her mother in this respect, she most likely had to rely on the king more frequently. Although we cannot assume that this was a controlling strategy of his, it would certainly have lessened her freedom of action, an issue to keep in mind throughout the next section.

The institutional queen: the household and beyond

The separateness of king and queen, expressed in ceremonial, was also officially built into their lives at court. The queen's household was defined as a corporate equivalent of the protocols calling for the queen to sit in a place of great honour, a little lower than the king. Edward IV's household ordinances specify that the queen's service was to be "nigh like unto

the king", and that she was to have the same assortment of servitors, though they were to take "som what lesse in every thing" than the king's servants.⁵⁰ This separation could have personal consequences. When Prince Arthur died in 1502, the king was the first to be told, and it was only at Henry's explicit request that the queen was brought from her chamber so that they might take the news together.⁵¹ The separation of households meant that even marital relations were an occasion requiring procedural notice. The "Ryalle Book" indicates that it was not usual for there to be anyone else in the chamber when the king and queen "lie togedure", but that body servants were to attend outside the chamber doors: men on the king's side, women on the queen's. (This note of caution demonstrates how little privacy was considered normal.) On such occasions the king sent his servants to fetch the queen, who came from her chamber accompanied by her servants.⁵²

There was also, however, interaction between the households. As we shall see, the same person might hold offices in both, or be related to someone in the other; he might also leave one for the other.⁵³ More practical matters could also connect the households; an order of 1488 specifies that fabric for the queen's gown be delivered to the yeoman of the king's robes.⁵⁴ In the same year Elizabeth of York's provisions were kept officially in her own storehouse, but this was located at the prince's wardrobe, a possible point of intersection

⁵⁰*The household of Edward IV*, 92.

⁵¹*Receyt*, 80-1.

⁵²*Antiquarian repertory*, I:314.

⁵³The masculine pronoun here is deliberate; women were mostly restricted to the household of the queen, unless one of the princesses had been given a household.

⁵⁴*Materials... Henry VII*, II:243.

between his household and hers.⁵⁵

The primary example for this discussion is the household of Elizabeth of York, which has not yet been seriously investigated.⁵⁶ The official head of the queen's household, the chamberlain, was a nobleman, as was also customary for the king: Thomas Butler, earl of Ormond, was given this office in August 1486.⁵⁷ The queen's chancellor, Edmund Chaderton, had been prominent in Richard III's household and was pardoned by Henry VII; in 1489 he was also nominated by the queen to be a justice in eyre of her forests.⁵⁸ At the nominal head of the finances was the treasurer, who controlled the queen's exchequer; Elizabeth Woodville's treasurer in 1466-7 had also been her receiver-general, John Forster.⁵⁹ For Elizabeth of York, perhaps reflecting the change in financial management, the two offices were separated. The treasurer was first Thomas Lovell and later Richard Payne, who was also a clerk and queen's almoner.⁶⁰ The receiver-general, Richard Deacons, was surely more important, because he was also the keeper of the queen's privy purse and thus controlled

⁵⁵*Materials...Henry VII*, II:282.

⁵⁶Although it may seem unbalanced to concentrate on Elizabeth of York, the household of Elizabeth Woodville is the subject of Myers' well-known article (1967), now an essential source for the Yorkist queen, and it seems unproductive to reiterate that information, especially when there is no comparable study for her daughter. Where pertinent, comparisons have been made between the two households, but there is insufficient space to make that the subject of this section.

⁵⁷P.R.O. LC 2/1, f. 78v; *Complete peerage*, X:132-3.

⁵⁸Emden, I:383; *C.P.R. 1485-94*, 318.

⁵⁹Myers, 257, 260. Even by Elizabeth Woodville's time the queen's exchequer seems to have been less important than in the previous century -- H. Johnstone, "The queen's household", in *The English government at work 1327-1336*, ed. J.F. Willard & W.A. Morris (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1940), I:279-80.

⁶⁰*Materials... Henry VII*, I:228; Emden, III:1443.

her chamber finance. Deacons had begun as the clerk of the queen's signet (effectively her secretary) by 1487, and in 1501 was made keeper of the writs and rolls of the Common Bench for his services to king and queen.⁶¹ From 1502 to 1507 he was also a commissioner of the peace in Buckinghamshire, and in 1503 was appointed the receiver-general for all the late queen's properties.⁶² His career illustrates the important point that holding office in the queen's household did not prevent anyone from holding other offices, in the king's household or even outside court, at the same time, a fact which influenced the staffing of many posts in the queen's establishment.

If Elizabeth Woodville's household is any indication, the above-mentioned officials most likely were also members of the queen's council, along with the keeper of the wardrobe, the attorney-general, and perhaps the queen's carvers.⁶³ The council had its own chambers (at the Tower, at least in Elizabeth Woodville's time) and its own clerk.⁶⁴ No definitive membership list for this advisory body exists for either queen, nor have its surviving records been catalogued; we know of it largely through records of its decisions, for example the unsuccessful attempt to reinforce Elizabeth of York's control at Havering (see above), in which the council determined the penalties imposed.⁶⁵ Probably it was involved in at least some of the decisions proclaimed by the queen's patent letters, another class of records which

⁶¹*Materials... Henry VII*, II:118; *C.P.R. 1485-94*, 265.

⁶²*C.P.R. 1485-94*, 630, 317.

⁶³Myers, 258-9. For Elizabeth of York the keeper of the wardrobe was John Coope, the attorney-general Richard Eliot, the carvers Sir Ralph Verney and William Denton.

⁶⁴Myers, 258-9. The clerk of Elizabeth of York's council in 1503 was John Pagenam, paid 100s. yearly wages, about whom nothing else is known (*P.P.E.*, 101; LC 2/1 fo. 76r).

⁶⁵McIntosh, 65-6.

seem to have been mostly lost. These were authorized by the queen's own signet, and were independently valid though they formally acknowledged the king's authority. One, to Elizabeth Woodville's forester, asserts "thise oure letters shalbe your sufficient warrant", while another of 1482 calls Sir William Stonor, who had been hunting in the queen's forests, to answer "to us or our Counsell" despite Stonor's commission from the king to "take þe view and reule" of the area.⁶⁶ Examples from Elizabeth of York include the appointment of a forest steward in 1492 and of her collector of queen's-gold.⁶⁷

The queen's councillors, of course, were only a tiny group of her officers, and her service probably did not account for most of their time (the receiver-general and the attorney were likely more busy). In the next rank of the household, the duties of the gentlemen carvers, sewers and ushers were at least partly ceremonial, and so, though sometimes men of consequence, they leave scant traces in the chamber accounts. The everyday business of the household belonged to people who were (with the possible exception of the clerics, such as the queen's confessor and chaplains) not yet socially prominent. They are therefore often more difficult to identify with confidence than their superiors. The yeomen ushers, yeomen of the chamber, grooms and pages attended to the queen's practical needs; the chamber accounts show that they ran her errands, arranged her travel, looked after her jewels, and accompanied her from one residence to another as needed. And, of course, the group most clearly distinguishing the queen's household from the king's were the ladies and

⁶⁶*The Stonor letters and papers*, ed. C.L. Kingsford, London: Offices of the Society, 1919), II:127-8, 150.

⁶⁷Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on manuscripts in various collections*, no. 2 (1903), 302.

gentlewomen, her most private attendants, whose presence in a mostly male environment also suggests a social role for the queen's establishment. In the case of Elizabeth of York, many of these servants were also the queen's creditors, for amounts ranging from the trifling to the substantial. There seem to have been established links between particular servants, as the chamber accounts often show the same individuals conveying messages or performing certain tasks together. Of course, these were all members of the household "above-stairs". The servants of the kitchen, stable, laundry and so on, including the true menials, are almost impossible to trace.

Who were the people occupying these posts, and how did they get them? It is not clear who had the final say in staffing the queen's household, but most likely the queen's opinion was not the only influential one. There is some indication that the king's mother involved herself, once dismissing a man who sought to enter the queen's service.⁶⁸

Generally speaking, the single greatest factor determining membership in the queen's household was belonging to one of the families represented in royal service elsewhere. Most of the servants listed in Elizabeth of York's funeral accounts can be matched at least by name to such a family, whether employed at the household or in the counties. (See Appendix VI for a complete, annotated list based on the queen's funeral accounts.) Some individuals can be identified fairly certainly. For most we can only state possibilities, making speculations based on ages and social status. For example, there is nothing to tell us the name of the queen's sewer listed in 1503 as "M[aster] Bekynsall". But we do know that George Bekynsall received a royal grant for good service in 1489, that John Bekynsall was the father of an MP

⁶⁸M.K. Jones & M.G. Underwood, *The king's mother* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 161.

with the same name, and that Robert Bekynsall was chaplain and almoner to Queen Katherine of Aragon.⁶⁹ It seems unlikely that the sewer was unrelated to any of these. Speculation is especially necessary regarding the queen's ladies: Robert Brent was a gentleman usher in the king's household while Ellen Brent was in the queen's, but whether they were husband and wife is difficult to tell.⁷⁰ The same applies to William (see above) and Ann Crowmer, Robert (groom of the king's chamber) and Eleanor Jones, John (remembrancer of the exchequer) and Elizabeth Fitzherbert, among others.⁷¹

A few of the queen's servants themselves also held posts in the king's household. Sir Thomas Lovell, her first treasurer, was also treasurer of the king's chamber and household, chancellor of the Exchequer, and speaker of Henry VII's first parliament.⁷² William Denton, the queen's carver at her death, had been the king's carver since 1485.⁷³ Thomas Twysday, gentleman waiter, had been a page of the chamber to Edward IV, and with John Hamerton, yeoman usher, a serjeant-at-arms for life since 1485-6.⁷⁴ One of her ushers, William Crowmer, was a servitor of the king as of 1502.⁷⁵ For certain others there is evidence of connections to the queen's lands, such as Devizes in Wiltshire, home to a

⁶⁹*Materials... Henry VII*, II:471 (George); Bindoff, I:410 (John, Robert).

⁷⁰*P.P.E.*, 180.

⁷¹LC 2/1, fo. 70r; Ann Crowmer: *P.P.E.*, 12, 99; Eleanor and Robert Jones: *P.P.E.*, 203; John Fitzherbert: *C.P.R. 1485-94*, 7; Elizabeth Fitzherbert: *P.P.E.*, 99.

⁷²Chrimes, 111.

⁷³LC 2/1, fo. 63; *C.P.R. 1485-94*, 95

⁷⁴LC 2/1, fo. 63; *Letters and papers... Henry VIII*, I:210; *C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 549.

⁷⁵LC 2/1, fo. 63; *P.P.E.*, 6; *C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 269.

Cambridge graduate likely identifiable as one of the queen's chaplains, Edmund Chollerton.⁷⁶ William Crowmer, the gentleman usher, may have first encountered the royal household while constable of Pevensey Castle, which had belonged to Elizabeth Woodville.⁷⁷ And some persons display more than one possible connection, so that it may be hard to say which was the operative one. The queen's sewer named Fowler may have been the son of Sir Richard Fowler, also named Richard, who died by 1528 and whose son John was in the household of Henry VIII, or he may be the Richard Fowler who was granted a manor recovered in the queen's court of Havering -- if these are not the same person.⁷⁸

A complex interplay of such factors (royal service, family, marriage, land) is evident in the careers of some of the queen's better-documented servants. Richard Smyth was yeoman usher of the robes for Elizabeth of York from 1487 to her death.⁷⁹ His prominent background accounts for the fact that by 1503 he had enough cash on hand to pay some substantial sums for the queen; he had been MP for Reading in 1497 and held offices in the queen's lordship of Swallowfield and the king's lordship of Caversham.⁸⁰ His stepson, Richard Justice, also from a Reading family, was a page of the queen in 1503 when he was probably in his teens.⁸¹ In his will, Smyth left property to both Justice and Richard Weston, another of the queen's servants, who rose to much greater prominence under Henry VIII,

⁷⁶*Al. Cant.*, I(1):334.

⁷⁷*P.P.E.*, 190.

⁷⁸Bindoff, *C.C.R. 1500-9*, 82-3.

⁷⁹*Materials... Henry VII*, II:213; *P.P.E.*, 50; LC 2/1, fo. 63.

⁸⁰*P.P.E.*, 74-5; *C.P.R. 1485-94*, 421; Bindoff, III:335-6.

⁸¹LC 2/1, fo. 64r; Bindoff, II:456-7.

becoming a royal councillor and under-treasurer of the Exchequer.⁸²

The households of Elizabeth Woodville in 1466-7 and of her daughter in 1503 do not share many names. Of course, 35 years later one would not expect to find the same individuals, but it appears that Elizabeth of York drew largely on different families. To be sure, there were exceptions. The Hawte family, related by marriage to the Woodvilles and prominent under that queen, had a sewer (perhaps Jaques Hawte) and a chaplain (probably the successful Henry) in her daughter's household.⁸³ The Cottons had been associated with the queen's household since at least the time of Henry VI, when William Cotton was Margaret of Anjou's treasurer; Sir Roger Cotton was the master of the queen's horse from 1487, and quickly advanced in the king's service, while in 1503 Anthony Cotton was a gentleman waiter of Elizabeth of York and Richard Cotton was the clerk of her stable.⁸⁴ But Elizabeth of York's household displays more continuity with her successor's than with either of her predecessors; she took no one from Anne Neville's short-lived establishment.⁸⁵ In contrast, some of Elizabeth's men served the next queen in comparable posts, for example Christopher Plummer as chaplain, the usher William Bulstrode, and Richard Deacons as secretary of the chamber.⁸⁶

⁸²Bindoff, III: 335-6; *P.P.E.*, 84; Bindoff, III:590-2.

⁸³LC 2/1, fo. 63. Jaques Hawte had been under-keeper of Kenilworth (*P.P.E.*, 200). For Henry Hawte, see below.

⁸⁴LC 2/1, ff. 63, 75r; *Materials... Henry VII*, II:134.

⁸⁵R. Horrox, *The extent and use of crown patronage under Richard III* (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1977), II:72-3.

⁸⁶Emden, III:1487; *Letters and papers foreign and domestic, Henry VIII* (London: H.M.S.O., 1965), I:40. Richard Justice was groom of the wardrobe to Katherine of Aragon from 1509, and held bailiwicks and receiverships for her successors up to the 1540s (Bindoff II:456-7).

Nicholas Gaynesford was a notable exception to this Woodville-York discontinuity. Gaynesford, who sat in Parliament first in 1453 and was an usher to Edward IV, had been made castle porter and park keeper (later conferred for life) at Odiham before it became Elizabeth Woodville's property, next becoming her receiver for part of her Duchy lands, and by 1476 was an usher of her chamber.⁸⁷ His offices at Odiham were regranted in 1485 and he was additionally made joint keeper of Banstead, Walton and Charlewood, lands restored to the queen-dowager.⁸⁸ In 1486 he was made usher of the new queen's chamber.⁸⁹ As one might expect of an MP, Gaynesford was also prominent in the counties, serving as sheriff of Surrey and Sussex in 1485, and holding commissions of gaol delivery at Guildford in 1489, of levy in 1491, of oyer and terminer in 1493, and of the peace in Surrey in 1497 shortly before his death.⁹⁰ His connections in the queen's household are evident elsewhere; he held land with members of the Hawte, Crowmer, Brent and Roper families, and was enfeoffed by Joan Brent.⁹¹ Moreover, at his death he held land in East Grinstead, a property of Elizabeth Woodville; this land may have helped his initial route to that queen, or vice versa.⁹² And his wife apparently served both queens also, though we know little about her.⁹³

⁸⁷Myers, 267.

⁸⁸*Calendar of fine rolls 1485-1500*, 7.

⁸⁹*Calendar of fine rolls 1485-1500*, 39.

⁹⁰*Calendar of fine rolls 1485-1500*, 39, 355, 319, 441; *C.P.R. 1485-94*, 661. He died by August 1498 (*C.F.R. 1485-1500*, 259).

⁹¹*C.I.P.M. Hen. VII*, 427-8; *C.P.R. 1485-94*, 386.

⁹²*C.C.R. 1500-5*, 74.

⁹³Myers, 267; apparently this information comes from Mrs. Gaynesford's tombstone.

Serving the queen could have its rewards, whether monetary (e.g. the handsome £10 annuity Joan Steward gained in 1508 for her unspecified services to the late queen) or otherwise.⁹⁴ In Elizabeth of York's household this is especially evident for the clerics. In 1491 she recommended Henry Hawte, one of her chaplains by 1503, to Oxford, which responded enthusiastically; Hawte later became a canon and accompanied the royal party to Calais.⁹⁵ Even after the queen's death, membership in her household could pay off. In 1507 Edmund Chollerton, leaving the queen's hospital of St. Katherine-by-the-Tower, was presented by the king to St. Peter's, Northampton.⁹⁶ The same year, an additional link was shown when William Atkinson was granted the canonry and prebend in the church of St. Mary and St. George, Windsor, which had previously belonged to the queen's clerk and almoner Richard Payne.⁹⁷ Similarly, William Barton, a priest employed by the queen in 1503 though not in her household, was abbot of Oseney in Oxfordshire by 1505 -- the same house to which Christopher Plummer, another of her clerics, was ordained subdeacon.⁹⁸ But clerics were not the only beneficiaries, nor were they the only group where one servant of the queen might succeed another in the same office. John Abell, a yeoman usher, received the bailiwick of Falwesley in Northamptonshire, once Elizabeth Woodville's hundred, on the death of John Warden, who was very possibly Abell's colleague John "Awordon".⁹⁹ The

⁹⁴*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 585.

⁹⁵Emden, II:886; *Epistolae academicae oxonienses* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), 596-7.

⁹⁶*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 533.

⁹⁷*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 536.

⁹⁸Emden, III:1487.

⁹⁹LC 2/1, fo. 63; *C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 307.

queen's lands also might be used to provide for her servants: her sewer Hamlet Clegg became gatekeeper at Havering in 1504, while William Hamerton, yeoman of her chamber, was granted a £5 annuity from the late queen's lordship of Berkhamstead, and her midwife, Alice Massy, the same amount (surely deserved) from her manor of Cookham.¹⁰⁰

The queen's household, in all, was a vital and integral part of the court. It could provide individuals with a promising career in itself. It could also serve as a window into the king's household, and offered valuable connections to the counties and the church. In effect, it was a busy crossroads, situating the queen, as usual, in an intermediate position, but of great potential influence. Although theoretically separate, it was far from segregated from the patronage and power networks of late medieval England.

There could be institutional roles for the queen beyond the household. The establishment of a council for the infant prince of Wales in 1471 gave his mother, Elizabeth Woodville, another arena of action. The queen was alone in not being already on the king's council, and was, unsurprisingly, the only female councillor. While she had no functional title (unlike the president, John Alcock, bishop of Rochester), the queen's membership was not merely customary or titular, but a position of authority. Elizabeth held one of the three keys to the coffer containing the prince's council revenues and his signet; thus, she shared in control of his cash and authorization of the council's decisions. Lowe presumes, without hard evidence, that she, with the other councillors, was behind the legal proceedings instituted in

¹⁰⁰*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 368, 364, 354. In addition, it does not seem unreasonable that the yeoman John Baillie who was leased the site of the manor of Berton by Marlborough, one of the queen's lands, in 1504 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 365) should have been the "John Belly" who was yeoman of the stuff in her stable; the stable officer had enough contact with the queen to be mentioned in her chamber accounts (*P.P.E.*, 45).

Herefordshire after the establishment of the prince's council there in the summer of 1473.

Also, because of the number of Woodvilles and persons professionally connected to the queen on the council, Lowe has concluded that it represented a major power base for her family.¹⁰¹

Elizabeth's individual part, however, is hard to pin down. She remained on the council after it was reconstituted in 1473, but the letter from Edward IV regarding the setup of the prince's household that same year makes no mention of her, though it gives her brother Anthony, Earl Rivers, supervisory responsibility.¹⁰² In early 1483 the household ordinances were again revised, and the queen's privilege of shared financial control was given to Sir Richard Grey, her second son, for unknown reasons. This reform seems to have decreased Elizabeth's direct role on the council; although she was still to be informed if the prince refused to obey the ordinances, she did not share in the power of Rivers and Alcock to enforce them directly or to make new ones.¹⁰³ The grant by the prince of two manors was said to be "with the advice of the lords of his council and the assent of his mother Elizabeth", implying that her role was somehow distinctive. Was the basis of her authority purely maternal? We do not know why she in particular accompanied the prince to Wales in 1473 and to Herefordshire in 1475.¹⁰⁴ Was it because her presence augmented the image of royal authority in these disturbed parts of the realm, or simply because the prince was still a small

¹⁰¹D.E. Lowe, "Patronage and politics: Edward IV, the Wydevills, and the council of the prince of Wales, 1471-83", *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* XXIX(3)(1981):555-7, 567-8.

¹⁰²*Letters of the kings of England*, ed. J.O. Halliwell (London: Henry Colburn, 1848), 136-44.

¹⁰³Lowe, 561.

¹⁰⁴*The Paston letters and papers of the fifteenth century*, ed. N. Davis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), II:456; *R.P.*, VI:160.

child?

From piety to patronage

A queen's position privileged her relationship with the church hierarchy. This allowed visible material expression of her personal devotion, and Elizabeth Woodville, though hardly renowned today for her piety, was a case in point. Some of her requests were for very private purposes, for example (in 1474) to have a portable altar.¹⁰⁵ Others applied outside the court. In 1477 she gained, at her own petition, an indult to enter Carthusian houses of royal foundation, with eight to ten women servants, to hear masses and other divine offices; two years later she and the king were granted a licence to hear services within the Carthusian house at Sheen.¹⁰⁶ Crawford (1985) uses this evidence to credit Elizabeth with a piety "beyond the purely conventional", but does not show how these actions prove it, given that the queen, any queen, had a far greater range of resources and opportunities to express piety than most women. Crawford also shies away from reconciling this comment with her earlier assertion that "many of Elizabeth's actions show her to have been grasping and totally lacking in scruple".¹⁰⁷

Elizabeth Woodville's devotion to the Feast of the Visitation (also adduced by Crawford) had complex implications. The main objective of her 1480 petition to the pope regarding this feast was that the people of England, including herself, not be deprived of the

¹⁰⁵*C.Pap.Reg.*, XIII(1):381.

¹⁰⁶*C.Pap.Reg.*, XIII(2):582-3, XIII(1):8.

¹⁰⁷A. Crawford, "The piety of late medieval English queens", in *The church in pre-Reformation society*, ed. C.M. Barron and C. Harper-Hill (Woodbridge (U.K.): Boydell Press, 1985), 50.

papal indulgences associated with its celebration; this was an issue because the date of the newly instituted feast conflicted with some traditional English ones. The pope declared an arrangement whereby neither observance would be lost. Elizabeth displayed even more of a sense of mission in requesting extra indulgences for practitioners of the Salutation of the Virgin, apparently wishing "the devotion of the faithful of the realm for the said Salutation to be increased more and more".¹⁰⁸ But however important this was for contemporary English piety, and however useful for a broader understanding of Elizabeth Woodville, it does not seem to take us far "beyond the purely conventional". More thought-provoking, perhaps, is the queen's surrender of her parts of two Worcestershire manors in 1479, which she granted to the monastery of St. Peter's, Westminster, with specific, detailed instructions for the observances she desired on behalf of the royal family.¹⁰⁹ The same year she granted the monastery of Jesus of Bethlehem 48 acres of land out of her manor of Sheen.¹¹⁰ One wonders why Elizabeth undertook almost all her religious projects within a brief period, 1477-80. Had the necessary resources finally come her way, or was there a more personal reason -- for example, the death of her first royal son, George, at the age of two, early in 1479?

It is safe to assume that for any powerful woman of the fifteenth century, piety and patronage were unavoidably related. One of Elizabeth Woodville's first acts of intercession,

¹⁰⁸*C.Pap.Reg.*, XIII(1):90-1.

¹⁰⁹*C.P.R. 1476-1485*, 133-4.

¹¹⁰*C.P.R. 1476-85*, 156.

in 1466, was to gain a royal licence for the founding of a London priestly fraternity.¹¹¹ Despite Crawford's contrary assertion, at least one of Elizabeth Woodville's household clerics became a bishop: her confessor Edward Storey, later bishop of Carlisle.¹¹² The queen maintained this ecclesiastical connection, later appealing to the pope on Storey's behalf.¹¹³ As for Elizabeth of York, her "singular devotion" for the Cistercian monastery of St Mary, Woborn, led her, toward the end of her life, to send the pope a "most instant request" for the union of that house to the parish church of Salisbury, but her wish was accompanied by those of the bishop, the dean, the archdeacon of Buckingham and the chapter of the church, all by the "will" of the king.¹¹⁴ This may indicate that the queen's word by itself would not have guaranteed the success of the petition.

Queenly patronage might still be much more direct than this. Elizabeth Woodville was granted the right of presentation to the hospital or free chapel of St. Anthony, London, in 1468.¹¹⁵ In 1499 Elizabeth of York wrote to the prior of Christ Church, Canterbury, asking for a literal *carte blanche* of presentation to the highly desirable, centrally located living of All Hallows, Gracechurch Street, London, for which Elizabeth Woodville and her husband had also wanted preferment. The prior was to leave a blank on the certificate which the

¹¹¹*C.P.R. 1461-67*, 516.

¹¹²Crawford, "Piety", 50; Myers, 303. We must keep in mind that most of the information we have about Elizabeth's household comes from this single account, only two years into her tenure.

¹¹³Corpus Christi College Cambridge MS. 170 no. 145 (description), in *A descriptive catalogue of the manuscripts in the library of Corpus Christi College Cambridge*, ed. M.R. James (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1912).

¹¹⁴*C.Pap.Reg.*, XVIII:265.

¹¹⁵*C.P.R. 1467-77*, 115.

queen would fill in with the name of her candidate (Richard Southayke received the benefice).¹¹⁶ Both queens were granted rights of presentation to canonries and prebends in the royal chapel of St. Stephen, Westminster, but these were often shared, e.g. Elizabeth of York's grants of 1486 with the bishop of Ely, or of 1487 with four others. They might also be carefully qualified, applying only to the *next* vacancy, or to "become void after the king, or some one by his grant, has presented to one canonry and prebend in the same chapel".¹¹⁷ And even a queen could have competition; in 1500 the university of Oxford received letters from Elizabeth of York, the prince of Wales, and the king's mother recommending three different candidates to the same position.¹¹⁸

The queen was not restricted to court or high-profile appointments, and she might exercise her influence even over livings to which she had no legal claim. In 1469 John Paston II informed his son that the "free chapell in Caster", a Paston property, was to be given to a chaplain of Elizabeth Woodville, "Master John Yotton", "at the speciall request of the Qwen and othere especiall good lordes of myn".¹¹⁹ This seems to have been contrary to Paston's original intentions for the living; moreover, the queen expected a higher stipend for her candidate than Paston was willing to provide.¹²⁰ Whatever salary was agreed on was evidently not enough to keep Yotton at his post, since before long "a prest to syng in Caster"

¹¹⁶*Christ Church letters*, ed. J.B. Sheppard (London: Camden Society, 1877), 64, 44, xxxvii.

¹¹⁷*Materials... Henry VII*, I:380, II:218.

¹¹⁸*Epistolae academicae oxonienses*, 666-7.

¹¹⁹*Paston letters*, 399-400.

¹²⁰"[Yotton] is informyd that it scholde be worthe c s. be yere, whyche I belyeve not; I think it dere inow xl s. by yeere" (*Paston letters*, 400).

was again needed; John Paston III advised his father that "now thys parlement tyme... I thynk [Yotton] shalbe awaytyng on the Qwen."¹²¹ Elizabeth of York claimed to be the exclusive patron, as queen, of the hospital of St Katherine-by-the-Tower, and attempted at least twice to obtain a plenary indulgence for it.¹²² Apparently whatever reputation she had for exemplary piety did not carry much weight with the pope. Her mother seems to have been far better at communicating with the Vatican.

Naturally, a queen's ecclesiastical patronage could have less spiritual motives, whether personal or political. In 1479 Elizabeth Woodville's brother Lionel was granted a papal dispensation to hold four simultaneous benefices, though this was at the petition of both king and queen.¹²³ The papal "relaxation" she obtained for those visiting St. Augustine's Church, Huntingdon, is also open to cynical interpretation, since one of the conditions is that the visitors "give alms for the maintenance of its buildings and ornaments".¹²⁴ It is less obvious why, in 1488, a papal inhibition of "disturbances in the matter of the right of succession, etc." among Irish ecclesiastics, was said to originate in the concern of both Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, though we should note that the queen's chancellor was an Irish peer.¹²⁵ Elizabeth Woodville's record of "protectyng and defendyng the libertes and ffranchises" of Westminster Abbey, and her "bounteous" donations for its repairs, stood her

¹²¹*Paston letters*, 611.

¹²²W.E. Wilkie, *The cardinal protectors of England* (Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press, 1974), 60. This episode of 1493 is the only evidence I have found of queenly patronage of this hospital.

¹²³*C.Pap.Reg.*, XIII(1):248.

¹²⁴*C.Pap.Reg.*, XIII(1):563.

¹²⁵*C.Pap.Reg.*, XIV:33.

in good stead when she wished to lease a house there.¹²⁶

Pious patronage might extend to literary patronage, and the prime example of this for our purposes is William Caxton. The dedication to Caxton's printing of the *Fifteen Oes* of St. Bridget of Sweden states that the book was printed at the joint commandment of Elizabeth of York and the king's mother.¹²⁷ The reason for this patronage is unclear, since there is nothing especially queenly or even feminine about the content of these prayers. Of course, Lady Margaret's active piety is well known, and it has been suggested that the queen was her "protégée" in the patronage of devotional literature.¹²⁸ In 1477 Caxton had dedicated his *Boke of the histories of Jason* to the prince of Wales "by [the king's] licence and congye [and] by the supportacion of... the Quene", Elizabeth Woodville; his reference to the new translation also formally acknowledges both king and queen.¹²⁹ Contrary to what one might suppose, the reference to the queen is probably more meaningful than that to the king; Woodville patronage had been important in Caxton's early career on his return to England, and his connection to Elizabeth was probably the critical one.¹³⁰

It is reasonable to suppose that in an age when learning was still so strongly connected to the church, a queen's educational benefactions might fall under the rubric of pious good

¹²⁶J.A. Robinson, *The abbot's house at Westminster* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1911), 22.

¹²⁷*Fifteen Oes*, pr. W. Caxton (1491). STC no. 20195.

¹²⁸Jones and Underwood, 182-3.

¹²⁹Crawford, "Piety", 50; W. Caxton, Prologue, *The boke of the histories of Jason* (1477), B.M. ref. C 10 b 3, fo. 1v. Blake has speculated that Elizabeth Woodville also commissioned Caxton's *Book of the knyght of the towre*, though the evidence seems slight (N.F. Blake, "The 'noble lady' in Caxton's 'The book of the knyght of the towre'", *Notes and queries* XII(1965):92-3).

¹³⁰N.F. Blake, *Caxton and his world* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1969), 79-101.

works. We lack any other substantiated motive for Elizabeth Woodville's patronage of Queens' College, Cambridge, which is first explicitly mentioned in 1465, even before her coronation.¹³¹ Elizabeth's main accomplishment, in 1473, was to give the college its statutes (never provided by the original foundress, Margaret of Anjou), in which she described herself as *vera fundatrix* and stated in part "the duties of our royal prerogative require, piety suggests, natural reason demands, that we should be especially solicitous concerning those matters whereby the safety of souls and the public good are concerned, and poor scholars... are assisted".¹³² The queen shared in the power to alter or rescind any of the provisions of these statutes.¹³³ Unfortunately no records remain of any further direct benefaction to the college from Elizabeth Woodville; her daughter's involvement is even more obscure except for a fragmentary "mandate for selecting... Billington to a fellowship or scholarship".¹³⁴ Elizabeth Woodville apparently also gave "large sums" to Eton College, probably after 1477 (when Henry Bost, the provost who allegedly influenced her, was elected).¹³⁵

¹³¹C.P.R. 1461-7, 495.

¹³²J. Twigg, *A history of Queens' College, Cambridge, 1448-1986* (Woodbridge, U.K.: Boydell Press, 1987), 9; Latin: "true foundress" -- R. Willis, *The architectural history of the University of Cambridge, and of the colleges of Cambridge and Eton*, ed. J. Willis Clark (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1886), I:lxiv; J.B. Mullinger, *The University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1873), I:316. Mullinger's attribution of the queen's patronage to her "Lancastrian sympathies" is unfounded. The full text of the statutes is cited by Willis as "Commiss. Docts. iii. 18", a volume I was not able to locate.

¹³³Mullinger, I:316.

¹³⁴W.G. Searle, *The history of the Queens' College of St Margaret and St Bernard in the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1867), 71, 124.

¹³⁵H.C. Maxwell-Lyte, *A history of Eton College*, 4th ed. (London: Macmillan & Co., 1911), 80.

Queens could, of course, be involved in more overtly worldly patronage, often in an intercessory role. A well-documented example is the involvement of the Mercers' Company of London with Elizabeth Woodville in the late 1470s. The queen first interceded for the merchants in 1478, regarding a "fraye" between the king's servants and some London citizens.¹³⁶ By December 1479 the company had a much more serious problem; it owed the king an onerous sum for non-payment of its subsidy, and for its alleviation it looked to both Elizabeth and the king's chamberlain (William, Lord Hastings).¹³⁷ From the beginning the queen's abilities were recognized as exceptional, not only by the company but by Hastings, who encouraged the merchants to cultivate her rather than himself. In January 1480, after the merchants had given "grete lawde & thanke" to their court connections, including Thomas Grey and "the lord Ryvers", they reported that Hastings had cautioned them "to be more secrete of theyre frendes and that non avaunt be made who that is frendly and laboureth for us Except the quenes good grace oonly, whiche that is, & always hath ben, oure verrey good & gracious lady in the said mater & c."¹³⁸ Evidently dealing with the queen alone would get the company into less political trouble than open lobbying of her relatives -- an indication, perhaps, that Elizabeth was not considered one and the same with "the Woodvilles".

By 8 January 1480, the queen had managed to convince Edward to forgive 500 marks (£333 6s. 10d.) of the fine, and the company decided that she was their most promising

¹³⁶*Acts of court of the Mercers' Company*, ed. L. Lyell & F.D. Watney (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1936), 106.

¹³⁷*Acts of court*, 124. Apparently Sir Henry Colet (Lord Mayor of London in 1486 and 1495) was responsible for convincing the queen to take part, but his connection to her is not clear (126).

¹³⁸*Acts of court*, 123, 125.

option; four days later the fine was further reduced by the same amount. Although this left the company still owing 3000 marks (£2000), which the king made clear was his final offer, the difference was significant enough to earn Elizabeth the merchants' gratitude.¹³⁹ This episode helps to explain Elizabeth Woodville's membership in two London fraternities connected to the Skinners' Company. She was the fifth queen consort to belong to the Fraternity of Corpus Christi, and the book of the Fraternity of Our Lady's Assumption contains a painting of her in her coronation robes.¹⁴⁰ Presumably this company had learned in the past that queenly connections were worth maintaining, and reasoned that to honour Elizabeth twice would be even more effective in keeping it in her good graces.

The queen's intervention was not limited to the business sector. In June 1467, Elizabeth Woodville wrote a sharply worded letter to the earl of Oxford when he failed to restore Simon Blyant to a disputed manor. Her involvement did not end with this gesture, for we know that the archbishop of York was to speak with her about it in August even though she had taken her chamber.¹⁴¹ Another landowner, Catesby of Hopsford, eventually appealed to the queen in a matter involving a number of lands, though we do not know the outcome.¹⁴² Where families were concerned, the queen's influence might help to undo a marriage as well as to arrange one. From October 1471 until at least April 1473 Elizabeth Woodville and her council were involved, at John Paston II's request, in trying to cancel his

¹³⁹The company seems not to have found a comparable advocate in Elizabeth of York, though they occupied a prominent place among the London guilds at her funeral, as their representatives waited on the Lord Mayor (*Acts of court*, 260-1).

¹⁴⁰"Queen Elizabeth, consort of Edward IV", in *Friends of Canterbury Cathedral 10th Report*, 55-6.

¹⁴¹For the queen's letter, *Paston letters*, 611-2; for the situation in August, 383.

¹⁴²C. Carpenter, *Locality and polity* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 494-5.

engagement to Anne Hawte.¹⁴³ Difficulties might arise when an individual had no such convenient connection to the queen; the prior of Bromholm asked John Paston for help because he did not know how properly to make his appeal to Elizabeth Woodville for "certeyn tymbre".¹⁴⁴

The queen's contact with cities was not defined solely by ceremonies of entry. In December 1467 the city of Coventry voted Elizabeth Woodville a gift of 100 marks (£66 13s. 4d.).¹⁴⁵ Even if this was merely a New Year's gift, and not in response to any special situation, it may represent the city's recognition that it could be in their interest to pay tribute to the queen. For her part, Elizabeth made a gift of twelve bucks to Coventry in September 1474, not long after her visit there with the prince of Wales.¹⁴⁶ The queen's dealings with Coventry were not a matter of mere courtesies. Three months later she wrote to the corporation to express her regret for the disturbance caused by one of the king's servants there. Elizabeth promised that the offender would be dealt with appropriately, and thanked the city for its recent kindness to her and the royal children.¹⁴⁷ The point to take from this is that the relationship a queen might develop with a city could be quite independent of her husband, though useful to him. It was more effective for Elizabeth to communicate with Coventry even though the situation she addressed had nothing to do with her. Here we see

¹⁴³*Paston letters*, 569, 458.

¹⁴⁴*Paston letters*, 450.

¹⁴⁵*Coventry leet book*, 336.

¹⁴⁶*English historical documents 1327-1485*, ed. A.R. Myers (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1969), 1106.

¹⁴⁷*Coventry leet book*, 407-8.

queenly intercession operating, as it were, in reverse.

To the modern reader, the most thought-provoking travel undertaken by either queen was Elizabeth of York's journey into the West Country and Wales in the summer of 1502. The reason for this trip is not at all clear, and there is no convincing evidence that, as two scholars have claimed, the queen's object was to visit her kinsmen, the Herberts, at Raglan castle, though she did stop there.¹⁴⁸ It seems unlikely, given the condition of English roads at this period, that the queen would decide to set out on a six-week tour with nothing more than a family visit in mind. Moreover, the queen was three months pregnant, making travel in even an English August uncomfortable at best. There must have been a serious rationale for the journey.

The problem is that the only readily accessible documentation of this event is Elizabeth's privy purse expenses. For all their detail, these accounts should be used cautiously (as regards the progress, at least), because as financial records, they inform us only about parts of the trip where the queen spent money. It is wrong to assume, just because they mostly record disbursements to shrines and religious houses (along with rewards to servants and associated travel expenses) on this trip, that the queen did nothing else. If she had wished to make a private and low-key passage, she would hardly have been accompanied by a large household staff, including two men responsible for her jewels. On the contrary, Elizabeth of York's last journey must have been a highly visible event. It might well have been intentionally so.

Why might this be? First, the area the queen visited was historically volatile.

¹⁴⁸K. Buckland, "The Skenfrith cope and its companions", *Textile history* XIII(2)(1983):136; B. Williams, "Elizabeth of York's last journey", *Ricardian* VIII(100)(1988):18.

Violence had flared repeatedly in the border counties during Edward IV's reign (recall the young prince's visit to Herefordshire), and in Gloucestershire, where Elizabeth of York spent most of her 1502 trip, there had been large-scale, destructive feuds caused by bastard brothers of the very Herbert she visited.¹⁴⁹ Under Henry VII the situation was not much more secure. The council of the prince of Wales had been resurrected for Prince Arthur by 1490 as a possible focal point for royal authority in the region, but this was disrupted by Arthur's death in April 1502.¹⁵⁰ There was as yet no precedent for a prince's council functioning without a prince. More seriously, the king now had only one male heir, still a child. The queen's appearance in the area might therefore have served, like her mother's in 1475, as a visible reminder of the royal presence. Indeed, she would constitute (as the king's presence would not) living proof of the succession's potential security in the face of a politically significant death.

The queens of late fifteenth-century England were not vested with significant executive power. Neither of them was ever created regent (unlike their successors Katherine of Aragon and Katherine Parr), and even Elizabeth Woodville's participation in her minor son's council seems to have been carefully checked and balanced. But rather than dwell on these unsurprising limitations, it is surely more important to realize the extent of their active involvement in both court and realm. Rather, their participation in various public spheres could serve to connect those two entities, serving the interests of both. Moreover, the queen had considerable opportunity to act independently. She was not merely an appendage of her

¹⁴⁹Ross, 407-8.

¹⁵⁰Chrimes, 245 ff.

husband; the fact that her authority was subordinate to his did not prevent her from developing a network of considerable potential. At the same time, her unique relationship to the king meant that her capacity for intercession could have not only compassionate but social and economic consequences.

Elizabeth Woodville's record is more striking, more assertive (or deemed by contemporaries more noteworthy), but that does not mean that her daughter was ineffectual. At their peak, the incomes and landholdings of both queens placed them among the realm's great magnates; few others could claim substantial interests in so many counties. (As a point of comparison, Richard, duke of York, father of Edward IV and possibly the greatest English magnate of the century, had estates in 18 English shires and a peak net income of no more than £3500, much the same range as his son's wife and daughter.¹⁵¹) However, Elizabeth of York's estate and income were much more restricted than her mother's for a long period, meaning that she had less of a presence in the counties and was less able to develop or to exploit external patronage networks. Instead, she was obliged to work more within the court, building up solid connections for her servants, especially her clerics. Additionally less active in the marriage and land markets, and with less known about her intercessory roles and their material rewards, she emerges as a less controversial figure.

This chapter does, in fact, go a long way toward explaining the reputations of both queens, the elder as the more assertive, the younger as retiring. Of course, "assertive" is not a synonym for "manipulative" or "grasping", much as it has been thought so through generations of historical writing. Similarly, Elizabeth of York's relative lack of activity had

¹⁵¹C.D. Ross, "The estates and finances of Richard, duke of York", *Welsh history review* 3 (1966-7):299-302.

much to do with her lesser opportunity, something no one has needed to consider, given that she has been constructed as dutifully domestic and pious. That piety, the "respect for the religious" so praised by André, surely included the patronage of clerics. For this reason, intercession developed a different meaning for mother and daughter. Neither queen, so far as we know, ever interceded on behalf of victims of oppression -- unlike Katherine of Aragon, who in 1517 went on her knees before Henry VIII to plead (successfully) for the lives of the Evil May Day prisoners.¹⁵² Instead, the examples we find all involve material benefits: reduced tax for the Mercers' Company, preferment for the clerics. Queens, then, were not above exploiting the intercessory ideal in ways which did *not* involve subjection, humility, or the appearance of powerlessness, and in this they were enthusiastically assisted by those who approached them. This does not apply only to Elizabeth Woodville. We should remember that pious good works, not only those of Katherine of Aragon but also those of Elizabeth of York, were expected to pay off for those who committed them -- if not in this world, then certainly in the next. If we are to consider one queen's intercessory actions self-interested, we must also so consider those of the other.

¹⁵²J.J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1968), 67.

Conclusion

The foregoing study cannot claim to be exhaustive, and lest anyone rashly suppose that it is, we must note a number of subjects which require further examination before the lives of Elizabeth Woodville and Elizabeth of York can be fully understood. Primarily, however, it is pertinent to note what this study has established about fifteenth-century English queenship. The present section aims to provide an overview by demonstrating connections between the conclusions of the past four chapters, reiterating as little as possible.

It may not surprise us that the late medieval vision of queenship was rooted in contemporary ideals of womanhood, such as sexual purity and maternal devotion, and of female behaviour, such as inaction and passivity. Elizabeth Woodville's activity was much more difficult for contemporaries to construct positively than evidence of her passive, maternal endurance, and even the politicized Elizabeth of York in the "Song of Lady Bessy" had to be tempered with feminine qualities. That contemporary gynephobia which surfaces in the ritual of churching could, when played out in the written word, easily work against a queen when she was perceived as a disruptive influence; the same concerns are visible in the *Morte d'Arthur* as in historical writing. The law which considered a queen's, but not a king's, adultery as treasonous, shows that consorts were not above the familiar double standard. Parsons has suggested that potential queens were also judged in terms of "desirability" (the sphere of influence of their male kin) and "suitability" (their lineage).¹ The resentment allegedly engendered by Elizabeth Woodville, who in spite of her numerous successes scored rather low on both counts, would seem to support this.

¹J.C. Parsons, "Family, sex and power", in *Medieval queenship*, 3.

But it is evident also that queens, while obliged to pay close attention to these matters, were neither defined nor confined by them. The ceremonies which defined a queen's role celebrated her regality, however different that was from the king's. As much as the queen was ceremonially subjected to the king, which may tell us more about kingship than queenship, the fact remains that others were ceremonially subjected to her -- for male peers, in a way which was transgressive and potentially challenging (especially in Elizabeth Woodville's case), unlike the gestures of deference the queen was obliged to make. Her coronation instructed her to take responsibility for her people, implied that she could use her position for their benefit, and reminded her that God chose the weak things of the world to frustrate the strong; her funeral displayed the symbols of her authority, not only of her motherhood. Gender norms did not prevent Elizabeth Woodville, who seems to have made the greater effort, from accomplishing what she set out to do; whatever resentment she provoked only came to light after the fact. And maternal roles were certainly not limiting, even without a regency, as Elizabeth Woodville's experience on her son's council demonstrates.

Parsons may be correct in stating, presumably with reference to public display and narrative structures, that "the most positive images of medieval queens grew from their maternal role", but these were not the only kind possible.² The wisdom of both Elizabeth of York and Elizabeth Woodville was praised, however vaguely, in different contexts. For the younger queen, this was an attribute which passed even into fiction, and with respect to her mother, we know that at least one person argued the value of a knowledgeable consort.

²Parsons, "Family, sex, and power", in *Medieval queenship*, 8.

Wisdom and astuteness are, of course, the opposites of "feminine" irrationality and folly. Similarly, Elizabeth Woodville was portrayed sympathetically as a peacemaker (i.e., not disruptive) and as forgiving (not vindictive). So queens seem to have been expected to transcend those handicaps seen as especially feminine. How distinctive this is for queenship depends on the degree to which kings were expected to overcome "masculine" vices, a question this study cannot address. It would also help to have a better understanding of how gender roles for the English female aristocracy compared to those of the queen. But we can see that gender norms did not operate on queenship in simple ways.

Piety, on the other hand, was an ideal shared with kingship, though presumably it was not expected to be expressed in the same ways. Of the two queens studied here, Elizabeth of York is the better known for her piety, though again reputation -- which originated, so far as is known, at the point of death -- is somewhat at odds with evidence. One gets the impression that most modern writers have interpreted piety rather narrowly, in terms of compassionate and charitable deeds, and have not considered the possibility that the fifteenth-century concept, and reputation, may have included more pragmatic acts, such as ecclesiastical patronage. With this in mind, it would surely be useful to determine how Elizabeth Woodville's highly active and interested relationship with the institutional church, and Elizabeth of York's record of clerical patronage, compared to the standard of pious behaviour for elite Englishwomen, with a fuller assessment of just what both queens were able to make out of their rights of presentation. Also, there is not much evidence of a devotional literature aimed at queens in this period, reflecting perhaps the fact that, despite the importance of their connections to the church hierarchy, neither queen enjoyed the kind of

direct interaction with prominent churchmen that had existed centuries before.³

Clearly, queens fitted most comfortably into the structure of elite society in their intercessory capacity, as long as they interceded in a way which did not challenge the social order. It is not difficult to see how intercession is related to reconciliation; thus, there is a way to make sense of the contradictions we have observed. The ability of the good queen to make peace among the disparate elements in her own person (weakness and strength, carnality and chastity, division and unity) not only defines her as special, but mirrors her function of making peace in society. Just as the intercession of *Maria regina* reconciles God and man, that of *Elizabeth benignissima regina* reconciles opposing factions. Moreover, what we perceive as contradictions might well not appear problematic to an age which dealt comfortably with dualities and was fond of setting up complementarities between qualities constructed as "masculine" and "feminine".⁴ We should therefore not assume that elite society had not worked out a coherent concept of queenship just because it never made that concept explicit.

This kind of theorizing, satisfying as it is, must however be placed in the context of pragmatic studies if queenship is to be understood as more than an academic construct. The present study is admittedly sub-optimal in this respect, but it must be noted that the imbalance it displays between abstract and concrete components reflects the kind of evidence available

³It might also indicate that the late fifteenth century was not an age of sufficient creativity, or even piety, among English ecclesiastics to support such a relationship. The fact that most English bishops were overwhelmingly educated in law rather than theology lends credence to this idea -- J.T. Rosenthal, *The training of an elite group: English bishops in the fifteenth century* (Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, new series, LX(5), 1970), 12-9.

⁴Parsons, "Ritual and symbol", in *Women and sovereignty*, 69.

for queenship in late fifteenth-century England. That said, this study's other main finding is the extent of the queen's autonomous authority, as confirmed in theory and ritual and exercised in practice by both Elizabeth Woodville and her daughter. The law of treason may have considered the queen's honour subsumed within the king's, because her behaviour reflected on him. Relative autonomy did not mean independence, because the queen ultimately owed her position to the Crown and could not alienate most of her estate; nor was her household immune to political changes, as the composition of Elizabeth of York's establishment shows. But comparing kingly and queenly potentialities is unproductive in an age when the king's power was regarded as unique. We should look to what the queen had, rather than what she did not, and what she did have was considerable. Her institutional capacity afforded her a wide field of opportunities.

As the experiences of Elizabeth Woodville quite plainly and of Elizabeth of York somewhat more subtly demonstrate, the advantages of queenly connections were obvious to many people; the queen did not need to force herself on anyone. There is much still to be known about this side of Yorkist and Tudor queenship. More involved research is needed, for example, to seek out the remaining records of the queen's council and her patent letters, which there is reason to believe may still survive somewhere. Although it is clear that a number of the estates held by the two Elizabeths carried with them the right of nomination, or influence over the selection, of Members of Parliament, we await the publication of the History of Parliament Trust biographies for this period to determine the extent of their parliamentary patronage, and how it was used, or assigned to others. With respect to intercession, we know nothing about how Elizabeth Woodville or her daughter received their petitioners, though we do know that an etiquette of some kind governed making an appeal.

For a better appreciation of the significance of the queen's household as an intersection, it would be useful to compare the careers of royal servants who passed through her service with those who did not, to determine just how much of an advantage it was to be connected to her. And the extent to which the queen's authority was respected, to what degree she could sustain this autonomy, is somewhat unclear. It will probably be difficult to establish, since problems -- as in Elizabeth Woodville's collection of queen's gold, or Elizabeth of York's control over Havering -- are much more likely than successes to leave records behind.

The queen undeniably had her own space, whether physically, symbolically or practically. The fact that this situation is suggested by Malory's Guenever implies that the author was influenced by the situation of his own day, however unimportant "queenship" may have been for his story. Legal formulations, and the experience of both Elizabeths in diplomatic events, indicate that this queenly space was in some way identified with the private sphere, the "familial context in which queens operated".⁵ As we have seen, though, queens certainly operated outside the familial context. We might call their status private, but that did not mean that they were marginalized; it would be repetitious to describe again here the ways in which the queen, through her lands, her household and her appearances outside court, could serve the interests of both Crown and realm.

The experience of Elizabeth Woodville and Elizabeth of York, in fact, confirms the intricate relationship between public and private aspects of queenship suspected in Chapter 1 of this study; it accords with the conviction of Parsons and others that to distinguish between public and private can be misleading with respect to medieval women and especially medieval

⁵J.C. Parsons, "Family, sex and power", in *Medieval queenship*, 2.

queens.⁶ Very little about the queen's position was rigid. Just as medieval queenship was discontinuous, so it was also fluid; its symbolism was versatile and could be manipulated, either to suit the queen herself or to instruct onlookers, and her ceremonial space could include others, just as it could invade masculine spaces. In the same way, the queen's household sat at an institutional crossroads, and her intercessions could work bidirectionally. This study bears out Fradenburg's assessment of queenship as an "interstitial" state, a condition "at the nodal points of cultural work, ...working to enable the crossing-over of difference into identity, the unfamiliar into the familiar".⁷

One subject remains. This study has taken pains to show that the historiographical evaluations Elizabeth Woodville and her daughter have so far undergone, depicting the former as unsavoury and the latter as benevolent, cannot be very consistently defended. Writers have consistently failed to consider a rather obvious question: exactly *who* disliked Elizabeth Woodville, or loved Elizabeth of York, as much as they supposedly did? But the evidence, from the details of land acquisitions, from patronage, and even, after careful consideration, from those treacherous narrative accounts, somehow still leaves the impression that the elder queen was more assertive and worldly, if not necessarily more intelligent or resourceful, than Elizabeth of York. In wondering what made the difference, we inevitably return to the issue of personality we tried so hard to de-emphasize in Chapter 2. Personality, evidently, cannot be ignored. In the absence of personal papers or similar detailed evidence, however, it is almost impossible to write about it accurately, especially for female figures. We have already

⁶Parsons, "Family, sex and power", in *Medieval queenship*, 9-10.

⁷Fradenburg, "Introduction: rethinking queenship", in *Women and sovereignty*, 5.

seen how difficult it has been for writers of successive generations to recognize, let alone evade, the gendered and socially driven critiques they have applied to Elizabeth Woodville and Elizabeth of York. These endured in large part because for so long history was treated as a narrative, but the fact that they have lasted into the post-narrative age shows how deeply rooted they are. Considerations of personality, therefore, cannot be more than supplementary in studies of medieval queenship, nor should they be, when there are so many other worthwhile approaches to the subject.

Readers will have noted a marked absence of references in this study to secondary literature on fifteenth-century English queenship. The main reason for this is that very little such literature exists. Queenship studies are still establishing themselves, and there are many gaps. A bibliographic search on English queenship in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries will turn up many works on Elizabeth I, a number on Mary I and the wives of Henry VIII, and perhaps some on Margaret of Anjou. Moreover, many of the serious studies which do exist for queens in general are articles, whose scope is necessarily narrow. Their subject matter shows a marked preference for interpretive theory and gender analysis. Full-length works with holistic approaches are rare; notable and useful exceptions are Stafford (1983) on the queens of early medieval Europe and Parsons (1995) on Eleanor of Castile, but many other English consorts remain unexplored.⁸ The present study aims to help meet the need for such comprehensive works, which will not be provided in any numbers until scholars of queenship overcome what Parsons has termed the "current distaste for administrative and

⁸Stafford, *Queens, concubines and dowagers*; J.C. Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995).

institutional history".⁹ Generally speaking, queens regnant and regent have attracted more attention than consorts. The fact that neither Elizabeth Woodville nor Elizabeth of York were ever regent makes them perhaps less exciting, but means that they can serve more purely as examples of consortship, by far the prevalent form of queenship throughout English if not European history.

Within the past fifteen years only two serious historical studies of any substance have addressed Elizabeth Woodville and Elizabeth of York, and neither is satisfactory.¹⁰

Crawford (1981) aims at a synthesis, addressing all the queens of fifteenth-century England as a group, which in a 20-page article means that the author cannot easily develop some of the important points she touches on.¹¹ Crawford also draws only on the most familiar primary sources and does not challenge the assumptions of the secondary sources she uses for many of her evaluations. Her conclusion shows that historiographical priorities on queenship have been slow to change:

As an object lesson in how not to behave as queen consort, [Margaret of Anjou] and [Elizabeth Woodville] could hardly be bettered. In their personal lives, each paid a bitter price for their behaviour. In contrast, Elizabeth of York was probably everything a fifteenth-century Englishman could have hoped for in his queen -- beautiful, fertile, pious and good, with apparently no thoughts beyond her God, her husband and her children, and above all, not a foreigner but an English princess.¹²

C. Wood (1991), on the other hand, focuses on Elizabeth Woodville and her daughter, but,

⁹J.C. Parsons, "Family, sex and power", in *Medieval queenship*, 1.

¹⁰There is also Crawford's 1985 article, "The piety of late medieval English queens", referred to in Chapter 4, which similarly tries to deal with the fifteenth-century consorts; its narrower subject makes it less pertinent here.

¹¹A. Crawford, "The king's burden? -- the consequences of royal marriage in fifteenth-century England", in *Patronage, the Crown and the provinces*, 33-56.

¹²Crawford, "The king's burden?", in *Patronage, the Crown and the provinces*, 53.

after taking five of nine pages to get to his central subject, comes to no very clear conclusion other than that "women's typically more complex family allegiances posed enormous obstacles to their being the successful wielders of sovereignty", something the article does not establish.¹³

It is apparent from these examples that the scholarly approach best suited to queenship, with its pitfalls of scanty evidence and gender issues, is still developing. Just as queens were special to their contemporaries, they are special as objects of historical research, requiring a critique which is at the same time sensitive, penetrating, and unsentimental. The present study's holistic approach has aimed to fulfil these requirements, to use all forms of the evidence, and to pay attention to both theoretical and institutional/social issues. An inclusive technique for queenship is thus hardly impossible. Since queenship was close to the centre of late medieval culture and political life, the result, a better understanding of these important women and their roles, will necessarily provide a valuable contribution to many mainstream historical concerns.

¹³C. Wood, "The first two Queens Elizabeth", in *Women and sovereignty*, 121-31.

Appendix I(a): Lands of Elizabeth Woodville

- *= original grant of 1465 Mar 16 by patent (*C.P.R. 1461-7*, 430)
 **= grant of 1465 Jul 5 by patent (*C.P.R. 1461-7*, 445)
 ^= revised grant of 1466 Jan 31 by patent (*C.P.R. 1461-7*, 480)
 ● = restoration of 1486 Mar 5 by patent (*C.P.R. 1485-94*, 75)
 DL= Duchy of Lancaster lands granted under Duchy seal, 1467 Jul 7 (*R.P. VI:628*)
 ◆ = DL lands not mentioned by Somerville¹ (*R.P. VI:628*)
 dl= Duchy of Lancaster lands according to *V.C.H.*
bold= previous queens' lands
 †=lands of John earl of Wiltshire (*C.I.P.M. Ed.IV.*, 317)
 ‡=Huse quitclaim (*C.C.R. 1476-85*, 30)

Properties are manors and lordships unless otherwise noted.

Bedfordshire

Shared: Stotfold‡

Berkshire

Benham^{^●}, Cokeham^{*^●} & Bray^{*^●} with hundreds, **Hampstead Marshal^{^●}**,
 Swallowfield^{^●2}, East Garston ◆ dl, Chipping Lamborne ◆, Hungerford ◆ dl, Wood
 Speen ◆, Henton ◆, Uplamborne ◆
 Holbenham^{**^●} & Westbroke^{**^●} (2 messuages, 2 carucates, 40 acres meadow and 20
 acres of wood)

Buckinghamshire

Wraysbury^{*^●}, Goddington, **Langley Marsh^{**^●}**, Crendon (DL, surrendered 1468
 [Somerville, 268])

Shared: [Newton Blossomville, Clifton, Pollicott]†, Medmenham‡

Cambridgeshire

Soham (DL)

Shared: Hinton‡

¹R. Somerville, *A history of the duchy of Lancaster* (London: Chancellor and council of the duchy of Lancaster, 1953), 340. This is the standard history of the duchy, and the discrepancies here noted show that it may not be totally reliable for Elizabeth Woodville's estate.

²The initial grant was of two-thirds of Swallowfield; the remainder, held by the queen's mother, followed in 1480 (*C.P.R. 1476-85*, 169).

Dorset

Gillingham with town and barton*^●, **Powerstock**, **Kingston Lacy**◆³, **Wimborne**◆, **Shapwick**◆, **Blandford**◆, **Guyssith**◆

Essex

Bradwell*^●, **Havering-atte-Bower***^●, **Radwell**, **Hadley****^●, **Hadleigh Ree**●, [Pleshey, High Easter, Wix, Debden, Quendon, Shenfield, Wethersfield](DL); [Waltham, Great Baddow, Masshebury, Dunmowe, Leighes, Farnham]●(DL) (by letters patent under DL seal, dated 4 Mar 1 Henry VII, cited in grant of 1486 Mar 5); [West Thordon, Fieldhouse, Gyngraff] (bought from Richard duke of Gloucester, sold before 1482 -- *C.C.R.* 1476-85, 295)

Shared: [Stanford Rivers, Tracies, Suttons, Pigsland, Bottles, Briggs, Navesby, "Bonon" (honour and members)]†; Earl's Colne, Bentley, Canfield, Stanstead Mountfichet (*C.P.R.* 1467-77, 543)

Hampshire

Lockerley*^, **Tuderley***^, **King's Somborne**◆dl⁴, **Weston**◆, **Hartley Mauditt**◆dl⁵, **Langstoke**◆

Odiham*^● hundred and lordship

Hertfordshire

[Nuthampstead, **Hertford**, **Hertingfordbury**, **Essendon**, **Bayford**](DL)

Shared: Weston-by-Baldock‡

Huntingdonshire

Shared: Sutton†, Fennystanton‡, Hilton‡

Kent

Plesaunce, alias Greenwich (CPR 1467-77, 64)

Leicestershire

Shared: Dysworth‡, Seagrave‡

Lincolnshire

Shared: Sutton and Tydde (CPR 1467-77, 566)

Middlesex

Shared: Bushey and Edgware (CPR 1467-77, 566), Tyburn‡

³Listed as duchy of Lancaster property by Wolff, 253.

⁴*V.C.H. Hampshire*, IV:471.

⁵*V.C.H. Hampshire*, II:508.

Norfolk

Methwold, [Aylsham, Snettisham, Gimmingham, Tunstead, Thetford, Beeston Regis, Fulmodeston, North and South Erpingham](DL)

Northamptonshire

Rockingham*^ (surrendered 1476)⁶, [Higham Ferrers, Raunds, Rushden, Irchester, Desborough, Weldon, Wardington, Passenham, Daventry, **Glatton, Holme**](DL), **King's Cliffe**⁷, **Geddington**^, **Brigstock***^ (with town)

Falwesley***^ hundred with office of bailiff

Park of Cliffe*^, herbage and pannage of Binfield*^

Shared (the Tresham lands): Rushton, Houghton Magna, Siwell, Liveden, with lands and tenements; Lands and tenements in Northampton, Rothwell, Kintresthorpe, Abindon, Ekton, Wendlingborough, Harrowdon Parva, Willoughby, Ashby Mars, Donnington, Barton Comitis, Churchbrampton, Hanging Houghton, Aldwinckle, Stanwick, Ringstead, Rounds, Cotes, Denford, Knoston, Archestreet, Haslebeck (with advowson), Hannington, Binfield, Braddon (with advowson) (*C.I.P.M. Ed. IV, IV:328*)

Shared: messuages and lands in Haculton and Peddington†

Oxfordshire

[Haseley, Kirtlington, Deddington, Pirton, Ascot](DL, "surrendered 1468" (Somerville))

Shared: **Woodstock, Hamborough, Stonfeld, Bladon, Wotton**, hundred of Wotton (these granted for 7 years) (CPR 1467-77: 543)

Shropshire and the marches of Wales

Shared‡: [Dynesbrow, Leon, Hughlinton, Broomfield, Yale, Wrexham, Almore, Stodysdean] with castles and towns

Staffordshire

Tutbury honour (DL)

Suffolk

Great Wrattling alias **Talworth Wrattling**[●], Elmsett (DL), Offton (DL)

Shared: Lavenham (*C.P.R. 1467-77, 543*)

⁶According to Somerville (238-9), Elizabeth Woodville surrendered "some other estates" in 1476 along with Rockingham, but the document he cites (DL 37/45/3) could not be located in the Public Record Office.

⁷The proceeds of King's Cliffe were apparently appropriated by Henry VII for the expenses of "the royal household" (*V.C.H. Northamptonshire, II:581*).

Surrey

Sheen⁸, Petersham and Hamme (CPR 1467-77, 64), **Banstead*●**, Walton*^●(DL), Charlewood^●

Shared: [Effingham, Cheapstead, Waldingham, Tillingdon, Caterham, Porkeley, Upwood, Gaters, Halingbury]†; [Reygate and Dorking with castles & towns, "tolneth" of Guildford and Southwark]‡

Sussex

[Willington, Maresfield, East Grinstead, Seaford, Endlewick, bailiwick of Pevensey portreve and of castle wards](DL)

Shared‡: Bosham, Funtington, Stoughton, Stoke, Thorney, Washington, Meaching; [Lewes, Brembre, Shorham, Horsham, Seaford, Piddinghoo] with castles, towns & boroughs; Clayton, Alyngton, Worth, Middleton, Brighthelmston, Pycombe, Iforde, Northeys, Kingsberns, Knapp, West Grinstead, Bedding, Cookfield; St Leonards park, Worth park; [Buttinghillstreet, Bercombe, Swanburgh, Holmstrow, Yonesmere, Whalesbone, Ponyngs, Fishersgate, Windham, Bretford, Stening, Grinstead, Burbeck, Eswrith] hundreds

Warwickshire

Kenilworth (1476, Somerville)

Shared: Weston by Cheriton‡

Wiltshire

Marlborough (lordship)*^●, manor of Barton by Marlborough^●, **Devizes** (with castle, borough and park)*^●, **Marston Maysey*●**, **Cosham*^●**, (manor and●) town of Rowde*^, Easterton ◆, Standen ◆, Everley ◆, Colyngborn ◆, **Aldbourne ◆ dl**, Braden ◆, **Berwick ◆**, Trowbridge ◆ dl, Oaksey ◆ dl, Pole ◆, Manyngforde ◆, Upavon ◆ dl

hundred of Selkese●

assarts within forest of Savernak●, forests of Melkesham*^●, Pevesham*^● and Chippenham*^●, Hurst** (200 acres of wood)

Worcestershire

Feckenham^●(DL)**, Cradley⁹ & Hagley (1474 Feb 10 by patent, *C.P.R. 1467-77*, 419)

Yorkshire

Shared: Donyngton‡, Thwaite‡

⁸In 1487, the name changed officially to Richmond (*V.C.H. Surrey*, III:542).

⁹Cradeley, at the request of the queen, was granted to Westminster Abbey in 1479, on the condition of two monks' daily mass for the health of the king and queen (*C.P.R. 1476-85*, 133-4).

Appendix I(b): Lands of Elizabeth of York

*= reconfirmed by patent 1492 Feb 1 (*C.P.R. 1485-94*, 369-70)

RCY= reversion upon death of Cecily Duchess of York (mother of Edward IV), confirmed in *S.R. II:595* and *S.R. II:640*

**= confirmed by *S.R. II:640* (cleanup legislation)

§= transferred from Elizabeth Woodville (*Materials... Henry VII*, I:148-9)

bold= previous queens' lands

Berkshire

[Newbury, Oakfield, **Stratfield Mortimer** including **Cokeham and Bray§**]*RCY;
Swallowfield§; Benham§; Holdenham and Westbrook (acreage etc.)§; **Hampstead
Marshal§**

Buckinghamshire

[Whaddon¹⁰, Bierton¹¹, Steeple Claydon¹², **Wendover¹³**] -- *These four are all mentioned in S.R. II:595/640 as to go to Elizabeth of York only on the death of the king, but they are listed by the Public Record Office as queen's lands¹⁴*; Wraysbury§, Langley Marsh§

Dorset

[Pimperne with hundred, Gussage Boon, Tarrant Gunville]*RCY; [Warham, Knolle, Stucle and Criche, Wyke, Weymouth, Portland, Helwell, Marshwood]**RCY; Gillingham§ Rowborough, Bussheme and Hasellore hundreds**RCY

Essex

Havering§; **Bradwell§**, **Hadley§**, Hadley Ree, [Waltham (DL), Great Badowe (DL), Masshebury (DL), Dunmowe (DL), Leighes (DL), Farnham]*§, keeping of Brettes in

¹⁰Whaddon "descended with... Bierton and Hulcott" [*q.v.*] until 1616 (*V.C.H. Buckinghamshire*, III:437).

¹¹Bierton: *V.C.H. Buckinghamshire*, II:321, cites *R.P. VI:463* in saying that the reversion of this manor was granted to Elizabeth of York "for her jointure on her marriage with Henry VII".

¹²Steeple Claydon "belonged to the group of Crown lands which became queens' dower lands" and "must have descended with Bierton and Hulcott" (*V.C.H. Buckinghamshire*, IV:227).

¹³"Henry VII resumed the manor in 1495 and assigned it to his wife Elizabeth of York as part of her jointure" -- *V.C.H. Buckinghamshire*, III:25, citing *R.P. VI:460*, 463

¹⁴P.R.O. Lists and indexes XXXIV, *List of original ministers' accounts present in the Public Record Office* (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1963), II:6-7.

Westham "during... minority" (of heir) "and as long as the manor remains in the king's hands" (1489; *C.P.R. 1485-94*, 293)¹⁵

Gloucestershire

[**Lechlade**, Bardesley, Brimpsfield, Miserden, office of bailiff of Bisleigh, Charleton and Doughton, Winstone, Bisley]*RCY

Hampshire

[Hook Mortimer and Worthy Mortimer]*RCY; Oakfield (P.R.O., as of 9-10 Hen VII); **Odiham**§

Herefordshire

[Marden and Muchmarcle]*RCY, Kingsland**

Hertfordshire

[**Berkhampstead**, **King's Langley**]*RCY

Northamptonshire

Fotheringhay (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 14)

Oxfordshire

Finmere; Woodstock¹⁶

Somerset

[forests of Exmoor, Rach and Mendip; Oddcombe, Milverton with borough, Heygrove, Bridgewater (castle and borough)]*RCY

Surrey

Walton§; **Banstead**§; Charlewood§

Suffolk

Great Wratting§

Wiltshire

[**Sevenhampton**, **Hiworth**, **Crikelade**, **Chelworth**, **Old Wotton**, **Tokenham**, **Winterburn Bassett**, **Compton**, **Somerford Canes**, borough of **Wotton**, park & pasture of **Fasterne**]*RCY, **Marlborough**§, **Devizes**§, **Merston**§, **Corsham**§; **Roude**§; forests of

¹⁵The heir in question was Edward, son and heir of Elizabeth, the widow of the duke of Clarence; he was born in 1475 and so the manor, worth £10 per year, was in the queen's custody for possibly seven years after she received it (*C.I.P.M. Hen. VII*, III:374).

¹⁶From *P.P.E.*, 108, where it is listed under Gloucestershire/Wiltshire.

Melkesham, Pevesham and Chippenham§; **hundred of Selkley§**; assarts in forest of Savernak

Worcestershire

[**Bromsgrove, King's Norton, Oddingley, Clifton**]*RCY; Feckenham§

Appendix II: Fee-farms¹

Farms ~~ruled through~~ were not regranted in 1486.

<u>£</u>	<u>s.</u>	<u>d.</u>	<u>Source</u>
102	15	6	Bristol
70			Cambridge (town) (with increment)
60			Barton (Gloucs.)
54	12		Nottingham ²
46			Southampton (with increment)
40			Hedington manor & Bolyngdene hundred (Oxon.)
40			Ipswich
40			Derby ³
40			Kingsthorpe (Northants.)
40			Abbot, prior & convent of Bury St. Edmunds
35			Oxford (town)
33	13	4	Prior & convent of St Albans
20	17	6	Shrewsbury (with old & new increments)
20			Bedford
20			Dorchester
20			Norwich ⁴
20			Malmesbury (Wilts.)
15			Calne hundred with water-mill (Wilts.)
15			Falwesley (Northants.)
15			Radwell (Essex)
12	18	5½	Framland hundred (Leics.)
12			Forde manor (Shrops.)
12			Kington (Warwicks.)
12			Shaftesbury (farm or custody)
12			Powerstock (Dorset)
10	6	8	Rowley manor (Staffords.)
10			University of Cambridge (sale of beer)
10			Goddington manor (Oxon./Bucks.)
9	16	9	Lowestoft manor & Luddingland hundred (Suff.) (n.)

¹*C.P.R. 1461-67*, 480-2.

²In 1486 reduced to £34 12s.

³In 1486 reduced to £30.

⁴In 1486 increased to £22 19s. 3¼d. (*C.P.R. 1485-94*, 76).

9			Kynefare & Storton manors (custody) & forest (Staffords.)
5	16		Tamworth (moiety) (with increment)
5	8	4	Peverell, Boulogne & Hagenet honour (Bucks/Northants/Leics) with Huntingdon castle & honour
5			Goscott wapentake
<hr/>			
902	4	6½	Total (1466-76)
962	4	6½	Total (1476-83, with £60 grant from Exeter lands)
789	13	10½	Total (restored portion of 1486-7)

Elizabeth of York received all of her mother's 1486 fee-farms, with an additional £100 per annum from the lands late of Sir William Trussell, during the minority of his heir, Edward, who was still underage when he died in April 1499; presumably, then, the queen had this annuity at least until then.⁵ In 1495 she authorized the diversion of £120 per annum from her fee-farms to support her sister Anne and her husband Thomas Howard until Howard came into his inheritance.⁶ The reversion from the duchess of York brought her the fee-farm of Wick in Worcestershire.⁷

⁵*Materials... Henry VII*, I:149; *C.I.P.M. Hen. VII*, II:210.

⁶*Statutes of the realm*, II:610.

⁷*S.R.* II:595, 640.

Appendix III: The Exeter lands

These are the estates which would have come to Elizabeth Woodville in reversion from Anne, duchess of Exeter, in 1476 (Chapter 4).

<u>Bedfordshire:</u>	Stevington
<u>Cheshire:</u>	town of Northwich
<u>Cornwall:</u>	Tackbear
<u>Derbyshire:</u>	Dalbere, Dalbereseley, Wryxworth
<u>Devonshire:</u>	Barnstaple, Combe Martin, Southmolton, Dartington, Blackborough, Teryngton, Fleet Danerle, Holberton, Thornton, Wyncle Tracy, Fremyngton hundreds of Fremyngton & Southmolton
<u>Essex:</u>	"all the lands, rents and services called Dogettes and Morises in Cawedon, Hakewell and Little Stanbrigge", "all those lands, rents and services called 'Wakerynges' in Great Wakeryng and two marshes called 'Ryggewarde' and 'Tyllewerde' in Great Stanbrigge"
<u>Hertfordshire:</u>	Great Gaddesden
<u>Lancashire:</u>	Newton, Haydock
<u>Rutland:</u>	Ridlington
<u>Somerset:</u>	Ludford, Hasilbere, Blackdown hundreds of Stone and Cattesasshe
<u>Westmoreland:</u>	Merton
<u>Yorkshire:</u>	Langton
<u>Pembroke (Wales):</u>	Maynardbydre, Pennelay
<u>Wales (unspecified):</u>	Hope, Hopedale

Appendix IV: Writs for queen's-gold (Elizabeth Woodville)

Details of these writs (Prynne, 68-104) do not exist for all the years of Edward IV's reign. The chronological distribution is as follows:

1465-6 (55 writs)	1472-3 (13)
1466-7 (10)	1474-5 (17)
1467-8 (3)	1475-6 (10)
1468-9 (21)	1479-80 (1)
1469-70 (4)	1480-1 (7)
1470-1 (19)	1482-3 (2)

This very uneven distribution may suggest that the queen was most active at making claims in the earliest part of the reign, or it may simply reflect the survival rates of the documents. It is difficult to compare these figures with the two years of receipts we know, since (at least for 1466-7) the source of the receipts is not given, and we cannot assume that charges were paid promptly.

Rank	A: Number charged	B: Charges over £1	Ratio B/A	C: Charges over £5	Ratio C/B
Nobles	31	11½	0.37	5	0.43
Knights	32	8½	0.26	2	0.23
Esquires	43	13	0.31	3	0.22
Gentry	30	10	0.33	2	0.20
Yeomen	12	3	0.25	0	N/A
Merchants	8	4½	0.56	1	0.22
Clerics	31	11½	0.37	1	0.08
Women (sole)	5	2½	0.50	0	N/A
Churches, monastic foundations	25	12	0.48	2	0.16
Fraternities	2	0	N/A	0	N/A
Municipalities	4	2	0.5	0	N/A
Total	203	78½	N/A	16	N/A

Note (column B): Half charges arise because many of the more substantial amounts were required of several people together, who were not necessarily of the same class.

Appendix V: Elizabeth of York's chamber expenditure, 1502-3

Source	£	s.	d.	%
Repayment of debts	592	10	0	17.4
Wages, salaries, annuities	590	19	5	17.3
Luxury goods	460	17	8	13.5
Stable	373	17	0	11.0
To the king (unspecified)	333	6	8	9.8
Queen's purse	172	3	8	5.0
Religious	97	0	11	2.8
Compassionate ¹	73	4	10	2.1
Rewards ²	70	8	7	2.1
Transport and travel	35	15	1	1.1
Medical (queen only)	21	16	7	0.6
Expenses of queen of Scots ³	21	11	10	0.6
New Year's Day gifts	16	16	8	0.5
Messengers	11	0	6	0.3
Miscellaneous ⁴	539	16	3¼	15.8
Total	3411	5	9¼	99.9⁵
Receipts	3585	19	10½	
Balance	174	14	1¼	

¹Includes clothing repairs for servants and the support of her orphaned nephew and niece.

²Of this amount, £16 10s. was for conveying New Year's gifts.

³The queen's daughter, who married James IV of Scotland in 1503.

⁴These expenses are for such diverse purposes that to itemize them would occupy too much space. Examples include various supplies (regular fabrics and everyday clothes, furniture, small food items, and unspecified "stuff"), repairs to rooms and to the queen's barge and carriage, expenses of the queen's fool, and to the composer Robert Fayrfax.

⁵Loss due to rounding.

Appendix VI: The household of Elizabeth of York, 1503

The following is an edited transcription of relevant excerpts from the funeral accounts for Elizabeth of York (P.R.O. LC 2/1), possibly the most complete source we have for this subject. These accounts record how much mourning cloth was issued to the members of the court, of which the queen's household is the only part reproduced here. They were probably drawn up in haste, which is perhaps why the organization is not totally coherent. For clarity I have removed the amounts of cloth and the numbers of servants pertaining to each person, but have otherwise tried to represent the manuscript as it appears in the original, with respect to format and spelling. Raised letters have been reproduced as such, but other abbreviations are expanded between square brackets. Discontinuous pagination is indicated by horizontal lines.

f. 63r

The quenes howshold s[erv]ants

Maister confesso^r ¹

M[r] Arthur²

Sir Rauf. Verney. knight³

¹Misidentified by Nicolas (*P.P.E.*, 228), this was Edward Underwood, called queen's confessor in 1494 when he was granted the deanery of Middilham (York dioc.) (void by death of William Beverley) in November 1494 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 7), and of the hospital of the Trinity and St. John the Baptist in Bruggenorth, 26 Jan 1496 (*C.C.R. 1485-1500*, 308). Repaid 20s for alms he spent (12 Nov 1502) (*P.P.E.*, 59). He died before 15 Mar 1505 (vacancy noted *C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 396).

²This apparently high-ranking servant is hard to identify. His position after the confessor may indicate that he was a cleric, in which case it is worth noting the Walter Arthur, M.A., who was presented to Milstead by patent in January 1501 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 221). In addition, a John Arthur held land of the king "by service of doing suit to the king's court of his manor of Berton by Bristol" (*C.I.P.M. Hen. VII*, II:376), and also held land together with Thomas Stidolf, one of Elizabeth Woodville's most important officials, and Nicholas Gaynesford (*C.I.P.M. Hen. VII*, I:363).

³Sir Ralph Verney's connection to the queen's household was his wife Eleanor Pole, a distant cousin of the queen; Eleanor was already at court when they married. Verney was present at least once during the queen's 1502 progress -- *Letters and papers of the Verney family*, ed. J. Bruce (New York: Johnson Reprint Co., 1968), 30-3.

Kerve's.	{	Willi[a]m Denton ⁴
Sewe's		M[r] hawte ⁵ M[r] Bekynsall ⁶ M[r] fowler ⁷
Chapelayns		Docto ^r Atkynson ⁸ M[r] Edmond Chulderton ⁹

⁴From this post Denton drew the considerable salary of £25 13s. 4d. p.a. (*P.P.E.*, 100). He had been appointed king's carver with £40 p.a. "during good behaviour" in 1485 (*C.P.R. 1485-94*, 95), in which he was especially protected from the Act of Resumption, 1 Hen VII (*P.P.E.*, 192). A gift to him of 2 messuages and a watermill (424 acres altogether) names also Thomas Haute esq. and Richard Empson esq., later of Henry VII's Council Learned (*C.C.R. 1485-1500*, 339).

⁵This family had a Woodville connection to the court, where their representatives were numerous. Nicolas suggests Jacques Haute, under keeper of Kenilworth (*P.P.E.*, 200).

⁶As indicated in Chapter 4 above, this Bekynsall is very likely connected to the Robert Bekynsall who was Queen Katherine of Aragon's chaplain and almoner (Bindoff, I:410), but since a cleric would probably not serve as sewer, he cannot necessarily be identified with him.

⁷The Fowler family had numerous possible connections to the queen's household. Thomas Fowler had been rewarded jointly with Alice Hulcote, Elizabeth Woodville's servant, in 1483 (*Grants... Edward V*, 56), and a man of the same name shared the manor of Mapulderham with one of Henry VII's sergeants-at-law in 1485-6 (*C.I.P.M. Hen. VII*, I:80). In 1490 Richard Fowler esq. received the same manor by charter together with Sir Thomas Lovell (*C.C.R. 1485-1500*, 132). Richard was also the name of the son of Sir Richard Fowler, chancellor of the Exchequer and duchy of Lancaster under Edward IV, whose grandson John served Henry VIII as groom of the privy chamber (Bindoff, II:166-7). This last seems the most likely connection for the prestigious office of sewer to the queen.

⁸Likely William Atkinson, Cambridge graduate (D.D. 1497), deacon of Norwich by 1478, probandary of Southwell 1501, canon of Lincoln 1504 (*Al. Cant.*, I(1):54). As professor of theology, in 1507 he was granted the canonry and prebend in the collegiate church of St. Mary and St. George, Windsor Castle, in the room of Richard Payne, deceased (named as the queen's clerk and almoner, *P.P.E.*, 1, 5, 67, 97; *C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 536), which is the strongest suggestion that he was the queen's cleric. Atkinson died in 1509 (*Al. Cant.*, I(1):54).

⁹This may well be Edmund Chollerton, the Cambridge graduate (B.A. 1481-2) whose will (*P.C.C.*, 1526) states that he came from Devizes (Wilts.) (*Al. Cant.* I(1):334). Edmund Chollerton was presented to St Peter's (Northants.) at the king's presentation by reason of voidance of the hospital of St. Katherine-by-the-Tower in 1507 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 533); since Elizabeth of York was patron of this hospital, an identification with her chaplain seems plausible. If so, like William Atkinson, he was probably middle-aged and well along in his career at the queen's death; her household therefore was not his first opportunity.

M[r] [Christ]ofer¹⁰
 M[r] Watson¹¹
 M[r] hawte¹²
 M[r] Cooke¹³
 M[r] hyworthe
 Clerke of the Closet¹⁴

gens Vsshe's. M[r] henry pole¹⁵
 M[r] Crowmer¹⁶

¹⁰No clerics with the surname Christopher occur in the records. Probably this was Christopher Plummer, who accompanied the queen on her journeys (*P.P.E.*, 37, 62). Christopher Plummer, B.C.L., was ordained subdeacon to the title of Oseney Abbey, Oxford (whose connection to William Barton has been noted above). He was later chaplain to Queen Katherine of Aragon and a prominent cleric under Henry VIII (Emden, III:1487). Why Plummer was listed by his given name is difficult to say, unless the hasty preparation of the funeral accounts is responsible.

¹¹John Watson (*Al. Cant.*, I(4):348), later chaplain to Henry VIII, seems a likely candidate. He was B.A. 1497, and died 1536-7, so his service to the queen represents the beginning of a young man's career; he must have been among the more junior clerics.

¹²Probably Henry Haute, "commended by queen Elizabeth to the Chancellor of [Oxford] for admission as a scholar of her exhibition 15 Feb. 1491". Canon of Salisbury by 1498, he went to Calais with the royal party in 1500 and present at meeting of Henry VII and archduke Philip, and died by April 1508 (Emden II:886). The response from Oxford (*Epistolae academicae oxonienses*, 596-7) indicates that Haute was younger than normal at his entrance there; combined with the quick advancement of his career, this indicates a man of intelligence and ability, for whom the queen's household was a stepping-stone.

¹³Though Cooke is a common name, we cannot discount a connection to the John Cooke (d. 1494) who was a prominent cleric in Edward IV's household and a diplomat for Henry VII (Emden, I:124).

¹⁴Identified as "Master Harding" (*P.P.E.*, 187).

¹⁵The Poles were, of course, an important family. Sir Henry Pole was chamberlain of Prince Arthur, but if this were the same man he would surely be noted as a knight by 1503 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 29, 822). The queen's Henry Pole seems to have been a gentleman usher, and so Sir Henry, whose brother Geoffrey was prominent under Henry VIII (Bindoff, III:115-8), is the most likely connection, aside perhaps from Eleanor Pole Verney (cf. William Pole below).

¹⁶William Crowmer (*P.P.E.*, 6), named king's servitor in 1502 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 269). William and Nicholas Crowmer were protected in the enjoyment of the offices of constable and porter of Pevensey Castle in Sussex, in the Act of Resumption, 1 Hen. VII (*P.P.E.*, 190).

	M[r] Bulstrold ¹⁷
Sewe's of the chambre	hamelet Cleg ¹⁸ John Shirley ¹⁹ Thom[a]s Lacy ²⁰
gentilmen Wayters	Nicholas hyde ²¹

¹⁷William Bulstrode. He was obviously a man of some independent wealth: on 13 May 1502, he received in recompense for amounts borrowed with the queen's plate in security, £206 13s. 4d. (*P.P.E.*, 12). On 11 Nov. 1502 the queen sent him venison via her groom William Pole (from Windsor to London), at some expense (*P.P.E.*, 58-9). She also sent two bucks to him 20 Jun. 1503 (*P.P.E.*, 88). He was possibly gentleman usher to Henry VIII in 1520 (*P.P.E.*, 181). William Bulstrode was "gentleman usher of the chamber" to Henry VII and made keeper of the parks of Fasteerne (Wilts.) in 1504 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 348). He was a commissioner of gaol delivery at Aylesbury (Wilts.) in 1503 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 359), and thus of consequence in the shires. He was later in service to Queen Katherine of Aragon (J.C. Wedgwood, *History of Parliament 1439-1509* (London: H.M.S.O., 1936-8), 131).

¹⁸Hamlet Clegg had been in the queen's service since 1486, when he was issued cloth of russet (*Materials... Henry VII*, II:179). In 1488 he was made ranger of certain forests in co. Oxon. Clegg lent some small sums to the queen (*P.P.E.*, 21, 62). As "king's servant", he was made gatekeeper of Havering-atte-Bower park, 20 Mar. 1504 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 368). Either Clegg's ambition was modest, or his service to the queen did not compensate for his apparent lack of other connections.

¹⁹A John Shirley held several posts in the king's household: chief clerk of the kitchen in 1495 and 1499 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 15, 185), "head officer" by 1500 (*Letters and papers... Henry VII*, II:90), and cofferer of Henry VIII's household in 1546-7 (*Letters and papers... Henry VIII*, I:39).

²⁰In 1489 a man of this name, with Richard Cotton (*q. v.*), received tenements in Westminster from Amy Thornton (*C.C.R. 1485-1500*, 132). A Thomas Lacy of Grantchester (Cambs.) and Stamford (Lincs.), of fertile age by 1491, sat in Parliament, and his son Henry did also (Bindoff, II:488).

²¹A Nicholas Hyde, sewer of the [king's] chamber, attended the funeral of Henry VII, the coronation of Henry VIII and two years later the burial of the infant Prince Henry. There is nothing to show that this was Nicholas Hyde [MP] of Reading but two other Reading townsmen who sat in Parliament during this period, Richard Smyth I and Richard Justice, also held court office". Also, the Hydes were a "prominent Berkshire family". Nicholas Hyde of Reading lived c. 1489-1528 (Bindoff, II:430). Hyde would have been a rather young gentleman waiter in 1503; perhaps Bindoff's suggested birth date should be put back several years.

Thom[as] Twysaday²²
 Anthony Cotton²³
 M[r] Eliot the quenes Atto'ney²⁴

f. 63v. Yet the quenes howshold s^{er}vants

M[r] Dicons²⁵

M[r] Audito^r ²⁶

M[r] Brokas²⁷

yomen

²²See John Hamerton. Twysday had been page of the chamber to Edward IV (*Letters and papers... Henry VIII*, I:210). He was apparently made serjeant-at-arms for life in 1485-6 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 549). At the queen's death, he was probably between 40 and 60 years of age.

²³Cotton received "in reward" 13s. 4d., 9 Jul. 1502 (*P.P.E.*, 30). The earlier prominence of the Cotton family has been noted (Chapter 4). The most likely connection for Anthony Cotton, gentleman waiter, seems to be either Sir Roger Cotton, master of the queen's horse from 1487 (apparently, if alive, no longer in her service by 1503), or perhaps the Robert Cotton who shared a royal reward with Lord Dynham and Reginald Bray in 1486 (*Materials... Henry VII*, II:94).

²⁴Richard Eliot. He received a salary of £10 (*P.P.E.*, 100). A man of his name was commissioner of the peace in Wiltshire in 1503 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 194).

²⁵Richard Deacons, the queen's receiver and keeper of her privy purse. In 1487 he is mentioned as clerk of the queen's signet, with 10 marks as year's wages (*Materials... Henry VII*, II:118). He was rewarded £6 13s. 4d. in the same capacity in 1486 (*Materials... Henry VII*, II:85). In 1503 he received a £10 wage for the "office of signet", and £16 13s. 4d. as receiver and "for his costs" in London and travelling (*P.P.E.*, 101-2). He was made keeper of the writs and rolls of Common Bench in 1501 for "services to king and queen" (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 265). A commissioner of the peace, Bucks., from 1502-7 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 630), in 1503 he was made receiver-general for all the late queen's properties (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 312). Deacons became secretary to the chamber for Queen Katherine of Aragon by June 1509 (*Letters and papers... Henry VIII*, I:40).

²⁶Richard Bedell, who received a £10 "fee" (*P.P.E.*, 101).

²⁷Benet Brocas, receiver of the duchess of Suffolk's lands and also for the queen's manor of Fotheringay (*P.P.E.*, 112). "Benedict Brokas" was enfeoffed, along with various highly-placed people, including Reginald Bray, by Thomas earl of Surrey, 1497 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 114). The duchess of Suffolk (see below) was the queen's aunt, but beyond this it is not clear why Brocas is listed among the queen's household.

Vsshe's
 Robert Alen²⁸
 John hamerton²⁹
 John Awordon
 Arnold Chulderton³⁰
 Richard Smyth³¹
 John Abell³²

yomen of y^e

²⁸Robert Allen arranged lodging for the queen and accompanied her on her travels (*P.P.E.*, 35, 36, 41, 49, 58), including the progress in Wales and her very last journey to the Tower (*P.P.E.*, 95). The payments to him make clear that the queen made frequent short trips between Greenwich, Richmond, Westminster and Windsor. From the mention of him together with various yeomen of the chamber, it appears that he had some supervisory responsibility. About Allen himself or his family it is difficult to find anything of substance.

²⁹Hamerton paid the queen's offering twice in 1502-3 (*P.P.E.*, 22, 42), but seems not to have closely accompanied her. John Hamerton esq., aged 30 in June 1500, son and heir of Sir Stephen Hamerton, held numerous manors; one of his tenants was Richard Pudsey (see Lady Pudsey below) (*C.I.P.M. Hen VII*, II:243-4). He was made king's serjeant-at-arms, with Thomas Twisday (q.v.), in survivorship, as "king's servant", 1508 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 549). Socially, a defensible connection can be made with Richard Hamerton, yeoman of the king's chamber in 1488 (*Materials... Henry VII*, II:376).

³⁰Chulderton arranged lodging for the queen in August 1502 and accompanied her on several shorter trips (*P.P.E.*, 71, 72).

³¹"Yeoman of the queen's robes" (*P.P.E.*, 50). In 1487 he had been in the same position (*Materials... Henry VII*, II:213). *P.P.E.*, 18, mentions his "servant", but no such person is listed in the funeral account. Obviously a man of considerable means, Smyth paid £22 10s. for 105 yards of cloth "given to divers persons by the queen's commandment", £15 13s. 4d. for 110 yards of cloth for "poor women" (a Maundy Thursday custom for which Smyth was reimbursed only in December), and for clothing (for footmen, other "necessaries") £10 2s. 3d. and £8 18s. 4d. More "necessaries" paid for through the queen's bills amounted to a further £30 11s. 8d. (*P.P.E.*, 74-5). The queen was, then, somewhat dependent on him financially. Born by 1453, Richard Smyth of Reading was made bailiff of the lordship of Caversham, near Reading, and keeper of the manor, park, outwoods and ferry in 1493 (*C.P.R. 1485-94*, 421). In 1509 he was named keeper and paler of the park and bailiff or collection of the queen's lordship of Swallowfield, also near Reading, for Katherine of Aragon, and steward of the lordship of Caversham. He sat for Reading in Parliament in 1497, 1504, and 1512, and was yeoman of the king's robes by 1504 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 351); perhaps after the queen died, he was brought into king's household. In his will he left property to Richard Justice and Richard Weston. (Bindoff III:335-6). A Richard Smyth was made keeper of the king's garden in the Tower of London in 1506 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 392).

³²As "late servant of the queen", Abell was granted in June 1503 the bailiwick of the hundred of Fallesley (Northants.), void by the death of John Warden, who may well have been the John Awordon in the queen's household about whom nothing else is known (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 307).

Chambr
 Thom[a]s Shirley³³
 Willi[a]m hamerton³⁴
 Nicholas Wybo'rne³⁵
 Thom[a]s holden³⁶
 John holann³⁷
 Nicholas Mathewe³⁸
 John Womell³⁹
 Robert Langiston⁴⁰

³³Repaid for cost riding "on message" with Eleanor Jones (5). Paid for queen's offering at Our Lady of Pewe, for milk at Richmond, alms to ex-servant of Edward IV (June 1502). As a yeoman of the chamber he is perhaps best connected to Ralph Shirley, Henry VII's esquire of the body (Bindoff, III:316).

³⁴"Yeoman to the queen's beds" in August 1502, William Hamerton seems to have worked and travelled frequently with Robert Allen. He went to Wales with the queen and paid some small sums for her (*P.P.E.*, 35, 49, 58, 51, 102). A man of his name, called the king's servant, was made keeper of the king's palace of Baynards Castle, with 100s. p.a. from the late queen's lordship of Berkhamstead (Herts.) 1504 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 364).

³⁵Little is knowable about Nicholas Wyborne. He was close enough to the queen to have paid some small travelling expenses for her in 1502 (*P.P.E.*, 12).

³⁶Thomas Holden had been in the queen's service since 1489 at the latest (*Materials... Henry VII*, II:431-2). With John Field, he "waited on" the queen's jewels during the last part of her Welsh trip, for which neither was paid till November (*P.P.E.*, 59). Holden seems to have gone with Robert Allen "preparing lodging" (*P.P.E.*, 70-1). Apparently his child was given to the queen, but he was paid 13s. 4d. for the half year for its keeping (15 Aug 1502) (*P.P.E.*, 40). In 1503, after the queen's death, he was appointed keeper of the royal household in the palace of Westminster at 4d. per day (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 317).

³⁷As keeper of the council chamber, Holland was paid £4 10s. 3d. in March 1503 (*P.P.E.*, 101); his position was therefore important. Whether he shared more than a surname with Henry Holland, duke of Exeter in the 1470s, is uncertain.

³⁸The queen paid Nicholas Matthew 26s. 8d. "in reward towards his charges when he was hurte by the servauntes of S' William Sandes", 28 November 1502 (*P.P.E.*, 70). David Matthew, esquire of the king's body in 1500 (*C.C.R. 1485-1500*, 347), is a more likely connection for this yeoman of the chamber than John Matthew, Lord Mayor of London in 1491 (*C.P.R. 1485-94*, 356).

³⁹A Roger Womwell was a commissioner of inquisitions *post mortem* in 1507 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 562). The name is sufficiently uncommon that we may suppose this Roger to have been from a more prominent branch of the family of John the queen's yeoman.

⁴⁰The only notice of Langston is his purchase (for 4s.) of 4 yards of flannel for Princess Katherine (*P.P.E.*, 94).

Richard Bayly⁴¹
 Edmond Lovesay⁴²
 Edmond Burton⁴³
 John Staunton⁴⁴
 Willi[a]m Fisher⁴⁵
 Thom[a]s Senaght
 Thom[a]s Alee⁴⁶
 Henry Wyke

Gromes

Elis hilton⁴⁷

⁴¹Bailly had enough responsibility to prepare lodging "by the queen's commandment" during her Welsh trip, for which he was paid in November 1502 (*P.P.E.*, 56). A Richard Bailly was seized of 4 acres of the queen's land in fee at Bradwell, Essex, before January 1489 (*C.I.P.M. Hen. VII*, I:222-3).

⁴²Edmund Lovesay worked with Robert Allen and Arnold Chollerton on the queen's travels (*P.P.E.*, 35, 36, 41, 42, 95).

⁴³Burton worked, as usual, with Robert Allen, but also with Thomas Shirley and Nicholas Wyborne (*P.P.E.*, 4-5, 12, 35, 49, 58), as well as Arnold Chollerton (*P.P.E.*, 71-2). How closely Edmond Burton was related to the Christopher Burton, also a yeoman, who served in the queen's stable at the same time (see below), or to Thomas Burton who served her in 1488 (*Materials... Henry VII*, II:431-2), is hard to tell. But two other yeomen Burtons were also in royal service: Edward to Edward IV (*Materials... Henry VII*, II:379), and William to Margaret of Anjou (Myers, 374). The possibility of a connection is likely strengthened by the shared social rank.

⁴⁴Presumably John Staunton "the elder", of sufficient means to lend the queen a total of £5 3s. 11d. in 1502-3 (*P.P.E.*, 23, 51, 77). He received in the same period 14s. 12d. toward a horse, apparently for himself (*P.P.E.*, 21, 53). Staunton's salary was 56s. 8d., the same as the minstrels (*P.P.E.*, 100). A Robert Staunton was esquire for the king's body in 1488 (*Materials... Henry VII*, II:226).

⁴⁵A Thomas Fisher was granted an annuity of 26s. 8d. by patent for good service in 1489 (*Materials... Henry VII*, II:468).

⁴⁶Thomas Aleigh is not mentioned in the chamber accounts and was therefore probably not working closely with the queen. Was he perhaps related to Mrs Elizabeth Lee (*q.v.*), one of the queen's gentlewomen? Note also that Robert Aleigh was a yeoman of Margaret of Anjou (Myers, 187).

⁴⁷ Called "grome of the robys" in the chamber accounts, Hilton paid a total of £3 7s. 2½d. for cloth for the queen's niece and nephews, and for transport of the queen's gowns (*P.P.E.*, 17, 20), plus 17s. 10d. for cloth for the queen herself (*P.P.E.*, 54). He was groom of the king's chamber by 1500, and groom of the wardrobe to Queen Katherine of Aragon in 1509 (Somerville, 499).

John Browne⁴⁸
 John Doffyn⁴⁹
 John field⁵⁰
 Willi^am pole⁵¹
 Thom[a]s Wodnot⁵²
 Steven high^am⁵³
 George hamerton⁵⁴

⁴⁸John Brown was groom of the beds and a very mobile servant, who prepared lodging, conveyed messages, and took charge of the queen's luggage during her longer journeys. He worked with Robert Allen and Arnold Chollerton but also on his own (*P.P.E.*, 11, 36, 39, 41, 49, 50, 57-8, 93-4). The commonness of the name John Brown makes positive identification very difficult.

⁴⁹John Duffin seems to have worked mainly as a messenger and courier, for a great variety of purposes and over considerable distances, including fetching the queen's confessor; riding to "M. Decons when his clerk was deed to cause him to come to the Court"; and to Lambeth for "countremaunding of a cofer of the Quenes" (*P.P.E.*, 5, 32, 37, 47, 67). He worked with John Brown and Arnold Chollerton (*P.P.E.*, 58, 71, 72, 93, 94).

⁵⁰Field's main responsibility was the queen's jewels, in which he worked mainly with Thomas Woodnote but also Thomas Holden on her travels (*P.P.E.*, 40, 44, 59, 60, 87); he is only mentioned once with Robert Allen (*P.P.E.*, 36). A man of his name was styled "yeoman" and involved in releases and quitclaims with Sir William Say in 1494 (*C.C.R. 1485-1500*, 207-8).

⁵¹Pole worked mainly with Robert Allen (*P.P.E.*, 35, 36, 49, 57-8) as well as Arnold Chollerton (*P.P.E.*, 42) and John Brown (*P.P.E.*, 93-4). He was perhaps connected to Thomas Pole, who was yeoman of the king's chamber and succeeded John Abell (*q.v.*) as bailiff of Fallesley in 1505 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 395).

⁵²Woodnote worked mainly with John Field (*P.P.E.*, 28-9, 40, 44, 59, 60, 87). His main independent responsibility appears to have been the queen's greyhounds, for which he was paid (after the fact) a total of £2 5s. 5d., in two instalments, to cover nine months (*P.P.E.*, 33, 88). The Woodnote family's relationship to the court as of 1503 is extremely unclear; perhaps Thomas was the first of them to gain a foothold there.

⁵³Higham was paid 24 May 1502 "for certain stuff by him made for the Quene", for paying Lady Lovell's boat hire, and getting Doctor Lathis (*P.P.E.*, 13). The Higham family was sufficiently prominent in the shires that two of them, Richard and Thomas, were commissioners of the peace and gaol delivery, in Essex and Suffolk respectively, in the 1480s and '90s (*C.P.R. 1485-94*, 40, 348, 397, 417, 486, 106, 241). Moreover, William Higham, clerk, was granted (with Thomas Lovell and the bishop of Exeter) advowson in the collegiate church of St. Stephen, Westminster, where queens also occasionally had rights of presentation (*Materials... Henry VII*, II:453).

⁵⁴George Hamerton, groom porter, worked almost exclusively with Robert Allen (*P.P.E.*, 35, 36, 41, 49, 58, 71, 95). Although he did not have much independent responsibility, he had access to enough cash to lend the queen a total of £4 6s. 8d. in 1502-3, suggesting a connection to a well-to-do family (*P.P.E.*, 18, 91). See also William Hamerton (above).

John Staunton⁵⁵
Randolf maynwaring⁵⁶

f. 64r. Yet the quene houshold s[erv]jants

Pages. Richard Justs⁵⁷
henry Roper⁵⁸
John Bright⁵⁹
Edmond Calverley⁶⁰

⁵⁵Presumably this is "the younger" John Staunton mentioned in the chamber accounts (*P.P.E.*, 35-6, 41, 77).

⁵⁶Randolph Maynwaring is not mentioned in the chamber accounts. The Maynwaring most obviously a royal servant was Peter, made clerk of the ordnance in 1504 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 431), but James was granted a £4 annuity out of Tutbury honour, like the queen's servant Sir Roger Cotton (*Materials... Henry VII*, II:30), while William was a tenant-in-chief in Shropshire in 1499 (*C.I.P.M. Hen. VII*, II:184).

⁵⁷Justice seems to have been primarily a messenger, who also accompanied the queen into Wales (*P.P.E.*, 7, 46, 68). He was solvent enough to spend £1 11s. for the queen and lend her a further £2 directly (*P.P.E.*, 15-16, 63), for which his comfortable background probably accounts. After the death of his father, his mother Agnes married Richard Smyth, the yeoman of the king's robes "by 1486". Justice was born by 1488 and was groom of the wardrobe to Queen Katherine of Aragon from 1509; he held bailiwicks and receiverships of various queens' lands up to the 1540s, as well as the joint bailiwick of Caversham with his stepfather (Bindoff II:456-7).

⁵⁸Henry Roper's duties involved much running of errands (*P.P.E.*, 10-11, 98). Moreover, his "servant" was paid for "coming behinde with the cartes of stuf" from Langley to Raglan to Abingdon (*P.P.E.*, 40, 58), but no servant is indicated in the funeral accounts. There is no evidence of other Ropers at court at this time. However, John Roper held land jointly with Sir John Risley (see Lady Risley, below) by 1502 (*C.C.R. 1500-9*, 32) and made monetary agreements with John Butler, sergeant-at-law, and with John Pole (*C.C.R. 1500-9*, 40, 55). This John Roper, who was aged 24 in November 1488, seems also to have been enfeoffed in the queen's land (*C.I.P.M. Hen. VII*, II:247-8). Given his age, it is entirely plausible that the queen's page Henry Roper was his son, or at least a younger relative, and perhaps the family's first representative at court.

⁵⁹Bright worked closely with Robert Allen (*P.P.E.*, 35-6, 49, 57-8, 75). A Richard Bright was made purveyor of the king's horses in 1492 (*C.P.R. 1485-94*, 396).

⁶⁰Calverley expended small sums for the queen, mostly for necessaries, totalling at least £3 in 1502-3 (*P.P.E.*, 13-14, 26-7, 34-6, 44, 56). He worked with Robert Allen (*P.P.E.*, 70-1, 95). Outside of the chamber accounts his family is not visible, meaning perhaps that they had not yet really established themselves.

William Gentilmen⁶¹
Randolf Boswell

The M[aster] of the quenes Bauge⁶²

Robynet the Brauderer⁶³

ijj fotemen

ii Messengers

Oliver the fawkoner⁶⁴

ijj mynstrell⁶⁵

George Svit^r of the quenes chamb^r

Maistress ayedewys

maistress lok⁶⁶

Maistress howton

⁶¹We know nothing about this page or his background other than the few tasks for which he was paid in the chamber accounts (*P.P.E.*, 41, 56-7, 88).

⁶²Lewis Walter. According to Nicolas this was a position of "some importance", protected in the Act of Resumption 1 Henry VII (*P.P.E.*, 94). Walter was paid large amounts, but he was responsible for paying the rowers. He himself collected 16d per day (*P.P.E.*, 6-7 and others). He seems to have conveyed the queen in her barge and her ladies and servants in another boat, but was only paid half as much for the latter task.

⁶³The queen's embroiderer, not a resident member of the household, was "rewarded" 13s. 4d. (*P.P.E.*, 13), and was paid 5s. for one ounce of "flatte gold" and 8s. 8d. for 2 oz. "rounde golde" (*P.P.E.*, 55). He was given £6 10s. 1d. for various wages and "board wages" of sundry workers; of this, 16d. per week (10s.) went to Robynet himself (*P.P.E.*, 82-3). He was also paid 30s. for ¼ year's house rent (*P.P.E.*, 86). Evidently it was considered worthwhile to retain him in this manner.

⁶⁴Oliver Auferton, "keper of the Quenes goshawks", was paid for the year's expenses £1 6s. 8d. (*P.P.E.*, 94).

⁶⁵The minstrels were named Marques Loryden, Janyn Marcazin, and Richard Denouse, and each was paid £3 6s. 8d. (*P.P.E.*, 100) as yearly wage.

⁶⁶This may be the silkwoman who provided bonnets for the queen and was paid £20 "in partie of payement of a bill" for various items (*P.P.E.*, 14, 92, 206).

maistress Launder

The Mayden

John pache⁶⁷

Will Worthy⁶⁸

The fowle⁶⁹

f. 65v

The quenes

kechyn

John Ricroft gents.⁷⁰

Willi^m Brise⁷¹

John Hunte

Willi^m Richer

John Goland

}yomen

}gromes

ijj Childern

f. 71r⁷²

My lady of Suff for her self

my lord henry Courteney

my lady m^{ar}garet Courteney⁷³

⁶⁷Perhaps "Patch" (*P.P.E.*, 74, 93).

⁶⁸"Otherwise called Phip", he boarded the queen's fool William, and seems to have been responsible for his clothes too (*P.P.E.*, 5-6, 26, 61).

⁶⁹Perhaps William. "Patch" is also referred to in Henry VII's privy purse expenses (*P.P.E.*, 196), so either the households shared their fools or this was a common nickname.

⁷⁰Ricroft was paid 13s. 4d. as yearly wage (*P.P.E.*, 100). It seems from this and other references (see below) that the supervisors of the "below-stairs" establishment reported to the queen's chamber.

⁷¹Called "yeoman cook for the queen's mouth" (*P.P.E.*, 78).

⁷²The following list comes between "yomen messenge's" and "The kings trumpettes"; thus, among the king's household. But several of them are listed in the chamber accounts.

⁷³As previously noted, the Courtenays were the queen's niece and nephew, repeatedly mentioned in the chamber accounts (*P.P.E.*, 20, 70, 75, 25, 63). Their "rockers" were Beatrix Bradowe, Emma Braggas, and Alice Williams (*P.P.E.*, 100).

[Maist]rs Elizabeth Lethon

Mrs Jane Eyre⁷⁴

Mrs Denys⁷⁵

Emme Braggs⁷⁶

Sir Willi^am Lark

Robert doon Cooke

Rauf Bothe

Laurence Trave^s⁷⁷
 iiij other men s^er^vaⁿts

Maistress Saxilby woman.⁷⁸

my lady kateryn Noryss⁷⁹

Maistress Anne mayland

Elizabeth putnam

⁷⁴Thomas Eyre had been groom of the chamber to Margaret of Anjou (Myers, 377), and John Eyre was keeper of the king's beds and cloths within the palace of Westminster by 1489 (*Calendar of fine rolls 1485-1509*, 112).

⁷⁵The Dennis family was connected by marriage and enfeoffment to the Bridges (*C.I.P.M. Hen. VII*, II:442-3; see Mrs. "Brugges" below). Hugh Dennis was a servant of the king by 1495 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 38, 44). Exactly what Mrs. Dennis did is unclear, but she is named here with several others associated with the queen's household.

⁷⁶See above, Henry and Margaret Courtenay.

⁷⁷Laurence Travers ran messages for the Courtenays, took charge of their "stuf", and was paid £1 6s. 8d. p.a. (*P.P.E.*, 63, 79, 100). In the chamber accounts he is grouped with the 3 rockers as "vad' servienc' attendenc' nutric' d'ne Katerine" (*P.P.E.*, 100).

⁷⁸Mrs. Saxilby was sent for by the queen in May 1502 for an unstated purpose (*P.P.E.*, 11).

⁷⁹Perhaps the wife of Sir William Norris, and with him owner of the manor of Brodcampdene (Gloucs.), 1503; feoffees of their tenant included Thomas Bridges, serjeant-at-law, and William Catesby esq. "since deceased" (*C.I.P.M. Hen. VII*, II: 373).

Jane lovell⁸⁰

Willi^am Walshe

f. 75r

The Quenes Stable

Thom^as Acworth clerke of the Avery⁸¹

Richard Cotton Clerke of the stable⁸²

John harman svntt of the Carre

John Burton yoman purvio^r ⁸³

Robert Wyly yoman gavynter

Thom^as lee yoman garnyter

Willi^am dame yoman ferro^r

John Raynold yoman of the Stud.⁸⁴

John Rolf yoman of the Carre⁸⁵

Thom^as hopkyns yoman of the Chariot

⁸⁰Perhaps related to Sir Thomas Lovell, but not his wife, whose name was Anne (see below).

⁸¹Acworth was paid very considerable sums for the expenses of the queen's stable in June, July, September and November 1502 (*P.P.E.*, 18, 30, 45, 62), but it is unclear whether this was in advance or a reimbursement.

⁸²It would make sense for the stable clerk Richard Cotton to be connected to Sir Roger Cotton (see Chapter 4 above), who had begun to make his name at the head of the queen's stable. See also notes on Anthony Cotton, queen's gentleman waiter, above.

⁸³A man of this name was a servant of David William, clerk of the rolls, and was owed a debt of £40 in 1488 (*C.C.R. 1485-1500*, 87).

⁸⁴Reynold was paid £1 0s. 2d. for various horse-related expenses in 1502-3 (*P.P.E.*, 79).

⁸⁵Rolf is named "yeoman of the close Carre" in the chamber accounts (*P.P.E.*, 34, 103). His presence there indicates that some members of the stable had closer dealings with the queen than others.

Robert Chapman yoman of the Chare

John Belly yoman of the stuff⁸⁶

Nicholas Maior yoman Sadiller

John Royde yoman of the litter

John hynton grome of the litter

Richard parker⁸⁷

Thomas Wilson

John Every

Jaques yervell }

} Sumptermen

John Sumpterman of the stable

Robert Colyngwood Sumpterman

John Knoll grome of the botell

Robert dalie

John Custance

John Bolt

Willi^am kendall

} palfremen

John Somerton

John Blacbo'ne

henry Blast

John Lambert

James Wasshington

James Cooke

Nich frencheman

humfray Glasebury

[Christ]ofer Enstlyngs

Willi^am ayichell

John Taillo^r

} palfremen

⁸⁶Called "yeoman of the Quenes stuf" in the chamber accounts (*P.P.E.*, 45). John Baylly, yeoman, leased the site of the late queen's manor of Berton by Marleburgh, among other lands, 17 May 1504 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 365).

⁸⁷Parker is mentioned together with John Reynolde (*P.P.E.*, 79).

Laurence hedfeld grome of the Chare

Willi^am yonge grome of the Chare

Richard Redehede grome Sadiller

Willi^am grome ferro^f

f. 76r

Robert Taillor y^e quenes surgion

John pagenam Clerk of y^e quenes counsaile⁸⁸

John holand keper of y^e counsail Chambre⁸⁹

John Wyly s^{ervant} to y^e yoman of the horses

John Coope keper of y^e quenes wardrobe at Baynard castall

John Johnson y^e quenes surgion⁹⁰

f. 78r⁹¹

Countesse iij

My Lady Elizabeth Stafford⁹²

⁸⁸In this position Pagenam was paid a yearly wage of £5 (*P.P.E.*, 101). A Robert Pagenam (*c.* 1497-1552), son of Hugh, was a clerk in the counting house of Henry VIII by 1518 (Bindoff, III:46). Robert's age could make him nephew or cousin of John the queen's clerk.

⁸⁹(see under yeomen)

⁹⁰On 28 May 1502 Taylor was paid 13s. 4d. for coming from London to the queen at Richmond (*P.P.E.*, 14).

⁹¹These women are not listed under a household rubric but some appear (from the chamber accounts) to have been involved in the household, and the section seems to include all of the queen's ladies and gentlewomen. Only names are listed here; I have removed the clothing descriptors which appear at the end of each category.

⁹²According to Nicolas, "possibly the queen's first cousin" (*P.P.E.*, 224), but if, as he says, she was the unmarried daughter of the duke of Buckingham, then how could she be styled "countess"? Lady Stafford's lending the queen a total of £4 in 1502-3 is less than might be expected from her salary of £33 6s. 8d., the highest in the household (*P.P.E.*, 41, 80, 99).

my Lady of Surray⁹³ and my Lady / of Essex⁹⁴ (...)

Baronessez vij My Lady Anne Percy⁹⁵
 My Lady herbert⁹⁶ my lady Mountroy⁹⁷
 My lady dawbeney⁹⁸ my Lady go'don⁹⁹
 my Lady fitzwater¹⁰⁰ [and] my lady Verney¹⁰¹

⁹³Agnes Howard, second wife (after 1497) of Thomas Howard, duke of Norfolk and earl of Surrey, who attended the king and queen to Calais in 1500 (*Comp. Peer.*, IX:615).

⁹⁴Mary, wife of Henry Bouchier, earl of Essex, daughter of Sir William Say (*Comp. Peer.*, V:138-9), and younger sister of Lady Mountjoy (see below) (*C.C.R. 1500-1509*, 238).

⁹⁵Lady Percy is not mentioned in the chamber wage list, but she was clearly close to the queen, lending her over £18 in 1502-3 and accompanying her on her travels (*P.P.E.*, 21, 28, 43, 51, 37, 49, 54, 70, 78). Nicolas suggests she was "probably Anne, 2nd daughter of Henry Percy, 4th earl of Northumberland" (*P.P.E.*, 214, 215), but the title, here "baroness", is again confusing. The earl had not been in favour with the king even before his murder in 1489 (Chrimes, 80).

⁹⁶This is probably not the wife of Sir Walter Herbert, daughter of Henry Stafford 2nd duke of Buckingham, mentioned in *P.P.E.* (51, 201). Rather, she is more likely Elizabeth baroness Herbert, wife of Sir Charles Somerset; daughter of the earl of Pembroke (later earl of Huntingdon), and the niece and co-heir of Richard Woodville earl Rivers (and therefore the queen's first cousin). Raglan, where the queen stayed on her journey into Wales, belonged to the Herbert family (*C.C.R. 1500-1509*, 191-2).

⁹⁷Elizabeth Blount, baroness Mountjoy, eldest daughter of Sir William Say. A complicated indenture of 1506 tied the late queen's manor of Berkhamstead (Herts.) to the earlier marriage agreement of Lady Mountjoy (1499) and that of her younger sister Mary to the earl of Essex (1497) (*C.C.R. 1500-9*, 238-9).

⁹⁸Elizabeth, wife of Giles lord Dawbeney, the king's lord chamberlain, appointed steward of the late queen's Somerset and Dorset lands in 1504 (*Comp. Peer.*, IV:104).

⁹⁹Katherine Gordon, sister of the Scots earl of Huntley, and wife of the pretender Perkin Warbeck, placed in the queen's household after Warbeck's capture (Chrimes, 88, 91).

¹⁰⁰Margaret, second wife of John Radcliffe lord Fitzwalter, steward of the king's household (*Complete peerage*, V:486).

¹⁰¹As noted above (Sir Ralph Verney), Eleanor Verney, née Pole, was a distant cousin of the queen. She may have been in the household as early as 1487, when she received a gift from the king (*Materials... Henry VII*, II:175). She travelled with the queen and frequently lent her money, in 1502-3 a total of £8 (*P.P.E.*, 8, 30, 39, 43, 57, 55, 91). With a salary of £20, she was evidently one of the higher-ranking paid ladies (*P.P.E.*, 99).

knights wyfs	My Lady Gulford ¹⁰² my lady Braye ¹⁰³ my Lady Gray my lady Egremount ¹⁰⁴ my lady Lavell ¹⁰⁵ my Lady Peche ¹⁰⁶ my lady pudsey ¹⁰⁷ my lady Risley ¹⁰⁸ Maistres denton ¹⁰⁹
Gentilwomen	Maistres Catisby ¹¹⁰

¹⁰²Lady Jane Guildford travelled with the queen, whose dice wager of 13s. 4d. she covered at Ewelme; she was paid £13 6s. 8d. as yearly wage (*P.P.E.*, 52, 99). Nicolas suggests she was the second wife of Sir Richard Guildford, a member of the king's council (*P.P.E.*, 199; Chrimes, 110).

¹⁰³"Probably Katherine, daughter of Nicholas Hussey, esq., and widow of Sir Reginald Bray..." (*P.P.E.*, 179). Although she was not paid a salary from the queen's chamber, Lady Bray was another substantial creditor, dispensing a total of £14 in 1502-3 (*P.P.E.*, 18, 23, 28, 52, 67).

¹⁰⁴Sir John Egremont was granted an annuity by the king in 1486 (*C.P.R. 1485-94*, 100). Lady Egremont may have been his wife or his daughter-in-law.

¹⁰⁵As Nicolas suggests (*P.P.E.*, 207), perhaps the wife of Sir Thomas Lovell. This was Anne Saintleger, the heiress whose survival had deprived Elizabeth Woodville of the Exeter inheritance in 1476 (*Complete peerage*, V:108).

¹⁰⁶"Dame Elizabeth Peche" was paid £3 6s. 8d. as yearly wage (*P.P.E.*, 99). Sir John Peache was a royal commissioner in 1501 together with Richard Guildford (see Lady Guildford), John Risley (see Lady Risley) and Thomas Twisday (*q.v.*) (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 248-9). He was connected by property to Richard Empson by 1504 (*C.C.R. 1500-9*, 117) and several other royal servants by 1506 (*C.C.R. 1500-9*, 211). Lady Peache was probably his wife; whether or not she was Elizabeth Peache depends on the meaning of the title "Dame", but the two were probably connected.

¹⁰⁷Possibly Joan, wife of Richard, daughter of John Cheyne. She died 9 September 1503 (*C.I.P.M. Hen. VII.*, II:59), and is not mentioned in the chamber accounts. Sir Richard Pudsey was a knight of the body for Henry VII by 1500, and was prosperous enough to lease various manors at a yearly rent of £41 8s.; he predeceased his wife (*C.I.P.M. Hen. VII.*, I:244).

¹⁰⁸This may be Thomasina, wife of Sir John Risley, king's councillor and frequently a royal commissioner in several counties throughout the reign (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 30, 33, 53, 86, 231, and others).

¹⁰⁹Elizabeth Denton, who was paid £20 as yearly wage (*P.P.E.*, 99). Her possible relation to William Denton is unclear, as is the reason why she is clearly included among the knights' wives but not given the title "Lady".

¹¹⁰Elizabeth Catesby, paid £5 as yearly wage (*P.P.E.*, 99). She was possibly the wife of George Catesby and daughter of Richard Empson (*Bindoff*, I:542).

[Maist]rs Crowmer¹¹¹
 [Maist]rs Bo'ne¹¹²
 [Maist]rs Elino' Jonys¹¹³
 [Maist]rs Stafford¹¹⁴
 [Maist]rs Luke¹¹⁵
 [Maist]rs davy¹¹⁶
 [Maist]rs Belknap¹¹⁷
 [Maist]rs lee¹¹⁸

¹¹¹This is likely Ann Crowmer, who received the large yearly wage of £10 (*P.P.E.*, 99), but an Elizabeth Crowmer is also listed above. See Mr Crowmer, queen's usher, above.

¹¹²Mentioned in *P.P.E.* (38) but not in the wage list, Mrs. Borne paid 40s for items for the queen at Langley (51).

¹¹³Nicolas suggests a connection to Robert Jones, groom and later sewer of the king's chamber (*P.P.E.*, 203; *C.P.R. 1485-94*, 406). Eleanor Jones' yearly wage was £6 13s. 4d., which seems to have been the standard for the gentlewomen (*P.P.E.*, 99).

¹¹⁴Mistress Stafford was sought at least twice away from court in 1502-3: from Greenwich, and also for Mistress Locke (*P.P.E.* 14, 39). She was perhaps therefore not one of the queen's more personal attendants. William Stafford was keeper of change in the Tower in 1504 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 360).

¹¹⁵Mrs. Luke is not mentioned in the chamber accounts and therefore was probably not close to the queen. She may have been Anne Luke, who was granted a £5 annuity in 1504 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 345). Anne was the wife of Walter Luke, a commissioner of inquiry between 1505-8 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 422, 484, 581).

¹¹⁶A servant of "Maistres Davys" is mentioned in *P.P.E.* (64). John Davy was page of the beds in the king's wardrobe in 1507 (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 535).

¹¹⁷Margaret Belknap, who lent 20s. to the queen on at least two occasions and was paid the standard salary of £6 13s. 4d. (*P.P.E.* 13, 38, 99). Margaret Belknap was the widow of Henry Belknap, who died 20 Jun 1488 and whose heir Edward was then aged 17 (*C.I.P.M. Hen. VII*, I:170); Nicolas suggests (*P.P.E.*, 177) that this was the Edward who became privy councillor to Henry VII and Henry VIII.

¹¹⁸Presumably Elizabeth Lee, who accompanied the queen to Wales and lent her the considerable sum of £20 on one occasion (*P.P.E.*, 11) along with smaller sums. She was fetched from London to Greenwich (*P.P.E.*, 14) and was therefore not in constant attendance, but was paid £6 13s. 4d. as yearly wage (*P.P.E.*, 99). Of the several Lees in royal service, it is perhaps safest to connect the gentlewoman Mrs. Lee to James or Thomas Lee, sergeants-at-arms in 1486 and 1499 respectively (*C.P.R. 1485-94*, 30; *C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 167).

[Maist]rs Brent¹¹⁹
 [Maist]rs Bulstrode¹²⁰
 [Maist]rs Weston¹²¹
 [Maist]rs Saxbe¹²²
 [Maist]rs Jane¹²³
 [Maist]rs Cheyne¹²⁴
 [Maist]rs ffogge¹²⁵

[Maist]rs Brugs¹²⁶

¹¹⁹Ellen Brent, an important creditor to the queen, lent her a total of over £10 in 1502-3 (*P.P.E.* 18, 23-4, 25, 34, 43, 53). As mentioned in Chapter 4 above, she was probably connected to the king's servant Robert Brent (*P.P.E.*, 180).

¹²⁰Most likely related to the queen's usher William Bulstrode (above).

¹²¹Anne Weston, who lent the queen a substantial 53s. 4d. in 1502-3 and received the standard £6 13s. 4d. salary (*P.P.E.*, 23, 99). She was very possibly Anne, wife of Richard Weston, who was himself reimbursed by the queen (*P.P.E.*, 84) and who rose to much greater prominence under Henry VIII (Bindoff, III:590-2).

¹²²A Mistress "Saxilby" was sent for by the queen in 1502, for an unstated purpose (*P.P.E.*, 11).

¹²³Mrs. Jane may have been related, though obviously not by marriage, to Thomas Jane, dean of the king's chapel, who held the advowson and collation of St. Stephen's, Westminster, and was a feoffee in Great Baddow, Essex, one of the queen's lands (*C.P.R. 1485-94*, 778; *C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 66; *C.I.P.M. Hen. VII*, I:321).

¹²⁴A "Maistres Cheyne" is mentioned with respect to the Courtenay children (*P.P.E.*, 77). Cheyne was a common name at this period (Myers, 276), but the closest match for Mrs. Cheyne seems to be John Cheyne, a "gentleman of the king's household" by 1504 and perhaps the father of Lady Joan Pudsey (*C.C.R. 1500-9*, 105).

¹²⁵There were two John Fogges with court connections, the closer being John the elder, who created a problem in 1485 when the king wished to grant Fogge's office of keeper of the rolls and records in Chancery to Richard Deacons (the king claimed that Fogge had been granted the post without his approval, *C.P.R. 1485-94*, 123). Since this John Fogge was a knight by 1486 (*C.P.R. 1485-94*, 132), Mrs. Fogge was probably not his wife (she would have been Lady Fogge), but could have been otherwise related to him, or to the second John Fogge, Esq., commissioner of array (1496) and tenant-in-chief (1506) (*C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 67, 347).

¹²⁶Florence Bridges, as the name would be rendered today, was one of only two gentlewomen whose given names are mentioned in the description of the queen's funeral (*Antiquarian repertory*, IV:658). Her husband was Thomas Bridges, a royal commissioner (*C.P.R. 1485-94*, 281, 357). Presumably the Henry Bridges who was a gentleman usher at Henry VII's funeral was a relation of theirs (Bindoff, I:532). We must also note that John Duffin was paid for riding to "S' Giles Brigges", one of the king's knights of the body (*P.P.E.*, 47; *C.P.R. 1494-1509*, 599). Obviously the family was

	[Maist]rs fitzherbert ¹²⁷
Gentilwomen	[Maist]rs Saye ¹²⁸
with y ^e	[Maist]rs Browne ¹²⁹
chief chambere's ¹³⁰	[Maist]rs Tendring
	[Maist]rs Lacy ¹³¹
	[Maist]rs Jonys ¹³²
	Alis Skylyng chiefe chamberer ¹³³

f. 78v.

Chambere's	Maistress Lies
	Elizabeth baptista ¹³⁴
	ffraunce baptista ¹³⁵

strongly connected to the court. Florence Bridges, though, was not paid from the chamber and was not mentioned elsewhere in the accounts, so she was probably not close to the queen.

¹²⁷Presumably Elizabeth Fitzherbert, whose salary was £2 13s. 4d. (*P.P.E.*, 99). John Fitzherbert was made remembrancer of the exchequer in 1485 (*C.P.R. 1485-94*, 7).

¹²⁸Presumably the Ann Say whose appearances in the chamber accounts indicate chronic ill health (*P.P.E.*, 38, 48, 52). The Say family had been more prominent before Henry VII: William was dean of the king's chapel 1449-68 (Myers, 315), while Sir John Say was speaker of the commons and chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster under Edward IV (Ross, 345, 349).

¹²⁹Anne Browne is the other gentlewoman fully identified at the queen's funeral (*Antiquarian repertory*, IV:658). In the chamber accounts she was paid a half-year's wages of 100s. (*P.P.E.*, 99). John Browne was the queen's groom of the beds (see above); however, Browne is too common a name for any associations to be made without hard evidence.

¹³⁰The difference in wage levels suggests that this group of gentlewomen occupied a lower rank than those listed before them.

¹³¹Probably the closest association possible for this gentlewoman is with Thomas Lacy, Esq., who was granted a shared interest in several properties with Nicholas Gaynesford, Sir Thomas Lovell, Richard Higham, among others, and "the queen of England", which could be either Elizabeth of York or her daughter (*C.I.P.M. Hen. VII*, II:429-30).

¹³²Perhaps related to Eleanor Jones.

¹³³Alice Skilling's salary was £5 (*P.P.E.*, 99). She lacks the title "Mistress" both here and in the chamber accounts.

¹³⁴Received £3 6s. 8d. as yearly wage (*P.P.E.*, 99).

¹³⁵"Fraunceys Baptiste" was paid £2 13s. 4d. as yearly wage (*P.P.E.*, 100).

Elizabeth Ansted

[Maist]rs Crowmer s[erv]ant

The quenes
Chamberlyn } My Lorde of Ormonde¹³⁶

¹³⁶Thomas Butler, earl of Ormond. He was created queen's chamberlain in August 1486, and was also Queen Katherine of Aragon's chamberlain (*Comp. Peer.*, X:132-3). Despite the status of his office, his only appearance in the chamber accounts occurs when he was fetched from London to Richmond (*P.P.E.*, 7).

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