ABSTRACT

This thesis uncovers and elucidates the cultural and political significance of noble reputation in late medieval England between 1377 and 1437. Changes in the wake of the Black Death placed pressure upon the nobility and increasing emphasis upon their reputations. The late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries witnessed the re-enactment of Scandalum Magnatum statutes to protect noble reputation under law, and the foundation of the court of chivalry, which offered the nobility an avenue by which they might defend their conduct, lineage and right to carry their family coats of arms.

Focusing on both the secular and clerical nobility, the thesis uses contemporary chronicles, legal sources including depositions from the court of chivalry, parliamentary and institutional records, and the evidence of visual and material culture to explore the nature and deployment of noble reputation in this period. The thesis argues that, in better understanding the importance of noble reputation, we gain insight both into what it meant to be noble in late medieval England and into the ways in which the nobility exercised their power and authority.

Ultimately, in an environment in which politics remained highly personal, and political participation amongst the lower orders was increasing, noble reputation became crucial. It offered a means by which nobles, and their kings, could attempt to cultivate popular support, whilst simultaneously offering popular voices an avenue by which they might express their political opinions and make use of their increasingly powerful voices.

The Politics of Noble Reputation in Late Medieval England, 1377-1437.

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of History | Durham University | December 2020

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LIST OF FIGURES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AJLH	American Journal of Legal History
Anon.	V. H. Galbraith (ed.) *The Anonimalle Chronicle 1333 to 1381* (London, 1927).
Beaufort	G. L. Harriss, *Cardinal Beaufort: A Study of Lancastrian Ascendancy and Decline* (Oxford, 1988)
Brut	Friedrich W. D. Brie (ed.), *The Brut, or the Chronicles of England* (London, 1906-8)
Capgrave I	Hingeston, Francis Charles (ed.), The Chronicle of England by John Capgrave (London, 1858)
Capgrave II	Hingeston, Francis Charles, (ed.), *Johannis Capgrave Liber de Illustribus Henricis* (London, 1858)
CCR IV	*Calendar of the Close Rolls, Richard II, vol. IV A.D. 1389-1392* (London, 1922)
Chaucer	Larry D. Benson, F. N. Robinson (eds.), *The Riverside Chaucer* (3rd ed., Oxford, 1987)
CoL	Charles Lethbridge Kingsford (ed.) Chronicles of London (Stroud, 1977)
Communi	De Communi Libraria' in Henry Anste, *Munimenta academica, or, Documents illustrative of academical life and studies at Oxford* (Oxford, 1868)
Concessio	'Concessio Capituli Domino Willelmo Countenay Cantuariensi Archiepiscopop de Cantaria et Aliis Beneficiis Subscriptis' in Joseph Brigstocke Sheppard, *Literae Cantuarienses: the letter books of the monastery of Christ Church, Canterbury vol. III* (London, 1827), pp.41-5.
Defam.	R. H. Helmholz, *Select Cases of Defamation to 1600* (London, 1985)
DUL, GB-0033-DCD	DUL, GB-0033-DCD, Catalogue of the Medieval Seals in the Durham Cathedral Muniments, (available online: http://reed.dur.ac.uk/xtf/view?docId=ark/32150_s1vh53wv76d.xml) [accessed: 16th October 2020]

Eng. Chron.	William Marx (ed.), *An English Chronicle 1377-1461* (Woodbridge, 2003)
Gawain	J. J. Anderson, *Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl, Cleanness, Patience* (London, 1996)
Gesta	John S. Roskell, and Frank Taylor (ed.,trans.), *Gesta Henrici Quinti: The Deeds of Henry Fifth* (Oxford, 1975)
Gesta Abbatum	Henry Thomas Riley (ed), Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani, 3 vols. (London 1867-9), vol. III.
GKP	Briggs, Charles F., Fowler, David C. And Remley, Paul G., *The Governance of Kings and Princes: John Trevisa's Middle English Translation of the De Regimine Principum of Aegidius Romanus* (London, New York, 1997)
Gower	David R. Carlson, (ed.) and A. G. Rigg (trans.), *John Gower: Poems on Contemporary Events: The Visio Anglie (1381) and Cronica Tripertita (1400)* (Toronto, 2011)
Gregory	Gregory, William, 'William Gregory's Chronicle of London' in James Gardiner (ed.), *The Historical Collections of A Citizen of London in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 1876), pp.57-239.
GvH	G. C. Young, *An Account of the Controversy between Reginald Lord Grey of Ruthin and Sir Edward Hastings in the Court of Chivalry in the Reign of King Henry IIII* (London, 1841)
Harding	John Hardyng, Henry Ellis (ed.) The Chronicle of John Harding (London, 1812)
HER	English Historical Review
Historians of York	James Raine (ed.), *The Historians of the Church of York and its Archbishops, Rolls series, 71* (London, 1979-94)
HJ	The Historical Journal
Hoccleve	Charles R. Blyth (ed.) *Thomas Hoccleve: The Regiment of Princes* (Kalamazoo, 1999)

HoG	Siân Echard and Stephen H. Rigby (eds.), *Historians on John Gower* (Woodbridge, 2019)
HP	Rossell Hope Robbins (ed.), *Historical Poems of the XIVth and XVth Centuries* (New York, 1959)
HSLC	The Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire
JIH	The Journal of Interdisciplinary History
JMH	Journal of Medieval History
KC	J. F. Baldwin, and I.S. Leadam*, Select Cases Before the King's Council 1243-1482* (Cambridge, 1918)
Knighton	Henry Knighton and G. H. Martin (ed., trans.), *Knighton's Chronicle 1377-1396* (Oxford,1995)
Langland	William Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman* (London, 1995)
Libel	Illingworth, William, 'Copy of a Libel against Archbishop Neville...' in *Archaeologia*, vol. 16 (Jan 1812) pp.80-3.
Livre	E. J. Arnould, *Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines: The unpubished devotional treatise of Henry of Lancaster* (Oxford, 1940)
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
LMCC	Joseph Brigstocke Sheppard, *Literae Cantuarienses: the letter books of the monastery of Christ Church, Canterbury vol. III* (London, 1827)
Lovells	Monika. E. Simon, 1999, 'The Lovells of Titchmarsh: An English Baronial Family, 1297-148?'' PhD thesis, University of York, York viewed 27 August 2019 <http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/id/eprint/10863>
LvM	Lovell v Morley, National Archives, C47/6/1.
McFarlane	R. H. Britnell and A. J. Pollard (eds.) *The McFarlane Legacy: Studies in Medieval Politics and Society* (New York, 1995)

Memorials	Charles Augustus Cole (ed.) *Memorials of Henry Fifth, King of England* (London, 1858)
MoL	Henry Thomas Riley (ed.), Memorials of London and London Life in the XIIIth, XIVth and XVth Centuries (London, 1868).
MvM	Maurice Keen and Mark Warner (eds.), 'Morley vs. Montagu (1399): A Case in the Court of Chivalry' in *Camden Miscellany, XXXIV: Chronology, Conquest and Conflict in Medieval England (Royal Historical Society: Camden Fifth Series),* vol.10 (July, 1997)
ODNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. (Oxford, 2008)
ODNB - Joan of Navarre	Michael Jones, 'Joan [Joan of Navarre] (1368–1437), queen of England, second consort of Henry IV' in Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford, 2014) <https://www-oxforddnb-com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-14824> [Accessed: 02/12/20]
ODNB – Henry Bowet	J. J. N. Palmer and T. F. Tout, 'Bowet, Henry (d. 1423), archbishop of York' in Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford, 2004) <https://www-oxforddnb-com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-3062>[Accessed: 05/12/2020]
ODNB – Katherine Swynford	Simon Walker, "Katherine [née Katherine Roelt; married name Katherine Swynford], duchess of Lancaster (1350?–1403), mistress and third wife of John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. (Oxford, 2008) <https://www-oxforddnb-com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-26858> [Accessed: 14/09/2019]
ODNB – Nicholas Brembre	Andrew Prescott, 'Brembre, Sir Nicholas (d. 1388), merchant and mayor of London' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Online Edition* (Oxford, 2004)<https://www-oxforddnb-com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-3312> [Accessed 05/11/2020].
ODNB – Thomas	Roy Martin Haines, 'Hatfield, Thomas (c. 1310–1381), administrator and bishop of Durham' in Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. (Oxford, 2004)< https://www-oxforddnb-

Hatfield	com.ezphost.dur.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-12598> [Accessed 05/12/2020]
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
PC II	Nicolas, Sir Nicholas Harris (ed.), *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England, Volume II* (London, 1834)
PC III	Nicolas, Sir Nicholas Harris (ed.), *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England, Volume III* (London, 1834)
PCM	Processus in Curia Marescallis (2 vols.) in the College of Arms.
PROME	Paul Brand, Anne Curry, Chris Given-Wilson, Rosemary Horrox, Geoffrey Martin, Mark Ormrod, Seymour Philips (eds.), *The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England* (Online Edition, 2005)
recueil des croniques II	William Hardy (ed.) *Recueil des Croniques et Anchiennes Istories de la Grant Bretaigne, A Present Nomme Engleterre par Jehan de Waurin, Seigneur du Forestel*, vol. II (London, 1868)
recueil des croniques III	William Hardy (ed.) *Recueil des Croniques et Anchiennes Istories de la Grant Bretaigne, A Present Nomme Engleterre par Jehan de Waurin, Seigneur du Forestel*, vol. III (London, 1868)
Rigby	Stephen H. Rigby, *Wisdom and Chivalry: Chaucer's Knight's Tale and Medieval Political Theory* (Leiden, Boston, 2009)
Royal Wills	*A Collection of All the Wills Now Known to be Exact of the Kings and Queen of England, Princes and Princesses of Wales, and Every Branch of the Blood Royal from the Reign of William the Conqueror, to that of Henry the Seventh Exclusive* (London, 1780)
Scriptores	James Raine, *Historiae Dunelmensis Scriptores Tres* (London, 1839)
Scrope	P. J. P. Goldberg (ed.) *Richard Scrope: Archbishop, Rebel, Martyr* (Donnington, 2007)
Stall Plates	W. H. St. John Hope, *The Stall Plates of the Order of the Garter 1348-1485* (New York, 1901)

Statutes I.	*The Statutes of the Realm, vol. I* (London, 1963).
Statutes II.	*The Statutes of the Realm, vol. II* (London, 1963)
SvG	Nicolas, Sir Nicholas Harris, *The Controversy between Sir Richard Scrope and Sir Robert Grosvenor in the Court of Chivalry A.D. MCCCLXXXV-MCCCXC - A Transcript of the Original Roll* (London, 1832)
TFC IV	Christine Carpenter and Linda Clark (eds.) *The Fifteenth Century, Volume IV*: *Political Culture in Late Medieval Britain* (Woodbridge, 2004)
TNA	The National Archives
TRHS	Transactions of the Royal Historical Society
Usk	Given-Wilson, Chris (ed.,trans.), *The Chronicle of Adam Usk*, 1377-1421 (Oxford, 1997)
Walsingham I.	John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs, Leslie Watkiss (eds.) *The St. Albans Chronicle: The Chronica maiora of Thomas Walsingham I 1376-1394* (Oxford, 2003).
Walsingham II.	John Taylor, Wendy R. Childs, Leslie Watkiss (eds.) *The St. Albans Chronicle: The Chronica maiora of Thomas Walsingham II 1394-1422* (Oxford, 2003).
Wavrin II	John de Wavrin, Lord of Forestrel and William Hardy (ed., trans.) *A Collection of the Chronicles and Ancient Histories of Great Britain, now called England, vol. II* (London, 1864-91)
Wavrin III	John de Wavrin, Lord of Forestrel and William Hardy (ed., trans.) *A Collection of the Chronicles and Ancient Histories of Great Britain, now called England, vol. III* (London, 1864-91)
Westmin.	Barbara F. Harvey and L. C. Hector (eds.), *The Westminster Chronicle 1381-94* (Oxford, 1982)
Worcestrii	*Liber Niger Scaccarii, nec non Wilhelmi Worcestrii Annales Rerum Anglicarum*, vol. 2 (London, 1774)

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In loving memory of my grandparents Ronald and Rita Lewis.
You never got to enjoy this stretch of the journey with me,
but I know you were every step of the way.

*

And in memory of Varro, my walking companion,
who didn't quite make it to the end of the road.

INTRODUCTION

The so-called Bad Parliament of 1377 concluded to widespread unrest in London. The coat of arms of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster were set up over the doors of St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Hall, reversed; a fate usually reserved for the arms of traitors. To add further insult, the inverted shields were accompanied by slanderous bills, which claimed that the duke was not a true son of the king and queen. They stated that Lancaster was, in fact, the son of a Flemish butcher, who had been swapped for a dead royal infant after the queen had given birth in Ghent. These inflammatory accusations caused great noise as they spread throughout London and the kingdom. The duke flew into a rage. The leading men of the city were summoned to appear before the king at Sheen, where the duke addressed them in person. What had been said, he claimed, 'was made in contempt of the king and of his sons and his entire lineage', and he was within his rights to punish them so severely that they would stand as a cautionary tale to the rest of the kingdom.[1] Alarmed, the citizens beseeched the duke for his grace and pardon. The duke said they could have it, on the condition that they have a pillar of marble, adorned with his coat of arms, erected in the middle of Cheapside. Once this was done, the serving mayor, aldermen and sheriffs were to be replaced, while those responsible for reversing the duke's arms were to be hunted down and put to death. It would be the duke's prerogative alone to show them mercy.[2] Ultimately, the pillar was not forthcoming and the duke had to content himself with an apology from the city. Walsingham recorded a candlelit procession through London made with candles bearing the impression of the duke's arms. Lancaster, however, seemed to take this inclusion as further effrontery. They acted, he claimed, as if he were dead and 'brought dishonour upon him.'[3] Gaunt took the bill, the accusations and the Londoners' attempts at amends as affronts to his honour and his personal reputation. The peace eventually negotiated between the duke and the city by Princess Joan did not end Gaunt's pursuit for reparation.

I. Scandalum Magnatum

That same year, after the death of Edward III, Gaunt appeared before his nephew, Richard II, in parliament, and spoke of the vile rumours touching on his person and reputation that had circulated throughout the kingdom. He would not accept his nomination as councillor to the commons, he said, until he had been vindicated, and had his innocence made explicit and publically known. Then, in 1378, he called for a solution to the problem of defamers and

[1] *Anon.* p.105. Translation is my own.
[2] Ibid., p.104-5.
[3] *Walsingham I*, p.107.

requested that 'an effective ordinance' and 'a just and rightful punishment be devised in this parliament for such rumour-mongers and promoters of lies...' because they 'might easily have caused conflict between the lords of the kingdom.'[4] The government's response was to re-enact the Scandalum Magnatum statute, a component of the statutes of Westminster introduced by Edward I in 1275. The Westminster statutes were a new king's pledge to his kingdom, promising a new era that would place the law and the common profit at the forefront of governmental concern.[5] The statutes were designed to ensure the peace and prosperity of the realm, and to demonstrate the new king's devotion to good rule. The Scandalum Magnatum statute was likewise intended to ensure the maintenance of the king's peace. It was designed, more specifically, to protect the great men of the kingdom, and by extension the realm itself, from the perils of rumour, slander and false news. The primary concerns of this early statute were discord between the king and his people, and between the lords, which might be prompted by the spreading of false news and slander. The statute sought to protect the reputations of the king and the lords by preventing conflict that could result in violence and unrest. It demonstrated an acute awareness of the political power inherent in words and in unregulated speech, which anticipated Gaunt's actions over a century later.[6]

When the government revisited the Scandalum Magnatum statute at Gaunt's behest in 1378, it made adjustments to the original measures:

> 'Item, Of Devisors of false news and of horrible and false lyes of Prelates, Dukes, Earls, Barons, and other Nobles and Great Men of the Realm, and also of the Chancellor, Treasurer, Clerk of the Privy Seal, Steward of the King's House, Justices of one Bench or of the other, and of other Great Officers of the Realm of things which by the said Prelates, Lords, Nobles and Officers aforesaid were never spoken, done, nor thought, in great Slander of the said prelates, Lords, Nobles and Officers whereby debates and discords might arise betwixt the said lords or between the lords and the Commons, which God forbid, and whereof great Peril and Mischief might come to all the Realm, and quick subversion and Destruction of the said Realm, if due remedy be not provided; It is straitly defended upon grievous Pain, for to eschew the said Damages and Perils, that from henceforth none be so hardy to devise, speak or to tell any false News, Lyes or other such false Things of Prelates, Lords and of other aforesaid, whereof Discord or any Slander might arise within the same realm; and he that doth the same shall incur and have the pain another time ordained thereof by the statute of Westminster the First, which will, that he be taken and imprisoned till he have found him of whom the word was moved.'[7]

[4] *PROME*, Parliament of October 1377, item 14.
[5] Statutes of Westminster 1275, c. 3 5, Edw I in *Statutes I*, p.26.
[6] Statutes of Westminster 1275, c. 32-7, Edw I in *Statutes I*, p.35.
[7] Statute 1 1378, c.4-6 Ric II in *Statutes II*, p.9.

Both the original statute of 1275, and the new statute of 1378, claimed that slander committed against the nobility imperilled the kingdom. The statute was thus enacted to ensure the maintenance of good and stable rule. The fourteenth-century statute, however, differed from the original in two key ways. Firstly, it established more specifically the identity of those figures to whom the statutes defending them from false accusation, slander, and false news applied: prelates, dukes, earls, barons and royal officers. In so doing, the protections the statute offered were extended to include the clerical nobility and officers of the crown. Secondly, the king's relationship with his lords and subjects was no longer the primary concern of the new statute, but rather the relationship between the lords themselves, and then the relationship between the lords and the commons. Of concern, too, was the position and reputation of the government as a whole, and the maintenance of its collective authority over the populace. The statutes placed reputation at the heart of these concerns and ensured that the reputations of the nobility were protected by law. As such, the primary concerns of the lords of 1378 were notably distinct from those of 1275. This was an old law rewritten to suit a new set of political circumstances.

The statute was then subsequently re-enacted in 1388, triggered once again by a specific attack made upon a member of the nobility in the form of a slanderous bill against Alexander Neville, Archbishop of York. These bills condemned Neville as a second Nero in reference to his alleged tyrannical behaviour in the north of England.[8] This time, the re-issuing of the statute was prompted by a written condemnation of a member of the clerical nobility. The concern expressed for the archbishop's reputation shared many of the same concerns articulated by Gaunt a decade earlier. Neville was a favourite of Richard II, and this assault corresponded with those others levelled against members of the king's court by the lords appellant in the same year. The bill was answered by a petition, submitted to parliament by the archbishop's friends, denying the charges levelled against Neville.[9] The resulting re-issuing of the Scandalum Magnatum statute copied the previous 1378 version, but with one addition. It stipulated that if the originator of lies against the great men of the realm could not be found, the spreader of them could be punished by the advice of the king's council.[10] Thus, the crown took greater control over the legal protections accorded to noble reputation. This step was taken, not out of concern for attack on noble reputation from below, but from amongst the ranks of the nobility itself. For Michael Hanrahan the modified statute was evidence of political conflict as two noble factions grappled for the upper hand.[11] Hanrahan attributed the changing language in proclamations to shifts in the balance of power between the king and the lords appellant during the late 1380s.

[8] *Libel*, pp.80-83. This incident will be explored in more detail in chapter five.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Statute 12 1388, c.10-13 Ric II in *Statutes I.,* p.59.
[11] Michael Hanrahan, Defamation as Political Contest During the Reign of Richard II in *Medium Aevum*, vol. 72 (2003), p.287.

He argued that 'the shift in power from Richard to the appellants permitted a redefinition of what kind of criticism constituted slander and who deserved protection from it'.[12] As events began to move in Richard II's favour, 'Richard once again laid claim to defamation as a means to rebuff challenges to his power.'[13] The appellants and their opponents had both attacked the reputations of fellow lords in an attempt to discredit their rivals. The Scandalum Magnatum statutes of the fourteenth century were therefore symptomatic of the nobility's particular *and* growing concern for their reputations and the political uses to which they could be put. As such, the statutes embody many of the key themes of this thesis. They revealed a concerted, collective effort to defend noble reputation, both secular and clerical, from attack both from within their own ranks and beyond. They demonstrated, also, a particular preoccupation with the increasing and expanding political roles of both the parliamentary Commons and the commons more widely.

Persecutions under the Scandalum Magnatum statutes continued in England throughout the late medieval and early modern periods. Historians have concentrated on the early modern period. John Lassiter considered the meaning and significance of the increasing number of Scandalum Magnatum prosecutions that occurred periodically throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The statutes, he argued, helped to underline the distinction between peers and commoners and were employed by the nobility to defend their power in times of turbulence and insecurity. He attributed the rise in Scandalum Magnatum prosecutions in the sixteenth century to a growing sense of vulnerability amongst the English nobility. Their military and political powers were waning, their land holdings and incomes were decreasing, and they were falling victim to rising inflation and dangerous overspending.[14] Lawrence Stone had already drawn a direct link between the 'crisis of confidence' of the sixteenth-century nobility and the rise in prosecutions under Scandalum Magnatum. Stone argued that the statutes were a way of re-enforcing old and weakening social boundaries.[15] These sentiments were further supported by Lassiter. He highlighted the rising use of Scandalum Magnatum after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. In these circumstances, he argued, the nobility, haunted by rebellion and instability, used the statutes to reassert their regained privileges and to communicate the message that the old order had been restored after the interregnum. The lords, Lassiter concluded, 'set about demanding respect and silencing their detractors with every available weapon.'[16] If the nobility of sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and

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[12] Hanrahan, *Defamation as Political Contest*, pp.268.
[13] Ibid.
[14] John. C. Lassiter, 'Defamation of Peers: The Rise and Fall of the action for Scandalum Magnatum', *American Journal of Legal History,* vol. 22 (1978), p.219.
[15] Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641* (Oxford, 1965), pp.746-53.
[16] Ibid., p.219.

eighteenth-century England employed the statutes to defend their powers and privileges in times of political and social unrest, the central argument of this thesis is that the same could be said of their late medieval counterparts, who found themselves in circumstances which were even more challenging.

II. The Late Middle Ages

The period after the Black Death was one of continued social and political change. The political community was expanding. 'The Public' was no longer confined to the traditional political classes: the lords and knights of the shire brought together in parliament.[17] While the Hundred Years War had created new political opportunities for merchants, the economic changes following the outbreak of the Black Death in the fourteenth century had resulted in a more fluid society.[18] New social groups were emerging as the availability of land increased, towns expanded and servile bonds decayed. A new group of wealthy peasants and prosperous townsmen sought inclusion in the political community as the traditional lines between social groups blurred.[19] The common people were invested in the political life of the realm due to their involvement in defence and taxation. The expansion of royal government in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries meant that an increasing number of people were caught up in its activities.[20] People were more likely to express opinions on government when it touched directly upon their interests.[21] John Watts has argued that governmental expansion in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries reshaped political values, much like the spread of the common law had done in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[22] By the end of the fourteenth century, the good opinion of the commons was being deliberately cultivated by government, and, by the fifteenth century, the commons had a recognised role in the polity of the realm and were entitled to the attention of their rulers.[23]

As the political community grew, so too did the realm's discursive community.[24] As the number of people interested in, and able to engage with, politics increased, so too did the number of people able and willing to participate in political discussion. This trend was advanced by

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[17] John Watts, 'The Pressure of the Public on Later Medieval Politics' in *TFC IV*, p.159. In response to Charles Ross, 'Rumour, Propaganda and Popular Opinion during the Wars of the Roses' in R. A. Griffiths (ed.), *Patronage, The Crown and The Provinces in Later Medieval England* (Sutton, 1981), p.15.
[18] Christian D. Liddy, *War, Politics and Finance in Late Medieval English Towns: Bristol, York and the Crown 1350-1400* (London, 2005).
[19] I. M. W. Harvey, 'Was There Popular Politics in Fifteenth Century England' in *McFarlane*, p.159.
[20] Ibid. p.165.
[21] Watts, *Pressure of the Public*, p.172.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid., p.169.
[24] Ibid. p.162.

increasing rates of literacy across the social spectrum[25]. John Watts argued that, by the fifteenth century, the political public comprised a substantial part of the population.[26] There were more people involved in the politics of the realm, and they knew an increasing amount about a wider range of political subjects. Information flowed more freely than ever before, even at the lower end of the social scale. There was a growing awareness of the existence of a common discursive space and national forum, which needed to be monitored and responded to by the authorities. Politicians were forced to engage with public opinion and to listen to it. There was a recognised power inherent in mass political action, which troubled the authorities and which compelled them to respond to the public opinions of the lower orders.[27]

Yet, while Watts believed that there existed a common stock of political expression and language, which was shared and employed by all classes, this assertion ran contrary to the work of other historians like Charles Ross, writing earlier in 1981, and Gerald Harriss and Isobel Harvey, who argued separately that there was something distinct about the concerns of popular politics.[28] Ross observed that whilst public opinion generally referred to the views of the traditionally active classes in the fifteenth century, both popular rumour and governmental propaganda appealed to a much wider audience. He noted that popular discontent was a fact of political life, especially after 1397.[29] Harriss later engaged more thoroughly with the nature of this popular brand of political discontent, identifying popular politics as a fourth political sub-culture or arena with its own distinct character. The central concern of popular politics, Harriss argued, was 'to ensure security of livelihood against those immediately above them who could abuse law and office to their own advantage'.[30] Popular political action was therefore driven by social and economic pressure, and ordinary people called for justice as a way to redress the wrongs inflicted upon them from above. Harriss imagined fifteenth-century England not as a uniform political unit, but rather as a series of political contexts, in which high politics was the concern of the whole realm. 'If there existed a common language of politics', he wrote, then 'it had different meanings and uses in the different political arenas.'[31]

That political language and ideas were transmitted across the social spectrum at all, whether they were used ultimately to different ends, is evidence of an informed popular element within the polity. Ordinary people were able to articulate their views and priorities,

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[25] Harvey, *Popular Politics,* p.157.
[26] Watts, *Pressure of the Public*, p.161.
[27] Ibid., p.164, 173-4.
[28] Ibid., p.161.
[29] Ross, *Rumour, Propaganda and Popular Opinion*, pp.15-17.
[30] Gerald Harriss, 'The Dimensions of Politics' in *McFarlane,* p.16.
[31] Ibid.

which were different from those above them, by making use of the widely accepted political forms and concepts cultivated by their social betters. Key themes persisted in both high and low status texts and recurred with notable regularity.[32] Political ideas were not confined to any one social group and these groups shared common ideals and language. Among the most common motifs were the evil councillor and the loyal commoner, eager to serve his king.[33] Such patterns demonstrate that political information was not only transmitted from the powerful down to the people, but that the wider population were having political discussions of their own. As such, the existence of a common political language does not negate the distinctiveness of the popular voice. Rather, it demonstrates popular awareness of contemporary events, figures and accepted political forms. It also underlines the capacity of ordinary people to make themselves heard and prove themselves worthy of being listened to.

Both Watts and Harriss argued that popular politics demonstrated a pronounced interest in those who wielded political influence, and a public well-informed of their conduct.[34] Popular awareness of current events and individual political figures was reflected in much of the period's political verse. Individual figures were not only targeted specifically, but were frequently represented symbolically by their heraldic charges or badges.[35] That this political communication was possible suggests that the writers of political verse were confident that their audiences would understand and respond to their allusions and that the badges were widely known and recognised. Its significance to a study of noble reputation is apparent, as reputation represented all that was publically known about individual people. In this environment, such information could influence the way in which individual politicians were perceived. The increasing participation of the lower orders in the political life of the realm altered the audience of noble reputation. It was no longer enough for the nobility to satisfy their fellow lords and the parliamentary commons. A new, popular audience brought with it its own set of expectations and priorities for politicians to consider and appeal to. In an environment where the mass of the king's subjects were increasingly willing to take matters into their own hands, an individual with a poor reputation who crossed popular opinion would have left himself exposed to popular displeasure.[36] Its consequences can be seen, *in extremis*, in the example of the earl of Huntingdon, who was lynched by a mob in 1400.[37]

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[32] Watts, *Pressure of the Public*, p.168.
[33] Ibid.
[34] See: Watts, *Pressure of the Public*, p.157 and Gerald Harriss, *The Dimensions of Politics*, p.14.
[35] Harvey, *Popular Politics*, p.160-161.
[36] Ibid., p.156.
[37] Ibid.

The rebels of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, and of Cade's rebellion in 1450, laid claim to political legitimacy by publically declaring that they acted, and spoke for, the commons, and the community of the realm. Those who marched under Wat Tyler in 1381 identified themselves as the 'trew communes', while those under Jack Cade acted in the interests of the 'comyn wele'. Through these assertions, the rebels claimed membership of 'the public' and, in turn, possession of the political rights guaranteed by inclusion in the political community.[38] Those involved in the community were also participants in the exercise of power. The increased size of the public lent its opinions greater weight as there was power inherent in numbers. John Watts argued that the revolts of the late medieval and Tudor periods looked to restore the traditional social order, not to overthrow it. Popular complaints and grievances revolved around a desire to see the social elite, the clerics, warriors and landlords, do their jobs correctly and act in the interests of the wider community.[39] Rebels often looked to lords to act on their behalf. In 1450 the Cade rebels appealed to Richard Duke of York because of his proximity to the throne, and, at least partly, on the basis of his reputation and what he represented. [40] If his reputation had been poor, he would not have inspired the same level of popular support. York, however, went to great pains to distance himself officially from Cade's revolt. His reputation had been used by the public apparently without his consent.[41] Thus, the ability of noble reputations to appeal to the public could be both beneficial and potentially dangerous. A nobleman could use his reputation to build support, but it could also be usurped by others.

Other historians, like Andy Wood, have adopted an alternative view of the parameters of popular revolt. The rebels of the late medieval and early modern periods, he argued, were not merely trying to restore the polity to order. They rose in opposition to a specific set of factors, including corruption and taxation. Furthermore, they were able to articulate a new social vision, addressing social inequality, in direct opposition to the social vision of their rulers. While the rebels claimed loyalty to the king, they often made direct attacks upon lords and lordship.[42] Wood's argument suggests that the population of late medieval and early modern England had its own set of distinct political values and expectations, which often contradicted those of its lords. Lords and lordship were particular targets of popular grievances, which placed increased emphasis on reputation. A lord was likely to be of particular interest to an irate populace if he had a reputation for perpetrating the crimes about which the population complained. We see in Watts' and Wood's arguments the two sides of reputation: the kind capable of attracting

[38] Ibid. p.160.
[39] Michael Bush, 'The Risings of the Commons in England 1381-1549' in Jeffrey Denton (ed.), *Orders and Hierarchies In Late Medieval And Renaissance Europe* (Manchester, 1999), p.113.
[40] R. L. Storey, *The End of the House of Lancaster* (Stroud, 1966), pp.64-5.
[41] Ibid., p.63, 75.
[42] Andy Wood, *The 1549 Rebellions and the Making of Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2007), p.4.

support as seen with York, and the kind which could inspire opposition and retribution epitomised in Huntingdon's demise. Wood and John Walter posited a further reason for the nobility's concern for reputation.[43] Drawing on the work of anthropologist James C. Scott on infra-politics, they argued that verbal attacks upon the reputations of prominent figures were a form of political protest, with the capacity to restrict the ruling group's ability fully to exercise their power. Scott's infra-politics refers to those acts and words that fall between whole-hearted consent to the rule of the elite, and outright rebellion. In his model, gossip was an effective form of protest as it was easily spread and manipulated. It could be used in a targeted way to attack specific individuals for particular transgressions. Scott argued that gossip could be used by subordinates to criticise their social superiors, to destroy their reputations, and restrict their ability to act.[44] When we return to the late Middle Ages, we can see that public speech and action proved both politically and socially significant and politicians were forced to engage with it.[45] The fifteenth century witnessed an increase in the number of presentments at King's Bench concerned with seditious speech; this is evidence of growing governmental concern with the power of public talk and discourse.[46]

In this environment, the reputations of the nobility became *increasingly* significant. Reputation, defined as all that was publically known about an individual, group or thing, encompassed the related and overlapping concepts of fame and honour. Fame referred to the characters of people and things as established in common knowledge. It was the state of being much talked about and discussed, and of gaining reputation through achievement and appearance. Honour, whilst similar, was generally restricted to the nobility, and centred on an individual's or group's ability to inspire respect and esteem as a result of their demonstrated good character. Whilst the Scandalum Magnatum statutes, and many of our sources, do not use the word reputation specifically, it is the term that most thoroughly encapsulates the specific concerns expressed within them. Reputation referred to the commonly accepted view of an individual's overall character and the esteem in which they were held.[47] Fame, honour and reputation, therefore, all relied upon what was said and known about individuals and groups. They all involved public performances of some kind, and were dependent upon having personal qualities widely recognised. The medieval notion of *fama* embraced all three of these concepts. Hans-Joachim Neubauer concluded that *fama* could be used to refer to fame and infamy, honour

[43] John Walter, *Crowds and Popular Politics in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2006), pp. 196-215. And Andy Wood, *Riot, Rebellion and Popular Politics in Early Modern England* (London, 2002), pp.18-19, 172.
[44] James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (New Haven, 1990) pp.142-3.
[45] Watts, *Pressure of the Public*, p.173.
[46] Harvey, *Popular Politics*, p. 160. See also Helen E. Wicker, 'Opprobrious Language and the Development of the Vernacular in Fifteenth-Century England' (PhD thesis, University of Kent, 2007).
[47] Definitions from *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2017. Web., (28 April 2017).

and dishonour, good reputation and bad.[48] Fama was not only fame, honour and reputation; it also referred to the talk, news and information that helped create them. This public talk continually adjusted honour and assigned social standing to those about whom there was talk. Personal reputation, he concluded, was the most obvious and visible embodiment of this *fama*.[49]

III. The Late Medieval Nobility

In his essay 'After 'After McFarlane', Edward Powell highlighted the limitations of the study of patronage in late medieval England and called on historians to consider a new constitutional history for the period. Patronage, he argued, had become 'the catch word of the 'after-McFarlane generation,' and, in concentrating so determinedly on patronage, historians risked losing sight of the bigger picture.[50] Powell's essay was a response to a 1983 review piece by Professor Colin Richmond. Richmond took stock of the political history of late medieval England, famously remarking that the fifteenth century had become 'McFarlane's century'.[51] Indeed, since the 1960s, the study of the late medieval nobility in England had been heavily influenced by the work of K.B. McFarlane. McFarlane challenged the prominent nineteenth-century work of those, like William Stubbs, who asserted that the medieval nobility stood as obstacles to the progress of institutional government. 'Bastard feudalism', the term perhaps most associated with the study of the nobility in this period, particularly in regards to the Wars of the Roses, was first coined in the nineteenth century, and it was intended to be far from complimentary. The choice of language immediately indicated that the lordship of late medieval England was a debasement of the 'true' feudal lordship that preceded it. The term did not originate with William Stubbs, but he is largely credited with having perpetuated it.[52] For Stubbs, the late medieval nobility embodied an era of widespread political conflict and moral decline. Stubbs lamented that it was this self-interest that came to define an era, in which rival factions of noblemen, driven by self-serving ambition, powered the country's tumultuous political trajectory. In moving from the thirteenth to the fourteenth centuries, Stubbs declared, we passed 'from the age of chivalry, from a century ennobled by devotion and self-sacrifice, to one…which...fails to hide the reality of

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[48] Daniel Lord Smail and Thelma Fenster, 'Introduction' in Daniel Lord Smail and Thelma Fenster (eds.), *Fama: The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, 2003), p. 1. See also: Lucy Potter, 'Telling Tales: Negotiating Fame in Virgil's Aeneid, Vodi's metamorphoses and Christopher Marlow's Tragedy of Did, Queen of Catharge' in Heather Kerr and Clare Walker (eds.), *Fama and Her Sisters: Gossip and Rumour in Early Modern Europe* (Turnhout, 2015), p.37.
[49] Smail and Fenster, '*Introduction*', p.3.
[50] Edward Powell, 'After 'After McFarlane': The Poverty of Patronage and the Case for Constitutional History' in Dorothy J. Clayton, Richard G. Davies and Peter McNiven (eds.), *Trade, Devotion and Governance* (Stroud, 1994), pp. 1-16. See also Christine Carpenter, 'Political and Constitutional History: Before and After McFarlane' in *McFarlane,* pp. 175-206, and Harriss, *Dimensions of Politics,* pp.1-20.
[51] Colin Richmond, 'After McFarlane' in *History,* vol. 63 (1983), p.46, 60.
[52] Term was coined by Charles Plummer in: Sir John Fortescue, Charles Plummer (ed.), *The Governance of England: Otherwise Called the Difference between an Absolute and a Limited Monarchy* (London, 1885), p.15.

heartless selfishness and moral degradation'. Late medieval England had its struggles, 'but they are contests of personal and family faction, not great causes'.[53]

Stubbs was not alone in viewing the late medieval period as one of decline. Johan Huizinga famously portrayed the closing centuries of the Middle Ages as an age characterised by crisis, and cultural decay.[54] As the court, king and nobility became increasingly lavish and ritualised, society became more violent and brutal. In this historiographical tradition, the nobility were portrayed not only as self-indulgent, but as primarily problematic and disruptive elements within the polity. Tout likewise framed the politics of late medieval England as the result of the actions of competing political parties who drifted in and out of conflict, while R.H. Jones categorised the period as one in which the crown was forced to defend itself from its wolfish subjects, chief amongst whom were the realm's magnates.[55] McFarlane's work, on the other hand, tried to understand the nobility as a social group and bastard feudalism as a system of social connections. He argued for a more sympathetic understanding of 'bastard feudalism', viewing it not as a decayed form of earlier 'true' feudalism, but as a system adapted to suit its historical context.[56] From here, McFarlane's successors considered the significance to politics, and to the construction of noble power, of patronage networks, county power, and retaining practices. This was the history not just of institutions and the mechanisms of government, but of the relationships between people.

The assessments of McFarlane's legacy by Richmond and Powell at the opening and closing of the 1980s were remarkably different. Richmond concluded that if McFarlane's legacy were to be followed to fruition, historians of late medieval England should direct their focus towards the localities and undertake studies of gentry networks in the counties.[57] To this end, many subsequent studies followed, focusing on interpersonal relationships, patronage, and the relationship between central government and the localities. Chris Given-Wilson's approach to the nobility in 1987 conformed to this idea. He emphasised the significance of landholding and patronage in the localities, on the relationship between the crown and the regions, and for those mutually sustaining systems of affinity and retaining which bound the nobility to the gentry.[58] The nobility were motivated ultimately by their need to maintain their regional influence and their style of living, and to this end, Given-Wilson concluded, 'they were continually cultivating

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[53] William Stubbs (1875), *The Constitutional History of England in its Origin and Development* (Cambridge, 2011) For quotations see vol. 2, p.305.
[54] Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (London, 1924)
[55] T. F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Medieval England*, 6 vols (Manchester, 1920–33). R. H. Jones, *The Royal Policy of Richard II: Absolutism in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1968).
[56] K. B. McFarlane, *The Nobility of Later Medieval England* (Oxford, 1973), pp.3-4.
[57] Richmond, *After McFarlane*, p.46, 60.
[58] Chris Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility in the Late Middle Ages: the fourteenth century political community* (London, New York, 1987), pp.161-8.

and enriching that regional authority which was the bedrock of their status in the realm'.[59] Other studies took a similar approach. Rosemary Horrox's *Richard III: A Study in Service*, for example, explored the significance of patronage and service to the lives of the period's nobility of whom Richard III was perhaps the archetypal example.[60] Powell, on the other hand, argued for something quite different. He endorsed a shift away from a McFarlane-like approach and proposed instead a fresh consideration of 'alternative structures of organisation regulating the distribution of power and authority' in order to reconstruct the political culture of late medieval England.[61] He was not alone in championing this endeavour. In 2015, John Watts reminded us of Professor Carpenter's conviction that 'the ultimate concern of political historians should not lie with the uncovering of meaning – for meaning is infinite – but with the explanation of action, and of patterns of action.' Professor Carpenter believed that the study of political culture should serve this purpose. [62] In understanding why the powerful acted in the ways that they did, we might appreciate more fully the interactions that occurred between people, society and institutions, and their wider significance.[63]

The solution Powell suggested was a new kind of constitutional history, distinct from the Stubbsian model rejected by McFarlane. This new constitutional history would seek 'to re-establish the importance of political and constitutional principles...in relation to political action'.[64] It was important to recognise, Powell reiterated, that the choices made by the powerful were restricted and shaped by the beliefs of their society and culture. Kings and nobles needed to 'reconcile their actions to its values'.[65] It was therefore crucial to try to understand all the factors that exerted influence over political behaviour, and this included an understanding of how government and its mechanisms operated. The case for constitutional history, Powell argued, was the case for reintegrating political history and the history of ideas in order to compile a more rounded picture of late medieval England. Patronage was important, but should be related to contemporary developments in political theory. Work to this effect had already begun, he claimed, in the work of those interested in the conceptual basis of kingship, and those interested in the chivalric ethos that bound together the nobility and gentry, like Maurice Keen. There was still much work to do, however, if this new constitutional history was

[59] Given-Wilson, *English Nobility*, p.179.
[60] Rosemary Horrox, *Richard III: A Study of Service* (Cambridge, 1991).
[61] Powell, 'After 'After McFarlane'' pp. 1-16. See also Christine Carpenter, 'Political and Constitutional History: Before and After McFarlane' in *McFarlane,* pp. 175-206, and Harriss, *Dimensions of Politics*, pp.1-20.
[62] John Watts, 'Introduction' in Christine Carpenter, Benjamin Thompson, John Watts (eds.), *Political Society in Later Medieval England* (Rochester, 2015) pp.1-6, quotation on p.6. See also: 'Introduction: Political Culture, Politics and Cultural History', in TFC IV, pp.1–19.
[63] John Watts, 'Introduction' in Carpenter, Thompson & Watts, *Political Society*, p.3.
[64] Powell, After 'After McFarlane' p.10.
[65] Ibid., p.11.

going to succeed. After all, Powell lamented, 'is there an historian under sixty who had written a book on the late medieval parliament?'[66] From the 1990s, the quest for this rounder, fuller historiography began to take shape. Historians thus examined many different aspects of political culture and its wider institutional ramifications. Included amongst this work, and uniting the study of motivation and institution, is Gwilym Dodd's extensive work on parliament and parliamentary petitioning, thus closing the gap identified by Powell in 1989. Dodd, a student of Mark Omrod, shared the latter's interest in these institutional mechanisms and societal forms, and Ormrod's own work, for example, included considerations of parliamentary performance and the evolution of political language.[67] Their work facilitated our understanding of the motivations and cultural values shaping political action, which in turn re-moulded the institutions themselves.

Parliament was not the only mechanism of government to receive attention and increase our understanding of noble action. John Watts's 1996 study of kingship and government under Henry VI concluded that the world of the nobility was defined as much by the common principles and structures that united them as by individual interests and relationships.[68] The maligned lords of the later fifteenth century, Watts argued, were 'neither fools nor knaves…they were victims, driven by the hideous logic of a dysfunctional system.'[69] The system in question, Watts argued, was sophisticated and flexible, but required two basic commitments from the king: willingness to listen to advice, and the ability and inclination to exercise his will. The problems of the later fifteenth century resulted not from the ambitions of over mighty subjects, but from Henry VI's lack of will. The nobility did their best to compensate, exercising more royal authority on the king's behalf than was usual, but in so doing they were forced to neglect their own central function as defenders of the common weal. These pressures, and the continued absence of a strong royal authority, resulted in a breakdown in relationships amongst the nobility themselves. Their aim, however, remained the preservation of royal government and the authority of the crown.

Elsewhere, examinations of the social and cultural influences that governed and shaped noble behaviour offered further insight into late medieval political culture. A growing body of

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[66] Ibid., p.9.
[67] Gwilym Dodd, *Justice and Grace: Private Petitioning and the English Parliament in the Late Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2007), Mark Ormrod, 'Pardon, Parliament and Political Performance in Later Medieval England' in Craig M. Nakashian and Daniel P. Franke (eds.), *Prowess, Piety and Public Order in Medieval Society* (Leiden, 2017), Gwilym Dodd and Remy Ambuhl, 'The Politics of Surrender: Treason, Trials and Recrimination in the 1370s' in Remy Ambuhl, James Bothwell and Laura Tompkins (eds.), *Ruling Fourteenth Century England* (Woodbridge, 2019), pp.227-61 and Mark Ormrod, "Common Profit" and "The Profit of the King and Kingdom": Parliament and the Development of Political Language in England, 1250 - 1450 in *Viator*, vol. 46 (2015), pp.219-252.
[68] John Watts, *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship* (Cambridge 1996) p.363.
[69] Ibid.

work on chivalry followed Keen's work, including that of Richard Kaeuper on chivalric violence, and Hugh Collins's consideration of the Order of the Garter.[70] Each branch of the study of late medieval political culture and constitutionalism has thus been shaped by its own aims and intentions. Taken together, however, we begin to approach the well-rounded picture for which Edward Powell advocated, to which a concentrated consideration of noble reputation can contribute. Noble attitudes to reputation shaped, and were shaped by, social and political action and were an ingrained component of late medieval political culture.

IV: Reputation

The role of reputation has been sketched out to a limited extent by historians in regards to the Wars of the Roses. It is almost completely lacking for the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. In his study of Warwick, the Kingmaker, A. J. Pollard demonstrated the ways in which Warwick's 'fame' bolstered his power during the late fifteenth century. Fame offered Warwick advantages both in politics and war during a time of conflict and factionalism, by allowing him to muster popular support, and mobilise substantial armed forces.[71] Similarly, Michael Hicks discussed the significance of common popularity to men like Warwick in their bid for power.[72] The significance of fame and reputation for the nobility of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries has not received the same attention. Instead, the reputations of individual nobles of this period are often a feature of biography. Usually, such assessments focus on the historical reputations of the medieval nobility and the extent to which the reputations we have inherited would have been familiar to the contemporaries.[73] The contemporary reputation itself, however, the way in which noble reputation 'worked', and the political ends to which such reputation was put, has received less attention. Studies of chivalric culture, like that of Nigel Saul, have come closest to an analysis of noble reputation in this capacity, but they have stopped short of a concentrated study of the social and political implications of the reputation of the late medieval nobility.[74]

More generally, the historical study of reputation beyond the nobility has approached the subject from three directions: the role of gender and sexuality in attacks upon political figures; the legal dimensions of *fama* and public talk; and the political significance of reputation.

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[70] Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (London, 2005), Richard Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry* (Woodbridge, 1995). Richard W. Kaeuper, *Medieval Chivalry* (Cambridge, 2016). Hugh E. L. Collins, *The Order of the Garter 1348-1461: Chivary and Politics in Late Medieval England* (Oxford, 2000).
[71] A. J. Pollard, *Warwick the Kingmaker: Politics, Power and Fame* (London, 2007).
[72] Michael Hicks, 'Bastard Feudalism; Over-Mighty Subjects and Idols of the Multitude during the Wars of the Roses' in *History,* vol.85 (2000) pp.386-403.
[73] See for example: Anthony Goodman, *John of Gaunt: The Exercise of Princely Power in Fourteenth-century Europe* (Abingdon, 1992), pp.15-27.
[74] Nigel Saul, *For Honour and Fame: Chivalry in England 1066-1500* (London, 2011).

Studies of the political implications of reputation for late medieval queens, such as Diana Dunn's consideration of Margaret of Anjou and Rachel Gibbon's investigation of Isabeau, were part of a wider trend which concentrated on gendered portrayals and criticism of political figures.[75] Their approach then influenced the work of those working on the representation of medieval kings, as demonstrated by Christopher Fletcher's analysis of the reign of Richard II.[76] Fletcher's study considered the extent to which motifs of masculinity and youth were employed in contemporary portrayals of the king. This focus on the relationship between gender and reputation is also present in studies of the early modern period, where the social and political implications of reputation have received greater attention. Faramerz Dabhoiwala's study of reputation and honour in late seventeenth -and early eighteenth- century England adopted a gendered approach to the study of reputation, with particular focus on allegations of sexual misconduct. [77] The association between the study of reputation and social attitudes to sexual misconduct is an enduring theme of the studies of this kind and was the approach adopted by J.A. Sharpe in his study of the defamation cases recorded by the church courts of York. [78]

However, sexuality and gender remain just one small aspect of the wider consideration of reputation and its political application. As Sharpe's study exemplifies, the legal dimensions of *fama*, including defamation and the prosecution of related speech acts, have been another major feature of medieval and early modern studies of reputation.[79] The volume on medieval *fama* edited by Fenster and Smail was particularly interested in the significance of talk, and the social implications of *fama* as reflected in legal texts and literature. Many of the studies collected in this work focused on the legal contexts of *fama* and public speech throughout the Middle Ages and across medieval Europe, including, for example, Chris Wickham's examination of *fama* and the law in twelfth-century Tuscany, and F .R. P. Akehurst's analysis of the significance of reputation in French customary law. [80] Similarly, in *Fama and Her Sisters*, contributors explored the role of *fama* in early modern society, using literary texts and legal records to interrogate the

[75] Diana Dunn, 'Margaret of Anjou: Monster Queen or Dutiful Wife' in *Medieval History*, vol. 4, (1994), pp.199-217. Diana Dunn, 'The Queen at War: The Role of Margaret of Anjou in the Wars of the Roses' in Diana Dunn (ed.), *War and society in medieval and early modern Britain* (Liverpool, 2000), pp. 141-161. Rachel Gibbons, 'Isabeau of Bavaria, Queen of France (1385-1422): The Creations of an Historical Villainess' in *Transitions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 6, (1996), pp.51-73.
[76] Christopher Fletcher, *Richard II: Manhood, Youth and Politics 1377-99* (Oxford, 2011).
[77] Faramerz Dabhoiwala, 'The Construction of Honour, Reputation and Status in Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Century England' in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 6, (1996) pp.101-3.
[78] J. A. Sharpe, *Defamation and Sexual Slander in Early Modern England: the Church Courts at York* (York, 1980).
[79] See also for example: Laura Ikins Stern, 'Public Fame in the Fifteenth Century' in *The American Journal of Legal History*, vol. 44 (April, 2000), pp.198-222.
[80] Fenster & Smail, *Fama*, See: Fenster & Smail '*Introduction',* pp. 1-12 for full outline of study.

complex relationship existing between *fama*, rumour and speech their significance at different levels of society, and as a form of subversive political action.[81]

Considerations of the political significance of reputation have taken different forms. Early modernist Mervyn James explored notions of reputation involved in early modern honour-culture and politically motivated violence.[82] Other studies, like Pauline Croft's analysis of the libellous rumours circulating about the chancellor Robert Cecil in 1612, examined the wider political ramifications of reputation as a means of widening political involvement. Croft argued that such attacks on reputation revealed contemporary political and social attitudes and demonstrated 'the existence of a lively and informed body of public opinion which relished political gossip and subjected famous figures to a far from deferential scrutiny'. This, she argued, 'testified to the vigour of popular political culture'.[83] Such studies engaged with, and are examples of the interest of early modern historians in, the growth and development of the Habermasian 'public sphere'[84] As Lake and Pincus outlined, the concept of the 'public sphere' has been brought fruitfully to bear on discussions of the Reformation, and the Elizabethan and Stuart periods. These accounts considered the relationship between what actually happened and what was said and believed about what occurred, and noted the expansion of public discussion in the period.[85] This increase, represented by a rise in political pamphlets and broadsides and the higher transmission of gossip and news, was taken as indicative of an expanding political public and increasingly free political discussion and new political environment.[86]

The Scandalum Magnatum statutes, and the triggers for their reintroduction, demonstrate something remarkably similar in the case of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Reputation was not an inconsequential concern for the nobility; if it had been, the Scandalum Magnatum statutes would not have been re-issued, and John of Gaunt would not have reacted so viscerally to the libellous statements against him. Neither were these concerns limited to the pressures of chivalric notions of honour, renown, or fame. In late medieval England noble reputation needed to consist of more than honour of a kind appealing to one's fellow lords. In the changing social and political environment of the late fourteenth and early

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[81] Heather Kerr and Claire Walker, 'Introduction' in Kerr & Walker, *Fama and Her Sisters*, p.2.
[82] Mervyn James, *Society, Politics and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1986), pp.308-415.
[83] Pauline Croft, 'The Reputation of Robert Cecil: Libels, Political Opinion and Popular Awareness in the Early Seventeenth Century' in *TRHS*, vol. 1, (1991), pp.43-69.
[84] Jürgen Habermas and Thomas Burger (trans.), *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1989).
[85] Peter Lake and Steven Pincus 'Rethinking the Public Sphere in Early Modern England' in Peter Lake and Steven Pincus (eds.), *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2007), p.1-2.
[86] Ibid., pp.18-20.

fifteenth centuries, the public reputations of the nobility could have very real political consequences. A study of noble reputation in this period combines the study of chivalric culture with that of popular politics, the ideals of masculinity and notions of lordship. Reputation encompasses ideas of noble self-identity, of social and political purpose, of public performance and memory and commemoration. In understanding why the nobility cared about their reputations, why they felt compelled to defend them, and how this concern manifested itself culturally, socially, and politically, we can gain a greater appreciation of the thoughts and ideas underpinning their actions. Reputation was something the nobility both tried and failed to control. Their attempts to manage and defend reputation offer an opportunity to understand the role of reputation in the exercise of noble power and authority in the period of social and political change following the outbreak of the Black Death, and before the outbreak of civil war in the 1460s.

As such, this thesis will explore the reputations of the English nobility in the period before the Wars of the Roses, between 1377 and 1437. This period begins with the death of Edward III and the accession of Richard II, spans the reigns of Henry IV, and Henry V, before concluding at the end of Henry VI's minority. It will examine the reputations of members of both the secular nobility (like Gaunt), who will make up the larger part of the study, and the clerical nobility (like Archbishop Neville), all of whom were encompassed in the Scandalum Magnatum statute of 1378. For secular figures, the term 'nobility' is usually used to refer to those lords who had secured the hereditary right to be individually summoned to parliament. This group included all of the earls, and the greater and more affluent barons. By 1388 some 48 barons were receiving regular summons to parliament.[87] To this number were added dukes under Edward III in 1337, and later marquises and viscounts in the early 1440s. Such additions are indicative of the increasingly selective nature of this group, underlined further by sumptuary laws that allowed such men and their families to display their elite status.[88] To complicate matters, however, some knights who were not barons did receive a parliamentary summons, and in the fourteenth century these men were referred to as knight bannerets. They were the lowest rank of men summoned to parliament, and by the early fifteenth century had been absorbed into the barony.[89] This dissertation will focus on the nobility and this latter higher order of knights. In the case of the clerical nobility, this study will focus on the period's bishops and archbishops.

[87] Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility,* p.29, 44-5.
[88] Micheal Hicks, *Bastard Feudalism* (London, 1995), p.5.
[89] Given-Wilson, *The English Nobility*, p.61.

The first chapter will address conceptually, and more fully, what was understood by reputation in late medieval England, establishing its legal and social significance more broadly. It will place the Scandalum Magnatum statutes within the context of defamation law to understand why the nobility were so concerned for their reputations. To do so, the chapter will use legal records, detailing defamation proceedings amongst different social groups, to gain a greater understanding of the significance of reputation to people's daily lives. Exploiting local and church court records, and records from the mayor's court in London, the chapter will consider what can be ascertained about societal attitudes to reputation from defamation law itself, and from surviving cases. In understanding the reputational concerns of another power holding group, in this case the mayor and aldermen of late medieval London, the chapter will explore the relationship between reputation, power and authority. It will also introduce performance as a significant component of the authorities' response to attacks upon their reputations.

Expectation lay at the root of reputation; the ability to meet expectation resulted in praise and positive renown, while failure to live up to the same ideal was punished by criticism. Through the analysis of a range of different types of texts including didactic literature, conduct manuals, and narrative sources, chapter two will explore the relationship between expectation and reputation by examining what it meant to be noble in late medieval England. It will consider how these expectations were employed in contemporary praise and criticism of the nobility and in discussions of noble reputation. It will examine the significance of those ideals associated with chivalric culture and contemporary notions of elite masculinity more generally.

From here, chapter three will consider the nobility's engagement with their own reputations, their social attitudes to reputation, and their awareness of the uses to which those reputations could be put. The chapter will argue that noble reputation depended upon a system of performance, recognition, interpretation, transmission and memorialisation. From here, the chapter will be divided into two parts. Using material from the parliament rolls and the court of chivalry, part one will focus on noble performance and the relationship between these performances, reputation and the expectations explored in chapter two. It will argue that expectation underpinned performances designed to repair, alter and damage noble reputation. The second part of the chapter will use the records of the court of chivalry to discuss the significance of objects and physical display in the formation, transmission and memorialisation of reputation. It will argue that display is key to understanding the ways in which the nobility wished to be perceived and remembered. Exploring the significance of space and place, the chapter will discuss individual, family and collective reputation and the significance of display to each.

Opening with a discussion of the bill posted against Alexander Neville, Archbishop of York, which prompted the re-enactment of Scandalum Magnatum in 1388, chapter four will interrogate the role and importance of reputation in regards to the clerical nobility. It will examine episcopal reputation and the expectations which underpinned it. It will consider what episcopal expectation had in common with the expectations of the secular nobility, and what defined it. The chapter will also study episcopal display and its role in the establishment, personalisation and memorialisation of episcopal reputation.

Chapter five will consider the significance of popularity and the public good to the cultivation of reputation and the exercise of power and authority. It will explore the ways in which popularity and the concept of the public good, featured in engagements with noble reputation in the period immediately before the Wars of the Roses. This final chapter includes three case studies in which noble reputation, clerical and secular, took on particular political significance. The first study will interrogate the role of reputation and popularity in the appellant crisis of 1386-7, and the Lancastrian usurpation in 1399. The second case study will examine the roles of reputation and popularity in the 1405 rising of Archbishop Richard Scrope of York The chapter concludes with the final case study, which demonstrates the role of reputation and popular appeal in the dispute between Cardinal Henry Beaufort and Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester in 1425-6. The study will argue that this incident shows the central role of reputation in noble disputes, and demonstrates the political attentiveness to, and application of, reputation by the nobility themselves.

CHAPTER ONE: CONCERNING REPUTATION

In the parliament of 1384, Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford complained of one Walter Sibille of London. Sibille stood accused of having 'gravely defamed that earl of maintenance'.[1] As a result, the king ordered Sibille's arrest, and he was brought before parliament to answer the charge. The Londoner claimed that he had been unable to secure justice in a cause he had undertaken against Sir William Coggesdale and Sir Nicholas Twyford as a result of the maintenance of the earl. The earl's alleged actions had robbed Sibille of most of his wealth and goods. The earl of Oxford however stood before parliament and '…declared himself completely innocent and blameless of the said maintenance wickedly alleged against him.'[2] The earl said that he would exonerate himself of the charge by any means the court desired, and requested that Walter Sibille 'suffer the penalty included in and provided by the statute against defamers', thereby invoking the Scandalum Magnatum legislation of 1378.[3] Sibille was subsequently committed to prison for three days, before being returned to parliament, whereupon he threw himself upon the king's grace and publically declared that he believed the earl of Oxford to be innocent of the crime of which he had accused him. When asked if he wished to maintain his allegation, Sibille said that he did not, and was convicted of defamation. The court ordered him to pay damages of to the earl and was taken back to prison until he was able to pay this and a fine and ransom to the king. Oxford's employment of the Scandalum Magnatum statutes was evidence of continued noble concern for reputation beyond their initial re-enactment at the behest of John of Gaunt six years earlier.

The Scandalum Magnatum statutes were exclusive to the nobility and royal officers, but they were not unique. Late medieval England had an established legal framework designed to protect individuals at all levels of society from defamation and public abuse. Laws of this kind were introduced to solve particular societal problems and as such reflected the society in which they were written.[4] Introduced by law-makers who were members of the ruling group or government, they reflected the values and concerns of these men. This chapter will examine the wider implications of the Scandalum Magnatum statutes, by considering them within the context of other forms of defamation law.

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[1] *PROME*, Parliament of November 1384, item 12.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] For discussion of the legal-mindedness of late medieval English society see: Edward Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society: Criminal Justice in the Reign of Henry V* (Oxford, 1989), p.29. Anthony Musson, *Medieval Law in Context: The Growth of Legal Conciousness from Magna Carta to the Peasants' Revolt* (Manchester, 2001), p.237.

Like the study of reputation and its social and political implications, defamation suits have been most thoroughly addressed for the early modern period. Studies of defamation in this period began in earnest in the 1970s and 1980s, pioneered by historians like James Sharpe who examined defamation suits in the courts of York.[5] Martin Ingram provided a detailed assessment of subsequent studies in a 2000 essay.[6] Such studies, he argued, explored defamation cases in three ways, and for three purposes: in the examination of pre-modern gender and sexuality, in studies of community, and in consideration of the public regulation of morality.[7] Indeed, the titles of many defamation studies, for both the early modern and later medieval periods, reveal a particular focus on ideas of gender and sexuality. A notable example is Anthony Fletcher's study of early modern attitudes.[8] Ingram himself used the evidence of litigation in English church courts to uncover attitudes to sex and marriage.[9] Historians have been attracted by the relatively strong presence of women in court records in regards to defamation suits.[10] This point demonstrates another feature of historical work on defamation. The richness of court evidence, as material facilitating studies of the social attitudes of non-elite groups, means that such groups have been the primary focus of these works. By the same token, Bronach Kane's recent study of defamation in late medieval York adopted a similar approach to the gentry. She explored the ways in which the gentry sought to protect and maintain their reputation by considering the issues in terms of gender identity and the role of sexual dishonour in male disputes.[11] Whilst Kane's article addressed elite attitudes to defamation, she excluded the nobility, an omission that is part of a wider pattern in the study of pre-modern defamation law. In R.H. Helmholz's introduction to his collection of medieval and early modern defamation cases, the nobility, and the courts most likely to deal with their complaints, were deliberately and explicitly excluded from the collection.[12]

As the works above demonstrate, defamation law was designed to protect the reputations of the 'ordinary' people of late medieval England from the dangers of slander and libel. Using records of court cases heard before church and local courts, we will consider why such measures were deemed necessary, and the kinds of accusations and aspersions people

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[5] J. A. Sharpe, *Defamation and Sexual Slander in Early Modern England: the Church Courts at York* (York, 1980).
[6] Martin Ingram, 'Law, Litigants and the Construction of 'Honour': Slander Suits in Early Modern England' in Peter Coss (ed.), *The Moral World of the Law* (Cambridge, 2000), pp.134-160. A detailed list of defamation studies on pp.137-8.
[7] Ingram, *Construction of Honour,* pp.137-8.
[8] Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England, 1500-1800* (New Haven, 1996).
[9] Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570–1640* (Cambridge, 2009).
[10] See for example: Tim Meldrum 'A Women's Court in London: Defamation and the Bishop of London's Consistory Court 1700-1745' in *London Journal*, vol. 19 (1994) pp.1-20.
[11] Bronach C. Kane, 'Defamation, Gender and Hierarchy in Late Medieval Yorkshire' in *Social History*, vol. 43, (2018) pp.356-374.
[12] *Defam*., p.xi.

endeavoured to defend themselves against. In so doing, we will seek to understand why they felt compelled to defend their reputations in this way – what exactly were they protecting, and why? We can then consider the implications for our understanding of noble reputation and wider attitudes to it. Then, using records from the mayor's court of the city of London, as preserved in the London Letter Books, the chapter will examine the prosecution of slander and defamation made against members of the civic elite involved in urban government, and the motivations and fears underpinning these legal actions. This study will allow us to consider the particular concern for reputation amongst another power-holding group, in order to gain further insight into noble attitudes towards the same.

There are, of course, certain difficulties inherent in extracting social concerns and attitudes from legal sources. As we will see in the next section, legal parameters could be very specific. Legal cases were composed with these parameters in mind in an attempt to maximise the plaintiff's chance of success. The reality of the situation may therefore have been manipulated in advance of the case being brought to court. As such, the records will not always provide us with an accurate account of everything that occurred in advance of the case. There is also the possibility that the plaintiff's case was entirely unfounded and was instead engineered into a social or political attack. Whilst it is important to acknowledge these concerns, they do not negate the usefulness of our source material. In looking for the general values and motivations that underpin these cases, we can best understand this concern and the factors motivating noble regard for reputation. Why was John of Gaunt, the wealthiest noble in England, so concerned about a popular assault on his reputation when it stripped him of none of his wealth or land, the traditional bases of noble power? And why did the earl of Oxford feel compelled to proceed publically against an accusation of maintenance?

I: The Shape of the Law

As we established in the introduction, a reputation consists of everything that is said and known about an individual person or thing.[13] Reputation was a significant part of people's lives and governed the manner in which they moved through society. They were many-faceted and ever-evolving things, dependent upon the opinions of others and transmitted through society by talk. Anthropologist F.G. Bailey argued that reputation dictated a person's ability to discredit others, to forge friendships, to exert influence, to manage their social space and to preserve their personal identity. As such, reputation lay at the heart of an individual's social experience.[14] Acts of defamation targeted the reputations of individuals and groups, and were a prosecutable

[13] Definitions from *OED Online*. (Oxford, 2017), [accessed online: 28 April 2017].
[14] F. G. Bailey, 'Introduction' in F. G. Bailey, *Gifts and Poison: The Politics of Reputation* (Oxford, 1971), p.3.

crime in medieval England at all levels of society. It was said to have occurred when an individual was publically accused of an offence that they had not committed. R.H. Helmholz argued that defamation litigation was a significant, and more-or-less constant, feature of medieval England's church courts. He showed, for example, that of the 113 cases heard in the Canterbury Commissary court of 1373, 18 were concerned with defamation; a total of 16 percent of the year's cases. Likewise, in Lichfield between 1465 and 1467, 45 of the 259 cases were matters of defamation, around 17 percent of the total heard.[15] Originally introduced into the English church courts in 1222, defamation law was part of a larger package of measures introduced by the Council of Oxford to prevent abuses of judicial procedure and, like the Scandalum Magnatum statutes, to safeguard the peace of the kingdom. As such, defamation was considered a public crime; publically made and with public consequences. By implementing defamation law in the thirteenth century, the law acknowledged that reputation was a significant, recognised component of people's lives that merited some form of legal protection, and that this protection was in the interests of the common good. The continued application of defamation law throughout the late medieval period and beyond suggests that these attitudes persisted and that people continued to seek legal protection for their reputations.

In 1381, the consistory court of the diocese of York heard the case of Topcliff vs. Greenhode. John Topcliff of Ripon, a squire of the archbishop of York, accused John Greenhode of defamation.[16] Greenhode had 'imputed the crimes of falseness, perjury and prodigality and other outrageous crimes' to Topcliff and called him a 'false man and false sponger'. He had also asserted that Topcliff was ‘a false man and of bad fame, a poor worthless and abject person' and 'a notorious prodigal'. Greenhode had claimed all of this, Topcliff alleged, to discredit him and thereby prevent him from contracting marriage with Emma Erle of Wakefield. As a result of Greenhode’s speech acts, Topcliff had been left with a damaged reputation. 'The status and fame of the said John Topcliff', the records noted, 'are greatly injured and denigrated and his public character is grievously reviled among good and substantial persons among whom he had previously been of good fame.’ [17] Topcliff intended to prove that this information had been made 'public, notorious and manifest' in Ripon, Wakefield and York and had become a matter of 'public voice and fame'. This was an almost text-book example of a defamation case.

Defamation in the church and local courts was a very precisely defined crime, and a number of criteria needed to be met for a prosecution to be undertaken. Helmholz identified six

[15] R. H. Helmholz, Canonical Defamation in late medieval England in *AJLH,* vol. 15 (1971), p.256.
[16] Topcliff v. Greenhode in *Defam*., pp.4-5.
[17] Ibid.

key components.[18] The first element, *crimen imponunt*, required that a person had been publically imputed of a crime. Such crimes included offences such as theft, sexual offences, sacrilege, leprosy and homicide. The second and third elements, signified by the adverbs '*falso*' and '*malicose'*, required that the accusation of the crime have been made as a result of ungenerous motives. The fourth element, *cum infamatus non sit apud bonus et graves*, required that the accusations had been spoken in the presence of, or spread to, men of good fame. The condition, *vel alio modo gravetur*, required the wronged party to demonstrate that they had been significantly damaged by the accused defamer; this damage could include monetary loss or loss of good name. The sixth and final element, *unde purgatio indicitur*, required that the accused had been subjected to canonical purgation as a result of the defamer's accusation. This was a reference to a public church court at which a defendant was permitted to make a public declaration of innocence supported by other men of recognised good standing. Purgation could only take place if the defamation had become a matter of public fame amongst respectable persons.[19] There are four general themes to be extracted from the intricacies of medieval defamation law. The law acknowledged firstly that the victim of a defamatory act had something to lose as a result of the accusations levelled against them. The act of defamation deprived them of something they had previously possessed, whether materially or ideologically. As such, the law recognised that deliberate defamation was a malicious act intended to damage the victim, and that defamation affected an individual's status and standing before a wider community. As a result, defamation was a public crime which required public remedy.

The parameters set regarding what kinds of accusations constituted defamation meant that many insults and accusations capable of damaging an individual's reputation were not covered by the law, but could be said to have been slanderous.[20] So far as the law was concerned, only a fixed range of accusations could damage an individual's reputation. Yet an individual's reputation did not only exist in a legal sense, but also with a wider social space. The legal environment within which defamation cases were heard lent formal regulation to proceedings within the courtroom, by imposing limits and clear definitions, but rules were impossible in the less rigid, more organic environment of lived experience. There were plenty of insults and accusations that could be levied against men by their rivals which, whilst not legally defamatory, and incapable of affecting a person's reputation in law, could alter what was said about a person by his community, and influence the way in which his neighbours interacted with him. The law was so precise exactly because there were so many ways in which an individual might feel their reputation had been attacked. The law and the courts needed to

[18] Ibid., pp. xvi-xxxix.
[19] Ibid., p.xxiii.
[20] Martin Ingram, *Construction of Honour*, pp.134-160, 139.

prioritise those defamatory attacks that could most adversely reflect an individual's social and legal standing.

Nevertheless, the potential impact of this wider range of insult and accusation was acknowledged by those customs and laws designed to defend the reputations of the powerful from similar verbal assaults. Civic officials sought to protect themselves from loss resulting from defamatory accusations by maintaining these laws and customs. Christian Liddy demonstrated that the authorities of medieval towns had long cultivated customs and ordinances designed to defend their officers from abusive speech.[21] Liddy argued that these 'laws against speech crimes were, in fact, as old as the towns themselves'. These laws were deemed critical and significant. When the new common council of Bristol analysed their ancient customs and ordinances in 1344, the custom against abusive speech aimed at city officials was given prime billing as the first statute preserved in their new civic register.[22] The civic officials, however, were not just defending their reputations in an effort to preserve their social standing; they were also concerned with preserving their power and authority. To this end, unlike standard defamation law, the ordinances of the cities that were designed to defend officials were kept deliberately broad. 'Abusive speech' in this context could encompass a wide range of slanderous speech acts, not only those that imputed to an individual a specific crime. This breadth is reflected in city ordinances. The ordinance against abusive speech in the Little Red Book of Bristol refers to *'vilia verba'* or coarse language, spoken in defamation of city officers, and to attempts to 'maliciously vilipend' them so that they were unable to carry out their duties.[23] Specific definition of the kind of language that would be considered defamatory or slanderous is tellingly absent. In the array of cases brought by the London aldermen in the mayor's court, men and women were accused of a wide range of verbal offences and acts of slander against the aldermen: everything from accusations of corruption, to reminders of the unfortunate fates of previous office-holders and claims that the aldermen were out of touch with the populace.[24] The flexibility of town customs and ordinances in this area put greater power in the hands of the officials. They were left with the discretion to proceed against any kind of speech act that they considered to be in contempt of their authority, and a danger to their individual and collective good fame.

The Scandalum Magnatum statutes took a similar approach. Again, the legal parameters of these protections were notably broad. The original statute of 1275 forbade anyone from

[21] Christian D. Liddy, '"Sir ye be not kyng": Citizenship and Speech in Late Medieval and Early Modern England' in *HJ*, vol. 60, no. 3, (2017), pp.588-9.
[22] Francis B. Bickley (ed.), *The Little Red Book of Bristol*, vol I. (Bristol, London, 1900) p.28.
[23] Ibid. To rate or regard as being of little value or consequence; to treat contemptuously or to slight.
[24] For jurisdiction and workings of the mayor's court see: Penny Tucker, *Law Courts and Lawyers in the City of London 1300-1500* (Cambridge, 2007), p.90, 99.

telling or publishing 'any false news or tales whereby discord or...slander' might arise. The fourteenth-century modifications of 1378 and 1388 did little to alter this framework. They too protected the great men of the realm from slander, 'false news, lyes or other such false things'. In so doing, they equipped the nobility with the ability to proceed legally against any insults or slanderous statements they may encounter, whether or not they constituted legal defamation. The power to prosecute and to decide what deserved proceeding against lay firmly in their hands. Instead, the statutes were increasingly precise about the kinds of people who were protected by Scandalum Magnatum legislation. Where the 1275 statute referred only to the 'Great Men' of the realm, the 1378 revival of the statute specified a particular concern with abuse of 'Prelates, Dukes, Earls, Barons and other Nobles and Great Men of the Realm, and also of the Chancellor, Treasurer, Clerk of the Privy Seal, Steward of the King's Household, Justices of one bench or the other and of other great officers of the realm'.[25] The reputations of a wider range of people were considered significant enough to merit the kind of protection previously assigned exclusively to the lords. This was another way in which the lords attempted to secure greater control and power over their reputations. By being specific about to whom the statute applied, they assigned special status to the named parties, and ensured that they could easily bring charges under Scandalum Magnatum without anyone contesting their right to do so. Every office named in the 1378 statute, the prelates, lords, clerks, stewards, and justices were all key components of central royal government and acted as its representatives. By protecting the individual reputations of these lords and officers, the government was protecting itself from political attack.

The implementation and revival of the Scandalum Magnatum statute suggested that the king and lords, much like the civic officials of the period, had very real concerns about the power of words. These concerns focused specifically on the impact speech could have on the good names of the nobility, and acknowledged that such attacks could result in undesirable outcomes. Indeed, Ian Forrest argued that the Scandalum Magnatum statutes were evidence of a growing recognition that great men could be materially harmed by hostile words.[26] The nobility, like the men and women defending themselves against defamation in the church courts, and the aldermen of the cities, had something to lose as a result of defamatory and slanderous allegations.

The Scandalum Magnatum statutes, and other laws designed to protect these groups from this kind of loss, conform to the main themes we identified earlier in this section. They

[25] Statute 1 1378, c.4-6 Ric II in *Statutes. II* (London, 1963), p.9.
[26] Ian Forrest, *The Detection of Heresy in Late Medieval England* (Oxford, 2005), p.151.

acknowledged that defamation and slander could deprive individuals of assets they might otherwise have possessed, and could influence that individual's status and social standing. They also condemned slander and defamation as malicious acts and categorised them as public crimes. We have also established that there existed a broader range of insult, slander and personal attack which could affect an individual's social standing, but which was not covered by standard defamation law. Such insults could still impact an individual's reputation and have major social consequences. This is acknowledged more fully by the laws designed to defend the reputations of the powerful, not by what they said, but rather by what they did not say. The customs defending city officers and the Scandalum Magnatum statutes were deliberately broad so as to lend these groups a greater level of protection, which they could adapt to individual circumstances. The ability of power-holding groups to enact such laws and customs were an expression of power in and of itself. They did however acknowledge the fact that each of these social groups was invested in their reputation and were concerned about the impact defamatory remarks could have on them.

II: Social Capital, Power and Authority

We have established the general shape of the laws designed to protect reputation from defamation and slander in late medieval England. This section will discuss the fears and motivations that ensured the continued use and exercise of these laws. It will consider the reasons why reputation was so important to different members of society, and what exactly the parties of the previous section had to lose from attacks upon their reputations.

The 1383 case of John atte Hatch vs. Thomas Bourgh at the manor court of Havering-atte-Bower in Essex, whilst seemingly modest, demonstrates the central concern that motivated individuals to pursue defamation charges against their accusers.[27] Hatch alleged that Bourgh regularly stood beneath his windows and doors, listening to his private conversations and defaming him to numerous others. As a result, Hatch claimed, he had 'lost the friendship of the neighbourhood' to his significant detriment.[28] Hatch's concern can be explained in part by the sociological concepts of social and cultural capital. Social capital is a form of interpersonal credit, which has been explored extensively by sociologists, most famously Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman and Robert Putnam.[29] It refers to those resources an individual is able to access

[27] Hatch v. Bourgh in *Defam.,* pp.36-7.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital' in John G. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of Theory of Research for the Sociology of Education* (Westport, 1986). James S. Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory* (Massachusetts, 1994). Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York, 2000).

based upon their social connections and relationships. Bourdieu argued that the value of these ties depended upon the connections they in turn were able to mobilise.[30] In other words, a person with a large number of influential friends possessed a higher level of social capital than a neighbour with only a few. As such a higher number of people, looking to further their own influence and raise their own store of social capital, were likely to want to connect with them. They were an investment for others, likely to yield rewards, just as others were able to do for them. Therefore, an individual needed to be able to convince the people around them that they were a sound investment, in order to keep his existing contacts and acquire new ones. They were trading upon their reputations. An individual with a poor reputation, one renowned for cheating, or lying, or for immoral behaviour which was likely to attract scandal, was unlikely to keep their friends and connections for long. They would have been seen as a risky investment, unlikely to wield very much social capital at all.

The networks underpinning individuals' social capital also ensured a steady flow of information between all the parties involved. This information included updates on individuals' reputations. Social capital and reputation were therefore inextricably linked, and anyone hoping to accumulate or employ social capital needed to take particular care to guard their reputations. In considering former peasant communities in Europe, F.G. Bailey concluded that in such societies there existed a small fund of common knowledge about all members of the community, and that everyone had access to that knowledge. This fund was made up of reputations. In order for a person to reap the maximum benefit from their reputation, they need to ensure that his or her public self appealed to as many people as possible, with a particular emphasis on those whose help they needed to achieve their goals.[31] It was therefore in an individual's interests to demonstrate and display all of the ways he conformed to the expectations of his society, so that his reputation existed within his community's shared fund of knowledge, in a manner which was beneficial to him. By making insinuations about Hatch's good character to members of their community, John Bourgh endangered Hatch's social capital by damaging his reputation and making him seem like a less sound investment to those upon whose good opinion his social world depended.

Ian Forrest explored the significance of ideas of trust to medieval society, legally and in a broader social sense. He argued that talk around concepts of trust was commonplace in medieval society and that many social practices depended upon the successful communication

[30] Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital' in Nicole Woolsey Biggart, *Readings in Economic Sociology* (London, 2002), pp. 286-7.
[31] Bailey, *Gifts and Poison*, p.4.

of trust.[32] A reputation damaged by defamatory remarks could not only affect an individual's social standing, but their economic prosperity too. There was a direct correlation between a tradesman's reputation and his business success. Any accusation of poor conduct, and particularly accusations touching upon an individual's trustworthiness or undermining the integrity of an individual's goods, could negatively affect their livelihood by driving away their customers. Craig Muldrew had earlier proposed a similar thesis in relation to early modern England, in which he noted that social and economic credit was so dependent upon good reputation that it became a kind of currency in its own right. A loss of good reputation was a significant loss of credit and undermined individual economic prosperity.[33]

Christine Colmere, a woman accused of having leprosy in Canterbury in 1413, claimed to have been 'harmed both in her name and goods' as a result of the accusation against her because none of her neighbours would dare to buy any ale from her, out of fear of being infected by the said disease.[34] Trust in Christine and her product had been eroded, along with her social capital, as her customers sought to distance themselves from her. This accusation was of particular significance, as leprosy was widely thought to be indicative of immorality and untrustworthiness.[35] Indeed, of the 13 defamation cases brought by non-office holders identified in the local and church courts, and the London Letter Books, between 1377 and 1437, four were concerned with accusations of falseness and dishonesty, four with false accusations of theft, two were imputations of perjury, another two were unspecified attacks upon an individual's fame, and three concerned accusations of other forms of moral corruption. Examples of this corruption include the charge against Agnes Neunan, who was labelled a 'Redmodyr' by Richard Dounham in Cambridgeshire in 1383.[36] It was these kinds of accusations that sat under the protections provided by medieval defamation law, as established in the previous section. As we argued there, these accusations were considered the most damaging to reputation, particularly the formalised kind that influenced someone's standing under law.

Defamation law emphasised the significance of a person's 'good fame' under law, particularly to their ability to act as witnesses. Accusations of dishonesty were so potent

[32] Ian Forrest, *Trustworthy Men: How Inequality and Faith Made the Medieval Church* (Princeton, 2018), pp.33-6, 39, 42.
[33] Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 1998), pp.148-9.
[34] Colmere c. Daniel in *Defam.,* pp.5-6.
[35] Carole Rawcliffe, *Leprosy in Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2006), pp.48-55.
[36] Colmere c. Daniel in *Defam.,* pp.5-6, and Neunan c. Dounham in *Defam.,* p.36.

because they questioned a person's legal and social credibility.[37] In both ecclesiastical and secular law, ill fame, poor reputation and the 'suspicion of the countryside' was enough to compel a man to answer a charge; but if there was nothing more, both jurisdictions allowed him to clear himself by compurgation.[38] Poor reputation, in these cases, was enough for a person to be indicted for a crime, but was not, on its own, grounds for conviction. Nevertheless, it placed individuals in rather uncomfortable social positions. Alexandra Shepard examined legal cases from early modern England in which individual witnesses were asked a series of questions in order to establish their trustworthiness. Such proceedings demonstrated that the credibility of witnesses was crucial in legal cases, and that courts paid attention to the 'general creditworthiness' of the witnesses they called. In this legal environment, in which witnesses could be rejected on the grounds of infamy, the perceived virtue, and public knowledge of the virtue, of community members was paramount.[39]

We can identify a number of parallels between the attitudes of individuals like Hatch, and those studied by Shepard, and those of more powerful men. Public officials were motivated by a high regard for their reputations and defended them in order to preserve their social capital and position. The officers in our sources were as eager to defend their social capital as those below them. When William Hughlot was charged with abusing the then-mayor of London, Nicholas Extone between 1387, Hughlot was reported to have said that 'he had Nicholas Exton to thank for his imprisonment, although it was very likely that in the future, after seven years or so, all his lords and friends would desert him'.[40] Extone's position, Hughlot implied, depended on his connection with his friends and on the connections he held amongst the nobility. If Extone should lose one or the other, he would be deprived of his social capital, and in turn his power and his social status, from which he drew his authority. For men in public office, then, there was an additional dimension to the defence of reputation. Their social connections, which depended upon their good reputation and underpinned their social capital, were also key to their claims to power and authority.

The word 'power' conjures thoughts of a range of related terms and ideas: effectiveness, control, authority, dominion and influence. As such, 'power' can be a somewhat nebulous term.

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[37] Smail & Fenster, 'Introduction' in Thelma Fenster and Daniel Lord Smail (eds.), Fama: The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe (Ithaca, 2003). For a similar phenomenon in Italy: Thomas Kuehn, 'Fama as a legal status in Renaissance Florence' in Smail & Fenster *Politics of Talk*, p,27, p.33.

[38] Milsom, S. F. C., *Historical Foundations of the Common Law* (2nd ed.) (London, 1981), p.381

[39] Alexandra Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself: Worth, Status, and the Social Order in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2015), p. 2,10,11.

[40] LMA, Letter Book H, COL/AD/01/008, fo. 210r: '*quod Nicholaus Exton foret regraciatus pro inprisonamento predicto licet forte fuerit post septem annos futuros vel aliter omnes domini et amici sui sibi deficerent*.' My translation is a more literal translation than that in *MoL*, p.490.

Widely used by historians in discussions of a range of issues including lordship, monarchy and politics, the concept itself is often left undefined. A particularly apt example is Sharon Kettering's *Power and Reputation at the Court of Louis XIII - a study of the career of Charles d'Albert*.[41] Whilst the title suggested its status as a keyword, power was never explicitly defined and no framework for its study established. It is perhaps the indistinct nature of 'power' that allows it to be applied in such a variety of circumstances. It acts as a useful collective term indicating interest in an array of concepts, and is easily adaptable for use in wide range of contexts. It is important for our purposes, however, to define 'power' more clearly. If we are to determine the extent to which reputation affects an individual or group's ability to amass or exercise power, we need first to understand what power actually is. Patrick Wormald defined power as 'a regime's ability to get people to do what it wants whether or not they want'. Power, he wrote, was the 'capacity to exert command and extract obedience'.[42] Wormald was dealing largely with regimes; with collective, or institutional power, but the definition can easily be adapted to apply to the individual too: power gives one party the ability to assert their will over that of another. It is the ability to command, and to have that command obeyed. Wormald's definition drew heavily on the work of sociologist Max Weber. Weber asserted that 'power' referred to 'the probability that one actor in a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests'.[43] He suggested that power often involves forcing others to act against their will. Power, then, not only allowed one party to assert their will over another, and have their commands obeyed, it also allowed that party to override any resistance they might encounter.

The definitions supplied by Wormald and Weber however focused on how power works and is exercised. They do not explain why individuals and groups desire power. The work of sociologists Talcott Parsons and Michael Mann can assist us in addressing this gap. Parson defined power as 'a generalised means for attaining whatever goals one wants to achieve'.[44] Similarly, Mann wrote of 'the ability to pursue and attain goals through mastery of one's environment'.[45] Both Parsons and Mann place 'goals,' and the ability to achieve them, at the centre of their definitions of power. Power for Parson and Mann is the ability to get things done. If we combine these ideas of power with those of Weber and Wormald, we arrive at a

[41] Sharon Kettering, *Power and Reputation at the Court of Louis XIII: The Career of Charles d'Albert, duc de Luynes* 1578-1621 (Manchester, 2008).
[42] Patrick Wormald, 'Germanic Power Structures: the early English experience' in Len Scales and Oliver Zimmer (ed.), *Power and the Nation in European History* (Cambridge, 2005), p.105.
[43] Robert F. Berkhofer III, Alan Cooper, Adam J. Kosto (eds) *The Experience of Power in Medieval Europe* (Hamphsire, 2005), p.1.
[44] Michael Mann, *Sources of Social Power vol. 1: A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760* (New edition, Cambridge 2002), p.6.
[45] Ibid.

comprehensive definition of power. Power is a competitive social resource, which allows one party to achieve its goals by successfully asserting its will over the will of others, in spite of any resistance offered. There is an unmistakable similarity between the aims of power, and the motivations that drive individuals to accumulate and defend their social capital. Both power and social capital were social resources, which manifested through an individual's interactions with other people. Where social capital dictates the number of physical and social resources a person can draw upon to achieve their ends, power refers to the ultimate capacity an individual has to draw upon these resources in order to achieve their goals. Social capital is one of the bases upon which power rests, and social capital in turn rested upon reputation.

Authority, too, relied heavily on both individual and collective reputation. Sociologists Girth and Mills argued that the term 'authority' referred to 'legitimate power' and provoked 'voluntary obedience of the subject based on the belief that obedience is his duty'.[46] In her study of Margaret of Anjou, Helen Maurer separated ideas of power from notions of authority.[47] For Maurer, authority was 'the socially recognised right to make certain decisions and to require obedience'.[48] Susan Reynolds drew a similar distinction between power and authority. Power, she asserted, is the ability to get things done, to make things happen, to dominate and control. Authority, on the other hand, requires that the use of such power is acknowledged as legitimate.[49] Power, in other words, was the raw force. When that power is controlled, and the right to use it acknowledged, it becomes authority. Power is the capacity, authority the widely accepted right to use it. It was this legitimacy that was most under threat in the cases in the London Letter Books, in which men and women were charged with slandering aldermen and city officials. The aldermen who brought their accusations before the mayor's court were defending not only their personal reputation, social capital, and power, but the authority of the government they represented. Office holders, like those below them, were concerned for their personal and social well-being. The more powerful they were, the greater number of resources, both material and social, to which they had access. This allowed them to further their interests and ensure their continued prosperity. In order to maintain this power and access, however, it was critical that they maintained the structures that supplied it, and ensured their place within the ruling group.

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[46] Dennis H. Wrong, *Power: Its Forms, Bases and Uses* (New Jersey, 1979), p.23.
[47] Helen H. Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou: Queenship and Power in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2003), p.5.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Susan Reynolds, 'Secular Power and Authority in the Middle Ages' in Huw Pryce & John Watts (eds.), *Power and Identity in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of Rees Davies* (Oxford, 2007), p.11.

As such, reputation was accorded significant concern at all levels of society, and influenced many aspects of individuals' everyday lives. It determined how successfully they interacted with society, how many friends they had, and the number of resources to which they had access. A person of good reputation was more likely to prosper in such an environment, where a man of poor fame would struggle to present himself as a worthwhile social investment. The social networks underpinning social capital facilitated the transmission of reputation, and depended upon shared public knowledge of individuals. This knowledge was reputation. It was therefore in a person's interests to ensure that their public self, their reputation, appealed to the public opinion of his or her society by conforming with expectation. The creation of the socially conforming public self was central to notions of trust and both legal and social credibility. Such concerns were of equal significance to members of ruling groups, and they maintained a similarly vigilant watch over their reputations and the social capital it accrued as a result. For those involved in government, however, these social resources took on an additional dimension. Power, like social capital, was a social resource determined by an individual or group's ability to amass and mobilise resources. Power allowed a party to assert their will over that of others via the deployment of these resources in spite of any resistance offered to the contrary. Equally reliant on reputation, and indeed more so, was authority. Authority was the commonly recognised right of an individual or group to exercise power, and reputation was at the centre of this. The legitimate exercise of power required a general agreement that the individual seeking to use it was generally acknowledged to be entitled to do so. Attacks on reputation undermined claims to legitimacy by targeting the ideological basis upon which that authority rested. Social capital, power and authority were all competitive social resources, and positive reputation enabled their cultivation and maintenance, just as poor reputation endangered them. Attacks upon reputation risked an individual's position in society and it was for this reason that they were guarded so jealously.

III: Competition and Cooperation

Members of ruling groups had distinct reputational concerns, particularly in relation to the exercise and defence of power and authority. Many of the mechanisms of power relied upon the kinds of social interaction governed by reputation. Sociologists Michael Mann and Dennis Wrong demonstrated their significance when they identified three social bases of power: force, influence and command.[50] Two of these bases, influence and command, relied exclusively upon social interaction, whilst the third, force, could be subdivided into two further sub-categories. The first, and least dependent upon reputation and social interaction, was the physical

[50] Wrong, *Power*, p.3, and Mann, *Social Power,* pp.2-3.

enactment of violence, and the ability to cause physical harm. The second, however, was the 'potential use of force' or what Wrong labelled 'the threat of force'. To illustrate the difference between this and physical violence, Wrong compared the firing of a gun to the stereotypical highwayman's threat of 'your money or your life'. In the latter case, the highwayman was not only acting violently, he was engaging in communication with his victim in order to meet his desired ends. He was still exerting power over his victim by forcing them to behave in a way they would not be inclined to naturally. This power resulted from his potential to inflict violence or injury despite him having not yet acted violently. As Wrong argued, threats were used to extract obedience and compliance via social interaction with one's target. Force never actually had to be employed; it was enough for the target to believe you, the aggressor, had the capacity to inflict force upon them.[51] This transaction may involve physical force, but it was not necessarily dependent upon it. Power stemmed from an individual's ability, verbally and ideologically to manipulate their target.

Reputation was central to these beliefs and to this kind of social manipulation. For the threat of force to be successful, the perpetrator needed others to believe that he was capable of enacting it, and this belief was dependent upon his reputation. Successful command was the ability to tell someone to do something and to have them obey. A command might be obeyed out of a socially constructed sense of duty, or out of the fear of physical or emotional force; but it was again dependent upon an individual or group's reputation, and the fear that they were able to enact consequences for disobedience. Similarly, influence was an individual's ability to inspire cooperation, to persuade, to cajole and to incentivise. Each of these techniques relied upon reputation, social interaction and social networks, which were dependent in turn upon social capital. It was the fear of losing this social ability, which motivated Gaunt and the civic authorities to defend their reputations so vehemently. If someone was able to attack them in these ways without consequence, they appeared politically weak and powerless, unable to force, command or influence.

Slanderous remarks against civic officers mirrored the accusations exhibited in the standard defamation cases in the church and local courts by questioning the moral conduct of the targeted officer. These accusations endangered an individual office holder's social connections, and questioned their suitability for their offices. City leaders were private citizens who had become public servants and had sworn to serve on behalf of their communities. They were expected to act in the best interests of these communities, and they also inescapably belonged to them. In many cases it might be their office alone that distinguished them from

[51] Wrong, *Power*, p.25.

their neighbours. As such, in order to justify their position as governors, they needed to demonstrate superiority over those they ruled. Known collectively as *probi homines* or 'worthy men', they derived status from their economic standing, and from their claims to moral superiority. It was therefore important that they were seen to live up to these expectations and that their ability to do so was reflected in their reputations.[52] The need to preserve this image motivated the interrogation of Thomas Maynelle, a grocer, who was brought before the mayor and aldermen in the mayor's court in 1415. He was questioned in regards to 'certain irregular and sinister doings and sayings, and to divers damages, dissensions, disputes and losses'. He was specifically examined over words he had spoken to William Sevenok 'despitefully and menacingly'. Maynelle was said to have told Sevenok that it was 'his duty to conduct himself well and honestly, lest such an end should ensue upon his designs as befell Nicholas Brembre'.[53] Brembre had once been mayor of the city and had been drawn and hanged in 1388.[54] Brembre had cultivated significant connections with Richard II and the royal court, and had used this to gain the upper hand in his struggle with fellow mayoral candidate John Northampton. In doing so, he lost the trust of the citizens of London, and was ultimately indicted for treason and executed on the orders of the Lords Appellant.[55] Primarily, Maynelle was calling upon alderman Sevenok to live up to the moral expectations of his office and reminding him that, as an official of the city, he was expected to be honest and to conduct himself honourably. The downside to reminding the alderman of this in public was that it implied that he had forgotten this responsibility and had been guilty of poor conduct. To add insult to injury, Maynelle followed his warning with a rather stark reminder of what could happen to a city official who lost his good reputation, and the favour of the city. He lost everything else as well, his authority, his power, and his life.

Abuse of office was another common accusation made against civic officials. Attacks of this kind were another means of suggesting that officials were failing to live up to expectation. The implication that they were not serving the good of the community, but abusing their power to feather their own nests therefore constituted a potent political attack. If people believed that their officials were abusing their position in such a way, they endangered their claims to moral superiority and their position as true representatives of the community. In so doing, they risked their authority. In 1415, three men, William Grantham, a grocer, Richard Sutton, a draper, and

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[52] Christian D. Liddy, *Contesting the City: The Politics of Citizenship in English Towns 1250-1530* (Oxford, 2017), p.94, pp.109-112, p.130.
[53] LMA 'Letter Book I' COL/AD/01/009, Corporation of London, folio cxlv, translated in *MoL*, pp.605-6.
[54] Gwilym Dodd, 'Was Thomas Favent a political pamphleteer? Faction and Politics in later fourteenth century England' in *JMH*, vol. 37 (2011), p.399, 404.
[55] *ODNB – Nicholas Brembre*. Also Ruth Bird, The Turbulent London of Richard II (London, 1949) p.86, 89-96.

Henry Anketill, a shearman, were charged for having falsely accused Alderman Thomas Pyke of levying from them a higher sum than was required to meet the requirements of a £1,000 loan made by the city to the king.[56] Similarly, the following year (1416), Robert Cristendom, a draper, was brought before the mayor and aldermen accused of having claimed that the former mayor and then-alderman Thomas Fauconer had caused a false record to be entered against him and his associate Alice Kelseye.[57] Again, this suggestion of moral and professional corruption was in contravention of the expectations of public office, and the accusation struck at the heart of Fauconer's reputation. Attacks targeting the conduct of individual civic officials threatened their claims to the power inherent in their offices, and to their individual authority - their right to exercise that power. If they did not meet expectation, by displaying the moral superiority and wisdom that set them apart from their fellow citizens, then what right did they have to their office?

In questioning Gaunt's lineage, the rumours of 1377 struck at the heart of his claims to his power and authority by questioning his ability to fulfil the fundamental expectations of a nobleman.[58] As a son of the king, he was noble as a result of his great lineage, and this lineage endowed him with personal gifts, including moral superiority. Thus, by questioning his heritage and highlighting alleged immoral behaviour, the rumours attacked the basis of the duke's claims to this nobility. Indeed, the accusations of immorality could easily have been taken as evidence of his alleged lack of nobility, and a failure to meet expectation. If he were truly noble, he would not have conducted himself in so base a manner. By highlighting Gaunt's failure to meet the expectations of his social position, as a person of great lineage and higher moral and virtuous character, the bill-casters deliberately targeted his reputation, social capital and authority. Whilst the allegations in the bills targeted Gaunt's right to his lands and title, the claim regarding his lineage was too outlandish to be accorded any true credence. The accusation, however, constituted a direct attack upon Gaunt's identity, and undoubtedly on a more human level, upon his pride. That anyone felt able to attack his reputation in such a way was a blow to Gaunt and undermined his attempts to project an image of strength. It also highlighted a point of vulnerability in the duke's social armour; his unpopularity was a weakness that could be exploited by his political rivals. Significantly, the bills were evidence of the fact that rumours did not necessarily need to be widely believed in order to have significant political impact.

[56] LMA 'Letter Book I' COL/AD/01/009, Corporation of London, folio clixb.
[57] Ibid., folio clxxxviib.
[58] See introduction, p.1.

Attacks upon reputation left individuals exposed to further assaults, particularly from those with whom they were in direct social competition. Whilst it was unlikely that the bill-casters of 1377 could have directly stripped the duke of any of the cornerstones of his power - of his inherited wealth, land, and ability to raise a large armed affinity - they could weaken his position and restrict his ability to maximise his social capital. The worlds in which both the nobility and civic authorities existed were fundamentally competitive. Members of each social group were vying for limited resources and reward, in which each endeavoured to gain or maintain the upper-hand over the other, whilst simultaneously guarding the mutually sustaining sources that underpinned their positions. In her 2020 exploration of treason and masculinity in late medieval England, Amanda McVitty argued that treason committed by knights and nobility was framed as a betrayal of the homosocial bonds of chivalry and knighthood, and the 'natural masculine bonds between political subjects and the king'.[59] Both gender and reputation were sustained within such an elite homosocial network. Social deviance from the values fostered within it constituted a betrayal of the network. An individual's competitors could seek to capitalise on his continued exclusion from the group. Viewed in this light, attempts to undermine an individual noble's reputation endangered their standing amongst their fellow lords, and with the king. This limited their access to political and social resources and restricted their ability to wield their power and to cultivate social capital. It was this eventuality Gaunt sought to avoid in his response to the Londoners' attacks upon him; he was determined to prove that he still had the power and authority to punish those who had wronged him. He needed to maintain his authority over his social inferiors and defend his position from the incursions of the lords around him.

Whilst the Scandalum Magnatum statutes can therefore be viewed as an act of one lord defending his power and authority from outside competition, in reality the statutes went further. There was a parallel with the city statutes defending the reputations of civic officers, which were designed to defend both the individual and the ruling group as a whole. Social structures and networks meant that damage inflicted upon one reputation often impacted the reputations of those associated with them, by blood, business or friendship. For example when Richard Dounham called Agnes Heunan a 'Redmodyr', he was said to have done wrong, not only to Agnes, but also to her husband Henry.[60] Similarly, when Henry Pott accused Christina, wife of Nicholas Freman, of having stolen a cup, Pott was said to have lied, 'unjustly defaming the said

[59] Amanda McVitty, *Treason and Masculinity in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2020), pp.175-81, quotation p. 181.
[60] Meaning of 'redmodyr' is unclear.

Nicholas and Cristina to their manifest scandal and disgrace, and to their grievance.'[61] By attacking the reputation of these women, the perpetrator was also seen to have besmirched the reputations of their husbands. The household, Shannon McSheffrey argued, operated like a unit of government, not dissimilar to the nobility or civic rulers as *probi homines*. Male householders were responsible for the behaviour of everyone living within their household and for everything that happened beneath it. An errant wife was indicative of poor household management and reflected poorly on men, undermining their masculinity and their specific place within society.[62] As such, a legal defence of reputation made by an individual party was not always in the sole interest of that person. Group reputation and reputation by association were also important motivating factors, and we will see evidence of this in the case of the nobility in later chapters. In these circumstances, the defence of reputation became a collaborative effort. The conduct and reputations of individual officers contributed to the collective reputation of office holders as a collective group. They all drew their authority and claim to office from the same sources, and thus an attack on the conduct of an individual member of the group could very easily be interpreted as an attack on the conduct of the whole. As such, assaults of this kind were interpreted by the authorities as attacks on the structures of power. In order to preserve the reputation of the whole, therefore, an individual might find himself in one of two situations. Either, his fellow group members might choose to sever their connections with him, distancing their reputations from his in order to protect the reputation of the wider group, or they might rally around him and defend him in the interests of the collective whole.

At the same time, whilst attacks upon individual officers could be calculated to separate him from the safety of the group, attacks upon individuals could also be deliberately designed to attack the group as a whole. Richard Bole, a butcher, was brought before the mayor and aldermen in 1388 for insulting alderman William Wottone. When the alderman had declared that Bole's meat was too expensive, the butcher had replied; 'I certainly believe it is too expensive for you because I reckon that you have never bought so much meat for your own use'.[63] And then, despite the alderman clearly wearing his alderman's hood, Bole continued to ask Wottone if he was indeed an alderman. When Wottone confirmed that he was, Bole replied, 'it is good that you and your fellow aldermen should be so wise and prudent as to be able to ride

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[61] Heunan v Dounham in *Defam.,* p. 36, Christina Freman in LMA 'Letter Book H' COL/AD/01/008, Corporation of London, folio cxliii, translated in *MoL*, pp.462-3.

[62] Shannon McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex and Civic Culture in Late Medieval London* (Philadelphia, 2006), pp.137-40, 144-6, 149-50, 175-6, 178. Derek Neal, *The Masculine Self in Late Medieval England (London, 2008)*, p.8, 58.

[63] LMA, Letter Book H, COL/AD/01/008, fo. 226v: '*…ac dictus Ricardus rendit credo bene quod nimis care sunt pro te quia vt puto nunquam emisti tantas carnes ad vsum tuum proprium*.' The translation in *MoL*, pp.502-3 is in archaic language; the one provided is my own.

without difficulty on the pavement just as some of you have been riding'.[64] Bole's insult was two-sided. This was a personal attack upon Wottone as an individual, but it was also an attack on Wottone as a representative of the aldermen as a group. Not only were the aldermen out of touch with the people they ruled and not only did the aldermen have no idea about how much it cost to purchase meat, they had also been abusing their positions by lackadaisically ignoring rules others in a less privileged position were bound to follow. They were abusing the power of their office. The attack on Wottone, therefore, had wider implications for the reputation of the group, threatening the reputations of all its individual members.

The correlation between individual and collective reputation meant that individual officers did not always even need to have been specifically named for a case to be undertaken against an accuser. In these incidences, it was not the reputation of the individual that mattered. Rather, the fact that the person whose reputation was under attack was an office holder was enough to prompt action. This was evident in the case of John Foxtone, who was interrogated in regards to an incident involving one William Warde, a cutler of York, and an unidentified alderman and city clerk in 1382. Foxtone had promised Warde that he would assist him in gaining entry into the London craft of cutlers. To assist with this, Foxtone had taken six marks from Warde, and had told him that he had paid an alderman half a mark from this sum, and another half to a clerk of the city in order to try to bring this about. When questioned on this matter, Foxtone admitted that he had not given money to either an alderman or a clerk for this purpose, but confessed that he had indeed said so. Despite never having named any individual parties, Foxtone was also indicted for having defamed the unidentified alderman and clerk.[65] He had called all the aldermen and clerks of the city into disrepute, and the officials closed ranks to protect themselves. There was strength to be found in unity. Much like these assaults on the London officials, John of Gaunt derived a degree of safety in 1377-78 from the fact that any assault on his authority endangered not just his position, but the positions of those who drew their power from similar sources. This was another example of collective, collaborative reputation. Accusations of this nature made against Gaunt were troubling to all his fellow lords, and a threat to the wider group he represented. It was these considerations that led to the re-issuing of the Scandalum Magnatum statutes in 1378 and 1388.

It was not only the other lords who had an interest in upholding the nobility's collective authority, however. The London records preserve examples of action being taken against those

[64] Ibid.: '*…quod dixit bonum est quod tu et socii tui aldermanni sitis sapientes et circumspecti quia leuiter poteritis equitare super pauimentum sicut aliqui ex vobis equitauerunt.*' The translation is my own.
[65] LMA, Letter Book H, COL/AD/01/008, Corporation of London folio clvii, LMA, Letter Book H, COL/AD/01/008, Corporation of London, translated in *MoL*, pp.474-5.

accused of having offended or insulted lords in 1378. On 28 October, for example, a wax chandeler called John Maynard was brought before the mayor, aldermen and common council for having offended the earl of Buckingham, the king's youngest uncle, and his servants. The mayor had been impeached before the 1378 parliament for Maynard's offences.[66] This was followed by the arrest of Thomas Knapet, a clerk of the church of St. Peter the Less on 8 November, 'for having used abusive words touching the duke of Lancaster'. The offence had occurred in the house of one John Shepeye and had been witnessed by John, his servants and another man named Thomas Hiltone. Thomas Knapet was committed to Newgate 'until he could purchase the duke's favour and that of the city'.[67] These crimes were then prosecuted in the mayor's court. By defending the lords, the civic authorities not only made a gesture of good will to the king and nobility, they also defended the reputation of the city, and the position they and the lords shared: that of representatives of royal government. The lords and civic authorities had an interest in upholding each other's claim to authority as they made use of similar narratives of justification. Whilst the lords might take issue with individual officers, and officers with individual lords, each group had a collective vested interest in supporting the authority of the other.

There was another form of collective reputation at stake in accusations levelled at the London authorities: that of the city itself. The aldermen, mayor and other officials collectively represented London, and the city's reputation was tied up with theirs. In 1383 Hugh de la Pole of Wales was brought before the mayor and aldermen for having gone around the city begging and pretending to be injured. He had spread false reports of the ongoing war in Flanders, claiming to have been injured on the assault on Ipres. Pole told of a disagreement between the bishop of Norwich, who was leading the assault, and the English knights who had gone with him. The records claim that these reports, and Pole's deceptions, could have resulted 'in the manifest scandal of the City of London; the more especially as the same city, by such lies so fabricated therein, might very easily be everywhere defamed, as being the planner and inventor thereof, and the whole kingdom might readily be disturbed and disquieted thereby'.[68] There was fear of the civil unrest that could be caused by the spreading of false news, but also fear that the city itself was being defamed as a result. Should civil unrest result and spread to other parts of the kingdom, London would be left disreputable as the originators of the same. The officials were therefore not only responsible for policing their own behaviour to protect their personal reputations and the good-standing of their offices; they were responsible for the reputation of the entire city. We see this kind of wider collective reputation manifesting itself amongst the

[66] LMA, Letter Book H, COL/AD/01/008, Corporation of London, folio xciv b, translated in *MoL*, p.424.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid., folio clxv, translated in *MoL* pp.479-80.

nobility, in areas that will be explored in more detail in chapters three to five. An individual noble was a representative of the nobility as a whole, of his family, and of the kingdom at large.

The competition and conflict that endangered individual reputation, however, also damaged collective reputation and undermined cooperation. Public disorder was of particular concern in medieval England, and so efforts to defend the reputations of civic officials and the nobility from slanderous remarks, false news and internal discord were also conscious attempts to keep the peace. In sentencing John Foxtone for spreading false reports in 1382, the authorities claimed that his accusations had been particularly dangerous to the peace of the city because 'by such accusations, each alderman might be suspicious of another'.[69] Discord amongst the ruling group of the city was problematic because it endangered group cohesion. Disputes between office holders could very easily descend into widespread public disorder, and result in a loss of faith in the authorities. False reports could also generate discord between social groups, and risk the peace of the realm. In 1382 Stephen Scot, a maltman, was brought before the mayor and aldermen. It was claimed that he had visited many places within and beyond the city 'falsely saying and maliciously lying' that the mayor of London had been committed to the Tower of London.[70] Likewise, in 1388 William Asshewell, a beadle, was charged for having spread a rumour claiming that two aldermen, John Churchman and Hugh Fastolf, had been detained in the Tower of London by the orders of the king's council. Asshewell had also alleged that Churchman had had his head broken by the duke of Gloucester.[71] In each case, the overriding concern of the authorities was public disorder. Rumours of discord between the city authorities, the king and the lords could easily lead to conflict and civil unrest. They threatened the reputations of the officials involved, as well as the reputations of the lords. If it was widely believed that Churchman and Fastolf had been arrested for justifiable reasons, then they were likely to lose their authority as suitable office holders. If it was believed they had been wrongly arrested, this could trigger an outcry and be taken as evidence of the lords overstepping their bounds. This in turn may have led to violent protest and unrest.

This section has demonstrated the connection between criticism and expectation in attacks upon reputation. Attacks upon the reputations of members of power-holding groups suggested a failure to live up to the expectations intrinsic to their positions, and allegations of corruption and selfishness in particular targeted the supposed moral superiority of those who ruled. It was these kinds of attacks against which the city ordinances against slander and the

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[69] LMA, Letter Book H, COL/AD/01/008, fo. 157v: '*Et quia per talia dicta vnusquisque aldermannus possit habere suspicionem super alium*.'
[70] LMA, Letter Book H, COL/AD/01/008, Corporation of London, folio cxliii, translated in *MoL*, p.460.
[71] Ibid., folio ccxxix, translated in *MoL*, pp.507-8.

Scandalum Magnatum statutes sought to defend their orchestrators. These attacks threatened both individual prosperity within competitive social environments and the mutually sustaining cooperation of the groups to which they belonged. Individuals strove to ensure their continued membership of these groups for their own social and political safety, whilst also attempting to pursue avenues to their own personal advantage. Reputation was key to both these ends, and the laws and prosecutions designed to defend it reflect these concerns. Ultimately, the preservation of the peace and prosperity of the realm was the central focus of these laws. They sought to prevent disputes between individuals over reputation from descending into violence and to ensure continued cooperation *within* power-holding groups and *between* them. This ambition in itself allowed these power-holding groups to portray themselves in-line with expectation as defenders and maintainers of the common good.

IV: Public Penance and Punishment

In this section we will consider the penalties the law provided for the perpetrators of slander and defamation, and the wider significance of these official responses to subversive speech. Focusing on the importance of publicity, performance, and the proper assignation of blame and shame we will highlight the patterns in these responses across society and consider the implication of these patterns for our wider study of noble reputation.

To begin, it will be beneficial to define more thoroughly what I mean by a performance, particularly in relation to performances involving speech. Most of the performances discussed in this thesis involve words. Often, this is a result of the nature of the surviving records, which prioritise the recording of words over other aspects of performance. Words, however, can be just as performative as actions. In the 1950s J. L. Austin, a philosopher of language, argued that words were used for more than describing, reporting and recording. Words could also *do things.* Austin termed these speech acts 'performative sentences.'[72] The purpose of a performative sentence was not to describe what was being done, but actually to do it. Speech acts were powerful performances in their own right, but context too was significant. In order for a performance to be successful, it required the following preconditions: a) there needed to be a general acceptance of the conventions involved in the performance; b) the act needed to involve the appropriate persons and circumstances; c) the procedure needed to be properly executed; d) the procedure needed to be completed; e) the pre-conditions of thought and feeling required for the procedure must be met; and f) all participants must subsequently conduct themselves in

[72] J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford, 1975), p.6.

compliance with the performance.[73] Similarly, sociolinguist Dell Hymes developed his S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model in the 1970s to frame his belief that speech acts derived meaning not just from the words and grammar used in a speech act, but from the circumstances in which they were spoken.[74] Hyme's model posited that in studying a speech act, special attention should be paid to the physical, temporal, psychological and cultural circumstances of the speech act, as well as to the participants, the audience, the goals of the speech act, the order in which speech acts occurred, the method used to communicate the speech act (the language used etc.) and the social rules and conventions which underpinned it.[75]

The London Letter Books supply details of the verdicts and punishments delivered against those convicted of defamation against non-office holders. These punishments follow a generally consistent trend, based on sensory practices of publicity, which involved sight, sound, and touch. Alice Godrich, who was indicted for having falsely raised the hue and cry against William Walworth in 1379, was sentenced to the pillory or 'thewe'.[76] Likewise, Henry Pott, who was accused of having used sorcery falsely to accuse Christina Freman of stealing a cup, was sentenced to the pillory, and in his case, the sheriffs were ordered publically to proclaim the reason for his punishment.[77] In 1382, Robert Berewold was brought before the mayor and aldermen to answer an accusation that he had used soothsaying and the art of magic to inform Alan, a water bearer, that Johanna Wolsy had stolen a cup from the house of Matilda de Eye. This accusation had been to the 'scandal and manifest disgrace and grievance' of Johanna. Berewold confessed to the offence, and it was decided that he should be punished because, 'by such soothsaying, magic arts and falsities, good and lawful men and women might easily, and without deserving it, incur injury in their name and good repute'. He was sentenced to the pillory, with the tools of his sorcery hung around his neck.[78] Like Pott, the reason for Berewold's punishment was publically to be proclaimed by the sheriffs. Alan the water bearer, who had believed Berewold's claims and publically declared Johanna a thief within the parish of St. Mildred Poultry, was ordered to go to church at the hour of mass and confess to the parishioners there that he had falsely defamed her.[79] The focus of all these punishments was repair. They were attempts to 'set the record straight' and to ensure that dishonour fell upon the correct party. Joanna Wolsy's case is particularly illustrative. By publically displaying Berewold in the pillory, with the bread, peg and knives that he had used in his sorcery, the authorities were making sure

[73] Ibid. pp.14-15.
[74] Dell Hymes, *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach* (Philadelphia, 1974), pp.55-62.
[75] Ibid.
[76] LMA, 'Letter Book H' COL/AD/01/008, Corporation of London, folio cxiv translated in *MoL,* pp.433-4.
[77] Ibid., folio cxliii translated in, *MoL,* pp.462-3.
[78] Ibid., folio clv, translated in: *MoL*, p.472-3.
[79] Ibid.

that everyone who saw him knew that he had been found guilty of a crime. The people who saw him would then begin to transmit this news to their neighbours until Berewold's offences entered the pool of common knowledge the community shared. As a result, he would suffer a reduction in his social capital. In so doing, they rendered him a less trustworthy person than Johanna; her word was worth more than his, and so she was the one who should be believed. Alan the water bearer's confession outside the church would further repair Johanna's reputation amongst her immediate neighbours. The time and place of the ordered confession would guarantee that it was heard by as many people as possible. Like canonical purgation, the punishment designed by the civic authorities was intended to restore the maligned individual to pristine fame, by ensuring their innocence was transmitted through talk. Attempt was made not only to restore her legal reputation, but also her social reputation. The latter, however, was more difficult. It is likely that there would be people within the community whose image of Johanna had been permanently altered by the accusation made against her. Whilst her standing in the law was protected, it was impossible completely to safeguard her popular reputation, and, by extension, her social capital.

The sentences given to those found guilty of slander against city officials in London made even more clear the performative, as well as public, nature of punishment for defamation. In 1413, for example, Geoffrey Lovey, a mercer, was brought before the mayor and aldermen on a charge of cursing and slandering an alderman. Lovey had attacked his former master, Alderman Thomas Fauconer, in beseeching God openly before the people that hell might devour him' and had uttered 'many insulting and abusive words to the same Thomas Fauconer, in calling him false and in saying that the same Thomas had completely destroyed him'.[80] Lovey repeated these things before the mayor and aldermen, and 'there openly insulted the said Thomas, to the shame of the said Thomas Fauconer and to the manifest scandal and injury of the estate of aldermanry of the said city'.[81] Lovey's run-in with Thomas Fauconer was part of an ongoing saga.[82] He had been condemned to the pillory for slandering the alderman in 1411, but Fauconer had requested that the sentence be remitted on condition of Lovey's future good

[80] LMA 'Letter Book I' COL/AD/01/009, fo. 123v: '*...supplicando deum palam coram populo quod infernus eum deuoraret et plura verba contumeliosa et opprobriosa eidem Thome ffauconer vocitando eum falsum et dicendo eundem Thomam ipsum Galfridum penitus destruxisse*.'

[81] LMA 'Letter Book I' COL/AD/01/009, fo. 123v: '*...et dictum Thomam palam ibidem maledixit in dicti Thome ffauconer dedecus et status aldermanneriae dicte Ciuitatis scandalum et deterioracionem manifestam*.'

[82] For the Lovey case see: Caroline Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages: Government and People 1200-1500* (Oxford, 2004), p.145.

behaviour towards him.[83] The power not only of judgement, but of remission rested exclusively with London's mayor and aldermen. In 1388 Simon Terry, gate-keeper of the sheriffs' counter, was sentenced to prison for insulting Alderman Adam Bamme.[84] This punishment was later remitted. Thomas Derlyng confessed to slandering Alderman John Penne in 1412, and was condemned to the pillory.[85] This sentence too was remitted. This pattern of punishment, centred on public confession and public remission, suggests that the punishments themselves were not the main purpose of the trial and conviction of these men and women for their trespasses against the city's elite. What was more significant was that the authorities were seen to have detained the perpetrator and proceeded against them.

Anthropologist James C. Scott argued that this kind of behaviour was typical of the relationship between the dominant and subordinate parties when the dominant had been insulted or wronged. The dominant party reaffirmed its position symbolically by proceeding with a public performance, and this was more important to it than the act of punishment itself.[86] The prosecution of offences against the city officials were public performances in their own right, designed to send a message to the wider population about the authority of the aldermen and mayor, and their attitudes to such insults and behaviour. By remitting the punishments of those found guilty, the aldermen in question not only demonstrated the desirable character traits of mercy and Christian charity, but also communicated the strength of their power; they were secure enough, they implied, that they could afford to be magnanimous.[87] We can comfortably conclude, therefore, that the final punishment handed out by the mayor's court was not as significant as the act of publically prosecuting the case. The performance of power was key to the authorities' response.

The same was true of the actions taken against slander and defamation by the lords. As we have seen, whilst the 1378 Scandalum Magnatum statute made multiple modifications to the original statute of 1275, the two remained the same in one respect. The 1378 version did not change the punishment devised for any who flouted the statute. Both versions required that the person caught spreading the rumour or false news be imprisoned until the original author of the tale could be brought before the court. This stipulation would suggest that the purpose of

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[83] LMA 'Letter Book I' COL/AD/01/009, fo. 106v: '*Qui quidem Thomas ffauconer supplicauit eisdem maiori et aldermannis quatenus execucionem iudicii predicti respectuare dignarentur super bono gestu predicti Galfridi eidem Thome imposterum.*'

[84] LMA 'Letter Book I' COL/AD/01/009, Corporation of London, folio ccxxix, translated in *MoL*, pp.506-7. For the sheriff's counter see: Caroline Barron, 'The Later Middle Ages 1270-1520' in Mary D. Lobel, *The British Atlas of Historic Towns, Volume III: The City of London from Prehistoric times to c.1520* (Oxford,1990), p.44.

[85] 'Letter Book I' COL/AD/01/009, Corporation of London, folio cxvib, translated in *MoL*, pp.585-6.

[86] James C. Scott, Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts (New Haven, 1991), p.58.

[87] Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages,* p.145. Helen Carrel, 'The Ideology of punishment in late medieval English towns' in *Social History*, vol. 34 (2009), pp.301-20, pp.307-8.

reissuing the statute was not to devise a new punishment for the crime. Instead, it sent a very clear message that these kinds of offences would not be tolerated. It was the message sent by re-stating the statute that was most significant. Just like the Londoners who had their sentences remitted by the aldermen they had insulted, it was the act of proceeding, rather than the ultimate outcome, that most interested the lords. In implementing the statute, the lords were engaging in a kind of performance, designed to be talked about and discussed until the message they wanted to convey was successfully transmitted. Like the punishments and solutions applied in the standard defamations cases, and those applied to individuals found guilty of slandering the London aldermen, the statutes were designed to provide remedy for the injured party. The important aspect of the sentences was not simply to punish the guilty, but to repair the reputation of the injured. It was this need for performed reparation, which motivated Gaunt to request that parliament openly proclaim that it believed him innocent of the crimes of which he had been accused in 1377.[88] It was not enough for Gaunt that those in parliament believed him innocent; he required that his innocence be transmitted as far as possible. It was public performance that triggered the talk that could begin to repair the damaged reputation, and ensured its transmission to as wide an audience as possible. Public performance was central to reputation control across all levels of society.

The lords tried to defend themselves with additional kinds of public performance. For example, in the parliament of 1377, John of Gaunt asserted the he was not a traitor, as popular rumour had claimed. Rather, the person who had accused him of this crime 'was himself the obvious and real traitor, for such conflict might have brought about the destruction of the same kingdom forever.'[89] The term 'traitor' was both politically and socially charged. A convicted traitor was not only deprived of his life, but of his honour, reputation and property too.[90] Like the other attacks targeting Gaunt in this period, the accusation had been levelled at the duke in an attempt to condemn him, undermine his authority, and strike at the heart of his power. By turning the accusation back upon his attackers, Gaunt was sending a powerful message of his own. If a traitor was a person who neglected and endangered the prosperity of the realm, threatening king and kingdom, then a man who spoke false and wicked words against a lord, risking violence and the breakdown of law and order, was clearly a traitor. By condemning those who had moved against him, Gaunt sought to regain the upper hand and discredit his enemies. It was as much a public performance as the trials heard in the mayor's court, and underlined one of the key messages of the Scandalum Magnatum statute: it was in the interest of

[88] PROME, parliament of October 1377, items 13-14.
[89] Ibid., item 14.
[90] J. G. Bellamy, *The Law of Treason in England in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1970), p.139.

the kingdom that the reputations of the lords be protected from the perils of rumour and false news.

This tactic was repeated when Gaunt called for the renewal of the Scandalum Magnatum statute in the parliament of 1378. The government publically condemned the perpetrators of speech crimes against the lords using a rather colourful array of language. The sentiment was similar to that expressed by Gaunt the year before. 'These liars and gossips who are called back-biters', the 1378 parliament rolls record, 'resemble dogs who chew raw meat. For the said false back-biters thus do this when, with their evil words, they devour raw good and loyal people'.[91] The back-biters were compared unfavourably with animals, their behaviour rendering them less than human and base and beast-like. This description was juxtaposed with the 'good and loyal' people they 'devoured' with their words. In this way, they were once again depicted as traitors, working against the good of the wider kingdom. Interestingly, these beast-like descriptions were similar to those employed by chroniclers describing the rebels of 1381.[92] The same kind of language was used to condemn similar subversive behaviour. The lords' response was to engage in a reputation game; they defended their reputations by undermining those of their detractors.

The punishments devised for perpetrators of slander and defamation were always public affairs and were designed to repair the reputation that had been damaged. They did this by triggering the right kind of talk amongst the right kind of people. Theoretically, this requirement allowed individuals to regain their good reputation and by extension their previous levels of social capital. What was important was ensuring that the repaired reputation be transmitted amongst those who were best placed to assist the reputation holder in meeting their personal goals. Public punishments were also designed to assign the blame and shame that the act of defamation or slander had generated to the correct party. Punishments for this kind of crime were, in essence, public performances. For the civic officers in our sources, it was the act of proceeding, the performance of the trial, which was most significant and was an expression of power in and of itself. These attitudes were shared by the lords. They too arranged performances to repair their reputations that were designed to generate talk, and it was this talk that had the power to repair. The renewal of the Scandalum Magnatum statutes sent a wider message about the nobility's attitude to their reputations and to attacks made upon them. Attacks by the nobility on those who attempted to damage their reputations were another way in which they sought to repair the damage inflicted. If those who had slandered them were

[91] *PROME*, parliament of October 1378, item 9.
[92] For discussion see: Barbara A. Hanawalt, *Of Good and Ill Repute: Gender and Social Control in Medieval England* (Oxford, 1998), pp.12-3.

painted in so negative a light that no one respectable would want to be seen to agree with them, then the accusations lost some of their sting. In understanding these methods of defence and repair, we gain a greater understanding of the ways in which those in power sought to regain control over their reputations in the wake of attacks. Official defence of reputation made use of many of the same tools as the original attacks; they were public, they required reliable witnesses, they involved altering the reputational information shared within the community's shared pool of knowledge, and they relied upon talk for transmission. These were also key features of the laws explored earlier in this chapter. That the nobility and city authorities shared these methods and attitudes with those below them suggests that throughout society there was a shared language and range of attitudes underpinning the social deployment and regulation of reputation.

Conclusion

Reputation was a recognised and significant societal force, which governed the ways in which people lived their day-to-day and political lives. The laws created to defend reputation represent these wider attitudes and demonstrate the processes society implemented to protect individuals and groups from social, financial and legal harm as a result of defamatory attacks. Laws also represented the general recognition of the fact that acts of defamation deprived an individual of an asset they might otherwise have possessed. Insult and accusation had very real social consequences against which everyone, at all levels of society, had an interest in defending themselves. Social interaction, which was governed by reputation, lay at the heart of social capital, power and authority. People were so concerned about the consequences of defamation because reputation had such a large impact on the ways in which they lived their daily lives and thought about themselves. Reputation was central to ideas of trust, credibility and political legitimacy. Like the cultivation of power, the quest for positive reputation could be competitive, in which damage to individual reputation could lead to individual misfortune and social exclusion. It could also, however, be collaborative. Defence of collective reputation could foster cooperation between individuals in order to defend the shared power, authority and social standing resulting from membership of the wider group. Defamation law, and city ordinances and the Scandalum Magnatum legislation were examples of this kind of wider cooperative reputation, which both sustained, and was sustained by, the reputations of its individual members.

Criticism of groups and individuals targeted their ability to meet the expectations of their social positions. These expectations prioritised the supposed moral superiority, better

character and public mindedness of members of society's ruling groups. This kind of criticism was particularly dangerous to the reputations of these individuals and the wider groups with whom they were associated. The particular emphasis placed on the protection of the peace of the realm in those laws designed to protect elite reputation both reinforced this expectation, and demonstrated collective noble concern for the common good. Punishments aimed publically to restore a wrongfully damaged reputation by triggering talk to alter the community-shared pool of knowledge in order to help regain reputation and restore associated social benefits. Public performance was a key aspect of both legal proceedings and punishments in order to ensure that blame was assigned to the correct party, and that loss of credibility was inflicted upon the defamer, not the defamed.

We find similarities in the ways in which ordinary men and women, the civic authorities of London, and the nobility, sought to defend themselves against defamation, and the manner in which they addressed it when it occurred. That the former two groups were eager to defend their reputations is unsurprising: their reputations were crucial to their economic livelihoods and to their positions in society, and, for the city officials, to their continued occupation of their offices. Their reputations made them who they were, and they had little to fall back on when those reputations failed. The nobility, meanwhile, whilst equally eager to protect their reputations, did not rely so heavily on reputation to maintain their status. The mainstays of their power were their inheritances, their land and their family connections. That their attitude to defamation should be so similar to those of their civic counterparts is indicative of their *particular* concern for their reputations in spite of this. It was a further component of their power and, crucially, of their authority, their recognised ability to wield it. A poor reputation could not directly deprive a lord of his status as a member of the nobility, but it could restrict his ability to act, and prevent him from achieving wider dynastic and political goals. A nobleman's reputation was not all he was, but it did lend him strength, and the ability to thrive in a competitive environment amongst his fellows and in the face of an increasingly vocal commons. The defamation laws of late medieval England we have considered in this chapter emphasise the key themes we will explore in subsequent chapters, for both the secular and clerical nobility. They demonstrated an awareness of the correlation between reputation and power, both social and political, and they acknowledged the connection between reputation and authority. Ultimately, like the earl of Oxford's action against Walter Sibille in 1384, defamation laws demonstrated the significance of expectation, public performance, collective reputation, and popular appeal to the formation, defence and repair of reputation.

CHAPTER II:
NOBLE EXPECTATION

In the latter half of the 1380s, the Chandos Herald completed his biographical poem of Edward the Black Prince, eldest son of King Edward III. The Herald's poem engaged directly with the Black Prince's reputation, offering praise intended to enhance and promote it. It begins with a consideration 'Des nobles condiciouns du prince' or, 'Concerning the noble qualities of the prince'.[1]

> This noble prince of whom I have spoken,/ From the day that he was born/ Thought of nothing beyond loyalty,/ Nobility, valour and goodness,/ And he was gifted with prowess./ Such was the highness of this prince/ That he desired all the days of his life/ To put all his thoughts/ to the keeping of justice and right/ And the prince's upbringing/Right through from his infancy/ His will was honourable and noble/ The prince learned of largesse/ Because joy and honour/ were in his heart perfectly/ From the first commencement/ of his life and in his youth./ Listen, it is good time that I address/ The virtue of my subject/ How he was, it's clear/ So noble so bold, so valiant/ And so courteous and so wise/ And so well loved holy church/ Heartily and by all ways/ And especially the Holy Trinity/ The feast, and in solemnity/And began to support/ Right from the first of his life/ And supported all his life/ In good heart without thought of jealousy.[2]

In this passage, the Herald identified a series of traits that categorised the prince as noble. Firstly, the prince had been endowed with many virtues. Some of the virtues identified by the Herald were of a general nature: the prince exhibited loyalty, valour and goodness. Elsewhere, the praise touched on more specific forms of virtue. The prince had an 'honourable and noble' will, was 'courteous', and understood the principle of largesse. He was also 'so wise', sought to maintain 'justice and right', 'well loved holy church' and was 'gifted with prowess'. These virtues and attributes allowed the Prince to fulfil his social obligations. Valour equipped him for battle, his great courage marked him a good companion, and his wisdom, knowledge of largesse, and belief in justice, identified him as a good and capable lord. In each of these regards, the Prince met or exceeded the expectations of a man of his social standing. The Herald's decision to praise the Prince in the manner in which he did was very deliberate. He focused on attributes that would serve to enhance the Prince's reputation by emphasising the ways in

[1] Eleanor C. Lodge and Mildred K. Pope (eds.), *Life of the Black Prince by the Herald of Sir John Chandos* (Oxford, 1910), pp.2-3 lines 61-92.
[2] The translation is my own, For alternative translation see: Chandos Herald, 'Life of the Black Prince' in Richard Barber (ed., trans.), *The Life and Campaigns of the Black Prince* (Chatham, 1979) pp. 85-6. My translation is more literal.

which he was able to demonstrate his nobility. It was this nobility of person and character, which justified the Prince's place within society and made him deserving of praise and positive reputation. In an earlier section of the poem, the Herald praised the Black Prince as the son 'of the noble king Edward, who never had a coward's heart' and of Queen Philippa, who was' the perfect root of all honour, nobility, wisdom, valour and largesse'.[3] This familial association, too, was a very deliberate decision on the Herald's part. Lineage was key to nobility, and the Prince had inherited his capacity for virtue, lordship and prowess from his parents.[4] The Prince was noble by blood, he was able to maintain that nobility by acting nobly, and his ability to meet these expectations lay at the heart of his reputation.

In chapter one, we touched upon the relationship between reputation and expectation. Officials in London were called upon to live up to the expectations inherent in their offices, and any suggestion that they had failed to do so could be prosecuted as a form of defamation.[5] These expectations were not limited to office holders; all individuals within any given society live subject to the expectations of those around them. The ability to meet expectation results in positive reputation and any failures are of detriment to the same. Drawing from sociology, Fenster and Smail argued that being of 'ill repute' in medieval Europe indicated that an individual had violated their society's standards of acceptable behaviour.[6] In so doing, they endangered their social standing and good name. Similarly, Judith Butler asserted that 'gender [was] a project which [had] cultural survival at its end' and that those who failed 'to do their gender right' were exposed to punishment and censure.[7] There are inescapable parallels here between gender and reputation and between the processes underpinning each aspect of personal and social identity. To avoid social punishment, in either regard, a person had to conform to society's expectations. These expectations, Barbara Hanawalt suggested, consisted of unwritten codes of behaviour that determined whether an individual person was of good reputation or bad.[8] It was this range of social expectations that made criticism and defamation effective. As anthropologist James C. Scott asserted, reputations could only be damaged or improved upon if the social spaces in which those reputations existed also shared a set of normative standards against which individual conduct could be measured.[9] What makes studying these expectations more difficult is the fact that a society's social rules were rarely

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[3] Pope & Lodge, *Life of the Black* Prince, p.2, lines 55-62. Again the more literal translations are my own: For an alternative see: Chandos Herald, 'Life of the Black Prince' in Barber, *Life and Campaigns,* p.85-6.
[4] Nigel Saul, *For Honour and Fame: Chivalry in England 1066-1500* (London, 2011), p.172.
[5] Chapter one, p. 47 of this thesis.
[6] Barbara A. Hanawalt, "*Of good and ill repute' : gender and social control in medieval England* (New York, 1998), p.1.
[7] Judith Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory' in *Theatre Journal*, vol. 40 (1988), p. 528.
[8] Ibid., p.14.
[9] James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance : hidden transcripts* (New Haven, 1990), p.143.

made explicit; they were implied, learned and policed via gossip and criticism.[10] As such, praise and criticism of personal and collective conduct drew upon the same range of social expectations as reputation itself. By considering examples of praise and criticism levelled at the nobility in late medieval England, we gain insight into those actions and values that met or disappointed noble expectations *and* that could be employed to enhance or discredit a reputation.

As the Herald's account of the Black Prince demonstrated, lineage and proper personal conduct were vital to noble reputation, and were the primary concerns of contemporary commentary. Accusations of improper conduct, whether justified or fabricated, could undermine reputation, nobility and noble identity. As such, they made effective political weapons. It is however impossible, with the sources available to us, to ascertain the specific reputation of any individual nobleman. Reputation, by its very nature, was fluid, highly subject to interpretation, and evolved over time. There was likely to have been regional variation, and a nobleman's reputation amongst his fellows, with whom he interacted more regularly, was likely to be different from his reputation amongst more disconnected observers. Surviving evidence of engagement with noble reputation is always filtered for us by the author of the source. We cannot claim with any confidence that their view of an individual was true, or representative of any wider consensus. Whilst texts were composed with specific agendas and intentions in mind, in composing praise and criticism for their subjects, they drew upon shared ideals of noble behaviour. In so doing, they reinforced those same ideals and placed them at the heart of noble reputation.

This chapter will make use of a range of contemporary literature to understand the expectations underpinning noble reputation in late medieval England. These texts will include didactic literature, conduct manuals, and 'descriptive' narrative sources, primarily chronicles, to establish the range of expectations to which noble men were subject. Using contemporary chronicles, especially, the chapter will consider the praise and criticism the authors of these works levelled at the nobility in their attempts to create, manipulate and make use of individual and collective noble reputation. It will examine the principles and expectations they relied upon to do so. This chapter will, therefore, establish the wider social and cultural environment in which noble reputations existed and were interpreted, in areas within their control, but also principally beyond. The expectations identified here will inform the discussions of subsequent chapters in their consideration of noble performance and the wider political applications of noble reputation.

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[10] Thelma Fenster and Daniel Lord Smail (eds.), *Fama : The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, N.Y. ; London 2003), pp.4-5.

Both the medieval historian and chronicler, Given-Wilson argued, sought to preserve 'the truth' in the pages of their work.[11] This was truth conceived of in terms of trustworthiness (the reliability of the composer and his evidence) and of accuracy. Accuracy for the medieval writer encompassed both the modern definition, of something being correct in terms of details and facts, and didactic, or moral truth.[12] Chroniclers, Given-Wilson asserted, were at pains to emphasise the ways in which they believed things *should* be done. As such, they elected to highlight behaviour which conformed to those ideals.[13] Matthew Kempshall identified a similar approach in the chronicler's pursuit of truth in medieval England, focusing on the principle of verisimilitude, or the *nature of truth.*[14] This was the contemporary idea that the truth required the aid of rhetoric in order for it to become truly convincing. Fiction could be mixed with fact in order to reconstruct events in a way that would justify aspects of truth which might otherwise have been seen as improbable.[15] A well-crafted lie, it seems, could be more believable than fact, and so long as the central essence of the event was maintained, the account could still be said to be true. The fictions invented to aid the truth were crafted in such a way as to appeal to the beliefs and opinions of the audience. The ultimate aim of the writer was to convince the audience of the truth. As such, both Kempshall and Given-Wilson demonstrate the significance of contemporary ideals in the composition of medieval chronicles. Whether their accounts of events or people were factual or not, these texts were both shaped by, and reflective of, society's norms and expectations.

All chronicles were not created equal. Composed in our period in Latin, Norman French and Middle English, some chronicles are more useful to our purpose than others. Some, like the English Chronicle for 1377-1461, focused primarily on preserving the occurrence of events. Whilst they are influenced by the allegiances and judgements of their authors, they provide little by way of narrative, or commentary, for the events discussed here. At the opposite end of the spectrum are works like those of Thomas Walsingham and Adam Usk. They describe events and provide their own, sometimes colourful, verdicts on those involved. It is this latter kind of chronicle that appears most frequently in this chapter. 'And the ix yere off his regne he helde a parlemente atte Westmynstre, and ther he made ii dukes and a markeys and v erles…' in *An English Chronicle* is a flat statement; by contrast, in writing 'the duke of Hereford was the more gloriously arrayed… arriving with seven horses decked out in a variety of remarkable trappings…', the author, Adam Usk, imbeds his judgement of his subject's action within the

[11] Chris Given-Wilson, *Chronicles: The Writing of History in Medieval England (London, 2004)*, p.1.
[12] Ibid., p.2.
[13] Ibid., p.3.
[14] Kempshall, Matthew, *Rhetoric and the Writing of History, 400-1500* (Manchester, 2011), pp.350-2, p.268.
[15] Ibid., pp.350-2.

text.[16] Focusing on judgement statements, we will acquire a greater understanding of the ideals and expectations that underpinned noble reputation. Chroniclers, and chronicles, were the product of the societies within which they emerged.

As established in chapter one, positive reputation relied upon an individual's ability to meet the range of expectations placed upon them by their society. The precise nature of these expectations was governed by an individual's place in their community. These expectations varied depending on the sub-components of that person's identity, including, but not limited to, their social status, their gender, their occupation and the offices or appointments they held. A noble man had numerous sub-identities; he was male, he was a knight, he was a son, he might be a father and a husband, and principally, he was noble. Crucial to understanding reputation, then, is an understanding of the expectations associated with each of these sub-identities. As such, the following section will consider what it meant to be noble and how this manifested itself in praise, criticism and assessment of noble behaviour in contemporary texts.

I: Nobility of Being and Action

A noble infant, Maurice Keen asserted, was noble because they had been born to noble parents.[17] Nobility of birth instilled an innate capacity for noble deeds, which equipped a noble individual for leadership. Thomas, Duke of Gloucester, Edward III's youngest son, was described as being 'of no common lineage but the offspring of the king and the uncle of a king'.[18] This description of the duke was immediately followed by an account of the fear the duke was able to instil in the Irish when he began to ready his troops in 1392. The passage in the St. Albans' Chronicle labelled Gloucester an 'invincible hero', an 'intelligent, wise lord' and a 'bold knight'.[19] By prefacing this praise with a positive appraisal of Gloucester's lineage, the chronicler emphasised the direct correlation between the two. Gloucester's noble lineage meant that he had an innate capacity for performing noble deeds, and his inherited nobility was evident in his abilities. The presumed correlation between nobility of action and nobility of birth was crucial to contemporary understanding of what nobility was. Nobility of birth alone was not enough to maintain a nobility of being. It had to be earned, and sustained, through noble action. Henry Duke of Lancaster outlined this understanding of nobility in his devotional treatise, *Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines*. For the duke, writing in 1354, the keys to nobility lay in lineage, lifestyle, and in an individual's personal conduct:

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[16] *Eng. Chron*., p.8. *Usk,* pp.50-1.
[17] Maurice Keen, *Nobles, Knights and Men-at-Arms in the Middle Ages* (London, 1996), p.200.
[18] *Walsingham I,* p.933.
[19] *Ibid.*

> 'It seems that whomever should be entitled to judge the nobility of a person, he should know three things before deciding if that person holds a noble right; the first is whether his father was noble, the second, if his mother is also a noble woman, and the third is to know whether he behaves, in fact, in a noble manner and enjoys the company of nobles...And if he is thus noble by his father and by his mother noble, and holds in himself the same, as I have said before, that man can truly be called and held noble.'[20]

It was important that a nobleman understood how to behave nobly and had the opportunity and inclination to act accordingly. Their noble actions re-enforced their noble being, and noble being could be lost if it was not maintained through action. As such, an individual's positive personal traits and great accomplishments were often described alongside details of their lineage, in order to emphasise the connection between the two. When the Earl of Suffolk, Michael de la Pole, died in 1415 at the Siege of Harfleur, he was succeeded by his son, a twenty-one year old, 'as strong, daring and as active as any member of the court.'[21] The qualities of Suffolk's heir, his temperament, inclinations and capacity for prowess, were seen to reflect the greatness of his lineage, and frame him as a worthy successor to his father, 'a knight of excellent and most gracious name'. His father's noble actions likewise influenced the nobility of the son and ensured his positive reputation.

If nobility was not correctly maintained through proper personal conduct, then it could be forfeited. This was evident in a story recounted in both the St. Albans' Chronicle and the Chronicle of John Wavrin. They recorded the plight of the son and heir of the appellant earl of Arundel after his father's execution in 1397. Each chronicler provided a different account, but they shared a distinct theme. After his father's death, Arundel's heir was entrusted to the care of the duke of Exeter. Whilst in the care of the duke, the young man was treated in a manner that undermined his nobility. Walsingham reported that whilst in Exeter's household, Arundel's heir 'had been infamously dishonoured by a certain Thomas Shelley, a knight of the duke, who had treated him like a common servant, and had forced him to serve him more like a captive than a noble...'[22] Similarly, in Wavrin's account, after Exeter's plot to restore Richard II in 1400 failed and he was captured, Henry IV sent the boy, now earl of Arundel in his own right, to the place where Exeter was being held. In Wavrin's report, the earl said the following:

> …you held my lands for a long time and wickedly governed my sister and myself so that, as a result of cold poverty I was forced to convey myself away from the realm of England, and if it was not for my cousin of Clarence I would have died of ruin. And you, villain, do you not remember how I have often removed your shoes and cleaned them,

[20] The translation is my own. The original text from *Livre*, p.27, lines 1-16.
[21] *Gesta*, pp. 50-1.
[22] *Walsingham II,* p. 138-9.

> when you were so inclined, in front of King Richard? You have treated me as if I were your menial.[23]

In short, Arundel had been denied the opportunity to adopt a noble lifestyle. Not only was this a denial of his birth right, but it deprived him of the opportunity to build himself a reputation that would allow him to demonstrate the same inherited nobility. He had been denied the power to act. Exeter had forced Arundel and his sister into a less-than-noble way of living, divesting them of wealth and forcing Arundel to engage in occupations below his station.

The term *dérogeance* emerged in the fifteenth century to describe those who lost their nobility in law by choosing to engage in unsuitable activities.[24] For example, those who were noble should not labour in the fields or work with their hands. Arundel's experience was presented as a form of forced *dérogeance*, and as an active attempt by Exeter and his men to rob Arundel of his nobility. They could not deny his noble blood, but they could restrict his ability to maintain and demonstrate it. The implications of this offence did not apply to the young man alone. It was a damaging accusation to level at both Shelley and the duke. Walsingham strengthened his condemnation of Exeter by referring to his household as 'Rahab's house'.[25] This was a biblical reference to the Old Testament story in which Rahab, an alleged prostitute, helped the Israelites capture the city of Jericho. Rahab supposedly entertained her clients within her home.[26] The chronicler's assertion, therefore, was that the duke's household was one of ill-repute. For this reason, the duke was an entirely unsuitable guardian for a noble boy, undermining nobility at every turn, and undeserving of the trust the king had placed in him. Exeter had restricted the ability of a nobleman to act nobly, and in so doing had behaved ignobly himself, and this implied other similar personal failings.

A lack of understanding or conformity, regards to correct noble behaviour, was an effective point of criticism in attempts to damage individual noble reputation. In his assessment of Robert de Vere, favourite of Richard II, Thomas Walsingham remarked that de Vere had been 'a young man who was the ideal person to undertake any task requiring honesty, had he not lacked discipline in his boyhood'.[27] De Vere was of undeniably noble stock, and whilst this should have inclined him to noble behaviour, his nobility had not been properly nurtured. The result was a lack of understanding of his obligations, and this in turn had led to his dishonourable conduct. This was a marked contrast to Wavrin's assessment of the sons of Henry IV, who 'were all good knights and well-educated in moral science' and who, after this positive

[23] Published translation in *Wavrin II*, p.45 is antiquated; translation provided is my own from: *Recueil des croniques* II, p.47.
[24] Keen, *Nobles, Knights and Men-at-Arms*, p.196 and Keen, *Chivalry*, p.174.
[25] *Walsingham II*, p. 138-9.
[26] *Walsingham II*, p. 138-9, Joshua 2:1-24
[27] *Walsingham* I, p. 798-9

early upbringing, 'each of them afterwards held a high command in wars between France and England in which they all behaved valiantly'.[28] Having been born noble, and taught how to behave nobly, Henry IV's sons were able to demonstrate their nobility throughout their adult lives.

Ignoble action could therefore be used as evidence of a lack of noble education and understanding, but it was also indicative of more general moral failings and ultimately of ignoble being. Accusations of this kind were used by writers in various forms in attempts to discredit individual lords. The author of the *Gesta Henrici Quinti* implicated Sir Thomas Grey in the plot against the life of Henry V in 1415, writing: 'Thomas Grey, a knight famous and noble if only he had not been dishonoured by this stain of treason'.[29] Whilst Sir Thomas hailed from a noble family, and had previously behaved nobly, building himself a positive reputation, his ultimate treason undermined both his innate and earned nobility. When revealing instances of ignoble action, writers once again set lineage beside behaviour. The ignoble behaviour of specific individuals could be explained if their lineage was less than noble. Low birth and rapid rise were often employed as a way to explain an individual's fall from grace. Sir Roger Acton, for example, was described as 'the son of a tiler...born into a lowly Shropshire family and made his fortune from spoil and booty during the Welsh war. But he became arrogant beyond belief, getting himself honoured with the order of knighthood'.[30] Acton, 'this ungrateful wretch', was eventually hanged after betraying Henry V, thus proving his lack of nobility.[31] Similarly, Richard II's favourite Michael de la Pole was described by 1378 as 'a man more suited to the world of commerce than to knighthood, and had grown old peacefully amongst bankers, not on the battlefield amongst soldiers'.[32] In this case, the chronicler attempted to explain Pole's unpalatable acts and his inability to fulfil a nobleman's knightly function by emphasising his less-than noble origins. A man was suited to the area of life to which he had been born, in Pole's case banking and trade. With martial prowess, chivalry and military action being so central to noble identity, the chronicler attempted to undermine Pole's claim to nobility by emphasising his disinclination to act martially. He was not a man of war, as the nobles, the fighters of society, should be, but a man of peace.[33] Thus, Pole's disinclination to act nobly undermined his ability truly to be noble. Humble origins were also used to explain the heresy and treason of Sir John Oldcastle. Oldcastle, the author of the *Gesta Henrici Quinti* tells us, 'had at first been humble in rank. Then, slaughtering and pillaging the Welsh secured his promotion to knighthood, and later

[28] *Wavrin II*, p. 168, *recueil des croniques* II, p.161.
[29] *Gesta*, pp.18-9.
[30] *Usk*, p. 246-7.
[31] Ibid.
[32] *Walsingham I*, p.236-7.
[33] Keen, *Nobles, Knights and Men-at-Arms*, p. 198.

still, flattering fortune called him through marriage to be Lord Cobham.'[34] Oldcastle had earned his knighthood through violence, but the language chosen by the author of the *Gesta* implied that this was not acceptable chivalric, or noble, violence. He had then risen further not as a result of his own merits, but through a fortuitous marriage. His nobility had not been earned through noble action, and thus was not true nobility at all. Oldcastle's less-than-noble lineage meant that he did not understand how to act nobly, and had been led astray. The chronicler thus used his alleged low birth as an explanation for his outrageous conduct. He was a man lacking in nobility and therefore virtue.

That lineage and nobility were firmly bound together was undisputed, but lineage alone was not enough to maintain nobility and ensure individuals conformed with all aspects of noble reputation. Nobility endowed noble individuals with the capacity to perform noble deeds and, as such, they were expected to demonstrate and maintain their nobility by acting publically in a noble manner. Poor behaviour jeopardised the nobility a nobleman had inherited from his noble parents by suggesting that he had either not inherited their innate capacity for virtue, or that he had neglected and sacrificed it by failing to maintain it. There was general agreement in contemporary chronicles that nobility was something that needed to be nurtured and constantly maintained through action. Writers were able to use examples of less-than-noble behaviour to undermine the nobility of individual men, targeting the very core of their reputations and identities.

II: Personal Virtue

A nobleman, therefore, was expected to demonstrate his nobility by fulfilling the behavioural expectations associated with his high birth. In doing so, he maintained both his nobility and his reputation. Principally, noble behaviour required the public demonstration of personal virtue. A noble action was a virtuous one, and the two concepts were as closely connected as nobility and lineage. The correlation between nobility and personal virtue was generally accepted by the late medieval period and virtue was crucial to the nobility's ability to fulfil their social obligations as leaders, warriors and commanders. [35] In Gawain and the Green Knight, King Arthur was criticised for allowing Gawain to accept the Green Knight's challenge and go to his death.

> Warloker to haf wrought had more wyt bene,
> And haf dyght yonder dere a duk to have worthed.
> A lowande leder of ledes in londe hym wel semes,
> And so had better haf ben then britned to nought,

[34] *Gesta*, p.10-11.
[35] Keen, *Nobles, Knights and Men-at-Arms,* p. 191 and Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 174.

Hadet wyth an alvisch mon, for angardes pryde.[36]

Gawain was better suited to become a duke, than to be killed by Camelot's fairy visitor, for his virtues marked him as a great leader of men. Gawain's nobility, and the virtues associated with it, made him suitable to his social position, and allowed him to fulfil his function within society. Virtue was significant for its own sake, but also because the proper cultivation of virtue enabled the proper exercise of lordship. Chroniclers might thus stress their subjects' capacity for virtue. They did this in one of two ways: either by making simple generalised claims to virtue on behalf of individual lords, or by describing specific examples of virtuous behaviour. These virtuous deeds were either social or martial in nature. The following two sections will consider each approach in turn, and identify the common threads that connected them.

Generalised claims to virtue, on behalf of those lords whom writers wished to portray in a positive light, were commonplace. Jean Wavrin, for example, countered criticism of the duke of Gloucester, upon his imprudent marriage to his mistress Eleanor Cobham, by asserting that Duke Humphrey 'was a prince of great virtue, liberal, courteous, wise and a very valiant knight in body and bold in heart'.[37] Wavrin stressed the duke's great lineage, his practice of proper virtuous noble behaviour and his generous exercise of lordship, thus refuting any allegations that the duke had acted ignobly. Making use of the same principles, Henry Knighton of Leicester Abbey sought to underline the virtues of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, the Abbey's patron. Knighton's most concerted effort appeared in his description of the duke's experiences during the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. He referred to Gaunt as 'the good duke', and as dutiful, pious, kind repeatedly throughout the passage, and in various forms. Examples of this repetition include: 'the good duke of Lancaster', 'the good duke of peace and mercy', and 'the good and most innocent duke'.[38] Knighton concluded the section by justifying his choice of epithet. 'And lest any wonder that I should always refer to him as the good duke', he wrote, 'let the careful reader consider, and he who hears me remember, as a friend of truth, that the good duke drew such strength from his virtues..'[39] Gaunt was good, both personally, and in his role as duke and prince, because he was able to demonstrate his nobility through his virtuous conduct.

Knighton also established the general virtue of his subject by describing the duke as a person protected by God, as an enemy of the corrupt, and as a good lord and public servant. Knighton established Gaunt's virtue, in the first instance, by claiming that the duke's goodness had earned him the support of God. It was God who had ensured that Gaunt was away from

[36] *Gawain,* p. 195, lines 677-81.
[37] *Wavrin III*, p. 140, *recueil des croniques III*, pp.213-4.
[38] *Knighton,* pp.230-3.
[39] Ibid. pp.238-9.

London at the outbreak of the revolt, being deep in negotiation with the Scots. This favourable happenstance had prevented the duke from falling into the hands of the rebels. 'And thus it came about', Knighton insisted, 'which can be readily attributed to divine providence, that he was far from the places in which he might have fallen into the hands of those wicked wretches, and have been wantonly slain.'[40] The implication of this extract was two-fold: firstly, that God was against the work of the rebels, but, secondly, that Gaunt was good and virtuous enough to have earned and merited divine protection. Knighton reinforced this idea repeatedly. 'God always sustained him [the duke]', he asserted, 'and turned his enemies' deceits to his advantage, and at all times repressed their malice, and delivered him from their hands.'[41] When Gaunt was turned away by the earl of Northumberland and forced to retreat north to seek refuge with the Scots, Knighton notes, 'so he came to Edinburgh, the Lord protecting him in all his ways'.[42] When, in a moment of self-reflection, the duke considered his circumstances, 'he fastened his mind upon God to whom he most earnestly commended himself and his cause, remembering how it is written; "Many are the tribulations of the righteous, and God shall deliver them from all."'[43] Gaunt's connection to God and virtue was further reinforced when the duke delivered news of the revolt to his followers and bid them return to their homes in order to secure their own interests in the face of the unrest. Knighton formed a parallel between his 'good duke' and Christ, noting that 'they, just as the disciples abandoned Christ, left him, and all fled away, leaving only a few with him'.[44] Both this comparison, and Gaunt's portrayal as a man with God on his side, were the essence of Gaunt's status as a 'good duke'.

Virtue in Practice

The second way in which Knighton demonstrated John of Gaunt's virtue was by highlighting positive aspects of the duke's *personal* behaviour. Many of these behaviours were in-line with those virtues encouraged by writers of contemporary Mirrors for Princes. Mirrors for Princes were didactic texts, 'designed to educate rulers in ethical conduct, proper Christian morality and practical wisdom'.[45] They operated 'under the theory that the ruler's political character is defined by the ways that his personal morality is exerted in the public sphere' and relied upon the principle that virtue needed to be continuously demonstrated and maintained.[46] They implied, too, that this demonstrated virtue could be politically advantageous. They thus

[40] Ibid., pp.230-1.
[41] *Knighton*, pp.234-5.
[42] *Knighton*, pp.234-5.
[43] Ibid., pp.236-7.
[44] *Knighton*, pp.232-3.
[45] Misty Schieberle, 'Mirrors for Princes' in Siân Echard and Robert Rouse (eds.) *The Encyclopaedia of Medieval Literature in Britain* (Hoboken, 2017), p.1.
[46] Ibid.

acknowledged the correlation between personal conduct and political success.[47] John Watts argued that by the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the emphasis on royal virtue became even more pronounced after the depositions of Edward II and Richard II and the subsequent dynastic struggles of the Wars of the Roses.[48] Our later period also saw Mirrors for Princes consumed by a growing audience as the genre became increasingly popular and accessible, available in French and English in addition to the traditional Latin. According to Charles Briggs, whilst Giles of Rome himself specified that kings and princes were the primary audience of his *De Regimine Principum,* he acknowledged that its contents would also benefit lords and common men. By the mid-fifteenth century several members of the English nobility had owned copies of Giles' text, including Thomas of Woodstock, Henry of Grosmont and Lord Thorpe of Northampton.[49] Whilst Watts noted that book ownership did not necessarily suggest that an individual ever engaged directly with a text, the late medieval nobility demonstrated a significant interest in didactic works, including moral, political and chivalric treatises and etiquette manuals. Watts pointed also to the high numbers of surviving manuscripts of mirrors from the period, and suggested that this was evidence that this kind of advice literature appealed to the nobility as much as to their kings.[50]

Indeed, Thomas Hoccleve employed members of the nobility as examples of virtuous behaviour in his English adaptation of Giles' *Regimine* composed for the future Henry V. These particular nobles, John of Gaunt and Henry of Lancaster, were prominent ancestors of the prince, and were no doubt included in the text for this reason, but their inclusion also suggested that members of the nobility could be used as exemplars of those virtues desirable in kings and princes. Of Gaunt, Hoccleve wrote:

> I never saw a lord rule himself,
> Better in accordance with his estate, all knightly prowess,
> Was fastened to him like a sword. O God bless his soul! [51]

Here, Hoccleve praised Gaunt's personal conduct, his ability to govern himself in-line with the virtue of temperance, and his martial prowess. Duke Henry, meanwhile, Hoccleve praised as an exemplar of justice, writing:

> Of Lancaster good Duke Henry also,
> Whose justice is written and vouched for,

[47] Ibid..
[48] John Watts, *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship* (Cambridge, 1996), pp.52-6.
[49] Charles F. Briggs, *Giles of Rome's De Regimine Principum: Reading and Writing Politics at Court and University c. 1275-c.1525* (Cambridge, 1999), p.53, pp.60-61.
[50] Watts, *Politics of Kingship*, pp. 53-4.
[51] *Hoccleve,* p.54, lines 516-8. Translation is my own.

> Why should I not list you amongst those
> That in their time have justice exercised
> To thee, but all that belonged to knighthood
> Was stored in your excellent manhood.[52]

Hoccleve drew a direct line between Duke Henry's ability to practise true justice with his capacity for knighthood and his masculinity. As such, whilst the primary purpose of Mirrors for Princes was the education and guidance of kings, the principles they contained, and the virtues they extolled, were of similar significance to the nobility, and we find evidence of this significance in the praise or criticism to which they were subjected.

Hoccleve's reference to Duke Henry's manhood was particularly significant. Masculinity, nobility, virtue and reputation shared much in common, as each needed to be outwardly demonstrated and actively maintained. In her seminal work *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Judith Butler argued that gender was produced and maintained via performance, and governed by societal norms.[53] Engaging with Simone de Beauvoir's argument that 'one is not born but becomes a woman', Butler asserted that gender involved 'the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a regulatory frame' and was 'a performatively enacted signification'.[54] In other words, gender identities needed to be maintained via the performance of public acts which aligned with, and re-enforced, the gender ideals of a given society. These conclusions built on Butler's earlier argument that public actions or performances were strategically calculated to maintain gender and that 'actors' existed permanently upon a social stage.[55] Amanda McVitty recently argued that an historical consideration of homosociality acknowledges the fact that manhood and masculinity were not 'discursive abstractions' but that 'manhood is grounded in and performed through sexed male bodies that exist in a material and social world'.[56] Like Butler, then, McVitty underlined the significance of performance to the maintenance of social identity and social position, but also to the cultivation of social relationships. In this sense, gender was not only a component of reputation, but operated in a very similar way. Bothwere reliant upon public demonstrations of a person's ability to meet social expectation.

Katherine Lewis argued that manhood, like nobility, required the demonstration of desirable attributes, such as honour, constancy and self-mastery, many of which could also be

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[52] Ibid., p. 117, lines 2647-53. Translation is my own.
[53] Judith Butler, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (New York, London, 1999), p.33.
[54] Ibid, pp.43-4.
[55] Judith Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory' in *Theatre Journal*, vol. 40 (1988), p.526.
[56] Amanda McVitty, *Treason and Masculinity in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge, 2020), p. 10.

considered chivalric virtues. Masculine ideals overlapped with contemporary notions of virtue.[57] R.W. Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity asserted that the most desirable ideals of masculinity were always embodied most completely by a society's most powerful men.[58] As such, noblemen, as the elite males of their society, were expected to most fully embody these key masculine traits. They needed to be noble, virtuous and masculine. The lynchpin of medieval masculinity was what Derek Neal termed 'husbandry' or, otherwise, self-mastery. This was the practice of self-restraint and self-command of the body and its appetites. Male adultery, for example, was seen to endanger an individual's manhood as it suggested lack of husbandry over the self, and risked the suggestion that the individual in question also mismanaged other areas of his life in a like fashion.[59] The ideals of husbandry and self-mastery align with the virtue of temperance. For Christopher Fletcher in his assessment of Richard II, temperance was a signifier of male maturity. Richard, Fletcher argued, was often described suspended in a youthful state, which underlined his lack of masculine temperance.[60]

Temperance, in medieval thought, was one of the seven traditional virtues, and one of the four cardinal virtues. As such, it was also one of the twelve moral virtues identified by Giles of Rome in his *Regimine*.[61] Temperance involved the moderation of the passions, and was the mean point between over-indulgence and excessive self-denial. It was 'sobriety in the taking of drink, abstinence in the consumption of food, chasteness in sexual pleasure and...refraining from those passions that move us to lechery'.[62] Temperance also involved the control and moderation of passion as it manifested in personal emotion. A temperate person had control over their emotions, succumbing neither to excessive rage, nor to sorrow. Included too was sobriety of conduct. In his *Regiment for Princes*, for which he drew from the work of Giles, the *Secreta Secretorum* and *Ludo Saccorum*, Thomas Hoccleve wrote:

> A prince must be of merciful disposition
> And his anger and wrath kept in check,
> In case an unforeseen disturbance
> Provoke him and set his heart on fire
> That will lead him to seek revenge as quickly as he desires,
> And actively to carry it out. He ought to acknowledge

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[57] Discussed in: Katherine J. Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity in Late Medieval England* (Oxford, 2013) p. 34.
[58] Raewyn W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Cambridge, 2014), pp.183-6.
[59] Derek Neal, *The masculine self in late medieval England* (Chicago, 2008), pp.7-8.
[60] Christopher Fletcher, *Richard II: Manhood, Youth and Politics 1377-99* (Oxford, 2011), p.1, pp.4-8, p.11.
[61] *GKP*, p.40, lines 1-35. See also: Stephen H. Rigby, *Wisdom and Chivalry: Chaucer's Knight's Tale and Medieval Political Theory* (Leiden, 2009), p.32-4.
[62] See *GKP*, pp.69-71. Also: Rigby, *Wisdom and Chivalry,* p.44.

His rage, and extinguish that fire.[63]

A prince, in other words, should have control over his emotions, in this instance, particularly his temper, else he might be led into making rash decisions he would later regret. Rulers were advised to keep their passions firmly in check. Temperance was particularly valued, as it was a key component of everyday life, and needed to be exercised most regularly.[64] Giles of Rome asserted that there was a particular need for temperance, as it could keep a ruler from falling into tyranny by allowing him to put the welfare of those he ruled before his own personal pleasures.[65] In exercising temperance, a lord was able to demonstrate both his innate virtue and his masculinity, both of which were indicative of his nobility.

A man was not truly a man, nor was he noble, if he could not control himself and moderate his passions. The *Vision of Piers Plowman* presents a version of King Lot, who had succumbed to excess and over indulged in wine.

> Through wine and through women was Lot encumbered,
> And got in gluttony children that were base,
> Forsake the dread delectable drink and you will do better,
> Measure is medicine, though you much yearn
> It is not all good for the soul that which the body demands.[66]

By indulging his appetites, both physical and sexual, King Lot had abased himself, and as a result was only able to sire base children. He had surrendered his inherited nobility, was rendered neither noble of action, nor being, and as a result was incapable of transmitting any nobility of being to his children. This critique of Lot was in line with the advice offered by Gilbert Kymer to Duke Humphrey of Gloucester in his medical text of 1424.

> Excessive and improper coitus...corrupts the humours, impairs the virtues...gives rise to evil diseases, effeminises the person, produces love sickness and jealousy, gives rise to fatness, neglectfulness and foolishness and shortens the life.[67]

Lack of temperance and masculine restraint, Kymer argued, manifested itself in the person, affecting an individual's masculinity, body and reason, thus restricting their ability to act nobly.

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[63] *Hoccleve*, p. 130, lines 3102-8. Translation is my own.
[64] *GKP*, pp.69-71. Also: Rigby, *Wisdom and Chivalry,* p. 44.
[65] *GKP*, pp.68-74.
[66] William Langland, *The Vision of Piers Plowman* (London, 1995) p.15 lines 34-6. Translation is my own.
[67] Transcription of original document available in: *Worcestrii,* pp.556-7. Translated extract by Katherine Lewis in: Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity,* p.26.

In his assessment of the failings of Robert de Vere, Duke of Ireland, Thomas Walsingham complained that noble boys of the time were:

> …allowed to go their own way without the guidance of a teacher or master. Formerly, nobles of the realm handed over their sons from infancy to knights or experienced esquires to instruct them in letters and refinement, so that they might know with greater discernment how to avoid any kind of outrageous behaviour.[68]

As discussed in the previous section, guidance and discipline were necessary for a boy, even a boy of noble lineage, to grow into a successful and reputable adult man. He needed to be equipped with the knowledge necessary to demonstrate prudence by making reasoned, noble and masculine judgements. Boys also needed to be taught how to manage their own behaviour and practise temperance.[69]

Walsingham outlined the kinds of unsuitable behaviour untrained and uneducated young men could fall into. He commented:

> Now because attitudes have changed completely, young people of the present time, who are without teachers, enjoy staying up until after midnight, and sleeping until noon; they delight in ball games and dice, in dreadful oaths, and in other behaviour which is neither good for them nor right for them.[70]

At the heart of each of these unsavoury pursuits was self-indulgence, otherwise a lack of self-control and moderation. A man engaging in such activities could not expect to cultivate positive reputation. The result, Walsingham noted, was 'that the children of countrymen have greater refinement, which they learn from their parents, than do the sons of lords, who have to indulge constantly in the pleasures of the flesh'.[71] In so doing, the chronicler emphasised the relationship between nobility and self-control. A boy from a noble family was only superior to common men if he knew how to compose himself and act appropriately, guided by virtue. He must therefore resist temptation and indulgence and fulfil his masculine obligations by managing his passions and enjoyments appropriately, with both restraint and wisdom. Henry Knighton noted that in the 1380s John of Gaunt:

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[68] *Walsingham I*, p.934-5.
[69] Nicholas Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry: The education of the English Kings and Aristocracy 1066-1530* (London, New York, 1984), pp.133-9.
[70] *Walsingham I*, pp.934-5
[71] Ibid.

> …had heard, both from churchmen and from members of his own household, that his reputation was greatly tarnished in all parts of the realm as a result of his illicit relationship with his mistress Katherine Swynford.[72]

The relationship was widely taken as evidence of a lack of masculine temperance and, through these ignoble actions, the duke risked his noble being. In addition to continuing with the relationship, he had also failed to listen to the advice of those around him who had a care for his reputation. Thomas Walsingham regularly emphasised other examples of Gaunt's intemperate behaviour in his wider condemnation of the duke. The chronicler's enmity largely coincided with Gaunt's support for John Wycliffe through the 1370s and 1380s and featured in Walsingham's earlier version of his *Chronicon Angliae*. His criticism ranged from disparagement of Gaunt's morals to critical descriptions of his leadership in war and his relationship with the city of London. Later, the chronicler's rhetoric was dialled back when Henry IV, Gaunt's son, ascended the throne. The chronicler was generally more favourable to Gaunt through the 1390s when Walsingham transferred his ire to Richard II and his courtiers.[73] Walsingham's dislike of Gaunt was inescapably evident in the chronicler's account of the confrontation between John of Gaunt, the earl of Northumberland and the bishop of London at the trial of John Wycliffe in 1377. Gaunt, finding that his wishes in regards to the trial would not be satisfied, resorted to threatening the bishop, accusing him and his fellow bishops of arrogance. He then turned to the earl of Northumberland and whispered that he would like to grab the bishop by his hair and drag him from the church.[74] Walsingham, fuelled by his dislike of John of Gaunt, used this outburst to both criticise and undermine the duke. Instead of relying on wisdom or well-chosen words and acting temperately, Walsingham's Gaunt resorted quickly to anger and threats of violence. This lack of self-restraint and ready resort to conflict was evidence of intemperance.

It was in similar language that both the Westminster Chronicler and Thomas Walsingham recorded the murder of the heir of the earl of Stafford by Richard II's half-brother John Holland, Earl of Huntingdon.[75] The event was damaging to Huntingdon, not only because he had broken the law and committed a very serious crime, but also because his violent actions were evidence of a lack of self-control. The Stafford murder was retaliation for the killing of two of Huntingdon's squires and occurred despite Richard II's apparent promises that he would ensure justice was served, and his brother's honour satisfied. The king warned Holland not to

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[72] *Knighton*, pp.236-7.
[73] For more on Walsingham's attitude to Gaunt see: Given-Wilson, Chronicles, p.9, V. H. Galbraith, 'Thomas Walsingham and the St Albans Chronicle', *EHR*, vol.47 (1932), pp.12–29, p.19. *Walsingham I*, p.lxxvi, p.lxxix, pp.xciii-xciv. Anthony Goodman, 'John of Gaunt: Paradigm of the Late Fourteenth Century' in *TRHS,* vol. 37 (1987) pp.133-48, pp.133-5.
[74] *Walsingham I*, pp.79-80.
[75] *Westmin*. pp.121-2, and *Walsingham I*, pp.756-9.

take revenge on those who had wronged him. Despite this, upon meeting Stafford's son on the way to York, the two men exchanged 'insulting language' and resorted to violence, during the course of which Stafford was killed. In his report of the events, Walsingham referred to Holland's conduct as 'savage behaviour', again emphasising the lack of self-control which had resulted in so grievous a crime.[76] This highlighted the difference between virtuous chivalric violence, and savage violence.[77] The former was the result of wisdom and prudence, governed by temperance, and the latter the result of a loss of self-control.[78] Walsingham provided another example of lords lacking self-restraint at the trial of the appellant earl of Arundel in 1397. He recorded how the counter-appellants offered to:

> …fight a duel to act as confirmation of their charge, and with their bodily gestures and ignominious leaping about they made themselves look more like theatrical executioners than knights or men of good sense.[79]

This lack of decorum was treated with distaste by the chronicler, and offered as further evidence of the ridiculousness and incompetence of those around the king. The counter-appellants proved themselves lacking in self-control, temperance and awareness of appropriate behaviour.

In addition to temperance, the virtues identified within the mirrors generally included: prudence, justice, liberality and magnificence, magnanimity and proper ambition, affability, truthfulness, proper amusement and finally fortitude.[80] Largely following Giles of Rome, Hoccleve divided his *Regiment* into the following virtues: justice, pity, mercy, patience, chastity, magnanimity, the proper disposal of wealth, prudence, good counsel, and peace. Duke Henry also made use of very similar categories in his treatise, encouraging honesty, controlling one's lusts, acting in the interest of the public good, modesty in prowess, justice, temperance, avoiding flattery, mercy, and generosity.[81] Both Hoccleve's political work, and Duke Henry's devotional one, drew from the same core set of beliefs in regard to virtue, and how it should be practised by lords and rulers. Of these virtues, fortitude will be discussed in greater detail in the next section as the virtue most prominently associated with prowess and martial action. For Giles of Rome, meanwhile, prudence was the primary virtue, from which all other virtue flowed. [82] It was the virtue responsible for allowing a person to make rational and righteous moral choices.[83] Prudence, Hoccleve argued, 'is vertu of entendement (intellect), she makith man by reson him

[76] *Walsingham I*, pp.756-7.
[77] Richard W. Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 1999), pp.28-9, pp.38-9.
[78] This distinction will be discussed in greater detail later in the thesis. See Chapter two, pp.89-91.
[79] *Walsingham II*, pp. 86-7.
[80] *GKP*, p.40, lines 1-35.
[81] *Livre*, p.13, pp.16-23.
[82] See for example: *GKP*, p. 68, lines 1-9. *Rigby,* p. 33.
[83] *GKP*, p.45, lines 23-4, p.68, lines 11-14. See also: *Rigby*, p. 34.

governe. Whoso that list to be wys and prudent'.[84] Prudence, then, was connected with wisdom, intelligence and knowledge. Two key components of prudence were the ability to reason, and to accept counsel in order to rule well. However, in seeking counsel, a lord needed to be able to apply his ability to reason, in order to distinguish between good advice and bad. A prudent lord was discerning, and courteous. He also had foresight, and had a working knowledge of the past, so it might guide his decisions.

Justice was a further virtue Giles of Rome required in a ruler, and was the first virtue discussed by Thomas Hoccleve in his English adaptation of Giles of Rome's Mirror for Princes. The virtue of justice involved governing fairly, administering the law, and observing it in one's person. It required that a person had a good understanding of right and wrong. Hoccleve declared that:

> Through justice is the shedding of blood prevented,
> And guilt punished when there is complaint.
> Justice defends possessions,
> And protects people from oppression.[85]

Justice, then, protected people, ensured fair play and defended the public good by guaranteeing the peace of the realm.[86] In supporting justice, a prince opposed corruption and encouraged just behaviour in others. Other virtues were strongly associated with justice, including pity, mercy, 'mansutude' and 'debonairetee,' otherwise patience or forbearance. Each was concerned with the ways in which princes, and noblemen, treated others and exercised his authority.

Liberality concerned itself with the virtuous spending of money. A ruler, Giles of Rome argued, should both amass and spend his wealth virtuously. He should look to be wealthy, so he might work towards the common good, but should not cling to money as an end in itself.[87] It was not the amassing of wealth that was important, but what it allowed a person to do. The nobility, who were of old bloodlines blessed with wealth, should be expected to spend their money on increasingly ostentatious works as their bloodlines became increasingly noble over the generations.[88] Lords should take care, however, to guard themselves against the arrogance that great wealth so often engendered.[89] Instead, they should spend enough to cultivate and maintain their honour without succumbing to the dangers of excess. All men were capable of

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[84] *Hoccleve*, p.179, lines 4761-7
[85] Ibid., p.113, lines 2510-13. Translation is my own.
[86] *GKP,* p. 45, lines 32-5. *Rigby,* p. 44.
[87] *GKP*, p.74, lines 23-8. *Rigby,* p.47-8.
[88] *GKP*, pp.150-2. *Rigby*, p.48.
[89] *GKP*,pp.150-4.

virtuous spending, but only lords and princes were able to exhibit magnificence.[90] Giles of Rome set out four ways in which a lord's wealth could be spent to demonstrate his magnificence. He could undertake building work in order to promote the glory of God, he could perform works which would further the common good, he might look to reward persons worthy of honour, or he could spend it on his own person in order to maintain his own honour and status.[91] These were not Giles of Rome's only guidelines, however. The decision to undertake any of these four kinds of spending should be guided by the following principles. Wisdom must be employed to ensure that the intended venture was seemly. A lord should make sure that the work he meant to undertake was truly intended to aid God or the common good, and not simply to increase his own sense of importance or impress his neighbours. The work should be done well, without cutting corners to save money, for it was not seemly for a lord to worry overmuch about overspending when engaged in such ventures, and yet, he should not show himself to be financially imprudent.[92]

Giles of Rome grouped magnanimity and proper ambition together as virtues relating to honour.[93] Both related to the manner in which individuals approach matters of honour and, as such, they were difficult to separate. Proper ambition referred to the manner in which an individual responded to moderate honour, and magnanimity to the deeds and worship which bring great honour to an individual's name. A properly ambitious and magnanimous man strived for honour, but did not try to overstretch himself to achieve beyond his status and ability. He accepted honour modestly and showed patience in the face of criticism and suffering. A magnanimous man meanwhile was brave without needlessly endangering himself. It was only permissible for a man to endanger his own safety if he did so in defence of the kingdom, the common profit of the realm, or in the service of God. Magnanimous men performed deeds that were worthy of honour for their own sake. They performed deeds because those deeds were good, not because they wished to profit personally from the venture. A magnanimous lord was a generous giver of gifts, but did not actively look for gifts from others. He should also be open and expressive, making it clear to those around him what he thought and felt, and should not conceal his true intentions.[94]

Affability, truthfulness and proper amusement were the more straightforward of the virtues. Affability focused on a man's ability to make, and keep, friends. It was important that a man be able to make interesting conversation and maintain relationships. For lords and princes

[90] *Rigby*, p.48.
[91] *GKP*, p.81, *Rigby*, p. 53.
[92] *GKP*, p.83-5, *Rigby*, p. 53-6.
[93] *GKP*, pp.90-5, 122-4, 150-2. *Rigby*, pp.58-9, p.61.
[94] *GKP*, pp.90-5, 122-4, 150-2. *Rigby*, pp.58-9, p.61.

this was especially significant, as these virtues would allow them to thrive within the courtly environment to which they belonged.[95] Truthfulness in this context, referred to the honest awareness of one's personal worth, although the word truth could indicated various, and changing, meanings in late medieval England. [96] In the Mirrors however, truth maintained the balance between the sins of boastfulness and excessive self-criticism. A man should be aware of his own value and know where and how he could be of use.[97] Proper amusement meanwhile required a lord or prince to engage himself in leisure activities suitable for a man of his station. This helped him to maintain his affability, as it meant he could cultivate common interests with those around him, and avoid being seen as a bore. He should however take care not to over-indulge in these pursuits. As with all pleasures, it was important he manage his enjoyment of them. A ruler's amusements, Giles of Rome asserted, should be liberal, honest and well moderated: 'And game and pley þat is liberal, honeste and moderat is iordeyned to good ende, for it is nedfol in som wise in þe lif of mankynde.' [98]

Inevitably, the virtues detailed in Mirrors for Princes were primarily concerned with the application of such virtues to lordship and politics. Temperance was important, because it allowed a ruler to act in a reasonable and level-headed manner, just as prudence enabled him to rule with wisdom and to seek good advice from those around him. Even virtues like affability and proper amusement were significant because they allowed a ruler to forge positive relationships with those he needed to rule effectively. The ultimate goal of virtuous lordship therefore was the common good of the kingdom at large, and the needs of the kingdom were most readily and effectively served by virtuous men. A lack of virtue resulted in foolish, headstrong and selfish rule, alienated other members of the political community and resulted in discord and instability. By embodying each of these virtues and indicators of masculinity, lords could demonstrate their nobility and fortify their reputations. They acted virtuously in the interests of the common good, shunning their own selfish desires and wants. It was the selfishness resulting from a lack of virtue that endangered the polity, and as such, we find evidence of this connection between virtue and lordship in the praise and criticism levelled at individual members of the nobility.

In Knighton's account of John of Gaunt in 1381, for example, upon learning that he was the focus of the rebels' displeasure Gaunt:

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[95] *GKP*, pp. 150-2. *Rigby*, pp.66.
[96] See: Richard Firth Green, *A Crisis of Truth: Literature and Law in Ricardian England* (Philadelphia, 1999), p.8, pp.13-9, pp.25-31.
[97] *GKP*, pp.99-101. *Rigby*, pp.67-8.
[98] *GKP*, p.101, lines 22-3. See also: pp.53, 98, 101-3, 131, 233-4. *Rigby*, pp.73-4.

> …though roused by its suddenness, not to say perturbed, was not astonished by it, acted not precipitately but with careful consideration and wisely took advice. Not moved by anger, as he showed himself in all his actions, that is to say good and gentle.[99]

Gaunt was portrayed as both temperate in controlling his emotions, and prudent in seeking advice. By neither succumbing to anger, nor losing control of himself in panic, the duke acted virtuously and nobly, and, in looking for counsel, he demonstrated wisdom. He was also praised for being 'gentle.' Gentleness, whilst most typically a feminine trait, was desirable in a lord when tempered by reason, so he might be inclined to fairness, mercy and justice.[100] All of these things were to the benefit of the common good. Knighton returned to this latter aspect of the character of his 'good duke' at the end of the passage. Upon being received generously by the king in the wake of the revolt, 'he sought no revenge, and ordered no reprisals by his followers, but impartially and patiently forgave the offences of anyone who sought forgiveness'.[101] Here, the duke showed mercy to those who had wronged him, exhibiting 'mansuetude' or 'debonairetee'.[102] It was these virtues that motivated Gaunt and determined his actions, not anger or a need for revenge. In so doing, he once again demonstrated both wisdom and self-control. Knighton, determined to show that this was not an isolated example, provided a second anecdote of the duke's temperate and merciful behaviour.

> Once when some of his servants had stolen on many occasions silver vessels of great value from his treasury, and his officials had caught them and wished to apply the full rigour of the law to them and hang them, he was so charged with the spirit of mercy that he forbade it, saying that he would not set his possessions above any man's life, and he ordered only that they should be dismissed his service.[103]

In this case, the duke's virtues of temperance, prudence and wisdom had allowed him to exercise his lordship effectively and mercifully. As such, the chronicler presented an image of a fair, controlled and compassionate lord, both noble and masculine, and undeserving of the rebels' ire.

The correlation between virtue and lordship was echoed elsewhere. When Sir Richard Scrope was dismissed from his role as chancellor in 1382, Walsingham emphasised the fact that Scrope had originally been appointed by the collective will of the lords and the commons in parliament and had 'carried out his office commendably and prudently' in service of the

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[99] *Knighton*, pp.232-3.
[100] *Rigby*, p. 64*. GKP*, p. 114, 127-9,
[101] *Knighton*, pp.238-9.
[102] *GKP*, p. 74, 95-7, 129,136-7, Rigby, pp. 64-6.
[103] *Knighton*, pp.240-1.

common good.[104] In Walsingham's original entry regarding Scrope's appointment earlier that year, the chronicler noted that Scrope 'was a man of exceptional knowledge and was resolutely just, and there was no one as affluent as he in the kingdom.'[105] The chronicler's praise acknowledged Scrope's wisdom, his good character and his wealth. As with the townsmen of chapter one, Scrope's affluence was presented alongside his other virtues as evidence of his good sense and virtue.[106] It was proof of his ability to exercise his new office competently. Despite his success, Scrope was ultimately removed by men of lesser ability and virtue.

The wisdom of individual lords was often emphasised by juxtaposing their good sense with the less-than-virtuous conduct of others. When a confederacy of lords approached the earl of March regarding a plot to overthrow and murder Henry IV and his children, Wavrin recorded that 'the earl thought very much that night over the matter which they had sounded him about. Where in the morning came the Earl of March, behaving wisely, considered and found means of speaking to the king in private, so he disclosed the proposals which the said lords were making to him and the counsel they were giving him.'[107] The earl of March, whose virtue and wisdom had kept him from rebellion, became the foil of those lords who had turned away from virtue in favour of treason. The earl was the wisdom, prudence and temperance to their folly. This method of praise and criticism by juxtaposition was a commonly used device. In Knighton's praise of John of Gaunt, for example, the chronicler portrayed his subject as the enemy of other far less virtuous persons. In the passage, the duke was concerned he had lost the favour of the king, and Knighton suggests this was the result of the king being 'under the influence of evil counsel from those who were jealous of him'.[108] If those around the king were 'evil counsellors' and they were envious of the duke, intent on his destruction, Knighton suggested that the 'good duke' with his ample virtues was their opposite, and their enemy. Knighton reiterated that the duke 'had many who were jealous of him, and were his enemies both rich and poor, who would rather speak ill of him than good, thinking evil of him and meditating injustice towards him when he had not observed it of them.'[109] The injustice of Gaunt's enemies ran counter to the duke's own proper sense of justice, and where the duke was a good and just lord, serving the good of the kingdom, those who threatened him were, by implication, more malignant.

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[104] *Walsingham I*, pp.578-9.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Christian D. Liddy, *Contesting the City: The Politics of Citizenship in English Towns 1250-1530* (Oxford, 2017), p.28,
[107] *Wavrin II*, p.182, *recueil des croniques* II, p.178.
[108] *Knighton*, pp.234-5.
[109] *Knighton*, pp.234-5.

Adam Usk employed a similar technique in his portrayal of Roger Mortimer, Earl of March. When the earl arrived for the parliament of 1397, Usk noted that many in attendance, 'envying the earl's good character, set traps for him, searching out excuses to proceed against him'.[110] In so doing, Usk presented Mortimer as both virtuous, being of good character, and as an enemy of the king's faction intent on wickedness. Driving the point home, Usk wrote that 'the king remained suspicious and hostile towards him, planning to put him to death with his own hands - something which the others dared not do - and continually seeking a chance to destroy him, as did the others who were parties to the conspiracy; hoping as a means of accomplishing their malicious schemes'.[111] The earl's goodness and virtue were evidenced by the dislike the 'wicked' had of him. Usk applied the same technique to the earl's uncle Sir Thomas Mortimer. Sir Thomas was 'a most vigorous knight who had been exiled by them [the king's faction] and whom they feared greatly'.[112] The earl, Usk claimed, had supported his uncle in his exile, and thus, their enemies around the king conspired to use this information to rid themselves of the earl. They were 'eagerly awaiting the moment when they could destroy him, boasting that once it was done they would divide up his lands between them'. Usk condemned the earl's enemies as greedy, opponents of true justice and, by implication, the common good. They had already wrongfully exiled Sir Thomas, who was a good man, and they intended wrongfully to convict the equally virtuous earl. Usk underlined his assertion in regards to the good character of the earl of March, by labelling him 'a young man of the highest character' who 'bore himself carefully and with discretion'.[113] Once again, the chronicler chose to draw attention to traits considered both virtuously noble and masculine, with particular emphasis being placed on self-control.

Good lordship, wherein individual lords used their position and authority to fulfil their obligations fairly, was the anticipated outcome of noble virtue.[114] Contemporary 'good lordship', Gordon McKelvie remarked was 'impressionist rather than scientific and rigorously defined' in late medieval England.[115] And yet, the term was widely used and broadly understood and referred to the relationship and ties of expectation and responsibility between lords and their men.[116] In exchange for service, a term laden with vagaries of its own, a man could expect protection and opportunity from the lord, or lords, with whom he aligned himself. In turn, he

[110] *Usk* pp.32-3.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.
[113] *Usk* pp.32-3.
[114] For good lordship, see for example Christine Carpenter, *Locality and Polity: A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society 1401-1499* (Cambridge, 1992), pp.288-90.
[115] Gordon McKelvie, 'Kingship and Good Lordship in Practice in Late Medieval England: Henry VII, the earl of Oxford and the Case of John Hale, 1487' in *JMH*, vol. 45 (2019), pp.504-22, pp.516.
[116] Ibid.

could be called upon to render aid and advice.[117] One good turn, as Simon Walker phrased it, deserved another. This however, both Walker and R.R. Davies argued, went beyond those formalised bonds of affinity evidenced in contemporary indentures of retainer.[118] For Walker, the indenture merely formalised a tie which already existed, whilst Davies warned that lords existed at the centre of informal circles of reward and service which transcended the noble affinity.[119] If a 'good lord' maintained these bonds, by keeping his side of the social bargain he made with those in his service and beyond, then a bad lord surely neglected them. He did not protect, he did not reward and he did not provide opportunity. He also did not keep proper guard over the men around him. Misrule, Davies noted, endangered good lordship, and lords remained watchful. They swore to maintain their men in just causes, and punished abuses of their maintenance in order to preserve their own reputations as 'good lords.'[120] Michael Hicks noted John of Gaunt's parliamentary assertion in 1384, that the lords were perfectly capable of monitoring their own servants.[121] There was indeed an expectation that a good lord should have control over his retainers, even if, in reality, these connections were regularly abused. There was more to well-exercised lordship however than was encompassed by the ideals of 'good lordship' discussed here. As this chapter explores, a lord was subject to a series of expectations. Just as he owed 'good lordship' to his men in exchange for service, so too did he look to his king for opportunity and reward in exchange for services rendered. He was a component of the government, and expected to contribute to the maintenance of order within the kingdom, whilst defending it from enemies beyond its borders. There was more to good lordship, to virtuous lordship therefore, than the proper exercise of 'good lordship'. In 1393, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster responded to disorder in the north west, particularly Lancaster and Chester.[122] The disorder was the result of reports that had been circulating about the duke, prompting the rebels to rise in protest. The St. Albans' chronicler, in a marked change in tone, reported how 'with his customary good sense' Gaunt 'persuaded the people of Lancaster to accept the peace in accordance with his wishes'.[123] The chronicler's choice of language firmly assigned Gaunt the role of peacemaker. Governed by his innate wisdom, he persuaded, rather than forced. In this way, he secured 'the strong support of the men of Lancaster as well as their good will'.[124] The reaction of the men of Lancaster to Gaunt's approach stood testament to his lordship. With

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[117] R. R. Davies, Brendon Smith (ed.), *Lords and Lordship in the British Isles in the Late Middles Ages* (Oxford,2009), pp.198-200. See also: pp.197-202, pp.214-5.
[118] Ibid., p.215. Also Simon Walker, *The Lancastrian Affinity 1361-1399* (Oxford, 1999), p.9. See also: p.10, pp. 26-37.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Davies, & Smith, *Lords and Lordship*, p.214.
[121] Michael Hicks, *English Political Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (London, 2002), p.153, pp.154-8.
[122] *Walsingham I*, pp. 944-9.
[123] Ibid. pp.946-7.
[124] Ibid.

Lancaster brought to heel, the duke turned his attention to Chester. The chronicler then referred to force, writing that the duke meant to 'restore them to their proper allegiance, otherwise to punish them severely with considerable force'.[125] Force was introduced as a last resort, when more peaceful and persuasive methods failed. This was what Gaunt did. 'He first decided to explain to them that they had done no wrong, and to recall them in some way or other from their defiance and bloodshed.'[126] Once again, he responded to violence with peace and reason. Sending 'some of his more diplomatic knights' to speak with the rebels, he satisfied them as to his innocence, and secured an apology from them. Here, the chronicler reminds us of the damage rumours of misconduct could inflict upon a reputation, and emphasised the importance of both disproving such allegations and securing public recognition of that innocence.

In the wake of these events, Gaunt, 'against the expectations and advice of many, generously allowed them to join their families'. Meanwhile, those who persisted in rebellion were subjected to the law.[127] Again, in this depiction, Gaunt continued to demonstrate restraint and magnanimity, treating the rebels fairly and generously. The chronicler suggested that the extent of this generosity was unusual and unexpected. He assigned Gaunt a powerful independence of thought. He acted in a way he considered to be right, rather than conforming and simply behaving as others might expect. He acted, in other words, as a leader. The duke's generosity did not end with the pardon he extended to the rebels. According to the chronicler, the rebels had rebelled as a result of their poverty. Gaunt:

> …not only pardoned, but had them trained for his own benefit, and, paying them generously, sent as soldiers for his own benefit to parts of Gascony and other areas subject to his lordship.[128]

This provided them with motivation to maintain the peace of the realm at his own cost. In short, the chronicler was able to frame the entire incident as an excellent example of lordship.

As we have seen, in addition to being magnanimous, lords, like kings, were expected to be able to recognise good advice, and be guided by it. Waurin recounts the reaction of the earl of Huntingdon to the deposition of his half-brother Richard II and accession of his brother-in-law Henry IV in 1399. At first, Huntingdon was angry, and inclined to act rashly against his new king. In Waurin's account, Huntingdon was advised by his wife. She first counsels him to 'let pass your anger well and wisely and do nothing by which you may take harm', thus advising the earl to exercise temperance, reason and wisdom. She continues, telling her husband that her

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[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid.
[127] *Walsingham I*, p.946-7.
[128] Ibid.

brother, the king, would be a good and generous lord to him, and had the wealth and capacity to reward him for loyal service, and could provide for their children's future prosperity. Wavrin emphasised Huntingdon's acceptance of his wife's advice, writing that 'the earl of Huntingdon understood well the words which his wife had said and had explained to him, for he was sensible enough, and he believed them and listened to them'.[129] Whilst at first prone to intemperate feelings of anger, upset and passion, the passage remarks that the earl proved himself able to discern the wisdom in his wife's words, and had the good sense to heed them. This scene was reminiscent of other contemporary examples of royal and noble women adopting intercessory roles between their husbands and other parties. Writing about Queen Philippa's intercession between Edward III and the burghers of Calais, and about the actions of Anne of Bohemia on behalf of the City of London in the 1380s and 1390s, Paul Strohm argued that queens were able to exert influence over masculine judgement provided they appeared to guide or modify male behaviour, not overrule it.[130] A man could therefore adjust his resolve after receiving counsel from, or being implored by, his wife, without being seen to have sacrificed his masculine prerogative. We find similar behaviour in accounts of Joan of Kent in her intercessions between her son Richard II and his uncle John of Gaunt, and in Chaucer's fictional *Tale of Melibee* in which Melibee's wife recalls him from rash vengeance.[131] Similarly, it is his ability to accept advice that enhances the positive impression of the earl of Huntingdon within Waurin's account. The wisdom of the countess' advice, and the earl's good sense in listening to her, was reiterated in Waurin's record of the consequences of the earl's acceptance of King Henry. He was able to secure enough influence to help ensure the release and forgiveness of the earl of Salisbury. By embracing wisdom and temperance, Huntingdon was able to exercise his lordly influence and 'was able to do so much through the good friends and power which he acquired'.[132] Again, the earl's virtue allowed him to act for the benefit of others.

Charity and generosity were other key components of lordship, sitting beneath the umbrella of magnanimity.[133] Magnanimity was central to ideas of lordship and, as such, acts of generosity were frequently reported in the chronicles. The Chronicle of Adam Usk records the death of the earl of Warwick on Good Friday in 1401. The chronicler remarks that the earl was a 'most liberal man' and describes how previously, every Good Friday, the earl 'performed a great

[129] *Wavrin II*, p.8, *recueil des croniques* II, p.9.
[130] Paul Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow: The Social Imagination of Fourteenth Century Texts* (New Jersey, 2014), pp.99-111.
[131] Ibid, p.106, Westminter, p.114, Anthony Goodman, *Joan, the Fair Maid of Kent: A Fourteenth Century Princess and her World* (Woodbridge, 2017), p.134, 143-4, 163-5. *Chaucer,* pp.217-239, particularly pp.219-22.
[132] *Wavrin III*, p.8, *recueil des croniques* II, p.9.
[133] *GKP*, pp.86-7.

number and variety of devotions such as alms-giving and penances'.[134] This account of the earl evidenced his generosity in his alms-giving, by which he had done both his lordly and Christian duty in assisting those less fortunate than himself. As such, the earl appears at the moment of death as a lord both generous and pious, his acts of generosity and devotion ensuring he could 'exchange this transient world for the eternity of heaven'.[135] The connection between acts of faith and charity in support of the church, and acts of lordly generosity is a recurring feature of praise for the nobility within the chronicles. The St Albans' chronicler provided an example, when, in 1390, the duke of Lancaster and the earl of Northumberland contributed to the repairs required at Tynemouth Priory.[136] 'To hasten this work the duke of Lancaster gave a hundred pounds from his own treasury, and the earl of Northumberland contributed a hundred marks.' These donations were in addition to the assistance they had already given the king towards the five hundred pounds he had pledged to the cause.

Nobility, then, was demonstrated and maintained via virtuous behaviour. The nobility had greater capacity for this kind of behaviour as a result of their noble lineage, and as such virtuous action could be evidence of a person's individual nobility, in both being and practice. Noble virtue was essential as it enabled the nobility to fulfil their social function as lords, leaders, rulers and commanders. It was therefore the root of noble expectation. Of significance, too, was a nobleman's ability to demonstrate his masculinity through the same virtuous behaviour. In the chronicle examples explored in this section, the virtue of temperance, otherwise self-control, self-management or husbandry, was the most discussed and emphasised. Temperance was not only indicative of noble virtue, but was also the corner stone of medieval masculine identity. Other virtues, including prudence, justice and liberality, emphasised the role of lords and rulers in society as promoters and defenders and upholders of the common good.

III: Prowess and Violence

In addition to the social components of noble virtue, the martial deeds and accomplishments of noblemen featured prominently in contemporary praise and criticism. Ideals of prowess and chivalry were also underpinned by ideas of virtue, and virtuous noble behaviour. They, too, were concerned with a lord's ability to fulfil his social function, and particularly with his role as a warrior and protector. Like the other virtues we have discussed in this chapter, a nobleman's martial prowess was very much a part of his elite masculine identity. Indeed, Derek Neal argued that it is impossible to ignore the role of violence in medieval ideals of manhood and

[134] *Usk*, pp. 126-7.
[135] Ibid,, pp. 128-9.
[136] *Walsingham I*, pp.900-1.

masculinity.[137] Martial deeds, bound up with military success and failure, were a core component of noble male identity.. This, however, was violence tempered by virtue. Violence, like lordship, needed to be exercised in the interests of the kingdom and the greater good.

Prowess, in its most fundamental form, referred more specifically to skill and bravery in battle. The concept of prowess was strongly influenced by ideals of chivalry. Originally referring simply to a group of mounted knights, the term chivalry evolved significantly from the thirteenth century onwards.[138] Historians, including Maurice Keen, Nigel Saul and Richard Kaeuper, generally agree that the line between chivalry and nobility was eroded over time, until the two terms became virtually synonymous.[139] Prowess became fused with chivalry, and by the late medieval period, chivalry with nobility. Where in early texts the second of the three estates of society had been the 'chevalerie', by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries this had become 'noblesse'.[140] The convergence of language reflected the merging of the ideals; the nobility were chivalrous. The close relationship between nobility and chivalry is reflected in both contemporary sources and modern historiography, and their closeness explains the difficulty many historians have encountered in defining exactly what chivalry was. Craig Taylor pointed to two main interpretations of the term: either as a general study of aristocratic culture during the high and late middle ages, or else a specific consideration of the values and ideas that underpinned medieval knighthood.[141] We see in the former interpretation just how intrinsic chivalric culture was to ideas of nobility and noble identity.

The virtue of fortitude was most strongly connected with prowess and knighthood. It was both an aspect of a man's character, and the manner in which he conducted himself in war. It was courage in the face of adversity, strength of character, and prevented a person from turning away from goodness. It ensured a man was brave in battle, had nerve, and possessed moral strength.[142] The virtue of fortitude was, therefore, built upon the same fundamental values as the other virtues discussed in this chapter. In order to demonstrate fortitude, an individual should be courageous, but should avoid rash action and should not endanger themselves unnecessarily. Bravery should stem from past experience and knowledge of one's enemy, not from anger or fury. War should be undertaken as a conscious decision to do good, and courage motivated by the desire to achieve honour for its own sake, not for any personal earthly benefit. True fortitude, therefore, required prudence and temperance, and could overlap

[137] Neal, *The Masculine Self,* p.135.
[138] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 196.
[139] Saul, *For Honour and Fame,* p.163, and Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence,* p.189, and Keen, *Chivalry*, p.151.
[140] Keen, *Chivalry*, p. 194, 196.
[141] Craig Taylor, *Chivalry and the ideals of knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War* (Cambridge; New York, 2013), p.4.
[142] *GKP*, p. 68, 125-7, 400, 62-5. *Rigby*, p. 41.

significantly with ideals of justice. As such, neither prowess nor fortitude was limited exclusively to physical displays of violence. Richard Barber argued that prowess consisted of two further components, largesse and courtesy. In a chivalric context, largesse dictated that a man should be generous in victory and should balk from allowing his pride to restrict his ability to give. Courtesy, on the other hand, urged the chivalrous to avoid the sins of envy, slander, pride, boastfulness and gluttony. They should honour the church, share in gladness and love, and appreciate music and song.[143] In meeting these chivalric expectations of prowess, the nobility also met noble expectations of virtue. Largesse, after all, was identified as a virtue required of rulers in Mirrors for Princes as discussed in the previous section, whilst courtesy encompassed aspects of temperance, affability and proper amusement. To be chivalrous, to have prowess, was to be virtuous, noble and masculine, and these associations are reflected in the praise and criticism of the nobility's martial pursuits.

As with other forms of virtue, therefore, claims to prowess, chivalry and fortitude were assessed in two forms. In the first instance, writers would make generalised claims in which they would describe their subjects as simply possessing prowess. In Wavrin's Chronicle, for example, the earl of Salisbury was described as 'a knight very expert in arms', Sir Thomas Saille as 'a very valiant and brave knight in his time', Sir Thomas Erpingham as 'an excellent and well-known knight' and Thomas, Duke of Gloucester and Sir Robert Knolles as 'invincible knight[s]'.[144] Claims of this kind occurred frequently throughout the period and across the chronicles, and are indicative of the strong connection between noble reputation and the possession of martial prowess. Praise for individual knights and their martial deeds tended to provide addition information in regards to their past martial experience and success in battle. In a similar manner to the Herald's description of the Black Prince's lengthy martial career, William Montague, Earl of Salisbury was described in the St. Albans' Chronicle as an 'experienced soldier from his earliest youth, and a formidable man'.[145] Through these experiences, the earl had proven his worth and earned honour, on the field of battle.[146]

In addition to these broad claims, chroniclers also provided individual examples of prowess, fortitude and virtue. As we might expect, masculine and martial strength and violence in war were often celebrated in the chronicles. It was usually the judgement attached to the event by the chronicler that determined whether each incident was interpreted as an act of savagery, or favourably, as an impressive deed of chivalric violence. For example, when Sir

[143] Richard W. Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry* (Woodbridge, 1970, reprint: 1995), p. 134.
[144] For Salisbury see: *Wavrin II*, p.154, *recueil des croniques II,* p.46, Erpingham: *Walsingham II*, pp. 140-1, Knolles: *Walsingham II*, pp.518-9, Gloucester: *Walsingham I*, pp. 932-3.
[145] *Walsingham I*, pp.228-9.
[146] Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence,* p.130-131.

Geoffrey Worseley engaged the French in 1379, he and his men 'slaughtered the French like cattle'.[147] The chronicler's account continued, claiming that in this engagement 'the strongest of helmets could be seen being utterly smashed by strong men, some of them so shattered that the inside of the helmet was crushed or destroyed, one side of it stuck to the other and could by no skill be removed from it, and no way restored to its shape without taking the whole helmet to pieces'.[148] This celebration of martial strength followed the chronicler's claim that Sir Geoffrey was 'a knight swift in action and vigorous in battle.' The displays of strength the chronicler described, despite being unquestionably, and one might argue excessively violent, were intended to be viewed in a positive light. Similarly, the author of the *Brut* described Thomas, Duke of Clarence entering a French town, and on his way to reunite with his brother, the king, where he *'spared neþer man ne childe; and euyr þai cryed "a clarans a clarans, seint George*!"'[149] Here the author of the chronicle was not a dispassionate observer, or reporter, of chivalric violence; there was an endorsement of the joyous celebration of Clarence's personal achievements, which, as the reference to St George indicated, were also legitimate acts of violence committed on behalf of the English 'nation'.

In addition to examples of past military triumph, and descriptions of particular martial deeds, chroniclers also focused upon individual personalities, temperaments or general suitability for martial success. Sir Henry 'Hotspur' Percy was described as being endowed with 'a mettlesome and generous temper' in a passage in the Westminster Chronicle describing his multiple victories against the Scots.[150] Similarly, Sir Robert Salle was described by Wavrin as 'a knight who was no common soldier, but amongst the most renowned for his vigour'.[151] In other words, Percy and Salle had personalities that enabled great deeds of arms and that made them natural soldiers, predisposed to success. Such traits were largely viewed as evidence of nobility. As Richard Kaeuper argued, honour was 'earned and merited, sword in hand, by those whose lineage leads them to such deeds.'[152] To the same end, the physical capacity for great deeds of arms was also significant. When John Wavrin described the actions of John, Duke of Bedford at the battle of Verneuil in 1424, he specifically identified the physical attributes the duke possessed which suited him for knighthood. Bedford 'did that day wonderful feats of arms, and killed many a man, for with an axe which he held in his two hands, he reached no one whom he did not punish, since he was large in body and stout in limb, wise and brave in arms'.[153] This

[147] *Walsingham I*, pp. 286-7.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Brut, p. 383.
[150] *Westmin.*, p. 138-9
[151] *Wavrin II*, p. 43 Sir Robert Salle
[152] Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence,* p. 130
[153] *Wavrin III*, pp. 76-7, *recueil des croniques III,* p. 114.

account of Bedford's actions presented the duke in a classically chivalric light, as a hardy warrior performing great deeds on the field of battle, wielding his weapon of choice with skill. His ability to perform in this way depended upon his physical capacity for such deeds. Like his wisdom and bravery and his wonderful feats of arms, Bedford's physical attributes were evidence of his ability to act nobly and of his natural inherited nobility.

Physical appearance was understood as proof of nobility, with outer appearance reflecting the inner nobility of the person. Thomas, Duke of Clarence, for example, was described by Wavrin as 'the handsome duke of Clarence'.[154] This appraisal of the duke's person was followed immediately by further proof of his nobility of character. In the correlation between physicality and nobility, noble bodies were often praised for their beauty, but also for their capacity to fulfil their noble and masculine function as warriors. In his account of the execution of John Holland, formerly duke of Exeter, in 1400, Wavrin recalled that, when brought before the common crowd, 'there was certainly no one in all that company who pitied him, for he was a very fair prince, tall and straight and well-formed in his limbs'.[155] Holland then was 'a very fair prince', whose height, straightness and well-formed limbs meant that he had a body that allowed him to fulfil both his noble and masculine social functions as a warrior and protector. His lack of deformity, like his handsome appearance, suggested his nobility, and it was this nobility of body and the nobility of person it implied, which stirred the sympathies of the crowd.

The physical or temperamental capacity for violence, however, was not the only aspect of prowess or masculinity praised in regard to martial deeds. The duke of Bedford was praised also for his wisdom in arms. He was both physically and mentally capable of prowess. Wisdom was regularly framed as a quality necessary to temper bravery and hot-headedness and was thus crucial to any display of fortitude.[156] Excessive military ardour, to the point of foolishness, invited criticism, just as cowardice did. When Adam Usk reported the death of the earl of March in 1398, he claimed that the young earl died in battle in Ireland 'having trusted too much in his own prowess and less in his good sense'.[157] Whilst March had acted bravely and had been unafraid of martial engagement, he had not exercised his prowess wisely or prudently. As such, he had not demonstrated virtuous fortitude, nor temperance, but had allowed his passion to rule him. Readiness for martial action was not enough to mark oneself worthy of praise.

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[154] *Wavrin II*, p.338, *recueil des croniques II,* p. 360.
[155] *Wavrin II*, p.44, *recueil des croniques* II, p. 47
[156] Rigby, p.42, see previous.
[157] *Usk*, p.116-7

The necessity of balancing martial prowess with wisdom is best demonstrated in Wavrin's account of Sir John Fastolf, and the circumstances in which he was temporarily demoted from the Order of the Garter in 1426. Fastolf was, Wavrin begins, 'very wise and prudent in arms', and the duke of Bedford demonstrated his great trust in him by maintaining him as chamberlain and grand master of his household.[158] The duke's trust in Fastolf was the result of his wisdom and prudence, and the good character it implied. In the subsequent passage, Wavrin juxtaposed the wise and prudent Fastolf and Lord Talbot, 'at whose arrival the English were very joyful as was right' for Talbot was the 'most wise and valiant knight of the kingdom of England'.[159] In Wavrin's account, Lord Talbot took on the more traditionally chivalric role. Fastolf cautioned Talbot as to the men's morale and suggested they take time to consolidate their current position before attempting a fresh assault upon the French. In contrast, Talbot declared that he would act immediately, and lead any men who were willing to follow him to 'fight the enemy with the help of God and St. George'.[160] In response to Talbot's declaration, Fastolf tried to dissuade him a second time, explaining again the perils they faced, being outnumbered by the French. Throughout the exchange, Fastolf was the voice of wisdom, trying in vain to restrain the impulses of his fellows. Talbot's approach to the situation was more traditionally heroic, but the report is framed in Fastolf's favour. Fastolf embodied the balance between fortitude and prowess. Unlike Talbot, he had not underestimated the power of the French, he was aware of the obstacles they faced, and suggested practical steps they might take to overcome them. In demonstrating this restraint, Fastolf also displayed temperance, reining in his knightly impulses to engage with the enemy.[161] Despite his less heroic depiction it was clear that it was Fastolf, not Talbot, who was most successfully meeting noble expectation.

Wisdom was a trait often praised in a martial context. Sir Thomas Erpingham was praised in the St. Albans' Chronicle as both 'courageous' and as 'a man of great wisdom'.' Through his deeds he had amassed 'a vast fortune', which 'surpassed that of all rich men.'[162] Whilst this was certainly an over-estimation of Erpingham's wealth, the extent of Erpingham's fortune was not the purpose of the passage. Wealth enabled noble living, and was viewed as symptomatic of wisdom, and as evidence of it.[163] Thus, Erpingham's wealth was expressive of other noble qualities. A similar treatment was accorded to Sir Robert Knolles, whose 'prestige in warfare was thoroughly deserved' so much so that he had earned himself the fear of the dukedom of Armorica, Brittany, and the awe of Spain. He had also undertaken building works,

[158] *Wavrin III*, p.161, *recueil des croniques III*, p.254.
[159] Translation in *Wavrin II*, p.179, *recueil des croniques II*, p.228.
[160] *Wavrin III*, p.181.
[161] *Wavrin III*, p. 180-1, *recueil des croniques III*, pp.228-94.
[162] *Walsingham II*, pp. 140-1.
[163] Liddy, *Contesting the city*, p.94, pp.109-112, p.130.

which would have 'exhausted the resources of kings'.[164] Significantly, Knolles' good works – the promotion of a Carmelite house, the building of a bridge and the foundation of a chantry – were all public acts of charity. The bridge was to the public good, and the remaining two deeds to the benefit of the church. It was this generosity, enabled by wealth accumulated through wisdom and prowess, which contributed to Knolles' nobility, and enhanced his reputation. His martial achievements were complemented, and reinforced, by his other personal attributes and virtues.

Lack of martial action and cowardice were evidence of corruption in other areas of an individual's life or person. According to the Westminster Chronicler, three knights, who had accompanied the bishop of Norwich on his crusade, refused to comply with the bishop's plan of attack. Despite being 'stalwarts of their order, all stout warriors', they chose not to engage the enemy.[165] Instead, they were bribed into surrendering, to their dishonour. Their refusal to fulfil their martial function as knights *led*, in the chronicler's account at least, to moral deficiency and, ultimately, to their reproach. When Lord FitzWalter tried to go to the aid of Thomas of Woodstock in a naval adventure in 1378, FitzWalter's men mutinied and tried to prevent him from leaving. He finally managed to escape and took a smaller number of men to support Woodstock. With their numbers greatly reduced, Walsingham claimed that the expedition was less successful than it might have been, and the lords returned to England. Sir Thomas Percy alone remained behind, determined to restore the honour of the fleet through further martial action. Whilst Walsingham was full of praise for Percy, who performed successful martial deeds in the wake of disaster, he claimed that the failures of the others were due to them having allowed prostitutes and wives aboard the ships, for the purposes of 'adultery and fornication.'[166] For Walsingham, there was a direct line between moral corruption and military disaster. For the knights serving with the bishop of Norwich, it was martial inaction that led them to moral corruption, and for Fitzwalter, Woodstock and their men, it was moral corruption that led them to martial defeat.

This was not dissimilar to Walsingham's famous passage in which he characterised the men surrounding Richard II as:

> ...knights of Venus rather than of Mars showing more prowess in the bedroom than on the field of battle, defending themselves more with their tongues than with their lance, being alert with their tongues but asleep when martial deeds were required.[167]

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[164] *Walsingham II*, p.518-9.
[165] *Westmin.*, p. 45.
[166] *Walsingham I*, p.214-5.
[167] *Ibid.*, p.814-5.

In his assessment of this extract, Mark Ormrod argued that whilst historians had often seen the Knights of Venus passage to demonstrate martial reluctance in those about the king, he believed it had a broader significance.[168] It was reflective of Walsingham's more general frustrations with England's knighthood and his belief that they exerted a detrimental influence over royal policy. In the Knights of Venus passage, Walsingham connected perceptions of the untrustworthiness of the king's friends with a general cultural shift away from the combat-centred aspects of chivalry. The chronicler's references to the bedchamber were representative of this cultural shift of which Walsingham so passionately disapproved, and references to Venus were intended to undermine the masculinity of those around the king.[169] They were 'all words and no action' and inaction was in-turn, the enemy of chivalry.[170] Crimes of the tongue, gossip and intrigue, were traditionally viewed as more feminine fallibilities, and so the king's favourites shunned both martial deeds, and proper elite masculinity.[171] In failing to be martial, noble and masculine, they succumbed to corruption. This corruption in turn exposed them to criticism, damaging their reputations, and that of their king, whose reputation they should have worked to enhance. They failed in their duties, and fell short of expectation in multitudinous respects. To underline this, Walsingham subsequently introduced a foil for these men in the person of the earl of Nottingham. Nottingham returned to court fresh from his victorious campaign in France. Expecting a warm reception as a result of his successes, Nottingham entered the king's presence. In contrast to the welcome Nottingham might have expected, the king proved hostile, and the duke of Ireland refused to speak or look at him. The duke, Walsingham wrote, envied the integrity of Nottingham and his companion the earl of Arundel, because he was unable to imitate their virtue and prowess. Nottingham and Arundel, however, far from engaging in the intrigues of the duke and the king, 'perceived the way of things but cared little about it. They returned home to live in greater peace than they would have done with the king.'[172] Nottingham and Arundel were both martially active, and immune to the corruptions of the court, spurning them in favour of their own residences where they could live more happily and virtuously. Nottingham and Arundel represented Walsingham's ideal, fulfilling noble and chivalric expectation in the manner most acceptable to the chronicler. Once again, martial activity contributed to individual morality and general virtue, whilst a lack of demonstrable prowess nurtured corruption of the same.

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[168] Mark Ormrod, 'Knights of Venus' in *Medium Aevum*, vol. 73 (2004), pp.290-305, pp.290-1.
[169] Ibid., p.291-3.
[170] Ibid. p.298.
[171] Sandy Bardsley, *Venomous Tongues: Speech and Gender in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia, 2006) pp.1-4.
[172] *Walsingham I*, pp. 814-5.

In their capacity as knights and warriors, chivalry, prowess and violence were significant components of the identities of late medieval noblemen. As such, they featured prominently in contemporary commentary on noble behaviour. Virtue was crucial to the performance of prowess and was central to both the chivalric ideal and to ideals of martial lordship. Wisdom was a particular requirement of prowess and of properly exercised martial action, and was heavily emphasised by contemporary writers in their praise and criticism of the nobility. Martial wisdom also encompassed other virtues including prudence and temperance, and in exercising the virtue of fortitude, the nobility could also demonstrate their devotion to justice, charity and mercy. Virtuous violence, guided by these principles, was central to elite masculinity and to noble expectation more generally. A noble reputation could be enhanced if he could prove himself capable of prowess and its associated virtues, and this reputation was cited as further evidence of virtue. Noble birth inclined an individual to martial talent and success and military triumph could confirm his nobility. Likewise, martial failure, and a general reluctance to behave martially, flouted traditional notions of what it meant to be noble. In failing to conform to these particular expectations, individual noblemen, and the nobility as a whole, endangered their reputations. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, service to the common good was as central to the ideals of prowess as it was to the exercise of lordship more generally.

Conclusion

Praise and criticism of the nobility relied upon contemporary understandings of what it meant to be noble. There was a specific range of expectations against which noble behaviour could be measured. Nobility depended upon nobility of birth and nobility of action, and the latter was needed to maintain and demonstrate the former. Noble behaviour was marked by virtuous conduct, and this need for virtue permeated the many aspects of noble male identity, including chivalry and masculinity. Their inherited capacity for virtue justified the nobility's social position and authority, and enabled them to fulfil their social function as lords and martial commanders. Fundamentally, both the nobility's social and martial functions were intended to promote and preserve the common good. In order properly to demonstrate and maintain their nobility, noblemen needed to act virtuously in peace and war, and the ultimate goal of this virtue was the greater good of the kingdom at large. This was reflected in the praise and criticism levelled at the nobility in the chronicles, particularly when the chroniclers were intent on portraying individual noblemen in positive or negative lights. Criticism of the nobility highlighted incidents in which they had failed to act virtuously, most often intemperately or imprudently, and with a selfish disregard for the common good. Even descriptions of military failure had moral implications, and suggested that individuals had not only failed to fulfil their function as warriors and defenders of the realm, but had failed to act virtuously too. It was this

lack of virtue that ultimately resulted in defeat. Most significantly, writers routinely *linked* their subjects' capacity for virtue *to* aristocratic reputation. Noble reputation, then, relied upon these expectations that targeted the central aspects of noble identity. Medieval concepts of nobility as something inherited and personally maintained, of virtue, and of the nobility's role in the maintenance of the common good, underpinned noble reputation, and had significant implications for noble power and political security. If nobility and noble reputation were dependent upon the demonstration of virtue, then criticism of them in the terms explored in this chapter, struck at the heart of noble identity and undermined their claims to their position in society.

CHAPTER III:
SHAPING NOBLE REPUTATION

The minutes of the privy council for July to September 1412 refer to an incident of slander against Henry, prince of Wales, whilst he was serving as captain of Calais.

> Also because my lord the prince, captain of the town of Calais, was slandered in the same town and elsewhere that he ought to have received many great sums of money for the payment of his soldiers and these sums he had not distributed amongst the same soldiers. The contrary of which was found to be true, as appears by two rolls of paper despatched to the council by my said lord. So it is agreed that there should be made three declarations under the privy seal...of the estate of the said lord the prince in those parts.[1]

Rumours had circulated within the town and elsewhere that the prince had received funds to pay the soldiers in his charge, but had refused to distribute the money. In order to protect the prince and defend his reputation, the privy council issued three declarations under seal in which it confirmed the prince's innocence. The Council's actions acknowledged that the slander in question was problematic and, in recognition, devised a performance to mitigate the damage. Much like John of Gaunt's public actions in defence of his reputation against the Londoners in 1377, this incident was further evidence of continued noble concern for reputation and the power of words. In chapter one, we explored the significance of words and talk to the manipulation of reputation. Such talk contributed to a bank of public knowledge shared within a community and was prompted and addressed by public action.[2] Chapter two developed this point, arguing that reputation, like the concepts of nobility and masculinity, needed to be actively maintained via public action and performance which underlined the ways in which individuals conformed to contemporary ideals of noble behaviour. Performance was therefore central to the cultivation of noble reputation, and to the nobility's engagement with the same. Reputation, both individual and collective, featured prominently in many different kinds of noble performance, and these will be explored in the present chapter. Nobles employed performance collectively to enhance and defend individual reputation: they used it to manipulate their group reputation, and to inflict damage upon the reputations of their noble opponents. In each of these circumstances, noble performance had both social and political consequences.

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[1] *PC* II, pp.34-5, Translation is my own.
[2] F. G. Bailey, 'Introduction' in F. G, Bailey, *Gifts and Poison: The Politics of Reputation* (New York, 1971), p.4.

Positive reputation, built through public performance before prominent persons, equipped an individual with recognition and influence. This recognition and influence was identified in chapter one as social capital: the ability to maximise social connections in order to 'get things done.' The ability to accumulate and expend social capital was as significant to the nobility as it was to the civic authorities.[3] In the parliament of 1399, for example, the duke of Surrey, who had involved himself with Richard II's counter appellants, made an appeal to Henry IV in which he implored the king to take account of his youth at the time of the incident and to consider 'the little reputation of which he was' at the time.[4] Surrey's implication was not only that he had been young and potentially foolish, but also that as a person of little reputation, his support against the appellants had been inconsequential.. Akin to the attitudes of the civic authorities of chapter one, reputation imbued individual noblemen with social capital, particularly within their social group. Just as Surrey's 'little reputation' reduced his social capital, positive reputation increased it, and qualified individuals for offices and duties denied to those of poor repute. William Phillip was away on campaign when he was admitted into the Order of the Garter in 1418. As such, he was permitted to send a proxy to accept the honour on his behalf. This proxy needed to be 'at least a knight and bearing a coat of arms of a good and irreproachable reputation'.[5] Phillip therefore sent two knights, Sir Andrew Buttreley and Sir John Henington, 'by reason of the[ir] prudence and virtue' and in whom 'nothing will be found wanting that appertains to the most gallant knights.'[6] Buttreley and Henington thus qualified for the task and were able to honour their master, just as he honoured them in return. Reputation, then, needed to be defended and maintained, and we have seen evidence of this already in chapter one. The nobility frequently acted to defend their reputations, both as groups and individuals, but as we will see in this chapter they also needed to defend themselves against accusations from king, parliament and one another.

Methodology

This chapter will examine the manner in which the nobility engaged with their own reputations, and the wider attitudes which underpinned these interactions. It will also consider the nobility's demonstrated concern for their reputations, and identify those aspects of reputation they sought most vehemently to cultivate, display and defend. The core evidence of this chapter will be the rolls of parliament and the records of the court of chivalry. Where many recent studies of the late medieval parliament, most notably those of Gwilym Dodd, have focused on the writing

[3] Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Forms of Capital' in John G. Richardson (ed.) *Handbook of Theory of Research for the Sociology of Education* (Westport, 1986), pp.248-252.
[4] *PROME,* Parliament of October 1399 (Pleas), item 4.
[5] Elias Ashmole, *The Register of the Most Noble Order of the Garter* (London, 1724), p.72.
[6] Ibid.

and submission of parliamentary petitions and the process of petitioning, this chapter will concentrate on the proceedings of parliament, on parliament in its capacity as a court, and on the actions and words of the nobility within this forum.[7] The Court of chivalry, meanwhile, was principally concerned with noble matters, on disputes over coats of arms and noble conduct in war. Unlike the parliamentary performances covered in this chapter, the primary purpose of the Court of chivalry was not the active manipulation of noble reputation. The nature of the cases and the evidence provided by the witnesses, however, offer insights into the ways in which the nobility thought and talked about issues of reputation in peace and war.

The Court of Chivalry

The court of chivalry was founded in the fourteenth century to hear cases relating to the law of arms.[8] Its foundation in the late medieval period was part of the wider pattern addressed in chapters one and two: that the nobility were becoming increasingly concerned with their reputations and collectively protective of their noble identity. There are only limited surviving records from the medieval Court of chivalry, namely the cases of Scrope v Grosvenor of 1385, Grey v Hastings of 1407, Lovell v Morley of c.1386, and Morley v Montague of 1399. Of these four cases, three relate directly to the right to bear a specific coat of arms. The latter, Morley v Montague, is distinctly different from the other examples in that it did not include a dispute over a specific coat of arms. Rather, it concerned an accusation of treason, with political connotations.[9] Nevertheless, the case undoubtedly concerned the performance of honour and reputation and included testimony akin to that found in the other cases.

Of the three cases regarding coats of arms, the case of Scrope v Grosvenor is the most famous and best studied. In Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in August 1385, Sir Richard Scrope, of Yorkshire, and Sir Robert Grosvenor of Cheshire, brought their case to the Court of chivalry and presented it to Thomas, Duke of Gloucester, Constable of England and uncle to the King. Their quarrel concerned the coat of arms 'Azure, a bend Or' and which of them had the right to bear it. After their initial appearance, the case was referred back to Westminster. Evidence for the case began to be collected in 1386 at Gloucester's request, but the constable's verdict was not delivered until 1389. Testimonials were gathered from deponents for both sides, with each of

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[7] See for example: Gwilym Dodd, 'Blood, Brains and Bay-Windows: The Use of English in Fifteenth-Century Parliamentary Petitions'. in and Helen Killick and Thomas W. Smith (eds.), *Petitions and Strategies of Persuasion in the Middle Ages: The English Crown and the Church, c.1200-c.1550* (Woodbridge, 2018), pp.11-39. Gwilym Dodd and Sophie Petit-Renaud 'Grace and Favour: the Petition and Its Mechanisms' in Christopher Fletcher, Jean-Philippe Genet and John Watts (eds.), *Government and Political Life in England and France, c. 1300 - c. 1500* (Cambridge, 2015) pp.240-78.

[8] For a full discussion of the possible origins of the Court of chivalry see: *Lovells,* pp. 164-7.

[9] *MvM*, pp.146–97, and E. Amanda McVitty, 'Traitor to the *Chose Publique*: Negotiating Institutional Conflict through the Law of Treason 1399-1402' in James Bothwell and Gwilym Dodd (eds.), *Fourteenth Century England XIV* (Woodbridge, 2016), pp.149-67.

the witnesses being asked several questions. The first question concerned to whom they believed the arms belonged, and why they thought this. Secondly, they were asked whether the arms had been employed by the ancestors of either Sir Richard Scrope, or Sir Robert Grosvenor, and how they knew this. They were then questioned as to where they had seen the arms carried (in which battles, wars or expeditions and under which commanders), whether they were related to either party, and whether their evidence was based on hearsay or material evidence.[10] After hearing the accounts of both sides, Gloucester ruled in favour of Sir Richard Scrope, and Grosvenor was granted use of the arms with a mark of difference of a plain silver border. Sir Robert later appealed to the King. In May 1390 the king and lords in parliament overturned Gloucester's decision ruling that, whilst such difference would have been acceptable if Scrope and Grosvenor had been cousins, it was unsuitable for men of no proven relation. Sir Robert Grosvenor was thus deprived of the arms entirely and ordered to pay costs of 500 marks.[11] It was the need to defend reputation, and to keep the reputations of the two families distinct, which motivated the decision at Grosvenor's appeal to deprive Sir Robert of the arms entirely, as even the arms with differences implied too close a connection between the two men. At its core, the controversy between Scrope and Grosvenor centred on their concern that the image of the arms Azure, a bend Or, was associated with only one of them. Motivating this concern was an awareness of the connection between the imagery of heraldry and the reality of personal and family reputation.

In the Grey v Hastings case of 1407, there was no argument about whether or not the arms, or a manche gules, belonged to the Hastings' family, but rather who had the right to inherit them, Sir Reginald Grey or Sir Edward Hastings. Both Grey and Hastings claimed to be the heir of the earl of Pembroke, who died at Woodstock in 1389. The case was held before the duke of Bedford as constable of England, and the two sides fielded their witnesses in an attempt to demonstrate that they possessed the better claim.[12] The questions posed to the deponents were akin to those employed in the Scrope v Grosvenor case, focusing particularly upon the use of the arms in war and any knowledge of the right of the individuals involved to claim them.[13] The case of Lovell v Morley had more in common with that of Grey v Hastings than that of Scrope v Grosvenor, in that the same family arms, those of the Burnells, were being claimed by two rival parties. The Scrope v Grosvenor case alone was a dispute between two separate families who had independently adopted the same 'design.' In the Lovell v Morley case, both parties claimed the Burnell arms of a lion rampant sable crowned and armed or. Morley claimed

[10] Ronald Stewart-Brown, *The Scrope and Grosvenor Controversy 1385-1391*, *HSLC*, vol.89, (1937), p.4.
[11] Ibid., p.6.
[12] A transcription of 'an antique register' survives for this case: *PCM*. For origins see: Maurice Keen, *Nobles, Knights and Men at Arms in the Middle Ages* (London, 1996) p.168*n*.
[13] For a full list of the questions posed to deponents in Lovell v Morley see: *Lovells*, pp.242-3.

that his family had used the arms since the times of the Norman Conquest, whilst Lovell claimed the arms through his grandmother, Maud Burnell. Monika Simon examined the Lovell claim in detail and argued that it was curious that Lovell should try to lay claims to a coat of arms his family did not actively use. She proposed that, in claiming the arms, Lovell sought to lay the groundwork for a larger inheritance claim upon the Burnell estates.[14] Thus, both the Grey v Hastings and Lovell v Morley cases, whilst undoubtedly touching upon issues of reputation, performance and display, had a more practical dimension than the case of Scrope v Grosvenor, which was most purely an issue of reputation and identity. There was obviously a reason why the two parties in the Scrope v Grosvenor case so disliked the fact that they both laid claim to the same arms, and, unlike the Grey v Hastings and Lovell v Morley examples, the reason was not a matter of inheritance or potential for practical dynastic gain.

Generally, the Scrope v Grosvenor case, and other court of chivalry material, have been employed in a martial context, in the study of career patterns amongst the late medieval military community. Michael Prestwich labelled the Court of chivalry depositions 'often tedious' and employed them sparingly in his study of the English experience of warfare in the middle ages.[15] Maurice Keen also studied the court of chivalry and its surviving cases, and produced a chapter focusing on the Grey v Hastings case. He excluded from his study the details provided by witnesses regarding the material objects employed during the case as irrelevant to his purposes. Instead, his study concentrated on patterns of military service amongst the knightly community.[16] With a similar intention, Andrew Ayton examined the Lovell v Morley case, and, like Keen, was principally interested in the martial implications of the material, although he paid rather more heed to the role of heraldic display. He used the material to conclude that there was little evidence of a de-militarisation of the gentry in the last quarter of the fourteenth century.[17] Adopting a noticeably different approach, literary scholar Robert Barrett used the Grosvenor side of the Scrope v Grosvenor case in conjunction with Gawain and the Green Knight in his study of regional and chivalric identity amongst the military community of late medieval Cheshire.[18] Unlike Keen, Barrett placed key emphasis on the material evidence referred to by witnesses and argued for the existence of a regional as well as national knightly feeling of shared identity. In contrast to this predominantly military focus, the contributions to the recent

[14] For an account of the possible motivations behind Lovell's claim see: Ibid., pp.254-9.
[15] Michael Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare in the Middle Ages: The English Experience* (New Haven, London, 1996), p.113
[16] Keen, *Nobles, Knights and Men-at-Arms*, pp.167-186.
[17] Andrew Ayton, 'Knights, Esquires and Military Service: The Evidence of the Armorial Cases before the Court of chivalry' in Andrew Ayton and L. J. Price (eds.), *The Medieval Military Revolution: State, Society and Military Change in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (London, 1998), pp. 81-104.
[18] Robert W. Barrett Jr., *Against All England: Regional Identity and Cheshire Writing 1195-1656* (Notre Dame, 2009), pp.133-170.

volume *Courts of Chivalry and Admiralty in Medieval Europe*, studied the legal jurisdiction of the Court of chivalry and courts of a similar nature elsewhere in Europe, and other related matters.[19]. Richard Barber, for example, considered the function of heralds within England's Court of chivalry and their role in collective and institutional memory.[20] Julian Luxford explored the material objects raised during the course of Lovell v Morley case, and the ideas they represented, whilst Philip Morgan studied the Grosvenor side of the Scrope v Grosvenor case in an analysis of Sir Robert Grosvenor's building works as the last of his line.[21] These accounts all demonstrated the richness of the Court of chivalry material as a means of exploring aspects of noble culture, from their military function, to their impact on the landscape, to their employment of coats of arms and their use of art and architecture.

The most recently published work on the Court of chivalry in this period is Philip Caudrey's *Military Society and the Court of Chivalry in the Age of the Hundred Years War*.[22] Remaining consistent with much of the existing historiography, Caudrey explored three of the Court of chivalry cases as they related to late medieval military society. Focusing particularly on the witness lists for each of the cases, Caudrey reconstructed local gentry networks and considered the role regional identity played in the composition of those same lists. From here, the study considered the testimony provided by the deponents as they related to chivalric culture and gentry society more widely in the period between the martial victories of Edward III and Henry V, emphasising the changing attitudes evident between these two military epochs. In his exploration of chivalric memory, Caudrey recovered and dissected the martial experiences of the gentry, their attitudes to war, and the ways in which soldiers spoke about their military experiences. He explored too the way in which such experiences were anchored within the localities, citing the Court of chivalry depositions as examples of the 'strength of localism.'[23]

The Court of chivalry, however, was a national forum, drawing depositions from the localities to the centre. The testimony given was indicative of a shared noble culture of reputation and recollection extending beyond the gentry, with many of those participating in the cases being members of the nobility. The depositions given during the course of each of the cases offer insight into the ways in which noble reputation was formed, transmitted and

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[19] Anthony Musson and Nigel Ramsay, *Courts of Chivalry and Admiralty in Late Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge, 2018).
[20] Richard Barber 'Heralds and the Court of chivalry from Collective Memory to Formal Institutions' in Musson & Ramsay, *Courts of Chivalry and Admiralty,* pp. 15-28.
[21] Julian Luxford, 'Art, Objects and Ideas in the Records of the Medieval Court of chivalry', and Philip Morgan, 'Sir Robert Grosvenor and the Scrope-Grosvenor Controversy' in Musson & Ramsay, *Court of Chivalry and Admiralty,* pp.47-74 & pp.75-94.
[22] Philip J. Caudrey, *Military Society and the Court of chivalry in the Age of the Hundred Years War* (Woodbridge, 2019).
[23] Ibid., p.179.

maintained, amongst the nobility, gentry and beyond. Caudrey noted some of this, remarking towards the end of his final chapter that much of the evidence provided to the court drew upon '...the oral traditions of the counties, often comprising nothing more than a combination of hearsay, tale-telling and iconographic display...'[24] Likewise, he asserted, 'Sir Edward Hastings' entire line of defence essentially rested upon a hot bed of poorly substantiated rumour, perpetuated by the Hastings themselves and taken as fact by the Norfolk gentry.'[25] What Caudrey dismissed here as 'nothing more than hearsay' and 'poorly substantiated rumour' are many of the building blocks of reputation, and are indicative of the processes which underpinned its formation. The fact that the Norfolk gentry bought into Hastings' interpretation is itself representative of reputation formation and of the 'shared pool of knowledge' referred to throughout this thesis. The focus of this chapter will be these very processes and the nobility's use of their words, bodies, objects and space as expressed in the Court of chivalry depositions, to cultivate, disseminate and commemorate their reputations. As such, where Caudrey, Luxford and Morgan concentrated primarily on the testimony provided to the court and placed this at the centre of their studies, this chapter seeks to locate the same depositions and the Court of chivalry itself within their broader context as components of a wider noble culture concerned with reputation.

Performance and Display

The Court of chivalry and parliament both met in 1391, and after the judgement in the Scrope v Grosvenor case was pronounced by the court in Scrope's favour, both parties subsequently appeared together in parliament. Here, Scrope challenged Grosvenor in regards to accusations of falsehood the latter had made against Scrope during the course of the case between them. Grosvenor claimed that he had made the accusations only under the advice of his lawyers and publically withdrew them. Grosvenor's retraction was subsequently enrolled for prosperity, so Scrope's future reputation was also protected.[26] The interaction between the Court of chivalry and parliament in this instance demonstrated the set of cohesive attitudes and concerns in regards to reputation which bound the two forums, and the nobility, together. Like the proclamations made on Prince Henry's behalf by the Privy council in 1412, Scrope and Grosvenor's appearance in parliament constituted a performance, designed to rehabilitate Scrope's reputation in the wake of Grosvenor's accusations. The proceedings in the Court of Chivalry between the pair, the original accusations, and the depositions provided by their respective witnesses had all constituted performances. The impact of these performances upon Scrope's reputation could be remedied only by a further public performance. Parliament proved

[24] Caudrey, *Military Society*, p.177.
[25] Ibid.
[26] *CCR IV*, pp.517-9.

the ideal venue, allowing the performance to be seen by respectable persons who could transmit the message conveyed to their wider social networks. The record of parliamentary proceedings also offered an avenue by which the performance and its implications could be commemorated and preserved. As such, the Scrope v Grosvenor controversy demonstrated perfectly the five stage process by which reputation was formed, adjusted and remembered.

First, there needed to be a performance, which needed to be witnessed by others who then interpreted what they had seen based on their social values and expectations, and transmitted to others via talk. Talk then passed into the community's common fund of knowledge for preservation and continued interpretation. Objects, documents and architecture could then be used to encourage specific interpretations and highlight aspect of reputation, acting as prompts for memory to encourage further talk and recollection. This process is evident throughout our sources and will provide the structure for this chapter. To this end, the Court of chivalry and parliamentary records discussed above will be considered alongside other governmental material including the proceedings of the court of the king's bench and the privy council. These will be combined with material sources including tombs, stained glass, seals, art and architecture, and contemporary chronicles, which recorded examples of noble performance and display, and were themselves reactions to those same performances.

PART I: PERFORMANCE

F.G. Bailey argued that 'reputations arise from the interactions in which a man engages and from the messages which these interactions signal about him.' [27] Therefore, in order for a reputation to start to form, there must first be a public performance. A person's interactions prompted talk which created and adjusted reputations. Performance could, but did not need to be, deliberately staged or choreographed. Any action that could be seen by others can be considered a performance and an individual may engage in a number of incidental performances in any given day. This is true of any individual existing within a social space. Display, and the public exhibiting of objects, was not only a component of performance, but could constitute a performance in its own right. It is an irony of the Scrope v Grosvenor case, that the proceedings are likely to have enhanced Grosvenor's reputation bringing him and his family to the attention of a wider noble audience. Performances could also occur on a large or very small scale, from a major organised public event like the coronation of a king, to more everyday activities like eating meals and travelling. Performances involved bodies, words, things and places, and could

[27] Bailey, *Gifts and Poison*, p. 22.

be calculated to portray particular messages and encourage desirable interpretations. Such interpretations could also occur organically within the cultural contexts in which they transpired. The term 'performance' is not intended to imply any artificiality of purpose on behalf of the 'performer' or to suggest that all such performances lacked sincerity. Undoubtedly things were said and done in the pursuit of personal advantage which the 'performer' did not genuinely believe in, but equally many occurred in good faith, or were so mundane they merited little conscious thought or calculation. Austin's performative sentences, and Hymes' S-P-E-A-K-I-N-G model, as set out in chapter one of this thesis, are equally applicable here.[28] The present chapter develops the assertions that words were performative, words *do things*, and the contexts of place, person, action and intention are important to our understanding of the performances explored in this section.

I: In War

The performative acts identified in the sources largely served three functions: to enhance reputation, to damage it, or to repair it. The most traditional way in which a nobleman might build his reputation was through performance in war and participation in tournaments. As explored in the previous chapter, chronicle entries often recorded noble participation on military campaigns. In addition, many of the witnesses who testified in the period's Court of chivalry cases speak of this kind of performance, and provide details of the circumstances in which they occurred. For example, in the Scrope v Grosvenor case, Sir William de Lucy claimed to have seen Sir Richard Scrope, or others of his lineage, riding armed at the battles of Sluys, Crecy and Poitiers. Likewise, Robert de Toft speaks of having seen Sir Robert Grosvenor at the raid on the city of Issoudun (1356), participating in the Black Prince's chevauchée through the region of Berry in 1349, and in the second beginning at Bourges in 1356, as well as at the battle of La Roche-Derrien in 1347.[29] Multiple witnesses for both Scrope and Grosvenor refer to these examples of service, as well as to deeds of arms performed by the ancestors of both parties. In the Lovell v Morley case, Sir John de Ryalkteby, the earl of Salisbury, and multiple other witnesses testify to the presence of Lord Morley at the Siege of Calais of 1346-7 and to an earlier controversy over the Burnell arms which took place there in 1346.[30] Sir Richard Cosyn, who testified on behalf of Lord Morley, claimed that Morley's father, William, had fought under Robert de Ufford, Earl of Suffolk at the battle of Poitiers, and that his grandfather, Robert, had accompanied King Edward on the Crecy campaign carrying the Morley arms on his banner. Sir

[28] See chapter one, p. 55 of this thesis.
[29] *SvG*, Lucy: p.66, Toft: p.267. Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas provided summary translations for Scrope, but not Grosvenor. All Grosvenor translations are my own, Scrope translations checked for accuracy.
[30] *LvM*, see for example witnesses: XXX (Sir John de Ryalkteby), LXII (Sir William de Elmham), LXXXXVIII (William de Montague, earl of Salisbury).

Robert Morley had also accompanied Edmund, Earl of Cambridge on his expedition to Brittany, and, according to Sir John de Rawteby, had served on campaign under the duke of Lancaster and Lord Latimer.[31] At first glance, the primary purpose of participation in military campaigns may not seem to have been a specifically calculated performance, it undoubtedly was just that. Honour and reputation needed to be cultivated and maintained, just like nobility as discussed in chapter two, and participation in war enabled public performances to this effect. The Court of chivalry testimony was evidence of the existence and significance of such performances. The deponents who provided evidence in the cases were witnesses to individual martial performance, and there was clear social benefit for the knights involved that they had been seen to perform in this way. Their reputations strengthened their claim their disputed coat of arms.[32]

The earning of reputation was a recognised function of the tournament. In Scrope v. Grosvenor, Sir Thomas Roos of Kendal, who claimed to be over eighty years old, provided considerable detail in regards to Geoffrey and William Scrope's tournament participation, testifying to the presence of Geoffrey Scrope at tournaments at Guilford and Newmarket and to William Scrope's attendance at a tournament at Dunstable in the presence of the late king.'[33] Multiple witnesses in Scrope v. Grosvenor testified to Sir William's and Sir Geoffrey Scrope's successful jousting careers for which they seem to have earned particular esteem.[34] Similarly in Lovell v Morley, Robert de Cramley knew that Sir Thomas' grandfather, Sir Robert Morley, had ridden in the jousts held at Smithfield under Edward III, and Sir Alan de Heton knew that Sir Robert Morley had also ridden at the joust outside Calais in 1390.[35] Such events, and the significance attached to them, is also evident in the chronicles. In 1406, a number of Scottish lords came into England 'to gete worchip as by feet of armez'. The Scottish earl of Marr challenged the earl marshal of England to joust with him on horseback with sharp spears. The earl of Marr was ultimately unable to finish the challenge. He was thrown from his horse and broke three ribs in the fall. The earl's intention to earn reputation through combat within a tournament setting backfired; he died at York on his way back to Scotland. Nevertheless, the incident demonstrated the significance of the tournament arena as a forum for performance in which reputation could be won or lost. They were performances designed and organised by the nobility in pursuit of reputation. In 1409, the seneschal of Hainault, Jean de Werchin, brought men into England 'for to seke auntre to gete hym worschip yn dedis of armez bothe on horsbak and on foote, of all maner poyntis of dedis of armez and warre.'[36] There followed a six day

[31] *LvM*, witness no. XXIII (Sir Richard Cosyn), XXX (Sir John de Rawteby).
[32] This is discussed in greater detail in part two of this chapter, see: p.24.
[33] *SvG*, p.132.
[34] For example, SvG, p. 142 (Sir William Aton).
[35] *LvM*, witness no. & LXII & LXXIII.
[36] *Brut*, p. 369.

competition between the English lords and the Hainaulters. The seneschal challenged and rode against the king's half-brother, the earl of Somerset. Somerset 'delyuerde hym manfully yn al his chalangez and put his aduersari to þe worsse yn alle poyntis & wanne hym þere grete worschyp and degre of the ffelde.'[37] The tournament included other English victories, including that of the earl of Arundel who brought his adversary to his knee, Sir John Cornwall who 'manly and knygtly quyt hym yn alle maner of poyntez,' and two squires who were knighted in recognition of their skills. [38] War and tournament were fora in which the nobility could perform to the benefit of their reputations, most particularly their martial reputations and demonstrate their capacity for prowess. The sources refer particularly to 'worship' earned through marvellous deeds of arms. Keen noted this vaguely as an intention of the tournament, asserting that tournaments were public tests of prowess where prizes and renown could be won.[39] Indeed, tournaments were organised with this intention very much in mind. The descriptions of tournaments focused upon the knightly and masculine traits of noble participants, these being separate but related identities. As chapter two demonstrated, as the elite men of society, the nobility were expected to most fully embody the late medieval masculine ideal. By demonstrating these qualities, they proved that they were able to fulfil their traditional function as defenders and warriors, in service of the crown.

II: In Parliament

Enhancing and Promoting

Parliament was another venue in which the nobility could perform in an effort to enhance, adjust or repair their reputations. Parliamentary performance largely focused on areas of noble reputation beyond, but not excluding, martial prowess. When individual noblemen were granted new titles, these appointments were given publically in parliament. In the records of these events we can identify those traits, deeds and qualities which were presented as justification for their new positions. In 1385, for example, Richard II's two uncles, Edmund of Langley and Thomas of Woodstock, were made dukes of York and Gloucester respectively. Identical descriptions of their qualities were listed as justification for their new positions. Whilst this suggested a level of standardisation, it also implied a shared and accepted range of values. The two royal dukes were 'eminent in feats of arms and mature counsel' and had served the crown meritoriously. [40] They were eminent in their abilities, accomplished in arms and wise in their counsel, and thus excelling in royal service. The royal dukes' ability to both perform martially and offer sound advice demonstrated their ability to fulfil both of the core aspects of

[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Keen, *Chivalry*, p.100.
[40] *PROME* Parliament of October 1385, items 14 & 15.

noble service. Similarly, at his elevation in the same parliament, Michael de la Pole was honoured 'on account of his outstanding merits, to the honour of God and the adornment of the royal crown, and the strength and protection of the kingdom.' [41] Again, emphasis was placed on both virtue and service. In Pole's case this was a trinity of service; to God, to the king and to the kingdom. Pole was able to fulfil the traditional martial functions of a nobleman, and serve king and kingdom, using his noble strength to protect the realm. When Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford was made duke of Ireland in that same parliament, he was praised for his 'noble birth, strenuous probity and excellent wisdom.' He too had employed these qualities laudably to serve the crown.[42] In De Vere's case, his lineage, wisdom, ability to advise, and moral integrity were the traits of note. Two of these qualities related directly to Oxford's innate nobility and the other to his proven ability to serve. This pattern was repeated for John Holland when he was created earl of Huntingdon in 1388 in specific recognition of his laudable service, having exceeded others 'both in wisdom and noble deeds.'[43] His elevation was a result of his 'nobility of birth', his kinship to King Richard, and his 'excellent wisdom.'[44] He had laboured in the king's service, sparing no expense and always shown himself 'untiringly compliant' to the king's wishes.[45] Ultimately, the descriptions of each individual nobleman emphasised his personal qualities, being a direct result of his noble lineage, alongside his proven ability to act in a noble manner by rendering effective service to king and kingdom. Such descriptions emphasised the importance of doing, as well as behaving. It was not enough just to behave virtuously, to be wise, a person needed to demonstrate that wisdom by applying it, giving their wisdom purpose. Service was itself a performance, intended to both confirm and enhance the reputations of these individual noblemen, and to demonstrate those qualities the king and nobility wished to be seen to value.

Noble conduct was frequently presented in these parliamentary performances as evidence of nobility of birth, and the two concepts existed within a virtuous circle; noble conduct was evidence of noble birth, and noble birth imbued a person with the capacity for noble conduct. This association was directly demonstrated in pronouncement of the legitimisation of the Beauforts during the parliament of 1397. The Beauforts, John, Henry, Thomas and Joan, were the children of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster by his mistress, and later wife, Katherine Swynford.[46] They were legitimised after their parents' marriage by the pope and by the king, the latter of whom issued them a charter which 'was read in full parliament, and delivered to the said duke, father of the said John, and his said brothers and

[41] *Ibid.*, item 16.
[42] *Ibid.*, item 17.
[43] *PROME* Parliament of February 1388, item 46.
[44] *Ibid.*
[45] *Ibid.*
[46] Alice Curteis and Chris Given-Wilson, *The Royal Bastards of Medieval England* (London, 1984), p.150.

sister.' This performance involved both word, in the public declaration of the charter, and action, in the open presentation of the same charter to Gaunt and his children in the full view of parliament. This was a grant from the king, and also a legal document bestowed in a court setting to confirm the Beaufort's position in common law. Words here were not just words, in-line with J.L. Austin's speech act theory, the words written in the charter, and then read aloud in parliament, *did something*; they bestowed legitimacy.

In this same setting, John Beaufort was subsequently created earl of Somerset in consideration of his 'strenuous probity...prudent mind, distinguished conduct and nobility of birth.'[47] As with the two royal dukes, Pole, and Oxford, this parliamentary performance emphasised John Beaufort's innate noble qualities, his application of those qualities to service, and his nobility of blood. Within the wider context of his legitimisation, however, public recognition and official utterance of his noble deeds underlined his nobility of lineage more firmly; they were provided as proof of his noble origins, now fully and formally recognised in parliament and law. Again, the words spoken were *doing things*, they were formally recognising John Beaufort's lineage, legitimacy and creating him an earl. The parliamentary setting also ensured the performance was viewed by the lords, men of consequence who made respectable witnesses, and the Beaufort's peers whose acceptable of their new positions was particularly consequential. Proceedings of parliament were also distributed beyond Westminster, ensuring the wider dissemination of knowledge of the Beauforts' elevation.[48]

Royal reward for service was also a key component of parliamentary performances designed to create or enhance noble reputation. They recognised services rendered to the crown, the personal qualities which had enabled such service, and used them as justification for reward and promotion in the public forum of parliament. One of the reasons provided for the legitimisation of the Beauforts, in the charter presented to them and read aloud in parliament, was their father's long and committed service to king and kingdom. In the parliamentary performance legitimising the Beauforts, King Richard recognised them as:

> …our most beloved cousins born of our uncle that noble man John duke of Lancaster...While inwardly considering how endlessly and with how many honours of parental and sincere affection of our aforementioned uncle and of his mature counsel we are on all sides blessed.[49]

Thus, this particular parliamentary performance was designed not only to enhance the reputations of the Beauforts and support their claim to nobility, but was also an opportunity for

[47] *PROME*, Parliament of January 1397, item 32.
[48]Christian Liddy, 'Urban Conflict in Late Fourteenth Century England: The Case of York in 1380-1' in *EHR*, vol. 118, (2003), pp.1-32, pp.26-7.
[49] *PROME*, Parliament of January 1397, item 29.

the king to publically recognise Gaunt's service to the crown. This service was evidence of the duke's nobility, and had resulted in the rewards bestowed upon his children. His noble conduct was also evidence of the Beauforts' own innate, and proven nobility: the father's conduct was proof of the nobility of his children, and, vice-versa, the children honoured the father. Again, the words spoken as part of this parliamentary performance were *doing things*, they were recognising, and attaching honour to, lineage and royal service.

The connection between personal virtue, nobility and royal reward was also a theme of the entry regarding the elevation of the King Richard's youngest uncles to their dukedoms. In this particular performance, in which the words spoken endowed the duke's with their new titles, it was declared that:

> A country resplendent with noblemen who excel not only in mature counsel but in vigour of arms is certain to be happy. For just as the sky is rendered bright and clear by the stars, so not only kingdoms but kingly diadems reflect the light of dignity as he who is laden with honours becomes more noble and potent, so it follows that he is made more virtuous, for as gifts increase so do the occasions for gifts, and from him to whom more is assigned a higher degree of discourse and counsel is expected.[50]

A person who had been rewarded with honour was a person of virtue, and by honouring those virtues a king made that individual nobler and more effective in his role. He was empowered to achieve more, and thus a higher quality of service could be expected from him. The wider kingdom would then benefit from this greater level of service. Thus, a performance of royal reward testified to the presence of such virtues in an individual and in so doing enhanced his reputation. This connection was specifically recognised within the performance itself. 'For who would presume to treat his repute negligently or shamefully,' the pronouncement continued 'which he knew to have been raised to the highest honour for its excellent merits?'[51]

The role of royal reward in recognising and evidencing positive noble reputation was underlined further in the subsequent section. Men were to be rewarded when they demonstrated their nobility through noble action, by being of sound judgement, vigour, and virtuous conduct. Individuals who displayed each of these qualities were to be rightfully rewarded by being summoned to high offices.

> ...we [the king] truly believe[s] that we do not merely adorn but also increase the eminence of royal dignity under happy auspices when we dispense the highest of honours among the noble, judicious and vigorous. For we believe our royal crown to glitter with many gems and shimmer with precious stones in so far as virtuous and

[50] *PROME* Parliament of October 1385, items 14 & 15.
[51] Ibid.

> active men, especially those excelling in counsel on the king's behalf, are summoned to high office to strengthen the management of public affairs.[52]

By appointing a man to high office in a public forum, the King recognised both their talent and their good reputation. Merit was continuously proven by those called to high office by fulfilling – and performing – the duties required of those of their social station.

Damage and Reproach

In addition to enhancing noble reputation, public performance could also be employed to censure or criticise members of the nobility to the detriment of their reputations. These performances subverted those characteristics designed to enhance reputation and depended upon the same shared values. The most obvious examples of this kind of performance were situations in which members of the nobility were accused of, and tried for, treason.[53] When the earl of Arundel was arraigned for treason in the parliament of 1397 as one of the lords appellant, he was brought before the lords and commons wearing a red robe with a scarlet hood.[54] The duke of Lancaster then stood and ordered that the earl's hood be removed, along with his belt. In so doing, Arundel was deprived of two emblems of his nobility; these were forfeit as a result of the judgement to be given against him. He stood accused of having subverted royal authority, and acted in opposition to the wishes and well-being of the king. These offences were framed as having been perpetrated to the detriment of the realm.[55] The earl had failed in his duty of noble service, and as such his nobility stood in question. Ultimately found guilty of these crimes, Arundel was further stripped of his markers of noble identity. His lands were confiscated, his heir disinherited and his body 'buried without ceremony at the house of the Augustinians in London'.[56] The latter robbed Arundel and his family of the opportunity to hold a funeral: the earl's final opportunity to perform (or to have a performance undertaken on his behalf) and make a final statement of reputation.

Reputation was also a key component of trials in which members of the nobility were accused of criminal activity. Damage to reputation was part of the punishment in the event of a conviction. This was evident at the trial of Edward Courtney, Earl of Devon before the King's Council in 1392 on a charge of maintenance.[57] The trial had a considerable audience consisting

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[52] Ibid.
[53] For in-depth study of treason trials in late medieval England see: J.G. Bellamy, *The Law of Treason in England in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1970), particularly pp.138-176.
[54] *Usk*, pp.26-7
[55] Ibid., pp.26-31
[56] Ibid., pp.30-1. This is the House of the Austin Friars. Christian Steer suggested that following Arundel's internment, the house became the regular burial place of executed knights and nobles. Christian Oliver Steer, 'Burial and Commemoration in Medieval London c. 1140-1540' (PhD thesis, Royal Holloway University of London, 2014) p.275.
[57] *KC*, pp.77-81.

of the king, the dukes of Lancaster, York and Gloucester, the archbishops of York and Canterbury, eight bishops, five earls and many others. The earl was accused of having harboured Robert Yeo and his servant John Langford who had thrown the king's writs against them into a well. When one William Wyke had requested fresh writs, Yeo and Langford had murdered him, and been indicted for the crime. The earl had subsequently accused the men who had indicted Yeo and Langford of acting falsely, had called them false traitors, reproached them and threatened their safety.[58] Thus, Courtney stood charged with a crime which constituted an abuse of his social position and noble function; he had failed to maintain order and he had not ensured true justice but had instead obstructed it in an abuse of his authority. The earl admitted that he had called one John Wadham a false JP, and had spoken to the other men involved in Yeo's indictment, but claimed that he had not intended to reproach them. He did however confess to having threatened to break the head of another man. For this, the earl placed himself upon the king's grace.[59] This public confession, even restricted as it was to the lords of the council, would have impacted the earl's reputation. Found guilty of the charges against him, he was initially committed to prison but the lords implored the king to show the earl special grace on account of his royal blood and previous good character. Here, positive reputation was beneficial to the earl. Heeding the lords, the king pardoned him on the condition that he preserved the law in future, or risk being charged with the same crimes again. The earl's public trial and conviction, and the records of them, constituted punishment in and of themselves. This was akin to those cases explored in chapter one in which the punishments assigned to defamers of London officials were remitted. The king and the lords themselves had acted in a way beneficial to their reputations, by demonstrating noble mercy, and by decisively dealing with one of their number who had acted in a way likely to damage their collective reputation.

Damage inflicted on noble reputation through official performance could be employed as a form of public censure in other circumstances too. When the earl of Northumberland lost the castle of Berwick to the Scots in 1385 'the earl stood trial before the nobles who were attending parliament, and received the king's sentence of condemnation for the loss of the royal castle.' Once again, parliament was operating as a court and the public performance before the lords gathered in London was designed to shame the earl, adjust his reputation for the worst before his peers, and punish him in the eyes of the law. He was sentenced to have 'a public proclamation...made against him.'[60] This would ensure that news of the earl's disgrace would spread beyond the lords and throughout the kingdom. It represented a significant assault upon the earl's reputation. In mandating this punishment, the parliamentary performance

[58] Ibid, p. 80.
[59] Ibid., p. 80-1.
[60] *Walsingham I*, pp.732-3.

commissioned a related series of further performances in different forums throughout the country. Proclamations were a normal way in which kings communicated with their subjects, especially in relation to parliamentary statutes and ordinances. They were made in a range of venues, at county court meetings, in parish churches, cities, towns, market towns and even smaller rural towns. They were often made in market places on market days, where they could reach the largest number of people across the social spectrum.[61] It must have been of some relief to the earl that King Richard ultimately waived the sentence.

Reparation and Restoration

Performances calculated to repair reputation could be responses to this official kind of condemnation, or to those attacks made by popular report. Where attacks upon reputation focused upon an individual's failure to meet expectations of loyalty and service, attempts to rehabilitate reputation explicitly insisted the opposite. When Lord Latimer responded to the charges of corruption made against him in the parliament of 1376, he offered personally to answer any individual who wished to accuse him of misconduct. The rolls report that 'no individual person would publicly accuse the said lord of the same things...',[62] but the commons maintained the charges regardless. Latimer therefore spoke again, 'in exoneration of his person and declaration of his reputation...', in French 'en excusacion de sa persone et declaracion de sa fame.'[63] Despite Latimer's efforts, however, he was 'found in full parliament to be in fault by his singular counsel and governance, contrary to the profit of the king and the realm.'[64] As a result of being 'found to be in such fault by his aforesaid personal ambition,' Latimer was removed from his royal offices and from the King's Council. Such public accusation and action would undeniably have taken a serious toll upon Latimer's reputation. The entry in the parliament roll emphasised that everything that was done occurred publically, in presence of the full parliament, and the act of recording both accusation and conviction further compounded the damage. When Latimer denied the charges, particular emphasis was placed upon his person and his reputation. The potential damage was firmly acknowledged and Latimer acted to defend himself.

Thus, when John of Gaunt regained royal control the following year in the Bad Parliament of 1377, Latimer's public disgrace was countered by a public restoration of his reputation. The charges brought against him in 1376 were dismissed in parliament as having

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[61] James Masschaele, 'The Public Space of the Marketplace in Medieval England' in *Speculum*, vol. 77 (2002), pp.390-6. J. R. Maddicott, 'The County Community and the Making Of Public Opinion in Fourteenth Century England' in *TRHS*, vol.28 (1978), pp.33-9.
[62] *PROME* Parliament of April 1376, item 26.
[63] *Ibid.*
[64] *PROME,* Parliament of April 1376, item 28.

been made 'by means of false accusation' and 'without due process'.[65] In an attempt to undo the damage to Latimer's reputation the previous year, the parliament of 1377 portrayed Latimer as a victim of a miscarriage of justice. Latimer was, the roll recorded, 'sufficient to be of the king's council for his service in the wars as well as otherwise.'[66] Not only was he innocent of the charges brought against him the previous year, he was of suitable character to be restored to his offices and advise the king as before. As such, the parliament of 1377 officially restored Latimer 'to his first estate and degree,' knowing that this would 'bring great profit' to the realm.[67] The latter assertion recorded in the rolls directly disputed the earlier characterisation of Latimer as a man bent on personal profit at the expense of the greater good. He was capable of giving sound counsel in the interest of the kingdom, and his capacity to do so was both publically and officially recognised in 1377.

The same ideology underpinned the correction submitted on behalf of the earls of Rutland and Somerset in the parliament of January 1401. The earls had originally been included in the list of lords who had acted as counter-appellants against the duke of Gloucester and his companions in 1397. The judgement against all of the lords involved had been recorded in the parliament rolls. The record of 1401, however, stated that time had 'separated the evil from the good amongst the aforesaid lords' and the earls of Rutland and Somerset, far from being traitors, had 'shown themselves to be good and loyal lieges to our lord the king in all their affairs.'[68] The commons then requested that the king, on account of '...their great loyalty and good repute...' and their being 'so closely related to him by blood', might 'grant by his special grace that they be declared to be such loyal lieges and restored to their good reputation and henceforth to enjoy their liberty and freedom in all things as fully as other lords of the realm notwithstanding any judgement or ordinance made to the contrary.'[69] This request acknowledged the good reputations of the earls, thus confirming them, and emphasised their loyal service, and noble lineage. The suggested declaration was intended to rehabilitate the earls' reputations more widely by opening this acknowledgement to a wider audience within and beyond parliament. Their restoration was finalised when the king '...personally testified to the loyalty of the same earls...and to their good and loyal bearing towards him...', lending royal weight to the performance and to the confirmation of the earls' reputations.[70]

Parliamentary performances of this kind were not used solely to overturn official judgements against individual noblemen. They were also used in attempts to repair and

[65] *PROME,* Parliament of January 1377, item 75.
[66] *Ibid.*
[67] *Ibid.*
[68] *PROME,* Parliament of January 1401, item 33.
[69] *Ibid.*
[70] *PROME,* Parliament of April 1376, item 28.

reinforce reputation attacked or damaged by rumour and other unofficial forms of talk. In July 1433, a declaration was issued in parliament confirming the good name of the duke of Bedford. Speaking personally before parliament, the duke raised an issue concerning 'his name, reputation and honour' which he wished to have discussed in the presence of the king. It had come to his attention that 'a false and perverse belief was being put about and spread among very many people in the realm of England...' claiming that the king's troubles in France and Normandy were the result of Bedford's 'negligence and carelessness.'[71] Such a claim was 'to the scandal of his person and to the grave damage of his name, reputation and honour, but also to the 'sadness and sorrow of his heart.'[72] In so doing, Bedford demonstrated both a concern for rumour and talk, and for the impact this could have upon his personal standing (or reputation). His concern was such that he was compelled to seek a public solution within parliament. The duke invited any man, who had a specific charge to lay against him, to accuse him publically so he might formally answer their charge and prove the truth; that he had conducted himself well and honourably. Bedford would prove himself against men of equal or similar rank to his own and 'if such an accuser was not of similar rank...then it might please the same king to hold and to consider the aforesaid duke of Bedford as a person equal to the person thus making the accusation...' and to defend himself as such. In either case, he would act as 'the law of arms demands and requires.'[73]

Following the duke's declaration, the king, Bedford's brother, the duke of Gloucester and the lords of the council considered the matter. Their decision was conveyed publically in parliament by the bishop of Bath and Wells, and declared that the 'profane and scandalous words' that had circulated about the duke of Bedford had not previously been heard by the king, the duke of Gloucester or the council.[74] The rumours were thus firstly condemned as both disrespectful and untrue and then discredited. As we have explored in previous chapters, the significance lay in to whom words were spoken and by whom they were believed. To be given credence, a rumour needed to have been heard by men of good standing and reputation. By denying knowledge of the rumours circulating about the duke of Bedford, the king and council discredited the words themselves. The rumour had not been passed to or believed by men of consequence, and was therefore not to be believed. The declaration continued, stating that the king 'holds and considers, as he has always considered and held, the aforesaid duke of Bedford as his true and faithful liege and his dearest uncle...and he gave most special thanks to the same

[71] *PROME,* Parliament of July 1433, item 10.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid. For a remarkably similar example in Chastelain's account of the story of Jean Coustain see: Andrew Brown and Graeme Small, *Court and Civil Society in the Burgundian Low Countries c.1420-1530* (Manchester, 2007), p.125.
[74] Ibid.

duke of Bedford both for his good, laudable and fruitful services expended in many ways...'[75] The public acknowledgement of Bedford's good service, and his place in the king's affections, were designed finally to dismiss and overturn the rumours in question, repairing any damage that had been inflicted upon the duke's reputation.

Bedford's experience echoed that of his grandfather, John of Gaunt, some fifty-six years previously. In the October parliament of 1377, the duke of Lancaster staged his own performance in parliament in defence of his reputation. Kneeling before the king, the duke refused to act as an advisor to the commons as they had requested, until he had been publically exonerated 'of that which the commons had wickedly said of him.'[76] He claimed that 'his person had been spoken of so malevolently' and that he had been accused of offences akin to open treason. Thus, he declared, he would do nothing 'until the truth was made publically known.'[77] Parliament obliged him. Combining word and action 'all the prelates, and lords stood and exonerated him with one voice' and the commons claimed that 'they had exonerated the duke of all blame and defamation' when they had elected him as their chief counsellor in the same parliament.[78] This was not enough for the duke; his public exoneration needed to be explicit, not implied. By performing publically in parliament before the lords and commons, the duke also ensured that his innocence was publically acknowledged, and was recorded within the roll for posterity.

Whilst such parliamentary performances could correct and override the official record of events, and the formal reputation of individual lords, the effectiveness of such acts in dispelling rumour or popular feeling is uncertain. Just because the parliament of 1377 formally recognised Lord Latimer's innocence, and declared him worthy to serve the king, this endorsement did not necessarily indicate that this claim was widely believed to be true. Whilst the nobility could control and choreograph their parliamentary performance in ways intended to prompt particular favourable reactions, they could not guarantee how their performances were received, interpreted or transmitted in the world beyond their chosen forum.

The difficulty in attempting to repair the reputations of individual lords in this way is suggested in the duke of York's three separate requests to have his innocence and good reputation acknowledged in 1404, 1407 and 1414. In the first instance in 1404, the duke, alongside the archbishop of Canterbury, complained that they had 'been slandered by certain malevolent persons' who had accused them of involvement in the Percy rebellion of the same

[75] Ibid.
[76] *PROME,* Parliament of October 1377, item 13.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.

year.[79] The duke and archbishop requested that the earl of Northumberland be compelled to state publically everything he knew of the matter so they might clear themselves. The earl obliged, stating that 'he had never known anything about the said duke and archbishop or about any of the others aforesaid which would be derogatory to the honourable estate of the king...but that they were and are good and loyal lieges to him and our same lord king can hold and consider them as such and faithfully put his trust in them.' [80] In October 1407, however, Prince Henry knelt before his father in parliament to speak on behalf of the duke of York. The prince claimed to have 'heard that various malicious and derogatory things had been said by certain people who wished ill towards the said duke, to the slander and derogation of the honourable estate and name of the duke.'[81] In an attempt to contradict and correct such slander, Prince Henry openly declared that 'had it not been for his [the duke's] good advice and counsel', he and those in his company 'would have suffered very great peril and loss...', and that the duke had 'laboured in such a way as to support and embolden all the other members of the aforesaid company as if he had been the poorest gentleman in the realm wishing to serve him in order to win honour and renown and that he is a loyal and valiant knight in all that he does.'[82] The parliament of 1414, however, witnessed a third parliamentary performance on behalf of the duke and his reputation. King Henry V, 'of his own incentive and royal authority by the advice and assent of the lords spiritual and temporal, and by assent of the commons', had the duke declared 'a good loyal liege' to both himself and his father and wished for the duke of York 'to be regarded as such' and to be restored 'to his estate, name, repute and honour as completely and fully as he was before the judgement rendered against him' in Henry IV's first parliament in 1399.[83]

Collective Reputation and Cooperation

As touched upon earlier in this chapter, performative acts designed to alter reputation were not always to the benefit or detriment of individual parties. As established in chapter one, the nobility's preoccupation with reputation was fostered by a series of shared concerns. This shared concern fostered cooperation and performances designed to benefit multiple parties. Reconciliation between the earls of Northumberland and Westmorland was arranged in the parliament of 1402. The commons prayed that 'full unity and concord' be restored between them 'expelling all malice and rancour from their hearts.'[84] In doing so, they hoped that 'the people of their countries who were despoiled of their possessions should be restored to them,

[79] *PROME,* Parliament of January 1404, item 14.
[80] *Ibid.*
[81] PROME, Parliament of October 1407, item 24.
[82] Ibid.
[83] *PROME*, Parliament of April 1414, item 9.
[84] *PROME*, Parliament of January 1403, item 18

and due remedy and redress provided for this.' The earls promptly obliged, claiming that there existed 'no ill-will or bad-feeling between them' and, in the presence of full parliament, they 'took one another's hands and kissed one another openly three times in confirmation of the complete unity and concord between them.'[85] This done, the commons requested that the king ordered the earls back to the north so they could ensure that 'the same unity and concord' as had been agreed between them could be applied within their lands.

Parliament was also used as a forum to settle disputes between individual lords, and these events were equally performative. Much like instances in which individual reputations were endangered by defamation or rumour, accusations between lords were viewed as a danger to the peace and prosperity of the realm. As such, they were to be avoided, defused or repaired, else the nobility as a whole might be brought into disrepute for placing private dispute above the well being of the kingdom.

In the parliament of October 1423, John Lord Talbot formally withdrew the accusations of corruption and treason he had levelled against James Butler, Earl of Ormond. The record in the parliament begins as follows:

> Be it remembered that on Thursday 10 November in the present parliament, having reflected upon and diligently considered the very many dissensions, disturbances, disputes, scandals and other intolerable evils which, God forbid, might indeed be easily generated between royal lieges, not only in the realm of England but also in the king's lordship of Ireland by reason of an allegation, report and revelation of certain crimes, treasons and misdeeds, first made and presented by John Talbot, lord of Talbot and of Furnival, before the lord king in his great council against James Butler, earl of Ormond...[86]

Here, the dangers inherent in such disputes were openly acknowledged and condemned, actively demonstrating the commitment of the king and lords to the peace and prosperity of the realm. They were fulfilling their duty by ensuring justice and order, and the case was originally assigned to be heard by the king's uncle, the duke of Bedford, in the court of chivalry 'in order for such damage and perils to be prevented and avoided and also for peace and quiet to be agreed and inviolably maintained between the said royal lieges...'[87] Proceedings within the court of chivalry were open to a far more restricted audience than parliament, and as such, offered a safer environment for the lords to air their grievances. The smaller the audience, the less exposed the reputation.

Later in the roll entry, the risks and commitments identified above were repeated:

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[85] Ben R. McRee, 'Peacemaking and its Limits in Late Medieval Norwich' in *EHR*, vo. 109, (1994), p.850.
[86] *PROME*, Parliament of October 1423, item 9
[87] Ibid.

> 'We, mindful of domestic considerations that if it is proceeded further concerning the accusations, denunciations and revelations put forward on these crimes, treasons and defaults, many scandals and other inconveniences in our realm of England and in our lordship of Ireland will follow, which God forbid, to the disturbance of our peace in our kingdom and lordship, which we endeavour to prevent to the utmost of our strength...'[88]

Lord Talbot accused the earl of Ormond of having worked with prominent Irish leaders who were enemies of the king, of protecting the murderer of one John Liverpool, constable of the castle of Wicklow, and other unlawful assaults and oppressions. Each of the accusations was of such a nature that it would have significantly damaged the earl's reputation, both in England and Ireland. The roll entry acknowledges this. Since the accusations against the earl had already been submitted and made known, steps needed to be taken to undo the damage when lord Talbot agreed to drop the charges. The subsequent performance in parliament was designed 'to establish a perfect link of love and harmony' between Ormond and Talbot, thus avoiding any public disorder resulting from their enmity, and to 'preserve entire and unharmed the reputation which we accord to those faithful to [the king.]'[89]

In addition to having the charges publically withdrawn, the king ordered that record of the charge and related proceedings 'be abolished, removed, taken away, cancelled, excised and deleted completely from our capitularies and registers of all our courts whatsoever' in full parliament.[90] By destroying records of the trial, the proceedings were physically as well as verbally erased and could not be referred to in the future. Furthermore, the king moved to further protect the reputations of both the earl of Ormond and lord Talbot. He was:

> …not willing that the said John and James or their heirs, or any of them, shall in any way be injured, oppressed, disturbed or perturbed in reputation, opinion, person, name or possession by reason of any such aforesaid accusation.[91]

This concept of collective noble reputation was exhibited again in 1401 when parliament discussed a series of challenges which had been issued to certain members of the lords by the French. The commons had heard that 'certain lords and other worthy and sufficient persons of this kingdom had been challenged by the French' and implored the king to bring the issue to a sensible conclusion, for the men in question were 'all men of sense, humanity and wealth.'[92] For his part, Henry IV promised 'to do his best for the salvation of the honour of those persons who had been challenged...[93]' In this incident, the reputations of individual lords became the express

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[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.
[92] *PROME*, Parliament of January 1401, item 12.
[93] Ibid.

concern of the king and parliament as a whole. Their reputations were worth officially defending as they were great men, sensible, humane and wealthy. Their virtuous gifts were marks of their nobility and thus their reputations were to be honoured and defended. They also stood as representatives of the king and of the kingdom as a whole. If their reputations were damaged, so too was the reputation of the kingdom. This connection was openly acknowledged in the rolls. The entry claimed that the good sense of kings was demonstrated through their own good conduct and 'also through the sense that lies within the honourable persons of the lords spiritual and temporal of his kingdom, as is well known.' In this case the nobility sought to preserve their reputations, and by extension those of their king and kingdom.

As this example suggests, noblemen were members of a number of different collective groups and existed as representatives of each. A curious performance by the earl of Somerset in 1402 demonstrated the significance of both the connection between royal and noble reputation, and reputation shared within families. On 6 November the commons appeared before the king and praised the 'good and honourable behaviour and conduct' of the earl of Somerset, and requested that, in consideration of this, he be restored to the rank of marquis, which he had briefly held under Richard II. It is recorded that, in response to this request, the earl rose and then knelt 'most humbly' at the king's feet, and said that:

> ...as the name of marquis was an alien name in this kingdom, he did not wish him to bestow this name of marquis in any way because never again by the king's leave did he wish to bear or accept for himself any such name in any form.[94]

The earl ended the matter by thanking the lords and the commons 'cordially for their good thoughts and wishes.'[95] It is difficult to believe that such a performance would have been spontaneous. It was beneficial to the earl's reputation in a number of ways, and, as the earl's half-brother, it was equally beneficial to Henry IV. In rejecting the title of marquis, a title which the deposed Richard II had awarded to his controversial favourite Robert de Vere, Somerset also rejected Ricardian corruption. As the new king Henry IV's half-brother, this was a powerful message with which to begin a new reign and establish its legitimacy.

Praise for the king's family was also a notable feature of the parliament of 1401 in which the commons recommended the king's sons, Prince Henry, Thomas, John and Humphrey, requesting that they each be awarded an honourable title. They also praised the king's cousin, the duke of York, 'who is so close a blood relation of his, [service he]has done him, in the parts of Guyenne as well as in other parts and the great costs and labour he has endured for him and his

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[94] *PROME*, Parliament of September 1402, item 18.
[95] Ibid.

kingdom...', highlighting the duke's lineage, royal service and devotion to the common good.[96] The earl of Somerset, and his brother Sir Thomas Beaufort, were also granted a recommendation by the commons 'for the ordering of their estates to the honour of the king and his realm.'[97] Each item of praise offered by the commons touched upon the innate nobility of the king's closest relatives, and upon their diligent fulfilment of their duties, both princely and masculine. The king's relatives were presented as a contrast to those who had encircled Richard II: they were competent, capable and worked dutifully in service of the kingdom, rather than from their own personal profit.

Material from the surviving Court of chivalry cases inevitably places heavy emphasis on the importance of lineage and family reputation. The primary purpose of the trials after all was not to ascertain the reputations of individual knights and families but to assess individual claims to hereditary coats of arms. Witnesses in each of the cases report having seen coats of arms borne honourably both entire, by the heads of the respective families, and with differences. The arms served to bind together the deeds of individual family members to the honour of the family as a whole, both in the present and for the benefit of the generations to follow. In the Grey v Hastings case, witnesses recalled how the duchess of Norfolk and her daughter, the dowager countess of Pembroke, had implored Hugh Hastings, Edward Hastings' father, to carry the Hastings arms into battle on John of Gaunt's Spanish expedition in 1386 to, 'do that worschyp to the erle' whilst the earl was in his minority and too young to participate himself. According to witnesses, Sir Hugh had obliged and had carried the Hastings arms entire on his kinsman's behalf.[98]

When William de Ufford, Earl of Suffolk died attending parliament at Westminster Hall in 1382, he left no heir, and his title and possessions reverted to the crown. Three years later, Richard II conferred the title upon his favourite, Michael de la Pole, in full parliament and framed Pole as Ufford's successor. The king, 'choosing rather to enhance the dignity and name of such an earl to the continuing honour of the royal diadem than to suppress his name and put the resources of his patrimony to fiscal uses', intended to give Pole the opportunity to continue the reputation and honour of the earls of Suffolk.[99]

> ...when William late earl of Suffolk, of illustrious memory, was taken from this world without heirs male, as it pleased the Almighty, and a great part of his patrimony legitimately devolved upon us for this reason, we chose rather that the dignity and name

[96] *PROME*, Parliament of October 1404, item 12.
[97] Ibid.
[98] *PCM*, pp.418, p.475 and p. 509. *GvH*, p.xv. Maurice Keen, *Nobles, Knights and Men-at-Arms in the Middle Ages*, p. 181.
[99] *PROME*, Parliament of October 1385, item 16.

> of such an earl should continue to honour our diadem, than that his name should be lost...For which reason we turned our thoughts to that strenuous and judicious man Michael de la Pole, chancellor of our kingdom, who in the past had rendered us many services, not merely useful but fruitful and honourable, since we undertook the governance of the kingdom.[100]

The honour and reputation Ufford and his ancestors had amassed was affiliated with their title, as much as with themselves as individuals. Thus, by awarding the title to another of ability and good reputation, the collective honour and reputation of the earls of Suffolk could be continued and preserved. Reputation was not just a matter of individual achievement or virtue, nor, this incident suggests, was it restricted to familial bloodlines. Pole was not Ufford's successor by blood, but he was an opportunity for the achievements of his ancestors to be honoured and carried into the future regardless. The title itself acted as a prompt for memories of past achievement and reputation. The importance attached to the connection between reputation, title and memory was also evident in the October parliament of 1399. Prince Henry was created duke of Lancaster by his father in consideration of 'how that honourable title and estate of duke have been so honourably borne and exercised in the honourable person of his father, whom God absolve, and of his many honourable forebears; and wishing thereupon that the said title of duke of Lancaster should be continued with honour...'[101] By assigning the title of duke of Lancaster to his son, the new king sought to preserve, continue and memorialise the reputations and achievements of their ancestors.

The nobility, then, recognised public performance as a vehicle for personal, family and collective reputation. Performances arranged by the nobility were designed to emphasise their service in both peace and war, and their innate capacity for that same service. They emphasised those qualities they possessed as a result of their born nobility which allowed them to fulfil their noble functions as warriors, protectors, advisors and dispensers of justice in pursuit of the common good. Emphasis was also placed upon family and lineage as key to both the capacity to act nobly and hold office and to ideas of inherited positive reputation. Damage was inflicted upon noble reputation by inverting these values and by stripping an individual of those markers of their nobility and virtue and placing them in opposition to the public good. To repair a damaged reputation, then, performances emphasised an individual's previous good reputation, confirmed his capacity for service, praised past services rendered and confirmed his personal virtue. Public performance of this nature was employed to repair reputations in the wake of both official forms of censure and popular accusation or rumour. Rumours of this nature were further diffused by denying that they had been heard by anyone of consequence, which in turn

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[100] Ibid.
[101] *PROME*, Parliament of October 1399, item 81.

rejected their validity. The nobility recognised too that their personal reputations did not exist in isolation but could impact upon the reputations of one another and upon their reputation as an entire social group. This shared interest fostered cooperation, which is particularly apparent in those performances calculated to try to repair damaged reputation. The nobility proved inclined to care for one another's reputations for political and social purposes, emphasising their collective ability to act nobly and fulfil the masculine ideals of being temperate, able to accept advice and dispense wisdom. Through each of these considerations, the nobility demonstrated that they were conscious of the public perception of their behaviour and policed their conduct accordingly. This was particularly apparent in their efforts to resolve internal disputes, at the centre of which was an intense concern for the common good. Accusations between nobles were recorded, and any subsequent withdrawals of such allegations were also preserved so reputation could be preserved and defended in future. Ultimately, as we witnessed in the Scandalum Magnatum statutes of chapter one, the nobility portrayed themselves as representative of the king and kingdom, and thus care for their reputations was framed in terms of concern for the well-being of the same.

PART II: DISPLAY AND COMMEMORATION

I: Recognition, Interpretation and Transmission

Performance alone, however, whether for the benefit of the individual, his family or his wider social group, was not enough to build reputation. In order for performances to contribute to reputation, they needed to be witnessed and recognised by the viewing audience. In order for talk to occur and reputation to form there needed to be a general acknowledgement of that performance. A performance which passed unremarked upon could not contribute to reputation because reputation was a direct result of talk. As M. A. Heppenstall argued, the people with whom an individual interacts 'refine and consolidate their impressions into something transmissible - these become the ingredients of reputation.'[102] Talk, however, was impossible to ever control, entirely and so it was at this stage that the 'owner' of a reputation began to lose much of their influence over their reputation. They could, for the most part, control and engineer their performances, but they could not control the talk resulting from them. They had to calculate the performance to trigger desirable forms of talk. As Bailey concluded, 'a man's reputation is not a quality he possesses but the opinions others have of him.'[103] He could

[102] M.A. Heppenstall, 'Rules for Gossip' in Bailey, *Gifts and Poison,* p. 153.
[103] Bailey, F. G., 'Introduction' in Bailey, *Gifts and Poison*, p.4.

influence the performances and the messages he hoped they would convey, but he could not ultimately control the judgements other people made as a result.

The reputation of audiences themselves was also significant to the formation and dissemination of reputation, particularly within official and legal settings. For reputation to be acknowledged in these situations, it was important that performed deeds were viewed and recognised by individuals of consequence. The audience themselves needed respectable reputations, as it was these men who made the most reliable witnesses. The correlation between nobility and moral uprightness implied that noble, or even royal, recognition was the most significant of all. We find evidence of this throughout the Court of chivalry cases, beginning with witnesses supplying their social positions or occupations. In his Court of chivalry testimony, Sir Thomas Roos described how he had seen Sir Geoffrey and Sir Henry Scrope, ancestors of Sir Richard, ride in tournaments and recalled in particular, Sir Henry Scrope riding well at a tournament at Dunstable where he '*received great applause from the late noble king*'.[104] The audience of deeds of arms, through which reputation might be earned, was as significant as the deeds themselves. Deponent testimony included both first-hand reports and hearsay evidence. When providing evidence based on what they had heard from others, deponents regularly remarked that their evidence came from men of good repute, as the reputations of these men were crucial to the reliability of the evidence.[105] Witness quality was also a feature of the first-hand testimony provided by Court of chivalry deponents. Sir Thomas Reresby recalled that Sir Henry Scrope had ridden armed in Gyanne with the prince of Wales, had displayed his banner in the company of the earl of Northampton, and had also been armed in the presence of King Edward III and his sons John of Gaunt, Lionel of Antwerp and Edmund of Langley.[106] John Bosevyle similarly testified that Sir Richard Scrope had been armed azure a bend or at the Battle of Najera in 1367, in the presence of the Prince of Wales.[107] Sir Gerard de Lound also reported how he had seen Sir Richard armed '*in the presence of the king and all of the princes, dukes, barons and other lords...*'[108] Ultimately, fifteen members of the titled nobility acted as witnesses on behalf of Sir Richard Scrope: two dukes, four earls, and nine lords. They included John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, his son Henry, Earl of Derby, the duke of York, the earls of Northumberland and Arundel, and the earl of Devon.[109] The quality of Scope's witnesses stood in his favour, and spoke to the extent and prominence of his reputation. A key problem for Sir Robert Grosvenor was that he was unable to field witnesses who were able to say the same of

[104] *SvG*, p. 139.
[105] Ibid., p. 49 (duke of Lancaster).
[106] Ibid., p. 117.
[107] Ibid., p.107.
[108] Ibid., p. 110.
[109]Ibid., p.49, Lancaster: p.49, Derby: p.50, Devon: p.73, Northumberland: p.215, York & Arundel: p.219.

him. The most comparable claim made by Grosvenor's witnesses was that he had been seen armed azure a bend or in the presence of Sir James Audley, lieutenant of the prince of Wales. This claim was made by both Richard de Monlegh and Thomas Saynpeer.[110] Whilst the duke of Lancaster, for example, spoke of having seen Sir Richard Scrope armed azure a bend or, he also claimed to have seen or heard nothing of Sir Robert Grosvenor or any of his relatives until very recently.[111] Such assertions in regards to Sir Robert were frequently supplied by Scrope's witnesses.

Only deeds that were witnessed could contribute to reputation because only witnessed deeds could generate talk. The Court of chivalry records provide evidence of this kind of discussion. The second-hand reports included in witness accounts suggest that reputation, and the performances which contributed to it, were points of discussion amongst the arms-bearing classes. Sir Hugh Hastings, for example, drew upon his family's knowledge of Sir Richard Scrope and his right to bear the arms azure a bend or. He said that he had 'heard his father state that his grandfather had served with Sir Geoffrey le Scrope.'[112] Similarly, Lord Poynings claimed that he had personally seen Sir Richard armed azure a bend or since his [Poynings'] youth, and had 'heard from his late father that Sir Richard had the arms by right of ancient ancestry.'[113] Again, the witness combined his personal experience with a report of information gleaned from older ancestral sources. In a number of instances, witnesses claim to have had their knowledge from veteran knights, some of whom were dead at the time of the Court of chivalry deposition. Military accomplishment and the bearing of arms in war were not the only points of discussion in regards to reputation. Sir Thomas Percy claimed that he had never heard of Sir Robert Grosvenor riding armed, but he had heard that he was 'a gentleman of high degree.'[114] Sir Robert's noble origins had also been a point of discussion amongst his peers, and this was further evidence of the existence of a shared pool of knowledge and reputation from which they all might draw.

II: Display and Memorialisation

Introduction

Whilst reputation depended on the talk prompted by public performance, such performances were not confined to words and gesture. Visual display, images, architecture and objects were a key component in the award, repair and preservation of reputation. They too could trigger talk

[110] Ibid., Monlegh: p. 256, Seynpeer: p.261.
[111] Ibid., p.49
[112] Ibid., p. 51.
[113] Ibid., p. 50.
[114] Ibid.

and contribute to the shared pool of knowledge in which reputation was created and maintained. Display and performance were inextricably connected, and whilst display was a key component of performance, the act of display, such as the installation of a tomb or use of a seal, could constitute a performance in its own right. Such artefacts served two purposes. Firstly, they could be employed to convey meaning during performances, and secondly they could act as a prompts for recollection.

Objects of the kind referred to by witnesses in the Court of chivalry cases helped to generate, manipulate and preserve reputation. Performances allowed individuals to associate themselves with particular images, such as coats of arms and badges, which in turn could be used to associate them with ideals and institutions. Images could then also be used as prompts or mnemonic devices, to encourage anyone who saw that image to associate it with the desired individual, family, event or ideal; these were building blocks of noble reputation. Objects could be used in this way to encourage talk even when a performance was not actively taking place, including when the individual for whom the object had been commissioned or installed had died. Prompts of this kind, designed to ensure the recollection of reputation after death, were an active concern of the nobility. Nigel Saul acknowledged this collective noble consciousness in the association between commemorative building works and secular forms of remembrance. He supplied the example of Ralph, Lord Cromwell, who was the last of his family line when he died in 1455. Prior to this, Cromwell had undertaken an ambitious programme of building works to ensure that his name and lineage would be remembered once their line no longer had a living person to represent his family.[115] As discussed in the previous section in regards to Michael de la Pole and Prince Henry, people, like objects, could earn honour for the present and future, and prompt recollections of the people and deeds of the past.

Memory and Material Culture

A study of the relationship between display, commemoration and reputation unites the historiographies of material culture and memory. The association between objects and recollection in the medieval period has been widely acknowledged by historians, and other scholars, as part of the concentrated study of material culture over the last forty years. Studies of this kind have championed the ongoing assessment of objects as expressions of human thoughts, behaviours and relationships.[116] Uniting methodologies imported from archaeology and anthropology, historians of material culture argued that the meanings of objects become clear within their narrative contexts. In understanding these contexts, we gain a greater

[115] Nigel Saul, *English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages: History and Representation* (Oxford, 2009) p.135

[116] Cruse, Mark, 'Material Culture' in Albrecht Classen (ed.), *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms - Methods - Trends, vol. 1* (Berlin, New York, 2010), p. 836, 848.

comprehension of how medieval figures viewed themselves. Principally, early modernist Richard Grassby argued, 'people construct material culture': their ideas, beliefs and values give items and places meaning, and these same objects and locations gain additional layers of meaning overtime.[117] Contemporary sources like the parliament rolls and particularly the depositions from the Court of chivalry, reveal these values, thoughts and interpretations through a medieval lens. The depositions given during the course of each of the Court of chivalry cases describe, and assign meaning to, objects, items and places, locating them directly within their cultural contexts. Whilst reputation was not the focus of these depositions, the reports provided by the witnesses were themselves products of reputation and commemoration. They demonstrated the existence not only of chivalric memory as explored by Barber and Caudrey, but of those processes of display and commemoration which underpinned the formation and preservation of noble reputation more generally.

Memory was highly valued in medieval society. Mary Carruthers explored the significance of memory to medieval cultures, and the different ways in which texts were remembered, including and beyond the written word.[118] Focusing particularly on educated memory between the fourth and fourteenth centuries, and upon books and literature, she demonstrated the ways in which memory was perceived and understood.[119] A good memory, she argued, was seen as an indicator of intelligence, and the basis of morality, enabling prudence and moral judgement.[120] As an extension of their claims to virtue and greater understanding, the nobility sought to be both remembered and to be seen to remember. These desires motivated their acts of performance, display and commemoration, with much of this evident in the material from the Court of chivalry. The association between memory and material culture is particularly apparent in medieval funerary monuments and effigies, and these artefacts have attracted significant historical interest. Art historians Carol Pendergast and Elizabeth Valdez del Alamo argued that tombs and funerary monuments were intended to trigger recollection, the ultimate purpose of which was to maintain symbolically the presence of the dead in the world of the living. The roots of this assertion lay in medieval notions of memory, as something which could be stimulated by image, ritual, space and action.[121] That medieval monuments stood as mnemonic devices to aid the living in the memorial of the dead is generally accepted. So too is the dualistic intention behind the erection of such monuments to

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[117] Richard Grassby, 'Material Culture and Cultural History' in *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol. 35, (Spring, 2005), pp.594-5.
[118] Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study in Medieval Culture* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 2008, online edition: 2014), p.1, 9.
[119] Ibid., pp.9-10.
[120] Ibid., p.11.
[121] Carol Stamatis Pendergast, and Elizabeth Valdez del Alamo, *Memory and the Medieval Tomb* (Aldershot, 2000) pp.1-3.

this purpose: for the elicitation of prayers and the commemoration of earthly achievement. Nigel Saul argued that the primary purpose of the medieval tomb was to implore the living to remember the dead in prayer as part of Catholic liturgy. Whilst he cautioned against allowing the secular memorial function of the tomb to overshadow this intention, he pointed to the increasing use of secular devices to decorate tombs as displays of kinship, generational ties and family identity. Saul's concern that the secular functions of the tomb might overshadow its devotional purpose was shared by medieval commentators. T. A. Heslop highlighted medieval concern regarding the use of secular images and objects, particularly within churches and cathedrals. Contemporaries were concerned that the installation of secular imagery within religious spaces detracted from the godliness of the space. Heraldic glass, for example, allowed benefactors publically to advertise their generosity, and tombs facilitated the display of earthly pomp and magnificence within the church.[122] The fact that people of medieval England were concerned about these secular forays into these religious settings demonstrates the diversity of the messages being portrayed by such objects, and suggests that faith and devotion were not always the primary motivators behind their installation.

Exactly what secular messages tombs were intended to convey and represent has also been a matter of historical debate. Using the example of the tomb of Sir Ralph Percy, installed at Chillingham by his son, Saul argued that such tributes were often displays of family power rather than affectionate family tributes. The tomb commemorated what the deceased person represented, their reputation, rather than their more personal human qualities.[123] Both Robert Kinsey and Jennifer Ward argued in favour of the two purposes of the medieval tomb. Like Saul, Kinsey argued that the medieval tomb acted as a plea to the living to remember and pray for the dead, but also asserted that tombs were designed to demonstrate the wealth, rank, influence and power of a deceased person and their family. Ultimately, he wrote, funerary monuments 'elicited prayers, enhanced family status and emphasised social ties of tenure and service.'[124] Similarly, Jennifer Ward presented the noble medieval funerary monument as a demonstration of career experience, social connections, landed estate and the bonds of chivalry and knighthood. Thus, tombs displayed many of the building blocks of noble reputation. In this respect, the secular tomb, and the items associated with it, mirrored the treatment accorded to medieval saints. Saints, Jeffrey Denton observed, were associated with physical objects, their tombs and relics, and were depicted in stained glass, wall paintings and statutes. These images

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[122] T.A. Heslop, 'Attitudes to Visual Arts: the Evidence from Written Sources' in Jonathan Alexander and Paul Binski (eds.), *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200-1400* (London, 1987), p. 30.
[123] Saul, *English Church Monuments* p. 85, 139-4.
[124] Robert Kinsey, 'The Location of Commemoration in Late Medieval England: The Case of the Thorpes of Northamptonshire' in Caroline M. Barron and Clive Burgess (eds.), *Memory and Commemoration in Medieval England* (Donington, 2010), pp.40-41.

captured those particular traits which were associated with individual saints and made them recognisable to the viewing audience.[125] We see secular figures doing the same, in their use of images and objects to display their defining deeds and associations so they remained recognisable even after death. The objects employed to this purpose were therefore able to prompt memory and preserve reputation, but equally, they were the product of this kind of recollection too. The reputation of the deceased helped to inform the way in which their monuments were viewed and interpreted and contributed to their reputations of their living family members and associates.

The desire to display an individual's defining traits is also evident elsewhere. In his survey of the royal tombs of medieval England, Mark Duffy argued that tombs were intensely personal structures, which expressed identity more particularly than just status alone.[126] They were commissioned with the long-term view of preserving an individual's public identity and maintaining it within the memory of the wider community. The work of early modernist Nigel Llewellyn established a framework for the understanding of this process by applying his two-body theory, based on Kantorowicz's concept of the *The King's Two Bodies*, to early modern tombs and commemorative monuments.[127] According to this theory, a deceased person possessed two bodies, a natural body and a social body. The social body consisted of a person's social identity and embodied his position in society and everything he had been in life.[128] Whilst the natural body decomposed and disappeared, the social body could be preserved via means of a commemorative body. The commemorative body marked the final resting place of the natural body and stood as a replacement for the social body, which in turn reminded viewers of the departed living body.[129] Llewellyn asserted that the commemorative body was designed in such a way as to summarise the life of the deceased person, their piety, acts of charity, their authority and their service, and to establish their reputation for future generations.[130] The social body continued to exist within the community 'as a construction sustained by the collective imagination.'[131] Under Llewelyn's definition, it is very difficult to separate the social body from reputation. Like reputation, the social body depended upon talk within, and recognition by, an individual's community. The social body, like reputation, governed the way in which a person moved through the social spaces they inhabited and interacted with the groups with whom they

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[125] Jeffrey Denton, 'Image and History' in Alexander & Binksi, *Age of Chivalry,* pp. 20-1.
[126] Mark Duffy, *Royal Tombs of Medieval England* (Stroud, 2003), p.8, pp.10-11.
[127] Llewellyn, Nigel, *The Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual c.1500-1800* (London, 1991), p.9. Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theory* (Princeton, 2016), pp.3-6, 20-3.
[128] Llewellyn, *Art of Death*, p.9, 46-7, 94.
[129] Ibid., pp.46-7
[130] Ibid. pp.101-2
[131] Ibid., p.114

associated. However, the social body as preserved within the commemorative body was not reputation in reality, but rather reputation as the nobility wished it to be, and desired it to be remembered. It was those aspects of reputation the nobility most valued and wished to have preserved and remembered. The court of chivalry material demonstrated that this association between reputation, the social body and physical objects extended beyond tombs alone. The witnesses' use of such objects was evidence in action of these associations and evidenced the importance of display to the creation and manipulation of the social self.

Repositories of Memory

The Court of chivalry depositions are themselves evidence of the existence of the common pool of knowledge of reputation as described by Bailey and, in the context of memorials, by Llewellyn. As talk, resulting from performance and display, circulated through a community and beyond, it passed into the memories of those who heard it, ready to be recalled. Many of the witnesses, including Sir Watler Ursewyke and Sir Ralph Ipre for Scrope and Robert le Pusildon and Sir William de Bereton for Grosvenor, claimed that the their party's ownership of the arms was a matter of '*common fame and report*' or '*of common voice and fame.*' [132] Similarly, the abbot of Selby emphasised that Scrope's ownership of the arms was a matter of common fame in his part of the country, and William, Prior of Lantercost agreed, arguing that it 'was known by common report in all parts of the north'.[133] These phrases were a stock component of the Court of chivalry testimony, and touched upon the essence of reputation; what is commonly said and known about an individual person or thing. They appeared regularly in the Lovell v Morley depositions too. Morley's use of the arms was described repeatedly both as notorious and as a matter of public voice and fame.[134] Objects designed to prompt recollection appealed to viewers to access this common knowledge and recall the performances of the past. For example, in the case of Morley v Montague, one witness referred to a christening gift of a golden table painted with images of the Holy Trinity and covered in precious stones, which was used as evidence in a 1409 inquisition to prove that Thomas Montague, Earl of Salisbury had reached his majority.[135] The role of objects as prompts for memory was also evident in the abbot of Byland Abbey's description on behalf of Scrope detailing how knights would visit his abbey and, upon noticing the Scrope arms on the walls, remark to one another: *'look! There are the arms of Sir Richard Scrope.'*[136] The arms depicted at Byland were older than Sir Richard and had been placed there by his ancestors. Nevertheless they contributed to, and supported, the reputations of Sir Richard

[132] *SvG*, Ureswyke: p.51, Ipre: p.52, Puisldon: p. 258, Bereton: p.262.
[133] Ibid., Selby: p.91 Lantercost: p. 99.
[134] *LvM*, See for example: witness XXX (Sir John de Ryalktby) 'il dist que per tout le temps susdit laboura & laboure publike vois & fame' and witness XXIII (Sir Richard Cosyn), the same.
[135] *MvM*, pp. 163–4.
[136] *SvG*, p.96

and his family. Thus, through the abbot's testimony we see an example of armorial objects prompting recognition and recollection.

The abbot of Byland also described how, when he had been a youth, the elder monks of the order had pointed out the arms, and they too had been able to identify them as the arms of the Scropes.[137] Thus, living people became receptacles for memory, recalling the performances and judgements, which made up reputation, prompted by objects and spaces existing in the world around them. These memories were then passed on to others via the kind of talk described by the abbot of Byland. As such, older people were particularly valuable to the preservation and dissemination of this kind of knowledge. Sociologist Maurice Halbwachs argued that the elderly were often valued by society precisely because they possessed great experience and were full of memories, of things they had seen and experienced, but also of things they had been told by previous generations but to which the young no longer had access. As such, he argued, a society's elderly are often regarded as guardians of their collective past.[138] This thesis was exemplified in the Court of chivalry material in evidence provided by Sir John de Sully, who claimed to be over one hundred years old; a living record of the past.[139] His age, whether accurate or impressionistic, not only allowed him to recall the performances and deeds he had seen himself, but also meant he had had access to the knowledge and memories of even older men who had still been alive in his youth. They had passed on their knowledge of past performances to him via talk, and he was able to recall them in the present and transmit the same knowledge to younger men who would carry it forwards into the future.

The depositions also demonstrate that such memory was often transmitted through families. Halbawchs gave particular attention to family memory, arguing that each family member recollects the common familial past, and that this is maintained by exchanges of knowledge and opinions within the family group.[140] Sir Hugh Hastings drew upon his family's knowledge of Sir Richard Scrope and his right to bear the arms azure a bend or. He said that he had '*heard his father state that his grandfather had served with Sir Geoffrey le Scrope*' and that, sixty years prior to the Court of chivalry case, Hastings' grandfather had placed the Scrope arms in a glass window in his chapel to commemorate their shared service.[141] In this example, we have evidence of familial memory being transmitted from grandfather, to father, to son, and of the family unit acting as a repository for recollection. This was aided, consciously, via the installation of objects and images to commemorate past actions and relationships. The objects

[137] Ibid.
[138] Maurice Halbwachs, Lewis A. Coser (ed., trans.), *On Collective Memory* (Chicago, London, 1992) p. 48.
[139] *SvG*, p. 74.
[140] Halbwachs, *Collective Memory,* p. 54.
[141] *SvG*, p.51.

helped to ensure this information was not lost, prompting the recollection of the past events, and of the individuals who had influenced their creation.

Images and Objects

The close association between performance, display and memory, and the eagerness of individuals to associate themselves and their families with specific images, resulted in a shared visual language of commemoration. This language was then employed within performances in order to perpetuate and preserve reputation and the social self. Later, such images and artefacts became objects of commemoration themselves. Objects could be used as a means to honour individuals for their service, and to acknowledge their status, position and identity in a noticeable and enduring way. These ideas existed in the use of the sword in knighting ceremonies and in the association between knighthood and the wearing of spurs. After his legitimisation in 1397, Sir John Beaufort was created earl of Somerset. He was brought before the king, 'dressed in a cloth as a dress of honour' and with his sword carried before him, the hilt angled upwards.[142] Sir John's nobility and honour were represented by the cloth he wore and his knighthood by the sword. Each object represented an aspect of his identity and reputation as a man worthy of elevation, and recognised his past and future service. These symbols and their meanings were commonly understood, and so both sword and cloth could be employed as part of a performance to portray a widely understood message. Such recognisable motifs could be employed, and combined, to convey specific messages in a range of situations. In 1397 for example, the earl Marshal was granted a new staff of office. Where once his golden staff had been adorned only with the coat of arms of the king, his new mark of office was to have the ends enamelled in black with the top adorned with the king's arms, and the bottom with the arms of the earl marshal. This boon was granted in consideration of the 'vigour and nobility' of the earl and so that he might 'in future more fittingly and honourably perform and exercise the aforesaid office.'[143] The new staff physically connected the earl's arms with those of the king, and tied both to the symbol of his office as marshal. This symbolically recognised the earl's royal service, the hereditary nature of his office and the royal favour he had earned. The accompanying parliamentary performance imbued the marshal's staff with further layers of meaning, to which the staff could stand testimony in the future. It served as a prompt for the recollection of both the initial award of the staff, and its subsequent uses, and carried those same meanings forwards into subsequent performances.

Whilst these parliamentary performances were relatively unusual, the Court of chivalry depositions offer insight into more domestic and day-to-day methods by which individuals

[142] *PROME*, Parliament of January 1397, item 31.
[143] Ibid,, item 33.

sought to associate themselves and their deeds with images. The most obvious example was the wearing of coats of arms on the body. Multiple witnesses claim to have seen Scrope and Grosvenor riding in war and tournament with their coats of arms displayed on their bodies. Sir Hugh de Browe had witnessed Robert Grosvenor riding armed in France and Tomas Hesilden reported having seen Sir Richard Scrope 'armed on his body and his banner borne publically in battle.' He had also seen 'standards with Scrope's arms placed outside his quarters.'[144] Coats of arms were recognised images which represented families and the individuals within them, ensuring that the actions of each could contribute to the reputation of the whole. As such, coats of arms were an effective symbol for performance and commemoration. The Augustinian Sub-Prior of Warter demonstrated both of these aspects when he exhibited before the court 'an amice embroidered with leopards and griffins or between which were sewed in silk in three places shields with the entire arms of Sir Richard Scrope...in four circles Or embroidered.'[145] He claimed the artefact was a hundred and sixty years old. The detailed description of this item was reminiscent of a similar object detailed by the Westminster chronicler. Thomas, Duke of Gloucester had given the following to the church of St. Peter in Westminster:

> ...a splendid vestment of cloth of gold, red in colour, with orphreys of black velvet embroidered with the capital letters T.A. in monogram interspersed with swans carried out in matching pearls stitched on in a remarkable way…and cunningly worked in, so as to add wonderfully to the beauty of the vestment. It was composed of three copes, a chasuble, two tunicles, and three albs, with stoles and maniples, all matching.[146]

Gloucester was also to donate other items including two silver and gilt basins 'of skilful workmanship, for the washing of the celebrant's hands at the high altar', two silver and gilt candelabra and a gilt censer. The gifting of such items would constitute a performance, as would their subsequent display. Objects of this kind contributed to noble reputation and the social self as demonstrations of piety and Christian lordship. They were acts of both faith and patronage. Additionally, if such items were subsequently used in services, they would continue the performance, ensuring the lords' gifts and identifying marks were regularly displayed, even after they were dead. In this respect, they served a similar purpose to Llewelyn's commemorative body as embodied in the tomb effigy.

The Court of chivalry depositions evidence the sheer variety of material items to be found in churches with the family coat of arms upon them. The arms azure a bend or, for example, were also to be found on other fabric and wooden items within churches and abbeys. The abbot of St. Agatha referred to tablets bearing the Scrope arms set before the altars, in

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[144] *SvG*, Browe: p.86, Hesildon: pp.52-3.
[145] Ibid., p. 99.
[146] *Westmin.*, p. 479.

addition to vestments embroidered with the arms, and 'a corpus case of silk.'[147] Similarly, John le Armourer reported having seen the Scrope arms depicted on an ancient table in the church of the Friars Minor of Chester.[148] Each of these examples ensured the presence of the Scropes in these spaces even in their absence, and prompted recollections of their deeds and reputations.

Nigel Saul disputed Julian Luxford's argument that the Court of chivalry testimony demonstrated that one purpose of such items was to stand as proof of right and entitlement. He asserted instead that objects of this kind publically recorded and honoured the entitlements of the dead and their living descendants. There is some disparity in these interpretations, between the intended purpose of an artefact or memorial, and the use to which it may subsequently be put. The Court of chivalry material demonstrated that the artefacts mentioned within the depositions were exhibited as proof of right and entitlement, even if that was not the primary motivation for their original installation.[149] The documents exhibited to the court, and the seals attached to them, were not created to justify family claims to coats of arms, but could be used in such a capacity when required to do so because they made use of those same images.

Deponents in the Court of chivalry made frequent reference to documents to which members of the families involved in the disputes had put their names or seals.[150] Some of these documents were even exhibited before the court by the deponent in question. The abbot of Riveaulx, for example, presented the court with a charter to which was attached the arms of Henry Scrope, Sir Richard's ancestor. He also referred to another charter sealed with the same arms in white wax.[151] Once again, the primary purpose of this within the context of the court was to demonstrate the continued public use of the arms by individuals and their families. These documents, however, and particularly the seals attached to them, allowed individuals to put their names to documents, trusting to their reputations to lend this weight as evidence of their personal trustworthiness. They crystallized an individual's reputation – and that of his family – in a single image. Armorial seals of the kind referenced by the Court of chivalry witnesses were commonplace, and lords often associated themselves with a badge, such as the Buckingham swan, Warwick's bear and the Mortimer lion. Figures one and two below show the armorial seals belonging to Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmorland, depicting his coat of arms with the Neville's bull crest, and Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, displaying his rather more complex coat of arms, with bear supporter.

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[147] *SvG*, p.94.
[148] Ibid., p.268.
[149] Saul, *English Church Monuments* p. 139.
[150] See for example: *SvG*, p. 263.
[151] Ibid., p.93.

Fig.1 ***Fig.2***

Fig. 1*: Seal of Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmorland – TNA SC13/028, Photography by R. Snaith.*
Fig. 2: *Seal of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick – TNA,* PRO 23/800*.*

The ability to associate one's person and reputation with an image was undoubtedly advantageous. Images could be used to invoke multiple aspects of reputation. Adrian Ailes demonstrated that by 1200 the traditional noble seal design of a mounted knight was beginning to be replaced by the armorial seal, not only as a feudal image but as a representation of the self. At first, magnates proved more reluctant to surrender their mounted image, instead combining it with a smaller counter seal of their arms into the thirteenth century. By the end of the late medieval period, however, the armorial seal was the dominant form of noble seal.[152] Ailes argued that by inheriting and displaying his father's arms, a nobleman demonstrated that he had come into his inheritance and had taken on the physical and martial qualities of his ancestors. He had inherited their reputations. As such, armorial seals placed the sealant's identity as part of his family at the forefront, displaying his lineage and projecting his innate nobility. The use of armorial seals also allowed the nobility to project the changing nature of their service to crown and country, as individuals of knightly rank, and in their civilian role in royal government. [153]

Heraldic stained glass was another of the common examples of imagery referred to by deponents in the Court of chivalry cases. The Scrope arms were to be found in the south aisle of the church at Selby Abbey: in a glass window at the altar of St. John the Baptist, in the porch of the infirmary high over the door, and in the infirmary chapel.[154] The abbot of St. Agatha described a glass window of the arms in the windows of his refectory, and John Botiller of Merton, testifying on behalf of Grosvenor, had seen them in a window in the church of Vale

[152] Adrian Ailes, 'The Knight's Alter Ego: From Equestrian to Armorial Seals' in John Cherry, Noel and James Robinson (eds.), *Good Impressions: Image and Authority in Medieval Seals* (London, 2008), pp.9-10. Also: P.D.A. Harvey and Andrew McGuiness, *A Guide to British Medieval Seals* (Toronto, 1996) pp.43-62.
[153] Aisles, *Knight's Alter Ego*, pp.8-10.
[154] SvG, p. 91 .

Royal Abbey.[155] The prominence of stained glass in the Court of chivalry depositions does not necessarily suggest that it was the form of imagery most popularly used to prompt memories of reputation and the past, but rather that it was one of the most common locations for families to display their coat of arms. Nevertheless, the witness depositions from the Court of chivalry cases demonstrate the additional meanings the nobility attached to these depictions of their arms. Armorial windows allowed the nobility to display their connections to one another, and to preserve the memory of these associations. John de Leicester described how one William de Modburley had married his daughter to Sir Robert's grandfather, another Robert, and that because of this, sixty years previously, the coat of arms of the Modburleys and the Grosvenors had been depicted side-by-side in glass windows in Modburley church.[156] The Scropes had also used stained glass to similar effect. The prior of Marton described how at the foundation of the church at Marton, Sir Robert Hacket, Lord of Quenby had loved the Scropes so much that he had installed their arms in a window of the church, and the Scropes had set up Lord Quenby's arms in their own church likewise.[157] In these instances, images within the context of their locations were used to convey a message regarding the relationship between members of two noble families, expressing fondness, commemorating shared service, and making a public declaration of their relationship with one another.

Paintings and carvings were another form of decoration referred to in the Court of chivalry depositions. Paintings of the Scrope arms were reported on the walls in a variety of locations including in the refectory and near the gate of the Chapel of St. Mary Magdelene at Byland Abbey.[158] The same arms were also to be found on behalf of the Grosvenors on the walls of the manor house at Over Peover.[159] Howel de Eton had seen the Grosvenor arms painted on the walls of Hulme Manor, and Ralph de Vernon had seen them carved on the walls of the church of Norton Priory.[160] Sir Richard Bold confirmed Richard de Atherton's claim that the Grosvenor arms appeared in colour in Bold's manor chapel at Bold, and John de Haidok said that he had seen the arms displayed in the lodgings and private chambers of Sir Thomas de Dutton, ten years prior to the Scrope v Grosvenor controversy.[161] Likewise in the case of Lovell v Morley it was noted that the Morley arms:

[155] Ibid., St. Agatha: p.95, Botiller: p. 300.
[156] Ibid., p.236.
[157] Ibid., p.139.
[158] Ibid., p.96.
[159] Ibid., p. 172.
[160] Ibid., Eton: p. 260, Vernon: p. 271.
[161] Ibid., Bold: p. 83, Atherton: p. 70, Haidok: p.65.

> …were painted in two places in the said priory, that is to say, in the north part of the vault of the choir of the church of the priory and in the north part of the high dais on the walls of the refectory of the same priory.[162]

In his deposition, William, the prior, declared that the arms had been there 'from the time of the foundation of the said priory', some two hundred years previously.[163] Witnesses, therefore, reported the arms depicted in secular and religious settings, suggesting that the purpose of these displays, even within churches and abbeys, were not solely devotional, or evidence of faith and patronage of religious houses.

Julian Luxford noted the distinctly secular tone of the evidence provided in the Court of chivalry depositions, despite the prominence of churches, abbeys and chapels as places host to heraldic objects. The descriptions of these objects and their locations were rarely pious, nor did they suggest the items mentioned were anything out of the ordinary.[164] Even in religious spaces, the secular relationships between noble families and their shared service were commemorated. The Scrope arms were to be found painted on a banner on the wall of the old hall within Selby Abbey, between those of Lords Moubray and Neville, other prominent noble Yorkshire families.[165] Likewise, Sir John Warde had seen the Scrope arms set up alongside those of Neville, Percy and Clifford in a chamber of the manor house of Gynedale.[166] Similarly, multiple witnesses for Thomas Morley referred to banners, which had been placed in churches by Sir Thomas Bolyngton, to commemorate Sir Robert Morley who had died on the Reims campaign 1359-60.[167] John de London, a member of the Augustinian priory of Thremhall, like his brother John Takle and Prior Richard Branketre, described:

> …that he had known the said banner some twenty years or thereabouts and that one Thomas Bolyngtoun, who was banner bearer to Sir Robert Morley, grandfather of Sir Thomas, [and] a lifetime defendant, until the death of the said Sir Robert, gave the said

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[162] Lovell v Morley, NA C47/6/1 see witnesses CXXI-CXXVI (William Prior of Buckenham, John de Haylesdon, Robert de Buckenham, John de Brythenham and Robert de Brythenham). Source reads: '*…peynez en deux lieux del dite priorie cestassauoir en la partie boriele de le seleure del choer de lesglise du dit priorie et en la partie boriele del haute deese del Fraytour de mesme la priorie.'*

[163] Ibid., witness XXI (William, Prior of Buckenham).

[164] Julian Luxford, 'Art, Objects and Ideas in the Records of the Medieval Court of chivalry' in Anthony Musson and Nigel Ramsay, *Courts of Chivalry and Admiralty in Late Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge, 2018), p.64.

[165] *SvG*, p. 91.

[166] Ibid., p.118.

[167] *LvM*, see witnesses: CLVIII-CLXIV (Richard Branketre, John Takle, John de London, John Pont, John Amy, Richard Gerald, Bartholemew Haddenham). This was also observed without transcription in Caudrey, *Military Society*, p.141.

> banner to the said priory in perpetual memory of the said Sir Robert and his successors.[168]

John Pont of Hatfield Priory in Essex claimed to have knowledge of two such banners, gifted by Thomas Bolyngton in memory of Sir Thomas' grandfather. One had been displayed in the priory and the other in the local church.[169] He was supported in this by his fellow Benedictines, John Amy, Richard Geraldn and Bartholemew Haddenham.

The stall plates commissioned for companions of the Order of the Garter were another form of memorial, not unlike a tomb in intention. They ensured that the achievements of the dead, in rising to so great an honour, were preserved for the future so that their deeds and prowess would not be forgotten by future members of the order. These plates were specified in the statutes of the order and were a benefit of membership; they were another opportunity to leave a prompt for recollection behind once the nobleman in question had passed from the world. As such, they are evidence of the nobility's particular concern for their posthumous reputations. The treasurer's account roll for the College of Windsor recorded the commission of three such stall plates between 1422-23 for the duke of York (then deceased) (fig. 3) John, duke of Bedford (fig. 4), and the duke of Exeter (fig. 5).[170] Each plate contained the coat of arms of the individual in question, complete with crest and mantle, and, for York and Bedford, a French inscription. York's read 'le duc de York Edmond' and Bedford's 'John fitz de Roy duc de Bedford.' They were thus represented both in image and in name. These plates, located in the Garter Chapel at Windsor Castle, served to bind individuals to the ideals of chivalry and nobility the Order of the Garter embodied. The plates, and their location, effectively married an individual to the Order for the benefit of their reputation for prosperity.

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[168] *LvM*, witness: CLX (John London). Translation is my own. Original reads: *…qil ad conuz le dit baner par xx ans ou entour et qun Thomas Bolyngtoun qestoit banner a Monsieur Robert Sire de Morlee aiel a Monsieur Thomas partie defendant en sa vie iesqes a la mort du dit Monsieur Robert dona le dit baner a la dite priorie en perpetuele memoire du dit Monsieur Robert et sez successours*.
[169] *LvM* witness: CLXI (John Pont).
[170] *Stall Plates.* For Duke of York see plate XLIII, for Bedford see plate XLIV, and for Dorset plate XLV.

Fig.3

Fig.4

Fig.5

W. H. St. John Hope, The Stall Plates of the Order of the Garter 1348-1485 (New York, 1901) For Duke of York see plate XLIII ***(fig.3),*** *for Bedford see plate XLIV* ***(fig.4),*** *and for Dorset plate XLV****(fig.5).***

Theatres of Reputation

Such memorials demonstrate that display was not only about the use of image, but also the manipulation of space. This point was true both within a specific location and across geographical distance. After all, the occupation of space was itself an expression of power and control.[171] Matthew Ward argued that to appreciate fully the value of tombs, they should be viewed not in isolation but as part of their wider location.[172] The intention was to create a space in which the architecture, items and monuments became a spectacle of stone and light. This may have been achieved artificially with candles; otherwise the space would have been manipulated to fully exploit natural light. Ward painted an emotive picture of sunlight falling across light-stone tombs with patches of coloured light created by the sun streaming in through stained glass windows.[173] Each element worked together to create the overall display and impression of wealth and grandeur intended to perpetuate and preserve the reputation of the deceased and their family. The ability to control and choreograph space in this manner was itself a demonstration of power. Nigel Saul argued that it was the intention of the perpendicular architectural style of the period to have all aspects of the church fabric working together, to be viewed as a whole. He also pointed to a late medieval fascination with light and concluded that churches, with their combination of gilded tombs, paintings and stained glass windows became striking 'theatres of memory' and, as we have argued throughout this section, theatres of

[171] Peter Arnade, Martha Howell and Walter Simons, 'Fertile Spaces: the Productivity of the Urban Space in Northern Europe' in *JIH*, vol. 32 (2002), pp.515-17, 522-27, 533-5.
[172] Matthew Ward, *The Livery Collar in Late Medieval England and Wales: Politics, Identity and Affinity* (Woodbridge, 2016), p. 7.
[173] Ibid., p.8.

reputation too.[174] St. Nicholas' Church at West Tanfield near Ripon in North Yorkshire was referred to in the Scrope depositions in the Court of chivalry. It is host to the tomb of Sir John Tanfield, whose effigy wears the Lancastrian collar of esses (fig. 6), and to a stained glass depiction of Tanfield's arms alongside those of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster (fig. 7). The effigy no longer lies in its original location, and as such the original context of the orientation of the space is lost, but the surviving elements still exemplify the way in which individual elements within a church worked together to tell the story of the person or persons buried there.

Fig.6

Fig.7

Fig. 6: *Tomb effigy of Sir John Tanfield with collar of esses at St. Nicholas' Church with armorial stained glass in background, West Tanfield, Ripon, North Yorkshire.* ***Fig. 7:*** *Close-up of arms of Sir John Tanfield and John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster in stained glass. Photography by R. Snaith.*

The positioning of images was significant outside of the church as well as within. At the parish church of Wensley in North Yorkshire, for example, a site included in the list of locations provided by Scrope during the Court of chivalry case, the Scrope arms were displayed over the entrance to the porch, meaning it would be seen by anyone who visited the church.[175] The same arms with differences were also carved in high places nearby, as symbols of the Scrope family's patronage, power and geographical influence.

[174] Saul, *English Church Monuments,* pp. 141-2.
[175] See fig.9.

Fig.8 ***Fig.9*** ***Fig.10***

Wensley Parish Church, Wensley, North Yorkshire with the Scrope arms in stone over the porch, and with differences to the left on the exterior wall of the nave. Photography by R. Snaith.

The installation of a monument in a particular location also tied the individual associated with that item to that particular space. In so doing it exhibited their connection to that place, and the power, influence and wealth they possessed which allowed them to do so. In his study of medieval royal tombs, Mark Duffy noted royal lords occasionally specified in their wills how they would like their tombs to look. The Black Prince's tomb in Canterbury Cathedral is a particularly famous example, with the Prince explicitly expressing his desire for a metal effigy with helm headrest and his arms of war in enamel.[176] More commonly, however, Duffy argued, lords were less concerned with the appearance of their tombs and more preoccupied with their locations. John, Duke of Bedford for example, specified three possible locations for his burial, the final decision to be determined by the location of his eventual demise.[177] There are well-known examples, too, of a lord being exhumed and reburied in a new location some years later in order to portray particular political messages. Henry V reinterred Richard II at Westminster as a form of Lancastrian redemption, Henry IV moved Thomas of Woodstock out of St. Edmund's chapel in Westminster and had him reburied closer to his royal parents, and later, Edward IV reburied his father Richard, Duke of York and his brother, Edmund, Earl of Rutland at Fothringhay Castle, a location with strong Yorkist connections.[178] In each situation, the choice of location was intended to portray very particular messages regarding the reputations of both the deceased lords, and the person ordering their reburial.

Generally, the tombs of noble family members were often placed in locations within their sphere of influence, and these locations often became the resting places of more than one family member. The testimony of the abbot of St. Agatha was most illustrative of this dimension. He testified that an older Sir Richard Scrope lay buried under the choir in his abbey, and in a

[176] Duffy, *Royal Tombs*, p.140. Includes the original text from the prince's will.
[177] Ibid., p. 17.
[178] Ibid., For Woodstock: p.104, For Richard II, and the duke of York: p.183

higher part of their church there stood the tomb of Sir Henry Scrope upon which was a representation of a knight in stone, painted with the arms azure a bend or. The abbey church was also the resting place of Sir Henry's son William, whose sculpture lay armed on a high tomb, the arms engraved on his shield without colours. There were also many other Scrope burials within the church, lying 'under flat stones with their effigies sculptured thereon and their shields represented with these arms.'[179] The same was true on a smaller scale at Coverham Abbey. The abbot there spoke of the tomb of Geoffrey Scrope, who was interred before the high cross of the abbey church 'in a lofty tomb with the effigy of a knight armed in those arms' and below him the flat stone of his son, Thomas Scrope, marked with a shield of the arms differenced by three blue crescents.[180] Another ancestor of Sir Richard Scrope was buried in a tomb in St. Martin's Church in York, and, at the effigy's head and feet, were placed shields, sculpted and embossed with the arms of Scrope, and differenced by a label.[181]

In addition to tombs and memorial plaques and brasses inside churches, witnesses reported having seen other forms of funerary monument, particularly stone crosses. For example, Hamon de Aschley and Robert de Toft, speaking for Grosvenor, claimed to have seen the arms on a cross in the cemetery of Nether Peover.[182] John de Massey reported the existence of Braddelegh Cross on the high street or road between Knutsford and Warrington in Cheshire, which had been carved with the Grosvenor arms.[183] The testimony demonstrated that monuments could be as varied as they were far-reaching and exemplified the way in which they peppered the landscape of an area.

In his recent consideration of the material evidence cited in the Lovell v Morley case, Julian Luxford noted that during the course of the case, officials not only heard about material artefacts in witness depositions, but travelled to view a range of artefacts in person. Luxford wondered why the court expended quite so much time, effort and money in doing so. The fact that they did, he argued, suggested that they placed significance in the data they could gather from visiting these places and assumed that the data could be significant to the outcome of the case.[184] Luxford was also interested in the sheer variety of objects and locations exhibited as part of the case - and indeed, all of the surviving cases - and tentatively concluded that the court wished to sample the distribution of objects and knowledge of individual coats of arms.[185] The map below (fig. 11) marks the places cited by Scrope, Grosvenor and their witnesses in the

[179] *SvG*, p.95.
[180] Ibid., p.97.
[181] Ibid., p.98.
[182] Ibid., Aschley: p.266, Toft: p.267.
[183] Ibid., p.287.
[184] Luxford, *Art, Objects and Ideas,* pp.70-71.
[185] Ibid.

Court of chivalry. The Scrope example is more detailed, as Scrope included a complete list of known sites alongside his evidence, and, when combined with those cited by witnesses in the depositions, there is a total of thirty-six unique sites.[186] The Grosvenor example was compiled from the individual depositions recorded, and includes some eighteen unique sites.

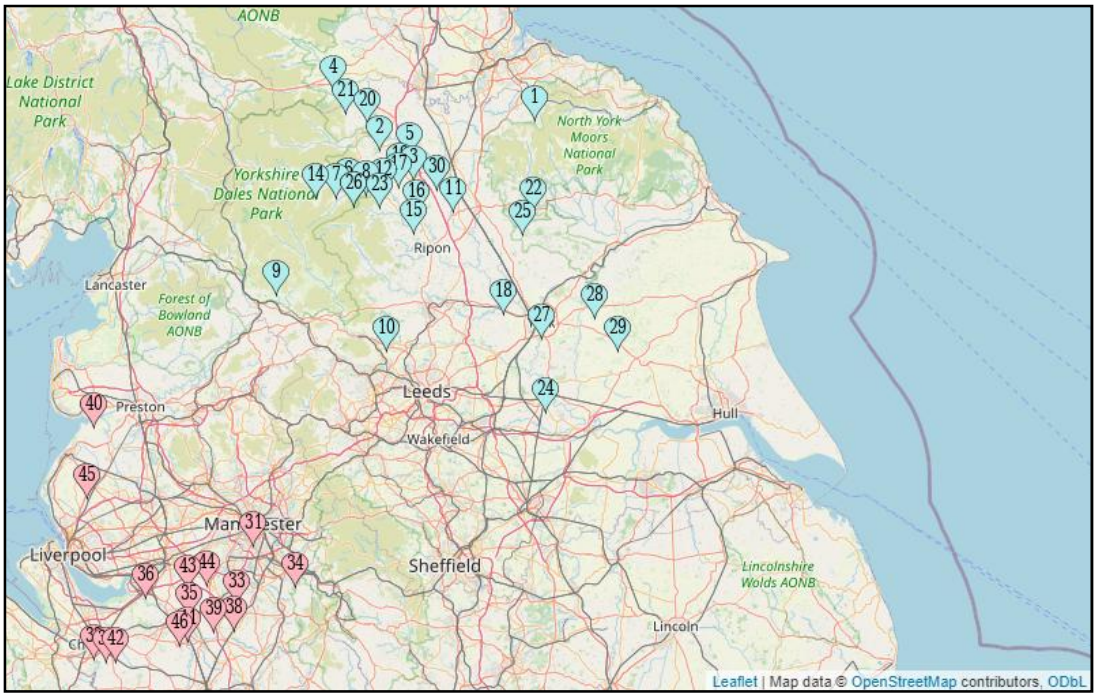

Fig.11: *Map generated by R. Snaith via mapcustomizer.com. Blue markers indicate sites mentioned on behalf of Scrope, and pink represents those referenced on behalf of Grosvenor. For close-up maps for each case, and the list of marked locations by number, see appendix 1.*

The map shows sites concentrated within a specific geographical area within an individual family's area of influence. This is an obvious and expected pattern, given all that is known about the power of a magnate's local lordship and about the profoundly local context of aristocratic ambition. As John Watts argued, 'the dream of every nobleman was surely the unchallenged rule of the locality, in which case everybody would be, in some sense, a part of his following.'[187] Yet, given the specific references made by the abbots of Selby and Lanercost to talk and reputation preserved in the common memories of a specific region, the maps also demonstrate the role of these monuments in keeping memory alive within localities. The Scrope examples cover an area from Barnard Castle in County Durham to Selby in North Yorkshire, with the majority concentrated in the Yorkshire Dales, in and around the family seat of Bolton. The Grosvenor sites range from Warton in Lancashire to Cotton in west Cheshire. The Grosvenor sites are generally more scattered than those indicated by Scrope, but mostly centre on Knutsworth in Cheshire. They show the ways in which individual nobles and noble families

[186] *SvG*, pp.222-226.
[187] John Watts, *Politics of Kingship*, p. 67.

physically occupied geographical areas, stamping their identities on the landscape using tombs, funerary monuments, stained glass, paintings and other artefacts. Site and object concentration of the kind evident in the court of chivalry depositions therefore presents an alternative source by which we might study the local influence of the nobility and gentry in addition to the written evidence relating retaining practices usually employed by historians. This kept their names and reputations alive within the localities, and over successive generations, by generating talk and discussion, and the reality of this is all too apparent in the Court of chivalry testimony. The extent of the area over which Scrope's family arms were displayed and recognised, and his ancestors spoken about, outstripped Grosvenor's, and was further evidence of the fact that Scrope's ownership of the arms, and his family's use of them, was more widely known than his opponent's. Again, the physical occupation of space, and the ability to prompt memories of reputation within that space was of great social and legal significance. They were physical expressions of family achievement, service and lordship. The Court of chivalry records are particularly rich in this regard, as they record architectural features which have not survived into the modern day and thus allow us to build a more complete contemporary picture of the extent of the distribution of commemorative artefacts and the ways in which they coexisted within specific spaces. The depositions therefore offer insight into the mechanics of reputation within the localities, of a kind less likely to be preserved in the records of central government, or in the national chronicles, which allow us insight into reputation more generally.

Memory, both the act of remembering and being remembered, were highly valued in medieval society. Objects and images were crucial to these processes, acting as representatives of people and bodies and as prompts for memory, and the recollection of the past performances and judgements from which reputation was constructed. Living people became repositories of memory, recalling past performances and the judgements applied to them, supplying the young with their impressions of the past via talk. This talk circulated within social and institutional groups and within families. As such, reputation was preserved in people, objects, images and places. Viewers of objects and images, which had been consciously associated with individuals and family groups, were encouraged to access the pool of common knowledge in which reputation resided. For the nobility, objects were part of a conscious effort to preserve their reputations, their social selves, and, therefore, their families and lineage, in the minds of the wider communities to which they belonged. To do so, objects and images invoked those aspects of a nobleman's identity he most wished to be spoken about and remembered, and which were recognisably characteristic of him in the eyes of the viewer. This invocation served to maintain his reputation whilst he was living, and to commemorate it when he was dead. This commemoration had power in the present, for the successors of the deceased. This was most

obvious in the medieval tomb and effigy, but the role could also be fulfilled by other images and objects with the ability to prompt recollection of that person or their family. Such images could be used to call to mind the presence of a person or family even in their absence. Images, like the coats of arms found on seals, in windows and as wall paintings in the Court of chivalry material, were used to covey multiple meanings. They projected a nobleman's position within his family, his martial role, his nobility, his earthly relationships, his faith and his devotion to royal and martial service. In this, their purpose was very similar to the performances of the previous section. Location was also significant to the display and memory of reputation and this manifested in a number of ways. Like objects, places could act as prompts for memory. The occupation of space, with bodies, images and objects, was also significant because it allowed the nobility to display their power and influence both across space and through time. This could be on the very large scale, in building works scattered throughout a geographical area, or within a smaller space, whereby objects within an interior space were orientated in order to convey a particular message about the individual who had ordered their installation. Ultimately, acts of display were expressions of identity which, like performance, embraced the nobility's idealised version of themselves as beings of family, virtue and service, and helped to preserve these aspects of reputation for future generations. The Court of chivalry evidence, whilst specific in its original purpose, is useful more generally as insight into noble consciousness, and use, of these processes.

Conclusion

Through performance and display, therefore, we are presented with two kinds of reputation: the more traditional and everyday evident in the display discussed in section two, and political reputation, as apparent in the performances of section one. The defining feature of these performances was their concentrated interest in, and use of, the concept of the common good. They were united, however, by their emphasis on family, the expectations of nobility, and royal service. In each instance, the nobility elected to emphasise these traits in active attempts to manipulate their reputations to their own benefit. In each instance, too, engagement with reputation served both individual and collective interest. Performances to repair and affirm reputation could benefit the reputations of the nobility as a whole, and the kinds of display described in section two were often to the benefit of a nobleman's family. We see too that performance and display were employed to ensure social and political benefit, and, to this end, it was particularly useful to emphasise their compliance with the expectations explored in chapter two. Collectively, the sources of this chapter demonstrate the processes which underpinned the formation of noble reputation, indicating the significance of public performances, recognition, interpretation, transmission and memorialisation. Whilst the

nobility could not directly control how they were judged and what was said about them, they could attempt to manipulate interpretations through carefully choreographed performance. They could also attempt to ensure that these performances were viewed by those they wanted to see and interpret them, ready for wider transmission. Through display, the nobility were able to preserve recollections of these same performances, and maintain the interpretations they desired to have remembered. Objects, images, people and places were used as repositories and theatres for these memories, facilitating the recollection of noble performance and reputation across time, space and society. The Court of chivalry depositions, whilst not primarily concerned with reputation, were the products of it, and of the performances, interpretation, modes of transmission and memorialisation which facilitated the testimony of their witnesses.

CHAPTER IV:
THE CLERICAL NOBILITY

In 1388, three bills appeared in the city of London. One of these bills was pinned to the doors of St. Paul's Cathedral and the others attached to a pillar of the chapterhouse of Westminster where parliament was in session. The bills began as follows:

> þ' is an oþ' Kyng in 3our Lond, þt is Alisaundre Nero, bishop of 3orkshire; he distroieth þt lond be north, & for his vengeaunce of him al þe lond shal be distruyed for godde wote & þe lordes witen wel & þe coies wyten wel, þt þ' never was siche a tirraunt in holy chirche, no among þe coi'es of þis cuntree, for he oppresseth more þ cuntree & doth more extorcione & distruccione & disese to þe cuntree, þan þe Kyng an al þe lordes of Ingelond.[1]

There followed a sustained attack against Archbishop Alexander Neville of York..[2] Building upon the comparison drawn between the archbishop and Nero, the Roman emperor infamous for his tyrannical approach to government, moral corruption and persecution of Christians, the bills outlined Neville's own shortcomings of character and lordship. The bill alleged that he had committed 'extorciones w^{t} outen nombre', had 'taken falsely ageyne the kynges lawes', and had overtaxed the people of the north in a betrayal of the common good.[3] He had instead greedily pursued personal profit to the detriment of the realm. 'He is', the bills declared, 'a predo (a dishonest person), a thef, a Traytour, bothe to godde & to his Kyng.'[4] He was also underhanded and deceptive, pretending 'to his kyng as he wer a saynt, but al the world wot it wel, the fayrer he speketh, the falser he is'.[5] Neville was, the bills concluded, 'a tirraunt of holy chirhe', and as such, 'he shal lese al the lond'.[6] The bills attacked the archbishop's reputation from every direction, and Neville proved unwilling to let the insult stand.

A petition was submitted in reply during the same parliament by the archbishop's 'linage alie3 et autres amys', or 'kin, allies and other friends'.[7] This petition claimed that the three bills were authored 'by some of the enemies, of God, our said lord king and the said archbishop' and that they were calculated 'to destroy and to ruin the good fame, honour and

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[1] *Libel*, pp.80-83, p.82.
[2] For Neville's poor reputation: R. B. Dobson, *Church and Society in the Medieval North of England* (London, 1996), pp.185-8.
[3] *Libel*, p.82.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid., p.83.
[7] TNA, SC 8/262/13079. Translation is my own.

estate of the said archbishop'.[8] The petition emphasised that the accusations had been made in 'public slander' of the archbishop 'falsely and maliciously' and were the most 'horrible and heinous' kind of slander that had ever been made against any lord in any parliament.[9] In consideration of these facts, the petitioners called for the perpetrators of this slander to be punished 'under statute' in order to protect other prelates and lords from suffering such slander in future, particularly in 'honourable and high courts'.[10] This same year, the Scandalum Magnatum statutes were modified and reiterated. It is impossible to ignore the coincidence of the timing between the bills, the subsequent petition, and the renewal of the statute. Where in 1378 the statutes had been modified as a result of slanderous words against a secular lord, on this occasion they were adjusted on behalf of a member of the clerical nobility who similarly sought redress.[11] The archbishop's concerns regarding his reputation in 1388 shared much in common with those of Gaunt a decade earlier and in markedly similar circumstances.

Many of the accusations made against Neville in the bill were comparable to those points of criticism we have identified in regards to the secular nobility. The bishop's failure in royal service, his abuse of office and his moral corruption were all common points of complaint. The 1388 bills also emphasised the archbishop's clerical role. He was, after all, a tyrant of holy church and later, the bill contrasted Archbishop Neville with the saint-bishop Thomas Becket, lamenting: 'if only he wer' as good a man as Thomas of Cant'bery'.[12] The bills also claimed that Neville was not only a traitor to the king, but also to God, and he had over-taxed the church. These were specifically clerical criticisms, which focused on the bishop's episcopal functions. The responding petition meanwhile repeatedly reiterated the archbishop's secular role and connections, alongside his role as prelate. The legal protections it called for were to be applied to clerical and secular lords, just as they had in 1378. In both the bills and the resulting petition, Neville was treated as both bishop and noble. The bishop's concerns in regards to his reputation, and the actions he took to address them, were the same as those adopted by the secular nobility of the previous chapters, but accorded a clerical character.

The first part of this chapter will explore the interplay between the different aspects of episcopal identity and the reputations of the clerical nobility of late medieval England. It will then consider those expectations of behaviour that distinguished episcopal reputation from

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[8] Ibid. Original reads: a) '*en apert desclaundre'* b) '*faucement et maliciousement'* c) '*qe come par ascunes des enemys de dieux nostre dit Seignur le Roi et le dit Archeuesque ymaginantz a destruir et anyenter le bone fame honour et lestat du dit Archeuesque*.'

[9] Ibid. Original reads: '*plus horrible et heyniouse quanque ne fu vewe sur ascune Seignur fait en ascune parlement*.'

[10] TNA, SC 8/262/13079. Original as follows: a) '*par estatut'* b) '*honourables et haute3 courtes*.'

[11] Statute 12º 1388, c.10-13 Ric II in *Statutes II,* p.59.

[12] *Libel*, p.83.

those applied to the secular nobility. The chapter will assess the way in which the conflicts inherent within the basis of episcopal reputation, and the traits which defined it, featured in contemporary praise and criticism of the clerical nobility. It will consider too the role of these features in the way in which the clerical nobility conceived of themselves, as evident in the material artefacts they displayed and commissioned.

Studies of late medieval bishops have approached bishops from the perspective of their different identities: as administrators and public servants, as lords, and as men of faith. A number of biographies of late medieval bishops were published in the late 1960s, including those of Henry Chichele by E.F. Jacob, Thomas Arundel by Margaret Aston, and William Courtenay by Joseph Dahmus. Jacob's study of Chichele focused largely on the archbishop's administrative treatment of his diocese, his relationship with the papacy, role as diplomat, his treatment of the English church during his tenure as bishop, and his building works. The final chapter, entitled 'The Secular Chichele', concentrated on the archbishop's royal service, particularly upon his role in administration and council.[13] Margaret Aston's consideration of Thomas Arundel, subtitled *A study of church life in the reign of Richard II*, dedicated two chapters to the prelate's role in politics, first between 1376-86, and then 1382-96. Her study of Arundel's tenure as bishop of Ely addressed his role as both bishop and official with particular attention to his administration of his diocese. In addition to discussion of his building works, Aston examined Arundel as the head of his household and as a master to his clerks and protégés.[14] Wycliffe and heresy loomed large in both Aston's study, and Dahmus' consideration of William Courtenay. Three of the ten chapters of Dahmus' study of Courtenay were dedicated to his confrontation of Lollardy. The remainder of the book assessed the archbishop's episcopal career and his administration of his sees, as bishop of London and later archbishop of Canterbury. A single chapter, 'Courtenay and the State', assessed the bishop's royal service, his contribution to politics and his relationship with the crown.[15] A study of clerical reputation allows for a consideration of the connections between these roles and of the inherent points of conflict and cohesion between them.

It was how bishops elected to navigate these conflicts and commitments that ultimately defined their reputations. It was Cardinal Beaufort's relationship with the Lancastrian crown, which moulded much of G.L. Harriss' study of his subject, published in 1988.[16] Harriss framed Beaufort's life and career in the context of his contribution to the destiny of the Lancastrian dynasty. Beaufort emerged, fundamentally, as a servant and representative of the crown. With

[13] E.F. Jacob, *Archbishop Henry Chichele* (London, 1967).
[14] Margaret Aston, *Thomas Arundel: A Study of Church Life in the Reign of Richard II* (Oxford, 1967).
[15] Joseph Dahmus, *William Courtenay Archbishop of Canterbury 1381-1396* (London, 1966).
[16] *Beaufort*.

little in-depth consideration of Beaufort's role as bishop of Lincoln or Winchester, the Cardinal was presented as a political creature, a lens through which the politics of Lancastrian England could be viewed and understood. Harriss remarked that:

> Beaufort mainly impressed his contemporaries as a man of great wisdom, probity and experience. His cast of mind was essentially political and legal, and he found little outlet in religion, learning or the arts.[17]

In this assessment, Beaufort flouted many of the expectations applied to late medieval bishops, prioritising the political over the clerical and the spiritual. Harriss' Beaufort was, primarily, a secular man, elevating his position as a member of the House of Lancaster above his occupation as a bishop. He failed in finding the balance between the two worlds, and his historical reputation as a Lancastrian stalwart is the result. We see this pattern in the other biographies mentioned here. Each author selects for their subjects one key defining trait of their reputations. For Beaufort, it was his commitment to the Lancastrian kingdoms, for Chichele, it was administration and diplomacy, and for Arundel his roles as political actor and opponent of the heretic Wycliffe. These depictions were the result of the bishops' own personal priorities, and the aspects of their reputation that they, their contemporaries, and their historians elected to emphasise.

A Note on Sources

As for previous chapters, this chapter will make use of contemporary chronicles, the parliament rolls and other governmental records, including petitions. It will extend the source basis to encompass other documentary sources associated with cathedrals, and with other institutions in which medieval bishops were involved. The penultimate section of this chapter will focus particularly on the example of the bishops of Durham, and will exploit the material sources and contemporary descriptions of the same. It is worth noting at the outset some of the complications that this range of sources poses. Firstly, the majority of the chronicle sources were composed by clerical authors, and as such, the expectations they applied to the episcopacy would have been coloured by their own experiences within the church. They might regard certain episcopal duties as more significant or as more paramount than a secular author. The religious institutions within which they were writing may also have had their own conflicts or alliances with specific bishops, which coloured their reports. Both Walsingham and Adam Usk, for example, were particularly favourable to Archbishop Arundel. Nevertheless, as in previous chapters, such accounts offer insight into the contemporary ideals that underpinned praise and criticism, and where possible, the chapter endeavours to draw from a cross-section of sources to

[17] Ibid., p. 397.

demonstrate commonalities between writers. Inevitably, perhaps, the work of the St. Albans' chronicler, dominates the chronicle material, particularly in regards to accounts of Archbishop Arundel and his conflict with the Lollards. Again, where possible, the chapter tries to balance this coverage by drawing from other sources in conjunction with Walsingham.

Of the 102 bishops who served within an English or Welsh diocese between 1377 and 1437, around 12% hailed from noble families. Dahmus argued that the fourteenth century witnessed the rise in prominence of the aristocratic bishop. If we compare the percentage of noble-born bishops serving 1254-1315 to the percentage in office 1316-1376, we see the figure almost double from 5.2% of bishops to 10.2%. This increased further for our period 1377-1437 to 12%, before dropping back to 10.2% for the following sixty years 1438-98.

YEARS	NUMBER OF BISHOPS[18]	NUMBER OF NOBLE-BORN BISHOPS[19]	% OF NOBLE BISHOPS
1254-1315	154	8	5.2%
1316-1376	137	14	10.2%
1377-1437	117	14	12%
1438-1498	86	9	10.5%

Therefore, numerically speaking, the number of noble-born bishops peaks in our period, and in-line with Dahmus' argument, they occupied prominent bishoprics. They included two archbishops of Canterbury, two archbishops of York, a bishop of London, a bishop of Norwich, and a bishop of Winchester. The emergence and prominence of noble-born bishops like Thomas Arundel, William Courtenay and Henry Beaufort brought England's episcopal and political spheres closer than ever before.[20] Bishops from noble families appeared most prominently in the accounts of contemporary chronicles. In a selection of the most substantive national chronicles for the period 1377-1437, the eleven most-mentioned bishops were: Thomas Arundel, William Courtenay, Henry le Despenser, Henry Beaufort, Simon Sudbury, Richard le Scrope, Richard Courtenay, Alexander Neville, Walter Skirlaw, Robert Braybrooke, and Henry Chichele.[21]

[18] Total number of bishops includes only those bishops who were consecrated.
[19] A noble-bishop here refers to any bishop whose family holds the rank of lord or above.
[20] Dahmus, *William Courtenay,* p. 8.
[21] Chronicles included: St. Albans' Chronicle, Knighton's Chronicle, Chronicle of Jean Wavrin, Westminster Chronicle, Gesta Henrici Quinti, Chronicle of John Capgrave, Chronicles of London, An English Chronicle, and the Chronicle of Adam Usk.

Top 11 Bishops *(out of 79)*	**Number of Mentions by Chronicle** *(out of 706 total entries)*											
Thomas Arundel	10	6	10	7	4	5	12	74	0	0	7	**135**
William Courtenay	0	0	4	0	0	7	33	6	0	0	12	**62**
Henry le Despenser	3	1	5	1	0	2	24	6	0	0	5	**47**
Henry Beaufort	0	11	0	10	2	0	0	12	1	9	0	**45**
Simon Sudbury	0	1	4	0	0	2	24	0	0	0	2	**33**
Richard le Scrope	3	0	6	4	0	1	0	18	0	0	0	**32**
Richard Courtenay	1	0	3	0	9	0	0	10	3	0	0	**26**
Alexander Neville	1	2	4	1	0	3	6	0	0	0	5	**22**
Walter Skirlaw	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	3	0	0	10	**20**
Henry Chichele	4	1	0	4	2	0	0	8	0	0	0	**19**
Robert Braybrook	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	2	2	0	8	**19**
	Adam Usk	An English Chronicle	Capgrave's Chronicle	Chronicles of London	Gesta Henrici Quinti	Knighton's Chronicle	Walsingham I	Walsingham II	Wavrin II	Wavrin III	Westinster	**Total**

Fig.12. Top 11 bishops by number of mentions per chronicle, with overall totals.

Of these men, seven hailed from noble families. This means that noble bishops, who accounted for 20% of the period's bishops, accounted for 63% of mentions within the chronicles, and as such, they were disproportionately represented. This pattern could be the result of several factors: bishops of noble background attracted greater attention from the chroniclers precisely because they were noble; noble bishops tended to involve themselves more actively in the political life of the realm, with which the chroniclers were particularly preoccupied; or noble bishops tended to occupy more senior, wealthier or more prominent bishoprics. Of the remaining bishops in this group, Simon Sudbury and Henry Chichele were both archbishops of Canterbury. Sudbury's inclusion is also explained by his death at the hands of the rebels of 1381. Walter Skirlaw was bishop of Durham, and was frequently referred to in relation to diplomatic missions at home and abroad, whilst Robert Braybrooke was bishop of London between 1381 and 1404, and served as royal chancellor 1382-3. The bishops who featured most prominently in chronicle accounts were, therefore, either nobly born, had extended political careers, were at the centre of a key political event, or combined two or more of these factors. These factors, their

influence over the source material, and their implications will be explored elsewhere in the chapter and incorporated into the chapter conclusion.

I: Duality and Conflict

Whilst the secular and clerical spheres of medieval England were not divided and state and church consistently overlapped, a late medieval bishop occupied a peculiar place. He was a clergyman and a landlord, he was head of his household, an administrator, a preacher, and judge. He was an agent of the Catholic Church, the custodian of his bishopric, and royal servant. Each of these roles came with its own values and expectations, which influenced their social identities and reputations. Sometimes, the bishops' clerical and secular roles were at odds. These conflicts of interest were a prominent feature of episcopal reputation and appeared regularly in contemporary praise and criticism of the conduct of the clerical nobility. Not all bishops however were subject to the same set of conflicts and expectations. Many roles they shared by virtue of their offices, but, unlike the secular nobility, the late medieval episcopacy were drawn from a diverse range of social backgrounds. Whilst all bishops were noble by virtue of their offices, some, like Neville and Beaufort, were noble by birth. The expectations placed upon a noble bishop like Beaufort, and the conflicts he encountered, would be different from those experienced by a bishop from a common or monastic background, and vice versa. Bishops of noble origin entered the church having been raised in the world of the secular elite, and inevitably, conceived of themselves in terms of these secular values. They also brought their families' secular ambitions and allegiances into the church with them, introducing additional considerations and loyalties. These familial connections anchored these bishops strongly in the politics and culture of the secular elite. In addition to their loyalties to church and king, they needed to navigate the competing pull of family loyalty, and all that implied. We saw evidence of this in the petition submitted on behalf of Archbishop Neville by his 'kin, allies and other friends'. As a member of the prominent Neville family, the archbishop had access to a significant noble kinship network to lend him support, as well as their political connections, as suggested by 'allies', and socio-political connections as implied by 'friends.' Each of these associations placed further expectations upon the bishop and his conduct and contributed to his reputation, for good or ill.

In 1429, Cardinal Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester was called upon to make a choice between his promise to the pope and the needs of Lancastrian France. This dilemma occurred at an important moment, when the regency government of the young Henry VI was deciding how best to navigate Beaufort's dual claim to both his cardinalship and his English see. Upon Beaufort's receipt of his red hat in 1427, two papal bulls were read aloud to him, one of

which placed him in charge of a crusade against the heretical Hussites in Germany, Bohemia and Hungary. By 1429, however, the duke of Bedford was in need of reinforcements in France. The troops earmarked for Beaufort's papal crusade were redirected, and the Cardinal was dispatched to his nephew's aid.[22] As G.L. Harris, remarked, 'Beaufort's choice at this juncture lay …between a career at the Curia or in the Lancastrian Kingdoms. One or the other had to be sacrificed and the choice, when it came, was not in doubt.'[23] For Beaufort, his loyalty to the crown, and his family, came before his commitment to the church. The Privy Council records preserve the Cardinal's declaration that he would accept the diversion of his forces:

> ...for the moost singuler love zeele and tendrenesse that he bereth to the suretee, welfare and prosperitee of the king and of alle his landes and subgittes and in especial of my lord of Bedford.[24]

The Cardinal wished it to be known and recorded that he acted in the interests of the king, his kingdom, and the subjects within it. He valued service to the secular authority of Bedford, his nephew, over that of the pope. Beaufort's repeated prioritisation of the interests of the Lancastrian crown defined much of his reputation. It was praiseworthy for some, and troubling for others, especially amongst those who would rather Beaufort applied his considerable talents to the church. Whilst the cardinal's choice was undoubtedly heavily influenced by his familial connections to Bedford and the young Henry VI, the conflict of loyalties between church and king was far from an unusual quandary for a medieval bishop.

A majority of the bishops of our period entered the world of the secular clergy from non-noble families. They were usually drawn from the gentry or from prosperous urban families. Archbishop Simon Subury came from a merchant family, Archbishop John Kemp was the son of an Oxford gentleman, John Stafford was the illegitimate son of a squire, and Richard Fleming was a member of the gentry. In addition, a small number of the bishops of our period had previously been members of religious orders prior to their elections to their bishoprics. The latter category included three former Benedictine monks, two Dominican friars, two Carmelite friars, and a former abbot of the Cistercian abbey of Beaulieu in Hampshire.[25] As such, the clerical nobility were a varied group of men, the make-up of which was more diverse than the secular nobility. They brought into the church with them expectations and reputations associated with their backgrounds. By virtue of promotion, they rose to the ranks of the clerical nobility and were expected to move within the elite world of their nobly-born counterparts.

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[22] *Beaufort*, p. 184-5.
[23] Ibid., p. 185.
[24] *PC III* pp. 339-40.
[25] Thomas Merke (Carlisle), Edmund Bromfield (Llandaff), John Langdon (Rochester), Thomas Rushook (Llandaff), Robert Reed (Carlisle) and Robert Tideman (Llandaff).

Even without the connections and loyalties associated with noble birth, the office of bishop itself, and the roles it encompassed, meant that all bishops risked finding one aspect of their identity and reputation at odds with another.

Situations might, and did, arise, in which a bishop was required to defend the church against the government and king for whom he worked. Adam Usk provided a positive report of William Courtenay as archbishop of Canterbury in 1400. Courtenay, Usk wrote, summoned his clergy:

> …and explained to them dejectedly how the temporal powers did not shrink from violating the liberties of the church, particularly in regard to the arrest, imprisonment and trial of bishops, matters in which they were treated no differently than laymen.[26]

Usk's description highlighted both the conflict between secular and church authority, and the special status that bishops should have been accorded as forces partly insulated from secular control. In the chronicler's report, Courtenay provides an account of the story of William Lisle, Bishop of Ely and the actions of Simon Islip, an earlier archbishop of Canterbury who, seeing Lisle being led to face royal judges, took the bishop by the hand and said to him:

> "This place where you are standing is prohibited to you, and this man before whom you stand may not judge you, come with me." Whereupon, even though the judge did not assent, he led him away.[27]

Islip stood up to secular royal authority in defence of his fellow bishop and the privileges of the church. That Courtenay was able to discern the lesson in this story was, in Usk's view, a credit to the archbishop, and demonstrated the danger secular authority could pose to the clergy, and the steps that should be taken to resist. Inevitably, actions like Courtenay's and Lisle's were not always favourably received by their kings or by the lay authorities more generally. In standing up for the rights of churchmen and the church, they opposed the wishes of their secular lord. This stance might serve to enhance his standing amongst his fellow churchman, but simultaneously dent his reputation amongst his secular counterparts.

There was danger, too, in a bishop allowing his commitment to secular matters to overshadow his devotion to the church. A bishop's excessive concern for secular matters and secular duties was likely to lead him astray and distract him from his true purpose, as a clergyman and defender of the church, through which he might make his most valuable contribution to the world. In the parliament of 1376, Simon Sudbury, Archbishop of Canterbury succeeded Lord Richard Scrope as chancellor. He did this, Walsingham declared, despite it being

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[26] *Usk*, pp.94-5.
[27] Ibid.

'contrary, as many declared, to the dignity of his office; but whether he himself arranged for this to happen or undertook it without thought, only God knows.'[28] For the chronicler, the role of chancellor existed in conflict with the archbishop's status and position. In accepting the post, Sudbury showed either an excess of ambition or a lack of wisdom, and there was an inherent danger in having done so. This danger was, no doubt, particularly emphasised in the wake of Sudbury's eventual execution at the hands of the rebels of the Peasants' Revolt in 1381. It was perhaps these considerations which compelled Walsingham to lament that, in 1407, Archbishop Thomas Arundel, to whom the chronicler was consistently favourable, 'was prevailed upon by the insistent pleas of many to undertake the office of chancellor, yet he did it against the wishes of those who desired his honour'.[29] In the chronicler's view at least, Arundel's acceptance of the role of chancellor, and his commitment to royal service, risked his continued good reputation.

In these accounts, there was a corruptive quality to the secular world. For example, Alexander Bachel, Richard II's confessor, underwent a curious transformation in the Westminster chronicler's entry for 1390. Before he was created bishop of St. Asaph in Wales, he was a member of the order of friar preachers and a master of divinity. The chronicler remarked that before he had come to the attention of King Richard, Bachel's 'standard of living and his attitude to personal gain were quite humble and there was transparent modesty in everything he did'.[30] For example, he had refused to ride a horse and had followed the court on foot instead, and when he had first been offered a bishopric he had refused. After this, however, he was said to suffer a change of heart 'and began to behave with arrogance.'[31] Thus Bachel was transformed from the ideal clergyman – humble, always modest in manner and style of living and unwilling to puff himself up with worldly luxuries – into an arrogant man, and an ideal no longer. The passage demonstrated that a clerical reputation could be enhanced by outer displays of modesty and undermined by accusations of arrogance and excessive worldliness.

This concern with appearances was well-demonstrated again in an example provided by the St. Albans' chronicler in relation to William Courtney as archbishop of Canterbury in the 1370s. He claimed that the other bishops:

> …roused their father the archbishop from a deep sleep as one would a great man drunk from wine, or rather a hireling drunk with the poison of greed that he might recall the wandering sheep from the pastures of such manifest damnation.[32]

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[28] *Walsingham I*, p.364-5
[29] *Walsingham II*, p.494-7.
[30] *Westmin.* pp.434-5.
[31] Ibid.
[32] *Walsingham I*, p.79.

In comparing the archbishop to a drunk man being roused from sleep, Walsingham suggested a tendency for over-indulgence, a failing in masculine self-control, an over engagement with the world, and a dulling of mind, which should have been sharpened, ready to confront Wycliffe's heresy. The chronicler reiterated this point later, asserting that the archbishop had 'determined to spend his days in good living,' and not in keeping 'watch over his flock'.[33] The archbishop, in other words, had turned his back on his duties in favour of worldly comfort and indulgence. Walsingham's second metaphor, of the 'hireling drunk from greed', referred to the archbishop's subordination to the duke of Lancaster, Wycliffe's most powerful defender. The result of this, Walsingham warned, was that 'the wolf and the hireling shepherd' would allow 'the lords' lambs to be exposed to the greed of them both'.[34] The archbishop, driven by greed looked the other way, whilst Gaunt, the wolf, injured the people. Gaunt, as the secular power, drew the archbishop into the world of secular concern to the detriment of the archbishop's flock. Thus, a conflict of interest was drawn between the corrupting secular world and the righteous clerical sphere of pastoral engagement the archbishop should have inhabited. The entire passage allowed Walsingham to demonstrate the correlation between the clerical neglect of duty, self-indulgence, greed, worldliness, enslavement to secular powers and a loss of positive reputation. The world of government a bishop entered upon undertaking royal service was a secular domain in which a bishop could be tempted away from his clerical duties. This duality was reflected in the praise and criticism, with bishops' entanglement in the secular at the expense of the clerical a consistent theme.

II: Episcopal Expectation

Despite the conflicts inherent in a bishop's secular and clerical roles, a praiseworthy bishop was expected to cultivate many of the behaviours desirable in a secular lord. Bishops, too, were expected to exhibit self-control and commit themselves to the promotion of the greater good. They were required to offer counsel, to be charitable and to be wise. They were criticised if they were seen to have abused governmental office, as Archbishop Neville was in 1388, for immoral behaviour and for acting in their own selfish interests. Virtue was as central to positive episcopal reputation as it was to a secular lord. Whilst noble birth introduced additional layers of identity, expectation and potential conflict to a bishop's reputation, noble birth and episcopal office were far from incompatible. In fact, in terms of virtue, noble birth was an asset to a bishop and his reputation. The noble birth of bishops often featured in positive accounts of their conduct and abilities. As with the secular nobility, their birth was presented as the root cause of their personal virtue, and as justification of their social position. In the case of the period's noble

[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.

bishops, their noble birth ensured that they were well-suited for episcopal office. The author of the *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, for example, described Richard Courtenay, Bishop of Norwich upon his death at Harfleur in 1415 as:

> …a man of noble birth, imposing stature and superior intelligence, distinguished no less for his gifts of great eloquence and learning than for other noble endowments of nature, [he] was regarded as agreeable above all others to members of the king's retinue and councils.[35]

Courtenay was the grandson of Hugh Courtenay, Earl of Devon (d.1377), and the nephew of William Courtenay, Archbishop of Canterbury (d.1396), who was himself described in a statute of the University of Oxford as 'Master William Courtenay, the son of an earl and agleam with royal blood', the Courtenays being descendants of Edward I.[36] The passage in the *Gesta* thus emphasised the belief that Richard Courtenay's illustrious lineage had endowed him with innate virtue, both generally, and in ways more specific to his office. He was well-built, an outward indication of his nobility, intelligent, eloquent and personable. The composer of the *Gesta* applied these same principles to his description of Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was a son of the earl of Arundel (d.1376). He was described as 'a man of exalted ancestry and profound wisdom', the first quality directly equated with the second.[37] Chronicler John Capgrave, meanwhile, described Henry le Despenser, Bishop of Norwich as 'Henry, so descended from the line of Despensers'.[38] Just as for a secular lord, therefore, family remained a significant component of the identities and reputations of nobly born bishops.[39] A bishop of this type owed his talents and virtue to his ancestry, and one was evidence of the other. This connection was further evident in a petition submitted on behalf of Richard Clifford at parliament in 1401. Clifford had been provided to the bishopric of Salisbury by the pope, only to be supplanted by another, and had subsequently been appointed to the bishopric of Bath and Wells. The petition requested that this appointment be formally recognised. In support of the request, the petition emphasised that Clifford 'is a man of gentle birth', a factor intended to stand testament to Clifford's suitability for holy office.[40]

However, the need to conduct oneself virtuously was universally applicable to the episcopacy, regardless of a bishop's family background. Bishops who were not noble by blood,

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[35] *Gesta*, pp.44-5.
[36] *Communi*, pp. 226-7. It reads: '*...dominus Magister Wilhelmus de Courtenay, filius Comitis regioque sanguine praefulgens...*' Translation is my own.
[37] *Gesta*, pp.44-5.
[38] '*Henricus igitur iste de genere Dispensatorum ortus est*' in *Capgrave II*, p. 170.
[39] For Bishop Despenser's attitude to his lineage see: Kate Parker, 'A Little Local Difficulty: Lynn and the Lancastrian Usurpation' in Christopher Harper-Bill, *Medieval East Anglia* (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 115-29. p.120.
[40] *PROME,* Parliament of January 1401, item 35.

but only by virtue of their offices, and were still expected to behave nobly and cultivate reputations appropriate to their station. Their birth could not be used as evidence of their virtue as it could for nobly born bishops, but they were still expected to exhibit it, as, through promotion, they had been rendered noble. They received a summons to parliament, were accorded a place amongst the lords in parliament, and acted as lords over their lands, tenants and households. The fact they had achieved such high office could itself be considered evidence of virtue, as in an ideal world, it should have been impossible for a corrupt man to ascend to so lofty a position within the church. Just like the secular nobility, therefore, the ability to act nobly, and to demonstrate nobility via virtuous conduct, was key to a bishop's position, and to his positive reputation. Whilst many of the traits desirable in, and expected of, a bishop were equally praiseworthy in a secular nobleman, and a great deal of overlap existed between both sets of expectations, episcopal virtue had a distinctive character of its own.

The idea that episcopal expectation adapted those ideals applied to the secular elite is explored elsewhere in the historiography of the late medieval bishop, in relation to contemporary masculine ideals. Much of this research has focused on clerical masculine identities in the wake of the mandate of clerical celibacy. While it is easy to assume that secular masculine ideals and clerical expectation were incompatible, studies by Katherine Harvey, Derek Neal, Pat Cullum, Katherine Lewis and Jennifer Thibodeaux have argued differently. R.N. Swanson's assertion, that the clergy's duty to refrain from violent and sexual acts rendered them unmasculine in the eyes of the secular world, and confined them to a third gender, neither entirely masculine nor feminine, has been disputed.[41] Rather, Katherine Harvey argued that clerical celibacy was viewed as an extension of secular forms of the masculine ideals of self-control and self-discipline, and of control over the body. This was not conflict, but adaptation. The same principles of masculinity were equally applicable to clerical and secular figures, albeit in distinctly different forms. Clerical masculinity was presented by the clergy as the ultimate, idealised form of masculinity, and this was reflected in the emphasis placed on virginity in the construction of the reputations of saint-bishops. [42] However, a saint-bishop was, by his very nature, special. Virginity appears to have been of less interest elsewhere. The emphasis was on self-control instead, just as it was for secular notions of masculinity. The role of self-mastery in conceptions of clerical masculinity was also central to Jennifer Thibodeaux's argument that

[41] R.N. Swanson, "Angels Incarnate: Clergy and Masculinity from Gregorian Reform to Reformation," in ed. D.M. Hadley (ed.), *Masculinity in Medieval Europe* (London, 1999) pp.60-177. Problems with Swanson's approach discussed in Maureen C. Miller, 'Masculinity, Reform and Clerical Culture: Narratives of Episcopal Holiness in the Gregorian Era' in *Church History*, vol. 72, no.1 (March, 2003), pp.27-8. And Derek Neal, *The Masculine Self in Late Medieval England* (London, 2008), pp.90-91.

[42] Katherine Harvey, 'Perfect Bishop, Perfect Man? Masculinity, Restraint and the Episcopal Body in the Life of St. Richard of Chichester' in *Southern History*, vol. 35 (2013), pp.10-14.

masculinity was always tied to a struggle of some kind, and as such masculinity could be proven by defending or reinforcing traditional masculine markers.[43] Jacqueline Murray adopted a similar approach, conceiving of celibacy as a victory over the body, and arguing that the battle for celibacy could be, and was, conceived of in martial terms.[44] As such, the language of lay masculinity, of control and victorious struggle with oneself and one's enemies was readily applied to the clergy. New language to define and explain clerical masculinity was not required, because it was not so different from the lay example. Yet it was, perhaps more so than for secular men, defined by conflict, not with other men, but within the self, and with society more widely.

Derek Neal questioned the wisdom of emphasising the role of sex and sexuality in the formation of masculine identities. He argued instead that boys who grew up to take holy orders were raised alongside those who would go on to pursue secular occupations. It was unlikely that the transition to holy office robbed clerics of their previous identities.[45] He argued that far from being in conflict, the clerical and secular interpretations of masculinity were largely compatible. In his view, laymen did not use clerical celibacy as a way by which they might exclude clerics from the homosocial networks that sustained a masculine social identity.[46] The lives of clergymen directly paralleled those of laymen in many ways and, in spite of some points of conflict, they generally acted in one another's interests.[47] They lived in the same communities and navigated the same social worlds. Our previous two chapters demonstrated how strong was the influence of ideals of masculinity on the formation of the reputations of the secular nobility. As they and the clerical nobility of the current chapter conceived of their masculinity and their related identities in similar ways, using the same language, we should expect many of these themes and motifs to continue here. Concepts may be employed differently, or accorded different levels of emphasis, but the language of noble, elite reputation remained consistent.

There was a balance to be struck, between the identity of office and personal identity, which adhered to more traditional secular interpretations of masculinity. We find this balance in general descriptions of episcopal virtue. According to The Durham chronicles attributed to

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[43] Jennifer Thibodeaux, *The Manly Priest: Clerical Celibacy, Masculinity and Reform in England and Normandy 1066-1300* (Philadelphia, 2005), p.10.
[44] Jacqueline Murray, 'Masculinising Religious Life: Sexual Prowess, the battle for Chastity and Monastic Identity' in P.H. Cullum and Katherine J. Lewis (eds.), *Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages* (Cardiff, 2004), pp. 25-9.
[45] Ibid., p. 91-3
[46] Derek Neal, 'What can historians do with clerical masculinity? Lessons from medieval Europe' in Jennifer Thibodeaux (ed.), *Negotiating Clerical Identities: Priests, Monks and Masculinity in the Middle Ages* (Basingstoke, 2010), pp. 26-7.
[47] Neal, *The Masculine Self,* p.91.

William de Chambre, the continuator of Symeon of Durham's *Historia Dunelmensis Ecclesiae,* described Thomas Hatfield, Bishop of Durham, in the following way:

> …he was measured in his rule of the church and his household; careful to have for his conveyance honourable men and not boys, horses and not foals. For he was in the eyes of observers, in manner and in wealth, noble and exalted.[48]

Here, the writer noted the bishop's mature masculine self-control and composure alongside his nobility. Hatfield hailed from the gentry, and was therefore not noble by birth, but solely as a result of his office.[49] It was perhaps the writer's purpose to make a particular point of the bishop's noble conduct as a result. The description of the bishop as honourable, measured and diligent was reminiscent of the praise rendered on behalf of the secular nobility as discussed in the previous chapters. That Chambre elected to draw attention to these particular aspects of the bishop's character was significant, however.

In an entry in the letter books of the monastery of Christ Church, Canterbury, meanwhile, William Courtenay, Archbishop of Canterbury between 1381 and 1396, was described as 'the same most reverend and pious father to us, and to the church of Canterbury, was benign and at all times benevolent, devoted and modest.'[50] This passage highlighted Courtenay's personal piety and his fair treatment of those around him. He was a man devoted to his office and modest in his conduct. The description was more distinctly clerical in its points of emphasis, but the impression created was similar to that rendered for Hatfield; he was a man of great dignity, patience and forbearance. A similar approach was adopted by Archbishop Thomas Arundel in his tribute to Roger Walden, Bishop of London upon the latter's death in 1406. 'He died a more devoted prelate, more patient in adversity, more moderate in the face of good fortune, more worthy of love and more generous to the people, fortified by grace and virtue.' In praising Walden, Arundel focused on his personal conduct and virtue. Walden, like Courtenay, was committed to his office, was tolerant, and patiently weathered adversity, all while dealing well and kindly with his flock. This ability to remain strong and calm, and to resist the storms of secular life, maintained by one's faith, was a particularly clerical trait.

Conversely, poet John Gower portrayed Bachel in a similarly unfavourable light in his *Tripartite Chronicle*. He described him in the following verse, mirroring many of the accusations levelled at the king's confessor by the St. Albans' chronicler.

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[48] *Scriptores,* p. 137. Translation is my own. For Chambre see: Michael Twomey, 'Chambre, William' in Christian Bratu and Graeme Dunphy (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of the Medieval Chronicle* (online edition, 2016) [Accessed: 05/12/2020]

[49] *ODNB – Thomas Hatfield.*

[50] *Concessio*, p. 41. Translation is my own.

> Pliant confessor, fawning and wicked teacher...
> Whose blackness, I believe, defiles the places of the royal presence,
> He was a greatly devious and skulking enemy,
> Always greatly increasing rather than reducing anger.[51]

Gower's description depicted Bachel, subsequently bishop of Llandaff, as an underhand and shadowy figure, and a corrupting element at the court. In so doing, Gower undermines Bachel's masculinity, his position as a man of the church, and his commitment to royal service. Where a masculine man made his intentions known and met them head-on, Bachel lurked in the shadows and obtained his ends through deception. He was a flattering yes-man who said only what others wanted to hear, neither good nor masculine. The implication of the passage was that Bachel had not only corrupted the court, but also the king. Instead of helping to resolve disputes and maintain the peace and prosperity of the realm, the king's confessor promoted discord and suspicion. Excessive, unjust anger was condemnable in a king as it could lead him into tyranny, and therefore undermine his position as a suitable ruler. Bachel, in inflaming the king's anger, failed in his duties as a royal councillor and as a man of the church, leading his king into sin.[52]

Wisdom and Learning

Wisdom and learning were two further markers of episcopal reputation and identity. Reporting the death of two English bishops in 1405, the St. Albans chronicler wrote: 'It was around that time that two bishops died, Master John Trefnant of Hereford and John Bottlesham of Rochester, who had been men of wisdom, education and the highest repute.'[53] In doing so, the chronicler drew a correlation between the bishops' learning and their positive reputations. Wisdom was desirable in a secular lord as both a virtue and a quality allowing him to supply his king with good counsel. Yet wisdom for the clerical nobility stemmed from their education and from their knowledge of religion and faith, where the wisdom of secular nobles was more firmly rooted in their nobility of birth and their experience. Whilst wisdom was significant to both the secular and clerical nobility, it was emphasised particularly in regards to the latter – and defined as the acquisition of knowledge and learning, rather than the wisdom that arose from inheritance and practice. Kings were expected to take account of both.[54]

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[51] John Gower, 'Tripartite Chronicle' in Thomas Wright, *Political Poems and songs relating to English History* (London, 1859), p.528. Translation is my own.
[52] Kate McGrath, *Royal Rage and the Construction of Anglo-Norman Authority c.1000-1250* (London, 2019), p.147, see also: pp.129-32, 158-68. Gerd Althoff 'Ira Regis: Prolegomena to a History of Royal Anger' in Barbara H. Rosenwein (ed.), *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middles Ages* (Ithaca, 1998), p.67-8.
[53] *Walsingham II* p. 428-9
[54] Bernard Guenee, Juliet Vale (trans.), *States and Rulers in Later Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 1985), p.71.

Statements in regards to the academic qualifications and intelligence of bishops were applied to bishops of common background just as frequently as to their nobly-born counterparts. Education and intelligence were, in essence, tropes of episcopal reputation; to be a bishop, one must be wise. And wisdom came from study. Making reference to a bishop's scholarly qualifications was the most straight-forward way in which a bishop's education was employed within the chronicles. For example, in discussion of Henry Chichele's translation to the archbishopric of Canterbury in 1414, Adam Usk noted that 'Master Henry Chichele, doctor of laws and at that time bishop of St. Davids, was translated to the see of Canterbury.'[55] Both Usk and the Westminster chronicler provide details of the educational background of their episcopal subjects, often at the moment at which they are promoted to a bishopric for the first time, or, as in Henry Chichele's case, when they were translated to another. This seemingly redundant detail emphasised the connection between intelligence and learning and episcopal office, and between education and social status. The Westminster chronicler adopted a similar approach to Walter Skirlaw, whom he described as 'The bishop of Hereford, Master Walter Skirlaw, LL.D., keeper of the privy seal.'[56] This example noted Skirlaw's educational background, his episcopal office and his position in royal government. That this was how the chronicler elected to describe Skirlaw, within a passage that made no further judgement in regards to his conduct, suggests that these were key markers of Skirlaw's identity and reputation.

The most interesting description of an individual bishop's scholarly accomplishments was that applied to William Read, Bishop of Chester. The Westminster Chronicler recorded that: 'The death occurred on 13th August of Master William Reade, D.D (Doctor of Divinity), bishop of Chichester who severely taxed his faculties in the study of astronomy, a subject in which he was expert.'[57] Again, this entry recorded the notice of William Reade's episcopal office, his educational qualifications and his personal scholarly accomplishments. Apparently, his expertise in astronomy was such that the chronicler felt compelled to make note of it at the point of the bishop's death. Such descriptions were not confined to national chronicles. In the biographical entry of John Fordham, Bishop of Durham composed by William de Chambre, the author noted that those electing the bishop surrounded themselves with 'very able teachers and students of theology, and very many other learned men', and that these traits were important to those responsible for electing the new bishop in order to elect someone who would ensure the 'honour and advantage' of the church.[58]

[55] *Usk*, pp.250-1
[56] *Westmin*., pp. 50-1
[57] Ibid., p.130-31
[58] *Scriptores*, p.143.

The inescapable association between episcopal office and wisdom prompted one of Adam Usk's many complaints of Richard II, in which he lamented 'the numerous simpletons whom he raised to bishoprics and who were later brought to ruin because of such unwarranted promotion'.[59] The extract emphasised intelligence and learning as central to a bishop's position and reputation. If he was not intelligent and learned, then he could not properly fulfil the obligations and duties of his office. Chroniclers thus regularly invoked the intelligence and learning of bishops in more overt attempts to praise them, both to enhance and to exhibit their reputations. Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury was praised explicitly as 'a man of...profound wisdom' by the author of the *Gesta Henrici Quinti*.[60] The *Gesta* also remarked that Richard Courtenay, Bishop of Norwich was 'a man of...superior intelligence' and the author of 'An English Chronicle' declared of Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, that 'in iii thynges he passed and exceded al other, that ys to say, in wisdom, nobley and riches'.[61] In Beaufort's case, the chronicler noted the bishop's nobility of birth alongside his wisdom and his great wealth, but it was wisdom that came first.

The wisdom of bishops could also be portrayed by less direct means, through the portrayal of their discernment in appearance and action. William de Chambre's account of Bishop Thomas Hatfield of Durham did not make any direct references to Hatfield's educational qualifications, but stressed that Hatfield had been 'venerably grey-haired'. This was a statement of the ideal of episcopal wisdom by means of the bishop's outer appearance, which emphasised the connection between age and wisdom. His inner virtue, like a nobleman's inner nobility, was made outwardly evident.[62] Chronicler Thomas Walsingham employed the criticism of youth on two other significant occasions. When the bishop of Lincoln was forced from office in 1398 and translated to the poorer bishopric of Chester, Walsingham claimed that this was so his bishopric could be awarded to Henry Beaufort, the son of the duke of Lancaster even though he was still 'but a boy'.[63] The term 'boy' was applied to Beaufort to underline his young age, and the flaws associated with that stage of the life-cycle.[64] This youth, the chronicler implied, rendered Beaufort unsuitable for high clerical office as he was lacking in wisdom. Likewise, the chronicler described Henry le Despenser, Bishop of Norwich in the following terms in 1380:

> …a man lacking in learning and discretion, [he] was an intemperate and haughty young man, who had not learned to preserve or establish friendships, for he lifted up his heel

[59] *Usk* pp.62-3
[60] *Gesta*, p.4-5
[61] *Gesta*, p.44-5, *Eng. Chron*., p. 66.
[62] *Scriptores*, p.137. Original: '*canitie venerabilis*.'
[63] *Walsingham I*, p. 110-11.
[64] Christopher Fletcher, *Richard II: Manhood, Youth and Politics 1377-99* (Oxford, 2008), pp.1-8. P.J.P. Goldberg, Felicity Riddy and Mike Tyler, 'Introduction: After Aries' in P.J.P. Goldberg and Felicity Riddy (eds.), *Youth in the Middle Ages* (York,2004), pp.3-7.

> against his friend the prior of Wymondham, Sir Nicholas Radcliff, a professor of Holy Writ, and devised trouble for the man to whom he should rightly have owed gratitude.[65]

Despenser's youth manifested itself in a lack of wisdom, and in a series of mistakes an older and wiser man would have avoided. The bishop's lack of education, self-control and immodesty rendered him unsuitable for office, and each trait was, in Walsingham's account, a side effect of youth. These behaviours offered the chronicler an avenue by which he might portray the bishop in an unfavourable light. It should also be noted that the image generated by Walsingham of Despenser, as a heavy-handed and arrogant young man, was the polar opposite of the serene and enduring pen-portraits composed for Hatfield, Courtenay and Walden. The latter group exemplified proper episcopal conduct, Despenser and Beaufort, in their youth with all it implied, did not.

Faith and Devotion

Unsurprisingly, expressions of a bishop's personal faith were another significant component of his reputation, and featured in descriptions intended to be favourable to individual bishops. When describing the final sickness and death of Bishop Hatfield of Durham, for example chronicler William de Chambre made repeated references to the bishop's faith and devotion. The dying bishop attended to biblical verses, was preoccupied with the figure of the lord in his final confessions, and urged others to 'love the lord your God...and love your neighbour'. The bishop's expressions of faith, particularly at the end of his life, were to his credit. Expressions of faith were a recurring theme, and were often mentioned to indicate other forms of virtue in a bishop. For example, after being removed from office by the pope in order to make way for Henry Beaufort as bishop of Lincoln, the former bishop, John Buckingham, refused his transfer to the bishopric of Chester 'and took himself off to Canterbury, awaiting the end of his life commendably and in sincere contrition amongst the monks of Christ Church'.[66] In doing so, the bishop demonstrated his piety and devotion, becoming the only admirable figure in Walsingham's account of the event. It was the bishop of Lincoln alone who had acted in a way befitting his office, motivated by faith and true commitment to his calling. He had ultimately removed himself entirely from the secular world and from the corruption associated with it, by fully embracing his personal faith.

We see this theme again in Walsingham's description of an event in 1404 involving the archbishop of Canterbury. The archbishop was standing in a public place, discussing the well-being of the country, when a priest walked by him carrying the host. The archbishop demonstrated his personal devotion by pausing his discussion, kneeling down and worshipping

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[65] *Walsingham I*, pp.350-1.
[66] *Ibid.*, pp.110-11.

it. His companions did the same. Then the archbishop rose, and followed the priest at a respectful distance. When he reached a group of knights, deep in discussion, the archbishop was horrified when they failed to acknowledge the presence of the host, or take any steps to venerate it.[67] The chronicler attempted to demonstrate the goodness of a bishop he favoured as a representative of the church by demonstrating his faith and commitment to God. The impression created by Walsingham's description was one of faithful dignity. Faith often featured in accounts as the motivation behind particular actions. Walsingham's description of William Courtenay, Archbishop of Canterbury and his reactions to the teachings of the Lollards encompassed both of these elements. He referred to Courtney's personal faith, and the uses to which he applied it, writing:

> Master William Courtenay, the archbishop of Canterbury, was disturbed by these proclamations, and being a man, it was believed, full of the Spirit of God, did not allow such wicked intentions to gain a free rein.[68]

Courtenay's faith in God was not only of credit to him on this occasion, but it also equipped him to face the threat before him. His faith, and his virtue, were subsequently evident in his actions.

The Episcopal Voice

Another common feature of much of the praise and criticism of the clerical nobility was the repeated references to the use, and misuse, of the episcopal voice. The bishop's voice allowed him to fulfil his clerical function and was the best avenue by which he might demonstrate his virtue. He might use his voice in royal service to advise his king, offering counsel that demonstrated his wisdom and learning. He used his voice to persuade others when on diplomatic missions, and to soothe discord between factions. He might also use his voice in trying to persuade heretics to rejoin the church and to condemn them when they persisted in their errors. A bishop also needed his voice in order to preach and to guide others in the teachings of the church. These were all approved uses of the episcopal voice and, as such, they could enhance a bishop's reputation by earning him praise. Criticism of bishops often focused on how a bishop failed to use his voice in an appropriate manner, or to appropriate ends. A bishop who offered unwise counsel to his king, or sought to sow dissension, misused the clerical voice. He also misused his episcopal voice if he failed to confront an errant king with the counsel he needed, or neglected to speak out against heretical speech. In all of these ways, the episcopal voice was often the central thread running through praise and criticism of the clerical nobility.

The ability to speak well was important for a bishop, and contributed to his reputation. For example, in the *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester:

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[67] *Walsingham II*., p.424-9.
[68] Ibid.

> '…went to the council [in Rome], intending to go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem after the election of the pope had been celebrated. His powers of persuasion were so great that he was successful in urging all the cardinals to reach an agreement and hasten as quickly as they could to celebrate the election of a pope.'[69]

The passage emphasised the oratorical abilities of the bishop of Winchester and demonstrated the positive ends to which he was able to apply his episcopal voice in exerting influence amongst his fellow clergy and upon the international stage. Similarly, Walsingham praised all of the English bishops who defended an earlier bishop of Winchester, William Wykeham, in 1376 for their 'boldness' and particularly the bishop of London for his 'commendable persuasiveness' in speaking so well in defence of his brother bishop.[70] In consequence, they acted collectively so that he could attend their convocation in London. Thus, the bishop of London's talent for public oratory allowed him to defend the bishop of Winchester, and by extension the wider church. The ability to speak well was considered indicative of other significant qualities. In his praise of Thomas Arundel as archbishop of Canterbury, the St. Albans' chronicler described in 1404, 'the bishop of Rochester, who was said to be the spokesman of the archbishop of Canterbury...though the archbishop did not lack eloquence'.[71] That Arundel was able to speak well in his own right was important to Walsingham's categorisation of him as an outstanding member of the clerical nobility. Persuasive and compelling speech was a marker of wisdom, intelligence, learning, and understanding, and was the most public way in which to exhibit the possession of all four qualities. It was also a significant component of politics, rulership and governance, qualities which were of great use to the crown.[72]

III: Maintaining Balance

These virtuous principles were key to maintaining positive reputation and navigating the conflicting commitments of a late medieval bishop. He could undertake secular duties virtuously if he maintained the cornerstones of his episcopal identity, remaining calm and controlled, applying his learning, faith and voice, to the greater good of king, kingdom and church. Theoretically, the conflict between the secular and the clerical spheres in royal service should not have existed at all. A bishop could offer his best advice to his king if he applied his learning, and counselled him with faith and kept the interest of the church in mind. The king was meant to work to the benefit of church and kingdom, and would do so if he was properly advised. As

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[69] *Gesta*, pp. 176-7.
[70] *Walsingham I*, pp.72-3.
[71] *Walsingham II*, p.422-3.
[72] Suzanne F. Cawsey, *Kingship and Propaganda: Royal Eloquence and the Crown of Aragon* (Oxford, 2002), pp.18-22.

we have already discussed, however, such balance was difficult to maintain in reality, but it remained central to praise and criticism of the clerical nobility nonetheless.

Royal Service

Provided he balanced it with his clerical commitments, devotion to royal service remained desirable in a bishop, and bishops often occupied high governmental office; the majority of the period's chancellors and treasurers, for example, hailed from clerical backgrounds. It was for his royal service that Henry Beaufort, as bishop of Winchester, received public praise in parliament; specifically in relation to the financial assistance he offered the crown. In 1417, a petition delivered by the commons acknowledged that Beaufort's loan had been 'to our most sovereign lord the king, both for the good and gracious progress of this present campaign to recover his rightful inheritance overseas and for the defence of his realm of England.'[73] Beaufort was making a substantial financial investment in the Lancastrian crown and became an indispensable resource in this regard. The petition emphasised that Beaufort's financial contribution was intended to be of benefit to king and crown. In the parliament of 1425, his financial services were recognised again as having been made 'in a generous spirit to the same lord king in his aforesaid need, for the defence of his aforesaid realm.'[74] On this occasion, Beaufort was praised for the personal virtue he possessed, generosity, which had prompted the loan, and for his commitment to both the king, and the safety of the kingdom at large. That these contributions were acknowledged in so public a setting suggested that such loans and commitments were to Beaufort's credit – in a broader sense – and to the benefit of his reputation, especially when framed in terms of royal and public service. Providing this generosity did not impoverish the church, or take resources from charitable causes, his secular generosity was of little detriment to his episcopal reputation more generally.

Elsewhere, bishops were frequently mentioned in the chronicles in relation to diplomatic missions, both domestically and internationally. For example, Walter Skirlaw, Bishop of Durham appeared on eleven occasions across three separate chronicles in relation to foreign diplomacy throughout the 1380s and 1390s. Skirlaw's diplomatic activity accounted for 20% of all references to episcopal diplomacy across these texts.

[73] *PROME,* Parliament of November 1417, item 15.
[74] *PROME,* Parliament of April 1425, item 21.

Top 10 bishops *(out of 20)*	**Number of Mentions for Diplomacy per Chronicle** *(out of 54 total entries)*								
Walter Skirlaw	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	6	**11**
Thomas Arundel	0	0	3	1	4	0	0	1	**10**
Robert Hallum	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	**4**
Richard Courtenay	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	**3**
Robert Braybrook	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	**3**
Nicholas Bubwith	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	**3**
William Courtenay	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
Henry Beaufort	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	**2**
John Kemp	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	**2**
Thomas Langley	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**2**
	An English Chronicle	Capgrave's Chronicle	Knighton's Chronicle	Walsingham I	Walsingham II	Wavrin II	Wavrin III	Westinster	**Total**

Fig. 13. Top 10 bishops by mention for diplomacy per chronicle, with overall totals.

The remaining entries however include a significant cross-section of the period's bishops, including those of both noble and non-noble blood.[75] Diplomacy was a common occupation for bishops, and one which required the effective employment of their voices, intelligence and inter-personal talents. A bishop might act as ambassador or envoy, carrying messages and delivering them eloquently to the recipient, improving relationships between parties at home and abroad. He might also be sent as a mediator in foreign and domestic quarrels, or to gather news and information.[76] Such functions were well-suited to a bishop and aligned with many of the expectations of his office. It required the use of his voice, it cast him in the role of peace-maker, and asked him to employ his learning and make use of his memory.[77] Diplomacy enabled a bishop to exhibit the crucial aspects of his episcopal identity whilst serving king and kingdom, without imperilling the church.

[75] For example, in addition to Skirlaw: Henry le Despenser of Norwich, Richard Courtenay of Norwich , Robert Braybrooke of London, Thomas Langley of Durham, John Gilbert of Hereford.
[76] Donald E. Queller, *Office of Ambassador* (Princeton, 1967), pp.85-8.
[77] For the importance of memory to learning in this period see chapter three, pp.128-30 of this thesis.

The provision of counsel was another significant component of the bishop's role and was a substantial form of royal service to which his episcopal talents could be applied, or found wanting. The clergy and episcopacy had long been involved in government and bishops also served on kings' councils. Jeremy Catto observed that whilst the minority council of Henry VI was dominated by the king's royal uncles and the bishop of Winchester, it also heavily relied on 'lawyer-diplomats' such as Philip Morgan, Bishop of Worcester, John Stafford, Bishop of Bath and Wells, and John Kemp, Archbishop of York.[78] A bishop could find himself the subject of criticism should he be found to be offering poor counsel, and accusations of poor counsel were common in assessments of a bishop's standing and reputation. Conversely, good counsel was an asset to a bishop, and it was part of his role to offer guidance to his king. In the chronicles bishops are depicted offering good advice to their kings. This advice was either heeded, to the benefit of all, or, was ignored by the secular authorities before ultimately proving justified. The latter often emphasised the inherent wisdom and goodness of the bishop in question. Whilst the provision of counsel was a form of royal service and a worthy use of a bishop's voice, it was not always well-received by the kings they wished to advise. This reception, however, could also be evidence of virtue. Sycophancy in counsel, by simply telling a king what he wished to hear was not good counsel at all, and worthy of condemnation. A bishop's ability to maintain good counsel in the face of royal displeasure demonstrated his devotion to both his king and his God. When brought before parliament by the king's associates in 1405, Archbishop Arundel was able to clear himself of the crimes imputed against him. He turned to the king, thanked him for his judgement and said:

> ...you should most certainly grasp the fact that I never engaged in any malicious communication with anyone concerning your person, but said what I knew was expedient for you. I have shared secretly with you things which concern you and me because of your royal honour, though on many occasions you have been somewhat vexed by my admonitions.[79]

In advising a king to follow the right course of action, however unpopular the advice, the archbishop demonstrated his loyalty and his commitment to both good counsel and royal service. The archbishop's words were rewarded, when he succeeded in 'exonerating himself of suspicion and regained the king's feelings of affections towards him'.[80] The archbishop had spoken with the best intentions and in such a way – honestly, directly, and critically – that the king was able to recognise the merits of his counsel and to readmit him to the royal grace.

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[78] Jeremy Catto, 'Counsel and Conscience in Lancastrian England' in Jacqueline Rose (ed.) *The Politics of Counsel in England and Scotland 1286-1707* (Oxford, 2016), p.94. See also: John Watts, *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship* (Oxford, 1996), pp.145-7.
[79] *Walsingham II* p. 432-3.
[80] Ibid., p. 434-5.

In a confrontation with the king's favourite Michael de la Pole in 1385, the bishop of Ely showed courage and a lack of self-regard, precisely the qualities that were absent in de la Pole. The bishop of Ely had approached the king to intercede on behalf of the bishop of Norwich in order to secure the restoration of his temporalities, which had previously been confiscated as punishment for his alleged misconduct on his Flemish crusade. Pole responded to the bishop's request with incredulity, and demanded why the king should return property that brought him an annual income of over £1,000 pounds.

> The bishop of Ely straightway replied, "What do you mean, Sir Michael? I am not asking the king for what belongs to him, but what belongs to someone else, which he has no just right to withhold, for this situation has pertained because he is under the influence of iniquitous counsel, or that of men like you."[81]

In speaking out against de la Pole and the evil counsel he offered the king, the bishop of Ely positioned himself as Pole's antithesis. His advice, and his words, were honest and true, and were the ones the king should most properly heed. He was wise, and counselled the king to pursue the righteous path, instead of encouraging him to please himself as de la Pole had done.

Chroniclers' narration of individual episodes was sometimes more literary and inventive than historical and descriptive. In Walsingham's account of the attack made upon Archbishop Arundel by the king's circle in 1397, we learn that the archbishop was accused of treason, cunning, deception and evil counsel. The king subsequently prevented Arundel from speaking in his own defence in parliament, promising him fair treatment. However, further attacks were made upon the archbishop. John Bushy urged the king to restrict the archbishop's speech, 'for he is so clever...and so superior to us in intelligence that we are afraid he will deceive and harm us by his ingenuity'. [82] On this occasion, the archbishop's power of speech, and the intelligence he might convey with it, posed a threat to those who had conspired against him. He was cleverer than the king's coterie of favourites and, if allowed the power of his voice, might thwart their designs. While it seems a little contrived that Bushy would have used such self-deprecating language in so public a setting, and while they are likely to be the invention of the chronicler, the words attributed to Bushy reflected contemporary understanding of the norms and values of episcopal conduct and reputation.

On another occasion, when the archbishop witnessed a group of knights failing to venerate the host as is passed by in 1404, Arundel remonstrated with them, and then hurried to report them to the king. At first, Henry IV was disinclined to take the archbishop's concerns

[81] *Walsingham I*, pp.782-3.
[82] *Walsingham II*, pp.80-1.

seriously, but the archbishop persisted, counselling the king as to the dire significance of the knights' error.

> …as long as there had been a strong, wholesome faith in this land towards the sacrament of the Body and Blood of the Lord, the royal throne had been strong, the knighthood had been strong, prosperity followed throughout the land, and prayers had been answered. But now, after the royal knights had begun to stray in matters of faith, and especially in the faith of the sacrament, peace has been banished from the kingdom, faith from the earthly domain, and charity from friendship.[83]

The archbishop used his voice to deliver his warning, to counsel and persuade his king as to the importance of faith and proper Christian observance. In so doing, he fulfilled his role as royal councillor and as a clergyman. The archbishop was able to serve his king best, if his own faith was strong, so he might then advise with faith in mind, and in so doing ensure the prosperity of the realm. As a result of the archbishop's advice, King Henry promised 'severely [to]chastise those irreverent men, and give warnings of punishment to those persons who had given offence in this matter'. This addition was significant, as it demonstrated both that the bishop had offered advice and that the king had listened and acted in line with episcopal expectations. In Walsingham's account, the affair was concluded when the king 'bade the archbishop to reprove and correct them [the knights] himself, as he knew best how to deal with them effectively'.[84] In these words, the king recognised the archbishop's spiritual authority, his faith, and his learning, and both king and archbishop fulfilled their proper societal roles, to the benefit of both their reputations. The incident, as described by the chronicler, was the perfect example of the ideal way in which a bishop might serve both church and king, without one commitment overshadowing or tarnishing the other.

Battling Heresy

A bishop's reputation was on firmer ground in regard to the confrontation of heresy, in England, and as part of wider church efforts throughout Europe.[85] In opposing heresy, a bishop might gain positive reputation amongst his peers, contemporary writers, and wider society by fulfilling his clerical function and exhibiting his faith by defending the church from those who would seek to destroy it, and guiding his flock. The merits and necessity of acting swiftly and decisively were discussed by Walsingham in the St. Albans' chronicle in relation to Henry le Despenser, Bishop of Norwich. Whilst other bishops turned their backs upon their duty to defend their people and their church from the ravages of heresy:

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[83] Ibid., p.424-9.
[84] Ibid.
[85] See for example: Mark Whelan, 'Between papacy and empire: Cardinal Henry Beaufort, the House of Lancaster, and the Hussite Crusades', *EHR, vol.* 133 (2018), pp. 1-31.

> …the bishop of Norwich, blessed be his name for ever, for he refused to allow his people to be infected with such a contagion. Indeed, he swore, and he will not regret it, that if anyone from that perverse sect dared to preach in his diocese, he would be consigned to the flames or beheaded...and because of this, faith and religion since his episcopate has remained to this day undefiled.[86]

It was to Despenser's credit that he had successfully kept his diocese safe, and he had done so with characteristic force. His actions had preserved his episcopate for the future, so it might continue to be to his credit. In swearing justly to punish all heretics found within his diocese, Despenser had spoken publicly and decisively. Returning to his metaphor of the sheep, shepherd and wolf, Walsingham contrasted Despenser's excellent conduct with that of his fellow bishops. While all bishops knew of the threat they faced, they did nothing, but return to their homes to manage their personal affairs:

> ...they left their sheep exposed to the jaws of the wolves, and not one of them raised his staff to drive them away. Every crowd had not only wolves in abundance, but ravening wolves, whose fangs were inevitably poisonous and deadly, yet there was no one to revile them and at the very least to frighten those robbers with their voice.[87]

Here the chronicler outlined the role bishops were expected to play in the control and persecution of heresy, protecting their flocks from a corrupting poison with condemnation and the power of their voices. Speech was central to both the duties and reputations of late medieval bishops. Their voices were powerful tools, which could be used to educate, counsel, correct and control.

Henry Knighton wrote favourably of John Buckingham, Bishop of Lincoln, when he took action against a heretic preacher in 1382. Not only did he expel the preacher from the chapel he had been using, he forbade him from any church or churchyard within the diocese of Lincoln, and prohibited the population of the area from listening to the preacher's words. The bishop transmitted his orders via letters and ordered them to be published in his churches.[88] In this way, he restricted the preacher's ability to speak and be heard, and replaced the preacher's heretical words with words of his own. This was an effective, and public, use of the episcopal voice, enabling Buckingham to condemn and correct. The writer of the *Gesta* applied similar principles to Archbishop Arundel's handling of the Oldcastle affair. Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham from 1408, was an associate of Henry V. Convicted of heresy in 1413, Oldcastle escaped from the Tower of London and plotted against the king and his brothers. He was finally executed

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[86] *Walsingham I*, p. 882-3.
[87] *Ibid.*
[88] *Knighton*, p.310-13.

in 1417.[89] As the overseer of proceedings regarding Oldcastle's heresy, to the author of *The Gesta*, Archbishop Arundel was:

> ...a noble defender of the Church whom neither good fortune could lift up nor adversity cast down, and … whom from olden times no man has anywhere been found braver in fighting Christ's battles and opposing seditious men of that kind.[90]

Arundel, who 'condemned this traitor [Oldcastle] to God and man as a heretic', appeared as a defender of the church and a spiritual warrior battling on Christ's behalf to condemn Oldcastle and his beliefs

William Courtenay, Bishop of Canterbury used his voice against heretics in a different manner. According to Walsingham:

> ...disturbed by these proclamations, and being a man, it was believed, full of the Spirit of God, [Courtenay] did not allow such wicked intentions to gain a free rein…he summoned his suffragan brethren, to inform them that it was not the righteousness of Phinehas that he had lacked till then, but the opportunity to curb the rash and foolish minds of those men. He…spoke of the misery, and expressed his grief about these sons of perdition who, though they had been nurtured in the bosom of Mother Church, were trying to tear her to pieces.[91]

Here, the archbishop of Canterbury applied his voice to a range of purposes: he summoned, informed, discussed and grieved with his fellow bishops over the Lollard threat to the church. He displayed leadership to the rest of the episcopal bench, which was precisely what the office of archbishop of Canterbury entailed. Courtenay also used his voice to compare himself with Phinehas, a biblical priest, the grandson of Aaron, who as a youth had committed himself with great zeal to combating the heresy of Peor. He had personally taken up arms against those who had succumbed to the temptations offered the Israelites by the Moabites and the Midianites.[92] The archbishop was thus able to convey to the gathered bishops the approach he intended to take to Wycliffe and his followers. It was, in essence, a call to arms.

Defence and War

In contrast, in the Westminster Chronicler's report of the parliament of 1383, the Bishop of Norwich, Henry le Despenser, was condemned for adopting the martial trappings of a secular lord, engaging in secular instead of spiritual conflict.

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[89] Christopher Allmand, *Henry V* (New Haven, London, 1997), pp.294-9, pp.302-4. See also, for example: Maureen Jurkowski, 'Henry V's Suppression of the Oldcastle Revolt' in Gwilym Dodd (ed.), *Henry V: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge, 2013), pp.103-30 and Edward Powell, *Kingship, Law and Society: Criminal Justice in the Reign of Henry V* (Oxford, 1989) pp.146-9, 163-4.
[90] *Gesta*, p.5.
[91] *Walsingham I*, p.596-9.
[92] (Exodus 6:25), (Numbers 25:1-9).

> My lord bishop, you have your sword borne before you everywhere like a temporal lord. Lay aside that sword of yours; its presence is an affront to the king, and the rest of the temporal lords are loud in their murmurs of complaint about it: and for the future conduct yourself according to what is proper for a bishop.[93]

The parliamentary performance was intended as a rebuke against the bishop's reputation, and to correct his errant behaviour. He had strayed too far into the secular world by adopting the martial trappings of secular lordship at the expense of his clerical office. This was symbolic of wider criticism of his command of his military campaign in Flanders, which had been declared a crusade by the pope. Nevertheless upon his return to England, Despenser was criticised further for having wandered from his priestly vocation in taking command of the campaign in the first place. His behaviour was unsuitable in a bishop. Thomas Walsingham echoed these sentiments in his assessment of Despenser in his chronicle, remarking that he was 'a man better suited to warfare than to the stewardship of the church'.[94] Walsingham's assessment demonstrated a belief that the office of bishop required a different kind of personality and a distinct set of abilities separate from those required of a secular warrior. In his view, the two occupations were complementary. Occupied by the same person, however, they were in conflict. A good warrior did not make a good bishop.[95]

This condemnation was somewhat at odds with the realities of medieval England. Whilst canon law restricted the clergy from participating in the spilling of blood, the late medieval period produced a number of warrior bishops who actively involved themselves in warfare.[96] Henry Burghersh, Bishop of Lincoln had participated in the early stages of the Hundred Years' War and William de la Zouche, Archbishop of York had defended the kingdom at the Battle of Neville's Cross against the Scots in 1346.[97] Warrior bishops were not unheard of, nor did they always attract criticism. Bishop Thomas Hatfield of Durham, for example, had been placed in charge of the rear guard at the Battle of Crécy in 1346. Michael Prestwich concluded that actual practical command would probably have been practised by the earls of Arundel, Suffolk and Huntingdon, who accompanied the bishop. Hatfield, however, had a recognised place on the battlefield and his engagement did not appear to attract any significant criticism.[98] The

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[93] Westmin., p.53. See also: PROME, Parliament of October 1383, items 14-23.
[94] *Gesta Abbatum*, p.281.
[95] Andrea E. Oliver, 'Battling Bishops: Late Fourteenth-Century Episcopal Masculinity Admired and Decried' in Harper-Bill, *Medieval East Anglia,* p.274, p.281. Bruce McNab, 'Obligations of the Church in English Society: Military Arrays of the Clergy 1369-1418' in William Chester Jordan, Bruce McNab & Teofilo F. Ruiz (eds.) *Order and Innovation in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of Joseph R. Strayer* (New Jersey, 1976), p.293.
[96] Oliver, *Battling Bishops*, p. 281.
[97] Michael Prestwich, 'Thomas Hatfield at War' in Anthony Bash (ed.), *Thomas Hatfield: Bishop, Soldier and Politician* (Durham, 2013), pp. 9-10.
[98] Ibid., p.11.

participation of clergymen in battle could also earn active praise. The death of the war-like abbot of Battle was reported with regret by the Westminster Chronicler, who remarked that 'his death was the occasion of deep and widespread regret, for beneath his monkish habit he was a soldier of mark and the stout defender of home, neighbours, and coast against the attacks of pirates.'[99] Here, a man of the church was praised for his martial accomplishments, not criticised for his foray into the secular world. Significantly, however, the abbot was described acting in the role of defender, not aggressor. In protecting the countryside from pirates, he maintained the law and protected England from her enemies, serving king and kingdom. The abbot was not scorned for having strayed from his priestly vocation, and by doing so he claimed the affection of many. Bishop Despenser had received praise, two years before his disastrous Flemish campaign, for his martial actions against the rebels of the Peasants' Revolt in 1381. The bishop was described wearing the trappings of war, 'armed as a knight, accoutred with a metal helmet and a strong hauberk impregnable to arrows, and wielding a substantial two-edged sword', in a manner mirroring descriptions applied to secular lords.[100] He personally fought to suppress the rebellion, and his actions were described in chivalric detail. For example, 'he himself, taking a lance in his right hand, urged his horse on with his sharp spurs, with such hostility and boldness did he rampage against them.' This tone was preserved in Capgrave's later account, in which the chronicler recalled how 'the pious priest tore this pack of savage wolves to pieces with many bites'.[101] Capgrave acknowledged both the bishop's piety and his propensity for violence, and gave no indication of any contention between the two. The bishop's actions in this case were an extension of his pastoral role, which required a bishop to defend his godly flock against the wicked wolves who meant them harm.

There were three obvious factors underpinning the differences between accounts of Despenser in 1381 and in 1383. Firstly, in 1381, the bishop was acting defensively in the interests of the peace and prosperity of the realm, upholding the authority of the king's government. In accordance with the contemporary notion of the society of orders, he also acted against the lower orders who had departed from their proper place in society and who, as such, deserved the bishop's retribution. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the bishop's efforts were successful in 1381, and disastrous in 1383. In defeat, his having deviated from his clerical role became a stick with which to beat him. Had his crusade been successful and profitable, he would likely have earned praise instead and his reputation would have profited. Episcopal violence was not in itself particularly problematic; it just needed to be performed within acceptable boundaries, and to be carried out competently. A clergyman could be violent in

[99] Westmin., p.35.
[100] *Walsingham I* p.491-3.
[101] Original in *Capgrave II*, p. 170.

defence of the realm, the church and the Christian faith, but not for its own sake, and not for personal profit.

Capgrave praised Despenser in the extract below for his youthful endeavours in service of the church in Italy in the 1360s. He was, in Capgrave's words:

> ...a soldier in all things vigorous and who in the strength of youth only thirsted for the sight of war. Since however at that time England was at peace he was pleased to hurry to Rome where he fought for apostolic right, and suppressed the rebels of the church by force and punishment.[102]

Episcopal participation in war was not only excusable, but often required. It was a duty bishops owed to their kings. Whilst the chroniclers might be critical of episcopal reputation in war, the same could not be said of kings who viewed their bishops primarily as royal servants. Again, bishops' roles were complex and sometimes in conflict. Nigel Saul defined the late fourteenth to early fifteenth century as the peak period of clerical calls to arms, arguing that between 1368 and 1418 over a dozen military orders were issued to bishops by royal government.[103] Edward III, Bruce McNab argued, regularly, and purposefully employed the clergy in the defence of the realm.[104] These instructions called upon prominent churchmen to defend the realm and resist the enemies of the king and this was of particular significance to bishops in the north of the country who might be called upon to defend the kingdom against the Scots.[105] Michael Prestwich argued that Bishop Hatfield owed his promotion to the bishopric of Durham to his administrative experience during the early stages of the Hundred Years' War. This experience equipped him with the skills necessary to hold Durham and combat the Scots.[106] Bishops were frequently called upon to defend their tenants or their dioceses in late medieval England, and kings actively involved them in local defence.[107]

Archbishop Henry Bowet earned praise for his actions against the Scots in the reign of Henry V. According to chronicler Thomas Elmham, chaplain to Henry V:

> Here the archbishop of York is observed in attendance,
> Preparing many thousands of the clergy into divisions.
> This father, in order to defend his country, prepared them for war;
> Giving solace to the common people, he blessed them.
> Here, truly, he would have struck down and captured the Scots

[102] Hingeston, *Capgrave*, pp.170-1.
[103] Saul, *For Honour and Fame: Chivalry in England 1066-1500* (London, 2011), p.169.
[104] Oliver, *Battling Bishops*, p.281, McNab, *Military Arrays of the Clergy*, p.294.
[105] Saul, *For Honour and Fame,* p. 216.
[106] Prestwich, *Hatfield at War*, p.16.
[107] Saul, *For Honour and Fame,* p. 216.

> Even if they had yielded to himself their own vows.[108]

This account presented Bowet's martial and spiritual roles side-by-side, with no hint of conflict between the two. He acted in the role of general, leading his fellow clergy into battle. The passage stressed the bishop's success in this role, underlining his skill and competence. Bowet also comforted the common people and bestowed blessing upon them in his role as bishop. He was thus able to balance both of his roles, and the multiple expectations of his office. Significantly, it should also be noted that unlike Despenser, Bowet was not a member of a noble family, hailing instead from the gentry.[109] Hatfield likewise was not noble by birth, and yet participated in war. These commonalities would suggest that it was by virtue of office and not of background that bishops were able to incorporate the exercise of war comfortably into their reputations. Despenser's noble birth, however, served to explain why he attached *such* importance to it.

Active participation on the battlefield and the supplying of troops were not the only contribution bishops could make to the war effort. Just as Bishop Hatfield had worked in a more traditionally clerical role providing administrative support during the Hundreds Years' War, bishops could also offer spiritual support and boost morale. A further account of Archbishop Henry Bowet's actions in 1417 by Robert Redman took a different approach, recalling how:

> The Archbishop of York, who was now affected with great age, was carried by wagon and appeared with the duke [of Bedford], so that his presence, his love for his country and his singular affection for his king might enflame the courage of the soldiers to fight bravely.[110]

Whilst Bowet was no longer able to actively participate on the battlefield as a result of his infirmity, being then in his seventies, he remained involved in the war effort. The focus of this later passage was the bishop's ability to inspire the soldiers via his reputation for devoted royal service.

The key to retaining positive episcopal reputation in war lay in fulfilling one's duties to the kingdom and church, and, in the view of the mostly clerical chroniclers, in never allowing the former to overshadow the latter. In Walsingham's report of Bishop Despenser's death in 1406, the chronicler recorded how: 'towards the end of the autumn Sir Henry Despenser died.

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[108] 'Elmhami Liber Metricus de Henrico Quinto' in *Memorials*, p.152. Translation with assistance of Christian Liddy. For Elmham see: Raluca Radulescu, 'Elmham, Thomas' in Graeme Dunphy and Christian Bratu (eds.) *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle* (Online edition, 2016) [Accessed 11/12/2020]
[109] *ODNB – Henry Bowet.*
[110] Robert Redman, 'Vita Henrici Quinti' in *Memorials*, p.51. Translation is my own. For more on 1417 see: Allmand, *Henry V*, p.341.

He was a man who had fulfilled the duty of a knight and yet had not neglected his obligations as a bishop.'[111] This was a marked contrast to Walsingham's earlier criticism of Despenser and his martial endeavours, as explored earlier in this chapter. The St. Albans' chronicler's account of Despenser's career evolved over time, demonstrating the instability of reputation. The same action could be interpreted in different ways, at different times, by different people. The bishop was, by his very nature, a creature of both the clerical and secular worlds and his duties and commitments spanned both spheres. The key to positive episcopal reputation was the ability to keep these aspects of the role in balance. Warfare was an arena in which, as the criticism levelled at Bishop Despenser in 1378 demonstrated, a bishop was at risk of straying too boldly into the secular world. If he was successful in his martial ventures, and performed them in acceptable circumstances, in the defence of church, king and faith, he was unlikely to face criticism. In defeat, however, he exposed himself to criticism and was reminded that warfare was beyond his remit. And yet, kings continued to involve bishops in local defence calling upon them in their roles as lords to raise men and face the kingdom's enemies.[112] The difference here was perhaps a subtle one; in 1378 Bishop Despenser had actively pushed to be allowed to lead his crusade, in a manner which might easily be framed as glory-hunting, and had then failed to deliver, whereas those bishops called upon to defend the northern marches had been ordered to do so, in fulfilment of their duties to the crown, and in service to the common good of the realm.

IV: Self-Perception

The biographies of the bishops of Durham by William de Chambre and a later continuator share much in common with the Court of Chivalry material from the previous chapters on the secular nobility and demonstrate the active attempts by bishops to cultivate and preserve their reputations and identities, which, in the end, were more social than political. The building works of individual bishops were a prominent feature of these accounts, and these works served many of the same purposes as the artefacts, items and architectural features installed in churches and other buildings by the secular nobility. They were displays of regional power, social connections, lineage, wealth, identity and service, and were also intended to commemorate the bishop and keep memories of his identity and reputation alive after his death. The building works of bishops, and the physical artefacts described within them, were prompts for recollection, and their cathedrals, churches and even episcopal cities were theatres of memory and reputation. Chambre's biography offers insight into those aspects of their identities the bishops were most eager to display. Just as is suggested in the previous sections, there is evidence here of individual bishops choosing to emphasise specific aspects of their reputations

[111] *Walsingham II*, pp.478-9
[112] McNab, *Military Arrays of the Clergy*, p.295-6.

and identities more than others, revealing again distinct possibilities for expressions of personal self-fashioning and individuality. This was a key, and defining, feature of episcopal reputation.

Just as the deponents in the Court of Chivalry cases testified to the presence of building works and coats of arms within the plaintiffs' local spheres of influence, so too did the works undertaken by the bishops of Durham. These works were both hyper-local, centring on Durham cathedral, and local, within Durham city and County Durham, with forays into the bishop's lands in Yorkshire. Inside Durham Cathedral, for example, Bishop Hatfield made modifications to the southern parts of the choir by the monks' stalls, and added fine carvings to his bishop's stall 'at great expense'.[113] Later, Walter Skirlaw commissioned work on the cloisters and added dormitories for 330 monks, whilst his successor Thomas Langley commissioned repairs on the Galilee Chapel to the sum of £499, 6s. 8d. and funded further building works on the cloisters.[114] As such, each of the bishops left a permanent mark upon the fabric of the cathedral. This activity served to commemorate them, to ensure their contributions would be noted in the future, and helped to glorify the home of Saint Cuthbert. Building to glorify God was one of the virtuous forms of magnificence and was a proper avenue along which a rich man should channel his wealth.[115] Building works therefore allowed a bishop to exhibit his virtue, specifically his faith and devotion, and his commitment to the church.

Expenditure on public works that benefited the greater good was another virtuous way the wealthy might spend their money. We see examples of this in the building works of the bishops of Durham. Hatfield 'allowed Durham to grow' and 'adequately fortified it with a wall'.[116] Such a description contributed to Hatfield's legacy at Durham; he had left a permanent mark upon the cathedral and city, completing building works not only to his own benefit, but for the good of the city at large. Other bishops of Durham also contributed building works for the good of their communities. Walter Skirlaw built bridges at Shincliffe, Yarm and Bishop Auckland, and added a stone gate to the latter. The bishop undertook large-scale restorative works on the church of Howden, attaching a 'very beautiful' chapter house and commissioning a great bell tower, which could act as a refuge for the village's inhabitants in case of flooding.[117] Each of these works was to the benefit of the local communities, and stood testament to the bishop's sense of charity, wealth and devotion to God.

Public building works were also used by bishops to shape and commemorate their reputation, prompting talk and recollection in the localities in a similar manner evident in the

[113] *Scriptores,* pp.137-8.
[114] *Scriptores*, Skirlaw: p.145 , Langley: p.146.
[115] *GKP*, p.81, *Rigby,* p. 53.
[116] *Scriptores*, p.138.
[117] Ibid., p.144.

court of chivalry material of the previous chapter. In this way, they were acting just like secular noblemen. Indeed, other forms of building works were more specifically associated with the bishop's role as lord. Bishop Hatfield made significant repairs to Durham castle, restoring older parts of the building and renovating the constable's hall.[118] Later, Bishop Langley founded a gaol at Durham and replaced the old decaying gates, whilst Robert Neville's main achievement during his subsequent occupation of the bishopric of Durham was the exchequer building by the gates of Durham Castle.[119] Elsewhere, Skirlaw constructed a manor house at Howden, where Langley later added a bedchamber and a western gate to the gardens and orchards.[120] These works were more secular and practical in nature, relating to the bishop's day-to-day existence and the administration of his estates. They were, however, public symbols of his lordship, displaying this aspect of his identity and social function to the wider population. In each of these locations, whether inside the cathedral, within churches or in outdoor spaces, the bishops set up their coats of arms to ensure that their connection with each addition or modification was preserved. Bishop Skirlaw, for example, placed his coat of arms of a cross formed by six interlacing batons on each of the structures he commissioned, 'always in the highest of places to demonstrate his honour.'[121] Bishop Neville's family coat of arms, complete with bull-head crest, is still visible on the chancery building on Palace Green in Durham, and Langley ensured his arms were installed on the gates he commissioned at the entrance of the orchard at Howden.[122] The act of building was not enough in itself; people had to remember who was responsible for each of the structures. Even more interestingly and importantly, it was insufficient that the credit be assigned to the bishop of Durham via the display of the episcopal arms they shared. These works were individual ventures, intended to prompt memory of and enhance their personal reputations as much, if not more, than their collective identity.

Much like the reports of tombs supplied by the court of chivalry material, Chambre's biographies included descriptions of the bishops' final resting places. Hatfield was buried by stalls he had built in the cathedral, beneath his bishop's throne following an ornate and expensive funeral. The bishop left money to pay for the horses to bring his body to the cathedral, for a cloth of silk and for jewellery, badges of his coat of arms and red vestments.[123] This magnificent display was designed to portray the bishop's wealth, importance and nobility, all of which Hatfield had been keen to emphasise in life. The combination of objects and display meant that the artefacts associated with the funeral could later act as prompts to encourage

[118] Ibid., p.138.
[119] Ibid., p.146 and p. 147.
[120] Ibid., p.145, p.146.
[121] Ibid., p.145. Translation is my own.
[122] Ibid., p.146.
[123] Ibid. p.139.

recollections of the performance. Bishop Skirlaw was buried in the north aisle of the choir of Durham Cathedral between two columns before the altar of St. Blaise, under a stone of marble. Over this were placed many sumptuous bronze statues, with his image cast in brass at the centre. On the chest of the tomb were the words: 'I believe that my redeemer lives and in the last days of earth he will rise up and in my body I will see God, my saviour.' Iron railings were raised around the tomb, and opposite it to the north was placed a stone bench on which his arms were displayed.[124] Skirlaw's memorial had stronger religious overtones than Hatfield's. The bishop's burial was placed near the altar of a saint, and Chambre paid particular attention to the tomb's inscription, which testified to the bishop's faith and devotion. Nevertheless, the tomb, as described, was ornate, and projected the wealth and status of the bishop, perfectly projecting the clerical and secular facets of Skirlaw's identity. The identity of Bishop Langley was encapsulated in the depiction of his arms on his marble tomb in the Galilee Chapel to which he had made significant contributions.[125] The choice was deliberate, binding Langley's reputation securely to the building works he had commissioned within the Cathedral, so one might prompt recollection of the other.

Just as secular noble families chose to be buried together in local churches in displays of lineage and nobility, the bishops of Durham were united in death inside the Cathedral. They too were a line of men, each inheriting their position from the other, and bound together by the office they shared. The familial nature of the episcopacy was physically represented by their memorials in this shared space, itself a representation of their office and the aspects of reputation they shared as a result. As such, it is interesting to note that when Bishop Robert Neville died, he was buried, not only alongside his fellow bishops but 'with his ancestors' in the southern part of the Cathedral beneath a memorial brass.[126] At the last, Neville maintained his connection to his noble family as well as to his brother bishops; both remained key aspects of his personal identity, and underlined his secular and clerical relationships.

In his will, William Courtenay, Archbishop of Canterbury (d. 1396) remembered his sister Catherine, as well as his brother Philip Courtenay and his brother's children, with a specific gift for 'my little child, William Courtenay', should he reach his twelfth birthday.[127] Of special mention was his nephew, Richard Courtenay, a future bishop of Norwich. Courtney's will ran as follows:

> ...to my dearest child and foster son, Richard Courtenay...my best mitre in case he becomes a bishop. I wish the mitre to remain in the custody of the dean and chapter of

[124] *Scriptores*, p.145.
[125] Ibid. p.146.
[126] Ibid. p.147.
[127] Dahmus, *William Courtenay*, pp. 269-270.

> Exeter until he is risen to an episcopate...Next I leave Richard, in case he wishes to be a clerk and is ordained into the priesthood, my dictionary in three volumes together with its calendar. I also leave him the milleloquium of St. Augustine and my handsome book called the lira bound in two volumes...I want them to be given into his hands whenever he begins in the arts or is a bachelor in civil law or decrees.[128]

In this light, Richard appears as the archbishop's spiritual heir. In inheriting his uncle's mitre and books, he also inherited the markers of Courtney's office and position. The mitre was a physical representation of his episcopal office, in which vocation he hoped Richard would follow, and the books were suggestive of the learning and wisdom required of a bishop. The archbishop, however, also applied familial terms in his will to his fellow bishops, referring to them individually as 'my venerable brother.' This language he applied to the archbishop of York and the bishops of Salisbury, London, Lincoln, Winchester, Exeter and Bath and Wells. Again, the examples depict the bishop as a man who, in accepting holy office, did not shed his origins, or replace his natural family with a clerical one.

The concept of the clergy as a family unit was also prevalent, however. The employment of familial terms, in referring to clergymen and their relationships to one another, created a similar sense of unity to a more traditional, biological conception of family. In 1377 the bishops of England submitted a complaint to the archbishop of Canterbury regarding his treatment of William Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester. According to Walsingham, the archbishop had aligned himself against the bishop in support of the duke of Lancaster. The bishops 'saw how the archbishop had allowed the bishop [of Winchester] to be treated cruelly by the duke'. In confronting the archbishop, the bishops complained 'about the injustice inflicted upon their brother and fellow bishop'.[129] The attack upon William Wykeham brought 'dishonour not only upon the bishop himself, but also upon them and was an attack upon the whole liberty of the church'. The bishops also reiterated that 'the present affair affected the archbishop as much as it did them': he who was 'the common father of them all'. As we have seen for both the city officials of chapter one and the secular lords of chapters two and three, the bishops conceived of their individual reputations as existing as part of the greater whole. An attack upon the honour of one of them was not only an attack on the honour of all English bishops, but, by extension, an attack on the entire English church. This relationship was conceived within the metaphor of a family, with the bishops as brothers and the archbishop the father. And, as with any noble family, the reputation of the individual members of that family influenced the reputation of the family as a whole. As such, the reputations of individual members should be defended and promoted by the other members of that family. Like the town authorities of chapter one, and the

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[128] Ibid., p. 269
[129] *Walsingham I*, pp. 72-3.

secular nobility of chapters two and three, the clerical nobility conceived of reputation individually and collectively. In defending one another, as representatives of the church, they defended the church itself.

The concept of episcopal lineage was apparent in other areas too. The bishops of Durham, for example, imagined themselves as the heirs of St. Cuthbert and as the defenders of his liberties.[130] In 1388, for example, Bishop John Fordham complained that the forfeitures to the crown by Michael de la Pole and Roger Fulthorp of lands and goods within the franchise of Durham was done to the great injury of the holy body of St. Cuthbert and his franchise, and to the harm and 'disinheritance of his church.'[131] In 1390, Fordham's successor Walter Skirlaw submitted a petition containing the same complaint. He claimed that the lands should belong to the bishop by right of his church of St. Cuthbert and said they had been seized by the king to his great injury and the disinheritance of his church.[132] The bishops of Durham regarded their position in terms of lineage and inheritance just as an earl of duke might in relation to his sons, heirs and broader kinship networks. In spite of their vows of celibacy, the clerical nobility maintained ties to their families, and conceived of their relationships within the church in familial terms. The bishops were a brotherhood, the archbishops were their fathers, they were the heirs of their churches, and they were custodians of them, and must leave them in a fitting state to pass on to their successors.

Alongside the use of individual coats of arms on buildings and other works, we must acknowledge the importance of individual identity amongst the clerical nobility. Whilst the bishops of Durham did share a common source of reputation, based on office and occupation, and inherit it from one another, they remained eager to preserve their own legacies and reputations. Just as it was not their shared arms as the bishops of Durham that they placed upon their building works, but their personal or family arms, bishops took care to balance the collective and the individual.

The seals of the bishops of Durham demonstrate a continuity of design with points of personalisation for each individual.[133] The differences between the oval seals of Thomas Hatfield, John Fordham and Walter Skirlaw were subtle. Hatfield's coat of arms features on a single shield at the bottom of the seal (fig.14), beneath the central image of St. Cuthbert, whilst

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[130] For discussion of the significance of St. Cuthbert in this respect to the bishopric of Durham see: Christian Liddy, *The Bishopric of Durham in the Late Middle Ages: Lordship, Community and the Cult of St. Cuthbert* (Woodbridge, 2008), pp.174-235.

[131] TNA SC 8/20/980

[132] TNA SC 8/20/981B

[133] For an exploration of the development of the episcopal seal see: P.D.A. Harvey & Andrew McGuiness, *A Guide to British Medieval Seals* (Toronto, 1996). pp.63-73.

on Fordham's seal this space is occupied by a depiction of the bishop himself, with the coat of arms moved higher up, appearing on a smaller scale on the sinister and dexter sides (fig. 15). For Skirlaw, the coat of arms moved back to the bottom of the seal, and St. Cuthbert was joined by saints Peter and Andrew, the patron saints of Skirlaw's previous bishopric of Bath and Wells (fig.16). The latter was the strongest example of personalisation, and raises another aspect of episcopal identity: its fluidity. Bishops did not necessarily hold a single bishopric for their entire lives, but might be translated between them. They featured, then, in the lineage of each office, and yet created a lineage of their own as they carried their reputations with them from bishopric to bishopric. This instability of course was not something generally experienced by the male members of the secular nobility; they were bound to their families for life. We might however find a parallel with noblewomen, who were translated from their fathers to their husbands. Their tombs often included the arms of both their birth family and of the family into which they married. Just as the bishops translated their reputation between their bishoprics, a noblewoman carried her father's reputation with her to her husband.[134] Amongst the male members of the nobility, however, the transferrable nature of the bishop's identity was a distinctive feature of episcopal reputation.

***Figure 14**: Oval seal of Bishop Thomas Hatfield of Durham - DUL, GB-0033-DCD*, 3136.

***Figure 15**: Oval seal of John Fordham of Durham - DUL, GB-0033-DCD*, 3140.

***Figure 16**: Oval seal of Walter Skirlaw of Durham - DUL, GB-0033-DCD*, 3144.

Lineage, descent and shared office were not the only aspects of identity and reputation that the bishops' seals conveyed. The chancery seals of Bishops Hatfield, Fordham, Skirlaw and Langley were modelled on the great royal seals, with a figure enthroned on the obverse and an

[134] For example, Joan Beaufort, daughter of John of Gaunt and wife of Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmorland in Mark Duffy, *Royal Tombs of Medieval England* (Stroud, 2003) p.197-8. Also Philippa Mohun, Duchess of York, p.217-8.

armoured knight and horse on the reverse. In these images the bishop was depicted in his role as lord exercising quasi-monarchical regality. The imagery combined the clerical, showing the bishop enthroned, and the secular, by depicting him as a knight. Again, the two roles were required to be kept in balance. There is further evidence on the seals of Hatfield and Fordham. Here, the armoured figures were shown with the crest of a mitre in order to retain clerical imagery within the distinctly secular motif (figs.17-18). Whilst the mitre was abandoned on the mounted figures on these seals for Skirlaw and Langley, they continued to invoke their episcopal identities on the martial sides of their seals; Skirlaw's depicted a winged angel (fig. 19), and Langley's a bush of feathers (fig.20). The great seals encapsulated, and communicated, the dual nature of the bishop's identity and power – the secular and the spiritual – both of which were the source of his reputation.

Fig. 17: *Chancery seal of Thomas Hatfield, Bishop of Durham - DUL, GB-0033-DCD* , 3188.

Fig. 18*: Chancery seal of John Fordham, Bishop of Durham - DUL, GB-0033-DCD, 3142.*

Fig. 19*: Chancery seal of Walter Skirlaw, Bishop of Durham - DUL, GB-0033-DCD, 3146.*

Fig. 20*: Chancery seal of Thomas Langley, Bishop of Durham - DUL, GB-0033-DCD, 3149.*

At the same time, seal designs could be tailored to suit the individual and his personal priorities. The oval seals of Alexander Neville, Archbishop of York both feature the coat of arms of the Neville family, alongside the royal coat of arms. The compiler of the catalogue of medieval seals

in the Durham Cathedral archive noted this as unusual and lacking explanation. However, the tomb of Bishop Hatfield in Durham Cathedral was also adorned with the royal arms, presumably for a similar reason, alongside a depiction of the head of his king, Edward III. It is probable that this was a way of displaying the bishops' history of royal service and their closeness to their kings, but it might also have been employed to assert the bishop's quasi-regal position. As we have seen elsewhere in the chapter, this was also an important aspect of episcopal identity: connections to the crown were a point of pride, status and reputation.

***Fig. 21**: oval seal of Alexander Neville, Archbishop of York - DUL, GB-0033-DCD, 3233.*

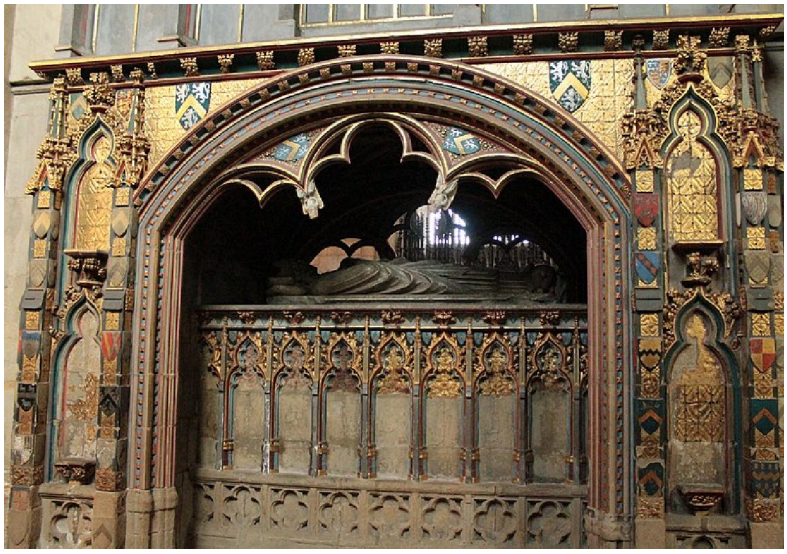

***Fig. 22**: Tomb of Thomas Hatfield, Bishop of Durham. Photography by Stephencdickson CC BY-SA 4.0 <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_elaborate_tomb_of_Bishop_Thomas_Hatfield,_Durham_Cathedral.jpg>*

V: Reputation in Practice

Like those of the secular nobility, the reputations of the clerical nobility had two aspects, which can be broadly separated into the social and the political. There existed, of course, significant overlap between the two, and one was always informed by the other. The social reputation was more of an everyday construction, informed by the bishop's daily activities and interactions, and, as we have seen, by his building works and performances. This was his reputation as a bishop; how fairly he administered justice, how he conducted himself in public and treated his dependents, how he exhibited his faith, managed his relationships and applied his wisdom. We have seen evidence of this in our sources, in descriptions of bishops' personal conduct, in remarks relating to their education, their faith and their voices.

When a bishop then stepped from this world into the political sphere, he carried his reputation with him, but it was then subjected to those pressures and expectations experienced by the secular nobility. In occupying secular offices in royal service, or by actively participating

in secular warfare, a bishop exposed his reputation to different kinds of praise and criticism. It was here that demonstrable commitment to the common good was particularly significant. In this environment, as the bill posted against Archbishop Neville in 1388 proved, the clerical and secular nobility experienced the same pressures and consequences. Neville's poor reputation, socially and locally, was the basis of the political attack against him. This unpopularity informed his political reputation and restricted his ability to act politically, endangering his secular position as an intimate of the king and member of government. Poor political reputation was as potentially dangerous as it was for a secular lord, and this was most viscerally apparent in 1381 when Archbishop Simon Sudbury perished at the hands of the rebels of the Peasants' Revolt, dragged from his hiding place in the Tower of London. Sudbury was not murdered as a result of his spiritual reputation as archbishop of Canterbury but as the chancellor associated with the unpopular poll tax. He died, in other words, because of his political reputation. Measures like the Scandalum Magnatum statutes were designed to protect a bishop's political reputation, so he could continue to draw power and authority from it within the political arena, in much the same way as a secular lord. A bishop's political reputation then fed back into his social reputation more generally. What political attacks, like those enacted upon Neville in the 1380s and upon Henry Beaufort in the 1420s could not do, was directly deprive a bishop of his position within the church, the land associated with it, and the power he drew from it.[135] Just as popular opinion and poor reputation could not deprive a lord of his territorial holdings, it also did not have the power to separate a bishop from his church. It did, however, restrict him, undermine his authority, prevent him from being able to wield his power successfully within the secular political sphere, and, in the most severe of circumstances, endanger his personal safety.

Conclusion

There are a great number of parallels between the reputations of the clerical and secular nobility in late medieval England. They shared many of the same pressures, were subject to a similar range of expectations, and were praised and criticised in much the same way. That is not to say, however, that clerical and secular reputations were identical. Whilst there was much overlap, an episcopal reputation had a distinctive character of its own. The expectations associated with episcopal office depended on many of the same principles and ideals as those applied to their secular counterparts, but there were differing points of emphasis, necessitated by their different societal roles. A bishop was not wise as a secular nobleman was wise: he was learned, his faith was the guiding force behind many of his actions, and he made particular and remarkable use of his voice, to counsel, persuade, reason and condemn. As a result of his

[135] Liddy, *The Bishopric of Durham*, pp.25-75.

episcopal office, a bishop's reputation was a patchwork of identities and commitments, and his secular and clerical roles were sometimes in conflict with one another. Criticism of the clerical nobility often alleged that they had allowed their secular lives to overshadow their episcopal duties. On other occasions, maintaining his church duties brought a bishop into direct conflict with the secular world and the king he was expected to serve and advise. As such, this conflict, and the ability to find balance between the two aspects of a bishop's role, was an additional and distinctive feature of episcopal reputation. It also allowed individual bishops, and those who wrote about them, agency and opportunity to give greater weight to one aspect over another. They could construct their reputations with rather more autonomy than historians have previously argued. Bishops were not one-dimensional, despite the tendency of historians to categorize bishops as particular 'types'. There were multiple ways a bishop could be perceived as good and virtuous.

Ultimately, as with the secular nobility, it was the bishop's ability competently and virtuously to fulfil his allotted social functions, aided by his particular episcopal virtues, which secured him a positive reputation. A bishop who did all he could for the church, by extension, also did all he could for king and kingdom. Theoretically, at least, his usefulness lay in his faith, devotion and learning. It allowed him to counsel his king, to ensure the king acted in the interest of the greater good, and honoured the church. Yet the complications of his duality of function are most evident in the arena of war and defence. A bishop entering the field of physical (as opposed to spiritual) battle crossed into the secular world, and whilst this conduct could be justified as an action in defence of church or kingdom, a bishop risked having his reputation treated like that of a secular lord. The *particular* difficulty for a bishop was that, in cases of defeat and failure, it was much easier to criticize a bishop's reputation, on the ground that he had strayed beyond his remit. Other forms of service in war, such as administration, and the provision of inspiration and spiritual comfort, were perfectly acceptable and praiseworthy in a bishop. Here, too, we can see the distinctive emphases of episcopal reputation.

This particularity is also visible in the efforts of bishops themselves to display and cultivate their own reputations, through their building works and the symbols of their office. Like the secular nobility, they displayed their power and wealth, their generosity and their commitment to the common good. They built to the glory of God, and in the interests of their local communities, making a concerted effort firmly to bind these works to their reputations by displaying their coats of arms. But episcopal ideas of lineage and inheritance were multi-faceted and more complex than those of the secular nobility. The church itself was a family, a bishop's individual bishopric was his inheritance for him to safeguard and pass on to his successor. In death, he joined a line of bishops who had shared that same inheritance, and shared in their

collective reputations likewise. What the secular and clerical nobility had in common, in regards to reputation, was their ultimate societal purpose. At the root of positive reputation was the ideal of service to the common good, whichever form that service happened to take.

CHAPTER V:
POPULAR APPEAL AND THE COMMON GOOD

In his *Chronica Tripertia*, composed in the wake of the Lancastrian usurpation, John Gower described the Lords Appellant, Thomas, Duke of Gloucester, Richard, Earl of Arundel and Thomas, Earl of Warwick, in the following terms:

> Let glory in Christ's name to swan be always raised,
> And on this earth let Horse (from swallow named) be praised,
> And may the bear enjoy respect from people's voice:
> These Englishmen, these Three, were virtue's special choice,
> Upholding England, bearing burdens cheerfully.
> May God, who is both three and one, reward these three.[1]

Gower characterised the three lords, the swan, the horse and the bear, as praiseworthy and glorious men, who had willingly served the kingdom of England, and in so doing had earned the love and respect of the people. In particular, he emphasised their personal virtue and their devoted service to their country, thus placing these features at the heart of the appellants' reputations. As argued in chapters two and three, service to the common good was central to conceptions of lordly virtue and identity.

John Watts directed attention to the significance of the concept of the common good in late medieval political thought. He argued that, whether or not the nobility genuinely believed in their role in ensuring it, the concept of the common good was a prominent and potent component of contemporary politics.[2] As argued in the introduction to this thesis, late medieval England was host to an expanding political community in which an increasing number of people were making their presence felt and their voices heard.[3] 'The people' held their rulers to account and challenged their monopoly of representation. The commons were finding their political voice, speaking on their own behalf as representatives of the common good. As such, the audience for noble reputation was growing too. Charles Ross asserted that 'public opinion' referred to the views of the parliamentary classes, and that this was distinguishable from the 'popular opinion' of the general population.[4] Watts, however, disagreed, arguing that there was

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[1] *Gower*, p. 267, line 267.
[2] John Watts, 'The Pressure of the Public on Later Medieval Politics' in TFC IV, pp.173-4.
[3] John Watts, 'Popular Voices in England's Wars of the Roses 1445-1485 in Jan Dumolyn, Jelle Haemers, Hipolito Rafael Oliva Herrer and Vincent Challet (eds), *Studies in European Urban History 1100-1800- The Voices of the People in Late Medieval Europe: Communication and Popular Politics*, vol. 33 (Turnhout, 2014), pp. 107-122, p. 114. G. L. Harriss, 'The Dimensions of Politics' in *McFarlane*, pp. 14-16.
[4] Charles Ross, 'Rumour, Propaganda and Popular Opinion During the Wars of the Roses' in R. A. Griffiths, *Patronage, the Crown and the Provinces in Later Medieval England* (Stroud,1991), pp.15-32, p.15.

significant overlap between what was public and what was popular, and that the lines between them were less firmly demarcated than we might imagine.[5] This discussion is indicative of an increasingly vocal and politically significant popular element emerging within the polity. The nobility were increasingly aware of these developments, and of the growing need to respond and appeal to public and popular opinion. Ross argued the surviving records from the period demonstrated numerous attempts by the authorities to appeal to popular opinion during the Wars of the Roses of the later fifteenth century.[6] It was important in this environment, Watts asserted, to be seen to address popular grievance.[7] This concern manifested itself in a number of forms already explored by historians and discussed in the subsequent section. Each manifestation was the result of the same expanded political community, the new assertiveness of popular politics and the focus of such politics on individual figures and political personalities.[8] Collectively, they also demonstrated awareness amongst the traditional governmental classes that there were both dangers and possible advantages to interacting with, and falling victim to, this growing popular audience.

Wendy Scase argued that in late fifteenth century England bills were evidence of popular political activity and claimed to speak on behalf of the commons. That these bills, including the libel against the duke of York posted in Fleet Street in 1456, and the bills posted on the doors of Westminster Hall and St. Paul's during the Jack Cade rebellion of 1450, were recorded in contemporary chronicles was suggestive of their impact and success. So, too, was the government's response. It was unable to ignore them and sought actively to refute them.[9] Charles Ross noted that during the Cheshire rebellion of 1393, despite Richard II's public denials that he sought the destruction of the kingdom's magnates, the rumours gained traction. The story appeared on bills placed in churches throughout the country. In response, the government issued proclamations throughout Chester, Lancaster, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Warwickshire.[10] The bills noted by Scase and Ross were part of a wider pattern, with a similar trend being observed by I. M. W. Harvey in her study of contemporary political verse, and in G. L. Harriss' discussion of bills and political manifestos.[11] Ross and Walker highlighted the seriousness with which these political forays were regarded by those in power. In his discussion of Henry IV and the rumours of Richard II's survival which

[5] Watts, *Pressure of the Public*, pp.159-61, pp.164-6, pp.173-4. Quotation from p.173.
[6] Ross, *Popular Opinion*, pp.15-32. p. 16.
[7] Watts, *Popular Voices*, p. 200.
[8] I. M. W. Harvey, 'Was there popular politics in fifteenth century England' in *McFarlane,* p.157.
[9] Wendy Scase, 'Strange and Wonderful Bills': Bill Casting and Political Discourse in Late Medieval England' in Rita Copeland, David Lawton and Wendy Scase (eds.), *New Medieval Literatures Vol. II* (Oxford, 1998), p. 225.
[10] Ross, *Popular Opinion*, p.19.
[11] Harvey, *Popular Politics*, pp. 160-1. and G. L. Harriss, 'The Dimensions of Politics' in *McFarlane,* pp.14-16.

continued through into the reign of Henry V, Walker remarked that the government was becoming increasingly anxious about sedition. He argued that the rumours were symptomatic of widespread criticism of Henry IV beyond the confines of parliament.[12] Popular discontent, Ross concluded, was a fact of political life, particularly after 1397.[13] The commons, then, were a recognised and active component of late medieval politics and, through direct interventions of their own, they regularly expressed their opinions on the key issues of the day.

Attempts were made by the government and members of the nobility, not only to address their grievances or muffle their voices, but also to shape that opinion in their favour. Personal noble reputation was often central to these attempts. Michael Hicks, for example, argued for the existence of so-called 'idols of the multitude', a term taken from the Crowland Chronicle in its assessment of George, Duke of Clarence and Richard, Earl of Warwick in the 1470s. These 'idols' were powerful noblemen with significant territorial holdings and popular public personas, who used these personas in order to rally support amongst the commons.[14] They positioned themselves as champions of popular grievance who stood in opposition to the errors of an unpopular royal government. In so doing, they were able to harness feelings of discontent in order to bolster their own political positions. Richard, Duke of York, Hicks argued, presented himself 'as a spokesman of an almost universal movement of parliamentary and popular unrest'.[15] Thus Hicks' idols aligned themselves with the commons by claiming to speak for them on behalf of the common good. This posturing, in turn, enabled them to pursue, and claim legitimacy for, their personal political goals.

Whilst 'idols of the multitude' sought to mould and influence their own reputations during their lifetime, a similar set of principles underpinned the creation and veneration of the late medieval political saint. In this case, the reputations of dead noblemen were manipulated by others to aid and legitimise the actions of the living. The phenomenon of the popular or political saint recognised the power inherent in the memory of those nobles who had lost their lives in opposition to the crown, especially those who had been buoyed by popular support. Examples of political saints included Thomas, Earl of Lancaster and Simon de Montfort and Richard Scrope, Archbishop of York.[16] In these instances, popular support was usually used to assert the

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[12] Simon Walker, 'Rumour, Sedition and Popular Protest in the Reign of Henry IV' in *Past and Present*, vol. 166 (Feb, 2000), p.51.
[13] Ross, *Popular Opinion*, p.17.
[14] Michael Hicks, 'Bastard Feudalism, Over-might Subjects and Idols of the Multitude during the Wars of the Roses' in *History*, vol. 85 (Jul, 2000), pp. 386-403, p.386, p.388.
[15] Ibid., p. 400.
[16] See for example: Dana Piroyansky, 'Bloody Miracles of a Political Martyr: The Case of Thomas of Lancaster' in Studies in *Church History*, vol. 41 (2005), pp.228-238 and John M. Theilmann, 'Political

righteousness of the causes they had championed. J.W. McKenna argued that popular canonization 'drew from the tradition of popular religious cults to express its own fierce political dissents'.[17] In making this argument, he stressed again the power and influence of popular politics. Theilmann agreed, asserting that individual figures were fashioned into would-be saints in order to take advantage of their sacred and political power. [18] Later medieval England was 'unusually rich in lay candidates for political sainthood for in no other country was the connection between involvement in secular politics and claims to sanctity so tightly drawn'.[19] Again, this observation underlined the connection between political service, popularity and righteousness. With these conditions and relationships established, the reputations of these political figures could be manipulated to specific purposes in order to try to carry popular opinion with it. Simon Walker elaborated on this line of argument and wrote that in late medieval England there was a 'growing necessity of securing the affections of the commonality, and that 'a new age of political leaders sought to channel and control this enthusiasm by the skilled manipulation of popular religiosity'.[20] Political saints, Theilmann agreed, were a symbolic means by which the crown's opponents sought political legitimacy by courting popular opinion.[21] Reputation, what was known and believed about these figures, was crucial to the political employment of both political saints and Hicks' idols. The ability of contemporaries to connect these reputations to ideals of the common good and royal service rendered them powerful political weapons and figureheads for specific political causes.

Popular sainthood and its political applications have often been studied as a form of infra-politics; this is an idea articulated by anthropologist James C. Scott, by which a society's subordinate groups find ways to express their political discontent in ways that protect them from the retaliation of their rulers.[22] Josiah Cox Russell described how political saints were used to this effect in Angevin England. Favouring a political saint was a way of expressing hostility to the king, which could not be traced back successfully to an individual source. It was, as such, an un-punishable form of protest.[23] Simon Walker argued that the same was true of the Ricardian

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Canonization and Political Symbolism in Medieval England in *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 29 (Jul, 1990), pp. 241-66. p.246, 250. Also: Simon Walker, 'Political Saints in Late Medieval England' in *McFarlane*, p. 79.

[17] J. W. Mckenna, 'Popular Canonization as Political Propaganda: The Cult of Archbishop Scrope' in *Speculum*, vol. 45 (Oct, 1970), p.609.

[18] Theilmann, *Political Canonization*, p.245.

[19] Walker, *Political Saints*, p. 80.

[20] Ibid., p.81

[21] Theilmann, *Political Canonization*, p. 245.

[22] James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (London, 1990), pp. 136-42, p.144, pp. 152-4. See also: Walker, *Political Saints*, p.81.

[23] McKenna, *Popular Canonization*, p.609. See also: Josiah Cox Russell, 'The Canonization of Opposition to the King in Angevin England' in J. L. La Monte and C. H. Taylor (eds.), *Haskins Anniversary Essays in Medieval History* (Boston, 1929), p.286.

rumours targeting Henry IV.[24] Like bills, therefore, they were evidence of popular involvement in politics in late medieval England. Posthumous reputation, like the contemporaneous reputations of the living, had very real political implications. In each instance and each period, the politicisation of sainthood, and by extension reputation, acknowledged the power of the commons, and the government's interest in what they were saying. With this power acknowledged, and with the government and nobility eager to control and capitalise upon it, popular approval and condemnation became a means by which the virtue of specific causes could be expressed and maintained. Politicians sought ways in which to tap into this significant resource, and so, in addition to appealing to the commons, they tried to invoke their approval as a means of demonstrating the virtue of their actions. The reputations of the dead could aid the reputations of the living, but were themselves reliant upon the reputations these figures had cultivated during their lifetimes.

In a political climate in which the political community was expanding and growing more vocal, and in which the authorities sought to harness and regulate popular speech, noble reputation of both the living and the dead became increasingly significant as a political tool. Popular focus on individual personalities increased the significance of the individual and collective reputations of the nobility. We see examples of this in the historiography of idols of the multitude of the Wars of the Roses, in late medieval bill-casting and in the veneration of popular political saints. In each example, the power of the populace was both demonstrated and appealed to. Just as reputation could offer political advantage in these situations, however, the governmental reaction to bills, rumour and extra-parliamentary criticism underlined the dangers they perceived in the outward expression of popular opinion. Unpopularity endangered reputation and, in turn, restricted political success. Critique, or endorsement, of noble reputation offered the population a safe way to express their political opinions. As such, popularity amongst the general population was taken as evidence that individuals had successfully met these political and social standards. The increased significance of popular appeal placed particular emphasis on the promotion and maintenance of the common good, which, as we have already seen, was central to noble expectations and to the sense of service that was so crucial to noble identity.

This chapter will explore the significance of popularity and the common good to noble reputation in late medieval England, and the political ends to which this popular appeal was applied. To do so, it will begin with a general consideration of the use in contemporary

[24] Simon Walker, *Rumour, Sedition and Popular Protest in the Reign of Henry IV* (Manchester, 2006), pp. 34-40.

chronicles of ideals of the common good and popularity to the cultivation and manipulation of noble reputation. The meanings and implications of the notion of the common good relied upon fluid contemporary notions of 'the commons', the parameters of which were ill-defined, changeable, and open to interpretation. Used in some contexts to refer to the parliamentary commons, and in others to designate the wider population of the country, the term could be employed also to confer political legitimacy upon groups and movements or to associate individuals with the lower orders in an attempt to discredit them.[25] The common good, meanwhile, was upheld by high and low as the purpose of government and a source of legitimacy. John Watts argued that displays of common and popular grievance were generally accepted as a legitimate form of complaint.[26] The rebels of Cade's rebellion in 1450 turned to the common good, just as had the participants in the revolt of 1381.[27] Similarly, in his discussion of the 'common profit', Mark Ormrod argued that the term, and its partner 'the profit of king and kingdom', were used as framing devices for discussions around emerging ideals of 'good governance'. These concepts, he noted, were of great significance to political, and especially parliamentary, discussions in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries as the parliamentary commons sought to justify and establish their role within the polity.[28] The promotion of the common good was therefore both an ideal and an expectation for members of the political classes and beyond. Noble popularity resulted from being seen to conform or uphold those expected ideals inherent in their positions. The maintenance of, and service to, the common good was one such expectation. Claims to popularity could therefore be used as evidence of the achievement of that same ideal. At its core, this chapter argues for the political importance of perception and interpretation and the way in which key figures were able publically to present themselves. The interplay between projection and perception was the foundation of reputation. Popular acclaim and positive reputation were the social and political reward for being seen to be virtuous and committed to serving and ensuring the common good.

Having explored the significance of popularity and the common good to noble reputation, the chapter will then provide three specific case studies, which demonstrate the significance of reputation and popular appeal and its application in particular political circumstances. In each of the studies, lords combined performance, display and expectation in order to glean political advantage from noble reputation. The first case study will assess the role

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[25] John Watts, 'Public or Plebs: the Changing Meaning of 'the commons' 1381-1549' in Huw Pryce and John Watts (ed.), *Power and Identity in the Middle Ages: Essays in Memory of Rees Davies* (Oxford, 2007), pp.243-4, 250.
[26] Ibid., p.250.
[27] John Watts, The Pressure of the Public on Later Medieval Politics in *TFC IV*, pp. 159-80, p. 160.
[28] Mark Ormrod, '"Common Profit" and "the Profit of King and Kingdom" Parliament and the development of political language in England 1250-1450' in *Viator*, vol. 46, (2015), p. 222, 226, 251-2.

of popularity and the concept of the common good in portrayals of the Lords Appellant, before and after their deaths in 1397. The second case study will address the reputation and martyrdom of Archbishop Richard Scope. It will examine the role noble reputation played in the rebellion against Henry IV in 1405, and the wider political implications of this application in the years and decades following the archbishop's execution. The final case study addresses the conflict between Cardinal Henry Beaufort and Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester in 1426. This example will demonstrate the ways in which noblemen endeavoured to use reputation as a political resource, and to shape popular opinion to further their political goals by weaponising the ideal of the common good in order to gain the upper hand in noble versus noble confrontations.

The Common Good and Popularity

Chroniclers writing about noble reputation made regular use of the concepts of the common good and popular acclaim in praise and criticism of individual noblemen, and of the nobility as a whole. Service to the common good was given as evidence of personal virtue, and popularity as suggestive of this same goodness. Adam Usk's praise for the earl of March in his entry for 1397 was couched in the language of the common good. He described how:

> That noble knight the earl of March…came to parliament, having been summoned thither; a young man of the highest character, he had no part in the king's schemes, and was quite innocent of any complicity in his evils.[29]

Here, the chronicler established the earl's virtue and moral worth and placed him in direct opposition to the king and royal policy. Where the king had been accused of failing to uphold the common good, March, by implication had opposed those same abuses. If the earl was of the highest character and had a high regard for the common good, then the king and those around him were condemnable. Usk laboured this point. His virtuous earl was described feigning 'indifference towards the misfortunes of the people, pretending when he was with the king that he approved of what he did, whereas in fact he strongly disapproved of it'.[30] The king and those around him cared little for the troubles of the people, and, by extension, the common good, whereas March disapproved of their actions and thus, as their opposite, stood as their champion.

The St. Albans' chronicler described how at the 'Bad Parliament' the duke of Gloucester packed parliament with knights of his own persuasion, but was still 'afraid that he would be prevented from carrying out successfully the plans he had conceived by the ill will of those who

[29] *Usk*, p.39-41.
[30] Ibid., pp.40-1.

in the last parliament had stood up manfully for the rights of the commons, and he also feared that even those he had sponsored would take a common line with them'.[31] The duke's actions and motivations were juxtaposed with his more virtuous and public-minded opponents. If those whom the duke feared wished to represent the well-being of the commons and deny him his goal, then it stood that his aims were contrary to the well-being of those same commons. He was not acting in the interests of the common good because he stood in opposition to those who did. Just as Knighton placed service to king and kingdom at the heart of his assertion of the duke's virtue, Walsingham used disregard for the same, and the selfish pursuit of personal ambition, as the cornerstone of his condemnation.

Gaunt was also subjected to criticism of this kind again, in the wake of the 1381 rebellion, in his continued dispute with the earl of Northumberland. The personal strife between them threatened to escalate into widespread disorder and endangered the peace and safety of the realm.[32] Thus, in selfishly pursuing their quarrel, the duke and earl risked the greater good of the kingdom. This episode was part of a wider concern in regards to the relationship between the nobility and the greater good. Often their private concerns threatened consequences for the entire kingdom. The Westminster chronicler complained that during the parliament of 1384:

> …nothing which furthered the interests of the kingdom was done in this parliament, because the lords temporal, whose business it is to speak up for the condition and welfare of the realm, were…at this time perpetually at odds.[33]

Whilst it was the duty of the temporal lords to defend the realm and make sure it was able to prosper, once again, the personal disagreements of the lords obstructed the proper business of parliament, and the common good was ultimately neglected.

Neglect of the common good, however, did not always have to be deliberate for it to impact a reputation negatively. Noblemen who lacked talent and virtue could threaten the kingdom through their incompetence, and thus earn the condemnation of commentators. In 1380, the duke of Lancaster led an army into Scotland to try to put an end to the frequent Scottish excursions into the northern marches. The aim of the expedition therefore was the defence of the realm. 'How successful his expedition was', Walsingham scathingly remarked, 'you will be able to guess from all of his previous expeditions.'[34] The St. Albans' chronicler referred to his accounts of the duke's previous military exploits which, he consistently asserted,

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[31] *Walsingham I* pp.70-1.
[32] *Westmin*., pp.20-1.
[33] Ibid., pp.104-5.
[34] *Walsingham*, pp.394-5.

usually ended in disaster as a result of the duke's poor judgement. He was repeatedly failing in his duty to defend the realm and preserve the common good. This latest Scottish expedition of the duke took a similar course. Having 'impoverished the realm' raising funds for the expedition, 'an enormous sum of eleven thousand marks in gold' from the common people, the English army 'gained no benefit for their own country' except for the horses they had acquired from the Scots.[35] The duke's aim had been to defend the realm, and he had ultimately achieved the opposite, leaving it worse off than it had been before. The earl of Northumberland was subjected to similar criticism for failing to defend the realm. Despite the earl being paid seven thousand marks to defend the marches, the Scots had still managed to raid the area and even kill eight reputable local men. The result was that 'considerable criticism of the earl grew'.[36] Here, the chronicler used the displeasure of others are rhetoric device to underline and reinforce his own distaste. In contrast, Ralph, a younger son of the earl, was 'praised, loved and constantly talked about by everybody' because he had successfully kept the Scots at bay in the western march, and had been paid a lower sum than his father to do so.[37] Sir Ralph therefore had demonstrated his prowess and exhibited great virtue, for he had succeeded in defending the kingdom and the greater good of the realm.

Throughout the chronicles, popular support was framed as being indicative of adherence to noble ideals. Lords worthy of praise dedicated themselves to the public good. The love of the people was indicative of personal virtue, and of reputation for the same. Popularity was the result of positive reputation and positive reputation of personal virtue, particularly in regards to the promotion and defence of the common good. In a circularity of argument, lords who were beloved and had good reputations were both morally virtuous and capable. As such, evidence of popularity and common acclaim had significant implications for reputation. The influence of traditionally high-status texts, like Mirrors for Princes, beyond their primary audiences of the peerage and gentry is difficult to establish with the sources available. Like John Watts, Ulrike Graßnick laboured the point that it is difficult truly to assess the influence of the Mirrors, even amongst their primary audience, as evidence of book ownership is not necessarily evidence of readership.[38] However, we do know that the ideas and ideals preserved in the Mirrors are reflected elsewhere. They both influence, and are influenced by, the society in which they were created. Graßnick argued that 'beyond educating the social and political elite, mirrors for princes offer other social groups the theoretical background against which they could

[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid., pp.952-3
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ulrike Graßnick, 'O Prince, desire to be honourable': the deposition of Richard II and Mirrors for Princes' in J. S. Hamilton (ed.) *Fourteenth Century England IV* (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 164. See also this thesis chapter two, pp.72-3.

develop their expectations of the king's behaviour' and that these texts 'generate and mirror social norms and values'.[39] From here, Graßnick identified principles and conventions from the period's mirrors in the articles of deposition against Richard II in 1399. He also emphasised the presence of these political ideas in the language of the period.[40] This language filtered its way into other political texts, written and spoken, including bills and proclamations as discussed elsewhere in this thesis.[41] The concept of the 'common good' and the idea that a lord should use his gifts of birth to serve it is most evident here.[42] The 'common good' was perhaps the most accessible, transmissible and most easily articulated aspect of contemporary political thought, which could be taken up and used by a broad social audience. As such, it is this idea which is most easily detectable in lower-status political texts and reported speech. It is also the one most readily emphasised by chroniclers keen to stress the popular appeal of their favoured subjects; as with so much discussed here, in such circumstances the truth of these claims to popularity are of less significance than the chronicler's compulsion to claim it.

John Harding praised the exploits of Sir Robert Umfraville in Scotland in 1410. Sir Robert succeeded in capturing a large number of goods from the Scots and had them transported back to England to be distributed and sold. Harding claimed that Umfraville's generosity on this occasion earned him the nickname 'Robyn Mendmarket' amongst the people.[43] Umfraville's martial actions had thus been to the benefit of the common good. He had fought with a virtuous purpose and redistributed his spoils, rather than keep them for his private profit. The resultant moniker suggested popular support extending beyond the confines of the chronicle, and more significantly, beyond his fellow noblemen and knights. Similarly, in his praise for the Mortimer earls of March, Adam Usk recorded that when the earl of March arrived at the parliament of 1397:

> …the people welcomed him warmly and with joyful hearts; twenty thousand of them wearing parti-coloured hoods of red and white - his livery - went out to meet him on his arrival, in the hope that through him they might be delivered from this king's wickedness.[44]

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[39] Graßnick, *Richard II and Mirrors for Princes*, p. 161.
[40] Ibid, p. 165.
[41] Mark Ormrod, "Common Profit" and "The Profit of the King and Kingdom": Parliament and the Development of Political Language in England, 1250 - 1450 in Viator, vol. 46, no. 2 (2015) pp.219-252. Rodney Hilton, *Bond Men Made Free: Medieval Peasant Movements and the English Rising of 1381* (Oxford, 2003) pp.214-232. Wendy Scase, 'Strange and Wonderful Bills': Bill Casting and Political Discourse in Late Medieval England' in Rita Copeland, David Lawton and Wendy Scase (eds.), New Medieval Literatures Vol. II (Oxford, 1998), p. 225. See also this thesis: p.13, pp.149-50, p.194.
[42] See chapter two of this thesis pp.76-89 and pp.97-9.
[43] *Harding*, p.366.
[44] *Usk*, pp.40-1.

Usk thus assigned popular support to the earl, and in doing so established him as a foil to the wickedness and deviant lordship of the king and his favourites. The people loved the earl because he supported the common good. As in previous examples, Usk reiterated the earl of March's virtue by juxtaposing his good behaviour against the poor behaviour of others. Walsingham employed a similar device in his record of Henry IV's return to England as duke of Lancaster in 1399. 'There was great joy among the commons', the chronicler claimed, because they 'truly thought that God would send this man to remove the yoke of their most grievous servitude.'[45] Again, popular support amplified the good intentions of the chronicler's subject. The nobleman was loved because he served the well-being of the kingdom and sought to put the realm to rights.

The implication was that good and virtuous behaviour earned popularity, and the praise and love of the commons. At the height of their unpopularity amongst the commons of London in 1377, John of Gaunt and Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland were able to gain the favour of the city's inhabitants by behaving nobly during Richard II's coronation.

> In fact it happened that, though they had previously been feared not only by people but also by magnates…in this procession they acted so modestly, and instructed the crowds so respectfully and so courteously to make way for them, that no one in that great crowd was harmed by them…The result was that they gained the favour of almost all the common people, by whom they had previously been mistrusted and hated.[46]

Despite their previously poor behaviour, the duke and earl were able to win over the people of the city by behaving virtuously and in doing so were able to earn the affections of the Londoners.

Chroniclers presented evidence, or declared the existence, of popular esteem to eulogise members of the nobility upon their deaths, as proof of the virtuous lordship that they had practised throughout their lives. When the earl of Pembroke was killed in a tournament in 1390, 'his death caused unspeakable grief, not only among the magnates but among all the common people. He had been a generous man, friendly to everyone, humble and kind to all the young lords of that time in the kingdom.'[47] Pembroke's virtues of generosity, friendliness, kindness and modesty had facilitated the successful exercise of his lordship. Likewise, when Thomas, Duke of Clarence, the brother of Henry V, was killed in 1421, Wavrin reported how news of the duke's demise prompted displays 'of great sorrow', as Englishmen mourned the death of 'the handsome duke of Clarence'. He had been 'greatly liked among them for his great prudence and valour, and even by his enemies the French; for the kindness and humbleness that were in him

[45] *Walsingham II*, pp.140-1.
[46] *Walsingham I,* pp. 138-9.
[47] Ibid,, pp. 896-7.

constrained those who had heard it spoken of or had seen him to love him.' The duke's virtues – his prudence and valour – had earned him the respect and love of his countrymen, and even his enemies, 'and therefore throughout England and France he was greatly pitied and regretted'.[48] The mass out-pouring of grief at Clarence's death was associated with his virtue and the successful exercise of his lordship. The chronicler drew a direct connection from the duke's humility, prudence, valour and kindness to his ability to inspire love in those who had interacted with him. The description of public grief made clear Clarence's status as a very personable and virtuous lord, whose noble qualities had inspired popular support.

In the writings of chroniclers, popular acclaim was evidence of a lord's personal virtue and of his service to the common good, just as service to the common good in turn could be evidence of virtue. In the political environment of late medieval England, in which a larger proportion of the population were involving themselves in politics and in which the government and nobility were becoming increasingly aware of, and attentive to, popular attitudes, popular acclaim was *both* a confirmation of personal nobility *and* a source of political legitimacy. Service to the common good and widespread popularity therefore featured prominently in the praise and condemnation of the nobility. Refusal to serve the common good, and unpopularity, revealed personal and moral corruption. Failures of lords to live up to expectation, whether in terms of personal morality or capability, were particularly unforgiveable when they were of detriment to the public good. Likewise, praiseworthy deeds were particularly admirable when they served the good of the kingdom.

THREE CASE STUDIES

Case Study One: The Appellants and the Lancastrian Usurpation

The recent volume, *Historians on John Gower*, encouraged a new appraisal of Gower's work. Gower's texts, Stephen Rigby and Siân Echard argued, were more overt in their social and political commentary than the more veiled observations of Chaucer. Contributors to this collection demonstrated Gower's usefulness to discussions of gender, nobility and chivalry, and politics.[49] The ideas expressed in Gower's work, the contributors argued, and this thesis maintains, can be taken as reflective of broader attitudes of late medieval England, just as an

[48] *Wavrin II*, pp. 338, *Chroniques II*, p. 360.

[49] Siân Echard and Stephen H. Rigby, 'Preface: Gower in Context', David Green, 'Nobility and Chivalry', Katherine J. Lewis, 'Women and Power', Christopher Fletcher, 'Masculinity', Stephen H. Rigby, 'Political Theory', Michael Bennett, 'Gower, Richard II and Henry IV' in *HoG* via EBSCO Books [Accessed: 27/11/2020].

understanding of such attitudes is essential to an understanding of Gower's work. John Gower's description of the Lords Appellant as the swan, the horse and the bear was not unique in its deliberate attempts to shape Gloucester, Arundel and Warwick into heroic figures and victims of Richard II's corruption. Led by Gloucester between 1386 and 1388, the appellants' stated purpose had been to restore good governance to the realm of England. They were intent upon rescuing the kingdom from the hands of the king's favourites: the earls of Oxford and Suffolk, and the archbishop of York. They moved against these favourites at the so-called Merciless Parliament of 1388 and secured the exile, execution and banishment of a number of royal officers. Gloucester formed a council to 'advise' the king, restricting Richard's ability to exercise his royal powers.[50] Their triumph, however, was short lived. Richard had himself declared of age the following year and dispensed with the appellants' counsel. He never forgave them, and eight years later had them arrested and tried.

Despite their conviction for treason in 1397, which resulted in the deaths of Gloucester and Arundel and the banishment of Warwick to the Isle of Wight, the appellants were presented in most contemporary chronicles as good lords with worthy reputations. This representation was due largely to the Lancastrian usurpation of 1399. As opponents of Richard II who had claimed to champion justice and the common good, the appellants were fashioned into martyr-like figures and Henry IV positioned as their political successor. The portrayals of the appellants in this guise highlighted their devotion to service and their resulting popularity. This popularity was placed centre stage by men like Gower and the St. Albans' chronicler, and in the proceedings of parliament under Henry IV, in order to demonstrate the righteousness of their cause. The chroniclers' treatments of the appellants and the Lancastrian usurpation acknowledged the power of popular appeal and demonstrated its apparent effectiveness in assisting noble opposition to the crown. Key to this popular appeal was reputation, and Gower and the other contemporary chroniclers knew it. Capitalising upon the reputations the appellants had attempted to cultivate for themselves, writers and other political actors promoted the appellants as men of positive renown, devoted to the common good and beloved by the commons. The reputations of the appellants bestowed legitimacy during the early days of the Lancastrian crown. Reputation existed in these circumstances as a politically potent device for a nobility and king who claimed to be acting in their names.

[50] For thorough accounts of the events of the appellant crisis see: Anthony Goodman, *The Loyal Conspiracy* (London, 1971) pp. 16-54 and Anthony Tuck, *Richard II and the English Nobility* (London, 1973), pp.121-38.

The Lords Appellant have previously been studied in an array of contexts. Anthony Goodman's work, *The Loyal Conspiracy*, provided historians with a series of biographies of the main participants in the appellant movement.[51] The purpose of this book was to outline the causes and results of the appellants' appeal of treason in 1387-8 and to offer a narrative account of the political careers of the appellant lords up to 1399.[52] Ultimately, Goodman concluded with an assessment of the flaws inherent in the appellants' efforts and the longer-term historical and constitutional implications of the movement.[53] More recently, A. K. Gundy oriented her study of the career of the appellant earl of Warwick within the context of studies of local political culture in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Such studies, she argued, offered insight into national politics, by exploring the relationship between local politics, magnate power and high politics. Placing Warwick in the context of power structures within the west midlands, Gundy investigated the earl's career to understand the reign of Richard II from a local perspective, particularly in regards the king's domestic policy.[54] This study was largely a consideration of Warwick as a late medieval magnate and was less concerned with the later impact of Warwick's role as an appellant. More surprisingly, the significance of the reputations of the appellant lords was not discussed by Paul Strohm. This work analysed the relationship between contemporary texts and the political process in Lancastrian England, with specific focus on the role of symbolism in constructing and maintaining the Lancastrian kingship. A study of the appellants, as proposed in the following case study, would have fitted well, as Strohm explored the role of literary texts in Lancastrian attempts to justify the usurpation and solidify the legitimacy of Henry IV's rule.[55] In his later consideration of Henry IV's role in the 1399 deposition of Richard II, Michael Bennett recognised the broad appeal of Henry's demonstrated concern for good governance, and the significance of popular acclaim in his efforts to secure the throne.[56] Whilst Bennett acknowledged Henry IV's eagerness to associate himself with other victims of Richard II's unpopular regime, including Archbishop Arundel, he did not assign any great significance to the king's efforts to align his cause with that of the deceased appellant lords.[57] The following case study will connect the historiography of the appellants and their actions between 1387 and 1388 with that of the early days and years of the Lancastrian crown.

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[51] Goodman, *Loyal Conspiracy*, p. ix.
[52] Ibid., pp. ix-x.
[53] Ibid., pp. 166-7.
[54] A. K. Gundy, *Richard II and the Rebel Earl* (Cambridge, 2013), p. 31.
[55] Paul Strohm, *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation 1399-1422* (London, New Haven, 1998), p. xiii.
[56] Michael Bennet, 'Henry of Bolingbroke and the Revolution of 1399' in Douglas Biggs and Gwilym Dodd (eds.), *Henry IV and the Establishment of a Regime 1399-1406* (York, 2003), pp.10-12, 23, 27.
[57] Ibid.

The Appellants

The seeds of the appellant myth were planted by the appellants themselves in the 1380s. They positioned themselves as champions of justice and the common good in opposition to the king's favourites. The bishop of Ely opened the appellants' so-called Merciless Parliament by describing how the parliament sought:

> ...to determine, by the grace of God, how the great disputes, trouble, and dissensions which had arisen in the kingdom for want of good governance in the past might best be ended and calmed, the king better advised, and the kingdom better governed; good peace, quiet, and tranquillity everywhere nourished and maintained; the law better observed and executed; right and justice done as well to the poor as to the rich; extortion, oppression, fraud and false maintenance entirely ousted and destroyed; malefactors and maintainers in the land best punished and chastised; and the good and the loyal best cherished and rewarded: and to ordain also the defence and salvation of the realm.[58]

This address demonstrated the appellants' determination to be seen to address popular grievance. In so doing, they hoped to legitimise their movement by claiming, and cultivating, popular support for their efforts. They stressed their devotion to good government, to the maintenance of peace, and to the proper execution of the law for rich and poor. As explored in chapter two, these were the causes the nobility were frequently called upon to champion and maintain by the commons and by popular political movements. The appellants, Chris Given-Wilson noted, actively courted popular opinion from the start of their venture, circulating letters and proclamations, and selecting as their targets men from the king's circle who had already earned the hatred of the general populace.[59] The commons, Given-Wilson continued, both within and beyond parliament, remained very much a part of proceedings. The events of the Merciless Parliament were a very public affair, with events playing out beyond the confines of the parliament chamber in the streets of London and the suburb of Westminster.[60] Tuck observed that the support of the commons for the appellants remained steadfast throughout the Merciless Parliament, in spite of the 'blood-letting' which saw the king's favourites dispatched publically, in a manner that made many of lords so uncomfortable.[61] Given-Wilson agreed. The appellants were able to retain the support of the commons throughout the Merciless Parliament. Whilst the rather creative use of the law and legal processes against their enemies prompted misgivings amongst the lords, the commons remained resolute.[62] The appellants'

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[58] PROME Parliament of February 1388, item 1.
[59] Chris Given-Wilson, *Henry IV* (New Haven, London, 2016), pp.56-7.
[60] Ibid., p.56.
[61] Tuck, *Richard II*, p. 121.
[62] Given-Wilson, *Henry IV*, p.54.

reputations were forming as they had wished them to, and secured them both parliamentary and popular support.

It was evident that Gloucester appreciated the value of his reputation. In the wake of his actions against Richard and his court circle, he was eager to defend himself from accusations of treason and rumours he had sought to depose the king. He engineered a public performance in parliament with this in mind.

> Thomas duke of Gloucester kneeling before the king, said that he understood that our said lord the king had been informed that the said duke was about to depose our lord the king and make himself king; and he offered to state his case in this matter as the peers of parliament chose. Whereupon our said lord the king said openly in full parliament that he considered the said duke guilty of nothing, and fully excused him.[63]

This performance confirmed Gloucester's loyalty to the king and to royal service in a public setting in an attempt to fend off accusations of disloyalty or excessive ambition. In so doing, Gloucester guarded his reputation, his personal safety and his standing in law. The proceedings in the parliament of 1388 demonstrated the appellants' awareness of the importance of protecting their reputations and in ensuring their popular appeal. Maintaining this image was vital to their political success.

The popularity of the appellants in parliament began to fade within a few months of the end of the Merciless Parliament, but the reputations they had built for themselves, and the popular support they had rallied in the months before, lingered.[64] Given-Wilson wrote that tales of the duke's murder in 1397 tore 'great cracks' in Richard II's new regime within a few months of it having been established.[65] This assessment echoed the earlier conclusion of Anthony Tuck, who asserted that in spite of the appellants' losses in the later 1380s, when Richard moved against them in the 1390s, their popularity amongst the commons held firm. Gloucester was an irritation to Richard, Tuck asserted, because he was a natural focus-point for those dissatisfied or alarmed by his peace policy in regards to France. Indeed, even in death, Gloucester's popularity proved problematic for Richard. The risk of popular anger resulting from stories of the duke's murder at Calais instilled the king with a sense of caution.[66]

This popular appeal, the appellants' virtues, and their focus on the common good were taken up and elaborated by the chroniclers in the years that followed. The *Brut* does this very simply, by labelling Thomas of Woodstock 'the Gode Duke of Gloucester' and by repeatedly

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[63] *PROME*, Parliament of February 1388, item 6.
[64] Nigel Saul, *Richard II* (New Haven, London, 1997) p. 196, 199-200. Tuck, *Richard II*, p. 135. Given-Wilson, *Henry IV*, pp.58-9.
[65] Given-Wilson, *Henry IV*, p.106.
[66] Tuck, *Richard II*, p. 184, p.189.

using this moniker throughout its account. The Brut subsequently assigned a similar label to 'the Gode erle of Warwic'.[67] Other writers, meanwhile, were more specific and calculated in their praise. Gower, for example, described how the appellants 'rose in revolt, praiseworthily, with careful forethought, in order to destroy a number of traitors wickedly giving counsel around the king, for the kingdom's well-being, the honour of the king, and the praise of God'.[68] Gower, writing a year after the usurpation in 1400, illustrated the wisdom of the appellants, their devotion to the common good and their commitment to royal service. He underlined these virtues by suggesting that the appellants' actions were also godly. Later, Gower reintroduced Gloucester's role as a protector by returning to his swan metaphor. He described the duke as a swan, responding to the aggressions of the king and his favourites 'with his wings outspread' in a defensive gesture. The duke then took 'thought in haste...to tend to the kingdom's future health', a direct demonstration once again that Gloucester and the appellants stood in defence of the prosperity of the realm.[69] Walsingham applied a similar description to the appellant lords, writing 'they had met out of concern for the king's welfare and that of the realm, and in order that they might succeed in separating the king from the traitors whom he kept continually with him...to demonstrate that this charge was true, they threw down their gauntlets, and took an oath that they were willing to challenge them in a duel'.[70] In Walsingham's examples, the lords appellant were even prepared to risk their bodies and personal safety for the sake of the common good of the realm. This was a selfless act, contrary to the common accusation that errant lords were concerned only for their personal profit, and foreshadowed what became of the appellants in 1397. Such sentiments were echoed by the Westminster chronicler, who remarked that the appellants 'clearly foresaw the speedy overthrow of the kingdom of England by the traitors who haunted the king's presence'.[71] Again, the well-being of the kingdom was placed at the forefront of the appellants' thoughts and motivations, and they were positioned in direct opposition to the corrupt lords around the king.

As we have seen in the previous section, writers often sought to demonstrate the virtue and reputation of their subjects by contrasting their good, praiseworthy behaviour with the condemnable actions of their opponents. In the 1380s, the appellants had presented themselves as counterweights to the corruption of those around the king, and this too was repeated in later depictions. The appellants' opponents received unfavourable treatment at the hands of Gower. Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford, was assigned the emblem of the boar. The boar was both fraudulent and ruinous in the first part of Gower's account, churning up the kingdom as a boar

[67] *Brut*, p.351-2
[68] *Gower,* p. 249,
[69] Ibid., p. 255, line 73.
[70] *Walsingham I*, p.835.
[71] *Westmin.*, p.211.

churned the earth. He acted as an agitator at the king's bequest, stirring up the people of Chester and risking war. Unlike the appellants, who desired the proper rule of law, the king's favourite was responsible for disorder. Oxford, however, was ultimately defeated and was forced into exile.[72] Alexander Neville, Archbishop of York met a similar fate. 'York's pontiff found no help in mitre or in frankincense's smell or choir or wealth or honour's rank', and so neither the trappings of his clerical office, nor his secular wealth and honour could save him from appellant justice. He had been a thief, and 'a merchant of anxiety', an unsettling element within the kingdom, and for this and his 'past iniquity' he, too, was forced into exile.[73] Michael de la Pole, earl of Suffolk and the king's chancellor, appeared as a similarly murky figure. He was 'deceptive, greedy, full of sin' and fraudulent, having abused his governmental office. He was a back-biter who hated the true nobility and sought means to ruin them. He, too, was presented as a stark contrast to the appellants in their nobility, goodness and virtue.

The correlation between the virtues of the appellants in their devotion to the common good was particularly apparent in descriptions of their deaths. In his report of Gloucester's demise, Walsingham wrote:

> So it was that that excellent man suffered a miserable death, a man who had always toiled for the king's welfare and honour, and for the advancement of the whole kingdom up to the very time he received this treacherous recompense for his meritorious service.[74]

This description served three purposes: it acknowledged the duke's devotion to the common good of the realm, illustrated the ultimate result of his willingness to stake his life for his cause, and demonstrated the cruelty and injustice of the king. This account, in turn, established Gloucester as a martyr-like figure, a theme that became central to other contemporary and near-contemporary depictions of his and Arundel's deaths.

Gower maintained the image of Gloucester as a political martyr throughout the second section of his *Chronica*, lamenting that:

> Alas, who living now has known such a thing,
> That this a king's son should be slaughtered by a king?
> Alas, that royal stock, an English duke sublime,
> Should die by king's command, convicted of no crime!
> ...May God grant that his body find at last its rest,
> And may his soul in heaven finally be blest![75]

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[72] *Gower*, p. 255, lines 65-75.
[73] Ibid., p. 257-269, lines 97-104.
[74] *Walsingham II*, p.99.
[75] Gower, p. 277, lines 105-118, see: Stephen H. Rigby and Sian Echart, ''Preface: Gower in Context' in *HoG* via EBSCO Books [Accessed: 27/11/2020].

This passage reiterated the perversion of law that had resulted in the duke's death and outlined the other injustices perpetrated against him, even in death. His royal blood offered Gower another avenue by which to praise Gloucester, reiterating his nobility of birth as further evidence of his nobility of being, before ultimately commending this martyr to God. He accorded similar treatment to Arundel, describing the earl's death in the following terms:

> The earl then turned to Christ and spoke these words: "You know,
> O God, all things. I'll die: my foes desire it so.
> Oppressed unlawfully, condemned by enemies,
> Quite innocent I go; have mercy on me please."
> His palms stretched out, with psalms resounding mightily,
> He meets his end and suffers that same penalty.[76]

Again, Gower's description of Arundel stressed the martyr-like nature of his death and the injustice of Richard II and his favourites. Just as he had done for Gloucester, Gower stressed Arundel's role as political martyr through religious imagery. He was described reaching for God both physically and spiritually in his final moments, in one final display of lordly virtue. 'With palms and psalms', Gower connected Arundel's physical body on display to his spiritual one, stressing his nobility of being and internal goodness.

Other descriptions of the appellants' demise combined each of these approaches: the virtue of the appellants, their devotion to the common good, the king's wickedness and their martyr-like deaths, and reports of their popular acclaim. Gower praised the earl of Arundel for his 'piety and strength' in the face of persecution and claimed that his execution caused his friends to weep and 'a hundred thousand [to] curse the parliament', which suggested widespread grief for the earl's fate and implied widespread popularity.[77] This coupling was repeated for the earl of Warwick, of whom Gower declared 'the king destroyed the one the country grieved'.[78] The reaction of the populace to the fates of the appellant lords was inescapably political. In laying claim to their grief, Gower was able to suggest that the appellants' actions had earned the support of the people. This support was given as further evidence of the appellants' virtue.

The St. Albans' chronicle adopted a similar tone in its report of the earl of Arundel at his execution in 1397.

> All the people bemoaned and pitied the fate of so great a man, who not long before had been considered so famous, so rich and so noble amongst the noblest of Christian men,

[76] Ibid., p.279, lines 143-148.
[77] Ibid., p.279, line 150.
[78] Ibid., p.283, line 205 and p.285, line 218.

> that even remote nations spoke highly of his prowess, his knightly qualities and all his other personal endowments. So they watched, I say, such a man who had previously brought safety to his country by crushing and vanquishing its foes, bound like a criminal, hustled, dishonoured and forced to endure a most ignominious death. They grieved, and were deeply saddened that they were unable to snatch him from the hands of stronger men.[79]

The report began by highlighting the mass outpouring of grief the earl's execution prompted and combined this with an appraisal of his excellent reputation. Walsingham wrote of the earl's fame, wealth, nobility and Christianity, each of which implied further kinds of virtue. He focused particularly on the earl's martial prowess and the efforts he had made in defending the kingdom and ensuring its prosperity. The nobility of the earl was then contrasted with the dishonourable treatment he was forced to endure at the hands of the king.

Adam Usk also sought to shape the earl of Arundel's reputation in this direction in his description of the aftermath of the earl's demise. Once again, the earl was presented as a martyr-like figure, with the blessings of both man and God. 'Would that I might be deemed worthy to accompany his soul, for I have no doubt that he had been admitted to the fellowship of the saints!'[80] In addition, Usk simultaneously held him up as an example, and as someone to be emulated. His willingness to stand up for the populace, for virtue and for right, had earned him the love of the people, even in death: 'For although at the time his body was buried without ceremony at the house of the Augustinians in London, it is now venerated with great reverence and glory, and people continually make offerings there.'[81] The passage imagined Arundel as *both* martyr *and* saint. His modest tomb received the same honours and treatment as a true martyr-saint, further demonstrating his popularity. He was both virtuous and beloved for his upright pursuit of justice. In the Brut's interpretation of the execution, the earl's popularity was demonstrated in a different way. He was escorted to his place of execution by armed men, because the authorities were concerned that the people would try to rescue the lord they loved so dearly: 'a grete multitude of Chestirschire men yn streyngthyng of the lordez that brought this erle vnto his deth, for thai draddyn that the erle schulde haue be rescued and take fro ham'.[82] In one action, the commons showed both their regard for the earl of Arundel and their disregard for Richard II and his government. Implicit, once again, was the earl's widespread popularity and support.

The alleged popularity of the appellants and their associates is a much elaborated and repeated theme. In 1387, the traders of London were instructed by Richard II not to sell to the

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[79] *Walsingham II*, pp.91-2.
[80] *Usk*, p.31.
[81] Ibid.
[82] *Brut*, p. 354.

earl of Arundel, in a move which 'caused widespread displeasure, for the earl was one of the most heroic figures among the great men of the entire country'.[83] References to the earl's heroism invoked his martial success and the popularity this had earned him. His reputation was good, and therefore he was able to keep the friendship of the Londoners who wished to continue in their support of him. His reputation had both social and political benefits. In a broader example, the appellant lords' position as defenders of the commons and the kingdom at large was reiterated by the St. Albans' chronicler. 'When the people heard of the arrest and imprisonment of these nobles there was general dismay in the whole of the community throughout the realm, just as the kingdom was now about to be destroyed by enemy forces.'[84] This was popularity, but it was also something more. It implied reputation, generally heard and accepted by the country at large, which had resulted in public belief and talk. This reputation implied the legitimacy of the appellant cause. Walsingham reiterated this point more specifically for the duke of Gloucester, as a champion of the continuation of the war with France.

> Lord Thomas of Woodstock departed for Prussia to the dismay of many and the complaints of the common people of London…. The fact is that the common people, both urban and rural, were afraid that some new catastrophe would take place in his absence, whereas they had no such fear when he was present. Indeed the hopes and comfort of the whole county seemed to repose in him...

He later returned 'bringing great joy to the whole kingdom, both because he had escaped death, and because he had arrived back.'[85] In this account, Gloucester embodied the hopes and prosperity of the kingdom. He was the defender of the people against the corruption of the king and court, and stood as a barrier between them. His absence promised disaster because he would not be there to protect the kingdom from these threats. This spoke both to the position in which Walsingham wished to cast the duke as a champion of the people, and to the eventual danger posed by his murder. On this occasion, Gloucester returned to the joy of many, and when he would eventually fail to return, this would be to their continued sorrow and disadvantage.

Adam Usk, meanwhile, had the earl of Arundel acknowledge his own position and popularity amongst the commons. '"Where are those faithful commons?" the earl demanded of those who put him on trial in parliament:

> I know you and your crew well enough, and why you have gathered here – not to act in good faith for the faithful commons of the realm are not here. They, I know, are grieving greatly for me. But you, as I know only too well, have always been false.[86]

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[83] *Westmin.*, pp. 208-9.
[84] *Walsingham II*, pp. 72-3.
[85] *Walsingham I*, pp. 912-3.
[86] *Usk*, pp. 26-27.

In these circumstances, the earl was portrayed as personally aware of his reputation and of those he represented. Usk suggested that an attack upon the earl was an attack upon the true commons. It undermined, too, the legitimacy of those who acted against the earl in parliament and all that they represented. How did they, the so-called parliamentary commons, have any authority over the earl if they did not truly represent the will of the people? The passage bestowed upon those same commons a measure of political power and authority, actionable through the commons in parliament, and capable of expressing their political perspective through their support of members of the nobility.

Walsingham acknowledged the potential political power of the commons in his account of Richard's campaign against the duke of Gloucester. He recalled how 'the king accordingly made every effort he could to bring about the duke's death, '…aware that this could not be achieved openly because of the common people in the country, who had deep affection for the duke'.[87] In this portrayal, the affection of the commons and the united front they presented, focused on the person of the duke of Gloucester, had the power to protect the duke from the king's machinations. Walsingham continued with this theme, claiming that:

> ...prayers were said and processions held throughout all parts of the realm for these lords...when the king heard that such acts of devotion were taking place...he was afraid he would lose the opportunity to deal harshly with them.[88]

In this example, the love of the commons manifested itself in public displays and performances of support. These performances implied a power which the king had grounds to fear. Richard, in Walsingham's depiction, was concerned that should the commons unite in the support of the appellants, his position would be weakened. Depictions of the appellants as popular representatives of the common good were particularly concerning for a medieval king because a significant part of royal legitimacy stemmed from the king's representative role as the protector and promoter of the well-being of his kingdom and the people within it.[89] The appellants' appeals for popular support undermined this legitimacy, positioning them, not Richard, as the champions of the common good. Subsequent portrayals of the deceased appellants, Gloucester and Arundel, as saint-like figures also undermined the king's position as God's representative. Monarchy, contemporary thought held, had been instituted by God for the benefit of his people, but in these depictions of the appellants it was Gloucester and Arundel, not the king, who had the support of God.[90]

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[87] *Walsingham II*, pp.98-9.
[88] Ibid., pp.74-5.
[89] G. L. Harriss, 'The King and his Subjects' in Rosemary Horrox, *Fifteenth Century Attitudes: Perceptions of Society in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1994), p.13.
[90] Ibid.

The Lancastrian Usurpation

Henry IV, then earl of Derby, had first aligned himself with the appellants in 1388 in their condemnation of the king's favourites. Upon his usurpation in 1399, he sought to capitalise upon this connection and upon the appellants' reputations in order to affirm the legitimacy of the Lancastrian crown. His decision to do so suggests that at least some of the popularity of the appellants existed beyond the pages of contemporary texts. The hopes of the appellants, who had martyred themselves in the interests of the common good, for good rule and the proper maintenance of law, had finally been achieved in Henry's person. Henry was 'friend of all that's bold and fair', he 'was at his peak, outdoing others everywhere' and 'the best of all that was good'. He was praised for his style of living, and for aptitude for martial deeds: 'A model of good life, in arms to none he'd yield, A lion, he trod down the wolves on battle field.'[91] Henry therefore was virtuous and martial, noble by blood and deed, and embodied all those qualities the appellants had epitomised. That Gower combined the virtuous and the martial was a deliberate continuation of a model he had applied to the appellants. In response to their enemies' attacks upon their reputations, it was their martial achievements that Gower selected in his refutation. 'Great Gloucester you made war on France with sword and might, For honour of the king, as well befits a knight. And for the king, Earl Arundel, you did defeat and bring to heel at sea the Frenchmen's naval fleet.'[92] In this way, Gower focused on the cornerstones of the appellants' nobility and, by extension, their reputations. Like his uncle, the duke of Gloucester and the appellants, Henry was 'All England's guardian on whom their glory stood' and acted in the interests of the kingdom at large.[93] His wider popularity stood as testament to his commitment to this cause, 'For Richard knew that H[enry]. had England's loyalty', and it was this popular support that rendered Henry a threat to the king by undermining, once again, Richard's royal position as protector, defender and representative of his people.[94] Gower specifically cites Henry's reputation, and the strength with which it endowed him: 'there he stood, renowned and by the kingdom blest', Henry understood the power of reputation, since he acted 'his honour always in his mind'.[95]

Gower's account of the early days of the Lancastrian crown was based heavily on the record and process of Henry's first parliament. The appellants, particularly Gloucester and Arundel, featured prominently in the new regime's condemnation of Richard II and his government. The first charge against Richard referred to the events of 1387-8. The former king, it alleged, had conspired against those lords parliament had appointed to defend the good rule

[91] Gower, p.299 lines 75-80.
[92] Ibid., p. 291, lines 326-329
[93] Ibid., p. 301, line 99
[94] Ibid., p. 301, line 85,
[95] Ibid., p. 303, line 130.

of the kingdom. These lords had committed 'all their strength, at their own expense' and 'faithfully laboured for good government', and had occupied themselves with ensuring the general welfare of the realm'.[96] Richard, however, had conspired against the appellants, and had coerced judges to act against them. In so doing, the charge accused Richard of injustice, of corruption, abuse of authority and personal dishonesty. He had been defeated, because divine approval had been withheld and he had been prevented from continuing with his plans. This was further evidence of the king's immorality, and of the goodness of the appellants.

The contrast between the appellants' good behaviour and intentions and the king's wickedness continued throughout the accusations. When, in 1388, the king had agreed to hear the appellants' grievances in parliament and the appellants had 'retired quietly and peacefully' to their houses, the king had sent the duke of Ireland to stir up the people of Chester against the lords. This, the parliament of 1399 alleged, had disturbed the peace of the realm, resulting in homicides, imprisonments, dissensions 'and endless other evils'.[97] It had been the king, not the appellants, who had disrupted the peace, for whilst they had trusted the king's word and returned home, the king had persisted in his actions against them. Again, they appeared virtuous, and the king and his favourites worthy of rebuke. The underhandedness and injustice of King Richard was another persistent theme. Between 1388 and 1397, he had feigned friendship and forgiveness in his behaviour towards the appellants. Eventually, however, he had shown his true colours and had the appellants arrested. Gloucester was taken out of the realm to Calais where, 'without any legitimate response or process whatsoever, [he caused the duke] to be secretly suffocated, strangled and murdered, inhumanly and cruelly'.[98] It was not only the appellants towards whom the king was duplicitous.

The parliamentary records of 1399 allege that the king also sought to mislead the commons in regards to his treatments of the appellant lords. He had it proclaimed by writ throughout the kingdom that he had had them arrested on account of recent extortions and oppressions, not as a result of their rising in 1387-8. The writs also declared that the king did not intend to prosecute the associates of the appellants or members of their households. Richard then proceeded to do the opposite. The appellants were charged for the offences committed against the king in the 1380s and those connected with them materially harmed by the king. Like the examples in the chronicles, the parliament highlighted the injustices perpetrated against the appellants. They came almost to personify Richard II's greatest fault, to which Henry IV claimed to offer remedy. Having reaffirmed and publically established the

[96] *PROME,* Parliament of October 1399, item 18.
[97] Ibid., item 20.
[98] Ibid., item 21.

appellants in their roles as champions of the common good, and as political martyrs of a corrupt regime, the new Lancastrian government repealed the actions of the parliament of 1397. This repealed the act disinheriting the lords and their heirs and declared the parliament invalid, save for those things passed which were 'advantageous for the good and common profit of the realm'. Henry IV was able to bolster his own credentials as a champion of the common good whilst delivering justice for the appellants and their heirs, restoring them to their property and good names. They also confirmed the actions of the appellant parliament of 1388 which, they claimed, had been held 'for the great honour and common advantage of the whole realm'. There was a connection between the intentions of Henry IV and the political aims of the appellants. Henry sought to capitalise upon their reputations, and their popularity, in order to bolster and legitimise his own position. To do so, he endeavoured to solidify publically an interpretation of the appellants' actions and reputations that had captured widespread support and, as such, were of the greatest benefit to him.

The Lancastrian chronicles followed suit. Many of their descriptions of Henry when he arrived back in England in 1399 echoed those applied to the appellants in the 1380s and 1390s. Like them, Henry was a victim of Richard II's poor government and injustice, having been deprived of his rightful inheritance and banished from the realm.[99] Also, like the appellants, Henry was presented as a champion of the common good. The St. Albans' chronicler recalled that 'when talk of this was heard throughout the whole realm, that the duke of Lancaster was sailing in the channel, ready to return home, there was great joy among the commons, who truly thought that God would send this man to remove the yoke of their most grievous servitude'. Here, the chronicler emphasised the duke's good reputation and his popularity amongst the commons. This latter was justified by his association with the common good. The latter consideration was repeated in Henry's first parliament, when. in claiming the throne. he said, in English, that he had recovered the kingdom as it 'was in poynt to be undone for defaut of governance and undoyng of the gode lawes,' echoing the sentiments expressed by his uncle Gloucester and his fellow appellants in 1387.[100]

The appellants portrayed themselves as champions of the common good in order to cultivate popular support and appeal to a popular sense of grievance. Again, this undermined the king's position as the representative and protector of the people. The Appellants thus aligned themselves with the causes of good governance, peace and prosperity, and the proper maintenance of law and justice. In doing so, they presented themselves as personally virtuous,

[99] *Walsingham II*, pp. 144-5. '...even the duke of York himself declared publically that the duke had been wrongfully disinherited...'
[100] *PROME*, Parliament of October 1399, item 53.

successfully conforming to noble expectation. The appellants *also* demonstrated that they were aware of the significance of their reputations, and understood that these were crucial to their political success. They framed their cause in terms of their conformity to noble virtue and commitment to royal service, and each of these traits were noted, and embellished, by the chroniclers and poets who recorded their deeds. Writers stressed the appellants' virtue, their commitment to the common good, their popularity amongst the populace, and their desire to serve both king and kingdom through their actions. This language facilitated later portrayals of the appellants as political martyrs, who had been beloved by the people and who had literally staked their bodies in order to secure the well-being of the realm. Political martyrdom, as we have seen, was another way in which political figures attempted to harness popular feeling. This the appellants did. The love of the populace, popular acclaim, and a popular desire to rescue Gloucester and Arundel from their executioners, were all given as further evidence of their virtue and commitment to the common good in the wake of their deaths. This interpretation of the appellants was politically powerful, and culminated in an image which could be used for political purposes by those in search of political legitimacy and popular support of their own. Whilst both the appellants and Henry IV shaped their reputations and their political language in line with contemporary ideals of nobility, monarchy and the common good, there was undoubtedly a concerted effort on the latter's part to connect his reputation with those of the appellant lords. Henry, popular in his own right in 1399, placed Richard II's treatment of the appellants front and centre of his first parliament. The new king took this opportunity publically to connect himself and his intentions with the political aims of Gloucester, Arundel and Warwick over a decade earlier. By officially recognising and promoting the interpretation of the appellants as virtuous champions of the common good, and as political martyrs who had been the victims of Richard II's injustice, Henry IV sought to strengthen his own political position. They offered a source of legitimisation to a new regime; if the populace had approved of the appellants' actions, then they should surely approve of Henry IV's kingship. By absorbing the appellant cause in 1399, Henry reclaimed those markers of kingship they had usurped as the protectors of the commons, and men favoured by God. As such, noble reputation, popularity and the promotion of the common good were therefore central to early attempts to establish the Lancastrian crown.

Case Study Two: The Martyrdom of Archbishop Scrope

Richard Scrope, Archbishop of York was the son of Baron Stephen Scrope of Masham. After a successful, but largely unremarkable clerical career, he was appointed to his archbishopric by Richard II in 1398. In 1405, he became embroiled in the political unrest generated by the rebellion of Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, and led a group of rebels out onto Shipton

Moor. Scrope was eventually detained by royal officers, hurriedly tried upon the orders of Henry IV, and executed for treason in 'one of the most difficult political events to interpret during the reign of Henry IV'.[101] Yet Scrope's afterlife was in many ways more remarkable than his life. He attracted veneration as a popular saint, and a cult was established around his tomb in York Minster, much to the chagrin of the budding Lancastrian regime. Scrope became a figurehead for criticism of Henry IV and the Lancastrian usurpation, and in the later fifteenth century became a significant component in the Yorkists' quest for legitimacy as they sought to undermine the claims of their predecessors and enhance their own.[102] At the heart of Scrope's rebellion, and his posthumous treatment at the hands of chroniclers, hagiographers and political figures, were the twin themes of the common good and popularity. And each of these qualities rested, inescapably, upon the archbishop's reputation. Chronicle and hagiographical accounts produced after the rebellion sought to manipulate perceptions of Scrope and his reputation in order to prove him deserving of the same popular support that seemed set to elevate him to sainthood in the wake of his execution by Henry IV. This section will argue that the archbishop's popularity and his devotion to the common good were key to portrayals of Scrope and his rebellion *and* that both were in fact central to the political potency of his reputation in 1405 and the years following his death.

In Peter McNiven's view, before the rising of 1405, Archbishop Scrope constituted 'an obscure and colourless figure' who had led a 'generally uneventful career' as a churchman and scholar, of few strong political opinions.[103] He had been, until his rebellion, 'a politically neutral archbishop'.[104] The contemporary perception of Scrope was of 'a man who was the very antithesis of the ambitious worldly prelate'.[105] Goldberg agreed. Before the events of 1405, he characterised Scrope in the following terms: 'a conscientious, devout, but apparently loyal ecclesiastic not previously noted for either his charisma or his interest in politics'. [106] Whilst McNiven allowed that the tone of Scrope's manifesto suggested he was a man in touch with 'the social, political and economic issues of the time', his method of addressing these issues was 'not in keeping either with the popular image of his character or with the alleged aims and principles of the movement' with which he had supposedly aligned himself.[107]

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[101] Douglas Biggs, 'Archbishop Scrope's Manifesto of 1405: 'Naive Nonsense' or Reflections of Political Reality'' in *Journal of Medieval History*, vol. 33 (2007), p.358.
[102] McKenna, *Popular Canonisation, p.618-22.*
[103] Peter McNiven, 'The Betrayal of Archbishop Scrope' in *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. 54 (1971), p. 177.
[104] Ibid., p. 181.
[105] Ibid., p. 192
[106] P. J. P. Goldberg, 'Introduction' in Goldberg, P. J. P. (ed.) *Richard Scrope: Archbishop, Rebel, Martyr* (Donnington, 2007), p. 1.
[107] McNiven, *The Betrayal*, p. 185

Whilst the motivations underpinning Scrope's endeavours in 1405 have been explored by a number of historians, such motivations are of less important to this present study. The sources largely agree with McNiven's interpretations of Scrope. When he appears in the chronicles before 1405 he does so in an utterly uncontroversial manner, with very few obvious signs of political or personal charisma. Scrope's reputation before 1405 was good, in the sense that it had never been damaged to any degree notable enough to make it into the chronicles. He performed the duties of a bishop admirably, with perhaps a greater than usual degree of dedication for a man in his position and of his noble birth. He therefore maintained a respectable reputation, little damaged and little celebrated. It was the 1405 revolt alone that transformed Scrope's reputation into something remarkable.[108] It was the positive, yet unremarkable nature of Scrope's reputation, which made him such a perfect candidate for both his role in the rebellion, and his subsequent treatment at the hands of the chroniclers and hagiographers. Before 1405, Scrope had not cultivated a particularly distinct public or political persona. The cleric who led men out onto Shipton Moor was a good man and a good archbishop, and this made him well-suited to the role he claimed in 1405 and those assigned to him later.

Contemporary commentators emphasised the connection between Scrope's reputation for goodness and the popular support he was able to rally in 1405. The St. Albans' chronicler noted that Archbishop Scrope had succeeded in calling so many to his cause as a result of his well-known personal virtue, writing that 'of particular importance also in stirring the people was the well-known Godliness of the archbishop, as well as the pre-eminent dignity of the man and the gentleness and purity of his character'.[109] Scrope's popularity, earned via his virtue, and his ability to conform to the traits expected of an archbishop, were central to his categorisation as both a political martyr and a popular saint. The archbishop and his supporters actively sought to inspire popular support for their movement in 1405, and did so by stressing the archbishop's virtue, and particularly his commitment to the common good. This association, too, was crucial to later depictions of Scrope and was the basis of his posthumous reputation, and the ways in which it was employed throughout the fifteenth century.

Common Good and the Manifesto of 1405

The origins of the reputation created for Scrope after his death were rooted in the contemporary manifesto produced in 1405, the contents of which have been subjected to a range of interpretations by historians, who as a result have portrayed Scrope as everything from

[108] P. J. P. Goldberg, 'St. Richard Scrope, the Devout Window and the Feast of Corpus Christi: Exploring Emotions, Gender and Governance in Early Fifteenth-Century York' in S. Broomhall (ed.) *Authority, Gender and Emotions in Late Medieval and Early Modern England. Genders and Sexuality in History* (London, 2015), pp. 66-83, p. 68.
[109] *Walsingham II*, pp.440-3.

saint, to unfortunate political puppet, to informed and articulate reformer.[110] The articles were composed in English and were 'published in the highways and byways of the city of York, and publically fastened to the doors of monasteries, so that any person who wished could ascertain the nature of his case'.[111] By publically displaying a manifesto in the vernacular, it was clear that Scrope, or his supporters, sought public support and were prepared to use the archbishop's name, and his reputation, to cultivate it.

The extent of Scrope's personal involvement in the production of the manifesto is a matter of historical debate. Mark Ormrod asserted that the existence and reproduction of the manifesto was a significant component of the revolt, as it demonstrated 'Scrope's self-conscious and systematic publicising of the reasons for his revolt against Henry IV'. Ormrod assumed Scrope's personal and active involvement in the manifesto's production.[112] This argument ran counter to Peter McNiven's earlier view that Scrope was a puppet of Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, and that the contents of the manifesto had been composed to this effect.[113] Ormrod conceded that, whilst the writing of the manifesto in English could suggest it was composed by Scrope's supporters, rather than at the behest of the bishop himself, the fact that the chronicler Thomas Walsingham translated the manifesto into Latin from the vernacular signalled Walsingham's acceptance of Scrope's direct involvement. Walsingham's translation 'legitimise[d] the archbishop's own articulation of his legitimist political agenda' by rendering the contents of the manifesto in the language that would 'authenticate them as the voice of the clerical elite to which both he [Walsingham] and Scrope of course belonged'.[114] As such, the archbishop, like the appellants before him, made a conscious decision to appeal for popular support, and did so via the contents of the manifesto.

Also like the appellants, Scrope's manifesto emphasised his commitment to the common good and set him in opposition to a corrupt and ineffective royal regime that had disregarded it. Like its manner of display and the language in which it was composed, the contents of the manifesto were designed to appeal to as broad an audience as possible. They did so by invoking the concept of the common good. The manifesto asserted that the kingdom had fallen victim to injustice and that the law was not being properly administered and maintained. It called for the

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[110] Douglas Biggs provides an overview of the changing interpretations of Scrope's manifesto and adds his own analysis in: Biggs, *Archbishop Scrope's Manifesto*, pp. 358-9. A similar view is expressed by Simon Walker in: Simon Walker, 'The Yorkshire Risings of 1405: Texts and Contexts' in Gwilym Dodd and Douglas Biggs (eds.), *Henry IV and the Establishment of the Regime 1399-1406* (Woodbridge, 2003), pp.161-84, pp.162-3.
[111] *Walsingham II*, pp. 442-3.
[112] Mark Ormrod, 'An Archbishop in Revolt: Richard Scrope and the Yorkshire Rising of 1405' in Goldberg *Richard Scrope,* pp.32-3.
[113] Ibid., p.30. See also McNiven, *The Betrayal*, pp. 175-6.
[114] Ormrod, *An Archbishop in Revolt*, p.35.

situation to be resolved, so that disorder and dissent did not spread through the kingdom, placing it in further peril. Additionally, it argued, the 'bad governance in the kingdom' should be 'corrected in accordance with truth and justice'.[115] There were further grievances. The lords were denied their proper inheritances, being 'very likely to suffer to the prejudice of both their own persons and their inheritances, contrary to their station enjoyed by right of birth and the laws employed and made on behalf of their predecessors'.[116] The lords, church and commons all suffered equally under harsh taxation, 'which rule[d] the lives of nobles, merchants, and the commons of the realm, bringing ultimate impoverishment and ruin upon those who would be found to be true supporters of all the estates'.[117] Continuing in this vein, the manifesto also criticised king and government for not properly defending the realm and its subjects, particularly its merchants, from the attacks of their enemies. This neglect was also the result of poor governance, and had triggered the Glyndwr rebellion in Wales.[118] Additionally, the manifesto alleged that the king and his government had failed to prevent those in their service from 'squandering funds' allowing them to use the wealth of the realm for personal gain, instead of the common profit.[119] As a result, the loyalty of those commons who would otherwise have rested dutifully with the king had begun to waver, placing the peace of the realm in jeopardy. The church, too, suffered. The manifesto highlighted 'insupportable burdens which affect all grades of the clergy', and asserted that the archbishop's actions were intended to preserve 'the preservation and liberty of holy Church which had previously been ordered and succoured so as to give pleasure to the Lord'.[120] As such, the manifesto presented Scrope as a champion of the lords, the church and the commons. He acted in the interests of the entire realm.

The assertions made in the manifesto were problematic for Henry IV because, in aligning himself with the common good against the king, Scrope placed Henry on the wrong side of popular opinion. The archbishop could claim to have the support of the realm as a champion of the common good, whereas the king was its enemy. This was a similar technique to the one employed by the appellants decades earlier. The accusations were particularly problematic for the first Lancastrian king, because they undermined those aspects of Henry IV's reputation, and the promises that he had sworn upon taking the crown, in 1399. He had deposed Richard II because his predecessor had neglected the proper rule of law, had sought to deprive the nobility of their proper inheritances – a crime Henry himself has suffered in the wake of his father's

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[115] Manifesto provided translated from original English into Latin in *Walsingham II*, pp. 442-5. Quotation: pp.442-3.
[116] *Walsingham II*, pp.442-3.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Given-Wilson, *Henry IV*, pp.218-25
[119] *Walsingham II*, pp.442-3.
[120] Ibid.

death – and had allowed his favourites to use the wealth of the realm to their own personal advantage. Upon his accession, Henry built his claim to the crown on his ability to remedy such abuses, to ensure the crown lived within its means, and to rule well and reasonably over the estates of the realm. Henry's reputation as earl of Derby had also largely relied on his martial and crusading achievements, so, by suggesting that he had failed to maintain the proper defence of the realm and its merchants from attacks by foreign threats, this aspect of his personal, aristocratic identity was undermined.[121]

The manifesto also pointedly drew comparisons between the present Lancastrian regime and those of its predecessors: that of Edward III, already invoked as a paragon of English kingship, and perhaps more potently, that of Richard II. The articles claimed that 'those who are now rebelling in Wales...will heartily rejoice and be glad to live under the governance of the king of England, just as they lived in the times of Edward and Richard, without rebelling or putting up any resistance to it'.[122] Henry's reign, therefore, not only fell short of the standards of Edward III, but of the king he had overthrown. Again, this language served to undermine Henry's position and his claim to the throne, founded as it was on his ability to remedy the abuses alleged against Richard II as articulated by the lords appellant. The contents of the Scrope manifesto, therefore, undermined Henry's personal and political reputations, whilst framing this criticism in such a way as to enhance Scrope's. Popularity and the support of the commons had helped Henry to claim his crown when he had promised to serve the common good. By criticising the king's commitment to his promises in this regard, Scrope's manifesto seized the initiative, laying claim to popular support and the political legitimacy it implied. It was, essentially, a battle of reputations.

Scrope's Virtue and the Common Good

The tone established in Scrope's manifesto was carried over into contemporary and later reports of the archbishop, his rising and his ultimate execution. Chroniclers and hagiographers were able to pick up the seeds of Scrope's virtue, as established during the course of his life, and popular appeal, as exhibited in the manifesto, and nurture them to fulfil their prespective purposes. The goodness of Scrope was vital to the maintenance of his position as a point of political criticism directed towards the Lancastrian regime, and to the justification of his elevation to sainthood. The anonymous author of *An Account of the Proceedings against Archbishop Scrope* described how the archbishop gave mass to those gathered with him on Shipton Moor, fulfilling his spiritual role and exhibiting his clerical identity.[123] Later in this

[121] Given-Wilson, *Henry IV*, pp. 63-76. See particularly: pp. 70-76.
[122] *Walsingham II*, pp.444-5.
[123] 'An Account of the Proceedings against Archbishop Scrope' in *Historians of York*. p.288. Translations provided for this text are my own.

account, Scrope was labelled '*pater pacis*' or 'the father of peace'.[124] The role of peace-keeper was regularly applied to Scrope in accounts of the events of 1405. This was part of a wider attempt to demonstrate Scrope's innate virtue, underpinning the later calls to declare him a saint, and demonstrated his fulfilment of his episcopal office and expectations of noble behaviour. Monk Clement Maidstone, the author of *The Martyrdom of Archbishop Richard Scrope,* began his account of events by highlighting the bishop's learning, noting Scrope's possession of the degree of Bachelor of Arts from the University of Oxford, his doctorate in both laws from the University of Cambridge and his time as bishop of Lichfield.[125] Similarly, an anonymous historical poem, recounting the bishop's demise in 1405, characterised Scrope as 'The bysshop Scrope that was so wyse'.[126] Like his fulfilment of the role of peacemaker, Scrope's wisdom and learning was a significant component of his episcopal reputation and as such was further evidence of his virtue. It was also, as we demonstrated in the previous chapter, central to his episcopal reputation and identity. In this vein, the author of *The Martyrdom* also made particular note of Scrope's service at the curia in Rome where, he writes, Scrope had acted as '*advocatus pauperum*'.[127] Scrope's wisdom, his social status, his dedication to good causes and his support for the poor were all singled out for praise.

Descriptions of Scrope's virtues largely stressed his overall commitment to the common good, rather than other, more exclusively clerical or saintly virtues. The latter, and Scrope's clerical position, were undoubtedly significant components of his living and posthumous reputations, but in relation to the political ends to which these reputations were put, their relationship to his ability to serve the greater good of the kingdom were paramount. The archbishop's commitment to his clerical office was also to the benefit of the common good; he was a shepherd tending to the well-being of his flock. Whilst all accounts of Scrope's martyrdom emphasised his innocent, Christ-like death, even Scrope's religious commitments were frequently framed in relation to his devotion to the common good.[128] Additionally, as a martyr, Scrope's chastity and virginity received particular attention in hagiographical accounts as evidence of his holiness and suitability for sainthood.[129] In the analysis in chapter four, piety and wisdom both feature as significant elements of the reputations of the clerical nobility, but allusions to clerical virginity, or lack thereof, are far less common and less obviously expressed. The reputation of a saint moved further away from the practical allowances that were inevitably

[124] Ibid., p. 289 and p.290.
[125] *'Martyrium Ricardi Archiepiscopi'* in *Historians of York,* p. 306
[126] 'The Death of Archbishop Scrope' in *HP*, p.90.
[127] *Martyrium Ricardi Archiepiscopi*, p. 306.
[128] Dinana Piroyansky, *Martyrs in the Making: Political Martyrdom in Late Medieval England* (London, 2008), pp. 49-51, Goldberg, *Richard Scrope*, p.68.
[129] Piroyansky, *Martyrs in the Making*, p. 60, Pat Cullum, 'Virginitas' and 'virilitas' in the life and cult of Richard Scrope' in Goldberg, *Richard Scrope*, pp. 86-99. pp. 91-8.

made for living, breathing men still actively moving through the world. A bishop's celibacy, however, whilst part of his identity and clerical position, was of less significance to his ability to perform his function and contribute to the common good than his education, his oratorical skill or his political know-how. For a political bishop in the mould of Cardinal Beaufort or Archbishop Arundel, their other competencies overshadowed the significance of celibacy to their personal reputations and identities. The ideal still existed, but the ability to embody that ideal as both and man and priest became more significant at the moment sainthood became a possibility. It was another way of evidencing a person's holiness and their superiority over the ordinary and the worldly. In this sense, Scrope's celibacy remained an important aspect of his virtuous posthumous reputation, and was evidence of the goodness that had earned the love of the people, but it was a secondary concern to his other, more secular contributions to the well-being of the realm.

Scrope's goodness was the basis of the dichotomy between the archbishop and his enemies. This contrast echoed the way in which the appellants were presented, juxtaposed against the king's circle. Where the archbishop was virtuous, righteous and efficient in fulfilling clerical and noble expectation, his opponents were the reverse. If they opposed Scrope in his efforts to aid the common good, then they were failing in their function. They were untrustworthy, ignoble and failed in their duty to the common good. The casting of the archbishop as the sympathetic party in subsequent narratives enhanced the archbishop's reputation still further and maintained his broad popular appeal. For example, John of Lancaster, the king's son, and Lord FitzHugh, who, the king had sent to quell Scrope's rebellion, were shown to be duplicitous and underhand. As the king's representatives, they pretended to have some sympathy for the archbishop's demands at Shipton Moor, and in so doing deceived Scrope into treating with them for peace. They convinced him to meet with them to discuss his cause. Once in their presence, however, Lancaster and FitzHugh demonstrated that they had never had any intention of dealing with Scrope in the way they had promised. They declared the archbishop a traitor and arrested him alongside the earl of Nottingham. Once the archbishop was in their custody, they told his followers that all was resolved and urged them to return to their homes.[130] This deceptive speech was a notable contrast to the bishop's open, public declarations as to his purpose; it categorised Lancaster and FitzHugh as wicked, deceptive conspirators, in contrast to the archbishop's trusting, open goodness. Scrope also embodied the ideals of masculinity; open and honest, not furtive and thief-like.[131] However, John of Lancaster and Lord FitzHugh, and, by extension, the king they represented, were corrupt and dishonest,

[130] *Walsingham II*, pp. 446-9.
[131] Derek Neal, *The Masculine Self in Late Medieval England* (London, 2008), pp.13-56, particularly pp.40-2.

neither masculine nor noble. They were as worthy of common condemnation as Scrope was of their support. Scrope's betrayal was key to the archbishop's posthumous reputation.

Scrope's goodness and commitment to the common good extended beyond his death. The miracles assigned to the archbishop after his execution reflected not only his alleged saintliness but also the sentiments cited in the York manifesto. In the first miracle, described in the St. Albans' chronicle and *The Martyrdom*, the crops in the field where the archbishop had been executed, and which had been trampled to the earth by the king's men, re-grew.[132] This rebirth was not only miraculous, but symbolic of Scrope's wider criticisms of the king. Where those serving Henry IV in their execution of the bishop had cared little for the welfare of the people who had grown the crops, Scrope had been mindful, and in death he had seen this injustice put to rights. The miracle was a reflection of what, according to the manifesto and to the chroniclers, he had intended in life. It was both to the benefit of Scrope's memory, and a further criticism of royal government. This divine condemnation of Henry was confirmed when he was allegedly afflicted with leprosy.[133] The affliction served two purposes: it was physical evidence that Henry was in the wrong, and further evidence that Scrope's cause had been divinely sanctioned.

Popular Support

As we have seen, Scrope's virtue and good reputation, and his commitment to the common good, were frequently given as evidence of, and as the reason for, his popularity amongst the commons. The St. Albans' chronicler described how, 'in addition to the general populace of the country, almost all the citizens of York who were able to carry arms ran with enthusiasm to join him.'[134] The exact make-up of the group on Shipton Moor is a matter of debate. Sources beyond the chronicles, including royal pardons, pardon rolls and the chancery rolls, suggest that Scrope's support consisted of a range of different kinds of people, from townspeople to villagers, and, most notably, a large number of clergymen. Christian Liddy questioned the accuracy of the impression provided by the chroniclers in regards to the extent and nature of the support the archbishop was able to rally within the city.[135] It is difficult to identify the extent of the involvement of citizens of the city. A handful of individual applications for pardon survive, but the king's pardon, which was not issued specifically to citizens of York, but was applied to all of the king's subjects living temporarily or permanently within York and its associated villages, superseded the need for these. The king also specifically extended the pardon to both the clergy

[132] *Walsingham II*, pp.452-5. *Martyrium Ricardi Archiepiscopi*, p. 308.
[133] *Martyrium Ricardi Archiepiscopi*, p.308.
[134] *Walsingham II*, pp.44-5.
[135] Christian Liddy, 'William Frost, the City of York and Scrope's Rebellion of 1405' in Goldberg, *Richard Scrope,* pp. 70-71, 84.

and the laity, suggesting that the former played a significant role in the rising.[136] Simon Walker noted that a large proportion of those suing for pardons later in the year were members of the clergy attached to Scrope's household or to York Minster.[137] Liddy agreed, concluding that the surviving evidence suggested that the archbishop's supporters included more members of the city's clergy than its laity. This evidence would suggest that it was a varied group who followed the archbishop onto the moor, and it seems to have been interpreted as such by the authorities.

Official accounts portrayed Scrope as a figure capable of rousing the general populace and creating unrest within the city. For the chroniclers, Scrope's popularity within the city could be used as evidence of his commitment to the common good, and of his virtuous reputation. Meanwhile, Liddy pointed to Paul Strohm's theory that the Lancastrian government frequently sought to exaggerate the seriousness of individual threats to royal authority in order to justify its robust responses.[138] If the chronicles exaggerated the extent of lay involvement in line with the policy of royal government in this period as outlined in Strohm, this would imply that Henry IV and his regime actively contributed to later portrayals of the rebellion as a popular movement, fronted by a popular and beloved cleric. As such, just as the king miscalculated in his decision to execute Scrope, he also made a grave error in framing the rebellion in the way that Strohm suggested. In justifying his actions, the king helped to position Scrope as a popular hero. The chroniclers, meanwhile, were left to imply that it was Scrope's reputation, combined with his previous good standing, which rallied the popular support the archbishop was able to lead onto Shipton Moor for his eventual confrontation with the king's men. In short, the ability to use reputation to rally popular support, by claiming to speak on behalf of the common good, remained key to each aspect of the Scrope affair. That the Lancastrian government felt compelled to restrict access to archbishop's tomb as a result of the large number of offerings being left there is inescapably suggestive of popular appeal. Scrope's ability to inspire support, even in death, remained a problem for the king, and this, combined with the archbishop's virtue, threatened to make him a saint. The transformation from clergyman to saint only threatened to enhance the bishop's popularity still further.

The ability of Scrope, and his reputation, to rally popular support was significant to the different ways in which the Lancastrian government, and modern historians, interpreted the events of 1405. It was McFarlane's view that Archbishop Scrope was drawn into the earl of Northumberland's rebellion in order to act as the main rallying point for popular support, and

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[136] Liddy, *Scrope's Rebellion*, pp.72-3.
[137] Ibid., pp.71-2. Walker, *Yorkshire Risings*, pp.175-7.
[138] Liddy, *Scrope's Rebellion*, pp. 84-5. Paul Strohm, *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation, 1399-1422* (New Haven, London, 1998) ch. 2-3. See particularly pp.64-5.

that the York manifesto was calculated to appeal to this popular element.[139] Likewise, Peter McNiven suggested that Northumberland made use of the archbishop in a similar way, asserting that Scrope lent the northern rebellion 'an air of religious legitimacy'. [140] These interpretations suggest two things: firstly, that Scrope's reputation was considered good enough, by virtue of his office, his steady performance of his episcopal duty, his family connections and his apparent tendency to offer little offence, to enable a successful appeal for popular support; and secondly, that Scrope's clerical position meant that his reputation and involvement were capable of bestowing legitimacy upon any cause to which he applied himself.

We should also note that Northumberland was able to recognise Scrope's reputation, and the power it could hold. Attaching the archbishop to his cause, he was able to take political advantage of Scrope's reputation and the good will it could inspire. For Simon Walker, Scrope's Yorkshire rising was largely unaffiliated with Northumberland's, and the archbishop's reputation played a different role.[141] In these circumstances, Henry IV's government took advantage of Scrope's reputation by suggesting that there existed a greater connection between Northumberland's rebellion and Scrope's protest in an attempt to discredit the archbishop. Walker suggested that it was easier for the Lancastrian crown to combat and marginalise Northumberland's movement, 'couched in self-interested loyalty to an absent and unpopular predecessor', than it was for it to contest Scrope's rather more informed criticisms of Henry IV's government.[142] In either case, whether Scrope and Northumberland were in cahoots or not, the archbishop's reputation was significant to the outcome and subsequent interpretations of the rising. If Northumberland did indeed court the archbishop in order to use him to rally popular support, this suggests an acknowledgement on the earl's behalf that he was unable to rally the same support by virtue of his own reputation, damaged as it inevitably was by his previous rebellion which had culminated in the Battle of Shrewsbury.[143] Likewise, in the situation as interpreted by Walker, the crown was able to marshal against Archbishop Scrope the earl's established reputation as a somewhat unsympathetic traitor, who cared more for personal advantage than the common good, by association. To undermine Scrope's reputation and popularity, the authorities tried to weaken the archbishop's connection with the the common good. This 'official' interpretation, as propagated in the record and process of the parliament of

[139] Biggs, *Scrope's Manifesto*, p. 359.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Walker, *Yorkshire Risings*, pp.162-3.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Given-Wilson, *Henry IV*, pp.220-7.

1405, struggled to gain traction. Rather, the popular interpretation of Scrope and his reputation continued unperturbed by royal attempts to damage it.[144]

Case Study Three: The Bishop and the Duke

Noble reputation was important beyond the cultivation of popular appeal and the promotion of the idea of the common good in support of, and opposition to, the crown. Public attacks upon noble reputation were often a feature of noble-on-noble disputes, in which parties grappled with one another in an attempt to gain the upper hand. Reputation was at the heart of the dispute between Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester and his nephew Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester between 1424 and 1425.[145] The disagreement descended into a series of calculated assaults perpetrated against Beaufort by his increasingly hostile nephew. Like the example of the Lords Appellant and Scrope's rebellion, the conflict between Beaufort and Gloucester touched upon the reputations of the participants, and demonstrated the political use of reputation by members of the nobility in their attempts to rally wider political support in the pursuit of more personal ends. Personal popularity, and unpopularity, played an important role in this conflict, and concern for the common good became a bone of contention between the bishop and the duke. This case study will argue that the common good, popularity and reputation were central themes of the conflict between Gloucester and Beaufort, and were also crucial to the eventual solution engineered by the duke of Bedford and the king's council.

In his biography of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, K.H. Vickers framed the conflict between the duke and bishop as a personal dispute, initiated by Beaufort, which had long-term constitutional implications.[146] The incident, he argued, was the beginning of the troubles created by Henry VI's prolonged and chronic inaction and paved the way for the Wars of the Roses, which followed later in the century. [147] Vickers did, however, touch upon some of themes to be discussed in what follows, noting that Gloucester 'saw the whole matter as a personal question' or, as this section will argue, as a matter relating to his personal reputation.[148] Vickers also wrote that Beaufort 'knew how to use the language of the new constitutional theories which had developed under the two preceding Lancastrian kings' in relation to the bishop's repeated emphasis on the peace and prosperity of the realm.[149] Yet Vickers often dismissed the greater significance of these points. He remarked, for example, that whilst Beaufort and Gloucester levelled pointed accusations at one another 'this was only a diplomatic move...to blacken the

[144] PROME, Parliament of March 1406, part 2, items 5-6, 14.
[145] *Beaufort*, pp.134-49, 214-28.
[146] K. H. Vickers, *Humphrey Duke of Gloucester* (London, 1907), p. 181.
[147] *Ibid.,* p.173, p.185.
[148] Ibid. p. 181.
[149] Ibid.

other's character'.[150] That the argument here is that this 'diplomatic move' was far from insignificant; it was an important part of the political culture revolving around noble reputation in late medieval England.

For G.L. Harriss, the quarrel between the duke and bishop was indicative of wider tensions in Lancastrian foreign and economic policy. In his biography of Cardinal Beaufort, Harriss dedicated a chapter to the dispute of 1425-6, which centred on Beaufort's loans to the crown and struggles for control over the young king's council.[151] His principal interest was in the nature and conduct of Lancastrian government. Later, Lucy Rhymer's 2008 analysis of the conflict between Gloucester and Beaufort focused on the duke's relationship with London, and the role this played in the events of 1425-6.[152] Whilst Rhymer did question Gloucester's apparent popularity amongst the Londoners, she framed her discussion in terms of the exercise of good lordship, rather than the importance of reputation.[153]

The origins of the dispute between Beaufort and Gloucester were complex. They were entwined in the duke of Bedford's efforts to maintain Lancastrian France in the name of the young Henry VI, and Gloucester's determination to secure the inheritance of his wife, Jacqueline of Hainault. It also had roots in the ongoing trade relationships between English merchants and the Low Countries, all of which were embroiled in Bedford and Gloucester's respective goals. Relations between the bishop and duke were increasingly tense from the beginning of Gloucester's expedition to the Low Countries in October 1424, which resulted in anti-Flemish feeling in London. By the time parliament met the following year, popular support, at least in London, was with Gloucester and against Beaufort. Gloucester's possession of his wife's lands would be beneficial for the English merchants. Beaufort, meanwhile, attempted to contain the anti-Flemish feeling rampant in the city streets, earning himself popular disdain.[154] Gregory's Chronicle records how:

> Parlyment was grauntyd that alle maner of alyentys shulde be put to hoste as Englysche men benne in othyr londys, and ovyr that condyscyon was the tonage grauntyd; the whyche condyscyon was brokyn in the same yere by the Byschoppe of Wynchester, as the moste pepylle sayde…and there-fore there was moche hevynesse and trowbylle in thys londe.[155]

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[150] Ibid., p.185.
[151] *Beaufort*, pp. 134-149.
[152] Lucy Rhymer, 'Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester and the City of London' in Linda Clark (ed.) *The Fifteenth Century VIII: Rule, Redemption and Representations in Late Medieval England and France* (Woodbridge, 2008), p.48.
[153] Ibid., pp.57-8.
[154] *Beaufort,* pp.138-41.
[155] *Gregory*, p.157.

This popular dislike of Beaufort, and his attitude to both the Flemings in London and Gloucester's campaign in the Low Countries, was no doubt reinforced by the knowledge that his mother, Katherine Swynford, had been the daughter of a herald from Hainault.[156] The accusation recorded by the author of Gregory's Chronicle endangered the bishop's reputation in three regards. It implied that he was sympathetic to the Flemish, at the cost of his own countrymen, that he had not only ignored the will of the commons in parliament, but overruled it, and that this had resulted in 'moche hevynesse and trowbylle'.[157] Beaufort's actions, in other words, had resulted in a disturbance of the peace he was obliged to maintain. The chronicler's report was significant in a fourth regard, noting that the bishop's alleged involvement in these events was widely known and spoken about: 'the moste pepylle sayde'. In such circumstances, Beaufort's reputation was imperilled and subject to rumour. Whether the accusation was ultimately deserved, or not, was, by this stage, largely irrelevant to his predicament. His actions and reputation had positioned him in opposition to popular feeling, resulting in accusations that he did not act with the kingdom's best interests in mind. He was neither popular, nor seen to be in service to the common good.

The rumours against Beaufort had further consequences. Gregory's Chronicle reported how:

> ...that yere…were caste many byllys in the cytte and in subbarbys a-gayne the Flemyngys, and sum were set in the byschoppe ys gate of Wynchester and in other bischoppys gatys.[158]

These bills were evidence of criticism of Beaufort, and of his poor contemporary reputation, beyond the confines of the chronicles. Beaufort and his reputation had become the targets of talk and written bills. The bills themselves may not have referenced Beaufort directly, but by pinning them to the bishop's gate, they literally laid blame at the bishop's door. The bishop's reputation, and the unpopularity that it provoked, continued to have real political consequences. The political situation worsened for Beaufort when, in the wake of this disorder in London, he fortified the Tower of London, placing it in the keeping of Sir Richard Woodville 'with men of armys as thoughe hyt hadde bene in the lande of warre'.[159] Beaufort was not only the target of disorder, but its cause. His actions directly endangered the king's peace, and by extension, the common good. Further accusations reinforced this image of Beaufort. There were

[156] *ODNB – Katherine Swynford.*
[157] *Gregory*, p.157
[158] Ibid., pp.157-8.
[159] Ibid., p.157.

reports that the bishop had falsely imputed Londoners of crimes and had acted as false witness against them.

> …there were many worthy men of London apechyde of treson by a false boy Peloute by excytacyon of Byschoppe of Wynchester, as many men noysyde and sayde.[160]

That the chronicler noted that the accusations were 'noysyde and sayde' by many people suggested that Beaufort's reputation continued to be undermined by popular rumour within the city as a corrupt opponent of the common good.[161] The rumours about Beaufort ultimately made him politically vulnerable; this was a vulnerability Gloucester would exploit. When the duke returned to raise further money and troops for the continuation of his campaign in the Low Countries, his reputation and popularity were in ascendant, whilst Beaufort's were in notable decline.

Beaufort's decision to fortify the Tower of London also exacerbated the conflict between the bishop and duke. Upon Gloucester's return to England, the duke attempted to enter the Tower, but was refused entry by Sir Richard Woodville. The duke's pique led to increased hostilities between Gloucester and his uncle, which resulted in a series of charges being brought by each party against the other. Gloucester, as Harriss asserted, 'certainly exploited the citizens' grievances' against Beaufort, in order to cast the bishop in a negative light, adding further fuel to the fire of Beaufort's unpopularity, and capitalising on the existing cracks in the bishop's reputation.[162] The tension between the two parties was observed in a number of chronicles, including the Brut, the Chronicle of John Wavrin, and A Chronicle of London:

> …the Mair of London, John Coventre, had taken his charge, was A gret watche in London for Affray that was bitwene the Bishop of Wynchestre and the duke of Gloucestre Protectour &c' ffor the Mair, with the peple of the Cite, wold abide by the Duke of Gloucestre as Protector of the Reame.[163]

> …the cause was this, that the duke of Gloucester wished to have the government of the young king, his nephew, who had been given in charge to the aforesaid cardinal by the ordinance of king Henry his father; nevertheless, on account of the force and power of the said duke of Gloucester, the cardinal had to retire to the Tower of London where he was for the days that he durst not issue thence and eight or ten of his men were slain.[164]

> And the same day at even and alle the nyght folwynge was strong and grete wacche: and the morwe nest folwynge moche peple of the citee of London in savynge and kepynge the kynges pees, arraied in sufficient harnes to stonde with the duke of Gloucestre

[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid.
[162] *Beaufort*, p.140.
[163] *Brut*, p.499
[164] *Wavrin II*, p.131

> protector of Engelond, and be the maire of London, and in defend of the citee ageyn the bysshop of Wynchestre.[165]

Each description aligned the people of London with the duke of Gloucester against Beaufort. The bishop was the enemy, risking the peace of the realm by pursuing conflict with the duke.

With the conflict continuing to escalate, the duke of Bedford returned to England in order to arbitrate the dispute between his brother and uncle. That the duke of Bedford had returned in the role of a mediator, and that the king's council and parliament took an involved interest in the affair was testament to the damage the duke and bishop were inflicting upon themselves, one another, the wider kingdom, and Bedford's war efforts in France. Their personal animosity was a danger to the greater good and success of the realm. In an attempt to resolve the situation, Gloucester and Beaufort's complaints were aired and read publically at the parliament in Leicester in 1426. Gloucester's initial accusations, and the bishop's responses, were recorded in the Chronicles of London, probably based on documents originating from the court.[166] Each of these accusations would have had implications for the reputations of the two parties. Gloucester's complaints against his uncle were five-fold.

The first was that, at Beaufort's command, Sir Richard Woodville had refused to admit Gloucester to the Tower, despite Gloucester's office as protector, and that Beaufort had subsequently protected Woodville from any consequence 'ayenst the state of worship off the kyng and off my seyde lorde of Gloucestre'.[167] The next accusation alleged that Beaufort had subsequently conspired to take possession of the king, without the permission of either Beaufort or the king's council, intending 'to putte him in suche governaunce as him lust'.[168] Thirdly, Beaufort had conspired against Gloucester's person by fortifying London Bridge against him, 'purposyng his deeth' and his 'fynall distruccion', when he had hastened to warn the king of the bishop's sinister intent. From here, Gloucester reached further into the past for his allegations, undermining Beaufort's service to both Henry IV and Henry V. Gloucester claimed that his brother, Henry V, had told him that Beaufort had been responsible for the assassin who had been caught in Henry's chamber when he had been prince.[169] Finally, the duke alleged, when Henry IV had lain dying, but was not yet dead, Beaufort had urged the then prince Henry to take the crown upon himself.

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[165] CoL, p.114

[166] These chronicles were composed in English through the fifteenth century by secular Londoners. For more see: Mary-Rose McLaren, *The London Chronicles of the Fifteenth Century: A Revolution in English Writing* (Cambridge, 2002), pp.3-5, 8-10, 25-6. For their recording of the Beaufort v Gloucester conflict see: p.41.

[167] Ibid., p.77.

[168] *CoL*, p.77.

[169] *PROME*, Parliament of February 1426, item 12.

Each of these accusations constituted a potential treason charge and was legally dangerous for the bishop. These particular accusations were also potentially damaging to Beaufort because they struck at the heart of his reputation and his identity as a loyal royal servant, devoted to the House of Lancaster. Gloucester's accusations were carefully chosen to target these specific cornerstones of Beaufort's political identity. In combination, they categorised Beaufort as someone of personal and destructive political ambition, with little concern for life or law. He was not the faithful royal servant he claimed to be, but had undermined all the kings he had served, betraying his brother in his final days, plotting the murder of his nephew and trying to manipulate his young great-nephew to his own advantage. The first two charges, that Beaufort had demonstrated a flagrant disrespect for both Gloucester as protector and the king's council, emphasised Beaufort's selfish pursuit of power, but also his intention to flout the terms of Henry V's will.[170] The third charge accused Beaufort of having taken up arms, disturbing the peace of the realm and risking full-scale warfare on English soil. In combination, Gloucester's charges portrayed Beaufort as a self-serving, ambitious and under-handed person, whose entire career had been one of betrayal, injustice and family disloyalty. Not only did Gloucester's characterisation of Beaufort place his uncle in a legally precarious position, his accusations, made in a public arena and recorded by chronicler, were also calculated to attract the criticism of the wider population. The bishop had failed to meet every expectation of his birth, position in government and his clerical office, and as such, was utterly condemnable. By invoking the name of Henry V, who was himself of popular memory, and alleging that Beaufort had betrayed the late king, Gloucester sought to stir up further enmity against the bishop. Unpopularity and disfavour, earned by flouting noble expectations of royal service and commitment to the common good, were thus wielded by the duke as political weapons. Unpopularity weakened Beaufort's position and in turn strengthened Gloucester's.

As such, Beaufort was eager to counter each of these aspersions upon his reputation in his responses. Sir Richard Woodville, he asserted, had not been appointed to hold the Tower and to prevent anyone of greater authority than him from entering it by Beaufort alone. He had been charged to this duty by the king's council as a result of the widespread unrest in London, which had disturbed the king's peace and which had desired 'the destruccion as well off dyuers estates off Englonde as off straungers beyng vndir their proteccion'.[171] In short, Beaufort had not personally closed the Tower to Gloucester as a power-play against the duke, but the king's council had ordered access to be restricted as an act of defence against the threat posed by the rebellious Londoners. The bishop went on to argue that the Tower had been placed in Woodville's care, as the latter was a man 'so trusted with the kyng oure souereyne lorde that

[170] *Royal Wills*, pp.236-243.
[171] *CoL*, p.79.

deed ys as well is knowe also chamberlyn and counceyllyng vnto my lorde off Bedford'.[172] Woodville's reputation as a man trusted both by Henry V, and by the duke of Bedford, was used by Beaufort to his advantage. He had chosen a man loyal to king, to kingdom and to Bedford, Gloucester's brother. Like Gloucester, Beaufort invoked the name of Henry V in his attempt to add weight to his words. Where Gloucester had implied that Beaufort sought to disrupt Henry V's will and thus demonstrated disloyalty to the great king's memory, Beaufort suggested that he had in fact acted very much with Henry V's memory in mind in selecting a man the king had trusted. This was a point to which Beaufort would return later in proceedings. In his version of events, Beaufort cast himself as a devoted royal servant who had acted in line with the expectations of his position, and with the safety of London, the king and the greater good of the realm always in his mind. His present unpopularity was undeserved, because he had served the common good.

From here, Beaufort began to lay a series of accusations at Gloucester's feet instead. Gloucester, he suggested, had been in such a state of pique, in the wake of Woodville's refusal to admit him to the Tower, that the duke had riled up the already restless Londoners, empathising with their grievances and assuring them that, had he been in the country, they would have had far better treatment at his hands than they had received at Beaufort's.[173] Gloucester had thus sewn further seeds of discontent, setting the scene for further disruptions of the king's peace, contrary to the common good. The allegation also drew a line between Gloucester, the Londoners and the instances of slander and rumour to which Beaufort's reputation had been subjected. Again, this was something Beaufort would return to later in his response. He proceeded to make a second allegation against Gloucester, namely, that he had ordered one Richard Scot, Lieutenant of the Tower, to fetch him out a traitor held there named Brother Randolf without the permission of the king's council who had ordered that the said cleric be kept within the Tower.[174] When Scot had explained the council's orders to Gloucester and said he did not have the authority to release Randolf to the duke, Gloucester allegedly told Scot that his word alone was ample authority to ensure the traitor be delivered into his custody.[175] In this, Beaufort's accusation alleged Gloucester 'toke upon himself fferrer than his auctorite stretched unto'.[176] This allegation was significant because it suggested that Gloucester had abused his authority and position, and that it was he, not Beaufort, who had flouted the will of

[172] Ibid.
[173] *Ibid.*, pp. 78-84.
[174] Brother Randolph had accused Joan of Navarre, widow of Henry IV, of plotting to bring about the death of Henry V by means of sorcery and witchcraft in 1419. See: Vickers, *Humphrey Duke of Gloucester*, p. 183 and *ODNB - Joan of Navarre*.
[175] *CoL*, p.80.
[176] Ibid.

the king's council in pursuit of his political own ends. Beaufort suggested, just as Gloucester had done, that the duke had encroached on royal power and had been intent on his own advantage, at the expense of the good of the realm. To gain the political upper hand, Gloucester had been prepared to sacrifice the king's peace, and in so doing, he had flouted noble expectation. It was he, Beaufort argued, who deserved a damaged reputation and the disdain of the commons.

Doubling down on this line of attack, Beaufort returned to Gloucester's second allegation that he had sought to take possession of the king's person, and to bend him to his counsel. This, Beaufort emphatically denied, arguing not only that this had never been his intent but that he 'ne koude conseyve any manere off goode or auauntage at myht haue groe vnto him theroff, but rather grete perylle and charge'.[177] This charge, Beaufort was prepared to refute: 'and heroff my seyde lorde off Wynchestre ys redy to make ffeyth ffor tme and place convenable.'[178] This was a charge against Beaufort and his reputation that he wished to challenge and address separately. He was not only innocent of the charge, he claimed, but had acted in order to prevent Gloucester from taking control of the king. This counter-claim was reinforced by a further accusation, namely, that Beaufort had been told by various parties that the duke wished him personal bodily harm. The bishop's charge connected this desire to the slander to which he had been subjected within the city of London, in which regard 'they hadde noo cause'.[179] Beaufort detailed this slander, and the result, claiming the following:

> …dyuers persones off lowe estate off the citee off London in grete nombre assembled on day vpon the Wharffe, at the Crame in Vyntre, wysshed and desired that they hadde ther the persone off my seyde lorde off Wynchestre; seyynge that they wolde haue throwen him in Temyse to haue tauht him to swymme with wengis; ffor wiche billes and langage off sclaundre and manasse caste and spoken in the seyde citee caused be my seyde lorde the Chaunceller to sppose that they that so seyde and dydde, wylled and desired his destruccion.[180]

By associating Gloucester with these words and deeds, in conjunction with his earlier assertion that the duke had stirred up the Londoners against him, Beaufort essentially charged Gloucester as a rabble-rouser and demagogue, who had deliberately sought political advantage by turning the Londoners against him. In so doing, he had damaged Beaufort's reputation, thereby weakening the bishop's political position, risking Beaufort's life and endangering the security of the realm. Gloucester, as a secular noble, and particularly as protector, was duty bound ensure the kingdom was peacefully and safely kept. In an attempt to maintain this peace, and to defend his person from the dangers posed by Gloucester and his Londoners, and to stop the duke from

[177] Ibid., p.81.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Ibid, p.82.
[180] Ibid., p.81.

seizing the young king, Beaufort had fortified Tower Bridge. It had not been an aggressive act on his part against Gloucester, but 'manelich to his own suerte an defence accordyng to Lawe off Nature ordeyned to lette that no fforce off peple shulde kome on the Brigge off London towarde him'. [181] In other words, Beaufort insisted he had acted lawfully, in self-defence and in the greater interests of the realm, not out of any kind of personal ambition or callous disregard for the kingdom.

Beaufort concluded his refutation of Gloucester's charges by reasserting his loyalty to each of the Lancastrian kings he had served. He emphasised his commitment to royal service, which Gloucester had endeavoured to undermine. The bishop placed particular emphasis upon his service to Henry V:

> ...he was euer trewe to all thoo, that were his sovereyne lordes and reigned vpon him, and that he neuer purposed treson nor untrouthe ayenst eny of her persones and in especiall ayenst the persone of oure seyde sovereyne lorde kyng Herry the ffyffte; the whiche consideryng the grete wysdome troute and manhode that alle men knewe in him, ne wolde not ffor the tyme that he was kyng haue sette in my seyde lorde…grete truste as he dydde yff he hadde ffounde or trowed in him suuch untrouthe off byfore.[182]

In this final defence, the bishop not only invoked the name of Henry V, but his reputation, and used this knowledge of the king's qualities to reinforce his argument. A king like Henry V, of 'grete wysdome troute and manhode that alle men knewe in him', would not have placed any trust in Beaufort, if he had believed of him the things the duke of Gloucester had accused him.[183] To accuse Beaufort was to undermine the wisdom and manhood of the late king, whose memory still cast so long a shadow over the political landscape of England. This kind of criticism of Henry V would not have been tolerated in 1426. The late king remained popular, and his name and legacy, and particularly his virtue and manhood, were invoked regularly to demonstrate English strength and governmental unity.[184] To be seen to undermine his reputation would be to the detriment of the reputation of the person who attempted to do so, even by implication. It is not insignificant that both Beaufort and Gloucester invoked Henry V in their charges. The king's reputation had the power to bolster the reputation of another, or to damage it, and service to, and the trust of, Henry V were indicative of service to the common good by association.

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[181] Ibid.
[182] CoL, p.84.
[183] Ibid., p.83. For the significance here of the term 'manhode' see: Katherine J. Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity in Late Medieval England* (Oxford, 2013), p.126, 130-31.
[184] For an assessment of Henry V's posthumous influence on contemporary politics see: Christopher Allmand, *Henry V* (New Haven, London, 1997), pp.426-432. See also Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity,* pp.134.

In the bishop's repeated references to the rumours, slander and threats against him, he emphasised the importance he placed upon them and the threat they posed to his reputation – and, by extension, his power. Reputation, and its political and personal ramifications, lay at the heart of the disagreement between the bishop and duke. They used their charges and counter-charges against one another to undermine the cornerstones of their respective duties, reputations and identities. G. L. Harris viewed the dispute between the bishop and the duke as symptomatic of a wider conflict over Lancastrian policy. Whilst this issue was certainly at the heart of their disagreement, it is significant (but not noted by Harriss) that the way in which they elected to confront one another was through the medium, and political stakes, of reputation. Whilst hostilities between Beaufort and Gloucester continued, Bedford, and the king's council, troubled by the disorder which might result from continued hostilities, endeavoured to find a solution and agreement that would salve the wounds of both bishop and duke. Concern for the peace of the realm was the central theme of the efforts made by the king's council in advance of the parliament of 1426, as recorded in the proceedings and ordinances of the privy council.[185] As Bedford and the council laboured to bring the two sides together for arbitration, the duke of Gloucester persisted in his professed concern for his safety, and for the peace of the realm, should his and the chancellor's men meet. Fortunately, an agreement was eventually reached, and was announced publically in parliament. By this stage, it was Bedford and the king's council who appeared as those most committed to the peace and prosperity of the realm. In The common good and peace of the realm was no longer a bone for Gloucester and Beaufort to argue over. Service to the common good, and public approval, now lay, not with the duke or the bishop, but in compliance with the will of Bedford and the council. By failing to cooperate, both Gloucester and Beaufort would have damaged their reputations as opponents of the good of the realm.

The parliamentary pronouncements and performance that followed the arbitration processes were designed to restore order and portray a restored sense of unity within parliament and beyond. The parliamentary performance can be divided into three component parts. Proceedings began with an acknowledgement of the dispute, which stated that the disagreement between Gloucester and Beaufort had resulted from 'several less than truthful reports made by both parties hitherto'.[186] This was a public acknowledgement that both parties had been at fault, and that each had been the victim of false allegations made by the other. The announcement damaged, yet also restored, their reputations, recognising that both parties had been untruthful, but also that the accusations they had levelled at one another were ultimately unfounded. Their trespasses against one another, and the realm, had been far less serious than

[185] PC III, pp.181-7.
[186] *PROME*, Parliament of February 1426, item 12.

either had alleged. Reputation played a further role in these parliamentary proceedings. For the second part of the performance, and as part of the arbitration process, both Gloucester and Beaufort were required to promise to abide by the agreement that had been reached between them as arranged by the group of lords Bedford had assigned for the purpose. Gloucester 'submitted himself and in the words of a prince promised to abide by the decree, ordinance and arbitration'. Beaufort did likewise on his word as a priest.[187] In addition to giving their word, both bishop and duke signed their names to a copy of the agreement in their own hands. Thus, both Gloucester and Beaufort put their names, their positions as a prince and priest, their very identities, to a promise of peace between them. They quite literally staked their reputations on it, and – in ensuring that this promise was rendered both by public performance and in writing – memorialized the making of this agreement and the pledging of their reputations.

Beaufort, however, required further reassurances. Once his dispute with Gloucester had been resolved and peace restored between them, he wished to have the damage inflicted upon his reputation publically acknowledged and the accusations against him dismissed. This was the third and final phase of the parliamentary performance. That Beaufort and not Gloucester felt compelled to arrange this particular parliamentary performance suggests that he felt he had come out of his disagreement with Gloucester with a far more damaged reputation than that of his opponent. G. L. Harriss also believed that Beaufort emerged from this conflict in a weaker position, although he did not explain this weakness in terms of reputation.[188] The form of Beaufort's submission to parliament followed the pattern we have seen in other examples discussed in previous chapters. The record of his appeal on behalf of his reputation follows in the parliamentary roll:

> My sovereign lord, I well understand that I am defamed among the estates of your land' in regards to having arranged for an assassin to target Henry V, then Prince Henry, in the Green Chamber in Westminster. Furthermore I am defamed as to how I incited the late king, when he was also prince, to take the rule and the crown of this realm on himself, forsaking his father who was at that time king; through which words and defamation, I consider my name and reputation greatly tarnished in various men's opinions.[189]

Beaufort's concern for his reputation was explicit. Of those allegations made by Gloucester against him, the accusations of deceptive royal service and treason most concerned him. They were the most legally dangerous, *and*, most significantly, undermined his political reputation.[190]

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[187] Ibid.
[188] Harriss, *Cardinal Beaufort*, pp.138-9.
[189] *PROME*, Parliament of February 1426, item 12.
[190] J. G. Bellamy, The Law of Treason in England in the Later Middle Ages (Cambridge, 1970, repr. 2004), p.14, pp.177-205.

> Whereupon I first call upon God as my witness, and then all the world, that I have been and I am at all times a loyal friend and loyal subject to you, my sovereign lord, and shall be faithful all my life. And also I have been a loyal subject to my sovereign lord, your father, during his entire reign, and he accepted, trusted and cherished me as such until the end of his life, as I believe no man will vouch to the contrary; never in my life procuring or imagining the death or destruction of his person, or agreeing to any such thing or the like... And similarly I was a loyal subject to King Henry the fourth all the time that he was my sovereign lord and reigned over me.[191]

Beaufort wished for the king publically to acknowledge each of these things, 'considering that there is no substantiated proof by which I might lawfully be convicted...notwithstanding the said slander and defamation'.[192] The response made on behalf of the five-year-old Henry VI by the council gave the requested acknowledgement, declaring Beaufort a 'trewe man' to him, his father and his grandfather, 'þe said declaundre and noysyng not withstondyng.'[193]

As with previous examples from earlier chapters, such as John of Gaunt's parliamentary performance in 1377, Prince Henry's performance on behalf of the duke of York in 1401, 1407 and 1414, and Bedford's in 1433, this public acknowledgement of Beaufort's loyalty was a performance designed to repair his reputation and to lay to bed the issue of the slander against him once and for all. Again, it was both performed, and preserved in written form, so it might be remembered in future. The performance created the memory, and the document ensured those memories could be prompted and verified in future.

A similar sentiment also underpinned the second half of the parliamentary performance of 1426 . Beaufort and Gloucester were required to state publically in parliament words that had previously been agreed. Beaufort denied that he had ever intended any harm to Gloucester, but acknowledged that he was true his nephew had heard disturbing reports of him, which explained his actions. He implored the duke to be a good lord to him in future, and Gloucester obliged.'[194] Thus, the duke both discredited the rumours he had previously endorsed against his uncle and legitimised parliament's work in its attempts to rehabilitate Beaufort's reputation. Proceedings were concluded when, before parliament, 'the aforesaid duke of Gloucester and the bishop of Winchester immediately took each other by the hand' in a final physical and performative gesture of reconciliation.[195] This act was intended to draw a final line under the issue, securing the peace and prosperity of the realm and restoring each of the lords involved to their good reputations.

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[191] PROME, Parliament of February 1426, item 12
[192] Ibid
[193] PROME, Parliament of February 1426, item 12
[194] Ibid., item 13
[195] Ibid.

The public nature of the performance, and the multiple layers of words and actions, were designed to prompt the 'right kind' of talk, so reports of the event might be transmitted beyond parliament to a broader audience, and adjust wider perceptions of the actions of the bishop and the duke. The chronicler's preservation of events offers evidence that it did so. Once again, the perceptions of those beyond the traditional governing classes, and their awareness and interest in noble reputation, were acknowledged in governmental action. The reconciliation of the duke and bishop was intended to save the peace and prosperity of the realm, but equally, it sought to keep them both from the ire of the populace. Unpopularity, as a consequence of a disregard for the common good, and the result of a poor reputation, was a threat to individual noblemen, secular and clerical, but also to the political stability and well-being of the realm.

Conclusion

It is somewhat ironic that Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester would end his life in similar circumstances to the earlier appellant duke of Gloucester. Just as Thomas, Duke of Gloucester and his reputation became significant to the establishment of the Lancastrian crown, so would Duke Humphrey's provide a service to the Yorkists who followed. Opposition to the crown, and popular support, became very much a part of Duke Humphrey's posthumous reputation, and once again, the groundwork for this was laid during the duke's lifetime.[196] In each instance, the more complex and sometimes controversial reputations of these royal dukes, illustrated by incidents like the conflict between Gloucester and Beaufort, gave way to a more favourable, more statesman-like reputation, which was able to lend others a sense of political legitimacy. This legitimacy was the ultimate aim of noble reputation, in which renown was able to solidify power and authority, even if that power and authority was not ultimately to be wielded by the person whose reputation it was.

When taken together, the three case studies in this chapter demonstrate one aspect of the role of reputation in the political climate of late medieval England: its entanglement in the politics of popularity and the common good, both of which served simultaneously as evidence of noble virtue and of positive noble reputation. Popularity was earned through virtue and particularly via service to the collective good of the realm. The case studies demonstrate that reputation was a political resource used by the nobility in order to rally popular support against the crown, and in attempts to gain the upper hand in conflicts with other members of the nobility. This multiplicity of uses, in turn, suggested that those outside of the traditional political classes had a recognised and significant power of their own.

[196] Rhymer, *Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester,* p.58.

The case studies also demonstrate the ways in which noble reputation offered an avenue by which extra-parliamentary criticism might be expressed. Scrope's position as a popular saint, the existence of so-called idols of the multitude, and the bills, rumours and actions taken against Cardinal Beaufort in 1425 and 1426, each demonstrated the connections between popular protest and noble reputation. In each instance, the reputations of members of the nobility, whether living or dead, were shaped to appeal to, or earn the condemnation of, the wider population. This strategy was achieved by emphasising individual commitment to, or disdain for, the common good. Ultimately, good reputation was grounded in the ability and willingness of noblemen to serve the common good and to present themselves publically as conforming to this ideal. In combination, dedication to the common good, the popular acclaim this earned, and the positive reputation that resulted, were the basis of claims to political legitimacy. Attacks upon reputation constituted attacks upon authority, undermining a noble's acknowledged right to exercise the public power they owed privately to land and family. Noble reputation was a formidable weapon in the arsenal of domestic politics in late medieval England, and the nobility and commons were increasingly aware of its usefulness.

CONCLUSION

This thesis began with John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and his reaction to the slanderous bills posted against him in London in 1377. Why, we asked, did a man like Gaunt, the greatest and wealthiest magnate of his time, react so viscerally to an assault upon his reputation, which could rob him of neither his lineage, nor his property? It proved serious enough, in Gaunt's eyes, to resurrect the 102-year-old Scandalum Magnatum statute, and to extend the protections once accorded only to the nobility to all lords and royal officers, secular and clerical. As we have seen through the course of this thesis, Gaunt was not alone in his concern, nor in his compulsion, to defend his reputation in parliament, and restore his good fame. The parliament rolls for our period (1377-1437) are scattered with examples of these kinds of restorative performances: the earl of Oxford's confrontation with Walter Sibille in 1384; Thomas of Woodstock's declaration before Richard II in the midst of the appellant crisis in 1387-8; the repeated announcements made in regards to the loyalty and good conduct of Edward, Duke of York in 1404, 1407 and 1414; the performance organised on behalf of Cardinal Henry Beaufort in 1424-5; and the defence against rumour made by John, Duke of Bedford in 1433. At the heart of each example was noble reputation. By the time of Bedford's appeal, a standard form appears to have emerged. A public appeal was made in parliament, in which the nobleman in question first complained about the words and rumours circulating against him, then asked king and parliament openly to declare his innocence and restore his good fame. What was done for John of Gaunt in 1377 was repeated for Bedford in 1433. Reputation, its significance, and noble attitudes towards it endured throughout our period.

The thesis asked how, why, and to what extent reputation was of particular significance between 1377 and 1437. Why was it in this period that the Scandalum Magnatum statutes were modified and reissued on two occasions – once on behalf of a secular lord, and once for an archbishop? In order to understand contemporary attitudes to noble reputation, the thesis sought to explain how reputation 'worked' socially, politically, and textually: how it was constructed, projected, altered, and written about. Reputation was something including, but extending beyond, notions of chivalric honour. Noble reputation was neither stable nor static, but constantly evolving. Try as he might to control, manipulate, protect and commemorate it, a nobleman was never the master of his own reputation. In the end, reputation was rooted in the opinions of others. As such, this thesis considered a variety of contemporary perspectives as expressed in different kinds of written texts, visual sources and material culture.

Opening with the parliamentary case between the earl of Oxford and Walter Sibille of London, the first chapter of this thesis placed Oxford's complaint, and the Scandalum Magnatum statutes, into their broader social and legal contexts. The chapter compared the measures implemented by the city authorities to defend *civic* authority to the Scandalum Magnatum statutes, and concluded that, despite the differences between the two social groups, and particularly the *sources* of their power, city officials and the nobility shared similar concerns and fears in regards to assaults upon their reputations, especially via the medium of speech. They were primarily concerned with the *operation* of power and the *exercise* of authority. The chapter argued that reputation was a social resource people possessed and could lose. It governed the ways in which people at all levels of society lived their everyday lives and was central to notions of trust, credibility and – for power holding groups – their political legitimacy. Reputation depended on an individual's perceived ability to live up to the expectations associated with his or her place in society. For those in positions of authority, governance was linked inextricably to their ability to uphold and promote and the peace and prosperity of the realm. A poor reputation, could not deprive a lord of his status, his property or his lineage, the traditional sources of his power, but it could restrict his ability to *exercise* that power.

Chapter two analysed the range of expectations underpinning noble reputation and explored the multiple meanings of nobility in late medieval England. The chapter argued that nobility depended upon nobility of birth and nobility of action. Noble behaviour was marked by virtuous conduct, and noble lineage resulted in an increased capacity for virtue. As nobility was used to justify the power and authority of lords, it was important that nobles exhibited their virtue. Noble virtue was evidenced in their ability to perform their duties within society, fulfilling their functions as elite masculine men, as lords, defenders and commanders. Ultimately, noble virtue ensured the common good and the peace of the realm. By contrast, criticism of the nobility targeted their inability to meet these expectations. Praise and criticism coalesced around markers of masculinity, such as temperance and prudence, and markers of lordship, most prominently the ability, and desire, to promote the common good. Therefore, accusations of intemperance, lack of wisdom and the selfish pursuit of profit all undermined noble reputation.

The range of expectations and conceptions of nobility explored in chapter two underpinned the central arguments of chapter three. Divided into two parts, the first section of the chapter considered noble performances designed to enhance, damage and repair noble reputation. Such performances were orchestrated by the nobility themselves, and aligned with the values of nobility identified in chapter two. These public performances emphasised their service to king and kingdom in peace and war, and reaffirmed their innate capacity for such

deeds. Attempts to repair damaged reputation confirmed their capacity for service, and stressed their personal virtue and their devotion to the common good. In short, they reiterated all the ways in which individual noblemen conformed to those expectations of lordship and masculinity set out in the previous chapter. Through these performances, the nobility acknowledged the significance of public perception of their behaviour within parliament – and beyond it.

The second part of chapter three concentrated largely on evidence from cases in the court of chivalry of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries noting that the court was founded in the fourteenth century. Its foundation coincided with, and was both cause and consequence of, the late medieval nobility's growing concern for reputation. Reputation was preserved in people, objects, images and places, recalled via memory and spread via talk. Objects described in the court of chivalry depositions were used to advertise family ties, royal service, local power and friendships. Objects encouraged individuals to access the community's shared knowledge of the past and encouraged them to recall people, events and reputations. The chapter also argued for the connection between the reputations of the living and the dead, and particularly the relationship between reputation and lineage. Reputation was a collective resource shared amongst family groups, anchoring lineage and serving the needs of the present by linking it to the past. The nobility commissioned objects with these purposes in mind, displaying those aspects of their reputations and identities they most wished remembered. Locations too acted as vehicles for memory, and interior spaces were orientated to emphasise those aspects of noble identity the living and the dead wished to promote.

Beginning with the 1388 bill against Archbishop Alexander Neville, which prompted the period's second modification to the Scandalum Magnatum statute, chapter four shifted focus to the reputations of the clerical nobility. It assessed the similarities and differences between episcopal reputation and the reputations of the secular nobility. The chapter argued that an episcopal reputation was an eclectic mix of identities and functions, with inherent conflicts and contradictions. Whilst an episcopal reputation was underpinned by many of the same principles applied to bishops' secular counterparts, it had a distinctive character of its own. Episcopal reputation stressed academic and spiritual wisdom, and paid particular attention to the episcopal voice in its ability to counsel, persuade and reason. Criticism of the clerical nobility often alleged that a bishop had strayed too far from his spiritual calling and had prioritised worldly concerns over God and his faith. A bishop was the servant of both church and king; he needed to find the balance between these two roles. One of the main defining qualities of episcopal reputation, however, was its relative flexibility. Individual bishops were able to accentuate and cultivate different aspects of their identity depending on their personal

identities and priorities. There were many ways to be a good bishop and to build a positive episcopal reputation, so long as the individual was seen to fulfil his allotted social function.

Finally, chapter five moved from political structures to political events. Bringing together the secular and clerical nobility, it considered the role of noble reputation in three key instances of political conflict: the appellant crisis of 1387-8, the rebellion of Archbishop Scrope in 1405, and the dispute between Cardinal Beaufort and Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester 1425-6. Chapter five stressed the significance of popularity, its relationship with the common good, and noble reputation to contemporary political events. It positioned noble reputation as a political resource of which the nobility made conscious use in struggles against the crown, and in conflict with one another. It argued too that noble reputation provided an avenue for the expression of political opinion within and beyond the traditional political classes. This application of noble reputation spoke to a general awareness of the power inherent in *popular* support.

Reputation was particularly significant in this period 1377-1437 as the political community expanded, yet contemporary politics remained rooted in the personalities of individual political figures. Reputation facilitated the exercise of landed noble power by imbuing individual noblemen with authority and political legitimacy via claims to public support. It also allowed them to avoid the kind of public ire that could inhibit their ability to act, and to achieve their personal and political aims. Praise and criticism of the nobility was rooted in contemporary expectation of what it meant to be noble, and in the evolving notion of the common good. A study of noble reputation in this period also reveals the significant place of royal service in contemporary notions of what it meant to be noble in late medieval England.

Public performances of action, speech and display were important avenues by which reputation was established, attacked, defended and damaged. They resulted in talk which could transmit details and judgements amongst an ever-widening audience. Contemporary focus on reputation was indicative of the fact that talk and common knowledge had political significance beyond the traditional political classes, and that this talk was crucial to the formation, maintenance and perpetuation of noble reputation. This was an environment in which the relationship between noble reputation and contemporary notions of the common good placed particular emphasis on the politics of popularity. Such popularity, resulting from positive reputation and common acclaim, could be employed in support, or in opposition to the crown, and established reputation as an avenue by which extra-parliamentary criticisms might be expressed. It allowed an increasingly vocal popular element the ability to express their views and exert political power.

This thesis has placed reputation at the centre of a social, cultural and political history of late medieval England. Reputation was integral to noble culture: to the meaning, conception, and presentation of nobility. It was a significant force influencing, and motivating, noble action and decision-making. Contemporary masculine ideals infused and complicated contemporary notions of nobility. Surprisingly, the secular nobility have largely been excluded from dedicated studies of late medieval masculinity, which have focused on the lower orders, kings, and clergymen, particularly in regards to the implications of clerical celibacy. Derek Neal, for example, specifically excluded the nobility from his study of late medieval masculinity, asserting that the focus of his book was 'on the most ordinary men accessible' and that 'This is not another book about knights and chivalry.'[1] In fact, ideas relating to *noble* masculinity were not circumscribed by the values of medieval chivalry. The basis of the construction of lordly reputation, masculinity featured prominently in contemporary praise and criticism of the nobility and had both social, and political, ramifications.

Having established the social and cultural significance of noble reputation, the thesis also considered the role of reputation in late medieval political culture and explored its practical political applications. In the period 1377 to 1437, parliament was one forum in which lords sought to reconstruct and reassert damaged reputation. This conclusion may surprise historians who have focused on the increasing prominence of the House of Commons and on the legislative role of parliament as an institution. We now know much about the processes of petitioning and the making of ordinances and statutes.[2] Yet parliament was much more than that. It was within parliament that seigneurial reputation was performed. At the same time, however, the thesis established noble reputation as a political force that addressed the increasing significance of popular opinion and the expansion of political participation amongst the lower orders. The nobility demonstrated an awareness of the significance of their reputations themselves, actively seeking to cultivate popular acclaim through their reputations so they might draw political power and strength from popular support in struggles against other noblemen, or against the crown. The thesis demonstrated that noble attitudes to reputation were not confined to the knightly classes. We can gain understanding of *noble* attitudes and the pressures to which they were subjected by considering the attitudes of *other* power-holding groups. In the process, we showed the value of considering the nobility, not in isolation, or as enclosed group exerting downward and horizontal influence, but as a social and political group also subject to the attitudes and values of those below them.

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[1] Derek Neal, *The Masculine Self in Late Medieval England* (London, 2006), p.6.
[2] See for example Gwilym Dodd, *Justice and Grace: Private Petitioning and the English Parliament in the Late Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2007), and intro, p.25 of this thesis.

For historians interested in the mechanics of late medieval politics, chapter five demonstrated how attention to the concept and practice of noble reputation can provide new insights to our understanding of key political events like the appellant crisis and the conflict between Humphrey of Gloucester and Cardinal Henry Beaufort. The role of reputation in such events has previously been either overlooked or accorded only passing consideration.

The further the research for this thesis progressed, the larger the subject of noble reputation seemed to become. Inevitably there are subjects and issues it has been unable to discuss, or unable to explore in depth. In taking a thematic and mostly structural approach, it has been difficult to consider fully change over time, particularly in regards to the relationship between noble and kingly reputation, and the extent to which the characters of the kings of our period, Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V and the young Henry VI, influenced the reputations of their nobility. We see in the table below, for example, that noble reputation received the greatest amount of parliamentary attention during the reigns of Richard II and Henry IV, and significantly less under Henry V. This is true, even making allowance for the shortness of his reign.

King	Length of Reign (in years)	No. Parl. Refs. To Rep. (out of 125)[3]	Average refs per year	Percentage of Total Refs.
Richard II	22	46	2.1	36.8%
Henry IV	14	46	3.3	36.8%
Henry V	9	9	1	7.2%
Henry VI (minority 1422-1437)	15	24	1.6	19.2%

Fig.23: Number of parliamentary references to noble reputation by reign with average number of references per year, and percentage of total references, per reign.

Preliminary analyses of language use in these entries in the parliament rolls also reveal changes in emphasis over time, as well as points of commonality and consistency (see appendix 2). The words 'honour', and 'name' for example, appear prominently under Richard II, but disappear under the Lancastrian kings. Words relating to law and justice appear consistently, including 'justice', 'law' and 'judgement' under the Lancastrians, but not under Richard II. Such patterns and changes warrant further consideration and analysis.

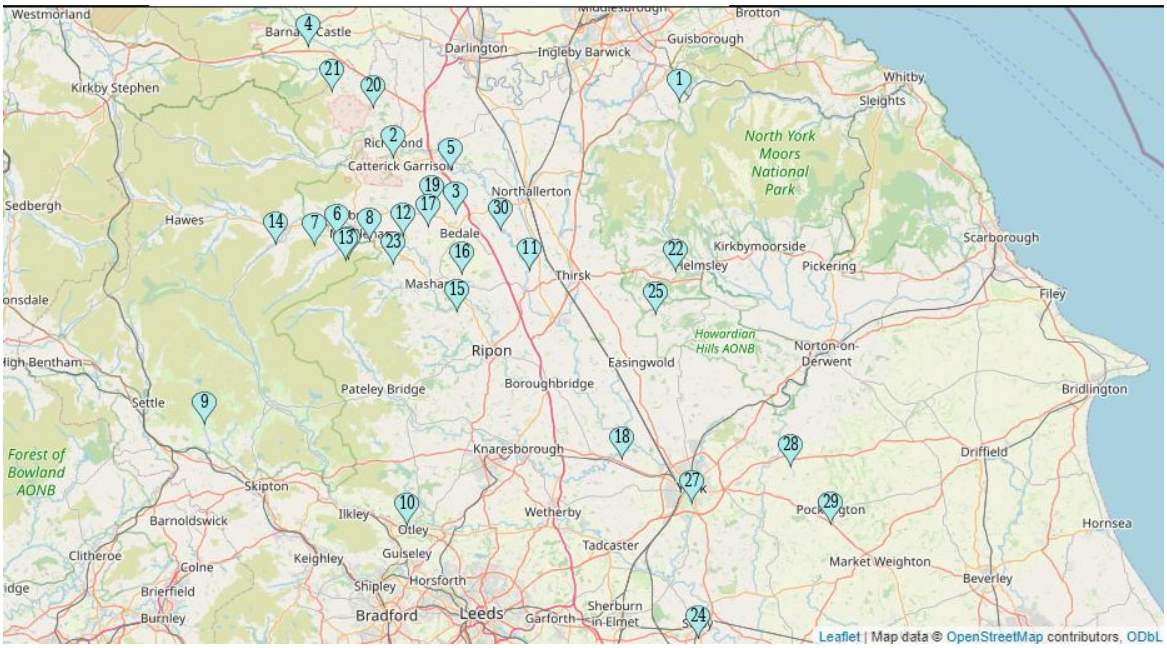
We also find semantic evolution within the chronicles, with the caveat that the sample texts used to formulate these preliminary figures focus most prominently on the reigns of Richard II and Henry IV (see appendix 3). They do, however, illustrate the impressions of a reader of the chronicles of this period, that concern for reputation increases under Richard II

[3] This total takes account of all entries in the parliament rolls involving direct references relating to noble reputation, including issues of honour, fame etc.

and Henry IV, drops under Henry V and recovers again during Henry VI's minority. The nature of the concern expressed also adopts a different character under Henry V and, perhaps unsurprisingly, the emphasis under this king is on martial reputation. As such, the figures presented here suggest there would be value in a future consideration of evolving attitudes to noble reputation throughout the period.

APPENDIX I:
MAP OF SCROPE & GROSVENOR SITES

Sites Mentioned by Witnesses for Scrope



Map generated by R. Snaith via mapcustomizer.com. Blue markers indicate sites mentioned on behalf of Scrope.

All sites listed are in the county of North Yorkshire unless specified otherwise in brackets.

1. Easby Abbey, Hambleton
2. Richmond, marking:
    a) Richmond Parish church
    b) The Friars Minor
    c) Hospital of St. Nicholas
    d) Chapel of the Anachorite
    e) Chapel of the Holy Trinity
    f) Richmond Castle
3. Ainderby Church, Ainderby Miers with Holtby
4. Barnard Castle (Co. Durham) marking:
    a) Wycliffe Church
    b) Bowes Chapel
5. Bolton-On-Swale Chapel, Richmondshire
6. Wensley Church, Richmondshire
7. Bolton Church, Wensleydale

8. Spennithorne Church, Spennithorne
9. Watlow Church, Malham
10. Clifton Chapel, Clifton
11. Kirby Wiske Chapel, Kirby Wiske, Hambleton
12. Finghall Church, Richmondshire
13. Coverham Church, Coverham with Agglethorpe
14. Aysgarth Chapel, Aysgarth
15. Tanfield Church, West Tanfield, Hambleton
16. Snape Chapel, Snape
17. Patrick Brompton Church, Patrick Brompton, Richmondshire
18. Nun Monkton Church, Nun Monkton, Harrogate
19. Horby Castle Chapel, Horby, Richmondshire
20. Ravensworth Chapel, Ravensworth
21. Barningham Church, Barningham (Co. Durham)
22. Rievaulx Abbey, Rievaulx, Ryedale
23. Jervaulx Abbey, East Witton, Richmondshire
24. Selby Abbey, Selby
25. Byland Abbey, Hambleton
26. Coverham Abbey, Richmondshire
27. St. Martin's Church, York
28. Skirpenbeck Church, Skirpenbeck (East Riding of Yorkshire)
29. Pocklington Church, Pocklington (East Riding of Yorkshire)
30. Morton Church, Morton-on-Swale, Hambleton

Sites Mentioned by Witnesses for Grosvenor

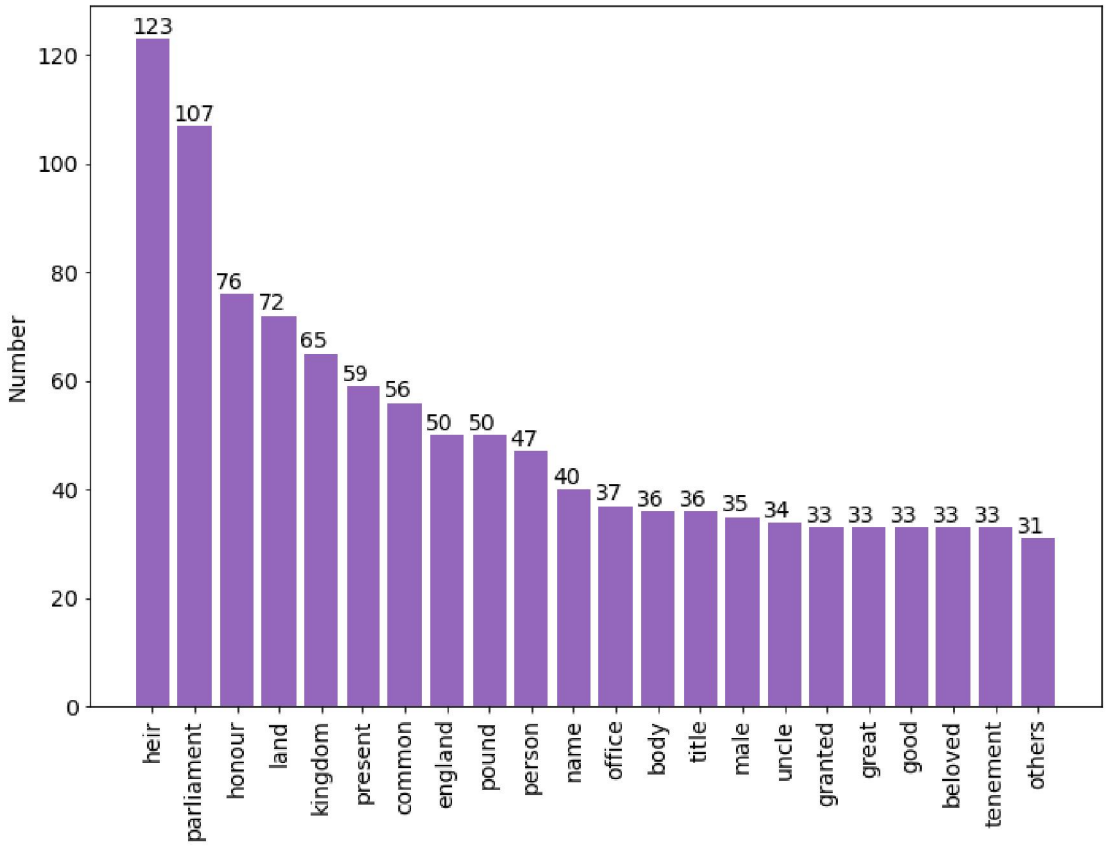
Map generated by R. Snaith via mapcustomizer.com. pink markers represents sites referenced on behalf of Grosvenor.

All sites in county of Cheshire unless otherwise indicated in brackets.

31. Hulme Manor, Hulme (Greater Manchester)
32. Chester Abbey, Chester
33. Mobberley Church, Mobberley
34. Stockport Church, Stockport (Greater Manchester)
35. Budworth Church, Great Budworth
36. Norton Priory, Halton,
37. Christelton Church, Christelton
38. Over Peover Manor, Over Peover
39. Nether Peover Church, Nether Peover
40. Warton Church (Fylde), Warton (Lancashire)
41. Davenham Church, Davenham
42. Cotton, Cristelton
43. Stone Cross between Warrington and Knutsford (marked here equidistant between the two points)
44. Lymm Church, High Legh
45. Bold Manor, Bold (Lancashire)
46. Vale Royal Abbey, Whitegate and Marton

APPENDIX II:
LANGUAGE ANALYSIS OF PARLIAMENT ROLLS

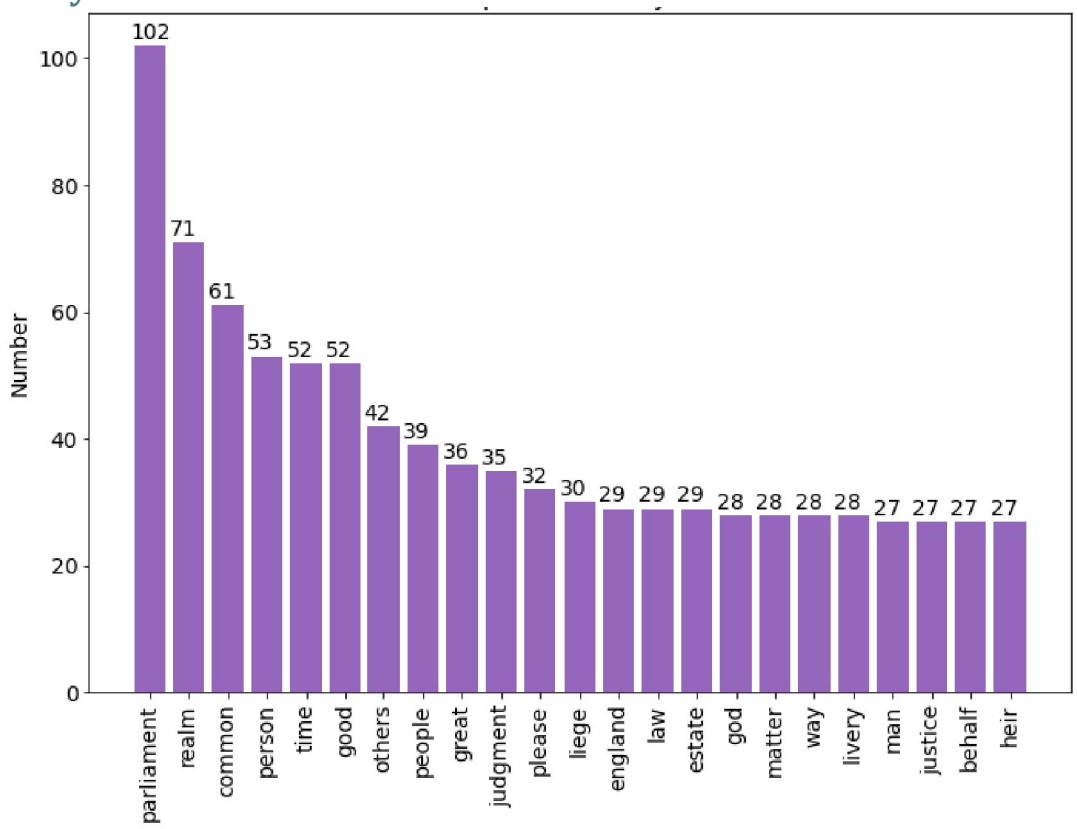
Richard II



Most common words used in parliamentary records concerning noble reputation under Richard II[1]

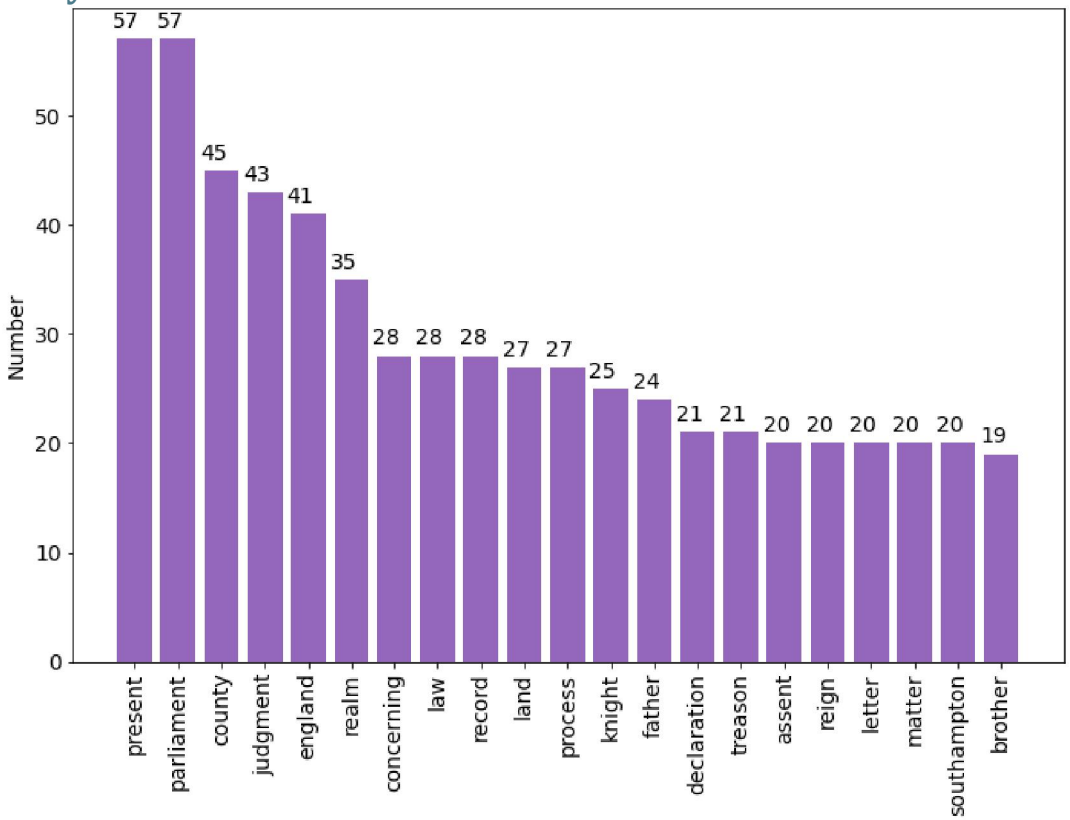
[1] These figures exclude common grammatical words such as: he, was, the, on etc. names and titles.

Henry IV

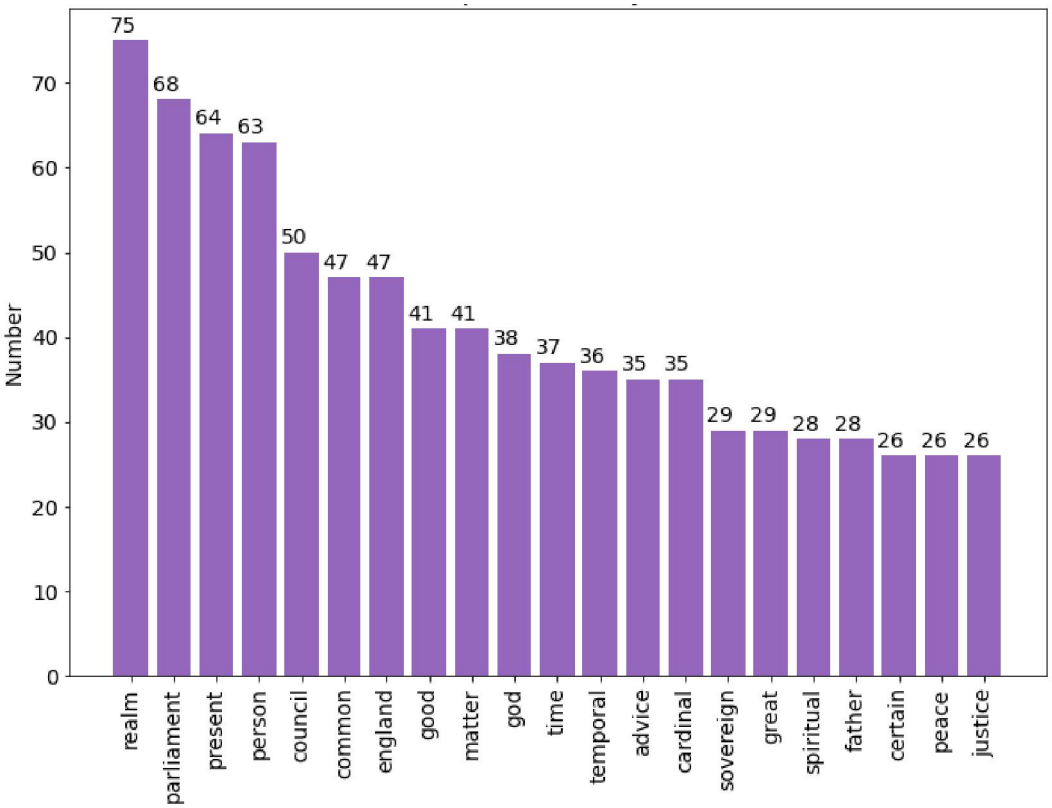


Most common words used in parliamentary records concerning noble reputation under Henry IV

Henry V



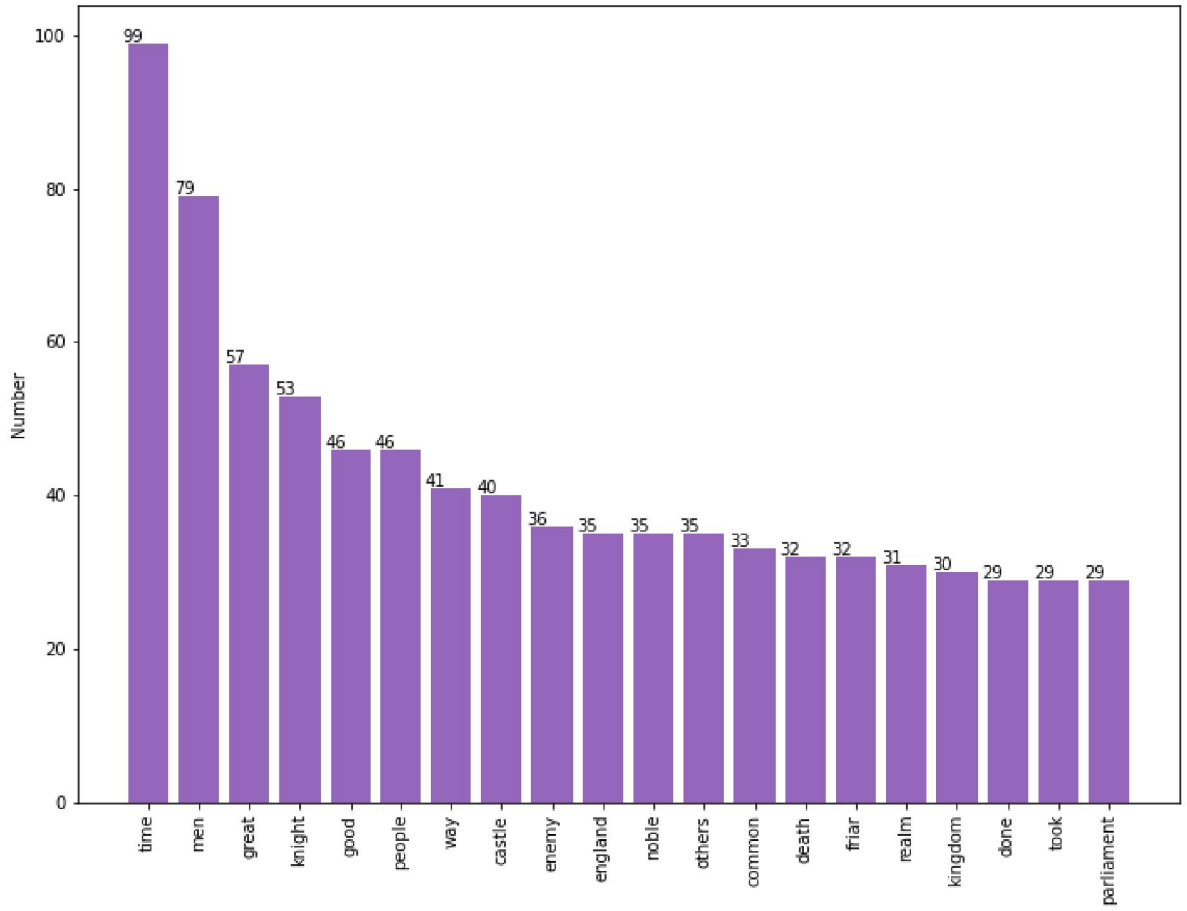
Most common words used in parliamentary records concerning noble reputation under Henry V



Most common words used in parliamentary records concerning noble reputation under Henry VI.

APPENDIX III:
LANGUAGE ANALYSIS OF CHRONICLES

Richard II

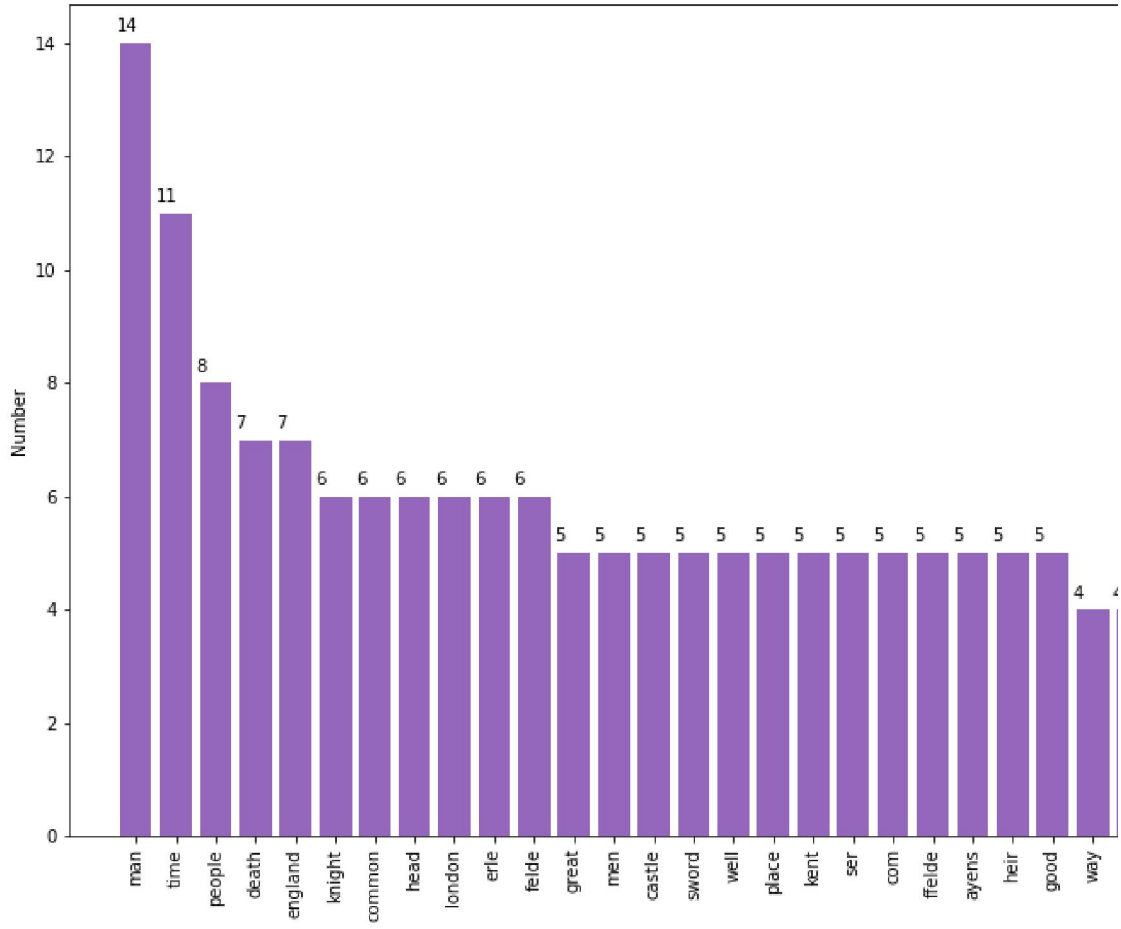


Most common words used in chronicle accounts concerning noble reputation under Richard II[2]

[2] Information from the following sample texts: Chronicles included: St. Albans' Chronicle, Knighton's Chronicle, Chronicle of Jean Wavrin, Westminster Chronicle, Gesta Henrici Quinti, Chronicle of John Capgrave, Chronicles of London, An English Chronicle, and the Chronicle of Adam Usk.

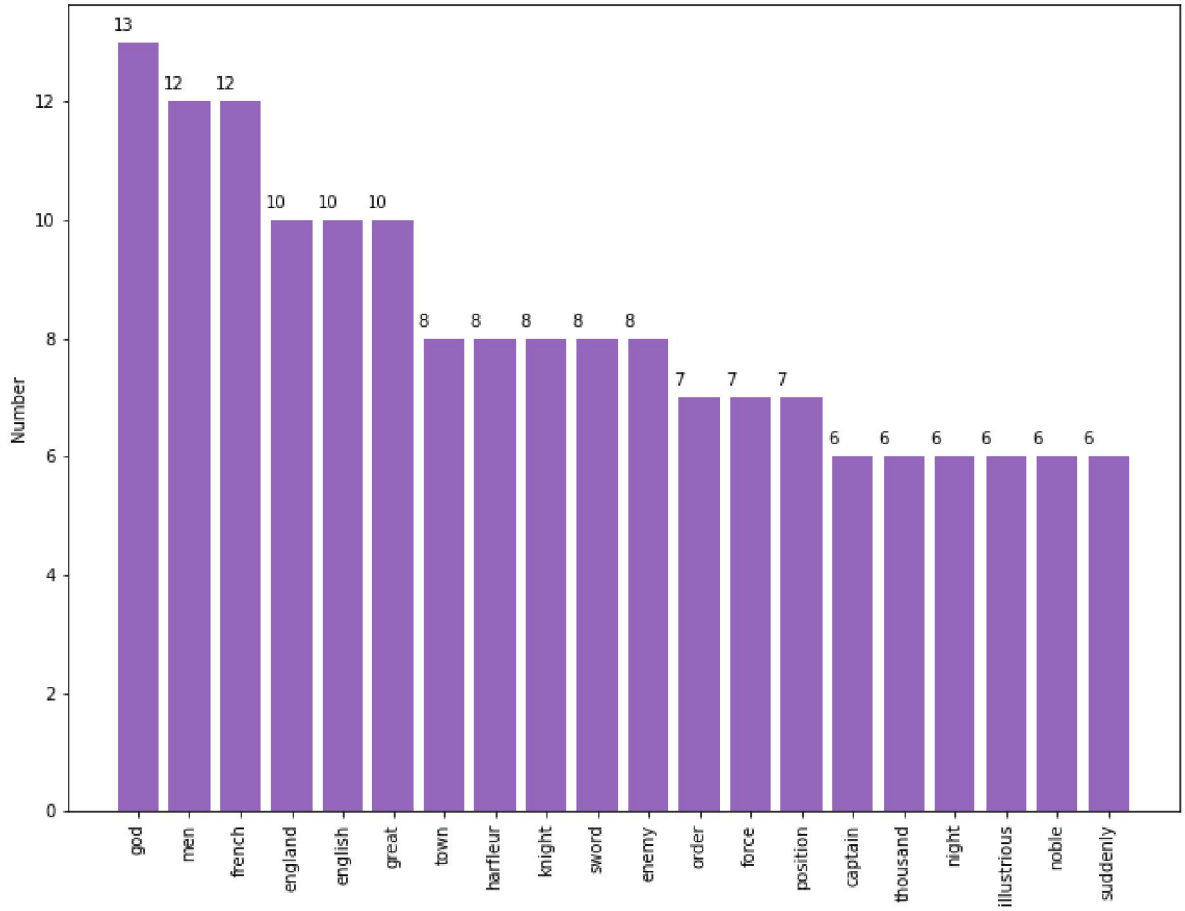
These figures exclude common grammatical words such as: he, was, the, on etc. names and titles.

Henry IV



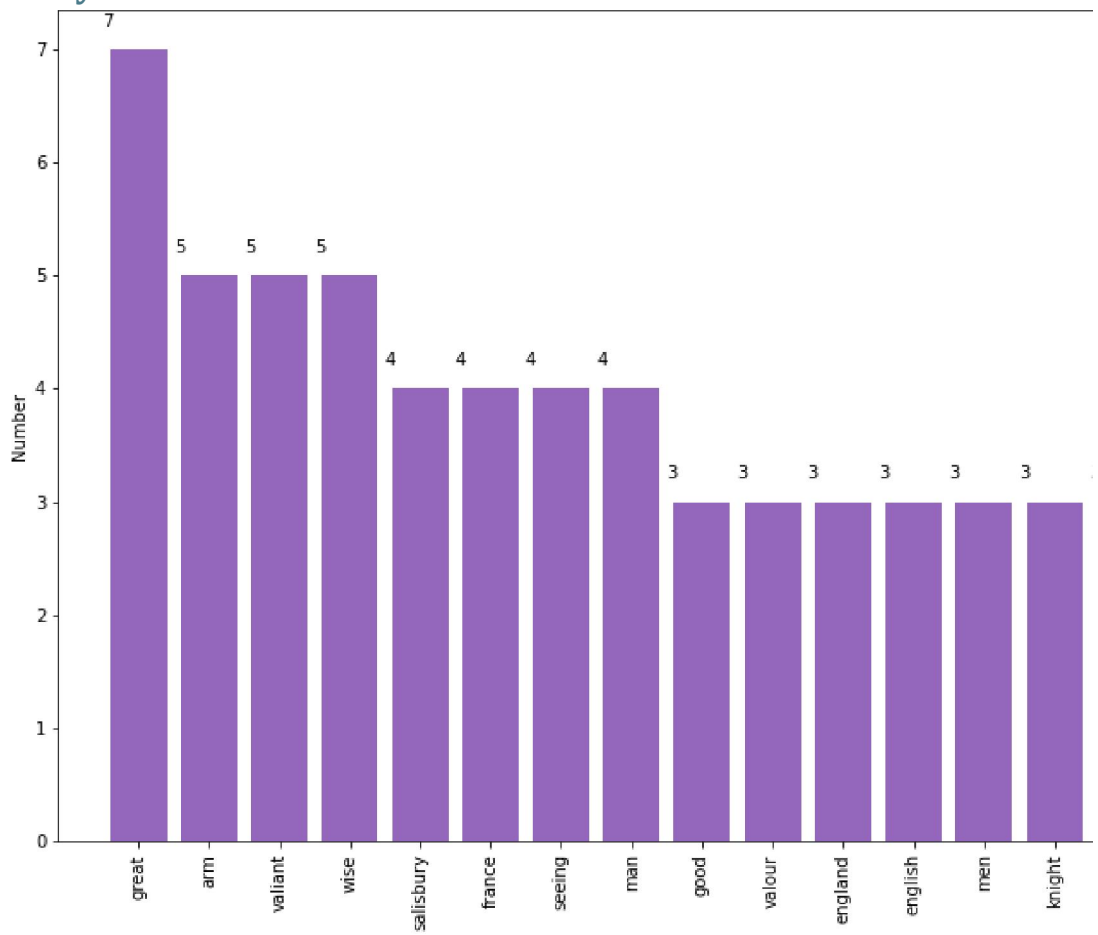
Most common words used in chronicle accounts concerning noble reputation under Henry IV

Henry V



Most common words used in chronicle accounts concerning noble reputation under Henry V

Henry VI



Most common words used in parliamentary records concerning noble reputation under Henry VI

Language analysis using: NUMPY (van der Walt, Colbert & Varoquaux 2011)
MATPLOTLIB (Hunter 2007) and PANDAS (McKinney 2010) python libraries. We made use of jupyter notebook/ jupyterlab (Kluyver et al. 2016). For the list of stopwords, lemmatization and tokenization we used NLTK (Natural Language Tool Kit, Bird et al. 2009). van der Walt S., Colbert S. C., Varoquaux G., 2011, Comput. Sci. Eng., 13, 22, J. D. Hunter, "Matplotlib: A 2D Graphics Environment", Computing in Science & Engineering, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 90-95, 2007.
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Author = {Thomas Kluyver and Benjamin Ragan-Kelley and Fernando P{\'e}rez and Brian Granger and Matthias Bussonnier and Jonathan Frederic and Kyle Kelley and Jessica Hamrick and Jason Grout and Sylvain Corlay and Paul Ivanov and Dami{\'a}n Avila and Safia Abdalla and Carol Willing},
Booktitle = {Positioning and Power in Academic Publishing: Players, Agents and Agendas},
Editor = {F. Loizides and B. Schmidt},
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doi = {10.5281/zenodo.3509134},
url = {https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3509134}} Bird, Steven, Edward Loper and Ewan Klein (2009). Natural Language Processing with Python. O'Reilly Media Inc. https://github.com/nltk/nltk

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