

**CHIVALRY AND WARS OF THE ROSES**  
**AN ANALYSIS OF THE ACTIONS OF ENGLISH KNIGHTHOOD WHILE AT WAR**  
**FROM 1455 TO 1485**

**Thesis**  
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## ABSTRACT

Despite a significant amount of authorship regarding both the Wars of the Roses and fifteenth century chivalry, there is little analysis of actual recorded behavior of English knights on and around the battlefield. This study explores contemporary English concepts of the chivalric qualities specific to combat, generally classified as prowess, loyalty, tactical knowledge, and wrath, as chivalric didactic texts as well as the medieval romance. These qualities are then weighed against medieval just war theorist's concepts of how war should be fought. Specifically, the writings of Honoré Bonet are used as a focus, along with Christine de Pisan, who draws on Bonet heavily in her own writings. This thesis then applies those chivalric concepts and "laws of war" to the actions recorded in contemporary chronicles and letters. Of the seventeen incidents which might be considered battles, only four are thought to have surviving eye witness accounts, those being, both battles at St. Albans, Barnet, and Tewksbury. These battles serve as the primary focus for this analysis, however where relevant, other points of exemplary or deplorable chivalric behavior are discussed as well. This analysis finds three core trends regarding the chivalric behavior of English knights. First, English nobility were still very much aware of chivalric expectations on the battlefield. Second, with the exception of loyalty, as defined by the crown and the 1352 statute on treason, English knights conducted themselves within contemporary chivalric standards. Finally, the English knighthood operated within the bounds of *jus in bellum*, as they were understood at the time. This thesis contributes to the existing body of literature regarding the status of chivalry during the mid to late fifteenth century, exploring where chivalric standards were maintained and where they were abandoned on and around the battlefields of England, specifically from 1455 to 1485.

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For  
Christina, Malcolm, Bella, and little Augustine

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

“These were evil days for England. The Crown was beggarly, the nobles rich.”

--Winston Churchill, *The Birth of Britain*, 1956

Many have heard of the Wars of the Roses, though their exposure is often tied to Shakespeare’s histories or perhaps the unfortunate first season of *Black Adder*. Though these mediums may retell history from the apologist or comedic perspective, the actual events which occurred in England in the second half of the fifteenth century did not occur in a vacuum and would shape England for centuries. Those fighting in the Wars did so during a complex period of change occurring across Europe. Humanism was very slowly gaining influence, eroding the more traditional chivalric values which continued to hold powerful sway.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, across Europe, the very face of war was changing as both Burgundy and France drastically increased the number of infantry at their disposal and maintained them as a permanent force.<sup>2</sup> England was not to be left out of this changing landscape. A general decline in numbers of the English knighthood throughout the fifteenth century resulted in those of lesser social status taking a larger role in filling the ranks of England’s armies, bringing an altogether new flavor to war.<sup>3</sup>

But what were the Wars of the Roses? Very simply put, they were three periods of

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Ferguson, *The Indian Summer of English Chivalry* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1960), 75.

<sup>2</sup> Philippe Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages*, trans. Michael Jones (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1990), 134-136.

<sup>3</sup> K.B. McFarlane, *The Nobility of Later Medieval England: The Ford Lectures of 1953 and Related Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 142-171. McFarlane provides an excellent section in this book (Appendix B, 172) which outlines the decline in numbers of the English nobility.

conflict that comprised a single civil war in England, from 1455 to roughly 1485.<sup>4</sup> There were primarily two sides: the Lancastrians, commonly represented by a red rose; and the Yorkists, represented by the white. A third side, the Tudors, arose at the very end of the conflict, ultimately winning the crown in 1485 and holding it until 1603 and the death of Elizabeth I. “The broken sequence of battles, murders, executions, and armed clashes between neighbors” is often generalized as exceptionally brutal, with an underlying implication that the English nobility and knighthood had somehow lost all sense of reason, abandoning all pretense of chivalric behavior, in pursuit of the crown.<sup>5</sup> It is important to note however that while this civil war lasted for thirty years, the fighting was sporadic at best and England enjoyed long stretches of peace during this time.<sup>6</sup>

- Historiography -

The most significant challenge in unravelling the mysteries surrounding the Wars of the Roses is in regard to the surviving contemporary source material. To quote Christine Carpenter, “no coherent account of the politics of the Wars of the Roses could be written from chronicle evidence alone; to a great extent, all that could be produced from there is a purposeless list of events.”<sup>7</sup> To augment the sparse number of surviving chronicles, only a few collections of personal letters have been found to provide insight into the thoughts of those involved in the

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<sup>4</sup> The first period of conflict was from roughly 1455 to 1461, the second from 1469 to 1471, and the third from roughly 1483 to 1485. While it can be debated when the Wars of the Roses truly ended, for the purpose of this thesis, we assess the end at 1485 as this is the last time the crown would change hands. More will be said on this in Chapter Two.

<sup>5</sup> K.B. McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1981), 231.

<sup>6</sup> Philippe de Commines, on visiting England stated: “England enjoyed a peculiar mercy above all other kingdoms, that neither the country nor the people, nor the houses were waisted, destroyed, or demolished...[and the] calamities and misfortunes of the war fell only upon the soldiers.”; Ben Lowe, *Imagining Peace* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 56.

<sup>7</sup> Christine Carpenter, *The Wars of the Roses: Politics and the Constitution in England, C. 1437 - 1509*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 5.



fighting, and none of these were of the great magnates.<sup>8</sup>

Of those few surviving chronicles, the *Hearne's Fragment*, the *Arrival of Edward IV*, and the Chronicles of *Warkworth*, *Bale*, *Benet*, and *Gregory*, all of Yorkist bias, served as the foundation for this work and provide the contemporary record of events.<sup>9</sup> Of the few non-Yorkist accounts available, Polydore Vergil's is perhaps the most useful. However, Vergil did not witness the war first hand, but wrote his account during Henry VII's sixteenth century reign.<sup>10</sup> His text is decidedly apologist in nature, in favor of the Lancastrian side of the conflict. Our challenge then, lies in those few lines of text within these chronicles that describe the actions and behaviors of English knighthood in and around the battlefield, while avoiding the biases of the authors. Specifically, we attempt to draw out where chroniclers ascribe characteristics to combatants on the field as well as where they specifically associate great successes for failures in what can be described as chivalric expectations. These works must be used with caution and are often called "ill-informed and unreliable," when used to reconstruct the events of campaigns or individual battles.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, we will primarily draw from the four surviving eyewitness accounts of battles.<sup>12</sup> These sources, however bias, are the ones that survive, and so it is these that must be cautiously drawn on to establish the events of the Wars of the Roses.

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<sup>8</sup> K.B. McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, op. cit., 231.; The Paston, Stonor, and Plumpton letters are the primary collections we have today, though there are collections from immediately before, regarding England's loss of its French possessions, specifically between the Duke of Somerset and Henry VI. But while these may shed light on how English holdings were lost, they are of little value beyond "cause" with regard to the Wars of the Roses.

<sup>9</sup> The primary limitation on the author revolved around finding adequate available translations. See the bibliography for a full listing of primary sources used. There many other chronicles, such as the Chronicles of London, that provide dates and a brief description, but little else. So too, there are a few surviving compilations of poems and letters that also provide some context and flavor to the events of the late fifteenth century.

<sup>10</sup> Christine Carpenter, op. cit., 5.

<sup>11</sup> A.J. Pollard, *The Wars of the Roses: British History in Perspective*, 3rd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 3.

<sup>12</sup> Charles Ross, *The Wars of the Roses* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 109.

Augmenting these chronicles are those collections of letters from the Pastons and Stonors along with some few political poems that have survived. It is these collections that reshaped scholar's views of the fifteenth century. While early scholars such as Stubbs and Plummer saw fifteenth century England as a place of constant strife, these letters instead indicated that "most people went about their daily business undisturbed by the Wars of the Roses."<sup>13</sup> But these letters and poems are valuable beyond simply the insights they provide into the life of English gentry. On occasion, when the war does protrude in their personal lives, brief commentary arises that provides insight into how they view the actions of their betters. It is these brief glimpses that this thesis attempts to draw on to add context to the analysis of chivalric expectations.

This reduction of the historical record did not dissuade historians, however, and in the second half of the nineteenth century professional historians began to write at length about the period.<sup>14</sup> William Stubbs and Charles Plummer serve as the mainstays of that first generation of scholars focused on the fifteenth century, with Plummer coining the phrase "bastard feudalism."<sup>15</sup> These authors saw England as a gloomy place of constant conflict, mired with a failing monarchy. For them, this failure was tied inextricably with a failure of the king to properly align with parliament and an allowance of overmighty subjects to sway men to their cause with coin.<sup>16</sup>

As a result of these early Whig historians, a variety of schools of thought emerged to

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<sup>13</sup> Christine Carpenter, ed., *Kingsford's Stonor Letters and Papers 1290-1483*, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 11.

<sup>14</sup> Christine Carpenter, *The Wars of the Roses*, op. cit., 6.; Christine Carpenter provides an excellent historiography of early scholarship of the Wars of the Roses, on which I have drawn heavily.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.; Bastard feudalism is an alteration in feudal practice between a noble or king and a subordinate, primarily seen in England. In practice it saw those of lesser standing serve in private, civil, or military positions for pay rather than because of feudal obligation. As the Hundred Years War dragged on and men were needed for new campaigns in France, these relationships became common.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-9.

challenge their assertions. The first of these was the Manchester school of medievalists epitomized in T.F. Tout.<sup>17</sup> He assessed that the nobility was attempting to control the monarchy by forcing it to operation through the “more institutionalized” part so the government, thus preventing despotism emerging from the monarchy.<sup>18</sup> Another was the “efficiency” school of thought whereby Henry VII and VIII were celebrated, in direct contrast to the Whig assertion that they were despots. A.F. Pollard saw these kings as efficient bureaucrats, if controlling. The last school to arise in the early twentieth century, included those historians who focused on the law. F.W. Maitland stands out as the leading figure in this school, and focused on English common law, actively attempting to avoid anachronistic influences.<sup>19</sup>

Scholars struggled against Stubbs’ paradigm of the fifteenth century until the mid-twentieth century. K.B. McFarlane provided that new paradigm, slowly disaggregating “bastard feudalism” and replacing it with an objective view of the relationships between the king, his nobles, and the commons. Carpenter assesses that his greatest contribution may, in fact, be the re-envisioning of retainers. Instead of seeing these individuals as thugs, McFarlane highlights the normality of their relationship with their betters.<sup>20</sup> So too, McFarlane challenged earlier ideas that power was centralized, either in the king or overmighty nobles, stating,

The interdependence of magnates and gentry meant that the English body politic in the later middle ages was a complex organism and it would be doing no service to truth to emphasize the share of any one part in the working of the whole. Power was not concentrated in the hands of a few. It was distributed among kings, magnates, and commons in various and varying degrees...<sup>21</sup>

McFarlane’s “local history approach” provided a new framework for historians to employ

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<sup>17</sup> Of note, Carpenter states that Tout was the first modern historian in England to personally dive into the English archives in search of new information versus relying on previously printed material.

<sup>18</sup> Christine Carpenter, *The Wars of the Roses*: op. cit., 11.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-13.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-17.

<sup>21</sup> K.B. McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century* op. cit., 20.

and greatly influenced “new military history” with its emphasis on war and society.<sup>22</sup>

Following McFarlane’s example in objectivity and with the view that the fifteenth century is worthy of study in its own right, the second half of the twentieth century has provided much additional scholarship on the Wars of the Roses. Christine Carpenter has led the efforts to expand our understanding of late medieval governance in England, and how it influenced and was influenced by landholders. Her focus on the interrelation of English national politics with the shires has provided additional clarity to the confusing records of fifteenth century England. Charles Ross’ scholarship provided the first in depth look at the Yorkist kings and their politics, and was followed by historians such as Paul Kendall and Rosemary Horrox. Their works offer key insights not only into the conflict periods of the Wars of the Roses, but also into those much longer periods of peace. AJ Pollard joined Charles Oman in expanding this to include in depth studies of George Neville, Earl of Warwick, and both Pollard and Michael Hicks have provided fresh analysis on the character of the wars and their importance in British history in each of their *Wars of the Roses*.<sup>23</sup>

Beyond the pure histories of the Wars of the Roses, much has been written on topics along the periphery. Sylvia Thrupp led the way in analyzing English urban life, focusing on London’s merchants, while Maurice Keen (among his many other works), engaged in the study of English gentry and their place in English society. Both of these served to expand the understanding of that “complex organism,” McFarlane spoke of, and how these classes saw themselves and their role in England. H.S. Bennett explored English publications in the late fifteenth century, providing key insights into what readers in England were ingesting.

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<sup>22</sup> Brian Price, emailed to Sam Fishburne, Fort Leavenworth, KS, November 8, 2017.

<sup>23</sup> In this case, both authors have produced a separate book, entitled *The Wars of the Roses*. Both provide unique perspectives on the causes and relevance of the wars, and are excellent. Indeed, Charles Ross also provides a title by this name, and Carpenter does as well, though with a subtitle.

Catherine Nall's work has taken this to its next logical step, evaluating how those texts may have influenced English thought, as humanist values slowly replaced the chivalric.

Of equal importance to those studies focusing in depth on aspects of English development are those which place fifteenth century England in contexts with the rest of Europe. The earliest generation of professional historians to focus on the evolution of military forces broadly across Europe was led by the likes of Hans Delbrück and Charles Oman.<sup>24</sup> Following these early scholars, J.R. Hale focused specifically on Europe's transition from the medieval to the renaissance in his works *The Civilisation of Europe in the Renaissance* and *War and Society in Renaissance Europe 1450 – 1620*. These works provide insights into how large-scale changes in military structures in Europe, to include the creation of standing armies, impacted Europe broadly across society.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, Hale explores why England was so hesitant to follow suit in the creation of a standing army.<sup>26</sup> Most recently, Clifford Rogers has led the way in offering new contributions to the debate regarding the "military revolution." Roger's assesses that the significant military structural changes occurring across Europe in the sixteenth century, have their roots steeped strongly in the early fourteenth, during the Hundred Years War. Specifically, he highlights the ascendance of the commoner as the backbone of victory in English armies during the first half of this war. These victories eventually led to French reforms.<sup>27</sup> Both Charles VII and Louis the XI drastically increased the number of infantry at France's disposal and maintained them as a permanent force. So too, Charles the Bold spent a great deal to hire

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<sup>24</sup> Clifford Rogers, "The Military Revolutions of the Hundred Years War," in *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings on Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 57.

<sup>25</sup> J.R. Hale, *War and Society in Renaissance Europe 1450-1620* (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 65-68.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.; Hale asserts that the common Englishman associated a standing army with tyrannical rule as well as being an unnecessary tax burden.

<sup>27</sup> Clifford Rogers, *op. cit.*, 58-61.

additional infantry to oppose the French and also maintained these as a permanent force.<sup>28</sup> These authors and their work places the Wars of the Roses into a broader context of European transition, both militarily and politically.

There are few words today that can compete with “chivalry” for the trophy of most loaded term. Popular culture and Hollywood has mired it in either anachronistic romance or violence. Indeed, it would be very difficult to argue other than chivalry meant many things to the people of the fifteenth century, or any other century for that matter. However, it is my challenge in this thesis to attempt to distill that complex ethos into a usable format that may be measurable. Therefore, this thesis is strongly anchored in those late fourteenth and fifteenth century texts with which the English of the period would have been familiar.

To understand the chivalric ideal, two romances have been selected, *Guy of Warwick*, and *Le Morte Dearthur*. Dating from the early thirteenth century, *Guy of Warwick* remained popular through the fifteenth century, and was put into print by William Caxton.<sup>29</sup> Its hero, an Englishman, provides the ideal example of the knight errant, in pursuit of renown.<sup>30</sup> Sir Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte Dearthur* stands as perhaps the greatest piece of literature to come out of fifteenth century England. Written from an English prison cell, as the Wars of the Roses occurred, Malory provides his reader with a unique look into the mind of a fifteenth century

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<sup>28</sup> Philippe Contamine, op. cit., 134-136.

<sup>29</sup> H.S. Bennett, *English Books and Readers: 1475-1557: Being a Study in the History of the Book Trade from Caxton to the Incorporation of the Stationers' Company*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 300.; Brian R. Price, Yron and Stele: Chivalric Ethos, Martial Pedagogy, Equipment and Combat Technique in the Early Fourteenth Century Middle English Version of *Guy of Warwick* (*Journal of Medieval History* #16, forthcoming, 2018), 1.

<sup>30</sup> *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* defines renown as a “fact or condition of being widely celebrated.” This definition is suitable for the purpose of defining medieval renown, with one addendum. For the purpose of the medieval knight, there renown was heavily steeped in their prowess, or ability to fight and win. While there were other aspects for which one could be famous, most scholars will agree that renown for high prowess was the most sought-after form or renown.

knight.<sup>31</sup>

Romances, however instructive, only show the ideal, and so they must be weighed against the practical. For this perspective we turn to the knights themselves, specifically those who left behind didactic texts written on how knights should implement the chivalric ethos. The first of these is Richard Kaeuper and Elspeth Kennedy's exceptional translation of Geoffroi de Charny's *Book of Chivalry*. Though French, Charny's work is the benchmark for late medieval chivalry.<sup>32</sup> Next is Raymon Llull's *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*. Written in the late thirteenth century, this text experienced remarkable staying power as it was copied in manuscript form many times through the centuries, and saw publication multiple times by Caxton as late as early sixteenth century. Both of these texts stand as paragons of what Keen calls, "written specifically for the instruction of the knighthood."<sup>33</sup> William Worchester's *The Boke of Noblesse* must also be included in any discussion regarding fifteenth century English chivalry. A uniquely English contribution, this text had two purposes. Its first was indeed to serve as an instructional text to the knighthood, however, its second purpose was more political; attempting to inspire Edward IV to campaign in France to regain lost English possessions.<sup>34</sup> Finally, Vegetius' *De re militari*, though not written for the medieval knight specifically, was certainly read and shaped how armies were employed.<sup>35</sup> For an accurate translation of the original work we rely on N.P. Milner's *Vegetius: Epitome of Military Science*. But, we cannot rely entirely on Milner's work. There were variations produced within the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries that must

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<sup>31</sup> Edward Hicks, *Sir Thomas Malory: His Turbulent Career* (New York: Octagon Books, 1975), 32.

<sup>32</sup> Geoffroi De Charny, *The Book of Chivalry: Text, Context, and Translation*, trans. Richard Kaeuper and Elspeth Kennedy (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 3.

<sup>33</sup> Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (London: Yale University Press, 1984), 6.

<sup>34</sup> Isaac Levitan, ed., *The Boke of Noblesse* (San Bernardino: Editoria Griffio, n.d.), 3.

<sup>35</sup> Vegetius, *Vegetius: Epitome of Military Science*, 2nd ed., trans. N.P. Milner (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996), xiii.

be employed, if we are to have an accurate picture of Vegetius' usefulness. Therefore, when analyzing tactics of the Wars of the Roses, the fifteenth century verse paraphrase *Knyghthode and Bataile* edited by Dyboski and Arend, as well as Christine de Pisan's *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyvalrye* must be brought to bear in the analysis. Both of these texts draw heavily from Vegetius' work and both offer slight changes to the text which must be considered when evaluating tactics.

Finally, as a large part of chivalric practice centered on the conduct of war, it is only appropriate to look at medieval concepts of both *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bellum*. For an understanding of early medieval thought, Frederick Russell's *The Just War in the Middle Ages* provides an exceptional look into early medieval thought on the issues. Russell asserts that the efforts of the church and other medieval scholars to restrain warfare through canon law may have served to limit the violence. Ben Lowe's *Imagining Peace*, is representative of the opposing view that valiant efforts by peace movements and canon lawyers had no appreciable impact on war making. Maurice Keen's *The Laws of War in the Late Middle Ages* is a second seminal work and pursues the topic from a different angle all together. Keen assesses that medieval attempts to formalize laws of war stemmed from a desire to ensure "that one's enemies were going to observe the rules of the game," allowing the knighthood to pursue profit in warfare with less risk.<sup>36</sup> For contemporary sources, a most excellent source is found in Honoré Bonet's *The Tree of Battles*. Bonet's work provides insights into the complexities of the medieval battlefield through the myriad of situations provided, that require rulings. Christine de Pisan, as with Vegetius, pulled strongly from Bonet's work in *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyvalrye*. As with so many medieval authors, Christine slightly alters Bonet's words to account for her

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<sup>36</sup> Maurice Keen, *The Laws of War in the Late Middle Ages* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), 3-4.



own insights and judgments, uniquely relevant to her time.

More so than the Wars of the Roses, chivalry as a subject of study has long been a specific focus of scholarship. The earliest writers, such as Léon Gautier saw the ideal within medieval literature and chronicles. It was this early literature that would fuel European and American imaginations for the knight in shining armor, saving a damsel in distress.<sup>37</sup> The mid twentieth century, however, saw a new perspective emerge, steeped in the analysis of social force throughout history. Their analysis took on a darker view of medieval life, emphasizing the cultural tensions that existed in medieval society and highlighted chivalry as a driver of much of the violence and instability. Johan Huizinga, a leader in this school of thought, wrote of this life,

The people could not perceive their own fates and the events of their time other than as a continuous succession of economic mishandling, exploitation, war and robbery, inflation, want, and pestilence. The chronic form that war tended to take, the constant threats to the town and the country from all kinds of dangerous riffraff, the eternal threat from a harsh and unreliable administration of justice...nourished a feeling of general insecurity that tended to paint life's background in dark colors.<sup>38</sup>

Richard Kaeuper in his 1999 landmark work, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe*, provided the next analytical step in this school of thought, arguing that chivalry did not serve to restrain violence, but instead celebrated and encouraged it.<sup>39</sup>

Roughly at the same time, another group of scholars provided an alternative to the “chivalry justifies violence” school of thought. These scholars were led by Richard Barber, Sydney Anglo, D’Arcy Boulton and Maurice Keen.<sup>40</sup> Keen’s seminal work, *Chivalry* stands as the example *par excellence* for this school of thought. This group of scholars focused on the

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<sup>37</sup> Brian R. Price, “Craig Taylor’s Chivalry and the Ideals of Knighthood in France during the Hundred Years War,” *Journal of Military History* (Apr. 2015), 476-7.

<sup>38</sup> Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans. Rodney Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 27.

<sup>39</sup> Brian R. Price, “Craig Taylor,” op. cit. (Apr. 2015), 476-7.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 476-7.

“binding elements of chivalric culture,” avoiding earlier over-romanticizing of chivalry, or the overt condemnation espoused by Huizinga and others. Keen and those of similar interpretation have inspired scholars such as Juliet Barker and Elspeth Kennedy, who have provided nuanced study of English feats of arms.<sup>41</sup> So too, Nigel Saul has provided a useful work on English Chivalry over time, however, his chapters on the late 15<sup>th</sup> century focus more on the chivalric revival at court versus an analysis of actions on the battlefield.<sup>42</sup>

- Methodology -

This thesis follows a historical approach, aiming to explore how the English knights conducted themselves on the battlefields of the Wars of the Roses. Did English nobility abandon chivalric conduct on the battlefield, or did they maintain its general precepts? Did chivalry help guide their decisions in battle, or were there other, more important factors? To accomplish this, we must explore contemporary English concepts of how war and combat should be fought. This will be accomplished by first triangulating multiple source types related to and influencing the chivalric paradigm.

First, an in-depth examination of the romances is required, and as noted previously, two have been chosen as a test sample: *Guy of Warwick* (well known in the fifteenth century) and *Le Morte Darthur*. Romances provide their readers with the ideal, the pinnacle of what an individual should aspire to. This is both a strength and weakness of the romance, making identification of those chivalric traits easy, but depicting chivalry as it *should be* in the writer’s opinion. The reader must be cautious and understand that reality will always fall short of the ideal. Indeed, “works of fiction should be seen as responses to obsessions, instincts, and tensions...” and understanding this allows us to place the ideals of chivalry within the greater context of the

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<sup>41</sup> Brian R. Price, “Craig Taylor,” op. cit.

<sup>42</sup> Nigel Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 325.

societal tensions of the Wars of the Roses.<sup>43</sup> Focusing specifically on chivalric traits and behavior in combat within these romances, these characteristics will be compared with those traits admired in the second source type, what might be termed “chivalric manuals.” This thesis will draw upon those didactic manuscripts described earlier in this chapter, those Maurice Keen describes as, “written specifically for the instruction of the knighthood.”<sup>44</sup> These texts provide their readers with the ideal characteristics of a knight, but steeped in the practicalities of medieval life and warfare. Written by knights, for others to follow, these treatises on knighthood provide the knight aspirant with those qualities expected of him by his peers, both on the battlefield, and off.

These first two source types allow us to balance the ideal with the practical in an attempt to narrow down the qualities expected from an English knight in combat. But, as with land navigation, a “cut” is generally not enough to get you to where you are going, and so we need a third source type to provide a “fix.” This third source type comes in the form of an exploration and analysis of medieval thought regarding *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bellum*. These scholars provide insight into the medieval mind with regard to legalities of declaring war as well as how that war should be fought. To understand these theories this thesis will survey their evolution and then focus on Honoré Bonet’s *Tree of Battles* and other derivative works to place English actions in context. The challenge with these sources center on the reality that most of those writing on these theories never set foot on a battlefield during the fighting.<sup>45</sup> However, unlike most other canon lawyers, Bonet was known to associate with knights, providing him with additional

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<sup>43</sup> Danielle Regnier-Bohler, “Imagining the Self,” in *A History of Private Life*, ed. George Duby and Philippe Aries, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1988), 315.

<sup>44</sup> Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* op. cit., 6.

<sup>45</sup> Christine de Pisan is one such author, however, she drew heavily on Bonet’s work and likely benefited from many of his own insights, gleaned while associated with armies.

insights into warfare and the laws that should govern it, that his contemporaries may not have had access too.<sup>46</sup>

Finally, once this triangulation is complete, this thesis must measure the decided upon chivalric ideals against the actions of English knighthood. For this, we must turn to the chronicles and letters which record the Wars of the Roses. As discussed earlier, surviving chronicles demonstrate strong pro-Yorkist leanings that must be taken into account. Additionally, the quality of these chronicles is often commented on as “ill-informed and unreliable,” with regard to the records of battle.<sup>47</sup> With this in mind, this thesis will focus only on those battles that are assessed as having produced eyewitness accounts. Commentaries found in surviving letters must also be brought to bear to minimize known bias.

For the purposes of this work, the author was limited in the source material available to those that have either been translated to English or were originally written in Middle English. This had unfortunate effect of removing from the source pool several English chronicles, written in either French or Latin, to include the MS. Rawlinson B. and MS. Tanner chronicles. This also applies to the primary texts used for *Guy of Warwick* and Bonet’s *Tree of Battle*. In each case, the author attempts to highlight the where translations are relied on and the manuscript that translation is based upon.

- Framework -

Before we can begin an analysis of the actions of English knighthood, we must understand the theories and facts surrounding the Wars of the Roses as well as understand how the Wars proceeded. The second chapter surveys the entirety of The Wars of the Roses, starting

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<sup>46</sup> Honoré Bonet, *The Tree of Battles of Honoré Bonet*, trans. G.W. Coopland (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1949), 21, 15-21.

<sup>47</sup> A.J. Pollard, op. cit., 3.

with most accepted causes and proceeding to the timeline of the war itself, shedding light on the complexities of the war. It highlights the changing and progressive nature of each of the individual periods of conflict within the Wars of the Roses, specifically, moving away from a reform based conflict to a dynastic one.<sup>48</sup> It also provides some insight and context for the shifting alliances in England during the second half of the fifteenth century. It is with these complexities in mind that we can begin to shape an analysis of the knighthood's actions during periods of open war.

The third chapter will begin to dive into the immense task of defining English chivalry in the fifteenth century, specifically associated with combat and warfare. It begins with an in-depth analysis of combat as portrayed in the medieval romance. Specifically, we have selected *Guy of Warwick*, a well-known contemporary romance which focuses on an English paragon of chivalry, and Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte Dearthur*, written by Malory from a jail cell in the fifteenth century. This chapter then explores how the chivalric traits prized within the romance align with those priced in those didactic texts written by the knights themselves. This chapter concludes with an initial assessment of what chivalry was in England, which is then carried into Chapter Four for further analysis.

The fourth chapter reviews the state of medieval just war theory beginning with Augustus and proceeding forward to the late fourteenth century Benedictine monk and canon lawyer, Honoré Bonet.<sup>49</sup> This chapter is structured to allow a comparison of the main themes in just war theory over time, climaxing with an analysis of Honoré Bonet's work and where, if at all, it

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<sup>48</sup> Specifically, it can be argued that Richard, Duke of York did not seek to overthrow Henry VI, only to replace his advisors with himself and his allies. He clearly sought the crown upon Henry VI's death, though he did not actively seek that death. With York's death at Wakefield however, the tenor of the Wars of the Roses shifted to that of a dynastic struggle.

<sup>49</sup> Zeynep CeCen, "Interpreting Warfare and Knighthood in Late Medieval France: Writers and Their Sources in the Reign of King Charles VI" (diss., Ihsam Dogramaci Bilkent University, 2012), 3.

differed from earlier theorists and how his work aligns with chivalry as a behavioral paradigm. Simultaneously, we summarize the theories of *jus in bellum* through time as these two topics are interwoven throughout the writings of medieval scholars. These restrictions on how war is to be fought is where we focus the most, highlighting the complexities of late medieval law regarding *jus in bellum* and how this aligns with chivalric practice.

The fifth chapter applies the final layer of the analysis, placing those chivalric traits determined to be key in battle to the test against the surviving eye witness accounts from the Wars of the Roses. Specifically, we target the First and Second Battles of St. Albans, Barnet, and Tewksbury. Each battle is recounted with as much detail as can be found, and is followed with a detailed analysis of the actions of English knights present. Because there is more to battle than simply fighting, this analysis covers the events immediately leading to combat, and immediately after. In addition to those chivalric traits demonstrated or not by the knighthood, their actions are also viewed through the legal lens of Bonet to determine if those actions on the battlefield might have been seen as licit. The final chapter offers a summary of the findings of the previous chapters and provides a consolidated analysis and conclusion regarding the chivalric behavior of the English knighthood.

The scholarship surrounding the Wars of the Roses is continually broadening in scope. As Christine Carpenter points out, much of this is due to MacFarlane's efforts to prove the period was worth study in its own right, and has much to offer. However, while it is often said to be a period full of treacherous behavior, to this point there has been no focused analysis into how or if chivalry was put into practice during the fight. This work attempts to take that first step, through an analysis of those influential treatises that instruct chivalric behavior, medieval legal

thought on war, and ultimately weighing the actions of English knighthood against those chivalric expectations.

## Chapter 2

### THE WARS OF THE ROSES: THE STORY OF LANCASTER AND YORK

“In this yere the xxij day of [May] was the first bataile at Seint Albanes, and there was slayne the duke of Somerset, therle of Northumberland, the lord Clifford, and a knight called S. Barthilmeu Nantwesil, and xxv squyers, with other people, which were buried there.”

--Stephen Foster, Mayer of London, *A chronicle of London*, c.1455

It is easy to generalize the English civil war waged from 1455 to 1485 as a period when lawless nobles pursued their own ambitions for power through constant bloody war. In reality though, his conflict was more complex than is commonly accepted. Its origins are mired in a fog of political manifestos, incomplete or biased chronicles, and apologist accounts of events, leading historians argue for decades on the true causes of the wars. Hosts of contributing factors have been identified as the reason for the ultimate outbreak of war. But while the causes are perhaps the most argued factors of the Wars of the Roses, this work seeks to explore the behavior of those nobles, knights, and gentry while on campaign. As such, both the causes and the resultant conflict must be reviewed in order to have a clear understanding of the political and military environment in which these men found themselves.

One such cause, economic recession, might certainly be considered a factor. Michael Hicks asserts that with the conclusion of the Black Death (1348-9), the English economy, along with much of Europe, experienced deep recession.<sup>50</sup> In England, this recession hit its lowest point, known as the *Great Slump*, from 1440 to 1480.<sup>51</sup> And while protectionist policies were

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<sup>50</sup> Michael Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 49.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 50. Hicks is drawing on three texts on fifteenth century economics to make this assertion. Those of P. Nightingale's 'England and the European Depression of the Mid-Fifteenth Century' as found in the *Journal of European Economic History*, Hatcher and Britnell's *Progress and Problems in Medieval England*, and Britnell's chapter in *Wars*, edited by A.J. Pollard.



implemented in an attempt to prevent currency from leaving the country, there was little Henry VI's government could do to truly control the economy. This, however, did not stop the population from blaming his government from their plight.<sup>52</sup> This economic recession has led others to speculate that perhaps the great magnates of England sought profit through war to make up for their decreasing income from rents. However, K.B. McFarlane's analysis in *England in the Fifteenth Century* casts doubt on this reasoning, showing that the principle great magnates involved were, in fact, wealthier than their fathers had been.

A second contributing factor is the English military defeat in France during the Hundred Years' War and the loss of English prestige that went with it. This war is invariably linked with the treat of 1259 which established that the kings of England owed homage to the kings of France for Gascony.<sup>53</sup> This awkward relationship, combined with French King Phillip VI's interference in England's war with Scotland eventually led to war between England and France in 1337. In this war England experienced a string of victories to include those at Crecy (1346), Poitiers (1356), and Agincourt (1415).<sup>54</sup>

Between the years 1435 and 1449, there was a brief peace in this conflict, and during this time the English army in France languished. This of course did not occur all at once, but as a result of a series of decisions made by both Henry VI and Parliament. The result was an underpaid force of inexperienced English soldiers both lacking proper supplies and attempting to hold Northern France against a reorganized and well armed French army. The year 1449 marked the beginning of the end of English holdings in France with the English occupying the Breton

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<sup>52</sup> Michael Hicks, op. cit., 49-55.

<sup>53</sup> G. Templeman, "Edward III and the Beginnings of the Hundred Years War," in *The Wars of Edward III*, ed. Clifford Rogers (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1999), 231-35; *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "The United Kingdom: The 14th Century," accessed October 21, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/place/United-Kingdom/Social-economic-and-cultural-change#ref482833>.

<sup>54</sup> G. Templeman, op. cit., 246. 246.

castle of Fougères. This did not sit well with Brittany or France, and France resumed open war. In a series of letters between The Duke of Somerset and Henry VI, Somerset believed that he could resolve the issue, however, Henry would not allow it.<sup>55</sup> The French swept across Northern France rapidly retaking all but Calais.<sup>56</sup>

Another discussed cause for the outbreak of hostilities was the existence of liveried and maintained forces by the magnates themselves.<sup>57</sup> These forces served as the nucleus of any fighting force. It was comprised of a lord's personal household, and might be "scores strong for barons and hundreds for dukes."<sup>58</sup> Most commonly called upon when a magnate wished to make a show of power, these forces were present routinely in the fifteenth century during parliaments and other councils, though as McFarlane points out, without coming to blows. Their existence perhaps sped up the process of mobilization, however, given the demonstrated restraint showed by the nobility in the period leading up to 1460 and the battle at Northampton, it seems unlikely that the mere presence of these forces served as a cause for conflict.

These liveried and maintained forces are also tied to another secondary cause, often credited with the outbreak of the war: personal revenge, which might be further tied to private war. In general terms, the argument is that, if these standing personal armies had not existed, it would have been difficult for the nobility to pursue their grievances upon each other. There is recorded tension between the Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of Warwick. The Duke of Suffolk, as reported in the Paston Letters, usurped the Duke of Norfolk's influence in some of his territory,

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<sup>55</sup> Joseph Stevenson, ed., *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars of the English in France During the Reign of Henry the Sixth King of England Volume 1* (1857; repr., Memphis: General Books, 2012), 94-104.

<sup>56</sup> Michael Hicks, op. cit., 2012), 59-61.

<sup>57</sup> K.B. McFarlane, *England in the Fifteenth Century* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1981), 239.

<sup>58</sup> Michael Hicks, op. cit., 29.

and used that influence to place his own people in power.<sup>59</sup> The Earl of Devon and Sir William Bonville both held stewardship of the Duchy of Cornwall, leading to a feud. In Bedfordshire, riot broke on in 1437 due to the Grey/Fanhope feud, resulting in eighteen deaths.<sup>60</sup> There were many such rivalries, however, the most prominent was certainly between Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York and Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset. This particular rivalry ties three of our causes together, the third being the above discussed loss of English possessions in France, specifically, the Duke of York's loss to his sizable appanage and other possessions in Normandy.<sup>61</sup> Given the rapid retaking of the land by the French army, it was argued that Somerset had surrendered without a fight. This affront was compounded by York's inability to defend his possessions himself due to his duties as Henry VI's Lieutenant in Ireland. Some historians argue that this rivalry, along with the many other disputes between various nobles across England, significantly contributed to the outbreak of violence as it offered them a chance to settle their differences through combat.<sup>62</sup>

Perhaps the weightiest factors which might be said to have truly set the stage for the Wars of the Roses revolve around Henry VI himself. The first of these causes was the very real poverty of the crown. Henry VI inherited a significant debt from his father, as the victories in France had not come cheaply. However, wartime debt was not commonly accepted as the initial cause of the king's financial troubles. Instead, contemporaries contributed this poverty to a second factor surrounding the king, the "extravagance, corruption, and incompetence" of the king's closest

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<sup>59</sup> Christine Carpenter, *The Wars of the Roses: Politics and the Constitution in England, C. 1437 – 1509* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 111.

<sup>60</sup> Christine Carpenter, *op. cit.*, 112.

<sup>61</sup> A. J. Pollard, *The Wars of the Roses: British History in Perspective*, 3rd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 73-74; *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology* defines "appanage" as "provision made for younger children of princes etc...provide with means of subsistence."

<sup>62</sup> A. J. Pollard, *op. cit.*, 73-74; Catherine Nall, "The Production and Reception of Military Texts in the Aftermath of the Hundred Years War" (diss., University of York, 2004), 20.

ministers.<sup>63</sup> The misuse of the king's patronage became a centerpiece in calls for reform through acts of resumption. It was commonly believed that if these assets were returned to the crown, he would be able to fund the government and any wars through his own incomes. However, as Michael Hicks discusses in his *The War of the Roses*, there was no act of resumption or experimental taxation method that would generate the levels of income required by the crown, not to mention begin to pay down the crown's debt.

A final factor surrounding the king was the perceived general weakness of Henry VI as a king. Charles Ross assesses based on contemporary writings before York usurped the throne, that Henry VI was generally viewed a man of "limited mental capacity," and using the Abbot Whetehamsted's description, "a simple and upright man who could not resist those who urged him to unwise decisions and wasteful prodigality."<sup>64</sup> There is also much evidence to support the idea that Henry VI was far more interested in his personal projects such as King's College and Eton College than he was in governing the realm. Indeed, it has been argued by modern scholars that when he did engage in matters of state, the results were disastrous. It was this environment that both Edmond, Duke of Somerset and Richard, Duke of York entered into upon their return to England in 1450.

While it may be argued that additional smaller influences pushed England towards the brink of civil war, these explanations constitute the most accepted causes by both contemporary writers and the assessments of later scholars.<sup>65</sup> By January 1450 only one of the king's principle ministers had not resigned, William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk. Suffolk instead chose to defend

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<sup>63</sup> Michael Hicks, op. cit., 62.

<sup>64</sup> Charles Ross, *The Wars of the Roses* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 21-22.

<sup>65</sup> William Worcester writing his *Boke of Noblesse* highlights the loss of English lands in France. Yorkist propaganda in both the *Hearne's Fragment* discusses poor governance as Richard of York's motivation for war on the King to remove the advisor, Somerset. The primary modern scholars used here to outline these causes of war are Charles Ross, Christine Carpenter, A.J. Pollard, and Michael Hicks.

his actions to parliament, defending himself against twenty-seven total charges from the Commons.<sup>66</sup> Though Suffolk adequately defended himself against the charges, the Commons were not content. In order to protect his friend, Henry VI unilaterally dismissed all charges but one and exiled Suffolk for five years. Unfortunately for Suffolk, his exile did not sate the English people's desire for a more permanent punishment and while beginning his journey to France, his ship was overcome and he was executed.

By May of 1450, dissatisfaction with the king's government reached a climax and rebellion under a man known as Jack Cade erupted in Kent and Sussex. At once a political uprising, it is assessed that this may be the first time in which the commons openly participated in politics.<sup>67</sup>

The rebel's grievances as they expressed them were:

Also the law serves for nought else in these days but to do wrong, for nothing is sped almost but false matters by colour of the law for bribery, dread, and favour... Also we say our sovereign lord may understand that his false council has lost his law, his merchandise is lost, his common people is lost, the sea is lost, France is lost, the king himself is so beset that he may not pay for his meat and drink, and he owes more than ever any King of England ought, for daily his traitors about him, when any thing should come to him by his laws, at once ask it from him.<sup>68</sup>

This violent rebellion proceeded for an additional two months until in July 1450 the king advanced a force to disperse the rebellion through force of arms. Cade was mortally wounded in a skirmish on 11 July 1450.<sup>69</sup> While this rebellion was underway, Somerset had returned to England and resumed his post as a close member of Henry VI's personal household.

On the heels of Cade's Rebellion, Richard, Duke of York unexpectedly returned from Ireland

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<sup>66</sup> See pages 65-68 of Michael Hicks' *War of the Roses* for a short discussion on these charges and their validity. In brief, he assesses that the charges intentionally misinterpreted facts in order to lay the blame on Suffolk.

<sup>67</sup> Michael Hicks, *op. cit.*, 68.

<sup>68</sup> Charles Ross, *op. cit.*, 26.

<sup>69</sup> Michael Hicks, *op. cit.*, 71.

and began making his way to London. Cade's rebellion had endorsed York as a potential savior for the realm, and though he assumed the role as head of the reformist movement on his return, York was uncomfortable with this support.<sup>70</sup> It is this point, the return of York and his justification for returning, that has driven a great deal of academic discussion. There are those who argue that from the beginning, York had designs on the throne, given his own lineage from Edward III. Still other scholars state that York's motivations changed over time. Though he always intended himself to replace Somerset, his initial motivations were truly tied to reform, even if there was personal profit to be made.<sup>71</sup> On arriving in London, York's actions are more consistent with the second assessment. In the autumn of 1450, Parliament assembled, with York in attendance. He called for the prosecution of the twenty-eight individuals previously accused during Cade's Rebellion and called for acts of resumption. The king would not be moved however. Due to the pressure of the commons who rallied to support York, Somerset was imprisoned in the Tower of London, more for his own safety than because the king supported any charges against him. As Parliament dispersed in December no real action had been taken, and despite all the efforts of York, Somerset was released.<sup>72</sup>

Having failed to achieve meaningful results through Parliament, York attempted change through force of arms. As York prepared his forces and marched, he sent out letters to many towns and other lords, outlining his purpose. He continued to blame Somerset for the loss of English possessions and in general, England's poor governance, stating,

... what land, what worship honour, and manhood was ascribed of all Nations unto the people of this realm, whilst the Kingdom's Sovereign Lord stood possessed of his Lordship in the realm of France, and Dutchy of Normandy; and what derogation, loss of merchandize, lesion of honour, and villainy, is said and reported generally

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<sup>70</sup> Christine Carpenter, *op. cit.*, 116-117.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 117-118.

<sup>72</sup> Michael Hicks, *op. cit.*, 71-72; Charles Ross, *op. cit.*, 28; Christine Carpenter, *op. cit.*, 118.

unto the English nation, for loss of the same; namely unto the Duke of Somerset.”<sup>73</sup>

Unfortunately for York, he miscalculated his level of support amongst the other great magnates.<sup>74</sup> York found himself facing a superior force at Dartford with only one major supporter, the Earl of Devon. He was forced to beg forgiveness before the King and swear an oath that, “he had never rebelled against the king, and would never do so in the future.”<sup>75</sup> He then retired to his estates at Ludlow. This treatment is generally considered extremely light punishment, given that others with York were imprisoned for treason, and others executed.<sup>76</sup>

The Duke of York’s fortunes would change by 1453, as Henry VI was overcome by illness, often referred to as a madness. The king was unable to rule, and though there was great trepidation among the other nobility, precedent dictated that the senior male member of the king’s family should serve as protector, and this was Richard, Duke of York.<sup>77</sup> This first protectorate lasted only eleven months. However, during that time, York worked towards his goals; Somerset was locked in the Tower, he attempted to implement resurrections on behalf of the king, he appointed new ministers allied with himself to run the government, and he attempted to bring many of the private feuds to an end (with notably partisan results).<sup>78</sup> This protectorate was not to last, however, and in February of 1455, Henry VI recovered, Somerset was released from the Tower and resumed his duties close to the king, and much of York’s work was undone. In May of 1455, a great council was called in Leicester. Both York and Warwick, along with

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<sup>73</sup> Historical Introduction, containing a Cursory Sketch of the Events Which Led to the Dethronement of Henry the Sixth and the Coronation of Edward the Fourth,” in *The Chronicles of the White Rose of York: A Series of Historical Fragments, Proclamations, Letters, and Other Contemporary Documents Relating to The Reign of King Edward The Fourth*, 2nd ed. (1845; repr., San Bernardino: ULAN Press, 2014), xl.

<sup>74</sup> Charles Ross, op. cit., 26.

<sup>75</sup> Alison Hanham, trans., *John Benet's Chronicle, 1399-1462: An English Translation with New Introduction* (Houndsmill: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), 33; Charles Ross, op. cit., 28-29.

<sup>76</sup> Michael Hicks, op. cit., 71-72; Charles Ross, op. cit., 103-104.

<sup>77</sup> A.J. Pollard, op. cit., 25.

<sup>78</sup> Christine Carpenter, op. cit., 125-139.

many others Yorkists, were summoned to attend. They instead began to arm. The Yorkists, fearing retaliation from Queen Margaret, wife of Henry VI, (she saw York as a threat to her newborn son, Prince Edmund) were unwilling to place themselves at the mercy of the council.<sup>79</sup>

York however, did not given up entirely on talking his way out of a conflict. Prior to the first battle at St. Albans, he wrote to King Henry one last time,

Please it your Majesty Royal to deliver up such as we will accuse, and they to have like as they deserved. And this done, you to be honourably worshipped as a most rightful king. We will not now slack for no such promise nor oath, until we have them, which have deserved death; or else we, therefore, to die.<sup>80</sup>

Henry VI rejected this request outright. So too, the king had not set aside diplomacy either. With both armies nearing the town of St. Albans, the Duke of Buckingham was placed in control of both the military and diplomatic efforts for the king. Negotiations did take place, however, the king continued his unwillingness to surrender those he considered allies.<sup>81</sup>

The First Battle of St. Albans traditionally marks the opening battle of the Wars of the Roses. Taking place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May, most writers describe it as a skirmish, though the resulting deaths sent ripples through England. Among the dead were the Earl of Northumberland, Lord Clifford, and most importantly, Edmond, Duke of Somerset. Additionally, during the battle, King Henry was wounded in the neck, and though this indicates the king was under direct threat, it seems that not much was made of this. With the king in custody, York returned to London. Queen Margret, with her influence increasing rapidly, traveled to the Midlands.<sup>82</sup> For the next four years, an uncomfortable peace existed in England as the nobility continued to search for

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<sup>79</sup> Michael Hicks, op. cit., 108; Charles Ross, op. cit., 32.

<sup>80</sup> Historical Introduction, containing a Cursory Sketch of the Events Which Led to the Dethronement of Henry the Sixth and the Coronation of Edward the Fourth,” in *The Chronicles of the White Rose of York: A Series of Historical Fragments, Proclamations, Letters, and Other Contemporary Documents Relating to The Reign of King Edward The Fourth*, 2nd ed. (1845; repr., San Bernardino: ULAN Press, 2014), li.

<sup>81</sup> Christine Carpenter, op. cit., 134-135

<sup>82</sup> Charles Ross, op. cit., 33-35.



ways prevent a full civil war, in particular, the Duke of Buckingham.

This *Second York Protectorate* maintained an uncomfortable peace in England as the nobility continued to search for ways to prevent a full civil war. King Henry was also active in attempting to maintain peace, even while privately, both sides were beginning to arm once again. In May of 1458, both the Duke of York and the new Duke of Somerset along with the King and Queen Margret paraded through London to St Paul's Cathedral in a grand display, engineered by the King, in a last attempt to end York and Somerset's quarrel.<sup>83</sup> This "Loveday" would prove a failure, and in September 1459, "a council (to which York and his followers were not invited) was held at Coventry to reconcile the differences of the Dukes of York and Somerset, and their quarrel was referred to the King and Council of the Peers."<sup>84</sup> This council indicted York and his followers, and in response, York sought to use force to gain an audience with the King.<sup>85</sup>

The Earl of Salisbury was the first to encounter Lancastrian forces near Blore Heath. Though indecisive, this battle is generally thought to be a Yorkist victory. Salisbury continued to move south to Ludlow where he met with Warwick and the Duke of York.<sup>86</sup> These combined armies were confronted by a superior Lancastrian force in October of that year, with King Henry physically present. With promises of pardon, much of the Yorkist army deserted in what has been called the "rout of Ludford." This defeat forced Yorkist leadership to flee into Wales and

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<sup>83</sup> Charles Ross, op. cit., 37.

<sup>84</sup> Historical Introduction, containing a Cursory Sketch of the Events Which Led to the Dethronement of Henry the Sixth and the Coronation of Edward the Fourth," in *The Chronicles of the White Rose of York: A Series of Historical Fragments, Proclamations, Letters, and Other Contemporary Documents Relating to The Reign of King Edward The Fourth*, 2nd ed. (1845; repr., San Bernardino: ULAN Press, 2014), xxxvii-xxxviii.

<sup>85</sup> Charles Ross, op. cit., 37.

<sup>86</sup> Nicholas Nicolas and Edward Tyrrell, eds., *A Chronicle of London, from 1089 to 1483: Written in the Fifteenth Century, and for the First Time Printed from MSS. in the British Museum: to Which are Added Numerous Contemporary Illustrations, Consisting of Royal Letters, Poems, and Other Articles desc* (1827; repr., San Bernardino: ULAN Press, 2014), 140.

beyond. York returned to Ireland, while Salisbury, Warwick, Fauconberg, and York's youngest son, Edward fled to Calais.<sup>87</sup>

With York and his allies in exile, a Parliament was called in Coventry. York and his allies were convicted of treason by attainder.<sup>88</sup> This left the Yorkist lords with no options, other than to attempt to reverse this attainder. Leaving Calais to be defended by William, Lord Faulconberg, Salisbury's brother and a veteran of the Hundred Years War, Warwick travelled in secret to Ireland to conceive a new plan with York. Upon his return, the Calais lords launched an invasion into south-eastern England. Marching north, through London, the Yorkist army clashed on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1460 with the crown's forces at Northampton.<sup>89</sup> This time the king's forces were defeated, betrayed by Lord Grey (commander of the Lancastrian vanguard), "and was slayne on his partie the duke of Bukyngham, therle of Shrowisbury, the lord Beaumont and the lord Egremond, mych peple drowned in the river, the kyng was taken and brought to London."<sup>90</sup> The Yorkist lords, with control of the king's person, marched to London, immediately calling for parliament. York too arrived from Ireland, timing his arrival to coincide with parliament, and it is at this point that the tenor of the conflict shifted.

York approached the city displaying the royal banner and entered the city as would the king. He then entered into parliament and laid his hand upon the throne, symbolizing very publicly his intent to be king. Scholars have long debated whether Richard had always planned to pursue the throne or truly only sought reform in the beginning. This event, however, is the first time in the

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<sup>87</sup> Charles Ross, *op. cit.*, 37.

<sup>88</sup> The *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines attainder in English law as, "the extinction of civil and political rights resulting from a sentence of death or outlawry after a conviction of treason or a felony. The most important consequences of attainder were forfeiture and corruption of blood. For treason, an offender's lands were forfeited to the king."

<sup>89</sup> A. J. Pollard, *op. cit.* 27-28.

<sup>90</sup> Nicholas Nicolas and Edward Tyrrell, eds., *op. cit.*, 142; Charles Ross, *op. cit.*, 47.

meager sources available that he declares his desire to be king, and it is this point that the struggle transitions away from reform to one of a dynastic nature. But, even with control of the king, parliament was unwilling to depose him, and indeed, some reports indicated that York's own supporters were taken aback. Instead a compromise was reached. King Henry VI would remain king for his life, but his son was disinherited in favor of the Duke of York as the heir apparent.<sup>91</sup>

This decision was not universally accepted by the nobility, and it was certainly not accepted by Queen Margret, still recruiting in Northern England and Wales. To deal this ~~this~~ looming threat, York and Salisbury marched north to York's castle at Sandal, while Edward, Earl of March rode to Wales. Unfortunately for York, as his army was foraging for supplies, the Lancastrian forces under Queen Margret attacked at Wakefield Bridge. Commanded by the sons of York's former enemies, Somerset, Northumberland, and Clifford, the slaughter was great and in the fight, York and his second son, the Earl of Rutland were killed. Salisbury was captured and later executed. For the Lancastrians, the first battle of St. Albans had been avenged. The queen now marched her army south, her army plundering the English countryside as they advanced. She met and defeated the Earl of Warwick in a hard-fought second victory at St. Albans, and as a result, regained control of King Henry. With Henry now "freed" from Yorkist control, the *Accord* between him and the Duke of York was invalidated. For the Yorkist lords to continue, a new tact would be needed.<sup>92</sup>

Richard's eldest son Edward, Earl of March, had faired far better than his father, soundly defeating Jasper Tudor at the Battle of Mortimer's Cross. With Queen Margrett withdrawing to the north, Edward entered London victorious. With the loss of the king's person and the *Accord*

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<sup>91</sup> A.J. Pollard, op. cit. 29-29; Nicholas Nicolas and Edward Tyrrell, eds., op. cit., 141.

<sup>92</sup> Charles Ross, op. cit., 50-53.

between Richard and the King broken, the Yorkists had two options. They could attempt to negotiate a settlement as Richard was now defeated or they could risk it all and crown Edward as the Yorkist king.<sup>93</sup> They chose the second option and “kyng Edward the [IVth] was crowned at [Westminster]...” in early 1461.<sup>94</sup> In March, the newly crowned Edward IV departed London in pursuit of Queen Margret’s army.<sup>95</sup> By 29 March, York had caught up with the Lancastrian army outside of Towton. The battle that ensued was the bloodiest to take place on English soil in history. The battle proved a decisive Yorkist victory, sending King Henry and Queen Margret fleeing to Scotland, and securing the crown for Edward IV.<sup>96</sup>

But Edward IV’s new dynasty was not without its challenges. The ascendance of Edward to the throne did not immediately solve England’s economic concerns. Nor did Edward drastically alter the method by which the government ruled, and though resurreptions brought many of the Lancastrian patronages back to the crown, they were soon re-gifted, as patronage remained a key resource for the king to cement the loyalty of his lords. Also, though Towton was a decisive victory, Edward continued to face challenges from the surviving Lancastrians. Henry VI, the queen, and their son were all still alive and at large. Though removed from the heart of England, Lancastrian forces continued to cause concern along the fringes of the country, forcing Edward to repeatedly mobilize armies to deal with the threat. But all of this was not enough to drive the kingdom into the next phase of the Wars.<sup>97</sup>

Fourteen sixty-four witnessed a critical event within Edward VI’s first reign which set the stage for a resumption of hostilities. In May of that year, he secretly married the widow Elizabeth

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<sup>93</sup> Michael Hicks, op. cit., 71-72; Charles Ross, op. cit., 162.

<sup>94</sup> Nicholas Nicolas and Edward Tyrrell, eds., op. cit., 142.

<sup>95</sup> *John Benet's Chronicle, 1399-1462*, trans. Alison Hanham (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 50.

<sup>96</sup> Michael Hicks, op. cit., 71-72; Charles Ross, op. cit., 162-163.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 167-185.

Woodville while the Earl of Warwick was in France negotiating for suitable bride. Scholars argue over the benefits this marriage provided to the Woodville family. However, A.J. Pollard suggests that while the land grants may not have been substantial, records indicate that the Woodvilles (who were a prolific family) were showed favor by the king regarding marriages.<sup>98</sup> This would have given them increased influence over the long term and had an added effect of making it very difficult for the Earl of Warwick to find marriages for his own children.<sup>99</sup> This significant dwindling of the influence wielded by Warwick was fully realized in 1468 when Edward pursued a closer alliance with Burgundy, a plan supported by Elizabeth's father the Earl Rivers, over France which Warwick advised. By 1469, Warwick was well into planning a coup d'état which very closely resembled the opening moves of the first war to seize the king and rule in his name.<sup>100</sup>

During mid-summer 1469, the Duke of Clarence (Edward IV's younger brother) travelled to Calais with Warwick and married Warwick's daughter against the king's orders. This was Warwick's first public display of rebellion. By July of 1469, Warwick's followers in Yorkshire had organized a "popular uprising," led by "Robin of Reddesdale," which was of significant size to warrant a response. The Earls of Devon and Pembroke took forces to meet the rebels. Devon, however, departed after having an argument with Pembroke over lodging of forces, and so Pembroke fought alone, was defeated, and captured along with his brother at the Battle of Edgecote. Shortly thereafter, having been abandoned by much of his own forces, Edward IV was taken into custody by the Archbishop of York, Archbishop Neville, who had crossed back in to England with Warwick and Clarence after the wedding.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> A. J. Pollard, op. cit., 30-31.

<sup>99</sup> Michael Hicks, op. cit., 187-188.

<sup>100</sup> A. J. Pollard, op. cit., 32-33.

<sup>101</sup> *Warkworth's Chronicle* found in *The Chronicles of the White Rose of York: A Series of Historical*

Removing Edward from his position of authority, had the unintended result of allowing England and its nobility to devolve into chaos. Warwick soon found that he could not contain all of the rivalries that Edward had subdued. To make matters worse, a Lancastrian uprising occurred under Sir Humphrey Neville of Brancepeth in Warwick's own backyard. Unable to quell this rebellion, Warwick was forced to release Edward. At once loyal nobles rallied to Edward and he was able to reestablished his regime, crushing Sir Humphrey in the process.<sup>102</sup> Interestingly, Clarence and Warwick were forgiven and allowed to return to court. It would not be long however before Edward discovered his trust was misplaced. A second uprising in Lincolnshire was defeated in March of 1470 near Empingham (Battle of Losecote Field), and sufficient evidence was present that Clarence and Warwick were again to blame. Again, Edward offered clemency if Warwick and Clarence would present themselves and submit, however, they declined. Failed attempts to recruit in England resulted in both Clarence and Warwick fleeing to France.<sup>103</sup>

Now comes the most surprising change of allegiance. With Warwick in France, King Louis XI saw an opportunity. Louis desired England as an ally in his struggle against Burgundy. He negotiated a careful rapprochement between Queen Margret and the Earl of Warwick, with the condition that once Henry VI was again on the English throne, England would join France against Burgundy.<sup>104</sup> On 22 July 1470, Margrett and Warwick made a public reconciliation and the Queen's son, Prince Edward, was married to Warwick's youngest daughter to solidify the

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*Fragments, Proclamations, Letters, and Other Contemporary Documents Relating to the Reign of King Edward the Fourth; With Notes and Illustrations, and a Copious Index*, 2nd ed. (San Bernadino: ULAN Press, 2014), 111-112.

<sup>102</sup> Michael Hicks, op. cit., 194-195.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 197-198.

<sup>104</sup> Charles Ross, op. cit., 85.

alliance.<sup>105</sup> Simultaneously, a new figure was rising to fill the leadership gap left in England by the Duke of Clarence's departure, Richard, Duke of Gloucester. As Gloucester's star was rising, Clarence found himself replaced by Warwick in favor of Prince Edward and the rapprochement with the Queen.<sup>106</sup>

With this unexpected union complete, another dramatic change in the English crown was set in motion. Yet another Neville uprising, this time under Lord FitzHugh, drew Edward IV north. With Edward IV in the north, Warwick and Clarence landed in the south and began mustering forces. Simultaneously, the Marquis of Montague (the Earl of Warwick's brother) betrayed Edward IV and with 6000 men moved on the king in the north. Outmatched, Edward was forced to flee England with the Duke of Gloucester, the Earl Rivers, and Lord Hastings to Flanders.<sup>107</sup> After almost ten years of Yorkist rule, Henry VI was placed back on the throne of England by one of the men who removed him in the first place.

At this point in time, King Henry VI had returned to London with both Warwick and Clarence, though Queen Margret and Prince Edward were still in France. Edward IV and his retinue were also on the European mainland in Flanders. The Earl of Warwick wasted no time in honoring his agreement with the King of France and England declared war on Burgundy. This evoked an immediate response from Duke Charles of Burgundy, "who began to supply Edward with money, ships, and a few hundred men," pursuant to Edward retaking the throne.<sup>108</sup> Additionally, Edward began negotiations with the Hanseatic League, a longtime English rival at sea. Edward promised to, "satisfy [their] complaints when he regained the throne," in exchange

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<sup>105</sup> A.J. Pollard, op. cit., 32-33.

<sup>106</sup> Charles Ross, op. cit., 82.

<sup>107</sup> *The Chronicles of the White Rose of York* op. cit., 30; *Nicholas A Chronicle of London, from 1089 to 1483*: op. cit., 144; Charles Ross, op. cit., 85-86.

<sup>108</sup> Charles Ross, op. cit., 86-87.

for ships.<sup>109</sup> Finally, Edward VI's retinue was also hard at work raising a force of Englishmen from those living in Europe. And so, with preparations complete, "King Edward took his shipping in Flanders, and had with him Lord Hastings, and the Lord Say, and nine hundred of Englishmen, and three hundred of Flemmings, with hand-guns, and sailed towards England."<sup>110</sup>

After a challenging crossing, Edward IV found his first choice of landings, in Norfolk, frustrated by a hastily assembled Lancastrian force. He was instead forced to make a disjointed landing near the region of Ravenspurne in Yorkshire. Here too, the people came against him, unwilling to support another bid for the crown, but Edward deceived them, claiming to only desire his rightful claim to the Duchy of York. This deception earned him passage unmolested, and as he turned south, towards London, he steadily gained recruits to his army.<sup>111</sup> A complete lack of Lancastrian response, to include Warwick (occupying the city of Coventry), emboldened Edward and his followers. They marched past Warwick and entered into London, immediately taking possession of Henry VI. It was on this march south that both the Archbishop of York and the Duke of Clarence, again changed sides, reconciling with Edward and rejoined the Yorkist cause.<sup>112</sup>

With Edward back on the throne, Warwick now marched south with the Dukes of Excester and Somerset, the Earl of Oxford, and the Marquise of Montague. Edward IV, aware of Warwick's movements marched north and the two armies met on 14 April 1471 at Barnet.<sup>113</sup> The two armies advanced even though, "there was a great mist, and letted (hindered) the site of each

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<sup>109</sup> David Nicolle, *Forces of the Hanseatic League: 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 014), 41-42.

<sup>110</sup> "Warkworth's Chronicle." found in *The Chronicles of the White Rose of York* op. cit., 121.

<sup>111</sup> *Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English History (Classic Reprint)* (n.p.: Forgotten Books, 2012), 151.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 41-59.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.



other.”<sup>114</sup> In the chaotic battle that ensued, the Earl of Warwick was killed and Somerset and Oxford were forced to flee. The next nineteen days would see a second Lancastrian army land under Queen Margret and Prince Edward land near Waymoth.<sup>115</sup> Both Somerset and Oxford joined this force as it marched for Wales. Edward IV, having raised a new army with the Duke of Gloucester, William, Lord Hastings, and the Marquis of Dorset, caught up to the Lancastrian army near the river crossing at Tewksbury, and there, won a decisive victory. In this battle, Prince Edward, Henry VI’s son and heir apparent, was slain. Edmund, Duke of Somerset (the third generation to hold that title in this war) was captured and later executed along with all those found with him. With Henry VI locked in the Tower, Edward the Fourth had finally removed all challengers from the field, had secured his throne, and would rule England until his death in April 1483.

The next twelve years were relatively peaceful and England prospered under the Yorkist crown. Edward IV enriched those loyal to him, in particular his Woodville in-laws and his younger brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester. Creating this power balance amongst the magnates did have an unintended consequence that did not become clear until after his death.

There was no indication that there might be another dramatic shift in the fortunes of the English crown. Edward died a beloved king, and England had prospered under his second reign. He had two sons, Edward, Prince of Wales and Richard, Duke of York, both in their minority, but Edward (to be Edward V) had the support of English nobility and so his crown was not at risk. However, Edward IV’s policy of enriching the Woodvilles and Gloucester resulted in conflict after his death. Like much of the nobility, Gloucester disliked the Woodvilles, who were seen as grasping and greedy. Fearing what might happen during the Prince of Wales’s minority,

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<sup>114</sup> “Fleetwood’s Manuscript,” found in *The Chronicles of the White Rose of York*, op. cit., 63.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

Richard sought to place himself as protector, which the Woodvilles staunchly opposed.<sup>116</sup>

The Woodvilles made the first move, insisting that the prince should be crowned immediately, as Henry VI had been in 1429. This would remove the requirement of a protectorate and allowed the Dowager Queen and her family to advise the new king. This overrode the rights of the Parliament and the House of Lords to decide the proper course of action. Though Gloucester and the Queen were friendly, Gloucester did not want to see a Woodville regime, and so he took action.<sup>117</sup> It is unclear to modern historians what drove Richard to the extremes he pursued. Until this point (1483), Richard was renowned for his loyalty to Edward IV, in direct contrast to his brother, the Duke of Clarence. He was seen as a contemporary paragon of chivalry in England.<sup>118</sup> What is known is that Richard, with the Duke of Buckingham, seized his nephew on 1 May 1483 and arrested Edward's two principle advisors, the Earl Rivers and Richard Grey. With possession of the heir's person, Gloucester traveled to London and established himself as Protector, as the Dowager Queen retreated into sanctuary with her children in Westminster. It was not long however, that she was convinced to rejoin the court, and with this decision, both of Edward IV's male heirs were controlled by Gloucester, and both were kept in the Tower to prevent Gloucester's enemies from spiriting them away. It is unknown if Richard had always intended to take the throne or if that decision came once the princes were in his custody, but on 26 June, 1483 he claimed the throne of England for himself and on 6 July, he was crowned.<sup>119</sup>

Gloucester's (hereafter Richard III) usurpation of the thrown split supporters of the Yorkist regime. His judicial killings of the Earl Rivers, Richard Grey, and Edward IV's most loyal

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<sup>116</sup> Charles Ross, *op. cit.*, 93-94.

<sup>117</sup> Michael Hicks, *op. cit.*, 197-198.

<sup>118</sup> A.J. Pollard, *op. cit.*, 36.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

supporter, William, Lord Hastings further solidified the opposition's will to depose him.<sup>120</sup> By October of 1483, it was widely feared that Edward V and his brother were dead, though if this was true, no evidence has survived for modern historians to study.<sup>121</sup> Richard's opponents, led by the Woodvilles and Elizabeth the queen-dowager, and Margret Beauchamp convinced the southern gentry to instead support the claim of an, as yet unknown, Henry Tudor. Tudor was the intended groom of Elizabeth of York, Edward IV's oldest daughter and was currently living in Brittany.<sup>122</sup> As his new-found supporters, to surprisingly include the Duke of Buckingham, attempted to mobilize their forces, Henry set sail from Brittany. Fortunately for the King, these rebellions in both the north and south were dealt with and Buckingham was executed. Henry arrived to find the coasts barred to him and was forced to return to Brittany. Those opponents of Richard III to survive also fled to Brittany and rallied around Henry.<sup>123</sup>

King Richard III, immediately set about solidifying his reign. If the princes in the tower were not dead before the rebellion, they certainly were after. But sources indicate that regardless of Richard's purported involvement in their deaths, the population was unwilling to rise against him in large numbers. Richard made several attempts to extradite Henry Tudor from both Brittany and France, though each time failed. Tudor for his part continued to recruit a force capable of pursuing his newfound claim to the throne. On 7 August 1485, this force made landfall in Pembrokeshire, Wales, approximately 4 to 5000 strong.<sup>124</sup>

Richard immediately set forth with his own force, which greatly outnumbered Tudor's. The

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<sup>120</sup> Charles Ross, op. cit., 95-97.

<sup>121</sup> Paul Kendall, *Richard the Third* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002), 465-66.

<sup>122</sup> Charles Ross, op. cit., 95-97.

<sup>123</sup> For a concise discussion of the autumn revolt against Richard III, see Michael Hicks *The War of the Roses*, 223-229. In summary, while there were many supporters of Edward IV that revolted, Hicks assesses that the Duke of Buckingham's betrayal constituted true "revolt of the Yorkist establishment."

<sup>124</sup> Michael Hicks, op. cit., 230-231.

two armies met at Bosworth on 22 August, 1485. By any calculation, Richard III's army greatly outmatched Tudor's when the battle began. However, with the timely betrayal of Lord Stanley (one of Richard's most powerful supporters) and possibly the Earl of Northumberland, the tide of battle shifted in favor of Henry Tudor.<sup>125</sup> When all was finished, Richard III lay dead on the field of battle and Henry Tudor was crowned Henry VII, King of England.<sup>126</sup>

Bosworth marked the last time the crown of England would change hands during the Wars of the Roses, but it did not mark the end of the fighting. Scholars debate when the true end of the wars came about. There were further risings in 1486 which never truly gained momentum, and in 1487, Henry VII defeated a significant force on the field of Stoke.<sup>127</sup> In 1497, an invasion of Scotland was put off to deal with a dangerous uprising in the west, but this was defeated at Blackheath.<sup>128</sup> Ultimately, the Wars of the Roses did end. Though it is difficult to determine the exact point, both Henry VII and Henry VIII successfully uncovered conspiracies and defeated uprisings. Domestic challenges to the crown of England faded the longer the Tudors reigned. These were replaced by newer and more relevant challenges unique to the Tudor dynasty.

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<sup>125</sup> A.J. Pollard suggests that while Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland may have betrayed Richard and refused to engage the enemy, it is equally possible that the battlefield geometry prevented him supporting Richard at the critical moment of Lord Stanley's betrayal. *The War of the Roses*, 39.

<sup>126</sup> Charles Ross, op. cit., 100-104; Michael Hicks, op. cit., 230-232; A.J. Pollard, op. cit.38-40.

<sup>127</sup> This was the last time a King of England took the field personally to defend his crown. (Ross p 105.)

<sup>128</sup> A.J. Pollard, op. cit.40-41.

## Chapter 3

### CHIVALRY IN ROMANCE, CHIVALRY IN PRACTICE

“How every good man of [worsyp yn] armes shulde in the werre be resembled to the condicion of a lion”

--William Worchester, c. 1475

Having discussed the events of the War of the Roses, it is now necessary to examine the guiding philosophy of the military class, called chivalry, as it was expressed within fifteenth century England. As discussed earlier, few words capture the minds of the people with imaginings of anachronistic romance or images of violence. As the Renaissance slowly replaced medieval thought with humanism, the tone and flavor of war changed. Though its exact end is often debated, the War of the Roses was perhaps the last war fought in England with chivalric overtones.<sup>129</sup> But how do we define chivalry in England in the fifteenth century when, as Keen states, its definition is “tonal rather than precise in its implications?”<sup>130</sup> More specifically, how might these traits have translated to the battlefields of the War of the Roses? To answer this question, this analysis will look at the medieval romance and its reflections of chivalric society, contemporary secular writings either translated or read in England, and finally, legal concepts associated with chivalric combat related to war.

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<sup>129</sup> Charles Ross assesses that while there were several occasions during Henry VII's reign in which he was challenged, the Battle of Stoke was the last battle in which a reigning King was required to take the field against a rival claimant and therefore marks it as a solid ending point. A.J. Pollard, in the Wars of the Roses (p 41) tracks the end of the wars far later, around 1525 when the final York claimant died in France. Hicks on the other hand agrees with Sir Francis Bacon's assessment. This perspective asserts that Henry VII's reign, in general, marks the end of the wars, as each succeeding attempt to challenge Henry is less effective and the steady change evoked by Henry VII leaves England a substantially different place at the end of his rule, than at the beginning.

<sup>130</sup> Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (London: Yale University Press, 1984), 2.

The romance presents an idealized view into the medieval world, though the reader must be cautious. In a study on the emergence of the individual, Danielle Regnier-Bohler states, “we are far from regarding the literary sources as mirrors of reality... Works of fiction should be seen as responses to obsessions, instincts, and tensions...”<sup>131</sup> Certainly these three can be found in England between the loss of the Hundred Years War, the slow rise of humanism, and the Wars of the Roses themselves. However, as Keen writes, it is the romances that “habitually [associate] together certain qualities which they clearly regarded as the classic virtues of good knighthood: *prouesse, loyauté, largess* (generosity), *courtoisie*, and *franchise*,” and because these writings help to create the archetype of chivalric conduct, they must be included in any analysis.<sup>132</sup> This analysis will focus on two romances, *Guy of Warwick* and *Morte d’Arthur*, as both have strong association with England. With this in mind, we turn to the romance *Guy of Warwick*.

*The first known version, Gui de Warewic*, was in verse, composed in the early thirteenth century.<sup>133</sup> Of the many verse and prose versions of *Guy of Warwick* that were translated and redacted over time, twenty-one manuscripts have survived to the present day.<sup>134</sup> At least one of these copies (British Library, MS 144080) was intentionally collected together with excerpts from Vegetius, the *Secreta Secretorum*, the *boke of Saynt Isodre*, and other texts on virtues and

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<sup>131</sup> Danielle Regnier-Bohler, “Imagining the Self,” in *A History of Private Life*, ed. George Duby and Philippe Aries, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1988), 315.

<sup>132</sup> Maurice Keen, *Chivalry*, op. cit., 2.

<sup>133</sup> Marinanne Ailes, “Gui De Warewic in Its Manuscript Context,” in *Guy of Warwick: Icon and Ancestor*, ed. Alison Wiggins, trans. Rosalind Field (n.p.: Boydell and Brewer, 2007), 12-26, accessed July 5, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7722/j.ctt163tc9h.8>; For the purpose of this thesis, I am using a translated version of *Guy of Warwick*. The base manuscript used for this translation is in essence, a slightly modernized version of Caroline Clive’s 1821 translation of a fifteenth century edition. Todd states that the fifteenth century author (who he believes was not English) had at his disposal four medieval verse texts, now called the British Museum Add. MS. 38662, Cambridge Univ. MS Ff 2.38, Auchinleck MS, and the Caius MS.

<sup>134</sup> William Todd, ed., *Guy of Warwick* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), vii.

vices.<sup>135</sup> It is also recorded that John Paston had two texts within his library dealing with Guy of Warwick.<sup>136</sup> Given an assumption that Paston is a typical reader within England in the late fifteenth century, and given the number of surviving manuscripts, it can be assessed that this romance was fairly well known.

The story follows a single English knight, Sir Guy of Warwick, on his adventures as a knight errant, all to win the affection of his lady, Felicia. A quest which would have immediately labeled him as naïve to Charny, though still worthy of praise.<sup>137</sup> Within the first few lines, we learn that Guyonet's father was "renowned for high prowess," and his governor Herolt is, "a wise and valiant knight."<sup>138</sup> This suggests to the reader that men of high prowess are the most preferred to instruct and raise a future knight in his youth. As stated, Guy seeking the favor of Felicia, seeks and receives his knighthood and through the recommendation of Felicia becomes a knight errant to earn sufficient renown as to be worthy of her hand in marriage. He immediately travels to France where he enters into a tournament and seeks out the knight of highest prowess, Sir Gaher, the son of an emperor. During this fight, Guy, "struck him with his sword, while passing him, such a stroke upon his helmet that he had not power to keep the saddle. Therefore, Gaher was obliged to quit and fell on the ground so much stunned that he thought he was wounded to death."<sup>139</sup> It is said at the conclusion of this tournament that, "truly the knight with the shield paled or and azure (Sir Guy) acquitted himself well, who discomfited all others and

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<sup>135</sup> Nigel Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 306.

<sup>136</sup> Ronald Crane, "The Vogue of Guy of Warwick from the Close of the Middle Ages to the Romantic Revival," *Modern Language Association of America* 30, no. 2 (1915): 125-94.

<sup>137</sup> De Charny Geoffroi, *The Book of Chivalry: Text, Context, and Translation*, trans. Richard Kaeuper and Elspeth Kennedy (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 95.

<sup>138</sup> William Todd, ed., op. cit., 4-5.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

surpassed them in prowess.”<sup>140</sup> After finding success in this first tournament, Guy travels across Western Europe participating in every tournament he hears of, all to increase his renown, through demonstration of his prowess.

But these feats of arms, though effective in generating renown, do not approach the subject of warfare. Guy’s first taste of combat with the intent to kill was an ambush set for him by the Duke Othes of Pavia, his nemesis. Though the engagement is small in scale, Guy and his companions are significantly outnumbered, and some die. Though seriously wounded, Guy and Herolt emerge victorious, allowing only one of their ambushers to survive.<sup>141</sup> This engagement sets the tone for all future encounters with Duke Othes and will drive much of Guy’s actions in warfare through the first half of the tale.

Next, Guy is persuaded by a pilgrim to take up the cause of the Duke of Lorraine, who is at war with the Emperor of Germany and it is this moment that marks his transition from tournament combat to warfare as a means to further his renown. Here too, the author chooses primarily to describe Guy’s successes in terms of deeds of arms. In his first real action against the Germans, Guy attacks a much larger force, placing his own knights in peril. This questionable tactic is overlooked because, “those of Sir Guy’s company behaved so well, according to the example of his good deeds, that they defended themselves every well and were equal to their enemies.”<sup>142</sup> In other words, Guy fought so well, his *prouesse* was so great, that he inspired his men to survive the assault of a much superior force. Throughout this war, Guy repeatedly defeats the Emperor’s forces and captures Duke Othes. After defeating the Germans, the loss is described as “all by the high prowess and enterprise of a knight...who is in truth the

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<sup>140</sup> William Todd, ed., op. cit., 30.; Sir Guy did not wear his own heraldry that day but instead wore paled or and azure so that if he failed, it would not reflect poorly on him.

<sup>141</sup> William Todd, ed., op. cit., 42-48.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 53.



best knight I have ever known, and no other can stand before him.”<sup>143</sup>

Guy, Herolt, and his retinue continue their adventures heading East towards Constantinople. By this point in his adventures, Guy’s reputation and renown precede him to the Emperor of Constantinople, who charges him to defend the city from the attack of a great army of Saracens. The Saracen leaders are portrayed as knights in their own right and as understanding the concept of renown in the western sense. After two great battles with the Saracens, in which he kills several of their leaders, Guy is sent as a messenger to the Sultan, where after delivering his messages, is told he will be executed. Guy kills the Sultan, and alone, surrounded by the entire Saracen force, escapes the camp. He is saved from pursuit by Herolt and the rest of his retinue. Though not expressly stated within the story, surely fighting clear of an entire army must have represented an unimaginable level of prowess to a knight reading of these adventures. Even being rescued by his friends, does not seem to reflect poorly as the author presents the tale.

Having earned the love and gratitude of the Emperor, and after spending time in his court, Guy and Herolt begin their journey back to England. Along the way, they assist their friend, Thiery of Aigremoire, in his struggle against Duke Othes and in this struggle, Guy finally kills Othes in cold blood at his own wedding.<sup>144</sup> He returns then to England with sufficient renown to marry Felicia his love and live happily. Of note, it is this focus on positive outcomes as a result of violent action that has driven modern authors to assess that chivalry was simply an ideological tool to justify violence. Kaeuper in *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* writes that the common man “increasingly found the proud, heedless violence of knights, their praise for settling any dispute by force, for acquiring any desired goal by force on any scale attainable,

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<sup>143</sup> William Todd, ed., op. cit., 61.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 67-118.

an intolerable fact of social life.”<sup>145</sup>

But this is not the end of Guy of Warwick’s story, as he is overcome with guilt regarding perceived evils he committed as a knight errant. This guilt marks, for the story, a transition in which the author begins to critique chivalric practice. This second half of the tale takes on a reformist tone, showing Guy of Warwick embodying a reformed chivalric ideal. Here, Guy eschews personal glory and renown, using his prowess to defend the faith and to right true injustice (some of which he caused as a knight errant). Here, the author might be assessed as implying, “chivalry (reformed to [his] standards) was [still] the great hope, even as ...unreformed chivalry was...[a] great cause for fear.”<sup>146</sup>

Almost immediately after his marriage, with barely the time to begat his Felicia with a child, Guy departs again. This time, it is as a pilgrim to the Holy Land.<sup>147</sup> This journey Guy undertakes alone, as he is seeking penance rather than renown. In this period of Guy’s adventure, he completes three additional feats of arms and in each case, he refuses to reveal his name until after his victory, and only in secret. His first cause was taken in support of the infidel king, Triamor, who was accused of treason. In this personal combat, he fought the Saracen Amorant, who was “so tall and horrible that he was full four and a half feet higher than the command stature of a man, and moreover so strong and outrageous that nothing could stand against him.”<sup>148</sup> After defeating Amorant, Guy continued his pilgrimage until finding Thiery on the roadside in a very low state. Guy discovers that his murder of Othes caused his nephew, Besart, to seek vengeance, which he took on Thiery. Thiery describes Besart as, “so bold and of such

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<sup>145</sup> Richard Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 29.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>147</sup> William Todd, ed., *op. cit.*, 121-127.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

high prowess that no one could stand before him in battle, and he was so cruel that he fought with no knight that he did not kill.”<sup>149</sup> So, Guy pledges to fight Besart on Thiery’s behalf to clear his name, as he was the direct cause of Thiery’s fall from grace. This struggle lasted for two days, and Guy was forced to overcome both treachery off the field of battle and Besart’s immense prowess during the fighting. Having defeated Besart and placing his friend back into a state of grace with the Emperor, Guy returns to England. Here he fights his last battle, defending his homeland from the infidel Collebrand, and though it might be assumed this would be his greatest battle, he defeats him with relative ease, securing England from invasion.<sup>150</sup>

Here ends the tale of Guy of Warwick, clearly summarized from the perspective of his feats of arms and demonstrations of prowess. It is these conflicts and displays of prowess that take center stage within the telling of Guy of Warwick’s story and it is his renown for prowess which earn him a reputation in the second half of the story as such a legendary knight. Guy can be seen completing the “tripartite *ordo* for deeds of arms” as proscribed by Charney, “scaled according to their risk and commensurate worth.”<sup>151</sup> Guy follows Charney’s framework closely, first engaging in jousts, and then transitioning to tournaments. He finally transitions to war, and his exploits culminate with his adventures in the Holy Land.<sup>152</sup>

But the author strives to address more of the chivalric virtues than prowess alone. Guy’s exceptional *courtoisie* as a young man is in fact the first real description provided to the reader. His governor, Herolt, raises him such that prior to even departing on his adventures it, “would have been difficult to find any one of his age who could surpass him in sense, courtesy and

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<sup>149</sup> William Todd, ed., op. cit., 145.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 145-162.

<sup>151</sup> Brian R. Price, “Yron and Stele: Chivalric Ethos, Martial Pedagogy, Equipment and Combat Technique in the Early Fourteenth Century Middle English Version of Guy of Warwick” (Journal of Medieval History #16, forthcoming, 2018), 19.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 19.

gracious demeanour, and Guyonet was full of such abundant generosity.”<sup>153</sup> Therefore it must be asked, if he is already a pillar of courtesy how does the author expand this to the next level? Within the story, Guy exceeds common courtesy by extending it onto the tournament field and then onto the battlefield. Typical of the hero, he demonstrates this courtesy in his very first tournament. After unhorsing the Duke of Reiner of Cessoigne, he brings him his horse so the crowd will not see he is unhorsed. The Duke, “wonder[s] much at his courtesy and who he could be.”<sup>154</sup> Later Guy and the Duke meet as Guy fights for the Duke of Lorraine. Here too, Guy unhorses Duke Reiner, and again rehorses him and says that he has no quarrel with him and will avoid him in the battle. Such courtesy is not extended to all knights, as Guy takes many prisoners to be ransomed, however, the author may have specific intent with regard to this relationship. Reiner is described by the Emperor’s daughter as “wise and learned,” regarding tournament combat, and Guy himself describes him as a “very good and brave knight.”<sup>155</sup> As Reiner is regarded as fairly exceptional, Guy affords him exceptional courtesy. But this is not reserved solely for Reiner. There is one other that receives a generous show of courtesy from Guy while in combat, The Saracen Amorant. This fight is second only to that with Besart in difficulty and takes place in the Holy Lands. The Saracen having demonstrating high prowess and complementing Guy on his own high prowess, asks for a drink to sustain him. Guy considers his request and judges it to be sound, so that no one can say he lost the fight because of thirst. Guy agrees and allows him to drink on condition that he too is allowed to drink if he becomes thirsty. This is an interesting exchange of courtesies that is ultimately betrayed by Amorant.<sup>156</sup> The final example regarding courtesy is more of an instructional moment rather than an example to be

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<sup>153</sup> William Todd, ed., *op. cit.*, 5.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 32, 57.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 135-137.

followed. In fighting Callebrand, Guy loses his weapon. As such, he requests to use one of the many brought by his opponent. Denied this request, he must take one forcibly. The lesson being, though a knight might extend courtesy to those he believes to be honorable or of great prowess, do not expect such courtesy to be extended back.

There is seen here a broader relationship between courtesy, prowess, and renown. Even while on pilgrimage, Guy wishes to be seen as a knight of unparalleled prowess. Though he does not reveal his identity at the beginning of each adventure, in each case he does at the end.<sup>157</sup> In eschewing credit for his great deeds, he adds to his renown, presenting the image that he is humble in the extreme. So too, in offering courtesy to various opponents, he makes them stronger, thus their ultimate defeat earns him even greater renown than if he had defeated them in a weakened state.

A third virtue woven into the story, and outwardly displayed both on and off the battlefield is loyalty. Given the complex web of loyalties that might be experienced by a single knight in the late medieval world, *Guy of Warwick* offers a somewhat simpler example., The story also provides a glimpse into expressions of loyalty after all the wars have been fought, and knights return home. Sir Guy's governor, Herolt, is fully committed to Guy of Warwick and follows along on his adventures as a trusted companion. In Guy's first tournament, he protects Guy, "when the Duke of Moraine, who greatly envied him, tried to wound him by treachery. And Herolt took notice of this, and when to meet him with his lance couched, as fast as his horse could carry him, and attacked him at his arrival so fiercely that he bore him to the ground...."<sup>158</sup> Herolt follows Sir Guy across the breadth of Europe to Constantinople and they each save the others' lives multiple times through these wars and adventures. It is through this shared

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<sup>157</sup> William Todd, ed., op. cit., 138, 157, 163.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 30.

experience that a bond is built so strong that it endures post-conflict and transfers to Guy's family. After Guy's departure from England on his pilgrimage, his child Raimbron is kidnapped by Russian merchants while in Herolt's custody. Herolt is accused of having sold the child and therefore of treason. Herolt demonstrates an almost visceral reaction to the accusation of treason against Guy. He challenges his accuser to a judicial duel to the death (or until he recants his accusation) and swears to spend the rest of his life searching for the child. Though quite aged by this point, and though his Seneschal offers to take on the quest, Herolt insists that he must be the one to attempt to find Raimbron, and departs England. This results in his capture by an African king and imprisonment, whereafter, nothing is written of him.<sup>159</sup> This quest is essentially his final, as there is no manuscript stating he completed it. He gave his own life in pursuit of the recovery of Guy's progeny.

But Herolt's example of extreme loyalty to Guy is not the only discussion of the virtue within the story. There is a long discussion regarding how the Duke of Lorraine should approach the capture of the Emperor of Germany, his liege lord. In this case, the Duke of Lorraine only wishes to talk to the Emperor, but even so, this action directly against the Emperor might be considered treasonous. The character Iosseram of Spain "whose advice was much attended to, because he was a very wise knight and of excellent council," points out, "...Sir Duke...it is not right that in such an affair you should go against your liege lord."<sup>160</sup> This exchange is of note because the Duke is already at war with the Emperor and many battles have been fought and lives lost. But for the knights advising the Duke, it is a step too far, crossing the bounds of loyalty, for him to participate in an action where the Emperor's person is directly involved. Therefore, others must take on the mission protect the Duke and allow him to approach the

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<sup>159</sup> William Todd, ed., op. cit., 142-143.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 63.

Emperor without the perceived stain of treason.

Wrath and revenge are the final interrelated traits associated with warfare and combat routinely mentioned within *Guy of Warwick*. An unexpected motivational tool, wrath or wroth, coupled with the act of revenge is commonly used by almost every knight within the tale, including the hero. It is very common within the text for a knight, either at tournament or in war, to seek revenge for either himself or his companion for actions that can be seen to be quite normal, such as receiving a strong blow, or being unhorsed in a joust.<sup>161</sup> With specific regard Sir Guy, wroth is immediately introduced at his first tournament where he is struck by the Emperor's son, Gaher with enough force to leave a portion of the lance in his shield. So enraged by this blow he, "struck him with his sword, while passing him, such a stroke upon his helmet that he had not power to keep the saddle. Therefore, Gaher was obliged to quit and fell on the ground so much stunned that he thought he was wounded to death."<sup>162</sup> We see this motivational tool used again during Guy's first war, which was as discussed, fought in support of the Duke of Lorraine against the Emperor of Germany. During his second major engagement, Guy routes Duke Othes forces, and, "on account of the great hatred he bore the Duke their lord, he began the pursuit wherein he made so great a slaughter that day that all were astonished at him."<sup>163</sup> Soon after when Othes returns to the field with a new force, "It came to pass that in searching the ranks, Sir Guy met Duke Othes. Then he went fiercely to the Duke and gave him such a blow with his sword upon his helmet that he made the guard fly off, for he was greatly enraged at the death of his companions and would spare him no longer..."<sup>164</sup> This trend continues throughout every major battle or combat engagement that Sir Guy faces. It is in fact this persistent wroth and anger

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<sup>161</sup> Brian R. Price, op. cit., 24.

<sup>162</sup> William Todd, ed., op. cit., 29.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 59.

which drives Guy to murder Othes at his own wedding, saying, “‘Know that I am that Guy of Warwick who am come to reward you and take vengeance for it upon you. For it is full time.’ Then he drew his sword, with which he struck him in such a manner, inasmuch as his head was bare, that he cleaved it to the shoulders, and he fell to the earth quite dead.”<sup>165</sup>

This moment is perhaps Sir Guy’s greatest moment of what Richard Kaeuper would call “self-help violence,” and might place him squarely in the same place as Duke Othes during his first ambush to kill Guy. Interestingly, it is his participation in the tournaments early in his errantry that generate much of the conflict later in his adventures. His dispute with Duke Othes began at his very first tournament and culminated, after much war, with Guy murdering Othes. This resulted in Thiery’s complete destitution and the hands of Besart, which Guy was forced to resolve through judicial duel. The source of the Duke of Lorraine’s quarrel with the Emperor of Germany stemmed from the misinterpretations of his actions at a tournament and resulted in full war. The reflection of reality cannot be missed, and such actions in reality were motivation for both secular and religious authorities to denounce tournaments as “a direct threat to the good ordering of Christendom, and which led to homicide, destruction, and disorder.”<sup>166</sup> So too, many modern authors might assess that this is the ultimate lesson that should be taken away. But the author does not leave Guy in such a state, as Guy does repent and follows a path of redemption through his humbler approach of errantry. He rights his previous wrongs and destroys the greater villain he unleashed on the world in his defeat of Besart.

Having discussed at length the story of *Guy of Warwick*, the story of a lone English knight and his adventures abroad, we turn to *Morte Darthur*. The stories of King Arthur need little introduction, though it is important to point out that it presents a more collective approach

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<sup>165</sup> William Todd, ed., op. cit., 110.

<sup>166</sup> Maurice Keen, *Chivalry*, op. cit., 96.



to knight errantry, encompassing the many adventures of several knights of the Round Table. This version of the Arthurian Cycle is particularly relevant as it was written by the fifteenth century English knight, Sir Thomas Malory and as such, can provide some unique insights into Malory's ideas of chivalry.

Sir Thomas Malory served under Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, in France during the closing stages of the Hundred Years War. During this time, he had the opportunity to observe both Beauchamp, who was regarded by many as an ideal knight, as well as Humphrey, Earl of Stafford, later to be the Duke of Buckingham, who was regarded much less so. It was his actions, later in life, against Humphrey, Duke of Buckingham, that would, place Malory in prison where he would translate and edit French romances of Arthur into *Morte Darthur*.<sup>167</sup> This moment in Malory's career is worth a brief look, as it provides an interesting insight into knightly behavior in relation to romances.

For Malory, 1450 and 1451 were banner years. Captured and tried for multiple crimes of violence, Malory's greatest crime was likely crossing the Duke of Buckingham. Prior to 1450, there does not seem to be any reason for Malory to take up arms against Buckingham, however, in 1450, Malory with others laid an armed ambush for the Duke. Interestingly, in 1450, Buckingham supported the disinterment of Sir Baldwin, the eldest son of Sir William Mountford. Mountford was a close friend of Malory and the two had fought together in France. It is plausible therefore that to prevent this perceived injustice, Malory with others sought to remove the Duke as a threat, and so laid this ambush.<sup>168</sup> Though this ambush failed and Malory was subsequently detained, parallels to the chivalric values presented in *Guy of Warwick* are clear, in that a

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<sup>167</sup> Edward Hicks, *Sir Thomas Malory: His Turbulent Career* (New York: Octagon Books, 1975), 7-17, 28-32.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

prohess based (knight errantry) solution was attempted, driven by a profound sense of loyalty to Mountford and his progeny. This is the man who translated, redacted, and edited the French romances of the Arthurian cycle to create *Morte Darthur*. And like the medieval writers before them, “by omission and addition he made the resulting stories very much his own.”<sup>169</sup>

Like the medieval writers before him, “by omission and addition he made the resulting stories very much his own.”<sup>170</sup> As this analysis focuses primarily on warfare, or the actions immediately preceding or after battle, Malory’s descriptions of how these wars were fought take on a slightly more fifteenth century flavor. Arthur’s first war occurs very early in his kingship and it becomes clear that Malory’s emphasis was, first and foremost, prowess, which he interchanges often with the phrase, “deeds of arms.” Arthur, when fighting the six kings, “did marvelous deeds of arms that many of the kings had great joy of his deeds and hardiness.”<sup>171</sup> Indeed, within the first battle of his first war, Arthur is “in the foremost press till his horse was slain underneath him.”<sup>172</sup> This trend continues throughout Arthur’s war to consolidate Britain. He is consistently in the midst of the thickest fighting, leading. Malory continues to emphasize prowess as the primary characteristic critical of a knight. In Arthur’s next major battle, he has only 30,000 men to the eleven kings’ 50,000. Two knights, “Ulfius and Brastias where delivered 3,000 men of arms, and they set on them fiercely in the passage, and slew on the right hand and on the left hand that it was a wonder to tell. When that the eleven kings saw that there was so few a fellowship did such deeds of arms, they were ashamed...”<sup>173</sup> Once King Arthur joined the fight, he did so well, it “made all men wonder.” For Malory, Arthur’s success against great odds

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<sup>169</sup> Arthur Ferguson, *The Indian Summer of English Chivalry* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1960), 46.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Thomas Malory, *Morte Darthur*, 2nd ed. (1990; repr., New York: Dorset Press, 1992), 10.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 16.

was purely due to his prowess and that of his men, and that prowess extended to both mounted and dismounted combat. Throughout all of *Morte Darthur*, whether in war or while on a quest, prowess takes center stage as the primary factor determining success or failure.

Courtesy, like in *Guy of Warwick*, is also presented in the context of the wars fought by Arthur and is often extended in the midst of the thickest fighting. Though, unlike in the telling of *Guy*, the courtesy is only extended towards combatants on the same side of the struggle (with one exception). Within seventeen lines of text, four key leaders, Ulfius, King Cradelment, Sir Ector, and Sir Brastias are unhorsed and others within their army take specific action to re-horse their friend or lord.<sup>174</sup> This pattern of combat is common within Malory's telling of the story, along with a trend of recovering those knights that have been captured. The single exception to the extension of courtesy is provided by Sir Lancelot. As Arthur lays siege to Lancelot's castle, Gawaine after many insults, manages to goad Lancelot into battle. During the fight, Sir Bors unhorses Arthur and Lancelot is required to prevent Bors from killing Arthur. Lancelot "alit off his horse and took up the king and horsed him again, and said thus, My lord Arthur, for God's love stint this strife, for yet get here no worship, and I would do mine utterance, but always I forbear you..."<sup>175</sup> This act by Lancelot is telling as Lancelot is regarded as the best of all knights and the most courteous. It is this example to which Malory is pointing as *par excellence*. It is an example of both courtesy and loyalty on the field of battle, and it offers an interesting insight into the concept of treason from Malory's perspective. As in the telling of *Guy of Warwick*, it is ill advised to take direct action against your liege lord, in this case, the King. The Duke of Lorraine specifically avoids the engagement, and Sir Lancelot, with his hand forced, takes special care to avoid Arthur on the field and protects him when required.

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<sup>174</sup> Thomas Malory, op. cit., 17.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 588.

It is often said that English chivalry consistently had a different flavor and tone to the rest of Europe. Nowhere is this clearer than in Malory's retelling of the events leading up to Arthur's death. Within the French versions of the tale, much blame is placed on Guenever and Lancelot's affair for the breaking of the Round Table. However, in the Malory's version, "the place traditionally occupied by adultery...is occupied...by deeds of treachery and arms."<sup>176</sup> This retelling offers the reader an interesting looking to the concepts of loyalty and treason with regard to fifteenth century England.

When Arthur is informed of Lancelot's actions with Guenever, and his slaying of Colgrevice, his first comment is to stay, "he is a marvelous knight of prowess. Alas me sore repenteth...that ever Sir Lancelot should be against me."<sup>177</sup> The king goes on to judge that Guenever must be put to death because she is party to the treason and that if he can capture Lancelot, he will be given a "shameful death." Here too, Malory takes time to add, "And the law was such in those day that whatsoever they were, of what estate or degree, if they were found guilty of treason, there should be none other remedy but death..."<sup>178</sup> While this is intimated in other versions of the text, rarely is the punishment made so clear. But even then, Arthur does not immediately set off to war to enforce this judgement within Malory's telling. It is Sir Gawaine that presses Arthur into war over the death of Sir Gaheris and Sir Gareth. Within early French versions, Arthur reflects that if true, executing Lancelot would place the kingdom in great turmoil, but that it would be better that he died than himself dishonored. When he first speaks of this punishment to his barons, they advise him that death is not the traditional punishment in

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<sup>176</sup> Nigel Saul, *op. cit.*, 309.

<sup>177</sup> Thomas Malory, *op. cit.*, 579.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 580.

cases such as these.<sup>179</sup> However, they eventually conclude Guenever should be put to death in a shameful way. Lancelot is never fully convicted and sentenced to death, though Arthur does go to war with Lancelot with the intent to avenge his dishonor.

In both the French and Malory's versions, Arthur is persuaded to reverse his decision while laying siege to Joyous Gard. As Malory relates the tale, Lancelot, speaking from the walls is able to convince Arthur that no wrongs were committed, and "King Artur would have take his queen again, and have been accorded with Sir Lancelot."<sup>180</sup> Unfortunately, due to the death of his brothers, Sir Gawaine would not be consoled and persuaded Arthur to continue to war. Arthur, as the king, was willing to believe Lancelot's argument. It might be argued that to save his kingdom and the Round Table, he is looking for a reason to forgive Lancelot and the queen. This is very consistent with the direction English chivalry was taking in the fifteenth century, where service to the kingdom/sovereign/state was a key focal point. What destroys any chance of peace is Lancelot's actions while saving Guenever, which resulted in the death of Sir Gareth and Sir Gaheris, Gawaine's brothers, and many others. This "deed of ...arms" as Saul calls it stands as a barrier between Lancelot and Gawaine, and in Gawaine's mind warrants revenge, therefore, preventing a peaceful resolution of the war. It also is a powerful indicator from the romances in general of how the rivalries and disputes of noble houses can affect war, even when a sovereign seeks to end it. Within the French telling, Arthur is so impressed by Lancelot's refusal to harm him on the battlefield, he wishes the war had never begun. But, he continues to the siege of Joyous Gard, and only ends the struggle when the Pope demands it.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> James Cable, trans., *The Death of King Arthur* (London: Penguin Books, 1871), 111, 119.; The version of *The Death of King Arthur* used for this analysis was a translation of the work published by Professor Jean Frappier. This comparison is only used where relevant changes within England become apparent from Malory's point of view.

<sup>180</sup> Thomas Malory, op. cit., 586.

<sup>181</sup> James Cable, trans., op. cit., 145-146.

Wrath and vengeance are fully a part of Malory's *Morte Darthur* in the same manner presented in *Guy of Warwick*. Primarily, wrath serves as a motivational tool for knights in combat, driving them to action. In many cases, this action results in victory on the field, though occasionally, that action has negative consequences. Wrath and revenge, much like in Guy's vengeance against Duke Oaths, results in disaster for Arthur and his kingdom as well as his individual knights. It leads Gawaine to mistakenly kill a lady during his quest to kill the white hart and to vow vengeance on Lancelot when he learns of his brothers.<sup>182</sup> It is the pursuit of vengeance by Gawaine against Lancelot that enables the final destruction of Arthur's kingdom, and Arthur himself. While laying siege to Lancelot's castle in France, Sir Mordred is able to usurp Arthur's kingdom and crown himself king. On returning to retake the kingdom, Gawaine is mortally wounded where he was previously hurt while fighting with Lancelot, and so his unyielding wrath ultimately results in his death. Indeed Arthur, after seeing the great slaughter in his final battle against Mordred, was so wroth he could not be persuaded to not attack Mordred when he finds him on the battlefield. In his anger, Arthur places himself in a position that Mordred can strike at him, and though Mordred dies in the exchange, Arthur too receives a lethal blow and, after a short while, dies.<sup>183</sup>

A final topic to be addressed regarding warfare in both *Guy of Warwick* and *Morte Darthur* is the recurrent use of practical tactics observed throughout the tale. When faced with overwhelming force, withdrawal is consistently used as a means of survival. This is seen at both the army level and at the individual level. Within *Guy of Warwick*, Guy recommends to the Duke of Lorraine to withdraw into his walled cities when they are faced with an overwhelming opposing force. So too, when Arthur in Wales realizes that the kings that have joined him in

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<sup>182</sup> Thomas Malory, op. cit., 59, 583-584.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 605-609.

Carlion are not friendly to him, he withdraws into a tower for protection. These are never portrayed as acts of cowardice but as prudent measures to ensure success. At the individual level, Guy hastily retreats after beheading the Sultan within the Saracen camp outside Constantinople. *Morte Darthur* includes the use of scouts to provide information to Sir Lancelot during Arthur's war with Rome. In this case, the scouts informed Lancelot of an impending ambush, allowing him to maneuver his own force to successfully attack the Roman force.<sup>184</sup> As discussed early, Malory favors the use of realistic descriptions to inform his telling of Arthur.<sup>185</sup> It is telling that in his romance, a solid use of tactics informs the bold, though sometimes reckless, use of prowess in warfare. A final key note on tactics is the manner in which the romances align with the writings of contemporary knights. Ramon Llull, a knight writing in the thirteenth century wrote that, "prudence provides the ability to avoid physical and spiritual harm by using foresight and stratagems...for more battles are won by skill and common sense than by masses of people, equipment, or knights."<sup>186</sup> Almost a century later, Geoffroi de Charny wrote, "you should plan your enterprises cautiously and you should carry them out boldly."<sup>187</sup>

The romances provide an interesting look into the popular mediaeval traits that were ideally associated with the chivalric ethos. Regarding how a knight should behave during war, and where he should exercise caution, both *Guy of Warwick* and *Morte Darthur* are consistent in their descriptions. Demonstrable prowess is consistently the key factor that assists a knight in earning renown. For both Guy, and the key knights of the Round Table, it is their prowess that is

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<sup>184</sup> Thomas Malory, op. cit., 109-110.

<sup>185</sup> Maurice Keen, *Chivalry*, op. cit., 208.

<sup>186</sup> Ramon Llull, *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*, trans. Noel Fallows (Rochester: The Boydell Press, 2013), 73.; Raymon Llull was a knight turned evangelist who lived from roughly 1232 to 1316. Noel Fallows writes in his introduction that *The Book of the Order of Chivalry* is one of Llull's earliest works, and assesses that the book was written primarily for knights.

<sup>187</sup> De Charny Geoffroi, op. cit., 129.

most often spoken of. This is mirrored in reality through Charny, as he writes, “for all deeds of arms merit praise for all those who perform well in them. For I maintain that there are no small feats of arms, but only good and great ones, although some feats of arms are of greater worth than others. Therefore, I say that he who does more is of greater worth.”<sup>188</sup> So too, this can be found in works by chivalric reformers in England in the fifteenth century. The *Boke of Noblesse* states the nobility should “with courageous hertis [put] forthe their prowes in dedis of armes,” so as to retake former English lands in France.<sup>189</sup>

*Morte Darthur* provides only one tangible example of wartime courtesy to one’s enemy, and this from the paragon of knightly virtues, Sir Lancelot. *Morte*, it seems, acknowledges the ideal of romantic courtesy without making a claim that all knights can live up to that standard. Courtesy in warfare, as presented in *Guy of Warwick* is somewhat at odds with both *Morte Darthur*, and secular knightly writings. Within *Guy of Warwick*, on multiple occasions, Guy demonstrates what is a seemingly unbelievable level of courtesy to his opponents on the battlefield.<sup>190</sup> Something not seen within Mallory’s tale and rarely spoken of within more knightly writings. However, one thing that both *Morte Darthur* and *Guy of Warwick* both agree on, is that knights who kill every opponent they face are generally considered a villain within the tale. This small detail does seem to bring the romances more in line with the texts written more

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<sup>188</sup> De Charny Geoffroi, op. cit., 87.

<sup>189</sup> Isaac Levitan, ed., *The Boke of Noblesse* (San Bernardino: Editora Griffio, n.d.), 61.; The Boke of Noblesse was presented to Edward IV during his second reign. According to Levitan, its primary purpose was to spur the king into an invasion of France. Levitan states that the book is more of a compilation (versus an original work) of other manuscripts of the time to include portions of Vegetius and the Tree of Battles. Of note, Levitan states that the term “with chivalry” or “with honor” was at this time an obsolete term in England, instead replaced by the term “noblesse.”

<sup>190</sup> It is important to note that neither romance associates the taking of prisoners for ransom with courtesy. Guy takes many prisoners in his European war, but this act is never associated with the virtue. So too, Arthur’s forces take many prisoners during their march to Rome, but this is not described as an act of courtesy on the part of Arthur or his knights.



as guides to chivalry.

Within the more secular knightly writings, little is said of such wartime courtesy in practical terms. Lull states, “Courtesy and chivalry belong together, for baseness and uncouth words are contrary to chivalry,” providing no clear connection between war and courtesy.<sup>191</sup> However, in an earlier passage, he states, “For if the knight has no charity towards God and his fellow man, how can he love God, and how can he take pity on the helpless and be merciful to the vanquished who beg for mercy?”<sup>192</sup> This second passage speaks of mercy with much the same tone as the romances address wartime courtesy within *Guy of Warwick*. A century later, Charny offers a far harder point of view. He writes that among the supreme rules of conduct for men-at-arms should be “cruel avengers against their enemies,” and to “love and serve your friends, hate and harm your enemies.”<sup>193</sup> Like Lull, however, Charny offers a slight nod to the informal system of prisoner ransom. He states, “does God not show you great mercy if you are taken prisoner honorably, praised by friends and enemies?” In both cases, it is implied that mercy is a factor to be considered during combat in general, which includes war. So too, this aligns with both *Guy* and *Morte*, as both include a common taking of prisoners in during war. *The Boke of Noblesse* speaks often within its narrative of historical figures taken prisoner, but as for treatment offers little guidance though Christine De Pisan’s *Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyvalrye* recites Bonet’s judgement closely.<sup>194</sup>

The medieval concept of loyalty is a complex one. The reality of overlapping loyalties to different and possibly opposing lords generated much thought and resulted in treatises such as

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<sup>191</sup> Ramon Llull, op. cit., 78.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>193</sup> De Charny Geoffroi, op. cit., 129.

<sup>194</sup> Christine De Pisan, *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyvalrye*, ed. A.T.P. Biles, trans. William Caxton (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 220-222.

Honore Bonet's *The Tree of Battles*.<sup>195</sup> The romances simplify much of this. Within Guy, his loyalties to the King of England are never truly tested. The examples come from Herolt, who faithfully serves Guy, presumably to his death. *Morte Darthur*, with its much larger cast of characters, offers a better look. Mallory's telling has two primary villains, Mordred and Morgan.<sup>196</sup> Outside of these two, the Knights of the Round Table are, in general, loyal to Arthur. Even in Arthur's war with Lancelot, Lancelot in his heart is not disloyal, and this is demonstrated by his refusal to harm Arthur or let his men do so. For Mallory, the ultimate death knell for Arthur's kingdom was Mordred's treason. Given the events of the 1450s and 60s, this emphasis takes on importance. For Mallory, as an observer of the War of the Roses, symmetry can be found for both sides, either in Henry IV's overthrow of the Richard II in 1399 or in Edward IV's overthrow of Richard VI during the 1461 and 1471.<sup>197</sup>

Wrath is the final virtue explored within the medieval romance with regard to war. As stated earlier, it is consistently called upon as a source of strength for Guy of Warwick and Arthur and his knights. Within the two sources analyzed here, vengeance is closely associated with wrath and is the typically sought-after response. Both romances demonstrate the negative consequences associated with acts of vengeance as Guy is forced to atone for his actions and Gawaine, so consumed with his vengeance against Lancelot draws Arthur away to France, allowing Mordred to act. It is unlikely that this would have been lost on the medieval reader.

Llull provides the longest discussion regarding anger. He writes that "ire is perturbation in the heart" and that a knight, "must resort to strength of courage, charity, abstinence, and

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<sup>195</sup> Chapter 65 of *Tree of Battles* discusses whether a "Brother may defend brother against attack or injury" and Chapter 67 discusses "If a Baron be vassal to two lords who are at war with each other which should he help?"

<sup>196</sup> Though Agravaire is the knight that outs Lancelot and Guenever, he ultimately does this out of jealousy of Lancelot versus treason against Arthur.

<sup>197</sup> Nigel Saul, *op. cit.*, 309.

patience, which will restrain his ire and deliver him from the travails that ire occasions.”<sup>198</sup>

Charny also discusses anger, though he associates it with arrogance stating, “where there is arrogance, there reigns anger and all kinds of folly; and where humility is to be found, there reigns good sense and happiness.”<sup>199</sup> The *Boke of Noblesse* offers a different perspective however. The author writes that “every good man of [worship yn] armes shulde in the were be resembled to the condicion of a lion...for as ire, egrenesse, and feersnesse is holden for a vertu in the lion, so in like manere the said condicions is taken for a virtue and renomme of worship to alle tho that haunten armes...” This deviation of thought is an interesting one. It is entirely possible that as the author sought to encourage war with France, he was playing on the emotions of Edward and the lands his father lost when the French retook English possessions across northern France. So to, the author may have been intent on quietly justifying the cycle of revenge killings associated with the War of the Roses.

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<sup>198</sup> Ramon Llull, op. cit., 76.

<sup>199</sup> De Charny Geoffroi, op. cit., 133.

## Chapter 4

### MEDIEVAL THOUGHT ON JUST WAR AND TREASON

“...war is nothing other than discord or conflict that has arisen on account of certain things displeasing to the human will, to the end that such conflict should be turned into agreement and reason...”

--Honoré Bonet, c. 1380

Much of what is discussed above regarding the romances and how they align with knightly thinking over time could be assessed to be the ideal behavior relating to *jus in bello*, or, how individuals and armies conduct a war.<sup>200</sup> But these sources are not the only ones to influence behavior during war. We turn now to explore the legal approach to *jus in bello*, that is, what medieval scholars applied from both Roman and Papal law in an attempt to regulate armies in the field. Legal texts are important in our discussion because the influence of the church permeated society in medieval Europe, providing a common moral foundation. Its canon lawyers worked diligently (though with questionable results) to expand that influence through legal texts steeped in Greek logic, Roman law, and Biblical precedent.<sup>201</sup>

Relatively little has been written about the interaction of law and war during the late medieval period. Frederick Russell's *The Just War in the Middle Ages* surveys the breadth of these writings from the fourth century to the first half of the fourteenth century, and is the only text that thoroughly examines the concept. As such, it serves as the primary text in this thesis to

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<sup>200</sup> This thesis attempts to uniformly use the modern terms *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* throughout this chapter to provide some level of consistency. We define *jus ad bellum* as those laws which define the legitimate cause for a state to engage in war. We define *jus in bello* as the laws by which the individuals must follow when fighting in war.

<sup>201</sup> Maurice Keen, *The Laws of War in the Late Middle Ages* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), 14.

discuss early medieval thought on *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*. Maurice Keen's *The Laws of War in the Late Middle Ages* provides a shorter synopsis of these early writers, primarily focusing on how those early works were drawn upon by later scholars. Keen's work focuses primarily on late middle ages, which nests well into the primary focus of this chapter. At this point we will also draw primarily upon two contemporary primary sources, Honoré Bonet's *Tree of Battles* and Christine de Pisan's derivative work, *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyvalrye*. Bonet, writing in the last fourteenth century, and de Pisan writing in the early fifteenth, are almost unique in that, because their works were written in the vernacular versus Latin, they became at once more accessible to the common man, to include the knighthood. For Bonet especially, this accessibility has enabled his work to become perhaps the most "famous, rather than well-known."<sup>202</sup>

It is equally important to establish an idea of the closely paired concept of *Jus ad bellum*, or, those conditions that provide a legitimate cause for a state or kingdom to go to war. A complex topic, there is much debate by medieval scholars regarding the differences in public and private war, and who may declare just war. This is critical because, as we will see, the consequences of what a noble and his knights may do during the conduct of a just war are very different from those consequences of fighting an *unjust* war. Though the Wars of the Roses was in internal war within England, an analysis of *Jus ad bellum* will shed light on how personalities such as the Duke of York and Earl of Warwick were able to persuade so many of the justness of their cause to oppose the reign of Henry VI. Additionally, a discussion of secular law with regard to treason and how justice was met out on the battlefield must be had to fully understand the legalities of the Wars of the Roses. This English common law definition of treason, as set out in

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<sup>202</sup> Honoré Bonet, *The Tree of Battles of Honoré Bonet*, trans. G.W. Coopland (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1949), 15-21.

the 1352 statute, though unique in Europe at the time, was not the only definition used, as in 1453, the Duke of Norfolk refers to Honoré Bonet's work while accusing the Duke of Somerset of treason.<sup>203</sup> This thesis will explore how those laws align or differ and analyze their practical application during the Wars of the Roses.

The development of a fully formed medieval concept of "just war" took several hundred years. But, before a discussion can be had on these scholars and their work, some terms of reference must be established. The first and perhaps most important term of reference is the "decretal." These documents were "papal letter[s] giving an authoritative decision on a point of canon law," canon law being the laws of the Church.<sup>204</sup> The next series of terms relate to the scholars defining medieval notions of *jus ad bellum*. According to Frederick Russell's *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, it can be assessed that early medieval writers on the subject fell into roughly four categories. Romanists "focused...on the Roman law notions of self-defense, restraint of private and illicit violence, the conditions justifying recourse to war and the legal consequences of war."<sup>205</sup> The second group was the Decretists. Primarily canonists, the Decretists studied the laws of the Church, and specifically, the Decretals of Gratian and Gregory.<sup>206</sup> The third group of scholars were also canonists. These Decretalists had two primary goals, the first being the collection of decretals of the Church and the second, the "systematic and

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<sup>203</sup> Catherine Nall, "The Production and Reception of Military Texts in the Aftermath of the Hundred Years War" (PhD diss., University of York, 2004), 13.; S.H. Cuttler, *The Law of Treason and Treason Trials in Later Medieval France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 28.

<sup>204</sup> *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. "Decretal," accessed August 5, 2017, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/decretals>.

<sup>205</sup> Frederick Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 41.

<sup>206</sup> *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Decretists," accessed August 5, 2017, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/decretists>.

scientific exposition of the Canon Law contained in the decretals.”<sup>207</sup> The fourth and final group were the theologians. Those who “[study]...religious faith, practice, and experience; *especially*: the study of God and of God's relation to the world.”<sup>208</sup>

Saint Augustine was the first to try and establish a theory of just war that integrated both Roman law and medieval Christian values. Though far removed in time from the Wars of the Roses, Augustine’s work is the foundation of medieval just war theory and thus warrants exploration.<sup>209</sup> His first challenge was to reconcile war with New Testament teachings. Russell writes that Augustine’s central theory was that war was both “a consequence of sin and a remedy for it.” Augustine assessed that the “real evils of war were not war itself but the love of violence and cruelty, greed and a...lust for rule.”<sup>210</sup> Thus, war served to punish those sinful acts, and beyond those, sinful acts in general, even those not directly associated with war. He went on to assess that, “every war has peace as its goal, hence war was an instrument of peace and should only be waged to secure peace of some sort.”<sup>211</sup> Thus, having established that all war sought to enable peace, Augustine established war as a licit activity within the Christian faith.

Having addressed the moral and religious concerns to his satisfaction, Augustine turned to Roman law. In this effort, where he relied heavily on the analysis of Cicero, he developed the first medieval definition of just war: *iusta bellum ulciscuntru iniurias*, “just wars avenge injuries.”<sup>212</sup> With this definition established, Russell points out a critical point of interpretive

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<sup>207</sup> *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Decretalists,” accessed August 5, 2017,

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/decretalists>.

<sup>208</sup> *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. “Theology,” accessed August 5, 2017, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/theology>.

<sup>209</sup> Augustine of Hippo lived approximately from 354 to 430 A.D. and served as a Bishop in the early Church. (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, s.v. “Saint Augustine: Christian Bishop and Theologian,” accessed August 5, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Augustine>.)

<sup>210</sup> Frederick Russell, *op. cit.*, 16.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

change occurred with Augustine's analysis of Roman law. The Romans typically associated the word "ius" with their body of secular law. However, Augustine's interpretation is one of "righteousness" in a religious sense, thus opening up his just war theory to include any perceived violation of Christian (Church) law or any injury to the faithful. Finally, in Augustine's exploration of just war, he addresses what level of authority may declare war. In this, he assessed that only God or a ruler (be it king or prince) might declare war legally.

With these concepts of war in place, Augustine could turn to the individual warrior's role and concepts of *jus in bello*. Within the early Church's pacifist camp, warriors were most often seen as not keeping the tenants of the New Testament. In addressing New Testament teachings, Augustine interpreted lessons such as "resist not evil" and "turn the other cheek" as acts of "inward disposition of the heart rather than ...outward deed," enabling him to reconcile the New Testament with the concept of war.<sup>213</sup> "The just warrior restrained sinners from evil, thus acting against their will but in their own best interest."<sup>214</sup>

These Augustinian concepts of just war served as the foundations of almost all future medieval analysis. Indeed, Maurice Keen writes, "as justice is a moral concept, one will find that this question was discussed most fully by the canonists and theologians. The ultimate sources of most of their opinions were Augustine and Isidore."<sup>215</sup> Romanists adapted Roman laws of self-defense to partially address the issue. The predominate opinion was that, "self-defense was derived both from the relationships established by nature among men and by the *ius gentium*."<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Frederick Russell, op. cit., 17.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>215</sup> Maurice Keen, op. cit., 65.

<sup>216</sup> Frederick Russell, op. cit., 42-43.; "Ius Gentium was originally the section of Roman law, which the Roman Empire attached to the dealings with foreign citizens, primarily provincial subjects. In later times; however, this Latin term was soon regarded as the natural or common law practiced among nations that were considered to be states with a large human society." "Discover What Ius Gentium Is," Laws, accessed August 5, 2017, <http://common.laws.com/ius-gentium>.



In the context of *ius gentium* then, defensive wars became licit from the Romanist perspective. But since Roman law did not directly apply the laws of self-defense to war (they applied only to the individual), Romanists sought to strengthen their analysis through the use of the Institutes and Digests of Justinian, concluding that war was allowed in order to repel injury or violence.<sup>217</sup> The scholar Odofredus, writing around 1250, provides perhaps the clearest definition for the Romanists: “just wars were those waged under any conditions for defense of the *patria*.”<sup>218</sup>

These definitions alone, however, did not adequately address the complexities of feudal Europe, specifically with regard to who was authorized to declare a just war. As such, the Romanists were careful to make distinctions between the just war, the *guerra* or private feudal war, and the *pugna*, or judicial duel. The conclusion, as written in the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, was reasonably clear. Rulers were to *judicially* end *guerra* between their nobles, as they did not have the authority to wage legitimate war, indicating that Romanists believed that only medieval sovereigns held this authority.

Within the Romanists’ treatments of just war they attempted to merge Roman law with the concepts of chivalric feudal Europe. Their analysis provided some limited analysis regarding *jus in bello*, however, spent more time attempting to define how vassals might respond to just and unjust war. Romanists sought to limit violence through emphasizing moderation of response. In other words, violence was acceptable in an immediate self-defense, but should not be used after the initial incident to inflict vengeance. They applied this to the *guerre* stating that should be reconciled judicially. Lacking that resolution though, Romanists provided sometimes clear and other times confusing expectations of vassals. Hugolinus observed that custom, “obliged a

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<sup>217</sup> Frederick Russell, op. cit., 45-47.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid., 49. “*patria*” has eight translations using Google Translate. Most relevant to this discussion is “homeland,” or “native country,” though all translations are effectively synonyms.

vassal to aid his lord in the latter's *guerra* even when the vassal doubted its justice."<sup>219</sup> Even more confusing, the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* assessed that a vassal should support his liege lord even in a war against himself, and later states that said lord's unjust war against the vassal deprives the lord of his rights to the vassal's land. Almost one hundred years later, Odofredus reversed this judgement, stating that a vassal was not require to fight in his lord's *guerra* if it was "patently unjust' or "when obedience to his lord involved him in sin or perjury."<sup>220</sup> He also reversed the concept of a vassal aiding his lord against his own land stating, "the vassal's loyalty to his own *patria* overrode fidelity to his lord, such that a vassal could even kill his own father with impunity."<sup>221</sup> Of note, Russell states that by the end of the thirteenth century, Romanists in England, Naples, and France began to appropriate the concept of "defense of the *patria*," for the exclusive use of those monarchs. Here begins the first glimmers of the concept that "a vassals first obligation was not to his immediate overlord but to his king, who as guardian of public utility was charged with the defense of the *patria*, crown and realm."<sup>222</sup>

As Romanists were developing a just war theory from secular Roman law, others pursued alternate paths. The earliest to gain significant renown in this community of scholars was the Camaldolese monk, Gratian, around 1140.<sup>223</sup> Gratian was one of the first scholars to attempt to define the elements of a just war in his decretal, *Concordia Discordantium Canonum*. Drawing heavily from Isidore, Cicero, and Augustine, this work concluded that a just war consisted of two elements. The first was that a just war must "avenge injuries." He also assessed that defensive wars were also just when in defense of the "self, associates, the Church, the *patria*, or the

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<sup>219</sup> Frederick Russell, op. cit., 47.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 55.

common wealth.”<sup>224</sup> The second key element was that a just war could only be waged with an “authoritative edict.”<sup>225</sup> Gratian’s initial attempts to develop a formula for just war left much to be desired for later medieval canonists, though it did serve as a bedrock for further analysis. It would be the Decretists what would strive to fill in much of the gaps in analysis provided by Gratian.<sup>226</sup>

Gratian also addressed the concepts of how a just war should be waged. His primary concern in this regard was to limit the violence of war. As such, he agreed with Augustine in that it could only be fought by soldiers operating under the authority and order of a ruler with sufficient authority to declare war. Though he defined a just war as one which avenged injuries, such actions did not warrant undue violence or cruelty and so he assessed that mercy was due when victory was achieved. As with his definitions of *jus ad bellum*, Gratian’s work in defining the proper conduct of a war left holes to be filled by those that would follow.

Gratian’s *Concordia Discordantium Canonum*, completed in 1140, was immediately seized upon by the Decretists for further analysis, however, Russell states that, though not much original analysis was to come from their work, they did attempt to refine Gratian’s formula, continuing his practice of using both Roman law and Papal decrees. Much of this can be summarized into three core factors. First, a just war must be ordered by a person with sufficient authority. Second, it must be fought by soldiers in the service of that authority. Third, those being attacked must deserve it in some way. This general formula was common amongst the Decretists with some minor variations. Regarding specific causes, “inflicting deserved punishment, or protection of self, *patria*, faith or peace,” were all considered acceptable while

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<sup>224</sup> Maurice Keen, op. cit., 66.

<sup>225</sup> Frederick Russell, op. cit., 65.

<sup>226</sup> Maurice Keen, op. cit., 65.

motives such as “cruelty, cupidity, or ambition,” were seen as unjust.<sup>227</sup> One area in which the Decretists did offer a new perspective was their initial attempts to imply a judicial component to just war, specifically with regard to the concept of war as a punishment for crimes or sin. The Decretists did little however to further define critical aspects of Gratian’s work. They did not sufficiently define who held authority to declare war. Many definitions use the title “prince” as a proper authority, but Decretists were hesitant to further define this. So too, their definitions of just war could be used to justify much of the violence in feudal Europe.<sup>228</sup>

Within the realm of *jus in bello*, Russell states that the Decretists, again, offered little to advance existing thought, though there is some ground that was covered. Much like their formula to define just war, Decretists used formula to further define Gratian’s thoughts on the conduct of these wars. Three requirements were to be met. First, the soldier must be a layman. Second, the soldier must be acting under the authority of a prince of suitable authority. Third, that soldier must provide absolute obedience, except when the prince’s orders violate divine law. This last point however was debated, as some Decretists assessed that a soldier might disobey if the cause was judged unjust, implying that the soldier might be culpable for his actions in an unjust war. Regarding tactics, the Decretists generally agree with Gratian that if war was indeed required, then it could be fought at any time, to include holy days, and the use of ambushes was permitted.<sup>229</sup>

The next general grouping of canonists to add to the lexicon of medieval just war theory was the Decretalists. Leaving behind the work of Gratian, this group continued their study of Roman law while focusing on more “contemporary papal legislation.”<sup>230</sup> These scholars

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<sup>227</sup> Frederick Russell, op. cit., 88.; *Merriam-Webster* defines cupidity as an “inordinate desire for wealth.”

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, 86-102.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 103-105.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

provided the most in-depth analysis yet regarding *just ad bellum*, *jus in bello*, and feudal obligations regarding war. Around 1210, Laurentius Hispanus developed a more comprehensive formula to define the just war. His five criteria, *persona*, *res*, *causa*, *animus* and *auctoritas*, were eventually adopted by the majority of Decretalist scholars.<sup>231</sup> However, the most detailed analysis was to come from the second generation Decretalist, Henricus de Segusio, commonly referred to as Hostiensis. Focused on the *Decretal of Gregory IX*, he distinguished seven types of wars, both just and unjust.<sup>232</sup> These were wars waged by the faithful against the infidels, the judicial war waged to enforce a judicial order, the unjust war waged in opposition of a judicial authority of the second type, war waged to legally repel injuries to ones associates, the unjust war waged in opposition to the fourth type, unjust offensive war waged on private authority, and the last, legal war waged in self-defense against the sixth type.<sup>233</sup>

Such distinction was critical to clarifying ambiguities of previous Decretists and Decretalists. They also allowed the Decretalists to further move just war into the realm of judicial authority, to include what type of prince might hold sufficient authority to wage war legally. Two in particular, William of Rennes and Innocent IV, provided specific guidance regarding who could declare war and under what circumstances, providing a middle ground between the Decretist view allowing almost any prince to wage war, and the more conservative Decretalist view that only the Emperor or the Pope could. In their assessment, a king, a prince

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<sup>231</sup> Frederick Russell, op. cit., 128.; Russel defines the five criteria as follows: *persona* – the person waging the war must be a layman, *res* – the object of the war had to be either the recovery of stolen goods or the defense of the *patria*, *causa* – the necessity of waging the war constituted the just cause, *animus* – the just intentions of the belligerent excluded the desire to punish, and *auctoritas* – the war had to be waged on princely authority.

<sup>232</sup> “Hostiensis Contents,” The Ames Foundation, last modified June 6, 2014, accessed August 12, 2017, <http://amesfoundation.law.harvard.edu/digital/Hostiensis/HostiensisMetadataPrelim.html>.; Frederick Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 128.

<sup>233</sup> Frederick Russell, op. cit., 129-130.

with no superior, or a prince of immediate authority (baron, count, duke, etc) might justly declare war on either an external threat or their subjects (if no judicial solution could be found, or the subjects did not comply). Regarding the opposite:

a vassal wishing to make war on his count first had to secure permission from the king as the count's superior, and if the count wished to make war on his king, the latter being unwilling to render judgment in the court of the count's peers, then the count could without sin defend his rights by resort to moderate use of arms.<sup>234</sup>

This opinion did not, however, allow the vassal to make war directly on a king. For that to be allowed, the vassal had to seek permission from the Pope. Russell implies that this was the earliest significant attempt to align canon law with the realities of medieval contemporary practice. It also provides a formal outlet for the medieval concept of *déni de justice*.<sup>235</sup>

In modern international law, the concept of *déni de justice* is applied primarily to a foreign person living in a foreign state and their interaction with that state. The state's duties at the most basic level are, "prevention and punishment, repression and redress. The state must use a certain degree of diligence in preventing injuries to aliens; and, when such injuries nevertheless occur, it must repair them according to its own legal processes."<sup>236</sup> However, within the medieval context, *déni de justice* was often described as the "right of a vassal to revolt against his overlord."<sup>237</sup> Indeed the above formula as written by William of Rennes in his *Glossa* to the *Summa de Casibus*, provided a clear path for a vassal to pursue a violent solution if he had expended all other means of justice first.<sup>238</sup> Other Decretalists, however, did not agree with this

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<sup>234</sup> Frederick Russell, op. cit., 144.

<sup>235</sup> Maurice Keen translates *Déni de justice* as "denial of justice."; Maurice Keen, *The Laws of War in the Late Middle Ages* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), 73.

<sup>236</sup> Clyde Eagleton, "Denial of Justice in International Law," *The American Journal of International Law* 22, no. 3 (1928): 538, accessed August 19, 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2188742>.

<sup>237</sup> Frederick Russell, op. cit., 138.

<sup>238</sup> Referencing the online Encyclopedia Britannica, The *Summa de Casibus* was written by Raymond of Peñafort around 1222. It served as a manual of cannon law for confessors. The entry states that it was widely used during the late Middle Ages. This is demonstrated by the Morgan Library and Museum's

assessment. Hostiensis, writing in *Summa*, ruled that such wars, also term *diffidatio*, were in fact unjust, as they were a “breach of the faith that held Christian society together.”<sup>239</sup> Maurice Keen highlights the ambiguities surrounding civil conflict stating, “In civil strife, quarter was frequently refused, but technically it was doubtful if civil strife merited the name of war at all...its repression was justice, not war.”<sup>240</sup> Clearly all Decretalists did not agree on this issue, however, given Pope Innocent IV shared the more moderate interpretation, it is reasonable to assess that this was the more dominate opinion.

Decretalists, provided additional analysis regarding feudal obligations. In general, they assessed that a soldier or vassal should obey the orders of their lord, as long as such orders did not “contradict divine or canon law.”<sup>241</sup> Others however, such as Peter of Salins, dove further into their analysis questioning whether a soldier should obey if his lord’s motivation is cupidity. (He assessed that if the cause was just, but the intention unjust, the vassal could fight.) The author of the *Gloss: Ecce Vicit Leo* asserted that a vassal should not fight unless he was certain that the war was just, which directly contradicted earlier assessments that a vassal should fight unless he was certain a war was unjust. Johannes Teutonicus, recognizing the complicated relationships inherent in feudal obligations assessed that “the vassal was not bound to serve his lord against his own *patria*, the pope, or his own son unless the latter was excommunicated,” or

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online catalogue of books, in which they have two copies of the *Summa de casibus conscientiae* believed to have been created around 1458 and 1460 in Italy and Germany respectively.

<sup>239</sup> Frederick Russell, op. cit., 142.; *Diffidatio* is defined as, “A statement in which allegiance to a lord was renounced and that renunciation justified,” by “Dictionary of Medieval Terms and Phrases: Diffidatio,” [www.enacademic.com](http://www.enacademic.com), accessed August 19, 2017, [http://medieval\\_terms.enacademic.com/1088/Diffidatio](http://medieval_terms.enacademic.com/1088/Diffidatio).; According to the Ames Foundation site on Hostiensis, the *Summa* on the *Decretals of Gregory IX* was highly celebrated. It was also known as the *Summa aurea*.

<sup>240</sup> Maurice Keen, op. cit., 105.

<sup>241</sup> Frederick Russell, op. cit., 147.

when his lord, “unjustly attacked someone or when obedience would lead to sinful activities.”<sup>242</sup> Though all Decretalists did not agree with each other at all times, their work regarding feudal obligations provides insight into how the Church sought to limit the violence through limiting the number of combatants on the field. When combined with their work regarding just war, a trend emerges. By limiting the authority required and types of wars that could be deemed “just,” and by allowing the knight to decide if it is just or not, the canonists provide unwilling knights a path (admittedly at their own risk) to avoid fighting in their lords personal *guerra*.

Regarding the conduct of war, the Decretalists mostly agreed with those canonists that came before them. Alanus Anglicus assessed that “faith once promised to an enemy must be maintained.”<sup>243</sup> So too, the Decretalists believe that “all manner of stratums,” could be used to fight and win wars.<sup>244</sup> Of note however, papal decrees on the restriction of certain weapons began appearing by the thirteenth century. Specifically, the Pope banned the use of the crossbow, regular bows, and siege engines when waging war against other Christians.<sup>245</sup> Additionally, scholars such as Raymond of Peñafort and William of Rennes began to divide acceptable actions in the conduct of war by the justness of the war. Raymond assessed that using incendiary weapons and specifically the burning of houses or towns during an unjust war was not allowed, but within a just war was permitted. William expanded this, assessing that within an unjust war, one could not rob, ravage, wound or kill, but within a just war, these activities were licit. Regarding damages to property, William held that as long as the damage was unavoidable and did not result from a “love of violence, greed or malice,” then no restitution was required.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Frederick Russell, op. cit., 146-149.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>245</sup> Russell writes that this restriction was first emplaced in 1139 after the conclusion of the Second Lateran Council.

<sup>246</sup> Frederick Russell, op. cit., 160.



Excessive destruction, even in a just war, required compensation.<sup>247</sup> Russell writes that Decretalists spent very little time addressing death in war. They did add provisions within their texts that protected the warrior, specifically that he could not be killed outside of direct battle, and that he could not be reduced into servitude if fighting in a just war. However, these provisions typically were applied to those of more noble standing than the common man.<sup>248</sup>

Medieval theologians also worked to define their own ideas of just war. However, like the Romanists who focused primarily on Roman law to gain their answers, theologians limited themselves mostly to, “the Old and New Testaments, the writings of the Church Fathers, and the Sentences of Peter Lombard.”<sup>249</sup> They also drew heavily from Gratian and Augustine, as these key texts discussed warfare *ex professo*, providing the theologians a point of departure for developing their own definitions.<sup>250</sup> As might be expected, their focus centered on the moral dimensions of just war theory. As such, theologians had to first rectify the use of violence with the New Testament’s more peaceful tenants. The assessment of Jean de la Rochelle was generally accepted, that being, that the New Testament’s general objections to warfare were to only be adhered to by those Christians seeking perfection. For the theologian, this applied primarily to clerics of the Church.<sup>251</sup>

With this critical point in general acceptance, theologians, working off of Augustinian definitions, began to construct their own ideas on just war. Roland of Cremona presented a unique theory based on his study of both the Old and New Testaments. He provided for three criteria that must be met: “authority of a prince; maintenance of faith...; and the righteous

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<sup>247</sup> Frederick Russell, *op. cit.*, 161.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

consciences of both the prince and his warriors.”<sup>252</sup> Jean de la Rochelle agreed with Raymond of Peñafort’s five-point definition of person, thing, cause, intention and authority. Raymond’s student, Alexander of Hale would provide the longest list of requirements: authority, attitude, intention, condition, merit, and cause. In each of these definitions, the authors stressed the attitudes and intentions of those fighting. For Alexander, the moral imperatives of, “the alleviation of good men, the coercion of the wicked, and peace for all,” stood as the primary causes for just war.<sup>253</sup>

On the subject of obligations to feudal lords, the theologians had much to say though it often proved a challenge. Roland of Cremona argued that if an individual had doubts regarding the justness of a war, he should continue to fight. However, if the “whole body” of the fighting force knew the war to be unjust, they should not fight, even on pain of death.<sup>254</sup> Thomas of Chobham argued that a ruler must seek the approval of his people to wage an unjust war, but must not consult them for a just war. So too, he argued that the people had the right to disobey en masse if they believed a war to be unjust. Even so, he argued that it was better for a knight to follow his lord into an unjust war as long as they only defended themselves and avoided shedding blood and rapine.<sup>255</sup> These conflicts of opinion stemmed from the real possibility that such actions could lead to loss of all status and possessions in medieval Europe. Given many theologians were themselves knights or lords, the reality of these consequences weighed heavily in their analysis, limiting the depth of their analysis.<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> Frederick Russell, *op. cit.*, 219.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, 218-221.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 229.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 213, 230.

On *jus in bello*, the theologians offered much more of the same. Drawing from the Old and New Testaments, they assessed that faith once given, must be maintained. Parisian theologians assessed that the use of the crossbow was licit only in a just war, but that “crossbowmen [were] not worthy of salvation...”<sup>257</sup> They agreed that within just wars, ambushes were licit but in unjust wars were not. They did however, add to the discussion regarding the use of mercenaries. In general, mercenaries should be excommunicated (especially those who abuse their position), but theologians ran into issues regarding both the common practice king’s employment of mercenaries in their wars and of paying non-mercenary soldiers wages for their service.<sup>258</sup> Peter the Chanter accepted their use only when employed in a just war and only when there was no other employment available. He also accepted their use if the *patria* was unjustly attacked. So too, Bonaventura allowed for soldier to be paid for their service, but forbid rapine of the poor.<sup>259</sup>

Ultimately, these attempts to restrict the use of mercenaries fell on deaf ears. Indeed, J.R. Hale writes that all countries employed them.<sup>260</sup> They were used extensively in the Crusades, can be found in the employ of Florence (along with many other city states) in the late thirteenth century, and found steady employment during the Hundred Years War.<sup>261</sup> During the second half of the fourteenth century, even the papacy made extensive use of the English mercenary John

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<sup>257</sup> Frederick Russell, op. cit., 243.

<sup>258</sup> Russell states that the guidance regarding the excommunication of mercenaries was disseminated in the Third Lateran Council in 1179. A complete list of the canons can be found on the Papal Encyclicals Online website (<http://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/ecum11.htm>). Canon 27 expressly forbids the support of the Brabanters, Aragonese, Navarrese, Basques, Coterelli and Triaverdini and those who do should not be allowed to take communion. This may have been interpreted as mercenaries should be excommunicated, and therefore not be allowed to receive communion.

<sup>259</sup> Frederick Russell, op. cit., 241-242.

<sup>260</sup> J.R. Hale, *War and Society in Renaissance Europe 1450-1620* (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 69.

<sup>261</sup> Philippe Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages*, trans. Michael Jones (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1990), 99. 158-9.

Hawkwood and his White Company.<sup>262</sup> Russell assesses, that in the end, theologians offered few real contributions to the advancement of just war theory as they generally adhered to Augustinian principles with very few deviations.

By the middle of the thirteenth century, one final group of just war scholars emerged. The theologian Thomas Aquinas and his students charted a unique course in just war theory, combining Augustinian theory with that of Aristotle. Three key tenants of Aristotle's work were drawn upon: "the naturalness of political authority, the teleology of communal life, and the superiority of the common good over the good of the individual."<sup>263</sup>

Aquinas left behind the more complicated approaches to define just war, instead choosing a more simplified set of requirements: "authority; just cause; and just intention."<sup>264</sup> Regarding authority, he assessed that "since princes were instituted by God to further the common good, they therefore had the duty to defend it."<sup>265</sup> Cause fell back upon the simpler Augustinian definition rather than those of the Decretalists. Aquinas assessed that, "the just cause constituted some fault or sin committed by an adversary that need to be punished and the right intention was to suppress injustice, return the situation to order and assure peace."<sup>266</sup> He did warn however that wars for reasons other than the common good were dangerous. Indeed, Aquinas in general

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<sup>262</sup> Philippe Contamine, op. cit., 158-159.; The classicist Y. Garland wrote in his *La guerre dans l'Antiquite* that a "mercenary is a professional soldier whose conduct is dictated not by his membership of a political community but above all by his desire for gain." Contamine summarizes this stating that a mercenary is "a specialist, stateless, and paid." By this rationale, they discount knights and soldiers fighting specifically in service to their king due to fealty. It is these characteristics, Contamine argues, makes them so valuable to the medieval urban elite. Not only do they replace them as combatants, allowing them to pursue the accumulation of wealth, but because they are stateless, they are perceived as neutral, they can be trusted to operate without a broader political agenda. (p158-9 in Contamine's *War in the Middle Ages*)

<sup>263</sup> Frederick Russell, op. cit., 258.; *Merriam-Webster* online defines teleology as the study of evidences of design in nature.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 268.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 262.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 269.

supported the concept of “waging wars for the sake of peace rather than for their own sake.”<sup>267</sup> A final key point in Aquinas’ fusion of Aristotelian and Augustinian principles, is his joining of just war with political authority. In doing this, Russell asserts that he “returned the problems of war to the level of military organization, strategy, and tactics...thus provid[ing] contemporary princes with detailed advice...”<sup>268</sup>

The conduct of warfare was not overlooked within Aquinas’ writings. He argued that deception through deeds (ambushes) was authorized in a just war, however, deception in word was never justifiable. He discussed moderation in warfare, warning that defense was licit within natural law, but could become illicit if the defender used a disproportionate response in his defense. Aquinas also gives specific guidance within his *Summa Theologiae* on the conduct of soldiers in war regarding obedience and treason. He states that a “soldier on the battlefield is bound to help a fellow-soldier who is a stranger rather than a kinsman who is a foe,” implying that knights were better served keeping faith with the common weal rather than family that may oppose it.<sup>269</sup> Writing of stratagem he states, “a soldier has to learn...the art of concealing his purpose lest it come to the enemy's knowledge”<sup>270</sup> Russell assesses that Aquinas’ work constitutes the peak of early mediaeval theologian theory on just war. The primary challenge with his work is that nowhere did he focus specifically on the topic of war. Therefore, much of his analysis of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* are scattered throughout his expansive writings. His

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<sup>267</sup> Frederick Russell, op. cit., 266.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., 280-281.

<sup>269</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (n.d.), 4578, accessed August 26, 2017, [http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/1225-1274,\\_Thomas\\_Aquinas,\\_Summa\\_Theologiae\\_%5B1%5D,\\_EN.pdf](http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/1225-1274,_Thomas_Aquinas,_Summa_Theologiae_%5B1%5D,_EN.pdf).

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

most important contribution was the application of Aristotelian philosophy to his just war analysis, tying warfare to both political authority and the good of the common weal.<sup>271</sup>

Having discussed the early development of *Jus ad bellum* and *Jus in bello*, it is time to turn attention to one of the late fourteenth and fifteenth century's most "famous, rather than well-known," authors on the subject, Honoré Bonet.<sup>272</sup> Like many of the writers within this field, Bonet was a priest, and like other writers throughout the history of medieval just war theory, he drew heavily on those who came before him.<sup>273</sup> Though he held the degree of Doctor of Decretals, he is assessed by G.W. Coopland as having little education in classical Roman law, limiting his influence in academic circles of the time. However, Coopland is quick to point out that Bonet had something that many academics of the time lacked, experience. Bonet was widely travelled and is known to have associated with knights in his youth and witnessed the effects of war. It is this experience that he brought to bear in his most influential work *L'arbre des batailles*, or *The Tree of Battles*. His practical experience offered him insights into the subject, and when combined with his method of "writing for the layman in the vulgar tongue," he gained significant readership within the ranks of the nobility.<sup>274</sup>

As with other sources written in the period, it is important to understand their readership to assess their influence. In discussing early medieval scholars, the discussion could be general, as it provided the foundation of medieval thought on just war. However, regarding Bonet, additional detail is required. Copies of *The Tree of Battle* have been found in the libraries of royalty and nobility across Europe. Copies have either survived or been catalogued as having

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<sup>271</sup> Frederick Russell, op. cit. 279-291.

<sup>272</sup> Honoré Bonet, op. cit. 15.

<sup>273</sup> Coopland's analysis states that regarding legal texts, Bonet primarily drew from John of Legnano's *de Bello, de Represaliis, et de Duello*. For the historical section, Coopland assess that he likely drew from portions of the *Summa Manaldi* and Gratian.

<sup>274</sup> Honoré Bonet, op. cit. 21, 15-21.

existed across France, Burgundy, England, and Spain. It is referenced in William Worchester's *Boke of Noblesse* beside "dame Cristyn," almost certainly a reference to Christine de Pisan.<sup>275</sup> Indeed, Christine de Pisan draws heavily on *The Tree* in her book, *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyvalrye*. Most relevant to a discussion regarding the Wars of the Roses is the recorded use, in 1453, of *The Tree* in the *Paston Letters*. Specifically, the Duke of Norfolk, during his arraignment of the Duke of Somerset, references Bonet stating, "and also a knight that fled for dred of bataille shulde be beheded, soo that all these thyngs may be founden in the lawes wryten, and also yn the boke cleped L'arbre de Bataille."<sup>276</sup> These accusations by Norfolk were directly tied to Somerset's role in the loss of English possessions in France in the second quarter of the fifteenth century. So too, these same allegations, as previously discussed, were used by both Jack Cade and the Duke of York against the Duke of Somerset as justification for his removal as an advisor to Henry VI, and eventually, for armed conflict.<sup>277</sup>

Having established Honoré Bonet's place within the pantheon of just war scholars and his generally wide readership, we turn now to his opinions on the matter.<sup>278</sup> Regarding the legitimacy of war, Bonet follows closely with the Augustinian logic that war is licit in Biblical terms because "the aim of war is to wrest peace, tranquility and reasonableness, from him who refuses to acknowledge his wrongdoing."<sup>279</sup> He supports this assessment through a series of Old Testament references to include Joshua chapter eleven, where God commands Joshua to battle

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<sup>275</sup> Isaac Levitan, ed., *The Boke of Noblesse* (San Bernardino: Editoria Griffio, n.d.), 108.

<sup>276</sup> *Paston Letters*, ed. J. Gairdner (1904) Vol 2, p 291. in Honoré Bonet, *The Tree of Battles of Honoré Bonet*, trans. G.W. Coopland (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1949), 22-23.

<sup>277</sup> For an in-depth analysis of how medieval legal and knightly texts were used in England, see Catherine Nall's dissertation, "The Production and Reception of Military Texts in the Aftermath of the Hundred Years War."

<sup>278</sup> For the purpose of this analysis, I have limited the scope to those criteria developed by Laurentius Hispanus. Those are, *persona, res, causa, animus* and *auctoritas*. This simple framework seems to me best for placing Bonet's work in the context of other medieval writers on the subject.

<sup>279</sup> Honoré Bonet, op. cit. 125.

against his enemies. He goes on to outline the criteria for just war, though it must be said that his organization of this analysis is wanting. His criteria of just war are scattered throughout *The Tree of Battles*, and it is up to the reader (contemporary or modern) to place these in context.

In Chapters XXIII and XXIV, Bonet discusses four types of war only two of which provide licit *causa* for war. Defensive war to protect justly acquired goods is the first and is always considered licit. Offensive war to recover lost justly acquired goods is also considered licit, however Bonet offers a caveat later in Chapter XXIV that indicates that it is licit only when undertaken immediately. He categorizes any war to either defend or recover unjustly acquired goods as unjust. Left unspoken, it can be assessed that offensive wars to acquire goods unjustly are also considered unjust.<sup>280</sup> Within this analysis of the types of war, he also provides the *res* criteria of Laurentius Hispanus' just war formula. He associates "justly acquired goods" as the central "thing" over which war is fought. Although he is not specific, given the broad context of *The Tree*, we can assume that *patria* is to be included in this category.

Given the complex nature of feudal society, Bonet offers very specific guidance regarding two specific scenarios. If unjustly acquired goods are inherited, unknowingly and not through "force, violence nor rapine," a man may justly wage war to defend these goods or make war to recover them if "[he does] it in heat, that is to say in the instant, before [he] undertake[s] anything else."<sup>281</sup> The second complex case illustrated by Bonet deals with lost goods by violence that are subsequently transferred to another person. In this case, if the transfer happens immediately, it is just to wage war to recover the property. However, if the property is held by the person that took it for some time, then transferred to another, then these goods may not be recovered through war, and must be recovered through adjudication. As is so often the case

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<sup>280</sup> Honoré Bonet, op. cit. 140.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid.



however, Bonet provides the victim with a violent outlet stating, “but if such a man has asked for it by way of judgment, and then wishes to make war on the possessor, he may do this well and justly.”<sup>282</sup>

Bonet’s discussion of who possessed the authority, or *auctoritas*, to wage just war occurs in chapters III through VI as he reviews several key components of authority. The first is that the Holy Roman Emperor may declare war against external enemies and rebels. The next is that “princes” may ordain war, however, this title and authority is forbidden to the knight. The third component is the most critical within the context of the Wars of the Roses. Bonet asks where the Emperor can declare war on the Pope. His response is that he cannot because the Emperor is “subject to the Pope, and the Pope is sovereign, and I do not see how the Emperor, being a subject, can have the power to judge in the cause of his superior.”<sup>283</sup> Using the example of the Emperor and the Pope, Bonet excuses himself from creating a loophole for lesser lords to wage war on their king. Previous scholars allowed a lesser noble to request permission from the Pope to wage war on their sovereign king. Bonet however, by using the Pope in his example, elevates the issue to the highest level, not allowing room for any higher power to authorize the war. Two possible interpretations might be had regarding this point. The first, from the Lancastrian point of view, is that the Dukes of York (Richard and Edward) were subjects of Richard VI, and therefore did not have the right to wage war against him. The second, from the Yorkist perspective, is contingent on the belief that Richard, Duke of York sought the crown from the start. A Yorkist interpretation might be that because Richard VI was only in power because of the deposition of Richard II in 1399, he was not a legitimate king. In the end, such an argument has limited application. Richard, Duke of York, never actually claimed the crown, only ensured he would be

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<sup>282</sup> Honoré Bonet, *op. cit.*, 140.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

crowned on Henry VI's death. His son Edward did claim the crown, however, and once he was crowned, the war was technically between two peers, both temporal kings of England. Henry Tudor's invasion against Richard III might be considered unjust, however, Tudor claimed the crown through right of conquest and those willing to challenge him fall outside the scope of this paper.

Bonet also addresses the characteristic of intention/*animus* within *Tree of Battles*. Specifically, he states that "if in war many evil things are done, they never come from the nature of war, but from false usage...from war wrongly conducted," though he does accept that in war, the good will suffer with the bad.<sup>284</sup> He uses a metaphor regarding illness to further his point stating that a doctor may employ a remedy to cure an illness. However, "the remedy affects the good humours along with the bad, for in such degree are they mingled and intermixed that it cannot be otherwise..."<sup>285</sup> For Bonet, war is ordained by God as a panacea against the ills of the world. It must be fought with that purpose in mind and "virtuously," but even doing so, innocents will be harmed.<sup>286</sup>

The final condition of just war, *persona*, or those called on to fight, is discussed through *The Tree*. Bonet routinely discusses the expectations of knights and soldiers as well as provides a framework for how they should be treated by those in superior positions. Regarding those who must not fight, Bonet only expressly advocates for the old, young, ill, disabled, and women.<sup>287</sup> However, in Chapter XLII, he discusses whether cleric should "pay tallages or impositions levied for the purposes of a war." In this, his opinion is that they should not because "in shedding blood, and in being guilty of men's deaths and other illicit things, they would be participating in

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<sup>284</sup> Honoré Bonet, op. cit. 125.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid., 168.

the evil, and this does not appertain to them.”<sup>288</sup> It can be assessed from this statement, that if clerics should not pay taxes in support of war, that they should not fight in war either. Therefore, Bonet is consistent with previous writers that only laymen should fight in war.

As with previous scholars discussing warfare, Bonet takes time to address the complex obligations of nobility during the medieval period. Given the significant amount of guidance provided by Bonet, this analysis will attempt to restrict itself to those chapters that can be applied to the Wars of the Roses. Chapter XVI is the first of relevance asking “whether the subject of a baron are bound to aid their lord against the king?” In this argument, Bonet states the common opinion is that “he who is my man’s man is not mine,” and therefore the subjects of the baron may support him. However, Bonet disagrees with the “doctors our masters” on this point, stating that the moment the baron takes up arms against the king, he is guilty of “lese-majesty,” and therefore the baron’s men “are not bound to aid him to be forsworn, or to live in such sin.”<sup>289</sup> It seems that this decision overrides Bonet’s later opinions that both vassal and serf should aid their lord “if another wishes to attack him,” even though Bonet’s punishment for failing this is the loss of all lands.<sup>290</sup>

The above chapters address vassal and lord outside of blood relation, and Bonet is quite clear on his opinion. He next addresses the appropriate response for a more complex issue; when one’s father is the subject of an attack. The gloss Bonet is drawing from states that “the father should aid his lord against his own son, and that in similar case, the son should be entirely against his father.”<sup>291</sup> Here again, he disagrees stating,

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<sup>288</sup> Honoré Bonet, op. cit. 165.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid., 136.; The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines lese-majesty as a) a crime (such as treason) committed against a sovereign power; b) an offense violating the dignity of a ruler as the representative of a sovereign power.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.,138.

so, notwithstanding the reason to the contrary, I hold that he should certainly aid his father so long as he thinks or it appears to him, that his father is reasonably in the right. I say further, that if he refuses to aid his father, the father may disinherit his child for the vice of ingratitude; and I base my argument on civil law. [any oath to the king] is against all good custom, against the commandment of God, and outside all humanity. Hence although he is bound to his lord by an oath, he is not so bound against his father...<sup>292</sup>

Bonet supports his argument in that it aligns with the Decretals as well as civil, Biblical, and perhaps most importantly, natural law. Already, it becomes clear that such a opinion would weight strongly in the minds of the great families of England in the second half of the fifteenth century.

Bonet's next chapter regarding familial obligations considers whether, "brother may defend brother, against attack or injury." This is one of Bonet's more convoluted chapters, incorporating the opinion of the decretals and civil law, while also wandering off topic to discuss defense of those not related by blood. He concludes that if a person is with their relation when attacked, he "may defend him without incurring the sentence of a court."<sup>293</sup> However, if a person is not present when the attack takes place, then it is not legal to attack the assailant.<sup>294</sup> This is of particular relevance if expanded to include the broad category of family, which was most likely Bonet's intent. The Wars of the Roses saw repeated examples of family avenging a family member's death at the hands of the opposing side. These revenge killings almost always took place long after the fact. Under this opinion, such killings were considered illicit and warranted justice in the courts. However, under separate opinions, Bonet offers justification for such killings that apply within the context of the Wars of the Roses, and these will be discussed shortly.

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<sup>292</sup> Honoré Bonet, op. cit.,138-139.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., 166.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., 167.

Bonet's discussions regarding *Jus in bello* are no less detailed, though as with his criteria for just war, his thoughts and opinions are scattered throughout *Tree of Battles*. As with his discussions on obligations of the vassal, this analysis will limit the discussion to those topics specifically related to combat. On whether deceit or subtlety is allowed to overcoming one's enemies, Bonet's argument aligns with the common theme that it is allowed. He also agrees that once a pledge or truce is made with the enemy, it must be kept.<sup>295</sup> Bonet goes so far on this topic to state in Chapter CIV, that the stated punishment in law is death, even if the damages done only amount to five shillings.<sup>296</sup> Regarding conducting battle on feast days or holy days, Bonet holds with his contemporaries, that such is allowed, though to be discouraged.<sup>297</sup>

Pillage and plunder is also addressed within *The Tree*. Though Bonet does not expressly forbid it, he condemns it as dishonest and wicked.<sup>298</sup> He goes on to discuss the spoils of war in Chapter XLIII stating, "if a war is waged with the command and consent of the prince who has power to order and declare just war, then by my faith, I believe that it is simple truth that they do hold good." He concludes that the law is unclear, but that in his opinion, "what a man gains from his enemies belongs to him," though such spoils should be provided to the duke of the battle to be disseminated accordingly to each man, according to his valor.<sup>299</sup> Regarding cities or kingdoms waging war, he provides a more convoluted answer. In regard to city-states waging war, he assesses that, "goods gained by one of them from another will belong to the victor..."<sup>300</sup> However, in an example using England and France he states that if the peasants do not support their king in war, they and their possessions should be spared. However, if they support their

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<sup>295</sup> Honoré Bonet, op. cit. 154-155.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid., 151.

king, then the opposing kingdom is allowed to “make war on the people.”<sup>301</sup> After all of this, Bonet offers an exception to his opinion stating, “if on both sides war is decided upon and begun by the Councils of the two kings, the soldiery may take spoil from the kingdom at will, and make war freely.”<sup>302</sup> Indeed, with one exception within the Wars of the Roses, it seems that this rule was generally followed, though it should be stated that the nobles fighting understood the necessity of not pillaging their own English country side. The exception was allowed only by Margret of Anjou in 1461 on her march from Scotland to the Second Battle of St. Albans. This act generated such fear in London, that on her arrival, the gates were closed, and she was forced to march north again.<sup>303</sup>

Having discussed the most common of topics regarding the conduct of war, Bonet does offer some guidance regarding those who should be actively spared during war. This is most likely a response to the Hundred Years War tactic of *chevauchée*.<sup>304</sup> In Chapters C to CII, he describes a significant portion of the population to be protected. As a cleric, he was obligated to state that all members of the Holy Church were to be given safe passage, but he goes on from there. He adds that “all ox-herds, and all husbandmen and ploughmen with their oxen, when they are carrying on their business, and equally when they are going to it or returning from it, are secure, according to written law,” and to this he also adds “the ox drivers man.”<sup>305</sup> Indeed he felt it important to ensure that even an ass if used as a substitute for an ox was protected because

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<sup>301</sup> Honoré Bonet, op. cit., 153-154.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>303</sup> Charles Ross, *The Wars of the Roses* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 51-53.

<sup>304</sup> Philippe Contamine, in his book *War in the Middle Ages*, describes *chevauchée* as a tactic in which a large force “[burns] and [destroys] all in their path.”

<sup>305</sup> Honoré Bonet, op. cit. 188-189.

it did the work of an ox.<sup>306</sup>

Overall, Honoré Bonet's opinions on *Jus ad bellum* within his *Tree of Battles* are consistent with the writers and scholars that came before him. His opinions regarding feudal obligations stood against the general consensus with regard to familial ties. Finally, his discussions on the conduct of war firmly sit within the standards of extant material on the subject. Though not consumed within academic circles, his decision to write in the vulgar tongue opened his analysis up to a much larger audience. If we conclude that the ranking laymen such as the Duke of Norfolk considered Bonet's *Tree of Battles* as an authority on *just ad bellum* and *jus in bello*, and that its readership was broad across the nobility, then the work may be included as one of the measures against the actions of English nobility on the battlefield.

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<sup>306</sup> Philippe Contamine, in his book *War in the Middle Ages*, discusses the use of the ass in some cases as a stand in for a horse by the mounted archer, especially when an army had taken significant losses to their stock of horses.

## Chapter 5

### ACTIONS ON THE FIELD OF HONOR: AN ANALYSIS

“...he manly, vigorously, and valiantly, assailed them in the midst...”

—*Fleetwood's Manuscript*, c.1471

It is often argued that English chivalric culture was waning by the fifteenth century, though much evidence exists to the contrary.<sup>307</sup> There can be found chivalric romances, books of war, and chivalric manuals in many of the miscellanies from the period, commissioned by the growing population of English gentry and nobility alike. These writings sat alongside historical and political texts such as the *Polychronicon* and the *Secreta Secretorum*.<sup>308</sup> Nigel Saul states, “when readers thought in abstract terms about matters of politics and public affairs, chivalric assumptions were never far from their minds.”<sup>309</sup> He goes on to state that, given that these chivalric writings were included beside texts on governance, history, and “nurture,” it may be believed that these were meant to be read with an “appreciation of the other matter in mind.”<sup>310</sup>

However, accepting that chivalric ideals continued to hold influence, and could motivate

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<sup>307</sup> Though Nigel Saul states that the “urban elites seem to have adopted an attitude of almost complete detachment from chivalry and chivalric ceremony,” evidence suggests that urban elites such as wealthy merchants still sought the trappings of nobility. In Sylvia Thrupp’s *The Merchant Class of Medieval London*, she discusses at length the relationships of the merchant class and the nobility, and in particular, the desire to acquire legitimate heraldic arms. So too, Caroline Barron argues in *Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display in Medieval England* that the elite of London were very familiar with chivalric custom, and though did not participate in it directly, imitated it “[developing] their own brand of chivalric spectacle...”

<sup>308</sup> Nigel Saul, *Chivalry in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 305-306. Saul specifically references four individual examples of miscellanies or “great bokes” where this model is found. Sir John Astley, Sir John Paston, William Brandon, and one where does not mention the owner. Additionally, he mentions a miscellany gifted to Margret of Anjou by John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury in 1445.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*, 324.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, 307.



men to action (including war), it is important to acknowledge that some aspects of the chivalric ideal were changing. There is substantial analysis demonstrating the changing nature of chivalric obligation, or methods of rising up the societal ladder focused, away from combat, to one of service. K.B. McFarlane dates some creations of peerage through non-combat service as far back as Edward III's reign.<sup>311</sup> Maurice Keen highlights Honoré Bonet's emphasis that "he [the soldier] does all that he does as the deputy of the king or of the lord in whose pay he is."<sup>312</sup> He goes on to state that Bonet's assessment is in line with his peers in that, "the prince is the 'fount' of all honour, on whose recognition the title to nobility depends, and that the service of the princes and the common weal is the proper way forward for the aspirant to nobility and honour."<sup>313</sup> Notwithstanding this analysis, after reviewing a selection of surviving texts and law, there is little evidence to demonstrate that the chivalric virtues were changing with regard to warfare and combat.<sup>314</sup> Given the analysis of the previous chapters, this section attempts to bring

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<sup>311</sup> K.B. McFarlane, *The Nobility of Later Medieval England: The Ford Lectures of 1953 and Related Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 276.

<sup>312</sup> Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (London: Yale University Press, 1984), 235.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.

<sup>314</sup> Arthur Ferguson and Johan Huizinga provide the strongest arguments that chivalry was unable to cope with the increasing pressures of society, thus allowing for humanism to grow dominant. Ferguson's argument speaks to the very late fifteenth century, though primarily of the sixteenth century and beyond. Ferguson immediately admits that during the fifteenth century, "chivalry was still able to evoke a lively response in the minds of Englishmen." His "Indian Summer" argument rests on the perceived (and therefore demand) increased number of chivalric texts circulating in England during the late fifteenth century, the increased spender of the tournament, which he chastises for imitating past glories and increased theatricality, and the reduced number of citizens seeking knighthood. The first weakness in his arguments are that he does not adequately address manuscripts and printed books leading up to the mid fifteenth century, which indicate reasonably strong readership of chivalric texts predating large amounts of printed copies. The second weakness of his argument is that he implies that the virtues of chivalric behavior should be noticeable in daily life as represented by the very few sources that remain to us. He also ignores the consistent historical trend of chivalric thought to look to the past as a model for the future. He indicates that this is a mark of decline, instead of a fairly common occurrence. Huizinga argues that c. 1400 medieval thought was "overburden with the ideals of beauty, virtue, and utility." Chivalry in particular was "useless and phony as a fabricated, ridiculously anachronistic comedy." Focused primarily on France and Burgundy, he paints a pessimistic image of period. Though he speaks to the knightly ideal and why it existed in theory, he underemphasizes the tangible meaning it still had within the nobility, as argued by Keen. Finally, in a period where gunpower did not yet reign supreme and the professional

together those elements of chivalry expected on the battlefield—*jus in bellum*—then test those elements against the best recorded battles from the Wars of the Roses. This analysis primarily focuses on pitched battles, excluding the few sieges and many skirmishes of the Wars of the Roses. This is primarily due to the lack of firsthand accounts of those actions versus a deliberate attempt to avoid the grittier nature of medieval campaigning.

Prowess continues as the obvious primary trait sought for on the battlefield, as highlighted in all the literature reviewed here. If the romances are the ideal and the knightly manuals provide more realistic expectations, then they are in agreement. Christine de Pisan writes that even a king should engage in the combat when fighting in a civil war. His royal prowess increases the courage of his men, and his mere presence saps his enemy's courage.<sup>315</sup> More to the point, it might be argued that English nobles wanted to be perceived as having prowess and that chroniclers of the time, as limited as they were, were keen to gain favor by describing both friend and foe as having courage and prowess on the battlefield. The author of the *Hearne's Fragment* describes Anthony Woodville and other knights who participated in the Smithfield jousts as "men courageous and greatly expert in those feats of war."<sup>316</sup> So too, the author of *Fleetwood's Manuscript* states that in 1471, Edward IV was unwilling to re-cross the Humber River because, "if they so did, it would have been thought that they had withdrawn

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standing army had not yet emerged, the second estate still had a strong role on the battlefield of the fifteenth and early half of the sixteenth century, much of which was still very much defined by chivalric obligation and expectations.

<sup>315</sup> Christine De Pisan, *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyvalrye*, ed. A.T.P. Biles, trans. William Caxton (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 18-19.

<sup>316</sup> *Hearne's Fragment* found in *The Chronicles of the White Rose of York: A Series of Historical Fragments, Proclamations, Letters, and Other Contemporary Documents Relating to the Reign of King Edward the Fourth; With Notes and Illustrations, and a Copious Index*, 2nd ed. (San Bernadino: ULAN Press, 2014), 19.

themselves for fear, which note of slander they were right loath to suffer.”<sup>317</sup> He later goes on to describe Edward at Barnet, stating,

he manly, vigorously, and valiantly, assailed them in the midst, and strongest of their battle, where he, with great violence, beat and bare down before him all that stood in his way, and then turned to the range, first on that hand, and then on that other hand, in length, and so beat and bare them down, so that nothing might stand in the sight of him...<sup>318</sup>

Finally, Warkworth makes a point to highlight that the Duke of Exeter had “fought man(ful)ly there that day,” when retelling the story of Barnet.<sup>319</sup> Thus, we see here that (at least in those few surviving chronicles) chroniclers too sought to extend the image of the chivalric king and noble through acts of prowess.

Loyalty, or lack thereof, is used within the romances surveyed as a method of defining the villain. Such simple narratives represent the ideal. So too, knightly manuals are reasonably clear on the matter. Charny states that men of worth “live loyally and honestly.”<sup>320</sup> Worcester in *The Boke of Noblesse* (c 1450) states that a true man should, “hate and dispraise tresoure and riches by treason.”<sup>321</sup> Those in both romance and manual, these are more of the ideal rather than reality. Bonet, and later Christine de Pisan both acknowledge a more complex world, proving clearer “rules” within the context of *jus gentium*. Regardless, Llull’s default to “common sense wins more battles” applies here as well. Choosing to support no side in a war is often

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<sup>317</sup> Fleetwood’s *Manuscript* found in *The Chronicles of the White Rose of York: A Series of Historical Fragments, Proclamations, Letters, and Other Contemporary Documents Relating to the Reign of King Edward the Fourth; With Notes and Illustrations, and a Copious Index*, 2nd ed. (San Bernadino: ULAN Press, 2014), 39.

<sup>318</sup> Fleetwood’s *Manuscript*, op. cit., 63.

<sup>319</sup> Warkworth’s *Chronicle* found in *The Chronicles of the White Rose of York: A Series of Historical Fragments, Proclamations, Letters, and Other Contemporary Documents Relating to the Reign of King Edward the Fourth; With Notes and Illustrations, and a Copious Index*, 2nd ed. (San Bernadino: ULAN Press, 2014), 39.

<sup>320</sup> Geoffroi De Charny, *The Book of Chivalry: Text, Context, and Translation*, trans. Richard Kaeuper and Elspeth Kennedy (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 149.

<sup>321</sup> Isaac Levitan, ed., *The Boke of Noblesse* (San Bernardino: Editoria Griffio, n.d.), 108. Maurice Keen, *Origins of the English Gentleman* (Charleston: Tempus Publishing Inc., 2002), 96.

acceptable, but once a side is chosen and battle is at hand, loyalty is a key trait expected.

Courtesy, most often associated with the romance of courtly life, is demonstrated in *Guy of Warwick* during battle. Moreover, Guy demonstrates this trait many times. Mallory provides a singular example in Sir Lancelot. This suggests that within the romances, such courtesy was an ideal only the most perfect of knight might aspire to. In practical terms, knightly texts approach the topic from differing perspectives. Lull states that, “for if the knight has no charity towards God and his fellow man, how can he love God, and how can he take pity on the helpless and be merciful to the vanquished who beg for mercy?”<sup>322</sup> So too, Charny writes that it is a mercy from God when one is taken prisoner honorably and writes that one is praised by both enemies and friends alike.<sup>323</sup> Their perspectives are certainly present on the battlefield, and can be seen through the practice of ransom taking, whereby mercy is granted, for a price.<sup>324</sup> Lull, however, does provide a somewhat different response when discussing traitors, stating, “and the lord who does not destroy his traitor, what shall he destroy, and why is he a lord, a man, or anything?”<sup>325</sup> The extensive rules regarding the taking and treatment of prisoners in Bonet, later borrowed by Christine de Pisan, indicate that the Church and at least some of the nobility sought to further restrict the treatment of prisoners.<sup>326</sup> However, they provided loopholes stating that executions were licit if it brought peace sooner. Bonet writes that “he who in battle has captured his enemy, especially if it be the duke or marshal of the battle, truly, according to God and theology and the

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<sup>322</sup> Ramon Llull, *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*, trans. Noel Fallows (Rochester: The Boydell Press, 2013), 72.

<sup>323</sup> Geoffroi De Charny, op. cit., 133. This is paired with the idea that it is equally a mercy from God when one is successful in battle.

<sup>324</sup> Rémy Ambühl, *Prisoners of War in the Hundred Years War: Ransom Culture in the Late Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 158.

<sup>325</sup> Ramon Llull, op. cit., 52.

<sup>326</sup> Honoré Bonet, *The Tree of Battles of Honoré Bonet*, trans. G.W. Coopland (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1949), 158-163, 179-188.

law of decretals, should have mercy on him, unless by his deliverance there is danger of having great wars.”<sup>327</sup> De Pisan provides a similar ruling, stating, “and that he by hys counseyll knewe that a grete euyll and hurt myght come to hym and to hys lande yf he let hym goo free / shulde make hym to deye.”<sup>328</sup> Given the source material, and the context of the Wars of the Roses, it can be assessed that courtesy, though an ideal in romance and in some circumstances supported by knightly texts, was not automatically expected once battle had begun in reality.

Wrath is another quality not often associated with the chivalric knight. Consistently used in the romances as a source of drive for the attack, one might assess that it was a sought after motivational tool, something to be channeled.<sup>329</sup> Of particular note, when Guy of Warwick loses control of his anger, he commits the very public murder of the Duke Othes.<sup>330</sup> So to, in Malory’s *Morte*, Sir Gawain’s persistent ire for Lancelot set the conditions for both his death and the downfall of Camelot.<sup>331</sup> Thus we see when anger is channeled in a controlled way, romance knights find success, however when they lose control, disaster follows. For the bulk of knightly writing, we see that it is generally thought of negatively as well. Lull and Charny both speak poorly of a knight who yields to anger. A point of departure however, can be found in *The Boke of Noblesse*. Worcester encourages ire as “condicion of a lion...the said condicions is taken for a vertue and renomme of worship to alle tho that haunten armes.”<sup>332</sup> Worcester is here attempting to persuade Edward IV to undertake a war to retake English lands in France, and so he is likely

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<sup>327</sup> Honoré Bonet, op. cit., 134.

<sup>328</sup> Christine De Pisan, *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyvalrye*, op. cit., 223.; “and that he by his counsel knew that a great evil and hurt might come to him and to his land if he let him go free / should make him to die.”

<sup>329</sup> Brian R. Price, “Yron Yron & Stele: Chivalric Ethos, Martial Pedagogy & Combat Technique in the Early Fourteenth Century Middle English Version of Guy of Warwick, *Journal of Medieval Military History* #16, forthcoming, 2018.

<sup>330</sup> William Todd, ed., *Guy of Warwick* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), 110.

<sup>331</sup> Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur*, 2nd ed. (1990; repr., New York: Dorset Press, 1992), 605.

<sup>332</sup> Isaac Levitan, ed., op. cit., 60-61.

attempting to use the embarrassment of their loss as a means of motivation. If as Ferguson assesses, *The Boke of Noblesse* was at once both a call to arms and a book on the “practical application of chivalric virtues,” then it represents a shift of English attitude. One where the emotion of wrath/anger/ire are used in battle, rather than the earlier ideal of keeping one’s temper under control.

Knowledge of wartime stratagems, or practical tactics, is not something that is often immediately associate with the chivalric ideal. However, it is present in every text reviewed. Many traits might be included in such a characteristic. Wisdom and intelligence are both associated with “good council” and are often associated with how a battle should be fought.<sup>333</sup> Mallory provides an excellent example where King Arthur withdraws to fortification when he realizes he is surrounded by enemies.<sup>334</sup> He is in no way considered cowardly or this act. So too, we see this demonstrated by the Marquis of Montague in 1471 on Edward IV’s return, in that he does not ride out from Castle of Pomfret as Edward passes because he does not think that he has sufficient force to defeat him.<sup>335</sup> Practical tactics were a valued asset, but can be clearly placed amongst those valued in warfare, and expected out of a knight or noble.

We conclude then that prowess, loyalty, knowledge of practical tactics (or thought), and the channeling of anger were those traits most expected from the English knight. We add to this that the average English nobleman, would also have some familiarity with Bonet’s *The Tree of Battles*, either directly or through other writers who borrowed from him. Given this analysis, we

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<sup>333</sup> Llull, Charny, Christine de Pisan, Worcester, Mallory and the author of Guy all speak to the value of wise council. However, Charny offers perhaps the clearest example in his discussion of “The True Men of Worth, Brave and of Good Council.”

<sup>334</sup> Thomas Malory, *op. cit.*, 9.

<sup>335</sup> *The Chronicles of the White Rose of York: A Series of Historical Fragments, Proclamations, Letters, and Other Contemporary Documents Relating to the Reign of King Edward the Fourth; With Notes and Illustrations, and a Copious Index*, 2nd ed. (San Bernadino: ULAN Press, 2014), 43.

now can look at their actions during and immediately before and after combat to assess whether they adhered to these traits. This analysis will focus on four battles, specifically, the first and second battles of St. Albans, Barnet, and Tewksbury.<sup>336</sup>

- First Battle of St. Albans -

The first battle at St. Albans marked the opening blow of the Wars of the Roses. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of May 1455, the Earl of York, with the Earls of Salisbury, and Warwick, the Lord Cobham made camp near Wadford with three thousand men.<sup>337</sup> Henry VI, having heard of York's approach, marched out of London with "Dukes of Somersfet, and Buckingham, the Earles of Pembroke, Stafford, Northumberlande, Deuonshire, Dorset, & Willshire, the Lords Clifford, Sudley, Berneis, Roos, and others, beeing in all aboue two thoufande men of warre."<sup>338</sup> Negotiations began as the Duke of Buckingham began to establish defenses in the town of St. Albans. York's demands were the surrender of the Duke Somerset, for his many crimes, to include the loss of English lands in France, all while professing his loyalty to the crown. Henry VI would not agree to these terms, and so with negotiations at an impasse, York's forces attacked, though the king's banner was displayed.<sup>339</sup> This attack included the use of shot and arrow, which reportedly resulted in injuring the king in the neck.<sup>340</sup> The Duke of York led the vanguard on the right, attacking near Shropshire Lane and the Earl of Salisbury led the rearguard, advancing along Sopwell Lane. Warwick commanded the center comprised of both

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<sup>336</sup> Charles Ross, *The Wars of the Roses* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 109.

<sup>337</sup> *John Benet's Chronicle, 1399-1462*, trans. Alison Hanham (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 38.

<sup>338</sup> "The Holinshed Project," The Holinshed Text (1577), accessed September 4, 2017, [http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/texts.php?text1=1577\\_5324](http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/texts.php?text1=1577_5324).; *John Benet's Chronicle, 1399-1462*, trans. Alison Hanham (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 38.

<sup>339</sup> Michael Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 90.

<sup>340</sup> Charles Ross, *op. cit.*, 118.

the reserve and a significant number of archers.<sup>341</sup> Both, York and Salisbury were staunchly resisted along their lines of attack, and so Warwick took action, attack into the center. After being frustrated by the defenses established by Buckingham, Warwick managed to break into the town, at which point the fighting intensified. Somerset withdrew into a house with some of his men while the king's standard bearer, Sir Philip Wentworth, "cast it down and fled," leaving the king alone amidst the chaos.<sup>342</sup> Surrounded, Somerset had no choice but to attempt to fight his way out. In that struggle, he was overwhelmed and killed.<sup>343</sup> The Duke of Northumberland and the Lord Clifford also fell, amongst many others. York and Warwick reportedly found the king hiding in the house of a tanner during the battle, where they "came to him with their humble obedience."<sup>344</sup> Henry VI was moved by order of York to the abbey at St Albans to ensure his safety until the battle was complete.<sup>345</sup>

Applying our criteria, the first trait that comes to the forefront in this battle is loyalty. There are no examples of treachery by way of turncoat in this battle, however there is much to say regarding York's choice to attack. Hicks asserts that with the king's banner in display, York's attack takes on new meaning with regard to treason.<sup>346</sup> Looking to the treason act of 1352, and its definition of treason as "levying of war against the king and the compassing or imagining his death," there is perhaps some room to quibble.<sup>347</sup> At no point leading up to the

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<sup>341</sup> Peter Burley, Michael Elliott, and Harvey Watson, *The Battles of St. Albans* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2013), 29-31.

<sup>342</sup> "Introduction" in *The Chronicles of the White Rose of York: A Series of Historical Fragments, Proclamations, Letters, and Other Contemporary Documents Relating to the Reign of King Edward the Fourth; With Notes and Illustrations, and a Copious Index*, 2nd ed. (San Bernadino: ULAN Press, 2014), lii-iv.

<sup>343</sup> Keith Dockray, *Henry VI, Margaret of Anjou and The Wars of the Roses: From Contemporary Chronicles, Letters, and Records* (Croydon: Fonthill, 2016), 145.

<sup>344</sup> *John Benet's Chronicle*, op. cit., 38.

<sup>345</sup> Keith Dockray, op. cit., 145.

<sup>346</sup> Michael Hicks, op. cit., 111.

<sup>347</sup> J.G. Bellamy, *The Law of Treason in England in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 103.



battle is there evidence to support that York expressed anything but loyalty to the crown. Though the king's banner was on display, there is no definitive proof that York sought the death of the king, and his actions to secure the king's person during the fight perhaps speak to this. This is certainly an argument of technicality; however, such a technicality may have uniquely resonated within England.

Richard Kaeuper, in discussing literature in England, highlights the "Matter of England romances."<sup>348</sup> This discussion centers on the complex relationship the English people had with the crown as borne out through literature. He speculates that "violent self-help, a show of prowess carried out even against local royal officials or the law, is licit, even praiseworthy, whenever the king or the laws does not merit obedience."<sup>349</sup> With this in mind, such a technicality can take on new meaning. It is entirely possible that the common man did not perceive York's action as treasonous. Indeed, only the queen and those seeking to regain their place near the crown took issue. Though certainly the king's life was in danger, given York's reckless use of ranged weapons, York's boldness paid off temporarily.

Displays of prowess were present during the battle, on both the Yorkist and Lancastrian sides of the struggle. The Duke of York, and Earls of Warwick and Salisbury, all led their battles in person.<sup>350</sup> For York and Salisbury this meant involvement in a very close-quarters melee along their routes of advance. On the Lancastrian side, Somerset was recorded to have "retreated

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<sup>348</sup> Richard Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 114.

<sup>349</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>350</sup> A "battle" is effectively a block of soldiers, which today might be considered a battalion. Though often portrayed in battle analysis graphics as having large separations between individual battles, broadly speaking, this was less common as it opens holes in the line of battle, presenting extreme risk of having an army split in two. At times, such a separation is deliberate, and part of a larger strategy, at other times, it may result in additional forces arriving, intentionally or unintentionally, late to a battle.

into a house to save himself by hiding” once Warwick broke into the city.<sup>351</sup> The source, however, does not chastise him for the action. Possibly because he ultimately died fighting, though it should be noted this was only because he was discovered by York’s men.<sup>352</sup> Of the other peerage present, none were spoken of poorly. Lord Clifford died fighting along with the Duke of Northumberland and Sir Harington outside the building to which Somerset had withdrawn. Sir Philip Wentworth’s example of cowardice is noteworthy simply because it was noted. In a letter to William Worcester, it is written that the Duke of Norfolk said he was worthy of being hanged.<sup>353</sup> Sources indicate that many fled on seeing the Yorkist forces breaking through the defenses. However, this individual was specifically held accountable, possibly because of his position as the king’s standard bearer, or perhaps simply because he was a knight. Clearly though, such a display was considered a capital offense in the minds of at least some of the peerage. Indeed, when referencing Bonet we see his opinion is clear that

If a knight is fighting against Christians in his lord's service, I tell you, as I said before, that he should be willing to die to keep the oath of his faith to his lord. I say the same of the knight in receipt of wages from the king or other lord, for since he has pledged to him his faith and oath he must die in defence of him and his honour; and thus does he maintain in himself the virtue of courage, so that he fears nothing that may befall in fighting for justice.<sup>354</sup>

Both sides effectively drew from Vegetius; the Lancastrians in their defense and the Yorkists in their attack. The Lancastrians, employing the smaller force, were able to follow Vegetius’ seventh action,

Or finally, this ooste is but of few/And not so myghti men as hath the foo:/Heer hath the werreour his craft to shewe/And embataile hym nygh a flood that goo/On outhur half; a cragge is good also/Lake or marice or castel or citee/A side to defende

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<sup>351</sup> Keith Dockray, op. cit., 145.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid.

<sup>353</sup> Introduction in *The Chronicles of the White Rose of York* op. cit., liv.

<sup>354</sup> Honoré Bonet, op. cit., 122.

is good to see.<sup>355</sup>

The Yorkists appear to have attempted the fifth action, that is their primary attack came from both wings with their center protected by archers. When this failed however, Warwick assaulted the center, effectively transitioning to the first action.<sup>356</sup> It is unclear if Warwick took initiative unprompted or if York ordered him too, however, his breakthrough won the battle and put the Lancastrian forces to flight.

Regarding anger, wrath, or ire, there is little evidence in the extant sources to indicate that either side drew motivation these emotions. Perhaps the only place where it may have influenced decision-making, was at the place of Somerset's final stand where no quarter was given.<sup>357</sup> Though it can be assumed that, given the nature of medieval combat, it was present on the battlefield, it is not apparent that the primary actors on the battlefield employed it in a meaningful way.

- Second Battle of St. Albans -

The Second Battle at St. Albans took place on 17 February, 1461. Fresh from her victory at Wakefield, where the Duke of York and the Earls of Salisbury and Rutland (York's second son) were killed, Margret of Anjou marched south. It is here, the Yorkist chroniclers tell us, that Margret allows her army to plunder the English countryside.<sup>358</sup> In order to block her approach to London, the Earls of Warwick and Arundel with the Duke of Norfolk marched to St. Albans. Warwick is often described as favoring defensive tactics, and the account of this battle provides

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<sup>355</sup> R. Dyboski and Z.M. Arend, eds., *Knyghthode and Bataile* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), 77.

<sup>356</sup> Peter Burley, Michael Elliott, and Harvey Watson, op. cit., 28-29.; R. Dyboski and Z.M. Arend, eds., op. cit., 75-77.

<sup>357</sup> Keith Dockray, op. cit., 145.

<sup>358</sup> *John Benet's Chronicle*, op. cit., 49.

an in depth description of the tools brought to bear in a medieval prepared defense.<sup>359</sup> On arriving at St. Albans, Warwick, with a large amount of Burgundian ordnance, “pycchyd a fylde and fortedefyht fulle stronge.”<sup>360</sup> The Burgundians had brought with them,

instrumentys that wolde schute bothe pellettys of ledde and arowys of an elle of lengthe with vj [6] fetherys, iij [3] in myddys and iij [3] at the otheyr ende, with a grete mighty hedde of yryn at the othyr ende.<sup>361</sup>

Warwick’s force also set out nets with nails tied into them, which were laid on the ground for advancing infantry or horse to impale themselves on. The Burgundians employed shields the size of doors which would provide cover for them as they shot, and when they were complete, it had nails also so that it could be laid down to act as another barrier.<sup>362</sup>

As these defensive measures were emplaced, both forces were attempting to gain information on the other. The Lancastrian’s best intelligence came from the Kentish squire, Lovelace, who reportedly provided the complete details of Warwick’s preparations.<sup>363</sup> Warwick, relying on more conventional means, sent a detachment of soldiers North to “Dunstapyl” where this force was overwhelmed, killed or captured, to a man by Queen Margret’s forces.<sup>364</sup>

Warwick’s problems were increased when, as the Queen’s forces approached the western side of St. Albans, “for hyr pryckyeyrs come not home to bring no tydyng howe ny that the Quene was,

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<sup>359</sup> Charles Ross, op. cit., 121.

<sup>360</sup> *Gregory’s Chronicle* in James Gairdner et al., eds., *The Historical Collections of a Citizen of London in the Fifteenth Century* (Westminster: J B. Nichols and Sons, 1876), 212.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>363</sup> John Sadler, *The Red Rose and the White* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 105, accessed September 9, 2017, <http://books.google.com/books?id=HgWtAgAAQBAJ&pg=PA7&dq=Lovelace+Betrayer+at+St.+Albans&hl=en&sa=X&s>

<sup>364</sup> *Gregory’s Chronicle*, op. cit., 212.; Though both sides actively sought information regarding the disposition of their opponent, it is apparent that the Lancastrians held the upper hand with regard to such intelligence. This, because they were able to recruit Lovelace to provide them with detailed information. Indeed, Warwick likely had no such contacts in the Lancastrian force, though if he did, Yorkist chroniclers are silent on the issue. Without such a source of information, Warwick was forced to rely only on conventional scouting methods to locate the Lancastrian force.

save one come and sayd that shwe was ix [9] myle of.”<sup>365</sup>

Though Gregory’s Chronicle is not specific regarding a scheme of movement, it can be determined that the Queen’s force was able to cross the River Vers and enter St Albans from the south, which surprised the Yorkists. Warwick was forced to “brake hyr ray and fyld” or “break his rays and field,” in order to respond to the Lancastrian attack. Thus, many of the defenses so carefully planned were of “lytylle a-vayle or nought.”<sup>366</sup> Another critical variable entered into the battle in the form of the turncoat actions of Lovelace. Thought to have been spared by the Queen after the battle of Wakefield, he reportedly allowed Lancastrian force to penetrate the Yorkist lines, mid-battle, allowing them to take the town of St. Albans. The Lancastrian army’s position in the south, combined with this treachery resulted in complete defeat for the Yorkists and the recovery of Henry VI by the Lancastrians. Norfolk and Warwick both escaped along with “othyr knyghtys, squyers, and comyns.”<sup>367</sup> It is assessed that the Earl of Warwick was able to hold back the Lancastrian assault long enough to withdraw around 4,000 soldiers of his army.<sup>368</sup>

As with the First Battle of St. Albans, there is little to indicate that anger played a significant role in either inspiring feats of arms or critical decision making. However, knowledge of warfare and tactics stands out prominently within the sources as both the cause of the Lancastrian victory and the Yorkist defeat. From the Yorkist perspective, Warwick sent out men both on foot and horse to serve as scouts. This falls in alignment with Christine de Pisan’s version of Vegetius to “[be] curiouse & diligent to sende forthe here & there his espies subtylli

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<sup>365</sup> *Gregory’s Chronicle*, op. cit., 213.

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

<sup>368</sup> John Sadler, op. cit., 109.

for to enquire & vndrestande [the] purpos of his enemyes & what theyre way be...”<sup>369</sup>

Unfortunately for Warwick, what little information made it back to him seems to have not been detailed enough for him to fully understand the Queen’s position and intent. Though this contributed to the loss of the battle, Warwick did make tactically sound decisions through his attempt to use scouting elements to locate the Lancastrian Army.

The Lancastrian Dukes travelling with the Queen, and possibly the Queen herself, also applied superb tactical planning.<sup>370</sup> They were, through the information provided by Sir Lovelace, more aware of Warwick’s position and his orientation on the battlefield. With this knowledge they traveled to Dunstable before turning south, allowing them to position themselves to flank Warwick. They also successfully conducted what would be termed today the counter reconnaissance fight, in that they either avoided or capture/killed all of Warwick’s scouting elements. This allowed them to approach St. Alban’s while not exposing their position, gaining an element of surprise. When combined with a rarely seen night march, the Lancastrians were able to flank Warwick’s defenses and attack into the rear of his army.<sup>371</sup>

Warwick’s unusual placement of his forces also raises questions. Significantly spread out across the roads leading north to Nomansland Common, Warwick seems certain that the Lancastrian attack would come from the north. So much so that he effectively ignored his rear area.<sup>372</sup> While Warwick’s forces in St. Albans did cause casualties to the Lancastrian forces, poor positioning of the Yorkist force prevented rapid communication in order to report the Lancastrian approach, leaving Warwick surprised, with his defenses oriented in the wrong

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<sup>369</sup> Christine De Pisan, *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyvalrye*, op. cit., 50.

<sup>370</sup> Ross states that the primary magnates travelling with Margret of Anjou were the New Dukes of Somerset and Northumberland, and the new Lord Clifford. Each of these newly risen to their status due to the death of their fathers.

<sup>371</sup> Peter Burley, Michael Elliott, and Harvey Watson, op. cit., 28-29.

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.*, 82-83.

direction and his rear battle isolated.<sup>373</sup> Gregory's Chronicle states that the detachment sent to Dunstable was led by a butcher, possibly indicating that Warwick was working with a fairly inexperienced force.<sup>374</sup> Following Vegetius' guidance, the preferred solution would have been to have a knight or squire of some experience leading the forces protecting the primary choke points behind his army, which Warwick seems to disregard.<sup>375</sup> Gregory goes on to state that many knights and squires were able to escape the battle, and if he is to be believed, would have been preset for such a duty. Vegetius also writes that when leading an experienced force, it is wise to use choke points such as river crossings to better enable victory.<sup>376</sup> This is of note because such guidance was not included by some fifteenth century writers such as Christine de Pisan, who only recommend that an inexperienced army should be led by veterans. Regardless, Warwick seems to have been convinced his troop placement was adequate and there was no threat to his rear.

Both Yorkist and Lancastrian use of scouts is in keeping with good generalship, though the Lancastrian's successful defeat of Warwick's scouts might be attributed to the nature of war. Warwick has been assessed as a respectable captain and admiral at sea, however, his "ill placed" force disposition, has caused some speculation that he was a poor general on land.<sup>377</sup> Charles Oman assesses that the forces were too spread out to communicate well or mass quickly enough to fight in great numbers. Thus, Warwick fails in this instance to meet the "tactically proficient" chivalric measure of performance. The Lancastrians in this fight expertly outmaneuvered

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<sup>373</sup> Charles Oman, *Warwick the Kingmaker* (San Bernadino: First Rate Publishers, 2016), 87.

<sup>374</sup> *Gregory's Chronicle* op. cit., 212.

<sup>375</sup> Christine De Pisan, *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyvalrye*, op. cit., 50-51.

<sup>376</sup> Vegetius, *Vegetius: Epitome of Military Science*, 2nd ed., trans. N.P. Milner (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996), 88.

<sup>377</sup> Charles Oman, *Warwick the Kingmaker* op. cit., 56, 87. Michael Hicks references an assessment by Sharon Turner that Warwick was a "poor general" in his book *Warwick the Kingmaker*.

Warwick, either by skill or luck, demonstrating effective generalship, resulting in victory. Given that both the Queen and the Duke of Somerset were present with the Army, victory is assessed as theirs, as they were senior nobility present. However, it is entirely possible that this victory was as a result of following the advice of more seasoned soldiers such as Sir Andrew Trollope.<sup>378</sup> Indeed, there is no shame associated with relying on an experienced man-at-arms for tactical advice and in fact it is recommended. This is borne out through Charny's specific discussion related to how to study the art of war, specifically, that knights should listen to veteran soldiers and observe great feats of arms so that they can learn everything there is to know regarding war.<sup>379</sup>

Lovelace's actions reinforce the notion that the chivalric ideal of loyalty on the battlefield was quickly losing influence during the Wars of the Roses. At both Northampton and Ludford Bridge, defections preceded victory at Northampton for the Yorkists and at Ludford Bridge for the Lancastrians.<sup>380</sup> Of note, it seems contemporary chronicles do not seem to make an effort to record such defections.<sup>381</sup> This is remarkable given that in each case it cost the betrayed side the battle. There is a clear trend regarding defections on the battlefield, often securing the outcome of the battle. This trend, as we will see in our next case study on the Battle of Barnet, creates an incredible amount of wariness on the battlefield that extends down to the individual soldier.

Though Lovelace's treachery is the most obvious issue regarding battlefield loyalty present on the field, another incident took place that must be placed within the category. This event is the Yorkists description of the execution of Lord Bonville and Sir Thomas Kyrill the day after the battle. Yorkist both, these men agreed to stay beside Henry VI at his request, for his

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<sup>378</sup> Peter Burley, Michael Elliott, and Harvey Watson, *op. cit.*, 64-65.

<sup>379</sup> De Charny Geoffroi, *op. cit.*, 103-107.

<sup>380</sup> John Sadler, *op. cit.*, 7.

<sup>381</sup> Keith Dockray, *op. cit.*, 175-182.



protection during the fighting. As the Yorkist forces withdrew, Henry VI either went to the Queen or was recovered by the advancing Lancastrians. Reportedly, the day after the battle, Margret of Anjou summoned her son ask how these two should executed. Prince Edward, at only eight, determined that they should be beheaded.<sup>382</sup> Following Wakefield's post-battle brutality, it follows that captured Yorkist leadership might risk death if captured. However, this case warrants some attention. If the Yorkist account of the event is to be believed, though not siding with the king during the struggle, both demonstrated honor and loyalty in their willingness to protect him, even after their forces were routed. This was rewarded with execution. Such an act is also at odds with Bonet's *Tree of Battles*. Bonet assessed that those who take captives on the battlefield should grant mercy, "unless by his deliverance there is danger of having great wars."<sup>383</sup> Bonville and Kyrill, though Yorkists, likely did not fall within the stipulation provided by Bonet as neither were contenders for the throne and neither were considered great magnates. Additionally, there is no contemporary evidence to show that Warwick drew on the knowledge of these experienced soldiers to plan his battles in the way the Somerset is thought to have with Sir Andrew Trollop.<sup>384</sup> It is unlikely, therefore, that demonstrating mercy to these men would have resulted in great harm to the realm. So too, this conflicts with Vegetius that "an escape-route (in this case mercy) should be offered to the enemy," because "men who know without a doubt that they are going to die will gladly die in good company."<sup>385</sup> So too, Christine de Pisan recites Vegetius in writing,

when prisoners are taken during the conflict...they should not be treated so severely that their lives are despaired of by those on their side, for in case a battle were expected, those others would have less hope of finding pity if they should be

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<sup>382</sup> John Sadler, op. cit., 7.; Winston Churchill, *The Birth of Britain* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1956), 376-377.

<sup>383</sup> Honoré Bonet, op. cit., 134.

<sup>384</sup> Peter Burley, Michael Elliott, and Harvey Watson, op. cit., 65.

<sup>385</sup> Vegetius, op. cit., 107.

conquered, and so they would defend themselves more fiercely.<sup>386</sup>

When these executions are assessed within this context, it seems to fall outside the general conduct of *jus in bellum* definitions of the time. It might be argued that since Margret of Anjou was at the head of the army, a chivalric appreciation for their act could not be expected. However, given the cast of Lancastrians present, including the king, any of whom might have interceded on their behalf, this stands out as a particularly unwarranted act of violence.<sup>387</sup>

In William Gregory's account, he describes a single feat of arms from this battle, done by Andrew Trollope.<sup>388</sup> Trollope, a close associate of Somerset and a veteran soldier, was made knight by Prince Edward for killing fifteen men with a caltrop in his foot.<sup>389</sup> Reportedly he stood "in oo [one] place" as the soldiers came to him.<sup>390</sup> Regarding the Lancastrian army in general, he states that it was the professional core of around 5000 soldiers and knights that defeated the whole of the Yorkist army with the northern levies not providing much to the battle. On the Yorkist side of the struggle, there are no specific recorded feats of prowess. There are conflicting reports of Warwick's activities. Some state that he was very active on the battlefield, working to effectively reposition the army, keeping the force together into the evening to enable at least part of the army to escape.<sup>391</sup> However, at least one contemporary chronicle, the *Whethamsted's Register*, seems place the Yorkist defeat squarely on Warwick stating, "The southern men, who were fiercer at the beginning, [were] broken very quickly afterwards, and the more quickly because, looking back, they saw no one coming up from the main body of the

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<sup>386</sup> Christine De Pisan, *The Book of Deeds of Arms and of Chivalry*, ed. Charity Willard, trans. Sumner Willard (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 82, 89, 55.

<sup>387</sup> It should be noted that the primary record of this event, Gregory's Chronicle, a Yorkist account, does not assess any specific disgrace to the decision to execute these knights.

<sup>388</sup> *Gregory's Chronicle* op. cit., 214.

<sup>389</sup> Peter Burley, Michael Elliott, and Harvey Watson, op. cit., 64-65.

<sup>390</sup> *Gregory's Chronicle* op. cit., 214.

<sup>391</sup> John Sadler, op. cit., 7.

kings' army, or preparing to bring them help...."<sup>392</sup> Even so however, though the account ascribes defeat to Warwick's failure to reinforce, it doesn't ascribe any form of shame to the Yorkists for their withdrawal from the field.

- The Battle of Barnet -

Jumping forward to 1471, attention is now turned to the Battle of Barnet. Much had happened in the decade preceding. Lancastrian leadership was effectively exiled to France and Edward, Earl of March, had become King Edward IV, and was very nearly the uncontested King of England. However, the relationship between the new king and the Earl of Warwick had cooled, and this loss of influence did not sit well with Warwick. Warwick betrayed Edward IV and convinced Edward's brother, George Duke of Clarence to join him, under the possible auspice that Clarence might replace Edward on the throne.<sup>393</sup> After a failed uprising both were forced to flee to France.

It was at this time Louis XI of France saw an opportunity to create an ally in his war against Burgundy. Louis XI successfully reconciled the exiled Earl and Duke with Margret of Anjou and Prince Edward.<sup>394</sup> He agreed to provide "armor, men, and navy" to place Henry VI back on the throne if England would support his war.<sup>395</sup> With all parties reconciled and agreed, Warwick and Clarence returned in 1470 and placed Henry VI back on the throne, serving as his principle advisor. Edward IV was forced to flee England to Flanders where he set out to rebuild

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<sup>392</sup> Keith Dockray, op. cit., 179.

<sup>393</sup> Charles Ross, op. cit., 77.

<sup>394</sup> Ibid., 68-77.; This is most often attributed to Edward IV's unwillingness to be controlled by Warwick. Warwick sought two paths to a closer relationship with Louis XI. The first was an attempt to marry Edward to a French princess which was destroyed with Edward IV's married Elizabeth Woodville in 1464. (Ross 68.) The second attempt was through treaty, however, Edward rejected this, opting to ally with Burgundy, sealing this alliance through the marriage of his sister, Margret of York, to Charles the Bold. (Ross, 73)

<sup>395</sup> Polydore Vergil [pseud.], ed., *Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English History*, ed. Camden Society, Classic Reprint Series (n.p.: Forgotten Books, 2012), 131.

an army with the help of the Duke of Burgundy to retake the crown.<sup>396</sup>

Landing at Ravenspur on 15 March 1471, Edward began his march south to London, all while recruiting men along the way. He managed to avoid four armies along his way south, one led by the Marquis of Montagu, another by the Earl of Northumberland, the third by the Earl of Oxford, and last led by Warwick himself.<sup>397</sup> It was on this march south that a critical change of allegiance occurred. The Duke of Clarence, brother to Edward IV, having allied with Warwick in 1469-70, switched sides once again, after much negotiation with Edward IV, adding 7000 soldiers to Edward IV's army.<sup>398</sup> After a brief offer of battle near Coventry, which Warwick refused, Edward marched to London, retaking possession of both the city and Henry VI.<sup>399</sup>

With Edward IV in control of London, Warwick marched south from Coventry with the Dukes of Exeter and Somerset, the Early of Oxford, and the Marquis of Montagu. Warwick made camp ten miles north of London, outside the town of Barnet.<sup>400</sup> Edward, aware of Warwick's approach, "musteryd owt incontinent a new army of most hable yowthes, to meet him."<sup>401</sup> Indeed, according to Oman, Edward intentionally advanced his army so close to Warwick's on the evening of April 13<sup>th</sup>, that there was no possibility for either side to withdrawal the following day. That evening, the Earl of Warwick "weening (*thinking*) greatly to have annoyed the King, and his host, with shot of guns, the Earl's field shot guns almost all the night."<sup>402</sup> Unfortunately for Warwick however,

its so fortun'd that they always overshot the King's host, and hurt them nothing; and the cause was, the King's host lay much nearer them, than they deemed. And, with that also, the King and his host kept passing great silence almyghe (*all night*)

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<sup>396</sup> *Warkworth's Chronicle* op. cit., 121.

<sup>397</sup> Charles Oman, op. cit., 176-179.

<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

<sup>399</sup> Keith Dockray, op. cit., 210.

<sup>400</sup> Polydore Vergil op. cit., 144.

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>402</sup> *Fleetwood's Manuscript*, op. cit., 62.

and made, as who saith, (*as one should say*) no noise, whereby they might not know the very place where they lay...the King suffered no guns to be shot on his side....<sup>403</sup>

On April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1471, “there was a great mist, and letted [*hindered*] the sight of each other.”<sup>404</sup> Even so, Edward IV raised his banners and advanced his army. In the Lancastrian army, the vanguard on the right wing was led by Montagu and Oxford, the center by Somerset, and the rearguard on the left wing was led by Warwick and Exeter. The Yorkist army was drawn up in similar fashion with the Duke of Gloucester leading the right wing, Edward IV and Clarence in the center, and the Hastings leading the left wing.<sup>405</sup> The moment the two armies could make each other out in the fog, shot and arrow were released, rapidly however, the two armies met in melee.

In a somewhat unique turn of events, the armies did not engage on another at their centers, and as a result each army significantly overlapped the other with each right wing enveloping the opposing army’s left.<sup>406</sup> Both left wings found themselves under extreme pressure and both collapsed almost immediately. This pressure had a secondary effect, in that the entire battle began to rotate as each left wing gave way. Of the two left wings, the Yorkists had the worst of it. Hastings forces were shattered, some fleeing as far as London, telling all who would listen that King Edward was dead on the field. Oxford’s battle relentlessly pursued Hastings forces, taking them far from the fight, an action that would have dire consequences later in the battle. Montagu, maintaining better control of his forces, adjusted his position to assist Warwick on the left.<sup>407</sup>

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<sup>403</sup> *Fleetwood’s Manuscript*, op. cit., 62-63.

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>405</sup> Charles Oman, op. cit., 185-186.

<sup>406</sup> *Warkworth’s Chronicle*” op. cit., 125.

<sup>407</sup> Charles Oman, op. cit., 187.

In the center, Edward and Clarence were making significant progress against the Duke of Somerset. Neither of the armies had witnessed their left battles defeated because of the fog and so both fought on. Yorkist chroniclers recorded that Edward, “manly vigorously, and valiantly, assailed them in the midst, and strongest of their battle, where he with great violence, beat and bare down before him all that stood in his way.”<sup>408</sup> However, it cannot be argued that at this point that all was lost for the Lancastrians as they continued to hold against Yorkist pressure. It was the return of the Earl of Oxford’s men which served as the catalyst of Lancastrian defeat.

On returning to the battle, Oxford’s soldiers seemingly became disoriented and thinking they were approaching Edward’s rear, were in fact approaching Warwick’s. Oxford’s livery was, “a star with streams, which (*was*) much like Edward’s livery, the sun with streams; and the mist was so thick, that a man might not perfectly judge one thing from another.”<sup>409</sup> Thus, as Oxford’s men approached, Warwick’s reserve attacked them. Crying treason, the Earl of Oxford fled with his force. The cry of treason was infectious and “the old and the new Lancastrians,” fell upon each other in the midst of the battle.<sup>410</sup> *Warkworth’s Chronicle* states that Montagu changed livery to support Edward and a soldier of Warwick killed him. In the ensuing slaughter, Warwick was killed and his body stripped naked for his armor and wealth. Somerset managed to escape along with Oxford and Exeter.<sup>411</sup>

As discussed in Chapter One, Yorkist chronicles, which in this case provide the best account of the battle, are generally assessed as very biased. But in acknowledging this fact, we can begin to assess both the actions as they were recorded and make some assessments regarding how the battle was likely fought. Unlike Henry VI, Edward IV place a renewed emphasis on

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<sup>408</sup> *Fleetwood’s Manuscript*, op. cit., 65.

<sup>409</sup> *Warkworth’s Chronicle* op. cit., 124.

<sup>410</sup> Charles Oman, op. cit., 188.

<sup>411</sup> *Warkworth’s Chronicle* op. cit., 125.

chivalry at the forefront of his methodology of ruling.<sup>412</sup> Therefore, it makes sense that chroniclers who favored Edward or sought his approval would describe his exploits with chivalry in mind. And so, we turn to the Battle of Barnet.

Though a confusing and tumultuous battle, the chronicles do specifically discuss acts of prowess within the battle. Warkworth's chronicle implies that nobility present personally led their soldiers into the melee, however, the most highlighted were the actions of Edward himself. Leading the center battle in the Yorkist line, he is described as leading from the front of the formation, hewing down all those who cross his path, attaining "perfect victory."<sup>413</sup> Clearly this takes on an air of fantasy in its description, however, it can be easily deduced that the author, understanding Edward's desire to appear chivalric, wrote his chronicle in this way. Also, we cannot discount the telling altogether regarding Edward's actions. It is believed that Edward fought at both Mortimer's Cross and Towton affording him a reputation of leading from the front.<sup>414</sup> It can be assessed then that it is highly likely Edward was present at the front lines and fought well.

A second instance of good performance in battle is recorded, though with less enthusiasm. *Warkworth's Chronicle* records that the Duke of Exeter also fought "man[ful]ly" that day.<sup>415</sup> Though Warkworth mentions many other lords present during the battle, he only mentions Exeter specifically as having fought particularly well. This might be interpreted in two ways. The first is that to make Edward's performance seem more impressive, Warkworth, a Yorkist chronicler, highlighted the prowess of Exeter to demonstrate the Lancastrians were a

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<sup>412</sup> Nigel Saul, op. cit., 338.

<sup>413</sup> *Fleetwood's Manuscript*, op. cit., 64.

<sup>414</sup> Anthony Corbet, *Edward IV, England's Forgotten Warrior King: His Life, His People and His Legacy* (Bloomington: iUniverse, 2015), 229,

<sup>415</sup> *Warkworth's Chronicle*, op. cit., 125.

strong opponent. The second option is that Exeter did, in fact, demonstrate impressive prowess on the battlefield. The second, in this case, seems more plausible. Edward commanded the center battle of the Yorkist line, while Exeter commanded with Warwick in the Lancastrian rearguard or far left battle. As such, it is unlikely that the two were at any point in proximity to each other.

The Battle of Barnet also provides an example in which the atrophy of battlefield loyalty allows for mistaken identity to create chaos, which ultimately cost the Lancastrians the fight. Already wary of treason, having experienced it three previous times on the battlefields of this conflict, it is not an overestimation that soldiers and nobles alike were watching closely for betrayal and most likely expecting it.<sup>416</sup> As Charles Oman argues, “we cannot doubt that many a look was cast askance at new friends who had so long been old foes, and that the suspicion of possibly treachery must have been present in every breast.”<sup>417</sup>

This willingness to accept turncoats, and eventually trust them, such as with Anthony Trollope, is strong evidence that both sides were more interested with the end result versus how they got there, and represents a departure from chivalric texts if not the romances. Certainly, Arthur was eventually willing to accept Lancelot back into his council to preserve the kingdom, and would have, if not for Gawain’s anger towards Lancelot.<sup>418</sup> The Duke of Lorraine was also readmitted to court after waging defensive war against the Emperor of Germany in *Guy of*

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<sup>416</sup> Ludford Bridge (1459), Northampton (1460), and Second St. Albans (1461) each had leadership defect either immediately before or during the battle. Of the thirteen previous skirmishes and battles, this represents roughly 23 percent of the battles fought determined by treachery.

<sup>417</sup> Charles Oman, op. cit., 186. Charles Ross writes that this strange new alliance was born from the manipulations of French King, Louis XI, who first manipulated Warwick in an attempt to secure an English/French alliance, through marriage, against Burgundy. Edward IV instead married Elizabeth Woodville and allied with Burgundy. After Warwick’s final betrayal of Edward IV in 1470, and his subsequent flight to France, Louis engaged his diplomatic skills again to broker an uneasy truce between Warwick and Queen Margaret.

<sup>418</sup> Thomas Malory, op. cit., 586.



Warwick.<sup>419</sup> However, didactic knightly texts are less forgiving regarding such reacceptance. Christin de Pisan provides multiple historical examples of how a general being betrayed might in fact turn the betrayal into victory, and Llull as discussed, calls for a lord to destroy those who are treasonous.<sup>420</sup> As much as the nobility was able to look past previous allegiances (however tentatively), Warwick's transition to the Lancastrian side sparked extreme skepticism amongst the common soldier, resulting in disaster as Oxford's forces rejoined the fight.

As Oxford's forces returned from pursuing Hasting's fleeing soldiers, a literal fog ("of war") prevented Warwick's men from properly distinguishing the differences in York and Oxford livery. Clarification was not attempted and attack was immediate. Oxford and his men, for their part, immediately assumed the mistake was in fact Warwick reverting to his Yorkist loyalties, and attacked. Of all the battles fought thus far in the Wars of the Roses, this one perhaps provides the best atmospheric gauge with regards to loyalty. Though no breach of loyalty actually occurred, tensions were such that a case of mistaken identity resulted in cries of treason, costing the Lancastrians the battle. Anger or ire is not specifically mentioned in any of the extant sources as playing a role in the mistaken betrayal described above. However, given the response of Oxford's men, and the state in which Warwick was found immediately after the battle, it cannot be discounted.<sup>421</sup>

Edward IV is described by Charles Ross as demonstrating good generalship regarding both his march south to London and his immediate march north to Barnet.<sup>422</sup> Though this march south from Ravenspur technically did not take place immediately prior to a battle, and thus,

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<sup>419</sup> William Todd, op. cit., 42-53.

<sup>420</sup> Christine De Pisan, *The Book of Deeds of Arms and of Chivalry*, op. cit., 82, 89, 101.; Ramon Llull, op. cit., 72.

<sup>421</sup> Warwick was found immediately after the battle striped of all arms and armor. He was effectively in his small clothes. "Despoiled him naked" is the term used in *Warkworth's Chronicle*.

<sup>422</sup> Charles Ross, op. cit., 121-123.

might be outside the scope of this analysis, Edward's army was under direct threat of battle the majority of the march. He used both speed and intimidation to outmaneuver four separate armies along his path to London and offered battle to both Oxford and Warwick along the way, both of whom refused.<sup>423</sup> For Warwick's part, his behavior is typically cautious. His refusal to engage at Coventry is generally attributed to his desire to wait for reinforcements.<sup>424</sup>

The opening maneuvers of Barnet showed reasonable tactical competence on the part of both sides. Both Warwick and Edward employed scouts to locate the opposing force as Vegetius calls for. Edwards gained advantage however when his "aforeriders" located and defeated Warwick's lead scouts, effectively blinding him to Edwards maneuver.<sup>425</sup> Edward's success in this counter reconnaissance fight allowed him some small additional maneuver room, in the same way it did the Lancastrians at the second St. Albans battle. With Warwick's main army located, Edward was able to approach as night fell. Wanting to force battle the next day, under cover of darkness Edward moved his army much closer than Warwick realized and had his force rest that night in harness and in formation.<sup>426</sup> Warwick for his part dutifully applied the guns in his army for the entire night, attempting to reduce Edward's forces for the next day's battle. However, lack of information and a clever use of disciplined stealth by Edward again enabled Edward to emerge with little damage to his force.

Edward's actions are in keeping with the tenants of Vegetius, and in this Christine de Pisan's account aligns. She writes, "and straitly shal commaunde the hed captayne to them all that be of his counseyl vopon theyre othe that they shal vtter nor say what waye he purposeth to

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<sup>423</sup> *Fleetwood's Manuscript*, op. cit., 46-47.

<sup>424</sup> Polydore Vergil op. cit., 140-141.

<sup>425</sup> *Fleetwood's Manuscript*, op. cit., 62-63.

<sup>426</sup> Charles Oman, op. cit., 183-185.

goo / nor where he thynketh to lede his oost nor what his purpoos is to doo.”<sup>427</sup> Though the text does not specifically account for Edward’s every action, Edward’s actions are within the spirit of the text, specifically, that commanders should keep the movements of their armies a closely held secret, and in this case, Edward is an exemplar at the tactical level.

- The Battle of Tewksbury -

Shortly after returning to London following his victory at Barnet, King Edward was informed that a new Lancastrian army had landed at Weymouth. Travelling from Normandy, this army was led by Margret of Anjou and her son, Prince Edward.<sup>428</sup> This force immediately began marching north, increasing in size. The most notable magnate to swell its ranks was Edmund, Duke of Somerset.<sup>429</sup> On 19 April, Edward IV departed London and marched his army northwest with the intent to prevent the Lancastrians from crossing into Wales, where the Earl of Pembroke waited to reinforce them.<sup>430</sup>

By May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1471, the Lancastrian and Yorkist armies were within three miles of each other, and on May 4<sup>th</sup>, King Edward “appareled himself and set his host in good array; ordained three wars; displayed his banners,” and advanced against the Lancastrian position.<sup>431</sup> The Yorkist force was drawn up into three battles with Richard, Duke of Gloucester commanding the vanguard, King Edward in the center, and William, Lord Hastings and the Marquess of Dorset leading the rearguard. Somerset had not been idle. The Lancastrian army was arrayed on the high ground with difficult terrain separating the two armies. If the Yorkists were to close the distance,

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<sup>427</sup> Christine De Pisan, *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyvalrye*, op. cit.,54-55.; Vegetius, op. cit., 74-75.

<sup>428</sup> *Fleetwood’s Manuscript*, op. cit., 69.

<sup>429</sup> Edmund was the third Duke of Somerset to fight in the Wars of the Roses, the first dying at the First Battle of St. Albans and the second at Hexham.

<sup>430</sup> Polydore Vergil op. cit., 152.

<sup>431</sup> *Fleetwood’s Manuscript*, op. cit., 79.

they would be forced to do so over rough terrain and within range of Lancastrian bows and guns. So too, the Lancastrian force was arrayed in three battles with Somerset leading the vanguard, Prince Edward commanding in the center, and the Earl of Devonshire leading the rearguard on the left side of the army.<sup>432</sup> It is of note that in arraying for the battle, King Edward decided to place his vanguard commanded by Gloucester on the left side of his formation as opposed to the right. This placed Gloucester in opposition to the Duke of Somerset, whom in King Edward's mind, likely posed the greatest threat.

As King Edward advanced on the Lancastrian position, he made a decision that would later prove valuable. He saw a wooded "park" approximately a quarter mile from where the two armies would meet. Fearing that Somerset had placed a force in the wood, King Edward dispatched two hundred spears to secure the wood. If they found no enemy there, their instructions were to "employ themselves in the best wise as they could."<sup>433</sup> As Edward advanced, he found the terrain exactly had Somerset desired, "full difficult to be assailed."<sup>434</sup> On finally arriving at a position where his archers and ordinance could be brought to bear on the opposing army, King Edward halted his advance gave the Lancastrian force a "right-a-sharp shower."<sup>435</sup>

This exchange of shot and arrow lasted until the Duke of Somerset either became, "sore annoyed in place where they were," or found "great heart and courage."<sup>436</sup> In either case, Somerset "knightly and manly advanced himself with his fellowship," towards the Yorkist line.<sup>437</sup> Though there is no record of what Somerset's objective was in leaving his superior position, he found himself, at the end of his advance, attacking into the right side of King

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<sup>432</sup> *Fleetwood's Manuscript*, op. cit., 78, 82-83.

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>435</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>437</sup> *Ibid.*

Edward's battle. In response, King Edward "full manly set forth even upon them," and with the aid of Gloucester's battle fought Somerset to a standstill.<sup>438</sup> Having found no enemy in the wooded "park," it was at this point that the two hundred spears, sent by King Edward to the wood, found their opportunity. They advanced from the wood and "came and broke on, all at once, upon the duke of Somerset, and his vanguard."<sup>439</sup> With this additional attack, the Lancastrian vanguard broke. With a full third of the Lancastrian army defeated, King Edward advanced his army on the remaining forces of Prince Edward. King Edward quickly defeated these forces, winning the field at Tewksbury.<sup>440</sup>

As the Lancastrian army broke apart into flight, two incidents are recorded on which the Yorkist and Lancastrian chroniclers do not agree. The first is the death of Prince Edward. Yorkist chroniclers either do not record the event itself or simply state that as the army fell into retreat, the prince was slain. Lancastrian records tell a different story. Polydore Vergil records that Prince Edward was captured, and along with Margret of Anjou was brought before Edward IV. After a brief conversation, Edward VI "[thrust] the young man from him with his hand, whom forthwith, those that wer present wer, George duke of Clarence, Richerd duke of Glocester, and William lord Hastings, crewlly murdered."<sup>441</sup>

The second event is the execution of several Lancastrian nobles at Tewksbury Abbey. Yorkist accounts of this incident record that King Edward went to the abbey to praise God for his victory. When he arrived, he found many of the Lancastrian nobles who had escaped the battle there, seeking sanctuary. Edward, "gave them all his free pardon; albeit there neither was, nor had [not] at any time been granted, any franchise to that place for any offenders against their

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<sup>438</sup> *Fleetwood's Manuscript*, op. cit., 80.

<sup>439</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>440</sup> *Ibid.*, 81-82.

<sup>441</sup> Polydore Vergil op. cit., 152.

prince having recourse thither.”<sup>442</sup> The Yorkist account goes on to record that Edward legally could have forcibly removed the nobles, though he did not. Regardless, within two days, all those that were captured at the church were beheaded, to include the Duke of Somerset. Lancastrian records do not record this event. Polydore Vergil’s chronicle (pro-Lancastrian, but written during the reign of Henry VII) only says that, “ther wer taken, Margaret the queen, Edward the prince, Edmund duke of Somerset, John lord of Saint Johns, and xx<sup>te</sup>.”<sup>443</sup>

Regarding practical tactics, both the Yorkists and Lancastrians arrayed in Vegetius’ first method of arraying an army.<sup>444</sup> Specifically, that the three battles are aligned abreast of each other in a large rectangular formation. While the Yorkists maintained this positioning for the duration of the fight, the Lancastrians did not. Somerset’s attack draws attention because he abandons what is generally thought of as a superior position to attack. Of note, one source states that after his defeat, Somerset returns to Prince Edward’s battle and kills Lord Wenlock for not providing him with support in his attack.<sup>445</sup> It is possible therefore that Somerset was attempting one of two strategies. The first was a general advance of the Lancastrian line. The second however is a shift in their array to Vegetius’ second method, an oblique with the vanguard forward in the attack.<sup>446</sup> In either case, some confusion or unwillingness prevented the rest of the Lancastrian army from supporting Somerset’s charge, which ultimately sounded the death knell for the Lancastrians. This must be assessed as a tactical blunder on the part of the Lancastrians, though the causes may be many. Inexperience, misunderstanding, or simple lack of communication may all have contributed to the Lancastrian vanguards demise. On the other side,

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<sup>442</sup> *Fleetwood’s Manuscript*, op. cit., 82.

<sup>443</sup> Polydore Vergil op. cit., 152.

<sup>444</sup> R. Dyboski and Z.M. Arend, eds., op. cit., 77.

<sup>445</sup> Paul Kendall, *Richard the Third* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1955), 118.

<sup>446</sup> R. Dyboski and Z.M. Arend, eds., op. cit., 77-78.

King Edward's concern regard the "wood" proved a valuable tactical insight. Though his concerns were unwarranted, his contingency orders for those two hundred spears to employ themselves where they saw fit, significantly contributed to Yorkist victory.

As with the battle of Barnet, the primary author and chronicler is writing from a Yorkist perspective and is intent on recording King Edward as full of chivalric prowess and courage. Thus, he records his actions in a prominently positive fashion. However, as with Barnet, the opponent must be worthy if the protagonist (from the Yorkist perspective, King Edward) is to gain renown, and so the Duke of Somerset is also recorded as leading from the front and displaying manliness and prowess. As with most of the firsthand accounts, the descriptions of prowess are somewhat generic and applied to the most senior of leaders.<sup>447</sup>

Though the battle of Tewksbury offers little in the way of questionable loyalties on the battlefield, it does present an instance in which ire/anger/wroth possibly played a significant part in decision making. Again, we are drawn to Somerset's decision to abandon a superior position to attack the Yorkist line. The author of *Fleetwood's Manuscript* seems confused by Somerset's motivations stating that Somerset was either, "sore annoyed in place...which they neither would nor durst abide," or was struck with such "great heart and courage," that he decided to attack. Modern writers often disagree on his motivations. Paul Kendall assessed that Somerset "perceiving that his foes were checked, decided upon a bold stroke," while Charles Ross, on the other hand, assessed that Somerset was "goaded by [Yorkist] fire, or because he hoped to strike the Yorkists before they were fully deployed."<sup>448</sup> If the first is indeed true, then as stated above, Somerset after due deliberation, simply made a tactical misjudgment that cost him the battle. However, if the latter is true and he was goaded into attacking through Gloucester's shower of

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<sup>447</sup> A clear exception to this is the Second Battle of St. Albans and the account of Sir Andrew Trollope.

<sup>448</sup> Paul Kendall, op. cit., 117.; Charles Ross, op. cit., 126.

arrows and shot, he was very much in line with the chivalric romance in allowing his anger to drive his action. So too, within the *Boke of Noblesse*, a decidedly English text, ire was considered an appropriate motivational tool, though this is in conflict with previous chivalric didactic texts written by knights (or in fact, Christine de Pisan).<sup>449</sup> Regardless of his motivations, it is likely that Somerset believed his actions were in keeping with chivalric norms of the time.

The final aspect of Tewksbury that must be addressed is the series of events that occurred directly after the fighting. On arriving at Tewksbury Abbey to credit God with his victory, King Edward found many of the surviving Lancastrian nobility seeking sanctuary. According to the Yorkist accounts, these men were offered sanctuary, then later tried and killed. This is sometimes offered up as an example of the lack of chivalric behavior or brutality within England during the Wars of the Roses. However, this is open to challenge as Edward IV had every reason to believe that such pardons would result in additional war.

The year 1462 saw a number of pardons given by King Edward after he recovered the castles at Dunstanburgh and Bamburgh. Most notably after Bamburgh fell, he pardoned the second Duke of Somerset, who then later helped him retake the castle at Alnwick in 1463.<sup>450</sup> Sir Ralph Percy was also pardoned, and both he and Somerset were given back all of their lands and titles. In 1464 both rejoined the Lancastrian cause despite generosity from Edward which led to the Battles of Hedgeley Moor and Hexham.<sup>451</sup> Applying this history to 1471, Edward must have felt a sense of *déjà vu*. The Lancastrians had already demonstrated that it would be unlikely for them to remain true if pardoned. Therefore, to prevent further warfare and bloodshed, King Edward employed Honoré Bonet's ruling that, "he who in battle has capture his enemy,

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<sup>449</sup> Lull, Charey, de Pisan all associate ire or anger in a negative context.

<sup>450</sup> Christine Carpenter, *The Wars of the Roses: Politics and the Constitution in England, C. 1437 - 1509*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 161.

<sup>451</sup> *Ibid.*, 161-162.



especially if it be the duke or marshal of the battle, truly, according to God and theology and the law of decretals, should have mercy on him, *unless by his deliverance there is danger of having great wars.*”<sup>452</sup> Indeed, this decision ended the conflict for the duration of his reign, only to resurface after his death in 1483.

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<sup>452</sup> Honoré Bonet, op. cit., 134. (italics added for emphasis.)

## Chapter 6

### CONCLUSION

“Alas, my good knights be slain away from me: now within these two days I have lost forty knights, and also the noble fellowship of Sir Lancelot and his blood, for now I may never hold them together no more with my worship.”

-- King Arthur in *Le Morte Darthur*

The fifteenth century marked the beginnings of a transition in European thought, away from chivalric values towards a more humanist/rational approach. Across Europe the nature of chivalry was changing towards a model of service to the state versus the more traditional feudal obligations.<sup>453</sup> It is important to note, however that while service to the state was gaining momentum as a preferred form of chivalric service, the nascent humanist ideals that drove this change had not gained general acceptance across England or the broader European continent. As Ferguson stated, chivalry continued to inspire “more than a romantic response.”<sup>454</sup>

Europe was also seeing a dramatic change in the composition of armies. While the fourteenth century saw a reduction in the overall infantry formations fielded in favor of archers and men-at-arms, by the mid-fifteenth century, the trend was reversing. Both Charles VII and Louis the XI of France drastically increased the number of infantry at France’s disposal and maintained them as a permanent force. Charles the Bold spent a great deal to hire Swiss mercenaries, and fielded additional French infantry.<sup>455</sup> So to, England was facing its own

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<sup>453</sup> J.R. Hale, *War and Society in Renaissance Europe 145-1620* (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), 130.

<sup>454</sup> Arthur Ferguson, *The Indian Summer of English Chivalry* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1960), 75.

<sup>455</sup> Philippe Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages*, trans. Michael Jones (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1990), 134-136.

changes in warfare. Given the general decline in the numbers of the English second estate through the fifteenth century, it is reasonable that those of lesser social status would take a larger role in filling the ranks of England's armies.<sup>456</sup> Regardless, across Europe, senior positions of leadership within military formations continued to be filled by those of noble rank, regardless of experience.<sup>457</sup> As such, when studying warfare in general, or the Wars of the Roses specifically, one should expect to see chivalric principles more or less in action from those nobles during periods of war, and with regard to this paper specifically, in combat.

- *Jus in Bellum* -

“The Wars of the Roses were not marked by the near total abandon that occurred in France, largely because of the more immediate local and personal dangers intrinsic to civil war.”<sup>458</sup> In fact with the notable exception of Margarete of Anjou's army in 1461, there was marked restraint by English leaders to not damage English property. It may be assessed that (in addition to a general desire not to alienate their own population) this is at least partially due to an adherence by the English knighthood to the principles of *jus in bellum* set forth in texts such as Bonet's *Tree of Battles* and Christine de Pisan's *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyvalrye*. Certainly, the knighthood was aware of Bonet's work, as it is referenced in mid-century accusations against the first Duke of Somerset.<sup>459</sup> So too, copies of *Fayttes of Armes* are considered to have been in high demand in the early fifteenth century in both France and

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<sup>456</sup> K.B. McFarlane, *The Nobility of Later Medieval England: The Ford Lectures of 1953 and Related Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 142-171. McFarlane provides an excellent section in this book (Appendix B, pg 172) which outlines the decline in numbers of the English nobility.

<sup>457</sup> J.R. Hale, *op. cit.*, 130.

<sup>458</sup> Ben Lowe, *Imagining Peace* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 56.

<sup>459</sup> Catherine Nall, “The Production and Reception of Military Texts in the Aftermath of the Hundred Years War” (PhD diss., University of York, 2004), 13.; Ben Lowe, *Imagining Peace* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 49.

Burgundy and a copy was presented to Margarete of Anjou in 1455 by John Talbot.<sup>460</sup>

When discussing how knights should conduct themselves during war, Christine de Pisan often follows Bonet's lead. When discussing pillaging, she writes,

Whethere it behoueth them wyth theyre wages truly payed to take vytailles vpon the countrey / and to dyspoylle and take dyuerse other thynges as they commonly doo thys day in the realme of Fraunce / I ansuere the certeynly that nay / and that suche a thyng is noo point of the right of werre / But it is an evylle extrocyon and a grete violence made wrongfully and wyth grete synne vpon the people.<sup>461</sup>

So too, there are passages calling for knights to avoid violence or imprisonment against civilians.

Bonet concludes that “no man should bear the sin of another, so why should the poor English suffer harm or disturbance on account of the fault of their lord?”<sup>462</sup> He goes on later to specifically identify those who should be offered safe conduct. In addition to “prelates, chaplains, deacons, and also conversi, hermits, pilgrims, and all the people of the Holy Church,” he adds “ox-herds and all husbandmen, and ploughmen with their oxen, when they are carrying on their business, and equally when they are going to it or returning from it.”<sup>463</sup>

When compared to the actions of all but Margarete's army in 1461, it seems that the English knighthood followed this advice. Of note, Philippe de Commines, when speaking with the King of France remarked that,

England enjoyed a peculiar mercy above all other kingdoms, that neither the country nor the people, nor the houses were waisted, destroyed, or demolished...[and the] calamities and misfortunes of the war fell only upon the soldiers.<sup>464</sup>

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<sup>460</sup> Christine De Pisan, *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyvalrye*, ed. A.T.P. Biles, trans. William Caxton (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), xi, xvi.

<sup>461</sup> *Ibid.*, 217.

<sup>462</sup> Honoré Bonet, *The Tree of Battles of Honoré Bonet*, trans. G.W. Coopland (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1949), 153. Though it is an important here that Bonet offers a clear exception to be exploited, that being that if the poor are helping in any way their lord, then they may be imprisoned or attacked.

<sup>463</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

<sup>464</sup> Ben Lowe, *op. cit.*, 56.

This suggests that, either through a selfish desire to not alienate the public or a conscious following of the many principles set out by the clergy (or both), English knights and nobles followed much of the *jus in bellum* rulings set out by both clerical and secular just war theorists of the time.

Though it can be argued that the English generally followed the restrictions set by writers of just war, battlefield executions must be assessed specifically. Honoré Bonet is clear on the matter, when he writes that “he who in battle has capture his enemy, especially if it be the duke or marshal of the battle, truly, according to God and theology and the law of decretals, should have mercy on him, unless by his deliverance there is danger of having great wars.”<sup>465</sup> Christine de Pisan also supports this conclusion in her version of the *Tree of Battles*, stating, “and that he by hys counseyll knewe that a grete euyll might come to hym and to hys lande yf he let hym goo free / shulde make hym to dye.”<sup>466</sup> So too, under the 1352 treason statute, death was a suitable punishment. It might also be argued that Tiptoft and Woodville’s summary trials were unjust, and therefore were outside the bounds of *jus in bellum*. However, both were operating under the king’s license and the summary trials conducted had precedent in English history.<sup>467</sup> It should also be stated that such executions were effective with regard to bringing the kingdom to peace during Edward IV’s second reign. By executing those whom he knew would never allow peace, Edward IV did in fact bring peace to England for the duration of his life. Thus, having explored the history of medieval just war theory, and reviewing the most commonly read late fourteenth century

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<sup>465</sup> Honoré Bonet, op. cit., 134.

<sup>466</sup> Christine De Pisan, *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyvalrye*, op. cit., 222.

<sup>467</sup> Warkworth’s Chronicle in *The Chronicles of the White Rose of York: A Series of Historical Fragments, Proclamations, Letters, and Other Contemporary Documents Relating to the Reign of King Edward the Fourth; With Notes and Illustrations, and a Copious Index*, 2nd ed. (San Bernadino: ULAN Press, 2014), 114-115.

additions, it can be concluded that while brutal, such executions were licit.

- Prowess -

Throughout the fifteenth century, the romance in England continued to emphasize prowess as the king's descriptive feature of a knight. With regard to acts of prowess, the actions of English nobility align fairly well under the ideals described in the romances of the time. Edward IV routinely led from the front when he was present, which aligns well with both *Guy of Warwick* and *La Morte Darthur*. Arthur in his first war, for example, was so involved in the fighting that his "horse was slain underneath him."<sup>468</sup> King Ban provides another example in that when he "came into the battle, he came in so fiercely that the strokes redounded again from the wood and water; wherefore King Lot wept for pity and dole that he saw so many good knights take their end."<sup>469</sup> Though these romantic examples are exaggerations of great prowess and deeds of arms, the author's didactic intent is reasonably clear and English knights and nobility can be seen routinely engaging at the forefront of the battles analyzed here as the romance would have them do.

This also integrates well with knightly thoughts of the time as expressed in writing. Indeed, the earliest writing surveyed here, by Raymond Lull states, "O what great strength of courage resides in the knight who vanquishes and overcomes many malfeasant knights!"<sup>470</sup> He also writes that all knights should be "trained for feats of arms" and that all knights should "support and defend his temporal lord."<sup>471</sup> Charny writes in his *Book of Chivalry* a scale of sorts, instructing knights and nobility alike on which feats of arms are superior to others always ending

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<sup>468</sup> Thomas Malory, *Moret Darthur*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. \*(1990; repr., New York: Dorset Press, 1992), 10.

<sup>469</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>470</sup> Ramon Llull, *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*, trans. Noel Fallows (Rochester: The Boydell Press, 2013), 46-47.

<sup>471</sup> *Ibid.*, 46-47.

with “he who does more is of greater worth.”<sup>472</sup> Christin de Pisan in her revision of Vegetius calls for commanders to be “in the middle of this great formation,” with “the principle banner before him, on which the formation keeps its eyes.”<sup>473</sup> Finally, Worchester calls for the English knighthood to have a condition of a lion,

for as ire, egrenesse, and feersnesse is holden for a vertu in the lion, so in like manere he said condicions is taken for a virtue and renomme of worship to all tho that haunten arms...And thus with coragious hertis putting for the their prowes in dedis of armes, so that alle worshipfulle men, whiche oughte to be stedfast and holde togider, may be of one intencion, wille, and comon assent...<sup>474</sup>

With the notable exception of King Henry VI, who never engages in the fighting, and one specifically mentioned individual, Sir Philip Wentworth, in each of the battles surveyed in this work, the knights and nobility met the criteria, and thus remained consistent with earlier chivalric expectations regarding actions of prowess.

- Tactics -

With regard to tactics and employment of armies, there is, in general, an alignment with the romances. The Earl of Warwick avoids a pitched battle with King Edward in 1471 because he does not feel he has the advantage, much in the same way King Arthur withdrew to a castle to avoid his enemies very early in his reign.<sup>475</sup> So too, Guy of Warwick recommended withdrawal to a walled city when he felt himself at a disadvantage.<sup>476</sup> In the same vein however, Edward IV routinely uses boldness of action when employing his armies, even when he is outnumbered, just

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<sup>472</sup> Geoffroi De Charny, *The Book of Chivalry: Tes, Context, and Translation*, trans. Richard Kaeuper and Elspeth Kennedy (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 87.

<sup>473</sup> Christine De Pisan, *The Book of Deeds of Arms and of Chivalry*, ed. Charity Willard, trans. Sumner Willard (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 66.

<sup>474</sup> Isaac Levitan, ed., *The Boke of Noblesse* (San Bernardino: Editoria Griffio, n.d.), 61.

<sup>475</sup> Thomas Malory, op. cit., 9.

<sup>476</sup> William Todd, ed., *Guy of Warwick* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), 61.

as required by the romances.<sup>477</sup> So here too, English knighthood is in keeping with the chivalric ideals of the romance.

The English knighthood generally conformed to the tactical guidance as set down by Vegetius and later repeated in both verse and prose versions of his work. Perhaps the clearest example of Vegetius' use is the First Battle of St. Albans where the Lancastrian's employed Vegetius' seventh action while the Yorkist forces drew on the fifth and then transitioned to the first.<sup>478</sup> During the early years of the conflict, such keen use of tactics makes sense as many of the more senior knights and nobles had practical experience employing or fighting in English armies in both France and Scotland. However, younger generations continue the trend, implying that, at least at some level, knights and magnates of England received or pursued some level of education in how to employ armies, and they put this to use.

Charny's advice to "observe those who are best and learn by listening to them and by asking about what one does not know," can be seen in action through the relationship between Sir Andrew Trollope and the third Duke of Somerset.<sup>479</sup> Though we cannot attribute Somerset's actions directly to Charny, his relationship with Trollope implies Charny's advice was not an uncommon practice. Somerset being young and of relative inexperience found the experience of Trollope of great use, and in this relationship Somerset found success up to the Battle of Towton, where he found initial success, but was ultimately defeated when Yorkist reinforcements

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<sup>477</sup> As discussed in Chapter Five, in 1471, Edward both avoided Lancastrian armies and offered battle to Lancastrian armies when and where he chose. This was most likely based on his assessment of his own position of relative advantage.

<sup>478</sup> R. Dyboski and Z.M. Arend, eds., *Knyghthode and Bataile* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), 75-77.

<sup>479</sup> For a brief summary on this relationship, see Burley, Elliot, and Watson's book on the Battles of St. Albans. In summary, Trollope and Somerset can be found in close association from 1459 to the Battle of Towton where Trollope was killed.



arrived.<sup>480</sup> We can conclude then, that fifteenth century English knighthood, generally met the criteria of applying practical tactics in battle. Though mistakes or failures were recorded, it must be acknowledged that there is always a loser in war, and this may or may not be due to the leadership's decisions. Their use of tactics clearly aligned with both the romantic ideal found in literature and the more practical knightly texts to include didactic texts such as Vegetius.

- Ire -

Ire, though very common in romances, is rarely discussed within chronicles. With regard to firsthand accounts of battles, it is only hinted at once. Certainly, with regard to actions on the battlefield related to revenge, such as those at Wakefield, anger almost certainly played a strong role.<sup>481</sup> Indeed, following the Battle of Edgecote, Warwick wasted “no time in taking his revenge on his enemies,” killing the Earls of Pembroke, Devon, and Rivers, along with Sir Richard Herbert, and John Woodville.<sup>482</sup> It is, however, noticeably missing when chroniclers are describing the actions of knights and nobility. This absence lends itself to one of two conclusions. Either it was so common on the battlefield as a motivational or explanatory tool that the chroniclers did not believe it necessary to mention, or such a description did not fit the chivalric image in practice.

Within the romances, “inspiration comes from devotion to chivalric virtues such as piety, loyalty or love, but it also has a dark side, where anger or ‘ire’ is often evoked to boost

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<sup>480</sup> Peter Burley, Michael Elliott, and Harvey Watson, *The Battles of St. Albans* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2013), 64-65.; Michael Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 162-163.

<sup>481</sup> Michael Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 160.

<sup>482</sup> Charles Ross, *The Wars of the Roses* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 80.

performance.”<sup>483</sup> Indeed, when Guy of Warwick is fighting against Lombards sent to kill him in Brittany, the Count Lambert (who led the Lombards), as a man who was enraged, took a strong lance and went against Athosry in the traverse...”<sup>484</sup> Herolt’s response is that, “ he was in so great a rage that he was ready to burst with anger.”<sup>485</sup> Herolt uses this rage to assault and kill the Count. Within *La Morte Darthur*, ire is used in much the same way as *Guy of Warwick*, both as a motivational tool and a driver of action. However, catastrophe is almost certainly assured when the protagonist loses control of such emotions, and very especially when that emotion is ire. In *Guy of Warwick*, it drives Guy to murder Duke Othes, while in *La Morte Darthur*, ire results in the knight Gawain murdering a lady on accident, greatly shaming him.<sup>486</sup> Ultimately, as discussed in Chapter Three, actions through uncontrolled ire enable the downfall of Arthur’s kingdom.

Today, there are no surviving letters from the fifteenth century magnates who participated in the Wars of the Roses. We can only speculate as to the emotions that drove them. However, to deny ire existed as an inspirational tool in such a brutal and trying time is impossible. Indeed, William Worchester’s *Boke of Noblesse* calls for knights to resemble the condition of a lion, “for as ire, egrenesse, and feersnesse is holden for a vertu in the lion, so in like manere the said condicions is taken for a virtue and renomme of worship to alle tho that haunten armes.”<sup>487</sup>

It does not seem, however, that this was a prevailing opinion when surveying the

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<sup>483</sup> Brian R. Price, Yron and Stele: Chivalric Ethos, Martial Pedagogy, Equipment and Combat Technique in the Early Fourteenth Century Middle English Version of *Guy of Warwick* (*Journal of Medieval History* #16, forthcoming, 2018), 8-9.

<sup>484</sup> William Todd, ed., op. cit., 44.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid.

<sup>486</sup> Thomas Malory, op. cit., 59-60.

<sup>487</sup> Isaac Levitan, ed., op. cit., 61.

surviving sources available. Chroniclers active during this war (likely having some awareness of how the powerful wished to be viewed) did not record their betters on either side of the struggle as acting out of anger. So too, letters discussing battles do not describe knights or nobles acting out of anger. Given the general negative connotations associated with anger in knightly texts such as Lull's *The Book of the Order of Chivalry* or Charny's *The Book of Chivalry*, it may be assessed that English knights broke from the romantic *narrative* regarding ire. So too, it seems Worcester's view of ire may have been seen for what it was, an attempt to motivate new campaigns in France, and so not appropriate in this civil war. At a minimum, it seems those in power (and seeking increased power) wished to be remembered as not indulging their ire in battle, even though it was almost certainly present.

- Loyalty -

While the chivalric romance continued in popularity in fifteenth century England, they took on a darker tenor. English translations placed more emphasis on treason and treachery than their continental source material as authors/translators attempted to address the political environment.<sup>488</sup> Loyalty, is perhaps the most debated chivalric virtue when discussing the Wars of the Roses, and it is here that this analysis will linger the longest. Some argue that York always sought the crown and others that he only sought the removal and punishment of the Duke of Somerset for his mismanagement of the crown's affairs.<sup>489</sup> Reviewing the events that transpired in France under Somerset, there is a strong argument that York did, in fact, have a strong argument for his removal, or at least the limiting of his influence over the crown. Denial of such justice can easily be placed under the more legal category associated with *déni de justice* as

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<sup>488</sup> Megan Leitch, *Romancing Treason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 62-63.

<sup>489</sup> Christine Carpenter, *The Wars of the Roses: Politics and the Constitution in England, C. 1437 – 1509* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 117-118.

explored by earlier just war theorists, given the wealth lost by York, and any other person with property in France.

By the fifteenth century, there was guidance for such a war against a king, such as that laid out by the Decretalist, William of Rennes. He stated that “if the count wished to make war on his king, the latter being unwilling to render judgment in the court of the count’s peers, then the count could without sin defend his rights by resort to moderate use of arms.”<sup>490</sup> As discussed in Chapter Three, however, this did not give lords *carte blanc* to wage war on their kings. Permission should have first been sought from the pope, and York, as far as we know, sought no such permission. Bonet worked to remove this loophole, by elevating his example beyond the vassal to the level of kings and popes, essentially implying that a vassal could not wage war on his king.<sup>491</sup> Thus, it can be argued that because the Duke of York lacked appropriate approvals, his actions were disloyal.

But what about treason under secular law? If York’s early actions were not treasonous leading up to the First Battle of St. Albans, they must be considered as such after. English law defined treason in the statute of 1352 as, “levying of war against the king and the compassing or imagining his death.”<sup>492</sup> Given that Henry VI’s banner was raised at the first St. Albans, there is a strong argument that York’s crimes moved from petty treason to high. Even though his last actions implied he did not compass the king’s death, he levied war. So again, we can assess that the Duke of York’s actions might be considered disloyal.

All of this, however, does not account for the unique English perspectives on treason and

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<sup>490</sup> Frederick Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 144.

<sup>491</sup> Honoré Bonet, *op. cit.*, 125.

<sup>492</sup> J.G. Bellamy, *The Law of Treason in England in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 59-60.

governance as discussed by Kaeuper regarding the “Matter of England romances.” One side of the argument said that “order is secured by strong and wise kings,” while the other side argued that too willful a king also breeds unjustness.<sup>493</sup> Within the context of these romances, acts of violence might be considered licit or praiseworthy, and it is to this model that seemingly York is drawing on during the first period of open conflict.<sup>494</sup> Henry VI was considered a weak king, allowing English defeat in France (under Somerset, of course) as well as allowing, or at least not adequately deal with, significant numbers of feuding nobles throughout England. Thus, from this perspective, York seemed to many as the protagonist in all of this, seeking to remove incompetent advisors and better manage a weak king. This surely must have seemed, if treasonable, acceptable to many, and there is strong cause to believe this is where York found so much of his base of support.

If indeed the Duke of York was drawing on earlier romances such as *Robin Hood* and *Havelok the Dane*, to cast himself as the protagonist in all of this, the response from fifteenth century authors was skeptical. These romances addressed treason more pointedly, often minimizing the original focus of the continental source material, to focus on treason instead.<sup>495</sup> Malory minimizes Guinever’s role in the downfall of Camelot, to emphasize the role of Lancelot’s treason, which enabled Mordred’s treason. Fifteenth century romance writers often empathized the instructive nature of their work.<sup>496</sup> Though there is evidence that romances were always intended to be didactic in nature, this special emphasis highlights the concern many in England likely shared surrounding the actions of English leadership during the Wars of the

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<sup>493</sup> Richard Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 114-115, 118.

<sup>494</sup> Ibid. 118.

<sup>495</sup> Megan Leitch, op. cit., 62-63.

<sup>496</sup> Ibid., 63.

Roses.<sup>497</sup>

Turning to specific acts of disloyalty *on the battlefield*, there were only four recorded during the Wars of the Roses. Ludford Bridge, Northampton, the Second Battle of St. Albans, and Bosworth all saw battlefield treachery, resulting in the betrayed side losing the battle.<sup>498</sup> Of the sixteen actions which might be considered combat, one quarter saw treachery in the form of a turncoat.<sup>499</sup> Within the romances reviewed, there are no sudden reversals of side on the battlefield. Within these narratives, once battle has begun, the sides are fixed. Indeed, within these narratives, with the exception of *La Morte Darthur's* Mordred, misunderstanding is the cause a knight must defend himself against his king. Though these knights are in fact loyal, and once this is proven, they are accepted back into good graces.

Turning to more secular writings, Christine de Pisan's work discusses such battlefield betrayals, but these mentions primarily reference mercenary organizations or foreign troops.<sup>500</sup> She does however, spend a great deal of time in her third book within *The Book of Fayttes of Armes and of Chyvalrye* writing on the need for loyal knights and men both for garrisoning locations and in combat. Lull, Charny, and Worchester all discuss loyalty, but it is primarily discussed in generalities. For Charny, those who "should be held to be men of worth by everyone" are those who "have within them such steadfast qualities that their way of life cannot be criticized for any vile sins nor for any shameful reproach, and they thus live loyally and

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<sup>497</sup> Brian R. Price, *op. cit.*, 43.

<sup>498</sup> Andrew Trollope is recorded in the Brut Chronicle as a turncoat against York the night before Ludford bridge, Lord Grey began the Battle at Northampton with the king's army and ended with the Duke of York's (Ross, 47), Gregory's Chronicle describes Lovelace's betrayal of Warwick's army at the Second Battle of St. Albans, and finally, Sir William Stanley betrayed Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth (Kendall, 442).

<sup>499</sup> For the number sixteen, we are only considering the First Battle of St. Albans (1455) through the Battle of Bosworth (1485), as this is the last point at which the crown changes hands.

<sup>500</sup> Christine De Pisan, *The Book of Deeds of Arms and of Chivalry*, *op. cit.*, 89, 100-101.

honestly.”<sup>501</sup> Worcester’s focus is more politically driven. His thoughts on treason revolve around England’s loss of its French holdings. He writes,

that a trew man might not to over moche hate and dispraise treasoure and riches by treason and falshed evylle getyn, where as by possibilite and alle likeliness may be honourable and truly vanquished and wonne bye armes, and not in no maner wise by untrouthe and flashed.<sup>502</sup>

In the context of the rest of the *Boke of Noblesse*, we can take this to mean that Worcester saw exploitation of the people to increase one’s wealth was treasonous and false.<sup>503</sup>

Llull provides the most direct guidance with regard to how a king or noble should react to those who are traitors, and even this is a general statement to include actions both on and off the battlefield. Llull states that, “the malfeasant knight who aids the people rather than his lord, or who wishes to take his lord’s place,” does not follow the office of knighthood.<sup>504</sup> He goes on to state that a knight who “flees from battle and forsakes his lord, does not practice the office of the knight.”<sup>505</sup> Finally, Llull asks a question of rulers, asking, “the lord who does not destroy his traitor, what shall he destroy, and why is he a lord, a man or anything?”<sup>506</sup>

Given our source material, we can conclude that it was somewhat rare for an English knight or noble to switch sides during an ongoing battle or directly before. Didactic texts and writing by clerics, knights, and others, though not specific to ongoing battle, all warned

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<sup>501</sup> Geoffroi De Charny, op. cit., 149.

<sup>502</sup> Isaac Levitan, ed., op. cit., 108.

<sup>503</sup> In addition to calling for a recovery of England’s French holdings, Worcester spent a great deal of time discussing good governance. Worcester goes on to state that “for the governaunce of common publique of a roiaume, dukedom, erledom, barnage, or seignourie, castelle, forteresse, cite, and towne, that is clepid vulgarly the common profite, the surete and safegarde of all the saide contreis....but he must entende to every particuler charge and thing that nedithe remedie or relief for his charge...”

<sup>504</sup> Ramon Llull, op. cit., 46.

<sup>505</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>506</sup> Ibid., 52.

against disloyalty, and these were consumed in fifteenth century England. A change of attitude was underway however. An overly weak king in Henry VI, combined with a series of judicial executions by Margret of Anjou and Edward IV, created a loss of English knights and noble's "traditional sense of loyalty to an anointed king."<sup>507</sup> We find during the Wars of the Roses many of the knights and gentry, who might typically be loyal to the king, and who ostensibly follow chivalric traditions while at war, were more willing to adhere to their loyalties to a specific noble family, rather than the English crown.<sup>508</sup> The extreme punishments associated with being on the losing end of battle, mixed with the understandable desire for self-preservation (and some opportunism) from noble families, drove rapid shifts in battlefield allegiance that might otherwise have never been considered. This represents a significant divergence from chivalric norms of England.

The Wars of the Roses is one of the most complex and least documented civil wars in history. This work has sought to peel back just a small part of its story and assess whether those who were expected to follow chivalric norms in battle, did in fact follow them. Our answer then must be, partially. The English knighthood and gentry routinely rallied to their noble patrons and the nobility led from the front, as tradition would have them do. These men consistently demonstrated tactical thought in the employment of their armies with varying levels of success. Anger and ire were most certainly present in this war. However, the few chronicles that remain almost never mention this emotion, indicating that unlike the romances, the English knighthood aligned far more closely with the knightly texts of the time which at the most eschewed anger as a tool and at the least called for it to be tightly controlled. Loyalty presents the greatest challenge. Though the Yorkists were certainly guilty

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<sup>507</sup> Charles Ross, *op. cit.*, 145.

<sup>508</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.



of levying arms against Henry VI and thus guilty of high treason, there is evidence to suggest that, in England, this might sometimes be considered allowable in the broadest sense. On the battlefield however, no evidence exists to support the actions of a turncoat. Quite the opposite, evidence suggests that once battle is enjoined, the sides should be fixed. Thus, we summarize that England's knighthood met the criteria of prowess and tactics as discussed. With regard to ire, they aligned with those didactic knightly texts, working to keep anger from influencing their decision, and thus meet the expectations of chivalry in the practical sense. On the category of loyalty however, the English knighthood falls short, with both knights and nobles reversing sides immediately before or mid-battle, when chivalric expectations expect them to remain true.

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