

**An Exploration into the Differing Roles of Medieval
Queenship Before and During the Wars of the Roses:
1445-1485**

By Charlotte Black

January 2022

Master's Degrees by Examination and Dissertation

Declaration Form

1. This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Name: C.Black

Date: 27/01/2022

2. This dissertation is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Medieval Studies.

Name: C.Black

Date: 27/01/2022

3. This dissertation is the result of my own independent work/investigation, except where otherwise stated.

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references.

A bibliography is appended.

Name: C.Black

Date: 27/01/2022

4. I hereby give consent for my dissertation, if accepted, to be available for photocopying, inter- library loan, and for deposit in the University's digital repository

Name: C.Black

Date: 27/01/2022

Supervisor's Declaration

I am satisfied that this work is the result of the student's own efforts.

Signed:

Date:

Acknowledgements

Thankyou to Mum, Dad, Holly, Sophie, Lily, Nan and Junie (and the furry relatives) for encouraging me and supporting me throughout this course. You believed in me when it was most needed. You are my world. Thankyou to my tutors who helped me along this journey, especially Janet Burton. Finally, I have to give thanks to the lady who stoked my passion for history: Anne Boleyn. You always will be an incredible person and you truly are my hero.

Contents

Page 5	Abstract
Page 6	Introduction
Page 9	Chapter 1: The Perception of Females
Page 12	Chapter 2: What do we Mean by Queenship?
Page 16	Chapter 3: Marriage and Heirs
Page 25	Chapter 4: Piety, Patronage and Chastity
Page 32	Chapter 5: Intercession and Finances
Page 37	Chapter 6: Politics and Power
Page 48	Conclusion
Page 51	Bibliography

Abstract

This research has considered how females were viewed in popular texts of medieval history, and before. It has analysed the expected role of a Queen in the lead up to, and during, the Wars of the Roses and has explained what these expectations were. It aimed to look at documents and scholarly texts in depth to consider what was required of a Queen in the 15th century, and how this expectation came about. Three queens were the focus of this thesis: Margaret of Anjou, Elizabeth Woodville and Anne Neville, between the years of 1445 and 1485, part of what is famously known as the Wars of the Roses. A brief background is given of each queen and the thesis starts from 1445 when Margaret of Anjou married King Henry VI, through to Anne Neville, wife of King Richard III in 1485. This thesis looked at how each of these queens showed, or failed to show, the expected qualities of queenship: high social standing, provide an heir, be pious, be chaste, show patronage, use intercession and not to interfere in politics. It then considered how these three Queens met or changed the views on queenship within this given period and barriers and difficulties which they experienced along the way. The thesis considered whether they had an influence on each other, as friends or rivals, and as women from the same period. It was important to consider if, and when, they met each other in person and what their viewpoints and influence of each other may have been. Lastly, the thesis considered whether they demonstrated any power within their queenship and if they had any influence over their King. It concluded by considering whether they were successful in their queenships according to contemporary expectations which were thrust upon them.

An Exploration into the Differing Roles of Medieval Queenship Before and During the Wars of the Roses: 1445-1485

Introduction

Medieval monarchy was the 'paramount institution of governance, centred on family' and this research will use a range of primary and secondary sources to look at the Queen's role in society as a female and how this ideal changed over multiple reigns.¹ These sources, including primary sources of The Prayer Roll and Medal of Margaret of Anjou, are used as evidence in chronological order for the reader to gain a sense of the progress of expectations over the centuries, referring to perspectives of women and queens. This thesis aims to look at how each of these queens approached their queenship and will draw comparisons between them. It will aim to explore whether the queens were influential over decisions or not and it will achieve this by considering different viewpoints regarding different aspects of expected queenly behaviour. The thesis considers previous scholarly writing about medieval queenship and uses various sources to gain a more balanced view. However, Laynesmith was the most drawn upon text and author as it focuses on the same queens as this thesis.

The focus of this research will be the period 1445-1485 and will look at the following queens: Margaret of Anjou, Elizabeth Woodville and Anne Neville. First, details relevant to this study, regarding the Wars of the Roses and society's perception of females will be explored. 'The late medieval vision of queenship was rooted in contemporary ideals' and these ideals will be explored and compared between the three queens.² It will consider if, and in what circumstances, these queens met in person, and the significance of these meetings. It will consider whether these three Queens met the views or changed the views on queenship and will then look at whether they had an influence on each other. The thesis will consider the extent to which they had influence over their husbands and if they had an effect on the country as a whole, perhaps pushing their role as women further than that which was generally accepted. It will aim to end by summarising sources and information found

¹ T. Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe* (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)

² D. Neal, *The Queen's Grace: English Queenship 1464-1503* (Unpublished MA thesis) McMaster University, 1996, pp. 148.

throughout the research before giving a fair viewpoint of how their roles changed and adapted over time, making way for further powerful Queens and women in future generations. This will all be achieved by using a structure which is split into chapters referring to different queenly qualities to ensure ease of reading for the reader. Links are created between chapters and queens where necessary.

Before we explore the elements of the reigns of these three queens, more background must be gained about the period 1455 and 1485. It is known as the Wars of the Roses, a series of battles fought for the disputed crown between rival family factions.³ Both factions, the Yorkists and Lancastrians, claimed royal right by descent from Edward III. Henry VI was the monarch at the time of its start, with Margaret of Anjou as the queen and this couple were the leaders of the Lancastrian faction. Richard, Duke of York, and later Edward, Earl of March were the leaders of the Yorkist faction.

Henry VI was a pious man and was described by the Pope as 'a man more timorous than a woman...'.⁴ He married Margaret of Anjou in 1445 in exchange for Anjou and Maine. In 1453, Margaret of Anjou had to deal with Henry's first mental breakdown. In his place, Richard, Duke of York was made regent.⁵ When Margaret's husband recovered, he resumed the Kingship and thus the Wars of the Roses began in their first battle of St. Albans in 1455 when the Duke of York thought him unfit to rule. There were multiple battles lasting six years before the York faction triumphed with Edward, Earl of March, gaining the crown in 1461 during the Battle of Towton. After this battle, Margaret, Henry VI and their son, Edward of Lancaster, fled to Scotland and then France.⁶

Edward IV as he was known as king, was described as charming, handsome and having a common touch which made people feel comfortable around him. He secretly married the widower Elizabeth Grey, nee Woodeville, in 1464.⁷ For the sake

³ D. Hey, *The Oxford Companion to Local and Family History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)

⁴ K. Flude, *Divorced, Beheaded, Died...The History of Britain's Kings and Queens in Bite-Sized Chunks*, 2nd ed. (London: Michael O'mara Books Limited, 2015) p. 85.

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ F. Hepburn, 'The Queen in Exile: Representing Margaret of Anjou in Art and Literature', in L. Clark, *The Fifteenth Century XI: Concerns and Preoccupations* (Boydell Press, 2012)

⁷ Flude, *Divorced, Beheaded, Died*

of this thesis, she will be referred to as her maiden name, with the following spelling, Woodeville.

In 1470, Elizabeth and Edward had to endure his cousin and brother betraying them and supporting Henry VI to regain his throne. Edward was deposed and had to flee, leaving Elizabeth alone in London with the children. However, he returned in 1471 to regain the throne and ruled until his death in 1483. This same year, after Edward IV had died, his brother, Richard Duke of Gloucester, resumed the crown rather than Elizabeth Woodeville's sons and was crowned King Richard III. He was married to Anne Neville. This continued the Wars of the Roses, until a new faction, the Tudors, fought Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth. Henry Tudor defeated Richard with the support of the Yorkists. This subsequently ended the social unrest of the Wars of the Roses.⁸

The three queens who will be explored, were queens in the following order: Margaret of Anjou, Elizabeth Woodeville and then Anne Neville. For the sake of this essay, they will be referred to as Margaret, Elizabeth and Anne. Their husbands respectively, were Henry VI, who reigned from 1422 to 1461 and then later 1470 to 1471, Edward IV, ruling from 1461 to 1470 and then 1471 to 1483, followed by Richard III, who ruled from 1483 to 1485.⁹ Edward will be referred to as Edward, Earl of March, before taking the crown and Edward IV after taking the crown. Henry will be referred to as Henry VI consistently for ease of reading, and Richard will be referred to as Richard, the Duke of Gloucester or Richard III.

⁸ G. M. Trevelyan, *English Social History: A survey of Six Centuries. Chaucer to Queen Victoria* (London: The Reprint Society, 1978)

⁹ Flude, *Divorced, Beheaded, Died*

Chapter 1: The Perception of Females

The ideals of women were contradictory: weak, nurturing and passive, yet there was also a fear of them being a temptress and causing chaos.¹⁰ Gender is a socially constructed and historically rooted concept today, as it was in the period which is to be discussed.¹¹ Nevertheless, it was the monarchy which assisted the creation of social norms regarding masculinity and femininity, being central to the culture of England.¹² England was a Christian society, and fathers regarded women as 'snares of Satan'.¹³ From within the Bible, women were seen as inferior. The story of Adam and Eve sees the female as being made from man and medieval thought was that women should be grateful to men.¹⁴ Eve is the one who gave into temptation in the Garden of Eden and it was seen that Eve took the forbidden fruit from the tree because she wanted to believe the devil.¹⁵ Jerome wrote that the importance of virginity expected of women, was because 'it began with a woman' in the Garden of Eden.¹⁶ Demons were believed to be able to enlist women to ensnare and deceive men.¹⁷

This viewpoint was supported by Aristotle when he said that Adam and Eve demonstrated women's inferiority and that women could not reach perfection due to menstruation.¹⁸ He stated that male and female were juxtaposed: active/passive, form/matter, perfection/imperfection which supported his biological views that women were defective males and that women who ruled men abused their biological nature.¹⁹ However, Plato disagreed with this. Plato believed that male and female were capable of the same perfection and morality as souls were the same-it was

¹⁰ J. Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens: English Queenship 1445-1503* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

¹¹ J. Murray, 'Thinking about Gender: The Diversity of Medieval Perspectives' in J. Carpenter and S. B. Maclean (ed), *Power of the Weak: Studies on Medieval Women* (Urbana, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995)

¹² Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*; Neal, *The Queen's Grace*

¹³ Trevalyan, *English Social History*, p. 67.

¹⁴ E. Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou: Queenship and Power in Late Medieval England* (Suffolk, New York: The Boydell Press, 2003)

¹⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶ M. M. Sauer, *Gender in Medieval Culture* (London, New Delhi, New York, Sydney: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), p. 48.

¹⁷ Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*

¹⁸ *ibid*; L. Benz St. John, *Three Medieval Queens: Queenship and the Crown in Fourteenth Century England* (UK: MacMillan Springer, 2012)

¹⁹ Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*; Murray, in Carpenter and Maclean, *Power of the Weak*

merely the physical body which was different, and the female body was biologically weaker than mans.²⁰

In the sixth century, Gildas wrote '*On the Ruin of Britain*'. This said how Britain had tyrant kings and that they had wives which were whores and adulteresses.²¹ Although this mentions kings, it refers to wives and so is appropriate to mention it regarding femininity. These were the only terms used to describe the wives; whores and adulteresses-giving an idea of how women were perceived at the time, that they were untrustworthy and full of lust. This view had been seen before, in the Holy Bible. Jeremiah had said how the sexual misconduct of the Israelites had caused their relationship with God to be broken.²² This creates a link between sexual misconduct of females and failed links with God, one supported the other and vice versa.

Giles of Rome's '*De Regimine Principum*' was produced in the thirteenth century but gained popularity in the fifteenth century. The text said that all wives should be 'noble, beautiful, virtuous, temperate, chaste and not given to idleness...'.²³ These were all positive qualities of a woman. Nevertheless, he then went on to say that it was not worth listening to women as 'they were childlike in their reasoning'.²⁴ This shows that women already had an expectation to be inferior to men and because of this, they had a marginal status in the family which, according to the descriptions above, expected them to be quiet and sensible.²⁵ Gender was crucial when determining a woman's place in the family and it also determined how elite mothers raised their children.²⁶ This view was supported in Jacobus de Cessolis' '*The Solace*

²⁰ Murray, 'Thinking about Gender' in Carpenter and Maclean, *Power of the Weak*.

²¹ J. Laynesmith, 'Telling Tales of Adulterous Queens in Medieval England from Olympias of Macedonia to Elizabeth Woodeville' in L. Mitchell, (ed) *Every Inch a King: Comparative Studies in Kings and Kingship in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds* (Political Science: Boston, 2013)

²² *ibid*

²³ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*, p. 2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁵ B. Harris, 'Property, Power, and Personal Relations: Elite Mothers and Sons in Yorkist and Early Tudor England', *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 15 (Spring 1990), pp. 608-621; Benz St. John, *Three Medieval Queens*

²⁶ Harris, 'Property, Power, and Personal Relations'

of the Game of Chesse’ written between 1275 to 1300 when he described women as fragile and feeble.²⁷

²⁷ D. Dunn, (ed) *War and Society in Medieval and Early Modern Britain* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000)

Chapter 2: What do we Mean by Queenship?

Medieval queenship, when compared to its male counterpart, has had a lack of research until recent decades. To assist with clarity, it is important to consider what is meant by the term queenship. The term queen, as a noun, is defined as the female ruler of a country or a King's wife. Queenship, however, is the verb form of the above noun. Most scholars understand the term queenship to mean a 'cluster of customs, practises and political theory that focuses on who queens were and what they did'.²⁸ The contemporary theory of queenship can seem elusive but Neal believes that it combines 'the queen's subjection to her husband and disassociation from the political sphere'.²⁹ This chapter will begin by looking at previous work which mentioned queenship and expectations associated with them. Laynesmith provides a convenient summary of recent historiography trends in relation to queenship which has provided much insight into the study and understanding of queenship.

Queens were not powerless or passive as was expected-they were in fact remarkable.³⁰ Queens could rule in their own right, or alongside a husband or father.³¹ They were linked to kings by legal, political, dynastic and familial concerns.³² One of the first examples to explain a queen's role was in a text, thought to have been written by Jacobus de Cessolis between 1275 and 1300, yet printed in 1475 by William Caxton.³³ '*The Solace of the Game of Chesse*' was dedicated to George, Duke of Clarence and brother to Edward IV. It says that queens should be 'chaste, wyse, of honest people, well manered and not curyous in nourishynge of her children' and that she should be discreet in her speech.³⁴ This supports the view that women should not interfere with politics and any influence she had, should be applied privately.³⁵ He drew parallels between the game of chess, and real queenship. Cessolis explained how the queen could be used to protect the king, how the game of chess can continue without a queen and how the game is only

²⁸ T. Earenfight, 'Medieval Queenship', *History Compass*, vol. 15 (2017), p. 1.

²⁹ Neal, *The Queen's Grace*, p. iii

³⁰ L. Hilton, *Queen's Consort: England's Medieval Queens* (UK: Hachete, 2010).

³¹ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*

³² *ibid*

³³ Dunn, (ed) *War and Society*

³⁴ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*, p. 3; E. Glyn, *Negotiating Queenship: From Malory to Shakespeare* (Unpublished PhD thesis) King's College London, 2015

³⁵ Glyn, *Negotiating Queenship*

completed if the king is lost.³⁶ This emphasises the view that queens were inferior and not as important as the kingly figure.

The fifteenth century text, the '*Mirrors of Princes*', explained governance to kings only, as well as Aristotle's '*Secreta Secretorum*'.³⁷ The only mirror specifically for women was Christine de Pizan's '*Le Livre du tresor de la cite des dames*' of 1405. However, there was no English translation at the time and there is no record that English medieval queens were aware of its existence. The content merely stated how queens were no different to any other woman and so the same expectations applied: to be subordinate, pious, and virtuous.

E. Glyn believes that Thomas Malory's '*Morte D'Arthur*' emphasises continuities of representation of royal women across the medieval and early modern periods.³⁸ Malory's work was first published in 1485 and has lasted through the generations to modern day. Glyn states that Guinevere is used to seek approval for Margaret's active queenship because she gathers sympathy from readers for herself and her military queenship style, challenging the traditional viewpoint.³⁹ Ann Astell thinks that Arthur's wooing of Guinevere echoes that of Edward and Elizabeth, saying that the stories are portrayals of Margaret and Elizabeth.⁴⁰

Queens had expectations from society, of how to conduct themselves. These expectations were that queens: should have been from a royal foreign family, be pious, be chaste, show patronage, provide fair and just intercession on behalf of others, produce an heir, live within their means and to not interfere in politics.⁴¹ It is these areas which will be explored, comparing each queen within each area.

As the centuries passed, historians failed to address the states of medieval queenship and instead focused on queen's households and individual lives as biographies. It was only queens who had an independent role from the King, such as Eleanor of Aquitaine, who was studied further as players on a political stage. It was

³⁶ Dunn, *War and Society*

³⁷ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*

³⁸ Glyn, *Negotiating Queenship*

³⁹ *ibid*

⁴⁰ *ibid*

⁴¹ P. A. Lee, 'Reflections of Power: Margaret of Anjou and the Dark Side of Queenship', *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 39 (Summer 1986), pp. 183-217.

Mary Facinger, in 1968, who first looked at medieval queenship as an office in its own right. She found that queenship had changed from being mutual partners of the king in the tenth century, to a queen's political role diminishing until, in the thirteenth century, the queen was purely decorative and symbolic.⁴² This view is supported by Neal and Honeycutt when they said that queenship had developed a more ritualistic and customary symbolism by 1400 because of a change in royal administration and mistrust in women.⁴³ This mistrust is a result of the literature available in the centuries before, informing people of the evil deeds of women. Facinger also noted how queens after the twelfth century were seen as influential only in the area of patronage of arts and literature, but Facinger also failed to consider that queens also played the role of peaceweaver, advisor, romance heroine and mother, to name but a few.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, Facinger's thoughts were challenged by Margaret Howell and it must also be remembered that Facinger's essay on queens focused on France.

Laynesmith found that Margaret and Elizabeth were subjected to lots of vigorous antagonistic propaganda, showing bad stereotypes of queens.⁴⁵ Dunn has found that the victimisation of wives, and therefore queens, is common when political situations deteriorated.⁴⁶ This is seen from the twelfth century onwards where rumours were started to create false allegations against virtuous mothers or wives of saintly or heroic leaders, to damage their rule.⁴⁷ Laynesmith found that many biographies had been completed regarding Margaret and Elizabeth and recent attempts had been made to redeem their negative reputations.⁴⁸ Anne on the other hand, had had only a few short articles dedicated to her life due to facts being so few.

One work which explained the reduction of the queen's power, and which was particularly influential on the study of queens and queenship was Jo Ann McNamara and Suzanne Fondy Wemple's '*The Power of Women Through the Family in Medieval Europe, 500-1100*', published in 1973.⁴⁹ This text explained how the queen

⁴² Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*

⁴³ Neal, *The Queen's Grace*; Laynesmith, in Mitchell, (ed) *Every Inch a King*

⁴⁴ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*

⁴⁵ *ibid*

⁴⁶ Dunn (ed) *War and Society*

⁴⁷ Laynesmith, in Mitchell, (ed) *Every Inch a King*

⁴⁸ *ibid*

⁴⁹ J. A. MacNamara and S. Wemple, 'The Power of Women Through the Family in Medieval Europe 500-1100', *Feminist Studies Inc*, vol. 1, No. 3 (Winter-Spring 1973), pp. 126-141.

became more excluded from public life as the government became more developed.⁵⁰ This helped pave the way for Anne Crawford in 1981 when she used a systematic approach to consider queenship within the fifteenth century. She found that Margaret and Elizabeth 'could hardly be bettered as how not to behave as Queen consorts'.⁵¹ Elizabeth Strickland considered this view of Margaret but concluded that she was a tragic heroine who had shown maternal tenderness.⁵² Dunn believes that Shakespeare's portrayal of Margaret influenced Strickland's view when she said that she was a victim of circumstance and a heroine who had to defend herself, her son and her husband.⁵³ She also criticised Elizabeth. However, Strickland had links to gentility so may have been biased against Elizabeth's background-a widow from a gentile family.⁵⁴

Joan Wallach Scott's '*Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis*' in 1986 helped express how gender was considered within medieval England before Lois Honeycutt, in 1989, considered the fact that churchmen considered queens to be peacemaker, mother, nurse, benefactress and intercessor.⁵⁵ This view contrasted with the earlier beliefs in the tenth century where the queen shared the king's authority.

⁵⁰ MacNamara and Wemple, 'The Power of Women'

⁵¹ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*, p. 10.

⁵² A, Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England: Abridged Edition* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1867)

⁵³ Dunn (ed) *War and Society*

⁵⁴ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*

⁵⁵ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*; Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*

Chapter 3: Marriage and Heirs

The first expectation of queens which will be explored is the expectation of queens to be from a royal foreign family. The bloodline of the queen was important for it needed to be untainted to ensure pure family lines throughout its descendants. When females married, they carried wealth in the form of dowries and sustained patronage networks. As wives, they ensured biological continuity within the family and preserved the relationships between theirs and their husband's families.⁵⁶ Through being able to track its heritage, dynasties could claim rights to other land and monarchies, expanding control. These dynastic marriages were affairs between families to create allies and acted as instruments of policy.⁵⁷ 'Marriage was one relation of life, love another' and although it may happen by chance, love was not considered when making the match.⁵⁸ However, late fifteenth century literature made the idea of a love marriage popular, such as *Nut Brown Maid* and the *Ancestress of the Bailiff's Daughter of Islington*.⁵⁹

Margaret of Anjou was the daughter of Rene of Anjou and the marriage between herself and Henry VI gained political ties, stability and hoped to end the Hundred Years War.⁶⁰ She was from a long standing pedigree and was deemed acceptable to marry a king. This assisted a peace internationally and brought an end to the Hundred Years War between England and France which had lasted, intermittently, from 1337 to 1453. The war was about territories in France governed by England, England's strength in Flanders, France's support of Scotland's independence and the claim of English monarchs to the French crown. Margaret was 'outstanding in the beauty of her appearance' according to English ambassadors in 1444.⁶¹ She was of 'healthy breeding stock', of foreign blood and bought with her peace and stability, all attributes of an ideal queen.⁶² She would have seemed a suitable bride for Henry VI by the English population because of her political ties to France and the allegiance of her family. Margaret was betrothed by proxy in 1444, before attending a marriage

⁵⁶ Harris, 'Property, Power, and Personal Relations'

⁵⁷ Hilton, *Queen's Consort*

⁵⁸ Trevalyan, *English Social History*, p. 66.

⁵⁹ *ibid*

⁶⁰ S. Drimmer, 'Beyond Private Matters: A Prayer Roll for Queen Margaret of Anjou', *University of Massachusetts Amherst*, vol. 53, No. 1 (Spring 2014), pp. 95-117.

⁶¹ Hepburn, in Clark, *The Fifteenth Century XI*, p. 66.

⁶² B. Wolffe, *Henry VI* (Yale University Press, 2001), p. 175.

ceremony by proxy in 1445. She married Henry VI in person a month later and was crowned in May 1445.⁶³ Margaret had been exposed to strong women who had ruled in their husbands' and sons' absences.⁶⁴ This strong will can be seen within Margaret's own career and may be the reason why she underwent antagonistic propaganda campaigns throughout her career, as did her successor, Elizabeth.⁶⁵ However, in times of crisis and suspicion, a queen's position could leave her exposed to harmful allegations.⁶⁶

Elizabeth was a woman who was beautiful with a sober demeanour, a feminine smile, eloquent tongue, and wit.⁶⁷ Her first husband, Sir John Grey, died in the Battle of St. Albans in 1461 as a commander of the Lancastrian cavalry.⁶⁸ This meant that his lands were forfeit to the crown upon his death and the Yorkists' triumph. Elizabeth had no means of income, so she appealed to the king for support to raise her two children.⁶⁹ Her family were of the gentry class and she was an English lady, not foreign born. She was certainly 'not the international match that politics demanded' and she brought with her no foreign support or allies, apart from distant ties to Burgundy traced through her mother's lineage, Jacquetta, to Pierre de Luxemburg, Count of St Pol.⁷⁰ Although these allegiances from Burgundy were important and would be a great support for her husband during his reign, they were not a formidable force and seemed small pickings for a strong nation such as England. J. R. Lander believes that the Woodevilles were not as 'lowly as many historians have assumed' and therefore was not such a bad match for the King.⁷¹ C. Ross, however, states that by 'birth and degree' she was not a suitable queen.⁷² M. Hicks agrees with Ross and says how their rewards were excessive and that they had lowly origins.⁷³ Having said that, Lord Rivers, her father, was a royal councillor

⁶³ Wolffe, *Henry VI*

⁶⁴ Drimmer, 'Beyond Private Matters'

⁶⁵ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*

⁶⁶ Glyn, *Negotiating Queenship*

⁶⁷ E. Hall, *Hall's Chronicle: Containing the History of England* (London: G. Woodfall, 1809)

⁶⁸ D. MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville-a Life: The Real Story of the 'White Queen'*, (Stroud: Amberley Publishing Limited, 2013)

⁶⁹ *ibid*

⁷⁰ M. Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*, (Yale: Yale University Press, 2010), p. 176.

⁷¹ A. Kettle, 'Parvenus in Politics: The Woodevilles, Edward IV and the Baronage 1464-1469', *The Ricardian*, vol. 15 (June 2005), p. 95

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁷³ *ibid*

for over a year before she was queen.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, he claimed no rights to royalty, as did Margaret's father. Her mother, even though a former duchess, could claim no prominent ties either, except to that of Burgundy.

Jacquetta had at one time, before the king married, been the first lady of the land as the Duchess of Bedford.⁷⁵ After becoming a widow she married a knight for love and had a family: one of her daughters being Elizabeth. Jacquetta had been a friend of Margaret, and was later one of four ladies of her bedchamber and therefore her children could be provided for at court, including Elizabeth who was maid of honour to Margaret.⁷⁶ However, Sutton and Visser-Fuchs think Elizabeth would have been too young to have held this position.⁷⁷ Jacquetta and Margaret were said to be great friends and Jacquetta, supposedly, would have been a great support for Margaret during her marriage, coming to England, and the years which passed afterwards.

Elizabeth was known at court and evidence suggests, in the form of a letter suggesting a marriage between herself and Sir Hugh Johns, that she was known to Richard Duke of York, Edward IV's father, and the Earl of Warwick.⁷⁸ Therefore, it can be considered that her and Edward IV were already aware of each other when she asked him to return her forfeit lands. It is rumoured that he firstly asked her if she 'might so [have the] fortune of his paramour and concubine...' to which she declined, enhancing her chastity and lack of want for power.⁷⁹ He proposed marriage, they married in secret and this destroyed Edward's relationship with his cousin, the Earl of Warwick, who helped him win the crown.⁸⁰ This was due to Warwick wanting Edward to marry a foreign princess to aid their claim to the throne. They seemed to have married for passion and desire, but the marriage scandalised the nation and she was considered unsuitable as a royal bride.⁸¹ This was due to her humble background and that she was a widow and not a virgin. It was the expansion of a prosperous middling class with land which propelled the Woodevilles even more into the royal

⁷⁴ A. F. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs, 'A 'Most Benevolent Queen': Queen Elizabeth Woodeville's Reputation, her Piety and her Books', *The Ricardian*, vol. 10, No. 129 (June 1995), pp. 214-245.

⁷⁵ Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England*

⁷⁶ MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodeville*

⁷⁷ Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, 'A 'Most Benevolent Queen''

⁷⁸ Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England*

⁷⁹ Hall, *Hall's Chronicle*, p. 254

⁸⁰ Flude, *Divorced, Beheaded, Died*

⁸¹ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*; Hilton, *Queen's Consort*

circle.⁸² This marriage has been considered by some historians to be the reason for 'the collapse of the Yorkist dynasty'.⁸³ Even though it was fruitful marriage, with better allies and support, perhaps the Yorkist reign would have continued longer after Richard III took the throne due to the strong support which the marriage had lost them.⁸⁴

Anne Neville is described by historian John Rows as '...a most noble lady and princess born of the royal blood...' who came from the top rank of society.⁸⁵ She was the daughter of the Earl of Warwick, known as the Kingmaker due to helping put Edward IV on the throne and putting Henry VI back on the throne in 1470. Anne grew up around her future husband, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, as he was educated in their home.⁸⁶ Due to her being the daughter of a prominent Earl, she attended court from 1464 but not in the service of the queen.⁸⁷ Here, she would have mixed with royalty and nobility, passing alongside both her future husband and Elizabeth, seeing how this queen ruled. She was English born, not foreign, but was descended from Edward III with links to royalty in France, Spain and Scotland.⁸⁸ This was her second marriage, after her father had previously arranged a marriage between herself and the son of Margaret.⁸⁹ The noble links which Anne could use within England were a great asset for a king, especially in a time when the crown was disputed. Even though she was a widower and supposedly not a virgin, Richard needed allies to win the crown, and the support of English nobility who owed allegiance to Anne, would only strengthen his claim.

Anne's first marriage to Edward of Lancaster produced no children and seemed very strange to others 'consideryng that the erle of Warwicje, had first disinherited the father...'.⁹⁰ However, it ensured the crown for the Nevilles should the Lancastrians win. This marriage between Anne and Edward of Lancaster required a dispensation due to close affinity to each other. This was because of the canon law of marriage

⁸² Hilton, *Queen's Consort*; Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*

⁸³ Flude, *Divorced, Beheaded, Died*, p. 87.

⁸⁴ *ibid*

⁸⁵ Hicks, *Anne Neville: Queen to Richard III* (Stroud: The History Press, 2014), pp. 39.

⁸⁶ Flude, *Divorced, Beheaded, Died*

⁸⁷ Hicks, *Anne Neville*

⁸⁸ *ibid*

⁸⁹ Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*

⁹⁰ Hall, *Hall's Chronicle*, p. 231.

being based on the laws of Moses. It is written in Leviticus, Chapter 8 that: 'none of you shall approach to any that is near to kin of him, to uncover their nakedness'.⁹¹ It was issued in August 1470 but another one was granted in France because of having to wait for Warwick's consolidation of the conquest of England.⁹² However, when they received this second one, it was Advent, a time when marriages were forbidden.⁹³ It seems, however, that they married regardless of this. This marriage ended upon Edward of Lancaster's death. Though her father was a strong political figure with an impressive reputation, she bought no foreign allies or promises of peace with her. This can be seen to be an unsettled beginning to her reign. However, the alliance with her father would have been looked more favourably upon than that of the Woodeville family due to her background. Nevertheless, her allegiance had to change several times within her lifetime.

When Edward of Lancaster died at the Battle of Tewkesbury, Anne was only fourteen years old.⁹⁴ She was taken into a guardianship by George, Duke of Clarence, who was Edward IV's and Richard's brother.⁹⁵ It is rumoured that he had wished to secure the Warwick fortune for himself and so kept her hidden. Richard had her removed to sanctuary and desired to marry her. However, he could not marry her at the time because of the guardianship and the chance of being accused of abduction or rape.⁹⁶ In 1472, however, George agreed to a marriage between Anne and Richard, Duke of Gloucester, with Edward's encouragement. Prior to their marriage, they needed a dispensation on the grounds of consanguinity in the second and third degree as well as Anne's deceased husband being Richard's second cousin.⁹⁷ They were married after receiving what they believed to be an adequate dispensation, in May or June 1472.⁹⁸ However, the dispensation was inadequate due to naming their close affinity, but not consanguinity and so the marriage was actually invalid, unless it had already been absolved in a document lost to modern day

⁹¹ Hicks, *Anne Neville*, p. 28.

⁹² M. Barnfield, 'Diriment, Impediments, Dispensations and Divorce: Richard III and Matrimony', *The Ricardian*, vol. 17 (2007), pp. 84-98.

⁹³ *ibid*

⁹⁴ A. Licence, *Anne Neville: Richard III's Tragic Queen* (UK: Amberley Publishing, 2013)

⁹⁵ Barnfield, 'Diriment, Impediments, Dispensations and Divorce'

⁹⁶ *ibid*

⁹⁷ Barnfield, 'Diriment, Impediments, Dispensations and Divorce'

⁹⁸ *ibid*

researchers.⁹⁹ In 1484, rumours began circling that Richard was seeking a divorce in order to marry his niece, Elizabeth of York.¹⁰⁰ These rumours progressed along with another referring to her sickness, saying that Richard was poisoning her, which he publicly denied.¹⁰¹ Anne died in March 1485 after sickening in January.¹⁰² In general, Anne's life is so unknown that only several articles have been devoted to her life.¹⁰³

Though Margaret was a foreign queen, as was expected of royalty, the fact that Elizabeth and Anne, successive queens, were English born may have pleased the English population. Not only did they understand their country, but they had also seen during Margaret's reign how strong willed and forceful a foreign queen could be. This would have calmed some people but troubled others. Elizabeth broke open the expectations regarding queenly family rank. She made it known that love can triumph over rigid networks required of royalty. After seeing the rule of Margaret, she could see how disrupted the country was and promoted peace. Anne on the other hand, had come from nobility whose family had always had ties to the crown. Royalty was a part of her casual conversation when growing up and she would have felt a comfort in the company of upper-class man and women. Due to this background, she would have had a strong belief in rank and expectation, disapproving of such a match between a widower and a king. This impacted on Anne when she made a match suitable to her rank - a betrothal to a prince and then a duke.

After marriage, there was an expectation to bear children and to preserve the family memory.¹⁰⁴ 'Motherhood was the defining moment for a Queen consort...in a system based on lineal inheritance' and created a link between queenship and motherhood.¹⁰⁵ This is the reason for the expectation of virginity upon marriage. It protected the lineage of the husband and subsequent children.¹⁰⁶ Peggy MacCracken believes that the queen's body represented a site to render the health and integrity of the kingdom.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, adultery or crimes against her body meant

⁹⁹ Hicks, *Anne Neville*; Barnfield, 'Diriment, Impediments, Dispensations and Divorce'

¹⁰⁰ Barnfield, 'Diriment, Impediments, Dispensations and Divorce'

¹⁰¹ *ibid*

¹⁰² Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*

¹⁰³ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*

¹⁰⁴ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*

¹⁰⁵ Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*, p. 39; Benz St. John, *Three Medieval Queens*

¹⁰⁶ Sauer, *Gender in Medieval Culture*

¹⁰⁷ Glyn, *Negotiating Queenship*

a symbolic threat to the kingdom, perhaps in the form of their lineage. This can be seen symbolically when Malory's Guinevere resisted efforts by Mordred and Mellyagant who wanted her body to gain political power.¹⁰⁸ However, Lancelot, a chivalric hero, desired and gained access to her body due to love, not for the sake of power.

Anton Blok stated though, that ladies who emphasised motherhood and their role of wife would have difficulty being accepted as a leader.¹⁰⁹ This, however, is not the case with Margaret. She is seen by some historians to have acted in her warrior-type way to protect her son yet was accepted as the Lancastrian leader.¹¹⁰ The importance and weight put upon providing an heir was large and it was often a King and Queen's sole focus, with expectations from the realm upon them to perform and secure the realm's lineage and integrity, living up to Queenship and womanhood ideals.¹¹¹ No matter how politically successful, the primary duty was always to provide a male heir. The marriage between King and Queen was unequal in power and the woman also laboured under the burden of constantly trying to conceive and bear children.¹¹² However, it was not the office of Queenship that was associated with childbearing, but the gender of that office.¹¹³ Females. They were linked to reproduction in medieval society.¹¹⁴ The woman's ideal of maternity was channelled through the Christian emphasis on the Virgin Mary.¹¹⁵

This is supported by the fact that in the tenth century, England adopted part of the continent's coronation ceremony in the form of anointing.¹¹⁶ This became the first part of the coronation ceremony and it was a fertility charm, connecting the Queen to the Davidic line and linking her to the Virgin Mary.¹¹⁷ If a Queen failed to produce an heir, it had a disastrous impact on politics and society and the Queen was seen to be out of favour with God, diseased or defective.¹¹⁸ The blame would be placed on the

¹⁰⁸ *ibid*

¹⁰⁹ Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*

¹¹⁰ Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England*

¹¹¹ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*; Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*

¹¹² Trevalyan, *English Social History*

¹¹³ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*

¹¹⁴ *ibid*

¹¹⁵ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*

¹¹⁶ Dunn, (ed) *War and Society*

¹¹⁷ Hilton, *Queen's Consort*; Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*

¹¹⁸ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*

Queen as long as the King had continued to have sexual relations with his Queen.¹¹⁹ Even though it was considered important to conceive, it was arguably more important that it was a male that was conceived. The birth of a son strengthened the wife's position even more because only men could rule and females were just pawns to create alliances through marriage.¹²⁰ Due to this emphasis on male lineage, sons occupied a privileged position in the family.¹²¹

It took Margaret eight and a half years to fall pregnant after marrying and she bore one son. Why it took so long to conceive, we cannot say. It could be due to Henry's incapacitation, a medical problem or perhaps his pious nature resulted in him wanting to live a chaste life. We cannot say, but Laynesmith believes that Margaret channelled her frustration at not falling pregnant, into her extensive charity and intercession on behalf of others.¹²² Margaret would have felt a social pressure to ensure the royal bloodline and dynastic succession to demonstrate her worthiness of being queen, blessed by God.¹²³ This social pressure would link Margaret to the continuation or discontinuation of the Lancastrian dynasty and this delay was probably a factor which caused the allegations of illegitimacy of her son Edward.¹²⁴ This questioned her chastity and served two purposes: it attacked her as a woman in which she was unable to do what a 'proper' woman could do, and it drew attention to the impropriety of what she did with another man instead. However, Margaret fulfilled her expectation as queen by providing a male heir for the Lancastrians. That there was no spare heir was problematic though, considering mortality rates at the time and the fact that they were in the middle of a war regarding the future of the crown of England.

Elizabeth certainly lived up to this queenly ideal and the country saw this as proof that God favoured her as queen. She came from a fruitful family line and did not fail to provide countless heirs to continue the family name. Elizabeth bore three sons and seven daughters, the first of which was born within two years of marriage. In

¹¹⁹ *ibid*

¹²⁰ Harris, 'Property, Power, and Personal Relations'

¹²¹ *ibid*

¹²² Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*; Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*

¹²³ Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*

¹²⁴ *ibid*

doing so, she provided an heir, and a spare, for the Yorkist throne and this gave them hope of continuation into at least another generation.

In contrast to Margaret, yet parallel to Margaret, Anne bore only one son, Edward of Middleham. However, he was conceived much sooner than Margaret's Edward of Lancaster. Edward was born one and a half years after her marriage to Richard, Duke of Gloucester when Anne was also looked favourably upon by God.¹²⁵ However, that she only provided one son made things difficult when he died young and therefore, the throne could be taken again by force.

This short interval that it took to conceive, for Elizabeth and Anne, must have been a relief after seeing the pressure and negative propaganda which Margaret undertook as a result of her conceiving after eight and a half years.

¹²⁵ Hicks, *Anne Neville*

Chapter 4: Piety, Patronage and Chastity

Piety, patronage and chastity were unavoidably related when it came to queenship.¹²⁶ Piety was another important aspect of queenship and refers to a religious devotion. They were expected to attend prayers and to attend mass with attendants, whilst also distributing alms. Margaret was rarely absent from daily procession to the royal chapel.¹²⁷ They were required to keep strong relationships with bishops to protect their family's souls and to promote devotion to the Virgin Mary.¹²⁸ Religious discourses of the time encouraged pureness of the immortal soul, as well as the body.¹²⁹ Therefore, a woman could reacquire her virginity due to her chastity and devotion to God.

Queens could show piety by taking pilgrimages, fulfilling the queenly duty. Pilgrimages could assist in saintly intercession or help to provide miracles.¹³⁰ In 1453 Margaret completed a pilgrimage to Walsingham.¹³¹ Elizabeth also went on pilgrimage three times: 1465, 1470 and 1471, all to Canterbury.¹³² Anne had not been involved with pilgrimages during her time as queen. However, as the Duchess of Gloucester, prior to becoming queen, she joined the guild of Corpus Christi and joined the sisterhood of Durham Cathedral Priory.¹³³ Facinger believes that queens were influential in the patronage of arts and literature and this could enhance their piety and their political influence.¹³⁴ It must be remembered though, that medieval writers may have used both facts and rumours in their works.¹³⁵

Margaret commissioned a window for the Chapel of Mary of the Pew in Westminster Abbey.¹³⁶ It depicted her and the King kneeling before the Virgin Mary and only emphasised her devotion to the Virgin. Margaret used her influence to set up and give patronage to The Queen's College of Margaret and St. Bernard, in

¹²⁶ Neal, *The Queen's Grace*

¹²⁷ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*

¹²⁸ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*; Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*

¹²⁹ Sauer, *Gender in Medieval Culture*

¹³⁰ R. N. Swanson, *Catholic England: Faith, Religion and Observance Before the Reformation* (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 1993)

¹³¹ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*

¹³² Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, 'A 'Most Benevolent Queen''

¹³³ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*

¹³⁴ *ibid*

¹³⁵ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*

¹³⁶ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*

Cambridge.¹³⁷ This was later taken over by Elizabeth and Anne. Anne endowed the college with great rents. However, Ross believes that these rents were made by Richard, who was an important patron.¹³⁸ To give this idea more weight, the estates which she gave to the college were initially her mother's property.¹³⁹

There is a document called Queen Margaret's Prayer Roll, called so because of the images depicted of herself in it, showing Margaret's piety and her devotion to the Virgin Mary.¹⁴⁰ It is said to demonstrate a strife for Margaret to be a Marian exemplar.¹⁴¹ It shows Margaret kneeling at a prie dieu, gazing up at Mary and Jesus. There is a coat of arms which shows the fleur de lis of France and the lions of England.¹⁴² It is thought that this roll cannot have been for private use because of the large width of the document.¹⁴³ Therefore, we can gather that Margaret wanted the public to see the document to support her status and popularity as a pious queen who was seen as the rightful queen by the Virgin Mary.

The *Liber Proverbium*, housed in the British Library as Harley MS 7578, is a translation of religious texts and educational stories. Nicole Bozon's fourteenth century '*Les Proverbes de bon Enseignement*' was a part of the translated material.¹⁴⁴ He was a Franciscan friar who wrote sermons, poems and Marian lyrics.¹⁴⁵ It is thought that Margaret commissioned this translation of proverbs herself, to help shape her image as a new queen of patronage, or possibly to educate her children with.¹⁴⁶

Another example of her patronage is The Medal of Margaret. It was previously on display in the Victoria and Albert Museum and was sculpted by Pietro de Milano in the fifteenth century.¹⁴⁷ One side of the medal shows Margaret as Queen and has an

¹³⁷ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*

¹³⁸ Kettle, 'Parvenus in Politics'

¹³⁹ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*,

¹⁴⁰ Drimmer, 'Beyond Private Matters'

¹⁴¹ *ibid*

¹⁴² Prayer Roll of Margaret of Anjou, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Jesus College MS 124, 1445-1453

¹⁴³ Drimmer, 'Beyond Private Matters'

¹⁴⁴ The *Liber Proverbium*, British Library, London, Harley MS 7578, 1400-1700

¹⁴⁵ J. Nuttal, 'Margaret of Anjou as Patron of English Verse? The *Liber Proverbium* and the Romans of Partenay', *The Review of English Studies*, Vol. 67 (2016), pp. 632-643.

¹⁴⁶ *ibid*

¹⁴⁷ Hepburn, in Clark, *The Fifteenth Century XI*; The Medal of Margaret, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, A.182-1910, 1458-1464

inscription: 'Filled with virtues she shines. May you be called wise'.¹⁴⁸ On the other side of the medal is a female figure of the virtue, Prudence, holding her usual serpent and mirror.¹⁴⁹ There is an inscription which reads 'Prudence is above all things 'virtue''.¹⁵⁰ This, in combination with the other side, demonstrates how the public perceived Margaret to be a fit ruler and to hold queenly and Marian virtues typical of the time. By ensuring a comparison could be made between themselves and the Virgin Mary, the queens could ensure that some of the expectations of their role could be fulfilled. These items of Margaret's certainly did this because it legitimized her queenship by connecting her with Mary. As has been noted previously in the thesis, it was important for women to show Marian qualities because of the negative view which was otherwise associated with them.

Throughout Elizabeth's career she founded chapels, was granted land to build a chapel, was granted a licence to attend any service in a religious house founded by royalty, and granted land to the Prior of Sheen.¹⁵¹ She later hosted a religious thanksgiving for the safe delivery of her child and petitioned the pope for her subjects to enjoy the feast of Visitation.¹⁵² This shows that she had a relationship with the Pope and this was seen by the general population when they were allowed to enjoy the feast. This can only have bolstered her support. Elizabeth was a benefactor of Eton College, visiting three times in 1471 and got a licence to set up a fraternity of sixty priests in London in 1466.¹⁵³ The Yorkists tended to use poetry to create public support, especially in Wales which was largely Lancastrian.¹⁵⁴ The likes of Gutor Glyn, Dafydd Llwyd and Lewys Glyn Cothi were all employed to create poetry for them. For example, Gutor Glyn's poem, number 23, '*In Praise of William Herbert, First Earl of Pembroke*', praises William Herbert who had a close relationship to Edward IV.¹⁵⁵ This propaganda helped to link Wales and England against the Lancastrians, because Herbert was fighting for the Yorkists and yet he was a proud

¹⁴⁸ Hepburn, in Clark, *The Fifteenth Century XI*

¹⁴⁹ VA, A.182-1910, 1458-1464

¹⁵⁰ Hepburn, in Clark, *The Fifteenth Century XI*, p.70.

¹⁵¹ Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, 'A 'Most Benevolent Queen''

¹⁵² Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*

¹⁵³ Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, 'A 'Most Benevolent Queen''; Neal, *The Queen's Grace*

¹⁵⁴ G. Williams, *Renewal and Reformation: Wales c. 1415-1642* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993)

¹⁵⁵ Gutor Glyn [online], Available: <http://gutorglyn.net/gutorglyn/www/index.htm#>.

Welshman. Another poem of his, number 79, praises the Yorkist defeat at Barnet in 1471.¹⁵⁶

Much can be seen to demonstrate Margaret and Elizabeth's patronage and piety. However, no notable records can be found regarding Anne's, apart from the '*Booke of Gostlye Grace*' and the Rous Roll. The Rous Roll, found in the British Library as Add MS 48976, was made for the Beauchamp family and was potentially commissioned by Anne.¹⁵⁷ It notes the triumphs of the Earls of Warwick and the town.¹⁵⁸ It refers to both Yorkists kings too but fails to mention Henry VI. Another example of her piety is seen in Mechtild of Hackeborn's '*Booke of Gostlye Grace*'.¹⁵⁹ This is the only book known to have been owned by Anne and had links to the religious foundations of Syon and Sheen.¹⁶⁰

One explanation for the lack of evidence for her patronage and piety may be that she and Richard III only held the crown for two years, a much shorter time than the others. It could also be down to the fact that she became ill towards the end of her life and was not as active in the church. Anne would have naturally attended church but not much else is known. She may have refrained from such behaviour by making a conscious effort to stay out of politics completely, and not encouraging patronage to assist that. Margaret's actions, however, seemed to have shown Elizabeth that it was an important political tool to be present and active within the church through the use and demonstration of piety and patronage of the arts.

There is no greater role model for chastity than the Virgin Mary and so by using her as an example to themselves, these queens must remain chaste and only have intercourse with the King, hoping to produce an heir. Ruth Mazo Karras states that in the Medieval period, chastity meant the absence of sexual activity.¹⁶¹ However, for clarity, the term chaste will be used to refer to the absence of extramarital affairs. However, before that could be assessed, the state of virginity was first to be established.

¹⁵⁶ Glyn, Available: <http://gutorglyn.net/gutorglyn/www/index.htm#>.

¹⁵⁷ The Rous Roll, The British Library, London, Add MS 48976, 1483

¹⁵⁸ BL, Add MS 48976, 1483

¹⁵⁹ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*

¹⁶⁰ Mechtild of Hackeborn's '*Booke of Gostlye Grace*', The British Library, London, Egerton MS 2006, 1415-1438

¹⁶¹ Sauer, *Gender in Medieval Culture*

There was an expected ideal state of humanity and this was virginity with a lack of sexual awareness.¹⁶² Maidenhood was seen as a life cycle phase and was part of the ideal of femininity.¹⁶³ This was expressed within the Holy Bible in the book of Deuteronomy. However, both Anne and Elizabeth had been previously married and were therefore not virgins. Spiritual and chaste marriages developed alongside this due to the church's preaching of preferring virginity which resulted in either not producing an heir, or perhaps after an heir was begotten, the marriage became spiritual.¹⁶⁴ This was no less common than hearing of the Virgin Mary.¹⁶⁵ Christine de Pizan's book *'The Book of Three Virtues'*, written in 1404 or 1405 instructed women of all ranks to remain faithful, obedient and submissive to their husbands. To be faithful was seen as the norm and was not just an expectation of queens, but of women.¹⁶⁶ However, as was noted previously in the thesis, this book was not translated in English in this time period.

Margaret was the subject of attack regarding her chastity because several years after her son was born, allegations were made stating that he was not the King's son. The fact that Margaret regarded the Duke of York with suspicion might be important to note here. It might be a possibility that the rumour of her supposed sexual transgression was created at a time when factions were strongly opposed and to discredit the Lancastrian claim to the throne. These allegations were partly stopped when peers had to swear allegiance to the king and the prince in December 1466.¹⁶⁷ In 1461, the Milanese ambassador reported that Margaret would poison the King and marry the Duke of Somerset.¹⁶⁸ This rumour was not helped by the fact that the prince was conceived during one of Henry VI's periods of illness and when he first saw his son, he had no recollection of it, stating that 'it must've been the work of the Holy Ghost'.¹⁶⁹ Johnathan Hughes argues that accusations of sexual transgressions

¹⁶² Sauer, *Gender in Medieval Culture*

¹⁶³ K. M. Phillips, 'Maidenhood as the Perfect Age of a Woman's Life' in K. J. Lewis, N. J. Menuge and K. M. Phillips, *Young Medieval Women* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999)

¹⁶⁴ Sauer, *Gender in Medieval Culture*

¹⁶⁵ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*

¹⁶⁶ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*; Glyn, *Negotiating Queenship*

¹⁶⁷ Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*

¹⁶⁸ *ibid*

¹⁶⁹ Licence, *Anne Neville*, p. 5.

within the Wars of the Roses are often directly linked with women who fulfilled a political function.¹⁷⁰

An Italian poet between 1466 and 1468 wrote that Elizabeth was a 'model of triumphantly virtuous womanhood'.¹⁷¹ This is supported by Mancini when he described how Elizabeth remained chaste even when Edward IV put a dagger to her throat to try and have intercourse with her, when she asked for her deceased husband's lands back to support her sons.¹⁷² Thomas More agrees with Mancini and wrote that Elizabeth's resistance to Edward IV's wooing impressed him and encouraged him to take her as a bride.¹⁷³ However, it needs to be considered that both of these authors wrote several years after the event occurred. Mancini was also a foreign writer whose English was rumoured to be imperfect. It must also be considered that they may have already been familiar with each other from court and that Elizabeth had planned to meet him in such a place to avoid having an audience.

However, in later years Elizabeth's chastity was questioned. When Richard III took the throne in 1483, he declared Edward IV and Elizabeth's children illegitimate. He claimed that Edward IV was previously married and therefore this marriage was unlawful. This gave question to Elizabeth's chastity as it had Margaret. It was well known that Elizabeth came to the throne as a widower, and therefore not a virgin. If the marriage was unlawful, it meant that she had had sexual relations outside of marriage. However, this is one rumour, and not fact.

Margaret and Elizabeth could not have seen these rumours coming and could have done nothing to prevent them. Her chastity, even if was intact, was questioned and this created a weakness for the claim to the throne, and that of her son's. In this instance, she failed her role as queen as was not above reproach or rumour. Elizabeth, too, showed great patronage in the form of founding and associating with religious organisations. This showed her piety and devotion to God. However, her chastity was also brought into question. That her marriage was declared unlawful was

¹⁷⁰ Glyn, *Negotiating Queenship*

¹⁷¹ Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, 'A 'Most Benevolent Queen'', p. 215.

¹⁷² D. Mancini, *The Usurpation of Richard the Third*, (ed and trans.) C. A. J. Armstrong (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969)

¹⁷³ T. More, *The History of King Richard III and Selections from the English and Latin Poems*, (ed) R. Sylvester (London: Yale University Press, 1976)

ultimately Edward IV's fault for not acting in such a way as to quash those rumours at the time of his marriage to Elizabeth. Nevertheless, it affected her reputation and therefore she lost some respect and support regarding her suitability of queen, not to mention her children's rule. Anne did not leave any evidence of piety and so we can consider the thought that even though she visited church, she did not do anything remarkable with her newfound position. This included pilgrimages, acts of piety or patronage. No such rumour was made of Anne throughout her career and she was always considered chaste. This may have been because she was careful to not play such a prominent role in politics and so avoided the use of negative propaganda against her after seeing what it did to her previous queens. In this instance, Anne fulfilled the expectation of a queen as nobody questioned her chastity or her piety. She merely ruled alongside her husband with no accusations thrown at her. Having seen what had happened regarding Margaret and Elizabeth's chastity, Anne could have learnt from this and ensured that she was secure in her chastity, certain that no rumours could occur.

Chapter 5: Intercession and Finances

Intercession dominates many sources on queenship and is the act of intervening, considered by churchmen as a queenly ideal.¹⁷⁴ Queenship represented a powerful model in Marian symbolism, of which intercession was a priority.¹⁷⁵ Queens were compared to both Mary and Esther because Mary was seen to plead for undeserving sinners and Esther was seen to be a political intercessor.¹⁷⁶ Esther was seen to use intercession against her husband, King Ahasverus, to help their oppressed people.¹⁷⁷

Intercession gave Kings a chance to change their minds on the advice of their wife whilst causing no harm to their reputation. Paul Strohm states that this showed how queenship acted as 'a powerful reminder of [a King's] limits' as it was only the queen who had the privilege of changing a decision, not the King.¹⁷⁸ This suggests that queens had more power than the king. However, he also sees intercession as confining, because it shows itself as the only power source of women.¹⁷⁹ Intercession could also be part of a performance which was 'pre-emptive, as when a queen sought redress because she was unable to institute redress on her own'.¹⁸⁰ Fiona Downie supports this view, saying that the Queen's pleading was 'a part of a familiar ritual set up to achieve a predetermined objective'.¹⁸¹ Fees gained from this process could be used to fund hospitals, poor relief and other charitable acts, which in turn was seen as evidence of the queenly expectation. Strohm and John Carmi Parsons argued that a Queen was expected to intercede on behalf of others and that her pregnancy was associated with her intercessions.¹⁸² This is seen when queens appealed for pardons and royal favours from the childbed and can also be noted in Queens who had no children. Queens in spiritual marriages used models of the Virgin Mary to use intercession as a form of labour or substitute for childbirth by

¹⁷⁴ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*; Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*

¹⁷⁵ Neal, *The Queen's Grace*

¹⁷⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷⁷ Dunn, (ed) *War and Society*

¹⁷⁸ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*, p. 7.

¹⁷⁹ Glyn, *Negotiating Queenship*

¹⁸⁰ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*, p. 11.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁸² Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*

looking out for other people instead of her own children.¹⁸³ Intercession permitted royal consideration, affirmed masculinity of the monarchy and supplied a choice in which women pleaded with the King in a male dominated monarchy.¹⁸⁴ Nevertheless, it demonstrated that the King had the final say, even when others may advise him.

One of Margaret's problems within her career was that she breached intercessory expectations because there was no king to intervene with.¹⁸⁵ In c. 1445 she recommended Dame Maude Everynham to the position of Prioress of Nuneaton, interceding on her behalf for the position.¹⁸⁶ In 1446 she wrote to her uncle to act as intermediary, using a traditional intercessory approach.¹⁸⁷ Margaret, through breaching these standards, did not abide by the unspoken rules of intercession. She would have been considered improper and power hungry, overstepping her position.

Elizabeth favoured the use of intercession. A few pieces of evidence remain which demonstrate this. In 1468, Thomas Cook was asked to pay a large fine to the king. In theory, he should have paid ten percent of it to the queen for the Queen's Gold. However, she did not insist on the payment.¹⁸⁸ Queens gold was one tenth of all fines paid to the King. A. R. Myers states that all cases apart from two were paid to Elizabeth on time in the household records of 1466-7.¹⁸⁹ However, most cases were paid in arrears to Margaret. This can be seen to mean either that Elizabeth interceded on behalf of this and did not push for the receiving of payment, or that she was respected by others enough to pay up front and not have to be chased for it, resulting in no record made. On the other hand, it could mean that Margaret was either formidable in receiving what was owed to her or lacked the respect of the population to pay the money which they owed to her. However, Myers says that Margaret was a woman eager to 'gain and keep all the income she could'.¹⁹⁰ If that is

¹⁸³ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*; Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*

¹⁸⁴ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*

¹⁸⁵ Glyn, *Negotiating Queenship*

¹⁸⁶ *Letters of Queen Margaret of Anjou and Bishop Beckett and Others*, Vol 86, (ed) C. Monroe Esq (London: John Bowyer Nichols and Sons, 1863)

¹⁸⁷ Glyn, *Negotiating Queenship*

¹⁸⁸ Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, 'A 'Most Benevolent Queen''

¹⁸⁹ A. R. Myers, *Crown, Household and Parliament in fifteenth century England* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1985)

¹⁹⁰ *ibid*

the case, then Margaret pushed to receive the money and Elizabeth interceded on behalf of the others and let them off the debt, or merely forgot to chase it.

Elizabeth interceded for the Mercers' Company in 1478 when there was an issue between London citizens and the King's servants.¹⁹¹ Elizabeth used intercession in 1480 with this same group, to convince the King to forgive them five hundred marks. She then interceded on their behalf again to reduce their debt by another five hundred marks.¹⁹² After this, she was seen positively by the Mercers' Company and enjoyed a positive relationship with them. Elizabeth also interceded on behalf of Margaret when she was imprisoned at the Tower of London after losing her son at the Battle of Tewkesbury. Elizabeth remembered the benefits which she received from her former mistress, and Margaret was then moved to Wallingford Castle with a friend as company.¹⁹³ This wealth of evidence and records demonstrating Elizabeth's intercession shows a want to help others and an ability to empathise with others. This may be due to her upbringing, being from a more humble background to that of Margaret and Anne. Her intercession is an example of being a positive and successful queen. By interceding on behalf of others, she would gain supporters for herself, her husband and their heirs.

As with the expectation of piety, no evidence can be found regarding Anne's intercession on behalf of others. There could be various reasons for this. Anne may have lacked the desire to cause a rift between herself and her husband, depending on his disposition or the evidence may lack merely because of a short rule which included her approach towards death. Nevertheless, people might expect to see intercession from someone approaching death, as a means of preparing the soul. Even though the evidence lacks, it can be assumed that Anne did do some acts of intercession, or else the Tudor faction would have used this as negative propaganda against the Yorkists.

Medieval common law identified women in three states: maiden, wife, widow.¹⁹⁴ Queens were considered in these states but also as more independent of other married women and could do a range of extra financial tasks: sue and be sued,

¹⁹¹ Neal, *The Queen's Grace*

¹⁹² Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, 'A 'Most Benevolent Queen''

¹⁹³ Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England*

¹⁹⁴ Hilton, *Queen's Consort*

acquire property and grant land, hear oaths, preside over legal cases, make wills and appoint ecclesiastics.¹⁹⁵ Each queen had to ensure that they lived within their means and, according to Christine de Pizan, spent money cautiously.¹⁹⁶ Each queen had their own household to maintain and run and this household was a reflection of their husband's kingship.¹⁹⁷ This household was run by the income generated from the queen's properties, a third of which were traditional dower lands, and Queen's gold, which was ten percent of all fines paid to the King.¹⁹⁸ As each consecutive queen took over the household, the wealth grew as they took on property and accounts from the previous dowager queen.¹⁹⁹

It is difficult to consider their finances in depth as the only surviving accounts are Margaret's household accounts from 1452 to 1453 and Elizabeth's household accounts from 1466 to 1467.²⁰⁰ It must also be considered that the accounts are after significant events within their queenship. Margaret's accounts are after ruling for seven years and Elizabeth's are after she had just settled her dower lands and before that, had been dependent on the King. Therefore, they cannot be compared exactly. No records for Anne's finances survive. Myers saw a continuity in Margaret's and Elizabeth's sources of income and broke these sources down into dower lands, which were properties passed to successive queens, the gold held by themselves, and cash grants.²⁰¹ However, Margaret's household income was more than Elizabeth's.²⁰² Myers found that Margaret had a deficit of £24 at the end of the recorded year, but that was after paying off an arrears from the year before.²⁰³ However, Elizabeth was left with a surplus of £200 after the recorded year.²⁰⁴ This can be due to the difference in expenditure. Margaret was lavish in her outgoings. Elizabeth was not. This could perhaps be due to the fact that Margaret grew up with wealth and had a different standard of living when compared to Elizabeth. In turn, Elizabeth and then Anne became wealthier than they predecessor. This could be

¹⁹⁵ Hilton, *Queen's Consort*

¹⁹⁶ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*

¹⁹⁷ J. Kelly-Gadol, 'Did Women have a Renaissance?' in R. Bridenthal and S. M. Stuard, (ed) *Becoming Visible: Women in European History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), pp. 175-203.

¹⁹⁸ Neal, *The Queen's Grace*; Myers, *Crown, Household and Parliament*

¹⁹⁹ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*

²⁰⁰ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*

²⁰¹ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*; Myers, *Crown, Household and Parliament*

²⁰² Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, 'A 'Most Benevolent Queen''

²⁰³ Myers, *Crown, Household and Parliament*

²⁰⁴ *ibid*

another reason for the increase in surplus for Elizabeth. Through patronage they had expenses to attend to, and the payments of staff. However, none of them got into significant debt and so as the crown moved on, so did their wealth.

Chapter 6: Politics and Power

According to Joan Kelly, a woman's political function was symbolic: a 'public symbol of male power'.²⁰⁵ A Queen's political work could take many forms: intercession, patronage of convents, pious works for church, regency, marriage negotiations and sponsoring artists and writers.²⁰⁶ These mediums could provide ways of subtly influencing others and achieving political outcomes. At the start of the medieval period, queens held government together. Later queens, like the ones discussed in this thesis, were excluded from public shows of power and authority, forced to use this privately. This power could be wielded to create relationships with allies 'and to avoid wars and their resulting disasters'.²⁰⁷ In general, queens were to stay out of politics even though she was exposed to the secrets of the kingdom. The queens discussed in this thesis held a form of power if they held political sway. They were interlinked. The gender system of this period theoretically denied that a woman could hold political authority.²⁰⁸ At the same time, however, it encouraged women to act in ways which could have political consequences.²⁰⁹ It was the consecration and coronation of the woman which set her above everyone but the King, even government.²¹⁰ In a male-dominated world, the intimacy of the Queen to the King made her an anomaly in the political structure. inside yet outside official power.²¹¹

Queens used the arts to promote political thinking and outcomes. Margaret's Medal and her Prayer Roll, as previously discussed, are examples of this. The symbols of the sceptre and crown show queenship and because the Virgin Mary is looking down at her, it shows that she is accepted as the true queen of England.²¹² The Rous Roll, promoting the Earls of Warwick can also be seen to promote political gain.²¹³

Geoffroi de Charry's '*The III Consideracions Right Necesserye to the Good Governance of a Prince*' from 1347 stated that:

²⁰⁵ Kelly-Gadol, in Bridenthal and Stuard, *Becoming Visible*, p. 6

²⁰⁶ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*

²⁰⁷ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*, p. 194.

²⁰⁸ Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*

²⁰⁹ *ibid*

²¹⁰ Hilton, *Queen's Consort*

²¹¹ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*; Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*

²¹² Bodleian Library, JC, MS 124, 1445-1453

²¹³ BL, Add MS 48976, 1483

'Queens should...have good and due regarde to such thinge as
toucheth the profyte and honeure if hir lord and herself. And she
shulde take in hande noo greet maters with oute licences or
congie of hir lord...'²¹⁴

As stated above, queens were expected to keep the king's priorities above hers. There were instances when queens were given decision making capacity and public authority by the King to act as an independent person. This meant that the Queen could act as a representative of the King.

Margaret used this strategy in her letters, aligning her wishes with the King's.²¹⁵ Maurer says that Margaret's power was justified as the King's authority because no mention is made of the Queen's authority.²¹⁶ It seems that even though it was not the womanly ideal, it was not rare for this to occur. The Paston Letters tells of several generations where wives were not 'slaves to husbands, but their counsellor and lieutenant'.²¹⁷ Margaret used this method later in her career and said how her husband had granted her the power to act on his behalf when he was ill and then later imprisoned. However, Henry VI was not capable to grant it willingly due to his illness and so this was an unlawful and inappropriate use of power.²¹⁸

Margaret seemed to be thrust into the political sphere when Henry VI became unwell.²¹⁹ A Yorkist pointed out that England was without good governance due the King's illness, and in 1461 the Yorkists claimed they had a right to rule instead.²²⁰ Margaret allowed the government to control the country, until she became a mother. After that, she took on the rule of the country and had to lead battles, gather allies, negotiate aid from France and Scotland and raise money to send armies into battles. However, this power which she used and demonstrated was borrowed and exercised

²¹⁴ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*, p. 3.

²¹⁵ Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*

²¹⁶ *ibid*

²¹⁷ Trevalyan, *English Social History*, p. 71.

²¹⁸ Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*

²¹⁹ Lee, 'Reflections of Power'; Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*

²²⁰ Lee, 'Reflections of Power'

in the name of her husband or son and seems to have been adopted due to having a weak king rather than her individual will.²²¹

Gasgoine wrote at the time that the queen ruled that everything was done according to her will.²²² It must be considered though, that he was a Yorkist supporter. Gasgoine's comment was supported by two documents: the 'Brut' and 'English Chronicle'. They stated that 'the governance of the Reame, stode moste by the Quene and her counsell'.²²³ Edward Hall's Chronicle also supported this view when he said how 'the Quene, ...ruled the rost and bare[d] the whole rule'.²²⁴ To be effective, a medieval Queen needed well-defined institutional authority agreed by the governed. If that authority was not defined, it led people to think that the Queen was overstepping her boundary.²²⁵ She had to be careful to not overstep her boundary and isolate more of the country, causing herself to lose followers. By the evidence noted above, Margaret certainly took control of the situation and held a political advantage, giving her power. However, whether this was through her own desire or a case of having to take this burden on because of her husband is debated.

Margaret managed to exert a formidable power within the Lancastrian court.²²⁶ During her son's minority, tensions were rising between the Yorkists and Lancastrians and as an effort to ease this tension, Margaret presented a bill of five articles that could establish her as regent. Margaret was not the first queen to act as regent for her husband. In 1253, Queen Eleanor of Provence acted as regent for King Henry III. This was an attempt at protecting her son's interests by re-creating a royal centre which demanded the loyalties of all. Four of these articles were: the whole rule of the land, the right to appoint state officers and sheriffs, the patronage of bishoprics and other benefices, sufficient livelihood for herself, the King and Prince.²²⁷ The fifth article is not recorded in writing. This bill was declined, and a protectorate was set up with the authority of the King in which Henry's cousin,

²²¹ Glyn, *Negotiating Queenship*; Lee, 'Reflections of Power'

²²² Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*

²²³ Ibid., p. 139.

²²⁴ Hall, *Hall's Chronicle*, p. 232.

²²⁵ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*

²²⁶ ibid

²²⁷ Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*

Richard Duke of York, cared for him.²²⁸ However, the King was not capable of granting this request because he was incapacitated and so it must have been approved by government, which the Duke of York was a prominent figure in. It must be remembered that he was the leader of the opposing faction, vying for the crown. This rejection of a regency shows that Margaret did not 'dispense with ingrained notions of queenship' because of her gender within the country and that she had made a conscious effort to attempt to gain power.²²⁹ However, Maurer believes that Margaret seemed to accept this protectorate and has seen no evidence to suggest that she then excluded the Yorkists from the Great Council when Henry VI had recovered, giving cause to think she had no influence over her husband.²³⁰ Nevertheless, in 1456 'the queen having a wit, more than the common sort women have...', called a council at Greenwich and the Duke of York was stripped of the Protectorate.²³¹

The fact that Margaret assumed this power during the 1450s, and that by doing so acted in contrast to the traditional model of queenship, was probably the reason why Elizabeth's influence was limited, because of her gender matching that of Margaret's.²³² Sutton and Visser-Fuchs think that Elizabeth 'gained her own way...by an assumption of the deepest humility...' but this gives cause to think that she 'acted' the meek, pious queen while silently influencing things to her will which we have no evidence to support.²³³

Even though Elizabeth was subordinate in power to Edward IV, causing her to ignore his infidelities, it did not prevent her from making a network of considerable potential through her kin.²³⁴ Elizabeth used her newfound position to arrange advantageous marriages for family members, which only disgruntled the gentry class even more.²³⁵ The females were betrothed to high standing men, such as William, Lord Herbert of

²²⁸ Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*; Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*

²²⁹ Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*, p. 208.

²³⁰ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*; Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*

²³¹ Hall, *Hall's Chronicle*, p. 233

²³² R. L. Radulescu, 'Preparing for Mature Years: The Case of Margaret of Anjou and her Books', in S. Niebrzydowski, (ed) *Middle-Aged Women in the Middle Age* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2011); Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*

²³³ Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, 'A 'Most Benevolent Queen'', p. 222.

²³⁴ Neal, *The Queen's Grace*; Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, 'A 'Most Benevolent Queen''

²³⁵ Flude, *Divorced, Beheaded, Died*

Raglan.²³⁶ However, these marriages were not met with resistance from noble families because they saw the benefit of marrying into the royal family and did not want to lose the royal favour.²³⁷

Though it is said that Margaret's actions probably hindered Elizabeth's political sway, it cannot be compared directly. Elizabeth's husband was present for most of their rule and so she did not have the need to step up and explicitly take part in politics as Margaret had. Having said that, it cannot be helped to wonder if she could have. It must be remembered that the Yorkists had many supporters. On the other hand, the gentry class were always weary of Elizabeth due to her undeserving background to rule. That being said, she may have struggled to find powerful and political figures to assist her for a sole reign. However, Elizabeth too was thrust into an authoritative position when Edward IV had to flee to Burgundy in 1470. She and her children fled to Westminster Abbey and claimed sanctuary. Nevertheless, she did not play a large part in politics until after Edward IV's death.²³⁸

Edward IV ruled on his deathbed that Richard, Duke of Gloucester was to be the Prince's Protector. He gave no power to Elizabeth apart from the marriage of their daughters and she was consequently left unprotected.²³⁹ Due to his age, Elizabeth's son would need a protectorate. However, under the precedent set by Henry VI in 1429, a coronation deemed the ruler old enough to rule and there was no need for a Lord Protector or minority council.²⁴⁰ The Woodevilles arranged an immediate coronation of Prince Edward.²⁴¹ This was classed as a coup, even though it was intended by Elizabeth to ensure peace, because it overrode the rights of parliament and made the Woodevilles seem power hungry. By holding the heir to the throne, the Woodevilles had a political advantage.

Richard intercepted the Prince of Wales on his way from Ludlow and arrested the Woodeville leaders. Elizabeth and her children sought sanctuary but she did not remain passive, and instead fought for her son's place on the throne. She suspected

²³⁶ Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*

²³⁷ Kettle, 'Parvenus in Politics'

²³⁸ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*,

²³⁹ Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England*

²⁴⁰ Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*

²⁴¹ Flude, *Divorced, Beheaded, Died*

usurpation from Richard, even though deemed unreasonable by others. Richard was sworn in as Lord Protector and got everybody to swear allegiance to Edward, setting the coronation date for 24 June 1483.²⁴² Her sons were taken to the tower to prepare for the coronation when Richard suspected a plot between Elizabeth and Hastings. He then delayed the coronation and in turn, that delayed his protectorate coming to an end. This could be because of a want for power from Richard and Anne, a chance to seize it while it was available. However, it may be nothing more than mixed communications. Richard also deemed the princes illegitimate, drawing up a petition for him to take the throne. Richard, Duke of Gloucester, claimed that Edward IV and Elizabeth's marriage was unlawful. The *Titulus Regius* 1484 said that it was unlawful due to four reasons: it was made in secret from the Lords, it was made under the influence of witchcraft from Elizabeth and her mother, it was made in secret from the church and no banns called, and finally, there was a precontract between Edward and Dame Eleanor Butler.²⁴³ As Edward Hall says, Richard then 'usurped the crowne...and openly toke upon hym to bee kyng'.²⁴⁴ He became King Richard III on 6 July 1483. His accession was not accepted peacefully as it stimulated unrest in those whom it outraged.

It was here that Elizabeth became more involved in politics. Elizabeth approached Margaret Beaufort, mother of the other claimant to the throne, Henry Tudor, to make a political alliance. This alliance attempted to free the princes from the tower in 1483 and made a marriage match between Elizabeth of York and Henry Tudor, thus bringing an end to the Wars of the Roses and removing Richard III from the throne. However, it was unsuccessful, and the first rumours reached her in October 1483 that her two sons had both disappeared from the tower.²⁴⁵ There were rumours of murder, and this is a mystery unsolved to this day. Her political alliance with the Tudors did withstand though, and it went ahead after Henry Tudor killed Richard III in battle, giving birth to the Tudor dynasty.

²⁴² Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*

²⁴³ H. A. Kelly, 'The Case Against Edward IV's Marriage and Offspring: Secrecy: Witchcraft: Secrecy: Precontract', *The Ricardian*, Vol. 11, No. 141 (September 1998), p. 326-335.

²⁴⁴ Hall, *Hall's Chronicle*, p. 375.

²⁴⁵ Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses*

Elizabeth was thrust onto the political stage when her sons' throne and futures were threatened. This was the same as Margaret, who only seemed to become more politically involved once her son was born. It seems that their mother instinct was their driving force. Regarding politics, both Margaret and Elizabeth took part in political acts which was not considered proper for a queen. Margaret was successful in her political endeavours, gaining support to go into battle, even if those battles did fail. Elizabeth however, failed in her political involvement. She thought that she was pre-empting Richard, Duke of Gloucester's move, but in doing so, was seen to be making the first offensive move. By making an alliance with the Tudors, she gained another set of supporters. However, it must be remembered that they were also an opposing faction to the Yorkists and so cannot be trusted fully to put Elizabeth's wishes before their own. No evidence survives regarding Anne's relationship with politics.

Queens, by using politics or power, could influence their kings. Margaret does not seem to have any evidence of exercising influence over her husband. This is most likely because the evidence regarding her giving her perspective and acting with power, was when her husband was incapacitated. When Henry VI was healthy and well, it seems that he was the authoritative figure, and this was not questioned.

When Elizabeth tried to use her influence over Edward IV to make Anthony Rivers, her brother, Lord Protector, he declined and instead made his brother, Richard, Lord Protector. One example of successfully having influence over Edward IV was regarding Thomas FitzGerald, 6th Earl of Desmond. In 1463 Thomas was made Deputy Governor of Ireland and told the King that he should find himself a wife with better connections. In 1467, the Earl of Worcester replaced Thomas in his position. It was commonly reported that it was obtained by Elizabeth, to avenge herself for the insult.²⁴⁶ Nevertheless, Sutton and Visser-Fuchs say that there is no contemporary evidence to suggest that Elizabeth was involved in this situation.²⁴⁷

One event which is always debated regarding her influence, is the death of her brother-in-law, George, Duke of Clarence. Elizabeth and George's issues seem to have started when he and Warwick captured Edward IV in 1469 and executed her

²⁴⁶ MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodville*

²⁴⁷ Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, 'A 'Most Benevolent Queen''

brother and father.²⁴⁸ In time, when his wife died, he blamed Elizabeth and accused her of witchcraft, as he had with Jacquetta decades before. George was sentenced to imprisonment by Edward IV and was found floating dead, in a barrel of Malmsey wine, Elizabeth's favourite. The imprisonment of George by the King could be a result of Elizabeth's influence over Edward IV, in which she had held onto rage and grief and wanted George to suffer for it. Strickland believed that Elizabeth was a dangerous influence and so perhaps this is a compromise between them both to avoid death, Elizabeth's preference, and forgiveness, Edward IV's preference.²⁴⁹

Anne could be seen to use her influence over Richard III regarding his heir after their son died. This also promoted family ties. After her sister and brother-in-law, George of Clarence died, as well as her son, her nephew was the heir to the throne and to her fortune. The young Earl of Warwick was brought to court and dined with them daily. However, after Anne's death, he was stripped of these familiarities and not named heir.²⁵⁰ This could be taken to show Anne influence over Richard III and how she had interceded on behalf of her nephew. The swift removal of him as heir to the throne can only mean that it was done to placate Anne.

Regarding the influence of husbands and therefore, Kings, it is evident that Elizabeth seemed most able to do this. In this regard, she did not meet the expectation of remaining outside of politics and being subordinate to the King. If this is the case, perhaps Sutton and Visser-Fuchs were correct when they said that she 'gained her own way...by an assumption of the deepest humility...'.²⁵¹ It seems that she did a lot of subtle influencing. Anne, however, only seems to have influenced Richard III regarding the continuation of the throne and a fondness for family members. Having said that, Anne could well have influenced Richard III to have taken the throne from the Yorkists, who Anne naturally would have despised.

Apart from influencing their husbands, queens could also influence their family. One area in which the queen could yield power was within the family.²⁵² The family was a

²⁴⁸ MacGibbon, *Elizabeth Woodeville*

²⁴⁹ Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England*

²⁵⁰ *ibid*

²⁵¹ Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, 'A 'Most Benevolent Queen'', p. 222.

²⁵² Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*

political, reproductive and affective unit.²⁵³ Christine de Pizan's book stated that one of things for women to be aware of was to take care in raising children.²⁵⁴ However, Maurer believes that queens were only allowed an active role in intercession.²⁵⁵ Queens found a way to dominate the people who their children were exposed to.

Margaret had a greater influence on her son, the Prince of Wales', life due to Henry VI being incapacitated. This level of influence was continued with Elizabeth and her children, especially by appointing her brother, Anthony Rivers as the Prince of Wales' tutor, and also when they were in sanctuary and Edward IV had to flee. It can be assumed that Jacquetta would have had a great influence on the children during this time. Margaret and Elizabeth both ensured that their children's councils consisted of family members or supporters.²⁵⁶ For example, Edward of Westminster's council had eleven family members and fourteen independent advisors.²⁵⁷ Elizabeth even appointed herself as a member of his council. Having said that, these were not the first queens to influence their children: in the fourteenth century, Isabella of France advised and educated her son, Edward III.²⁵⁸ Anne ensured her son was invested as Prince of Wales as soon as was possible and ensured her niece and nephew were well cared for when her sister died. The influence which they had on these children assisted them with situation in their lives and rule. Being in sanctuary allowed Elizabeth's children to see how fear and instability could hinder progression within society. It allowed future royals, such as Henry VIII, to see the importance of having more than one male heir and gave them a strong sense of self and family.

Margaret had a strong political presence during her career, of which she had no choice. Her husband was incapacitated and unless she fought and protected her son's inheritance, it would be taken by others. Maurer and Laynesmith both believe that she became an accidental Lancastrian figurehead because of the King's illness, that she did not seek the power.²⁵⁹ Elizabeth on the other hand, had a husband who

²⁵³ Harris, 'Property, Power, and Personal Relations'

²⁵⁴ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*

²⁵⁵ Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*

²⁵⁶ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*

²⁵⁷ *ibid*

²⁵⁸ *ibid*

²⁵⁹ Glyn, *Negotiating Queenship*; Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*; Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*

was strong and adored by much of England. She had no need to have a strong political presence. However, she did manage to arrange advantageous marriages for family members which created political links and she did have to stand alone when Edward IV was in exile. She had seen how Margaret had ridden out on horseback and rallied troops, but Margaret had had a very different upbringing to herself, with very different female role models. It is probable that Elizabeth had a more subtle approach, making slow and steady moves which nobody noticed. Anne on the other hand, was described as being a shadowy queen to Richard.²⁶⁰ Once she gained the throne, she had no political presence and she lost what little influence she had, when her son died in 1484.²⁶¹ However, there is nothing which states whose idea it was for Richard to take the crown. It could well have been Anne who suggested it. Elizabeth had held a hatred for her father, the Earl of Warwick and this could have been vengeance for his and her husband's death. Unfortunately, that is something which will never be known.

When and how the queens met each other is difficult to determine but it can be assumed that Elizabeth met Margaret while she was one of her young, impressionable ladies in waiting. From here, she would have started to understand the expectation of a queen and have had discussions regarding this with her mother, Jacquetta, who would have been biased towards her friend. As she grew, she would have come to see the things which she approved and disapproved of. In turn, Anne would have met Elizabeth at court when she too, was a young, impressionable girl. Again, she would have seen the acts which she thought appropriate for a queen and had her own ideas regarding what should be different. She also would have grown up in an environment biased against Elizabeth in both the Warwick household and with Margaret, so her view of her would more than likely have been negative. Anne and Margaret met when Anne married Margaret's son. They spent some time together in France and returned to England together to claim the throne, sharing their grief when Edward of Lancaster died. At one point, they were enemies, in another they were allies. Whether they had a positive relationship is unclear. However, after Richard rescued Anne from George, she was granted permission to

²⁶⁰ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*

²⁶¹ Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe*

visit Margaret at the Tower of London.²⁶² This could show a fondness. After all, they had spent many years together and had both fled to claim refugee at Tewkesbury Abbey when they heard the battle was lost, entering London as prisoners together.²⁶³

²⁶² Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England*

²⁶³ Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England*

Conclusion

Queens were vital to family, culture and economics in the English medieval period.²⁶⁴ After considering these three queens in detail and considering what a medieval queen was expected to be like, it can be argued that all these queens did show these expectations at some point in their careers. It must be remembered though, that most primary evidence is biased due to men dominating the political scenes and leaving more written evidence than women.²⁶⁵

Margaret was too politically involved in her later career, exhibiting power and only bore one child. She was also not beyond rumour for unchaste behaviour and had a deficit within her household finances. However, she did encourage piety and patronage. Nevertheless, she was from a suitable family lineage. When Henry VI was imprisoned, Margaret was given a chance to have a separate identity to the King and this to some extent allowed her to show power.²⁶⁶ Laynesmith, Maurer, Smith and Dunn confirm that Margaret did fulfil the medieval expectations of a traditional queen, at least up to the birth of her son.²⁶⁷ After this, she was too politically involved and rumours began. Having said that, rumours are not facts and therefore, if that one rumour is discounted, she always exhibited a chaste way of life, living up to the womanly, and queenly, ideal.

Elizabeth had a bold entrance to queenship but satisfied the queenly ideal once she gave Edward IV a son. She provided Edward with a large family, showed piety and patronage and used intercession to assist others. However, she came from the gentry and so was not considered worthy for a king to marry. This was also due to the fact that she was a widow, with two children and not a virgin. Her family ties did have links to Burgundy though, giving political links from her mother's side. Elizabeth was also the receiver of rumours regarding her chastity when her marriage was declared invalid. This bastardised her children and therefore questioned her chastity as she had been laying with Edward IV out of wedlock. However, as with Margaret, this is only one rumour and so is not fact. If this is discounted, Elizabeth's reputation is that of chastity. Nevertheless, this only occurred after Edward IV's death. She

²⁶⁴ Earenfight, 'Medieval Queenship'

²⁶⁵ Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*

²⁶⁶ *ibid*

²⁶⁷ Radulescu, in Niebrzydowski, *Middle-Aged Women*; Maurer, *Margaret of Anjou*

remained out of the political sphere until after Edward VI's death, when she felt she needed to defend her son's claim to the throne. In general, Elizabeth seemed to fulfil the expectations of a medieval queen, atleast while Edward IV ruled. After that, she seems to have exerted her political power and influence, giving rise to rumours about her chastity.

Anne on the other hand, caused no tensions, promoted chastity, gave Richard a son and remained outside of the political sphere. However, she only bore one child and unfortunately, he died young. No rumours of her chastity endured but she also has no evidence regarding acts of intercession, piety or patronage. This could be due to her having a much shorter reign than the other two queens or could be because she did nothing remarkable. She was not of royal birth but could trace her lineage back to distant royal roots. She also bought with her strong political ties through the Warwick name, which was important for Richard when considering taking the throne. Nevertheless, when they married, they were not considering becoming King and Queen. Anne remained out of politics and yielded no power or influence over Richard, except that of her nephew being his heir.

For queens who ruled after these three queens, it was a priority to always have a male heir and a spare, to inherit the throne in case something went wrong for the heir. Much emphasis was put on providing a male heir to rule the kingdom too, as in the case of Henry VIII. He saw what happened if there was no heir and he did not wish for such disruption to occur again. The strength of these queens and the strong sense of motherhood can be seen in later queens, such as Elizabeth of York, Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn. These three fierce women discussed in this thesis saw what it meant to live within these queenly expectations, and they pushed the boundaries of these expectations. Later generations would not need to demonstrate royal bloodlines and would be allowed to have more influence in politics, even giving full power to a female sole ruler, Queen Mary I, followed by Queen Elizabeth I, both Elizabeth's great-granddaughters.

In some areas of their lives, Margaret, Elizabeth and Anne failed the expectations of queens. In others, they fulfilled the expectations. If we consider how these three queens affected and influenced eachother, we can see that each successive queen

became more in line with the expectations required of them, Margaret was at the forefront of politics but lost the crown, her son and husband. Elizabeth, more removed from politics, had a large family, only lost her crown due to her husband dying naturally but lost two sons unnaturally. Finally, Anne, kept the crown until her death, kept her husband and her supporters but lost her only son to natural causes. Crawford had stated how Margaret and Elizabeth 'could hardly be bettered as how not to behave as Queen consorts' and this supports that. Lessons can be learnt from history, whether over several centuries or decades. Anne has demonstrated how things can be learnt within decades. Even though there were positives in Margaret and Elizabeth's careers, compared to Anne, they were unsuccessful when regarding these expectations.²⁶⁸ Nevertheless, Anne is only successful in achieving these expectations, by being unremarkable. However, judged by modern day standards, it is clear that each of these strong, dedicated mothers lived remarkable and successful lives.

²⁶⁸ Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*, p. 10.

Bibliography

Primary Sources: Manuscripts and items

London, British Library

Add MS 48976	The Rous Roll, 1483
Egerton MS 2006	Mechtild of Hackeborn's ' <i>Booke of Gostlye Grace</i> ', 1415-1438
Harley MS 7578	The Liber Proverbium, 1400-1700

London, Victoria and Albert Museum

a.182-1910	The Medal of Margaret, 1458-1464
------------	----------------------------------

Oxford, Bodleian Library

Jesus College, MS 124	Queen Margaret's Prayer Roll, 1445-1453
-----------------------	---

Primary Sources: Published

Hall, E., *Hall's Chronicle: Containing the History of England*, ed. H. Ellis, (London: G. Woodfall, 1809).

Letters of Queen Margaret of Anjou and Bishop Beckett and Others, Vol 86, ed. C. Monroe, Esq., (London: John Bowyer Nichols and Sons, 1863).

Mancini, D., *The Usurpation of Richard the Third*, ed and trans. C. A. J. Armstrong, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

More, T. *The History of King Richard III and Selections from the English and Latin Poems*, ed. R. Sylvester, (London: Yale University Press, 1976).

Secondary Sources: Books

Benz St. John, L., *Three Medieval Queens: Queenship and the Crown in Fourteenth Century England* (Basingstoke: MacMillan Springer, 2012).

Bridenthal, R. and Stuard S. M., (ed) *Becoming Visible: Women in European History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998).

Carpenter, J. and Maclean, S. B., (ed), *Power of the Weak: Studies on Medieval Women* (Urbana, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995).

Clark, L., (ed) *The Fifteenth Century XI: Concerns and Preoccupations* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012).

Dunn, D., (ed) *War and Society in Medieval and Early Modern Britain*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000)

Earenfight, T., *Queenship in Medieval Europe* (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

Flude, K., *Divorced, Beheaded, Died...The History of Britain's Kings and Queens in Bite-Sized Chunks*, 2nd ed. (London: Michael O'mara Books Limited, 2015).

Hey, D., (ed) *The Oxford Companion of Local and Family History: The Complete Guide to Uncovering the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Hicks, M., *Anne Neville: Queen to Richard III* (Stroud: The History Press, 2014).

The Wars of the Roses (Yale: Yale University Press, 2010).

Hilton, L., *Queen's Consort: England's Medieval Queens* (London: Hachete, 2010).

Laynesmith, J. L., *The Last Medieval Queens: English Queenship 1445-1503* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Lewis, K. J., Menuge, N. J. and Phillips, K. M., *Young Medieval Women* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).

Licence, A., *Anne Neville: Richard III's Tragic Queen* (UK: Amberley Publishing Limited, 2013).

MacGibbon, D., *Elizabeth Woodville-a Life: The Real Story of the 'White Queen'* (Stroud: Amberley Publishing Limited, 2013).

Maurer, H. E., *Margaret of Anjou: Queenship and Power in Late Medieval England* (Suffolk, New York: The Boydell Press, 2003).

Mitchell, L., (ed) *Every Inch a King: Comparative Studies in Kings and Kingship in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds* (Boston: Political Science, 2013).

Myers, A. R., *Crown, Household and Parliament in fifteenth century England* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1985).

Niebrzydowski, S., (ed) *Middle-Aged Women in the Middle Age* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer: 2011).

Sauer, M. M., *Gender in Medieval Culture* (London, New Delhi, New York, Sydney: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015).

Strickland, A. *Lives of the Queens of England: Abridged Edition* (London: William Clowes and Sons: 1867).

Swanson, R. N., *Catholic England: Faith, Religion and Observance Before the Reformation* (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 1993).

Trevalyan, G. M., *English Social History: A survey of Six Centuries. Chaucer to Queen Victoria* (London: The Reprint Society, 1978).

Williams, G., *Renewal and Reformation: Wales c.1415-1642* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

Wolffe, B., *Henry VI* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2001).

Journals

Barnfield, M., 'Diriment, Impediments, Dispensations and Divorce: Richard III and Matrimony', *The Ricardian*, vol. 17 (2007), pp. 84-98.

Drimmer, S., 'Beyond Private Matters: A Prayer Roll for Queen Margaret of Anjou', *University of Massachusetts Amherst*, vol. 53, No. 1 (Spring 2014), pp. 95-117.

Earenfight, T., 'Medieval Queenship', *History Compass*, vol 15 (2017), pp. 1-23.

Harris, B., 'Property, Power, and Personal Relations: Elite Mothers and Sons in Yorkist and Early Tudor England', *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 15 (Spring 1990), pp. 608-621.

Kelly, H. A., 'The Case Against Edward IV's Marriage and Offspring: Secrecy: Witchcraft: Secrecy: Precontract', *The Ricardian*, vol. 11, No. 141 (September 1998), pp. 326-335.

Kettle, A., 'Parvenus in Politics: The Woodevilles, Edward IV and the Baronage 1464-1469', *The Ricardian*, vol. 15 (June 2005), pp. 94-113.

Lee, P. A., 'Reflections of Power: Margaret of Anjou and the Dark Side of Queenship', *Renaissance Quarterly*, vol. 39 (Summer 1986), pp. 183-217.

MacNamara, J. A. and Wemple, S., 'The Power of Women Through the Family in Medieval Europe 500-1100', *Feminist Studies Inc*, vol. 1, No. 3 (Winter-Spring 1973), pp. 126-141.

Nuttal, J., 'Margaret of Anjou as Patron of English Verse? The Liber Proverbiorum and the Romans of Partenay', *The Review of English Studies*, Vol. 67 (2016), pp. 632-643.

Sutton, A. F. and Visser-Fuchs, L., 'A 'Most Benevolent Queen': Queen Elizabeth Woodeville's Reputation, her Piety and her Books', *The Ricardian*, vol. 10, No. 129 (June 1995), pp. 214-245.

Secondary Sources: Unpublished

Glyn, E. 'Negotiating Queenship: From Malory to Shakespeare' (Unpublished PhD thesis) King's College London, 2015.

Neal, D. 'The Queen's Grace: English Queenship 1464-1503', (Unpublished MA thesis) McMaster University, 1996.

Websites

Gutor Glyn, 'Poems 23 and 79', [online]. Available at: <http://gutorglyn.net/gutorglyn/www/index.htm#>. (accessed: 18.12.2021)